In October 1545, Titian went to Rome to paint portraits of Paul III Farnese and his close relations. According to the papal nuncio to Venice and Farnese insider, Giovanni Della Casa, the artist was ready to paint the entire family, even ‘down to the cats’. In the event, Titian's sojourn in the papal city was to last until the spring of the following year, during which time he was given rooms at the Vatican and shown the sights by Giorgio Vasari. Of the many portraits painted while he was there, that of *Paul III and his Grandsons* (Capodimonte Museum, Naples) remains one of the most iconic images of the Farnese pope, alongside the same painter’s portrait of Paul from 1543 (Figure 8.1, also in the Capodimonte). And yet, Titian was not the only artist producing papal portraits at this time and it is another, rather different, portrayal that serves as the point of departure for the present study.

Also probably dating to 1546, the bust of Paul shown in Figure 8.2 is one of three marble portraits of the pope made by Guglielmo della Porta, who was appointed *plumbator apostolicarum* in 1547. Given the timing of the bust's

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3 On Della Porta see Werner Gramberg, ‘Guglielmo della Portas Grabmal für Paul III. Farnese in San Pietro in Vaticano’, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 21 (1984), 253–364; Carrol Brentano, ‘Guglielmo della Porta’, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 37 (1989), 192–199; Christina Riebesell, ‘Guglielmo della Porta’, in *Palazzo Farnèse. Dalle collezioni rinascimentali ad Ambasciata di Francia* (Florence, 2011), 255–261. Brentano argues that the Naples bust was carved in preparation for the effigy of the pope on Paul's tomb; but the tomb commission dates from 1549, while Della Porta was already paid in December 1546 for ‘un ritratto del Papa.’ It is highly likely that this payment relates to the marble bust in question, and not to another (bronze) bust, given that a year later he was explicitly paid for a portrait in bronze. It is possible of course that this payment was for one of the other two marble portraits of the pope, but since they are all quite similar, the original commission probably dates to 1546. See
**Figure 8.1** Titian, ‘Portrait of Paul III’, 1543, oil on canvas, Capodimonte Museum, Naples. Reproduced with kind permission of the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte—Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo.