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DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN
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HEFT 3



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1 Correggio and workshop,
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CORREGGIO, FRANCESCO MARIA RONDANI, AND THE NAVE FRIEZE IN SAN GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA

Mary Vaccaro

From 1519 until 1524, Antonio Allegri, better known as Correggio (ca. 1489–1534), undertook a major fresco campaign in the newly constructed Benedictine church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma. The last phase of the project involved murals depicting prophets, sibyls, and scenes of sacrifice on the entablature of the nave (Fig. 1) that are generally thought to have been executed by assistants following the master's designs. In his ground-breaking book on Correggio as a draftsman (1957), Arthur E. Popham established a solid corpus of the related studies, but several scholars have since demoted and reassigned a number of them to the artist's workshop. To add to the confusion, a group of six similar drawings recently appeared on the art market with an attribution to Michelangelo Anselmi (ca. 1492–ca. 1554), prompting a new proposal

that he helped to devise the decorative scheme. According to tradition, however, Francesco Maria Rondani (1490–before 1557) collaborated with Correggio on the nave frieze. Yet the attribution of which passages were painted by Rondani as opposed to Correggio has itself generated debate, especially after the latest restoration campaign. This paper will carefully review documentary and stylistic evidence to clarify the nature of Correggio's working relationship with Rondani in San Giovanni Evangelista.

The Commission for the Nave Frieze of San Giovanni Evangelista

Correggio's fresco project encompasses the entirety of the Benedictine church.¹ The dome shows the resplendent vision of Christ floating above a cir-

¹ David Ekserdjian, *Correggio*, New Haven/London 1997, pp. 95–121, with bibliography and illustrations, for an excellent overview. However, I do not wholly concur with his proposed chronology for the frescoes; see

Mary Vaccaro, "Correggio's Restless Invention", in: *Correggio and Parmigianino: Art in Parma during the Sixteenth Century*, exh. cat. Rome 2016, ed. by David Ekserdjian, Cinisello Balsamo 2016, pp. 37–47: 39.

cle of cloud-borne apostles, as witnessed by the titular saint, Saint John the Evangelist, who looks upwards from the base of the cupola. The pendentives contain the four evangelists, each paired in convivial discussion with a doctor of the church. While, unfortunately, Correggio's *Coronation of the Virgin* in the apse was demolished in 1587, when the monks decided to expand their church, they preserved a detached central portion of the original fresco and its *sinopia* and commissioned Cesare Aretusi (1549–1612) to make a replica in the new apse. In addition, much of the original ornament on the pilasters, the intradoses of the arches, and the ribs of the vaults in the chancel (the choir was once located beneath the cupola) remains intact. Similar minor decoration is found in the church's congregational area, together with the above-mentioned frieze.

No contract for Correggio's work in San Giovanni Evangelista has come down to us.² An important letter by the artist, published only recently, indicates that he agreed to paint the cupola "con altre historie et fregi per la chiesa" in 1519, a year earlier than previously believed, and suggests that the nave frieze was an integral part of the decorative scheme from the outset.³ Yet it is unlikely that he would have painted

a section of the frieze by himself at that time and resumed activity with assistance some years later, as Maria Cristina Chiusa has proposed.⁴ Such a scenario is implausible on documentary as well as stylistic grounds, borne out here by the overall consistency of the frieze's design. It was almost certainly the last stage of the entire project, since the church's account books that record payments to the artist specifically mention his pact with a Benedictine prior named Don Basilio on All Saints' Day (1 November) of 1522 to undertake ornament in the main body of the church, including the frieze, for which Correggio received 66 ducats ("la frixera circum lo corpo de la Ecclesia, computato li pilloni, archivolti, et ogni altro loco, d'accordo facto dicto maestro Antonio col padre don Basilio nostro priore alla festa de Ognissanti de l'anno 1522").⁵ Indeed, the extant preparatory drawings that will be more fully discussed below support a date around 1522.⁶

Divided into thirteen sections, the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista repeats alternating scenes of pagan and Jewish sacrifice. Each scene is flanked by a sibyl and a prophet who hold tablets inscribed in Greek and Latin.⁷ While the sibyls and prophets are individualized in pose, the sacrificial scenes

² For the notices of payment and other related documentation, see the transcriptions by Elio Monducci, *Il Correggio: la vita e le opere nelle fonti documentarie*, Cinisello Balsamo 2004, pp. 99–113.

³ The letter – dated 20 July 1519, and addressed affectionately ("padre amatissimo") to Padre Gerolamo dal Monferrato, a high-ranking Benedictine monk who later served as the abbot of San Giovanni Evangelista – not only provides a new *terminus post quem* for Correggio's work in the church, but indicates that initial plans to decorate the dome may have involved a slightly different subject ("lascenso di n. s. co 12 apostoli"). For the transcription of this letter and its interpretation, see Andrea Muzzi, "Una lettera inedita di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio al monaco cassinese Girolamo dal Monferrato", in: *Antologia Vieusseux*, 66 (2016), pp. 5–19; Maria Cristina Chiusa, "Per Correggio 'benedettino': un nuovo documento", in: *Benedettini in Europa: cultura e committenze, restauri e nuove funzioni*, conference proceedings Modena 2016, ed. by Sonia Cavicchioli/Vincenzo Vandelli, Modena 2017, pp. 159–178. Correggio had established ties to the Benedictines by 1514, the year he was enlisted to paint organ shutters for their church in San Benedetto Polirone. In 1521, the same Gerolamo dal Monferrato to whom the artist wrote in 1519

issued a decree that granted him and his family an affiliation of spiritual privileges, further evidence of Correggio's strong bond with the monastic order: see Monducci (note 2), pp. 26f., for the document (transcribed and illustrated), as well as Andrea Muzzi, *Il Correggio e la congregazione cassinese*, Florence 1982.

⁴ Chiusa (note 3), p. 170, and *eadem*, "Fra una sponda e l'altra del fiume: un'aggiunta per Correggio 'benedettino'", in: *Studi di storia dell'arte*, XXVIII (2017), pp. 121–140: 122.

⁵ Monducci (note 2), pp. 99–101. The payment is almost identical to what Correggio received (65 ducats) for painting the church's "capela granda", or apse. It is worth noting that the initial pact for his work in San Giovanni Evangelista involved the same prior, per the newly published letter of 1519 ("schritta con donno Basilio priore"; see above, note 3).

⁶ The mixed-media technique of these studies finds a parallel in Correggio's prospectus drawing for an altarpiece that was commissioned on 24 October 1522; see *Correggio and Parmigianino* (note I), p. 199, no. 30, (with illustration).

⁷ For the iconographic scheme, including comprehensive discussion of the literary sources for the inscriptions, see Giuseppe Toscano, *Nuovi stu-*

rely on two cartoons that were transferred, reversed, and combined along the entire length of the nave. Represented on the pilasters between the arches are, at the level of the frieze, various pairs of putti, also holding tablets with Greek or Latin inscriptions, and, below them, candelabra motifs. Fictive geometric coffers embellish the soffits of the nave's transverse arches as well as those of the arcade along each of the side aisles, whereas the rib vaults in the nave contain monochromatic ornament *alla grottesca*. Given their iterative nature and varied quality, the frescoes would likely have been delegated by Correggio to others. Although extant documents do not mention collaborators, the project certainly required help, and contemporary workshop procedure characteristically assigned areas of lesser importance to assistants following a master's design.⁸ Correggio had incentive to conclude his project expeditiously, since, on 3 November 1522, only two days after his pact with Don Basilio, he signed a contract with the *fabbricieri* of Parma cathedral to undertake an enormous cycle of frescoes in that church.⁹ Since he received his final payment for San Giovanni Evangelista on 23 January 1524¹⁰ and since fresco-work was usually suspended during winter months, the frieze and oth-

er decoration in the nave must have been painted in a relatively short period, between the spring and the fall of 1523.

Six (Plus Two) 'New' Drawings Related to the Nave Frieze

In 2011, six red chalk drawings – each measuring no more than 150 by 190 mm – surfaced on the art market under the name of Michelangelo Anselmi (Figs. 2–7).¹¹ The sales catalogue explains that they are part of a larger group of studies, by two different hands, related to the prophets and sibyls commissioned from Correggio and his workshop for the frieze in the central nave of San Giovanni Evangelista. The catalogue entry also lists one former owner, Richard Cosway,¹² and notes the presence of a fragmentary watermark (an encircled CC surmounted by a trefoil) in the paper of two of the studies, albeit which two of the six is not specified. The same auction house had previously offered for sale a pair from this set in 1975, at which time they were ascribed to a “follower of Antonio Allegri, il Correggio”.¹³ The change of attribution nearly four decades later is based on the opinion of the author of a major monograph on Anselmi, Elisabetta Fadda, whose recent essay in *Master*

di sul Correggio, Parma 1974, pp. 36–42 and 100–129, and Geraldine D. Wind, “The Benedictine Program of S. Giovanni Evangelista in Parma”, in: *The Art Bulletin*, LVIII (1976), pp. 521–527.

⁸ Carmen C. Bambach, *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop: Theory and Practice, 1300–1600*, Cambridge 1999, for a thorough survey of the uses of drawing in the workshop. On Correggio's workshop in San Giovanni Evangelista, see Mariangela Giusto, “La ‘naturale maniera’ di Correggio e i maestri dell’*officina parmense*”, in: *Correggio*, exh. cat. Parma 2008/09, ed. by Lucia Fornari Schianchi, Milan 2008, pp. 438–445; Bruno Zanardi, “Tecniche e modi di esecuzione degli affreschi di Correggio nella cupola di San Giovanni Evangelista a Parma”, in: *Correggio, Parmigianino, Anselmi nella chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista a Parma*, ed. by Vittorio Sgarbi, Milan 2008, pp. 59–79: 71–73; and below.

⁹ Monducci (note 2), pp. 181–189, and Cristina Cecchinelli, “Il pittore e i ponteggi: nuovi documenti e nuove date per gli affreschi del Correggio nella cupola della cattedrale di Parma (1530–1534)”, in: *Nuovi studi*, XV (2009), pp. 135–152, for documents pertaining to Correggio's project in the cathedral.

¹⁰ A declaration penned by Correggio on this day registers his receipt of

the money (“per integro pagamento et resto de la mercede mia de la pictura facta in ditta chiesa”); see Monducci (note 2), p. 103 (with transcription). The artist later received a small fee for ornament on the church's choir screen, discussed below, p. 402.

¹¹ *Old Master & British Drawings & Watercolours*, Christie's London, 5 July 2011, no. 14.

¹² The provenance is described as “Richard Cosway (according to an inscription on one of the mounts), possibly with his fragmentary collector's marks at the lower right corners of the sheets (L. 628)”. The British portrait painter Cosway owned an album that included 27 sheets believed to be by Correggio: see Stephen Lloyd, “The Fix'd Landmark of Art: Richard Cosway RA (1742–1821) as a Collector of Old Master Drawings”, in: *Sixièmes Rencontres Internationales du Salon du Dessin*, Paris 2011, ed. by Peter Fuhling/Cordélia Hattori, Dijon 2011, pp. 65–73: 69.

¹³ *Important Old Master Drawings, Sold at Auction by Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd.*, London 8 July 1975, p. 6, no. 8 (a prophet, red chalk, 138 × 179 mm; our Fig. 4) and no. 9 (a sibyl, red chalk, 145 × 191 mm), with no. 8 reproduced (pl. 3) and their provenance given as “Richard Cosway (L. 629)”. The catalogue of 2011 (note 11) does not refer to the earlier sale; and since



2 After Correggio, copy drawing of the Persian (or Agrippine) Sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



3 After Correggio, copy drawing of the Delphic Sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



4 After Correggio, copy drawing of prophet David on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



5 After Correggio, copy drawing of a prophet on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



6 After Correggio, copy drawing of a prophet on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



7 After Correggio, copy drawing of a prophet on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection

Drawings (2012) argues that the six sheets, now in a private collection, typify Anselmi's graphic style and that he helped to design the frieze.¹⁴ Since this artist has long been credited with decorative frescoes on the cross vaults in the nave of San Giovanni Evangelista,¹⁵ but not previously with its frieze, Fadda's proposal deserves scrutiny.

Popham's magisterial volume on Correggio identifies nearly a dozen extant studies for the frieze, mainly small sheets for the individual prophets and sibyls.¹⁶ Because one of these, in Rotterdam (Fig. 8), closely resembles a figure in an etching of eight prophets and sibyls by Jan de Bisschop (1628–1671), inscribed “Ant. d. Correggio inv.” (Fig. 9), Popham at first wondered whether it might be a fragment of a leaf from a sketchbook by Correggio to which the Dutch printmaker had access.¹⁷ Closer comparison of drawing and etching, however, reveals a number of differences between them, and Popham concluded that, while Correggio's drawing was certainly cut from a larger sheet, it was not De Bisschop's source. He more likely relied not on preparatory studies for but drawn copies after the finished frescoes to etch his plate. The same opinion

it does not give the exact measurements of the single sheets, no. 9 of the 1975 catalogue cannot be securely identified.

¹⁴ Elisabetta Fadda, “Drawings by Michelangelo Anselmi for S. Giovanni Evangelista in Parma”, in: *Master Drawings*, L (2012), pp. 507–522, where the medium is described as “all red chalk, some with touches of white, on pink-prepared paper”, not simply “red chalk” as in the two auction catalogues (cf. above, notes II and I3). The catalogue of 2011 (note II) cites Fadda's then forthcoming essay: “the present drawings can be attributed to Michelangelo Anselmi on the basis of the figures' facial types and the handling of the chalk, which she considers to be absolutely characteristic of the artist.”

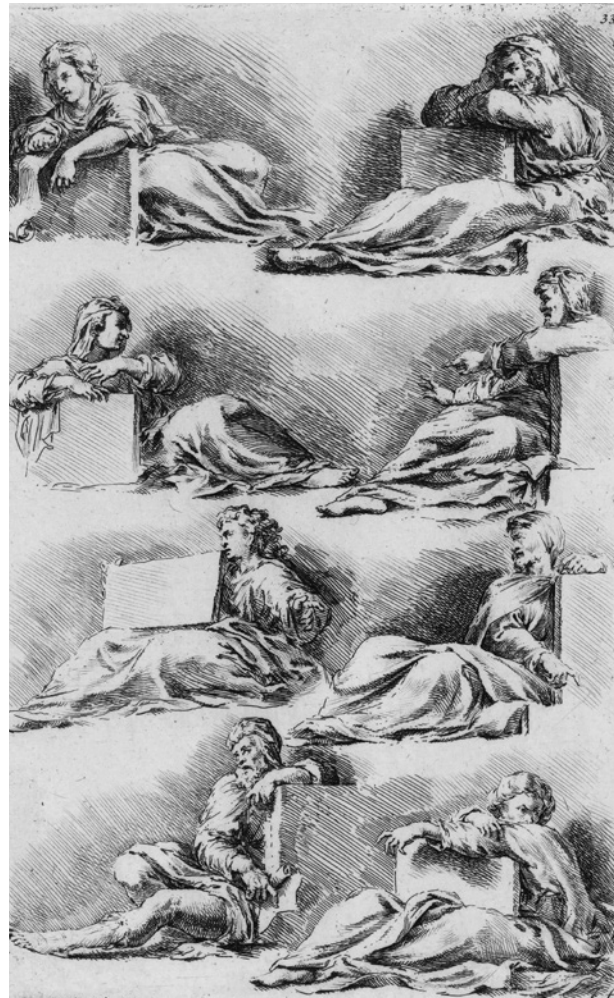
¹⁵ Elisabetta Fadda, *Michelangelo Anselmi*, Turin/London 2004, p. 162, with bibliography and illustrations. In my opinion, the frescoes on the ribs of the cross vault, unlike those on the nave frieze, are close in style to Anselmi's securely attributed frescoes in San Giovanni Evangelista. If the ribs on the cross vaults were part of Correggio's aforementioned pact of 1521, as presumably they were, he must have delegated their decoration to Anselmi.

¹⁶ Arthur E. Popham, *Correggio's Drawings*, London 1957, pp. 28–49, 207–210 (illustrated).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, especially pp. 47–49. The sibyl in the drawing corresponds (in reverse) to the left-hand figure on the second row from the top in the print.



8 Correggio, study for the Persian (or Agrippine) Sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. I.290



9 Jan de Bisschop after Correggio, *Eight seated prophets and sibyls*. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-1907-4005



10 Michelangelo Anselmi, *Saint Anselm appearing to the Abbot Helsin*, detail. Windsor Castle, Royal Collection Trust, inv. RL 0601r

is expressed in the commentary of the modern critical edition (1985) of De Bisschop's *Paradigmata graphices variorum artificium*.¹⁸ For Fadda, the recent rediscovery of six drawings of identical format, and evidently from a common sketch-book – three of which match, in reverse, the figures in De Bisschop's etching – reopens the question.¹⁹ Yet the author makes no mention of the fragmentary watermark, which is shared by two of these drawings and would presumably offer evidence that they were once cut from a larger sheet of paper.²⁰

¹⁸ *Jan de Bisschop and His Icones & Paradigmata: Classical Antiquities and Italian Drawings for Artistic Instruction in Seventeenth-Century Holland*, ed. by Jan G. van Gelder/Ingrid Jost/Keith Andrews, Doornspijk 1985, pp. 254f. This plate (33) was among Jan de Bisschop's prints that were published posthumously (after 1671) in a second volume of the *Paradigmata* (*ibidem*, pp. 13–15). Since De Bisschop sometimes combined drawings by different artists on the same plate, he may not necessarily have taken the eight studies of prophets and sibyls from a single page of a sketch-book. It is also worth noting that he inscribed this etching “inv.” rather than “inv. d.”: he evidently used the latter designation when working after studies that he believed to be autograph, as in the case of his two prints after Daniele da Volterra's caryatids in the Orsini Chapel (pls. 20 and 21).

Fadda is concerned primarily with the attribution of the six drawings, which she considers to be stylistically distinct from the studies of prophets and sibyls that Popham ascribed to Correggio. Although she acknowledges that she and other authors reject the autograph status of most of the latter group (including the aforementioned sheet in Rotterdam) and judge them to be “no more than workshop products”, she does not pursue the matter of their authorship.²¹ Thus, she invokes the name of Francesco Maria Rondani, the art-

¹⁹ Fadda (note 14), p. 508, with De Bisschop's print reproduced (her Fig. 2).

²⁰ My attempts to obtain more information from the auction house about the watermark have been to no avail. It is not a watermark that I have encountered in paper used by sixteenth-century draftsmen in Parma, including Anselmi. Paul Joannides, who studied this group of drawings some twenty years ago when it was owned by the late Alex Stirling, a collector-dealer, informs me (email communication, 2017) that two of them shared the same watermark, divided horizontally, indicating that at least these two, and probably the other four, were drawn in strips across a page.

²¹ Fadda (note 14), p. 513.



11 Correggio and workshop, *Persian (or Agrippine) Sibyl*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze



12 Correggio and workshop, *Delphic Sibyl*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze



13 Correggio and workshop, *Prophet David*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze



14 Correggio and workshop, *Prophet*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze



15 Correggio and workshop, *Prophet*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze



16 Correggio and workshop, *Prophet*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze

ist who is traditionally credited with helping to paint the nave frieze, but never explicitly assigns any of the rejected drawings to him, preferring to label the illustrations in her essay as “here attributed to Correggio (workshop of).”²² Whether one accepts an attribution to Correggio or to Rondani for these previously known studies, she contends, the new set of drawings points to the draftsman Michelangelo Anselmi.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to study the six sheets at first hand, but judging from photographs they exhibit a timid and almost static handling of red chalk that, in my opinion, contrasts starkly with the dynamic *sfumato* of Anselmi’s securely attributed drawings, for example his beautiful preparatory study of *Saint Anselm appearing to the Abbot Helsin* at Windsor Castle (Fig. 10).²³

Moreover, all of the figures in the drawings conform almost exactly to the frescoes. In order of the iconographic program, which begins with the first bay on the southeastern side of the nave, for a total of thirteen sections, including the counter-façade,²⁴ these are: the Persian or Agrippine Sibyl on the third section (Fig. 11, compare Fig. 2), to which, incidentally, the Rotterdam study discussed by Popham (Fig. 8) also refers; the Delphic Sibyl on the sixth section (Figs. 12 and 3); the prophet David with a tablet inscribed *DEDERVNT IN ESCA(m) MEA(m) FEL* on the eighth section (Figs. 13 and 4); the prophet with a tablet inscribed *VELVVM TEMPLI SCINDE(t)VR ON*

the eleventh section (Figs. 14 and 5); the prophet on the twelfth section (Figs. 15 and 6); and the youthful male prophet – not the Cumaean Sibyl as Fadda proposed²⁵ – on the thirteenth section of the frieze (Figs. 16 and 7). Such close correspondences imply that the newly published drawings are more likely to be reproductive than preliminary in function. This finds support, too, in terms of their technique: for example, while the sibyl in Rotterdam (Fig. 8) is densely worked up and squared for transfer (allowing for the enlargement of the design eventually into a full-scale cartoon), as one would expect of a drawing that is close in solution to the fresco it prepares, her counterpart and the five other drawings in the new group are not. They may be fragments of a larger sheet, or sheets, and since three of the drawn figures appear in reverse, albeit with minor differences, in De Bisschop’s etching, it is tempting to think that these were his source.²⁶ Given that the frieze in the church is not readily visible from the ground, it is also worth pondering whether such detailed copies were made after now-lost drawings by Correggio rather than the actual frescoes.²⁷ At all events, even if the copies were by Anselmi, they would not support the claim that he helped Correggio to design the frieze.

In this context, attention should be called to two unpublished red chalk drawings in another private collection, which I have been able to inspect at first

²² *Ibidem*, figs. 11–15, 19–21. For a critical reassessment of the drawings, see below.

²³ Inv. RL 0601r, red chalk (stumped and washed in places), 213 × 160 mm, for a fresco cycle in the Oratorio della Concezione, Parma, painted by Anselmi and Rondani (documented, 1532–1534). On Anselmi as a draftsman, see Popham (note 16), pp. 107–113, 169–172; Diane DeGrazia, *Correggio and His Legacy: Sixteenth-Century Emilian Drawings*, exh. cat., Washington, D.C., 1984, pp. 194–207.

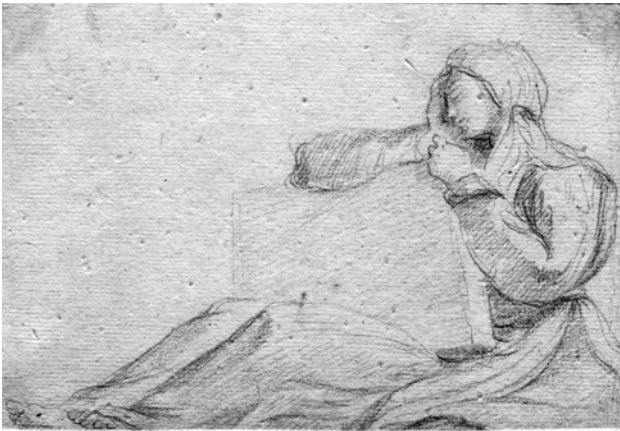
²⁴ On stylistic as well as iconographic grounds, I cannot endorse Popham’s tentative proposal that the frieze along the counter-façade was painted in the seventeenth century (Popham [note 16], p. 47).

²⁵ Fadda (note 14), pp. 512f. In all sections of the nave frieze, the prophets appear to the left of the sacrificial scene and the sibyls, to the right; the tablets held by the prophets are inscribed in Latin, those of the sibyls in Greek. The tablet of the prophet on the thirteenth

section translates (*TRIDVVM SOPITVS*) the Greek phrase of the sibyl to the other side of the sacrifice: see Toscano (note 7), pp. 128f. (with illustration).

²⁶ Van Gelder/Jost (note 18), pp. 254f., referring to the ex-Cosway studies sold at Christie’s in 1975, observe that “as there are some differences in details it is uncertain whether De Bisschop worked from this or from yet another drawing”. Fadda (note 14), p. 520, notes 3 and 4, cites Van Gelder and Jost without mention of this discussion, crediting the authors instead for a claim they do not make, namely that the six drawings once belonged to Lord Arundel.

²⁷ Paul Joannides (see above, note 20) recalls that, when he saw them, he believed them to be copies after the frescoes and told Mr. Stirling of his opinion. If the copies date to the early seventeenth century, as Rick Scorza suggests (see below, note 29), might there have been scaffolding in the nave for a restoration campaign at that time?



17 After Correggio, copy drawing of a sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection



18 After Correggio, copy drawing of a sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Private collection

hand: one (Fig. 17) reproduces the sibyl on the fourth section of the frieze and the other (Fig. 18) the sibyl on the eleventh section.²⁸ Along the top of the first sheet, to the right of center, is the edge of a circular watermark (otherwise indecipherable) that was cropped due to a later trimming of the paper. The dark, almost purplish color of the chalk suggests a date in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. In format and handling, both studies parallel the group of six to such an extent – for example, the description of the figures’ extremities and drapery – that all eight probably once constituted a unified series of copies.²⁹

²⁸ Red chalk; 130 × 188 mm and 132 × 192 mm, respectively. The pair was purchased as part of a lot of miscellaneous sheets described in the sales catalogue (*Sotheby’s Old Master Drawings*, London, 14 December 1992, no. 16) as “a group of fifteen drawings, all said to be from an album put together by the Roman painter and engraver, Giovanni Piancastelli (1845–1926)”, with no further information and no illustration.

²⁹ Rick Scorza kindly tells me that he considers this pair, which he examined with me this summer, and the group of six, which he studied at the Christie’s sale in 2011, to be stylistically of a piece, and that they are all copies after Correggio’s frescoes by a later unknown artist (oral communication with author, 2018).

³⁰ Of the total of eleven drawings listed by Popham (note 16), I exclude the study of putti (*ibidem*, p. 157, no. 39, illustrated), which he admittedly

Drawings by Correggio for the Nave Frieze

Given the doubts raised over Correggio’s authorship, the ten studies that Popham associated with the nave frieze, many of them double-sided, merit fresh consideration.³⁰ Among these, three – which have not been doubted – refer to the broader decorative scheme, the initial spark for whose invention may be seen on a sheet in the Louvre, with its rapid notation in pen of reclining figures to either side of an altar.³¹ Correggio developed the concept in two studies in the British Museum on paper that was washed pink, a preparation found in many of his drawings from this period. In red chalk he quickly drew men stand-

knew only from a photograph, as do I, but which seems to me to have little in common with the pairs of putti in the nave or with Correggio’s style.

³¹ Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 5929v; red chalk, pen, and ink; 270 × 201 mm. See Popham (note 16), pp. 154f., no. 28, illustrated, and the entry on the museum’s database at <http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr> (accessed on 16 November 2018). Popham thought the red chalk drawing on the same side of the sheet might be a discarded idea for the frieze, but its architecture differs from the nave arcade in San Giovanni Evangelista and likely refers to another project; see Bruno Adorni, “L’interesse del Correggio per l’architettura”, in: *Correggio* (note 8), pp. 379–385: 380, and his entry (no. IV.17) in the same catalogue, p. 400. The recto – drawn in red chalk, pen, ink, and wash – prepares angels for the *Coronation of the Virgin* on the original apse.

ing before an altar – an early idea for the sacrificial scenes that alternate along the nave – on the recto of the first sheet (Fig. 19) and a pair of recumbent figures, presumably a prophet and a sibyl, on its reverse (Fig. 20).³² The recto depicts another seated figure in a rich combination of media (pen and ink, wash, and white gouache over red chalk) that the artist often employed during the 1520s. Whether intended to represent a prophet or a sibyl,³³ the pose was not retained in the fresco.

The second study in the British Museum (inv. I895,09I5.74I) corresponds to the initial section of the frieze, on the south side of the bay adjacent to the cupola.³⁴ Again in red chalk, Correggio sketched the overall arrangement, then worked out the central episode of a lamb's sacrifice below, picking out its contours with scratchy pen marks. At this stage, his idea was still in flux: one of the two motifs of sacrifice recurring along the nave is almost identical, but with the animal's orientation relative to the officiants reversed. To these three drawings identified by Popham can now be added a fourth, discovered by Carmen Bambach (2004) in Chile, a modello for the other repeated scene of sacrifice in the nave, its altar bearing the words DEO IGNIOTO (Fig. 21).³⁵ Besides the characteristic technique of layering pen and ink, wash, and white gouache over red chalk on pink-pre-

pared paper, it is squared for transfer and therefore predictably matches the frescoes.

If the compositional drawings have been unanimously accepted as autograph, most of the studies for the individual prophets and sibyls have been demoted not only by Elisabetta Fadda, but also by Giuseppe Toscano (1974) and by Angelo Loda (2008), albeit without consensus among them and with little explanation to justify the changes in attribution.³⁶ Thus, whereas Toscano attributes two sheets in Rotterdam to Correggio and another two in the same collection to Rondani, Loda, followed by Fadda, ascribes all four to the workshop. On the other hand, Toscano assigns a pair of double-sided studies in Frankfurt to an anonymous helper (“aiuto”) and Rondani, respectively, yet Loda accepts both of them as autograph, and Fadda deems only one to be by the master.³⁷ Since I have previously defended their authorship by Correggio,³⁸ I recently took the opportunity to re-examine the drawings in London, Rotterdam, and Frankfurt in order to put the debate firmly to rest. In my opinion, all bar one reveal the hand of the draftsman responsible for the four extant compositional studies.

Among the seven drawings for individual prophets and sibyls that Popham identified, only the one in the British Museum (Fig. 22), virtually identical with the sibyl on the twelfth section of the frieze, is

³² Inv. I902,06I7.2; red chalk, pen and ink, wash, heightened in white on pink-prepared paper (recto); red chalk on pink-prepared paper (verso); 107 × 112 mm. See Popham (note I6), p. 155, no. 3I, and the British Museum collection online (www.britishmuseum.org), with bibliography. A sketch for Correggio's lost *Madonna of Casalmaggiore* also appears on the verso.

³³ Labeled by Popham (note I6), p. 155, first a prophet, then a sibyl (*idem*, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Artists Working in Parma in the Sixteenth Century*, London 1967, p. 6), the latter identification was adopted in subsequent literature. Yet the figure's legs seem to be exposed (the way the sheet is cropped makes it difficult to ascertain this), and this occurs only among prophets on the frieze, specifically the one on the fifth section. Several of the painted prophets are beardless and youthful.

³⁴ Red chalk, pen, and ink on pink-prepared paper; 96 × 151 mm. See Popham (note I6), p. 151, no. 30, with illustration, and the British Museum collection online (www.britishmuseum.org), with bibliography.

³⁵ Santiago de Chile, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, inv. DE I10; red

chalk, pen and ink, wash, and traces of white gouache on pink-prepared paper, squared in red chalk; 95 × 210 mm; see Carmen C. Bambach, “A New Drawing by the Young Correggio”, in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLVI (2004), pp. 691–693, who observes (p. 691, note 8) the variant spelling DEO IGNOTO in the frescoes.

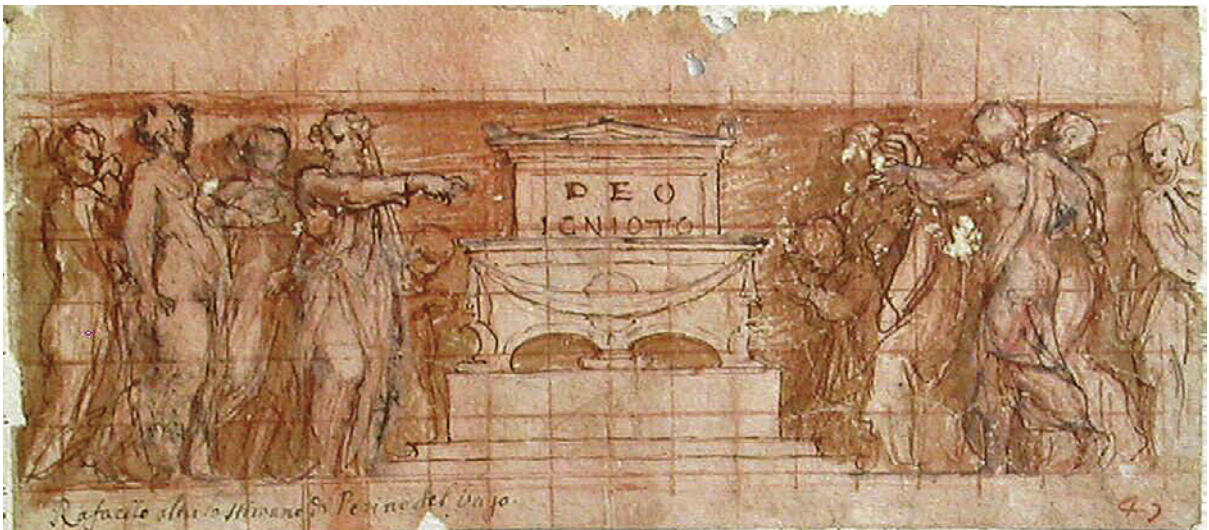
³⁶ Toscano (note 7), *passim*, and Angelo Loda, “Il dolcissimo lapis correggesco: una panoramica sulla grafica del Correggio”, in: *Correggio* (note 8), pp. 327–337. In contrast, Mario Di Giampaolo (*idem*/Andrea Muzzi, *Correggio: i disegni*, Turin/London 1988, nos. 41–46 and discussion under no. 39), had accepted all of these studies for the individual prophets and sibyls (except our Fig. 22) as autograph.

³⁷ Toscano (note 7), pp. 156 and 178 (Figs. 87, 89, 113); Loda (note 36), p. 329; Fadda (note I4), p. 513 (Figs. 17–20).

³⁸ Vaccaro (note I), especially pp. 40, 46, and *eadem*, “Correggio, Parmigianino, and the School of Parma in San Giovanni Evangelista”, in: *Benedettini in Europa* (note 3), pp. 179–190.



19, 20 Correggio, studies for the nave frieze of San Giovanni Evangelista and the *Madonna of Casalmaggiore*. London, British Museum, inv. 1902,0617.2, recto and verso



21 Correggio, study for the nave frieze of San Giovanni Evangelista. Santiago de Chile, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, inv. DE 110



22 Workshop of Correggio (?), copy drawing of a sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. London, British Museum, inv. 1946,0713.631

problematic.³⁹ A strict match between a study and the fresco that it prepares would not be worrisome if there were evidence of the working process, such as a grid for transfer, as is the case with the sheets in Rotterdam and Frankfurt to be discussed. In this case, however, the tepid handling of red chalk – for example the fussy attention to the sibyl’s hands and the long, undisciplined contours of her drapery – compares unfavorably with Correggio’s known drawings in the medium. It should also be noted that the London sheet, albeit likely drawn after the fresco or after a now-lost study for the figure, does not seem to be part of the aforementioned group of copies. When examined alongside a pair of these (Figs. 17, 18), as I can attest, it differs in terms of both materials and

³⁹ Inv. 1946,0713.631; red chalk; 143 × 206 mm (Popham [note 16], p. 157, no. 38). Although Popham catalogued the sheet as autograph, it is now listed under the “circle/school of Antonio Correggio” in the British Museum, for which see the pertinent entry (by Hugo Chapman) in the collections database (www.britishmuseum.org), with bibliography.

⁴⁰ Thanks to Rick Scorza with whom I examined the three drawings in the print room of the British Museum this summer (see above, note 29). In contrast, Fadda (note 14), p. 513, remarks that the London sheet “reveals the strongest similarities to the six new drawings in format, technique, and handling”.

technique: its chalk is less purple in color, its paper less gritty in texture, and its overall appearance less inert in style.⁴⁰

The remaining six studies in Rotterdam and Frankfurt – all fragments of once larger sheets that may have included other designs – are demonstrably preparatory in function and autograph. Amid the four in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen whose authorship has been called into question is a sketch (Fig. 23)⁴¹ that bears slight but important differences from its painted counterpart, the prophet who holds a tablet inscribed CORONA(m) SPINEAM PORTA(ns) on the sixth section of the frieze (Fig. 24). The lively handling of red chalk, notably pentimenti in the prophet’s head, attest to Correggio’s creative procedure. The verso, incidentally, includes a pen sketch for the angel who carries Saint Jerome’s hat on the southeastern pendentive of the dome of San Giovanni Evangelista with, once again, differences between the sketch and its fresco.⁴² A study in a private collection published by John Gere (1994) in connection with this Rotterdam sheet, while almost certainly by Correggio, prepares instead the prophet with a tablet inscribed VELUM TEMPLI SCINDE(t)VR on the eleventh section (Fig. 14).⁴³

The other drawings in Rotterdam and Frankfurt closely resemble the frescoes, yet should not be confused with workshop products or copies. Their technique – red chalk on pink-prepared paper, almost all of them reworked with point of brush and ink wash, then heightened in white – is typical of Correggio’s drafts-

⁴¹ Inv. I.289; red chalk (recto); pen and wash over traces of black chalk (verso); 77 × 115 mm (Popham [note 16], p. 156, no. 34). The recto is not squared in red chalk (cf. *ibidem*, p. 156). The frescoed prophet can be plausibly attributed to Rondani, as discussed below.

⁴² The verso is illustrated below (Fig. 42); a photographic reproduction of the related fresco is found in Ekserdjian (note 1), p. 107.

⁴³ John Gere, “A British Seventeenth-Century Collection of Drawings”, in: *Master Drawings*, XXXI (1993), pp. 339–349: 340f. (with illustration); the technique described as “point of brush in brown wash heightened with white and squared in red chalk”. Although I was unable to see the original



23 Correggio, study for a prophet on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. I.289r



24 Correggio and workshop (Francesco Maria Rondani), *Prophet*. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave frieze

manship. Additionally, they are squared for transfer, and, given their strict correspondence with the final painting, must have been progressively enlarged to create (now-lost) cartoons. The Rotterdam study that was earlier introduced in the context of De Bisschop's etching (Fig. 8) refers to the sibyl on the third section of the frieze (Fig. II),⁴⁴ while another in the same collection (Fig. 25) concerns the sibyl on the fourth section.⁴⁵ The final drawing in Rotterdam (Fig. 26) prepares the prophet with a tablet inscribed *SINE PATRE ET SINE MATRE* on the second section of the frieze.⁴⁶ This last sheet was recently detached from its old mount, revealing previously unknown red chalk sketches – a loosely drawn altar-like structure and the profile of a female head – on the verso (Fig. 27).⁴⁷ Such range of finish re-

calls the artist's compositional studies, particularly the double-sided drawing in the British Museum (Figs. I9, 20), and demonstrates his flexible working process.

Each of the two sheets in Frankfurt, both on pink-prepared paper, shows a preliminary figural pose (never used in the fresco) on one side and a more elaborate solution, squared for transfer, on the other. The recto of the first drawing (Fig. 28) prepares the prophet on the initial section of the frieze, for which, we recall, a compositional study in the British Museum also survives, while its verso (Fig. 29) contains a discarded idea, perhaps for a sibyl, in red chalk.⁴⁸ The red chalk sketch of a prophet, summarily reinforced in pen, on the verso of the second sheet (Fig. 31) differs in orientation from the frescoes, where all the

or to obtain a color reproduction, I suspect the use of pink-prepared paper, as is the case with all of Correggio's extant studies for the frieze that are similarly squared for transfer. For the prophet on the eleventh section, see Toscano (note 7), pp. I24f.

⁴⁴ Inv. I.290; red chalk, wash, and white gouache, squared in red chalk, on pink-prepared paper (abraded); 66 × 117 mm (Popham [note I6], pp. I55f, no. 32). For the sibyl (Persian or Agrippine) on the third section, see Toscano (note 7), pp. I08f.

⁴⁵ Inv. I.291; red chalk, wash, and white gouache, squared in red chalk, on pink-prepared paper; 77 × 117 mm (Popham [note I6], pp. I56,

no. 33). For the sibyl on the fourth section, see Toscano (note 7), pp. I10f. (with illustration). One of the previously unpublished copies, discussed earlier (Fig. 17), reproduces the same sibyl.

⁴⁶ Inv. I.288; red chalk and white gouache, squared in red chalk, on pink-prepared paper (recto); red chalk on pink-prepared paper (verso); 67 × 127 mm (Popham [note I6], pp. I56, no. 35). I detect oxidized white gouache along the figure's left leg, but no use of ink wash. For the prophet on the second section, see Toscano (note 7), pp. I06f. (with illustration).

⁴⁷ Vaccaro (note 38), p. I86.

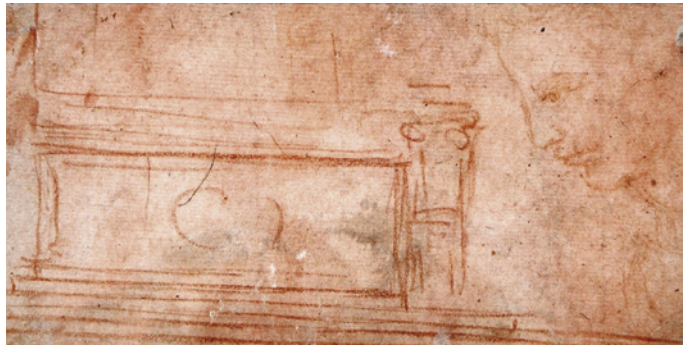
⁴⁸ Städel Museum, inv. 4110; red chalk and wash on pink-prepared pa-



25 Correggio, study for a sibyl on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. I.291



26, 27 Correggio, study for a prophet (recto) and various other studies (verso) for the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. I.288



prophets face to the right, and therefore probably belongs to an early planning phase. The recto (Fig. 30) represents instead a later stage, closer in time to the making of the cartoon, given its precise link to the prophet holding a tablet inscribed OS NO(n) COM(m)IN VETIS on the tenth section of the frieze.⁴⁹ The dense palimpsest of media (red chalk, pen and ink, wash, heightened in white) rewards close attention. Pentimenti bear witness to the artist's fertile imagination: besides his notation in pen for a putto supporting a tablet, washed over but still visible on

the right, he raised the prophet's extended left arm, cancelling an originally lower position with dense white gouache.⁵⁰ Stunningly pictorial, this drawing – and the others here surveyed – underscore that Correggio, *in primis*, designed the frieze along the nave of San Giovanni Evangelista.

Francesco Maria Rondani and the Nave Frieze

Since the frescoes in the nave were completed in a rather short span of time and since much of the decoration is repetitive, Correggio almost certainly enlist-

per, squared in red chalk (recto); red chalk on pink-prepared paper (verso); 100 × 143 mm; see Popham (note 16), p. 156, no. 36, and Joachim Jacoby, *Raffael bis Tizian: Italienische Zeichnungen aus dem Städel-Museum*, exh. cat. Frankfurt/Paris 2014/15, Petersberg 2014, pp. 102–104, no. 28, with bibliography. The figure on the verso may alternatively refer to a prophet, since all the sibyls painted in the frieze face to the left.

⁴⁹ Inv. 4111; red chalk, pen and ink, wash, and white gouache on pink-prepared paper, squared in red chalk (recto); red chalk, pen and ink, wash (verso); 89 × 116 mm (not including small strips that were added all around the original drawing, presumably by Pierre-Jean Mariette); see Popham (note 16),

p. 156, no. 37, and Jacoby (note 48), pp. 105–107, no. 29, with bibliography. For the prophet (Moses?) on the tenth section, see Toscano (note 7), pp. 122f. (with illustration).

⁵⁰ While lifting the sheet to the light, I detected the pentimento in the prophet's arm, which, thanks to Martin Sonnabend and Ruth Schmutzler, I was able to confirm using a light table in the Städel paper conservation studio. This dynamic handling of media is altogether consistent with other highly pictorial drawings by Correggio, such as his *Annunciation* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has similar pentimenti: see Vaccaro (note 1), especially pp. 40f.



28, 29 Correggio, studies for a prophet (recto) and another figure (verso) on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Frankfurt, Städel Museum, inv. 4110



30, 31 Correggio, two studies for a prophet on the nave frieze in San Giovanni Evangelista. Frankfurt, Städel Museum, inv. 4111, recto and verso

ed other artists to help execute his designs. The extant documentary evidence is scant, but his presumed association with Rondani and Anselmi, both of whom were independent masters by the early 1520s, implies that Correggio had informal ties with collaborators rather than a more conventional workshop. A solid tradition that can be traced to at least the late seventeenth century credits Rondani with painting the

nave frieze. The *Codice Resta* (ca. 1711) makes the claim,⁵¹ and should its credibility be doubted – given Padre Sebastiano Resta’s tendency to spin fanciful tales – more trustworthy sources based in Parma exist. According to the eminent local historian Padre Ireneo Affò (1794), Rondani painted the nave frieze for which Correggio was paid (“fregio sopra gli Archi nella Nave grande dicesi del Rondani, ma fu pagato

⁵¹ Transcribed in Giulio Bora, *I disegni del Codice Resta*, Cinisello Balsamo 1976, p. 272: “Mastro Torelli che col Rondani fece il freggio della Chiesa

di San Giovanni de Benedettini di San Giovanni.” The “mastro Torelli” to whom Padre Resta refers is not mentioned in other accounts of the nave

al Correggio”).⁵² And, already at the turn of the eighteenth century, Padre Maurizio Zappata had noted the artistic collaboration in redactions of his important manuscript on the churches of Parma. The first of these (1690) states that Rondani depicted the nave frieze with sacrificial scenes and prophets according to Correggio’s design, while unspecified disciples of the master decorated vaults in the nave and sanctuary (“Procere navis fasciam, quam zophorum vocant, inter coronas mediam, sub prototypo Antonii de Corregio, expinxit Rondanus, cum sacrificiis et prophetis; navis vero ac sanctuarii cacumina, alii Corregii discipuli”).⁵³ The revised manuscript (circa 1709) repeats this information, adding that Correggio was paid for the work in 1524 (“Procere navis fasciam, quam Zophorum vocant, pinxit Rondanus Parmensis; fornices vero et cum hagiasterii cacumine, alii Corregii discipuli, ad graphidem magistri, qui stipe recepit anno 1524”).⁵⁴ The autograph receipt of Correggio’s last payment for San Giovanni Evangelista, we recall, dates to the year 1524.

Although cited in the literature on Correggio, Padre Zappata’s testimony has greater weight than has perhaps been recognized. A Benedictine, he not only lived in the monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista but

also presided over its archives, later to be dispersed.⁵⁵ The fact that, after nearly two centuries, he invoked the name of Rondani, an artist who was hardly famous in his own day let alone to posterity, suggests that he had access to documents that have not come down to us. His manuscript assigns to Rondani, moreover, the frescoes on the soffit of Placido Del Bono’s chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista for which Correggio painted two lateral canvases.⁵⁶ If this is true – and the visual evidence seems compelling – Rondani would have once again carried out a decorative scheme designed by his colleague, since three preparatory drawings for the soffit, all of them in Correggio’s characteristically pictorial style, are known.⁵⁷

A relatively obscure painter, Rondani was born on 15 July 1490 in Parma, and the earliest documented reference to his artistic activity is a contract, dated 31 October 1520, for a large fresco commissioned by the Anziani del Comune di Parma.⁵⁸ While his presence in San Giovanni Evangelista cannot be corroborated with any known payments before 1526,⁵⁹ he probably assisted Correggio with the nave frieze and elsewhere in the church. On 21 November 1522, only weeks after Correggio agreed to decorate the cupola and presbytery of Parma cathedral, Rondani, as well as Ansel-

frieze; for his possible identity, see Elisabetta Fadda, “Un eccentrico nella Parma di Correggio: il Maestro di Sant’Uldarico”, in: *Nuovi studi*, 7 (1999), pp. 69–76, and Davide Gasparotto, “Francesco Farnese collezionista e la dispersione dei dipinti già nella chiesa di San Pietro Apostolo a Parma”, in: *Aurea Parma*, LXXXVI (2002), pp. 15–36: 26–28.

⁵² Ireneo Affò, *Il Parmigiano servitor di piazza*, Parma 1794, p. 118.

⁵³ Maurizio Zappata, *Florum Parmensis Viridarii à Mauritio Zapata decerp-torum, anno MDCLXXX*, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. Parm. 1540, p. 76. Padre Zappata’s death in 1721 pre-empted the publication of his book. I thank Federica Dall’Asta, Alessandra Talignani, and Fabrizio Tonelli for their invaluable help with this and the other two manuscripts.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, *Notitiae ecclesiarum in civitate Parme*, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. Parm. 1134, fol. 26v. See also *idem*, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. Parm. 448, fol. 23r.

⁵⁵ For Don Maurizio Zappata (1651–1721), see Ireneo Affò, *Memorie degli scrittori e letterati parmigiani*, Parma 1789–1833, V, pp. 299f. (“avuto la cura di custodire l’Archivio del suo Monistero, seppe trarne profitto”), and VI.2, pp. 839–842.

⁵⁶ Ms. Parm. 1540 (note 53), pp. 71, 73, and Ms. Parm. 1134 (note 54), fol. 25r, the earlier redaction being somewhat more descriptive.

⁵⁷ For discussion of the Del Bono Chapel, see Ekserdjian (note 1), pp. 123–133 (with illustrations). For the related studies, see Popham (note 16), pp. 158f., and David Ekserdjian, in: *Correggio and Parmigianino* (note 1), p. 201, nos. 34 and 35 (with illustrations); further on one of these (Fig. 40), see below, p. 400.

⁵⁸ For the commission and a useful survey of Rondani’s career, see David Ekserdjian, “Francesco Maria Rondani e la cappella Centoni”, in: *Basilica Cattedrale di Parma*, ed. by Marco Pellegrini, Parma 2005, II, pp. 88–93; and Elisabetta Fadda, s.v. Rondani, Francesco Maria, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, LXXXVIII, Rome 2017, pp. 372–375, with bibliography. The first known reference to Rondani as deceased appears in a document involving his son Gerolamo, dated 20 December 1557 (Parma, Archivio di Stato, *rogito* Giovanni Battista Zandemaria), as noted by Enrico Scarabelli-Zunti, *Documenti e memorie di Belle Arti Parmigiane*, III, fol. 359r, Parma, Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici e Storici, Ms. I06.

⁵⁹ An account book of San Giovanni Evangelista (London, British Li-

mi and Parmigianino, signed a contract to adorn its transept, and it is tempting to speculate that he was involved as a known collaborator of Correggio.⁶⁰ Although his transept project (as that of Parmigianino) was never realized,⁶¹ from 1527 until 1531 Rondani frescoed the Centoni Chapel in the cathedral,⁶² and in the early 1530s he teamed with Anselmi to paint a fresco cycle in the Oratorio della Concezione in the Parmese church of San Francesco del Prato.⁶³ Rondani's only signed altarpiece – the *Virgin and Child with Saints Augustine and Jerome* – and its preliminary drawing reveal a profound debt to Correggio.⁶⁴

The attribution of the frescoes along the nave and on the soffit of the Del Bono Chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista has been much debated.⁶⁵ The latest restoration campaign undertaken by conservator Marcello Castrichini has led several authors, himself included, to assign a far greater share to the master. According

to Castrichini and Vittorio Sgarbi (2008), Correggio was wholly responsible for the frescoes in the chapel, but had help on the nave frieze, the strict adherence to the master's cartoons making it now virtually impossible to distinguish the styles of individual collaborators.⁶⁶ Similarly, Chiusa maintains that Correggio almost single-handedly painted the nave frieze, while Rondani helped only with some of the iterative monochrome parts.⁶⁷ All three authors point to discoveries made during the restoration, notably the presence of a mixed fresco technique that is said to be unique to Correggio.⁶⁸ Given that less than a quarter of the entire frieze was cleaned and analyzed, however, some caution in making generalizations is perhaps in order.⁶⁹

In my opinion, Correggio's involvement in the execution of the frescoes was probably far more limited. His indisputably autograph lunette of Saint John the Evangelist in the church – which complements the ico-

brary, Egerton, Ms. I, fol. I15v) registers a payment to Rondani on 25 May 1526 for retouching pictures in the monastic refectory ("refrescato le picture in refectorio"). He was also active at the subsidiary Benedictine abbey of Torrecchiara: see Popham (note 16), p. 102.

⁶⁰ For transcriptions of the documents, see Marzio Dall'Acqua, *Correggio e il suo tempo*, Parma 1984, pp. 71–84. If Correggio recommended Rondani, their working relationship presumably began before the campaign in the nave of San Giovanni Evangelista (commissioned on 1 November 1522). It is also worth noting that on 30 March 1523, while the nave frieze was underway, Rondani served as witness in a legal agreement, drawn up in the monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista, regarding Correggio's rental of a nearby house: see Cristina Cecchinelli, "Il contratto della casa presa in affitto a Parma dal Correggio nel 1523 alla presenza del Rondani", in: *Aurea Parma*, XCIII (2009), pp. 347–364.

⁶¹ Only Anselmi did realize his decoration, albeit much later, after a new contract was drawn up with him in 1548. Those frescoes, which suffered damage, were replaced by copies in 1768. See Fadda (note 15), pp. 148, 190.

⁶² Mary Vaccaro, "Rondani and the Grotesque: Rondani in the Centoni Chapel", in: *Apollo*, CLXXIV (2011), 590, pp. 64–70, with bibliography and illustrations.

⁶³ For the Oratorio della Concezione, see Fadda (note 15), pp. 73–75, with bibliography and illustrations. Fadda speculated that, because drawings that have been connected to the project are by Anselmi, he likely designed the overall scheme. Too few preparatory studies have thus far been identified, however, and documented payments (1532–1534) were made equally to both painters.

⁶⁴ For the altarpiece, see Angelo Loda, in: *Parmigianino e il manierismo europeo*, exh. cat. Parma/Vienna 2003, ed. by Lucia Fornari Schianchi/Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, Cinisello Balsamo 2003, pp. 162f., no. LII (with illustration). Its dating is a matter of debate: given its conservative design and stylistic parallels with Correggio, a dating in the early 1520s seems to me to be most plausible. David Ekserdjian correctly identified the author and function of the related red chalk study (United Kingdom, private collection) in his letter to the editor, in: *Master Drawings*, XXXII (1994), pp. 398f. (with illustration). The fact that it was previously published with an attribution to Correggio – first by Gere (note 43), pp. 339–349, then by Mario Di Giampaolo, *Correggio disegnatore*, Cinisello Balsamo 2001, pp. 50f. – underscores the extent to which Rondani's style can approach that of Correggio.

⁶⁵ For an overview of the debate, see Toscano (note 7), pp. 133–137, with bibliography. Toscano discerned, not always convincingly, the hands of Correggio and three anonymous assistants in the painted frieze (*ibidem*, pp. 148–185).

⁶⁶ Vittorio Sgarbi/Marcello Castrichini, "Officina parmense: Correggio, Parmigianino, Anselmi e Bedoli in San Giovanni Evangelista", in: *Correggio, Parmigianino, Anselmi* (note 8), pp. 37–57: 46–48.

⁶⁷ Chiusa (note 4), pp. 137f.

⁶⁸ Regarding this "unique" combination of egg tempera with fresco, which was also used by the young Parmigianino elsewhere in the church, see Marcello Castrichini, "Nuova lettura dell'*Officina Parmense* e connessioni con opere di Polirone, Roma e Perugia", in: *Studi di storia dell'arte*, XX (2009), pp. 87–124: 91–95.

⁶⁹ This last restoration campaign involved only the first three sections of the frieze.



32 Workshop of Correggio (Francesco Maria Rondani), candelabrum. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, nave



33 Francesco Maria Rondani, candelabrum. Parma, cathedral, Centoni Chapel

nography of the nave frieze and may have been painted around the same time – differs qualitatively from many figures depicted along the nave as well as in the Del Bono Chapel.⁷⁰ Above all, it seems unlikely that the busy master would have spent his time replicating minor ornament, such as the pairs of putti (some of which I think are too inept to have been rendered even by Rondani)⁷¹ or the monochromatic candelabra. For example, Sgarbi and Castrichini compare details of the candelabra in, respectively, San Giovanni Evangelista and the Centoni Chapel to stress how the latter – and Rondani in general – pale by comparison.⁷² Yet these candelabra (Figs. 32, 33) seem to me to be virtually identical in form and handling to each other, and it is altogether more plausible that Correggio delegated the task to Rondani, who later reworked the motif for a project of his own.⁷³ Even if Rondani did not use egg tempera but oil in the Centoni Chapel, as Castrichini points out,⁷⁴ this technical difference hardly seems to me to be sufficient grounds to deny that he worked extensively with Correggio – and perhaps even adopted the latter’s techniques – in the Benedictine church.

Although parsing the attribution of every painted detail is beyond the scope of the present essay, it is worth pointing out that the other frescoes in the Centoni Chapel offer key points of similarity with those in the Benedictine church.⁷⁵ The aforementioned prophet who holds a tablet inscribed CORONA(m) SPINEAM PORTA(ns) on the sixth section of the frieze (Fig. 24) closely resembles a male type with an exaggerated nose that recurs in Rondani’s own imagery; compare, for instance, Pilate in the act of

⁷⁰ Ekserdjian (note 1), p. 99, for an illustration of this fresco.

⁷¹ For example, the pair of misshapen putti between the eleventh and twelfth sections of the frieze (visible on the right-hand side of Fig. 1).

⁷² Sgarbi/Castrichini (note 66), p. 47: “Rondani non riesce ad avvicinarsi a Correggio nemmeno quando cerca di imitarlo in decorazioni semplici come le candelabre.” Castrichini (note 68), p. 95, reiterates this idea, yet reproduces details from the frescoes in San Giovanni Evangelista and the Centoni Chapel (*ibidem*, Figs. 19–27, 30, 31) that seem more stylistically similar than not.

⁷³ Rondani also adapted the motif of sibyls and prophets, depicting sibyls on the vault (these were repainted by Andrea Pezzali in the late eighteenth century) and prophets on the counter-façade of the Centoni Chapel.

⁷⁴ Castrichini (note 68), p. 95.

⁷⁵ The frescoes in the Centoni Chapel deliberately depart from Correggio’s lyrical style to explore the expressive language of the grotesque; yet Rondani conceived of this project, at least initially, in more traditional terms. Two drawings that I recently identified as preliminary studies by



34 Francesco Maria Rondani,
Ecce Homo, detail.
Parma, cathedral,
Centoni Chapel



35 Workshop of Correggio
(Francesco Maria Rondani),
a pair of putti holding tablets.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista,
nave frieze



36 Francesco Maria Rondani,
Ecce Homo, detail.
Parma, cathedral,
Centoni Chapel



37 Workshop of Correggio
(Francesco Maria Rondani), *Sibyl*.
Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista,
nave frieze



38 Francesco Maria Rondani, *Christ before Caiphas*, detail. Parma, cathedral, Centoni Chapel



39 Workshop of Correggio (Francesco Maria Rondani), *Christ in glory*, detail. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista, Del Bono Chapel



40 Correggio, study for *Christ in glory* in the Del Bono Chapel, detail. Los Angeles, Getty Museum, inv. 87.GB.90

washing his hands in the Centoni Chapel (Fig. 34). The young attendant pouring Pilate's water (Fig. 34) and the female bystander (Fig. 36) in the same scene recall, respectively, a pair of putti on the pilasters of the nave arcade (Fig. 35) and the sibyl on the second section of the frieze (Fig. 37) in San Giovanni Evangelista. Likewise, the figure of Christ before Caiphas in the Centoni Chapel (Fig. 38) bears a striking resemblance to the Christ on the soffit of the Del Bono Chapel (Fig. 39). Correggio's related preparatory drawing for the latter (Fig. 40) allows us to gauge its translation into paint.⁷⁶ Rondani not only gave Christ a sharper profile and thick blond locks, but depicted his garment with heavy, flattened folds similar to the drapery found in the Centoni Chapel. Such parallels point to Rondani's role as a chief executant of Correggio's designs in San Giovanni Evangelista. The possibility that he not only turned his colleague's drawn ideas into paint but also contributed drawings of his own to the projects must remain open: alas, at present, not enough is known about Rondani's graphic corpus to arrive at a clear conclusion.⁷⁷

A Coda: Two More Drawings by Correggio

Two further drawings that can be ascribed to Correggio may bear a connection to San Giovanni Evangelista. One is a small unpublished study in the Kunsthhaus Zürich (Fig. 41), traditionally catalogued under the artist Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), which Joachim Jacoby very kindly brought to

him were once attributed to Correggio: see Vaccaro (note 62), where both are illustrated, and David Ekserdjian, in: *Correggio and Parmigianino* (note 1), p. 238, no. 110.

⁷⁶ Los Angeles, Getty Museum, inv. 87.GB.90; red chalk, wash, heightened in white, on pink-prepared paper, incised circles in pen, squared in red chalk; 146 × 146 mm. See Cristina Casoli, in: *Correggio* (note 8), pp. 403f., no. IV.24, and the Getty Museum database <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects> (accessed on 18 November 2018).

⁷⁷ See, for example, Mary Vaccaro, "A Drawing from the Circle of Correggio in the Uffizi", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLIX (2007), pp. 472–



41 Correggio,
study of putti.
Zurich, Kunsthaus,
inv. Z.A.B. 1582



42 Correggio, study of a putto
holding a palm and a cardinal's hat.
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen, inv. I.289v



43 Correggio, study of an angel
holding a medallion. London,
Victoria and Albert Museum,
inv. Dyce 271

my attention.⁷⁸ Executed in pen and wash over red chalk, the lively sketch represents three putti atop clouds. Notations on its mount – the first by David Lachenmann, followed by Paul Joannides – correctly identify its draftsman as Correggio.⁷⁹ Its morphologies and energetic handling are consistent with his graphic style, as particularly well exemplified by the verso of one of the aforementioned studies in Rotterdam (Fig. 42).⁸⁰ Just as the verso in Rotterdam prepares an angel on the southeastern pendentive of San Giovanni Evangelista, the sketch in Zurich – datable on stylistic grounds to near the same time – may be an early idea for a few of the many spirited putti that populate Correggio’s frescoes on the cupola and apse.

The second drawing to be introduced (Fig. 43), albeit long ascribed to Correggio, was curiously demoted by Popham (1957) to Bernardino Gatti (ca. 1495–1576), and accepted as such by Peter Ward-Jackson (1979) in his volume on the Italian drawings collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁸¹ The sheet, which depicts an angel holding a medallion, very much deserves to be returned to Cor-

reggio: its rich and vigorous use of media – with layers of ink, wash, and white gouache over red chalk, including a pentimento along the lower profile of the angel’s body – is wholly of a piece with his studies for the prophets and sibyls of the nave frieze and for the Del Bono Chapel that were discussed earlier. It, too, may have served a purpose in the Benedictine church. On 5 October 1525, Correggio received a small payment of 56 *lire* and 2 *soldi* for decorating the cornice around the outside of the marble choir screen once located beneath the dome (“picture intorno al choro di fora”).⁸² Sadly, neither the minor ornament nor the choir screen survives. Yet, perhaps, the London study with its frieze-like arrangement played a part in this otherwise mysterious final chapter of the story of Correggio and San Giovanni Evangelista.

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478. It is worth pondering whether a preparatory study of the *Madonna and Child with Saint George, a female saint, and the young Baptist* in Christ Church, Oxford (inv. 0489, ascribed to a “follower of Correggio”) and the related easel picture in Dresden (inv. Gal.-Nr. 165 A, attributed to Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli) are also by Rondani. The morphology of the female saint’s head closely parallels that of Saint Catherine in a known altarpiece by Rondani in the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples. Interestingly, the Oxford study uses a combination of media, including grey wash and thickly applied white gouache, that was clearly inspired by Correggio’s example.

⁷⁸ Inv. Z.A.B. 1582; red chalk, pen and ink, and wash; 80 × 83 mm; fully backed and mounted on a larger piece of paper that measures 148 × 163 mm. Although its exact provenance is unknown, it entered the collection before 1915, probably as a donation in the nineteenth century, as did most of the Italian drawings in the Kunsthaus Zürich. I thank Sonja Gasser and Bernhard von Waldkirch for this information.

⁷⁹ The respective notations read “Lachenmann Aug. 2008: Correggio?” and “Joannides: Yes”. I am grateful to both Joachim Jacoby for alerting me to this drawing and David Lachenmann for allowing me to publish it.

⁸⁰ On this drawing, see above, especially notes 41f.

⁸¹ Inv. Dyce 271; pen and ink over red chalk, heightened in white, with two incised concentric arcs (the medallion) visible in raking light; fully backed on a mount; 76 × 171 mm. See Popham (note 16), pp. 185f, no. A 73, and Peter Ward-Jackson, *Italian Drawings, Victoria and Albert Museum, Volume 1: 14th–16th Century*, London 1979, pp. 72f. According to Mark Evans, Nicholas Turner independently suggested, probably in 1981, that the old attribution was correct, his verbal opinion logged in Ward-Jackson’s own interleaved copy of his catalogue. Nicholas Turner and David Ekserdjian (respective email communication with author, 2017) concur that the drawing is by Correggio. Incidentally, the London sheet once belonged to Sir Peter Lely (Lugt 2092), who also owned the four studies for prophets and sibyls now in Rotterdam.

⁸² The “maestro Antonio pictor”, who received this payment, is almost certainly Correggio: see Monducci (note 2), p. 104 (with transcription of the document). For the choir screen, which was commissioned to Gianfrancesco d’Agrate (1489–after 1563) on 22 July 1524, but dismantled and presumably destroyed after the enlargement of the presbytery in the 1580s, see Alessandra Talignani, “Cori lignei cassinesi: San Giovanni Evangelista a Parma, San Pietro a Modena e San Sisto a Piacenza”, in: *Benedettini in Europa* (note 3), pp. 191–213.

By careful review of documentary and stylistic evidence, this paper aims to clarify the nature of collaboration on the nave frieze – depicting prophets, sibyls, and scenes of sacrifice – in the Benedictine church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma, part of a larger fresco campaign undertaken by Correggio from 1519 until 1524. Francesco Maria Rondani is traditionally said to have assisted Correggio on the nave frieze, yet a group of six drawings recently appeared on the art market with an attribution to Michelangelo Anselmi, prompting a new proposal that he had helped to devise the decorative scheme. The present essay demonstrates that these ‘new’ drawings are almost certainly copies after the frescoes, or after drawings for them, whereas studies by Correggio that have been variously called into question are preparatory in function and autograph. Moreover, this paper compares frescoes that are securely attributable to Rondani with details in the nave frieze and concludes that he collaborated with Correggio both here and in the Del Bono Chapel in the same church. Finally, two studies – one unpublished, both possibly made for San Giovanni Evangelista – are newly assigned to Correggio.

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Marcello Castrichini, Todi: Figs. 1, 32, 35, 39. – From *Old Master & British Drawings* (note 11): Figs. 2–7. – Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam: Figs. 8, 23, 25–27, 42. – Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: Fig. 9. – Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019: Fig. 10. – From Correggio, Parmigianino, Anselmi (note 8): Figs. 11, 37. – Lucio Rossi, Parma: Fig. 12. – Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Parma (Annarita Ziveri): Figs. 13–16, 33. – Rick Scorza: Figs. 17, 18. – The Trustees of the British Museum, London: Figs. 19, 20, 22. – Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago de Chile: Fig. 21. – From *Toscana* (note 7): Fig. 24. – From Jacoby (note 48): Figs. 28–31. – From Francesco Barocelli/Carlo Barbieri, *La cappella Centoni nel Duomo di Parma. Storia e restauri*, Parma 2006: Figs. 34, 36, 38. – The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles: Fig. 40. – Samuel Vitali: Fig. 41. – Victoria and Albert Museum, London: Fig. 43.

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