Chapter 1: Breastfeeding Pero

Sign of Desire, Transgression, and Dionysian Excess (1525–50)

It is hard to do justice to the bewildering complexity of representations of Pero and Cimon in the arts, which started to appear in the early sixteenth century in a wide range of media: bronze medals, frescoes, engravings, drawings, oil paintings, ceramics, inlaid wood decorations, and statues. Each medium was associated with different viewing practices and generated its own framework of references. The significance of the motif differed, depending on the stylistic choices and visual rhetoric employed by printmakers in Nürnberg, gallery painters in Venice, or palace artists at Fontainebleau. What these different renderings have in common is a distinctly erotic presentation of the anecdote in response to Valerius Maximus's ekphrastic challenge (see Chapter 4).

The motif appeared in both its mother-daughter and father-daughter variety, although the cross-gendered version was more popular. The earliest depictions of the theme emerged independently of each other in Southern Germany and Northern Italy around 1525.[1] They consist of a miniature pornographic print by Barthel Beham (1525) (Figure 1.1); a Venetian oil-painting of the "bella donna" type, now lost, reproduced in an auction catalog in Vienna from 1922 (Figure 1.2);[2] a round monochrome ceiling fresco in the monastery of Sant'Abbondio in Cremona (Figure 1.3) inspired by a bronze medal preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 1.4);[3] and a ceramic dish from Pesaro.[4] Of the mother-daughter variety, we have fifteenth-century French book illuminations (Figure 1.5) and a few prints and drawings in the sixteenth century until Poussin rendered the motif famous in his *Gathering of the Manna* of 1639 (Figure 3.3). The two versions compete with each other for greater shock value, the former because of its incestuous implications and the latter because of the two women's potentially dangerous bodily intimacy. While the mother-daughter version expresses reciprocity in kinship relations despite its lesbian overtones, the father-daughter version is devoid of a moralizing frame other than its thinly veiled pretext of representing "filial piety." The latter cross-gendered scene

Figure 1.1: Barthel Beham, Pero and Cimon, 1525

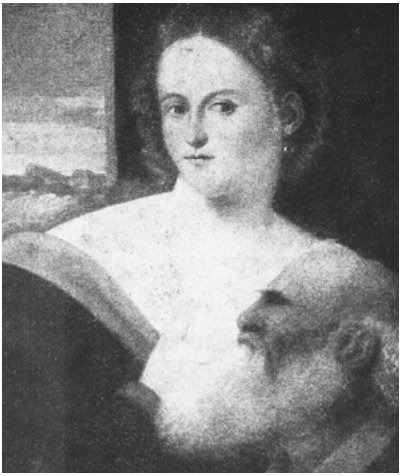

Figure 1.2: Venetian, Pero and Cimon, ca. 1520

Figure 1.3: Francesco Casella or Galeazzo Rivelli (della Barba), Pietas, 1513

Figure 1.4: Pietati, early 16th c.

Figure 1.5: Unnamed Roman Girl Feeds her Mother in Prison, Illumination of Giovanni Boccaccio, De cleres et nobles femmes, 1402

became more popular, either because it was felt to be more daring – because of its incestuous insinuations – or because it was felt to be more normative. After all, what is more natural than for a father to consume his daughter's body fluids?

The story of Pero and Cimon struck at the heart of early modern patriarchy because it thematized the exploitation of daughters and the displacement of mothers on which its patrilineal family organization depended. Visually, it dramatizes the weakness and pitiful state of Pero's guilty old father, who depends on her for his survival and rehabilitation, and flaunts the beauty and life-giving power of the young woman, who bears her sacrifice well and assumes a variety of postures ranging from tenderness and modesty to open sexual defiance. The voyeuristic energies it mobilizes make the viewer complicit with what he sees. Due to its instant success in the early sixteenth century – after a long hiatus in the Middle Ages during which the mother-daughter version monopolized the discourse on filial piety – the motif proliferated in three different discursive and visual contexts that gave it meaning. In Reformation Germany, Pero and Cimon contributed to contemporary discussions on allegory and the purpose of visual representations in an age of iconoclasm. In Renaissance Venice, the motif emerged as a sensuous half-length portrayal of an eroticized "bella donna" in the context of man-murdering "women on top."[5] At court in Mantua and Fontainebleau, it merged with Orientalizing scenes of excess derived from Egyptian antiquity.

The existing literature on the topic is meager. Starting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the motif generated some debate among historians of art and literature.[6] Monographs are entirely missing, but there are two interdisciplinary Italian essay collections with art historical contributions of varying quality.[7] A noteworthy recent article on Pero and Cimon in the arts is by Anna Tuck-Scala, with a focus on Caravaggio's rendering of the motif as part of his altarpiece *The Seven Works of Mercy* (1606).[8] In this article, the author shows the depth of Pero and Cimon's iconographical tradition by pointing to ancient representations of Artemis Ephesia, a multi-breasted fertility goddess, and by referring to W. Deonna's research on pre-Roman traces of the motif. Deonna argues that in Maximus's version of the two twin stories, earlier Etruscan notions of ritual kinship and divine adoption through breastfeeding are re-presented, but also problematized, in the framework of Roman – i.e., patriarchal – blood-kinship.[9] Maximus's anecdotes thus seem to colonize former, long defeated, expressions of ritual adult breastfeeding by superimposing a new meaning onto them, turning echoes of a lost semantic universe into a showpiece of patriarchal Roman family values. Tuck-Scala follows Deonna in suggesting that both the Christian tradition of Charity and the iconography of the Madonna Lactans harbor traces of such earlier pre-Roman traditions, since the charitable "nursing" of strangers can be viewed

as an expression of spiritual adoption. Tuck-Scala lists important precursors to Caravaggio's rendering of Pero and Cimon – most notably the fresco by Perino del Vaga and the stucco by Rosso Fiorentino, but also Giulio Romano's drawing and the Beham brothers' prints. She points to Caravaggio's followers Christiaen van Couwenbergh, Bartolomeo Manfredi, Matthias Stomer, Dirck von Baburen, and Willem van Honthorst, all of whom painted the motif at least once. And finally, she mentions former art historians' speculations about a lost *Roman Charity* by Titian and states that according to Neapolitan inventories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, at least eleven collectors in this city owned a painting of the motif.[10]

Robert Rosenblum's article on "Romantic Lactations" is very informative as well, pointing to a late blossoming of the iconography in French art after 1760 (see Chapter 3).[11] Of special interest is a late comeback of the mother-daughter motif in the revolutionary period after a hiatus of nearly a century and a half, with three paintings by Jean-Charles-Nicaise Perrin (1791, lost), Angelika Kauffmann (1794, lost), and Etienne-Barthélemy Garnier (1801, lost).[12] Rosenblum also mentions Louis Hersent's colonial adaptation of the topic, which depicts Bartolomeo de las Casas in the role of languishing Cimon and an Amerindian princess as charitable Pero (1808).[13] Another late eighteenth-century rendering of *Roman Charity*, by Johann Georg Weber (1769), is the subject of Bettina Simmich's investigation.[14] Further worthy of mention is the exhibition catalog *L'allégorie dans la peinture*: *la représentation de la charité au XVIIe siècle* (1987), curated by, among others, Alain Tapié. In his introduction, Tapié squarely situates the iconography of Pero and Cimon within the larger framework of allegorical representations of Charity, referring, again, to Deonna's notion of breastfeeding as a form of ritual adoption.[15] As part of this exhibition, eighteen *Roman Charities* by early modern artists were – for the first and only time in a modern setting – exhibited.[16] Given that Andor Pigler lists 236 renderings of the topic in his *Barockthemen* (1956) – a number my research has increased to 328 – further curating work in this area seems desirable.[17]

For our purposes, most interesting is David Freedberg's discussion of Roman Charity in *The Power of Images* (1989), a book that seeks to understand why certain images move their viewers to "mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; [why people] … are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt."[18] Taking Rubens's Amsterdam version of the motif as an example, Freedberg talks about the peculiar force of this picture to arouse sexually, in a perfect response to Valerius Maximus's challenge of ekphrastic desire (Figure 1.6). In his anecdote of Pero and Cimon, Maximus either claimed or wished to see their "living and breathing bodies" depicted in a painting of such fascination that viewers could not "take their eyes off the scene."[19] Chiding art historians for losing themselves in lengthy iconographic debates when confronted with Titian's Venus of Urbino, Cranach's nudes, or

Figure 1.6: Peter Paul Rubens, Roman Charity, 1630

the Behams' pornographic prints in an attempt to distance themselves from the emotional challenge these images pose, Freedberg affirms the "erotic basis of true understanding," even though – or perhaps because – "the hermeneutic quest is always based on the repression and perversion of desire."[20] Freedberg shies away from attributing the insight about "relations between sexual engagement and cognition" to Maximus himself, despite the fact that the Roman author claims that for purposes of historical education, paintings such as *Pero and Cimon* are "more effective than literary memorials."[21] Maximus's disclaimer of the power of his own words to evoke mental images compared with the visual arts is just another indication of the play with reversals that characterize his twin anecdotes about "filial piety." Freedberg argues that the resulting irony is unintended, an effect of the pictorial rendering of a virtue whose bodily exercise requires a focus on the young woman's breasts that almost inevitably produces sexual desire in its viewers.[22] In my view, the ambiguity inherent to Rubens's and other artists' renderings of the theme is indebted to the specific – and very deliberate – rhetoric of Maximus's narration, which sensationalizes the scene between Pero and Cimon through recourse to ekphrasis and openly speculates about the possibility of "misinterpreting" the mother-daughter breastfeeding scene as two women's sex play "against nature."[23]

In the Renaissance, artists and their audiences were particularly drawn to such ironies, which they connected with debates about the respective merits and flaws of verbal and visual representations. Already in fifteenth-century book illuminations of the mother-daughter scene in French translations of Boccaccio's *Famous Women* (1362), a certain erotic, thus ironic, effect can be detected. In manuscript Fr. 599 at the Bibliothèque Nationale, the depiction of the mother's half-naked leg, of the daughter's fully exposed big breast, and of the intently staring guard who scratches his beard in disbelief, contribute to a remarkable eroticization of the scene (Figure 4.5). In manuscript Fr. 12420, the depiction is less graphic, but the lavish nature of the two women's dresses, especially the red color and beautiful folds of the mother's gown, evoke considerable sensual pleasure, which is enhanced by the utopian landscape in which the act takes place (Figure 1.5).[24] A similar sensuous effect is achieved by Dürer's Madonna Lactans a century later, whose striking red dress draped in complicated folds, set in an illusionist landscape, is breathtakingly beautiful.[25] In manuscript Fr. 598, it is the daughter who wears a sumptuous red dress with a low-cut neckline; her breast is, again, centrally displayed, and the prominent bars of the prison window through which we see the scene add to the viewer's voyeuristic experience (Figure 4.4). The latter is true also for manuscript Fr. 599 and the woodcut in Steinhöwel's Boccaccio edition from 1473 (Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the mother-daughter version was depicted at least three more times. Each version depicts the couple in a more or less eroticizing manner. A trapezoidal bronze plaquette in the Bode-Museum, Berlin, shows a scantily clad young woman in a kneeling position in front of another semi-nude woman, whose facial wrinkles and saggy breasts reveal her to be older (Figure 1.7). The daughter's left arm and shoulder are entirely exposed, as is her left breast. The hungry mother clutches her daughter's left arm and suckles eagerly, crouching on the ground. In the background, a sculpted rectangle suggests an architectural setting, which, however, remains undefined. On top, two cornucopias are decoratively conjoined.[26]

A round medal, likewise held in the Bode-Museum, shows another adult breastfeeding couple (Figure 1.8). E.F. Bange calls it *Cimon and Pero,* even though the suckling figure wears a headdress, is of a tender constitution, reveals breasts behind her right arm when looked at from an oblique angle, and is positioned like the *Sleeping Ariadne* in the Vatican.[27] The nursing daughter kneels in front of her; both women embrace each other. The elaborate folds of their garments as well as the mother's semi-reclining position, her legs intertwined in the manner of Ariadne, reveal this medal's eroticizing and classicizing intention. The inscription below *(Pietate)* confirms a direct link with Maximus's anecdotes.[28]

Hans Kels the Elder depicts the daughter who breastfed her mother in the form of a carved tondo, which decorates his board game "für den Langen

Figure 1.7: Daughter Breastfeeding her Mother, Bronze Plaquette, early 16th c.

Figure 1.8: Pietati, Bronze Medal, early 16th c.

Figure 1.9: Hans Kels the Elder, Daughter Breastfeeding her Mother, 1537

Puff" (1537) (Figure 1.9). The daughter, again, kneels in front of her mother, who is seated on the ground. Both figures are properly dressed, except for the daughter's exposed right breast. A barred window in the back and thick iron chains hanging from the walls reveal the interior to be a prison. An inscription illuminates the viewer: "A young woman from the common folk nourishes her mother in prison with the milk of her own breasts."[29] This depiction is perhaps less overtly sensuous, but it is surrounded by representations of mythological love scenes – among them, the *Abduction of Amymone by Neptune*. Anja Ebert has recently shown how this latter roundel resembles three wooden miniature reliefs that show Nereides and Neptune riding on a dolphin, which in turn refer to Georg Pencz's print *The Sea Monster*.[30] Such juxtapositions of Roman Charity and mermaid scenes recur quite frequently, indicating that among artists intent on appropriating ancient erotic motifs, Maximus's examples of "filial piety" were seen as belonging to a repertoire of images that included long-tailed sea gods, breastfeeding sphinxes, Egyptian fertility goddesses, and similar "grotesques."[31] Kels's board game intensifies the impression of fantastic lushness through the rows of exotic birds, wild animals, and unicorns connecting the tondi.

Visual representations of the mother-daughter scene were thus either directly eroticized or placed in the vicinity of erotic images. Medals, in particular, had a special status for the development of Renaissance erotic art, as Ulrich Pfisterer has argued. They not only were among the first media to depict classicizing themes but also were often given as tokens of love, and figured prominently in the development of male homoerotic cultures.[32] They were choice objects for emotional arousal, as they could be secretly fondled and cried over.[33] Pfisterer ranks them among the "most intellectually challenging" Renaissance art forms, because of the interplay between image and inscriptions they offered and the cultured, and intimate, conversations they were apt to inspire.[34] It thus seems reasonable to propose that the two bronze plaquettes mentioned above, especially the medal of the Ariadne type, either openly celebrate or implicitly suggest physical love between women.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, representations of the mother-daughter couple continue to be rare and confined to the so-called "minor" genres, while images of Pero and Cimon proliferate after 1525. Modern scholars have little to say on the relative neglect of the same-sex scene in the visual arts. Maria Grazia Fachechi writes that only a heterosexual framing of the scene enables the eroticization of the image and marks the exaltation of the daughter's gesture as heroic.[35] Elisabeth R. Knauer calls the father-daughter version "artistically more feasible" [künstlerisch dankbarer].[36] Roberto Danese argues that the mother-daughter version "simply" celebrates reciprocity, while the father-daughter variety problematizes the "polar inversion of a highly illicit transfer of blood," namely incest. He concludes: "the two women simply

Figure 1.10: Hans Sebald Beham, after Barthel Beham, Three Women in a Bath House, 1548

exchange their roles … which is why such physical intimacy between two women could not result [to appear] so very insupportable."[37] In other words: the all-female nursing scene was too banal and unspectacular to merit artists' attention.

I tend to assume the opposite. In my view, the same-sex version became too daring once the proliferation of Maximus's text in vernacular languages made the irony and slipperiness of the daughter's alleged virtuous example obvious. While earlier literary references such as Boccaccio's *Famous Women* and Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* contained the potentially scandalous implications of the breastfeeding mother-daughter scene within a moralizing framework of women's worthies – of which echoes can still be found in Symphorien Champier's and Agrippa von Nettesheim's treatises – this possibility vanished with a greater awareness of the original source.[38] It is, of course, also reasonable to assume that early modern audiences were more at ease with depictions of cross-gendered incest than an all-female lactation scene, which is in sync with scholarship on the great provocation that the "rediscovery" of the clitoris posed to male scholars who immediately relegated this body organ to the illicit realm of lesbian sex.[39]

Figure 1.11: Hans Sebald Beham, after Barthel Beham, Pero and Cimon, 1544

However, the small prints of the brothers Barthel (1502–40) and Sebald Beham (1500–50), who between them produced six different renderings of *Pero and Cimon*, do not affirm this hypothesis. Among the many outrageous scenes they depicted were openly sexual images of women in a bathhouse (Figure 1.10).[40] Clearly at ease with depicting naked women tickling each other's genitals, they nonetheless preferred the father-daughter version of Maximus's anecdotes on "filial piety." Their preference for the cross-gendered nursing scene might be due to the specific ekphrastic challenge it was associated with since Maximus, which they explored in the context of Reformation debates on iconoclasm and the purpose of visual representations. Barthel's first rendering of the theme is usually brought in connection with a brief jail term that he, his brother Sebald, and their common friend Georg Pencz served for charges of atheism earlier that year (Figure 1.1).[41] It depicts a young woman, loosely draped in a piece of cloth but entirely naked from her waist down, kneeling between the chained legs of a bearded man. She offers him her right breast with a nursing woman's typical V-hold, i.e., the slightly splayed pointer and middle fingers of her left hand. The man, seen in profile, with lush hair, a beard, and a furry top, suckles her milk, eyes closed. Pero observes him from above, tenderly supporting his

Figure 1.12: Hans Sebald Beham, Pero and Cimon, 1525

Figure 1.13: Hans Sebald Beham, Pero and Cimon Flanked by Tritons, 1526–1530

back with her right arm. Her belly button and left nipple are clearly visible; her hair is neatly braided. The scene takes place in a small, dark, enclosed place, which the chains reveal to be a prison interior. The tiny picture is very intimate and sexual, because of Pero's gratuitous partial nudity and the couple's tangled legs and knees. Barthel's brother Sebald would reissue his print in reverse ca. two decades later, this time furbished with architectural details and two inscriptions informing the viewer of the father's identity ("Czinmon") and of the meaning of this act: "I live off the breast of my daughter" (Figure 1.11). With this print, Sebald revisits a topic he himself represented twice in his youth sometime between 1526 and 1530. Perhaps inspired by his younger brother, Sebald Beham published a tiny medal-shaped print of 4.7 cm in diameter, showing the breastfeeding couple in an architectural space clearly identifiable as a dungeon (Figure 1.12). Cimon, whose naked upper body is tied to a column, his feet chained to a wall, sits on the edge of a toilet, while Pero, almost entirely naked except for a thin piece of cloth wrapped around her belly, stands before him, knees bent in an impossible position, steadying herself with her left hand,

and embracing her father with her right. As in the print by Barthel Beham, her left nipple is clearly visible in Cimon's mouth. Her bosom and naked left leg are illuminated; behind her, the half-round space of a window opens up.

At about the same time, Sebald Beham adapted this composition for a decorative ribbon, placing the medal-shaped print at its center and flanking it with images of two tritons aggressively wielding their tridents (Figure 1.13). While preserving the overall composition of the figures, the couple's tangled legs and knees now almost touch each other; Pero's left and Cimon's right nipple are erect and clearly visible. The architectural details in the back are also slightly altered. The greater erotic appeal of this medal is enhanced by the two tritons flanking it, sporting not only scaly fishtails but also the hoofs of a horse in front of their lower bellies. Additional leafy ornaments qualify this image as a classicizing "grotesque."

Elaborating on this composition, Sebald Beham published another version of *Pero and Cimon* in 1544, the same year he "improved" on his deceased brother's early print by adding inscriptions. It is a rectangular, finely worked etching that shows the couple in a classicizing interior with double rows of arches and columns (Figure 1.14). Nothing but Cimon's ropes and chains indicate that this fancy, clearly defined, and well-ordered space might be a prison cell. Pero stands upright between Cimon's knees, her left leg slightly bent, Venus-like.

Figure 1.14: Hans Sebald Beham, Pero and Cimon, 1544

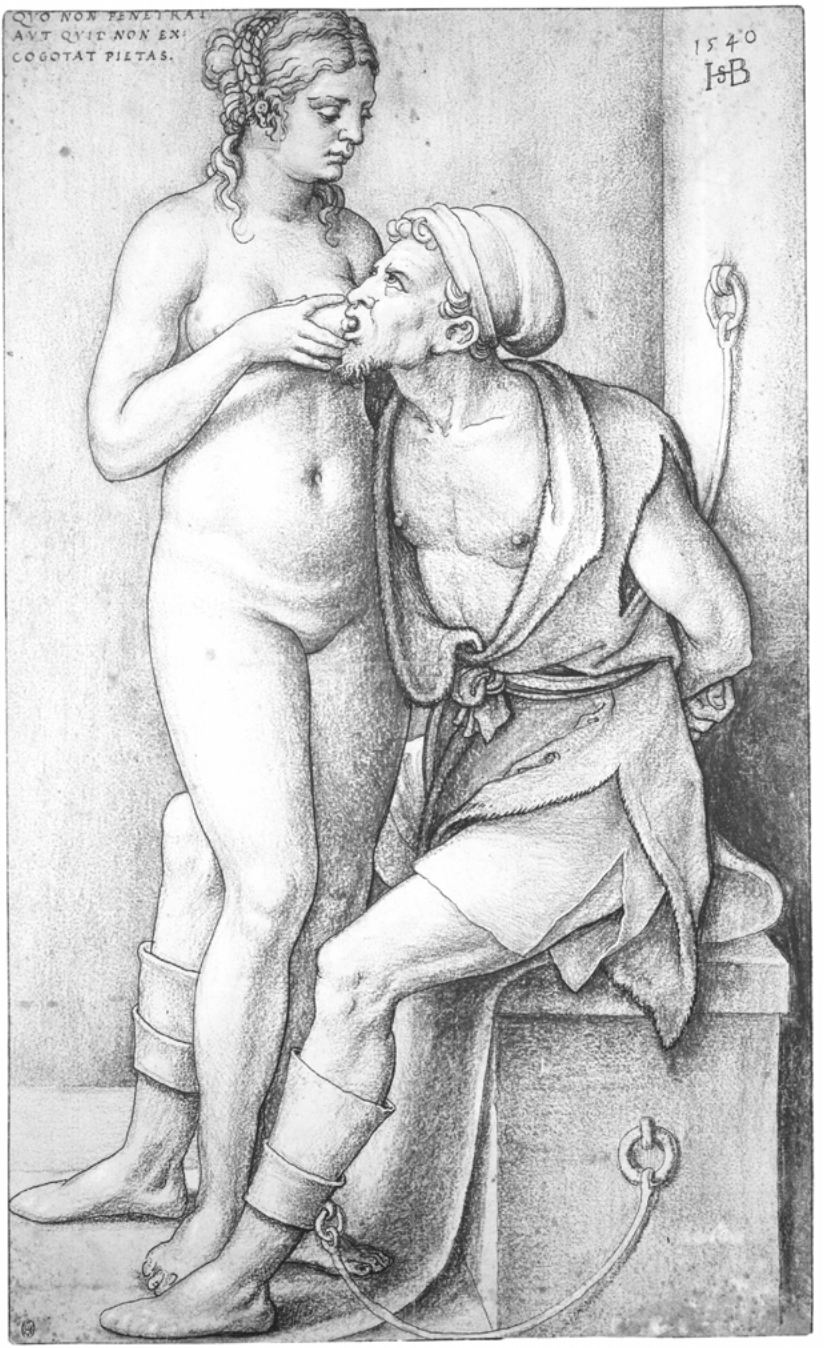

Figure 1.15: Hans Sebald Beham, Pero and Cimon, 1540

Otherwise, she makes no attempt at copying the "pudica" pose: her right arm embraces her father, and her left hand lifts gracefully, but without any apparent reason, the skimpy cloth that is wrapped around her hips. Another shawl-like piece of cloth, draped around her chest, draws attention to her naked breasts. Her shoulders, breasts, belly, and naked leg are thus in full frontal view. Cimon sits on a ledge, his head in a perfect position to reach Pero's right breast. His muscular upper body and legs are exposed. His right and Pero's left knee touch each other. If the couple's nudity, especially Pero's "shameless" Venus pose, and Cimon's suckling from her breast were not clear enough as an indication of sexual intent, the tangling of their legs and knees was further proof.[42]

The most provocative, openly pornographic, and also artistically most successful rendering of the scene is Sebald's drawing from 1540 (Figure 1.15). With its dimensions of ca. 40 x 25 cm, it is almost ten times bigger than most of the Beham brothers' other art works. No classicizing interior detracts from the stunning act the couple performs in the bare corner of a room. Cimon, arms tied behind his back, his feet in chains, sits on a stone bench, his shoulders and lower body covered in a jacket-like piece of cloth that offers a full view of his muscular, shaved chest and erect nipples. Pero, nicely coiffured and entirely naked, without even the scantiest veil attempting to cover her, stands between Cimon's knees. The V-hold with which she offers him her left breast seems to complete the arrested gesture of Botticelli's Venus.[43] Her belly and shaved genital area are in full view. The couple's eye contact enhances the provocation. The inscription in the upper left corner, which looks like graffiti etched into the smooth wall, reads: "Whither does Piety not penetrate, what does she not devise?" in an attempt to further puzzle and disorient the viewer.[44] Not only does the inscription contradict what we see – which clearly cannot be an illustration of "Piety's" endeavors – but it also quotes the wrong anecdote. In Maximus's story collection, it inaugurates the interior monologue of the guard who is observing the daughter who breastfeeds her mother. With this combination of references to both stories, the artist responds to Maximus's ekphrasis as well as his ironic exhortation. Literally expressing Pero's "silent outlines of limbs" through full nudity, Beham clearly "rivets men's eyes in amazement," while the overt eroticism, if not pornographic effect, of his print answers the guard's musings about the spectacular novelty and possibly "un-natural" quality of this act.[45]

This latter print and inscription shows how Sebald Beham intervened in the raging contemporary debate about the usefulness of pictures in an age of iconoclasm. While Lucas Cranach the Elder, friend of Martin Luther, seems to have depicted the "nakedness" and invisibility of truth in his altarpieces – by painting, in Joseph Leo Koerner's words, "under erasure" – the Beham brothers departed from Catholic and Lutheran theories on visual representations alike.[46] Clearly, they produced no art fit for Catholic worship. Their religious print

Figure 1.16: Hans Sebald Beham, The Virgin with the Pear, 1520

series are sober renderings of biblical stories or else highly eroticized renderings of the nursing Madonna that defy any expressions of spiritual desire. In *The Virgin and the Pear* (1520) (Figure 1.16), Mary's beautiful contemporary dress and opened bodice, her flowing strands of hair, and the sweet and juicy fruit she is offering to Christ violate decorum by bluntly eroticizing the nursing scene, while the parrot in *The Virgin with Child and Parrot* (1549) seems to contemplate picking at the apple of cognition (Figure 1.17).[47] In both scenes, Mary's breastfeeding is compared to or substituted by, respectively, Eve's momentous seduction, a drastic departure from both Catholic theories of milk as a source of grace and Lutheran calls for modesty in representing Christ's mother. Cranach's assembly-line production of paintings of the Madonna with Child, by contrast, observes Luther's indictment against the undue eroticization of the Virgin Mary as Madonna Lactans.[48]

Sebald Beham did not believe in the Lutheran transparency – and superiority – of words and Scripture. The inscription he added to his brother's print in 1544 ["Czinmon … I live off the breast of my daughter"] aims to contain the viewer's sexual fantasies that his image unleashes by pointing to Pero's

Figure 1.17: Hans Sebald Beham, after Barthel Beham, Virgin with the Parrot, 1549

charitable goal and intention. His print from 1540 reveals his attempt to expose the slipperiness and ambiguity of the text itself rather than his desire to pervert the meaning of Maximus's moral example (Figure 1.15). In contrast to Cranach's stress on the "nakedness" of pictorial truth, Beham's images cultivate a shock-like quality to arouse and depict emotions. Joseph in *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (1526) has a huge erection, probably against his will, thus terribly complicating the biblical story (Figure 1.18). So does Amnon about to rape his niece Tamar in *Amnon's Incest* (Figure 1.19).[49] Rather than keeping "emptiness on display," as does Cranach, Beham replaces the idolatrous beauty, venerability, and religious quest of Catholic imagery with a desperate, perhaps Augustinian but in any case a very full and drastic, depiction of male desire.[50] While Cranach's nude and stylized Charities refer to the nakedness of faith alone in an anti-allegorical move that negates the spiritual meaning of breastfeeding, the Beham brothers' Cimon is a figure of utter, sexualized want that is unbearable to look at.[51] Instead of "deadening" pictorial space through blanks and biblical quotations, the Beham brothers expand, even seek to violate, the boundaries of what is representable. This rings true for Sebald

Figure 1.18: Hans Sebald Beham, Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, 1526

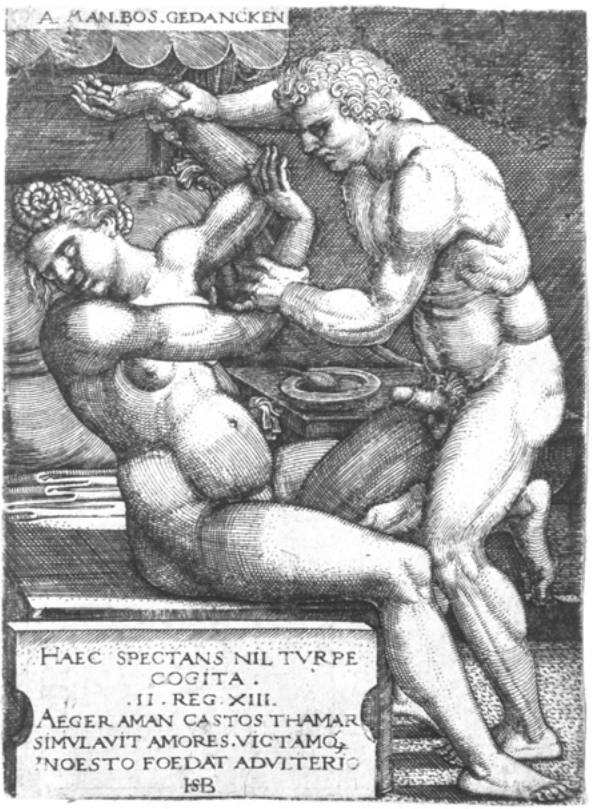

Figure 1.19: Hans Sebald Beham, Amnon's Incest, 1525 c.

Beham's large *Kermis* prints (1528–30) as well, which include "scatological" scenes of vomiting and shitting.[52]

The small size of Barthel's and Sebald's prints seems to emulate the aura of secrecy that coins and medals enjoyed among Renaissance collectors since the fifteenth century.[53] Like coins, the tiny prints could be shared in intimate conversations with friends, looked at in private, and organized into series. They served as models for the decoration of ceramics, coins, jewelry, earthenware, and similar objects of everyday use, but they also became collectibles in their own right.[54] Like coins and medals, small prints figured as vanguard and experimental media; their importance for major iconographic and stylistic developments in Renaissance art has recently been pointed out.[55] More specifically, the Behams' prints derive their shock value not only from their choice of subject matter and pornographic approach but also from the irony produced through irreverent quotations of major Italian Renaissance artists. One example of such parody is Sebald Beham's print *The Night* (1548), which quotes the position of legs in Michelangelo's famous allegorical sculpture but shows the naked woman lounging on her bed frontally to reveal her genitalia (Figure 1.20).[56]

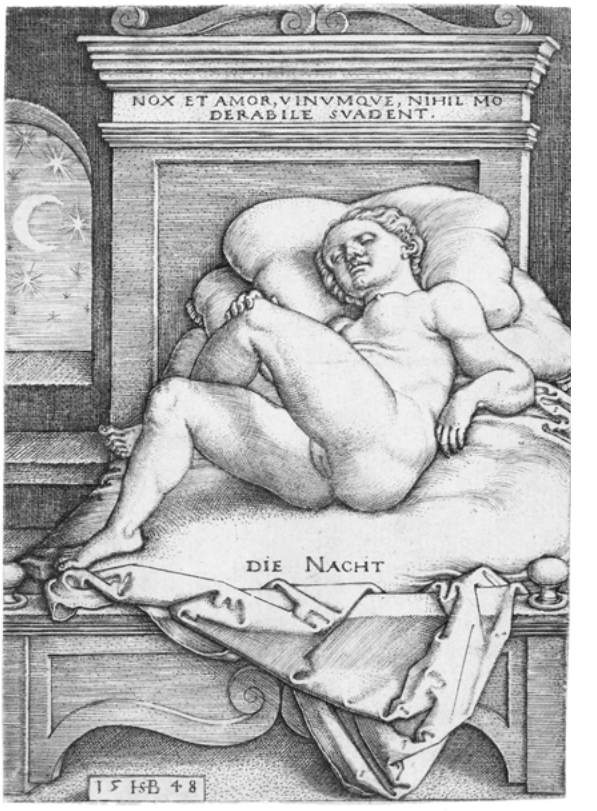

Figure 1.20: Hans Sebald Beham, The Night, 1548

Another example is the morphing of Botticelli's Venus's "pudica" pose into Pero's V-hold, which not only reveals the ambiguity of her classic posture but also polemicizes against the use of all forms of veiling, as if greater transparency of meaning could be achieved by stripping images of their semantic layers, in order to expose the ubiquity of male desire. Ultimately, it is this reduction that makes the Beham brothers' prints hard to look at.

Whether the two artists really thought a certain "truth" would emerge through the graphic depiction of erections – of both nipples and penises – is hard to say. Perhaps they aimed at the depiction of meaning *as* desire and want through the nakedness of their expressions. Such parody of truth as lack points to a certain disposition of disbelief, and it is in this sense that I concur with other art historians about a connection between the brothers' artistic output and their prison experience in 1525. As Herbert Zschelletzschky has carefully documented, the reformed Nürnberger Rat put Barthel and Sebald Beham, together with their friends Georg Pencz and Hans Denck, on trial for charges of atheism in 1525. During their interrogations, all four of them negated the importance of rites and sacraments. Barthel Beham doubted the truthfulness of Scripture, and Georg Pencz expressed his disbelief in Jesus Christ. Hans Denck, a follower of so-called negative theology, explained openly his "want [Mangel] of not being able to know whether bread and wine contain flesh and blood."[57] Georg Pencz harbored the greatest doubts by stating that he did not know "what to believe about God," that he "did not think much of Christ … could not believe in Scripture … did not believe in the sacraments … and in baptism … and knew no other lord than God."[58] What becomes visible in the art of the Nürnberg printmakers is their anti-authoritarian move to bare religion of its symbolic forms, even to doubt the very existence of God, and to strip other – ancient – modes of knowledge of their semantic overlay and hermeneutic depth. Such unveiling found expression in the nudity of their protagonists and the exposure of their wants as doubts (note the semantic collapse of the two words in Denck's deposition). This focus on male desire as "want" or absence of truth might also explain their privileging of Cimon over the starving mother in representations of Maximus's anecdotes. At least since St. Augustine's definition of phallic desire as post-lapsarian punishment and eternal sign of sin, male sex carried the weight of a millenarian intellectual and theological debate in the eyes of early modern artists and intellectuals, and deserved to be properly dismantled and resignified. Female desire for another woman, by contrast, was relegated to the burlesque mode of a bathhouse scene.

Flipping through the various illustrated catalogues of German prints – by Bartsch, Pauli, and Hollstein – it furthermore results that the Beham brothers' etchings of *Pero and Cimon* were grouped in the vicinity of ancient or biblical heroines. This indicates that in their – or their collectors' – minds, Pero belonged

conceptually to contemporary cycles of so-called *Ruses of Women*.[59] Of these print series of cunning or otherwise noteworthy women, Hans Burgkmair's etchings of three "good" Christian, Jewish, and Pagan women are probably the first (1516–19). In mid-century, this series was followed by Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert's cycles on *The Power of Women* and *The Praise of the Virtuous Wife* as well as Philips Galle's series *Women's Tricks in the Old Testament* and *Exemplary Women from the Bible*.[60]

Literary examples of such "galleries of strong women" go back to Boccaccio's *Famous Women* (1362) and Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), which, as already mentioned, include the anecdote of the Roman daughter who breastfed her mother.[61] With her *Book of the City of Ladies*, a critique of the representation of women in medieval literature and a comprehensive proposal to view women as morally superior to men, Pizan single-handedly started the so-called "querelle des femmes," a literary debate on the status of women in society that would engage male and female writers for centuries to come.[62] Agrippa von Nettesheim (ca. 1486–1535) was the last participant in this debate to mention the Roman daughter, praising her milk as an illustration of nature's powers of preservation.[63]

Pero's story, by contrast, was never cited in literary collections of this kind, perhaps because of the morally questionable nature of her sacrifice and the difficulties in portraying her as a complex enough person with motives and intentions. Nonetheless, she emerges as a "strong woman" in the visual arts next to heroines such as Lucretia, Dido, and Cleopatra but also Judith, Salome, and Dalila. Formal characteristics played a decisive role in such juxtapositions – traceable in collectors' catalogs – but content issues soon followed, with interesting results for the reception of both Pero and the *Weibermachten* in her vicinity. How and why was Pero perceived to be commensurate with women who either committed suicide because of their problematic sexual and emotional entanglements or who, au contraire, used their sexuality to emasculate or kill their partners? The very ambiguity resulting from this unlikely mix of "famous women" might prove to be the answer, throwing further light on the paradoxical appeal that Pero had for viewers and collectors. Like Judith and Salome, Pero holds the power of life and death over a man, but in contrast to the two biblical heroines, she decides to let him live. Like Lucretia, she gets morally tainted in the course of her sacrifice, but unlike Lucretia, she does not commit suicide. Like Dalila, she emasculates a man but winds up restoring him to his personhood and freedom. Pero's action has a positive outcome, as do the deeds of Judith and Lucretia, but it has no civic impact and remains confined within the sphere of domestic relations. Pero seems to have been the very embodiment of contradictions from the outset, while heroines such as Lucretia and Judith grew doubtful in their motivations as a result of their eroticization in the visual arts.[64]

Figure 1.21: Hans Sebald Beham, Lucretia, 1519

Figure 1.22: Hans Sebald Beham, Dido, 1520

Figure 1.23: Barthel Beham, Judith, 1523

Figure 1.24: Hans Sebald Beham, Judith and her Maid, 1520–1530

In the art of the Beham brothers, Pero's naked appearance ranks high among the formal qualities that inspired early modern collectors to place the breastfeeding daughter in the vicinity of ancient "strong women." Both brothers insisted on representing not only Pero but also Judith, Cleopatra, Lucretia, and Dido in statuesque, gratuitous nudity.[65] They did so starting in 1519, with Sebald Beham's print of *Lucretia* (Figure 1.21), followed by his *Dido* (1520) (Figure 1.22) and Barthel's *Judith* (1523) (Figure 1.23). Especially the undated upright figures of Barthel's *Cleopatra*, his *Lucretia Standing at a Column*, and Sebald's *Judith and her Servant* remind of Pero in Sebald's later prints of 1540 and 1544.[66] Such drastic, and unnecessary, nudity flattens the narratives of these heroines' respective stories into acts of allegory or barely

Figure 1.25: Barthel Beham, Judith, 1525

disguised pretexts for pornographic pleasure. In Sebald's last-mentioned *Ivdith*, for example, even the maidservant is naked, but both women wear thin veils of allegory draped around heads, sword, and arms (Figure 1.24). Barthel's rendering of Judith from 1525 shows her, butt-naked, sitting on Holofernes's bare chest, his severed head in her left hand, her right hand holding a sword embellished with the moon of Artemis (Figure 1.25). Such blatant eroticization of ancient and biblical women's heroic deeds and sacrifices is rare in the sixteenth century. Among German painters, only Lucas Cranach the Elder, perhaps inspired by the Behams' prints, rendered Lucretia fully naked starting in 1529 – a visual oxymoron, given the cause of her suicide – but left Judith and Salome carefully clothed in precious garments.

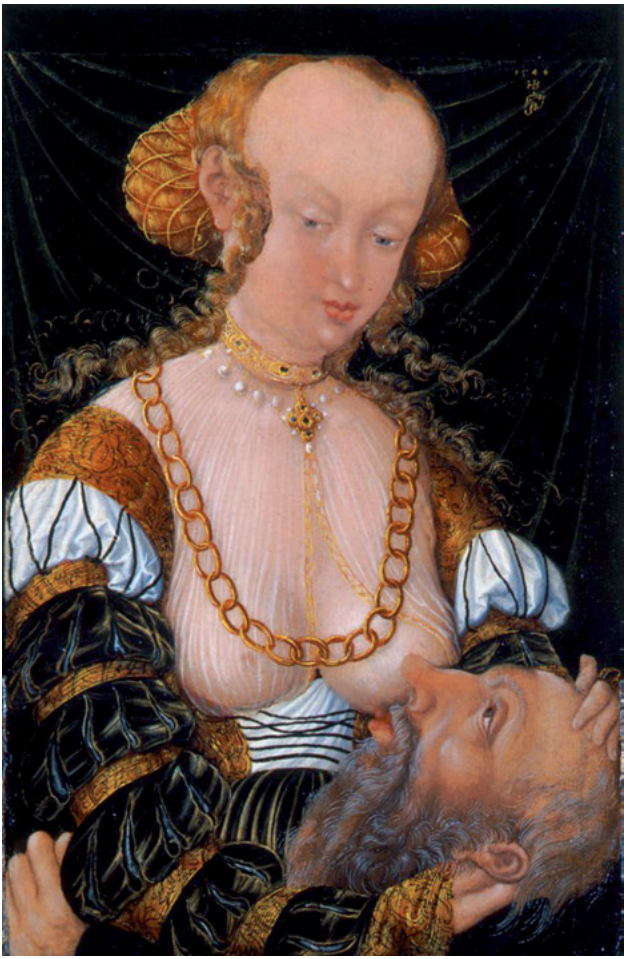

Figure 1.26: Master with the Griffin's Head, Pero and Cimon, 1546

A decade or two later, German artists started representing Pero in the form of oil paintings, implementing another set of formal analogies between her portrayal and that of ancient heroines by adopting the half-length format for this purpose. Among the four extant *Roman Charities* from this time period in Germany, one was executed by the so-called Master with the Griffin's Head in 1546, who some art historians believe to be identical with Hans Brosamer (ca. 1495–1554) (Figure 1.26).[67] This latter painting bears a striking resemblance to the many renderings of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* by Lucas Cranach the Elder because of its half-length format, the garments, jewelry, and oblique view of its protagonist, and the position of the male head just below the woman's

Figure 1.27: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, 1530

waistline.[68] In the Master with the Griffin's Head's painting, Pero wears a stunning dress, the tiny bodice of which reveals the immaculate white skin of her breasts and shoulders behind a shirt of ultra-thin lace, which is parted in the middle and hemmed with golden thread. This transparent blouse, pleated into elegant folds, gives Cimon access to her nipple down below. Pero's fashionably wide sleeves of shiny, expensive fabric are tied with ribbons of gold brocade to produce ruffles and folds. She wears several pieces of heavy jewelry: a golden, finely wrought choker set with emeralds and rubies, ending in a Greek cross; a thick golden chain loosely draped around her shoulders; and a row of pearls that somehow seem to fasten the transparent veil below her throat. Her

hairdo consists of a thick mass of blond hair tied together in a net, revealing an impossibly high forehead and two strands of curls above her temples. Of Cimon, we see nothing but a seemingly severed, disembodied head, which Pero holds with both hands to let him suckle, as well as his left hand, with which he clutches one of her sleeves.

This painting is clearly inspired by Lucas and Hans Cranach's numerous portrayals of Judith and Salome. All paintings mentioned here, to which more could be added, show the heroine from the waist up, in expensive velvet and brocade garments that feature fashionably complicated sleeves with slits, puffs, and ribbons (Figure 1.27).[69] The women wear tight bodices, even though none of them is as revealing as Pero's in the Master with the Griffin's Head's version, and they parade finely chiseled gold ribbons around their necks and heavy chains around their shoulders. They look into the viewer's direction without making eye contact. Several of them sport high foreheads and neat-looking hairnets. Their hats and slanted eyes constitute a major difference to Pero's outfit and appearance. The – for our purposes – most striking similarity, however, consists of the severed heads of Holofernes and Saint John the Baptist, respectively, which Cranach's Judith and Salome figures hold directly in front of their bellies. Cimon's face in the Master with the Griffin's Head's painting is located in the same position. The latter artist's painting of Dalilah reveals the same compositional setup, with Samson sleeping in Dalilah's lap (Figure 1.28). This formal – and, in the case of Pero and Cimon, somewhat unrealistic – choice of posture has immediate consequences for the interpretation of our protagonist as a "strong woman": just as Judith, Salome, and Dalilah are engaged in unmanning their male partners by parading their severed or unconscious heads in front of them and wielding phallic instruments such as swords and scissors, Pero emasculates her father by reducing him to a suckling child. The painting is of minor artistic quality, but the effect of the Griffin's Head's composition proved to be so powerful and outrageous that later iconoclasts intervened by emulating Judith's cutting of the head of Holofernes: they sawed off Cimon's head just below his daughter's waist. In her article from 1941, Irene Kunze mentions how she found the severed piece of panel depicting Cimon's head.[70] Only in the post-war era were the two halves rejoined.[71] This mutilation was unintended by the artist, of course, and yet: had Cimon's head not looked so very dispensable and disembodied in the first place, and had it not been located in such a low and unlikely position in front of Pero's belly, the iconoclast might have never been able to perform his decapitation in such neat fashion. Without Cimon's head, the painting of Pero survived for several centuries as yet another eroticized half-length portrait of an anonymous woman.

Another set of formal resemblances between Pero and Judith emerges in the work of Georg Pencz (ca. 1500–1550), artist from Nürnberg and friend of

Figure 1.28: Master with the Griffin's Head, Samson and Dalila, 1539

the Beham brothers. Between 1538 and 1546, Pencz painted a series of four *Roman Charities,* two of which are accessible in museums in Warsaw and Stockholm, the other two hidden in private collections in Switzerland and Austria.[72] These paintings were preceded by his portrayal of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* in 1531 (Figure 1.29). It shows a beautifully statuesque, pensive Judith, who dreamily looks away from the beholder to expose a perfectly "classic" face in semi-profile and reveals half of her right breast just

Figure 1.29: Georg Pencz, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, 1531

above the generous neckline of an Italian-style "camicia" [undershirt] slipping down her shoulder. She is in a similar state of undress as the many scantily clad "belle donne" painted in half-length format by Venetian artists in the manner of Giorgione's *Laura* (1506) and Titian's *Flora* (1515–16).[73] One barely visible breast is the trademark of these eroticizing portraits of unnamed women, many of whom appear in the guise of ancient goddesses or biblical heroines. Titian adapted the "sensuous half-length" already in 1510–15 for his portrayal of *Salome* (Figure 1.30); other artists, chiefly Palma the Elder, followed suit.[74] It thus seems reasonable to assume an Italian influence on Pencz's work; many art historians speculate about a possible trip of his to Italy in the late 1520s.[75]

Pencz's Judith is remarkable for the way she handles, almost fondles, Holofernes's severed head, whose slightly opened mouth is situated not far away from the nipple of her bare breast. She fiddles with a ribbon of her bodice, as if unsure whether to tie it up or not (or is it the dagger she's holding?). Behind her, a curtain is half drawn, as if she just left the chamber where she murdered the general. This remarkable work of art set, in formal terms, the stage for Pencz's series of *Roman Charities* starting in 1538. The first of his paintings of *Pero and Cimon* (Figure 1.31), today preserved in Warsaw, appeared at the

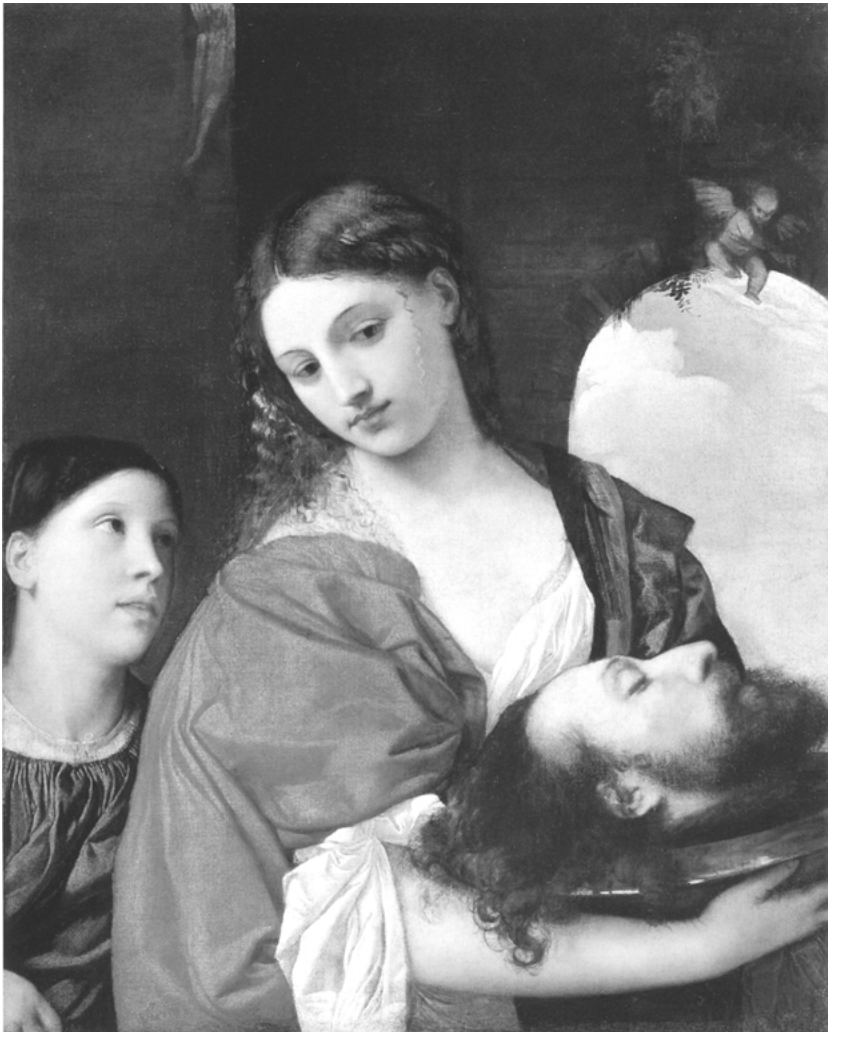

Figure 1.30: Titian, Salome, 1515

Figure 1.31: Georg Pencz, Pero and Cimon, 1538

same time as Erhard Schwetzer's rendering of the motif (Figure 1.32).[76] Pencz's painting is startling because of the way Pero turns her head to stare directly at the viewer, in distinction to the discreet pose observed by Judith seven years earlier. The half-length format with which she is painted and her partial state

of undress, drawing attention to her bare shoulders and left breast, do remind of the biblical heroine from 1531. Again, a nicely hemmed "camicia" peeks out of a bodice we see only from behind. Sleeves and skirt are simpler than in the Griffin's Head's version but do assemble into nice folds. The direct gaze and oblique view she offers the beholder form part of the repertoire of the Venetian sensuous half-length, as Anne Christine Junkerman has argued.[77] Cimon seems to be kneeling in front of her, his head just above the nipple to suckle from her breast; a block with iron chains, onto which Pero rests her left hand, confirms that the couple are placed in a dungeon. Her hair is curly and blond, with no recognizable hairdo; her face symmetrical and even.

Erhard Schwetzer's version of the motif shows a frontal view of Pero, who, observing a statuesque pose, offers her right breast to a diminished old man

Figure 1.32: Erhard Schwetzer, Pero and Cimon, 1538

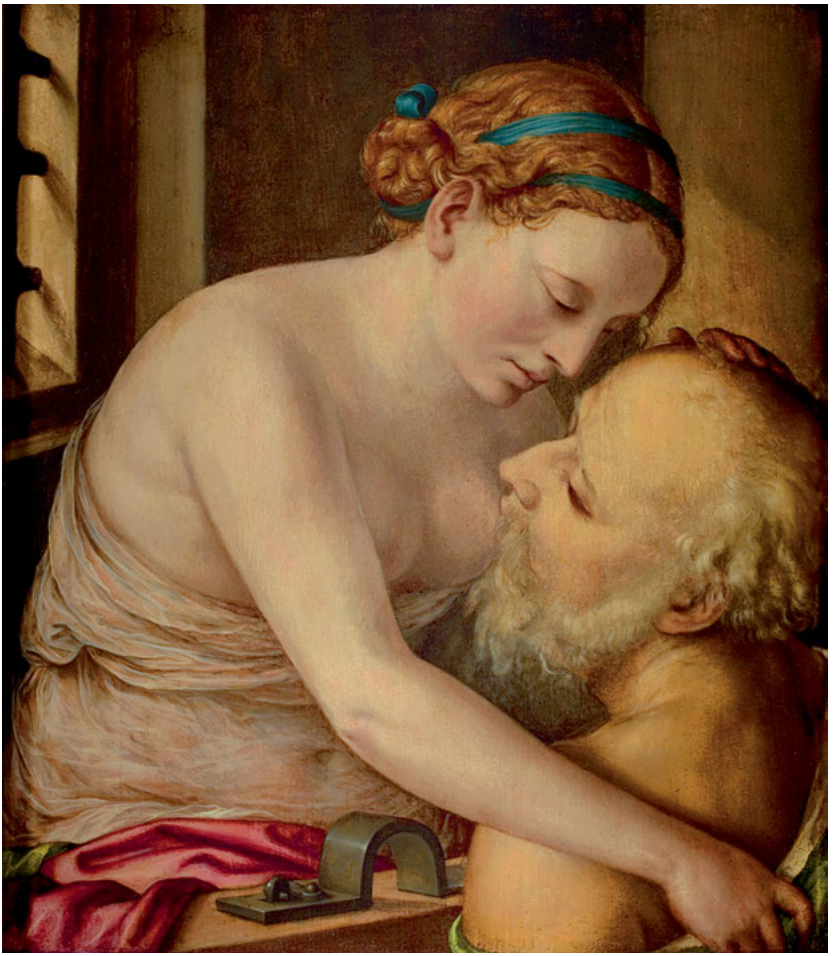

Figure 1.33: Georg Pencz, Pero and Cimon, 1546

with an elegant V-hold. We see her face in three-quarter profile; strands of curly blond hair escape from two long braids wrapped around her head. In contrast to Pencz's Pero, Schwetzer's daughter wears no contemporary clothing but a toga-like garment tied with a knot over her left shoulder, fastened with a green belt around her waist. This garment reveals her right breast, from whose nipple a poorly drawn Cimon eagerly sucks. Despite the historicizing costume, this painting displays certain features of the Venetian half-length, such as Pero's state of undress, her prominent arm and sleeve, and the oblique view of her eyes. Departing from this model, but in sync with contemporary German print art, is the longish inscription Schwetzer includes, etched into the wall behind the couple: "Because of his suffering in the dungeon, Cimon's daughter has

turned her old father, like a child, toward her heart, and nourishes him with her breast."[78]

Georg Pencz's other extant *Roman Charity* from 1546 (Figure 1.33), preserved in Stockholm, is a remarkable departure from both of these earlier versions and constitutes a further development in the art of the sensuous half-length. Pero's slightly turned torso is visible from the front; she is draped in a thin, transparent piece of cloth that reveals both breasts. Cimon is also topless, exposing his left shoulder. His iron handcuffs are mounted on a wooden board in the bottom part of the painting. The two figures' profiles occupy the center of the panel in an interesting triangular composition that includes Pero's naked right arm and shoulder as well as her breasts. It is hard to make out how they are seated, since only their torsos are visible, but the composition is of a certain harmonious dynamic. Pero seems to be moving toward her father, or else pulling him closer to her, embracing him from behind. Her hair is not coiffed in any complicated fashion but is neatly drawn back to reveal her face. Light enters onto the scene through the window on the left. The whole scene is very intimate and erotic, but not provocative in the manner of the Warsaw version. The panel reminds of a Venetian half-length because of Pero's state of undress, the turn of her upper body, and the arrested movement captured by the artist.

A third one of Pencz's *Roman Charities* exists in the form of a poorly executed seventeenth-century copy held by the Bayrische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (Figure 1.34). This composition elaborates on his first version from 1538, with Pero directly staring at the viewer in a pose and garment reminiscent of her predecessor. She is standing in front of her father, who, seated, embraces her hips for support; she rests her left hand on his fashionably slit sleeve. As in the earlier version, Cimon is half bald and beardless. Pero wears her hair in a braid tied around her head; her "camicia" ends in a nicely ruffled hem. Pero's provocative glance at the viewer, who is thereby caught in an act of voyeurism, is rare in the iconography of the motif.[79]

Including the three later prints by Sebald Beham, a total of nine extant renderings of *Pero and Cimon* were produced in Germany between 1538 and 1546, an unusual clustering worth further inquiry. In Italy, oil paintings of the motif existed already a decade or two prior, especially in Venice, hub of "belle donne" in particular and of erotic art in general.[80] On November 5, 1523, a notary describes a painting in the possession of Pietro Luna, recently deceased, as a "large canvas in a gilded frame with a woman who nurses an old man."[81] On April 17, 1538, another notary lists a "big painting … with a woman who gives suck to an old man" in the house of Benediti di Franciscis.[82] And on May 15, 1576, a notary identified the scene correctly by listing "a portrait of a woman and her father whom she gives her milk" among the estate of miniaturist Gasparo Segizzi.[83] None of these versions of the motif are still extant, but in 1922, a photo of a Venetian *Roman*

Figure 1.34: Georg Pencz, after, Pero and Cimon, early 17th c.

Charity was published in the auction catalog of the Dorotheum in Vienna (Figure 1.2). Pencil marks to the catalog reveal that its estimated price amounted to 600,000 Austrian Kronen. Although its asking price was set low at 300,000 Kronen – note the years of hyperinflation – it was not sold. Dated to ca. 1520 by the staff at the Dorotheum, this painting is a perfect example of a Venetian "bella donna" in half-length format. Anne C. Junkerman describes the genre as follows: "The broad proportions of the figures more than fill the frames of the paintings. One or both arms of each figure overlap the edges of the frame, creating a sense of extension, of ampleness in the figures ... [There is] some variation in the degree of frontality of the torso ... the figures all face the viewer with a gaze that is direct, although the head is somewhat averted ... In a few cases, the figure looks away from the viewer."[84] The *Roman Charity* last seen in Vienna displays all of these features: the broad shoulders, the overlapping arm, the slightly turned head and torso, the averted gaze. The only unusual element is the window in the back, since most sensuous half-lengths are set in dark interiors. The window has no bars but gives open access to a beautiful landscape. Neither is the father shown to wear handcuffs or chains, which means that the space is not marked as a prison interior. Of

Cimon, we see, again, only a disembodied, bald, and bearded head. This lack of realism removes the painting from its textual source and produces a certain utopian effect.

A comparison with works by Palma the Elder suggests that this painting came from his workshop or from a painter emulating his manner. Palma's voluminous output of "belle donne" and his schematic approach qualify his paintings as model types of the new genre.[85] As Philip Rylands remarks, Palma endowed most of his women with "smooth boneless cheeks, extremely pale skin, blonde hair … a straight nose that verges on sharpness, a small round chin, slightly dimpled, a cupid's bow mouth, small but full in the middle with the lips sometimes fractionally parted, with an emphatic valley from the nose and with a shadow under the lower lip, oval eyes, large and well-set with a shadow under the eyebrow that intensifies towards the nose, a spacious forehead, and ears that tend (as Morelli observed) to be round rather than long."[86]

Pero's face fits this description perfectly, even if it is executed in a manner less masterful than those of Palma's signature paintings. Moreover, Palma the Elder – like Titian – adapted the sensuous half-length to portray ancient and biblical heroines such as Lucretia and Judith. It thus seems reasonable to attribute the painting to the circle of Palma, even if it is clearly of minor artistic merit.[87]

The framing of Pero as both a Venetian "bella donna" and a heroic "strong woman" in the tradition of Lucretia and Judith offers, again, important interpretive clues. In contrast to German Reformation artists' efforts to unambiguously freeze the meaning of the motif by adding inscriptions, the Venetian Pero remains vague and nondescript – "a woman who nurses an old man," as a notary described the version owned by Pietro Luna. While the inscriptions in Sebald's prints and Schwetzer's painting create more confusion than they dispel – accentuating the difference between textual and visual modes of representation and questioning any straightforward view of Pero as moral example – the illusionary character of the Venetian copy offers less resistance. The act of suckling is not directly depicted. If we did not know the story, Pero's right hand might appear to hide instead of offering her breast, and Cimon's head would, again, seem to be in an inexplicably low position. The composition would signify nothing beyond the painter's framing of Pero as a sexy "woman on top." Pero's commensurability with paintings of Judith (1525–28) and Lucretia (1515) from the same workshop shows how Venetian and German artists developed their own sets of analogies between Pero and ancient "strong women" simultaneously and independently of each other. While Venetian artists framed Pero as a sensuous half-length portrait in oil, the Beham brothers produced their first nudes on tiny prints. In both contexts, the erotic packaging of ancient heroines worked toward a certain erosion and leveling of what was left of their morale.

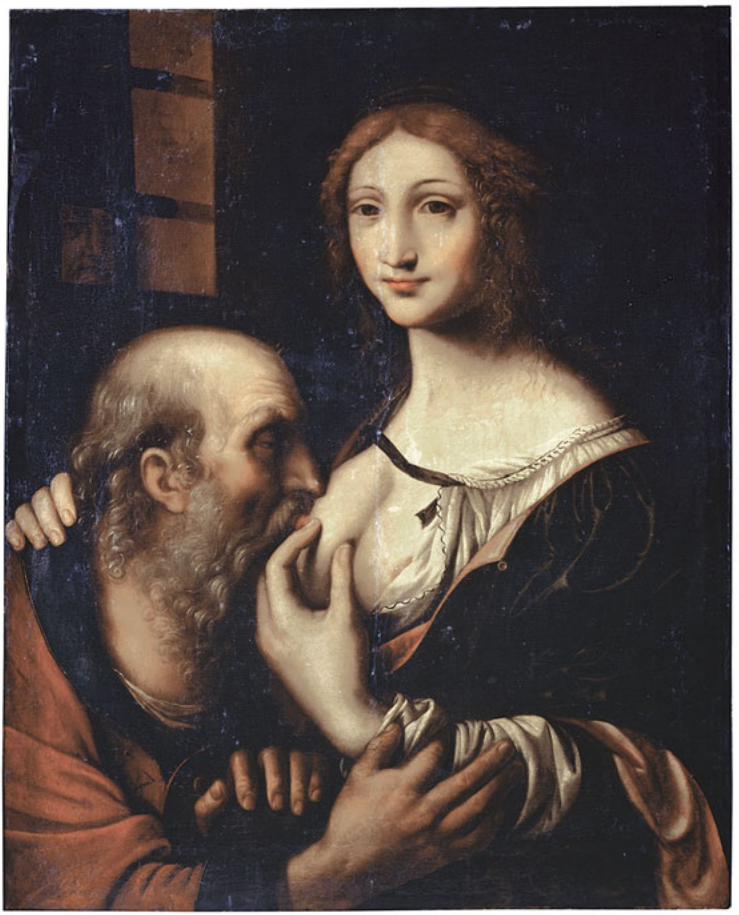

Figure 1.35: Bernardino Luini, after, Pero and Cimon, 19th c.

A final example, a nineteenth-century forgery of a painting formerly believed to be by Bernardino Luini (1485–32), confirms Pero's affinity with biblical celebrities – this time, Salome – and points once again to the difficult afterlife of sixteenth-century *Roman Charities* (Figure 1.35). Not every Cimon got sawed off of Pero's breast, as happened to the Master of the Griffin's Head's version, but many paintings of the motif simply vanished, probably as a result of post-Tridentine interventions and censorship of taste. Frederick Stibbert (1836–1906) bought the painting for his collection assuming Luini's authorship, but examinations of its paint and canvas in the second half of the twentieth century revealed it to be forged.[88] This is not generally known; recent art historical literature still assumes Luini's authorship.[89] In fact, a comparison with Luini's paintings of the Virgin Mary and his four portrayals of Salome shows a great

resemblance to the forged Pero.[90] Rather than a freely invented painting done by a nineteenth-century artist in the style of Luini, this work of art should be assumed to be a copy of a then-extant version.[91] Yet another example of a "bella donna" in half-length format, pseudo-Luini's picture shows Pero in a slightly slanted frontal position. Her eyes are directed squarely at the beholder, even if an inherent vagueness prevents them from piercing the viewer in the manner of Pencz's Pero from 1538. A thin "camicia," parted in the middle and loosely held together by a ribbon, exposes both breasts and a deep cleavage. Cimon, bearded and bald, suckles from the nipple that she offers him in a slightly unusual V-hold. He grasps her left sleeve, digging his fingers into its folds as if to feel the softness of its fabric. Her right arm rests on the back of his neck. A barred window to the left lets in some light. Pero's oval face, her fine eyebrows and almond-shaped eyes echo those of the Virgin Mary and Salome in other paintings by Luini. The most striking resemblance consists of Pero's loose white undershirt, parted in the middle but contractible by a thin string, and the "camicie" worn by the real artist's Madonna Lactans from Warsaw (Figure 1.36) and his *Salome* (1527–31) in the Uffizi. These finely observed sartorial details indicate that pseudo-Luini's *Pero and Cimon* is likely to be the copy of a lost original. If Pencz ever traveled to Italy, as is assumed by many, this was a painting he may have seen, unless he went straight to Venice to study Palma's work.

Aside from Luini's presumed original, all other early sixteenth-century Italian oil paintings of the motif originate in Venice – even Titian was at some point assumed to have painted one.[92] They formed part of a visual culture that was enigmatic, evocative, and deeply erotic and that had emancipated itself from its textual sources in an attitude of what David Alan Brown calls "self-conscious artfulness."[93] Lactation imagery was an essential part of this new intellectual attitude and visual landscape, of which Giorgione's *Tempest* and its eye-catching naked nurse sitting in a landscape (1508) is an early example (Figure 6.5). Fanciful play with Charity groups in the work of Titian, Giovanni Antonio Coróna, and, above all, Tintoretto, as well as the reappearance of nude nursing goddesses in Veronese's *Mars and Venus United by Love* (ca. 1575) (Figure 5.3) and Tintoretto's *The Origin of the Milky Way* (1575–80) followed suit.[94] Venetian artists' ongoing interest in lactation scenes may have been a late echo of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) and his traveler's onyrical descriptions of a lactating Venus (Figure 1.37) and water-spouting Graces (Figure 1.38). Among the many fantastic works of art the narrator dreams about is a statue of Venus nursing Cupid, which he describes in openly erotic fashion:

"She was seated on an antique chair … whereas the entire Cytherean body was made with incredible artifice and skill out of the milky vein of onyx. She was almost undressed, for only a veil made from a red vein was left to conceal the secrets of nature, covering part of one hip; then the rest of it fell to the floor,

Figure 1.36: Bernardino Luini, Madonna Lactans, before 1532

wandered up by the left breast, then turned aside, circled the shoulders and hung down to the water, imitating with wonderful skill the outlines of the sacred members. The statue indicated motherly love by showing her embracing and nursing Cupid; and the cheeks of both of them, together with her right nipple, were pleasingly colored by the reddish vein."[95]

With this ekphrasis, framed by descriptions of Venus's grief for dead Adonis and an inscription that reveals it is not milk but tears that Cupid sucks, Colonna envisions divine motherhood as openly sexual.[96] In addition, he may single-handedly have invented the erotic vision of a woman in dishabille, chief

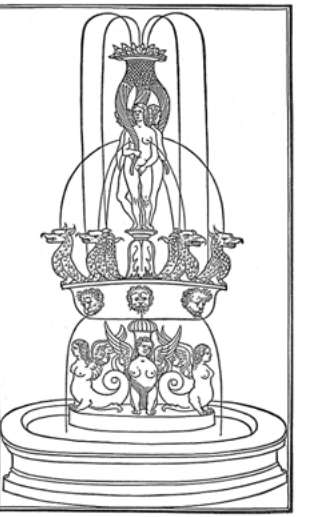

Figure 1.37: Venus Nursing Adonis
Figure 1.38: Polymast Fountain / The Three Graces Spouting Water from Their Breasts
Woodcuts, Illuminations, Francesco Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499

characteristic of the above-mentioned "belle donne" à la Giorgione, Titian, and Palma the Elder. In an earlier passage, Colonna's dreamy traveler comes upon a fountain of the Three Graces, from whose breasts pure water spouts onto the heads of six dragons who sit on a pedestal that shows three winged, bare-breasted sphinxes with mermaid tails and lions' paws. Here the nursing theme is connected to the idea of fertility goddesses and Orientalizing hybrid creatures, and it is in this context that another set of *Roman Charities* emerges in Italy and France in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Brian Curran has shown how the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* with its faux hieroglyphic inscriptions was part of a movement that took pleasure in promoting interest in ancient Egypt, inspiring a variety of artists to experiment with Egyptian themes and decors. Such interest, which according to Curran fed into a full-fledged "Egyptian Renaissance," manifested itself in Pinturicchio's decoration of Pope Alexander VI's Sala dei Santi with myths of Isis and Osiris (1492–94); Giulio Romano's depiction of a nemes-wearing sphinx in Palazzo Madama (1521–23); Raphael's and Romano's execution of an Egyptianizing telamon in the Stanza dell'Incendio in the Vatican Palace (ca. 1520); Rosso Fiorentino's and Primaticcio's frescoes of Pharaonic caryatids in the Pavilion des Armes at Fontainebleau (1530–45); and, most importantly, Giulio Romano's band of authentic Egyptian hieroglyphs on the vault of the Loggia delle Muse in the Palazzo Tè, executed by his team (1527–29).[97]

Figure 1.39: Egyptian Page with Image of Multi-Breasted Diana of Ephesus, Illumination, Mass of Saint John the Baptist, Colonna Missal, 1530–38

The fascination for Egyptian motifs and aesthetic included a focus on the goddess Isis, in ancient art often shown to nurse her son Horus in a seated position similar to the one adopted by Venus nursing Cupid in Colonna's onyrical narrative and its accompanying woodcut illustration. Since Herodotus, Isis was understood as an Egyptian version of Demeter, merging with her to form the multi-breasted figure of the Ephesian Artemis.[98] Such a polymast figure, here identified as Diana because of the stags that flank her, is the centerpiece of a

lavishly illuminated page in a missal commissioned by Cardinal Pompeo Colonna between 1517 and 1523 and completed in 1540 (Figure 1.39). This page also features representations of obelisks, Egyptian gods, and hybrid creatures as well as two male sphinxes decorated with hieroglyphs – all of them art works known to Renaissance Egypt lovers.[99] Polymast statuettes of the Ephesian Artemis were sought-after objects among early sixteenth-century collectors: in 1514, Gabriele Rossi acquired one for his collection in Rome, and Andrea Odoni emphasized a similar statue as the centerpiece of his collection in a portrait by Lorenzo Lotto (1527).[100]

Renaissance artists depicted statues of Artemis Ephesia quite frequently in their works. Raphael included one as a grotesque surrounded by Diana's stags, pictures of birds, and floral motifs among his frescoes in the Vatican Loggia (1518–19). Giulio Romano depicted a similar grotesque in the cross-vaulted room in the Palazzo Tè, and anthropomorphized the multi-breasted goddess in a ceiling fresco of the *Birth of Memnon*, a mythic Ethiopian king, located in the loggia of the palace's Appartamento del Giardino Segreto (1524–34) (Figure 1.40).[101] Giovanni Maria Falconetto (1468–1535) positioned a polymast statue from which putti nurse at the center of his *Archaeological Landscape* in the Palazzo d'Arco, Sala dello Zodiaco, likewise in Mantua.[102] Primaticcio, finally, drew the multi-breasted goddess at least twice, once as a caryatid in the vicinity of Ceres, and once as part of his composition *The Masquerade of Persepolis*, in preparation for his decorative programs at Fontainebleau.[103] For our purposes, the interesting fact is that among those artists with a taste for things Egyptian – and in particular, the multi-breasted Artemis Ephesia – several, i.e., Giulio Romano, Rosso Fiorentino, Primaticcio, Marcello Fogolino, and the unknown artist of Sant'Abbondio, produced drawings, frescoes, or stucco reliefs of *Pero and Cimon* in the context of palace decorations. So did Perino del Vaga, who worked with Giulio Romano as Raphael's assistant at the Vatican Loggia and

Figure 1.40: Giulio Romano, Birth of Memnon, 1524

Figure 1.41: Cima da Conegliano, Saint Mark Healing Ananias, 1497–1499, Detail

completed Rosso Fiorentino's print series *Amori degli Dei* in 1527, sharing these artists' interests in classicizing erotic art and the kind of decorative motifs derived from archaeological discoveries at the Domus Aurea.[104]

Giulio Romano, Marcello Fogolino, and the fresco artist of Sant'Abbondio combined their interest in the breastfeeding daughter with references to classicizing "grotesques" as well as mermaids, sphinxes, and other hybrid creatures. Especially the mermaid theme seems functionally and aesthetically related to other artists' taste for Orientalizing fertility goddesses or Egyptian motifs.[105] Often, these mermaids or sphinxes are themselves breastfeeding. Cima da Conegliano's painting of *Saint Mark's Healing of Ananius* (1497–99), for example, includes a frieze decorated with a mermaid Charity (Figure 1.41). It decorates the entrance to a mosque of classicizing architecture in Alexandria in front of a somewhat anachronistic group of turbaned "Egyptians." A sea goddess with a split fish tail embraces a male young to her left, nursing a mermaid baby to her right. In painting this frieze, Cima might have been inspired by the female sea hybrids and putti that Tullio Lombardo and his workshop sculpted for the marble plinths supporting the triumphal arch in Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Venice (1485–89). These latter fish-tailed nudes are not directly shown to be breastfeeding, but one of them offers her right breast to a neighboring putto with the typical V-hold of a nursing woman. Another mermaid is caught in an incomplete "pudica" pose, with fingers and thumb encircling her breast rather than covering it up.[106]

Cima never went on to paint a *Roman Charity*, but the Egyptian setting of his fantastically hybrid architecture shows that interest in nursing mermaids was rhetorically related to other artists' Egyptianizing adaptation of multi-breasted Artemis. Already in 1490, Bernardino Pinturicchio painted a mermaid nursing her infant for the ceiling of the Sala dei Semidei in Domenico della Rovere's Palazzo dei Penitenzieri in Rome (Figure 1.42), a few years before he adopted a

full-fledged Egyptian program for the ceiling frescoes of *Isis, Osiris, and Apis* in Pope Alexander VI's apartment.[107] A perfect fusion between a polymast fertility goddess and a mermaid Charity consists of a painting from the workshop of Giulio Romano featuring a multi-breasted *Mermaid Goddess Nursing her Young* (Figure 1.43). This lovely, but long neglected, painting from his Mantuan years preserved at Hampton Court shows a serenely smiling mermaid with what seem to be multiple fishtails. She tenderly embraces her seven children, five of whom suckle from a like number of breasts arranged in a semi-circle across her chest. Their curly fishtails are intertwined; wind blows into the mermaid mother's coat, and waves form at the surface of the sea to create the impression of movement. Already in the work of Hans Kels and Georg Pencz, interest in the motif of Roman Charity was accompanied by a love for mermaids, but in the visual universe of Giulio Romano, the depiction of breastfeeding Pero took

Figure 1.42: Bernardino Pinturicchio and workshop, Mermaid Nursing her Offspring, Ceiling Fresco, 1490

Figure 1.43: Giulio Romano and workshop, A Mermaid Goddess Nursing her Young, before 1534

place within a multi-faceted system of references to Egyptian motifs, hybrid sea creatures, and mythological lactation scenes.

Marcello Fogolino (1483/88–after 1558) may have been the first Italian artist to place a *Roman Charity* in the vicinity of sea gods, Nereids, and breastfeeding sphinxes (Figure 6.16). He painted a roundel of a young woman and an old man inscribed with *Pietas* as part of a frieze for the Villa Trissino (1516–25). It shows a surprisingly modest Pero, who, instead of offering her father a naked breast, gives him a round piece of bread as a symbolic substitute in the manner of certain nursing Madonnas. This roundel is flanked by a centaur and a Triton on whose fishtail a naked Nereid lounges seductively, holding a lyre. Another roundel shows a lactating Charity, held by another Triton-and-Nereid couple in the vicinity of a hippocampus and a winged sphinx nursing a mermaid baby (Figure 6.15).[108]

The frescoes at Sant'Abbondio, Cremona, variously attributed to Francesco Casella and Galeazzo Rivelli, or della Barba, and commissioned some time

before 1525 by the monastery's provost Gerolamo Landriani, include a tondo that shows Pero in the act of breastfeeding (Figure 1.3).[109] This roundel stands out in a series of eight medallions depicting Roman emperors and philosophers. As Marika Leino and Charles Burnett have pointed out, its composition resembles that of a plaquette held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 1.4). While the gendering of the couple on the medal is ambiguous, art historians writing about the roundel have so far not doubted the identity of the nursling as Pero's father.[110] The medallion is part of a ceiling fresco with the Virgin Mary at its center, surrounded by grotesques, floral and faunal motifs, centaurs and winged sphinxes. Two double-breasted female statues, split in halves, connect two parts each of this fresco, respectively. Except for their lack of multiple breasts, these statues remind of an Ephesian Artemis, given their outstretched hands and the decorative base that supports their torsos.

A similar lover of Egyptian motifs and grotesques, Giulio Romano went beyond these prior artists' depictions of *Pero and Cimon* by framing the breastfeeding daughter in an explicitly Dionysian setting. His drawing of the theme, produced some time between 1526 and 1534, served as the model for a stucco relief in the vault of the Sala degli Stucchi, Palazzo Tè (Figure 1.44).[111] This erotic drawing shows a bearded, muscular, topless man who casually lounges at the feet of a female figure, grasping her right breast and pulling it toward his mouth. Nothing about him suggests distress: elegantly crossing his legs, he rests his right arm in his lap, a pose suggesting comfort and relaxation. He is neither chained nor tied or locked up but sits in an open, nondescript environment. The woman from whom he nurses sits on a chair, clad in a classicizing garment that exposes her bosom and reveals her belly button and a well-shaped leg. With her left hand, she offers him the other breast to suck from as well, while her right hand rests on the old man's shoulder. Most remarkably, she wears the half-moon of Artemis as a headdress, while Diana's hunting dog crouches between her legs. Even more puzzlingly, another female figure, dressed in a flowing, revealing garment, approaches from the left, carrying a tree-branch. Unfortunately, Pero lacks her Artemisian headdress in the completed stucco relief, which Vasari attributes to Primaticcio, but retains Diana's hunting dog.[112]

While art historians have identified this drawing and the respective relief as a representation of *Pero and Cimon,* it echoes Etruscan mirrors that depict Juno in the act of breastfeeding a bearded Heracles surrounded by spectators. These mirrors were most likely unknown to Giulio Romano, but his fusion of Pero with Artemis shows a certain familiarity with Eleusinian cults in which ritual breastfeeding played a role. According to W. Deonna, Maximus's anecdote presents as blood kinship what among Etruscans qualified as adoptive kinship based on milk exchange. In his interpretation of the myth, Pero takes the place of a divine nurse.[113] Lucia Köllner argues that the legend of Pero and Cimon refers to a historical person – Kimon, son of Miltiades (509–450 BCE)

Figure 1.44: Giulio Romano, Pero and Cimon or Breastfeeding Artemis, before 1534

– as well as to the cults of Isis and Demeter, in which milk either renders the recipient divine or protects and regenerates him. She views Pero as yet another kourotrophos, i.e., a mortal or divine nursing caretaker.[114]

Giulio Romano attributes a decidedly Dionysian character to scenes of breastfeeding in his representations of Greek mythology. Pero, in his Camera degli Stucchi, is placed in the vicinity of Diana as a young child's caretaker and a lactation scene from the *Golden Age*.[115] In the latter stucco, a young woman breastfeeds a toddler, a man collects fruit for another child, and a bearded, naked old man stimulates the flow of water from his left nipple, which he squeezes in the V-hold of a nursing woman. With his left hand, he pours water from a jar. On the west wall of the Camera di Psiche, river gods and goddesses are represented in like fashion, i.e., either as spouting liquids from their nipples or as emptying vases full of water.[116] In the same fresco, a female satyr breastfeeds a ca. ten-year-old child riding on a goat amongst the revelry of guests at Psyche's wedding (Figure 1.45). Water-spouting Artemisia reappears as an allegory of *Water* in a design for yet another decoration at Palazzo Tè, and a winged sphinx with erect nipples is at the center of his *Allegory of Immortality*, next to

an oversized river god vomiting up red wine.[117] A naked woman offering both dripping breasts to a satyr in his drawing of *Bacchus and Ariane* underscores Romano's utopian and erotic approach to scenes of milk-exchange, which in his art tend to represent the excess of pleasure and the overflow of – his own? – mythological imagination (Figure 1.46).[118]

Primaticcio, who assisted Giulio Romano at Palazzo Tè until he left for France in 1531, produced a drawing of a so-called *Roman Charity* similar to the above-mentioned sketch by his master (Figure 1.47).[119] This drawing, done in red lapis, was completed sometime between 1547 and 1559, possibly in preparation for the vault decoration of the Gallery of Ulysses at Fontainebleau.[120] It shows a triangular composition with Pero in the back, Cimon to the left, and a large, seated female figure in the front. Pero seems to pull her father toward her breast by his neck and beard; of Cimon, we see his face in semi-profile,

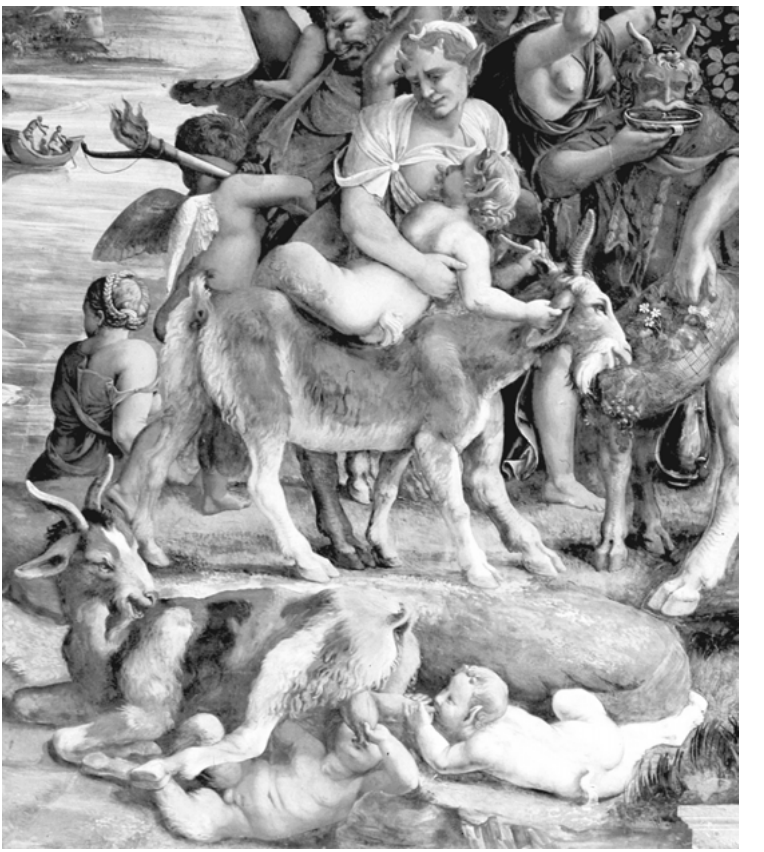

Figure 1.45: Giulio Romano, Wedding Banquet of Amor and Psyche, Detail of Breastfeeding Satyr, 1524–1534

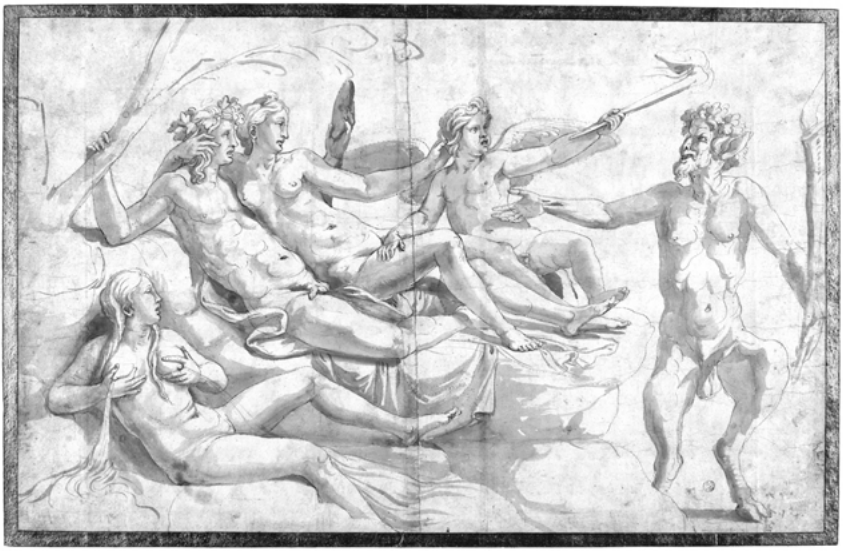

Figure 1.46: Giulio Romano, Bacchus and Ariane, before 1246

a muscular back and arm. The second female figure is elegantly draped in shawls and veils that reveal her belly button and right breast but modestly cover her hair and face. She watches intently as Pero nurses the naked old man. Again, the presence of this third person is seemingly unmotivated; as in Romano's drawing, prison accoutrements are entirely missing. A lock of Pero's hair assumes the form of a half-moon, once again attributing an Artemisian identity to the breastfeeding daughter.

Perino del Vaga and Rosso Fiorentino, who belonged with Primaticcio to the circle of Giulio Romano, presented yet another approach to the motif.[121] It is reasonable to assume that the specific interest in the theme of Roman Charity cultivated by these four artists derived from their first-or second-hand experiences of working with Raphael, with Giulio Romano acting as intermediary.[122] While Perino del Vaga joined Giulio as Raphael's assistant in the Vatican Loggia in 1517–18, Primaticcio became part of Giulio's crew in 1525 at the Palazzo Tè, possibly even executing the stucco relief of *Pero and Cimon*.[123] Rosso Fiorentino might have met Giulio in Rome in 1524, shortly before the latter left for Mantova.[124] Rosso and Primaticcio would become close collaborators at Fontainebleau in 1532, where Rosso had started to direct the decorative programs a year earlier.[125] All four artists belonged to a particular branch of post-Raphael mannerism that combined an openly erotic style with a Dionysian, exotic vision of antiquity. All four of them shared a commitment to Pero and Cimon in their palace decorations such that it emerges as a distinctive feature of their art.

Sometime between 1532 and 1534, Perino del Vaga created a large-scale fresco of *Pero and Cimon* at Palazzo Doria that Caravaggio quoted in his altarpiece *The Seven Works of Mercy* (1606) and that Rubens studied in preparation for his own multiple renderings of *Roman Charity* (Figure 1.48). At about the same time, Rosso Fiorentino designed – and Primaticcio may have executed – the stucco relief of *Pero and Cimon* in the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau (Figure 1.49), which the prints by Georges Reverdy from 1542 disseminated and rendered famous (Figure 1.50).[126] Perino del Vaga's fresco shows Pero gracefully

Figure 1.47: Primaticcio, Pero and Cimon, 1544

Figure 1.48: Perino del Vaga, Pero and Cimon, 1528–1539

leaning against a large window, through the bars of which Cimon suckles from Pero's left breast. Her beautiful face is shown in profile; her curly hair is carefully tied up; she wears a white dress and a red cloak puffed up by the wind. Her entire pose suggests a certain nonchalance, which is indicated by her comfortably crossed legs and the casual hand gesture she performs. Other emblems of classicizing elegance are the guards to the left of the big column next to the prison. Dressed in ancient Roman costumes, one of them lounges on the ledge of the prison wall, his naked legs coquettishly splayed. The other two stand behind him in statuesque postures, gesturing as if engrossed in a lively conversation. Pero's glance suggests that she is aware of the group behind her; it seems as if the discovery of her outrageous act is imminent.

Rosso Fiorentino's stucco relief, likewise, portrays Pero as breastfeeding through the bars of a large prison window. This is a busy street scene, with beggars surrounding and watching her as she exposes both breasts in an attempt to let Cimon suck; of him, we see only a ghost-like presence behind bars. The mother-with-child group behind her and the three men to her right create a sense of nervous dynamic. One of the beggars, a completely nude man lying on the street with his head moved back as if in pain, displays a classicizing, muscular body with splayed legs. Pero herself is seated comfortably on the ledge below the window, legs crossed, and exudes an aura of casual elegance despite the squirmy child she is trying to restrain. Here, as in Perino del Vaga's fresco, it seems to be a matter of minutes before Pero's illicit act will be discovered.

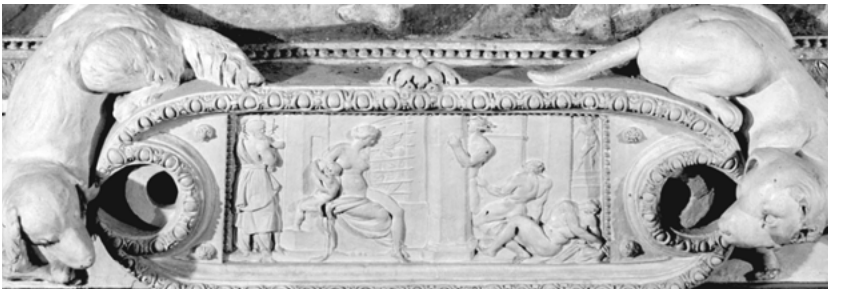

Figure 1.49: Rosso Fiorentino, Pero and Cimon, after 1530

Both Vaga's and Rosso's versions are characterized by an important deviation from Maximus's version of the story, the same aberration we also find in oral versions of the anecdote: they show the breastfeeding scene taking place through the bars of a prison window. Probably because of a historicizing, even "realist" impulse, they rejected the idea of Pero's improbable entry into her father's dungeon. In addition, they may have been concerned with removing any doubt about Pero's modesty and virtuous intention. Unlike Beccafumi, who envisioned Pero as an ancient "strong woman" of dubious morals at Palazzo Venturi – among the likes of Judith, Esther, Dido, Lucretia, and Cleopatra – and unlike Giulio Romano and Primaticcio, who assimilated her into an archaic fertility goddess performing a rite of rejuvenation, Vaga and Rosso presented a version of the motif that supports a strictly didactic reading of Maximus's anecdotes, while also trying to do justice to his ekphrastic challenge.[127]

As of yet, neither Vaga's nor Rosso's contributions to the iconography of *Pero and Cimon* have received appropriate attention among scholars. While the neglect of all earlier versions can be explained by the small size of the artworks, their marginal position in the context of large decorative programs,

Figure 1.50: Georges Reverdy (Gasparo Reverdino), Pero and Cimon, 1542

the ephemeral nature of the medium, or sheer loss, a similar excuse does not hold for the huge fresco at Palazzo Doria and the prominence that Rosso's stucco relief enjoyed among French artists. Anna Tuck-Scala does point to Vaga's fresco as an important precedent for Caravaggio's altarpiece; Renzo Villa argues that Rubens saw both Palazzo Doria and Palazzo Tè before painting his six (!) versions of *Roman Charity;* and Marianne Grivel alludes to Vouet and Poussin visiting Fontainebleau – but most art historians have nothing specific to say about the art works themselves.[128] Laura Stagno cites Vaga's fresco as an important Mannerist piece inspired by his Roman years, without, however, even trying to describe the artwork.[129] Cécile Scaillièrez shows how Jean Cousin quotes Rosso's Pero in his painting of Charity, but she neglects to point out that the workshop of Jean Goujon, another follower of Rosso, produced a massive relief of *Pero and Cimon* in ca. 1560 as part of a series of images related to questions of justice and court practice.[130]

Since Erwin and Dora Panofsky's attempt to interpret Rosso's relief in the context of the fresco of *Cleobis and Biton*, underneath which it is positioned, as well as the roundels that flank it, nobody has ventured to add new insights. Erwin and Dora Panofsky relate, somewhat unconvincingly, the relief as well as the adjacent art works to events in King Frances I's personal life, mapping the story of Pero and Cimon onto the loving memory the king had of his sister, Marguerite de Navarre, who came to visit him in prison while captive in Spain.[131] In my view, the fifth and sixth bays of the vault, which represent three of Maximus's anecdotes on "filial piety," celebrate the awesome powers of mythological mothers from the archaic period instead. Maximus's story of Cleobis and Biton tells of two sons who, instead of the usual oxen, pull their mother's cart and are "rewarded" for their pious act by a premature death, imparted by Juno, whose service the mother did not want to miss.[132] The roundel to the left of the fresco shows the death of the two sons, as well as an image of Ceres-Demeter; the roundel to the right is, according to the Panofskys, inspired by Raphael's painting *The Plague of Crete [or Phrygia]*, rendered in print by Marcantonio Raimondi, which features an infant trying to suck from his dead mother.[133] The sixth bay contains a fresco of the *Twins of Catania*, who saved their parents during an eruption of Mount Aetna.[134] Especially the images of the fifth bay show or remind of the power of mothers over life and death, with lactation scenes playing a central role.

The exact role that Pero and Cimon came to assume within the decorative programs of those six palace decorations varied according to the respective contexts and formal properties of the motif, but some parallels do emerge: *Roman Charity* was habitually positioned in the vicinity of classicizing grotesques or other decorative genres signifying the abundance and excess, whimsy and idiosyncrasy, emotional powers and shock value of mythological motifs.[135] The sphinxes, mermaids, satyrs, and multi-breasted goddesses

in Pero's vicinity underscore the artists' eroticizing, and often exoticizing, intent, no matter whether the "pious" daughter was securely positioned in front of prison bars or was shown as an Eleusinian Artemisia rejuvenating a bearded old man. Only Beccafumi depicts Pero as ancient heroine (1519), in the manner of German Reformation artists and Venetian painters of sensuous "belle donne" in half-length format. Among palace artists, Pero's inclusion in so-called "galleries of strong women" was soon replaced by either more fanciful or more historicizing approaches, as seen in the work of Giulio Romano and Primaticcio, on the one hand, and of Perino del Vaga and Rosso Fiorentino, on the other. It is the latter whom contemporaries found most convincing – as testified by the close attention that Vaga's and Rosso's versions enjoyed among later generations of painters – even though gallery paintings of *Pero and Cimon* in half-length format would celebrate a powerful comeback in the early seventeenth century.

Notes

1 | The very earliest representation of *Pero and Cimon* since antiquity consists, to my knowledge, of the misericord in the choir seats of the Cathedral of Magdeburg, completed 1360. But this is a single occurrence that had no afterlife. Hans Michael, *Das Chorgestühl im Magdeburger Dom. Leben-Jesu-Tafeln und Misericordien, um 1360 und 1844* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand GmbH, 2002), 143, Figure 100.

2 | Vienna, Dorotheum, Kunstauktion no. 328, 8. April 1922.

3 | Marika Leino and Charles Burnett, "Myth and Astronomy in the Frescoes at Sant'Abbondio in Cremona," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 66 (2003): 272–88, especially 273–74. The roundel was most likely commissioned by Gerolamo Landriani, provost of the cloister between 1479 and 1525, and painted by either Francesco Casella or Galeazzo Rivelli (della Barba): In my view, the gendering of the breastfeeding couple is unclear. Compare to Figure 1.8, which represents the mother-daughter breastfeeding scene.

4 | *Pero and Cimon,* Faence, 1520–30, Pesaro, Museo Civico. For a reproduction, see Grazia Maria Fachechi, "L'iconografia della Caritas Romana dal Medioevo a Caravaggio," in: *Pietas e allattamento filiale: La vicenda – l'exemplum – l'iconografia*; colloquio di Urbino, 2–3 maggio, 1996, ed. by Renato Raffaelli, Roberto M. Danese, and Settimio Lanciotti (Urbino: Quattro Venti, 1997), 227–45, especially 241, Figure I.3.

5 | Nathalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top," in: *Society and Culture in Early Modern France. Eight Essays by Nathalie Zemon Davis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 124–51. Anne Christine Junkerman, "Bellissima Donna: An Interdisciplinary Study of Venetian Sensuous Half-Length Images of the Early Sixteenth Century" (Diss., University of California–Berkeley, 1988).

6 | Adolf de Ceuleneer, "La Charité romaine dans la littérature et dans l'art," *Annales de l'Académie royale d'archéologie de Belgique* (1920): 175–206; Franz Kuntze, "Die Legende der guten Tochter in Wort und Bild," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 7 (1904): 280–300; Paul Kretschmer, "Zur Geschichte von der 'säugenden Tochter'," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 43, no. 1 (1899): 151–57; Georg Knaack, "Die säugende Tochter: ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Volkskunde," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte*, ed. by Max Koch, *Neue Folge* 12, nos. 5–6 (1898): 450–54; see also Heinrich Ploss and Max und Paul Bartels, *Das Weib in der Natur- und Völkerkunde*, vol. III, ed. by Ferdinand Freiherr von Reitzenstein (Berlin: Neufeld & Henius Verlag, 1927), 249–58.

7 | Raffaelli et al., *Pietas e allattamento filiale*; *Allattamento filiale: la fortuna*; colloquio di Urbino, 28–29 aprile 1998, ed. by Roberto M. Danese, Daniela De Agostini, Renato Raffaelli, and Gioia Zaganelli (Urbino: Quattro Venti, 2000).

8 | Anna Tuck-Scala, "Caravaggio's 'Roman Charity' in the Seven Acts of Mercy," in: *Parthenope's Splendor: Art of the Golden Age in Naples*, ed. by Jeanne Chenault Porter and Susan Scott Munshower (College Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 127–63.

9 | Waldemar Deonna, "La légende de Pero et de Micon et l'allaitment symbolique," *Latomus* 13 (1954): 140–66; 356–75, especially 361–62.

10 | Tuck-Scala, "Caravaggio's 'Roman Charity'," 135–36, 138.

11 | Robert Rosenblum, "Caritas Romana after 1760: Some Romantic Lactations," in: *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art*, ed. by Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin (New York: Newsweek, 1972), 42–63.

12 | Garnier's painting was still extant at the time Rosenblum wrote his article but was subsequently lost at the Musée Chintreuil in Pont-de Vaux. Also, Rosenblum did not know of Angelika Kauffmann's *Roman Charity* from 1794.

13 | See also Jutta Gisela Sperling, "Las Casas and His Amerindian Nurse: Tropes of Lactation in the French Colonial Imaginary (ca. 1770–1810)," *Gender & History* 23, no. 1 (2011): 47–71.

14 | Bettina Simmich, "Caritas Romana in Trier – Frauenmut und Männerstolz: Zur Rezeption einer antiken Legende in Trier in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch* 34 (1994): 141–69.

15 | *L'allégorie dans la peinture: la représentation de la charité au XVIIe siècle*, ed. by Alain Tapié, Caroline Joubert, Jennifer Montague, and Gisèle Jouet, exhibition catalog, Caen, 27 June–13 October, 1986 (Caen: Musée des beaux arts, 1986).

16 | These paintings and sculptures are by Nicolas Regnier (Modena, Galleria e Museo Estense); Niccolò Tornioli (Rome, Galleria Spada); Giacomo Galli, or Lo Spadarino (Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili); anon., after Guido Reni (Marseille, Musée des Beaux-arts; anon. Venetian (Orleans, Musée des Beaux-arts); Johann Carl Loth (Geneva, Palazzo Reale); Theodor van Thulden, copy after Rubens, Amsterdam version (Dunkerque, Musée des Beaux-arts); attributed to Gérard Seghers (private collection); attributed to Matthias Stomer (Budapest, Szepmüveszeti Muzeum); Ferdinand Bol (Rome, Palazzo Barberini); Simon Vouet (Bayonne, Musée Bonnat); Charles Mellin (Geneva, Musée d'art et histoire); Jean Cornu (Paris, École nationale supérieure); Jean-Baptiste Deshays, or Deshays de Colleville or Deshays le Romain (Rouen, Musée des Beaux-arts); Louis Dubois (Saint-Lô, Musée de l'Art); Jean-Jacques Bachelier (Paris, École nationale supérieure); Claude-François Attiret (Dijon, Musée des Beaux-arts); Jules-Joseph Lefèbvre (Melun, Musée Municipal); and a variety of prints; see Tapié et al., *L'allégorie dans la peinture.* See also Alain Tapié, "L'Allégorie dans la peinture. La représentation de la Charité au XVIIe siècle," *Revue du Louvre: La Revue des musées de France* 36 (1986): 224–25.

17 | Andor Pigler, *Barockthemen, eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974; first ed. Budapest: Verlag der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1956), vol. 2, 300–07.

18 | David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 1.

19 | "In the combination of the luscious paint so characteristic of the artist, the full breasts of the girl and the senescent flesh of the old man on the one hand, and the extraordinary story of a daughter giving her father to suck on the other, it is not hard to understand Valerius' claim that people might stop in amazement and be unable

to take their eyes off the scene; and there seems little extravagance in the assertion that "in those mute figures people feel they are looking at real and living bodies." Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 47–48.

20 | Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 13–21, 317. On the sexual pleasure of viewers in the Renaissance, see also Sigrid Schade, "'Himmlische und/oder Irdische Liebe'. Allegorische Lesarten des weiblichen Aktbildes der Renaissance," in: *Allegorien und Geschlechterdifferenz*, ed. by Sigrid Schade, Monika Wagner, and Sigrid Weigel (Köln; Weimar; Berlin: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 95–112, especially 102.

21 | Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 360. Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, ed. and transl. by D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), vol. 1, 501–03, no. V.4. ext. 1.

22 | "Although Valerius wishes to stress that the effect of such pictures is edifying, it is not difficult to imagine that the moral point might have been lost or obscured, or a very different lesson drawn. Of the strength of its effect there could be no doubt … The picture is … art: it should pertain to our highest and most spiritual faculties. Instead it blatantly, almost palpably, arouses the senses. Furthermore, it does so sexually, or at the very minimum could do so. Who are so pure that when they see a painting like Rubens's Cimon and Pero (to say nothing of the Behams' prints of the subject) they will only draw the virtuous lesson …" Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 360.

23 | Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings,* 499, no. V.4.7.

24 | Brigitte Buettner, *Boccaccio's Des cleres et nobles femmes: Systems of Signification in an Illuminated Manuscript* (Seattle: College Art Association and the University of Washington Press, 1996), f. 64.

25 | Albrecht Dürer, *Madonna Lactans,* early 16th c., London, National Gallery, inv. no. 5592.

26 | E.F. Bange, *Die Italienischen Bronzen der Renaissance und des Barock*, 2. Teil, Reliefs und Plaketten (Berlin; Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1922), 126, no. 959, Figure 78.

27 | I am grateful to Herrn Dr. Krahn from the Bode-Museum for this insight. Bange, *Die Italienischen Bronzen*, 56, no. 411 (A.N. 832, inv. no. 1226).

28 | In my view, the right arm of the suckling figure hides female breasts, which can be seen when holding the medallion at an oblique angle. Also the headdress of the nursling suggests that her gender is female. By contrast, Gaston Migeon identifies this plaquette as a representation of *Pero and Cimon.* Gaston Migeon, "La Collection de M. Gustave Dreyfus," *Les Arts* 80 (August 1908): 1–32, especially 29, Figure viii.

29 | "Mulier plebeia matrem in carcere lacte propria nutrivit." *Spielwelten der Kunst*: Kunstkammerspiele, exhibition catalog, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, 21. Mai bis 2. August 1998, ed. by Wilfried Seipel (Milan: Skira editore, 1998), Medallion Nr. 2/6, 206.

30 | Anja Ebert, "Fischfrauen, Meermänner und andere Wunder. Drei Reliefs aus dem Umkreis des Hans Kels," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (2005): 121–32.

31 | I sometimes refer to the images of *Pero and Cimon* in this time period as *Roman Charity* for reasons of variety, despite the fact that I believe the latter title originates from the early seventeenth century.

32 | Ulrich Pfisterer, *Lysippus und seine Freunde. Liebesgaben und Gedächtnis im Rom der Renaissance, oder: Das erste Jahrhundert der Medaille* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), 261–66, 307, 350.

33 | Pfisterer, *Lysippus und seine Freunde*, 250–51.

34 | Pfisterer, *Lysippus und seine Freunde*, 124, 232.

35 | Fachechi, "L'iconografia della Caritas Romana," 244–45.

36 | Elisabeth R. Knauer, "Caritas Romana," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 6, Neue Folge (1964): 9–23, especially 19.

37 | Roberto M. Danese, "Lac Humanum Fellare. La trasmissione del latte e la linea della generazione," in: Raffaelli et al., *Pietas e allattamento filiale,* 40–72, especially 67, 70.

38 | Symphorien Champier, *La Nef des Dames Vertueuses*, ed. by Judy Kem (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2007; first ed. 1503); Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Von dem Vorzug und der Fürtrefflichkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts vor dem männlichen* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1987; first Latin publication Antwerpen 1529).

39 | Katharine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris," in: *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern England*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 170–91.

40 | F.W.H. Hollstein, *German Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1400–1700*, vol. II (Amsterdam: Menno Hertzberger, 1955), 203, print by Barthel Beham P. 44 and B. 36; and vol. III (1956), 122, print by Sebald Beham after Barthel P. 211 and B. 208.

41 | Herbert Zschelletzschky, *Die "drei gottlosen Maler" von Nürnberg: Sebald Beham, Barthel Beham und Georg Pencz* (Leipzig: VEB E.A. Seemann Verlag, 1975), 29–42, 48–65; *Die gottlosen Maler von Nürnberg: Konvention und Subversion in der Druckgraphik der Beham-Brüder*; Ausstellungskatalog; Albrecht-Dürer Haus Nürnberg, 31. March–3 July 2011, ed. by Jürgen Müller, Jessica Buskirk und Kerstin Küster (Emsdetten: Edition Imorde, 2011); Kurt Löcher, *Barthel Beham: Ein Maler aus dem Dürerkreis* (München; Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1999), 14–15.

42 | One of the earliest and most provocative compositions in this regard is Michelangelo's Leda with the Swan. See print by Cornelis Bos after Michelangelo (after 1537) in the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University.

43 | See, for example, Sandro Botticelli and workshop, *Venus,* before 1510, Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie. This gesture has often been misunderstood. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, for example, sees the "V" formed by the splaying of the middle and index fingers as an allusion to either Venus or "virtue." Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, "Pictures of Women – Pictures of Love," in: *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*; exhibition catalogue; National Gallery of Art, Washington, June 18–Sept. 17, 2006; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Oct. 17, 2006–Jan. 7, 2007, ed. by David Alan

Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 189–236, especially 196. More to the point, but still not quite clear on the ubiquity and everyday purpose of the gesture, is Rebecca Zorach, who in her description of a salt-cellar calls the V-hold the "breast press:" "The salt-cellar also contains one of the more famous examples of what I call the 'breast-press' (fig. 3.5) in which a female figure presses her own breast as a sign of lactation. This is a common motif in sixteenth-century European visual culture ... the gesture can suggest any sort of source ... wealth or wisdom, comfort or fortune." Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 92.

44 | "Quo non penetrat aut quid non excogat pietas." Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, vol. 1, 500–01, no. V.4.7.

45 | Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, 501–03. On the invention of pornography in the early sixteenth century, see Paula Findlen, "Humanism, Politics, and Pornography in Renaissance Italy," in: *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800*, ed. by Lynn A. Hunt (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 49–108.

46 | "Cranach, similarly, paints under erasure. Like an iconoclasm launched from inside the image's resources, the fluttering loincloth stamps the crucifix with a 'not': not here, not this." Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 181.

47 | *Virgin with the Pear* (1520), P. 19 and B. 18; and *Virgin and Child with Parrot* (1549), P. 21 and B. 19, in: Hollstein, *German Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1400–1700*, vol. III, 17, 19. See also Hans Baldung Grien's treatment of the same subject in *The Virgin Mary with the Parrot* (1533), Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Jutta Gisela Sperling, "Charity's Nudity and the Veil of Allegory," in*: Renaissance Studies in Honor of Joseph Connors*, ed. by Machtelt Israëls, Louis Alexander Waldman, and Guido Beltrami (Milan: Libraria Officina; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), 520–26.

48 | Sibylle Weber am Bach, *Hans Baldung Grien (1484/85–1545): Marienbilder in der Reformation* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2006), 23, 119.

49 | On *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,* see Jürgen Müller and Kerstin Küster, "Der Prediger als Pornograf? Konvention und Subversion in der Bildpoetik Sebald und Barthel Behams," in: Müller et al., *Die gottlosen Maler von Nürnberg*, 20–32, 25.

50 | Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*, 84.

51 | On Cranach's *Charities,* see Sperling, "Charity's Nudity and the Veil of Allegory;" Dieter Köpplin, "Cranach's Paintings of Charity in the Theological and Humanist Spirit of Luther and Melanchthon," in: *Cranach*, ed. by Bodo Brinkmann (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2007), 63–80. On the veil as visual metaphor in Cranach's nudes, see Elke Anna Werner, "The Veil of Venus: A Metaphor of Seeing in Lucas Cranach the Elder," in: Brinkerman, *Cranach*, 99–109.

52 | Alison Stewart, *Sebald Beham and the Origins of Peasant Festival Imagery* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008), 79, 145.

53 | Giulia Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints 1490–1550* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), 12.

54 | Martin Knauer, *Dürers unfolgsame Erben: Bildstrategien in den Kupferstichen der deutschen Kleinmeister* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013), 22.

55 | Ulrich Pfisterer credits collectors of coins and medals with launching the systematic comparison of style. He calls them, with Vasari, the "founding fathers of art history." Pfisterer, *Lysippus und seine Freunde*, 13. Martin Knauer argues that the works of the "Nürnberger Kleinmeister," namely Barthel and Sebald Beham und Georg Pencz, anticipated important developments of late sixteenth-century Flemish and Dutch art. M. Knauer, *Dürers unfolgsame Erben,* 9.

56 | Müller and Küster, "Der Prediger als Pornograf?," 26–27.

57 | Zschelletzschky, *Die drei gottlosen Maler*, 29.

58 | Zschelletzschky, *Die drei gottlosen Maler,* 48. On Denck, see Müller and Küster, "Der Prediger als Pornograf?," 21–22.

59 | *Die Galerie der starken Frauen: Regentinnen, Amazonen, Salondamen*; exhibition catalog; Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf, 10. September bis 12. November 1995; Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, 14. Dezember 1995 bis 26. Februar 1996, ed. by Bettina Baumgärtel und Silvia Neysters (München: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1995). The title is inspired by a contemporary treatise in the tradition of women's worthies by Pierre Le Moyne. Pierre Le Moyne, *La galerie des femmes fortes* (Paris: Somaville, 1647).

60 | Bettina Baumgärtel, "Die Tugenden als Symbol kirchlicher und staatlicher Macht. Über die Galerie der starken Frauen in Ausstattungsprogrammen und als Buchillustrationen," in: Baumgärtel and Neysters, *Die Galerie der starken Frauen*, 140–57; Birgit Franke and Barbara Welzel, "Judith. Modell für politische Machtteilhabe von Fürstinnen in den Niederlanden," in: *Böse Frauen – Gute Frauen: Darstellungskonventionen in Texten und Bildern des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. by Ulrike Gäbel and Erika Kartschoke (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2001), 133–53. On Burgkmair, see *The Illustrated Bartsch: Sixteenth Century German Artists*, vol. 11, ed. by Tilman Falk (New York: Abaris Books, 1980), 68, 70, 72. On Coornhert, see *The Illustrated Bartsch: Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert*, vol. 55, ed. by Ilja M. Veldman (New York: Abaris Books, 1991), 161–66, 167–72. On Philips Galle, see *The Illustrated Bartsch: Netherlandish Artists (Philips Galle),* vol. 56, ed. by Arno Dolders (New York: Abaris Books, 1987), 97–102, 221–28.

61 | Pierre Le Moyne, *Gallery of Heroick Women*, transl. by Marquesse of Winchester (London: printed by R. Norton for H. Seile, 1652; first French ed. Paris 1647).

62 | Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

63 | "I maintain that nature gave milk to women, not only because of [nourishing] infants, but because [it is] of such force, that it can prolong the life of elderly persons, of which one can read an example in book 5 chapter 4 paragraph 7 of Valerius Maximus, [who tells] of a young woman, who preserves the life of her mother through her milk." Nettesheim, *Von dem Vorzug und der* Fürtrefflichkeit, 21–22.

64 | Karin Hanika, "'Eine offene Tür, ein offenes Mieder'. Das Schicksal der Lucretia zwischen Vergewaltigung und Ehebruch," in: Gäbel and Kartschoke, *Böse Frauen – Gute Frauen*, 109–31.

65 | See, among others, Barthel Beham's prints Bartsch nos. 2, 3, 12, 14, 15; Hans Sebald Beham's prints Bartsch nos. 10, 11, 12, 76, 77, 79, 80. *The Illustrated Bartsch. Early German Masters*, vol. 15, ed. by Robert A. Koch (New York: Abaris Books, 1978), 11, 15, 43, 44, 66, 67.

66 | Koch, *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 15: B. 12 [III], 15; B. 14 [II], 15; B. 10, 43.

67 | I. Kalden-Rosenfeld, "Brosamer," in: *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon. Die Bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, vol. 14 (München; Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 1996), 384–85.

68 | Irene Kühnel-Kunze points out that the Master with the Griffin's Head was part of Cranach's circle, working for the same set of commissioners at the court of Sachsen. Irene Kühnel-Kunze, "Hans Brosamer und der Meister HB mit dem Greifenkopf: Ein weiterer Beitrag zur Brosamer-Forschung," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 14, no. 1–2 (1960): 57–80, especially 70.

69 | See also Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* 1530, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, inv. no. 11.15; Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* 1520–37, Puerto Rico, Museo de Arte de Ponce, inv. no. 60.0143; Hans Cranach, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* ca. 1537, San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum; Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* 1526–30, Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister; Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Salome with the Head of Saint John the Baptist,* 1530, Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts.

70 | Irene Kunze, "Der Meister HB mit dem Greifenkopf. Ein Beitrag zur Brosamer-Forschung," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 8, no. 2 (1941): 209–38, especially 218–19. (I apologize for using an article printed during the Nazi-era.)

71 | The painting is now on display in the Martin-von-Wagner Museum in Würzburg.

72 | Pigler, *Barockthemen*, vol. II, 301. Heinrich Zimmermann mentions a painting of *Pero and Cimon* by Pencz in an inventory of the royal collection in Prague in 1621: Heinrich Zimmermann, "Das Inventar der Prager Schatz- und Kunstkammer vom 6. Dezember 1621, nach Akten des K. und K. Reichsfinanzarchivs in Wien," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* XXV, part 2 (1905): XIII–LXXV, especially XL, no. 946 (reprint Graz: Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, 1967).

73 | See Giorgione, *Laura,* 1506, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Tiziano, *Flora,* 1515–16, Florence, Uffizi. Junkerman, "Bellissima Donna."

74 | Philip Rylands, *Palma il Vecchio: L'opera completa* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1988).

75 | Hans Georg Gmelin, "Georg Pencz als Maler," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 17, no. 1 (1966): 49–126; Leona E. Prasse, "Engravings by Georg Pencz in the Museum Collection," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 23 (1936):

50–53; Bettina Keller, "'Weldtliche historien außm Livio, Ovidio etc.' (um 1543): Georg Pencz, die Antike und Italien," in: *Zwischen Dürer und Raffael: Graphikserien Nürnberger Kleinmeister*, ed. by Karl Möseneder (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2010), 139–60, especially 160; Stephanie Hauschild, "Spiegelbild und Schatten. Bildnisse des Sebald Schirmer und des Jakob Hofmann von Georg Pencz," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (2004): 105–14, especially 107.

76 | Hans Gmelin dates Schwetzer's *Roman Charity,* previously thought to be by Erhard Schön, to 1537. Gmelin, "Georg Pencz als Maler," 66; Dieter Köpplin dates it to 1538. Köpplin, "Cranach's Paintings of Charity," 77, note 14.

77 | Junkerman, "'Bellissima Donna'," 23.

78 | Hans Stegman, no title, in: *Mitteilungen aus dem Germanischen Nationalmuseum* 4 (1908): 49–61, especially 51.

79 | The only other version that similarly shocks the viewer is Mattia Preti's *Roman Charity* from Modena.

80 | Ferino-Pagden, "Pictures of Women – Pictures of Love."

81 | "Un teller grando soazado doro cum una dona che da teta a un vechio." Archivio di Stato di Venezia (=ASV), *Cancelleria Inferiore*, Miscellanea Notai diversi, inventory of Pietro Luna, 5 November 1523, busta 34, c. 9. I am very grateful to Monika Schmitter for alerting me to this and the other inventories.

82 | "Un quadro grando de nogera con una donna che da latte a un vecchio." ASV, *Cancelleria Inferiore*, Miscellanea Notai Diversi, inventory of Benediti de Franciscis, 17 April 1538, busta 36, c. 59.

83 | "Un quadro di retrato di una donna, et suo padre che [?] la glie [?] da il late." ASV, *Cancelleria Inferiore,* Misc. Notai diversi, inventory of Gasparo Segizzi, 15 May 1576, busta 42, c. 32. On Segizzi's inventory, see also Isabella Palumbo-Fossati, "L'interno della casa dell'artigiano e dell'artista nella Venezia del Cinquecento," *Studi Veneziani* 8, n.s. (1984): 109–53.

84 | Junkerman, "'Bellissima Donna'," 23.

85 | Junkerman, "'Bellissima Donna'," 22.

86 | Philip Rylands, *Palma Vecchio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 93.

87 | Junkerman, "'Bellissima Donna'," 57.

88 | See personal communication by Dominique Charles Fuchs, curator at the Museo Stibbert, Florence (October 2013).

89 | Edmund W. Braun, "Caritas Romana," in: *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 3, ed. by Ernst Gall and L.H. Heydenreich (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1954), col. 357; Fachechi, "L'iconografia della Caritas Romana," 241, Figure I, 2.

90 | Bernardino Luini, *Salome* (1527–31), Madrid, Prado; idem, *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* (1525–30), Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; idem, *Salome Receives the Head of John the Baptist* (1525–30), Paris, Louvre; idem, *Salome* (1527–31), Florence, Uffizi.

91 | The curator of the Museo Stibbert, Dominique Fuchs, suggested to me that the nineteenth-century forger might have recombined different elements of existing

paintings to create this *Roman Charity* in the style of Luini. He also shared with me that x-rays of the painting revealed a *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* underneath.

92 | Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., "A Titian Problem. The Seven Acts of Mercy," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* XXII (December 1942): 165–72.

93 | David Alan Brown, "Venetian Painting and the Invention of Art," in: *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*, ed. By David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, 15–37, especially 28.

94 | On Tintoretto, see Jutta Sperling, "Wet-Nurses, Midwives, and the Virgin Mary in Tintoretto's *The Birth of Saint John the Baptist* (1563)" in: *Medieval and Renaissance Lactations: Images, Rhetorics, Practices,* ed. by Jutta Sperling (Aldershot, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2013), 235–54; idem, "Allegories of Charity and the Practice of Poor Relief at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* LXX (2009): 119–46. On Veronese, see Gianna Pomata, unpublished paper.

95 | Francesco Colonna (presumed author), *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: The Strife of Love in a Dream*, transl. by Joscelyn Godwin (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 373.

96 | "You suck not milk, cruel child, but bitter tears / To give back to your mother, for love of dear Adonis." Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 374.

97 | Brian Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 107, 198–208, 237.

98 | Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance*, 17.

99 | Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance*, 247–51.

100 | Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Andrea Odoni,* 1527, London, Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. On Gabriele Rossi, see Curran, *The Egyptian Renaissance*, 251, note 24. On Andrea Odoni, see Monika Schmitter, forthcoming book.

101 | Amedeo Belluzzi, *Palazzo Te a Mantova* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1998), vol. 2, 509, Figure 945; 666, Figure 1196.

102 | Giovanni Maria Falconetto, *Archaeological Landscape,* before 1535, Mantua, Palazzo d'Arco, Sala dello Zodiaco. *Giulio Romano*, ed. by Manfredi Tafuri et al., with a contribution by Ernst Gombrich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; first Italian ed. Milan, 1989), 308.

103 | "Scènes de l'histoire de Proserpine et termes de Priape, Cérès, Cybèle et Bacchus," drawing, Paris, Louvre, inv. 3497; and "La Mascerade de Persépolis," drawing, Paris, Louvre, inv. no. 8568.

104 | Elena Parma, "Perino del Vaga, ingegno sottile e capriccioso," in: *Perino del Vaga tra Raffaello e Michelangelo;* exhibition catalog, Mantova, Palazzo Te, 18 marzo–10 giugno, 2001, ed. by Elena Parma (Milan: Electa, 2001), 13–38, especially 14; on Perino del Vaga and the Domus Aurea, see Laura Stagno, "Due principi per un palazzo. I cicli decorativi commissionati da Andrea e Giovanni Andrea I Doria a Perino del Vaga, Lazzaro Calvi e Marchello Sparzo per il Palazzo del Principe," in: *Il Palazzo del Principe. Genesi e trasformazioni della villa di Andrea Doria a Genova*; special issue of *Ricerche di Storia dell'arte* 82–83 (2004): 9–32, especially 15; on Rosso Fiorentino and the Domus Aurea, see Pascale

Climent-Delteil, *Il Rosso Fiorentino, pittore della Maniera* (Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2007), 86.

105 | On the kinship of meaning and form between fish-tail folks and foliate hybrid creatures in particular and the impact of the discovery of the Domus Aurea in general, see Alison Luchs, *The Mermaids of Venice: Fantastic Sea Creatures in Venetian Renaissance Art* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010), 34.

106 | Alison Luchs mistakes the V-hold of the mermaid on the left front plinth, inner corner, as an expression of pain. Luchs, *The Mermaids of* Venice, 81–91, especially 85. More than a century later, a doorknocker embellished with a mermaid *Charity* was imported from Venice for a palace in Reggio. Luchs, *The Mermaids of* Venice, 180.

107 | Luchs, *The Mermaids of Venice,* plate 2.

108 | Gunter Schweikhart, "Antikenkopie und -verwandlung im Fries des Marcello Fogolino aus der Villa Trissino-Muttoni (Ca' Impenta) bei Vicenza. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Villendekoration des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts im Veneto," *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 20, no. 3 (1976): 351–78.

109 | Leino and Burnett, "Myth and Astronomy," 273–74.

110 | This is also the impression of the restorer who was working on these frescoes while I took photos, but my suspicion is that nobody so far has examined the corresponding plaquette carefully.

111 | Belluzzi, *Palazzo Te a Mantova*, vol. 1, 439, scheda 839; Christine Begley, "Giulio Romano as Court Artist to Federico Gonzaga in the late 1520's," in: *Giulio Romano. Master Designer*, exhibition catalog, ed. by Janet Cox-Rearick, The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College, 16 September–27 November 1999 (New York: Hunter College, 1999), 74–97, especially 76.

112 | Rodolfo Signorini, *Il Palazzo del Te e la Camera di Psiche* (Mantova, editoriale sometti, 2001), 35.

113 | Deonna, "La légende de Pero et de Micon," 361.

114 | Lucia Köllner, *Die töchterliche Liebe: Ein Mysteriumgeheimnis* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1997) (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXVIII, Kunstgeschichte, vol. 307), 20, 29–40. On the representation of divine wet nurses in ancient Egypt, see Stephanie Lynn Budin, *Images of Woman and Child from the Bronze Age: Reconsidering Fertility, Maternity, and Gender in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

115 | Belluzzi, *Palazzo Te a Mantova*, vol. 1, 438, schede 833 and 834.

116 | Belluzzi, *Palazzo Te a Mantova*, vol. 2, 262, Figure 487.

117 | Sebastiano Giordano, "Una nuova lettura dell'allegorismo cinquecentesco. 'Igne Natura Renovatur integra: Dal Chaos alla redenzione' in Giulio Romano," in: *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, anno CDIV–2007; Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche; Memorie; Serie IX, Vol. XXI, Fascicolo 2 (Rome: Bardi Editore, 2007), 419–716, Figure 75 (Giulio Romano, "I Quattro elementi: Fuoco, Acqua, Terra, Aria"; design, perhaps model for a decoration in Palazzo Té; Mertoun House, Berwickshire, Scotland, Collection of Count of Ellesmere) and plate no. 1 (Giulio Romano, "Allegoria:

Igne Natura Renovatur Integra," ca. 1535–1540, Detroit, The Institute of the Arts, inv. no. Mr and Mrs Walter B. Ford II Fund, 66.41).

118 | *Giulio Romano*; Exposition, Cabinet des Dessins au Musée du Louvre du 11. 10. 2012 au 14. 01. 2013, ed. by Laura Angelucci and Roberta Serra (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2012), 68, Figure 10. On lactation imagery as representing excess and abundance, both literally as well as figuratively, especially at Fontainebleau, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold.*

119 | On Primaticcio at Mantova, see Vittoria Romani, "Primatice peintre et dessinateur," in: *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau*; exhibition catalog; Paris, Musée du Louvre, 22 septembre 2004–3 janvier 2005, ed. by Ugo Bazzotti, Geneviève Brese-Bautier, Dominique Cordellier, Marianne Grivel, and Vittoria Romani (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 18–30, especially 19.

120 | Bazzotti et al., *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau*, 319.

121 | On Vaga, Rosso, and Giulio, see Stagno, "Due principi per un palazzo," 12–13.

122 | According to Pascale Climent-Delteil, Primaticcio introduces Raphael's school of painting to Fontainebleau, via Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga. Climent-Delteil, *Il Rosso Fiorentino*, 91. On the many stylistic similarities between the four artists, see Romani, "Primatice peintre et dessinateur," 18–30; Romani, among others, mentions a game dedicated to painters commissioned by Innocenzo Ringhieri in 1551 that lists Rosso, Giulio, and Primaticcio in close proximity. Romani, "Primatice peintre et dessinateur," 27. Elena Parma mentions that Perino del Vaga met not only Giulio Romano in 1516 but also Luca Penni, brother of the director of Raphael's workshop, who first worked with him at the Palazzo Doria and then, from 1531, in Fontainebleau with Rosso Fiorentino. Parma, "Perino del Vaga, ingegno sottile e capriccioso," 14.

123 | On Primaticcio and Giulio, see Signorini, *Il Palazzo del Te*, 35; on Perino del Vaga and Giulio, see Parma, "Perino del Vaga, ingegno sottile e capriccioso," 14; and: *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, CD-ROM (Leipzig: Seemann, 2008), vol. "V," 13; on Perino del Vaga and Rosso, see Parma, "Perino del Vaga, ingegno sottile e capriccioso," 24.

124 | Thieme and Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. "Ro–Rz," 223.

125 | Romani, "Primatice peintre et dessinateur," 18.

126 | Unfortunately, this has been overlooked by scholars who work on printmakers' popularization of motifs at Fontainebleau. Catherine Jenkins, "Les Graveurs de Primatice au XVIe siècle à Fontainbleau," in: Bazzotti et al., *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau*, 38–44; Marianne Grivel, "La fortune de Primatice dans l'estampe au xviie siècle," in: Bazzotti et al., *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau*, 45–53. On Primaticcio as Rosso's stuccator, see Romani, "Primatice peintre et dessinateur," 22.

127 | On Beccafumi's frescos at Palazzo Venturi, see Andreas Vetter, *Gigantensturz-Darstellungen in der italienischen Kunst. Zur Instrumentalisierung eines mythologischen Bildsujets im historisch-politischen Kontext* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank

für Geisteswissenschaften, 2002), 34; Roberto Guerrino, "Il Ciclo di Palazzo Venturi a Siena e la sua iconografia," in: *Beccafumi*, ed. by Piero Torriti (Milan: Electa, 1998), 97–108; Antonio Pinelli, "Il 'picciol vetro' e il 'maggior vaso'. I due grandi cicli profani di Domenico Beccafumi in Palazzo Venturi e nella Sala del Concistoro," in: *Domenico Beccafumi e il suo tempo*, ed. by Piero Torriti (Milan: Electa, 1990), 621–51.

128 | Tuck-Scala, "Caravaggio's 'Roman Charity'," 133; Villa, "Quid hoc est rei?," 85; Grivel, "La fortune de Primatice dans l'estampe au xviie siecle," 45–53. Rubens's six versions include, most likely, copies by his followers.

129 | Stagno, "Due principi per un palazzo," 12–13.

130 | Jean Goujon and workshop, *Pero and Cimon,* 1560–64, Paris, Louvre, Cour Carrée. Cécile Scaillièrez, *Rosso: Le Christ mort* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 72–73.

131 | Dora and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 52, hundredth year, sixth series (1958): 113–90, especially 136–37.

132 | Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 56.

133 | Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau," 138.

134 | Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau," 136.

135 | On lactation imagery in French Renaissance art as a sign of excess, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold.* On the difficulties in interpreting the decorative program of the Gallery of Frances I in greater detail, see Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau," 115–18; and Climent-Delteil, *Il Rosso Fiorentino*, 85–86.