

**ANACHRONIC LIMITATIONS: A MEDIEVAL REFLECTION ON THE  
SCUOLA DI SAN GIORGIO DEGLI SCHIAVONI**  
**LIMITACIONES ANACRÓNICAS. UN REFLEJO MEDIEVAL EN LA  
SCUOLA DI SAN GIORGIO DEGLI SCHIAVONI**

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the iconographic complexities of Vittore Carpaccio's *Saint Augustine in his Study*, housed in the Scuola degli Schiavoni in Venice. Executed at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the work is part of a large cycle of paintings, primarily focused on the life of Saint Jerome. By reconsidering some of the painting's canonical iconographic features, I suggest that concrete references to the Eucharistic ritual remain critical to our understanding of its composition. In examining this previously unacknowledged liturgical dimension, I demonstrate how the artificial barriers of art-historical periodization complicate our understanding of medieval and "Renaissance" art.

KEYWORDS: Liturgy, altar, Eucharist, shadow, theology, studiolo.

RESUMEN

Esta contribución explora las complejidades iconográficas de *San Agustín en su estudio* de Vittore Carpaccio, conservado en la Scuola degli Schiavoni de Venecia. Realizada a principios

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\* I'm very grateful to my friends Gerardo Boto Varela and Alejandro Garcia Aviles for their invitation to contribute to this volume in honor of Herbert L. Kessler, and for their invitation to present my contribution within the conference they organized in Aguilar de Campoo and Palencia city.

I would like to thank the colleagues who made very rich comments on my contribution: Celia Chazelle, Vincent Debais, Jeffrey Hamburger, Gerda Panofsky, Cécile Voyer and Daniel Russo. Herbert Kessler's suggestions, remarks, and observations made after my talk at the conference in his honor will be taken into account for the monograph I am writing that revisits some famous Renaissance works, including Piero della Francesca's paintings as well as

del siglo *xvi*, la obra forma parte de un amplio ciclo de pinturas, centradas principalmente en la vida de San Jerónimo. Al reconsiderar algunos de los rasgos iconográficos canónicos del cuadro, sugiero que las referencias concretas al ritual eucarístico siguen siendo fundamentales para comprender su composición. El examen de esta dimensión litúrgica, hasta ahora no reconocida, me permite demostrar cómo las barreras artificiales de la periodización histórico-artística complican nuestra comprensión del arte medieval y “renacentista”.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Liturgia, altar, Eucaristía, sombra, teología, *studiolo*.

“The Middle Ages live and die in him.” T.J. Clark’s pronouncement in his recent monograph on Giotto challenges not only medievalists but all art historians, regardless of specialization. In attempting to clarify this ambiguous statement, the author observes, “he gathers together the powers of a civilization...at a unique moment of health and energy and change and confident summation of a long past.”<sup>1</sup> In order to extract meaning from Clark’s statement about Giotto, how should we consider the Tuscan painter and his art in terms of art-historical periodization? Or should we regard Giotto the embodiment of both the “living” Middle Ages and its death simultaneously? Clark’s musings underscore the inherent problem of trying to delineate clear temporal demarcations between “The Middle Ages” and “The Early Modern Period.” In so doing, Clark inadvertently raises the issue of how we as scholars even define the idea, notion, or concept of “modernity.” If the Middle Ages “live” in Giotto, how do we ascertain what sort of “death” for which he is responsible, and, if the medieval period—or more specifically, its art—dies in him, what sense of temporality generates from the artist and his work? Clark’s arguments underscore an apparent acceptance in viewing Giotto as the point of departure for “Early Modern” or “Renaissance” art. Yet his affirmation serves to recall this highly contentious issue of periodization for both medieval and Renaissance art historians.

Recent North American scholarship has addressed this problem of chronology by proposing notions of the anachronic, nonmodernity, or even contesting the basic precepts of what we term “The Renaissance.”<sup>2</sup> That this very debate about the nature of Renaissance remains within the hands of Early Modern scholars without any methodological contributions from medievalists seems remarkable to me. Advanced by Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, the concept of “Anachronic Renaissance” suggests a particular perspective to consider the discernment of temporality during what we refer to as the Renaissance in relation to earlier historical

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Carpaccio’s *Saint Augustine in His Study*, and considers various liturgical and theological approaches in its analysis. Finally, a very special thanks to Catherine Fernandez for our many intense discussions on Carpaccio’s painting and many revisions of the English text.

<sup>1</sup> T.J. CLARK, *Heaven on Earth. Painting and the Life to Come*, London, 2018, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> A. NAGEL, CH. S. WOOD, *Anachronic Renaissance*, New York, 2010. Previously, see their article “Interventions: Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism”, *The Art Bulletin*, 87-3 (2005), pp. 403-415 and the “response” by Ch. DEMPSEY, “‘Historia’ and Anachronism in Renaissance”, *Ibidem*, pp. 416-421. See also S. J. CAMPBELL, “On Renaissance Nonmodernity”, *I Tatti. Studies in Italian Renaissance*, 20-2 (2017), pp. 261-294; R. ZORACH, “Renaissance Theory: A Selective Introduction”, in *Renaissance Theory*, J. ELKINS, R. WILLIAMS (eds.), New York-London, 2008, pp. 3-36.

periods, notably the Middle Ages. By reexamining our understanding of chronology within the discipline of art history, the authors focus on the idea of a recurrence of motifs, derived from an archeological legacy through its materiality. It goes without saying that this publication has generated a lively debate on periodization within the field. Critiques by Charles Dempsey, among others, contest the excessive credit given by Nagel and Wood on the process of citations of works dating from Antiquity and the Middle Ages within examples of Renaissance art.

However, other specialists of Early Modern Art have recently proposed alternative perspectives to clarify issues related to questions of both transmissions and transitions within the artistic production of what we consider the Medieval and Renaissance periods, without resorting to a theoretical debate on the very nature of “Renaissance” and whether we as scholars should think of it in terms of rupture with the previous period, that is to say, the Middle Ages. For example, Megan Holmes’s brilliant and provocative monograph on miraculous images in Renaissance Florence demonstrates that there was a continuity of certain devotional and liturgical practices related to images in the city of the Medici during the fifteenth century, which remains rooted in medieval rituals and the cult of images.<sup>3</sup> Her serious analysis of the material reveals how artists of the so-called Florentine Renaissance perpetuated distinctly medieval ideas on the nature of miraculous images in a way that was not limited to an “artifactual” conception of specific medieval objects. This sensitivity to theological and liturgical elements in Florentine art is also present in Cyrille Gerbron’s recent monograph, which considers how the continuity of medieval liturgical traditions remains crucial to our understanding of Fra Angelico’s art.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Christopher Nygren’s recent publication thoughtfully explores references to the medieval tradition of icon veneration in Titian’s work.<sup>5</sup>

In the following pages, I would like to consider similar modes of transmission of medieval, theological, and liturgical elements in so-called Renaissance art from my vantage point as a medieval art historian. In arguing for a continuity of ideas and traditions present within these artificial chronological parameters, I wish to move beyond Nagel and Wood’s constructed paradigm on issues related to citation and the artifact during this particular moment of artistic production. Although I am not arguing that breaks with the “past” do not characterize our temporal demarcations of the “Middle Ages” and “Renaissance,” I wish to address the complexities of “rupture” and “transmission” in order to reach a better understanding of how medievalists and early modernists approach such instances by taking into consideration the endurance of religious practices that remain evident in celebrated examples of Renaissance art.

This essay revisits the iconography and themes of a well-recognized masterpiece of early-sixteenth-century Venice. Vittore Carpaccio’s *Saint Augustine in his Study* or *The Vision of Saint Augustine* has become a canonical example of what we identify as Venetian “Renaissance” art, and it remains a well-published work in the literature (Fig. 1). Indeed, it serves as

<sup>3</sup> M. HOLMES, *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence*, New Haven, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> C. GERBRON, *Fra Angelico. Liturgie et mémoire*, Turnhout, 2016. Gerbron’s approach to Fra Angelico had been preceded by Georges Didi-Hubermann’s exploration of Fra Angelico’s work at San Marco, *Fra Angelico. Dissemblance and Figuration*, English translation, Chicago, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. J. NYGREN, *Titian’s Icons. Tradition, Charisma, and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2020. See also S. J. CAMPBELL, *Andrea Mantegna. Humanist Aesthetics, Faith and the Force of Images*, «Renovatio Artium. Studies in the Arts of the Renaissance», Turnhout, 2020.



Fig. 1. Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Augustine in his Study*, Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, ca. 1502-1507

one of the key case studies within Nagel and Wood's monograph. A depiction of Saint Augustine in his study receiving the revelation of Saint Jerome's death, the tempera on wood panel is but one of a series of nine paintings painted for the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*, which the artist executed between 1502 and 1507.<sup>6</sup> The *scuola*, a confraternity made up primarily of Dalmatian sailors who emigrated to Venice, was founded in 1451. By virtue of its benefactor Cardinal Bessarion, the Greek theologian, humanist and convert from Orthodoxy, who played an active role in promoting reconciliation between the Eastern and Western churches as well as a defense of Christianity against the Ottoman Turks, the *scuola* flourished as a space of devotion for the cult of Saint George, whose relics were preserved in the structure that housed the confraternity.<sup>7</sup>

Carpaccio's paintings were commissioned by Paolo Valaresso, a captain in the Venetian military. Comprising narratives from the lives of Saints George, Tryphon, and Jerome, as well

<sup>6</sup> On Vittore Carpaccio's art and his paintings at the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*, the list of publications is vast. On the pictorial cycle at the *Scuola*, among other numerous references, Michelangelo MURARO, *Vittore Carpaccio alla Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni in Venezia*, Milano, 1956 and G. PEROCO, *Carpaccio nella Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni*, Venezia, 1964. The bibliography on saint Augustine in his study will be given in the second half of this contribution.

<sup>7</sup> I will below go into more details on the foundation of the confraternity. See PEROCO, *passim* and T. VALLERY, *La Scuola Dalmata dei SS. Giorgio e Trifone*, Scuola Dalmata dei S. Giorgio e Trifone, Colana Treveri vol. 11, 2011.



as scenes from the Gospel of Matthew, the cycle was originally located on the upper level of the fifteenth-century building. *Saint Augustine in his Study* and its companions migrated to the *scuola*'s ground floor after a substantial architectural renovation in 1551, where it has remained to the present day (Fig. 2). Their relocation provides little to no evidence on the initial display of the series by the confraternity, and we must assume that the panels were reordered after they were removed from their original setting. Today Carpaccio's Augustine rests adjacent to the panel dedicated to the funeral of Jerome and serves as a kind of visual conclusion to the cycle on the south wall, immediately to the right of the *scuola*'s entrance, yet scholarly analysis of this sequence remains inconclusive.

Even if we know nothing about the panel's original location, we must assume that it bore witness to the confraternity's many annual rituals, as confirmed by extant documentation. In February of 1464, Cardinal Bessarion granted the confraternity a very important indulgence for the celebration of a feast in honor of Saints George, Jerome, and Tryphon, the primary saints venerated by the confraternity as well as the feast of *Corpus Christi* and the first Sunday after the Ascension. The presence of an altar dedicated to Saint George in the second half of the fifteenth century within the *sala* that housed Carpaccio's cycle also attests to the building's liturgical function, a point to which I will return later in the essay.



Fig. 2. Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, view of the ground floor

# SAINT AUGUSTINE IN HIS STUDY: A SURVEY OF ICONOGRAPHIC HYPOTHESES

There is general acceptance within the scholarship that the seated figure within the painting is indeed Saint Augustine within his study. It was Helen Roberts who first noted that the narrative derives from a thirteenth-century legend included in the compendium, *Hieronymus. Vita et Transitus*, which was published in Venice in 1485.<sup>8</sup> The text records the moment of Saint Augustine within his study receiving the revelation of Jerome's death while composing a treatise about the glory and the joy of the blessed who rejoice with Christ in heaven. In vivid language the description relates that Augustine grasps this knowledge through a light that comes through the window of the room and through the sound of Jerome's voice, which informs him of his own demise, all the while responding to Augustine's questions on the nature of the Trinity. That streams of light form an integral component of Carpaccio's composition within the panel have led most scholars to accept this interpretation.

From an iconographic standpoint, Carpaccio's painting offers a startling assemblage of visual elements within a fairly standard setting for fifteenth-century art, namely the saint meditating in his study. The growing prominence of the *studiolo* as an interior space cultivated by individual humanists as a place to work and to display collections of singular objects as *cabinets de curiosités* would have conveyed the acquisition of knowledge as a kind of virtue to the viewer, but more importantly, the specificity of these objects also confirms the identity of the painting's protagonist.<sup>9</sup> It has been noted, for example, that the presence of ninety-four books within the interior space is surely an allusion to a well-known passage in Augustine's c. 420 *Retractiones*, in which the Church father asserts that he had written ninety-four books during his lifetime. Other iconographic elements reinforce this identity. As scholars have also observed, the two musical compositions—both sacred and profane—and prominently located in the right foreground of the panel, serve to evoke Augustine's studies on musical theory, notably his treatise *De Musica*, which enjoyed a wide circulation in late fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century Venice.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as Edward Lowinsky suggests, the presence of music within the painting reflects the interest the theologian showed for liturgical hymnody in homage to Saint Ambrose of Milan, recognized in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages for his prolific compositions of liturgical hymns.<sup>11</sup> Lowinsky notes that the second musical piece within the choir book even has the archaizing appearance of an older hymn.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> H. I. ROBERTS, "St. Augustine in 'St. Jérôme's Studio': Carpaccio's Paintings and its legendary Sources", *The Art Bulletin*, 41-4 (1959), pp. 283-297. On the old interpretation of Saint Jerome in his study, M. COSLOVI, "Henry James and Vittor Carpaccio: The Horizontal and the Vertical in Art", *Rivista di studi Nord Americani*, 15-16 (2004-2005), pp. 31-44.

<sup>9</sup> W. LIEBENWEIN, *Studiolo. Storia e tipologia di uno spazio culturale*, Modena, 1988; Ph. CORDEZ, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles. Les objets des églises au Moyen Âge*, 'Collection Représentations, vol. 11', Paris, EHESS, 2016. See also D. THORNTON, *The Scholar in his Study: Ownership and Experience in Medieval Italy*, New Haven, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> See F. H. JACOBS, "Carpaccio's Vision of St. Augustine and St. Augustine's Theory of Music", *Studies in Iconography*, 6 (1980), pp. 83-93; and D. RUSSO, *Saint Jérôme en Italie. Etude d'iconographie et de spiritualité (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris-Rome, 1987, 267 sq.

<sup>11</sup> E. E. LOWINSKY, "Epilogue: The Music in 'St. Jerome's Study'", *The Art Bulletin*, 41-4 (1959), pp. 298-301. See also JACOBS, "Carpaccio's Vision", pp. 83-93.

<sup>12</sup> A very interesting experimental reconstitution of these two pieces of music has been attempted by Victor Alexander STOICHITA: <http://svictor.net/carpaccio>

Yet the revelation of one saint's death to another saint imbues the composition with a theological dimension on the nature of vision. As Laurent Bollard has brilliantly surmised, Augustine's reception of Jerome's death through the active role of light underscores the notion that the vision itself—which encompasses all humanistic objects on display—is activated through the act of writing, which is a common trope.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Daniel Russo has observed the innate tension between the physicality of the objects within the study and the spiritual revelation through the intangible effervescence of light, underscoring the contrast between the comfort of the *studiolo* and the holiness of Saint Jerome, who leads Augustine to a moment of self-reflection by visually privileging the act of contemplation over action.<sup>14</sup> But the panel is also a meditation on portraiture, not only through the objects contained within the study, but also through the interaction of the saint and his vision. Although Jerome is not depicted physically, his presence remains palpable through textual references like the aforementioned thirteenth-century legend, and the allusion to the study as the favored interior in the most common representations of the saint. Finally, scholars such as Patricia Fortini Brown have convincingly suggested that the representation of Augustine bears a close physical resemblance to Cardinal Bessarion, who, as noted earlier, played a central role as patron of the confraternity.<sup>15</sup> It could thus be argued that Carpaccio's painting encapsulates three "portraits" within the representation of one figure through the merging of objects, narratives, and facial characteristics: a layering of meaning that joins the legendary with the historical. Although the assimilation of physical features with a visually absent spiritual attribute was not entirely common in the portraiture of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this three-in-one portrait of Jerome, Augustine, and Bessarion remains a striking element within Carpaccio's panel. Yet its potential function within the interior space of the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* merits further exploration.

Among the more original interpretations of the painting's reception is Victor Stoichita's analysis of the panel's original location within the *sala*.<sup>16</sup> Proposing that *Augustine in his Study* must have initially preceded the *Funeral of Saint Jerome* before their relocation to the ground

<sup>13</sup> L. BOLLARD, "Augustin, du songe à la lumière. Sur la vision de saint Augustin, Carpaccio", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 222-2 (2005), pp. 209-233. See also M. J. GILL, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance. Art and Philosophy from Petrarch to Michelangelo*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 129-135.

<sup>14</sup> RUSSO, *Saint Jérôme, passim*.

<sup>15</sup> P. F. BROWN, "Carpaccio's St. Augustine in his study: A Portrait within a Portrait", *Augustine in Iconography. History and Legend*, J. C. SCHNAUBELT, F. VAN FLETEREN (eds.), New York-Bern, 1999, pp. 507-547. See also, from the same author, "Sant'Agostino nelle studio di Carpaccio: un ritratto nel ritratto?", in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo*. catalogo della mostra, Napoli: Istituto Italiano degli Studi Filosofici – Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia, 1994, pp. 303-319. In her contribution to the painting, Yuko MORITA has recently expressed doubts about the identification with Cardinal Bessarion, suggesting other possibilities like Angelo Leonini, bishop of Venice in 1500 or someone from the Valaresso's family, at the origin of the painted cycle: "St. Augustine's Study: The Cycle of the Scuola Dalmata by Carpaccio", *Bigaku*, 59-2 (2008), pp. 72-85 (in Japanese). I'm very grateful to my friend Elza Hatsumi for the translation of the article.

<sup>16</sup> V. STOICHITA, "De quelques dispositifs télépathiques: Vittore Carpaccio à la Scuola degli Schiavoni à Venise", in *Voir l'au-delà. L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance*, Actes du colloque international, Paris 3-5 juin 2013, 'Collection Etudes renaissantes', Turnhout, 2017, pp. 153-172. See also his article, with the same title, *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 159e année, N.3, 2015, pp. 1397-1414 and his monograph *Über einige telepathische Dispositive: Vittore Carpaccios Gemäldezyklus in Der Scuola Degli Schiavoni in Venedig*, Berlin, 2016.

floor of the *scuola*, Stoichita posits that Carpaccio envisioned these two works as engaged in an act of visual “telepathy,” by which the figure of Augustine “responds” to the depiction of Jerome’s funeral. In so doing, he suggests that it is the panel of Jerome’s funeral that concludes the cycle of paintings. Although a seductive hypothesis, there is no concrete evidence to support his argument, and this assessment even risks underestimating the complexity of Carpaccio’s iconography and composition; while he correctly discerns a sensory or temporal dimension to the works, the actual rituals conducted by the confraternity in their presence are largely ignored.

My own interest in Carpaccio’s painting in relation to the overarching themes of this essay originates with Nagel and Wood’s observations of the work in *Anachronic Renaissance*.<sup>17</sup> A key feature of their discussion on the “anachronic” qualities of the Augustine panel centers on the presence of visual “citations” of other famous works of art or monuments. Of particular significance is the statue of Christ within the so-called background “niche” that acts as a focal point within the painting’s composition. The authors note that an iconographically similar bronze statue of the blessing Christ, dating to 1493, and now in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, once graced the altar of Venice’s church of Santa Maria della Carita, a monument that was surely known to Carpaccio. Likewise, the authors suggest that the mosaic apse within the niche served to evoke the thirteenth-century mosaic program within the Basilica of San Marco. Without discounting these well-founded insistences on citation, I will later return to the complexities of this fictive space by considering other ways of approaching the medieval elements in the composition.

Furthermore, if much of the scholarly literature rests on the idea of Augustine’s study as a Renaissance *studiolo*, with careful analyses of the marvelous diversity of objects as an accurate representation of an interior space for a learned Renaissance humanist, it is well worth reconsidering the kinds of objects that Carpaccio has chosen to include, as well as their placement within the composition.<sup>18</sup> In contradistinction to earlier studies that have duly noted the presence of liturgical implements within the interior, I argue that these elements were not simply “still life” depictions of objects that calmly await ritual activation.<sup>19</sup> Rather, they remain “active” images that allude to very specific moments in the liturgy through references to the theological temporality of the Eucharist and its sacramental effects.

The peculiarities regarding this highly unusual concentration of liturgical objects within the setting of a *studiolo* remain astonishingly understudied. While the “natural” and obvious link between these liturgical objects and the ecclesiastical duties that Saint Augustine undertook as a cleric and a bishop has been observed, there has been little discussion on their potential liturgical and theological significance within the painting. As I have previously suggested, Carpaccio’s construction of space is particularly significant. Although Nagel and Wood have

<sup>17</sup> NAGEL, WOOD, *Anachronic Renaissance*..., pp. 35-44.

<sup>18</sup> See MORITA, “St. Augustine’s Study...” and foremost, D. AMBROSINI, “Victor Carpathius Fingebat. Viaggio intorno e fuori lo studio di sant’Agostino nella scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni”, *Studi veneziani*, n.s. XXXIX (2000), pp. 47-96.

<sup>19</sup> See the ‘classical’ contribution by Z. WAZBINSKI, “Portrait d’un amateur d’art de la Renaissance”, *Arte Veneta*, XXII (1968), pp. 21-28. See also RUSSO, *Saint Jérôme en Italie*...



described the background setting for the statue of Christ as a so-called “niche” that was part of the larger decorative program for Augustine’s *studiolo*, we should contemplate why this space was positioned in such a central location and why Carpaccio incorporated such a high concentration of liturgical implements there. Its placement within the painting must have been part of the artist’s original intention; a preparatory drawing demonstrates Carpaccio’s spatial fidelity to this arrangement, since the earlier sketch privileges the altar and statue of Christ as a visual keystone from which all other elements in the composition are generated (Fig. 3).<sup>20</sup> That this area has been designated as a “niche” further obscures its resonance as a sacred space. In positing that this structural feature is not only the center of the formal composition but also the visual touchstone from which all major themes of this painting develop, I argue that we should deploy a more liturgical language that fittingly evokes an atmosphere of sacrality. The two adjacent small rooms that flank this so-called niche could be read visually as the lateral spaces that frame the choir within the space of the church. Also note, for example, that the liturgical objects located below the altar are displayed as readily available for use, as opposed to being stored in an armoire or cupboard, as would have been the case in any church in sixteenth-century Venice. By taking into account the sacred atmosphere of this space, I reject the more secular-minded term “niche” favored by previous scholars of this work and will deliberately

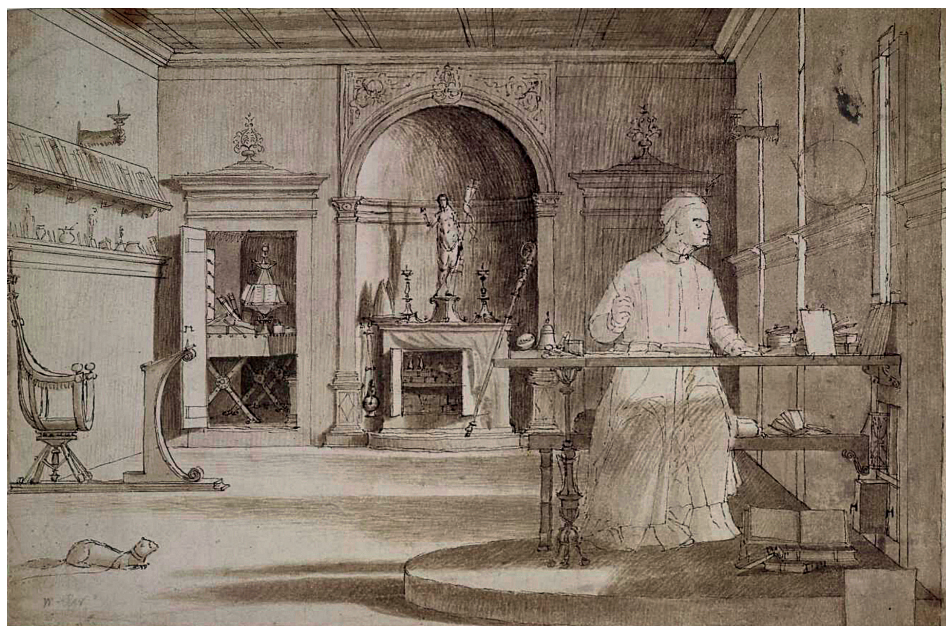


Fig. 3. Vittore Carpaccio, preparatory drawing of *Saint Augustine in his Study*, ca. 1501-1507, London, British Museum. Number Museum: 1934,1208.1. Published by Popham & Pouncey 1950

<sup>20</sup> C. BROOKE, “Vittore Carpaccio’s Method of Composition in his Drawings for the Scuola di San Giorgio Teleri”, *Master Drawings*, 42-4 (2004), pp. 302-314.



employ the more liturgical descriptor “apse” for the remainder of this essay.<sup>21</sup> In so doing, I will suggest that Carpaccio’s construction of sacred, even ecclesiastical space underscored the key sacramental elements of the painting.

I invite you now to consider an exploration of the apse at the center of the composition and its liturgical “arrangement.” In commencing with an examination of the architectural structure of the apse and its decoration, one should note the architectonic complexities of this salient detail. The architectural frame comprises two lateral pilasters and a semicircular arch. Directly above we find motifs reminiscent of architectural ornamentation within other works by Carpaccio and other Venetian painters of the late fifteenth and sixteenth century. Consisting of a prominent semidome and a semi-circular space where the altar is located, this architectural component evokes or even cites other contemporary Venetian altarpieces.<sup>22</sup> As Denise Zaru has posited, Venetian Renaissance altarpieces articulated devotional spaces in a manner similar to the architectural structure at the center of Carpaccio’s painting,<sup>23</sup> and I contend that this observation reinforces the probability that the painter wanted to simultaneously call to mind the notion of sacred space within a church through the accepted visual conventions of local altarpieces. Examples such as Giovanni Bellini’s San Giobbe altarpiece (Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia, late fifteenth century)<sup>24</sup> and triptych (1488-89), currently located in the sacristy of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (Fig. 4), bear similar architectural characteristics, notably the semidomes richly ornamented with mosaics and the complex interplay of interior and exterior spaces, which visually echo the architectural features within Carpaccio’s work.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the rendering of the apse within Carpaccio’s 1510 “Presentation at the Temple” (Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia) underscores this same kind of fictive architecture that elaborated a similar visual-spatial continuity within the stone frame.<sup>26</sup> The deliberate spatial choices exemplified by Venetian art at this time suggests that Carpaccio intentionally blurred the distinction between the representation of an architectural component, namely the apse, and the very structure of an altarpiece in his rendering of Augustine’s “study” at the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*. I therefore argue that we are witnessing a complex visual assimilation of humanist *studiolo* and sacred space, or more precisely, the vision of a church interior—with an emphasis on the apse and choir—that evokes concrete liturgical, and even Eucharistic connotations.

Among the depicted liturgical objects within the space of the fictive altar, one can see two candlesticks, a censer, and books and a navicella-censer, an item, it is worth noting, that

<sup>21</sup> One notable exception is Daniela Ambrosini, who uses the term ‘chapel’ to describe the space. See AMBROSINI, “Victor Carpathius Fiebat...”, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> On the altarpieces in Venice, P. HUMFREY, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, New Haven, 1993. On Architectures in Venetian paintings of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, see E. FOSSMAN, “Über Architekturen in venezianischen Malerei des Cinquecento”, *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, 29 (1967), pp. 105-139. See also B. WILLIAMSON, “Altarpieces, Liturgy and Devotion”, *Speculum*, 79-2 (2004), pp. 341-406.

<sup>23</sup> D. ZARU, “Creating a Devotional Space. Architectural Metaphors in Venetian Renaissance Altarpieces”, *Artibus et historiae*, 78 (2018), pp. 21-37.

<sup>24</sup> See *Ibidem* and A. TEMPESTINI, *Giovanni Bellini*, New York–London–Paris, 1999, pp. 124-126. See also R. GOFFEN, “Bellini’s Altarpieces: Inside and Out”, *Notes in the History of Art*, 5.1, *Essays in honor of Howard McP. Davis* (1985), pp. 23-28.

<sup>25</sup> ZARU, “Creating a Devotional Space”, and TEMPESTINI, *Giovanni Bellini*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>26</sup> ZARU, “Creating a Devotional Space”, p. 32.



Fig. 4. Giovanni Bellini, *The Frari Triptych*, 1488, Venice, Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari

may very well correspond to a *navicella con doi ampole d'argento* listed in the inventory of the *Scuola* from 1557 and which may, in fact, be the same item displayed in the *Scuola* today. The miter on the altar and the nearby crozier are two episcopal insignia that refer to the liturgical and ecclesiastical status of Augustine as a bishop. Although the saint is certainly represented within the painting, these two objects nevertheless replicate the physical presence of their owner as if he was celebrating the liturgy at the altar without being present in corporeal form. Also meaningful is the depiction of a small bell that is oriented exactly on the axis formed on the left by the pilaster within the architectural construction. This significant visual alignment compels us to add this item to our group of liturgical implements; even if this object is not located on or within the altar, its presence suggests the liturgical use of the bell during the performance of Eucharistic consecration. The bell is activated by an acolyte at the very moment of the triple *Sanctus*, which derives from a passage in Isaiah (Chapter 6), and which theologically served to announce the vision of the resurrected Christ. Thus, even though the bell is not on the altar or in the apse in Carpaccio's painting, the composition implies a kind of extension of "sacred" space visually articulated by the spatial relationship between the apse and the room in its entirety, that is to say, the studiolo and crucially, the location of Augustine's desk, as if this contemporary Venetian furniture acted as an extension of the altar. Since the bell remains on the same axis as the left pilaster, this complex spatial interplay indicates the presence of the saint, both in the apse through the liturgical accoutrements and physically at his desk, at the hour of Compline, as confirmation of the legendary textual source of Carpaccio's scene, which describes Augustine writing a treatise on about the salvation of the

souls while hearing the voice of Jerome expound upon on the very nature of the Holy Trinity, the very theological element that remains fundamental to our understanding of the exegesis concerning the liturgical function of the *Sanctus*.<sup>27</sup> In other words, these two distinct spaces of apse and study within the painting act in concert to generate a “unique” sacred and liturgical space. The obvious reference to the liturgy of the consecration and more specifically, the execution of the *Sanctus*, produces a vision of the resurrected Christ that is established through the representation of seraph within the mosaic decoration of the conch (Fig. 5). As the book of Isaiah describes, the seraph is on the top of the angels’ hierarchy, which allows him to see the *Maiestas Domini*, that is, in theological terms, the perfect anticipation of the resurrected Christ. In contrast to Nagel and Wood’s disproportionate archeological and “anachronic” reading of this particular apse as a kind of citation of a mosaic at San Marco, I would argue that such specificity of iconography betrays a theologically sophisticated understanding on Carpaccio’s part on the liturgical reference to the *Sanctus* and its embodiment of the Resurrection.

It stands to reason that the statue of Christ on the altar assumes an even more important function within the painting than previously acknowledged. Even if the work is a tangible reference to a well-known work on display in Venice when Carpaccio’s painting cycle was executed, the concrete allusions to the liturgical and theological elements of the consecration of the Eucharist and its sacramental effect should lead us to conclude that it is no mere “artifact.” I propose that we should view its inclusion upon the altar not only as an “anachronic” object but as the “real” vision of the resurrected Christ at the very moment of consecration immediately after the performance of the *Sanctus*. Visions of the resurrected Christ, such as the iconography of the Mass of Saint Gregory, occur frequently in late-medieval art. In many examples, the figure of the resurrected Christ stands on the altar and faces the celebrant, who has activated the vision through the consecration of the Host and the wine (Fig. 6).<sup>28</sup> While Carpaccio does not specifically represent the Mass of Saint Gregory in the panel, his presumed knowledge of the iconography is reflected through its pictorial integration with key theological elements related to this liturgical moment after the performance of the *Sanctus* and the consecration. Note, for example, the figure of the resurrected Christ in Giovanni Bellini’s painting (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, 1475-1478), which bears marked similarities to Carpaccio’s statue (Fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> Even Carpaccio’s 1496 *Christ as Redeemer* (Udine, Gallery), which was probably commissioned for the Dominican church of San Pietro Martire in Udine, betrays a sensitivity to Passion iconography. Here the figure of Christ holds his cross and stands on a sort of pedestal reminiscent of Augustine’s “statue.” The presence of Eucharistic iconography, such as the Host and chalice expresses a clear visual link between the Christ of the Resurrection and the liturgy.<sup>30</sup>

Yet a third and final example absolutely confirms Carpaccio’s awareness of the liturgical dimension in such Christological iconography. His ca. 1502 *Birth of the Virgin* in the

<sup>27</sup> See E. PALAZZO, *L’invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l’art au Moyen Age*, Paris, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> C. W. BYNUM, “Seeing and Seeing Beyond: The Mass of St. Gregory in the Fifteenth Century”, *The Mind’s Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, J. H. HAMBURGER, A.-M. BOUCHÉ (eds.), Princeton, 2006, pp. 208-240.

<sup>29</sup> TEMPESTINI, *Bellini*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>30</sup> F. HARTT, “Carpaccio’s Meditation on the Passion”, *The Art Bulletin*, 22-1 (1940), pp. 25-35.



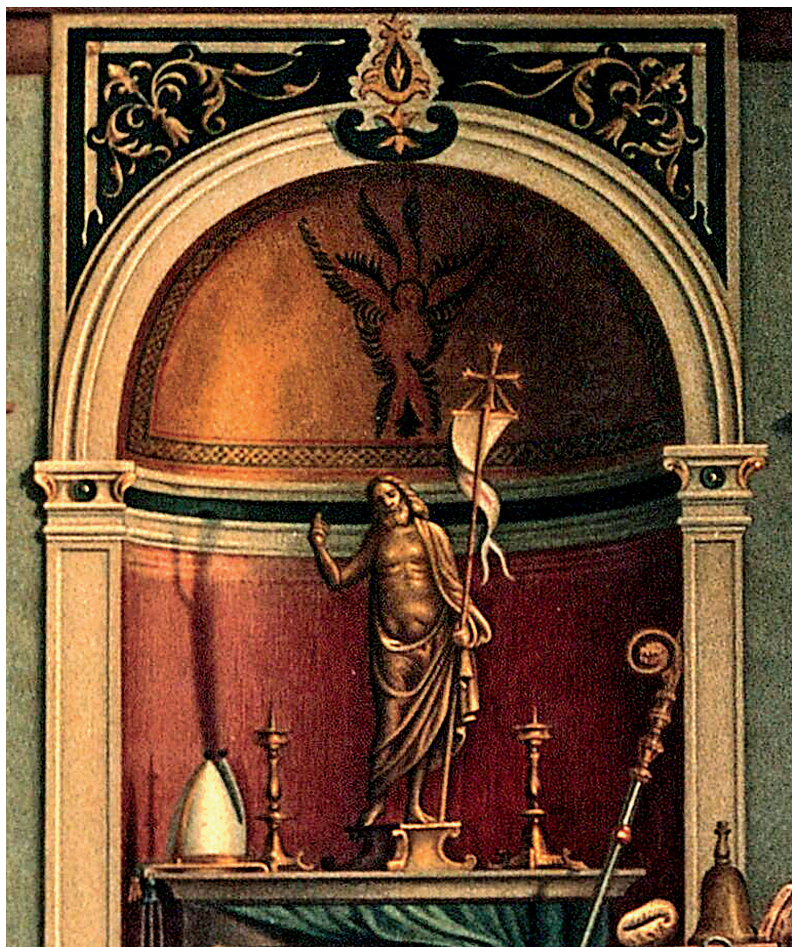


Fig. 5. Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Augustine in his Study*, Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, ca. 1502-1507, detail

Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, tellingly made for another confraternity, the *Scuola degli Albanesi*, demonstrates a clear connection to the moment of the *Sanctus* through a curious detail that has remained unnoticed in the scholarly literature (Fig. 8). A plaque hanging on the central wall of the interior contains a Hebrew inscription that does not correspond to the usual textual references that one might find in such a narrative, such as a Jewish prayer referring to the birth of the Virgin. Instead, the inscription replicates the exact passage taken from Isaiah 6:3 that describes the *Sanctus* and the anticipation of the vision of the *Maiestas Domini*.<sup>31</sup> In Carpaccio's rendering the very moment of the Virgin's birth becomes visually linked to

<sup>31</sup> L. BOREAN, "Nuove proposte e interpretazioni per le storie della vergine di Carpaccio nella scuola degli Albanesi", *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte*, 19 (1994), pp. 21-72, esp. 50.



Fig. 6. Pierre Spire (?), *The Mass of Saint Gregory*, ca. 1470-1477 (Chartreuse de Champmol), Paris, Musée du Louvre. R.F. 1941-8

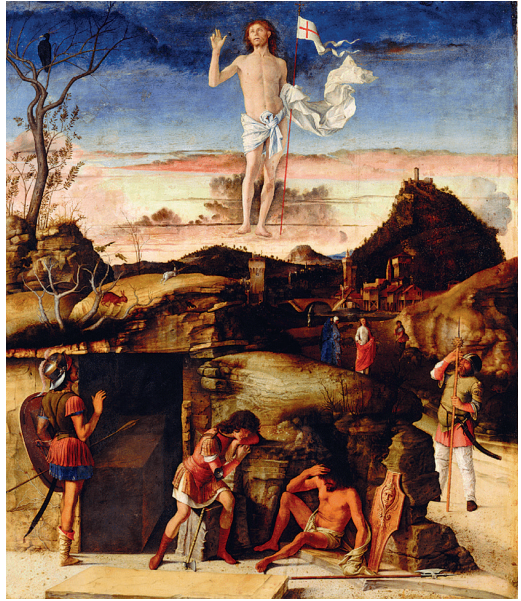


Fig. 7. Giovanni Bellini, *The Resurrection of Christ*, 1475-1478, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie

the anticipation of the Incarnation and Resurrection. One further salient detail that connects Carpaccio's statue of Christ in Augustine's study and the Bergamo work is the presence of an open curtain; the plaque containing the Hebrew inscription in the *Birth of the Virgin* bears a formal resemblance to the opened curtain on the lower part of the altar in *Saint Augustine's Study*. In other words, the fictive textile indicates a moment of revelation through *both* the inscribed textual reference from Isaiah and the statue of Christ: the vision of the *Sanctus* as a discrete liturgical moment. Although it is worth noting that, in the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* painting, the curtain does not reveal the statue of Christ because it also functions as a practical curtain for the closet below, it nevertheless accentuates specific liturgical allusions. We know from antique and medieval liturgical practices that the drawing of the curtain suspended on the ciborium occurred right at the performance of the *Sanctus* to render visible the reality of the resurrected Christ.<sup>32</sup> Thus, in a very subtle visual language, Carpaccio's painting unifies several temporalities within the space of the composition. With its theological references to the *Sanctus* and the resurrected Christ, the "sacred" space of the church interior unites with the "profane" space of the *studiolo*.

<sup>32</sup> E. PALAZZO, "Tirer le rideau dans la liturgie médiévale et voir le corps du Christ", in *Le rideau, le voile et le dévoilement du Proche-Orient ancien à l'Occident médiéval*, L.-J. BORD, V. DEBIAIS, E. PALAZZO (eds.), Paris, 2019, pp. 49-66.



This spatial integration extended well beyond the confines of the actual painting. Despite a lack of solid documentation on the rituals that occurred in the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*, we remain certain that its building also had a liturgical function. Like all confraternities in the Middle Ages and in the early Renaissance, the brothers of the *Scuola* were allowed to celebrate certain liturgical feasts in the confraternity's headquarters or elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> As noted earlier in this essay, Cardinal Bessarion's 1464 indulgence confirmed the Scuola's celebration of holy feasts, including those for Saints George, Jerome, and Tryphon, along with the feast of *Corpus Christi* and the first Sunday after the Ascension.<sup>34</sup> Even if we do not have solid evidence that these events were commemorated in the presence of Carpaccio's painting cycle, we should recall that certain liturgies were performed near *Saint Augustine in His Study* on account of its highly charged Eucharistic references. Even if the feast of *Corpus Christi* was commonly celebrated by confraternities in Early Modern Italy, the Eucharistic visual elements within the composition would have been particularly meaningful to the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* in this specific liturgical context.<sup>35</sup> That the confraternity's 1502 installation of Saint George's relics within an altar in the Assembly *sala* corresponds to the commencement of Carpaccio's work at the *Scuola* allows for reasoned speculation that the artist was highly aware of the kinds of rituals that occurred within the interior space.<sup>36</sup> In sum, the very setting of *Saint Augustine in His Study* may have resulted in specific iconographic choices on the part of the artist that privileged notions of sacred space and the centrality of the Eucharistic ritual at the moment of the consecration of the Host and the wine, the act that generates the vision of the resurrected Christ at the moment of the *Sanctus*. Without rejecting the argument of the statue's function as an "artifactual" citation to ornament the interior of a humanist's *studiolo*, I suggest that, by highlighting the liturgical dimension of this detail, we further enrich our understanding of Carpaccio's visually and theologically sophisticated work. By emphasizing Carpaccio's primary goal of depicting the sacramental effect of the Eucharistic consecration, I have demonstrated that the statue is not merely a purely material object, but rather a sacramental vision. Had the work merely reflected the collecting practices of contemporary humanists, then the statue would have been better situated with the other *studiolo* objects dutifully catalogued by previous scholars. Its presence on the altar can only confirm its liturgical significance.

Given the narrative centrality of the Eucharistic liturgy, Carpaccio also invites us to consider the prominent sensory elements present within the iconography of the panel. By definition, the liturgy is a sensorial act, and all its animated components ensure the sacramental effect of the ritual.<sup>37</sup> The staging within Carpaccio's painting places a tremendous importance

<sup>33</sup> Ch. F. BLACK, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1989. The pages on Carpaccio's paintings at the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* are very descriptive, pp. 243-245.

<sup>34</sup> ...*Confessis qui ecclesiam in qua dicte societatis in festis santi Georgii, Corporis Christi, sancti Hieronymi, sancti Trifonis et in prima dominica post ascensionem Domini devote visitaverint...* PEROCCHO, *Carpaccio...*, p. 215.

<sup>35</sup> D. ZARDIN, "'A Single Body': Eucharistic Piety and Confraternities of the Body of Christ in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Texts, Images and Devotion", in *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*, C. EISENBICHLER (ed.), Leiden-Boston, 2019, pp. 109-132.

<sup>36</sup> According to PEROCCHO, *Carpaccio...*, the ceiling of the hall where the paintings have been depicted was blue, gold and red, like the ceiling on Saint Augustine's painting, pp. 214-215.

<sup>37</sup> See PALAZZO, *L'invention chrétienne...*

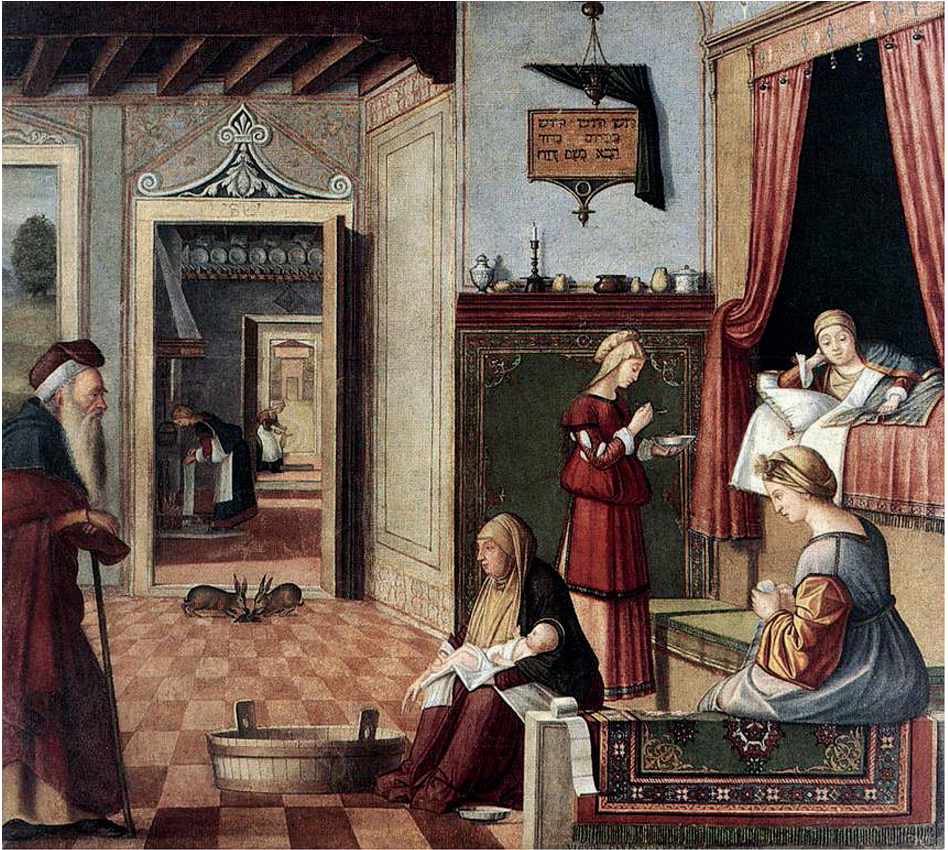


Fig. 8. Vittore Carpaccio, *Birth of the Virgin*, ca. 1502, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara

on the expression of the five senses through different objects and iconographic details. The presence of the censer remains but one obvious example of a depicted object that evokes the activation of the sense of smell within the liturgy. It is also worth recalling the animation of sound through the bell at the very moment of the *Sanctus*, or even by the “presence” of music through the placement of the choir book sheets bearing musical notation. The sound is also referenced, moreover, through the depiction of a shell placed on the desk, next to the bell, which could remind the viewer of the legendary narrative about Augustine’s desire to resolve the theological issue on the nature of the Trinity while strolling on the shore. According to this tale, Augustine’s questioning of a young boy who was listening to the sound of the entire sea by placing a shell against his ear compelled the saint to recognize that the Trinity is a mystery comparable to the possibility of one human trying to access the sound of the sea in its totality through one single shell. Its prominent location within the composition could only sensorially allude to the very same theme “discussed” by the deceased Jerome in his announcement to Augustine. In sum, all these sundry objects refer to the activation of the senses of smell and

hearing for the beholder, yet the primary sense is clearly granted to vision—and theological vision, in particular—through the perception of the resurrected Christ through the consecration of the Host. During this condensed liturgical moment, all senses evoked within the painting are harnessed to achieve this desired effect.

Illuminating this theme, literally, are the pronounced theological and narrative elements generated by the rays of light streaming through the window to the right of Augustine. Divine by nature, the light remains the key source of the revelation of Jerome's death while the saint is at his desk, and it is this very same light that has the ability to permeate the room and amplify the sacred atmosphere of the space through the series of cast shadows perceptible within the interior. Indeed, the complex relationship between light and shadow accentuates the central iconographic features of the painting, even echoing certain visual conventions present in the works of Giotto and Piero della Francesca. Piero, for example, deployed rays of light to exemplify the theology of the Incarnation, through the cast shadow of the beam, a symbol of Christ, in his *Annunciation* in Arezzo.<sup>38</sup>

Within Carpaccio's study, the rays of light enter through the window to announce Jerome's death to Augustine, but they also serve to elucidate the central theme of the Eucharistic liturgy. This very same light illuminates the apse as a reference to the brightness emanating from the vision of the Resurrection. The cast shadows of the miter, the candlesticks, and above all the figure of Christ atop the altar also underscore the iconographic significance of the liturgy.

Such dramatic allusions to light might even refer to Jerome's own commentary about the relationship between light, colors, and shadow in his discussion of Zechariah 5: 5-8: "The (events) are regarded like certain shadows and lines of future images, to be filled in with their colors by future events,"<sup>39</sup> suggesting the emergence of forms and life from the movements of shadows, which anticipate the future and emphasize a specific concept of temporality. Several biblical citations referring to shadow, moreover, convey notions of protection and healing, primarily by God.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the cast shadows in Carpaccio's painting, especially those in the apse, are not at all negative elements. On the contrary, they serve as "positive" features on account of their association with divine light as well as the shadow of the resurrected Christ, who spiritually and physically protects and heals humanity. According to such biblical passages and their exegesis, the idea of shadow is not associated with darkness. That shadow must be thought in terms of divine protection rather than opposition to light is a key feature in Christian

<sup>38</sup> On shadows and cast shadows in art, V. I. STOICHITA, *A Short History of the Shadow*, London, 1997 and E. H. GOMBRICH, *Shadows. The Depiction of Cast Shadow in Western Art*, New Haven-London, 1995. J. I. MILLER, "Symbolic Light in Giotto and the Early Quattrocento in Florence", *Notes in the History of Art*, 5-1, *Essays in honor of Howard McP. Davis* (1985), pp. 7-13 and, for Piero della Francesca, L. SCHNEIDER, "Shadows Metaphors and Piero della Francesca's Arezzo 'Annunciation'", *Ibidem*, pp. 18-22.

<sup>39</sup> *Haec quasi umbras quasdam et lineas futurae imaginis duximus ut quod reliquum est suis coloribus impleamus* (PL. 25 col. 1449C), cited by B. C. TILGHMAN, "Ornamentation and Incarnation in Insular Art", *Gesta*, 55-2 (2016) pp. 157-177, esp. p. 169. For a Byzantine reception of that idea, H.L. Kessler, "Gazing at the Future. The Parousia Miniature in Vatican Cod. fr. 699", *Spiritual Seeing. Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art*, Philadelphia, 2000, pp. 88-103.

<sup>40</sup> See SCHNEIDER, "Shadows Metaphors..."

thought; it is a complement to the divine light while darkness is the contrary of light. The complex iconography of Carpaccio's painting offers an expressive play of light and shadow that is similar to Botticelli's 1480 fresco depicting the same theme of the announcement of Jerome's death to Augustine in Florence's Ognissanti church. As Julia Miller has noted, the play of light and shadow in the iconography probably interacted with the natural light in the church, according to the spatial orientation of the fresco.<sup>41</sup> The primacy of light is also highlighted by the inscription on the frieze above Saint Augustine: *Redde nos claros lampas radiosa sine qua terra tota est umbrosa* ("O bright light, restore us with clarity without which the whole world is in obscurity or shadow"). Reminiscent of the theological elements visualized in Carpaccio's interpretation of this narrative, the inscription in Botticelli's painting also emphasizes that the word "shadow" means "obscurity" and perhaps underscores humanity's need of the divine light's protection to escape the darkness of the world, namely the complement to the light.

### CONCLUSION: THE CHIASTIC EFFECT OF THE THEOLOGICAL VISION

Carpaccio's painting of Saint Augustine in his study offers a very rich and meaningful case study to think differently about the theory of "Anachronic Renaissance," by moving beyond its theoretical parameters. It also provides a series of profound thoughts about the perpetuation process of the "long Middle Ages," conveying key ideas on its liturgy and theology, primarily the Eucharistic liturgy. I have demonstrated the key role played by the essence of Eucharistic ritual, namely the moment of the consecration, just after the execution of the *Sanc-tus*, in order to accentuate the notion of humanistic knowledge underscored by the presence of some "classical" objects referring to the iconography of a *studiolo*. Therefore, we can assert that, in Carpaccio's painting, the liturgy's sanctity encapsulates the comprehensive unification of temporality and space, i.e., the sacred space of the place of the celebration of the liturgy and the concrete space of Saint Augustine's study. I would argue, moreover, that the powerful yet subtle expression of Christ's Resurrection, generated through a liturgical vision, had the capability of encompassing all human activities, such as the quiet work of a theologian, understood as a humanist in his *studiolo* by the Venetian painter. Finally, Carpaccio's painting emphasizes the thematically central vision of the resurrected Christ at the moment of consecration as *the* liturgical moment that governs all aspects of life. It should be noted that Augustine and Jerome are obviously the major characters in the painting, in addition to perhaps the painter himself. Indeed, the little dog quietly seated in the middle of the room, his sight focused on Augustine or on the rays of light entering to the room through the window, is possibly an evocation of the painter as a *metteur en scène*, the organizer of the composition and its complex iconography. Some scholars have previously argued that the dog could be the painter, according to the knowledge of an iconographic tradition but also from the Latin expression *Victor Carpathius Fingebat*, an apparently rare signature at this moment, which could call to mind Carpaccio's ability to create and to organize a fictive world. This assumption remains a source of debate.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> J. I. MILLER, "An Iconography of Form: Space and Light in Botticelli's St. Augustine and Ghirlandaio's St. Jerome", *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 14 (1988), pp. 78-98.

<sup>42</sup> See AMBROSINI, "Victor Carpathius..."; S. COHEN, "Ars simia naturae. The Animal as Mediator and Alter Ego of the Artist in the Renaissance", *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 43 (2017), pp. 202-231 and foremost Anne-Marie



Nevertheless, I'm struck by the similar tension visible both in the rigid posture of the dog (maybe the painter staring at the bishop) and Augustine.

For many art historians, many of them medievalists, a depicted object, whatever its nature, evokes the traditional conception of the museum, an inheritance of our understanding of the *cabinet de curiosités*. Nevertheless, in order to capture an "object's" true identity, we certainly must move beyond the intense desire to "museify" the objects from the past. That certainly explains, among other reasons concerning the so-called theory of the "Anachronic in Renaissance art," why art historians who have previously written on Carpaccio's painting fundamentally misunderstood the profound meaning of the presence of the objects in the painting, especially those reserved for liturgical use. These objects remain very active and animated, even if they appear "quiet" and *au repos* as if the painter had depicted a "still life." As I have previously demonstrated, Saint Augustine is both represented as a "scholar" (or a humanist) and as an active celebrant, animating the objects and the sacred space of the "choir" and consequently rendering possible the sacramental effect through its vision of the resurrected Christ. The visual language developed by the painter expresses this idea through an imbrication of time and space. The space generated by the presence of the desk and the time of Augustine's study is visually intertwined with the liturgical space "behind" the "choir" and its temporality, that is to say, the liturgical celebration and its theological temporality.<sup>43</sup> In support of my hypothesis, one must recall the "physical" link (or connection) between the desk and its horizontality with that of the altar, the verticality of the pilaster and the bell, as well as the desk's vertical support, which looks a bit like a liturgical candlestick. As I have previously addressed, Augustine is present in both spaces, as a scholar and as a celebrant, evoked primarily through his crozier and miter. He is also present through his treatise on the joy of those souls who had achieved eternal bliss in Paradise with Christ, thus amplifying the link with the apse's liturgical theme, and the theme of Trinity conveyed by Jerome during Saint Augustine's reflection at the hour of Compline.

The visual link created by the geometry of the composition allows us to qualify this space as a chiasmic one. Indeed, Carpaccio appears to have visually articulated the idea of a chiasm, knitting together motives, iconography, space, and even time. The chiasmic space within the painting's composition or more aptly described, the visual chiasm, joins together the time and space of the study with that of the apse of the liturgical "choir." The divine light which transforms the entire room into a spiritual atmosphere is not the only iconographic feature of this chiasmic space. It also suggests that the two spaces depicted –the one around the desk and the one in the apse– merge as one, a chiasmic space created by the divine light that unifies two temporalities to express a specific theological concept. The divine light is, *per se*, the origin of the chiasm and the chiasmic space because it belongs both to the legend

LECOQ, "Finit. Le peintre comme 'fictor' au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance*, 37-2 (1975), pp. 225-243. See also J. HAMBURGER, "The Hand of God and the Hand of the Scribe: Craft and Collaboration at Arnstein", *Die Bibliothek des Mittelalters als dynamischer Prozess*, ed. by M. EMBACH, Trierer Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften 3, Wiesbaden, 2012, pp. 53–78.

<sup>43</sup> A same remark could be made about the famous painting by Antonello da Messina showing Saint Jerome in his study in which we note the presence of some architectural motives reminiscent of a church interior. (London, National Gallery, ca. 1475).



surrounding the annunciation of Jerome's death as well as the resurrected Christ as a source of light. Yet allow me to demonstrate the existence of a second chiasm not only generated by the light but by the painting itself. I strongly feel the need to reintegrate the true status of Carpaccio's panel at the *Scuola degli Schiavoni*: a painting that participates in the historical and liturgical function of the hall when it was put on display in the sixteenth century. Recall that the painting, with its powerful liturgical and theological evocation of the Eucharistic celebration, was in the main *sala* of the *Scuola* where an altar dedicated to Saint George was located and served as a locus for many liturgical celebrations, including the Mass of the *Corpus Christi*. I therefore argue that the painting, with its liturgical and theological content, interacted with the hall and the audience present for such liturgies, primarily the brothers of the confraternity. In other words, the painting and its iconography are also fully a part of the chiasmic space created between the "object" and the space of the hall, especially during the moment of the ritual of the mass. A similar remark can be made about Botticelli's Saint Augustine's fresco in the Ognissanti church in Florence. In some ways, one may speak of a "chiasmic spectatorship," whose medium is Saint Augustine himself, as a celebrant, as a major figure of the Christian theology, and as the "liminal" space between the apse depicted in the painting, the place of his work and the hall itself. Therefore, the second chiasmic space I discuss remains rooted in the Eucharistic theology and the permanent vision of the resurrected Christ. In the same vein, we can perhaps read the relationship between the painting depicting Jerome's funeral and the one showing Augustine as informed of Jerome's death in term of "liturgical chiasm," that is, the celebration of the Eucharist as a funeral ritual, and not according to a telepathic plan elaborated by the painter as Stoichita had proposed. This hypothesis could confirm the error related to the reordering of the paintings after the building's renovation and support the possibility that the painting of Augustine preceded the panel depicting Jerome's funeral.

It goes without saying that Carpaccio himself would have certainly been aware of the cross-referential elements generated by the presence of the panel within the hall through its demonstration of the timeless effect of the sacramental theology and its encapsulation of other significant iconographic features within the painting (like the idea of the *studiolo*) and its probable historical context in which Carpaccio participated, possibly without even having an awareness of its implications. This historical background refers to the circumstances of the foundation of the *Scuola degli Schiavoni* and the need for a reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Churches, particularly in tandem with the motivations of Cardinal Bessarion, who wished to simultaneously achieve that aim and defeat the Turks. It could thus be argued that the liturgical theology embedded within the painting was as effective as the relics of Saint George in the defense of the Church (both in the East and in the West) against its non-Christian enemies.<sup>44</sup>

By way of conclusion, I would suggest that we revisit Hans Belting's consequential theory on the transition between the devotional cult images in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages

<sup>44</sup> A. MARINKOVIC, "Saints's Relics in Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni: An Anti-Ottoman Pantheon", *Il Capitale culturale*, Supplementi 07 (2018), pp. 25-44. On Carpaccio's relationship between the East and the West, M. VICKERS, "Carpaccio and the West", in *Bosporus: Court, City and Country in Byzantium. Festschrift Cyril Mango, Byzantische Forschungen*, S. EFTHYMADES, C. RAPP, D. TSOUGARIKIS (eds.), XXI, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 343-355.

to the work of art, beginning with Renaissance Art.<sup>45</sup> Carpaccio's painting *Saint Augustine in His Study* offers, at least in my opinion, a good example that challenges Belting's observations. Rather than obscuring the "medieval legacy" of the liturgical and theological elements within the panel, the Venetian painter concretely integrated these features within the composition of a studiolo-like interior and extended this space into the very hall of the *Scuola*, as a subtle meditation on the chiasmic interplay between the real and fictive spaces.

In other words, Vittore Carpaccio was following a "tradition" that remained very much alive in the sixteenth century. He was, of course, not the only artist of the Renaissance to incorporate the "medieval" into so-called Early Modern masterpieces, and one only needs to allow oneself the awareness – a medievalist's reflection on such matters, if you will – to discern these expressions of "continuity" through the theological, liturgical, and visual elements that remain ever present in their compositions and display.

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<sup>45</sup> H. BELTING, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, English translation, Chicago-London, 1994. See J. HAMBURGER's review of Belting's monograph in *The Books that Shaped Art History: From Gombrich and Greenberg to Alpers and Krauss*, London, 2013, pp. 202-215, 228-230.

