 Raphael’s altar-piece patrons in Città di Castello*

Raphael’s earliest documented activity as a painter was in Città di Castello, where he painted three altar-pieces and a conffraternity banner. Investigation of the individuals who commissioned the altar-pieces sheds new light on Raphael’s work in the city and reveals that the artist’s private patrons there formed a close-knit coterie whose commissions should be seen as part of the extensive renovation of chapels in the city’s churches in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Città di Castello is a small city in the upper Tiber valley, fifteen miles south of Borgo Sansepolcro, with good access by road to Florence, Urbino and Perugia, thirty-five miles to the south (Fig. 1). In this period it was part of the Papal States, but was effectively ruled by the Vitelli family and their associates. Documentation for the period c. 1485–1505 gives evidence of a high level of artistic patronage in the city with a concerted programme of altar renewal. For most of the 1490s the local artistic scene was dominated by the presence of Luca Signorelli (c. 1450–1523), who painted altar-pieces for many of the same churches as Raphael and whose patrons were closely linked to his. Signorelli was first documented in Città di Castello in 1486, and was granted local citizenship in 1488 while painting a processional banner (now lost) for the most important local confraternity, S. Maria della Pietà. He subsequently painted portraits of three members of the ruling family, and an unpublished letter of 16th December 1498 demonstrates his intimacy with the Vitelli and with the political elite of Città di Castello. Signorelli also painted five altar-pieces for the city between 1493 and 1498: the high altar-pieces of S. Maria dei Servi and S. Agostino (the latter now in the Louvre) for which he was paid two hundred and fifteen florins in 1493 and 1494 respectively, and other altar-pieces in S. Agostino (for Luca Feriani’s chapel, probably the Nativity now in Naples), and in S. Francesco (the Nativity now in the National Gallery, London, apparently for the Tiberius family, 1496). In 1497–98 – immediately prior to his departure from the city – Signorelli painted the Martyrdom of St Sebastian for Tommaso Brozzi’s chapel in S. Domenico (Fig. 7), further discussed below. This appears to have been Signorelli’s last commission in Città di Castello for twenty years, as he was lured away by prestigious fresco commissions at Montecolino to Maggiore and Orvieto. His departure left something of an artistic vacuum, soon to be filled by the young Raphael.

The account of Raphael’s activity in Città di Castello that appears in Vasari’s Lives, with its perceptive comments on the young artist’s stylistic development, has been the cornerstone for all subsequent discussions, but Vasari provides relatively little detailed information. He mentions the three altar-pieces painted for S. Agostino, S. Domenico and S. Francesco in such a way that two of the three can be securely identified, but does not identify their patrons or give their dates. He does not refer at all to the double-sided banner depicting the Trinity with Sts Sebastian and Roch and The Creation of Eve, nor does he offer any explanation of how the artist came to the attention of the citizens of Città di Castello (although he does add the interesting, and verifiable, information that the artist came to the city ‘con alcuni amici suoi’). Vasari’s account has been supplemented by information from the pictures themselves and their frames, and by the researches of various scholars, especially Giovanni Magherini Graziani, who identified the patrons of Raphael’s three altar-pieces, and made a first attempt to reconstruct their biographies. The two documents he found for the altar-piece that Raphael painted for Andrea Baronci in S. Agostino (1500–01) have been republished on various occasions, but, with the exception of a small study of Baronci, there has been no attempt until now to investigate the links between Raphael’s various patrons.

The documents for the Baronci painting, Raphael’s first altar-piece commission in Città di Castello, remains the only direct archival evidence for his activity in the city. In Decem-

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ber 1500 Andrea Baroni commissioned an altar-piece from Raphael and another painter, Evangelista di Pian di Meleto, for his chapel in the church of S. Agostino. The two artists were to receive thirty-three ducats, a small sum compared with the fees paid to Signorelli in the preceding years, but one commensurate with their reputation and experience. Raphael, who was not yet eighteen, is described as 'magister' and had therefore presumably matriculated into a painter's guild. Evangelista, who had worked with Giovanni Santi, was considerably older but nonetheless plainly the junior partner.13 Baroni's advance was guaranteed by Battista Floridi, a prominent silversmith in Città di Castello. Nine months later, in September 1501, the parties made a final quittance, confirming the fee.

The now dismembered and fragmentary Coronation of St Nicholas of Tolentino (Figs. 2 and 3) — described in S. Agostino from 1627 on — is usually associated with these documents.14 However, the contract does not specify the subject-matter of the painting (to be determined by Baroni), or the chapel's dedication, and Enrico Mercati has recently argued that the Baroni altar-piece is lost and that the Coronation was painted in 1505 for an unidentified patron.15 This argument is based on seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century descriptions of the Coronation, which sometimes state that the picture was painted in 1505, together with some residual difficulties in connecting Baroni to the chapel of St Nicholas, which had been constructed by another patron, Berto Vanni, a few years earlier.16

Assessment of the Coronation is complicated by the severe damage it suffered in an earthquake in September 1789.17 S. Agostino was largely destroyed (the church of S. Francesco di Sales now occupies its site), and the then owners of the chapel agreed that the picture should be sold to pay for the church's rebuilding.18 It was evidently acquired by Pope Pius VI, and subsequently dismembered and dispersed. Four fragments survive in Naples, Paris and Brescia (Figs. 2 and 3).19

Our knowledge of its original appearance is supplemented by a partial copy made in Rome in 1791 by Ermenegildo Costantini (Fig. 4), by Luigi Lanzi's sensitive description,20 and by a number of preparatory drawings (the most important of which is a double-sided sheet in Lille; Fig. 5).21 St Nicholas of Tolentino (flanked by four angels) was shown trampling on a

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13 On 16th October 1483 Evangelista was described as 'Simulacrum Ioannis Sanctis pistoris de Urbino' (see E. Scatassa, 'Due opere sconosciute di Evangelista di Pian di Meleto', Rassegna bibliografica dell'arte italiana, IV [1901], p.197). See also the crucial, but largely overlooked, article of A. Alipii: 'Di Maestro Evangelista da Pian di Meleto pittore', Rassegna bibliografica dell'arte italiana, IV [1901], pp.197.

14 For the 1505 dating, see CONTI, op. cit. at note 10 above, p.159; A. CERTINI: Origine delle chiese e monasteri di Città di Castello, 1726-28 (CDCACV, MS I), folos.84v and 92r-v. For Berto Vanni's ownership of the chapel in 1491 and 1496, see CDCACV, 29.10, 264.

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devil with, above, God the Father, the Virgin Mary and St Augustine. Although the iconography is unusual, St Nicholas himself was a common Augustinian subject, with some potentially relevant plague associations.\(^2\) All the various reconstructions imply that Raphael's altar-piece would have been very large indeed, measuring c.390 by 230 cm.\(^3\) Examination of the individual fragments and the preparatory drawings makes it impossible to accept Mercati's conclusion that the Coronation could have been painted in 1505 (i.e. after the Sposalizio: Fig.13), and the traditional association with the Baronci documents should be maintained.

Andrea di Tommaso Baronci, the oldest of Raphael's patrons, is documented from 1466 and died between May 1503 and July 1505.\(^5\) He was a wool merchant (several documents were drawn up in his bottega),\(^6\) and was involved in numerous property transactions.\(^7\) He lived in the quarter of the Porta Santa Maria (in the south east of the city) and had a chapel in S. Domenico, as well as maintaining strong connections with the more northerly S. Agostino in Porta S. Giacomo. In addition to commissioning his own altar-piece from Raphael, Baronci had held sums earmarked for Signorelli's high altar-piece in S. Agostino,\(^8\) and had performed a similar rôle in 1497 in S. Maria Nuova;\(^9\) it appears that he concerned himself with getting pictures painted. He was also active in city politics, serving as one of the rectors of the Fraternity, as a member of the Consiglio del XVI, Consiglio del XXXII and the Officiali della Mercanzia, and he was a Prior of Città di Castello on numerous occasions between 1466 and 1502.\(^10\) Although I have been unable to locate his will,\(^11\) it is clear from the testament of his widow, Clara Baronci, of

1512 that his estate passed to her (see the Appendix below, Document 1). This also establishes that Andrea was buried in S. Domenico – not S. Agostino as had been commonly supposed – and that the couple were childless. Domenico Gavari, patron of Raphael's Crucifixion with Saints, was named as Clara's universal heir, and numerous documents point to the intimacy between Baronci and Gavari.\(^12\)

Gavari's Crucifixion, now in the National Gallery, London (Fig.6), was the second of Raphael's altar-pieces for Città di Castello. This large panel is signed 'Raphael / VRBIN/AS / P' in a prominent and highly original way at the foot of the cross. Vasari mentioned the picture in S. Domenico – adding acutely that had Raphael's name not been on it, no-one would have believed it was not by Perugino – and it was subsequently recorded in most of the published and manuscript florins, deposited with Andrea Baronci, to be spent on the high altar-piece of S. Agostino (CDCAN, 29.11, Angelo di Battista di Angelo, fols.53r–54r; 7th November 1492: 'reliquias et legasse pecunia sancti Augustini Civitatis Castellorum pro tabulis maioris altaris ... de pecunia deposita penes Andreas Baronci de dicta civitate ...').

Merca'ti, op. cit. at note 13 above, pp.74–75 (CDCAN, 49.1, Maccario Paciuchelli, fol.38v; 2nd July 1497). The individual involved here was called Marco di Maria.

For his political career from 1495, see mercati, op. cit. at note 13 above, pp.92–94; for the earlier period see Cdcas, Riforma, 1466–72, fols.9r, 16v, 170v; 190v et passim in vols.50–54 (1472–1504).

It was apparently drawn up by Ser Antonio di Domenico, for whom only one protocol, of 1473, survives (CDCAN, 39.1).

In addition to those mentioned below, see CDCAN, 52.1, Battista di Ser Battista, fols.240r–41r (24th May 1503); 48.7, Gentile di Ser Giovanni Buratti, fol.125r–v (13th August 1499).
guides to the city. The inscription on the picture’s frame, which survives in situ, establishes that the patron was Domenico Gavari. The Gavari chapel was acquired sometime before 1726 by the Gualterotti family who sold Raphael’s Crucifixion to Cardinal Fesch in July 1808 for 2500 scudi. Lord Ward (later Earl of Dudley), acquired the picture soon after the Fesch sale in 1845; it was purchased by Ludwig Mond in 1892 and bequeathed by him to the National Gallery in 1924.

The Crucifixion was painted for a chapel at the top of the south aisle of S. Domenico, just to the right of the high altar and altar-wall chapels. The surviving pietra sera frame (Fig.8) still bears the Gavari stemma and the inscription: ‘hoc opvs FECIT DOMENICO DE GAVARTS MDXXI’. The present church of S. Domenico was built between 1400 and 1424, and some remnants of its fifteenth-century decoration survive, the most significant element for our purposes being the frame for Signorelli’s Martyrdom of St Sebastian (Fig.7), discussed below.

The patron of the Crucifixion, Domenico di Tommaso di Giovanni Gavari, lived, like Baronci, in the quarter of the Porta S. Maria, near S. Domenico (probably in the modern-day Via dei Gauri – a corruption of Gavari). Domenico Gavari can be traced from 1486, and died between 1521 and 1524. He too was a wool merchant and various documents refer to his shop, and to the bales of wool and woollen gloves that were part of his stock-in-trade. References to loans being repaid to Gavari may indicate that he was also a banker. He was certainly a significant land-owner, completing numerous property deals in the years 1500–02. Gavari married Angela di Christofano di Jacopo (Sellari?) before March 1497; they appear to have had no children. Angela can be traced until July 1505, but must have died before 1511, by which date Gavari was remarried, to Marietta Gavari.

\[9\] Vasari, loc. cit. at note 9 above; conti, op. cit. at note 10 above, p.156; F.L. Lazzari, Storia di Nuvole e breve storia di Città di Castello, Foligno [1669], p.286; certesi, MS cited at note 17 above, fol.52r-v.

\[10\] The Gualterotti were granted a papal dispensation to sell the altar-piece to Cardinal Fesch on 8th July 1808 and did so three days later. For the Fesch sale, see Galerie de l’Ecu S.E. le Cardinal Fesch, Rome [1855], pp.1–90. For confirmation of the acquisition date of 1808, usually incorrectly given as 1818, see D. Thierbaud, Agnus, musée Fech, Les Primitifs italiens, Paris [1987], p.21, note 128.


\[12\] A. Ascani, Chiesa di San Domenico a Città di Castello, Città di Castello [1963], pp.2–23.

\[13\] Micheri Di Grazia, op. cit. at note 1 above, pp.236–57, published some biographical material relating to Domenico Gavari, much of which is unfortunately incorrect, and I have had to reconstruct his biography from scratch.

\[14\] CDCAN, 29.9, Angelo di Battista di Angelo, fol.34, for the 1486 mention; 51.5, Battista di Ser Biagio Lattanzi, fol.185, for that of 1521; Gavari was described as ‘defunct’ in 51.6, fol.97 (8th September 1524).

\[15\] CDCAN, 30.5, Pietro Paolo Pacchieri, fol.176v (19th March 1500); 29.12, Angelo di Battista di Angelo, fol.171v–172 (11th May 1498). His workshop was ‘in loco detto la loggia’ (50.2, fol.198, 8th January 1504).

\[16\] For the Crucifixion, see CDCAN, 31.4, Lattanzio di Ser Biagio Lattanzi, fol.171, for the 1518 mention; 31.5, Battista di Ser Biagio Lattanzi, fol.185, for that of 1521; Gavari was described as ‘defunct’ in 51.6, fol.97 (8th September 1524).

\[17\] CDCAN, 29.15, Angelo di Battista di Angelo, fol.171v–172 (12th March 1500); 1r (23rd March 1500); 52v (5th June 1501).

\[18\] CDCAN, 51.2, Lattanzio di Ser Biagio Lattanzi, fol.65v–66r (30th July 1505; published in mercati, op. cit. at note 13 above, pp.77–79).


Andreocci (see Appendix, Document 2), Gavari served regularly as a Prior of Città di Castello and was a Rector of the Confraternity, as well as serving on the Consiglio del XVI and del XXXII, and on four or five other governmental committees. In brief, his civic profile was very similar to that of Andrea Baronci. Confirmation of the close ties between the two families can, as we have seen, be found in Clara Baronci’s will of September 1512 (drawn up in Gavari’s chapel at the foot of Raphael’s Crucifixion), which names Domenico Gavari as her universal heir (Appendix, Document 1). It seems reasonable to suggest that Baronci provided the link between Raphael and Domenico Gavari.

Domenico Gavari made at least six wills, and the changes in his circumstances they reveal shed light upon his choices as a patron. In his first testament, of March 1497, he requested burial in S. Domenico, named his wife as his heir in first instance, and left fifty florins to each of the major churches of the city and twenty-five to the principal confraternity (S. Maria della Picta). His two brothers were to receive one hundred florins each, but the bulk of his estate was promised — after his widow’s death — to the friars and chapter of S. Domenico. His second will followed fourteen months later in May 1498. Again specifying burial in S. Domenico, he bequeathed the friars a specific, inalienable property, and left them a further ten florins for a new chalice and a black altar-cloth.

Most interesting for our purposes is Gavari’s third will of May 1511 (Appendix, Document 2). Burial in S. Domenico is now specified as ‘in sepulcro eius capelle sancti Hieronimi’ to which the property first mentioned in 1498 is now attached. His bequests to other churches in the city are greatly reduced, but two new confraternities are added to the beneficiaries: the local Hieronymites, and the confraternity of S. Maria in the church of S. Domenico. His new wife, Marietta, was to be the beneficiary for life of his estate and his only son by her, Girolamo, who cannot have been more than five years old, was instituted as his universal heir. By the time of the fourth will, in July 1514, Domenico and Marietta now had a daughter, Angela, to be provided with a dowry of four hundred florins. The most significant change in his fifth will, made in 1519, is that his universal heir is now named as a previously unmentioned son, Bernardino, Girolamo having evidently died in the meantime; another daughter, Giovanna, is also provided for. By August 1521, Gavari is described as ‘corporis languens’, but the final will’s provisions remain basically unchanged.

It comes as little surprise to learn that Gavari’s chapel in S. Domenico was dedicated to St. Jerome. Not only is that saint present at the foot of the cross in the Mond Crucifixion, but the two predella panels in Lisbon and Raleigh, North Carolina, associated with the altar-piece since 1908 (Figs.11 and 12), depict posthumous incidents from his life. Both have been cut at the sides and there must originally have been at least one other panel in the predella. The two episodes of Eusebius of Cremona resuscitating three dead men with St. Jerome’s chal...
was a supporter of the local Hieronymites (see Appendix, Document 2) and when his second wife finally bore him a son, the boy was named Jerome. Such practices were encouraged by the writings and example of Giovanni d’Andrea and suggest a special relationship with the saint.35

St Jerome was, of course, famous for his meditations on the Passion and devotion to the crucifix. The choice of the Crucifixion also reflects special family associations – the Gavari arms as seen in the altar-piece frame (Fig.6) show a hand clapping a cross – as well as a possible secondary dedication of the chapel, which is sometimes described as ‘alteare Crucifixum’ in the documents (see Appendix, Document 1).36 The particularly eucharistic character of Gavari’s Crucifixion, with angels catching the blood of Christ in chalices, is often noted, and its promise of resurrection is perfectly fitting for a funerary chapel where masses would have been said for Gavari’s soul; his earlier wills included legacies to pay for new chalices for S. Domenico and other churches in the city.37

The pietra serena surround (Fig.8) is one of the few original frames to survive for an altar-piece by Raphael. It matches the one opposite in Tommaso Brozzi’s chapel (Fig.9) which housed Signorelli’s Martyrdom of St Sebastian. John Shearman has described the two frames as identical, and has suggested that they might both have been designed by Raphael, c.1502–04.38 He has also questioned the reliability of the dates furnished by the inscription on Gavari’s frame, and this scepticism plays into the hands of those scholars who have doubted the traditional date of c.1503 for the picture (usually preferring a date c.1500–01, although Shearman raised the possibility that it could postdate 1503).39 However, there were several experienced masons and sculptors in Città di Castello at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and it seems most unlikely that the Brozzi frame, which once carried a date of 149840 – a year fully in accord with the stylistic character of Signorelli’s Martyrdom41 – could have been constructed as late as 1502. Moreover, the changes that Tommaso Brozzi made to his will between 1491 and 1498 confirm that his chapel was constructed in these years,42 ruling out Raphael’s participation. There is every reason for treating both the dates inscribed on these two frames as broadly reliable indicators of the dates of the paintings they contained.

The last of Raphael’s altar-pieces for Città di Castello was the Sposalizio or Marriage of the Virgin now in the Brera (Fig.13).43 The picture is signed and dated 1504 (RAFFAELLO VERNASCA, M.D.), and was first recorded in the church of St Francesco by Vasari in 1550.44 It stood as an altar-piece on the left-hand side of the nave, almost opposite the side entrance to the church, and was recorded by most published

11. Eusebius of Comana resurrecting three dead men with St Jerome’s cloak, by Raphael. c.1502–03. Panel, 25.1 by 43.2 cm. (Museo Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon).

tradition attributes the design of these capitals – along with numerous doorways and lavabo – to Raphael; see p. 15f. Ammonistriorum utile et curioso di pittura, scultura e architettura nelle chiese di Roma, Rome [1606], p.439.

39The Brozzi frame was once inscribed: ‘THOMAS DE BROZZIS ET FRANCISCA UXOR FECIT MCCCLXXVIII’; see CERTINI, MS cited at note 17 above, fol.45v–46r.40See note 8 above.

40On 16th May 1491 Brozzi left twenty florins to the church, and a further fifty ‘con contenda in edificium sine in cruciament capelle in aetatis posti in altare ecclesiae’ (CDGAN, 48.1 1491, fol.59–v). By 4th November 1498 the chapel is described as ‘constructa’ (48.7, fol.4r), and only the costs of providing it with a chalice, misal and liturgical vestments remained.

42For Raphael’s altar-piece, acquired by the Brera in 1806 from the Ospedale Maggiore in Milan, see C. BERTIELLI, in F. ZERI, ed.: Pratiche di Bresia: Scuole dell’Italia centrale e meridionale, Milan [1992], pp.192–200. Scandalously, the picture had been housed in the Chancery of Città di Castello in 1798 to General Giuseppe Lecchi di Brescia (v. DE VECCS: Lo Sposalizio della Vergine, Milan [1996], pp.9–19), and attempts to get it back were vain (MAHERRIN GRAZIANI, op. cit. at note 1 above, pp.352–69); M.T. MCGNIN O’DORF and M.T. ZANGUEZ PELLE, ‘Breve storia delle rivendicazioni dello Sposalizio della Vergine di Raffaello Sanzio’, Pagine Altoprandiane, II.5 [1998], pp.23–32; [1998], pp.23–32.43VASARI, loc. cit. at note 9 above.
and manuscript guides to the city until its removal in 1798.44

While a Franciscan church existed in Città di Castello from 1267, the present building in the north-eastern part of the city in the quarter of the Porta S. Egidio dates from the early fifteenth century. The last fifteen years of the century witnessed a concerted programme of altar renewal in this conventual church, which may have been stimulated by Vitelli interest.65 Unfortunately, the interior of the church was remodelled between 1707 and 1727, and very few vestiges of its Quattrocento decoration remain.

Despite this restructuring, and the removal of Raphael's picture to Milan, a certain amount is known about the patronage of the Sposalizio, largely as a result of the interest in picture to Milan, a certain amount is known about the painting had been commissioned by Filippo Albizzini, who was said to have died about thirty years earlier. The duke did not secure the picture, and a descendant of the original patron - Albizzino Albizzini - was able to renew his family's patronage of the chapel in 1633.66 At this time the chapel was said to be dedicated to St Joseph, and it has generally been assumed that Filippo di Lodovico Albizzini (whom Magherini Graziani identified as the probable patron of the altar-piece) commissioned Raphael's Marriage of the Virgin to reflect this dedication. A newly discovered document (Appendix, Document 3) confirms this, and establishes that Albizzini had married (Gelomia Ranuti Peri) by 1515, and was active in local politics. He was Captain of Scalocchio in 1549 and served regularly as a Prior between 1491 and 1527, as well as on the councils of the XVI and XXXII.67 His record of public service is almost identical to those of Andrea Baronci and Domenico Gavari, and it comes as no surprise to find that he and Gavari appear together in several notarial acts.68 Magherini Graziani stated that Albizzini died in 1541 (presumably working from the claim made in 1571 that he had died thirty years previously).69 I have found no mention of him after 1527. I have not located his will, but he is said in

1571 to have endowed his chapel with a piece of land, and to have asked that mass be celebrated on the anniversary of his death (as well as on St Joseph’s day); these masses were renewed in 1633.24

The chapel Albizzini acquired in 1501 was described as ‘suptus tabernaculum organorum in capite cori ipsius ecclesie versus altarem maior’, and a copy of Raphael’s altar-piece is still found today in that location, on the fourth altar on the left of the nave. Franciscan church interiors in Umbria were originally subdivided between the choir (for the friars), the upper nave (for the lay-men), and the lower nave (for female worshippers).25 Raphael’s picture was in the upper nave, close to the screen dividing the upper and lower parts of the church, and the placement of the Virgin Mary and the group of women on the left of his composition (reversing the arrangement in Perugino’s prototype in Perugia Cathedral; Fig 14, discussed below) can be seen to reflect the actual division of the congregation within the church.

Albizzini’s dedication of his chapel to St Joseph explains the choice of subject for Raphael’s altar-piece. Its probable model, Perugino’s Marriage of the Virgin now in Caen (Fig 14), was painted for an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St Joseph on the retro-façade of Perugia Cathedral.26 The city had acquired the ‘Santo Anello’ – said to be the ring with which Joseph had married the Virgin Mary – in 1473, and pride in the ownership of this relic bolstered the cult of Joseph in Umbria. The chapel in Perugia Cathedral was sponsored by the Franciscan preacher, Bernardino da Feltre (1439–94), and communal funds were voted for it in 1486. It housed the Holy Ring and (in spite of its full dedication) it was subsequently referred to as the chapel of St Joseph. A lay confraternity dedicated to the saint grew up around the chapel, commissioning an altar-piece depicting ‘istoriam et sponsalia Santi Joseph cum Beata Virgine Maria’, first from Pintoricchio (1499) and subsequently from Perugino (1499). Fra Bernardino da Feltre’s support for this new chapel was crucial, and

Joseph's cult was actively promoted in Umbria by the Franciscans. It seems clear that the dedications of the two chapels in Perugia and Città di Castello are related, and it is not without significance that the concession of the chapel in the Monteripido altar-piece can all be found in Perugino's own work of the 1490s.

The origins of Raphael's Umbrian altar-pieces in Perugino's repertoire have always been clear (the connexions may indeed have been requested by his patrons), and the very close similarities between the two artists' compositions have inevitably featured in the debate about the nature and date of Raphael's apprenticeship with Perugino, and who influenced whom. It is now generally accepted that Raphael's *Sposalizio* (Fig.13), which Vasari already selected as the prime example of how the younger artist surpassed his master, was developed from Perugino's altar-piece for Perugia Cathedral (Fig 14, although the opposite has sometimes been argued). Indeed, the comparison between the two paintings has become one of the most common exercises in the study of renaissance art: Raphael can be seen as adding physicality, convincing narrative and a greater sense of space to Perugino's original idea. Similar observations can be made of the relationship between Perugino's altar-piece for S. Francesco a Monteripido (Fig.10) and Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion* (Fig.6). Raphael borrowed the foreground setting, the basic compositional solution, the essential poses of the Virgin Mary, St John and the Magdalene (whose pose is reversed), as well as the golden sun and silver moon, and the fluttering banderolcs of the two angels. In addition to these details, the mannered angling of the figures' heads, the cast of the faces and the expressive nature of the hands come straight out of Perugino's corpus. The greater spatial, pattern-making and figurative sophistication of the *Mond Crucifixion* again appears to reflect Raphael's translation of a Perugino composition into his own idiom.

Perugino's *Sposalizio* was commissioned in April 1499. He had still not completed the painting by December 1503, but probably delivered it in the course of 1504. The Monteripido altar-piece was commissioned from Perugino in September 1502 (for delivery by Easter 1503), but completion is usually dated c.1504–06 on the grounds that Perugino was extremely busy c.1502–03 and was not in a position to deliver the picture on time. Nevertheless, if, as it has often been argued, the picture was executed in Perugia by one of Perugino's best assistants, this could have taken place within a year of the commission (with Perugino overseeing completion on the various occasions on which he returned to Perugia in 1503). At all events, it seems in the cases of both the *Sposalizio* and the *Crucifixion* that Raphael had knowledge of Perugino's compositions before they were unveiled (which suggests that he had access to the older artist's workshop in the Ospedale della Misericordia in Perugia). As it happens, Raphael was documented in Perugia in January and March 1503, when he was named as the local representative of an Urbanite merchant who needed to collect a debt there, strongly implying that he was based in Perugia at the time. This runs against the

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*For Raphael's movements in 1502–03, see SCARPELLI, *ibid.*, p.65.*

*This conclusion regarding the relationship between the Monteripido altar-piece and the *Mond Crucifixion* undermines attempts to see the latter (Raphael's most Peruginesque work) as the artist's first independent work of c.1500–01, since it follows that Raphael's picture was probably not designed until late 1502 at the earliest.*

*See, inter alios, R. HErLE von GAERTRINGEN: Raphael's Lernjahr in der Werkstatt Peruginos, Karlsruher Abhandlungen und Meisterwerke im Wandel, Munich and Berlin [1999], pp.46–54. His diagram on pp.52–53 shows how the compositional precedents for the Monteripido altar-piece can all be found in Perugino's own work of the 1490s.*

*For the documents of commission, and discussion of the picture and its date, see CANUTI, *op. cit.* at note 76 above, I, pp.179–80, II, p.237, and SCARPELLI, *op. cit.* at note 80 above, pp.106–07.

*For Perugino's movements in 1502–03, see SCARPELLI, *ibid.*, p.65.*

prevailing view that Raphael took up residence in Città di Castello while painting his altarpieces for the city. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's suggestion that 'there is nothing to prevent us from assuming that the masterpieces which Raphael created [for Città di Castello] were executed at Perugia' should therefore be considered afresh, and indeed Raphael's base may have been in Perugia for much of the period c.1500-07. This would also explain why he did not leave much of a documentary trace in Città di Castello, and might suggest that it was his connexion with Perugino (then the most sought-after artist in Central Italy) that helped him secure his earliest altar-piece commissions in Umbria.

Raphael's Altar-Piece Patrons in Città di Castello

1. Will of Clara Barocci, 17th September 1512
(Città di Castello, Archivio Notarile [hereafter CDCAN], 51.4, Lattanzio di Ser Biagio Lattanzi, fol. 155v-)

Die xvii Septrmbri

Honestissimæmulier Clara uxor olim Andree Thome de Baruniis de Civitate Castelli, comitata de[gra]te mente et intellectu a bona voluntatis fecit et retinet in decrpestatia et constituta et quia nihil est certius mortem. Amen.

2. Will of Dominico Gavari, 13th May 1511
(Ibid., fol. 48v-49r)

Die iii Maii 1511 Indicium: XIII

Speculalibis Virginum Thomae Thome de Gavariis de Civitate Castelli et portæ Sancte Marie sanæ de gratia mente corperis et intellectu voluntæ provivere salutem animæ sua et in eis et in eorum posteros aliquis a lege suo dissi horruit. Iego hoc sumo presens nuncupationum testamentum quod a vero dictum sine scriptis in hunc qui sequitur modum facere procuravit et fecit. Et quia nihil est certius mortem nihilque incertius aliud prædicatur.

Maria sanus dei gratia mente corpore et intellectu volens providere saluti anime sue sequitur modum facere procuravit et fecit. Et quia nihil est certius morte nihilque incertius aliud prædicatur.

3. Acquisition of the Chapel of St Joseph in S. Francesco, Città di Castello, by Filippo Albizzini, 27th February 1510
(CDCAN, 30.2, Pietro Paolo Paccardo, fol. 29v-30r)

[nuncius] Ser Filippo de Albezinis
MCCCCCI Indicium quarta tempore punctilatissime sanctissimi in Christo patrii domini dominii. Alexandri diano provivendissima pape sestis die vero vigesima septima mensis apud

Congregato et coadunato capitulo fratum minorum Sancti Francisci de Civitate Castelli curia in dicti sancti Francisci ad soman companeous ut moris est. In quo quod demum capitulato infrascripto Magister Bernardus Antonio de Fratte patru guardiunem dicat ecclesiam, fratrum Antonius Spanius Gallus, frater Claudiu Francisco, frater Bernardino de Gavari, frater Michaelis Barzoro. Ac Servatis Ioannis de Marchetis de Brissia, frater Andrea Ioannis de Hostiano, frater Salvator Francisci de Civitate Castelli testibus ad predicta habitis vocatis et ab Ioanne de Marchetis de Brissia, frater Gabriele Thome de Florentia, frater Lucchi Ioannis de Marchetis de Brissia, frater Antonio Ioannis de Hostiano, frater Salvatore Bernardino de Brissia, frater Sebastiano Stefani Pecci de Florentia et Don Petri...

In auctoritate et commendatione Civitatis Castelli testibis ad predicta habitis vocatis et ab Ioanne...

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*For the assumption that Raphael executed the pictures in Città di Castello, see MAGHERINI and GAVANZA, *op. cit.* at note 20 above, p.26; R. WITTROCK: "The Young Raphael", *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, XX [1961], pp.150-58; and C. GILBERT: *Signorelli and the Young Raphael* in *Raphael Infra Feme*, cited at note 15 above, pp.109-24, esp. p.110. It should be noted that Evangelista di Faio de Meleo was in Urbino on 29th and 30th March 1501 (Urbino, Archivio di Stato, Div I, C.7, N.153, Ser Matteo Geri, fol.6; see *Alleppey, loc. cit.* at note 14 above).