

The Master of the Unruly Children and his Artistic and Creative Identities

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a group of terracotta sculptures attributed to an artist known as the Master of the Unruly Children. The name of this artist was coined by Wilhelm von Bode, on the occasion of his first grouping seven works featuring animated infants in Berlin and London in 1890. Due to the distinctive characteristics of his work, this personality has become a mainstay of scholarship in Renaissance sculpture which has focused on identifying the anonymous artist, despite the physical evidence which suggests the involvement of several hands. Chapter One will examine the historiography in connoisseurship from the late nineteenth century to the present and will explore the idea of the scholarly “construction” of artistic identity and issues of value and innovation that are bound up with the attribution of these works.

Repeated but unsuccessful attempts to establish historical identities for our Master have resulted in the unique characteristics of our corpus remaining undefined, and the context in which the sculptures were produced inadequately established. Chapter Two surveys Florentine tradition, in which our Master is rooted, and highlights a practice of copying that is evident in the corpus, but also indicative of common workshop production. New classifications into which the corpus (Appendix I) is divided are then proposed and discussed.

Despite the singularity of subject matter associated with our Master an analysis of the iconography of the sculptures has never been carried out. Chapter three contains a detailed argument connecting the works of our Master, through iconography, to the revered theologian St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the humanist revival of antiquity, debates on the reformation of the Church, notions of Charity and Grace, and the political situation in Florence in the early sixteenth century.

For Columbus and Mrs Eaves

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INTRODUCTION

The works under discussion in this thesis are striking in composition, style and subject matter. They have previously been considered amongst those of the most important artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, reflecting the quality of conception and modelling found in the best examples, yet, existing in multiple, they are also often consigned to 'low status' genres of mass-produced works in terracotta, destined for the Florentine market for domestic art. Despite their fragile medium they have survived, in number, and can now be found in the collections of major museums across the world. Scholarship on these sculptures to date reflects this struggle in their categorisation between what might have once been deemed high and low art. Whilst such classifications are increasingly proven to be unhelpful, with many areas of Renaissance art production having deservedly received attention in the last twenty years or so, the works of the Master of the Unruly Children have thus far avoided such dedicated scrutiny. The Master, and the corpus of works attributed to him, present a specific set of problems, which have not yet been adequately dealt with. It is the purpose of this thesis to outline and address those problems. The reasons for doing so are multiple. Not only can the detailed analysis of these works better inform their own categorisation - their makers, dating, meaning and use - but such analysis can also reveal contemporary workshop practices, artistic exchange in the sixteenth century and something of why and how such works were valued.

The Master of the Unruly Children was a name coined at the end of the nineteenth century by curator and art historian Wilhelm von Bode to describe the anonymous sculptor he believed responsible for a group of works featuring animated infants. The number of works attributed

to this artist has steadily grown since Bode's initial grouping in 1890 of seven sculptures from the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. With only one exception all the sculptures connected with the artist are made of terracotta and are less than a metre in height (and, therefore, small-scale). As suggested by the artist's invented name, the subjects initially attributed to him were those involving children, notably variations on the themes of the *Madonna and Child*, *Charity*, and *Quarrelling Children*. Further groups of *Equestrian Battles* and *River Gods* are now also associated with the sculptor. Whilst the dating of the works has been disputed (between 1450 and 1550) their origins in Florence have not. This thesis aims to throw new light on the Master of the Unruly Children and the body of work ascribed to this name. It shall do so in three ways: through a historiography of scholarship on the Master so far; by setting him within the context of Florentine tradition; and through an examination of the meaning and function of the works ascribed to his hand.

Despite his relatively recent 'invention', The Master of the Unruly Children has become a mainstay in scholarship on Renaissance sculpture. This is largely due to the distinctive characteristics of his style and subject, evident in those works grouped under his name. Such distinction, however, has not always been appropriately acknowledged in the scholarship related to the Master, which is itself characterised by traditional methods of connoisseurship and a desire to identify the anonymous artist or connect him with known sculptors in Florence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A review, from the late nineteenth century to the present, of the shifting trajectory of this invented personality is undertaken in Chapter One. In examining the historiography of scholarship, the grounds upon which this Master was formed, and upon which subsequent scholars have added to his corpus of works, one may establish whether the Master is a reasonable concept. The detailed and analytical

coverage of literature on the Master in Chapter One precludes a need to embark on a more conventional bibliographic review in this introduction.

The invention of the Master and early attribution of works to this name paralleled the acquisition and documentation of those works in major museum collections, and it was largely propelled by these acquisitions. Further additions to the corpus, moreover, have most often been the result of sculptures emerging on the art market. Issues of value, status and innovation seem bound up with the attribution of these works which is why, therefore, the motivations behind a scholarship reliant on connoisseurship, and the problems or limitations of that method, will also be scrutinized. In addition, the idea of the scholarly construction of an artistic identity and the concept of authorship, as it relates to our invented Master, will be examined through the theoretical lens of modern writers such as Barthes and Foucault, in order to examine its rationale yet further. Notions of authorship that developed during the period our works were made will also be brought to bear. This survey of scholarship therefore highlights the ‘problems’ of the Master. Yet despite a focus on authorship no one artist has been identified to answer for all the stylistic traits seen in the works of our Master. In fact, previous repeated attempts to establish historical identities for our Master have resulted in the current unsatisfactory position in which the unique characteristics of our corpus are undefined, with the result that attributions to this name multiply even though works are often of varying quality. Moreover, there is also a tendency to link works to the *oeuvre* through subject rather than style. The resulting peculiarity of the Master’s story also fails to consider sufficiently the context in which the sculptures were produced or their meanings and uses.

Chapter Two will address the problem of context before offering a solution to some of those problems listed above. The suggestions of previous writers, discussed in Chapter One, which variously date the work from the mid-fifteenth century through to the mid-sixteenth century,

and which link the Master to almost every notable sculptor working in Florence during these years, underlines the fact that our Master is rooted in Florentine tradition. Whilst the evidence of a variety of influences, visible in the Master's works, has previously led to confusion, for example over the dating of the corpus, it will be reviewed in this chapter not only to define more clearly the Master's place within Florentine art but also to assess his specific appropriation of stylistic traits and thereby reveal his likely interests. One further 'problem' of the Master's corpus, not explicitly set out above, concerns the number of repetitions of compositions, or re-workings of similar themes. This practice of copying that is evident in the corpus is itself indicative of common workshop practices and Florentine tradition. By more firmly establishing the context of the Master's production, the body of work amassed under his name will be better delineated and informed, and, as a result, much can be determined not only about the time when he was active but also about the conditions under which he was working.

Accompanying this thesis, in Appendix I, is a catalogue of works which sets out new categories into which all those sculptures attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children can be placed. The new classifications, which take account of the revised understanding of the corpus of works and their production, are also outlined and discussed in Chapter Two. A proposed solution to the 'problems' of the Master is, therefore, offered and the characteristics of his output are far better defined than previously. The suggested time and location for the production of these works are then further examined in Chapter Three when the subjects and functions of the sculptures are assessed.

No analysis of the 'meanings' of the works attributed to the Master has been carried out to date. This, therefore, shall be conducted in Chapter Three, after which a brief examination of their possible uses will be undertaken. The primary themes associated with the Master of the

Unruly Children have been listed above as *Madonnas*, *Charity* groups, and *Infants*, and it is the shared use of figure types across these groupings that may have led to their common attribution. However, the subjects can also be linked through iconography and meaning, as well as through composition and style. Indeed, the iconographical traditions utilised across these three themes associated with our Master will be identified and will be shown to reveal an intentional reaffirmation of certain symbolic meanings. This clarification of the subject matter used by our Master will also corroborate findings and comparisons made in Chapter Two. Subject as well as style will therefore help to contextualise our Master and this, in combination with a consideration of how certain works may have been used, will throw new light on the Master's likely patrons.

A detailed argument will be presented in Chapter Three connecting the works of our Master, through iconography, to the revered theologian St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the humanist revival of antiquity, debates on the reformation of the Church, notions of Charity and Grace, and the return of the Medici Family to Florence, which were all taking place during the early years of the sixteenth century. The popularity, therefore, of certain themes within the corpus, and the modes in which they were represented, will be argued to have been determined not only by iconographical invention but by the contingent circumstances of their production.

The evidence of other subjects produced in multiple terracottas will also be brought to bear on the analysis of meaning and, moreover, help to inform how some of the works in our corpus may have been used. The evidence of recent technical examination (carried out in collaboration with this present writer) on the *Madonna and Child with a Book* at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, attributed to our Master, will also be discussed. New discoveries, which imply the participation of the viewer in the dressing and undressing of this sculpture, indicate that the works of our Master may have had specific uses and meanings to certain

audiences. An article on the Rijksmuseum work by the present author is reproduced in Appendix II to support the wider consideration of these findings within the larger corpus of the Master discussed in Chapter Three. In addition, both subject and usage will be evaluated within the context of recent scholarship on domestic art in Renaissance Florence and the use of miraculous images. An assessment of contemporary devotional practices in particular may be significant to the works in our corpus and will further reveal the nature of commissions undertaken by our Master and his workshop. Moreover, evidence that the basic compositions of the Master could be adapted to different ends may account for previously noted anomalies across the corpus, which had been explained by the suggestion that different hands were involved in their production. The evidence presented in Chapter Three puts forward the case for function to be considered a determining factor in the changing appearance of works of the same subject.

This thesis, therefore, aims to be both very specific in its assessment of the Master of the Unruly Children and also suggest new ways of approaching an under-studied area of Florentine Renaissance art history. Connoisseurship, stylistic and historical appraisal, iconographical analysis and the identification of relevant social and religious practices all serve to detail the very particular case of the artist, his evolution, the works attributed to his name, the context in which they were produced and the significance they once had. At the same time, the research also reveals something of wider Florentine workshop practices, the reproduction and consumption of artworks and the choices of subject, and the simultaneous revelation and obfuscation of the genre of early sixteenth-century terracotta sculpture in the hands of nineteenth and early twentieth-century art historians.

Almost every work of art referred to within the text of this thesis has been illustrated in the accompanying group of figures in the order in which it is first mentioned. Illustrations of works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children have been included within this to aid the initial comprehension of the reader on first encountering the story of the Master – for example this has allowed for the illustration of groups of works as they were first assembled or discussed. On the whole, when the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children are discussed they will be referred to by their catalogue number in Appendix 1, as this is the locus for further detail on those sculptures. The catalogue contains all works (known to the present author) that have ever been attributed to the Master – even when that attribution has been challenged or widely refuted. Comparative details are presented in plates also to be found in Appendix I.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF THE MASTER OF THE UNRULY CHILDREN

When Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1929) invented the Master of the Unruly Children at the end of the nineteenth century he created an enduring artistic personality upon which subsequent art historians have built. The historiography of scholarship is the prime subject of this first chapter, for only in reviewing the foundations upon which this Master was formed can we establish whether the artist is a reasonable concept. Through successive scholars the figure of the Master of the Unruly Children has become engrained into the lexicon or canon of the history of art and further works attributed to his hand.

In this chapter Bode's formation of the Master will be outlined before further subsequent scholars and their additions to the corpus are reviewed. In turn, the major contributors to our Master's development will be assessed for what they said, what new information or perspective they offered, and what the implications of their position may have been. Thus, the consensus points reached and the problems introduced will help us to better understand the parameters of this Master and the attributions as they stand. The present, somewhat unsatisfactory, position of scholarship and connoisseurship related to the Master shall be revealed.

This historiography will then be scrutinized with the theoretical lens of Barthes, Foucault and other modern writers, in order to further examine the concept of authorship in relation to our invented Master. The following questions will then be asked: what effect has the naming and construction of a unique character had on scholarship in relation to the works under

discussion? Is the history of the Master restricted to a concern with identity and if so has it been useful? Not only will consideration of such questions help us to explain the unique construction of our Master and further identify the limitations of scholarship surrounding the corpus, it may also make clear avenues of research hitherto unexplored, which could inform our understanding of these works. Crucially, a discussion of authorship, both conceptual and historical, clarifies the need to urgently contextualise and reappraise the sculpture associated with the Master, which will then be undertaken in Chapter Two.

Furthermore, notions of authorship can be seen to have emerged, or at least have been of distinct interest, during the period in which these works are likely to have been made. The final section of this chapter will examine ideas on authorship not only contemporary to Bode's invention but to the manufacture of the works. The work of Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, who introduce the idea of an 'anachronic Renaissance' will be brought to bear on the problem of deciphering both authorship and dating of these works.¹ The resulting confection or 'mosaic of styles', a term used in connection with Nagel and Wood, will then be explored further in Chapter Two.²

The identification of a Master of the Unruly Children occurred at the same time as the acquisition of several works in terracotta (and one of sandstone) by museums in London, Berlin and elsewhere. Before we survey the formation of scholarship on the Master it is helpful to list chronologically the acquisition of those works:

1858, South Kensington Museum (V&A), *Bust of the Infant St John the Baptist*, terracotta (CAT. C6)

1859, South Kensington Museum (V&A), *Two Winged Boys*, sandstone (CAT. D1)

1876, South Kensington Museum (V&A), *Two Quarrelling boys*, terracotta

¹ Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance*, Zone Books, New York, 2010

² This term originates with Angelo Poliziano and will be discussed later in the chapter. For its use in regard to the arguments of Nagel and Wood see Peter Dent, 'Time and the Image: Art at an Epochal Threshold' in *Medieval or Early Modern, The Value of a Traditional Historical Division*, Ronald Hutton (ed), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2015, pp. 146- 174 (and in particular pp.170-171).

(CAT. A4)

1885, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, *Charity*, terracotta (CAT. B1)

1889, Königliches Museum (Bode Museum), seated *Madonna and Child, Fighting Children, Infant St. John the Baptist in a grotto*, all terracotta, (CATS. A1, A3, D2)

1892, Königliches Museum (Bode Museum), standing *Madonna and Child*, terracotta (CAT. B12)

1898, Königliches Museum (Bode Museum), *Charity*, terracotta (CAT. B5)

1920, Victoria & Albert Museum, *Charity*, terracotta (CAT. A2) – Bode knew this work whilst it was in the collection of August Zeiss in Berlin. Zeiss acquired the work in Florence before 1869.

1922, Rijksmuseum, *Madonna and Child*, terracotta (CAT. B6)

The above list shows that in the sixty-four years between 1858 and 1922 the major works which now form the core of the corpus ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children entered the collections of four major museums – The South Kensington Museum in London (now the Victoria & Albert Museum – hereafter V&A), The Königliches Museum in preparation for the new Kaiser Friedrich Museum (KFM - now the Bode Museum), Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (BMAG) and The Rijksmuseum. Unsurprisingly these years also saw developing scholarship on the sculptor responsible for these works and a resulting shift in attribution from ‘unidentified fifteenth century sculptor’ to ‘Master of the Unruly Children’.

The instigator of this scholarship, and the man responsible for grouping the works and creating a unique personality to which he could ascribe them, was German scholar and Curator (later Museum Director) Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1929).³ John Charles Robinson (1824-1913), Curator at the then South Kensington Museum, pre-dated Bode in publishing on two of the works but he did not invent the Master of the Unruly Children nor did he even group the two works that had then been acquired for London with each other, let alone with examples elsewhere.⁴ In 1862, in his catalogue of the collection, Robinson ascribed a small

³ Wilhelm von Bode, ‘Versuche der Ausbildung des Genre in der Florentiner Plastik des Quattrocento’ in *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, Berlin, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1890, pp. 95-107.

⁴ J.C. Robinson, *South Kensington Museum, Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art*. A descriptive catalogue of the works forming the above section of the museum with additional illustrative notices. Published for the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education, Chapman and Hall, London, 1862. The bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist* is cat. no. 4496, p. 102, the *Amorini* (later described as *Winged Boys*) are cat. no. 5769, p. 155.

terracotta bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist* (acquired 1858, V&A) to an unidentified Florentine fifteenth-century sculptor and a pair of *Amorini* in pietra serena or sandstone (acquired 1859, V&A) to Francesco di Sangallo (Figs. 4 and 5).⁵

It was not until Bode wrote for the *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, in 1890 that the two works described by Robinson above were connected, and placed in a wider group.⁶ In his essay ‘Versuche der Ausbildung des Genre in der Florentiner Plastik des Quattrocento’ (Ventures in the Formation of Genre in Florentine Sculpture of the Fifteenth Century), Bode outlined his ideas on the use of genre motifs in Florentine Renaissance art and in particular the employment of putti and children both as ornament and as an emerging subject in their own right during the fifteenth century. The same essay was essentially reproduced as a chapter in Bode’s *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance* in 1902 but with a few important modifications.⁷

In the intervening years between Robinson’s catalogue and Bode’s essay in the *Jahrbuch* the South Kensington Museum had acquired a terracotta of *Two Quarrelling Boys* (acquired 1876, V&A; Fig. 6), Birmingham had acquired a terracotta group of *Charity* (acquired 1885, BMAG; Fig. 8) and Bode had acquired three terracotta statuettes for Berlin of the *Infant St John the Baptist in a Grotto*, a seated *Madonna and Child* and *Quarrelling Children* (all acquired 1889, formerly KFM; Figs. 1, 2 and 3).⁸ Bode linked the three works in Berlin with

⁵ Robinson, no. 4496, p. 104 and no. 5769, p. 155.

⁶ Bode, 1890, pp. 95-107.

⁷ Wilhelm von Bode’s *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance* was first published in Berlin in 1902. Edition used: Wilhelm von Bode, *Florentine Sculptors of the Renaissance*, translated by Jessie Haynes, 2nd edition revised by F.L. Rudston Brown, Methuen & Co Ltd., London, 1928.

⁸ It is interesting to note that Robinson was instrumental in helping establish the collection of the new Birmingham Museum in 1885 and according to Evelyn Silber was responsible for purchasing much of the Italian Renaissance sculpture, in which the *Charity* group was included. Evelyn Silber, *Sculpture in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery: Summary Catalogue*, Birmingham, 1987.

the three in London and ascribed them all to the same anonymous follower of Donatello (1386-1466) working *c.*1450.⁹

Bode did not mention the Birmingham work specifically but was aware of what he described as inferior variations on the *Madonna* theme which have been adapted into *Charity* groups, extant on the Florentine art market. The *Charity* group he described is particularly close to that in Birmingham with a bare and muscular arm and what appears to be a modified head.¹⁰ Two points prevent us from assuming without hesitation that the work he described is that now in Birmingham, firstly that he recounted that the two standing children both hold flowers, whereas one of the boys in Birmingham holds a bird, and that, in 1890, five years after it entered the Birmingham Collection, one would assume that Bode might have been aware of the work's new location (though he does not say when he saw the work described). Therefore, we cannot assuredly include the Birmingham *Charity* in the original group given by Bode to the Master. Moreover, Bode's description also applies to a *Charity* group formerly owned by Stefano Bardini (Florentine collector and dealer) which was sold in 1918 (CAT.C2).¹¹

Bode lastly mentioned a further work in the V&A Museum now attributed to Niccolò Tribolo (1500-50) of a *Boy and Girl with a Swan* (Fig. 7).¹² He cautiously linked this terracotta with the other works in his newly assembled group. It is in discussing this sculpture that Bode first

⁹ Bode, 1890, pp. 102-5.

¹⁰ For Bode's description of the *Charity* and further works seen on the Florentine art market see: Bode, 1890, p. 105.

¹¹ American Art Galleries, New York, Thursday 25 April, 1918, Lot 321. The sale catalogue notes that Bode had seen the work and ascribed it to the 'author of the struggling children'. This is likely to be the work Bode described in a letter to August Zeiss of 1896 - discussed later in the chapter (cf notes 70 and 62).

¹² Bode, 1890, p. 105 (illustrated p. 106). This work is now known as *Boy and Girl with a Goose*.

offered up a name for the Master referring to the personality as ‘our ‘Meister der derben Kinder’ [Master of the Coarse or Sturdy Children] as we could aptly call him.’¹³

In summary, Bode’s first grouping of works under a newly identified artistic personality included the two sets of *Quarrelling Children* from London and Berlin, *The Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto*, the seated *Madonna and Child* in Berlin, the *Winged Boys* and bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist* in London, a unidentified *Charity* group (possibly that with Bardini or in Birmingham) and, hesitantly, the *Boy and Girl with a Swan*, also in London. These works are connected under the provisional name of The Master of the Sturdy Children.

Bode’s attributions in the *Jahrbuch* were set within a wider discussion of the genre use of putti in fifteenth century sculpture. His is not an essay purely concerned with connoisseurship, thoroughly examining stylistic qualities and comparing these to known hands. Bode’s invention of the Master was the result of considering the use of animated infants, during which he recognised a discrete group of works, which he felt must belong to a single artist. For Bode this artist was an anonymous follower of Donatello. He dated the works to the mid-fifteenth century or possibly slightly later, but certainly not as late as Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-88) whom he used as a point of comparison to determine that the works are (according to him) earlier as they are ‘more archaic’.¹⁴

With the subject matter of the essay focused (at least in the section under discussion) on children, it is perhaps no surprise that it is almost purely through the child figure that Bode makes his comparisons between works and arrives at his group. He invariably describes their features as fleshy (*fleischigen*), ugly (*hässlich*), thick-necked (*kurzen Halse*), or hefty (*kräftigen*) and perhaps rightly believes only one artist could have been responsible for such a

¹³ Bode, 1890, p. 105.

¹⁴ Bode, 1890, p. 106.

unique conception.¹⁵ The concentration on the child in this early grouping is important when one considers the artist's eventual nomenclature and the works which would subsequently be attributed to it.

The name Meister der Unartigen Kinder (Master of the Unruly Children) is first used in Bode's *Denkmäler der Renaissance Sculptur Toscanas* compiled between 1892 and 1905 (published 1905).¹⁶ In the *Denkmäler* Bode listed four works as a group, firstly under the heading 'Unbekannte Donatello-Schüler und Nachfolger' (unknown students and followers of Donatello) and then with the sub-heading 'Meister der Unartigen Kinder'. The four works listed are the seated *Madonna and Child*, a standing *Madonna and Child* (formerly KFM; Fig. 9) and the *Quarrelling Children* from Berlin. The fourth is the group of *Quarrelling Children* from London but Bode has revised his former attribution of this as a companion work to that in Berlin, here describing it as a repetition of the Berlin original.¹⁷ There are, however, two strange omissions from Bode's *Denkmäler* group – most odd is the exclusion of the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* from this list as he does not remove it from his group in the *Florentiner Bildhauer* chapter of 1902. Also absent is the newly acquired *Charity* (formerly KFM) for Berlin – a gift to the museum from Bode himself in 1898. This second omission could be explained by this section of the *Denkmäler* having been compiled between 1892-1898, and therefore possibly before the *Charity* was in Bode's possession; he certainly is at pains to laud the terracotta in his revised essay two years later.

¹⁵ Bode's use of these adjectives in the *Jahrbuch* (1890) begins on p. 102 in his first mention of the terracottas (beginning with *St. John the Baptist in a Grotto*) and continues through his descriptions of each work in turn, until p. 106.

¹⁶ Wilhelm von Bode, *Denkmäler der Renaissance-Sculptur Toscanas in Historischer Anordnung*, F. Bruckmann, Munich, 1905, p. 13 (in the register). The *Denkmäler* was originally issued in 112 parts between 1892-1905. A register was compiled by Frida Schottmüller in 1905. Page numbers here refer to her register and to the volume of text (written by Bode). Illustrations are separated into a further 11 volumes, for the Master of the Unruly Children see the volume entitled 'Donatello Tafel 151-200'. The four works of our Master are listed in the Register on page thirteen with Tafel nos. 186a, 186b, 187a, 187b and discussed in Bode's text on pp. 55-6.

¹⁷ Bode, 1905, p. 56.

In almost every way the chapter in the *Florentiner Bildhauer* is exactly that written in the *Jahrbuch* and the origins of the group, beginning with the *Baptist in a Grotto*, are once again described. The name Bode proposed in the *en l er* – The Master of the Unruly Children – is absent but he made mention of two further works he believed belong to this group.¹⁸ The increased size of the group further suggests that, although the *en l er* was compiled simultaneously with the publication of the *Florentiner Bildhauer*, it was this chapter, written (or at least modified) later, which therefore represents Bode's latest thoughts on the group. The only peculiarity in this text is the absence of Bode's recently invented name – Master of the Unruly Children – since he reverted to referring to the sculptor as 'anonimo' (anonymous).¹⁹

The two new works added to the corpus of our 'Master' include the newly acquired *Charity* figure in Berlin, and a further *Charity* group which Bode mentioned was then in the collection of August Zeiss, also resident in Berlin (Figs. 10 and 11). The Zeiss terracotta would later be acquired by the V&A museum in 1920.²⁰ The standing *Madonna and Child* acquired for Berlin in 1892, and included in the *en l er*, is also incorporated into Bode's revised essay for *Florentiner Bildhauer*, indeed, it is made somewhat of a feature.

In summary, in the reprinted essay from the *Jahrbuch*, now a chapter in *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, Bode maintained discussion of a group including the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto*, the two sets of *Quarrelling Children* from London and Berlin, the seated *Madonna and Child* in Berlin, the *Winged Boys* in sandstone and the bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist* in London and mention of an unidentified *Charity* group (possibly that with Bardini or in Birmingham). He added the *Charity* figure which he had just donated

¹⁸ Bode, 1928, p. 175.

¹⁹ Bode, 1928, p. 176 (and elsewhere throughout the chapter).

²⁰ Bode, 1928, pp. 173-5. In this edition the Zeiss *Charity* is already referred to as in the collection of the V&A, but in the original publication of *Florentiner Bildhauer* in 1902, Zeiss is listed.

to the museum in Berlin, and asserted that this work, with a single child standing on the lap of the virtue and with a flame in her hand, must be an autograph work of the Master and was clearly superior to the larger group versions.²¹ In making this comparison he also added the aforementioned Zeiss Collection *Charity* (now V&A) to the group. Bode ended his revised chapter in praise of the *Standing Madonna and Child* in Berlin, which he described as the Master at his best and of particularly good quality.²²

We shall examine shortly the speed with which Bode's group and the new artistic personality 'The Master of the Unruly Children' were embraced, but first one must question the motivations and perhaps limitations of Bode's argument. It has already been stated that Bode's initial grouping came about during a discussion of the genre use of children in Renaissance Florentine art. This immediately limits the work which Bode considers. He is wilful in this, not only failing to suggest that the artist responsible may have worked on other subjects but, to the contrary, he asserts that this sculptor deals exclusively with children.²³ According to Bode, the artist's speciality are those street children and urchins adapted to represent either the Christ Child or a companion to *Charity* or just themselves, but imbuing each subject with their vital energy.²⁴

The second limitation to Bode's argument is in dating. Bode noted the similarities one might observe between these works and Verrocchio but he firmly believed them to be earlier and more specifically by a follower of Donatello. The revolutionary way in which Verrocchio was to employ the child or putto figure, life-like and as a subject in its own right, is described

²¹ Bode, 1928, p. 175.

²² Bode, 1928, pp. 175-6.

²³ Bode, 1890, p. 107. Bode describes the specialist and exclusive treatment of children by the Master: '...in jenen Kindergruppen geradezu als Genrebildhauer bezeichnet werden muss, so ist doch auch für ihn die Beschränkung auf das Kind, auf den Putto, charakteristisch;...'. Reprinted in Bode, 1928, p. 178.

²⁴ Bode, 1890, p. 103: 'er schafft bereits Genregruppen, regelmässig in kleinem Format, und wählt gelegentlich Motive direct von der Strasse; freilich wieder ausschliesslich aus dem Bereich der Kinderwelt.' Reprinted Bode, 1928, p. 172.

by Bode in the same essay but is not considered to have influenced the anonymous Master.²⁵ The argument Bode gave for this essentially concerned the ugliness of the children, and that their features assuredly pointed to ‘an older more archaic artist.’²⁶ Once again, his comparisons are limited to child figures, not only those of Verrocchio but of Desiderio and Vittorio Ghiberti (and other mid fifteenth-century sculptors).²⁷ Although these comparisons are of course valid they ignore the female figures of the group compositions whose drapery and contrapposto could have caused doubt as to their mid fifteenth-century origins. It is also important to note that a wider reading of the *Jahrbuch* essay, and subsequently *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, reveals a proclivity towards Donatello altogether. It may have been part of Bode’s wider ambition, to present Donatello as the father of all Renaissance sculpture, that these inventive new developments in the employment of child figures as genre subjects must be directly linked to him. This does not make Bode incorrect, but it is perhaps responsible for setting the parameters of the new group both in Florence, and within a span of less than thirty years (from the maturity of Donatello c.1430 to before that of Verrocchio c.1460).

The third characteristic of Bode’s argument is his obvious bias towards the works held in Berlin. Perhaps this is unsurprising given the original essay was written for the museum’s *Jahrbuch*, but this propensity was distilled further in successive publications where Bode discussed the Master’s work. The most notable examples of this were, firstly, the subordination of the London infants to that of an inferior re-working of the greater Berlin pair in the *Denkmäler* list, followed by the assertion that both the seated *Madonna* group and the *Charity* (in Berlin) are the authentic original versions of compositions modified and

²⁵ Bode, 1890, p. 106; Bode, 1928, p. 176.

²⁶ Bode, 1890, p. 106; Bode, 1928, p. 176.

²⁷ Bode, 1890, pp. 106-7. Bode, 1928, pp. 176-7.

reproduced by others to a lesser standard.²⁸ Unfortunately, with the majority of works formerly in Berlin now destroyed, it is hard to counter Bode's claims but successive scholars did so. Whilst noting differences between the works, Bode at no point creates sub-categories or explicitly suggests the involvement of other hands which the variances in 'quality' might encourage. These discrepancies and stylistic characteristics now also seem to indicate some unmistakably separate artistic identities, as following essays would recognize. This reinforces the main limitation of Bode's essay once more - that it was subject not style that initially brought his group together.

Stuttgart-based scholar Cornelius von Fabriczy (1839-1910), who had previously worked with Bode in the late 1890s,²⁹ quickly followed him in expanding the corpus of works ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children, in his own contribution to the *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlung*, in 1909, entitled 'Kritisches Verzeichnis Toskanischer Holz und Tonstatuen bis zum Beginn des Cinquecento' (critical register of Tuscan wood and clay sculpture from the beginning of the sixteenth century).³⁰ In this he wrote short entries on the works in Berlin: the standing *Madonna and Child*, the seated *Madonna and Child*, the *Charity* and the *Fighting Children*; and on the *Charity* group then in the Zeiss Collection (subsequently V&A) and the *Quarrelling Children* in London. In cataloguing these works Fabriczy did not add considerably to Bode's initial findings, other than making an important assertion that the works are of a later date. His proposition for this dating was not focused on the grimacing children but the monumentality of attitude in the

²⁸ Bode, 1928, pp. 173-6.

²⁹ Fabriczy and Bode collaborated on a revised edition of Jakob Burckhardt's *Der Cicerone* (1855) published in 1898.

³⁰ Cornelius Fabriczy, 'Kritisches Verzeichnis Toskanischer Holz und Tonstatuen bis zum Beginn des Cinquecento' in *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlung*, 1909, pp. 1-88. The 'Meister der unartigen Kinder' is first mentioned on p. 3. The attributions can be found as follows: Berlin – nos. 23 (p. 19), 24, 25, 26 (p. 20), Zeiss – no. 64 (p. 25), Bardini – no. 140 (p. 40), V&A – nos. 162, 163 (p. 44), 164 (p. 45).

female figures, which he likened to that of the High Renaissance.³¹ He also suggested that elements of the compositions, such as the veil of the seated *Madonna* placed high over the vertex of the work, were deliberately archaic stylistic choices.³²

Fabriczy made observations of the works in turn. He noted the new position of the child on the lap of the Berlin *Charity*, as opposed to that seen in the Zeiss group, or on the lap of the various *Madonna* compositions but, in agreement with Bode, reasserted its authenticity as a proficient work of the master.³³ The *Fighting Children* are also spoken of as a characteristic work.³⁴ The *Charity* group in the Zeiss collection received extra attention from Fabriczy who provided the first notable catalogue entry of any length on this work. He suggested it be considered a rough copy of a hitherto unidentified group by the Master, and believed the head of the female figure had been subject to modern intervention. He assessed the two standing children in the group as too awkward to belong to the hand of the Master and proposed a later date for the Zeiss sculpture than the earlier (Berlin) works by the Master.³⁵ Of the two *Quarrelling Children* in London Fabriczy re-stated Bode's assertion that they form a counterpart to the Berlin pair. He noted that the bronzing or pigmentation of the London terracotta is no longer present, nor is the underlying gesso layer which, in his view, rendered the effect of the work less pleasant – the realisation of the work being cruder.³⁶

The *Boy and Girl with a Swan*, also in London, previously linked by Bode to the group of works by the Master is here more firmly attributed to him by Fabriczy.³⁷ Fabriczy did not offer any particular explanation for this new classification and there is little comparison with the other works; rather he just described the work as being a model for a fountain and

³¹ Fabriczy, 1909, p. 25

³² Fabriczy, 1909, p. 20.

³³ Fabriczy, 1909, no. 25, p. 20.

³⁴ Fabriczy, 1909, no. 26, p. 20.

³⁵ Fabriczy, 1909, no. 64, p. 25

³⁶ Fabriczy, 1909, no. 162, p. 44

³⁷ Fabriczy, 1909, no. 163, p. 44.

reminiscent of the children in Donatello's *Annunciation* Tabernacle in Florence's Santa Croce.

Fabriczy also added to the group of works associated with the Master of the Unruly Children and catalogued under this name a previously unmentioned terracotta in the V&A Museum, a *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 12), and a second standing *Madonna* then in the Bardini Collection in Florence (Fig. 13).³⁸ The V&A sculpture had been previously listed in the museum's inventory as Florentine and from the early sixteenth century, but was not mentioned by either Robinson or Bode. According to Fabriczy, the work displays motifs from the Berlin *Madonnas* and *Charity* and the minor deviations from the Berlin groups are too unimportant to prevent consideration of this as a work by the Master. Likewise, the standing *Madonna* in the Bardini Collection repeats the motif and intimate expression of its Berlin counterpart, and according to Fabriczy, it is comparable to it in quality too. Whilst he expanded the *oeuvre* of the Master, Fabriczy also omitted works previously given to the artist by Bode. As a work in sandstone we would perhaps not expect Fabriczy to include the *Winged Boys* in London in this catalogue but nor did he mention the bust of the *Infant Baptist*, nor the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* in Berlin. It is unclear whether he intended to exclude these from the corpus of works attributed to the Master since he did not re-attribute them to any other artist.

Fabriczy's main contribution to the developing scholarship on the Master is thus his reappraisal of the works collected under the Master's name, the first since Bode, and his suggestion of dating the output a quarter of a century later. Fabriczy did perpetuate, to some extent, Bode's bias for the works in the Berlin collection. Whilst largely critical in his appraisal of most of the terracottas outside of the German museum, he did not offer any suggestions to account for the discrepancies in style which he himself described across this

³⁸ Fabriczy, 1909: V&A *Madonna and Child* - no. 164, p. 45, Bardini *Madonna and Child* - no. 140, p. 40.

new group; in fact, one of his own additions to the group, the V&A *Madonna*, arguably creates further contradictions within the corpus, as we will consider shortly.

The first example of a scholar outside of Germany, engaging at length with the characteristics of the Master of the Unruly Children, and the first to associate him explicitly with a known artist, was American University Professor and latterly Curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Raymond Stites (1899-1974).³⁹ In 1931, in the third part of an extended article exploring the sculpture of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Stites made a case for the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children to be connected to the hand of Leonardo. In the previous two instalments of the article Stites introduced us to four terracotta groups of soldiers on horseback in the Louvre (Paris) and the Bargello (Florence), and two more in the Palazzo Vecchio (Florence; Figs. 14-17).⁴⁰ Leonardo's depictions of horses in action are well known to us through drawings but Stites was able to make a strong case for the terracottas also to be attributed to Leonardo, who as Stites pointed out, was trained in a sculptor's workshop. In short, Stites proposed that Bode's initial group of works be linked to a further group of terracotta *Battle* scenes, and that they all be considered the work of Leonardo.

Using the *Equestrian Battle* groups as a starting point, Stites dedicated his third instalment of the article to drawing parallels between these and the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children.⁴¹ Comparisons were also made with known Leonardo works including the *Baptism of Christ* (1472-5, Uffizi, Florence; in which he assisted Verrocchio) and the

³⁹ Stites wrote a three-part article for *Art Studies* on the sculpture of Leonardo over the course of five years: Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo da Vinci, Sculptor' in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1926, Vol 4, pp. 103-9.

Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo's terracotta group in the Bargello' in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1928, Vol 6, pp. 73-7.

Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo da Vinci, Sculptor, Part III', in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931, Vol 8, part II, pp. 289-300.

⁴⁰ See esp. Stites, 1928, pp. 73-7.

⁴¹ Stites, 1931, pp. 289-300.

unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* (1481, Uffizi, Florence; Figs. 18 and 19). He evaluated the treatment of rock formations, hair, drapery, positioning of feet, shapes of heads, faces and general physiognomy of figures, and provided detailed descriptions of all the works listed by Bode. In his suggestion that Leonardo was the author of these works, Stites implied a significantly later dating to that suggested by Bode and even that offered by Fabriczy. Moreover, he noted that the Berlin *Children* still retained their original coating of reddish-brown patina, which he pointed out was unusual for the fifteenth century, and a fact Bode himself had mentioned.⁴²

In his examination of the pairs of *Quarrelling Children* at the V&A and in Berlin, Stites suggested that the treatment of the short locks of hair and the masterful strokes of the spatula which outline the rocks imply the same hand as the creator of the *Equestrian Battle* groups, therefore, according to Stites, Leonardo. In his appraisal of the bust of the young *Baptist* at the V&A, Stites used a similar argument to that above to retain the work in his expanded group. He remarked upon the quick sketchy strokes of the drapery and hair which he believed display the same degree of mastery as found in the other compositions.⁴³ He was not of the same opinion with regard to the *Winged Boys* at the V&A but instead listed various details, including parallel ridges on the surface of the stone clouds, which he could not compare with any finish he had seen in a work by Leonardo's hand. He further qualified this by noting that, rather than those of Leonardo, they are features common to the workshop of Giambologna (1529-1608) and also appear in the marbles of Michelangelo (1475-1564).⁴⁴

The group of works attributed to the Master was further modified by Stites in his assessment of the *Madonna and Child* and *Charity* groups. The rock formations present in the terracottas

⁴² Stites, 1931, p. 294.

⁴³ Stites, 1931, p. 294.

⁴⁴ Stites, 1931, p. 294.

were again used to link the *Charity*, now at the V&A, and the Berlin seated *Madonna* with the *Equestrian* groups and Leonardo. Of the seated *Madonna* Stites proceeded to compare the treatment of the Virgin's robes, especially her girdle, with the robes of riders in the battle compositions. Feet, their modelling and placement, are also considered by Stites and comparisons made between those of the *Madonna* and *Charity* in our corpus with Leonardo's figure of St Anne in his cartoon for the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* (c.1500, National Gallery, London; Fig. 91).⁴⁵ Stites is not so convinced that the single-figure *Charity* in Berlin is of the same quality. He noted its plain base, asymmetrical composition, less skilful modelling, and the lack of traces of colour. Stites did suggest that the drapery, the face of the Virtue, and the construction of the child could be by the same master but that the modelling of the hands and feet were at odds with this. He proposed the group was left unfinished by the artist and completed by a follower, or else is an early work.⁴⁶ The standing *Madonna* in Berlin was a different case for Stites; he believed this a well-balanced composition and that the handling of feet and the stones underfoot are consistent with the other terracottas.

In his discussion of drapery Stites reflected on the proposals of both Bode and Fabriczy. He conceded that, for example, in the standing *Madonna*, the folds of the Virgin's mantle recall the manner of Desiderio and that the arrangements of clothes and hair across the group find parallels in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, thereby explaining Bode's position.⁴⁷ In support of his own argument, Stites remarked on the variety of styles of clothes, halos, and treatment of hair in the sculptures – no two groups being identical in this. For Stites, this variety is further evidence for linking the works with Leonardo. He quoted Leonardo on the correct way to clothe figures – which should avoid 'any particular mode of his time.'⁴⁸ He

⁴⁵ Stites, 1931, p. 295.

⁴⁶ Stites, 1931, p. 294.

⁴⁷ Stites, 1931, p. 295.

⁴⁸ Stites, 1931, p. 296. Stites quotes from Leonardo, *On Painting*.

also suggested the same is true of the combat groups; ‘the helmets and armour of the warriors, like the costumes of the *Madonnas*, are as generalised as to defy any attempt to classify them in regard to the development of armour during the Renaissance.’⁴⁹ In further support of their sixteenth century origin, Stites compared the configurations of drapery in the sculptures with that seen in the works of Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), Raphael (1483-1520) and Michelangelo (1475-1564).⁵⁰

The connections made to Leonardo by Stites are reinforced through his discussion on anatomy and the inclusion of several drawings by Leonardo, which can be connected to the figures in our corpus. The child figures are a particular focus for comparison, with the numerous sketches by Leonardo evidence of his interest in this subject. According to Stites, parallels can be found in the treatment of the Virgin too. He described the ‘monocephalic indices’ and broad foreheads of the *Madonnas* in our corpus, which he connected with the type of head painted by Leonardo for the *Virgin of the Rocks* (Fig. 20) and the *Mona Lisa*.⁵¹

The analysis provided by Stites is akin to the method fellow American Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) proposed for the attribution of works: minute details of the works were appraised (feet, hair, rocks), comparisons made within the group (compiled by Bode) and with proposed new works (the *Equestrian Battle* groups) and with known Leonardo paintings and drawings. Stites’s eventual conclusion that, ‘this master has much in common with Leonardo da Vinci and the fact that no other artist is known to me whose hand had the power or whose mind the knowledge to create such groups makes me consider them all as his

⁴⁹ Stites, 1931, p. 296.

⁵⁰ Stites, 1931, pp. 295-6.

⁵¹ Stites, 1931, p. 296.

works' is perhaps more general and sweeping than his thorough examination allows.⁵² Moreover, Stites's argument for attribution to Leonardo is problematic in other ways.

Where the comparison of minutiae is concerned, albeit often selective, Stites's proposal was strong but he did not always consider other possibilities for the stylistic phenomena he detected. For example, the flat slab rock formations of the *Baptism* are akin to those of the grotto in Berlin's *Infant St. John*, but Verrocchio's workshop was large and Leonardo may not have been the only assistant to have adopted this technique. Furthermore, making the evident discrepancies in the style of drapery and hair across the group into an argument for Leonardo seems too convenient and ignores the possibility that they may instead derive from the involvement of different workshop hands. Nor did Stites persuasively tackle the larger questions of why, and when, Leonardo would have produced such works.

The suggestion that Leonardo may have created the terracottas as possible bozzetti for his painted compositions is ill conceived. These works are highly finished and although largely lost, traces of pigmentation and glazing exist that suggest they would have been completed to saleable degree. More recent scholarship confirms that Leonardo created models to inform his larger painted compositions but the degree to which these models re-work the same theme in multiple, from the same view point, to a highly finished state, surely recommends them as saleable items rather than working tools.

What Stites did achieve in his attempt to attribute these works to Leonardo, however, are credible grounds for associating the Master with Leonardo's circle or followers, and certainly positioning him at a contemporary date. Significantly, an additional consequence of Stites's supposition was to expand the discussion of the Master of the Unruly Children to include works beyond those mentioned by Bode and outside of the theme of restless infants. The

⁵² Stites, 1931, p. 295.

Equestrian Battle groups, now linked by Stites to our Master, bear closer scrutiny as works of Leonardo than perhaps can be said of our original group. Stites based his re-attribution of the Master's terracottas to Leonardo largely on their comparison with these battle compositions, which even now are not accepted works by the artist. Nonetheless, the affinity between the *Battle* groups and the works originally attributed to our Master, observed by Stites, was important and has resulted in their credible inclusion in the corpus.

Later that same year, in 1932, Eric Maclagan (Director) and Margaret Longhurst (Keeper of Architecture and Sculpture) published their catalogue of Italian sculpture at the V&A museum.⁵³ The articles by Stites are not listed in the bibliography here and there is no evidence to suggest that Maclagan and Longhurst were aware of his thoughts before compiling their entries. They began their appraisal of our sculptor and his work by stating he was an artist of the second half of the fifteenth century, continuing the tradition of Donatello. They used Bode's title, Master of the Unruly Children, and under this name included the *Quarrelling Children*, the bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist*, *Charity* and the *Two Winged Boys*.

Of the *Quarrelling Children* it was asserted that there is no evidence to doubt that this is a work by the Master's hand and a pendant to that in Berlin, and they suggested the antique as a possible source for the motif. The bust of the *Infant Baptist* was likewise defended as an autograph work by the Master and Maclagan and Longhurst claimed that the features of this child, although enlarged, are those seen in other works. As regards *Charity*, the composition was compared with the seated *Madonna and Child* and *Charity* in Berlin and it was also noted that the central group can be seen in a *Madonna and Child* once in the collection of

⁵³ Eric Maclagan and Margaret Longhurst, *Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Architecture and Sculpture, Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, Published under the authority of the Board of Education, London, 1932, The Master of the Unruly Children is listed on pp. 87-8.

Mrs Benjamin Thaw (now in Fundação Eva Klabin, Brazil; Fig. 21). The *Charity* group in Birmingham was also mentioned (specifically) for the first time, and the head of the *Virtue* was noted as having been restored. The accompanying boisterous children in all these groups were likened to those seen in the pairs of fighting children in London and Berlin. Finally, with a note of reservation, Bode's attribution to the Master of the *Two Winged Boys* in sandstone, is agreed upon. MacLagan and Longhurst noted their predecessor Robinson's former attribution to Francesco Sangallo but instead proposed that the discrepancies in style between this work and the groups in terracotta may be due to the sculpture being of a later period in the Master's career, the sixteenth century already becoming evident.⁵⁴

MacLagan and Longhurst did not include in their group the two works at the V&A previously attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children by Fabriczy. The terracotta of a *Boy and Girl with a Swan* is reattributed by them to Pierino da Vinci and re-titled *Boy and Girl with a Goose*. With other closely comparable works attributed to Pierino cited in their catalogue, their assertion that this work is also by his hand is well made. In any case, as they point out, the physiognomy of the figures leaves one in little doubt 'it can hardly be by the Master of the Unruly Children'.⁵⁵

As regards the *Madonna and Child* they likewise found it difficult to support Fabriczy's attribution to the Master, due mainly to the physique of the *Child* and his unusually small proportion. MacLagan and Longhurst noted similarities between this work and those of Luca della Robbia (1400-82) and Benedetto da Maiano (1442-97) but ultimately felt certain it should be dated to the sixteenth century. They made mention of a comparable statuette at the

⁵⁴ MacLagan and Longhurst, 1932, p. 88 (Plate 61d).

⁵⁵ MacLagan and Longhurst, 1932, pp. 142-3 (Plate 104c).

Bardini Museum but it is unclear whether the work to which they referred is the same as that attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children by Fabriczy.⁵⁶

Whilst making interesting notes of comparison, importantly adding new works for consideration to the corpus, namely the Thaw and Birmingham sculptures, and acting as a formal record of the group then gathered under the name of the Master of the Unruly Children at the V&A, the catalogue compiled by Maclagan and Longhurst did not significantly move scholarship forward. Bode's proposition remained, the characteristics of the Master left unaltered, and dating only marginally modified (in line with Fabriczy). *Charity* had been added to the Museum's collection (from Zeiss) so was listed and compared to works in Berlin (indicating its quality). The originality of the *Quarrelling Children* sculpture was similarly reasserted. Fabriczy's proposed later dating had little impact on the catalogue entries and Stites's argument seems yet to have been felt.

It was Frida Schottmüller (1872-1936), a curator under Bode in Berlin from 1905, who first took note of Stites's argument, when (after the death of Bode) she compiled her catalogue of Renaissance sculpture in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in 1933.⁵⁷ Her detailed entries are now our most reliable source of information on the lost works formerly in Berlin. Schottmüller began her analysis of the 'Meister der Unartigen Kinder' (she uses Bode's nomenclature without explanation or sub headings further suggesting that it was, by this time, well established) by boldly refuting Bode's dating to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, and asserting that these works could not date before the second quarter of the sixteenth century and the generation of Andrea del Sarto, Sansovino⁵⁸ and Giovan Francesco Rustici (1475-

⁵⁶ Maclagan and Longhurst, 1932, pp. 139–40 (Plate 107f).

⁵⁷ Frida Schottmüller, *Die Italienischen und Spanischen Bildwerke der Renaissance und des Barock, Erster Band – Die Bildwerke in Stein, Holz, Ton und Wachs*, Zweite Auflage, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin und Leipzig, 1933. For the 'Meister der Unartigen Kinder' see pages 157-9.

⁵⁸ Schottmüller (p. 157) does not specify whether 'Sansovino' is Andrea Sansovino (1476-1529) or Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570). With only ten years separating them a similar date range is proposed in either case but,

1554). Her appraisal of the modelling and the evident contrapposto used in several of the figures provided her argument but she was clear that she believed this dating applied to all the works grouped under this name.⁵⁹

Significantly, Schottmüller split the group (of Berlin works) into three categories: those by the Master of the Unruly Children, in which she included the standing *Madonna*, the *Quarrelling Children* and the seated *Madonna with a Book*; the workshop of the Master of the Unruly Children, under which she placed the *Charity*; and the Master of the Unruly Children and Santi Buglioni to whom she ascribed the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto*. In creating these three divisions Schottmüller added further complexity to the persona of the Master of the Unruly Children. The reduction in the number of works attributed to his hand had, in some senses, increased his significance, as now proposed was an artist who led a workshop (rather than was part of one), and collaborated with other prominent artists, as in the case of Santi Buglioni. Let us look at each of Schottmüller's groups in turn.

Schottmüller was the first to mention Santi Buglioni (1494-1576) as a possible collaborator on the terracotta *St. John the Baptist*.⁶⁰ In her catalogue entry she responded to Bode's earlier indication that the della Robbia workshop had a hand in this sculpture (which he dismissed after considering the physiognomy of the figure).⁶¹ Schottmüller went so far as to assert that a reliance on the della Robbia and the Buglioni (Benedetto (1459/60-1521) and Santi Buglioni were inheritors of the della Robbia technique) is proven.⁶² Given her dating of the group, the younger Santi is the most likely collaborator. Schottmüller supported the connection in bringing to light two comparative works. She noted that the composition of the terracotta in

one assumes that, listed between Andrea del Sarto and Rustici, she refers to Jacopo Sansovino, as these were his known associates.

⁵⁹ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 157.

⁶⁰ Schottmüller, 1933, pp. 158-9, no. 1584.

⁶¹ Bode, 1890, p. 102; Bode, 1928, p. 172.

⁶² Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158. Schottmüller asserts: 'Die Abhängigkeit gerade der spätesten Robbia-Werkstatt und der Buglioni von fremden Kompositionen ist auch sonst bewiesen.'

our corpus may be reliant on a relief from the baptismal font in San Leonardo, at Cerreto Guidi, ascribed to Giovanni della Robbia (c.1511). An almost exact replica of this relief exists, previously in the Volpi Collection and now at the Musée Cluny, Paris, which indicates that the similar treatment of the *Infant Baptist in the Desert* theme was popularized by the della Robbia and reproduced by their followers, of whom the Buglioni may be counted (Figs. 22 and 23).⁶³

Schottmüller described the Cluny work as a variant of the Berlin group but, although both are of a similar subject and size, and the original della Robbia relief appears to have inspired a small, stand-alone, saleable object, like that of our corpus, Schottmüller failed to register the substantial differences between the terracottas. Whereas the Cluny group is clearly taken from the relief at Cereto Guidi, the Berlin work departs from it significantly in composition and style. Although there is an evident influence which can be seen across all three works, Schottmüller's term 'variant' seems too indiscriminate and it ignored Bode's very pertinent comments on the differing body shapes used by the respective artists. Whilst they are not mentioned overtly, it is perhaps an acknowledgement of these differences, which led Schottmüller to retain an attribution to the 'Master of the Unruly Children' and name Buglioni as a collaborator only.

Schottmüller's re-classification of the Berlin *Charity* as 'Workshop of the Master of the Unruly Children' is also new. Schottmüller did not explicitly give her reasons for its removal from the core group but she did describe the London *Charity* in which the child on the lap of the Virtue is an almost exact copy of the child in the Berlin seated *Madonna*. With this statement she implied that the child on the lap of the Berlin *Charity* is less convincing as part

⁶³ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 159.

of the Master's original conception.⁶⁴ Schottmüller mentioned a further comparative work, of similar composition, in the Bardini Museum, but did not expand upon its connection to our corpus nor describe the work further. It is unclear which work, still in the Bardini collection in 1933, she may have referred to, but her comment suggests further works, in Florence, which may be connected to our Master.⁶⁵

The standing *Madonna and Child* is the first work listed by Schottmüller under the name of the Master of the Unruly Children.⁶⁶ She began her entry on the sculpture by suggesting that it clearly supports the argument for a later dating of the Master's works, due to its similarity to Andrea del Sarto's *Madonna of the Harpies* (1517; Fig. 24) and his *Charity* in the Scalzo (1520; Fig. 113). She proposed that the terracotta must be from the same time and location. Although evidently in agreement with Stites with regard to dating, Schottmüller asserted that although the identity of the anonymous sculptor could not be determined with any certainty, she did not believe an attribution to Leonardo da Vinci was possible. Her final remark on this work was to note a comparative example of a standing *Madonna* in wax in Budapest, which is of striking similarity (Fig. 25).

In her appraisal of the *Quarrelling Children*, Schottmüller was even more succinct.⁶⁷ She noted the second group in the V&A and that it was these two pairs that gave the Master his name, the unruliness of the children being more pronounced than in either the *Madonna* or *Charity* groups. Schottmüller noted that Werner Gramberg (1896-1985) commented that the children's bodies were remarkably similar to those of Tribolo's putti on his *Nature* in

⁶⁴ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158, no. 5558.

⁶⁵ Schottmüller may refer to the Bardini *Charity* sold in 1912, which is extremely close to that at the V&A (see CAT. C2). A further composition of *Madonna* or *Charity* with three putti remains in the Bardini Museum today but is clearly of a later date (CAT. C4).

⁶⁶ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 157, no. 1941.

⁶⁷ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158, no. 1585.

Fontainebleau (c.1529; Fig. 26).⁶⁸ Schottmüller's final work in this group, *The Madonna and Child with a Book* is merely listed, physically described, and catalogued alongside those above as an autograph work by the Master's hand.⁶⁹

Like her predecessors before her, Schottmüller listed her reasons for specific attributions and, more so than Bode, appears to have done so without a specific agenda or bias. Despite noting similarities with other artists she refrained from suggesting any one identity. Instead she prefers to use Bode's invented name, and indeed expand upon it. In Schottmüller's catalogue we have for the first time a sophisticated re-classification of the oeuvre of the Master of the Unruly Children. Rather than merely suggesting that a work in question is or is not by the hand of the Master she created sub-categories in an attempt to acknowledge the variances in quality and style whilst recognising their likely common origin. Building on Stites's argument for placing the work in the circle of Leonardo da Vinci, Schottmüller made comparisons with Andrea del Sarto and Tribolo and brought in Santi Buglioni, whom she credited as a co-producer.

No one has since developed the idea of the Master of the Unruly Children working with Buglioni, although Charles Avery noted the similarity between the Master's work and the frieze on the Ospedale del Ceppo in Pistoia, known to have been glazed by Buglioni, which shall be examined in due course (Fig. 29).⁷⁰ Buglioni is known to have collaborated with a number of artists including Rustici and Sansovino, mentioned by Schottmüller and further connected to our Master in later scholarship. According to Allan Marquand by the time Santi Buglioni reaches maturity he was the 'only one in his day' to produce such glazed

⁶⁸ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158. No reference is given for Gramberg's comment which may have been verbal. Both scholars were based in Germany.

⁶⁹ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158, no. 1583.

⁷⁰ Charles Avery, *Fingerprints of the Artist: European Terracotta Sculpture from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 48.

sculpture.⁷¹ This is a key point when considering the possible collaboration of Santi Buglioni with our Master. Indeed, any Florentine modeller who wished their work to be glazed in the ‘della Robbia style’ at this time would presumably have had to go to Buglioni. Further reflection on Schottmüller’s suggested collaboration and indeed her division into master and workshop classifications may lead one to register that the search for a single artist to account for the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children may be a search for a number of artists. In fact, it may be that individual works are not necessarily, or highly unlikely to be, the work of a single hand, given the very nature of workshop practice.

The legacy of Schottmüller’s new categories is that the previous unknown sculptor, originally presented as an anonymous follower of Donatello, has now seemingly become the head of a workshop, a Master whose designs respond to current trends, are emulated, and who engages in collaboration with other important artists. By giving our Master associates, and a workshop to run, Schottmüller situated him more firmly in a location – Florence - and a time – 1510-70 (the working years of Santi Buglioni).

In 1964 John Pope-Hennessy (1913-94), then Keeper of Sculpture but soon to be Director of the V&A, published a further catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the museum. He retained the Master of the Unruly Children as a classification, and in his paragraph of introduction he began by mentioning Bode and ended by citing Stites, implying some support for Leonardo as the identity of the artist.⁷² As we have done with previous scholars, we shall review Pope-Hennessy’s comments on the works in turn to establish his position, before summarising what was new, and what the problems or implications of his position might be.

⁷¹ Allan Marquand, *Benedetto and Santi Buglioni*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1921, p. xxxii.

⁷² John Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, London, 1964, Vols. I-III. For the Master of the Unruly Children see Vol. II, pp. 406-9, Cat. nos. 425-7 (illustrations Vol. III).

His catalogue entries begin with the *Charity* group in the museum, and after a detailed description of the work Pope-Hennessy noted other variants of the composition.⁷³ He listed the *Charity* group in Birmingham and other closely comparable works; the seated *Madonna and Child* and the figure of *Charity* with a flame and one child, both from Berlin, and the *Madonna and Child* group from the collection of Mrs. Benjamin Thaw (now in Brazil). He remarked upon the variations in the angle of the female head and the detail of drapery across the various versions, and that the two *Madonna* groups have the conventional round halos as opposed to the polygonal nimbus of *Charity*.

The catalogue entry also contains a quotation from a letter written by Bode to Zeiss (August Zeiss the former owner of the V&A *Charity*), of February 1896. Bode commented that he had seen an example of the composition with a false head owned by Bardini, and twice earlier had seen a similar work on the market; he considered the terracotta then owned by Zeiss to be considerably more beautiful than either version.⁷⁴ Pope-Hennessy also recounted Fabriczy's comments on the *Charity* terracotta now at the V&A, notably that he regarded this group as a crude copy of an earlier lost work and distinguished it from autograph works by the Master in Berlin. Pope-Hennessy believed the distinction was artificial, and that Fabriczy's second claim, that the head of the Virtue had received modern intervention, was false.⁷⁵

The second terracotta listed in the catalogue is *Two Quarrelling Children*. In this entry we learn that the group was originally recommended for purchase by the museum by collector Charles Fortnum F.S.A. (1820-99) as a "pretty group by an artist of the school of Donatello".⁷⁶ It is of interest that the circle of Donatello had already been implied in the

⁷³ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, p. 407, no. 425.

⁷⁴ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, p. 407. For the Bardini Charity see CAT.C2 discussed earlier in the chapter in relation to Bode (p.12) and Schottmüller (p. 31).

⁷⁵ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, p. 407.

⁷⁶ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 407-8, no. 426.

production of these sculptures, before Bode's *Jahrbuch* essay. Pope-Hennessy proceeded to recap the views of Bode, Schottmüller and Fabriczy and addressed the various conjectures that the work was either a companion to that in Berlin or a later imitation of it. He confirmed that the discrepancy in height between the two works is one millimetre and agreed with Maclagan and Longhurst that there was no reason to doubt the authenticity of the group as a pair with that in Berlin. Pope-Hennessy also noted the attributes of the *Children*, which in Berlin are a bagpipe and syrinx and in London a sack of fruit. He further agreed with Maclagan and Longhurst that the motif was likely to derive from the antique, where pairs of struggling children can be seen in sculpture, as they can also in Renaissance painting. As an example of this he cites a small sculpture illustrated by Salomon Reinach.⁷⁷

Finally, in his attributions to the Master of the Unruly Children, Pope-Hennessy listed the bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist*.⁷⁸ Pope-Hennessy followed Bode's lead in this but qualified his attribution by observing the blunt detail, which he believed revealed it to be an old terracotta squeeze, moulded from a superior original. Pope-Hennessy refuted the claims of Maclagan and Longhurst that the bust is related to a head of a child attributed to Verrocchio at Lille.⁷⁹

The *Two Winged Boys* were removed from the group previously listed under our Master, and instead given by Pope-Hennessy to Pierino da Vinci (1529-53).⁸⁰ In so doing, the former attributions of the group were reviewed: firstly the attribution made by Robinson to Francesco da Sangallo, then by Bode to the Master of the Unruly Children, and the tentative acceptance of this attribution by Maclagan and Longhurst. Pope-Hennessy then asserted that

⁷⁷ Pope-Hennessy cites Reinach in *Revue Archéologique*, 4e série, xx, 1912, pp. 381-4, in which he illustrates an antique pair of struggling children "Le groupe d'enfants autrefois à la bibliothèque de Vinne (Isère)".

⁷⁸ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 408-9, no. 427.

⁷⁹ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, p. 409. Maclagan and Longhurst, 1932, p. 87, refer to an infant bust at the Musée Wicar at Lille illustrated in Gonse, *Les Chefs-d'Oeuvre des Musées de France. Sculpture, dessins, objets d'art*. Paris, 1904, p. 215.

⁸⁰ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 440-2.

the sandstone sculpture has ‘nothing in common with the work of this artist’ (Master of the Unruly Children). He believed the correct identification of the work was one proposed verbally to him by James Holderbaum (1920-2011), as the pair of putti, recorded by Vasari, carved by Pierino for the house of Monsignor Pier Francesco Ricci. Pope-Hennessy proceeded to then cite Vasari’s description and record the provenance of the putti through different hands.⁸¹ *The Boy and Girl with a Goose* is likewise re-attributed by Pope-Hennessy, in this case to Tribolo, and dated c.1550.⁸²

With regard to the dating of these works, Pope-Hennessy did not challenge the opinion offered by Stites and Schottmüller. He noted that the sculptures were once regarded as belonging to the second half of the fifteenth century but, in the year of his writing, they were widely accepted as of the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Pope-Hennessy provided no further speculation or details to support a dating to 1500-25.

Rather than focus on dating, the catalogue provided the forum in which Pope-Hennessy could strongly defend the works in the museum’s collection, namely the *Two Quarrelling Children* and the *Charity*, which had previously received criticism as inauthentic or lesser works by the Master. Indeed, Pope-Hennessy described such classifications on authenticity as artificial, indicating the invented nature of the personality. The bust of the *Baptist* is acknowledged as a work of lesser quality but is not demoted in terms of attribution or re-classified as a workshop production, as it might have been in the hands of Schottmüller. The corpus of the Master is reduced by Pope-Hennessy as the *Boy and Girl with a Goose* and the *Winged Boys* are firmly removed from it. The *Madonna and Child*, once included by Fabriczy but refuted by Maclagan and Longhurst is likewise excluded by Pope-Hennessy.

⁸¹ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, p. 441.

⁸² Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 437-8.

Perhaps given the nature of the catalogue, which is comprehensive in its coverage of Italian sculpture at the museum, the entries are necessarily limited. The author did not engage in speculation on an identity for the Master nor did he offer any new comparisons with works by other masters. He did not build upon Stites's lead and follow up the likelihood of a connection with Leonardo nor did he expand upon Schottmüller's comparison with Andrea del Sarto. Reference to the *Equestrian Battle* groups, which Stites offered as works by the same hand, is omitted, nor is a comparable *Madonna and Child* at the Rijksmuseum (Fig. 27), acquired only two years after the V&A's purchase of *Charity*, included in Pope-Hennessy's assessment. One assumes he must therefore not have known it.

Inadvertently, by ascribing works formally attributed to the Master to artists such as Tribolo and Pierino da Vinci, Pope-Hennessy did bring the work of these sculptors into a possible relationship with our *anonimo*. Works were given to these artists, as distinct from the Master of the Unruly Children, because of stylistic qualities recognisable elsewhere in the artists' oeuvre and not in our Master's. Pope-Hennessy did not suggest the artists may have been potential collaborators and did not even place them within the Master's circle of influence. Even so, the concurrence in style and choice of subject, which led to the former amalgamation of these works under one personality, presents the possibility of all three artists, Tribolo, Pierino and our Master, having worked in close proximity.

With the publication of the V&A catalogue in 1964 we reach a point at which the foundations of our new Master have been firmly laid. Pope-Hennessy's text did not offer any hypotheses as to the identity of the artist; rather he considered the previous scholarship and clarified the current position. In doing so he further consolidated the supposed identity and corpus of the Master of the Unruly Children. The existence of a single artist, named as the Master of the Unruly Children, was the main point upon which all scholars following Bode had agreed.

Apart from Stites, who attempted to appropriate the works of the Master into the oeuvre of Leonardo da Vinci, all those scholars had maintained a belief in an individual artistic personality to whom they had allocated a consensual set of stylistic characteristics. Variances in style and quality were noted in several cases but never resulted in the loss of a unique persona behind the core group.

All of the authors analysing the work of the Master had included a nucleus of works as the basis of their corpus, the two *Madonnas* in Berlin, the two versions of *Charity* (V&A and KFM), and the two pairs of *Quarrelling Children* in London and Berlin. The works in both cities depicting John the Baptist could also be added to this list although they are occasionally omitted from some reviews. All of the works in this core group contain figures of lively infants. Aside from the *Winged Boys* at the V&A, all the sculptures attributed to this hand were made from terracotta and all were small-scale (less than a metre in height).

Each writer had mentioned further works supposedly produced by or connected to this Master. However, not all of these works receive proper categorisation or scrutiny; the Birmingham and Bardini terracottas are referred to without much detail provided. The groups of *Equestrian Battle* scenes proposed by Stites are discussed in some depth, but it can be argued that this was not wholly within the context of our Master but rather that of Leonardo. Nevertheless all scholars hint at a larger output for which they believe the Master of the Unruly Children to be responsible.

Despite Bode's early proposition of a mid fifteenth-century date for our Master and the subsequent repetition of this by Maclagan and Longhurst, all scholars since have agreed that the works in question belong to the early or mid sixteenth century. It was recognised that deliberate archaic traits, employed by the Master, could have caused early confusion.

As previously noted, the original dating could have originated in Bode's preoccupation with Donatello, who was the main protagonist in his writings on the use of the infant in Renaissance art – the pretext for Bode's first mention of this sculptor. The fact that our Master grew out of this discussion of children is perhaps the largest problem in our assessment of both the sculptor and the scholarship on him so far. It appears there is a proclivity to attribute works to his hand based on their subject rather than their style. Moreover, the *Equestrian Battle* groups, connected to the Master by Stites, do not contain any ebullient minors and were conspicuously absent from the subsequent scholarship on the Master (until this point).

Here lies a second limitation on the analysis so far, which is that, apart from Stites's article, the work on this Master had been driven and contributed by the staff of two large museums, writing on their own collections and for their own publications. The assessment of works is often presented in the somewhat restricted form of catalogue entries, which can convey the author's in-depth knowledge of the physical object, but in scope, do not always permit wide-ranging discussion. Moreover, a bias can be detected in both Berlin and London, the curators of each collection keen to establish, often in didactic fashion, the importance of their works. Scholarship may not have been the only motivation or influence determining the style and content of such publications.

Nevertheless, it is upon the basis of these early and seemingly authoritative sources that subsequent art historians and curators have built their own theories about the work of the Master of the Unruly Children. More recent scholarship shows a tendency to attempt an identification of the Master or at least to note the similarity of certain works in the *oeuvre* set out by Bode and his successors, with those of known artists. For works attributed to an unknown master the terracottas listed above have received exceptional coverage in scholarly

texts of the late twentieth century. They appear not only as quality examples of Renaissance terracotta but feature in numerous enquiries into the leading protagonists of early sixteenth century sculpture, such as Jacopo Sansovino, Giovan Francesco Rustici, and Pietro Torrigiano (1472-1528), when attributions to their own hand are being expanded or questioned. The works attributed to the Master have also continued to multiply.

The *Madonna and Child* which had been acquired by the Rijksmuseum in 1922 (CAT. B6; Fig. 27), received its first published catalogue entry in 1973 in *Beeldhouwkunst in het Rijksmuseum*, written by curator Jaap Leeuwenberg (1904-78) and conservator Willy Halsema-Kubes (1937-92).⁸³ The entry is mainly descriptive and whilst a reference to Schottmüller was made, further reflection on previous scholarship or the proposed identity of the Master was not undertaken. Nonetheless, the work was connected to the Master and his corpus (that established to date). Moreover, the publication of this work secured its inclusion in subsequent evaluations of the Master.

In 1981 on the occasion of its exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Charles Avery attributed a further work to the Master of the Unruly Children then in the collection of Arthur M. Sackler (CAT. C1; Fig. 28).⁸⁴ The work has since been in the possession of the Cesati Gallery in Milan.⁸⁵ Avery's catalogue entry begins with a review of the Master and featured the *Charity* groups formerly in Berlin and at the V&A and the Rijksmuseum's *Madonna and Child*. Whilst these works illustrated Avery's synopsis of the Master in the scholarship to date, they also served to

⁸³ Jaap Leeuwenberg and Willy Halsema-Kubes, *Beeldhouwkunst in het Rijksmuseum: catalogus /samengesteld*, 's-Gravenhage : Staatsuitgeverij, Amsterdam, 1973, Cat. no. 604, p.360

⁸⁴ Charles Avery, *Fingerprints of the Artist*, 1981, pp. 46-9. Whilst Avery's catalogue was in preparation James Draper also published the work in a shorter catalogue for the New York leg of the same exhibition tour: James Draper, *European Terracottas from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1981, p. 13 (no. 7).

⁸⁵ The present author saw it with Alessandro Cesati in April 2011.

support Avery's attribution of the Sackler terracotta to the same group, as they are closest in composition to the work.

The Master was described by Avery as a 'good sculptor' who 'composed with complete assurance' a series of variations on the theme of a seated female with children.⁸⁶ In proposing an attribution to this Master for the Sackler *Madonna and Child* Avery described recurrent features seen across this series of seated women and children - the facial type of the women, the positioning of their feet and direction of legs, the loose and ample robes, the treatment of drapery across their knees and feet. All of these features, he suggested, relate the works to the same master. The modelling of the children receives comparable analysis. The 'layered fleshiness' is noted in children across the group and compared to that seen in the child of the Sackler terracotta.⁸⁷ Facial expressions and curling hair are also evaluated. Avery makes a particular link between the pair of *Quarrelling Children* at the V&A with the new *Madonna and Child* proposed. Not only does he suggest the infant figures are alike but notes that in both works the seat supporting the principal figures is hollowed out in similar fashion.⁸⁸

Having reasonably connected the *Madonna and Child* from the Fogg with the Master of the Unruly Children, Avery used his catalogue entry to expand discussion of the Master more generally. He proceeded to mention further works which he believed should be connected with the artist. He began by noting that the glazed terracotta figures of the *Seven Corporal Works of Mercy* on the loggia of the Ospedale del Ceppo in Pistoia (1525-28) are close in style and subject to the works of our Master.⁸⁹ The ribbed halo seen on the figures of *Charity* in Berlin and the V&A is also seen on Virtues in the frieze in Pistoia, although not worn by *Charity* (Fig. 29). Avery noted that Santi Buglioni is credited with glazing the Pistoia frieze

⁸⁶ Avery, 1981, p. 46.

⁸⁷ Avery, 1981, p. 48.

⁸⁸ Avery, 1981, p. 48.

⁸⁹ Avery, 1981, p. 48. Cf. note 67.

between 1526 and 1528 but that it is not known if he was also responsible for modelling the figures. Avery did not mention Schottmüller's observations from her 1933 catalogue but it is interesting to note a similar proposal here – that the Master of the Unruly Children may have worked in collaboration with Santi Buglioni. Indeed, there is an inference that Buglioni and the Master may even be one and the same.

After Stites, Avery seems to be the first to expand the range of subjects attributed to the Master. He asserted that it would be unlikely for so competent a sculptor to be limited to groups of women and children alone and proposed a far more extensive array of activity, albeit still within the confines of small-scale terracottas. He even suggested this as a characteristic way of working for our master, along with a tendency to produce variations on a particular theme.⁹⁰

Two further series of statuettes are suggested by Avery to be connected with the hand of our Master. The first of these we have already had cause to examine: the *Equestrian Battle* groups. Avery noted the connections made between this series and the artists Rustici and Leonardo. He agreed that there was good reason (noting Vasari's comments on the artists and their compositions of horses) to attribute these works to Rustici, but that different hands were evident in the groups, which he believed could be due to some of them having been made by our Master. Much like Stites before him, Avery commented on form, movement, flesh, drapery, and rocky bases, all of which, according to him, are consistent with that demonstrated by the Master of the Unruly Children.⁹¹ The second series proffered by Avery is that depicting reclining male figures, most likely to be *River Gods*.⁹² Once again the same features and points of comparison were used to connect these with our Master. Avery then

⁹⁰ Avery, 1981, p. 48.

⁹¹ Avery, 1981, pp. 48-9.

⁹² Avery, 1981, p. 49. Avery illustrates the *River God* from the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design and notes that others are illustrated in A.E. Brinckmann, *Barock-Bozzetti*, Frankfurt a. M., II, 1924, pls. 4-6.

lists examples of these works and their locations, including Rhode Island (Fig. 30), Detroit (Fig. 31), and Munich (Fig. 32). It is noted that these have sometimes been associated with Jacopo Sansovino due to their similarities with his Venetian works.

In the concluding paragraph of the catalogue entry Avery not only summarised the problem of the Master of the Unruly Children as he perceived it, but he revealed the reasons for his preoccupation in making the above connections, particularly as they relate to new works. He says ‘it is difficult to decide identity from among the several candidates, including Sansovino and Rustici, one of whom may ultimately prove to be concealed behind the anonymity of the Master of the Unruly Children.’⁹³

In this text Avery thus opened up the field of scholarship on the Master. He had attributed a further work to the artist and beyond that indicated that several groups also belong to his hand. He suggested that this was an artist who worked frequently on series of small terracottas – reworking a theme with minor variations. Although he retained the name Master of the Unruly Children he was no longer bound by the subject matter implied by the title in his appraisal of works. He also began in earnest to explore the artist’s likely identity (considering Santi Buglioni, Jacopo Sansovino and Rustici), Stiles being the only one to have done this before. Although others had linked the anonymous sculptor with known artists, they had refrained from explicitly suggesting these as the true identity of the Master. This is a subject to which Avery returned in later texts. The main problem with Avery’s position, however, is that whilst he noted similarities between the additional works and the core group established previously, he failed to note the discrepancies – which are numerous. Avery was searching for a single artist behind the identity of the Master but these variances raise the question of whether we should be searching for several.

⁹³ Avery, 1981, p. 49.

In addressing one of Avery's suggestions, the 1991 monograph on Jacopo Sansovino written by Bruce Boucher re-visited the potential connection between our Master and the eponymous sculptor.⁹⁴ It is during a discussion of Sansovino's early training that Boucher mentioned the works of the Master of the Unruly Children. He proposed the works could be connected to Sansovino's pre-Roman period, perhaps being student models created more as learning tools than saleable objects, and certainly not a series of objects.⁹⁵ Boucher was tentative in offering this link. Thus, we find the work of the Master of the Unruly Children placed within the 'precursors' section of his catalogue of Sansovino works.⁹⁶ In listing him here, echoes of Bode and a tendency to link this artist with the previous generation still seem to resound.

With Sansovino rather than our Master as the real subject of this text the terracottas in question are not as rigorously scrutinised as they might otherwise have been. Boucher noted the connection between the compositions of the *Madonna and Child* and that seen within the corpus of Sansovino and indeed his close friend Andrea del Sarto, for whom Sansovino occasionally made models, but at no point did Boucher assert definitively that the works ascribed to the Master belong to Sansovino. The suggestion that such works may have been made as student models by the artist is as near to their connected authorship as Boucher ventured.

Boucher, however, made no comment on the highly finished quality of the works, which were also then painted or bronzed, which surely prevents them from being mere student practice. Their existence in multiples also calls Boucher's proposal into question. Despite Boucher's reaffirmation of the connection between our Master and Sansovino, his summary

⁹⁴ Bruce Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1991, Vol. I, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Boucher, 1991, Vol. I, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Boucher, 1991, Vol. II. In the unnumbered pages of illustrations, Boucher places the Master of the Unruly Children's *Charity* (V&A), no. 8, in the 'Precursors' section, before discussing autograph works.

approach to the terracottas is also evidence that he did not truly believe them to belong to the sculptor.

In his catalogue entry for the 1992 exhibition *Per la Storia della scultura, Materiali inediti e poco noti*, Massimo Ferretti picked up the baton in pursuit of an identity for the Master of the Unruly Children.⁹⁷ He reviewed the corpus of the Master in some detail, in the process of attributing yet a further work to his hand, in this case another example of two *Quarrelling Children* (CAT. B2; Fig. 33). Ferretti, of course, linked the work with the *Children* at the V&A and Berlin and a work of the same subject attributed to Donatello, belonging to Professor Santarelli, which we were informed was on display in the Medieval exhibition at the Bargello in 1865.⁹⁸ Ferretti also mentioned a now lost replica in marble that once resided in the Bellariva garden.⁹⁹ Although his essay is largely concerned with the iconography of the two fighting children, he did not ignore the question of attribution; he reviewed the claims of his main predecessors and broadened his discussion to include those other series connected to the Master of the Unruly Children.

In examining the *Equestrian Battle* groups, Ferretti acknowledged that Rustici may have been responsible for some of the works but doubted his involvement in the entire group. He proposed the Master of the Unruly Children for other examples, and suggested the works were made around 1510. He looked at the similarity of mouths and cheeks to Leonardo's cartoons, which he believed the artists responsible must have had close contact with.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Massimo Ferretti, *Per la Storia della scultura, Materiali inediti e poco noti*, Società Editrice Umberto Allemandi & C., Turin, 1992, pp. 33–49.

⁹⁸ Ferretti, 1992, p. 33.

⁹⁹ Ferretti, 1992, p. 33.

¹⁰⁰ Ferretti, 1992, p. 44.

He also considered the standing *Madonna* in Berlin and the similarity of the work to a Sansovino model in Budapest.¹⁰¹ The model was described previously by Boucher as a competition entry for the commission of a new figure for the Mercato Nuovo in Florence, but Boucher did not make the connection between this model and that of the Berlin *Madonna*, only with Andrea del Sarto's compositions.¹⁰² The potential link between these two artists had already been established but Ferretti suggested that the works of our Master may derive from the success of these compositions (by Sansovino and Sarto), rather than pre-date them.

Ferretti believed the bust of the *Infant St. John the Baptist* at the V&A was from the workshop of the Master of the Unruly Children, despite being made from a mould. Whilst he noted the debt to Desiderio da Settignano (1428/30-64) and Antonio Rosellino (1427-79), previously also referred to by Bode, he declared that the language of the work is different and proposed that the Master intended to archaize his style.¹⁰³

Ferretti also reasserted a connection between a *Madonna and Child* group in Santa Maria della Salute e San Nicolao, in Buggiano and the Master of the Unruly Children (Fig. 34).¹⁰⁴ The work was linked to Jacopo Sansovino in 1962 by Margrit Lisner, but the attribution did not find wide acceptance. Following Lisner various names had been proffered as responsible for the work and in 1980 M. Scudieri Maggi noted a similarity with the work of the Master of the Unruly Children, as described by Bode.¹⁰⁵ Ferretti made his case for the sculpture to be attributed to Zaccaria Zacchi. He also suggested, however, that it be attached to the Master of the Unruly Children's body of work, therefore making Zacchi our Master (or a

¹⁰¹ Ferretti, 1992, p. 45.

¹⁰² Boucher, 1991, Vol. II, pp. 12-13 and 319.

¹⁰³ Ferretti, 1992, p. 49.

¹⁰⁴ Ferretti, 1992, pp. 47-8.

¹⁰⁵ M. Scudieri Maggi in *La Civiltà del Cotto*, ed. Antonio Paolucci, Impruneta, 1980, no. 2.18, pp. 110-112.

collaborator).¹⁰⁶ He noted the similarity of composition between the Zacchi group and the sculptures of the *Madonna and Child* attributed to the Master. The Buggiano work conflates the motif of the foot on a step, seen in the Berlin standing *Madonna*, with the seated pose of the other *Madonna* and *Charity* groups. The style and handling of drapery is extremely close to that we have seen in our Master's work. Ferretti admitted that the Buggiano *Madonna* does not coincide completely with the style of the V&A work, which he wrote has 'morfologie meno verrocchiesche' (a less Verrocchioesque morphology) and is rather is more rhythmic.¹⁰⁷ Yet there are further inconsistencies which Ferretti failed to mention - the more angular facial types and arrangement of hair to name but two.

The author of the Buggiano *Madonna* was undoubtedly aware of the same Florentine traditions and developments of which the work of the Master of the Unruly Children is reliant and Ferretti's proposition is not without merit. Zaccaria Zacchi is recorded as having submitted an entry for the Mercato Nuovo competition alongside Jacopo Sansovino.¹⁰⁸ It is highly likely therefore that Zacchi would have known Sansovino's model and the work of Sarto, providing a likely origin for the motif of the raised foot seen here. It seems evident that Zacchi was influenced by the younger artist's work and if Ferretti's assertion is correct this would account for the similarities noted among the works here ascribed to Sansovino, Zacchi and the Master of the Unruly Children.

In 1996 Charles Avery built upon his former survey of the Master for an entry on the artist in the Grove Dictionary of Art.¹⁰⁹ The general overview of the Master presented here is much the same as was previously laid out by Avery in his 1981 catalogue. He reinforced his theory

¹⁰⁶ According to Boucher the *Madonna and Child* in Buggiano is the work of a provincial Tuscan sculptor, following the ideas of the turn of the century but not reflecting the work of Jacopo Sansovino. Boucher, 1991, Vol. II, cat. 101, fig. 373, p. 366.

¹⁰⁷ Ferretti, 1992, p. 48.

¹⁰⁸ Boucher, 1991, Vol. I, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Avery, 'The Master of the Unruly Children' in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996, Vol. 20, pp. 778-9.

that the groups of *River Gods* also belong to the Master, and he suggested the figures are re-workings of Michelangelo's studies of the 1520s for the *River Gods* intended for the tombs in San Lorenzo, once more noting their previous connection with Sansovino's Evangelists on the altar rail in San Marco, Venice. Moreover, Avery added to the series of *River Gods* he believed should be associated with the Master and listed a terracotta in Karlsruhe, once attributed to Sansovino but rejected by Boucher. In making the link with Sansovino, Avery once again entertained the possibility that the artist may have been behind the work of our Master. But aside from Sansovino, Avery suggested other plausible candidates for the Master's true identity. Once again he appraised the *Battle* groups and noted their kinship to Rustici, citing evidence to ascribe some of these groups to Rustici whilst also suggesting that some were executed by the Master of the Unruly Children. Although this assertion puts our Master in the circle of Rustici, it does not establish that the Master and Rustici are one and the same; indeed, it implies that the hand of one can be discerned from the other.

New to this publication, Avery recorded the suggestion that the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children and the Master of the David and St John Statuettes, to which our Master is often compared, may be by the hand of Pietro Torrigiano. Avery does not expand on this proposition in any depth but evidently feels it worth consideration.¹¹⁰ Torrigiano was an artist known to have worked in terracotta; indeed extant examples of his work are comparable to those in our corpus. Torrigiano's *putti* on the tomb of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York in Westminster Abbey also bear close comparison to the children of our Master (Fig. 107). What Avery failed to mention, however, is that Torrigiano was in England and elsewhere in northern Europe for the majority of the first decades of the sixteenth century, which would have prevented him from producing a body of work that not only seems to have originated in Florence, but seems to have been destined for a particularly

¹¹⁰ Avery, 1996, p. 779.

Florentine market. This proposed identity behind the work of our Master is not pursued further by subsequent scholars.

The repercussions of Avery's attribution of the *River Gods* to the Master of the Unruly Children were felt almost immediately with examples of small-scale terracottas of the subject emerging on the market, ascribed to our Master. In 2002, a *Bacchus* appeared alongside a *River God* for sale at the Daniel Katz Gallery (Fig. 35; CATs. B4 & D9). Both sculptures were linked to the Master of the Unruly Children but ultimately attributed to Rustici. This was argued for on the grounds of their kinship with the *Equestrian Battle* groups, a version of which incidentally came into the hands of the same dealer in 2010 (CAT. B13).¹¹¹ Other subjects too were now considered under the umbrella of the Master more freely than previously.

The commercial consequences are also reflected in scholarly texts on sculptors of this period. It could be argued that Avery's suggestion that our Master may have been responsible for works linked to Rustici or Sansovino, although not firmly attributed to them, had the effect of the Master becoming a catch-all for many problematic works in terracotta from the early sixteenth century. He is offered by Avery to account for anomalies in the oeuvre of artists like Sansovino and Rustici and this had a ripple effect often with less scrupulous followers.

In 2004, the opposite phenomenon occurred and an artist with no securely attributed *oeuvre* is attributed with all of the works previously grouped under the name Master of the Unruly Children. For the commercial gallery Altomani & Sons, Alfredo Bellandi published his appraisal of scholarship on the Master and proposed his identity as Sandro di Lorenzo di

¹¹¹ Katherine Zock, *European Sculpture*, Daniel Katz Gallery, 2002, pp. 54-9. The gallery also published their findings on the *Battle* group in 2010. This work was also attributed by the gallery to Rustici.

Sinibalo (active 1483-1554).¹¹² Let us first review the content of Bellandi's text before addressing this most recent identification of our Master.

Bellandi's proposition occurred in a catalogue entry for a small terracotta *Madonna Adorante* (the kneeling Virgin in prayer), which he attributed to our Master. The attribution had been suggested verbally to him by Giancarlo Gentilini (CAT. B7; Fig. 36).¹¹³ After briefly reviewing the scholarship on the Master from Bode to Avery, Bellandi concluded that this work had all the characteristics unanimously given to the sculptor. In his appraisal of previous attributions and in his physical analysis of this terracotta, Bellandi was keen to reassert the connections to Rustici. He noted at length the case of the *Equestrian Battle* groups and believed that this work too showed the influence of Rustici in the fall of the Virgin's dress, which clings to her arms, breasts and thighs, but protrudes in heavy ridges down her front. Bellandi asserted that this is not only a stylistic trait of Rustici, but suggested that its use here implied our Master had first-hand knowledge of Rustici, perhaps having frequented his studio or circle during his youth.¹¹⁴

Bellandi developed this suggested connection between Rustici and our Master in his proposal that Sandro di Lorenzo may be responsible for the works in our corpus. In documents that had recently been published, a dispute concerning four works by Sandro di Lorenzo was described.¹¹⁵ According to Bellandi, in the description of these works and their maker the profile of our Master emerged: a modern master, sensitive to fifteenth-century tradition, with a circle of avant-garde associates, and a documented relationship with Rustici. Moreover, Bellandi suggested that the themes of the disputed works, a *Laocoön*, *Bacchus*, the figure of a

¹¹² Alfredo Bellandi in *Altomani 2004*, ed. Andrea Ciaroni, Altomani & Sons, Milan, 2004, pp. 240-60.

¹¹³ Bellandi, 2004, p. 245.

¹¹⁴ Bellandi, 2004, pp. 245-6.

¹¹⁵ Bellandi, 2004, p. 248. For the original publication and interpretation of the documents see Andrew Butterfield and David Franklin, 'A documented episode in the history of renaissance 'terracruda' sculpture' in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 140, No. 1149, December 1998, pp. 819-24.

Child after Desiderio and a *Judith* after Verrochio, were all those you would expect from the Master of the Unruly Children.¹¹⁶ In particular Bellandi was keen to relate the *Bacchus* to similar works in Detroit (CAT. D10) and with the Daniel Katz Gallery (CAT. D9) in London, which are all similar to the *River Gods* proposed by Avery.¹¹⁷ Much like Stites before him, Bellandi used the motif of the rocky base to connect the Altomani *Madonna* with those *River Gods*, *Equestrian Battles*, *Charity* groups and *Quarrelling Children*.

The final suggestion made by Bellandi with regard to our Master was that he was involved in the production of *presepi* (nativity scenes), for which he believed the Altomani *Madonna* was once intended. He mentioned a *Shepherd* figure in a private collection which he also believed to be connected to the present work, and made for the same purpose. Moreover, Bellandi proposed that such nativity scenes were produced during the sculptor's youth, and therefore, the *Madonna Adorante* should be dated to the first years of the 1500s.

In summary, Bellandi added two works to the Master's corpus, a *Madonna* and a *Shepherd* (unseen by the present author), and suggested the Master was actually Sandro di Lorenzo di Sinibaldo, who he believed had a close relationship with Rustici and produced nativity scenes in his youth. Bellandi's point concerning the description of works documented by Sandro di Lorenzo, and their similarity with those attributed to our Master, is pertinent and makes his identification of our sculptor plausible, but there are no extant works in terracotta which can be firmly attributed to Sandro di Lorenzo and, therefore, no means of comparing stylistic qualities. Furthermore, Bellandi's supposition that Sandro di Lorenzo was close to Rustici has little evidence to recommend it. The documents he referred to imply only an acquaintance, not a friendship, and the artist's supposed youthful exposure to Rustici (whilst making *presepi*) seems fantastic. Nonetheless, Bellandi highlighted a wider problem in the present

¹¹⁶ Bellandi, 2004, p. 248.

¹¹⁷ Bellandi, 2004, p. 250.

field of scholarship: the existence of named and documented artists without attributed works yet an accumulation of attributions made to invented personalities.

A succinct review of the recent attempts to discover the identity of the Master of the Unruly Children was provided by Peta Motture in 2005.¹¹⁸ In her catalogue entry for *Charity* from the V&A, for an exhibition in Ottawa, she summarised the scholarship to date before taking it in a rather new direction. Motture does not discredit the suggestions of Ferretti or Bellandi, indeed she admitted that Bellandi's case for attribution to Sandro di Lorenzo was appealing, but she was firm in her belief that the works here described (and in the group attributed to the Master more generally) are the work of many hands and indeed many workshops. She was not the first to identify the involvement of several artists in place of our constructed Master but is the first, it could be said, to abandon completely the search for any one artistic personality behind the conception of these works.¹¹⁹ Motture's text shows a greater interest in the display and use of these works and their social impact, which we will have cause to review in subsequent chapters.

The impact of Motture's position was twofold. On the one hand it disrupted the process of connoisseurship which had preoccupied scholars to date but had, with some success, narrowed the likely time and circumstance in which the works under discussion were produced, even if it had not discovered their true author. On the other hand in eliminating the need to place a known sculptor in the stead of this invented identity, Motture also steered us to think about the use and iconography of the work, unencumbered by authorship, which better reflects the true nature of Florentine workshop manufacture during this period.

¹¹⁸ Peta Motture in *Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Renaissance in Florence*, ed. David Franklin, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2005, pp. 184 -5.

¹¹⁹ Motture, 2005, p. 184.

Finally, in 2007 and 2008 two large monographs on the work of Rustici were published by Philippe Sénéchal and Tommaso Mozzati.¹²⁰ As with Boucher's book on Sansovino, these volumes focus largely on the artist in question but they do not ignore the overlaps that scholarship on our Master has had with Rustici.¹²¹ Neither writer proposed that Rustici was the Master of the Unruly Children but both have cause to reflect on his oeuvre. This is done in particular by Sénéchal, who devoted a whole section of his book to the relationship between Rustici and our Master. He also included in his *Catalogue des oeuvres refusées* (catalogue of rejected works) twenty-seven works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children. Within this group one work is described as *Suiveur du Maître des Enfants turbulent* (Follower of the Master of the Unruly Children; Fig. 37), one as the Master or Zaccaria Zacchi (Fig. 38), and another as workshop or imitator of the Master (Fig. 39).¹²²

Sénéchal addressed the attribution of the *Equestrian Battle* groups, which had most often connected Rustici to our Master in previous scholarship. For Sénéchal, the groups at the Louvre and the Bargello belong to Rustici. He noted that authorship of the other versions is contested and, in his 'rejected works', gives four of these to our Master. The invention of the composition, he firmly believed, was wholly the work of Rustici.

Sénéchal discussed our Master further within his exploration of Rustici's role regarding the development of small-scale statuettes in terracotta. This 'evidence' of Rustici working on terracottas is used to bolster the likelihood that the artist was also responsible for other compositions and designs of this size and medium. It is here that Sénéchal called for

¹²⁰ Phillippe Sénéchal, *Giovan Francesco Rustici 1475-1554*, Arthena, Association pour la diffusion de l'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, 2007, Tommaso Mozzati, *Giovanfrancesco Rustici, le Compagnie del Paiuolo e della Cazzuola. Arte, letteratura, festa nell'eta della Maniera*, L.S. Olschki, Florence 2008.

¹²¹ The artistic community at the Sapienza, from where Rustici founded two social clubs enabling artists and patrons to mix, is the primary subject of Mozzatti's 2008 book and also discussed in Sénéchal, 2007, pp. 123-35, and Boucher, pp. 17-18. The likelihood of the Master of the Unruly Children having associated with this group is further discussed in Chapter Two.

¹²² Sénéchal, 2007, pp. 230-45.

reconsideration of the statuettes proposed by Bode as belonging to the Master of the Unruly Children, and those which he believes have been too long attributed to Jacopo Sansovino. An overview of the group attributed to the Master, and its coherence, was provided by S  n  chal. He described the place of the ebullient infants alongside counterpart minors seen in the work of Desiderio and Luca della Robbia, followed by Pontormo and Andrea del Sarto. He also reviewed Avery's association of these works with the groups of *Equestrian Battles* and *River Gods*, and refuted any connection between them and Jacopo Sansovino.

Sandro di Lorenzo is once again introduced and Bellandi's argument is retold in some detail by S  n  chal. S  n  chal also believed the artist may have been close to Rustici and suggested this as the reason Rustici declined to take part in the litigation described in the documents (mentioned earlier).¹²³ The reclining *Bacchus*, set on a barrel, mentioned among Sandro di Lorenzo's works and highlighted by Bellandi, is once again focused upon by S  n  chal, who proceeded to discuss the former attribution of the comparable works in Detroit and elsewhere to Jacopo Sansovino and Tribolo. He asserted instead that they belong to the circle of Rustici and that, recognising one of his own compositions in the disputed works of Sandro di Lorenzo, Rustici could no longer act as a witness.¹²⁴ Therefore, according to S  n  chal, Rustici was the designer of both the *Battle* groups and *River Gods* or *Bacchus* figures, and knowingly provided models for associate artists to reproduce.

In defence of their common attribution detailed comparisons between the several versions of *Bacchus* and the *River Gods*, with the figures and setting of the *Battle* groups at the Louvre and Bargello, are then made. Similarities were identified, including the notched rocky bases, the rendering of anatomy marked by incisions with the spatula, and the treatment of water

¹²³ S  n  chal, 2007, pp. 149-50, see also Bellandi, 2004, pp. 246-9 and Butterfield and Franklin, 1998, pp. 819-24.

¹²⁴ S  n  chal, 2007, p. 150-2.

and hair. A connection between the recumbent figures and those of Michelangelo's for the Sacristy of San Lorenzo was also noted. Sénéchal believed the terracottas preceded the original models by Michelangelo, but also conceded that they owe a debt to the artist and are probably derived from his colossal figures for the Sistine Chapel.¹²⁵

A *River God* in a Swiss Private Collection (formerly Katz) was singled out by Sénéchal as the original prototype of the Master (Rustici) which he believed was then replicated by others (Fig. 35).¹²⁶ Sénéchal proposed that Rustici was responsible for making such 'energetic' compositions fashionable before providing models to skilful 'plasticatori' (fabricators) amongst them the Master of the Unruly Children, Sandro di Lorenzo di Sinibaldo and the young Zaccaria Zacchi, who then infinitely embroidered on these ideas. He believed this was true not only of the sculptures of *Bacchus*, *River Gods* and *Equestrian Battles* but also of the *Quarrelling Children*, *Madonnas* and *Charity* groups connected to our Master. Variations across the group are explained as a consequence of the sculptor and his assistants, altering the dress slightly, changing attributes, and in general creating hybrids of previous designs. In this respect he believed the sculptors also had sovereignty over the works too – enjoying playing with the forms of the original concept.

Rustici has been a recurrent figure in the scholarship of the Master of the Unruly Children but is here, for the first time, firmly proposed as the originator of all the designs under discussion. A new model for production is outlined where Rustici is not credited as the author of all individual works, and not even the inventor of all modifications or variations, but nonetheless responsible for the prototype designs and concepts.

¹²⁵ Senechal, p. 150.

¹²⁶ Senechal, p. 152.

In his assessment of all the works formally attributed to the Master within the context of Rustici, S  n  chal modified the corpus previously known. Works once connected to our Master have been removed and given to Rustici, whilst other works have been added. Listed in the *Catalogue des oeuvres refus  es* are new works, which had recently appeared on the art market, but these have not necessarily all been attributed to the Master by S  n  chal. Indeed, S  n  chal composed a short catalogue entry on each work but did not attempt to break up this now large group of works, other than into the three categories mentioned above, despite the existence of several incongruities within the group still evident.

The position taken by S  n  chal with regard to the invention of these compositions is also problematic. In the body of his text clear arguments are expounded to attribute the groups of *Equestrian Battles* at the Louvre and Bargello to Rustici, and similarly (though less comprehensively) a terracotta *River God*. These act as the ‘prototype’ from which S  n  chal suggests subsequent artists produced variations for the market. No such ‘original’ compositions for the *Madonna and Child*, *Charity* or *Quarrelling Children* groups were singled out and given to Rustici. Nor was it explained where these groups connect with firmly attributed works to the artist of the same or similar subject. If one actually compares Rustici’s *Madonnas* or his children it becomes evident that they are not particularly close to those seen within the corpus of our Master. It appears these founding works (from the corpus of the Master) have been subsumed into those belonging to Rustici because they are associated with the *Battles* and *River Gods*, which have stronger ties to the artist. S  n  chal has indicated that the large proportion of these works were produced by *plasticatori* so the argument for connecting the works through spatula marks and incisions surely only provides evidence to link them with one another, rather than to Rustici.

Scholarship on the Master of the Unruly Children continues as the works discussed above become the focus of technical examination, and new attributions appear on the market regularly.¹²⁷ The present position is nonetheless still unsatisfactory. There remains a group of evidently closely connected works but no consensus as to their origin. What Motture and Sénéchal suggest – a cooperative production - may be informed by a better understanding of Florentine workshop practices but it risks consigning all these works into an amalgam in the same way that grouping them under the name the Master of the Unruly Children had done a century earlier, thereby ignoring their individual invention and obscuring their place within the development of tradition.

* * * * *

Throughout the history detailed above, Bode's invented name has been retained as an attribution; indeed it has become a mainstay of scholarship on Renaissance sculpture. It is worth here exploring the idea of the scholarly construction of artistic identity and issues of value, status and innovation that are bound up with the attribution of these works. The Master's corpus, containing variations of single subjects also highlights problems of repetition and reproduction. The importance of 'authenticity' can also be questioned against the notion of the commodification of an artistic personality. The conceptual lens of Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Janet Wolf may help us untangle the case of the Master of the Unruly Children and problems of authorship.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Carlo Ginzburg's article on the connections between the approaches of Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes, and what he

¹²⁷ Technical examinations have been recently carried out at the V&A and Rijksmuseum (see Appendix II). Works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children regularly appear on the art market, evidence of which can be seen in the corpus (Appendix I).

¹²⁸ Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in *Textual Strategies, Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari, Methuen & Co., London, 1980, pp. 141-60. Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, Fontana Press, London, 1977 (see especially 'The Death of the Author' pp. 142-8). Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 2nd edition, Macmillan, London, 1993.

terms *conjectural knowledge*, may also be brought to bear.¹²⁹ His model for historical epistemology may also helpfully be applied to the invention and development of our Master.

In his 1969 essay entitled ‘What is an Author?’ Foucault described the construction as this;

The coming into being of the notion of ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy and the sciences.¹³⁰

In the case of the numerous ‘Masters’, often created in the late nineteenth century to account for stylistically, thematically or materially, coherent groups of work by anonymous hands, this notion of author becomes a problematic construct. The case of the Master of the Unruly Children reveals a persistent desire on the part of scholars to unpick the identity of an invented personality in the pursuit of confirming authorship.

In defining, using St Jerome’s criteria, what constitutes an author, Foucault listed the very requirements analysed by scholars in their appraisal of the Master of the Unruly Children: ‘a constant level of value’ - i.e. works must be of a consistent quality; ‘a field of conceptual or theoretical coherence’ – the author has a single vision or doctrine; ‘stylistic unity’; and ‘as a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events’ – situated within a specific time-frame.¹³¹ These criteria have consistently been applied to the body of work here under discussion, with varying rigour, personal interest, and therefore varying effect.

Numerous artists have been linked to the Master of the Unruly Children, both as candidates for the possible authorship of works attributed to him and as collaborators, associates and influences. The importance of the Master and the extent to which his name is now commonplace in discussing leading Renaissance sculptors is evident. Also manifest in the

¹²⁹ Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method’ (translated with an introduction by Anna Davin) in *History Workshop Journal*, Oxford University Press, No. 9, Spring, 1980, pp. 5-36.

¹³⁰ Foucault, 1980, p. 141.

¹³¹ Foucault, 1980, p. 151.

historiography above is the fervour with which scholars have persistently sought his identity and their divergence in opinion.

Barthes wrote:

‘To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting to itself the important task of discovering the author (or its hypostases, society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work. When the author has been found, the text is ‘explained’ - victory to the critic.’¹³²

The relationship between the body of work gathered under the Master of the Unruly Children and those that have examined it and attempted to label it fall into this pattern neatly, or at least this is the case in the formative scholarship on the Master. It seems that once a writer has offered what he or she considers a likely author (artist), reinforced with visual or circumstantial evidence, they have explained the works and need do no more. The function and significance of these works has never been thoroughly assessed not even as a tool with which to better determine their creator. The scholarship traced through this chapter is one whereby the identification of author has been the primary goal and infers that by naming a maker we can understand the work.

Bernard Berenson, the well known art historian and connoisseur, admitted that a name can focus attention but also confer value;

It is a painful confession some of us have to make. Many a work of art fails to get our active and entire attention until we succeed in ascribing it to an artist already known. ... if we can bring to bear upon any given item a curiosity already well informed, and an admiration we do not fear to let loose, it gains greatly both in interest and value.¹³³

Berenson’s point is interesting when we consider it alongside the invention of new masters. When Bode coined the name the Master of the Unruly Children in nineteenth-century Germany, we witnessed the birth of an author, a new and ‘curious’ name but with no

¹³² Barthes, 1977, p. 147.

¹³³ Bernard Berenson, *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, Third Series, G. Bell and Sons Ltd. London, 1916, p. 79.

‘informed admiration’ then associated with it, which may have reassured the spectator. It is perhaps no surprise then that Bode so pointedly repeated the Master’s supposed connections to Donatello. Nevertheless, the previous attribution of the same works to a ‘follower of Donatello’ or an ‘*anonimo*’ began to seem unsatisfactory.

In Bode’s time the terracottas were housed at the newly founded Königliches Museum, now Altes Museum, founded in 1830 on what would become Museums Insel, before being transferred to the then Kaiser Friedrich Museum, next door, which was completed in 1904, and which has since been renamed the Bode Museum (in 1956) after the esteemed curator. This information may seem anecdotal but such historical factors may have contributed to Bode’s motivations in providing the artist with a proper name. Over the course of his early texts on the artist, Bode’s attribution shifts not in essence - he is firm in his belief that an associate of Donatello is responsible for the sculpture - but in semantics, from *Follower of Donatello* to *Master of the Unruly Children*.

The context of Bode’s initial consideration of these works, within a discussion of the child in Renaissance art, may have led to identification with Donatello but successively the scholar repeated his claims that the works belonged to the fifteenth century. Almost against his own judgement he denied any connection to the sixteenth century, defending his position before the suggestion had even been made.¹³⁴ Rather than Michelangelo’s grand manner, Bode pointed to Donatello’s school to answer for the ‘energetic movement and effective harshness of style’.¹³⁵ Despite his comparisons with later work and the compelling visual evidence Bode seemed manacled to the idea of a fifteenth-century sculptor, and limited his consideration to the canon of great sculptors of that age. We must assume that Bode’s attribution is a product of his generation, or time and circumstance, and that rather than

¹³⁴ Bode, 1928, p. 176.

¹³⁵ Bode, 1928, p. 176.

arrived at purely on the basis of physical examination, the creation of the Master of the Unruly Children as a follower of Donatello is reliant on the contingent circumstances of the late nineteenth century and personal character of the art historian.

Ginzburg offered two possible reasons for such attribution; the first is that a new theoretical model, or paradigm, for the construction of knowledge, emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century – not one based on experimentation but rather semiotic, observational and above all interpretive (witnessed in the development of disciplines such as phrenology or philology). Apposite to this is the series of articles published by Giovanni Morelli (initially under a pseudonym) which appeared in the German journal *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* between 1874 and 1876.¹³⁶ The articles proposed a new method for the attribution of old masters, which despite controversy became a popular technique used widely by art historians. The basis of the method lay in the identification of small incidental details, the unconscious acts of the artist, i.e. examination of the earlobes and fingernails of a depicted figure, which would distinguish the authentic from the fraud and one artist from another. Bode was undoubtedly aware of Morelli's writings, echoes of which can be heard in his appraisal of the 'squat' and unduly 'ugly' child figures of the Master.

If Bode's inclination towards connoisseurship can be seen as a fashionable academic (if conjectural) pursuit then more specifically his insistence on a follower of Donatello is bound up with his own personal expertise. Later in his article Ginzburg examines and compares paradigms which focus on the general and the particular, the conjectural model being one closely associated with the rise of the individual in society. Connoisseurship is entirely concerned with the identification of individual or distinctive characteristics but is also affected by one's own individual perspective. Ginzburg quotes architect Filarete (1400-69),

¹³⁶ Ginzburg, 1980, p. 7.

who claims that no two buildings can be identical but fails to assign such scrutiny to other subjects. Ginzburg writes:

So for a European architect, the slight differences between two (European) buildings were important, those between Tartar or Ethiopian faces were not, and those between two worms or two ants simply didn't exist. A Tartar architect, an Ethiopian unversed in architecture, or an ant would rank things differently. Knowledge based on making individualising distinctions is always anthropocentric, ethnocentric, and liable to other specific bias.¹³⁷

Perhaps for Bode, then so consumed at the time of writing about (and inventing) The Master of the Unruly Children with Donatello, it is no surprise that his comparisons fall within the sphere of that artist. His seemingly blinkered appraisal of the sixteenth century qualities of the works could be explained in a second line from Ginzburg; 'the likelihood of obliterating individual features relates directly to the emotional distance of the observer.'¹³⁸

Further historical and social factors may also have bearing on the invention of our Master. Bode was part of an extremely progressive era where the new, public museum was being invented and an evaluation of the best methods of display and communication with audiences was being carried out. Historically, since the earliest of sculpture museums, like that of Sixtus IV in 1471 who installed his antique bronzes on the Capitol, sculpture had been displayed thematically rather than chronologically, but for Bode and his contemporaries the recent example of the Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria who had his Glyptothek in Munich built between 1816-30, must have been in their minds. The Glyptothek was designed by Leo von Klenze and one of its major features was its chronological arrangement of the artworks.

The Königliches Museum was also considering its policies on display. In 1829 Wilhelm von Humboldt supervised an installation committee for the Museum, and brought with him a new ideology. His conviction was that art of the best quality embodied the means for generating

¹³⁷ Ginzburg, 1980, pp. 19-20

¹³⁸ Ginzburg, 1980, p. 19.

social improvement. Other members of the committee agreed although stressed the importance of arranging works according to historical principles. A section from a proposal put forward for the museum at this time is revealing:

[The museum's] first and true purpose consists in awakening in the public mind a sense of visual art as one of the most important branches of human culture... All the various interests of individual classes in society must be subordinated to this general purpose. By far the most pressing need is to give artists ample opportunity to study. Only then can the interests of art scholars be taken into consideration. Thirdly and finally, knowledge of art history should be generally encouraged and the dissemination of this knowledge be made as wide as possible. However this is not to say that aesthetic interests may not be combined to a certain extent with historical interests; if this first and fundamental principle is kept in mind: enjoyment first, then edification.¹³⁹

Bode was at the heart of the practical implementation of these new theories on display and the function of the public museum. He was charged, we can imagine, with the need to categorise the works in the museum's collection in order that they may fall into a new chronological understanding of the history of art and one which is both edifying and enjoyable. New pedagogic ideals of a historical hang, coupled with a need to make art accessible across society, may inform the motivations behind the fictitious Master of the Unruly Children.

It was a conscious decision on the part of Bode not to maintain the label 'follower of Donatello'. The reason for this was surely not entirely due to a need to impose a name and thereby fix meaning in the sense of Barthes. The discontent in calling the artist '*anonimo*' has resulted in a created personality, one which visitors to the museum and subsequent scholars have heeded. At its most basic level it is far more memorable than 'follower of' or 'anonymous'. The word 'personality' here is used quite deliberately, as the mere naming of

¹³⁹ This part of the proposal was written in 1828 by curator Gustav Waagen (1794–1868) and architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841), as quoted by, Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment, Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, p. 254.

this 'creator' allowed subsequent art historians to construct an entire character. This happened with almost immediate effect.

In Schottmüller's reclassification of the works she created three categories, Master of the Unruly Children, workshop of the Master of the Unruly Children and Master of the Unruly Children and Santi Buglioni. Whilst reducing the number of works ascribed to his hand Schottmüller actually increased the significance of the Master - we are now looking at an artist who led a workshop (rather than was part of one), and collaborated with other prominent artists. As we have previously described, the anonymous follower of Donatello is now a collaborator and head of a workshop. Further sub-divisions have since been made. The follower now has followers.

The Master of the Unruly Children was not the only 'birth' witnessed in late-nineteenth-century Renaissance scholarship. Repeated links have been made between the Master of the Unruly Children and other Renaissance masters in terracotta, most notably the so-called Master of the David and St John Statuettes. There is strong evidence to suggest that the two bodies of work, separated through subject matter rather than style, overlap. The same problems associated with the identification and dating of the Master of the Unruly Children can be said of the Master of the David and St John Statuettes and it is not inconceivable that several of the works attributed to one, belong to the other. Although Bode and his colleagues, in inventing these terms, had not necessarily intended this, what has resulted from the creation of such masters is a myopic idea of the Renaissance workshop system in which one Master or shop is involved in the production of unruly children whilst another satisfies the demand for saints.

It was perhaps the singularity of our Master's name which has ensured its endurance, for not too long after Bode's invention works of other subjects, without children of any disposition,

were considered in relation to him. His lack of identification has nonetheless limited scholarship, which on the whole considers these works only alongside others by known artists. The approach has been largely focused on connoisseurship and often not with the Master of the Unruly Children at the forefront but better known subjects of larger monographs.

Initially, one also desires to become the connoisseur guiltily adding to this fictitious character's story. Having assessed previous scholarship we find it likely that not only must he be a man and have lived in Florence in the early decades of the sixteenth century, but given the links made between him and artists such as Sansovino, Rustici, Tribolo and Andrea del Sarto, he was likely to be part of an artist group such as that at the Sapienza (which we shall discuss in the next chapter). We have given him a gender, home and friends. The desire to fix an author is very beguiling and it is easy to ignore the very nature of the work.

The problem with all of the suggested identities for the Master is, as has been indicated, the strong evidence to suggest several hands responsible for those works now amassed under his name. Attributions to this hand have multiplied though are notably of varying quality, leading one to think of the Master of the Unruly Children more as an iconographical classification rather than a stylistic one. The temptation for collectors, dealers and museums to attribute any terracotta with ebullient children to his hand is evident in the number of works listed in the corpus (Appendix I).

It is arguable whether one artist with the creative ability to conceive of this composition, originally, would reproduce it so many times with such varying quality. Therefore, we must deduce that the original design is being replicated and reproduced, as suggested by Motture and Sénéchal. This knowledge may prompt new views on the originator of the design – was it their fame or reputation that elicited these copies, does the replication of works suggest that it

was a particularly innovative and popular design, thereby conferring some sort of ‘genius’ onto its creator or was the subject matter and function of the work responsible? From these considerations could arise further examination of ideas of originality, authenticity and the commodification of artistic identity – as it might have taken place at the time, not to mention the subsequent commodification of this identity as it has been used by recent dealers and curators, who by assigning this author to a work immediately link it to extant examples and artists and thereby likely raise its value.

As with our assessment of Bode’s motives behind constructing the Master of the Unruly Children we should also bear in mind those of subsequent scholars. Along similar lines to Ginzburg, Janet Wolff states ‘the accredited judges of art and arbiters of taste are themselves socially defined and constituted and bring to bear in their judgements specific ideological and positional values.’¹⁴⁰

So what light does our review of the shifting trajectory of the Master of the Unruly Children throw on concepts of authorship? It corresponds with the observation of many scholars that the history of art has largely been the history of artists. Wolff points out that Barthes and his successors relate this focus on the artist to ‘the bourgeois ideology of the individual as creator; developed concomitantly with the rise of capitalism in Europe’.¹⁴¹ This assertion also comes through in Ginzburg who reviews a seemingly steady increase in our need to identify the individual in society – which becomes manifest in various disciplines as well as those of the state, i.e. the development of taking fingerprints for the purposes of criminology.¹⁴²

A nineteenth-century shift in epistemology might account for Bode’s methods of attribution and indeed the development and practice of connoisseurship, but there is also a wealth of

¹⁴⁰ Wolff, 1993, p. 139.

¹⁴¹ Wolff, 1993, p. 118.

¹⁴² Ginzburg, 1980, pp. 26-7.

evidence to suggest that notions of authorship were being scrutinised at exactly the time when these works are likely to have been made, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Notably, this is the period in which Leonardo began to form what would become his *Treatise on Painting*, in which he underscored the role of the individual and extolled the singular talent of the artist. Perhaps most pertinent, this is when Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* examined and recorded the lives and personalities of those artists he believed to be the leading protagonists of the day. One could even argue that the nineteenth-century practice of connoisseurship was based on a Vasarian model of identifying artistic genius. Jill Burke also identifies a shift in the role and identification of collectors and commissioners of art over the course of the Renaissance, from donor to patron and subsequently connoisseur, which she relates to Vasari.¹⁴³ Burke's assessment of patronage is relevant to the work of our Master both in the historiography outlined in this chapter but also in the later discussion of iconography and use. She quotes Warburg's assertion that works of art owed their making (and implicitly their appearance) as much to patrons as artists, an assertion which challenges the concept of the artist as the singular originator, at least within the typical organisation of art production in Renaissance Florence.¹⁴⁴

While the notion that the Italian Renaissance saw the rise of the (lauded) artist has been widely explored, a very specific focus on authorship and associated authority, as it existed in Renaissance Florence, has been recently examined by Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, and may be particularly relevant to the case of the Master of the Unruly Children. In their volume entitled *Anachronic Renaissance*, Nagel and Wood outline a belief that artwork is uniquely placed to bend or collapse time. They describe a capability for works of art to have a plural temporality, to point away from the moment of production

¹⁴³ Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons, Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence*, Pennsylvania, 2004, p.5.

¹⁴⁴ Burke, 2004, p.5-6.

‘backward to a remote ancestral origin, perhaps to a prior artefact, or to an origin outside of time, in divinity. At the same time it points forward to all its future recipients who will activate and reactivate it as a meaningful event.’¹⁴⁵

Nagel and Wood identify the period (loosely the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) as one in which an interest in this temporal instability and indeed, in the visualisation of time (in relics, the retrieval of lost worlds, and historical treaties), was significant. They are adamant that:

The power of the image, or the work of art, to fold time was neither discovered nor invented in the Renaissance. What *was* distinctive about the European Renaissance, so called, was its apprehensiveness about the temporal instability of the artwork, and its re-creation of the artwork as an occasion for reflection on that instability.¹⁴⁶

Nagel and Wood propose that as a result of this ‘apprehensiveness’ two models of temporality or authorship came into being, or at least into focus, during the period.

They term these two models of production the ‘substitutional’ and the ‘performative’. Into the substitutional category objects such as the Ship of Theseus are neatly placed. As a relic of the Athenian state it was a work which retained its meaning and identity despite constant reconstruction and plank by plank replacement. The substitutional work resists classification in time, it can be made and re-made by several hands, and not lose its authority. Conversely, the performative category includes works credited to an identifiable author at a particular point in time. Not only does the ‘authorial performance’ rupture time (into distinct before and after) because ‘the author does not simply deliver a pre-existing package of information but

¹⁴⁵ Nagel and Wood, p. 9.

¹⁴⁶ Nagel and Wood, p. 13.

generates something that did not exist before' but in their invention the author is integral to the meaning and interpretation of the work.¹⁴⁷

The phenomenon is summarised by Peter Dent:

[Nagel and Wood] ...have argued that two fundamental ways of embodying temporality in images came into conflict during the Renaissance as one, typical of the medieval world, cedes some of its prominence to another that will become typical of early modernity.¹⁴⁸

In connecting time and authorship, we are reminded of Foucault's criteria, that an author exists at a point of time. Furthermore, Nagel and Wood argue that it was not only the evolution of the authorial voice which characterised the period, but that the performative and substitutional models co-existed and elements of each were deliberately employed by some artists to allow the artwork to 'refer to multiple temporal moments.'¹⁴⁹

Such a combination is impressively outlined in reference to the *Monument to Giotto*, which Nagle and Wood describe as a lesson in the time-collapsing efficacy of images (Fig. 40).¹⁵⁰ This monument, prominently situated on the interior south wall of Florence cathedral was erected in 1490, one hundred and fifty-four years after Giotto's death in 1336. It is proffered by Nagel and Wood as possibly the first monument ever erected in honor of a visual artist, and testament in itself to the rise of the artist as a celebrated individual. The monument is formed of an epigram written by Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494) and relief by Benedetto da Maiano (1442-1497).

¹⁴⁷ Nagel and Wood, p.14-16.

¹⁴⁸ Dent, p. 165.

¹⁴⁹ Dent, p. 167.

¹⁵⁰ Nagel and Wood, pp. 123-133.

Giotto was widely regarded as the father of the Florentine tradition and in that sense, as described by Dent, can be labelled ‘the original artist-author’.¹⁵¹ The epigram is written as if spoken by the artist, and Giotto as a ‘performative’ author is emphatically underscored in the first line: ‘I am he who through painting, dead returned to life.’ In the opening words Poliziano imitates Virgil in his declaration of authorship of the Illiad. The epigram, which also contains a *sphragis* (an embedded signature), has the name Iottus (Giotto) in effect stand in for an image, as it declares no further description is needed. It implies all the achievements of the artist can be understood from his name alone. According to Nagel and Wood this demonstrates that notions of authorship more commonly (at this time) associated with literary works have here been transferred to a visual artist.¹⁵²

Within the relief of the monument Giotto can be seen working on a mosaic image of the face of Christ. Nagel and Wood and subsequently Dent explore the choice of this imagery, which does not show Giotto as a painter but a mosaicist. This ‘non-authorial medium’ is described by Dent as a ‘technique that comes close to being an ideal form of substitution’.¹⁵³ Giotto is also working on a ‘non-authored image’ as such representations of the face of Christ are derived from the Mandylion or Veronica (also called Vernicle), a miraculous image transferred by Christ, kept alive and transmitted through modes of substitutional production.¹⁵⁴

The incorporation of mosaic in the monument may have had further connotations for Florentines at the time. According to Gerhard Wolf, who also reviews Nagel and Wood, the choice of mosaic might have evoked Giotto’s most famous work in the fifteenth century, the *Navicella*, a mosaic located in St Peter’s in Rome. Wolf suggests that a reference to

¹⁵¹ Dent, p. 169.

¹⁵² Nagel and Wood, p. 126.

¹⁵³ Dent, p. 169.

¹⁵⁴ Nagel and Wood, p. 128.

Florentine greatness in Rome may have been desired by Lorenzo de' Medici (who ordered the Giotto monument) to allude to his cultural diplomacy with the papacy.¹⁵⁵ Lorenzo had also launched a mosaic revival in Florence, and in the same year as the monument was erected, 1490, he contracted Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) and Gherardo di Giovanni (1445-1497) to provide mosaic decoration for the chapel of St Zenobius, the patron saint of Florence, also in the Cathedral. Moreover, Lorenzo's personal collection contained both highly-prized ancient micromosaics and an icon of Christ. Mosaics signalled the glory of antiquity and here Giotto is connected to that artistic tradition, further ramifying notions of him as the great father of Florentine art and the link between past and present.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, in combining Giotto, the Cathedral, antiquity, miracle images, St. Zenobius, Poliziano and Benedetto da Maiano, Lorenzo de' Medici can be said to have created under his auspices a mosaic-like confection of Florentine pride - a model and ambition which may be relevant to our Master.

The monument seemingly contains a paradox between the assertion of authorship in the epigram with the depiction of Giotto's hand at work (the moment of creative action), and the image he makes and technique he uses. Nagel and Wood suggest that mosaic technique 'lifted images away from the real-time process of their production' creating a remove between author and image, which allowed for a plural temporality.¹⁵⁷

'the mosaic reports back to the originary portrait of Christ and yet is also plainly of the time of Giotto,... And it is a product of 1490. It belongs to each of these moments simultaneously, threading them together. Giotto is not, therefore, merely commemorated

¹⁵⁵ Gerhard Wolf, 'Review of *The Anachronic Renaissance*, Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood' in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 94, no. 1, 2012, pp. 135-41.

¹⁵⁶ Nagel and Wood, pp. 130-132.

¹⁵⁷ Nagel and Wood, p. 130.

as the restorer of ancient art; he is celebrated as the restorer of art's capacity to make past really present. [...] He was the author who restored authorless authority.¹⁵⁸

Poliziano was also actively playing with notions of authorship in his style of literary composition. Martin McLaughlin has described how Poliziano was famous for his intervention in the contemporary debate on literary imitation.¹⁵⁹ Dent has asserted that in many ways, through this style Poliziano reveals his own role as an author of the monument, albeit through a substitutional medium.¹⁶⁰ The epigram is a mosaic of literary styles and this metaphor can be extended to the entire monument. It is an example of a single work in which multiple authors, past, present and divine, are deliberately and simultaneously asserted and obscured. Moreover, in a prominent Florentine location, it is a work which must have been known to our Master.

The corpus of our Master, which we have seen divide the opinion of connoisseurs, could be said to contain a similar confection of styles, even within individual sculptures. Chapter Two will detail a rich Florentine tradition of numerous artists, who may be implied in the production of our works but may also be deliberately emulated. The analysis of the *Monument to Giotto* gives one license to consider the presence of various styles, not individually as evidence of various hands but collectively as a deliberate device chosen by an author. As has been proposed by Dent in relation to Poliziano, the role of the author/artist can still be asserted. The Master of the Unruly Children was originally identified or created to answer for a recognisable group of works, due to discernable stylistic traits and compositions, likewise Poliziano's invention can be determined in the monument. What the Master and Poliziano achieve in appropriating the styles of eminent predecessors is the greater authority

¹⁵⁸ Nagel and Wood, p. 133.

¹⁵⁹ McLaughlin, Martin, 'Poliziano's *Stanze per la giostra*: Postmodern Poetics in a Proto-Renaissance Poem' in *Italy in Crisis 1494*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 129-151.

¹⁶⁰ Dent, p. 171.

that whole of Florentine tradition can convey. Just as the *Monument to Giotto* embodies the particular intentions of the patron, artist and subject, the components of the artistic tradition incorporated by our Master will reveal something of the intentions behind the work.

The proposition of Janet Wolff, that 'ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values expressed in cultural products are ideological, in the sense that they are always related in a systematic way to the social and economic structures in which the artist is situated',¹⁶² may offer us a model for the social production of art which is relevant to our assessment of the mosaic of influences to be determined in our corpus. Establishing the context in which the works under discussion were made is the primary objective of subsequent chapters, but consideration of authorship in so far as it will help define the Master's body of work, will not be abandoned.

One could argue that in constructing an identity such as 'the Master of the Unruly Children' Bode has further obscured our idea of the true author as the name initially conveys neither spatial nor temporal significance. The name is, in fact, more likely informed by a Morellian penchant for identifying the most distinctive characteristic part of a work. But Bode has cleverly given the artist a 'proper name' and as Foucault describes proper names permit works to be grouped, defined, differentiated, contrasted and allows the creation of relationships amongst them. In other words naming the *anonimo* permits what Foucault describes as the 'author function'.¹⁶³ Furthermore, the marginal details so beloved by Morelli are evidence of how 'the artist's subordination to cultural traditions gave way to a purely individual streak, details being repeated in a certain way 'by force of habit, almost unconsciously'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Wolff, 1993, p. 119.

¹⁶³ Foucault, 1980, pp. 147-8.

¹⁶⁷ Ginzburg, 1980, p. 11 (quotes Morelli).

It is with this in mind that the following chapter will attempt to outline more coherent groups within the corpus of the Master of the Unruly Children, while at the same time recognising that it appears we are dealing with an artist deliberately incorporating a mosaic of styles. The period in which our Master is working was one where notions of authorship were developing (and to a certain extent were problematic). It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that problems in connoisseurship were faced by Bode and his successors. Style was the means through which authorship was asserted and regardless of attribution we are repeatedly reminded of the the unique characteristics of our Master's style throughout the scholarship surveyed. Style is a primary concern of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MASTER OF THE UNRULY CHILDREN IN CONTEXT AND A PROPOSAL FOR NEW CLASSIFICATION

The work ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children is rooted in Florentine tradition. The perceptions of previous writers, as described in Chapter One, underline this. When Bode first assembled a group of works under the Master's name he proposed that a fifteenth-century artist was responsible, and with successive scholars this attribution has gradually shifted to later and later artists and now rests with a dating almost a century later. The suggestions of previous writers will be re-visited in this chapter, not for the purposes of tracing the formation of the Master's artistic identity or as a historiography of scholarship, as has already been done, but as a means by which one might more closely define the Master's place in Florentine art. In more firmly establishing the context of the Master's work, the corpus of sculpture amassed under his name will also be better delineated and informed. The catalogue of works that accompanies this thesis defines new groups within which the works might be considered. These new groups shall be outlined in the latter part of this chapter.

Before the corpus of works can be defined the context for the Master's work must be outlined. Previous scholarship has rested with the proposal that our Master was active in the early sixteenth-century. This is a conclusion largely arrived at through stylistic comparisons with other artists, which not only dates the work to this period but also places our Master in Florence, and perhaps particularly concerned with the Florentine tradition. Assessments of style have in some cases, such as that of Sinibaldo Sinibaldi, been bolstered (if not replaced)

by documentary evidence suggesting that works such as these were commonly produced in early sixteenth-century Florence and in connection to the artists of the Sapienza.

The following survey, which will begin by looking at the generation of Donatello, as did Bode, before moving chronologically through successive generations of sculptors, highlights where previous scholarship has suggested the involvement of named artists. This process will map the often intersecting influences that are visible upon our Master or manifest in the works of our corpus and may account for why it took so long for previous art historians to arrive at the conclusion above.

As indicated in Chapter One the Master may be deliberately employing a mosaic of styles built up from multiple references to earlier Florentine tradition. The practice of copying that is evident in the corpus of the Master is itself indicative of common practices within the Florentine workshop. The survey conducted here will further illuminate this tradition, the impact of which can then be discussed in relation to the Master's *oeuvre*. In conclusion the chapter will set forth new categories for the works and a new proposition as to their production – that is when and where, and under what circumstances the artist or artists responsible were working.

Donatello and His Generation

The initial conviction that the works grouped under the name of the Master of the Unruly Children originated in fifteenth-century Florence was determined largely by the subject matter of the works under question: compositions of the *Madonna* or *Charity* with children, and depictions of ebullient minors quarrelling. With an abundance of *Madonna and Child* reliefs emanating from the workshops of Donatello (1386-1466) and Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), and a prevailing fashion for the use of antique *putti* as sculptural ornament, this

original dating reflected the tide of interest in infant subjects during the mid-*Quattrocento*. It was within the discussion of such a fashion for the use of children in art that Bode's initial grouping of the works, which he then attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children, occurred.¹⁶⁹

Although many reliefs of the Holy Family were designed for the home, the child as a subject in fifteenth-century art was not the sole preserve of the domestic interior. Large-scale sculptural projects such as those for the Cathedral, arguably the greatest locus of artistic invention at the time, also bore witness to the infiltration of exuberant young figures into the emerging sculptural language. The *cantorie* (organ lofts) of Luca della Robbia (1399/1400-1482), executed between 1431 and 1438 (Fig. 41a) and Donatello, dated 1433-39 (Fig. 41b), with their friezes of animated infant musicians, borrowing from the antique but portraying new subjects with a realism hitherto unknown, are testament to this. Shortly after, in 1440 and 1442, the *lavabos* (ecclesiastical basins) of Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and Buggiano (1412-1462) were also installed providing yet further examples of active juveniles for emulation.¹⁷⁰ Such examples in the Cathedral, when combined with concurrent developments in humanist tombs and sculptural monuments, Madonna and Child reliefs, and the fashion for infant portrait busts cast as Holy children make clear that the figure of the ancient *putto* or *spiritello* was being re-imagined into a variety of guises suitable for fifteenth-century Florentines. The infant figure both in its own right, and as company to a variety of

¹⁶⁹ Wilhelm von Bode, 'Versuche der Ausbildung des Genre in der Florentiner Plastik des Quattrocento' in *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, Berlin, 1890, pp. 95-107.

¹⁷⁰ Brunelleschi and Buggiano collaborated on two basins for the Cathedral. The earlier of these was for the Sagrestia delle Messe and completed in 1440. The second, of 1442, for the Sagrestia dei Canonici is a more lively composition in which Buggiano is said to have been influenced by Donatello. See Francesco Quinterio in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996 (hereafter *Dictionary of Art*), Vol. 5, pp. 128-129.

adults, was becoming ubiquitous. It is no surprise, therefore, that Bode, Robinson, MacLagan and Longhurst all looked to this period to answer for the boisterous youths of our sculptor.¹⁷¹

Before we follow Bode's lead and examine Donatello further there are two notable examples of early fifteenth-century sculpture by the artist Jacopo della Quercia (c.1374-1438), which appear as though they could have strongly influenced our Master, although neither of them are found in Florence. Jacopo's *Fonte Gaia* (Fountain of Joy, 1414-19) for the Campo in Siena was formed of a series of high reliefs in marble of the *Madonna and Child*, placed centrally, flanked by seated *Virtues*, two narrative panels of the *Creation* and *Expulsion from Paradise*, with free-standing figures at either end depicting the ancient figures of *Rea Silvia* and *Acca Larentia* the mother and foster mother of the twins Romulus and Remus (uncle and father to Senius and Aschius, founders of Siena). Even in their extremely damaged state, Jacopo's works clearly display characteristics which are echoed in the works in our corpus (Figs 42-46).

The central figure of the *Madonna and Child* shows the seated Virgin, with her knees apart and swung to the right, monumentalised by voluminous agitated drapery. The *Child*, although harder to discern in the fragment remaining, stretches across his mother's front to grasp at her dress, a gesture used repeatedly by our Master. The *Virtues* too, can be viewed as compositional forerunners to the seated female figures in our corpus. It seems the figure of *Charity* was part of the original design (*Faith* is certainly identifiable in the extant fragments and was normally accompanied by her fellow theological virtues), and it has been included by Tito Sarrocchi (1824–1900) in his 1868 copy made to replace the deteriorating panels by Jacopo della Quercia when they were removed to the Palazzo Pubblico (in Siena) for preservation. Sarrocchi's copy seems to have been somewhat freely made, particularly where

¹⁷¹ See Chapter One for attributions of Robinson, Bode, MacLagan and Longhurst.

the original panel was severely damaged or lost, as was the case with *Charity* (Fig. 47). The Virtue is depicted in the copy in a manner particularly pertinent to our Master, with two children, suckling and asleep. The evidence of drawings made during the period do not explicitly indicate that this was Jacopo's design (Figs. 48 and 49) and it is probably the result of Sarrocchi's interpretation based on other examples of Renaissance sculpture. If it were discovered to be based on a design of Jacopo della Quercia the fountain would become an even more pertinent example for our Master, indeed it would display an iconographical invention hitherto unseen in sculptural depictions of *Charity* in the 1410s.

Jacopo's two standing figures were omitted by Sarrocchi in his nineteenth-century version of the fountain, but these too are important to the development of the iconography of *Charity* later in the century. This development will be discussed further in Chapter Three, as will the fountain more generally, but suffice to say here that Sarrocchi may have conflated the imagery of the standing figures with attendant children with his figure of *Charity* (and left them out to deliberately avoid repetition of similar motifs). As exemplary women beset by robust and animated infants Jacopo's figures of *Rea Silvia* and *Acca Larentia* are exceptionally important to the formation of our Master. They are considered to have been based on an antique prototype - although no such work from antiquity has been found with which they can be directly linked.

Later in his career, between 1429 and his death in 1438, Jacopo worked in Bologna on the decoration of the central portal of the Basilica of San Petronio. The reliefs framing the doorway were highly influential on the following generation of sculptors, but it is his *Madonna and Child* (Figs. 50 and 51) for the lunette above where we find yet another precursor to the compositions of our Master. In this case his seated group is even closer in conception to the works of our Master than was his earlier *Madonna and Child* for the

fountain in Siena. Here the fleshy animated Child actively moves across the lap of his mother, which is once again sheathed in heavy drapery, the folds of which fall about her knees in a manner particularly close to that of our Master. Both Jacopo's work in Bologna and the *Fonte Gaia* were to become famed throughout Italy (the fountain design seems to have been particularly popular in Florence at the turn of the sixteenth century, which shall be discussed in due course). Donatello would have seen the *Fonte Gaia* at first hand as he notably contributed to the decoration of the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Siena, alongside Jacopo della Quercia, in 1427.

Bode was keen to link the output of the Master of the Unruly Children with that of Donatello. The associative benefits which such a connection confers need little explanation and Bode was undoubtedly aware of them too. It must have seemed appropriate that the artist, known to have worked prolifically in terracotta, who brought us the energetic participants on the Florentine *Cantoria*, or even more infantile figures on the Prato pulpit, be recognised as a source. Our Master most certainly owes a debt to Donatello but, if one sets the subject matter aside and concentrates on stylistic comparisons, the argument for the common origin of their works, the former working under the supervision or as a direct follower of Donatello, is thin.

Within Donatello's circle (though not of his shop), indeed, the artist responsible for the second *Cantoria*, Luca della Robbia can be thought of as having equal claim to influence over our Master. Luca, followed by the rest of the della Robbia family in turn, was among the first to be examined by Bode as a possible originator of the Master's designs.¹⁷² In this case Bode's reasons go beyond a mutual use of children in their art – since the della Robbia were responsible for the most prolific and inventive use of terracotta sculpture. So dominant was their hold over the market for glazed terracotta, and for so long was their reign supreme in

¹⁷² Wilhelm von Bode, *Florentine Sculptors of the Renaissance*, translated by Jessie Haynes, 2nd edition revised by F.L Rudston Brown, Methuen & Co Ltd., London, 1928, p. 172.

this production through successive generations, that Bode may have seemed remiss had the family not been foremost in his consideration.

Leaving the generation of Donatello briefly, it was the later della Robbia family, and especially Andrea della Robbia (1435–1525), which received particular attention from Bode. Child figures were a staple for Andrea and a subject in which he excelled. His most public commission dedicated to this subject is that of the roundels for the facade of Florence's founding hospital the *Ospedale degli Innocenti* (1463-66 (installed 1487); Fig. 52). The series of infants, variously swaddled, stand with arms outstretched and heads inclined in beseeching gesture. Their faces are not entirely unlike those of the Master of the Unruly Children: both have puffed-up cheeks and tousled curls of soft hair animating their edges. Andrea's children are undoubtedly 'sweeter', even when depicted here with their pursed melancholy lips. Moreover, despite their large scale on the exterior loggia of the hospital, they also convey a delicacy of youth that is not evident in the robust forms of our Master. This was not lost on Bode who concluded his discussion by discounting any connection between the two.¹⁷³

A more direct comparison however can be made between one of Andrea's domestic works, the polychrome terracotta of a *Young Boy Playing the Bagpipes* (Fig. 53) and the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* (CAT. D2; Fig. 1) or the *Quarrelling Children* (CAT. A3; Fig. 3) of our Master. Andrea's serene youth is an exquisite example of the type of child figure by the artist that Bode refers to – those so 'sensitively observed'.¹⁷⁴ Alongside the works of our Master we can see clearly an affinity of subject and medium, yet a contrast of style and handling that initially intrigued Bode. Despite a conceptual difference in age between this infant and the young Baptist in his grotto or the squabbling children, the muscular limbs of

¹⁷³ Bode, 1928, p. 172.

¹⁷⁴ Bode, 1928, p. 171.

the youths are surely not conceived by the same artist responsible for the fleshy tender portrayal of the younger seated child. Here Luca's classical and perhaps restrained musicians from the *Cantoria* are transformed by Andrea into something more sentimental. The children of our Master contain neither quality but instead are decidedly indecorous and vigorously modelled. In making a connection to Andrea della Robbia, who died in 1525, Bode stretched his furthest into the sixteenth century, in consideration of the Master's works. That Andrea's children are so much sweeter than those of his uncle's generation appears to have confirmed for Bode that the work of the Master must likewise pre-date his refined sensibility.

Aside from the young *Baptist in a Grotto* no works glazed in the 'della Robbia style' have entered the body of work grouped under the name of the Master of the Unruly Children. In due course, however, we will have reason to discuss Benedetto (1459/60-1521) and Santi Buglioni (1494-1576), who employed the same techniques as the della Robbia and have often been associated with our Master. Whilst the specific glazing process invented by the della Robbia and appropriated by the Buglioni was distinct, the general use of terracotta by sculptors in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was so widespread and varied that to refine one's search for an identity behind our Master to those versed in handling clay, is to hardly limit it at all.

After the della Robbia were considered but discounted by Bode in his appraisal of the origins of our Master's work, he returned once more to Donatello. Bode's attentions shifted from the circle of the sculptor to his followers. But before we do likewise it is worth noting a sculptor who Bode omitted. This is the figure of Michelozzo (1396-1472), collaborator of Donatello, who is jointly if not equally credited with him for the Prato pulpit, and who should also be recognized as having produced work important to the formation of our Master. Whilst Michelozzo and Donatello ran their joint workshop, the two were commissioned to make

several notable tomb monuments, including those of Cardinals Baldassare Cosica and Rinaldo Brancaccio, and of Bartolomeo Aragazzi. These works became exemplars in humanist tomb design for successive generations. It is widely agreed that the Aragazzi Monument is largely the work of Michelozzo and it is this work which bears particularly close scrutiny as an important precursor to our Master (Figs. 54 and 55).

The monument, now dismembered, includes two marble panels carved in bas-relief, which depict the patron Bartolommeo Aragazzi. The reliefs were probably carved c.1428-29. There is some contention as to their exact subject matter but a good argument for their interpretation is provided by Harriet McNeal Caplow.¹⁷⁵ This is worth expanding upon here, as the reliefs may prove to be more than just compositional sources for our Master but iconographical ones also. Caplow suggests that the Aragazzi reliefs may be connected to a local *beato* from Montepulciano (the location of the monument), Bartolommeo Pucci-Franceschi.

The beatified Bartolommeo shares the same name as Aragazzi and was popularly venerated in the church where his tomb was sited. Desiring to become a Franciscan monk, Pucci, a wealthy and prominent citizen, was forced to give up his family and all his earthly possessions. His wife took a vow of chastity and much of his wealth went to the poor. His four sons, city officials, inherited the remainder. It is Caplow's belief that this is the family seen in the two reliefs by Michelozzo, not that of Aragazzi himself. She contends the first of the panels shows the greeting or welcoming of Aragazzi into heaven and the second the presentation of him, by the saintly Bartolommeo, to the Virgin and Christ Child. Her supposition would explain the presence of the monk in the two panels, the four young males and the pious and veiled figure of the older woman.

¹⁷⁵ Harriet McNeal Caplow, *Michelozzo*, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London, 1977, pp. 261-86.

One of the most famous miracles associated with the Beato Bartolommeo was that, during a great time of famine and having urged his sons (who now held the family wealth) to empty their grain stores for the poor, Bartolommeo was approached by a woman with a starving child for assistance. Her persistence drove him to take her to his family grain store in order to show her it was empty only for it to be miraculously refilled and the stranger to transform into the Madonna and Child. Being so disorientated by the events that had just befallen him he staggered crazed back to the convent, his condition inciting children to throw rocks at him.

Michelozzo's reliefs refer to this act of charity in the pleading and somewhat agitated children that reach for the succour of the Pucci family. Caplow also makes a clear case for the 'hand holding relief' to be based on ancient prototypes.¹⁷⁶ Michelozzo's reliance on Roman processional reliefs for the composition is clear but Caplow suggests the device of handholding in particular has ancient origins.¹⁷⁷ The specific iconography of *dextrarum junctio*, which is linked with marriage and reunion, is something to which we shall return in chapter three. For now, however, it should be observed that there are also ancient examples of alms giving which could have been knowingly cited by Michelozzo. Notable here is that the sculptor has combined classical prototype and iconography with the story of a thirteenth century saint to confer virtue on a fifteenth-century humanist – a papal secretary but also a pioneering scholar of classical texts. Similar time-bending through eclectic referencing has been discussed in relation to the *Monument to Giotto*. It is this same potent combination of sources which informs the work of the Master of the Unruly Children in the assimilation of references and iconography for his own complex patrons.

The importance of the reliefs as compositional forerunners to the Master of the Unruly Children should also not be underestimated. Michelozzo's other great gift, perhaps more

¹⁷⁶ 'Hand holding relief' is Caplow's term which she uses repeatedly in this section of her thesis.

¹⁷⁷ Caplow, 1977, discusses the *dextrarum junctio* and its relationship to the Aragazzi reliefs on pp. 271-6.

readily seen and imitated by his successors, is in the intimacy of the human relationships depicted. Sincerely touching portraits of Aragazzi and Pucci are joined by a tender portrayal of the Holy Family. This provides a wonderful contrast to the ungainly, clamouring infants encircling the feet of their elders. Michelozzo's minors go some way to justify Bode's dating to this period since they demonstrate that lively and intimate composition was not the preserve of the sixteenth century. In fact, the grimacing children, who cling to and tug at the limbs and garments of the adults, are a direct precursor to those seen in the *Charity* compositions of the Master.

The affinity of composition and motif seen across the Aragazzi Monument reliefs and the work of the Master of the Unruly Children does not also translate, however, into stylistic similarity. It is not likely, therefore, that Michelozzo was responsible for originating the designs of our Master. His primary role as architect to Cosimo de' Medici and, after Brunelleschi's death, Master of the Cathedral Works would, one imagines, preclude him from the need, time or desire to participate in the production of small scale terracottas like those of our Master, even if stylistically we were not already able to discount this possibility. Nonetheless, Michelozzo is an important figure both to our Master and to the generation below him, those referred to by Bode as the followers of Donatello.

The Generation of the Rossellini

Between the years of 1409 and 1428 the Rossellino brothers Bernardo (1409-64) and Antonio (1427-79), as well as Desiderio da Settignano (1428-64), would all be born. Active in the second half of the fifteenth century the output of these sculptors reflects the dominant trends in mid *Quattrocento* artistic taste, developed by Donatello and his circle, and the qualities deemed requisite in the accomplished work of a sculptor – knowledge of the antique coupled with an interest and ability in naturalism and surface finish.

It is perhaps misleading to include Bernardo Rossellino, the elder brother of Antonio by eighteen years, in this generational group. Of the brothers only Antonio is mentioned by name in Bode's account of the development of the genre.¹⁷⁸ It is Bernardo, however, whom it is speculated spent time in Donatello's workshop (although several other sculptors are also potential masters to Bernardo and it is undisputed that he would have gained much of his training from his father and uncle in Settignano).¹⁷⁹ Bernardo's distinguished tomb monuments play their part in the advancement of the language of humanist sculpture and in particular his Bruni monument in Santa Croce (1444-47), crowned with a Virgin and Child in a tondo, looks back to Michelozzo and forward to the Master of the Unruly Children (Fig. 56).

Bernardo was the head of a large workshop, one which at times seems to have worked independently of its Master, and his sculptural practice may also tell us something of the tradition in which our Master was formed. This workshop we know included the younger brothers of Bernardo, most notably Antonio (who did not break away and set up his own business until 1469), and it also employed numerous assistants.¹⁸⁰ Despite the expectation that workshop assistants would follow the master's style, several variations in figure types are visible in a number of Bernardo's works - evidence of his large staff and the scale of commissions undertaken. Alongside large projects, the workshop followed Bernardo's models and produced copious small works such as *Madonna and Child* reliefs and portrait busts. The latter would become a speciality of the young Antonio. This method of production is likely to be that responsible for some of the variations apparent in the corpus of the Master of the Unruly Children.

¹⁷⁸ Bode, 1928, p. 163.

¹⁷⁹ Shelly E. Zuraw in *Dictionary of Art*, 1996, Vol. 27, pp. 180-83.

¹⁸⁰ Zuraw, 1996, Vol. 27, pp. 180-83.

According to Vasari, Antonio Rossellino was adored by his contemporaries more like a saint than a man, due to the grace and delicacy with which he endowed his works.¹⁸¹ His softer style is more akin to that of his friend and contemporary Desiderio da Settignano than to his brother's. His comprehensive skills are, as described by Vasari, best seen in the funerary chapel of Cardinal James of Portugal in San Miniato al Monte (1460-66, Fig. 57).¹⁸² Here, according to Antonio's design the combination of terracotta reliefs by Luca della Robbia, frescoes by Alesso Baldovinetti (1425-99), an altarpiece by Antonio (1429/33-98) and Piero Pollaiuolo (1443-96), the monument sculpture in marble executed by himself and Bernardo's workshop, together with a death mask by Desiderio, shows an unprecedented ensemble of media. The chapel demonstrates Antonio's collaboration with several of the foremost artists of the time and that he was wholly conversant in the dominant trends of mid fifteenth-century sculpture. The infants he included playfully sitting atop the marble tomb also demonstrate Antonio's skill in turning a now popular sculptural ornament into a naturalistic portrayal of childhood (Fig. 58).

It is the sweet child busts by the artist that perhaps best illustrate the grace and delicacy that Vasari was so struck by and it is these that are most readily compared to the work of the Master of the Unruly Children. Antonio specialised in highly individualised portraits of infants in the guise of the young Baptist or even the Christ Child, which were increasingly popular among wealthy Florentines. A comparison between Antonio's *St. John the Baptist as a Boy* in Washington (Fig. 59) with the terracotta bust of the Baptist from the V&A (CAT. C6; Fig. 4) might lead to a conclusion that the two sculptures reveal completely different

¹⁸¹ Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori* (nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568). Eds. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, Sansoni Editore, Florence, 1966-87, Vol. III, p. 391 (in the Life of Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino).

¹⁸² The young cardinal died in 1459. The design for the chapel was originally given at this time to the architect Antonio Manetti, who himself died in 1460. He was succeeded by Giovanni Rossellino but it is Antonio who is recorded as having submitted a model for the project and therefore credited with the design.

conceptions of the biblical figure and, therefore, must have been made by different hands. If one considers, however, that they may both be portraits, which would explain the differences in physiognomy, such a conclusion could be challenged. Nonetheless, it is less problematic to suggest that the controlled and sensitive originator of the first is unlikely to be responsible for the freer, more comedic expression of the latter. This comparison makes clear that whilst our Master may have been catering for the same market as Antonio and producing similar works, Antonio is not responsible for the works of our Master.

Antonio Rossellino, like Michelozzo before him, may have been an originator of compositional formats which our Master incorporated into his work. This can be seen not only in the genre of child busts but in the late works of the sculptor also. The *Running Infant St John the Baptist* of 1477, now in the Bargello (Fig. 60), was originally made for the lunette over the door of the Palazzo dell'Opera di San Giovanni. This unusual pose is one which we will have cause to examine later, when discussing the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488). As it is likely to have a classical source, and had been used by Filippo Lippi (1406-69) in his *Adoration of the Child* of c.1463 (Fig. 61), we cannot say that Antonio originated the pose of the running child exactly but his use of it in this sculpture may have been an example to our Master. The children on the left of the *Charity* groups (e.g. V&A and BMAG, CATS. A2, B1) with their forward lean and disposition of legs, owe much to this composition.

Vasari begins his account of Desiderio da Settignano in a similar vein to that of Antonio Rossellino, by crediting celestial intervention for his gifts.¹⁸³ Desiderio may have spent some time in Bernardo Rossellino's workshop alongside Antonio, but his style owes more to Donatello than to either of the brothers. Desiderio is perhaps the truest 'follower of

¹⁸³ Vasari, (Life of Desiderio da Settignano) Vol. III, p. 399.

Donatello', if we are to use Bode's term, in the manner in which he depicted children in his art. According to Vasari, Donatello and Desiderio worked together on a number of projects, including a frieze for the facade of the Pazzi chapel in Santa Croce (1453-54).¹⁸⁴ This work, notably in terracotta, depicts numerous putti and is an example of the affinity the two sculptors had in their treatment of child figures.

The major monument attributed to Desiderio is the tomb of Carlo Marsuppini (1453-60, Fig. 62). The tomb stands opposite Bernardo Rossellino's Bruni monument in Santa Croce. Marsuppini was Bruni's successor as Chancellor and also a renowned humanist and Desiderio's tomb deliberately echoes that of Rosellino's. Desiderio also adds to his predecessor's format. In particular, the use of free-standing putti at the base, acting as intercessors for the viewer marks a significant departure from the former tomb. The tondo above the effigy barely contains the relief of the *Madonna and Child* – the drapery of the Virgin breaking free from its architectural frame. Desiderio's touches of verisimilitude, particularly as they relate to the figures of children and the arrangement of drapery, both of which we have had cause to mention in relation to the work of our Master, once again add to the justification of Bode's claims that the works under discussion might belong to a fifteenth-century follower of Donatello.

Like Antonio Rosellino, Desiderio is also credited with numerous busts of infants, and, like his friend, these works demonstrate the realism and tenderness of approach so lauded by Vasari (Figs. 63-65). Attribution of the busts is often disputed but from the evidence of the Marsuppini monument alone, when one compares the treatment of figures, it is clear that our Master and Desiderio are not one and the same. Desiderio died at the age of twenty-eight although it is thought that his workshop continued to produce versions of his most popular

¹⁸⁴ This is recounted by Shelley E. Zuraw in *Dictionary of Art*, 1996, Vol. 8, p. 797, but this author has not found it in Vasari's life of Desiderio da Settignano (Vol. III, pp. 398-403) or Donatello (Vol. III, pp 200-26)

reliefs in stucco and terracotta after his death.¹⁸⁵ Desiderio may have been short-lived but several younger sculptors can be named his followers. Vasari says that Mino da Fiesole (1429-1484) was his student, though the two were only born a year apart.¹⁸⁶ Verrocchio, too, is thought to have spent time in Desiderio's shop and is often credited with involvement on the Marsuppini tomb. Francesco di Simone Ferrucci (1437-93) was certainly influenced by Desiderio and though mentioned by Vasari among the students of Verrocchio this is likely to have been in the years subsequent to Desiderio's death.¹⁸⁷ There was only a two year age difference between Ferrucci and Verrocchio, and Ferrucci probably received his basic training from his father before moving to Florence to work with Desiderio. He may have acted as more of an assistant to Verrocchio than a pupil. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) a fellow member of the Verrocchio workshop is also known to have admired Desiderio as has been demonstrated by Wilhelm R. Valentiner.¹⁸⁸

Perhaps Antonio Rossellino's most notable pupil in relation to the origins of our Master was Benedetto da Maiano (1442-97). This generation, of Benedetto, Verrocchio and his pupils was discounted by Bode as having any involvement in the works he attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children.¹⁸⁹ For Bode's immediate successors, Fabriczy and Stites, it is this circle that is held most likely to be responsible and we shall examine their role in due course. There is still yet one further sculptor of this generation who warranted Bode's consideration: Vittorio Ghiberti (1418-96).

Vittorio Ghiberti was the son of Lorenzo Ghiberti and his reputation is principally bound up with that of his father. Bode cites a remarkable lack of attributed works to Vittorio as the

¹⁸⁵ Zuraw, 1996, Vol. 8, pp. 797-800.

¹⁸⁶ Vasari, (Life of Mino da Fiesole) Vol. III, pp. 406-7.

¹⁸⁷ Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, pp. 542-3.

¹⁸⁸ Wilhelm R. Valentiner, 'Leonardo and Desiderio' in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 61, No. 353, August 1932, pp. 53-61.

¹⁸⁹ Bode, 1928, p. 176.

reason for his likely involvement in works by unknown masters.¹⁹⁰ Similar reasoning is subsequently used by Stites and others to account for Leonardo's missing *oeuvre* – insofar as it relates to sculpture. It was, however, the strong folds of drapery seen in our Master's seated *Madonna* in Berlin that caused Bode to shift his attention briefly from the circle of Donatello to that of Ghiberti. Vittorio Ghiberti is recorded as having assisted his father on the *Gates of Paradise* for the Baptistery in Florence (c.1426-52). Indeed, his portrait is included on the central framing device alongside Lorenzo's, but it is the frame of Pisano's south doors, commissioned in 1453 but not completed until 1464, that is often attributed to Vittorio alone.

It is this frame for the south doors and most notably the figure groups therein which employ fighting children, that Bode compares to the work of our Master (Figs. 66 and 67). The similarities in composition are striking. The decoration on the frame features the motif of two children mid-combat, in precise allusion to the story of Cain and Abel. The fight between the biblical brothers is a rare subject in art at this time and when depicted usually portrays the figures as young adults, in direct accordance with the story. Vittorio, however, perhaps intended to make clear their identity and suggest their future path. It is also noteworthy that the children are shown at the feet of Adam and Eve (on either side of the door) providing a pertinent forerunner to the infants seen at the feet of *Charity* in several versions of this subject by our Master. Particularly close comparison can be made between the child on the right of Eve with those in the pair of fighting children attributed to our Master in Milan (CAT. B2; Fig. 66).

A recent article by Arnold Victor Coonin complicates Bode's straightforward and rather compelling suggestion that Vittorio Ghiberti and our Master are connected.¹⁹¹ Coonin's

¹⁹⁰ Bode, 1928, p. 177.

¹⁹¹ Arnold Victor Coonin, 'Vittorio Ghiberti and the Frame of the South Door of the Baptistery, Florence' in *Sculpture Journal*, Vol. 18, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 38-51.

research reveals that Vittorio is likely to have had collaborators in the design and execution of the door frame and names them as Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino, Desiderio da Settignano, Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, Maso Finiguerra (1426-64) and Andrea del Verrocchio.¹⁹² Coonin still maintains that the figures of Adam and Eve are likely to be those of Vittorio so Bode's comparison between the figure groups remains salient. The collaborative approach to the sculptural project, however, is indicative of a common way of working which we have already witnessed in our appraisal of other large-scale commissions. Thus the environment in which the artists above operated was perhaps one whereby artists even depended on one another to enable certain projects to reach completion. We have already had cause to examine many of the sculptors Coonin mentions who worked with Vittorio on the door frame yet rather than discern the individual within this network who could have the greatest claim to the identity of our Master, it seems pertinent to remark upon the exchange of ideas which would have occurred on such commissions. It is the matrix of personalities and talents documented as having taken part that would have then further disseminated motifs – in this case, motifs that find their way into the work of our Master.

Verrocchio and his Generation

In 1435 Andrea del Verrocchio and Andrea della Robbia (already discussed) were born. So too, probably, was Bertoldo di Giovanni (1435/40-91). Bertoldo is a direct link with Donatello as he was perhaps Donatello's most favoured pupil and the sculptor left to run his workshop after his death. Having completed the projects left unfinished by Donatello, he was asked by Lorenzo de' Medici to act as the custodian of his collection of antiquities and head

¹⁹² Coonin, 2009, p. 42.

of an academy for young artists established in the gardens of San Marco. It is in this role that he is described by Vasari as the link between Donatello and Michelangelo.¹⁹³

As an artist Bertoldo is credited, alongside Antonio Pollaiuolo, with the development of the small-scale statuette. This new genre of works executed almost exclusively in bronze and of predominantly antique or mythological subject reached new levels of invention and popularity in the hands of Bertoldo and Pollaiuolo. Their scale aside there is little to link this output with that of our Master. There are known examples of Bertoldo working in terracotta but the most famous of these, the relief at Poggio a Caiano (begun c.1490 completed c.1515), was, according to James Draper, largely executed by the della Robbia workshop.¹⁹⁴

Although a contemporary of Verrocchio, Bertoldo's adherence to antique sources often at the expense of naturalistic detail encourages one, stylistically, to link him with his elders rather than his own generation. Even so, Bode may have discounted him from any involvement in the work of our Master on the basis he was active too late in the century. Bertoldo's occasional use of exaggerated anatomical detail, evident in his *Battle Relief* (c.1478, Fig. 68) can be seen reflected in the combat groups attributed to our Master, but it is clear that whilst Bertoldo may have imparted a sculptural vocabulary to our Master the accent is very different. Moreover, Bertoldo's academy at San Marco produced sculptors of hugely varying styles and abilities; most notable among them was Michelangelo (1475-1564), but Leonardo and Rustici (1475-1554) are also recorded in attendance and undoubtedly saw the Medici's various Hellenistic bronze horses (Figs. 69 and 70).¹⁹⁵ If the traditional workshop system of

¹⁹³Vasari, (Life of Michelangelo) Vol. VI, p. 9.

¹⁹⁴ As suggested in James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni, Sculptor of the Medici Household, Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London, 1992, p. 29. Andrea Sansovino is also credited with involvement on the frieze and it is suspected work may have been undertaken in two phases, in the 1490s and again in c.1512-15.

¹⁹⁵ Vasari, (Life of Michelangelo), Vol. VI, pp. 2-141. See Gary M. Radke, *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta in association with Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009, p. 23 (particularly on Leonardo and the Medici collection of Hellenistic bronze horses).

apprenticeship encouraged learning through imitation and emulation of the Master then it appears that the academy offered a rather different approach. The overriding influence seems to have been not Bertoldo but the Medici collections, the Master acting as guide and facilitator to the ambitions of his young students, teaching the technique of Donatello without necessarily imposing his style.

Cornelius Fabriczy, as outlined in Chapter One, was the first scholar to suggest that the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children should be dated at least quarter of a century later than Bode would allow. The observation which led to this dating, however, concerned not the character of the children, whose origins we have seen can be traced to the mid *Quattrocento*, but the monumentality of the female figures. Whilst Bode based his argument predominantly on comparisons between infant subjects, he himself did not completely ignore our Master's treatment of their maternal guardians. For Bode the voluminous drapery was further support for his dating but he also, in a sense, anticipated Fabriczy's claims:

The early period of the second half of the fifteenth century is clearly indicated by the dressing of hair, the way it is combed straight back and the arrangement of the veil. Those younger masters such as Verrocchio and Antonio Pollaiuolo, who show similar tendencies in regard to vivacious movement and ample drapery are nevertheless much more detailed and individual and therefore less bold in their treatment of drapery.¹⁹⁶

Thus, despite Bode's assertion to the contrary it was firmly toward the circle of Verrocchio and his contemporaries that Fabriczy suggested we should turn.¹⁹⁷

Verrocchio's exact training is unclear but he is associated both with the Rossellino workshop and, according to Vasari, the execution of the *Madonna and Child* on the Bruni Monument, as well as with Desiderio and his tomb for Marsuppini, both in Santa Croce. He is now also

¹⁹⁶ Bode, 1928, p. 176

¹⁹⁷ Cornelius Fabriczy, 'Kritisches Verzeichnis Toskanischer Holz und Tonstatuen bis zum Beginn des Cinquecento' in *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlung*, 1909, pp. 1-88.

proposed as a contributor to the frame for the south doors of the Baptistry.¹⁹⁸ Such a widespread involvement in major projects of the mid-fifteenth century ensured that Verrocchio was the natural channel through which those artistic principles already discussed, and believed by Bode to belong to the previous generation, were translated into the monumental works of the *Cinquecento*.

Verrocchio's role as the head of a progressive workshop, which employed the likes of Leonardo da Vinci and Rustici, further emphasises his importance as a link between the earlier and successive generation and will be explored in due course. The mentoring aspect of Verrocchio's career has received much attention from scholars, perhaps following Vasari's somewhat unkind description of the artist's own style as 'crude'.¹⁹⁹ It may have been this which led Stites to credit Leonardo with the works associated with our Master, without entertaining the possibility that Verrocchio may have had more claim to their authorship. For it is in the work of the older artist that we first see several of the inventions that characterise the work of the Master of the Unruly Children.

Verrocchio shares with our Master a debt to the iconographical traditions of the early fifteenth century. In the hands of Verrocchio these traditions are modified and greater movement infiltrates every figure, which seem simultaneously aggrandized yet naturalistically portrayed. His attention to surface realism is remarkable yet never appears to compromise the beauty of his figures. There are several works by Verrocchio which can be usefully compared with those of our Master and an argument can be made for the common origin of motifs and compositions in his work and in those in our corpus.

¹⁹⁸ Coonin, 2009, p. 42.

¹⁹⁹ Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, p. 533. Vasari wrote that Verrocchio had 'la maniera alquanto dura e crudetta'.

The extensive use of terracotta in the Verrocchio workshop is well documented. An extant bozzetto for the Forteguerri monument (c.1476, V&A, Fig. 71), along with attributed works such as the *Bust of Giuliano de' Medici* (1475-78, Washington, Fig. 72), and the variations made after the *Madonna and Child* relief (c.1475, Bargello, Fig. 73) for the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova demonstrate that the Master and his assistants used clay for numerous purposes and in a variety of ways. As a *Madonna and Child* relief the commission for Santa Maria Nuova provides us with evidence and opportunity to both reflect on Verrocchio's contribution to this tradition and compare his treatment of the subject with that of our Master.

A comparison between Verrocchio's relief and the seated *Madonna* formally in Berlin (CAT. A1 & Fig. 2), or that in the collection of the Rijksmuseum is revealing (CAT. B6; Fig. 27). Both the Bargello *Madonna* and those of our Master have large wide foreheads, downcast eyes and pursed lips and are shown in a similar position and attitude. They also have large hands. It is true that the *Madonna* by Verrocchio has broader more individual features than those of the Master's *Madonnas*, which are more delicate and idealised. In contrast the hands of Verrocchio's Virgin are far more elegant than their occasionally clumsy counterparts in the work of the Master. The repetition of high foreheads and demur expressions seen across these works can also be explained by their conformity to fashionable ideals of beauty and comportment which existed in Florence in the fifteenth century. They are evident in earlier reliefs by Donatello too but nonetheless Verrocchio's more animated relief is clearly closer in style and conception to our Master. The similarities between these works also extend beyond the features of the Virgin.

The dressing of the *Madonna's* hair, as suggested by Bode, is far more convoluted in Verrocchio's work than that in Berlin but if we compare the treatment of the hair itself, firstly by Verrocchio and then in the Rijksmuseum terracotta where the *Madonna* is unveiled, a

resemblance is notable (Figs. 74 and 75). In all three the arrangement and depiction of drapery is also alike. It could be argued that, apart from the folds of the veil, Verrocchio's cloaking of the *Madonna* is less fussy than that of our Master. This is especially apparent in the Master's use of ruched sleeves for the dress of the Virgin, which are then encircled by her outer garment sweeping from shoulder to knee. Nonetheless the handling of the drapery, which piles up as it reaches the ground, or in Verrocchio's case the fictive ledge, is akin.

When comparing the treatment of children in the different works it is clear that both artists use the same language of naturalistically chubby flesh creased at the joints of arms and legs. The feet of the children in all three works are remarkably similar. Despite this, however, the head and torso of Verrocchio's Child is a different shape to that of our Master. Whereas the infant torsos seen in our sculptures tend to widen at the midriff, Verrocchio's is of a more uniform and perhaps more delicate physiognomy. The heads too are distinct. The proportion of the Christ Child's head in relation to his body is larger in Verrocchio's work. Perhaps indicative of the Child's importance or possibly an observation on the natural proportions of young infants. Such large heads are not employed by our Master. Whilst all three works show the Child with thick and lively locks of hair, Verrocchio's treatment is once again notably individual. His Child displays noticeable curls and a central parting. If the Santa Maria Nuova relief provides us with some evidence for linking Verrocchio and our Master in various of its details, then an overall appraisal makes clear that the likelihood that Verrocchio conceived the works of our Master, particularly the boisterous infants, is slim.

Like certain works of Antonio Rossellino and Desiderio (whom we have established were important influences on Verrocchio) it seems that figures of children were rendered sweeter in the hands of Verrocchio than in those of our Master. His *Boy with a Dolphin* (c.1470, Florence, Fig. 76) is further evidence of this, though it too is an important work to consider in

relation to the Master. Widely lauded as one of the first sculptures to depict a *figura serpentina* (a serpentine figural pose) the bronze is also a prominent example of the revival of the child as an independent subject in art, it being neither a portrait bust nor attended by adults. While the infant in *Boy with a Dolphin* is certainly lively, grappling with his slippery catch, he is nonetheless elegant and though he may share the spirit of our Unruly Children he is graceful in comparison.

A later work often attributed to Verrocchio, which is close to his Christ Child for Santa Maria Nuova, is a further work in terracotta, *The Running Putto on a Globe* (c.1480, Washington, Fig. 77). Authorship of the work has been disputed though Verrocchio's involvement at some level is generally agreed upon.²⁰⁰ Aside from demonstrating yet further that Verrocchio's children tend to be of a different shape and more refined manner than those of our Master, this work, like that of Antonio Rossellino, provides a compositional forerunner for the child figures to the left of *Charity* in the group compositions of our Master.

It is not just in the conception of children, however, where Verrocchio diverges from our Master. The two *Madonna* types compared above, though similar and both conforming to fashionable ideals, remain clearly by different hands. Likewise Verrocchio's conception of *Charity*, arguably a character less constrained by predetermined ideas, is usefully compared to that of our Master. In his terracotta model for the Monument of Cardinal Niccolo Forteguerri, Verrocchio suspends the Virtue above the kneeling cardinal. The facial type of the figure and the handling of drapery are very similar to that which we see in sculptures of this subject by our Master but once again it is difficult to conceive of the works belonging to the same hand. Verrocchio's composition, with a child in one hand and a torch in the other is

²⁰⁰ This work is considered by some as a workshop production and by others as a later work (early 1500s) after a lost Verrocchio sculpture, possibly made by a former student. See Andrew Butterfield, *The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 240.

reminiscent of the *Charity* statuette formerly in Berlin but Verrocchio's child is depicted suckling, which is never portrayed in any work by our Master, who prefers that the child simply reveals the maternal breast. Verrocchio's *Charity* also lifts up her torch in line with the raised eyes of the cardinal, a more dynamic gesture than seen in the Berlin work, but this action may be accounted for by the whole upward thrust of the Forteguerri Virtue within the monument design. *Charity* is here depicted with wings, unlike any in our corpus. Nor do any of Verrocchio's Virtues appear to be wearing our Master's distinctive umbrella crown although there is some indication that similar headgear may have been intended when one examines the figure of *Faith* on the left of the panel.

The techniques and methods of working clay which can be seen in the Forteguerri Monument are similar to those of the Master of the Unruly Children. This is also true in the handling of the material seen in Verrocchio's *Resurrection* of c.1470 (Bargello, Florence, Fig. 78) a further work in terracotta. Once again, the dating and complete authorship of this work have been questioned but even as a product of Verrocchio's shop it is of interest as the mark making in the clay is especially alike that seen in the works ascribed to our Master. Particularly close comparisons can be made with the groups of combatant soldiers attributed to the Master and the figures at the base of Verrocchio's relief, who also lie upon a rocky ledge akin to those seen in our corpus.

Works which almost certainly involved the assistance of his workshop such as the *Resurrection* and also those which would have been absorbed and possibly reproduced by them (which may explain the numerous versions of the Santa Maria Nuova relief known to exist), highlight our present need to discuss the wider environment in which Verrocchio's works were produced. This is especially pertinent if we are confident that the works ascribed to our Master should not be reattributed to Verrocchio but nonetheless show his influence

strongly, in style, subject and composition. Verrocchio's workshop was eminent and, as mentioned, nurtured the talents of other notable artists. One of these pupils, Leonardo da Vinci, was suggested as the author of the Master's works by Raymond Stites.²⁰¹ We shall thus examine the Verrocchio workshop and the claims of Stites shortly but there remains one other sculptor, contemporary to Verrocchio and with notable influence on our Master, whom we have yet to discuss.

Benedetto da Maiano was Verrocchio's junior by seven years but, whilst he is credited with enormous technical proficiency, Verrocchio receives greater praise for innovation.²⁰² Given that almost all notable artists of this period have at some point been linked to the output of the Master of the Unruly Children by successive scholars, it is surprising that Benedetto, whose composition and style is so closely analogous with that seen in our corpus, has escaped more than passing reference. Benedetto is best known for working firstly in wood and then marble but he also produced several works in terracotta. Indeed like many sculptors we have already discussed, he would produce terracotta models for his workshop to use during the completion of large commissions. One such commission which is of particular relevance to our argument is the pulpit for Pietro Mellini in Santa Croce, Florence, of 1472-76 (Fig. 79 and 80). This work was praised highly by Vasari and contains marble statuettes of the theological virtues each set into a niche.²⁰³

Charity is here depicted with an umbrella-shaped crown or halo and voluminous robes which fall loosely over her wide-spread knees in a very similar fashion to that seen in the work of our Master. The child suckling at her breast, although lively and with fleshy legs, is small and

²⁰¹ Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo da Vinci, Sculptor, Part III', in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931, Vol 8, part II, pp. 289-300.

²⁰² Vasari, (Life of Benedetto da Maiano) Vol. III, pp. 522-31; Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, pp. 532-45.

²⁰³ Vasari, (Life of Benedetto da Maiano) Vol. III, p. 527-8.

more like that seen in Verrocchio's Forteguerri Monument rather than in the work of our Master. Benedetto's *Charity* also holds a torch which is of a more ornamental design than that seen in the Berlin *Charity* of our corpus but which is held in almost exactly the same position. The facial type of the Virtue is also closely akin to that used by our Master.

Benedetto da Maiano's *Madonna dell'Oliivo* (c.1480) now in Prato cathedral is also directly comparable to the works here under discussion (Fig. 81). As a work in terracotta of a similar scale one can see the parallels clearly. The *Madonna* with her high forehead and simple veil reminds one of Bode's early description of the Berlin *Madonnas*. The drapery is once again close to that seen in the work of our Master although the Virgin's cloak falls with less drama and her knees and shoulders, like those of the Santa Croce *Charity*, face front and do not twist or lean in the dynamic poses seen in the Master's compositions. The *Christ Child* of Benedetto's terracotta, whilst revealing that the artist was capable of replicating the tender portrayal of infants so admired in the work of his teacher Antonio Rossellino, is, however, very different to those depicted by our Master. He is seated in a manner more appropriate to his station and undertakes to bless the devotee.

Ultimately these comparisons may affirm that in the hands of Benedetto da Maiano the subject of the *Madonna and Child* or *Charity* was treated in a more sober and uncomplicated way than could be said of our Master and, therefore, that our Master's works cannot have originated from the same workshop. Yet there is still a character in the work of Benedetto which extends beyond the similarities of facial type, headgear, or drapery, that seems to inform the sculpture discussed in this thesis. Benedetto's workshop is known to have produced numerous works in stucco and terracotta after their master's design. Neri di Bicci

(1419-91) recorded having painted several of these.²⁰⁴ It is likely such products were destined for a commercial market and therefore Benedetto's idiom must have been both popular and widely disseminated. Benedetto's influence in the formation of our Master may be more evident in some works in our corpus than others and this is something to which we shall return when outlining the proposed new classifications later in the chapter.

Verrocchio's Workshop

The influence of Verrocchio on our Master is perhaps even more pervasive than that of Benedetto and this may be due to the teaching methods he employed in his workshop and to those pupils of his who continued to work in his style after his death in 1488 and into the sixteenth century. Existing drawings indicate the nature of the training artists received under Verrocchio and also the possible origin of motifs seen in our corpus. A short overview of the workshop will be followed by a closer examination of those artists in that generation with particular association with our Master.

Several recent exhibitions on Renaissance drawings have reaffirmed that Verrocchio operated as '*maestro del disegno*' (translatable as a master of design but also a masterly draughtsman) and that it was drawing which formed the basis of his instruction in the workshop.²⁰⁵ Numerous sheets connected to the Verrocchio shop and variously attributed to him and his students demonstrate the workshop practice of studying drapery, engaging in observational studies from life and from models, and producing detailed drawings of heads and hands. Unanimously given to Verrocchio is a sheet showing repeated studies of a child in various animated poses, and this is of particular interest to our topic (Fig. 82). The drawings show

²⁰⁴ Neri di Bicci documents painting reliefs from the Benedetto da Maiano workshop in his *Ricordanze* as cited by Gary M. Radke, *Dictionary of Art*, 1996, Vol. 20, p. 115.

²⁰⁵ Such exhibitions include *Fra Angelico to Leonardo, Italian Renaissance Drawings*, British Museum, 2010 and Galleria degli Uffizi, 2011 (catalogue by Hugo Chapman and Marzia Faietti, British Museum Press, 2010). See also Butterfield, 1997, p. 185.

Verrocchio's naturalistic and spontaneous engagement with the subject specifically of children and it is likely to have been one the workshop assistants would have tackled too. Leonardo's drawings of infants, which are widely known, will be discussed in due course.

Alongside such observation from nature Verrocchio's art also demonstrated his knowledge of the antique and the influence of Florentine tradition to date. The motif of the running boy, which we have repeatedly had cause to mention and which is used by our Master, is a good example of how Verrocchio utilised such sources and how his workshop also learned to do so. Fra Filippo Lippi (1406-69) had a great effect on Verrocchio as can be seen most clearly in the paintings attributed to him and his assistants. It is in Lippi's *Adoration of the Child*, of c.1463 (Uffizi), where we find the figure of the infant St. John the Baptist posed as if running - leaning forward with his first leg bent and the other stretched behind in propulsion (Fig. 61). The pose is almost certainly derived from the antique and it has been suggested that the sculptures of Alexander taming Bucephalus on the Quirinale in Rome (known as the Quirinale Horse Tamers), may have been the source (Fig. 83).²⁰⁶ The muscular figure was reduced by Lippi to that of a boy, and then seemingly repeated by successive Florentine followers.

The same stance is arguably that seen in the figure of the child grasping Eve's calves at the base of Vittorio Ghiberti's door frames, which is exactly contemporaneous to Lippi's altarpiece (Fig. 66). Antonio Rossellino certainly uses an almost identical pose for his infant made for the doorway lunette of the Palazzo dell'Opera di San Giovanni in 1477, as discussed (Fig. 60). Verrocchio's sketches show meditations on the figure and notably so do the drawings of his students (Fig. 82). Drawings attributed to Francesco di Simone Ferrucci and Leonardo believed to have been made whilst under Verrocchio's tutelage both show the

²⁰⁶ Zuraw, 1996, Vol. 27, pp. 180-3. Zuraw makes this connection in reference to Antonio Rossellino's *Infant St. John the Baptist* (1477) in the Bargello, Florence.

travelling figure (Figs. 84 and 85). This last comparison was made by Wilhelm Valentiner as evidence of the two artists having received the same training and that shared drawing exercises were responsible for what might otherwise appear an individual's invention.²⁰⁷ Valentiner's argument in this respect is strong and may have relevance to our investigation into the origins of the Master's designs also but he fails to note that the same pose also finds expression outside of this immediate circle.

The posture does appear to have been a favourite of Verrocchio and is transferred by him into a number of guises. It informs the *Boy with a Dolphin* and certainly the *Boy on a Globe*. That the latter may have been realised in the *terracruda* (unbaked clay) sculpture by a student (possibly after Verrocchio's death) only reaffirms that the workshop were all conversant with the figure type. Variations of the pose can also be detected in the figures of St John in the *Baptism* painting (Uffizi, Fig. 18) and *Tobias* in the National Gallery (London) painting (Fig. 86).

The depiction of the *Infant St John the Baptist* on the font in Cerreto Guidi (c.1511) by Giovanni della Robbia (1469-1529) also clearly follows this format (Fig. 23). This work is cited by Schottmüller in connection to the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* formerly in Berlin, and will be discussed more fully later in the chapter.²⁰⁸ In using this pose the work can also to some extent be linked with the groups of *Charity* attributed to the Master, though stylistically the works remain incompatible.

It is tempting to convince oneself that the widespread use of this figure type by Verrocchio (who lest we forget is also implicated in the design of the Ghiberti door frames and was an associate of Antonio Rossellino) and his workshop must indicate that the Master of the

²⁰⁷ Valentiner, 1932, p. 54 (Plate 1, a&b).

²⁰⁸ See Chapter One and Frida Schottmüller, *Die Italienischen und Spanischen Bildwerke der Renaissance und des Barock, Erster Band – Die Bildwerke in Stein, Holz, Ton und Wachs*, Zweite Auflage, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin und Leipzig, 1933, p. 158.

Unruly Children was among his students. If so, he would have been exposed to the same drawing practice witnessed in the sketches of Leonardo and Francesco di Simone. Could the terracottas of our Master even originate in the workshop, having been carried out by pupils to the Master's design? The same review of the running figure, which concludes with Giovanni della Robbia, whilst far from exhaustive, clearly cautions us against such convictions on the grounds of composition alone. It is rather another example of the extensive pollination of ideas, the development of tradition and possibly the deliberate citation of it. As the works of our Master contain variations on this figure type we can perhaps more confidently date them to this period after 1463, the year of Lippi's *Adoration of the Child*. It was evidently from this time onward that the pose became popular although with the Cerreto Guidi reliefs dating from 1511 and the figure clearly still in use we are unable to so easily limit the later range of dating.

The analysis of composition alone is an inconclusive tool for attribution and one must combine this with stylistic comparison also. Thus, it remains appropriate to continue our survey with an examination of those schooled by Verrocchio, who might have imitated his style (the influence of which is evident in the work of our corpus) and who can be seen utilising his compositions. As the sculptor trained first by Desiderio and then Verrocchio, and the artist responsible for one of the aforementioned drawings of the running boy, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci appears to be a likely candidate to have produced the type of works associated with our Master.

There is only one securely documented work attributed to Francesco di Simone and that is his Tomb of Alessandro Tartagni of 1477 (Bologna, Fig. 87).²⁰⁹ A relief of *Charity* is included centrally in the design, between two others of the theological virtues of *Hope* and *Faith*.

²⁰⁹ Mentioned by Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III. pp. 542-3.

Closer inspection of the figure of *Charity* reveals similarities with the work of our Master. The seated position of the figure with wide knees and the arrangement of drapery are alike, as are the ruched sleeves of the Virtue's dress. The child too is similarly lively, straddling his mother's thigh and tugging at her dress, even though the general body-type of the child and facial type of *Charity* are not those used by our Master. The work also depicts *Charity* with her torch raised, far more formal in pose than anything seen in our corpus. Whilst the detail and animation seen in Francesco di Simone's figures clearly display the influence of Verrocchio and the late *Quattrocento*, particularly in the drapery, and whilst these are also the concerns of our Master, direct comparison between these works would not suggest that Francesco was the Master. Other works attributed to him make it difficult to conclusively rule him out of a role in the production of the Master's corpus.

It is widely accepted that Francesco di Simone was able to work in a number of styles and, indeed, did so depending on the latest influence upon him and according to the commission in hand.²¹⁰ As a sculptor with few recorded projects it is also tempting to attribute works to him on the supposition that he may have needed to supplement his income with small-scale works or, as Bode did with Vittorio Ghiberti, assume that further works must exist which could be attributed to him due to the scarcity of an established *oeuvre*.

Evidence of Francesco di Simone's changing style can be seen when comparing two works in terracotta at the V&A with the Tartagni tomb. A statuette of a *Boy with a Shield and Bird* (c.1470-93, Fig. 88), attributed by Pope-Hennessy to Francesco, shows the influence of Desiderio in its sweet and childlike expression (with open mouth) and of Verrocchio in its

²¹⁰ Dario A. Covi, *Dictionary of Art*, 1996, Vol. 11, pp. 26-27.

dynamic, striding pose.²¹¹ Francesco's time spent in Verrocchio's shop is even more apparent in his relief of the *Madonna and Child* (c.1470-93, Fig. 89), also at the V&A. This work relies closely on the relief of the same subject by Verrocchio for the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova (the marble carved after Verrocchio's relief, also in the Bargello, is believed to have been executed by Francesco too). The differences between these figure types and those of the monument could thus be explained by Francesco di Simone's varying abilities to carve marble and model terracotta or just the inherent properties of those materials. The formal demands of the commission may have played their part also. All three works display characteristics comparable with the work of our Master and Francesco's eclectic style may have been easily adapted once again to aid in the production of the terracottas in our corpus. Given the largely derivative nature of the few works we have examined by Francesco so far, it seems possible that it was in the production and adaptation of the Master's works, rather than their original design, where he may have had a role. It is the invention apparent in the Master's work, with its increased contrapposto and mischievous infants that does not seem to accord with what we know of Francesco di Simone Ferrucci's talents.

Further students of Verrocchio, including Agnolo di Polo (1470-1528), Leonardo da Vinci and Rustici will be discussed in subsequent sections. The work of all three artists demonstrates a debt to Verrocchio and a connection to the work of our Master but due to the date of their most notable activity (in relation to our Master) they are more appropriately dealt with outside of the parameters of the Verrocchio workshop.

Leonardo, Michelangelo and Andrea Sansovino at the turn of the century

²¹¹ John Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964, Vols. I-III. For Francesco di Simone's *Boy with a Shield and a Bird* see Cat. 145, Vol. I, p. 171 (illustrated Vol. III).

The tentative steer towards Verrocchio and his workshop that was offered by Fabriczy in 1909 was more fully developed in the articles of Raymond Stites in the early 1930s.²¹² As discussed in Chapter One, Stites's primary motivation was to attribute sculptures to the hand of Leonardo da Vinci. Based on his training under Verrocchio and Leonardo's own claims to the Sforza Duke of Milan on his competency as a sculptor, Stites believed sculpted works by the artist must still be extant. A recent exhibition 'Leonardo and the Art of Sculpture' further explored this proposition, and evidence that Leonardo at least made models for his own use is compelling.²¹³ We have already seen Leonardo engaging in the workshop drawing studies that seemingly fed into the compositions of our Master and, in arguing for the Master's terracottas as works of Leonardo, Stites makes further forceful comparisons.

Stites's first and recurrent point of comparison between Leonardo and the terracottas of our Master was the use of flat rocks. He remarked that only two other artists are known to have used such a motif – Rustici and later Giambologna.²¹⁴ Whilst the particular use of rocky outcrops may have originated in the circle of Leonardo and Rustici (undoubtedly whilst in Verrocchio's workshop) they were, in fact, not the only artists to employ them in their work. The work of Agnolo di Polo (1470-1528), a further pupil of Verrocchio, and one whom we will have cause to examine in due course, also used flat rocks in his sculpture. Indeed, a brief survey of small-scale terracotta sculpture, not only attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children but also the so-called Master of the David and St John Statuettes and several others, clearly shows that this was a popular device and one quickly learnt by numerous hands.

There does, nevertheless, appear to be a particular way that our Master depicts his stony promontories, a shorthand of notching out the edges of his bases and using sweeping

²¹² Stites, 1931, Vol. 8, part II, pp. 289-300.

²¹³ Gary M. Radke, *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta in association with Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009, p. 21.

²¹⁴ Stites, 1931, p. 294.

indentations to delineate each pebble. This is, however, not a trait seen in the examples of Leonardo's work offered by Stites. The *Madonna of the Rocks* (1483-86, Louvre, Paris; Fig. 20) and the landscape of Verrocchio's *Baptism*, which Stites attributes to Leonardo, contain similar stacks of flat rocks to those we see in the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* of our Master but these are not the same style of rock formation that is seen elsewhere in the corpus (CAT. D2; Fig. 1). Stites's comparison then can only be made strongly with one work in our corpus and notably a work which has already been singled out for its differences to the rest of the group.²¹⁵

Further comparisons between Leonardo and our Master in their treatment of hair, drapery, positioning of feet, shape of heads and faces of the Virgin, as well as their general physiognomy, are made by Stites. Some of the parallels noted provide strong evidence for his argument that the terracottas belong to the hand of Leonardo. A sketch by Leonardo of the leg of a young child is particularly similar to the limbs of the infants in the sculptures (Fig. 90).

Moreover, when one shows Leonardo's cartoon for the *Madonna and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist* (c.1507), National Gallery, London, Fig. 91) alongside the terracotta of *Charity* in the V&A, the influence of Leonardo on our sculptor is clear. Here, however, it is not in the detail but in the composition where one is struck by the parallels. A monumental arrangement of four tightly grouped and twisting figures with a complex narrative of gazes between them, and the intricate fall of drapery across the centre section, is employed in both works. Leonardo's cartoon thus provides a compositional forerunner to our Master unlike any other we have yet seen.

²¹⁵ The *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto* had been variously omitted from discussion of the group by Bode and Fabriczy and was placed into its own category by Schottmüller. In the revised corpus discussed later in the chapter it is once again omitted from the core group of works attributed to the Master.

However, although details noted by Stites, such as the way the drapery clings to the knees of the figures in each of these works, and the tilted head and downcast expression of the Virgin, are similar, as is the animation of the infants, the holy boys of Leonardo are not those of the Master of the Unruly Children.²¹⁶ Nor is the often unnecessarily complex drapery of our Master very like that of Leonardo. There is a naturalism and softness in Leonardo that is not present in our Master.

Leonardo's treatment of the *Madonna and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist* had an immediate impact on his contemporaries. Vasari records Leonardo producing a drawing of this subject – the design destined for the high altar of Santissima Annunziata. The Servite order had previously commissioned Filippino Lippi for the work but according to Vasari, he stepped aside when he heard Leonardo, returned from Milan, would have willingly undertaken it.²¹⁷ When this drawing was finally produced and displayed there apparently followed two days during which people from all over the city flocked to see it. The drawing was never developed into the altarpiece and after Leonardo left again for Milan, the commission once more fell to Filippino. The cartoon now at the National Gallery was once considered to be the same as that described by Vasari but it is now usually believed to be a second version made a couple of years later. Nonetheless, it essentially records the composition of the lost drawing, which we also know from those copies made by the admirers noted by Vasari. The details of Vasari's account have been challenged by several scholars but the evidence of drawings by Michelangelo and others which show re-workings

²¹⁶ Stites, 1931, pp. 289-300.

²¹⁷ Vasari, (Life of Leonardo da Vinci) Vol. IV, p. 29.

after Leonardo's composition indicate that it must have been displayed and indeed celebrated whilst in Florence (Figs. 98-103).²¹⁸

Leonardo's drawing also appears to have been evoked by Fra Bartolommeo (1472-1517) in his unfinished *St Anne Altarpiece* (1510-12; Fig. 92) which was commissioned by the *Signoria* (Florentine government) to hang opposite the commemorative battle scenes of Leonardo and Michelangelo in the *Sala del Gran Consiglio* (Great Council Chamber), in the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence. The battle scenes shall be discussed in due course but Fra Bartolommeo's design is worth noting here as although the central group is based on Leonardo's drawing the monumental figure of *St. Anne* owes much to Masaccio (1421-28) and Masolino's (1383-1447) *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* originally for the Church of Sant' Ambrogio in Florence (c.1424, now in the Uffizi; Fig. 93). It is no surprise that in this large and politically charged commission Fra Bartolommeo was keen to recall great works of the Florentine tradition. Moreover, it is interesting to note that when the subject is found in the corpus of our Master, in a terracotta *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* (New York, CAT. C5), it likewise displays a similar conflation of tradition with the recent inventions of Leonardo.²¹⁹

The sensation caused by Leonardo's drawings of the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* must have owed much to their novel and complex composition, as described above. Therefore, it would be surprising if the work of the Master of the Unruly Children pre-dated them. It is far more likely that the sculptor responsible for the works was among those that flocked to see Leonardo's design. The earliest year in which the Santissima Annunziata drawings could

²¹⁸ Vasari, (Life of Leonardo) Vol. IV, pp. 29-30. For debate on the dating and function of the cartoon see Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci, The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 214. Kemp believes the London Cartoon is unlikely to have been for the altarpiece at SS. Annunziata as it is too small and the subject was not retained for the eventual altarpiece after Leonardo's departure.

²¹⁹ The New York terracotta is probably of slightly later date than the main body of work by our Master and is likely to have been made using a mould but it nonetheless implies that our Master was producing works of this subject.

have been displayed is 1499 and it is more commonly agreed that this took place in 1501. Thus, if it seems inconceivable that our Master could have generated his figure groups without the influence of Leonardo's composition, then we must date our corpus no earlier than the very end of the fifteenth century and more likely to the early sixteenth century.

Aside from the comparisons outlined above, the argument for placing the works within the circle of Leonardo is convincingly presented by Stites but it is largely reliant on the similarities noted between the combat groups of soldiers on horseback and Leonardo's designs (CATS. B10, B11, D7, D8). These combat terracottas bear closer scrutiny as works of Leonardo than do the figure groups. There is a volume of evidence related to Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* composition (Fig. 94), the figures seen in the landscape of his *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 19) and his designs for equestrian monuments, all of which show Leonardo engaging with this subject in a way directly related to the sculptures attributed to our Master.²²⁰ This second example of an affinity between the compositional inventions of Leonardo and those works in our corpus further suggests that our Master may have worked within the artist's circle or otherwise followed his example.

The combat groups have been the focus of extensive recent scholarship, much of which attributes at least two of them to Rustici but rarely are any of them now claimed to be by Leonardo.²²¹ Instead, a recurrent idea is that Leonardo may have produced small battle compositions in clay as an aid when working up larger two-dimensional commissions, such as the *Battle of Anghiari*. In fact, there is evidence that he made such works in wax and Stites

²²⁰ Venturi was among the first to note a connection between the compositions of Leonardo and the terracotta statuettes. Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'Arte Italiana, Vol. X, Scultura del Cinquecento*, Parte 1, Ulrico Hoepli, Milano, 1935 pp. 51-6.

²²¹ Philippe S  n  chal, *Giovan Francesco Rustici 1475-1554*, Arthena, Association pour la diffusion de l'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, 2007, pp. 84-93. See also Philippe S  n  chal, 'Giovan Francesco Rustici, with and without Leonardo' in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, ed. Gary M. Radke, 2009, pp. 161-93 and Tommaso Mozzati, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, Philippe S  n  chal (eds), *I Grandi Bronzi del Battisterio: Giovan Francesco Rustici e Leonardo*, Florence, Museo del Bargello, Giunti Editore, 2010.

proposed that the combat groups attributed to our Master may have served such a function.²²²

The sculptures are on the whole conceived in relief, and they all have a definite frontal viewing position and in some cases are left completely open or un-worked at the back. It would thus seem strange for Leonardo, or any artist, to have modelled such works for the purposes of studying and considering the subject from a multiplicity of view points. The highly realised detail on the battle groups, not to mention their number, also cautions us against thinking of these as working studio models. Many show evidence of pigmentation or bronzing further suggesting they were made for sale.

It is of course highly possible that Leonardo made models of the same subject which are now lost and that these extant works rely upon them.²²³ Rustici, a fellow student of Leonardo in Verrocchio's workshop, is known to have lodged with Leonardo and thought to have inherited many of his models. Stites suggested therefore, that Rustici used Leonardo's models as templates for his own compositions, denying the younger artist the capability to have invented the groups himself.²²⁴ Later scholars, however, have challenged this.²²⁵

Many arguments attributing sculpture to Leonardo have been persuasively proposed although all are inconclusive.²²⁶ For our Master the clearest indication of Leonardo's direct association, rather than just his general influence, is that he is the only named artist that can

²²² A sheet of Leonardo drawings, depicting rearing horses, includes a note of instruction from the artist to himself "make a small one of this in wax, a finger long." The sheet of studies is in the collection at the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, RL 12328. Leonardo's note is pointed out by Radke, 2009, p. 22. See also Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo's terracotta group in the Bargello' in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1928, Vol. 6, pp.73-7.

²²³ Gary Radke explores Leonardo's modelling further and in doing so quotes Gian Paolo Lomazzo's 1584 *Treatise on Painting* in which it is reported that Leonardo delighted in clay modelling. Included in the subjects quoted by Lomazzo are horses, heads of our Lady and Christ as a Child. See Radke, 2009, pp. 18-22. For Lomazzo text see Carlo Pedretti, *Studi Vinciani: Documenti, analisi e inediti leonardeschi*, E. Droz, Geneva, 1957, pp. 62-7.

²²⁴ Raymond Stites, 'Leonardo da Vinci, Sculptor' in *Art Studies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1926, Vol. 4, pp. 103-9.

²²⁵ See note 199 for recent discussion on the attribution of the *Equestrian Battle* groups.

²²⁶ The latest of these is proposed by Radke, 2009, pp. 49-58, with regard to two figures on the relief of *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, (Silver Altar) by Verrocchio in the Museo del Opera del Duomo, Florence.

be connected with the compositions of the combat, children and family groups. There are, moreover, stylistic similarities across these groups which suggest a common origin for the terracottas, and whilst it remains difficult to believe that Leonardo was responsible for their production, he may - it might be concluded - have been responsible for their design. Leonardo's potential contribution to the work of the Master of the Unruly Children will be examined further when we discuss his associate Rustici.

In the work of all the sculptors discussed so far it is possible to find precedents for general composition, Madonna types, infant types and use of drapery that are akin to those seen in our works but it is virtually impossible to conceive of any of them combining these elements to produce the works attributed to our Master. The work of our Master is highly accomplished and distinctive and the most unique feature of these works, as identified by Bode, is the unruliness of the children. Representations of fighting children were not uncommon as will be discussed in the next chapter, but the inclusion of such ebullience in compositions of the *Madonna and Child* is highly unusual. The Child grabbing his mother's dress, focused intently at her naked breast, open mouthed, is also outside the normal parameters of images of the *Nursing Madonna*. Even in the case of depictions of *Charity* we rarely see the Virtue so beset by her charges. To find such robust and muscular infants in sculpture we must look to Michelangelo (1475-1564).

Michelangelo was twenty-three years younger than Leonardo and indeed the same age as Rustici who will be discussed shortly. He is included in our survey here as he produced works important to the understanding of our corpus, concurrently with Leonardo, in Florence at the turn of the sixteenth century. The figure of Michelangelo has never been associated with the work of the Master of the Unruly Children, despite the fact that his increasing fame would have loomed large over the sculptors of Florence, even whilst called away to Rome.

Michelangelo had been one of the young sculptors trained under Bertoldo in Lorenzo de' Medici's garden academy. There he would have met Rustici and possibly Leonardo too. Several surviving letters between Michelangelo and Rustici attest to their life-long friendship. Perhaps his closest friend from San Marco was Francesco Granacci (1469-1543), who followed Michelangelo into Ghirlandaio's workshop. Granacci was later to join Rustici in the *Compagnia della Cazzuola* and worked with him and the other artists at the Sapienza (both of which shall be examined in due course) on the triumphal procession of Pope Leo X in 1515 and he may have been a further conduit, along with Rustici, through which the ideas of Michelangelo were passed on to this group.

Granacci's own work shows many similarities with that of our Master, which are worth noting before returning to Michelangelo. Granacci's painting of *The Life of the Young Tobias* at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (undated; Fig. 95) includes robust fighting infants which are much like those in our corpus. A female figure carrying food and tending to a pleading infant (similar to figures of *Charity*) is also depicted in this work, which shows an interest in the same iconographic traditions as our Master (a subject which will be explored further in Chapter Three). Indeed, several paintings by Granacci from the 1510s show the artist employing the same compositions and subjects which we associate with our Master. The central figures from his *Madonna and Child with Sts Francis and Zenobius* (c.1510, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence; Fig. 96) are particularly close to the standing *Madonna and Child* in our corpus and the work also depicts animated infants. As a painter, Granacci is unlikely to have had a direct involvement in the work of our Master but these similarities indicate that they may have been associated.

There are, however, very interesting and significant parallels to be made between works by Michelangelo and those of our Master. By 1499 Michelangelo had returned to Florence from

Rome and stayed in the city until 1505. During this time we know he made drawings after Leonardo's *Madonna and Child with St Anne and St. John the Baptist*. The direction in which he would develop this theme is particularly pertinent to the work of our Master as shall be discussed. Michelangelo also worked alongside Leonardo in the Palazzo della Signoria on his commission for the *Battle of Cascina* (1504-5) and in progress at this time (begun c.1497 though unfinished) was Michelangelo's painting known as the *Manchester Madonna* (National Gallery, London; Fig. 97). With the principal figures crowded onto a rocky platform, the Virgin with one breast exposed and holding a book, and with robust children clambering up her skirts, the relationship between this painting and the *Madonnas* of our corpus is strikingly clear.

Subsequent depictions of the *Madonna and Child* or *Holy Family* by Michelangelo show the influence of Leonardo on his compositions. Drawings attributed to him in the years following the display of Leonardo's cartoon reveal Michelangelo meditating on the seated pose of Leonardo's *Madonna*, with its raised knees and ample drapery (Figs. 98-103). He twists the figure into new positions and most notably for our Master puts in her charge increasingly vigorous children. In a chalk drawing attributed to Michelangelo now at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, dated c.1519, the muscular form of the *Child*, facing front and straddling his mother's knee whilst reaching across her front, as she looks downward, is particularly close to the composition used by our Master. It is such figures of animated children, and their relationship with their elders, which most readily connect Michelangelo to our Master. The lunette of *Josephat* on the Sistine Chapel ceiling (1508-12; Fig. 104), is a further work which relates to these drawings and the work of our Master. Here we find the figure besieged by infants, clambering and literally bending over backwards to suckle at her breast. It is also worth noting that Francesco Granacci was witness to this

invention as he was called upon by Michelangelo to aid in the transfer of the cartoons onto the ceiling of the chapel.²²⁷

Michelangelo's composition was further adapted in later years for the *Medici Madonna* for the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence (1521-34; Fig. 105). Here a seemingly distant Virgin aids her Son to twist vigorously from his position astride her knee and voraciously feed from her breast. The muscular physique of the infant and the vitality which infiltrates every part of the figure, even his hair, is far more akin to that used by our Master than the sweet and charming children of Desiderio. Michelangelo had assistance in the execution of this work too and according to Vasari it was Nicolò Tribolo (1500-50), then in his twenties, who was employed to work on the Medici Chapel with Michelangelo.²²⁸ Tribolo can also be connected to the artists based at the Sapienza and will be discussed further in the following sections.

The parallels between the work of Michelangelo and our Master are, therefore, striking and whilst it is difficult to imagine that the artist could have been responsible for the design of our terracottas, there are many ways in which his ideas and invention could have been directly translated to others. In particular there are several links between Michelangelo and those artists we shall discuss presently. Having seen the treatment of children in the hands of Michelangelo it is now as difficult to imagine the work of our sculptor without their precedent as it is to imagine it without Leonardo.

For sake of completion it seems important to note that an associate of Michelangelo has at one time been suggested as the identity behind our anonymous Master. Charles Avery notes

²²⁷ Vasari, (Life of Francesco Granacci) Vol. IV, p. 603.

²²⁸ Vasari, (Life of Niccolò Tribolo) Vol. V, pp. 204-5.

that Pietro Torrigiano (1472-1528) was proposed as a possible author.²²⁹ Torrigiano also attended the academy in the Medici gardens and famously broke Michelangelo's nose during a dispute. This resulted in his expulsion from Florence and a career spent largely in England and Spain. There are undoubted similarities between the infants of Torrigiano, seen on his tomb for Henry VII in Westminster Abbey (1512-17, Fig. 106), and those of our Master. Torrigiano was also extremely proficient in making works in terracotta but the sculpture produced by our Master is bound up, not only with the cross-currents of artistic developments in Florence at the turn of the century, but also the requirements of its patrons. It is highly unlikely that an artist working outside the city (in another country) could have been responsible for such works.

Born in the years between Leonardo and Michelangelo, Andrea Sansovino (1467-1529) is an artist whose work can also be very closely compared to that of our Master. After the departure of Verrocchio to Venice (1483), and before the maturity of Michelangelo, Andrea seems to have established himself as the most eminent sculptor in Florence, particularly in carving marble.²³⁰ His work demonstrates the influence of both Verrocchio and Benedetto da Maiano as well as Antonio Pollaiuolo, and some claim him as the true successor to Donatello.²³¹ Despite his position in the mainstream of Florentine art at the end of the fifteenth century, and his connection to the della Robbia workshop with whom he produced several works in terracotta, he has yet to be associated with the work of our Master.

It is the works produced by Andrea during the early 1500s which share particular traits to those of our corpus and which warrant his inclusion here alongside Leonardo and the young Michelangelo. In 1501 Andrea was commissioned for two monumental figure groups. The

²²⁹ Avery, 1981, p. 49.

²³⁰ Vasari, (Life of Andrea Sansovino) Vol. IV, pp. 270-83.

²³¹ Virginia Anne Bonito, *Dictionary of Art*, 1996, Vol. 27, pp. 775-7.

first of these was a *Baptism* (1502) to stand above the east doors of the Baptistery in Florence, which shows the overriding influence of Verrocchio. The second commission was for a *Madonna and Child* and *St. John the Baptist* for Genoa Cathedral (1501-03; Figs. 107 and 108). The *Madonna and Child* for Genoa is very similar to the standing *Madonna* from Berlin in our corpus in the general composition and comportment of figures (CAT. B12). Also evident in this work is the motif of the Child reaching over with a bent arm to tug at the dress of the *Madonna*. This is not present in the standing *Madonna* of our corpus but is exactly that used in the seated versions of the subject and in the *Charity* groups. In the hands of our Master this action has been enhanced and the child turns inward and gleefully disrobes the Virgin or Virtue.

Furthermore, whilst Andrea was in Rome in the subsequent years (1505-13) he was commissioned to carve a *Madonna and Child with St Anne* (1512, Sant'Agostino, Rome; Fig. 109) from a single block of marble (possibly the first life-size, multi-figure group to have been done so since antiquity). The work clearly shows that Sansovino had also studied Leonardo's drawings of the subject and was actively engaged in turning the composition into a three-dimensional format. He appears to have been the first sculptor to do so and is therefore a crucial artist for our Master, who was also engaged in developing the composition into plastic design.

Andrea Sansovino's work on the shrine of the Santuario della Santa Casa at Loreto is also evidence of the artist using similar compositional motifs to our Master. He carved reliefs of the *Annunciation*, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, and *Marriage of the Virgin* between 1517 and 1527 (the last of these was completed in 1533 by Tribolo). Aside from the general comparisons that can be made between the animated child figures and treatment of drapery between these works and those in our corpus, the seated figure of the Virgin in the

Annunciation relief is so strikingly similar to those of our Master that the two must be connected (Fig. 110). In no other works outside our corpus do we see the same severe lean of the Virgin's parallel knees, with her body turned to the left and her face downcast. The facial type of the Virgin and the dressing of her hair are also like those of our Master.

The work of Andrea Sansovino is clearly important to that of our Master and therefore one must consider whether he, or a close follower, might have been involved in its production. A terracotta *Madonna and Child* attributed to Andrea (Fig. 111), recently on the art market, demonstrates that he, or someone in his workshop, was producing similar works to those in our corpus. Andrea's most famous pupil was Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570) who has often been connected to our Master and who we shall examine in the following pages. It is also pertinent to note here, that in Loreto, Andrea Sansovino supervised a group of younger sculptors including Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560) and Raffaello da Montelupo (1504/5-66/67) and the aforementioned Tribolo (who completed the work). Scholars describe this not as a workshop but rather a group of young artists guided by an older master.²³² Tribolo and this circle of artists have also been associated with our Master and it may be that they are responsible for developing the compositions of Andrea into the works in our corpus.

The Artists of the Sapienza and the Buglioni workshop

Giovan Francesco Rustici has already been mentioned as both an attendee at Bertoldo's academy at San Marco and a member of Verrocchio's workshop. He may have also learnt to carve marble under Benedetto da Maiano, whose workshop he took over in 1500.²³³ He was also close friends with Leonardo and in contact with Michelangelo. His own work and his activity with a group of artists in the early sixteenth century also provides good reason to

²³² Bonito, 1996, pp. 776-7.

²³³ Proposed by Philippe S  n  chal in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, 2009, p. 162.

connect him with the works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children. Rustici was first mentioned by Stites in association with the groups of *Equestrian Battle* scenes in our corpus but this was to play down his involvement rather than propose it.²³⁴ Subsequently, Schottmüller declared the works of our Master should not be considered as having been produced before the generation of Rustici, Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), the latter two of which will be discussed shortly.²³⁵ Indeed, following Stites and Schottmüller, several other scholars have examined the possible role of Rustici in producing the terracottas in our corpus and recent exhibitions and publications specifically argue for at least some of the works to be attributed to him.

The works now widely accepted as those of Rustici are the terracotta battle groups in the Louvre and the Bargello (Figs. 14 and 15). Given the extensive scholarship undertaken on these works over several years and by numerous individuals, and the technical analysis carried out, the attribution is not something this thesis aims to challenge.²³⁶ On the contrary, it provides a rare point of relative solidity in our conjectures. Nor does it seem relevant here to outline in detail the reasons for the attribution to Rustici, although it is pertinent to note the oft-mentioned friendship between Rustici and Leonardo and the reliance of these groups on the *Battle of Anghiari*. It is also important to make clear that, whilst the Bargello and Louvre works are now given to Rustici, the other variations on the composition in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence (CATS. B10, B11), the Daniel Katz Gallery in London (CAT. B13) and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (CAT. C9) have been denied authorship as Rustici and remain, almost by default, still attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children.

²³⁴ Stites, 1926, pp. 103-9 and Stites, 1928, pp. 73-7.

²³⁵ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 157.

²³⁶ For attributions see note 199 and for specific technical analysis see *I Grandi Bronzi*, 2010, pp. 394-412.

Moreover, there is good reason, as Stites first observed, to connect the battle groups to the rest of the corpus attributed to our Master. The most immediately striking reason is perhaps the ubiquitous rocky bases but there are also parallels in the treatment of hair (and manes) and other anatomical details such as hands and feet. The handling of clay is also comparable. The battle groups not attributed to Rustici are extremely close to those at the Bargello and Louvre now given to him and we must assume they were made in emulation of them, possibly with Rustici's blessing or involvement or at least directly contemporaneous and following close inspection of his works. If we firmly connect our Master to the battle compositions and those works to Rustici then we have a clear case to suggest that Rustici and our Master were associated. An account of Rustici's life and work further supports this proposal.

According to Vasari, after Rustici began his training with Bertoldo, Lorenzo de' Medici decided to place him in the workshop of Verrocchio where he attached himself to Leonardo. Particular mention is made of the delight the two artists had in representing horses and how Rustici would emulate the designs of Leonardo in wax and clay.²³⁷ Now we know that Leonardo returned to Florence from Milan in 1500 and that it was whilst staying with the Servites of Santissima Annunziata on this visit that he produced the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist*, which had such an impact on his contemporaries and on our Master. During this period Leonardo was also acting as advisor to the Dieci di Balìa (the war magistrature of Florence) and his location at Santissima Annunziata was notably close to the new foundry established at the Sapienza (constructed in 1495).²³⁸ The Sapienza was a large complex of buildings founded by Niccolò Uzzano as a college with quarters for poor students. It had since been a textile factory and by the time of Leonardo's return, still

²³⁷ Vasari, (Life of Giovan Francesco Rustici) Vol. V, p. 476.

²³⁸ For Leonardo's work for the Dieci di Balìa, and in general his stay in Florence at this time, see Tomasso Mozzati, 'Florence and the Bronze Age' in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, 2009, pp. 195-206.

managed by the *Arte di Calimala* (the cloth workers guild), it contained a bronze-casting foundry. The foundry was notable as it was run by public office and not privately owned (as had been that of the Ghiberti for example).²³⁹ The complex also contained artists' studios, including those of Rustici, Andrea del Sarto and Jacopo Sansovino.²⁴⁰

Leonardo may have been asked for his expertise on bronze casting for the production of cannon and artillery in the war against Pisa but new research shows that his military interest in the foundry was combined with a desire to revive the casting of large-scale artistic commissions too. Tommaso Mozzati points out that there had been no such projects cast in Florence since Verrocchio's *Christ and St. Thomas* for Orsanmichele in 1483.²⁴¹ It is notable, therefore, that between 1504 and 1511 several new bronzes were cast and that amongst the first of these to be commissioned were the new figures for the Baptistery, *St. John the Baptist Preaching to a Levite and a Pharisee* (1506-11), by Rustici. Vasari's account of this period along with the evidence of several drawings shows that Leonardo worked closely with Rustici in the design of the figures. Mozzati suggests he obtained the commission for him.²⁴²

Just prior to work starting on Rustici's bronzes, between 1503 and 1505, Leonardo worked on his *Battle of Anghiari* fresco for the Palazzo della Signoria. He was not constantly in Florence from 1500 until the completion of Rustici's bronzes. We know that he travelled in his role as military advisor and he returned to Milan in 1506 (though he visited Florence shortly after to arrange the estate of his deceased father). It is in these years, and particularly those between 1500 and 1506, that in Florence, in close proximity to Rustici and his fellow artists at the

²³⁹ For the nature of the Sapienza foundry see Mozzati in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, 2009 p. 198 and documents pp. 202-6.

²⁴⁰ For artistic life at the Sapienza see Vasari, (Life of Giovan Francesco Rustici) Vol. V, pp. 481-7; Bruce Boucher, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1991, Vol. I, p. 18; Tommaso Mozzati, *Giovanfrancesco Rustici, le Compagnie del Paiuolo e della Cazzuola. Arte, letteratura, festa nell'eta della Maniera*, L.S. Olschki, Firenze, 2008.

²⁴¹ Mozzati in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, 2009, pp. 195-6.

²⁴² Mozzati in *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture*, 2009, pp. 196-8.

Sapienza, Leonardo created the works so influential to the production of our Master: the *Madonna and Child with St Anne and St. John the Baptist* (1500) and *The Battle of Anghiari* (1503-5).

Leonardo's importance for Rustici is clear but it would be unfair to suggest that the younger artist was merely a vessel for Leonardo's invention or imitator of it, and nor does Rustici's *oeuvre* reflect this. Aside from the terracotta groups of soldiers and horses, there are no works attributed to Rustici which so closely echo his friend. Antiquity played an enormous role in his art as did more recent Florentine tradition. The work of Donatello, for example, can be seen reflected in Rustici's *Madonnas* (and in his figure of the Levite) and his training under Bertoldo and then with Verrocchio both left their mark. His friendship with Michelangelo also influenced Rustici's style (Fig. 112). At the turn of the sixteenth century, Rustici's work deliberately celebrated the great pioneers of the early Renaissance and also embraced the new developments that were defining the age.

This often eclectic combination of archaicism, dynamism, antiquity, tradition and invention is exactly the combination of sources and stylistic traits that we see in the work of the Master of the Unruly Children, and it is the cause of so many problems in establishing authorship and date. The evidence for suggesting Rustici was involved to some extent with the work of the Master of the Unruly Children is strong. Support for this proposal becomes even stronger when we examine his artistic circle and the recorded instances of his model making. Nonetheless any close inspection of his documented works (whilst firmly attributed, the combat groups are not documented) alongside those of our Master makes clear that Rustici was not responsible for *all* of the designs seen in our corpus.

Vasari's account of Rustici dwells, for several paragraphs, on the artist's membership of two companies, the *Compagnia del Paiuolo* (Company of the Cauldron) and the *Compagnia della*

Cazzuola (Company of the Trowel).²⁴³ It is the first of these that operated from the Sapienza complex and its members included Andrea del Sarto, whom Schottmüller identified as an influence on our Master. Whilst the dinners and entertainments staged by the companies might show Rustici and his friends to have been somewhat frivolous they also demonstrate an engagement with history, literature, antiquity and the arts (poetry, music, rhetoric) in a creative and competitive way. If Vasari is to be believed, they were also pricked by their extravagance and the noble Rustici, whose charity is noted several times, suggested out of respect for the poor that they limit their parties to once a year.

The Sapienza then acted as a sort of artist colony (visited by Leonardo) where on occasion the artistic gatherings mentioned above would take place but also, on a more regular basis, Rustici would be found in his studio, alongside Andrea del Sarto who, from 1510, shared rooms with his friend Jacopo Sansovino. Bruce Boucher notes how Rustici's studio, in particular, was a hub where numerous visiting artists could mingle with aristocratic patrons.²⁴⁴ The sculptor Antonio Solosmeo da Settignano (active 1525-36) studied with Andrea del Sarto and Jacopo Sansovino, and Tribolo too gravitated to Jacopo from an earlier apprenticeship. The young Baccio Bandinelli (1488-1560) was tutored by Rustici but also frequented the Sarto and Sansovino studio where he alternated his efforts between painting and sculpture. The artists in this circle collaborated, moreover, on a number of projects both large and small. They pooled their talents most notably in their designs for the triumphal procession of Pope Leo X on his entry into his native city of Florence in November 1515. Among other things this involved the artists of the Sapienza creating a temporary facade for the Cathedral. Francesco Granacci was also involved in this project and may have spent time at the Sapienza.

²⁴³ Vasari, (Life of Giovan Francesco Rustici) Vol. V, pp. 481-7.

²⁴⁴ Boucher, 1991, p.18

It was Frida Schottmüller, in her 1933 catalogue, who first pointed to the circle of Andrea del Sarto and Jacopo Sansovino (i.e. the Sapienza) as the locus within which the works of the Master of the Unruly Children must have been created.²⁴⁵ Vasari wrote that Sarto and Jacopo had ‘an affinity’ and that the sculptor produced compositional models for the painter’s works.²⁴⁶ The terracottas in our corpus bear close comparison with the compositions of many of Andrea del Sarto’s paintings. One may be tempted, therefore, to propose that certain of them could even have acted as models but, as in the case of Leonardo, our works are surely too highly finished to have served such a function. Despite similarities, there is also no direct match of terracotta to painting between our Master and Andrea which might make this proposition more compelling.

A strong case for suggesting, nevertheless, that our Master may be connected to Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto centres around the standing *Madonna and Child* formerly in Berlin (CAT. B12) and Sansovino’s competition model for the facade of the Mercato Nuovo made in 1510-11 (Fig. 25). Sansovino failed to execute the commission, which went to the younger Bandinelli, so the full-scale sculpture was never realised. Zaccaria Zacchi (1473-1544) also entered this competition and is a figure who will be mentioned later. Sansovino’s model, made of soft fruit tree wood, is now sadly damaged and the terracotta *Madonna* from Berlin was lost in 1945. Our comparisons between the two can, therefore, only be cursory but the similarities are still striking. The style of drapery, the raised foot of the Virgin onto a platform allowing her knee to support the Infant, her face turned towards the Child, are repeated motifs in both works, and they are also visible in Andrea del Sarto’s *Charity* in the

²⁴⁵ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 157.

²⁴⁶ Vasari, (Life of Jacopo Sansovino) Vol. VI, p. 177. Vasari’s observation is also recounted by Boucher who expands further on the working relationship between Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto. Boucher, 1991, p. 20.

Chiostro dello Scalzo (Cloister of the Scalzo, Florence, Fig. 113) of 1514-24 and his *Madonna of the Harpies* (1517, Uffizi, Florence, Fig. 24).²⁴⁷

This repetition of motif and development of composition suggests a common source and points to the shared studio of Jacopo and Andrea but it was not their original invention. Filippino Lippi had already used an almost identical composition, reversed, to depict *Charity* in the decoration of the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella completed in 1503 (Fig. 114). The crossed legs of the Child seen in both Lippi's work and that of Sansovino surely suggest the sculptor knew the fresco. Leonardo's painting of *Leda and the Swan*, made in 1508, also contains a standing figure in serpentine pose with a single raised foot and several copies of the painting, by different hands, are dated between 1510 and 1515 (Fig. 115). Andrea Sansovino's *Madonna and Child* for Genoa (Fig. 107) does not contain the motif of the raised foot and nor is it so dynamic but, nonetheless, it was surely also an important forerunner to his student's composition.

Vasari tells us that Lorenzo di Credi (acting as judge) and the wider judging panel and other connoisseurs agreed that Sansovino's competition model was the finest.²⁴⁸ His acclaimed use of this popular pose in the guise of a *Madonna and Child* may have given rise to emulation by his contemporaries. Indeed, there exist several versions of standing *Madonnas* in terracotta, using elements of this design, which one could date to this period. The example attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children appears to have been particularly fine (especially if we consider Bode's praise for it).²⁴⁹ It may have had more reason than most to

²⁴⁷ The comparison between the Berlin *Madonna and Child* and works by Sarto and Sansovino is first noted by Schottmüller who cites Gramberg's comparison of the *Madonna of the Harpies* and *Charity* from the Scalzo and their similarity with the model in Budapest. Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158. Boucher also discussed this work and the competition. Boucher, 1991, Vol. 2, Cat. 8, p. 319.

²⁴⁸ Vasari, (Life of Jacopo Sansovino) Vol. VI, p. 179.

²⁴⁹ See Chapter One and Bode, 1928, p. 175.

be considered as having originated in Sansovino's workshop, or according to his design, but Jacopo could not have been responsible for them all.

The composition was evidently one which Sansovino favoured as it was re-used in several of his later works. Most notable among these are the *Madonna and Child* on the tomb of Galesio Nichesola in Verona Cathedral (c.1530-32) and a *Charity*, which owes much to Lippi and Andrea del Sarto, as well as Jacopo della Quercia, on the *Monument to Doge Francesco Venier* in San Salvatore, Venice (c.1556-61; Figs. 116 and 117). The curved pose of the standing figure easily permitted the addition of further children tucked into the void created by the bent leg. This conceit had been used to maximum effect by Filippino and Andrea who portrayed one of the infant companions to *Charity* emerging from under her robes. An extant terracotta of this composition has recently come to light and been attributed by Andrew Butterfield to Jacopo Sansovino (Fig. 118).²⁵⁰ He dates the work to c.1510 and believes it to be a model made for Andrea del Sarto's Scalzo fresco. The sculpture and the painting are extremely close and undoubtedly connected. The fact that the model differs slightly from the fresco lends credence to the possibility that it pre-dates rather than copies it, although this is still possible. If this is indeed a terracotta by Jacopo's hand, and represents his solution to a request for a standing figure of *Charity*, then it allows for a direct comparison with the sculpture in our corpus. Such comparison must conclude that despite the evident similarities with the work of our Master, particularly in the treatment of drapery, the Sansovino terracotta is substantially different in its figures of children, and in the facial types of all the figures, to be considered by the same hand. Given this evidence, our Master cannot be identified as Jacopo Sansovino, but the connection with him is nevertheless strengthened.

²⁵⁰ The work was included with its attribution to Jacopo Sansovino in *Body and Soul: Masterpieces of Italian Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture* an exhibition by Andrew Butterfield Fine Arts and Moretti Fine Art. New York, October - November, 2010.

There are no examples of a standing *Charity* in our corpus. Even so, a conflation of the standing Virtue with playful infants (of Sarto or Sansovino) and the majestic seated pose of Leonardo's *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist* could be said to account for the compositions of seated *Charity* by our Master. Such monumental groups of women and children were a recurrent preoccupation, too, of Andrea del Sarto who can be seen refashioning members of the Holy Family into naturalistic portrayals of the Virtue. His *Charity* in the Louvre, of 1518, is particularly pertinent in relation to the design seen in our Master's terracottas (Fig. 119).

Jacopo Sansovino too was working on variants of this idea and a model, attributed to his Venetian workshop, which shows the *Madonna* seemingly rising from a seated to standing position with a child to either side (identified as angels but without wings), is close to the sculptures of *Charity* in our corpus (Fig. 120). Whilst this model may be of a later date it is possible that it repeats an earlier work by Sansovino. The *cartapesta* (papier mache) sculpture has been greatly damaged but clearly shows a female and children of similar pose and physique to those by our Master. It was discovered in the former hospice of the Muneghette in Venice, and this may indicate the possible locations of some of our Master's works.²⁵¹

We know that Jacopo Sansovino made models in terracotta and was, with Andrea del Sarto, developing variations of similar compositions to those seen in the work of our Master. We also know that they were at the Sapienza together with Rustici between 1510 and 1517. It is very possible that Jacopo was involved in the production of copies made after his designs. In this context, a body of work now attributed to the so-called Master of the David and St. John Statuettes merits scrutiny in relation to Jacopo and our Master.²⁵² The two anonymous

²⁵¹ Rosella Bagarotto, Luigi Savio & Bruce Boucher, 'The Madonna delle Muneghette: A New Work by Jacopo Sansovino' in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 122, No. 922, January 1980, pp. 22-9.

²⁵² For connections between the Master of the David and St. John Statuettes see Boucher, 1991, pp. 6-7.

masters have often been connected with each other so it is likely there is an overlap between them in the attribution of works but to disentangle the attributions of yet another body of anonymous sculpture falls outside the scope of this thesis.

It is not proposed here that Jacopo Sansovino is responsible for the works of our Master. As compelling as all the circumstantial evidence may be, a stylistic comparison between the figures of Sansovino and those in our corpus makes such an assertion problematic. Nonetheless, there are points of comparison with certain works by the artist which are notable. The Martelli altar in Sant'Agostino in Rome (1518-21; Fig. 121), for example, shows Sansovino employing a similar *contrapposto* pose to our Master.²⁵³ The knees of the Virgin are swung to the right with drapery falling over and about them in a similar fashion to that we have seen used by our Master. The arm of the Virgin, which rests in her lap holding a book, is also akin to that in our corpus as is the stance of the *Christ Child*. The *Child* has particular resemblance to certain infants in our corpus, the *Child* in the standing *Madonna* from Berlin or that seen in the *Madonna and Child* in Milan (CATS. B12, C1) being the closest. However, the general appearance of Sansovino's *Madonnas* show him to be far more classical in temperament than could be said of our Master, even when not working in Rome.

The compositions of Sarto and Sansovino are variations of those seen in the work of our Master but they have often been developed beyond that apparent in our corpus. Andrea's paintings in particular expand the repertoire of poses and attitudes adopted by the infants surrounding *Charity* and whilst they are occasionally playful these children are never unruly. They can be muscular and even open mouthed (as is the angel at the foot of the *Madonna of the Harpies*) but they are also quite beautiful. There is a naturalism in the work of Andrea del Sarto that is not present in the works of the Master, which are still tied to a language of

²⁵³ This *Madonna and Child* group is in the same church as the previously mentioned *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* by Andrea Sansovino (Sant'Agostino in Rome).

animated drapery over idealised figures developed by Verrocchio. This, at least, is true of the principal females. The *Madonnas* of Jacopo Sansovino might not be deemed so naturalistic and in this they bear closer comparison with the works in our corpus, but Jacopo's preference for female types with heavily delineated braids of hair and broad facial features is not evident in our terracottas. The specific figures developed by his former master Andrea Sansovino in Loreto (from 1519) are not inherited by Jacopo, who would have left his employ by this time. Indeed, Jacopo had already left the Sapienza by 1517, which perhaps explains why some of his students then went to work with Andrea.

Jacopo Sansovino had several disciples at the Sapienza and the figure of Niccolò Tribolo was specifically mentioned by Schottmüller in connection with these works.²⁵⁴ Tribolo has also been connected with the Loreto reliefs of Andrea Sansovino. Specifically, Schottmüller compared the *Fighting Children* formerly in Berlin to Tribolo's putti in his *Nature* (c. 1529).²⁵⁵ The muscular bodies of the infants are certainly alike. Tribolo's treatment of children in this work may have been influenced by Michelangelo whom he was assisting on the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo around the same date. The influence of Michelangelo's twisting Child for the Medici Sacristy is even more pronounced in Tribolo's children on the *Fountain of Hercules and Antaeus* (c.1537-50, Figs. 122 and 123) at the Villa Castello. Tribolo is further connected to our Master (unwittingly) by Bode who tentatively included the terracotta *Boy and Girl with a Goose* at the V&A in the original group he attributed to our Master. This work has now been re-ascribed to Tribolo and linked to a period around 1545

²⁵⁴ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158.

²⁵⁵ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158.

when the sculptor, with Pierino da Vinci (1529-53/4), was producing works with infant subjects.²⁵⁶ The reasons to connect Tribolo with our Master are manifold.

Pierino da Vinci has himself been connected to the corpus of our Master. In Pope-Hennessy's catalogue of the V&A collections compiled in 1964 the *Winged Boys* in sandstone once attributed to our Master are given to Pierino da Vinci.²⁵⁷ Pope-Hennessy proposed the original location for the works as the house of Monsignor Pier Francesco Ricci, and supports this with documentary evidence; therefore, subsequent debate on the possible involvement of our Master in this work has since ceased. Baccio Bandinelli and Tribolo are said to have taken in the young Pierino da Vinci on his arrival in Florence (c.1540).²⁵⁸ This places Leonardo's nephew in the circle of the Sapienza, albeit considerably later than the period of Jacopo Sansovino, discussed above. Nonetheless he appears to have inherited the dynamic forms associated with his older associates and evident in our corpus and, therefore, it is not unreasonable to propose that Pierino may have also been associated with our Master.

Working concurrently with the artists at the Sapienza and often in collaboration with them, was the workshop of the Buglioni. Tribolo, in particular, is recorded as having worked with Santi Buglioni in 1539 and also to have influenced his fellow sculptor greatly.²⁵⁹ Santi Buglioni is first linked to our Master by Schottmüller who credits him with having collaborated on the *Infant St John the Baptist in a Grotto*, in our corpus.²⁶⁰ He is then further connected to our Master by Charles Avery.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 437-8.

²⁵⁷ Pope-Hennessy, 1964, Vol. II, pp. 440-2.

²⁵⁸ Vasari, (Life of Pierino da Vinci) Vol. V, p. 230.

²⁵⁹ Allan Marquand, *Benedetto and Santi Buglioni*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1921, p. xxxii.

²⁶⁰ Schottmüller, 1933, p. 158-9.

²⁶¹ Charles Avery, *Fingerprints of the Artist: European Terracotta Sculpture from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1981, p. 48.

Avery notes a similarity between the *Charity* on the frieze of the Ospedale del Ceppo (the hospital of the trunk or branch), a charitable organisation for the poor, in Pistoia and the works in our corpus. Santi Buglioni is documented as having glazed the terracotta frieze in Pistoia in 1525 but it is unclear if he also modelled the figures. It is Avery's contention that our Master may have collaborated with Buglioni on the project. A new loggia was built for the medieval hospital in 1502 in emulation of Brunelleschi's architecture for the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence and no doubt the idea of glazed terracotta decoration was also inspired by that institution and the roundels by Andrea della Robbia, c.1490, discussed earlier. Giovanni della Robbia (1469-1529) also produced works for the hospital in Pistoia.

The Buglioni family workshop is linked to that of the della Robbia through a story recounted by Vasari, in which Benedetto Buglioni learns the secrets of glazing terracotta from a woman in the della Robbia household.²⁶² Allan Marquand tells us they were actually a rival workshop to the pre-eminent terracotta masters but that by the time Santi Buglioni reaches maturity he is the 'only one in his day' to produce such glazed sculpture.²⁶³ This is pertinent in our consideration of any possible collaboration between Santi Buglioni and our Master. Indeed, any Florentine modeller who wished their work to be glazed in the 'della Robbia style' after the death of Giovanni della Robbia in 1529, would presumably have had to go to Buglioni. In his relation with the Master of the Unruly Children, therefore, we may not be dealing with a special partnership but a more common and requisite one.

In assessing the works of the Buglioni, it is the older Benedetto, rather than Santi who has a more immediately apparent kinship with our master. Comparable works such as a standing *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 124) attributed to the sculptor as well as two works in the Bargello

²⁶² Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, p. 545.

²⁶³ Marquand, 1921, p. xxxii. See also Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, p. 545: 'Dopo Benedetto rimase il segreto a Santi Buglioni, che solo sa oggi lavorare di questa sorte sculture.'

of the *Madonna and Child* and the *Infants Christ and St. John the Baptist* (Figs. 125 and 126) show that Benedetto was making small-scale, free-standing groups in terracotta much like those of our Master. Some of Benedetto's works have also been previously attributed to the Master of the David and St. John Statuettes.²⁶⁴ The poses of his *Madonnas* may be less dynamic than we often see in the compositions of our Master but the facial features of the Virgin, the treatment of hair, and the intimacy conveyed between the figures have their counterpart in our corpus. Benedetto's children are certainly sweeter and less muscular than those we have become accustomed to with our Master and over all there is a quiet decorum apparent in his works, perhaps created by the unfussy fall of the Virgin's cloak or the general simplicity of composition, unlike those in our corpus. The terracotta of the *Christ and St. John the Baptist* is especially close to that formerly in Berlin, given to our Master by Bode (CAT. D12). It provides further evidence to support Schottmüller's claim that the Buglioni workshop were involved in the production of this work. Whilst it is unlikely that Benedetto is responsible for the works of the Master his output is nonetheless indicative of the context in which they were being produced.

The connection between Santi Buglioni's *Charity* on the frieze in Pistoia with the works of that subject by our Master is proposed by Avery largely on the grounds of similarities in iconography and composition (Fig. 29). Stylistically the works are similar too, particularly when one accounts for the increase in scale from the terracottas of our corpus to the large architectural decoration of the hospital. Such a variance in scale, combined with the evident classicizing of the Virtues on the frieze, makes one wary of concluding that the same artist was responsible for our corpus and these works. Moreover, the infants in Pistoia do not

²⁶⁴ A pair of terracotta angels with a scroll at the V&A now attributed to Benedetto Buglioni were once given to the Master of the David and St John Statuettes by Robinson: J.C. Robinson, *South Kensington Museum, Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages and Period of the Revival of Art*. A descriptive catalogue of the works forming the above section of the museum with additional illustrative notices. Published for the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education, Chapman and Hall, London, 1862.

wholly correlate with those of the Master; however, the mischievous minors were possibly tamed for such a public setting. It is interesting to note that Marquand credits Santi's involvement with Tribolo and Michelangelo for his greater invention after Benedetto's death (1521).²⁶⁵

The collaborative working methods of artists at the Sapienza, whether it be Rustici, Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto or the younger generation of Bandinelli, Tribolo, Solosmeo, Pierino and often Santi Buglioni, offers a plausible environment in which the work of our Master may have been created. Individually it is difficult to single out any one of these artists and identify their hand in our corpus of works. We come closest to this in the *Equestrian Battle* groups and the figure of Rustici, who may well have produced a model for others to embellish and reproduce. These works surely date from a period shortly after Leonardo executed the first stages of his *Battle of Anghiari* for the Palazzo della Signoria when the impact was greatest and the subsequent demand for private examples of such figure groups was at its height. The groups of the *Madonna and Child* and *Charity* are harder to pin down but can also be strongly linked to this group of artists and the first decades of the sixteenth century.

Other Possibly Relevant Figures

Several other sculptors working in the same years as those artists of the Sapienza, and occasionally linked to them, may also be relevant to our Master and an examination of his attributed works. There are three figures discussed in this section, and they are notable as they are predominantly associated with the production of terracotta sculpture. They are, therefore, pertinent to our investigation not only through any affinity of style or subject matter their works may share with those of our Master but also because the works are

²⁶⁵ Marquand, 1921, p. xiii.

comparable in scale and material. Their output is indicative of the market for terracotta sculpture and highlights the practice of making copies, which is also evident in our corpus.

The first of or these sculptors is Agnolo di Polo de Vetri who could have been discussed in an earlier section as one of the students of Verrocchio. His prolific production of terracotta sculpture is particularly noted by Vasari.²⁶⁶ Moreover, other than the members of the della Robbia and Bugglioni workshops, Agnolo is perhaps the only other sculptor active in the sixteenth century for whom we have documents relating to numerous commissions in terracotta. Vasari mentions his productivity and, perhaps because of this, several undocumented small-scale statuettes have also been attributed to him. His style owes much to Verrocchio, although he spent only a few years in the workshop before Verrocchio's departure for Venice in 1486. His manner is also indebted to Benedetto da Maiano and, in combining these two stylistic influences, his work is of particular interest in relation to our Master. Furthermore, he is also recorded as having worked with Giovanni della Robbia in 1517.²⁶⁷ Such contact may have been the source for works such as the *Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto*, which is somewhat of an anomaly in our corpus but not dissimilar to works specifically attributed to Agnolo, such as a *Jerome in the Wilderness* – a statuette reproduced in multiples, including glazed versions (Figs. 127 and 128). The reliance of the *Infant Baptist* composition on the della Robbia reliefs at Cerreto Guidi has already been noted.

Closer inspection of the work of Agnolo di Polo reveals that whilst it shares certain traits with that of our Master it is perhaps a little too restrained to be considered to be by the same hand.

The centrepiece for Agnolo's commission for Santissima Annunziata in Arezzo is a *Madonna*

²⁶⁶ Vasari, (Life of Andrea del Verrocchio) Vol. III, p. 543. '...Agnolo di polo, che terra lavorò molto praticamente et ha pieno la città di cose di sua mano.'

²⁶⁷ Louis A. Waldman, 'The Terracotta Sculptor Agnolo di Polo de' Vetri: the Prison, the Pievano, the Pratese, and the Cook' in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 51. Bd., H. 3/4, 2007, p. 337.

and Child in terracotta (1526-27, Fig. 129). This work is very similar to that of Benedetto da Maiano's *Madonna dell'Oливо* (Fig. 81) although the placing of the knees of the Virgin and the drapery over them are more akin to Verrocchio, as is the position of the Child, which recalls that of Christ in the *Madonna and Child* panel in Berlin, attributed to Verrocchio and his workshop (Fig. 130). All three of these can be closely related to the seated *Madonna and Child* groups of our Master, particularly that in Berlin (Cat. A1).

A standing *Madonna and Child* of c.1520, in Los Angeles, is also attributed to Agnolo (Fig. 131). Once again strong connections can be made with the standing *Madonna and Child* in our corpus. The *Child* in this instance is still reliant on Verrocchio in style, although his pose, stretched across the front of his mother leaning to her left, is surely borrowed from Leonardo's *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist*. The facial features and drapery of the Virgin are like those throughout the corpus of our Master, although we never see the conceit of tying the two ends of her veil which is present in the Los Angeles terracotta. This motif is used in the terracotta *Madonna and Child* attributed to Andrea Sansovino (Fig. 111). In fact, despite the differences in pose, these two works are extremely close in style and handling. The animated figures of Christ are very similar to one another and were it not for the treatment of the Virgin's features one might conclude these works were by the same hand. Compared to the standing *Madonna* of our Master, Agnolo seems to have preferred a more static pose for his figure: both feet remain grounded although the weight is placed on one allowing for some contrapposto, but not nearly as pronounced as that of the Master's work. Such a stance can also be found in other female saints and Virtues attributed to the artist, including a statuette of *Faith* (dated c.1499, but possibly later, Fig. 132) recently sold at auction (Sotheby's New York, 2007). This work may give us an indication of how *Charity* may have been treated in the hands of Agnolo. He evidently

repeated the composition as it has been used for a *St Catherine of Alexandria* in the Cesati Gallery collection in Milan (convincingly dated 1510, Fig. 133).

The works mentioned above, probably made in the period between 1488 and 1528, show Agnolo di Polo embracing Florentine tradition and the teachings of his immediate elders Verrocchio and Benedetto da Maiano, but also new developments made by Leonardo and his near contemporary Andrea Sansovino. It also shows how these were incorporated into terracotta sculpture – both that designed for a specific commission and that most likely produced in multiple for a wider market. The similarities between Agnolo and our Master are also stylistic and there is a strong likelihood that they shared the same training and possibly worked in the same circle. The interaction between figures in the work of our Master is not evident in that of Agnolo - and one doubts that such lively compositions could have originated with him - but Agnolo may not have been above collaborating with our Master in their reproduction.²⁶⁸

Zaccaria Zacchi (1473-1544) was also an artist who worked extensively in terracotta. He was first associated with our Master by Massimo Ferretti, who linked Zacchi to a *Madonna and Child* in Buggiano (c. 1511-16, Pieve di Santa Maria della Salute e San Nicolao, Fig. 34).²⁶⁹ This work had formerly been attributed to the youthful Jacopo Sansovino by Margrit Lisner in 1962, who also proposed that it must have influenced the work of our Master.²⁷⁰ The Buggiano work is indeed very close in scale, subject and style to those of our Master, so much so that the work must not only be connected to our corpus, but it may also be concluded that its author is our anonymous Master.

²⁶⁸ Aside from the usual collaborative working methods of Florentine workshops, which may have seen Agnolo di Polo and our Master working together it is possible Agnolo may have needed to increase his income to pay debts. Documents indicate he may have spent time in a debtors prison. See Waldman, 2007, pp.337-50.

²⁶⁹ Massimo Ferretti, *Per la Storia della scultura, Materiali inediti e poco noti*, Società Editrice Umberto Allemandi & C., Turin, 1992, pp. 33-49.

²⁷⁰ As documented by Ferretti, 1992, p. 37, and Boucher, 1991, Vol. 2, Cat. 101, p. 366.

Massimo Ferretti's proposition that Zacchi was responsible for the Buggiano *Madonna*, remains unchallenged to date, but the argument for Zacchi to have originated the works in our corpus is less straightforward. Firstly, there are several differences which can be discerned between the figures in Buggiano and those of our Master and these are most obvious when one compares the children. Whilst the figure of the Virgin, with her hair cascading over one shoulder from a turban-style head scarf, her idealised face and downcast glance, her ruched sleeves, ample drapery, wide knees and raised foot, all find their counterparts in our corpus, the Christ Child she holds is not unruly and its face and hair owe more to Verrocchio than any child attributed to our Master. Moreover, Zacchi's career, whilst it intersects with those artists we have already had cause to mention, was spent mostly outside of Florence, in Volterra, Bologna, Trento and Rome.

Vasari mentions Zacchi, as Zaccaria da Volterra, only within the life of Baccio da Montelupo (1469-1523) with whom he seems to have spent his early years in Florence, and who was a close friend.²⁷¹ Baccio had attended the academy at San Marco and is also noted for his works in terracotta, so could have passed on such training to Zacchi. The former connection made between the Buggiano *Madonna* and Jacopo Sansovino is of also of interest. Zacchi competed against Sansovino for the Mercato Nuovo commission in 1510-11. Baccio da Montelupo and a young Baccio Bandinelli (who was eventually awarded the commission) also competed. Zacchi was evidently back in Florence (he is documented in Volterra in 1506) and associating with these artists at that time. The raised foot on a small box used by Jacopo in his competition model is the same as that used by Zacchi in the Buggiano *Madonna* and, if Ferretti's attribution and dating are correct, he would have worked on this terracotta within the same years.

²⁷¹ Vasari, (Life of Baccio da Montelupo) Vol. IV, p. 296.

The execution of Andrea Sansovino's marble of the *Madonna and Child with St Anne* (Fig.109) is dated to 1512 and utilises the same box, although this may have developed independently from the stone which raises the foot of St. Anne in Leonardo's drawings. Andrea Sansovino's work was made in Rome and unlikely to have been directly known to Zacchi at this time. It is possible that the two artists knew each other when they were both in Florence around 1500-1504 and they may even have even visited Leonardo's cartoons at Santissima Annunziata at the same time. Whatever the case, it seems too coincidental for the Buggiano *Madonna* and that in Sant'Agostino to have been made independently (without knowledge of the other) within two years of one another. Thus, a connection between Andrea Sansovino and Zacchi must have existed or the attribution and dating of the Buggiano *Madonna* needs to be altered.

The details of Zacchi's life are not entirely clear but he left Florence for Bologna in 1516 and was still there in 1524 when he is recorded as working on the church of San Petronio. Here he would have seen at close quarters the work of Jacopo della Quercia and most notably his *Madonna and Child* for the Basilica which we have already had cause to mention. Between 1531 and 1535 Zacchi is in Trento and then back in Bologna in 1536. In 1538 he is in Rome. The *Madonna and Child* in Buggiano is undoubtedly connected to our corpus and may also show an affinity with the work of Zaccaria Zacchi but the movements of Zacchi make it difficult to reconcile him with the larger production of our Master which, as mentioned, seems destined for a particularly Florentine market.

The demands of the Florentine art market and the methods through which they were satisfied by artists working in collaboration are highlighted by the most recent attempt to identify our Master – Alfredo Bellandi's attribution of the works in our corpus to Alessandro di Lorenzo

di Sinibaldo (1483-1554, also known as Sandro di Lorenzo di Smeraldo).²⁷² The problem of copies can likewise be examined through using Sandro di Lorenzo as a case study. Sandro di Lorenzo di Sinibaldo is an artist with no firmly attributed works to his name. Making the same kind of stylistic and compositional comparisons noted above is therefore impossible. Bellandi's attribution of our works to this artist is based entirely on the documentary evidence published by Andrew Butterfield and David Franklin.²⁷³ A further article by Louis Waldman brings yet more documents to light which help to reconstruct the sculptor's life and career.²⁷⁴

Of particular interest is a set of documents from 1523 which refer to the valuation of four works by the sculptor in terracuda (unfired clay). Rustici and Tribolo were initially asked to perform the assessment which would settle whether the sculptures were ample payment for the services of Guasparre Giunti del Pieve, a notary who had been appointed by Sandro di Lorenzo the year before in a case relating to his parents' estate. For an undisclosed reason it appears Rustici was unable (or unwilling) to participate and proposed Antonio Solosmeo as a substitute.

As outlined in Chapter One the first work is described as a *Laocoön*, a copy after the celebrated antique. Not only would this subject have been popular at this time for collectors but it is noteworthy that the recent competition held in Rome in 1508, which was suggested by Bramante and judged by Raphael, to make a copy of the *Laocoön* was won by Jacopo Sansovino. The second work is described as a '*ba bino*' (a child) after Desiderio da Settignano and it has been suggested by Butterfield and Franklin that this is likely to be a copy of the standing *Christ Child* from Desiderio's tabernacle for San Lorenzo of c. 1460. The

²⁷² Alfredo Bellandi in *Altomani 2004*, ed. Andrea Ciaroni, Altomani & Sons, Milan, 2004, pp. 240-60.

²⁷³ Andrew Butterfield and David Franklin, 'A documented episode in the history of renaissance 'terracuda' sculpture' in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 140, No. 1149, December 1998, pp. 819-24.

²⁷⁴ Louis A. Waldman, 'Sculptor and Perfumer in Early Cinquecento Florence: The Career of Sandro di Lorenzo' in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 49. Bd., H. 1/2, 2005, pp. 119-32.

work was both celebrated and extensively copied.²⁷⁵ The third work was a *Bacchus* reclining on a barrel which in its description links it with the various versions of *Bacchus* and the *River Gods* which have previously been linked to our Master, and to Jacopo Sansovino and Rustici. The final work is described as having been copied from a figure of *Judith* by Verrocchio. There are several small-scale statuettes of *Judith* which still exist, some in terracotta. This document, as has been highlighted by Butterfield and Franklin, is record of a now lost sculpture of *Judith* by Verrocchio.²⁷⁶ The number of similar works depicting this subject in Verrocchio's style not only helps us to recreate the original's likely appearance but attests to its popularity (Figs. 134-138).

The documents show that Sandro di Lorenzo was a sculptor working at the same time as Rustici, Tribolo and Solosmeo, who he felt able to call upon in support of his case. This does not, as Bellandi would have us believe, indicate a close friendship but it does nonetheless suggest a former connection or acquaintance. The documents also reveal that, in essence, what Sandro was producing at that time (suitable for the home of a man such as Guasparre Giunti) were small-scale copies of celebrated works and specifically those after the antique, Desiderio, Verrocchio and, probably, Jacopo Sansovino.

It is tempting to speculate on why Rustici may have opted out from participating in the valuation of the works and one theory is that he himself had previously supplied models to Sandro di Lorenzo to copy and that having realised that these may be included in the appraisal he could not reasonably assess their value. This theory proposed by Sénéchal seems to have very little evidence to support it but if it were true it would link Sandro di Lorenzo

²⁷⁵ Butterfield and Franklin, 1998, p. 819.

²⁷⁶ Butterfield and Franklin, 1998, p. 820.

more firmly with Rustici.²⁷⁷ It also implies that Rustici was in the habit of producing such models, whether out of friendship or commercial gain.

On the basis of the documentary evidence it is clear that Sandro di Lorenzo was an artist on the periphery of the Sapienza circle and able to work in the styles of Verrocchio, Desiderio and Jacopo Sansovino. As such he becomes a plausible candidate behind the identity of the Master of the Unruly Children whose work, as we have seen, shows the influence of all these artists. Bellandi is justified in his suggestion that the works listed here by the hand of Sandro di Lorenzo are similar to the types of works we see in the corpus of our Master - popular subjects, reproduced on a domestic scale.²⁷⁸ What Bellandi fails to mention is that Sandro di Lorenzo is not the only sculptor during these years to produce such works.

Documents discussed by Louis Waldman (which exist thanks to the sculptor's penchant for litigation) give a fuller picture of Sandro di Lorenzo's career. They show the artist engaging in several occupations and in reference to his activities as a sculptor they reveal commissions for one hundred and sixty painted terracotta dolls of the Christ Child (1518-19), portrait busts also in terracotta (1518), death masks (1533 & 1534), work in *pietre dure* (in-laid semi-precious stones) (1544) and the effigies of three traitorous captains to be hanged by the feet from the ramparts of San Miniato, made largely from straw (1530).²⁷⁹ Waldman also reveals Sandro working as a perfumer and applying for jobs as a manual labourer. Despite notable patrons the sculptor evidently struggled to make a living through his art alone. Other artists such as Bastiano di Francesco Jacopo Campagni, known as Ciano, and Zanobi Lastricati are

²⁷⁷ Senechal, 2007, pp. 150-2.

²⁷⁸ Bellandi, 2004, p. 248.

²⁷⁹ Waldman, 2005, p. 120.

also discussed by Waldman as having taken on supplementary employment in different professions.²⁸⁰

Whilst these documents provide a further context for the likely environment in which the works of our Master were produced they do not help us to identify their maker. When combined with the evidence of existing works these documents reveal that numerous artists were employed in the practice of making copies. We do not know exactly what Sandro di Lorenzo's *Judith* after Verrocchio looked like (other than an unbaked clay sculpture of around 51cm. high) but we can surmise that it shared a similar appearance to those works of a similar size in Detroit in bronze (50 cm. high, Fig. 134), and in glazed terracotta at the Museo Bardini (50 cm. Fig. 135), Budapest (60 cm. Fig. 136), Boston (71 cm. Fig. 137), and Brooklyn (60 cm. Fig. 138). These last four are often connected to Giovanni della Robbia but in each case they vary slightly, showing different attributes (some with the severed head and some without) and changing additions to the drapery or hair style of the biblical heroine. That they all may refer to a now lost work by Verrocchio is further evidence that they need not have come out of a single workshop but that various sculptors working independently may have produced copies (with their own flourish) to answer a demand for such works from the market, and essentially to make a living. This same method of working might explain our corpus.

Also indicated by the proliferation of copies after Verrocchio and Desiderio, is a celebration in the early 1520s of great works from the previous century (in line with Rustici's advice to Baccio Bandinelli to study the works of Donatello).²⁸¹ Not only were patrons and artists appreciative of the Masters of the recent past but particularly in the case of the *Judith* we see the popularity of an especially Florentine subject. Given the political upheaval in Florence at

²⁸⁰ Waldman, 2005, p. 124.

²⁸¹ Vasari, *Le Vite*, (Life of Baccio Bandinelli), Vol. V, p. 239.

this time, the deliberate invocation of peculiarly Florentine art (and greatness) is surely not accidental.²⁸² Moreover, it may be this same sense which led to our Master employing occasionally ‘archaic’ features in his work.²⁸³

The desire to incorporate all that was great about Florentine art and essentially to produce a work which looked peculiarly Florentine perhaps answers for the combination of references to Verrocchio, Leonardo, Michelangelo and others in the works of our Master. This same blend of sources or influences, found within individual works, also challenges the idea that the sculptures of the Master are copies after other celebrated works. In favour of an argument for the terracottas as multiple reproductions of, for example, an admired *Madonna and Child*, is their number. That so many similar works still exist, even given their fragile medium, indicates that they are likely to have once been many more. It also implies that they may have been particularly prized and, therefore, looked after. For such ‘copies’ to have been desirable suggests the prerequisite that the original was renowned (or by a renowned artist). Even if it were accepted that the ‘original’ work might be lost, the question of who was responsible for such a work remains. It is in this respect that the counter argument, against the terracottas as copies, is strongest. The conception of the unruly children is unique, particularly used alongside the very delicate and stylised figures of the *Madonna* and her animated drapery, yet no scholar, nor this survey, has been able to locate all of these stylistic traits within one notable artist. Due to the famed practice of record keeping favoured by the Florentines, and Vasari’s *Lives*, the names of most of the illustrious artists of the period are known to us, but it is only in a combination of work by these artists that we can discover all the various motifs used in our corpus. Further reason to doubt that the works of our Master are direct copies of a known work is the frequency with which they have been transformed into other subjects –

²⁸² The history and politics of Florence between the end of the fifteenth century and during the first three decades of the sixteenth century will be outlined in Chapter Three.

²⁸³ Bode’s term, see Chapter One.

from a *Madonna and Child* to a *Charity* group, or vice-versa – and within those groups still further changes in the disposition of figures and inclusion of attributes. Such transformation does not suggest the reverent reproduction of a celebrated predecessor. The examination into iconography which shall follow in Chapter Three, may offer alternative sources for the motifs in our corpus and explain their combination.

Within the corpus of the Master of the Unruly Children the practice of making copies is evident, but these copies may have been made after other works also in the corpus, rather than a lost or celebrated ‘original’. There are variances in style and quality within the corpus which suggest the involvement of several hands and which have led to previous scholars rejecting works or sub-dividing the body of work, as was done by Schottmüller.²⁸⁴ In the following outline of the new categories proposed in this thesis, the problem of copies and questions around invention shall hopefully be clarified. The survey of artists and artworks, undertaken in the chapter so far, shall also be brought to bear on the new categories into which the corpus is divided.

The Corpus

All of the works formerly attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children are included in the corpus of works attached to this thesis, even when those works have been subsequently given to another artist, e.g. the *Battle* group in the Louvre that is now ascribed to Rustici. Other discrete groups of terracottas by anonymous hands have not been included, although they may have often been linked with our Master. For example the works attributed to the so-called Master of the David and St. John Statuettes are here omitted. The body of work

²⁸⁴ See Chapter One and Schottmüller, 1933, pp. 157-9.

amassed under that Master is also problematic in that it too must be the product of more than one hand and therefore to include such works within this corpus would only obscure rather than clarify what we are able to determine about our Master and the production of these works.

Numerous works not discussed in Chapters One or Two are also included in the corpus. Most often these are works which have been discovered in museums and galleries and attributed to our Master or, more commonly, have surfaced on the art market in recent years. Not all works included in the corpus will be discussed individually here, as this is done within the corpus itself. Certain works are used to describe the nature of the four new categories into which the corpus is here divided. These categories include: Group A, those works which appear to have been made by one individual. This individual we may wish to call artist 'A' or even the 'Master of the Unruly Children'. Group B contains works which were possibly made by 'A' but which also show the involvement of other hands. One might wish to label this 'Master of the Unruly Children and workshop'. Within Group B there are three sub groups, to account for the emergence of a further, distinct hand that might account for a shift in temperament which is discernible within the group. Group C is formed of works which have been based on the previous designs of 'A' and 'B' but which were made by others. Finally Group D consists of works similar to those made by artist 'A' but made by other individuals.

Group A – Works made by one individual (Master of the Unruly Children)

The works in this group appear to have been made by one individual. We can perhaps call this individual the Master but this is not to preclude the possibility that other works may exist from which these works derive, i.e. a celebrated original such as that discussed above in the case of Verrocchio's *Judith*, or even a smaller scale work such as Rustici's *Battle* group in terracotta, from which copies appear to have been made. Even if we concede that this artist

may have made works according to the designs of others, it is nonetheless possible that they were also responsible for the original conception of several designs in the corpus. The works of Group A, in particular, reveal an artist with talent. The terracottas in this category, which include the *Madonna and Child* formerly in Berlin (CAT. A1), the *Charity* in the V&A (CAT. A2) and the two sets of *Quarrelling Children* from Berlin and the V&A (CATS. A3, A4), share a quality of handling which is distinct from the rest of the corpus. This is particularly evident in the detail of the works.

The *Madonna and Child* and *Charity* have almost identical features. The treatment of drapery is the same and indeed the exact fall of drapery seems to have been copied from one work to the next. The two female figures wear the same dress, which has the same neckline and high waist, and even though *Charity* doesn't have the same veil and flowing cape, both women have the exact same swag of drapery across their laps and their skirts fall in the same way over their knees. *Charity's* dress is perhaps a little fuller and so more folds are included as it reaches the rocky ground, but these are described in the same way in both works. Also, allowing for differences in adornment, the heads of the two women and their hair are almost indistinguishable. The children on the lap too share not only an almost identical posture and expression but the treatment of their hair is the same, and is subtly different to that of other groups in the corpus.

Certain discrepancies exist between the two groups of fighting children. The most noticeable of these is the rocky base – the work from Berlin has a different style to that most commonly used. The Berlin group is also arguably more dynamic as the two figures, pressed together, seem to contain a greater latent energy than the more artificially placed children from the V&A, but the treatment of their robust bodies, their expressions and once again their hair link them not only to one another but to the two works previously discussed in this group.

The works in Group A seem to have been produced entirely by a single hand, i.e. not compiled by a number of workshop assistants nor made in part from moulds. There is a parity of quality and finish in the works of this group and they are accomplished in handling as well as design.

**Group B – Works possibly made by A but also showing the involvement of other hands
(Master of the Unruly Children and workshop)**

Group B contains works which are also possibly made by artist ‘A’, or the Master, but they also show the involvement of other hands and could therefore possibly be classified as The Master and his workshop. Within this category the group has been split into three sub-groups.

The first of these groups contains works closely reliant on those in Group A. They appear to have been made almost in exact reproduction of those works. Nonetheless, these works are still largely modelled (as far as one can determine without further technical analysis) and much of this may have been undertaken by artist ‘A’. There are also some stylistic discrepancies evident between this group and Group A, which suggests that in part, other hands may have been involved.

Such discrepancies include the attendant figures to *Charity* in the Birmingham work (CAT. B1). The infant in her lap is very close to that of the child in the V&A *Charity*; indeed, in almost all respects the works are extremely close and should both be considered as works with the Master’s involvement. The children to either side of the Birmingham work are however, noticeably different to that in her lap. The striding child on the left is close to that in the V&A, and although the boy in Birmingham is less melancholy and with a slightly different hairstyle, both could be by the same hand. The child on the right of the Birmingham group is markedly different. Whilst he repeats the same pose as the V&A boy, on one knee,

he does not share the same body type, nor have his features been so well defined. The hair, face, and even the musculature, which is clearly delineated in the V&A work, are all softer and less articulated in Birmingham. The change of gesture and expression between the two boys in these works can be explained by a likely interest in developing and adapting the design but the stylistic change indicates the involvement of a second hand.

The head of *Charity* in Birmingham is often thought to be a replacement, which would explain its obvious differences from the other heads of our corpus. The head is certainly a slightly different colour than the main body of the terracotta but otherwise it appears to be integral to the original work. Upon close examination no joins between head and body are evident and it is possible that even if this head is a replacement it was one made at the time, i.e. attached before firing. The facial type is so different to that we have now become accustomed to by our Master that it suggests the involvement of a different hand, and one given considerable autonomy. The uncrowned and exhausted face of the Virtue is similar to those from Michelangelo's *Josephat* lunette on the Sistine ceiling or his Medici *Madonna*. As the status of the Birmingham head is still in some doubt speculation on its style or origins shall not be regarded as firm evidence of the concerns of our Master or his workshop.

Tentatively placed in Group B1 is a *Madonna and Child* formerly in the Thaw Collection and now in Brazil (CAT. B3).²⁸⁵ It appears to follow exactly the *Madonna and Child* from Berlin but with one or two notable exceptions. The arm of the Virgin which is extended out straight toward the bottom left is particularly odd and seems more weakly modelled than the rest of the work. It is possible that this is the result of a poor restoration although no such note was made in the sale catalogue. The base too, is smooth, without rock formation, and abruptly squared off at one side. It is quite possible that this work is not from the workshop of A but is

²⁸⁵ It is difficult to assess this work as it has only been possible to view from photographs.

a later copy, but the figures types, expressions and poses of both the Virgin and the Child and the drapery (other than the extended sleeve) are all extremely close to other works in groups A and B and therefore justify its inclusion here.

The second sub-group within Group B contains works that seem slightly different in temperament to Group B1 or Group A but are surely made within the same circle. The works still display strong allegiance to artist 'A' but, proposed here is the emergence of another talented individual within the workshop who might have developed the original designs and exerted their own style.

For example, the *Madonna and Child* at the Rijksmuseum (CAT. B6) is so close to examples of the subject in groups A and B1 that it cannot be separated completely from the hand of the Master. Nonetheless the child in this work is not the same as that seen in the Berlin or V&A groups and neither is it that of the child on the right of the Birmingham group. This is once more an accomplished work and the infant does not seem any less so than the rest of the composition; in fact the depiction of the infant is stylistically coherent with the rest of the work, but on the whole this terracotta is sweeter than that in Berlin. Certain aspects of the design could account for this; the Virgin's lack of veil makes her appear more homely and this Child has less fulsome and agitated curls than his counterpart in Berlin and his expression too, whilst similar to that of Group A works, is more of a smile than a grin, and thus less manic. This particular work was made with the capacity for the use of removable draperies, a characteristic which will be discussed in chapter three. This peculiarity amongst the corpus may suggest it was given over in its entirety to be worked upon by an assistant. Its adherence to the Master's design however, places it firmly under his supervision at least.

Much like the tentative inclusion of the *Madonna and Child* in Brazil into the sub-group above, included here is the *Charity* formerly in Berlin (CAT. B5). In almost every respect it

appears to have been made alongside those works mentioned so far. It is equally well modelled, as far as one can tell, as other works in this group, but it differs in notable details and in the attributes chosen to identify the Virtue. The female figure of *Charity* taken alone, without child or torch, would appear to be the exact same figure as we have so far seen in our corpus. She has the same facial type, although her hair style and crown are slight variations on the V&A group. She is also seen in the same dynamic leaning pose and with the same dress.

The work differs in the treatment of the child. This infant is more akin to that in the standing *Madonna and Child* (to be discussed presently), with a longer, less rotund, torso. The child does not appear at all to be seeking succour (as he might from *Charity*) and he calmly stands on her knee rather than over it – as have all the infants held by *Charity* or the *Madonna* so far (in groups A and B). Most importantly this *Charity* holds the attribute of the flaming torch in her right hand. This is not seen elsewhere in our corpus and represents a shift from the iconographical traditions which are being evoked in the V&A *Charity*. It is possible that the workshop developed this design as an alternative, or for a particular patron. As chapter three will discuss further, the work employs iconography commonly seen in the early to mid-fifteenth century, and it may have been a deliberate choice by the workshop to cater for tastes which preferred this.

The design of this work specifically is close to that of Benedetto da Maiano's *Charity* for the Santa Croce pulpit. The incongruent squared base is at odds with the rocky ground of the other groups. It is possible that a decision to keep the base square was informed by the change in iconography (which focuses less on the Virtue's love of humanity or earthly love, and more on the love of God). Nonetheless, when combined with other stylistic discrepancies

the base does occasion further doubt as to whether the statuette rightly belongs in this group or that of later copies.

In Group B3 (possibly the sole work of the emerging artist mentioned in B2 but still connected to 'A') is the standing *Madonna and Child* formerly in Berlin (CAT. B12). This work should remain connected to the Master of the Unruly Children as the figure types are undoubtedly his, the facial type of the Virgin is very close to that of the seated *Madonna* from Berlin or the *Charity* in the V&A but, like that in the Rijksmuseum it seems a little softer and more naturalistic, particularly in contrast to the stylised hair arrangements of the women in Group A. The standing *Madonna's* draperies too, whilst very similar to those seen elsewhere, contain small flourishes, such as a hem or edging along the bottom, which is not evident in other works. The Child, whilst hugely indebted to those in Group A, does not appear to be by the same hand. Perhaps due to the standing pose of the figures, the torso of the Child is elongated, or certainly slimmer, than any of the infant torsos seen in the corpus so far. Both in his body and his head, with curls of hair that circumnavigate the ear, he is akin to the Rijksmuseum Child and not the infants in Group A or B1.

The standing *Madonna and Child* appears to have been of exceptional quality. It may be a work of our Master, whose talents we have already admired, and who may have adapted his style to produce this work. However, it is proposed here that, as witnessed in other works in Group B2, there was a different artistic temperament present in this workshop which may have been solely responsible for this work but is nonetheless operating from within the circle of A.

So far, groups A and B have identified at least three hands – that responsible solely for Group A, that which produced the child to the right of *Charity* in Birmingham, and that which is likely to have been heavily involved in the Rijksmuseum and Berlin *Madonna and Child*

works. Nonetheless, the above works can all be connected due to their stylistic coherence, which suggests not only a common design but a common workshop.

Group C – Works made by others based on previous designs in Groups A&B

The works in this group are not all made by the same hand or even within the same workshop. They vary in quality, size and treatment of the subject, to such a degree that they can neither be said to directly follow the design of our Master or his shop, nor can they emanate from the same circle of artists. Therefore, they are evidence that the compositions of our Master were popular and reproduced by several different workshops or other hands. The works also record further subjects that are likely to have been treated by our Master and his workshop, for example, the *Madonna and Child with St Anne* now in New York (CAT. C5).

The New York work is not as skilfully modelled as any in Group A, nor is the circular ornamental base in this sculpture seen elsewhere in our corpus, but it is nonetheless clearly akin to works in Groups A and B. It is possible that a workshop separate to that of our Master developed the design of this subject based on the compositions of the *Madonna and Child* or *Charity* already discussed, although the inclusion of St. Anne changes the basic design of the *Madonna and Child* to a greater extent than the addition of the extra children required to produce *Charity*, and it is here thoughtfully done. The three figures create a compact pyramidal whole that cleverly reflect similar compositions in important Florentine paintings and the contemporary inventions of artists like Leonardo. Moreover, the quality of the modelling evident in the New York work suggests it is a copy, probably from a mould, and it is therefore more likely that it reveals the design of a now lost work by our Master.

In this design, it is revealed that our Master was not slavishly reproducing the celebrated drawings of Leonardo nor even the marble of Andrea Sansovino for Sant'Agostino (though

the veils of St. Anne are alike). Leonardo's influence is clear but the compression of the three figures owes more to fifteenth-century painted depictions of the subject, and most notably Masaccio and Masolino's *Madonna and Child with St. Anne*, mentioned earlier, from which the gesture of St. Anne's hand on the shoulder of the Virgin has been borrowed. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was Michelangelo who was most notably engaged in such compact multi-figure compositions and the series of hands which reach over the front of the group here are similar to those seen in the lunette for the Sistine ceiling (Fig.104).

Within our corpus the figure of *St. Anne* is most akin to the figures of *Charity*, with her strong, bare, right arm and broad stature. The more demure Virgin is like that at the Rijksmuseum or the standing *Madonna* in Berlin, although her features are less defined. Facially and in the style of her dress and cape she owes a lot to Benedetto da Maiano's *Madonna dell'Olivio*. The Child is unmistakably the type favoured by our Master and is a hybrid of that seen in the standing *Madonna* and those more anarchic playfellows on the laps of the Birmingham and V&A figures. Combining stylistic traits which have previously been given to different hands in earlier categories of our corpus (Groups A & B) this work, made in emulation of one by our Master, is further evidence that those hands were working together in the same shop.

From a different workshop or artist, is a *Charity* group last seen in the Galleria Botticelli in Florence (CAT. C2). Despite its adherence to the compositions of *Charity* in Groups A and B this work seems derivative of them. The facial type of the Virtue is vastly changed and has taken on a classical hairstyle, more akin to that seen in the works of Andrea and Jacopo Sansovino. The infants too, whilst particularly close in composition and comportment to those of the Birmingham *Charity*, are of slightly different proportions. Moreover, the child on the lap of the Galleria Botticelli *Charity* is closer to Tribolo's putti on his *Nature* than those

in Groups A or B. He is less unruly than his predecessors and instead seems gleeful rather than mischievous. In other respects this work seems to slavishly reproduce the detail of those in earlier groups, for example in the exact fall of drapery and placement of feet, but in doing so it also reveals its difference from those groups and ultimately its status as a copy.

Unlike the works of Group C discussed so far, the *Madonna and Child* formerly in the Sackler Collection and now in Milan (CAT. C1), is neither a straightforward copy of one of our Master's designs nor a workshop variation, but it is, nonetheless, clearly based on the works in groups A and B. It appears to conflate the iconography of the seated *Madonna and Child with a Book*, as seen in Berlin or Amsterdam, with the strong bare right arm and crown of the *Charity* formerly in Berlin. But for the book held by the Virgin the work might easily have been interpreted as or adapted into a figure of *Charity*, and a space on the right side of the base could have once accommodated a second infant, although there is no evidence that it did in this case.

The pose, figure types, and drapery of this work are very similar to those of works in Groups A and B but there are also notable differences which distance this work from the immediate circle of our Master. The handling of clay reveals a different hand to that of groups A and B. The hair of both the Virgin and her Son are far less defined than in any example in earlier groups and, particularly around the forehead, locks seem to have been incised into the clay rather than added. Neither does her crown have the same proportions or finish as that of the *Charity* at the V&A.

The dress of the Sackler *Madonna*, whilst superficially that seen in the works of Groups A and B, with a similar neckline (slightly different to that seen in works from the V&A and Berlin but the same as in the Rijksmuseum *Madonna*), similar high waist and gathered upper sleeves, is also different in some crucial details. This *Madonna and Child* does not display

the bare breast of the Virgin, as have the examples in Berlin and Amsterdam, yet it alludes to the *lactans* (nursing) motif in the strange arrangement of the dress as it falls over the Virgin's breasts. Fabric is here depicted as both tightly clinging to her chest and yet also gathered. This effect draws attention to her breast and indicates the placement of nipples. A similar sense of thin, clinging material is achieved under the waistband where we can make out the Virgin's navel. Not only is this treatment of drapery highly individual to this work, within the corpus, but it is also strange in its confusion of the iconography.²⁸⁶

As chapter three will illuminate, there is a complex use of various iconographical traditions incorporated into many of the works attributed to our Master (and in groups A and B). In the Sackler *Madonna*, various attributes appear to have been taken from a number of works and then combined, but with less surety and not in a way which is coherent with what we know of our Master, thus this work is surely revealed as one made in emulation of his design rather than directly according to it. This *Madonna* is crowned and enthroned, not placed on a rocky outcrop or shown breast feeding, and yet this is alluded to. In the *Madonnas* of Berlin and Amsterdam depicted with a book, they are engaged in reading it, whilst the Child focuses on the breast. In this work, the *Madonna* is also reading but her Child, more akin to that seen in the standing *Madonna* from Berlin, has no breast to draw his attention so instead focuses on an inattentive mother.

Even though it is here proposed that the works of Group C are made after the designs of groups A and B the quality and dating of these copies varies within the group. The Sackler *Madonna* has on the whole been well modelled and does not appear to have relied upon moulds as much as might be said of the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* in New York. For the most part these works also appear to be from the same period as our Master or of only a

²⁸⁶ For an indication of how the dress of the Virgin might look in the hands of our Master, when the work does not include the *lactans* motif, see the two *Kneeling Madonnas* of Group B (CATS. B7, B8).

few years later. An exception to this is the *Madonna and Child with Angels*, in the Bardini Museum (CAT. C4), which is clearly of a significantly later date and a work content to evoke the playful compositions of our Master without truly attempting to mimic his style.

Group D – Works similar to groups A and B but made by other individuals

Finally, in Group D, are amassed those works which have previously been attributed to or associated with the Master of the Unruly Children but which, it is proposed here, were made by other individuals. This group differs from C in that it is believed these works do not necessarily rely upon the work of artist ‘A’ (or the Master) for their conception but instead have been made independently. In some cases they may pre-date those of our Master. These works are testament to the popularity of certain subjects during this period and evidence of a common language being used with which to portray them.

For example, the two *Madonna and Child* terracottas within this group (CATS. D4, D5) have both previously been attributed to our Master yet they are stylistically very different from the figure types of Group A and B and also from one another. The *Madonna and Child* formerly in the Bardini collection is closest to our Master’s in the facial type of the Virgin (though with a direct stare unseen in the *Madonnas* of our corpus so far), and in its similarity in pose to the standing *Madonna and Child* from Berlin, but the Child in this group is not like any we have yet catalogued. Moreover, the number of works, both in painting and sculpture, which show a standing *Madonna and Child*, even containing the motif of her foot raised on a block (several of which have been reviewed in this chapter), indicate that several artists were developing this theme independently and that this terracotta needn’t have relied upon a prototype by our Master. Innovative touches, such as the way the blue mantle of the Virgin is swept up and hooked over her arm also implies the active engagement of this artist in individualising the composition, rather than copying any works here discussed. The conceit

of the lifted and swirling drapery works well to balance the forward thrust of the knee and the perched Christ Child on the opposite side, and one cannot help but think that had our Master invented this, he would have utilised it more frequently and thus we would find it elsewhere in our corpus. Incidentally, nor can this motif be seen in the standing *Madonna and Child* or *Charity* compositions of Sarto, Sansovino or Lippi (Figs. 113, 118 and 114).

The seated *Madonna and Child* from Buggiano (CAT. D6), most recently attributed to Zaccaria Zacchi and discussed at some length earlier in the chapter, has also been placed within this group. The connections to the work of our Master are undeniable and are both compositional and stylistic but ultimately it is clear that the artist responsible for Group A is not that responsible for the Buggiano *Madonna*, whose facial features are sharper, and whose Child is more heavily reliant on Verrocchio's model. Feretti's attribution of the work to Zacchi is well founded as this work looks like other documented sculptures by the artist. Zacchi was only three years younger than Agnolo di Polo (born 1470 and 1473 respectively) and was trained in the same environs of late fifteenth-century Florence. In this work we see the combination of this late fifteenth-century style, with its heavy and animated drapery and idealised if slightly naive faces, combining with the dynamic monumentality of new compositions by Leonardo and Sarto created at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In contrast to the direction in which our Master would take this composition, with the unruly children taking centre stage, this work feels like the product of a slightly older generation, more inclined to embellish their *Madonnas* with diadems and cherubic ornament (seen in the Virgin's necklace) and less open to the influence of Michelangelo. Indeed, this work is much like terracottas of the same subject by Agnolo di Polo and Andrea Sansovino already discussed (Figs. 131 and 111).

Whether it is a work which pre-dates, follows, or is contemporaneous to those of Group A is unclear. All three suggestions are possible, especially given that it is not proposed here that the work either formed a template upon which our Master embellished nor was produced in emulation of him. Rather, the close similarities in composition, style and the handling of clay, suggest that this artist (whether Zacchi or not) and our Master were acquainted and, moreover, that they may have worked together or received similar training (or one may have trained the other). Alternatively, both the artist of the Buggiano work and our Master were deliberately working in the same style. This could be in the imitation of another hand, although as we have already discussed this is a problematic proposition, or it is possible that this was a style preferred by patrons, or particularly efficient in the description of certain subjects. In support of common training, rather than the deliberate use of a particular style, is the divergence witnessed in the treatment of children. The Buggiano *Madonna* and those of our corpus are only really alike in their description of the Virgin's hair and draperies. Surely a superficial appropriation of another's style, upon request, would have extended to the depiction of the important figure of the Christ Child too.

The Infant St. John the Baptist in a Grotto (CAT. D2) also appears to be the work of an entirely separate artist to our Master or any other in this group. Nonetheless, it is likely to have been made at the same time as works by our Master and to some extent possibly shows his influence. The subject is further evidence of the same fashion for lively youths which informs the sculpture in our corpus. The muscular and robust forms of the children in groups A and B may have inspired the treatment of the Baptist here but, ultimately, this is not the child type favoured by our Master and nor are these his rock formations. Moreover, there is ample evidence to connect this work with other versions of the subject by both the Buglioni and the della Robbia workshops. Neither workshop would have necessarily required the input

of a separate sculptor in the production of this work, although the child is stylistically different to that seen in other versions of this subject by either shop. The basic premise for the composition must, however, lie with them and it seems reasonable to suggest that the relief at Cereto Guidi by Giovanni della Robbia spawned imitations and the production of smaller works suitable for the home, probably made within the della Robbia workshop itself. The Buglioni workshop, appealing to the same market, may have been responsible for their own versions of the subject, with stacked rocks, as is evident in the work attributed to Benedetto Buglioni (Fig. 126). The work formerly attributed to our Master seems to fall best into this second group. The Buglioni may have collaborated with another artist to produce this composition and whereas this may have been one of the sculptors from within our Master's workshop (Group B) there is little to recommend a direct connection between the sculptor of Group A and this work.

The Corpus in context – a proposition for the Master going forward

These works, and especially those in Groups A-C, belong together because they are clearly kindred, firstly in their treatment of figures, and secondly in their treatment of subject matter. Furthermore, aside from the discrepancies noted on account of the multiple versions, they are coherent in their general handling of clay, which, whilst not evidence of the same hand, shows they share a common language, which was particularly suitable to their likely common purpose. The meaning and function of the works will be discussed further in the following chapter, but it is appropriate to mention here that they are all works in terracotta, of similar size, which have been made within twenty to thirty years of one another (apart from notable exceptions) and respond to a particular climate (political or artistic) or demand from patrons. One may be able to narrow that period significantly as the choice of subject and iconography is interrogated further.

In Groups A and B we have identified the involvement of at least three distinct hands and there is a likelihood further workshops assistants were also employed. In Group C there were at least four more hands, or most probably workshops, which could be seen working from the same designs. Group D, whilst not reliant on the designs of our Master, contains works which are similar in their subject, style and are also likely to have been produced at around the same time (c.1500-50). Within the corpus as a whole the stylistic influences of certain known sculptors are visible to a greater or lesser extent and most notable among these are Verrocchio, Leonardo and Rustici, Agnolo di Polo, Benedetto da Maiano, Andrea Sansovino, Tribolo, and, compositionally, Michelangelo.

Other artistic influences are also important to our corpus and, as has been discussed, can be traced back to Donatello and Jacopo della Quercia. Indeed, the body of work collected under the name of the Master is evidence not only of the actual artists who may have been involved in the production of the work, but a desire on the part of their designers to produce a peculiarly Florentine work. Verrocchio, we know, famously re-invented great works of his Florentine predecessors, such as Donatello's *David* and, as noted in this survey, most probably his *Judith* also. The production of small-scale *Judith* statuettes in 1523 (by Sandro di Lorenzo di Sinibaldo) demonstrates that there was still a market for such works thirty-five years after Verrocchio's death. Moreover, his interest in adapting models of the past was passed on to his student Rustici, who worked knowingly with the inventions of Donatello, whilst incorporating the contemporary innovations of his friends Leonardo and Michelangelo.

Given that we can establish beyond reasonable doubt that the sculpture of our corpus dates to a period after 1500, when the works of the revered visiting Leonardo and the young Michelangelo were both the focus of attention, and had an impact on our Master, Rustici's circle becomes of particular interest. The artists of the Sapienza and of the two Companies to

which Rustici belonged, were almost certainly actively and intellectually engaged in a discourse on the revival of the antique, the great traditions of Florentine sculpture, and the future of art in the city at the beginning of a new century. The Sapienza provides a credible forum for these discussions and we have already noted how the artists in that circle collaborated on important civic commissions such as the celebrations for Pope Leo X in 1515. Their collaborative working methods may have encouraged the conflation of various styles, not only of the past, but also among the artists of the group. Moreover, a ‘mosaic of styles’ might have been deliberately employed as a fashionable device. These interests and wide stylistic repertoire are all evident in our corpus.

Within the circle of the Sapienza, Tribolo stands out as a sculptor who worked with Rustici, both Andrea and Jacopo Sansovino, and Michelangelo, and would have therefore been exposed to the various motifs in their work, which were subsequently used by our Master. He is also noted as having produced works in terracotta and had a demonstrated interest in depicting children. The style of Tribolo’s infants can be indentified in some of the works in our corpus but not in them all and if it were he who designed the works of Group A, combining his experience of working with Andrea Sansovino on the Loreto reliefs (c.1517-28) and his first view of Michelangelo’s Sistine chapel ceiling (c.1530) when he visited Rome, we could not date our corpus until after 1530. Some of the works in the corpus may date from this period, as copies no doubt continued to be produced, but the original designs of *Charity*, the *Madonna and Child*, the *Fighting Children*, and the *Battle* scenes seem to respond directly to works such as Leonardo’s *Madonna and Child with St Anne*, the *Battle of Anghiari* and Michelangelo’s meditations on the *Nursing Madonna* (to be explored further in the next chapter) all produced before 1510. Therefore, a date in the years immediately following these commissions, the period in which Andrea del Sarto was working on

variations of the same themes, and when there would have existed the greatest demand for related works, is more likely to have been when our corpus originated. Tribolo would have been a teenager at this time and still very much in the role of apprentice and assistant. This does not preclude his involvement in the works of our corpus but it does preclude his role as ‘Master’.

We may never know the true identity of any of the hands involved in the production of our corpus but we can determine that the work shows a close study of several important Florentine works which would not have been possible had the artist or artists responsible not been working in Florence in the 1510s and 1520s. An acquaintance with the artists of the Sapienza at this time, or certainly their work, also seems likely. Moreover, the demand for works which recalled a golden era of Florentine art and represented potentially politicised subjects within the context of Florence in the 1500s surely places them within that city at that time. The reproduction of the compositions by other workshops highlights both their original quality and their popularity, which sustained a demand which could either not be satisfied by the first workshop or which required the works be available at a range of prices. Aside from an interest in Florentine artistic tradition, which could be said to have occasioned the broad range of attributions reviewed in Chapter One, the artist responsible must also have been aware of contemporary humanist thought and sensitive to contemporary politics. The mosaic of styles which the Master employs reveals a retrospective tendency toward Florentine culture. The reason why such an approach might have been taken, and how and why viewers may have responded to this will be explored in the following chapter, which will further illuminate the context in which the works were produced.

CHAPTER THREE

MADONNAS, CHARITY AND UNRULY CHILDREN: SUBJECT AND USAGE IN THE CORPUS OF THE MASTER OF THE UNRULY CHILDREN

In this chapter we shall review the primary themes in the works of our corpus: the *Madonna and Child*, *Charity* and *Unruly Children*. These are certainly the subjects most readily associated with the Master of the Unruly Children and those that formed the initial group of works attributed to his name. In these subjects we also witness common uses of certain attributes and crossovers in iconography, which may have given rise to their original grouping under the same hand. As was discussed previously, the works in our corpus may have been grouped and compared according to their subject as well as style. Yet the fact that these works look so alike one another may in part be due to more than workshop efficiency and the re-use of one design for a new purpose, or to their reproduction by successive artists and workshops. Instead, could the individual and shared iconographical traditions present across these three subjects, as utilised by our Master, reveal an intentional reaffirmation of certain symbolic meanings and thereby explain their compositional similarities?

A clarification of the subject matter depicted by our Master will benefit us in three ways. It will tell us something about the intended meaning of the works and about the interests of our Master and it will indicate the possible function these works may have had. Knowledge of these things together will clarify the context in which the works were made, and will corroborate the stylistic comparisons made in Chapter Two, which indicated a date of c. 1500-1525. New consideration of the iconography and function of the primary themes will also be contextualised by historical events.

Before we examine the sculptures in subject groups, we shall begin with a brief introduction to the figure of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. St. Bernard was a popular saint in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Florence, and his writings and depictions of him in art would appear to have a bearing on the iconography used by our Master. An introduction to this figure at the outset makes clear why individual texts by the saint, which will be cited throughout the chapter when pertinent, are relevant.

The groups of the *Madonna and Child* shall then be examined and this will lead to a discussion of *Charity*. The close connection that these two subjects share, emphasised in our corpus by their similar representation, shall be explored. Following this, an investigation into the origins and significance of ebullient and fighting children, both as a discrete subject and in their role within the group compositions, shall then be undertaken. For each theme or subject in turn, the specific attributes of the figures and their arrangements will be outlined. Their relationship to contemporaneous art, literature, thought, doctrine, liturgical practice and historical events will also be discussed. In the case of *Charity*, a brief appraisal of the etymology of the word *caritas* (*carità*) will also be pertinent to a heightened understanding of its meaning.

In the latter part of the chapter our attentions will finally turn to the possible uses to which these works were put. This will be immeasurably aided by a better understanding of their meaning but also by their comparison to other works of similar medium, size and subject. Once a clearer idea of the function of the works is established the likely patrons of our Master may emerge and the origins of the corpus, context of its production and identity of its maker will be better clarified.

Florence between 1494 and 1532

We have already had cause, stylistically, to date the production of our corpus to a period between 1500 and 1525. The subjects depicted in the works and their particular use of certain symbolic elements, which will be explored in due course, further indicate this timeframe. It is not within the scope of this thesis to offer a detailed account of the extremely complex political history of Florence during this period but a brief outline of some of the major events may be pertinent to further contextualise the works of our Master.

The republican status of Florence was the focus of much debate and prose during the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries. Diarists such as Lucca Landucci (1436–1516) and political advisors like Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540) and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) to name but a few, provide a rich if biased account of the numerous factions, ambitions, conspiracies, and basic changes in the organisation of public offices and fabric of the republic.²⁸⁷ While our current focus is on the years after 1500 it is important to note that the redefinition of Florentine republicanism had begun over a century earlier as guilds increasingly ceded power to elite families, the wealth of which was needed to sustain the city and its ambitions for territorial expansion. Most notable among the wealthy benefactors to gain increasing political power was the Medici.²⁸⁸ It is also of interest that new forms of republicanism were aligned with those of antiquity and informed by a rise in humanist study in a bid to appropriate ‘ancient wisdom’ and ‘refashion ideals of citizenship and republican liberty and virtue’.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Landucci, Luca, *A Florentine Diary from 1450-1516*, translated by Alice de Rosen Jervis, London, 1927; Guicciardini, Francesco, *The History of Italy*, translated and edited by Sidney Alexander, Princeton, 1969; Machiavelli, Niccolò, *Florentine Histories*, translated by Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield Jr, Princeton, 1988. Machiavelli and Guicciardini write several texts during the period and these primary accounts among others are considered in Najemy, John, *History of Florence*, Chichester, 2006.

²⁸⁸ This is discussed widely throughout early chapters of Najemy (2006) but for changes in politics and rise of families due to cost of territorial wars see especially pp.188-194, for early Medici involvement see p.191 and for the emergence of Cosimo de Medici as a political force see pp.262-269.

²⁸⁹ Najemy, 2006, p.188.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather Cosimo (1389-1464) and father Piero (1416-1469), Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1492), known as 'Il Magnifico' (the Magnificent), presided over a 'golden age' of Florentine history.²⁹⁰ This was at least a myth that was created in part by Lorenzo and his circle and subsequently re-created for political and propagandistic ends, which we shall arrive at in due course.²⁹¹ Despite later accusations of tyranny levelled at Lorenzo, at his death, his achievements especially as a peacemaker were unequivocally lauded.²⁹² It is against the backdrop of Lorenzo's premiership that we must consider the events of the period in question, the years that immediately followed.

After the death of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1492, leadership of Florence passed to his less charming son Piero (1472-1503), but not without considerable opposition.²⁹³ When faced with invasion by the French Piero's actions caused dissent and even a desire among the populace for the French to liberate them from the Medici regime.²⁹⁴ A central figure in negotiating with the French, and avoiding a sack of the city, was Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98).²⁹⁵ A demand for constitutional reform was combined with religious reform and the charismatic Dominican preacher was instrumental in bringing about both. It was Savonarola who

²⁹⁰ The term 'golden age' was adopted during Lorenzo's lifetime in eulogies by humanists and poets who hailed him as 'Maecenas' (the Roman patron of Virgil, Horace and other Augustan poets). The term is also used to describe Lorenzo's rule by Vasari in his life of Botticelli: Vasari, Vol. III, Florence, p. 511. See also Gombrich, E.H., 'Renaissance and Golden Age' in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, Phaedon, London, 1966, pp. 29-34.

²⁹¹ Najemy, 2006, provides a more rounded portrait of Lorenzo, his shortcomings, and the difficulties he faced during his leadership of the city, pp. 341-374. For an assessment of the posthumous mythologizing of Lorenzo's reputation see Rubenstein, Nicolai, 'The Formation of the Posthumous Image of Lorenzo de' Medici' in *Oxford, China and Italy, Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on his Eightieth Birthday*, eds. Edward Chaney and Neil Ritchie, Thames & Hudson, London, 1984, pp. 94-106.

²⁹² Guicciardini, 1969, p. 10, admits that Lorenzo had done much to improve private and public affairs and that his ability to 'temporize wisely' had 'left Italy in a condition of peace'. Landucci, 1927, p. 54, describes him as illustrious, rich, stately, renowned and 'possessed of great wisdom'. Rubenstein, 1984, p. 95-96, recounts the numerous condemnations of Lorenzo as tyrant after the expulsion of the Medici in 1494.

²⁹³ Guicciardini, 1969, p. 10, describes Piero as 'not qualified either by age or understanding' and 'not capable of governing with that moderation [of Lorenzo]'. For an account of the struggle Piero had to hold onto power see Najemy, 2006, pp. 375-380.

²⁹⁴ Najemy, 2006, p. 377.

²⁹⁵ Guicciardini, 1969, p. 93, describes Savonarola's entreaty to Charles VIII with the telling expression 'interpolating divine authority into his own words earnestly exhorted him to restore their towns to the Florentines'.

persuaded the French King Charles VIII not to demand the return of Piero to the city, and in doing so affected the expulsion of the Medici family from their native city in 1494.²⁹⁶ The exile lasted until 1512, nine years after the death of Piero. Meanwhile, Savonarola went about revolutionising the Florentine government, creating a Great Council which reduced the power of the few in favour of the many.²⁹⁷ The decisive break from the former regime was seemingly welcomed by Florentines from all factions but Savonarola's religious ideology divided the populace not as previously, by party or class, but into those for and against his militant theological defence of republicanism.²⁹⁸

The policies of Savonarola were enforced by groups of boys known as the *frateschi* who patrolled the streets in search for gamblers, sodomites and others who flouted the new strict codes of conduct. Such actions, combined with an enforced decrease in their authority within the government gave rise to mounting opposition within the Florentine elite.²⁹⁹ This was further compounded by Savonarola's enmity with Pope Alexander VI, whom he had denounced as corrupt. The Pope excommunicated Savonarola but he continued to preach, despite entreaty from Florentines whose businesses and banking interests, reliant on relations with Rome, were at risk.³⁰⁰ Savonarola's defiance of the Pope and his fellow citizens eventually resulted in a request that he prove the truth of his prophecy through a trial by fire.³⁰¹ Various factors, described by Landucci, prevent the completion of the trial, which in

²⁹⁶ Najemy, 2006, p. 380.

²⁹⁷ Najemy, 2006, p.388 details how '3000 citizens simultaneously constituted a governing body endowed with real power over finances, taxes and elections'. To house this increased number Savonarola had the Palazzo Priori extended with the addition of the Sala Grande (great hall).

²⁹⁸ Landucci, 1927, p. 80, one of many entries on Fra Girolamo which detail how he was 'for the people and the common weal' and fostered a feeling of 'community among the people'. See also Najemy, 2006, p. 394.

²⁹⁹ Landucci, 1927, p. 118-119, describes the direct opposition Savonarola faced during public sermons and that experienced by his 'boys' – p. 121. Najemy, 2006, p. 397 lists families known to have been involved in the opposing brigades which took to the streets against the *frateschi*.

³⁰⁰ Landucci, 1927, p. 132.

³⁰¹ Landucci, 1927, pp. 133-138.

turn led to the arrest of Savonarola who confessed under torture that he was a sinner. Savonarola was executed two days later on 22 May 1498.³⁰²

The republic was in turmoil after the events of the previous years and proposals for government had to pacify both the elite citizens, accustomed to having authority and the popular party which remained strong despite the death of Savonarola.³⁰³ Eventually, in a bid for stability, Piero Soderini (1450-1522), a seasoned diplomat, known moderate, from an old Florentine family (which had variously supported both the Medici and Savonarola) was elected ruler for life in 1502.³⁰⁴ His republican government lasted until 1512 and was controversial in as much as Soderini maintained control of every aspect of policy-making, legislation, taxation and was accused of seeking excessive personal power, yet also noted for sound management, democracy and the absence of corruption.³⁰⁵

Perhaps Soderini's greatest achievement was military victory over Pisa. Florentine sovereignty over the city had been hard won in 1406, eventually by siege which caused the merciless starvation of thousands of its citizens, but surrendered by Piero to the French in 1494.³⁰⁶ It was siege and starvation once again which eventually ensured the reconquest in 1509.³⁰⁷ To inspire Florence toward military victory, in 1503 Soderini commissioned the

³⁰² Landucci, p. 142. Landucci notes how the scaffold was adapted to make sure it did not appear that Savonarola was being crucified.

³⁰³ Najemy, pp. 400-406.

³⁰⁴ Najemy, p. 407. Landucci, p. 200, records the election of Soderini, after the Madonna of Impruneta had been sent for to ensure a wise decision. Landucci is very pleased with the result. He thanks God and describes Soderini as a good and valiant man, and cites his success in previous diplomatic missions.

³⁰⁵ Najemy, p.408-409.

³⁰⁶ Najemy, pp. 194-197, for the conquest of Pisa in 1406, p. 378, for the surrender of Pisa by Piero, pp. 410-412 for Soderini's recapture. An almost daily update on ground won and lost and the brutalities of the war with Pisa and the other military engagements of the city are recounted by Landucci (from 1498), pp. 144-235. Anecdotes on the starvation of the Pisans are recounted, p. 232-234.

³⁰⁷ Najemy, p. 412.

ambitious decorative scheme for the Palazzo della Signoria, which (never completed and now lost) included the triumphant battle scenes of Leonardo and Michelangelo.³⁰⁸

Soderini had restored the Florentine territories but his success in this, and in the management of the republic, had not allayed the ambitions of the Medici, who had meanwhile amassed power in Rome and subtly reasserted themselves into Florentine public life.³⁰⁹ The decision of Pope Julius II to expel the French from Italy forced Soderini into an impossible position as Florence was reliant on good terms with both. Soderini tried to stay neutral though ultimately sided with the French to the anger of the Pope. The Holy League was formed and leading its troops was Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici.³¹⁰ The League was successful in its expulsion of the French and left without allies Soderini was forced to resign and flee the city in 1512.³¹¹

The Medici returned to Florence armed and took charge of the government. Landucci's account of events is pragmatic, suggesting that while there was opposition, and 'discomfort' it was divine providence.³¹² John Najemy has noted that the legitimization of the new regime had already begun in recollections of Lorenzo de' Medici who 'made this city great' and that popular resistance was quelled by 'a distribution of bread'.³¹³ In reasserting their authority the Medici were keen to restore old committees and methods of governance that had characterised the pre-1494 (Medici) regime. They had been warned that 'the city has lived well for ten years, and the memory of that time will always be your enemy'.³¹⁴

³⁰⁸ Discussed in Chapter Two, p. 125, See also Najemy, p. 410.

³⁰⁹ Interestingly this is done through devotion (votives at SS. Annunziata) and marriage (into Strozzi family). See Najemy, pp. 416-417.

³¹⁰ Najemy, p. 419.

³¹¹ Landucci, pp. 257-258 describes the explicit terms by which Florence ceded to the papal troops – it had to join the League, remove Soderini and reinstate the Medici. According to Landucci Soderini leaves without protest, for the good of the city. See also Najemy, pp. 420-421.

³¹² Landucci, p. 261.

³¹³ Najemy, pp. 423-424.

³¹⁴ Najemy, p. 426. The warning comes from Paolo Vettori to Giuliano de' Medici that he would have to govern with more force than skill.

In 1513, only a year after his re-entry into Florence, Giovanni de' Medici became Pope Leo X, to the joy of the city.³¹⁵ The Archbishop of Florence, his younger brother Giuliano (then made Cardinal), had already by that time been the Medici's leading citizen in Florence, while Giovanni in effect continued to command the city from Rome. In 1513, the recently elevated Leo X decided to install his nephew Lorenzo II, son of Piero (who had died in 1503), in Florence, with instructions sent via Giuliano on the leadership of the city.³¹⁶ By 1515 Giuliano had been named Captain General of the Church and Lorenzo as Captain General of Florence, with an army at his command. Lorenzo had not grown up in Florence, was insensitive to its republican past and was not well-liked by the general population, who perhaps recognised his personal rather than civic ambition.³¹⁷

In the same year, the new French king Francis I declared his intention to invade Italy. Opposing them were former members of the Holy League (the Emperor, Spain, Switzerland) while Leo X adhered to their cause in part, in conflict with his official objective to protect the power of the church he also negotiated with Francis for the advancement of the Medici family.³¹⁸ Lorenzo meanwhile conducted his own negotiations with Francis, to whom he pledged allegiance.³¹⁹ On route to meet with the French king and avert incursion into papal states, Leo X decided on a state visit to Florence which involved a huge ceremonial procession through the city. To describe only a fraction of this required seven pages from Landucci.³²⁰ Decoration of the city for the triumphal entry involved many of the artists of the Sapienza, discussed in Chapter Two.³²¹ Whilst the procession was lavish and admired, Florentine discontent with the Medici leadership of the city remained, and was compounded

³¹⁵ Landucci, pp. 266-268, recalls the pre-dawn ringing of bells, bonfires, commotion and cries of joy as the news was first rumoured and then announced later in the day – which led to three days of celebrations.

³¹⁶ Najemy, p. 427.

³¹⁷ Najemy, p. 429.

³¹⁸ Najemy, p. 430.

³¹⁹ Najemy, p. 431.

³²⁰ Landucci, pp. 279-285.

³²¹ Chapter Two, p. 125.

by the revival in popularity of Savonarolan ideas, which Leo tried desperately to quell in the years 1515-17.³²² 1517 also saw Martin Luther read his Ninety-Five thesis at Wittenberg. Luther's writings were heavily influenced by Savonarola and a zeal for reform surged through Europe. Leo attempted to silence Luther through a succession of papal bulls, excommunication and charges of heresy.³²³

The ambitions of the family were not slowed and having made arrangements with the French, Leo deposed the Duke of Urbino in 1517 and installed Lorenzo in his place. The addition of this title, and his marriage into the French royal family the following year, set Lorenzo's sights on becoming Prince of Florence. A sudden illness in 1519 caused the death of Lorenzo and the end this particular goal.³²⁴

Leadership of Florence was placed in the hands of Cardinal Giulio di Giuliano de' Medici (cousin of Leo X and son of Giuliano de' Medici, who had been murdered in the famous Pazzi conspiracy of 1478). His approach was reconciliatory and diplomatic towards the Florentines. According to Najemy, he wanted to heal old wounds both with the ruling elite and Savonarola sympathisers.³²⁵ In December of 1521, Leo X died.³²⁶ After the papacy of Adrian VI, which lasted only one year, the latest Medici Cardinal was made Pope Clement VII in 1523.³²⁷

Pope Clement's wavering politics led to unrest and the sack of Rome in 1527 at the hands of an army sent by Emperor Charles V.³²⁸ Clement was subsequently imprisoned and then in

³²² Najemy, pp. 430-431.

³²³ *Exsurge Domine* was a papal bull written by Leo X on 15 June 1520 in direct response to Martin Luther's 95 theses.

³²⁴ Najemy, p. 433.

³²⁵ Najemy, p. 433.

³²⁶ This is recorded in a very simple statement of Landucci, p. 290.

³²⁷ Landucci, p. 290 and p. 291. Again, the statements of life and death are basic and devoid of any comment on the new pope being of Roman.

³²⁸ Najemy, p. 447-449.

hiding until October 1528, a period which allowed enemies of the Medici in Florence to expel the family from the city and temporarily restore the republic, which was characterised by resurgent Savonarolan ideology.³²⁹ The republic refused to reinstate the Medici in Florence and in order to achieve this Clement negotiated the help of Charles V (despite the sack of Rome).³³⁰ In 1530, after an eleven month siege, Florence finally succumbed to the combined forces of the Emperor and Pope. Civillian deaths in the city alone, from plague and hunger, numbered over thirty-thousand.³³¹ With the agreement of Charles, Clement installed his illegitimate nephew Alessandro de' Medici first as ruler of the republic, then in 1532, as Duke of Florence. A new constitution was written and the republic ended.³³² The Medici were further aggrandized later in the century (1569) when they became Grand Dukes of Tuscany.

The outline of historical events above details a period of almost constant political crisis. It is within the context of those same years that the rich artistic output detailed in the previous chapter was produced. The politicisation of Florentine visual culture has been widely examined by scholars and occurred during the proposed period in which the sculptures of our corpus are likely to have been made. It has already been mentioned that Soderini commissioned the decoration of the Palazzo della Signoria from two of the city's leading artistic talents, Leonardo and Michelangelo, with a scheme to inspire military pride. In 1504, Landucci records that he also instructed that Michelangelo's '*gigante*' (the 'giant' *David*) be moved from the cathedral to the Piazza della Signoria, taking the place of 'the Judith' (by Donatello).³³³ The placement of *David* and its political symbolism, as enhanced by Soderini's

³²⁹ Najemy, p. 449 and 451-452.

³³⁰ Najemy, p. 253, describes an agreement whereby Charles assists with military support for the Pope who in return will deny Henry VIII of England a divorce from Catherine of Aragon (Charles's aunt).

³³¹ Landucci's diary (at this point being continued by second hand) remarks on the siege by listing the new imposed pricing of various food stuffs. (p. 292-293). Najemy, p. 461, recounts the estimated casualties listed by Varchi.

³³² Najemy, pp. 461-464.

³³³ Landucci, pp. 213-214.

appropriation, is explored by Saul Levine, who in an analysis of documents notes the tension that surrounded the use of the charged iconography.³³⁴

The use of art for political and propagandistic ends had arguably been perfected by the Medici, who had previously moved their own sculpture of *David*, by Donatello, and the *Judith* mentioned by Landucci, from the Palazzo Medici to the Palazzo della Signoria. In doing so they not only aligned their ideals with those of the city but blurred the division between their public and private spaces.³³⁵ When Giovanni de' Medici, soon Leo X, reclaims Florence for the Medici in 1512, he is no less aware than his ancestors of the power of images. Indeed, his choice of imagery could be said to deliberately evoke the former republican rule of his great grandfather, in contrast to recent regimes, and especially to revive the memory of his father, who had presided over a 'golden age'. Nicolai Rubenstein details a shift in recollections of Lorenzo de' Medici at this time. Notions of him as a tyrant give way to a reassertion of his talent, intelligence, and benevolence as a patron of the arts. Moreover, Lorenzo's gilded rule is the subject chosen by Leo X for the decoration of the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, begun in 1519.³³⁶

In Chapter Two we examined a trend in the work of our corpus to recall Florentine artistic tradition, and evoke the great masters of the mid-fifteenth century, whilst also embracing contemporary developments. In many ways this stylistic choice is also reflected in the subject matter and use of iconography, which could allude to important images of the *Madonna and Child* or significant public works, which will be discussed presently. It seems reasonable to assert that in the period discussed above, and particularly between the years 1498 (the death

³³⁴ Levine, Saul, 'The Location of Michelangelo's David: The Meeting of January 25, 1504' in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 56, no. 1, 1974, pp. 31-49

³³⁵ Many scholars have reviewed the iconography and placement of the Medici works. Among them see Blake McHam, Sarah, 'Donatello's bronze *David* and *Judith* as metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence' in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 83, no.1, 2001, pp. 32-47

³³⁶ Rubenstein, pp.96-98.

of Savonarola) and 1530 (the siege of Florence) Florence was keen to reassert its unique identity and promote its notable reputation for art, scholarship, prosperity and virtue, whilst political stability was uncertain. The recent 'golden age' had occurred at a time when Florence's status as a republic was proudly declared but also, whilst the Medici were its first family. In the early sixteenth century the story of Florence is one where republican ideals are pitted against the dominant involvement of the Medici, who used their position within the Church to regain political power in their native city. Allusions made within our corpus, to Florentine tradition, and in particular works by Donatello, Verrocchio and even Michelangelo, who were all heavily patronised by the Medici, and to the figure of St. Bernard (who we shall speak of shortly), can both serve to support Medician and republican or reformation ideals.

Whilst the period 1500-12 saw the republic stabilise under Soderini and the return of Leonardo and Michelangelo to the city, engaged in works that we have established were important to our corpus, the return of the Medici in 1512 and moreover, the Papacy of Leo X from 1513-21 provides strong reason to date the works to this time, and an allegiance with Medician ideals. The iconography of the works which shall be explored in the next part of this thesis, align with the interests of Leo X, son of the magnificent Lorenzo, tutored by the great humanists Angelo Poliziano and Marsilio Ficino, lavish in his charitable acts, and keenly aware of theological debate and the reformation of the Catholic Church.

The works of our corpus, and in particular the groups of *Charity*, seem to refer to family and civic virtue, alms giving, Christian love and grace, and as such are the perfect embodiments of those qualities that Leo X sought to portray. His blood ties to Florence and its illustrious past are made clear visually (through reference to tradition) and symbolically (through iconography). Furthermore, a connection with Trajan, a Roman Emperor, which can be

detected in our corpus, could also allude to Leo's position in Rome and his ability to offer succour to Florence from that seat of power. The triumphal entry of Leo X to his native city in 1515 was, moreover, celebrated with artwork made by the artists of the Sapienza. Similar iconography to that of our corpus can be seen in the triumphant depiction of *Ferdinando I de' Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany Succoring the City of Pisa*, by Giambologna and Pietro Francavilla in 1594 (Fig. 139). Whilst this period is outside the scope of this thesis, the work is nonetheless an illustration of the Medici politicising images of *Charity* and may have referenced an earlier use by Leo X.

Some of the above reasons to link Leo X with the themes of our corpus could also be said to be relevant to the papacy of his cousin Clement VII. Together they had commissioned the New Sacristy for San Lorenzo from Michelangelo in 1521, in which the *Medici Madonna* (important to our corpus) is installed. Leo X would have witnessed very little of the sacristy's production before his death in December that year but may have discussed with the artist its scheme, which combines a lactating *Madonna*, notions of charity and allusions to St. Bernard, within a family context. Clement VII oversaw more of this specific project, but his papacy (1523-34) was characterised by a more difficult relationship with Florence punctured by revolt, and climaxed with the conversion of Florence into a Duchy. Therefore, it seems a less likely period for the invention of our works, even if their production continued.

In addition to this, Rustici left for France in 1528 during the siege of Florence and Andrea del Sarto died two years later. The other artists of that generation, connected to the Sapienza, had also left the city or died. Whilst the younger members of that circle, their pupils, continued to live and work in Florence, it was a kinship to the works of Rustici, Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto which initially led us to examine that group for their involvement in our corpus, and these crucial influences that were no longer dominant in the city after 1530.

It is proposed here that the works of our corpus originated in the first years after the Medici return to Florence in 1512, and that their iconography and style, whilst recalling former Medici patronage and referring to the position of Cardinal Giovanni subsequently made Pope, also appropriates the imagery of the preceding non-Medici republic, at once identifying the interests of the Medici with that of the republic. The figure of St. Bernard, who had been historically significant to the city (since Dante and through the reign of Cosimo de' Medici) was also important to Savonarola and his ideas of political and religious reform. As a famous peacemaker, whom both factions in Florence could identify with, he was uniquely appropriate as a means through which the Medici could once again ingratiate themselves with the city. It is under Leo X that the rebuilding and redecoration of the Cappella dei Priori, with an image of St. Bernard, was undertaken. It is not suggested here that the Medici commissioned any of the works in our corpus, but that themes relevant to their return to Florence are also relevant to the sculptures.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was an extremely influential Cistercian monk. Shortly prior to his entering the order, in 1113, the Cistercians had embarked on a phase of reform, begun c.1108, which included a new constitution entitled the *Carta Caritatis* (Charter of Charity), approved by Pope Calixtus II in 1119. The charter emphasised the importance of a simple life, characterised by manual work, prayer, love and self-denial. St. Bernard was to be the main instigator of these reforms and he is also credited with having expanded the order and established a pure, if austere, model of Christianity across Europe.

St. Bernard wrote several important texts, which were not only widely read but gained specific popularity in Florence from the late fifteenth century onwards. Among these writings are sermons and tracts on the Blessed Mother and Child in which he meditates on the

Annunciation and Incarnation, The Song of Songs (or Canticles) and Grace and Free Will.³³⁷

The importance of these writings to the iconography of our corpus shall be explored in due course. The saint also had miraculous visions of the Christ Child and the Madonna, including one specifically linked to her lactation, a theme present in several works here discussed. This miraculous encounter with the Virgin involved milk from her breast symbolically wetting the saint's lips, which was credited with healing an eye infection he suffered. Bernard's legend also records the importance of his own mother's breastfeeding. She would not allow her children to be nursed by other women but insisted that, with her milk, she would infuse them with her own goodness.³³⁸ Similarly, St Bernard stressed the importance of the Virgin's lactation not just as nourishment but as this transferral of goodness; and in images of his vision there is often a scroll which reads *monstra te esse matrem* (show thyself to be a mother) (Fig. 140).

St. Bernard became particularly important for Florence. He had a prominent role in Dante's final verses of the *Paradiso* (the third book of the *Divine Comedy* completed in 1320), where he appears as an intercessor with his beloved Virgin Mary, and he is also invoked by Petrarch in his *De Vita Solitaria* (completed 1356).³³⁹ In the Palazzo della Signoria (the government

³³⁷ Many of St. Bernard's writings are recorded in the *Patrologia Latina* in Volumes 182-5, published by Jacques-Paul Migne between 1841 and 1865. Among the most pertinent writings with regard to this thesis are: Homilies on the Gospel including *Homiliae in laudibus Virginis Matris* (Homily in praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary) in which we find *Super Missus est* (specifically on the Annunciation and Incarnation), 1120s, PL 183 4; *De amore Dei* (on Loving God), which outlines the stages of ascent to union with God. c.1128, PL182 971-1000B; *De Gratiâ et Libero Arbitrio* (on Grace and Free Will), c.1128, PL182 999-1030A.; and of his numerous Sermons: *Sermones super Cantica Conticorum* (Sermons on the Song of Songs), begun in 1135 and unfinished at his death in 1153 (86 sermons completed). For a modern collection of St. Bernard's writings see: J Leclercq, CH Talbot and HM Rochais (eds.), *Sancti Bernardi opera*, 9 volumes, Editiones Cistercienses, Rome, 1957-77.

³³⁸ St Bernard's life is recounted in Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend, Reading on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, Princeton University Press, 1993, Vol II, pp.98-107.

³³⁹ For St Bernard in the final cantos of the *Paradiso* see Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradiso*, canto XXXI. For a precursor to Petrarch see the popular monastic text *Epistola de vita solitaria*, written by Guillaume of Saint-Thierry, transcribing conversations with St. Bernard. Petrarch also dedicated a chapter of his book to the saint.

palace) a chapel was dedicated to him, which also contained a relic of his thighbone.³⁴⁰ This was the *Capella dei Priori* (the chapel of the priors), where the decisions makers of Florence would seek spiritual guidance. The chapel was established in c.1335, when an altarpiece of St. Bernard (now lost) was commissioned from Bernardo Daddi (1280-1348). It was subsequently re-built and re-decorated in 1511-15 by Ridolfo Ghirlandaio (1483-1561; Fig 141). St. Bernard's importance in the seat of government may have been due to his role as a peace maker. He had been instrumental to the resolution of the papal schism in 1130 and the title *Pater Patriae* (Father of the Fatherland) was subsequently bestowed on him, the same title given, by the Florentines, to Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464). It would have been during Cosimo's leadership (and possibly by his direct commission) that Fra Filippo Lippi painted a panel depicting *St. Bernard's Vision of the Virgin*, for the Palazzo della Signoria in 1447 (now National Gallery, London, Fig. 142).

There are further notable depictions of the saint's vision in art of this period and several more toward the end of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the next. These include paintings by Filippino Lippi in 1480 (Fig. 143), Perugino in 1493 and Fra Bartolommeo in 1504. The specific setting of the vision and the iconography of these works may have a bearing on that used in our corpus. Filippino's work, especially, locates the vision within a rocky landscape, like the one we have already noted in our sculptures. Moreover, the image depicts the Virgin interrupting St. Bernard as he writes his famous homilies *Super Missus Est*, a commentary on Luke's account of the Incarnation.³⁴¹ The painting also advocates humility through a note above the saint's head.³⁴² The Incarnation, books, humility and St. Bernard

³⁴⁰ For details on St. Bernard in the Capella dei Priori see Rubenstein, Nicolai, *The Palazzo Vecchio 1298-1532: Government, Architecture and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic*, Oxford, 1995, p.49.

³⁴¹ St. Bernard wrote a collection of four homilies on the Annunciation entitled *Super Missus Est* in the 1120s, see note one.

³⁴² Which reads 'substine et abstine'

may all be relevant to our terracottas and in particular to the iconography of the *Madonna and Child* groups.

Research on St. Bernard by M. K. Leshner indicates that the *Vision of St. Bernard* was a theme almost unique to Florentine art, although with no examples found after 1530 until the seventeenth century.³⁴³ This decline in the popularity of Bernadine imagery coincides with the proposed dates of our corpus.

The *Madonna and Child* Sculptures

Even without the emphasis that St. Bernard placed on the Virgin, images of the *Madonna* can be said to have occupied a special focus in Florence, not least because she was the city's heavenly protector. As such, she was not only venerated but became the subject of much theological debate. The cult of Mary was well established by the fifteenth century – thanks in no small part to St. Bernard – with many miracles attributed to her, and many miraculous images identified. Depictions of the *Madonna and Child* were commonplace in Florence by the end of the fifteenth century and were found not only in religious settings but also in most homes.³⁴⁴

It was traditional for such images to incorporate references to the Passion and the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. The Virgin was often cast as the intercessor between the viewer and the Child Redeemer. She herself could also allude to the Passion. St. Bernard believed the Virgin

³⁴³ Melinda Kay Leshner, *The Vision of Saint Bernard and the Chapel of the Priors: Private and Public Images of Bernard of Clairvaux in Renaissance Florence*, Columbia University PhD Thesis, 1979, Published: Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1981. I have been unable to read this thesis other than through excerpts on-line. For a summary of some of Leshner's main arguments I am indebted to Stephanie Lee Tadlock's MA thesis: Stephanie Lee Tadlock, *Fra Bartolommeo and the Vision of Saint Bernard: An Examination of Savonarolan Influence*, University of Maryland, MA thesis, 2005. See especially p. 46.

³⁴⁴ For discussion on the use of Madonna and Child reliefs see: Geraldine A. Johnson, 'Art or Artefact? Madonna and Child Reliefs in the Early Renaissance' in *The Sculpted Object 1400-1700*, eds. Stuart Currie and Peta Motture, Scholar Press, Aldershot and Brookfield, Wisconsin, 1997, pp. 1-24. For more on Marian cults see: Michael O. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary: Psychological Origins*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986.

possessed all the knowledge of the prophets and, therefore, knew of her son's eventual sacrifice. The Madonna as seer was a well known idea and one which continued to retain currency at the turn of the sixteenth century. According to Savonarola 'the Virgin was illuminated even more than the other prophets by the prophetic light, and that is why she knew in advance that the Child was to suffer his Passion as a human being.'³⁴⁵ This emphasis on Christ's humanity is something to which we shall return but it is important to note that both St Bernard and Savonarola emphasised the role of the Virgin as intercessor with God and Jesus. This idea was of course central to the Catholic faith, but in Florence it had also been set out with particular clarity in a book published in 1477, the *Book of the Stairway to Heaven*, which was so popular that by 1491 a third edition had been issued. Its main imagery depended on a medieval text which likened Mary to a stairway by which God came down to earth and by which we mortals could ascend to heaven.³⁴⁶ In this respect, Mary came to represent the Church itself, and this complemented ideas put forward previously by St. Bernard. For St. Bernard, the Virgin was mother not only of Christ but also of all mankind. Her breasts, specifically, according to him, were symbols of the pouring out of affection and instruction and it was only through her as a 'gateway' that man could enter the kingdom of heaven.³⁴⁷ Symbolic intercession, therefore, may have also been important in the works here under discussion.

Within our corpus there are five groups of the *Madonna and Child* seated together (catalogued in groups A-C). These are the work formerly in Berlin (CAT. A1), in Rio de Janeiro (CAT. B3), Amsterdam (CAT. B6), Milan (CAT. C1) and one in Serra Pistoiese

³⁴⁵ As quoted by James Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, Pimlico, London, 2005, p. 28.

³⁴⁶ Poliziano's circle also wrote on these ideas describing five steps with the initials of Mary's name M-A-R-I-A. See Hall, 2005, p. 28.

³⁴⁷ See St. Bernard, *Homiliae in laudibus Virginis Matris*, PL 183.4 and *De amore Dei*, PL182 971-1000B also, G.R. Evans, *The Mind of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, Oxford, 1983.

(CAT C.3). There are further examples of the *Madonna and Child* standing, most notably formerly in Berlin (CAT. B12), and the *Madonna* alone kneeling in prayer or adoration (CATS. B7, B8), as well as the group in New York including St. Anne (CAT. C5). For the moment, let us focus on the seated compositions.

The two sculptures from Berlin and Amsterdam depict the holy figures seated on a rocky outcrop, the Child is held by the Virgin's left arm and balanced on her knee, whilst he reaches over to reveal her right breast (on the left-hand side as we view the work). The Virgin's attention is directed to a book, which she holds in her right hand. She is barefoot and both figures have a halo (the Rijksmuseum halos have now been removed but evidence exists of their original existence).³⁴⁸ The work in Brazil follows the same iconography but the base upon which the group sits is not rocky, nor does the Virgin hold a book; but as stated previously the Virgin's arm in this work is unusual and may not be original, in which case a book may once have been present. It is also unclear whether the figures once had halos.³⁴⁹ The Milan *Madonna* is also a variation on the Berlin and Amsterdam works, but with notable differences. Here the Virgin is not seated on rocky ground but enthroned. She wears sandals and has a crown rather than a halo. The Christ Child has neither. The Child plays with her hair rather than her drapery and does not reveal her breast. The breasts of the Virgin are highlighted in the style of her dress and like the Berlin and Amsterdam *Madonnas*, she also reads a book. The peculiarity of the Milan work, in its style and combination of attributes, has already been discussed in Chapter Two. Therefore, for the purposes of exploring the iconography used by our Master, we shall rely more closely on that seen in the works from Berlin and Amsterdam, as these are more likely to reflect his 'original' design.

³⁴⁸ Two holes on the heads of the Virgin and Child in this sculpture show that additional halos were once used. This is discussed further later in the chapter and in an article for the Rijksmuseum Bulletin reproduced in Appendix II.

³⁴⁹ It has not been possible to view the work in Brazil at first hand during the course of this thesis.

The combination of the rocky setting upon which the pair sits, the book, and the revealed breast, was not typical in depictions of the Madonna in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and appears to be a conflation of several iconographical traditions. These include the *Madonna Lactans* (Nursing Madonna), where breastfeeding the Christ Child is the principal theme, the *Madonna Sapientiae* (Madonna of Wisdom), where the Virgin, with the knowledge of the Prophets, is shown with a book, and the *Madonna of Humility*, a tradition which grew from depictions of the *Annunciation* and showed the Virgin, also with a book, seated on the ground, occasionally breastfeeding. These iconographical ‘types’ and their importance to our works shall be explored presently, as shall the subject of the *Annunciation*, to which the works also allude.

Before we assess what the combination of attributes in these works means, it is important to note a recent discovery made in relation to the *Madonna and Child with a Book* at the Rijksmuseum.³⁵⁰ During cleaning and examination, undertaken to investigate the paint layers on the work, Aleth Lorne discovered a sequence of holes in the sculpture. These had been purposefully created at the time of manufacture and their location correlates with the naked parts of the figures. The holes contained insect cocoons bound up with coloured thread and a hypothesis formed that there had once been drapes added to the figures, which could be removed and replaced by the devotee and held in place with wooden pegs.³⁵¹ This hypothesis, and the impact that the potential dressing of the sculpture has on our understanding of its meaning and function, was explored by the present author in an article reproduced in Appendix II.

³⁵⁰ This work was the subject of an article, published during the course of writing this thesis: Hannah Higham and Aleth Lorne, ‘A Terracotta *Madonna and Child with a Book*, Ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children: New Physical Evidence and Interpretation,’ in *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, Vol. 59, no. 4, 2011, pp. 348-367. A full transcript of this article is included in Appendix II.

³⁵¹ This hypothesis is fully explored in article above. So far, we have been unable to carry out similar investigations on the other works attributed to the Master of the Unruly Children.

Lactation, Incarnation and Humility

Representations of the *Madonna Lactans* had fallen out of favour from the mid-fifteenth century but saw a slight resurgence in the early sixteenth century thanks in part to Michelangelo's particular fondness for this theme and possibly a renewed interest in St. Bernard.³⁵² The particular significance of breastfeeding shall be examined later in the chapter, as it is used in both the depictions of the *Madonna* and *Charity* in our corpus. Even so, it should be stated here that breast milk was considered not only nurturing, in the spirit of St. Bernard, but that it was also believed to be, in some sense, processed blood. Therefore, the Virgin's lactation was an important symbol of her own bodily sacrifice, and pre-figured Christ's own. Traditional depictions of the *Madonna Lactans* required that breastfeeding the Child was the central motif and primary subject of the work but none of the terracottas in our corpus depict the Child actually suckling, but rather show the breast being revealed.³⁵³ Moreover, in the Rijksmuseum work the crucial symbol of the breast is obscured from the frontal viewing position by the book, which is raised up from the lap of the Virgin and held out in front. Additional draperies, which might then have been incorporated, would have further hidden this important motif. It is the book, not the breast, that is the focal point of both the Virgin and the Child in this work. When joined by the removable drapes (which at any point would hide or reveal the breast and the genitals of the Christ Child) we have a conjunction of symbolic elements in the work which far exceed the accepted scope of a *Virgo Lactans*. Whilst the Amsterdam work currently stands alone within our corpus, as the only

³⁵² Michelangelo would return to the subject of the *Madonna Lactans* several times throughout his career, including in several works discussed in this thesis. See also: James Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, Pimlico, London, 2005, Chapter One 'Mothers', pp. 1-36.

³⁵³ For more on the symbolism and evolution of the *Madonna Lactans* image in Florentine art see: Megan Holmes, 'Disrobing the Virgin: The *Madonna Lactans* in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Art' in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, eds. Geraldine A. Johnson and , Sara F. Matthews Grieco, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 167-95.

work with evidence of the use of removable drapes, it nonetheless may indicate themes also present or alluded to elsewhere in our Master's output.

The drapes intended for the *Madonna and Child* in Amsterdam appear to have been designed primarily to cover the naked parts of both figures and to have been removable; as such, both nudity and its absence would have been important to understanding the work. Had the breasts alone been hidden and revealed the theme of the *Nursing Madonna* may have been more easily understood. According to Anne Ashton, Mary's presentation of her breast is a signifier of her intercession for the souls of mankind, and would have been in line with the understanding of *Virgo lactans* iconography. Ashton also cites further examples of women, recorded in the Golden Legend, who uncover their breasts in pleading gestures.³⁵⁴ The baring of the breast, therefore, was not sexual but signified the sacrifice of the mother's flesh for her child. It is even possible that the presentation of the breast, as seen in the works of our Master, rather than the depiction of the suckling child, was enough to allude to the tradition of the nursing subject whilst also specifically signalling the Virgin as intercessor. A presentation of the breast would also be in line with St. Bernard's directive to 'show thyself to be a mother'. It may, therefore, allude to the *Vision of St. Bernard*, and not only the nursing of the Child.

It is not the breast alone but the concealment of both the mother and the son that occurs in the draping of the Rijksmuseum sculpture. Leo Steinberg suggests that the deliberate depiction of the Christ Child's genitalia, in images of the *Madonna and Child*, is evidence of his Incarnation or alludes to his Circumcision.³⁵⁵ The Incarnation was 'the word made flesh' and

³⁵⁴ Anne M. Ashton, *Interpreting Breast Iconography in Italian Art 1250-1600*, PhD Thesis for University of St. Andrews, 2006, pp. 56-57.

³⁵⁵ Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, Chicago, 1996. Steinberg presents several cases to support an argument that images of the *Madonna and Child* can be a visualisation of the dogma of the Incarnation, rather than a narrative account. For an introduction to these ideas, and for explicit reference to the Circumcision, see especially pp. 10-51.

according to the early theologian St. Augustine (354-430) ‘made in all parts of a man’. The highlighted genitals thus provided ‘evidence of the pledge of God’s humanation’.³⁵⁶ Augustine also cited hunger as evidence of humanity because Christ needed nourishment like any human baby, and ‘Mary’s breast sustained the God-man.’³⁵⁷ So the combination of genitals and breast, according to Steinberg, should be read as referring to the Incarnation. The use of drapery to call attention to hidden nudity is further explored in the Rijksmuseum article, which provides a clear argument for connecting the practice of veiling with the theme of Incarnation. It is not argued that the sculpture is a representation of the Incarnation but rather refers to the incarnate quality of Christ.

The Incarnation occurred at the moment of the Annunciation, and is celebrated in images of this subject, but images of the Virgin with her Son (now born), where the revelation of the genitals is a motif, may refer to the humanation of Christ as man. Traditional images of the *Annunciation* showed the Angel Gabriel interrupting the Virgin whilst reading a book. Even when not accompanied by additional draperies, the presence of a book, which is included in all but one of the seated *Madonnas* in our corpus, may have been sufficient (alongside the symbolic breast and naked Child) to allude to ideas relating to the Incarnation. Moreover, the slight lean of the Virgin, to the right, which recalls depictions of the surprised *Madonna Annunciate*, as seen say in Andrea Sansovino’s panel for Loreto (Fig.110) may have also subtly alluded to this theme.

References to the Incarnation, lactation, and the reading of a book, all visible in the terracottas of our corpus, can be linked to a further mode of representing the Virgin, as the *Madonna of Humility*. This image-type, itself derived from the *Annunciation*, normally shows

³⁵⁶ Steinberg, 1996, pp.15-16.

³⁵⁷ Steinberg, 1996, pp.132-133; quoting Augustine’s sermon for Christmas (Sermon 1, 23-24 [Ben.51]; Sermons, pp.52-56).

the Virgin seated on the ground, occasionally breastfeeding and often with a book or lily (Fig. 144). The book in this case, as in representations of the *Annunciation*, most probably alludes to the *Magnificat*, a hymn of praise spoken by the Virgin at the Incarnation, which states ‘it is the humble who are exalted’. Alternatively, the book may be the Old Testament where the Incarnation is prophesied. The *Madonna of Humility* tradition demonstrates how *Annunciation* motifs could be transferred to images of the *Madonna and Child*. As noted, our *Madonnas* are often barefoot and situated on a rocky base which emphasises their connection to the earth (the word humility is derived from the Latin *humus*, meaning earth). When united with books and breastfeeding, which was regarded as ‘indicative of low status’ and thus connected to humility, one is impelled to link the Master’s *Madonnas* with this tradition.³⁵⁹ The importance of the lactation for St. Bernard and his advocacy of asceticism and simplicity may also have underpinned the depiction of this subject in our corpus.

Works by the Master of the Unruly Children’s contemporaries show that such themes were widespread. Many of the same themes can be found, for example, in Michelangelo’s depictions of the *Madonna*, which have been mentioned in Chapter Two. His unfinished, so-called, *Manchester Madonna* (c. 1497, Fig. 97) bears a notable resemblance to the *Madonnas* in our corpus and to the Rijksmuseum work in particular.³⁶⁰ The rocky ground underfoot in the painting is almost identical to that in the sculptures, whilst in each case the Virgin holds a book, has one breast exposed and contends with an animated infant. The drapery of the *Madonna*’s dress is also highlighted in Michelangelo’s panel as the Child attempts to scale it. We also have reason to read the work, as Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt has done, in relation to the theme of Incarnation since the lap of the Virgin can be interpreted as the womb, and the

³⁵⁹ For the development of this iconographical tradition see: Beth Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility*, Woodbridge, 2009, for the status of breastfeeding see especially p.19.

³⁶⁰ Frits Scholten (Rijksmuseum) was amongst the first to bring this comparison to my attention.

drapery of her dress symbolically veiled Christ's mortality.³⁶¹ Of the book held by Michelangelo's Virgin, Brandt suggests that it is the Old Testament as Christ is thrusting his fingers into it to indicate a different page to the one his mother is reading. If the Virgin is reading the Old Testament prophesy of Incarnation, then the open page could represent the present, with Christ now flesh, while Christ reminds us of the *Annunciation* and Immaculate Conception.³⁶² Brandt also points out that, in the conventional Virgin and Child format with allusions to the Incarnation, the child stays on his mother's lap and reaches out, rarely touching the 'mortal earth' below. In Michelangelo's work, by contrast, the Child is climbing from earth onto the Virgin's lap. This reversal of the usual progression from womb to earth via mother, or heaven to earth via Virgin, is attributed by the author to the borrowing of imagery from depictions of *Charity* (a point of great significance to the present discussion), most notably Mino da Fiesole's *Charity* in the Badia (1466-81, Fig. 145). This image is located in the space, above the bier, usually occupied by an image of the *Madonna and Child*. Michelangelo's unfinished *Medici Madonna*, made for the New Sacristy at San Lorenzo (1519-34, Fig. 105), provides a further comparison with our sculpture. In his assessment of the sacristy design and the placement of the Madonna within it, James Hall has convincingly linked the figure's breastfeeding with St. Bernard, *Charity* and healing.³⁶³ In this case the association between the Virgin and *Charity* is essential to the beneficial and potentially healing effects that could be connected to contemplation of the *Madonna Lactans*. In St. Bernard's sermon on the Song of Songs he meditates on the line 'Your breasts are better than

³⁶¹ Weil-Garris Brandt in *Giovenezza di Michelangelo*, Kathleen Weil Garris Brandt, Christina Acidini Luchinat, James David Draper, and Nicholas Penny, Firenze & Milano, 1999, pp. 334-340

³⁶² Weil-Garris Brandt, 1999, p.338.

³⁶³ Hall, 2005. For Hall's ideas on the links between the sculptural elements of the New Sacristy and his explanation of the depictions of the Medici, the *Madonna and Child*, and their connection to St Bernard and breast-feeding see Chapter Five, 'Benefactions', pp.139-166.

wine, redolent of the best ointments'.³⁶⁴ Michelangelo's *Madonna*, which was designed for the Medici (a name literally translated as doctors), contends with a voraciously suckling child. The self-sacrificing and sustaining nature of the Virgin and the healing properties of her milk are strongly underscored, as they are in our corpus of work.

The *Charity* Sculptures

The sculptures of *Charity* attributed to our Master are, compositionally, extremely close to those of the *Madonna and Child*. Closer consideration of the meaning and iconography of *Charity* and its relationship with that of the *Madonna and Child* demonstrates that the repeated use of the same basic design for both subjects may not only be due to economy or efficient workshop practice but is essential to their intended meaning. The *Charity* groups shall next be discussed, with a survey of the composite meaning of the Virtue, before the shared symbolism of the *Madonna* and *Charity* is expanded upon further.

There are five terracotta sculptures of *Charity* in our corpus: groups at the V&A Museum (CAT. A2), Birmingham (CAT. B1), formerly in Berlin (CAT. B5), in Florence (CAT. C2)) and that sold in London in 1980 (Cat. D13). They almost all follow the same basic compositional format, which comprises the female Virtue sat centrally upon a rocky base accompanied by three children, one on her lap and one to either side. At least one child is depicted as grimacing or crying, most often that on the right side of the work. The child on the Virtue's lap reveals her right breast. The children often carry other attributes, most frequently a poppy in bud, carried by the standing child on the left side of the group. In the Florence group the children at either side both appear to hold poppies. A bird is carried by the

³⁶⁴ St. Bernard's Sermons on Song of Songs, c.1136, will be discussed at length later in the chapter. They are quoted by Hall, 2005, p.139, to assert an association with healing. See also Henk van Os 'The Culture of Prayer' in *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 52-85. As a Doctor of the Church Bernard's words were often described in healing terms. His mother's dream, whilst pregnant, predicted her son 'will be a renowned preacher and will cure many by grace of the medicine of his tongue' (Voragine, p.98).

child on the right of the Birmingham work. The London Virtue wears a polygonal crown and this is also present on the work from Berlin, which otherwise differs from the group as the Virtue is not on a rocky base, has only one child and holds a flame in her right hand.

The attributes used to identify *Charity* changed and developed considerably over the course of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. To understand how the Virtue, as represented in the works of our corpus, can be understood, a survey of what the concept of *Charity* actually means, and of the development of the iconographical tradition, is first needed.

Charity and multiple types of love

Charity is the greatest of the three Christian Virtues and she is described in Corinthians, (1 Corinthians 13:13): ‘And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.’ As such she was seen as the mother to the other Theological Virtues of Faith and Hope, which may bear relevance to her depiction as a mother of three children. Earlier in Corinthians (13:1-5), and leading up to this statement on the importance of the virtue, the bible says this:

1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

To the modern mind, and ear, *Charity* signifies giving, and this is implied in both verses three and four above, but it was never her principal Christian meaning. *Charity* originally signified love and in particular the love of God. The above verses reveal to us the importance which was placed on *Charity* or love. Even the gifts of prophecy, which we have had cause to

connect to the Virgin, are worthless without the love of God. The earthly, alms-providing role adopted into depictions and our understanding of the Virtue is also derived from love – a love of mankind. Therefore, the nature of the love which *Charity* represents was dual, and split into primarily love of God (*amor Dei*) but secondly love of thy neighbour (*amor proximi*). According to St. Augustine the Virtue was the bond which connects man with God. The importance of *Charity* and a nod to its duality was further ramified in the New Testament, when Jesus was asked which was the greatest of the commandments and he replied: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ... this is the first and great commandment ... And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Matthew 22:35-40).

The passage from Corinthians above may well have informed, either directly or indirectly, the works in our corpus. *Charity* is described as suffering and modest in verse four and uneasy to provoke in verse five. All these qualities can be said to explain the unflappable but rather exhausted looking figures seen in the terracottas of our Master, barefoot like the *Madonna of Humility*, and with unruly children unable to taunt her. Moreover, the children themselves may find their origin in the following verses in Corinthians (13: 10-12) which continue on from above:

10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.
11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.
12. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

As a contrast to *Charity* the children may serve to illustrate us, mankind in our spiritual infancy, and highlight our need for the love of God as a pathway to enlightenment.

In modern translations of the bible the word charity (or *caritas* in the Latin vulgate) in the text of Corinthians has been readily and straightforwardly translated as love. Whereas this

may seem to make clear the original meaning of the Virtue, the passage's use as a standard text in Christian wedding ceremonies also connects this love very clearly with romantic love (*cupiditas*). This is an association which R. Freyhan also makes when discussing the use of the word Charity in the language of courtly love and the *dolce stil nuovo* (the 'sweet' new literary style of the thirteenth century) and in relation to images of secular or profane love, which shall be discussed later.³⁶⁵ Therefore, the love of *Charity* may be described not only as a dual love, encompassing the love of God and Man (or one's neighbour) but tripartite, relating to notions of romantic love also.

The iconographical traditions of *Charity* and multi-purpose love symbols

With her composite nature and symbolism, and because love is an abstract quality, the way of depicting *Charity* has, over the centuries, presented a challenge to artists. To signify her primary meaning as love of God (*amor Dei*) the attribute of a burning heart, candle, or flame in a vase was widespread by the fifteenth century. The concept of love of God as light or flame had been developed by St. Bonaventura (c. 1217-74). St. Bonaventura's theory on the metaphysics of light was inspired by Neo-platonic and Augustinian sources and cited God as the eternal and pure light, and all others thereby graded by the amount of light they have in them. He explicitly uses the symbol of a flame to describe spiritual love, a burning love, which has since also been appropriated into secular love symbols.³⁶⁶ To represent *Charity*'s love of mankind (*amor proximi*) a cornucopia or alms giving to the poor or hungry was often depicted. For this aspect of her iconography much borrowing from images of the *Acts of Mercy* can be traced - distributing clothes to the naked and feeding the hungry were particularly popular motifs in early depictions of the Virtue.

³⁶⁵ R. Freyhan, 'The Evolution of the Caritas Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 11, 1948, pp. 68-86.

³⁶⁶ See Freyhan, 1948, for discussion of Bonaventura and the introduction of his *incendium amoris* into depictions of *Charity*, p. 73-75.

Freyhan and, previously, Edgar Wind have explained the varying ways in which artists combined or indeed separated the dual aspects of love which the Virtue personified.³⁶⁷ As Wind pointed out, the revered theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (in *Summa Theologiae*, written 1265–1274) taught that Heavenly charity enables and entitles men to be charitable on earth and therefore the two forms of charity were fundamentally one, but he also warned not to consider the earthly expression of *Caritas Misericordia* (merciful *Charity*) of higher value than a detachment from the world in the service or love of God. Wind aptly summarised by stating that ‘to define *Misericordia* as the chief function of *Charity* would be to forget the intermediate position of Man, who has much below him but more above.’³⁶⁸ Freyhan elaborated on this by explaining that in Northern Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was understood that ‘*amor Dei* was the root of *amor proximi*, the love of God the foundation of the love of the neighbour, therefore the two forms of *Caritas* were really inseparable’ and as a consequence of this he illustrates how, in early depictions of the Virtue at least, ‘a scene typifying *amor proximi* would therefore imply the other side of the virtue, *amor Dei*,’ and would not be in conflict with the Church’s teaching.³⁶⁹ He realised that there was a seeming contradiction here with the Thomist approach, where prizing *Misericordia* over *amor Dei* could even be considered reprehensible and points out that in Italy, depictions of the Virtue evolved to present the multifaceted love within *Charity*, and indeed, emphasise the more important love of God.

According to Freyhan, the method with which *amor Dei* was incorporated into Italian images of *Charity* was through the increasing use of secular love symbols. In discussing these he elucidated the scholastic discussion around the relationship between *amor amicitiae* (love

³⁶⁷ Edgar Wind, ‘Charity: The Case History of a Pattern’ in *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, Vol. 1, no. 4, April 1938, pp. 322-330.

³⁶⁸ Wind, 1938, p. 325.

³⁶⁹ Freyhan, 1948, p. 69.

of/in friendship) and *amor concupiscentiae* (love of concupiscence or desire). This was also related to the debate on *Caritas* defining a love which ascends heavenward and *Cupiditas* the love of transient or inferior things. The two, as Freyhan notes, were directly opposed by Augustine who divided the world ‘into the two mutually exclusive conceptions of *Caritas* and *Cupiditas* ... he assigns to *Cupiditas* the sinful part of the world which can have no relation, except in opposition, to *Caritas*.’³⁷⁰ Freyhan then detailed how this view was overturned by the medieval theologian Hugh of St Victor (c. 1096–1141) who believed love and desire were one. Moreover, St. Bernard is also cited, and he conceived *concupiscentia* as necessary for spiritual love, declaring ‘There will never be *Caritas* without *Cupiditas*.’³⁷¹ The views of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura also differed on this point and are outlined again by Freyhan. For Bonaventura at least ‘*amor concupiscentiae* and *amor amicitiae* were the two complementary movements of *Caritas* towards God.’³⁷² The combination of Bonaventura’s theory on light with his conception of romantic love was responsible, according to Freyhan, for the development of the burning heart motif newly seen in representations of *Charity* at this time.

The earliest example cited by Freyhan, for the use of Bonaventura’s flaming love symbols, is by Nicola Pisano in his *Charity* for the pulpit in Siena (1266–68, Fig. 146). Here the cornucopia of bountiful giving, which we might expect from the *misericordia* side of the virtue, is bursting forth with flames. According to Freyhan, Nicola Pisano had previously been responsible for translating *misericordia* motifs used to depict *Charity* in France, into Italian works of the mid-fourteenth century. He specifically credits Pisano with the adaptation of a diminutive adult receiving alms (such as that on Chartres Cathedral) into the figure of a

³⁷⁰ Freyhan, 1948, p. 72.

³⁷¹ St. Bernard quoted in Freyhan, 1948, p. 73.

³⁷² Bonaventura quoted in Freyhan, 1948, p. 73.

child at *Charity's* feet, a motif he used for the pulpit in Pisa (1260, Fig. 147).³⁷³ Pisano was highly influential and the Pisani workshop remained so through several generations; therefore both the symbol of the flame and the inclusion of children became commonplace in depictions of *Charity* in Italy from the 1260s onwards.

The motif of the '*incendium amoris*' (flame of love) appears to have simultaneously been used as an attribute of *Venus*. Freyhan expanded upon the correlation between the flame symbolising profane love, as *Venus*, and sacred love, in the guise of *Charity* and argued that this parallel, subject to the aims of the *dolce stile nouvo* to combine erotic and religious thought using the code of courtly love, eventually resulted in the actual fusion of *Venus* and *Caritas*.³⁷⁴ Freyhan's argument, which charts the evolution of the Virtue's iconography from Giotto (1266/7-1337) to Titian (c.1490-1576), has much to recommend it. Whilst the works depicting *Charity* in our corpus, aside from that formerly in Berlin, do not contain the motif of a flame, the identification of *Charity* with *Venus*, and their parallel symbolism may be important to the understanding of our sculptures.

Charity was also linked to other virtuous women. Within the retinue of *Venus*, or more specifically her Greek counterpart *Aphrodite*, the *Three Graces*, also known as *Charities*, are often found. Not only are charity and grace etymologically linked, as we will have cause to review later, but the triad of *Graces* and the dual or even tripartite nature of *Charity* may be linked through meaning also. A contemporary discourse on grace, with both Christian and secular implications, will be brought to bear on depictions of *Charity* later in the chapter. For

³⁷³ Freyhan, 1948, p. 71-72. Whereas the argument for Pisano misidentifying small adult figures in French depictions of *Charity* as children is problematic, and in this author's opinion an unlikely source for the motif, Pisano's work is an early example of *Charity* with a child as an attribute, which would have been highly influential.

³⁷⁴ Freyhan charts the motif of the gifted heart of *Charity* from from Giotto's virtue in the Arena chapel to Pisano's *Charity* on the Baptistry doors in Florence and on the reliefs of the Campanile. He extends the evidence of *Charity* incorporating secular love symbols to include that portrayed in Lorenzetti's Good Government in Siena in which *Charity* fires arrows like Cupid. The duality of the sacred and profane love is then applied to Titian's famous painting of the same name, which he interprets through the iconography of *Charity*.

a comparable division of *Charity* into separate figures within a Christian context, the biblical figures of Rachel and Leah are pertinent. Wind describes a significant change in the depiction of *Charity* after the Counter-Reformation and an encouragement by the Church to think of the Virtue as two distinct figures. Although the Counter-Reformation period is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief appraisal of the symbolism described by Wind, which has its origins in earlier scholasticism, may be relevant.

Wind writes:

‘Divine and human Charity were compared to Mary and Martha in the Gospel of St. Luke, or, by a subtle and long-winded argument, to Rachel and Leah, the wives of Jacob. The names of the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were said to signify allegorically the three virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and a profound meaning was attributed to the fact that Jacob, who represents Charity, wooed and served seven years for Rachel, the heavenly Love, while Leah, the earthly Love, was given to him in her stead. Hugo of St. Victor has given to this story the most subtle and elaborate interpretation. The barrenness of Rachel, who bears but two children before she dies, the prolificness of Leah, who has a wealth of offspring, signify the contrast between Heaven and Earth. Leah is the 'literal' sense of the Scripture, Rachel its 'mystical' significance; and the student who tries to penetrate the mystery of his faith is a second Jacob who, in the bridal chamber, longs for Rachel while he embraces Leah.³⁷⁵

The passage above is important to the works of our corpus for several reasons. The quality of love symbolised by Rachel and Leah is directly connected to their fertility and children, which are abundant in the corpus. The connection between the Virtues and the patriarchal figures of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, further ramifies an association between *Charity* and notions of progeny. The poppy flowers (containing numerous seeds) held by the children in our works can also be understood as a symbol of fertility. It is not proposed here that the female surrounded by her brood which features in the sculpture of our Master is a representation of Leah, but that the concept of *Charity* represented by Jacob and his wives may be alluded to. As Wind highlights, it was an interpretation already established and elaborated upon by Hugh of St. Victor.

³⁷⁵ Wind, 1938, p. 324.

From the evidence above it is clear that *Charity* represented both the love of God and mankind and could contain associations with romantic or familial love and have connotations outside of a Christian context. In the works of our corpus there is neither a clear act of almsgiving, which might represent the earthly love of *Charity*, nor the symbol of the burning flame or heart with which heavenly love was implied. One might ask then, how we know these to be depictions of *Charity*. From Nicola Pisano's use of a child at the feet of the Virtue stemmed several works where, borrowing from the *Madonna Lactans* tradition, *Charity's* love of mankind was signified through her suckling the young and hungry, and her love of God continued to rely on the heart or flame. Certainly by the seventeenth century the figure of a woman breastfeeding hungry children was standard. Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia* describes the virtue thus:

A woman all in red, a flame on the crown of her head with an infant suckling in her left arm and two others standing up, one of which is embraced with the right. The red denotes Charity; the spouse in the canticles was pleased with it in her beloved. The flame signifies that Charity is never idle, but always active. The Children show the triple power of Charity for Faith and Hope without her signify nothing.³⁷⁶

This description of *Charity* could have almost been written to describe the work of the Master of the Unruly Children – but for the insistence still on the inclusion of a flame (Fig. 148). Here it is interestingly described as a signifier of the Virtue's ceaseless dynamism rather than love of God. Despite this, love is implied on several levels in the reference to the canticles.

Solomon's Cantic of Canticles or Song of Songs is another important biblical text for the understanding of *Charity* and the *Madonna Lactans* tradition. In citing the Canticles in his description of *Charity* Ripa links the common understanding of the Virtue with this epithalamic poem between Christ and the Church and places the role of *Charity* as central to its understanding. Therefore, the complexity of *Charity* is further increased as a closer

³⁷⁶ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia ovvero e scrittura e ll'i agini Universali cavate dall'Antichità et da altri luoghi*, first published 1593 and then in 1603, Rome, with 151 woodcuts. Edition here used: 1611, Padua, p. 72.

reading of the Canticles suggests that *Charity* can allude to both the Church or Spouse (as can the Virgin) and the love of God or Christ. The breast, with its symbolic pouring out of love and doctrine, is the symbol which connects these characters.

The Canticles and the Breast

It is proposed here that interpretations of the Song of Songs, which were an important feature of the writings of St. Bernard but also of other authors, hold particular significance for the works ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children. One of the earliest of these, which appears to have formed the basis of St. Bernard's famous sermons, is written by Origen (c.185-254), an early Church father.³⁷⁷ In his introduction to the commentary on the poem, and in an attempt to guard against any lustful interpretation of the nuptial drama, he is at pains to identify love, and by proxy Charity. He reiterates that Charity is love but reinforces this by quoting several excerpts from the bible and affirming that God too is called Charity. He cites the gospel of John where it is written 'if charity abideth in you God abideth in you.' He also brings blood and flesh to bear on the transference of this charity, which we shall also have cause to do later in the chapter:

And because God is charity and the Son likewise, who is of God, is charity. He requires in us something like Himself; so that through this charity which is in Jesus Christ, we may be allied to God who is charity, as it were in a sort of blood relationship through this name of charity.³⁷⁸

In a further preamble to the main text Origen also teaches us to look beyond the surface meaning of words to their spiritual significance and is particularly concerned we do so in relation to love.

³⁷⁷ Origen, 'Commentary and Homilies on the Song of Songs' in *Ancient Christian Writers; the works of the Fathers in translation*, ed. R. P. Lawson, Paulist Press, Issue 26, June 1957. Originally begun by Origen in 240.

³⁷⁸ Origen in *Ancient Christian Writers*, 1957, p. 33.

Origen also uses the metaphor of children or offspring in illuminating the difference between carnal and heavenly love:

... just as there is one love known as carnal and also known as Cupid by the poets, according to which the lover sows in the flesh; so also is there another, a spiritual love, by which the inner man who loves sows in the spirit.³⁷⁹

As we have read in the interpretation of the fecundity of Rachel and Leah, love is also described here in terms of its fertile nature. The metaphor of offspring, the product of carnal love, has been appropriated to describe the benevolence or fruitfulness of spiritual love also.

In the Song of Songs we are told of the unification of a bride and her groom. The bride has since been identified as the Church or the enlightened soul and the groom as Christ or the Word of God. Whereas Origen and St. Bernard, amongst others, interpret for us the spiritual significance of these verses they nonetheless describe the scenario of an expectant Bride on her wedding night, addressing her groom. The conflation of secular or profane love symbols or language is not one orchestrated in the courtly circles of medieval poets, as described by Freyhan, but is evident here, in its biblical beginnings. Indeed Rachel Trubowitz has already had cause to describe the Canticles (and sermons thereon) as a 'legitimizing framework for competing ideas about the relations between eros and marriage and between *cupiditas* and *caritas*.'³⁸⁰

St. Bernard's sermons on the Canticles are numerous and were popular and influential. As such, they deserve closer examination, particularly as they relate directly to the iconography of *Charity* and to depictions of the *Madonna and Child* as seen in our corpus. In discussing the line 'your breasts are better than wine, redolent of the best ointments' St. Bernard offers

³⁷⁹ Origen in *Ancient Christian Writers*, 1957, p. 29.

³⁸⁰ Rachel Trubowitz, *Nation and Nurture in Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, p. 49.

up several interpretations. Noting that it is unclear who exactly spoke these words, he ascribes them to the various protagonists in turn and discusses the changing meaning.

Firstly should the breast belong to the Bridegroom (as thought by Origen):

These two breasts are two proofs of his native kindness: his patience in awaiting the sinner and his welcoming mercy for the penitent. This twofold sweetness of inward joy overflows from the heart of the Lord Jesus in the form of tireless expectancy and prompt forgiveness. [...]

"Are you abusing his abundant goodness, patience and toleration, not realizing that this goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance?" To this very end he postpones his punishment of the contumacious, awaiting a favourable moment to bestow on them the grace of repentance and forgiveness. [...]

When she said, then, "your breasts are better than wine," she meant: "The richness of the grace that flows from your breasts contributes far more to my spiritual progress than the biting reprimands of superiors. Not only are they better than wine, but smelling sweet of the best ointments too, for not merely do you refresh those present with the milk of inward sweetness, you also spray the pleasing perfume of good repute over the absent ones, [...]"

You have, as I say, milk within and ointments without, for none would come to be refreshed with the milk, if you had not the perfume to attract them."³⁸¹

So should the breasts belong to Christ (the groom) they are the pouring out of patience, love, forgiveness and essentially grace. Important in both the passage above and in Origen's interpretation is that the breast is an outward symbol of the heart. Regardless of whether this is then the breast of Christ – representing the 'inward joy overflowing from the heart' as above, or that of the Bride, the motif of the exposed breast in both the iconography of *Charity* and the *Madonna*, revealed frontally as it is in our corpus, could represent the heart. The breast as synecdoche for heart is the perfect conflation for the dual aspect of *Charity* representing love and succour. It also alleviates depictions of the Virtue from the need for cumbersome flames or alms giving.

Although we are not here concerned with depictions of Christ's breast it is also useful to note that, as conduit for the love of God and Christ the breast of *Charity* may also have

³⁸¹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, ed. Darrell Wright (on Internet Archive <https://archive.org/>), Sermon 9, part 5, p. 30-31.

connotations of forgiveness and grace. Patience too is a characteristic which seems to pour forth from Christ and is often used to describe Charity. But let us return to St. Bernard's sermon on the Canticles and his further interpretation, should the breasts in question belong to the Bride:

For so great is the potency of that holy kiss, that no sooner has the bride received it than she conceives and her breasts grow rounded with the fruitfulness of conception; bearing witness, as it were, with this milky abundance. Men with an urge to frequent prayer will have experience of what I say. Often enough when we approach the altar to pray our hearts are dry and lukewarm. But if we persevere, there comes an unexpected infusion of grace, our breast expands as it were, and our interior is filled with an overflowing love; and if somebody should press upon it then, this milk of sweet fecundity would gush forth in streaming richness. Let us hear the Bridegroom "You have received, my love, what you asked for, and here is a sign to show you, your breasts are better than wine; henceforth you will know that you have received the kiss because you will be conscious of having conceived. That explains the expansion of your breasts, filled with a milky richness far surpassing the wine of the worldly knowledge that can intoxicate indeed but with curiosity, not charity; it fills but does not nourish; puffs up but does not build up; pampers but does not strengthen."³⁸²

This description of the breast and its significance, swelled with the love of God, also relates closely to the sculpture here under discussion. The references to fecundity, abundance, and the fertile nature of faith are once again underscored. The attendant children to *Charity* in our terracottas also emphasise this fertility. Notions of strength in faith and attendant prosperity may have been important to the viewers of these works, as may have been the cautious note that worldly knowledge alone, for which the Florentines were famed, would not sustain or nourish, as Charity could. Grace once again is also mentioned and shall be expanded upon in due course.

There is a third possible interpretation of this passage offered by St. Bernard, that the phrase 'your breasts are better than wine...' is spoken by the companions of the Bridegroom, to whom the bride addresses much of her entreaty.

³⁸² St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 9, part 7, p. 31.

"... what he has already given you is of far more value than that which you look for. The favor you demand is rather for your own delight, but the breasts with which you may feed the offspring of your womb are preferable to, that is, they are more essential than, the wine of contemplation. What gladdens the heart of one man cannot be placed on equal terms with that which benefits many. Rachel may be more beautiful, but Lia is more fruitful. So beware of lingering amid the kisses of contemplation, better the breasts that flow in the preaching of God's word."³⁸³

St. Bernard goes on to say:

... these words may be fittingly applied to those that are cared for by a mother or a nurse, as children are? For these souls, immature, lacking in hardihood, cannot tolerate patiently the contemplative repose of her to whom they look for fuller instruction in the faith, for the guidance of her religious observances. And is it not the restlessness of such as these that is frowned upon... When these perceive that the bride longs for kisses, that she seeks to be alone, that she shuns the streets, turns aside from the crowds... they protest: "No!" they say. "No! Far greater the profit in the breasts you extend to others than in the embraces you enjoy in private. For by the former you deliver us from the selfish passions that attack the soul; you snatch us from the world and gain us for God." What they are really saying is: "Your breasts are better than wine." "These spiritual delights," they say, "that your breasts distil can conquer in us the pleasures of the flesh, that enslaved us just as drunkards are enslaved by wine."³⁸⁴

What is described in both sections quoted above is surely a description of *Charity* and her role, in all its duality, as depicted in the works of our corpus. The mother figure (like Leah) caring for her restless charges, extending her breast for the good of all mankind, the perfect conduit for the love of God, which fills her breast, and pours forth for the world and gains them for God. The love of God *is* the alms which *Charity* provides, the milk she dispenses is not just food for the hungry but the process through which man may partake and provide the Love of and to God. Moreover, the sermon could be interpreted as an incitement to the devotee to lead an active, public life, as deliverance from 'selfish passions.' The notion of *Charity* as a civic virtue shall be explored later in the chapter.

St Bernard further identifies the breast with the love of God and *Charity* when he describes its ceaseless properties and compares it with carnal love (to which the canticles imagery may

³⁸³ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 9, part 8, p. 31.

³⁸⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 9, part 9, p. 32.

also allude). It is also important to note the final line below, where St. Bernard indicates the second aspect of *Charity*, her earthly role and an overlap with notions of mercy.

For when these have been drained dry they are replenished again from the maternal fount within, and offered to all who will drink. Here is a further reason why I insist that the breasts of the bride are superior to worldly or carnal love; the numbers who drink of them, however great, cannot exhaust their content; their flow is never suspended, for they draw unceasingly from the inward fountains of charity. Out of her heart shall flow rivers of water, there will be a spring inside her, welling up to eternal life. The accumulating praises of the breasts come to a climax in the perfume of the ointments, because they not only feed us with the choice food of doctrine, but shed around them like a pleasing aroma the repute of good deeds.³⁸⁵

Further commentaries on the Canticles from theologians Walafrid Strabo (808-49) and Alain of Lille (1128-1202) also resulted in an association between these verses and the subsequent identification of the lactating female in art with the Virtue *Charity*.³⁸⁶ In their writing the breasts are linked to the Virgin, ‘the two breasts of the Virgin Mary are understood as the two rivulets of charity by which she loved Christ; one by which she loved Him as much as God, the other by which she loved Him as much as man.’³⁸⁷ Not only is the Virgin identified as a source of charity, further linking her with the Virtue, but the breastfeeding of more than one child or from more than one breast may be directly linked to the dual love of *Charity*, and a straight translation of this idea of two rivulets may be responsible for the multiplication of children seen in depictions of the Virtue.

It is important to reassert here that it was widely believed that the Bride in the Song of Songs, although often identified as the *Madonna*, is also intended to represent the Church. The alignment of the Virgin and the Church has already been discussed. As the earthly institution which both praises (loves) God and which can facilitate the dispersal of God’s love on earth

³⁸⁵ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, Sermon 9, part 10, p. 32.

³⁸⁶ The writings of Walafrid Strabo and Alain of Lille on the Song of Songs were brought to my attention by William R. Levin, *The Allegory of Mercy at the Misericordia in Florence: Historiography, Context, Iconography, and the Documentation of Confraternal Charity in the Trecento*, University Press of America, Lanham, 2004.

³⁸⁷ Levin, 2004, pp. 52-53.

there are also good reasons to link the Church with the figure of *Charity*, the foremost of the Christian Virtues, and a mother figure to mankind. Given this shared role, the conflation of iconography between these two Christian personifications is perhaps not surprising. Giovanni Pisano's (1248-1315) sculpture of *Ecclesia* (the Church) on the pulpit in Pisa's Cathedral (1302-10, Fig. 149) is a prime example of how figures of *Charity* and the *Madonna Lactans* can both be alluded to in a depiction of the *Church*, through the breastfeeding motif. The use of two children feeding from each breast also implies the dual love, associated not only with the Virgin and *Charity* but explicitly here, with the Church. During the proposed date of our corpus, Leo X was at the head of the Catholic Church.

Early depictions of *Charity* Breastfeeding

Several works of art which depict *Charity* breastfeeding, from the mid-fourteenth century through to the mid-sixteenth century, show that the motif of the breast to convey the love of God, was commonplace. Moreover, several of these are in prominent public settings, which may have carried particular associations that could be deliberately recalled in the *Charity* groups of our Master. Tino da Camaino, a pupil of Pisano, produced a figure of *Charity* (c.1321, Fig. 150) for the Baptistery of Florence, which was an important precursor to those in our corpus. Tino's Virtue appears like a contemporaneous wet nurse and has two children suckling voraciously at each breast, which could be interpreted as a literal portrayal of that Virgin-Church-Charity figure described above, her breasts the two rivulets for God and Man, pouring forth. To further support this interpretation the child viewed on the right has awkwardly twisted under the breast and is held by *Charity* with his genitals seemingly indicated. This may be a purposeful device employed to draw our attention to the child's humanity, as has been similarly proposed in relation to the *Madonna and Child* at the Rijksmuseum.

The Baptistery may have been a particularly appropriate context in which to locate a work reliant on the imagery of motherhood. Not only might the mother-child love depicted have been readily identified with by those utilizing the building, but to be baptized was the first sacrament through which you received God's grace, which might also be termed his love. If that figure describing God's love could also allude to the Church it would further ramify their role as the source through which God's love and grace is administered on earth.³⁸⁸ Tino's sculptural group was eventually replaced by Rustici's bronzes of *St. John the Baptist Preaching to a Levite and a Pharisee*, in c.1512, but it had already been an important influence on Michelangelo. The two children twist and wriggle as the maternal figure stares passively into the distance, not unlike Michelangelo's *Medici Madonna*.

A further prominent building in Florence, the Or San Michele, which had both religious and civic associations, housed two more images of *Charity*. A series of quatrefoils depicting the Virtues were designed by Giovanni di Balduccio (1290-1339) to decorate the *Shrine of the Miraculous Virgin* (c.1330, Fig. 151). *Charity* is here depicted with two diminutive babies who nestle below the Virtue's breast from which flames and milk pour forth. Once more, this image can be strongly connected to ideas derived from the Song of Songs and the notion of the breast as representing the heart. Not only does the breast nurture the children beneath with gushing milk, but is seen flaming, and therefore a depiction of Bonaventura's burning heart. Orcagna's tabernacle, which replaced the decoration of Balduccio in 1359, also contained an image of *Charity* breastfeeding. Set within the context of a miraculous shrine, and in a building once used as a grain store, these particular depictions of *Charity* feeding the young may be relevant to arguments explored later in the chapter, and ultimately to our understanding of the subject as represented in our corpus.

³⁸⁸ Grace shall be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

Likewise the *Allegory of Mercy* (1342, Fig. 152), painted for the Compagnia della Misericordia (the Company of Mercy) and located in the Loggia del Bigallo (opposite the Baptistery), attributed to Bernardo Daddi, is an important precursor to our works as it both contains the image of *Charity* breastfeeding, but also indicates attitudes toward charitable giving in Florence. In his in depth study of the *Allegory of Mercy*, William R. Levin described a climate in which charitable institutions were almost competing with one another, and the confraternity became a paradigm of the new Florentine society.³⁸⁹ Images of *Mercy* and *Charity* can, therefore, be linked to notions of civic virtue. Levin stressed how good government and economic prosperity were deemed inseparable and quoted the thirteenth-century Dominican Albertus Magnus (c. 1200-80), who's writings helped to explicitly embed the justifications for wealth in a spiritual and moral arena. The argument for virtuous wealth would be developed later by Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444) who dedicated his translation of Aristotle's *Economics* to Cosimo de Medici in 1420. This fed into a new identity for confraternities, as Levin described, 'once the preserve of contemplative devotion, [they] became the platform of civic devotion.'³⁹⁰ Images of *Charity*, embodying a dual love for God and Man, could be said to uniquely illustrate this new identity.

The position of the *Allegory of Mercy*, often considered a *Madonna della Misericordia* (*Madonna of Mercy*), allowed it to be viewed from the street outside. In this way it acted like a form of propaganda, demonstrating to all who passed the charitable acts of the confraternity. It also acted as a clear instructive primer on charity. The acts of mercy are shown in sequence on the large cloak of the figure, named and then pictured. In the top left hand corner of the fresco is a depiction of *Charity* breastfeeding a child. Images of the other Christian and Cardinal Virtues also surround the central figure. Levin proposed that the

³⁸⁹ Levin, 2004, p. 23.

³⁹⁰ Levin, 2004, p. 23.

choice of iconography in the depiction of *Charity* helped to emphasise the humanity of the confraternity's good works and allude to the foundlings that they helped to care for. He also proposed that a lactating mother would be readily linked to the confraternity's patroness the Virgin Mary.³⁹¹ The associations of the latter are more likely to have been intended. The fresco contains an image of the pelican piercing its breast, which was not only emblematic of the Eucharist and the piercing of Christ's side at the Crucifixion, but could also allude to breastfeeding and the milk-blood sacrifice of the Virgin, or indeed *Charity*. The spiritual love which the Virtue could symbolise is therefore heavily implied, perhaps more so than her earthly offering, which would not only have been appropriate but would have helped differentiate the Virtue from the central allegory. Moreover, the Bigallo is located on the Piazza del Duomo, opposite the Baptistery; therefore, the fresco may also refer to the figure of *Charity* by Tino da Camaino, and link the confraternity with the greater aspirations of the Florentine church and government.

The *Charity* groups of our corpus, aside from that in Berlin, rely solely on the motif of the breast and children to convey their message. The images of *Charity* described above make clear that the use of the breastfeeding motif to depict the Virtue was already established by the middle of the fourteenth century. Moreover, the symbolic breast or act of lactation could alone serve to describe the dual nature of the love represented by *Charity*. The breastfeeding motif conveyed notions of literal feeding, an act of mercy, and spiritual nurture, as related in the Song of Songs, and through its similar use in Marian imagery further ramified the message of Christ's incarnation and sacrifice and therefore God's mercy and grace. Although many artists in the fifteenth century continued to use two symbols, a flame and a child, or a cornucopia, nonetheless the female Virtue shown breastfeeding a child (without any other attribute), could have been readily understood as *Charity*. The choice of attributes available

³⁹¹ Levin, 2004, p. 50.

to artists depicting *Charity* allowed for various aspects of her love to be emphasised. We have already established how a rise in wealth and humanist learning in Florence may have led to the Virtue having connotations with charitable giving or public mindedness. As we will examine presently, her changing iconography may have been designed to efficiently reference other works of art or personifications of virtue.

Dovizia and Civic Charity

We have seen how depictions of *Charity* could be included in civic works of art and it is proposed here that the works in our corpus themselves referred to notions of civic virtue. Notable public commissions such as Donatello's *Dovizia* (c.1428-30, now lost; Fig. 153), could allude to *Charity*, and may inform her representation in our corpus. *Dovizia* (variously translated as Abundance or Prosperity) was an important sculpture for Renaissance Florence, discussed at some length by Vasari. Now lost, it was a monumental figure atop a Roman column located in the Mercato Vecchio (now the Piazza della Repubblica), the heart of the city and former site of the ancient Roman forum. David G. Wilkins and Sarah Blake Wilk have established that the work was linked to notions of charity and civic virtue.³⁹² Moreover, *Dovizia* was reproduced in multiple terracottas, seemingly for domestic use, the iconography of which was subtly modified from the original. Our own corpus contains multiple versions (with minor variations) of *Charity*, and therefore, the case of *Dovizia* may be particularly pertinent to an understanding of our subject.

A brief examination of the findings of Wilkins and Blake Wilk will help us to better understand the significance of the sculpture, why it may have been desirable for reproduction, and what affinity it may have with the groups in our corpus. The female figure carried a

³⁹² David G. Wilkins, 'Donatello's Lost *Dovizia* for the Mercato Vecchio: Wealth and Charity as Florentine Civic Virtues' in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 65, no. 3, September 1983, pp. 401-423; Sarah Blake Wilk, 'Donatello's *Dovizia* as an Image of Florentine Political Propaganda,' in *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 7, no. 14, 1986, pp. 9-28.

basket on her head and a cornucopia in her arm, both brimming with bountiful produce, but both scholars argued that *Dovizia* was more than just a personification of abundance reflecting her location in the Florentine market place and the prosperity of the city but that, in essence, she is a representation of civic charity and even of Florence herself – as emblematic of charity.

The location of *Dovizia* at the heart of Florence's commercial centre - significantly the exact centre of the ancient city - fuels the arguments of both Wilkins and Blake Wilk that the sculpture may have alluded to ancient prototypes or classical notions, which are important to understanding the significance of the work. The image of *Abundance*, which is variously called *copia* or *abbondanza* is well known in ancient Roman art and the cornucopia, which *Dovizia* carries, was an emblem used to describe the ancient gods known as *Lares*. *Lares* (or *Lares*) were minor deities most often associated with protecting or blessing the household, but they could also preside over larger domains, such as neighbourhoods or cities. The cornucopia is also an attribute of Hercules, a figure commonly employed by and associated with Florence, who wrenched it from the horned river god Achelous.

Donatello had an extensive knowledge of ancient Roman sculpture and is evidently drawing on antique prototypes in his design for *Dovizia*. The dress, hair and contrapposto of the figure betray his knowledge of classical works, as does the conception of the work as a figure atop a column. Moreover, the column is said to have had an actual antique base. The work was surely intended to knowingly refer to its location and the ancient origins of Florence. Moreover, the sculpture may relate to the contemporaneous efforts of Florentines (during the mid fifteenth century) to model the city as a new Rome and establish themselves firmly as the heirs to the Roman Republic with associated notions of liberty and independence.

If the commission of *Dovizia* contributed to Florence's civic ambition then its iconography could also be said to have encouraged the splendour, decoration and expansion of the city. According to Wilkins *Dovizia* may have contained a specific relationship to contemporary humanist theories of magnificence and, as opposed to *copia* or *abbondanza*, explicitly referred to financial prosperity. Citing Bruni's *Economics*, in essence a defence of spending and a justification for the sin of usury, which the banking city of Florence keenly felt, the argument is proposed for the case of *Dovizia* to act as example to all citizens to be proud of the wealth of the city and to use it for the good of the people and the beautification of the commune.³⁹³ The *catasto*, a city tax that was increased at the time for civic building projects and defence, may have provided a political reason to erect the sculpture as a propaganda message that suggested wealth should be shared.

Central to Bruni's argument for wealth and its virtuous use was that it allowed one to practice charity. This was subsequently reaffirmed in Poggio Bracciolini's 'Dialogue on Avarice' also cited by Wilkins.³⁹⁴ The virtue of wealth and therefore charity became so embedded in the city's structure and identity that it was built into the banking system and, as Richard Goldthwaite described, it became 'a moral challenge to the active citizen... testing their virtue and moral stature.'³⁹⁵ Wilkins cited several sources which demonstrate that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries charity had become a virtue for which the Florentines were especially proud.³⁹⁶

The cornucopia held by *Dovizia* therefore functions in several ways: as a classical reference to Fortune and Abundance, and even as a tyche or symbol of the city itself as it literally

³⁹³ Wilkins, 1983, p. 417.

³⁹⁴ Wilkins, 1983, p. 418.

³⁹⁵ Richard Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, quoted in Wilkins, 1983, pp. 417-8.

³⁹⁶ See Wilkins, 1983, p. 419. Wilkins quotes Giovanni Villani (*Cronica*) who bragged 'more caritas is practiced in Florence in a day than in a week in Pisa.'

describes *Florentia*, flowering and prosperous. According to Wilkins it also consciously borrows from the iconography of *Charity*, which enabled the work to exceed the limitations of pure abundance and represent virtue, and also thereby represent Florence as *Charity*. Wilkins proposed that *Dovizia*'s cornucopia specifically referenced those seen in depictions of *Charity* within the recently decorated cathedral complex. He included in his analysis a depiction of the Virtue by Andrea Pisano on the south doors of the Baptistry (1329-36, Fig. 154), the half-length figure now in the Museo del Opera del Duomo by Tino da Camaino (c.1320, Fig. 155), and that seen in a relief on the *Campanile* (bell tower), which all hold a cornucopia and are all situated on monuments financed by communal subsidies and public taxes. Therefore, according to Wilkins, the cornucopia in this context specifically suggests civic charity.³⁹⁷

Wilkins asserted that representations of *Charity* outside of the Cathedral complex actively avoided use of the cornucopia and opted instead for the nursing child and used this argument to explain why the iconography of the copies of *Dovizia* made for the domestic market changes to include children. He believed that the cornucopia was an emblem of new humanist virtues explicitly connected to civic wealth and charitable giving, and that when transferred to home *Dovizia*'s cornucopia would not have been appropriate and was therefore often omitted. This conclusion, however, is flawed in several respects. Firstly, the cornucopia is more often present in the terracottas of *Dovizia* than not. Secondly, as an attribute of Lars who brought blessings on the home it would have had domestic as well as civic connotations. Thirdly, one assumes that the desire to own a reproduction of a major Florentine sculpture was one to associate oneself with the very virtues that the work represents, and patrons would have deliberately intended to assert their own civic virtue.

³⁹⁷ Wilkins, 1983, pp. 419-20.

Most notably, given our recent examination of the meaning of *Charity*, Wilkins's suggestion ignores the fact that images of *Charity* seen breastfeeding children were included in the Cathedral complex and in several public forums. The most visible of these would have been the striking figure by Tino da Camaino on the Baptistery. Beyond the Cathedral, the portrayal of *Charity* on the Loggia dei Lanzi designed by Agnolo Gaddi (c.1380, Fig. 156) clearly shows the Virtue breastfeeding, without a cornucopia. Located outside the Palazzo della Signoria this would have been a highly politicized civic site. Commissioned by the government in 1374 it could even be described as a direct forerunner to the idea of *Dovizia* for the Mercato Vecchio. Moreover, the subject was still being used in political settings a century later as is clear in Piero Pollaiuolo's series of Virtues for the Mercanzia in 1469 (Fig. 157).

There are more than eight known enamelled terracotta statuettes attributed to the della Robbia workshop (c.1500) which are related to *Dovizia* (Figs.158-165).³⁹⁸ This production is contemporary with the proposed date of the works in our corpus. The reduced versions of *Dovizia* vary in size from fifty centimetres to one metre and also vary in their quality and iconography. It is interesting to note that not one of the terracottas replicates exactly the lost Donatello but all are modifications of the original. Our best clue to their function is provided by an inscription found on two of the statuettes: GLORIA ET DIVITIE IN DOMO TUA (May Honour and Wealth Be in Your Home). This dictum accords perfectly with the readings of Donatello's *Dovizia* posited so far (that it was concerned with prosperity and its virtuous use) and translates these to a blessing for the home. This reading is not in opposition to one of civic virtue but instead intimates that should your household be wealthy you will be in a better position to exercise civic charity, which would bring honour.

³⁹⁸ These are discussed by both Wilkins, 1983, 408 – 412, and briefly by Blake Wilk, 1986, pp. 10-11.

To further his idea that the presence of children in these works was occasioned by their domestic setting, Wilkins suggested that just as *Dovizia* is idol-like on her column in the Mercato Vecchio, in the home, when accompanied by children, she could act as a fertility idol.³⁹⁹ Whereas there is an obvious change or addition of attributes from the public *Dovizia* to the private versions this interpretation would seem to unnecessarily limit the meaning of the work in its new location. Fecundity and the production of healthy children were major preoccupations for Florentine citizens and may be significant in explaining the changing imagery of these sculptures, but the inclusion of children could allude to more than domesticity or fertility. They are commonplace in images at the feet of *Charity* by 1500 (when these works were made) to whom *Dovizia* has already been related. They may also refer specifically to other artworks and the iconography of figures other than *Dovizia*, which shall be expanded upon later. A further reason to link children with *Dovizia* and civic charity was offered by Sarah Blake Wilk.

Wilk further emphasised the ancient Roman connotations that the sculpture had as she made the connection between the Emperor Trajan's famous acts of charity in the form of the *Alimenta* (an early welfare system), and the representations of *Dovizia*.⁴⁰⁰ She suggested that civic wealth and charity was already an established propaganda theme in Rome and that it was Trajan who, through the institutionalization of the distribution of food to the people, created the first example of state charity. The *Alimenta*, as this was known, was restricted to the poor children of Italy with the primary intention that they become strong men and soldiers of the Empire. In Trajan's Arch at Beneventum we can see pictorial evidence of this propaganda and a direct precursor to the imagery of *Dovizia* – not only as she was represented by Donatello but as witnessed in the della Robbia copies (Fig. 166). Wilk

³⁹⁹ Wilkins, 1983, p. 416.

⁴⁰⁰ Blake Wilk, 1986, pp. 19-28.

suggested that *Dovizia* was a humanist adaptation on this celebrated exemplar of virtue, which in accordance with Wilkins, was in line with contemporary debates on magnificence.⁴⁰¹ A drawing of *Abundance* by Botticelli (c.1480-85; Fig. 167), which relies closely on Donatello's example, illustrates how the personification with her cornucopia can also be imagined leading the children of Italy toward prosperity and succour.

In the same vein, Anne Ashton believed that the *Charity* of Tino da Camaino for the Baptistery contained similar propagandistic aims and that food provision is a central theme to be understood in this work.⁴⁰² She proposed that the suckling motif combined notions of fertility and abundance along with food distribution but, although the evidence that late-medieval governments were preoccupied by such provision is strong, it seems blinkered to describe the iconography of Tino's *Charity* as prescribed only by this. As we have already examined, the religious significance of the breast as it related to the love expressed by *Charity* was well understood and would have been appropriate in the context of its setting. The symbol of the cornucopia held by *Dovizia*, and her location in the market square, would have been more directly understood in relation to desired victuals. Nonetheless, contemporary debate on poverty and who constituted the deserving poor did determine that children should be amongst the main recipients of charity. In this, late-fourteenth and fifteenth-century thought mimicked Trajan's example, supporting Wilk's analysis of *Dovizia* but also perhaps explaining the increased presence of children in depictions of both *Dovizia* and *Charity*, whether seen breastfeeding or at her feet. The building of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (foundling hospital), begun in 1419 (designed by Brunelleschi), further demonstrates the contemporaneous development of organised charity with an emphasis on

⁴⁰¹ Blake Wilk, 1986, pp. 19-23.

⁴⁰² Ashton, 2006, p. 122.

children. As an institution which also, at times, acted as a *de facto* savings bank for investors, it is also evidence of the close relationship between finance, charity and the state.

Furthermore, in considering contemporary sculptures depicting classical figures, which had connotations of civic pride and prosperity and depicted women and children, Jacopo della Quercia's figures of *Rea Silvia* and *Acca Larentia* for the Fonte Gaia in Siena, completed in 1419, may also be relevant (Figs. 45 and 46). As standing figures, moreover Roman matriarchs, set within a civic centre, and decorating a vital (and nourishing) water source, they are a direct precursor to Donatello's *Dovizia*. The scheme for the fountain, with its arrangement of Virtues, appears to mimic Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco of the *Allegory of Good Government* (1338-39) inside the Palazzo Pubblico, the government seat of Siena situated opposite the fountain. In this way, it too links civic ideals with the commune's provision. The specific figures of *Rea Silvia* and *Acca Larentia*, who were the mothers (natural and adoptive) of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, whose myth involves their essential suckling, may also be relevant to discussion of *Dovizia* and *Charity* and to notions connected with breastfeeding. They are certainly included by Jacopo della Quercia to assert Siena's ancient foundation by the sons of Remus, and in this way they relate to the proposed propaganda of *Dovizia* as a symbol of Florence as a new Rome. Moreover, the Fonte Gaia appears to have been of particular interest to Florentine artists at the turn of the sixteenth century as a number of drawings dated c.1497-1512 attest. This is not only the period in which the terracotta versions of *Dovizia* were made, but also the likely date when our corpus was produced. The compositional similarities between the fountain and our works have already been noted but the subject too may have been evoked by our Master and further instilled notions of civic virtue into his sculpture. Certainly the themes discussed above and the very fact they are expressed in a *de facto* Medician work such as *Dovizia*, support the idea

that our terracottas were invented during the supremacy of Leo X when a campaign to reassert Florentine ideals, Medici greatness and his own virtue, was underway.

Flesh and Blood

Both literal and symbolic flesh and blood have been recurrent themes in our survey of the iconography of *Charity* and the *Madonna and Child* and they can also be related to the non-Christian personifications connected to *Charity* which we have discussed. As already established, Passion symbols were easily identified in most scenes of the Virgin and Child, and in our corpus there is strong reason to identify particular associations with Christ's Incarnation. The genitals of the Child may also be a reference to his Circumcision and the first spilling of blood, and thus a portent of the sacrifice to come. The theme of blood is also present in the motif of breastfeeding through the common belief that breast milk was processed blood. If, therefore, in suckling the Child the Virgin literally gives of her own lifeblood, *Charity* or *Carità* which can etymologically be linked to *caro*, meaning flesh, indicates that *Charity* too gives of herself and could equally represent the incarnation of God's love on earth.⁴⁰³ The belief that milk was transmuted blood was also central to the ideas proposed by early writers such as Clement of Alexandria (150-215), who links it with the Eucharist.⁴⁰⁴ Christ's great act of love for mankind was his sacrifice. Mary's lactation, and by proxy that of *Charity*, therefore implied the love and sacrifice not only of their flesh but that of the Redeemer. The baring of the breast by the *Madonna* and *Charity* can,

⁴⁰³ The often used symbol of Christ's sacrifice, the pelican, which pierces its breast to feed its young on its own blood is also associated with Charity. The notion of breast milk as processed menstrual blood is discussed by James Hall, 2005, pp.139-166. For the etymological link between *Carità* and *caro* see amongst other dictionaries René Hoven's *Dictionary of Renaissance Latin from Prose Sources*, Leiden and Boston, 2006, p. 79.

⁴⁰⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, translated by Simon P. Wood, Washington, 1954, 6:38-41.

therefore, be related to Christ displaying his wound.⁴⁰⁵ The breast as an outward symbol of the heart has also been established through an analysis of the imagery in the Song of Songs.

Caro can also be translated as 'kin', and the sculptures in our corpus appear like family groups. Moreover, *Carità* can be linked with the ancient Roman word, and festival, *Caristia*. The *Caristia* or *cara cognatio* was an official but privately observed holiday on 22 February celebrated in ancient Rome.⁴⁰⁶ The love and harmony of family was lauded and encouraged with banqueting and gifts. It was a day of reconciliation, where disagreements were set aside. The festival followed *Parentalia*, nine days of remembrance (begun on 13 February) where visits were made to family tombs. *Caristia* was the recognition of the family line as it continued into the present and among the living. It remained on the calendar long after the Roman Empire had come under Christian rule and was written about by Ovid in the *Fasti* (published 8 AD), where the word *cari* is used to mean kin.

...let the innocent come: let the impious brother be far, far from here, and the mother harsh to her children, he whose father's too long-lived, who weighs his mother's years, the cruel mother-in-law who crushes the daughter-in-law she hates, be absent...And whoever has gathered wealth by wickedness.⁴⁰⁷

Family concord is obviously the paramount concern of the feast day according to Ovid's text, but it is also interesting that he implies that wealth, or the misuse of it, should be considered. In some depictions of *Charity*, for example that by Giotto in the Arena Chapel (c.1305), the Virtue was pitted against an opposing sin, which for Giotto was *Avarice*. This may also account for the importance of demonstrating *Charity* for the banking city of Florence. Most essentially, Ovid describes an early example of love and the management of wealth being discussed under the name of *Caristia*.

⁴⁰⁵ See Ashton, 2006, p. 53, for discussion of the *Virgo Lactans* image as Mary fuelling the Eucharistic body and for discussion on Mary and Christ, her breast and his wound.

⁴⁰⁶ Michele Renee Salzman, 'Religious Koine and Religious Dissent in the Fourth Century' in *A Companion to Roman Religion*, Jörg Rüpke (ed.), Oxford, 2007.

⁴⁰⁷ Ovid *Fasti*, translated by Sir James G Frazer. London, 1967, Book II (February 22).

The humanist interest in ancient texts, art, and practices which characterised the Renaissance and which we have already established informed the iconography of sculpture in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, would make it very likely that the festival, and personifications of *Caristia* in sculpture (Fig. 168) were also known. *Charity* has already been linked with fertility, but an association with *Caristia* and family love may relate too, to the development of the iconography of the Virtue, particularly as it is presented in the sculptures of our corpus. The terracottas of our Master contain not only the two children, which as we have seen could relate to the dual nature of *Charity's* love, but also include a third child. Our children are also unruly, which underscores a need for familial concord and the settling of squabbles.

Family management seems an obvious subject in the works of our corpus on first viewing, but this had little grounding in the traditional Christian idea of *Charity* as a Virtue representing the love of God. Her role as mother to the other Virtues or her identification with the figures of Rachel and Leah may have provided a biblical reason to depict her with children but in understanding *Caristia* there is a further, classical, origin with which to explain the particular iconography of our works. It is clear that the inclusion of children, and certainly breastfeeding, in images of *Charity* could have religious and civic connotations and was not the preserve of the home, but this does not preclude the subject from being ideally suited to domestic sculpture. The inclusion of additional attributes such as the poppy flowers may not only have acted as talismanic symbols of fertility, but may also allude to notions of family lineage. Moreover, *Charity* linked to *Caristia* could indicate family love and fecundity and still be in concordance with meditations on love derived from the Song of Songs.

There is certainly some visual evidence to support the idea that depictions of *Charity* from the turn of the sixteenth century were informed by the Roman *Caristia*. Michelangelo's

besieged mother from the Josephat lunette (Fig. 104) has already been discussed as a compositional forerunner to images of *Charity* in our corpus but the subject of this lunette is also clearly dynastic. It is part of a series portraying the ancestors of Jesus Christ. In this work the successive kings of Judah are listed, quoting the passage from Matthew 1:8: 'And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias.' Edgar Wind identifies the Michelangelo fresco as the compositional forerunner to Raphael's figure of *Charity* in the predella of his *Deposition* altarpiece (1507, main altarpiece: Galleria Borghese; predella: Vatican, Rome; Fig. 169).⁴⁰⁸

Raphael's panel also relates to a particular family event and notions inherent in the *Caristia*. The choice of subject and the depiction of the Virgin and mourners accompanying Christ as he is removed from the cross, parallel events in the life of the family for which the work was executed. The altarpiece was commissioned by Atalanta Baglioni in honour of her slain son, Grifonetto Baglioni. During a feud between various factions of the Baglioni family, lords of Perugia, Grifonetto conspired to murder various relatives while they slept. Having committed his bloody deed Grifonetto left the city and sought refuge at his mother's house. When she refused him admittance he was forced to return only to find rival family member Gian Paolo Baglioni waiting for him. Meanwhile, his mother had regretted her decision and ran after her son only to witness his death.

Raphael placed *Charity* at the centre of the predella panel on the altarpiece, flanked by *Faith* and *Hope*. In each case the Virtues are accompanied by putti at either side holding identifying attributes. For *Charity*, they hold bowels of fruit and flames traditionally describing the dual nature of the love she embodies. At the centre, the figure herself is surrounded by four, or possibly five children, heavily underscoring the maternal and familial connotations of the

⁴⁰⁸ Wind, 1938, pp. 322-323.

altarpiece and the significance of the Virtue. Notions of the *Caristia* would have been appropriate to this work and may be alluded to here. As a feast day to settle family feuds, and one undertaken after the remembrance of dead ancestors, the inclusion of *Charity* as *Caristia* would have emphasised the memorial nature of the commission.

The Theological Virtues were commonplace on tomb monuments of the Renaissance and *Charity* is almost always depicted centrally within the three. Their inclusion could both reflect the qualities of the deceased but also have been intercessory. The figure of *Charity* by Mino da Fiesole on the tomb monument of Count Ugo of Tuscany (Fig. 145) has already been noted for its dominant position and particular intercessory iconography. In her classical attire and with two children she also appears like the Roman matriarchs of the Fonte Gaia and may allude to the *Caristia*. The imagery of Michelozzo's Aragazzi monument (Figs. 54 and 55), with its focus on family and the insertion of distressed children may also relate to the ideas of the *Caristia*. The inclusion of the ancient *dextrarum junctio* (hand holding) motif, described in Chapter Two, could not only signify marriage but reunion, friendship and harmony, which are also themes associated with *Caristia*.

Contemporary with the proposed dating of our corpus, Andrea del Sarto's *Charity* for the French King Francis I in 1518, also relates to notions of the *Caristia* (Fig. 119). Moreover, the work bears a very close resemblance to our sculptures. The painting was commissioned after the long-awaited birth of the Dauphin, who is alluded to in the suckling child. The face of the Virtue also bears a resemblance to Queen Claude of France and therefore, the work is considered an allegory of the Royal Family. Furthermore, the motif of breastfeeding is used here, and the iconography of humility and abundance are both present, which are also combined by our Master.

Christian conceptions of *Charity* are not at odds with a derivation from *Caristia* or *caro* as familial love or kin and flesh. Moreover, notions of family love and hereditary goodness could be mediated through the writings of St. Bernard and interpretations of the milk of the Virgin and the Blood of Christ, and linked to the iconography of the breast. The Virgin after all was an exemplary mother, who had breastfed her own Child. St. Bernard described her milk as a transferral of goodness and it was a popular belief in Renaissance Italy that the nature of a child would be shaped by the milk it received. This is evident in St. Bernard's own legend and in the biography of artists such as Michelangelo, who 'took in the chisel with his milk'.⁴⁰⁹ The notion of transferring qualities through breast milk, an expression of a mother's love for her son, connects the connotations of *caro*, *Caristia* and *Charity*.

Furthermore, breastfeeding and family are linked in images of *Roman Charity*, which were included in the popular writings of the great Tuscan poet Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75) and may have informed the works in our corpus. The act of *Roman Charity* was depicted through the ancient story of *Cimon and Pero*, which reached the height of its popularity as a subject in art in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nonetheless, the story associates breastfeeding, *Caristia*, *Charity* and family love and may be considered a primer to understanding this combination in the iconography of our works. The exemplary story of *Cimon and Pero*, where a daughter visits her starving father in prison and feeds him with milk from her breasts, was arguably adapted from an earlier version of the tale where it is the mother who suckles from her daughter's breast. This seems to have been the version most widely known in the late Middle Ages and is retold in Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* (first published 1374), which popularized the legend (Fig. 170).⁴¹⁰ This act of charity,

⁴⁰⁹ Vasari, *Le Vite*, (Life of Michelangelo) Vol. VI, p. 5.

⁴¹⁰ Ashton, 2006, p. 157 discusses how editions of Boccaccio, Valerius Maximus (*Factorum*, 5.4, 247) and Pliny the Elder, (*Natural History*, VII, 36) were all published in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with illustrations of Roman Charity.

a reversal of the mother-child relationship, may have been specifically associated with the *Caristia* and illustrates how love, literally expressed by the breast, could ensure family survival and overcome hardship.

The feeding of Cimon by Pero was instigated by starvation and therefore not only represented love but also a form of alms giving – feeding the hungry. By the seventeenth century images of the pair were used to describe one of the *Acts of Mercy*, and therefore they also relate to the traditional iconography of *Misericordia* or *Mercy*, which we have established informed depictions of *Charity*. Indeed, the evolution of the iconography of *Charity* seems to have been circular in this respect. Her earthly love had previously been foremost in depictions of the Virtue through an easy assimilation of the iconography of *Mercy* but during the fifteenth century the focus had shifted to the more abstract quality of heavenly love. By the time Cimon and Pero are used by Caravaggio in his *Seven Works of Mercy* in 1607, as charity figures, they are representative of feeding the hungry and visiting the imprisoned, albeit inspired to do so by love.

Love, Mercy and the Madonna

An allusion to the acts of mercy or personifications of *Mercy*, was also assimilated into images of the Virgin as the *Madonna della Misericordia* or the *Madonna of Mercy*. In this form the Virgin is depicted standing with a large cloak, under which are gathered a group of people; for example this may be the city populace, the faithful, the needy, a confraternity or just a family. The *Madonna* is almost always depicted on a larger scale, so that she may fit numerous diminutive figures under her protective cloak. In the case of two paintings of the *Madonna della Misericordia* specifically made for the Ospedale degli Innocenti (Figs. 171 and 172) the figures she shelters are the swaddled orphans of the hospital. The specific arrangement of figures in the *Charity* groups of our corpus, may have been adapted from the

general composition of the *Madonna* with figures at her feet, and are especially close to those examples where children are seen as the recipients of her merciful love.

The cloaking action, integral to the *Madonna of Mercy* image, may account for the playful use of drapery in images of *Charity* which we have already compared to the works of our Master. Filippino Lippi's frescoed decoration of the Strozzi chapel (1487-1502; Fig. 114) contains an image of *Charity* which both relates to the drawing of *Abundance* by his former tutor Botticelli and, in its use of drapery to encircle and envelope the children clinging to the Virtue, it also recalls the *Madonna of Mercy*. The clothing of the naked was also an act of mercy which may be implied here. Lippi's *Charity* was evidently an example to Andrea del Sarto who adapted the composition for his Scalzo fresco (Fig. 113). In this work the rearrangement of the children and wider arc of the Virtue's arms provide an even closer comparison to the standing *Madonna of Mercy*. The breast is also highlighted in Sarto's depiction of *Charity*, pointed out by an attendant infant, and the vase of flames used by Lippi is dispensed with, emphasising the *lactans* motif, which can also be related to the *Madonna*. The tangle of robes under which the standing child finds himself is carried across both works. Furthermore, this same composition and motif is used in the frieze on the facade of the Ospedale del Ceppo.

The possible involvement of our Master in the production of the terracotta decoration for the hospital in Pistoia has already been discussed. The frieze on this charitable institution illustrates the *Seven Acts of Mercy* and includes images of the Virtues. The concerns of the institution can be directly related to those of the Misericordia in Florence, who commissioned the *Allegory of Mercy*, and to the Ospedale degli Innocenti, and they can also be linked to the Scalzo. As the Pistoia *Charity* is now sadly damaged we cannot determine what attribute she once held in her right hand. She does not bare her breast and has only two children, but

otherwise replicates the composition used by Sarto. Surrounded by images of mercy, there would have been little need to further emphasise the earthly love of *Charity* in this context, but the inclusion of children in her arms and under her cloak may have visually connected her to depictions of the *Madonna* and therefore Christian love, whilst in her classicizing dress the figure also connects her with the Roman matriarchs and notions of abundance already mentioned.

The connection between the Virgin and *Charity*, which we have repeatedly noted in this chapter, are underscored by the close compositional similarities in the treatment of the subjects in our corpus. Their shared iconography as Christian breastfeeding women is due to their emblematic roles in representing the love of God and the Church or as being intercessors with God. Their maternal and merciful roles also allowed for a conflation in their iconography when the *lactans* motif was absent. The familial origins of *Charity*, established through her etymology and the story of *Roman Charity*, further emphasised her role as a mother. Moreover, *Roman Charity* provided further reason to associate the Virtue with breastfeeding, and was itself incorporated into the Christian doctrine on mercy. *Charity* then, was a figure which both represented the principal Christian Virtue and, through her association with the Virgin could allude to the Church itself, whilst simultaneously she recalled ancient notions of harmony and the exemplar of civic virtue. The combination of meditations on the church, intercession, and the ideals of the ancients was also a characteristic of debates on Grace, which took place throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The reasons to link this discourse with depictions of both the *Madonna* and *Charity* are persuasive.

Grace

Grace has already been mentioned several times through the course of this chapter and concepts of grace, which were the focus of debate in the same years as it is proposed our works were made, may be significant to understanding both the subject and style of our works. Grace, like *Charity* had discrete if related meanings to humanists and theologians, both of which were embraced and combined by Renaissance artists. Grace can be identified with *Charity* in the Canticles and also linked through etymology, the Greek origins of the word being *charis*. Moreover, the term grace became associated with the arts specifically and by the time Vasari writes his *Lives* (first published in 1550) it is the ultimate mark of distinction. Indeed, grace can also be linked to fifteenth and sixteenth century ideas about civic virtue through the revival of ancient texts which posited it as a desirable virtue in both cultural and social contexts.⁴¹¹

In her analysis of the term and its origins, Ita Mac Carthy describes how ancient grace designated ‘that which brings joy’, and how it found expression in such things as female beauty, military valour, and acts of charity (among other things). She also notes that it was ‘distinctive for the way it moved the beholder’. This active quality of the ancient *charis* can be directly linked to the role of *Charity*. Moreover, Mac Carthy continues to describe how grace was to be repaid with grace and, therefore, described a system of reciprocal gift-giving which had the effect of maintaining harmony and directing moral behaviour. The figures of the *Three Graces* can also be linked to notions of mutual affection and happiness. Mac Carthy quotes Seneca’s treatise *De Beneficiis* where he evoked the graces in their circular dance:

‘to be willing to give, willing to receive, willing to return; and to place before themselves the high aim, not merely of equalling, but even of surpassing those to whom they are indebted, both in good offices and in good feeling.’⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ The following discussion relies heavily on an unpublished essay by Ita Mac Carthy (University of Birmingham 2014), which will form part of her forthcoming book *The Grace of the Italian Renaissance*.

⁴¹² Seneca, *De Beneficiis* I. 4, 2-3, as quoted by Ita Mac Carthy, 2014.

The qualities of grace are here directly linked with notions of virtue and civic prosperity that were also summoned in the commissioning of *Dovizia* and her reproductions. The implicit act of giving denoted by grace also relates to the *misericordia* or alms-giving aspect of *Charity*.

Grace had a different meaning in Christian doctrine and the method by which grace was received was under particular scrutiny by theologians and specifically church reformers, in the early sixteenth century. Grace was a gift from God and the means through which man might be redeemed. Medieval thought described it physically; indeed it was often conveyed through the milk of the Virgin, or *Charity*, as we have discussed. Moreover, it can be linked to the Annunciation when Mary is described as ‘full of grace’.⁴¹³ The interpretation of this passage was especially examined by reformers such as Erasmus and Lorenzo Valla whose writings became particularly influential through the publication of the *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* in 1505. Paul’s epistles (where we find our earlier definition of *Charity*) were an important source for the formation of new ideas concerning grace. As Mac Carthy summarised, ‘For Paul, God’s grace is the ultimate sign of divine mercy’ and could be gained through ‘inner transformation’ occasioned by a ‘profound belief in God’.⁴¹⁴

Like grace from the classical tradition, God’s grace could also bring joy and was also active, aiding the soul to live a righteous life. In this, the Roman Catholic Church and sixteenth century reformers were agreed. Where they diverged was in the dispensation of grace. Martin Luther built upon the teachings of St. Paul and St. Augustine and believed that grace was the divine gift of God bestowed on the faithful, even if they proved undeserving. The Catholic Church preferred to emphasise man’s agency in his own redemption and reinforce the institution of the sacraments as the vehicle through which God’s grace was received. Baptism

⁴¹³ Luke 1:28 as quoted by Mac Carthy, 2014.

⁴¹⁴ Mac Carthy, 2014.

was the first and foremost sacrament whereby Christians entered into a state of grace. Grace and free will were therefore important factors in the religious debates of the early sixteenth century. Particularly relevant in our context, however, is that they had also been the subject of a treatise by St. Bernard of Clairvaux of c. 1128. St. Bernard's belief was that 'not by works of Righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us.'⁴¹⁵ Despite a concordance with reformation ideas in this respect, St. Bernard's writings overall may have helped negotiate a middle ground during this period, which both ascribed the gift of grace to God alone, but awarded mankind the free will to seek it out, thereby also allowing the Church some agency in the salvation of souls.

Divine Grace was afforded to humanity by the gift of God's son. The bodily sacrifice of Christ ultimately effected man's salvation. As a gift given through the mortification of flesh, which brings joy, divine grace can be linked to both ancient *charis*, *caro* and the iconography of *Charity*, particularly when depicted breastfeeding. Not only does the expression of the Virtue's milk call to mind the medieval concept of God's grace pouring out through the Virgin as vessel, but the breast as synecdoche for heart could also signify the locus of divine influence. Moreover, concepts of grace develop from the Old to New Testaments and in translation from Hebrew to Latin, and connotations of kindness, mercy and virtuous strength are also implied by grace. Most significantly grace, which is the divine intervention on the human heart, can also be called love. The Grace of God and the Love of God are almost interchangeable in their efficacy as a pathway to salvation. In this, they also reinforce connections with depictions of the *Madonna* and personifications of the *Church*.

⁴¹⁵ St. Bernard Clairvaux (The Treatise of), *Concerning Grace and Free Will*, addressed to William, Abbat of St. Thierry, translated, with an introduction, synopsis and notes by Watkin W. Williams, The Macmillan Company, London and New York, 1920, p. 32.

The three children which encircle the figures of *Charity* in our corpus may, in addition, subtly allude to the *Three Graces* or *Charites*. They are not unified or harmonious but they do become increasingly joyous as they near the breast–heart, the centre of grace. In a similar vein to Bonaventura’s light theory, they may be characterised by the amount of light, or God’s grace, that is in them and the child nearest the salvation-giving or love-providing breast is certainly the most grace-full. This reading also aligns with the notion of our childlike souls, described in Corinthians, which only mature when we reach or receive the love of God.

The Quarrelling Children Sculptures

The children of our corpus examined so far have hitherto been in the guise of the *Christ Child* or the attendants to *Charity*. Although these infants, who are certainly lively, must have contributed to the invented name of their creator, the groups of figures for which this epithet originates are surely the combatant figures of minors, without adult supervision. The subject of these sculptures, whilst independent from the groups of *Charity* and the *Madonna* above, may also connect to some of those themes already discussed.

We have already surveyed the increasing popularity of the child figure in art through the course of the fifteenth century and have mentioned the likely origin of this as a renewed interest in antique sculpture and the processions of playful putti found therein. The popularity of small scale statuettes of children, often in the guise of Holy Children, has also been touched upon in Chapter Two. St John the Baptist and Christ were exemplary infants and recommended for household decoration by Dominican Giovanni Dominici writing in 1403.⁴¹⁶ It is hard to imagine that the fighting pairs of our corpus could have acted as exemplar, but depictions of St. John the Baptist and Christ together, as a pair of infants, may have

⁴¹⁶ Giovanni Dominici, *Rule for the Management of Family Care*, 1403. This is discussed by several scholars, including Geraldine A. Johnson, ‘Art or Artefact? Madonna and Child Reliefs in the Early Renaissance’ in *The Sculpted Object 1400-1700*, Stuart Currie and Peta Motture (eds.), Aldershot and Brookfield, Wisconsin, 1997, p. 6.

influenced the imagery in our corpus. Likewise other famous pairs of children will be examined as a possible source for the iconography of our sculptures.

There are three pairs of *Quarrelling Children* in our corpus. These are the groups in Berlin (CAT. A3), London (CAT. A4), and Turin (CAT. B2). In each case the children appear to be boys, though this is not made obvious in every work. They are depicted fighting, grabbing at each other's hair and mouths. Each pair also contains other attributes or objects – possibly the items over which the children fight. In the Berlin and Turin works these are musical instruments. A set of bagpipes can be seen between the legs of the two combatants in the Turin work, and the Berlin terracotta contained both panpipes and bagpipes at the feet of the child on the left and right respectively. The children in London are depicted perched on a box, which may be present as a means of support, but which may also have intentionally represented a container with precious contents. Each child also defiantly places a foot on a sack on the ground. The sack is evidently full and lumpy – suggesting its contents may be food stuffs such as fruit or vegetables.

Sacks of produce can be easily related to the symbols of abundance and fertility which we have already examined in relation to *Dovizia* and *Charity* and their often shared attribute of the cornucopia. Pipes too could symbolise fertility as they had phallic connotations. 'Pan pipes', in particular, were named after Pan, the satyr God of shepherds and more generally nature. In itself this suggested fecundity but half-goat, Pan and his pipes also became associated with lust. Bagpipes likewise had connotations of sensual pleasure.⁴¹⁷ The qualities felt to be inherent in different musical instruments was determined by a legendary argument, which may be related to the works in our corpus.

⁴¹⁷ For the iconography of musical instruments see James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, John Murry, London, 1974, Reprinted 2000.

The ebullience of our minors is conveyed not only by their tussle but by their instruments. Mythology describes a musical contest between the sun god Apollo and the satyr Marsyas in which Apollo played the lyre and the Marsyas the double flute. Apollo won the competition aided by his eloquent appeals to the Muses, acting as judges. As a result, Marsyas was flayed. Subsequently, strings came to represent the intellect whilst pipes the passions. The sun god and the satyr did not physically fight one another and the works in our corpus cannot represent this battle, but they may allude to it. The theme seems particularly resonant in the Berlin work where both children have an instrument and are seen pulling at each other's facial flesh and skin (in flaying actions). As both infants play pipes there is perhaps an excess of passion.

Pairs of children known to fight and those known to love

Aside from the instruments or produce they seemingly protect, there are no clear identifying attributes through which the children in these groups can be recognised. The subject of the work appears to be their quarrel and therefore, relating these figures to other pairs of children known to have fought, in history, the bible, or mythology, may be relevant to understanding the works in our corpus. Moreover, we have already had cause to mention certain of these pairs in our earlier stylistic analysis of the Master's works. In our discussion of the Fonte Gaia, and comparison between works in our corpus with the figures of *Rea Silvia* and *Acca Larentia* (Figs. 45 and 46), the story of Romulus and Remus was noted as popular throughout the Italian peninsular. Depictions of the twins in art, most often focus on the legend of their infant suckling by a she wolf. Later in life the two brothers notoriously fought; indeed, the outcome of their ultimate fight was the death of Remus, the crowning of Romulus, and the naming of Rome in his honour. Although this episode in their story occurred during the adulthood of the twins it may nonetheless be referred to in our sculptures. Their father was

believed to be Mars the God of War and depictions of the two quarrelling as infants may both allude to this and prefigure their ultimate fight and the founding of Rome. As youths, the brothers were shepherds and so the bucolic trappings of pipes and sacks of produce would also not be out of place here.

The biblical parallel of Romulus and Remus could be said to be the brothers Cain and Abel. Having killed Abel, forced into exile, Cain is described in Genesis as a city builder. Moreover, as younger men, Cain is described as a crop farmer and Abel a shepherd and it was as a result of offering their produce to God that their fight and the death of Abel occurred. As the sons of Adam and Eve, Cain was the first human born and Abel the first human to die. Therefore, Abel's death – the first murder – is often connected with that of Christ, and described in terms of the spilling of blood and martyrdom. This event in their lives, like that of Romulus and Remus, did not occur until the two brothers were young adults, but once again this may not have prevented it from being alluded to in the works of our corpus. In Chapter Two we examined the depiction of Cain and Abel on the baptistery doors, attributed to Vittorio Ghiberti, which can be closely compared to our *Quarrelling Children* sculptures (Figs. 66 and 33).

A further pair of mythological siblings, known to fight may also be related to our works, and can be connected to the wider themes of the corpus. Eros and Anteros were the sons of Aphrodite (or Venus in her Roman equivalent). Anteros was in effect given to his brother as a playmate because love must be reciprocated if it is to prosper. Anteros, as a symbol of reciprocal love or selfless love is sometimes used to represent charity – as it does in

Piccadilly where he symbolises the philanthropic love of the Earl of Shaftesbury.⁴¹⁸ This notion of reciprocal love also aligns with the meaning and symbolism of grace.

The two brothers, most often depicted winged, can sometimes be seen fighting over a heart or a palm frond (Fig. 173). They are also sometimes seen with a cornucopia, as in Vasari's painting of the muses for the Palazzo Vecchio (c.1550-72; Fig. 174), further linking them to the fruitfulness of love and charity. Their battle was memorialised in popular poetry of the time, as we can see below in an excerpt from Andrea Alciato's verses on the subject in 1536, where the symbols of love, flame and battle are combined:

Nemesis has fashioned a form with wings, a foe to Love with his wings,
subduing bow with bow and flames with flame,
so that Love may suffer what he has done to others.
But this boy, once so bold when he was carrying his arrows,
now weeps in misery and has spat three times low on his breast.
A wondrous thing - fire is being burned with fire,
Love is loathing the frenzies of Love.⁴¹⁹

Once again, whilst the story of Eros and Anteros may be alluded to in the works of our corpus it is clearly not their direct subject. Our *Quarrelling Children* are not winged and nor do they carry the attributes of these figures. The notions of love that are incorporated in the fight of Eros and Anteros synchronise with the themes surveyed earlier in relation to *Charity* and grace and can be linked to the iconography of the Virtue. Moreover, the theme of feuding brothers, common to the stories of Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel, and Eros and Anteros, is easily integrated into ideas of the *Caristia*. Our sculptures of children may not depict the stories of any of the exact figures discussed above, but may be connected through an allusion to them with other works in the corpus and represent the desire for familial harmony, or the effects of its absence.

⁴¹⁸ The monument has been widely discussed, of particular note for this discussion see Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 2001, p. 4.

⁴¹⁹ Excerpt from Andrea Alciato, 'Anteros, Love of Virtue, Conquering the other Love', 1536, in *Andreas Alciatus: Emblems in translation*, Virginia Woods Callahan (ed.), University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1985, p. 106.

As a pair of infants who loved one another, and who were regularly depicted playing sweetly together in art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, images of St. John the Baptist and Christ may have provided compositional models, which were adapted by our Master, and have acted as a direct contrast. If Christ can be considered a second Abel then St. John, his infant playmate, might be a second Cain. Rather than fight, these two in effect wash clean the sins of their biblical forebears and provide an example of the new love (or grace) offered by Christ. The pair were often depicted in a tender embrace and occasionally kiss, which may not only relate to the kiss described in the Song of Songs, which delivered grace, but is a counterpart to the violent mouth-grabbing of our infants. Could images of the exemplary children advocated by Dominici have had a pendant image of bad behaviour, representatives of the Old Testament and the New, and therefore, the benefits to be found in Christ? A closer look at other images made for the home reveals that depictions of unruly children were often used, but may have had different connotations.

The putto and its place in the home

Before an examination of unruly boys in domestic furnishings can be undertaken it is useful to turn briefly to the figure of the putto. We have already noted its ubiquitous presence in sculptural ornamentation of the mid to late fifteenth century and its ancient origins may also help inform the iconography of the infants in art of the period, especially where, as is true of our corpus, a known biblical or mythological subject is not immediately obvious. Charles Dempsey writes extensively on the developing iconography of the putto and distinguishes the winged *amorini* denoting love to the more earthly *spiritello* or sprite.⁴²⁰ Playfulness, sometimes mischievousness, and musical instruments characterise their depictions, particularly when employed decoratively. Dempsey describes how the fifteenth-century artist

⁴²⁰ Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 2001, p. 12

elevates the putto from this ornamental purpose alone through a better translation of ancient culture.

Through its etymology and usage, Dempsey links *spiritello* with breath or a movement of air. ‘Spirit is the breath of life animating the human organism, departing from it at death.’⁴²¹ He goes on to describe how this discovery accords with the basic tenets of Aristotle and the Greek pneumatic school of medicine, which were core to Renaissance humanist thinking in natural philosophy. He remarks that, in life, ‘spirits drawn from the air are mixed with blood in the veins and arteries, through which they transmit life-sustaining nutrients, as well as sensations that enter involuntarily through the sensory organs and stimulate the passions.’⁴²² These sprites then, are the visual means by which the spirits can be depicted. It is also important to emphasise, as Dempsey does, that the spirits described above are not merely allegorical but were considered to have physical and active powers.

The exuberance and vitality expressed in the children of our corpus could be seen as the visual expression of such spirits. Their life-giving and desire-stimulating properties could also be said to align with the interests of our Master in themes of nurture and love. Moreover, as Dempsey proved, malevolence or rambunctiousness would not be out of place in their imagery. Understanding this premise helps to explain the complex relationship that Renaissance viewers had with images and in particular the artwork they commissioned for their homes.

Birth trays or salvers have been expertly researched by a number of scholars in recent years.⁴²³ They were often commissioned on the occasion of a pregnancy and also given as

⁴²¹ Dempsey, 2001, p. 28.

⁴²² Dempsey, 2001, p. 28.

⁴²³ See especially Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, ‘Imaginative Conceptions in Renaissance Italy’ in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco (eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 42-60.

wedding presents in anticipation of offspring from the union. A number of narratives were depicted on the trays, both biblical and allegorical, but of greater interest with regard to our corpus are their reverses. These, occasionally hidden from view, often presented young infant boys performing indecorous activities such as urinating or fighting. As symbols of the robust male heirs sought after by the owners of these trays the depiction of these infants was thought to have a talismanic effect. An example of a salver (c.1450, Palazzo Davanzati, Florence, Fig. 175) where two boys fight and pull hair, provides a particularly close comparison with the figures of our corpus. The criss-cross of legs and arms is particularly close to the sculpture in Turin, and the *dextrarum junctio*.

Within the home, if the infants on birth trays or images of sprites were designed to fuel the passions and literally give life, then the phallic symbols of bagpipes or fruitful sack of produce in our works would not have been out of place. Moreover, they would clearly symbolise fertility and fecundity. Our muscular boys which robustly fight are imbued with perhaps more than their share of ‘spirit’ and life. They are vigorous both in their quarrel and in the music which they have temporarily abandoned. The inclusion of pipes may have alluded to the ‘breath’ of the spirit, described by Dempsey. A drawing by Marco Zoppo (1465-74, British Museum, London Fig. 176) depicting a street scene with mischievous putti taunting one another with bellows, further identifies air or wind as significant to their meaning. The bellows, which are inserted into the backside of one of the putti, may literally describe the intake of air animating the body. The addition of a dog, which can symbolise lust, further ramifies notions of fruitful intercourse. As discussed, progeny is a theme implicit in the *Caristia* and one wonders if the music our infants play might not also symbolise the concord or discord which *Caristia* would resolve.

Fewer sculptural depictions of fighting boys are known than exist on birth trays, but the number that do survive attest there was a market for the subject. Perhaps because they were less easily hidden than the images on the reverse of the salver, they are often slightly more decorous than their painted counterparts. Fertility and abundance were still central to their iconography as can be seen in a group of boys with fruit attributed to Silvestro dell'Aquila (c.1500; Fig. 177).

The presence of the basket of fruit in this sculpture, alongside children, reminds us once more of the cornucopias of *Dovizia* and *Charity* and the succour offered by her breast and that of the *Madonna* to their infant charges. Perhaps unsurprisingly there is a homogeny of themes in all the works examined from our corpus, which not only reaffirms their grouping but indicates the interests of our Master and those of his time. Nurture and Love given through visceral metaphors of flesh and blood, be they breast, genitals, muscle, milk or breath, can all be found here. Such iconography appears to draw upon a rich and complex matrix of Christian doctrine and humanist thought. Moreover, an allusion to grace in all of these works, which was particularly debated at the turn of the sixteenth century within these parameters, suggests that we look to this period to answer for our corpus.

Usage

The scale, subject, and medium of the works in our corpus make them appropriate and affordable for domestic use. Moreover, the physical properties of the *Madonna and Child* or *Charity* groups, which are either completely open at the back, or certainly less worked, suggest that they may have been developed from the popular genre of Marian reliefs or were specifically made for display within a niche. Marian reliefs were found in almost every Florentine home and niches were a common feature of the more affluent palaces. The number of domestic artworks that have featured in our survey on the iconography of unruly children,

and the familial connotations of *Charity* further suggests the destined location for these works as the home. The repetition of the same design, which is also a feature of our corpus, recalls the multiple examples of Verrocchio's *Judith* or Donatello's *Dovizia*, and further suggests a domestic market where an established design was required by a patron but modifications could also be requested to suit each work to an individual.

Before we consign all of these works to private quarters, it is important to remember that terracotta was also used regularly for public works and indeed, many of our early comparisons were with *Madonna and Child* groups in terracotta of a similar scale to our own, made for public worship; for example Benedetto da Maiano's *Madonna dell'Olivio*, Agnolo di Polo's *Madonna and Child* for Arezzo, or that attributed to Zaccaria Zacchi in Buggiano (Figs. 81, 129 and 34). Verrocchio's *Madonna and Child* relief for the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova (Fig. 73) is also an indication of similar works produced for organisations and can be related to multiple examples of terracotta works for the Ospedale degli Innocenti. Terracotta may not only have been the material deemed most appropriate for certain subjects or contexts but given the requisition of bronze for the production of cannon, already noted as a factor at the turn of the sixteenth century, terracotta may have become even more commonplace.

Scholarship on the art of the Florentine domestic interior may be relevant to our corpus but it is not within the scope of this thesis to review the wealth of discourse on this genre, which has been prolific in recent years. Nor is it possible for this research to encompass a survey of all terracotta sculpture of similar size to that in our corpus likely produced within the same years. Nonetheless, this chapter will close with certain propositions as to the suitability of works by our Master for both private and public or institutional use, which will be informed by the scholarship referred to above and the context of other known works in the same

medium. Moreover, the case of the *Madonna and Child with a Book* at the Rijksmuseum suggests other genres of artwork which may be relevant to understanding their use. A brief reappraisal of the Amsterdam work, and in particular its activation, followed by an assessment of other activated works, will be undertaken next, and will inform those ultimate propositions on usage.

Activating sculpture: the case of the *Madonna and Child with a Book* in Amsterdam

As the article in Appendix II explores, the *Madonna and Child with a Book* at the Rijksmuseum was not alone in its probable use of draperies and headgear. The dressing of images and particularly sculpture was a practice which had a long tradition and was still widely used in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italy. The various types of works known to have been clothed or adorned point up a potential use for the Amsterdam terracotta, which may in turn be relevant to the rest of the corpus.

An argument is made for the Rijksmuseum sculpture that its combination of real and terracotta drapery, which covers the figures in part, and which was designed to be removed and replaced in a ceremonial fashion, associates the work not only with other adorned sculptures, but with objects or images in which the concealment or revelation of potency was important. It is the naked parts of the figure that are, at times, concealed in the draping of the Rijksmuseum work, and therefore they are seemingly designated as especially symbolic or potent.

The article also considered other contemporary objects which were similarly veiled and unveiled, and examined religious practices in Renaissance Florence, where the use of relics and miraculous images was routine.⁴²⁴ Local and important miraculous images of the Virgin,

⁴²⁴ See especially Richard Trexler, 'Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image', *Studies in the Renaissance*, Chicago, 1972, Vol.19, pp.7-41, and *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, New York, 1980, and

including the *Madonnas* at SS. Annunziata, Or San Michele and Impruneta were ‘activated’ through their covering and uncovering with cloth and may be significant to understanding how the Rijksmuseum terracotta was used.⁴²⁵ Moreover, a specific account of 1511 connects the Medici with the veneration of such images. Richard Trexler relates the contemporary observation of the number of ‘rich coats’ and ‘cloth pieces’, including gold brocade from the Medici that were presented to the *Madonna of Impruneta* in 1511 when she was asked to stop the persistent rain. Not only does Trexler suggest the politics involved in such gift-giving but notes that the ‘charity of the populace evidenced the efficaciousness of the *tavola* as well.’⁴²⁶ The veneration of the *Madonna* is here connected to notions of *charis* and reciprocal favour discussed earlier, and is a documented act of 1511.⁴²⁷

Our Master may not only have been emulating a pattern of ceremonial undressing associated with miraculous images, but also echoed their known reproduction. Whilst other works within the corpus have yet to reveal any hidden holes, the adherence of several works to the same design recalls the duplication of miraculous images made on a smaller scale or in a different medium for personal use.⁴²⁸ There are several copies of the *Madonna of Impruneta* made in terracotta and Jacopo di Cione is known to have made copies from the *Madonna* at SS. Annunziata.⁴²⁹ Power and usage both earthly and miraculous was bound up with the employment of replicas; the multiples possessed power inherited from the ‘original’ but some believed the duplication of images could also increase their ‘magical potency’ i.e. the source

‘Being and Non-Being, Parameters of the Miraculous in the Traditional Religious Image’ in *The Miraculous Image in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf, Rome, 2004, pp.17-27.

⁴²⁵ Trexler, 1972, p. 11. In discussing the *Madonna of Impruneta* he states that, whilst there, she was covered so that ‘her potential was stored’; but when taken abroad, or processed to Florence, she became ‘active’.

⁴²⁶ Trexler, 1972, p. 16-17. Trexler remarks on Landucci’s account of 1511.

⁴²⁷ Landucci records numerous times when the Lady of Impruneta was called for including several occasions mentioned in our historical outline – during war with Pisa, pp. 159-160, to guide the election of Soderini, p. 200, in the days before Giovanni de’Medici took Florence, p. 256, and when he became Pope Leo X, p. 268.

⁴²⁸ Robert Maniura, Megan Holmes and Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser all discuss the duplication or replication of miraculous images in their chapters for *The Miraculous Image in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf, Rome 2004.

⁴²⁹ Megan Holmes, ‘The Elusive Origins of the Cult of the Annunziata in Florence’ in *The Miraculous Image in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 2004, p. 108.

power.⁴³⁰ The replica image may also have allowed an ‘active engagement’ with the object that was perhaps not appropriate or possible with the original.⁴³¹

The dressing of the Rijksmuseum group may also allude to the tradition of relics and the use of some relics in particular. The Confraternity of the Virgin’s Milk in the Florentine provincial town of Montevarchi grew up around the relic of a crystallized drop of milk that leaked from the lips of Christ during the flight into Egypt. The relic was well known and especially venerated. A dedicated chapel was decorated, in terracotta, by Andrea della Robbia (1480-90), only fragments of which survive.⁴³² If its centrepiece was a sculpture of the Virgin suckling the Christ Child⁴³³ it may have been an important precursor to the present work. The cult of the Virgin’s milk was particularly popular and images of the *Madonna Lactans* were noted not only as an exemplar to mothers but for their efficacy in answering prayers. The ‘magical’ properties associated with the milk and breastfeeding imagery has almost always been associated with women, fertility, pregnancy and child rearing, but as we have established could also be connected to St. Bernard. Nonetheless, in writing about domestic birth-related objects Jacqueline Musaccio touches on the practice of covering and uncovering these works to contain or preserve their potent effect.⁴³⁴ These private practices appear to have echoed those undertaken in public places of worship and may be important to the function of our corpus.

The locus of potency in the Amsterdam work is connected to the nudity of the two figures, and it could be asked whether prudery or decorum might not account for their concealment.

⁴³⁰ Holmes in *The Miraculous Image in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 2004, p. 110.

⁴³¹ Garnett and Rosser, ‘Translations of the Miraculous Cult Images and their Representations in Early Modern Liguria’ in *The Miraculous Image in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 2004, p. 207.

⁴³² For a description and photographs of the chapel see Allan Marquand, *Andrea della Robbia and his Atelier*, Princeton, 1922, Vol. I, pp.123-127

⁴³³ As suggested by Cavallucci and quoted by Marquand, *Andrea della Robbia and his Atelier*, 1922, Vol. I, p.125.

⁴³⁴ See especially Jacqueline Musaccio, ‘Imaginative Conceptions in Renaissance Italy’ in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 52-53.

In Gregory of Tours' (c.540-594) *Eight Books of Miracles* we are told of a priest named Basileus who was visited three times by an apparition of Christ. Each time Christ demanded that the figure of himself in the local cathedral, which wore only a slim linen cloth, be decently covered. Finally Basileus consults the Bishop who orders the image to be veiled and exposed only briefly for devotional purposes.⁴³⁵ This account implies a conflict between decency and the need to portray the symbolic content of images, and may indicate that future works were conceived with such concerns in mind. In the Rijksmuseum sculpture, the breast of the Virgin and genitals of Christ are both symbolically necessary. The depiction of these motifs does not appear to have been problematic in the other works of our corpus, or in many other contemporary images of the *Madonna* or *Charity*. The additional draperies of the Rijksmuseum sculpture are, therefore, more likely to have been designed for a specific context or patron, rather than due to a general attitude towards nudity. Nonetheless, people's perceptions of nakedness were shifting over the course of the sixteenth century in the light of religious reform. By the 1540s it was believed by some that nudity led to immorality, and whilst this date is later than that proposed for our corpus, earlier fears about nudity can also be traced.

Megan Holmes has examined the perils of witnessing nudity in religious images and described the belief that vision was volatile and connected with temptation and sin. It was vision, Holmes recounted, that was implicated at time of fall when Adam and Eve came to know the shame of nakedness. The writings of St. Gregory the Great (540-604) also reflect this concern, "we should not gaze at what we may not desire lest we get involved with dangerous thoughts..."⁴³⁶ Holmes described the resultant effect as a need to standardize pictorial conventions to ensure that reading images of the Virgin was non-sexual or 'stable

⁴³⁵ Steinberg, 1996, p. 140.

⁴³⁶ Megan Holmes, 'Disrobing the Virgin: The Madonna Lactans in Fifteenth Century Florentine Art' in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 171-2.

within a religious context for male and female viewers'. The resurgent problem of the eroticising of religious images, according to Holmes, was connected with the greater realism with which art of the fifteenth century was imbued. The decline in images of the *Virgo Lactans* during the latter half of the fifteenth century is particularly linked by Holmes to a fear of eroticisation, the conventions for displaying the Virgin's breast having become 'too disruptive when a premium was placed on naturalism in the visual arts as a representational means to more didactically efficacious images.'⁴³⁷ Whether this concern had dissipated by the turn of the century, after the death of Savonarola, encouraging the repeated depictions of the subject by artists like Michelangelo, or whether a new appreciation of the writings of St. Bernard offered an alternative reading, fears around decorum may have informed the use of drapes on the Rijksmuseum *Madonna and Child*.

A counter to this argument is found in the very nature of the work, a sculpture to be undressed, the bodily presence and tactility of which would have increased its veracity and the potential sexualisation of the holy figures. Certainly, the idea of decent coverings and their occasional use lends itself to a public rather than private setting, the revelation of holy figures being more inappropriate in a domestic environment. Holmes too suggests that the private use of a *Madonna Lactans* image may have been 'too volatile'.⁴³⁸ Whereas it could be argued, the devotees within the domestic context are more likely to be women, who may have benefited from an exemplar of motherhood, images of the *Madonna Lactans*, in the spirit of St. Bernard, acted as intercessors for all.

The evidence of viewer participation discovered on the terracotta in Amsterdam expands our understanding of how the works of our Master may have been used. The dressing of the sculpture parallels the comparative practices associated with miraculous images and relics,

⁴³⁷ Holmes, 1997, p. 179.

⁴³⁸ Holmes, 1997, p. 179.

and the partial nature of the drapes may also indicate an implicit potency to those areas covered, which could in turn relate to notions of decorum. Whether for reasons miraculous or erotic, the use of the drapery also helps to define the parameters in which such a work might have been used.

Activating sculpture: other relevant examples

There are further examples of works already mentioned in this chapter, which may have once been ‘activated’ by the viewer, and which indicate that interaction with works of sculpture was not limited to devotional subjects. The terracotta copies of *Dovizia* could also have been activated on special occasions. A recent examination of the Cleveland *Dovizia* (Fig. 178) revealed that the basket which rests on the head of the figure is able to be removed and replaced easily.⁴³⁹ Initially this suggested that, for ease of manufacture, the terracotta was modelled in two (or more) parts and assembled once fired, but on closer inspection it became apparent that the work could also have been intentionally viewed in two parts. Care had been taken in the manufacture of the work to add detail and glazing to the underside of the basket and the top of the figure’s head, which would not be visible to the viewer unless basket and figure were separated. Moreover, the basket sits comfortably as a discrete work of art.

The association with *Lars*, an ancient household god bringing blessings, and *Dovizia* (the terracotta versions of which we can locate in the home thanks to the aforementioned dictum on two examples), has already been mentioned as a source for her iconography. Furthermore, the ceremonial use of statues of *Lars* by Roman families may have also been emulated in the sixteenth century. Images of the god were placed upon the dining table at important family events, as his benevolent influence was considered crucial. Not only does this suggest a

⁴³⁹ Visual examination carried out by the present author during visit to Cleveland Museum of Art in July 2012, with assistance of Jon Seydl (then Curator of European Painting and Sculpture).

further connection to personifications of *Caristia*, but an occasional use for the domestic *Dovizia* too. On special occasions, and particularly banquets, *Dovizia* may have been activated to literally be seen giving her bounty to guests. The basket of fruit could easily be imagined lifted from her head to form a table centrepiece, and in this way the generosity and magnificence of the host could also be identified with the abundance offered by Florence itself and highlight the intertwined nature of civic and private prosperity.

Further domestic works also show evidence of having been activated. In the Boston Museum of Fine Arts a small, glazed terracotta also appears to have been designed with compositional flexibility in mind (Fig. 179). The sculpture of the *Last Supper* is made up of several moveable parts and it is suggested by the museum that the work may have been used as part of the Holy week celebrations in the advent of Easter.⁴⁴⁰ Much like the similar use of figures, also often in terracotta (of which our Kneeling Madonnas (CATS. B7, B8) may be two), created to re-imagine the nativity, which were produced on various scales for both home and church, this work could be both instructional and devotional.

The Cleveland *Dovizia*, Boston *Last Supper* and Rijksmuseum *Madonna and Child with a Book* reveal to us that the interactive use of sculpture in terracotta appears to have been relatively commonplace across a number of subjects. The format that the activation of artworks took may have been based on ritual behaviour learnt from liturgical ceremony or devotional behaviour but could also relate to ancient practices discovered through humanist scholarship. An increasing level of skill and innovation in the techniques of manufacturing glazed terracotta during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, may have both heightened the potential functionality of terracotta sculpture, and made fashionable and

⁴⁴⁰ The present author viewed this sculpture in Boston in May 2010 where gallery labels suggested this use, corroborated by subsequent correspondence with Curator Marietta Cambareri.

affordable for the home, customs that had previously been associated with more public forums.

Locating the works of the corpus

Before we assess the various merits of situating the works of our corpus in the public or private domain, the writings of St. Bernard may once again be relevant to our discussion. St. Bernard meditated on the division of religious contemplation into three realms (an idea which originated with Augustine): corporeal contemplation, which required images; spiritual contemplation, where images were in the mind; and intellectual contemplation, where no images were needed at all. These divisions were linked with intellect, thus, according to this criteria an uneducated devotee would have further need of images to aid contemplation. Polychromed terracotta, which could combine a three-dimensional and bodily presence with the veristic colour of a painting, was often used over other materials for its ability to achieve life-like effects. Figures in this medium would not only have appeared corporeal, but with the addition of draperies, for example, could feel real too.

Scholarship indicates that the use of images in the renaissance home was complex and works of art could convey multiple and multifaceted meanings bound up with specific patterns of viewing. The commissioning or gifting of domestic works appears largely connected with occasions of great familial conjugation and rites of passage; births, deaths and marriages. For the most part, works created at these times also had some useful purpose for their recipient, which might be instructional, devotional, exemplary, talismanic or commemorative. The only discrete works (particularly of small sculpture) which seem to have been made for purely aesthetic or pleasurable reasons were destined for the *studiolo* or study, a mostly male-dominated space. Bronze statuettes popularized by artists such as Bertoldo and Pollaiuolo are most commonly associated with this context. The works could demonstrate the erudition of

their owner and, in bronze, were often picked up, turned, viewed from all sides and even caressed. Terracotta was not such a suitable medium for this type of handling, nor did it convey the same sense of *lusso* (luxury), but it was in a similar vein to such works that the sculptures of the *Equestrian Battle* groups and *River Gods* must have been made. Moreover, these works were also occasionally bronzed rather than polychromed. The advantage of terracotta over bronze was that the depicted subjects were less easily eroticised; therefore, religious figures and especially virtuous women were more appropriately realised in this medium.⁴⁴¹

We have already noted the regular inclusion of relief sculptures of the *Madonna and Child* and busts of the holy children in the home, which have been linked with an adherence to the advice of Dominici, and therefore associated with the women and children. This demographic may also have comprised the intended viewers of the groups of the *Madonna and Child* or *Charity* in our corpus. Both subjects represent mothers, which could have been intercessory and exemplary. Their allusions to the incarnation of God's love, specifically imagined through children, associates them with a potentially desired divine blessing on the offspring (or future offspring) of the devotee. Moreover, the humility indicated by the iconography of our works was a quality sought after in a wife and mother during this period, and the example offered by the Virgin or *Charity* may have been deliberately evoked. The breastfeeding motif, whilst appropriate to a universal audience, could also have specific connotations for a female viewer but beliefs surrounding breastfeeding and wet nursing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries made the image of *Madonna Lactans*, and possibly also *Charity*, occasionally problematic in a domestic setting. The example of the Virgin was at odds with the widespread practice of sending your child to a wet nurse, and whilst images of her nursing demonstrated the motherly behaviour advocated by the Church, they could not have always been popular in

⁴⁴¹ God too was also associated with modelling clay to make the first man: Genesis 2:7.

a society in which, for reasons of status or further reproduction, wet nurses were commonly used.⁴⁴² But, the imagery of the breast as described in the Song of Songs connects its depiction to a biblical epithalamia and recommend the subject in art as a suitable wedding gift.

A dual Christian and humanist understanding of *Charity*, which could reinforce ideas of fecundity, dynasty, prosperity through unity, and civic virtue, as well as love of God, the Church, mercy and grace, could have made images of the Virtue uniquely appropriate to a domestic setting where they could hold different meanings for its various inhabitants and visitors. Like the terracottas of *Dovizia*, who occasionally acquired infants, the *Charity* groups could refer simultaneously to domestic and civic concerns. Moreover, images of *Charity*, over those of the Virgin, may have carried fewer concerns over nudity and decorum through a link with exemplary Roman matriarchs, and not only Christian ones.

The *Quarrelling Children* sculptures have already been related to other domestic works of art and seem equally destined for private use. These infants could not have acted as the meritorious paradigm exhorted by Dominici but may relate instead to the iconography of birth trays. Despite that connection, their talismanic function is dubious. Other works were explicitly made for this purpose, most notably (in terracotta) the production and use of dolls, which had both instructional and magical properties when used by young women.⁴⁴³ Whilst the phallic symbolism of the works in our corpus cannot be denied, this may be accounted for by their reliance on antique prototypes. An understanding of their meaning as putti also relied

⁴⁴² See Beth Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility: development, dissemination & reception, c. 1340-1400*, Woodbridge and Rochester, New York, 2009, pp. 137-143.

⁴⁴³ See especially Christine Klapisch-Zuber, 'Holy Dolls: Play and Piety in Florence in the Quattrocento', Sarah Blake McHam (ed.), *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1988, 111-127

on a knowledge of ancient texts, and it may be that these works were created as deliberately fashionable and fanciful, whilst also alluding to real concerns about fertility.

Our Master was evidently producing works for the domestic market, as the *Battle* groups, *River Gods* and *Children* attest. The *Madonnas* and *Charity* groups too, are appropriate in this context and may have been made for the home but there is also an argument for their public use. We have established that similar works furnished the parish churches of Tuscan towns, and also alluded to the role these works could play in charitable organisations. The women and children of institutions such as the Ospedale degli Innocenti would have been receptive to multisensory devotional works (in line with St. Bernard's views on contemplation) and moreover, had a tradition of adorning images of the *Madonna*.⁴⁴⁴ Images of *Charity* too, which we have already attached to the Ospedale del Ceppo and the Misericordia, were important to such organisations. *Charity's* connection to family love may seem inappropriate to the inhabitants of a foundling hospital but could easily be considered in terms of God's love and the inclusion of the baptised soul within the family of the church. It is also possible that such works were bought or commissioned by individuals for the institution, and through the iconography of our *Charity* groups a donor might associate himself with Trajan, the gift-giving of the Graces, the seeker of God's love or even the conduit of that love for mankind.

The multiples of subjects in our corpus, which mimics that of *Dovizia* and *Judith* or that of votive images, suggests there was once an 'original' or acclaimed predecessor. These two forms of reproduction, of esteemed or miraculous works, may be connected. Richard Trexler asserted that by the end of the fifteenth century, 'European artists like Alberti and Leonardo

⁴⁴⁴ Alessandra Maggi 'Madri, figlie, balie. Le donne degli Innocenti' and Brunella Teodori, 'Tabernacoli e sculture devozionali nel Coretto di Santa Maria degli Innocenti. Uno spaccato di vita delle nocentine' in *Madri, Figlie, Balie: Il Coretto della chiesa e la comunità femminile degli Innocenti*, Florence, 2010, pp. 7-11 & 38-49.

boldly proclaimed that they were the ones who imbued objects with such [miraculous] powers' and that there were 'certain forms that, if incorporated into images by mortal men, were thought to have particularly efficacious impacts upon the attitudes of the devotees.' The *Madonnas* and *Charity* groups of our corpus operate then, in a system of semiotics and belief which not only exploited the ready understanding of iconographic symbols but valued their repetition. Potency, whether magical or associative, is still the result. We are unlikely to ever find a work from which our sculptures derive, should such a work have ever existed, but even in recalling the inventions of Leonardo and Michelangelo, reviewed in Chapter Two, the sculpture in our corpus could be said to stand at the interface between high art and popular votive images. Moreover, in their potential allusion to the virtues of the Medici as rulers of Florence, religious sensibilities, and any associated potency, are transferred in these works to an image of political propaganda, and disseminated into the homes and civic institutions of the city.

CONCLUSION

The corpus of works which makes up Appendix I will detail the revised understanding of the Master of the Unruly Children with specific regard to individual works, but outlined here are those main findings which have come to light in the previous three chapters. We began by asking whether the ‘Master’ was a reasonable concept, and it has been proposed in Chapter Two that, in so far as a discrete hand can be identified, he is. The artist described as ‘artist A’ may not have been the inventor of each composition in our corpus but just as Giovanni della Robbia can be identified as having devised a small-scale version of *Dovizia*, to be reproduced by his workshop, so the Master should be identified as an individual, who made copies after Rustici, but who may have also invented his own compositions, and directed others to reproduce them. These compositions may have been inspired by the artists around him or may have been in emulation of now lost works. In either case there is a strong case for placing our Master within the circle of artists working from the Sapienza in Florence. That the works of our Master (artist ‘A’) were then further reproduced, possibly by independent workshops, suggests that he, or those designs, were popular or esteemed.

Stylistic evidence combined with a new understanding of iconography suggests these works should be dated to a period between 1512 and 1527. The Medici had regained leadership of Florence and the past glory of the city (during their leadership in the mid fifteenth century) was being deliberately invoked. This coincided with a trend in Florentine art at the beginning of the sixteenth century to look back at the Masters of the recent past and all that was great and peculiarly Florentine about their achievements. The works in our corpus pay homage to Donatello, Verrocchio, Benedetto da Maiano, Leonardo and Michelangelo and point to a

desire to conflate and re-imagine the works of these artists. Allusions to the figure of St. Bernard of Clairvaux are also present in our sculptures and may have been deliberately appropriated by the Medici regime (as had been done previously) and artists of this period. As a reformer, who was admired by Savonarola, but also a peacemaker historically beloved by Florence, St. Bernard was the perfect conduit through which the Medici Pope could mediate with his native city. Moreover, certain subjects in the corpus, which could imply civic charity, family, healing, Christian and pagan ideas of love and grace and humanist ideas of virtue, are embodied in the core works of our sculptor. In their possible reference to Roman history and the exemplar of Trajan and his *Alimenta*, the sculptures are not only in line with the ideas and aims of Florence in the mid fifteenth century but with Leo X (in the early sixteenth century), who was in effect then leader of Rome and Florence. Moreover, the imagery is employed by later Medici family members in the 1594 marble of *Ferdinando de Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany Succoring the City of Pisa*. The Medici had a history of politicising images and repeatedly used the same motifs to assert their dominance. The Pisa monument further supports the idea the iconography used by our Master can be associated with the family. The *Caristia*, with its association to healing rifts and reasserting familial ties, could also be said to serve Medici policy between 1512 and 1527 and account for the particular imagery of the works in our corpus and its popularity.

The sculptures discussed would have been symbolically appropriate for use at home but also appear to have been adapted for specific purposes and viewers, possibly within such charitable organisations as the Ospedale degli Innocenti. In either case, a strong argument can be made to suggest that the core works at least, groups of *Charity*, the *Madonna and Child* and *Quarrelling Children*, were not merely decorative but actively engaged with or regarded for their specific symbolic meaning and efficacious potential.

Please note appendix I, II and III and the plates have been redacted from this thesis on copyright grounds. Please find details of an article written by the author on the next page.

A Terracotta "Madonna and Child with a Book": Ascribed to the Master of the Unruly Children:
New Physical Evidence and Interpretation

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