

# The Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna



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## The Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna



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Vitale da Bologna, *St George  
and the Dragon*, detail

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*Jadranka Bentini*

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## The Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna

The Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna is housed in the old Jesuit convent. Its original formation – essentially arising from the suppressions – is, however, much older and linked to the foundation of the modern academy and the new university.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli brought writers and painters together in his home with the aim of superseding the old corporate structures of the guilds and launching a new idea of the academy movement. The project to establish an institute of sciences and arts thus followed, with capital provided by Marsigli and consigned to the Bologna senate which, in 1712, purchased the Palazzo Poggi in Via San Donato. This was the old residence of Cardinal Poggi, frescoed by Niccolò dell'Abate, and is now occupied by Bologna University. The artistic branch was the focus for a regenerative idea of art, both through practice and through incentives and services to the public, such as competitions and prize-giving ceremonies. The young academy then also received donations and collections, starting with that of Marsigli and a large part of the painting collection owned by Marquis Francesco Zambecari. In 1780 the Palazzo Poggi premises housed extremely important works and nuclei: from Ulisse Aldrovandi and Francesco Cospi's natural history museum to the antiques room, through to specialist scientific and military collections. Basically divided into two branches – the *Accademia delle Scienze* and the *Accademia Clementina* – the new institution repeated and expanded concepts developed in modern European countries and capitals such as London and Paris. Dozens of travellers supported and admired it. It was a symbol (or better, utopia) of the unity of the arts and sciences. This gave rise not only to the Pinacoteca, but also to other museums in the city, beginning with the grandiose *Museo Civico Archeologico*.

Following the conquest of Bologna by French troops under General Augerau and the subsequent suppressions, a large number of churches, convents, colleges, charitable institutes, laboratories and libraries revealed their treasures, which were safeguarded by immediate inventories before being dispersed or added to new local and foreign collections. When Napoleon Bonaparte visited the *Istituto delle Scienze*, he said that the first thing he wanted to do was to visit the *Accademia Clementina* (named after the donations and attention given it by Pope Clement XI): 'on 28 October the *Accademia Clementina* met in the room known as the Hercules Room in the public building, to acclaim Bonaparte himself as an honorary academic; the academics then moved into the herb garden for entertainments and refreshments... Shortly after, the central government administration ordered an academic commission to propose a new study programme'. With the new public education laws enacted on 8 September 1802, the Bologna *Accademia di Belle Arti*, in line with that of Milan, ended its life as the *Accademia Clementina* to take on a new educational role. The nucleus of paintings which the *Clementina* had collected was thus transferred to the *Accademia di Belle Arti*, becoming its collection.

### Pio Panfili

*The Collegio dei Gesuiti and the church of Sant'Ignazio towards the end of the eighteenth century*  
Bologna, Cassa di Risparmio art collection

That apparently indistinct jumble of assets was thus consolidated in newly established institutions and places. In Bologna some of this was conferred on the urban district of San Donato where the architect Martinetti's design for the new university ordered by Napoleon in 1803 saw an organic arrangement of the various institutes adhering to different disciplines but following the same overall programme. This harmonious system was intended to mediate the functional needs of the different institutes for a new university district and culture, in which the academy would also have its place with its Pinacoteca following. These were located in the building of the Jesuit novitiate, taking in the convent and the fine church designed by Alfonso Torreggiani which became the *aula magna*. From 1804, the upper rooms were used to hold the nucleus of paintings collected from the previous *Accademia Clementina* from 1796. The new institution's collection was initially based mainly on works from suppressed convents and churches: it consisted of three big halls designed by Leandro Marconi, and had the painting school next door, thus respecting the educational aims of the old Pinacoteca.

In 1815, many of the paintings which had left Bologna nineteen years earlier began to return one by one to the city. This operation was supervised by Antonio Canova, who personally attended the opening of the cases collected in the church of the Spirito Santo. Their state of preservation was regarded as pleasing due to the excellent quality of the Parisian restoration work. The extremely famous *St Cecilia* by Raphael, requisitioned from San Giovanni in Monte, had been restored and its support changed. Mauro Gandolfi had seen it in the workshop of the painters and engravers Pierre Laurent and Robillard Peronville, who were engraving the main paintings in the Louvre, and mentions it in his Paris writings: 'I saw Raphael's *St Cecilia* being transferred from panel to canvas'. The consignment ended fairly happily for the newly established Pinacoteca, apart from some paintings remaining in France, including the *Triumph of Job* by Guido Reni (from the church of the Mendicanti), only recently recognised by Sir Denis Mahon in Notre-Dame, Paris.

In 1827 Pietro Giordani published the first catalogue of the Pinacoteca with 274 works, though it is known that the archives contained many more. It must also be recorded that from 1818 the project of engraving the paintings in the Gallery by the celebrated Francesco Rosaspina had begun, eventually completed in 1829: this spread the fame of the Bologna collection – essentially linked to the artists of the Baroque city – throughout Europe.

In the new museum, even after 1815, nothing was changed by the Church, which continued to give continuity and impetus allowing and encouraging the transfer of paintings from minor suppressions and private donations.

Between 1817 and 1860, various alterations and enlargements were made to the Pinacoteca which was opened free to the public on Thursdays. An entrance fee was introduced in 1875, representing the prologue to the definitive separation of the Pinacoteca from the academy which took place in 1882. The two institutions were thus separated; one remaining a school, the other established as an autonomous museum.



Dalmasio di Jacopo  
*Crucifixion*



At the same time, the Pinacoteca was bequeathed Marquis Giacomo Zambeccari's famous collection, the only survivor of the many senatorial collections in the city and consisting of more than 400 paintings by old masters. Alongside the eminently public and local value of the Bologna collection resulting from the enormous Jacobin legal restructuring, the connection with the noble society of the place thus also emerged, though this was not to be repeated with the same kind of intensity. The Zambeccari bequest was inspired by an enlightened and commendatory attitude typical of the last years of the eighteenth century: it was always to be kept together and be preserved to honour the name of the donor and the city of Bologna to the benefit of fine arts students and the public. This collection of high quality paintings, though not containing any real masterpieces, was of value in that its private origins enriched the largely ecclesiastical nature of the works then presented by the Pinacoteca.

At present 105 paintings from the big collection are exhibited in the noble apartment of the Palazzo Pepoli Campogrande – previously the senatorial residence of the Bologna family – in four rooms frescoed by Giuseppe Maria Crespi, Donato Creti and the Rolli brothers. This building has become an integral part of the Pinacoteca Nazionale as the old noble premises with painting annex.

Another important acquisition made in 1881 was that of the print collection belonging to Pope Benedict XIV, Prospero Lambertini. This is a nucleus of almost 23,000 items, with a further 12,000 Roman chalcographic prints donated by Pius IX. The prints are now all kept in the Print and Drawing Room adjoining the modern Pinacoteca.

New architectural restructuring was therefore necessary, along with a reordering of the materials – which already occupied a kilometre of display space. In 1906, 638 ancient paintings were on display, while many began to be distributed, on request, to public offices and other institutes; a custom discontinued a few years ago in an attempt to create an organic recomposition of the historic nuclei.

The antiques market at the beginning of the twentieth century still offered good deals at low prices. So several works by primitives were also added to the Pinacoteca's collections, along with others by Francesco Francia, the famous *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* by Guido Reni, paintings by Marco Zoppo, Elisabetta Sirani and others. The first task was to thin out the rooms, where the paintings were still hung in three overlapping rows, in order to create a more rational and visible arrangement.

The modern enlargement of the Gallery on the present Via De' Rolandis through to Via Irnerio was designed by Edoardo Collamarini and now houses the large and medium-sized works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The additional project for further enlargement which would have allowed a closing aspect of the period to be covered was, however, never carried forward. The Institute of Legal Medicine was built within the grounds of the Pinacoteca instead, thus denying the latter the complete display of its holding.

It was only in 1950, under the direction of Cesare Gnudi, that the work of restoration and of further enlargement and critical requalification of the materials was given a substantial lift. This was a result of many other important acquisitions and an increase in the



Guido Reni  
*Samson*



number of compulsory detachments of frescoes from derelict churches (the case of the frescoes from Mezzaratta being a typical example). The entire layout was thus reorganised with a new museographical and historical-theoretical composition, under the guidance of Cesare Gnudi and with the architectural input of Leone Pancaldi. At the time there was complete recognition of the holding. The new layout was one of the first, post-war, global, museographical layouts in Italy and was on a par with those of Carlo Scarpa and Franco Albini. The work fully respected the original shape and volumes of the building, particularly in the nineteenth-century rooms lit by skylights – thus allowing the initial characterisation of the building to be retained; so too in the halls intended to contain the big works and connecting features such as staircases.

The essential foundation of the modern layout is the Bolognese and Emilian school, from its fourteenth-century flowering through to the eighteenth century: from Vitale da Bologna to the Gandolfi, the itinerary develops through the Renaissance with Francesco del Cosca and Ercole de' Roberti, Lorenzo Costa, Francesco Francia, Amico Aspertini, Raphael and all his local followers dazzled by his brilliance; and on with Parmigianino, Pellegrino Tibaldi, Bartolomeo and

Giovanni Battista Bagnacavallo, Giorgio Vasari, Prospero and Lavinia Fontana, through to the substantial presence of the Carracci (Ludovico, Agostino and Annibale), Guido Reni, Domenichino, Guercino, Simone Cantarini, Francesco Albani and Giuseppe Maria Crespi. The underlying theme linking the long

and structured exhibition follows the historiographical indications of Carlo Cesare Malvasia, author of *Vita degli artisti bolognesi* and exegete of local figurative culture. The broad mesh of the layout, marked by large ecclesiastical works added after the Napoleonic suppressions, still allows room for enlargements and additions. However, although united in its expressive layering, the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna is still awaiting completion so that it can give space to at least another hundred works from its archives.

The Fine Arts Halls created in the basement are, however, functional: these modern equipped rooms measuring 3,200 square metres are used for large and medium-sized temporary exhibitions. They are part of a new enlargement that has since 1997 allowed the display of old and modern works, drawings and archaeological materials, and the staging of seminars and conferences in annex rooms set aside for teaching purposes. The object is to once again seal the museum-school identity, encouraging not only appreciation of the holding, but especially educational activities, the real ultimate role of a modern museum producing live culture.

*Jadranka Bentini*

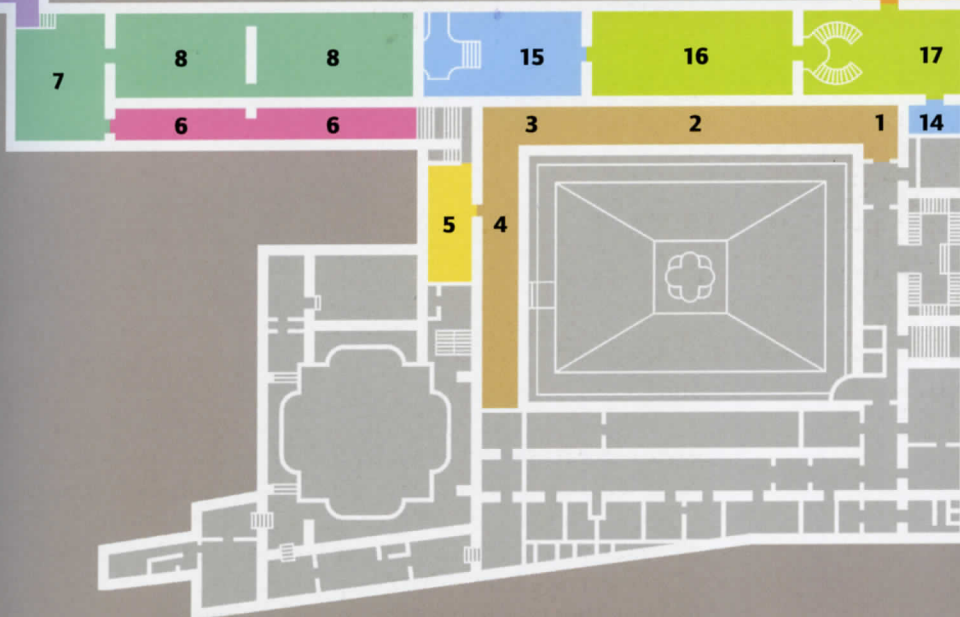
Curator of the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna



**Guido Reni**  
*Plague Altarpiece*  
detail



- XIII-XIV century
- Giotto
- XIV-XV century
- XIV century frescoes / Mezzaratta frescoes
- The Renaissance / Raphael
- Mannerism
- The Carracci / Guido Reni
- XVII-XVIII century



1 The thirteenth century

2 The origins of Gothic in Bologna

3 Mature Gothic

4 The San Petronio Workshop

5 Giotto and the 'foreigners' in Bologna

6 The twilight of Gothic

7 The fourteenth-century frescoes

8 The Mezzaratta frescoes

9 The fifteenth century and Humanism

10 The nobility and the art of the Bentivoglio

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14 Emilian Mannerism

15 Giorgio Vasari and mature Mannerism

16 The Carracci and the late sixteenth-century renewal

17 Guido Reni

18 The Accademia degli Incamminati

19 Guercino

20 Seventeenth-century Classicism

21 The late seventeenth century

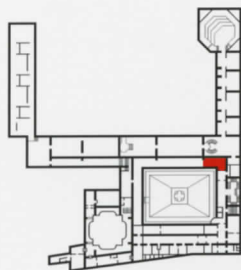
22 The turn of the century

23 Giuseppe Maria Crespi  
The eighteenth century

24 The monumental  
seventeenth-century altarpieces

At the entrance is one of the rare works in the Pinacoteca's historical collection from the thirteenth century: a complex period when Bologna, 'international' city, home of a prestigious university and epicentre from which the great religious orders spread, was a meeting point for 'doctors', artists and merchants of the most varied origins.

The *Crucifix* on board was originally in the Basilica of San Francesco; it was then moved to Santa Maria del Borgo di San Pietro and from there to the Pinacoteca. Its creator was long identified as Master of the Borgo Crucifix, from its place of origin. More recent studies, however, link the big cross – with the theme of the suffering Christ, imported from the Byzantine Orient and autonomously re-read by the different cultures of the Italian peninsula – to a united group of works of similar suggestion and model found mainly in central Italy and the Bologna area, attributed to the so-called **Master of the Franciscan Crucifixes**: a pseudonym for the unknown painter of such examples in Franciscan churches. (→ I.)







Master  
of the Franciscan Crucifixes  
*Crucifix*  
(left: detail)

## I. The *Crucifix* previously in San Francesco and the 'international' culture of thirteenth-century Bologna

Franciscans and Dominicans – some of the main disseminators of artistic culture and promoters of big workshops in the thirteenth century due to the missionary spirit of their orders – found fertile ground for the circulation of ideas in Bologna, where artists and intellectuals from the most diverse backgrounds met, attracted by the richness of the commissions and cultural debate. Contacts with France, which increased following the political relations established with the Angevins and the empire, particularly at the time of Frederick II, were complemented by the direct or indirect flow of ideas from the Byzantine Orient. The hubs for the transmission of Oriental Christian culture to Italy were Pisa, due to its geographical position and uninterrupted links with Constantinople and the Byzantine regions, Venice, Genoa, the Adriatic cities and papal Rome. It was the Dominican order which commissioned the big *Crucifix* still in the San Domenico in Bologna from Giunta Pisano, one of the most influential disseminators of Oriental styles. Artists like the painter of the *Crucifix* now in the Pinacoteca, following the style of the master, were important references for the circulation of such models. The Tuscan examples were not, however, the only vehicles in our region: in other cases it is possible to suggest the presence of masters from across the Adriatic, or the relationship with drawings, possibly spread by way of codices. Traces of Byzantine ideas with a possible Balkan flavour have been identified in Bolognese illuminations and in thirteenth-century Emilian and Romagnol painting. Mention must also be made of the Baptistry cycle in Palma, the *Massacre of the Innocents* remaining from the lost pictorial complex



originally in the Rotunda in Santo Stefano, Bologna (now in the Santo Stefano museum) and the frescoes by the Master of San Bartolo in the Pinacoteca of Ferrara, in which direct influences from Serbian painting have been read. There is nothing odd about such a possible meeting, motivated by political, cultural and commercial reasons, even if this has been almost completely concealed until recent times: the importance of the Adriatic ports for trade with the Dalmatian coast, from Ragusa-Dubrovnik through to Cattaro and Scutari, must be remembered. In the same way that influences and models reached inside the Balkans from Italy, so they could have come back in the opposite direction. Other works from the same period are also connected to this network of relations. They include the three *Stories* in the nearby *Sala di Giotto* (Giotto Room) – possibly originally part of an altarpiece – attributed to the artist known as the **Master of Faenza** from the place where the other parts of the complex are kept. The *Nativity* and the *Scenes from Christ's Passion*, drawn from Oriental models, suggest echoes of ancient exchanges. The *Deposition* presents Byzantine iconography with a less courtly language. The most illustrious version of this is on the other side of the Adriatic, in a fresco in the church of Mileševa; one of the most important monasteries in Serbia on the ancient road linking Constantinople with the Orient and the sea. In Italy it may also be seen in Perugia, Aquileia, Siena and, with modifications, in the work of Rimini, Tuscan and Veneto painters. The monochrome sculptures in the painted architecture refer to similar suggestions, related to the Byzantine art of the Paleologi period which, around the last decade of the century and the beginning of the next, was found in complexes like Gračanica, Decani and Studeniča (royal chapel) in historic Serbia.

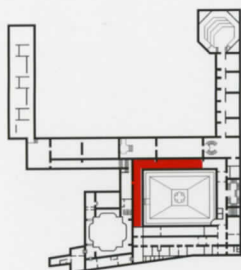








Vitale da Bologna  
Dead Christ with Saints  
Christopher and Anthony Abbot



Bologna retained its role as an 'international' crossroads in the first decades of the fourteenth century: the closer political ties with France in particular – accentuated in the thirties during the government of the legate Bertrand du Puget – must have also influenced the renewal of its art, contributing to the growth of the local painting style. However, this remained closely linked to the love of the 'natural' which remained a characteristic part of the culture. Further along the corridor are paintings on wood by masters who, in the first half of the fourteenth century, made Bologna an autonomous centre of European Gothic; not unmindful of the ideas it had come into contact with in the previous century, but ready to elaborate new ones.

In the *St George and the Dragon* by **Vitale da Bologna** (whose work was already documented at the beginning of the 1330s, and through to 1361), the distortion of the horseman and the portrayal of the princess are a counterpoint to the fixed blue background, rare in panels and more common in wall painting. The work was signed by the artist on the horse as a reminder of his surname 'degli Equi'. The nearby *Stories of St Anthony* (possibly from the 'big panel' mentioned in documents in the church of the same name), with the signature of the master, narrate episodes relating to the life and miracles of the saint, reverting to the ancient Oriental accounts. Here the construction planes are added and overturned, the episodes co-exist as in a sacred representation. In the nearby panel, the *Dead Christ with Saints Christopher and Anthony Abbot* – protectors against the plague, whose cult is linked to the journeys of pilgrims – is situated among the works of his maturity, around the 1350s, when the master worked in the church of Santa Maria dei Servi. The *Stories of Christ* on the wall in front are attributed to the anonymous **Master of San Niccolò degli Albani**, active in Bologna in the early decades of the century.

The board in the subsequent panel (*Crucifixion and Saints - Deposition and Christ in Limbo*) is attributed to the anonymous Rimini painter known as **Pseudo Baronzio**, because of links to the work of the painter Giovanni Baronzio, active at the dawn of the century and one of the founders of the school based in Rimini. The relationship with the Rimini painters and the strong sign of Byzantine iconographic tradition help to establish a connection with works referred to a master working in the 1320s, according to most recent critical opinion. This artist, who combines the Bolognese language with designs of Rimini origin, with Gothic elements and with strong references to the big contemporary production of illuminations, was in the past identified with the later Jacopino di Francesco, documented in the 1360s: his work has recently been moved back to a period parallel to that of the young Vitale, and the pseudonym **Pseudo Jacopino** attributed to him.

Three polyptychs stand out amongst the paintings by the 'Pseudo Jacopino group' exhibited in this and the subsequent spaces: two painted for the no longer existing church of Santa Maria Nova and one for the Benedictine Santi Naborre e Felice abbey, now a military hospital in Via San Felice. Evangelical themes and figures of saints are read with enthusiasm for the account: the volumetry of the Rimini painters – still 'translated' from the Orient and the Adriatic school – is mixed with the chromatic and expressive style of Bologna. Some polyptych fragments are by the same artist: the *Death of the Virgin*, the *Coronation of the Virgin between Angels*, two cusps with *Saints* under the *Annunciation* and the *Stories*, possibly originally in Santa Cristina, brought to the Pinacoteca as part of the earliest eighteenth-century donation by Father Urbano Savorgnan of Madonna di Galliera.

**Tomaso da Modena**  
*Altarolo*

**Pseudo Jacopino**  
*Polyptych*



After two other small works from the mid-century by an unknown artist, some paintings are exhibited by masters who were active in the 1340s and '50s, when Gothic expressiveness was clarified in a less extreme language. Amongst these, **Dalmasio di Jacopo** was a 'bridge' with nearby Tuscany, and particularly with Florence which, nourished by the presence of Giotto, saw an expansion in the number of artists referring to that great model. Dalmasio worked in the Dominican Santa Maria Novella Basilica in Florence – a sign of his recognised role in that city, despite his being a foreigner – and is represented here by a *Crucifixion*, possibly originally in San Martino church where there is also a fresco by him depicting *St Onouphrius*.

The *Christ in the Garden with Saints Ambrose and Petronius* is traditionally attributed to **Cristoforo da Bologna**, one of the artists who 'ferried' Bolognese painting from the time of Vitale to that of the late Gothic at the end of the century. The painting – whose material recalls the splendours of oil painting – in reality seems closer to the work of Lippo di Dalmasio, one of the most significant masters in turn of the century Bologna.

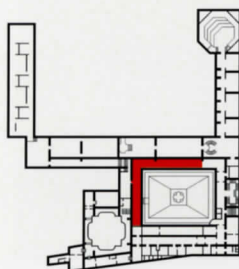
The small but important *Altarolo* which follows – almost a polyptych in miniature – is by **Tomaso da Modena**, who was educated in Bologna but moved to Treviso in 1349. From there he went to Bohemia where one of his frescoes and a *Madonna* on panel are still conserved in the Karlstein Castel near Prague. The Bolognese *Altarolo* was probably for a 'private', female client, as suggested by the depiction of four female saints in the lower range, and by the rare iconography in the central section. Here the Virgin is portrayed in three different attitudes: while reading, while feeding the Child and, in the third image, while knitting. The latter is an iconographic version of a subject that had perhaps already been broached by Vitale in the 1330s with his *Madonna of the Embroidery*.







**Simone de' Crocefissi**  
*Madonna di Giovanni*  
*da Piacenza*  
*Polyptych*



**Simone de' Crocefissi**, one of the most renowned painters of the late fourteenth century in the city, whose name derives from the subject present in many of his works, is here represented by a significant number of works. The artist was Dalmasio's brother-in-law and had studied under Vitale in his youth. The *Madonna di Giovanni da Piacenza* was originally in the Madonna del Monte church, not far from the church and oratory of Mezzaratta where Simone was already in direct contact with Vitale in the 1350s, and until recently carried the false signature of the latter. It is preceded by two panels from separated polyptychs: a *Crucifixion* possibly from the 1370s, and a *Coronation of the Virgin*. In his old age, Simone continued to influence and work alongside the new generation in the San Petronio Workshop, from where the predella with *Stories of the Virgin* on the front wall came: the presence of the Cospi coat of arms here suggests a connection with the polyptych painted in his later years – 1396–7 – for that family's chapel in the new basilica. The *St Helen with a Donor Nun* (at the beginning of the next corridor), an example of a particular technique – tempera on canvas – is attributed to the same artist. It may have originally been in the convent of the Dominican Sisters of Sant'Elena, and is one of the earliest surviving examples of this technique, which sources indicate was widely used in the city. In 1393 it was applied in the prestigious polyptych-altarpiece for the temporary high altar of the new Basilica of San Petronio – then under construction – entrusted to Lippo di Dalmasio and Giovanni di Ottonello. Attributed to Simone around the 1360s, the *St Helen*, possibly created as a processional banner, reveals the influence of Tomaso da Modena and the masters working in Padua, as confirmed by the important designs on the back of the canvas.

The greatest number of signed works amongst those by fourteenth-century masters in Bologna are by Simone. The decline apparent in his mature work relates both to the fame of his workshop and to the numerous 'political' and 'social' commitments which prevented him personally carrying out much of the work. It is not, however, certain that the differently formulated works are due simply to differing periods in the artist's life; a similar characteristic being also seen in other Bolognese painters working at the turn of the century. The works exhibited on the two sides of the corridor are testimony to this 'difference' in his range of production. In the first *polyptych*, dated between 1365 and 1370 and signed 'Symon de Bononia', the influence of Vitale is still strong, as is that of his brother-in-law Dalmasio, evoked in the refined chromatism and elegance of the forms. The second *polyptych*, however, is attributable to the Petronio period; its stiffening is possibly also due to the desire to adhere to the new fashions of the end-of-century artists, starting with his nephew Lippo, Dalmasio's son. In addition to the polyptychs, there are two youthful cusps with the *Annunciation* on the left, and the celebrative frontal portrait of *Pope Urban V* – who died in 1370 and was an immediate cult figure – on the right. Finally, the first panel shows *St Bernard Consigning the Rule to the Cistercian Monks*, possibly from the no longer extant church of San Bernardo. Bolognese culture was often in contact with that of Veneto and Lombardy in the second half of the fourteenth century, despite the frequent conflicts and battles between the regions. Giovanni da Bologna moved to Venice around 1370 and possibly sent the *polyptych* – exhibited here between the two by Simone – from there to the church of San Marco in his home city. The painter can be seen to have assimilated the 'Paduan' styles of Jacopo Avanzi, the other – more important – Bolognese artist of the late fourteenth century active in Padua, in the church of Sant'Antonio, alongside Altichiero.





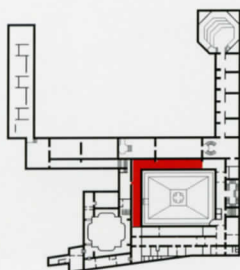


This brings us to the 1380s and '90s and the culture centred around the San Petronio Workshop. Examples of this are the *Saints Cosmas and Damian*, attributed to **Lippo di Dalmasio**, and the *Coronation of the Virgin*, signed by Lippo and dated 1394, one year after the first work in San Petronio of which no trace remains. References to Tuscan culture are strong in his work, and are one of the reasons for his great fame which continued over the centuries particularly because of the devotional value attributed to many of his paintings. Lippo was a link between the generation of the second half of the fourteenth century, represented by artists such as his father Dalmasio and his uncle Simone, and his younger colleagues, Jacopo di Paolo, Giovanni di Ottonello and possibly Pietro Lianori, painters of mature Bolognese Gothic.

The *Saints Peter and Paul* and the three *Saints* by **Jacopo di Paolo** anticipate three panels by the same master placed at the end of the corridor: part of a single complex, perhaps for San Michele in Bosco. The central scene portrays a signed *Crucifixion* to which the two lateral panels with *Saints* under the *Annunciation* correspond. There is a notable stylistic and technical consistency between the panels. The work features background painting and shading on a preparatory charcoal drawing, and grey washes over the burnished gold of the background; characteristics which can be found in the sources and technical recipes, and in the best of fourteenth-century Sienese and Catalan painting. **Giovanni da Modena** completed two works for San Francesco that are now in the Pinacoteca. The dramatic *Crucifix* interprets the theme present in the basilica from the time of the great thirteenth-century artists in a tragically 'natural' manner, with Christ's head sunk between his shoulders while his body tumbles forwards. Historians relate this work to the 'international' culture typical of the mature Gothic, especially with the Burgundian context. The two artists were already active in the first decade of the fifteenth century in the new Petronio Basilica. Jacopo di Paolo worked on sculptures and paintings for the monumental wooden altar in the Bolognini family chapel, while Giovanni da Modena completed the big frescoed cycle in which the *Stories of the Magi* and the *Last Judgement* (both still in place) stand out. This last scene recalls the *Last Judgement* on panel along the corridor, possibly painted by an illuminator who could have had direct contacts with Giovanni – himself also an illuminator and the author of treatises and prescriptive guides on painting technique.

*The small adjacent room, known as the Giotto Room, dedicated to works by non-Bolognese artists, is reached from the corridor.*

**Jacopo di Paolo**  
*Crucifixion*







Giovanni da Modena  
*Crucifix*

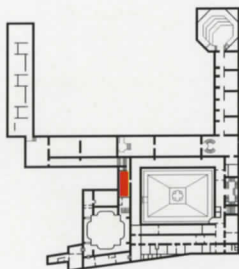
The main attraction in the room is the *polyptych* painted by **Giotto** for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli: the only signed work by the Florentine master in Bologna. It is generally dated as 1333-4, and was painted with a good deal of assistance from the workshop. It is interesting to note that his presence in the city coincided with the first appearances of Gothic, while French political influence was being asserted. The sources indicate that Giotto also worked in the fortress-palace of Galliera, built by the papal legate Bertrand du Puget and destroyed so totally after his expulsion that only vague signs of the walls remain in the present Montagnola park.

The two *Saints* by **Lorenzo Veneziano**, probably part of the polyptych commissioned from the artist by the Augustinians of San Giacomo Maggiore, refer rather to the relations between Bologna and Venice. The strong Byzantine roots of Venetian culture are here grafted onto Gothic studies that presuppose connections with the Veneto mainland and the Adriatic regions.

Alongside the thirteenth-century *Stories* by the **Master of Faenza** (→ I.) are: a *Crucifix* by the Spoleto painter **Rinaldo di Ranuccio**, signed and dated 1265; a *Last Supper* by the Sienese artist **Andrea di Bartolo**; an interesting tablet attributed to the anonymous Florentine known as **Master of the Misericordia** who assimilated the styles of the Gothic masters in the second half of the fourteenth century; and a *Virgin and Child* by the late-Gothic Florentine artist **Lorenzo Monaco**, which shows numerous elements of exchange with Bolognese artists such as Lippo.

*Leaving the room, the steps on the left lead to the second corridor, where the excursion on Bolognese painting at the turn of the fourteenth century continues.*

**Lorenzo Veneziano**  
*St Anthony Abbot*







**Lorenzo Monaco**  
*Virgin and Child*

**Giotto**  
*Santa Maria degli Angeli*  
polyptych



*Saint Bernardino with Stories from his Life*, datable to 1451, is the second of two works commissioned from **Giovanni da Modena** for San Francesco. Once attributed to Michele di Matteo, the canvas is important in the reconstruction of the master's late work.

Two paintings featuring differing techniques follow. Various frescoes from the late fourteenth century are attributed to **Giovanni di Ottonello**, while the *Resurrection* in the external arches of San Giacomo Maggiore is actually signed by him. The attributed works include the *Stories of the Magi*, detached from the external wall of the church of Santa Maria dei Servi and now in the nearby convent, and the *Virgin and Child with Musician Angels* exhibited here, which is also from one of the external arches of San Giacomo. This is the first of the wall paintings exhibited in the Pinacoteca, and relates to those of similar technique and origin shown on the opposite wall: the *Virgin*



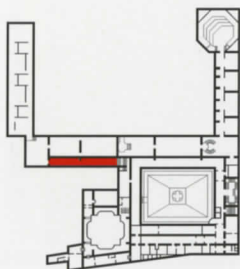
**Pietro di Giovanni Lianori**  
*Virgin and Child with Saints*

*and Child with Saints*, closely adhering to Vitale's style, and the *Crucifixion*, datable to the 1460s. The *Virgin with Musician Angels* was once attributed to Lippo, due in part to the undisputed similarity of the two masters. But while the reference to Lombard and Paduan culture is more notable in Giovanni's painting – with the possible mediation of Jacopo Avanzi, the Bolognese artist active in Padua – that of nearby Tuscany is more evident in the work of **Lippo di Dalmasio**. This is confirmed by the triptych on wood, signed by him, in which still lively reminders of Vitale combine with echoes of post-Gothic Florence, particularly in the saints.

Some paintings – a signed triptych by Monteveglio, the Gothic and elegant figure of *St Anthony*, a *polyptych* and two figures of *Saints* – document the Bolognese work of **Giovanni Martorelli**, originally from Lombardy but who was distinguished in Bologna between 1390 and 1447 for his frenetic, at times almost caricatural, expressiveness.

His relationship with another representative of the 'twilight of Gothic' in Bologna is interesting: in the *polyptych* by **Michele di Matteo**, which concludes the first section of the corridor, attempts at renewal combine with an adherence to tradition. Fragments of another *polyptych* painted by the same artist for San Martino, signed and dated 1469, are also exhibited.

Already noted in 1409, Michele continued his work – always linked to local Gothic styles – through to 1470, when the signs of Humanist culture were already apparent in the city. He also received prestigious commissions from beyond Bologna: from Siena and Venice, two important centres for the persistence of styles rooted in reciprocal traditions, despite also relating to the new contributions of Humanism. The first of the *Crucifixes* exhibited on the left of the subsequent section dates from his finest period – between 1430 and 1435, or immediately after his return from Venice. It was possibly painted for San Francesco, and was a model for the subsequent exhibit: a later,







**Giovanni di Ottonello**  
*Virgin and Child*  
*with Musician Angels*

monumental *Crucifix*. The third *Crucifix*, which concludes the series, is attributed to **Giovanni Martorelli**: it portrays the figure of St Christine and is an example of the give and take relationship between the two artists. Some panels are exhibited between the *Crucifixes*: *St John the Baptist* and *St Jerome*, attributed to **Giacomo di Nicola**, from the Recanati Cathedral (1443); the *Madonna of Humility*, possibly by the Tuscan artist **Master of Montefoscoli** (late fifteenth - early sixteenth centuries); and a *St Ubaldo*, of the Marches school.

Two paintings document the late work of another late-Gothic painter working in Bologna and the Petronio Workshop. **Pietro di Giovanni Lianori** was one of the innovators, as is shown by his frescoes in San Domenico, San Francesco and San Petronio. But after a beginning showing his awareness of the highest achievements of late fourteenth-century culture, Pietro seems to have turned in on himself. This moment of crisis is clearly expressed in the *triptych* for San Gerolamo di Miramonte, painted in 1447, and the tempera on canvas depicting the *Virgin and Child with Saints*, previously in the Gozzadini collection.

*Frescoes detached at various times from the walls of Bolognese churches are exhibited in the next large hall.*





This room contains important fresco fragments from the best fourteenth-century school, examples of which have already been seen on board and canvas. Few examples remain from that stimulating period, and it is difficult to completely define the real historical direction, despite the further studies of recent years.

On the right of the door, two fragments with *Stories of Christ and of St Francis*, attributable to **Francesco da Rimini**, are traces of the formative period of the Bolognese school, between the 1320s and '30s. (→ II.)

Alongside these is the *Madonna of the Embroidery* by **Vitale da Bologna**, painted for San Francesco possibly in the early 1330s (→ III.), while the *Last Supper*, painted by Vitale for the same church at a similar date – possibly related to the paintings in the Guest Quarters mentioned in the documents – is exhibited on the end wall. It was rediscovered during works carried out in the Franciscan complex in the mid 1930s and detached in the same manner

as the Francesco da Rimini frescoes; despite the damage, the expressive power, in which every line conveys movement, tension and rapport, transforming these into emotion, remains unaltered. Still in the tradition of the Rimini and Adriatic culture, the lateral *Saints* provide a counterpoint to the central scene, also with their distinctive decorative richness.

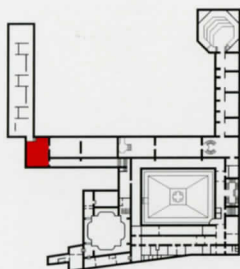


**Vitale da Bologna**  
*Last Supper*

**Pseudo Jacopino**  
*The Apostle James Defeating  
the Infidels in the Battle  
of Clavijo*

The right wall is taken up by a large composition, *The Apostle James Defeating the Infidels in the Battle of Clavijo*, a fresco from the Augustinian church of San Giacomo. It was rediscovered and detached in the 1960s and, still the subject of some discussion, has been attributed to **Pseudo Jacopino** and dated to the 1320s due to the contacts with earlier Rimini painting, with the culture of the illuminators and with the typically Bolognese reading of Gothic. The protagonist, between two lateral 'choirs', is the saint on horseback, whose flight is marked by the tension of the figure and by the free-flowing cloak against the consistent blue background. The original presence of dry finishing work is shown by the disappearance of entire figures, of whom only the fresco base and sketched shape remain.

A third fragment by **Francesco da Rimini** and other detached frescoes hang on the left wall, variously documenting the artistic vitality of the Bolognese school in the fourteenth century. The *Virgin and Saints*, previously in Santa Maria Maddalena in Via Galliera, is attributed to **Andrea de' Bruni**, who was active in the second half of the century. The work is dated to the '60s, prior to the artist's departure for the Marches. Some relationship with this painter can be seen in the nearby *Madonna*, still showing the influence of Vitale and attributed to **Simone de' Crocefissi** in his period of greatest adherence to the styles of the master. In both works, the Gothic tensions of the first period of the Bolognese school are reduced, with softer linear rhythms. The move from the suggestion of French Gothic to more open contacts with the Veneto-Lombard and Tuscan styles can be recognised. The anonymous fragment showing *St Peter Martyr with a Nun* has some similarity to Simone's work; it was originally in a convent of Dominican nuns, possibly the same one that commissioned the canvas portraying *St Helen* which is referred to this artist. The *Christ Meeting the Virgin in the Presence of Saints Francis, Dominic and Louis of Toulouse* is the work of a minor artist possibly working in the middle of the century.









**II. Francesco da Rimini between East and West** The fragments are from the end wall of the ex-refectory in the convent of San Francesco in Bologna, where Francesco da Rimini had completed a monumental cycle showing *Stories of Christ and of St Francis*, possibly as early as the 1320s. Two of the pieces are reasonably well preserved, while the third is badly ruined due to its detachment in the 1930s. The work was gradually abandoned over the centuries after the room had lost its original use. At the time of the Napoleonic suppressions and conversion of the rooms into a customs warehouse, this particular room was used for the storage of salt, causing further deterioration to the pictorial surface, already damaged by long years of neglect. Evidence of how the frescoed complex appeared on the wall remains in old photos, taken prior to the nineteenth-century 'restoration', which entailed the detachment of some fragments, including those exhibited here. Subsequent detachments were not all successful. What remained, recovered in the early



**Francesco da Rimini**  
*Miracle of St Francis*

1980s, is now visible on the side walls of the apse in the Franciscan basilica. The artist had audaciously brought together facts from the life of the Order's founder and evangelical episodes in overlapping registers (which still carried Francesco's signature in the eighteenth century). In the tympanum the vision culminated in the conjunction of the prophet Elijah's ascent into heaven, that of Francis, seen by the friars to ascend on a chariot of fire, and the Glorification-Ascension of Christ. The scene is read in non-canonical manner, with the two groups of the three Maries and the apostles, who meet in the centre and look upwards at the Redeemer in the vesica of light. This iconography is common in Byzantine-inspired illuminations (for example in the Master of Gerona, some of whose works are also from San Francesco). Amongst the other scenes, two portrayed *Miracles of the Saint of Assisi*, of which these fragments were part.

Francesco was the only one of the Rimini painters to be directly documented in Bologna, and his work there is dated to the 1320s when there was still a powerful presence of Tuscan or Venetian artists in the city and the suggestions of Byzantine styles persisted, particularly along the coast. The Adriatic and Rimini approaches were spread mainly by the Franciscans, and found an echo here in the work of the older Bolognese masters, from Pseudo Jacopino to the young Vitale. An autonomous school of painting and illumination work developed in Rimini between the end of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth. This added the experience of Giotto's work, an artist active in the church of San Francesco (later to become the Malatesta Temple) to the continuing contacts with art from the other side of the Adriatic – evident in the work of Giovanni.

In Francesco's work, the construction of the monumental, volumetric figures has little in common with the dawning Gothic: alongside Giotto's styles and those of the Rimini school, it demonstrates iconographic and other references to traditions on the opposite coast.

From the technical, graphic point of view, details such as those on the right wall on entering are better preserved than those on the left, detached in the 1930s. The original use – now verifiable – of oil, tempera, metal and precious materials such as gold, suggests a desire to match the greater richness of wood, illuminated manuscripts, and the tradition of mosaics and Byzantine techniques, where the splendour of gold dominated the wall painting itself.

**III. Vitale da Bologna and the iconographic suggestions of the *Madonna of the Embroidery*** This fresco was in San Francesco until 1803, on one of the pillars near the altar, from where it was transferred onto wood in an oratory of the Beccadelli family in Monte San Pietro, where it was rediscovered in 1978. It is a Virgin and Child, from the early maturity of Vitale da Bologna, when a 'Vindalinus pictor' identified as this artist was at work on the Franciscan basilica, and shows suggestions of a context that retained important cultural expressions of the previous century.

Though of course lacking many of its original layers, the fresco quite unusually does still retain much relief, traces of rich, solid materials and the presence of metals and dry binders. The study of the technique not only recovered lost parts of the decoration, but also allowed its theme to be recognised – one that is rare in Italian painting at such an early date. A dark mark can in fact



**Vitale da Bologna**  
*Madonna of the Embroidery*

be seen in the Virgin's right hand and, due to the context, this has been identified as a needle. A fine white thread falls down from this across the Virgin's dress to her left hand, holding a cloth on which the elegant embroidery is unfinished. The Child, seated nearby, leans affectionately towards His mother.

These elements have allowed a particular interpretation of the theme of the working Virgin to be recognised. This appears in the apocryphal gospels which tell the stories of Mary and of Christ's infancy: a common theme in the art of the Byzantine Orient, especially in the images of the *Annunciation*. Indeed, both in the paintings and the codices attributable to that culture, the Virgin holds a spindle from which a red thread emerges, according to the legend that she was surprised by the Angel in the temple while intent on weaving. In the Italian interpretation of the subject, the theme of the Virgin spinning is usually replaced by that of her intent on reading, or in an attitude of prayer or surprise. Only rare examples take up the thread and spindle theme in the thirteenth century, though these are of direct Byzantine format, such as a frescoed *Virgin* in Brindisi and the *Annunciation* in a scene in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Siena. This iconographic reading can be matched and easily related to Franciscan ideals and to the commercial trade of the period, and proba-

bly came to San Francesco in Bologna through direct contacts with the other side of the Adriatic. Such contacts were always kept alive in the sphere of the Order and widespread in the later years of the thirteenth century: proof of which can be seen in the meetings between Italian regions – particularly those along the coast – and the Serbian kingdom of Nemanja.

New western readings of the subject can be found around the mid-fourteenth century; but generally featuring the Virgin of Humility, seated on the ground with the Child, and the allusive embroidery bobbins alongside. Mention may also be made of the *Virgin* by Vitale in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan and his *Annunciata* rediscovered in Udine Cathedral where, translating the noble iconographies of the Orient into Gothic rhythms and tensions, the Virgin is shown with the objects of her work, something quite rare at that time. A further example is the Virgin making the stocking painted in the *Altarolo* by Tomaso da Modena.

In the *Madonna of the Embroidery* the linear tensions, the connection between the figures and the use of a complex technique are typical of the master. The affectionate theme transfers the reference to French statuary and the echoes of Byzantine art into the language of Bolognese Gothic.

The privately owned fresco has been very kindly deposited in the Pinacoteca.



The Fresco Room leads into the two big halls created to house the complex of frescoes from the small church of Sant'Apollonia of Mezzaratta, so called because it was built half-way ('metà') up the ascent ('ratta') from San Mamolo to Madonna del Monte and the present Osservanza church. The building still exists, incorporated into the villa purchased by the Minghetti at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the apse was destroyed and the complex altered and restored.

The cycle was created over the arc of almost a century, between the early 1340s and the mid-fifteenth century, but was detached due to the precarious condition of the room, according to those who carried out the work in the 1960s. Although causing damage to an already deteriorated surface, the work led to the recovery and better visibility of the cycle and to the rediscovery of sinopie which, drafted as a preparatory design, were in turn detached and are now in the first of the two rooms dedicated to the complex.

The scenes now arranged on the end wall of the second room originally decorated the inside façade of the church and are attributed to **Vitale da Bologna**. At the top, according to a widely used iconography, is the *Announcing Angel* and the *Virgin Annunciata*,

with the *Nativity* below. (→ IV.)

The artist then added the *Dream of the Virgin* and the *Miraculous Healing*, documenting the move to a less frantic period, to these scenes in a subsequent operation in his late maturity, possibly in the 1350s when painting the frescoes in Santa Maria dei Servi. The master probably also worked on the side wall of the church in the mid 1340s, completing the *Virgin*



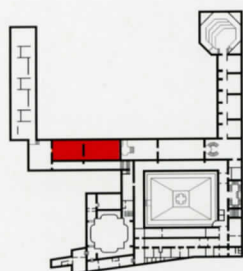
**Vitale da Bologna**  
Baptism of Christ  
Virgin and Child

*and Child*, a new interpretation of an ancient iconography, and the *Baptism of Christ*, in which the innovative nude and natural figure of the Saviour stands out (now at top right).

The *Biblical Stories* and the *Scenes of Christ's Infancy and His Miracles*, now on the lateral walls of the second room, where the original layout has been only partly recreated, are rather still the object of discussion. On the left of the entrance, the *Biblical Stories* are arranged according to the old division into Old and New Testaments. The stories of Jacob and Joseph are shown in the upper range, from the *Exchange of the Birthright* – which gave the name to the painter of these first scenes – to the *Recognition of Joseph by his Brothers*. These themes were dear to medieval painting, especially in the big churches and cathedrals. Below are the *Stories of Moses*, with episodes from *The Fall of Manna* to the *Punishment of the Priests*.

On the right, the *Stories of Christ* are dedicated to canonical episodes of his infancy and some miracles. After the *Annunciation* and the *Nativity* painted by Vitale on the inside of the façade, the artists that followed depicted *Circumcision*, *Adoration of the Magi*, *Presentation at the Temple* (not in the Pinacoteca), *Flight into Egypt* and *Massacre of the Innocents*.

The frescoes were painted over a long period of time; the lower range (not exhibited) was the work of masters working in the fifteenth century, amongst whom the sources recorded Galasso of Ferrara, a still elusive figure. In some of the episodes, the signatures 'Symon' and 'Jacobus' (*Presentation at the Temple*); 'Symon fecit' (lost, on the *Resurrection of Lazarus*); 'Jacobus



fecit' (on the *Pool of Bethesda* and the *Weeping of Jacob*) are, or were, legible. 'Symon' has generally been identified with **Simone de' Crocefissi**, possibly active here in the 1350s when most closely influenced by Vitale. 'Jacobus' (one or more masters of that name), initially identified with Jacopino di Francesco, is the object of new attributive hypothesis, as is the Master of Jacob's Birthright. Masters such as **Cristoforo da Bologna**, **Jacopo Avanzi** and **Jacopo di Paolo**, active in an advanced period between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and nourished by the ideas emerging from the San Petronio Workshop, have been generally recognised in the *Stories of Moses*. New studies over recent years are suggesting a different order in the entire discussion of the Mezzaratta problem. But what in any case remains important is having a cycle that is almost entirely whole from a period represented by few examples in the main churches of the city.

*Works painted in Bologna or brought here from other places in the fifteenth century and first decades of the sixteenth are exhibited in the next large hall.*

**«Jacobus»**

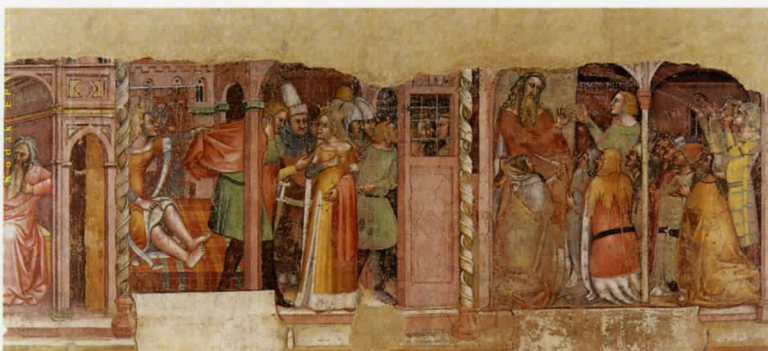
*Joseph and Potiphar's Wife  
Joseph in prison explaining  
the dream*

**«Jacobus»**

*The Brothers before Joseph  
The Collection of Provisions*

**Jacopo di Paolo**

*Moses consigning the Law  
to the people  
Punishment of the rebels  
to the priesthood of Aaron*





**Vitale da Bologna**  
*Announcing Angel*  
*Virgin Annunciata*  
*The Nativity*  
*Dream of the Virgin*  
*Miraculous Healing*





**IV. The Nativity by Vitale da Bologna in the context of the Bolognese and 'international' culture of the fourteenth-century**

The *Nativity* (more commonly known as *Presepe*, or 'manger scene' in Italian), originally in the inside of the façade of the church of Sant'Apollonia in Mezzaratta, translates a reading of the theme present in Oriental and Byzantine examples – probably re-elaborated in a northern European context – into the intense, Naturalistic language of Bolognese Gothic. The expressive maturity demonstrated here at first suggested it as a late work, relating even to the end of the fourteenth century. But after its masterly execution was attributed to Vitale, the subject was re-opened for discussion. Long assigned to the full maturity of the leader of the Bolognese school, around the mid-1340s, the fresco was then reconsidered in discussions about the earlier dating of the entire history of the school, resulting in its being dated to the end of the 1330s. The particular interpretation of the subject may also be attributed to Vitale. The partici-

pants in the sacred conversation are all present, but as part of a less common iconography. In the centre, St Joseph, with a curvature of the bust reminiscent of the *St George and the Dragon*, is depicted pouring water into a basin, while the Virgin, nearby, is holding the Child and intent on checking the temperature of the water for her Son.

The oldest iconography of the theme, widespread particularly in Byzantine art and in the western translations most closely linked to it, usually showed the bathing of the Child – or of the Virgin child – by two maids. In the more 'natural' version of the subject, one of the two servants checks the temperature of the water while the other pours it into the basin. This version is found for example in Sopočani, in mid-thirteenth-century Serbia, and in Italy in the mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome; the latter were painted in the last decade of that century and almost constitute a literal translation of the model presented in the Serbian monastery. At Mezzaratta it is Mary and Joseph who act, according to a reading related to interpretations made in Burgundy; testimony to the widespread knowledge that typified the city, between papal legations of gallicizing culture, the recovery of traditions, relations with the other coast of the Adriatic and familiarity with the more 'realistic' versions of Serbia and the Balkans. Along the same lines – though in search of a different spatial scanning in the order of the noble Byzantine harmony – some common elements may also be identified between the angels freeing the dead from the tombs in the *Descent into Hades* in the same Serbian monastery of Sopocani and the choirs of distraught angels in the *Nativity*, reinterpreted according to the style of the first 'natural' and 'emotive' Bolognese Gothic.

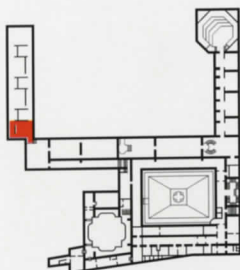






**Giambattista Cima da Conegliano**  
*Virgin and Child*

**Antonio Vivarini**  
**Bartolomeo Vivarini**  
*Polyptych*



Contemporary with the mature flowering of the Gothic and the repetition of traditional formulas up to at least the 1470s, the Humanism becoming established in Tuscany and Veneto launched a new representation of man and of nature, also influencing the more conservative Bolognese school. In the centre of the first section, the continuity of relations with Venice is underscored by the monumental *polyptych* by the Murano brothers, **Antonio** and **Bartolomeo Vivarini**, inserted into a still fully Gothic structure but one already reflecting the 'modern' perspective view. Along with the *Christ in the Sarcophagus* by **Antonio Vivarini**, the *polyptych*, dated 1450 and donated to the Certosa by Pope Nicholas IV in remembrance of Cardinal Niccolò Albergati, documents the interest in the Veneto transition culture which more closely matched the Bolognese style.

The *St Ursula*, once attributed to the saintly Bolognese painter Caterina Vigri, is also in Veneto late-Gothic style; while the *Virgin and Child* by **Giambattista Cima da Conegliano**, from the end of the fifteenth century and previously in San Giovanni in Monte, is a fully Renaissance work with strong references to the Venetian Humanism of Giovanni Bellini.

The panel exhibited near the entrance to the room is from a polyptych by the Venetian artist **Francesco Pelosio** and was originally in the church of Santi Vitale e Agricola. The *altarpiece* painted in 1482 on both sides by the Foligno painter **Niccolò Alunno**, however, has no original link with Bologna but arrived by way of Pope Pius IX's donation in 1856. The *St Abbondio*, purchased by the Pinacoteca, is now referred to the Lombard painter **Andrea de' Passeris**, an interesting exponent of the 'Naturalism' typical of fifteenth-century culture in that region.

It is followed by a *St Jerome* by **Marco Zoppo**. A native of Cento who worked mainly in Padua, Zoppo had a profound influence on the birth of 'modern' painting in Bologna in the mid-fifteenth century when he produced the polyptych for the Collegio di Spagna (1465). Traces of those influences can be seen in the *Adoration of the Child*, possibly painted for San Domenico, by **Giovanni Francesco da Rimini**, a mediator between Paduan culture and that of central Italy linked to Piero della Francesca, and in the triptych with the *Virgin and Child with Saints*, referred to **Cristoforo di Benedetto**.

**Marco Zoppo**  
*St Jerome*







The final decades of the fifteenth century saw the assumption and loss of power over Bologna by the Bentivoglio family, as culturally enlightened as they were disliked by the people for their methods of governing. Their expulsion in 1506 coincided with the demolition of many signs of them in the city, including the palace in Via San Donato – the present Via Zamboni – with its enormous wealth of art. The Bentivoglio also left their mark in the hills around the city, building their ‘villas of delight’, updating them and enriching them with frescoes and paintings: in places such as Ponte Poledrano, the current Bentivoglio, and Bazzano, not far from Monteveglio. The work of those masters who firmly placed Bolognese culture within the Humanist context at the turn of the fifteenth century was related to this family.



**Lorenzo Costa**  
*Betrothal of the Virgin*

The use of tempera on canvas continued in this period, as shown in two works by the **Master of Ambrogio Saraceno**, active in Ferrara and Bologna, but especially in the *Virgin and Child between Saints Petronius and John the Baptist with Donor*, known as the *Merchants' Altarpiece*, commissioned in 1474 and signed by **Francesco del Cossa** (→ V.): one of the greatest exponents of the Ferrara school linked to the Este at the height of his career.

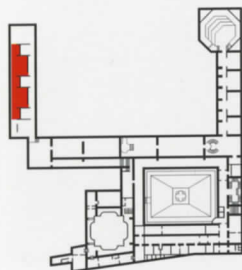
The *Weeping Magdalene* is the only remaining fragment of the *Crucifixion* painted by **Ercole de' Roberti** (→ V.) in the Garganelli chapel in San Pietro. Ercole also painted the nearby tablet with *St Michael Archangel*, possibly in 1480-5, which was donated to the Pinacoteca.

The next section contains some of the more significant works by the Ferrara artist **Lorenzo Costa** (→ V.) in the Pinacoteca, most of which are from Bolognese churches: the *St Tecla Altarpiece*, previously in the church of the same name and one of his first attempts at Classicism, and the *St Petronius with Saints Francis and Dominic*, from the

church of the Annunziata. The gold background and frontal representation of the subject are here a counterpoint to the volumetry of the figures, in order to master the perspective space with the new techniques. The *Assumption* from the abbey in Monteveglio is here on deposit – but is worth mentioning: again tempera on canvas from the early 1490s, in a period close to that of the *Triumphs* painted for San Giacomo. The painting is dominated by the iconic image of the Virgin, whose frontal view between groups of angels is almost neo-medieval.

The *Adoration of the Child* on the wall beside the window shows clear signs of Lorenzo's style; the unidentified artist was perhaps one of his students in the early years of the sixteenth century when he painted the frescoes in the chapel of Santa Cecilia in San Giacomo. There are also two paintings by the Ferrara artist **Sebastiano Maineri** in this room: a *St Sebastian* and a *Portrait*, along with a damaged panel transferred onto canvas from the **Romagnol School**, and a painting related to the **Lendinara circle**, artists of Lombard origin whose presence in Emilia and Bologna provided further mediation between northern culture and that of central Italy.

The *Death of the Virgin* by **Michele Coltellini**, inspired by northern drawing at a time when links with the Fleming world were expanding, is important



to early sixteenth-century Ferrara under Ercole I of Este; while the *Virgin and Child* by **Marco Palmezzano** refers to the Romagnol context, nourished by Venetian and Adriatic suggestions.

Another master linked to the Classicism of the Bentivoglio circles, especially in the later period, is **Chiodarolo** whose *Burial of Christ* can be seen and who also worked in Santa Cecilia.

The *Betrothal of the Virgin* in the next section, from the Annunziata, signed and dated 1505, is by **Lorenzo Costa**. Here the by now mature artist has evidently absorbed the suggestions of Perugino and central-Italian painting, and the effects of the crossover with his contemporary, Francesco Francia, also of Bologna, which was constant during the whole of the Bentivoglio

period: it must also not be forgotten that the two artists perhaps went to Venice together at the beginning of the 90s.

Francesco Francia (→ VI.) is represented by several works, confirming his influence and his success at a time when the new Classicist vision was spreading through the city. Works of importance to his development include the celebrated *Felcini Altarpiece*, accompanied by the respective frieze with the *Dead Christ* on the front wall, and the *Scappi Altarpiece*; along with the *Manzuoli Altarpiece*, the *Bentivoglio Altarpiece* and the predella with the *Birth, Infancy and Passion of Christ*, all from the church of Santa Maria della Misericordia. The *Virgin and Child with St Francis* is also exhibited, along with the big *Annunciation*, dated 1500 and painted for the church of the same name. Finally, there is a precious relic of what was destroyed: a rare fragment of fresco, transferred onto wood, possibly during the demolition of the Palazzo Bentivoglio in Via San Donato, with two *Male Figures*.

**Amico Aspertini** (→ VII.) is documented by a fres-

coed fragment with the *Holy Family*, the *Adoration of the Magi* for the church of Santa Maria Maddalena, painted after his stay in Rome (1500-3), and, especially, by the *Adoration of the Child with Saints in the Presence of the Donors*—the famous *Tirocinio Altarpiece*.

Some works in the same section indicate how the Bologna school was to develop after the definitive establishment of the papal state.

**Giovanni Battista Ramenghi**, called **Bagnacavallo** after his Romagnol town of origin, was one of the leaders of the first generation of sixteenth-century Bolognese painting. His *Virgin and Child with Saints*, amongst whom the figure of a Carthusian with white habit stands out, adds aspects of the Ferrara style—including the pictorial technique in as much as this is preserved by the original surface—to his mature, Raphaellesque Classicism.

The two panels depicting *St John the Baptist with Donor* and *St Christopher*, attributed to **Giacomo Francia**, son of Francesco, possibly in collaboration with his brother **Giulio**, were originally part of a single complex and possibly completed in the second or third decade of the sixteenth century.



**Giovanni Battista Ramenghi**  
called **Bagnacavallo**  
*Virgin and Child with Saints*



**Ercole de' Roberti**  
*Weeping Magdalene*

**Lorenzo Costa**  
*St Petronius  
with Saints Francis  
and Dominic*

**V. The Ferrara painters in Bologna: Francesco del Cossa, Ercole de' Roberti and Lorenzo Costa** - **Francesco del Cossa** arrived in Bologna in 1470, four years prior to the commission for the *Merchants' Altarpiece*, after leaving his home city due to misunderstandings regarding the poor financial support for his work in the Schifanoia workshop. In the *Merchants' Altarpiece*, his most celebrated work, the beauty is all 'moral', and even the natural elements are transformed into matter with sharp, metallic reflections, as are the fabrics and architecture.

Together with **Ercole de' Roberti**, who arrived later, Francesco introduced an independence and renewal to the Bolognese circle, already marked by important artists such as Paolo Uccello in the 1430s and Marco Zoppo in the 50s. Both masters were to be employed in the Garganelli chapel in the cathedral of San Pietro, of which only vague traces remain after its almost total demolition at the time of the sixteenth-century reconstruction. The only surviving original fragment, the head of the *Weeping Magdalene* from the *Crucifixion* by Ercole de' Roberti, with its dramatic representation of suffering, makes us regret how much was lost and only partly documented by the copies taken from detached fragments before these, too, were dispersed.

Bologna continued to attract 'foreign' masters due to the value of the commissions and to the high cultural level of the artistic circles which had formed around the Bentivoglio. **Lorenzo Costa**, also from Ferrara, arrived in the eighties, and became one of the leaders of Bolognese Humanism, having already been employed at a young age in one of the 'villas of delight' built by the ruling dynasty in the countryside at Ponte Poledrano, in the present-day municipality that took its name from the Bentivoglio. In 1492, Lorenzo painted the *Triumphs* for the Bentivoglio chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore, again in tempera on canvas. The artist's interest in trying out new technical ideas is evident in some of the panels, such as the *Rossi Altarpiece* in San Petronio, which still retains much of its original pictorial character. Alongside the traditional use of tempera, such techniques included oil binders applied according to recipes whose invention was attributed to the Flemings one minute, then to Antonello da Messina, then to the Veneto artists. Costa was one of the innovators, and took up the methods initiated by masters such as Giovanni Bellini or Perugino in the last decades of the fifteenth century.



**Francesco del Cossa**  
*Merchants' Altarpiece*







**VI. Francesco Francia 'tender Bolognese star'** Possibly a goldsmith in his youth (he signed many of his paintings with the qualification 'aurifex'), he may have come into contact with painting through his relationship with Costa. Whatever his origins and his possible youthful links with Florentine Classicism may have been, he soon became one of the most accomplished representatives of Bolognese Humanism, inserting the 'perfection' of human forms into his depiction of architecture and nature. Extensive use of the new oil techniques can be seen in his works, intended to give the painting a new, rich grading of chromatic tones, making the whole representation more 'real'. His experiments with the new 'secret' may also be recognised in the surface defects, caused in several paintings by an accumulation of the poorly distributed oily material. Examples of this are the *Scappi Altarpiece*, from Santa Maria della Misericordia, a late work by the artist, and the more celebrated *Felicioni Altarpiece* from the same church – a genuine workshop of pictorial ideas in the Bentivoglio period. The *Felicioni Altarpiece* was painted in two different periods: the first dates from the 90s; the second from three decades later by the then mature artist following damage caused to the panel by an earthquake. It is interesting to note how he has moved from a still 'fifteenth-century' reading – shown by the now restored frieze with the *Dead Christ* – to the elegant vision that typifies his later work, where the inclusion of ideas from Perugino and Raphael is evident.

The now 'classic' representation of the *Manzuoli Altarpiece* has links with the *Bentivoglio Altarpiece*, painted for the family chapel. The northern iconography of the *Nativity* in the latter work – now installed in an interesting wooden altarpiece also from the Bentivoglio period – with the Child on the ground worshipped by divine and human figures, is set in a town described according to the new rules of depth and naturalness, while the donors are portrayed with the same dignity as the sacred figures.

**Francesco Francia**  
*Felicioni Altarpiece*  
*Bentivoglio Altarpiece*









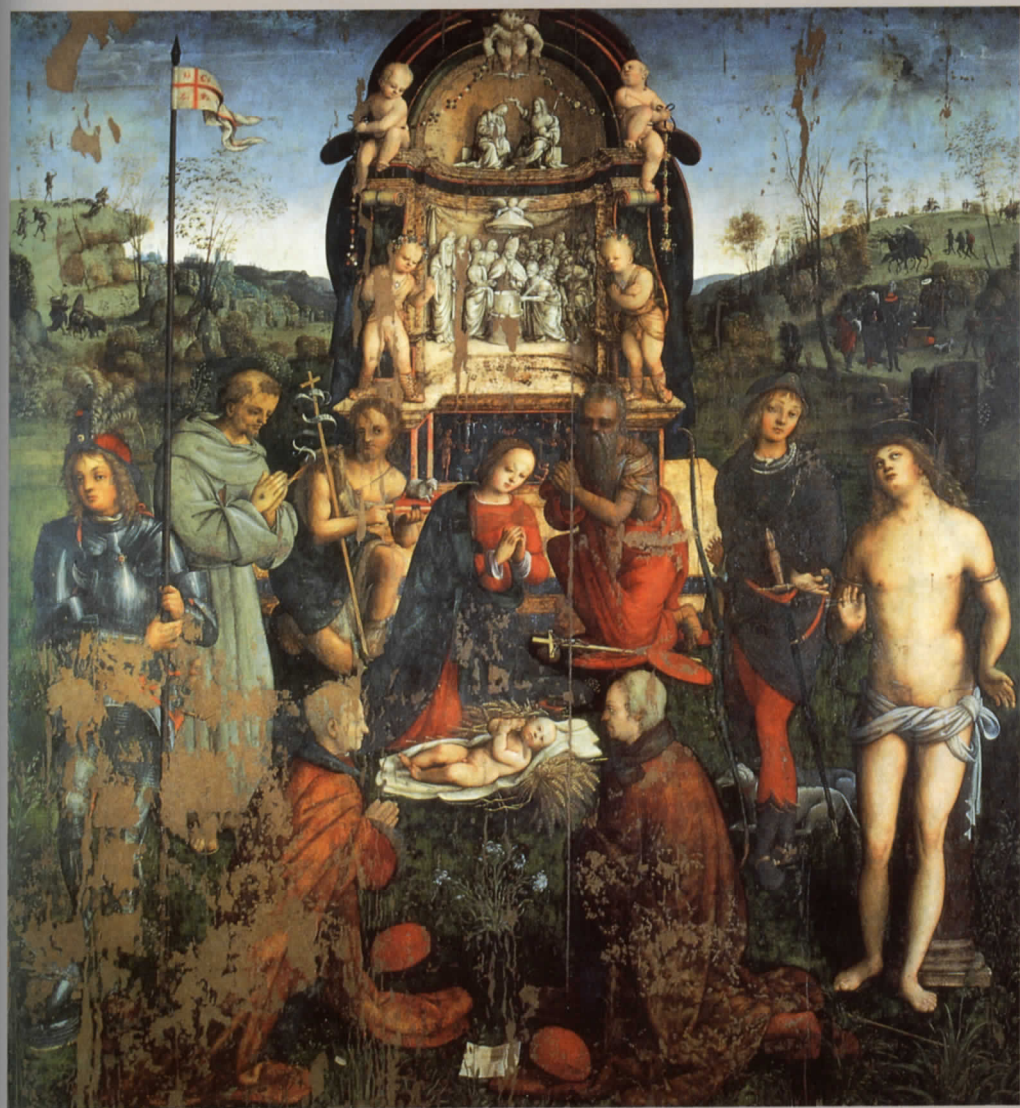
**VII. 'Eccentric' Amico Aspertini** Like Francia and Costa, Amico Aspertini was also linked to the Bentivoglio circle. But while the first two masters represented the Classicist side of that culture, Aspertini highlights a different aspect in which the relationship with Fleming and German northern Europe – in a period of broad cultural circulation of models and people which the more enlightened courts helped spread – combines with the experience matured in Rome and Florence. The interpretation of detail is translated into a taste for realistic representation, and the northern influences are remodelled on the study of ancient Classicism and on almost medieval spatiality, in which the planes overlap leaving little place for perspective.

This master's high level of culture, the expression of an open and 'international' atmosphere, is represented in the Pinacoteca by three paintings, among which the *Tirocinio Altarpiece* stands out. Painted in 1505-6 in competition with masters linked to the purest Classicism of the time such as Costa and Francia, and preceding the frescoes in the oratory of Santa Cecilia, this work is almost a compendium of the experience accumulated by him from various sources in his early years – and it is to this that the word 'tirocinio' (apprenticeship) found in the writing possibly alludes. Against the background of a 'Humanist', landscape openness, in which episodes from the story of the Magi appear, the protagonists are placed before an altar where episodes such as the *Coronation of the Virgin* are portrayed – almost examples of a 'mimesis' between sculpture and nature.

It is no mere chance that Francesco Arcangeli should have inserted the work of this master after that of the Gothic Vitale in the development of Expressionism and Naturalism in Bolognese art. Aspertini continued working for the wealthiest of patrons (see the commission for the organ shutters in San Petronio) for several decades, even after the city came under papal control.

**Amico Aspertini**  
*Adoration of the Magi*





**Amico Aspertini**  
*Tirocinio Altarpiece*



The next big section is centred on two altarpieces – both painted for San Giovanni in Monte, one of the new centres of the new clientele – which had a significant influence on the painting styles of subsequent decades: the *Madonna in Glory with the Child and Saints* by **Perugino** and the *Ecstasy of St Cecilia* by **Raphael**. (→ VIII.) These two major masterpieces of central Italian Renaissance Classicism are then flanked by other works linked to the early sixteenth-century Classical Tuscan and, more particularly, the Florentine culture, with which representatives of the 'new' Bolognese art interacted more or less directly in the early decades of the new century.

The *Stories of St Ubaldo*, possibly originally part of a furnishing element, are by **Francesco Ubertini** called **Bachiacca**, while the *Virgin and Child* is attributed to **Franciabigio**, another leading figure in Florentine painting in the first decades of the century.

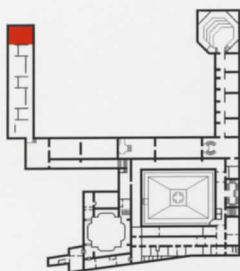
There are three paintings by **Giuliano Bugiardini**, documented in Bologna in 1512 and then again in 1526-30: the *St John in the Desert*, from Santo Stefano, and the *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John*, possibly from Santa Maria di Galliera, are the earliest; while the later altarpiece with the *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine, the Infant St John and St Anthony Abbot* on the right wall came from San Francesco. Bugiardini was an exponent of the Florentine Classicism which developed out of the Medici patronage, and his work clearly shows how the effect of examples left by Raphael in his city combine with the ideas of the prevailing culture at the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

A *St John the Baptist* alongside is a variation on a theme proposed by Raphael and Giulio Romano.

The wooden sculpture portraying *St Sebastian* is now attributed to **Benedetto di Montelupo**, an artist connected to the best of Tuscan production who also worked in Bologna.

*The visit continues along the corridor on the right.*

**Giuliano Bugiardini**  
*St John in the Desert*





Perugino  
*Madonna in Glory  
with the Child and Saints*



**VIII. Raphael, Perugino and Bolognese Classicism** Pietro Vannucci, called **Perugino**, is a famous painter celebrated at every triumphal stage of the Classical style. His *Madonna in Glory with Child and Saints*, set in open country in the gentleness of an ideal landscape, is a natural point of arrival, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, for a path the Umbrian master had already seen between the fonts of inspiration for the Classicism of the Bentivoglio sphere. It is also direct proof of the positive comparison his art can bear with that of the masters working in Bologna. This may be seen simply by looking at this panel along with the works by Francia, such as the *Annunciation*, in which the figures are arranged in a big town.

The *Ecstasy of St Cecilia*, painted in 1515 by the Urbino artist **Raphael**, is one of the most celebrated works in Bologna. Its success was documented both by his contemporaries and by subsequent generations: the model of a more 'modern' ideal Classicism, it has always appeared in the guides and literary citations, through to becoming the most noted of the works taken by Napoleon to Paris after suppression of the Bolognese religious orders and convents. In Paris the work was transferred from its old panel onto canvas, an operation of which significant documents remain. It was again the importance of the altarpiece which allowed its return to the city, after the end of the Napoleonic government. However, it was not returned to its church of origin – for which a copy was made by the neo-Classical artist Clemente Alberi and placed in the original frame by Formigine – but to the Pinacoteca of the *Accademia di Belle Arti*, where it remains today, placed in a nineteenth-century reproduction of the original ancona.

This sacred representation was profoundly innovative. In the centre it does not have a traditional and predominant holy figure – such as the Virgin enthroned – but the patron saint of music, St Cecilia, surrounded by other figures of saints portrayed as her equals. It is a figurative revolution that was to have a resounding effect in the sixteenth century, and be the object of numerous copies and replicas. The angelic choir above, in a timeless sky of deep, distinctive blue, expresses the sense of celestial music, which prevails over the earthly version represented by instruments abandoned on the ground.

Many iconographic and iconological interpretations have been made of the painting: it was an unequivocal example for seventeenth-century Classicism, which held the work – and its 'essential' vision – particularly dear.





The works along the corridor retrace the stages of a path through the 'modern' painting which established itself in Bologna and Romagna – and with autonomous aspects in Ferrara – in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Innocenzo da Imola, Bartolomeo Ramenghi il Bagnacavallo, Biagio Pupini dalle Lame and Francesco Cotignola are some of the more influential exponents of the period in Bologna, linked to the new papal commissions and those of the senatorial aristocracy.

In the *Virgin and Child, St Elizabeth, the Infant St John and two Followers* by **Innocenzo da Imola**, previously in the church of Corpus Domini, the influence of Raphael is strong, as is the component derived from the artist's Tus-

can studies. The altarpiece on the wall representing the *Virgin and Child in Glory with Saints Michael Archangel, Peter and Benedict* was painted by Innocenzo for the main altar in the Olivetan church of San Michele in Bosco, where the artists linked to the new culture worked in competition; the frescoes in the sacristy are fundamental evidence of their work. The *San Michele in Bosco Altarpiece*, transferred to Paris in the Napoleonic period, was consigned to the Pinacoteca after its return to Bologna together with other works (including Raphael's *St Cecilia*) and replaced on the original altar by a copy.

**Giacomo Francia** is again documented by two panels. The altarpiece for the church of the female convent of Santi Gervasio e Protasio sees the interesting presence of a group of donor nuns alongside the sacred figures. In works like this the Classicist forms of his father Francis are taken up again and transcribed; forms which, though celebrated and appreciated, had now in the mid-sixteenth century lost their original innovative function and become a basis for the painting and transmission of powerful devotional images. Further along is a *Pietà*, where Giacomo is still involved in translating his father's ideas into moderately updated language, with powerful references also to the major Ferrara artists of the previous century: almost a nostalgic review of their world.

The *Nativity* by **Biagio Pupini dalle Lame**, an interesting artist after Bagnacavallo and active in the San Michele in Bosco 'group', is related to the manner established in Bologna in the first decades of the new century, marked by a strong reference to the Classicism of Raphael and the Tuscans, but also to the ideas of contemporary Ferrara painting.

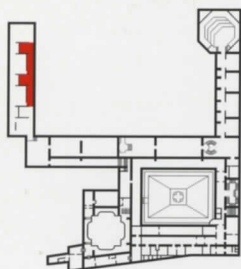
Further along, the *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine* is an example of the early maturity of **Bartolomeo Ramenghi called Bagnacavallo**: despite the different approach, there are still echoes of the devotional Classicism derived from Francia.

Several examples of the contemporary Ferrara school which arose around the Este court are here interspersed with works by masters active in those first decades of the century in Bologna and with whom the former were in constant communication. The new trends apparent in the city, one of the more vibrant centres of the time, may be related to its lively political, cultural and commercial exchanges with different places, from Venice to northern Europe and Flanders, through to central-Italian and Raphaellesque culture. There is a *Virgin* at the beginning of the corridor, of no precise attribution; while some smaller but very accomplished paintings in the first section



**Bagnacavallo il Giovane**  
*Holy Conversation*

**Innocenzo da Imola**  
*San Michele in Bosco Altarpiece*









give an idea of the different directions taken by this school. The encompassing chromatism of the *Holy Family* by **Garofalo**, laden with echoes of Raphael, is shown alongside the delicate *Virgin and Child* by **Ortolano** and the *Adoration of the Child* by **Ludovico Mazzolino**, linked to northern models. Further ahead, the two *altarpieces* by **Niccolò Pisano**, who moved from his hometown to work in Ferrara and Bologna, relate to the paintings of the Ferrara masters. In the *Deposition*, the precise updating on the particular styles of these – with special reference to Ferrara – documents the will to create paintings that were perfectly in keeping with their host environment.

In this context, the lovely altarpiece with the *Virgin and Saints* on the wall in front is also significant; the work is from a private collection but has been deposited with the Pinacoteca for some time.

The *Virgin and Child* is a small work by the Romagnol painter **Girolamo da Cotignola**, remembered with his contemporary 'Bolognesi' in San Michele in Bosco and various other workshops open in Bologna in those busy early years of the sixteenth century. Other works here by him are the *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John and Saints Francis and Bernardino*, in which Raphaellesque, Veneto and Bolognese elements can again be recognised, and the big altarpiece depicting the Betrothal of the Virgin, furnished with its own predella, where hints of Raphael and reminders of central-Italian and Bolognese culture combine to reach one of the most complex and studied results of his work.

Two panels are attributed to **Giovanni Battista Ramenghi**, another native of Bagnacavallo and therefore known as **Bagnacavallo il Giovane** to distinguish him from Bartolomeo: a *Holy Conversation* and the *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine*. The latter was for a long time ascribed to Tibaldi, one of the most representative figures of mature Emilian Mannerism: a sign of the many and frequent cross-overs between artists linked to a similar culture.

The concluding section is dedicated to **Pellegrino Tibaldi** (*Christ Answering the Pharisees, Sybils*) and to **Francesco Mazzola**, called **Parmigianino** after his city of origin (*Madonna of Santa Margherita*): two emerging figures whose presence on the Bolognese artistic scene helped to suggest new directions to mature local sixteenth-century painting, between the spread of Mannerism and the Naturalist renewal. (→ IX.)



**IX. Pellegrino Tibaldi, Parmigianino and Mannerism in Bologna** Born in Lombardy, **Pellegrino Tibaldi** worked as a young and recognised 'hope' in leading workshops in the papal capital, including Castel Sant'Angelo, a place of comparison and growth for many exponents of mature Mannerism. In Rome he also came into contact with the Bolognese masters working there: the two elegant *Sybils* and the fine fresco fragment depicting *Christ Answering the Pharisees* are related to those models. Nourished by the Michelangelesque culture being circulated in the same decades by artists like Daniele da Volterra and Giorgio Vasari, Pellegrino moved to Bologna at the invitation of Cardinal Poggi, owner of the big palace in Via San Dona-



**Pellegrino Tibaldi**  
*Sybil*

**Parmigianino**  
*Madonna of Santa Margherita*

to – later home to the university – and head of the family chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore. The latter was the focus of a busy artistic workshop which was virtually the linking element between the different centuries and the various cultural changes in the city. Tibaldi was one of the most representative cornerstones of Bolognese-Roman Mannerism, combining the different spirits of northern and central-Italian cul-

ture with expressive formulae that were to become typical of the masters working in the papal state's two most important cities in the second half of the sixteenth century.

In 1529, after the tragic Sack of Rome by the Lansquenets which led to the dispersal of many artists previously working in the many rich workshops in the papal capital, **Parmigianino** completed two big masterpieces in Bologna. These offered a new element of suggestion for those here interested in the latest ideas circulating amongst the fervent group reaching out to Rome, but also towards Lombardy and Veneto. The first of these works – *St Roch* – is still in the most prestigious place in the city: the San Petronio Basilica. The second, the *Virgin and Child with Saints*, known as the *Madonna of Santa Margherita* after the church where it was originally located, is in the Pinacoteca: comparisons with the other nearby works show how it communicates with local traditions, but also asserts itself with the new way of approaching nature as a theatre of events, and of interpreting space, in a new reading of the link between the figures represented.

Here nothing is symmetrical or calm, despite the elegance and grace that has always been recognised in the work, which is one of the most frequently cited in the historical literature of Bologna. The rich, thick material, in which the use of oil as a binder prevails, creates new, previously unseen effects of colour and light. The serene plane of Humanist and early Renaissance skies – that eternal, immutable blue that is essentially without history – is replaced by a lively, continually changing, shifting sky of which a moment, or excerpt, is caught. Nature becomes phenomenon. These new ideas were particularly appreciated by the masters of Mannerism at the time of the Reformation. In a different context, at the *Accademia degli Incamminati* and in the new vision of the Carracci, they were also to become the basis of the new Naturalism. Along with these elements, the painting also displays motifs derived from late Raphaellesque Mannerism, and especially that grace and skill in the fictional construction of space which, in early sixteenth-century Parma, were applied by another of the great founders of 'modern' painting, the hero of artistic literature and of travellers: Antonio Allegri, called Correggio, with his painted domes open to the sky, between fiction and miracle.

The appearance of Parmigianino's works in Bologna represented a stimulus to renewal for all those masters who, educated in the middle of the century, took up the suggestions from different cultures, particularly Rome, that circulated after the Sack and subsequent dispersal of the artists.





Other works 'imported' into Bologna are shown in the nearby section.

The *Visitation* is referred to **Jacopo Robusti**, called **Tintoretto**, and was painted for the church of San Pietro Martire around the middle of the century. While certainly not being one of his most representative works, it is an example of his totally Venetian manner of constructing space, figure and form with colour. It was no coincidence that the great 'eclectics', including the Carracci, wanted to take up such virtuosity in constructing pictorial planes with shading and paint, though adding this to another important element of sixteenth-century art and in particular of Mannerism: design, represented by Michelangelo and by his Roman and Florentine emulators.

The *St Jerome* is by the Mannerist painter **Girolamo Muziano**.

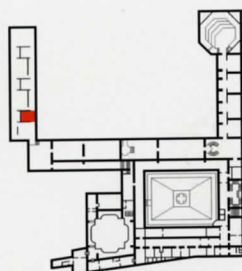
The Cretan artist **Domenico Theotocopoulos**, called **El Greco**, who worked in Venice and Spain, was a bridging element between the Oriental Greek and western cultures. He acted as a mediator between the tradition of the Byzantine *madonneri* (painters of Madonnas) working in Italy (especially in Venice, where there was a strong nucleus of Greek origin) and the modern culture of the lagoon city, particularly of masters like Tintoretto. El Greco was the only artist linked to Oriental traditions to also achieve success in the cultural world outside the devotional one of the *madonneri*. This *Last Supper* was painted during his Spanish stay. Almost obscured by its small size, this important work may not be related to Bolognese culture but offers further proof of greater European Mannerism.

The fragment with the *Crucifixion*, which came to the Pinacoteca with the eighteenth/nineteenth-century donation of the Zambeccari collection, is proof of the relationship between Veneto painting and colour. The work is referred to one of the most important Veneto masters of the sixteenth century: **Titian**. In this case it is the same aspect of the painting, now demeaned by earlier cleaning attempts, which, also by 'absence', constitutes evidence of the complex and delicate original 'layered' construction of Venetian works.

The *Deposition* carries an interesting reference to another Veneto master, **Domenico Campagnola**. The possibility of examining the work directly in the Pinacoteca may help encourage further studies into the matter.

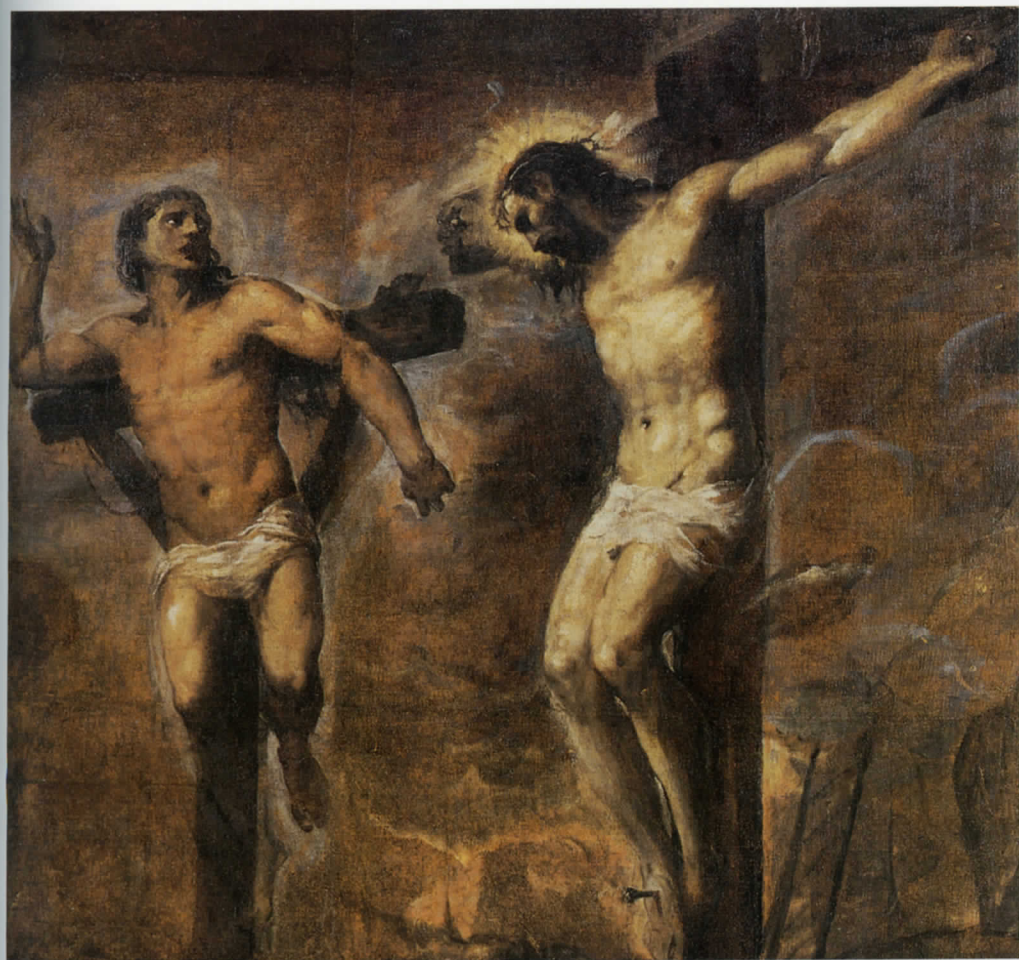
The altarpiece with the *Nativity*, painted for Bologna by the Genoan artist **Luca Cambiaso**, is a further sign of the numerous transitions and cross-overs, and the stimulating comparisons that created the basis for the development of new, differently oriented directions in Bolognese art.

*In order to continue the 'tour' through the centuries of Bolognese art, return to the entrance and proceed to the right of the thirteenth-century Crucifix.*



**Titian**  
*Crucifixion*

**El Greco**  
*Last Supper*



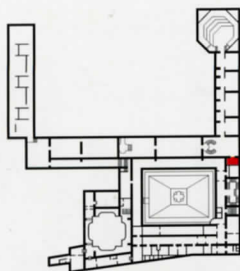


The Council of Trent moved to Bologna for several sessions between 1547 and 1549. Fundamental for the renewal of the Catholic Church, it brought influential people of diverse backgrounds to the city and helped once again make Bologna an important cultural crossroads. The Council sanctioned the Catholic Reformation which, to counter the powerful Protestant presence, wanted to bring the Church back under precise rules, to give it new power and a higher profile. The sacred images which had been branded idolatry by differing interpretations of the Reformation were once more in favour. Altarpieces in the churches were to take on a precise function: that of 'educating', 'convincing' and 'moving', and, through commotion, facilitate an opening up to the spirit of the faith. The theatre, which took on ever greater importance when festivals, ceremonies and shows became daily experiences, also influenced works of religious art, as it did the liturgy and the rites.

It was mainly through the contribution of ideologues like Cardinal Paleotti that such trends were reflected in art, but the second half of the sixteenth century, including its Mannerist aspects, was not to be exempt. The political development of Bologna and its function as a meeting place provided its art with even more contacts.

The extraordinary and charming pictures painted for the Palazzo Torfanini in Via Galliera by one of the most significant Mannerists of the mid-sixteenth century, **Niccolò dell'Abate** of Modena (→ X.), are exhibited in the first room on the right. The frescoed scenes describe episodes from the seventh and tenth cantos of Ariosto's poem *Orlando Furioso*, relating to excerpts concerning *Ruggero and Alcina*.

*The room containing some significant examples of mature Mannerism is reached by crossing the room dedicated to Reni, climbing the stairs and walking between the Carracci altarpieces.*



**Niccolò dell'Abate**  
*Stories of Ruggero and Alcina*







**X. Niccolò dell'Abate and the new openness of the mid-sixteenth century** In the mid-sixteenth century the second city of the papal state was a genuine crossroads of ideas and artists working in Rome and the northern regions of Italy, with a particular emphasis on Parma, Venice and Ferrara. Furthermore, some important exponents of Emilian art were even called to France to decorate important buildings, such as the Fontainebleau castle near Paris. Amongst these was Niccolò dell'Abate, invited there in 1552 on the recommendation of another Emilian, Francesco Primaticcio, who was already active in workshops under way around the French capital. Niccolò had received his education at the Este court of Modena and assimilated the ideas of the great Ferrara painters, Dosso Dossi in particular. In Bologna he had also seen Parmigianino's works, which was to be decisive, along with his exposure to the local culture, to the Raphaelesque painters, and to the important Tuscan masters working in the city – particularly Giorgio Vasari. He was mainly to be employed by the big aristocratic Bolognese families, whose palaces and picture galleries were enriched by competitions in a period of palpable artistic development. And in those palaces he was to leave some of his greatest works.

The frescoes for the Palazzo Torfanini in Via Galliera, detached from the walls of a room for reasons of conservation in the 1960s, portray episodes from *Orlando Furioso*, the chivalrous poem that best expressed the culture and tastes of the Este court. The decoration of private buildings, and particularly the big reception halls, usually consisted of friezes around the upper sections of the walls, leaving the lower part free for furnishing elements. In this case, however, Niccolò worked 'in full field', opening up the wall spaces onto history and nature. Unfortunately, the overall work suffered considerable damage over the years, such that the scenes from the Ariosto cycle are now only partly visible. Despite this, though, the whole work represents a previously unseen, secular, literary narration which says much about both the culture of the patron and that of the artist. The account takes on fabulous dimensions in the depiction of customs and landscapes, half-way between the contemporary interest in 'detail' and Oriental style. The battle scenes are particularly interesting, while the architectural borders and false sculptures framing the various episodes, fashioned on traditional Mannerist models, especially the Michelangelesque, became a point of reference for the trends proposed some years later by the Carracci, starting with the early work on the Palazzo Fava.





Niccolò dell'Abate  
*Stories of Ruggero and Alcina*



The Arezzo painter, **Giorgio Vasari**, was an important presence in Bologna. An exponent of the more directly Michelangesque tendency, he represented the highest possible achievement of pictorial art in design and foreshortening, both based on the styles of the great master.

In 1539 Vasari was called on to work in the convent of San Michele in Bosco, where Raphaelesque painters like Innocenzo da Imola and Bagnacavallo senior had previously worked. He painted three big panels for the convent library: of the two surviving ones, the *Supper of Pope Gregory* has always been

in the Pinacoteca, while the *Christ in Martha's House*, long kept in its place of origin, has only recently been made public, after restoration, and now hangs on the left wall of the room.

In the *Christ*, which is of excellent quality and in better condition, the technique and the pictorial and stylistic modulations of an artist who knew how to combine the diverse 'essences' of his education from Florence and Rome are evident; his work thus constituting a model for the already complex developments of the contemporary Bolognese school.

In the *Supper of Pope Gregory* (whose precarious condition required that it be transferred onto canvas), the foreshortening of the figures, the 'monumentalised' representation of the people and the insertion of a noble architectural structure provide the background to a historic event that was long past, but which evidently related to the 'modern' development of papal Bologna. It is therefore a representative altarpiece whose 'historic' characters are intended to allude to the contemporary. Alongside Michelangelo-inspired foreshortening (note the nude seen from behind in the foreground), there are elements that are more

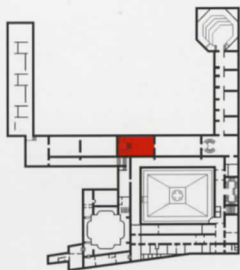


**Giorgio Vasari**  
*Supper of Pope Gregory*

obviously inspired by Tuscan and Roman Mannerism, such as the two figures hugging the columns, which are reminiscent of the Vatican rooms and of Perin del Vaga or Salviati's translation of Raphaelesque models.

Near the entrance is the *Flagellation* by the 'Italianised northerner', **Denis Calvaert**, based on Mannerist models which highlight the design and attention to detail.

Amongst the masters linked to the new Naturalist experimentation, **Bartolomeo Passerotti** brings a new interest in the event, in the mutation and in the transient reality of the individual to the Mannerist tradition. Two large altarpieces by this artist, who was linked to the *Accademia delle Scienze* and the research conducted in that environment, are exhibited here: the *Presentation at the Temple* on the left, and the *Resurrection of Christ* on the right. Both works still completely reflect the Mannerist style in the figuration of the foreshortening, the bodies and the architecture taken from famous designs and models; while in the smaller *Resurrection* on the end wall, the move-



ment is broader and the 'difficulty' and complexity of the framing more studied.

**Prospero Fontana** was active in Bologna and Rome, and several paintings document his presence in many workshops in the two cities – a sign of his recognition by the contemporary clientele. The *Burial of Christ* on the right wall, a big signed altarpiece for the oratory of Santa Maria della Morte, adds the diverse suggestions of Roman and Emilian Mannerism to the model taken from an engraving by Dürer. A little further on, the *Adoration of the*

*Magi*, from a later period, refers rather to Florentine styles and familiarity with Vasari's work.

His daughter, **Lavinia Fontana**, began her career following the example of her father, but in time developed her own autonomous language. This led to her becoming one of the most representative female painters of Bologna and, during her stay in Rome, of the papal capital, too. Her interest in a 'naturalness' that seems to want to draw her father's style towards the new northern trends of Veneto and Lombardy is evident in the significant small altarpiece portraying a *Miracle of St Francis of Paola*. Lavinia painted portraits that were in big demand from the Bolognese aristocracy; examples being the *Portrait of a Scholar* and the *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family* (on the end wall). It can be appreciated how her manner of portraying the subjects of her time, according to an idealised but at the same time carefully revised reality, would have been able to arouse interest and contribute to her fame. This style may be related to the influence of her contemporary Fleming artists working in Italy and in Bologna itself.

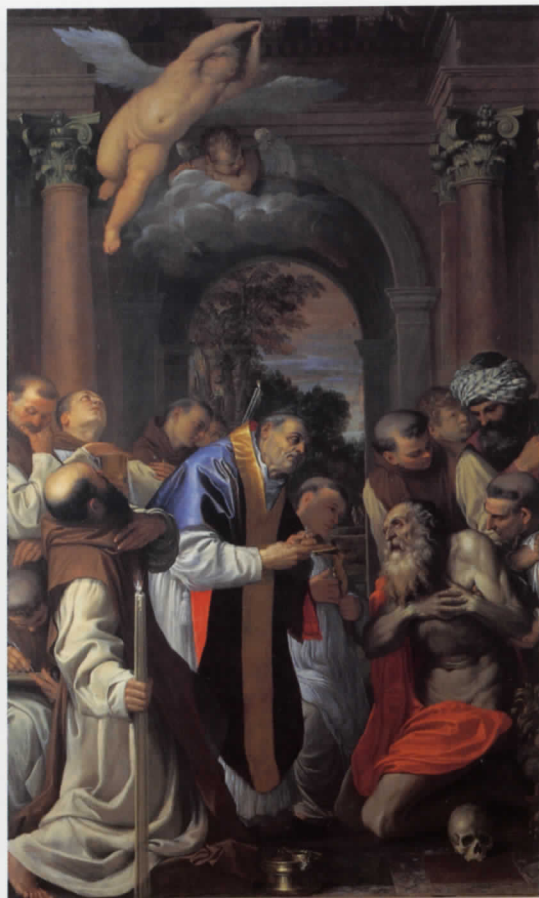
Other works by Bolognese artists who

kept local tradition alive at the turn of the seventeenth century and gradually renewed it are here exhibited alongside the *Nativity* by **Camillo Procaccini**, whose move to Lombardy is reflected in the luminist vision of the figurative space. The *Coronation of the Virgin* by **Orazio Samacchini**, who was to continue working for some time into the new century, relates to two works by the 'moderate renovator' **Bartolomeo Cesi**: the *Virgin with Three Saints* and the *St Anne's Adoration for the Virgin*. While Samacchini represents the more 'modern' updating of work by Tuscan and Roman masters, Cesi is the exponent of a culture that made close contact with the new ideas of the Carracci, while maintaining his autonomous reading. Not by coincidence, both worked side by side with the leading exponents of the new Naturalism of the Incamminati. Proof of this may be seen in the *Mysteries of the Rosary* in San Domenico, where the new and old generations were called on to compete.

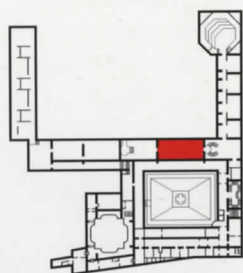


**Bartolomeo Passerotti**  
*Resurrection of Christ*





**Agostino Carracci**  
*Communion of St Jerome*



The crisis in the old conception of the world was comprehensively felt in the last decades of the sixteenth century and affected all of Europe. New scientific research allowed a greater understanding of nature and its phenomena, and the Copernican revolution overturned the conception that the Earth is the centre of the universe. Man was no longer the only, undisputed, central figure in the cosmos, but just one of the elements participating in its existence. Art and science became different means of expressing the human experience. The development of great nation states and the growth of Atlan-

tic trade after the opening up of new routes transformed the markets and European politics, placing the old Mediterranean world in a position of inferiority. The Reformation split the unity of the western Church, undermining a system that had by now been consolidated for centuries. In such a situation, artistic patronage found new channels of investment, both in secular and religious directions. In Bologna the growth of papal power and the needs of the Reformation gave an impulse to renewal and to the construction of religious buildings, with an important spread of ideas and discussions on art. The big altarpieces are a reflection of the new political and religious attitude. On the other hand, the senatorial aristocracy imposed itself on the city with the construction of magnificent palaces, enriched with frescoes and collections of art. The world was like a big stage where life, death, religious and secular ceremonies were transformed into elements of attraction. It was in this society in ferment that the 'modern' culture of the Carracci developed from the 1580s. Although arising out of Mannerism and always in communication – or conflict – with the masters linked to tradition, this culture developed its own autonomous, reformist language.

The brothers **Annibale** and **Agostino** and their cousin **Ludovico Carracci** (→ XI.) began their studies in Bologna assisting on the cycle of paintings in the Palazzo Fava (between the present Via Indipendenza and Via Manzoni) at an early age, and then in the Palazzo Magnani in Via San Donato. From there they took different directions, but all were important to the further developments of the Bolognese school and its dissemination. Annibale moved to Rome, working there for a long time and leaving an important mark both on religious and secular art, particularly evident in the big Palazzo Farnese cycle. The new Illusionist style was to fully develop in the papal capital (mediated by Correggio's Parma works), constituting the basis for the big scenographic edifices of the Roman Baroque: in the subsequent decades they were to decorate the ceilings of palaces and churches, with 'theatrical' and illusive openings onto the infinite.

The *Madonna of St Louis*, the *Virgin and Saints* from San Giorgio and the *Assumption* are by **Annibale Carracci**: the Veneto and Parma models, the sensitive chromatic impasto, the attitudes of the figures and the brightness that



Annibale Carracci  
*Madonna of St Louis*





strikes the eyes and 'leads' it to the inside of the composition, are typical elements of his art. **Agostino Carracci** is represented by his *Assumption* and the big *Communion of St Jerome*, a synthesis of updated, learned citations of what his contemporary renovators were proposing. Most of the room, however, is given over to **Ludovico Carracci** and his great altarpieces, and not without reason. Ludovico virtually never went away from Bologna and, while following the tradition of the most undiluted naturalism, also adopted the ideals of the Reformation preached by Cardinal Paleotti, his patron and protector, thus becoming one of the main referents for the development of Bolognese painting in the seventeenth century.

*Before moving on to the artists who were to follow the 'directions' indicated by the Carracci in different ways, a stop must be made in the room dedicated to the most renowned of these, Guido Reni. It is therefore necessary to return to the lower level, descending the staircase.*

**Ludovico Carracci**  
*Bargellini Altarpiece*  
*Annunciation*





**XI. The Carracci and Bologna** If the two *Assumptions* by **Annibale** and **Agostino** are compared, the difference between the two brothers can be appreciated, despite their similar cultural intention and similar models. Agostino, the intellectual, was the one most linked to literature and the reinterpretation of famous models – especially from the Veneto – which he directly re-made. So it was no mere chance that his main work was to become the reproduction of images using engraving techniques, allowing him to circulate not only Annibale and Ludovico's 'inventions', but also those of the major painters who had been the model for his generation (from Correggio to the Veneto painters). While Agostino's *Assumption* recalls previous celebrated artists, Annibale, in his 1592 altarpiece for San Francesco, reviews the scene in a new way, though remaining tied to the colour of the Veneto painters and the famous models. The perspective loses its central position, replaced by a continuing variation of points of view and optical surprises, anticipating the art of the seventeenth-century. The apostles question one another, while the Virgin is triumphantly raised in a scenic 'edifice' of light and angels who 'break through' the frame of the picture and unite the illusory space with the real. Observing **Ludovico's** works, starting with the *Bargellini Altarpiece* of 1588 (so-called because it was donated to the *Clementina* by Camillo Bargellini), it is possible to recognise his methods, which are quite autonomous, even compared to those of Annibale and Agostino. Although the composition is moved from the centre, the lateral position of the Virgin's throne – while recalling Titian – here has a precise constructive meaning. St Dominic turns to the observer, albeit with a rhetorical attitude, becoming the necessary 'mediator' with the sacred space of the picture. His act is demonstrative. And the Virgin is interpreted not according to the rules of a bygone beauty, but with the characteristics of the time. The vividness of the sacred scene is underscored by the daily objects appearing there, to make

the event 'natural'. The *Fall of St Paul* takes up Mannerist models, such as that of Er-

cole Procaccini in San Giacomo, and renews them: but here the use of light

is different. It comes from the Naturalist openness of the sky, falling

on the background scene and advancing to strike the figures in

the foreground. The same renewal of traditional ideas can be

seen in his *Sermon of the Baptist*, almost a translation of the

Veneto painters' chromatic richness into the language of Bo-

lognese Naturalism; or in the *Martyrdom of St Ursula*. In the

latter the rhetoric of the 'commotion' reaches its maximum:

the martyrs in the foreground, the dramatic dialogue between

the executioner and one of the victims and, high above all, the

main character caught in the demonstrative act of accepting her

martyrdom. In the *Annunciation*, the scene is poor and bare. The

Virgin is an ordinary, modestly-dressed woman; the elements

of the scene those of seventeenth-century furnishings. The angel

does not appear in a triumph of light, but is there, real and human,

indicating the 'naturalness' of the extraordinary event. In the *Transfiguration*

there is a 'modern' version of Mannerist foreshortening, the

sign of a desire for contrast. The beautiful *Madonna of the Scalzi*

is closer to the 'natural' works. The monumental *Calling of St Mathew*,

the *Pool of Bethesda* and *Sermon of St John the Baptist* continue

the discourse of the triumphal altarpieces dedicated to immersing

the faithful in a world as similar as possible to their own, and to

making the religious event and its message as equally moving and

everyday.





Annibale Carracci  
*Assumption*





**Guido Reni**  
*Portrait of the Artist's Mother*  
*Massacre of the Innocents*

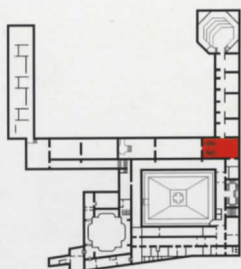
**Guido Reni** is one of the most celebrated of Bolognese painters; there is a portrait of him painted by one of his most audacious students, **Simone Cantarini**.

Despite beginning with the Mannerism of Calvaert, and despite becoming a follower of the Carracci academy and participating in the decorative projects involving various masters in the big workshops of the city, Guido was to become the exponent of another artistic direction, steeped in consequences for seventeenth-century Classicism – and not only in Emilia. Starting from Annibale Carracci, he was openly attuned to the ancient masters and the perfect beauty of ideal models. And his works were a very high and informed expression of this. In his work every element of drama is softened in a vision seeking calm and symmetry. In the *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, the strong, volitive image of the woman on a background reduced to the essential – completely dark – is translated from realism into the purity of a timeless image whose every component is harmonious. The same research is at the basis of his big altarpieces, confirmed by the existence of numerous drawings for his works: the enormous *The Pietà of the Mendicants Altarpiece* is distinguished by its division into one upper sacred space and one lower human one, which the great patron saints of Bologna 'inhabit', and where the city appears in one of its more precise pictorial representations. The city is presented again in the *Plague Altarpiece* in a moment of drama – the epidemic, with the corpse-carriers moving the bodies on carts under a leaden sky – seen as a description of a living space and an allusive event.

*Samson and the Massacre of the Innocents* are two more examples of Guido's work, amongst the most admired by foreign visitors as models of absolute beauty – the transfiguration of drama into harmony. They were painted after the artist's stay in Rome, during which he was employed in important public and private workshops: the sign of great recognition attributed him by the clientele. In the first the figure of the young protagonist triumphs, linked to the concept of classically inspired harmonious beauty, reinterpreted through the examples of Raphael and the ancients. The second translates the tragedy into a profound study of figurative and chromatic symmetries; an intellectual vision in which the scream of the mother is transformed into a nostalgically reconsidered canon of perfection. Works like these were to be at the centre of eighteenth-century research into Classical harmony in Bologna and Rome, and also in artists like Poussin, certainly the main representative of those trends between Rome and France in the seventeenth century. In the *Crucifixion* – whose iconographic success is proven by the significant number of copies made from it – the protagonists are symmetrically placed at the sides of the cross, on a background that intentionally eliminates the landscape and concentrates on the 'apparition' of the figures and their illumination.

In his later work Guido brought the redundancy of the material to its maximum concentration in pursuit of a superior, purely spiritual beauty; an idealism that forgets the form, making the images evanescent, built up on few, mainly light colours. Examples of this research are the *Virgin and St Francis*, the *Flagellation* and *St Francis and the Angel*, the latter given on deposit thanks to the sensitive disposition of Denis Mahon. To these are added the delightful *Sybil* and *Christ Crowned with Thorns*.

The next space is the *Corridor of the Incamminati*, after the name of the academy founded by the Carracci.









**Mastelletta**  
Miracle of St Anthony

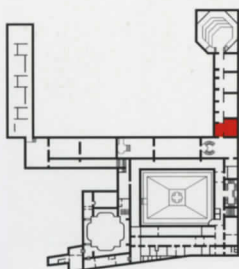
In the first section of the corridor, some small genre paintings by Annibale and Ludovico Carracci introduce works by artists who participated in the renewal proposed by the Carracci's *Accademia degli Incamminati* either as students or associates. It was a time of discussion that led to the most significant achievements of the Bolognese school, always in close communication with Rome, and with Venice and Lombardy. The *Announcing Angel* and the *Virgin Annunciata* by **Annibale Carracci** once again demonstrate how different his cultural premises are from those of Ludovico. There is a strong reference to the tradition of the grand colourists. Iconographic models and the use of colour and light relate to Venice and Parma; the scene is constructed in the manner of high theatre. The figures do not have the clear evidence of Ludovico's style, but are infused with new feeling, with a warm sensuality whose persuasive intention is achieved with more elegant rhetorical artifice. The small *St Francis and the Crucifix*, immersed in a landscape, the *Mockery of Christ* and *St John the Baptist* – from the Mahon collection – are also by Annibale. The *Annunciation* is by **Ludovico Carracci**, while the *Rape of Europa* is by **Antonio Carracci**, a lesser, but significant exponent of the family.

The seventeenth century was a time when pictorial genres – landscape, portrait, still life – appeared and became more precisely differentiated, due to the desire to experiment and to

study nature and its phenomena. Generally small, 'room' paintings, these were particularly liked by collectors and patrons intending to broaden their horizons to the new studies. Bolognese Classicist landscape painting – one of the areas most favoured by the modernisers – had a significant influence on subsequent developments of the pictorial 'genre'. It is no mere chance that the lovingly described landscape, in which the figures become merely extras, was broadly welcomed into the art of Annibale and the students of the *Incamminati* who followed him to Rome. Here, once again, is **Annibale Carracci**, with a *Landscape with Hunter*, and a *Landscape* of accomplished execution by **Domenico Zampieri** called **Domenichino**, one of his leading pupils, who moved with him to the papal capital. The rhetoric that triumphs in Domenichino's altarpieces tends to soften in the small idyllic compositions, in the descriptive taste for elements of nature reconsidered according to the dictates of Classical beauty.

Proceed into the first side room where some important examples of work by the *Incamminati* and artists who related to them are exhibited.

**Ludovico Carracci** is placed in direct comparison with his main pupils in this room via the *Martyrdom of St Peter Thomas* and the *Madonna of the Rosary*, while the *Portrait of the Tacconi Family* is important evidence of his work as a portraitist. **Pietro Faccini**, a painter who had a brief but intensive artistic career, trained at the Carracci's academy and quickly became independent.



His taste for colour, interpreted on the basis of the great Venetian and Parma masters, is fully apparent in the *Annunciation*, in which Annibale's example is acknowledged in a very personal reading based on the fragmentary and liberal use of the chromatic relations. A similar style distinguishes the little-known *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine with Saints* (previously attributed to Annibale Castelli), where the stratifications and studied, shaded construction typical of this artist are easily recognisable. **Lucio Massari**, represented by the *Return of the Prodigal Son*, is the oldest of those who worked with the Carracci. After training under the Mannerist Passerotti, he became linked to



**Alessandro Tiarini**  
*Burial of Christ*

the *Incamminati* and particularly the Classicist wing of the academy in the last decade of the century. He worked in competition with the main masters of the time in important workshops, such as San Colombano and San Michele in Bosco, where he assisted in the decoration of the chapel which, due to the contribution of some of the more significant *Incamminati* artists, was known as the 'Carracci chapel'. In this altarpiece his moral and ideal vision of the Classical world, which also finds comparison in the 'severe' Tuscan reformed art, combines with the typically Bolognese study of the 'natural'. **Alessandro Tiarini** had also begun to paint under the wing of the Bolognese artists linked to Mannerism, before moving to Florence where he took up with the Tuscan reformed artists, especially Passignano and Empoli. On his return to Bologna he entered into contact with the best representatives of the local school. The *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine with Saints*, and especially the *Burial of Christ*, transform the construction into blocks, planes and directrices typical of Bolognese academic research, in an essential, severe version where all elements join to create effects of involvement

and commotion in the observer. **Giovanni Andrea Donducci** – called **Mastelletta** because of his father's work – is a visionary painter: in some senses he repropose and updates the fantastic interpretation obtained through the intensive relationship between light and colour typical of artists like Niccolò dell'Abate, or the more imaginative Ferrara painters, and which in a different way had found a place in Faccini's freer reading. Mastelletta's culture finds references in the genre and landscape painting of Rome, with a particular interest in lighting effects and chromatic construction. His work is often independent from that of other Bolognese artists, even though he related to them and picked up and reworked their suggestions. Two episodes from the *Miracles of St Anthony* from San Francesco are exhibited in this room. **Giacomo Cavedone** is wholly linked to the styles of Ludovico Carracci. The big *St Alò Altarpiece*, painted in 1614 for the church of the Mendicanti, almost seems the work of the master himself. It is one of the 'rarer operations' (Malvasia) by the Carracci school, with the Virgin above – again a typically Carracesque plain woman – and the two saints: Alò, protector of the Blacksmiths Guild, commissioner of the work, and Petronius. The mediator between the observer and the painting is the clergyman behind St Petronius, the only person looking outwards.

*Return to the corridor to continue the excursus on seventeenth-century painting.*





**Guercino**  
*Madonna of the Sparrow*

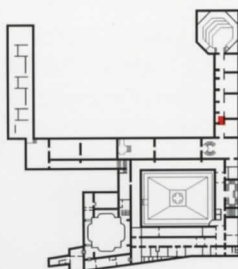
In this section of the corridor and the adjoining room there are some significant examples from another of the century's great masters in Bologna: **Giovanni Francesco Barbieri**, called **Guercino**.

Guercino was born in Cento, in the province of Ferrara. His artistic 'epiphany' came when admiring the altarpiece painted for the church of the Cappuccini in his home city by Ludovico Carracci. On the basis of this master's vehement colour, but in an independent version derived from a contemporary reading of the Ferrara artists, he created his own style in which the dense, pasty painting is based on the use of broad, rapid brush strokes, with a strong presence of luminist values. He was to be one of the most highly appreciated and best loved of Bolognese artists, sought after by collectors and art lovers.

The young *Sybil*, drenched in colour like the *St Sebastian Attended by Irene* and the lovely *Madonna of the Sparrow*, from the Mahon collection, are all examples of a peak of personal research, though all linked to the 'natural' interpretation that was so much part of the *Incamminati* environment, albeit in different expressions. The warm impasto and rapid brush stroke, the various tones of blue and white, from the *Christ in the Olive Grove* and *St Joseph* through to the altarpiece with the *St William Receiving his Vestment*, are works from his youth and early maturity. The *Magdalene* and *St Jerome*, from the Zambeccari collection, and the frieze with *God the Father* rather indicate a later period, when he made a return to a Classicist view, with greater attention to form and less to 'effect'; while the *St John the Baptist* and the *St Peter Martyr* are from his advanced maturity.

Two small works of transformed imaginative value by **Mastelletta** appear in the corridor next to Guercino: the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* and the *Christ Served by Angels* – in which the signs of his visionary taste for colour can be seen, despite the damage caused by old restorations – and two *Landscapes* by **Domenichino**.

*Proceed into the second room.*





**Guercino**  
*St William Receiving  
his Vestment  
St Sebastian Attended by Irene*





**Elisabetta Sirani**  
*St Anthony of Padua  
 Worshipping the Infant Jesus*

The survey of Guercino's art made in the previous section is concluded with the works in this room. Alongside the master, his rich school is significantly illustrated by a *Portrait of Barbieri*, attributed to **Benedetto Gennari**, one of the first and most interesting exponents of the master's 'family' of relations and close followers who were active for several generations. **Domenichino** is again represented in this room by his *Martyrdom of St Peter*, a genuine big rhetorical 'edifice' in which every figure has its own space and its own sense, and in which every element of drama becomes representation.

The new generation of Bolognese painters is reminiscent of some of the artists mentioned so far, without forgetting the Carraccesque origins of the school. Relations between Bologna and Rome continued, as they did with Ferrara, Parma, Venice and Lombardy. As the century advanced, use of the great Illusionist decoration was to triumph, covering the walls of churches and palaces. The tradition put in place in the first decades of the century was updated and continued in the big altarpieces and 'room' pictures.

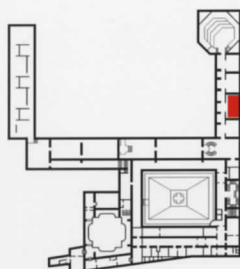
The Pesaro painter **Simone Cantarini** turned again in an independent manner to Guido Reni, whose school was to develop broadly. The *Immacolata and Saints*, the two versions of *St Jerome* and the big painting, previously in the Malatesta Temple, Rimini, with *Saints Joseph and Dominic*, are expressions of a sensitive and melancholy Classical vision.

**Giacomo Sementi**, represented by the *Martyrdom of St Eugenia*, refers less freely to Guido's Classicism, but also with moments of autonomy.

**Elisabetta Sirani** is one of the most celebrated of Bolognese female painters. The traditional, devotional commitment is combined with a personal reading of the chromatic values, following that of the most valid Reni-inspired artists, in *St Anthony of Padua Worshipping the Infant Jesus*, as also in the *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John*, previously in the Zambeccari collection, and in general in all his best work. There is a well-known story, handed down by Malvasia, according to which his death at a young age was due to his being poisoned, an act arising out of the envy of those who did not accept his superiority in the field of painting.

**Giovanni Lanfranco**, with his *Samson* and **Guido Cagnacci**, with a *Lucretia* are also represented in the same room.

*Returning to the corridor, the artistic panorama continues towards the end of the seventeenth century.*



**Simone Cantarini**  
*Saints Joseph and Dominic*





**Domenichino**  
*Martyrdom of St Peter*





**Alessandro Albani**  
Self Portrait

The Emilian school continued its course from master to pupil, making Bologna one of the most renowned cities of art in Italy and a beacon for foreign travellers. Artistic literature and guides were widely circulated with the works of the artists and 'accounts' of their lives presented by writers such as Carlo Cesare Malvasia.

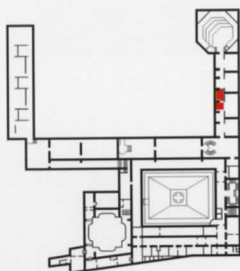
The Classicist direction derived from Annibale, with particular links to Roman production, is represented by three works by **Alessandro Albani**, one of the first and most loyal of the Incamminati: the small, lovely *Virgin and Saints*, almost an altarpiece in miniature; the *Virgin with St Catherine and the Magdalene*; the *Self Portrait*. Albani clearly shows the direct suggestion of the Carracci, along with that of the masters of Roman Mannerism who he had been in contact with in the papal capital. There is a particularly noticeable link with the Raphaellesque ideal of a pure beauty, reconsidered according to the Classical taste of his time.

**Michele Desubleo**, represented by the elegant and elegiac *St John the Baptist*, was originally from Flanders but became a faithful follower of Reni's Classicist idea, re-presenting it in his own personal version.

Burrini and Pasinelli were two leading artists at the turn of the seventeenth century. **Lorenzo Pasinelli** interprets the Reni style of his teacher Simone Cantarini in a new way, filtering it in a highly educated, elegiac, more 'theatrical' manner in which the colour again recalls the great Venetians. He was mainly a decorator of churches and palaces. The *Martyrdom of St Ursula*, historically remembered in the Aldrovandi collection, is one of his most significant works. The big model is again that of Ludovico, but the suggestions reminiscent of the master's old altarpiece are re-read in a more fluent and pleasant, less dramatic way. The colour is solar, the correspondence between the full, dense brushwork softens into lighter and brighter shades. At this time 'theatre' was equivalent to melodrama, and the virtuosity of the 'marvel' and the 'surprise' of late Baroque triumphed. Pasinelli is again represented by two accomplished tondi depicting *Pandora* and *Peace*, and *St Cecilia* caught in the act of playing music.

**Giovanni Antonio Burrini** is another of the great end-of-century decorators. His *Erminia amongst the Shepherds*, *Susanna and the Elders* and *St Agnes* are paintings that already anticipate the better, more liberal, eighteenth-century Baroque, with their range and thickness of layered colour and light transparent washes that give material consistency to the portrayal. The *Three Figures* is an authentic genre scene, in which the subjects no longer have anything of the courtly about them but are characters from everyday life. The pictorial 'specialisations': still life, with fruit, flowers, musical instruments and game, had widespread success in this period. They were much sought after by private clients, partly due to the allegorical and moralising nature they often assumed. A typical example is the *Still Life* by the **Master of Rodolfo Lodi**, which ends this section.

Now proceed into the third room.





**Lorenzo Pasinelli**  
*Peace*

**Giovanni Antonio Burrini**  
*Susanna and the Elders*



Papal Bologna in the eighteenth century assumed an increasingly important role from a political point of view due to its position bordering the nearby dukedoms and its ongoing place as the second city of the state. One of the most important popes in this century was actually from Bologna: Benedict XIV Lambertini. He was linked to one of the most powerful of the senatorial families and his presence on the papal throne had a strong influence on the patronage and cultural development of 'Bologna, ever the painter'. There was no lack of opportunity, because alongside the Church, illustrious families also continued to compete to have the richest palaces and art collections. At the end of the seventeenth century and the first decades of



Giovan Gioseffo dal Sole  
*Magdalene*

the eighteenth, art proceeded without any noticeable shocks in the directions already indicated by the great masters of the previous century.

In this room the model of the *Miracle of St Anthony*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Nativity* and the *Swooning of Julia* (once interpreted as the *Swooning of Esther*) by **Lorenzo Pasinelli** are presented. (→XII.)

**Giovan Gioseffo dal Sole** was a great decorator and mediator between the two pictorial generations which represented the turn of the seventeenth century. The virtuosity of his big monumental works also has a personal interpretation in the small works, with the increase in visual effects, the variation of brush stroke and contrasted lighting effects. An example of this is the *Magdalene*, previously Zambecari, with its varied chromatism in which the material is elaborated to the point of creating the illusion of life in the representation of physical nature.

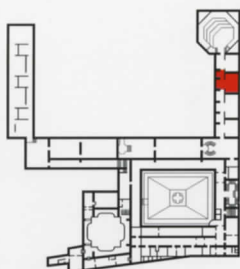
**Domenico Maria Canuti**, who belongs to the same turn-of-the-century generation, was mainly active

in the big, scenographic workshops open in churches and palaces, including the Palazzo Pepoli. He is a typical representative of the best Bolognese Baroque. In his *Death of St Benedict*, the colours are dark and every element of the scene is constructed with precise rules of alternation and symmetry, both in the chromatism and in the depiction of the figures, positioned in an almost 'edifice-like' rapport on the stage of an imaginary theatre.

**Donato Creti** (→ XII.) is here represented by various important compositions: *Idyll*, *Achilles Plunged into the Styx* and the *Allegorical Tombs*, commissioned by the Duke of Richmond and painted with the assistance of the landscape and perspective specialist Carlo Besoli.

The *Glorification of the Duke of Argyll* by **Francesco Monti** is part of the same allegorical cycle. Monti was an interesting Bolognese artist of the eighteenth-century generation, who adopted the suggestions of more unrestrained styles proposed by Crespi. This is possibly the oldest of the works painted by Monti for England.

In the corridor, the *Portrait of a Hunter* and the *Girl with Cat* by **Giuseppe Maria Crespi** are placed in contrast with the *Visitation* by **Donato Creti**: allowing a comparison between these two artists who are more widely represented in the nearby rooms. (→ XII.)



The other side of the culture at the turn of the century, the more purely Classical, is well represented in the next section of the corridor by **Marcantonio Franceschini's** *Four Seasons*. He, too, was a painter of large works and of genre scenes, who sought references in Bologna's now established artistic history, in a new version of the models taken from seventeenth-century Classicists: from Cignani, his teacher, and from examples by Annibale, Domenichino and Albani. His taste for ideal beauty, but set in nature, is achieved through ennoblement of the activities and figures linked to life at different times of the year, which finds a natural point of reference in the allegory of the *Seasons*.

**Giuseppe Gambarini**, approaching the same theme in the eighteenth century, translates its educated, accomplished language into a more popular, familiar interpretation. The *Autumn* and *Winter* are an elegy of Arcadia and the return to nature, in the ennoblement of daily work. Overall, they represent the search for contact with a different experience of life from that of the aristocracy, which the dissemination of Arcadia as a literary movement and aspect of culture was to make the central part of a style of society.

Two small works offer contact with a family of artists that was particularly important to Bolognese artistic culture in the second half of the sixteenth century: the Gandolfi. They completed a vast number of works in the city and surrounding countryside. **Ubaldo Gandolfi** is represented here by a *Resurrection*, the model for the painting he executed along the San Luca portico; and the two *Portraits of Children*, painted with great pictorial wisdom and an abiding interest in detail. Contact with the brightness of the Veneto painters is particularly apparent in these works.

**Vittorio Maria Bigari**, a wholly eighteenth-century painter, was mainly employed in big pictorial workshops in churches and palaces, where he constructed real 'theatrical edifices', often using less common techniques. An example is the stories in tempera on masonry decorating the higher part of the nave in the basilica of San Domenico, completely rebuilt by Carlo Francesco Dotti according to the showy architectural style of the period. The *Baptism of Christ* and the *Adoration of the Magi* seem to be grand scenes of reduced size. More scenographic than ever, Bigari creates genuine theatres in miniature, in which the architectural framing triumphs – in more than one case the work of perspective specialists – and in which the human scenes are generally crowded and packed with action. He often also paints in tempera in the room-sized works, giving the surfaces a chalky effect – bright, but without that sheen typical of the varnishes applied to finish works in oil.



## XII. Crespi and Creti: two sides of Bolognese painting in the Age of Enlightenment

Not always appreciated by the official clientele due to the forthrightly 'natural' character of many of his works, **Giuseppe Maria Crespi** worked mainly on commissions from enlightened patrons, such as the Pepoli, for whom he painted one of the great 'manifestos' of his work at the beginning of the 1690s: the decoration of two rooms in their Via Castiglione palace. In those works, gods and allegorical figures are transformed into 'real' people; the *Seasons* become girls intent on their work in the fields, standing out against a sky that is 'real' but, with its theatrical openness beyond the closed space, also part of the search for illusion and Baroque surprise. The *Portrait of a Hunter* and *Girl with Cat* are tangible portraits. Light and colour find confirmation in the artist's contemporary – and friend – Burrini, and in the tradition favouring Venice and Parma. But here there are no elements of 'distraction'. Everything is essential. The elements represented are exclusively those necessary to recognise the person, his or her environment, characteristics and place in society. The 'natural' protagonist is the subject.



**Giuseppe Maria Crespi**  
*Girl with Cat*

**Donato Creti**  
*Achilles Plunged into the Styx*

The *Visitation* by **Donato Creti** returns to the atmosphere of Arcadia, to the accomplished Classicism already seen in Pasinelli, his teacher. He, too, was educated in Veneto culture and was a great and elegiac artist with a nostalgia for the ancient beauty that was so often pre-eminent in Bolognese artistic history. The colours are bright and clear, but evenly distributed, without impasto or excessively liberal overlapping. It is a style of painting in which the rational also finds its place.

The *Allegorical Tombs*, painted in 1729, in which myth, allegory and nature are combined to represent a complex world, were commissioned by the Duke of Richmond to glorify distinguished people from the English nobility; the works being part of the cult of the 'monument' as a symbol of fame that survives even death. The commission itself is an indication of the fame achieved by the artist and the importance attributed to Bolognese painting beyond its borders. Primarily a 'figure' painter, Creti worked on these paintings – almost 'secular' altarpieces transformed into monuments – with the landscape and perspective specialist Carlo Besoli: a frequent occurrence in a century when the diverse pictorial genres tended to become more and more specialised.

The clear and at the same time pale colours in paintings linked to his idyllic, Arcadian vision of nature and history, such as in the review of Classical myth in the *Idyll* or in *Achilles Plunged into the Styx*, again recall his teacher Pasinelli. Indeed, an interesting comparison may be made between the works of the eighteenth-century painter and those of **Lorenzo Pasinelli**: in the model for the monumental altarpiece with a *Miracle of St Anthony* for San Petronio, there is appreciable freedom in the use of colour that 'constructs' the pictorial space. The *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Nativity* are represented with clear, pale, bright but also pasty colours, which the young pupil must have enjoyed, while the Classical model becomes theatre and melodrama in the *Swooning of Julia*. Drawings for this work are proof of the artist's concerted preparatory work and accurate study. Every element, 'constructed' by the taste for colour, at the same time recalls a nostalgia for the Classical world and the old nobility, a world that is also 'reconstructed' in the details of the clothing. Arcadia and mythology together, an example of certain impact on the subsequent generation of artists like Creti.









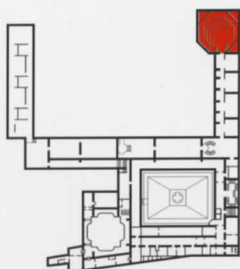


Several large paintings from the most representative and noted period in the course of Bolognese art – the seventeenth century – are exhibited in the Octagonal Room. Artists exhibited elsewhere in the Pinacoteca appear again here: **Ludovico Carracci** with a *Nativity*; **Domenichino** with the *Madonna of the Rosary* and *Martyrdom of St Agnes*; **Alessandro Albani** with the *Baptism of Christ*; and **Guercino** with his *Virgin and Child Worshipped by St Bruno*. And there are two works by artists not otherwise represented: **Carlo Cignani**, exponent of the first post-Carracesque generation, painter of the altarpiece with the *Virgin and Child with Saints*, and **Lionello Spada**. The latter was one of the very first of the *Incamminati*, active in Bolognese workshops alongside Ludovico, and in Brizio, Massari and Tiarini. His monumental canvas depicting *Abraham and Melchizedek* is closely related to the style of Bolognese artists between the end of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth. Finally, the *Chariot of Apollo*, by **Simone Cantarini** hangs above the entrance door.

*The visit to the Pinacoteca ends here; but another work may be admired along the route to the exit, on the landing at the entrance.*

The *Marriage at Cana*, a big composition by **Gaetano Gandolfi**, was painted for the convent of San Salvatore in 1775, at a time when the master enjoyed considerable fame. Here the scene is constructed on a background of Classicist architecture – typical of eighteenth-century painters of history – which is represented illusively and remains in shade. The subjects are illuminated by a source of light which, in theatre language, would be said to come from the stage. Typically eighteenth-century in the quality of lighting and the use of colour, the composition again recalls interest in the Venetian models to which the master remained closely attached: those of the sixteenth century – Titian and especially Veronese – through to those of his great contemporary, Tiepolo.

**Simone Cantarini**  
*Chariot of Apollo*







**Lionello Spada**  
*Abraham and Melchizedek*

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