Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow*, 'Meditational Poesia', and the *Imitatio Christi*

Brian D. Steele

Associate Professor of Art History, School of Art, Texas Tech University,
Lubbock, TX, USA

Brian.Steele@ttu.edu

Abstract

This essay examines Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow* as a 'meditational poesia', focusing upon formal aspects that differentiate between embracing landscape and figural group and upon Bellini's approach to this landscape and its contrasting staffage that elicits contemplative reflection. I examine three treatises that may have stimulated the artist and contend that Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (translated as *Imitatione de Cristo*, Venice, 1488) provides thematic structures that most closely align with those characterizing Bellini's painting and intimate its role in articulating a meditational approach by which a viewer can effectively appraise the *Madonna of the Meadow*.

Keywords

meditational poesia – meadows – humility – wisdom – Giovanni Bellini

This essay examines Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow*, 1500–1505 (Fig. 1), as a 'meditational poesia', focusing first upon formal aspects that differentiate embracing landscape from figural group.¹ Bellini's conception sit-

1 Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, 162–164; Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, 119–120. For condition, see Dunkerton, et al., '*Madonna of the Meadow*', 80–85. Damage includes loss of paint in shadowed areas of the Virgin's chin and veil, Christ's head, and his thighs and legs (80). The ultramarine blue of his cloak is somewhat blached, thereby reducing the relief of the folds and disrupting light and shadow contrasts. This may be the result of removal of varnish that no longer saturates the surface (85). Finally, infrared reflectogram shows a red squirrel perched on a

uates the figures as entrance to the depicted world but maintains a sense of the Madonna with Christ existing apart, 'not of the world, as I also am not of the world' (Jn. 17:16).² Bellini conjoins multiple Madonna types—including the Madonna of Humility, the Pietà, and the Throne of Wisdom—in an evocative image capable of stimulating a variety of meditative devotions on the figures themselves, while also rife with implications for spiritualized readings of the landscape beyond. With regard to iconography, conclusions drawn from previous scholarship are accepted here: city and Madonna refer to New Jerusalem with the Virgin as Gate of Heaven and Bride of Christ,³ stork battling serpent embodies conflict between good and evil, arboreal references evoke the Axe Laid to Root and the Green Tree and the Dry, vulture or eagle in tree can signal death's presence, and shepherd sunk in lassitude but arousing himself to spiritual life contrasts with one who actively tends to pastoral duties. My approach shares analogies with investigations by Keith Christiansen and Johannes Grave,⁴ but I aim to provide more concrete references for interpreting the painting's devotional structure. I scrutinize Bellini's approach to the landscape with its monumentalized figural group and contrasting staffage, examine devotional treatises that may have elicited contemplative reflection, and contend that Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, published in Venice as the *Imitatione de Cristo* (1488), provides thematic structures that so closely align with those characterizing Bellini's painting as to intimate the treatise's role in

---

stump, now barely visible, similar to that in the *St. Jerome Reading* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), dated 1505 (84).

- 2 The line reads: 'They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world'. All biblical references cite the *Douay-Rheims Bible* + *Challoner Notes* edition of the Latin Vulgate, <http://www.drbo.org/drl/index.htm>.
- 3 Those who consider the city on hill to represent New Jerusalem include Cast, 'Stork and Serpent', 252; Gentili, 'Bellini and Landscape', 177–178; and Janson, 'Meaning of the Landscape', 44–48, who discusses the combination of central-plan and longitudinal structures used to depict Heavenly Jerusalem, relating interest in the motif to fears about the millennial Apocalypse (1500) that stimulated images showing real cities as citadels of virtue analogous to the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems. Christiansen, 'Meditational *poesia*', 12, departs from this interpretation, evidently rejecting the notion of the City of God, since Bellini combines specific buildings along the Adriatic coast in several paintings.
- 4 In examining the Frick *St. Francis*, Christiansen stresses the relevance of hymns, *laudes*, and popular Franciscan literature rather than learned sources; see Christiansen, 'Meditational *poesia*', 15–18. Critics have faulted Grave's publication on Bellini's Landscapes of Meditation (*Landschaften der Meditation*) as lacking specifics with regard to context, details, and examples of devotional practices, relying as it does primarily on writings of Lorenzo Giustiniani; see, e.g., Long, 'The Art of Contemplation'. I provide specific references and include both learned and popularly available sources.

articulating a meditational approach by which the painting can most effectively be appraised.

Bellini's approach to the devotional landscape in the *Madonna of the Meadow* differs emphatically from that used in his half-length figural groups, for example, the *Madonna with the Pear*, c. 1485 (Fig. 2), in which a parapet imposes a barrier between a viewer's physical space and that occupied by Virgin and Child, while the spatial disjunction between figures and landscape leaves the holy figures suspended above the earth. Remote from both viewer and landscape, they connote miraculous apparitions to the world rather than presences situated within it.⁵ The relationship between figure and landscape in the *Madonna of the Meadow*, however, shares much with that in the *Donà dalle Rose Pietà*, c. 1502–1505 (Fig. 3), among a few other works dating to the period between the 1480s and 1505: folds that enwrap the Virgin create her bodily form, pure colors and contrasting tonalities of her robes detach her from a background more chromatically blended in technique, and the pyramidal figure group is pictorially related to the distant city by renewed light and visual similes of cloud, veil, or mountain peaks.⁶ With regard to landscape, a slight hillock establishes a 'space apart' at the foreground that is connected with the distant views through virtually continuous recession. Intervening spaces form a counterpoint in which a constellation of staffage is presented in regular but non-hierarchical sequence to establish another distinctive area of

5 For the *Madonna with the Pear*, see Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, 128. See also Christiansen, 'Practice of Devotional Painting', 32–36; Battisti, 'Origini religiose del paesaggio', 13–14; and Goffen, 'Icon and Vision'.

6 For a similar configuration of foreground knoll, see, e.g., Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, 120 and 122, for the *Crucifixion with Jewish Cemetery* (Prato) and the *Transfiguration* (Naples). For the *Donà dalle Rose Pietà*, see *ibid.*, 166–169. Dating to 1502–1505, the *Pietà*, too, was intended for sustained scrutiny leading to an empathetic relationship with its subject and stimulating poetic reflection when contemplating details.

The phenomenon of the Virgin's bodily identification created by folds that enwrap her is sometimes attributed to Northern models; see Huse, *Studien*, 96–97. That feature, however, combined with separation of the figural group by chromatic means, intimates a Venetian manner of constructing volumes and space by means of color and light within the landscape. Lubert's discussion of Dürer's shift from a graphic to a painterly conception of space, most clearly seen in landscape forms, calls attention to Bellini's facility in this regard: a facility that marks background space and separates distance from figural group in both the *Pietà* and the *Madonna*; see Lubert, *Albrecht Dürer*, 93–104.

One might attribute compact pyramidal form to Leonardo's example instilled during his brief visit 1499–1500, although no drawings preserved in Venetian collections provide a compelling match. Bellini may have reacted to the drawing for the *Madonna with St. Anne and the infant Christ* now in the Accademia, dated c. 1503; see *Leonardo & Venezia*, 244–245; and see Nepi Sciré, 'Leonardo e Giovanni Bellini', 303–307.

contemplation—mid-ground—where figural placement intimates a meditational pilgrimage based upon associative encounter with symbolic elements.⁷ Sunlight, playing over bands of barren and inhabited earth, gleaming off distant walls, and shining in clouds implies the possibility of transcendence that accompanies resurrection through Christ.⁸ As for the principal focus, Virgin and Christ paradoxically seem situated within enfolding nature, even while the chromatic differentiation of group from mid-distance reinforces the foreground knoll as in but ‘not of the world’, with the Virgin viewed from a low vantage point that emphasizes her importance as a devotional linchpin engendering varied concepts in the course of meditations.

These devotional concepts comprise the Madonna as Tabernacle and, seated on ground, as the embodiment of Humility. The Madonna of Humility type appeared early in the Venetian milieu and developed into the garden type emphasizing flowery ground,⁹ on which she sits as measure of her virtue in serving as Handmaiden of the Lord at the Annunciation. Derived by isolating the Virgin and Child from the Nativity narrative, the Madonna of Humility accentuates maternal tenderness and her role as *Maria Mediatrix*, maternal intercessor on behalf of humanity, together with moral qualities including benevolence, mercy, and charity. The flowering ground underscores *humilitas*, thought to derive etymologically from *humus* and considered to be the foundation for all virtues, the *radix virtutem* that flowered in modesty like violets and other plants that hide their blooms in the sward.¹⁰ For a viewer less familiar

7 For constellations of symbolic elements in half-length images, see Gentili, ‘Bellini and Landscape’, 167–174. For landscapes as meditational pilgrimage, see Christiansen, ‘Practice of Devotional Painting’, 47–51; and idem, ‘Meditational *poesia*’, 11–17. Scholars agree that the contrast of symbols and structural connections requires a viewer to make choices. Although some treat the presentation as a divided landscape like that in the *Blood of the Redeemer* (1460–1465) (e.g., Cast, ‘Stork and Serpent’, 251; Christiansen, ‘Practice of Devotional Painting’, 51), Bellini rarely structures landscape in this manner, and I examine instead the harmonious but polyphonic statements that present simultaneously varied attributes in non-hierarchical fashion; see Battisti, ‘Origini religiose del paesaggio’, 11–12 and 16–17.

8 In Bellini’s *Blood of the Redeemer*, warm sunlight and growth distinguish the world under Grace from the pagan world; see Meiss, ‘Light as Form and Symbol’, 175–176; and Blass-Simmen, ‘*Qualche lontano*’, 77–91. For association with dawn, spring, and the light-shot, idyllic, eremitic retreat from worldly tumult as the harmony of *quies*; see Battisti, ‘Origini religiose del paesaggio’, 21.

9 For development of the theme in Venice, see Meiss, ‘Madonna of Humility’, e.g., 435 and n. 2, and 454; for the Garden type, see 441–442 and 448. See also Levi d’Ancona, ‘Doni Madonna’, 44 and n. 14.

10 Meiss, ‘Madonna of Humility’, 461–462. For the Franciscan contribution to exalting the virtue of *humilitas* and related ones including obedience, patience, compassion, and

with theological doctrine, hymns circulated epithets for the Virgin including *'prato fiorito'*, ... flowery meadow, watered, untilled, verdant, salutary, [nourishing] pasture'.¹¹ Christ, of course, is a product of this humble meadow: according to St. Bernard, 'A pleasure-garden for us is thy most holy womb, O Mary, from which we can pluck manifold flowers of joy every time we think of what wealth of sweetness has thence streamed forth over the world'.¹² Thus, the verdurous earth situates Christ and the Virgin within devotional metaphors including humility, root of virtues, and fecund womb. In turn, Bellini's representation of the Virgin's body as a swath of drapery calls attention to the womb's product, given Christ's revelation as though, naked, he had just issued forth from the fabric's folds (Fig. 4). Flowery ground, *radix virtutem*, womb: this type of part-by-part scrutiny readily prompted spiritual reflection. The *Decor Puellarum* (Venice, 1471), for example, advised young females to recite such prayers as '... I bless with all my strength your blessed feet; which have carried to this earth that most Blessed little Child, the only Begotten Son of God, ... whom I most truthfully believe in ...'¹³ and subsequently praised womb, hands, mouth and

---

purity during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Warner, *Alone of All her Sex*, 179–185. For humble flowers, including daisy, spikenard, and violet, see Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 439; St. Bernard of Clairvaux's formulation was 'Maria est viola humilitatis ...', and in an old sermon her humility is compared to spikenard, 'for nard is a little low plant of warm nature, out of which costly ointments are prepared, and hereby is understood Mary's submissiveness, her love, and her piety. These three things, that were marvelously united, gave a strong scent that smelt pleasant to God'. For fertile ground as contrast between salvation and damnation based upon passages that refer to God's favor as 'dew upon the grass', see Levi d'Ancona, 'Doni Madonna', 44; and Cast, 'Stork and Serpent', 252. For Cast, the Virgin's seating directly upon the ground signifies her direct role in salvation, with the greens of grass repeated around the New Jerusalem in the distance.

Recourse to the concept of Hortus Conclusus hardly seems warranted by a grassy knoll lacking enclosure: cf. Meiss, 'Madonna of Humility', 455; and Battisti, 'Origini religiose del paesaggio', 18. For the Hortus Conclusus theme, see Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 446–451 *et passim*: always stressed is the notion of the enclosed garden that guarantees her virginity. Nor do devotional treatises such as the *Giardino de Oratione* seem apposite, given their generalized reference to varied flowers, etc.: e.g., 'Negli giardini che sono pieni di varii e de diversi arbori fructiferi. L'anima desiderosa de diversi frutti dilectueuelli al gusto ...'; *Giardino*, 7, screen 21; see also 118, screen 136. For 'fruitful', see *Giardino*, 62, screen 80; and 82, screen 100. [I have consulted the edition *Zardino de oration: fructuoso* (*Giardino de Oratione fructuoso*), 1494, and provide screen numbers in addition to available page numbers since the edition is paginated incorrectly.]

11 Cited by Battisti, 'Origini religiose del paesaggio', 23 and n. 5: 'prato fiorito, irrigato, non lavorato, ben coltivato, salutare, pascolo'.

12 Cited by Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 448–449.

13 Cited by Kasl, 'Holy Households', 99. For the origin of the text, which recommended eleven

tongue, etc. In Bellini's painting, contemplation concentrates on the body of Christ situated against Mary's draped womb, which elicits comparison of the Virgin with the Tabernacle. Since the word *tabernaculum* signified the veil covering the Host container, Christ's placement within the tented drapery echoes the Host's display, with the curtain or Cloth of Honor symbolizing the sacred Presence. Theologians agreed that the Virgin's womb transformed into a Tabernacle for Christ at the Annunciation: as S. Bonaventura wrote,

... the Creator of all things reposed in the tabernacle of the virginal womb, for there he made for himself a nuptial chamber, so that he might become our brother; he prepared a royal throne, so that he should be our Ruler; he assumed priestly vestments, so that he should be our High Priest. By reason of the nuptials the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God; because of the royal throne she is the Queen of Heaven; because of the priestly vestments she is the advocate of the human race.¹⁴

Christ's placement, revealed against voluminous drapery and shielded by the Madonna of Humility's cupped hands above, encourages meditation on the womb as Tabernacle, a concept augmented by its symbolism as a royal throne.

Queen of Heaven and Mother of God as throne, frontality, near symmetry, and direct presentation of the Christ Child call to mind concepts related to the Throne of Wisdom. The Virgin as god-bearer or *Theotokos* symbolizes the Church, and Christ on her lap embodies the Logos. Divine Wisdom had become mortal, the Word of God was incarnated in flesh, Mary's agency engendered the

---

verses for young girls to be repeated over eight days, see Lowry, 'Humanism and Anti-Semitism', 39–54.

- 14 Sermon 4 on the Purification, cited by Graef, *Mary*, 286. For Virgin as Tabernacle, see Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 32; and Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 454–455 as well as 151–167 for symbolism relating the tabernacle to the grave. The comparison was revised in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (c. 1324) as Ark of the Old Testament and repeated in late medieval hymns: 'As the ark contained the golden urn with manna,/ So Mary offered us the true manna of heaven'; cited by Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 27 and nn. 47, 48. However, the concept that the earthly Virgin was transformed into a tabernacle for the Highest at the moment of the Annunciation remained stable; see Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 305–316. Hills, *Veiled Presence*, 59–60, discusses the tradition within liturgical forms, citing William Durand's *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, which maintained that the receptacle in which the consecrated host is preserved 'signifies the body of the glorious Virgin'. She was the tabernacle of the New Covenant, and the sacristy 'where the priest "put on Christ" by donning vestments to celebrate Mass, was likened by Durand to the womb of the Virgin' (60 and n. 16). Elaborations on the symbolism of the Virgin's womb recur in, e.g., the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*.

Incarnation, and as bearer of Wisdom, she was regarded as *sedes sapientiae*, the Seat of Wisdom.¹⁵ Often titled the living throne representing the throne of God, her image frequently incorporated allusions to the throne of Solomon, whose steps and sides bore lions. Bellini's *Enthroned Madonna Adoring the Sleeping Christ*, c. 1470 (Fig. 5),¹⁶ more overtly intimates the Throne of Wisdom even though it omits leonine ornament; key to the fifteenth-century conception is the rectilinear alignment of the Virgin's body to serve as the throne of Christ who, in the *Madonna of the Meadow*, does not stand but sleeps naked with his left arm curled in infantile relaxation. Thus the Virgin's prayer itself prompts recollection of the Nativity, since theologians had agreed that before tending to Christ's physical well-being following parturition, she humbly paid homage to his greatness; while, in Venice, the sleeping Christ evoked the couched lion's whelp who slumbers like that in the *Physiologus* with eyes opened so that in repose his heart watches.¹⁷ Alert even in sleep, Christ's pastoral role as shepherd of souls continues, just as the working herder acts in the temporal zone of the mid-distance behind him (Fig. 6); to the left, the wakening shepherd may remind that Christ, too, must awaken lest the process of redemption be impeded (Fig. 7). The Holy Mother surmounting herbivorous ground now may evoke the fruiting bloom of Wisdom personified, 'For my fruit is better than

15 As Romanesque sculptures proclaimed, 'On the lap of the Mother sits the Wisdom of the Father'; cited by Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom*, 26; see 22–23 for the visual configuration. Bellini, of course, departs from twelfth-century conventions that require a double enthronement with the Virgin presented as seated regal figure who in turn presents the blessing Christ holding a book, but he maintains the concepts of the Virgin as throne subordinate to Christ and of the Mother as embodiment of the lineage of David that guarantees Christ the status of king.

16 Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, 199. Peter Damian (d. 1072) had identified the Virgin's womb as the seat of majesty: 'Our Solomon [i.e., Christ], not only wise but indeed the Wisdom of the Father, not only pacific but indeed our peace, who unified both, has prepared a throne, manifestly the womb of the chaste Virgin, in which sat that Majesty which shakes the world with a nod'; cited by Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom*, 25 and n. 62. Lions on throne refer to those on the throne of Solomon (1 Kings 10:18–20 and 2 Chronicles 9:17–19); according to the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* of the fourteenth century, 'The throne of the true Solomon is the most Blessed Virgin Mary, In which sat Jesus Christ, the true Wisdom'; cited by Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 15. During the fifteenth century, the rectilinear alignment of the Virgin's body to form a shelf-like lap supporting Christ evokes the notion of Virgin as both Throne and Altar in works by Jan van Eyck; see Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 13–18; and Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 456.

17 See Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 358–359. For sleep, see Meiss, 'Sleep in Venice', 360; for the inscription on a Florentine example, 'I sleep and my heart watches', 361; for a painting by Cosimo Tura with inscription imploring the Virgin to waken the child for the benefit of salvation, 362.

gold and the precious stone, and my blossoms than choice silver ... I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made' (Prov. 8:19–23). A viewer versed in biblical readings might notice that the Virgin's veil repeats rounded forms of distant clouds while gathering with them the light entering from left distance (Fig. 1) and recall, 'For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty ...' (Wis. 7:29, 26).¹⁸ Embodied eternity shining before the light, the Virgin as Wisdom is prophetic of the New Jerusalem glimpsed in the far distance.

Wisdom possesses foreknowledge of the Passion, and the angularity of drapery, the folds and linings that align with the horizontal edge of green space, and the unyielding surfaces that suggest a stony block supporting Christ's back all imply the Virgin as Altar or, in hymns, the enduring stone comprising all virtue, 'pietra durissima, angolare, che contiene tutte le virtù'.¹⁹ Ludolphus of Saxony explained in his widely circulated *Vita Christi* (c. 1325) that, as bearer of Christ, '... Mary is well prefigured by the table (mensa), because through her a celestial meal has been served to us.'²⁰ The *mensa* or altar is the locus at which the believer meets God face to face within the Mass ceremony, so approaching Bellini's symbolic altar requires the humility evoked by pictorial symbolism and inflected in corporeal terms by the lowered point of view. The requisite humble confession of sin before God reminds a church-goer of the liturgy in which the *Confiteor* constituted a dialogue among celebrants to which laity provided intercessory response with the *Misereatur*, 'May almighty God have mercy on thee and having forgiven thee thy sins, bring thee to life everlasting'.²¹ Evocation of the Mass ceremony induces a devotional attitude of humility, confession of

18 For the Virgin's association with morning light, see Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 443; for cloud-related symbolism, see 466–468.

19 This is but one of several epithets for the Virgin, in shortened form, that Battisti derived from the *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* (ed. C. Blume and G.M. Dreyes; Lipsia, 1888–1902); see Battisti, 'Origini religiose del paesaggio', 23 and n. 5.

20 Cited by Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 23 and n. 30. As she notes, 'The inclusion of the Virgin-altar analogy in the *Speculum* and the *Vita Christi*, two of the most popular books of the late Middle Ages, documents its prominence in fifteenth-century thought' (23). For Byzantine precedents, see *idem*, 21; with regard to Old Testament ritual objects, see Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 460 and, for symbolism of the altar, see 19–30, 70–73, and 79–83; see also Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 95. Christ himself is seen as the altar stone in 1 Peter 2:1–6.

21 For development of the *Confiteor* and growth of lay responses from the late eleventh century, see Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:299–301. The basic formula derives from that used at Cluny c. 1080: 'Confiteor Deo et omnibus sanctis eius et vobis, pater, quia peccavi in cogitatione, locutione et opere, mea culpa. Precor vos, orate pro me' (301).

faults, forgiveness, and recognition that, as with stork and serpent (Fig. 6), the battle between good and evil is won only through the living altar's offering of Christ.

With her body symbolizing the holy altar, the Virgin presides in a priestly role, even while her actions instill the same emotional state within a viewer, i.e., prayerful meditation on the Divinity of Christ whose pronated arm suggests death and an infant Pietà. St. Bernard stressed her role as celebrant in one of his sermons: 'Offer your son, sacred Virgin, and present the blessed fruit of your womb to God. For the reconciliation of us all, offer the holy Host [which is] pleasing to God';²² a sentiment disseminated by Ludolphus's *Vita Cristi*. Offering the infant fruit-of-womb stands in reciprocal response to intimations of Pietà since, according to St. Birgitta's Revelations, the Virgin felt the same pleasure when cradling Christ's dead body as when she pressed the infant to her breast, 'for she knew that her Son would die no more, but live eternally';²³ a statement echoed in S. Bernardino's formulation as the Virgin viewing the adult Christ's body in her lap but imagining the infant sleeping. The Virgin, seeing her child but visualizing the sacrifice to which she had agreed, officiates symbolically as Priest: the concept was circulated by the chief devotional treatise of the era, *The Imitation of Christ*, in which the disciple preparing for Mass compares himself to her, praying,

Lord God, my Creator and Redeemer, ... I desire to receive Thee this day, as Thy most holy Mother, ... received and desired Thee when, after the angel had announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation, humbly and piously she answered: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord ...'.²⁴

The Virgin, then, constitutes the model for communicants who meditate before Bellini's image. Her reflective mood relates to her foreknowledge and *compassio*—empathetic suffering with Christ's Passion and the Pietà—that established her as co-redeemer; a devotee should contemplate both the Virgin's mood and Christ's pronated arm with pity for them both. Thomas à Kempis

22 Cited by Lane, *Altar and the Altarpiece*, 71: although medieval writers seldom referred to the Virgin as priest, Ludolphus of Saxony quoted St. Bernard in his own discussion of the Presentation in his *Vita Christi*. See also Warner, *Alone of All her Sex*, 220–221.

23 Cited by Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 400. For S. Bernardino's notion that the Virgin imagines the sleeping child on her lap, saying, 'You have often slept on my lap the sleep of infancy, but now you sleep on my lap the slumber of death', a statement gleaned from tenth-century Simeon Metaphrates, see Hilloowalad and Oremland, 'The St. Peter's Pietà', 91 and nn. 45, 46.

24 Cited by Hirn, *Sacred Shrine*, 167.

required participation in her compassion as the means to salvation, while a hymn adjured: 'Feel pity for Christ and his mother, faithful soul, should you wish to rejoice with them in Heaven',²⁵ the New Jerusalem depicted in the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Desirous of attaining that goal, a viewer might focus on the Virgin as an entry to the depicted realm and might recollect the morning prayer for 8 December: 'This is the house of God and the gate of heaven. Wise builder, sanctify your home and your family,—that the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, your spouse, may appear before all as your glorious bride'.²⁶ Looking more closely, an attentive viewer observes how the mountain-top city's grouping replicates in flattened form that of the figural pyramid, which is echoed higher still in the massing cloudbank at right, with the result that Bellini's resonant forms evoke the Virgin as Gate of Heaven whose shining veil rivals the firmament's gleaming clouds.

Madonna of Humility, Tabernacle, Throne for the Sleeping Christ, Priestess and Altar with Infant Pietà: Bellini's evocative conflation of well-known concepts constitutes an entry to the sacral landscape of the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Here, symbolic vignettes are rendered with a sacred naturalism that represents doctrine as fact and renders the quotidian pregnant with theological significance,²⁷ while mid-distant plains, alternately sunlit and shadowed, connote a transitory world of conflict and challenge that must be traversed on the meditational journey toward the shining New Jerusalem on the hilltop. In the intervening space, the wanderer discovers an arrangement of contrasting symbols and structural connections that requires interpretive choices that defy resolution into any simple good/evil division. The cut stump with bare tree at left evokes the 'Axe laid to the Root' (Fig. 7) when those who do not produce the fruits of penance shall be cast into fire,²⁸ while the contrast between barren and leafy trees in the distance recurs at right in the more focused group of

25 Von Simson, 'Compassio and Co-Redemptio', 15–16, citing at n. 46 the line from the hymn 'Compassio animae devotae super contritione et dolore beatae Mariae Virginis' (G.M. Drewes, *Analecta Hymnica*, XLVIII, Leipzig, 1905, 510, No. 489). At the Pietà, the Virgin is both co-redeemer and prophetess of the New Jerusalem; through operation of pre-existent Divine Wisdom, typologically she is also the second Eve re-born as the bride of Christ the second Adam.

26 Cited by Janson, 'Meaning of the Landscape', 47.

27 Campbell, 'Renaissance Naturalism', 296 *et passim*.

28 Luke 3:8–9: 'Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance; and do not begin to say, We have Abraham for our father. For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire'. See also Matt. 3:10; and Luke 13:6–7 (the unfruitful fig tree).

the 'Green Tree and the Dry' (Fig. 6), wherein the Green Tree symbolizes innocence suffering evil in the present and the Dry Tree symbolizes evildoers, ripe for the fire of judgment.²⁹ Both motifs refer to the impending day of Wrath, but the Axe laid to Root enjoins the liturgical humility of the Confiteor by which a viewer should approach Bellini's Christ. By contrast, the Green Tree and the Dry recall the Crucifixion's torments resulting in the infant Pietà and, despite the scene's placidity, warn the wicked of punishment so extraordinary that they would wish their mothers had remained barren and beg the mountains for entombment. At left, high in a tree, a bird of prey's head—either vulture or eagle—turns in the direction of the mid-distant plateau (Fig. 8). If interpreted as a vulture, its domain is a zone of death that underscores the warning posed by the axe laid to the impenitent's root. If interpreted as an eagle, like that of the Physiologos, its gaze intimates penitential success that raises sight to contemplation of the divine represented by the image of New Jerusalem; or, like the Christian spirit who satisfies desire only with good, it symbolizes the baptized whose 'youth is renewed like the eagle's' (Ps. 102:5).³⁰ Below, the battling Stork and Serpent embody conflict between Good and Evil,³¹ but near the green and bare trees of Innocence and Wrath at right springs a wellhead (Fig. 6)—if thought to be sealed, a symbol of the Madonna's virginity, but if interpreted as flowing with water, a symbol of baptism, rebirth, and life everlasting promised in the pilgrim's goal of the Celestial City.³² And what to make of the herders? Does the reclining shepherd at left sink into slothful torpor or arouse himself

29 Luke 23:27–33: 'And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left'.

30 Ps. 102:5 reads: 'Who satisfieth thy desire with good things: thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's'. Dunkerton, *Madonna of the Meadow*, 84, identifies the bird as an eagle, as does Cast, 'Stork and Serpent', 250, but cites Rabanus Maurus's exposition as 'ill-willed captor of souls'; see also Metford, *Dictionary of Christian Lore*, s.v. 'Eagle', 88; and Sill, *Handbook of Symbols*, s.v. 'Eagle', 20. Gentili and Christiansen both identify the bird as a vulture.

31 See Wittkower, 'Eagle and Serpent', 296, 311, 312–313, and 317–322. For Cast, 'Stork and Serpent', 249, the stork is Virgil's 'white bird hateful to snakes', and the battle symbolizes Christ battling against evil.

32 Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols*, s.v. 'Well', 45. Battisti, 'Origini religiose del paesaggio', 11–12 and 15–16, situates these symbols within a cultural climate of Marian devotions without citing specific literature.

to pastoral duty? The upright monk or friar at right actively tends his herd of oxen, symbols of patience, meekness, and the humble of heart who willingly submit to the sweet yoke of Christ, labor without complaint for good of others, and consider the burden to be light.³³ The positive message implied by oxen is strengthened for the observer who spies, close by the well of living water, the admixture of goats that may suggest the damned at the Last Judgment when Christ shall set 'the goats on his left',³⁴ which Bellini situated at the infant's left in the painting. These vignettes pose varied spiritual and moral choices within a landscape suggesting retreat from worldly tumult even while the pilgrim sojourns through Christ and the Madonna, gradually proceeding toward the goal of the Celestial City.

In consideration of the contemplative journey that Bellini's painting implies, two treatises have been adduced as potential sources for the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Published in 1494, the *Giardino de Oratione fruttuoso* opens with the admonition to imitate Christ and positions the reader as pilgrim (*peregrino*), thus presenting a promising parallel to Bellini's imagery.³⁵ However, the notion of earthly sojourn is quite common, since later authors of devotional tracts followed Augustine's Exposition on Psalm 122:

But there is in heaven the eternal Jerusalem, where are our fellow citizens, the Angels: we are wanderers on earth from these our fellow citizens. We sigh in our pilgrimage; we shall rejoice in the city. But we find companions in this pilgrimage, who have already seen this city herself; who summon us to run towards her. At these he also rejoices, who says, I rejoiced in them who said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord (Ps. 121:1).³⁶

33 Matt. 11:28–30, 'Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light'. As a symbol of Old Testament sacrifice, the ox also constitutes a typological reference to Christ's death. See Sill, *Handbook of Symbols*, s.v. 'Ox', 24; Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects*, s.v. 'Ox', 231, and s.v. 'Sacrifice', 270. For the reference, I thank Liana De Girolami Cheney, who noted that the Ox later entered the emblematic tradition as Patience.

34 Matt. 25:32–33: 'And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left'. See also Cast, 'Stork and Serpent', 251.

35 *Giardino*, unpaginated introduction, screens 8 and 13. I provide screen numbers in addition to available page numbers, since the edition is paginated incorrectly.

36 Augustine, 'Exposition on Psalm 122', paragraph 2; for Augustine's role as precursor to the *Imitation of Christ*, see Sanvito, 'Imitatio', 37–38.

Moreover, the *Giardino de Oratione* presents a structured series of meditations that return at various points to gardens vaguely described as filled with diverse fructiferous trees whose delectable bounty the soul desires,³⁷ 'fruitful', filled with 'diversi fiori e fructi',³⁸ etc. Garden and fruits provide a generalized touchstone from which to elaborate virtues; to exalt God and Virgin as exemplars of perfect virtue; and, by contrast, to meditate on topics including death, purgatory, Hell, and Last Judgment, while the garden's scented delights and savory fruits prompt contemplation of Christ's Passion.³⁹ Other topics include the Life of Christ, His five wounds, His blood, and His seven last words:⁴⁰ all, of course, lead to contemplation of Paradise, the luminous city of God, filled with every delight, where the glorified soul possesses heightened spiritual senses perfecting those of earthly existence.⁴¹ The *Giardino de Oratione* provides impetus for contemplation of the Virgin, Christ, the Passion, and the Celestial City even though its generalized reference to garden and grove of fruiting trees hardly accords with Bellini's grassy knoll, nor does the structured series correlate well with a visual journey that meanders through the landscape plain rife with secondary symbolic encounters.

Venetian devotional culture often identified physical with spiritual ascent and mountain as locus of spiritual refinement, so the *Monte del Oratione*, first published in 1493, initially offers intriguing thematic similarities but ultimately overwhelms Bellini's imagery. It opens with praise of the Corpus Domini born of Mary and exalts nature's magnificence as God's handiwork, but again it carefully structures meditations leading toward heavenly light and the mount, i.e., the court of God.⁴² Singular meditations urge the devotee to acquire humil-

37 'Negli giardini che sono pieni di varii e de diversi arbori fructiferi. L'anima desiderosa de diversi frutti dilecteueli al gusto ...'; *Giardino*, screen 21, 7; see also screen 136, 118; and Sanvito, *Imitatio*, 22–23. For structured meditations, see, e.g., *Giardino*, unpaginated, screens 11–13.

38 *Giardino*, 82, screen 100; for 'fruitful', see 62, screen 80.

39 On virtues, see *Giardino*, 20–22, screens 36–38; on God as exemplar, 23–32, screens 39–48; on the Virgin, 32–45, screens 48–61; on purgatory and hell, 32–45, screens 48–61; on Judgment, 97–118, screens 115–136; and, on the Passion, 149–159, screens 167–177.

40 In seq., *Giardino*, passages beginning 136, screen 154; beginning 159, screen 177; beginning 166, screen 184; and beginning 175, screen 193.

41 *Giardino*, 211–213, screens 229–231: augmented senses combine in glorious celebration ('starano in gaudii feste'). For Paradise, see passage beginning 188, screen 206; for sounds of varied instruments and sweet scents, 192, screen 210; for fruits, birds, creatures, trees of all sorts, and wondrous healing herbage ('Quante generatione de herbe mirabile e virtuose'), 193, screen 211; and for enjoyment of manifold pleasures in heaven, see passage beginning 197, screen 215.

42 'Ave verum corpus domini natum ex Maria virgine ...'; *Monte del Oratione* [hereafter:

ity and obedience, to renounce love of possessions, to purge sin and acquire virtues, and to make atop a hillock the soul's garden, perfumed with aromatics and awash with sweet fruit.⁴³ Although this spiritual *orto* is a terrestrial paradise in which the soul with her spouse Jesus would delight to live, the devotee exits the garden and enters a shady grove with seven trees of virtues surrounding an immense exemplar adjacent to a fountain:⁴⁴ in subsequent chapters, one meditates on that tree as Cross and on the fountain as *carità*, learning that the gardeners comprise perfect love and fear of God and that love of God inflames the soul.⁴⁵ Chapters on modes of prayer culminate in meditations that expatiate on celestial vision and union with God.⁴⁶ Brief references to humility and renunciation of the world in the *Monte* suit Bellini's seated Madonna with Christ and perhaps the mid-distant sojourn, but the *Monte*'s steadfast progression toward a unitary goal wherein the garden offers only a momentary respite *en route* to contemplation of forest, its ascent of the mountain, and its extensively detailed celestial vision conform neither to the *Madonna of the Meadow* nor to the Christological devotion it encourages. Rather, as we shall see, Bellini's imagery seems more attuned to the type of meditational practice adumbrated in the *Imitatio Christi*.

Paolo Sanvito has elucidated late fifteenth-century devotional tendencies at Venice in the context of the *devotio moderna* and Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* in a study that explains the reception of Bellini's works dating to c. 1464–1475.⁴⁷ Bellini, whose literacy did not encompass fluent Latin,⁴⁸ was

---

Monte], opening of chapter 1, screen 5; and chapter 3, screen 8. I have consulted the 1501 edition in the Library of Congress, and cite PDF viewing screen numbers in addition to chapter numbers. See also Gentili, 'Bellini and Landscape', 173, who discusses the *Monte* in relation to Bellini's Frick *St. Francis*.

43 'Di questo capo [di terra] si puo fare bosco & spineto & giardino pieno di fruti odoriferi & suavi'; *Monte*, chapter 6, screen 15. For preceding concepts, see *in seq.* chapter 4, screen 11; chapter 4, screen 13; and chapter 5, screens 13–15.

44 *Monte, in seq.*, chapter 6, screens 15–16; chapter 7, screen 17 (aromatics); and chapter 8, screens 18–22; see also Sanvito, '*Imitatio*', 168–170.

45 *Monte, in seq.*, chapter 9, screen 22; chapter 9, screen 25; and chapter 11, screen 29.

46 *Monte, in seq.*, chapters 13–16, screens 33–40; and chapter 17, screens 40–51.

47 See Sanvito, '*Imitatio*', 17–20: Sanvito examines the function of the images, for example, that of Bellini's *Dead Christ Supported by Angels* (Museo Civico Correr, c. 1460), in a devotional praxis of meditation that aimed to enhance contrition in service of readying the conscience to receive the Sacraments during an era that desired the Eucharist to be visible and tangible. Such images could make concrete the concept of union with God, either by way of priestly mediation or through the Grace of mystic dialogue with Virgin and Child. Artists are not linked securely with these interests, and Imitation constitutes a generalized interest in mystical devotion that establishes a sense of discipleship.

48 Although Bellini consorted with humanists and poets, his own literacy did not encom-

unlikely himself to have scrutinized the *Imitatio* prior to its publication in Italian translation at Venice, in 1488. His interest may be presumed on the basis of professional affiliation with the congregation of S. Giobbe and membership in one of three scuole to which he belonged, the Scuola Piccola of San Cristoforo dei Mercanti at Sta. Maria dell'Orto,⁴⁹ since both churches adumbrated principles of the *Imitatio Christi*. Sta. Maria dell'Orto, in fact, established contact with the congregation of S. Giorgio in Alga, the original seat of one of the *Imitatio*'s early adherents in Venice, Lorenzo Giustiniani. Be that as it may, the *Imitatio*'s transmission, reception, and appropriation by diverse individuals rely upon a broader religious context: interiority, Christocentric focus, emphasis on the vernacular, and centrality of the Bible all number among features common to the *Imitatio*, the *devotio moderna*, and the sixteenth-century Catholic renewal.⁵⁰ The *Imitatio*, written for lay members as well as for formal communities, expounded monastic virtues and morality and prescribed a disciplined spiritual life for laity who remained in society; hence its emphasis on submission, humility, and the *contemptus mundi* motif whereby readers learned that disdain for temporal affairs constitutes the spiritual wisdom most conducive to reaching the heavenly kingdom.⁵¹ The configuration of the *Imitatio* recalls the *rapiaria*, or collection of spiritual sayings, often adopted within the *devotio moderna*, and, in fact, its four books seem to have originated as independent treatises, not all of which were usually included within the earliest copies.⁵² In Venice itself, Lorenzo Giustiniani and, later, Ludovico Barbo were instrumental to dissemination of the *Imitatio Christi*. Giustiniani's writings relied upon the *Imitatio* and *devotio moderna* in terms of spiritual exercises to produce a trance-like state of identification with Christ and of the soul enflamed by meditation on His Passion. Barbo, founder of the Benedictine congregation at Sta. Giustina in Padua, in 1440 had presented the congregation with a trans-

---

pass fluency in Latin, even though he 'could mix a Latin phrase with Italian and Venetian words'; Fletcher, 'Social World', 40; see also 32–41.

49 Bellini belonged to the Scuola Grande di San Marco, near his residence in the *sestiere* of Castello, and served on its Board of Management. He also held membership in the Scuola Piccolo of San Cristoforo dei Mercanti at the church of Madonna dell'Orto; see Fletcher, 'Social World', 21–25. In 1484 he was member of a third, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, for which see Sanvito, 'Imitatio', 242.

50 The Catholic renewal ensured the *Imitatio Christi*'s success even during the sixteenth-century de-emphasis on the monastic component of the *devotio moderna*; see Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 2 and 6–7. For sources and the significance of Eucharistic devotion during the era, see Sanvito, 'Imitatio', 42–57.

51 Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 9, 31, 34–35, 38, and 40.

52 Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 32: Book 4, intended for the priestly celebrant, was often omitted from early vernacular editions.

lation or adaptation in Italian, his *Metodo di pregare e meditare*, that relied on mental prayer in the manner of the *Imitatio Christi*, and the library there eventually possessed several copies of the *Imitatio* itself. Although available in adaptation and translations since mid-century, the greatest diffusion of the *Imitatio*'s concepts in Italian manuals of devotion stems from the late fifteenth century: it appeared in numerous Italian-language Incunabula; and in Venice, Franciscan Spirituali and Observants, Augustinians, and Camaldolites all promoted such concepts.⁵³ Iconographic types associated with the *Imitatio Christi* comprise the Dead Christ in Sarcophagus, the Pietà, and other Christocentric subjects possessing strong Eucharistic references, to which Bellini's allusions to the Virgin as Tabernacle and the infant Pietà correspond. The diffusion of the *Imitatio Christi* in Venice was chronologically and physically situated to have plausibly inflected Bellini's own devotional culture by c. 1500, and myriad pictorial aspects of the *Madonna of the Meadow* suggests that indeed it did so.

The relationships between the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Madonna of the Meadow* comprise affinities of theme, structure, and spirituality. The treatise requires believers to acknowledge their frailty in the face of God in order to begin spiritual progress: assessing the self and admitting one's need for purification initiates the meditative process, since '... no man is rycher, no man is myghttier, no man more free then he that canne forsaked himselfe and alle thinges and putte himselfe atte the loweste'.⁵⁴ In brief, humility is required,

53 See Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 65, 69, 251, and 294: some fourteen editions (Latin and Italian) were published in Venice alone between 1469 and 1499, including the Giovanni Rossi edition of 1488, and Latin Incunabula number 62; these were followed by at least twenty-seven Italian and forty-seven Latin editions published between 1501 and 1550. Sanvito, *'Imitatio'*, 65–66, dates intensified Augustinian interest in such meditative practices to c. 1510–1520, although he includes the *Monte de la Oratione* (Venice, 1493). In *ibid.*, see also 58–62, for textual production of related treatises, manuscript translations, and the presence of the *Imitatio* in libraries; 131–134, for the Franciscan Observants (S. Giobbe) and Spirituali (S. Francesco della Vigna; the Frari's Cult of the *Sangue di Cristo*); and 138–140, for the Augustinians (Sta. Maria dell'Orto; Ludovico Barbo's tenure at S. Giorgio in Alga; and absorption of all related orders into the Benedictine congregation of Sta. Giustina after 1506). For associated iconographic types, see *ibid.*, 164–190 and 240–246.

54 *Imitatio*, Book 2, Cap. 11, P. 56, S. 30; see also, e.g., Book 3, Cap. 9, 'Of vile estimacion of himselfe in the sight of God', Pp. 76–77; Cap. 33, P. 102; Cap. 46, P. 116. I cite the first English translation of the *Imitatio Christi* in the absence of certain knowledge as to the version that Bellini may have consulted: 'Cap.' refers to Capitulum, 'P' refers to Page, 'S' refers to Sentence number; and, with regard to orthography, I have replaced the conjoined Middle English character with 'th'. Definitions rely upon the *Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>. Capitulum titles are specified when important to content or context. See also Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 13.

a virtue embodied in the painting by the Madonna seated on the ground, a low point of view, and evocation of the liturgical Confiteor that precedes forgiveness. 'What avayleth hit the[e] to dispute highe thinges of the Trinite, if thou lakke mekenes, whereby thou displese the Trinite?':⁵⁵ 'meekness' is translated from the Latin *humilis* from which is derived humility, a virtue that in the *Imitatio* is closely related to peace; for example, 'Continuel pees is with the meke man, but in the herte of a proude man is ofte envye and indignacyon'.⁵⁶ In the Madonna's lap rests the reason to cultivate humility: 'Be meke and pesible, and Ihesus shal be with thee. Be deuoute and restful, and Ihesus shal abide with thee'.⁵⁷ Moreover, meekness, love of God, wisdom, and patience magnify in reciprocal relationship: 'Goode lyue [life] maketh a man wise aftir God and experte in many thinges. The more meke that a man is, and the more sugget [subject] to God, the more wise he shal be in alle thinges, and the more paciente'.⁵⁸ A cursory survey reveals at least nine chapter headings and more than thirty references to meekness and peace within the three books, e.g.: Book 1, 'Capitulum secundum, Of meeke knowynge of a mannes selfe ...'; Book 2, 'Capitulum secundum, Of meke submission'; Book 3, 'Capitulum tercium, That the wordes of Godde ar[e] to be herde with mekenesse'.⁵⁹ The rationale for the emphasis on meekness and humility is given in the heading to 'Capitulum 8, Of grace to be hidde vnder the warde of mekenesse',⁶⁰ that is, grace belongs to the inwardly meek and thus constitutes the true following of God's way. The visual structure Bellini presents as entry to the painting, viz., the grouping of Christ with the Madonna of Humility, encourages the devotional attitude required for an observer to follow these precepts in imitation of Christ. Moreover, recurring references to meekness suffice to reveal the unstructured nature of the *rapiaria*: one returns repeatedly to meditate upon related themes

55 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 1, P. 4, S. 7.

56 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 7, 'Of fleyng of veyne hope ...', P. 11, S. 11–13; see also Book 2, Cap. 7, P. 48, S. 23, footnote. The injunctions to practice a simple Christian life, to remain aware of frailty, and to follow Christ in humility and patience constituted a spirituality countering popular devotion to saints as sources of relief from affliction; see Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 20–21.

57 *Imitatio*, Book 2, Cap. 8, 'Of the familiar frensheppe of Ihesu', P. 49, S. 16–17.

58 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 4, P. 9, S. 7–8.

59 *Imitatio, in seq.*, Book 1, Cap. 2, P. 5; Book 2, Cap. 2, P. 43; Book 3, Cap. 3, P. 66. See also, e.g., Book 1: Cap. 7, P. 10, S. 5; Cap. 7, P. 11, S. 11–13; Cap. 12, P. 15, S. 2–3; Cap. 13, P. 17, S. 29; Cap. 16, P. 20, S. 5. In Book 2, see: Cap. 2, P. 43, S. 1–P. 44, S. 12; Cap. 3, P. 44, S. 1–5; Cap. 10, P. 53, S. 11; Cap. 10, P. 54, S. 12–22. In Book 3, see: Cap. 3, P. 66, S. 1–P. 68, S. 24; Cap. 9, P. 76, S. 1–P. 77, S. 12; Cap. 15, P. 84, S. 14–17; Cap. 24, P. 94, S. 7–8; Cap. 25, P. 95, S. 1–P. 96, S. 7; Cap. 29, P. 98, S. 1–P. 99, S. 15; Cap. 54, P. 128, S. 28, S. 35–36; Cap. 57, P. 132, S. 17–18.

60 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 8, P. 74.

in differing meditational contexts. In similar fashion, one might ponder multiple references to ideas such as *Axe Laid to the Root*, which the treatise varies as setting ‘... the axe to the rote that we, purged of oure passions, mowe [may] haue a pesible mynde’;⁶¹ the *Green Tree and Dry*, at which the reader contemplates Grace personified and queries, ‘What am I withoute hir but a drie tree and an vnprofitable stokke [stock]?’;⁶² and the oxen, goats, and well in Bellini’s painting. Allied with the concept of humility and frailty is humanity’s limited wisdom, which the *Imitatio* phrases as a preference for the simple rather than scholarly believers’ doctrinal approach. For example, ‘... But kunnyng [cunning] withoute the grace and the drede of God, what availeth hit? Certeynly the meke plowman that serveth God is muche better then the prowde philosopher that, takinge none heede of his owne lyvinge, considereth the course of hevon’.⁶³ And again,

There is a grete difference bitwene him that is illumyned with wisdame and a deuoute man, and him that is lettred and studiouse in science, called a clerke. That doctrine is muche more noble that welletth from above of Goddes influence then that that is laborously gotten bi mannes witte.⁶⁴

In the *Madonna of the Meadow*, herdsmen monumentalized by the low point of view replace the textual plowmen but similarly exemplify awakening to and acting honorably in accordance with a meditator’s insight wrought by devout wisdom rather than by intellectual labor. The devotee who adopts such reflections merits the *Imitatio*’s encomium, ‘Blisfulle ar the symple, for they shul haue muche pees’.⁶⁵

61 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 11, P. 14, S. 14; see also Book 3, Cap. 58, P. 134, S. 15–19.

62 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 60, P. 139, S. 26. For more traditional opposition of good and evil, without direct reference to *Green Tree and the Dry*, see Book 1, Cap. 24, P. 35, S. 17–22 and 27–30.

63 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 2, P. 5, S. 1–3. Christ teaches without words: see Book 3, Cap. 48, P. 118, S. 9–16. See also Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 15–16: Since humanity’s wisdom is limited, the *Imitatio* states a preference for simple rather than scholarly believers. Reading should improve individuals’ spiritual lives, paralleling the roles of priests at this time, which were pastoral and pragmatic rather than intellectual and doctrinal. The preference for pietistic readings was not a critique of learning per se, and the *Imitatio* was well received in intellectual circles.

64 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 36, P. 105, S. 12–13. On Wisdom, see also, e.g., Book 3, Cap. 32, P. 101, S. 4.

65 *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 11, P. 13, S. 3.

The Madonna's affective role in praying over the infant incarnates two significant themes in the *Imitatio*: a contemplative, inward-looking spirituality; and focus on Christ, his eucharistic body, and God (Fig. 4).⁶⁶ With regard to inward contemplation,

Oure Lorde seithe that the reawme [realm] of God is witheyn you. Turne thiselfe to God with alle thi herte and forsake this wrecched worlde, and thi soule shal fynde reste. Lerne to despise outwarde thinges and to conuerte thee to inwarde thinges, and thou shalt see the reaume [of God] come into thee ... Criste shal come to thee shewynge the[e] his consolacion, if thou make to hym withinforthe a worthi dwellynge place.⁶⁷

The heart should delight in unperceivable things, but visible signs, like Christ's pronated arm foreshadowing his death, can assist a weaker soul in readying a dwelling for Him: 'If thou cannnot byholde highe celestial thinges, reste in the passion of Criste and dwelle gladly in his holy woundes ... Suffre for Criste and with Criste, yf thou wolte [would] regne with Criste'.⁶⁸ Doing so in humility sets the reader apart from worldly affairs, because '... to the meke man he graunteth grete grace and aftir his mekinge lyfteth him to glory ... The meke man ... standeth in God and not in the worlde'.⁶⁹ The echo of Christ's words 'as

66 For the Madonna's aspect and expressive hands focusing attention on Christ, see Kasl, 'Holy Households', 79–80. With regard to spirituality, see Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 13, 17, and 26–28: aimed at readers already familiar with Christian dogma, the *Imitatio*'s role was to intensify spirituality, and themes in the first three books indicate the necessity to purge the soul in order to prepare a pure vessel for reception of the Body of Christ; emphasis on contrition and examination of conscience probably owed to the infrequency of sacramental Confession. The spiritual process's final goal on earth was reception of the Body of Christ at Mass, and devotion to the Eucharist was characterized by silent, contemplative reverence rather than that directed to visible aspects of devotion such as the Elevation of the Host. This type of reverent contemplation as spiritual communion with Christ was recommended outside a sacramental context, as well.

67 *Imitatio*, Book 2, Cap. 1, 'Of the inwarde conuersacioun', P. 40, S. 1–5; the passage continues, 'Alle his glorie and his worshippe is withinforthe, and there is [his] plesaunce. His visitacion is comune and ofte withinne an inwarde man: with him is his swete talkynge, graciouse consolacion, much wondirfulle familiarite'; P. 40, S. 6–P. 41, S. 7. See also Book 1, Cap. 1, 'Of the foloyng [following] of Cryste and despysynge of alle vanytees worldely', P. 5, S. 19–20: 'Haue mynde oftetyms of that prouerbe that the [e]ye is not fulfilled with sight, ner the ere [ear] with herynge. Study therfore to withdrawe thi herte fro the loue of thinges visible, and translate them to thinges invisible'.

68 *Imitatio*, Cap. 1, 'Of the inwarde conuersacioun', P. 41, S. 24, and P. 42, S. 31. See also P. 42, S. 32–33: the inward man turns himself to God and lifts himself in spirit.

69 *Imitatio*, Book 2, Cap. 2, P. 43, S. 9–11 (entire passage).

I also am not of the world' prompts a devout viewer to imaginatively adopt a deferential position with the Madonna and Child on the plateau set apart from mid-distant activity, like the pilgrim sojourner the *Imitatio* recommends, 'If thou wolte stande duely and profite, accompte [account] the[e] as an exyle and a pylgryme vppon yerthe'.⁷⁰ The lay pilgrim need not renounce society for life as a hermit but must 'Lerne nowe to dye to the worlde, that then thou mowe [may] bygynne to lyffe with Christe. Lerne nowe to despise alle thinges, that thou mowe then goo freely to Criste'.⁷¹ Worldly vanities are despised in a qualified sense: self-deprecating contemplation augments fortitude to abandon temporal values, but encounters with worldly challenges enhance the spirit's progress. Looking beyond the foreground plateau of Bellini's image toward temporal actions in the mid-distance, a devotee remembers the *Imitatio*'s advice to moderate behavior: 'Lete temporal thinges be in vse, and everlastinge thinges [be] in desire'.⁷² As for nature, eagle, stork, and herder constitute lessons: 'Yf thi herte [heart] were right, then euery creature shulde be to thee a myrrour of lyve and a boke [book] of holy doctrine'.⁷³ In the mirror of life, stork battling snake is spiritualized as prayer: 'The olde serpente wol [would] stirre the[e] and bring thee to bitternesse, but with preier [prayer] he shal be dryven away and with profitable laboure his comyng onne shal be stopped'.⁷⁴ Prayer's efficacy demands difficult action, and herders, recumbent and upright, remind that 'Nature loveth ydelnes and bodely [bodily] reste, but grace cannot be voyde [void] ner ydel, but gladly taketh vppon him laboure and travaile'.⁷⁵ Standing in God and not of the world, a believing viewer summons strength to navigate a fraught but illuminating journey through temporal affairs, desired not for earthly gain but valued only in necessity of use.

⁷⁰ *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 17, P. 20–21, S. 4; see also Book 2, Cap. 1, P. 41, S. 16–20.

⁷¹ *Imitatio*, Book 1, Cap. 23, P. 33, S. 32–33; see also P. 31, S. 1–9; P. 33, S. 35–38 and S. 45; and Book 3, Cap. 17, P. 85, S. 5–P. 86, S. 8. For allowance that all need not adopt a hermit's existence, see Book 3, Cap. 11, P. 78, S. 9.

⁷² *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 18, 'That verie solace is to be sought in God alone', P. 86, S. 6. See also S. 8: '... But in God, that made alle thinges, shal be thi blysse and thi felicitye, not suche as is sene and preyed [prized] of folyshe lovers of this worlde, but suche as gode, trewe [Latin *fideles*] Cristen men abideth, and spirituel men fortasteth amonge, whos conversacion is in heven'. See Von Habsburg, *Translations of the Imitatio Christi*, 45; and, for preceding themes in text above, see 44–45.

⁷³ *Imitatio*, Book 2, Cap. 4, P. 45, S. 6; see also S. 7–11.

⁷⁴ *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 13, P. 82, S. 24.

⁷⁵ *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 59, P. 135, S. 11–12; the passage continues, 'Nature seketh to haue curiouse thinges and feire [fair] thinges ... But grace delyteth in simple thinges and lowe thinges, and despiseth none [no] asperite ...'. For similar distinctions between Nature and Grace, see *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 59, P. 134, S. 2–4; and Book 3, Cap. 36, P. 106, S. 24–25.

The spiritual journey is difficult, and, occasionally daunted, the pilgrim may question, 'When shal I, Lorde, haue mynde of thee alone? ... Goode Ihesu, when shal I stande to see thee? When shalle I biholde the glory of thi reaume [realm]?'⁷⁶ Encounters with pictorial challenges posed by worldly nature remind the sojourner that surmounting temporal blandishments requires grace of God, '... for he lyfteth vppe man frome yerthely thinges to love hevonly thinges, and of him that is fleysshely he maketh spirituel. Wherefore the more that nature is holde vnder and overcomen, the more grace is poured inne, and the inward man is every day renewed aftir the image of God ...'.⁷⁷ Encouraged that grace infuses all the more when one resists nature's temptations, the beholder who 'stands in Christ' may lift his eyes to notice the tower arising over the Virgin's shoulder and may take comfort in the 'Turrus Davidica' of responsorial prayers in Litanies of the Virgin: as David defended himself within a tower, so Bellini's Virgin depicted with sheltering hands protects Christ from Satan.⁷⁸ Thoughts of tower and shelter remind that not only does the Virgin offer protection but also that 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the just runneth to it, and shall be exalted' (Prov. 18:10). Thus fortified, the contemplative viewer gazes at the entirety of the shining city on the hill, its pyramidal form echoed in cloudbank above, seen from outside and afar, and thinks,

O the moste blisful dwellynge-place of that highe cite! O the moste clere daie of everlastingnes, whome no [n]yght maketh darke ...! O, wolde God that that day had ones [once] shyned, and alle thees temporalle thinges had take an ende! And this daie shyneth to seintes in a perpetuel bright clerenesses, but to pilgrymes al afarre and by a mirroure.⁷⁹

Tantalized by a glimpse of future bliss, the beholder can again regard mid-distant vignettes with equanimity and affirm to the infant Christ, 'I chese [choose] rather to be a pilgryme with the[e] in yerthe, then to haue hevonly withoute the[e]. Where thou arte, there is hevonly, and where thou arte not, there is

76 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 53, P. 124, S. 9 and S. 12; see also S. 13–15.

77 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 59, 'Of diverse mevinges [movings] of nature and of grace', P. 137, S. 31–32; grace is a supernatural light, gift of God, signal of his chosen, and everlasting help.

78 For the Turrus Davidica, see Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects*, s.v. 'Virgin Mary (4)', 326–327; Metford, *Dictionary of Christian Lore*, s.v. 'Tower', 245; and Song of Songs 7:4. A biblically attuned viewer might also recall the simile 'Turrus Eburnea' that honored her as beloved in the Song of Songs (4:4): 'Thy neck as a tower of ivory'.

79 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 53, 'Of the daie of eternite and the angwysshes of this lyve', P. 124, S. 1–4.

dethe and helle'.⁸⁰ Thus comforted, a viewer continues the meditational pilgrimage another day.

Collating extracts from the *Imitatio Christi* with potential visual excursions precipitated by Bellini's imagery demonstrates how well the latter correlates with the former. His *Madonna of the Meadow* situates Virgin and Christ clearly within the landscape, set slightly apart from the distribution of contrasting and complementary vignettes within mid-distant space that recall the nature of *rapiaria* as a compendium of spiritual sayings and that parallel the *Imitatio's* non-linear sequence of meditations on related topics in a progression that, as in life, encounters similar themes repeatedly for renewed reflection as a means to spiritual growth. The Madonna embodies its central virtue, humility or meekness, and its desired spiritual mood of inward contemplation of Christ and, evoked by his arm, the Passion. Bellini's reported propensity to 'wander at will, according to his *fantasia*',⁸¹ recollects imagery apposite to repeated meditations on the finished painting's spiritual import. Monumentalized by the low point of view, one herder at least suggests simple folk acting with devout wisdom, another perhaps succumbs to nature's blandishments, and creatures provide lessons from the Book of Life: encountering the conflict of Good and Evil strengthens the pilgrim and gives experience to assist a spiritual journey that traverses the earthly realm even while its temporal values are rejected. In the foreground, as entrance to the landscape, lies the means: Christ, God's grace, allows the devout to transcend earthly for heavenly things, so that the inward-looking contemplative is renewed in the image of God and, as pilgrim, glimpses the celestial city from afar. Christ and Virgin apparently exist within this world, but they are not *of* its temporal mid-distance; rather, they constitute salvific means formally related to shining city on the hill and cloud-garlanded empyrean. Perhaps the most significant parallel between image and text is one of devotional approach: Bellini's image demands visual attention to the Madonna of Humility with Christ, just as the *Imitatio* compares the communicant with the 'Handmaid of the Lord' as preparation to 'stand in Christ'. Standing in Christ constitutes the goal attainable in life; with that accomplished, both image and text present temporal issues that prompt repeated and varying reflections on life's vicissitudes and the moral lessons they impart, while retaining only a distant view of the goal that believers hope to gain in the after-life. A devout meditator learns to concentrate on Christ poised in the Virginal womb as a means to secure that dimly perceived goal.

80 *Imitatio*, Book 3, Cap. 64, P. 145, S. 5–6.

81 Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, 138; reported as '... uso como dice di sempre vagare a sua voglia nelle pitture', by Pietro Bembo to Isabella d'Este in 1506.

Giovanni Bellini, of course, did not seek to illustrate passages from the *Imitatio Christi* in his *Madonna of the Meadow*. Rather, affinities in theme, structure, and spirituality imply that he was privy to the type of meditational experience the *Imitatio* promoted, whether directly or through an intermediary, since the devotional approach it adumbrated was available at Venice in varying forms throughout Bellini's adult life. Following the text's publication in Italian in 1488, though, two factors intimate his recourse to the *Imitatio*. First is its nature as *rapiaria*, which may have stimulated Bellini's ability to articulate his working method of gathering commonplaces according to his *fantasia*. Second, the number of thematic affinities and the degree to which they align in both text and image intimate the treatise's role in articulating a meditational approach by which a viewer can most effectively appraise Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow*.

Bibliography

- Augustine, 'Exposition on Psalm 122', in: Schaff, P. (ed), Tweed, J.E. (trans.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, Vol. 8, Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1888. Knight, K. (ed. and rev.), New Advent, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1801122.htm>. Accessed 01/18/2016.
- Battisti, E., 'Le origini religiose del paesaggio veneto', *Venezia Cinquecento* 1:2 (1991), 9–25.
- Blass-Simmen, B., 'Qualche lontani: Distance and Transcendence in the Art of Giovanni Bellini', in: Wilson, C.C. (ed.), *Examining Giovanni Bellini: An Art More Human and More Divine*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2015, 77–91.
- Campbell, S.J., 'Renaissance Naturalism and the Jewish Bible: Ferrara, Brescia, Bergamo, 1520–1540', in: Kessler, H.L., and D. Nirenberg (eds.), *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, 291–327.
- Cast, D., 'The Stork and the Serpent: A New Interpretation of the *Madonna of the Meadow* by Bellini', *Art Quarterly* 32 (1969), 246–257.
- Christiansen, K., 'Bellini and the Meditational *Poesia*', *Artibus et Historiae* 34:67 (2013), 9–20.
- Christiansen, K., 'Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting', in: Kasl, R. (ed.), *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004, 7–57.
- Douay-Rheims Bible + Challoner Notes, <http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>. Accessed 15 March 2016 and 3 February 2021.
- Dunkerton, J., et al., '*Madonna of the Meadow*, about 1500–5', in: Dunkerton, J., et al.,

- National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 39, *Giovanni Bellini's Painting Technique*, London: National Gallery Company, 2018, 80–85.
- Ferguson, G., *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Fletcher, J.M., 'Bellini's Social World', in: Humfrey, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 13–47.
- Forsyth, I.H., *Throne of Wisdom*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Gentili, A., 'Bellini and Landscape', in: Humfrey, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 167–181.
- [*Giardino de Oratione fructuoso*]. *Zardino de oration: fructuoso* [*Giardino de Oratione fructuoso*], [Niccolò da Osimo], 1494, in: Pellegrini, L., *DBI* 78 (2013) (Errori nella paginazione manoscritta) Electronic reproduction, Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', Giardino dell'orazione—Europeana, www.europeana.eu/portal/.../BibliographicResource_3000113676620.htm. Accessed 18 March 2016.
- Goffen, R., 'Icon and Vision: Giovanni Bellini's Half-Length Madonnas', *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), 487–518.
- Graef, H., *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1963.
- Grave, J., *Landschaften der Meditation: Giovanni Bellinis Assoziationsräume*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2004.
- Hall, J., *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Rev. Ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Hilloowala, R., and J. Oremland, 'The St. Peter's *Pietà*: A Madonna and Child? An Anatomical and Psychological Reevaluation', *Leonardo* 20:1 (1987), 87–92.
- Hills, P., *Veiled Presence: Body and Drapery from Giotto to Titian*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Hirn, Y., *The Sacred Shrine: A Study of the Poetry and Art of the Catholic Church*, Vol. 57, New York: Macmillan, 1912.
- Huse, N., *Studien zu Giovanni Bellini*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972.
- [*Imitatio Christi*] *The Imitation of Christ: The First English Translation of the 'Imitatio Christi'*, Biggs, B.J.H. (ed.), The Early English Text Society/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Janson, A.F., 'The Meaning of the Landscape in Bellini's *St. Francis in Ecstasy*', *Artibus et Historiae* 15 (1994), 41–54.
- Jungmann, J.A., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, 2 vols., Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1951.
- Kasl, R., 'Holy Households: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Venice', in: Kasl, R. (ed.), *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004, 59–89.
- Lane, Barbara G., *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting*, New York: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Leonardo & Venezia*, Milan: Bompiani (© Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri), 1992.

- Levi D'Ancona, M., 'The Doni Madonna by Michelangelo: An Iconographic Study', *Art Bulletin* 50:1 (Mar. 1968), 43–50.
- Long, J.C., 'Giovanni Bellini: The Art of Contemplation', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 50:3 (2019), 955–957.
- Lowry, M.J.C., 'Humanism and Anti-Semitism in Renaissance Venice: The Strange Story of *Décor Puellarum*', *La Bibliofilia* 87:1 (1985), 39–54.
- Luber, C.C., *Albrecht Dürer and the Venetian Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Metford, J.C.J., *Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1983.
- Meiss, M., 'Light as Form and Symbol in Some Fifteenth-Century Paintings', *Art Bulletin* 27:3 (Sept. 1945), 175–181.
- Meiss, M., 'The Madonna of Humility', *Art Bulletin* 18:4 (Dec. 1936), 435–465.
- Meiss, M., 'Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110:5 (1996), 348–382.
- Middle English Dictionary*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.
- Monte del oratione* [*Incomencia il Libro chiamato'il monte di oratione*], Venice, [Bernardinus Benalius?, 1493], 1501; Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Otto Vollbehre Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008578090/>.
- Nepi Sciré, G., 'Leonardo e Giovanni Bellini', in: *Leonardo & Venezia*, Milan: Bompiani (© Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri), 1992, 303–308.
- Robertson, G., *Giovanni Bellini*, New York: Hacker Art Books, 1981.
- Sanvito, P., *Imitatio: L'amore dell' immagine sacra. Il sentimento devoto nelle scene dell' imitazione di Cristo*, Pescara: ZiP Adv, 2009.
- Sill, G.G., *A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art*, New York: Macmillan, 1975.
- Tempestini, A., *Giovanni Bellini*, Bonfante-Warren, A., and J. Hyams (eds.), New York: Abbeville, 1999.
- Von Habsburg, M., *Catholic and Protestant Translations of the Imitatio Christi, 1425–1650: From Late Medieval Classic to Early Modern Bestseller*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011.
- Von Simson, O.G., 'Compassio and Co-Redemptio in Rogier van der Weyden's *Descent from the Cross*', *Art Bulletin* 35:1 (March 1953), 9–16.
- Warner, M., *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, New York: Knopf, 1976.
- Wittkower, R., 'Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols', *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2:4 (Apr. 1939), 293–325.

FIGURE 1
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna of the Meadow*, c. 1500
© NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON/ART RESOURCE, NY

FIGURE 2
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna and Child* [*Madonna with the Pear*],
c. 1485
ERICH LESSING/ART
RESOURCE, NY

FIGURE 3
Giovanni Bellini, *Pietà*, 1505
CAMERAPHOTO ARTE, VENICE/ART RESOURCE, NY

FIGURE 4
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna of the Meadow*, c. 1500, det. *Virgin and Christ*
© NATIONAL GALLERY, LON-
DON/ART RESOURCE, NY

FIGURE 5
Giovanni Bellini,
*Madonna Enthroned
Adoring the Sleeping
Christ*, c. 1475

CAMERAPHOTO
ARTE, VENICE/ART
RESOURCE, NY

FIGURE 6
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna of the Meadow*, c. 1500, det., *Herder,
Tower, Animals*
© NATIONAL GALLERY, CC BY 3.0. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

FIGURE 7
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna of the Meadow*, c. 1500, det., *Stork
and Serpent*

© NATIONAL GALLERY, CC BY 3.0. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

FIGURE 8
Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna
of the Meadow*, c. 1500, det.,
Eagle, Stork, Serpent, Herder

© NATIONAL GALLERY,
LONDON/ART RESOURCE,
NY