



MUSICA E CULTURA NELLA PADOVA DI PIETRO BEMBO

A CURA DI CRISTINA CASSIA

LIBRERIA MUSICALE ITALIANA

Studi e Saggi



· 57 ·

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SARAH FERRARI – IRENE BROOKE

CONSTRUCTING THE MYTH OF BEMBO THROUGH VISUAL AND VERBAL PORTRAITS*

Portraiture, both ancient and modern, formed a critical aspect of Bembo's engagement with the arts, as shown in his writings, which were on a certain level conceived to function as a «written portrait» of the author.¹ Fundamentally linked to humanistic pedagogical ideals of exemplarity, so central to Bembo's normative project, portraiture's power to fashion identity and propagate fame was abundantly recognized by the author and his followers who exploited its potential for asserting authority, as well as self-hood, in literal and metaphorical manifestations. Taking into account Petrarchan origins of Bembo's interest in portraiture, also thoroughly investigated by critics, this essay will analyze a few case studies that exemplify different ways in which the image of the individual figured within the literary agenda of Bembo and members of his circle. In particular, we will examine how «written portraits» surface in the work of Bembo's close friend Andrea Navagero (1483–1529). Subsequently, the presence of portraits in the writer's own collection — including the famous *Double Portrait* of Navagero and Beazzano by Raphael (Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj) — will be considered in light of Bembo's critical views on portraiture and his role as an arbiter of taste and style, especially regarding female beauty. Finally, we will consider how the interplay between visual and verbal portraits contributed to the construction of Bembo's «myth» following his

* This essay is the result of continuous exchange and dialogue between the two authors. In terms of writing, however, the first part, until paragraph *Ritratti, bellezza di donne, and exempla: Portraits and Bembo's cultural capital* (included) is authored by Sarah Ferrari, while the second part is authored by Irene Brooke. Unless otherwise indicated all translations are our own.

1. Several authors have argued this. See VIRGINIA COX, *The Renaissance Dialogue. Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992; SUSAN GAYLARD, *Shifty Men Writing Monuments: Creating a Permanent Self in Early Modern Italian Literature*, Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley 2004 (especially chapter 4).

death, in asserting his authoritative place as one of the *exempla* that he himself had advocated.

Petrarchan Poetics of Portraiture

The conceit of the «written portrait» was one that Bembo's contemporaries played upon regularly. Perhaps most famously, Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano*, fundamentally conceived as a behavioural model, is declared by the author to be a «portrait» of the court of Urbino.² Similarly, in his text *De Guidobaldo Feretrio*, written between 1509 and 1510 to commemorate the death of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Bembo sets up the duke's funerary oration, delivered by Lodovico Odasio (and related through a letter from Federico Fregoso) in terms of a painted portrait which reflects the qualities of the soul just like written words:

Vedutasi da voi la pittura delle maniere e de' costumi di lui, dirò tale e somigliante a questi costumi esser la faccia e la qualità delle sue scritte, e la leggiadria e dolcezza de il loro stile esser uguale alla soavità e candidezza del suo animo. Ché se questa qualità di scrittura dissegna sapesse questo medesimo artefice e quella disegnata ci avesse [...], allora quasi la imagine de gli scritti di lui vedereste da quella de gli suoi costumi ritratta.³

Bembo's «portrait» of the duke, which is able to communicate both his «costumi» and «animo», comprises an *exemplum* for future generations. At the same time, it commemorates the author's affection for and personal relationship with the duke and duchess.

The construal of the text as a portrait is tied to a broader, conceptual role played by portraiture within Bembo's literary oeuvre, a subject that has been explored by Alessandro Ballarin and Lina Bolzoni, among others.⁴ Beyond

2. He states «mandovi questo libro come un ritratto di pittura della corte d'Urbino» in the dedicatory letter; Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano con una scelta delle opere minori*, ed. by Bruno Maier, UTET, Turin 1964, p. 71.

3. PIETRO BEMBO, *De Guidobaldo Feretrio deque Elisabetha Gonzaga*, ed. by Maria Lutz, Droz, Geneva 1980, pp. 121–3.

4. ALESSANDRO BALLARIN, *Giorgione e la Compagnia degli Amici. Il «Doppio ritratto» Ludovisi*, in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, ed. by Giulio Bollati and Paolo Fossati, Einaudi, Turin 1983, tomo v, vol. II/1: *Dal Medioevo al Quattrocento*, pp. 479–541 (republished in ALESSANDRO BALLARIN, *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano*, vol. II, Grafiche Aurora, Verona 2016, pp. 999–1054); ALESSANDRO BALLARIN, *Generazione al bivio. Giorgione e la Compagnia degli Amici: un'introduzione al seguito dei lavori*, in *Pietro Bembo e le arti*, ed. by Guido Beltrami, Howard Burns and Davide Gasparotto, Marsilio, Venice 2013, pp. 281–4 (republished in

their role as exemplars and bearers of memory, within Bembo's Petrarchan poetics, portraits served both a literal function, in terms of the exchange of images and poems, but also a metaphorical one, as demonstrated in *Gli Asolani*, where Gismondo describes the effect which his love has on him, defining the experience in terms of both painted and written works of art:⁵

O Amore, benedette sieno le tue mani sempre da me, con le quali tante cose m'hai dipinte nell'anima, tante scritte, tante segnate della mia dolce donna, che io una lunga tela porto meco ad ogni ora d'infiniti suoi ritratti in vece d'un solo viso, e uno alto libro leggo sempre e rileggo pieno delle sue parole, pieno de' suoi accenti, pieno delle sue voci, e in breve mille forme vaghissime riconosco di lei e del suo valore, qualora io vi rimiro, cotanto dolci sutemi e cotanto care, non picciola parte di quella viva dolcezza sentendo nel pensiero, che io già, operandola ella, ne' loro avvenimenti mi sentia.

The Petrarchan poetic conception of portraiture, in relation to both the beloved and the self, was shared by Bembo's circle of Venetian friends, including the so-called «Compagnia degli Amici» whose «leggi», written in Bembo's hand, stipulated that each member should have his or her portrait executed by a «singolare depintore» — and it is worth noting that the «Compagnia» allowed membership to both men and women, who shared the same passion and interest for literature.⁶ Although not named in the «leggi», the patrician Andrea Navagero was close to members of this «Compagnia» from an early date and his poetry takes up the interplay of lyric and portraiture. In a sonnet included

BALLARIN, *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano*, vol. II, pp. 1407–12); LINA BOLZONI, *Il cuore di cristallo: ragionamenti d'amore, poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento*, Einaudi, Turin 2010; LINA BOLZONI, *I ritratti e la comunità degli amici fra Venezia, Firenze e Roma*, in *Pietro Bembo e l'invenzione del Rinascimento*, ed. by Guido Beltramini, Davide Gasparotto and Adolfo Tura, Marsilio, Venice 2013, pp. 210–7; LINA BOLZONI, *Il testo come «speculum animi» e il ritratto del volto*, in *Il ritratto letterario in età moderna*, Bardi, Rome 2021 (Atti dei convegni lincei, 338), pp. 11–26. See also: FEDERICA PICH, *I poeti davanti al ritratto: da Petrarca a Marino*, Pacini Fazzi, Lucca 2010 (Morgana); FEDERICA PICH, «RVF» LXXVII–LXXVIII and the Rhetoric of Painted Words, in *Petrarca und die bildenden Künste*, ed. by Maria Antonietta Terzoli and Sebastian Schütze, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2021, pp. 243–63.

5. PIETRO BEMBO, *Gli Asolani*, Venezia 1530, ed. by Carlo Dionisotti, UTET, Turin 1966, p. 436; the passage is quoted by LINA BOLZONI, *La stanza della memoria: modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa*, Einaudi, Turin 1995, p. 155.

6. «Leggi della Compagnia degli Amici», in PIETRO BEMBO, *Prose e Rime*, ed. by Carlo Dionisotti, UTET, Turin 1966, p. 699.

within his *Lusus* (Diversions),⁷ Navagero imagines sending his portrait to his lady, whom he addresses under the pseudonym «Hyella»:

This little picture, which I give you now, Hyella,
 On the first of January, portrays my face.
 None was ever more like to anyone: the likeness is pale,
 Just as a constant pallor lingers on my face;
 it is expressionless, heartless, as I am without a heart, since Love himself
 gave mine, snatched from my breast, into your power.⁸

Navagero's lyrics exhibit several elements of Bembo's petrarchism: the attitude of devotion, dependence and despair; the analogies of the passions with fire and the torments of love with storms; and generally the quintessential Petrarchan situation in which the «despairing» poet laments his lady's hardness of heart, which is here clearly reflected in the description of his own portrait. Another poem by Navagero, an epigram on the theme of the «Venus armata», also plays upon Petrarchan tropes, framing love as warfare, while again expressing the idea through the imagery of a portrait. Particularly interesting are the last four verses:

So also, the painter has depicted this armour on my shoulders,
 Not because I have taken part in any battle,
 But because in this war, in this terrible time for our country,
 It becomes everyone, however unwarlike, to bear arms.⁹

Here, despite being a man, the poet figures himself as the ambiguous — though not uncommon in classical literature and art — «persona» of «Venus armata»; it is not the goddess who incongruously wears armour but the poet, concealing his inner, more delicate self with steel. In doing so, he sets up an

7. Published posthumously in Venice in 1530 by Giovanni Tacuino, following Navagero's sudden death in France. Giovanni Ferroni's book is an extremely useful source for understanding Navagero's poetry: GIOVANNI FERRONI, «*Dulces lusus*». *Lirica pastorale e libri di poesia nel Cinquecento*, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2012. On Navagero's poetry and the arts see also: SARAH FERRARI, *Una fonte per i disegni di paesaggio di Tiziano: prime riflessioni sui «Lusus» (1530) di Andrea Navagero (1483–1529)*, in *Il paesaggio veneto nel Rinascimento europeo*, ed. by Andrea Caracausi, Marsel Grosso and Vittoria Romani, Officina Libraria, Milan 2019, pp. 27–47.

8. The quote is from the English edition: ANDREA NAVAGERO, *Lusus. Text and Translation*, ed. by Alice Wilson, Nieuwkoop, De Graaf 1973 (Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica, 9), pp. 56–7.

9. NAVAGERO, *Lusus*, pp. 74–5.

ambiguous simile intended to perplex and surprise the reader, since as noted by Edgar Wind, we find that the contrasting roles of Mars and Venus, which would normally be divided between man and woman, recur within one figure. According to Wind: «The principle of the “whole in the part” entails this rather baffling conclusion: that Venus is not only joined to Mars, but that his nature is an essential part of her own, and vice versa. True fierceness is thus conceived as potentially amiable, and true amiability as potentially fierce. In the perfect lover they coincide because he — or she — is the perfect warrior. But whenever their “infolded” perfection is “unfolded” the argument requires two opposing images which, by contrasting the martial with the amiable spirit, reveal their transcendent unity».¹⁰

Francesca Cortesi Bosco has suggested a relationship between Navagero's epigram and Giorgione's *Man in Armour*, now in the Uffizi (fig. 1), arguing that this could possibly be a portrait of the poet.¹¹ However, the absence of any visual reference to Venus seems to invalidate the simile proposed by Navagero, suggesting perhaps a different kind of ambiguity. Wind on the other hand connected Navagero's lyrics on the «Venus armata» with an image of *Venus and Mars* (fig. 2) on the reverse of a medal of don Rodrigo de Vivar, the eldest son of Cardinal Mendoza. Although there are varying views regarding the date of this medal, it has been plausibly suggested that it was made around 1500 in connection with Rodrigo's marriage to Lucrezia Borgia.¹² The link with Lucrezia is particularly interesting in light of her subsequent relationship with Bembo; not only was she the dedicatee of *Gli Asolani*, but as part of their amorous exchange she requested that Bembo devise a reverse for her own medal. Although Bembo's suggested reverse does not seem to have been used, the imagery of «blindfolded Cupid» that decorates Lucrezia's extant portrait medals accords with the Petrarchan inclination to identify the self with

10. EDGAR WIND, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, Faber and Faber Limited, London 1958, pp. 84–8.

11. FRANCESCA CORTESI BOSCO, *Viaggio nell'ermetismo del Rinascimento. Lotto, Dürer, Giorgione*, Il Poligrafo, Padua 2016, pp. 418, 488–9, footnote 2.

12. It has been connected both with Rodrigo's marriage to Leonora de la Cerda, in 1492, or with the possibility of a second marriage, following Leonora's death, with Lucrezia Borgia, presumably after the nullification of her marriage with Giovanni Sforza, in 1497. Rodrigo made several trips to Italy: by the end of August 1499, he was in Naples, whence he travelled to Rome. He spent Christmas in Milan. On New Year's Day 1500, he arranged for five cartloads of artefacts to be transported to Genoa and shipped to the port of Cartagena, and by the end of September he was back in Valencia. He then secretly married Maria de Fonseca in 1502.

the vicissitudes of love which are visualised in form, as seen in *Gli Asolani* and Navagero's poems.¹³

Returning to the verso of Rodrigo de Vivar's medal, it might be profitably read in connection with the small painting of *Venus and Mars* in the Brooklyn Museum of Art (fig. 3), which has been convincingly attributed to Giulio Campagnola by Keith Christiansen.¹⁴ The size and paper ground of this work suggest a resemblance with the small-scale paintings by Giulio seen in Bembo's collection by Marcantonio Michiel.¹⁵ As is well known, Bembo's two pictures depicted female nudes in landscapes, which Michiel describes as copies made by Giulio after works by Giorgione and Benedetto Diana: the description of the copy after Giorgione as «la nuda stesa e volta» recalls Campagnola's engraving of a nude woman lying in a landscape with her back facing the viewer.¹⁶ The same viewpoint is adopted in the small Brooklyn painting, with Venus similarly seen from behind. Beyond the possible link with Campagnola's print of the *Nuda*, and thereby Bembo's small painting, this aspect also evokes in visual terms the opposition described in Navagero's poem, as the two figures appear juxtaposed in a sort of chiasmus.

Collecting Portraits

Bembo and Navagero shared a close friendship, which is documented in the history of Raphael's famous *Double Portrait* of Navagero and Beazzano (fig. 4). This painting was executed in Rome, probably in the Spring of 1516, when the sitters, Bembo, Castiglione and Raphael made their famous sightseeing trip to Tivoli. Michiel later saw the picture during his first visit to Bembo's collection, generally thought to have occurred before 1526 (the exact date is unknown).¹⁷

13. For the circumstances surrounding Bembo's involvement with Lucrezia's medal and his interest in the figure of Blindfolded Cupid see IRENE BROOKE, *Pietro Bembo and the Visual Arts*, Ph.D. diss., The Courtauld Institute of Arts, London 2011, pp. 28, 122–3, with further bibliography.

14. KEITH CHRISTIANSEN, *A Proposal for Giulio Campagnola pittore*, in *Hommage à Michel Laclotte: études sur la peinture du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance*, Electa, Milan 1994, pp. 341–7.

15. For a consideration of what Campagnola's painted works might have looked like see IRENE BROOKE, *Giulio Campagnola, Landscape, and Venetian Illumination*, «Colnaghi Studies Journal», III 2018, pp. 136–55.

16. MARCANTONIO MICHEL, *Notizia d'opere di disegno*, ed. by Cristina de Benedictis, EDIFIR, Florence 2000, pp. 30–2.

17. ROSELLA LAUBER, *Note sulla collezione d'arte «In casa di Messer Pietro Bembo a Padova»*, «Padova e il suo territorio», XXVIII/161 2013, pp. 50–4.

When and how Raphael's *Double Portrait* arrived in Padua remains unclear, but one would expect such a painting to have a strong impact on local artists. If the *Double Portrait* remained with Bembo in Rome, as is often assumed, it probably would have reached Padua only in 1522, following Pietro's relocation to the city. According to Alessandro Ballarin, Titian's awareness of Raphael's *Double Portrait* at this date is evident in the Averoldi Polyptych and in his *Portrait of Castiglione*.¹⁸ However, as I have argued elsewhere, if the *Double Portrait* was taken by Navagero to Venice on his departure from Rome in the late spring of 1516, Titian would have had access to it even earlier.¹⁹

Navagero's role in Titian's career has been largely overlooked but a letter sent by Isabella d'Este to Giovanni Battista Malatesta in Venice, on 20 June 1523, indicates that he may have acted as a mediator with high-profile clients as well as an advisor in matters more strictly related to the artistic sphere, in a way that resembles the role played by Bembo in the relations between Isabella and Giovanni Bellini. Isabella in fact when considering the purchase of a painting by Titian confessed that she would be willing to hear the opinion of Navagero, since «it is hard to be mistaken under his advice, given the experience that he has on artistic matters».²⁰ By the time Navagero returned from Rome, he and the artist had probably been friends for many years, given Ludovico Dolce's claim that in 1513 Navagero persuaded Titian to stay in Venice rather than accept an invitation to serve the Pope, an invitation which according to Vasari came through Bembo.²¹ The artist's immediate response by Titian to Raphael's painting may be suggested by the pose of the *Petworth Man with a Plumed Hat* (fig. 5).²² Seen in an over-the-shoulder-view, which closely resembles that

18. ALESSANDRO BALLARIN, *Nota alle tavole*, in ID., *Giorgione e l'umanesimo veneziano*, vol. VII, pp. XXII–XXIII (figg. 46, 47, 48, 49).

19. FERRARI, *Una fonte per i disegni di paesaggio*, pp. 27–47.

20. «[...] sapendo di non poter errare sotto il parer suo per la experientia che l'ha di tal cose». On this episode, see PETER PORÇAL, *Isabella d'Este, Tiziano e il «quadro di ser Hieronymo»*, «Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz», xxxiii/2–3 1989, pp. 385–9.

21. LODOVICO DOLCE, *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l'Aretino. Nel quale si ragiona della dignità di essa pittura [...] e nel fine si da mentione delle virtù e delle opere del divin Titiano*, Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, Venezia 1557 (republished in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento. Fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. by Paola Barocchi, G. Laterza & Figli, Bari 1960–1962, vol. 1, pp. 141–206).

22. Oil on canvas, 70,5 x 63 cm, Petworth House and Park, West Sussex, inv. no. NT 486242. It should be noted that the painting was listed at Petworth as early as 1671 and was then attributed to Giorgione. For a slightly earlier dating of the *Young Man with a Plumed Hat*, in parallel with the *Interrupted Concert* (Florence, Palazzo Pitti) see: PAUL JOANNIDES, *Titian to 1518. The Assumption of Genius*, Yale University Press, New Haven-London 2001, p. 218.

of Navagero in Raphael's *Double Portrait*, and is clearly dependent on Giorgionesque prototypes, the sitter — whose identity is unknown — could have been someone close to the circle of friends shared by Bembo and Navagero.

The kind of privileged access that Navagero undoubtedly had to Bembo's Paduan residence is indicated by a passage in Sisto Medici's *Stromata*, which describes a «convivium» hosted by Bembo on 14 July 1524 in honour of Navagero's imminent departure as ambassador to Spain. If Navagero was originally in possession of Raphael's *Double Portrait*, it is possible that such an occasion might have prompted its consignment to Pietro, who may have desired a way to remember his friend in his absence. Although for the moment we can only speculate about the portrait's history prior to Michiel's visit to Bembo's house, there is no doubt that gifts and exchanges of portraiture occurred frequently in Bembo's circle of friends. Indeed, the *Double Portrait* ultimately became a gift when in the summer of 1538 Pietro wrote to his secretary Antonio Anselmi, requesting that the painting be sent to Beazzano in Treviso.²³

Ritratti, bellezza di donne, and exempla: Portraits and Bembo's cultural capital

In the same year, 1524, that Bembo hosted the «convivium» in honour of Navagero, Giangiorgio Trissino published his *Ritratti*, which can be seen as the culmination of the notion of the «written portrait».²⁴ Composed a decade or so before its publication, the work claims to report a conversation between Vincenzo Macro (or Magré) and Pietro Bembo, in which Macro «paints» a portrait of a beautiful Ferrarese woman who is designed to be identified by Bembo, clearly regarded as an expert on love and beauty. Through Macro's description, Bembo recognizes the woman as Isabella d'Este and completes her «portrait» with a disquisition on her speech, singing voice and many admirable traits.²⁵ The entire work functions as a written portrait of Isabella intended to contend with visual representations, ultimately surpassing them in its ability to depict the lady's internal, as well as external beauty.

Mary Rogers noted the recurrent use made by Trissino of phrases like «la misuratissima qualità de la fronte», «il ben formato mento», and «il ben

23. PIETRO BEMBO, *Lettere*, ed. by Ernesto Travi, 4 vols., Commissione per i testi di lingua, Bologna 1987–1993, vol. IV, no. 1945.

24. GIAN GIORGIO TRISSINO, *I ritratti del Trissino*, Lodovico degli Arrighi Vicentino – Lautitio Perugino, Roma 1524.

25. TRISSINO, *I ritratti del Trissino*.

proportionato collo».²⁶ While indicating that Trissino was well-aware of the theoretical importance of anatomical proportion within artistic discourse, the vagueness of such formulations suggests that he was not equipped to pursue the subject in any depth because of the comparative lack of Renaissance writing on the proportions of female as opposed to male bodies.²⁷ Therefore, it seems likely that the choice of Bembo as mouthpiece for the «portrait» of Isabella also directly reflects his perceived expertise in this genre within the visual arts, already implied by Bembo himself in *Gli Asolani*, in which his interlocutor, Gismondo (usually identified with the author), refers to the «subtly painted appearance of a beautiful girl» whose beauty is defined as «a grace born from proportion and a seemliness born from a harmony of parts».

Bembo's expertise in matters of portraiture was probably considered to derive not only from his knowledge of literary sources, but also from his own collection which included a considerably high number of portraits, particularly of ancients. Interestingly, the only female portrait explicitly mentioned by Michiel in Bembo's collection is an image of Petrarch's *Laura*. Nevertheless, we know that Bembo played an active role in the commission and/or execution of female portraits, as in the cases of Maria Savorgnan and Elisabetta Querini. The latter's portrait-medal by Danese Cattaneo, author of Bembo's monument discussed below, showed on its verso an image of the three graces, possibly an allusion to Bembo's aesthetic described earlier, and significantly the emblem that was meant to decorate a gold medal commemorating the «Compagnia degli Amici», described in their «leggi».²⁸

Bembo's early interest in and investigation of the didactic role of ancient portraits is documented in youthful works like his *Encomium of Helen* and the *De Aetna*, both of which highlight the notion that through the collection and contemplation of «imagini», individuals could be moved to adopt the noble, humanistic virtues, embodied in the physiognomies of ancient heroes recorded on numismatic and sculptural remains.²⁹ For Bembo, the inclusion of a portrait was a factor that could significantly increase the value of an artefact.³⁰ That Bembo's contemporaries viewed him as an expert on images of the

26. MARY ROGERS, *The Decorum of Women's Beauty: Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini, and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth-Century Painting*, «Renaissance Studies», II 1988/1, pp. 47–88.

27. ROGERS, *The Decorum of Women's Beauty*; see also JILL BURKE, *The Italian Renaissance Nude*, Yale University Press, New Haven-London 2018, pp. 125–57.

28. BEMBO, *Prose e Rime*, p. 700.

29. BROOKE, *Pietro Bembo and the Visual Arts*, pp. 44–5, 50–2.

30. This is indicated in his correspondence with Elisabetta Querini regarding a coin of a «Salute Augusta», which Elisabetta was willing to buy for Bembo at the price of twenty-five

ancients is later demonstrated in a letter to Giovan Battista Ramusio, a close friend of Navagero, in which Bembo makes an interesting distinction between the meanings of the Latin terms «signa» and «imagines»: «Avertite che “signa” sono Gladiatori, e Dei, e Muse, Bacche, e Satiri e alter così fatte figure che naturali non sono; “imagini” poi sono le tolte dal naturale, come Augusti Aurelii, Dominiziani, Traiani e somiglianti».³¹

In proposing this definition, Bembo shows a critical approach to images, distinguishing between the fictive nature of representations of mythological personae versus the accurate physical likeness that characterizes portraits. The question of likeness specifically applied by Bembo to the area of ancient portraiture assumed a crucial role in the iconographic programme of the decoration of the Sala dei Giganti, conceived by Alessandro Maggi da Bassano, a pupil of Bembo. As noted by Giulio Bodon, the fresco cycle presents a unique combination of portraits of «giganti», based on classical sculptural prototypes, and monochromatic narrative scenes which illustrate the virtues of each individual through one or more related episodes.³² This combination can be seen to reflect Bembo’s view of the didactic role of images and represents an important testimony to the writer’s impact on local Paduan artistic and intellectual culture. Following his death this was further propagated through the celebration of the author in both visual and written portraits, which culminated with his monument in the Santo.

Monumentalizing Bembo: Poems and Portraits

Bembo’s death in 1547 prompted an outpouring of commemorative projects, many of which reflect his own expertise in the area of portraiture and the complimentary role of visual and verbal portraits which he promoted in his

scudi; according to Bembo, however, the coin was «molto picciola» and had only letters (no image) on the reverse, therefore its value was not more than three or four scudi. Elisabetta eventually presented the coin as a gift to Bembo. In his letter thanking her, Bembo made a clever pun, saying that with this gift Elisabetta had restored him to health «da voi m’è venuta la salute». See: BEMBO, *Lettere*, vol. IV, nos. 1837–1846; for a discussion of this exchange, see also IRENE BROOKE, «Per farne poi di esse donation [...] per lasciar perpetua memoria a i posteri de i nomi di coloro»: Gifts of Ancient Coins to Pietro Bembo, in *Una insalata di più erbe: A Festschrift for Patricia Lee Rubin*, ed. by Scott Nethersole, Jim Harris, and Per Rumberg, The Courtauld Institute, London 2011, pp. 57–8.

31. BEMBO, *Lettere*, vol. II, no. 575.

32. GIULIO BODON, *Heroum imagines. La Sala dei Giganti a Padova. Un monumento della tradizione classica e della cultura antiquaria*, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Venice 2009 (Studi di arte veneta). See also the essay by Giulio Pietrobelli included in this volume.

writings and collection. Already frequently portrayed and mythologized prior to his death, ultimately the written, sculpted, and painted monuments undertaken in Bembo's memory demonstrate a rich interplay between the visual and the verbal and collectively document Bembo's transformation into the realm of *exempla*; the many visual representations of Bembo produced posthumously fulfilled both the didactic and aesthetic role that he so often assigned to portraits of ancients, simultaneously instructing souls while delighting the eyes.³³

Bembo as a work of art

At the time of Bembo's death, individuals in his far-reaching circle of literary disciples sought to pay tribute to the cardinal and, in doing so, attach themselves to his memory. Among the many who wrote poems in honour of Bembo was his perceived literary heir Giovanni Della Casa. In his tribute to Bembo, the younger author objectifies his mentor, describing him as a «bel tesoro», whence the city of Venice was made rich and distinguished by «so precious and luminous a gem».³⁴ This description of Bembo evokes an image of one of the ancient *cammei* or gems from his or Della Casa's own collections. The visual arts and portraiture in particular had figured prominently in the relationship between the two men. Under the aegis of Bembo, Della Casa had, following his mentor's Petrarchan model, composed sonnets on a portrait by Titian of the cardinal's late-in-life love interest, Elisabetta Querini, to whom Bembo had sent a portrait of himself prior to his departure for Rome in 1539.³⁵

33. See for example Bembo's comments on the dual value of ancient coins deriving from their function as moral exemplars and their aesthetic merit in various letters discussed in BROOKE, «*Per farne poi di esse donation*», pp. 51–62.

34. GIOVANNI DELLA CASA, *Rime*, ed. by Roberto Fedi, Salerno Editrice, Rome 1978, no. 37, p. 41, «Or piangi in negra vesta, orba e dolente/ Venezia, poi che tolto ha Morte avara/ dal bel tesoro, onde ricca eri e chiara,/ si preziosa gemma e si lucente».

35. These are closely modelled on Bembo's sonnets on Bellini's portrait of Maria Savorgnan and Bembo's own sonnets dedicated to Elisabetta. For Della Casa's sonnets see DELLA CASA, *Rime*, nos. 33 and 34. For an art historical analysis of these sonnets see MARY ROGERS, *Sonnets on Female Portraits from Renaissance North Italy*, «Word & Image», 11/4 1986, pp. 293–6. For an analysis of Della Casa's sonnets in relation to Bembo's poetry see GIORGIO DILEMMI, *Giovanni Della Casa e il «nobil cigno»: «a gara» col Bembo*, in *Per Giovanni Della Casa: ricerche e contributi*, ed. by Gennaro Barbarisi and Claudia Berra, Cisalpino, Milan 1997, pp. 116–8; FEDERICA PICH, *I sonetti a Tiziano nella tradizione delle Rime per Ritratto*, in *Giovanni Della Casa ecclesiastico e scrittore*, ed. by Stefano Carrai, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Rome 2007, pp. 401–4; and LINA BOLZONI, *Poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento*, Editori Laterza, Bari 2008, pp. 92–8. For Bembo's portrait sent to Elisabetta Querini see BEMBO, *Lettere*, vol. IV, no. 2125, discussed in BROOKE, *Pietro Bembo*, pp. 97–9.

Bembo was able to enjoy Elisabetta's portrait when staying in Della Casa's Roman lodgings, where he also admired his friend's collection of antiquities.³⁶ After Bembo's death, his image in Della Casa's imagination assumed the form of one of the ancient works of art which the two had probably spent much time deliberating.

Della Casa was not the only author in Bembo's milieu to eulogize the cardinal in terms of a work of art. In honour of his old friend and literary hero, Agostino Beazzano published a book of *Lachrymae*, a series of eulogistic poems written in Latin and the vernacular which includes several references to the visual arts.³⁷ One long, encomiastic passage, listing the many far corners of Italy that will lament Bembo's death, refers to Urbino's loss of a «bel thesauro», which the Montefeltro had once collected.³⁸ As with Della Casa, portraiture had played an important role in the relationship between Bembo and Beazzano, and the rich interplay between the visual and the verbal seen in the *Lachrymae* is anticipated in Beazzano's earlier *Le cose volgari e latine*, which was published in 1538 and may have instigated the gift of Raphael's *Double Portrait*.³⁹ As discussed above, this image immortalized the time spent by the three friends with the artist in Rome, and Beazzano's earlier book of poetry had included «written portraits» of Bembo, Raphael and Navagero.⁴⁰

This previous exchange of written and painted portraits is mirrored in Beazzano's edition of *Lachrymae*, where individuals are called upon to take up the subject of the recently deceased Bembo. Most addresses are made to fellow authors. Jacopo Sansovino, however, is addressed three times in the poem.⁴¹

36. BEMBO, *Lettere*, vol. IV, no. 244.

37. AGOSTINO BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae in Funere Petri Cardinalis Bembi Augustini Beatiani*, Giolito, Venezia 1548. For a discussion of Beazzano and his social network in relation to Bembo as demonstrated in this and his other poetic works, see MICHEL HOCHMANN, *Un amico di Pietro Bembo: Agostino Beazzano*, in *Pietro Bembo e le arti*, pp. 193–206.

38. M. Iacomo Antonio Benalio *ne la morte dell'ecellentissimo Bembo* in BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae*, fol. 25r: «Da gli umbri Antichi spinto da furore/ Col precipite corso il buon Metauro/ Mostra nel mar cadendo il suo dolore./ Che vede estinto tutto il bel thesauro/ C'hebbe già Montefeltro in se raccolto».

39. AGOSTINO BEAZZANO, *De le cose volgari e latine del Beatiano*, Bartolomeo de Zanetti, Venezia 1538. For the interplay between the visual and verbal in this work see MARIA LUISA DOGLIO, *Ritratto e maniera nelle Rime di Agostino Beaziano*, in EAD., *Il segretario e il principe: studi sulla letteratura italiana del Rinascimento*, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 1993, pp. 101–8. Although the portrait was sent in July and the book is dated October 10th, the publication was undoubtedly in preparation when Bembo sent the painting.

40. BEAZZANO, *De le cose volgari*, sine pagina.

41. As noted by MASSIMILIANO ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita: Danese Cataneo nella Venezia del Cinquecento*, Pacini Fazzi, Lucca 1995, pp. 42–3, who comments on the «gioco tra scultura

The first half of the work, written in Latin, concludes with an appeal to Sansovino for a monument to Bembo. Beazzano bemoans the futility of his own expressions of grief, but Sansovino possesses a unique ability to create «living faces from marble, and he alone will be able to execute an image of Bembo that will carry him to eternity. This labour will not go unrewarded, as his own glory will become immortal having been joined to the author's».⁴²

Two further appeals to Sansovino are made in the vernacular section of the text. With the first of these, Beazzano again laments the insufficiency of words to represent his deceased friend adequately. Sansovino, this time together with his son Francesco, might be able to do justice to Bembo's memory, the latter in «carte vivo» and the former in marble. That which his son's verse will have «painted», his chisel will have sculpted.⁴³ In a final address, he makes a parallel between Bembo's work and Sansovino's. The former's «splendid ink» requires commemoration by Sansovino's «ancient chisel». Bembo will then be rendered divine, as will Sansovino's own *opera*.⁴⁴

These passages addressed to Sansovino play extensively with the *paragoni* of the arts, at once appearing to give primacy Sansovino's work, while at the same time providing it with meaning through written works, Beazzano's own, Francesco's, and most of all Bembo's. By ending the Latin section with the appeal to Sansovino, Beazzano seems to imply that the many preceding pages of «dolores» are unable to yield the same kind of immortality that a marble effigy would. In the vernacular section, however, he undermines this idea by suggesting that it would take not just Sansovino's sculpture, but also his son's verses, which are tellingly described as «painted», to render an accurate

e poesia» in the work.

42. BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae*, fol. 16r: «At tu, qui ducis vivos de marmore vultus / Et veteres prima laude carere facis; / Nitere ut illius veniens mittatur in aevum / Effigies, uni quod tibi posse datum est. / Magna laboris erit merces; nam vestra manebit / Gloria iuncta ullo non solvenda die».

43. BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae*, fol. 32r: «Sansovino; Io non so com'humo potesse / Exprimer degnamente con parole, / Quanto del morto Bembo hora si duole / La virtù, in cui tutti i suoi raggi expresse. / Impresa tal dinanzi'l ciel vi messe, / Et insieme al figliuol vostro, che suole / Spesso tener fermo cantando'l sole; / Che non si sa, chi par qui si vedesse. / Se lui tiene'l figliuol vostro eccellente / In carte vivo, e voi nel marmo, udito, / Torre al prisco l'honor meritamente / Sia'l vostro oprar, et l'atto si gradito, / Che resti superato agevolmente / Ciò, che verso pinto ha, martel sculpito».

44. BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae*, fol. 36v: «A M. Jacopo Sansovino: Acciò che vegga l'altra estate il volto / Di quel gran Bembo honor del viver nostro; / Procuri donde havete 'l nome tolto / A qual si voglia antico martel vostro / Facendo ciò, non sia distante molto / L'opra dal più splendido vivo inchiostro. / Questo il Bembo è, sculpillo il Sansovino / Si dira, et se l'un fu, l'altro è divino».

«portrait» of the author. Flattering the sculptor, he suggests that Bembo will be rendered divine through Sansovino's monument. And yet, at the same time Beazzano positions his own work as a monument to the author, claiming in the dedicatory letter to Marcantonio Giustiniani that he undertook the collection so that «the world might know how much he loved Bembo» and bear witness to how the author was «sculpted» on his soul, just as Gismondo's beloved was «painted» on his «anima». ⁴⁵

In 1552, some of Beazzano's *Lachrymae* were reprinted in Venice, together with Bembo's *Carmina*. This edition contained only Latin verses and included some poems that had not appeared in Beazzano's work of 1548. ⁴⁶ Despite the exclusion of Italian poetry, some of the new additions emphasize Bembo's work in the vernacular, including an address to Cosimo de' Medici by Beazzano and a poem celebrating Bembo's championing of Tuscan, written by Lazzaro Bonamico. The latter author, though originally from Bassano, was a friend of Varchi and many of the other Florentines who had spent time in the Paduan *studio*. ⁴⁷ Bonamico was himself a professor of Latin and Greek, but he admired Bembo's teachings on the *volgare*. In his eulogy, Bonamico invokes Cosimo to pay tribute to the author who raised the Tuscan language to the same level as Latin and Greek. Bembo's memory, he insists, must be commemorated with a monument in Florence, and he is confident the Medici duke will do this:

That famous hero, Duke Cosimo of Medici [...] / Undertakes to honour you, Bembo, with a marble tomb / Having been raised up with solemn pomp and the accustomed funeral rites / And when, the learned hand of an artist equalling ancient honours, will have shaped your image from Parian stone, / He provides to put [your image] to be admired among the three lights of the Tuscan language, / In a celebrated place, and with the celebrated honour

45. BEAZZANO, *Lachrymae*, fol. 39v. For the Petrarchan trope of the image of the beloved figured as work of art on interior of the lover see BOLZONI, *La stanza della memoria*. For Marcantonio Giustiniani, son of the well-known procurator, Girolamo and Agnesina Badoer, who built the family villa at Roncade and reconstructed the Badoer-Giustiniani chapel, see DOUGLAS LEWIS, *The Sculptures in the Chapel of the Villa Giustinian at Roncade, and their Relation to those in the Giustinian Chapel at San Francesco della Vigna*, «Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz», xxvii/3 1983, pp. 307–52.

46. *Petri Bembi Carminum libellus*, Gualtiero Scoto, Venezia 1552.

47. For Bonamico see RINO AVESANI, *Lazzaro Bonamico*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. XI, Treccani, Rome 1969, pp. 533–40. A notice of this poem was published by BARBARA AGOSTI, *Due versi di Lazzaro Bonamico su Michelangelo*, in *Il più dolce lavorare che sia: mélanges en l'honneur de Mauro Natale*, ed. by Frédéric Elsig, Noémie Etienne, and Grégoire Extermann, Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo 2009 (Biblioteca d'arte, 23), pp. 359–61.

/ Of that art with which Michelangelo soars to the stars, /fashioning faces
and breathing images.⁴⁸

Appropriately in this passage, intended as an appeal to Cosimo, a Florentine artist is chosen as the worthy executor of Bembo's effigy; indeed Bonamico calls upon the most famous living Florentine artist, namely Michelangelo, whose work had long been praised (by Bembo himself) as rivalling that of the ancients.

Although it seems unlikely that such a monument to Bembo was ever conceived, the author had a special relationship with Florence and with the Medici in particular, which is reflected in Bonamico's hyperbolic praise. The fact that Bembo was interred between the two Medici popes in the Roman church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva may have inspired Bonamico's idea that the new Medici duke ought to honour the man who had served the family. Upon his death, Bembo was celebrated by a number of Florentines, and Cosimo ultimately paid tribute to Bembo's memory in Vasari's decoration of Palazzo Vecchio, where Bembo's portrait is prominently positioned within a group of literary men including Paolo Giovio, Jacopo Sannazaro, Jacopo Sadoletto, Bernardo Accolti, Pietro Aretino and Lodovico Ariosto in the fresco depicting *Leo X's Triumphant Entry into Florence* (fig. 6).⁴⁹ Here Bembo, gazing at the viewer and centrally placed among the most famous writers of first half of the sixteenth-century, is associated with the Medici's cultural and political status, both as rulers of Florence and on the Italian peninsula more broadly.

48. Lazzaro Bonamico in *Petri Bembo Carminum libellus*, fol. 108: «Ille Heros Medicum Cosmus Dux maximus... Marmoreo ut decoret curat te Bembe sepulchro, / Solenni elatum pompa, exequisque solutis, / Et lapide ex Pario priscos aequantis honores / Artificis cum docta manus te duxerit, inter / Apparat, ut ponat Thuscae tria lumina linguae / Visendum, celebrique loco, celebrique decore / Artis, qua Michaël sese super evehit astra/ Angelus, et vultus, spirantiaque ora figurat». The poem is addressed to Torquato Bembo. I am very grateful to Giovanni Ferroni for checking my translation of this passage and suggesting some useful amendments.

49. See JOHN SHEARMAN, *The Florentine entrata of Leo X, 1515*, «The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», xxxviii 1975, pp. 136–54, and ILARIA CISERI, *L'ingresso trionfale di Leone X in Firenze nel 1515*, Olschki, Florence 1990. For a description of the fresco see GIORGIO VASARI, *Ragionamenti di Palazzo Vecchio*, ed. by Davide Canfora with French trans. by Rolande Le Molle, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2007, p. 149.

Ingenii monumenta eius corporis quoque memoria

Bembo's effigy was of course executed by neither by Sansovino nor Michelangelo. Rather another Tuscan, the former pupil of Sansovino, Danese Cattaneo was engaged to carve a marble bust (fig. 7) that would adorn the monument erected in honour of the venerated author in the city where his collection was housed, where he had held court over so many young scholars, and where Bembo himself had petitioned in 1534 for the right to install 'archa di bronzo' dedicated to his memory.⁵⁰ Ultimately the monument was commissioned by the Venetian Girolamo Querini, Bembo's close friend and executor, and first cousin once removed of his late muse, Elisabetta.⁵¹ Another poem by Paolo Ramusio (son of Bembo's old friend, Giovan Battista mentioned above), which was published anonymously in 1548 and included in the 1552 edition of the *Carmina*, presents Querini, in the guise of a shepherd named of Thrysidis, lamenting his deceased mentor.⁵² Querini expresses his grief in elegiac verses where he describes how he will pay homage to Bembo (who bears the more suitably Grecian name, Menaclas):

Lest Rome alone be able to bear witness to your honours / I shall erect monuments in praise of you, / In that place where venerable Antenor after the burial of miserable Troy, / Located a permanent seat for the Trojans and a city, / And gave the Venetian name to the race with an auspicious omen. / Here with solemn rite I will gladly erect two altars gleaming with snow-white stone to you; and / I will institute annual performances of festive games / Here a hand learned in art will elicit you with beautiful pigment, /

50. For the bust see ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita*, pp. 39–56; MANUELA MORRESI, *Trifon Gabriele, Danese Cattaneo e il Monumento Bembo al Santo di Padova*, in *Alessandro Vittoria e l'arte veneta della maniera*, ed. by Lorenzo Finocchi Ghersi, Forum, Udine 2001, pp. 71–96; and LUCA SIRACUSANO, *Danese Cattaneo, «Busto di Pietro Bembo»*, in *Pietro Bembo e l'invenzione del Rinascimento*, Marsilio, Venezia 2013, p. 379, no. 6.14. The architecture of the monument, though given by Temanza and some subsequent scholars to Michele Sanmicheli, is now generally given to Cattaneo. For Bembo's petition for a monument in the Santo see OLIVIERO RONCHI, *La casa di Pietro Bembo a Padova da documenti inediti, «Atti e memorie della Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti in Padova»*, nuova serie xxxix–xl, 1923–1924, pp. 285–329: 325–6, footnote 47.

51. See ALLISON SHERMAN, *The Lost Church of Santa Maria Assunta dei Crociferi*, Independent Publishing Network, London 2020, pp. 401–2, for the correct identification of Bembo's executor, who was not Girolamo di Francesco, brother of Elisabetta Querini, but rather Girolamo di Ismerio, son of her grandfather's brother.

52. [PAOLO RAMUSIO], *In Petri Bembi mortem eclogae tres incerti auctoris*, Venezia 1548, fol. 4v; see ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita*, p. 50.

and conduct you living from Parian Marble, / And will imitate your well-known features in golden bronze.⁵³

A short preface to the poem, interprets the verses as an allusion to the monument commissioned by Querini in the Santo.⁵⁴ The altar «shining with white stone» may be intended as this, but the author takes a good deal poetic license, with his shepherd claiming not only to institute annual games in memory of Bembo, but also to undertake no fewer than three effigies, in three different media. Such elaborate vows serve to heighten the antique flavour of the eclogue and therefore are not to be read literally. The poem was probably composed shortly after Bembo's death in January 1547, before Cattaneo had actually begun work on the bust. In a general way, the mention of portraits in three different media within the celebratory poem reflects contemporary discourse concerning the *paragoni* of the arts. In a more specific way, it may also reflect some initial indecision regarding the details of Bembo's monument.

The fact that the commission of Bembo's bust was given to Cattaneo, rather than Sansovino, has at times seemed odd to scholars, though Massimiliano Rossi has observed that Danese's own aspirations as a poet may have made him a particularly suitable candidate.⁵⁵ Manuela Morresi, has also noted that Cattaneo's close connection with Bembo's old friend Trifon Gabriele, who was in turn close to Girolamo Querini, may have also played a decisive role in securing him the commission.⁵⁶ By April 1548, Cattaneo had carved the bust, but it remained in his studio for nearly a year. The delay of the bust's installation may reflect debate surrounding the location of the monument. Pietro Aretino's correspondence indicates that he and perhaps others thought it should be installed in the Bembo family's parochial church in Venice, San Salvador.⁵⁷

53. *Petri Bembi carmina libellus*, pp. 58–9: «[...]ne sola tuos testetur honores/ Roma potens, laudum ponam monumenta tuarum, / Qua gravis Antenor miserae post funera Troiae, / Mansuras Teucris sedes, urbemque locavit, / Et Venetum genti fausta dedit alite nomen. / Hic ego bina tibi niveo fulgentia saxo / Constituum gratus solenni altaria ritu: et / Annuæ praebebo festis spetacula ludis. / Hic manus artificium te pulchro docta colore / Exprimet, ac Pario vivum de marmore ducet, / Et notos fulvo vultus imitabitur aere».

54. *Petri Bembi carmina libellus*, p. 54: «simul et de statua, quam idem Quirinus illi Patavii erigendam curavit et de monumentis, quae extracturus est mentio habetur».

55. ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita*, p. 43.

56. MORRESI, *Trifon Gabriele, Danese Cataneo e il Monumento Bembo*, p. 85.

57. PIETRO ARETINO, *Lettere sull'arte*, vol. II, ed. by Ettore Camesasca, Edizioni del Milione, Milan 1957, pp. 273–4, where the author states that the bust is destined for San Salvatore in Venice, where Bembo's parents were interred. However, as noted above, Bembo himself had in 1534 issued a request for a monument in the Santo, and Querini was probably trying to be true to Bembo's own wish. See ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita*, pp. 41–4.

From Aretino's letters, it is also clear that various individuals connected to the arts visited Cattaneo's studio to see the bust while it was still there. Titian and Sansovino apparently viewed it in April 1548.⁵⁸ Both of these artists had known Bembo intimately, and the former had of course executed several portraits of the writer, including the famous canvas now in Washington painted to celebrate the author's promotion to the cardinalate (fig. 8).⁵⁹ In January 1549, Lorenzo Lotto, Sansovino, the collector Benedetto de' Martini, and Girolamo Querini were all in Cattaneo's studio to view the work.⁶⁰ One can easily imagine that among such individuals, in front of such work, conversation would inevitably fall upon comparisons between painting and sculpture, modern and ancient works, and of course the poetry written by and in honour of the subject. Indeed, Aretino, in his first letter to Cattaneo regarding the bust, indicates exactly this kind of discourse, saying that when he sees the sculpture his eyes and his ears will be delighted, as he will read some bit of Cattaneo's poetry as he gazes upon the portrait. As a poet, he compares Danese to Dante and Petrarch, whose equivalents in the field of sculpture are predictably Michelangelo and Sansovino.⁶¹

The emphasis placed on the execution of a physical likeness of Bembo in all the celebratory verse discussed above is significant, and Cattaneo's bust should be viewed with this in mind. Lest the viewer might not have read one of these many poems insisting on the importance of the marble effigy for the preservation of Bembo's legacy, Querini ensured that this point was explicitly spelled out on the monument itself (fig. 9). The inscription reads, «Girolamo Querini, Son of Ismerio, saw to it that the image of Cardinal Pietro Bembo was placed in public so that there will be an eternal monument to his genius

58. ARETINO, *Lettere*, vol. II, pp. 213–4.

59. See MARSEL GROSSO, *Tiziano Vecellio, «Ritratto del cardinale Pietro Bembo»*, in *Pietro Bembo e l'invenzione del Rinascimento*, pp. 368–9, no. 6.1, with further bibliography; and more recently ID., «*Poi che fu cardinale*»: *Bembo, Tiziano e l'Aretino* (forthcoming 2023). For a discussion of portraits of Bembo as a cardinal see IRENE BROOKE, *Group Portraits of Cardinal Bembo and his Friends in the Wake of Trent in Portrait Cultures of the Early Modern Cardinal*, ed. by Piers Baker Bates and Irene Brooke, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2021, pp. 261–84.

60. ARETINO, *Lettere*, vol. II, pp. 274–5. For de' Martini's relationship with Bembo see BROOKE, *Pietro Bembo*, pp. 88–90.

61. Letter cited at footnote 52 above. For a discussion of Danese's poetry in relation to his sculptural oeuvre see ROSSI, *La poesia scolpita*. This author emphasizes the fact that Aretino's correspondence is a valuable source not only of documentary evidence for Cattaneo's work, but also in revealing the rich intertextuality of Danese's written and sculptural oeuvres.

with the memory also of his body, lest future generations should desire it». ⁶² Composed by Paolo Giovio, the epitaph underscores the didactic role played by portraiture and its function in preserving history and memory. In general, the inscription, prominently placed below Bembo's effigy, reflects the interdependency of text and image in his mind, as well as his followers'. ⁶³

The importance placed on this living image of Bembo for future generations demonstrates the writer's initiation into the realm of *exempla*. Just as he often cited the dual role of ancient statues and coins in delighting the eyes and instructing the soul, Bembo himself was now transformed into a heroic *all'antica* figure to be imitated, a function that is underscored by the style of Cattaneo's bust. ⁶⁴ Though outfitted in his cardinal's mantle, Cattaneo's bust of Bembo closely imitates Roman portraiture in its fuller depiction of the subject's chest which is rounded at bottom, hollowed back, and raised on a socle. Individual elements also recall different Roman portrait types. For example, although Bembo's long beard does not accord with classical styles, Cattaneo gave it a Roman flavour with the elaborately carved curls which evoke the drill work on the hair of many later imperial portraits. Likewise, Bembo's deep expression lines and furrowed brow recall the physiognomic traits characteristic of portraits of the emperor Caracalla, like the one that probably featured in his own collection. ⁶⁵ Cattaneo's bust of Bembo possesses a psychological intensity and monumentality that shows the artist to have absorbed the lesson of Titian's work, while achieving something new in the area of sculptural portraits in the Veneto at this time. The novelty of the bust pays tribute to Bembo's own antiquarian tastes and efforts to reconstruct literary monuments of the classical past, while its *all'antica* style implies his own transformation into

62. «Petri Bembi card. Imaginem / Hieronymus Quirinus Ismerii f. in publico ponendam curavit / ut cuius ingenii / monumenta aeterna sint / eius corporis quoque memoria ne a posteritate desideretur».

63. Giovio's composition of the epitaph is recorded in the correspondence between Gualteruzzi and Della Casa, see *Corrispondenza Giovanni Della Casa – Carlo Gualteruzzi (1525–1549)*, ed. by Ornella Moroni, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City 1986, p. 458. For a recent discussion of Giovio's literary pursuits in relation to his collection, as well as his wider social network, including Bembo, see BARBARA AGOSTI, *Paolo Giovio: Uno storico lombardo nella cultura artistica del Cinquecento*, Olschki, Florence 2008.

64. THOMAS MARTIN, *Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998, p. 19, emphasizes the novelty of the rigorously *all'antica* style of Cattaneo's bust, even considering it «the first time that a contemporary person [...] was honoured with a public bust in the *all'antica* format».

65. See GIULIO BODON, *Arte Romana*, «Ritratto di Caracalla», in *Pietro Bembo e l'invenzione del Rinascimento*, p. 333, no. 5.12.

a literary hero, joining the ranks Homer and Virgil, not to mention Dante and Petrarch.

Bembo's new role as an *exemplum*, signified by the juxtaposition of bust and inscription on his monument, was not lost on young scholars. The French humanist, Marc-Antoine Muret, who collaborated with Paolo Manuzio on new editions and commentaries of classical authors, articulated exactly how Bembo's image functioned in conjunction with his written works to preserve his memory and shape his legacy. In 1558, in the dedicatory letter of his *Scholiam* of Tibullus, addressed to Bembo's son Torquato, Muret laments the fact that he never had the chance to see or speak with his father.⁶⁶ In spite of this, Muret's study of the «great monument» of Bembo's *ingenium* is complemented by Bembo's *imagines*:

But also I make a habit of studiously contemplating the images of his body; from this I derive the greatest pleasure. Because these seem to place him before my eyes. Now whether depicted on canvas, or carved in marble or sculpted in bronze or silver, I have become accustomed to treat the image of Pietro Bembo almost as that of a divine cult.⁶⁷

In the absence of Bembo himself, his portrait enlivens his works and increases their relevance and meaning for young scholars. In fact, Bembo's written work, on its own, appears to be somehow incomplete without the physical likeness. The conjoined role of text and image in shaping Bembo's legacy and transforming him into an *exemplum* explains the vast number of posthumous representations of the author, whether painted, printed or medallion, which were produced in the wake of his death. However, Muret's comments carry the image even beyond its basic didactic function, ultimately placing it in the category of icon, whereby the «cult of Bembo» can pay homage to its hero. Reversing Hans Belting's shift from «Bild» to «Kunst», the myriad anonymous, posthumous images of Bembo derive their worth and authority from the figure represented rather than their authors or artistic merits. Bembo's widespread cultivation of his image throughout his lifetime, through both verbal and

66. MARC-ANTOINE MURET, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by David Ruhnkenius, Nabu, Leiden 1789, pp. 873–4.

67. MURET, *Opera omnia*, pp. 873–4: «verum etiam imagines corporis ipsius studiose contemplari soleo, magnamque ex eis oblectationem capio, quod illae mihi ipsum ante oculos constituere videantur. Iam si aut depictam in tabula aut marmore expressam, aut in aere, argentove insculptam Petri Bembi imaginem prope divino cultu afficere solitus sum».

visual representations, ensured the efficacy of these portraits even when text identifying the sitter is lacking.⁶⁸

68. HANS BELTING, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, University of Chicago, Chicago 1994. For further discussion of the many posthumous portraits of Bembo see BROOKE, *Pietro Bembo*, pp. 228–36.



Fig. 1. Giorgione, *Man in armour* (“Gattamelata”), c. 1501, Firenze, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv. N. 911, tela, cm 90 x 73.



Fig. 2. Portrait medal of Don Rodrigo de Vivar y Mendoza (recto), Mars and Venus (verso), c. 1499–1500 (?), bronze, overall (diameter): 3,63 cm, Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1957.14.827.b



Fig. 3. Attributed to Giulio Campagnola, *Venus and Mars*, oil on paper mounted on canvas, 19,1 x 16,5 cm, Brooklyn Museum, inv. no. 37.59



Fig. 4. Raphael, *Double Portrait of Andrea Navagero and Agostino Beazzano*, c. 1516, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, inv. FC 130, canvas, cm 77 x 111.



Fig. 5. Titian, *Portrait of a Young Man with a Plumed Hat*, c. 1516, Petworth, West Sussex, Petworth House and Park, National Trust, inv. no. 486242, canvas, cm 70,5 x 63.



Fig. 6. Giorgio Vasari and workshop, *Leo X's Triumphant Entry into Florence*, c. 1555–1563, Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, fresco.



Fig. 7. Danese Cattaneo, *Portrait bust of Pietro Bembo*, Padova, Basilica del Santo (detail).



Fig. 8. Titian, *Cardinal Pietro Bembo*, c. 1539–1540, Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1952.5.28, canvas, 94.5 x 76.5 cm.



Fig. 9. Danese Cattaneo, *Pietro Bembo's funerary monument*,
Padova, Basilica del Santo.

INDICE DEI NOMI

L'indice comprende i nomi delle persone nate prima del 1800 citate nei capitoli del volume. Le occorrenze in nota sono segnalate solo se il nome non si trova già nel testo principale della stessa pagina.

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