

**Regarding Gendered Mythologies:**

**Nicolas Poussin's Mythological Paintings and Practices of  
Viewing in Seventeenth-Century Rome**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
PhD

The University of Leeds  
School of Fine Art, History of Art, and Cultural Studies

June 2004

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## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

My thanks go firstly to my supervisors Susan Siegfried, Thomas Puttfarcken and William Rea, whose encouragement and close criticisms have greatly enriched this thesis. Their ability to respond to my research from very different perspectives has been a constant inspiration. I must also thank various scholars at Leeds and further afield who have commented upon my work, answered my questions, helped with translations, or guided me in my research: Brian Richardson, Anthony Wright, Russell Goulbourne, Richard Andrews, Anthony Hughes, Fred Orton, Natasha Bogoslavakaya, Brian Pullen, Ashok Roy, Mieke Bal, Charles Ford, Patricia Emison, Stephanie Trigg, Donatella Sparti, Susan McClary, Adrian Randolph, Helen Hills, Jo Taylor, David Packwood, Alice Sanger, and Verity Platt. I am indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for the financial assistance of a Postgraduate Studentship and a Travel Award.

I am very grateful for assistance in acquiring bibliographic and photographic material received from the Document Supply staff at the Brotherton Library; the library staff at the Warburg Institute, the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the National Gallery, London, and the Musée du Louvre. I also thank Maria Castellino, Alain Tapie, Kathleen K. Drea, and Caroline Worthington.

For their kind hospitality and trips to the Roman *campagna*, I thank Donatella Doddi and her family.

My friends at Leeds have been a constant source of creative thinking, as well as kindly reading drafts of this thesis, and helping with translations. My thanks go to Elizabeth L'Estrange, Katrin Kivimaa, Jeffrey Orr, Christina Warnes, Dominic Williams, Alistair Rider, Rhiannon Davies, Ji-young Shin and Victoria Sauron. I thank in particular Martin Abbott for his unfailing enthusiasm and intellectual stimulation.

Finally, I would like to thank my family Bryony, Nick, Helen and Tim to whom I dedicate this thesis.

## *ABSTRACT*

Between 1624 and about 1635, Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) produced a series of mythological paintings that depict women looking at passive men. Read by modern commentators as a sign of the painter's fear of women, these pictures have contributed to the myth that this artist created predominantly masculine works of art. Laying aside biographical interpretation, this thesis investigates the relationship between Poussin's representations of masculinity and femininity and the social affairs of the gentlemen who bought these paintings.

In order to address fully the paintings' unusual iconography, it has been necessary to take into account the importance of femininity in the sociality that permeated Poussin's visual repertoire. I analyse how culturally constructed gendered positions of viewing informed the design of these paintings and the kinds of viewing that occurred before them. By considering the social possibilities, the pictorial processes, and the physical locations through which these paintings affected their patrons, I establish that a connection existed between social experience and Poussin's representations of gendered looking. This discussion sets the parameters for an examination of how these paintings related intimately to the familial and status concerns of the painter's Roman clientele. I aim to demonstrate that Poussin's early mythological paintings functioned within a complex visual culture where gentlemen sought to utilise representations of powerful women positively. At the same time, this thesis attempts to restore aspects of femininity to perceptions of the gender of Poussin's early artistic production.

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## PREFACE

### *Des Amants (Lovers)*

*When [Poussin] paints a Lover resting his head on his lady's breast,  
It is as if [the Lover] is, quite truly, dying and giving up his soul:  
The look of pleasure is so strong in his languishing eyes  
That only the ignorant, unseeing, can fail to see it.  
...In front of this painting, Envy, affected strangely  
Turns away from its black poison to proclaim its praise,  
And [Poussin's] winged infants who descend from Heaven  
Make all its bitterness as sweet as honey.*

Hilaire Pader, *La peinture parlante*, 1653.<sup>1</sup>

In 1624, Nicolas Poussin arrived in Rome. During the next decade, he painted a series of works with the kind of *Amants* described by Hilaire Pader in the poem *La peinture parlante*. In these paintings, the protagonists display behaviour that is atypical in terms of patriarchal forms of femininity and masculinity: women are alert, gazing with desire upon languishing men. In his poem, Pader described the sensual effects of this imagery; he may have seen Poussin's early mythological paintings during his stay in Rome between 1635 and 1642.<sup>2</sup> According to this spectator, Poussin's paintings of *Amants* had the potency to turn the spite of even the most recalcitrant viewer into sweet pleasure.

It is less evident how such paintings affected Poussin's Roman clientele. In the 1620s and 1630s, Poussin produced for these gentlemen the following works: *Venus and Adonis* (Caen), *Mars and Venus* (Boston), *Cephalus and Aurora* (Hovingham), two versions of *Tancred and Erminia* (St Petersburg, Birmingham), two paintings of *Rinaldo and Armida* (Moscow, Dulwich), and *Echo and Narcissus* (Paris) (figs. 1-8).<sup>3</sup> Although they are diverse in date and ownership, scholars have considered these paintings as a group for reasons similar to those found in Pader's poem.<sup>4</sup> These

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<sup>1</sup> (Toulouse: Colomiez, 1653), pp. 21-22: 'Lors qui'il peint un Amant sur le sein de sa dame,/ On diroit, sans mentir, qu'il expire & rend l'Ame:/ L'aise parest si fort dedans ses yeux mourants/ Qu'il ne se peut cacher qu'a ceux des ignorants./...L'envie en cét endroit par un effet estrange/ Quittant son noir venin publie sa loüange;/ Et ses enfants aisles qui descendent du Ciel/ Rendent tout son absinthe aussi dous que le miel.' I am grateful to Russell Goulbourne and Elizabeth L'Estrange for help with the translation.

<sup>2</sup> On Pader see *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. by Jane Turner, 34 vols (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), XXIII, 748. Pader may have had links with Cassiano dal Pozzo through their joint connections with Cardinal Maurizio of Savoy.

<sup>3</sup> Several other related paintings will be considered at pertinent points of the discussion.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Pallas Athene, 1995), pp. 103-49; Richard Verdi, *Nicolas Poussin* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1995), pp. 21-22; Louis Marin, *Sublime Poussin*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 152-70; Malcolm Bull, 'Poussin's "Loves of the Goddesses"', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 137 (2001), 61-70 (pp. 67-68).

paintings all manifest a particular iconography. A man reclines; he is dead, dying, sleeping, or subjugated. Beside him is a woman. In contrast to his passivity, she is active. She mourns, cuts her hair, attempts murder, falls in love, or restrains her partner. In all but one painting, she also directly looks upon the body of her beloved.

Pader's poem demonstrates that this group of paintings had the ability to interact in the lives of their audience by moving them to feel certain emotions. In this thesis, I argue that these paintings offered to Poussin's Roman patrons a means of testing, negotiating or appraising the contradictions present in contemporary ideologies of masculinity and femininity.<sup>5</sup> Parts I to III of the thesis (chapters 1-7) chart the social possibilities, the pictorial processes, and the physical locations through which these paintings affected their patrons. Part IV (chapters 8-10) addresses how these works contributed to the formation and maintenance of social relations on an intimate, familial level.<sup>6</sup>

\* \* \*

In this thesis, the emphasis on the social and cultural meanings of Poussin's early mythological paintings challenges and complicates previous interpretations of these works. Before moving to the main body of my argument, it is necessary to address briefly the problems inherent in these other interpretations.

The similarity between the events of the artist's life and the paintings' theme of heterosexual love has been used repeatedly by scholars as a frame to constitute the works' significance. This approach limits our perception of the paintings' meanings. The paintings are chronologically proximate to the late 1620s, when the painter suffered from a serious illness, perhaps syphilis. The family of the French *trattoria* owner, Jacques Dughet, helped Poussin recover; in 1630, one of Dughet's daughters, Anne, married the painter. These two events involved relations between men and women. In this respect, they appear to be similar to the paintings' subject matter. Scholars have conflated the negative events behind Poussin's disease and his marriage into the narrative of the painter's depictions of mythological romantic liaisons.

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<sup>5</sup> T. J. Clark, 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation', *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 May 1974, pp. 561-62 (p. 562); Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 18-20.

<sup>6</sup> Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 64-91 (pp. 66-68, 89-90); Dirk Pels, Kevin Hetherington and Frédéric Vandenberghe, 'The Status of the Object: Performances, Mediations and Techniques', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 19 (2002), 1-21 (pp. 1-2).

Examples of this reading of the paintings have appeared frequently. In the catalogue for the grand *Poussin* exhibition held in London in 1995, Richard Verdi argued that Poussin's paintings of passive men 'suggest the extent to which the young artist may have felt himself enslaved by the power of woman'. Verdi interpreted the works as a psychological response to Poussin's illness. Of the artist's representations of water, he wrote: 'one is naturally led to wonder if the illness that Poussin suffered around 1630 scarred him not only physically but psychologically as well, leading him to feel tainted and unclean'.<sup>7</sup> In 2001, Malcolm Bull speculated cautiously on a biographical link between the paintings and Poussin's bachelor status.<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey have also argued recently that the *Mars and Venus* is a personal exploration of Poussin's own sexual and artistic creativity. Poussin's motivation, according to the authors, came from the 'wound of love' he suffered through syphilis, and his, apparently, sexless marriage.<sup>9</sup>

These biographical accounts are problematic for several reasons. On a simple level, firstly, Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* in Birmingham has been dated c.1635, five years after the supposed resolution of Poussin's fear of women in his marriage with Anne Dughet. Secondly, at this time, Poussin executed his paintings rapidly and made subsequent modifications.<sup>10</sup> This working method suggests that he was more interested in satisfying his clients' tastes than his own psychological needs.

The ideologies at work in these readings are much more problematic. These explanations evidence the tendency of modernist art historians to rely on biographical details in order to delimit a painting's multivalency and to disregard the historical and social conditions in which an artist produced his or her work.<sup>11</sup> The virulence of the biographical approach in current expositions of Poussin's early mythological paintings may arise from the fact that Poussin studies, as a whole, reached their apogee in the 1960s, at the height of the Modernist era. Biography and chronology dominated the art history written in this period, including literature on Poussin.<sup>12</sup> In Denis Mahon's *Poussiniana* (1962), for example, Poussin's life events order the sequence of 'artistic

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<sup>7</sup> Verdi (1995), pp. 19, 22, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Bull, 'Poussin's "Loves of the Goddesses"', pp. 67-68.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 222-23, 228-30, 246.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Thuillier, 'Poussin et la laboratoire', *Techne*, 1 (1994), 13-50 (p. 15).

<sup>11</sup> Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been no Great Women Artists? (1971)' reprinted in *Women, Art and Power* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 145-78 (pp.153-58); Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, 'Cloisonism', *Art History*, 5 (1982), 341-48 (p. 342); Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986), pp. 28-30.

<sup>12</sup> Orton and Pollock, p. 342.

evolution'.<sup>13</sup> This book appeared after the major retrospective exhibition of 1960, which sought to establish the development of Poussin's early *oeuvre*. Chronological studies of the artist's early works have continued to use biographical data, not without complication.<sup>14</sup> Konrad Oberhuber noted that his strict adherence to biographical interpretation meant that he had overlooked the social functions of the paintings.<sup>15</sup>

Misogyny is the second ideology at work in the biographical model. It has been observed that representations of powerful women often invite interpretations predicated upon male chauvinism.<sup>16</sup> The biographical readings discussed above link Poussin's suffering with the painted women and men. This explanation conditions us to read the paintings' themes negatively. Indeed, scholars have read these works as being about 'female desire and romantic loss', or the 'unhappiness of love'.<sup>17</sup> The works are far more complex than is allowed by this 'negative' outlook. Cephalus, for example (fig. 3), appears to ward off the ardent Goddess of Dawn, yet his intertwined and parted legs suggest the lower parts of his body are more receiving of Aurora's embrace than a misogynist reading would tolerate.<sup>18</sup> Instead of permitting us to be sensitive to such visual complexities, the implications of these biographical readings encourage us to believe that when women assume the position normally reserved for men only disease, death and destruction can prevail.

The biographical readings further encourage us to believe that Poussin painted for his own two *male* eyes alone. In this respect, it is possible to identify links between these explanations and patriarchal forms of art history.<sup>19</sup> These accounts ignore any relevance paintings may have had for women. In contrast to such approaches, feminist art historians have demonstrated how an awareness of the gender politics at work in pictorial representation can elucidate the significance of art objects within the social relations of the people who made and looked at these objects.<sup>20</sup> I believe that the

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<sup>13</sup> *Poussiniana: Afterthoughts Arising From the Exhibition* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux Arts, 1962), pp. v-xii.

<sup>14</sup> Konrad Oberhuber, *Poussin: The Early Years in Rome: The Origins of French Classicism*, (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1988); Alain Mérot, *Nicolas Poussin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), p. 38; Jacques Thuillier, *Nicolas Poussin* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> Oberhuber, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Mieke Bal, 'The Genius of Rome: putting things together', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 1 (2002), 25-45 (pp. 29-32).

<sup>17</sup> Bull, 'Poussin's "Loves of the Goddesses"', p. 67; Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> Compare Verdi (1995), p. 150.

<sup>19</sup> Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, pp. 23-24; Nanette Salomon, 'Sins of Omission: The Art Historical Canon', *Engendering Knowledge: Feminists in Academe*, ed. by Joan E. Hartman and Ellen Messer-Davidow (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), pp. 222-36; Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 3-69.

<sup>20</sup> See Nochlin, p. 158; and Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, pp. 18-30, 50-90. For useful overviews see Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, 'The Feminist Critique of Art History', *Art Bulletin*, 69 (1987), 326-57 (pp. 338-42, 355-56); and Gill Perry, 'Introduction: Gender and Art History', in *Gender*

responses engendered by Poussin's paintings move us to perform such a revisionist commentary.

In this thesis, I resist limiting the meaning of Poussin's paintings to a simple biographical reflection. I attempt to explain their significances to the people who purchased Poussin's work. In addition, I demonstrate that Poussin's early mythological paintings do not vilify powerful women. Writing just a few years after Poussin painted these works, Hilaire Pader did not read the artist's women as usurping and challenging the position of men. On the contrary, Pader wrote that Poussin's representation of a man 'resting his head on his lady's breast' made one's 'bitterness as sweet as honey'. The exact nature of this viewer's pleasure deserves our investigation.

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*and Art*, ed. by Gill Perry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 8-31. For the early modern period see Patricia Simons, 'Women in Frames: the gaze, the eye, the profile in Renaissance Portraiture', *History Workshop*, 25 (1988), 4-30; and the overview by Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco, 'Introduction. Women and the Visual Arts: Breaking Boundaries', in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. by Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1-13.

## *INTRODUCTION*

### **Painting Mythologies in Rome**

Nicolas Poussin arrived in Rome in 1624, a year after the election of Maffeo Barberini as Pope Urban VIII. Poussin quickly established a good reputation and successful career working primarily for members of the newly formed Barberini papal administration. The artist's success came despite the death, in 1625, of his first Italian protector, the poet Giambattista Marino, and the absence from Rome, during 1625 and 1626, of his main patron, the papal bureaucrat and scholar Cassiano dal Pozzo.

Before 1630, the papal doctor, Giulio Mancini, noted Poussin's respected reputation for his many '*opere private*': paintings displayed in 'private' gentlemanly households. Mancini's text explains that his patrons particularly appreciated Poussin for his manifest erudition in Latin and in the literature of histories and myths, and for his ability to express with his brush histories, mythologies, and poetic narratives. Indeed, Mancini described Poussin's very appearance and behaviour as 'noble', indicating that the artist seemed to belong to the class that had privileged access to such learning.<sup>1</sup> Mancini's comment foreshadows Bellori's later statement that in these years Poussin was a 'pupil' of the noble household and collection of the Cavaliere and Commendatore Cassiano dal Pozzo who worked for the papal nephew Francesco Barberini.<sup>2</sup> Poussin's patrons were professional administrators, but aspired to aristocratic status.

The subject matter, size and appearance of the paintings described in the Preface indicate that they were among those for which Mancini particularly praised Poussin: works displayed in exclusive 'private' spaces. Reflecting Mancini's adjective, the mythological genre existed on the margins of 'public' or civic society. Traditionally, mythological paintings were displayed in more discreet areas of the town palace or in the country villa.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the subjects of these paintings were certainly part of the repertoire that established Poussin's reputation as a skilled interpreter of ancient mythology and Christian poetic narrative.

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<sup>1</sup> Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla Pittura*, ed. by Adriana Marucchi, 2 vols (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1956), I, p. 261: 'haber apreso la lingua latina et havendo acquistato erudition di storie et di favole... con quei studij s'è condotto ad un termino molto riguardevole, onde vien reputato per molte opere private che si son viste di suo./ È homo... di aspetto et costume nobile et, quello che importa assai, per l'erudition litterale è capace di qualsivoglia historia, favola, poesia per poterla poi, come fa felicemente, exprimerla con il pennello.'

<sup>2</sup> Giovan Pietro Bellori, *Le Vite di Pittori, Scultori e Architetti Moderni*, ed. by Evelina Borea (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 428, 431: 'allievo del suo museo e della sua casa'.

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Cieri Via, 'I luoghi del mito fra decorazione e collezionismo', in *Imagini degli dei: Mitologia e collezionismo tra 500 e 600*, ed. by Claudia Cieri Via, exhib. cat. (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1996), pp. 29-48 (pp. 31-33).



Poussin's choice of merchandise was not in itself startling. Small-scale mythologies painted on canvas and copper were already a profitable specialization for Poussin's contemporaries, particularly Francesco Albani.<sup>4</sup> In other artists' work in this genre, however, images of passive men and desiring women were relatively rare. A survey of the work of seventeenth-century Italian painters who produced mythological works shows that they only painted a few pieces that addressed the theme over the course of their careers.<sup>5</sup> Poussin's sustained production of a group of works with this unusual iconography was a striking phenomenon. He produced at least nine paintings in ten years that depicted this combination.<sup>6</sup>

The relations between men and women in Poussin's paintings also stand in marked contrast to those depicted by his rival, Pietro da Cortona, in the grand mythological canvases produced for the Sacchetti family at the beginning of the 1620s. The difference between the two painters' works may have arisen from their patrons' interest in the conditions of the *paragone*: in 1624, the Sacchetti family had commissioned Poussin and Cortona in such a competition.<sup>7</sup> This method of inspiring artists was common in Rome; artists often responded to this challenge by playing with their opponent's imagery.<sup>8</sup> Poussin's early mythological paintings certainly destabilise Cortona's representations. Poussin depicted women in active, dominant positions, such as Armida wielding the dagger about to kill Rinaldo (fig. 7). In contrast, in his *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*, Cortona had depicted, a meek, pathetic girl. She is waiting for the death the dagger will bring (fig. 9). Unlike Armida, Polyxena does not possess manly valour. Her strength is a passive resilience to suffer a fate dictated by men.<sup>9</sup> Cortona

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<sup>4</sup> Clare Robertson, 'The Classical Tradition', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, ed. by Beverley Louise Brown, exhib. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2001), pp. 116-39; Francesco Cappelletti, 'The Enticement of the North: Landscape, Myth and Gleaming Supports', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 174-205; Patrizia Cavazzini, 'Towards the Pure Landscape', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 208-47.

<sup>5</sup> I surveyed the catalogue raisonnés of Annibale Carracci, Domenichino, Pietro da Cortona, Lanfranco, Guercino, Albani, Reni, and Vouet.

<sup>6</sup> The ninth painting is the *Diana and Endymion* in Detroit. I have excluded this painting from my discussion because Endymion is not shown reclining. He is however in a subservient position to the goddess; see Judith Colton, 'The Endymion myth and Poussin's Detroit Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 30 (1967), 426-31 (pp. 430-31).

<sup>7</sup> David Freedberg, 'Poussin, Ferrari, Cortona et l' "Aetas Florea"', in *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665: Actes du Colloque*, ed. by Alain Mérot, 2 vols (Paris: Louvre, 1996), I, 339-61 (p. 351).

<sup>8</sup> Beverly Louise Brown, 'The Black Wings of Envy: Competition, Rivalry and Paragone', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 250-73.

<sup>9</sup> Donald Posner, 'Pietro da Cortona, Pittoni and the Plight of Polyxena', *Art Bulletin*, 73 (1991), 399-414 (pp. 399, 404.).

probably painted his work to celebrate the institution of marriage for the seigniorial Sacchetti family. In 1639, it was displayed in the wife's apartment.<sup>10</sup>

Poussin may have intended to distinguish his production from that of Cortona through his use of unusual iconography. Whereas Cortona's large mythological paintings stayed within patriarchal notions of gender, the challenge of the *paragone* may have encouraged Poussin, and his gentlemen advisers, to subvert these conventions. It is significant that in 1623 Cortona painted a now lost *Rinaldo lasciviously lying on the breast of Armida* for the poet Giambattista Marino, Poussin's protector in Paris during the early 1620s and in his first few months in Rome.<sup>11</sup> The appearance of Poussin's early mythological paintings struck a chord with his patrons' tastes.

Poussin's early mythological paintings, which make up a sizable proportion of the works by which the painter gained his success, must have been greatly appreciated by his gentlemanly patrons. The nature of the attraction of papal bureaucrats to these works deserves investigation in order to further recent research into the dynamics of Roman private patronage during this period.<sup>12</sup>

Poussin produced his paintings for a particular clientele at a particular time. After 1635 or so, Poussin largely abandoned the theme and format of his early paintings. Increasingly throughout the 1630s, Poussin used smaller figures set within a more detailed landscape. Poussin's rising fortune and status contributed to this change. Paintings such as the *Bacchanals*, executed for Richelieu in the mid 1630s, demanded a mass of figures and erudite detail uncalled for in the earlier paintings.<sup>13</sup> Poussin's French patrons, who dominated his clientele after 1635, favoured classical histories with multiple figures and clear gender stereotypes rather than mythologies that centred on two ambiguously gendered protagonists.<sup>14</sup> The mythological canvases he did produce for his French clientele concentrated on voyeurism of the female body and images of

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<sup>10</sup> Jorg Martin Merz, 'Pietro da Cortona', in *The Dictionary of Art*, VII, 906-10 (p. 906); Sergio Guarino, "Con Grandissima Leggiadria et Diletto dei Riguardanti" Note su Pietro da Cortona e i Sacchetti', in *Pietro da Cortona (1597-1669)*, ed. by Anna Lo Bianco, exhib. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1997), pp. 67-72 (p. 69).

<sup>11</sup> Giambattista Passeri, *Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti che hanno lavorato in Roma* (Rome: Natale Barbiellini, 1772; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1976), p. 401.

<sup>12</sup> The authority on this general topic remains Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: Art and Society in Baroque Italy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 95-116.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Friedlaender, *Nicolas Poussin: A New Approach* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), pp. 46-50.

<sup>14</sup> Todd Olson, *Poussin and France: Painting, Humanism and the Politics of Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 53-55, 111-21.

rape. These were more suited to the pictures collected by the French bourgeoisie.<sup>15</sup> After 1630, Poussin only used large-scale figures for religious works that required a more iconic figure size. It is significant that Poussin returned to the theme of passive man and active woman in the *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which he executed around 1651 for Cassiano dal Pozzo. This late commission supports the thesis that Poussin's repetition of this theme arose from his Roman patrons' interests.

### Framing Poussin's Paintings

In order to consider the social meanings of Poussin's works, I employ the strategy of using contextual frames. This approach is necessary because there are no extant verbal reflections on these paintings written by his Roman clientele. Several art historians have developed a method that respects the paintings' original context despite the lacuna of primary evidence; it involves working from the frame of the surrounding culture.<sup>16</sup> I use the word 'frame' to describe this methodology because it is a concept which allows a recognition that context is always produced. 'Frame' signifies the relationships with other cultural entities that constitute an object's meanings, just as a painting frame determines the enclosed object as a work of art. 'Framing' is also an event conducted by the art historian.<sup>17</sup> In order to elucidate further the rather complex double practice of interpreting (framing) a historically constituted (framed) object I will briefly outline my reasons for using the various cultural entities, or frames, that are present in this thesis.

The frames reflect something of the social experiences of Poussin's clientele. At a basic level, the patrons of Poussin's paintings responded to these works through their lives as Roman, papal bureau-aristocrats, musical, poetry-loving, natural philosophers who lived in a particular kinship system. A methodology that recognises the relevance of intimate social experiences to the formation of modes of viewing can help us to interpret Poussin's paintings whilst maintaining a historical sensibility.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> George Wildenstein, 'Le goût pour la peinture dans la Bourgeoisie Parisienne au début du règne de Louis XIII', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 37 (1950), 153-273 (pp. 185-86): the combined list of works includes only two paintings of *Mars and Venus* and two paintings of *Venus and Adonis*, whereas there are twelve paintings of *The Judgement of Paris* and eight of *Diana and Acteon*. These subjects correspond with those of Poussin's *Nymphs Bathing* c.1634 for the Duke de Crequi; *Hercules abducting Deianira* 1637 and *Apollo chasing Daphne* c.1637 for Jacques Stella; and *Pan chasing Syrinx* 1637 for La Fleur.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 145; Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. xxiv-xxv.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. ix; Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 133-73.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 29-108; Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors*, pp. 143-63.

The multitude of frames utilised in this thesis reflect the multivalent forms of viewing present in this culture. Rome was a centre for optical innovation, such as the microscope, which encouraged detached study of each individual object. It was also a centre of devotional ritual where looking was part of a rich sensory experience that could connect viewers with each other and with God. At the same time, it was a city where aristocrats vied with each other through opulent courtly display. Poussin's patrons participated in many of these practices of viewing. In depicting the act of looking in his mythological paintings, Poussin responded to the multivalency of his patrons' visual habits.

Finally, certain frames operate for my own reasons. The unusual depictions of men and women in Poussin's work intrigue me because I want to contest my own society's representations of 'male' and 'female'. The concerns of this thesis are partly an outcome of my own politicisation. I first thought about these paintings only in terms of Roman gentlemen looking at depicted men; but then, in part after reading Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, I became aware of Poussin's women who look. However, my connection with Poussin's paintings is one of intersubjectivity rather than of dominance and submission.<sup>19</sup> It is important to state that the study of Poussin's paintings has contributed to my greater awareness of the confines of patriarchy. The concept of 'framing' can elucidate what I mean. A frame emphasises the separation and difference between oneself and the object of study. At the same time, it provides a linking element between one's own space and the painting.<sup>20</sup> The particular peculiarities of Poussin's early mythological paintings discussed in this thesis glimmer at present because our society primes us to be aware of them.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Social Significance of Gender Reversal**

On a formal level, Poussin's early mythological paintings manifest a reversal of established conventions for depicting men and women. The most obvious example of this feature occurs in the *Mars and Venus* (fig. 2), which I discuss fully in Chapter Nine. At present, the painting will function to introduce many of the distinctive features of the paintings considered throughout this thesis. In this work, Mars takes up a position occupied by Venus in the various *Loves of the Gods* prints produced in the sixteenth

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<sup>19</sup> Bal, *Travelling Concepts*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Bal, *Travelling Concepts*, p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> I am working with a hermeneutical approach here broadly based on the work of Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (Guildford: Sheed and Ward, 1975), pp. 266-67. This approach has been explored by the art historian Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 4-28.

century. Poussin's Mars, like Venus in the print shown in figure 10, has one leg raised up upon the bed, an action that emphasises the open 'v' of the crotch. Poussin's Mars twists his body to look at Venus, just as in the print the goddess of love turns towards her admirer. Throughout the thesis, it will become apparent that similar formal reversals occur in many of the paintings in question.

Seventeenth-century notions of gender provide a context for understanding Poussin's formal inversions. I consider 'gender' in this thesis as the social and cultural constructions: 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Following a sociological approach to gender, I understand these categories as the ideological interpretations that a particular culture assigns to the physical characteristics of biological sex through the prism of culturally legitimate sexuality.<sup>22</sup> In the early modern period, Italians interpreted the concepts 'masculine' and 'feminine' in the terms of a heteronormative division of labour between child raising and government. For example, in his *Discorso della virtù femminile* of 1582, Torquato Tasso argued that the differences between women and men 'were introduced for many reasons, not only from nature, but also from the uses and laws'.<sup>23</sup> For Tasso, men's virtues were *fortezza* - strength - and *liberalità* - freedom from prejudice - suiting their life conducted through the public business activities of the city. By contrast, women's virtue was *pudicizia* - modesty or chastity - which suited her role within the private sphere of the house.<sup>24</sup> Poussin's paintings show interactions occurring between men and women. In this sense they reflect the basic semiological structures of opposition that helped to generate the meanings of 'masculine' and 'feminine' in seventeenth-century culture.

Poussin's inversions of the positions of men and women indicate that his paintings explored the instability of this semiological system. Analogous representations provoked anxiety about their effects upon society. Filippo Sassetti criticised the aggressive female warriors in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* because he believed that women's actions must always be understood in relation to the behaviour of their male peers. Sassetti feared that if women were not represented properly they would

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<sup>22</sup> Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, 'Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meanings', in *Sexual Meanings the Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. by Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1-27; Stevi Jackson, *Heterosexuality in Question* (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 132-34.

<sup>23</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca [1582]* ed. by Maria Luisa Doglio (Palermo: Sellerio Editore, 1997), p. 57: 'con molta ragion, dunque, non sol dalla natura, ma dall'usanza ancora e da' legislatori é stata introdotta la distinzione delle virtù'.

<sup>24</sup> Tasso, *Discorso della virtù*, pp. 54-55.

constitute a violation of the entire system of differences among people.<sup>25</sup> Sassetti perceived that depictions of men and women could affect how real men and women acted. Representing Mars in Venus' position played with conventions of gender: Poussin's paintings had the ability to express dissidence to societal norms of behaviour.

Poussin's paintings had the potential to provide a method for gentlemen and women to experience a sense of transgression of the gender roles that they were expected to perform in their day-to-day lives. Since Natalie Zemon Davis' seminal essay 'Women on Top', many historians and art historians have posited that in the early modern period men and women addressed the straightjackets of their roles through popular representations of gender inversion and subversion.<sup>26</sup> My contribution to this body of scholarship demonstrates that *noble* people also required a pictorial means to negotiate the gendered and classed positions that society had granted them.<sup>27</sup> It has been argued that representations of sexual difference often work to establish meanings of social differentiation.<sup>28</sup> In this respect, Poussin's paintings offered a means for exploring inversions of patriarchal hierarchies of both gender and class.

Papal bureaucrats, as much as peasants, were subject to the instability of the gender hierarchy. Contrary to perceptions that the Eternal City was an entirely male dominated society, recent research has shown that in the late 1620s and early 1630s the number of women in Rome began to significantly increase, temporarily overtaking the male population during the plague years of the 1640s.<sup>29</sup> This demographic shift paralleled perceptions about the growth of women's power in the sixteenth century. Tommaso Campanella, a friend of Cassiano dal Pozzo and a favoured philosopher of the Pope during the 1620s, had reflected upon the frightening political ascendancy of women in his book *La Citta del Sole* (1602):

In this century women have reigned – like the Amazons between Nubia and Monopotapa – and among the Europeans the Red One in Turkey, Bona in Poland,

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<sup>25</sup> Deanna Shemek, *Ladies Errant: Wayward Women and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> The bibliography on this subject is vast. For the classic discussion see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Duckworth, 1975), pp. 124-51. On the Roman context see Sara F. Matthews Grieco, 'Pedagogical Prints, Moralizing Broadshets and Wayward Women in Counter Reformation Italy', in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, pp. 61-87.

<sup>27</sup> There has been a distinct aversion to connect elite 'Art' with the subversive functions of gender reversal imagery. Grieco, for example, has seen the popular imagery of the broadshets as 'potentially more subversive' than high art images of gender inversion see 'Pedagogical Prints', p. 67. Such aversion has been less common in the treatment of literature; see, for example, Shemek.

<sup>28</sup> Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986), 1053-75 (pp. 1067-74); Ortner and Whitehead, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Eugenio Sonnino, 'The Population of Baroque Rome', in *Rome Amsterdam: Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schutte (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), pp. 50-70 (pp. 62, 65). Rome was a male dominated city due to the constant immigration of single male workers.

Maria in Hungary, Elizabeth in England, Catherine in France, Margaret in Flanders, Bianca in Tuscany, Mary in Scotland, Camilla in Rome, and Isabella in Spain: the inventress of the New World. And the poet of our century began with women, saying “Of ladies, knights, arms and love.” And all the poets of our day are critics of Mars; and under the influence of Venus and the Moon they talk of pederasty and prostitution. Men turn effeminate and call each other, “Your lordship”.<sup>30</sup>

Poussin’s mythological paintings may have played an ideological role in the physical renegotiation of men and women’s roles that occurred in the streets of Rome and in the courts of the world. Through depicting men and women in positions that reversed established conventions, Poussin’s paintings presented a testing ground to explore changes in the gender hierarchy. Campanella perceived that social change was replicated in poetic mythological representation. Poussin painted Mars in a pose that is analogous to Campanella’s description of men falling ‘under the influence of Venus’. Poussin’s mythological paintings explored the nature of social change.

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This thesis considers the meanings and possibilities of Poussin’s iconography of gender reversal. There is one feature that demands particular attention. Poussin’s formal inversions of men and women cast the latter as pronounced viewers of the male body. For example, in the painting of *Mars and Venus* (fig. 2), Venus takes up the appraising position that Mars occupies in the antecedent print (fig. 10). Viewers of Poussin’s paintings were encouraged to identify with the gaze of women. In order to understand the nature of the engagement between these works and their first viewers it is necessary to analyse carefully the social functions of Poussin’s representations of women looking. This theme structures the development of my argument.

Part I of the thesis demonstrates that Poussin’s women staged an intersection between feminine and gentlemanly modes of looking which related to contemporary

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<sup>30</sup> Tommaso Campanella, *La Città del Sole*, in *Opere di Giordano Bruno e di Tommaso Campanella*, ed. by Augusto Guzzo and Romano Amerio (Milan: Ricciardi, 1956), pp.1073-116 (p. 1114): ‘in questo secolo regnârò le donne, come l’Amazoni tra Nubbia e ’l Monopotapa, e tra deli Europei la Rossa in Turchia [Rosselana wife of Suliman I], la Bona in Polonia [wife of Sigismund I], Maria in Ongheria [wife of Ludwig II, sister of Charles V], Elisabetta in Inghilterra [Elizabeth I], Catarina in Francia [Catherine de’ Medici], la Bianca in Toscana [wife of Francesco I de’ Medici], Maria in Scozia [Mary Queen of Scots], Camilla in Roma [unidentified, possibly Camilla Peretta, sister of Sixtus V] ed Isabella in Spagna [Isabella I], inventrice del mondo novo. E ’l poeta di questo secolo incominciò dalle donne dicendo: “Le donne, i cavalier, l’armi e l’amori”. E tutti son maledici le poeti d’oggi per Marte; e per Venere e per la Luna parlano di bardascismo e puttanesmo. E gli uomini si effeminano e si chiamano “Vossignoria”. Translated in Shemek, p. 89. On Cassiano’s relationship with Campanella see Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pp. 327-31. On Campanella at the Barberini court see Frederick Hammond, *Music and Spectacle in Baroque Rome: Barberini Patronage under Urban VIII*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 20-21.

practices of viewing. By depicting feminine looking, Poussin's mythological paintings allowed their gentleman owners to identify with a type of viewing that they were culturally circumscribed from experiencing due to their gender. The word standpoint, meaning 'the position at which a person stands to view an object', helps to describe what I mean.<sup>31</sup> The word 'position' in this definition is interpreted as a culturally constructed entity into which a privileged person imaginatively, rather than physically, stepped. I perceive the process as a rather superficial, conscious performance in order to gain prohibited pleasures.<sup>32</sup>

The viewers analysed in Chapter One indicate that gender was crucial to perceptions of how women and men reacted to visual stimuli. Opinions about what happened when different people looked were based on the medical theory of the four humours. People believed that bodily fluids, which corresponded to the qualities hot, cold, wet, and dry, determined a person's physical and mental qualities, including their sex and gender. Woman's cold and wet state made her emotionally unstable and suggestive, a condition reflected in Poussin's paintings.<sup>33</sup> The Dulwich Armida is the most striking example: she reacts to the sight of her beloved's body with murderous hate *and* tender love (fig. 7). In the early modern period, practices and depictions of women looking emphasised perceptions of women's physical and mental weakness.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, gendered practices of viewing had an element of fluidity permitted by humoral theory. For example, certain women could have a dominance of male fluids and behavioural qualities. Sixteenth-century, as well as more recent, commentators have noted that powerful women had the ability to adopt positions usually associated with the

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<sup>31</sup> 'standpoint, n.', *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00236108>>, [accessed 10 May 2004]. An implicit use of this word in the way I describe it occurs in Teresa Brennan, "'The Contexts of Vision" from a Specific Standpoint', in *Vision in Context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, ed. by Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 217-30

<sup>32</sup> My theory is not directly analogous with current theories of gender performances which constitute the emergence of whole subjectivities; see Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. x, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Galen, 'Mixtures', in *Selected Works*, trans. P. N. Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 202-89, (p. 247); Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 29-46; Elizabeth Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 24-26; Zirka Z. Filipczak, *Hot Dry Men, Cold Wet Women: The Theory of Humors in Western European Art 1575-1700*, exhib. cat. (New York: American Federations of Arts, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Simons, pp. 4-30; Paolo Berdini, 'Women under the Gaze: A Renaissance Genealogy', *Art History*, 21 (1998), 565-90; Adrian W. B. Randolph, 'Renaissance Household Goddesses: Fertility, Politics and the Gendering of Spectatorship', in *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation and Marriage in Pre Modern Europe*, ed. by Anne McClanan and Karen Rosoff Encarnación (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 163-90, (p. 175).



masculine gaze.<sup>35</sup> I consider the other side of the same coin: a gentleman had the possibility to identify with feminine viewers because of his class. The consideration of women as tournament spectators in Chapter One elucidates how the privileged status and gender of Poussin's clientele allowed them to draw upon the feminine points-of-view depicted in Poussin's paintings.<sup>36</sup> A history of feminine tournament viewing remains to be written and would surely help to argue against modern perceptions that women were only objects to be looked at.<sup>37</sup>

It is important to outline here the relationship between 'feminine' viewers and the type of viewing which dominated the period. In this thesis, I utilise the theory of 'scopic regimes', a term that Martin Jay has used to signify the concept that specific cultures have a dominant form of organising and prescribing what it is to see. A 'scopic regime' is not necessarily organic, arising simply from life skills, as suggested by the term 'Period Eye', nor does it characterise all ways of seeing as evoked by the term 'Visual Culture'.<sup>38</sup> At certain points of this thesis, I shall discuss how Poussin's paintings reflect divergent residual or anticipatory forms of viewing.<sup>39</sup> A 'scopic regime' connotes a relationship with a particular political moment; here I interpret it as an ideology of the ruling power: in Rome's case, the Catholic Church.

In seventeenth-century Rome, there was a general perception about what happened to a spectator when he or she looked at an image: the depicted message moved, persuaded, or affected the viewer. Bishop Gabriele Paleotti's *Discorso* on images, published in 1584, outlined the Catholic Church's opinion: painting's principles were to 'delight', 'teach' and, in addition to these two traditional functions, to 'move'.<sup>40</sup> The iconoclasm of the Northern Reformation and the use of images by the Catholic

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<sup>35</sup> Tasso, *Discorso della virtù*, p. 62; Regina Stefaniak, 'Correggio's Camera di San Paolo: An Archaeology of the Gaze', *Art History*, 16 (1993), 203-228; Veronica Biermann, 'The Virtue of a King and the Desire of a Woman? Mythological representations in the collection of Queen Christina', *Art History*, 24 (2001), 213-30. See also Carole-Anne Tyler, 'The Feminine Look', in *Theory between the disciplines: Authority/ Vision/ Politics*, ed. by Martin Kreiswirth and Mark A. Cheetham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp. 191-212 (pp. 198, 202).

<sup>36</sup> Ortner and Whitehead, pp. 7-8; Catherine King, 'Made in Her Image: Women, Portraiture and Gender in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Introduction' in *Gender and Art*, pp. 33-36 (p. 36).

<sup>37</sup> Kim M. Phillips, 'Bodily Walls, Windows and Doors: The Politics of Gesture in Late Fifteenth-Century English Books for Women', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 185-98 (pp. 190-93).

<sup>38</sup> Martin Jay, 'The Scopic Regimes of Modernity', in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988) pp. 3-23; Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, pp. 29-108; Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors*, pp. 143-63; Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, pp. xxi-xxvii.

<sup>39</sup> On this theory of culture see Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 38-42.

<sup>40</sup> 'Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane', in *Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento* ed. by Paola Barocchi, 3 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1961), II, 117-509 (p. 148): 'il dilettere, l'insegnare, e commovere'; Rensselear W. Lee, 'Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting', *Art Bulletin*, 22 (1940), 197-269 (pp. 226-28); Phillip Salman, 'Instruction and Delight in Medieval and Renaissance Art Criticism', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 32 (1979), 303-32.

Church to propagate the faith had stressed the efficacy of images to persuade and convert.<sup>41</sup> This belief manifested itself in Italian high-class painting in the interest in the conveyance of emotion - the *affetti*.<sup>42</sup> Both the fascination with affective paintings and the stress on gendered points of view can be located in the society of the *seicento* papal court. The peculiar nature of this institution meant that ecclesiastical-bureaucrats had to aspire to the Catholic ideal, that images were powerfully affective, whilst distancing bodily emotion from their rational, administrative selves. The notion of feminine viewers was central to this scopic regime.<sup>43</sup> The figure of a woman, an inconsistent body easily affected by external stimuli, was a logical standpoint to utilise in order to both explore affection by image and maintain a gentlemanly detachment from such an experience. A Roman gentleman could have utilised Poussin's paintings to experience a feminine standpoint *and* to maintain his status.

In order to signify the type of viewing gentlemen practiced before Poussin's paintings, I have resurrected the defunct sixteenth-century English word 'regarder', which is also a direct translation of the Italian word *riguardante* used in seventeenth-century treatises on painting.<sup>44</sup> This rather uncomfortable English word reminds us that we need to make an imaginative leap to a world where paintings had very real effects on people's bodies.<sup>45</sup> The words used to describe viewing in this period reflected the wider socio-historical context of the Reformations and iconoclasm.<sup>46</sup> The word 'regarder' captures something of the dominant scopic regime. Unlike the detached connotations of our word 'viewer', 'regard' means to have a relation to, or to have some connection with, the object concerned.<sup>47</sup> The word 'regarder' helps us to recognise that in the early

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<sup>41</sup> David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), pp. 358-71.

<sup>42</sup> Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (London: Warburg, 1947), pp. 50-51.

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Cropper has speculated that the possibility of 'a beholder not necessarily gendered as male', posited by certain art works of the sixteenth century, arose in relation to affective art forms; see 'The Place of Beauty in the High Renaissance and its displacement in the History of Art', in *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance*, ed. by Alvin Vos (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995), pp. 159-205 (p. 201).

<sup>44</sup> 'regarder, n.', *OED Online*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00201128>>, [accessed 10 May 2004]; Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, pp. 142-44.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 113-16.

<sup>46</sup> Joanna Woodall, 'Wtewael's *Perseus and Andromeda*: looking for love in early seventeenth-century Dutch painting', in *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality* ed. by Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 39-68. (pp. 60-61)

<sup>47</sup> 'regard, v.', *OED Online*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00201121>>, [accessed 10 May 2004].

modern period people believed that transcendent subjects such as God or Fate, or even a painting, had the power to direct human activity.<sup>48</sup>

The potential of the activity of regarding Poussin's paintings to convert a gentleman regarder into a 'feminine' viewer is considered in Chapter Two. This conversion was facilitated by the particular social space where regarding occurred: the intimate mythological gallery of the private gentleman. I end this chapter by considering the relationship between regarding and Poussin's own theories of viewing.

Part II of the thesis considers the role of Poussin's painterly techniques in the fulfilment of this experience. From visual evidence, it is clear that Poussin was deeply interested in exploring the *affetti* during his first years in Rome.<sup>49</sup> The belief in the power of painted *affetti* to affect a viewer meant that people responded to secular paintings as active agents. We can understand this concept by comparing how religious works of art can be 'person-like' in the sense that they are sources of, or targets for, social agency.<sup>50</sup> In the seventeenth century, depictions of profane love came to have similar powers to the divine agency that worked through religious icons.<sup>51</sup>

It is worth noting here that the interrelationship between the effects of sacred and profane paintings in *seicento* Rome can shed light on Poussin's use of religious motifs in his mythological works. Modern writers have remarked upon the iconographic similarity of these paintings to pictures of holy women mourning Christ.<sup>52</sup> These religious motifs have not been considered in terms of how religious practices of viewing may have informed the ways in which Poussin's audience responded to his paintings. Poussin's ecclesiastical patrons would have responded to his paintings through practices of religious viewing which stressed how visual form could convert the nature of the regarder.<sup>53</sup> I address specifically how such religious motifs may have functioned in Chapters Eight and Ten.

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<sup>48</sup> Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire*, (New York: New York University Press, 1989), pp. 145-46; Michael P. Carroll, *Veiled Threats: The Logic of Popular Catholicism in Italy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>49</sup> Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's 'Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 60-61; Charles Dempsey, 'Nicolas Poussin between Italy and France: Poussin's *Death of Germanicus* and the Invention of the Tableau', in *L'Europa e l'arte italiana*, ed. by Max Seidel (Venice: Marsilio, 2000), pp. 321-35.

<sup>50</sup> Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 96.

<sup>51</sup> Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 317-71.

<sup>52</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 115; Richard Verdi, *Nicolas Poussin: Tancred and Erminia*, exhib. cat. (Birmingham: Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1992), pp. 14-15.

<sup>53</sup> Francesco Solinas has outlined some of the connections between dal Pozzo's commissions and the prevailing taste in religious imagery in 'Cassiano dal Pozzo e le arti a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento', in *I Segreti di un collezionista: Le straordinarie raccolte di Cassiano dal Pozzo 1588-1657*, ed. by Francesco Solinas, Rome exhib. cat. (Rome: Edizione de Luca, 2000), pp. 1-11.

It is evident that Poussin used gendered *affetti* to convey emotive tension to his regards, a feature I discuss in Chapter Three. Poussin's pictorial strategy makes sense because in the seventeenth century gender was intimately linked to emotion.<sup>54</sup> Many of Poussin's mythological paintings reveal stories where the protagonists express simultaneous contrasting gendered emotions. In order to foster this multivalency, the painter conflated different versions of the myths into a single figure, a technique used by contemporary poets and mythographers.<sup>55</sup> For example, in the *Mars and Venus* Mars displays a conflict of duty and desire that arises from the use of two source texts (fig. 2); I discuss this point further in Chapter Nine. Here it is sufficient to note that Mars both adopts the pose of the goddess of love and gestures towards his civic responsibility as the god of war. Mars' simultaneous adoption of masculine and feminine poses figured his emotive tension. I develop the analysis of Poussin's painterly techniques in Chapter Four in order to consider his ability to affect the humoral gendered physique of his regards. It can be demonstrated that Poussin depicted his characters in terms set out by theorists of the *affetti* and musical modes which had the power to effect this change. Finally, Chapter Five considers the contemporary reception of representations of gender simultaneity in order to illuminate the willingness of Roman gentlemen to enter a feminine standpoint.

Part III addresses the role of the relationship between the gallery space and the paintings' mythological landscape in the processes outlined in Parts I and II. Chapter Six considers social uses of the landscape in relation to the effects of Poussin's paintings in their domestic setting. My interpretation of the significance of Poussin's landscapes develops the work of Anthony Blunt and Clovis Whitfield in order to connect these paintings to the social context of the Italian countryside, as has been

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<sup>54</sup> Poussin is often described as a very 'psychological' painter without considering the historical nature of emotion; see, for example, Jane Costello, 'Poussin's Drawings for Marino and the New Classicism: I - Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18 (1955), 296-317 (p. 315); Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 45; and Claire Pace, 'Nicolas Poussin: "peintre-poète"?', in *Commemorating Poussin: Reception and Interpretation of the Artist*, ed. by Genevieve Warwick and Katie Scott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 76-113 (p. 79).

<sup>55</sup> Robert B. Simon, 'Poussin, Marino and the Interpretation of Mythology', *Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978), 56-68; Françoise Graziani, 'Poussin Mariniste: la mythologie des images', in *Poussin et Rome: Actes du colloque de l'Académie de France à Rome*, ed. by Olivier Bonfait (Paris, RMN: 1996), pp. 367-86; Ann Moss, *Poetry and Fable: Studies in Mythological Narrative in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 125; Beatrice Corrigan, 'The Opposing Mirrors', *Italica*, 33 (1956), 165-79 (p. 170). Vincenzo Cartari, *Vere e nove imagini degli dei... l'adietro offeruate simiglianze ... da Lorenzo Pignoria*, ed. by Stephen Orgel, (Padua, Tozzi, 1615; repr. New York: Garland, 1979). The editor of this edition, Pignoria, was an associate of Cassiano dal Pozzo. Cartari and Pignoria's lengthy descriptions provide the reader with an awareness of the multifaceted and complex nature of the characters of classical and Christian mythology, including instances of dual gendered divinities such as Venus and Bacchus. The multifaceted nature of pagan gods and goddesses ensured their survival into the early modern period; see Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* (New York: Pantheon/ Bollingen Foundation, 1953).

recently considered in the French environment of Poussin's work.<sup>56</sup> The analysis of the mythological painting gallery, which is also developed in this chapter, demonstrates that a gentleman viewer could have imagined that he was *compelled* to experience a feminine standpoint because of this room's connotations. Chapter Seven relates this experience to representations of male pastoral leisure brought about by the power of feminine desire. This discussion furthers our understanding of the relationship between gender and landscape in Poussin's art.<sup>57</sup>

The three case studies that form Part IV of the thesis consider in depth the social functions of the depiction of women viewing for Poussin's gentlemen clientele. Important recent work has begun to explore a similar process. Susan Siegfried has discussed how the images of women in the paintings of Joseph Wright of Derby responded to social rituals of scientific viewing. Wright's paintings of women could have 'functioned' to express the kinds of emotions, elicited by the disturbing developments in science and industry, which men shared but could not display in public due to the limitations of social etiquette.<sup>58</sup> Siegfried's approach offers a social dimension to supplement the literary analysis of 'focalizers' that has recently entered art historical literature. A 'focalizer' is the look of a represented viewer that influences and organises an external spectator's act of looking.<sup>59</sup> Looking perceived as a series of identifications between the viewer and different focalizers, has helped to challenge perceptions that only men can be active participants in the practices of viewing, an important conceptual point to my thesis.<sup>60</sup>

The role of Poussin's mythological depictions of feminine gazes in the negotiation of familial gender roles is established in Part IV. This approach is justified by the genre of the paintings under consideration. Art historians have established that strong connections existed between mythological painting and kinship issues, particularly marriage and birth, in the early modern period. These studies have demonstrated how such images encouraged women to be active, sexual viewers contradicting the chaste personas that they had to display to the outside world.<sup>61</sup> I

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<sup>56</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pp. 269-300; Clovis Whitfield, 'Poussin's Early Landscape Paintings', *Burlington Magazine*, 121 (1979), 10-19; Olson, pp. 213-43.

<sup>57</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pp. 327-30; Filipczak, *Hot Dry Men*, p. 198.

<sup>58</sup> Susan Siegfried, 'Engaging the Audience: Sexual Economies of Vision in Joseph Wright', *Representations*, 68 (1999), 34-58 (p. 43).

<sup>59</sup> Mieke Bal, *On Story Telling: Essays in Narratology* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1991), pp. 86-88.

<sup>60</sup> Norman Bryson, 'Introduction: Art and Intersubjectivity', in Mieke Bal, *Looking in the Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G&B Arts International, 2001), pp. 1-40 (pp. 8-19).

<sup>61</sup> Christelle L. Baskins, *Cassone Painting, Humanism and Gender in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 26-49; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 67-68, 109-11, 120; Sara

discuss how the particular structures of the families of Poussin's clientele determined specific concerns about chastity, the generation of children, and infant care.<sup>62</sup> Poussin's distinct depictions of masculinity and femininity appear to have responded to these issues. The nature of kinship in the period under discussion excludes the relevance of psychoanalysis to my discussion as this model arose out of a later concept of the family.<sup>63</sup> Modern theories of sexuality have been shown to be inapplicable to concepts of desire and selfhood of the past.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, an awareness of the family's historical nature helps to illuminate how Poussin's paintings negotiated the contradictions between different ideologies of kinship that arose during the Counter Reformation.

Sheila McTighe and Todd Olson have demonstrated how profitable considerations of the social network of Poussin's French clientele are for interpreting the reception of his work.<sup>65</sup> A similar approach to the Roman context of Poussin's work has so far been lacking. This lacuna has occurred partly due to the influence of Anthony Blunt's perception that Poussin's main patron, Cassiano dal Pozzo, lived 'apart from the main stream of political and ecclesiastical life'.<sup>66</sup> Blunt's thesis has been successfully challenged through important research on dal Pozzo's collecting practices and his activities in the Accademia dei Lincei, an institution intimately connected to the political life of 1620s' Rome.<sup>67</sup> This research has, in turn, impacted upon our understanding of the relationship of Poussin's work to the religious and political events

F. Matthews Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale nell'arte dell'Italia moderna', in *Storia del matrimonio*, ed. by Michela De Giorgio and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Rome: Laterza, 1996), pp. 251-82; Rona Goffen, 'Sex, Space and Social History in Titian's *Venus of Urbino*', in *Titian's 'Venus of Urbino'*, ed. by Rona Goffen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 63-90.

<sup>62</sup> On Roman family structure see Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Rome: Laterza, 1990), pp. 60-71, 118; Renata Ago, 'The Family in Rome: Structure and Relationships', in *Rome Amsterdam*, pp. 85-91.

<sup>63</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Volume One, An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1979), pp. 110-14, 129-30; Jackson, pp. 22-24.

<sup>64</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture', in *Literary Theory/ Renaissance Texts*, ed. by Patricia A. Park and David Quint (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 210-24; Debora Shuger, 'Excerpts from a Panel Discussion', in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, ed. by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 269-276 (p. 270). Laura Mulvey's work has been used repeatedly within studies of the gaze in the early modern period; see for example Stefaniak, 'Corregio's Camera di San Paolo', p. 204; and Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky, 'Taming the Basilisk', in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 195-217 (p.197); Mulvey argued for psychoanalysis' specificity within Hollywood cinema. This argument is often overlooked; see *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Basingstoke: Bloomington, 1989), p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Sheila McTighe, *Nicolas Poussin's Landscape Allegories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 18-77; Olson.

<sup>66</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>67</sup> The bibliography on Cassiano dal Pozzo is vast. Important revisionist accounts are Donatella L. Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo: Storia di una famiglia e del suo museo nella Roma seicentesca* (Modena: Panini, 1992); Francesco Solinas (ed.), *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Rome exhib. cat.; and Francesco Solinas (ed.), *I Segreti di un collezionista: Le straordinarie raccolte di Cassiano dal Pozzo 1588-1657*, Biella exhib. cat. (Rome: Edizione de Luca, 2001); David Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, his friends and the beginnings of modern natural history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

of the papal court.<sup>68</sup> However, whilst it has been observed that it was the papal court that linked all of Poussin's early Roman patrons, there has been no study of the social reasons for their attraction to his works.<sup>69</sup> For example, while Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey have produced a useful discussion of the relationship between Poussin's paintings and some of the social concerns of his Roman patrons, they considered each Roman separately thus perpetuating Blunt's thesis that these men operated in isolation.<sup>70</sup>

The relative lack of research on the patronage of Angelo Giori, who owned two of the works in question, has perpetuated the singular focus on Cassiano dal Pozzo. In Chapter Eight, I focus on Giori's ownership of Poussin's *Venus and Adonis*. Reasons for the similarities of the tastes of Giori and dal Pozzo appear to lie beyond personal intellectual interests. Whilst Giori was, like Cassiano, a member of the Barberini administration, he does not seem to have frequented the circles favoured by Cassiano, such as the academies of the Lincei, Humoristi or Crusca.<sup>71</sup>

When Poussin painted his mythological works the activities of Giori and dal Pozzo were motivated by the need to aspire to and to perpetuate aristocratic conspicuous display, the creation of clientele networks through patronage and marriage alliances, and the establishment of a new dynasty. The latter two activities involved women. Most of the studies discussed above consider the social spaces where Poussin's works were received as being exclusively inhabited by men.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, I take into account the women and children who also lived in the rooms where Poussin's paintings were hung. Chapter Nine looks at the relationship between Poussin's *Mars and Venus* and the marriage of Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo to Theodora Costa; whilst Chapter Ten explores Poussin's motifs of touching and looking in the second version of *Tancred and Erminia* in relation to the childrearing concerns of his patrons.

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<sup>68</sup> Marc Fumaroli, *L'Inspiration du poète de Poussin: essai sur l'allegorie du Parnasse* (Paris: RMN, 1989), pp. 33-66; Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 121-23; Francesco Solinas, 'Poussin et Cassiano dal Pozzo: Notes et Documents sur une collaboration amicale', in *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665: Actes du Colloque*, 1, 289-336.

<sup>69</sup> Elena Fumagalli, 'Poussin et les collectionneurs romains au XVIIe siècle', in *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, ed. by Pierre Rosenberg and Louis-Antoine Prat, exhib. cat. (Paris: RMN, 1994), pp. 48-57.

<sup>70</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 64-105.

<sup>71</sup> Giori and dal Pozzo may have met each other through their jobs. Both were responsible for liaising with Bernini on projects for their patrons. See, Lorenza Mochi Onori, 'Il Cavalier dal Pozzo ministro dei Barberini', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Rome exhib. cat., pp. 17-20 (p. 19); B. Feliciangeli, *Il cardinale Angelo Giori de Camerino e Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Sanseverino-Marche: Bellabarba, 1917).

<sup>72</sup> Olson has considered women but only as an outside force in relation to the masculine culture associated with the reception of Poussin's paintings; see pp. 116-21, 172. At least one of the paintings he discussed, *The Holy Family in Egypt*, was painted for a woman, in this case Madame de Montmort; see Olson p. 63 and Blunt, p. 214.

The last chapter returns to an issue discussed in the first. I consider how a particular feminine standpoint, which involved an element of touch, figured both in Poussin's paintings and in a representation of Theodora Costa, the wife of Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo. This material offers a means to critique the modern notion that a positive haptic look relates to female biological experience.<sup>73</sup> In contrast, I argue that an actual woman, as much as a painting, could represent a culturally constructed standpoint. Rather than locating feminine looking within female experience, the chapter sustains the argument, developed throughout this thesis, that gentlemen were able to utilise 'feminine' modes of viewing. In this respect, I counter an ideology that appears to be at work in some modern readings of the 'female' gaze.<sup>74</sup> Theories that locate positive modes of looking in the female body work to limit our perception of women's subjugation under patriarchy. It seems that inferiority gave women exclusive access to certain positive experiences. In opposition to this perception, I demonstrate that gentlemen were able to identify with elements of womanly behaviour. It is important to note however that my argument also highlights the social reasons behind the necessity of gentlemen to perform this process. The practice of looking at mythological paintings by Nicolas Poussin provided a means through which his *male* patrons contested patriarchal notions of gender.

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<sup>73</sup> Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, *The Matrixial Gaze* (Leeds: Feminist Arts and Histories Network, 1995), pp. 2, 8, 22. The mother's touching gaze is privileged, despite Ettinger's argument that it can be experienced by men. See also Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 24, 79.

<sup>74</sup> Randolph, 'Renaissance Household', pp. 173-74. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 592; Mary Anne Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film in the 1940's* (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1987), p. 9. For a related critique see Shuger, p. 276.



## ***PART I: REGARDING GENTLEMEN AND WOMEN VIEWING***

### **Looking in Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus***

This part of the thesis introduces how Poussin's mythological paintings had the potential to stage an intersection of feminine and gentlemanly viewing. I have established that Poussin represented women as significant viewers of the male body in his early mythological paintings. This formulation did not reflect the patronage of Poussin's paintings. We know of no women who commissioned or bought these works. Instead, the paintings produced an encounter between the gentlemanly gallery viewing practiced by his Roman patrons and Poussin's depictions of feminine spectators.

One of Poussin's early mythological paintings visualises a similar intersection of different viewing positions. In *Echo and Narcissus* (fig. 8), Narcissus appears as a feminine viewer of himself. The painting shows Narcissus metamorphosing into the flower that bears his name. In the background, Echo, the spurned lover of Narcissus, fades into a rock as she changes into sound. By including Echo psychically in the painting, thus subverting the chronology of the Ovidian myth, Poussin invited his viewers to compare formally the behaviours and fates of the two characters. Through the composition of his painting, Poussin indicated that Narcissus inhabits Echo's previous position of unrequited desire. Narcissus' body, stretched along the rock, rhymes that of Echo; his drapery visually quotes Echo's unmistakably female fold between her legs. Narcissus' eyes, like hers, are no longer able to focus on the object that escapes possession. Both characters change because of their unreciprocated passion. Narcissus appears as an echo of Echo: the irrational feminine desirer of Narcissus.

Poussin may have been inspired in his iconographic choices by the curse that was placed upon Narcissus by his spurned lovers in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: 'May he himself fall in love with another, as we have done with him! May he too be unable to gain his loved one!' (III. 405).<sup>1</sup> The painting also reflects the fact that in Ovid's text Narcissus is described as being 'at once boy and man' (III. 352). In the seventeenth century, this simultaneous state would have been understood as an instance of dual gender. Narcissus's body, as boy and man, partook in two sets of gendered humours. In humour theory and social practice, young boys were considered to be cool and wet, akin to the humoral physique of women, rather than hot and dry like adult men.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting

<sup>1</sup> All translations are taken from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary Innes (London: Penguin, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Galen, pp. 233-37. Although Galen considered children to be 'hot and wet', he argued that they were colder than men in their prime because the 'child is an incomplete animal'. This description can be compared to Galen's notion of women as colder than men; see pp. 247-48. See also Sears, pp. 24-26. On

this state, in Poussin's painting Narcissus' masculine body enters the viewing position of Echo, his most disappointed female admirer. Both characters wither away into the earth emphasising the consequences of their shared feminine standpoint.

The intersection between masculine and feminine viewing positions, visualised in Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus*, was paralleled in the performances of viewing before Poussin's other mythological paintings. Gentleman regards looked as gentlemen. This part of the thesis demonstrates that they could have also looked as women. When considered through the frames of related practices of viewing it is possible to recognise that Poussin's paintings had the potential to shape gentlemanly looking. Furthermore, the particularities of the mythological painting gallery enabled gentlemen to replicate Narcissus's adoption of the position of Echo.

## Chapter One: Women as a Gentleman's Medium

Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus* (fig. 8) was not an isolated representation of the interaction between masculine and feminine ways of looking. Another instance of such an intersection in seventeenth-century Rome was the story of the master painter Annibale Carracci who utilised the reactions of two women viewing paintings. In art historical literature this story has come to be called the anecdote of the *vecchiarella*, meaning poor/little old woman. There are three reasons why the *vecchiarella* anecdote is key to understanding the function of the women viewers depicted in Poussin's early mythological paintings. Firstly, to draw out the similarities between motifs of feminine viewing contained within the anecdote and Poussin's women. Secondly, to consider how cultural representations of female viewers could be utilised by Roman gentlemen. These two points will be considered in this chapter. Finally, the anecdote is useful to explore the potential of seventeenth-century exhibition spaces in encouraging gentlemen regards to identify with feminine spectators. This point will be considered in the following chapter.

### 1.1. The 'vecchiarella' Anecdote: Women as a 'method' of Viewing

The *vecchiarella* anecdote directly utilised the processes of identification between a gentleman regarder and a woman. It can therefore elucidate the possibilities for a gentleman to identify with the women depicted in Poussin's mythological paintings.

The anecdote appeared for the first time in print in the 1646 edition of engravings by Annibale Carracci depicting market workers. The preface was written by Giovanni Antonio Massani, the personal companion and household manager of Pope Urban VIII, under the pseudonym Mosini. Massani included the anecdote as an example of Carracci's superior wit in his ability to find a method, '*un modo*', to praise the painting of one of his disciples. Annibale Carracci's 'method' involved viewing paintings through the eyes of women.<sup>1</sup>

The anecdote tells how the painter Annibale Carracci was asked one day whether he preferred the fresco by Domenichino, or the fresco by Guido Reni, both of

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<sup>1</sup> G. A. Mosini (ed.), *Diuerse figure al numero di ottanta, diseguate di penna nell'hore di recreatione da Annibale Carracci. Intagliate in rame, e cauate dagli originali da Simone Guilino* (Grignani: Rome, 1646), p. 20. Printed in Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art*, pp. 271-72. For a detailed discussion of the composition of the anecdote, though not explicitly in terms of gender, see Felix Thürleman, 'Betrachterperspektiven im Konflikt. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der „vecchiarella“ – Anekdoten', in *Marburger Jahrbuch Für Kunstwissenschaft* (Marburg: Philipps Universität, 1986), pp. 136-55.

*The Martyrdom of St Andrew*, in the Oratory of Sant'Andrea at San Gregorio al Celio in Rome. Massani wrote:

To this question Annibale replied that these two History paintings had been the reason that he had himself realized he was a very great fool, because he had never known how to make out which of them deserved the most praise, until he learnt to understand by an old woman. She, holding a little girl by the hand, stopped one day to look at both paintings, and he observed that whilst she fixed her gaze on one painting [by Reni] and turned her eyes to every part to admire all of it, she never said a word, nor did she give any sign of any emotion, that in her had been caused by the painting. But then having turned to the other painting [by Domenichino], she began to say to the little girl: 'See, see daughter that man, who is doing such and such a thing' and with her finger she pointed out to her the figure who represented the action she was describing: and so hand in hand they admired other figures, the old woman pointing them out and declaring with enjoyment the actions depicted to the child, who also seemed to be taking delight in it. Then I saw (said Annibale to the man of letters) how I had learnt to know, which of our two Painters had more vividly expressed the *affetti*.<sup>2</sup>

In Massani's story the bodies of the old woman and young girl were available to the gaze of Annibale Carracci as blank canvases upon which were registered the 'true' affective powers of the products of two great male painters. By investigating the tropes and motifs of this story it is possible to come to some understanding of the possible functions that Poussin's depictions of women looking may have had for seventeenth-century viewers. Poussin particularly admired Domenichino's fresco in the years he painted his mythological paintings.<sup>3</sup> He must have been familiar with the kinds of affective reaction Domenichino's painting was meant to elicit in the viewer; he certainly utilised Domenichino's and Reni's motifs of feminine reactionary viewing from the San Gregorio frescoes in his own work.<sup>4</sup> The anecdote has spatial proximity to Poussin's own production and, as I argue in the next chapter, can help to clarify Poussin's theory of affect verbally formulated in the 1640s.

I discussed in the Introduction how the types of feminine viewing that occur in Poussin's painted mythologies are social constructs. Massani's story too is a construct

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<sup>2</sup> Mosini, p. 20: 'A quale quesito Annibale rispose, che quelle due Historie erano state cagione, che egli si era conosciuto se stesso per un grandissimo balordo; perche non haveva mai saputo comprendere, quale di esse meritasse d'esser più lodata; sintanto che egli non imparò à conoscerlo da una Vecchiarella; la quale havendo per mano una Fanciulla, si fermò un giorno à guardare l'una e l'altra di quelle Historie; & egli l'osservò; che me[n]tre ella ad una fissò lo sguardo, andò voltando l'occhio da ogni parte per mirarla tutta, ma non disse mai una parola, nè diede altro segno d'alcun affetto, che in lei havesse cagionato il guardar quella Pittura. Ma poi all'altra Historia voltatasi, cominciò à dire alla Fanciulla: Vedi vedi figlia quell'huomo, che fà la tal cosa; e col dito gli accennava la Figura, che quell'attione, ch'ella diceva, rappresentava: e così di mano in mano mirando l'altre Figure, le additava, e ne dichiarava con gusto le attioni alla Fanciulla, la quale ancora pareva che se ne prendesse diletto. Hor vedete (disse Annibale al Letterato) com'io hò imparato à conoscere, quale delli nostri due Dipintori habbia più vivamente espressi gli affetti'. I am grateful to Brian Richardson and Rhiannon Davies for help with the translation.

<sup>3</sup> Bellori, p. 427; André Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes*, 4 vols (London, Mortier, 1705), IV, pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 59; Olson, p. 172.

of feminine viewing practices that draws on established literary topoi and social convention. The story explicitly refers to Cicero's argument that a passer-by, ignorant of the contents of a speech, could judge an orator's talent by observing the reactions of an audience: their signs of assent, applause, laughter and tears.<sup>5</sup> There are, however, important differences between Cicero's text and Massani's story. Unlike Cicero's ignorant passer-by Carracci, the teacher of both Domenichino and Reni, must have known the content of the works back to front, and following Cicero's logic should have had no trouble judging the quality of the communication. The Ciceronian trope does serve to isolate the specific quality of rhetoric, the ability to arouse emotions in the audience, which we have seen was a central concern of painters at this time.<sup>6</sup> The quality that Annibale could not judge in Massani's story was precisely the skill at depicting the *affetti* through which the dominant scopic regime was manifest. In Massani's story it was, as in Cicero's text, 'ignorant' passers-by who registered the emotions of the painting. However, the passers-by in Massani's story were specifically classed and gendered as ignorant, i.e. lower-class women who did not have access to education, unlike Cicero's unspecified person whose ignorance comes from not being able to hear the speech. Massani effectively wrote that it was only women and children who experienced the type of affective viewing that was so central to this scopic regime. Massani's story registers the role that distinctions of class and gender had in the production of different viewing positions in seventeenth-century Rome. The story is a repository for the kinds of visuality that conditioned the experiences of Poussin's patrons when they looked at representations of women viewing.

Massani's different types of classed and gendered viewers can be understood in the context of the Counter Reformation and the widening access to the practices of collecting quality paintings. The link between social change and differentiated viewers occurs in a treatise written in the late 1610s and early 1620s by the papal doctor, and side-line painting dealer, Giulio Mancini. Mancini was an associate of Poussin's mentor Cassiano dal Pozzo and, as we saw in the Introduction, Poussin's first biographer. The treatise was designed to help his fellow gentlemen fulfil their desire to collect paintings. In the chapter on 'The Rules for Buying, Displaying and Conserving Paintings', Mancini distinguished between several different types of classed and gendered viewers citing as evidence the differences between the collections of princes and gentlemen and

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<sup>5</sup> Cicero, *Brutus*, trans. by G. L. Hendrickson (London: Heinemann, 1939), p. 253 (84. 290).

<sup>6</sup> On the text's location in the different discourses of the seventeenth century see Thürleman, pp. 140-41.

the Church's censorship of imagery.<sup>7</sup> Mancini was not alone in distinguishing viewers in this way. In his treatise on painting written about 1607 to 1615, the papal bureaucrat Agucchi distinguished between the viewing abilities of learned men and the 'people'. It was the former alone who could appreciate the ideal, whilst the latter could value only naturalistic representation.<sup>8</sup> These views were also expressed by rhetoricians at the Papal court. In the context of counter-reformatory fears about heterodoxy these men revived the theories of Cicero that an orator should tailor his address to specific audiences.<sup>9</sup> I have argued that the nature of the dominant scopic regime made such distinctions necessary.

Determinations in viewing positions coincided with concerns over the power of images to destabilise a gentleman's claim to authority based on his position as a rational agent. The interest of painters and patrons in the power of the *affetti* to influence a regarnder coincided with the growth in the concept of the 'gentleman of taste'.<sup>10</sup> These two cultural phenomena were interrelated. Increasingly in the seventeenth century, violent affection by image was represented through the bodies of women, the lower classes or uncultured aristocrats.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, gentlemen were interested in maintaining the decorum that befitted their particular role as administrators of the papal court. Such a distinction is evident in the diary of Cassiano dal Pozzo where he condemned the action of a castrato and courtier kissing in church. Cassiano laid blame for the behaviour at the viewer of the castrato, particularly 'grand persons who behave with disordered emotion towards these emasculated people'. He recommended that these grand persons become educated. They should read Raynaudo's 'very curious and very learned' book on eunuchs in order to learn how to behave decorously.<sup>12</sup> These comments indicate that

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<sup>7</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, pp. 139-48: 'Regole per Comprare Collocare e Conservare le Pitture'. On social distinctions of viewers in the French context of Poussin's work see Olson, pp. 134-35, 139-40, 180.

<sup>8</sup> Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art*, p. 127; Ricardo de Mambro Santos, *Arcadie del Vero. Arte e teoria nella Roma del seicento* (Sant'Oreste: Apeiron, 2001), pp. 39, 206 n. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Marc Fumaroli, 'Cicero Pontifex Maximus: le tradition rhetorique du college romain et les principes inspireurs du mecenat des Barberini', *Melanges de L'Ecole Francaise de Rome*, 90 (1978), 797-835 (pp. 820-24); John Beldon Scott, *Images of Nepotism: The Painted Ceilings of the Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 196.

<sup>10</sup> Marc Fumaroli, 'Rome 1630 entrée en scène du spectateur', in *Roma 1630: Il trionfo del pennello*, ed. by Oliver Bonfait, exhib. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1994), pp. 53-84 (pp. 53-60); Robert Klein, 'Judgment and Taste in Cinquecento Art Theory', in *Form and Meaning: Essays on the Renaissance and Modern Art*, trans. by Madeline Jay and Leon Wieseltier (New York: Viking Press, 1979), pp. 161-69 (p. 167).

<sup>11</sup> Phillipa Plock, 'Framing Kant's Notion of the Sublime Before its Time? The Politics of Looking Up in Baroque Rome' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Leeds, 1999), pp. 18-37; Thürleman, notes that the motif of women and children as reactionary spectators became widespread in the seventeenth century, p. 144.

<sup>12</sup> Printed in Giacomo Lombroso, *Notizie sulla vita di Cassiano dal Pozzo* (Turin: Paravia, 1875), p. 79: 'il curiosissimo e dottissimo libro di tutte le sorti degl'eunuchi del padre Teofilo Raynaudo apporterà non poco beneficio in universale e massime à persone grandi che portandosi con disordinato affetto verso

dal Pozzo believed that his *private gentlemanly* status could be demonstrated through manifesting a correct learned reaction to the viewed object rather than getting sensuously carried away.

By locating affect within the bodies of women and children, Massani reserved rational reactions for the male viewer represented by Carracci. This latter figure was a spectator who could stand as a member of a particular class: the gentleman. In his painting treatise Mancini directly compared the *'artefice o huomo di gusto'*: 'the painter or gentleman of taste'.<sup>13</sup> The figure represented by Massani's Carracci was a synonym for Poussin's patrons. I established in the Introduction that Mancini believed Poussin's reputation came from his many *'opere private'* that could be seen in Rome. The word 'private' signified that the paintings concerned were not part of the lavish displays of conspicuous consumption which depended on a public, civic audience.<sup>14</sup> Mancini outlined the exact nature of the economic and social status of the men who owned these *'opere private'*; *'huomo private'* (private gentleman) were distinct from the *'principe'* (prince) and the *huomo publico* (civic gentleman).<sup>15</sup>

Mancini's *huomo di gusto* was clearly a member of the third type of patron. This fact is established through Mancini's further distinction of skill. The skills utilised by the *huomo di gusto* were those of the private gentlemen for whom Poussin worked: bureaucrats in the middling ranks of the papal administration. Mancini advised his readers that whereas princes could afford to buy quality of paintings, gentlemen must use their 'grand wits or liberality', and their 'taste, hard work and discretion' in order to purchase paintings at more moderate prices.<sup>16</sup> These social and connoisseurial skills were demonstrated by the wily Mancini himself as he kept an eye out for potential sellable paintings when visiting his sick patients.<sup>17</sup> Mancini considered those blessed with these skills of business acumen, judgement, and behavioural restraint, to be the painter and the gentleman of taste. These men both had to rely on their professional skills to make money. The figure of an artist, such as Massani's Carracci, operated as a stand-in for the type of gentleman who looked at Poussin's paintings.

In the *vecchiarella* anecdote Carracci stands in opposition to feminine viewers. Mancini's text also distinguishes between masculine and feminine viewers. Mancini

quella gente evirata, può essere, che si moderino, essendo l'impertinenza, ò sfacciatagine, che vogliam dire, che coloro accompagna, indicibile'.

<sup>13</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 140.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 132-49.

<sup>15</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 139.

<sup>16</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 140: 'grand'ingegno o liberalità', 'i suoi gusti, fatighe e discretione'.

<sup>17</sup> Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art*, p. 329, n. 175.

clearly related strong or damaging affect by lascivious images with cold and wet 'feminine' bodies. Firstly, Mancini discussed how images affect the gestation of a child and encouraged women to look upon images in order to impress beauty upon the foetus. Mancini further gendered the occurrence of strong affection by image by warning his readers that such lascivious images should be kept away from young boys and virgins.<sup>18</sup>

The censorship of the Catholic Church was on Mancini's mind when he wrote this section. Just preceding the discussion of lascivious paintings, such as Venus, Mars, the seasons and nude women, there is an aside where Mancini ruminated upon the actions of Savonarola who burnt 'many good pictures' just because they 'had a bit of paganism and lasciviousness' in them. Mancini approved of the more tolerant attitude of Pope Pius V who had not removed the ancient sculptures from the Vatican.<sup>19</sup> This justificatory aside demonstrates that distinguishing between different types of viewers had become a much more sensitive issue following reforms in religious visual culture. The father of the household had to be rigorous about to whom he showed lascivious imagery in order to avoid compromising the honour of his family and dangerously affecting more sensitive viewers, deemed to be those with feminine bodies. In this respect, Mancini advises that such paintings should be shown in 'garden galleries' and 'ground floor private chambers'.<sup>20</sup> In Massani's anecdote it is also women and the young who are most affected by the paintings they see. Carracci, the standpoint for ecclesiastical bureaucrats, remains unaffected, like Mancini's wise pope.

In the story of the *vecchiarella*, the old woman functions as the 'proof' of Domenichino's ability to communicate emotions. Domenichino's painting, which won Annibale's competition, was considered to be a particularly affective work of art. Bellori wrote that whilst Domenichino painted this fresco he was seen acting out the emotions of one of the soldiers torturing Andrew in order to be able to depict the correct passions of the character.<sup>21</sup> In Massani's story, the women physically sensed Domenichino's superior skill in conveying the *affetti* through visual form. It is likely that this narrative motif was necessary because of the winning painting's relationship to the dominant scopic regime. Carracci only comes to learn of this skill by watching the women: he himself, like the rational judging gentlemen of the papal bureaucracy, is not

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<sup>18</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143. Mothers were traditionally connected with this ability, as discussed below, however Mancini also extended this ability to husbands, a point discussed in Chapter Nine.

<sup>19</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, pp. 142-43: 'non mi piace quella gran rigidità del Savonarola che fece bruciare in Fiorenza tante pitture che avevano un po' di gentilità e del lascivo'.

<sup>20</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143: 'le lascivie come Veneri, Marte, tempi d'anno e donne ignude, nelle gallerie giardini e camare terrene ritirate'.

<sup>21</sup> Bellori, p. 359.



physically affected by the image. Annibale could not decide which picture was best: ‘until he learnt to understand by an old woman’. Through vicariously viewing through the old woman Carracci maintains bodily control *and* appreciates Domenichino’s skill in terms of the dominant scopic regime of affect by image.

In Massani’s text, the stand-in figure for a gentleman, Annibale Carracci, views through the eyes of a woman. It is this process that I am arguing may have been encouraged by Poussin’s paintings of feminine viewing. Poussin’s painted women can be considered as ‘*vecchiarelle*’: available social constructions of feminine viewing that privileged male viewers could look through at works of art.

### 1.2. Women in Poussin’s Painting/Women in the ‘*vecchiarella*’ Anecdote

I am arguing that the *vecchierella* anecdote put into words a particular practice of viewing where men enter a feminine standpoint. This process is remarkably similar to that depicted in Poussin’s *Echo and Narcissus* where Narcissus becomes a desirous, feminine viewer of himself (fig. 8). It is possible that Narcissus, like Carracci, acted as a stand-in for a gentleman in order to allow him to adopt a feminine position of viewing.

Poussin depicted women in a similar fashion to the anecdote. For example, *Echo* responds in a literal bodily sense to the event of Narcissus’ rejection: without his presence, she disappears. Her pose also mimics that of the suffering body she once desired. She acts like the women in the *vecchiarella* anecdote where the ability of the feminine body to register an image physically allowed the ‘ignorant’ woman to relate the story depicted to the little girl. The old woman’s lack of education meant that she could not judge the paintings on an intellectual level; she was able to use only her natural ability to recognise signs empathetically. The women’s delight was a symptom that their bodies had registered the emotions depicted in the painting and had by this means, understood the story.<sup>22</sup>

*Echo*’s physical rhyming of Narcissus’ body also occurs in Domenichino’s painting. Indeed, the type of affection by image that occurs in the anecdote is visualised thematically in both of the paintings Carracci tried to judge (figs. 11-12).<sup>23</sup> In both paintings, men in authority watch the scene quietly whilst women and children are depicted as prominent, reactionary spectators. In Reni’s painting, a mother on the left of

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle wrote that the viewer’s pleasure and delight comes from recognition: ‘understanding is extremely pleasant... what happens is that as they view them they come to understand and work out what each thing is (eg: ‘This is so-and-so’); see *Poetics*, trans. by Malcolm Heath (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996) pp. 6-7 (48b 10f). The similarity between Aristotle’s words and the old woman’s comment in Massani’s story: ‘See, see daughter that man, who does such a thing’ indicates that Massani utilised Aristotle’s concept of pleasure.

<sup>23</sup> Thürleman, p. 143.

the scene points out the saint to her child and seems to explain to him what is happening. In Domenichino's version two women, also on the left, throw up their hands, whilst a small child, trying to hide in his mother's skirts, looks out at the viewer, communicating the terror of the scene (fig. 13). The foreground woman twists and curves her body, in a subtle echo of the bend of Andrew's torso (figs. 12-13). The visual analogies between the paintings of Domenichino and Poussin may suggest that Poussin intended to encourage a similar avoidance *and* mimicry of affective feminine viewing in his spectators that Massani registered in the *vecchiarella* anecdote.

### 1.3. Cultural Constructions of the Feminine Body

Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus*, along with his other mythological paintings, shares the same rhetorical strategies of the *vecchiarella* anecdote: affection by image is located primarily in the body of a woman. These representations reflected cultural beliefs that feminine bodies were more responsive to what they saw. Women were believed to be more moved by passions than their male-counterparts. Cold and moist objects were more subject to metamorphoses and so women, in their cold and moist state, were more fervently moved by their imaginations. Women were also subject to the powers of the womb, thought to affect the mind by weakening rationality and increasing the violence of the passions.<sup>24</sup>

Powerful, feminine imaginations were more effective at transmitting the depicted *affetti* into women's bodies. The imagination was believed to be the organ that received the images that were to teach, delight or persuade. Well constructed images would impress themselves deeply on the soft 'wax' of the imagination, thus making them available for the mind to contemplate. The body of the individual would then copy the character of the image. The manner of this final process was mysterious and subject to debate. In the *Politics*, Aristotle argued that music, and to a lesser degree 'objects of sight', could get us to feel 'corresponding emotions' through a kind of natural imitation. Sound or form could represent emotions; the great likeness of these representations to our actual bodily emotions means that 'when we listen to [or see] such representations our souls are changed'.<sup>25</sup> One of Cassiano's friends Ambrosio Mazenti, a Milanese doctor, clearly subscribed to such views about feminine affective viewing. Writing to dal Pozzo about the effects of the plague in 1630, he wrote, 'The young girls and the women are touched [by the disease], even though not fully infected, by which one can

<sup>24</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. by C. D. C. Reeve (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1998) pp. 235-6 (1340a11f).

argue that the cause of the illness is more fear, imagination, constellations or influence, than contagion'.<sup>26</sup>

The biological potential of childbirth was central to this perception of women's bodies, a theme discussed in more depth in Chapter Nine. Here it is enough to note that the ancient link between the female gender and affection by image was virulent enough to survive the challenges of seventeenth-century natural philosophers to the theory that corporeal spirits and vapours allowed external stimuli to physically affect the body.<sup>27</sup> Descartes himself, whilst trying to explain how ideas are impressed on the interior part of the brain, wrote 'they can sometimes even be caused, by certain actions of the mother, to be imprinted on the limbs of the child being formed in her entrails'.<sup>28</sup> Traditional methods of controlling the appearance of a foetus through regulating what expectant mothers gazed upon was reiterated by Tommaso Campanella, the natural philosopher who was associated with the Barberini and Cassiano dal Pozzo, and, as we saw above, by the papal doctor Mancini.<sup>29</sup> Women, like Echo in Poussin's painting, were believed to be affected physically by what they saw.

Another detail of Poussin's depiction of Echo relates to perceptions that women were more subject to sexual provocation by image. The separation between Echo and Narcissus, emphasised by the cleft in the rock, reminds us of Ovid's description of her unquenchable 'fire' for her untouchable beloved (III. 370-374). This uncontrollable 'feminine' desire would have been understood as a natural response to the sight of Narcissus' beauty. Several anecdotes from the sixteenth century recount how women were driven to perverse sexual acts by depictions of beautiful or lascivious men.<sup>30</sup> The strength of Echo's desire would have also been connected to her female body. Insatiable lust arose from an empty womb; barren women were considered to be particularly unappeasable.<sup>31</sup> Echo, without Narcissus, remains unfruitful. This analysis can be extended to the other paintings under discussion: Poussin's feminine characters

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<sup>26</sup> Lumbroso, p. 119: 'Le giovenette e le donne sono tocche, benché non conversion, dal che si argomento le causa del male più tosto esser paura, imaginatione, constellatione, ò influo che contagione'.

<sup>27</sup> Katherine Park, Lorraine J. Daston and Peter L. Gattison, 'Bacon, Galileo and Descartes on Imagination and Analogy', *Isis*, 75 (1984), 287-386 (pp. 292-93).

<sup>28</sup> René Descartes, *Treatise of Man*, trans. by Thomas Stelle Hall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 87. On this tradition see Musacchio, pp. 126-47.

<sup>29</sup> Lina Bolzoni, 'Tommaso Campanella e le donne: fascino e negazione della differenza', in *Women's voices in Italian literature*, ed. by Rebecca West and Dino S. Cervigni (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989), pp. 193-216 (p. 201).

<sup>30</sup> Freedberg, *Power of Images*, pp. 327-28; Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. by Gaston Duc de Vere, 10 vols, (London: Macmillan and the Medici Society 1912-15), IV, p. 158.

<sup>31</sup> Joannes Benedictus Sinibaldus, *Geneanthropeia* [Rome, 1642], trans. by Erotodidasculus as *The cabinet of Venus unlocked* (London: Briggs, 1658), p. 23; Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women*, p. 41.

voraciously eye their masculine beloveds within the confines of cultural perceptions of feminine sexuality.

The fact that women and sexual pleasure were both demarcated from the activities of the civic sphere lay behind medical explanations of insatiable feminine sexuality. For example, contemporary writers utilised the fictional voices of socially marginal female prostitutes in order to talk about sexual matters.<sup>32</sup> Poussin's mythological paintings occupied an analogous space to that of women and sexuality, on the margins of the civic sphere. Indeed, several of his paintings relate to the prints associated with this erotic literature.<sup>33</sup>

Women's social roles as mourners of men can equally help us to understand the reactions of Poussin's women. For example, in *Echo and Narcissus*, the absent lover has affected Echo who withers away in grief. Echo's physical reflection of Narcissus' pose in Poussin's painting prefigures how her voice echoes Narcissus' own lament and reminds listeners of her love for this man and the loss she has suffered (III. 494-98). Poussin's painting has been related to the iconography of Christian lamentation.<sup>34</sup> Certainly this iconography drew upon the idea that women mimicked the suffering of men, such as Mary's faint at the foot of the cross mirroring the death of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Such imagery reflected the limitation of women's activity at funerals to one of response that occurred during the Renaissance period. Women could manifest the greatness of a dead man, commemorate ancestors and acknowledge legitimate descent through the strength of their mourning gestures.<sup>36</sup>

Women are privileged mourners in Poussin's paintings as demonstrated by the translation of an ancient motif of *male* mourning in his contemporary *Death of Germanicus* (fig. 14).<sup>37</sup> According to Félibien, in this painting the woman covering her face was a motif that 'could not express better excessive sadness'. Félibien went on to

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<sup>32</sup> Ferrante Pallavicino, *La rettorica delle puttane: composta conforme li precetti di Cipriano: Dedicata alla vniuersità delle cortegiane più celebri [1642]*, ed. by Francesco Fonte Bassano (Paese, Treviso: Pagus Edizioni, 1991); Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 97-8, 196, 243 n. 13; Roberto Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man*, trans. by Brian Williams (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), pp. 162-63.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapters Eight and Nine.

<sup>34</sup> Bernice Iarocci, 'Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus*, Female Mourning and the Affected Viewer' (paper presented at the Conference of the College Art Association, Chicago, March 2001).

<sup>35</sup> Emile Mâle, *L'art Religieux après le Concile de Trente* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1932), p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Sharon T. Strocchia, 'Funerals and the Politics of Gender in Early Renaissance Florence', in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender in the Italian Renaissance*, ed. by Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Shiesari, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 155-68 (pp. 165-66.); Diane Owen Hughes, 'Invisible Madonnas? The Italian Historiographic Tradition and the Women of Medieval Italy', in *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, ed. by Susan Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1987), pp. 25-57 (p. 43); Jasper Griffen, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (London: Duckworth, 1985), p. 149.

<sup>37</sup> On this topic see Olson, p. 171.

write that Poussin drew upon an ancient motif utilised by Timanthes to indicate the grief, according to Pliny, 'for which he had reserved no adequate expression'.<sup>38</sup> It is significant that in Timanthes's original painting it was a man who veiled his face. In contrast, Poussin chose to signify the absolute loss brought about by the death of the noble and successful general Germanicus through the gestures of a woman. Félibien's comment reveals that in the seventeenth century women were perceived as the perfect vehicles to show violent affection, such as grief.

The particular stress on women as affected and impressionable viewers in Poussin's paintings may have been partly a reactionary response to the Catholic Church's fears about the messages violently affected women sent out about the Christian afterlife. In Italy during the seventeenth century, the Church tried to outlaw the employment of professional female mourners at funerals, who displayed outlandish behaviour like tearing their cheeks and pulling out their hair, as the immortality of the soul was questioned by such displays of superfluous grief.<sup>39</sup> Profane mythological paintings provided a space where women, like Poussin's Echo, could continue to be represented mirroring the deaths of their beloveds.

#### 1.4. The Ideological Use of Emotional Women

Gentlemen maintained social control partly through the ideological construction of the figure of the affected feminine viewer. By locating affect in feminine bodies, gentlemen justified keeping women out of public positions and maintained rational positions for men. The excessive mourning behaviour of women helped to affirm their inferiority by isolating excessive emotion in women, and calm rationality in the men who ran the state.<sup>40</sup> The placement of the rhetoric of sexual desire in the mouths of women also helped to exclude them from positions of civic power. In *La rettorica delle puttane* of 1642 Pallavicino argued that prostitution was necessary for a peaceful and stable '*l'umana Repubblica*' run by men.<sup>41</sup> Woman's insatiable lusts, spelled out in the writer's text, justified Pallavicino's patriarchal argument.

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<sup>38</sup> Félibien, III, pp. 173-74: 'qui n'a pas cru pouvoir mieux exprimer une douleur excessive'; Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. by H. Rackham, 10 vols (London: Heinemann 1938-1968), IX, p.267 (XXXV. 73); Montagu, *The Expressions of the Passions*, p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> Carroll, *Veiled Threats*, pp. 96, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Strocchia, p. 166.

<sup>41</sup> Francesco Fonte Bassano, 'Le reti della persuasione', in Pallavicino, pp. ix-xxvii (pp. xxi, xxiv); Tommaso Campanella believed women over the age of 19, and men over 21, should have sex every three days in order to ensure a stable utopia; see Bolzoni, p. 200. See also Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man*, pp. 162-3; and Michel Foucault, *The Uses of Pleasure: Volume Two of the History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986), p. 149.

The gendering of particular experiences in the feminine, and their location in the female body, did mean, however, that if men wanted to share or utilise such emotions they had to use the medium of female bodies. Writers like Aretino and Pallavicino used fictional prostitutes' voices to build their own reputation and to make particularly abrasive satirical comments about the Church hierarchy.<sup>42</sup> Such textual strategies provide a context for the possibility that seventeenth-century men identified with socially constructed feminine subject positions in order to achieve certain ends.

Marginalised from the state, women were characters who could be used to illustrate freely a viewer who was affected by painting. Increasingly in the seventeenth century, the gentlemen of the papal bureaucracy were encouraged to regulate their deportment in civic life. This kind of physical comportment had long helped express the superiority of the nobility and their ability to rule in opposition to the disorder of the lower classes. In the sixteenth century, bodily self-control was encouraged by dance treatises and books such as Castiglione's *Courtier*.<sup>43</sup> The early seventeenth century was a moment when the importance of emotional control was intensified in treatises directed at courtiers.<sup>44</sup> In early seventeenth-century Rome there was an explosion of etiquette treatises directed at different members of the papal court, such as that of the *Maestro da Camera*, the post occupied by two of Poussin's patrons Cassiano dal Pozzo and Angelo Giori, and of the *Maestro da Casa*, the post occupied by the author of the *vecchiarella* anecdote Massani.<sup>45</sup>

I have argued that in the *vecchiarella* anecdote Carracci circumnavigated the cultural prohibitions attached to his gender and status as a gentleman-artist by utilising the body of the old woman as a translation device. The women viewers depicted in Poussin's early mythological paintings may well have functioned in a similar fashion. For example, a gentleman looking at the painting of *Echo and Narcissus* (fig. 8) could have read the feminine bodies of Echo or Narcissus in order to understand the emotional impact of the event. In this sense, he would have undergone the same process of

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<sup>42</sup> Talvacchia, p. 97-99; Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 37; Pietro Aretino, *Sei Giornate [1534-6]*, ed by Angelo Romano (Milan: Mursia, 1991); Bassano, p. xi.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Kolsky, 'Graceful Performances: The Social and Political Context of Music and Dance in the Cortegiano', *Italian Studies*, 53 (1998), 1-19.

<sup>44</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott, rev. edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) pp. 169-70, 270, 373-76, 477.

<sup>45</sup> Sandro Piantanida, Lamberto Diotallevi and Giancarlo Livraghi (eds), *Autori Italiani del Seicento: Catalogo Bibliografico*, 4 vols (Milan: Libreria Vinciana, 1948) I, pp. 1-2; Stefanie Walker and Frederick Hammond (eds), *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome*, exhib. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 164.

identification figured in the painting. As Narcissus enters the desiring position of Echo so a gentleman could have adopted a feminine standpoint.

### 1.5. Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia*: Ladies Judging the Tournament

Poussin's painting of *Echo and Narcissus* does not help us to explore the ability of class to the success of a man identifying with feminine points-of-view. In order to consider this aspect of the process, we need to shift our focus to another of Poussin's early mythological paintings: his first version of *Tancred and Erminia* now housed in the Hermitage (fig. 4). This painting foregrounds a type of viewing associated with high-class women in Roman society that certain elite men were able to share.

In Poussin's early *Tancred and Erminia*, Erminia takes up a feminine 'tournament' viewing position. Poussin's painting depicts a moment from Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata*, published in 1575, which is a mythologized account of the first crusade.<sup>46</sup> The scene shows the Saracen princess Erminia discovering the body of her beloved Christian knight after his final fight with the Saracen Argantes (XIX. 56-119). In contrast to the very emotive description in this section of Tasso's poem, Poussin depicted Erminia standing detached from her knight calmly looking down upon him. The relationship between Erminia and Tancred in this painting is much closer to Tasso's description of their distanced relationship in an antecedent canto of the poem.<sup>47</sup>

Canto VI of *Gerusalemme Liberata* relates Erminia's former unrequited relationship with Tancred under his guardianship of her city (VI. 56-60). During this canto, Tasso positioned Erminia in a tower in the palace walls. She can only search out her beloved with an 'avid eye' from afar as she watches him performing in battle below (VI. 61-62).<sup>48</sup> This is a refrain of Erminia's first appearance in the poem: in Canto III she is on the tower with the king of Jerusalem looking over the battlefield.<sup>49</sup> The king asks her who shows the greatest valour in battle, to which she replies: Tancred (III. 17-20). Two further descriptions of the bravery and courage of the Christian knights are also seen through Erminia's eyes. She identifies each knight by name through his heraldry and then proceeds to describe their qualities to her companion as they stand on the battlements. Her comments upon the appearance of the men suggest a tournament is occurring below, rather than a war, emphasising her position as a chivalric audience for

<sup>46</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata* [1575], ed. by Fredi Chiapelli (Milan: Rusconi 1982).

<sup>47</sup> In canto VI Erminia dreams about encountering Tancred thus making it a premonition of canto XIX.

<sup>48</sup> 'avid guardi'

<sup>49</sup> Marilyn Migiel, *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's 'Gerusalemme Liberata'* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), pp. 58-59.

knightly deeds (III. 37-40). Poussin's first version of the *Tancred and Erminia* captures the position of the princess in these earlier cantos, isolated in her tower, gazing down upon the knights performing below.

In both of the earlier cantos of Tasso's poem Erminia shares a viewing position with one experienced by many aristocratic women of the medieval and early modern period.<sup>50</sup> She watches her knight as women were expected to watch their champions at tournaments.<sup>51</sup> Honour ceremonies, such as jousts, were an essential component in the performance of aristocratic gender roles. A demonstration of fighting ability before women's eyes affirmed the traditional role of the man as heroic defender of his lady.<sup>52</sup> Reflecting women's important role as viewers of such events, a joust held in Rome in 1634 was dedicated to the women of the Barberini family. At the *veglia* held to announce the challenge to take part in the tournament, women were invited in a song sung by Fame to cast their 'courteous looks' at a warrior.<sup>53</sup>

Women at the tournament were also the spectacle of the event. A report of the 1634 joust mentions that the ladies' fine clothes, jewellery and beauty added to the nobility of the evening and also encouraged the performers in their manly pursuits.<sup>54</sup> Women's role as '*ornamenti principili*', rather than actors within civic life, affirmed their inferior position within the patriarchal rule of the court. Tournament viewing affirmed patriarchal gender roles for aristocratic women as they watched from windows that enclosed their bodies within the domestic space of the dynastic family.<sup>55</sup> This inferior position did however still include the activity of watching, scrutinising and judging the bodies of men. Women's detached position from the activity below is reflected in the use of the verb *guardare* in the description of the 1634 Roman

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<sup>50</sup> Stephanie Trigg, 'Observing the Female Gaze in Medieval Art and Literature' (paper presented at the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, July 2000); Phillips, pp. 192-93; Shemek, pp. 38, 80.

<sup>51</sup> This formulation developed in the mid thirteenth century as the joust increasingly become an enclosed spectacle; see Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments, Jousts, Chivalry and Pageantry in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Cohen, 'Honour and Gender in the streets of Early Modern Rome', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22 (1992), 597-625; Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by George Bull (London: Penguin 1976), pp. 115-6; Chad Coerver, 'Donna/Dono: Chivalry and Adulterous Exchange in the Quattrocento' in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. by Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 196-221 (p. 197). The joust was utilised by Ariosto to signify the warrior-maiden Bradamante's submission to the norms of Renaissance femininity. At the end of the story it is Bradamante who watches her husband Ruggiero compete in a joust against her former combatant; see Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, trans. by Guido Waldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), XLVI. 104-140.

<sup>53</sup> Guido Bentivoglio, *Relazione della famosa festa in Roma alli xxv di Febbraio mdcxxxiv* (Rome: Passarini, 1882), p. 202: 'Donne... Siate co'sguardi al mio guerrier cortesi'.

<sup>54</sup> Bentivoglio, pp. 202, 212.

<sup>55</sup> Shemek, p. 38.



tournament.<sup>56</sup> This word means to look *at*, to eye, to examine, to watch.<sup>57</sup> The social ritual of viewing at the tournament produced the construction of an aristocratic female viewer, a standpoint that could be labelled *Donna* inspector, from the Italian title for a Lady and the verb to inspect: to look *into*.<sup>58</sup>

Poussin appears to have visualised this type of viewing in *Tancred and Erminia* (fig. 4). Erminia is isolated from her beloved. Her blade is angled towards her own body reflecting Erminia's detachment from Tancred's frame. She stares at Tancred's face, the prime site of honour, as indicated by the contemporary trend of disfiguring the face, the 'mirror of honour', between quarrelling men in the streets of Rome.<sup>59</sup> Her position of feminine 'tournament' viewing accords with the gender characteristics that Poussin used to depict her character. In the painting she appears rather soft and mournful, embodying the type of domesticated femininity that tournament viewing expressed. Later in Canto VI, Tasso describes Erminia's weak and tender body, and the incongruity of her wearing Chlorinda's armour (VI. 92-3), an image that artists were encouraged to paint.<sup>60</sup> It is such constructions of soft femininity and isolated female viewing that Poussin seemingly drew upon in his first version of *Tancred and Erminia*.

### 1.6. Ladies and Cardinals Share Places

The tournament viewing alluded to in Poussin's paintings provided his gentleman regards with another model for the identification between male and female viewers. Due to the particular social structures of Papal Rome, aristocratic women and ecclesiastical men shared positions of viewing at tournaments. Cardinals, like women, were excluded from participating in jousts. In paintings of the jousts that occurred in seventeenth-century Rome, the female audience is often located on the same level or in the same spaces as cardinals. In a painting of the 1634 joust (fig. 15), the privileged women viewers, ranked by status, inhabit the right half of the top box. The other half of the box is filled with cardinals (fig. 16). This visual depiction reflects a report that the joust went ahead to satisfy a general 'yearning to see' the revival of the neglected

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<sup>56</sup> Bentivoglio, p. 202, 212.

<sup>57</sup> Vladimiro Macchi (ed.), *Collins-Sansoni Italian Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Florence: Sansoni, 1981), p. 1688.

<sup>58</sup> Bentivoglio called the viewers of the tournament *spettatori*; p. 211. The root Latin verb *spectare* means to examine or test, as well as to look at. These meanings are also present in the Italian noun; see Macchi, p. 2119.

<sup>59</sup> Cohen, 'Honour and Gender', p. 607. Poussin himself apparently experienced such an attack; see Passeri, p. 349.

<sup>60</sup> Clovis Whitfield, 'A Programme for *Erminia and the Shepherds* by G. B. Agucchi', *Storia dell'Arte*, 19 (1973), 217-29 (p. 219).

ancient taste for chivalry in young Roman noblemen.<sup>61</sup> Cardinals, the most privileged men in Roman society, shared women's position as judges of the noble masculinity represented through outmoded martial skills.<sup>62</sup>

The men for whom Poussin worked aspired to the positions occupied by cardinals. A mythological painting, such as Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia*, which drew upon rituals of aristocratic female viewing, flattered the social aspirations of his clientele. Bureaucrats of the papal administration hoped that they would one day be able to join the other Cardinals in such events as the joust. The joust itself was a symptom of the use of chivalry to integrate a new service-nobility, employed in administration or organised 'state' armies, into the social status quo.<sup>63</sup> Chivalric culture also provided ideological support to the increased investment in land in Italy, as industrial and trading power shifted to Northern Europe.<sup>64</sup> The landed classes remained fixated with the perception of a noble existence that harked back to a culture of courtly chivalry and mythology.<sup>65</sup> The lawyers or administrators who rose in the ranks of the papal court wanted to participate in such chivalric ideals. Cassiano dal Pozzo, for example, was made a *Cavaliere* of the order of St Stephen by his uncle, the Archbishop of Pisa. This entitlement turned the success of the dal Pozzo family in political and judicial administration at the courts of Turin and Florence into a signification of nobility. In the state of Tuscany, the Order of St Stephen helped the rising classes gain influence and exercise social and political control without causing conflict or antagonism with the more established nobility. The Order maintained traditional values of knighthood and the basis of wealth in land ownership.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Bentivoglio, p. 197. Bentivoglio did not discuss the cardinals' position in the viewing box. It is only the women who are described as viewers of the tournament; see pp. 211-12.

<sup>62</sup> Jousts were, by this time, more a performance of noble skills rather than preparation for battle as the wide scale introduction of guns in the early sixteenth century had changed the nature of warfare.

<sup>63</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1984) pp. 238-48; Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, trans. by Brian Pearce (London: Merlin Press, 1968), pp. 95-121.

<sup>64</sup> Peter Musgrave, *Land and Economy in Baroque Italy: Valpolicella 1630-1797* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 2-4; Carlo M. Cipolla, 'The Economic Decline of Italy', in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Brian Pullan (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 127-45.

<sup>65</sup> The rise of opera, which utilised mythology, has been interpreted in this context, see Lorenzo Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. by David Bryant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 29-33. A nostalgic interest for the chivalric world has been identified also in the themes of Italian novels which peaked in popularity between 1620 and 1660. The tales often ended in the triumphant marriage of the protagonists, relating them to the pictures of heterosexual love in Poussin's paintings. The audience for these books was both aristocratic and bourgeois, the latter looking to a perception of aristocratic culture to define their own social aspirations. See Albert N. Mancini, 'Narrative Prose and Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, ed. by Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 318-40.

<sup>66</sup> Franco Angiolini, 'La Nobilit  Imperfetta': Cavalieri e Commende di S Stefano nella Toscana moderna', in *Signori, Patrizi, Cavalieri nell'et  moderna*, ed. by Maria Visceglia (Rome: Laterza, 1992), pp. 146-67.

In addition, Erminia's form of looking would have appealed to the hopes of Poussin's patrons for the women of their family. As cardinals, their female relatives would be admitted to the tournament box alongside other important Roman ladies. In the eighteenth century, the sister-in-law of Cassiano dal Pozzo, the daughter of a wealthy banker, was referred to as a '*contessa*' in family documents.<sup>67</sup> This slippage between mercantile reality and aristocratic fantasy reflected the desire for social mobility that influenced so much of Roman society.<sup>68</sup> Allusions to rituals of chivalric and aristocratic tournament viewing must have pleased Poussin's patrons on a multitude of levels.

The ritual of tournament viewing also demonstrated how the shared class of cardinals and noblewomen supported their similar viewing position. Aristocratic women had greater access to the same humanist culture that helped to position gentlemen as rational and intellectual subjects; they also had the possibility to inhabit the same positions of authority as elite men. As a result, aristocratic feminine viewing had different connotations to the perceptions of poor women viewers such as those in the *vecchiarella* anecdote. In his book *Discorso della virtù femminile e donnesca* Tasso distinguished between the feminine virtues of a 'female citizen, a private gentlewoman, [and] an industrious mother of a family' and those of the *Donna* who shared the 'virile virtues of all her glorious ancestors'.<sup>69</sup>

The status of Poussin's patrons would have encouraged them to transcend the limitations of their masculine gender and identify with noble feminine attributes. The potential of class for the renegotiation of basic gender categories was not only present so that ruling women could be assimilated into patriarchal ideology by being considered 'virile' people.<sup>70</sup> Important men in the early modern period also drew upon feminine virtues in their self representation. Francis I used feminine attributes in a 'transvestite'

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<sup>67</sup> Donatella L. Sparti, 'Carlo Antonio Dal Pozzo (1609-1689): An Unknown Collector', *Journal Of The History Of Collections*, 2 (1990), 7-19, (p. 16 n. 26); Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Hirmer, 1999), p. 34. On the Costa family see: Luigi Spezzaferro, 'The Documentary Findings: Ottavio Costa as a Patron of Caravaggio', *Burlington Magazine*, 116 (1974), 579-86.

<sup>68</sup> Maria A. Visceglia 'Introduzione', in *Signori, Patrizi*, pp. v-xxxiii (p. xviii); Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> Tasso, *Discorso della virtù*, p. 62: 'non già ad una cittadina o ad una gentildonna privata, né ad una industriosa madre di famiglia ma ad una nata di sangue imperiale ed eroico, la qual con le proprie virtù agguaglia le virili virtù di tutti i suoi gloriosi antecessori'.

<sup>70</sup> For a brief discussion of this tradition in the early modern period see Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr, 'Introduction to the Series', in Lucrezia Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women, and the Defects and Vices of Men [1601]*, ed. and trans. by Anne Dunhill, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. vii-xxvi (p. xxiii). See also Sheila ffolliott, 'Catherine de Medici as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow', in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 227-41.

depiction of himself. According to the print shown in figure 17, the King dressed in feminine garb showed that 'Francis in war is a furious Mars/ in peace Minerva and Diana at the hunt'.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the sixteenth-century Italian poet Navagero compared himself to Venus in order to demonstrate he was the perfect lover as well as an ideal warrior.<sup>72</sup> In seventeenth-century Rome, Urban VIII utilised feminine imagery, though in a less obvious fashion than these earlier examples. The Pope venerated the medieval Countess Matilda, to whom he dedicated an artistic programme in the 1620s and 30s, including the Sala della contessa Matilde in the Vatican. Matilda, whose virtue Urban praised in a poem before he became pope, had defended the Church against temporal powers in the Middle Ages.<sup>73</sup> By associating himself with this woman, who, due to her gender, must have triumphed in war only with God's help, Urban could have justified Papal involvement in secular affairs without appearing like a Machiavellian prince. Furthermore, Matilda's feminine reverence and submission did not exceed spiritual decorum. In Romanelli's *Matilda greeting Pope Gregory VII* (fig. 18), the latter shown with Urban's features, the Pope does not appear overly powerful in a secular sense, as he would if he was shown dominating a male leader. These examples of important men adopting feminine positions demonstrate how a painting that encouraged men to identify with feminine standpoints could have nurtured the status aspirations of Poussin's patrons.

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<sup>71</sup> Stephen Orgel, 'Gendering the Crown', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 133-65 (p. 136): 'Francis in war is a furious Mars/ in peace Minerva & Diana at the hunt'.

<sup>72</sup> Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 86-87.

<sup>73</sup> Scott A. Schweigert, 'The Countess Matilda and the Revival of Popular Female Cults in *Seicento* Rome' (paper presented at the College Art Association Conference, New York, February 2000).

## *Chapter Two: Regarding Gentlemen and Women in the Gallery*

This chapter considers the role of the room where Poussin's paintings were shown in the practices of viewing outlined in the last chapter. The particular space of the gentleman's mythological painting gallery encouraged the type of viewing that I have termed 'regarding'. The peculiarities of being a regarnder assisted a gentleman's identification with feminine standpoints.

### **2.1. The Gentleman's Gallery**

In order to consider the possible intersections between different positions of viewing in the spaces where Poussin's paintings were shown, I want to first return to the space of the Oratory of Sant'Andrea, the location of the *vecchiarella* anecdote. At first glance, the Oratory might seem far from the gallery space. It was, however, a building that encouraged the kinds of aristocratic appreciation of paintings as well as other notions of classed and gendered viewing that sometimes occurred in the gallery. The space of the Oratory performed the instability of the gallery in the gentleman's palace, which was accessible to female members of the family and lower-class servants. Female servants who entered 'private' spaces during cleaning activities could be particularly problematic. In the sixteenth century, Bishop Ludovico Gonzaga wrote to his sister, Isabella d'Este, that the servant women in his house were becoming too sexually interested in a bronze statue of a boy.<sup>1</sup> We might bear in mind here Mancini's advice that the father of the household had a duty to keep these diverse viewers away from sensitive, affective imagery. The space where Poussin's mythological paintings were displayed had the potential to bring together different ways of looking.

The changes made to the Oratory of Sant'Andrea in the early seventeenth century meant that it staged the meeting of gentlemanly and lower-class feminine viewing. It had originally been formulated as a space for the type of devotional viewing by the illiterate masses praised by the sixth-century pope and saint Gregory the Great. From 1602, Cardinal Baronio had restored the oratory as part of a campaign to present to pilgrims buildings and relics connected with the miracles of St Gregory. The faithful who visited the church and the adjacent oratories are represented in the *vecchiarella* anecdote by the old woman and the little girl. In 1607, Scipione Borghese took over the commendam of the Church from the dead Baronio. The nature of the Oratory changed with the new patron. Scipione was interested in refined decoration. He employed his

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 152.

own court painter Reni, and, in *paragone*, another Carracci pupil who was popular in Rome at this time, Domenichino. The aristocratic interests in taste, rather than purely spiritual motives, of Borghese's project was emphasised by the illusionistic frames that appear around the frescoes, replete with Borghese eagles. The pictures appear to be hung on hooks like easel paintings or tapestries (figs. 11-12).<sup>2</sup> The nature of the small space, the similarity of subject matter, and the way the frescoes were presented conditioned many seventeenth-century readings of the works to be couched in the terms of stylistic comparison.<sup>3</sup>

The figure of Carracci in the *vecchiarella* anecdote represents the aristocratic, discerning viewing of different styles that was newly fashionable in the circles of gentlemen of taste.<sup>4</sup> The contrast between Baronio's and Borghese's intentions for the space is reflected in the structure of the anecdote: the intersection between low-class pilgrim viewers, and upper-class connoisseurs of painting. This meeting occurs because of the different reactions of these viewers brought about by the dual use of the space. These reactions had to be given equal weight in the story due to the contemporary scopical regime. Carracci had to view as a gentleman *and* a woman because the paintings moved people to adopt these two viewing positions due to the contradictory nature of the Oratory.

The nature of the gallery in the private gentlemanly palaces of Poussin's patrons meant that there was a risk of a similar intersection of different viewing practices. The creation of specific spaces for the viewing of paintings by the gentlemen connoisseur, signified by the term 'gallery', was a relatively new phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> It was therefore an activity that was not fully established. The exact nature of the gallery was subject to the economic resources of the patron. In his treatise, Mancini advised that whilst a man of means with an abundance of paintings should consider building a *galleria* dedicated exclusively to the display of paintings, the more modest gentleman should use various rooms within the palace to display certain works that reflected the function of, and the type of person who had access to, the room.<sup>6</sup> Poussin's patrons appear to have followed Mancini's advice. Cassiano dal Pozzo certainly owned a copy of Mancini's unpublished

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<sup>2</sup> Anna Maria Pedrocchi, *San Gregorio al Celio Rome* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999), pp. 19-20, 69-78.

<sup>3</sup> Thürleman, pp. 138-40.

<sup>4</sup> On style as a growing concept in the Roman writers on painting in the seventeenth century see Silvia Ginzburg, 'Giovanni Battista Agucchi e la sua cerchia', in *Poussin et Rome*, pp. 273-291.

<sup>5</sup> Wolfram Prinz, *Galleria storia e tipologia di uno spazio architettonico*, ed. by Claudia Cieri Via (Modena: Edizioni Panini, 1988), pp. 4-5, 8, 27-33.

<sup>6</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, pp. 142-44.

manuscript.<sup>7</sup> By the time of his death in 1669, the successful Angelo Giori – he had been made a Cardinal in 1643 – had a separate *Galleria*, which housed a large number of paintings, including Poussin's *Venus and Adonis*.<sup>8</sup>

Inventories and descriptions of the Palazzo dal Pozzo reflect the more modest arrangements of the gallery of the dal Pozzo family - Cassiano never achieved cardinal status. In this Palace, there was a suite of five rooms designated to the display of paintings and other *objet d'art*.<sup>9</sup> The arrangement of the rooms dates from at least the 1630s, when Poussin painted the *Seven Sacraments* for the sixth and final room in this suite. There is little reason to question the assumption that Cassiano planned his picture rooms as soon as he and his brother started to rent the palace in 1626. It would have been contradictory for Cassiano to neglect the appearance of his own household whilst advising a gentlemanly friend on ways to display paintings.<sup>10</sup> The fifth room of the dal Pozzo painting suite was dominated by some of Poussin's early mythological paintings. This grand chamber was connected to private family rooms; it was next to the room where two family members slept in the summer and, in 1695, a chapel and the Lady's dressing room.<sup>11</sup>

The use of various rooms of the gentleman's palace in order to create a gallery meant that different types of viewers must have come into contact with works of art. On one level, Cassiano aspired to a princely gallery. The late 1620s was a time when members of Urban VIII's newly created bureaucracy began to rise in status. A rare collection could raise the courtier's profile at court as well as demonstrating his links with other important members of society through the display of such items as portraits and expensive mythological paintings.<sup>12</sup> *Maestri da camera*, the heads of the private households of high-ranking cardinals and the Pope – the positions held by dal Pozzo

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<sup>7</sup> Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>8</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Notarile, no. 6643, fols 334-341v, printed in Sandro Corradini, 'La Collezione del Cardinale Angelo Giori', *Anthologia di Belli Arte*, 1 (1977), 83-94 (pp. 84-90), p. 87, no. 139.

<sup>9</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, Ufficio 25, vol. 419, 12<sup>th</sup> September 1689, fols 124r-126v, 151r-152v; 11<sup>th</sup> October 1689, fols 219r-258r, notary Palumbus Perellus: partially printed in Donatella L. Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection Again: the inventories of 1689-1695', *Burlington Magazine*, 132 (1990), 551-70 (pp. 556-61); Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, Ufficio 6, vol. 210, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> March 1695, fols 253r-286r, notary Marius Clarici: partially printed in Sparti 'The Dal Pozzo Collection Again', pp. 551-69; Robert de Cotte, *Memoire*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Fr. 9447, fols 210-13, printed in Jacques Thuillier, 'Pour un "Corpus Pussinianum"', in *Nicolas Poussin*, ed. by André Chastel, 2 vols (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1960) II, 49-238 (pp. 202-3).

<sup>10</sup> Sheila Rinehart, 'Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657): Some Unknown Letters' *Italian Studies*, 16 (1961), 35-59.

<sup>11</sup> In 1729 some of Poussin's mythological paintings were in the third anticamera of the palace, the next room being where the Signora Anna Teresa slept, again suggesting this room was relatively private; see Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>12</sup> Jay Tribby, 'Body/Building: Living the Museum Life in Early Modern Europe', *Rhetorica*, 10 (1992), 139-63.

and Giori - were certainly aware of their employers' ability to purchase the most expensive items for display: in 1627 Cassiano was engaged in acquiring samples of rich cloth for his master.<sup>13</sup> Giori and Pozzo's painting collections could add to the construction of their courtier identity and establish them as 'princely' viewers. At the same time, the gentleman's collection reflected his limited economic resources. Cassiano's collection was divided up into different rooms. These rooms were connected to the spaces of the family in ways that could have been avoided with the single princely gallery.

Mancini's advice to the private gentleman patron - that each type of painting should be displayed with an awareness of who might see it - reflects concerns about the different type of people who might enter these rooms. The gentleman's gallery seems to have been a space akin to the Oratory, where different perceptions of viewing intersected. The space also functioned in a similar way to the tournament box discussed in the previous chapter, where ladies and cardinals sat next to each other in order to share the same judicial point-of-view. The particular nature of the gentleman's gallery would have encouraged viewers of Poussin's paintings to adopt the types of feminine viewing outlined in Chapter One.

## 2.2. Poussin's Theory of Viewing

According to Mancini the divided gentleman's gallery was designed to affect a particular type of spectator in a particular way.<sup>14</sup> A suite of small rooms in the gentleman's palace offered the viewer a series of different, intimate relationships with diverse genres of paintings. Groupings of different paintings induced different kinds of behaviour in the regarder. For example, in Mancini's treatise he recommended displaying paintings that related to the public, civic nature of the hall and anti-chambers. The kind of 'inducing' that was expected to occur as a result of this concentration of imagery is hinted at by Mancini's statement that in these spaces people have to wait and are detained '*per negoziare*'.<sup>15</sup> The imagery of correct civic behaviour, contained in grand portraits and historical paintings, impressed upon the souls of those forced to hang around under them, softening them up for the subsequent business negotiations with the master of the house. This function of paintings appears to have influenced the changes in the appearance of Italian paintings that occurred around 1600.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 173-74.

<sup>14</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 142.

<sup>15</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> Helen Glanville, 'Veracity, verisimilitude, and optics in painting in Italy at the turn of the seventeenth century', *Italian studies*, 56 (2001), 30-56.



Poussin's mythological paintings were, we have seen, shown in the spaces of the private gentleman's gallery. They were objects that had the potential to induce certain behaviours in the people who might lay eyes upon them. Indeed, the experience of producing paintings for such a space may have helped to shape Poussin's later interpretation of looking as a spectacle affecting a viewer. In his famous letter on the modes of 1647, Poussin formulated his interest in creating a reaction in his regards. He explained that the type of style he used had 'a power to induce the soul of the regards to diverse passions'.<sup>17</sup> This theory of viewing was predicated on the regarder intimately studying a painting. It involved the type of attentive viewing that was encouraged in the intimate spaces of the gallery, rather than the grand public space where only a glance could be thrown, a practice which Poussin abhorred.<sup>18</sup>

A letter of 1646 demonstrates that Poussin considered his paintings to be powerful affective objects. Poussin wrote to his friend and patron Jacques Stella:

I have not enough joy or health to engage myself with sad subjects. The *Crucifixion* has made me ill, I have taken there a lot of pain, but the *Carrying of the Cross* was really killing me. I could not resist distressing and serious thoughts with which one needs to fill the mind and heart in order to succeed with themes which are in themselves so sad and lugubrious.<sup>19</sup>

Poussin's views expressed in this letter are similar to those of the sixteenth-century writer Paracelsus: 'imagination can cause disease, can cause dreadful disease, as joy can cause health'.<sup>20</sup> It is true that Poussin wanted to get out of producing the accompanying painting of *Christ Carrying the Cross* and may have used any excuse in order to do so, but we can at least conclude that he expected Stella to believe what he wrote: depicted subjects physically affected his body.<sup>21</sup> The affects of Poussin's early mythological paintings, discussed in the next part of the thesis, can be considered as visual explorations of Poussin's ideas that he wrote down in the 1640s, when dealing with members of a non-Roman clientele.

### 2.3. The Gallery's Narrative

Poussin's early mythological paintings had particular resonance because of their location within the segmented spaces of the gentleman's suite of rooms that made up his

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<sup>17</sup> Nicolas Poussin, *Lettres et propos sur l'art*, ed. by Anthony Blunt (Paris, Hermann, 1964), p. 124: 'une puissance de induire l'âme des regardans à diverses passions'.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Puttfarken, 'Poussin's Thoughts on Painting', in *Commemorating Poussin*, pp. 53-75 (pp. 66-9).

<sup>19</sup> Poussin, pp. 113-14: 'Je n'ai plus assez joie ni de sante pour m'engager dans des sujets triste. Le crucifiement m'a rendu malade, j'y ai pris beaucoup de peine, mais le port croix achèverait de me tuer. Je ne pourrais pas resister aux pensées affligeantes et sérieuses dont il faut se remplir l'esprit et le coeur pour réussir ces sujets d'eux mêmes si tristes et si lugubres.'

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Park, Daston and Gatison, p. 293.

<sup>21</sup> Thuillier, 'Pour un "Corpus"', p. 219.

gallery. I discussed above that in the Palazzo dal Pozzo, Poussin's mythological paintings with themes of dominant women and passive men were gathered together in one room. This room will be discussed in full detail in Part III of the thesis. Here it is enough to note that Poussin's major Roman patron organised his collection to take into account the different genres of painting Poussin produced.

The concentration of paintings displaying themes of active women and passive men that occurred in the Palazzo dal Pozzo appeared elsewhere in Rome. In the Barberini palace at Quattro Fontane, a small private room, beyond the audience chamber of Cardinal Antonio Barberini, had over-doors depicting Salmacis, the nymph who seduced Hermaphrodite, Aurora and Cephalus, and Diana and Endymion, all pictures that have a predominant theme of female desire.<sup>22</sup> This arrangement copied the Galleria Farnese which had grouped together Ovidian 'love conquers-all' stories in *quadri riportati* style. In Bellori's description of the cycle the stories of Salmacis, Aurora, and Diana are described in close proximity with each other.<sup>23</sup>

Literary constructs of galleries also grouped together the themes present in Poussin's early mythological paintings. In his poem *La Galeria*, Marino grouped together paintings of Adonis, Narcissus, Cephalus and Hermaphroditos at the beginning of the '*favole*' (mythological stories) section. This poem by Poussin's patron, published in 1619, replicates the *Imagines* by Philostratus and describes 620 paintings, sculptures and reliefs within the metaphor of the gallery space.<sup>24</sup>

An assemblage of mythological paintings created a particular kind of narrative. This narrative dominated the room that the paintings were assigned to in the gentleman's painting suite. The ability of paintings to refer to each other, creating a diversity of meanings within a general theme, was an important component of the mythological gallery space.<sup>25</sup> Such a reading occurs in Cassiano dal Pozzo's diary report of seeing Titian's *poesie* during his trip to Spain with the papal legate in 1626. Titian's *poesie* were hung in pendants throughout a series of seven rooms. In describing the paintings, Pozzo made conscious comparisons between the works. He paid attention to the contrasting depictions of female desire, for example, the meek Andromeda paired

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<sup>22</sup> Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), pp. 159-61. For the layout of the rooms see Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Palaces: Use and Art of the Plan* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/ New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1990), p. 189; and Scott, *Images of Nepotism*, p. 33 & fig. 4; the room can be identified with Waddy's C25 due to the description of the ceiling fresco in the inventory.

<sup>23</sup> Bellori, pp. 67-69.

<sup>24</sup> Giambattista Marino, *La Galeria*, ed. by Marzio Pieri, 2 vols (Padua: Liviana, 1979), I, pp. 11-17; Marzio Pieri, 'Capriccio ma non troppo', in *La Galeria*, pp. xxv-xlv (p. xlv).

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Hughes, 'What's the Trouble with the Farnese Gallery? An Experiment in reading pictures', *Art History*, 11 (1988), 335-48 (p. 344).

with Venus 'trying as best she can to keep Adonis from the hunt'.<sup>26</sup> Cassiano's thematic reading accords with other examples. In Salvator Castiglione's 1661 description of Rubens' *Venus and the Dead Adonis* and *Hercules and Omphale* which hung next to each other, both women are read within a single narrative of excessive female desire.<sup>27</sup> Castiglione wrote about the mourning and pathetic Venus: 'if those with lynx eyes penetrate the emotions of that white breast, you will perceive a certain vivacity with which one concludes at once the end of her unfruitful battle and her enjoyment of a new lover'. Salvatore read Venus through the frame of Omphale, the queen who enslaves Hercules in love and forces him to wear women's clothes. Venus-as-Omphale is also a voracious desiring woman: she is unstoppable by the death of her man.<sup>28</sup>

Evidence from poems, inventories, travel reports and painting treatises clearly shows that groupings of mythological paintings with similar themes could acquire a particular narrative when placed within the domestic space of the mythological painting gallery. Separated from the other various rooms of the painting suite, these mythological paintings could induce a particular type of behaviour in the regards that entered the room.

#### 2.4. Inducing Gender by Mythological Painting

In the seventeenth century people perceived that the type of narrative produced by Poussin's early mythological paintings had the power to affect the gender of an inducible regarnder. This possibility is established in Mancini's text. Mancini argued that one must know the nature of the people who would regard in each room in order to judge what characteristics of that person 'one will desire to conserve or augment, or truly diminish and correct and convert to the contrary'. Types of viewers were distinguished by 'complexion and passion of the soul, age, sex, behaviour, type of life'.<sup>29</sup> As well as mentioning gender specifically, the humoral configurations brought on by different emotions, times of life and behaviours could also be conceived in terms

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<sup>26</sup> Printed in Mary Crawford Volk, 'Rubens in Madrid and the King's Summer Apartments', *Burlington Magazine*, 123 (1981), 513-529 (p.526): 'sforzandosi di retenerlo dalla caccia'.

<sup>27</sup> Renato Martinoni, *Gian Vincenzo Imperiale: Politico, Letterato e Collezionista Genovese del Seicento* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1983), pp. 247-48.

<sup>28</sup> Printed in Giancolo Schizzerotto, *Rubens a Mantova* (Mantua: [n.p], 1979), p. 126: 'Iole... gioisce che al primo lampeggiar delle sue lascivie bellezze habbi reso prigioniero il già invitto Eroè'; 'Venere... resa per il perduto bene inconsolabile, si distilla con le commiseranti Gratie in amarissime lagrime. Ma però da chi con occhio linceo penetra gli affetti di quel candido seno, vi scorge certa vivacità con la quale ben tosto si argomenta il fine dell'infrutuoso lutto, et il godimento di novello drudo.'

<sup>29</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 142: 'non solamente dovrà esser distinction di luogo, ma in farle vedere da questa o quell'altra sorte d'huomini, secondo la complessione e passion d'animo, età, sesso, costume, genere di vita che si desidera conservare o aumentare, o veramente sminuire e corregger e converter al contrario.'

of masculinity and femininity.<sup>30</sup> Mancini's text demonstrates that the gentlemanly gallery had the ability to 'convert' the 'sex' of a person. The responsibility for the change in the regard lay in the way the host arranged his paintings, but the technology that produced that change was the paintings themselves.

Contemporary literature fictionalised men's responses to the kind of imagery utilised in Poussin's paintings as a process of feminisation. Tasso's poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* describes the responses of two men to carvings of Hercules and Omphale and Anthony and Cleopatra on the gates of Armida's castle, the place where she subjugates men to her bidding. These images arrest the gaze of the two knights who have come to rescue Rinaldo from the clutches of the beautiful sorceress. The scenes of the mighty warrior brought low by Omphale, as he holds the distaff, and Anthony awaiting death, whilst lying in Cleopatra's lap, foreshadow the scene the knights are about to come upon: Rinaldo lying in Armida's lap and holding her mirror '*in servitù*' (XVI. 2-7, 17-23). The gate carvings and the tableau vivant in the garden have been described as three 'panels' in a series of very visual illustrations of the Triumph of Love.<sup>31</sup> The gate carvings certainly illustrate the reversal of gender roles that occurs in Armida's castle. The combination of these images is part of Armida's magic that persuades men to enter such a position of servitude. The poem describes the two dutiful knights turning their eyes away from these images, pre-empting their ability to resist the temptations of the feminine delights offered in the castle (XVI. 7, 17). Tasso's literary description conceptualises how seventeenth-century viewers might be affected by such mythological paintings.

Tasso's literary construction of viewing makes sense in Mancini's schema. According to the papal doctor, one could 'convert to the contrary' a person's sex through making them look at specific paintings. In this respect, a painting might make a woman 'virile' by physically affecting her with images of warriors and kings. On the other hand, a gentleman spectator could have been made 'womanly' by being physically affected by images of men who displayed feminine characteristics, or by being affected by seeing feminine signs displayed on the surface of female bodies.

Poussin's series of early mythological paintings that depict dominant, viewing women and passive men could well have been intended as a similar conceptual painted narrative of female desire. These works had the potential to affect the gender of a gentleman regard. The divided spaces of the gentleman's gallery were crucial to this

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<sup>30</sup> Galen, pp. 233-37; Sears, pp. 24-26.

<sup>31</sup> Corrigan, p. 177.

process. It meant that similar paintings were concentrated in one area in order to affect particular spectators in specific ways. The intimate spaces of the small rooms of the gentleman's gallery also encouraged the type of regarding that allowed viewers to absorb into their souls visual representation.

### 2.5. Poussin and the Feminine Effect

Poussin described an experience of being affected by a feminine image in a letter of 1642. Writing to his patron, Poussin commented on the delight Chantelou took in looking at the attractive girls of Nîmes, comparing it to the similar enjoyment he will take in the beautiful columns of the Maison Carrée. 'It seems to me', Poussin wrote, 'a grand contentment when, amongst our toil, there is something that intervenes to soften the sorrow. I never feel more moved to take on effort and work than when I have seen some beautiful object'.<sup>32</sup> Contentment occurred due to the positive effects of the object upon the regarder, which caused him to relax. Poussin's experience reflects Aristotle's belief that 'relaxation is of necessity pleasant, since it is a sort of cure for the pain caused by one's exertions'.<sup>33</sup>

The pleasure gained from looking at a beautiful object, the columns, was analogous to the desire of a man perusing the body of a woman.<sup>34</sup> Poussin's view accords with that of his patron Marino. The poet wrote that a painting of Venus, displayed opposite his bed, was the only thing that could 'console and cool' him in his illness. A man's health, therefore, could be achieved through erotic pleasure predicated upon objectification of women.<sup>35</sup> However, in Poussin's letter of 1642, the feminised object, passive and gazed upon, also has an agency. Poussin wrote he was 'moved' to action by the intervention of the object. 'She' could enter the soul of the gentleman regarder and effect change. In this sense, the feminised visual object is analogous to the beautiful twin sisters Poetry and Music in Marino's poem *Adone*. These women are described as 'restorers of afflicted human kind/ with power through happy rhymes to make serene/ the turbid tempests of our guilty thoughts' (VII. 1).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Poussin, p. 53: 'C'est, ce me semble, un grand contentement lorsque, parmi nos travaux, y a quelque entremêt qui en adoucit la peine. Je ne me sens jamais tant excité à prendre de la peine et de travailler comme quand j'ai vu quelque bel objet.'

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII. 15-20.

<sup>34</sup> Cropper, 'The Place of Beauty', p. 190; Olson, p. 177.

<sup>35</sup> Marino, *Lettere*, ed. by Marziano Guglielminetti (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), pp. 41-42: 'in questa mia indisposizione non ho altro consolamento e refrigerio maggiore che la *Venere* di V.S., la quale me ho fatta porre a riscontro del letto e tutto il dí la vagheggio'.

<sup>36</sup> All translations are from Giambattista Marino, *L'Adone*, trans. and ed. by Harold Priest (New York: Ithaca, 1967).

Poussin's comments are reflected in the *vecchiarella* anecdote. In the story, Carracci temporarily enters into the position of an affected, feminine subject through being affected by the sight of feminine objects. Annibale Carracci understood which painting 'deserves the most praise' because he was affected by the signs of pleasure that the old woman and little girl displayed on the surface of their bodies. In some senses, the representation of pleasure on the bodies of the women triggered in Annibale's body a latent feminine ability to be moved by emotion and ultimately to experience pleasure. Because, in Aristotle's words, 'understanding is extremely pleasant', Carracci, like the women, experiences pleasure and enlightenment.<sup>37</sup> There is a sense in the story, therefore, that Carracci learns to see as an emotional 'woman'; the anecdote relates how he 'learnt to know' through this 'method' of viewing.

The erotic nature of women's bodies, discussed in the previous chapter, meant that people perceived them to be highly persuasive. Unconventional images of men were more acceptable if a sexually powerful woman was present. Bishop Paleotti, in his discussion on verisimilitude in painting, argued that at first glance an image of Hercules dressed as a woman would seem to be far from the 'truth' of this character: 'but when we learn that Hercules is entrapped within the jests of Omphale the image no longer seems un-verisimilar'.<sup>38</sup> The power of women to convert the souls of men occurs also in Pallavicino's book *La rettorica delle puttane*, discussed above. In this book, the art of rhetoric and the arts of love are combined in order to produce the ultimate discourse that can persuade and trap the hearts and minds of men. At the beginning of his book, Pallavicino stated: 'the rhetoric of prostitutes is an art that... moves the souls of those unfortunates, who running into their nets, help them to victory'.<sup>39</sup> Although primarily about the use of words to entrap men, Pallavicino also encouraged prostitutes to perfect the art of the visual performance of the *affetti*, an essential part of the skill of oral persuasion.<sup>40</sup> By locating dangerous effects in women's bodies, Pallavicino's book presents men as 'unfortunate' wretches who had no power over their own sinful destinies. Images of unnatural inversions of patriarchal gender roles could be legitimised by the power of women to cause change in men's bodies.

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<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 48b 10f.

<sup>38</sup> Paleotti, pp. 369-70: 'Ercole in Lidia che era vestito d'abito femminile... la quale imagine, considerata la persona di Ercole, pareria lontanissima da ogni verità, ma chi intende poi dei lazzi di donne in che si trovò talora involto, non parerà più non verisimile.'

<sup>39</sup> Pallavicino, p. 15: 'Altro non è la Rettorica dell Puttane, che un'arte di... muovere gli animi di quelli infelici, ch'incappando nelle loro reti, assistono alle sue vittorie'.

<sup>40</sup> Bassano, p. xiii.

Poussin's letter of 1642 refers to the firmly established role of women in the provision of restorative cures to hardworking men that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. It is sufficient to note here that Poussin compared Chantelou's sexual delight aroused by looking at pretty women with the delights of looking at feminine columns and the restorative effects of beautiful objects in his life of toil. This link implies that the seductive pleasures of feminine art could alter the constitution of a gentleman regardier engaged in masculine duty, so that he might enter an opposite state of feminine relaxation. Poussin painted for gentlemen who needed to combat the toil of being papal bureaucrats. The power to convert such an experience to the contrary, the task of paintings according to Mancini, was located in feminine bodies. In Marino's poem *Adone*, it is the beautiful, lustful maiden Wantonness who says: 'I am she who turns to joy all sorrow and travail' (VIII. 40). In this climate Poussin's paintings were able to be perceived as having the power to overcome a gentleman regardier, by inducing him to become a pleased, feminine viewer. This theory adds a gendered dimension to Poussin's belief expressed at the end of his life that painting's aim was to provide '*délectation*'.<sup>41</sup> Poussin painted images that were analogous to powerful feminine bodies.

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I have considered thus far the types of viewing which appear to have been encouraged by Poussin's mythological paintings: the intersection of feminine and gentlemanly standpoints. The necessity for the repeated representation of a feminine viewing position in the texts of Massani and Mancini, and in the paintings of Nicolas Poussin, may have arisen from the fact that by the end of the sixteenth century there was a deeper division between the social realities of being a woman, and the ideologies of femininity.<sup>42</sup> I argued in the Introduction that Poussin's *Mars and Venus* was analogous to Campanella's observation that men came 'under the influence of Venus' due to the dominance of women in the courts of Europe and the New World. Similarly, in the previous chapter I established that Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus* and *Tancred and Erminia* captured elements of feminine viewing that belonged to a waning feudal society. Culturally constructed feminine standpoints, such as those that appear in

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<sup>41</sup> Poussin, p. 163.

<sup>42</sup> Judith C. Brown, 'A Woman's Place was in the Home: Women's Work in Renaissance Tuscany', in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 206-24 (p. 222).

Poussin's mythological paintings, could have helped to sustain notions of womanhood that day-to-day experience contradicted.

At the same time, the practice of gentlemen entering these positions could have allowed them to experience elements which were no longer necessarily attached to female bodies. Poussin's feminine standpoints organized the gaze of the external spectator. They shaped the type of viewing that a patron could employ. The nature of the gentlemanly painting gallery fostered the potential for gentlemen connoisseurs to identify with cultural constructions of feminine looking. The narrative created by Poussin's mythological paintings in this space encouraged the imaginative conversion of a gentleman's gender.

There is one area that I have not considered in this part of the thesis: the social rituals of women looking *at* Poussin's paintings. I will argue in Chapters Nine and Ten that Poussin's mythological paintings addressed a particular woman in the dal Pozzo family. We shall see in these chapters that Poussin's early mythological paintings may have persuaded women to perform the type of feminine positions of viewing that have been discussed throughout Part I. Significantly, Chapter Ten demonstrates that Poussin's male patrons could have used a real woman as a 'method' of viewing, as described in the anecdote of the *vecchiarella*.



## *PART II: IMPRESSIONS OF SIMULTANEITY*

### *Simultaneity in Poussin's Rinaldo and Armida*

Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* (fig. 7) at Dulwich is a painting that depicts states of contradictory simultaneity.<sup>1</sup> The strong arch of Armida's arms directs a viewer's gaze in a path of oscillation between opposing gestures of hate and love. In one hand Armida holds a dagger. Her arm is aggressively moving across: the fingers of the putto's hand rake her flesh; the effort of trying to stop her causes him to cry out. Armida's other hand rests upon Rinaldo's flesh. Her passive left hand contradicts the assertions of her right. Instead of restraining him, the gentle pressure of her hand, placed on top of Rinaldo's inert limb, produces a shielding, enveloping, insistent caress. This contradiction of simultaneous states is echoed in Armida's drapery. Above, her white garment billows in the wind, as if she is still coming in for the kill. Below, the putto steps on her heavy blue skirts signifying that she has been at rest for sometime. Armida is, at once, moving murderer and static, tender lover.

Armida's left and right hands, and upper and lower drapery, are material traces of Poussin's attempts to mould a particular type of person. This person had to embody two distinct and contradictory states with neither a dissolution of the two states nor self-combustion. Poussin's depiction of Armida was drawn from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. He chose to depict the moment in the poem when the pagan sorceress encounters her prey: the Christian knight whom she has lured onto an island and sent to sleep in order to kill him and take her revenge. At the moment of execution the sight of Rinaldo causes her to fall in love and she decides to spare his life (XIV. 57-67).

In the terms established in Part I, Armida's gaze at Rinaldo had the potential to organize an external male spectator's act of looking as an intersection of his own masculine standpoint with a feminine viewing position. This part of the thesis is about *how* Poussin utilised particular methods of representation in order to produce this intersection.

The *Rinaldo and Armida* is a vivid example of Poussin's figuration of the meeting of two genders within one body that is indicated in more subtle ways by the other paintings under consideration. It is therefore a valuable resource for an analysis of Poussin's means of representing simultaneity. Certain pictorial strategies drawn from a range of sources were available to Poussin to use as established triggers of audience

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Careri, 'Mutazioni d'affetti, Poussin interprete del Tasso', in *Poussin et Rome*, pp. 353-66 (pp. 353-56).

response. When painting *Rinaldo and Armida* Poussin could have relied upon these reactions in order to achieve a 'conversion' of the gender of his regarnder.

This part of the thesis concentrates wholly upon the figure of Armida for several reasons. For a start, Poussin painted Armida in a much more striking version of simultaneity than Rinaldo. Additionally, several art historians have already commented upon the feminisation of the man in this painting.<sup>2</sup> In these accounts Rinaldo has not been read as an image of simultaneity. This is because he appears suffused with the femininity that is allegorised in the glowing orange light coursing through his body. In contrast, Armida abounds with clearly visible statements of two beings existing simultaneously in one body. Hatred and love, masculinity and femininity, are neither merged nor dissolved but exist as two visibly separate entities in Armida's right and left hands. The painterly effects of Poussin's figures such as Rinaldo will be considered in Chapters Seven to Ten.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 195-96; Giovanni Careri, 'Le Retour du geste antique: amour et honneur à la fin de la Renaissance', in *La Jérusalem délivrée du Tasse : poésie, peinture, musique, ballet : actes du colloque*, ed. by Giovanni Careri (Paris: Klincksieck, 1999), pp. 41-65 (pp. 49-50); Régis Michel, *Posséder et détruire: Strategies sexuelles dans l'art d'Occident* (Paris: RMN, 2000), pp. 89-93.

### ***Chapter Three: Poussin's Visual Rhetoric***

In this chapter, I argue that Poussin emphasised Armida's contradictory states through the rhetoric of gender. Poussin used gendered gestures in such a way as to construct a character that is simultaneously feminine and masculine. This argument redresses recent interpretations of Armida's gender as neutral or masculine.<sup>1</sup> Poussin's strategies for representing simultaneity become resonant when placed within seventeenth-century notions of gender. The theory of the four humours, which were central to notions of masculinity and femininity, provided the structural framework for a representation of contrasting states held within one body that was particularly admired in poetical imagery.

#### **3.1. The Language of Gendered Gestures**

When constructing his paintings, Poussin used formal means, which I will call here visual rhetoric, in order to persuade and impress a particular affect upon his spectators.<sup>2</sup> A close reading of Armida's hands in the Dulwich *Rinaldo and Armida* (fig. 7) shows that Poussin utilised a seventeenth-century language of gendered gestures in order to represent Armida's bodily simultaneity.

Art historians have established that Renaissance painters used the hand gestures developed in the art of oratory as visual signs in order to convey certain messages to an audience well versed in the strategies of persuasion used by preachers and lawyers.<sup>3</sup> The identification of a gendered language of gestures in Poussin's paintings helps us to untangle the means through which Poussin's paintings could have 'converted' the gender of his regards, in line with Mancini's text discussed in Chapter Two.

Gestures had a key role in determining the status of a depicted character's gender. For example, a woman shown using over-the-top hand gestures signifying invitation could mark out a temptress in a painting of St Anthony. A woman covering her genitalia with her hand could express the feminine sexual shame of Eve, whilst a man covering his face could signify Adam's masculine shame of dishonour. These gendered signs operated in the wider discourse of etiquette manuals and courtly

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<sup>1</sup> Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, pp. 195-66; Michel, *Posseder*, pp. 90-93.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Dempsey has discussed Poussin's tragic paintings of dramatic changes of fortune in relation to tragic theatre, see: 'Nicolas Poussin between Italy and France', pp. 326-32. I would argue that Poussin does not confine this effect to tragic painting but relies upon a visual rhetoric that can work across genres.

<sup>3</sup> Moshe Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, pp. 61-70.

literature that encouraged women and men to conduct themselves in ways determined by social perceptions of their sex.<sup>4</sup>

The gestures made by women's right and left hands, as in Poussin's painting, could challenge the connection between biological and social sex. A good example of such a challenge occurs in a text written by a woman who sought to contest conventional feminine behaviour. Lucrezia Marinella, in her book *La nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne* of 1601, rebuffed an argument made by Torquato Tasso that women are different, 'weak and imperfect in comparison to men, similar, in fact, to the left hand'. Marinella's advocacy for women's training in fighting with arms, expressed earlier in her book, accords with her view that 'there is no difference between the right and the left [hand], as can be frequently observed in everyday use... [and the] thousand examples of strong women'.<sup>5</sup>

Marinella's text demonstrates the complicated status of gender in the early modern period. Masculinity and femininity appeared to be attached to social role and binary biological sex, and thus desirably immutable. At the same time gender characteristics were considered as a manifestation of the humours of the body. The humours produced a four-fold system: hot and dry, cold and dry, hot and wet and cold and wet. Women were generally cold and wet, and men hot and dry. However, a person could share masculine and feminine humours due to other factors: a drunk, lascivious woman could be hot and wet; an old man could be cold and dry. Importantly for painters, characteristics of humoral gender manifested themselves upon the surface of the body. For example, it was believed that humoral physique caused women's white, pliable skin, and men's contrary ruddy complexion. Recent work on gender and humour theory in paintings of the early modern period show how faithfully artists, including Poussin, relied upon these beliefs in order to depict the differences between men and women.<sup>6</sup>

The four-fold humoral structure of gender (hot, cold, wet, and dry) bisected the two-fold social structure of gender (masculinity and femininity). Social masculinity and femininity was, therefore, something that people negotiated and contested in various ways through the realm of the visible humoral characteristics or gestures that appeared on the surface of the body. For instance, it has been shown that this medical discourse provided a fluidity that allowed playwrights to subvert visually conventions of

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<sup>4</sup> James Clifton, 'Gender and Shame in Masaccio's *Expulsion*', *Art History*, 22 (1999), 637-55 (p. 642); Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, p. 70; Berdini, p. 572; Phillips, pp. 185-98.

<sup>5</sup> Marinella, pp. 80, 139. The dal Pozzo family owned works by this writer; see Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 245v.

<sup>6</sup> Filipczak, p. 198.

masculinity and femininity.<sup>7</sup> The slippage between the two systems also allowed Marinella to express her belief that women could be just as successful as men upon the field of honour, if only their bodies were trained to perform masculine gestures of sword fighting.

In Poussin's painting Armida tenderly touches Rinaldo with her left hand. In her right she holds the dagger, like Marinella's knightly women. The gendered distinction between the gestures of left and right hands was available to Poussin as a representational method in order to show Armida as both masculine and feminine.

On the one hand, Armida appears intensely feminine. The caressing touch of her left hand upon Rinaldo is visually reminiscent of the laying on of hands that is an important element in Poussin's early *Pietà* and *Lamentation*. Indeed, Armida's overall pose has been compared to women mourning the dead Christ.<sup>8</sup> Armida's enveloping, resting hand can be compared to the Virgin's roughly modelled hand in Poussin's *Pietà* that seems to waver above Christ's chest, at once touching and desiring to connect (fig. 19). As I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter Ten, this gesture can be read as feminine because a look combined with a touch upon a passive body was closely associated with mothering in the early modern period.<sup>9</sup> Touch was an important element in the iconography of the Virgin. The vast majority of miraculous Marian images in early modern Italy were those that showed Mary tenderly holding the infant Christ.<sup>10</sup> These images encouraged people to imagine Mary's touch upon their own bodies. Francis de Sales' popular *Introduction to the Devout Life*, published in 1609, persuaded the reader to imagine Mary's embrace: the reader is told to 'Fly to her as a little child, cast yourself upon her breast with complete confidence; invoke her motherly love and try to imitate her virtues with filial love'.<sup>11</sup> The gesture of Armida's left hand appears to accord with seventeenth-century notions of her biological role as a potential nurturing mother.

Armida's right hand contradicts the feminine gestures of her left: with her 'virile' hand Armida wields the dagger. In literature of the period, women who carry

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction', in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individualism and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. by Thomas C. Heller et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 30-52.

<sup>8</sup> Verdi, (1992), pp. 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> Randolph, 'Renaissance Household', pp. 173-74.

<sup>10</sup> Carroll, *Veiled Threats*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> St Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. by Michael Day (London: Burns and Oates, 1962), p. 72.

armour and weapons are repeatedly mistaken as men.<sup>12</sup> Armida's grasp of the dagger with her right hand suggests she embodies the 'absolute strength' which Tasso equated with men and the right hand. Armida's stiletto in Poussin's painting is not, perhaps, a fully masculine weapon. It brings to mind the type of dagger the Roman heroine Lucretia turned on herself to commit suicide and preserve her honour.<sup>13</sup> The lack of contact between Armida's dagger and Rinaldo's flesh may make a viewer think that Armida is about to kill herself. In contradiction, however, to the usual placement of the point, ready to plunge into a female bosom, Armida turns the dagger outward and threatens the very manhood of Rinaldo. If a line is drawn from Armida's dagger one can see that it points to the permeable area of a masculine body, protected only by the thin cloth of Rinaldo's shorts.

The conception of Armida as a masculine sexual predator is supported by a comparison with Poussin's drawing of a satyr leering at a sleeping woman of around 1625-26 (fig. 20).<sup>14</sup> The arch of Armida's arms, her insistent stare with her mouth slightly open, the fall of her left hand upon Rinaldo's body, and the tension in her right arm, all find analogies in the pose of the satyr. The sexual connotations of the dagger are determined by a visual comparison to the tradition of hand gestures of satyrs and nymphs in prints and paintings. In Poussin's own painting of the scene, developed from ancient sarcophagi, Titian and the Carracci, the painter emphasised the sadistic, voyeuristic nature of the encounter through the language of gesture (fig. 21). The threat of phallic penetration is present; sleep has obligingly slackened the legs of Poussin's nymph allowing the satyr a view mediated only by her own prophetic fingers. The phallic nature of her hand may have been suggested by a print by Raimondi (fig. 22). In this print, the reclining nymph covers her eyes with her left arm and drapery; in pulling up the cloth, she reveals her crotch. The middle finger of her right hand, resting on her belly, is extended; it forms the shape of an erect penis, echoing the aroused genitals of her attacker. These images revolve around looking, desire and penetration figured by the phallic gaze, hand and penis. Armida's dagger stages a similar predator-victim relationship. Held in a clenched fist, it follows the line of her gaze.

Painters figured sexually predatory women by arranging their bodies into the forms of masculine desire. Primaticcio reversed images of lustful satyrs in order to

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<sup>12</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, XII. 52, 67: Tancred fights Chlorinda thinking her to be a man. He only discovers her true identity when he removes her helmet.

<sup>13</sup> Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 216-44.

<sup>14</sup> Careri has also compared the Dulwich canvas with the scene of nymphs and satyrs in general; see 'La Retour du Geste Antique', p. 53.

produce pictures of female desire in his decorations at Fontainebleau.<sup>15</sup> One painting, later reproduced as a print, shows a group of nymphs carrying a bound satyr to be raped by a woman (fig. 23). The subject only becomes meaningful through its pendant which reverses the positions of the men and women. A nymph is carried forward to be raped by a satyr (fig. 24). Through the pairing of these images the visible signs of the intent to penetrate could be read onto female bodies that could not manifest such a visible sign of desire as the male erection.

The vision of simultaneity contained in Armida's feminine-masculine gestures was available to Poussin through the theories of humoral gender. The presence of all four humours in all bodies meant that the contrary gendered humoral physique sometimes overrode physical sex. One body could be male and feminine, or masculine and female. This system lent itself to visual representation because humours manifested themselves upon the surface of the body through skin colour, facial features, gesture and pose. I conjecture that Poussin utilised a language of gendered gestures in order to depict protagonists who embody both masculine and feminine genders simultaneously.

### 3.2. Painted Simultaneity versus Poetry

Poussin may have been attracted to the language of visual simultaneity offered by the state of gender because of his interest in the possibilities of simultaneity that lay within the art of painting in the early modern period. Poussin's techniques appear to have been developed with a consciousness about the possibilities of painting to depict a pure, shocking and marvellous simultaneity that poetry aspired to but often failed to achieve.

In contrast to poetry's temporal movement, in the Dulwich canvas Poussin capitalised on painting's ability to represent simultaneity (fig. 7). Unlike the source, Poussin's painting shows Armida as at once enemy *and* lover. Tasso related Armida's change as temporal movement: 'from his enemy she became his lover' (XIV. 67). Such a construction was logical in poetry. This art form traditionally relied on emotion conceived as motion, unfolding in the manner of a rhetorical argument.<sup>16</sup>

In the *Rinaldo and Armida*, Poussin appears to have responded to the puzzle that painting did not always do what poetry could. Poussin certainly engaged verbally with debates around *ut pictura poesis*, the belief that 'as is poetry, so is painting', in his much

<sup>15</sup> *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Editions des Musées nationaux, 1972), pp. 300 no. 374, 307 no. 389. For a discussion of Poussin's knowledge of art at Fontainebleau see Blunt, *Nicholas Poussin*, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, pp. 217-20.

later *Observations on Painting*.<sup>17</sup> The *Rinaldo and Armida* appears to be an early visual manifestation of his sensitivities to the debate.

Preceding Poussin's pictorial exploration, some commentators had already noticed painting's difference from poetry. Lodovico Dolce, in his treatise *Dialogo della Pittura* of 1557, had argued that if painters did not learn about expression, their works would be 'cold', 'in the manner of a dead body'.<sup>18</sup> Dolce's comments demonstrate an awareness that painting's static qualities risked failing to express the movement of emotions believed to affect the audience. It was this rhetorical quality that painting was meant to share with poetry, yet the latter was an art that relied on the unfolding of a persuasive argument over time. The mismatch between the abilities of the spoken word and the painted form was also realised in the early seventeenth century by Annibale Carracci and the papal bureaucrat Agucchi during their attempts to practice the art of ekphrasis. Indeed, these men stressed the superiority of the infinite semantic possibilities of visual language over the limits of the verbal word.<sup>19</sup>

Poussin sidestepped this puzzle by utilising the static qualities of painting in order to express contradictory emotions in one image. In painting *Rinaldo and Armida* Poussin came close to sharing the viewpoint of Leonardo da Vinci who stressed painting's ability to show an event such as a battle 'in un istante' rather than in the many 'lunga e tediosissima' lines of a poem. Poetry, for Leonardo, was less able to represent beauty because 'the eye cannot embrace the whole simultaneously in its field of vision' as it can in painting.<sup>20</sup> In *Rinaldo and Armida*, Poussin seems to have rethought painting's relationship to the temporality of poetry through the representation of simultaneity allowed by the visual realm.

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Blunt, 'Poussin's Notes on Painting', *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 1 (1937-38), 344-51.

<sup>18</sup> Ludovico Dolce, *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l'Areino [1557]*, (Florence, Nestenus and Moucke, 1735), p. 226: 'la Pittura, ch'è priva, riman come si dice, fredda, et è guisa di corpo morto... Questo è, che bisogna, che le figure movano gli animi de 'riguardanti'. Printed in Lee, p.266.

<sup>19</sup> Santos, pp. 95-97, 106-7.

<sup>20</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works*, ed. and trans. by Jean Paul Richter, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2 vols (London: Phaidon, 1970), I, pp. 53, 60. It is possible that Poussin directly knew this passage through Cassiano dal Pozzo. One of Cassiano's projects, encouraged by the interests of his employer, Francesco Barberini, was to gather and disseminate Leonardo's ideas. This research culminated in the publication of the abridged *Trattato*, containing Leonardo's research on optics and perspective, which Poussin himself illustrated. Cassiano may have also been aware of the *paragone* section. He acquired information about collections of Leonardo's writings throughout Italy, checking manuscripts against each other and creating new copies. A manuscript containing the *paragone* section was obtained by Urban VIII from the library of the deceased Duke of Urbino sometime in the early 1640s. Other scholars in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries also had had access to a book by Leonardo on the *paragone* between painting and sculpture, now lost, which may have also had some remarks upon the *paragone* between poetry and painting. Among the scholars who knew Leonardo's work on the *paragone* was Ambrogio Mazenti. This may have been Ambrosio Mazenta with whom Cassiano corresponded about the plague in Milan. See Claire J. Farago, *Leonardo da Vinci's Paragone* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 30-31, 159-60; Carlo Pedretti, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci compiled and edited from the original manuscripts by Jean Paul Richter: Commentary*, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), I, pp. 33-34, 76, 82.



Something of Poussin's novelty in how he conceived the Dulwich canvas can be understood by comparing it to Poussin's first painting of the subject. The episode chosen for the earlier canvas (fig. 6) had already been illustrated in 1614 by Baglione (fig. 25). In the Casino of the Palazzo di Monte Cavallo, frequented by Poussin, Baglione had painted a ceiling fresco showing Armida looking at the sleeping Rinaldo.<sup>21</sup> As in Poussin's painting, Armida has already progressed past her desire for revenge. She has no need of the arrow aimed at her by the flying cupid: she is already in love. The putti bind Rinaldo, in readiness for his abduction, with the flowers that Armida scatters from above. Poussin's first version repeats the motif of the cupid: Armida is faced by a putto preparing to strike. The putto in both works is the only sign of Armida's former aggression. Neither Baglione's fresco nor Poussin's first canvas depicts a knife, or any other implement, with which Armida could kill the knight.

In the case of Baglione's fresco, the lack of a weapon has thematic logic. Baglione's painting is a pendant to another ceiling painting in an adjacent room of the Casino. This painting depicts a moment from the end of the lovers' story: when the armed Armida tries to kill Rinaldo in battle with an arrow (fig. 26). The two paintings illustrate the beginning and end of Armida's love signified by the lack and presence of a lethal weapon. In his second version of the subject Poussin combined Armida's two emotions, visualised in separate rooms of the Casino, in one image. In the Dulwich canvas the peripatetic viewing structured by the placement of the scenes in different rooms of the Casino is condensed into an instant interaction with a small scale painting.

Into his second composition, Poussin painted connotations of the intimate viewing experienced in the private gallery, as discussed in the previous chapter. This spatial analysis of Poussin's work allows us to contextualise recent discussions of the different reactions caused by Poussin's two versions. Giovanni Careri has argued that in the second version the spectator is submitted to marvel, suspended in the pinpoint of the instant between two contrasting emotions.<sup>22</sup> We can locate this emotion in the gallery. Instead of producing a catalyst to a leisurely walk from love to aggression in an aristocratic casino, Poussin attracted the regarder with a novel vision of both emotions contained in the frame of one painting. When contained within a gentleman's mythological gallery, this painting had the ability to induce certain emotions within the regarder. We saw in the previous chapter that the nature of the inducement involved the feminisation of the gentleman regarder.

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<sup>21</sup> Poussin drew a sarcophagus that is set into the exterior of this Casino; see Oberhuber, p. 332.

<sup>22</sup> Careri, 'Mutazioni d'affetti', p. 355.

### 3.3. Picturing the Oppositional Metaphor

Poussin's painterly techniques can be explored through a comparison with the strategies of Marino's poetry. Marino was a key figure for Poussin's production of mythological paintings in his early years in Rome. Before coming to the city, Poussin had nursed the sick poet in Paris. According to his biographers Poussin produced illustrations to Marino's mythological poetry, such as the *Adone*, for his patient's enjoyment.<sup>23</sup> The extant drawings are from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the source text for three of the paintings under consideration. These drawings suggest that it was Marino who first encouraged the painter to pictorially experiment with his renderings of ancient myths. For Marino, Poussin illustrated sections of the text that were unusual to find in the art of painting.<sup>24</sup> Marino was certainly interested in the dynamics of mythical relationships that presented different power structures than those encountered in everyday life. He had recommended to the rather reluctant painter, Bartolommeo Schedoni, subjects that figured many dominant women, such as Adonis and Venus, Medoro and Angelica, Aeneas and Dido, Cephalus and Aurora, and Rinaldo and Armida.<sup>25</sup> Marino probably also introduced Poussin to Tasso's poetry, the source text for four of the paintings under discussion in this thesis, including the *Rinaldo and Armida*.<sup>26</sup> Marino played with the same Tassian motifs in his own poetry as Poussin chose to depict in paint. Finally, Poussin's ability to rework texts through the manipulation of several related textual sources must have been substantially developed when in the company of Marino, a prolific 'fisher-man' of other poet's motifs.<sup>27</sup>

Poussin may have developed his paintings of shocking, instantaneous images of contradictory emotions in consultation with Marino.<sup>28</sup> In Poussin's drawings for Marino's poems, he eschewed the traditional format of book illustration that showed several scenes of the narrative in one picture frame. Instead, he depicted single events charged with emotional tension such as Polyphemus jealously spying on the lovemaking of Galatea (fig. 27).<sup>29</sup> The simultaneity that appears in the figure of Armida may well

<sup>23</sup> Bellori, p. 424; Passeri, p. 348.

<sup>24</sup> Costello, 'Poussin's Drawings', pp. 296-317.

<sup>25</sup> Marino, *Lettere*, p. 150. On Marino's painting tastes see Giorgio Fulco, 'Il sogno di una "Galeria": nuovi documenti sul Marino collezionista', *Antologia di belle arti*, 3 (1979), 84-99.

<sup>26</sup> Marino commissioned a painting of this subject from Cortona in 1623; see Passeri, p. 401.

<sup>27</sup> Marino described his technique of reading thus: 'with a hook, drawing forth for my purposes whatever was good, noting it down in my miscellany, and saving it for use at the appropriate time'. Elsewhere he wrote: 'let these little thieves [rival poets] be sure to avoid sailing the waters where I fish and traffic'; see James V. Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous: Giambattista Marino* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Olson, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Costello, 'Poussin's Drawings', pp. 313-35. Marino worked with another artist, Alessandro Turchi, on the representation of another part of this story; see Passeri, pp. 174-75.

have been a sign of Poussin's continuing fidelity to the figurative practices of the deceased Marino, as well as the poet's belief about painting.

Marino was very interested in the representational abilities of painting. His fascination was most notably shown in the long poem *La Galeria* that sought to render individual works of art in verse form. In the poem's dedication to his patron Marino played on the relationship between his own poems and real works of art displayed in a gallery that could provoke discussion among *literati*.<sup>30</sup> In these poems Marino tried to capture the sensuous vividness of paintings that induced men to talk.

In his earlier theorising about painting, contained in the *Dicerie Sacre* published in 1614, Marino had distinguished between the abilities of painting and poetry. Poetry could capture the temporal movement of emotions whilst painting only showed things that are visible on the superficial plane.<sup>31</sup> For Marino, the instant visual address of painting was its particular quality. The poet appreciated the primacy of painting in depicting the rare, monstrous or incredible that would move the imagination of a regarder. He certainly utilised paintings' ability to move the imagination as he used works of art as an inspiration for his own poetic creations. Painting appears in Marino's work as having the ability to immediately transport the viewer to the fantasy world of pastoral.<sup>32</sup>

Poussin's close relationship to Marino whilst the poem *Adone*, published in 1623, was in preparation may have influenced his own interpretation of the Armida-Rinaldo episode. In his poem, Marino had reworked Tasso's description of Armida coming across Rinaldo. Like Tasso's Armida, Marino's Venus stops, immobile, when she sees the beautiful sleeping Adonis. As Venus hangs over the beautiful youth, she 'overflows with desire, with pleasure, with marvel' (III. 76). Armida, in contrast to Venus, bears her future lover ill will. In his second version of the subject, Poussin reasserted the original source of this motif by reintegrating connotations of dangerous hatred into the figure of a desiring woman. At the same time, he maintained the connotations of marvellous response introduced by Marino through the emotions the painting induces in the viewer.

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<sup>30</sup> Marino, *La Galeria*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Giambattista Marino, *Dicerie Sacre e le Strage degli Innocenti*, ed by Giovanni Pozzi (Turin: Einaudi, 1960), p. 151-53. Marino's negative opinion of painting expressed in this piece should be taken in context: he is comparing earthly painting with that of God. The latter has the power to show the internal *affetti* of the soul and touch the soul of the viewer.

<sup>32</sup> Gianni Eugenio Viola, *Il verso di Narciso. Tre tesi sulla poetica di GB Marino* (Rome: Cadmo, 1978), p. 47; Francesco Guardiani, 'L'idea dell'immagine nella Galleria di G. B. Marino', in *Letteratura Italiana e Arti Figurative*, ed. by Antonio Franceschetti, 3 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1998), II, 647-54 (p. 651).

Poussin's second *Rinaldo and Armida* is the first known visual representation that shows Armida about to kill Rinaldo.<sup>33</sup> Poussin's novelty was the result of hard work. The Dulwich picture has another composition underneath the present painting showing a reclining man, a putto and a woman stretching out her hand, a composition remarkably close to the present painting although it lacks the dagger.<sup>34</sup> This reuse of a canvas, coupled with other examples, is material evidence of one of Poussin's early working methods. He appears to have reworked a picture until it found a buyer on the Roman art market who was deeply affected by what he saw.<sup>35</sup>

Several commentators have noticed that in his early paintings, Poussin utilised Marinesque poetic techniques in order to draw the attention of his clientele.<sup>36</sup> The same can be said for the Dulwich *Rinaldo and Armida*. To create his marvellous image Poussin conflated the two contradictory Armidas, depicted by Baglione and il Passignano in separate rooms, into one image. Marino revelled in the same fantastic juxtaposition demonstrated in this painting. In order to attract readers, he relied on the startling effect of unexpectedly juxtaposing two things that no one had ever conceived of putting together before.<sup>37</sup> For example, he rendered Petrarch's fairly tame image of a woman squeezing her beloved's heart as: 'Her eyes armed with fire and her breast with ice, the amorous murderess opened my heart'.<sup>38</sup> Marino transformed the poetic conceit by making it violently and sensuously vivid through the idea of the women penetrating her victim with a weapon. Poussin's Armida, like Marino's Petrarchan beloved, is an 'amorous murderess'. Fiery desire flushes her lips and cheeks; icy repose exists in her milk white skin; the thrust of the dagger reveals hate; whilst love is manifest in the tender touch. Like Marino's poetic conceit, one body encloses many contradictory states of being.

Poussin's painting signifies as a visual version of a Marinesque poetic metaphor. In his treatise on figurative uses of language, published in 1654, the pro-Marinesque

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<sup>33</sup> See the articles by Laura Laureati, Massimo Ferretti, Ludovica Trezzini and Adalgisi Lugli in *Torquato Tasso tra letteratura, musica, teatro e arti figurative*, exhib cat., ed. by Andrea Buzzoni (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1985), pp. 230-1; 249-58; 264-5; 272-82; Patrizia Cavazzini, *Palazzo Lancellotti ai Coronari: Cantiere di Agostino Tassi* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1998), pp. 100-7; Lee, pp. 242-50.

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Blunt, *The Paintings of Nicolas Poussin: A Critical Catalogue* (London: Phaidon, 1966), p. 140.

<sup>35</sup> Humphrey Wine, 'La nymphe endormie de la National Gallery de Londres: L'apport des radiographies' in *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665: Actes du Colloque*, 1, 231-42, (pp. 233-34).

<sup>36</sup> Andrea Moschetti, 'Dell'Influsso del Marino sulla Formazione Artistica di Nicola Poussin', in *Atti del Congresso internazionale storia dell'arte* (Rome: Magliore and Strini, 1922), pp. 356-84; Antonio Colantuono, 'The Tender Infant: Invenzione and Figura in the Art of Poussin' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1986); Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 261-78.

<sup>37</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, pp. 75-76, 87, 118-19, 182-83.

<sup>38</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 182.

writer Emmanuele Tesauro remarked on how this verbal form could, in an almost miraculous fashion, allow one to see many things at once. It was as if two separate entities were joined together in one word. A metaphor makes one see *'l'un dentro all'altro'*: 'one inside the other'.<sup>39</sup> Tesauro utilised visual language in order to communicate this concept to his readers in a diagram of two metaphors laid out as a family tree (fig. 28). The metaphors are 'shield of Bacchus' = 'cup', and 'cup of Mars' = 'shield'. Tesauro explained that because cups and shields are both round objects they are as 'two sisters proceeding from the same father'.<sup>40</sup> The metaphor makes one see shields, cups, Mars, and Bacchus at the same time, as one might see both daughters in the body of the father.

Tesauro distinguished between eight forms of metaphor. The seventh was the *'Metafora di OPPOSIZIONE'*. This group of phrases included those that combined positive with negative elements. The examples include describing a tortoise or an arch as a 'lyre without strings'. Another form involved contradiction, such as when one describes water as 'liquid crystal'. The sharpest oppositional metaphors were single words that 'contain two contrary conceits', as in an antiphrasis. Tesauro stressed the visual qualities of this last metaphor: he compared it to a coin or medal with two faces.<sup>41</sup> This metaphor's optical nature made it ripe for commandeering by those painters who were drawn to startling visual effects, such as Nicolas Poussin.

Poussin's unexpected juxtaposition of contradictory emotions in the right and left hands of Armida appear as a pictorial translation of the startling rhetorical device of the oppositional metaphor outlined by linguistic theorists like Tesauro. Poussin certainly had access to these ideas through his patrons. Emmanuele Tesauro was sympathetic to Marino's techniques and was a friend of Cassiano dal Pozzo. Indeed, Cassiano helped him formulate his ideas contained in his 1654 treatise.<sup>42</sup> The allusions to the structures of verbal language in *Rinaldo and Armida* can be interpreted as a development of the visual rhetoric of *contrapposto* utilised by the painters of the sixteenth century in an

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<sup>39</sup> Emmanuele Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico* (Turin: Zavatta, 1670; repr. Berlin: Verlag Gehlen, 1968), p. 301: 'la Metafora, tutti à stretta li rinzeppa in un Vocabulo: & quasi in miraculoso modo gli fà travedere l'un dentro all'altro. Onde maggiore è il tuo diletto: nella maniera, che più curiosa & piacevol cosa è mirar molti obietti per un'istrafóro di prospettiva, che se gli originali medesimi successivamente ti venisser passando dinanzi agli occhi'.

<sup>40</sup> Tesauro, p. 281: 'come due Sorelle procedenti dal medesimo Padre'.

<sup>41</sup> Tesauro, pp. 293-94: 'la Testuggine; LA LIRA SENZA CORDE'; 'le limpide acque si chiamano LIQUIDI CRISTALLI'; 'una singola parola, contenute due contrari concetti; come l' *Antifراسي*; Figura quanto più breve più acuta'.

<sup>42</sup> Solinas (ed.), *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Biella exhib. cat., pp. 161-62.

analogy to the verbal skill of antithesis.<sup>43</sup> Like an *antifraso*-as-medal, Armida has a body with two diverse sides.

Rather than merging genders, Poussin's painting represents a state of simultaneity. Poussin's work cannot be assimilated into recent interpretations of sixteenth-century paintings of bodies with two genders in terms of *grazia* as the indefinable or ineffable. Central to that thesis is the concept of 'merged' opposites. Doubled sex, male and female, becomes the indefinable of *grazia* through the breakdown of distinct genders.<sup>44</sup> Poussin's painting of *Rinaldo and Armida*, in contrast, encourages us to consider the representational structure of male *and* female existing as distinct entities within one body. The oppositional metaphor was one such representational method that could keep two significations separate in one sign.

Theories of poetic metaphor were available to Poussin to achieve painting's ability to produce instant shock. It was also a medium suited to the depiction of the marvellous. The traditions of poetry meant that poems could not consist only of one single-worded oppositional metaphor. However, a painting could convey a moment of stasis in which an object could exist as two things at the same time. In this sense, a painting could stand as the sharpest rhetorical form: the *antifraso*.

As the vehicle for the conflation of two moments of the poetic story into one visual image, Armida's body had to be able to bear two different states of being simultaneously. There could be no ambiguity. Her body had to exist in two contradictory states at the same time. The language of gendered gestures was a form of visual rhetoric that allowed Poussin to communicate the marvel of the episode to his contemporaries.

### 3.4. Armida-as-Narcissus

It is probable that Poussin emphasised the simultaneous masculinity and femininity of Armida in response to a central oppositional metaphor present in Tasso's text. In Tasso's description of the episode, Armida is described hanging over Rinaldo. She looks down on his 'pretty face', 'as Narcissus looked at the spring' (XIV. 66).<sup>45</sup> This last metaphor is one of contradiction. It is comparable to Tesauro's example of the opposition '*LIQUIDO CRISTALLO*' to describe water as a combination of fluid and

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<sup>43</sup> David Summers, 'Contrapposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art', *Art Bulletin*, 59 (1977), 336-61.

<sup>44</sup> Fredrika H. Jacobs, 'Aretino and Michelangelo, Dolce, and Titian: *Femmina, Maschio, Grazia*', *Art Bulletin*, 82 (2000), 51-67.

<sup>45</sup> 'su la vaga fronte/ pende omai sì che par Narciso al fonte'.

hard entities.<sup>46</sup> In Tasso's text, Armida is a woman yet the reflection she stares at is male. Tasso's metaphor describes Armida as a contradictory woman-man. In Poussin's hands, this metaphor acts in the way Tesauro described. It enclosed 'one inside the other', man inside woman; two elements can be seen in one moment.<sup>47</sup>

Tasso's metaphor of Armida-as-Narcissus produces the connotation of gender simultaneity in the body of Armida. Several writers have interpreted Tasso's use of Narcissus as a sign that Rinaldo has taken on Armida's feminine powers of affect.<sup>48</sup> Tasso's equation of Armida and Narcissus also raises the question of Armida's masculine qualities. In his description of Armida-as-Narcissus, Tasso encourages the reader to think back to an earlier description of Armida in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. In Canto IV, Armida's uncle remarks on her abilities, 'under golden hair and outward beauties so delicate [you] keep concealed a manly heart and grey-haired wisdom' (IV. 24).<sup>49</sup> Tasso's Armida is a woman who has both feminine beauty and masculine strengths.<sup>50</sup> The later oppositional metaphor of Armida-Narcissus reiterates the motif of Armida as both masculine and feminine, an image that Poussin visualised through the simultaneity of painting. Armida-as-Narcissus is a successful metaphor because of Ovid's description of Narcissus in the *Metamorphoses* as 'at once boy and man' (III. 352). I discussed at the beginning of Part I how this figured as an instance of dual gender because boys shared the humoral physique of women.

Poussin's decision to depict Armida as feminine and masculine responded also to a second connotation of Tasso's Armida-Narcissus metaphor. The image of Armida looking Narcissus-like into the face of Rinaldo is the first of several allusions in the *Gerusalemme Liberata* to these lovers mirroring themselves in each other. This repeated motif plays on the ancient idea that lovers mutually desire to mirror themselves in each other's soul. This conceit was often associated with the myth of dual genders combined in one body that occurs in Platonic philosophy.<sup>51</sup> I discussed above how Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* bears a similarity to Marino's description of Venus looking at the sleeping Adonis. In this episode, Marino emphasised the motif of the mirroring of the

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<sup>46</sup> Tesauro, p. 293.

<sup>47</sup> Tesauro, p. 301.

<sup>48</sup> Corrigan, p. 174; Migiel, pp. 113-22. See Chiapelli's note in Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, p. 595 n. 66.3.

<sup>49</sup> 'sotto biondi/ capelli e fra sì tenere sembianze canuto senno e cor virile ascondi'.

<sup>50</sup> The metaphor suggests that Armida sees her masculine qualities in Rinaldo. This connotation prefigures the recuperation of his masculinity during the final reiteration of the mirroring scene. On the final scene see Jo Ann Cavallo, 'Tasso's Armida and the Victory of Romance', in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. by Valeria Finucci (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 77-111 (p. 95).

<sup>51</sup> Corrigan, pp. 172-74; Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women*, p. 24.

self in the other. Marino compared Venus to a 'studious painter': she 'drinks in with her greedy, wanton eyes' Rinaldo's beauty. His image is 'printed in her breast' in which Venus 'sees herself reflected' (iii.78-79). Marino utilised the motif of lovers mirroring themselves in each other's breasts in order to enhance the marvel of this scene. In Marino's poem, the marvel was produced by precisely the same oppositional metaphor that occurs in Tasso's poem and Poussin's painting: the concept that femininity and masculinity can co-exist in one body.

Marino's poem demonstrates that the figure of gender simultaneity produced by the souls of two lovers coming together aroused marvel in the viewer. Tasso's oppositional metaphor presented an image of simultaneous contradictory emotions. However, Tasso developed his metaphor over a whole poem line. Unlike the verbal constraints of the oppositional metaphor where phrases had to be employed, Poussin relied on the visual qualities of painting. The instant effect of paintings, praised by Marino, allowed the painter to illustrate the ultimate oppositional metaphor: the single words that 'contain two contrary conceits'. Poussin utilised the language of gendered gesture to show Armida as both man and woman. Gender was very suited to the communication of states of simultaneity because of the fluidity allowed by the theory of the four humours.

The flexibility of the four humours may have caught the attention of the artist because members of his clientele's network utilised it in similar ways. Men such as Campanella and Galileo, both friends of Cassiano dal Pozzo, drew upon elemental-humoral theory in order to conceptualise the complex relationship between sun, earth, air and water. In the works of these philosophers, this theory allowed a concept of simultaneity. For example, Campanella described the sea as the sweat of the earth – the feminine principle - liquefied by the heat of the sun - the masculine principle. Water was, for Campanella, a mixture of principles. This natural philosopher demonstrated the age-old link between the four natural elements and the four bodily humours when he wrote that water united the air with the earth as the blood united the soul with the body.<sup>52</sup> In a similar fashion, Galileo drew upon elemental theory in order to combat the rigidity of Aristotle's two-sphere perfect-heavens/imperfect-earth universe. His work bears similarities to that of Ficino who argued that the heavenly sphere was made of the same four elements as the earth, and was therefore subject to change. Such ideas were useful to Galileo who was trying to prove that the moon's surface was rough, rather than

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<sup>52</sup> Campanella, p. 1110; Bolzoni, pp. 193-216.



perfectly smooth, and that spots could surface and disappear on the sun.<sup>53</sup> Visible signs of the mixtures of the four elements and humours allowed philosophers to challenge traditional binary structures of radical opposition. Poussin's relationship to these men, through his patrons, gave him access to exciting theories of simultaneity. Such simultaneity manifests itself in the gender of visual rhetoric evident in his early mythological paintings.

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<sup>53</sup> James Hankins, 'Galileo, Ficino and Renaissance Platonism', in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. by Jill Kraye and M.W.F. Stone (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 209-37 (pp. 215, 218-19). Lucrezia Marinella also used Plato against Aristotle's rigid binaries of gender in order to argue that women could fight as well as men; see pp. 79-80. Marinella also refuted the notion that hot equalled masculine; see pp.130-31. Ginevra Conti Odorisio, *Donna e Società nel Seicento: Lucrezia Marinella e Arcangela Tarabotti* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1979), p. 68.

## Chapter Four: Affecting Painting: Music, Humours, Genders

In the last chapter, we saw how Poussin utilised the gendered language of visual rhetoric and the marvellous oppositional metaphor in order to create a striking image. This chapter considers the means through which the sensual effects of paintings could affect the gender of a regarder. The painting of *Rinaldo and Armida* (fig. 7) was able to achieve this result in the seventeenth century because it operated within a climate where visual form could affect the constitution of the body physically. In the context of the belief in the power of painting to affect the viewer, the appearance of Poussin's Armida as feminine-masculine, could have impressed itself upon a gentleman regarder making him also woman-man.

### 4.1. Painting Gendered *Affetti*

I have already discussed that in the seventeenth century painting was perceived to have the ability to affect a regarder physically. The theory of *ut pictura poesis*, which dominated the production of painting and poetry at this time, emphasised that art could instruct people through inducing them to imitate the message of the speech, poem or work of art. The power of forms used by painters was perceived as being analogous to a quality of rhetoric: language could move an audience to empathise with the emotions conveyed by the speaker.<sup>1</sup>

In his *Trattato* on painting, published in 1584, Lomazzo argued that a painting, when rendered in life-like fashion, will cause the observer to 'laugh with those who laugh, think with those who think, sorrow with those cry, delight with those who make merry, and marvel with those who marvel'.<sup>2</sup> People would imitate a realistic depiction of emotions because the same effects would be aroused in their bodies.<sup>3</sup> Painters in the seventeenth century, including Poussin, were interested to discover the 'true' visual representations of the *affetti* that would impress the corresponding emotion upon the regarder.<sup>4</sup> In the painting of the *Israelites Collecting the Manna*, Poussin worked hard to communicate various emotions to his viewers. Poussin wrote to his friend, 'I have

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, p. 218; Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art*, pp. 148-51; Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura, et architettura* (Milan: Gottardo Pontio, 1585), p. 105: 'una pittura rappresentata come dianci diceva con moti al naturale ritratti far senza dubbio ridere, con chi ride, pensare con chi pensa, ramaricarsi con chi piange, rallegrarsi e gioire con chi s'allegra, e oltre di ciò maravigliarsi con chi si maraviglia'.

<sup>3</sup> Lomazzo, pp. 118-19.

<sup>4</sup> Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*, pp. 65-67.

*found... natural attitudes that show... misery and hunger*'.<sup>5</sup> In order to capitalise on the power of painted form to affect viewers, painters began to formally categorise the *affetti* and explain how each one should be reproduced.

The visual signs of gender were included in the pictorial language of the *affetti*. For example, signs of masculinity and femininity are included in Gaspare Colombina's *Discorso* on painting, published in 1623, a copy of which was accessible to Poussin as it was owned by Cassiano dal Pozzo.<sup>6</sup> In the introduction to the fourth part of the *Discorso*, Colombina advised the painter how to depict the 'universal' physical differences between men and women. Issues of gender also appear in the specific instructions on how to paint each emotion. The author includes '*effeminato*' among the list of the forty six different *affetti* that the painter could form 'with line and colour'. This *affetto*, Colombina wrote, is best shown by, among other things, 'mobile eyes', 'delicate eye lashes', 'a small mouth with slightly swollen lips', 'white skin', 'a long beard' and 'effeminate gestures'.<sup>7</sup>

The inclusion of a gendered state amongst the *affetti* of painting was a logical extension of Lomazzo's treatise. He had argued that painters had to be aware of the effects of the four humours and the seven planets, including the feminine influences of Venus and Luna, upon the expression of emotion in masculine bodies.<sup>8</sup> Colombina may have included *effeminato*, a state that partook in both masculinity and femininity, because he felt painters needed to have special guidelines for the representation of this complex entity. The inclusion was, perhaps, also rendered necessary because feminine men contradicted Colombina's earlier statement that men and women were radically different in the signs of emotion that they displayed upon their bodies.

Colombina's text also demonstrates that painting had the ability to affect physically the gender of a person. *Affetti* were designed to communicate to the audience the emotions of the character through impressing this passion on the soul of regards. Utilising Lomazzo's idea that a painting could move someone to 'perform with his body the same *affetti*', it is possible to deduce that the painter who followed Colombina's

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<sup>5</sup> Poussin, p. 27: 'J'ai trouvé... certaines attitudes naturelles, qui font voir... la misère et la faim' (my emphasis).

<sup>6</sup> Donatella L. Sparti, 'Criteri museografici nella collezione dal Pozzo alla luce di documentazione inedita', in *Cassiano dal Pozzo: Atti del Seminario internazionale di studi*, ed. by Francesco Solinas (Rome: De Luca Edizione, 1989), pp. 220-40 (p. 239, n.19).

<sup>7</sup> Gaspare Colombina, *Discorso distinto in IV capitoli* (Padua: Tozzi, 1623), p. 126: 'Effeminato: Di capo e collo inchinato a destra, d'occhi mobile, di palpebre indiritte di ciglia delicate, di color bianco, di bocca picciola, di labra delicate, e gonfie, di dita ben distinte, di barba lunga, che ritri le guancie, di volto allegro, di gambe, e piedi rivolti e di positurra e gesti effeminati'.

<sup>8</sup> Lomazzo, pp. 115, 120-25.

advice could make a viewer effeminate with he who is effeminate.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, this analysis can help us understand the pictorial processes necessary to the belief, which was discussed in Chapter Two, that mythological paintings of dominant women and passive men feminised gentleman regarders.

The image of gendered simultaneity in Poussin's painting of *Rinaldo and Armida* would have been particularly affective upon the body of the regarder because it is combined with the most powerful of the *affetti*: that of love. In Tasso's poem, Armida herself is forced to change through the power of Rinaldo's affect upon her. This affect is phrased in terms of the power of love. It is the 'sweet movement that laughed' in Rinaldo's 'beautiful eyes... although they were closed' that helps to affect the change in her and causes her to fall in love (XIV. 66).

The motif of Rinaldo's eyes affecting Armida reflected the belief that rays of sight entered the body.<sup>10</sup> Love was a particularly powerful *affetti* because of its relationship to this process.<sup>11</sup> This connection manifests itself in Castiglione's advice about how the courtier should use his eyes to declare his love, for:

they not only reveal the lover's thoughts but often arouse affection in the heart of the one he loves. For the vital spirits that dart from his eyes originate near the heart and thus when they penetrate the eyes of the woman he loves like an arrow speeding to its target they go straight to her heart... as if to their true abode; and there they mingle with those other vital spirits and with the very subtle blood near to the heart... warming it and making it like themselves and ready to receive the impression of the image they carry with them.<sup>12</sup>

Painters drew upon this connection in order to make their images particularly persuasive. In Guercino's painting of *Venus, Mars and Cupid*, the putto aims his arrow not at the lovers in the painting, but at the viewer outside the work (fig. 29). Guercino's witty conceit demonstrates that the love depicted by Guercino between Venus and Mars will forcibly affect the viewer, just as it affects the characters in the painting. At the same time love, in the words of Castiglione, will make the heart 'ready to receive the impression of the image'. The belief in the possibility of images of love to affect the

<sup>9</sup> Lomazzo, p. 119: 'mosso con lui da quei medesimo moti fanno co'l corpo simiglianti effetti'.

<sup>10</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. by R. D. Archer-Hind (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 155-57. Whilst discussing the creation of the body Plato wrote: 'first of the organs they wrought light-giving eyes... The fire within us, which is akin to the daylight, they made to flow pure smooth and dense through the eyes... Whenever there is daylight surrounding the current of vision then this issues forth as like into like, and coalescing with the light is formed into one uniform substance in the direct line of vision, wherever the stream issuing from within strikes upon some external object that falls in its way.' Plato's theory was developed into the concept that rays from the eyes could enter the body of the beloved, like flaming arrows into the heart; see Stefaniak, 'Correggio's Camera di San Paolo', pp. 207-11.

<sup>11</sup> In the tradition of the art of memory, images that were charged with the affects of love were believed to be particularly affective at burying themselves deep within the brain; see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 257-58, 314.

<sup>12</sup> Castiglione, p. 268.

viewer in dangerous and erotic ways was emphasised by the potency of such imagery to overcome the body stressed both in the lascivious literature of the sixteenth century, and in the Church's condemnation of these poems and prints.<sup>13</sup>

The *affetto* of love depicted in Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* had the power to affect the gentleman regardless of his will. It would have compelled him to absorb into his body the rest of the emotions on the canvas. Through love's ability to penetrate the eyes, the image of Armida as woman-man would come to rest in the gentleman's heart, in the same way that Castiglione had described how the image of the lover would come to rest in the heart of the beloved.

#### 4.2. Gender and the Musical Modes

Painting not only affected someone's physical state through the language of the *affetti*. Additionally, the equation of the art form with the power of music meant that the visual equivalents of rhythm and tone had the ability to affect the humour configuration of the body.

In the 1620s, Poussin studied ideas about the power of visual form conceived in musical terms. The treatise on optics by Matteo Zaccolini, read by Poussin in his early years in Rome, compares the abilities of music harmonies and the harmonies of colour to affect the listener or viewer. Zaccolini discussed the tarantella dance whose power and rhythm could control the passions induced by the poisonous bite of the tarantula. In this dance forceful or languid rhythms were used to counteract different effects of the poison. Zaccolini related different colours to different musical chords: he recommended that certain colours should be shown to the victim to accompany each type of music in order to help cure the tarantula bite. Harmonious colour and music would intensify the force of their affects upon the patient's body.<sup>14</sup>

Zaccolini shared the fascination of other music theorists in the seventeenth century with the possibilities of certain musical forms and techniques to arouse in the soul of the listener a particular *affetto*. Using arguments developed out of the 'magical medicine' of the sixteenth century, music specialists, along with Poussin's patron Marino, believed that music affected the balance of the four humours of the body. The

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<sup>13</sup> Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 358-71; Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi*, accompanied by Romano's scandalous prints of the sixteen positions of *I Modi*, set out to engage the involuntary reaction of the body. In Aretino's Epilogue to the *Sonetti*, he taunts the viewer/reader: 'And just as the smell of pepper and other powders, arising to the nose, often immediately causes furious sneezing, so the odor of screwing has caused you to explode in your codpiece. And if you don't believe me, check it with your hands'. Quoted in Talvacchia, p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Cropper, *The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa's Düsseldorf Notebook* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 144, 144 n.210; Passeri, p. 352.

spirits that governed the body were affected by musical agitations of the air.<sup>15</sup> The humour imbalance brought on by music could cause ‘perturbations’ in the heart which corresponded to certain emotions. Languishing intervals and sweet syncopated voices in a performance of a love madrigal, for example, expressed the rhythm of the languishing heart.<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Battista Doni, the music theorist and specialist in ancient Greek music, isolated four musical modes and associated them with the four seasons, four elements, four humours and different colours and light effects.<sup>17</sup> In the 1620s, Doni was the secretary of Cassiano’s employer Francesco Barberini. Zaccolini’s connection between musical rhythm and colour was similar to Doni’s theory that colour as well as rhythm had the potential to affect the humour balance of the regarder.

The painter Domenichino, whose studio Poussin joined in the 1620s, was very interested in the attempts by musicians and music theorists to reconstruct the modes of ancient Greece, five different styles of music that were reputed to move the audience in different ways. As part of this experimentation, Domenichino and his musical friends built instruments and tuned them to different intervals.<sup>18</sup> We saw in Chapter One that Domenichino was also particularly interested in the visual depiction of the *affetti* that would move a person in a particular way.

Like Domenichino, Poussin was interested in the concept that visual form, like music, could impress a particular emotion onto the soul of the regarder. Poussin’s relationship to Domenichino at this time no doubt encouraged the manifestation of his theory of painting, which I have argued appears in his early mythological paintings.<sup>19</sup> To remind ourselves, in 1647, Poussin wrote that ‘when all the things that pertained to the composition were put together in proportions’, the latter determined by each different mode, a painting had the ‘power to arouse the soul of the regarder to different passions’.<sup>20</sup> The exact manifestation of the artist’s interest in the modes has been widely debated by modern writers. Poussin, unlike Domenichino, was not at the forefront of

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<sup>15</sup> Barbara Russano Hanning, *Of Poetry and Music’s Power: Humanism and the Creation of Opera*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), pp. 27-28; Marino, *Dicerie Sacre*, p. 249. Marino utilized the forms and rhythms of poetry in order to aurally persuade a listener; see Mirolo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 195; Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*, p. 54

<sup>16</sup> Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Battista Doni, *Appendice à Trattato della musica scenica*, in Antonio Francesco Gori and Giovanni Battista Passeri (eds) *Lyra Barberinae amphichordos* (Florence, Typis Caesareis, 1763; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1975), vol. 2, part I, p. 43. See: Naomi J. Barker, “‘Diverse Passions’: Mode, Interval and Affect in Poussin’s Paintings”, *Music in Art*, 25 (2000), 5-24 (p. 13).

<sup>18</sup> Rosella Vodret and Claudio Strinati, ‘Painted Music: “A New and Affecting Manner”’, in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 90-115 (pp. 97-98).

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of Poussin’s comments in the context of the music scene in Rome see Frederick Hammond, ‘Poussin et les modes: le point de vue d’un musicien’, in *Poussin et Rome*, pp. 75-91.

<sup>20</sup> Poussin, p. 124: ‘quand toutes les choses, qui entraient au composé, étaient mises ensemble proportionnement, d’où procédait une puissance de induire l’âme des regardans à diverses passions’.

musical theory. It has been demonstrated that Poussin's colour or harmony of tone operates as a pictorial device to persuade the viewer through empathetic sensation.<sup>21</sup> Several of his paintings from the 1620s to the late 1640s also appear to utilise the colours and geometric principles of musical intervals that were connected by contemporary music theorises with each Greek mode.<sup>22</sup>

It is possible to extend this analysis to the painting in question. Modern scholars have remarked upon Poussin's use of colour in the *Rinaldo and Armida*. The intense red and orange colours of Rinaldo seep into the cool appearance of Armida, reflecting her emotional change.<sup>23</sup> Her blue and white clothes contrast with the red flushes that colour the tip of her nose, the back of her shoulder and the index finger of her left hand. Redness, according to the theory of the four humours, could connote the sanguine complexity: those people with the most 'proclivity to Venus... for this temperament hath calidity and humidity'. Redness in a desiring woman could also connote shame, a signification of the change from the emotional and moral whiteness of chastity. In Marino's poem about Aurora's kidnapping of Cephalus the blush of the rosy fingers spreads to Aurora's cheeks, becoming a sign of her humiliation and amorous shame.<sup>24</sup> In the colour scheme of the painting, Poussin marks Armida's change from chastity to desire. The balance of colours in the painting may have been inspired by their relationship to the different musical modes, elements and genders which could affect the body of the regarder. Furthermore, the representation of simultaneity in the body of Armida is rather like the ratio structures of musical harmonies. Aristotle wrote 'we enjoy harmony, because it is a mingling of opposites that bear a relation to each other'.<sup>25</sup>

Although these musical readings of Poussin's painting must remain at the level of speculation, a direct analogy existed between the effects engendered by music in 1620s' Rome and Poussin's painting. In the city, Armida was not just a character from a poem or a painting: she was also an opera diva.<sup>26</sup> Around the same time as Poussin's

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Puttfarken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 29-37; Thomas Puttfarken, *The Discovery of Pictorial Composition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 215-17; Cropper *The Ideal of Painting*, pp. 140-42; Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 168-72; Olson, p. 8; Freedberg, 'De l'effet de la musique aux effets de l'image; ou pourquoi les modes ne sont pas les affetti', in *La Jérusalem délivrée du Tasse*, pp. 309-38.

<sup>22</sup> Barker, pp. 5-24.

<sup>23</sup> Careri, 'Mutazioni degli affetti', p. 355.

<sup>24</sup> Sinibaldus, p. 18; Marino, *La Galeria*, p. 15; John Gage, *Colour and Culture: practice and meaning from antiquity to abstraction* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), p. 228.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. by W.S. Hett (London: Heinemann, 1936), p. 403 (XIX. 38).

<sup>26</sup> In the 1610s the character Armida appeared in Rome in an opera commissioned by Cardinal Montalto entitled *The Captivity and Deliverance of Rinaldo*. Monteverdi's opera *Armida* was performed in 1627; see Torgil Magnuson, *Rome in the Age of Bernini*, 2 vols (Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell

depiction of *Armida* in paint, a similar woman appeared in an operatic production at a Roman palace as the main character of *La Catena d'Adone*. This opera was based on a section of Marino's *Adone* and had common themes with Tasso's *Armida*. In Act 1 Scene 3 the beautiful witch Falsirena swears her excessive love when she sees Adonis asleep. Later, moved by 'blind desire', she chains him up in order to keep him in her garden of love. The author of this opera, Tronsarelli, also wrote before 1631 a short musical drama entitled *Rinaldo Prigioniero*, which dramatised the exact scene depicted by Poussin.<sup>27</sup> Poussin's *Armida*, a character poised between two extremes of emotion, resonated with the emotions operatic women could engender and experience. Opera composers utilised the same contrasts of two contradictory passions that were available in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* in order to affect their audience.<sup>28</sup>

The contradictory emotions of love and hate embodied in *Armida's* hand gestures provide a visual analogy to the state of turbulence manifested by female characters at the end of many operas. During the much repeated climactic lament scene, female singers communicated sudden changes of mood; one moment the character could be romanticising the joys of her past love, and the next swearing an oath of revenge. This abrupt change of mood could be emphasised in the form of the music.<sup>29</sup> Visual gestures were vitally important to how opera singers communicated the emotion of the song. Feminine singers trained to capture the exact language of the passions, in a parallel to Domenichino's performance of emotions whilst painting, discussed in Chapter One.<sup>30</sup> As they swung from love to hate, to remorse and revenge, these women performed aurally and visually a conversion of emotions, from those deemed feminine to those deemed masculine.

Poussin's *Armida* was a painted analogy to the feminine singers of opera who were skilled in displaying contrasting *affetti* upon the surface of their bodies. The new

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International, 1982), i, p. 191; Eric Nicholson, 'Romance as Role Model: Early Female Performances of *Orlando furioso* and *Gerusalemme Liberata*' in *Renaissance Transactions*, pp. 246-69 (pp. 262, 266); Lorenzo Bianconi, 'I Fasti musicali del Tasso, nei secoli XVI e XVII', in Buzzoni, *Torquato Tasso*, pp. 143-50 (pp. 149-50).

<sup>27</sup> Ottavio Tronsarelli, *La Catena d'Adone* (Rome: Corbelletti, 1626), pp. 22-23, 43, 45; Margaret Murata has compared *La Catena* and the *Rinaldo/Armida* plot; see *Operas for the Papal Court 1631-1668* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 15. Tronsarelli, *Drammi Musicali*, (Rome: Corbelletti, 1631), pp. 309-16. Jonathan Unglaub has compared the appearance of Poussin's *Dulwich Armida* to the description in Tronsarelli's *Rinaldo Prigioniero*; see 'Poussin, Tasso, and the Poetics of Painting, with an excursus Ancient Painting and Baroque Elocution' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1999), pp. 137-39.

<sup>28</sup> Stefano la Via, 'Le combat retrouvé. "Les passions contraires" du "divin Tasse" dans la représentation musicale de Monteverdi', in *La Jérusalem délivrée du Tasse*, pp. 109-158 (p. 128).

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne G. Cusick, "'There was not one lady who failed to shed a tear": Arianna's lament and the construction of modern womanhood', *Early Music*, 22, no. 1 (1994), pp. 21-41 (p. 25).

<sup>30</sup> Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Discorsi sulle arti e sui mestieri*, ed. by A. Banti (Florence: Sansoni, 1981), p. 24.



style of female singing of opera brought about an entirely new way of experiencing music. The emotionally charged expression of feminine opera singers restructured the hierarchies of the voice: the male sound of public rhetoric was challenged by the *affetti* represented in the tremors of a woman's tone.<sup>31</sup> Women were the *virtuose* of this art. The Roman nobleman Vincenzo Giustiniani wrote that Roman men, such as the eunuchs and castrati of the papal choir, had copied the style introduced to the city by Vittoria Archilei. This new style of singing the aria had, according to Giustiniani, the most '*meraviglia*' and was a most '*affetuoso*' music because of the representation of the *affetti*.<sup>32</sup> Vincenzo Giustiniani advised that singers of the aria had to dedicate themselves to 'the study and application of the soul... and the practice of the *affetti*'.<sup>33</sup> The visual aspects of opera, where singers were encouraged to communicate emotion through the language of the *affetti*, must have encouraged regards of the *affetti* in painting to recall the powerful effects of feminine opera characters.

Feminine singing could be powerful stuff. Bourdelot, a gentleman in the dal Pozzo circle, wrote that 'this beautiful art represents naively the passions and imprints them in those who listen; by which without lying I saw myself two times on the point of tears'.<sup>34</sup> This comment clearly shows that the excessive emotions displayed by opera characters impressed themselves upon the souls of men. The wording of Bourdelot's letter also suggests that this experience could not be fully embraced by gentlemen in public. Being emotionally moved before a large audience of Roman dignitaries contradicted the decorous behaviour that gentlemen were expected to show. Bourdelot emphasised his ability to control his emotions: he only reached the point of tears. He successfully employed the gentlemanly social skills of bodily comportment.

The analogy between music and painting would have allowed gentleman regards of Poussin's works to understand how their bodies were affected. As the tremors of the voice pulled at the heart strings, so lines and colours moved the humours of the body. For example, the colours and structure of *Rinaldo and Armida* had the potential to disturb the spirits of a regarnder's body, altering the constitution of the

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<sup>31</sup> Susan McClary 'Soprano as Fetish: On the Rise of Professional Singers' (paper presented at Centre CATH, University of Leeds, March 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Giustiniani, pp. 19, 24; John Rosselli 'The Castrati as a Professional Group and a Social Phenomenon', *Acta Musicologica*, 60 (1988) 143-79. Female singers did perform in Rome in the ex-territorial space of the Florentine embassy where they could avoid the ban on women performing in public; see Hammond, *Music and Spectacle*, pp. 86, 199, 329 n. 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Giustiniani, p. 19: 'vi si ricerca anche uno studio e applicazion d'animo e di persona... e la pratica degli effetti che da queste denvano negli animi gli'uomini'.

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Bourdelot: 'Je veux dire ce bel art de représenter naïvement les passions et les imprimer dans celui qui écoute; par ce que sans en mentir ie me vis deux fois dans le point de verser des larmes', printed in Lumbroso, pp. 228-29.

body's humours and gender characteristics. Furthermore, analogies to opera characters, such as Armida, could sanction the possibilities of crossing gender through the practice of gentlemen looking at women's bodies. Their gestural, as well as aural, performance of contrasting gendered emotions were designed to impress themselves upon the souls of the audience. The audience was meant to experience the same shift in emotions.

## *Chapter Five: Regarding Simultaneity in 1620s' Rome*

In the final chapter of this part of the thesis, I want to consider the ways in which Poussin's gentlemen spectators would have responded to Poussin's pictorial processes that had the power to 'convert' their souls to a masculine-feminine state. In order to chart the possible responses of the artist's clientele, it is necessary to compare the formal aspects of the painting of *Rinaldo and Armida* (fig. 7) to the appearance of simultaneity in the natural world. In 1620s' Rome, the most pressing analogies to the visual display of two states that occurred in Armida's body were the conjoined twins and the hermaphrodite. This chapter is about Poussin's patrons' perceptions of these simultaneous beings. Reactions to hermaphrodites and conjoined twins provide a related cultural experience that can inform us about the reactions of Poussin's clientele to his paintings.

Poussin's painting strategies, which are manifest in the *Rinaldo and Armida*, were located within the appearance of monstrous marvels that interested his patrons in this decade. These monstrous marvels raised their complex heads through Marino's poetic techniques and the attempts to rationalise classification of the natural world by the Accademia dei Lincei, to which Cassiano dal Pozzo belonged.<sup>1</sup> Rituals of regarding marvel were practiced by the same people who looked at Poussin's paintings. It is likely that the body of Armida affected them in a similar fashion. Indeed, mythological narrative played a vital role in the interpretation of marvellous natural objects; it linked poetry and marvels of the natural world through the domain of the visuality of simultaneity.

### **5.1. Getting Drunk on Hermaphroditic Metaphor**

A poem by Giambattista Marino, entitled *Salmacis and Hermaphroditos*, provides evidence of seventeenth-century gentlemen's reactions to imagery such as that contained in Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* (fig. 7). Marino's poem plays around similar conceits of painting, marvel, simultaneity and affect as Poussin's painting. It explores the effects upon a regarnder of a lost painting by Ludovico Carracci that depicted simultaneous masculinity and femininity in one body. The *Salmacis and Hermaphroditos* poem is highly complex. It is both *about* an oppositional metaphor and made *of* oppositional metaphors. The juxtaposition of two contradictory elements in an extraordinary way is the narrative of the poem as well as its form. This format is very

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Careri has related the startling effects of Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* to the much later seventeenth-century phenomena of mysticism and philosophy: 'Mutazioni d'affetti', p. 356.

similar to that of Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida*; both capture through formal simultaneity a moment from a mythological narrative where two genders are held within one body.

Although Marino's poem is a literary construct, it is a marker of the expectations of how such paintings could address potential spectators. Furthermore, the poem's analogies between visual and poetic simultaneity means that the recorded responses to Marino's poetry are likely to be similar to those provoked by Poussin's paintings. A comment made by a close associate and mentor of Cassiano dal Pozzo in the 1620s, the papal bureaucrat Girolamo Aleandro, is particularly revealing.<sup>2</sup> He wrote that the marvellous poetic formulas employed by Marino made 'the heart of every *galant huomo* sweetly drunk'.<sup>3</sup>

In the poem, Marino commented on the marvel of an image of two genders joined in one body and the pleasures this may bring to the regarder. The poem begins:

Just as the tranquil and clear waters/ of Salmacis had in themselves/ the power to make one enamoured,/ so through your art,/ CARRACCI, their appearance has in itself the power/ to make one marvel:/ but one does not know which loses or which advances: /the miracle of Love /or that of wonder.'<sup>4</sup>

Marino compared the painter's skill to Salmacis's pool. Each has the power to join two distinct entities together. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Salmacis's pool joins reluctant male and desiring female together in the new body of Hermaphroditos (IV. 285-388). Likewise, Carracci's painting joins regarder and the work of art.

This process is registered in the poem's ending: 'Love in one single body conjoined two,/ wonder separates one from oneself'.<sup>5</sup> These lines stage the experience of viewing the painting as an echo of the work's subject matter. The process of separation and conjoining, which Hermaphroditos undergoes in the image, is replicated

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<sup>2</sup> A. Azor Rosa, 'Aleandro, Girolamo', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, II, 135-36; Sabine du Crest, 'Girolamo Aleandro, Cassiano dal Pozzo e gli eruditi della corte borghesiana', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Biella exhib. cat., pp. 53-56. Cassiano may well have been responsible for publishing the second part of Aleandro's defence of the *Adone* in 1630 after Aleandro died in 1629. Aleandro left all his papers to Francesco Barberini. Pozzo, as Francesco's new secretary, was in charge of these papers. He certainly sent Peiresc some of Aleandro's newly published work in 1632, probably including the second part of the *Difesa*; see Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, *Lettres à Cassiano dal Pozzo (1626-1637)*, ed. by Jean-François Lhote et Danielle Joyale (Clermont-Ferrand: Adosa, 1989), p. 84 n. 16. For connections between Aleandro and Poussin see Caterina Volpi, 'I Primi Tempi di Poussin Romano', in *Nicolas Poussin: I Primi Anni Romani*, exhib. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1998), pp. 116-28 (pp. 119, 121, 124).

<sup>3</sup> Girolamo Aleandro, *Difesa dell'Adone per risposta all'Occhiale del Cav. Stigliani*, 2 vols (Venice: Scaglia, 1629-30), I, p. 33: 'il cuore d'ogni galant huomo di nobil meraviglia dolcemente inebriano'.

<sup>4</sup> Marino, *La Galeria*, p. 17: 'Sì come di Salmace/ aveano in sé l'acque tranquille e chiare/ virtù d'innamorare,/ così per l'arte tua la lor sembianza,/ CARRACCI, ha in sé possanza/ di far meravigliare:/ ma non si sa, qual perde, o qual avanza:/ il miracol d'Amore,/ o quel de lo stupore./ Quello in un corpo sol congiunse dui,/ questo divide da se stesso altrui'. I am grateful to Brian Richardson for help with the translation.

<sup>5</sup> Marino, *La Galeria*, p. 17: 'Quello in un corpo sol congiunse dui,/ questo divide da se stesso altrui'.

in the reaction of the regarder that is also described in the poem. Painting as 'Love' or 'wonder' affects the regarder making 'one marvel'. Carracci's painting skill is compared to the effect of Salmacis's pool. The pool makes people fall into it through being in love, Marino wrote, and so does Carracci's art. The marvel of Carracci's painting separates the gentleman regarder from himself, just as Hermaphroditos is separated from his state of reluctant masculinity and is forced to conjoin with a desirous female. In order to make this analogy hold, Marino must have relied on the perception that the action of wondering at fantastic art objects had the power to separate the link between soul and body.<sup>6</sup> The poem tells us that Carracci's skill at moving the viewer conjoins viewer and object in love as male and female are conjoined in the painting. In terms of the common gendering of the Christian soul as feminine, the separation between body and soul produced by the marvel of this painting had the potential to be read as analogous to the re-gendering of Hermaphroditos as both masculine and feminine.<sup>7</sup>

The possibility of painting to 'convert' the gender of the regarder is emphasised by Marino's comparison between Carracci's powers 'to make one marvel' and Salmacis's spring. In the *Metamorphoses*, the nymph's spring is given the power to transform other men into hermaphrodites: 'a single form, possessed of a dual nature, which could not be called male or female, but seemed to be at once both and neither' (IV. 373-75, 384-86). Although Marino did not specifically mention this quality, an erudite reader of the poem would have compared the potency of Carracci's painting to an agent that changes the gender configuration of the recipient into a simultaneous experience of both masculine and feminine genders.

Marino's poem explores the unnerving effects of marvellous imagery that were a noted feature of poetic metaphor. In line with the emphasised belief in affect by rhetoric in this period, metaphors, like paintings, were conceptualised as having the ability to affect the body of the regarder. Tesauro argued that 'the spirit of the listener, overwhelmed by the novelty [of the metaphor], considers the acuity of the representing

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<sup>6</sup> A similar formulation occurs in Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, ed. by Giovanni Pozzi and Lucia A. Ciapponi, 2 vols (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1964), p. 63 (d 7v). In front of a marvel of beautiful architecture Poliphilo is delighted, stupified and separated from his soul. See Liane Lefaivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili Re-cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), p. 236.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Hardman Moore, 'Sexing the Soul: Gender and the Rhetoric of Puritan Piety', in *Gender and Christian Religion*, ed. by R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History 34 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 175-86. The Salmacis and Hermaphrodite myth was used by some sixteenth-century writers to figure the loss of self in effeminacy equating this state with the loss of reason in sensuality; see Lauren Silberman, 'Mythographic Transformations of Ovid's Hermaphrodite', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 643-52 (p. 648).

wit and the unexpected image of the object represented'.<sup>8</sup> This theory drew on Aristotle's formula that marvels could motivate learning through wonder, but also on his concept that wondrous metaphors could produce a pleasant deception.<sup>9</sup> Objects like a poem or a painting could delight because of their purely sensual qualities. In the sixteenth century, the idea grew that style, rhythm, order, or figures of speech, provided a pleasure unrelated to the didactic qualities of the piece.<sup>10</sup>

In the last two chapters, I argued that Poussin utilised the language of gendered gestures and the power of the *affetto* of Love in order to represent affective simultaneity. This visual rhetorical trope had the ability to affect the gentleman regarder in the same way that, according to Aleandro, Marino's marvellous poetic metaphor made a gentleman's heart 'drunk'. Through the theory of the *affetti*, the gendered-passions that are manifest upon the surface of the bodies of Poussin's protagonists imprinted themselves onto the body of a regarder. When a gentleman looked at a character like Armida, the impression of her masculine and feminine characteristics altered his constitution. He too became a metaphor of 'one inside the other'. He might have described this experience as becoming 'sweetly drunk', a feeling that would have been in contradiction to the masculine duties of responsibility associated with his office in the papal administration.

Marino's poem crystallises how gender played a role in this experience and helps to elucidate the possible affection caused by Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida*. A feminine-masculine painting was expected to affect a gentleman regarder in the same way that the feminine-masculine appearance of Rinaldo affects Armida. As with Marino's poem, gendered affect played a central role both in the theme of Poussin's painting and the reaction it could have elicited from a potential regarder. The change from enemy to lover, depicted in Armida, visualises the process of affection that was expected to occur between painting and gentleman regarder. The logic of the painting dictated the gentleman to identify with a feminine standpoint as outlined in the first part of the thesis.<sup>11</sup> Through this experience the gentleman would have felt 'sweetly drunk' as his soul delighted in conjoining with feminine desire.

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<sup>8</sup> Tesauro, p. 266, translated in Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 118.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, trans. by George A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 244-253 (III. 10-11); James V. Mirollo, 'The Aesthetics of the Marvelous: The Wondrous Work of Art in a Wondrous World', in *The Age of the Marvelous*, ed. by Joy Kenseth, exhib. cat. (Hanover NH: Hood Museum of Art, 1991) pp. 61-79 (pp. 67, 71).

<sup>10</sup> Salman, pp. 317-20.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Marin connected Armida's gaze on the sleeping Rinaldo with the 'viewer's own gaze... playing out on the sleeping body of the work'. Marin however does not consider the implications of a male viewer identifying with a female viewer. The 'viewer' in Marin's account is unquestionably male: 'he' is first

Placed in the context of this poem, the visual rhetorical strategies employed in Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida* must have been particularly pleasurable to Poussin's clientele. They were men who wanted to experience 'drunken' states of dual gender.

### 5.2. Marino's 'Conjoined Twins' Poetry

In a book of 1627, the poet Tommaso Stigliani wrote that the poem *Adone*, penned by his rival Giambattista Marino, was a 'monstrous conjunction actually resembling two twin children that today live attached by the chest'. The precociousness of Marino's poetry was akin to two individuals joined together whom Italian city dwellers could marvel at, for an entrance fee paid to the twins' father.<sup>12</sup> Stigliani's remarkable conception of Marino's poetry, when slowly unravelled, can allow us to understand further the power of Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida*. Reports of pictures and stories of conjoined twins in our own society involve profound sympathy, morbid curiosity, a destabilising response to a symbol of the fluidity of the self, and a feeling of one's total inability to conceive of what life must be like merged so physically into another subjectivity.<sup>13</sup> The figure of the conjoined twins from the seventeenth century when considered in our own society retains an ability to affect a viewer: the sensation that appears to be at work in Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida*.

By comparing Marino's poem to conjoined twins, Stigliani wanted to disturb his readers, potentially those same Roman gentlemen who had so fêted Stigliani's enemy on his arrival in Rome and who had eagerly sought copies of the *Adone* even before it had been properly published with the approval of the Inquisition.<sup>14</sup> In the streets of Rome monstrous children were a psychologically disturbing phenomenon. In May 1623, a Roman official recorded in his diary that in the Pantani district of the city a woman had given birth to a Demon 'or a creature in that form'. When she brought it to the parish priest he refused to baptise it.<sup>15</sup> We can only speculate on the priest's fear and the mother's pain, confusion and shame as her new-born child was cast out from heaven

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discussed in this chapter through identification with Acteon; see pp. 152-53, 165. Careri also argues that the spectator conforms to the effect of Rinaldo upon Armida. Although Careri does not discuss gender explicitly, there is some indication of a cross-gender identification: it is the *anima* (feminine) of *lo spettatore* (masculine) that submits and is languid like Armida's left hand; see 'Mutazioni degli affetti', p. 357.

<sup>12</sup> Tommaso Stigliani, *Dello Occhiale: Opera difensiva scritta in riposte al Cavaliere GB Marino* (Venice: [n.pub.], 1627), p. 20: 'non è un solo poema, ma un groppo di poemi ammassati insieme, il cui mostruosa congiunzione s'assomiglia propriamente à quella di quei due fanciulli gemelli, ch'oggi di vivono attaccati per pancia, e vannosi da' padri mostrando à prezza per le città italiane'.

<sup>13</sup> Darin Strauss, 'Happy Together?: Ladan and Laleh Bijani', *The Guardian*, 8 July 2003, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,3605,993526,00.html>> [accessed 20 August 2003].

<sup>14</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 87.

<sup>15</sup> Giacinto Gigli, *Diario Romano (1608-1670)*, ed. by Giuseppe Ricciotti (Rome: Tumminelli 1958) p. 70: 'overo creatura in quella forma'

before the eyes of society. Marino's *Adone* had been placed on the Papal Index of prohibited books in 1624.<sup>16</sup> Stigliani's analogy may have been designed to remind those gentlemen, who still sought permission to read the poem, that it had similar demonic origins to the baby of Pantani and should be cast out from the 'temple', an analogy for the civic, ecclesiastical sphere of Roman life.

The comment also encapsulates Stigliani's main criticism of Marino's work: his failure to follow the rules of decorum, the idea that each type of genre of poem or character should manifest only one characteristic.<sup>17</sup> Stigliani criticised Marino's indecorous merging of opposite behaviours in one individual that occurred in the poem *Adone*. A character, Stigliani thought, should act according to his 'status, age, complexion, sex, type, office and nation'. The characters of Marino's *Adone* broke these seven differences, including by making 'feminine the masculine'.<sup>18</sup> Stigliani was not alone in considering Marino's techniques as monstrous. Tesauro compared metaphors of opposition with monsters, including the hermaphrodite, 'neither man nor woman but both'.<sup>19</sup>

Stigliani conceived Marino's marvel as a living monster or a freak hawked for a paltry fee. His joining of poetry and conjoined twins through metaphor could be sustained because of the concept of marvel in the early modern period. Marvels included many different things that contained two distinct elements. A marvel could be a poetic flourish juxtaposing two extremes, a strange rock that seemed to be both wood and metal, or a pagan deity such as the bearded Venus who was both masculine and feminine. These objects could all be marvels because of the effect they engendered in the spectator: fear, pleasure, wonder and curiosity.<sup>20</sup>

Poussin's patrons were linked to supporters of Marino; they probably enjoyed Stigliani's analogy between Marino's poetry and conjoined twins. The connection between Marino's words and a marvellous monster could have produced the conception for Poussin's patrons that poetic imagery demonstrated the fecund generation of nature and marked the possibility of one body containing two distinct entities that could produce wonder, fear and pleasure. Indeed, in contrast to Stigliani's criticisms, we have

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<sup>16</sup> Rhetoricians at the papal court tended to reject Marino's sensuous style for a measured classical rhetoric; see Fumaroli, 'Cicero Pontifex Romanus', p. 825. The appreciation of Marino's style can therefore be located in the more private spaces of Rome, away from the public places of religious oratory.

<sup>17</sup> Lee, pp. 228-35.

<sup>18</sup> Stigliani, pp. 112-13: 'al grado, all'età, alla coplessione, al sesso, al genere, all'uffizio e alla nazione'; 'Cosi la guasta l'Adone ne qual sì rado riguardo alle sette differenze sopratoche, ma fa parersi... femmina il maschio'.

<sup>19</sup> Tesauro, p. 448: '*Nec Mas nec Foemina, sed uterque*'.

<sup>20</sup> Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonder and The Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone, 1998), p. 15.



seen that Girolamo Aleandro praised the ability of Marino's marvel to make 'the heart of every gentleman sweetly drunk'.

Aleandro, like Poussin's patrons, was a member of the Barberini papal bureaucracy. Stigliani, on the other hand, was only protected by a member of this administration, who died in 1624, forcing Stigliani to find patronage elsewhere. His new patrons were outside the circles of the Barberini administration and the Academies frequented by members of the bureaucracy. Stigliani was isolated from the circle around the Barberini.<sup>21</sup> Aleandro, unlike Stigliani, was part of the rising elite of Roman society, who perhaps felt more inclined, and able, to indulge in sensual delights.

Poussin's painted Armida, read through the frame of Stigliani's negative conception of Marino's poetry, becomes alive. Not constrained by the temporal developments of poetry, Poussin could use the instantaneousness of painting in order to represent an entity that contained two beings simultaneously within one body. The painting is a living marvel, like twins attached by the chest, with the agency to disturb or excite us.

### 5.3. Representing Marvels

The comparison between Marino's poetry, conjoined twins and Poussin's painting gains further significance in light of the scientific interests of Poussin's patrons.<sup>22</sup> Marvellous objects of simultaneity had particular relevance in the 1620s to the enquiries of the Accademia dei Lincei. This academy, to which Cassiano dal Pozzo belonged, was involved in the study of the natural world with the intention of classifying natural phenomena into clearly defined categories.<sup>23</sup>

Marvels of the natural world influenced Poussin's painting decisions. In a letter to his patron Cassiano dal Pozzo, written around 1626, Poussin offered him a drawing of an elephant, a sight of wonder in Rome, 'because it seemed to me' he wrote 'that Your Illustriousness had some desire of it'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Aleandro claimed that Virginio Cesarini, Stigliani's former patron, would no longer support him if he were alive, and that Ciampoli, another poet and important figure in the Barberini circle, also did not support Stigliani; see I, pp. 111, 115.

<sup>22</sup> An interpretation of Poussin's *Triumph of Ovid* would be highly pertinent here as it appears to be a celebration of both Marino's poetry and the activities of the Accademia dei Lincei.

<sup>23</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*.

<sup>24</sup> Printed in Giovanni Bottari, *Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura, Scultura e Architettura*, 8 vols (Milan: Silvestri, 1822-5; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1979), I, pp. 372-73: 'Ho disegnato l'elefante, del quale (perchè m'è paruto che V.S. ill. N'aveva qualche desiderio) gliene farò un presente, essendo dipinto con un Annibale montato su, armato all'antica'. On the date of the letter see Denis Mahon, 'Gli esordi di Nicolas Poussin pittore: lavori dei suoi primi anni a Roma', in *Nicolas Poussin: I Primi Anni Romani*, pp. 13-33 (p. 17).

Poussin intended to appeal to his patron's interest in marvel. Indirectly, Poussin also paid heed to the general importance of visual record in the maintenance of the belief in the marvellous and monstrous. Witness reports abound in Cassiano's correspondence with his learned friends such as tales of a young Spaniard who had a tree growing out of his stomach and the existence of giants' bones in Roman collections.<sup>25</sup>

Cassiano's interests in marvel can be located in the wider context of the Accademia dei Lincei's project of classification.<sup>26</sup> The head of the academy, Prince Federico Cesi, was fascinated by the marvels of fungi and fossils, objects that seemed to exist somewhere on the borderline between different species. Cesi wrote to Francesco Barberini in 1624 that 'I have found very ambiguous bodies amongst which those that demonstrate mixtures differently: of wood and earth, of wood and stone, of wood, stone and metal together'.<sup>27</sup> Francesco Stelluti, a fellow founder and the secretary of the Lincei who later published some of Cesi's material, wrote of the marvels of these rare fossils. He called them 'metallofito' (metallophyte): a combined term literally meaning both 'of metal' *and* 'of plants'.<sup>28</sup> Marvellous objects could simultaneously embody two different entities; something that was perplexing for people intent on sorting out what belonged exclusively to each category of thing. Cesi realised that rigorous classification could only occur with the resolution of those entities that appeared to participate in two different natures.

Visual appearances were crucial to the continuation of older beliefs in the simultaneity of things.<sup>29</sup> There is some evidence to suggest that certain men in the Lincei circle still believed in duality because of the visual evidence that existed before their eyes. Francesco Barberini displayed a dead borderline creature, a small dragon, in his palace, whilst Cassiano dal Pozzo owned a print of an amphisbaena, a serpent with a head at each end, which he had seen in Paris.<sup>30</sup> Cassiano's interest in this marvel accords with other details known about his collection. When the French scholar Peiresc began to assume the role of Cassiano dal Pozzo's mentor after 1629, he reproached

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<sup>25</sup> Peiresc, pp. 130, 195-99, 206-7.

<sup>26</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, p. 183.

<sup>27</sup> Federico Cesi, 'Osservazioni Fisiche [1624]', in *Antologia Della Prosa Scientifica italiana del Seicento*, ed. by Enrico Falqui, 2 vols (Florence: Vallecchi, 1943), I, 83-85 (pp. 83-4): 'ho trovati de' corpi molt'ambigui fra di quelle, che diversamente dimostrino miscugli: di legno e terra, di legno e pietra, di legno pietra e metallo insieme'.

<sup>28</sup> Francesco Stelluti, 'Del Legno Fossile Minerale', in *Antologia Della Prosa Scientifica*, I, 309-13 (p. 309): 'metallofito per la natura che ha della pianta e del metallo'.

<sup>29</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, p. 406

<sup>30</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, pp. 361-33.

Cassiano for his credulity and his penchant for marvels.<sup>31</sup> The appreciation of Cassiano dal Pozzo's rather haphazard collection was, according to David Freedberg, dependent on the subjective judgement of the senses rather than on the mathematical certainty praised by Galileo.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, a large number of the drawings and prints that made up Cassiano's vast collection entitled the 'Paper Museum' were records of the monstrous or marvellous.<sup>33</sup> They were visual evidence of the simultaneity of things.

Poussin's mythological paintings, such as *Rinaldo and Armida*, demonstrate gender simultaneity. In this sense they can be considered explorations of the importance of the visual in maintaining a view of the world that was being challenged by certain men in the Accademia dei Lincei. The Lincei were fascinated by objects with strange gender characteristics. They were particularly keen to record hermaphroditic anomalies in rats, moles and humans. This was firstly because gender, as a binary structure, was a fundamental category of taxonomy. Instances of mixed masculinity and femininity troubled the classificatory grid. The Lincei were fighting against received medical understanding. Sixteenth-century Italian scholars had understood hermaphrodites to be the result of an equal contribution of both mother and father at the moment of conception.<sup>34</sup> The external signs of dual gender, breasts and penis, were a manifestation of an inner duality. This duality was believed to be caused by the conditions of the womb that affected the humoured configuration of the individual. A comparable belief was manifested in Colombina's advice to painters discussed in the previous chapter: effeminate men should be shown with pale skin, a feminine attribute caused by the dominance of cold and wet humours in their bodies.

Secondly, gender was an important issue to the Lincei because Prince Cesi believed that the key to a stable classification system was a better understanding of systems of reproduction. The internal sexed body parts visible through dissection could resolve signs of gender ambiguity that manifested themselves upon the surface of the

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<sup>31</sup> Jean-François Lhote et Danielle Joyale, 'Introduction', in Peiresc, *Lettres à Cassiano dal Pozzo*, pp. 9-37 (p. 12).

<sup>32</sup> David Freedberg, 'Cassiano and the Art of Natural History', in *Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum: Quaderni Puteani 4*, exhib. cat. (Milan: Olivetti 1993), pp. 141-53 (p. 152.). The distinction between Cassiano's beliefs and those of Cesi's are difficult to judge and must remain on the level of speculation. Cassiano bought the dead Cesi's papers suggesting he was interested in continuing Cesi's research. He could however have been simply interested in the marvelous natures of the many things that Cesi investigated.

<sup>33</sup> Cassiano owned a wealth of drawings of fossils and fungi, entities that disrupted the boundaries of classification, as well as pictures of deformed fruits signifying the playfulness of nature; see Freedberg, 'Cassiano and the Art of Natural History', pp. 141-53.

<sup>34</sup> Daston and Park, pp. 192, 200, 203. A sixteenth-century anatomist at the University of Padua felt that hermaphrodites were the most wondrous of creatures. It was mostly in the circles of French medicine where they were considered to be deformed men or women rather than wonders of simultaneity.

body.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to the intentions of Poussin's paintings, the leaders of the Lincei wanted to resolve objects that appeared to belong to masculine *and* feminine categories because of the external signs upon their body.

Cesi's system of binary classification challenged the mutability of gender supported by the theory of the four humours. It also challenged the importance of external bodily signs in assessing the nature of things. In contrast, monsters, womanly-men or manly-women demonstrated simultaneous states of being through the realm of the instantly visible. Poussin's paintings demonstrate a similar visual rhetoric of instantaneous, simultaneous representation. They were parallel objects to entities such as conjoined twins or hermaphrodites as instances of borderline species. Many of Poussin's paintings of complexly gendered men and women were displayed in the dal Pozzo household. They were available to be viewed with the same belief in the simultaneity of things that was aroused by Cassiano's print of a two headed serpent.

Poussin's paintings would have been evidence of simultaneity, a state of being that some members of the Lincei rejected. The mythological genre utilised by Poussin was vital to the communication of ideas about the monstrous and sustaining the belief in simultaneity. Pagan mythology allowed a space where the simultaneity of male and female genders within one body could be brought into representation. In the late sixteenth-century mythological handbook, *Imagini degli Dei*, Cartari discussed the bearded and breasted Venus, a deity who has 'the sign of *maschio e di femina* like this because she rules over the universal generation of animals' (fig. 30).<sup>36</sup>

Natural philosophers were used to blurring the boundaries between categories of knowledge in order to understand marvels. A gentleman could understand the significance of the strange gender characteristics of the flamingo, for example, by utilising the Egyptian goddess Isis. In 1627, Peiresc sent dal Pozzo some drawings of male and female flamingos.<sup>37</sup> In a letter of 1629, Peiresc commented that the drawings show: 'the difference between the male and female, which is contrary to other birds

<sup>35</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, pp. 183, 244, 277, 283, 363, 371. In 1604 members of the Lincei academy had written to Caspar Bauhin, a famous researcher of hermaphrodites, to get advice on taxonomic issues.

<sup>36</sup> Cartari, p. 487: 'questa Dea avesse l'insegna di maschio e di femina come quella che alla universale generazione de gli animali era sopra'. A statue of a bearded Venus may have been in the Palazzo Savelli in Rome in the early seventeenth century. The sculpture, called *Hermaphroditae*, appears to show a bearded, breasted woman revealing her skirts to show an erect penis. The image differs from the famous sleeping Hermaphrodite by being clothed, making it parallel Cartari's image of the bearded Venus; see G Franzini, *Icones*, (1599) pl. DD5 (Warburg Image file: Hermaphrodites).

<sup>37</sup> *The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo*, pp. 169-70; Dal Pozzo also owned a painting showing male and female flamingos by Antonio Cinatto; see Anton Maria Bozzolani, *Osservazioni*, Roma ASC, FBP, Pozzo I, arm III, div. III, fol. 48, printed in Timothy Standring, 'Come fare l'inventario dei beni dal Pozzo: Una disputa legale sul fidecommesso', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Rome exhib. cat., pp. 205-224 (p. 218, no. 227).

where the male is more beautiful..., is that the male has lighter feathers, beak and legs, and for this reason I believe the Egyptians appropriated it for their supreme goddess Isis'.<sup>38</sup> Peiresc's strange comment becomes understandable in the light of contemporary understandings of the goddess. In *Imagini degli dei*, Cartari wrote that the Egyptian horned Moon goddess - the attributes of Isis - was called both god and goddess; men sacrificed to the deity dressed as women, whilst women dressed as men.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Isis changes a girl into a boy.<sup>40</sup> The flamingo was a bird that seemed to reverse the traditional attributes of gender. Peiresc reasoned that its gender oddities made the flamingo particularly suited to its role as a signifier for Isis, a dual gendered divinity.

Mythological imagery, as much as the wonders of nature, facilitated the representation of pure simultaneity. The concentration of Poussin's gendered mythological paintings in the dal Pozzo household may have been a response to the role gender played in Cesi's project of classification and Cassiano's interest in marvel.

#### 5.4. Taxonomic Viewing

I am arguing that the subjects and forms of Poussin's paintings may have been influenced by Lincean research. It is equally important to note that the ways of looking employed in this research shed light on the type of response prompted by Poussin's paintings. A painting of a woman who was both masculine and feminine, such as *Armida* (fig. 7), was a suitable specimen for taxonomic viewing.

Cassiano dal Pozzo and his friends in the *Accademia dei Lincei* practised their activities of collecting in spaces connected to the display of mythological paintings. In the Palazzo dal Pozzo, two rooms of the painting suite were devoted to pictures of fruit, flowers and birds; the following room was for the display of paintings of mythological subjects.<sup>41</sup> Collectors were attuned to comparing man-made objects with those from the natural world. The inventory of Federico Cesi, leader of the *Lincei*, demonstrates that in one room fossils were shown amongst wooden and metal busts, bas-reliefs, statues and

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<sup>38</sup> Peiresc, p. 59: 'le differenze tra'l maschio e la femina, che sonno al contrario degli altri ucelli, fra quali par che il maschio sia sempre più bello... che la femina, ma fra i Phoenicopteri il maschio no ha penne cosi infocate di rozzo, ne la pelle del rostro e delle gambe e per questo credo che gli Aegittij l'appropriassero alla lor sopra dea Iside'.

<sup>39</sup> Cartari, p. 487.

<sup>40</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX. 704-97.

<sup>41</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fols 222r-223r, printed in Sparti 'The Dal Pozzo Collection Again', p. 558

other *objet d'art*.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, nature's 'sculptures' were being compared to the works of man, as often occurred in the *Wunderkammer* of seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>43</sup>

The procession through the cabinet and the practice of comparing wonders of nature and wonders of art would have encouraged the gentleman regarder to apply his taxonomic understanding of gender in the natural world to his responses to Poussin's mythological paintings. By regarding objects that could simultaneously be two different things: wood *and* stone, or plant *and* animal, or masculine *and* feminine, the gentleman viewer could have perceived that his own body could simultaneously enter two separate states.

Collections of wonder played a vital role in the courtier's understanding of his position in the world. Collections of marvels acted as tools for professional and social self-fashioning, helping to build careers, reputations and networks of clients and patrons.<sup>44</sup> The space of the collection was available as a place to perform notions of the self. I suggest that a gentleman regarder could have utilised the performative nature of the space in order to imagine that his body could hold two genders at the same time.

Furthermore, rituals of viewing marvellous objects could have provided another practice through which gentlemen utilised the perception of a lady. Semi-public museums of marvel were opened in seventeenth-century Italy to both male and female spectators.<sup>45</sup> This practice may well have contributed to the gendering of the scientific audience as predominantly feminine in the late seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup> Certainly, by 1695, the curiosities of the dal Pozzo household were displayed in the Lady's apartments.<sup>47</sup>

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Poussin's paintings had the potential to activate in a gentleman an identification with a feminine viewing position. This promise gains significance in the light of the changing ways of understanding the world demonstrated through the different activities

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<sup>42</sup> Anna Nicolo and Francesco Solinas, 'Per una analisi del collezionismo linceo l'Archivio Linceo 32 e il museo di Federico Cesi', in *Convegno celebrativo del IV centenario della nascita di Federico Cesi (Acquasparta, 7-9 ottobre 1985)* (Rome: Accademia nazionale Dei Lincei, 1986), p. 200.

<sup>43</sup> Daston and Park, pp. 255-93.

<sup>44</sup> Tribby, pp. 139-63; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 291-392; Daston and Park, pp. 100-8, 158, 167, 170.

<sup>45</sup> Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 70, 83

<sup>46</sup> Mary Terral, 'Gendered Spaces, Gendered Audiences: Inside and Outside the Paris Academy of Sciences', *Configurations*, 2 (1995), 207-32.

<sup>47</sup> Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 133-34.

of the Lincei. At a time when Cesi was attempting to divide everything in the world into clear, distinct and neat categories, a painting that made a man identify with a woman could have maintained a sense of similitude and closeness with a gendered object perceived by some to be fundamentally different.

Poussin's mythological pictures provided a field for the representation of a system of ordering the world through resemblance. They depicted the possibility of masculine and feminine gender characteristics existing simultaneously within one body. The importance of marvel in the scientific research of the 1620s was sign of the negotiation between older and newer ways of understanding the place and relationship of things in the world. Marvels, like hermaphrodites or conjoined twins, were particularly strong instances of simultaneity, a key concept in the older way of thinking that imagined everything in the world existing in a web of similitude. In this way of ordering things, entities could be the same, yet different, from each other.<sup>48</sup> In 1620s' Rome, Stigliani read Marino's poetry as a marvellous image of simultaneity from the natural world: the conjoined twin. Marino's poetry was the probable source for Poussin's development of paintings that are visual parallels to the oppositional metaphor. The appearances of Poussin's works enacted the same processes engendered by the marvellous that were central to the understanding of the natural world. Whilst regarding Poussin's paintings, a gentleman was able to respond to the ability of the mythological genre to represent dual gendered goddesses and gods. The paintings must have reminded him of the existence of borderline creatures that proved the possibility of simultaneity.

The use of feminine viewing positions by gentlemen, considered throughout this thesis, can be interpreted as a way to maintain a method of relating to objects in the world as if they all existed in the same order. I have demonstrated in this part of the thesis that Poussin had the painterly power to induce a gentleman to experience feminine characteristics. The experience of taking another's gender into one's body could produce a physical connection of resemblance between two living entities. The theory of the four humours meant that gentlemen could be the same as feminine others, if only they came to share feminine characteristics.

In Chapter Ten, I will consider further the relationship between gentlemen using feminine viewers and the growth of scientific observation in the natural research

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<sup>48</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 20-21, 140-43. I differ from Foucault and see these epistemes competing in the seventeenth century. I do not think that a radical rupture occurred mid-century; see Mark Bevir, 'A humanist critique of the archaeology of the human sciences', *History of the Human Sciences*, 15 (2002), 119-38 (p. 123).

conducted in seventeenth-century Rome. It is enough to suggest here that a woman's body existed as a fleshy analogy to the microscope or telescope used by the men in the Accademia dei Lincei, including Cassiano dal Pozzo.<sup>49</sup> Instead of looking through a mechanical instrument, a man could look through another human being. We saw in Part I that Carracci called the vecchiarella incident a 'method' of viewing. I suggest we can conceptualise this 'method' as an instrument of viewing: a gentleman could have extended his eye with the flesh of another human being. When situated in contemporary modes of viewing, we are able to realise that this experience was one of pleasure and wonder.

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<sup>49</sup> Enrica Schettini Piazza, 'Cassiano dal Pozzo Linceo', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Rome exhib. cat., pp. 13-15 (p.14).



### ***PART III: THE LANDSCAPE OF MYTHOLOGICAL PAINTING***

#### **Picturing Landscape in Poussin's *Landscape at Grottaferrata***

In the painting *The Landscape at Grottaferrata* (fig. 31), Poussin utilised the connotations of the landscape in order to depict an imaginary, mythical reversal of masculine activity and feminine passivity in a recognisable setting. His painting pictures landscape in three senses: firstly; in an imaginative capacity; secondly, as a record of Rome's actual surroundings; and thirdly, as a mythological painting that was displayed in a very specific place.

Although not a painting that shows dominant women and passive men in quite the same way as the other paintings under discussion in this thesis, *The Landscape at Grottaferrata* is a useful place to start to consider the 'location' of Poussin's mythological imagery that does show this theme. In particular, this painting elucidates some of the significances of its pendant in the Palazzo dal Pozzo: the *Aurora and Cephalus* at Hovingham (fig. 3). By 'location' I mean more than the represented setting in the paintings under consideration. I am interested in investigating the relationship between the location *in* the paintings and the location *of* the paintings. This latter definition includes the subject matter's position within a particular cultural experience in terms of where such imagery was encountered, by whom, and in what specific circumstances. The pictorial and social locations of Poussin's paintings were intrinsically interrelated. In this part of the thesis, I move from the processes of painterly affect in Poussin's paintings, discussed in the previous part, to consider the connections between the settings of Poussin's works and the social spaces in which affection by mythological painting occurred.

## Chapter Six: Privacy, Privilege and Transgression

### 6.1. Landscape between Reality and Fantasy

An inscription on the back of *The Landscape at Grottaferrata*, probably in the hand of Cassiano dal Pozzo, names the place depicted as CRYPTAM FERRATUM: the Grotto Ferrata.<sup>1</sup> This town, eighteen kilometres outside Rome in the hills of the Castelli Romani, is the location of an important abbey that was one of the seats of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Cassiano's employer (fig. 32). The painting, which hung in the Palazzo dal Pozzo in Rome, would have allowed Cassiano to meditate on the complex layering of reality and fantasy that occurred in the local landscape.

Poussin's painting does not record the seventeenth-century activities that took place in this location. Instead, a nearly nude couple embrace beneath the shade of a spinney. The green fields behind stretch back to the dark hills beyond. These are the distinctive hills that one can still see from the town of Grottaferrata (fig. 33). Poussin used real landscape as a backdrop for the lascivious kiss of an amorous couple (fig. 34). The man, perhaps a shepherd, has laid down his cloak and staff. The woman is equally mortal: her dress has been discarded and now cushions her body; she may be a shepherdess. The man is pulled into the kiss by the woman. She clamps her hand on the back of the man's head. She twists her body to reveal her breasts and rear, as if readying herself for sexual penetration. Poussin's patron Marino had used the kiss as a similar poetic motif to explore and herald sexual union.<sup>2</sup> The woman shown at Grottaferrata is analogous to the provocative shepherdess of Marino's obscene poem *La Pastorella*. In the poem the shepherd relinquishes his will/penis to her so 'That she may dispose of it where sense directs her'.<sup>3</sup>

In his painting of the countryside at Grottaferrata, Poussin emphasised the mythological aspects of the landscape. Putti and nymphs play with flora and fauna, and a River God once looked on from the left section of the canvas, now separated from the remainder of the painting (fig. 35). These fantastical aspects of the scene legitimise the reversal of patriarchal masculine activity and feminine passivity. Poussin's painting hovers between a mythologized version and a recognisable landscape.

In this chapter, we shall see how the painting reflected the countryside's potential in seventeenth-century Rome for figuring alternative notions of gender. The

<sup>1</sup> Thierry Bajou, 'Deux tableaux de Nicolas Poussin pour un: Venus et Adonis dans un paysage avec un dieu-fleuve et des chiens qui se desalterent ou les vicissitudes d'un tableau', *Artibus et Historiae*, 39 (1999), pp. 113-25.

<sup>2</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, pp. 126-27.

<sup>3</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 299.

Arcadian/real landscape setting of Poussin's painting could have assisted people in relating the gender positions represented in the mythological genre to those they experienced in contemporary life.<sup>4</sup>

It was not just in Poussin's painting that the genre of landscape provided a vehicle to conflate the fantastical possibilities of mythology with the realities of daily existence. The hills outside Rome could be fantasised as unspoilt pastoral idylls despite the many villa complexes that crowded the landscape.<sup>5</sup> These hills were utilised as the location for mythological happenings which related to the concerns and activities of Rome's elite.<sup>6</sup> An example of the relationship between landscape and such concerns occurred in the wedding opera, *La Sirena*, performed for Taddeo Barberini, nephew of the Pope, and Anna Colonna in 1627 at the Papal villa outside Rome. The opera allegorised the love of the new couple and the glory of the Barberini family through mythological characters and sets based on the landscape around the villa.<sup>7</sup>

Garden design also conflated ideal landscape and real life. Pastoral gardens, with mythological features such as grottoes and fountains, were created in the villa parks built as part of the massive investment in suburban and hill villas in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>8</sup> In the park at the suburban Villa Pamphilj, Roman aristocrats could wander among herdsmen and watch the cows being milked. These fabrications of an idyllic pastoral countryside were far removed from the reality of Rome's rather poor agricultural production.<sup>9</sup> Mythological imagery, therefore, existed in a tangibly present yet fantastic landscape, a state that is explored in Poussin's painting of *Landscape at Grottaferrata*.

A careful analysis of the place where Poussin's mythological paintings hung in the Palazzo dal Pozzo can reveal how the landscape depicted in the paintings merged

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<sup>4</sup> I use the terms Arcadian, pastoral and mythological landscape interchangeably to mean a distant or lost Golden Age populated by masculine and feminine characters that did not exist in seventeenth-century society, but with which people could still identify. For a general description of the implications for gender of this topos see Richard F Hardin, *Love in a Green Shade: Idyllic Romances Ancient to Modern* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), pp. 15-17.

<sup>5</sup> A print in A. Kircher, *Latium* (Amsterdam: Janssonium and Weyerstraet, 1671), shows the countryside around Frascati as being crammed with villas without any wild spaces left in-between.

<sup>6</sup> Mirka Beneš has noticed a similar conflation of myth and reality in the landscapes of Claude. She argues that Claude's transposition of Roman ruins onto the landscape outside Rome reflected the aristocracy's social and feudal power; see 'Pastoralism in the Roman Baroque Villa and in Claude Lorrain: Myths and Realities of the Roman *Campagna*', in *Villas and Gardens in Early Modern Italy and France*, ed. by Mirka Beneš and Dianne Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 88-113 (pp. 103-6).

<sup>7</sup> Ottavio Tronsarelli, *Dramma Musicali* (Rome: Corbelletti, 1631), p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> Claudia Lazzaro-Bruno, 'The Villa Lante at Bagnaia: An Allegory of Art and Nature', *Art Bulletin*, 59 (1975), 553-60 (p. 553).

<sup>9</sup> Beneš, pp. 106, 110; David R. Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 369; Massimo Petrocchi, *Roma nel seicento* (Bologna: Licinio Cappelli, 1975), p. 59.

with the activities associated with the space of display. We saw in Chapter Two that rooms of mythological paintings produced a certain narrative which induced the regarnder in a specific fashion: such paintings had the potential to make a gentleman effeminate. This change in the gentleman's gender was remarkably similar to the type of experiences undergone in the countryside during periods of aristocratic leisure.

## 6.2. Mythological versus Civic Gender

The locations depicted in Poussin's paintings engaged with both the spaces of the Arcadian landscape and of aristocratic leisure. The countryside of the Castelli Romani, depicted in Poussin's paintings, housed many of the villas that were used as places of retreat by Rome's aristocracy. The paintings can be interpreted as facilitators of a fantasy of informal interaction between the sexes in a space located somewhere between reality and fantasy.

Life at the villa was meant to be one of ease. This included the relaxation of the norms of masculinity and femininity expected in the civic sphere. Women were able to behave more liberally, but not be deemed unchaste, whilst men could rest, without losing the sense of their overall role as responsible public administrators. Under the benign influence of a feminine muse, gentlemen involved themselves in creative pursuits such as philosophy and poetry. It is important to note that *otium* – or aristocratic leisure – subverted patriarchal notions of gender. For example, in *otium* gentlemen were perceived to integrate feminine characteristics into their bodies, as discussed fully in the next chapter.<sup>10</sup>

The mythological imagery employed in Poussin's paintings was intimately connected with spaces of leisure, such as the villa and the garden, which were marginal to civic life. Fifteenth and sixteenth-century treatises on painting had encouraged their readers to decorate their villas, as well as places of retreat within the city, with festive, delightful and pleasurable imagery.<sup>11</sup> Frivolous mythology appeared in Rome in the form of one-off opera performances and in discreet galleries. The marginal location of Arcadian, mythological landscape meant that it was an area of transgression that remained relevant to elite people's lives. Picturing mythological landscape was a crucial medium for transporting this space into the city. The imaginative potential of such paintings is reflected in Cardinal Federico Borromeo's comment, of 1628, that through

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<sup>10</sup> Brian Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness in the Renaissance: the ambivalence of *otium*', *Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1990), 1-37, 107-54; Thomas Frederick Crane, *Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century and their Influence on the Literature of Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), pp. 277-82.

<sup>11</sup> Cieri Via, pp. 31-33, 43-44.

looking at landscape paintings in the intimate space of his study, 'we go wandering, and make long journeys [whilst] standing still in our room'.<sup>12</sup>

Pastoral imagery avoided the constraints placed on men and women in 'public' Roman society. Its spatial and temporal distance from city life meant that the pastoral genre could operate as a place for writers and artists to explore what life might be like without the restrictions caused by social propriety and political or religious turbulence.<sup>13</sup> In theatre, literature, painting, and social practice, the Arcadian landscape was used as a place of interaction between usually distinct social classes and sexes. This interaction was seldom perceived as occurring in the surroundings of the city streets.<sup>14</sup> Recent research has demonstrated that sixteenth and seventeenth-century aristocratic women and men used the fluidity this genre allowed in order to rework traditional notions of femininity and masculinity through opera, art and poetry.<sup>15</sup>

Mythological imagery was a safe place to investigate alternative gender roles for men and women because it was seen as spatially and temporally distant from contemporary society. Such distance could prove the historical fidelity of the piece in question. For example, in the 1630s, one commentator on opera wrote that only characters from the Golden Age, such as nymphs and shepherds, would be believable in the context of sung dialogue. These figures dominated much early opera, which relied on classical myths for plot lines, suggesting that the spectacle of seeing someone talk in song allowed the audience to suspend disbelief and so fantasise that they really were witnessing the Golden Age of the classical world.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, in defending the warrior women in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, some commentators pointed out that these

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Pamela M. Jones, *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana: Art Patronage and Reform in seventeenth-century Milan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p. 64; see also Cavazzini, 'Towards the Pure Landscape', p. 211.

<sup>13</sup> Louise George Clubb, 'Pastoral elasticity on the Italian stage and page', in *The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. by John Dixon Hunt (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1992), pp. 110-27 (pp. 122-24.)

<sup>14</sup> Clubb, pp. 113-14. Theatre sets of Arcadia were used for pastoral plays that mixed genres, fantasy and reality and different social ranks. Comic or tragic plays which used city street scenes did not mix such entities.

<sup>15</sup> On women see Elizabeth V. Young, 'Aphra Behn, Gender and Pastoral' *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 33 (1993) 523-43 (pp. 528, 537, 541); Sheila ffolliott, 'Women in the Garden of Allegory: Catherine de Médicis and the locus of female rule', in *Villas and Gardens*, pp. 207-24 (p. 211); Suzanne G Cusick, 'Of Women, Music and Power: a model from Seicento Florence', in *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. by Ruth Solie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 281-304. On men see Alison McNeil Kettering, 'Gender issues in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture: A New Look', in *Rembrandt, Rubens and the Art of their Time: Recent Perspectives*, ed. by Roland E. Fleischer and Susan Clare Scott (University Park: Department of Art History Pennsylvania State University, 1997), pp. 145-75 (p. 152); Lawrence D. Kritzman, *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 161-62. See also Melissa Hyde, 'Confounding Conventions: Gender Ambiguity and François Boucher's Painted Pastorals', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 30 (1996-97), 25-57 (p. 32).

<sup>16</sup> Bianconi, *Music in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 175.

characters related to historical figures such as the Amazons and gave Ariosto's story an air of historical specificity, locating it within a long lost age.<sup>17</sup>

The reversal of 'norms' of masculine activity and feminine passivity allowed in the genre of mythology meant that it had the potential to visualise alternative societies. Poussin's drawing of *Cephalus and Aurora* figures a reversal of the gender roles instigated by a patriarchal system of government (fig. 36). The pose of the goddess and her rapt beloved inverts the most dramatic pair of male aggressor and female victim from Cortona's *Rape of the Sabines* (fig. 37). The Sabine rape, the foundation act of the Roman patriarchal state, organised men and women into occupying the gender roles of patriarchy.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, Poussin drew Aurora carrying Cephalus to her chariot, waiting to transport the lovers to her sacred grove. This grove was a place outside mortal laws where Cephalus could enjoy sexual pleasure away from the marriage bed. The reversal of Cortona's painting in Poussin's drawing is reminiscent of how seventeenth-century feminist writers used the Amazons, a society run by women, to figure an alternative political system to patriarchy.<sup>19</sup>

### 6.3. Locating Poussin's Paintings

The distance of history and fantasy present in mythological subject matter was replicated in the physical spaces where transgressive mythological paintings were shown. These private and exclusive spaces could operate as a permissible space for figuring more fluid notions of gender due to their spatial distance from the civic sphere.

Around 1689, the French gentleman Robert de Cotte wrote an account of seeing Poussin's mythological paintings in the Palazzo dal Pozzo as part of his visit to three famous Roman painting collections. It was customary for travellers to make notes for themselves, or for correspondents, in order to keep a record of the important people they had met, and the interesting things they had seen.<sup>20</sup>

De Cotte's report confirms that the *Camera Grande*, which contained Poussin's *Landscape at Grottaferrata*, was the fifth and penultimate room of the dal Pozzo painting suite. The room was verdant in green velvet and damask furnishings and was dominated by Poussin's paintings of lovers in landscapes - *Piramus and Thisbe*, *Mars and Venus* (fig. 2), *Cephalus and Aurora* (fig. 3), and possibly *Diana and Endymion*

<sup>17</sup> Shemek, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Norman Bryson, 'Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women', in *Rape: An Historical and Cultural Enquiry*, ed. by Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 152-173, (pp. 155-60).

<sup>19</sup> Odorisio, pp. 70, 73.

<sup>20</sup> De Cotte, fols 210-13, printed in Thuillier, 'Pour un "Corpus"', p. 202.

and *Venus and Adonis* - as well as other sea and landscapes by the painter, including one of a sleeping faun, and one of the knights who come to rescue Rinaldo from the seductions of Armida.<sup>21</sup> The latter two works are discussed in the next chapter.

In addition to the mythological paintings, there was a pair of religious pendants by Poussin of *Christ and the Samaritan woman* and *Rebecca at the well*.<sup>22</sup> These last two paintings also depict dominant women. For example, in Poussin's *Rebecca at the well*, Rebecca is depicted in an upright, dignified pose whilst Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, bows before her. His action is necessitated by his need to drink, yet Poussin painted him in an attitude of submission (fig. 38). De Cotte noted this painting first in his list, marking it with an asterisk to indicate a particularly powerful painting.<sup>23</sup>

Religious and mythological paintings with similar formats were interposed in the *Camera* in such a way as to produce the kind of unified narrative that was discussed in Chapter Two. An indication that de Cotte recognised that the theme of the room was the sort of gender inversions produced by the trope of 'Love Conquers All' was his placement of another asterisk next to Poussin's painting showing *Mars and Venus* (fig. 2). The asterisk suggests that de Cotte found the painting of the god of war submitting to Venus' wiles particularly striking.

De Cotte's sense of the room's theme helps to justify the use of the inventories of 1689 and 1695 to reconstruct the 'location' of some of Poussin's mythological paintings in early seventeenth-century terms. Although several of Poussin's works, possibly including the *Cephalus and Aurora* (fig. 3), did not enter the collection until 1652 through the bequest of Roccatagliata, a painting dealer and friend of the dal Pozzo household, the inventories give a sense of the potential of Poussin's paintings in their

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<sup>21</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 222r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558; Timothy Standring, 'Some Pictures in the Dal Pozzo Collection: Three New Inventories' *Burlington Magazine*, 130 (1998), 608-26. The 1689 inventory lists two pictures of Endymion believed to be by Poussin. This could have been a mistaken reading of paintings of sleeping fauns such as the one at Montpellier with a Pozzo provenance which has not been accounted for in the 1689 inventory. Alternatively they could be the pair of pictures of Endymion listed as by the school of Poussin and Chaperon (a follower of Poussin) in the collection of the Cardinal Fesch; see A. Pigler, *Barockthemen eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zue Ikonographie des 17 & 18 Jahrhunderts*, (Budapest: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1956) p. 154.

<sup>22</sup> The painting of *Christ and the Samaritan woman* is untraced; see Standring, 'Some Pictures', pp. 624-5. Poussin's later painting of the scene of 1662 is also lost but a copy exists in a private collection in New York; see Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pl. 239. In this painting Christ sits by the well whilst the Samaritan woman stands in order to draw water from the well (John 4. 7-26). The format of an upright, hierarchically dominant woman accompanied by a man who occupies a lower register in the painting is similar to the early *Rebecca at the well* painting from the dal Pozzo collection.

<sup>23</sup> In his account of the mythological room De Cotte marked three paintings with asterisks: the *Rachel/Rebecca, Carlo and Ubaldo* and the *Venus and Mars*. Thuillier has argued that these marks indicate the paintings that most struck the author when writing his report, see: 'Pour un "Corpus"', p. 203.

original context.<sup>24</sup> Whenever they entered the collection, they were assimilated into a pre-formed programme of display. This arrangement can inform us about the location of the encounter with Poussin's mythological paintings in the specificities of the social life of seventeenth-century Romans.

De Cotte's report demonstrates that seeing the dal Pozzo's collection of paintings was an activity inflected with a sense of privilege. His attention to the *Camera Grande* demonstrated a cultural sensitivity to the messages communicated in the mythological room about the status of the dal Pozzo family in relation to other aristocrats. Mythological painting was an iconography that was utilised by powerful people in order to indicate their erudite status and high cultivation.<sup>25</sup> In the early seventeenth century, many of the leading families of Rome had acquired or commissioned mythological paintings and frescos for their Roman palaces and country villas.<sup>26</sup>

De Cotte's sense of honour must have been increased by being led to the farthest rooms where paintings were displayed in the Palazzo. We saw in Chapter Two that the *Camera Grande*, the fifth room of the apartment, appears to have been connected to more private family rooms such as a sleeping area and a chapel. In grand palaces guests were allowed to progress through suites of rooms in degrees that reflected their status.<sup>27</sup> Even though this practice may not have occurred in the gentlemanly Palazzo dal Pozzo, de Cotte may have still felt flattered by his entry to this room. Mancini had advised that the *padrone* restrict showing the kind of lascivious and mythological imagery displayed in the *Camera Grande* to his close confidants alone.<sup>28</sup> De Cotte seems to have recognised the privilege accorded to him: he spent more time describing the works in the farthest rooms than in the preceding four chambers.<sup>29</sup>

The censorship activities of the Church in the sphere of religious painting had underscored the relationship between the privileged space of privacy and transgressive mythological imagery. Paleotti advised that mythological imagery should be restricted to use by elite, educated scholars and poets in 'remote places' in order to sustain the

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<sup>24</sup> For discussions of when works entered the Pozzo collection see Standring, 'Some Pictures', pp. 608-26; Mahon, 'Gli esordi di Nicolas Poussin', pp. 13-33; and Sonia Amadio, 'Per una prima ricognizione di dipinti di Nicolas Poussin regesto di documenti di collezioni romane tra seicento e primo settecento', in *Nicolas Poussin: I Primi Anni Romani*, pp. 144-53 (pp. 148-49).

<sup>25</sup> Sez nec, pp. 266-69.

<sup>26</sup> Cieri Via, pp. 36-48.

<sup>27</sup> Waddy, pp. 4-6.

<sup>28</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> De Cotte may have also paid special attention to these two rooms because of his national interest in Poussin.



difference between themselves and more general 'Christian and honourable people'.<sup>30</sup> Paleotti's recommendations were born out in practice. The Papal Index of prohibited texts was designed to keep such sensitive material away from the eyes of the populace.<sup>31</sup> In 1624, 1627, and 1628, Marino's book *Adone* was placed on the Index due to this unease. In the case of the *Adone* however, it is clear that it was relatively easy to gain a pass to read the item if one had the relevant connections. Indeed, Cassiano dal Pozzo himself was involved in getting these for his correspondents.<sup>32</sup>

#### 6.4. The Arcadian Gallery

The privileged and private nature of the *Camera Grande* can help us begin to consider the type of behaviour permitted in this space. Social decorum, which restricted the display of mythological imagery to this room, also meant that the space had the ability to arouse behaviour in a gentleman that would be considered transgressive if manifested in the civic sphere. The spatial relationship between civic and aristocratic private space gave the latter its sense of permissive atmosphere.

In Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, for example, the character Federico Fregoso recommends that a courtier can engage in more bawdy and wild dances when in a 'private room, of the kind we are in now' because he was away from the eyes of the public. The dances Fregoso mentions included the *brando* where gentlemen kiss their partners, move on and kiss their new partner.<sup>33</sup> The ability to discard social decorum and enjoy a more sexualised behaviour was attached to the spaces of an elite, private sphere.

Fregoso's advice is echoed in the productions of opera that occurred in 1620s' Rome. Private spaces allowed men who were publicly engaged with the serious duties of the Catholic Church to indulge in frivolous activities through recreating the operas in their imagination. The complex relationship between the private and public circulation of opera experience is evident in the published lyrics of the 1626 opera *La Catena d'Adone*. The little book includes the allegory of the opera. According to the book the opera demonstrated the moral that reason is easily overcome by the senses.<sup>34</sup> Such

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<sup>30</sup> Paleotti, pp. 292-93; 504-06.

<sup>31</sup> Roberto Zapperi, 'L'ignudo e il vestito', in *Gli amori degli dei: Nuove indagini sulla Galleria Farnese*, ed. by Andre Chastel, Giulio Briganti and Roberto Zapperi (Rome: Elefante, 1987), pp. 49-68 (p. 53); Fumaroli, *L'Inspiration du poète*, p. 61.

<sup>32</sup> Mirollo, *The Poet of the Marvelous*, p. 98-100; Lumbroso, p. 138

<sup>33</sup> Castiglione, p. 118.

<sup>34</sup> Ottavio Tronsarelli, *La Catena d'Adone* (Rome: Corbelletti, 1626).

allegories facilitated the progress of mythological tales past the scrutiny of the Inquisition and allowed them to circulate in the public sphere.<sup>35</sup>

The allegory also provided a commentary on the private experience of the guests before the elaborate scenery, costumes, special effects and music of the opera that they witnessed in the Palace of Sig. Marchese Euandro Conti. The opera, based on a section of Marino's long poem *Adone*, treated the audience to a tale of a sorceress able to make pleasurable gardens appear at whim and restrain her beloved with a magic chain; Adonis in chains appears on the frontispiece of the book (fig. 39).<sup>36</sup> The allegory that reason is easily overcome by the senses restaged the sensual affects of the opera's dazzling spectacle of sound and image upon its audience. The allegory could be purchased and read by gentlemen in private. Here they could have imagined legitimately the sensuous excess of the opera experience. Poussin's mythological paintings operated in a space of privacy where people experienced transgressive behaviour.

The rooms where Poussin's mythological paintings were displayed also evoked the behaviour permitted in the Arcadian landscape. Two of the rooms of the dal Pozzo gallery suite were devoted to pictures of fruit, flowers and birds, as if the bounteous nature associated with the agricultural production of the country villa also blossomed within the town Palace. This sense of Arcadia was carried into the next room where Poussin's mythological paintings were displayed through the colour of the furnishings. The green curtains and chairs in the room would have associated the space with spring, Arcadia, gardens and pleasure.<sup>37</sup> Angelo Giori also brought the countryside into his Roman Palace through his mythological painting gallery. Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* was hung in the *Galleria* that was next to his garden. Six landscape paintings by Claude, also in this room, would have helped to transport the viewer to the delights of

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<sup>35</sup> Seznec, p. 271.

<sup>36</sup> This opera seems to have been written for two female singers, though was performed by castrati, see: Hammond, *Music and Spectacle*, p. 126.

<sup>37</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 222r, printed in Spati, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558. On the colour green see Gage, p. 143. In the early seventeenth-century poem by Giuseppe Salomoni, 'Veste di color verde della sua donna', printed in *Poesia del Seicento*, ed. by Carlo Muscetta and Pier Paolo Ferrante, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1964) I, 660, the narrator's lover wears a green dress in the spring when the new flowers and grass are sprouting. The colour green mitigates the narrator's pain because it is a sign of hope: 'col verde color forse m'insegna/ a mitigar sperando il duolo interno,/ poscia che 'l verde è di speranza insegna'.

the villa garden.<sup>38</sup> The connotations of these rooms reflected Mancini's advice that lascivious mythological imagery should be shown in 'garden galleries'.<sup>39</sup>

These galleries reflected the springtime pastoral stage sets that Bourdelot, Cassiano's friend, found so delightful in counteracting winter blues.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the nature of theatre in this period meant that domestic spaces were often used to stage plays whose sets spilled out into other spaces of entertainment. A late sixteenth-century book described how various hostesses transformed their dining rooms and gardens; their guests ate dinner within stage sets representing palaces or grottoes and then watched plays.<sup>41</sup> The conscious blurring between domestic space, fabricated Arcadia and pleasurable entertainment may be echoed in the description of the library of Cassiano dal Pozzo as a 'domestic Parnassus'.<sup>42</sup> This comment may have been encouraged by the experience of entering the library. The library was accessed through the rooms of the picture gallery; we have seen that at least three of these were presented as a spring-like Arcadian space.

In addition to their similarities in appearance, the experience of walking through the mythological painting gallery was analogous to that of the villa garden. We saw in Chapter Two that gentlemen's painting collections were divided between different rooms each with a diverse theme created by the particular works displayed in each room. This layout was remarkably similar to the arrangement of the villa gardens into clearly defined and themed groves. At the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, for example, the visitor was encouraged to walk through the different experiences offered by each grove in a determined route in order to emphasise the overall narrative of the garden as a progression from Parnassus of the Golden Age to the laws of man. The different spaces of the garden were used for different sorts of entertainment, such as listening to music or dining, which particularly suited the theme of the space.<sup>43</sup>

The Arcadian connotations of the *Camera Grande* in the dal Pozzo Palace would have contributed to the permissive nature of this space established by its privileged and private location. The fantasy journey induced by the paintings in this room could have

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<sup>38</sup> Rosemary MacLean, "'O Gran Principe O Gran Prelato": Claude's Roman Patrons and the Appeal of his Landscape Easel Paintings', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 126 (1995), 223-34 (pp. 226-27); Rome AS, A. N., no. 6643, fols 334r-341v, printed in Corradini, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143.

<sup>40</sup> Pierre Bourdelot, quoted in Lumbroso, p. 231: 'je fus surprise ne me pouvant imaginer assez de pouvoir dans les homes pour forcer l'ordre des saisons et nous faire jouir de la douceur d'un printemps parmy les rigueurs de l'hyver'.

<sup>41</sup> Crane, pp. 311-13.

<sup>42</sup> David Freedberg, 'From Hebrew and gardens to oranges and lemons, Giovan Battista Ferrari and Cassiano dal Pozzo', in *Cassiano dal Pozzo: Atti del Seminario internazionale di studi*, ed. by Francesco Solinas (Rome: De Luca Edizione, 1989), pp. 37-72 (p. 37).

<sup>43</sup> Lazzaro-Bruno, pp. 553-60; Coffin, pp. 319-38.

persuaded a gentleman that he was experiencing the relative freedom of the countryside, where the rules of city-life did not apply.

### 6.5. Feminine Looking

The private, privileged, and Arcadian connotations of the *Camera Grande* surrounded Poussin's paintings that depicted alternative relations between men and women. In this space, the presence of womanly desire hinted at in the *Grottaferrata* painting was emphasised by its companion piece: the *Cephalus and Aurora* (fig. 3) now at Hovingham. *The Landscape at Grottaferrata* hung over a door, and the rather larger *Cephalus and Aurora* was hung next to it on the same wall. In 1695, the only other pictures on this wall were two paintings of tragic scenes.<sup>44</sup> People walking around the apartment would have caught sight of the two mythological paintings together.

Aurora's obvious signs of desire would have emphasised the gestures of the shepherdess's passion in the accompanying painting of *Grottaferrata*, such as her hand held tightly on top of her beloved's head. The *Cephalus and Aurora* shows the Goddess of Dawn being called to her duty by Zephyr and the Hours. The sun is already rising, yet Aurora refuses to leave the beautiful Cephalus whom she had taken to her bower. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Cephalus tells that when captured he found the goddess very beautiful but he still loved his wife and he talked incessantly of his recent marriage until Aurora sent him back, thoroughly annoyed (VII. 700-13). The painting echoes Ovid's text by showing Cephalus half entwined in Aurora's embrace, his legs open to receive her thigh, his shoulder caressed by her hand. His chest is flushed as Aurora presses her bare breasts against him. He also turns his head and holds up his hand, at first perhaps to shade his lover from the raking dawn light which signifies the end of their night of passion, but also to free his mouth to complain. Aurora looks intently at Cephalus, reflecting Ovid's description of how she fell in love with him when the dawn light first revealed him to her eyes (VII. 703-4).

I have argued throughout this thesis that one of the most significant details of Poussin's paintings is the fact that women are repeatedly shown looking at men. This

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<sup>44</sup> In the 1695 inventory both paintings are clearly listed next to each other; see Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 6, vol. 210, fol. 261v, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 563 nos 113-14. The other two paintings on this wall were of tragic subjects: copies of Poussin's *Plague at Ashdod* and *Phocion's Wife Collecting Her Husband's Ashes*. This pairing may also be evident in the 1689 inventory: a 'lunga e stretta' painting of 'due figure che abbracciano' has a 'compagno con veduta di Paese e figure', Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 222r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558. Robert de Cotte saw a *Cephalus and Aurora* in the room in about 1689; see fols 210-13, printed in Thuillier, 'Pour un "Corpus"', p. 203. The *Cephalus* was originally 90x157.5, and the *Grottaferrata* was originally about 67.5x202.5. The *Cephalus* was called a 'sopraporto' in 1735. See: Standing, 'Some Pictures', pp. 615-16, 617 n. 53, 619.

type of viewing, depicted in paintings such as *Cephalus and Aurora*, reflects the probable function of the room in the dal Pozzo Palace. The room's relationship to the more private spaces of the house indicates that it had the potential to express the concerns of the family. Collections displayed in these spaces were intimately tied into the continuation of the family dynasty as precious objects could be handed down from generation to generation.<sup>45</sup> Decoration with mythological themes, often taken from Ovidian love imagery, was directed to the women of the household in their role as producers of children.<sup>46</sup> Family concerns involved engaging feminine desire and sexuality. Such viewing practices were emphasised in the late sixteenth century. In response to the Church's desire to keep mythological imagery away from the public sphere, Roman patrons of palace decoration tended to relegate erotic subject matter to rooms such as the *Sala degli sposi*, the room for newly-weds.<sup>47</sup>

The *Camera Grande* had the ability to represent the feminine desire that was perceived to be crucial to the generation of children. Poussin's female viewers could therefore have reflected the nature of feminine viewing encouraged in the *Camera Grande*. This argument seeks to counteract two other possible interpretations. Firstly, that these women were necessarily objects of a masculine gaze. Secondly, that images of beautiful male bodies inevitably cemented homo-social relations between men.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the kinds of patriarchal-homosocial structures of looking that mythological paintings could instigate were confined to the first two rooms of the dal Pozzo painting suite. The nature of the mythological paintings displayed in the *Camera Grande* strongly contrasts with that of the works displayed in these two rooms. In the first room, for example, amongst paintings of landscapes, religious works and portraits by some of the leading artists of the day, there were four mythological works: a spinet cover by Brill showing Orpheus, presumably playing music to the animals; a copy of Poussin's *Midas and Bacchus*; and two large pendants of *Perseus and Andromeda* and *The Judgement of Paris* by the Sieneese artist Francesco Rustici. Unlike Poussin's mythological paintings in the fifth room, these mythological paintings concentrate on active men and objectified women, or beautiful men who are looked at by men. The paintings show a damsel who sleeps off too much wine; a princess tied to a rock

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<sup>45</sup> Margreta de Grazia, 'The ideology of superfluous things: King Lear as a period piece', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 17-42 (p. 31).

<sup>46</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, p. 143; Cieri Via, pp. 31-3, 43-44; Musacchio, p. 126-47.

<sup>47</sup> Zapperi, 'L'ignudo e il vestito', pp. 61-62.

<sup>48</sup> On homosociality see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

awaiting her rescuer; and goddesses who are judged for their beauty. In Poussin's *Midas and Bacchus* (fig. 40) a circle of fauns encloses the perfect body of Bacchus. The kneeling King Midas appears to worship this form. Furthermore, a visual trick of juxtaposition between fore and background figures makes one faun seem to reach to suck the god's fingers.

The choice of the dal Pozzo family to encourage homo-social forms of looking in the earlier rooms of the suite related to the connections between this type of looking and the kinds of status that could be demonstrated through mythological imagery.<sup>49</sup> We saw in Chapter Two that rooms at the beginning of the apartment, according to Mancini, should be hung with didactic portraits showing great men. The purpose of such a display was to impress upon visitors the magnificence of the man with whom they were waiting to negotiate. The forms of viewing encouraged by the type of mythological works in these rooms accorded with this rhetoric of patriarchal masculine power.

Poussin's paintings displayed in the *Camera Grande* existed on the margins of these patriarchal ways of looking. The freedom sanctioned by the relatively private space of the *Camera Grande* could have allowed other practices of looking to operate, such as the feminine standpoints outlined in Chapter One.

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The permissive space of the villa garden existed in a fragile relationship with the laws of decorum that governed the public, civic space. The inscription in the garden of the Villa Borghese, built by the papal nephew Scipione Borghese from 1606 on the edges of Rome, encapsulates the possibility of this space:

Whosoever thou art, so long as thou art a free man, fear not here the bonds of the laws!... In this golden age, which holds the promise of universal security, the master of the house wishes to lay no iron laws upon the well-bred. Let seemly enjoyment be the guest's only law.<sup>50</sup>

In 1612, one guest to the Villa Borghese, from north of the Alps, did not take so kindly to Scipione's invitation and furiously spoke out about the lascivious mythological pictures he had seen inside the villa. The Pope came to hear of his criticisms and closed

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<sup>49</sup> Taste could be demonstrated through the rhetoric of patriarchal heterosexuality where women were beautiful objects; see Castiglione, pp. 101-2, 86; G. B. Agucchi, 'Descrizione della *Venere Dormiente* di Annibale Carracci', in Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice: vite de' pittori bolognesi*, 3 vols (Rome: Pagliarini, 1769; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1974), I, 360-68; and Elizabeth Cropper, 'The Beauty of Woman: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture', in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, pp. 175-90.

<sup>50</sup> Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, trans. by Dom Ernest Graf, 40 vols (London: Kegan Paul, 1891-1953), XXVI, p. 454.

the villa to all visitors.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, when scandal threatened to blemish the reputation of the Pope through his family, it was important to disassociate in the public's eye mythological painting displayed in the Arcadian villa space from the government of the Church.

The private gallery that existed in the gentlemanly Palazzo dal Pozzo escaped some of the restrictions of the civic sphere. It was a perfect location for experiencing the affects of transgressive mythological imagery. In the following chapter we shall see how the non-homosocial modes of viewing present in Poussin's mythological paintings related to the gentlemanly pleasures associated with the 'location' of these works. At the same time, the gentleman's gallery was a space that had to accommodate a certain threat of exposure. These residences were, after all, occupied by potential papal families. In the next chapter, we shall see how the state of dual gender was crucial to such negotiations. The paintings by Nicolas Poussin, which hung in the room beyond the *Camera Grande*, were also relevant for a continual process of acceptance and rejection of mythological imagery that was figured at the Villa Borghese.

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<sup>51</sup> Pastor, XXVI, p. 454 n.2.

## *Chapter Seven: The Landscape of Feminine Leisure*

In this chapter, I want to consider in depth one reason for the experience of a gentleman identifying with a feminine standpoint in terms of the 'location' of Poussin's paintings that was traced in Chapter Six. It is probable that the justification for the experience was found partly in the type of restorative possibilities offered by the villa garden.

One validation of the *otium* and pleasure experienced at the villa was the claim that it restored the body to a harmonious state.<sup>1</sup> The potential dual state of gender, which a regarnder could have experienced before Poussin's paintings in the Arcadian space of the mythological painting gallery, signified as an ideal state of harmony. I have argued that Poussin's paintings had the ability to activate a process that would have allowed a gentleman to experience aspects of femininity. Through this practice of viewing a gentleman would have been restored to the original state of being male *and* female. Galen had argued that this was the constitution of a man as he was conceived in the womb, as both mother and father contributed semen that conjoined and formed the embryo. This theory gained ascendancy in humanist medicine by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of harmony experienced as dual gender was also a current idea in philosophy. Throughout the Renaissance period, there were several positive interpretations of figures of dual gender, such as hermaphrodites, particularly in neo-platonic philosophy and theology. It could be a figure of a heavenly ideal state, of the positive nature of marriage, of the ideal ruler, or of the meeting between a human soul and celestial perfection.<sup>3</sup>

The simultaneous masculine and feminine characteristics displayed by Poussin's protagonists had the potential to be conceived as a figure for the type of healthy body that villa life was meant to produce. Such a notion would have been reinforced by Plato's *Symposium*. In this text, a discussion of the ideal of medicine in terms of harmony gives way to the discussion of the primary state of beings when there were three sexes: male, female and androgynous. In this original state, each body was

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<sup>1</sup> Coffin, pp. 273-75; Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness', p. 130; Gerd van Riel, *Pleasure and the Good Life. Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 234-5.

<sup>2</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, pp. 36-39. On Campanella's use of Galen's reproductive theory see Bolzoni, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Silberman, p. 651; Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 12; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, 'Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe', in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 80-111 (pp. 98-100).



composed of two beings, with two faces and two sets of genitalia. The androgynous sex had one male and one female part. When these beings were separated they mourned the loss of their other halves. They only gained satisfaction from coming together with their lost halves through sexual intercourse. This episode's relevance to villa life is indicated by the fact that through this intercourse 'they'd be relieved and go back to work' (191).<sup>4</sup> The rest received through *otium* was traditionally justified as it restored the body to a state ready for labour.<sup>5</sup>

The relationships depicted in Poussin's paintings encourage us to apply a heterosexual reading of Plato's passage about the original dual state of mankind. This reading enables a link to be made from Plato's description of the satisfaction and restoration of the body, through the joining of male and female, to the imagery contained in the previous discourse on health. Here, the character Eryximachus argues that medicine, aiming to create a healthy body, should 'make inimical elements in the body friendly and love each other... the most inimical elements are the most opposite: cold to hot, bitter to sweet, dry to wet' (186). In the context of a medical discourse based on the four humours, hot, dry, wet and cold, a representation of a body that contained masculinity and femininity, like those happy beings of Plato's creation story, or those in Poussin's paintings, could signify a body in concord.

In this chapter, I will consider how Poussin utilised the location of landscape in order to depict men and women who shared attributes of each other's gender. These paintings could have affected gentlemen in the context of relaxation and restoration at the villa.

### 7.1. The Gender of Masculine *Otium*

The Arcadian locations of Poussin's paintings can be partly understood within the concept of 'landscape' as a site of male relaxation where different relationships between the sexes could be experienced and enjoyed. We have seen that the liberal space of the Arcadian landscape permitted the representation of a different notion of the masculine gender than that instigated by men's duties in the civic sphere. This notion of masculinity involved an element of the feminine gender. The ancient writer Sallust expressed this concept most vehemently; he argued that opulent relaxation could 'render

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<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by R. E. Allen (Harvard: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 126-32 (186-191).

<sup>5</sup> Coffin, pp. 273-74; Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness', p. 130. The inscription in the Palazzo del Te read: 'Honest leisure after work to restore strength'.

the most manly body and soul effeminate' as it encouraged negative qualities such as avarice.<sup>6</sup>

Poussin explored the significances of completely relaxed men in several of his paintings of the 1620s.<sup>7</sup> It is evident that in Poussin's paintings, the motif helped to convey an air of a pastoral idyll full of soothing music and a bountiful harvest. One of these paintings, the *Landscape with a Faun*, was displayed in the *Camera Grande* of the Palazzo dal Pozzo (fig. 41).<sup>8</sup> This painting shows a faun asleep, being gazed upon by a woman. By her feet is a water jug, suggesting she has been at work collecting supplies from the nearby river. In contrast, the faun bears no sign of toil. Even his pipes have been stolen by the impish putti who stares out in our direction, communicating the joke about the profound state of this man's slumber.<sup>9</sup> Displayed in the *Camera Grande*, the *Faun* could have encouraged the regarder of other paintings in this space, such as Poussin's *Aurora and Cephalus*, to consider the positive benefits that men could enjoy whilst being in a state of rest in Arcadia.

Poussin's *Landscape with a Faun* alludes to the notion of the Arcadian countryside as a masculine space of relaxation that was antithetical to the work that went on in the city. Poussin's motif of the sleeping faun could have been interpreted as a figure of *otium* because sleep, like leisure, was perceived as an opposition of work.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of *otium* allowed men to imagine and experience an escape from courtly pressures. Away from the city, courtiers could enjoy the absence of the threat of social disgrace and the constant flattery and backbiting involved in sustaining one's position.<sup>11</sup> However, sustained *otium* was an ideal that was not easy to reach. Men who were employed in the papal bureaucracy could not live permanently at a villa until the

<sup>6</sup> Sallustius Crispus, *Bellum Catilinae*, ed. by J. T. Ramsey (Chico: Scholar's Press, 1984), p. 31 (XI. 3); Vickers, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> On Poussin's *Landscape with Ceres and Bacchus* see Xanthe Brooke, 'Confirming a Poussin: New Evidence from the Walker Art Gallery Liverpool', *Apollo*, 153 (2001), 13-20 (p. 18). A variant sleeping man also appears in Poussin's *Youth of Bacchus* (Chantilly, Musée Condé No. 298). Further examples of positive sleep imagery are depictions of the sleeping Silenus and Aegle from Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*. Poussin produced a drawing of this scene: Bayonne, Musée Bonnat (AI 1672 NI 47 verso). His colleague, Duquesnoy, also carved a version for Cassiano dal Pozzo; see Colantuono, 'The Tender Infant', pp. 137-49, and Sparti, *Le Collezioni*, fig. 73. Such images may have appealed to the same tastes as the many ivories imported from Goa in the seventeenth century which depict sleeping shepherds.

<sup>8</sup> The painting is identified as the work that hung in the *Camera Grande* listed in 1695 as the 'Altro di palmi 4 con Satiri del Possino', Rome AS, 30 N. C., U.6, vol.210, fol. 259v, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 563, no. 87, by Bozzolani in his *Osservazioni*, fol. 37, printed in Standring, 'Come fare l'inventario', p. 214, no. 125.

<sup>9</sup> This was the painting's main conceit according to the inscription, again probably in the hand of Cassiano dal Pozzo, on the reverse of the canvas: 'SATYRUS.NINPHA.FLUMEN.ET.PUER. RAPTA.SATYRI. FISTULA.FUGIENS.NS.POSINUS.PINXIT'.

<sup>10</sup> In Cartari's discussion of the god Somnos he quotes Seneca's eulogy: 'O Sonno almo ristoro alle fatiche/ De mortali' (Oh Sleep restore the soul of mortals to work), p. 298

<sup>11</sup> Coffin, pp. 9-11.

end of their careers.<sup>12</sup> Leisure was experienced in brief snatches, quite similar to the holidays of modern society. In the early seventeenth century, paintings were employed to support the fantasy of a male escape from work in the spaces of the city. Tasso's episode of Erminia discovering a group of shepherds enjoying the contemplative life in *Gerusalemme Liberata* was a very popular subject for painting.<sup>13</sup> It appealed to men such as the Roman papal bureaucrat Agucchi who wrote in 1602 'I have made every effort to make myself a strong nest so that I can resist every surprise storm' that occurs at 'the sea of the court'.<sup>14</sup>

It is relevant that Erminia decides to experience the contemplative life of the countryside when she is disguised in warrior's armour. In Domenichino's version of the subject (fig. 42), the rather Herculean peasant reacts in startled surprise to the warrior standing before him. The masculine nature of the peasant's leisure is stressed by the woman to the left of the painting, who is engaged in the activity of carrying a bucket and tending to the sheep. Erminia can join these leisured men because she masquerades as one of them. However, Erminia was still conceived as a woman, her feminine qualities are shown in the painting by her pale skin and slim frame, in accordance with Agucchi's advice directed at painters of this subject.<sup>15</sup>

Erminia may have been useful as an image of leisure because of the slippery morality of *otium*. Although *otium* was considered by the humanist scholars of the Renaissance period to be a positive experience, during the Middle Ages the negative connotations of this condition had been stressed. In ancient and Christian writings male idleness was sinful. If a man chose to relax he could be considered weak, sensual and effeminate. The academic work and discussion practiced at the villa by Renaissance gentlemen helped to ensure that they did not lose their sense of masculinity.<sup>16</sup> However, the moral fears about *otium* meant that such men were aware of the changed nature of their gender when at the villa. Erminia figured leisure as masculine-feminine. She appears as a man, but inside her clothes she is a woman. Through locating this

<sup>12</sup> Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome 1500-1559* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976), p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> Whitfield, 'A Programme', pp. 220-22; Milovan Stanić, 'Herminie dans le paradis artificiel des bergers. Avatars d'un motif tassien dans la peinture du XVIIe siècle', in *La Jérusalem délivrée du Tasse*, pp. 15-39. Painters also used the ideal of a simple life in the countryside as a positive escape from life at court; see Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: on the ancestry of the modern artist*, trans. by David McLintock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 247-48.

<sup>14</sup> Printed in Eugenio Battisti, *L'antirinasimento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962), pp. 538-42, (p. 540): 'io mi ritrovi in questo mare della corte.... per la qual cagione ho' fatto ogni opera di fabricarmi contro me stesso uno si forte nido, ch'io ci possa resistere ad ogni inprovisa borasca'.

<sup>15</sup> In Agucchi's *concetto* sent to Ludovico Carracci describing how to paint this subject, the writer stressed that the painter should still show Erminia's 'ornamento femminile'; see Whitfield, 'A Programme', p. 219.

<sup>16</sup> Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness', pp. 129-30; Coffin, pp. 11-12, 336. On *otium* as productive leisure in the context of Poussin's paintings see Olson, pp. 222, 233, 243.

experience inside the body of a woman, the episode of Erminia and the shepherds helped to preserve fully masculine standpoints for gentlemen.

Despite such moral tensions, Roman patrons showed great interest in representations of men reclining and sleeping through their commissions of mythological imagery during the 1620s.<sup>17</sup> Poussin's *Landscape with a Faun* was one such representation. The imagery found in these paintings and sculptures was a significant departure from sleep iconography developed in the preceding century, which was dominated by the figures of mythological women, such as nymphs or Venus, asleep in the landscape, as in Titian's *Pardo Venus* (fig. 43).<sup>18</sup> Whilst women and children were often shown in paintings asleep, especially through the affects of wine, it was much more problematic for men to be shown unconscious. Sleep, in the Christian schema could be a sign of sloth, a rejection of the traditional divisions of gendered labour instituted by God's order that Adam delve and Eve spin.<sup>19</sup> Villa decorations manifest the importance of justifying this troubling activity.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to these moralistic images, Poussin's faun adopts the pose of sleeping women in sixteenth-century painting without sign of punishment. The faun's fantastical nature distanced him far enough from civic morals to allow such an ambivalent figure to be celebrated.

The faun in the painting displayed in the *Camera Grande* seems just to be asleep. Work, even intellectual activity, is absent. In this respect Poussin's paintings

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<sup>17</sup> Two pieces of ancient art, which came to the attention of artists and scholars in the late 1620s, appear to have stimulated or complimented Poussin's experiments with positive images of resting males. One figure was the *Barberini Faun*, the second was the figure of Hymen or Bacchus in the *Aldobrandini wedding* fresco that was of interest to Cassiano dal Pozzo and his correspondents. Although the ancient Roman fresco was discovered in 1601 it did not attract the interest of artists and scholars until the late 1620s; see Francesca Cappelletti and Caterina Volpi, 'New Documents Concerning the Discovery and Early History of the *Nozze Aldobrandini*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 56 (1993), 274-280. Poussin included a quotation of the figure from the fresco in two of his mythological paintings produced in the 1620s: as Bacchus in *The Andrians* (Louvre), and, with some variations, including the introduction of the sleep motif, as Autumn in *Phaeton begging the chariot of Apollo* (Berlin). The text from which Poussin worked did not directly describe this figure as asleep, see: Timothy Worthen, 'Poussin's Paintings of Flora', *Art Bulletin*, 61 (1979), 575-88 (p. 586).

<sup>18</sup> Millard Meiss, *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 212-29; Patricia Emison, 'Asleep in the Grass of Arcady: Giulio Campagnola's Dreamer', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45 (1992), 271-92; Filipczak, p. 72. Sixteenth-century artists in central Italy began to experiment with image of the sleeping Endymion, but one should note that Endymion was put to sleep by Diana rather than falling asleep himself.

<sup>19</sup> Meiss, pp. 223-24; *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, ed. by Charles G. Herbermann and others, 15 vols (London: Caxton, 1912), xiv, p. 57; Nanette Salomon, 'Dreamers, Idlers and other dozers: aspects of sleep in Dutch Art' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1984), pp. 10-62.

<sup>20</sup> Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness', pp. 129-30. Paintings following Ovid's description of the House of Sleep from *Metamorphoses* (xi, 592-632), where sleep's positive affects are praised, appear in the Villa Farnese at Caprarola (roundel, Camera dell'Aurora) and Villa Farnesina (frieze, Sala delle Prospettive). The latter room originally had an inscription: 'Vale et dormi: somnus enim otium est. Animae felices a miseris in dimidio vitae non differunt' (Be healthy and sleep: sleep truly is *otium*. Happy spirits do not differ from sad ones in this half of life); see Mogens Nykjar, 'La Villa Farnesina: Identificazione di un motivo ovidiano nella Sala delle Prospettive', *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, 21 (1993), 213-18 (p. 217).

contrast with fifteenth and sixteenth-century images of male sleep which drew on neo-platonic philosophy in order to show that men could have access to a higher level of intellectual activity through this state.<sup>21</sup> Poussin's images of male sleep appear to demonstrate a parallel merging of masculine and feminine qualities that occurred in the figure of Erminia, seen in the early seventeenth century as an ideal figure for *otium*. In the *Faun*, Poussin drew upon a pose and qualities traditionally associated with women sleeping in the landscape. The feminine characteristics displayed in this body could signify a total absence of all work, even the scholarly practices conducted at the villa.

## 7.2. Feminine Desire and *Otium*

The Arcadian landscape used by Poussin as a setting for his paintings allowed him to represent women as active and desiring subjects, a crucial aspect of the configuration of masculinity connected with *otium*. Writers on *otium* had linked the condition with the smitten male lover, reclining and receiving the affections of a woman. Images that depicted mythological men in this position, such as the sleeping Cupid looked upon by Psyche, were used in the sixteenth century in places specifically designed for *otium*.<sup>22</sup> These ideas were crystallised by Marino who figured Pleasure as a young man who rarely stirred from the soft lap of a beautiful maiden called Wantoness (*Adone*, VIII. 37). Poussin's audience could have understood the images of masculinity that hung in the *Camera Grande*, such as the passive, reclining Cephalus (fig. 3), as a parallel figure to Pleasure in Marino's poem. Subjugated to the wanton lusts of a beautiful woman, Cephalus could stand for pleasurable male relaxation brought about by the sexual voraciousness of a goddess. This analysis accounts for the ambiguity of the painting discussed in the Preface: the lower part of Cephalus' body seems more willing to embrace Aurora than his head.

Poussin may have cast women, such as Aurora and the *Grottaferrata* shepherdess (fig. 31), as powerful, active characters in order to suggest to his viewers that their men have little choice in being forced into a position that transgressed patriarchal masculinity. Gentlemen did not relinquish power through this operation; they merely experienced a state that was excluded from the masculine gender in the civic sphere.<sup>23</sup> In terms of the relationship between Poussin's paintings and the practice

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<sup>21</sup> Meiss, p. 224

<sup>22</sup> Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness', p. 24. The Sala of Psyche and Cupid in the Palazzo del Te at Mantua depicts the moment when Psyche sees Cupid asleep.

<sup>23</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has argued that a similar process occurs in the poems of Dante where Beatrice is used as a figure that seemingly castrates the writer, removing his responsibility for his actions, whilst remaining firmly under his control; see 'Finding Feminist Readings: Dante-Yeats' in *American Criticism in the Poststructuralist Age*, ed. by Ira Konigsberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1981)

of *otium*, desirous women could bring about the positive effects that men hoped to experience during relaxation.

Set in the Roman landscape, Poussin's paintings show the beneficent effects of women. One such painting, of *Numa Pompilius and Egeria*, was in the dal Pozzo collection (fig. 44). It was possibly displayed in the *Camera Grande*.<sup>24</sup> The work shows the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, visiting the goddess Egeria who lived in a sacred grove dedicated to Diana and located near the town of Ariccia in the Castelli Romani. Poussin set this scene in recognisable countryside: the Ariccian grove.<sup>25</sup> During the late sixteenth century, the Savelli family had landscaped this ancient grove as part of their villa garden.<sup>26</sup> In the painting, Poussin showed Numa plucking the golden bough from Egeria's grove, an episode not recounted in the ancient sources on Numa.<sup>27</sup> This conceit conflated the story of Numa with that of another tradition connected with the location of the painting. Ancient legend had it that runaway slaves could break off a golden bough from the sacred tree, which grew in the grove of Diana at Ariccia, and challenge the priest of the grove to mortal combat. If the man slew his opponent he became the mortal king of the grove. His queen was the goddess of the grove, identified with Diana or Egeria. This marriage promoted the fertility of the earth, a concept that was figured in the Numa myth by his ability to rule his people with peace.<sup>28</sup>

Poussin's conceit is apt because King Numa forsook the ways of city folk to be married by Egeria.<sup>29</sup> Numa shared the experience of the slaves who ran away from the bondage of work into the delights of the countryside. Through his relationship with the Nymph, Numa achieved the kind of peaceful living men hoped to experience at the

pp. 42-65 (pp. 47-55). A similar motif of the male subject surrendering to a feminine force occurs in later literature on landscape and the sublime. However, as Carole Fabricant has pointed out, the male spectators of the landscape are very much still in control; theirs is only 'a titillating flirtation with surrender', see: 'The Aesthetics and the Politics of Landscape in the Eighteenth Century', in *Studies in Eighteenth Century British Art and Aesthetics*, ed. by Ralph Cohen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 49-81 (p. 73).

<sup>24</sup> Blunt, *Critical Catalogue*, p. 121. The painting was sold in 1829 from the Boccapaduli collection (through direct inheritance from the dal Pozzo family). The subject does not appear in any of the dal Pozzo inventories, however the painting may have been one of the 'Cinque quadri in tela pocco più grandi di testa con paesi e figurine... si credono del Posino' listed in the 1689 inventory; see Rome AS, 30 NC, U.25, vol.419, fol.222r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558 nos. 281-85.

<sup>25</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 269.

<sup>26</sup> Castelli 2000, 'Monumenti e ville - Palazzo e Parco Chigi (Ariccia), <<http://www.castelli2000.it/chigi.htm>> [accessed 29 April 2004].

<sup>27</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 132.

<sup>28</sup> James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, Abridged Edition* (London: Macmillan 1922), pp. 3, 146-48. Ovid connects the 'king of the grove' legend and the story of Numa and Egeria, see *Fasti*, trans. by Betty Rose Nagle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 88 (III. 271-75).

<sup>29</sup> Livy, *The Early History of Rome Books I-V*, trans. by Aubrey de Sélincourt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 56 (I. 21).

villa. Plutarch related that the goddess Egeria 'loved [Numa] and bestowed herself upon him, and it was his communion with her that gave him a life of blessedness and a wisdom more than human' (IV. 2).<sup>30</sup> Numa was inspired to study the secrets of life by Egeria, as gentleman wished to practice poetry or philosophy at the villa. This parallel was reflected by the use of Numa's story in Renaissance villa decoration.<sup>31</sup> Poussin's painting indicates the positive effects that women's love in the countryside could have for hardworking men.

The importance of feminine desire to this concept of *otium* is indicated by Plutarch's relation of the story of Numa to other examples of mortal men, such as Endymion and 'other mortals who were thought to have achieved a life of blessedness in the love of the gods' (IV. 2). Endymion, like Numa and Adonis, was a mortal who enjoyed the attentions of a goddess. The moon, Cartari wrote in the late sixteenth century, 'put [Endymion] to sleep... only to kiss him at her pleasure'.<sup>32</sup> Annibale Carracci depicted Diana reaching to kiss the sleeping Endymion in the Farnese Gallery (fig. 45).

Such representations of desiring women can be located in the wider use of the Golden Age of Arcadia as a place to depict sexual freedom by seventeenth-century poets and painters.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, the desirous shepherdess in the *Landscape at Grottaferrata* (fig. 31) signifies that the painting depicts a Golden Age. In commissioning this painting, Cassiano may have wanted to subtly flatter his patron Francesco Barberini by indicating that he had brought about a second Golden Age through his leadership of the abbey at Grottaferrata.

The fashion for imagery of a sexually liberated Golden Age has been interpreted as a response to the increasing decorum required of male courtiers in the early modern period.<sup>34</sup> I conjecture that this was also a response to the general restrictions placed on women in the civic sphere. Sanctioned female sexual liberalism was certainly a sign of heresy in public Roman society; in 1630, the Inquisition tried a priest after he gave

<sup>30</sup> Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. by Bernadotte Perrin, 10 vols (London: Heinemann, 1914), I, p. 317.

<sup>31</sup> Coffin, pp. 262-64.

<sup>32</sup> Cartari, p. 116: 'la Luna s'innamorasse di Endimione pastore, & l'adormentasse sopra certo monte, colo per baciarlo a suo piacere.'

<sup>33</sup> Eugene R. Cunnar, 'Fantasizing a Sexual Golden Age in Seventeenth-Century Poetry', in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, pp. 179-205; Otto Kurz, 'Gli Amori de' Carracci four forgotten paintings by Agostino Carracci', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 14 (1951), 221-33 (p. 227); Thomas Puttfarcken, 'Mutual Love and the Golden Age: Matisse and "gli Amori de' Carracci"', *Burlington Magazine*, 124 (1982), 203-8 (p. 204).

<sup>34</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 243-44, 263.

women licence to sin carnally.<sup>35</sup> The relaxation of the female body was equally problematic in the civic space. A text, published in Rome in the same year, argued that when a woman wanted to take a break from spinning and cooking she risked threatening her chastity in various ways: if she looked out of the window, for example, she appeared a flirt.<sup>36</sup> In the city, women who did not appear chaste and modest could threaten the honour of her family. Men walking in the city streets might catch sight of honest women relaxing at their windows, and mistake them for whores. In contrast, Arcadian gardens were secluded from such public eyes.<sup>37</sup>

The villa garden was conceptualised as a setting where female desire could be demonstrated without fear of shame. Two paintings by Paul Bril in Roman garden casinos, both from the early seventeenth century, show the villa garden as a place of love and conversation between men and women.<sup>38</sup> In one, an elaborate water machine, such as those in the villa gardens around Rome, serves to disturb normal conventions of gender (fig. 46). A group of women lose their cool reserve and race around, throwing their hands in the air, as they are caught out by the dancing fountains turned on by a concealed man. Men above watch the scene, but the women are not passive objects. Bril's painting implies that the relative freedom of the villa space will allow women to let their 'normal' gender roles slip. The young gentleman, pointing out a rabbit to a lady in the foreground, may hope the liberal air of the villa garden will destabilise the lady's chastity and prompt her to become sexually active. There is no indication in the painting that this will bring disrepute to her or her family. Bril's painting reflects the informal relations between men and women in literary descriptions of the games of conversation played by the aristocracy on holidays, including at the villa. In these games, men and women had relative equality in demonstrating wit and learning.<sup>39</sup> One game entailed the woman of the house donning the guise of Venus and handing out advice about love to the other guests.<sup>40</sup>

Real countryside, conflated into a mythical space, was similarly a site where men could be shown as the object of women's attention.<sup>41</sup> Around 1616 in Rome,

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<sup>35</sup> Gigli, p. 112.

<sup>36</sup> Grazioso Uberto, *Contrasto Musico* (Rome: [n.pub], 1630), p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Philippe Ariès, 'Introduction', in *A History of Private Life: The Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. by Roger Chartier (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 1989), pp. 1-11 (pp. 1, 5).

<sup>38</sup> The other work by Bril is in the Casino Aurora (formerly Borghese, now Pallavicini Rospigliosi). It is an allegory of Spring and shows men and women walking in a villa garden.

<sup>39</sup> Crane, pp. 279-82.

<sup>40</sup> Crane, pp. 298-302.

<sup>41</sup> In the sixteenth century Dosso Dossi had responded to Titian's painting of the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* by visualising a logical outcome to the predominance of male nudes in this painting. In his *Bacchanal* (Rome: Castel Sant'Angelo, c.1530), Dossi conceived the countryside around Ferrara as a



Antonio Carracci depicted a clothed woman in seventeenth-century dress indicating towards nude men bathing. Contrasting the contemporary nature of the woman's clothes, the scene is set in a fantastical landscape (fig. 47). Another of Poussin's contemporaries, Cerquozzi, painted a version of this scene set in the *seicento* Roman countryside. In *Festa Campestre*, Cerquozzi painted a vista of country life where a sophisticated seventeenth-century man and woman, with fan and parasol, enter a peasants' gathering (fig. 48). On the far right of the painting, the woman looks towards a semi-naked man who is washing goats in the river; just to the right of a tree, she peeks round with curiosity and desire (fig. 49).<sup>42</sup> Cerquozzi's painting indicates that the 'real' countryside outside Rome was a place to represent the concept that women visually desired the male body.

The connotations of the location depicted in *The Landscape at Grottaferrata* (fig. 31) spilled over into its companion piece: *Cephalus and Aurora* (fig. 3). Poussin used the privacy and liberality of the elite mythological genre connected to the countryside in order to depict the concept that women desire men. The desire of the shepherdess in the former painting would have been heightened for a visitor to the dal Pozzo gallery through a consideration of its companion piece, the *Cephalus and Aurora*. Cephalus, like Endymion or Numa, was another mortal who temporarily enjoyed the attentions of a goddess. However, unlike these men, Cephalus rejected this beneficent gift to return to his mortal wife. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* describes how Cephalus's punishment for this rejection was jealousy and mistrust of his spouse; finally he killed her by accident (VII. 683-865).

The conflation of real and mythical landscape extended into the Arcadian atmosphere of the *Camera Grande* in the Palazzo dal Pozzo. In this private space, a desiring woman need not necessarily have the connotations of danger associated with the prostitute, a lustful woman of the public sphere.<sup>43</sup> In the context of mythological narrative, a gentleman would have been honoured to be affected by such a woman.

### 7.3. The Feminine Gallery

There is strong evidence to suggest that the decoration provided by Poussin's paintings would have created the sense that the *Camera Grande* itself was a feminine

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place where men, rather than women, could be naked and arouse the desire of their beloveds. Titian also depicted a semi-naked man and a clothed woman in his *Three Ages of Man*, now in the National Gallery of Scotland.

<sup>42</sup> The action of peeking round the tree makes this woman analogous to the faun in Poussin's *Nymph and Satyrs* (fig. 21)

<sup>43</sup> Sander Gilman, *Sexuality: An Illustrated History. Representing the Sexual in Medicine and Culture from the Middle Ages to the Age of AIDS* (New York: Wiley, 1989), p. 144.

space. In his description of the room, Robert de Cotte singled out another painting with an asterisk: 'les deux chevalier\* qui vont délivrer Renaud des enchantements d'armide' (fig. 50).<sup>44</sup> De Cotte may have starred this work because he appreciated the witty relationship between himself, coming to view images of men being subjugated by women, and the image the knights in the painting are about to come upon: Rinaldo subjugated to the enchanting powers of the witch Armida in her sumptuous garden.

Poussin's painting of *Carlo and Ubaldo* appears to have staged the *Camera Grande* in terms of the entrance to Armida's garden of earthly delights in Tasso's poem. Poussin's painting shows the two knights tackling the serpent on their way to rescuing Rinaldo from Armida's garden taken from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Just after this scene, the two knights come across the images of Hercules and Omphale, and Anthony and Cleopatra, carved on the gates to Armida's garden. In Chapter Two, I discussed these images in relation to Poussin's mythological paintings as a whole. Here it is necessary to elaborate further on this detail because it relates to the viewing conditions of the *Camera Grande*.

The poem describes the knights' point of view as they see these prophetic images of the scene of Rinaldo lying in Armida's lap and holding her mirror (XVI. 18-21). As in the poem, Poussin's painting of *Carlo and Ubaldo* encourages the regarder to share the viewpoint of the knights. Poussin depicted them with their faces turned so our gaze follows their gaze, as it does in Tasso's description. In the *Camera Grande*, the gentleman regarder would have found himself in a green space connotative of the pleasures of the villa garden: a similar situation to that experienced by Tasso's knights.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how the concentration of the paintings in this room had the ability to feminise the regarder. The connotations of Poussin's mythological paintings displayed in the *Camera Grande*, where feminine desire overcomes the normal duties of men, were linked to the notion of the landscape as a feminine space.<sup>45</sup> Poussin's figure of Cephalus, overcome by feminine desire in an Arcadian landscape (fig. 3), can be compared to descriptions of the garden of Venus. Petrarch thought this

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<sup>44</sup> De Cotte, fols 210-13 printed in Thuillier, 'Pour un "Corpus"', p. 203.

<sup>45</sup> On the general gendering of landscape as feminine, but especially in the last two centuries see Steven Adams and Anna Greutzner Robins, 'Introduction', in *Gendering Landscape Art*, ed. by Steven Adams and Anna Greutzner Robins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-12. On the early modern period see Eduardo Saccone, 'Wood, Garden and *locus amoenus* in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*', *Modern Language Notes*, 112 (1997), 1-20 (pp. 10-11); and A. Bartlett Giametti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) pp. 6, 126-7. For examples in early modern art see Elise Goodman, *Rubens 'The Garden of Love' as Conversatie à la Mode* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1992) pp. 57-63; and ffollott, 'Women in the Garden of Allegory', p. 207. Poussin painted several works where the landscape can be read as feminine particularly his *Kingdom and Triumph of Flora*.

place 'deprives the soul of every manly thought', it tempts men to cast off such male concerns as duty and honour and succumb to the domination of woman.<sup>46</sup> Marino too described Venus's garden as a place of male intoxication. No fewer than three cantos of the *Adone* are devoted to describing Venus's gardens of sensual pleasure. In the final garden of touch, Adonis is so overcome by the 'tyrant force of Love' (VIII. 61) that he can no longer resist and is led to the pleasures of the marriage bed.<sup>47</sup> Marino emphasised the link between Venus's garden, male subjugation to love, and the role of painting. As Adonis enters into the garden of touch, he sees a gallery of pictures: 'There's no lascivious object, tender act, that here before is not displayed'. These pictures stir the 'amorous sweetness' in Adonis (VIII. 10) that will eventually lead to his sexual union with Venus. In Chapter Nine, we shall see that the paintings in the *Camera Grande* in the Palazzo dal Pozzo had the potential to stir such amorousness in the members of the dal Pozzo family. It seems, therefore, that a seventeenth-century regarder would have had little trouble conceiving the *Camera Grande* painting gallery as analogous to the powerful space of the feminine garden, which had the ability to overcome masculine responsibility.

The 'feminine' nature of the *Camera Grande* would have suited its probable function within the Palace. Social practice replicated literary and visual representations of feminine space as a positive place to escape the constructions of subjectivity instigated by patriarchal civic society. Women's apartments were often used by men to meet each other in much less formal surroundings than the main audience chambers of the Palace. In woman's apartments, there was less need for men to maintain prestige as in the civic sphere.<sup>48</sup> The *Camera Grande* was connected to the private spaces of the Palace. This chamber may have been sufficiently feminine to allow men to relax their guard. The decoration of the room, which emphasised the power of feminine space to make men relax, was decorous for the room's potential function.

The connotations of feminine landscape manifest in the *Camera Grande* may well have reminded de Cotte of the power of Armida's enchanted garden and facilitated his identification of the unusual theme of Poussin's painting of *Carlo and Ubaldo*. De Cotte probably appreciated Poussin's conceit. Encouraged to draw on his erudition, he no doubt recognised the thematic similarities between the images carved on Armida's gates in Tasso's poem and those displayed in the *Camera Grande*, such as *Cephalus*

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<sup>46</sup> Giametti, p. 126.

<sup>47</sup> Marino's *Adone* contains connotations that Venus and Adonis actually married; see Aleandro, p. 101.

<sup>48</sup> Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, p. 66; Renata Ago, 'Giochi di squadra: uomini e donne delle famiglie nobili del XVII secolo', in *Signori, Patrizi*, pp. 256-64, p. 260.

and *Aurora*. This painting may well have jogged de Cotte's memory when interpreting Poussin's painting of *Carlo and Ubaldo* as the subject bears many similarities to the Armida story.

The significances of the *Camera Grande* reflect the crucial role of landscape to the perception that women had the ability to overcome the norms of patriarchal civic gender. The translation of feminine desire into a vast landscape must have encouraged the notion that this force was strong enough to reduce men to a position of submission. When femininity was associated with landscape, a gentleman could have believed it was able to destabilise the patriarchal hierarchies of gender that denied women power in the first place. Poussin's representation of men such as Cephalus could have helped sustain the belief that the gentleman regarded was *forced* into a position of experiencing the feminine gender through a transcendent influence. The gender of the *Camera Grande* emphasised the theme of the Poussin's mythological paintings, the power of women over men. An inducible gentleman regarded entering this space would be forced to submit his body to a state of relaxation through the medium of a feminine force.

When regarding these paintings, de Cotte had a choice to be sensuously carried away, like Rinaldo in the garden of Armida, or to continue to follow the steadfast gaze of the knights. Tasso's poem describes how the two knights turn their eyes away from these images and resist the temptations of the feminine delights offered in the castle (XVI. 7, 17). In the *Camera Grande*, the juxtaposition of the *Carlo and Ubaldo*, and Poussin's mythological paintings emphasising masculine passivity, had the ability to create the atmosphere of Armida's garden of earthly delights and tempt the regarded to follow the first option. This room could have acted as a performance of the temporary delights of *otium*. In the momentary stasis of the visitor, as he looked round the *Camera Grande* mythological room, the atmosphere could have precipitated a feeling of release from masculine constraints brought on by the power of a feminine force.

Reflecting De Cotte's alternative, any uncomfortable feelings of a loss of control or descent into sinful effeminacy would have been countered by the experience of leaving the mythological room and entering the next room of the suite. This room contained Poussin's paintings of the *Seven Sacraments*. The two rooms were designed to be experienced as a pair. Whereas the first two rooms of the painting suite had red curtains, and the room preceding the *Camera Grande* had yellow furnishings, the mythological and *Sacraments* room were both swathed in green.<sup>49</sup> Refreshed and

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<sup>49</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fols 221v-224r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', pp. 558-59.

restored in the feminine space of the mythological room, when he entered the *Stanza degli Sacramenti*, the gentleman returned to the laws and duties of the civic sphere represented by the dispensation of the sacraments. The movement through space from Arcadian to civic space that occurred in the Palazzo dal Pozzo related to the temporal movement through the landscapes constructed in the villa gardens outside Rome.<sup>50</sup>

The recognition and rejection of mythological imagery, performed by gentlemen moving through the dal Pozzo collection, relates to the Catholic belief in the soul's ability to survive temptation and return to the moral path, emphasised through the sacrament of penitence.<sup>51</sup> Poussin's painting of *Penance* (fig. 51), one of the *Seven Sacraments* displayed in the subsequent room, would have emphasised this moral experience.

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Poussin's mythological paintings that were displayed in the *Camera Grande* of the Palazzo dal Pozzo helped to create the fantasy of an isolated Arcadia in the spaces of the city. Mythological painting galleries, such as the dal Pozzo's *Camera Grande*, could have provided papal courtiers with a space within the city to escape the pressures of civic life. This relatively private space, associated with the villa garden, permitted behaviour which challenged the notions of gender formed in civic society. The dual gender of the men and women depicted in Poussin's painting would have contributed to the maintenance of the fantasy that when men entered this space they could escape the fundamental attribute of patriarchal masculinity: work. Given the masculine nature of work in the civic-ecclesiastical sphere of Rome the need for a fantasy of male escape must have been particularly pressing.

We have seen that the format and style of Poussin's paintings had the power to induce the gentleman regarder to identify with dominant, gazing women or passive,

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<sup>50</sup> Lazzaro-Bruno, pp. 553-60.

<sup>51</sup> On the changing significance of penitence see John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 127-36. On the tendency of Counter-Reformation poetics to both justify and deny sensual pleasure by mixing it with instructive purposes see Sergio Zatti, 'Epic in the Age of Dissimulation: Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*', in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. by Valeria Finucci (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 115-45 (p. 143). Further research into the widespread imagery of the prodigal son who errs but is welcomed back, and warnings to men not to err such as through the primrose path imagery utilized in Urban VIII's poem of warning addressed to his son, would be very interesting here, but lies outside the scope of this project. On the poem see Jennifer Montagu, 'Exhortatio ad Virtutem: a series of paintings in the Barberini Palace', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 34 (1971), 366-372 (p. 370). Maria H. Loh has made some general points about the importance of self-discipline in relation to looking at lascivious images. One has the power to rise above sin, but the sin must be there to rise above it; see 'The Blinding of Eros in Post-Tridentine Italian Art' (paper presented at UCL, November 2003).

objectified men. The connotations of the space would have encouraged a gentleman regarding to convert his masculinity in order to experience the restful delights of *otium*. In so doing, he could have entered a state of harmonious dual gender. The experience of this state would have been ultimately justified by the landscape connotations of the *Camera Grande*. The process of a gentleman becoming masculine-feminine through regarding Poussin's mythological paintings was a gendered version of the utopian condition of physical harmony that men hoped to gain through rest at the villa.

#### ***PART IV: THE SOCIAL LIVES OF POUSSIN'S PAINTINGS***

The final part of this thesis develops the preceding analyses of the effects of Poussin's early mythological paintings in order to consider the nature of the 'social lives' of these works. As I discussed in the Introduction, it is possible to analyse Poussin's works as social participants with the ability to contribute to the formation and maintenance of familial relationships. We saw in the last two chapters that the spaces where these paintings were displayed were connected to the private spaces of the household. The next three chapters consider in depth the meanings of Poussin's paintings within these domestic surroundings.

## Chapter Eight: Negotiating Status with Poussin's *Venus and Adonis*

### 8.1. Positive Passivity

The frenetic world of papal politics provides one context for understanding the relevance of Poussin's mythological paintings to his Roman patrons. This chapter considers Angelo Giori, the man who owned the *Venus and Adonis* now at Caen (fig. 1) and the *Echo and Narcissus*, which was discussed in Chapter One. Giori displayed the *Venus and Adonis*, the subject of this chapter, in the 'Galleria' of his palazzo-villa on the Janiculum hill.<sup>1</sup> Probably bought in the 1620s, it is likely that this painting was particularly resonant to Giori because of his social experiences in these years.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of Poussin's painting could have eased Giori's concerns in establishing a position in the Barberini administration.

Unusually for this subject, Poussin depicted the moribund hunter in such a way as to suggest that Adonis' fate is positive pleasure rather than negative death. The canvas contrasts significantly with the more traditional representation of the wailing goddess and the lifeless corpse, for example in the version by Domenichino (fig. 52). In Poussin's painting, Adonis appears asleep rather than dead.<sup>3</sup> Poussin positioned Adonis' right arm in a motif that traditionally signifies sleep in sarcophagi depictions of *Diana and Endymion*, such as the one studied by Poussin (fig. 53). Poussin, or his patrons, may have been encouraged to establish a visual relationship between Adonis and Endymion through their knowledge of Roman sarcophagi. These sarcophagi, which show visual similarities between the iconography of the death of Adonis and the sleeping Endymion, have caused modern commentators to argue that both subjects refer to the pleasures of an ancient Roman afterlife conceived as a death-like sleep.<sup>4</sup> Adonis' sleep-like state in Poussin's painting is emphasised by the sleeping River God to the left of the painting. Over-the-top emotion, displayed by Domenichino's Venus, is expressed only in the figure of the standing putto. Mirroring and transfiguring the putto's downcast head, Poussin's Venus forms the stable pinnacle of the painting's compositional triangle. This vantage point positions Venus as calm agent. She pours her magical unguents as her gaze falls upon Adonis' body.

<sup>1</sup> Corradini, p. 87. The villa was a stone's throw from the place of Tasso's retirement, the monastery at San Onofrio, suggesting the area had an air of *otium*.

<sup>2</sup> Arnauld Brejon de Laverginée, *L'inventaire de Le Brun de 1683: La collection des tableaux de Louis XIV* (Paris: RMN, 1987), p. 401.

<sup>3</sup> Marin, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Koortbojian, *Myth, Meaning and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 21-62, 85; and Verity Platt, 'Dying to See: Epiphanic Sarcophagi from Imperial Rome' (paper presented at *Articulations*, University of London, April 2003).



Poussin represented the gaze issuing from female eyes onto the male body. Adonis is the prime object of the represented gaze within the painting. In contrast, Venus bars her naked body with her arm, whilst her white drapery falls to cover her genitalia. This painting reverses Francesco Albani's successful format of Adonis perusing the nude, reclining Venus (fig. 54).<sup>5</sup> Poussin's Venus appears sexually active like Diana in the sarcophagi imagery discussed above.<sup>6</sup> She also relates to the desirous Venus who gazes upon her dead beloved in an erotic *Loves of the Gods* print of the sixteenth century (fig. 55).<sup>7</sup> Venus' position in Poussin's painting, crouched over Adonis, could have signified to a seventeenth-century regaller the pleasurable, yet sinful, 'woman on top' position.<sup>8</sup> In this work, the state of Adonis echoes the ancient belief that Venus resurrected Adonis every year in order for her to enjoy another night of passion.<sup>9</sup>

Something of how a seventeenth-century gentleman interpreted Poussin's positive representation of Adonis' eternal slumber can be ascertained from Aleandro's reading of Marino's *Adone*. Aleandro interpreted Adonis' metamorphosis into a flower as a happy event. He called it 'a type of revival and of immortal stasis'.<sup>10</sup> Poussin's painting of Adonis had the potential to be read as an image of positive 'immortal stasis', rather than death. This state was analogous to Endymion's experience, which we encountered in the last chapter in the form of a pleasurable image of male rest brought about by the power of women.

Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* offered Giori the pleasure of looking at a masculine body through an imagined feminine gaze. In its seventeenth-century context, Adonis' passive body could have signified the possibility for men to cast off their masculine duty and relax through the feminine space of *otium* as discussed in the last chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> Albani painted at least five versions of Adonis coming across the recumbent nude body of Venus. See Catherine Puglisi, *Francesco Albani* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), cat. nos 48. iii; 49; 71. iii.

<sup>6</sup> On the Endymion sarcophagi, studied by Poussin (fig. 53), a small putto opens Endymion's legs for the approach of Diana. This motif was commonly used on sarcophagi of Bacchus approaching the sleeping Ariadne, heralding their sexual union.

<sup>7</sup> Madeleine Cirillo Archer, *The Illustrated Bartsch: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century, Volume 28, Commentary* (New York: Abaris, 1995), p. 203; and Talvacchia, pp. 143-44, although neither author considers its erotic nature. Caraglio's print was erotic, I think, because of connotations of the 'woman on top' position. Vico used a similar gesture of the encroaching knee in his depiction of Socrates fighting off the seduction of a woman; see John Spike (ed.), *The Illustrated Bartsch: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century Enea Vico, Volume 30* (New York: Arbaris, 1985), p. 81 n. 93. Poussin may have also known the erotic versions of the scene painted by Cambiaso in the late sixteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> Talvacchia, p. 122; Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man*, pp. 161-64.

<sup>9</sup> Theocritus, 'Idyll XV', in *The Poems of Theocritus*, trans. by Anna Rist (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 141-2 (lines 100-150)

<sup>10</sup> Aleandro, p. 27: 'che è una spetie di ravviamento, e d'immortal durationi'.

Adonis had the ability therefore to communicate messages about states of masculinity alternative to the ideals of the civic sphere.

The semiotic fluidity of the masculine-feminine body equally had the potential to provide an image through which Giori understood the changes in status undergone in civic life. In the specific society of seventeenth-century Rome, dominated by male ecclesiasts, status could be negotiated and demonstrated through representations of a masculine-feminine body. It is possible to interpret Adonis' form as one such representation.

Giori may have used Poussin's painting as a visualisation of his ambitions. Giori was a man who coveted a cardinal's hat despite a disability that could have prevented him from ever becoming a priest. In the context of Giori's rise through the ranks of the Barberini administration, it is likely that the gender configurations present in Poussin's works were particularly appealing. Papal bureaucrats were concerned about chastity and subordination, states traditionally gendered feminine. Poussin's representation of Adonis could have provided Giori with a way to conceptualise the choices open to him as he sought to establish and organise his family in order to serve its future interests.

Paintings of masculine-feminine bodies expressed status through various means. Giori demonstrated his tastes as an aspiring courtier and ecclesiast through his painting collection. Exhibitions of desire for the masculine-feminine body also communicated social position. Poussin's painting of *Venus and Adonis* visualised how Giori could have negotiated ideologies of status, masculinity and desire. Central to this ability was the figure of Venus: a represented feminine viewer who was available to be utilised by a gentleman regardier.

## 8.2. Masculine-Feminine Adonis

Poussin's painting shows Venus turning Adonis' blood into an anemone, a scene taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (X. 724-39). The colour and form of Adonis manifest feminine humours. Firstly, in comparison with the colouring of the corpse in Domenichino's *Venus and Adonis* (fig. 52) and Poussin's shade for depicting Venus in his *Mars and Venus* (fig. 2), it is possible to argue that Poussin depicted Adonis with the white skin of a cold, wet feminine body rather than the shocking white flesh of a corpse.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, Adonis' chest arches in a feminine position. His body takes on the kind of display of comatose nymphs, such as in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig.

<sup>11</sup> In Bion's *Lament of Adonis*, one of Poussin's sources, Adonis is described as having 'snowy flesh' (10), usually the preserve of women or children; see Bionis Smyrnaei, 'Epitaphius Adonidis' in *The Fragments and The Adonis* ed. trans. and commentary by J. D. Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) pp. 123-131. On colour and gender in paintings of this period see Filipczak, pp. 8, 16-17.

56).<sup>12</sup> Such an attitude of recline was traditionally conceived as an attribute of feminine lasciviousness.<sup>13</sup> Adonis appears like Philostratus's description of the sleeping Ariadne: 'look at Ariadne, or rather at her sleep; for her bosom is bare to the waist and her neck is bent back and her delicate throat and all her right side is visible... how fair a sight'.<sup>14</sup> Poussin's choices make sense because, in the seventeenth century, people considered the cold and moist physique, which was passive, impressionable, and subject to metamorphosis, as feminine.<sup>15</sup>

The detail of the blue anemones sprouting from Adonis' hair also genders him in the feminine (fig. 57). Poussin deviated from the *Metamorphoses*, which specifies a red anemone (X. 735). Blue, a colour associated with feminine humours, associates the flowers with Venus' watery liquid, and Adonis' cold, wet feminine body.<sup>16</sup> In *La Florum Cultura*, published in Rome in 1633, Giovanni Battista Ferrari wrote that the colours of flowers could be influenced by growing conditions 'as the ground that nurtures it, not being in every place the same temperature, varies the nourishment and the colour according to the particularities of the place'. It was known that particularly anemones could vary their colour: 'by the seed of every sort of Anemone', Ferrari concludes, 'comes flowers of various colours'.<sup>17</sup> Ferrari, a professor of Hebrew and Rhetoric at the Jesuit Collegio Romano, was a friend of Cassiano dal Pozzo from the 1620s.<sup>18</sup> Ferrari's theory on flower colour is remarkably similar to the medical understanding of the formation of a person's gender attributes through the womb's temperature. Male seeds that grew in the colder left side of the womb were believed to develop feminine gender attributes.<sup>19</sup> Poussin's blue flowers could have connoted the complex gendered state of Adonis to a regarder sensitive to these beliefs.

Poussin's Adonis retains elements of the masculine gender because he is not the ultimate victim: he appears asleep rather than dead. I outlined above how Poussin positioned Adonis' right arm in a gesture that traditionally signifies sleep. Poussin also

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<sup>12</sup> Poussin used the arched back in the sleeping nymph in *Midas and Bacchus* (fig. 40); *Venus surprised by satyrs* (Zurich, Kunsthau, no. 2480); *Nymph and Satyrs* (fig. 21) and for Venus in *Venus and Adonis* (Kimbell Art Museum).

<sup>13</sup> Patricia Rubin, 'The Seductions of Antiquity', in *Manifestations of Venus*, pp. 24-38 (pp. 28-29).

<sup>14</sup> Philostratus, *Imagines*, trans. by Arthur Fairbanks (London: Heinemann, 1931), pp. 63-65.

<sup>15</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Filipczak, pp. 16-17

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Battista Ferrari, *Flora overo Cultura di fiori*, trans. by L. Aureli (Rome: [n. pub.], 1638), p. 183: 'dal seme di ogni sorte di Anemone... sì come vengono di color vario i fiori'; p. 465: 'ogni sorte di fiori, se vien per via di seme facilmente varia di colore; però il terra, che gli nutrica, non essendo in ogni luogo della stessa temperature, secondo la varietà de'luoghi della stessa temperature, secondo la varietà de'luoghi variamente gli alimenta, e colora'.

<sup>18</sup> Freedberg, 'From Hebrew and Gardens', pp. 37-44.

<sup>19</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 38.

marked the prime signifier of Adonis' masculinity, the penis, with the swirl of blue drapery.

Poussin's depiction of Adonis related to contemporary representations of the character as dual gendered. Ancient writers had described Adonis as both a youth and a maiden.<sup>20</sup> In the sixteenth century, Titian had given these ideas pictorial form in his famous *Venus and Adonis*; contemporaries commented how Adonis in this painting conveyed aspects of both male and female beauty.<sup>21</sup> Marino compared Adonis to Cephalus, Endymion and Danaë (*Adone*, VIII. 102-3). According to a sixteenth-century moral interpretation of Ovid's myth, Adonis was 'vain and beautiful and weak in strength' and 'loved by a woman, one who is greater and stronger than he'.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the dominance of Poussin's Venus brings into signification Adonis' contrary masculine-feminine passivity.

### 8.3. Upwardly Mobile

Poussin's depiction of a dual gendered Adonis finds analogies in seventeenth-century representations of masculinity. In the visual culture of *seicento* Rome, the male body, as much as the female, was a site of negotiation between different ideologies. Masculine-feminine men challenged the rights of men to power, an ideology that rested on the radical gender difference of men and women. Torquato Tasso, in his *Discorso della virtù femminile* of 1582, for example, had argued that women's souls, unlike men's, were incapable of intellectual virtues thus rendering women unable to govern.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, by the early seventeenth century, the ideal male religious body was one that contained an element of the feminine. The combination of the Catholic Church's fear of genital representation and the desire to represent extremes of bodily emotion meant that religious male nudes from this period often appear to have an overt femininity.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Hélène Tuzet, *Mort et Réurrection d'Adonis* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1987), p. 47. Regina Stefaniak has argued that Rosso used the allusion to Adonis in his *Pietà* in order to feminise Christ as Adonis was understood to be of both genders, see 'Replicating Mysteries of the Passion: Rosso's *Dead Christ with Angels*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45 (1992), 677-738 (pp. 730-31).

<sup>21</sup> Ludovico Dolce, 'The Letter of Dolce to Alessandro Contarini', printed in Mark W. Roskill, *Dolce's 'Aretino' and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), p. 212: 'ha ricercato di esprimere certa gratiosa bellezza, che partecipando della femina, non si discotasse però dal virile: vuol dire, che in Donna serrebbe non so che di huomo, & in huomo di vaga Donna'.

<sup>22</sup> Giuseppe Orlogi and Francesco Turchi, interpretations added to Anguillara, *Le Metamorphosi di Ovidio* (Venice, 1584), translated in Troy Thomas, 'Un fior vano e fragile: the symbolism of Poussin's Realm of Flora', *Art Bulletin*, 68 (1986), 225-36 (p. 229).

<sup>23</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Discorso della virtù*, pp. 54-57. On the tradition of such claims see Letizia Panizza, 'Introduction to the Translation' in Marinella, *The Nobility and Excellence of Women*, pp. 1-34 (p. 28).

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male: A New Perspective* (New York: Paddington, 1978), pp. 81-85, 179.

In *seicento* Rome, such representations of masculine-feminine bodies also helped to justify and support the lifestyle and aspirations of the papal courtiers who made up Poussin's clientele. Passive masculinity could signify the possibilities of changing positions from low status to high. More traditional images of assertive masculinity, such as Michelangelo's *David* hailed as the perfect public *masculine* symbol for the Florentine republic just a century before, may have been inappropriate in this setting because they did not offer the possibility of inversion necessary to the ideology of social mobility at work in 1620s' Rome.<sup>25</sup>

In early modern Italy, masculine passivity was a transgressive image. Traditions of patriarchal society dictated that men occupied the positions of conscious, controlling masters. A sleeping, pacified man, such as Poussin's Adonis, could challenge this 'natural' order of things. In a late sixteenth-century Italian 'World upside-down' print (fig. 58), a sleeping man in the foreground lies in a cradle, rocked by a now homeless infant (fig. 59).<sup>26</sup> Adonis' pose is remarkably similar to that of the infantilised man. The man's chest appears to take on the appearance of feminine breasts. Through the physicality of this man, the print visualises the gender inversions implicit in the reversal of man and babe. The re-gendering of the reclining man accords with the central motif of the print where man and woman swap clothes and places. The four men surrounding the lazy man are unaffected by the reverses of order. Alone among all the inversions, the sleeping, infantilised, feminised man attracts the gaze of the men who, in the 'natural' order of the things, were in control. The print indicates that the print maker, and his target audience, considered an image of masculine-feminine passivity as the most transgressive of all images of social inversion.

In the context of this print, a viewer versed in such images could have read Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* as an image of society in disarray, an indiscretion that should be policed, or a violation that must be prevented by the men in control who viewed the painting. However, images of social inversion figured positive, as well as negative, experiences.<sup>27</sup> Rituals of status elevation sometimes involve the participant

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<sup>25</sup> Michelangelo's sculpture replaced Donatello's *Judith* as the latter was seen by one contemporary as an evil influence on Florentine affairs partly because 'it is not fitting that the woman should slay the man'. See Geraldine Johnson, 'Idol or Ideal?', in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, pp. 222-46 (pp. 231-32).

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of this print and its dating see, Grieco, 'Pedagogical prints', p. 66, p. 263 n.10.

<sup>27</sup> Davis, *Society and Culture*, p. 131. Adrian Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 265-69. Randolph has discussed the relationship of Davis's work to that of Victor Turner; see 'Flipped: Gender, Spectatorship and Figural Inversions in Italian Late Medieval and Renaissance Art' (paper presented at *Articulations*, University of London, April 2003). Turner argued that rituals of status elevation and reversal produced 'a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of

temporarily occupying a liminal position of inferiority in relation to his future subjects in order to humble the person who is rising up the ranks, and to strip him of his individual status before he ascends to a position of power.<sup>28</sup> In a similar fashion, the reversals of the traditional positions of men and women that occurred in Poussin's paintings had the ability to figure for Giori the possibility of his social mobility within the papal court.

Giori was part of a milieu of *virtuosi*, some of whom collected world-upside imagery.<sup>29</sup> These men were certainly keen to follow the moral message communicated by the print discussed above and maintain hierarchies of gender and class in order to sustain their desire to obtain the positions of their masters. At the same time, they needed to believe that transgression of one's original status was possible. Rome was a city that allowed men of minor nobility or of the middling classes, such as Giori and Cassiano dal Pozzo, to rise quickly up the social ranks.<sup>30</sup> The primary aim was to become a cardinal, a rank that Giori achieved in 1643.

Angelo Giori was born to a humble family in a small village to the northeast of the Papal States. He was fortunate. His uncle was a servant of the Barberini family, who called the seminary-educated Angelo to Rome. In 1606, he became the tutor to the Barberini children and continued to serve Maffeo, their uncle, after the children grew up. Following Maffeo's election to the papal throne, Giori was made a servant in the Pope's private apartment, and a few months later his cupbearer. His rise through the ranks continued: he became an altar attendant in St Peter's; in 1632, he was made secretary of memorials, where he oversaw Bernini's commission for Urban's tomb; in 1635, he became Urban's *maestro da camera*. The *maestro da camera* was a grand position: Giori was in charge of the private household; he supervised access to the Pope through the granting of audiences; he waited on him, and oversaw his attendants.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the 1620s and 1630s, Angelo's new importance allowed the secular side of the family, headed by his younger brother Prospero, to exercise influence in the affairs of the town of Camerino. Here the family obtained rich offices and a palace; they bought up estates and consolidated a vast holding, where they built a villa, to which Angelo and his family retired in the summer. Angelo himself acquired a villa on the

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scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs'; see *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 167.

<sup>28</sup> Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 167-72.

<sup>29</sup> Cassiano dal Pozzo's collection included prints of animals dressed as humans. See Anthony Griffiths, 'The Print Collection of Cassiano dal Pozzo', *Print Quarterly*, 6 (1989), 3-10.

<sup>30</sup> Noble connections were still instrumental in facilitating this rise, see Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup> Hammond, *Music and Spectacle*, pp. 5-6.

Janiculum hill; he enlarged it and made it fit for someone of his rank, and it was here that he amassed his large collection of paintings. From at least 1640, Angelo's younger brother and his family, Angelo's heirs, also inhabited the house. In 1643, in the last promotions of the Barberini pontificate, Angelo was made a cardinal; he was ordained as a priest sometime around this appointment. He had to request his ordination from Urban as he had been precluded from this position due to a disability: he had lost his thumb and two fingers of his right hand in a hunting accident when he was young. This mutilation meant he was unable to perform the sign of the blessing. His appointment as a cardinal meant his early choice to follow a celibate lifestyle had at last paid off.<sup>32</sup>

Men such as Giori wanted to maintain existing hierarchies at the same time as they wanted to transcend them. The world-upside down image of the sleeping Adonis may have appealed to Giori because it signified the instability of the social hierarchy as well as its inherent stability. As with the sleeping man in the print, Adonis enters the state of a pacified female, allowing a woman to gain the active position. This inversion of the gender hierarchy may have functioned as a metaphor for the social jockeying for position in Roman society.<sup>33</sup> The instability of Adonis' gender could have signified for Giori the possibility of his movement within the hierarchy of the papal court. Adonis as a masculine-feminine man could mark the ability of men to move between various levels of prestige. Men and women could change position in representation, just as poor men and princes could do in Roman society due to the unique possibilities of the papal court. Such images of inversion are premised, however, on the stability of the two positions of power and subordination. The higher position still had to be available to the poor man even after he had transcended his subordinate position. In Poussin's painting, the presence of both masculine and feminine genders within Adonis' body maintained the binary structure of power and subordination. Although Adonis has elements of the

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<sup>32</sup> On Giori see S. Giordano, 'Giori, Angelo', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 55 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), pp. 385-7; Corradini, pp. 83-94; Feliciangeli. Giori was a the prelate of the Holy bedchamber before being made a cardinal. He became a Cardinal priest. See Patriitium Gauchat, *Hierarchia Catholica medii et recentioris aevi* (Rome: Monasterii, 1935), IV, p. 26. On Giori's house see Rome Archivio del vicariato, S. Giovanni in Laterano, *S. Spirito in Sassia Lib. Stat. Anime ab Anno 1626 –usq: ad. 1641 inclusivo*. The Giori family is listed under the 1640 *Stati d'Anime*: as Prospero Giorgio Giori (50); Caterina Giori (36); Ant franco figlio (7); Cesario figlio da Prospero (18); Hipolita –moglia (20). Prospero had only one surviving son which meant that the Giori family could not consolidate their position in Rome in the standard way through the eldest son of the next generation climbing the ecclesiastical ranks, and the younger son heading the secular side of the family. On the risks and advantages of renouncing the first-born's marriage privilege see Renata Ago, 'Ecclesiastical Careers and the Destiny of Cadets', *Continuity and Change*, 7 (1992), 271-82.

<sup>33</sup> On the social jockeying for power see Ago, 'Giochi di squadra', pp. 256-264. On the use of the gender hierarchy male/female as a method to order status among men (effeminate men have lower status) see Ortner and Whitehead, pp. 9-13.

feminine gender, his masculine attributes entitled him to retain dominance within a patriarchal system.<sup>34</sup>

Giori was lucky to become a cardinal: only a few bureaucrats reached this position. Reports from members of the court show that a papal courtier had to flatter the Pope continuously in order to keep in his favour. Even cardinals had to restrict their own authority severely in order not to oppose the Pope and risk damaging their careers. Papal courtiers, at whatever level, were dependent on the Papal Prince. Uncertainty of position, fear, and a lack of any real power meant that, in some senses, these men were essentially passive.<sup>35</sup> Andrea Camassei's print for the frontispiece of Teti's *Aedes Barberinae*, of 1642, manifests the status of papal bureaucrats. This print shows the author and illustrators of the book presenting Urban with the *Aedes*. In relation to the fatherly figure of the Pope, his courtiers are shown in diminutive size as if they are children (fig. 60).<sup>36</sup> I outlined in Part I how male children were considered to be closer to the feminine, rather than the masculine, gender. Adonis' femininity in Poussin's work was a positive figuration of the passivity men in Giori's social position sometimes felt.

Through the pastoral genre, Giori would have been able to identify with Adonis. The shepherd protagonists of pastoral theatre and literature often reflected the personal concerns of the audience.<sup>37</sup> Texts such as Sannazaro's *Arcadia* portrayed gentlemen, in this case members of the Neapolitan Accademia Antoniana, in the guise of rustic characters.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the use of antique pseudonyms by Academicians in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy allowed these men to imagine that when they entered the space of the Academy they entered an Arcadian world.<sup>39</sup> Fifteenth and sixteenth-century writers had reinterpreted Adonis as a shepherd and a poet, making him ripe for such identification.<sup>40</sup> After 1623, Adonis was further suited to stand for a gentleman's persona. Marino's *Adone*, published that year, depicts the figure as a prince with a rustic

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<sup>34</sup> Linda L. Carroll has argued that painters in early modern Italy used alternative notions of the masculine gender in order to make sense of the changing power structure of society. Carroll connects depictions of passive men from late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy to a psychological response to political and economic upset; as people feel submissive in conflict they occupy the position that they believe will be best rewarded. See 'Who's On Top? Gender as Societal Power Configuration in Italian Renaissance Drama', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20 (1989), 531-58.

<sup>35</sup> Paolo Prodi, *The Papal Prince One Body and Two Souls: The Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe*, trans. by Susan Haskins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 80-85.

<sup>36</sup> Teti was a *gentilhuomo* in the household of Cardinal Antonio Barberini; see Scott, *Images of Nepotism*, p. 59 n. 102.

<sup>37</sup> Clubb, p. 114; Olson, pp. 224-5.

<sup>38</sup> William J. Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of the Pastoral* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), pp. 13-15, 102, 114-25.

<sup>39</sup> For a general discussion of the relationship between Academies in the sixteenth century and the imagined space of Arcadia see Marc Fumaroli, *L'École du silence: Le sentiment des images au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), pp. 20-36.

<sup>40</sup> Tuzet, p. 97.



upbringing.<sup>41</sup> Identification between high-class viewer and pastoral subject, which seems to have occurred through Federico Gonzaga's portrait as a shepherd in Titian's *Madonna of the Rabbit* (fig. 61), may have also occurred between Giori and Adonis.<sup>42</sup>

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Social advancement in the papal court rested on a gentleman's merit, the ability to negotiate the power battles of the court, the demonstration of his ecclesiastical zeal, and through display of his cultural sophistication.<sup>43</sup> I have argued that Giori could have fostered his ability to negotiate the papal court through looking at Poussin's painting of *Adonis*. The rest of this chapter considers how the type of masculinity evident in Poussin's painting firstly, could have displayed Giori's ecclesiastical zeal, and secondly, allowed him to demonstrate cultural sophistication.

#### 8.4. Pious Masculinities

In his *Venus and Adonis*, Poussin offered to his patrons an image of masculinity that explored the sensibilities of the masculine body emphasised in post-Tridentine Catholicism. The secular context of Poussin's mythological painting meant that the viewer could sensually appreciate the masculine body without contradiction, a response that was both encouraged and condemned by the censorship that occurred in the religious sphere.

Poussin sought to obscure male nudity in his painting of Adonis. Adonis is not nude. Neither is he securely clothed. Although the blue drape covering the genitalia, the primary sign of Adonis' male gender, is tucked beneath his hip, the material is not quite clothing, but curls and ripples around his form in the nature of a caress. In post-Tridentine religious painting, artists used swathes of material as an expressive vehicle and as a convenient way to hide genitalia. At the turn of the seventeenth century, Caravaggio used draped material, caressing the male body, in order to explore the sensuality of the nude, at a time when European male dress sought to conceal and wad the body.<sup>44</sup> The rich pigment of Adonis' drape similarly draws the eye. Its blue

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<sup>41</sup> Adonis becomes King of Cypria.

<sup>42</sup> On this painting see, most recently, David Jaffé's catalogue entry in *Titian*, exhib. cat. (London: National Gallery, 2003), p. 118. Olson has argued that Poussin's French viewers would have been encouraged to enter imaginatively into the pastoral space of Poussin's landscape paintings because of the viewing dynamics of the pastoral genre, p. 228.

<sup>43</sup> Visceglia, pp. xix-xx.

<sup>44</sup> Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) p. 35; Anne Hollander, *Fabric of Vision: Dress and Drapery in Painting* (London: National Gallery, 2002), p. 59-62.

vibrancy, against the vermilion material, confirms the appeal that it must have had for a seventeenth-century viewer versed in both the economic and religious significances of the colour.<sup>45</sup> The paint attracts the viewer's eyes to the very area of Adonis' body that the depicted material seeks to mask. The sign of Adonis' masculine gender, the penis, is both concealed and marked. The presence of the drapery indicates that the masculine-feminine body signified to Poussin and his intended audience as something that was both desired and repressed.<sup>46</sup> The nudity of the River God to the right of the painting is equally shrouded, this time in shadow.<sup>47</sup>

Poussin's paintings had the ability to disturb the spectator: late in the seventeenth century Lomenie de Brienne destroyed Poussin's painting of a sleeping Venus with her leg lifted, after concerns expressed by local churchmen. Slightly earlier, in *La Peinture Parlante*, Hilaire Pader wrote that Poussin's nymphs troubled the senses.<sup>48</sup> Poussin's Adonis appears in the reclining position usually occupied by such Venuses and nymphs. The painting was an image that had the potential to disturb the spectator sensually.

The effect of the Counter Reformation on representations of masculine bodies is one context in which we can understand the troubling complications inherent in the male bodies depicted in Poussin's *Venus and Adonis*. The artistic reforms introduced by the Council of Trent affected the way men appeared in religious painting. On a wider level, the changing definitions of male spirituality in the late sixteenth century also contributed to a fundamental alteration of the way people perceived the male body. Religious art celebrated, repressed and marked the masculine-feminine body in very specific ways. Works of art that Poussin's ecclesiastical clientele encountered on a daily basis would have tinged their responses to his depictions of masculinity.

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See also Mario Perniola, 'Between Clothing and Nudity', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, ed. by Michel Feher, Ramona Nadaff and Nadia Tazi, 3 vols (New York: Urzone, 1989), II, 236-65 (pp. 253-55).

<sup>45</sup> On the pleasures of the colour blue see Julia Kristeva, 'Giotto's Joy', in *Calligram: Essays in New Art History from France*, ed. by Norman Bryson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 27-52.

<sup>46</sup> A similar argument can be made for Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* (fig. 5). It is visible to the naked eye that Poussin moved the drapery to reveal more of Tancred's torso. This decision suggests Poussin was experimenting with different levels of masculine bodily display during the process of painting. This accords with Poussin's early working practice where he worked directly onto the canvas in an experimental manner rather than planning rigorously prior to painting. See Thuillier, 'Poussin et la laboratoire', pp. 16-17.

<sup>47</sup> Rosenberg and Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, p. 155. River gods, such as those in the Vatican Belvedere, could be shown nude. The figure can be read also as a personification of Sleep: he is remarkably similar to Somnos in Poussin's later *Diana and Endymion*; see Rosenberg and Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, p. 192. His state of sleep helps to excuse his nudity.

<sup>48</sup> Pader, p. 22: 'Des Nymphes... Poussin troublent nos sens par ses subtiles voiles'. This painting must have been similar in appearance to figure 21.

As part of the representational strategies introduced by Trent, designed to keep the sacred sphere separate from the profane, interest in genitalia had to be denied. At the same time, censorship marked genitalia.<sup>49</sup> The repression and desire signified by Adonis' body in Poussin's painting can be understood by us in this context. In early modern Italy, the censorship of images of the body perpetuated beliefs in the power of images to arouse sexual feelings. In order to justify censorship, it was necessary to believe that images of the naked male body were powerfully affective.<sup>50</sup> Responding to the Tridentine decrees about art, writers argued that images of nudity, including that of the baby Jesus, aroused sin in the viewer.<sup>51</sup> The ability of the masculine body to affect the viewer was stressed through the act of censorship. Suppression of male genitalia emphasised the similarity of the masculine body to the traditional belief in the corruptible effects of women. Poussin appears to have represented this shift by painting Adonis in the position of an objectified sleeping nymph.

It is a feature of the Counter Reformation that its effects were felt many years after it began. In 1627, contemporary with Poussin's *Venus and Adonis*, members of an Apostolic Visitation to S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome complained about the nudity of the angels in an altarpiece of St Mary Magdalene (fig. 62).<sup>52</sup> The altarpiece, by Baccio Ciarpi da Barga, is certainly now a model of fleshy restraint. We can only speculate on the new meanings the cover-up may have suggested to the Roman men and women who regularly visited the church. The drapes, which now mark the sinful nature of the previously uncovered male genitalia, undoubtedly made the angels appear worldlier than suggested by their heavenly activities. Papal bureaucrats, such as Giori, no doubt aware of the reports of colleagues who carried out the Apostolic Visitation, must have been encouraged to consider the sensual nature of the male body. Poussin's Adonis seems to convey precisely this masculine sensuality.

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<sup>49</sup> Walters, pp. 84-5.

<sup>50</sup> Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, pp. 359-71. In the Lateran papal apartments, which demonstrate the counter-reformatory zeal of Sixtus V, a fresco in the Sala di Daniele shows the pagan false idol as a male nude.

<sup>51</sup> Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Degli Errori de' Pittori*, printed in *Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento*, II, 1-115 (pp. 79-80). Gilio argued that pagan gods were shown nude because of their dishonest lifestyle, and that such images aroused lust. Saints and Christ should be depicted clothed because Christianity is a pure, chaste religion. Molanus also warned against depicting the Christ child naked; see David Freedberg, 'Johannes Molanus on Provocative Paintings', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 34 (1971), 229-45 (p. 239). San Bernardino da Siena, whose work was republished in 1591, 1635 and 1650, argued that the naked flesh of Christ on the cross would lead the viewer to commit sexual sin; see Franco Mormando, 'Teaching the Faithful to Fly: Mary Magdalene and Peter in Baroque Italy', in *Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image*, ed. by Franco Mormando, exhib. cat. (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 107-35 (p. 117).

<sup>52</sup> Petrocchi, p. 97.

Poussin's painting was not only a repository of censorship; it also figured a masculinity that was celebrated in the religious sphere. In the climate of renewed spirituality, holy men explored diverse forms of masculinity in order to gain a sense of closeness to God. The mystical relationship with the divinity experienced by the Roman Filippo Neri, who died in 1594, reveals a male interest in adopting certain traditional feminine saintly attributes. God's love was reputed to have penetrated and so filled Neri's heart that his ribs broke and his chest swelled. Examinations of his body after death verified this miracle. The type of ecstasies he experienced were those usually associated with female saints. For example, the marks of God's love upon the surface of Neri's body were a saintly attribute that was almost wholly gendered feminine in the early modern period. Neri chose activities more reminiscent of female saints: he renounced masculinist humanist learning and rhetoric in order to nurse the sick and teach people with gentleness and cheerfulness in an intimate manner.<sup>53</sup> In some senses, Neri occupied the position of a passive, feminised subject in relation to God.

Some men sought to be like women in their relationships with the divinity. A popular Capuchin preacher, who died in 1611, wrote 'who will ever be able to express fully the happiness of that soul which, imitating the glorious Magdalene, gives itself to the contemplative life and with a burning spirit, through its practice of elevated contemplation procures and desires for itself union with its sweet and beloved Jesus?'.<sup>54</sup> A print dedicated to Cassiano dal Pozzo by Bernardino Capitelli, to be discussed in Chapter Ten, shows the Magdalene in ecstasy. It suggests that members of Poussin's clientele were actively involved in such productive cross-gendered identification.

Images of St Sebastian played an important role in the shifting representations of holy masculinity in the early seventeenth century. The important families of Rome repeatedly reused the image of this saint in their architectural patronage, tomb sculpture, and altarpieces.<sup>55</sup> Sebastian was important partly because he helped guard against

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<sup>53</sup> On Neri see Pastor, XIX, pp. 164-169. On gender and saintly behaviour see Ann Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition and Gender in the Republic of Venice 1618-1750* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Mormando, pp. 119-20.

<sup>55</sup> Examples include the Basilica of S. Sebastiano renovated by Scipione Borghese, with a new façade and reliquary chapels; see Antonio Ferrua, *La basilica e la catacomba di S. Sebastiano* (Vatican City: Pontificia commissione di archeologia sacra, 1990), p. 37. Also, the church of S. Sebastiano al Palatino, rebuilt in 1624 for Urban VIII, with an altarpiece of the saint by Camassei; a lateral painting by Passignano of *Lucina gathering the body of St Sebastian* in the Barberini chapel in S. Andrea della Valle (late 1610s); a statue of St Sebastian in the Aldobrandini chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva by Cordier (1604-5); and an altarpiece in SS. Quattro Coronati by Baglione commissioned by Cardinal Vidoni around 1632 of *St Sebastian Treated by Lucina and Irene*. The chapel also contains Sebastian's skull which was found in the crypt in 1624. On the latter chapel see Bruno M. Apollonj Ghetti, *I Ss. Quattro Coronati* (Rome: Marietti, 1964), pp. 59, 62. Giuseppe Giorgetti's later statue of the dying, ecstatic Sebastian in the

plague. Close to boyhood, he also represented a male body that could inhabit the subordinate position of a patriarchal heterosexual relationship, which was one model for a devout soul's relationship with God.<sup>56</sup> Sebastian appears feminised in a poem of 1613, written about a bronze in the collection of Scipione Borghese. The evil eyes of his torturers are described as being like the bows that deliver blows upon Sebastian's 'arched chest and ample arms', a particularly feminine description.<sup>57</sup> The persistence of Sebastian's feminised gender, as well as its troubling implications, was registered in Federico Borromeo's complaint of 1624 that St Sebastian was an old man, as proved by the researches of Baronius, rather than the adolescent that artists and patrons chose to represent.<sup>58</sup> As a feminised suffering victim and as an object of the gaze, replicated in the arrows that entered his body, Sebastian represented a man who was passive to divinity and who aroused the spiritual love of God through his beautiful appearance. Sebastian was a similar figure to Ganymede, the beautiful boy whom neo-platonic Christians interpreted as an allegory of the *mens humana* that is 'beloved' by God.<sup>59</sup> In his very public appearances in Rome, Sebastian was not intended to operate as a purely homosexual image as some commentators have suggested.<sup>60</sup>

Poussin's Adonis, subjugated to the power of Venus and the destinies of fate, seems to act as a metaphor for the passive masculine subjectivity developed by Neri and depicted in images of St Sebastian. Constructed within a heterosexual framework, Poussin's painting allegorises the kind of spiritual relationship that men desired to have with God in the terms of profane love. The sumptuous blue cloth that covers Adonis' body represses and marks the powerful ability of the male body to arouse desire in the viewer. Adonis signifies the possibility, explored by Neri and his followers, that men could be enraptured by a higher divinity. At the same time, the figure of the pacified

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Basilica of S. Sebastiano, which draws on Bernini's statues of ecstatic *female* saints, is much later in date and has therefore been excluded from the discussion.

<sup>56</sup> On this concept of the Christian religion see Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man*, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Scipione Francucci, *La galleria del ill. Scipione card. Borghese cantata 1613*, Vatican Library Borghesiana 184. fols 22-22v: 'col cigli crudel morti minaccia/ C'è un sguardo mortal vibra da gli occhi/ Indi il petto inarcando, e l'ampie braccia'.

<sup>58</sup> Beverley Louise Brown, 'Between the Sacred and the Profane', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 276-303 (p. 282). Brown's theory that Sebastian continued to be represented as a young man so that artists could continue to paint the nude body is unsatisfactory because it fails to take into account devotional patronage motives.

<sup>59</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 215.

<sup>60</sup> Images of St Sebastian were not necessarily evidence of a homosexual subculture in Rome at this time as argued by Walters, p. 188 and Richard Spear, *The 'Divine' Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1997), pp. 70-76. Although not talking specifically about images of St Sebastian, James M Saslow has also argued early seventeenth-century Roman society had a homosexual 'sub-culture'; see *Pictures and Passions: A History of Homosexuality in the Visual Arts* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1999), p. 115.

Adonis also operated as a sign that a courtier could be loved by the Papal prince, as woman is loved by man in the structures of patriarchal heterosexuality. An image of a feminised man in a mythological painting such as the *Venus and Adonis* could have helped Giori to explore the possibility that men could elicit favours and goodwill from a more powerful entity.

Poussin's patron Angelo Giori may have bought the *Venus and Adonis* not only to display his cultural sophistication but also to show ecclesiastical zeal, an important factor in promotion up the ranks of the papal court. Investing in images of St Sebastian facilitated the perception of piety.<sup>61</sup> Adonis' body could have communicated a similar acceptance on the part of a papal courtier of the Church's celebration of passive masculinity in the form of a mythological painting.

The masculine-feminine body figured in Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* may have had further specific religious significances for its owner. Angelo's choice to remain celibate was a personal risk: he calculated that through service to the Papal family he could become a priest, and hopefully a Cardinal, something that his physical affliction prevented him from easily doing. In making this choice, he had to relinquish any desires he may have had for children and place his hopes in the generative powers of his younger brother. Giori's choice was usual in seventeenth-century Rome. To build a successful Roman dynasty, it was necessary for the oldest son to remain celibate, hoping to gain an important ecclesiastical job, and leave carnal matters to his younger brother. In order to do so, Giori had to relinquish the patriarchal masculine role of fathering children and gamble that his physical disability would not hinder his ambitions. The church had traditionally presented priest's chastity as a sign of the supernatural guarantee of the continuity of the church, rather than its reliance on the patriarchal dynastic succession through lineage.<sup>62</sup> Poussin's painting of a man who has already relinquished this patriarchal role may have been satisfying in relation to Giori's life choices.

Instead of fathering children, Giori had to remain chaste. The kind of masculinity depicted in Poussin's painting could have supported this decision. Protestant attacks on the concept of chastity meant that Catholics particularly cherished this virtue. Catholic writers of this era depicted Rome as a city that was humble, reformed and chaste. For these writers, the virtue signified the ability of the mind to

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<sup>61</sup> Francucci praised Borghese's patronage of the Basilica of S. Sebastiano as an expression of his piety, fols 22-22v.

<sup>62</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men and Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 443; Conrad Leyser, 'Custom, Truth and Gender in Eleventh-Century Reform', in *Gender and Christian Religion*, pp. 75-91 (pp. 82-83).

overcome the stirrings of sexual sin in the body, just as Christ overcomes Satan, the Christians defeat the infidels, and Catholics overpower heretics. Chastity was the principal sign of divine virtue; it was the most common feature of Counter-Reformation saints.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, this virtue was a central element in the iconography of the Barberini family. The bee, on their coat of arms, was believed to be an animal that was able to reproduce without sex. The Lincei academicians researched the qualities of the king bee who was believed to be immensely fecund and able to produce worker bees through the transmission of his vital spirits, rather than by semen. Federico Cesi, head of the Lincei, compared the chastity of the bee to that of Urban himself.<sup>64</sup>

Chastity was traditionally a very feminine virtue.<sup>65</sup> Perceptions of gender shaped what it meant to be a morally chaste 'man' in this period.<sup>66</sup> Traditionally, male continence was seen to arise from political motivations: such as the Roman General Scipio who gave up his right to rape his female captives in order to show his magnanimity towards his newly conquered people; women's chastity, on the other hand, was seen to arise wholly from moral virtue.<sup>67</sup> Women's weaker nature could reflect upon the strength of her virtue: Castiglione wrote that 'the less strength their sex has to resist their natural appetites, the more praiseworthy they are'.<sup>68</sup> In Lucrezia Marinella's *La nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne* of 1601, the author uses many examples of women who are chaste and loyal to argue that women are naturally more temperate and moderate than men.<sup>69</sup> From the early years of Christianity, chastity had been associated with women. The story of St. Thecla, converted by St Paul and encouraged to live a virtuous life, was a sign to early Christians that anyone, even a weak woman, could remain chaste with God's help.<sup>70</sup> A woman's body, in the form of the Virgin Mary, was also the ultimate sign of the power of God to overcome the desires of disordered humanity.<sup>71</sup> In seventeenth-century Rome, the cult of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, the belief that Mary's soul was conceived without sin, was developed and

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<sup>63</sup> Frederick J. McGinness, 'Roma Sancta and the Saint: Eucharist, Chastity and the Logic of Catholic Reform', *Historical Reflections*, 15 (1988), 99-116 (pp. 100, 104-5, 116). On the development of chastity in early Christianity see Brown, *The Body and Society*, esp. pp. 60, 443.

<sup>64</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, pp. 165, 174-76.

<sup>65</sup> Tasso, *Discorso della virtù*, pp. 54-57.

<sup>66</sup> Moore, 'Sexing the Soul', p. 180.

<sup>67</sup> Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. 88.

<sup>68</sup> Castiglione, p. 244. Women were generally thought to be more prone to sexual desire than men; see Sinibaldus, p. 15-16.

<sup>69</sup> Marinella, pp. 93-105

<sup>70</sup> Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 61.

<sup>71</sup> Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 444.

venerated partly in response to Protestant attacks on the importance of the Virgin.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, novices of the Discalced Carmelite order were instructed to conserve the virtue of their chastity following the example of the Immacolata and to perfect it in her honour.<sup>73</sup>

The pronounced *feminine* nature of chastity in Roman Catholicism suggests that men who wanted to be chaste, such as Giori, were encouraged to identify with women. It has been demonstrated that Protestants adopted feminine identities in order to imagine themselves as weak individuals in relation to God.<sup>74</sup> I conjecture that feminine identification also helped Catholic men to stage their ability to achieve divine virtue through the grace of God. For example, the Counter-Reformation saint, Stanislaus Kostka, noted for his angelic chastity, called upon the virgin saint Barbara in his hour of need.<sup>75</sup> Barbara was a virgin martyr who had kept her virginity partly through being locked up in a tower by her father.<sup>76</sup> Barbara's enforced virginity may have appealed to Stanislaus because it indicated God's ability to instil strength and virtue in even the weakest of bodies.

Feminine gender characteristics may have been included in the religious male body in order to signify that men, like women, were weak: their spiritual virtue to remain chaste came from the power of God. Poussin's Adonis may have helped to signify the possibility to Giori that men could share virtues with women. Giori could have imagined how his own body could enter a chaste feminine standpoint through the gender fluidity of Poussin's mythological paintings.

### 8.5. Dangerous Liaisons

Censorship and the resulting attention to the sensuality of male bodies complicated a gentleman's viewing in the religious sphere. Because Poussin's mythological paintings were designed to be shown in the secular context of the gallery, the gentleman viewer could sensually appreciate the masculine body without contradiction. Such complex dynamics surface in Maffeo Barberini's decision to exhibit a painting of *St Sebastian Thrown into a Roman Sewer*, by Ludovico Carracci (fig. 63), in his palace gallery rather than in its original location as an altarpiece in the Barberini Chapel at S. Andrea della Valle.

<sup>72</sup> Spear, *The Divine Guido*, pp. 130-162; Warner, pp. 50-67, 245.

<sup>73</sup> Pamela Askew, *Caravaggio's Death of the Virgin* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 67.

<sup>74</sup> Moore, 'Sexing the Soul', pp. 175-86.

<sup>75</sup> McGinness, p. 99.

<sup>76</sup> This may reflect Jerome's idea that it was the body as a 'strong tower' which protected the virtue of the soul inside; see Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 383.



Maffeo decided that the image of Sebastian's completely passive body being aggressively acted upon and looked at by soldiers was too secular for a religious setting. As a replacement, Maffeo requested a picture of Sebastian's body being rescued from the sewer by Lucina, a pious Roman woman. From this decision we can infer that female viewing of a male corpse could be assimilated into a religious setting through the tradition of female lamentation, discussed in Chapter One. In contrast, Ludovico's depiction of male viewing of a male body was not acceptable in a devotional context. The instability of Carracci's work was registered again, after it was removed from the chapel. In Maffeo's gallery, it was re-titled as a mythological subject: Palinurus, a helmsman of Aeneas, who was denied a proper burial.<sup>77</sup> Due to the particularities of mythological painting within the secular gallery, a viewer could legitimately appreciate the troublesome, yet desirable, pacified male body.

Maffeo's various decisions, about the place of display and the title of this work, reflect the complex issues raised by the re-workings of masculinity during the Counter Reformation and the role of the secular gallery in reconciling some of these issues. On the one hand, there was a desire to produce images of feminised men in accordance with changes in devotion. On the other hand, the painting was troubling. This disturbance may have resulted from perceptions of the sinful nature of the sodomitic desire suggested by Carracci's work. It depicts an interaction between an active male soldier and the body of a desirable male Sebastian. It also induces a viewer to respond with desire to the sensibilities of the male body. Maffeo certainly felt he should separate it from the religious space of his family chapel and display it in the much more private 'profane' part of his picture collection: the gallery. Finally, it seems that people could only unequivocally enjoy Carracci's painting as a mythological subject.

It is in this context that we can further understand the pleasures offered by Poussin's painting of the male body in *Venus and Adonis*. Giori hung this work in his 'Galleria'.<sup>78</sup> From the specificities of its placement in this room, it is clear that it reflected upon religious images of passive masculinity. It was hung amongst paintings of a *Virgin with the Christ child in her arms*, *The Adoration in the Garden with Sleeping disciples*, and a *Crucifixion with the Virgin*.

Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* provided a mythological commentary on the type of viewing relations present in these religious paintings. Venus is a female viewer of the

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<sup>77</sup> Oliver Bonfait, 'De Paleotti à G B Agucchi: théorie et pratique de la peinture dans les milieux ecclésiastiques a Rome du Caravage', in *Rome 1630: Il trionfo del pennello*, pp. 83-96 (p. 91); Andrea Emiliani (ed), *Ludovico Carracci*, exhib. cat. (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1993), p. 152.

<sup>78</sup> Corradini, p. 87.

male body like the Virgin at the Crucifixion. We can also compare her to Lucina viewing St Sebastian in the replacement painting made for Maffeo's Chapel. Venus provided Giori with the possibility to identify with an active feminine viewer in order to desire a passive male body legitimately. Distanced from the male body through the figure of Venus, Giori avoided connotations of sodomitic desire and maintained his priestly chastity. Lastly, because the subject matter is mythological, the representation of passive masculinity in Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* escaped some of the problems inherent in religious images of the male body.

Maffeo's decision also reveals how the secular nature of the gallery allowed men to appreciate the sensual aspects of the masculine body. The nature of Giori's *Galleria* meant that Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* operated within a space designed to foster appreciation of the patron's most exquisite paintings. Poussin's patrons' interest in the 'Greek style', recently discussed by Cropper and Dempsey, provided a frame for the sensual appreciation of the type of masculinity depicted in Poussin's painting.<sup>79</sup> This type of viewing avoided connotations of sexuality.

During the 1620s, Poussin was encouraged by his patrons to experiment with images of 'Greek' masculinity, such as in *Bacchus*, which contained an element of softness and sensuality normally retained for the feminine body (fig. 64).<sup>80</sup> Cropper and Dempsey have linked the appreciation of the 'Greek style' to other social rituals that sought to distinguish elite men's behaviour from their social inferiors.<sup>81</sup> Taste developed out of the delectation of luxury food and drink, music and art, which played an important part in the socialization of the aristocracy and the demarcation of their bodies from the lower classes, in terms of physical response to the costly or the beautiful.<sup>82</sup> I suggest that we can consider Giori's possible sensual appreciation of Adonis' masculine-feminine body within this context.

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<sup>79</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 26-45.

<sup>80</sup> Thuillier, 'Poussin et la laboratoire', p. 17. Poussin's painting of this subject may well be a result of a later repaint undergone by someone who sought to remake it as a befitting image by a classical and honest Poussin. Duquesnoy also produced a sculpture of Bacchus showing similar sensuality; see Antonia Nava Cellini, *La Scultura del Seicento* (Turin: UTET, 1982) p. 77. Bacchus was another deity considered to embody both male and female characteristics; see Cartari, p. 390. Poussin depicted the beginning of the story where Bacchus is raised as a girl in his *Nurture of Bacchus*; see Humphrey Wine, 'Nurture of Bacchus', in *Fransk Guldalder Poussin og Claude og Maleriet i det 17 århundredes Frankrig*, ed. by Humphrey Wine and Olaf Koester, exhib. cat. (Copenhagen: Statens Museum for Kunst, 1992), pp. 164-65; Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, trans. by Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 101 (III. 3). Michelangelo had shown Bacchus with characteristics of both genders; see Vasari, *The Lives*, IX, p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 89-91.

<sup>82</sup> Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, pp. 60-109; Michael Moriaty, *Taste and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 58; Ariès, 'Introduction', p. 6; Daston and Park, pp. 90-108.

The appreciation of male nudity in 1620's Rome may well have been an extension of the sixteenth-century trend for male courtiers to depict themselves in mythological guise, semi-naked, perhaps in order to demonstrate the grace of their behaviour.<sup>83</sup> Images of male passivity were certainly part of this phenomenon. Vasari reported that he had painted the young, beautiful Neapolitan *letterato* and *virtuoso* Alfonso di Tommasso Cambi, 'nude and full length in the pose of Endymion'.<sup>84</sup> Poussin's paintings can also be related to images of languid male nudes painted in grand Roman palaces, such as Salviati's *sopraporte* in the Palazzo Sacchetti, just down the road from Giori's palazzo-villa.

By the 1620s, the ability to appreciate works of art through the application of taste had so defined a particular type of Roman gentleman that they were described by Mancini as *huomini di gusto*, gentlemen of taste.<sup>85</sup> We saw in Chapter One that Mancini, a member of the papal court, distinguished these men from great princes and lords. They were comparable to the more modest 'private gentleman of distinction', an apt description of Poussin's clientele.<sup>86</sup>

The *huomini di gusto*, for whom Poussin painted, tried to appreciate different styles in different ways.<sup>87</sup> These different responses were a marker of status: they indicated distinction, learning and restraint. A gentleman's reaction to a sensual image had the potential to overpower him if he did not have sufficient control. The act of regarding a male body represented in the 'Greek style', and responding to it in the correct way, was thus an indicator of the gentleman's status.

In demonstrating status through a gentlemanly appreciation of the style of Greek masculinity in Poussin's painting, Giori must have affirmed his links with his colleagues through homo-sociality. Adonis' femininity makes him analogous to certain representations that modern writers have identified as fostering relations between men. Eve Sedgwick famously defined homo-sociality as 'male heterosexual desire to consolidate a partnership with authoritative males in and through the bodies of

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<sup>83</sup> Walters, pp. 163-64

<sup>84</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de Più eccellenti Pittori, Scultori e Architettori*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini, 6 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1966-1987), VI, p. 394: 'si fece ritrarre ignudo e tutto intero in persona d'uno Endimione'. On Cambi see C. Mutini, 'Cambi, Alfonso', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XVII, 91-92. A similar personification may occur in the left hand figure of Eustache Le Seuer's *Reunion d'Amis* (1648, Louvre) which represents a meeting of a French academy. The man is dressed as a shepherd, with dog, as in the iconography of Endymion.

<sup>85</sup> Klein, p. 167.

<sup>86</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, pp. 140, 143.

<sup>87</sup> Ginzburg, 'Giovanni Battista Agucchi', p. 285-86. Agucchi identified sculptures as being in the 'Greek style'. The interest in regional styles may have also encouraged the Venetian revival in the 1620s, of which Poussin's mythological paintings were a part.

females'.<sup>88</sup> Sedgwick discussed how Shakespeare's sonnets marginalise the female gender and assert homo-social relationships through the figure of the ambiguously gendered youth. In a similar fashion, Abigail Solomon-Godeau has interpreted French Revolution paintings of feminine men as promoting homo-sociality through the violent suppression of woman's threatening difference.<sup>89</sup> Male bonding over feminine-masculine bodies does seem to have occurred in seventeenth-century Rome. Caravaggio's erotic paintings of musicians have been linked with a type of social gathering of gentlemen listening to the performance of male singers dressed as women.<sup>90</sup> Caravaggio's eroticism conveyed the power of music to affect the listener emotionally.<sup>91</sup> These sexualised boys reinforced the structures of patriarchal heterosexuality in which older men lusted after affective, younger, womanly creatures.<sup>92</sup> In this sense, homo-sociality was achieved through a shared experience of patriarchal masculinity.

An image of a naked adolescent male stood for the masculine virtue of honour and conveyed a shared taste appreciated by male giver and male recipient. In Rome in 1622, Asdrubale Bombasi presented the *Love of honour* by Annibale Carracci (fig. 65) to Cardinal Alessandro d'Este. Despite the Church's prohibition of nudity in the public spaces of Rome, collectors continued to invest in paintings of male nudes.<sup>93</sup> The nature of the world of the elite, hidden from the eyes of the Roman populace, meant that male sociability could still be legitimately carried out through the image of the nude male body. In this light, Poussin's *Adonis* could have helped Giori to cement his male social network.

### 8.6. Degrees of Desire

I am arguing that Giori's interest in Poussin's *Adonis* related to the display of status that was performed through demonstrating desire for the masculine-feminine body. Further evidence of this performance comes from reports about audiences of opera. In Chapter Four, I argued how Poussin's paintings can be related to the visual and aural strategies of representation employed in opera. Here I want to extend this formal relationship to consider how operatic representations of gender may have

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<sup>88</sup> Sedgwick, p. 38

<sup>89</sup> Sedgwick, pp. 44-48; Abigail Solomon Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997) pp. 138-41; see review of Godeau by Satish Padiyar, 'Crisis? What Crisis?', *Art History*, 21 (1988), 272-78.

<sup>90</sup> Haskell, p. 29.

<sup>91</sup> Helen Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life* (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 105-12.

<sup>92</sup> Panizza, p. 18 n.39.

<sup>93</sup> Zapperi, 'L'ignudo e il vestito', pp. 52, 56-58.

influenced the responses to Poussin's images of passive masculine-feminine bodies in terms of status. Poussin's patrons must have been encouraged to respond to his image of the masculine-feminine body in specific ways due to the presence of castrati singers in the palaces of Rome. By considering this social ritual of viewing, we can further appreciate the dynamics of desire and the negotiation of status that I have argued is registered in Poussin's painting of *Venus and Adonis*.

In Rome, unlike in France, noblemen cherished and enjoyed the complex characters of castrati.<sup>94</sup> The opulence of Sacchi's portrait of the famous Roman castrato Pasqualini, a member of the court of the papal nephew Cardinal Antonio Barberini (fig. 66), demonstrates this appreciation.<sup>95</sup> Because of the ban on women singing in public, as well as the fact that only men could belong to the papal choir, young boys were operated upon and trained in order to replicate the fashionable female voice for the new art form of opera. Although full removal of the genitals did not occur, people believed that the operation made castrati weak in body and mind and unable to develop male secondary sexual characteristics such as facial hair. Castrati were read through the physical signs of their gender as men or women; they still had penises, but they did not have beards.<sup>96</sup> The castrato's simultaneous male and female genders fulfilled the requirements of his unique position. Due to the logic of gender segregation in Roman society, castrati had to be considered as men: women were not allowed to be public singers or members of the Papal choir. At the same time, the castrati had to be successfully read as female opera characters in order to allow the audience to emotionally engage with the plot.

Within the context of the castrati, Adonis' veiled body in Poussin's painting would have allowed a gentleman viewer to maintain the fantasy that there was some feminine aspect within Adonis' body. The fact that the blue cloth marks Adonis' genitals would have reminded the viewer that his body was also still male. Such explorations of gender ambiguity occurred in the operas performed on the stages of Rome. The 1629 opera, *Diana Schernita*, played on the conceits of veiling and unveiling the bodies of Diana and Endymion. The revelation and concealment of Diana's body in the bath, dominates the climatic fourth act. The concealing, revealing

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<sup>94</sup> Jones and Stallybrass, p. 91. The cultural difference between Italy and France can be seen in Mazarin's misjudged opera project of the *Orfeo*, staged in Paris in 1647. Instead of being praised Mazarin was personally and politically attacked as having the same 'freakish' indeterminate gender as Italian castrati. See Olson, pp. 124-26.

<sup>95</sup> On this painting see Terence Ford, 'Andrea Sacchi's *Apollo Crowning the singer Marc Antonio Pasqualini*', *Early Music*, 12 (1984), 79-84.

<sup>96</sup> McClary, 'Soprano as Fetish'; Rosselli, pp. 145, 151.

and hiding of Endymion himself, disguised as Acteon, reiterates Diana's striptease. Revelation is staged as an act that is both desired and feared: it promises sexual satisfaction but also death. The concealing aspects of Diana's striptease must have been necessary, not only for decorum, but also because the body of the person playing her was not female.<sup>97</sup> The opera *Diana Schernita* appears to register the desire to explore a ritual of viewing where the fantasy could be sustained that the male body was in fact feminine. At the same time, as with contemporary censorship of the male genitals in religious art, the veiling of 'Diana's' body also marked the male genitalia that it sought to conceal.

In seventeenth-century Rome, there was a clear relationship between status and sensual appreciation of the operatic masculine-feminine body. In 1633, Francesco Barberini's French secretary of Latin letters, Bouchard, noted somewhat satirically that the castrati who dressed as girls were the targets for the affections of bishops and cardinals. Bouchard wrote:

The singers who represented women... being young pages or young castrati, of the type that one could only hear the muffled sighs in the hall, only admiration and desire could escape from the bishops, but from the cardinals, because they have more authority they can behave more liberally, pouting and speaking softly, they invite these clean-shaven *pantomimes* to gentle frolics.<sup>98</sup>

Although it is necessary to be careful about the bias of Bouchard's text, the description usefully highlights how a superior social position in the papal court allowed a man greater liberalism in the demonstration of his desire for the masculine-feminine body.

Through his ownership of Poussin's painting of *Venus and Adonis*, Angelo Giori possessed a representation of a passive masculine-feminine body. Giori's possession of the painting related to demonstrations of status through different degrees of desire. In the semi-public space of the opera performance, cardinals were able to exhibit their ability to possess such bodies sexually, through whispered invitations. Bishops were not able to perform in this way. Giori's ownership of Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* provided a statement akin to the bishops' signs of 'admiration and desire' for the masculine-

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<sup>97</sup> Giacinto Cornachioli, *Diana Schernita Favola Boscareccia* (Rome: Robletti, 1629). I would like to thank Susan McClary for bringing this opera to my attention.

<sup>98</sup> Jean Jacques Bouchard, *Oeuvres*, ed. by E. Kanceff (Turin: Giappichelli, 1976-7), p. 152: 'Les recitans qui represoint ou femmes ou choeurs ou anges estoit beaus en perfection, estans ou jeunes pages, ou jeunes chastrez di *capella*, de sorte que l'on entendoit qye souspirs sourds par la sale, que l'admiration et le desir faisoient eschaper *da i petti impavonazzati*, car pour les rouges, ayants plus d'autorité, ils se comportoient aussi plus librement, jusques là *χε λε χαρδ*. Sav *Γιοργιο*, et *Αλδοβρανδιν*, *protensis labjis et crebris sonorisque popismatibus glabros hos ludiones ad suavia invitabant*'. I have relied on Marc Fumaroli, *Nicolas Poussin: Sainte Françoise Romaine* (Paris: RMN, 2001), p. 76, for the translations from the Greek and Latin.

feminine body.<sup>99</sup> Through possessing a painted, rather than real, body, a *maestro da camera* of a cardinal, such as Giori, respected the class ideologies at work in the different demonstrations of desire.

In Poussin's painting, Venus acted as a feminine standpoint that could mediate between Giori and Adonis. The representation of a feminine gaze could have allowed Giori to maintain the decorum that befitted his status as a gentleman. As a lower member of the papal court, Giori was not permitted socially to invite castrati back to his house. At the same time, because of his aspirations to become a cardinal, Giori was encouraged to demonstrate desire for masculine-feminine bodies. Bouchard notes how the lower status bishops still displayed 'admiration and desire' for the castrati. Poussin's Adonis could have registered the desire for the possession of such a body, which was intimately linked to power in Roman society. Through the mediating desire of Venus, a gentleman could have entertained a desire to possess sexually the male body, but through an inferior subject position. Furthermore, this desire was registered in a secular mythological painting. In Chapter Six, we saw that this genre allowed a certain liberalism of behaviour.

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Poussin's painting depicts Adonis in a positive light. It is a representation that could have eased Giori's fears about experiencing a social position of passivity. It also encapsulated the likelihood of his rise from humble beginnings to a princely cardinal.

In terms of configurations of gender and power in the seventeenth century, Poussin's *Venus and Adonis* can be seen as analogous to men's gallant homage to women. This social practice allegorised a deferential social position that was not actually inferior.<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Adonis, subjugated to a woman, could have represented the temporary nature of Giori's passivity and his eventual success in obtaining a position of power. When looking at this painting, Giori utilised skills that would have supported his belief in his right to inhabit the position of his masters. He could apply his appreciation of sensual Greek style and desire the type of masculinity cherished in

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<sup>99</sup> Lanfranco's *Young boy with a cat*, oil on canvas, 113x160, London: Walpole Gallery, c.1620-22 demonstrates a similar desire by presumably the male patron to possess an erotic painting of a young male body, with his genitals covered. The painting was later acquired by Christina of Sweden, suggesting that it was also a painting which could demonstrate female desire for the male body; see Germaine Greer, *The Boy*, (Thames and Hudson, 2003), pp. 219-23.

<sup>100</sup> Ago, 'Giochi di Squadra', p. 260.

Counter Reformation Catholicism; at the same time, he kept himself chaste in the manner befitting an ecclesiastical-gentleman of the papal court.



## Chapter Nine: Marital Tensions in Poussin's Mars and Venus

### 9.1. A Painting for Marriage

This chapter presents a second example of how Poussin's early mythological paintings related to the kinship experiences of his patrons. In the same way as Poussin's painting of *Venus and Adonis*, his *Mars and Venus* had significance for seventeenth-century regards in terms of their familial and status interests. Poussin's *Mars and Venus* in Boston (fig. 2) was displayed in the *Camera Grande* of the Palazzo dal Pozzo that was discussed in Part III. There we saw that the chamber was intimately linked with the private spaces of the palace where the dynastic hopes of the family were housed. Poussin's *Mars and Venus* was an apparatus through which the dal Pozzo family could have explored their fears and hopes.

Poussin's *Mars and Venus* relates to the entrance into the dal Pozzo household of Theodora Costa, the wife of Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo, in 1627.<sup>1</sup> Most scholars have dated the painting between 1627 and 1629, contemporary with this event.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, its subject was traditionally associated with the celebration of marriage.<sup>3</sup> The story of Venus subjugating Mars was a relevant representation of an institution that could resolve battles between families, or entire countries.<sup>4</sup> The temporal, spatial and thematic closeness of Poussin's painting and the dal Pozzo-Costa marriage offers a frame through which we can consider the paintings' multivalency. Contradictory beliefs about marriage and the production of children provide a context for understanding the complex choices Poussin made when constructing his painting. The gendering of its protagonists as simultaneously masculine and feminine may have allowed different members of the dal Pozzo household to utilise the painting in ways that related specifically to these concerns.

In this chapter, women begin to people our notion of the dal Pozzo household. Women viewers of paintings were certainly not unheard-of in the early seventeenth

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<sup>1</sup> Oberhuber argued that the painting was 'surely destined for the celebration of a marriage', p. 224. He did not know that the painting was in the collection of dal Pozzo. Later research by Standring has proved the provenance of this painting; see 'Some Pictures', pp. 611-13. Another painting in the *Camera Grande* also referred to marriage: the *Rebecca at the Well*. Through her action of giving water to Abraham's servant to drink, Rebecca demonstrated her wifely potential (Genesis 24. 12-13).

<sup>2</sup> Eric M. Zafran, *French Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Volume One Artists Born Before 1790* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1998), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> For contemporaneous references to Mars and Venus in marital imagery, including in the Palazzo Zuccari in Rome, see S. Saward, *The Golden Age of Marie de Medici* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1978), pp. 53-57. On the longer tradition see Panofsky, pp. 161-64.

<sup>4</sup> Daniela Lombardi, 'Intervention by Church and State in marriage disputes in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Florence', in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 142-56 (p. 142).

century. Reports about Italian collections that were opened at this time mentioned women spectators.<sup>5</sup> We can visualise how seventeenth-century gentlemen imagined these women gallery-goers through a painting by Cornelius de Baellieur of a collector's cabinet, dated 1637 (fig. 67). Although from a Flemish rather than an Italian context, De Baellieur's painting is reminiscent of Italian images of pleasurable interactions between the sexes that occurred in the Arcadian spaces, such as the mythological painting gallery. There is some evidence that the dal Pozzo family respected women's standpoints, suggesting they were keen to replicate De Baellieur's arrangement. Cassiano's mother appears to have had an advisory role in terms of the layout of the Palace.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Cassiano was involved in trying to gain permits for women to read Marino's *Adone*. These permits were almost never conceded for women, suggesting that Cassiano must have had the motivation to take on this difficult task.<sup>7</sup> The role of the women of the dal Pozzo family in the reception of painting will be considered further in the following and final chapter of the thesis.

## 9.2. Forming the Dal Pozzo Household

Poussin's painting shows Mars relaxing in Venus' bower, succumbing to her peaceful powers, in a similar fashion to other paintings of the couple that depict Love overcoming strife.<sup>8</sup> Putti hold Mars' armour, indicating that he is no longer engaged in his masculine duty of instigating and organising war. Two of these Loves are preoccupied with sharpening the weapons of Cupid that will help Venus to keep Mars in this state of leisure. The relaxing nature of the pastoral idyll is emphasised through the figure of the reclining Nymphs and River God to the left and the right of the painting. Mars makes a visual comment about the unique possibilities of this intimate space: with his left hand he gestures towards the *outside* world, with all its laws of duty and responsibility, which opens up beyond his shield.

We know that Poussin's *Mars and Venus* came to reside in the Palazzo dal Pozzo. Almost certainly, this was its original destination as the size of the painting

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<sup>5</sup> On the gender of audiences of collections see Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 68-74.

<sup>6</sup> Caterina Volpi, 'Biancamaria Cacherano', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Biella exhib. cat., pp. 109-10 (p. 110). Noblewomen were often called upon to advise in the decoration of palaces; see Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>7</sup> Lumbroso, p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> On this tradition see Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, pp. 81-85. It is worth noting that the probable source, the *Loves of the Gods* prints discussed below, must have been more widely known than the positive paintings of the subjugated Mars by Botticelli and Piero di Cosimo that were for 'private' *camere*; see Rubin, p. 33. A French print depicts this configuration as entirely negative; see Henri Zerner, *The School of Fontainebleau: Etchings and Engravings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), L. D. 72. The negative connotations of 'women on top' imagery at Fontainebleau has been discussed in political terms by Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Women on Top at Fontainebleau', *Oxford Art Journal*, 16 (1993), 34-48.

indicates a private commission. The painting is surprisingly large in relation to the other mythological paintings that the artist produced at this time; it is largest of the group considered in this thesis, and is almost twice the size of the *Echo and Narcissus* discussed in Chapter One. The *Mars and Venus* is also considerably larger than the small-scale landscape paintings used to decorate new houses quickly in preparation for marriage.<sup>9</sup> The *Mars and Venus* was certainly one of twenty-odd paintings that the dal Pozzo brothers acquired from Poussin in the late 1620s and early 1630s.<sup>10</sup> The purchase of this painting was connected with the initial decoration of the palace that occurred in preparation for the marriage of Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo to Theodora Costa.<sup>11</sup> Around the time when Poussin painted the *Mars and Venus*, the members of the dal Pozzo household were deeply involved with rituals and beliefs surrounding marriage.

Poussin's patrons must have realised the relationship between Poussin's painting and the social event with which they were involved. In these years, the dal Pozzo family had to make certain familial decisions which reflected the importance of this institution. Recent research on the careers of ecclesiasts in the papal court has shown the value to the success of these celibate men not only of their matriarchal, and sisterly networks, but also the links provided through the marriage of their brothers.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, for Roman bureaucrats who were gentlemen, such as Cassiano, establishing a family household was a sign of social strength.<sup>13</sup> Reflecting this important moment in the dal Pozzo genealogy, Cassiano's mother sent her son a painting of the dal Pozzo family tree, eighteen days before the marriage.<sup>14</sup> It is highly likely that Poussin's *Mars and Venus*, as an analogous marital image, allowed the members of the dal Pozzo family to comprehend and negotiate this vital experience in their rising fortunes.

In the 1620s, the dal Pozzo family's history followed a similar line of social advancement to the Giori family outlined in the last chapter. Capitalising on their new found importance with a family member working for the papal administration, the dal Pozzo family accumulated possessions and set about ensuring the continuation of the

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<sup>9</sup> Sheila Rinehart, 'Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657): Some Unknown Letters', *Italian Studies*, 16 (1961), 35-59 (p. 48).

<sup>10</sup> It is very hard to be certain exactly how many paintings the dal Pozzo family did acquire in these years. See Chapter Six, n. 24. I have excluded the *Sacraments* and later works from my calculations.

<sup>11</sup> The palace was first occupied a month before the wedding. From Cassiano's correspondence with his friend Antonio Galli it is evident that marriage provided a focal point around which to organise and decorate a household; see Rinehart, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 40-41, 63-65, 118; Kate Lowe, 'Secular brides and convent brides: wedding ceremonies in Italy during the Renaissance and Counter Reformation', in *Marriage In Italy 1300-1650*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 41-65 (p. 41). Cassiano's mother interceded on behalf of her son at the court of Savoy where she held some influence; see Volpi, 'Biancamaria', p. 110.

<sup>13</sup> Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>14</sup> Volpi, 'Biancamaria', p. 110.

family dynasty in the terms specified by Roman society.<sup>15</sup> The wedding between Carlo Antonio and Theodora Costa was one such strategy to establish the dal Pozzo dynasty.

Unlike Giori, Cassiano came from a family that had already held high positions in Turin and Florence. He was invested into the military order of the knights of S. Stefano and provided with a commendam (an ecclesiastical benefice that did not require the incumbent to take on the duties of a priest) by his uncle, the Archbishop of Pisa. The benefice meant that Cassiano had the economic freedom to ignore his father's advice to become a lawyer and to marry.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he tried to enter the service of the Borghese, the current papal family, perhaps hoping to gain a place in the papal administration. During the 1610s, Cassiano lived off his income, frequenting intellectual circles and joining academies. By 1618, his finances had begun to run out. However, through these connections he met Francesco Barberini, and when Francesco's uncle became Pope, Cassiano too enjoyed a rapid rise through the ranks of Francesco's household staff, becoming his *maestro da camera* in 1633. His decision not to marry, taken in the 1610s, had at last paid off.

In 1620, Carlo Antonio, the youngest of the three brothers, joined Cassiano in Rome. In 1625, Francesco, the middle brother, died fighting for the Duke of Savoy; the continuation of the family line now lay on Carlo's shoulders. On 14<sup>th</sup> October 1627 he married Theodora Costa. Theodora was the second youngest of five daughters of Ottavio Costa, a Roman banker of Genoese extraction and a patron of Caravaggio. Cassiano, who no doubt organised the marriage, may have met Ottavio through their shared interests in painting. He must have seen the Costa family regularly as they lived very near to the Palazzo dal Pozzo.<sup>17</sup> Due to Theodora's age, and her position within the family, her dowry was only 15,500 *scudi*.<sup>18</sup> The connections she provided may have made up for her financial lack. She brought links to Genoa, which bordered Savoy, the dal Pozzo home state. Northern influence may have been valuable when the Piedmont branch of the dal Pozzo family tried to lay claim to Cassiano's commendam.<sup>19</sup> The ties

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<sup>15</sup> On the Pozzo family see Lumbroso, pp. 5-20; Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 25-51; and Francesco Solinas, 'Cassiano dal Pozzo e le arti a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Rome exhib. cat., pp. 1-11. Carlo Antonio's eldest son became a priest, suggesting that the family wanted to build on Cassiano's success in rising through the ranks of the papal administration.

<sup>16</sup> Lumbroso, pp. 9-12.

<sup>17</sup> Spezzaferro, pp. 579-86.

<sup>18</sup> Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Munich: Hirmer, 1999) p. 34. In 1616-21, the daughters of Giacomo Barolo received dowries of between 18-20,000 *scudi*. The average dowry size had grown ten times since the end of the sixteenth century due to a fall in interest rates. A family needed more capital to get the same amount of income; see Stuart J Woolf, *Studi sulla nobiltà piemontese nell'epoca dell'assolutismo* (Turin: Accademia delle scienze, 1963), pp. 156-57. The youngest Costa daughter became a nun.

<sup>19</sup> Lumbroso, pp. 7, 135.

provided by Theodora certainly proved useful for Pietro Testa, another painter patronised by Cassiano dal Pozzo. His copy of Poussin's *St. Erasmus* was bought by Theodora's brother, Pier Francesco Costa.<sup>20</sup> Cassiano exchanged letters with Pier Francesco between 1628 and 1652.<sup>21</sup> In a dal Pozzo family document of 1729, Theodora was referred to as a '*contessa*' suggesting that her own status was important in the family lore.<sup>22</sup>

The iconographic tradition of using the coupling of the God of war and the Goddess of Love as an allegory of marriage meant that Poussin's painting of *Mars and Venus* reflected the important event of Theodora's entrance into the dal Pozzo household.<sup>23</sup> Now that Cassiano had started his ascent through the ranks of the papal administration, it was important to capitalise on his success and start a family. Cassiano dal Pozzo, who most probably acquired Poussin's painting of *Mars and Venus*, was keen to promote the success of his brother's marriage.<sup>24</sup> The joyous, witty air of the painting relates the *Mars and Venus* to the 'light and playful' songs celebrating marriage which Cassiano commissioned to be sung at his brother's wedding feast. Cassiano asked his friend, who was negotiating with the composer, 'that in praising marriage and explaining the pleasure that one can hope to have from a happy companionship, [the songs] would not only establish the newly weds in the good intention to be content in their state but also to invite others to chose to be in a similar position'. Cassiano left much of the creative decisions, such as the length of the poem and the style 'entirely' up to the composer, Andrea Salvadori.<sup>25</sup>

Cassiano's interest in the success of his brother's marriage was not just sentimental. Cassiano, as the eldest brother, and ecclesiast, was head of the household over his younger brother, who was the head of the dynasty. The eldest brother

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<sup>20</sup> Hugh Brigstocke, 'Some Further Thoughts on Pietro Testa', *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 29 (1978), 117-48 (pp. 118-19). Brigstocke dated this painting to 1632-7 when Testa was heavily involved in the Pozzo circle. He did not make the connection between the Pozzo and Costa families.

<sup>21</sup> Herklotz, p. 34 n. 19. The earliest extant letter is dated 29th March 1628.

<sup>22</sup> Donatella L. Sparti, 'Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo (1609-1689): An Unknown Collector', *Journal Of The History Of Collections*, 2 (1990), 7-19 (p. 16 n.26).

<sup>23</sup> On this tradition see n. 3 of this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Carlo Antonio may have also played a part in the commission as he supervised the decoration of the palace during Cassiano's absence in 1626. See Sparti, 'Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo', p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Cassiano dal Pozzo, *Lettere ad Agnolo Galli*, 2 ottobre 1627, reprinted in Sparti, *Le Collezioni dal Pozzo*, pp. 173-4 (p. 173): 'che usandosi qui dopo il Pasto delle Nozze far Musica, desiderarei che VS. facesse fare dal Sig.r Andrea Salvadori qualche compositione d'aria scherzevole, e allegro, che lodando il maritarsi e spiegando le contentezze che da un felice accompagnamento si posson sperare, potesse non solo stabilir in buon proposito I sposi di contentarsi del stato loro, ma far invito à gl'altri d'elezione di simil stato... Dell'esser olungo [sic], o breve, o del far'l componimento o in Dialogo o in forma che più piacesse la lo rimetterà interamente al suddetto S.re Andrea'. Pozzo also had a scholarly interest in marriage demonstrated through his discussions on the *Aldobrandini wedding* fresco with Peiresc, Pignoria and Milesi; see Peiresc, pp. 46-47, 58 n. 2, 89 n. 29. Cassiano also asked Poussin to produce a picture of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis in 1642; see Poussin, *Lettres et propos*, pp. 54-55.

influenced the education and management of those who were next in line to the fortunes of his ecclesiastical career.<sup>26</sup>

The theme of Poussin's painting resonates with Cassiano's wishes for the songs for the wedding feast. The sylvan atmosphere of Poussin's *Mars and Venus* depicts the same notions of 'happy companionship', which were to occupy the creative mind of Salvadori. The bliss of Venus' bower, emphasised in Poussin's idyllic painting, was highly relevant to the ideals of marriage held by Cassiano. In late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century treatises on marriage, women were encouraged to provide a comforting environment for their husbands.<sup>27</sup> The dal Pozzo family must have regarded the picture in the context of the ritual with which they were all involved at this time. Marriage pictures were commissioned before or after the actual wedding.<sup>28</sup> As they settled into their new roles, the picture would have been relevant to Theodora and Carlo Antonio over an extended period.

Carlo Antonio and Theodora were used to relating such general imagery to their own positions. Cassiano expected them to apply the all-purpose marital imagery of the songs performed at their wedding feast to their own marriage. In his letter asking his friend to commission the songs, he wrote: 'I do not care to name specifically the husband and wife, it should be applicable to every marriage'.<sup>29</sup> Though these songs do not survive, we can surmise that they would have drawn on traditional marriage imagery that often utilised the narratives of mythology.<sup>30</sup> Poussin's painting of Venus overcoming the warlike tendencies of Mars, and creating peace, would be very relevant to the themes Theodora and Carlo Antonio were meant to be considering at the time of their marriage.

A detail of the painting supports this analysis. The central motif of Venus laying her right hand on top of Mars' right hand may connote the wedding gesture termed the

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<sup>26</sup> Irene Fosci and Maria Antoinetta Visceglia, 'Marriage and Politics at the Papal Court in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *Marriage In Italy 1300-1650*, pp. 200-23 (p. 210); Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 60-71; Ago, 'The Family in Rome', p. 81.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Richardson, 'Advice on Love and Marriage in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century', in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. by Letizia Panizza (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 194-208 (p. 202).

<sup>28</sup> Rubin, p. 33; Margit Thøfner, 'Helena Fourment's *Het Pelsken*', *Art History*, 27 (2004), 1-33. In the ancient world wedding songs or poems were often performed as examples of beautiful poetry, years after the event. The new performance must have continued to allude to the event for which the poem had been originally written, no doubt reminding listeners of the marriage and its subsequent fortunes. On the tradition of wedding poems in the ancient world see Arthur Leslie Wheeler, *Catallus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934), pp. 183-217.

<sup>29</sup> Dal Pozzo, *Lettere ad Agnolo Galli*, p. 173: 'Nella detta Poesia, non mi curo che venga nominato specificamente ne il Sposo, nela Sposa, mà che sia una cosa generale applicabile a ogni Sposo'

<sup>30</sup> Bianconi, pp. 271-84. In 1614, the Roman marriage of Don Michele Peretti and Anna Maria Cesi was celebrated with a musical spectacle *Amor pudico* using mythological characters, see Filippo Clementi, *Il Carnevale Romano nelle cronache contemporanee* (Rome: Settii, 1899), p. 338.

*dextrarum iunctio*.<sup>31</sup> This Roman tradition symbolised concord, affection, devotion and fidelity. The gesture does not occur in the *Loves of the Gods* versions of the couple (fig. 10). Poussin must have studied the motif elsewhere. It does appear on the well-known sarcophagus at S. Lorenzo fuori le mura depicting marriage (fig. 68). The gesture entails the man on the right crossing his body with his right arm, and his wife extending her arm with an open profile. The poses of the husband and wife on the sarcophagus are very similar to that of the central couple in the *Mars and Venus*, although reversed along the lines of gender. In ancient Rome, couples depicted themselves in the guise of Mars and Venus. Cassiano dal Pozzo was, perhaps, aware of this tradition as he owned a drawing of a similar motif from a now-lost sarcophagus (fig. 69). Sometimes the allegorical couples were shown with their right hands clasped in the gesture of *dextrarum iunctio* (fig. 70).<sup>32</sup>

In relation to the dominant scopic regime of affection by image, Poussin's *Mars and Venus* had the power to encourage Theodora and Carlo Antonio to adopt correct marital behaviour. Images, rather than words, were believed to be a far more effective way to influence behaviour. Paleotti had stressed that paintings of men and women could provide examples to regards about how to live, exciting them to imitate the paintings they saw.<sup>33</sup> Poussin's *Mars and Venus* might not have been the kind of saintly image Paleotti had in mind, but the dal Pozzo family required slightly different results than those envisaged by the bishop.

### 9.3. Changing Positions

In the Introduction, I discussed how the arrangement of Poussin's *Mars and Venus* was indebted to the formula employed in the various sixteenth-century *Loves of the Gods* prints, such as the version by Giovanni Battista Ghisi (fig. 10), as well as a whole series of prints by Giorgio Ghisi, Scultori, Vico, Reverdino, and Caraglio. These prints show Mars and Venus in positions that are antithetical to those taken up by the characters in Poussin's painting: Venus is on the right and always has a raised leg. A formal comparison of the two images shows that Poussin's figure of Mars takes up a

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<sup>31</sup> Cunningham suspected that Venus' gesture 'symbolized the union of the two characters'. His suggestion was rejected by Panofsky who argued in a letter to Cunningham: 'I would not say that the gesture of Venus means that Poussin was familiar with the tradition of legal marriage'. I would refute Panofsky's argument as Poussin depicted the legal gesture of *dextrarum iunctio* in his *Sacrament of Marriage*. On this correspondence see Zafran, p. 41. The gesture might signify 'incapacity', although this tradition appears to belong more to the Middle Ages; see Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture*, pp. 88-95.

<sup>32</sup> Diana E. E. Kleiner, 'Second-Century Mythological Portraiture: Mars and Venus', *Latomus*, 40 (1981), 512-42; Phyllis Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), pp. 229-31.

<sup>33</sup> Paleotti, pp. 148, 156-57.

pose traditionally connected with Venus.<sup>34</sup> Mythological scenes from the *Loves of the Gods* prints were used throughout Italy and France in a wide range of media: they appear in prints and frescoes and on majolica plates and limoge enamels.<sup>35</sup> The widespread dissemination of this imagery provided a visual repertoire of mythological imagery with which Poussin's patrons would have been familiar. His contemporaries must have recognised the reversal of poses in Poussin's painting.

Poussin's painting represents a reversal of the division of labour between Mars and Venus in the *Loves of the Gods* prints: Mars as viewer of Venus' body. Whilst Mars relaxes in a pose usually occupied by Venus, Venus inclines her head to stare into her lover's eyes, taking up the profile position of Mars in the *Loves of the Gods* prints. In formal terms, Poussin clearly wanted to emphasise Venus' active gaze. Venus' role as viewer is highlighted by surrounding details. One of Cupid's arrows seems about to brush Venus' back. This motif echoes the description of how Venus fell in love with Adonis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (X. 524-27), a story that revolves around Venus' own act of looking. Grazed by Cupid's arrow, she became captivated with the beauty of the youth. Venus' intense stare in Poussin's painting can be seen as a migration of her active gaze at the passive Adonis onto a situation that is usually about Mars' masculine-possessive look and Venus as feminine-object.

The nuances of Venus' role in Poussin's painting were not recognised in a recent analysis of the representations of gender in this painting. Cropper and Dempsey argued that:

it is not Venus, but the male figure of Mars who is presented to the active gaze of the beholder (and painter)... [Mars] is distinctly non-phallic, and he *is possessed by* Venus (who *is* the phallus, in the Lacanian terms invoked by Fried).<sup>36</sup>

In this argument, it is the active *male* painter (and beholder) rather than Venus that takes Mars' traditional role as the subject who views.

This misunderstanding of the painting is a result of the authors' reliance on Lacanian theory through the work of Michael Fried. In Lacanian theory woman, in her

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<sup>34</sup> Poussin used this pose for Venus in his Dulwich *Venus and Mercury*; see Cropper and Dempsey pp. 231-32. He also use it for Acis in a drawing of *Acis and Galatea* (Chantilly, Musée Conde no. P174B). In Bonasone's less well known *Loves of the Gods* series some reversal of this pose does occur: in one print the man is on the right and bends his leg back whilst embracing the upright woman on the left; see *The Illustrated Bartsch: Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century, Volume 29*, ed. by Suzanne Borsach (New York: Abaris, 1982), p. 19. For Poussin's awareness of Bonasone's print of *Pan and a Woman* see Malcolm Bull, 'Notes on Poussin's Egypt', *Burlington Magazine*, 141 (1999), 537-41.

<sup>35</sup> Philippe Lemarchand, *Les Amours des Dieux*, 3 vols (Lausanne: Institut d'Iconographie Arietis, 1989) II, pp. 647-726.

<sup>36</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 246-47 (their emphases).



feminine position, can not take the role of active viewer.<sup>37</sup> Cropper and Dempsey used the gender ambiguity present in Poussin's *Mars and Venus* to argue that Poussin, as in Fried's discussion of Courbet, takes up the position of both maker and beholder, masculine and feminine.<sup>38</sup> Whereas Lacan's theories may be applicable to the nineteenth-century images analysed by Fried, Roman society in the 1620s had very different conceptions of the family, gender and desire. An understanding of women's roles in this period is crucial in order to interpret the seventeenth-century significances of this painting.

The dominant position of Venus in Poussin's painting partly reflected the fundamental role women played in the generation of children that would continue the rise of the family in the papal court.<sup>39</sup> Poussin may have chosen to emphasise Venus' gaze because of its relation to the marriage of Theodora Costa and Carlo Antonio. The figure of Venus viewing may have encouraged Theodora to look herself at the painting. As a marital image, Poussin's painting had the potential to address Theodora in her new role as wife. I suggest that it functioned in a similar way to the painting of *The Marriage of the Virgin*, c.1590, by Ludovico Carracci, which was displayed in the bedroom of Diana Barbieri. This painting referred to Diana's marriage through the coats of arms in the painting's elaborate silver frame.<sup>40</sup> Inside the frame, the depicted subject provided Diana with a model of matrimony to emulate.

The painting did not only provide an image for Theodora; masculinity is also presented in a specific fashion. Whilst Venus looks, in the centre of Poussin's painting, Mars' body is displayed to the viewer. He is naked: a detail unique in the paintings under consideration in this thesis. The red drapery, which covers Venus, marks the triangular gap between Mars' thighs and his minimal genitalia.<sup>41</sup> Our attention is further

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<sup>37</sup> See especially Mulvey, pp. 31-37, who argued that women can only view from a masochist or masculine position. Jacques Lacan has stated that 'there is no symbolisation of woman's sex as such'; see *The Seminar. Book III: The Psychoses 1955-56*, trans. by Russell Grigg (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 176.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), pp. 189, 191. For a critique of Fried's colonization of feminism see Kathleen Adler, 'Review of *Courbet's Realism* by Michael Fried', *Word and Image*, 7 (1997), 383-86. For a critique of Fried's concept of the painter-beholder see Terry Atkinson, 'Beholding Courbet from the Side', *Oxford Art Journal*, 15 (1992), 108-112. Similar arguments can be mounted against Cropper and Dempsey's use of Fried's theories to explain the *Mars and Venus*.

<sup>39</sup> Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 60-71.

<sup>40</sup> K. Christiansen, 'Ludovico Carracci's newly recovered *Lamentation*', *Burlington Magazine*, 142 (2000), 416-22 (p. 418).

<sup>41</sup> There has been some debate about whether Poussin did paint Mars' penis, particularly by Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 216-49. A recent technical report argued that Poussin did paint it; see Zafran, p. 42; and Rosenberg and Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, p. 166. In 1940 conservators noted some repainting in this area. I am grateful to Elizabeth Jablonski and Kathleen Drea, at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, for providing a summary of the conservation file. I would add that the gap between Mars' thighs is closer to

drawn onto Mars' body through the circle of putti who turn towards the pair, and the gaze of the Nymph. Completing the circuit of gazes, Mars' shield becomes a reflective looking-glass, which is Venus' traditional attribute. As well as reflecting the finger tips and arm of the two putti, the concave surface of the shield promises the viewer a glimpse of the back of Mars.<sup>42</sup>

The appropriation of Mars' war tools for those of a toilette emphasises Mars' feminisation.<sup>43</sup> The central position of the shield, and its glossy appearance, draws the viewer's attention towards a surface that plays with our fascination at what we might see. In the seventeenth century concave mirrors were prized, visually arresting items. The marvel of optical illusion through reflection caught the attention of visitors to Roman collections.<sup>44</sup> Two drawings related to the *Mars and Venus* show Poussin's development of this arresting motif. In the drawing at Chantilly (fig. 71), the putti look into the metal surface and one touches his reflection, as if amazed at what he sees. The shine of the shield in the painting draws the viewer's attention towards it. The sheen emphasises its new role as a beauty aid, redolent with connotations of vanity, love and desire. The altered nature of Mars' weapons is relevant to an understanding of the status of his gender in the painting. We have seen that in the seventeenth century gender was ultimately marked by clothes, attributes and gestures that appeared on the surface of the body. In the painting, Mars' attributes call into question the manliness of his status as the god of war. In the context of the Costa-dal Pozzo marriage, I conjecture that Poussin's image of Mars provided a model for Carlo Antonio, as a new husband, to emulate.

#### 9.4. Mixed Messages

The formal reversal of Poussin's *Mars and Venus* had the potential to allow the members of the dal Pozzo family to explore the complex nature of gender within

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the pictorial tradition of depicting the male genitalia, rather than the tradition of the closed 'v' which signifies the female crotch. If the painting shows Mars lacking testicles, it may have been intended to arouse female desire: castrati were considered to be very appealing to women because of their heightened sexual prowess and their sterility; see Rosselli, pp. 174-75.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Crehore Cunningham, 'Poussin's *Mars and Venus*', *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, 38 (1940), p. 55-58. Cunningham argues that the shield mirrors Venus, but as Baumstark also points out, this would be impossible given the shape of the shield and the position of the figures: Reinhold Baumstark, 'Ikonographische Studien zu Rubens und Friedensallegorien', *Aachener Kunstblätter*, 45 (1974), 125-234 (p. 184).

<sup>43</sup> Such an argument is usually made in connection with the arrows sharpened by the putto in the foreground, which some commentators take to be Mars' weapons of war turned into those of love: see Cunningham, p. 55-58. As Baumstark rightly observes, Mars is not traditionally depicted with arrows and the quiver is far too small for him, p. 184.

<sup>44</sup> Jeremy Woods, 'Padre Resta as a Collector of Carracci Drawings', *Master Drawings*, 34 (1996), 3-71 (p. 68).

marriage. In the early modern period, people understood to a great extent what it was to be a man or a woman through the prism of marriage. Writers used women's chastity and loyalty within marriage in order to justify the virtues of her sex. Urban VIII himself championed faithful wives such as Penelope in his poems.<sup>45</sup> Alternatively, the figure of the strident wife dominating her husband could be used to explore hierarchies of society turned upside down and lament the problems this would bring. The ritual of marriage was crucial in the affirmation or subversion of patriarchal gender roles: would the woman assume the feminine, passive state, or would she try to usurp the male role as the head of the household? Cassiano's mother, Biancamaria, seems to have warned about this possibility in her gift to her sons, made just before the dal Pozzo-Costa marriage, of a painting of a gypsy woman tricking a man out of his money.<sup>46</sup> This episode was a popular subject about the seductive wiles of women overcoming credulous innocent men.<sup>47</sup>

A seventeenth-century print by the Bolognese etcher Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, explored the negative consequences of a wife-dominated marriage. It is entitled: 'Sad is that House Wherein the Hen Crows and the Cock Stays Silent' (fig. 72).<sup>48</sup> The husband is shown dressed in the simple clothes of his wife and kneels before her, head humbly bowed. In contrast the woman, dressed as a male dandy, stands confidently with her hand-on-hip, brandishing a stick as if to mete out punishment. This print locates the expression of correct and incorrect gender attributes in moralistic terms. It also clearly demonstrates how the exploits of mythological characters could be related to the concerns of everyday life. The stick, held by the wife, is reminiscent of Hercules club and makes a parallel between this domestic scene and the mythological tale of Hercules and Omphale. This reference is further born out in the accompanying inscription: 'A more unhappy scene than this you will not see, where sometimes with an unworthy change Omphale takes the sword and Hercules the distaff'.<sup>49</sup>

On the one hand, we could conclude that Poussin's painting is a similar misogynistic warning to beware of feminine wiles.<sup>50</sup> For example, Poussin's representation of Venus' active gaze would have been somewhat disturbing. In contemporary advice on marriage, blatant female sexuality was discouraged. In Trotto's

<sup>45</sup> Fumaroli, *L'Inspiration du poète de Poussin*, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> Volpi, 'Biancamaria', p. 110.

<sup>47</sup> Langdon, pp. 85-87.

<sup>48</sup> 'Trista è quella casa, dove la gallina canta e il gallo tace'.

<sup>49</sup> 'Stanza mai più infelice altri non vide,/ Di quella, ove talor, con cambio indegno,/ Tien Iole il brando, e la canocchia Alcide.'

<sup>50</sup> For a similar reading of Botticelli's *Mars and Venus* as a positive and negative interpretation of the delights and dangers of marriage, see Rubin, p. 33.

*Dialoghi del matrimonio e della vita vedovile* (1578), the reader is told that a wife should on no account offer herself to her husband as a shameless whore. The message of this text was that in durable 'amore maritale', marital love, a wife should simply 'sweetly receive' her husband.<sup>51</sup> Venus' active gaze in Poussin's painting contradicts the ideal passive position of a woman receiving the love that issued from her husband's body. Venus' usurpation of Mars' place as active desirer means that the painting could have been read as misogynistic. Much of the energy of writers who defended women was focused on the refutation that women are lustful and can not control themselves, a standard attack of the misogynist tradition.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the reversals of men and women in Poussin's painting reflected new ideals of marriage. On one level, the theme of the painting would have reminded Carlo that love was part of civilized, courtly behaviour.<sup>53</sup> On another, it could have reminded Carlo of the new importance of husbandly love and respect for his wife. Marriage was one of the rituals reformed by the Council of Trent. The Catholic Church was eager to uphold marriage as a Sacrament: it was a ritual that had higher significance than a merely secular contract. The Trent theologians felt that the sanctity of the Sacrament was threatened by such practices as clandestine marriage and adultery.<sup>54</sup> Prior to the Council, treatises on love had often encouraged men and women to seek their love-partners outside the social duty of the marriage bond. Literature on love and marriage after Trent encouraged a new ideal of marriage upheld by 'amore maritale'. These treatises responded to the Church's desire to uphold the Sacrament by including *within* marriage the love that had threatened the bond through the practice of adultery.<sup>55</sup> In order to foster loving happiness, men were encouraged to treat their wives in a more kindly fashion.<sup>56</sup> For example, Stefano Guazzo, in his *Civile Conversazione* (1574) advised that the husband must not beat his wife, but love and respect her: 'we ought to be comforters one of another'. Guazzo asked the reader 'with what hart can [a wife] love that man that can find in his hart to beat her?' To combat adultery Guazzo advised that a 'husband also must provide to satisfie the honest desires of his wife, so that

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<sup>51</sup> Richardson, p. 202.

<sup>52</sup> Marinella, pp. 93-104. On the misogynist tradition see King and Rabil Jr, pp. vii-xv.

<sup>53</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, pp. 86-8. See also Rubin, p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Hubert Jedin, *Crisis and Closure of the Council of Trent*, trans. by N. D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1967), pp. 141-45; Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 4 vols (Freiberg: Herder, 1951-75) IV, pt. 1, pp. 98-99. For an instance of the heightened sensitivity to the sins of lust in counter-reformatory society see Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 8-15.

<sup>55</sup> Richardson, pp. 201-2

<sup>56</sup> Ago has also noticed a 'softening' of behaviour towards family members in Roman families of the seventeenth century, see *Carriere e clientele*, p. 71.

neither by necessity, nor superfluitie, she be provoked to dishonour'.<sup>57</sup> Although the Church still argued for women's inferior position within marriage, the many shelters for women who were *malmaritate*, unhappily married, which were set up in the wake of the Council of Trent provided a certain amount of autonomy for those women who were not treated in the new fashion of kindness.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to the misogynist reading, Poussin's *Mars and Venus* manifests a counter-reformatory notion of a reciprocal relationship. The physical meeting of the lovers' hands is echoed in their reciprocal gaze. Mars and Venus stare into each other's eyes. Interpreting this gesture through seventeenth-century beliefs, their darts of love mingle together in the space between their eyes.<sup>59</sup> The arrow behind Venus' back points in the same direction as Venus' gaze. The visual analogy between arrow and gaze emphasises the power of Venus' look to penetrate the soul of her beloved and impress her own image as the goddess of love into his heart, altering the state of his being.

The feminisation of Mars and the dominance of Venus in this painting provided a visual commentary to beliefs about marriage central to post-Tridentine Catholicism. Mars and Venus both share attributes of the masculine and feminine genders; they are analogous to the Catholic belief that in marriage man and wife become 'one flesh'. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, used in the Tridentine nuptial mass, St Paul taught that marriage is a physical eternal bond where man 'shall be joined unto his wife' (5.22-33). This ideal of marriage was figured in various ways in painting and poetry, including through the motif of one sex sharing attributes of the other.<sup>60</sup> As Mars takes up the pose of Venus in Poussin's painting, his body merges into her flesh. In this sense, the painting can be considered as a mythological version of the formal marriage portraits that reflected the changing status of matrimony.<sup>61</sup> Poussin's Mars, in taking up Venus' role as the deity of love, also echoed the post-Tridentine concept that it was the husband who should encourage the wife into loving him. Guazzo advises that the husband, as the head of the wife, must love her and set her an example to imitate, so that 'no doubt but

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<sup>57</sup> Stefano Guazzo, *Civile Conversazione* trans. by George Pettie and Barth Young, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1925), II, pp. 40, 26.

<sup>58</sup> Sherrill Cohen, 'Asylums for Women in Counter-Reformation Italy', in *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe: Private and Public Worlds*, ed. by Sherrin Marshall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 166-88.

<sup>59</sup> Castiglione, p. 268.

<sup>60</sup> Thøfner, p. 16; Walter Stephens, 'St Paul among the Amazons. Gender and Authority in *Gerusalemme Liberata*' in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 169-200 (pp. 177-91).

<sup>61</sup> Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale', pp. 261-62.

she will follow her head, as the shadowe doth the body, and will take his manners and doinges for the lawe of her lyfe'.<sup>62</sup>

The ideology of male love and kindness tied up in the Tridentine reforms of marriage was unstable on two counts. Firstly, it went against the traditional secular, patriarchal, ways of arranging and policing the marital contract. The Church's marriage reforms were resisted. These reforms had the most widespread effect of any Tridentine decree as they applied directly to the laity. The Church's desire to assert authority over the marital sacrament alienated different groups of society. Members of the upper classes objected to the interference of the Church in the practice of clandestine marriages, often a necessity in the world of political diplomacy and internal rivalries. Secular tribunals continued to assert rights over deciding the legitimacy or illegitimacy of marital contracts since marriage was the key to ensuring the integrity of family possessions, the legitimacy of the blood line, and the stability of inheritance.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, the Church reforms also questioned the ideal gender roles that were meant to be enshrined in the image of the husband as the master of his wife. Mitelli's print, showing a wife with stick in hand, ready to beat her husband, becomes more meaningful when we consider Guazzo's post-Tridentine advice that a husband should no longer beat his wife. Mitelli's wife has taken on the role of the patriarchal husband that was questioned by the Tridentine reforms.

The contradictory nature of Poussin's painting reflected anxieties about men's changing roles in marriage. The contradictions between the ideal notions of marriage expressed in humanist literature and in the decrees of the Church were figured in imagery.<sup>64</sup> For example, the slippages between these two systems of thought is visualised in Ripa's emblem for marriage (fig. 73). Marriage is symbolised by a young man carrying a yoke with his feet in stocks. For Ripa, this image connoted the serious weight of responsibility, and the lack of freedom, which men take on when they submit to the law of marriage. Ripa's emblem differs considerably from the use of the yoke as an attribute of Juno in her role as inventor and protector of marriages. Here the yoke symbolised the joining together of husband and wife in marriage. Although marriage is for Ripa 'desirable to gain respect', his man in stocks is surprisingly close to the submissive husbands in anti-marriage imagery, such as Mitelli's print considered

<sup>62</sup> Guazzo, II, pp. 25-26. See also Marinella, pp. 136-38, and Richardson, pp. 201-2.

<sup>63</sup> Jedin, *Crisis and Closure*, p. 145; A. D. Wright, *The Counter Reformation: Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale', pp. 251-82.

above.<sup>65</sup> Pictorial form could reconcile the instability inherent in the social institution of marriage. The mixed messages of Poussin's work responded to familial concerns about the outcome of this ritual.

### 9.5. Troubling Masculinity

In painting his figure of Mars, Poussin incorporated elements from ancient texts and images that reflected the tensions surrounding marriage. In the painting, he cleverly intertwined two related instances of the story, one from the opening passage of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, and one from Book III of Statius' *Thebaid*.<sup>66</sup> Both texts emphasise the ambiguous power relations of the couple, played out through signs of gender. Venus' ability to bring peace is achieved through her subjugation of Mars. Mars' submission entails a subtle reconfiguration of his gender. Significantly, the two texts have different outcomes for Mars. In Statius' version, Mars recovers his masculinity, a detail registered in Mars' gesture of departure in the painting. It seems likely that Poussin's attention to this contradiction was related to the tensions of marriage outlined above. The configuration of a feminine *and* masculine Mars reflected the double position of the husband: at once persuaded by the Church to be more loving towards his wife, *and* encouraged by society to retain his patriarchal authority.

Cropper and Dempsey have convincingly argued that a passage from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* is a basis for Poussin's *Mars and Venus*.<sup>67</sup> Mars' pose in Poussin's painting is similar to the feminised and passive Mars described by Lucretius in his homage to Venus' powers to bring peace.<sup>68</sup> As well as depicting the overall pose from this text, Poussin also responded to Lucretius' language, such as 'vulnere amoris' (the wound of love) and 'cervice reposta' (neck thrown back), which suggest porous or graceful parts of the female anatomy. In Poussin's painting, Mars adopts a pose that calls attention to the orifices of his body. His pose is reminiscent of Caravaggio's *Victorious Cupid*, which hung, in Poussin's time, in the Roman palace of the Giustiniani brothers (fig. 74). In Caravaggio's painting, the missing right hand and the angled arrows subtly direct the viewer to the sexually available orifice of this boy. In Poussin's

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<sup>65</sup> Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, 2 vols (Padua: Tozzi, 1618; repr. Turin: Fògola, 1986), II, pp. 28-29; Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale', p. 254; Cartari, p. 178.

<sup>66</sup> For the Statius reading see Walter Friedlaender, 'Iconographical studies of Poussin's works in American Public Collections I: The Northampton *Venus and Adonis* and the Boston *Mars and Venus*', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 22 (1942) pp. 17-26 (p. 23-24). Rosenberg and Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, p. 166, have also emphasised the fact that Mars is leaving Venus in accordance with Statius, but does not identify a possible source. For the Lucretius reference see Cropper and Dempsey, p. 221.

<sup>67</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, p. 223.

<sup>68</sup> Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. by W H D Rouse, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 5.

painting, Mars' elongated neck takes on the twist of Venus' body from the *Loves of the Gods* print (fig. 10). In the print, Venus' *contrapposto* pose increases the expanse of flesh revealed to the viewer. In Poussin's painting, such feminine bodily display has been translated into the corporeality of Mars. His chest appears to take on the saggy appearance of female breasts. The painting by Agostino Carracci called *Castigo d'Amore* (fig. 75) may have provided Poussin with a model for such a transformation. Carracci took his image from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, where two bound women pull Cupid's chariot (fig. 76).<sup>69</sup> Agostino changed the foreground woman to a man, yet kept the shadow around his right breast, suggesting a womanly swell. Poussin may have studied Carracci's picture; he has defined the shadowy curve around Mars' breast in a way that suggests some gender ambiguity. In contrast, in Pietro da Cortona's drawing after Agostino's picture, this detail has been smoothed out. Cortona replaced the shadow with a line along the bottom of the pectorals returning this area to muscle rather than fat (fig. 77).

Despite the strong relationship between Lucretius' text and the painting, Poussin's detail of Mars' hand gesture finds no analogy in Lucretius' text. Through its formal arrangement, the *Mars and Venus* indicates that the painter wanted to refer also to the text by Statius. Statius' *Thebaid* is about the destructive war between the two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polynices. Mars is ordered by Jupiter to stir the citizens of Argos, Polynices camp, to war against the Thebans, the descendants of Harmonia – Mars and Venus' daughter. In the midst of this saga of family loyalty and stability gone disastrously wrong, Venus stands in the path of Mars' war horses causing him to jump down from his chariot and embrace her. Mars, in direct contrast to the bloody family feud of the *Thebaid*, sings of the joy and tranquillity Venus brings him.<sup>70</sup> During the song Mars passes his spear to his left, feminine hand.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps in response to this detail, in Poussin's painting Mars' active hand is his left. In Statius' text, after singing of his sweet repose, Mars leaves Venus and carries on his way. He is bound to carry out Jupiter's will and perform his duties as the god of war in inciting the Argives to battle. In Poussin's painting, Mars' left arm and hand communicates his imminent departure as described in Statius' text.<sup>72</sup> The position of Mars' arm relates to the gesture of Adonis

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<sup>69</sup> Kurz, p. 229.

<sup>70</sup> Statius, *Thebaid*, trans by. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 63.

<sup>71</sup> Marinella, p. 139.

<sup>72</sup> Friedlaender, 'Iconographical studies', p. 23.



leaving Venus that was carved on an antique sarcophagus (fig. 78).<sup>73</sup> This visual parallel helps to explain why the painting was repeatedly called *Venus and Adonis* in later inventories.<sup>74</sup> It is plausible that contemporary viewers read Mars' gesture as a visual reference to Statius' version of the tale.

The allusion to Statius in Poussin's painting allows us to resist a simple misogynist interpretation of the painting. Poussin showed that Mars had the ability to resist Venus' charms and return to the theatre of war. X-ray evidence shows that Poussin altered the painting and removed a sword lying across Mars' legs, a possible image of castration.<sup>75</sup> The finished painting is a representation of gender fluidity, where a man temporarily enters a passive, feminine position, but still has the ability to regain the upper hand.<sup>76</sup>

Cassiano was in a position to appreciate such learned comparisons between texts. He was somewhat of an expert on Lucretius' book: he later extensively advised one of his correspondents on a commentary of the work, published in 1647.<sup>77</sup> Poussin may have been encouraged to utilise these versions of the story together by Cartari's *Imagini degli Dei*, an important source for the artist.<sup>78</sup> Cartari's comparison between the texts could have reminded Poussin, or his patron Cassiano dal Pozzo, that Lucretius and Statius refer to the same principle: Venus' power to protect her descendants against the wrath of war.<sup>79</sup> The double allusion to both Statius and Lucretius in the painting explains much of its ambiguity: Mars can be read as both submitting and resisting, calling for his armour as it is taken away. The gesture of his arm suggests acquiescence as much as his impending exit. In addition, the peculiar allusion to Statius' text could have communicated a message to the dal Pozzo family about the continued masculinity of a newly made husband. At the same time, the two texts helped Poussin to figure how domestic peace required a husband to take on some feminine attributes. In the terms of Cassiano's desired message of 'happy companionship' in relation to the dal Pozzo-Costa marriage, Poussin's *Mars and Venus* quite successfully fits the bill. Finally, the painting's allusion to Statius must have allowed the members of the dal Pozzo

<sup>73</sup> Bober and Rubinstein, pp. 64-65. This motif was also utilised by Fantuzzi for a print possibly showing Achilles leaving the daughter of Lycomedes after a Primaticcio painting at Fontainebleau; see Zerner, A.F. 70.

<sup>74</sup> Standring, 'Some Pictures', p. 612

<sup>75</sup> Zafran, p. 42; Cropper and Dempsey, p. 228.

<sup>76</sup> 'World upside down imagery' provided an alternative way to conceive family structure in the early modern period; see Davis, *Society and Culture*, pp. 142-45.

<sup>77</sup> Francesco Solinas, *L'Uccelleria: Un libro de arte e di Scienze nella Roma dei Primi Lincei* (Rome: Olschki, 2000), p. 41 n.122. Pozzo owned a copy of Statius' *Thebaid* and works by Lucretius; see Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 247r.

<sup>78</sup> Cartari, pp. 489-90, 555; Friedlaender, 'Iconographical Studies', p. 24.

<sup>79</sup> Panofsky, p. 164; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, pp. 82-83.

household to meditate upon their individual importance within the kinship group. Theodora, like Venus, provided the domestic comfort for her husband. Carlo Antonio, like Mars, had to be a loving-feminine, authoritative-masculine, husband. Carlo Antonio also had to perform the various tasks given to him by the head of the household, Cassiano, figured by Statius' Jupiter.

### 9.6. Producing Children with Venus

Poussin's painting of *Mars and Venus* expressed a notion of the pleasures of living together in marriage. I have argued that the reciprocal gaze between Venus and Mars would have emphasised this ideal. This dynamic of looking echoed neo-Platonic ideas about the nature of love as a mutual desire of lovers to mirror themselves in each other's souls - to live in the other through the entry of one's image into the heart.<sup>80</sup> It also would have connoted the fundamental function of marriage in the early modern period: procreation. Galenic reproductive theory, which dominated contemporary medical thought, recommended the combination of the ejaculation of both male and female seed for the production of the ideal child.<sup>81</sup> The image of the darts of sight combining in the hearts of the two lovers was a motif that replicated these ideas of conception. In Poussin's painting, Venus adopts Mars' role as prime viewer. In the light of the marital connections of the painting, Poussin's representation of Venus' gaze related to beliefs in the role of women and men in the generation of children.

In the context of contemporary beliefs about the generation of children, it is likely that the *Mars and Venus* encouraged Theodora to adopt the role of a wife with a fruitful womb. In particular, Poussin's viewing Venus embodied a patriarchal fantasy about how a married woman should behave.

Venus' passion for Mars is akin to the sexual desire that was expected to be demonstrated by a good Catholic wife. In his advice to wives included in the spiritual guide, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609), Francis de Sales encouraged women to undergo sexual intercourse 'freely, without constraint, and with some show of appetite'.<sup>82</sup> Mars' nakedness had the potential to arouse Theodora's passions. When looking at this painting, Theodora was encouraged to copy Venus and gaze on the figure

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<sup>80</sup> Castiglione, pp. 241, 262, 268; Adrian Randolph, 'Regarding Women in Sacred Space', in *Picturing Women in Renaissance*, pp. 17-41 (pp. 39-40); Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, pp. 24, 37.

<sup>81</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, pp. 36-39.

<sup>82</sup> De Sales, p. 195; Paul A. Chilton, '1609: Devout Humanism', in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. by Denis Hollier (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) pp. 253-58. De Sales wrote his guide for laypeople. It was immediately embraced by the church and translated into several languages. Although Francis worked in Savoy and France, his ideas were still influential in Rome and he was canonized in 1665.

of a beautiful youth: a practice that was not uncommon during this period. For example, nude men were painted on the undercover of *cassoni* lids.<sup>83</sup> In his treatise on painting that was owned by the dal Pozzo family, Mancini, the papal doctor, advocated the use of lascivious images to aid procreation. Mancini advised that pictures could ‘very much help to excitement and to make children beautiful, healthy and strong’.<sup>84</sup> Theodora could have achieved her new role partly through staring at Poussin’s painting of Mars.

Venus’ gaze would have reminded Theodora of her reproductive capabilities. In writing about the female sex, seventeenth-century gentlemen emphasised the specificities of women’s reproductive capacity. By this time many physicians had refuted the Aristotelian notion that woman was an imperfect version of man.<sup>85</sup> This had repercussions on what men actually thought women were. For example, Virgilio Malvezzi, an associate of Cassiano, discussed the problem in the following way:

Those that believe that woman was not formed against the intentions of nature, that she is not an error, or a monster, need to affirm that she is made for generation; and if she is made for this end, as really she is, it is necessary for her to be supplied with the parts that allow her to accomplish this aim.<sup>86</sup>

Malvezzi’s comment makes it clear that women’s unique biological specificity made woman a sex in her own right. If everything was made for a purpose, Malvezzi logically concluded that a woman’s purpose was to generate, and to fulfil this role she must be supplied with the right physical equipment. Woman’s bodily specificity included the ability to affect their unborn children through what they saw at conception or during pregnancy, a point I discussed in Chapter One. Therefore, the parts for generation, which allowed a woman to fulfil her purpose, included the ability to look in a certain way at depicted male bodies. Paintings, such as the *Mars and Venus* could have encouraged Theodora to adopt this type of looking. Over time, familial anxiety may have increased the pressure on Theodora to engage with the painting in this way: the first surviving heir to the dal Pozzo dynasty was not born until 1630, three years after the marriage.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Musacchio, pp. 132-33, 138; Baskins, p. 125; Rubin, p. 33; Goffen, pp. 63-90.

<sup>84</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, 143: ‘far figli belli, sani e gagliardi’.

<sup>85</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup> Virgilio Malvezzi, *Il Ritratto del Privato politico Cristiano* (Bologna, 1635), p. 114, printed in *Politici e moralistici del seicento*, ed. by Benedetto Croce and Santino Caramella (Bari: Laterza, 1930), p. 269: ‘Coloro che credono che la donna non sia formata contro l’intenzione della natura, che non sia un errore, che non sia un mostro, bisogna che affermino che è fatta per la generazione; e, se è fatta a questo fine, come veramente è fatta, è necessario che sia dotata di parti che muovono a questo fine’. Malvezzi was a member of the Academy run by the Cardinal of Savoy to which Cassiano also belonged and the two men later corresponded; see Unglaub, pp. 397-98; Solinas, ‘Cassiano dal Pozzo e le arti a Roma’, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Herklotz, p. 107.

The dal Pozzo family may have considered Poussin's *Mars* as a medium to raise the temperature of Theodora's body. It was crucial to induce heat because hot wombs produced the all-important male children.<sup>88</sup> A similar depiction to the *Venus and Mars* was interpreted as having a warming effect. In his description of Carracci's *Diana and Endymion* (fig. 45), Bellori wrote that her action of seeing him 'heated her with amorous fire'.<sup>89</sup> Poussin's colouring of *Mars and Venus* in tones of pink, red and orange, as well as the bodily flushes which tingle the cheeks and the edges of the bodies, could have similarly aroused bodily heat. Such an aesthetic fits Mancini's wish that couples look on images of '*buona formatione*' and '*buona temperatura*' which, Mancini wrote, should be represented by '*colore*'.<sup>90</sup> Redness was directly linked to heat. In the contemporary medical treatise, the *Geneanthropia*, a ruddy complexion signified a person's 'calidity and humidity'.<sup>91</sup>

Finally, Venus' assumption of the traditional pose and role of Mars in the painting illustrated the mysterious power of Venus' ability to generate. In Cartari's mythological handbook *Imagini degli Dei*, a representation of Venus, which emphasised the fact she had both '*maschio e femina*' in one body, signified her power over the generation of all animals (fig. 30).<sup>92</sup> It is likely that Venus' masculine-feminine identity in the painting particularly attracted Theodora's attention. Theodora was named after a female saint who dressed as a man, illustrated in a print commissioned by the family in the year of her marriage. I shall discuss the significance of this print in more detail in the next chapter. Here it is enough to note that Poussin's representation of a dual gendered Venus could have been a further reference point for the patriarchal hopes invested in Theodora's generative powers.

### 9.7. Fathering Venus' Gaze

It was not only women who affected the foetus through regarding paintings. In his treatise, Mancini stated that couples should look upon lascivious mythological paintings 'not because the imagination imprints on the foetus, which is alien material to the father and mother, but because both parents, *through a similar view*, imprint in their seed, in their respective parts, a similar constitution as it is impressed on them through

<sup>88</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 38.

<sup>89</sup> Bellori, p. 67: 'una nubbe Diana, la quale non più gelida e schiva, ma tutta calda d'amoroso foco, si avvicina, meditando il bel fiore dell'età e la deliziosa giovanil forma'.

<sup>90</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, 143.

<sup>91</sup> Sinibaldus, p. 18. Cassiano dal Pozzo owned books by this author: see, Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 234v.

<sup>92</sup> Cartari, pp. 485-87.

the view of that object and figure'.<sup>93</sup> In Poussin's painting, Mars adopts Venus' standpoint. This feature may have offered to Carlo Antonio the possibility of sharing Venus' generative powers.

Mancini's dismissal of the opinion that only women can influence the form of the child gave the father's powers of the gaze equal weight. Mancini was not alone in his belief, Ficino had also stressed that husbands as well as wives could influence the appearance of the foetus.<sup>94</sup> However, Mancini also noted that husbands and wives can view in *the same way*. Given the prevalence of the belief that it was women who affected the child, Mancini's comment indicates that husbands who looked in this way came to share attributes traditionally gendered feminine.

Mancini's advice could have been important in the face of increased marital rights for women introduced after the Council of Trent. In the climate of softening patriarchal husbandry, men may have wanted to claim some control over the generative process. Poussin's painting may have equally eased male anxieties. As Mars takes on Venus' position in Poussin's painting, a male viewer would have been offered the possibility of his body adopting the powers traditionally associated with pregnancy. Folklore stories of male pregnancy, dating from this period, also seem to express the desire of men to steal women's potency in order to maintain patriarchal domination.<sup>95</sup> The relationship between the new notions of marriage and the threat to male power is manifest in de Sales' *Devout Life*. Husbands are advised 'that though they [wives] are your companions you may still be in authority over them'.<sup>96</sup> Renewed importance in the role of generation may have eased male anxieties about the change in husband's power in post-Tridentine ideals of marriage.

Mars' feminine pose may be related to seventeenth-century anatomical prints of the male body, which show men in positions that had been used for depictions of the female body in mythical and medical prints (fig. 79). Sander Gilman has argued that these prints show men in 'a position of parturition'. He has suggested that they emphasise the theory that it was men who generated the foetus in Aristotle's sense: their

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<sup>93</sup> Mancini, *Considerazioni*, I, 143: 'non perchè l'imaginativa imprima ne feto che è material aliena al padre e della madre, ma perchè l'uno e l'altro parente, per simil veduta, imprimono nel lor seme, come in parte propria, una simil costitution come s'è impresa per la veduta di quell'oggetto e figura' (my emphasis).

<sup>94</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *The Book of Life*, trans by Charles Boer (Irving: Spring Publications, 1980), p. 143; see Musacchio, p. 129.

<sup>95</sup> Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man*, p. 123.

<sup>96</sup> De Sales, p. 189.

semen gave form to the matter provided by the woman.<sup>97</sup> Mars' splayed legs, a feature of Venus in related prints and paintings, may have communicated a similar message.

In addition, Poussin's Mars signified men's ability to demonstrate the same fecund powers usually associated with Venus. In France, allegories of eternal springtime, the Goddess's traditional attribute, were woven into Louis XIV's personal iconography in order to communicate the fecundity of his rule.<sup>98</sup> A similar message is conveyed in Poussin's painting. Through the adoption of a feminine pose, Mars appears as a dual gendered divinity. In this sense, Mars joins the ranks of other fecund divinities such as Bacchus and Pan, believed to have both genders within their bodies. These deities appear with Venus on the frontispiece of the Roman text about sex and generation, the *Geneanthropeia* (fig. 80). The abilities of these characters to unite the two principles of generation and conception, figured through their combined masculinity and femininity, gave them extensive reproductive powers.<sup>99</sup> In Poussin's painting, the god associated with husbands in the tradition of the couple as an allegory for marriage, also signifies this potency.

In this respect, Poussin's painting represented an unobtainable ideal. A friend of Cassiano dal Pozzo keenly felt the contradiction between the ideal of all male reproduction, and the reality of women's influence over successful generation. Contemporary letters, by the Lincean Federico Cesi, demonstrate an analogous male desire for control of the production of their offspring. Cesi conducted research on bees, an animal where the male appeared to have full control over reproduction. Cesi discussed his findings about bees in the same letter that he talked about his wife's failure to bear healthy male offspring as she had suffered from a series of miscarriages. David Freedberg has argued convincingly that the two interests were connected.<sup>100</sup> In parallel to the Linceans' research, Poussin's *Mars and Venus* offered a pleasing figuration of the belief that men *did* control this process.

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The interrelation of art and dynastic interests that I have plotted in relation to Poussin's *Mars and Venus* occurred in another celebration of marriage that took place just a few doors away from the Palazzo dal Pozzo, a decade earlier. In 1615, the

<sup>97</sup> Gilman, pp. 126-27.

<sup>98</sup> Elizabeth Hyde, 'Gender, Flowers and the Baroque Nature of Kingship', in *Villas and Gardens in Early Modern Italy and France*, pp. 225-248.

<sup>99</sup> Cartari, pp. 390, 487.

<sup>100</sup> Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, pp. 375, 440 n.49.

marriage of Theodora Costa's older sister, Luisa, was accompanied by a party. A report of the ceremony and party was printed, according to its author, in order to inform people of the sumptuousness of the occasion and the delight felt by the guests. It describes how the Costa family decorated the *Salone* of their Palace with expensive Flemish tapestries and their prized paintings. Briccio noted that these were 'displayed in places for maximum pleasure and delectation' by the guests. Luisa married her husband in the presence of Costa's sumptuous painting collection. Briccio ended his account by saying that the occasion had made everyone content and happy, especially those who were married.<sup>101</sup>

Poussin's *Mars and Venus* reflected the ideals of happy marriage expressed at such wedding occasions that took place underneath paintings. The picture also had the potential to placate certain anxieties surrounding marriage brought about by social change. Displayed in the *Camera Grande* of the Palazzo dal Pozzo, the painting was available for contemplation by members of the household during the early years of the marriage and the attempts to start a family. Poussin's painting reflected this optimistic time, which was also tinged with fear about the location of power in the new family. It retained a positive reading of the kinds of changes to masculinity demanded by post-Trecentine ideals of marriage by signifying husband's ability to influence the forms of his children. In this respect, the painting signified the pleasures of 'happy companionship' that Cassiano dal Pozzo believed marriage could bring.

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<sup>101</sup> Giovanni Briccio, *Breve e succinto Ragguaglio del festina fatto in Roma nel palagio dell molt'illustre Sig. Ottavio Costa con l'occasione del sposalitio fatto tra la Signoria Luigia sua figliuola & il molto illustre Sig. Pietro Henriques de Herrara* (Viterbo: Burlino d'Albegna, 1615), fols 1-4; fol.2: 'vaghissime pitture, compartite ne'luoghi per maggior vaghezza e diletatione'.

## *Chapter Ten: Caring for Children: Poussin's Touching Looks*

### 10.1. Touching and Looking in *Tancred and Erminia*

Poussin utilised the motif of touching and looking in several of his early mythological paintings. This chapter addresses the significance of this distinctive feature in terms of relations between celibate papal bureaucrats and their nephew-heirs. I have already commented upon this distinct motif in two of Poussin's paintings. In Part II, I discussed how Armida's hand, resting on that of Rinaldo (fig. 7), helps to stress her feminine characteristics. In the last chapter, I considered the relevance of 'amore maritale' to the haptic connection between Mars and Venus (fig. 2).

Poussin's motif is comprised of a look that happens at the same moment as physical contact. In Poussin's early mythological paintings, the gesture is most often associated with female characters: Armida's hand rests *upon* Rinaldo's hand as she gazes *upon* him; Venus's hand rests *upon* that of Mars as her gaze falls *upon* him. In both of these paintings Poussin has replicated the direction of the woman's gaze with a sharp implement. Armida's dagger and the arrow behind Venus's back both follow the line of their looks. As noted previously, this comparison refers to the widely used platonic concept that the eyes sent out darts into the lover's heart. In this chapter, I want to concentrate upon another occurrence of this motif. In Poussin's second version of *Tancred and Erminia*, now in Birmingham, Erminia's thigh supports the touch of Tancred's loosely resting hand (fig. 5). She looks intently at Tancred. The introduction of the motif of touch and a penetrating stare was an important part of Poussin's revisualisation of this woman's engagement with Tancred's body; it does not occur in the first canvas (fig. 4).<sup>1</sup> Erminia's look at Tancred in the Birmingham canvas is emphasised by arrows, held by the upper putto in the top left hand corner of the painting, which follow the path of her gaze. Poussin's motif translated the haptic nature of the arrow-like rays of sight into a human gesture. The look of the woman upon her beloved is intensified through her touch upon his body. Her touch figures the contact that the darts of sight make with his heart.

I refer to this motif as a 'touching-look'. This motif figured the processes of affection through looking at images outlined in the first three parts of the thesis. I have demonstrated that people believed images could impress themselves upon their souls and change the constitutions of their bodies and the children they conceived. Poussin's

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<sup>1</sup> Most Poussin scholars agree that the Birmingham canvas is the second version of c.1634-5; the Moscow canvas has been dated c.1628-9: see Rosenberg and Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, pp. 187, 214; Verdi (1995), pp. 182, 198.



motif emphasised the physical effects of looking by visually comparing this sense with the sense of touch. In the light of theories of affection by image, a seventeenth-century regarnder would have read Poussin's motif as the connotation of a look that can physically touch the body and emotionally touch the internal soul. This is why I have chosen the adjective 'touching' to describe this type of looking in order to capture the resonances of both its physical and emotional effects.

An analysis of the *Tancred and Erminia* can help us to understand further the role of touch in Poussin's own theory of viewing, as well as in the experiences of his patrons. Motifs of touch in Poussin's paintings have previously been interpreted in a negative light. According to Elizabeth Cropper, in the paintings executed around 1650, Poussin appears to have sought to distinguish between an inferior look that involved a notion of touch, incapable of understanding anything other than absence, from a purely visual look that had recourse to memory.<sup>2</sup> Here I demonstrate that Poussin's earlier mythological paintings explored the positive connotations of a look that involves an element of touch. It is important to note that this positive significance is present also in these later paintings. Cropper argued that the muse on the right in the *Arcadian Shepherds* (fig. 81) stands for purely visual looking. However, the muse also lays her hand on the shepherd's back. Thus, it is not only the uneducated shepherd who employs a look that involves a notion of touch, but also the all-knowing muse. The pressure of her hand on the shepherd's back appears to depict the belief that through visually contemplating images these forms imprint themselves upon the memory.<sup>3</sup> In the *Arcadian Shepherds*, Poussin figured a positive simultaneous use of the two senses in a woman. Attending to Poussin's earlier paintings can help us to explore the nature of this gendered 'touching-look' in its seventeenth-century context.

## 10.2. Complicating Mother

In the *Rinaldo and Armida* and *Mars and Venus*, the motif of the 'touching-look' is associated with female characters. Poussin's second version of *Tancred and Erminia* (fig. 5) complicates the dominant pattern of this motif. In this painting, although Erminia looks, it is difficult to say who actually touches. Her crouching thigh supports the touch of Tancred's loosely resting hand. Tancred is, however,

<sup>2</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 202-15.

<sup>3</sup> Yates, p. 311. The gesture has also been read as a figuration of death claiming her future victim; see Judith Bernstock, *Poussin and French Dynastic Ideology* (Bern: Lang, 2000), pp. 306-11.

unconscious.<sup>4</sup> He has not wilfully lain his hand *upon* Erminia, as Venus and Armida have purposefully placed their hands on the bodies of their beloveds.

The painting depicts an episode from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Accompanied by Tancred's squire Vafrino, Erminia, a Saracen princess who is in unrequited love with Tancred, has found the wounded Christian knight. After finishing her lament, she sets about trying to heal his wounds by binding them with her hair (XIX. 56-119). Whilst doing so, Tancred's arm has fallen upon her thigh. In this work, Poussin did not conform to the colonizing ideology of the seventeenth century that was manifested in images of white men touching raced and gendered others, whilst never depicting these others touching back.<sup>5</sup> In this painting, touch emanates from both parties, Pagan princess and Christian soldier, merging boundaries of gender and race. The unusual nature of Poussin's motif deserves to be investigated further in order to clarify its relationship to seventeenth-century practices and beliefs about touching and looking.

The motif of touch that occurs between Erminia's leg and Tancred's insensate hand is central to Poussin's reworking of the subject. The receiving nature of Erminia's touch is in contrast with the connotations of her look. She stares piercingly at Tancred's groin. Her concentrated, strained gaze echoes the penetrative connotations of Tancred's index finger. The putto that carries the arrow, which follows the line of her gaze, stares intently at Erminia, as if to emphasise the power of her darts of sight to pierce her lover's soul. A detail of the painting sexualises this romantic conceit. The yellow drapery wraps around Tancred's right thigh, thus exposing his loins. Erminia's focus on Tancred's revealed genitalia suggests that she desires to carnally, rather than spiritually, be penetrated by her beloved.<sup>6</sup> The accidental touch between thigh and hand reiterates the tactility of the relationship established by Erminia's gaze. Her touch is not, however, aggressive. She has not intentionally laid part of her body onto Tancred. Any penetrating connotations of her gaze are tempered by her passive reception of Tancred's hand.

In Poussin's second version of the subject, the connotations of Erminia's contact with Tancred draw on seventeenth-century perceptions of her biological ability to bear and raise children. This format is in contrast to the noble viewpoint of the *Donna*

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<sup>4</sup> Careri has compared this involuntary conjunction of bodies with Tasso's motif of Erminia's and Tancred's sighs mingling together; see 'Mutazioni d'affetti', p. 359.

<sup>5</sup> Gilman, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Unglaub has argued the exact opposite, that Erminia's gaze, no longer at the face, refuses the reciprocal mirroring of desire that occurs in Poussin's *Rinaldo and Armida*, and suggests Erminia only feels compassion rather than carnal desire; see pp. 354-55.

inspector that I discussed in Chapter One in relation to Poussin's first version of the subject. In the centre of the composition, Tancred's finger has fallen in such a way as to indicate the folds of Erminia's dress. These creases both cover and mark her genitalia through the fold of the cloth that runs from her waist. Tancred's finger acts as a replacement for his phallus. This detail locates the area of sensual contact in Erminia's female anatomy.<sup>7</sup>

Poussin's location of the sense of touch in Erminia's body is reminiscent of reinterpretations of the nature of female sexuality written in this period. Following the medical 'rediscovery' of the clitoris in the sixteenth century, physicians compared the clitoris to the penis, contradicting Aristotle's idea that the womb was an inverted penis. This comparison provoked an anxiety in physicians and *literati* that women could penetrate other women.<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Benedetto Sinibaldus' lavish book *Geneanthropeia*, published in Rome in 1642, shows us that this fascination with female anatomy was shared by learned Roman gentlemen.<sup>9</sup> Sinibaldi wrote that:

This clytoris lies latent within a woman's pudenda, which answers to a man's virile, this if it chance to grow over-much, may stand in stead of a man's member, yet without effusion of seed. Whencefore heretofore there hath been laws enacted against feminine congression, being it is a thing that happened too common and frequent.<sup>10</sup>

As a result of medical advances, a woman was no longer perceived as a passive recipient of the complete male phallus into the hole of her womb. She was herself able to touch and penetrate. Such a construction of femininity was doubly provocative because it went against the idea that unmarried women should resist physical contact in order to sustain their honour and chastity.<sup>11</sup> In the context of these beliefs, Poussin's location of touch in Erminia's female anatomy means that her seemingly passive touch contained an element of active contact, as figured by Poussin's other women, such as Armida and Venus.

The ambiguity of touching and looking in this painting may have resulted from Poussin's new interest in the complexities of Erminia's gender. Poussin's second Erminia displays a masculine vigorous strength as well as a feminine emotional lament. She is very unlike the calm, girlish Erminia of the first painting (fig. 4). A likely source

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<sup>7</sup> A similar connection between feminine looking, touching and perceptions of the female anatomy has been traced by Stefaniak in the work of Correggio for Gioanna di Piacenza; see 'Correggio's Camera di San Paolo', p. 226-30.

<sup>8</sup> Katherine Park, 'The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade 1570-1620', in *The Body in Parts*, pp. 171-93; Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> Cassiano dal Pozzo owned books by this author: see, Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 234v.

<sup>10</sup> Sinibaldus, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Castiglione, p. 213: honest women give out words, laughs or acts of kindness, whilst unchaste women give out, among other things, caresses.

for Poussin's modification of the character was the representation of the Saracen princess in Rospigliosi's opera *Erminia sul Giordano*, which played in Rome in 1633.<sup>12</sup> The opera was staged during Carnival in the anteroom of the Palazzo Barberini. An elite audience attended the event: special performances were given to cardinals, noblemen and noblewomen.<sup>13</sup> The experience of the opera was also available to other members of Roman society. The sumptuousness of the sets and music were reported both in the Roman *avvisi*, a sort of early newspaper, and in letters from members of the audience.<sup>14</sup> The score was published in 1637.

Reworking an earlier play, Rospigliosi decided to intensify Erminia's emotions as well as her ability to disguise her femininity convincingly. Erminia spends virtually the whole opera in drag, either as a warrior or a shepherd. Erminia as warrior produced a clear visual juxtaposition between her feminine behaviour and her manly appearance. The prints included in the opera score capitalised on this visual anomaly. The juxtaposition of two genders within Erminia's body is most evident in the print illustrating the moment when Erminia carves a declaration of her love for Tancred on a tree. She is watched from afar by the shepherd Ergasto, who does not understand the feminine behaviour of the '*nobil Pellegrino*': the noble *male* wanderer (fig. 82). Erminia's male disguise allows her to manipulate Tancred and reveal her turbulent emotions. Jealous of Tancred's love for Chlorinda, Erminia uses her disguise as a shepherd to act out her desperate passions: she tells Tancred that she - as shepherd - has made love to Chlorinda, hoping that Tancred will kill her and put her out of her misery.<sup>15</sup>

Poussin's second version of Erminia also relates to her behaviour in Canto VI of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.<sup>16</sup> Here, Erminia experiences a myriad of masculine and feminine emotions, including the desire to kill Tancred and avenge her family; her wish to marry him; her desire to defeat him in battle and make him a prisoner of her love; or to be killed by him (VI. 64-85). In the second version of the subject, Poussin has turned Erminia's sword towards the reclining knight. The sword's direction suggests that Erminia is wavering between striking Tancred's body and fulfilling her own self

<sup>12</sup> On dating see n. 1 of this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> Hammond, *Music and Spectacle*, p. 202.

<sup>14</sup> Murata, p. 251.

<sup>15</sup> Michelangelo Rossi, *Erminia sul Giordano: Dramma Musicale* (Rome: Masotti, 1637), esp. pp. 72, 131. In Tasso's poem, Erminia does carve declarations of her love on trees but Tancred never sees them and never acknowledges Erminia's presence in the forest; see Migiel, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> This textual reference exists in the painting in addition to Poussin's use of Canto XIX when Erminia finally gets to cure Tancred from his wounds, on the latter reference, see: Careri, 'Mutazioni d'affetti', p. 359.

destruction (figs. 4 & 5). Likewise, Erminia's fixed stare at Tancred's genitalia, coupled with her open thighs that appear to signify her sexual desire for his body, reflects her wish, expressed in the earlier canto, to entrap him in her embraces of love (VI. 84).<sup>17</sup>

In the painting, agency is located somewhere in the space between the bodies of Tancred and Erminia. Tancred's involvement in the gesture of physical connection means that the relationship between feminine touch and the feminine look, established by Poussin in his earlier paintings, is not so straightforward in this later work. The touch is neither securely female nor securely male. Reflecting the ambiguous nature of the touch, Erminia displays both feminine and masculine characteristics. She presented the possibility to gentlemen that they too could share feminine characteristics.

### 10.3. Men and Children

I conjecture that Poussin's motif of the 'touching-look' in his painting of *Tancred and Erminia* appealed to the particular family experiences of his patrons. The motif had the potential to be interpreted as a representation of the close bond between mother and child. Poussin's ambiguous gendering of the motif in the *Tancred and Erminia* would have allowed men to contemplate their own ability to practice such a look. The connection of mythological paintings to the production and maintenance of the family dynasty meant that Poussin's paintings provided an ideal space in which to register such concerns.

Male interest in children was a product of the particular set up of the Roman family. The elder brother, who had an ecclesiastical career, and his younger brother's wife had a special relationship in terms of the care of children. Because they were both excluded from the responsibilities and obligations of fatherhood they could behave more indulgently towards the family's youngsters. Renata Ago has linked this practice to the growth in families' accommodation of different behaviours, founded on a principle of '*gentilezza*', which occurred during the seventeenth century. At the time, this type of behaviour was considered as a feminisation of the masculine culture of intransigence and bullying. Indeed, women were sometimes the instigators of a change

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<sup>17</sup> Migiel has argued that in Erminia's lament she does play out this fantasy of power over the male body: her action of making her lap a support for Tancred's head recalls Armida's control over Rinaldo in her realm of pleasure, pp. 72-73. The thematic relationship between Erminia and Armida may strengthen the argument that the two paintings in Moscow of these subjects, and possibly also the two paintings in Britain, were originally pendants. The Moscow paintings were sold as a pair in 1766; see Verdi (1992), p. 30.

in their husband's harsh attitude towards children through petitioning the intervention of their ecclesiastical brother-in-laws.<sup>18</sup>

A similar process of encouraging intimate relations between men and children, and a 'feminisation' of masculine characteristics, is at work in Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia*. I suggest that Poussin's motifs of the 'touching-look' encouraged men to experience a notion of parental love. Representations and practices of men caring for children in the early modern period seem to have been influenced by the changing significations of childhood. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a marked increase in European representations of childhood as a special, sentimental age.<sup>19</sup> Partly to combat strong family alliances and factions, the Church sought to idealise the immediate domestic family through the Tridentine reforms.<sup>20</sup> Male touch can be seen as part of the integration of the father into the nuclear family. The new cultural visibility of men playing with children was registered in Montaigne's essay, 'On the affection of fathers for their children'. The essay includes tales of men cuddling newborn infants, and of fathers 'moved by the skippings and jumpings and babyish tricks of our children'.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, visual imagery increasingly emphasised the maternal, rather than marital, role of married women.<sup>22</sup>

A drawing attributed to Poussin demonstrates that this interest in children occurred in the dal Pozzo household. The dal Pozzo librarian, Giovanni Battista Marinella, identified the subject of the drawing as the children of Carlo Antonio and Theodora (fig. 83).<sup>23</sup> Poussin's involvement in this drawing, as either author or tutor, suggests that he was included in the activities of men caring for children that took place

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<sup>18</sup> Ago, 'The Family in Rome', p. 8; Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, pp. 68-70. Ottavio Costa, Theodora's father, shared the respect that Cardinals had for the judgement of women in terms of family affairs. The only family member he trusted with arrangements after his death was his daughter-in-law, Maria Catanea; see Spezzaferro, p. 584.

<sup>19</sup> Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. by Robert Black (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962) p. 46, 110; Ariès thesis has been challenged by, amongst others, Louis Haas in his recent book: *The Renaissance Man and his Children. Childbirth and Early Childhood in Florence, 1300-1600* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998). It is interesting to note however that *fathers* play a very small role in Haas's book. Fathers in the Renaissance seem to have been expected to provide bread and guidance, but not the day-to-day care which was the role of the mother: pp. 135-36. It seems that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *men* began to be seen to interact with children, as women had been seen to do in the past. See also, Bossy, pp. 7-8. Pierroberto Scaramella has associated the rise in cultural representations of childhood as an age of innocence, with the growth of education in the sixteenth century. Through education children were perceived to enter into the adult world, almost as a second Fall; see 'Tra Roma e Fabriano: culti per l'infanzia di Cristo nello Stato della Chiesa in età moderna', in *Roma, la città del papa: Storia d'Italia Annali 16*, ed. by Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), pp. 865-888 (pp. 865-66).

<sup>20</sup> Bossy, p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays*, trans. and ed. by M. A. Screech (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 435.

<sup>22</sup> Grieco, 'Matrimonio e vita coniugale', p. 274.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Blunt, 'The Massimi collection of Poussin drawings in the Royal library at Windsor castle', *Master Drawings*, 14 (1976), 3-31 (pp. 17-18).

in the Palazzo dal Pozzo. I have argued that Poussin's paintings facilitate a gentleman regarder to identify with a feminine 'touching-look'. This can be partly understood, I suggest, within the restructuring of men's and women's roles in nurturing children.

It has been noted that Poussin used children in his early paintings in order to invoke tender feelings in his viewers and persuade them of the message of the piece.<sup>24</sup> The efficacy of this motif can be situated in this historical context. The new found visibility for men's interaction with their children was useful for the Catholic Church, which sought to stress the ability of images to move the heart and excite devotion. Charming children could be used to convey serious messages. They could move even the hearts of men who were more traditionally confined to non-emotional public duties of the state.<sup>25</sup> For example, Lanfranco's painting of *The Salvation of a Soul* solicited the tender concern of spectators, presumably including men, through the spectacle of the little child's fear (fig. 84).<sup>26</sup> Concern for children can be related to the work of early-seventeenth-century theorists of poetry and music. Tragic art that induced weeping could temporarily relieve the mind of a spectator from the mournful passions which might otherwise consume him or her.<sup>27</sup> It has been argued that the mournful passions of gentlemen of this period were an appropriation of traditionally feminine behaviour.<sup>28</sup>

The form of the 'touching-look' in Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* could have helped his gentlemen patrons to register their desire and need to relate in traditionally 'womanly' ways to the children of their family. The ambiguity of touch and gender in Poussin's painting allowed a way for gentlemen to identify with feminine emotions. These experiences would have involved those associated with the 'touching-look', gendered as feminine in Poussin's other paintings.

### 10.3. Maternal Touches

I have noted that in Poussin's paintings the motif of the 'touching-look' is associated mostly with women. Like other social constructions of feminine viewing discussed in Part I, the gesture of touch refers to woman's potential biological role as mother. As I have shown, even in the complex *Tancred and Erminia*, Poussin located the woman's sense of touch in her genitalia. I have argued that the ambiguity of the

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<sup>24</sup> Colantuono, 'The Tender Infant'. This motif seems to have been developed by Poussin and his colleagues in Rome in the 1620s and 30s; see Julia K. Dabbs, 'Not mere child's play: Jacques Stella's *Jeux et Plaisirs de l'Enfance*', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 125 (1995), 303-12 (p. 305).

<sup>25</sup> David Freedberg, 'The origins and rise of the Flemish Madonnas in flower garlands; decoration and devotion', *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 32 (1981), 115-150 (p. 133).

<sup>26</sup> The gentleman spectator is also encouraged to identify with the child as an allegory of his own soul.

<sup>27</sup> Hanning, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 162-64.

touch in this painting facilitated an identification between gentlemen and the touching look.

Poussin's mythological paintings further allowed his male patrons to experience a notion of this maternal 'touching-look' through their allusion to images of the *Pietà*. Many of the recumbent men in Poussin's early mythological paintings have been compared by art historians to the dead Christ in *Pietàs* or *Lamentations*.<sup>29</sup> Such visual references are commonplace in Poussin's work. The artist utilised established pictorial traditions in order to allow the audience to understand new scenes such as Armida wavering over the killing of Rinaldo, and Erminia cutting her hair.<sup>30</sup> It is probable that Poussin intended to invoke the religious image of the *Pietà* through his motif of the 'touching-look' in order to convey Erminia's sense of loss. The painting's form would have induced in the regarder the ritualised religious experiences associated with this type of imagery.<sup>31</sup> I have discussed how Poussin's letters from the 1640s show that he became interested in the ways that visual art, like music, could induce a regarder to empathise with the theme of the depicted story. Poussin's quotation of the *Pietà* iconography may have been part of his initial experiments with visual form. By evoking conditioned religious responses, Poussin could be sure of his ability to express something in a style that would automatically evoke in his audience a similar emotion.<sup>32</sup>

In Poussin's famous letter to Chantelou of 1639, the artist demonstrated that he was aware of a regarder's tendency to let his or her eye and mind wander, and be influenced by other imagery hung alongside.<sup>33</sup> In the letter Poussin asked his friend to enclose his painting within a simple gold frame, 'so that when gazing at it in all its parts, the rays of the eye are retained and not scattered outside in the course of receiving the visible forms of the other neighbouring objects which, being jumbled with the depicted things, confuse the light'.<sup>34</sup> The letter is particularly resonant in the light of the inventories of Poussin's Roman patrons. We have seen that these gentlemen displayed mythological and religious works with similar themes together. Another example, from the collection of Angelo Giori, demonstrates that visitors were encouraged to respond to

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<sup>29</sup> Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, p. 79; Verdi (1995), pp. 14-15; Cropper and Dempsey, pp. 221, 249. Although in the earlier passage Cropper and Dempsey wrote Mars is *not* in the position of the *Pietà* they later described Mars as 'the young son received into the body of the mother'.

<sup>30</sup> Lee, pp. 242-50.

<sup>31</sup> A similar argument can be found in Thomas Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995), p. 166.

<sup>32</sup> Iarocci, has argued that Poussin's Echo draws on Marino's development of the Virgin as the mirror of Christ's suffering in his poem *Dicerie Sacre*. Echo acts, for Iarocci, as a figure with whom the viewer can identify in order to learn to love the divine.

<sup>33</sup> Puttfarcken, *The Discovery of Pictorial Composition*, pp. 212-14.

<sup>34</sup> Poussin, *Lettres et propos*, p. 36, translated in Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, 'Framing Classical Space', *Art Journal*, 47 (1998), 37-41 (p. 37).



Poussin's *Echo and the dying Narcissus* (fig. 8) with similar emotions to a painting of the dead Christ with mourners by Lucas Cornelisz that was hung alongside.<sup>35</sup>

In the dal Pozzo household, Poussin's early *Pietà* directly explored the gestures of maternal looking and touching (fig. 19).<sup>36</sup> The work was displayed as a pendant to the similarly framed *Virgin and Child* (fig. 85).<sup>37</sup> The twinned paintings show the close, touching relationship between Mary and Christ. Poussin's rough brushwork encourages the viewer to imagine the tactility of the paint. The viewer is not separated from the image with a shiny, impenetrable façade as in the *Echo and Narcissus* (fig. 8).<sup>38</sup> In the *Pietà*, Mary's hand is roughly moulded and seems to waver above Christ's chest, at once touching and desiring to touch. This feeling is emphasised by the rich orange highlights at the edges of her fingers, as if Mary's very blood is destined to merge with that of her son, trickling below her little finger. In both Poussin's *Pietà* and *Virgin and Child*, the rhythmic folds of Mary's garments, which surround and enclose the figure of Christ, allow the eye to caress the form of the paintings. The floral frames encourage this feeling of tactile intimacy between viewer, mother and child. Flowers figured in hagiography as a sign of intimate personal relations with the Virgin as well as evoking the ritual of the rosary, a devotional practice centred on touch.<sup>39</sup>

The representation of the maternal touch and look in such paintings was not peculiar to Poussin. During his visit to Madrid, Cassiano dal Pozzo saw two paintings by Jan Brueghel and Hendrick van Balen on the theme of the five senses (figs. 86 & 87). These paintings provide us with a useful indication about the type of looking associated with the *Pietà* in the early modern period.<sup>40</sup> A picture of the *Pietà* appears on the back wall in the painting of *Hearing, Taste and Touch*. This little picture comments upon the sense of touch as Mary lays her hands upon her dead son (fig. 88). Her action of touching is replicated in the fall of her gaze upon her son's body. In the companion painting of *Sight and Smell*, a picture of the *Judgement of Paris* hangs on the back wall (fig. 89). Paris leans forward, ogling the flesh of the three goddesses that stand away from him. In contrast to Mary's touch on her son, Paris practices a detached gaze. It has been noted that a similar association between the Virgin, touching, and looking, occurs in several other media, such as religious narrative and song. In these media, the

<sup>35</sup> Rome AS, A. N., no. 6643, fols 334-341v, printed in Corradini, p. 85, nos 42, 46.

<sup>36</sup> See Standrig 'Some pictures', p. 613.

<sup>37</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 221v, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558, nos 272-73.

<sup>38</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, p. 178.

<sup>39</sup> Freedberg, 'The origins', 115-150.

<sup>40</sup> Volk, p. 520.

feminine excess of Mary's lament broke down normal conventions of bodily separation and distance.<sup>41</sup>

Brueghel and Balen's painting reflected how seventeenth-century people were encouraged to respond to the *Pietà* by religious guides such as Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. This book used for lay devotion was much used in the seventeenth century. In the third week of the programme the book encouraged participants to imagine the Passion of Christ. As part of the experience, one should consider 'the solitude of our lady with so much pain and weariness'. Mary's grief should be felt in the context of the overall tone of the week when the participant should grieve, be sad and lament: one should 'ask for what I want which will be grief, sensible affliction and confusion, because for my sins our Saviour is going to His Passion'.<sup>42</sup> Mary's gaze and touch upon her son could mediate her son's suffering to the viewer. Her look focuses and articulates her sorrow. By looking at Christ's body Mary internalised Christ's pain. Representations of the *Pietà* encourage the viewer to internalise some of Christ's suffering through empathising with Mary's pitiful 'touching-look'.<sup>43</sup> In the context of this devotional ritual, it is likely that the similarities between images of the *Pietà* and Poussin's *Tancred and Erminia* encouraged the regarder to empathise with Erminia's feminine compassion.

Mary's contact with Christ's body also figured a desire to merge erotically with the body of Christ. Catholic English poets of the seventeenth century utilised Mary and Mary Magdalene's special access to Christ's body in order to figure their own desire to touch the body of Christ. Such desire should not be interpreted as hetero- or homosexual desire but can be understood, to use Richard Rambuss's phrase, as an 'otherworldly sexual orientation'.<sup>44</sup> Mary was, after all, Christ's spouse as well as his mother. This configuration was reflected in Monteverdi's lament, *Pianto della Madonna*, where Mary sings of her dual relationship to Christ to the famous tune of the

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<sup>41</sup> Kathy Lavezzo, 'Sobs and Sighs Between Women: The Homerotics of Compassion in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. by Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 175-198; Sarah Stanbury, 'The Virgin's Gaze: Spectacle and Transgression in Middle English Lyrics of the Passion', *PMLA*, 106 (1991), 1083-93.

<sup>42</sup> Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Joseph Rickaby (London: Burns and Oates, 1915), pp. 169-70, 184.

<sup>43</sup> Stanbury, pp. 1083-93.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Rambuss, 'Pleasure and Devotion: The Body of Jesus and Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric', in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 253-279 (pp. 255, 257); Lavezzo, p. 190; Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 3.

lament of Arianna, a song for her departed lover.<sup>45</sup> Mary's touch upon her son figured the connections between mother/son *and* wife/husband. The *Pietà* references in *Tancred and Erminia* communicated, therefore, both Erminia's sexual passion for Tancred, and a strong desire to connect with a child. Regarders, who were familiar with devotional practices, must have responded empathetically to this motif.

### 10.3. Religious Looks

The types of viewing practised by the family of Cassiano dal Pozzo are a repository of the processes that may have prompted a gentleman to utilise the motif of the 'touching-look'. Poussin had a close relationship with the dal Pozzo family throughout the 1620s and 1630s: his motif was conceived in this environment. Certain aspects of the visual culture of this household support the theory that the men of this family were adept at identifying with the feminine characteristics associated with the motif. It may seem incongruous to introduce Cassiano dal Pozzo into a discussion that deals with religious ritual. Modern literature has constructed Cassiano dal Pozzo and Poussin as secular philosophers, more interested in libertine ideas, or Stoicism, than in Christian ritual.<sup>46</sup> That interpretation has recently been revised by several scholars.<sup>47</sup> I contribute to this revisionist effort here by considering more closely the religious context in which Cassiano dal Pozzo lived.

As well as being himself part of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy, Cassiano's relatives were involved in organised religious devotion. His brother, Carlo Antonio, belonged to several religious societies. In 1627, Carlo became the deputy of the congregation of S. Girolamo della Carità, a confraternity attached to an Oratorian church. Later he was a member of the elite confraternity of the Rosary.<sup>48</sup> Cassiano too has been linked to the Oratorians, an order that strongly believed in the effective power of images.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Claire Fontijn, 'The Virgin's Voice: Representations of Mary in seventeenth-century Italian song', in *Maternal Measures: figuring caregiving in the early modern period*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 135-62 (p. 149).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Haskell, p. 108; Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, pp. 177-207. The exhibition in 2000, *I Segreti di un collezionista*, which focused on Cassiano's collection, is an interesting case in point. Whilst the version of the exhibition that was displayed in Biella, Cassiano's home town, included a section on Cassiano's family chapel in his Roman palace, the Rome version of the same exhibition did not include such a section, religious works of art were placed in a general 'gallery' section. The Rome exhibition emphasised Cassiano's scholarly, 'scientific' activities in the context of the Roman Accademia dei Lincei.

<sup>47</sup> Marc Fumaroli, 'Prayers for a secret Platonist: Poussin's debt to the Jesuits and its suppression by Anthony Blunt', *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 October 1994, pp. 22-23; Solinas, 'Poussin et Cassiano dal Pozzo', p. 301; Jacques Thuillier, 'Poussin et Dieu', in *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, ed. Rosenberg and Prat, pp. 29-34; Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, pp. 61, 77.

<sup>48</sup> Sparti, 'Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo', p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Solinas, 'Poussin et Cassiano dal Pozzo', p. 301.

Other evidence relating to Cassiano's close relatives provide us with a picture of the environment in which Poussin's paintings were displayed. This environment was saturated with a belief in the efficacy of images to touch the soul of the regarder.

It is important to realise that scholars engaged in the beginnings of modern science, such as Cassiano dal Pozzo, also lived in a world where magical affection by religious imagery was commonplace.<sup>50</sup> The archival records of Pisa Cathedral hold a story about Cassiano's uncle and tutor, the Archbishop at Pisa, being affected in this fashion.<sup>51</sup> The Archbishop wished to see a miraculous image of the Virgin that was only uncovered on certain feast days. On a normal day, in the presence of two canons and a workman, the Archbishop started to unveil the image, but before he could finish he was seized with a shivering fit and was forced to cover the image. As a result of this foolhardy act, the Archbishop died soon after, one of the canons committed suicide, the other died in poverty, and the workman went blind.<sup>52</sup> The fact that Cassiano grew up in the vicinity of such a powerful statue should not be taken lightly. Although aspects of this story seem to have been embroidered to fit the cultural convention of such anecdotes, the story was recorded in the Cathedral records as a true, believable event.

Close analysis of the inventory of the dal Pozzo household taken in 1689 provides material evidence of religious devotion practiced in the proximity of Poussin's paintings. There were many religious paintings in the house. For example, Carlo Antonio possessed a picture that represented a map, or plan, of the Crucifix.<sup>53</sup> This object may have used for a practice described in the *Spiritual Exercises*, in which the participant is repeatedly asked to imagine the physical locations of the events of the Passion before proceeding to more profound meditation.<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere in the house there were several *prie-dieu*, two of which are described as 'used'. Another had a decoration of a silver Crucifix, suggesting it was an important item.<sup>55</sup>

One object from the Pozzo palace helps to elucidate particularly the kind of responses Poussin's motif of the 'touching-look' may have encouraged in his gentleman viewers. The 1689 inventory details an effigy of the Christ Child: it was a wax child laid

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Dava Sobel, *Galileo's Daughter* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999) pp. 11-12, 87. Sobel critiques the notion that Galileo 'scoffed at the Bible', and discusses his pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin at Loreto.

<sup>51</sup> On Archbishop Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo, see: E. Stumpo, 'dal Pozzo, Carlo Antonio', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXXII, pp. 202-4.

<sup>52</sup> Carroll, *Veiled Threats*, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 152r printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 557, no. 140: 'una pianta all'antica in quartata di Croce'.

<sup>54</sup> Loyola, p. 184: on the seventh day of the third week the participant is encouraged to imagine, among other things 'where and how it [Christ's body] was buried'.

<sup>55</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fols 151r, 220v, 224v, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 557 no. 107, and in 'Nell'altra Stanza annessa'; p. 559 in the sixth 'Stanza Contigua'.

in a cot that was lined with satin and edged in gold; it was kept in the same room as the two used *prie-dieu*. The effigy was probably similar to the fifteenth-century example now in the Museo Bardini in Florence (fig. 90).<sup>56</sup> The dal Pozzo's wax *bambino* can be related to the widespread practice of manipulating effigies of the Christ Child that had gained in popularity during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This devotional activity arose from spiritual guides, such as the *Spiritual Exercises*, which encouraged participants to imagine themselves at the Nativity, ready to serve Mary in helping with the care of the infant Christ. During the late sixteenth century, the nuns of San Domenico in Lucca developed a thriving industry in the manufacture of these effigies, which were sold for 50 *scudi* each throughout Italy, France, Spain and the New World. In the seventeenth century, a confraternity was set up in Italy specifically to care for, wash, swaddle and cradle these effigies of the new-born Christ. The seventeenth-century holy woman, Orsola Benincasa, was reported as talking to her effigy in order to gain consolation, as it sat in a chair in front of its bed. This type of devotion transcended the boundaries of public and private space: publicly venerated effigies were sometimes taken to visit noblewomen in their homes. These women would intimately dress the effigy in sumptuous clothing.<sup>57</sup>

Unlike many relics that were kept under lock and key, participants could touch these sacred objects through dressing and washing activities. The role of touch in this ritual can be seen as part of a much wider trend within post-Tridentine Catholicism where image worship became a matter of corporeal contact, as if the image were a body in its own right.<sup>58</sup> The motif of touching, looking, and believing, occurs in paintings such as Guercino's *Incredulity of St Thomas* (fig. 91).

The importance of touch to the affirmation of the Catholic faith was reflected in other cultural practices, including mythological imagery and painting. In Marino's poem

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<sup>56</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 220v, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 557: 'Un'bambino di cera caolco, dentro ad una canna raso con filetti d'oro'. By 1695, there were three babies in cradles, in the first and second compartments of a showcase, in the room where the Signora of the house dressed: see, Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 6, Vol. 210, fol. 275r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 566. There was also a cult effigy of the Christ child at the dal Pozzo's local church, San Andrea della Valle; see Scaramella, p. 883.

<sup>57</sup> P. Cesario Van Hulst, 'La storia della divozione a Gesù Bambini nelle immagini plastiche isolate', *Antonianum*, 19 (1944), 33-54; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. by Lydia Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 310-27; Scaramella, pp. 866-86. The private, intimate nature of the devotion attracted the attention of the Inquisition, who were always keen to control the sacred through the established institutions of the church; see Scaramella, p. 878.

<sup>58</sup> Francois Lecerle, 'L'infigurabile: Le corps entre theologie des images et theorie de l'art', in *Le Corps à La Renaissance Actes du XXXe colloque Tours 1987*, ed. by Jean Ceard, Marie Madeleine Fontaine and Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1990), pp. 173-86; Alice Sanger, 'Sensuality, Renewal, Private Devotion and the Relic in Post-Tridentine Italy' (paper presented at *Old/New*, University of Nottingham, April 2004).

*Adone* the traditional hierarchy of the senses is reversed in Venus's series of gardens. The culmination of Adonis's delights is the basest sense of touch.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, Marino wrote that 'all senses yield to touch' (VIII. 19). Around 1600, the experience of touch began to be much more visually manifest in paintings. The tangible, physical crusty surface of these canvases has been interpreted as drawing the viewer into an emotional relationship with the painting through appealing to his or her sense of tactility.<sup>60</sup> It is no surprise therefore, that Poussin's mythological paintings reflected the central role of touch in contemporary devotion.

Connotations of the ritual of handling effigies would not have been out of place in Poussin's mythological works. The artist and his patrons were no doubt aware that the ritual was similar to the Adonia festival, as described by Cartari in his mythological handbook, *Imagini degli Dei*. In honour of Venus's sorrow at the death of Adonis, the women of Athens placed effigies of Adonis's dead body in little beds and carried them to a sepulchre.<sup>61</sup> Venus's rite of metamorphosing the dead Adonis is the subject of Poussin's painting that I discussed in Chapter Eight. The ritual of manipulating effigies of dead men could provide women with a cultural space in which to voice erotic desire for the male body.<sup>62</sup> In both Christian and pagan rituals, feminine desire was expressed through the maternal connection between mother and child. Poussin's quotation of Christian imagery in his mythological paintings sustained this comparison.

Gentlemen must have responded to Poussin's imagery through their experience of these rituals because the devotional activity associated with effigies of Christ was important to men, both religious and lay, as well as to women.<sup>63</sup> Representations of the relationship between mother and son were highly important to both sexes within society, not just, what have been termed, 'frustrated' women.<sup>64</sup> With the rise of the cult of the baby Jesus in post-Tridentine Catholicism, several male saints were more frequently depicted holding the Christ Child, such as St Francis receiving Jesus from Mary, or St Anthony of Padua coddling the infant Christ. In an early seventeenth-century print by Simone Cantarini, produced on a very intimate scale, St Anthony holds

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<sup>59</sup> Carl Nordenfalk, 'The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 48 (1985), 1-22 (p. 13).

<sup>60</sup> Glanville, p. 56. The tactility of painting was also something that was picked up in the ekphrases written by Agucchi; see Santos, pp. 98, 100.

<sup>61</sup> Cartari, p. 488.

<sup>62</sup> Lavezzo, p. 176.

<sup>63</sup> Scaramella, pp. 868-69, 873-75. Two of the effigies owned by men were previously, or subsequently, owned by women, a fact which stresses women's mediating function in this devotion.

<sup>64</sup> Klapisch-Zuber, p. 326-27.

a podgy baby Jesus to his breast; the smile on the saint's inclined face indicates his delight at the intimate gesture of the Christ Child reaching up to touch his face (fig. 92).

Seventeenth-century Catholicism also stressed Joseph's role in the Holy Family.<sup>65</sup> Following the introduction of Joseph's cult in 1479, the saint had increasingly been seen as a valid member of the Holy Family, rather than an aged cuckold. Part of Joseph's new role involved child care, such as rocking the cradle or holding the Christ Child, activities that were more traditionally connected to Mary's maternal role.<sup>66</sup> Poussin's painting of *Return of the Holy Family from Egypt* reflects contemporary beliefs in Joseph's ability to relate physically to the infant Christ; it is he, rather than Mary, who supports the child (fig. 93).

#### 10.4. Feminine-Masculine Devotion

Poussin's use of the motif of the feminine 'touching-look' occurred within a context where men were familiar with identifying with emotions traditionally gendered in the feminine. In the majority of Poussin's early mythological paintings, the gesture is performed by women reflecting the fact that experiences of closeness and affection were traditionally figured through mother and child relationships. In order to experience such emotions gentlemen were encouraged to identify with feminine bodies.

Further evidence of how this feminine identification occurred can be found in the religious imagery utilised in the Pozzo household. Between 1627 and 1635, the Pozzo family commissioned the engraver Bernardino Capitelli to produce a series of religious prints for them. Each print was dedicated to a member of the family.<sup>67</sup> The prints shed further light on the religious practices of the Pozzo family, as well as the relationship between the family's religious devotions and the subjects of Poussin's early paintings. Carlo Antonio's print shows the mystic marriage of St Catherine. This was the subject of one of Poussin's early paintings in the Pozzo collection, indicating that at this time the artist engaged directly with the religious interests of the Pozzo family. Cassiano's print depicts the ecstasy of Mary Magdalene (fig. 94).<sup>68</sup> The elements of

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<sup>65</sup> Oreste Ferrari, 'Sul tema del presagio della Passione, e su altri connessi, principalmente nell'età della riforma cattolica', *Storia dell'Arte*, 61 (1987), 201-24 (pp. 219-20). Women too could associate with the image of men holding the Christ Child, as the noblewoman Emilia Pannelini did, shown by the engraving executed for her on the theme of St Anthony of Padua by Bernardino Capitelli; see Patrizia Bonnacorso, *Bernardino Capitelli 1590-1639*, exhib.cat (Siena: Museo Civico, 1985), p. 39.

<sup>66</sup> Rosemary Drage Hale, 'Joseph as Mother: Adaptation and Appropriation in the Construction of Male Virtue', in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. by John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 101-16.

<sup>67</sup> Bonnacorso, pp. 32-8.

<sup>68</sup> The print was taken from a painting by Rutilio Manetti, *Ecstasy of the Magdalene*, oil on canvas, 133-160, Paris: Sant-Eustache. It was possibly painted for Cassiano; see Anna Maria Pedrocchi, 'Costanzo

touch that Poussin depicted in his mythological paintings are also present in Capitelli's print. The Magdalene's state of spiritual ecstasy is emphasised by her lack of awareness of the attendant angel who touches her chest. The print suggests Cassiano was familiar with the practice of identifying with the feminine characteristics associated with the 'touching-look'.

The motif of touch in Capitelli's print relates to the Magdalene's special relationship with Christ. In the novel *Maria Maddalena peccatrice e convertita*, published in 1636 and written by one of Cassiano dal Pozzo's correspondants Anton Giulio Brignole Sale, the Magdalene's touch is an important element of her holiness. In the first part of Sale's novel, the Magdalene sexually devours men and seeks to seduce Christ physically. After she is seduced by his words, the Magdalene's carnal desire for Christ's body does not cease. When she washes Christ's feet, she abandons herself at his feet; she amorously embraces them, and kisses them with a violent desire. Later, squatting before Christ on the Cross, the Magdalene is moved by her emotions to embrace the foot of the Cross; her open lips plunge into the blood spurting from Christ's wounds.<sup>69</sup>

The metaphor of the Magdalene's touch was particularly suited to convey a notion of her special erotic-spiritual attachment to Christ. For centuries, moralists had considered touch as the basest of senses; it was an instrument of the sin of lust.<sup>70</sup> Women's social inferiority meant that femininity could be aligned easily with the base sense of touch, leaving the noble sense of vision as an attribute of the masculine gender.<sup>71</sup> In this way, seventeenth-century poets, writers and painters used the figure of the Magdalene to reinterpret the base significance of touch.<sup>72</sup> In his novel, Sale figured the Magdalene's ultimate desire to connect with her beloved spiritually by the extent of her ecstasy. The intensity of her love makes her soul leave her body to intermingle with Christ, mirroring her physical absorbance of Christ's blood at the foot of the Cross.<sup>73</sup> Capitelli's print captures the same relationship between the Magdalene's ecstasy and her privileged physical contact with divinity.

Patrizi, Cassiano dal Pozzo ed altri amatori d'arte nella Rome di Papa Borghese', in *I Segreti di un collezionista*, Biella exhib. cat., pp. 61-67 (p. 61).

<sup>69</sup> Silvia Fabrizio-Costa, 'Du desir amoureux à l'amour de Dieu: un roman religieux d'A. Brignole Sale', in *Au Pays d'Eros: Littérature et éroticisme en Italie de la Renaissance à l'Age Baroque* (Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1988), pp. 145-217.

<sup>70</sup> Nordenfalk, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> On the noble quality of sight in the early modern period see Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, pp. 21-82.

<sup>72</sup> Rambuss, p. 257.

<sup>73</sup> Fabrizio-Costa, p. 202.



Capitelli's print indicates that the image of the Magdalene merging with Christ in ecstasy was special to Cassiano. The dal Pozzo family owned several pictures of the saint, including a half length figure by Vouet, and a depiction of her with her hand to her chest by Lanfranco.<sup>74</sup> Cassiano's connection with these artists may suggest that he collected these pictures to suit his particular affiliations. Cassiano's interest accords with those of the wider community in which he lived. The Magdalene was an immensely popular figure in seventeenth-century Rome. Her image defended the Catholic sacrament of penance and the concept of salvation through good works against the attacks of the Protestants. She also provided a fallible person with whom the laity could identify.<sup>75</sup> In Chapter Eight I discussed how religious men sought to be like the Magdalene in their relationships with Christ.<sup>76</sup> In his novel, Sale directly identified himself with the Magdalene: it is she who expresses the hidden essence of his soul.<sup>77</sup> It is probable that Cassiano, through these images of the Magdalene, identified with a type of connection based on the notion of feminine physical touch.

These Magdalene images held similar motifs of touching and looking as those that occurred in Poussin's early mythological paintings. For example, Poussin's Erminia exhibits a masochistic desire towards Tancred that is similar to the desire the Magdalene feels for Christ in Sale's novel (fig. 5). Erminia's readiness to chop off her hair to bind his wounds, in an echo of the Magdalene's use of her hair to dry Christ's feet, provides the most obvious example between the two figures.<sup>78</sup> I have commented that Tancred's insensate body may also instigate the touch depicted in the painting. In some senses, he is analogous to a desiring ecstatic Magdalene-figure. Tancred's appearance replicates the devotional practices where gentlemen sought to identify with a woman touching Christ.

The inversion of traditional gender roles evoked by Magdalene devotion, and the connection between the feminine body and touching-looks, occurred in the print made for Theodora Costa. In the year of her marriage, Capitelli made a print featuring her name saint (fig. 95). The dal Pozzo family obviously wanted to encourage Theodora to give devotion to this particular figure. Theodora's saint is depicted in a very particular way. The print depicts an episode from the life of the fifth-century saint, Theodora of Alexandria, recounted in the *Golden Legend*. So ashamed after committing adultery,

<sup>74</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fols 222r, 223r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558, nos 297, 339.

<sup>75</sup> Mormando, pp. 107-12.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Mormando, pp. 119-20.

<sup>77</sup> Fabrizio-Costa, p. 204.

<sup>78</sup> Verdi (1992), p. 15.

Theodora of Alexandria cut her hair and entered a monastery, disguised as a monk. Her sanctity was so great that she performed many miracles whilst living in the desert. One day a girl tried to seduce her, thinking her to be a man. St Theodora refused, but when the girl became pregnant by another, she accused St Theodora of being the father. The Saint took the blame, and cared for the child; her true sex was only discovered after her death.<sup>79</sup> The *Roman Martyrology*, revised after the Council of Trent, does not refer to the child. The *Martyrology* only details Theodora's disguise in a religious habit and her abstinence and patience.<sup>80</sup> In contrast to the post-Tridentine version of the saint, it is clear that Capitelli's print sought to maintain the older tradition of St Theodora's dual gender. The print shows St Theodora as a monk, with short straggly hair, studiously looking at a book. At the same time, she places her hand on the child's shoulder in a gesture of support and love. The print must have encouraged Theodora Costa to experience the nurturing love that she should feel towards her own future children, especially since noblewomen were involved often in the education of their young children.<sup>81</sup>

At the same time as modelling for her a suitable role as a mother, the print invited Theodora Costa to identify with a woman who masqueraded as a man so successfully that people believed in 'his' male reproductive abilities. Theodora Costa was not alone: other seventeenth-century women identified with cross-dressing female saints.<sup>82</sup> In the *Golden Legend* version of St Theodora's story, her ability to live as a man, only broken at her death, helped her to achieve saintliness. The success of her masquerade demonstrated her virtues of patience and tolerance to suffering. This part of the story may have some basis in the ideas of St Jerome: 'as long as woman is for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But if she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called a man'.<sup>83</sup> St Theodora's choice reflects how from the early days of Christianity the ability of holy women to transcend their gender figured the possibility for lay people to change

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<sup>79</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 539-43.

<sup>80</sup> Cesare Baronius, *The Roman Martyrology*, trans. by G. K. (1627; repr. Ilkley: Scholar Press, 1974), p. 300. Another St Theodora had also stolen the Roman limelight: during the Carnivals of 1635 and 1636 the opera *I Santi Didimo e Theodora* played in the Palazzo Barberini. This Theodora also cross dressed, but only briefly in order to escape a brothel; see, Murata, pp. 253-55.

<sup>81</sup> Ago, *Carriere e clientele*, p. 70; Klapisch-Zuber, pp. 320-21.

<sup>82</sup> Davis, *Society and Culture*, p. 145.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Cross Dressing, Sex and Gender* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 50.

their spiritual status.<sup>84</sup> In contrast to the straight gender inversion suggested by St Jerome however, the print stresses St Theodora's role as a motherly, care-giving figure through her action of touching the child. In Capitelli's print, St Theodora does not provide an example of a woman adopting a masculine position. Instead, she operates as a subject that can play at both genders at the same time: she looks down at the scholarly book but lovingly touches the child.

The unusual features of this print demonstrate that in the dal Pozzo household it was a woman who was figured as both a masculine scholar and a feminine caregiver.<sup>85</sup> I suggest that this print encouraged the social relationship between the ecclesiastical elder brother and his sister-in-law in their common identification with a 'maternal' role, which we have seen was an important feature of the Roman family. Theodora's masculine associations, through her name saint, would have facilitated any identification Cassiano cared to make with his sister-in-law.<sup>86</sup> Cassiano's devotion to the Magdalene would have further encouraged his identification with figures of feminine devotion. This analysis of the religious devotion of Cassiano dal Pozzo and Theodora Costa suggests that Cassiano dal Pozzo felt 'motherly' tenderness towards Carlo Antonio's children through an identification with Theodora Costa. The practices of looking depicted in Poussin's early mythological paintings accord with these social and devotional practices. It is likely that paintings such as the *Tancred and Erminia* appealed to gentleman because they were keen to embody masculine strengths and feminine sensibilities partly to figure their ability to touch and care for children. The type of feminine-masculine subjectivity figured by Capitelli's print of St Theodora is echoed in Poussin's painting of Erminia, as well as many other paintings that I have discussed throughout this thesis.

### 10.5. Fleshy Instruments

A consideration of the religious devotion in the dal Pozzo household demonstrates firstly, why a gentleman may have sought to enter a feminine standpoint, and secondly, how an actual woman was encouraged to be a medium of viewing, in the ways outlined in Part I. In the anecdote of the *vecchiarella*, the old woman was called '*un modo*'; she was a 'method' which allowed Annibale Carracci to appreciate correctly

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<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Castelli, "I will make Mary male": Pieties of the body and gender transformation of Christian women in late antiquity', in *Body Guards*, pp. 29-49.

<sup>85</sup> Women, such as the writer Moderata Fonte in her autobiographical poem *Tredici canti del Floridoro* (1581), did identify with the lady warriors of sixteenth-century chivalric fiction; see Odorisio, p. 58.

<sup>86</sup> An enquiry into the importance and functions of women in the dal Pozzo family forms the basis of my postdoctoral research project at the British School at Rome, commencing October 2004.

the paintings concerned. In the Palazzo dal Pozzo, gentlemen could have used Poussin's represented women in order to view in a certain way. I conjecture that, in addition, a real woman, Theodora Costa, was encouraged through visual imagery to be a prism through which gentlemen could look in order to experience feminine emotions.

The relationship between Poussin's representations of women and the body of Theodora Costa posits the theory that women, as constructed subjectivities, operated as viewing 'technologies'.<sup>87</sup> I have advanced this argument because of the probable connection between the feminine 'touching-look' and changes in scientific technologies of viewing. In the seventeenth century, gentlemen increasingly practiced an ocular-centric notion of vision, devoid of contact, through such objects as the telescope and microscope.<sup>88</sup> Viewing conceived as detached judgement, became 'masculinised' particularly through scientific discourses. I argue that, in a parallel move, the 'feminine' eye came to house viewing as a haptic experience.<sup>89</sup>

Guercino's painting of Endymion as an astronomer, dating from the 1640s, reflects the scholarly mastery that could be gained by using the telescope (fig. 96). Marino called Galileo the new Endymion because he had revealed the nudity of the moon (*Adone*, X. 43). Guercino's painting also underlines the physical isolation this practice could produce. Guercino shows Endymion asleep. The reason for his tiredness is not active bewitchment by Diana, come to kiss him at her leisure, as depicted by Carracci forty years before in the Galleria Farnese (fig. 45). Rather, Guercino's shepherd has tired himself out by gazing too long at the moon through his telescope. The introduction of the telescope, in Guercino's painting, produces a distancing between the shepherd and his goddess. Diana is invisible, subtly present only in the upturned crescent-moon that usually appears upon her brow. This feature recalls Galileo's argument that it was as impossible to know the internal essence of those things closest to us, such as water that 'we constantly handle', as those at a great distance, such as the Moon, that one can only observe.<sup>90</sup> In some senses, Galileo rejected the certainty of touch in confirming faith that was so important in post-Tridentine Catholicism.

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<sup>87</sup> 'technology, *n*<sup>1</sup>', *OED Online*, <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00248100> [accessed 12 Sept. 2003]: 'a particular practical or industrial art'; 'high technology goods'.

<sup>88</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 144-45. See also Gilman, p. 112.

<sup>89</sup> I am drawing here on Martin Jay's history of philosophical paradigms of vision in: *Downcast Eyes*, pp. 23-81. Jay does not though consider the history of the feminine touching-look. He locates this phenomenon in the twentieth century; see p. 535.

<sup>90</sup> Stillman Drake, *Galileo at Work: His Scientific Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 199.

Guercino's picture demonstrates how the telescope excluded touch from the action of looking and how the empirical nature of this sense was questioned.<sup>91</sup>

As related mythological paintings, which also feature looking, desire, and the possibility of physical contact, Poussin's representations of women can be considered as social 'technologies' of viewing. Gentlemen could look through these depictions of fleshy bodies, almost as if they were scientific instruments. Through this practice, gentlemen gained a sense of closeness to, and certainty about, the objects they wanted to contemplate. We should recall here that in the *vecchiarella* anecdote, Carracci only came to know the true effects of Domenichino's painting through the medium of women. In Poussin's paintings, the objects gazed upon by mediating women are masculine bodies. In the light of Galileo's questioning of empirical sensation, this suggests that the object of uncertainty was the gentleman's sense of his own gender. By adding to his characteristics of masculinity with those of femininity through the activity of looking at mythological paintings, a gentleman could have eased such anxieties.

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<sup>91</sup> Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 144-45.

## ***CONCLUSION: REGARDING GENDERED MYTHOLOGIES***

This thesis has demonstrated that a group of Nicolas Poussin's early mythological paintings had the capacity to alter the nature of a gentleman or woman's gender. The activities of looking, depicted in these paintings and practiced by their regarders, were central to this process. I have argued that these paintings functioned within the kinship experiences of Poussin's clientele. In so doing, I have implicitly rejected the interpretations that I detailed in the Preface, which have argued that these paintings are a simple reflection of Poussin's life.

In order for this thesis to transform, rather than simply counter, these previous readings it is necessary to return here to the biographical mode in the light of the thesis' findings. In this Conclusion, I will therefore take into account Poussin's artistic persona. A review of the significances of his early mythological paintings discussed in this thesis provides a frame that can help us to begin to constitute the meanings of 'Poussin' in seventeenth-century Rome.

Implicit in my title *Regarding Gendered Mythologies* is an awareness that 'myths' about the gendered nature of 'Poussin' continue to call for further critical analysis. From the debates of the French Royal Academy of Painting in the seventeenth century, to present-day French concerns to defend a nationalist culture, Poussin has been gendered 'masculine'. Several writers have already charted this historiography.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of such masculine gendering in British art history, particularly through the work of Anthony Blunt, has also been obliquely addressed in revisionist accounts of the artist's early *oeuvre*.<sup>2</sup> These studies have demonstrated that various ideologies have restricted readings of the 'gender' of Poussin. The type of speech that Roland Barthes has termed 'myth' has the capacity to narrow meaning and thus distort any multivalency that cannot be sustained in ideological representation.<sup>3</sup> I suggest the myth of 'Poussin' has misrepresented the nature of his gender. This thesis has destabilised the notion that

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Lousie Berg, 'Classical De/pictions: Figures of Woman in French Classicism' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 1982), pp. 47-66; Svetlana Alpers, *The Making of Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 89-101; Liane McTavish, 'Complicating Categories: Women, Gender and Sexualities in Seventeenth-Century French Culture' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, 1996), pp. 189-237; Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 124-25. On the imagery of Poussin utilised by various French political regimes see Katie Scott, 'Introduction – "pour la gloire des arts et l'honneur de France": commemorating Poussin 1784-1995', in *Commemorating Poussin*, pp. 1-52.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Cropper, 'Fort Worth Early Poussin', *Burlington Magazine*, 130 (1988), 958-62 (p. 961); Hugh Brigstocke, 'Poussin et ses amis de Italie', in *Seicento: la peinture italienne du XVIIe siècle et la France* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1990), pp.215-229 (p. 216); Michael Kitson, 'Anthony Blunt's *Nicholas Poussin* in context', in *Commemorating Poussin*, pp. 211-230.

<sup>3</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lowers (St Albans: Paladin, 1973), pp. 109-59.

Poussin's early mythological paintings are a signifier of this 'Poussin'. It is possible now to reconsider the 'gender' of this artist in Rome during the 1620s and 1630s.

The first part of the thesis included a discussion of how Poussin experienced a 'conversion' of the gendered characteristics of his body through regarding feminine-visual form. I established that the depiction of feminine viewing in paintings, such as *Echo and Narcissus* and the early *Tancred and Erminia*, was paralleled in the culture by beliefs about and practices of looking in which gentlemen stepped imaginatively into a socially constructed feminine point-of-view. Poussin's letters of the 1640s suggest that the social practices of viewing which surrounded him may have affected not only his work but also his artistic persona.

I demonstrated that such practices of viewing manifested an aristocratic-masculine desire to experience aspects of the feminine gender. This wish stemmed from the intersection of the belief in affection by image and the status concerns of Poussin's clientele. As rational administrators, Poussin's patrons were keen to display their ability to look at things with bodily control. Through utilising affect-laden feminine standpoints, gentlemen experienced *and* distanced themselves from affection by image. At the same time, Poussin's patrons aspired to become Cardinals. The peculiar nature of Roman society meant that these most privileged men shared the positions of noblewomen as co-inspectors of manly displays at tournaments. Papal bureaucrats, who made up the core of Poussin's Roman clientele, were adept at entering culturally constructed feminine viewpoints.

Mancini's description of Poussin as 'noble', discussed in the Introduction, posits the likelihood that Poussin shared this gentlemanly need to experience feminine ways of looking. The connection I established between the gallery and these practices of viewing demonstrated that Poussin's paintings had the ability to create a narrative that would induce a gentleman regard to 'convert' imaginatively his gender. In the light of the evidence that was discussed in Part I, it is evident that 'Poussin', and 'Poussin's mode of painting', had the potential to be perceived by his contemporaries as manifesting a multivalency of gendered characteristics.

In the 1640s, Poussin certainly had to defend his choice of sweet and soft subjects to his French clientele suggesting that they tended to conflate his feminine style with Poussin's own character.<sup>4</sup> Some recent writers have outlined Poussin's use of a similar sensuous, style of painting in his early Roman works.<sup>5</sup> Part II of this thesis

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<sup>4</sup> Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory*, pp. 124-25, 134-35.

<sup>5</sup> Denis Mahon, 'A Plea for Poussin as a Painter', in *Walter Friedlaender zum 90. Geburtstag* (Berlin: De

contributed to these studies with a close analysis of the gender of Poussin's representation in *Rinaldo and Armida*. The simultaneous masculine and feminine qualities of Poussin's protagonist acted as a visual 'oppositional metaphor': a highly praised rhetorical device. The gestures and colours used by Poussin had the capability to affect the humoral constitution of a regarder due to contemporary beliefs in the power of the *affetti*. Gentlemen no doubt responded to Poussin's techniques in a similar fashion to how they reacted towards other marvels of simultaneity. The related frames of poetry and natural history established that Poussin's patrons were familiar with the experience of being encouraged to enter into a feminine position through marvellous images of simultaneity. Poussin's mythological paintings offered a similar exploration of the similitude and closeness between the masculine and feminine genders. Through regarding these works, Poussin's patrons had motive to perceive the painter as a marvellous being who was able to draw upon different characteristics. Seventeenth-century Roman viewers had good reason to agree with the artist's later French patrons and see his stylistic choices as evidence of Poussin's own feminine characteristics.

At least one of Poussin's Roman patrons did connect his early artistic persona and the style of his early mythological paintings. A portrait of Poussin hung in the room I discussed in great depth in Part III.<sup>6</sup> A probable candidate for this lost portrait shows Poussin as a young, scruffy painter, about to address the viewer (fig. 97).<sup>7</sup> Unlike in his later self-portraits, the painter does not adopt a patriarchal pose. His appearance recalls Ovid's ambiguous description of Narcissus as 'at once boy and man' (*Metamorphoses*, III. 352). On the verge of speech, the portrait shows Poussin with the ability to affect the viewer. Whether or not this is the dal Pozzo portrait, it is significant that Poussin's major Roman patron chose to hang his face with his early mythological paintings in the *Camera Grande*, rather than in the more serious atmosphere of the next-door *Stanza degli Sacramenti*. For the dal Pozzo family, the perception of Poussin's artistic persona operated as part of a particular narrative that was created in the mythological painting gallery.

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Gruyter, 1965), pp. 113-142; Cropper, 'Fort Worth Early Poussin', pp. 958-62; Richard Wollheim, 'The Most Poetical of Painters', *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 November 1981, p. 1365; Pace, 'Nicolas Poussin: "peintre-poète"?'; Freedberg, 'De l'effet de la musique', pp. 309-38.

<sup>6</sup> Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 222r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558, no. 286.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Blunt, 'Poussin studies I: Self Portraits', *Burlington Magazine*, 89 (1947), 219-26; Anthony Blunt, 'Poussin and his Roman patrons', in *Walter Friedlaender zum 90 Geburtstag* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), pp. 58-75 (p. 61). On the developments of this type of portraiture see Clovis Whitfield, 'Portraiture: From the "Simple Portrait" to the "Ressemblance Parlante"', in *The Genius of Rome 1592-1623*, pp. 142-71.



The 'locations' of Poussin's mythological paintings assisted the imaginary conversion of a regarder's gender. Poussin's paintings depicted the landscape around Rome and recalled the Arcadian villa garden; they also staged urban mythological painting galleries as a liberal, pastoral space. The categories of masculinity and femininity practiced in the central civic sphere, could be relaxed in this marginalised, half-real, and half-fantasy, place. I discussed the potential of the *Camera Grande* to provoke viewers into imagining a state of complete relaxation from civic responsibility. Poussin's paintings from this room explore the importance of feminine sexuality, including feminine ways of looking, to the concept of men's leisure. These features meant that the room appeared as a feminine space with the power to compel men to enter an ideal, harmonious state, figured by dual gender. A biographical detail about Poussin in his early years indicates how Poussin's portrait signified in this 'location'. The painter's practice of going out into the landscape and returning to create paintings, instead of joining in the amusements and games enjoyed by his friends, may have assisted the perception of the dal Pozzo family that Poussin was a painter who could bring the spaces of the countryside into their city palace.<sup>8</sup> Poussin's portrait in the *Camera Grande* emphasised that the source of this benevolent power was his artistic persona. In this respect, the painter was analogous to women, like the sorceress Armida, who created images in order to feminise her manly captives.

The final part of this thesis considered some of the social reasons why Poussin's gentlemanly clientele may have wanted to embody characteristics of femininity. In their depictions of masculinity, the paintings figured a state of being that related to the experience of papal bureaucrats negotiating their new-found positions in Roman society. I argued that the appearance of the *Venus and Adonis* demonstrated to Giori his potential rise in society, whilst reminding him of his submissive position in relation to the Pope. The painting certainly helped him transcend his humble beginnings and demonstrate his taste as an aspiring ecclesiastical-courtier. This painting depicted a sensual masculine body but mediated the reception of this figure through Venus's gaze. Poussin's painting manifested the demands of social status that both fostered and limited Giori's appreciation of masculine-feminine bodies.

The concerns surrounding marriage and the generation of children related to the patronage of another of Poussin's early mythological paintings: the *Mars and Venus*. This painting contributed to the organisation of the family after the entrance of Theodora Costa into the dal Pozzo household. Such concerns were particularly pressing

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<sup>8</sup> Bellori, p. 427.

due to the changing notions of marriage in post-Tridentine Catholicism. Through looking at the painting, the family could have explored the contradictions between new ideals of marriage and more patriarchal forms of gender relations that were enshrined in this institution. I discussed how the painting functioned in terms of contemporary beliefs about the use of paintings in conceiving and nurturing the foetus. The need for men to have a greater role in this process provides one context for understanding the complexly gendered protagonists of Poussin's paintings. Identification with feminine viewers was also a practice related to how men, in Cassiano dal Pozzo's social position, gained a close relationship with their nephew-heirs. Poussin's motif of the 'touching-look' modelled an experience of motherly love that gentlemen coveted. Through references to devotional practices, this motif was highly affective upon seventeenth-century regards.

Close attention to the natures of the families for whom Poussin worked led to a consideration of how an actual woman, Theodora Costa, figured a feminine mode of viewing. Theodora's print makes evident that constructed gendered standpoints were not only conceptual: they affected the very bodies of men and women. This point is crucial to a new understanding of the gender of Poussin's artistic persona. I have argued in the Conclusion that through Poussin's engagement with practices of gendered viewing, his use of feminine painterly affects, and his 'location' in mythical landscape, Poussin's patrons could have considered him as the embodiment of a particular constructed gendered standpoint. It is possible that they perceived Poussin as someone who was both masculine *and* feminine.

It would have been socially advantageous for Poussin to encourage such a notion. I have already argued that he shared the social aspirations of his clientele, which included the ability to engage with feminine points-of-view. In addition, as a painter, Poussin had further motivation for demonstrating masculine *and* feminine character traits. Other artists, such as Guido Reni and Artemisia Gentileschi, capitalised on the notion that their bodies were dually masculine and feminine in order to advertise their creative abilities. In 1604, Guido Reni represented himself as a woman in *St Benedict Presented with Gifts by Farmers* (fig. 98), a story that he repeated many times. The woman in question carries a basket of eggs and looks out towards the viewer, just to the right of the centre of the painting. In Malvasia's biography of Reni, the anecdote of the portrait appears just after the description of the artist's nature as melancholic mixed

with vivacity and spirit: the perfect attributes for a painter, according to Malvasia.<sup>9</sup> The proximity of these two statements indicates that Reni's mixed gender contributed to his painterly prowess. Gentileschi also played with notions of dual gender in her self-presentation. In 1649, Artemisia wrote to a patron, 'You will find the spirit of Caesar in the soul of a woman'. Although this painter had to prove her worth in a man's profession, her *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (fig. 99) advertises both the masculine *and* feminine aspects of her creativity. Rationally absorbed in her work like any male painter, Artemisia also shows herself dressed in sensuous feminine attire, her hair attractively unravelling.<sup>10</sup> Reni and Gentileschi were both patronised by Cassiano dal Pozzo; from the latter he commissioned a self-portrait.<sup>11</sup> Poussin, therefore, worked for patrons who appreciated the plurality of painter's genders; it is highly probable that he too wanted to demonstrate feminine characteristics.

The *Camera Grande* of the Palazzo dal Pozzo has provided the final 'feminine' framing of 'Poussin'. Within the walls of his patron's home, Poussin's artistic persona was part of a narrative of images that induced men to imagine that they could adopt 'feminine' experience. This framing constitutes the artist's persona as someone whose works tested, negotiated and appraised the social concepts of masculinity and femininity in subtle and sophisticated ways. These paintings were certainly not confined to being a misogynistic reflection of 'the extent to which the young artist may have felt himself enslaved by the power of woman', as one recent contributor to the myth of 'Poussin' would like us to believe.<sup>12</sup> I have demonstrated the complex significances of these paintings in the social context in which Poussin worked. These paintings move us to recognise the sweetness, as much as the bitterness, that men and women once experienced through regarding mythological paintings.

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<sup>9</sup> Malvasia, II, p. 44: 'Di natura malinconica, mista però di spirito a tempo, e di vivacità, ed in conseguenza atta alle speculazioni, ed all studio, quale appunto conviensi ad un pittore'.

<sup>10</sup> Garrard, pp. 357-58, 365-66, 397.

<sup>11</sup> For evidence of dal Pozzo patronage of Reni see Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 25, vol. 419, fol. 223r, Rome AS, 30 N. C., U. 6, vol. 210, fol. 272v, 276r, printed in Sparti, 'The Dal Pozzo Collection', p. 558 no. 342, p. 566 nos 56 & 666. Garrard, pp. 85-89.

<sup>12</sup> Verdi (1995), p. 22.

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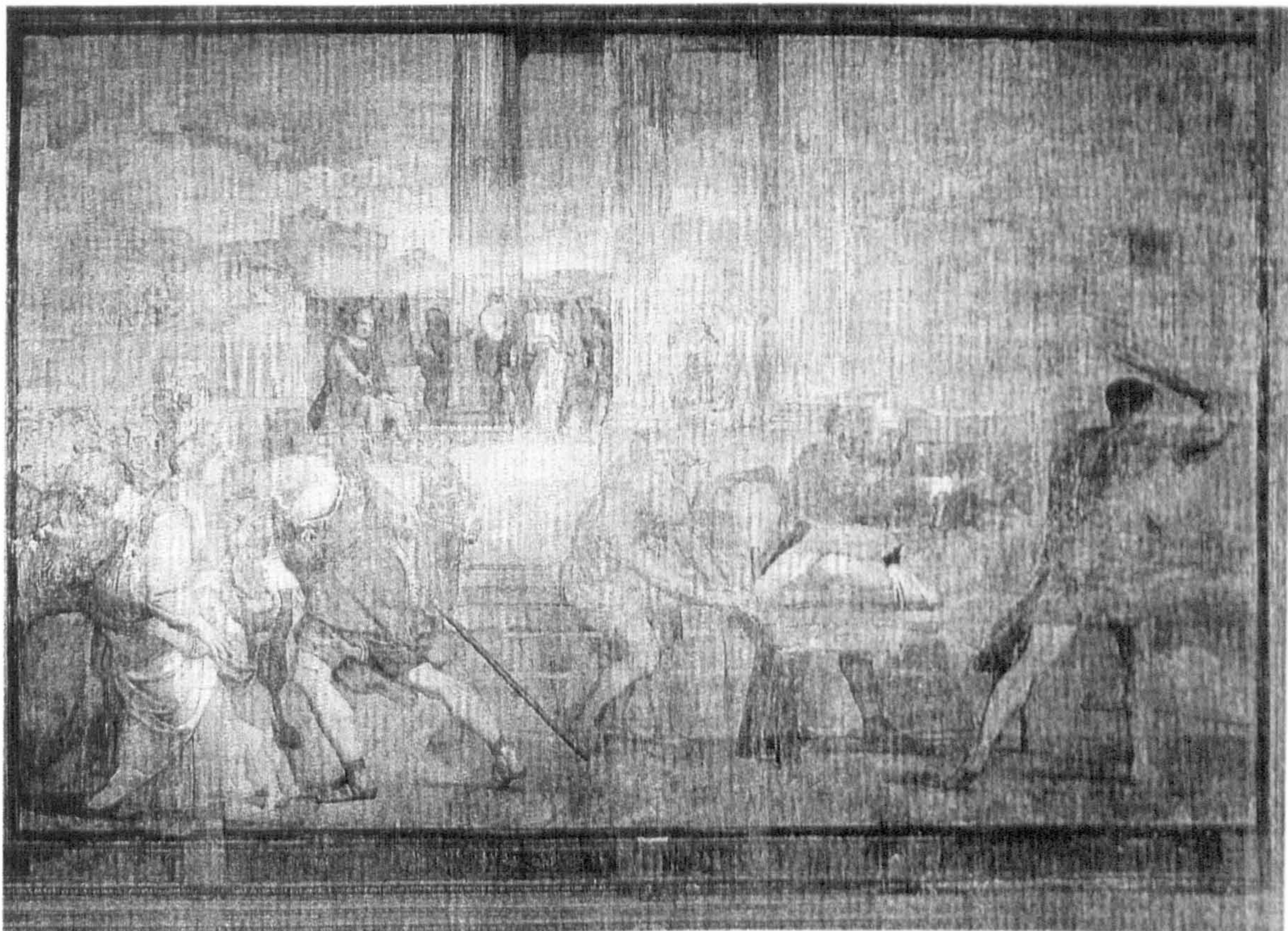


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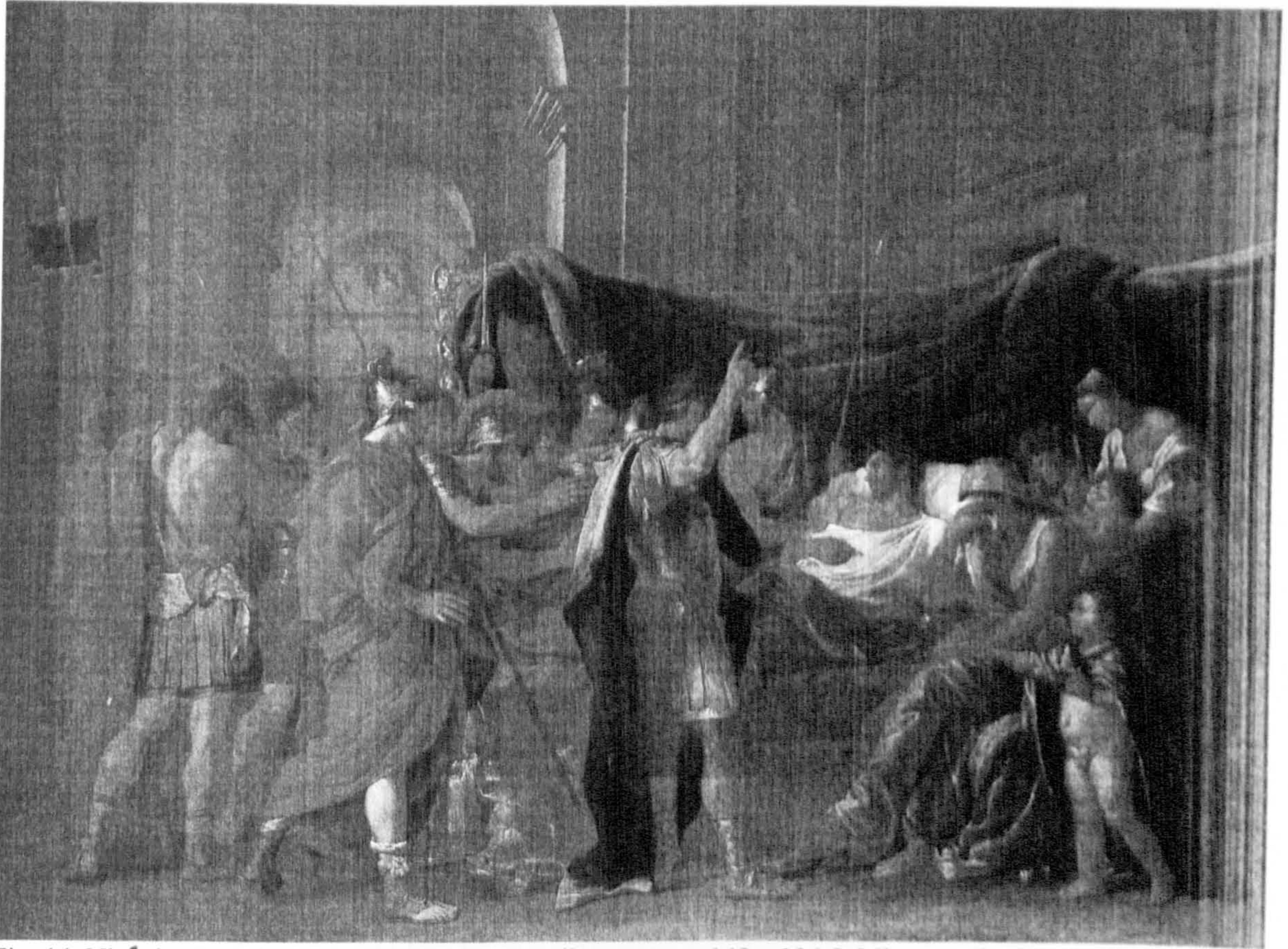
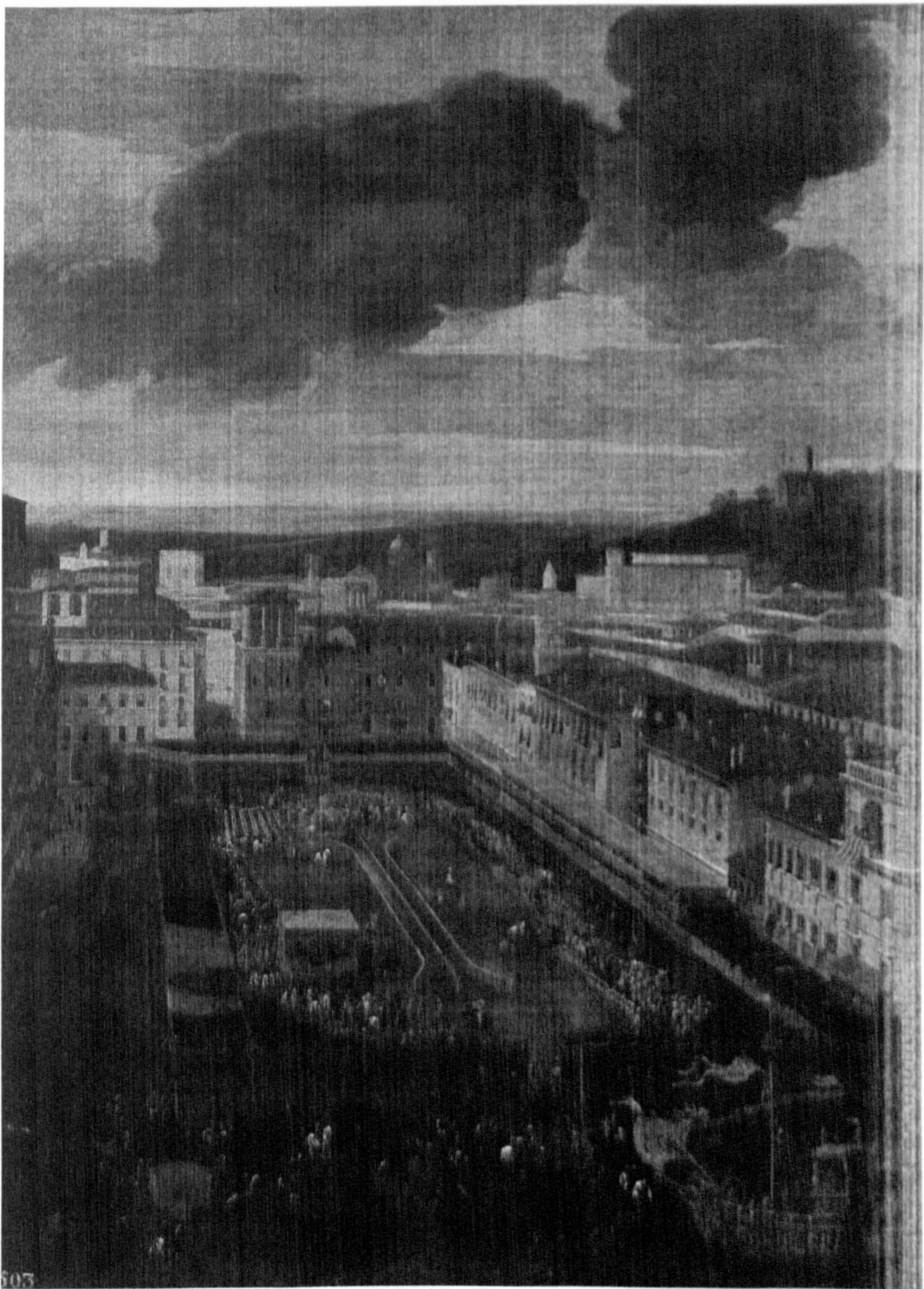


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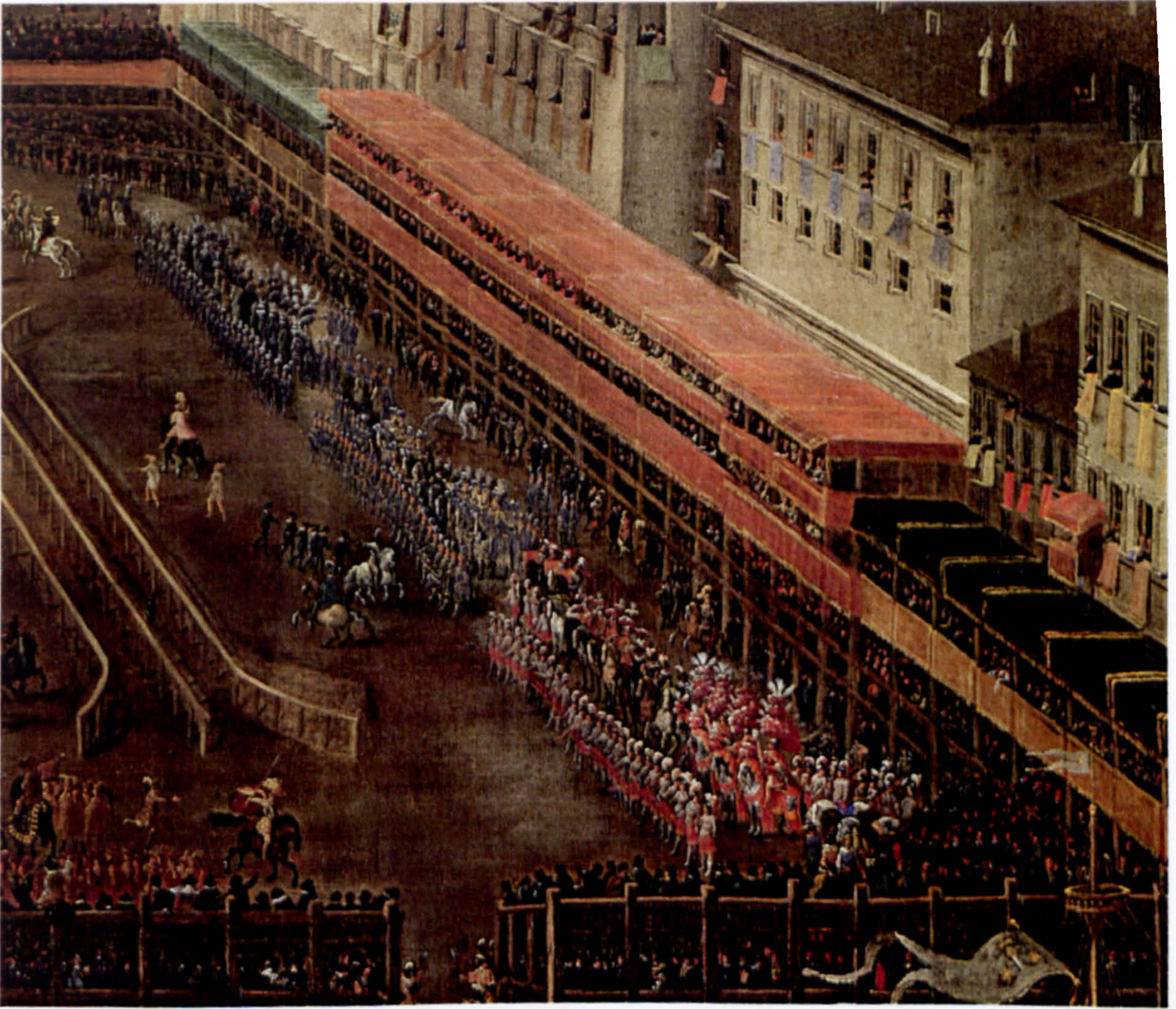


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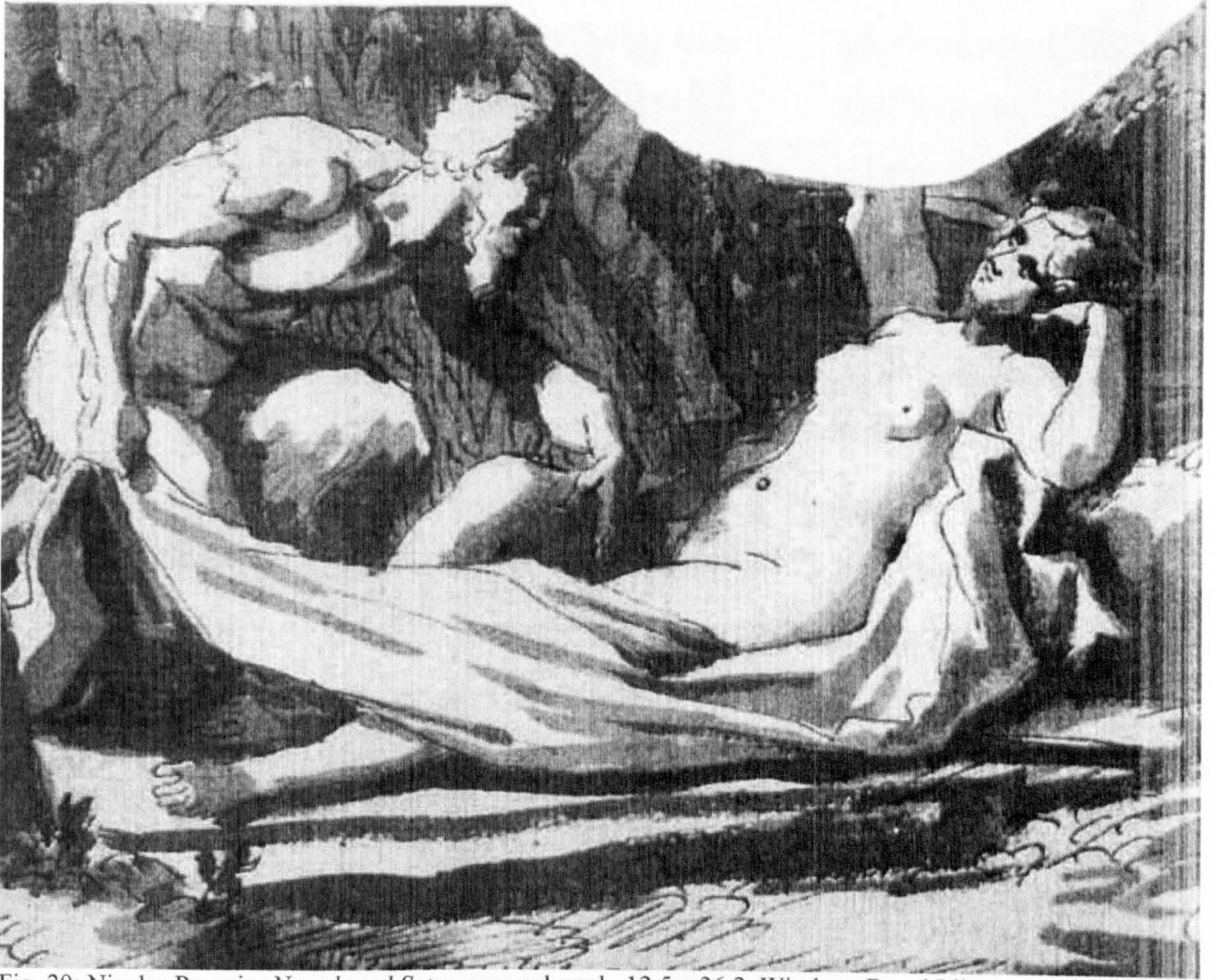


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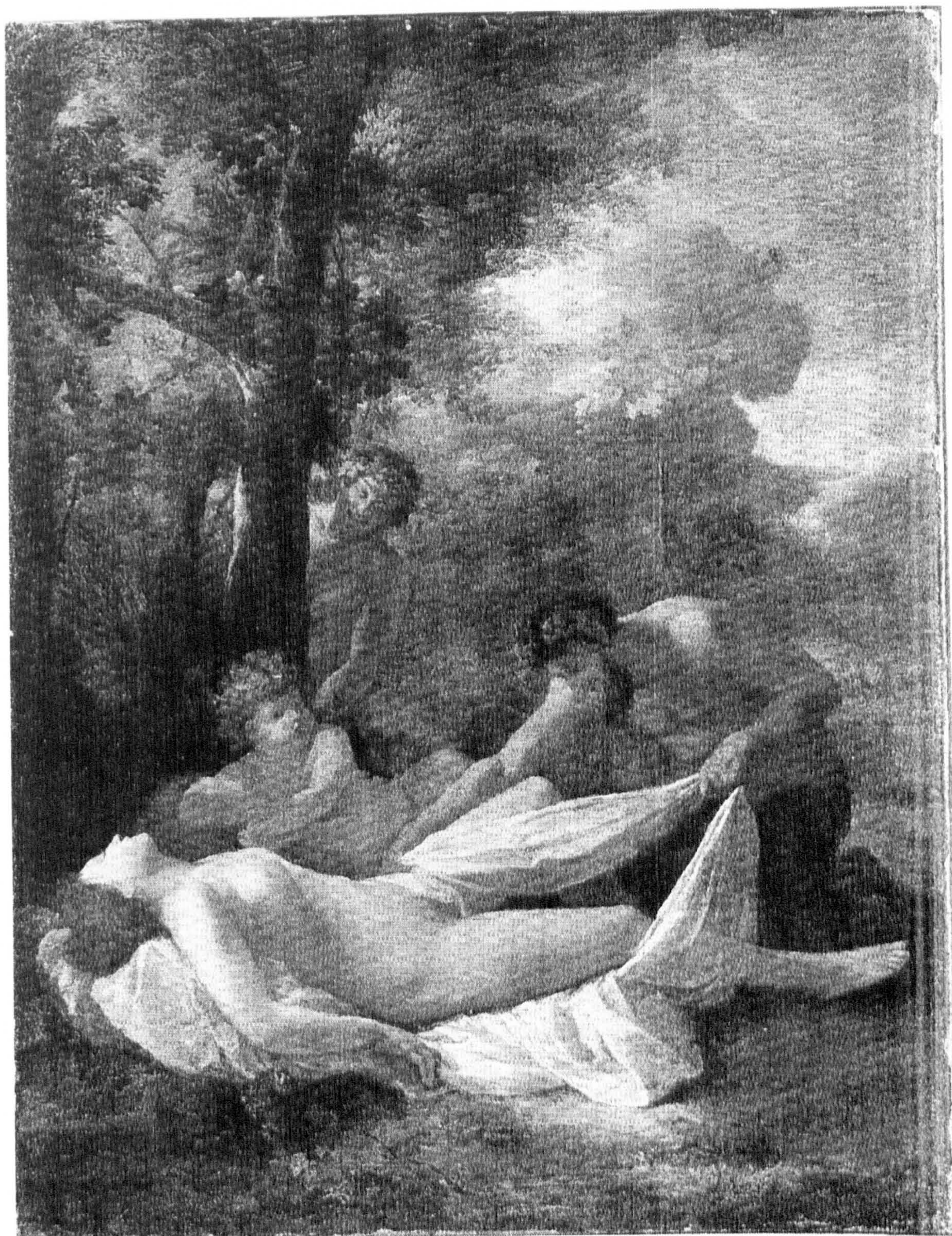


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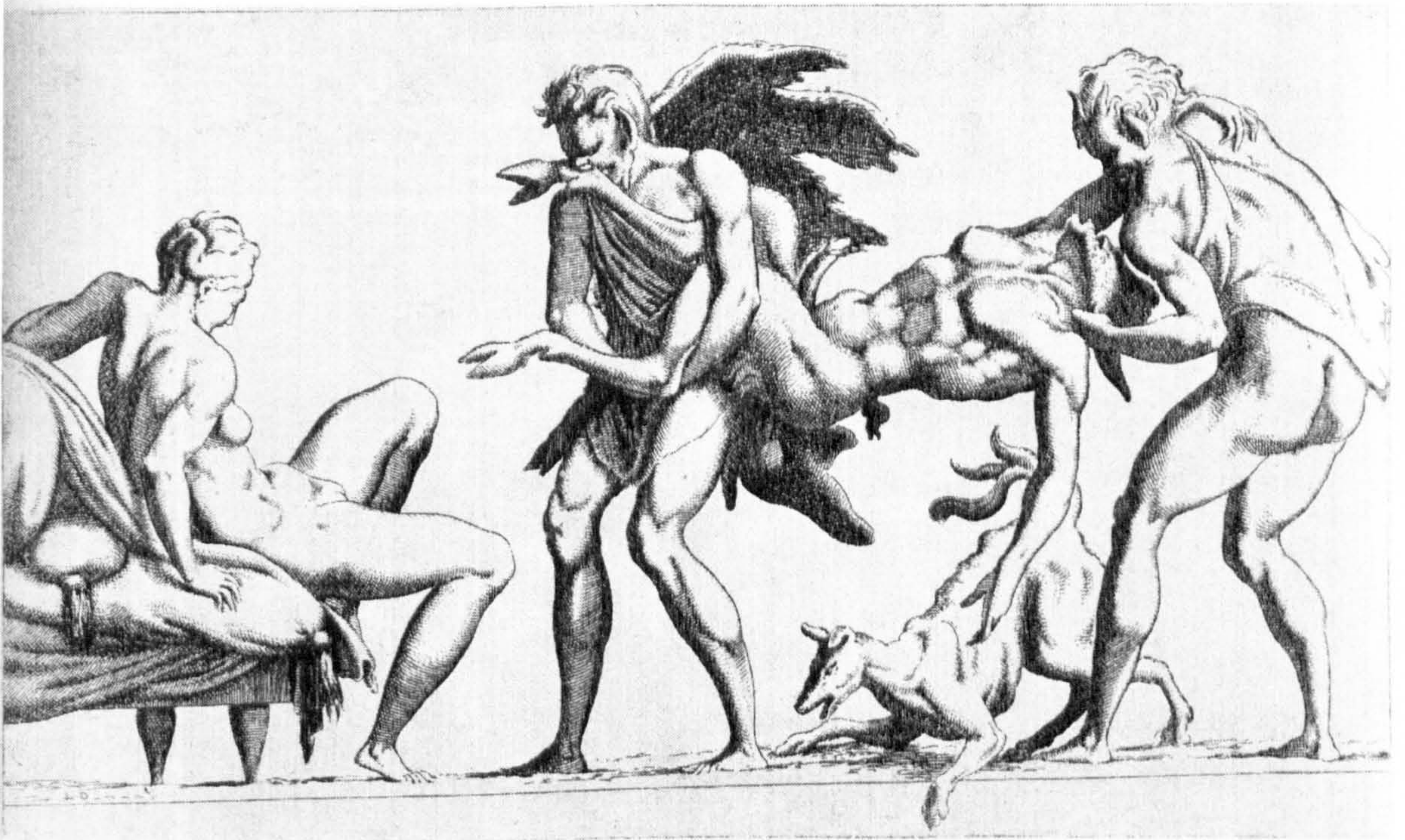


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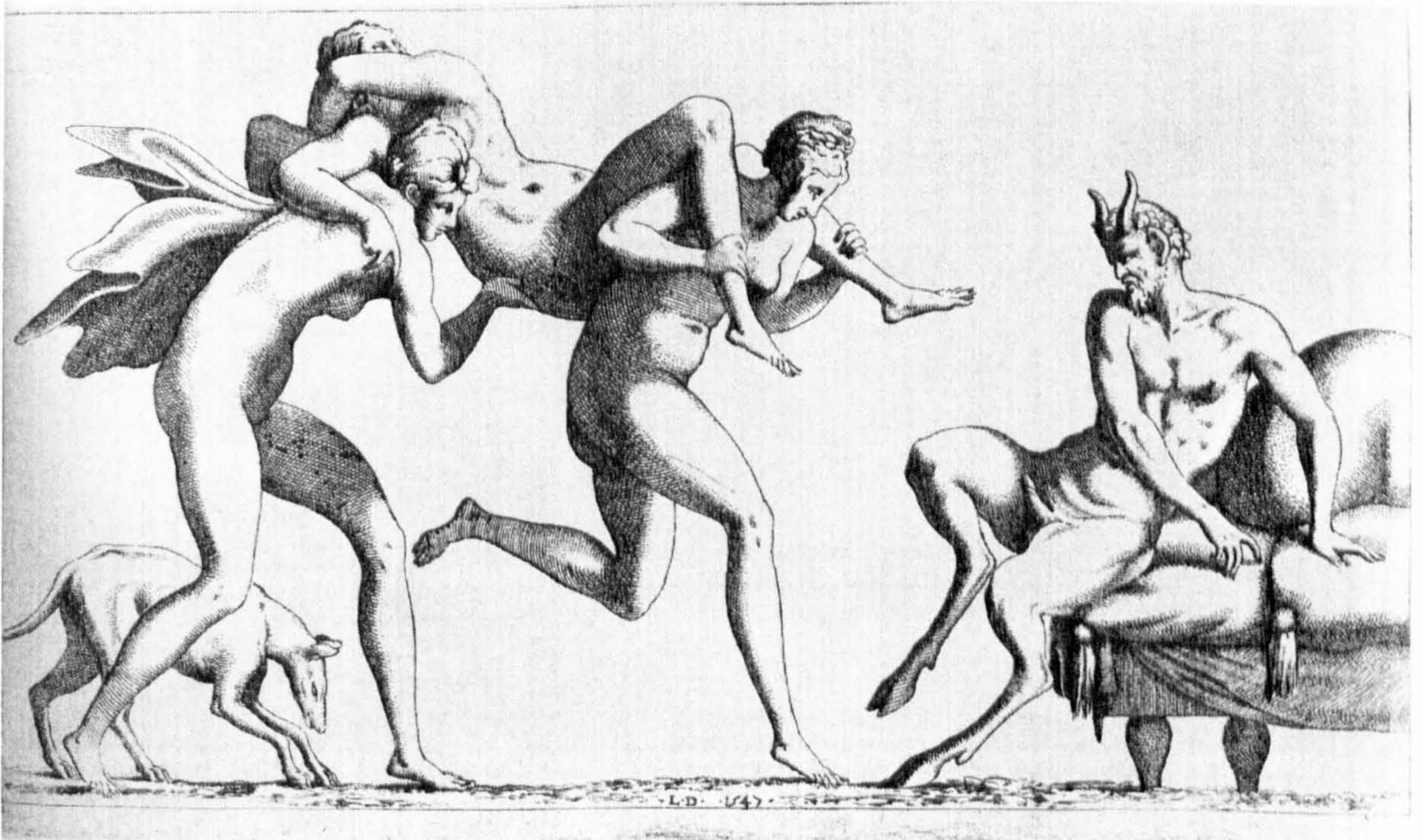


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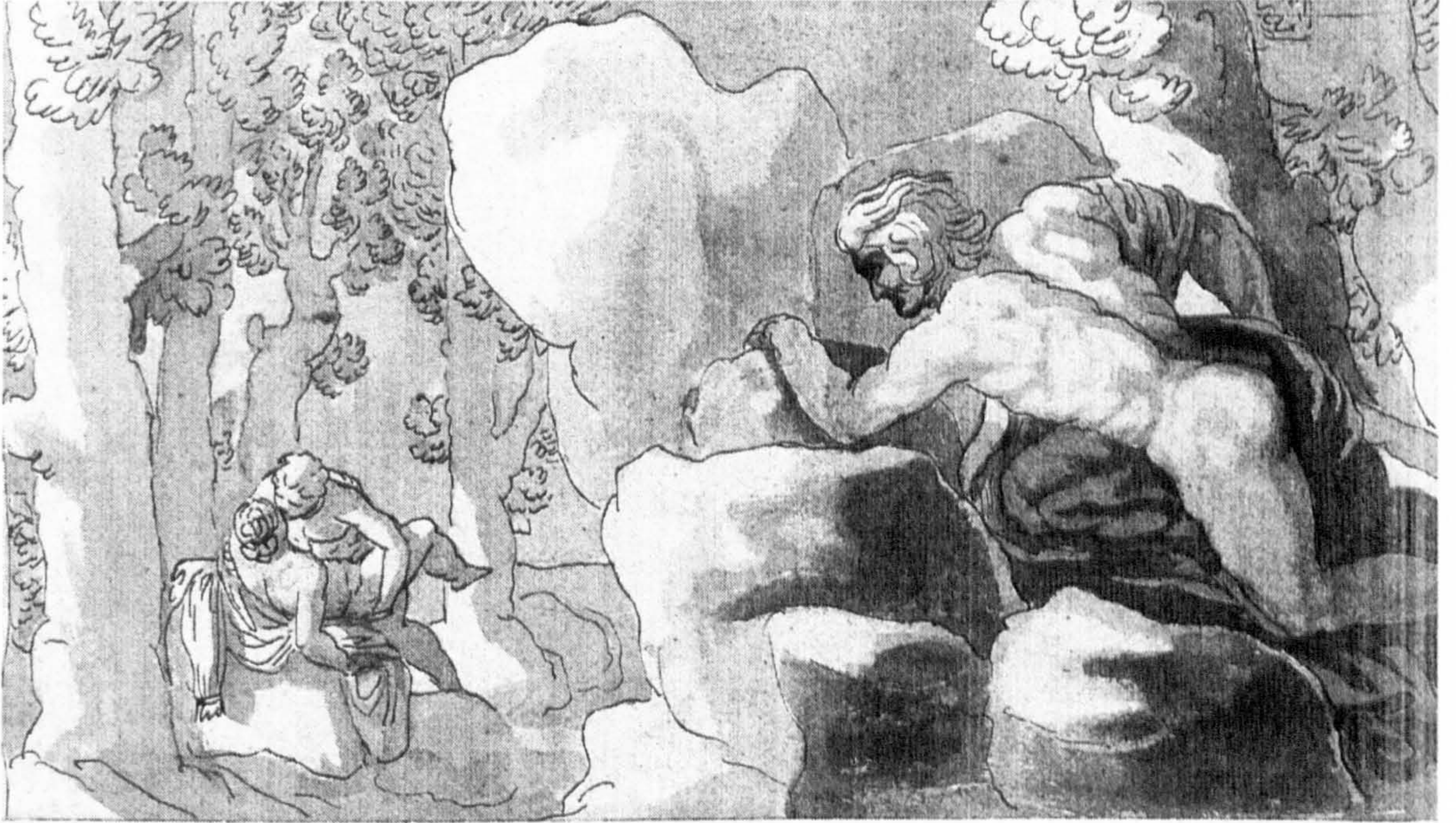


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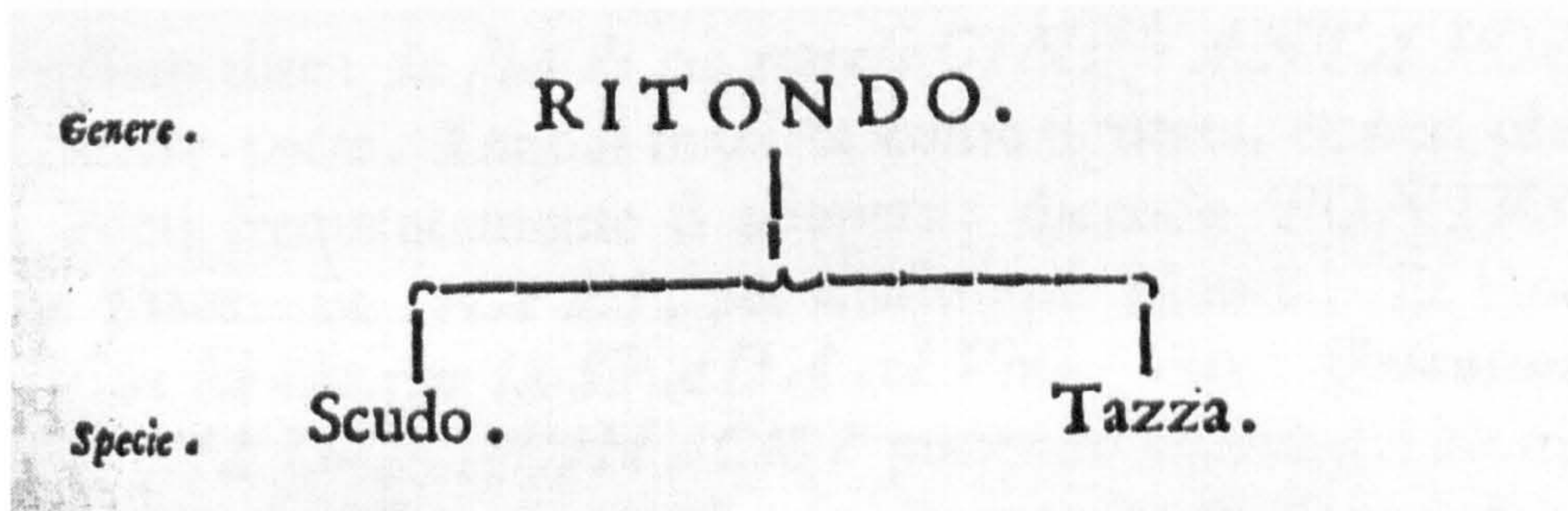


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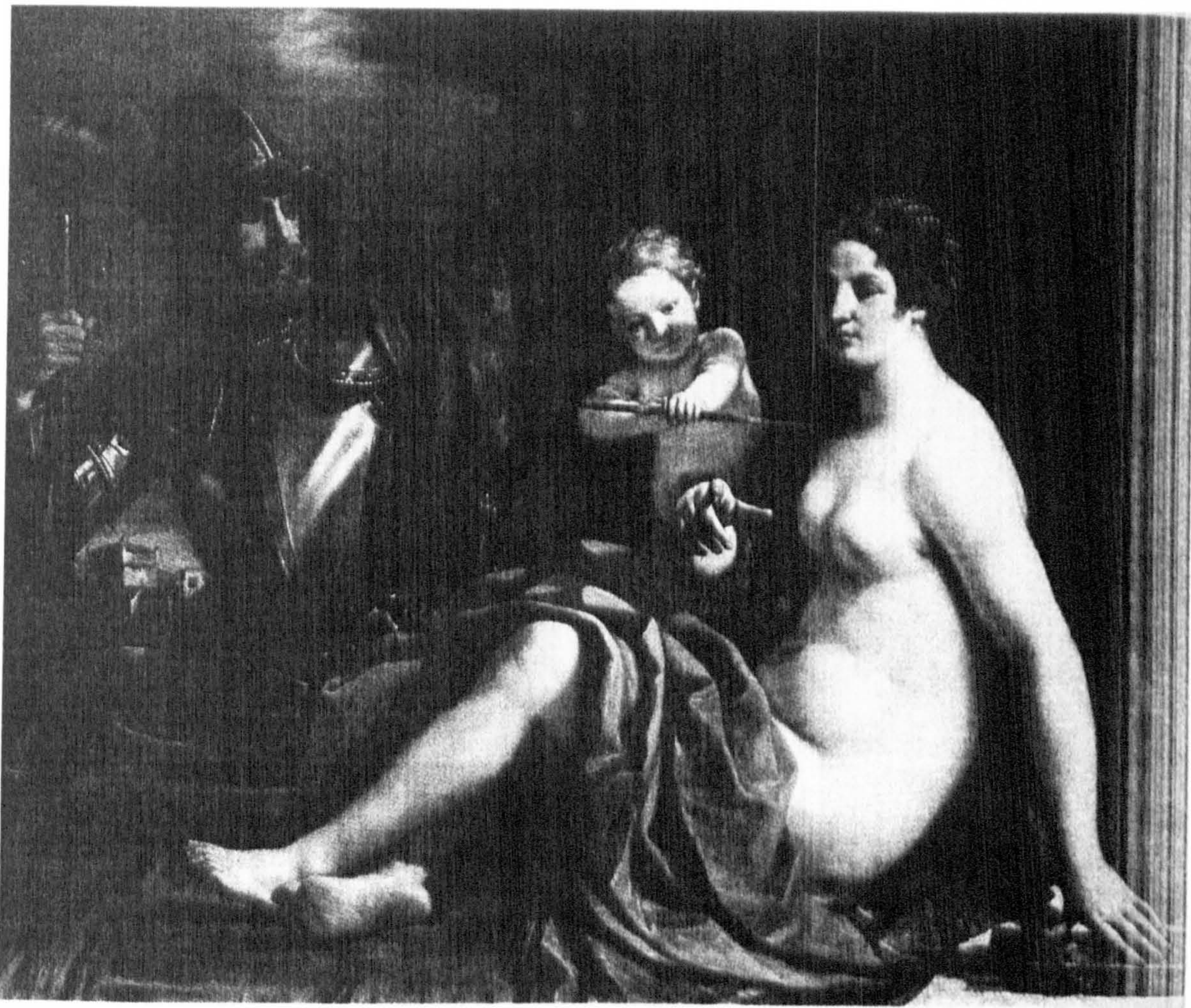


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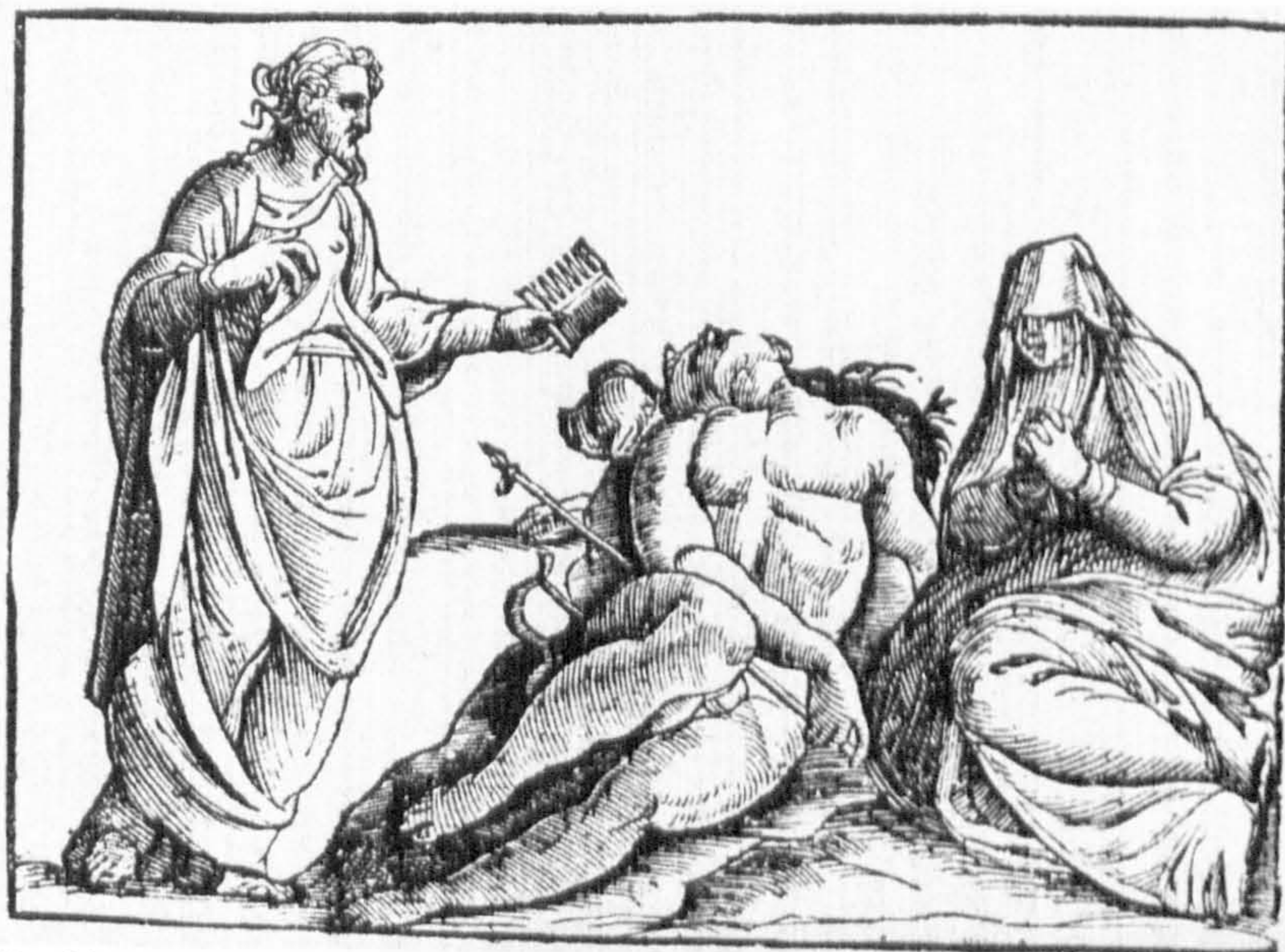


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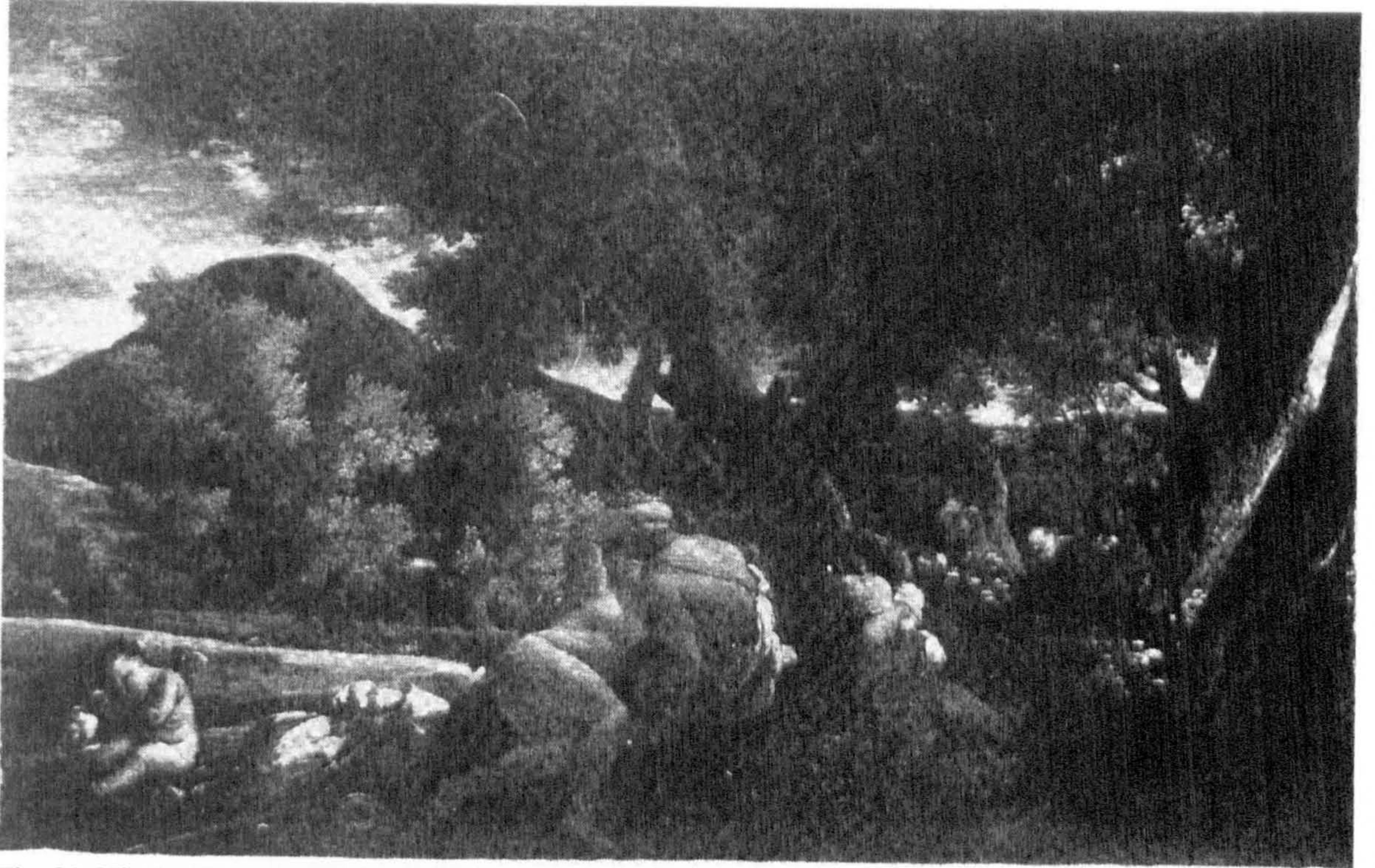


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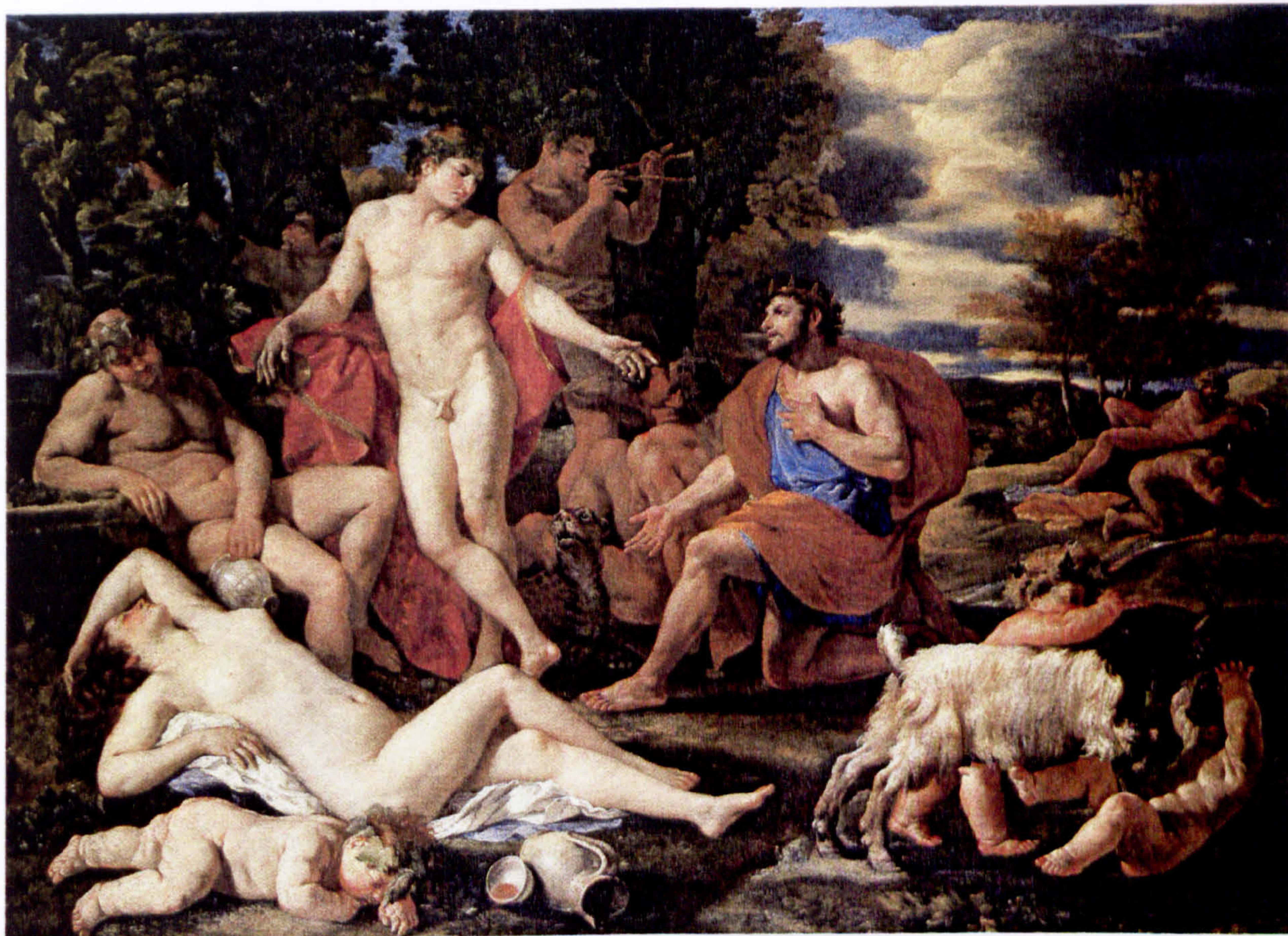


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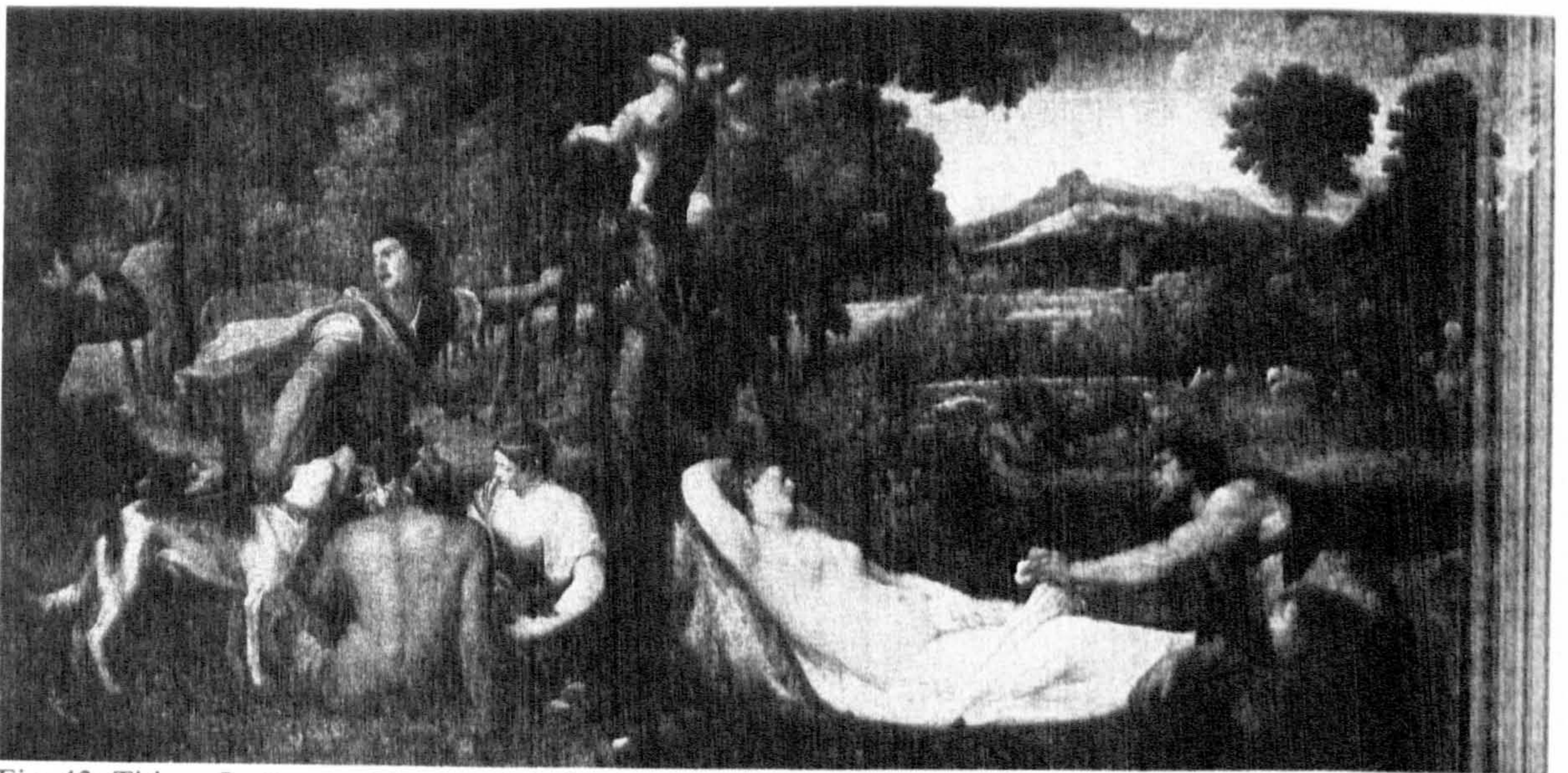


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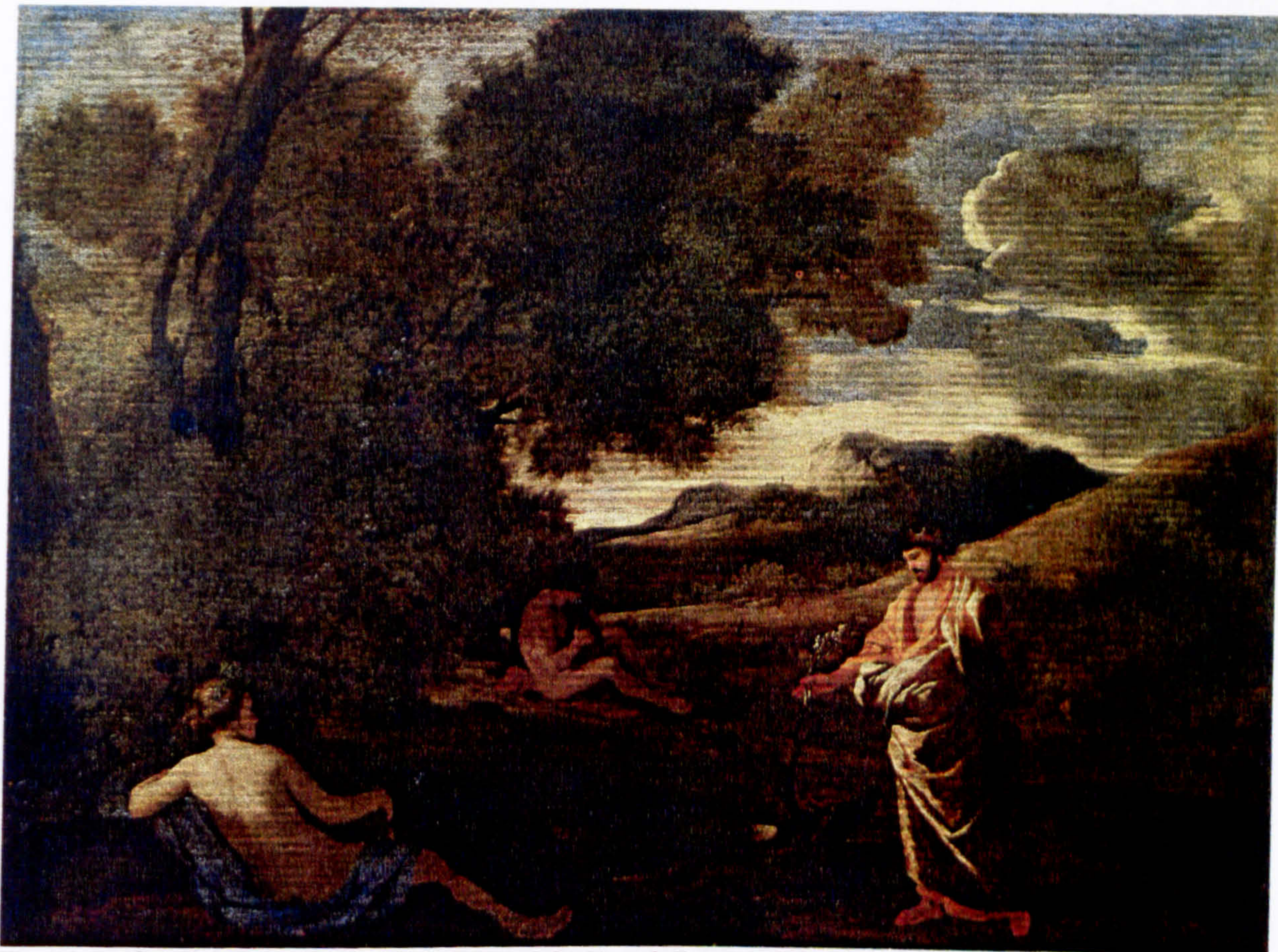


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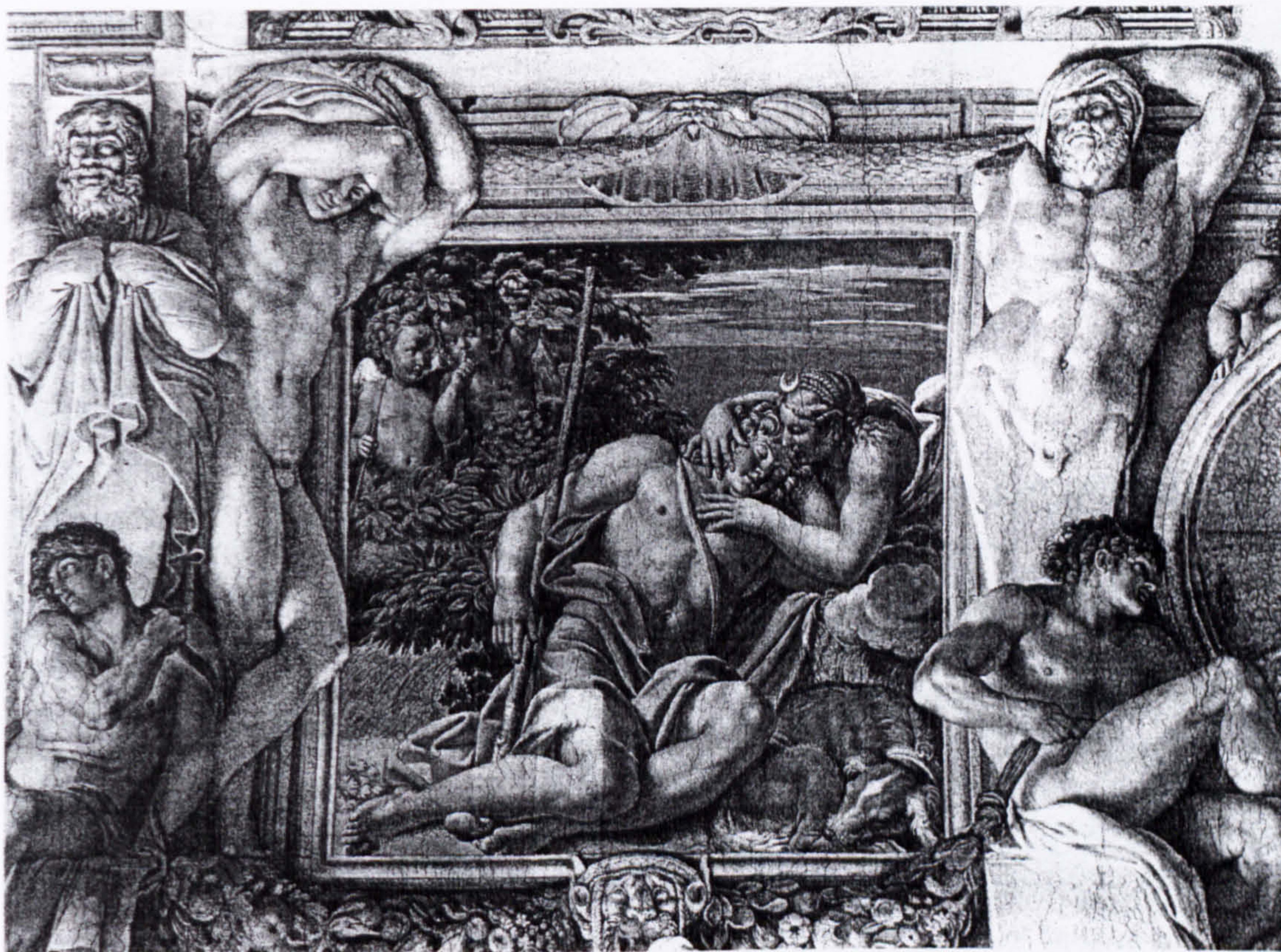


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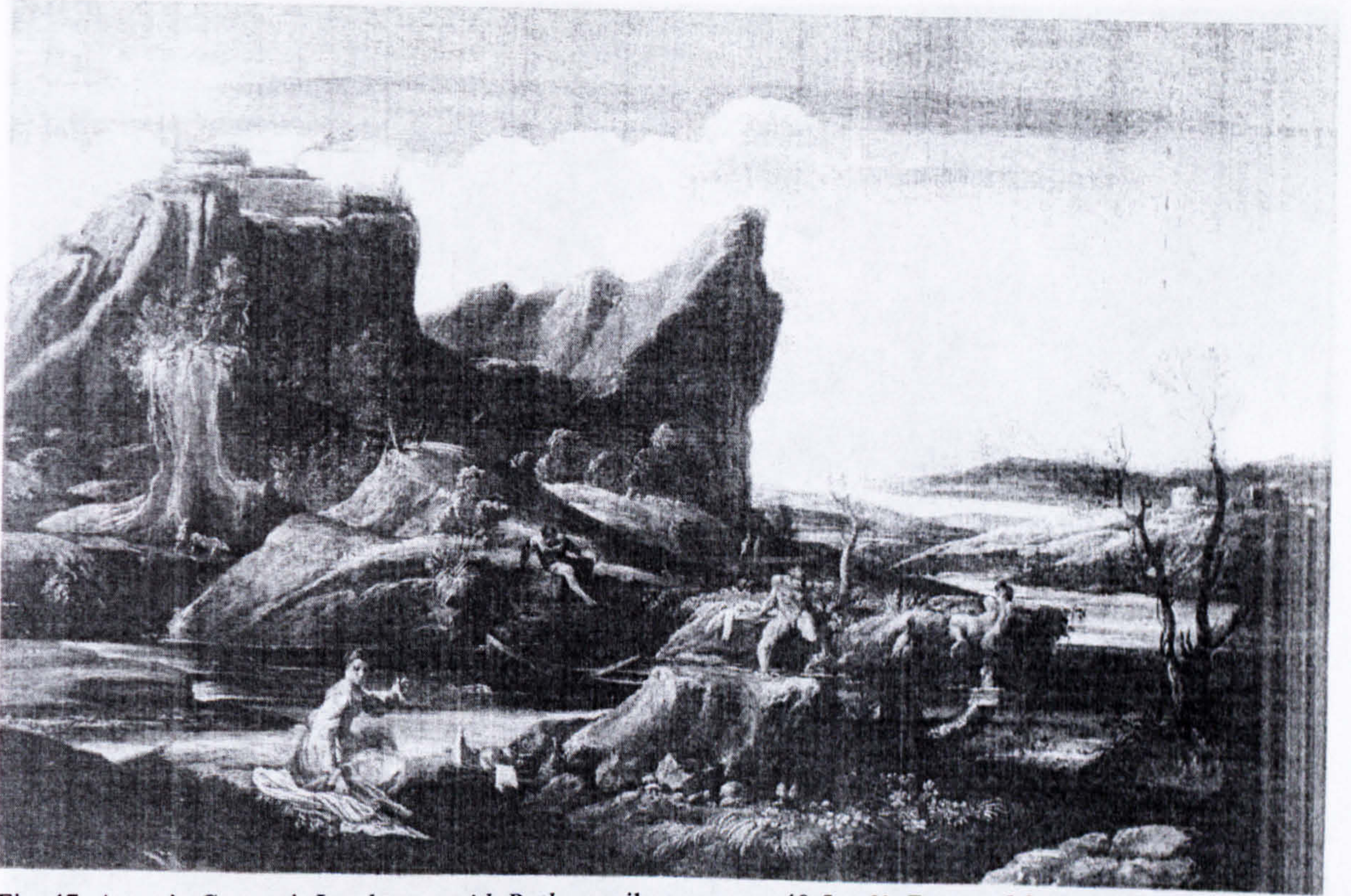


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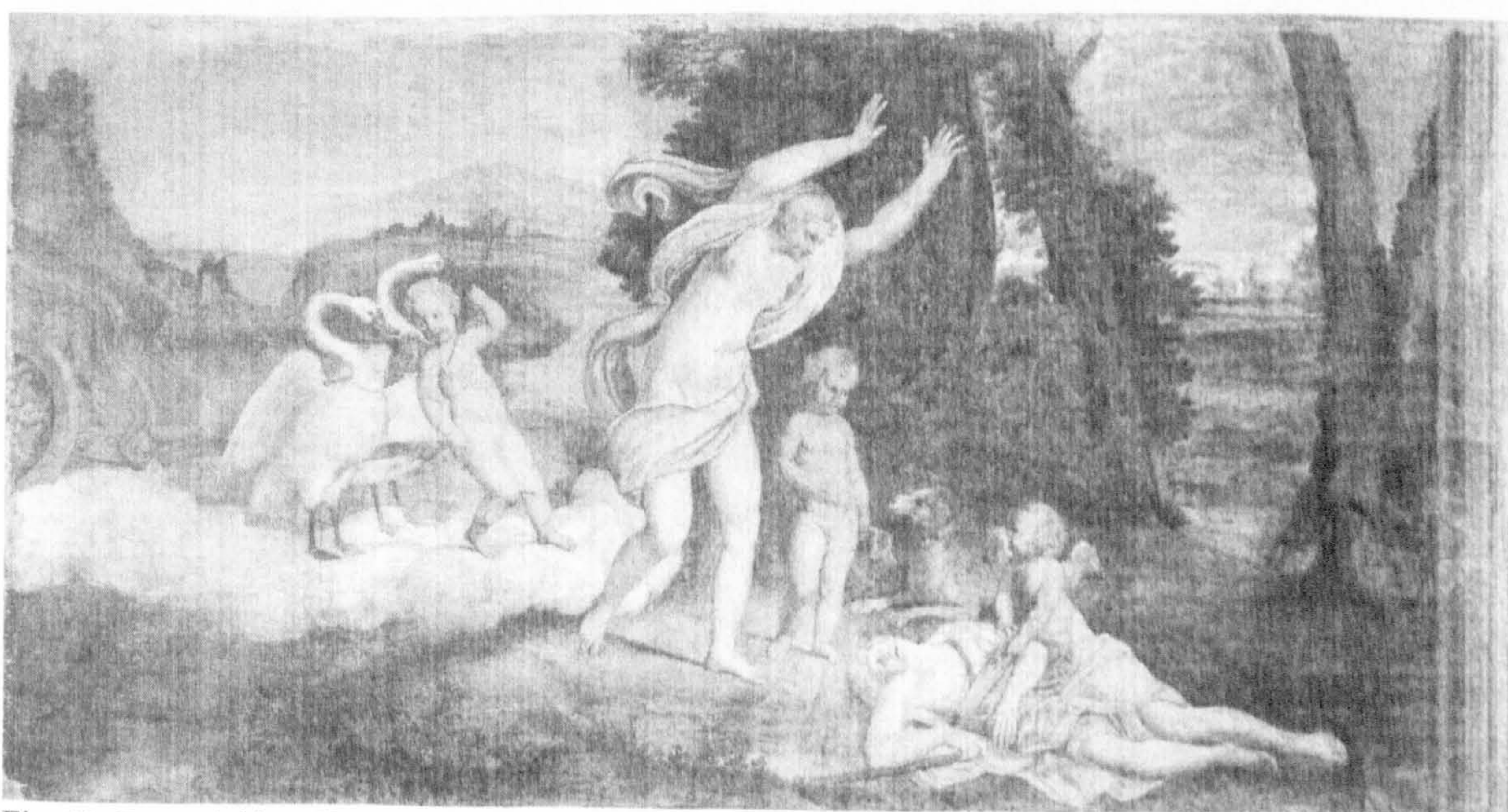


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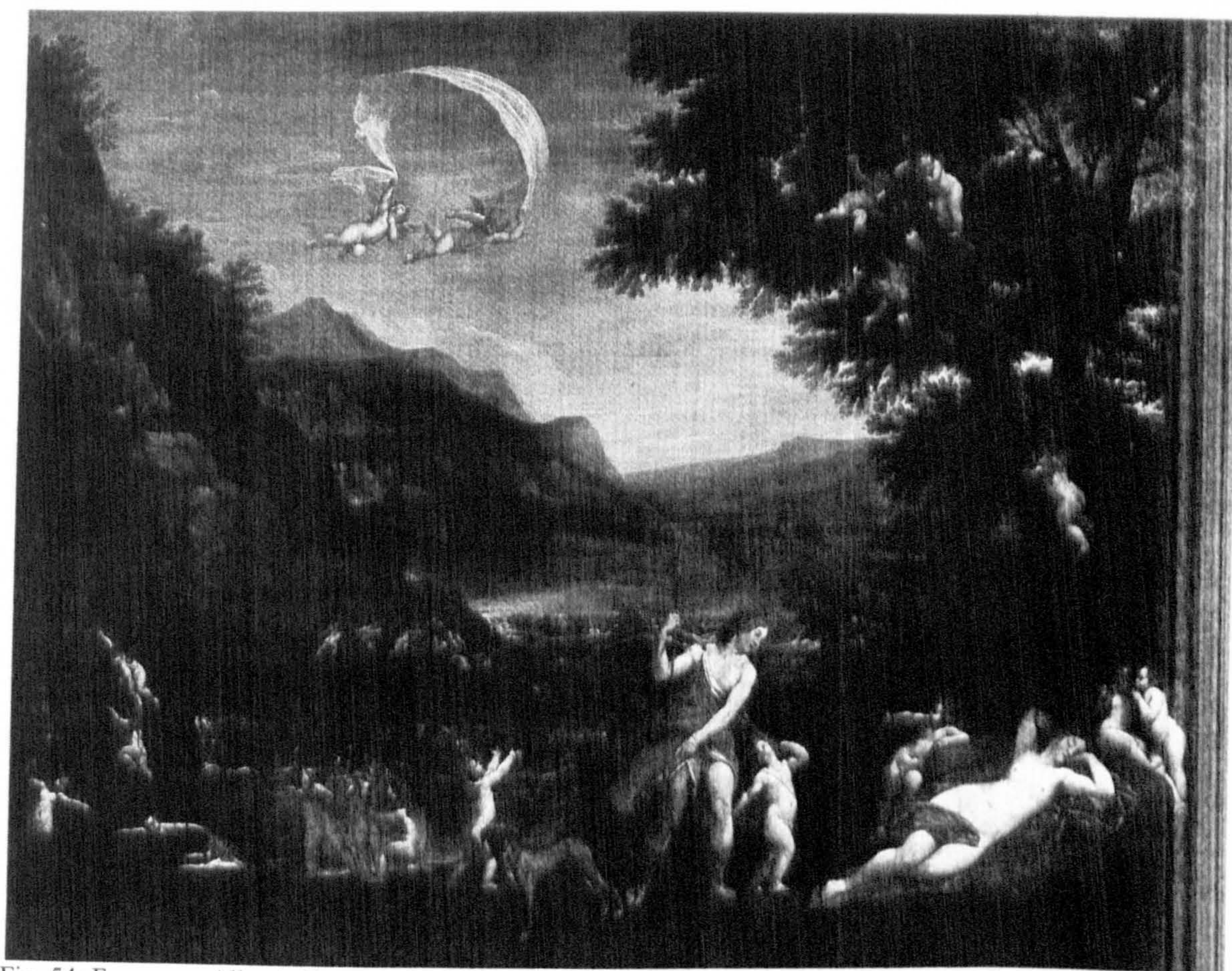


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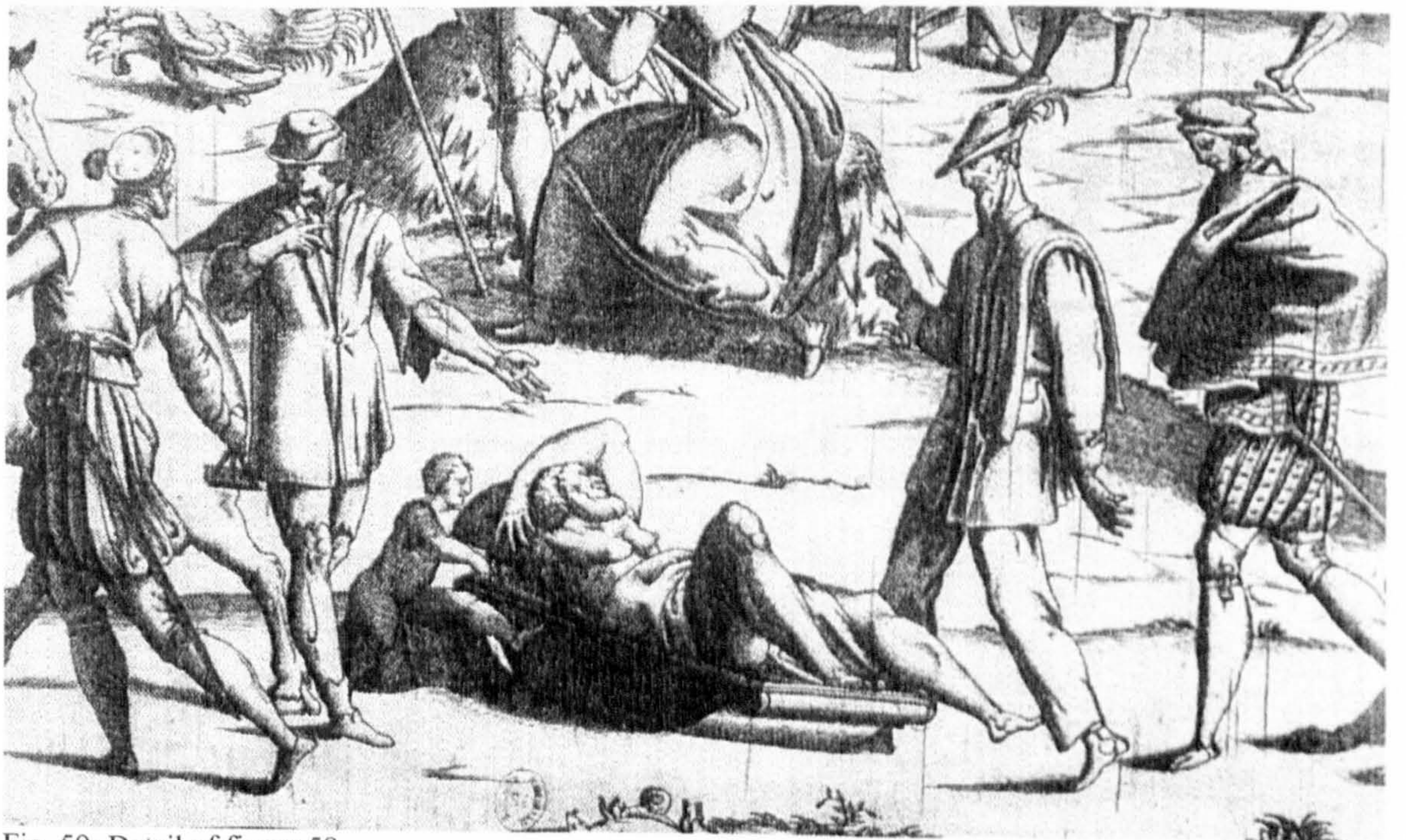


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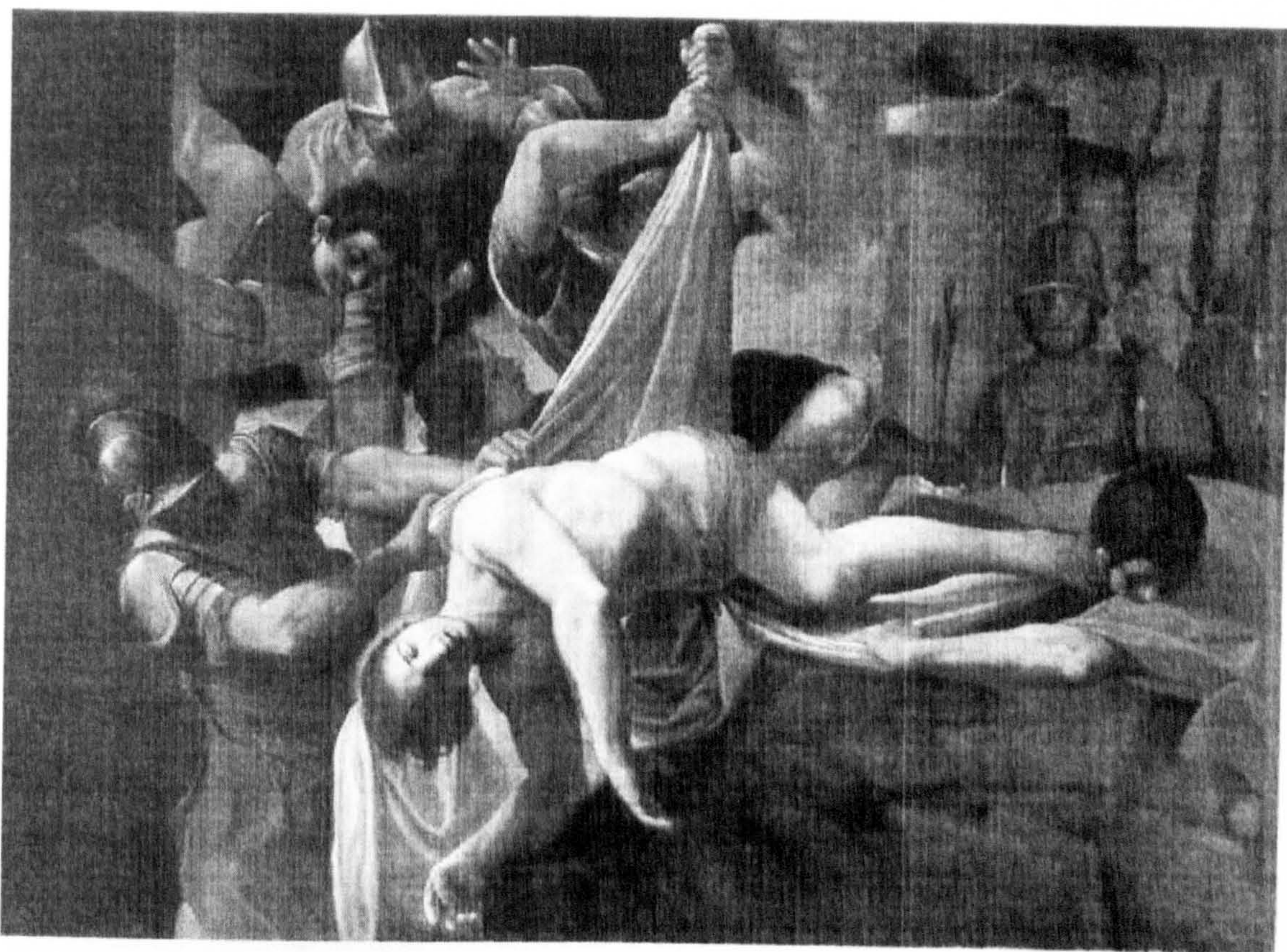


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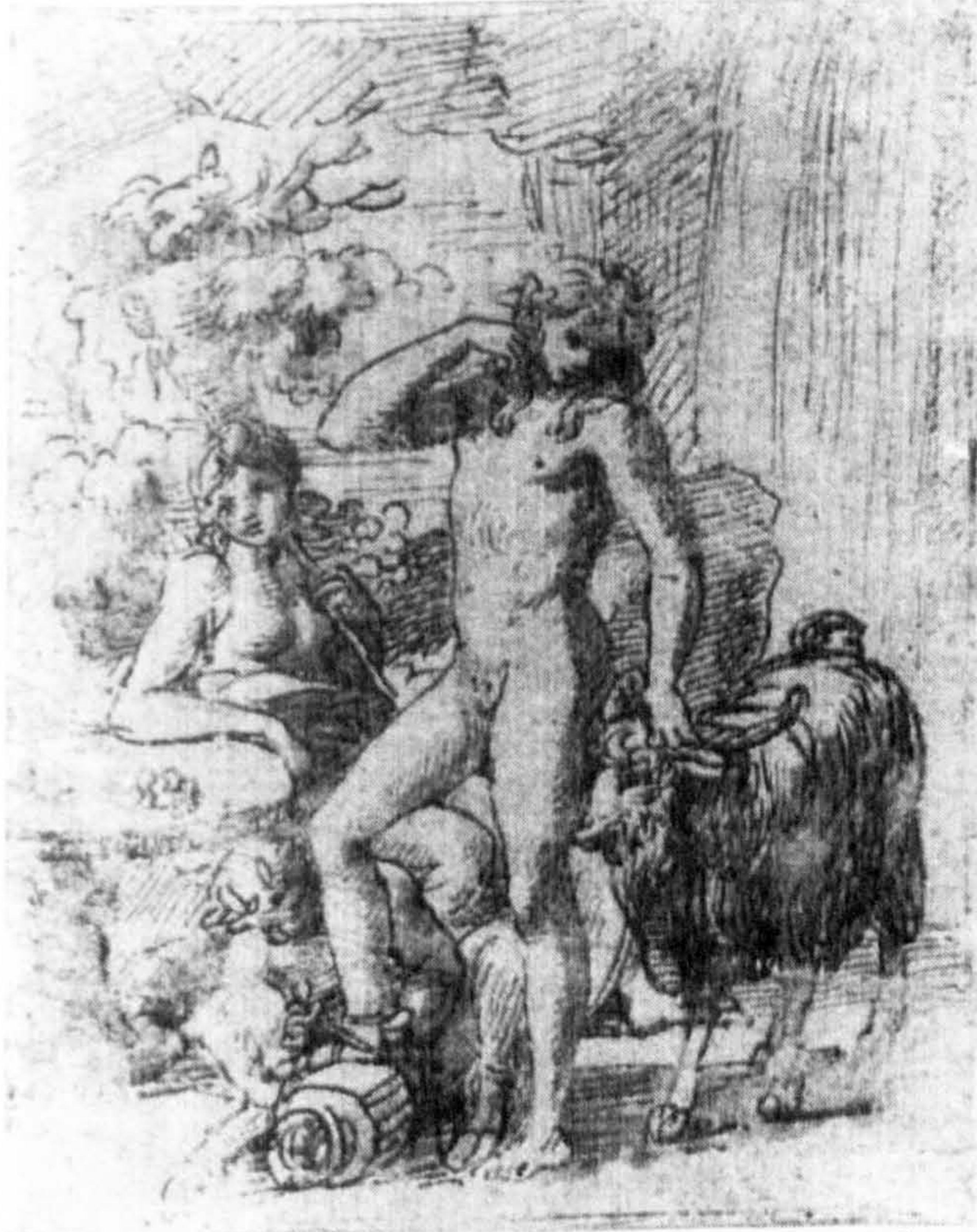


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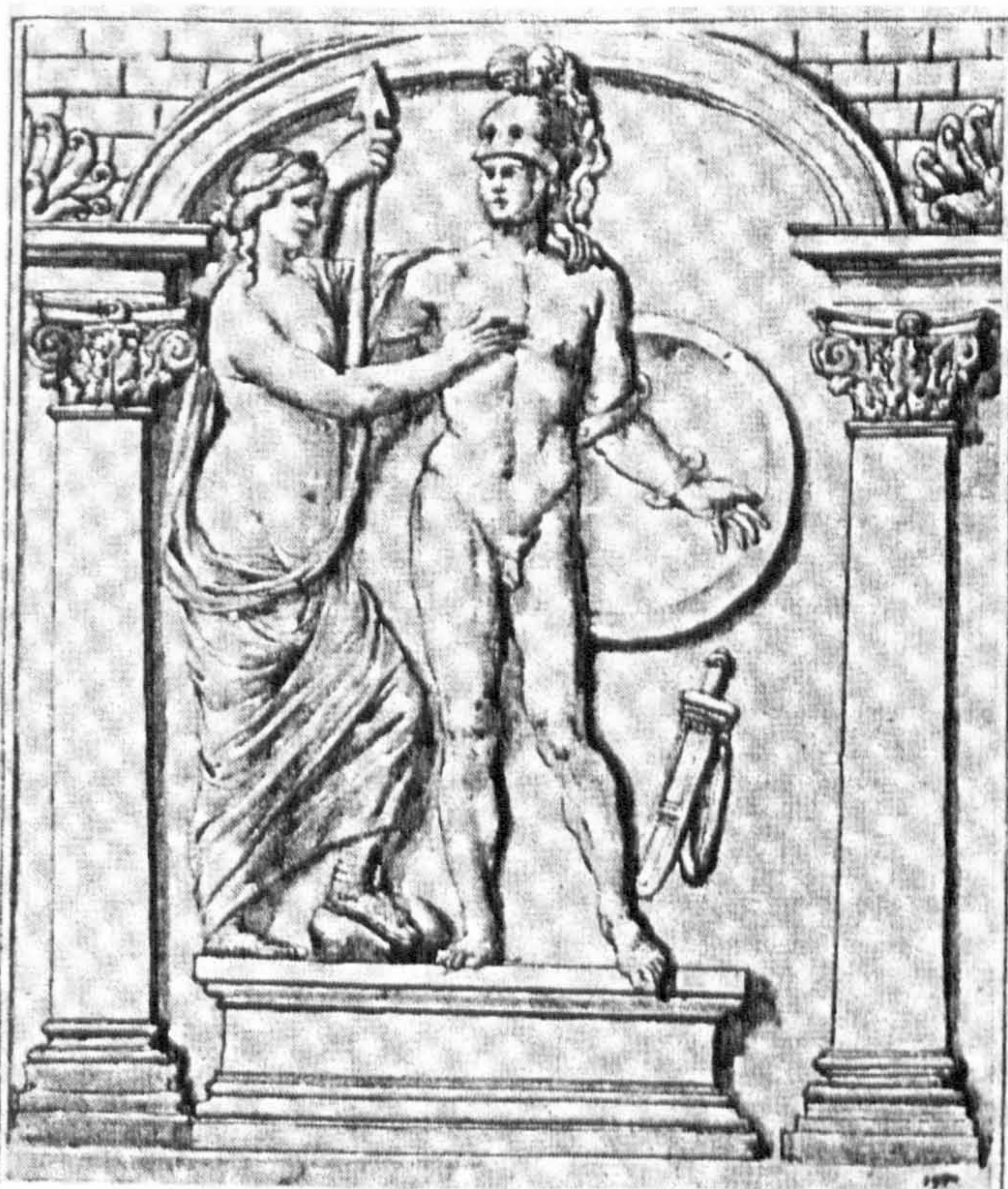


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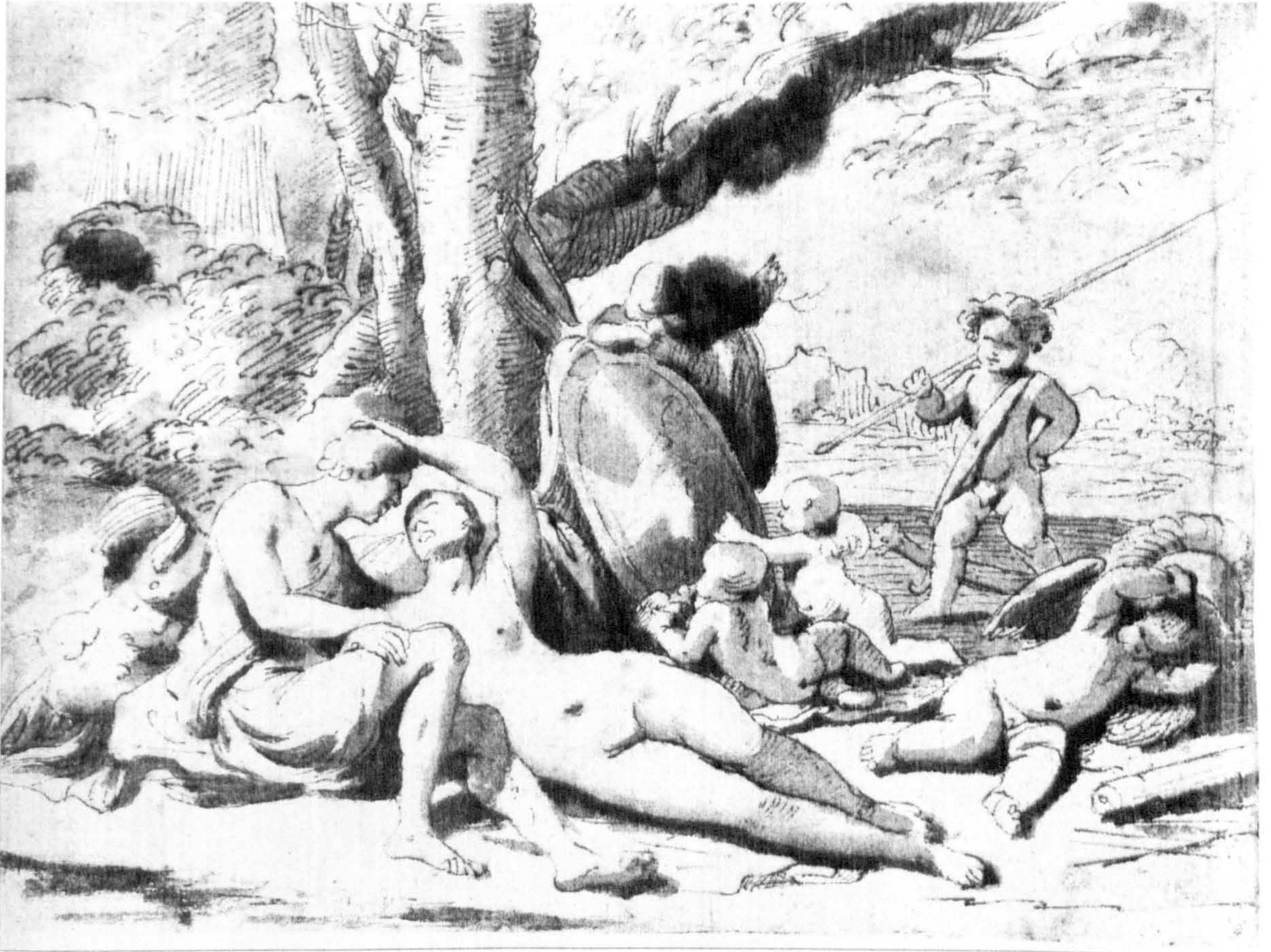


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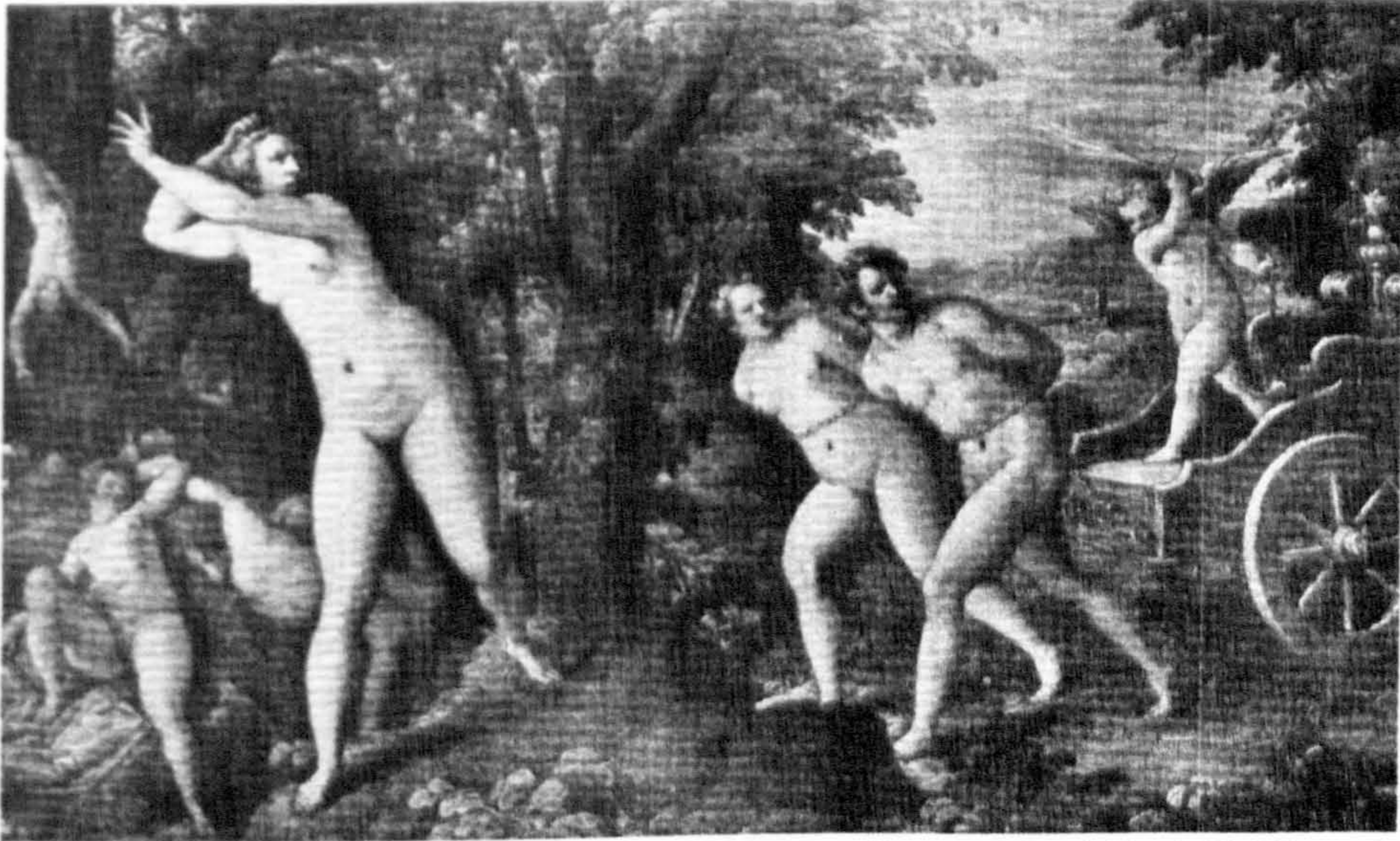


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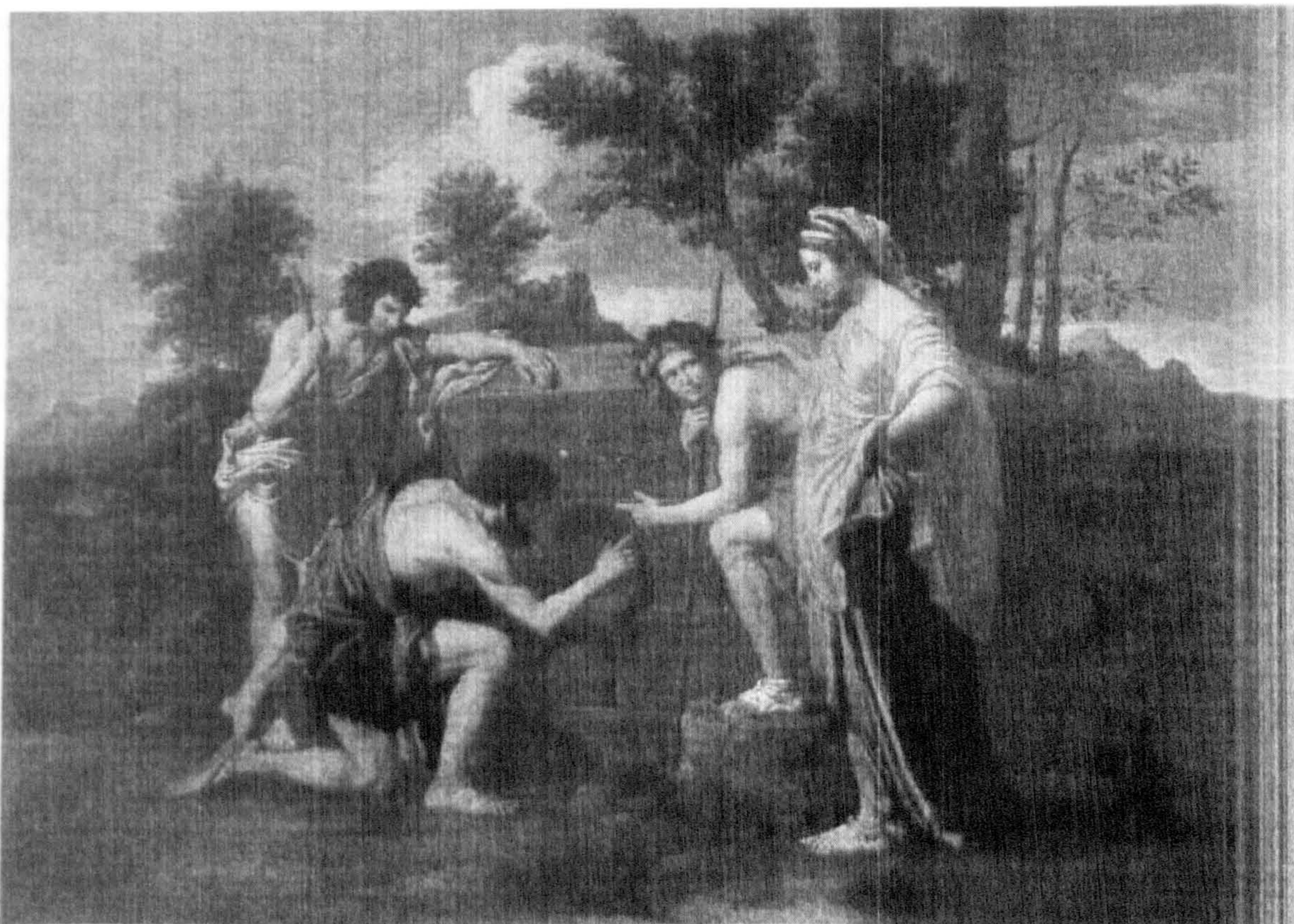


Fig. 81: Nicolas Poussin, *Arcadian Shepherds*, oil on canvas, 85 x 121, Paris: Louvre, c.1638 or c.1650-5



Fig. 82: F. Greuter after Andrea Camassei, *Erminia Carving Tancred's Name and Ergasto*, engraving, 36 x 24.2, from Michelangelo Rossi, *Erminia sul Giordano: Dramma Musicale* (Rome: Masotti, 1637), plate between pp. 71-72.



Fig. 83: Nicolas Poussin (attrib.), *Portraits of the Children of Carlo Antonio*, black chalk, 8.7 x 20.5, Windsor: Royal Library, c.1630s.



Fig. 84: Giovanni Lanfranco, *The Salvation of a Soul*, oil on canvas, 279 x 186, Naples: Museo di Capodimonte, c.1612-13.



Fig. 85: Nicolas Poussin, *Virgin and Child*, oil on canvas, 58.5 x 49.5, Brighton: Preston Manor, 1625-27.

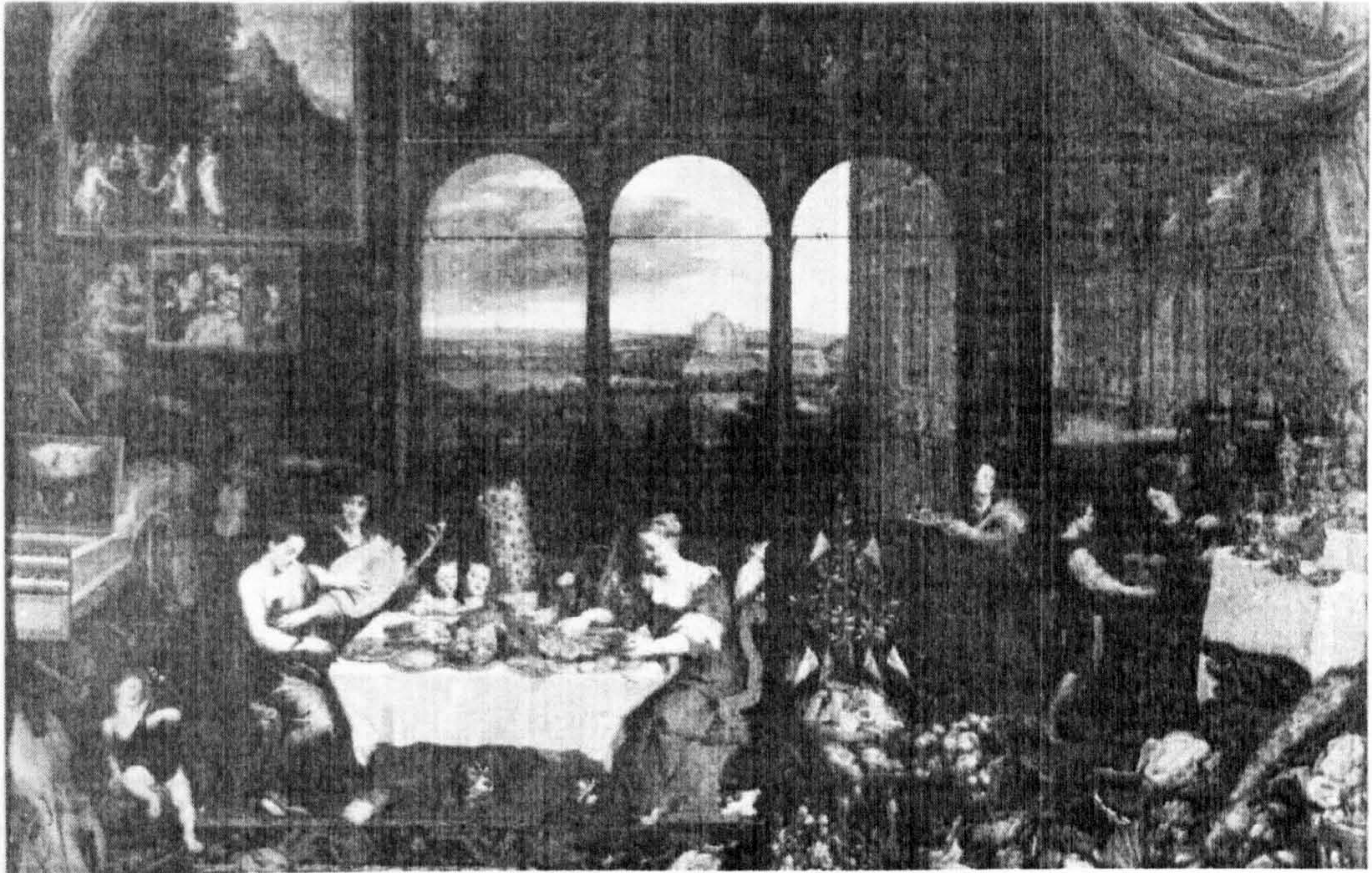


Fig. 86: Jan Brueghel I and Hendrick van Balen, *Hearing, Touch and Taste*, oil on canvas, 176 x 264, Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1617-18.

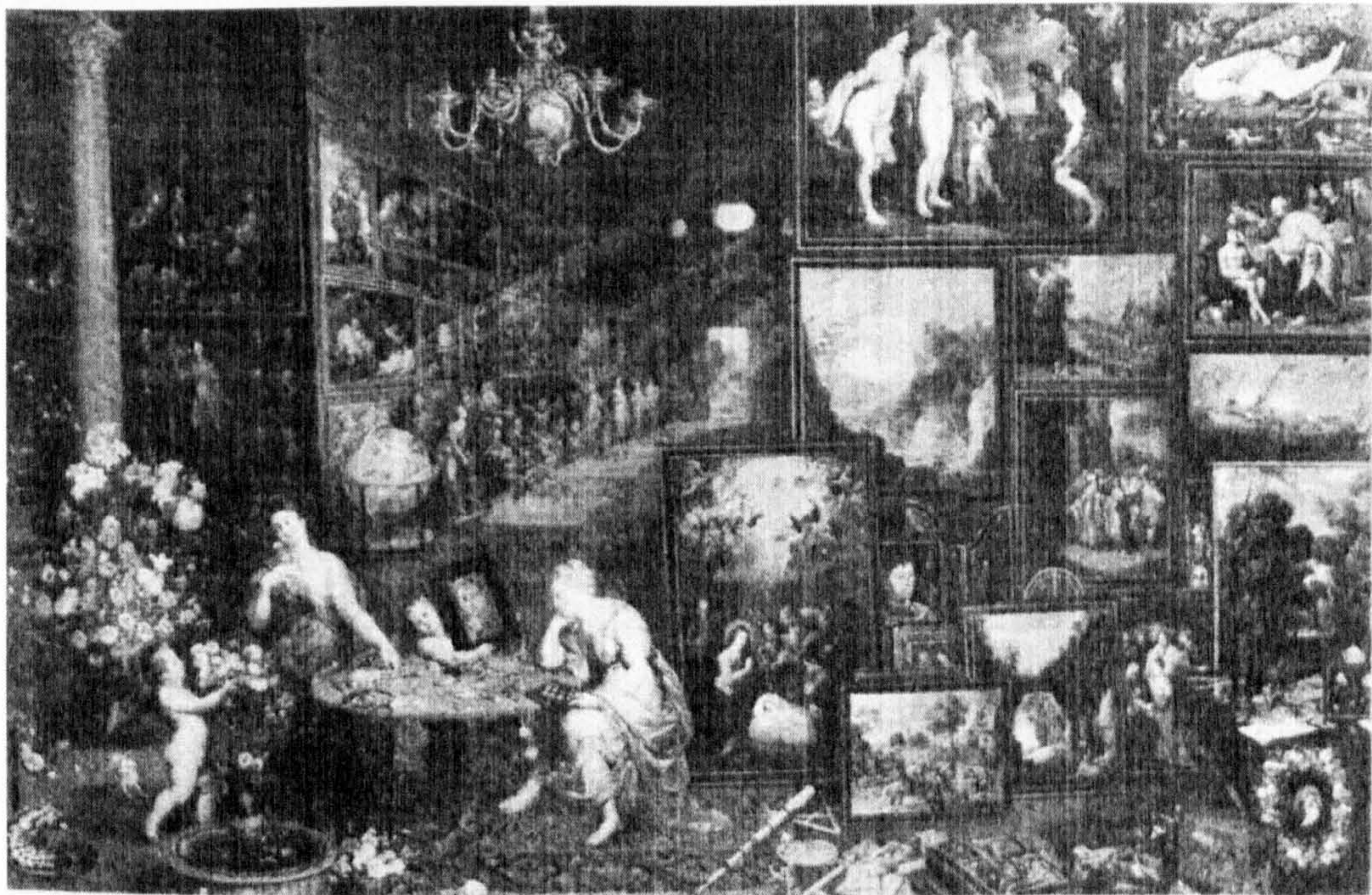


Fig. 87: Jan Brueghel I and Hendrick van Balen, *Sight and Smell*, oil on canvas, 176 x 264, Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1617-18.

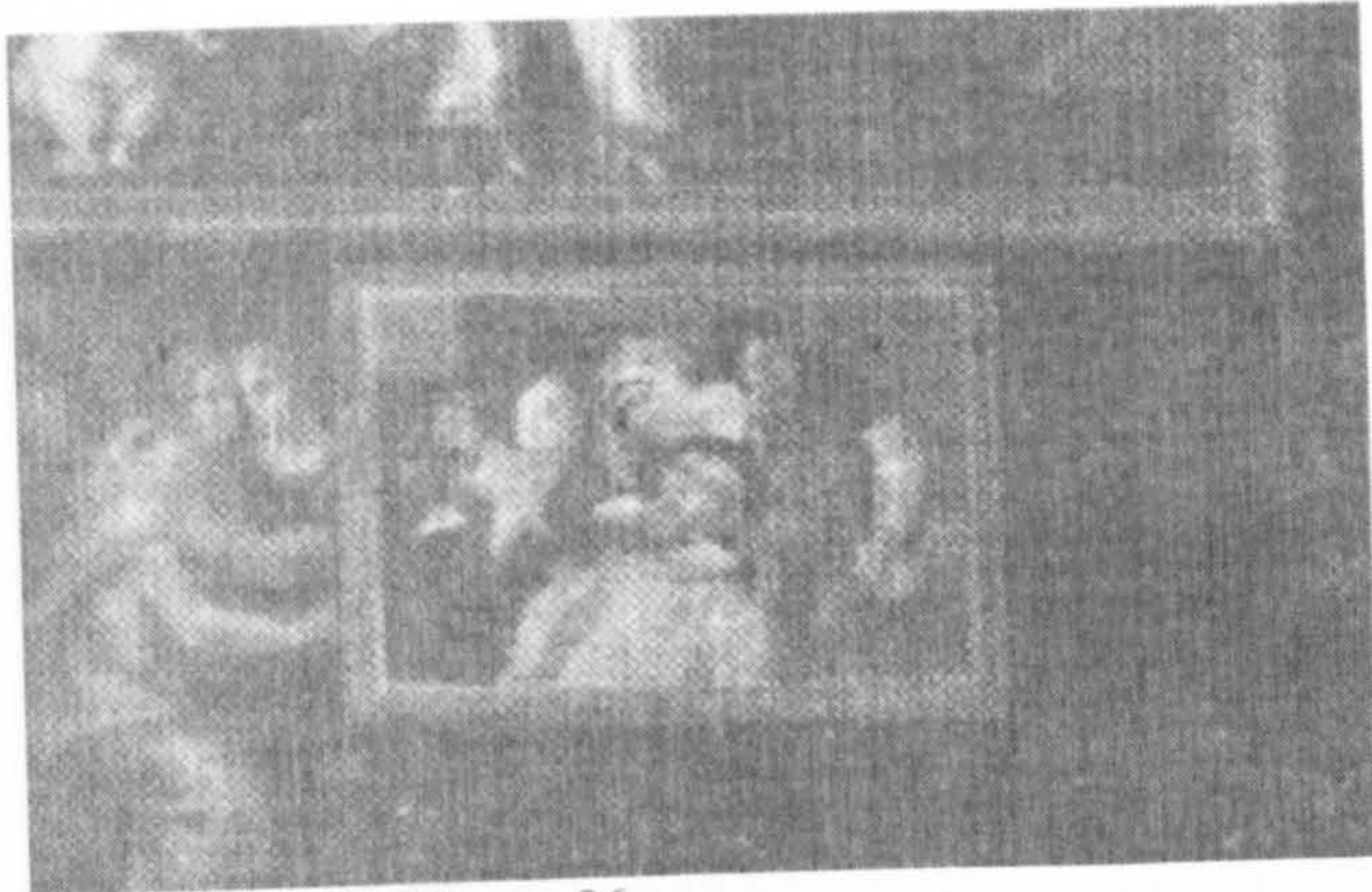


Fig. 88: Detail of figure 86.

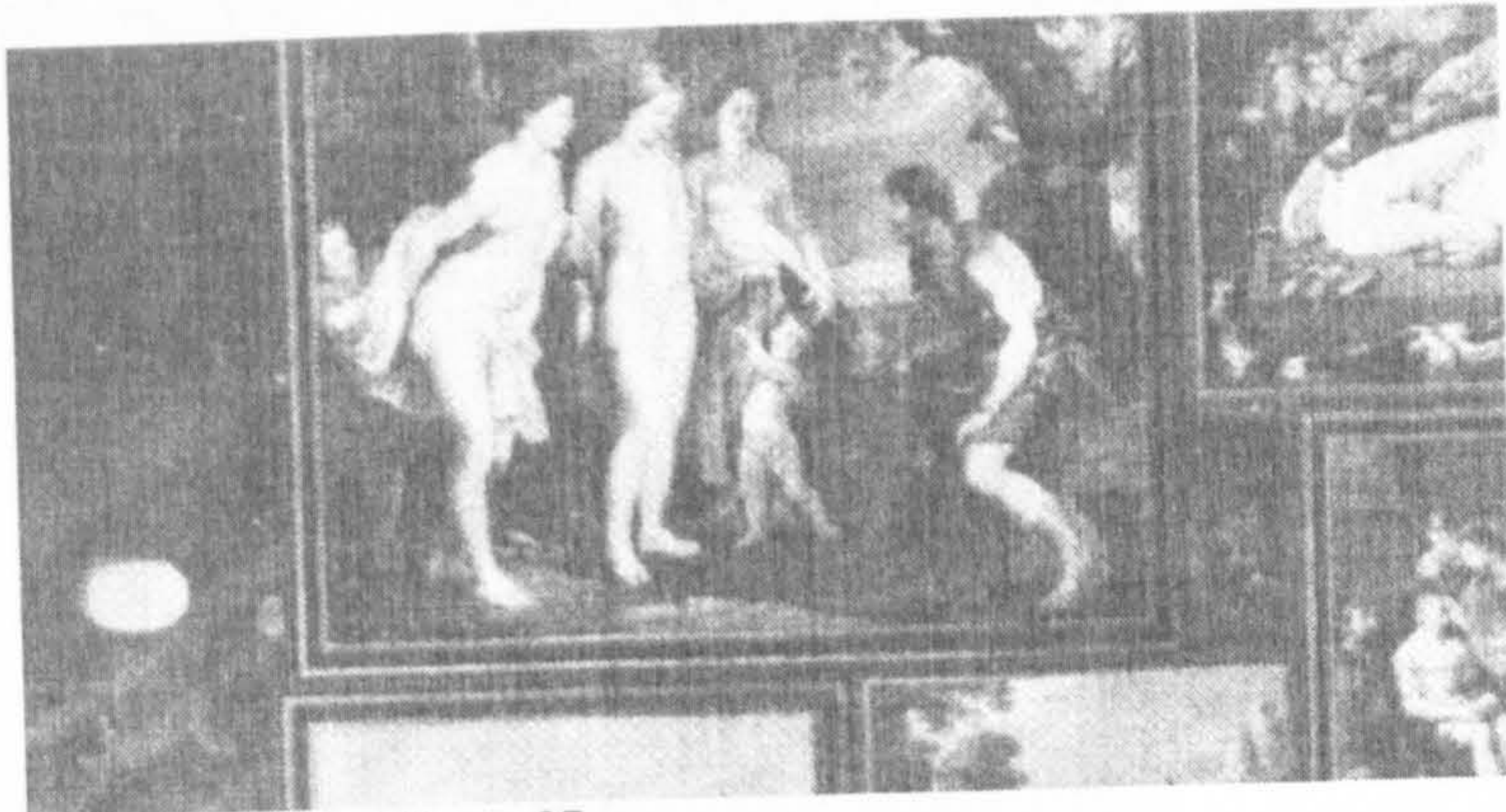


Fig. 89: Detail of figure 87.

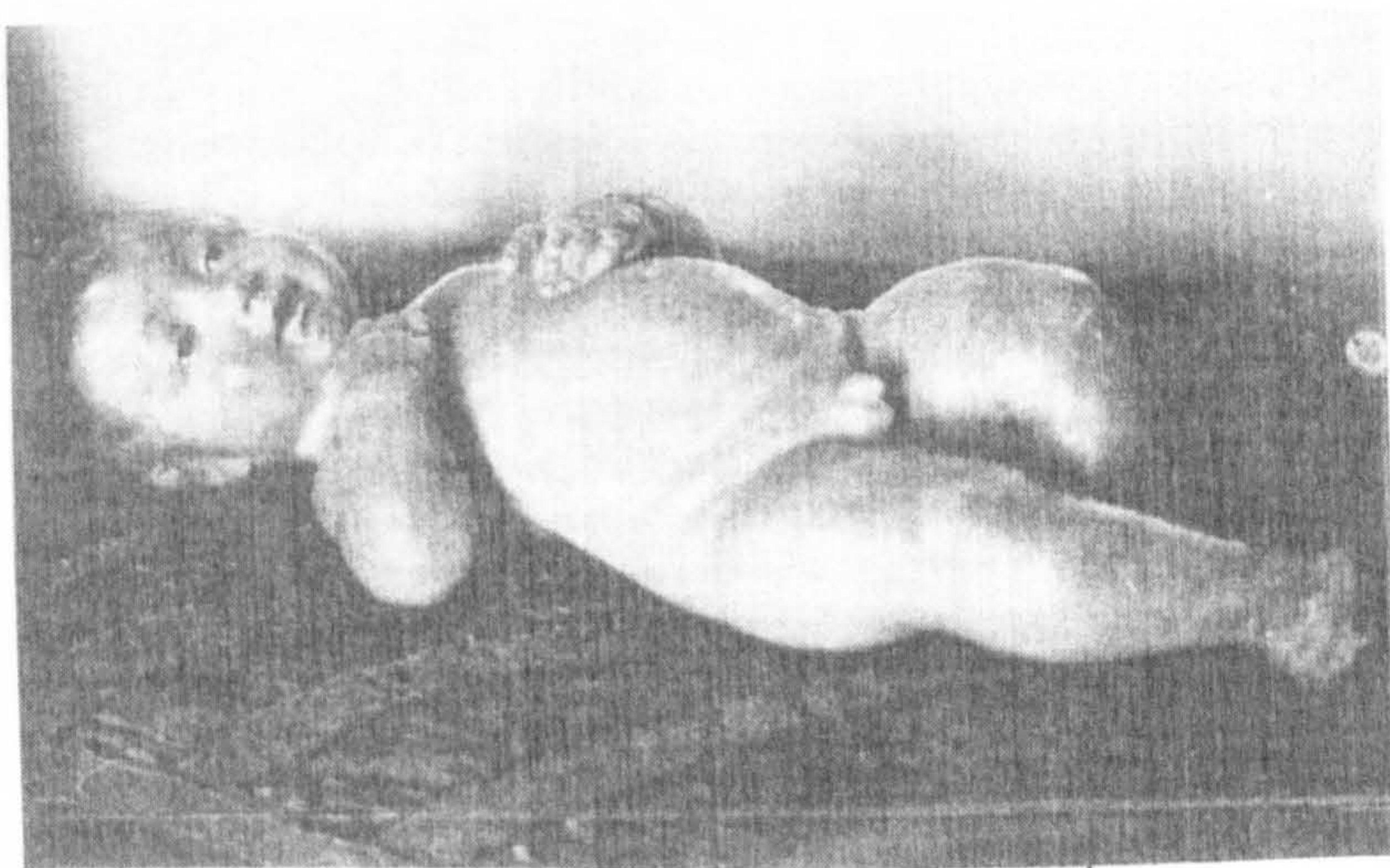


Fig. 90: Anon., *Christ Child*, Florence: Museo Bardini, 15<sup>th</sup> C.





Fig. 91: Guercino, *Incredulity of St Thomas*, oil on canvas, 110.3 x 142.2, London: National Gallery, 1621.



Fig. 92: Simone Cantarini, *St Anthony of Padua and the Christ Child*, engraving, 6 x 8, Vienna: Graphische Sammlung Albertina, c.1637-48.



Fig. 93: Nicolas Poussin, *Return of the Holy Family from Egypt*, oil on canvas, 112 x 94, London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, c.1633-34.



*Sancti Illi et Reu<sup>o</sup> Dno Cassiano Puteo Abbati Dni Anicli de Tropea, et Santi Stefani Commendatario,  
ut grati animi munus pro illius profusa in eum benignitate daret ex aqua expressam imaginem Bernardino Capitelli D.D.*

Fig. 94: Bernardino Capitelli, *Ecstasy of Mary Magdalene*, engraving, 25.2 x 29.7, Vienna: Graphische Sammlung Albertina (HB VI p.91 no.278), 1627.



Fig. 95: Bernardino Capítelli, *St Theodora of Alexandria*, engraving, 27.4 x 20.5, Vienna: Graphische Sammlung Albertina (HB VI 92 no.282), 1627.

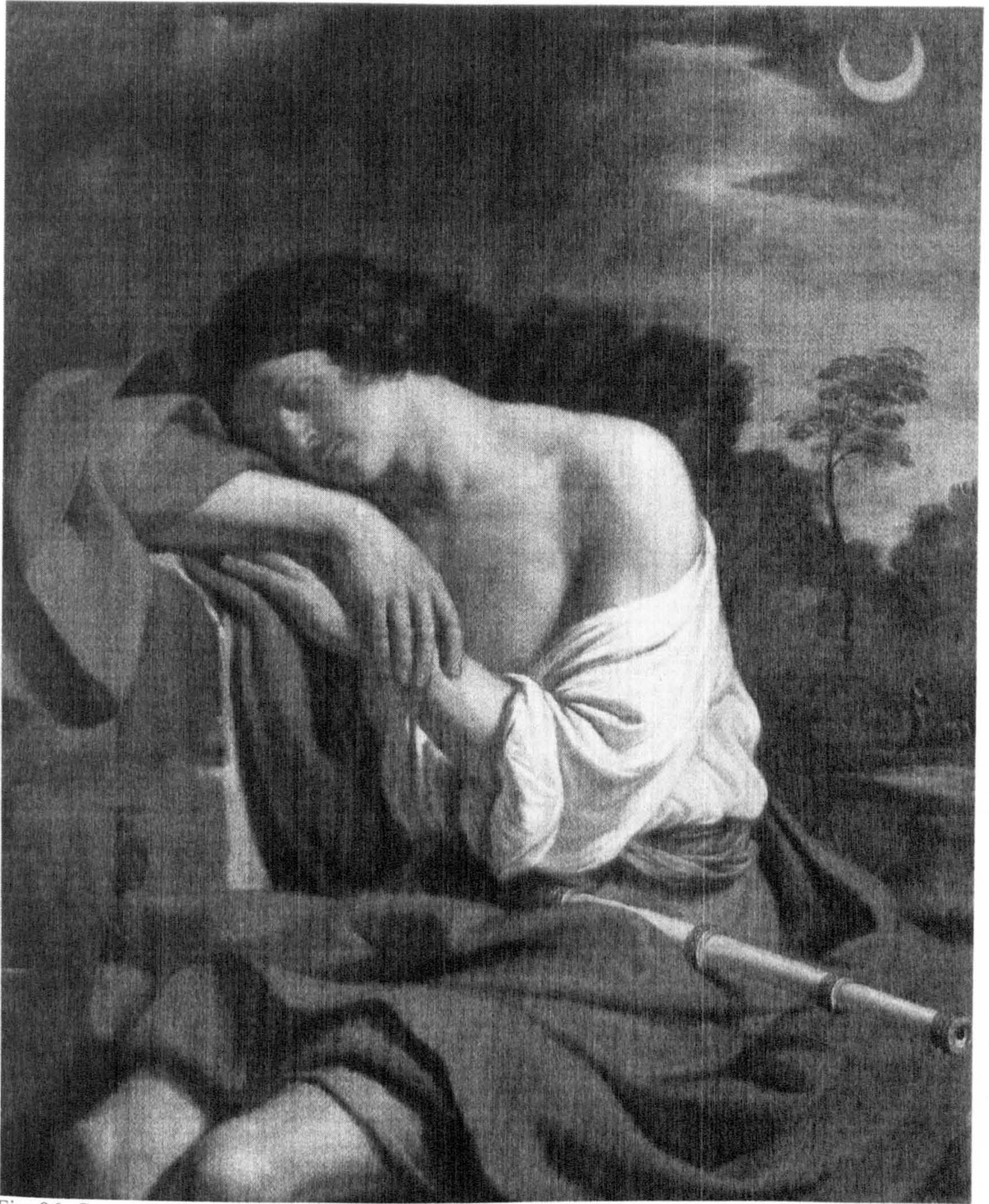


Fig. 96: Guercino, *Endymion*, oil on canvas, 125 x 105, Rome: Galleria Doria Pamphili, 1644 or 1647.



Fig. 97: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Nicolas Poussin*, oil on canvas, 52 x 45.7, York: York Art Gallery, c.1625-28.

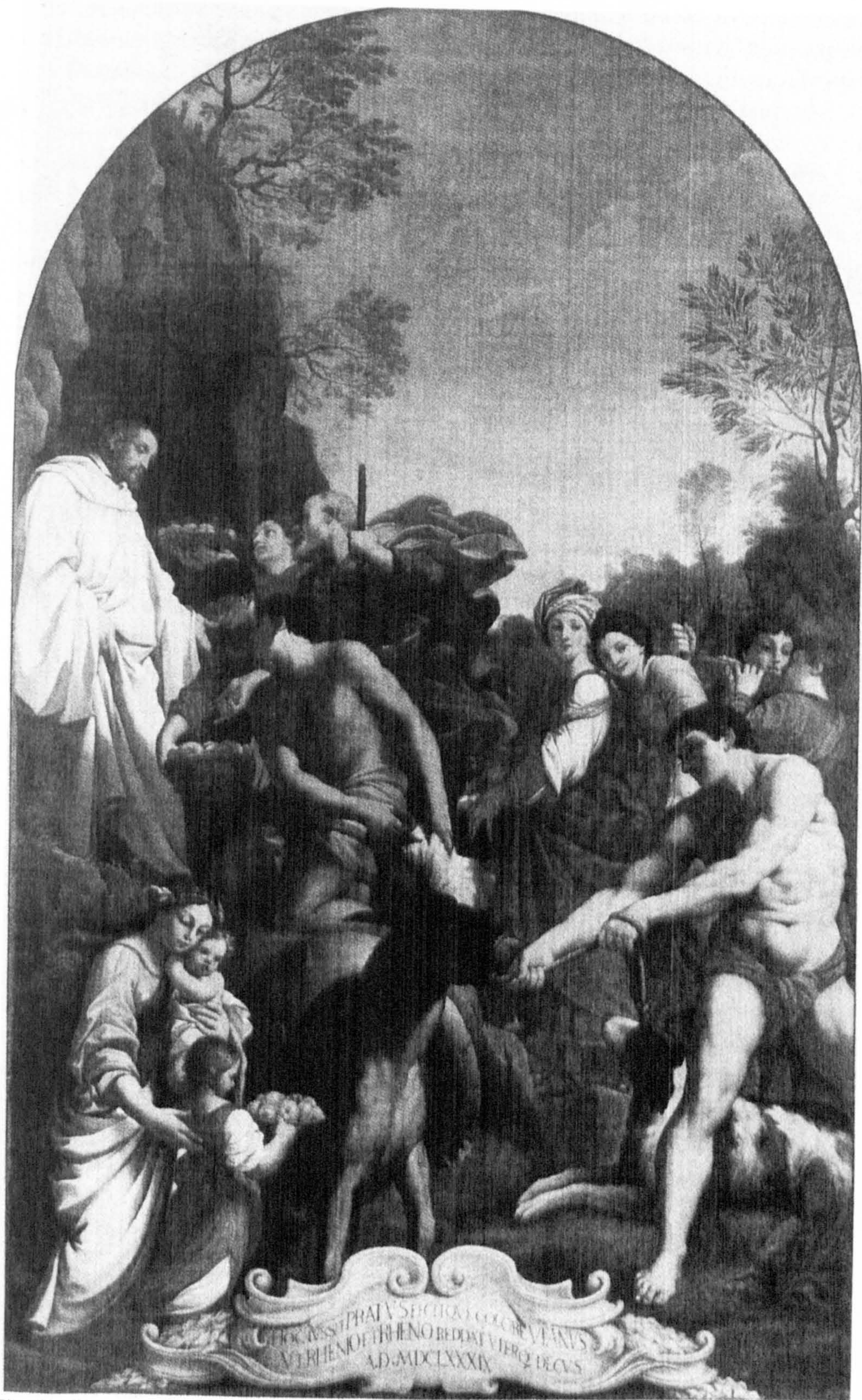


Fig. 98: Giovanni Maria Viani after Guido Reni, *St Benedict Presented with Gifts by Farmers* (lost mural 1604), oil on canvas, 498 x 300, Bologna: S. Michele in Bosco, 1689.



Fig. 99: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, oil on canvas, 96.5x73.7, London: Kensington Palace, c.1630s.