

# TOTO 11







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EXHIBITION CURATORS Simone Facchinetti (Museo Adriano Bernareggi, Bergamo) Arturo Galansino (Royal Academy of Arts, London

with the assistance of Katia Pisvin (Curatorial Assistant at the Royal Academy of Arts, London)

DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC PROGRAMMES Tim Marlow

EXHIBITION ORGANISATION Idoya Beitia Anna Smith Andrea Tarsia Elana Woodgate

ROYAL ACADEMY PUBLICATIONS Beatrice Gullström Alison Hissey Carola Krueger Simon Murphy Peter Sawbridge Nick Tite

TRANSLATION FROM THE ITALIAN Caroline Beamish

Sara Ayad

Isambard Thomas, London

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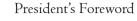
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Supporter's Statement

Map of northern Italy

# GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI: HISTORY AND CRITICAL FORTUNE

Simone Facchinetti and Arturo Galansino

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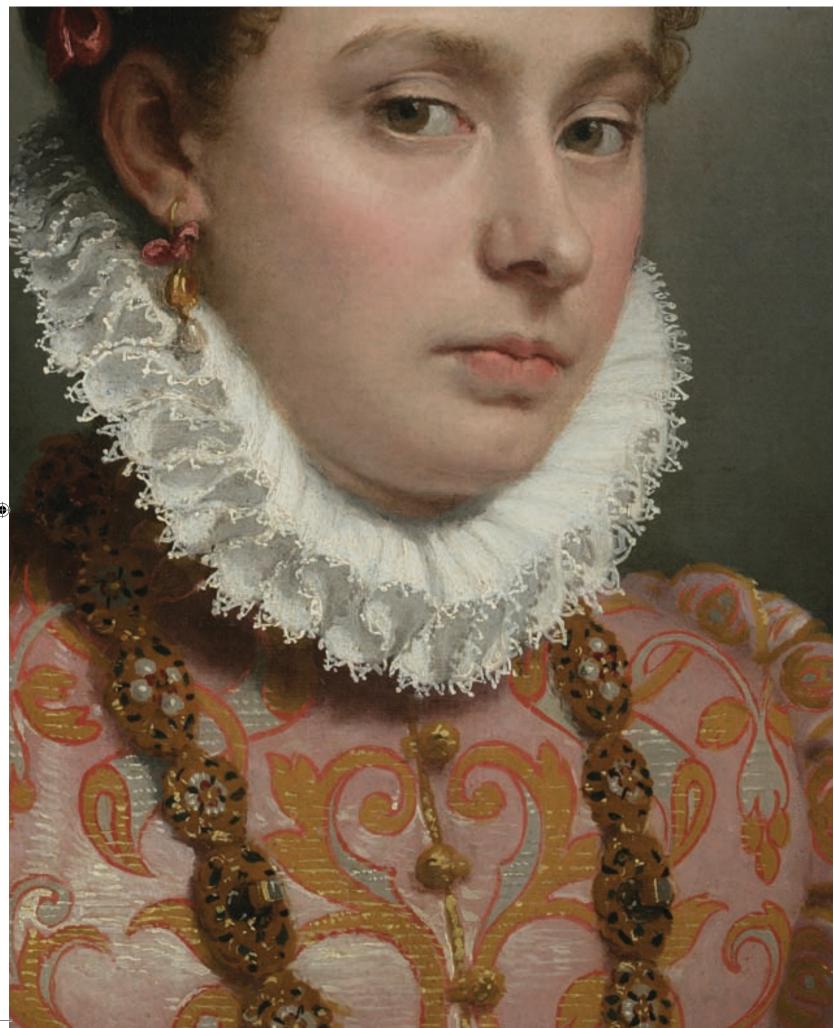




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# President's Foreword

iovanni Battista Moroni was born in Albino, in the northern Italian province of Bergamo, and spent almost his entire life in Lombardy, yet his outlook was anything but provincial. As well as the elegant men and women of high society, his portraits also depict meditative poets and members of the middle class engaged in their trades and professions. The startling naturalism with which Moroni painted his subjects contrasts with the idealising manner of his contemporaries, and, moreover, anticipates the realism of Caravaggio. The artist also painted altarpieces imbued with the spirit of the Counter Reformation and created paintings for private devotion that reflect the new religious ideals of his time.

Moroni is not the best-known Renaissance artist. His work was rightly reappraised in the nineteenth century, when his unique skills were admired and his works avidly sought by major collectors and museums, especially in England. Indeed, some of Moroni's paintings have already been displayed here at Burlington House in the Winter Exhibitions held in the late nineteenth century.

The Royal Academy is proud to stage 'Giovanni Battista Moroni', the first major survey of the artist's work to be presented in Britain. This is the first comprehensive monographic show on Moroni since the seminal exhibition in Bergamo in 1979, which marked the modern rediscovery of the artist. Furthermore — with the exclusion of the 1978 London display of works mainly from the National Gallery's collection, and the small exhibition of portraits displayed at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, in 2000 — the Royal Academy show is the first outside Italy to be devoted to Moroni. Encompassing the Lombard's entire career, and featuring never-before-exhibited altarpieces from the churches of his native province, this is a long-overdue celebration of an artist ahead of his time.

It is with pleasure that we extend our thanks to the many people who have contributed to 'Giovanni Battista Moroni'. The exhibition has been made possible by JTI, our generous benefactor and long-term partner of exhibitions in the Sackler Wing of Galleries. We are indebted to our lenders, collectors and institutions for the important loans from all over the world that constitute this exhibition. At the Royal Academy Tim Marlow, Director of Artistic Programmes, has supported the project, which was first programmed by Kathleen Soriano and has been organised by Dr Arturo Galansino, Curator at the Royal Academy, and Dr Simone Facchinetti, Curator at the Museo Adriano Bernareggi in Bergamo. From within the Exhibitions Department, invaluable assistance has been provided by Idoya Beitia, Exhibition Manager; Katia Pisvin, Curatorial Assistant; Elana Woodgate, Exhibition Assistant; Anna Smith, Rights and Reproductions Coordinator; and Katharine Oakes, Rights and Reproductions Manager. The expertise and dedication of the Royal Academy's Publications Department have resulted in this handsome catalogue.

CHRISTOPHER LE BRUN PRA President, Royal Academy of Arts

# Supporter's Statement

We are delighted to help bring an exhibition of the works of one of the greatest portraitists of sixteenth-century Italy to British audiences for the first time. Giovanni Battista Moroni's unique artistic quality captured the vitality of his sitters so distinctly that his portraits are still remarkable for their realism today. This survey also showcases Moroni's later religious works, some of which have never before left Italy.

We hope you enjoy this striking retrospective.

DANIEL TORRAS

Managing Director UK, JTI

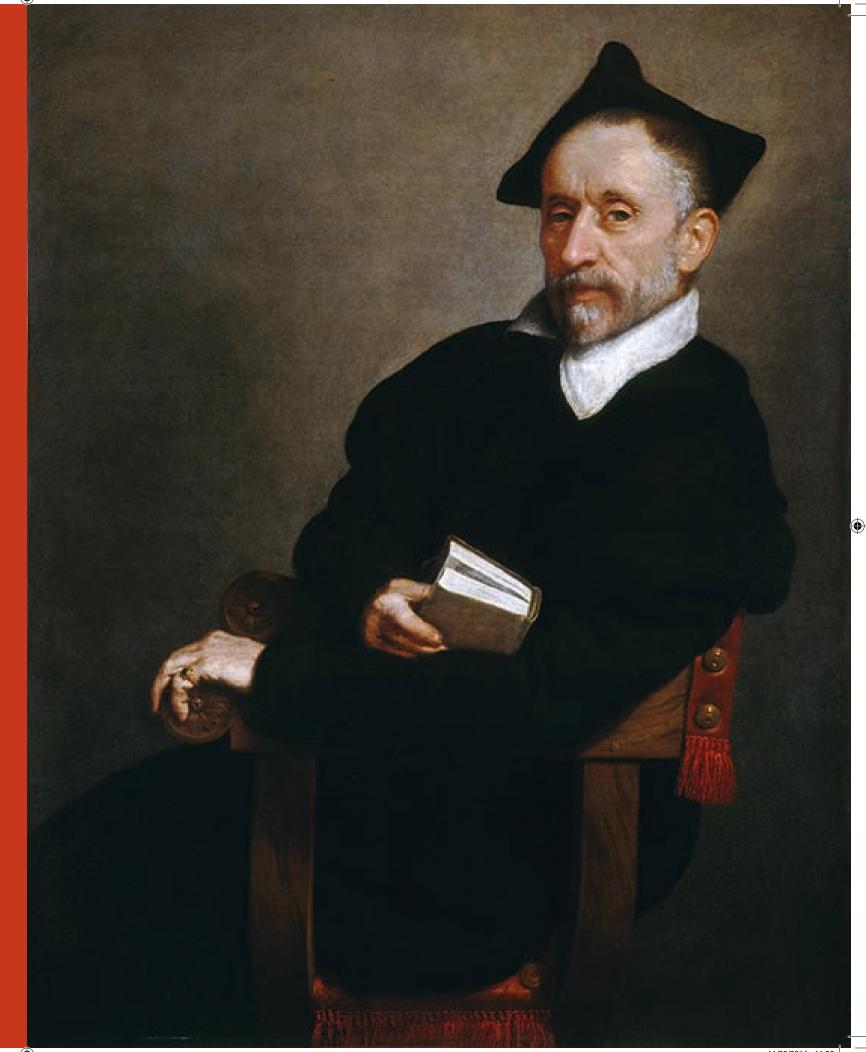
Map of northern Italy at the time of Moroni



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# GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI: HISTORY AND CRITICAL FORTUNE

Simone Facchinetti and Arturo Galansino





he name Giovanni Battista Moroni (c.1521/4 - 1579/80) does not yet figure in the close circle of Renaissance artists with whom the public is familiar. This is particularly surprising in the case of England, which is almost a second home to the artist: thanks mainly to the collection in the National Gallery, London is, after Bergamo, the city with the largest number of paintings by Moroni. Our intention is to re-present to the public the work of this unique artist, not easily situated within the usual art-historical categories of period and style, who at the end of the nineteenth century was enjoying huge acclaim in England.

This is not the first time the Royal Academy has hosted the artist's work. In the Victorian period, portraits by Moroni, including Portrait of Gabriel de la Cueva (cat. 19) and the so-called *Titian's Schoolmaster* (fig. 17), both of them in private collections in England, were habitually hung in the Royal Academy's Winter Exhibition, which featured works by both Old Masters and recently deceased British artists. Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli, popularly known as The Man in Pink (cat. 17), and the portraits of the Spinis (cats 39 and 40) made their appearance in the exhibition rooms of Burlington House on the occasion of the great 'Exhibition of Italian Art' (1930). More recently, the Royal Academy devoted a whole section of the exhibition 'The Genius of Venice' (1983) to Moroni. He was displayed under the broad heading of the 'Venetian School', to which he does not strictly belong. In our exhibition, in addition to the celebrated portraits and for the first time outside Italy, the Royal Academy has included a section dedicated to Moroni's Counter Reformation altarpieces, which have often been denigrated or ignored by critics in the past because they belong to a cultural phenomenon that has yet to be critically reassessed but is central to a full appreciation of the artist.<sup>1</sup>

Moroni's fluctuating popularity, combined with his failure to travel, a shortage of information about his life, exacerbated by the absence of any contemporary biography, and the constant erroneous attributions that afflicted his work for centuries after his death might indicate that we are dealing with a second-rate artist, isolated, working in a minor field. This judgement would be a mistake, not only because of the self-evident quality of Moroni's work, which places the painter among the great figures of sixteenth-century Italian art, but also because he belonged to the artistic tradition of Bergamo, a city that lays claim to some of the greatest names in that field. Despite the fact that it was in the small town of Albino during the isolated phase of his life that some of Moroni's most famous works were produced, his output can still be seen in relation to key contemporary events. Observed in this manner, the *œuvre* and life of the artist can be appreciated as much closer to the centre-stage of history than might be expected.

We should therefore take a close look at the events that cast Moroni as an important artistic figure in the narrative of the cinquecento in northern Italy, while equally celebrating his gifts as an 'outsider', a characteristic that caused him to produce works that were almost shockingly modern. Obviously fundamental to this was Moroni's experience in Trent during the Council of Trent (1545–1563), an event that changed the face of the Catholic world. It could be claimed that the artist's output was thoroughly permeated by the climate of the Council.

# Moroni and Michelangelo

On 21 January 1564, during the final throes of the Council of Trent, the decision was taken to censor the *Last Judgement* painted by Michelangelo Buonarroti in the Sistine Chapel. Less than a month later, Michelangelo died and the following summer scaffolding went up in front of the monumental frescoed wall. Daniele da Volterra (1509–1566) made alterations to the figures considered most obscene, for which he earned the epithet *braghettone* ('the maker of breeches'). This repainting dramatically illustrates the contemporary mood. Moroni's final work was a copy of the *Last Judgement* by Michelangelo. The painter's unexpected death meant it remained unfinished, with only Hell completed.<sup>2</sup> When Moroni began painting in 1577 he was aware of the dispute that had surrounded the celebrated original. He knew which elements had fanned the flames of disagreement, and decided, for his own work, to modify the incriminating parts as a precaution.

Moroni was working from an engraved version, possibly that completed by Giorgio Ghisi in about 1545, or perhaps the smaller one created by Martino Rota in 1569. Moroni knew perfectly well that the controversy centred on the presence of Charon, on the wingless angels and above all on the highly visible nakedness of the souls being punished. He omitted Charon's boat without hesitation, gave the angels visible wings and clothed those souls considered too daring. He took other liberties with his interpretation too and, having noticed that the souls of the risen painted by Michelangelo were for the most part male, he decided to introduce a greater balance between the sexes (fig. 1). And there was a further difference from the original. Michelangelo's figures exist in a far-flung celestial world and present themselves to the observer's gaze as distant beings, belonging to a complex kingdom that lies well beyond the earth. Moroni's figures, by contrast, seem to seek instant contact with the spectator. The attitudes of many of the painted souls in Hell contribute to this direct rapport due to Moroni's sophisticated handling of the genre in which he most excelled – portraiture.

It is difficult to imagine two artists more different from one another than Moroni and Michelangelo. The Lombard was well versed in portraiture and skilled at exposing human reality down to its honest physical details, using these details to suggest the deep recesses of the soul. Conversely, the Tuscan aimed always at the idea, and 'hated painting from life unless the subject was possessed of infinite beauty'. It is not by chance that this brief contact between the two should occur around religious painting, and it is intriguing to see Moroni 'improving' Michelangelo's masterpiece by making recourse to experience gained as a portraitist.

One of the bitterest opponents of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* was Pietro Aretino (1492–1556), author of a celebrated letter to the painter of the Sistine Chapel written in 1545 and published in 1550. Moroni may or may not have been familiar with Aretino's criticism when he went to work on his copy of the *Last Judgement*, but he must have known the name of the influential author since his youth. By 1544, in fact, Moroni was already working permanently in the studio of his teacher Alessandro Bonvicino (*c.* 1492/95–1554, known as Moretto), who some time earlier in Venice had painted a portrait of Aretino. The generous gift of the painting immediately resulted in a letter, filled with compliments, sent to Moretto in Brescia in 1544 and published, to great acclaim, in the *Libro delle lettere* in 1546. S



Fig. 1 Giovanni Battista Moroni, The Last Judgement (detail), 1577–79/80. Oil on canvas, 422 × 485 cm Chiesa di San Pancrazio Martire, Gorlago

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Not only this; thanks to good relations with Aretino the name Moretto reached the studio of Giorgio Vasari, who mentions it in his *Le Vite*, first published in 1550.6 For this reason the Brescian painter made his way at once into the chronicles of Italian art, and was subsequently described as a 'another Raphael'.7 There was no similar stroke of fortune for his pupil; not only because Moroni lacked recommendation by an influential *maître à penser*, but also because during Vasari's journey to northern Italy in 1566, in preparation for the second edition of the *Le Vite*, he did not go to Bergamo. This lacuna in his itinerary was to weigh heavily against the appreciation of one of the greatest artists of the period.

# Moroni in Moretto's workshop

We do not know exactly what caused Moroni to start working in Trent during the early stages of the Council, and thereby to enter into the good graces of the family of the Prince-bishop Cristoforo Madruzzo (1512–1578; fig. 5). The context is straightforward enough, however, and it is possible to guess that Moroni's affiliation is derived from his link with the important artist Moretto. This granted him the opportunities that accompany a position in the workshop, not least training within an artistic approach that was perfectly in tune with the main trends in religion that followed the thorny sessions of the Council.

To gain some idea of Moroni's privileged position you have only to think of his earliest works. His first figurative output consists of a very detailed and painstakingly finished series of drawings, dated 1543, which form part of an album of copies of work by his teacher.<sup>8</sup> Although Moroni does not use preparatory drawing under his paintings, he continues at length to develop ideas through the medium of drawing. These demonstrate his personal method of translating form by rendering the effects of light in a slightly artificial way, using the dense application of short strokes of white lead. This treatment is widely used in graphic work but rarely in painting; however, in a number of Moroni's works in oil the light areas are obtained via dense webs of short strokes, which form a strong contrast with the rest of the painting. This technique is evident in the work Moroni executed while he was training, but gradually disappeared as his style evolved. Thanks to this development we can sort his earlier work into chronological order.

The other interesting feature of Moroni's drawn works is the perspective they provide on his personal method of interpreting subjects, particularly within his religious painting. Throughout his career, Moroni extracted images from the album of drawings made in his youth, repeatedly employing them either singly or in combinations. Paradoxically, we could say that Moroni invents almost nothing in his religious output; he simply modifies the inventions of others, adding variations.

The distinguishing characteristic that enables the viewer to understand and evaluate how the practice of a Renaissance painter differs from that of one growing up at the time of the Counter Reformation is to be found in the field of invention. During the years in which Moroni trained at Moretto's workshop in Brescia, the artists must have come into contact with the Mannerist culture of Giorgio Vasari and Francesco Salviati, both known through their work in Venice. The outcome of this exchange is embodied in the decoration of the lower part of the chapel of the Santissimo Sacramento in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia, where

Moretto displays all his Mannerist 'contamination'." We can be confident that Moroni knew this work, he was later to include in *The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine* (cat. 11) a faithful copy of a detail of the *St Mark* painted by Moretto in this chapel

The absence of any Mannerist components in Moroni's work, despite his exposure to that style, perhaps suffices to give an idea of the artistic path the painter had chosen to embark upon. Deaf to the siren call of Mannerism that was sounding so loudly, the young Moroni had fallen for something quite different.

# Painting in the Counter Reformation

During this period Moretto was working on a series of altarpieces whose doctrinal and Eucharistic content would be appreciated by a Catholic Church busy responding to criticisms emanating from the Protestant world. Moretto's studio was a kind of laboratory in which for the first time complex iconography was used to embody visually the themes of the Counter Reformation. Moretto accepted commissions from a strict wing of the local church, which had elected to react to external criticism from Protestants, and internal criticism from a minority faction of reformists known as the Spirituali. On 8 April 1546 the Council of Trent published their first official decrees. The Second Decree establishes the Vulgate of St Jerome as the authentic text of the Holy Scriptures, reserving the interpretation of meaning exclusively for ecclesiastical authorities. This choice was to have huge repercussions affecting the division between the Catholic Church and the reformed Protestant world; the decree is also considered to have been responsible for enforcing ecclesiastical censorship, culminating a decade later in the first printed Index Librorum Probibitorum ('index of prohibited books').

The decrees made at the Council found a form of expression in the work of Moretto. One instance is an altarpiece in which the subject of the ruling on the Vulgate is expressed in accordance with the intransigent, orthodox views of the Dominican Order, which had commissioned the painting (fig. 3). If The crux of the argument is expressed in the image of Pope Gregory I (known as Saint Gregory the Great) being helped with the interpretation of the Bible by St Jerome, thus illustrating the Roman exegesis of pontifical primacy. Moroni used examples such as this one to build up his own figurative repertoire, distanced from the sophisticated experiments of Mannerism; he was interested mainly in complex questions relating to the interpretation of doctrine.

In 1551 Moroni was summoned to execute his most important public commission, intended for the church in Trent in which the Council fathers met; it was no coincidence that he reused a composition already tried by Moretto, although not without including some significant changes (fig. 2). This transaction marked a turning point in the artist's career. Everything seemed to be in his favour: the commissioning body, the location, the historic occasion. On the surface it seems very simple: the corporation of Lawyers and Doctors of Trent required a painter to produce a piece for their altar in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. It should not have been difficult to agree on a subject that was appropriate to the period, the location and the character of the commissioning body.

Behind these facts, however, lies a complicated reality. In 1546 the Bishop of Bergamo, Vittore Soranzo (1500–1558), was also a member of the Council.

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Giovanni Battista Moroni, Madonna and Child in Glory with the Doctors of the Church, c. 1551. Oil on canvas, 330 × 164 cm. Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Trent

His friend and mentor, the aged Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), begged him to go to Trent. Soranzo made a direct intervention in the deliberations on the Second Decree, and was clearly not in favour of the direction it was taking. Because of his less than ambiguous stance, suspicion soon began to deepen around him, to the extent that documents were sent from Trent to Rome deploring his conduct.<sup>12</sup> The Roman Inquisition subjected Soranzo to a long and humiliating trial from 1550 until his death in 1558.

Paradoxically, Moroni's public success with the altarpiece was based on the decree that had precipitated the downfall of the bishop of his own diocese, as well as that of the Spirituali, to whom the progress of the Council was to spell total defeat. This is likely the reason that Moroni, returning to Bergamo during the 1550s after the Council was over, found the number of public commissions entrusted to him much reduced; they now came mainly from the religious orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. The principal detractors of Bishop Soranzo thus became Moroni's most assiduous patrons during this tricky period.<sup>13</sup>

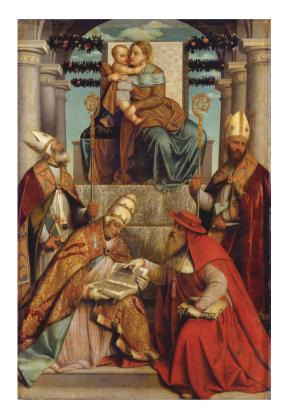
# State portraits in Trent

While the Council of Trent was occurring on the international stage, Moroni enjoyed some notable successes in portraiture. The works that remain from this period leave us in no doubt of his rapid progress. *Portrait of M. A. Savelli* (cat. 5), especially, sums up much of what Moroni must have gleaned from Moretto's teaching. Before he was welcomed to the private apartments of the nephews of the Prince-bishop of Trent – the brothers Giovanni Ludovico (1532–1600) and Giovanni Federico Madruzzo (c. 1530–1587) – Moroni had completed only a few small portraits from life, including *Portrait of a Knight in Black* (c. 1545–50; Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid) and the lost *Portrait of a Soldier* (c. 1545–50; formerly Galerie Trotti, Paris). These canvases bear witness to the first timid steps of a painter at the beginning of his career.

Portraiture did not occupy a central position in Moretto's *œuvre*, as it was to for Moroni, although the teacher left some milestones in the history of the genre, beginning with *Portrait of a Man* (1526; National Gallery, London), held to be the first full-length portrait of its kind in the history of Italian art. Once Moroni had escaped the direct control of his teacher by travelling to Trent, he was able at last to open himself to new influences, for example northern European painting.

The connection established with the Madruzzo family helps us to determine Moroni's presence in Trent during the years 1550 and 1551. The second phase of the Council was suddenly adjourned on 28 April 1552. The two state portraits of the nephews of the Prince-bishop of Trent, Cristoforo Madruzzo, certainly pre-date the summer of 1552. 14 In 1552 Madruzzo requested that Titian should paint his portrait. We do not know whether Moroni's portraits of the two nephews that followed were intended to be shown directly alongside the portrait of their powerful uncle. In any case, the pictures (figs 4, 5 and 6) must be compared – they constitute the first documented contact between the art of Moroni and that of Titian.

Giovanni Ludovico was the nephew for whom Cristoforo Madruzzo cherished the greatest ambition: from 1546 to 1550 he sent him to the Flemish town of Louvain to study under Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (1517–1586). In 1550



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Fig. 3 Alessandro Bonvicino, called Moretto, *Madonna and Child Enthroned* with the Four Fathers of the Latin Church, c. 1546. Oil on canvas, 248 × 187 cm. Städel Museum, Frankfurt



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Cristoforo managed to acquire for his nephew the title of Co-adjutant to the Sergeant of the Bishopric of Trent, laying the foundation for his succession to the position of prince-bishop, which took place in 1567. His tutor, Granvelle, Bishop of Arras and advisor to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, was unusually involved in the world of the arts, as we learn from his letters. In 1548 his portrait had been painted by Titian in Augsburg, Germany, and in 1549 by Anthonis Mor in Brussels (fig. 7). In Trent, Moroni inevitably would have come into contact with the international fashions and conventions of state portraiture that were spreading to the courts of Europe.

The process of defining the 'state portrait' had in Titian and Mor two undoubted trendsetters. The ultimate goal of the state portrait was:

that the person represented, without losing any of his facial features, should be returned to our gaze under a new guise, immutable and beyond the reach of time; the attributes of his social status and wealth – clearly described by his clothing and accessories – do not play a subservient role to that played by facial features or parts of the body. A module in short that in the best, most successful examples has more of the coat of arms or emblem about it than it has of the portrait, of the representation of a living person, so strict is the etiquette that governs it. <sup>18</sup>

Fig. 4 ↓
Giovanni Battista Moroni, Portrait of
Giovanni Federico Madruzzo, c. 1551–52.
Oil on canvas, 201.9 × 116.8 cm.
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Titian, Portrait of Cristoforo Madruzzo, 1552. Oil on canvas, 210 × 109 cm. Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand





Fig. 6 Giovanni Battista Moroni, Portrait of Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo, c. 1551–52. Oil on canvas, 199.8 × 116 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago











Fig. 7 →
Anthonis Mor, Portrait of Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, 1549. Oil on panel, 107 × 82 cm.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Fig. 8 ↓ Giovanni Battista Moroni, Bust of a Bearded Man, c. 1553. Oil on canvas, dimensions and whereabouts unknown.

Archive photograph (1880–1920) from the Berenson collection, Biblioteca Berenson, Villa I Tatti – The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies



Portrait of Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo (fig. 6) bears witness to the distance between Mor and Titian in which Moroni flourished. The objective accuracy used to render the sitter is made more powerful by the extraordinary concentration which emanates from the face. This expressive approach was to be difficult for Moroni to forget in future works.

# Return to Bergamo

After Trent, return to Brescia was unthinkable for Moroni. Moretto was growing older and his workshop was heading gradually towards an end, although the master still had energy for more masterpieces. Moroni had to return to Bergamo at this juncture. It was a critical moment that led to his fleeting flirtation with Mannerism. This can be glimpsed in the *Martyrdom of St Peter of Verona*, painted for the Dominican nuns of Matris Domini in Bergamo (c. 1553–55; Museo del Castello Sforzesco, Milan). A similar attitude can be found in the portraits of this period, notable in the strained poses that are palpably artificial, in fact almost unnatural. The unpublished *Bust of a Bearded Man* (fig. 8) must date from about 1553, judging by its similarities with the painting in Honolulu (fig. 9), which dates from that year. This new phase is characterised by a keener interest in capturing what seems to be





an instant in the life of the sitter using rapid brushwork that conveys a heightened sense of naturalism to the viewer. One example of this is to be found in *Portrait of a Carthusian Friar* (cat. 10), which must portray someone high up in the Order, although we have no clue to his identity.<sup>20</sup>

We can at least be sure of the identity of the subject of the Uffizi portrait (fig. 10), erroneously thought to be the humanist Giovanni Antonio Pantera. The truth is more modest: it portrays a notary from Albino, Giovanni Luigi Seradobati (a.1490–a.1565/1566).<sup>21</sup> Moroni paints him seated and turning towards the spectator. This was one of the first times the artist had tried this pose, which seems at once familiar and confidential. The most striking feature is the text clearly displayed on the cover of the book, which specifies it as the *Monarchia del Nostro Signor Iesu Christo*, written by the aforementioned Pantera and first published in Venice in 1545. The book enjoyed a certain literary success in Europe, which was at that time cruelly riven by destructive wars of religion. It was inspired by St John's Book of Revelation, and foretold the arrival of a happier millennium, climaxing in the cessation of all religious intolerance.<sup>22</sup>

We should not be puzzled that the painting of Seradobati – known to be from the later 1550s – features a book listed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

Fig. 9 C Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Man*, 1553. Oil on canvas mounted on wood panel, 102.9 × 81.8 cm. Honolulu Museum of Art

Fig. 10 ↑
Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait*of Giovanni Luigi Seradobati, c. 1558–60.
Oil on canvas, 81 × 63 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

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The religious anxiety that was spreading during the period interested a great number of people who were to all intents and purposes above suspicion, such as the notary Seradobati, an old friend of Moroni (and a relative of the painter by marriage). Research has revealed the existence of contemporary concern in the religious problems of that time, an interest demonstrated especially by professional notaries, who were attracted to the topic by the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam.<sup>23</sup>

The intransigent atmosphere that developed in the Catholic world after the election of Pope Julius III in 1550 is demonstrated by antagonism towards the Spirituali, led by Cardinal Reginald Pole. Not long after the election the tightening web of the Roman Inquisition left no escape for those who, in the past, had been guilty of Lutheran sympathies or compromising friendships. This happened to Basilio Zanchi from Bergamo, thought to be the subject of Moroni's portrait in Rotterdam (cat. 26).

# Prosperous years and a deadly feud

During the late 1550s and early 1560s the dearth of important public commissions Moroni experienced was compensated for by increased requests for portraits. Members of the leading families of Bergamo at the time, the Brembati, the Albani and the Grumelli, all enlisted Moroni - a tribute to his acknowledged skill in portraiture. It did not take long for the painter to become part of a small, élite circle. The tight-knit literary community of the city of Bergamo revolved around the figure of the humanist Giovanni Bressani (1490–1560; fig. 11) and included the female poets and writers Lucia Albani Avogadro (cat. 15) and Isotta Brembati (cat. 16), all of whom were painted by Moroni. The painter, busy with these new contacts, supported the intellectual aspirations of a world that expressed itself in verse, composed riddles and acrostics, and requested that portraits contain emblems. It is therefore surprising that neither the portrait of Isotta nor that of Lucia contains any reference to their literary accomplishments.

The new political order in Europe, finally settled by the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559, ratified Spain as the power dominant over much of Italy. Bergamo's proximity to the Duchy of Milan (which was under Spanish domination), as well as the political factions within the city and the assertiveness of pro-imperial circles all help to explain the appearance of Spanish inscriptions painted in Moroni's portraits (such as cats 18 and 19). This stage was short-lived and culminated around 1560 with Portrait of Gabriel de la Cueva, who was to become the governor of the Duchy of Milan. Moroni worked for important clients. These were good years, crowned with a series of masterpieces. Moroni's preference for naturalism increased, something that is instantly noticeable in Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (cat. 17) and the Portrait of a Doctor (cat. 27) – both dated 1560. His colours grew more sumptuous; the paint was applied in rapid strokes and with absolute mastery of the medium.

We cannot be sure how much Moroni knew of the art of the great contemporary painters of Venice (particularly Titian, with whom he is traditionally juxtaposed), or indeed whether this phase was influenced by contact with Venetian

Giovanni Battista Moroni, Portrait of Giovanni Bressani, 1562. Oil on canvas, 116.2 × 88.8 cm. Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh

painting. A trip to Venice, though hypothetical, does not seem impossible; however,

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the sources do not mention it. Instead, Ridolfi's famous anecdote (see page 31) suggests that Titian was aware of the naturalism of Moroni's portraits. At any rate, even if Moroni had not already seen a painting by Titian, he probably had the opportunity to view a portrait in Bergamo: *Portrait of Cardinal Filippo Aribinto* (1558; Philadelphia Museum of Art). Archinto was elected to the archbishopric of Milan in 1556 but because of the difficult political situation in the city the prelate could not gain access to his throne. He waited in vain in Bergamo until his death on 21 June 1558. Seven years later, in 1565, two monumental organ fronts arrived in Bergamo, painted by Paolo Veronese for a local church. We have no idea what these lost paintings looked like, we only know their subjects: the *Dream of St Joseph* and the *Meeting of St Joseph with the Virgin Mary*, <sup>24</sup> Surely Moroni saw them.

The unusual Portrait of Giovanni Bressani also belongs to this exceptional artistic period. A variety of factors persuaded Moroni to declare, via a very visible inscription, that the portrait was executed in the absence of the model ('QUEM NON VIDIT'); not least among these factors was Moroni's awareness that his own 'style' was to reproduce 'from nature'. This was a fairly exceptional position to adopt, but Moroni is no ordinary portrait painter. As Ridolfi reported, Moroni paints portraits 'al naturale'. 25 This means that he needs the model to be in front of him. He is not able to imagine, idealise or reinvent her or him. This is the characteristic that differentiates Moroni from Titian and his other contemporaries. Therein lie his limitations, but also his strengths. This is why Bressani's face is so weak, so generic, so lacking in definition. In addition, the person who commissioned Moroni to paint the posthumous portrait of Giovanni Bressani wanted to emphasise, similarly with an inscription, that the painting represented only the external features of the poet; Bressani's soul was locked away inside his poetic compositions: 'CORPORIS EFFIGIEM ISTA QUIDEM BENE PICTA TABELLA/ EXPRIMIT, AST ANIMI TOT MEA SCRIPTA MEI'.26

This successful period was curtailed by a dramatic incident involving the Albani and the Brembati families, two of the most important aristocratic clans in Moroni's circle. The feud that broke out between the families reached its climax in 1563 with the murder of Achille Brembati; this caused a great stir because the assassination took place in public, in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. A death sentence was passed on those who had carried out the murder; however the perpetrators escaped justice by leaving the jurisdiction of the Venetian Republic. Giovanni Gerolamo (cat. 41), the highly influential head of the Albani family (and one of the artist's greatest admirers), was sent into exile.

Henceforward Venetian control of Bergamo and of its pro-Spanish families became tighter, and perhaps as a result of this Moroni lacked important commissions. Bergamo no longer seemed to favour his activities, and he moved permanently to his native Albino.

After serving out his exile, Giovanni Gerolamo Albani enjoyed a sudden reversal of fortune. His friend Michele Ghislieri had been elected to the papal throne as Pope Pius V in 1566. In 1570, within the space of a year, Giovanni Gerolamo was exonerated from all blame and made a cardinal.<sup>27</sup> Soon after it seemed that the time had also come for Moroni to reforge his links with Bergamo.

# Two Altarpieces

Recent research has brought to light new documents relating to some of Moroni's religious paintings. We now know for certain that two works that seem very different from one another, the *Resurrection of Christ* in the church of San Martino, Sovere (fig. 13),<sup>28</sup> and the polyptych in the church of San Bernardo, Roncola (fig. 12), both date from the years 1561–62. They differ above all in format: the latter is a traditional polyptych, which had long since been superseded by the style of the former, a single painted altarpiece. Their dissimilarity should not cause too much surprise, as local clients were still divided between tradition and innovation.

The Sovere altarpiece shows the painter in narrative mode and exhibits a virtuoso composition; the main, static, image includes soldiers who are present at the Resurrection and have been partially cropped by the edge of the frame.

The circumstances of the commission for the painting in the church of San Bernardo in Roncola are very revealing, and involved characters from beyond the boundaries of the small village in the province of Bergamo. Due to a complex legal dispute, the syndics of the church requested assistance from the episcopal curia. The contract for the commission was drawn up in the house of Girolamo De Monte, deputy to the bishop, in the presence of other prominent figures,

such as the dean of the parish of Seriate, the prior of the Dominican monastery of Santo Stefano and the inquisitor Fra Aurelio da Martinengo. This might explain why the Roncola polyptych was archaic in format and strictly orthodox in its iconography. Given the roles of those involved, this altarpiece can be read as official work, despite its remote location.

There is a neo-medieval feel to the composition of the images of the saints in the Roncola polyptych, something furthered by the simplification of the individual figures, each made clearly recognisable by their attributes. The minute differences in proportions between the saints could have indicated to the congregation their different positions in the heavenly hierarchy. The painting anticipates the regulations promulgated by the Tridentine decree on images, made in 1563.<sup>29</sup>

It would be unfair to judge Moroni on this example, with its very delimited scope. In fact, our understanding of the painter's attitude to religious imagery is most enriched in the light of his more complex commissions, epitomised by *The Last Supper* in the church of Santa Maria Assunta e San Giacomo Maggiore in Romano di Lombardia (cat. 32). Here we witness a kind of inversion of the device of the vision, an inversion suggested by the presence of a portrait at the centre of the composition. This is no typical *Last Supper* with a pious worshipper separately appended;

Fig. 12
Giovanni Battista Moroni, The Madonna and Child with St Andrew, St John the Baptist, St Bernard of Menthon, St Defendens and St Roch, 1561–62. Oil on canvas in an oak frame, 400 × 260 cm (overall). Clockwise from top left, 95 × 55, 167 × 85, 95 × 55, 146 × 60, 170 × 95, 145 × 60 cm.
Church of San Bernardo, Roncola



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rather Moroni interprets the internal process of prayer by visualising the worshipper as a central figure at the very event on which they meditate. The space within the vision where the portrait sits is the pole of attraction for the spectator. During the 1560s and 1570s Moroni employed a succinct means of verifying the reality of biblical history, creating compositional schemes that allowed him to adhere faithfully to the contents of the Holy Scriptures (such as cats 8 and 9).30 This visualising form of prayer was expounded in the Spiritual Exercises (1548) written by St Ignatius of Loyola, in which the devotee assumes a more active, engaged role.

# Final years

We know from documents that it was in Albino, his birthplace, that Moroni lived out his final years. Despite his increased isolation, his skill at representing the interiority of his sitters grew. The subjects he painted there seem to have been chosen from the ranks of the provincial bourgeoisie, although often their identities remain unknown to us – a contrast to the more prestigious clientele Moroni had painted earlier in his career. The artistic achievement of those final years is, however, anything but provincial: it was in Albino that Moroni reached the highest, most innovative point of his long career. It was here that he painted portraits with the greatest profundity. Portrait of a Tailor (cat. 36) and Titian's Schoolmaster (fig. 17) have become Moroni's most iconic paintings, containing as they do the nucleus of a genre that was later to be taken up by the great European masters, from Van Dyck to Velázquez, from Ingres to Degas.

Moroni was aware that the sitter's pose, engaging expression and air of approachability are the main foci for the spectator's attention and interest. It is as if the painter were giving the spectator a greater role within the paintings of this final decade, transforming him or her into a silent protagonist in an imagined relationship with the sitter.

Portrait of an Elderly Man Seated with a Book (cat. 42) in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, demonstrates this claim perfectly. The sitter has been tentatively identified as the humanist Pietro Spino from Albino. There is nothing in the background to distract us from Spino's almost hypnotic gaze, which lies somewhere between melancholy and suspicion. The portrait of the humanist, here approaching the end of his life, possesses such vitality that the sitter seems able to look out beyond the space determined by the edge of the painting. In these ineffable spaces – between sitter, canvas and viewer – lies the modernity of Moroni's art.

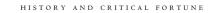
# Critical fortune: Moroni and England

Looking at Moroni's career in the broadest terms, it would be possible to claim that he is known above all as a portrait painter, and that art historians, painters and collectors alike have admired his work in this genre especially. As is the case with many artists, the posthumous appreciation of Moroni has not progressed through the centuries in an unchanging continuum; in the case of the master from Bergamo it has been more like a wave: sometimes rising, sometimes falling. Although he was favoured by art writers and collectors alike in the seventeenth century, Moroni's main period of rediscovery was the nineteenth century and its epicentre was England.

Fig. 13 Giovanni Battista Moroni, *The Resurrection* of Christ, 1561-62. Oil on canvas, 220 × 135 cm.

Church of San Martino, Soven

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An as yet unsolved riddle, which pre-dates Moroni's first known works, is the possible connection to England established by the mysterious Portrait of Henry Howard (fig. 14), conserved at Arundel Castle, West Sussex. The painting portrays the Earl of Surrey, a celebrated English humanist and poet. The youngest son of the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, Surrey was beheaded by Henry VIII on a charge of high treason in 1547. The sitter is portrayed in 1546, at the age of 29, as can be read on the inscription at the top of the arch beneath which he appears. The attribution of the painting to Guillim Scrots (fl. 1537–53), a painter at the Tudor court, seems almost to have been abandoned; for some time now it has been hypothesised that a pupil from the workshop of Moroni's teacher Moretto may have been the artist.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, our knowledge of the workshop is too scant to enable us to reconstruct the profiles or individual styles of the numerous pupils who worked there in the 1540s.<sup>32</sup>

It would be tempting to ascribe Portrait of Henry Howard to the young Moroni, however, given the void in his output (to our knowledge the years preceding his first work executed during his stay in Trent in 1548 are documented only in a series of drawings made in 1543)33 caution is advisable. A new piece of the jigsaw must appear before we are able to explain the matter more compellingly, or to unravel the phases of the artist's early career with conviction. Nevertheless it seems probable that the painting is somehow connected to Moretto's workshop. The prints that were probably used as a model for the rich decorative setting of statuary and architecture that surrounds Howard accord with the visual repertoire of Moretto's entourage. Nor should we forget that in 1549 Moroni painted an extensive series of secular wall paintings in Palazzo Spini in Albino. According to a later description, there Moroni 'painted a group of cherubs, who held aloft the heraldic bearings of



that house'.34 From this, it seems that the wall paintings contained Mannerist aspects similar to the portrait of Howard.

Whether or not Portrait of Henry Howard is by a contemporary of Moroni, the painting goes to show that a taste for the style of the artist has existed in England for four and a half centuries.

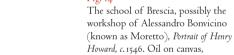
Moroni's fame grew progressively during the seventeenth century. This growth can be traced quite accurately by investigating such phenomena as art collecting, the art market and writing about art. The main centre for these three activities was Venice. It was from there that Moroni's work left the confines of the Venetian Republic on its way to the Kingdom of England or the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Bergamo, Moroni's province of origin, fell at that time within the boundaries of La Serenissima and the earliest books to mention the painter, Le Maraviglie dell'arte (1648) by Carlo Ridolfi and La Carta del navegar pittoresco (1660) by Marco Boschini, issued from Venetian printing houses. The first of these two authors, particularly, was very well informed about the painter and wrote an ambiguous anecdote that was to enjoy great success:

Men are sometimes born with natural talent, and with little effort come to be considered excellent, as with Moroni, who made very lifelike portraits; thus Titian is supposed to have said to the Rettori who were posted by the Republic to the City of Bergamo that they should have themselves painted by Moroni, who makes them 'from nature'.35

By the middle of the seventeenth century a development had taken place that justified the growing interest in the work of the long-dead painter. Obviously the sitters painted by Moroni were also deceased, and the paintings had either been bequeathed to heirs or had been sold. These representational objects were no longer laden with emotional or documentary value for those who owned them, and a radical change began to occur in the attitudes towards Moroni's portraits. They had now become sought-after collectors' pieces.

It was also at this time that the identity of the sitters was lost. Some regained their names over time, thanks to painstaking historical research, but others were lost forever. Such was the case with Moroni's two most celebrated portraits, Portrait of a Tailor and the so-called Titian's Schoolmaster.

It was in early seventeenth-century Venice that the collector and art dealer Bartolomeo della Nave (d. 1636), himself from Bergamo, created an extraordinary collection of Renaissance masterpieces, including works by Antonello da Messina, Giorgione and Titian. He owned Moroni's Portrait of Alessandro Vittoria (fig. 15), an exceptional likeness of the greatest Venetian sculptor of the sixteenth century, and Portrait of Giovanni Pietro Maffei (cat. 20). The two paintings are listed in the inventory that, through Basil Feilding, 2nd Earl of Denbigh (c. 1608–1675), reached James Hamilton, 1st Duke of Hamilton (1606–1649), who passed it on to King Charles I of England. 'The picture of Alexander Vittoria a famous painter [...] by Gio Batto Morone of Albino. Another picture [by Gio Batto Morone of Albino] of a man very good.'36 Charles I reacted enthusiastically to the extraordinary quality of the Della Nave Collection, as we learn from a letter written by Hamilton to Feilding in 1637:



222.3 × 219.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London

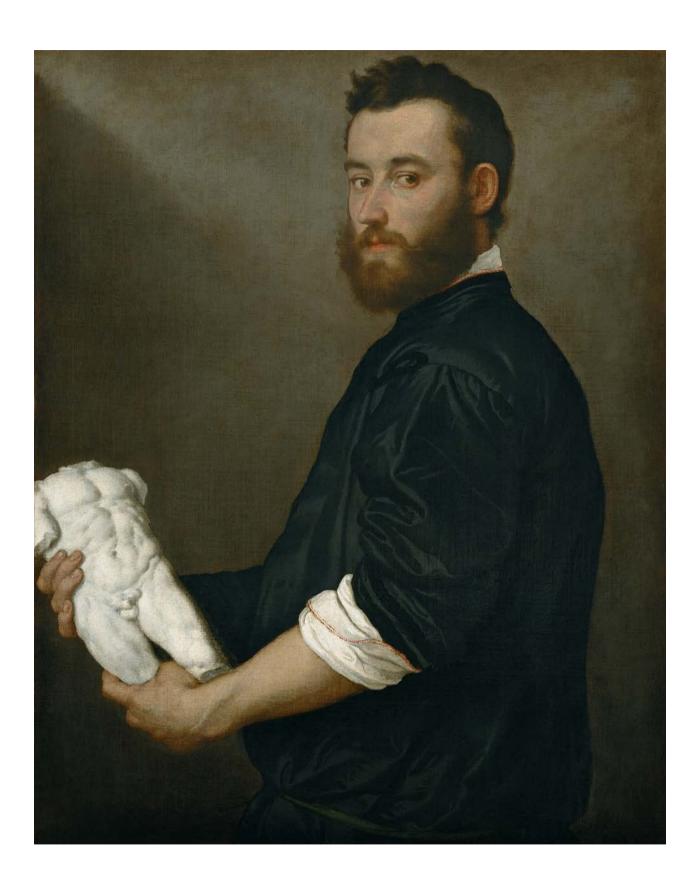
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His Majesty who having seeine the noot of Delanaves collection is so extremely takine ther with as he hes persuaded me to by them all, and for thatt end hes furnished me with munnis, so, brother, I have undertakin that they shall all cume into Ingland, booth pictures and staues, out of wich he is to make choyes of what he likes, and to repay me what they coost if I heave a mynd to turne marchand.<sup>37</sup>

The events surrounding the dispersal of the Della Nave collection are well known: it was acquired in its entirety and reached English soil by the end of 1638. This was an unpropitious period for the Kingdom. The following year war broke out with Scotland, a few years after that the English Civil War erupted. In such dramatic circumstances the Della Nave Collection was doomed to oblivion. After Charles I was beheaded in 1649, part of the collection travelled to Brussels under the ownership of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–1662), Governor of the Spanish Netherlands. During the agitation provoked by this transaction much of the knowledge that had been acquired about the paintings was lost, indeed even the correct attributions for many works were mislaid along the way. The two paintings by Moroni mentioned were both subsequently misattributed: the portrait of Vittoria to Titian and the portrait of Maffei to Titian's German pupil Jan Steven van Calcar (c. 1499–1546). In Brussels the Flemish painter David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690) painted a small copy of Portrait of Alessandro Vittoria. This was used for the engraving of the painting in the Theatrum Pictorium, the illustrated catalogue to the Archduke's gallery, published in Brussels in 1660, in which the work is still incorrectly attributed.

These misattributions are typical of the confusions that arise quite regularly in the art market. For example, Moroni's *Portrait of a Man* (c. 1560; Firle Place, Sussex) - bought in Florence by the Earl Cowper in the 1770s - arrived in England as a portrait of Pope Paul V, painted by Paolo Veronese. The most famous example is the so-called Titian's Schoolmaster. This painting departed the Borghese Collection in Rome in 1801 and from the moment of its acquisition, on behalf of the art dealer William Buchanan, it enjoyed unusual popularity in England. Long before it left Italian soil, the portrait had already attracted the attention of Anthony van Dyck who, during a stay in Italy that began in 1621, copied it rapidly into his travel notebook (fig. 18). Van Dyck believed it to be an original by Titian and Joshua Reynolds studied it as such in Rome over the years 1757 and 1758 (fig. 16). The aspects of the painting that struck both painters most forcibly were characteristics that were to play a fundamental part in the development of the portrait in England after Van Dyck: the relaxed pose of the sitter, the naturalness with which he or she established an intimate relationship with the spectator, and the profound scrutiny of his or her psychology, all rendered with absolute precision.

The people portrayed continue to exist only to the extent that the artwork is lifelike, and thus an imagined relationship is established between the viewer and the character he or she perceives in the picture. It is thanks to this special ingredient that Moroni's paintings continued to be appreciated, despite the misunderstandings about attributions. The popularity of his work was only to increase in the century that followed. The art writer Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake, wife of Charles, the director private diary of the acquisition in 1862 of a work by Moroni destined for the

Giovanni Battista Moroni, Portrait of the Sculptor Alessandro Vittoria, c. 1551. Oil on canvas, 87.5 × 70 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

of the National Gallery, understood this very clearly when she made a note in her

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museum in London: 'It is a celebrated picture, called the "Taglia Panni". The tailor, a bright-looking man with a ruff, has his shears in his beautifully painted hands, and is looking at the spectator. This will be a popular picture'. 38

During the nineteenth century critical opinion of Moroni took a decisive turn. The phenomenon took place in England, a country that was central to modern European connoisseurship, attracting important collectors to a stage created by the growing number of exhibition spaces and museums. Events contributing to Moroni's increasing popularity began to multiply, and it would be difficult to provide a detailed account for fear of omitting some of them. Nevertheless, this is an appropriate moment to provide some examples of a burgeoning tendency.

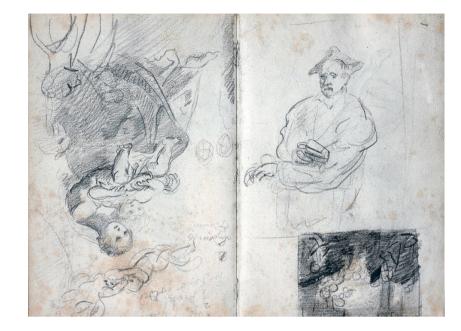
One event worth recording concerns the painter Angelica Kauffman (1741– 1807), one of the founders in 1768 of the Royal Academy in London. When her will was opened in 1807 it was learnt that in her private collection was included a 'self-portrait by Morone von Bergamo, the merito of which artist is well known'.<sup>39</sup> This painting was later acquired in Rome by the art dealer James Irvine (c. 1759– 1831), again on behalf of William Buchanan, to be added eventually to an English collection. The collector and dealer Richard Vickris Pryor (d. 1805) also managed to acquire a painting by Moroni in 1802 (cat. 24), one particularly admired by its owner, Count Faustino Lechi of Brescia, and regarded by the Neoclassical painter Andrea Appiani (1754–1817) as well. Similar cases occur frequently in the first half of the nineteenth century, demonstrating that the market moved rapidly, and that collectors were ready to seize every opportunity that presented itself and to see transactions through from start to finish.

The work by Moroni that attracted most attention at that time was undoubtedly Titian's Schoolmaster, acquired in 1810 by George Leveson-Gower, Marquess of Stafford. As has been noted, the painting was believed to be by Titian, at least until 1758 when the cognoscente and collector Count Giacomo Carrara (1714–1796) of Bergamo returned the attribution definitively to Moroni.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the painting continued to be associated with the name of Titian.

In 1824, to provide an explanation for the traditional title of Titian's Schoolmaster, the writer William Hazlitt claimed 'vague tradition' suggested Titian 'was in the habit of frequently visiting [the portrait], in order to study and learn from it.'41 The painting earned a certain measure of celebrity because it began to be borrowed for exhibitions of Old Masters organised by the British Institution in Pall Mall (where it was exhibited in 1818), and subsequently by the Royal Academy (featuring in 1871 and 1893).42

On the occasion of the very first Winter Exhibition organised at the Royal Academy, held in its new premises in Piccadilly in 1870, another portrait supposedly by Moroni appeared, also suffering problems with its title. Baron Mayer de Rothschild had lent the painting, which had reached him with the improbable title: 'Michael Angelo: an imaginary portrait'. The owner excused this to the organisers, writing that:

This is a very strange title and has often excited much doubt and curiosity. Count Corti and many others have endeavoured to verify it, but in vain. If you can give me a better version of the picture, pray do so. At all events many critics and literary men will see it in your collection and it will be discussed and perhaps new light thrown on the subject. If not, you must accept the account given to us at Venice.43





Sir Joshua Reynolds, sketch of Titian's Schoolmaster after Giovanni Battista Moroni, c. 1757-58. Black chalk on paper, 20.5 × 26.6 cm.

Sir John Soane's Museum, London

## Fig. 17 🔽

Giovanni Battista Moroni, Titian's Schoolmaster, c. 1575. Oil on canvas,  $96.8 \times 74.3$  cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Antony van Dyck, leaf from Van Dyck's Italian sketchbook page showing (clockwise from top left) Portrait of Ranuccio Farnese after Titian, an unknown portrait, Titian's Schoolmaster after Giovanni Battista Moroni and another unidentified portrait, 1621–27. Pen and brown ink with brown wash; black chalk, traced over with brown ink, 19.9 × 15.6 cm. British Museum, London



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Both of these episodes confirm that the name Moroni was not yet particularly well known by his new English public; this public was fed with anecdotes that referred to far more celebrated artists, from Titian to Michelangelo. For the time being, attention was shifted to the subject of the painting, until such time that the artistic qualities of the works should be better appreciated.

In the nineteenth century the great connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891) played the role of guide on the historiographical front, which in turn affected high-end collecting of Moroni's *œuvre*. We can measure the effects of Morelli's activities simply by studying the collection of the celebrated archaeologist Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) – a collection amassed largely following the suggestions of his friend Morelli.<sup>44</sup> Several of the portraits by Moroni acquired by Layard from 1865 onwards were bequeathed to the National Gallery, London, of which institution the discoverer of Nineveh served as trustee from 1866.

Around that time an important role in the modern rediscovery of Moroni was being fulfilled by the early directors of the National Gallery, beginning with Eastlake. As we have seen, in 1862, Eastlake acquired the famous *Portrait of a Tailor* for the collection; the painting was to become the artist's iconic work.

Morelli kept his friend Layard abreast of developments regarding the works of Moroni. In 1876 he wrote to him about the three portraits recently acquired by the National Gallery from the Fenaroli Collection in Brescia: 'Since fate has not decreed that these fine paintings should remain in Italy, I am very satisfied that they should pass into your public Gallery, rather than into any other. I have no doubt that they will be amongst its finest ornaments'. <sup>45</sup> With a hint of personal satisfaction, Morelli summed up what had happened:

It was not till the present century that Moroni attained that European fame which he deserves as a portrait-painter. During his lifetime he was highly celebrated in his own native district, especially in the Bergamo province, but was hardly known beyond the limits of the Venetian republic. At the beginning of this century nearly all his works were still in Bergamo and its neighbourhood, and the few portraits which had found their way across the Alps in former centuries were invariably shown to the public under the name of Titian or some other master. [...] Among the finest portraits by Moroni are three in the National Gallery, London.

Morelli also described the reaction of the public to the work of Moroni: 'his portraits all have a more or less prosaic look, but they must all have had that startling likeness to the original which so enchants the great public, who exclaim "The very man! Just how he looks!"

Portraits by Moroni are often to be found in the pages of English novels of the period, hanging on the walls of the houses belonging to high-society characters of the Victorian era; they are admired features representing the taste of the period. For example, in the elegant drawing room of Julia Dallow, one of the characters in Henry James's *The Tragic Muse* (1890) there hang paintings by Van Dyck and Moroni; Julia's fiancé, the tortured aspiring artist Nick Dormer, suggests donating them to the nation.

In Victorian novels the name of the painter from Bergamo was used to embody the tradition of great portrait painters, able to portray the interior world of their subjects with great realism. The painter Oliver Lyon, hero of Henry James's short story *The Liar* (1888), considered Moroni's *Tailor* to be among the half-dozen greatest

portraits in the world. It was the realism, the 'masterly clearness' of the painting in the National Gallery that served him as a model for the portrait he was painting of his adversary, Colonel Capadose; he wanted to convey the hidden truth about Capadose's soul.

In a page from her novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876), Mary Anne Evans, alias George Eliot, describes one of her characters as being like a modern portrait by Moroni:

Grandcourt [...] was lounging, while he smoked, in an easy-chair near the hearth, where a fire of oak boughs was gaping to its glowing depths, and edging them with a delicate tint of ashes delightful to behold. The chair of red-brown velvet brocade was a becoming back-ground for his pale-tinted well-cut features and exquisite long hands: omitting the cigar, you might have imagined him a portrait by Moroni, who would have rendered wonderfully the impenetrable gaze and air of distinction; and a portrait by that great master would have been quite as lively a companion as Grandcourt was disposed to be.<sup>47</sup>

We should bear in mind that the author was a friend of the then director of the National Gallery, Sir Frederic Burton, who at the time was engaged in the acquisition of the two Moroni portraits from the Fenaroli Collection in Brescia (cats 14 and 15).<sup>48</sup>

In Jacob Burckhardt's treatment of Moroni in the late work *Il ritratto nella pittura italiana del Rinascimento* (published posthumously in 1898, a year after his death), the great Swiss scholar was keen to emphasise the fact that opinions of the artist have changed: 'Moroni is much more admired today than is, for example, Bronzino with his best works'. He claims that this appreciation has been endorsed 'since the National Gallery gave him such a splendid welcome'. Then he compares *Portrait of an Elderly Man Seated with a Book* (cat. 42) in the Accademia Carrara with a painting he loved: 'who is not reminded of Rubens's *Doctor Van Thulden*, one of the most fabulous portraits in the Pinakothek in Munich!' Finally Burckhardt singles out a psychological explanation, perhaps inspired by his own advancing years, for the attraction that the portrait by Moroni continues to exert over the spectator: 'he looks serenely and good-naturedly out of the painting. [...] he has the expression of a person of enormous experience'.<sup>49</sup>

At this time comparisons between Moroni and various great, more recent portrait painters were not in short supply. Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), Morelli's star pupil, was carrying on his tutor's activities in the United States and, with the aim of praising Moroni's qualities as a painter and making them seem more up-to-date and relevant, Berenson suggests parallels between Moroni's *œuvre* and the work of Velázquez, and also identifies similarities between Giovanni Battista's portraits and the seductive grey-and-black paintings of Whistler. <sup>50</sup> In the latter case, the immediate outcome was that in 1895 his heiress friend, the great collector Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924), bought *Portrait of a Man* (1576) by Moroni, now in the museum named after her in Boston; Berenson thus opened the gates of a new market for works by the painter from Bergamo.

In addition to the portrait sold to Gardner, Berenson was involved in the sale of two other paintings by Moroni in the United States, including *Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi* (cat. 13), praised by the scholar for her 'superbe laideur'. 51 After his early love affair with Moroni – which was not entirely unmotivated by commercial

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considerations – Berenson was later to be responsible for the subtle denigration of the Lombard artist, whom he described as 'the only mere portrait painter that Italy has ever produced',<sup>52</sup> an opinion that was to influence the English-speaking world for years to come. *The Portrait in the Renaissance* by John Pope-Hennessy (1963) swiftly dismisses Moroni. The book is an example of the manner in which one of the greatest portrait painters of the sixteenth century was treated by some modern scholars.<sup>53</sup> One exception to this trend is Sydney Freedberg, a scholar who, although linked to the world of I Tatti, gave space to Moroni in his 1971 book on cinquecento Italy.<sup>54</sup>

After and despite Berenson's derogatory remarks, Moroni seems to have enjoyed pride of place in the 1930 exhibition of Italian art at the Royal Academy. The event owed more to international diplomacy than to art history, as it was strongly promoted by Benito Mussolini in order to advertise his fascist regime. This was to be Moroni's final appearance on the English stage for a long time.

A diminution in the appreciation of Moroni in the English-speaking world can be sensed if we compare the scale of two exhibitions held to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the artist's death, then erroneously considered to have occurred in 1578. The small exhibition at the National Gallery was a modest affair, consisting mainly, apart from a couple of loans, of paintings from the gallery's own collection. In 1979 Bergamo, by contrast, celebrated its own painter with a complete monographic exhibition crowned in the same year by the publication of the indispensable catalogue raisonné by Mina Gregori, still a work of reference today.

Gregori's study and reevaluation of the artist was produced in the context of the innovative studies of the art of Lombardy by Roberto Longhi (1890–1970). We owe to Longhi the idea of considering the sixteenth century in Lombardy as the true precursor of Caravaggesque realism, thus placing Moroni's mastery as a signpost along the route of one of the most important revolutions in the history of western European art. In Longhi's opinion, it was thanks to his Lombard background that Caravaggio (c. 1571–1610) could leave for Rome with 'the manifesto of the realist revolution already in his pocket'. The new approach taken by Michelangelo Merisi – and later continued by the nineteenth-century avant-garde – was thus founded on Moroni: painting from life, sur le motif, with 'penetrating attention' and 'calm confidence in being able to express directly, without stylisation, the reality that surrounds one'. St It should come as no surprise that, as Moroni painted the portrait of a tailor, the young Caravaggio should have painted the portrait of an innkeeper.

This truly Lombard story was presented in the large exhibition of 1953, 'I pittori della realtà', held at Palazzo Reale in Milan, two years after the extraordinary success of Longhi's 'Mostra del Caravaggio e i caravaggeschi' (1951). In total, it contained 35 works by Moroni, sacred and secular, revealing an artist who, by observing real circumstances, was able to remain independent of the mannerisms and fashions of his day — as distant from the heroic portraits of Titian as he was from the chilly effigies of Bronzino.

# Notes

- Freedberg 1971, pp. 408–09; Testori 1978; Rossi 1991, pp. 22–30; Zardin 2004, pp. 63–85.
- 2 Facchinetti 1995, pp. 19-29.
- 3 Vasari 1568, part. 6, p. 110
- 4 Aretino 1550, pp. 130-31, no. 189.
- 5 Aretino 1546, p. 97, no. 74.
- 6 Vasari 1550 and 1568, part. 3, p. 626.
- 7 Gigli 1615, p. 43.
- 8 Litta 2004, pp.111-15.
- 9 Ballarin 1988, pp. 159-94.
- 10 Guazzoni 1981, pp. 41–54.
- II Guazzoni 1988, pp. 264–67.
- 12 Firpo 2006, pp. 297–303.
- 13 It should not be forgotten that the first works Moroni painted in Trent, dating from 1548, are altarpieces commissioned by the Poor Clares at the monastery of Santa Chiara (Domizio Cattoi, in Trent 2009, p. 256, no. 47 and p.158, no. 48).
- 14 On this subject, it is worth noting that in July 1552, while on a naval mission to defend Naples, Giovanni Federico was captured by the Turkish fleet; he remained a prisoner in Constantinople until 1556. On the basis of this biographical data the two paintings have generally been dated to the years 1551 and 1552 (Gregori 1979, pp. 251–53, nos 92 and 311, no.
- 15 Vareschi 1993, pp. 62–68.
- 16 Ferrarino 1977; D'Amico 1996.
- 17 The first of these paintings is now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, attributed either to Titian or to his pupil Lambert Sustris (for a summary of the question of attribution see Bert W. Meijer, in Venice 1999, p. 548, no. 164). More generally, on portraits of Granvelle, see Curie 1996.
- 18 Zeri 1957, pp.12–13.

- The present whereabouts of the Bust of a Bearded Man are unknown; it is known only through a photograph catalogued among the anonymous sixteenth-century painters of Lombardy (no. 123184). The Berenson Photo Archive, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence.
- 20 One line of investigation to be considered involves the architect Andrea Moroni, a third cousin of the painter Giovanni Battista. From 1534 to 1560, Andrea Moroni was involved in the construction of the Certosa in Vigodarzere, near Padua (Della Mea 1976; Luchesa 1998). The Carthusian monks took up residence in their new monastery from 1554. Relations with the painter's family must have been very close, since in 1559 Andrea was appointed as procurator in an affair that was very important to Giovanni Battista's father, Francesco Moroni (Tiraboschi 2002, p. 32).
- 21 We are sure that Moroni painted a portrait of Giovanni Luigi Seradobati, as it is carefully noted in the will of Seradobati's nephew Giovanni Battista, which was drawn up in 1631. The painting was inherited by Gerolamo Seradobati, then in 1656 passed by his son Giuseppe, to Francesco Moroni: 'un ritratto in pittura del Morone di un vecchio sentato in cadrega' (Tiraboschi, forthcoming). In 1668 the painting was sold along with three other portraits by Moroni. The illustrious purchase was Leopoldo de' Medici who acquired it through his agent in Cremona, Giovanni Battista Natali. In the correspondence between Natali and Leopoldo de' Medici it is implied that the paintings have passed through the market in Brescia and are thus thought to be the work of Moretto, apart from one which is ascribed to Lattanzio Gambara (Bandera 1979, pp. 98-101; Archivio 2000, pp. 95-96). So far three of the four paintings sold by Natali have been positively identified; they are now in Palazzo Pitti, Florence (Paolo Plebani, in Bergamo 2004, pp. 224, no. 41 and 226, no. 42; Stefano Casciu, in La Galleria Palatina 2000, p. 373, no. 602). Confirmation of this interpretation of the sale of the property - which also involved the portrait in the Uffizi – can be found in the imous inventory of Leopoldo de' Medici, in which the four paintings quoted are all identically registered as being by 'a painter from Cremona' (Gregori 1979, pp. 261-62, no. 105; 262-63, no. 107; 263-64, no. 108).

- ... Caravale 201
- 23 Seidel Menchi 1987, pp. 322–27.
- 24 Vallardi 1830, pp. 53-54, nos 130-31.
- 25 Ridolfi 1648, vol. 1, p. 147
- 26 On the appearance of Giovanni Bressani see Caversazzi 1026
- 27 Belotti 193
- 28 Documentation relating to the Sovere altarpiece, dating from 1562, was discovered by Gabriele Medolago. On the Roncola polyptych see Medolago 2014, pp.560–88.
- 29 See the summary by Hecht 2014.
- 30 Facchinetti 2004в, pp. 131–33.
- 31 Karen Hearn, in London 1995, pp. 50–52, no. 14. The most thorough study of the portrait is by Bolland (forthcoming).
- 32 Whether through Francesco Richino or Agostino Galeazzi, we have documents from only the 1550s onwards. For Richino, see Fiori 2010, for Galeazzi, see Guazzoni 2014.
- 33 Litta 2004, pp. 111–15.
- 34 Tassi 1793, vol. 1, p. 164.
- 35 Ridolfi 1648, vol. 1, p. 47.
- 36 Waterhouse 1952, p. 19, no. 171–72.
- 37 Waterhouse 1952, p. 5. See also Shakeshaft 1986, p. 125.
- 38 Eastlake 1895, vol. 2, p. 173.
- 39 Manners and Williamson 1924, p. 244. On the history of the painting, whose whereabouts are currently unknown, see Gregori 1979, p. 314, no. 211.
- 40 The reference to Moroni's painting appears, opportunely, in the notes to the edition of Vasari's *Le Vite* written by Bottari. Bottari 1759, vol. 2, p. 46.
- 41 Penny 2004, p. 197.

- 42 London 1818, p. 15, no. 76; London 1871, p. 4, no. 14; London 1893, p. 28, no. 120.
- 43 Haskell 2000, p. 75.
- 44 Lennon 1993, pp. 241–52; Penny 2004,
- 45 Letter of 2 June 1876 from Giovanni Morelli to Austen Henry Layard, transcribed by Jucker 2012–13, p. 311, no. LXXXII: Puisque le sort n'a pas voulu que ces beaux tableaux restassent en Italie, je suis très satisfait qu'ils passent, plutôt que dans une autre, dans votre Galerie publique, dont ils formeront, je n'en doute point, l'un des plus superbes ornements.'
- 46 Morelli 1883, pp. 48, 49–50.
- 47 Daniel Deronda, George Eliot, [1876] London, 1996, p. 260.
- 48 Penny 2004, p. 197.
- 49 Burckhardt 1898, pp. 191, 312.
- 50 The name of Velásquez has been used to add value to Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi (cat. 23): Berenson 1896, p. 202. The name of Whistler has been attached to Portrait of the Man in Black now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan: Letters 1987, p. 49.
- 51 Berenson 1896, p. 202.
- 52 Berenson 1907, pp.128–30; Penny 2004, p.198.
- 53 Pope-Hennessy 1963, p. 205.
- 54 Freedberg 1971.
- 55 Longhi 1929; Longhi 1953. The idea of Caravaggio as a descendant of the Lombard Renaissance 'Caravaggesque Predecessors' won widespread critical acceptance and general approval, and not only among Italian critics. The exhibition in 'The Painters of Reality' (Cremona and New York, 2004) is a demonstration of this

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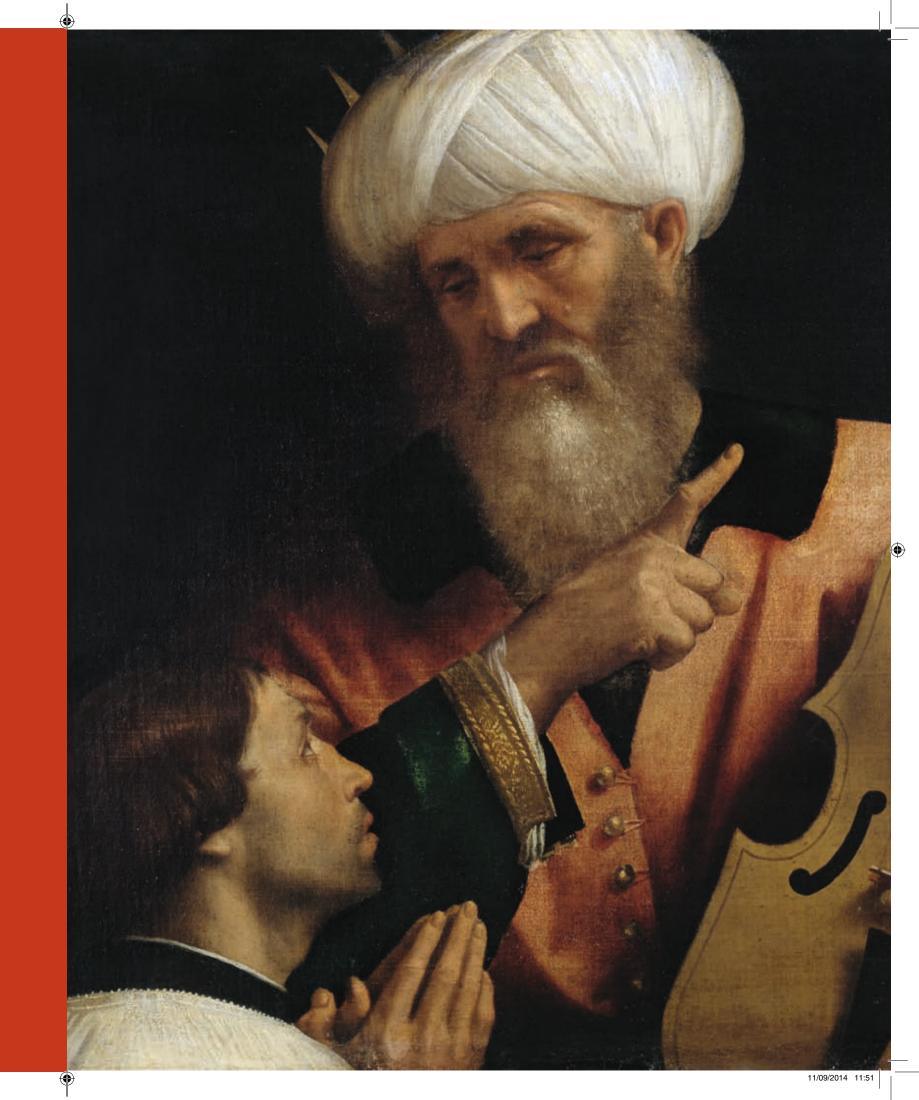


NOTES



# I

MORONI'S TEACHER: MORETTO





lessandro Bonvicino, known as Moretto (c. 1492/95–1554), was, with Gerolamo Romanino, the major Brescian painter of the sixteenth century. In the 1568 edition of *Le Vite* (*The Lives*), Vasari had no hesitation in preferring Moretto to Romanino. His choice was determined by the supreme 'diligence' displayed by the painter, whose name was incidentally associated with that of Raphael. Henceforth, in artistic literature, Moretto was referred to as 'another Raphael', the 'Rafael of Urbino', or the 'Raphael of Brescia' (Gigli 1615, p. 43; Paglia 1660–75, p. 183; Fenaroli 1877, p. 54).

What struck Vasari so forcibly was the painter's ability to 'imitate natural things', in particular heads and the fabrics used for the clothes worn by his sitters. In his descriptions of paintings by Moretto that he had seen in the capital of Lombardy, Vasari put his finger on some of the artist's special skills:

In Milan, in the houses of the Zecca [mint], there is a painting by the said Alessandro of the Conversion of St Paul, and other very natural heads, and very well dressed as regards fabrics and clothing, because the artist took great pleasure in simulating cloth of gold or silver, velvet, damask and other fabrics of all kinds, and in these he would most diligently clothe his figures. The heads painted by his hand are extraordinarily lifelike, and possess something of the manner of Raphael of Urbino (Vasari 1568, part 5, p. 427).

These unusual technical skills – which form the basis of a conscious direction in terms of style – can be clearly appreciated in the Sant'Andrea altarpiece (cat. I), painted during the years 1536 and 1537 for the church of the same name in Bergamo. Particularly successful in the painting are the 'very natural' heads of the saints, composed to express connected but disparate psychologies, and the brocades, velvets and other fabrics so skilfully simulated. Nor should we omit to mention the remarkable bowl of fruit placed in the centre of the paved floor: an added-on still-life that was to contribute to the genre's development. The naturalism here is not just a feature of the style, it is a way of seeing and representing the world. The piece of cloth acting as a carpet under the Madonna's feet bears horizontal lines marking the place where it has been folded. In addition, the pomegranate design on the piece of cloth is far from perfect. It was obviously a scrap of fabric, literally copied with all its imperfections.

It is quite possible that by this late date Giovanni Battista Moroni had already joined Moretto's studio. What is certain, however, is that the Sant'Andrea altarpiece remained an indispensable model for him, to the extent that he deconstructed and reconstructed it, copying separate parts of it over the years. If we had to imagine a work that fundamentally influenced Moroni's development, we would probably find no better example than this one. Its legacy is evident and instantly recognisable in even the setting and the general colour scheme of *Portrait of M. A. Savelli* in Lisbon (cat. 5), regarded as one of Moroni's earliest independent works.

Moretto's inclination towards naturalism sometimes had the effect of producing work that was judged to be much more modern in style than it really was. For instance, *Devout in Contemplation of King David*, (cat. 2), a painting for private devotion, was until very recently attributed to Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino (c. 1591–1666).

During Guercino's lifetime, the work was also attributed to Giorgione. The re-attribution to Moretto is no isolated example in the history of the gradual acknowledgement of the Lombard School of painting, regarded during Vasari's time as an offshoot of the Venetian School. The cities of Bergamo and Brescia lay within the boundaries of the Republic of Venice from the early fifteenth century (from 1428 and 1426 respectively) and followed the fortunes of their ruling city until the Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the population of Bergamo was only half that of Brescia. This explains the attraction that Brescia naturally exerted over Moroni. He showed ambition in choosing to enter the studio of the leading painter of the day.

Major nineteenth-century scholars harboured doubts about the attribution of the penetrating *Portrait of an Ecclesiastic* in Munich (cat. 3), ascribed first to Moroni and then to Moretto. These doubts show that we are entering an area in which the profiles of the two artists have become merged and confused. Today we acknowledge the wealth of evidence proving that Moroni developed a clear inclination towards portraiture, very different from the figurative culture of Titian and closer to the northern European tradition. Moretto's *Portrait of Count Martinengo* (cat. 4) is executed in the same vein as his *Portrait of an Ecclesiastic*, although the Lechi picture has the later date of the two. In it we can discern the highly successful stratagem that Moroni adopted for the layout of his portraits: the head and shoulders are placed at a diagonal with the head slightly turned to one side and lowered; the eyes gaze across to the opposite edge of the frame, the sitter's gaze meeting that of the spectator. The room setting is reduced almost to nothing, often no more than a monochrome wall. In this manner, above all else, the physical appearance of the model is emphasised – the face, the gaze. SF

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MORETTO

Madonna and Child on a Throne between Saints Eusebia, Andrew, Domneone and Domno, 1536–37

Oil on canvas, 224  $\times$  174 cm

Chiesa di Sant'Andrea Apostolo, Bergamo

2

MORETTO

Devout in Contemplation of King David, c. 1535–40

Oil on canvas, 74 × 85.5 cm

Kinnaird Castle, Brechin. The Southesk Collection



MORONI'S TEACHER: MORETTO 45



MORETTO

Portrait of an Ecclesiastic, c. 1540-45

Oil on canvas, 101.5 × 78 cm

Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. W.A.F. 683. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds



MORETTO

Portrait of Count Martinengo,

c. 1545–50

Oil on canvas,  $83.8 \times 67.8$  cm

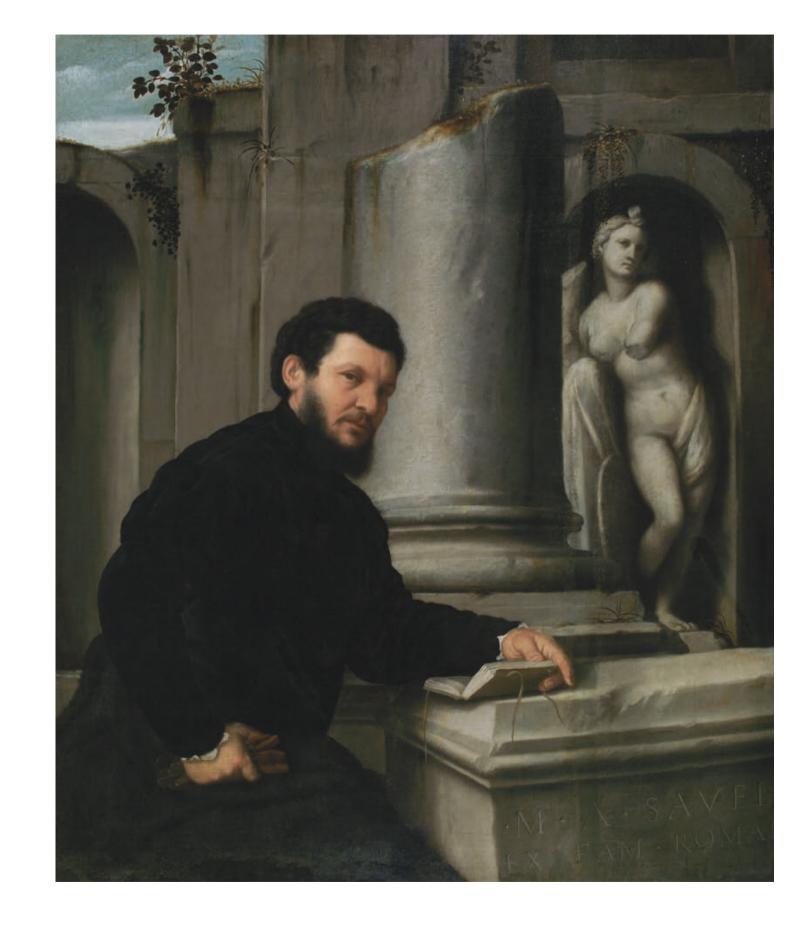
Museo Lechi, Montichiari, inv. ML27



Portrait of M. A. Savelli, c. 1545–48

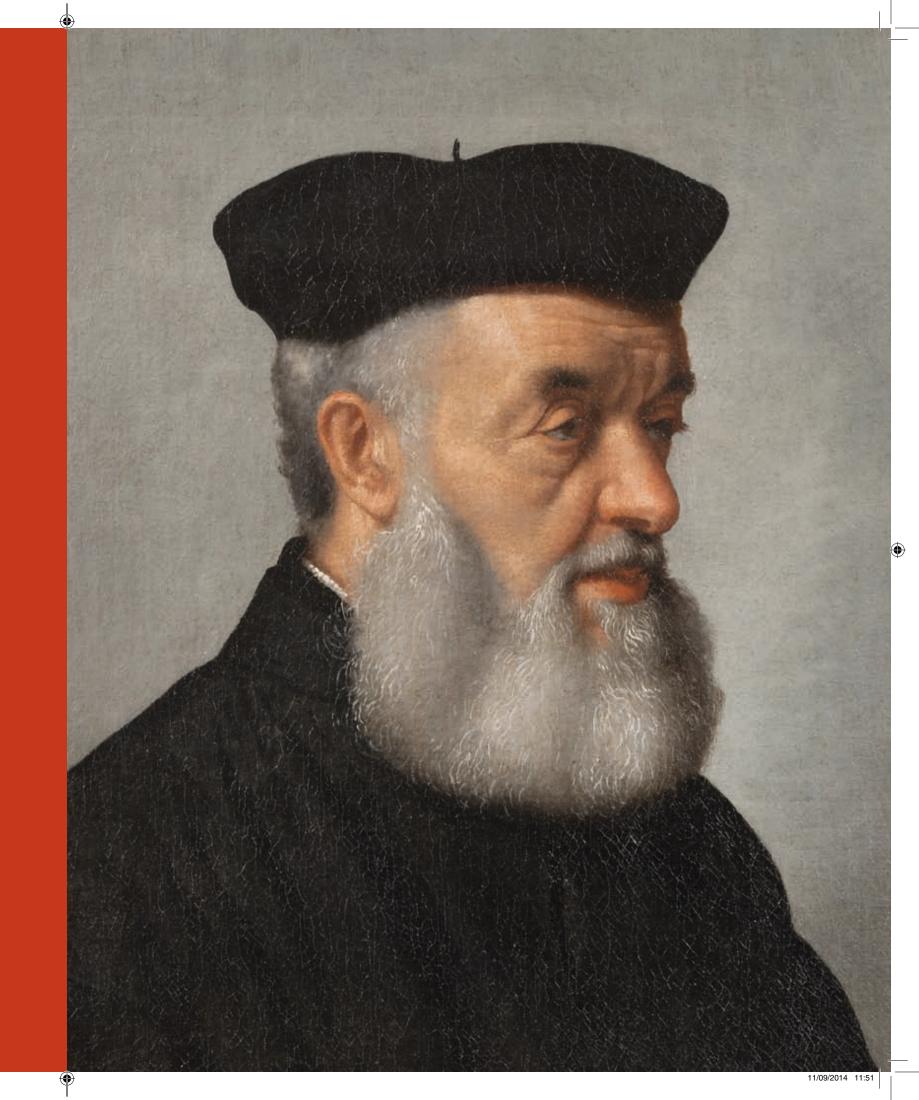
Oil on canvas, 137  $\times$  112 cm

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, inv. 92. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation





EARLY WORKS





nce an apprentice had permanently joined the studio of a painter during the Renaissance, copying was considered an essential part of his training. It formed an indispensable element of the apprenticeship, and also ensured that the trainee acquired a range of formal skills based on his teacher's own example. The studio of Moretto was unusually crowded with pupils during the 1540s. We are fairly well informed about the beginning of Moroni's career thanks to what remains of a book of drawings dated 1543. The pages contain single figures copied from paintings by his teacher, removed from their context. Contrary to what we might instinctively suppose, the process does not indicate that we are looking at the work of a novice painter. The drawings do, however, provide historical evidence of the change in the working practices of an artist at the time of the Council of Trent. The emphasis on invention, or the ability to devise new subjects and compositions, was now filtered through a completely different cultural sensibility. Invention had to submit to specific demands, within strictly established boundaries, and was increasingly confined in outlook by new orthodoxies regarding the representation of sacred images.

This new style – known as counter-Mannerism or anti-Mannerism – involved a conscious return to models from the past. This explains Moroni's free interpretation of *The Trinity* (cat. 6) by Lorenzo Lotto (a. 1480–1556/57). Only about thirty years separate the earlier from the later work, yet they give the impression of belonging to two very distant worlds. The assertiveness of Moroni's image is evident at first glance, characterised by saturated colours laid in crisp, clearly defined backgrounds. Lotto's lifelike, atmospheric landscape is restored to us in a simplified, stifled version with an artificial feel.

Another work inspired by an existing model is *The Calumny of Apelles* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes, *c.* 1554), derived from a print taken from an original work by Lorenzo Leonbruno (1524; Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). We still lack exact details linking the name of Moroni to the commission. In this case, the variations between the original and the copy are not very substantial, apart from the doge's cap, omitted from the symbols of power to be found in the engraving. It is clear that whoever commissioned the painting was a subject of the Republic of Venice and would not have appreciated the inclusion of anything that might have been disrespectful of the established government.

The source of Moroni's portrait Gentleman in Contemplation before the Madonna and Child (cat. 8) is even more unexpected; it is derived from a celebrated engraving by Albrecht Dürer, Virgin and Child on a Crescent (1516). This brings us into the sphere of private devotions and the representation of 'visualising' mental prayer, a meditative practice that was very widespread at the time, its observance being strictly laid down by St Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. In one of the earliest stages of prayer the person praying is advised to proceed to 'composition' or the 'visualisation of the place', according to the following precepts: 'composition means visualising with the eye of the imagination a physical location in which the thing I wish to contemplate is to be found. By physical location I mean for example a temple, or a mountain where Jesus Christ is to be found, or Our Lady, according to whichever

I desire to contemplate' (Loyola 1548, p. 108). It may be worth noting that the person praying was advised to draw inspiration from familiar locations and images. Bearing this in mind, it could be that Dürer's print had particular significance for whoever commissioned the portrait by Moroni.

In her portrait (cat. 13) Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi also seems to have been immortalised at prayer. She is holding a prayer book in her hand and her gaze is fixed elsewhere; its object will always be a mystery to the spectator. It seems very likely that the copy of the *Madonna and Child* by Giovanni Bellini executed by Moroni in the mid-1550s (now in a private collection) belonged to her. This information is of great interest as it allows us to witness the painter's habit of quite unashamedly transforming a fifteenth-century model into a modern image.

Both the portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi and that of Fra Michele da Brescia (cat. 12) present us with an apparent paradox. In each case Moroni has employed all his skill in rendering the model's true appearance. Physical defects are included without modification, noted quite straightforwardly without any attempt at idealisation. Despite this the sitters are distant, and are introduced to the spectator by inscriptions emphasising their deeds or general qualities. Such biographical details were intended to be exemplary to contemporary eyes. Moroni has striven to represent physically believable but morally idealised figures, introducing a distance and separating them from the direct gaze of the spectator. SF

EARLY WORKS

EARLY WORKS











6 LORENZO LOTTO The Trinity, c. 1519–21 Oil on canvas, 176 × 126 cm Museo Adriano Bernareggi, Bergamo, inv. 3000



The Trinity, c. 1552–53 Oil on canvas, 176 × 122 cm Chiesa di San Giuliano, Albino







Gentleman in Contemplation Before the Madonna and Child, *c.* 1555

Oil on canvas, 59.7  $\times$  64.8 cm

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, inv. 1939.1.114. Samuel H. Kress Collection



# 9

Gentleman in Contemplation of the Baptism of Christ, c. 1555

Oil on canvas, 104 × 113 cm

The Collection of Gerolamo and Roberta Etro





# IO

Portrait of a Carthusian Friar, c. 1555–57

Oil on canvas, 55.2  $\times$  50.5 cm Städel Museum, Frankfurt, inv. 904



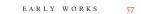
# 11

The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine, *c*. 1545–50

Oil on canvas,  $82.6\times67.5~\text{cm}$ 

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. A 446. Purchased, 1935

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Portrait of Fra Michele da Brescia,

Oil on canvas, 63 × 53.5 cm

Private collection

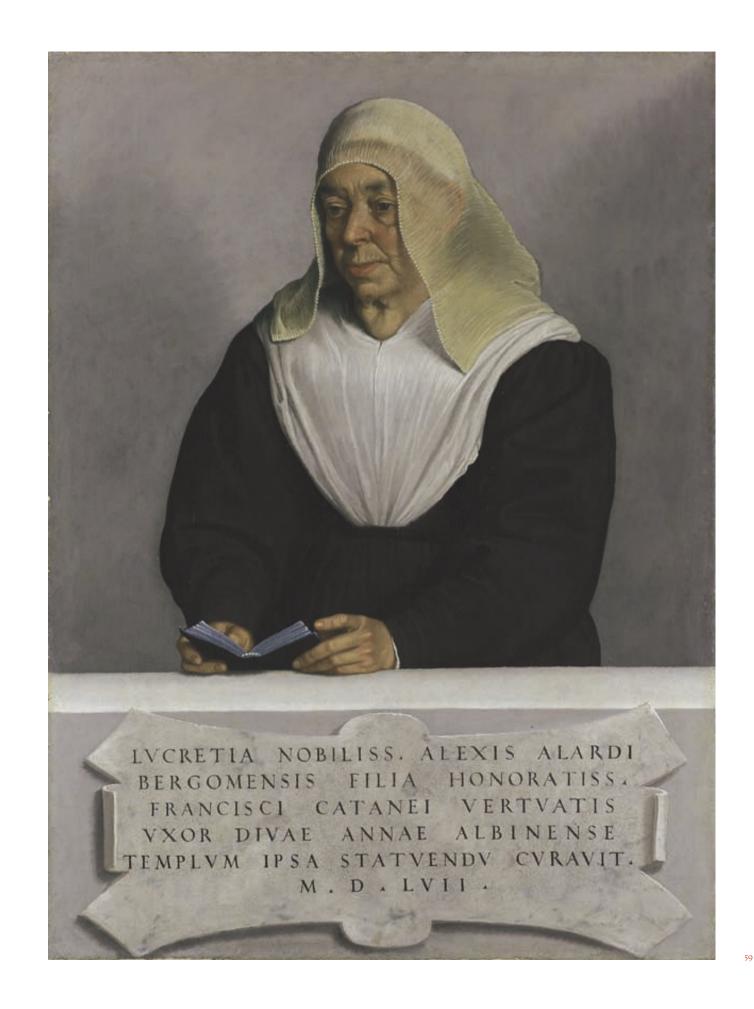
13

Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi, 1557

Oil on canvas, 90 × 67 cm

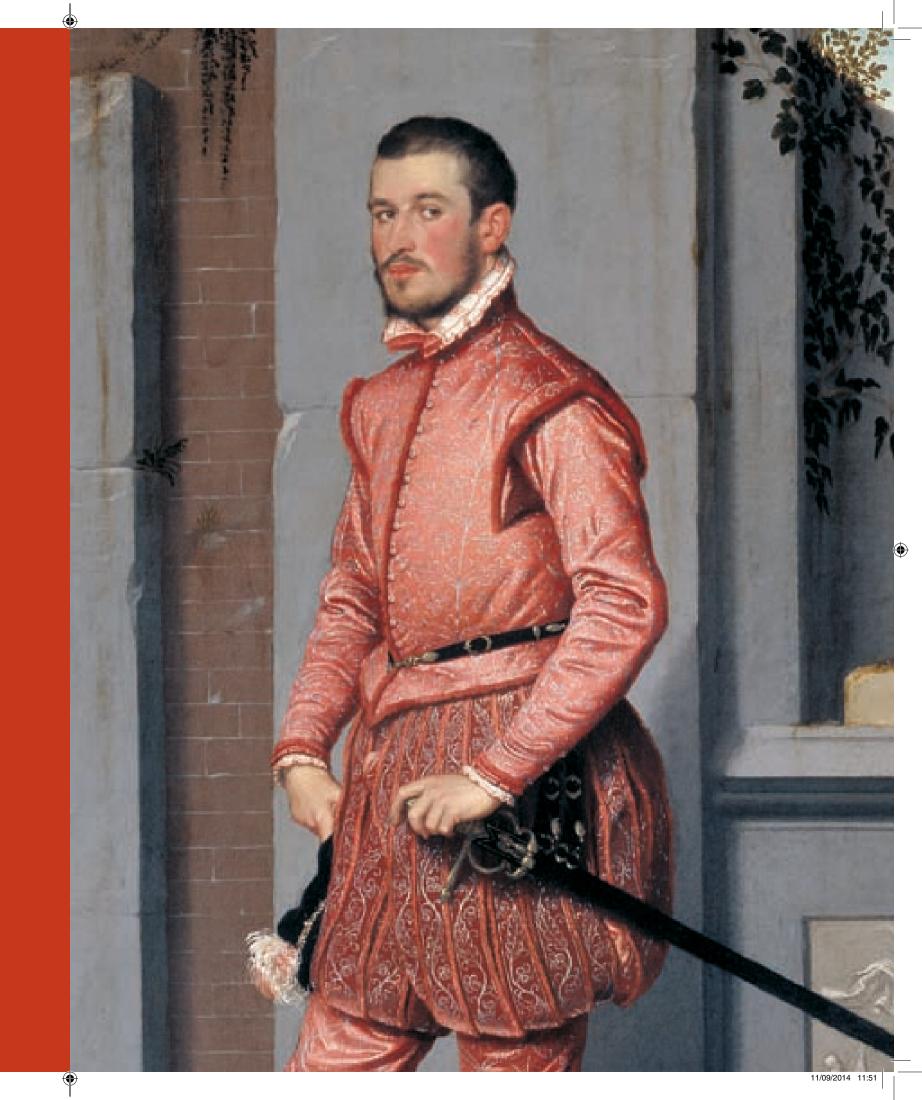
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, im. 30.95.255. Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915





58 EARLY WORKS

ARISTOCRATIC PORTRAITS





ollowing his second stay in Trent, which lasted from about 1550 to 1551/52, Moroni returned to Bergamo where he enjoyed a highly successful period in terms of his commissions. He produced a magnificent series of pictures featuring members of the local aristocracy, becoming their portrait painter of choice.

Of the various portrait formats he used at that time, the most prestigious was the full-length format executed in the tradition of Moretto, who was responsible for the first full-length, life-sized, independent portrait in the history of Italian art (1526; National Gallery, London). This format was also inspired by northern-European official portraits, whose generic style spread through the continent, also providing the model for Titian's imperial portraits from the 1540s. Moroni's early full-length portraits include those depicting the Madruzzo brothers (figs 4 and 6) and the supposed likeness of Michel de l'Hôpital (1554; Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan), which, more than the cooler, harsher portraits from the Trent period, follows in the wake of Moretto with its honey tones, a precursor to *Portrait of Faustino Avogadro* (cat. 14).

Although under the jurisdiction of the Venetian Republic, Bergamo was geographically and culturally closer to Milan, which belonged to the Spanish Empire. At the time of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), which established Spain as the dominant power in Italy, Moroni's aristocratic portraits depicted mainly pro-Spanish high society, including a number of prominent representatives of the empire, such as Gabriel de la Cueva (cat. 19), who was to become Viceroy of Navarre, 5th Duke of Alburquerque and Governor of Milan. Evidence of this is the ostentatious Spanish inscriptions and the clothing worn by some of the sitters (Gregori 1979, pp. 101–02).

Fashion is a central component in these works, and in his portrayal of it Moroni showed himself to be an attentive observer of social nuance, self-representation and contemporary dress codes: for the men, close-fitting jackets with padded shoulders and tight sleeves, full, puffed pantaloons, embroidered shirts with lace collars and very tight-fitting hose; for the women, *giorneas* worn over low-cut dresses, jewels, luxury accessories and elaborate hairstyles. We marvel at the silks and brocaded velvets in their brilliant colours, such as the striking shade of pink – with its heraldic significance – worn by Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (cat. 17).

However, as one looks at these aristocratic portraits one sees the colour black starting to become prevalent in men's fashion. Black was already the traditional colour worn by the Venetian aristocracy (Butazzi 2005, p. 47–55), and from the reign of Charles V it increasingly became the official colour of the Habsburg court in Spain, from there spreading all over Europe. The many suits of black clothing worn by the men portrayed by Moroni (cats 20, 21 and 22, for instance) mark this trend.

Moroni used a bright Venetian pictorial style to portray this elegant and aristocratic clientele, creating brilliant colours and shades to display the tangible luxury of fabric and jewellery that is especially evident in the portraits of Isotta Brembati (cat. 16) and Lucia Albani Avogadro (cat. 15). These two portraits of celebrated poetesses, as well as those of other literary figures – such as

Giovanni Pietro Maffei (cat. 20); our unknown poet (cat. 21); and the posthumous portrait of the humanist author Giovanni Bressani (1490–1560; fig. 11), the outstanding representative of the cultural life of Bergamo – testify to Moroni's proximity to the lively intellectual world that existed in the city in the second half of the sixteenth century. Erudite maxims and literary attributes appear as inscriptions within the portraits (such as cat. 22), and books in elegant leather bindings are held by the sitters or placed on parapets or broken columns so that their titles can be read (such as cat. 21).

Oddly enough, probably as a result of social convention, both the women, active members of the 'time of the poetesses' (Dionisotti 1965, p. 238), are portrayed with great pomp, solemnly seated like proud matrons, without a single attribute to suggest their literary activity. These two portraits were painted a few years apart and one was probably modelled on the other. The same is true of the images of their respective spouses: the portrait of Faustino Avogadro (husband of Lucia Albani Avogadro) is chivalrous in tone, and similar in composition to the more sophisticated portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (husband to Isotta Brembati), in which, apart from the sword worn at his side, there is nothing related to the martial world.

Despite their similarity, when shown together these four portraits embody a collision. Their juxtaposition here echoes the violent civil clashes that occurred in Bergamo in the early 1560s. The Albani and Brembati families were involved in a feud, fighting for political pre-eminence, which threw the town into confusion and led to the assassination of Achille Brembati in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in 1563. This event brought sudden change to the social life of the city, including the exile from Bergamo of those involved, for example the leader of the pro-Spanish faction, Giovanni Battista Brembati, and the 'collaterale generale' of the Venetian Republic, and close friend of the future pope Pius V, Giovanni Gerolamo Albani (cat. 41).

Towards the end of the Council of Trent, when Italy was almost entirely under imperial rule, a frontier city such as Bergamo occupied a key role; the new fortifications built there in the early 1560s bear witness to the besieged Republic's desire to regain tighter control. Moreover, the tragic outcome of the internal feuding between factions of the nobility meant that the atmosphere of well-heeled munificence — in which Moroni's aristocratic portraiture had flourished — disappeared. The portrait of Pietro Secco Suardo (cat. 22), dating from 1563, seems to mark the close of this illustrious period. The artist thereafter restricted his movements more and more to his native Albino, where he was to set in motion a quiet revolution with his 'natural' portraits. AG

62 ARISTOCRATIC PORTRAITS







Portrait of Faustino Avogadro (The Knight with the Wounded Foot), *c.* 1555–60

Oil on canvas, 202.3 × 106.5 cm

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 1022. Purchased, 1876

# 15

Portrait of Lucia Albani Avogadro (The Lady in Red), c.1555–60

Oil on canvas, 155 × 106.6 cm (including additions)

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 1023. Purchased, 1876











Portrait of Isotta Brembati, c. 1553

Oil on canvas, 160 × 115 cm

Fondazione Museo di Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo. Lucretia Moroni Collection

# 17

Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (The Man in Pink), 1560

Oil on canvas, 216 × 123 cm

Fondazione Museo di Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo. Lucretia Moroni Collection





MAS EL SAGVERO QVE EL FRIMERO









Portrait of Prospero Alessandri,

Oil on canvas, 104.6 × 83.5 cm

The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, inv. GE 2149

19

Portrait of Gabriel de la Cueva,

Oil on canvas, 112 × 84 cm

Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. 179



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20

Portrait of Giovanni Pietro Maffei, c. 1560–64

Oil on canvas, 88 × 70 cm

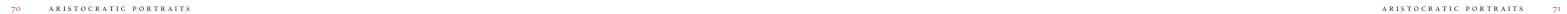
Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. GG 88



Portrait of a Gentleman (The Unknown Poet), 1560 Oil on canvas, 106 × 80 cm

Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 144









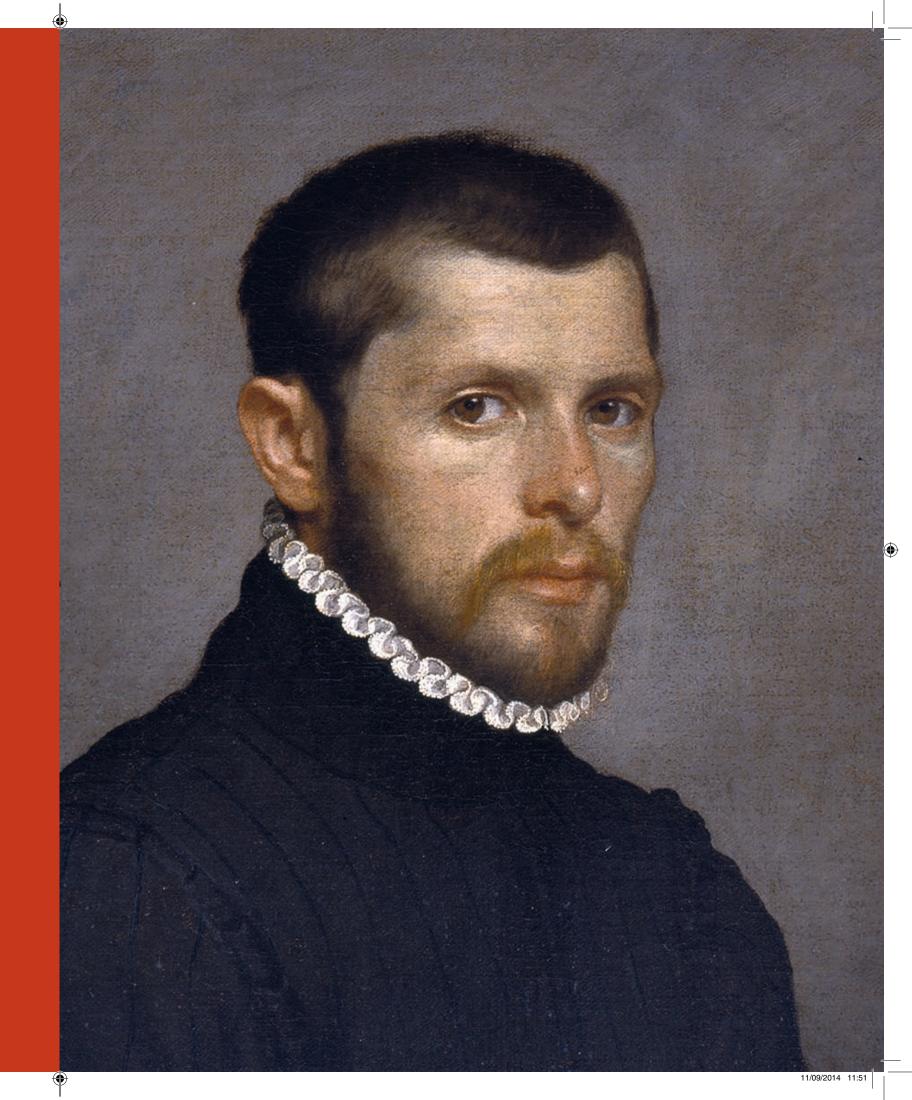
Portrait of Pietro Secco Suardo, 1563

Oil on canvas, 183 × 102 cm

Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 906. Soprintendenza Speciale per il patrimonio storico, artistico ed etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze









oroni's portraits are 'so true, so simple, so realistic they instantly make us feel sure that we know the sitters' (Longhi 1953, p. 5). This way of viewing the artist's specialisation in portrait painting has a very long history. The first person to acknowledge the quality of Moroni's portraits was the seventeenth-century painter and historian Carlo Ridolfi. From his vantage point in Venice he recounted an anecdote that was to become famous: in it he compares Titian and Moroni. Ridolfi writes: 'Titian is supposed to have said to the Rettori who were posted by the Republic to the City of Bergamo that they should have themselves painted by Moroni, who makes them "from nature" (Ridolfi 1648, vol. 1, p. 147).

This ambiguous passage pays tribute to Moroni's special skills but also makes a value judgement. The social standing of the person portrayed has a clear connection with the way he or she is represented on the canvas. It was acceptable for a rettore or *podestà*, in other words a rector of the Republic (such as cat. 28), to commission a lifelike portrait. The same would not do for a doge, a pope or an emperor, Titian's usual clientele. It is clear that, in writings on this subject, there was an undercurrent of disagreement. The closer we get to the present day the more this hierarchical judgement is overturned; indeed, a note of redress can sometimes be detected. Marco Boschini (1660, p. 360) praises the naturalism of Moroni's portraits, even writing an enthusiastic eulogy elicited by the portrait of the tailor (cat. 36) now in the National Gallery, London: 'There are portraits: but in particular / That of a Tailor, so fine and so well done / It speaks more loudly than if it were a Lawyer; / He has in hand his scissors and is about to cut.'

If we go back to the century in which Moroni was working, however, the scene changes radically. Sixteenth-century writing about art, as represented by Vasari, Pietro Aretino and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, contains strongly worded reservations about lifelike portraits. A rigid hierarchy held sway in the world of portraiture, and 'natural' portraits were considered appropriate for only the non-aristocratic social classes: 'To your disgrace, oh century, you allow even tailors and butchers to appear in painting, just as they are' (Aretino 1546, p. 226). Lomazzo (1584, p. 2,737) is very explicit in his definition of the portrait from life, 'that is to portray people as they are, so that they are recognisable as themselves by whoever sees them'. He also notes inadmissible abuse in the spread of this type of portrait: 'the art of portraying from nature is so popularised that almost all its dignity is lost'; nevertheless he admits that 'at least among connoisseurs this abuse has not lessened in any way the esteem accorded to this art, nor stained its purity' (Lomazzo 1584, p. 2,739). Vasari, Aretino and Lomazzo all express a very similar point of view. Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, author of a sixteenth-century work that provides further comment on the matter, is of a very different opinion: 'since these are called "portraits from nature", care must be taken that neither the face nor any other part of the body is made either more beautiful or more serious. Nor altered in any way from the nature that age has bestowed upon it; thus if there were defects, natural or accidental, that changed his aspect for the worse, these are not to be omitted' (Paleotti 1582, pp. 2,723–24). This attitude towards the sitter is clearly

endorsed by the portraits of Moroni; we have only to think of *Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi* (cat. 13) to realise it.

The naturalism of Moroni's paintings is the outcome of a technique that he perfected over the years. Some of the ingredients of this technique never changed. First and foremost the painter depicts his model as large as life. Proportions are always respected, and this contributes to the spectator's illusion of standing before the model. We know of only one preparatory study for aportrait (cat. 30). In general the painter omits the drawing phase: the absence ofunderdrawing has been confirmed by infrared reflectography carried out on a number of his paintings. Moroni painted 'from nature', in front of his model. The result is extraordinary spontaneity. The pictorial material – the individual – becomes tangible, vibrant, luminescent.

We do not know the function of these portraits with any certainty but in the case of many, we can guess. For example, *Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi* (cat. 25) — a portrait painted for a specific public place, the priory of the Lateran Canons in Santo Spirito, Bergamo — was probably commissioned after its subject was appointed Rector General of the Order in 1559. Nevertheless, nothing adulatory emerges from the painting. All has been put aside in favour of a painstaking record of the model's physical appearance. This is a documentary portrait, morally and ethically correct according to the standards that were to be laid down by Paleotti. SE



PORTRAITS FROM NATURE



PORTRAITS FROM NATURE

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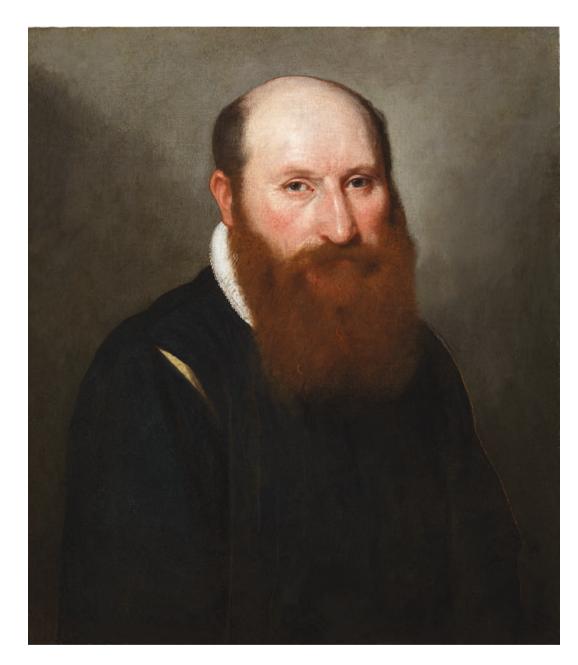




Portrait of Lucia Vertova Agosti, c. 1557–60

Oil on canvas, 51 × 50 cm

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, inv. 112



24

Portrait of a Man with a Red Beard, c. 1558–59

Oil on canvas, 60.5 × 52 cm

Private collection

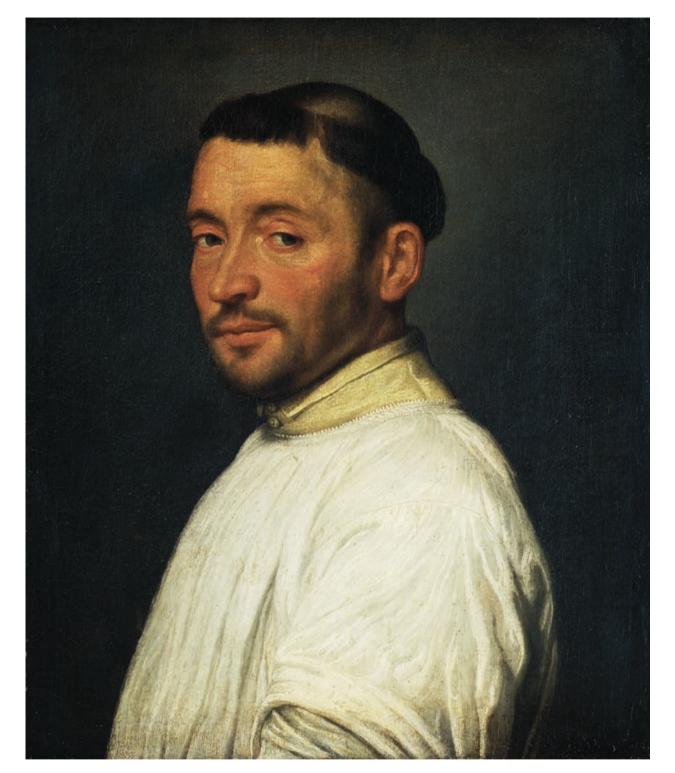
78 PORTRAITS FROM NATURE 79

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Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi, *c.* 1559 Oil on canvas, 58 × 50 cm Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 06 AC DP 088



Portrait of a Lateran Canon (Basilio Zanchi?), c. 1558 Oil on canvas, 58 × 48 cm Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2559







Portrait of a Doctor (The Magistrate), 1560

Oil on canvas, 116 × 91.5 cm

Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 147

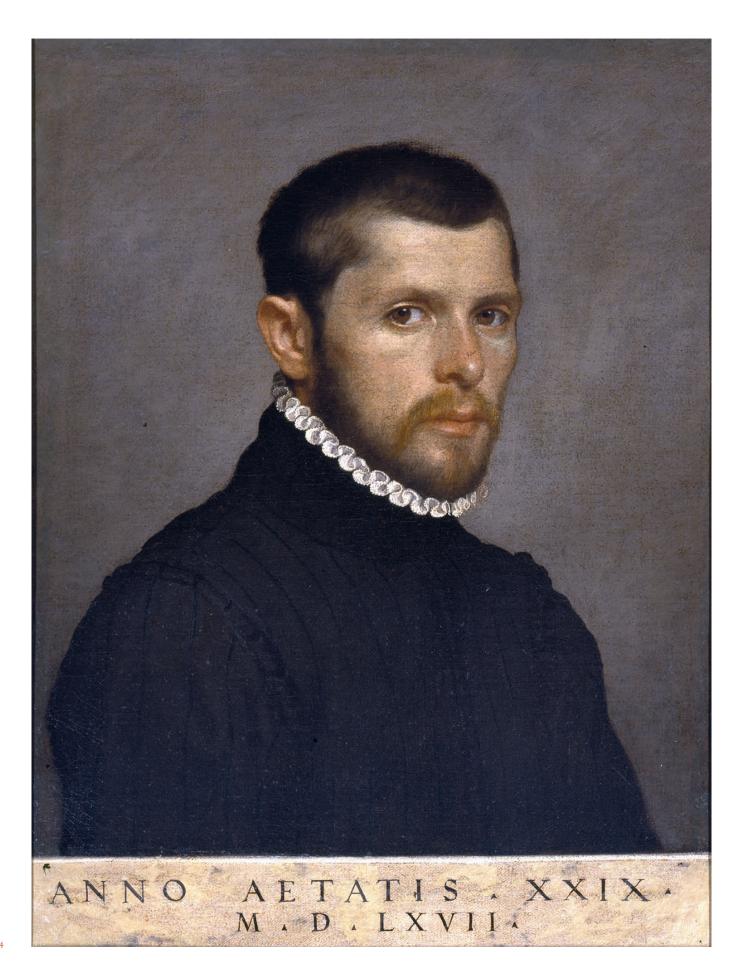


Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, inv. 334









Portrait of a Young Man of Twenty-nine, 1567 Oil on canvas, 57 × 45 cm Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00174



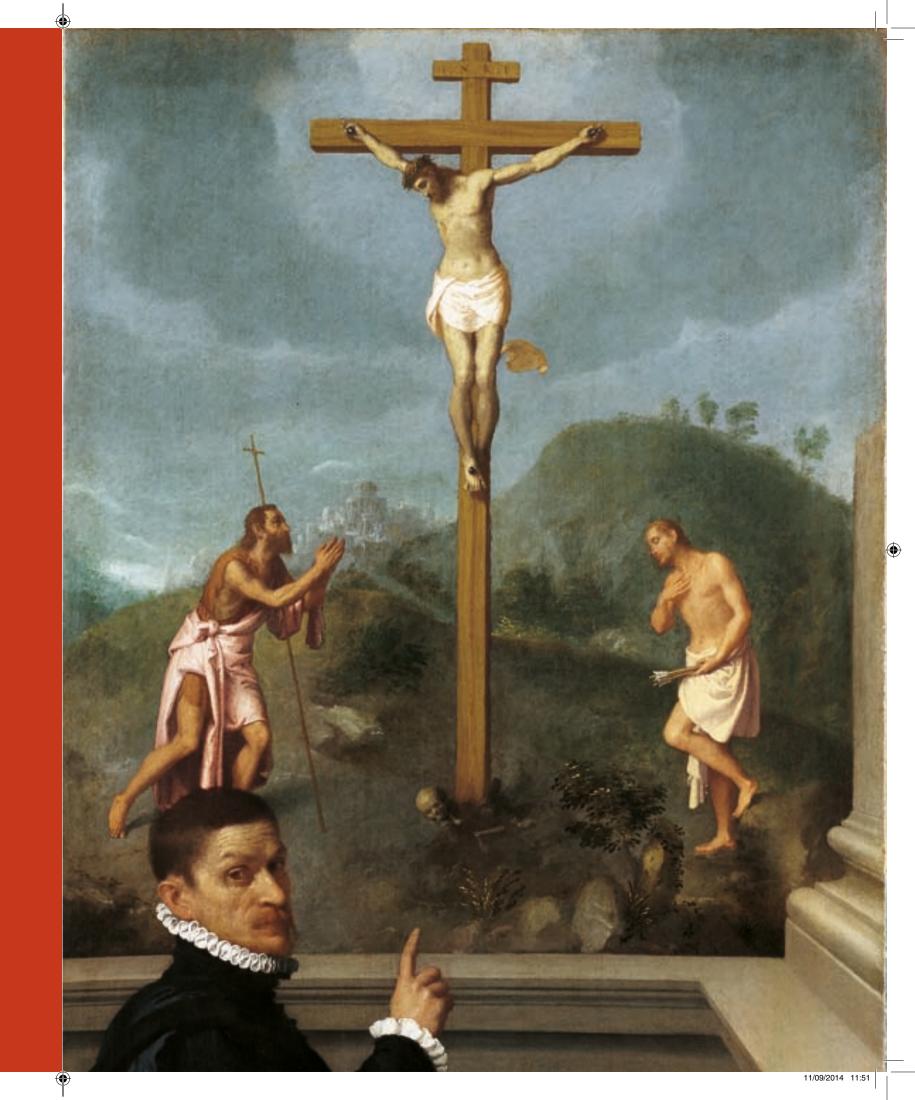
30

Head of a Young Man, c. 1565

Black and white chalk on grey-green paper, 20.8 × 19.7 cm

Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 437F

ALTARPIECES





ublic acclaim for Giovanni Battista Moroni coincided with a historical event that was to have an indelible effect on his future. It would be difficult to imagine a more propitious occasion, or context, than Trent in 1551. The reconvention of the ecumenical Council, instigated by Pope Julius III, began there in May of that year. One of the most important locations chosen to receive the delegates of the Council was the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The city's powerful corporation of lawyers and doctors had their own altar inside the building and they did not want to miss an opportunity to enjoy the limelight. They therefore commissioned Moroni to paint a monumental altarpiece, which took as its subject the second decree of the fourth session, passed by the Fathers of the Council in 1546, concerning the selection of the Vulgate translation by St Jerome as the authentic text of the Holy Scriptures. Madonna and Child in Glory with the Doctors of the Church (fig. 2) also draws attention to the fact that in the official decree the power to provide an interpretation of the Bible was reserved exclusively for the ecclesiastical authorities. It is important to bear in mind that the commissioning of the altarpiece and the beginning of the Council's work coincided; the painting was probably finished by July 1551.

After such an auspicious start, one might have expected that Moroni's work would have received an unconditional approval, perhaps supported by the highest cleric in the local ecclesiastical hierarchy, Vittore Soranzo, Bishop of Bergamo, who was present during the first phase of the Council of Trent. As it turned out, things did not go smoothly: Soranzo represented a minority faction in the Church, known at the time as the Spirituali, led by Cardinal Reginald Pole, who was eventually forced out of the Council. From 1550 on, the Roman Inquisition subjected Soranzo to a lengthy process of humiliating trials that ended only with his death in 1558.

It is probably no coincidence that Moroni's public commissions began to increase rapidly after the arrival of Soranzo's successor, Federico Cornaro, who served as Bishop of Bergamo until 1577. By now the general climate had changed and was resolutely orientated towards acceptance of, and obedience to, the principles laid down by the Council of Trent. Local parishes became artists' main clients; they were ready to exchange the old devotional imagery for a new set of subjects adapted to comply with contemporary forms and perceptions. The new imagery can be found in *The Last Supper*, a sophisticated painting made by Moroni in Romano di Lombardia between 1566 and 1569 (cat. 32). Never before had such a lucid exposition been made of the subject of transubstantiation, a point of doctrine that had split the Catholic and Reformed Churches. To make the image even more persuasive, the artist introduced a portrait in the figure of the witness, a flesh-and-blood individual who at the time was fulfilling a recognised and influential role in the community.

It was through works such as these that Moroni began to wonder about the principles of 'historical truth', and to try to find a way of interpreting religious history in a solidly orthodox manner. During this process of enquiry various experiments were made in which the artist endeavoured to paint the different levels of a vision simultaneously, as in the small altarpiece commissioned probably by

a member of the Guarnieri family (cat. 33). The gentleman portrayed in the painting guides the beholder's gaze towards the Crucifixion, which is contemplated by St John the Baptist and St Sebastian. These are two different dimensions: the real space in which the devout lives, and the space of his imagination in which the sacred vision is taking place.

In general, the use of narrative imagery was diminishing drastically and the representation of devotional subjects increasing gradually. Parishes felt the need to renew the cult of the saints; Moroni responded to this need, depicting his saints clearly and recognisably. The figures display their personal attributes, thus making instantly clear to the churchgoing public their name, their deeds and the protection they offered to each worshipper. Where this was not the case an inscription would be added to make the direct invocation to the patron saint even clearer; thus in the St Gotthard altarpiece in Gorlago (cat. 35): 'CONCILIAS SYMMVM/POPULO GOTTARDE/TONANTEM' ('Oh Gotthard, make the resounding peak kindly towards the people'). Worshippers would have immediately translated this apparently vague form of prayer into something more concrete; in this case, the protection of crops from storm and hail is sought.

Moroni's public religious commissions increased during the 1560s, accelerating as the apostolic visitation of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo in 1575 drew near. This increase also illustrates the strong links between Bishop Cornaro of Bergamo and his metropolitan bishop, the Milanese cardinal. SF

ALTARPIECES







The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine, c. 1565–70

Oil on canvas, 228 × 148 cm

Chiesa di San Bartolomeo, Almenno San Bartolomeo



32

The Last Supper, 1566–69

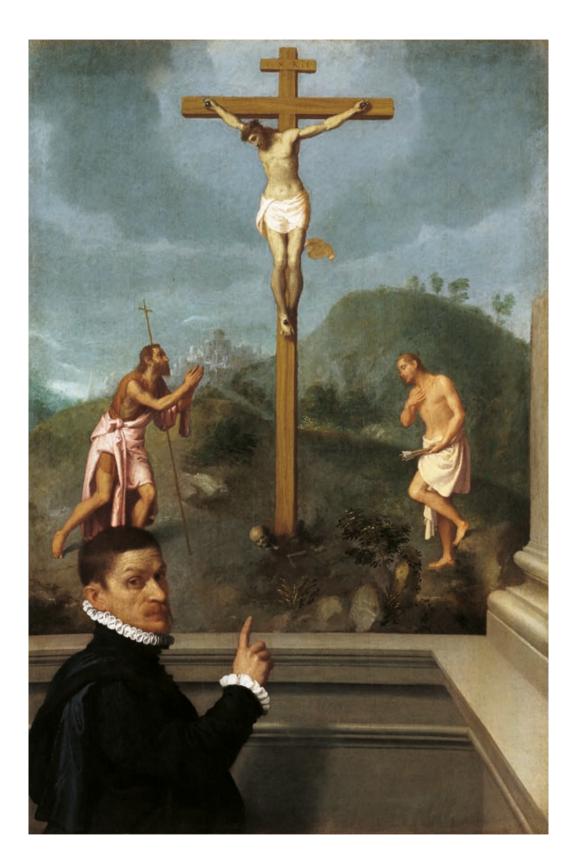
Oil on canvas, 295 × 195 cm

Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta e San Giacomo Maggiore, Romano di Lombardia

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A Man in Contemplation Before the Crucifixion with St John the Baptist and St Sebastian, *c.* 1575

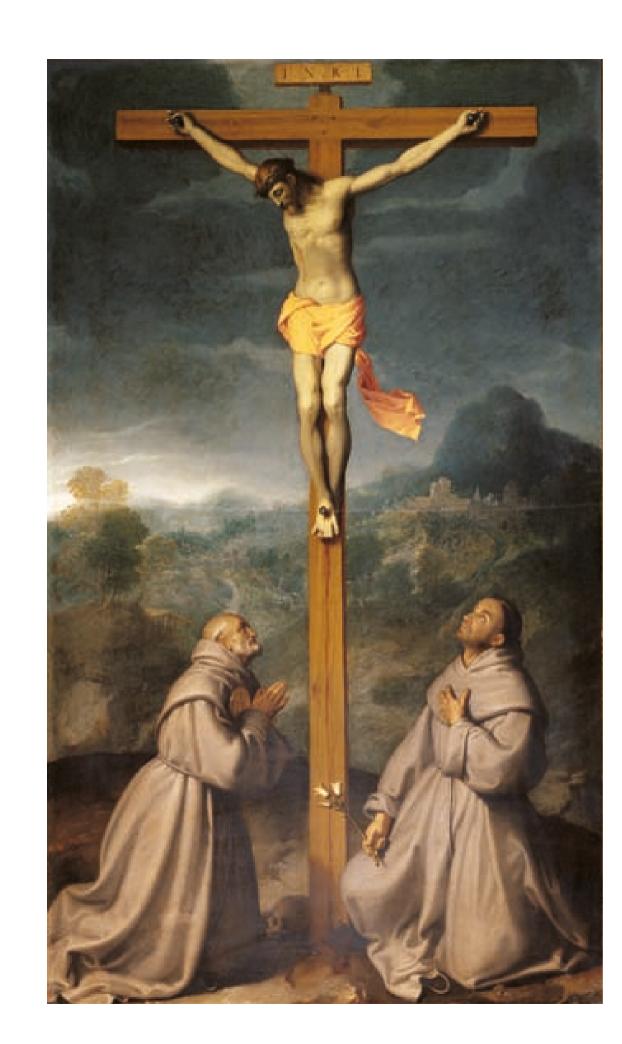
Oil on canvas, 160 × 100 cm

Chiesa di Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo

Crucifixion with St Bernardino of Siena and St Anthony of Padua, 1574-75

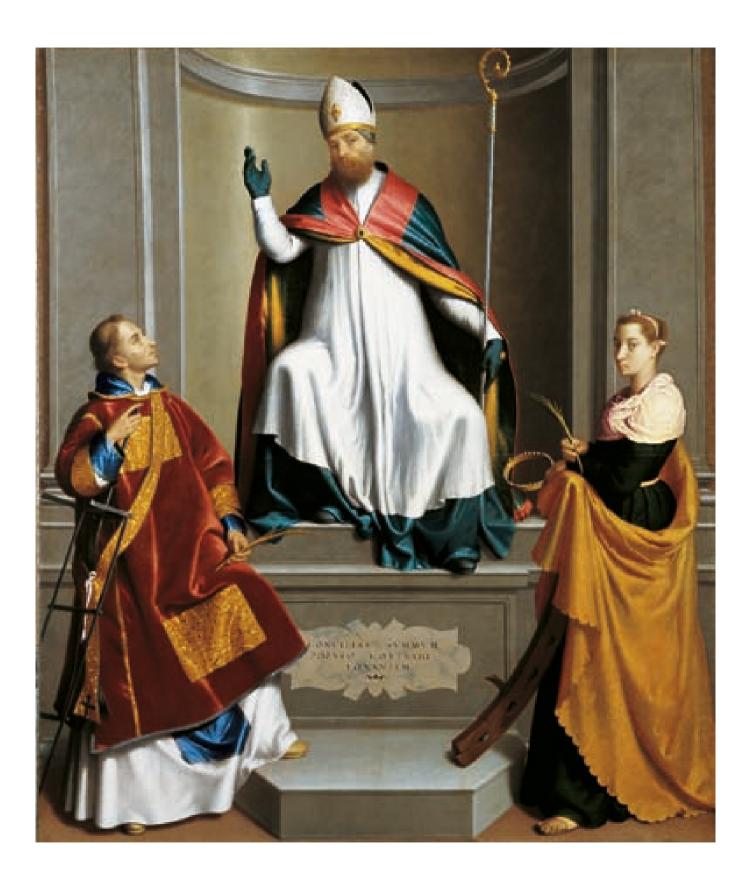
Oil on canvas, 226 × 133 cm

Chiesa di San Giuliano, Albino



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St Gotthard Enthroned with St Lawrence and St Catherine of Alexandria, 1574–75

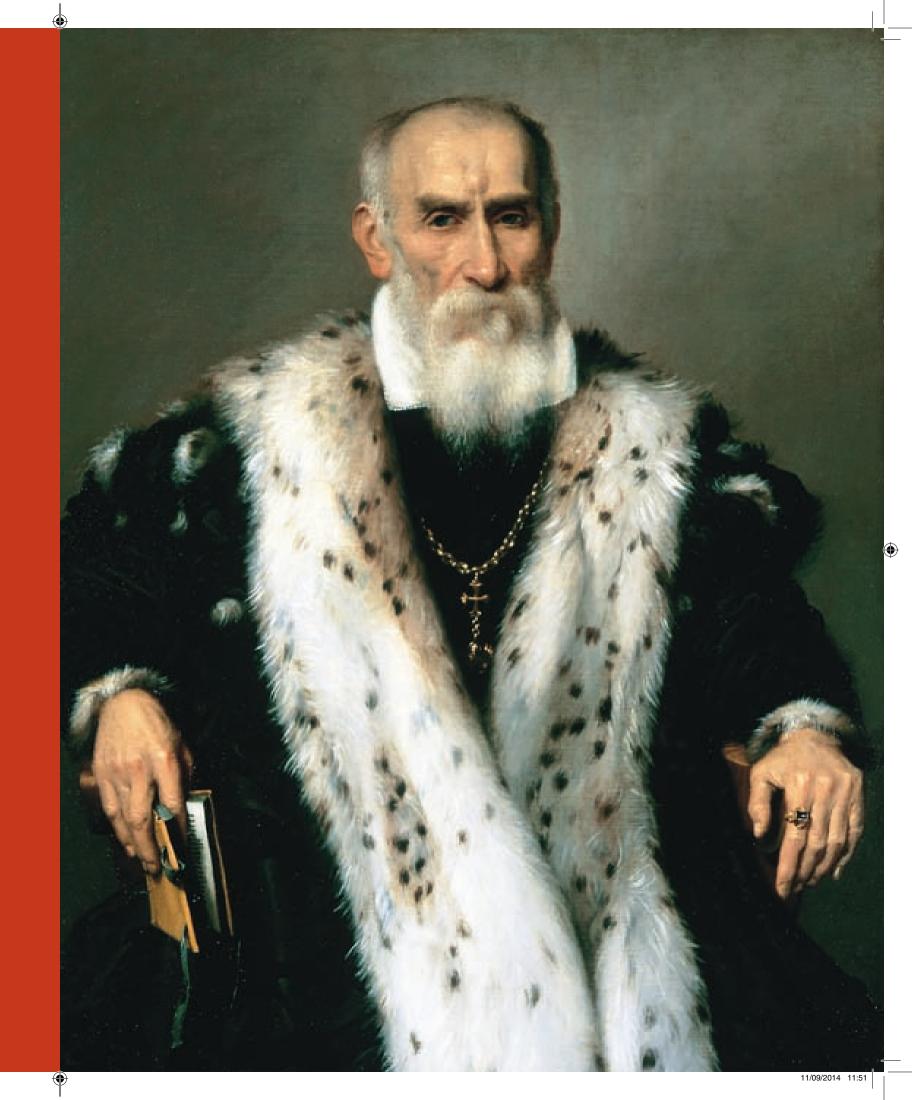
Oil on canvas, 260 × 198 cm

Chiesa di San Pancrazio Martire, Gorlago





LATE PORTRAITS





iorgio Vasari's travels in northern Italy in 1566 did not take him to Bergamo, thereby excluding Moroni from mention in the earliest comprehensive account of Italian art history. The exclusion of the city from Vasari's tour was to weigh heavily on the critical appreciation of one of the greatest portrait painters of the sixteenth century.

If Vasari had visited Bergamo, he would probably have seen the paintings but would not have met the man. Moroni was at this time working mainly in the town of Albino, a little removed from the limelight and the stylish commissions; his failure to coincide with Vasari may be a reflection of a less prosperous period for the artist, tucked away in his home town. Moroni's final phase, however, as well as being a period of intensive religious painting and profound reflection regarding the requirements of the Counter Reformation, was also a period in which he made especially remarkable achievements in portraiture. Although some late paintings display a diminution in quality, caused by fluctuations in the standing of the commissions, it was in this spell of relative isolation that Moroni reached his artistic zenith.

Documents reveal that Moroni was active in the local government and civic affairs of Albino (Savy 2004, pp.177–79). In 1567 he and Bernardo Spini (cat. 39) were given the task of supervising the construction of a new school, and, at the beginning of the 1570s, he attended meetings as a local councillor. This civic involvement ceased abruptly in about 1575, at a time when the artist was completely absorbed in the production of the large Counter Reformation altarpieces that were to adorn the neighbouring churches, marking the apostolic visit of Carlo Borromeo. It may well be that this frantic endeavour on the part of Moroni – carried out in solitude and at a time when he was no longer young – led to exhaustion and ultimately to his death at the end of the decade.

Among the portraits from this period, the *Portrait of a Tailor* (cat. 36) is a superb image of a craftsman, probably himself from Albino, at work. It is surely the richest vision of a countryman that Moroni completed during his time in the small town; indeed, it embodies the artist's poetics and is one of the masterpieces of sixteenth-century portraiture. The subject is quite unusual. Even though few other portraits of tailors from that century are known (Penny 2004, p. 236; Andrea Di Lorenzo, in Milan 2005, pp. 86–87, no. 2), a letter from Aretino appears to confirm the existence of other portraits of this type (Aretino 1546, p. 226). Because of the extraordinary, almost nineteenth-century, modernity of this image (Allan Braham, in London 1978, p. 5; Gregori 2000, pp. 24–25), the identity of the subject has been the subject of much discussion. The elegance of his clothes has encouraged various authors to view the work as the portrait of an aristocrat who has turned to selling fabrics (Rossi 1991, p. 90, no. 27). In fact, the young man's garments are not incongruous with his professional status or with contemporary prints depicting his trade (Grazietta Butazzi, in Milan 2005, pp. 87–88, no. 2).

Like Portrait of a Doctor (cat. 27) or Portrait of Giovanni Luigi Seradobati (fig. 10) — both earlier in date — Portrait of a Tailor belongs to a category of portraits representing people who often seem comfortably off, yet are not aristocratic. Moroni's sitters appear to have been interrupted in the midst of some activity, as if the painter wanted to capture their innermost being by representing them lost

in a moment of intense concentration or solitude. Famous portraits such as *Portrait* of a Tailor, or Titian's Schoolmaster (fig. 17), are to all intents and purposes bourgeois portraits avant la lettre.

These portraits were mostly of private significance. Originally they would have been viewed by an intimate circle of people, to whom the sitter was well known, which explains the lack of inscriptions or objects denoting status or identity. Sometimes a painted possession gives the modern viewer a clue as to the background of the sitter, but all too often it feels there is more to discover about the individual on a personal, human level. This is precisely the case with *Portrait of a Gentleman and His Two Daughters* (cat. 38). The man, portrayed with his children during a moment of family intimacy, is certainly from Albino. In the absence of any documentation his history remains hinted at, but unknown.

It would be especially gratifying to be able to identify the magnetic Accademia Carrara portrait (cat. 42) as Pietro Spino, the cultivated humanist born in Albino. This painting seems extraordinarily modern in its ability to suggest the subject's complex individuality – a distinctive feature of Moroni's late output.

Like an early portrait photographer, Moroni repeatedly uses the same props to immortalise his clients. The Carrara portrait contains the same Dantesca chair and the same yellow book that appear in several of the artist's late portraits (such as cats 37 and 41). He sets each figure before an identical grey wall and not only exactly reproduces their features, including wrinkles and irregularities, but also captures their emotional depths.

We have already seen the signs of this elevated – indeed, almost unique at that moment in history – approach to portraiture in a painting completed around a decade earlier, probably in Bergamo, *Portrait of Podestà Antonio Navagero* (cat. 28). Although the sitter was a senior civil servant of the Venetian Republic, and belonged to a very influential family (the heavily stuffed breeches and gown edged with lynx fur confirm his importance), our *podestà* looks out to the spectator in a good-natured, approachable manner. He reminds us of the protagonist of Ridolfi's famous anecdote (1648, vol. 1, p. 147), the Venetian functionary rendered 'al naturale'.

There is nothing of Navagero's cheer in the portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Albani (cat. 41). The powerful patriarch of the Bergamese aristocratic family is here portrayed in a solemn frontal pose. Exile stripped him of his position and honour but he still wears the dress of the 'collaterale generale' of the Venetian Republic. He looks at us with a severe, exhausted gaze, as if he has recently returned from a lengthy journey. There is something quite shocking in the raw power of this image, and the gnarled hands in the foreground increase this impact. Albani's return to Bergamo at the end of the 1560s probably signalled the renewal of Moroni's commissions from clients in that town, as we can see in the half-bust and half-length portraits of noble city ladies (such as cats 43 and 45), bejewelled according to the latest and most exclusive fashions.

During the 1570s, the artist also returned to the production of full-length aristocratic portraits, such as that of *The Knight in Black (c.* 1570; Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan), and *Portrait of a Man* (1576; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston). The subjects of these portraits generally appear, according to the fashion of the

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time, swathed in black; a characteristic which led the art historian Bernard Berenson to pronounce, in a letter to Isabella Stewart Gardner 'You will see it was not by any means Whistler who invented tone' (*Letters* 1987, p. 41).

Among these late masterpieces are to be numbered the pendant portraits of Count Bernardo and Countess Pace Rivola Spini of Albino (cats 39 and 40). The artist knew his sitters well, and depicts them with typical, uncomplicated precision and in an almost enamelled style. Despite Bernardo Spini's great wealth, the couple were noble after a provincial fashion: Pace Rivola's clothing is much simpler than the finery of the city ladies. The basic colour scheme of the two paintings, the cool shades, and the pose adopted by the sitters – stiff and slightly awkward in their thick clothing – create austere but very genuine images that put one in mind of a Velázquez.

The good-natured irony emanating from these images of provincial nobles; Albani's fiercely combative old age; the burning gaze of Pietro Spino, a soul disturbed from deep meditations; all are extraordinarily skilful examples of Giovanni Battista Moroni's ability to imbue his subjects with such a convincing sense of individualism that the portraits seem, nowadays, to be as much psychological depictions as they are representations of reality. These pictures represent Moroni's own view of the world. AG



Portrait of a Tailor (Il Tagliapanni), c. 1570

Oil on canvas, 99.5  $\times$  77 cm

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 697. Purchased, 1862

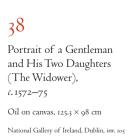


IOO LATE PORTRAITS





















40 Portrait of Pace Rivola Spini, c. 1573–75 Oil on canvas, 197 × 98 cm Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 00083



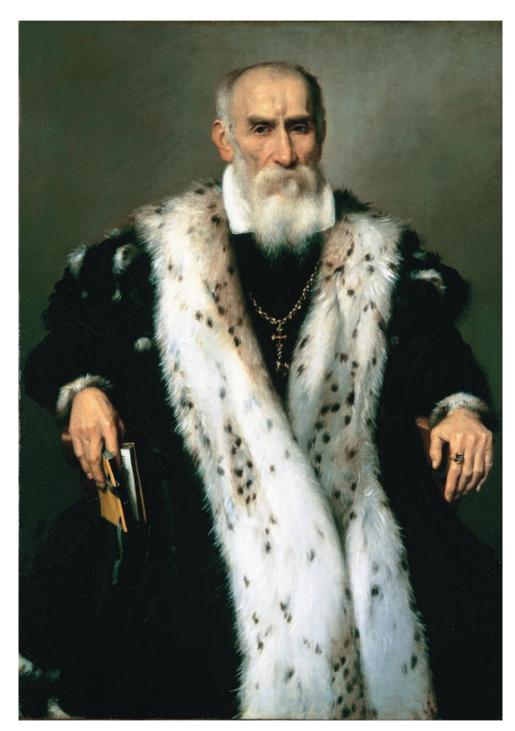
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4.I Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Albani, c. 1568–70 Oil on canvas, 110 × 77 cm

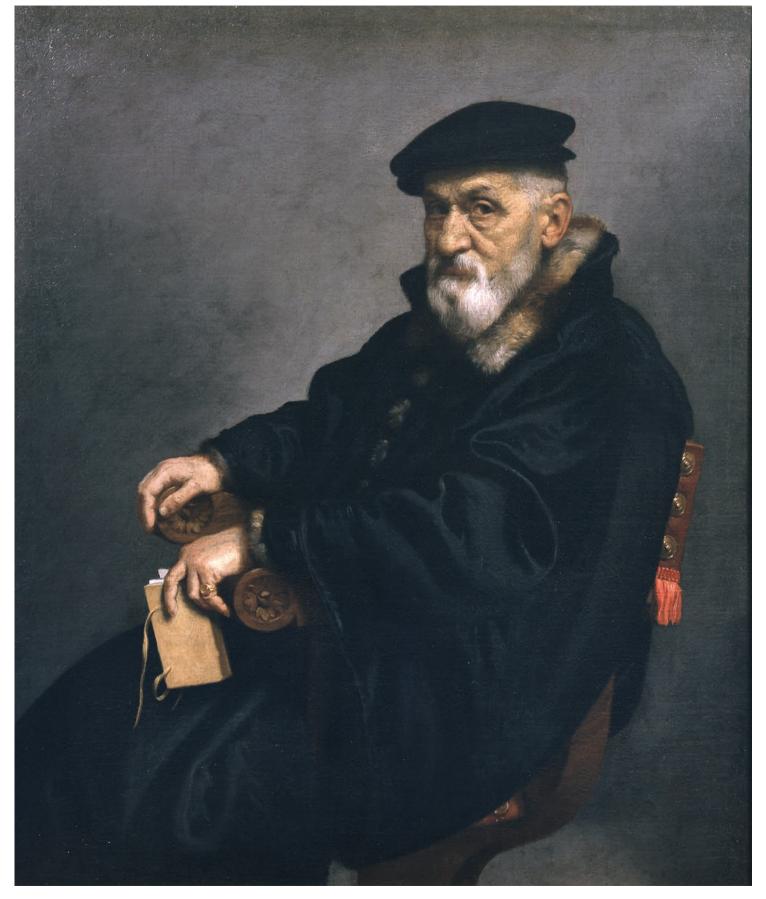
Private collection



42

Portrait of an Elderly Man Seated with a Book (Pietro Spino?), c.1575–79

Oil on canvas, 97.5 × 81.2 cm Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 0084



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Portrait of a Young Lady with a Fan, c. 1575

Oil on canvas,  $73.5 \times 65$  cm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK A 3036. Purchased with the support of Vereniging Rembrandt



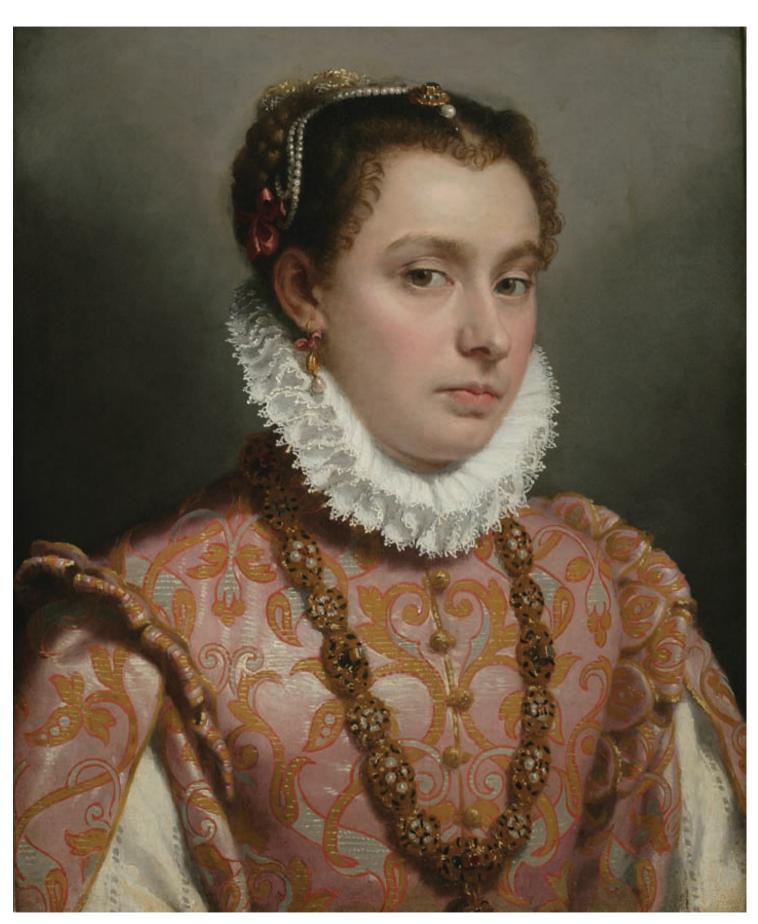
44

Portrait of a Girl of the Redetti Family, c. 1570–73

Oil on canvas,  $40 \times 32$  cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00175. Gugliemo Lochis Collection, 1866





Portrait of a Young Lady, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 51.8  $\times$  41.5 cm

Private collection





LATE PORTRAITS III

# CATALOGUE ENTRIES



ALESSANDRO BONVICINO, known as MORETTO,  $(\epsilon. 1492/95-1554)$ Madonna and Child on a Throne between Saints Eusebia, Andrew, Domneone and Domno, 1536–37

Oil on canvas, 224 × 174 cm

Chiesa di Sant'Andrea Apostolo, Bergamo



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The throne bearing the Madonna and Child is poised above a monumental step with colossal architectural features behind it. The presence of a paved floor suggests that we are in a portico, opening onto a glimpsed landscape. The Holy Child struggles to free Himself from the Madonna's arms, turning towards St Andrew, who strains under the weight of a heavy wooden cross, the symbol of his martyrdom as well as of Christ's future Passion. Through a carefully

orchestrated network of glances the siblings Eusebia and Domno look out at the spectator while their uncle Domneone is in communication with the Madonna. The saints (excluding Andrew) are richly attired and each holds the palm of martyrdom: according to medieval tradition they were proto-martyrs from Bergamo, slain at the beginning of the fourth century during the persecution of Christians by the Emperor Maximian (Finazzi 1847, p. 22).

The painting was first recorded by Carlo Ridolfi (1648, vol. 1, p. 265). In a biographical profile of Moretto, Ridolfi described the subject in some detail as a 'Madonna with Saints Domno, Domneo, & Eusebia, aristocrats of Bergamo, of the Claudia family'. The work remained the church's main altarpiece for three centuries (Calvi 1661-71, p. 19), and moved to a side chapel when the building was refurbished in the midnineteenth century. The painting has always been greatly admired, by writers and artists alike (Facchinetti 2012, p. 35). Thanks in particular to Roberto Longhi (1929, p. 113) the contemporary quality of the still-life has been appreciated; it is a precursor of the independent development of the genre that began, in Italy, with works such as Caravaggio's Basket of Fruit (c. 1596–97; Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

The recovery of archive material related to the painting has thrown light on the circumstances and the period of its commission (Rodeschini 1981, pp. 24-28). In 1534 the vicinia of Sant'Andrea decided to enrich their church with an altarpiece. They elected as their community representative Marcantonio Grumelli, the husband of Medea Rossi (who may be depicted in cat. 37) and father of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (cat. 17). to oversee the commission. On 17 June 1536 the Brescian painter Alessandro Bonvicino, known as Moretto, received an advance for the work, which was to be delivered on 24 November 1537. These dates make unsustainable the hypothesis that his pupil Giovanni Battista Moroni had any part in the work, as had long been supposed (Vertova 1976, p. 7). Nevertheless it is clear that for Moroni the Sant'Andrea altarpiece was strongly influential, so regularly did he ransack it for individual ideas to incorporate into his own work, from the lost Vall'Alta altarpiece (documented in 1562; Previto 1994, pp. 65–68), to the Fiorano polyptych of 1575 or the Fino del Monte altarpiece of 1577. SF

MORETTO Devout in Contemplation of King David, c. 1535-40 Oil on canvas, 74 × 85.5 cm

Kinnaird Castle, Brechin, The Southesk Collection



The main figure is portrayed leaning towards the apparition of God, who is concealed within the light source that King David is pointing out to him with his finger. From the sitter's attire we can deduce that he is a young cleric: he wears a white shirt, a black jacket and an embroidered surplice. Portraits by Moretto with similar clothing include those that appear in the

altarpiece at San Lorenzo, Manerbio, and at Sant'Andrea, Pralboino (Begni Redona 1988, pp. 198–203, nos 28–29). Instead of his usual harp, old King David holds a musical instrument with presumably particular relevance to the artist's client: a lira da braccio with a richly inlaid neck.

The provenance of this painting has been reconstructed from circumstantial evidence, beginning with its subject, which is identified as 'painting with David playing the lyre, and it contains a figure on his knees in front of him with his hands joined, by the hand of Giorgione' (Peter Humfrey, in Edinburgh 2004, p. 138, no. 43). It is recorded as being in the collection of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini in Rome after 1603 (D'Onofrio 1964, p. 205, no. 220). The subsequent history of the painting (analytically reconstructed by Peter Humfrey, in Edinburgh 2004, p. 138, no. 43) is not without interest, especially because at the beginning of the nineteenth century the painting's remarkable naturalism caused it to be considered much more modern than it really was, to the extent that it was thought to be by Domenichino (1581–1641) or even Guercino (1591–1666). It made its entrance into the collection at Kinnaird Castle during the vears 1822-23 with this attribution, and indeed retained it until Mina Gregori re-attributed it definitively to Moretto (the attribution is noted and explained by Francesco Frangi, in Pittura 1986, p. 179).

Thereafter the debate has shifted to the presumed chronology of the painting, with many proposals, all at variance. Opinions range from the idea that it dates from about 1525 (Francesco Frangi, in Pittura 1986, p. 179; Giorgio Fossaluzza, in Pittura 1008, p. 261) to the conclusion that it belongs to the artist's very last period, c. 1550-54 (Peter Humfrey, in Edinburgh 2004, p. 138, no. 43). In fact the exceptional naturalism of the painting chimes with figurative work produced by Moretto back in the 1530s, for example the altarpiece of Sant'Andrea, Bergamo, documented around 1536-37 (cat.1). It was from imaginative compositions such as the present work that Giovanni Battista Moroni prepared himself to paint works in a similar vein, at a similar period, as in the case of Devout in Contemplation before the Madonna and Child Between St Catherine of Alexandria and St Francis of Assisi in the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, or the painting now in Washington DC (cat. 8). sF

Portrait of an Ecclesiastic (Gerolamo Martinengo Cesaresco?), c. 1540-45 Oil on canvas, 101.5 × 78 cm

Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. W.A.F. 683. Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds



The sitter poses in his study, dimly lit by a window glazed with circular panes of leaded glass. The walls are lined with fabric to the height of a projecting cornice on which are stacked some books and a leather box. On a table behind the subject a pile of books is surmounted by an hourglass, while before him a folio volume is open on a table covered by a carpet. The heading on the open page reads 'Homilia', evidence that he is reading a book of homilies, in other words a collection of sermons. The man has interrupted

his reading and raised his head, half turning his body to gaze out of the frame meditatively. He wears a three-cornered hat, indicating his position as the holder of an ecclesiastical degree.

The earliest known owner of this painting was the Neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova. When Canova died in 1822, the painting was transferred from Rome to Venice and was inherited in 1829 by the sculptor's half-brother; it was inventoried as 'Morone' and described as 'Portrait of a scholar with hands and library background. Exceptionally rare and well-preserved' (Pavanello 2000, pp. 334, 353-54; Pavanello 2001, pp. 163, 165, 170-71). In 1838 Ludwig I, King of Bavaria, acquired the painting (as the work of Giovanni Battista Moroni) for the museum he was putting together in Munich. The painting carried the name Moroni until 1865 (Marggraff 1865, p. 86–87, no. 452), when the attribution was removed in favour of that of his teacher, Moretto, on account of the 'ton argentin si prononcé' (very pronounced silvery tone) remarked on in the painting (Marggraff 1866, pp. 90, no. 452).

The attribution to Moretto was suggested by Otto Mündler, as we learn from the furious reaction of Giovanni Morelli who attempted in vain to return it to its previous attribution (1891, pp. 82-83). Jacob Burckhardt (1898, p. 244) realised that this was a portrait not of a librarian but of a provincial cleric, possibly a 'canon of Brescia'. We have Roberto Longhi (1929, p. 109) to thank for having grasped the stylistic import of the portrait: 'related more closely to Holbein than to Titian'. Once another erroneous attribution, to Paolo Veronese (Suida 1938, p. 184), had been dismissed – it had no support – the debate began to focus on the chronology of the painting (for a summary see Begni Redona 1988, pp. 408-09, no. 99, and Ballarin 1996, pl. 156) and the attempt to identify the sitter.

The identification of the portrait's sitter as Gerolamo Martinengo Cesaresco (Rühl 2011, pp. 148–49, no. 13) cannot be reliably confirmed. An attractive proposition, it is at present based solely on the fact that Moretto portraved various members of Brescia's Martinengo Cesaresco family. It is true that there is no conflict between the details of the figure painted by Moretto and the biography of Gerolamo (Motta 2008, pp. 152-54): born in Brescia in 1504, graduated from Padua in 1527, appointed commendatory abbot of the monastery of Leno in 1527 and a chamberlain to Pope Paul III in 1541. His transfer to the Roman Curia opened the door to rapid ecclesiastical advancement: Papal Nuncio in Poland in 1548, Papal Representative in Vienna in 1549 and Nuncio to the court of Queen Elizabeth from 1560. SF



MORETTO Portrait of Count Martinengo, c. 1545–50 Oil on canvas, 83.8 × 67.8 cm

Museo Lechi, Montichiari, inv. ML27



The young gentleman seems to want to conceal his shyness behind a steadfast, lofty gaze. This impression is largely due to the portrait's composition: the head and shoulders are set at a diagonal, the head is slightly tilted and turned to the left, while the eyes are trained to the right, intercepting those of the beholder. The young man is shown standing, casually leaning with one arm on a table covered by a carpet. He is dressed in a sumptuous black doublet, embellished with bands of gold braid. His plumed hat is trimmed

with gold and the two loops of chain at his neck are made of the same precious metal.

The identity of the sitter is unknown, although it can be assumed, based on the provenance of the painting. It was acquired by Luigi Lechi in 1974 from the Salvadego Collection in Brescia; in 1861 this family took possession of the Palazzo Martinengo in Brescia from the Padernello branch of the family.

The painting only recently arrived in a public museum and was recognised as a mature work by Moretto, dating from about the 1540s. Before the correct attribution had been made the work was believed – by Antonio Boschetto, Fausto Lechi and Federico Zeri – to be by the Brescian painter Gerolamo Romanino (Paolo Boifava, in Boifava, Frangi and Morandotti 2012, pp. 38–41, no. 7).

The painting is particularly important for the light it throws on the beginnings of Moroni's career as a portrait painter. Infrared reflectography has revealed a lack of any preparatory drawing, a technique also used by Moroni (Penny 2004, p. 196). The layout follows a format that was a particular favourite of Moroni, who used it throughout his career, from the Portrait of a Lateran Canon (cat. 26) to the Portrait of a Young Lady (cat. 45). Strong similarities with the Portrait of M. A. Savelli (cat. 5) bear witness to the important debt Moroni owed to his teacher. The date of the Lechi painting has been established by comparing it with other undated Moretto portraits, all generally ascribed to the 1540s (Paolo Boifava, in Boifava, Frangi and Morandotti 2012, pp. 38–41, no. 7). The closest link with Moroni in this painting is its muted, almost monochrome palette, a marked characteristic of Moretto's late work. sF

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MORONI'S TEACHER: MORETTO MORONI'S TEACHER: MORETTO



GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of M. A. Savelli, c. 1545-48

Oil on canvas, 137 × 112 cm

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, inv. 92. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation



The subject of this portrait has just stopped reading a sextodecimo volume. He leans his weight on the top of a moulded plinth on whose front is carved the inscription: 'M.A.SAVELLI(I) / EX FAM. ROMAN(A)' ('M. A. Savelli of Roman family'). The sitter's fondness for reading and study is emphasised by the setting in which he has chosen to pose, a courtyard filled with ancient ruins that house a statue of Venus. The architecture is ravaged by time, in places the stones overgrown with vegetation. This member

of the house of Savelli is looking outwards, trying to catch the spectator's eye, and standing in what looks like a very unstable position.

The painting is mentioned for the first time in the Uggeri Collection in Brescia: 'Celebrated portrait of a member of Casa Savelli Romana by Titian' (Carboni 1760, p. 158). Teodoro Lechi acquired it from Giuseppe Finetti in 1842 when it was attributed to Moretto (Lechi 1968, p. 182, no. 97). Soon after, possibly thanks to the good offices of Otto Mündler, the work was reassigned to Moroni (Galerie Lechi 1857, no. 43), an attribution that was sustained without interruption until the early twentieth century, when Bernard Berenson (1007, p. 261) reintroduced Moretto's name. Gustavo Frizzoni (1902, p. 301) tried unsuccessfully to discover the identity of the sitter, a descendant of the ancient Roman family of Savelli. When Calouste Gulbenkian acquired the painting in 1925 (Sampaio 2009, p. 40, no. 12), the work was still believed to be by Moretto. It was György Gombosi (1943, pp. 68, 120) who reassigned the work to Moroni and suggested that it might be an early canvas, still displaying the influence of his teacher. This solution was subsequently welcomed by the art historians and some chronological precision was added. According to Mina Gregori (1979, p. 270, no. 120), the Lisbon painting is estimated to be among the artist's earliest inventoried works, dating from 6.1545–47 (this date is also confirmed by Macola 2007, pp. 130-31).

Compared to Moroni's subsequent portraits, this early effort is strongly marked by the influence of his teacher - an influence seen clearly if we consider it alongside Portrait of Count Martinengo (cat. 4). The composition of the portrait is also reminiscent of the portraits of Lorenzo Lotto (c. 1480–1556/7). The inscription providing the name of this member of the Savelli family is very similar, in style as well as in the script, to the inscription bearing the date 1548 on Moroni's St Clare in the Museo Diocesano, Trent.

The Lisbon painting could date from Moroni's first prolonged visit to Trent. Many distinguished members of the Savelli family gathered in the city that hosted the Council of Trent in 1546 (Perini 1863, pp. 32– 33). It is probable that our model, whose identity has not yet been securely established, was a member of the diplomatic corps gathered in Trent for the first part of the Tridentine council. SF

LORENZO LOTTO (c. 1480–1556/7) The Trinity, c. 1519-21 Oil on canvas, 176 × 126 cm

Museo Adriano Bernareggi, Bergamo, inv. 3000



A screen of clouds thins out and parts, revealing an image of the Trinity, appearing as if in a vision. Christ wears a strip of bright blue cloth wound twice around his hips and a red mantle spreading from his shoulders; both garments seem to hang blowing in the wind, leaving the wounds inflicted during the Crucifixion uncovered. The expansive vellow background glows with symbolic light, and from it emerges the white silhouette (with no facial features) of God the Father, behind the dove of the Holy Spirit.

In order to emphasise the visionary quality of the image, Lorenzo Lotto has introduced a lifelike landscape as seen from a high viewpoint; possibly a real site, close to Bergamo.

The traditional iconography of the Trinity is interpreted in the light of the religious sensibilities of the group who commissioned the painting. It originally adorned the high altar of the demolished church of the Trinità, Bergamo, the headquarters of a confraternity of Disciplini. This lay fellowship, also known as Flagellants (due to the practice of self-flagellation that characterised their gatherings), must have suggested to the artist that he should represent the figure of Christ bearing the visible marks of the Passion. Members of the confraternity were enjoined to review the most important moments of the Passion of Christ during their prayers. One of the prayers they recited was an exhortation said to have been made by Jesus: 'Your eyes, your ears, your mind extend to my agony, and learn to suffer from me' (Prestinari 1526).

Lotto's painting is mentioned for the first time in about 1525 by Marcantonio Michiel (Notizia 1884, p. 137). In fact its execution dates to a few years earlier. In 1519 the Consorzio di Santo Spirito undertook to donate a small sum to the churches dedicated to the Trinity and to San Bernardino (both Disciplini centres) for the execution of two altarpieces (Colalucci 1998, p. 149; Gnaccolini 2011, p. 27, n. 38). The second altarpiece is still extant in the church of San Bernardino in Bergamo, signed by Lorenzo Lotto and dated 1521. It is reasonable to suppose that this painting of the Trinity was also completed between those two dates. Many copies of the painting exist, either literal or more freely derived versions, illustrating the success that this iconographic model enjoyed in and around Bergamo. The earliest of these is by Moroni; it was painted for the church of the Trinità at Albino, centre of a confraternity of Disciplini (cat. 7). SF

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI The Trinity, c. 1552-53 Oil on canvas, 176 × 122 cm Chiesa di San Giuliano, Albino



The Trinity is staged in a celestial setting, situated somewhere far distant from reality. Its ethereal nature contrasts with the realism of the scraps of landscape, painted as if seen from an elevated viewpoint. The main group of figures seems to be generated by an intense vellow light, from which emerges the ghostly figure of God the Father. The dove of the Holy Spirit seems almost to emanate from the mouth of God. Christ sits regally on a throne of light, suspended before a thick screen of cloud. He holds a terrestrial globe in his hands featuring very

accurately drawn landmasses; Africa and the Middle East, Europe and the coast of South America can be clearly recognised. It seems probable that the painter had studied the geographical plates in the edition of Ptolemy brought up to date by Jacopo Castaldo and published in Venice in 1548.

The painting comes from the church of the Trinità in Albino, the headquarters of the local Confraternita dei Disciplini. The membership of this confraternity was made up of the local mercantile élite. In 1555 the leading members were the minister Battista Marini and presidents Michele Personeni, Battistino Moroni and Matteo Burse Moroni (Tiraboschi, forthcoming). It is probably fair to surmise that the members of the association were responsible for choosing the subject of the painting, perhaps suggesting to the painter that he repeat Lorenzo Lotto's painting of the same subject, also commissioned by a confraternity of Disciplini. It is not unusual in Moroni's career to find work explicitly based on older models, from Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430–1516) to Lorenzo Leonbruno (1477–c. 1537), the latter known through an interpretive engraving (Gregori 1979, p. 222, no. 8; p. 246, no. 76; and p. 290, no. 165). Furthermore, on many occasions Moroni reformulated compositions by his teacher, Moretto.

In this case, the differences between Moroni's painting and that of Lotto (cat. 6) are numerous and – if examined in isolation – help to characterise the style of the painter during the 1550s. For convincing proof of the early date of the present work (already covered in detail by Gregori 1979, p. 220, no. 3; Rossi 1991, p. 52, no. 10; Savy 2009, p. 61, no. V), comparison with Moroni's Eucharistic Glory in Pradalunga, documented in writing in 1562, should suffice. One or two passages are identical with The Trinity and his Eucharistic Glory (note, for instance, the cherub at top right). Such similarities clearly illustrate the 'purist' and 'hyperreal' style typical of Moroni's activity in Bergamo immediately following his return from his sojourn in Trent. Comparison with his Madonna and Child in Glory with the Doctors of the Church in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Trent (fig. 2), documented in 1551, and Portrait of a Man (fig. 9), dated 1553, suggests that The Trinity belongs to around this time. SF

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Gentleman in Contemplation before the Madonna and Child, c. 1555 Oil on canvas, 59.7 × 64.8 cm

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, inv. 1939.1.114. Samuel H. Kress Collection



Inside an austere room, whose size is indicated by the vertical corner of a wall, a gentleman is portraved in contemplation before the Madonna and Child. The young man is in the foreground, painted in profile; he is dressed in an elegant white embroidered shirt, a red jacket and sleeveless jerkin in black velvet. The holy figures look out of the painting at the viewer, involving

him or her in the scene. The Infant holds an apple close to his body and with the other hand timidly clasps the Madonna's index finger. A bite has been taken out of the apple, conveying a clear symbolic meaning: Jesus takes upon Himself the sins of humankind. We are participating in the worshipper's vision as he makes his silent prayer. The poses of the Madonna and Child are based on a celebrated engraving by Albrecht Dürer dating from 1516 (Tietze 1939, p. 314; Fara 2007, p. 75, no. 15).

The earliest mention of the painting's provenance was in 1814, when it was recorded in Brescia in the collection of Teodoro Lechi: 'Portrait of a man with joined hands in adoration before the Madonna and Child. On canvas' (Lechi 1968, p. 204, no. 274). To what was known by nineteenthcentury collectors (summed up, after the acquisition by Samuel H. Kress in 1939, by Shapley 1979, vol. 1, pp. 337–38, no. 225) we can add that in 1845 the painting passed between Carlo Francesco Longhi, Guglielmo Lochis and the Marchese Terzi (Rossi 2000, p. 263).

The notion that the painting was a fragment, cut from a larger work, has been abandoned: it was believed that the Portrait of a Gentleman at Prayer in the University Art Museum, Princeton, could have been part of the larger painting (Lendorff 1939, pp. 148, no. 88 bis). In fact this composition is independent and self-sufficient, linked to works by Moretto (cat. 2) and very similar in design and date to other figurative pieces by Moroni: for example Devout in Contemplation Before the Madonna and Child Between St Catherine of Alexandria and St Francis of Assisi (Pinacoteca di

It is generally agreed that the Washington DC painting dates from around 1560 (Shapley 1979, vol. 1, pp. 337–38, no. 225; Mina Gregori 1979, pp. 311–12, no. 209, proposes a date after 1557, and this proposal is endorsed by Peter Humfrey, in Fort Worth 2000, pp. 61–62, no. 4). When observed closely, the painting reveals the artist's heightened sensitivity towards light effects; the result is a kind of chromatic vibration, at its most intense in Madonna's gown, conveyed in mixed shades of sky blue and bright blue. In addition, it becomes clear that the effect of light falling on the folds of the Virgin's red sleeve is achieved by hatching in a lighter colour, using a method learned from the practice of drawing but employed by Moroni in painting, particularly in the 1550s (for another example, see Our Lady of the Assumption [c. 1555] in the church of San Leone, Cenate Sopra, Bergamo: Gregori 1979, p. 149). The work may therefore be more convincingly dated to 6.1555. SF

MORONI'S TEACHER: MORETTO / EARLY WORKS EARLY WORKS



С

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Gentleman in Contemplation of the Baptism of Christ, *c.* 1555

Oil on canvas, 113 × 104 cm

The Collection of Gerolamo and Roberta Etro



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A portion of architectural ruins marks the separation between the area containing the portrait and the imaginary scene of the Baptism of Christ. In front of the ruins the figure of a young gentleman can be seen, in profile, straightbacked, with his hands joined in worship. Perhaps he is kneeling. He has the appearance of someone concentrating on prayer. The

background shows a view of a Lombard landscape and in the foreground, by a stream, which must be a reference to the River Jordan, Christ is being baptised by St John the Baptist. The scene is probably an allusion to the name of the unknown man who posed for Moroni.

On the back of the canvas, in antique script, can be found the inscription: 'GIO, BATTA MORONE'. The inscription has never been questioned, at any rate, not since the work was mentioned for the first time in the collection of the Tomini family of Bergamo: 'a half figure illustrated in a rayishing landscape, where to be seen at a distance is St John Baptist, who is baptising the Lord, a work worthy of great admiration' (Tassi 1793, vol. 1, p. 169). Unfortunately the earliest reference to the provenance gives no clue to the identity of the young man in the portrait (for more detail on the Tomini family: Tiraboschi 2004, p. 302: to passed should be added that of Guglielmo Lochis: Rossi 1999B, p.50, n. 96). On the other hand, the message of the image is clear: it is a representation of the exercise of 'visualising' mental prayer, based on a practice that was widespread at the time (Niccoli 2011, pp. 95–96), in many cases following the recommendations made in St Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, first published in 1548 (Gregori 1973, p. 32). The celebrated text by the founder of the Society of Jesus exhorts the worshipper to kneel down and to proceed with the 'composition' or 'envisioning of the place': 'composition means seeing with the eyes of the imagination a physical location in which the thing the worshipper wishes to contemplate is to be found'. One of the series of exercises prescribed. with the aim of reviewing major moments from the life and Passion of Christ, is devoted to the episode of Christ's baptism.

There has been little debate about the date of the painting, which is usually ascribed to sometime during the 1550s (Lendorff 1939, p. 127; Gregori 1979, p. 285, no. 147; Andrea Bayer, in Cremona and New York 2004, p. 174). Perhaps a more precise date in the mid-1550s would be better, following comparison with the *Portrait of Michel de l'Hôpital* (in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan), which is dated 1554. The style of the present painting links it with the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi* (both 1550–1555) in the Moroni collection in Stezzano, Bergamo, two paintings that surprisingly share very similar measurements to our *Gentleman in Contemplation of the Baptism of Christ.* SF

10

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Carthusian Friar, c. 1555–57

Oil on canvas, 55.2 × 50.5 cm Städel Museum. Frankfurt, inv. 904



The identity of the sitter, evidently a friar, is not known: he is wearing a scapular, hood and habit – that the latter is white suggests our sitter is of the Carthusian Order.

The spectator is transfixed by the model's face to the exclusion of all else. He stares fixedly at a point outside the picture frame. The warm, grey background provides depth to the surrounding space, enhanced by the diagonal pose of the sitter, shown in bust length. The

fleetingness of his expression is heightened by paint applied with great confidence in small, swift strokes.

The painting's first documented owner, a nineteenth-century German art historian Johann David Passavant, considered this to be the portrait of a Dominican friar. Bearing this title, and with a correct attribution to Moroni, he presented it in 1843 to the Städel Museum (Passavant 1844, p. 62, no. 51), the museum in which he had worked as inspector from 1840. It is very tempting to identify the painting as the one described by Passavant in the Tomini Collection in Milan, seen in 1835: 'Conte Tomini [...] J B Morone [...] Portrait of a friar head only. Good. L 1120 with 0.35 gold' (Laffranchi 2011–12, p. 34). The monetary valuation in the margin of the description indicates that the painting was for sale. The work could well be the 'Ritratto di un Padre Domenicano' (Portrait of a Dominican Father) by 'Gio. Battista Morone Bergamasco' exhibited in Bergamo by the Tomini family in 1799 (*Quadri* 1799, p. 85, no. 24). Francesco Maria Tassi (1793, vol. 1, p. 169) makes a general mention of 'four stupendous heads' by Moroni in the Tomini Collection.

The leading nineteenth-century scholar of Moroni's work, Giovanni Morelli, considered the Frankfurt portrait to be the finest example of Moroni's painting on German soil (Morelli 1891, p. 87). More recently Mina Gregori (1979, p. 266, no. 112) has singled out the painting as the absolute pinnacle of Moroni's career, worthy of a digression on future developments in expressiveness in the careers of Caravaggio and Velázquez: she lauds the 'perception of tonal precision obtained via the proper appraisal of the light', which, according to her, achieves 'a moment of equilibrium, assuming all the force of a ground-breaking discovery'.

The layout of this portrait closely resembles that of the *Portrait of Fra Michele da Brescia* (cat. 12). This portrait dates from the same period and the model must also have accomplished some deeds that were at the time considered exemplary. SF

11

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine, c. 1545–50

Oil on canvas, 82.6 × 67.5 cm

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. A 446. Purchased, 1935



The mystic marriage of St Catherine is here set inside a room; a large window looks out onto a foreshortened urban view. The painting was most probably designed for private devotion, perhaps for a young girl who could have identified with the teenaged saint. According to tradition, the life of St Catherine spanned the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries; she was martyred in Alexandria in Egypt.

The earliest reference to the provenance of the painting goes back to the collection of the Sampieri family of Bologna. It may be the canvas listed in an inventory drawn up in 1743 which refers it to the school of Parmigianino (Campori 1870, p. 599, no. LVI). On the back of the painting, along with the wax seal of the Sampieri family, appears a nineteenth-century inscription with the name 'Alessandro Bonvicino known as Il Moretto from Brescia', an attribution that was repeated without interruption from the work's first public exhibition at the British Institution in 1837, to the year of its entry into the Ashmolean Museum in 1935, when it was finally acquired as the work of Giovanni Battista Moroni (Lloyd 1977, pp. 127–29, no. A 446).

Although there is no exact prototype to be found in the work of Moretto, all commentaries have emphasised the links between this painting and compositions by the Brescian artist. As a result a chronology has been devised that places it among Moroni's earliest attempts, somewhere during the 1550s (with the sole exception of Allan Braham, in London 1978, p. 30, no. 5, who pushes the date of its execution forwards to 6.1560). The early date of 6.1550 suggested by Gregori (1979, pp. 293–94, no. 169) is still to be confirmed, and should perhaps be set back to the mid-1540s.

One of the buildings to be seen through the window has been recognised as the Torre Civica in Bergamo, which was built in the Middle Ages and in virtual ruin by 1518. This identification is in fact very uncertain since the same urban view appears in *St Mark*, painted by Moretto in about 1544 for the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Brescia. It is probably a Brescian view, and this would suggest that the Oxford painting dates from the years when Moroni was working in the studio of his teacher. The urban view glimpsed in the Uffizi's *Portrait of Pietro Secco Suardo* (cat. 22), often associated with the urban view in the Oxford painting, is quite obviously different. In the Uffizi portrait the tower has a Gothic mullioned window with two lights, similar to the window in the campanile of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. SF

12

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Fra Michele da Brescia, 1557

Oil on canvas,  $63 \times 53.5$  cm

Private collection



The old man portrayed in bust length is dressed in a black cassock and a four-cornered hat. He is seated diagonally, creating the illusion of spatial depth. His eyes are fixed on a point beyond the edge of the painting. The painted marble ledge carries the inscription, in Roman capitals: 'IVSTITIA ECCLESIAM SERVAVI,/ET INIMICOS PACAVI/M.D.LVII' ('I protected the Church with justice, and brought peace to enemies 1557').

The painting was published for the first time by Federico Zeri (1976, p.77 and pl. 50), and was assessed by him in the light of other constant features of Moroni's portraiture: 'Moroni's figures are all leading actors in a story involving the entire social fabric [...] the private preoccupations of prelates, occupying a rank in the hierarchy which they feel is their mission, unyielding and uncompromising'. Zeri was in no doubt that the person portrayed is an ecclesiastic. The sitter was later wrongly identified as the merchant Battistino Moroni, cousin of the artist and syndic of the monastery of Sant'Anna at Albino (Rossi 1990, p. 68). This mistaken identification grew from the conviction that the subject of the painting was in some way linked to Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi (cat. 13), also portrayed by Moroni in 1557 (the hypothesis was correctly rejected by Andrea Di Lorenzo, in Milan 2007, pp. 204–07, no. 85).

Recent research in the archives (Tiraboschi, forthcoming) has revealed the probable historical context of the present portrait. Between 1550 and 1551 a feud broke out between the Spini family of Bergamo and the Pulzini family of Albino. In the bitter fight that ensued, a member of the Spini family lost his life and a member of the Pulzini family was wounded. The ensuing lawsuit dragged on until 1557, when Fra Michele da Brescia finally succeeded in restoring peace. The Augustinian friar was summoned to Albino for the Lenten sermons and thanks to his intervention the feud between the Spini and the Pulzini families abated; the end of hostilities was officially sanctioned in 1557 by means of an act of reconciliation drawn up by the notary Giovanni Luigi Seradobati (fig. 10). One of the witnesses to the act of reconciliation was Ambrogio Venturelli, attorney to Gerolamo Spini. The painter Giovanni Battista Moroni was present at the granting of the power of attorney.

The painting must have been commissioned at this time, to commemorate the role played by Fra Michele da Brescia. The Latin inscription now becomes much clearer, bearing in mind the historical circumstances described above. Also clearer is the moral message conveyed by the painter in the composition, which emphasises his sitter's function as a role model. SF

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi, 1557

Oil on canvas, 90 × 67 cm

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 30.95.255. Theodore M. Davis Collection, Beauest of Theodore M. Davis, 1015



RA\_Moroni\_vFF.indd 120-121

The elderly sitter is portrayed standing in front of a ledge on which her hands rest, steadfastly holding a small prayer book. The background consists of a wall coloured a non-uniform grey and illuminated only in the centre, exactly above the sitter's head. At this stage we pause to take in her physical appearance: under a transparent starched veil she is wearing a cap to cover her hair. A protuberant goitre and the signs of ageing have been carefully observed and transferred to the canvas. The woman's identity, her aristocratic

origins and her deeds worthy of being recorded for posterity are described in an elegant inscription in capital letters painted on a marble plaque on the ledge: 'LVCRETIA NOBILISS. ALEXIS ALARDI/BERGOMENSIS FILIA HONORATISS./FRANCISCI CATANEI VERTVATIS/VXOR DIVAE ANNAE ALBINENSE/TEMPLVM IPSA STATVENDV CVRAVIT/M.D.LVII.' ('Lucrezia, daughter of the most noble Alessio Agliardi, wife of the most esteemed Francesco Cattaneo Vertova, personally supervised the building of the church of Sant'Anna at Albino, 1557')

Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi married in 1499 and was widowed in 1516. It is assumed she was born in about 1480. The foundation of the church and attached monastery of Sant'Anna dates from 1525. The church was not in fact completed until 1551.

The commissioning of the official portrait of the foundress of the monastery was occasioned by her approaching demise. It has been mooted that this was a posthumous portrait. A glance suggests that the work is lacking in the characteristics typical of the 'natural' portraits painted by Moroni; however, it is certain that the Carmelite tertiary, who dictated her last will and testament on 26 November 1556, did not die until 24 March 1558 (Tiraboschi, forthcoming).

With her steady, meditative gaze lingering on a distant horizon, the sitter portrayed might seem to the spectator to be engaged in prayer. This is a strategy that the painter employed on several other occasions (such as cat. 10). In this case Moroni wanted to present a portrait of an ethical, highly moral figure, suitable for private scrutiny by the community of Carmelite nuns that she herself had founded; a portrait of a role model, commemorating the good deeds performed by the sitter in her lifetime — as in the case of Michele da Brescia (cat. 12) who managed to bring to an end a bitter family feud. SF

14

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Faustino Avogadro (The Knight with the Wounded Foot),

Oil on canvas, 202.3 × 106.5 cm

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 1022. Purchased, 1876



A young man stands elegantly in front of an old wall with a marble base; the wall has vegetation growing out of it and is streaked with damp — a setting typical of Moroni (for example cat. 5). He is shown in three-quarter profile, and his gaze is haughty and a little disdainful. He is dressed in the fashion of the 1550s (Gould 1975, p. 167): a hat with an ostrich feather, a shirt with a high white collar, short puffed pantaloons and a silk jacket partly covered by an arming doublet, a protective garment to be worn under armour (Penny 2004, pp. 200–02). He wears a long sword and rests his arm on a helmet with an opulent crest; spread around him are various pieces of luxurious armour, probably made in Milan. All these

attributes refer to the sitter's military rank (Gould 1975, p. 167) and quite probably his participation in unmounted tournament combat (Penny 2004, p. 202). Because of the support worn on the left leg from the foot to the knee, the painting has traditionally been known as *The Knight with the Wounded Foot*, but this description is probably wide of the mark; the brace is more likely there to remedy a congenital defect of the ligaments of the ankle (Gould 1975, p. 167–68). Evidently this disability did not prevent the young man from competing in tournaments.

The portrait is listed in the Avogadro Collection in Brescia in 1715 (Lechi 1995, p. 172) and is assumed to have been there since its completion. The sitter is Count Faustino Avogadro (Gould 1975, p. 167), husband of Lucia Albani (cat. 15). The young man was involved in the feud between the Albani and Brembati families, which threw Bergamo into confusion in the 1560s. One of his servants was sentenced to death for the assassination of Count Achille Brembati in 1563 and Faustino went into exile in Ferrara to avoid the risk of vengeance or legal repercussions. He died the following year after falling into a well when completely drunk (Belotti 1937, p. 56; Gregori 1979, p. 274).

The painting was attributed to Moroni by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, who saw it in the Fenaroli Collection in 1854, where it was catalogued as by Moretto (Avery-Quash 2011, vol. 1, p. 389). It was acquired by Sir Frederick Burton, Director of the National Gallery, in 1876 from the dealer Giuseppe Baslini.

The precise style of the portrait, characterised by shades of black and brown, and the depiction of the whole figure, combined with our knowledge of the biography of the sitter and the costume in which he is dressed, suggests that the work was painted in the 1550s – more precisely between *Portrait of Michel de l'Hôpital* (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan), dated to 1554, and *The Man in Pink* (cat. 17), dated 1560. AG

15

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Lucia Albani Avogadro (The Lady in Red), *c.* 1555–60

Oil on canvas, 155 × 106.6 cm (including additions)

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 1023. Purchased, 1876



A young, elegantly dressed woman in a glittering red brocade dress with an open bodice, in the style of the late 1550s (Gould 1975, p. 168), sits on a Dantesca chair in a luxurious interior with a polychrome marble floor. She holds a fan and wears valuable jewellery: bracelets with agates, rings set with precious stones, a pearl necklace and earrings. A gold chain with cabochon emeralds frames and controls her elaborate hairstyle (Penny 2004, p. 219).

We are in the presence of Countess Lucia Albani (b. 1534, d. before 1568), wife of Faustino Avogadro (cat. 14) and daughter of Giovanni Gerolamo Albani (cat. 41). Lucia was a descendant of one of the most powerful families of Bergamo and married at the age of 16 to Faustino, her third cousin from Brescia; she was a well-known poet, celebrated for her literary talent, her manners and her beauty (Foresti 1903, pp. 19–22). Having moved to Brescia after her marriage in 1550, in 1563 she followed her husband to Ferrara to escape the repercussions of the feud between the Albani and Brembati families, which involved her husband, her brothers and her father. She died while still young, a few years after the death of her husband in 1564.

The portrait on the title page of a manuscript containing Albani's poems (Foresti 1903, pp. 40–42), confirms the identity of the person portrayed by Moroni (Gregori 1979, p. 274). In support of the identification of the sitter in *The Lady in Red*, bought in 1876 by Frederick Burton, Director of the National Gallery, through the dealer Giuseppe Baslini from the Fenaroli Collection, there is also a description that mentions a portrait of Lucia in the 1715 inventory of the Avogadro Collection (Lechi 1995, p. 172), from which this painting originally came, together with the portrait of *The Knight with the Wounded Foot* (cat. 14).

Lucia is depicted without any allusion to her status as a poet. Just as in the *Portrait of Isotta Brembati* (cat. 16), possibly a model to emulate, the young woman is presented to the spectator exclusively in her role as an aristocratic lady. As with the pair formed by *The Man in Pink* (cat. 17) and Isotta Brembati, the portraits of the Avogadro couple were of different sizes (this one was enlarged only at a later date; Penny 2004, p. 216) and in non-matching poses; the two were not designed as pendants.

In the inventory of the Avogadro Collection this painting was attributed to Moretto. During his visits to Brescia in 1857 and 1862, Sir Charles Eastlake maintained this attribution, and, although full of praise for the treatment of the hands, found the painting too 'unpleasant' (Avery-Quash 2011, vol. 1, p. 389) to be acquired by the National Gallery. The portrait was re-attributed to Moroni by Giovanni Morelli, as can be gathered from Morelli's correspondence with Sir Austen Henry Layard (letter of 2 June 1876, in Jucker 2012–13, p. 311).

The crisp style of the painting and the brilliant use of colour suggest that the work is a little earlier than *The Man in Pink* but definitely later than *Portrait of Isotta Brembati*. Compared to the latter, this portrait, with its more elegant composition, slightly raised viewpoint and successful pose, seems to belong to a more mature stage of Moroni's career (Allan Braham, in London 1978, p. 18; Gregori 1979, p. 275). AG

16

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Isotta Brembati, *c.*1553

Oil on canvas, 160 × 115 cm

Fondazione Museo di Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo. Lucretia Moroni Collection



The young woman who posed for Moroni chose to be portrayed sitting on an elegant Dantesca chair, placed very precisely in the centre of a square of inlaid marble. The location was carefully chosen, a domestic setting made grander by half-columns that provide a perspective framework for the sitter. Her flowing gown of green and gold brocade, her ostrich feather fan the sable around her shoulders from which hangs a showy gold chain all serve to define the social status of the noble Isotta Brembati, first wife of

Elio Secco d'Aragona di Calcio. Books are notably absent from the painting, leaving no indication that Isotta belongs to the world of letters. She was famous during her lifetime for compositions in Italian, Latin and Spanish. Her personal coat of arms, a slain dragon in front of the garden of the Hesperides, with golden apples, emphasises the virtues of chastity and honour (Ruscelli 1566, pp. 26, 519–20). It may have been in deference to these virtues that Isotta chose to be painted in the garb of matron and wife, with no reference to her literary activities.

Examination of the painting's style has led to unanimous agreement that its date is around 1553 (Gregori 1979, pp. 237–38, no. 47; Paolo Plebani, in Bergamo 2004, pp. 216–19, no. 39). It was assumed for a long time that the Portrait of Isotta Brembati was painted as a pendant to the portrait of her brother-in-law and second husband Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli – The Man in Pink (cat. 17) – dated 1560. However, the pair did not marry until 1561, both having been widowed, and only then were the Moroni portraits linked together, with the wealth of history they shared. The height of the present portrait was increased to match its format to that of the sitter's husband, giving rise to the idea that both portraits were produced at the same time. Even the disparaging comments made in the past about the present portrait's style are mainly attributable to the fact that it compared badly to that of the husband. One of the earliest modern commentators on this portrait, Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1832, p. 319), emphasises the subject's physical shortcomings – she is described as 'neither beautiful nor attractive' - particularly when she is compared to the male subject, who is held to be 'handsome and interesting'. According to the presumed date of this painting, Isotta was about 23 years old when it was completed, having been born in about 1530. Another portrait by Moroni of the same noblewoman exists (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 00087). SF

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (The Man in Pink), 1560

Oil on canvas, 216 × 123 cm

Fondazione Museo di Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo. Lucretia Moroni Collection



The young man portrayed here full length has been identified as a scion of the aristocracy of Bergamo, Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (Locatelli Milesi 1922–23, p. 574), who was born in 1536 and died in 1610. The decision to have his portrait painted at the age of 24 could be connected to his marriage to Maria Secco d'Aragona di Calcio in 1560 (the date that appears alongside the painter's signature on a fragment of worked stone lying on the ground). Scarcely more than a year later, having been widowed, Giovanni Gerolamo took as his second wife Isotta Brembati (cat. 16; for his biography see Soglian and Vittori 2006, pp. 17–20). The chronology of these events

prevents the interpretation of the Spanish motto MAS EL ÇAGVERO QVE EL PRIMERO' ('Better the latter than the former') being read as a cryptic allusion to the subject's matrimonial career, and it is unlikely that the text was a later addition suggested by Isotta Brembati (Locatelli Milesi 1922–23, p. 576). In the absence of evidence, it is best to try to comprehend the intellectual mindset of the day and read the portrait as a complex image composed of allegorical and symbolic references.

The magnificence of the outfit and its dominant colour have earned the painting the title 'The Man in Pink' (in use since London 1930, p. 198, no. 347). The choice of colour seems less random if we remember that Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli had chosen as his coat of arms a coral branch, accompanied by the motto 'Far from my tears it reddens and turns to stone' (Percivallo 1588, p. 239). The red colour of coral, therefore, possessed symbolic meaning for Giovanni Gerolamo (Paolo Plebani, in Bergamo, 2004, pp. 220–23, no. 40). Much more obvious is the juxtaposition between the classical sculpture, which has fallen in pieces from the niche, and the painted bas-relief illustrating the biblical story of Elijah and Elisha: a straightforward comparison between true and false gods. The motto 'Better the latter than the former' thus refers to an episode in the Bible in which the prophet Elijah, having ascended into heaven, bequeaths his mantle to his disciple Elisha; thanks to the mantle Elisha is recognised in Israel as Elijah's true heir. The classical torso recalls the model held by the sitter in Portrait of Alessandro Vittoria (fig. 15), a portrait painted in Trent in 1551 and now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, SF

18

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Prospero Alessandri, c. 1560

Oil on canyas, 104.6 × 83.5 cm

The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna, inv. GE 2149



This portrait follows a composition used quite often by Moroni, in which the subject poses out of doors, leaning casually against a stone plinth. Here the sitter wears an outfit consisting of a black cloth jerkin, a padded doublet and red silk breeches. His intense gaze implies a level of preoccupation; perhaps the motto written in Spanish on the plinth refers to this: 'ENTRE MIEDO/Y SPERANÇA' ('Between fear and hope'). The remainder of the inscription has been added

later – possibly in 1580 – and informs the onlooker of Prospero Alessandri's nobility: son of Gerolamo, husband of Isabella Gozzi, daughter of Pietro. The few extant biographical details relating to Prospero provide a little more information: he was already married in 1570 and five years later was a member of the Great Council of the city of Bergamo, dying in 1590 (Rossi 1979, p. 344, no. 70; Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 46, no. 3).

The earliest mention of the painting is in 1833, when it was described by the collector Guglielmo Lochis of Bergamo: 'A superb portrait belonging to the Alessandri family was in the possession of Signor Paolo Agazzi, and he parted with it a few years ago' (Facchinetti 2004A, p. 50). It is not impossible that the painting is one of the two Moroni portraits quoted by the scholar Francesco Maria Tassi as 'belonging to sig. Francesco Alessandri', probably a descendant of Prospero (Tassi 1793, vol. 1, p. 169). At least two old copies of the picture exist, one partial version in the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts (no longer considered a replica by the artist's own hand), and a complete one in the Bonomi Collection in Bergamo.

The Spanish motto associates the *Portrait of Prospero Alessandri* with other paintings by Moroni (such as cat. 19) completed from 1560 onwards. The admirable mastery of style in this portrait places it in the productive early 1560s, a date that has been accepted unanimously by scholars (Peter Humfrey, in Fort Worth 2000, pp. 65–66, no. 6; Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 46, no. 3; Valerio Guazzoni, in Naples 2006, p. 278, no. C55). SF

10

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Gabriel de la Cueva, 1560

Oil on canvas, 112 × 84 cm

Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. 179



The model is portrayed leaning on a grey stone plinth. The side of the stone bears the date of the painting's execution and, in Roman capitals and cursive script (a favourite combination for Moroni), the inscription 'M.D.LX. / Io: Bap. Moronus. P.

The apparently calm demeanour of the sitter hides his braggart's temperament, revealed by the presence of a 'side arm' (a sword) in plain sight, and suggested by the motto: 'AQVI ESTO SIN

TEMOR/Y DELA MVERTE/NO HE PAVOR' ('I am here without fear and have no dread of death'). His elegant outfit is based on the contrast of red and black: the undershirt and wide breeches are in various shades of red, surmounted by the black stuffed doublet. His shirt is embellished with fine red embroidery in a geometric pattern. The ensemble is topped by a black silk cap.

The earliest mention of this painting is to be found in the inventory, drawn up in 1814, of the Brescian collector Teodoro Lechi. The details of the sitter were not formerly known: the portrait was described as 'Portrait of a Portuguese Soldier' (Lechi 1968, p.183, no. 98; for successive owners until the portrait was acquired in 1979 by the Staatliche Museen, Berlin, see Gregori 1979, pp. 241–42, no. 60; and Peter Humfrey, in Edinburgh 2004, p.170, no. 60). The identification of the sitter as Gabriel de la Cueva (1525–1571) was made possible by the appearance of a faithful copy of Moroni's painting that bore a label on the reverse containing his name (Genolini 1889, pp. 30–31, no. 81 and pl. 16); this painting is now in the Deutsches Klingenmuseum, Solingen.

Gabriel de la Cueva was appointed Viceroy of Navarre in 1560 and took the title of 5th Duke of Alburquerque in 1563. He was also Governor of Milan, and his profile appears on a medal coined by Pietro Paolo Galeotti (Rossi 1979, p. 336, no. 49) between 1564 and 1571 – De la Cueva's years in office.

This painting of a Spanish nobleman was the first in a series of portraits by Moroni with several traits in common; all were painted in about 1560. In particular they share a similar layout, as seen for example in *Portrait of Prospero Alessandri* (cat. 18), or they contain mottoes or inscriptions in Spanish (for example cat. 17). The format and composition of this portrait seem to have been fashionable within the pro-imperial circles of the aristocracy in Bergamo. SF

20

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Giovanni Pietro Maffei, c. 1560–64

Oil on canvas, 88 × 70 cm

Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. GG 88



Moroni portrays this gentleman before the wall of a semi-ruined building, which frames a fragment of sky. Unlike the many three-quarter length portraits painted by Moroni in the early 1560s, in which subjects are generally seen leaning on a plinth beside a column or pilaster, our sitter is leaning against a writing table covered with a green velvet cloth on which are placed a manuscript and a book. From these few elements we can guess that he is a gentleman of letters; if

nothing else, he is presented as a letter-writer – as can be deduced from the decisive way he holds a missive, just received or waiting to be sent. His face is lean and somewhat melancholic.

The painting is mentioned for the first time in a list of works in the collection of the Venetian merchant Bartolomeo della Nave: 'Another picture [by Gio Batto Morone de Albino] of a man very good' (Waterhouse 1952, p. 19, no. 172). In about 1638 James Hamilton, 1st Duke of Hamilton – through the offices of Basil Feilding, 2nd Earl of Denbigh - acquired the entire collection for Charles I. After the king's beheading in 1649 the Della Nave collection passed into the hands of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, a Habsburg residing in Brussels. This painting by Moroni was thought to be by Jan Steven van Calcar (c. 1499–1546) and it was copied as such by David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690) and engraved in the Theatrum Pictorium of 1660, the volume published to illustrate the Archduke's collection. It was not until 1854 that the painting was re-attributed to Moroni (Krafft 1854, p. 124) and the sitter was identified – because of the typical pose – as an orator. He is in fact Giovanni Pietro Maffei, as Francesco Rossi realised (1979, p. 340, no. 60) by comparing the present work with a portrait bearing the same or similar features, painted by Giovanni Paolo Cavagna in about 1603, the year in which the celebrated Jesuit died (Restauro 1997, no. 4; Enrico de Pascale, in Bergamo 1998, p. 38, no. 9).

Giovanni Pietro Maffei was born in 1536. He was a nephew of the brothers Giovanni Crisostomo, Dionigi and Basilio Zanchi, all leading members of the Order of Lateran Canons (Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 44, no. 2). Moroni executed the portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo (cat. 25) and also the portrait supposed to be of Basilio (cat. 26). Thanks to Basilio, custodian of the Vatican Library until 1558, Giovanni Pietro Maffei studied in Rome and was a frequent guest at the Vatican court (Andretta 2007, pp. 232–34). He left Rome in 1563 and moved to Genoa, first as a teacher of rhetoric and oratory, and later as Secretary of the Republic, an official state position. He joined the Society of Jesus in August 1565, a date that establishes a *terminus ante quem* for the painting. SF



GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Gentleman (The Unknown Poet), 1560

Oil on canyas, 106 × 80 cm

Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 144



The gentleman in the portrait poses in the open air, his profile standing out against a ruined wall of grey stone and brick, to the right of which can be glimpsed a slip of sky. His clothing is entirely black and his searching gaze is directed towards the spectator. One hand, hanging loosely by his side, holds a small book bearing on its spine a title containing the word 'Affetti' (affections). Two more volumes lie on the stone plinth on which his other hand rests, and which bears the date 'M.D.LX.'.

The earliest reference to the painting's provenance was in 1828, the year of its sale by Marchesa Carolina Rota Quattrini to the collector Paolo Tosio of Brescia. The sale was prompted by the favourable opinion of the painter Giuseppe Diotti, who considered the portrait to be 'one of the best preserved and most famous in Bergamo' (Gianfranceschi and Lucchesi Ragni 2004, p. 41; Rossana Sacchi, in Brescia 2004, pp. 89-90,

The layout adopted here by Moroni occurs with few variations in other portraits of the 1560s; the Portrait of Giovanni Pietro Maffei in Vienna (cat. 20), the Portrait of Gerolamo Vertova (c. 1560–65) in a private collection. and the Portrait of Podestà Antonio Navagero in the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan (cat. 28).

Identification of the book titles reveals a little more about the sitter, who was definitely a keen reader as well as perhaps a poet. The first volume, held in his hand, is De gli affetti del animo. Ragionamenti fatti sopra un trattato di Galeno, in che modo possa l'huomo conoscere se stesso & emendare la sua vita ('Of the affections of the soul: discourse on a treatise by Galen, the manner in which man can know himself and improve his life'), written by Annibale Firmani and published in Rome in 1559. The other two volumes are Il dialogo di Cicerone. Dell'amicitia intolato il Lelio ('Laelius: a dialogue on friendship'), translated from the original Latin by Orazio Cardaneto and published in Florence in 1559, and, very probably, Del fine dell'Amore ('Of the aim of love') - the fourth volume from the Libro di natura d'amore ('Book of the nature of love') by Mario Equicola, which was edited and reprinted by Lodovico Dolce in the Venetian edition of 1554.

The three books in the portrait have identical bindings: leather decorated with a double gold band and reversed fleurons. It may be no accident that the publications all deal with the same subject: the affections and love in their most varied forms - including love of God, the subject of Equicola's celebrated text, published for the first time in Venice in 1525; it went through at least fourteen editions before 1607. SF

22

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Pietro Secco Suardo, 1563

Oil on canvas, 183 × 102 cm

Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 906. Soprintendenza Speciale per il patrimonio storico, artístico ed etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Firenze



The sitter is portrayed in sober domestic surroundings, with a window opening onto an urban view. He is dressed entirely in black, wearing a doublet, wide breeches and tight hose. With one hand he grasps the hilt of a sword, and with the other points to the flames flaring from a brazier standing on a stone plinth. The words 'ET QVID VOLO / NISI VT ARDEAT?' ('What should I desire if not to burn?'), are followed by the date and the painter's signature: 'M.D.LXIII. / Io: Bap. Moronus P.

The painting is listed in the 1713 estate nventory of Ferdinando de' Medici, Grand Prince of Tuscany, as 'portrait of St Ignatius when a layman, dressed in black in the Spanish

style, with short hair [...] with a view of the city of Pamplona' (Chiarini 1975, pp. 88–89). It is assumed that the painting came from the Venetian collection of the widow Agnesina Badoer, and was offered to Ferdinando de' Medici in 1705 by Sebastiano Ricci (Epe 1990, p. 221, n. 12; Del Torre 2002, pp. 6, 14–15; another suggested identification is with the painting included in the 1677 list of Secco Suardo assets registered at the house in via San Salvatore, Bergamo: De Pascale 1999, p. 20, n. 5).

The interpretation of the motto, which bears a strong similarity to the gospel verse 'Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?' ('I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?' Luke, XII, 49), was helpful in identifying the model correctly. The translation of 'VT ARDEAT' into Italian corresponds to the words 'su arda', in other words to the family name of the noble Suardo family of Bergamo (Mazzi 1904, pp. 2-3).

Pietro Secco Suardo pursued a diplomatic career in Venice, where he held the rank of ambassador from 1545. In 1546 he married Maria Bon. After his death in 1577, Pietro's body was transported from Venice to Bergamo, and the funeral was accompanied by a 'bier covered in black satin and a few little flames standing on silver brocade' (Mazzi 1904, p. 3). Flames were a constant feature in the heraldry of the Suardo family, indicating that Moroni's portrait contains complex symbolism and would have been commissioned by a sophisticated individual (Antonucci 1939, pp. 137–40; Gregori 1979, pp. 259–60, no. 103).

The same brazier, used this time to send the symbols of wealth and power up in smoke, appears in the Portrait of Giorgio Passo, painted by Moroni in 1569 and now in the Musei del Castello Sforzesco, Milan (Valerio Guazzoni, in Fiorio, pp. 113-17, no. 324). The urban view outside the window in the Uffizi picture has a similar appearance to the view in The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine in Oxford (cat. 11) or in the Portrait of Bartolomeo Bonghi in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. It must surely be a view of Bergamo (in particular the bell tower of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore) seen from the high ground of the Colle di San Salvatore SE

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Lucia Vertova Agosti, c. 1557–60

Oil on canvas, 51 × 50 cm

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, inv. 112



The female subject is painted slightly turned away and bust length. She wears an elegant black velvet dress over a white, transparent blouse buttoned high at the neck. Her hair is carefully styled and embellished with two flowers, a rose and a sprig of jasmine, tucked over an ear. Unusually for a portrait by Moroni – whose subjects often stare straight into the eyes of the spectator – the sitter looks fixedly towards an

unknown point somewhere beyond the picture frame.

The painting was first mentioned in 1856, when it was sold with other property belonging to the collector M. Houdet of Nantes. In the sale catalogue the female subject is wrongly identified as Bianca Cappello, wife of Francesco I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the painting attributed to Paolo Veronese (Sarrazin 1994, p. 114, no. 34). The reference to the aristocratic woman of Venetian origin also contained a lightly veiled allusion to Bronzino, a painter to whom various versions of the portrait of Bianca Cappello are attributed.

The first scholar who correctly ascribed the painting to Giovanni Battista Moroni felt obliged to do so at the expense of both the Venetian and the Florentine artist: 'The portrait of a woman attributed to Paolo Veronese is even more valuable (than the Bronzino). [...] I am thinking more of Moroni and I think it would not be too bold to attribute such a magnificent piece to this rare and skilful portrait painter' (Gonse 1900,

The true identity of the female subject was revealed thanks to the discovery of a seventeenth-century copy of the Nantes painting; the copy is executed in a larger format and bears an inscription with the name and age of the sitter: Lucia Vertova Agosti at the age of 42 (Locatelli Milesi 1934, p. 195; Vertova 1976, p. 9; Vertova 1984, pp. 566–67, no. 92). Lucia was the wife of Cavaliere Gerolamo Vertova who, at the age of 50, was painted by Moroni (Gregori 1979, p. 239, no. 51). Gerolamo Vertova was the great nephew of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi, painted by Moroni in 1557 (cat. 13). The painter enjoyed an enduring relationship with the Vertova family, much as he did with Lucia's family – between 1565 and 1570 he painted a portrait of her father, Luca Agosti (Gregori 1979, p. 240, no. 54).

On the basis of the copy, a three-quarter likeness executed in the mid-seventeenth century by Carlo Ceresa, it was widely assumed that the Nantes painting had been reduced in size (Rossi 1979, p. 343, no. 68). Commentators, with the similar format of the Portrait of Gerolamo Vertova in mind, imagined quite reasonably that the paintings of husband and wife were executed simultaneously. This hypothesis can be rejected: the features depicted in the copy are very unlike those Moroni would usually include. We should also perhaps entertain the notion that the Portrait of Lucia Vertova Agosti might be older than that of her husband, possibly dating from somewhere between 1557 and 1560. SF

24

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Man with a Red Beard, c. 1558–59

Oil on canvas, 60.5 × 52 cm

Private collection



In this as yet unpublished painting the sitter faces out, his head appreciably turned to his right; he is dressed in a black coat with intense dark-blue tones. A slit in the coat at shoulder level reveals a white lining beneath and the upturned collar ends in an embroidered border. His mouth is almost hidden by a dense tangle of red beard that reveals only a lower lip. The man directs his gaze out to meet that of the spectator.

Light falls from above, diagonally from left to right; a monochrome, grey-green background frames the sitter. The handling of the background colour and the controlled modulation of the light lend a threedimensional quality to this naturalistic study of a head.

Moroni did not approach his portraits via preparatory studies (only one drawing related to a portrait is known; cat. 30); preparation was limited to a few summary lines drawn directly on the canvas. It is the absence of intermediate draughtsmanship that gives the painting its surprising vitality, augmented by the details of form noticed during the act of painting.

The painting comes from the collection of Count Faustino Lechi of Brescia (1730–1800), correctly catalogued as by 'Moroni Gio, Battista'. number 325 (Lechi 1968, p. 145): 'Portrait of a middle-aged man, halflength, bald head, long beard, red. Exquisitely beautiful. Oil on canvas, one-and-a-half by one-and-one-third ells'; the measurements expressed in 'ells' (braccia) correspond to 64 × 55 cm. A note in the margin of the inventory reveals that the painting was 'stolen, then returned. Sold to Pryor' (Lechi 1968, p. 145). This means that the work was withdrawn in 1799, during the occupation of Brescia by Austro-Russian troops, returned to its owner and then transferred in 1802, with a large proportion of the collection, to the English collector and merchant Richard Vickris Pryor (on Pryor, see Mannu Pisani 1981, pp. 295–328; Penny 2004, pp. 386–87; Boifava 2012, pp. 12–14). This portrait is recognisable as number 128 in the inventory of Pryor's paintings: 'Pietro Morone d'Albino. Portrait of a Man, half-length, with bald head' (Mannu Pisani 1981, p. 309). From a letter written in 1802 by Pryor to his Milanese friend Francesco Ciceri, we know that of some 234 paintings transferred, Faustino Lechi's heirs wished to regain this one, which was particularly admired by the Neoclassical painter Andrea Appiani (Mannu Pisani 1981, pp. 312–13). The changes of ownership that occurred between this transfer and its recent reappearance are unknown.

The identity of the sitter is unknown. He was probably a member of the middle class but there are no signs to indicate that he pursued any particular trade or profession. The black outfit he wears was popular with the entire social spectrum of the day, from the highest ranks to the professional and mercantile classes. The simple, unextended collar suggests an earlier date, according to studies of contemporary fashion (Newton 1979, p. 292; Bridgeman 2000, p. 44). The style of this painting helps to pinpoint a date of around 1560. The warm, light colours, and the glowing, ruddy complexion are typical of Moroni's painting during that period. The detail of the network of fine lines around the sitter's right eye, highlighted with dense, light-coloured brush strokes, suggests a similar date to Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi (cat. 25). SF

ARISTOCRATIC PORTRAITS PORTRAITS FROM NATURE







11/09/2014 11:51

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi, c. 1559

Oil on canvas, 58 × 50 cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. o6 AC DP o88



The subject of this portrait wears a white rochet, a black cloak fastened at the neck and a biretta: the uniform of the Lateran Canons. Moroni has portrayed him life-sized, thus emphasising his strong physical presence to the spectator. The artist's choice of pose and composition seem to suggest that the sitter has glanced to his right. The light touching his face is specifically intended to illuminate its most prominent

features: the forehead, the cheekbones and the nose.

The identity of the sitter is known through an engraving made of this painting to illustrate the biography of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi (Calvi 1664, p. 249), a leading light in the Order of the Lateran Canons. Zanchi's date of birth is not known; we know only the date of his entry into the Congregation with his two brothers Dionigi and Basilio (possibly depicted in cat. 26) in 1524. Giovanni Crisostomo made his mark as a scholar, author and poet, and was particularly gifted as a linguist. He published his *De Origine Orobiorum*, dedicated to Pietro Bembo, in Venice in 1531 and his *Panegyricum ad Carolum V* in Rome in 1536. Zanchi occupied important posts within the Order of Lateran Canons, as Visitor (1554–55 and 1559–60) and as Rector General (1559).

The painting is referred to as the work of Moroni by Francesco Maria Tassi (1793, vol. 1, p. 169), and as located in the priory of Santo Spirito in Bergamo, where Zanchi pursued his religious career as prior (for the successive owners of the painting see Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 44, no. 2). After being forgotten for many years, the portrait was exhibited in 1979 as a modest seventeenth-century copy of a lost original (Rossi 1979, pp. 339, no. 58, and 344, no. 72). Thanks to Federico Zeri it was recognised as the original, this information being immediately welcomed by Mina Gregori (Zeri 1979, p. 18; Gregori 1979, p. 317, no. 222). Since then the debate has moved to the presumed date of the painting, an area in which disagreement reigns. The arguments range from the hypothesis that this is an early portrait by Moroni, dating from 1545 to 1550 (Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 44, no. 2), to the suggestion that it could be a commemorative portrait painted following Zanchi's death in 1566 (Francesco Rossi, in Bergamo 1998, p. 22, no. 1). The style of Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi suggests the work was completed in about 1560; the portrait shares similarities with other paintings of that period (cats 23 and 24). Zanchi's promotion in 1559 to leadership of the Order, as Rector General, may well have provided a historical occasion for the commissioning of the portrait. SF

26

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Lateran Canon (Basilio Zanchi?), c. 1558

Oil on canvas, 58  $\times$  48 cm

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2559



The sitter seems to have stopped all of a sudden to pose for this portrait: he is depicted from the side, his shoulder in profile and his head turned towards the spectator. In turning, he gives a timid smile. His head is tonsured and a growth of thick stubble shadows a face that is otherwise enlivened by a ruddy complexion. He wears a cream-coloured cassock and white rochet, the dress of the Lateran Canons (Valerio Guazzoni, in Naples 2006, pp. 272–73,

no. C52). These garments mean that we can discount the notion he might be a Camaldolensian or Cistercian (Li Lian The, in Boschloo and Van der Sman 1993, pp. 65–66, no. 52; Francesco Rossi, in Bergamo 2000, p. 178, no. 2).

The nineteenth-century provenance of the painting – from the records of Milan's Bonomi-Cereda Collection (Gregori 1979, pp. 301–02, no. 186) – does not help us to identify the person portrayed; however, a step forward has recently been made: convincing similarities between this work and the *Portrait of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi* (cat. 25), in both the dimensions of the canvases (almost identical) and in the style, have been noticed. Supposing that the two paintings exist in relation to one another, it has been suggested that the identity of the figure in this portrait could be ascribed to one of Giovanni Crisostomo Zanchi's brothers, Basilio or Dionigi, both members of the Order of Canons Regular of the Lateran (Valerio Guazzoni, in Naples 2006, pp. 272–73, no. C52).

A different painting by Moroni has already been incorrectly identified as the likeness of Basilio Zanchi (Rossi 1979, p. 339, no. 56; Gregori 1979, pp. 247–48, no. 83). This painting, in the Goodyear Collection, formerly in Buffalo, was wrongly identified on the basis of a not very conclusive comparison with the seventeenth-century engraving of the likeness reproduced in Donato Calvi's *Scena letteraria* (Rossi 2001, pp. 146–47). In fact, a late eighteenth-century portrait of Basilio Zanchi painted by Giovanni Raggi hangs in the Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai in Bergamo (*Restauro* 1997, no. 7). It was copied from the engraving mentioned above in the *Scena letteraria* (Calvi 1664, p. 70).

The three Zanchi brothers all became Canons Regular of the Lateran in 1524. Basilio made his mark as a humanist, to the extent that in 1546 the Italian historian Paolo Giovio requested a portrait of him, to add to his Lake Como collection of portraits of illustrious men (Klinger 1991, p. 212; Rossana Sacchi, in Varese 2002, p. 44, no. 2). The assumed date of the picture, generally given as *c.* 1561–63 (Lendorff 1933, pp. 70, 96; Gregori 1979, pp. 301–02, no. 186), has now been moved back to no later than 1558 on the basis of biographical information relating to Basilio: after a successful career in the literary world he was appointed as supernumerary curator of the Vatican Library, a post he occupied from 1550 until 1558 (De Maio 1961, pp. 119–20). In 1558, Basilio was imprisoned for his support of Lutheranism (Firpo and Marcatto 1995, pp. 277–78, n. 13). Despite his recantation, in 1567 he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

His physical appearance was described in 1553 by the Venetian ambassador (and later cardinal) Bernardo Navagero: 'As far as I can judge he is a man of about forty years old; dark in colouring and satisfied with his tranquil life; he has no regrets, and every day writes something useful to mankind and rivalling the ancient virtues' (Belotti 1956, p. 78). SF

27

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Doctor (The Magistrate), 1560

Oil on canvas, 116 × 91.5 cm

Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia, inv. 147



The subject of this portrait has been interrupted as he reads a letter, addressed to him and signed by the artist. Comfortably seated on a Dantesca chair, he turns very naturally towards the spectator so that his upper body is at a slight angle. The decor is sparse, consisting of a small table covered with green fabric and a grey wall, diagonally illuminated by a high light source outside the picture frame. Although the sitter wears an lynx-lined cape and a three-cornered

hat – the latter the badge of his rank as *dottore* (Gregori 1979, pp. 244–45, no. 68; Rossana Sacchi, in Brescia 2004, pp. 92–95, no. 8) – the friendly confidence of his glance seems to imply a close acquaintance with the artist. This intimate touch removes the veneer of formality and etiquette usually adopted in an official portrait.

The sensation of taking part in an amicable conversation between the two men is enhanced by the conceit of the letter, which bears the heading (in Spanish) 'Aqui quedo con sossiego' ('Here I am at peace with myself'), addressed with the customary formula 'Mag.co Seg.r' (Magnifico Signore) to a man whose identity is unknown to us. The contents of the letter are also a mystery; we know only that it was sent on 'xx. Febr. M.D.Lx.' by 'Gi. Bat.a Morone pit.e Albin'. It could be that the sender (i.e. Moroni) is declaring his inner well-being, or that the doctor portrayed has achieved the same state of tranquillity — justifying the letter's heading. The naturalness of the model's glance suggests it may well be the case that both are true.

The painting came from the collection of the Avoltori family in Brescia and was acquired by Paolo Tosio before 1826. Roberto Longhi is to be congratulated for having understood the painting's modern implications: 'Moroni's anecdotal portraits were of immeasurable importance to Caravaggio's development as an artist. His realistic simplicity often leads him to dispense entirely with landscape and scenery, and to establish new ways of dealing with different surroundings' (Longhi 1910–11, p. 25). This painting is one of Moroni's first to feature a naturalistically half-turned sitter: a layout that the artist went on to replicate time after time, yet rarely with the same impact; perhaps only in the case of a portrait in the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, the so-called *Titian's Schoolmaster* (fig. 17), is the same expressive outcome achieved. In this work one again senses that the sitter's informal attitude is probably due to the warm relationship he shares with the painter. SF

28

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Podestà Antonio Navagero, 1565

Oil on canvas, 115  $\times$  90 cm

Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, inv. 334



The subject of the portrait is depicted outdoors, standing in front of a ruined building consisting of a broken column and a ruined wall, open to a scrap of sky. Looking relaxed and benevolent, the sitter turns towards the spectator; he holds a sealed letter, possibly a confidential dispatch. He wears the official uniform of a *podestà* of the Republic of Venice, a doublet in brilliant red silk, here enhanced by a cloak lined with lynx fur. The subject's status is announced by an inscription in

Roman capital letters: 'CVM BERGOMI / PRAETVRAM / SVSTINERET / M.D.LCV'.

Antonio Navagero was born in Venice in 1532. In 1553 the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (who two years earlier had sat for a portrait by Moroni, fig. 15) was living in Antonio Navagero's Venetian home.

Navagero was appointed podestà in Bergamo from 1564 to 1565, and in 1582 (five years before the Venetian died) a medal was struck bearing the likeness of Navagero; it is signed, in Greek script, 'APCEN' (the name of the craftsman). On its reverse, the medal bears a picture of a snake wound round an arm, and the words: 'INIQVOR. MORSVS. NON. PRAEVALEBUNT' ('Unjust bites shall not prevail') (Rossi 1979, p. 336, no. 50; Olivari 2012, pp. 15–16).

Moroni's painting is described by Carlo Ridolfi (1648, vol. 1, p. 148): 'In the Navagiera house, at the Pietà [in Venice], a portrait of Antonio Navagiero, formerly Podestà of Bergamo.' The painting was the property of the stage director Pasquale Canna, who relinquished it in exchange for four paintings that were requisitioned by Napoleon's troops and thought to be, respectively, by Francesco Francia, Bonifacio de' Pitati, Paolo Veronese and Elisabetta Sirani (Olivari 2012, p. 13).

At least three other portraits by Moroni of different podestàs of the Venetian Republic are known: Portrait of Vittorio Michiel (1561; Kunsthaus Zürich), Portrait of a Podestà in the Accademia Carrara (c. 1560–65) and Portrait of Jacopo Contarini of 1575 (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest).

An account of Antonio Navagero's role in the government of the city of Bergamo, written by captain Lorenzo Donato, can be found in the official report sent to Doge Gerolamo Priuli in 1565. The podestà is described as 'truly a very intelligent and prudent gentleman, both in matters of justice and in keeping the city calm and well stocked with provisions; he has always kept watch with the greatest care and diligence' (Relazioni 1978, p. 92). SF





GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Young Man of Twenty-nine, 1567

Oil on canvas, 57 × 45 cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00174



NO ALTATIS . XXIX

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This portrait is composed according to a formula used quite frequently by the artist: a bust-length figure with head slightly turned, set against a neutral background with a band along the lower edge bearing an inscription in Roman capitals: 'ANNO AETATIS. XXIX. / M.D.LXVII'. Moroni uses the composition mainly for portraits of the local middle classes and provincial clerics, sometimes including moralising maxims or aphorisms referring to possession of a particular quality. The texts very rarely reveal the identity

of the sitter, confirmation that the paintings were executed for private enjoyment only. The reverse of this painting bears the name of the painter in old-fashioned script: 'GIO. BATTA. / MORONE. PINSE'.

Before the Bergamese collector Guglielmo Lochis acquired it in 1835, the painting was in the possession of the Milanese merchant Carlo Francesco Longhi, nephew of the engraver Giuseppe Longhi (Rossi 2000, p. 268, n. 97). It is mentioned in the catalogue to the Lochis Collection: Portrait of a young man; half-length, without hands, masterpiece by the artist. Painted on canvas, height 0.48 metres, width 0.38 metres' (Lochis 1846, p. 12, no. XVI). We can deduce from these measurements that the edges of the canvas had been folded behind the stretcher to give the portrait a more modern appearance (Simone Facchinetti, in Caen 2010, p. 126, no. 45). As a result the dated inscription was no longer legible.

The first person to propose a considered date for the painting was Pasino Locatelli, who described it as being in Moroni's 'grey manner. practised to such glorious effect between 1550 and 1560' (Locatelli 1867-79, vol. 1, p. 388). The date was moved to 1562 by Lendorff (1933, p. 69, no. 48) on the basis of the clothes worn by the sitter, in particular his closefitting collar. This date was correctly challenged in the catalogue to the exhibition I pittori della realtà (Milan 1953, p. 31, no. 25), and the suggestion made that the young man was in fact painted a little later. In 1070 the portrait was returned to its original dimensions, revealing the date of its completion (Gregori 1979, p. 230, no. 29).

The painting was executed for a private occasion, not easy to specify without knowing the identity of the sitter. The presence of a date seems to suggest that the portrait was intended for a third party. A similar relationship between a portrait and its inscription can be found in Moroni's Portrait of a Lady of Thirty, also now in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo. SF

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Head of a Young Man, c. 1565

Black and white chalk on grey-green paper, 20.8  $\times$  19.7 cm Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 437F



The drawing was executed with rapid, firm strokes. The outline of the face, the anatomical details and the hair were sketched in with dark chalk during an initial phase; at a second stage, the areas on which the light falls were heightened with white chalk. The dynamic attitude of the face is achieved by a cunning strategy: while the head is tilted to the left, the eyes look towards

the opposite side. This creates the impression of movement in the spectator's mind. The slight backwards tilt of the head and the flashing glance, aimed downwards, have the same effect. This technique was used on several occasions by Moretto, for example in Portrait of Federico Martinengo in the Museo Civico, Abano Terme (c. 1546). Moroni inherited the technique from him, establishing a pose that was repeated in a number of paintings and paired with a considerable variety of expressions.

The correct attribution of this drawing has been arrived at relatively recently by means of lengthy and progressive examination of its style (Florence 1976, pp. 81–82, no. 42). The drawing is believed to have come from the Fondo Mediceo Lorenese, constituted mainly in the midseventeenth century through the patronage of Leopoldo de' Medici. The earliest attribution pointed towards the Florentine painter Giovanni Antonio Sogliani (1492–1544). It was not until later that this was adjusted in favour of the Venetian School; the name of Paris Bordone (1500–1571; a pupil of Titian) is written on the reverse of the sheet. In 1014 the drawing was exhibited in the 'Mostra di disegni e stampe di scuola veneziana dei secoli XV e XVI' at the Uffizi (Florence 1914, p. 23, no. 69), attributed to the artist Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo (fl. 1506–48) from Brescia. This attribution has been incontrovertibly rejected on grounds of technique (it was too dissimilar from the certified graphic works of the artist) and of style (William R. Rearick, in Florence 1976, pp. 81–82, no. 42). Rearick's opinion was unanimously approved in the succeeding literature (Gregori 1979, p. 262, no. 106; Rossi 1991, p. 128; Alfonso Litta. in Bergamo 2004, p. 148, no. 16), even though the sheet under examination is the only drawing by Moroni to use this technique and with this degree of finish. It is not possible to compare this drawing with Moroni's early drawings of the 1540s, all of which are copies made from paintings by his teacher Moretto. The drawing in the Uffizi is a study made directly from the model, realised in preparation for a painted portrait. Similarities with the Portrait of a Gentleman (c. 1565) in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, have served to confer on the drawing a presumed date of around 1565. SF

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine, c. 1565-70

Oil on canvas, 228 × 148 cm

Chiesa di San Bartolomeo, Almenno San Bartolomeo



The episode known as the Mystic Marriage of St Catherine is here staged inside a monumental architectural setting resembling the nave of a church. The saint moves towards an altar; she has stopped by an empty niche that acts as a natural frame to her figure. She leans on a fragment of spiked wheel, the instrument of her martyrdom, and holds in her hand a royal crown. An angel flying above carries the palm of martyrdom and a laurel branch, symbol of immortality and chastity. The subject is described by the inscription on the scroll affixed to the step:

'VENISTI CATHERINA / VT DESPONDERERIS / IMMORTALI SPONSO / CHRISTO' ('Catherine you came as the immortal bride of Christ'). The saint seems emotionally overcome at the sight of the affectionate gesture made by the Child to the Madonna, a caress that is intended to relieve the pain caused by her presentiments of the suffering she will feel during His Passion. The Madonna's rapid forwards motion is emphasised by the airy, horizontal position of her transparent veil. Haloes belonging to Mary and Christ are suspended in the air like smoke rings, a feature borrowed from a painting by Moretto (cat. 1). The general composition of the altarpiece is also derived from a painting by Moretto: the so-called Rovelli Altarpiece, dated 1539, painted for the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Brescia (the altarpiece is now in the Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia). It has been reasonably suggested that a drawing related to the Rovelli Altarpiece (held by the Morgan Library and Museum, New York) should indeed be attributed to Moroni (Litta 2004, pp. 113–14).

The construction of the church of San Bartolomeo in Almenno was almost complete by 1564. The chapel dedicated to St Catherine was commissioned by Francesco Losetti, who was dead by 1575 (in which year a weekly Mass was instigated in his memory). The presence of the painter's signature ('10: BAP: MORONVS, P') helped to guarantee the painting's lasting fame (Calvi 1676-77, vol. 2, p. 305; Locatelli 1867-79, vol. 2, p. 291). The link to Moretto's prototype has influenced opinions about the painting's date, causing it to be regarded as an earlier work (Rossi 1977, p.56). In fact, stylistic similarities with the well-documented Parre Altarpiece in the church of San Pietro, which dates from 1564-67. provide a more convincing date for the painting (Pinetti 1931, p. 135). Gregori's stylistic analysis (1979, p. 223, no. 9) has served to push the date forwards even further, to the end of the 1560s. Parallels with The Last Supper (cat. 32), also by Moroni, support this insight (Barbara Maria Savy, in Bergamo 2004, p. 180, no. 28). SF

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI The Last Supper, 1566–69

Oil on canvas, 295 × 195 cm

Church of Santa Maria Assunta e San Giacomo Maggiore, Romano di Lombardia



The Last Supper is staged under a covered loggia within an architectural setting that opens out on a distant landscape. Standing in a dominant position behind St John is a man bearing a cruet of wine. From his attire we can tell he is clearly no disciple; he is in fact the subject of a portrait. The Apostles' heads lack the full-blown naturalism of his depiction, which is the most realistic passage in the painting. The intensity with which the central figure looks out at the spectator suggests that The Last Supper might even be his vision.

The events leading up to the commission are described in archival documents that reveal the names of the individuals involved and the time span of the painting's execution (Pinetti 1922, pp. 549–55). The Last Supper was commissioned by the Confraternita del Santissimo Sacramento, Romano di Lombardia, on 27 December 1565. The work was finished over three years later and delivered on 5 May 1569.

The identification of the subject of the portrait within the religious painting and the role the portrait plays have posed some problems. For a long time it was believed to be a self-portrait of the painter (Locatelli 1867–79, vol. 1, pp. 383–84; Calì 1980, p. 21), even though Moroni's presence in an official commission for the aforementioned confraternity would be hard to justify. It seems more reasonable to suppose that it portrays Lattanzio da Lallio (Simone Facchinetti, in Bergamo 2004, pp. 134–37, no. 13), parish priest of Romano di Lombardia at the time and thus in a position of control over the lay brotherhood dedicated to the Holy Sacrament, It was Lallio's task to remind the painter on 26 January 1569 to 'have the picture delivered', a message he delivered during a trip that took him to Albino, around 18 miles away (Pinetti 1922, p. 551).

Formerly, the painting's illusionism was enhanced by an architectural frame, consisting of two massive columns, an altar step and an architrave. created by Alessandro Belli in 1571. The walls of the Corpus Domini chapel (in the church of Santa Maria Assunta e San Giacomo Maggiore, Romano di Lombardia) where the altarpiece was kept were decorated by the Brescian artist Francesco Richino (c. 1518–1573). It seems likely the frescoes he created featured Eucharistic subject-matter.

The picture's composition depends to a large extent on a version of the Last Supper painted during the 1540s by Moretto for the church of San Giovanni Evangelista at Brescia. Some of the poses, and to an even greater degree some of the details of the heads, go back to that celebrated painting, which was certainly known to Moroni. Although in comparison Moroni's figures appear almost emotionless. SF

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI

A Man in Contemplation Before the Crucifixion with St John the Baptist and St Sebastian, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 160 × 100 cm

Chiesa di Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo



The man portrayed in the foreground is turned towards the spectator and clearly points to a painted scene of the Crucifixion, which is watched by St John the Baptist and St Sebastian. St Sebastian holds the arrows shot at him during the first attempt on his life; he was eventually martyred by flagellation. The religious composition is the fruit of mental prayer — a kind of vision arising in the mind of the believer as he prays according to the teaching of St Ignatius of Loyola in his *Spiritual* 

Exercises. St Ignatius's text gives precise instructions on the matter of 'composition' or 'envisioning of the place': 'composition means seeing with the eyes of the imagination a physical location in which the thing the worshipper wishes to contemplate is to be found' (Loyola 1548, p. 108).

In order to establish an identity for the man in the foreground, and to explain the painting's subject and its connection with the biography of the individual, we need to find out where the painting first hung. The idea that it could be a self-portrait of the artist (Locatelli 1867–79, vol. 1, p. 383) is extremely misleading and in the nineteenth century led to a large number of copies reproducing the sitter (Simone Facchinetti, in Bergamo 2004, p. 138, no. 14).

Unfortunately the earliest documented provenance for the piece goes back no further than the early nineteenth century; in 1820 it was hung in the sacristy of the church of Sant'Alessandro della Croce in Bergamo as part of the collection of Don Giovan Battista Conti. We know that Conti acquired his collection mainly from churches and guilds that had been closed down during the Napoleonic period (Facchinetti 2006, pp.141–47).

This small altarpiece would have fitted very well into the context of a church in private patronage. The existence of a faithful copy of the painting in the church of Sant'Andrea, Gorlago, opened a new trail of enquiry. The church was under the patronage of the Guarneri family who lived in an adjoining palazzo, probably the original was commissioned to decorate this church. In 1575, Alessandro Guarneri had been gravely wounded in a skirmish between the Guarneris and various members of the Lanzi family - Tebaldo Lanzi and Camillo Guarneri lost their lives in the affray; the fight was quelled by the intervention of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (cat. 17). The tragic events that affected the family may be recognised in the iconography of the painting. The inclusion of St Sebastian, who survived a first attempt on his life, could be a reference to the recovery of Alessandro Guarneri. A date close to 1575 would make the identification of the portrait as the older brother Donato, born in 1543, quite plausible. The painting may then have been copied and taken to Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo, while the copy remained in Sant'Andrea, Gorlago.

It has also been suggested that the painting was commissioned after the threat of plague had passed: an epidemic is known to have hit Gorlago during the year 1574 (Bravi 2004, p. 265). SF

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34

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Crucifixion with St Bernardino of Siena and St Anthony of Padua, 6.1574–75

Oil on canvas, 226 × 133 cm

Chiesa di San Giuliano, Albino



The Crucifixion is situated on a rise dominating the broad valley that stretches as far as the horizon. A group of buildings can be seen in the distance, at the foot of a mountain. The sky is grey and threatening, making the bright loincloth worn by Christ – yellow-orange instead of the usual white – even more startling. It looks as though a storm will break at any minute. In the foreground kneel two Franciscan saints: Bernardino of Siena, depicted in a position of prayer, clutching to his chest the disc bearing the trigram of Christ; and Anthony of Padua, more controlled, one hand on his chest and the other

holding a lily. The figures of the saints are proportionally much larger than the figure of Christ, emphasising to the onlooker that he or she is witnessing a scene of contemplation of the Crucifixion, rather than the Crucifixion itself (Guazzoni 1984, p. 187).

The painting is still in the church for which it was painted. In the record of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo's apostolic visit to Albino in 1575 it is noted as being near the altar dedicated to St Bernardino, built by Pietro Regazzoni (Roncalli 1939, vol. 2, part 1, p. 582). Twentieth-century commentators considered this to be one of Moroni's most characteristic religious works (Testori 1978, pp. 13–14). Its date seemed to settle at somewhere in the 1560s (Gregori 1979, p. 221, no. 4) until recent archival research revealed the names of the people who commissioned the painting and the date of its execution. In a document of 1575 it emerges that the altarpiece was painted 'de presenti' ('recently') and was commissioned by Pietro Pulzini and his brothers Giuseppe, Simone and Alessandro (Tiraboschi 2004, pp. 299–300). The name of the Pulzini brothers' father was Antonio, which explains the presence of the second Franciscan saint, who kneels with Bernardino, the altar's titular saint. It has been suggested that the work was carried out to compensate for a violent crime committed in the past, involving Antonio Pulzini (Tiraboschi 2004, pp. 299–300).

The Crucifixion scene, including the yellow-orange loincloth that flaps like a banner in the wind, is repeated exactly in Moroni's altarpiece in the church of the Redentore in Seriate, thought to have been painted in about 1575. The painting of Christ carrying the Cross in the church of the Madonna del Pianto in Albino has been ascribed to the same few years (Barbara Maria Savy, in Bergamo 2004, p. 194, no. 34). SF

35

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI

St Gotthard Enthroned with St Lawrence and St Catherine of Alexandria, 1574–75

Oil on canvas, 260 × 198 cm

Chiesa di San Pancrazio Martire, Gorlago



The three saints are arranged hierarchically inside an illusionistic side chapel, which has a low protruding platform and a tall, stepped plinth leading to a niche between two pilasters. St Gotthard the bishop is seated on a throne within the niche. He is clothed in luxurious episcopal dress (with cope, mitre and crozier) and looks out towards the spectator. An elegant inscription in capital letters on a painted marble plaque invokes his protection: 'CONCILIAS

SVMMVM/POPULO GOTTARDE/TONANTEM' ('Oh Gotthard, make the thundering peak kindly towards the people'). Traditionally, St Gotthard wards off natural disasters; in particular he protects crops against hailstones. The two other saints stand one on either side: St Lawrence, in diaconal dress, rests on the symbol of his martyrdom, the grille; and St Catherine, holding a palm and a crown, leans elegantly against a fragment of serrated wheel.

The painting began life as an altarpiece in the chapel of St Gotthard in the church of San Pancrazio Martire at Gorlago. From 1567 to 1613 the curate of Gorlago was Don Giorgio Asperti, who commissioned at least three altarpieces from Moroni, as well as his own portrait. His association with the artist lasted from 1572 to 1579. During this period Moroni painted for the church in Gorlago the *Adoration of the Magi*, the present St Gotthard altarpiece and the monumental *Last Judgement* (fig. 1), which was left unfinished due to his sudden death (Facchinetti 1996, pp. 186–97). We know more today about the cultural life of Giorgio Asperti thanks in part to a study of the books in his library (Bravi 2004, pp. 261–77).

The painter was paid for the St Gotthard altarpiece between August 1574 and April 1575, being remunerated both in cash and in kind (i.e. large quantities of wine, equal in value to more than a third of the estimated price: Facchinetti 1996, p. 195, n. 20). The delivery of the painting was timed to precede an apostolic visit from Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, who in his report describes the church as 'pulcram et ornatam' ('beautiful and graceful'; Bravi 2004, p. 263). Giorgio Asperti's responsibilities extended to rearranging the church furnishings in line with instructions received after the Council of Trent, instructions implemented by the pastoral efforts of Carlo Borromeo. SF

36

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Tailor (Il Tagliapanni), c. 1570

Oil on canvas, 99.5 × 77 cm

The National Gallery, London, inv. NG 697. Purchased, 1862



In a bare, ill-lit room stands a young man dressed in a beige fustian jacket; he looks intently at the spectator. He wears very full red breeches and around his waist is a sword belt. On the little finger of his right hand is a gold ring set with a ruby; in the same hand he holds a pair of scissors. He spreads a piece of expensive black fabric across his bench; the place where he is to cut is marked with white chalk. We are looking at a tailor immortalised at work.

Ridolfi writes that the painting was in the house of Giovanni Grimani. It may have been bought by the great collector Cardinal Giovanni Grimani (1501–1573), Patriarch of Aquileia (Penny 2004, p. 236), or – more likely – it was bought by a later Giovanni Grimani (1595–1653), who was Captain of Bergamo in 1630. If the latter is the case, then Ridolfi was referring to a living collector.

Portrait of a Tailor was first documented in Venice in the midseventeenth century at Palazzo Grimani (Ridolfi 1648, vol. 1, p. 148; Boschini 1660, p. 360), with other portraits by Moroni, including almost certainly Ercole Tasso (c. 1575; known only through the copy formerly in the Art Institute of Zanesville, Ohio). In his commentary on Francesco Maria Tassi's Vite, Antonio Piccinelli records having seen the painting in 1845 in Venice, but in the house of the painter Natale Schiavoni (1777– 1858; Piccinelli 1863–65, p. 202; Andrea Di Lorenzo, in Milan 2005, p. 86, no. 2, p. 87, no. 10). We do not know from where Schiavoni purchased the portrait – it is possible that towards the end of the eighteenth century (or during the beginning of the nineteenth) the work was no longer in the Grimani Collection (Gould 1975, p. 166, no. 5) – but in 1846 the artist was to sell it to Federico Frizzoni-Salis. In 1855 it was seen by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake in Frizzoni-Salis's collection (Avery-Quash 2011, vol. 1, p. 246) and in 1862 he was to see it again at the Villa Frizzoni in Bellagio, acquiring it there at a high price for the National Gallery, London (Avery-Quash 2011, vol. 1, p. 595; vol. 2, p. 130). The work was the first Moroni to come into the National Gallery's collection.

As reported in the verse of Boschini (1660, p. 360) and endorsed in an extensive critical literature (see Gregori 1979, p. 271), Moroni gives us a genuine image of a tailor, probably a comfortably-off artisan, proud of his trade. The traditional title of the portrait, *Il Tagliapanni*, has itself caused some confusion; it was used by Frizzoni-Salis to detract from an ennobling allegorical or moral interpretation — the expression 'tagliare i panni' ('to cut the clothes' [from someone's back]) means to speak ill of someone — in order to increase and justify its price (Gregori 1979, p. 271).

With its admirable combination of silver tones and warm browns, this is the masterpiece of Moroni's portraiture. Although slightly worn in places, particularly on the face (Penny 2004, p. 236), the portrait is characterised by an intimacy with the sitter that heightens its expressive impact and psychological realism, both of which are highly unconventional and almost anachronistic. AG

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI

Portrait of a Lady in Black (Medea Rossi?),  $\emph{c}.\,\textsc{1572--73}$ 

Oil on canvas, 95 × 76 cm

Fondazione Museo di Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo



The female model's stern, penetrating gaze seems to suggest total tranquillity; the spectator is naturally impressed by the tremendous sense of control that emanates from the representation of such a mood. The layout of the painting dispenses with any symbolic or emotional interference and a dense grey background enhances the sitter's outline. She is seated on a Dantesca chair, placed diagonally to give a feeling of depth. The white ripples of the ruff and cuffs

stand out from the chrysalis of her black dress, which reveals a grey lining where it is slashed on the sleeve. These details direct attention towards the form of the head and the position of the hands; one hand holds a small book, the other lies on the sitter's lap clasping a pair of leather gloves. That the lady's reading has been recently interrupted can be deduced from the index finger between the pages of the book, keeping her place; this explains her mood of cool detachment. The fact that her bodice is very similar to the ones worn in Moroni's *Portrait of Pace Rivola Spini* (cat. 40) and *Lady Seated with a Book* (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo) has served to date the portrait to about 1570 (Gregori 1979, p. 238, no. 48; Newton 1979, p. 294).

Unfortunately we do not know the identity of the sitter, and the provenance of the painting goes back no further than 1817 (Plebani 2004, pp. 205–06). In that year, Marcantonio Fermo Grumelli delivered to the collector Count Pietro Moroni 'four paintings by Moroni', including the portraits of Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (cat. 17) and Isotta Brembati (cat. 16). It has been suggested on the basis of this provenance that the *Portrait of a Lady in Black* might portray a member of the Grumelli family, specifically Medea Rossi (1515–1590), wife of Marcantonio Grumelli and mother of Giovanni Gerolamo (Paolo Plebani, in Bergamo 2004, p. 228, no. 43).

Medea Rossi's biographical details do not conflict with this identification, and it is known that she had an interest in the figurative arts. Shortly after being widowed in 1542, she and her three sons commissioned the painter Filippo Zanchi to paint a portrait of her husband – 'who she said was much better-looking than the portrait' (De Pascale 1998, pp. 11–12, no. 12). In 1544 she commissioned Moretto to execute *The Martyrdom of St Peter of Verona* (Rodeschini 1981, p. 29), designed to hang in the Grumelli family chapel in the church of Santi Stefano e Domenico, Bergamo (it is now in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan). It should be remembered that by 1544 Moroni was already working in Moretto's studio. SF

38

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Gentleman and His Two Daughters (The Widower), 6.1572–75

Oil on canvas, 125.3 × 98 cm

National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, inv. 105



The sober furnishings of the room — books on the shelf, letters on the table — do not distract our attention from the direct, searching gaze of the sitter. The larger of the two girls is also turned towards the spectator, while the smaller looks at her sister and clutches a piece of fruit. Both are tenderly embraced by their father, whose identity is unknown. We know only where he lived, Albino, because the name is written on both of the unsealed letters, which have been left

open on the green velvet cloth of the table.

The earliest mention of this painting dates back to 1835, when the Milanese painter and dealer Giuseppe Finetti presented it to the board of the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, receiving in return an appraisal, signed by the collectors Carlo Marenzi and Guglielmo Lochis, that certified it as an original work: 'Examined as requested with all care and circumspection and declared to be undoubtedly a distinct, original work by Gio. Batt.a Moroni of Albino' (Rossi 2000, p. 261). A few years later the painting left Italian soil, ending up in the collection of Sir Joseph Hawley in England. In 1858 it was sold at auction at Christie's, London, with a curious description: 'Portrait of Aretino, in black dress and ruff, two children standing before him' (Christie's 1858, p. 4, no. 32). After its acquisition in 1866 by the National Gallery of Ireland it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1884, where it earned the enthusiastic admiration of Jean Paul Richter (1884, p. 51), who considered it the finest work in the exhibition of old masters from the Veneto.

Once the erroneous attribution to Sofonisba Anguissola – advanced by Herbert Frederick Cook (1915, pp. 235–36) on the basis of comparison with the *Family Portrait* now in the Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Nivå – had been dismissed, debate centred on the painting's chronology within Moroni's output. Lendorff's suggestion (1933, pp. 37, 41, 72–73, no. 57) of 6.1563–65, based on analysis of the fashions worn in the painting, met with unanimous approval (Gregori 1979, pp. 255–56, no. 99; Valerio Guazzoni, in Cremona 1994, p. 320, no. 61; De Pascale 1998, p. 10; Carolina Vincenti, in Paris 2006, p. 202, no. 53). In reality the style of this painting fits best into the succeeding decade (Humfrey 2000, p. 34, suggests 6.1570). The extraordinary rendering of the flesh and the soft and atmospheric skin tones relate the Dublin triple portrait to such paintings from Moroni's final years as the *Portrait of Vincenzo Guarinoni* (1572; Cleveland Museum of Art) and the St Gotthard altarpiece at Gorlago (cat. 35), finished before 1575. SF

39, 40

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI

Portrait of Bernardo Spini and Portrait of Pace Rivola Spini, c. 1573-75

Oil on canvas, each 197 × 98 cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 00082 and inv. 58 AC 00083



The identity and age of these two figures can be gleaned from the inscriptions (added later) on the canvases: Bernardo Spini was born in 1536 and died in 1612 at the age of 76; Pace Rivola was born in 1541 and died in 1613 at the age of 72. Husband and wife are portrayed full length before a horizontal dado that rises to waist height; this supports a half-column and a pilaster strip. The architectural setting is undecorated; perhaps we are looking at the interior of Palazzo Spini in Albino, a building in which Giovanni Battista Moroni carried out some profane wall paintings for Marcantonio Spini, father of Bernardo, in the late 1540s (Tassi 1793, vol. 1, p. 164).

Bernardo looks rather pleased with himself. He is dressed entirely in black with a tall cap on his head and a cape fastened at his shoulder. The sword by his side is so long that it cannot be accommodated on the canvas. In the other portrait, Pace Rivola has removed both her gloves in order to show off the rings glittering on the third finger of each hand. She cradles an ostrichfeather fan.

The gesture Pace Rivola makes with her right hand at waist height seems deliberate: spreading the *giornea* she is wearing over her red dress, apparently in allusion to pregnancy. There are no records that indicate their marriage produced legitimate children; however,

in Bernardo's will we read of the existence of three children born out of wedlock to two different women.

The portraits were mentioned in passing by Angelini (1720, p. 38) and Lanzi (1795–96, vol. 2, p. 99). The earliest champion of the paintings was the collector Guglielmo Lochis who, in about 1833, described them as 'superb portraits' (Facchinetti 2004A, p. 49). The paintings remained in the Spini family until 1852, when they were offered to the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.

We now know, from the discovery of documentation, that Bernardo Spini celebrated his marriage to the noble Pace Rivola on 16 November 1568 with a dowry of 2,000 scudi (Tiraboschi 2004, p. 301), establishing a terminus post quem for the paintings. Yet even prior to this discovery, Lendorff (1939, p. 94) had suggested a tentative year of around 1570. This date was subsequently set back (Gregori 1979, p. 227, nn. 19–20) on the basis of the portraits' style. The similarity of Bernardo's pose to that of the sitter in *Portrait of a Man* in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (a work that is signed and dated 1576), is obvious and suggests that these two portraits were executed at around the same time. SF

41

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Albani, *c.* 1568–70

Oil on canvas, 110 × 77 cm

Private collection



When Moroni posed his models he generally decided to portray them in three-quarter profile. This is the only known portrait in which the figure sits directly facing us. The elderly subject has just interrupted his reading and has slipped a finger between the pages of his book to keep his place. He sits magisterially on a Dantesca chair, wearing a sumptuous black robe lined with lynx fur, which emerges from the slashes at the shoulders and at the wrists. A gold chain hangs around his neck with a cross and the winged

lion of St Mark, the badge of the Knights of the Order of St Mark, an honorific title bestowed by the Republic of Venice.

The earliest description of this painting dates back to a posthumously published work by Francesco Maria Tassi (1793, vol. 1, p. 166): 'an old man with a long beard wearing a robe lined with white fur'. Tassi, embellishing a celebrated anecdote first told by Carlo Ridolfi (1648, vol. 1, p. 147), recounts that 'finding in Venice a gentleman from Bergamo, a member of the Albani family, sought Titian out to have his portrait painted. He was asked from which area he came and let it be known that he was from Bergamo: "What," replied Titian, "do you think you will get a better portrait from my hands than you could get in Bergamo from your Moroni? Best leave this work to him, for it will be more valuable and more distinctive than mine." Sig. Albani then returned to Bergamo and told the story to Moroni, who produced this stupendous portrait now belonging to Sig. Giuseppe Albani' (for records of the painting's changes of ownership see: Paolo Plebani, in Bergamo 2004, p. 156, no. 20; for a historical justification of Ridolfi's anecdote see Facchinetti 2004A, pp. 32-33).

The sitter has been recognised by Mina Gregori (1979, pp. 299–300, no. 183) as Giovanni Gerolamo Albani (1509–1591), a leading member of the aristocracy of Bergamo and protagonist in a famous family feud with the Brembati family. Because of a bloody assassination in 1563 (Giovanni Gerolamo's son had murdered Achille Brembati), Giovanni Gerolamo lost his post as 'collaterale generale' of the Venetian Republic and was forced into a five-year exile on the island of Hvar in the Adriatic. This enforced absence may have prompted the request for a commemorative portrait, commissioned by the family. Exile is one of the few justifications that Gabriele Paleotti does not disapprove of in his stringent censure regarding the legitimacy of having a portrait painted (1582, p. 2,720). In any event, if the identification is correct, the portrait must date from before 17 May 1570 when Albani – thanks to the appointment to the papacy of his old friend Michele Ghislieri (as Pope Pius V) – was made a cardinal. SF

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of an Elderly Man Seated with a Book (Pietro Spino?),  $\iota$ .1575–79 Oil on canvas, 97.5 × 81.2 cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 58 AC 0084



RA\_Moroni\_vFF.indd 134-135

The portrait is set in an unfurnished room with a grey wall as background. A Dantesca chair positioned at an angle almost perpendicular to the viewer establishes the depth of the space. The elderly sitter, dressed in a heavy black jacket lined with fur, seems to have sunk into the comfortable chair. He has stopped reading an octavo volume and turned slowly round to meet the spectator's eye. His own gaze is searching, almost hypnotic.

The earliest reference to this painting goes

back to its purchase by Giacomo Carrara in 1758. The Bergamese collector seemed very proud of having acquired such an important work, to the extent that he felt the need to record it in writing: 'I bought a superb portrait by Moroni, an old man with a beard, seated, with both hands' (Paccanelli, Recanati and Rossi 1999, p. 251). In 1806 – on the occasion of the visit of Prince Eugene of Savoy, Viceroy of Italy - the painting was exhibited by the municipality of Bergamo alongside a number of other paintings considered to have particular historical significance (Appendice documentaria 1999, p. 261, no. 20). In 1854 Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and future director of the National Gallery, London, visited the Pinacoteca Carrara in Bergamo and wrote in his notebook: 'Portrait like Schoolmaster -Moroni'. The note (explained by Gregori 1979, pp. 229–30, no. 26) establishes an immediate link with the so-called *Titian's Schoolmaster*, (fig. 17) a famous portrait (attributed to Moroni by Giacomo Carrara) then in the collection of the Duke of Sutherland at Stafford House in London.

Over the years it has been conjectured that the subject of the portrait is the notary of Albino, Giovanni Luigi Seradobati (fig. 10; see Mina Gregori, in Bergamo 1979, p. 246, no. 81; Rossi 1999A, p. 184). Moroni was certainly in close contact with him, having acquired a degree of kinship through the notary's daughter Angela Seradobati, who became the painter's sister-in-law after her marriage to Giuseppe Bonasio; however, this identification has been rejected. The style of the portrait shows it was definitely painted after 1575. Seradobati the notary died in 1565 or 1566, and his portrait is in fact that conserved in the Uffizi (until now, mistakenly believed to depict the poet Giovanni Antonio Pantera).

The hypothesis that this superb Accademia Carrara portrait bears the physical features of Pietro Spino (1513–1585) deserves further research (Pansera 2004–05, pp. 270–79). Moroni almost certainly knew the author from Albino, having painted a portrait of the condottiero Bartolomeo Colleoni (Valerio Guazzoni, in Fiorio 1999, pp. 117–19, no. 325), who had been portrayed in an engraving to illustrate Spino's famous Historia della vita et fatti dell'eccellentissimo capitano di Guerra Bartolomeo Coglione, published in Venice in 1569. The anonymous portrait of Pietro Spino (reproduced in Rossi 1979, p. 332, no. 40; Restauro 1997, no. 6) now in the Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, Bergamo, possesses physical features not dissimilar to those in Moroni's painting. SF

43

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Young Lady with a Fan, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 73.5 × 65 cm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK A 3036. Purchased with the support of Vereniging Rembrandt



No detail in the painting can divert attention from the piercing gaze fixed on the spectator by the young woman. The shadow of her head stands out against the grey-green back wall, indicating the direction of the light, from right to left. The young woman's dress is embellished with magnificent jewellery: a necklace consisting of a twist of gold chains and strings of pearls; a belt in gold and precious stones; and the inlaid fan,

decorated with painted animals. The woman's hair is very carefully styled, with curls arranged along the front hairline to form a point in the centre of her forehead, a style fashionable in Lombardy around the 1570s. The most striking item of jewellery is the pendant the young woman holds to her chest with an extravagant gesture of the right hand. This is an elaborate gold jewel featuring an allegory of fidelity: a female figure sits on a throne with two dogs beside her. Although we have no clue as to the young lady's identity, we know the virtue she would like to promote.

The earliest mention of this painting dates from 1682, when the work was listed in the collection of Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, the Vicerov of Naples: '841 Portrait of a woman holding a fan adorned with pearls by the hand of Lorenzo Lotti' (Burke and Cherry 1997, part 1, p. 770). Its illustrious provenance is confirmed by the initials 'DGH, 841' on the reverse of the canvas (Gregori 1979, p. 223, no. 10). The reference to Lorenzo Lotto could suggest that the painting was acquired in Bergamo or Venice; these were the main centres of Lotto's activity, but also places where the earliest collections of work by Moroni were formed. The attribution to Lotto was soon forgotten and in 1804 the painting was acquired for the collection of the Duke of Oldenburg, and re-attributed to Paris Bordone (1500–1571). The German art historian Wilhelm von Bode was the first to associate it with the name of Moroni: he illustrated the catalogue to the Oldenburg Collection with a full-page engraving of the painting (Bode 1888, p. 21). Once Lendorff's opinion had been dispensed with - he thought it was the work of a Bergamese follower of Moroni, possibly Giovanni Paolo Lolmo (c. 1550–1595) – the attribution was no longer in dispute (for a recent account, see Novella Barbolani di Montauto, in Bergamo 2004. p. 160, no. 2). In fact Lehndorff's suggestion helps to explain the chronology of the painting, which was traditionally thought to date from around 1570, but is definitely a little later than that. The lustre and translucence of the image and the brilliance of the artist's palette are typical of Moroni's final years, after 1575. It was from this point in his career that Lolmo (thought to be Moroni's apprentice) began to build his own repertoire, easily recognisable by the strong drawn element to be found in his compositions (Simone Facchinetti, in Bergamo 2002, pp. 70–75, no. 7). SF

44

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Girl of the Redetti Family, c. 1570–73

Oil on canvas, 40 × 32 cm

Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, inv. 81 LC 00175. Gugliemo Lochis Collection, 1866



As in many of Moroni's portraits, the figure here is placed against a neutral-grey background, which has the immediate effect of making the spectator concentrate fixedly on the physical appearance of the sitter. The model wears her best dress and, despite her youth, seems to have adopted a pose that was popular with adults during the period; similarly, her grey-blue eyes suggest self-assurance beyond her years. With her right hand she holds her necklace, drawing

attention to the coral bracelet – worn for its apotropic powers – that encircles her wrist. The head, held absolutely still, is framed by a neat, starched ruff. Her hair is particularly carefully dressed, with the locks curled forwards to form a point in the middle of her forehead; this was becoming the fashion in Lombardy at that time.

The earliest reference to this painting appears in a handwritten note, dated to about 1833, by the collector Guglielmo Lochis of Bergamo. According to Lochis, the portrait he owned depicts a 'Girl of the Redetti family' and reflects the artist's 'final and most polished style' (Facchinetti 2004A, p. 48). Based on this evidence, it has been assumed that the work came from the collection of Clara Redetti, second wife of the art writer Francesco Maria Tassi (Gregori 1979, pp. 180–91, n. 50). This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the painter Francesco Zuccarelli, sometime guest of the Tassi family in Bergamo, seems to have been following Moroni's example in his Portrait of Margherita Tassi (1751; Accademia Carrara, Bergamo), Sir Charles Locke Eastlake makes a brief mention of Moroni's portrait in a note of his own in 1854, describing it as: 'child holding necklace – embroidered dress – pleasing specimen' (Avery-Quash 2011, vol. 1, p. 234). The Lochis painting is the only known individual portrait of its kind in Moroni's auvre, and as such has enjoyed unusual popularity.

Study of the style of the sitter's dress suggests a late date for the painting. Lendorff (1939, pp. 97–98) insisted it was created between 1566 and 1570; he also emphasised the shading of the face, which appears more akin to the works of later artists such as Velázquez than to those of a contemporary of Bronzino.

Later commentators have brought the portrait's date of completion forwards to about 1570 (Gregori 1979, pp. 180–81, n. 50) because of stylistic similarities with *Portrait of a Young Lady with a Fan* in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (cat. 41). AG

45

GIOVANNI BATTISTA MORONI Portrait of a Young Lady, c. 1575

Oil on canvas, 51.8 × 41.5 cm

Private collection



The severity of this young woman's appearance is increased by her piercing, almost inquisitorial gaze. This is to a large extent due to the way the painter has arranged the pose: the model's upper body is set at a diagonal, with the head turned a little to the left and slightly tilted; her eyes look towards the right, intercepting the gaze of the spectator. The young woman seems completely unintimidated by the painter, and appears perfectly at ease in her opulent, fashionable dress.

Her over-garment of pink brocade with open sleeves is secured with buttons on alternate sides of the bodice, and fastens right up to the broad ruff. The figure is painted at very close quarters, against a grey-blue background brightened by suffused light around the head.

The provenance of the painting was little known until relatively recently. In 1928 it appeared in a sale of antiques from the collection of Prince Gagarin of St Petersburg (for details of subsequent changes of hands, see Kathleen M. Morris, in Williamstown 2011, pp. 88–89, no. 14). Wilhelm Valentiner described it, also in 1928, as 'one of the finest female portraits known to me by Giovanni Battista Moroni' (reported in Parke-Bernet 1963, p. 16).

Details of the clothing have helped to date the painting to after 1572 (Lendorff 1933, pp. 43, 81, no. 83). In fact similarities with the clothing worn in *Child of the Redetti Family* (cat. 44), and the equally magnificent gown worn in *Portrait of a Young Lady with a Fan* (cat. 43), have proved a useful guide; both paintings are considered to belong to the early 1570s.

Lendorff's suggestion about the date of the portrait, which was based exclusively on analysis of the costume, has been confirmed on stylistic grounds as well. Mina Gregori (1979, p. 290, no. 163) proposed an even later date of 6.1575. Her insight remains valid, bearing in mind that during the middle years of the 1570s Moroni returned to his preference for warm, luminous colours, appreciably different from those he had been using just a few years earlier. SF

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Stefano Andretta, 'Maffei, Giampietro', in Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, vol. 67, Rome, 2007, pp. 232-34

## ANGELINI 1720

Giovan Battista Angelini, Per darti le notizie del paese. Descrizione di Bergamo in terza rima 1720, Vincenzo Marchetti (ed.), Bergamo, 2002

## ANTONUCCI 1939

Giovanni Antonucci, Il ritratto di Pietro Secco Suardo di G. B. Moroni nella Galleria degli Uffizi', Rivista di Bergamo, 18 (1939), pp. 137-40

## APPENDICE DOCUMENTARIA 1000

Rosanna Paccanelli (ed.), 'Appendice documentaria', in Paccanelli, Recanati and Rossi 1999, pp. 243–319

Archivio del collezionismo mediceo. Il Cardinal Leopoldo, IV, Rapporti con il mercato di Siena, Pisa, Firenze, Genova, Milano, Napoli e altri centri minori, Miriam Fileti Mazza (ed.), Milan

## ARETINO 1546

Pietro Aretino, Lettere. Libro terzo [1546], Paulo Procaccioli (ed.), Rome, 1000

Pietro Aretino, Lettere. Libro quarto [1550], Paulo Procaccioli (ed.), Rome, 2000

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