Material Prayers: The Use of Text in Early Modern Italian Domestic Devotions

VOLUME ONE

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Katherine Tycz Dissertation Abstract

Material Prayers: The Use of Text in Early Modern Italian Domestic Devotions

While scholarship often focuses on how early modern Italians used images in their devotions, particularly in the post-Tridentine era, little attention has been placed upon how laypeople engaged with devotional text during times of prayer and in their everyday lives. Studies of early modern devotional texts have explored their literary content, investigated their censorship by the Church, or concentrated upon an elite readership. This thesis, instead, investigates how ordinary devotees interacted with holy words in their material form, which I have termed 'material prayers'. Since this thesis developed under the aegis of the interdisciplinary research project, *Domestic Devotions: The Place of Piety in the Italian Renaissance Home, 1400-1600*, it focuses primarily on engagement with these material prayers in domestic spaces.

Using an interdisciplinary approach drawing from material culture studies, literary history, social and cultural history, and art history, it brings together objects, images and archival sources to illuminate how devotees from across the socio-economic and literacy spectrums accessed and employed devotional text in their prayers and daily life. From holy words, Biblical excerpts, and prayers to textual symbols like the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus, this thesis explores how and why these material prayers were employed for spiritual, apotropaic and intercessory purposes. It analyses material prayers not only in traditional textual formats (printed books and manuscripts), but also those that were printed on single-sheets of paper, inscribed on jewellery, or etched into the structure of the home. To convey how devotees engaged with and relied upon these material prayers, it considers a variety of inscribed objects, including those sanctioned by the Church as well as those which might be questioned or deemed 'superstitious' by ecclesiastical authorities. Sermons, Inquisition trial records, and other archival documents have been consulted to further illuminate the material evidence.

The first part of the thesis, 'On the Body', considers the how devotees came into personal contact with texts by wearing prayers on their bodies. It examines a range of objects including prayers with protective properties, known as *brevi*, that were meant to be sealed in a pouch and worn around the neck, and more luxurious items of physical adornment inscribed with devotional and apotropaic text, such as necklaces and rings. The second part of the thesis enters the home to explore how the spaces people inhabited and the objects that populated their homes were decorated with material prayers. 'In the Home' begins with texts inscribed over the entryways of early modern Italian homes, and then considers how devotees decorated their walls with holy words and how the objects of devotion and household life were imbued with religious significance through the addition of pious inscriptions.

By analysing these personal objects and the textual domestic sphere, this thesis argues that these material prayers cut across socio-economic classes, genders, and ages to embody quotidian moments of domestic devotion as well as moments of fear, anxiety and change.

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages.

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Writing (and finishing) this thesis would have been impossible without the support of my supervisor, Abigail Brundin. Abi has had faith in my concept of 'material prayers' from the beginning, and has provided me with continual encouragement throughout all stages of the research and writing process. Conversations with Abi inspired me to think about Italian studies in new ways, and she has always encouraged me pursue innovative approaches to my material. Abi has supported me through my ever-evolving thesis outline and provided me with thoughtful and constructive feedback on multiple drafts of this thesis. I will be forever grateful for her willingness to impart valuable advice on completing a doctoral degree and preparing for my future career.

This thesis was made possible by sponsorship of the European Research Council-funded *Domestic Devotions* project in Cambridge. The premise of this exciting interdisciplinary research project provided me with the framework within which to pursue my interests in the material text and devotion in early modern Italy. I am thankful to have been given the opportunity to develop my own research as a member of this project, and to have contributed to the various project outputs. The collaborative environment encouraged by the Principal Investigators and embraced by the *Domestic Devotions* team fostered my development as a scholar. In addition to Abi, the other PIs, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven, demonstrated enthusiasm for my work and were always willing to share helpful advice on my research and conference presentations. The *Domestic Devotions* post-doctoral researchers modelled how to transition from graduate student to early career researchers. Marco Faini embraced my project and generously shared primary sources that he thought might be of interest to me; Marco was always willing to discuss my ideas and to help decipher troublesome transcriptions. Alessia Meneghin, too, kindly shared her palaeography expertise, particularly for fourteenth- and fifteenth-century sources. Maya Corry was a font of advice and reassurance regarding the PhD process and my future career prospects. Maya was always willing to engage with my research ideas, particularly in relation to the project's *Madonna and Miracles* exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum. It was a privilege to complete my doctoral thesis alongside two fellow PhD students on the *Domestic Devotions* project, Irene Galandra Cooper and Zuzanna Sarnecka. Our discussions about our research pushed me to think about my project from new perspectives, and they served as first-rate colleagues in both Cambridge and on various research trips into the Italian archives. I must also extend my gratitude to our project administrator, Rachel Burgess, who was a constant friendly presence in our office and invaluable source of administrative assistance. In addition to the funding provided by the European Research Council, I was also generously supported by the Cambridge Overseas Trust.

In Cambridge, I am thankful to have been welcomed into a vibrant community of early modernists. My colleagues in the Sensory Renaissance seminar at the Centre for Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) encouraged me to think more deeply about the multisensory aspects of my research. I was honoured to have been able to convene the *Things: Early Modern Material Cultures* research seminar based in CRASSH for two years during my doctoral studies, and I am grateful to my co-convenors, our advisors, the presenters, and the enthusiastic community for exposing me to cutting-edge approaches to material culture studies. During my time in Cambridge, I was privileged to be invited to contribute to the *Treasured Possessions* exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum by Mary Laven, Melissa Calaresu, Ulinka Rublack, and Victoria Avery. I am also grateful for the support of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages, particularly the Department of Italian.

I would like to thank the archivists, librarians and curators who welcomed me at research institutions in England, the United States, and Italy. In Italy, I am grateful to all who provided me with assistance at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, the Archivio di Stato di Verona, the Archivio di Stato di Macerata, the Biblioteca Comunale Mozzi-Borgetti in Macerata, the Archivio di Stato di Ascoli Piceno, the Archivio di Stato di Salerno, the Biblioteca Provinciale di Salerno, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede at the Vatican, and the Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago. Mirko Traversari kindly met with Irene and me in Bologna to discuss the discovery of the devotional objects found

alongside the early modern mummified bodies in Roccapelago. The Franciscan custodians of the Santuario di San Giacomo della Marca generously allowed me to view and photograph their rare *Breve di San Giacomo*. I would like to thank the librarians and curators of the Cambridge University Library, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the British Library, the British Museum, and the Ashmolean Museum (particularly Timothy Wilson), who provided me with unlimited access to their collections. I am also grateful to the curators and librarians of the Morgan Library, the Beinecke Library at Yale University, the Columbia's Butler Library, and Princeton University's Firestone Memorial Library (particularly Don Skemer), who permitted me to view documents integral to my research. The curatorial and collections staff at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, specifically in the Medieval, Prints and Drawings, and European Sculpture and Decorative Arts departments as well as Watson Library, offered me the opportunity to view and analyse a variety of objects.

I was privileged to present versions of my thesis research at a variety of conferences and seminars, and I am grateful to the audiences in Loughborough, Cambridge, Oxford, Berlin, New York, Boston, and Chicago for their constructive questions and suggestions. I must thank also Simon Davies for his detailed proofreading of my thesis.

I extend my gratitude the influential scholars who inspired me to pursue my academic interests. At the College of the Holy Cross, I found my home in the Italian department and was encouraged to study abroad in Florence where I developed a passion for Renaissance Italy. After I had devoured all the Italian courses offered at Holy Cross, Susan Amatangelo listened to my interest in the lives and culture of Renaissance Italians and suggested that I explore courses in art history. Virginia Raguin saw my eyes light up when we studied small devotional objects in her medieval art class and encouraged me to pursue graduate studies in a related field. I soon found myself studying for a Masters at the Bard Graduate Center where I discovered a group of kindred spirits. Deborah Krohn, Andrew Morrall, and Ittai Weinryb nurtured my interests in devotional practices, domestic material culture, and the material text in early modern Europe. During my doctoral research, Andrew and Deborah kindly invited me back to teach for a semester as I researched in the collections and libraries of New York. The members of my BGC cohort have remained steadfast friends and colleagues, and in particular Christine Griffiths, Laura Speers, and Sharon Twickler extended their hospitality, friendship, and served as sounding-boards during my short and long research trips to New York.

Friends and family, too many to name, on both sides of the Atlantic have provided me with exceptional support during my studies. My mother's family in England welcomed their 'American cousin' with open arms and included me in family events from the moment I arrived, giving me a respite from the stresses of academic life and a 'home away from home'. The Pitman family offered me hospitality and friendship throughout my time in Cambridge, and even organized an authentic 'American Thanksgiving' when I was unable to return to the US for the holiday. Notes of encouragement from friends and family provided me with the sustenance to finish my degree. In my final year, I was privileged to be welcomed at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art as a Kress Interpretive Fellow, and I am grateful to my colleagues at the museum for their patience and support as I have finished writing up.

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My deepest gratitude is owed to my family, who have always provided me with unconditional love. I would not have been able to pursue this degree without their support, encouragement, and willingness to take a phone call at any time despite the time difference. My mom, Carol, and dad, James, instilled in me the value of education from a young age and fostered my love of books. Over the last four years, like any good sister, Lauren constantly reminded me: 'you should be writing your thesis'. I would also like to acknowledge the influence of my grandparents. My paternal grandparents passed when I was quite young, but I know my Babci, a devout communicant, would be thrilled with the topic of my research. We lost my maternal

grandfather during my second year of doctoral research, but I will always fondly remember how Grandpa proudly wore the Cambridge hat I gave him for Christmas.

Finally, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to my Grandma Maria, who left her home in Italy nearly seventy years ago to move to the United States in search of a better life. Her example gave me the courage to set off on my own adventure across the Atlantic to pursue my dreams. I dedicate this thesis to her.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

This thesis is submitted as part of the project funded by the European Research Council and hosted by the University of Cambridge, *Domestic Devotions: The Place of Piety in the Renaissance Italian Home, 1400-1600* (Principal Investigators Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, Mary Laven).

The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013)/ERC grant agreement n° 319475.

Transcriptions

For ease of comprehension in transcriptions from archival and manuscript sources, abbreviations have been expanded and the punctuation modernised. Similarly, 'u' has been changed to 'v and 'j' to 'i' when this conforms to modern usage. Otherwise, I have tried to adhere precisely to the spelling and form of the original. When I have omitted sections these are indicated by square brackets: [. . .]. Dots without brackets indicate that the dots are found in the original. Empty brackets indicate illegible text.

In transcriptions of early modern printed sources, abbreviations have been expanded and punctuation modernised sparingly, only when it would improve legibility of the source. Titles of printed materials have not been altered to facilitate identification in library catalogues.

Translations

Translations for quotations in languages other than vernacular Italian or Latin have been provided.

Illustrations

Unless otherwise noted, illustrations have been taken from online museum and library catalogues, which permit the use of images for scholarly purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Domesticating Devotional Text

A short printed devotional pamphlet now preserved in the Beinecke Library at Yale University has the title *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise sopra al mal caducho, la quale da tenire in casa con grande devotione*+ (Figure 0.1). Void of information relaying the publisher or date, the booklet was probably printed in Italy in about 1530, a pivotal point in religious history during the Protestant Reformation and on the cusp of the Catholic Church's response in the form of the Counter-Reformation.[1] The pamphlet, a form of cheap print which would have been affordable to wide swathes of the population, holds within its four leaves traces of the devotional habits of ordinary people in early modern Italy. The front page is dominated by a woodcut image of an enthroned saint with one hand raised in benediction, the other holding a crozier; he wears a Bishop's mitre and is identified as 'Alouise', or Saint Louis of Toulouse. Inside the text appears on four leaves (cc. 1v-4v) and narrates the '*vita e leggenda*' of Saint Louis in *ottava rima*.[2] Yet the title of this pamphlet provides the most intriguing clues to its possible uses. Besides explaining that the text inside contains the life story, legend, and prayer of Saint Louis, it also indicates that the content is efficacious against the '*mal caducho*'.[3] The title concludes with a note specifying that the text should be 'kept in the home with great devotion'.

This thesis questions how devotional text entered the early modern Italian home and seeks to understand how devotees engaged with its material forms in everyday life. As the title of *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise* suggests, the mere presence of pious text in the home might be considered an act of devotion and simultaneously provide benefits to the home's inhabitants. While books of prayers and prayers in books will be discussed throughout this thesis, the ways in which the devotional text populated the homes of early modern Italians in other media will also be addressed. This thesis, therefore, seeks to expand our understanding of devotional text in early modern Italy by investigating this range of inscribed objects, which I am terming 'material prayers'.

The concept of 'material prayer' in the early modern era probably conjures thoughts of the book of hours. Considered the essential text for the devotion of the laity, books of hours are

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[1] The book, an octavo, has been cut down since it was printed, and any publishing information there may have been has been lost, along with a manuscript annotation that may have recorded an earlier owner: (Italy?: s.n., *c.* 1530)

[2] It is written in Tuscan octaves (11-syllable lines with a rhyming pattern of ABABABCC). In early modern Italy, *ottava rima* was often used to recount epic narratives or newsworthy stories meant to be recited: Gloria Allaire, 'Ottava Rima', in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Christopher Kleinhenz (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 809; Una McIlvenna, 'Singing Songs of Execution in Early Modern Italy', in *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society*, ed. by Stefano Dell'Aglio, Brian Richardson, and Massimo Rospocher (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 52-68 (58).

[3] While *mal caduc[h]o* is traditionally interpreted as epilepsy, this is a false equivalency as the term referred to a wider range of ills in the early modern era, including vertigo, fainting, seizures, spasms, and heart problems: John Brooks, 'The Nail of the Great Beast', *Western Folklore*, 18 (1959), 317-21 (317).

often studied for their beautiful illuminations or their connections to the great families.[4] While scholars like Eamon Duffy, Virginia Reinburg, and Kathryn Rudy have recently delved deeper into the materiality and devotional value of books of hours from England, France, and the Low Countries respectively, Italian examples have been mostly excluded from these lines of enquiry.[5] While I will consider books in which prayers appear, such as *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise*, this thesis will not be a comprehensive study of the prayer books in Italy.

However, these studies of the book of hours have provided a useful framework for approaching the range of material prayers that this thesis will consider. Reinburg has referred to the book of hours as an 'archive of prayer' that 'preserved materials—both written and visual' and 'with multiple personal scripts for prayer' and whose 'owners […] used, read, and looked at their books in wildly different ways'.[6] Therefore, this thesis will expand the concept of an 'archive of prayer' to analyse how the home itself and the objects within it functioned as 'archives of prayer' for early modern Italians. This thesis will argue that the 'multiple scripts for prayer' inscribed on a variety of surfaces illuminate how early modern Italians 'used, read, and looked' at material prayers 'in wildly different ways'.

Domestic Devotions

This research was developed under the aegis of an interdisciplinary research project at the University of Cambridge, *Domestic Devotions: The Place of Piety in the Italian Renaissance Home, 1400-1600*. The project was funded by a European Research Council Synergy Grant and led by Principal Investigators Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven. The *Domestic Devotions* project sought to illuminate how people engaged with the divine from within their homes. Based in three disciplines (Italian, History of Art, and History) members of the *Domestic Devotions* project explored the domestic devotional practices of early modern Italians through the study of the religious art, books, objects, texts, stories, and domestic spaces. The project selected three primary geographical areas of investigation with the goal of moving outside the 'Golden Triangle' of Renaissance scholarship which, particularly in the Anglophone world, tends to focus

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[4] The book of hours was a compendium of devotional texts to read and recite throughout the day. While they usually contained the Latin texts of the Offices of the Virgin and the Seven Penitential Psalms, the supplementary texts contained within a book of hours depended upon a variety of factors: the region in which it was produced, the owner's personal preferences and budget, the period in which it was made, etc.

[5] Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 16-18; Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016); Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: Braziller, 1997). For an analysis of Italian books of hours in the context of domestic devotion, see Abigail Brundin, 'Reading at Home', in *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), 98-101; Abigail Brundin, 'Plate 99. Book of Hours, third quarter 15th century', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 102-03; and Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2018).

[6] Reinburg, 4-5.

on Florence, Venice, and Rome. By moving beyond these cities, the project instead considered the little-explored regions of the Venetian *terra firma*, the Marche, as well as Naples and its surrounding countryside.[7] These three zones were selected because they were spread out across the Italian peninsula, offered a range of demographic and geographical features, and were home to three of the most important pilgrimage sites in early modern Italy.[8]

Rather than concentrating exclusively on one geographic region, this thesis has a thematic intent, attempting to develop a more comprehensive picture of the use of material prayers in the domestic sphere across early modern Italy. Further, because of the paucity of pertinent available material, this thesis cannot only consider the geographical regions studied by the *Domestic Devotions* project. Instead it brings sources from these regions, particularly the Veneto and the Marche, into conversation with those from other parts of the Italian peninsula. In particular, it incorporates an analysis of select trials of the Sant'Uffizio in Venice, using the methodological approaches to Inquisition trials pioneered by Carlo Ginzburg, to glean a better understanding of the early modern beliefs about material prayers through the rich testimonies.[9] While the written records of the Veneto prove vital sources in understanding how early modern Italians viewed and utilized some of these devotional objects, the physical remnants of homes in the Marche, specifically in the area around Ascoli Piceno, offer a concentrated sample of preserved building façades to study devotional architectural inscriptions. Throughout this thesis, information gathered from the *Domestic Devotions* regions will be discussed alongside written sources, objects, images, and buildings from other regions. In particular additional sources from the northern and central portions of the Italian peninsula, ranging from archaeological finds from the mountainous regions of Emilia-Romagna to printed sources and paintings originating in Tuscany and the Veneto, provide us with a more detailed view of the various material prayers used in various areas of early modern Italy.

It is important to emphasise that this thesis attempts to present a more nuanced, rather than a perfect or complete, picture of the material prayers utilised across early modern Italy. It acknowledges that Italy was politically and culturally fragmented with regionally distinct dialects that influenced the development of devotional practices, beliefs, and objects. It also does not claim that these types of practices surrounding material prayers were unique to the Italian

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[7] The project proposal cites the conference proceedings, *Beyond Florence: The Contours of Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, edited by Paula Findlen, Michelle M. Fontaine, and Duane J. Osheim (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003) as one of the first major intentional efforts of Anglophone Renaissance scholars to develop a picture of medieval and early modern Italy outside of the Florence: Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven, *Domestic Devotions project proposal* (2012), 4.

[8] These three shrines highlighted by the project--Lonigo (Veneto), Loreto (Marche), and Madonna dell'Arco (Naples)—were sites where ex votos were deposited celebrating miracles, including those that had occurred in domestic settings: Brundin, Howard and Laven, *Domestic Devotions project proposal* (2012), 4-8.

[9] See for example Ginzburg's studies of the beliefs of Menocchio in Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976) and the *benandanti* in Carlo Ginzburg, *I benandanti: Stregoneria e culti agrari tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996).

peninsula. Though they are beyond the scope of this thesis, scholars have revealed evidence of similar practices, objects and beliefs employed by devotees across the world from the beginnings of the written language to today.

This project recognises that scholarship of religion in early modern Italy has focused mainly on official Church doctrine, the patronage and practices of the elite and clergy, the art and music adorning public ecclesiastical spaces, civic rituals, as well as the practices of religious orders and confraternities.[10] Likewise, studies of early modern Italian domestic life consider mostly elite and secular life, especially within the environs of the major centres of 'Renaissance culture', namely Florence, Venice, and Rome.[11] While recent scholarship on Italian material culture has started to move beyond the nobility and elite merchant classes to study the wide range of products available to early moderns, such research has emphasised secular objects originating in these three Renaissance centres.

Scholarship focused on Italian domestic devotion have centred primarily on Florence and Venice.[12] Most research on Catholic lay devotion has stressed the primacy of images, particularly in the post-Tridentine era. Studies of early modern devotional texts have explored their literary content, investigated their censorship by the Church, or concentrated upon an elite readership.[13] While some of these studies touched upon the use of objects I define as material prayers in domestic practice, scholarship on early modern Protestant domestic piety, particularly in northern Europe and England, is more useful for contextualising my approaches to material prayers in this

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[10] Some recent publications include: Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop, *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Kate J. P. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini, 1453-1524* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Anabel Thomas, *Art and Piety in the Female Religious Communities of Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[11] John Kent Lydecker, 'The Domestic Setting of the Arts in Renaissance Florence' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1987); *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (London: Victoria & Albert Publications, 2006); *The Early Modern Domestic Interior, 1400-1700*, ed. by Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

[12] For an overview of domestic devotional practices, see the essay by Donal Cooper on 'Devotion' in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 190-203. On Florence: Jaqueline Marie Musacchio, 'The Madonna and Child, a Host of Saints and Domestic Devotion in Renaissance Florence', in *Revaluing Renaissance Art*, ed. by Gabriele Neher and Rupert Shepherd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 147-64; Caroline Corisande Anderson, 'The Material Culture of Domestic Religion in Early Modern Florence, c. 1480-1650' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2008). On Venice: Margaret Morse, 'The Arts of Domestic Devotion in Renaissance Italy: The Case of Venice' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Maryland, 2006); see also Margaret Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space: The Religious Visual Culture of the Renaissance Venetian *Casa*', *Renaissance Studies*, 21 (2007), 151-84; Margaret Morse, 'From Chiesa to Casa and Back: The Merging of Public and Private in Domestic Devotional Art', in *Reflections on Renaissance Venice: A Celebration of Patricia Fortini Brown*, ed. by Blake de Maria and Mary Frank (Milan: Five Continents, 2013), 143-53; Margaret Morse, 'The Venetian *portego*: Family Piety and Public Prestige', in *The Early Modern Domestic Interior*, ed. by Campbell, Miller, Consavari, 89-106; and Rhoda Kasl, 'Holy Households: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Venice', in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. by Rhonda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 59-89. On other cities: Angelo Turchini, 'Tracce di religione domestica in ambiente urbano: il caso di Rimini fra il XV e il XVII secolo', *Il Carrobbio*, 6 (1980), 351-64.

[13] See the essays in the recent volume *Religione domestica (medioevo – età moderna)*, Quaderni di Storia Religiosa, 8 (Caselle di Sommacampagna: Cierri Edizioni, 2001), which explores devotion in the Italian home from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Publications by the *Domestic Devotions* project will further add to the field, including the already published exhibition catalogue *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven.

thesis. Though the ways in which the religious inscriptions on household objects and domestic spaces were viewed and used by Protestant devotees differ from the uses of material prayers which will be discussed, scholarship on these objects and domestic spaces inscribed with devotional text provided inspiration for the questions this thesis addresses.[14]

Methodologies & Sources

This thesis argues that the text itself is material and should be considered as an object, rather than solely a vehicle through which ideas are conveyed. Regarding the study of material text, Ben Jervis has proposed that scholars (in his case archaeologists) should

> consider the presence of text in social relationships, as more than representational parts of the material record of medieval life […] documents do not simply say how things were, but, just like objects, were fundamental in making them that way. The role of text as material culture deserves to be the subject of a book in its own right [and] if we wish to be truly interdisciplinary we must develop mechanisms through which we can explore the inter-relationships and interplays between texts, objects and spaces in the past […].[15]

By engaging with Jervis's proposal, this thesis will consider not only how text was present in social relationships of early modern Italians, but also how material prayers functioned as a mediator in the relationship between devotees and the Divine. Further, it attempts the interdisciplinary scholarship called for by Jervis by exploring the 'inter-relationships and interplays between texts, objects and spaces in the past', and extending this exploration to the inter-relationships between texts, inscribed objects, and inscribed spaces.

As this thesis argues, in early modern Italy, material prayers not only took the form of manuscripts and printed prayer pamphlets, but also devotional prints, inscribed household objects and domestic decorations, objects of personal adornment, and the structure of the home itself. By studying both the textual contexts and the materiality of these inscribed objects, we are able to better understand how devotees accessed and utilised devotional text. This thesis will argue that devotees ascribed agency to religious words, particularly in their material form, and believed that material prayers were imbued with the ability to provide not only spiritual solace, but also apotropaic and intercessory benefits.[16]

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[14] Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion, 2001); Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Andrew Morrall, 'Domestic Decoration and the Bible in the Early Modern Home', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, ed. by Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith, and Rachel Willie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 577-97; Andrew Morrall, 'Inscriptional Wisdom and the Domestic Arts in Early Modern Northern Europe', in *Formelhaftigkeit in Text und Bild*, ed. by Natalia Filatkina, Birgit Ulrike Münch, and Ane Kleine-Engel (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2012), 121-38; Andrew Morrall, 'Protestant Pots: Morality and Social Ritual in the Early Modern Home', *Journal of Design History*, 15.4: Approaches to Renaissance Consumption (2002): 263-73.

[15] Ben Jervis, *Pottery and Social Life in Medieval England: Towards a Relational Approach* (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2014), 157.

[16] On the agency of material objects: Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Julian Droogan, *Religion, Material Culture and Archaeology* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 149-73; On the concept of the 'material text': Frances Maguire and Helen Smith, 'Material Texts'

This thesis employs methodologies associated with material culture studies, particularly the method of object analysis outlined by Jules Prown.[17] Material culture historians not only study objects, but often also read objects as sources that can reveal something of the maker, owner, or culture in which an object was created and consumed.[18] At its inception the field of material culture studies developed out of many disciplinary backgrounds, including archaeology, anthropology, and history, particularly the social histories of everyday life developed by the Annales School. In recent decades, the field has expanded to encompass art and design history, cultural and economic history, literary analysis and history, and the history of the book and bibliographical study, to varying degrees.[19] Following these developments, this thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach under the umbrella of material culture studies, utilising primarily book and literary history, social and cultural history, and art history.

Using this interdisciplinary lens of material culture studies to read textual objects permits us to develop a deeper understanding about these objects and their cultural contexts. This methodology encourages close reading not only of the text inscribed on the object, but also encourages us to analyse the textual object's material qualities, visual appearance, state of conservation, and biography. A holistic approach to these material prayers can reveal information about an object's intended purpose as well as its role in the devotional lives of early modern Italians.

In order to improve our understanding of the types of material prayers available to and used by early modern Italians, this thesis discusses primary source material from a wide range of repositories. It collates objects stored in libraries and museum collections with those discovered in archival repositories, including personal family papers, notarial documents and trial records of the Roman Inquisition. In addition, it incorporates material prayers found in archaeological sites and inscribed on extant domestic buildings. Finding primary examples, particularly in written sources, poses a challenge, since catalogue records often do not provide details regarding the content of these types of sources. Many of the objects that originate in museum collections have been relegated to museum stores and often lack information regarding the maker or the place of production, making it difficult to tie practices to local traditions. Further, most of the objects under consideration have only been roughly dated, prohibiting the ability to gauge change over time. As dating methods improve, and the records of these neglected objects are updated, further

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in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David Gaimster (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 206-16.

[17] Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982), 1-19.

[18] Anders Andrén, *Between Artifacts and Texts: Historical Archaeology in Global Perspective* (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 145-78.

[19] 'Introduction' in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Richardson, Hamling, and Gaimster, 3-28; 'Introduction' in *Writing Material Culture History*, ed. by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 1-13.

research might allow us to establish a better understanding of regional differences and a clearer chronology of the changes in practices surrounding the use of material prayers.

Early modern manuscripts and printed books have also been consulted to contextualise these inscribed objects. Sermons, Inquisition trial records, and other archival documents further illuminate the material evidence. Though the thesis focuses primarily on objects and practices from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it also brings sources from the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries into the discussion when they can provide context or further proof of a practice.

Important Themes and Concepts

Before discussing the structure of the thesis, it is important to introduce a few themes and concepts which will be relevant to the subsequent chapters. I will propose how literacy levels affected devotees ability to read, understand, and utilise the various devotional texts that will be discussed. I will then introduce how a certain type of prayer, like *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise*, included instructions, called rubrics, that offer insight into how some prayers were meant to be used. Finally, I will provide an overview of scholarship on the complex terminology and understanding in contemporary culture and in prior scholarship of concepts like 'popular religion', magic and superstition, which have been used to describe many of the objects and practices that the thesis addresses.

The Literacy Spectrum

Who might have read and owned *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise*? Who were the consumers of material prayers in general? Was it important for the person who possessed a material prayer to have reading comprehension? Jacqueline Musacchio has acknowledged that '[t]exts, whether or not they could be read, carried an enormous amount of weight […] the written word was considered both mysterious and powerful by many at this time'.[20]

This thesis argues that devotional words were experienced across a range of levels of literacy. Literacy encompasses those who could only read (ranging from basic understanding to comprehension of complex tracts), and also those who were also able to write (from being numerate, to being able to sign one's name and record basic facts, to those who were prolific writers). Studies of early modern Italian literacy rates have been neither conclusive nor comprehensive. It is difficult to determine literacy statistics for early modern Italy due to lack of evidence. With a lack of a unified language in this period on the Italian peninsula, people communicated in a variety of local vernacular dialects, and also Latin (especially amongst the

[20] Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 142.

upper classes and clergy). Some analysis of various areas of Italy, particularly major cities, has been attempted using statistics gleaned from school enrolment records and the presence of signatures on official documents, but these studies do not consider the vast number of people who probably learned at home, on the job, or in rural communities.[21]

In her work on the prayerful reading habits of early modern Italian devotees, Abigail Brundin has explored how Paul Saenger's terms 'comprehension literacy' and 'phonetic literacy' might be applied to how people read devotional texts in early modern Italy. Devotees might be able to read Latin or the vernacular or use basic knowledge of letters and common words to sound out simple devotional texts. In this manner, they might be able to recognise and understand familiar prayers when they saw them in written form.[22]

That people interacted with letters, words, and texts differently is something that must not be taken for granted. This study will move beyond literary considerations and the official message of Church doctrine to reach a better understanding of how text of a 'religious' nature, encompassing but not limited to holy words, names, abbreviations, prayers, biblical passages, and stories of holy figures, was experienced by people in their devotional activities. It investigates not only prayers officially promoted by the Church, but also studies the ways in which any type of text with religious connotations might be utilised as religiously efficacious. It also considers how devotees from a range of socio-economic backgrounds with varying literacy levels interacted with material manifestations of text. It will explore how such interactions—whether reading, meditating upon, or seeking thaumaturgical and amuletic intercession—facilitated and enhanced devotional activities.

Rubricated Prayers

The text of the printed *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise* also provides further information regarding the text's use and purpose. In the final section of the pamphlet, where the *orazione* of Saint Louis is recorded, the text informs the reader: 'Questa e la oratione de santo

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[21] Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, 'Introduction', in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 1-36. See also: Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), especially 42-47, and 78 for a discussion of male literacy in 1480s Florence (estimated at between 30 and 33%) as well as estimated Venetian rates in the late sixteenth century (about 33% for males and 12-13% for females); for a distinction between those who could read, but not write: Michael T. Clanchy, 'Parchment and Paper: Manuscript Culture 1100-1500', in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 194-206 (205); John K. Hyde, 'Some Uses of Literacy in Venice and Florence in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 29 (1979), 109-28 (113-14) for a discussion of levels of merchant literacy; on women's acquisition of reading and writing skills, particularly in the vernacular, and printed handbooks that facilitated autodidacticism: Helena Sanson, *Women, Language and Grammar in Italy, 1500-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 45-56; on literacy distribution amongst the artisanal classes, see John Jeffries Martin, 'Popular Culture and the Shaping of Popular Heresy in Renaissance Venice', in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Stephen Haliczer (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 115-28 (121-22); Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 108-110; Charles F. Briggs, 'Literacy, Reading, and Writing in the Medieval West', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), 397-420.

[22] Brundin, Howard, and Laven, *The Sacred Home*.

Alouise sopra il mal caducho, la qual chi la lege[g]era sopra a qualunque persona con cinque pater nostri & cinque ave marie a honore de li cinque piaghe de messer Iesu Christo, e con il vangelio di santo Gioanne, e con il passio dil nostro signore sara liberato'.[23] Explanations about the significance and authenticity of the prayer as well as instructions embedded in the text of a prayer book are known as rubrics. In manuscripts and in some printed books, they are often delineated from the main text through the use of red ink. Occasionally rubrics are expressed in the vernacular, while the main text is written in Latin. Rubricated prayers often include details of how the prayer should be read (recited aloud, read over an ill person), if any supplementary prayers should be recited in addition to the prescribed prayer, how the prayer could provide the user with reprieve from purgatory through indulgences, or how the prayer might protect from or cure a malady.[24]

The promises of rubrics prefacing these *orazioni* were viewed by ecclesiastical authorities as suspect because users might employ them with amuletic intent to gain the benefits promised. Of the prayers appearing on the Pauline Index, those commencing with rubrics were amongst the most commonly targeted.[25] These forbidden prayers and their rubrics have received attention from scholars of the Counter-Reformation and Inquisition. They have been considered mainly from the official institutional perspective, while the practices surrounding the use of such objects by people in daily life have mostly been ignored. In this era of reform, Church authorities prohibited prayers with rubrics offering specific protection or assistance, explaining that believing these prayers had agency detracted from pure devotion to saints and their supplicatory abilities, concentrating instead upon 'un valore meramente meccanico e materiale'.[26]

Kathryn Rudy has started to explore the significance of rubrics in medieval Northern Europe, particularly how they instructed devotees to interact with devotional images while reciting the requisite prayers or how they indicated the indulgences earned by the prayer.[27] This thesis, instead, relies upon rubrics as sources that can illuminate how devotees engaged with material prayers themselves, by considering how they encourage devotees to place them in their homes or carry them on their bodies. Rubricated prayers also consider the varying literacy levels of their owners, and often offer suggestions for substitute prayers to recite if the devotee can not read the text (or have someone read it aloud to them).

In addition to presenting how devotees were instructed to interact with these prayers, the rubrics present on some prayers also offer insight into how devotees might engage with similar

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[23] *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise*, c. 4v.
[24] Kathryn Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), particularly 13-24.
[25] Giorgio Caravale, *Orazione proibita: Censura ecclesiastica e letteratura devozionale nella prima età moderna* (Florence: Olschki, 2003), 2, 65, 75-78, 165-66.
[26] Caravale, 165.
[27] Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences*, 3-29.

prayers when they were inscribed on a range of other objects. For example, knowing the rubric that accompanied *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise*, we can better understand how devotees may have interacted with excerpts of Saint Louis of Toulouse's prayer or other references to the Saint inscribed on other objects by keeping them in the home, placing them on the body, or using them as an accompaniment to prayer. Additionally, these rubrics provide us with integral information that might be applied to similarly inscribed objects; in this case, we can propose that other objects referencing Saint Louis may have been imbued with the same protective and healing properties regarding the *mal caduco* by early modern devotees.

(Popular) Religion, Superstition, & Magic

Promises, like that offered by *La vita e leggenda e oratione del glorioso santo Alouise* to be efficacious against the *mal caduco*, may have been interpreted by readers, by Church authorities, and by modern scholars in vastly different ways. Some might view the printed prayer pamphlet and the promises contained within as devotional, while others might view it as an attempt to obtain intervention and protection through magical or superstitious means. Defining the purpose and intent of efficacious and intercessory material prayers in an attempt to categorise them as devotional, superstitious or magical has long been the focus of intense debate.

In the early modern era the term 'superstition' was evolving, and practices and objects deemed superstitious by contemporaries differed greatly depending on individual definitions.[28] Superstition, always closely linked to magic, was a term originally used to describe 'false religion' that relied upon 'recourse to pagan gods or magical techniques'.[29] By the thirteenth century, theologians, such as Saint Thomas Aquinas, defined superstition as an excessive or overzealous practice or ritual that focused intercessory requests on demons rather than God, possibly out of an ignorance of orthodox belief and practice.[30] In the fifteenth-century, theological criticism and regulation focused on how any activity (maleficent or beneficent) that sought to engage with diabolical forces to obtain a goal distinguished magic and superstition from licit religious practices.[31] The definition continued to evolve in the sixteenth century when the emphasis moved away from those who engaged with demons.[32] According to O'Neil, theologians relied on the

[28] For an overview of the development of the definition of 'superstition' from early Christianity to the sixteenth century: Mary O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition: Popular Errors and Orthodox Response in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1982), 10-22.
[29] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 13.
[30] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 14-17.
[31] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 18.
[32] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 19.

definition written by Martino de Arles in the late fifteenth century that 'Superstitio est religio suramondum servata in mods et circumstantiis malis et defectuosis'.[33]

While early Christian reformers sought to define and prohibit devotees from engaging in practices they deemed magical and/or superstitious, it was not until the period of Catholic Reformation that the Council of Trent set forth stricter definitions and regulations for adherents to the Catholic faith that were then enforced in trials of the Roman Inquisition.[34] As Mary O'Neil notes regarding the Modenese trials she studied, 'no Inquisitor cited a formal definition of superstition in the course of these trials, Arles' formula does apply to those charms which include religious elements, such as orthodox prayers, invocation of saints, or blessed objects used outside the context prescribed by the Church'.[35] This thesis, instead, will consider any material prayers that include 'religious elements, orthodox prayers, invocation of saints, or blessed objects' as devout from the perspective of the devotees who used them even if it also contained elements that might be described as magical. For the purposes of this thesis magical will be defined as images, words, signs and symbols not associated with Christianity or other organised religions, but with other supernatural forces. It will also explore material prayers created or used with an intent that might have been deemed 'superstitious' by contemporary authorities, and may occasionally reference this terminology to describe the material prayers and practices surrounding them.

The designations of devotional, superstitious and magical and their role within what has been termed 'popular religion' that have been the focus of intense scholarly debate since the days of early Christianity have continued in modern scholarship. David Gentilcore explains how scholars have tried to differentiate these practices 'depending on whether a given act had mechanical efficacy (considered magical) or relied on the intervention of the divine (therefore religious)'.[36] Gentilcore also acknowledges the problem with these types of definitions and categorisations: 'given that so-called magical invocations often gained their efficacy through recourse to saints, and that many religious rituals and devotions were assumed to have automatic effectiveness, it is difficult to maintain this distinction.'[37] Regarding devotional acts of writing, Véronique Plesch has argued that

> the practice of writing prayers on books kept in shrines, or even prayers written directly on devotional objects belong to what Joseph-Claude Poulin terms the "marginal uses of writing," phenomena between religion and magic in which a

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[33] Martino de Arles, *Tractatus de superstitionibus* (Rome, 1559), f. 354 cited in O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 20, note 24.
[34] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 19.
[35] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 20.
[36] David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 10.
[37] Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 10.

> text is endowed with a function additional to its primary one of recording or transmitting information.[38]

Many of the material prayers discussed in this thesis may be interpreted as 'marginal uses of writing', having been inscribed or later employed with intent that may be considered somewhere between religion and magic, or devotion and superstition. This thesis moves away from distinctive categorisations of religious, magical, superstitious to explore how early modern Italians interacted with and placed their faith in devotional words that were written, printed, engraved, or painted on a variety of textual supports.

Many, but not all, of the practices and objects discussed throughout this thesis might be ascribed to the field of the history of popular religion. Like the intertwined terms of magic, religion, and superstition, the term 'popular religion' can be both useful and difficult to define and use. Natalie Zemon Davis, Carlo Ginzburg, Mary O'Neil, and others explain that while the term 'popular religion' might be employed to refer to beliefs and practices of Christians outside of the official sanctioned examples provided by the Church, it is a problematic term that often has been applied with derogatory implications to refer to the religious practices of the 'ignorant' lower socio-economic classes.[39] Explaining the state of scholarship regarding the categorization of beliefs, objects and devotional practices Natalie Zemon Davis notes

> [h]istorians of popular religion in Europe have often proceeded as if their most important task were to separate the grain from the chaff. Not to winnow souls, but beliefs and rites: they distinguish between beliefs and practises [*sic*] that are "truly" religious and those which are "superstitious" and/or "magic".[40]

In order to move beyond this tendency of scholars of religious practices, this thesis will not attempt to maintain a distinction, but will blur the lines between the dichotomies of magic and religion, superstitious and devotional practice. While the terms will still appear throughout, the focus will move away from categorisation towards a broader understanding of these complex and multifaceted objects and practices. Moreover, this thesis will argue, as the above scholars and others have, that the complex range of practices, beliefs, and devotional objects oft associated with 'popular religion' were not the preserve of one facet of society, and instead were embraced in various ways by devotees across the socio-economic spectrum.

To convey how devotees engaged with and relied upon material prayers, this thesis considers both the ecclesiastically-approved popular practices, those belonging to the sphere of unorthodox popular devotion, and those falling somewhere on the spectrum between permissible and forbidden in the eyes of the authorities. Following in the path of recent scholarship on the

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[38] Véronique Plesch, 'Destruction or Preservation? The Meaning of Graffiti on Paintings in Religious Sites', in *Art, Piety and Destruction in the Christian West, 1500-1700*, ed. by Virginia Chieffo Raguin (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 137-72 (159).

[39] Carlo Ginzburg, 'Premessa giustificativa', *Quaderni storici*, 4: Religioni delle classi popolari, ed. by Carlo Ginzburg (1979): 393-97; Zemon Davis, 'Some Tasks and Themes', 307-09; O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 26-27.

[40] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. by Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 306-36 (307).

religious practices of ordinary people, it will emphasise how holy words were viewed and used by devotees rather than relying upon early modern ecclesiastical perspectives or attempting to categorise these material prayers, beliefs, and practices as magical or superstitious.[41]

Carlo Ginzburg's study of the extraordinary beliefs of the Fruilian miller Menocchio has emphasised the great complexity of Renaissance religious life and the vast gulf between Church-sanctioned doctrines and practices and those understood by the laity and applied to their devotion.[42] Ginzburg's approach to presenting Menocchio's beliefs and those of the *benandanti* from their own perspective, through their own words as preserved in Inquisition trials, is key to understanding devotion as practiced by the people. Following in this tradition of 'history from below', rather than categorising objects and practices discussed in the following chapters as religious, superstitious, or magical, this thesis will instead attempt to view material prayers and the practices associated with them from the perspective of the people who owned and used them.[43]

Chapter Outline

The first half of this thesis focuses upon the devotee's body as a site of textual devotion. Chapter One considers how texts written on traditional supports—paper and parchment—were carried on the devotee's body, often in pouches worn around the neck, as reminders of their faith and for easy access during prayer. These material prayers, often referred to as *brevi*, were also carried on or placed in contact with devotees' bodies with amuletic intent, to procure apotropaic, protective, or intercessory benefits. Chapter Two concentrates on the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Christ. It considers paper examples, which were employed like the *brevi* discussed in the previous chapter, as well as more decorative uses of the Sacred Monogram in the form of objects of adornment, particularly clothing and jewellery. Chapter Three continues with the concept of wearing devotional text and discusses objects inscribed with other prayers, holy words, and names, meant to be worn on the body as devotional aids and protective devices. It analyses garments, such as girdles, as well as other objects of adornment, predominantly rings and necklace pendants.

Part Two focuses upon the space of the home as a place of textual devotion. Beginning with the home as a physical space, in Chapter Four the entryway is discussed as a point of transition into the domestic sphere. This chapter considers the role of devotional inscriptions placed on or near the threshold of domestic buildings, focusing on examples in the Marche

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[41] For discussions of scholars' efforts to move away from dichotomies of religion vs magic/superstition, see Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*, 134; and John R. Decker, "'Practical Devotion": Apotropaism and the Protection of the Soul', in *The Authority of the Word: Reflecting on Image and Text in Northern Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. by Celeste Brusati, Karl A.E. Enenkel, and Walter S. Melion, Intersections, 20 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012) 357-83 (360-61).

[42] Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi;* and Ginzburg, *I benandanti*.

[43] On presenting the history from the perspective of common people, see: Jim Sharpe, 'History from Below', in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. by Peter Burke, 2nd edn (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 25-42.

region, which have never been studied before from a devotional standpoint. The final chapter moves from the entryway into the home itself, considering the use of text to adorn the interior. It considers the writing of text on the walls as well as the use of objects hung on or embedded in the walls, such as paintings and ceramic plaques. Picking up threads regarding printed materials in Part One, this section also discusses single-sheet prints that were intended for display in the home rather than the personal protection of the wearer's body.

PART I: ON THE BODY

CHAPTER ONE

Wear it With Devotion: Physical Engagement with Material Prayers

Paper & Parchment Prayers to Saint Julian: A Case Study

A small piece of a rectangular parchment (measuring 17 x 25 cm) now stored in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze is covered with text written in black ink punctuated with red cross symbols (Figure 1.1). The text is divided by a large cross with floriated ends, a shape known as a *croce gigliata*, drawn in red ink and embellished with yellow and black.[44] An image of Christ's face is drawn where the bars of the cross intersect. Inscribed in red ink across the top, the words 'Or[ati]o Sa[n] Juliani' seem to indicate the content of the text that covers the sheet's surface. Further investigation of the textual, visual, and material components of this piece of parchment reveals that it functioned as much more than a manuscript recording a prayer dedicated to Saint Julian.

As implied by the title, the text begins with the Latin prayer: 'Deus qui beato iuliano [con]fessore tuo atasti co[n]cede nobis eius meritis et intercession, hospitum securum bonum et idoneum, fragilitati nostre congruum et maiestati tue acceptum: per Christum dominum nostrum. + Amen'.[45] Variations of a prayer to Saint Julian, often referred to as the 'Paternoster di San Giuliano', were common in medieval and early modern Italy, but the textual content of this example does not resemble other known versions.[46] After this brief prayer acknowledging the intercessory power of Saint Julian to procure safe lodging for travellers, which concludes with an invocation to Christ, the subsequent text does not mention Saint Julian again, despite the title.

A variety of holy words, including names of saints and angels, biblical excerpts, and popular prayers cover the remainder of the sheet. Immediately following the prayer to Saint Julian is a request to 'Domine Deus, Deus Abraam. + Deus Isaac + et Deus Jacob' to 'propitius esto mihi peccatori et custos mei omnibus diebus et horis vite mee', which is derived from the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in Luke (18:10-14). The first words of the 'Deus propitius' prayer might be written alone or included in a longer prayer thought to have been given to Saint Augustine by the Holy Spirit. It would be familiar to devotees as part of the antiphon used during vespers on the tenth and twelfth Sunday following Pentecost. As an intercessory prayer, it was believed to offer protection and to foster the virtue of humility. It was often included as an accessory text in books of hours, and many devotional manuals

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[44] Marcella Oberziner, 'Il Paternoster di S. Giuliano', *Lares*, 4 (1933), 10-25 (23).
[45] 'Oratio sancti Juliani', transcribed in Oberziner, 23-24.
[46] See Oberziner.

recommended that the prayer be recited after each hour to obtain forgiveness for sin.[47] Another passage paraphrased from Luke describing the Circumcision and Naming of Jesus is also included (2:21). Other devotional texts inscribed on the BNCF Saint Julian prayer sheet request protection from enemies and for general protection everyday: 'salva me in omni tempore et in omnibus diebus vite mee'. It also includes the prayer, 'Mentem sanctam spontaneam honorem Deo patrie et liberationem', a phrase linked to Saint Agatha, which offers protection from storms and earthquakes, and was often inscribed on objects, church bells, and buildings.[48] The text concludes with a line of gratitude: 'Deo gratias. Amen. Amen. Amen. Jesus Christus'.[49]

While the assemblage of prayers, invocations, Gospel passages, and holy names is seemingly random, the material qualities of this manuscript may indicate its use. The drawing of Christ's Face on the Cross references Veronica's Veil, a relic that was impressed with the image of Christ's face.[50] The text is also peppered with red ink crosses, perhaps indicating where the Sign of the Cross should be made by the devotee as the prayer contemplated or recited. The small sheet of parchment also shows evidence of folding, perhaps to make it easier to store or carry.

Another prayer sheet, also dedicated to Saint Julian, offers further indications about the potential uses and meaning of the BNFC parchment prayer. Entitled 'El pater noster de san Guiliano', the prayer is printed on a sheet of paper along with a woodcut image of the saint (Figure 1.2). Like the parchment example, worn marks indicate that it was once folded. This printed prayer was found with two other prayer sheets (one printed and one manuscript) in a tomb in the Chiesa di San Francesco in Viterbo that was damaged during World War II. These three prayer sheets were folded into a rectangle and were placed in a cloth bag suspended around the neck of the deceased by a hemp cord. Giulio Battelli discovered this devotional ensemble along with Professor Emilio Lavagnino as they assessed the damage to the church, focusing on the tomb of the thirteenth-century cardinal, Vicedomini. The prayers were found on one of five mummified bodies interred near the tomb of the cardinal.[51] Battelli noted that the body still held 'un vago odore di aromi' and was dressed in remnants of a Spanish-style gown, that appeared to be made of velvet.[52]

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[47] Elizabeth Towl, "'Faictes ma chetiue ame tender a ioyeuse felicite": The Illuminations and Prayers of Dunedin Public Libraries, Reed Fragment 60', in *Migrations: Medieval Manuscipts in New Zealand*, ed. by Stephanie Hollis and Alexandra Barratt (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 247-67 (252-53).
[48] Chiara Frugoni and Arsenio Frugoni, *Storia di un giorno in una città medievale* (Rome: Laterza, 2011), 45.
[49] 'Oratio sancti Juliani', transcribed in Oberziner, 23-24.
[50] See also: Irene Galandra Cooper, 'Plate 58. Crucifixion above a prayer against earthquake and sudden death', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 58-59.
[51] Giulio Battelli, 'Tre "brevi" devozionali del '500. Un nuovo testo del *Pater Noster* di San Giuliano', in *Miscellanea di studi marchigiani in onore di Febo Allevi*, ed. by Gianfranco Paci (Agugliano: Bagalioni, 1987), 23-43 (24).
[52] Spanish fashion was most popular in Italy from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century: Gabriel Guarino, 'The Reception of Spain and its Values in Habsburg Naples: A Reassessment', in *Exploring Cultural History: Essays in Honour of Peter Burke*, ed. by Melissa Calaresu, Filippo de Vivo, and Joan-Pau Rubiés (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 93-112 (107-08); Battelli, 24.

Unlike the earlier manuscript example, this version of the Saint Julian prayer bears many similarities to others in circulation throughout the medieval and early modern era, as it references the story of how Julian committed patricide and matricide unknowingly, but later redeemed himself through good deeds and hospitality.[53] Customarily, the 'Paternoster of Saint Julian' was meant to assist travellers in finding safe lodging and to protect them during their travels.[54] Below this prayer to Saint Julian, another text is printed along with an image of Saint John the Evangelist writing the first words of his Gospel, 'In principio [erat verbum]'. This second prayer is entitled 'Breve de Ioan[ni] [co]ntra ogni maligno sp[irit]o diabolico'. The term used here, '*breve*', refers to a type of material prayer meant to be worn on the body as a sign of devotion, but more importantly as a prophylactic, protective, or intercessory device. *Brevi* took their name from their brief texts often composed of prayers, biblical phrases, and holy names interspersed with symbols such as crosses, and were often referred to as *brevi da portare addosso*. According to definitions of these objects, the paper or parchment *breve* would be folded and sealed or sewn shut, a requirement to preserve the efficacy of the text. It would then be placed in a pouch or other portable container and worn on the body, usually around the neck. While the strict definition of a *breve* indicated that it should be sealed in a permanent way so that its contents remained protected and unseen even by the wearer, in practice people may have also engaged with what they considered *brevi* in a more active way: they may have carried texts in pouches on their body for protection, but also perhaps for ease of consultation during prayer.

In addition to the Saint Julian prayer, the other printed sheet (14.2 x 11.3 cm) included in the Viterbo devotional ensemble contains both prayers and images. It too includes an image of Saint John the Evangelist writing with his attribute, the Eagle, accompanied by the first four lines of his Gospel, known as the incipit, a popular devotional text to be recited, copied, and used for general protection; it was often used as the opening passage in books of hours and was inscribed on paintings.[55] This second text in the ensemble found in Viterbo also contains the prayer known as the 'Anima Christi' with a note promising an indulgence of 2,000 years offered by Pope Boniface as well as words from Psalm 90, and the note that they are efficacious 'contra omnia adversa'. Battelli also records that a small square of paper (1.5 cm) imprinted with a variation of the Monogram of Christ (*VHS*) set in a circle was pasted onto this prayer sheet.[56] The third example was written on paper with a watermark and the handwriting was tentatively dated by Battelli to the period between 1576 and 1584, aligning with the style of dress found on the body. When it was analysed by Battelli, the ink was nearly illegible, but he noted that the text was

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[53] Oberziner, 10.
[54] Battelli, 30.
[55] Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 88.
[56] Battelli, 27.

punctuated by crosses like the BNCF example and was written in both Latin and the vernacular. It began with the names 'ihs maria augustinus […] [Ies]us xpus marie filius + al nome del padre del filio e dello spirit santo, al nome di dio', and included invocations to the saints and angels, healing prayers, as well as the familiar 'kirielesion + chriseleison+' and concluded with the words 'Amen Amen Amen'.[57]

The two prayers to Saint Julian as well as the others that accompanied the Viterbese example raise questions regarding prayers that were meant to be worn on the body by devotees. Manuscript and print, with images, symbols, and texts that were written in both Latin and the vernacular, these prayer sheets illustrate the variety of prayers available to devotees to wear for protection and devotion from the fourteenth through to the sixteenth centuries. This chapter will explore how devotees possessed and engaged with personal, portable, protective prayers in their everyday lives by analysing examples found in a range of contexts—from libraries to burial sites—to develop a comprehensive understanding of how people ascribed agency to humble sheets of paper and parchment inscribed with holy words.

Portable Protective Prayers

Scholars have worked to define and categorise the various types of prayers meant to be worn on the body as amulets. In many cases, studies of these objects have engaged with only one type of documentation, such as literature or trial documents, leading the writer to adopt the terminology used in the source, often affected by genre-specific jargon, while also relying upon modern categorisation. The following section will trace the historiographical development of the scholarship on the terminology for these types of objects, focusing specifically on literature related to their use on the Italian peninsula.

The use of talismans in the form of text written on parchment or paper was not a new tradition, but one that can be traced back to ancient origins. Amuletic texts were employed in the earliest literate civilizations of the Italian peninsula; however, this study will focus upon on how the tradition persisted in Italy.[58] While this use of text for protection and intercession was not purely an Italian phenomenon, the practice's popularity on the Italian peninsula from the late medieval through early modern period is evident from a variety of sources, including extant examples and contemporary accounts. However, limited scholarly attention has been focused upon their existence and use in early modern Italy, particularly within the devotional context of daily domestic life. In scholarship of medieval and early modern Italy, a material prayer of this

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[57] Battelli, 27.

[58] Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis, for an overview of the ancient and early Christian uses of amulets, particularly those of a textual nature: John L. Crow, 'Miracle or Magic? The Problematic Status of Christian Amulets', in *Van Discussie tot Beleving: Religiestudies aan de UvA (From Discussion to Experience: Religious Studies at the University of Amsterdam)*, ed. by Jacqueline Braak and Deirdre Malone (Amsterdam: Ars Notoria/University of Amsterdam, 2009), 97-112 (98-102); Skemer, *Binding Words*, 23-58.

nature might be described as not only a *breve* (alternatively *brieve*, *brevia,* or *brevuccio*), but also by the other vernacular terms *bolla*,[59] *lettera di preghiera*, *lettera di scongiurio*, *scongiurio*, *segreto*, *rivelazione*, *orazione*, *legatura*, or Latin *brevis*, *portato brevis*, *charta*, *chartula*, *cedula*, *phylacterium* (alt. sp. *filaterium*), or *ligatura*.[60] As the ensuing discussion will demonstrate, the range of Italian and Latin terms often overlapped to describe similar objects inscribed with religious texts and symbols in medieval and early modern usage. This chapter will focus less on categorization, and instead direct its attention to understanding how these texts were consumed by ordinary people across the socio-economic spectrum.

Links can be drawn to the *tefillin*, used by Jewish devotees, in which a small strip of parchment inscribed with a phrase from the Torah (Exodus 13:1-10 or 13:11-16, or Deuteronomy 6:4-9 or 11:13-21) is placed in a leather box that is wound around the left arm with a leather tie. *Tefillin* functioned as *aide-mémoires* and were based upon the passage in Deuteronomy 11:18: 'Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be frontlets between your eyes'.[61] Morgan proposes that engaging in prayer while wearing the *tefillin* 'constitutes the material way of practicing the religion as something one feels in one's flesh'.[62]

Amuletic texts have been discussed in literary analyses and in scholarship on popular magic and medicine. In his comprehensive study of late medieval Europe, Don Skemer utilises the term 'textual amulet' to refer to

> brief apotropaic texts, handwritten or mechanically printed on separate sheets, rolls, and scraps of paper, parchment, or other flexible writing supports of varying dimensions […] worn around the neck or placed elsewhere on the body [with an] […] ever-changing potpourri of scriptural quotations, divine names, common prayers, liturgical formulas, Christian legends and apocrypha, narrative charms, magical seals and symbols, and other textual elements.[63]

Franco Cardini's study of Tuscan literature has noted the differences between two distinct objects, the *breve* and the *preghiera-scongiuro*, which both fall under Skemer's broader category of 'textual amulets'. While both could be worn on the body as protective devices, Cardini explains that a *breve* contains a 'brief' textual formula kept secret from the user and all others by folding,

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[59] The terms *bolla* and *breve* should not be confused with other uses of these terms to refer to two types of documents issued by the Pontificate, Papal Briefs and Papal Bulls: Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the 'Privilegio' in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), xxx; Marco Ferro, *Dizionario del diritto comune e Veneto*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Venice: Andrea Santini e Figlio, 1843), I, 275-77.

[60] These terms derive from the following sources, but also from my own research: Skemer, *Binding Words*, 9-19; Franco Cardini, 'Il "breve" (secoli XIV-XV): tipologia e funzione', *La Ricerca Folklorica*, 5 (1982), 63-73; Laura Roveri, 'Scritture magiche. Brevi, lettere di scongiuro, libri di *secreti* nei processi inquisitoriali emiliano-romagnoli del Cinque e Seicento', *Chronica Mundi*, 1 (2011), 2-32.

[61] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 11-12.

[62] David Morgan, 'The Material Culture of Lived Religion: Visuality and Embodiment', in *Mind and Matter: Selected Papers of Nordik 2009 Conference*, ed. by Johanna Vakkari, Studies in Art History, 41 (Helsinki: Helsingfors, 2010), 14-31 (16).

[63] While this chapter focuses purely on Italian examples, for an in-depth discussion of the various terms in use across medieval Europe which fall under Skemer's term 'textual amulet', see: Skemer, *Binding words*, 1-19.

rolling, and perhaps even sewing or sealing so that its contents could not be read or even seen.[64] Conversely, the *preghiera-scongiuro*, an apotropaic prayer, might contain longer prayer or spells, and could instead be worn, but also read, recited, or meditated upon.[65] Laura Roveri further distinguishes between *lettere di preghiera* and *lettere di scongiuro*, longer prayers or repetitive lists of the formulae found in *brevi*. *Lettere di preghiera* could feature content deriving from a wide range of sources, such as the Name of Christ displayed in various languages and representative symbols, or excerpts from the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of John. Prayers (*orazioni*) deemed particularly efficacious, such as the *Preghiera di Carlo Magno*, *Carta di ben volere* or *I santi nomi,* may also have been selected. Additionally, pericopes, citations from holy texts that had been condensed into a single memorable phrase, were utilized in *lettere di preghiera*.[66] *Lettere di scongiuro* strayed from the religious nature of *lettere di pregheira* by incorporating designs that belonged to the supernatural sphere, such as magic circles, pentacles, symbols, and seals, invented words or textual formulas in exotic languages (Latin, Greek, Arabic). These symbols often derived from sources such as the *Clavicula Salomonis* or other grimoires, astrological, or alchemical texts. However, *lettere di scongiuro* could also incorporate Christian symbols, such as crosses, biblical formulae or the Names of God. Additionally, they could employ pseudo-Christian contents such as the names or signs of angels and demons. In contrast to the secretive *brevi*, Roveri suggests that the inherent power of both types of *lettere* would not only be enhanced by reading, but also by memorizing the text so that it could be recited.[67]

Texts which may not have been created to function as wearable prayers may also have been employed by various users as such. For instance, generic prayers (*orazioni*) may have been considered efficacious by certain people, and physical copies of these texts may have been employed for amuletic purposes. Besides the common prayers, like the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster*, invocations to specific saints, such as patron saints, namesakes, or those saints associated with certain illnesses, could also take on such a role in the popular piety of devotees. Prayers targeted as superstitious by the Counter-Reformation authorities included those whose intent went beyond the spiritual connection with the divine and instead sought to assist in the procurement of some earthly desire, whether it be healing, fortune, or love.[68]

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[64] Cardini, 63; Marina Montesano, *"Supra acque et supra ad vento": "superstizioni", maleficia e incantamenta nei predicatori francescani osservanti (Italia, sec. XV)*, Nuovi studi storici, 46 (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1999), 81.
[65] Cardini, 63.
[66] The *Preghiera di Carlo Magno* was also known as the *Devotione mandata a Carlo Magno da papa Leone da portar adosso*: Roveri, 'Scritture magiche', 3-8.
[67] Roveri, 'Scritture magiche', 8-9.
[68] See the story of the Modenese prostitute accused by the Roman Inquisition of hiring a printer to print a superstitious prayer to win a man's heart: Maria Pia Fantini, 'La circolazione clandestina dell'orazione di Santa Marta: un episodio modenese', in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo. Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. by Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia et Letteratura, 1996), 45-65. On this case, see also: O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 179-90.

The multiple modern definitions of these terms lead us to believe that they were distinct objects, as they may have been in the medieval and early modern understanding; however, surviving documentary evidence suggests a slippage in terminology. Bringing a range of sources—literary accounts, archival documents (family papers, notarial accounts, pawn records, inventories), trial records, as well as an analysis of extant examples from archaeological contexts and those found in museum and library collections—into the discussion allows us to develop a more comprehensive picture of the use of, rather than the semantics of, these objects.

While these objects had long been employed by both men and women across Europe, those used by Renaissance Italians have been misunderstood. Focusing on the magical and heretical aspects of amuletic texts has caused their Christian content and context to be largely ignored or underplayed. Acknowledging how textual amulets functioned 'as a renewable source of Christian empowerment that […] promised safe passage through a precarious world', Skemer mostly focuses on amulets which were 'assembled materially and used physically to exploit and enhance the magical efficacy of words'.[69] Many modern scholars rely largely on the categorisations of contemporary theologians in their understanding of these *brevi* as 'magical' and 'superstitious'.[70] Further, while scholars of superstition and magic have utilized Inquisitorial records to highlight the unorthodox and inappropriate nature of reliance upon such objects, they fail to fully consider the popular contemporary interpretation of these objects that such trial records also reveal.[71]

This chapter argues instead that these material prayers should be considered alongside other devotional apotropaic objects—both sanctioned and unsanctioned—that devotees relied upon for comfort, aid, and divine intercession. It discusses texts that incorporate any religious words, images or symbols, even those that might traditionally have been deemed magical by Church officials or modern scholars for additional content that strays from Christian norms or made with what institutional perspectives might consider superstitious intent.[72] In doing so, it emphasises how physical engagement with devotional text functioned as a facet of devotion. While not completely disengaging from the 'magical' aspects of some of these practices and texts, it seeks to divorce the narratives of these objects from the superstitious/magical realm where

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[69] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 1.
[70] Montesano, 80-87.
[71] For example, see O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition'; Mary O'Neil, '*Sacerdote ovvero strione*: Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in 16th Century Italy', in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 53-83; Mary O'Neil, 'Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-century Modena', in *Inquisition and Society*, ed. by Haliczer, 88-114; Fantini, 'La circolazione clandestina'; Maria Pia Fantini, 'Saggio per un catalogo bibliografico dai processi dell'Inquisizione: orazioni, scongiuri, libri di segreti (Modena 1571-1608)', *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* (1999), 587-668; Maria Pia Fantini, 'Tra poesia e magia: Antiche formule di scongiuro (Secoli XVI-XVII)', *Studi Storici*, 46 (2005), 749-69.
[72] See Introduction, pp. 10-13 for a discussion of the terms magical and superstition in relation to prior scholarship as well as how they are used in this thesis.

they were relegated by authorities of the time (and by modern scholars), to develop a more complex understanding of their nature and how they were perceived by the people who relied upon them to obtain Divine intercession, protection, and spiritual solace. While this chapter occasionally will acknowledge elements that may be considered 'magical' or 'superstitious', it will primarily focus on content deemed to be Christian and the role of these objects in the devotional lives of many people.

Early Modern Understanding of the 'Breve'

Material prayers on the traditional textual supports—paper and parchment—were valued by early modern devotees for their ability to function as devotional tools and as protective devices. For the purposes of clarity in this chapter, any folded paper or parchment prayer sheets intended to be worn on the body as well as the pouches they were worn in will be referred to as *brevi*. Rather than relying on the strict definition in which the prayers needed to be sealed to be efficacious, the term *breve* will be used to discuss prayers that may have been referred to as *lettere di preghiera*, *rivelazione* and *scongiure* as well as *orazioni* and *preghierie* by contemporaries.

This chapter will therefore rely upon the general use of the term *breve* throughout the early modern era to refer to objects kept in pouches, including the types of prayers listed above. Therefore, in the following chapters the term *breve* may be applied to material prayers that were sealed in pouches as well as those that may have been worn on the body, possibly in a similar manner, but were accessible to devotees for devotional consultation. Throughout the following analyses of the selected *brevi*, textual, visual and material clues as well as contextualising information offer insight into the possible intended purpose of individual examples and possibly how they were employed by individuals in practice. However, it is not always possible to definitively determine if the devotees who engaged with these *brevi* examples kept them sealed on their bodies or opened them to use in their devotions.

Early modern definitions display the multi-layered cotemporary understanding of the term *breve*, and reveal why it is a suitable overarching category to describe the variety of wearable prayers discussed in this chapter. The 1552 *Il dittionario di Ambrogio Calepino dalla lingua latina nella volgare brevemente ridotto* includes two definitions for the term *breve* which are relevant to understanding the complex perception and use of these objects in early modern Italy. One provides the simple explanation: 'Breve alle volte dinota scrittura picciola'. While this definition speaks only of a brief text, it nuances the use of the term by citing Boccaccio's use, 'Dratti il cuore di toccarla conun [*sic*] breve, ch'io ti darò', which denotes a connection between this type of text and the body. The second definition offers a more evocative explanation of an amuletic text to be worn on the body, though it does not mention devotional content: 'Breve da portare al

collo contra i cantesimi, & fatture. Amuletum'.[73] However, the first edition of the *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca* (1612) emphasises the pious role of the 'brieve e breve', explaining that it is a 'piccola scrittura cucíta, in che che si sia, che si porta al collo, per devozione. Lat. Amuletum', again citing the aforementioned passage from Boccaccio and adding the description of a sealed object to earlier definitions.[74]

If *brevi* remained sealed, according to their strict definition, their contents often would be unknown to the wearer, and they might include extraneous and illicit substances. Some *brevi* contained substances that might have been considered relics or other more 'superstitious' materials, like magnets.[75] By interrogating the materiality and contents of these *brevi* as well as accounts of use by ordinary people, this chapter will attempt to analyse these objects and practices from the perspective of those who placed their faith in their power to alleviate everyday worries and to avoid monumental disasters.

Extant examples reveal something of both the types of wearable containers used to hold these material prayers as well as the components kept inside. During a routine pre-restoration analysis begun in 2008 in the Chiesa della Conversione di San Paolo Apostolo, which overlooks the small village of Roccapelago di Pievepelago in the mountainous Apennine region between Bologna and Modena, a team of archaeologists discovered about 280 bodies in various states of natural mummification.[76] Unearthed along with the hoard of mummified remains in the long-forgotten crypt beneath the church floor, a plain cloth *breve* pouch, probably made of linen, contained a small, simple religious medallion and a piece of paper whose text is no longer visible, and was suspended from the wearer's neck by a cord of the same textile (Figure 1.3).[77]

Alessia Meneghin's study of early modern Marchigian pawn records reveals a variety of materials used to make *brevi* pouches.[78] In 1588 Nicolo d'Agnussio pawned 'due brevi di lino', which probably resembled the example found in Roccapelago.[79] Other entries in the pawn records reveal the different coloured fabrics, decorative elements, and more luxurious materials

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[73] Ambrogio Calepino, *Il dittionario di Ambrogio Calepino dalla lingva latina nella volgare brevemente ridotto* (San Luca: al Segno del Diamante, 1552), c. 36v.

[74] *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca con tre indici delle voci, locuzioni, e prouerbi Latini, e Greci, posti per entro l'Opera* (Venice: Giovanni Alberti, 1612), 132.

[75] On superstitions regarding magnets and religious blessings: O'Neil, 'Magical Healing', 102-03.

[76] Mirko Traversari and Vania Milani, 'Quadri paleopatologici nelle fonti documentarie: il caso di Roccapelago e i suoi registri dei morti', in *Pagani e cristiani: forme e attestazioni di religiosità del monto antica in Emilia*, 11 (Florence: All'Insignia del Giglio, 2012), 171-78 (171); Giorgio Gruppioni, Donato Labate, Luca Mercuri, et al., 'Gli scavi della Chiesa di San Paolo di Roccapelago nell'Appennino modenese. La cripta con i corpi mummificati naturalmente', in *Pagani e cristiani: forme e attestazioni di religiosità del monto antica in Emilia*, 10 (Florence: All'Insignia del Giglio, 2011), 219-45 (219).

[77] Donato Labate, 'Documenti cartacei tra le mummie della cripta cimiteriale della chiesa di S. Paolo di Roccapelago-Pievepelago (MO)', *Quarderni Estensi*, 4 (2012), 259-65 (262-63) <http://www.quaderniestensi.beniculturali.it/qe4/23_QE4_contributi_labate_labellarte.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2016].

[78] I am grateful to Alessia Meneghin for sharing the results of her research in the Marchigian Monte di Pietà and her forthcoming article with me: Alessia Meneghin, 'Fonti per la storia della devozione popolare nelle Marche (XV-XVI secc.), I registri dei pegni nelle serie dei Monti di Pietà', *Richerche storiche*, 47 (2017), 5-24 .

[79] Nicolo d'Agnussio, 1588, Jesi, Monte di Pietà, busta AAC, VII, 210, 27v, cited in Meneghin.

used, such as an entry regarding Antonmaria Cucullo, who pawned 'due brevi lavorati a filo d'oro' in 1594, with the detail that one was 'rosso a cuore con un crocifissio'—the Crucifix was probably embroidered with the gold thread on the heart-shaped pouch, emphasising the connection between Christ's Heart and wearing the object next to one's own heart.[80] The objects with which the *brevi* were pawned were often devotional in nature, further emphasising that both their wearers and the officials of the Monte viewed these objects as acceptable devotional accessories. For example, in 1592 Rocco di Cesare pawned 'un breve di velluto negro' along with two brass Crucifixes and two tiny black crosses; although he redeemed the pawn, he returned to pawn the black velvet *breve* and the two brass Crucifixes in 1599.[81] In 1603 Paolo di Giovanni Bonafede pawned 'un collo di coralli con un breve di drappo verde attaccato'; besides serving as a decorative accessory, the coral of the necklace to which the *breve* was attached also functioned as a symbol of Christ's Passion, its reddish colour representing Christ's Blood. Coral, often worn by children and young women, was a substance also associated with general protection and safe childbirth, and its presence would have increased the apotropaic value of the *breve*.[82] The range of materials—from velvet to linen—indicates a practical side to the creation of these devotional sachets as people probably used scraps of clothing or furnishing textiles, ensuring that even small pieces of expensive fabric had a purpose.

As the poor of society were pawning their various *brevi*, the rich wore sumptuous examples. An account of the entry of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, into Naples in November 1535 records the luxurious garments he wore. In addition to a gilded sword and hat adorned with pearls and a feather, Charles wore the insignia of the Golden Fleece suspended from a black silk ribbon around his neck, a symbol of his chivalric royalty. Despite this pomp and circumstance, the chronicler also provides details of another important accessory: 'Sotto lo sajone teneva una catena con un breve pieno di orazioni, e il borsetto di detto breve era di broccatello inaurato ad 11 fila, dove erano cositi certi pezzi d'ogni della gran bestia contro il mal caduco.

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[80] Antonmaria Cucullo, 7/12/1594, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 2, 74v. Until the seventeenth century, when devotion to the Sacred Heart developed, the focus was upon the pierced heart of Christ, often representing the side wound of the *Five Wounds of Christ*: Johanna Fassl, *Sacred Eloquence: Giambattista Tiepolo and the Rhetoric of the Altarpieces* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 187-89; Shannon Gayk, 'Early Modern Afterlives of the *Arma Christi*', in *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture, with a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle'*, ed. by Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 273-307 (288-89).

[81] Rocco di Cesare, 14/12/1592, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 2, 25v and Rocco di Cesare, 2/3/1599, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 2, 167v, cited in Meneghin.

[82] It appears that others also pawned *brevi* and coral together (see Giorgio Greco, 6/7/1594, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 191, 47v): Paolo di Giovanni Bonafede, 12/2/1603, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 325, 48v, cited in Meneghin, 'Fonti per la storia'. On coral, see: Jaqueline Marie Musacchio, 'Lambs, Coral, Teeth, and the Intimate Intersection of Religion and Magic in Renaissance Tuscany', in *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 296 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 139-56 (151-53); Irene Galandra Cooper and Dora Thornton, 'Plate 129. Coral pendant, 16th century' in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 134-35.

Detto breve toccava le carni'.[83] Suspended from a chain, the lavishly brocaded *breve* pouch was 'filled with prayers as well as pieces of a great beast'. The designation 'gran bestia' possibly refers to the elk, which was commonly referred to by this term in the early modern era.[84] The 'claws' of the 'gran bestia' were believed to be imbued with special powers; as the account notes, the Holy Roman Emperor's amuletic pouch was considered efficacious against the *mal caduco*.[85] The account also emphasises how the pouch filled with prayers came in direct contact with the skin. The chronicler does not question or show concern that the Emperor's *breve* contained both prayers as well as a superstitious substance.

While jewellery with devotional inscriptions will be considered in Chapter Three, *brevi* might also be related to other devotional objects meant to be worn on the body. The pouches were probably worn under the wearer's outer garments so that they were close to the skin. Early modern portraits occasionally depict devotional jewellery, particularly portraits of young women, to illustrate their subjects' pious virtues. Sometimes devotional jewels are suspended from simple leather cords, like the cross pendant worn by the girl in a painting by Domenico Ghirlandaio (Figure 1.4). Many other paintings illustrate women wearing similar cords, the ends of which are hidden, with no visible pendant shown (Figures 1.5-1.7). Could these indicate devotional amulets worn close to the skin, possibly meant to offer them general protection, or in the case of the portrait by Raphael aid the pregnant woman through a safe birth (Figure 1.5)?[86] *Brevi* might not only be suspended from a cord around the neck, but may also have been sewn into garments as permanent protective measures. Unlike the simple single-sheet *brevi*, more complex protective iterations of this type of amulet might also incorporate an assortment of apotropaic and thaumaturgical objects collected in a small bag, which would be worn in a similar manner.[87]

Since the early medieval period, devotees were known to wear portable reliquaries; those preserved in museum collections take the form of jewellery, often wearable containers in the shape of crosses, but evidence from the tenth century onward suggests that people wore cloth

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[83] 'Racconti di storia napoletana,' in *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 33-34 (1908/1909), 116-117, cited in Sergio Bertelli, *Il corpo del re: sacralità del potere nell'Europa medievale e moderna* (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1990), 71-72.
[84] The term 'gran bestia' may have also been used to refer to a moose (the North American equivalent to an elk), an elephant, or a South American animal known as a tapir: Brooks, 317; Gregorio Comanini, *The Figino, Or, On the Purpose of Painting: Art Theory in the Late Renaissance*, trans. by Ann Doyle-Anderson and Giancarlo Maiorino (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 122, note 22.
[85] While early modern literature refers to 'onghie' or 'unghie', the substance extracted from the animal and used as an amulet probably derived from the hooves of the 'gran bestia'. It may have been carved to resemble a claw in order to match the mythical appearance of this creature: Brooks, 317; Apollonius Menabene, *Trattato del grand'animale o' gran bestia, Cosi detta volgarmente; & delle sue parti, e facultà; e di quelle del Ceruo, che seruono à Medici* (Rimini: Gio. Simbeni & Compa., 1584), 53; Andrea Bacci, 'Historia del gran bestia aggiunta all'alicorno dove si discorre delle sue proprietà occulte contra il mal Caduco, & di molte sorti d'animali estrani', in *Le XII pietre pretiose, le quali per ordine di Dio nella santa legge, adornauano I vestimenti del sommo Sacerdote* (Rome: Giovanni Martinelli, 1587), 111-30 (129-30).
[86] This idea developed during conversations with my colleague Irene Galandra Cooper.
[87] Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 135.

bags filled with relics around the neck and close to the body for saintly intercession.[88] Made of taffeta brocaded with gold thread, a fifteenth-century example stored in the Cathedral of Saint-Paul in Liège contains rock crystal and glass (Figure 1.8). The note that accompanies the relics, presumably kept inside like *brevi* text, explained that the stones were from the place where the Angel approached Mary, the place of the Annunciation.[89]

Scapolari, a devotional accessory suspended from a cord and worn close to the body by the devotee, derived from the vestments worn around the shoulders of the clergy and the cloistered since the medieval period. For the laity, and especially members of confraternities, they became popular in the sixteenth century. Scapulars developed into simple garments in which two pieces of humble cloth, usually wool, were suspended from a simple cord around the neck. Often the scapular's rectangular pendants of cloth could be decorated with images or words. Coming in a variety of colours (brown, blue, black, or white), which often denoted allegiance to a particular religious order, scapulars became increasingly popular devotional objects in the Counter-Reformation period.[90] A woodcut of the Virgin of Mount Carmel depicts her bestowing the different coloured rectangular pieces of fabric upon her devotees (Figure 1.9).[91]

Devotees were encouraged to use wax *Agnus Dei* medallions, which were blessed by the Pope, to function as licit signs of devotion. Since they might also be employed as protective devices worn as jewellery or in pouches, or placed in the home, they may have held similar connotations to *brevi* for devotees. In his treatise on the virtues of the *Agnus Dei*, Vincenzo Bonardo suggests that wax *Agnus Dei* had been developed by the Church to replace superstitious *brevi*, which had first been favoured by the ancient Romans, then adopted by early Christians, and were still used 'anchora hoggi'.[92] Using a case from the Roman Inquisition in Naples as evidence, Irene Galandra Cooper argues that the terms *breve* and *Agnus Dei* might have been confused or used interchangeably. In the trial cited by Galandra Cooper, Giulia Diamante accuses her husband, Francisco da Cordoba, of wearing a *borsetta di fattocchiere*, a pouch filled with magical and superstitious materials. At various points in the trial both Francisco and witnesses refer to the pouch as an *Agnus Dei* and a *breve*. A witness describes the *Agnus Dei* as a 'little round black velvet pouch […] inside […] a piece of wood […] a small piece of magnet, some flesh that looked like a

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[88] Many of these pouches probably had liturgical uses and stored relics when not in use, while other similar bags might have been used to hold important sealed documents: Don C. Skemer, 'Magic Writ: Textual Amulets Worn on the Body for Protection', in *Schriftträger-Textträger: Zur materialmen Präsenz des Geschriebenen in frühen Gesellschaften*, ed. by Annette Kehnel and Diamantis Panagiotopoulous (Berlin, Munich, Boston: de Gruyter, 2015), 127-49 (139, note 20).
[89] Whether these objects came from the pilgrimage site of the Virgin's House in Nazareth or its counterpart in Italy, the Santa Casa of Loreto, is unclear.
[90] Mary Laven, 'Legacies of the Counter-Reformation and the Origins of Modern Catholicism', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. by Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 451-69 (460-61).
[91] This woodcut will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, p. 134.
[92] Bonardo switches terminology, later referring to an object that meets description of a *breve* as a 'Bolla': Vincenzo Bonardo, *Discorso intorno all'origine, antichita, et virtu de gli Agnusdei di cera benedetti* (Rome: Vincentio Accolti, in Borgo, 1591), 24-27.

pulsing heart, a broken piece of iron, some peppercorns', describing an array of superstitious objects, but using the term *Agnus Dei*, which implied the Church-issued sacramental. Francisco also tries to emphasise that this is a licit object by calling it 'a *breve* that I used to carry' given to him by his mother, explaining that it was 'the *agnus dei* made of blessed wax, and I used to carry it as a sign of my devotion'.[93] The links between the *breve* and the *Agnus Dei* as devotional and apotropaic objects can be seen in the list of things Marcattilio Palmuccio pawned in 1592: 'due agnus dei con due brevi gialli e rossi' along with 'fusti di corralli'.[94]

Preachers & Prohibitions of Protective Prayers

Recognising the inextricably interwoven understandings of religious and superstitious/magical, orthodox and unorthodox, licit and illicit text, this study will first establish an understanding of elite discourse regarding *brevi*.[95] Despite their popularity, these apotropaic texts often became the focus of discussion regarding their superstitious and potentially heretical qualities. Analysis of official statements regarding their use allows us to better understand their complicated role in society. Given that most scholarship has focused upon official critiques and efforts to police the use of these objects, this section will discuss only a few key examples of the negative perception of these practices, which both illuminate the confusion surrounding the orthodoxy of *brevi* while also allowing us to learn more about their physical properties and how people used them.[96]

With the rise of popular religious movements in the fifteenth century, itinerant preachers took to the *piazze* and *prati* professing the faith, prescribing orthodox practices, and prompting penance in an effort to rouse new fervour, to rectify false beliefs, and to encourage communities to reflect God's divine harmony in their social interactions.[97] Through accounts of these public sermons, it is possible to divine information about common devotional practices of the time—both those officially sanctioned by the Church and those whose status was questioned or

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[93] I must thank Irene Galandra Cooper for alerting me to the details of this trial and sharing her forthcoming article on the topic with me: Archivio di Stato di Napoli, 'Fondo Sant'Ufficio', 47.542, 1582, cited in Irene Galandra Cooper, 'Investigating the "Case" of the *Agnus Dei* in Sixteenth-Century Italian Homes', in *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, ed. by Maya Corry, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin (Leiden and Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

[94] Marcattilio Palmuccio, 25/9/1592, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 2, 17v, cited in Meneghin.

[95] By elite, this refers to the clergy and scholars who sought to define and outlaw such practices.

[96] Scholars such as Marina Montesano and Mara Ioriatti discuss the prohibitive efforts of preachers, particularly in the fifteenth century, while those studying Inquisition records, such as Mary O'Neil, Laura Roveri, and Maria Pia Fantini provide a look into sixteenth century efforts to regulate and stop the use of *brevi*: Montesano; Mara Ioriatti, 'Devozioni lecite ed illecite nella predicazione di Giacomo della Marca' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli studi di Trento, 2009); O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition'; O'Neil, '*Sacerdote ovvero strione*'; O'Neil, 'Magical Healing'; Fantini, 'La circolazione clandestina'.

[97] Michelson attributes the increased efforts on behalf of the clergy to bring the Word of God to the Italian people to the need to restore faith in religion after the reinstatement of the Papacy in Rome after its temporary absence during the Papal Schism (1378-1417): Emily Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 18-19; Corrie E. Norman, 'The Social History of Preaching: Italy', in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. by Larissa Taylor (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001), 125-91 (125); Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 4.

suspect.[98] Throughout the fifteenth century, prominent ecclesiastical figures rallied against the use of superstitious objects as protective and intercessory devices. *Brevi* texts were criticized by the representatives of the Church for their misleading merits.

With a career spanning about forty years, Bernardino of Siena carried the message of his faith to the people of the cities and the countryside from Venice and Milan to Siena and Rome.[99] Bernardino criticised people who employed text for superstitious purposes, particularly the creation, marketing, and use of *brevi*, often citing examples of cases where they had been ineffective. In his 1425 'Predica contra e mailiardi e incantatori' offered in Siena, Bernardino devotes much of the lesson to the (mis)use of *brevi*. Beginning with a diatribe announcing 'Ingiustizia è chi à brevi', Bernardino continues by criticizing those who advocate not only the use of the protective *breve*, but more importantly those who seek to deceive gullible people by insisting that that the *breve* must remain sealed in order to realize its power. Bernardino discusses his own encounter with one: 'Intervenne una volta, che uno avea uno breve, che guariva della febre, qualunque si fusse, e venendo a le mani a frate Bernardino, mirò questo breve; in quello breve vi contava ogni bruttura e mali, e pure guariva.' In fact, regarding the success of the negative words and symbols, Bernardino affirms, 'Equesto era che il diavolo aveva data quella virtù a' breve di colui per avere l'anima sua'.[100]

Bernardino also criticized the questionable materials used in the production of *brevi*, 'Quando è in carta vergine nol tenere però che tu fai Idio quella carta, però che se vi fusse el vangelo, e tu abbi fede nella carta vergine, è del diavolo, e non ti vale né vangelo, né cosa che vi sia'.[101] This so-called '*carta vergine*' (also known as '*charta non nata*' or '*filo de la fanciulla vergine*') was a material often cited in descriptions of contemporary *brevi*, especially in criticisms of their use; it probably referred to the use of the skin of an animal foetus or amniotic sack, possibly from a goat or a lamb, the purity of which was believed to enhance the *breve*'s otherworldly power.[102] Sometimes the condemnations of *brevi* specified that these materials were not animal, but human in origin, taken by 'witches' from an aborted or stillborn human foetus or even of an unbaptized child for use in their malefic amulets.[103] Further, Bernardino criticizes the ritualistic and

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[98] Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press*, 14-18.

[99] Bernardino died in L'Aquila in the Kingdom of Naples: Mormando, 4; 'Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444)', in David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 50.

[100] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI. Questa è la predica contra e maliardi e incantatori', in *Le prediche volgari: Predicazione del 1425 in Siena*, ed. by Ciro Cannarozzi, 5 vols (Pistoia: 1958), II, 55-68 (62).

[101] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62.

[102] Grimoires, such as the *Clavicula Salomonis*, included instructions for preparing virgin parchment: Frances Timbers, *Magic and Masculinity: Ritual and Gender in the Early Modern Era* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 10-11; Montesano, 81; Skemer, *Binding words*, 131; Giacomo della Marca, *Sermones Dominicales*, ed. by Renato Lioi, 3 vols (Falconara Marittima: Biblioteca Francescana, 1978), II, 481, cited in Ioriatti, 93.

[103] It is highly likely that such shocking accusations played a large part in the effort to increase religious fervour and ostracize the marginalized members of society who were often accused of being 'witches', much in the way that fear-mongering anti-Semitic propaganda accused Jews of killing Christians, especially children: Skemer, *Binding words*, 131, note 13; Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 118-19; Mitchell

superstitious nature that included a fixation upon making them on certain auspicious days or the need to attach them to a certain place on the body.[104] Local communes took Bernardino's messages to heart, creating bonfires to rid themselves of the vanities of daily life. As Bernardino moved south, the chronicler Niccolò della Tuccia recorded in his *Cronaca di Viterbo* one such conflagration during Bernardino's Lenten visit to Viterbo in 1426. Bernardino, 'avendo gran seguito del popolo fece abbrugiare tutti i tavolieri da gioucare, libri d'incanti, carte, *brevi*, pianelle di donne sfoggiate, e cappelli trecciati'.[105] *Brevi* are included amongst luxuries and other trinkets in this bonfire of the vanities, emphasising their role as illusory objects.

Giacomo della Marca, a Marchigian preacher and follower of Bernardino of Siena, whose reach also extended well beyond the borders of the Marche, confronted the issue of amuletic text in his sermons as well.[106] Among other prohibited objects and practices, Giacomo della Marca announced that 'portare nomina ignota, carateres carta nonnata, spolium serpentis vel cum filo verginis in festo sancti Christophori apendere ad collum vel suere in diploide, ut numquam aperiatur breve […] item, dum ducit: qui super se non peribit mala morte', specifically referencing *brevi* dedicated to Saint Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, and those promising protection from a bad death.[107]

In his guidebook, the Archbishop of Florence, Antonio Pierozzi advised that a confessor should ask 'che se confessa se ha facti o facti fare: alchuni brevi: o incanti: per se: o per suo amico: o parente: o bestie: o per reccuer sanita: et in che modo: o quante uolte: o se ha consegliato: o confortato altrei aquesto'.[108] Not only does this order illuminate the clergy's role in weeding out illicit practice, it also explains the variety of applications for the *breve*; instead of serving as purely personal protective devices, they might also be used to protect livestock, which provided sustenance or income for one's family.

Despite the multiple negative homilies on the use and ownership of *brevi da portare addosso*, the message was often mixed and confusing as each opponent issued different definitions of which types of texts, if any, were tolerable. As early as 1304, Giordano da Pisa preached that it was perfectly acceptable, and even encouraged, for devotees to carry certain holy texts. In fact,

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B. Merback, *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008).

[104] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62; Montesano, 81.

[105] Niccolò della Tuccia, *Cronaca di Viterbo*, in *Cronache e Statuti della città di Viterbo* (Firenze: Ciampi, 1876), I, 52, cited in Ioriatti, 11.

[106] Giacomo's career as a preacher lasted about 60 years, during which time he travelled to Eastern Europe. He later returned to Italy and served as the Apostoli Nuncio for Aquileia: Errico Cuozzo, 'San Giacomo e la nuova crociata', in *San Giacomo della Marca e l'altra Europa: crociata, martirio e predicazione nel Mediterraneo orientale (secc. XIII-XV), Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, ed. by Fulvia Serpico (Monteprandone (Ascoli Piceno): SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006), 1-4.

[107] Giacomo della Marca (Iacobus de Marchia), *Sermones Dominicales*, ed. by R. Lioi, 3 vols (Falconara M.: Biblioteca Francescana, 1978), II, 481, cited in Ioriatti, 93.

[108] The book was written before his death in 1459 and published posthumously: Antoninus Florentinus, *Prohemio. Incomenza uno tractato uulgare o sia confessionale composito per lo Reuerendissimo padre Beato frate Antonino de lordine de frati predicatori arziuescouo de fiorenza. Elquale se intitula Medicina de lanima* (Bologna: Balthasar Azoguidus, 1472), cc. 10r-11r.

Giordano da Pisa even specified that carrying such texts should be done as an act of devotion, saying, 'Ben potremo ancora per devocione portare adosso scritto el Pater nostro, overo il vangelio: In principio erat verbum. Questo non sarebbe altro che buono e devoto. E però se averai fiore d'intendimento tu medesimo vedrai le cose licite e l'alre che non sono licte'.[109] Bernardino of Siena reiterated this exeption: 'El buono brieve a portare adosso a' fanciulli o agli altri si è el vangelo di San Giovanni, 'l Credo, 'l Pater nostro, e l'Ave Maria, e 'l Nome di Gesù, e questo passa el tutto'. However, he warned, 'Tutti gli altri brevi, chi li scrive chi li dona, chi li vende, chi li compera e chi l'insegna, tutti peccano mortalmente'.[110] The sin derived from the fact that, 'Quando ve' scritto dentro alcuna parola che non s'intende, e lui ti dirà: "È parola di Dio", e forse che è del diavolo. Se vi fusseno cento nomi buoni e uno ve ne sia gattivo, è del diavolo'; just one wicked word could ruin a *breve*.[111] At the end of the sixteenth century we find a similar message in the *Giardino di sommisti: nel quale si dichiarano dodecimila e piu casi di conscienza* by Father Marco Scarsella da Tolentino, which relays the qualifications set forth for *brevi* by Cardinal Paleotti, a leader of Counter-Reformation devotion:

> a due cose devesi haver riguardo da quelli, che detti brevi portano. Prima, che, le parole scritte in essi, sia no intese, & che sorte di parole siano […] Secondo con quale intentione, & osservanza le portano […] li nomi scritti in essi siano nomi conosciuti & intelligibili, & che siano nomi Santi, o dell'Evangelo, o altre parole, che siano della sacra scrittura, o d'alcun Santo […] in essi brevi non sia alcuni carattere, o figura, o altro segno, se non della + di Giesu Christo, o d'altra cosa sacra […] non li sia scritto alcuna cosa falsa, ò vana, né invocatione de'Demoni […] non ponga alcuna sua speranza nel modo di scriverli, o nel modo di legarli […] che possi esser tenuta per superstitiosa, che non si a laude di Dio […].[112]

Spanning three centuries, the advice of Giordano da Pisa, Bernardino of Siena, and Marco Scarsella privileged 'good and devout' words for use in *brevi*. However, many material prayers contained these holy words amongst a host of other phrases. For those with limited or no literacy, it would be difficult to discern the content and complexities of such instructions. Had they been taught to recognize the words of the *Pater Noster*, the Name of Jesus, the *Ave Maria*, and the incipit of the Gospel of John, they may look no further into the text of the amulet, supposing it to have sacred and sanctioned contents. These texts were often included as the first pages in primer textbooks, and would thus probably be familiar to anyone who had made a basic foray into learning how to read.[113]

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[109] Giordano da Pisa, *Avventuale Fiorentino 1304*, ed. by Silvia Serventi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), 354, cited in Ioriatti, 92.
[110] Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari: Quaresimale fiorentino del 1424*, ed. by Ciro Cannarozzi, 2 vols (Pistoia: Pacinotti, 1939), II, 79, cited in Ioriatti, 137, note 484.
[111] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62, note 1; Montesano, 82.
[112] Marco Scarsella, *Giardino di sommisti: nel quale si dichiarano dodecimila e piu casi di conscienza* (Venice: Giacomo Antonio Somasco, 1595), c. 78v-79r.
[113] Autodidacts might have purchased these texts to teach themselves to read as well: Grendler, 147-49; B. Richardson, *Printing,* 139-41.

Prayers for Pregnancy & Childbirth

Literature also elucidates how people understood *brevi*, why they wanted them, and how they acquired them. In his commentary on the *Divinia Comedia*, composed in 1373, Benedetto da Imola recounted how Giovanni Boccaccio had recently visited the Abbey of Montecassino and was horrified to observe the monks slicing the margins of manuscripts to make *brevi* to sell to local women.[114] While some *brevi* sheets offered either general protection throughout life or included a preventative array of protective prayers, many provided aid at key moments in the lifecycle, particularly pregnancy and childbirth, when new life began. Novella 217 of Franco Sacchetti's *Il Trecentonovelle* begins with a young married woman, seven months pregnant. Afraid for her own well-being, as well as that of her unborn child during the pregnancy and birth, she seeks out 'leggende di santa Margherita, e di medicine e di brievi, e d'ogni altra cosa che credesse che li giovasse alla sua passione'. A maid in the pregnant woman's house meets a man who convinces her that two hermit friars 'sapeano fare un brieve che, tenendolo la donna addosso, non serebbe sì duro parto, che sanza pena non partorisse'.[115] The woman, desperate to escape the pain of childbirth, sends her young maid with five florins to fetch her this *breve*. However, the man 'là fece una cedola scritta, e piegatala, la legò tra più zendale, e cucilla in diverse maniere', forging the *breve* himself, rather than commissioning the holy friars for their spiritual aid.[116] Finally, the man instructs the maid to tell the woman not to read it or unseal it to preserve the efficacy of the text. She keeps this promise for years after successfully giving birth. She even shares the object with her pregnant friends as it acquires the reputation of a legendary miracle-working amulet in Siena. However, the woman's curiosity eventually overwhelms her and 'se ne andò un dì con una compagna che sapea legere in una camera dinanzi alla tavola di Nostra Donna, e con grandissima reverenza cominciarono a scucire il detto brieve; e trovata la scrittura in carta sottilissima di cavretto, lessono di detto brieve', which contained a nonsensical poem about a bad chicken, wine, and bread.[117] In Sacchetti's story the woman is fooled by blindly trusting the alleged holy friars and the unknown textual contents of the *breve*. Only after breaking the seal, and with the help of the image of the Madonna (a more mainstream means of intercession) and her literate friend, she discovers the meaningless poem inside the *breve*. While Benedetto da Imola and Sacchetti's criticism of these practices is evident, these anecdotes reflect

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[114] Benvenuto da Imola, 'Excerpta historica ex commentariis Benevenuti da Imola super Datins poëtae comoedias', in *Antiquitates italicae medii aevi sive dissertations* …, ed. by Ludovico Antonio Muratori (Milan: Ex Typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1740), I, col. 1296, cited in Skemer, *Binding words*, 129, note 8.

[115] Franco Sacchetti, 'Novella 217' in *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. by Emilio Faccioli (Turin: Einaudi 1970), 666.

[116] Sacchetti, 'Novella 217', 667; see also Cardini, 69.

[117] The poem read: '*Gallina gallinaccia, | Un orciuolo di vino e una cofaccia, | Per la mia gola caccia, | S'ella il può fare, si 'l faccia, | E se non sì, si giaccia*': Sacchetti, 'Novella 217', 667-68. Songs of the *gallina* were a popular type used in curses: Laura Roveri, 'Gli stregoni errant. La cultura popolare nelle carte di un processo dell'Inquisizione Modenese', in *Il piacere del testo: Saggi e studi per Albano Biondi*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001), 119-40 (128-30).

the commonly-held belief in the power of the *breve*, and the perception that they were particularly valued by uneducated women.

Along with the linen *breve* pouch found in Roccapelago, another worn sheet of paper covered in a handwritten prayer was also unearthed. Now fragile and worn, this sheet of paper, referred to as a '*Lettera di rivelazione*' or a '*Lettera di componenda*', formed part of a devotional and protective ensemble. Folded four times into a small rectangle (measuring about 2.5 x 5 cm folded), the prayer sheet was sealed along with an image. The image, though faded, is a woodcut depicting the Virgin Mary (Figure 1.10; see details). To protect the paper devotional image, it was placed on a sheet of copper and ensconced behind a pane of glass. The image was subsequently attached to the folded *Lettera* with *cera lacca*, remnants of which survive.[118] The image offered its own form of security to both the owner and the prayer, shielding the *Lettera* sealed beneath from the more damaging elements. The act of sealing the sacred image to the *Lettera* served more than practical purposes; in the medieval and early modern world, the seal on a document represented truth and authenticity.[119] Attaching an image of the Mother of God to the prayer could offer verification and legitimacy of the object's sanctity in the mind of the owner. While a pouch for this *Lettera* does not survive, the text of the prayer indicates that it was probably worn on the body for devotional and apotropaic purposes. Paper, glass, copper, wax–the material elements of the prayer pleading for intersession and this image of the Virgin and Child would be placed in a sachet that was probably made of linen. This composite devotional device would have been worn around the neck, beneath garments, touching the skin, close to the devotee's heart.

While the *Lettera* cannot be specifically linked to any one corpse, it offers clues to the life and identity of its wearer. The text ends with the words 'Maria Orii Rocca Pelago'—possibly the name of its owner—as well as a selection of prayers to protect her throughout her life. Unfortunately, no evidence of Maria Orii (Ori) has been found in the limited surviving archival documents.[120] However, records indicate that a family by the name of Ori was living in the town of Pievepelago (of which Roccapelago is a hamlet) in the seventeenth century; in 1670, Bartolomeo Ori and Giovanni Stefano Ori, both from Pievepelago, were mentioned in the records of the Inquisition in Modena.[121] While names of owners appear in the same manner on similar prayers, this may be a simple invocation to the Virgin Mary, with the prayer ending 'Maria,

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[118] Maria Antonietta Labellarte, 'Il restauro della lettera rivelazione di Maria Ori', *Quaderni Estensi*, 4 (2012), 266-68 (266) <http://www.quaderniestensi.beniculturali.it/qe4/23_QE4_contributi_labate_labellarte.pdf > [accessed 22 May 2014].

[119] Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, 'In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050-1400)', in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, ed. by Noël Adams, John Cherry, and James Robinson (London: British Museum, 2008), 1-7 (1).

[120] During a conversation with anthropologist Mirko Traversari on 19/6/2015, it was noted that a preliminary search of the town's archives by scholars working on the excavation did not locate anyone named Maria Ori in the death records. For published results of this archival research: Traversari and Milani, 'Quadri paleopatologici', 171-78.

[121] *I processi del tribunale dell'inquisizione di Modena: inventario generale analitico: 1489-1874*, ed. by Paolo Prodi, Angelo Spaggiari, and Giuseppe Trenti (Modena: Aedes muratoriana, 2003), 158 (busta 161, ff. 11, 1670).

ori' an abbreviated version of 'Maria, ora pro nobis' or 'Mary, pray for us'. Although little is known about the owner, this text offers up clues to her daily concerns.

The *Lettera* itself contains many prayers, including the 'Rivelazione' that Christ proclaimed to Saints Elizabeth, Brigit, and Matilda, a copy of which was allegedly discovered in the Holy Sepulchre.[122] Rubricated instructions embedded in the prayer direct the wearer to use the prayer during childbirth, 'Portandola adosso la donna gravida partoriva', emphasising that the potency of the prayer can be exerted through interaction with the material text—the pregnant woman only needs to wear it on her body during labour. The image of the Madonna attached to the prayer would have lent further protection to pregnant women, who were encouraged to pray to the Mother of God. The rubric to the prayer extends protection to the wearer's home, explaining 'senza pericolo nella casa dove sarà questa Rivelazione non vi sarà illusione di cose cattive'.[123] Did the woman who owned this, Maria Ori, utilise the prayer sheet while turning the small medallion of the Virgin and Child in her hand during her daily devotions? Did she only utilise the prayer during pregnancy, and did she pass during the perilous period of pregnancy and childbirth? Or did the prayer remain sealed in its pouch with the accompanying image, their presence enough to provide spiritual solace to the wearer? Carried with her to the grave, this precious but unassuming spiritual aid would also have accompanied the woman through her everyday life, and provided protection and spiritual support at key moments in her life cycle.

Birthing Girdles

Applying holy texts, in the form of manuscript codices and rolls, to a woman's body during labour was a popular practice across Europe.[124] While most European examples took the form of paper or parchment rolls that could be draped across the labouring woman, some Italian cases indicate the use of actual girdles (or belts).

An oft-cited example of the use of a birthing girdle in the Italian context can be found in the late fourteenth-century letters between Margherita Datini and her sister. After nineteen years of marriage Margherita Datini, the wife of the famous merchant from Prato, Francesco di Marco, felt at fault for their lack of an heir, since Francesco had already fathered three illegitimate children.[125] Margherita sought advice from her sister, Francesca. Francesca's husband, Niccolò dell'Amannato, relayed the advice in his letter to Francesco in 1395, the two men acting as the

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[122] Versions survive from across medieval and early modern Europe: Labate, 'Documenti cartacei', 264-65.

[123] 'Lettera di rivelazione di Maria Ori [Letter of Revelation of Maria Ori]', Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago.

[124] Amulet rolls are sometimes described as 'girdles' by scholars: Stephanie Lynn Volf, 'A "Medicyne of Wordes": Women, Prayer, and Healing in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Arizona State University, 2008), 261-68; Skemer, *Binding Words*, 240-50; Louis Carolus-Barré, 'Un nouveau parchemin amulette et la légende de sainte Marguerite patronne des femmes en couches', *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 123 (1979), 256-75.

[125] Ann Crabb, "'If I could write": Margherita Datini and Letter Writing, 1385-1410', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2007), 1170-206 (1171).

literate intermediaries between the sisters.[126] In the letter, Margherita's sister explained the details of a popular fertility treatment that utilised a girdle with an inscription to invoke the power of God. After instructing Margherita to first place the belt on a boy who is still a virgin, she told her to 'dicha prima 3 paternostri et 3 ave marie a onore di Dio et della Santa Trinita o di Santa Caterina et ch[e] elle le lettere che sono scritte nella cintola le si pongha in su '[i]l cho[r]po a carno ignuda'. Placed upon the woman's flesh, the sacred words would work with the recited prayers to exert their potency. Regarding this remedy, Francesca's husband wrote, 'Io Niccholo credo che le fareb[b]e più utile e più bene a quello [h]a che'[e]lla la vole adoperare che'[e]lla desse ma[n]ggiare a 3 poveri 3 venerdì e non andare dietro a parole che dichono le fem[m]ine'.[127] While some have argued that this masculine criticism reflects the divide between 'feminine' popular devotion and the more masculine scholastic Church message regarding the efficacy of good works, perhaps this gendered discussion allows another more nuanced reading.[128] These women, whose literacy was limited, seem to attribute a greater efficacy to words, which they may not have fully understood, seeing in them an inherent power that was enhanced and extracted when accompanied by ritual, prayer, and contact with the flesh. Conversely, the men who can read the words inscribed on the belt view them as less mysterious, and therefore less potent, and consign them to the realm of superstitious 'women's chatter'.

Despite the belittling of birthing girdles in the Datini example, men also advocated their use. In his *zibaldone*, Bartolomeo dal Bovo from Verona included instructions for a similar apparatus. One passage in Bartolomeo dal Bovo's manuscript offers instructions for a belt inscribed with holy words to aid pregnant women, and is marked by a large manicule signalling its importance (Figure 1.11). Specifically, the leather belt should bear the inscription from Psalm 1 verse 3, which encourages a holy person to 'be as a tree which is planted beside a water course, which will bring forth its fruit in due season, and its leaf shall not fall, and all that it does shall prosper'.[129] The Psalm infers that the woman represented by the tree, who draws up the water of her faith through her roots, will give birth to a child who will lead a full life. Like the knowledge Bartolomeo dal Bovo preserves in his notebook for posterity, girdles of this type may have also been passed down from generation to generation. These girdles probably also reminded users of the Virgin's Girdle (*la Sacra Cintola*), a miraculous relic preserved near the Datini home in the

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[126] Margherita's literacy was limited in the late 1380s, but both her reading and writing skills improved over the course of the 1390s and early fifteenth century. Francesca's husband indicated that his wife did not know how to write: Crabb, 1175 and 1188.

[127] Many thanks to Alessia Meneghin for help with the transcription of this letter: Lettere di Tecchini Niccolò dell'Ammannato a Datini Francesco di Marco, 23 April 1395, Archivio di Stato di Prato (ASP), busta 1103, inserto 14, codice 134071, Carteggio privato, Lettere di vari a Datini, 1103.14, *Fondo Datini Online* (see bibliography for permanent link).

[128] Katharine Park, 'Medicine and Magic: The Healing Arts', in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998), 129-49 (130).

[129] Bartolomeo Dal Bovo, Verona, Biblioteca Civica, MS 827, f. 35v; see also: James S. Grubb, *Provincial Families of the Renaissance: Private and Public Life in the Veneto* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 36.

cathedral church of Santo Stefano in Prato valued for its ability to aid in pregnancy; the added benefits of holy words replaced the efficacy of direct association with the Virgin offered by the relic.[130]

Print & Pregnancy

Through the medium of print, this type of material prayer became available to more members of society, who no longer needed to rely upon a literate acquaintance to procure a *breve*. A variety of printed prayers were directed particularly to aid in pregnancy. An early extant example of a printed apotropaic prayer known as the *Misura di Christo* has also been folded, indicating that it was worn as a *breve* (Figure 1.12).[131] The title *Misura di Christo* refers to the length of Christ on the Cross, a proportionally accurate representation of which is depicted in the lower right-hand corner. The *Misura* was a popular devotional tool that could stand in for Christ's body, and the devotional practice of meditating upon it earned indulgences.[132] Measurements were potent devices in the medieval and early modern world. In addition to devotional measurements of Christ on the Cross or the size of Christ's Side Wound, devotees might also utilise the measurements of faraway pilgrimage sites to duplicate the experience in virtual pilgrimage closer to their homes.[133] Though it is outside the parameters of this thesis, a comparison can be drawn to a practice considered superstitious at the time: the act of measuring (*spannare*), which was often associated with women. This practice involved measuring household objects, architectural features (the wall or hearth), and human bodies with a hand or forearm as a standard of measurement. By knowing these measurements, they were attempting to develop an awareness of space, which in turn appears to have enlightened the practitioner's ability to understand and manipulate relationships.[134]

The rare extant records of a fifteenth-century press, that of the nuns of San Jacopo di Ripoli in Florence, record print runs of the *Orazione della Misura di Christo* between January and May of 1477. We know that 350 copies were sold to a blind man, Pisanello, in April of that year. That Pisanello was described as blind may indicate that he relied upon income from selling flyers of the prayers he performed on the street corner, a common occupation for the blind in late

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130 Cesare Grassi, 'La storia del Sacro Cignolo', in *La Sacra Cintola nel Duomo di Prato*, ed. by Aldo Capobianco (Prato: Claudio Martini, 1995), 23-39.

131 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 229-30; Curt F. Bühler, 'An Orazione della misura di Cristo', *Bibliofilia*, 39 (1938), 430-33.

132 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 98-99.

133 Guides produced to assist with virtual pilgrimages often included measurements of the number of paces between holy sites or the time required to move from one site to the other: Natalie M. Mandziuk, 'Drawing to scale: The medieval monastic's virtual pilgrimage through sacred measurement', in *Binding the Absent Body in Medieval and Modern Art: Abject, virtual, and alternate bodies*, ed. by Emily Kelly and Elizabeth Richards Rivenbark (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 73-92.

134 Many thanks to Flora Dennis for pointing out the connections between the religious and 'superstitious' practices of measuring. On the practice of *spannare:* Giudo Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 111 & 154.

medieval and early modern Italy.[135] Although it has not been proven that this example was printed at the Ripoli press, this order demonstrates the popularity of this type of prayer.[136] The *Misura* also contains a specific verse for the protection of pregnant women, advising 'una do[n]na ch[e] non potisse partorire metezela adosso con devotio[n]e dice[n]do uno pater nostro & una ave maria e con una ca[n]dela benedeta subito partorira senza pericolo in substa[n]tia del corpo de miser ihu xpo'.[137] The physical presence of the printed prayer and the blessed candle would operate in concert with the recited *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* to aid the woman safely through childbirth.

Although viewed with suspicion by the Tridentine Church, prayers such as these continued to be printed throughout the early modern period. The frontispiece of another prayer sheet, called the *Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio trovata nel S. Sepolcro di Christo*, alleges that it was first printed in Barcelona, then translated into Italian and reprinted in Venice (Figure 1.13).[138] Again suggesting physical contact with the body, this *Oratione* also offers aid to women who are struggling to give birth, explaining, 'Se alcuna donna non potrà partorire, mettendol sopra questa oratione subito partorirà'.[139] The *Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio* is also a single-sheet prayer and could easily be carried on the body for daily protection or during childbirth. The practice of touching the prayer sheets to the body to induce labour operated in the same manner as birthing girdles used in other parts of Europe.[140] Along the left edge of the *Oratione* reddish-brown stains tantalizingly resemble blood, and the active use of these ephemeral objects in childbirth may explain why few survive.[141] The text of the *Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio* is also accompanied by a woodcut image of Christ rising from the grave between the Virgin and a male saint. The image may have served as a marker identifying the text for the owner; reading the *oratione* may not have been as important as its apotropaic presence.[142]

Saint Margaret of Antioch and prayers associated with her were believed to aid pregnant women because of the legend that recorded her escape from the belly of a dragon, which was interpreted as a metaphor for safe childbirth. The *vita* of this patron saint of pregnancy and

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135 Laura Carnelos, 'Street Voices: The Role of Blind Performers in Early Modern Italy', *Italian Studies*, 71 (2016), 184-96 (190).
136 Emilia Nesi, *Il diario della stamperia di Ripoli* (Florence: Bernardo Seeber, 1903), 30; Bühler, 432; Skemer, *Binding Words*, 229.
137 'Orazione della misura di Cristo', (Italy, unsigned: before 1500).
138 *Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio trovata nel S. Sepolcro di Christo Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio trovata nel S. Sepolcro di Christo* (Barcelona, reprinted in Venice, no date); Marco Faini, 'Heterodox Devotion in the Italian Renaissance Home', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 166-69 (166).
139 See also: Caravale, 165-66.
140 This practice may also have existed in Italy, though examples survive in greater number from England and France: Skemer, *Binding Words*, 235-50.
141 Scientific analysis of the substance would be required to prove this theory, perhaps employing analytical methods and technology: Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 2.1-2 (2010), 1-44.
142 On the apotropaic use of both religious and non-religious words and images on childbirth objects: Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 142.

childbirth first circulated in manuscript and eventually in printed form, in texts such as the *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine.[143] The title of the printed *La Legenda devotissima de santa Margarita vergine et martire* included the detail that it was *utillissima per le donne parturiente*.[144]

Others offered more explicit instructions, such as the *Legenda et oratione di Santa Margherita vergine, & martire historiata; laqual oratione legendola, ouer ponendola adosso a vna donna, che non potesse parturire, subito parturirà senza pericolo* (Figure 1.14). This *Legenda et oratione* contains both the complete story of Margaret's martyrdom recounted in rhyming verse as well as prayers in both Latin and the vernacular. The title proclaims its ability to aid a woman who is struggling to give birth 'senza pericolo'. The text itself further elucidates how the prayer should be used. Before her martyrdom by beheading is described in the *Legenda et oratione*, Margaret's final words are recorded in a prayer. Margaret announces that those who say her prayer with contrition will be forgiven for their sins. She proclaims that keeping the written prayer in the home will protect from illness, as the apotropaic powers of the words associated with the Saint are activated by their physical presence alone. Both the recitation of the holy words of Margaret's prayer and interaction with their material expression unlocked her intercessory power. After the story of Margaret's death, a rubric contained within the prayer addresses the husband of the pregnant woman, saying 'se nel parto tua donna è in periglio, meglior medico qui, non te consiglio'.[145] Lists of prohibited books often included those with rubrics directed to 'le donne di parto'.[146] Among those banned in 1604 'per contenere esse respettivamente cose false, superstitiose, apocrife e lascive' was another prayer to Margaret, the *Oratione di S. Margarita in ottava rima, per le donne di parto: O dolce madre*.[147]

Protecting Children

Many of the pregnancy aids described above also contained notes for the protection of the home, thus extending their power to all members of the family. Once she had given birth, the mother's attention turned to her child's welfare. The *Oratione devota di Sancto Cypriano contro alli spiriti maligni, & buona a tenere nella culla delli fanciulli piccoli contro alle fantasme & contro a tucte le malie* not only

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[143] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), no. 93, 368-80.

[144] *La Legenda devotissima de santa Margarita vergine et martire vtillissima per le donne parturiente* (Milan, Jo. Antonio da Burgho: 25 January 1536).

[145] *Legenda et oratione di Santa Margherita vergine* (Venice, Francesco de Tomaso di Salò e compagni: 1550), 21r.

[146] Caravale, 166.

[147] Many thanks to Marco Faini for transcribing and sharing the content of this list: 'Parte terza. Avertimenti in materia de libri prohibiti e sospesi etc', of *Sommaria instruttione del M.R.P. Maestro Fr. Archangelo Calbetti da Recanati dell'ordine de' Predicatori Inquisitor generale di Modona, Carpi, Nonatola* [*sic*, or: Nonantola?] *e loro diocesi, e della Provincia di Garfignana* [*sic*, or: Garfagnana?] *A' suoi* RR. *Vicari nella Inquisition sodetta intorno alla maniera di trattar alla giornata i negotii del Sant'Ufficio per quello che a loro s'appartiene* (Modena: Gio. Maria Verdi, 1604) in *Scriniolum sanctae Inquisitionis Astensis in quo quaecumque ad id muneris obeundum spectare visa sunt videlicet librorum prohibitorum indices* (Asti: Virgilium de Zangrandis, 1610), 342. See also: Caravale, 165.

advises the wearing of the prayer, but also that the booklet itself be placed in children's cradles to protect them from spirits and other evil things.[148]

Children, too, might be given *brevi* to wear. Musacchio has noted that Florentine inventories list childhood *brevi* along with other types of charms, such as the *breve* with inscribed text that accompanies the coral and tooth worn by the Christ Child in a painting by Giovanni di Ser Giovanni Guidi, known as 'Lo Scheggia' (Figure 1.15). This type of *Madonna and Child* painting, in the shape known as a *colmo*, was a popular format for images of domestic devotion, and perhaps the amulets depicted offered further protection to the family who owned the painting.[149] While Musacchio suggests that the object is covered with text, a close examination of the painting's detail reveals instead that it is a piece of fabric, probably a *breve* pouch, embellished with pearls and embroidery. At least two other paintings attributed to the workshop of Lo Scheggia depict a similar, if not identical, set of charms worn by the Christ Child, shown at various angles (Figures 1.16 & 1.17). A third painting attributed to Lo Scheggia shows a similar amulet, but one that has been decorated with miniature tassels and embroidery in the shape of a cross (Figure 1.18). While these charms may have been workshop props, they probably closely resemble the objects familiar to devotees, and they may have even been amulets treasured by the family of Giovanni di Ser Giovann Guidi.

Families who could afford the services of a wet-nurse sent practical and apotropaic objects along with their newborn child, including sets of charms, which often included bits of coral, *Agnus Dei*, and *brevi*, offering them an otherworldly protection as their own parents relinquished control of them for a time.[150] In his account book, Florentine Antonio Rustichi recorded the items that accompanied his fifteen children to their wet-nurse, such as swaddling bands, linens, and cribs.[151] The Rustichi children were also sent with the family's set of amulets, comprising 'una brancha di chorallo chon una ghera d'ariento, uno dente chon deta brancha, uno brieve di scamito nero cho' l'arme chon detta'. The '*breve*' itself was a pouch made from black samite decorated with the Rustichi arms, thus linking the contents' protective qualities to the security of the family name. According to Musacchio the records explain that coral and tooth had to be replaced many times. This allows us to infer that the *breve* was a family heirloom used by all these children. Another *breve* was included in this list and was described as: 'uno brieve di domaschino azurro'.[152]

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[148] Many thanks to Marco Faini for finding and sharing the transcription of this prayer: (Florence: Francesco di Giovanni Benvenuto, not before 1516).
[149] Roberta Olson, 'Lost and Partially Found: The Tondo, a Significant Florentine Art Form, in Documents of the Renaissance', *Artibus et Historiae*, 14 (1993), 31-65 (35); see also Musacchio, 'Lambs, Coral, Teeth', 154-55.
[150] Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 142-43.
[151] Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art, Marriage and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 202.
[152] Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, & Family*, 202 & note 54, cites the Carte Strozziane II, 11, 11r; see also Musacchio, *The Art & Ritual of Childbirth*, Appendix D.

Mothers constantly worried for the well-being of their children, and these anxieties continued long after their children outgrew the cradle. Prayers worn throughout childhood might become permanent fixtures in an adult's life. In January 1554, Giulia Orsini Silva in Ferrara wrote a letter to her son Giuseppe in besieged Siena filled with motherly concern for his spiritual, physical, and moral well-being. After ordering Giuseppe not to mix with 'male compagnie' and to avoid the temptation of gambling, she entreats him, 'Che tu mi facessi questa gratia di portare quelle sancte oratione che io ti missi al collo con bona devotione'. Giulia believes so strongly in the necessity of these 'sancte oratione' that she continues, 'et se quelle fussero andate in sinistro damene aviso che subito te ne manderò un'altra'.[153] Giulia's offer to replace the 'sancte oratione' if they were compromised suggests that she is worried that these prayers, which were probably worn as a *breve*, may have been unsealed, thus cancelling their efficacy, or lost. The case of Francisco de Cordoba, cited earlier, illustrated that, if caught with these objects and questioned by Inquisitors, men often blamed their mothers, who had insisted that they wear them from a young age and instilled in them a belief in their efficacy.[154] The implications of this are twofold: first, that mothers were viewed as pious and their devotional guidance as trustworthy; second, that it was credible that those most apt to encourage the use of such wearable texts were women, and therefore men accused of such practices might be excused if they were following the advice of their mothers.

Prayers for Protection, Everyday Worries, & Preventing Catastrophes

Giulia's worries for her adult son mirrored those of early modern Italians across the social spectrum. The following examples will investigate the types of material prayers acquired by people to address a variety of quotidian concerns, from remaining healthy to preventing the natural disasters that might ruin their property.

Following the widespread population decimation that was a result of the plague in the mid-fourteenth century, people sought out medicinal as well as pious preventative measures to avoid that painful death. Images of plague saints, like Sebastian and Roch, were particularly popular, as were prayers calling upon their intercession. One cheap printed prayer pamphlet dated to about 1530 contains woodcut images of both Sebastian and Roch accompanying Saint Christopher, a saint often called upon to aid travellers and to provide protection from the plague. The rubricated title of the prayer informs the reader: *Questa sie la oratione de santo Christoforo, dira o*

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[153] The online summary of the letter suggests the 'sancte oratione' were rosary beads, but the description better fits a *breve*: *Giulia Orsini Silva to Giovanni Silva*, 25 January 1554, Archivio Mediceo del Principato, vol. 1863, fol. 161, *The Medici Archive Project Database*, Doc ID: 21008, <http://bia.medici.org/DocSources/src/docbase/ShareDocument.do?entryId=21008> [accessed 6 August 2017].

[154] Skemer discusses a Morisco man who blamed his mother for the Arabic amulet against the evil eye that he owned and claimed he did not understand, since he was illiterate, when brought before the Spanish Inquisition in 1620: Skemer, *Binding Words*, 144. For another Italian example in which the man attributes the suspect object to his mother, see Galandra Cooper, 'Investigating the "Case" of the *Agnus Dei*'.

fara dire con bona deution non morira de pestilenza (Figure 1.19). While this specific prayer pamphlet called for the devotee to recite it aloud, other short prayer pamphlets dedicated to these plague saints proposed a more corporeal engagement with the material prayer, like the aforementioned *Legenda et oratione di Santa Margherita vergine*. An *Oratione di santo Sebastiano* contained both a rhyming story of Sebastian's martyrdom and a list of the benefits of his prayer. It also included prayers at the end that explained, 'qui hanc orationem devote in tuo sanctissimo nomine dixerint, vel supra se portaverint, vel in suis habitaculis habuerint', indicating that wearing it or keeping it in the home offered protection from 'pesti sine morbo epidimie et ab omni febre et subitane morte'.[155] These books might be worn in a manner similar to *brevi*, the short pamphlets folded and worn in a pouch around the neck, but they might have also been bound and attached to belts to be worn as girdle books that could be consulted during prayer.

Like Bartolomeo dal Bovo, many others recorded these prayers in their books. Skemer proposes that these amuletic charms inscribed in books served as exemplar for the creation of *brevi*, and notes examples of plague prayers inscribed in Italian manuscripts which may have served this purpose. One 'contra pestilentiam' is found in a mid-fifteenth-century manuscript linked to the Barozzi family of Venice; the prayer contains instructions that the Tau cross design and the Latin prayer should be copied and carried on the body. The user should memorize the prayer so that it could be recited in moments of need.[156] A visual analysis of the prayer and its place within the manuscript provides further clues about the Barozzi family and their devotional and quotidian pursuits.

The prayer itself is found on the final page of a manuscript compilation that might be considered a family *zibaldone*, marked with their coat of arms. It is comprised of practical, humanistic, and devotional content, including astrological drawings, calendars with notes of Northern Italian saints' feast days, historical chronicles, and devotional treatises. On the verso of the penultimate folio, the owner of the manuscript inserted a beautifully illuminated miniature copying the *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece of San Pantaleone in Venice by Giovanni d'Alemagna and Antonio Vivarini (Figure 1.20).[157] Presumably this was a favourite devotional image that the Barozzi family wished to consult often, and a copy in a portable family book proved to be a good place to preserve it.

The plague prayer has been thoughtfully illuminated in red and black ink with accents of blue (Figure 1.21). In the manuscript, the Tau cross functions as both text and symbol, a visual prayer to both meditate upon and to wear as protection. The manuscript page also incorporates

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[155] Many thanks to Marco Faini for sharing a transcription of this printed prayer from the Biblioteca Alessandrina in Rome: *Oratione di santo Sebastiano* (Siena: 1577), c. Aiiiv-Aiiiiv.

[156] London, British Library, Additional MS 41600, fol. 91v. A partial transcription of the prayer can be found in Skemer, *Binding Words*, 180-81, note 18.

[157] '*Treatise on the Compotus*, with other astronomical and chronological matter', Add MS 41600: c 1454', *British Library Catalogue Online* <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-002085281> [accessed 11 July 2017].

other textual elements into the design of the Tau, particularly the prayer of the Sign of the Cross: Names of God (*deus*, *pater*), Son (*yhus xpus*), and Holy Spirit (*et spiritus sancti*). Another variation of the Name of Jesus has been imposed upon one of the initials of a prayer on the sheet, which begins '*ihs* Omnipotente sempeterne deusqui precibus et moritis beati e glorioso martiris tui sancti sebastiani quondam generalem pestem hominibus pestifera revocasti', further emphasising the prayer's power, through the intercession of Saint Sebastian, against plague.[158] The final two pages of the manuscript provide a devotional compilation: a pious image replete with religious figures, prayers of protection, and devotional symbols.

The Tau Cross is a potent symbol that Christians believe originated with the Old Testament story of the Passover, when the Jewish devotees marked their doors with a symbol so that their children would be saved (Exodus 12:12-13); it is thus thought to offer protection. The Tau Cross was also thought to be a representation of the Trinity (as illustrated in the Barozzi example). It was drawn on the prayer sheet made for Saint Francis by his closest follower, Brother Leo.[159] Another printed prayer utilises the shape of the Tau cross to shape the text (Figure 1.22). The text printed in black forms a Tau Cross, while the red introduction added on top morphs the form into a traditional Latin Cross.[160] It was printed in Rome in about 1499, before the 1500 Jubilee, by the émigré-printer Eucharius Silber, who was originally from Wurzburg. The Latin text includes a list of divine names as well as *Oratio ad sanctam crucem*, a prayer written by Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio. Mercurio was a lay preacher and prophet, who started a movement in late fifteenth-century Italy centred on his beliefs, which derived from hermetic magic and Cabala. Mercurio fashioned himself as a healer and indicated that this prayer was intended to protect against plague (particularly the sores or *piaghe*) as well as misfortune.[161] This example bears marks of folding, indicating that it was worn on the body.[162]

Prayer sheets to be worn might include prayers for more general protection as well as images to contemplate during prayer. In the centre of an early sixteenth-century manuscript prayer sheet an image of the Crucifixion has been drawn (Figure 1.23). Water-stained and worn along its fold marks, the large vellum sheet is covered in miniscule text punctuated by the cross marks that indicated the Sign of the Cross. Images of the Four Evangelists—John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark, with their attributes (eagle, angel, ox, and lion, respectively) and accompanied by texts from their Gospels—are at the four corners, with a caption in the Margin identifying the

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158 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 180-81, note 18.
159 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 176-77.
160 Patrizia Castelli, 'Un caso di predicazione ermetica: *Novitatum novitas nova*' in *Ermetismo ed esoterismi: Mondo antico e riflessi contemporanei*, ed. by Paolo Scarpi and Michela Zago (Padua: Libreria Universitaria, 2013), 173-204 (197); Skemer, *Binding Words*, 224-25.
161 Castelli, 197; Skemer, *Binding Words,* 224-25; Patricia J. Osmond, 'Pomponio Leto's Unpublished Commentary on Sallust: Five Witnesses (and More)', in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Munich 19-21 August 2009*, ed. by Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Saur, 2010), 135-50 (135).
162 It would measure 4 x 6 cm when folded: Skemer, *Binding Words*, 225.

image and the content of each text. Next to the image of John the text reads 'In principio erat verbum', the popular incipit of the Gospel of John.[163] Each Evangelist is accompanied by a portion of their Gospel. The marks indicate that the sheet would have been folded into a rectangle (measuring about 7 x 4.5 centimetres).[164] A man named 'Francisco' is mentioned throughout the document, which also explains that the prayers would be useful to him or whoever 'super se portabit', thus implying that it was worn as a *breve* for protection when the prayers and images were not being used for prayer.[165]

In addition to the Gospel passages, the prayer sheet also includes a prayer on the *Measure of Christ* and a visual representation along the bottom of the sheet with a rectangular box whose ends are marked by crosses, further illustrating the popularity of this prayer on wearable *brevi*. Inside the space marking the 'Misura longitudinis corporis divini yhu xpi', the words '+ Rex + venit i[n] pace + deus homo factus est + libera domini famulu[m] tuum Franciscum +' are inscribed, emphasising the sheet's purpose of protecting Francisco and his family. Other popular protective Latin prayers surrounding the central scene, such as the *Seven Last Words of Christ*, also would have served as a focal point for Francisco's devotions, drawing his attention to Christ's suffering.[166] The Latin prayers were accompanied by instructions in Italian, which might have served as prompts to remember the various Latin prayers to be recited. Along with the holy images, a group of circular magic symbols and seals call upon the names of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel as well as protective saints, like Anthony (probably Saint Anthony of Egypt).[167] Skemer proposes that Francesco was an erudite consumer who commissioned the piece from a professional illustrator, who at least executed the drawings and possibly also the miniscule text in humanistic *cursiva*.[168] The drawings are executed in red, purple, and black ink with embellishments of a yellow and red ink wash on the images, adding to the visual appeal of the object as a devotional tool to be contemplated during prayer. The Crucifixion scene depicts Christ on the Cross set into the mound representing Calvary, with blood spurting from His wounds and the *Titulus Crucis*, inscribed 'INRI' above His head.[169] While the content and appearance of the text offer clues to how Francisco may have viewed and used the sheet, other sources further illuminate how such complex prayer sheets filled with texts, images of holy figures, and magical symbols functioned in early modern Italy.

In one collection of sixteenth-century medicinal receipts a note appears on the back of the index, 'co[s]i nesuna fattura vi strega possa noceri fa depignere in una carta li quattro

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[163] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 86-87; D. Vance Smith, *The Book of the Incipit: Beginnings in the Fourteenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 4.
[164] Two centimetres were trimmed off the left margin: Skemer, *Binding Words*, 214.
[165] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 214.
[166] Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 94-99; Skemer, *Binding Words*, 143.
[167] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 216.
[168] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 214.
[169] See discussion of the *Titulus Crucis* in Chapter Five, pp. 131-32.

evangelisti et falli dir sopra tre messi et poni in p[er] detta carta adosso et uno si portira'.[170] These instructions suggest that a prayer sheet of similar appearance to Francisco's would protect anyone who wore it as a *breve* from witches' curses if a mass had been said over it. While the instructions suggest that the protective powers of the prayer would be activated after the object had been blessed three times during the mass, placing an object under the altar cloth so that it would unknowingly be blessed by the priest was viewed as superstition by the Church.[171] There is no indication that Francisco's prayer sheet was ever blessed in this manner.

In May 1588, Giovanni, the son of Gasparo Mion from Romano near Bassano, was suspected of superstitious practices and questioned by the Roman Inquisition for a controversial item in his possession that closely resembles the description in the receipt book and the prayer sheet inscribed with Francisco's name. Giovanni, a soldier of the militia, was questioned about 'una carta granda pecorina scritta, che comincia In no[m]i[n]e Dei Patris, ei finisce deuotion con tre croce dove oltra le parole sono depinti li 4 evangilisti, et alcuni santi con molti circoli, caratteri ei nomi incogniti e dettogli'.[172] When asked to confirm that he recognised the parchment, Giovanni Mion responded, 'questa carta e mia, e la conosco, e l'ho portata adosso'. He explained that he had acquired it from Giovanni Alvise Pergola, the brother of a priest, on Saint Michael's feast day. Giovanni Alvise told him that if 'l'ho portata adosso per le arme, ei X mi diceva che portando questa adosso non sarà mai offeso'. While he was not willing to confirm his ability to read and write, he explained to the Inquisitors that he 'non l'ho mostrato più à niuno, pensando che fosse bona per veder quel crucifisso' and 'ci guradai una volta solo che viddi quell Crucifisso, e la stimai buona'.[173] Giovanni's testimony relays a number of his beliefs about this object, while also giving us insight into how devotees evaluated the prayers that they wore on their bodies for devotion, protection, and other intercessory requests. Giovanni asserts that the document was offered to him by a priest's relative to protect him during battle, and therefore he assumed it was an acceptable devotional device. Giovanni claims he only looked at the prayer sheet once, and did not show it to anyone. In Giovanni's case, he emphasises that he believed that the image of the Crucifix signified an orthodox object, 'la stimai buona', possibly indicating how other devotees approached similar material prayers to determine their validity as licit devotional objects. When they could not read, devotees looked instead for familiar devotional signals. Giovanni appears to have convinced the authorities that though he was ignorant, his intentions were devout. The interview document ends abruptly, suggesting that the case was never pursued any further.

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[170] Vatican City, Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (ex Sant'Uffizio) [henceforth ACDF], St.St. P 3-t*: raccolta di prescrizioni mediche*, MS n. 10, c. 1v.
[171] Euan Cameron, 'For Reasoned Faith or Embattled Creed? Religion for the People in Early Modern Europe', in *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader*, ed. by Helen Parish (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 34-51 (34).
[172] 'Statement of Giovanni Mion from Bassano for superstizione in 1588', Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio (Savi all'eresia) [henceforth ASV, SU], Pezzo 61, fasc. 14, c. 1-2.
[173] ASV, SU, Pezzo 61, fasc. 14, 1v.

Tasting Text

In the late medieval era and into the early modern period we find evidence of substances inscribed with sacred words, which were meant to be consumed to unlock the efficacy of the prayer. For those who are experiencing a difficult birth, the *Trotula* recommends eating a piece of butter or cheese inscribed with the SATOR square: an arrangement of letters that can be read in all directions, backwards and forwards, known as a magical square.[174] This magical square has been found across a variety of media, from walls to manuscripts to objects, for millennia, and was used as a protective device against many ills. Bernardino of Siena cited the SATOR square, a rebus composed of the Latin words '*Sator arepo tenet opera rotas*, che si lege per ogni verso e dice sempre a uno modo'.[175] Even though Bernardino of Siena believed 'che le carattere so' le bolle del Lucifero e degli altri diavoli', scholars have since determined that the letters of the SATOR square can be rearranged in multiple ways to create the words *PATER NOSTER* twice in the form of a cross, accompanied by two each of the letters A and O, which could represent the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, another symbol for Christ.[176] A recipe for curing the bite of a rabid dog recorded in a notarial record in Perugia also recommended that the SATOR square be inscribed on a piece of bread and consumed as a prayer was recited (Figure 1.24):

> Quando quis tam homo quam bellua morsu canis rabiosi offenderetur describat infrascripta verba super frusto panis vel pane integro e dicto offenso paneme sic descriptum comedere et erit incolumis. Res sepius expierimentata […] precor sanas charucca brischas sed seduchat. Non nobis domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.[177]

Under the subtitle 'A Stagnar sangue', the *Zibaldone da Canal* contains a recipe against quartan and tertian fevers, in which the following words should be inscribed upon a Eucharistic host and consumed: '+Pax Pater + Jesu Elloi', '+Vita Fillius+ Sabaoth+', '+Remedium Spiritus Santus allfa et ho+ Jesus Christus+ Amen' (Figure 1.25).[178] The *Zibaldone da Canal*, a commonplace manuscript made by a group of merchants from the Veneto between the

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[174] The Latin *Trotula*, a compilation of the three books about women's medicine, allegedly the work of an eleventh-century female doctor from Salerno, is not known to have been printed in an Italian translation during the Renaissance; the first edition printed in Italy, the *De mulierum possionibus ante in et post partum* (Venice), appeared in 1547 and presented only an edited compilation of the many Latin texts in circulation: Rudolph M. Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 318, note 36; Skemer, *Binding Words*, 238.

[175] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62.

[176] It is unknown if early modern Italians were aware of this possible arrangement of the letters. The SATOR can be dated to ancient times, and their Christian association may have developed from an extant magical square: Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62; Duncan Fishwick, 'On the Origin of the Rotas-Sator Square', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 57 (1964), 39-53 (39-40).

[177] Perugia, Archivio di Stato, *Notaio Rubino di Giacomo di Nicolò*, protocollo aa. 1482-1484, cited in *Il notariato a Perugia: mostra documentaria e iconografica per il XVI congresso nazionale del notariato, (Perugia, Maggio-Luglio 1967)*, ed. by Roberto Abbondanza (Rome: Consiglio nazionale del notariato, 1973), 314-15, no. 254, fig. 43.

[178] *Zibaldone da Canal. Manoscritto Mercantile del Sec. XIV*, ed. by Alfredo Stussi and Bianca Strina, Fonti per la storia di Venezia, Sez. V-Fondi Vari (Venice: Comitato per la pubblicazione delle fonti relative alla storia di Venezia, 1967), xi-xii and 143-44.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, contains a mixture of what may have been defined as 'licit' and 'superstitious' religious phrases and prayers, including this recipe as well as instructions for writing a *breve* against fevers.[179] The removal of the Eucharist from the church, and its misuse in unsanctioned rituals, such as this, was viewed as increasingly inappropriate by the Church over the course of the fifteenth century, and led to the fear of desecration and superstitious use.[180] Yet this recipe's inclusion in a book belonging to members of the merchant class suggests that the use of blessed hosts for such medicinal recipes may have been more common than the Church wished, or that people employed facsimile hosts.

In a 1582 trial of the Roman Inquisition in Modena, accused priest Don Teofilo Zani was said to have aided a mother with a feverish son by writing 'the names of Christ and the twelve Apostles on thirteen almonds', and then said a Mass over them. According to Don Zani, this was a popular practice in Modena: 'the sick person was to eat each a day, at random […] When he ate that bearing the name of Christ, the fever would immediately leave'. While Don Zani was accused of superstitious misuse of religious words and practices, he claimed he tried to avoid doing this favour for the illiterate woman, but explained that 'she said that she did this for the devotion that she bore to the name of Jesus Christ […] This custom is used by many people, and for these reasons I wrote the names on the almonds, thinking it was a matter of devotion'. Don Zani was further encouraged by the knowledge that the woman was known to give to charity and request special Masses.[181]

Other examples indicate how prayer text and consumables could be combined to offer protective and healing abilities to the user. A printed prayer sheet whose title announces *Questa sie la vera Oratione de San Paulo* also shows evidence of folding, indicating that it may have been worn as a *breve* (Figure 1.26). Beneath a woodcut image of Saint Paul trampling serpents with his horse, the words of the Sign of the Cross in Latin are printed, encouraging the reader to cross him or herself. These words are followed by lists of holy names, phrases, and details from Paul's ministry, specifically his time in Malta. Most of the text is written in the vernacular, making the content more accessible to the average reader. The prayer sheet explains the type of assistance it offers and instructs the user that, after saying a *Pater Noster* and an *Ave Maria*, they will be safe and their family will be protected from rabid dogs, from consuming poison, or being bitten by a

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[179] New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Library, *Zibaldone da Canal,* MS 327; at least two different hands have been identified in the text, which is believed to have been composed by different members of the same merchant family, the Canal, between the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, finally reaching the hand of Nicolò da Canal di Bartolomeo in 1422, who autographs it on f. 67v and 68v: *Zibaldone da Canal*, ed. by Stussi and Strina, xi-xii and 142-44.

[180] The charge of desecration was often aimed at Jews: Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 79-81.

[181] Trial of Don Teofilo Zani, Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione, b. 8, Testimony of Don Teofilo Zani, 28 April 1582, f. 14r, cited and trans. in O'Neil, '*Sacerdote ovvero stirone*', 65 and 81, note 47.

venomous animal. It concludes with the amuletic words 'Christus vincit; Christus regnat; Christus imperat', and continues 'Christus ab omni malo nos defendat. Amen'.[182]

Below the prayer, another text, called 'la receta de la gratia', explains how a piece of *Pietra di Santo Pauolo* can be mixed with water or wine and consumed to heal those afflicted by these dangers: it should be mixed with water to cure the bite of a rabid dog or if something poisonous had already been consumed, and when mixed with wine, it could also offer general protection to whoever drank it. To heal venomous bites afflicting a baptised person, either wine or water could be used, and the Sign of the Cross should be made over the bite and a *Pater Noster* and an *Ave Maria* recited. Thus, this was more than a simple prayer sheet, it was also a medicinal remedy, or a secret, like many of these other consumable substances. The power of secrets came from their mysterious ingredients and the required specialist knowledge to activate the remedy; the prayer sheet's instructions might have stood in for a specialist, permitting the owner to acquire the select ability to heal.[183]

Saint Paul's time in Malta after being shipwrecked *en route* to Rome is detailed in Acts 27-28, where he survives the bite of a viper and heals those who are ill on the island. Based upon these miracles, a later tradition developed that during his time in Malta, Saint Paul had bestowed upon the local clay the ability to function as an antidote to poison.[184] *Pietra di San Paolo* (also known as *Terra di Malta* or *Gratia Pauli*) was a type of medicinal tablet made from clay, more generally known as *terra sigillata*. Malta was one of the many origination sites of *terra sigillata*, which was imported from around Europe and the Mediterranean.[185] Usually made from a white clay, the tablets were stamped with words and symbols confirming their authenticity, and were distributed with the claim that they were made from the clay of the Grotta di San Paolo in Malta (below the Chiesa di San Paolo) and imported as a miraculous healing substance (Figure 1.27).[186] According to John Florio's 1598 Italian-English dictionary, this *Terra di San Paolo* might also be referred to as *Terra Samia*, 'a kinde of earth against poison, that mountibankes use in Italy'.[187] The

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[182] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 90.

[183] This example may have operated like the printed books of secrets disseminating 'secret knowledge' with increasing regularity in the sixteenth century: Mario Sensi, *Vita di pietà e vita civile di un altopiano tra Umbria e Marche (secc. XI-XVI)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 345; David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 109-10.

[184] This tradition probably developed around the twelfth century: Charles Savona Ventura, 'Maltese medical Pauline tradition', *Malta Medical Journal*, 22 (2010), 34-36. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294526750_Maltese_medical_Pauline_traditions> [accessed 8 July 2017]; Giovan Filippo Ingrassia, *Informatione del pestifero, et contagioso morbo: Il quale affligge et have afflitto questa città di Palermo, & molte altre città, e terre di questo Regno di Sicilia, nell'anno 1575. et 1576.* (Forca: Giovan Mattheo Mayda, 1576), Parte 3, 39 and Sensi, 345.

[185] Originally the clay tablets came from Lemnos, despite their name's association with Malta, but by the sixteenth century they were also being made in Malta and imported. This type of *terra sigillata* should not be confused with the ancient red Roman pottery with raised designs, which resembled the stamped clay tablets, perhaps providing a reason for their overlapping names: Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing*, 107.

[186] Sensi, 345.

[187] John Florio, *A World of Wordes: Or Most Copious and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Edw. Blount, 1598), 417.

suggestion that these medicinal devotional assemblages were sold by mountebanks, itinerant charlatan healers who commercialized their special medicinal concoctions and skills by publicizing them in elaborate spectacles in *piazze* around Italy, might be confirmed by the fact that the text indicates that it was printed for a man by the name of 'Magristro Jo. Angelo'. Another instructional sheet for the '*pietre di santo Paulo*' is found in Camerino's Archivio Capitolare, and was composed for 'Maestro Giovan Pietro della Gratia de Santo Paulo'.[188]

Saint Paul had become the patron saint of snake charmers, popular healers often known as *pauliani* or *sanpaolari*. Further, the association between their remedy and the legend of Saint Paul emphasised the legitimacy of the *pietra* and prayer sheet as holy aids. These charmers were viewed with prestige in early modern Italy, particularly in the central and southern Apennine region because of the fear of venomous creatures, especially vipers, native to the area.[189] The sheet concludes with the explanation that prayer and stones will work on behalf of both family members and animals. It also adds a note that demonstrates the aggressively anti-Semitic sentiments of the time by excluding 'cani porci e iudei' from these benefits.[190] This multipurpose ensemble provided both a consumable substance and a prayer sheet that could be kept in a *breve* pouch until needed by the wearer and its presence around the wearer's neck could ward off poisonous bites.[191] Once the *Pietra di San Paulo* had been consumed, the prayer sheet offered continuing protection.

Policing Practices

Material prayers that were used as *brevi* and included suspect symbols and elements drew the attention of Church authorities throughout the Renaissance, but received increased attention during the era of Catholic Reform. Various cases of the Roman Inquisition illustrate the Church's attempt to discover who was using these objects and to eradicate the use of these objects, which they deemed to be superstitious. On the 5th of October 1591, a man by the name of Jacobo Tinctore, the son of Benvenuti Colaviti and resident of the parish of Santa Maria Nova in Venice, appeared before the Inquisition. He presented a collection of documents along with a statement about his innocence. While he initially appears to have told the Sant'Uffizio that he had found 'queste cose' on the *fondamenta* of San Zaccaria, he later conceded in a subsequent interview: 'Se ben ho detto allhora di haver trovato queste cose su la fond[amen]ta di S. Zaccaria non e vero, ma lo dissi, perche non voleva paralar, che tutti sapesse, ma la verità, è che le ho trovate queste robbe sotto il mio letto'. According to Jacopo: 'il giorno de s. Francesco p[ro]ss[im]o passato

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188 Sensi, 345.
189 They might even be regulated by medical authorities and be members of professional medical associations: Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing*, 106-09.
190 This exception is also present in the Camerino version: Sensi, 345.
191 Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing*, 107.

inanzi il mezo giorno me partiva di casa, ei andai in campalto con Za'ang[el]o tentor' a S. Zanepolo'. After the festive outing of these two dyers, Jacopo returned 'a' casa mia il med[esim]o giorno sule 21 hora incirca ei essendo dentro in casa senti non so che rumor sotto il letto, finalmente mia moglie scampò via di casa mia'. He then discovered a man hiding under the bed and promptly kicked him out, when 'doppo partito guardai sotto il mio letto, ei trovai questo saccheto con queste cose dentro, che presentai l'altro giorno, che quando lo trovai non vi era alcuno presente, Io non so de chi fusse questo saccheto', but assumes that they belonged to the adulterous man.[192]

Then follows an inventory of the items found in the *sacchetto* (Figure 1.28). While some of the objects lack description, others give insight into the confusion surrounding licit and illicit objects, and Jacobo's concern to distance himself from an association with them. Objects with devotional content (marked in blue) included 'Un mezo foglio di carta signati A. comincia qusti li nomi di Jesu christo', 'Un officiol piccolo vecchio in stampa con diverse oratione supersitiose con dentro tre dui pecci di carta con figura d'hostia', 'Un pecetto di carta co l'imagine del Crucifissio ei de santi'. Along with the two sheets of devotional images and text that might have been used for devotional contemplation or worn as *brevi*, the 'officol' probably refers to a printed edition of the 'Little Office of the Virgin', one of the main texts included in books of hours. It is unclear if the two pieces of paper with figures of Eucharistic wafers were meant to be consumed or kept as amuletic tokens. In addition to these devotional objects, other sheets may have been considered devotional for their owner, but their contents would have been considered superstitious by the Church authorities, including 'Un pezzo di carta bergamina, nella qual sono li nomi del ben voler condiversi caratteri sta nomi incogniti signa. H' and 'Un peceto di carta vergine con alcuni caratteri dentro'; *I nomi del ben voler*'. Further objects in the *sacchetto* are more explicitly non-devotional, and suggest superstitious practices, particularly the 'dui pecetti di calamita un bianco, e un nero' and the 'ongia humana'.[193] While Jacobo claims ignorance about these objects and their owner, it is unclear if he was truly unaware of their origins. It is possible that the devotional and superstitious objects were kept in the house along with the herbs in this sachet and that, knowing that they might be viewed with suspicion by the authorities of the Sant'Uffizio, Jacobo first feigned ignorance about their origins, but later used this opportunity to take revenge on his wife and her lover by denouncing them.[194]

Other cases illustrate how these suspect prayers were discovered by chance, such as when prisoners were subjected to search and seizure upon being arrested. After being imprisoned in

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[192] This trial does not appear in the 1876 inventory of the Inquisition documents: 'Interview of Jacobi Tinctoris, 5 October 1591', ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 27, cc. 1-2.
[193] On the possible definition and uses of *calamita bianca* for love magic: Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 196-99 and 259, note 48.
[194] 'Jacobi Tinctoris', ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 27, cc. 1-2.

Venice, Bernardo di Lodi was searched for counterfeit money, but instead the inspector found that he was wearing two sheets of paper and reported his discovery to the Sant'Uffizio. Bernardo was then accused of *sortilegio* and was questioned. After explaining that he was the son of 'Giovanni Batista, io son' gentilhomo milanese', he stated that he had been in *galera* for three days and still did not know with which crime he was being charged. However, he did admit that the reason for which he was brought before the Sant'Uffizio was the 'boletino che me e stato trovato adosso'. He claimed that he discovered it in jail and 'vedendo che era scrittura, che era li'a tanto bella me la messi in scarsella' and 'se sapesse che fossero stati cattivi Io non li havevà tenuti adosso'. Bernardo then admits, 'Io non so ne legger, ne scriver, ei se lhavesse saputo legger quelli boletini ei che fossero p[ro]hibiti Io li havevia stracciati'. Though he says he only recently found the two sheets, he appears to have appreciated their purpose, and wore them as *brevi*.

An analysis of the two *bolletini* in question, which are attached to the trial, perhaps reveals why Bernardo viewed them as acceptable devotional objects (Figures 1.29a, 1.29b). One *bolletino*, labelled '#', begins with words from the Eucharistic ceremony: 'Hoch est enim corpus meum cich osto enim chalis sui sanguines meum' and repeatedly instructs that the *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster* should be recited to protect from enemies (Figure 1.29a). It concludes, 'Lamatino o la prima figura dala Madonna, guardandolla diraj tre volta, Madonna guidami et la via della salute con tre pater nostri et tre have marie', instructions which appear devotional in nature.[195] The larger slip of paper is labelled '+ Oracione devotissima qual a trovato, adosso, dei z. Piero capellano' (Figure 1.29b).[196] After this label a list of divine names and holy and superstitious words appears, mixed with crosses. In the middle is a representation of the 'Misura di Christo', drawn in a heavy ink line with flourishes marking the points of Christ's Body; the text on the reverse provides an explanation of this symbol, indicating how the prayer sheet should be used, and the details of its efficacy (Figure 1.29b reverse):

> Misura del corpo del nostro signore iesu xpo, la qual fu trenta volte longer come e questo cegno, qui di sopra il quale fu ritrovado in costantiopoli in un croce d'oro, di queste adosso portent quell di non poter morire da mala morte subitanea, ne in foco, ne in aqua, ne in folgore, ne in sancta ne per tempesta, ne dei veneno, ne da demoni, ne da iudice, de maleficio, ne da falso testimonio, ne da mal homo, ne tormento, gli poter nocero, e chi portero questa sopra di se, o vedero quel di non potro morire da mala morte amen.[197]

While Church officials viewed these *bolletini* with suspicion, the allegedly illiterate Bernardo had not noticed anything amiss in the documents. Perhaps his recognition was limited to familiar devotional words he may have seen repeatedly throughout his life, such as Madonna and *pater nostri*, and their presence in this document along with the crosses and symbol of the Measure of

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[195] 'Trial against Bernardo Lodi from Milan for *sortilegio*, 15 December 1590', ASV, SU, Pezzo 67, fasc. 11 (Old Index: fasc. 5).
[196] It appears that this label was added when the piece was catalogued.
[197] 'Trial against Bernardo Lodi', ASV, SU, Pezzo 67, fasc. 11 (Old Index: fasc. 5).

Christ made it appear to be an acceptable devotional aid. While these cases illustrate the Church's efforts to eradicate the use of these objects because of their potential superstitious elements, the testimonies also demonstrate the laity's confusion surrounding these objects, sometimes as a result of their lack of reading comprehension. They also reveal the cues ordinary people used to determine what types of objects should be used for devotion regardless of the guidelines provided in official Church doctrine.

Between Superstition & Devotion: Approved or Illicit Brevi

Brevi were occasionally made by priests, who were often the only literate members of small communities. A priest of Tresigallo had taken it upon himself to make *brevi*, specifically charms against fevers. The record of the priest's pharmaceutical-prayer venture was recorded in the official documents of the episcopal visit to the Ferrarese countryside from 1447 to 1448 along with references to villagers who performed 'precantations and incantations'. [198]

Brevi prayer sheets were sometimes distributed by Church authorities, perhaps at pilgrimage sites or on feast days, or might resemble the *santini* issued by local churches. In 1330 the chronicler Opicinio de Canistris recorded how young boys in Pavia celebrated the feast of Saint Agatha on the fifth of February by creating *brevi* during the mass, presumably a tradition that continued. As the Gospel was read at this Mass,

> Scribunt pueri brevia, in quibus sunt illa verba que scripsit Angelus Domini in tabula marmorea sepulcri dicte virginis, scilicet: "Mentem sanctam, spontaneam, honorem deo et patrie liberationem", et illa ponunt in agris vel vineis ut liberentur a tempestatibus grandinum.[199]

As this example demonstrates, the protective qualities of *brevi* extended beyond the bodies of humans and covered anything they touched, including the fields that provided sustenance and income. In Pavia, the *brevi* were made within the Church, during the Mass, without criticism by a contemporary chronicler. According to legend, the 'Mentem Sanctam' prayer had been miraculously written on Saint Agatha's marble gravestone in Catania by an angel at the time of her burial. A year later her inscribed tombstone saved the city from a volcanic eruption, and it continued to protect the city.[200] The use of this prayer of Saint Agatha for *brevi* was widespread. A century later, Antonio Pierozzi specifically criticised 'le cedole: che se scriveno la matia de sancta agata: zio mentem sanctam et cetera. Mentre che se canta lo evangelio: che se poneno ne le vignie o ne li campi: o altri luoghi: o li anelli: che se fano di pionbo: contra lo granfio'.[201]

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[198] Albano Biondi, 'Streghe ed eretici nei domini estensi all'epoca dell'Ariosto', in *Il Rinascimento nelle corti padane: società e culture*, ed. by Paolo Rossi et al. (Bari: De Donato, 1977), 168, cited in Park, 140.
[199] Anonymi Ticinensis (Opicini de Canistris), *Liber de laudibus civitatis Ticinensis*, RIS, XI, 1, p. 32, parr. 35 sgg., cited in Frugoni and Frugoni, 45, notes 42 and 43.
[200] Jacobus de Voragine, 156
[201] Antoninus Florentinus, cc. 10r-11r.

A tiny paper *breve* covered with prayers dedicated to two important saints also shows evidence of folding (Figure 1.30). The *recto* of the prayer sheet displays the 'Breve di S. Vincenzo Ferrer.io contro la Febre' (right column), an image of an angel (centre top), and a communal 'Breve Contro I Tuoni Tremuoti e pestilenze' (left column) with accompanying prayers in Latin. On the opposite side, Saint Anthony of Padua prays at an altar, holding the lily, the symbol of his virginity, in his hand (Figure 1.30 *verso*). Below, Saint Anthony's 'Responsorio', a song in the form of a responsorial and antiphon, is printed. As part of a practice sanctioned by the Church and promoted by the Franciscans (the order to which Saint Anthony belonged), people who had lost items or been the victim of a theft chanted this Responsorio to ask for the saint's help to find their possessions, since he was the patron saint of lost things.[202] Following the 'Responsorio' a subtitle indicates that this side also includes the 'Breve di S. Antonio contro i Demonj'. The 'Breve di San Antonio' originates from a miracle story in which a Portuguese woman had been convinced by an apparition of the Devil in the guise of Christ to commit suicide by drowning in a river as penance for her sins. Before following through with her plan, she stopped at a shrine dedicated to Saint Anthony where she received a piece of paper with the text written in gold from the saint, who instructed her to wear it around her neck to prevent demons from haunting her. As a result of this story, *brevi* inscribed with the prayer 'Ecce + Crucem Domini fugite partes adversae vicit. Leo de Tribu Juda. Radix David. Alleluja' circulated from the thirteenth century onward. The legend was even recorded in the manuscript *De sancto Antonio Patavit liber miraculorum* (1367).[203] This tiny printed prayer sheet contained three different *brevi* texts to protect its wearers from fevers, storms, plagues, and demons as well as the 'Responsorio' text to aid with the finding of lost things, and images of a saint and angel for both protection and devotion.

In 1575 the Sant'Uffizio questioned the printer Pietro de Faris, who was accused of printing and selling superstitious prayers in Venice. A man by the name of Battista Furlano had been apprehended selling an octavo-sized plague prayer for one *bezzo* that had been printed by Pietro in Piazza San Marco.[204] Kept in the trial record, the prayer itself promises 'QUEST E QVEL GRAN SECRETO DA ESSER sicuro à tempo di Peste', and it instructs 'Dirai ogni mattina con fede & deuotione, & porterai addosso à laude del N.S. GIESV CHRISTO & di MARIA Vergine sua gloriosissima madre, le seguenti parole' (Figure 1.31). After the title, a Latin

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[202] Ryan Giles, *The Laughter of the Saints: Parodies of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 103.

[203] Katherine Tycz, 'Praying for Protection', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 112-17 (116-17); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 250, note 68; Thomas Aquinas, *The Academic Sermons*, trans. by Mark-Robin Hoogland, C.P., The Fathers of the Church: Mediaeval Continuation (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 276, note 67.

[204] Salzberg refers to the printer as Pietro De' Farri. Another street-seller, Iseppo Mantelli, was also selling these prayers on the Rialto: 'Pietro de Faris, for printing some prayers without a license, 15 March 1575', ASV, SU, pezzo 39, fasc. 14 (other sources have recorded it as fasc. 7 or 8); Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 158-60.

prayer that praises the Virgin and her powers against the plague is printed in the middle, and is followed by another version of the prayer in the vernacular with a longer explanation of its meaning. Another larger version of the prayer with different decorative elements and various additions (prayers to Saints Roch and Martha) was also requisitioned from Pietro's shop; it, too, bears evidence of folding and contains the same rubricated instructions (Figure 1.32). Salzberg notes that these prayers would have been particularly desired in Venice in 1575 as the city was suffering from a major outbreak of plague.[205] The trial documents reveal the relative cheapness of such material prayers and how street-sellers acquired them in bulk from a local printer. Pietro's family press was known for printing cheap *fogli volanti* and booklets, and he claimed he printed the prayer without a license because he was acting at the behest of 'certe gentildon[n]e' and 'p[er]che è stata stampata altre volte'.[206] As O'Neil notes, the prayer closely resembled sanctioned examples and may have been printed and sold as an honest mistake. In fact, the results of the trial were not serious, as Pietro only had to promise to not print such prayers again, and to try to find any that had already been sold, and to relinquish any remaining to the officials of the Sant'Uffizio.[207]

While the details and significance of the trial of Pietro de Faris have been studied in-depth by both Salzberg and O'Neil, material and textual analysis of the prayer sheets and their relationship to other objects is particularly telling.[208] A simple manuscript prayer sheet found amongst the papers of the archive of a local noble family in Ascoli Piceno, the Sgariglia, has been inscribed with a nearly identical version of the prayer printed by Pietro (Figure 1.33). Written in an educated hand, but unembellished, the title declares 'Oratione da dirsi nel tempo della Peste'. Following the plague prayer, another prayer is copied, which also offers beneficial protection: 'presta auxilium gratie tue ut abonni peste et improvissa morte'.[209] It too shows signs of folding so that the owner could carry it with them. These two versions, probably contemporaneous, show the concurrent intermingling of both printed and manuscript prayers, particularly those meant to be worn on the body in the era following the advent of print. While one version of the prayer, printed to be sold cheaply on the streets of Venice, was confiscated as superstitious by the Inquisition, another copy found its way into the prized papers of a Marchigian noble family, preserved for posterity.

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[205] Salzberg, 158.
[206] The source for this prayer, a small booklet that also contained the Litany of Saints, is also attached to the trial record: ASV, SU, pezzo 39, fasc. 14; see also, O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 176. [Note: When I viewed the trial record, this booklet had been placed incorrectly in the subsequent *fascicolo*.]
[207] O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 176.
[208] Salzberg, 158-60; O'Neil, 'Discerning Superstition', 175-78.
[209] 'Oratione da dirsi nel tempo della Peste', Archivio di Stato di Ascoli Piceno, Archivio Sgariglia, Cassetto V, Fascicolo 4, Pezzo G.

Death

From the *breve* with three prayers found in Viterbo to the *breve* pouch from the crypt in Roccapelago, the discovery of personal material prayers in burial contexts speaks to the importance of these prayers to devotees throughout their lives. The scientifically excavated archaeological site of Roccapelago provides authentication for practices associated with objects and texts that lack a provenance. The presence of these objects in burials raises further questions: did devotees explicitly request that they be buried with their *brevi* or were they buried in their daily attire, including their protective devotional objects?

Death, especially through nefarious or sudden means, was a constant concern for early modern Italians. As we have seen, many of the amuletic material prayers discussed above offered protection from all manner of death. These promises drew the ire of ecclesiastical authorities. In his 1425 Sienese sermons, Bernardino condemned those who used those inscribed with the promise 'Né in fuoco, né in acqua, né in casa, né in via, né in vigna etc., che non potrai morire', as death is inevitable for all human beings.[210]

Despite these warnings, devotees still acquired and ascribed efficacy to these objects. They might not only protect one from death, but also might offer protection from the dead themselves. In an Inquisition trial in Siena, women who had been given the responsibility of sitting in wake with a body employed a *breve* with the hopes that it would protect them from the spirit of the deceased who had been murdered. Lucia di Gervasio had been suspicious of a *breve* given to her by her friends, so she had given it to her confessor to check that it was an acceptable object. She was then interviewed by the Sant'Ufficio and proposed a variety of explanations for the object and its contents to the tribunal. She eventually admitted,

> la verità che ritrovandomi in Sovana, et essendo amazato il luogo tenete di Campauria io insiema co[n] livia Sanese stetti alla guardi tutta la notte di quel corpo, onde mi venera' certe parua è mi pareva sempre di haverlo avanti gli ochi […] Agata sartianese vedenomi cosi me adimandò che cosa haverio io gli direi che p[er] la guardia che haverò fatt à quel morto ero vestata tutta piena di paura è mi parare di haver' sempre avanti gli ochi quel morte, è lei me disse, io ti darò alcune cose delle quale facendone un' breve e portandole adosso, tu non havaria paura di cosa alcuna.

According to Livia, Agata then gave her the *breve* and said, 'che portandola adosso, non vi era pericolo di paura alcuna ne de espiriti è p[er]che detta livia era stata ancor' le con me a far' la guardia al morte è temeva ancor'lei di queste paure […]et cosi io gli ne diedi et si fece ancor' lei quel breve giallo che io portai à VP inseime ad il mio' confessore'.[211] The details of the contents of the *breve* and the potential superstitious practices of the women are not relevant here, where the focus is upon the belief that *brevi* could calm fears and protect devotees from ghosts.

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[210] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXVI', II, 62-63.

[211] 'Trial against Agata da Sarteano, Lucia di Gervasio e Livia Senese', ACDF, Archivium Inquisitionis Senensis, Processi e Cause, Processus, Vol 12. 1594-5 (Processi Processi, Vol 12), fasc. 3, c. 110v.

Multipurpose Material Prayers

Devotees not only read texts, but also engaged with them on a physical level by wearing them on their bodies or by consuming them. Material prayers in the form of *brevi* came in all shapes and sizes; they might be written quickly by an untrained hand, painstakingly composed with lavish illuminations, or printed with (or without) images. Early modern Italians applied these multipurpose prayers to their bodies as devotional devices, as miracle-working and healing objects, and as protection against a variety of dangers.

This chapter has argued that a better understanding of how these material prayers were used by devotes can be achieved through a thorough study of the textual and material components of the objects. Contextualising these sources by listening to the voices of devotees can further illuminate how they obtained, used, and appreciated these objects. In addition, this chapter has emphasised that it is important to consider the often overlooked devotional content of efficacious texts. By illustrating how these objects, inscribed with Christian words, phrases, and symbols, were interpreted by the wider Italian populace—both the laity and sometimes the clergy—it is evident that they were often considered a common and acceptable means of accessing Divine intercession. The examples and accounts discussed in this chapter reveal that these material prayers were ascribed agency both by those who had the ability to read the text contained within and by those who were illiterate, but viewed their contents as potent words. From the *brevi* worn by expectant mothers and infants to those that accompanied early modern Italians to their final resting places, portable prayer sheets were devotional and protective tools utilised and prized by early modern devotees from birth to death.

PART I: ON THE BODY

CHAPTER TWO

The Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus

'Il breve de brevi'

Along with the bodily remains of the inhabitants of Roccapelago, the trinkets of daily life, and various devotional objects, including the *Lettera di rivelazione* and the *breve*, two devotional objects inscribed with the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus were unearthed between 2009 and 2011. A small sheet of paper (measuring about 5 cm x 7.2 cm), imprinted with four variations of the symbol of the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus (written as *IHS*) set in a frame of clouds (Figure 2.1), was discovered in the crypt of the Chiesa della Conversione di San Paolo. Like the other examples of paper *brevi* this printed paper sheet was also found in a pouch on one of the mummified bodies.[212] The other, a tiny bronze medal, cast with the Sacred Monogram on one side (also in the *IHS* form) and the Marian Monogram (*MA*) on the opposite side, was also found among the bodies (Figure 2.2).[213] The bronze pendant represents a common form of devotional adornment, which may have been acquired by the devotee as a pilgrimage badge. Both objects were meant to be worn on the body, close to the devotee's skin, like the material prayers in the form of *brevi* discussed in the previous chapter. The decision to bury the bodies with these devotional objects, perhaps at the request of the deceased, speaks to the strong devotional beliefs of the community of Roccapelago as well the potency ascribed to these inscribed objects. This chapter will consider why devotees applied objects inscribed with the Sacred Monogram to their bodies in both life and death.

Notwithstanding Bernardino da Siena's strong condemnation of the use of *brevi* discussed in the previous chapter, he did not deny the potential efficacy of text in devotional practice. As discussed, Bernardino explained that the only 'buono brieve' used the texts of 'el vangelo di San Giovanni, 'l Credo, 'l Pater nostro, e l'Ave Maria, e 'l Nome di Gesù'.[214] Bernardino also repeatedly returned to the Sacred Monogram, the devotional emblem he was known for promoting, as a substitute for the *breve*. Devotion to the Name of Jesus in the form of the Sacred Monogram increased during the Renaissance, although it had long functioned as a religious emblem. Instead of an abbreviation based upon the Latin, the Name of Jesus was most often expressed as a monogram derived from the Greek transliteration Jesus (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ) in the form of

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[212] See discussion in the previous chapter (p. 32) regarding the *Lettera di rivelazione* and the other *brevi* found at Roccapelago. Labate, 'Documenti cartacei', 259-63.

[213] Labate, 'Documenti cartacei', 261.

[214] See Chapter One, p. 30, for a full discussion of the extended quotation. *Quaresimale fiorentino del 1424*, ed. by Ciro Cannarozzi, II, 79, cited in Ioriatti, 137, note 484.

IHS (or *yhs*), most often with a cross surmounting the H.[215] Saint Bernardino of Siena transformed this Sacred Monogram into a tangible material object. During his sermons, Bernardino held up a rectangular panel painted in blue and emblazoned with *yhs* in gold surrounded by a sunburst, encouraging devotees to focus their prayers upon the symbol (Figure 2.3). Around the panel's edges, an inscription in gold, 'In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, celestium, terrestrium, et infernorum', extracted from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, served as a type of rubric for viewers of the Sacred Monogram, instructing them to genuflect before the symbol.[216] Bernardino also explained the theological symbolism of each of the components of his Sacred Monogram in detail to his audience.[217]

Bernardino announced that Sacred Monograms should replace *brevi* as portable devotional protective objects, saying, 'Questo nome di Gesù è el brieve de' brievi santo. Portatelo adosso, o scritto o figurato, e non potrai capitar male'.[218] By referring to the 'nome di Gesù' as 'el brieve de' brievi', Bernardino again draws parallels between the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus and a material object. He indicates that the Sacred Monogram is more than a devotional concept or visual device that should be recalled during meditation. He orders that it should be worn on the body, employing the imperative tense, 'portatelo addosso', and explains that the material form can be either 'scritto o figurato'.[219] In another sermon, Bernardino reiterates the notion of the Sacred Monogram 'breve de' brevi', the highest form of the devotional textual amulet since it possessed divine virtues. Bernardino proclaims, 'questo si è il breve de' brevi: el virtuoso nome di Iesu il quale ogni virtù della sacra Scrittura in se compreende et è atto e sofficiente in ogni tuo bisogno aiutarti'.[220] Bernardino offered devotees a legitimate and holy substitute for the objects that he viewed as suspect due to their secretive nature and the possibility that people were relying upon superstitious, dangerous, and meaningless *brevi* rather than the Word of God.

Bernardino's promotion of the Sacred Monogram as a substitute for *brevi* did not move forward without scrutiny. At the end of the 1420s he was criticized by Bartolomeo di Firenze,

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[215] The Monogram has often been misinterpreted as an abbreviation for 'Jesus Hominum Salvator' or as 'In Hoc Signum', a reference to the story of Costantine's discovery of his Christian faith. On the transformation of the abbreviation: Emily Michelson, 'Bernardino of Siena Visualizes the Name of God', in *Speculumm Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon*, ed. by Georgiana Donavin, Cary J. Nederman, and Richard J. Utz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 157-79 (159-62).

[216] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXV. Questo è la seconda predica del Nome di Gesù', in *Le prediche volgari* ed. by C. Cannarozzi, II, 188-202 (190); Loman McAodha, 'The Holy Name of Jesus in the Preaching of St. Bernardine of Siena', *Franciscan Studies*, 29 (1969), 37-65 (40).

[217] See Bernardino da Siena 'XXXV', II, 188-202; Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV. Questa è la predica del nome di Gesù,' in *Predicazione del 1425 in Siena*, ed. by Cannarozzi, II, 173-87; Michelson, 'Bernardino of Siena', 167-70.

[218] Bernardino da Siena, *Quaresimale fiorentino del 1424*, ed. by Cannarozzi, II, 209, cited in Lina Bolzoni, *La rete delle immagini: predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena* (Turin: Einaudi, 2002), 215, note 204.

[219] *Figurato* probably refers to a more elaborate illustration, possibly replicating the visual components of Bernardino's version of the Sacred Monogram, while *scritto* probably suggests the letters written in ink without the sunburst frame.

[220] Cited in Enrico Bulletti, 'Il nome di Gesù. Predica volgare inedita di S. Bernardino', *Bullettino di Studi bernardiniani*, 4 (1938), 211, cited in Ioriatti, 138.

who disapproved of the Sacred Monogram tablets, since they were a material form that could distract devotees from the true focus of their devotion.[221] Bernardino was put on trial for heresy for his role in encouraging adoration of the Sacred Monogram during the pontificate of Martin V. Despite the momentary setback, he was quickly acquitted and allowed to continue his public campaign encouraging the Holy Name of Jesus as a focus of devotion.[222]

In his 1425 Florentine sermon on the merits of the Name of Jesus, Bernardino referenced the long history of holy figures endorsing its virtues, and turned to more practical devotional uses explaining the ability of the Name of Jesus to heal, when he addressed those who worried about suffering from illnesses and relied upon superstitious practices to deal with these issues. In this sermon, Bernardino suggested to the crowd that 'pistolenze, guerre e scandali' occur 'dove el suo Nome non è onorato e riverito'. According to Bernardino, 'ognuno con ferma fede si rifidi nel Nome di Gesù, e certamente sarà essaudito e liberato da ogni infermità'. By relinquishing 'ogni breve e ogni incanto', Bernardino explained how 'con questo Nome, co' la fede, arete ogni grazia da Dio'.[223]

While Bernardino's promotion of the Sacred Monogram as a devotional symbol is well-known and studied, the amuletic powers he attributes to it have received less attention. While Mormando mentions Bernardino's advocacy of the Sacred Monogram and his disapproval of the *brevi*, he does not connect the two practices.[224] Bolzoni and Bargellini, however, both discuss the Sacred Monogram as the acceptable *breve* that Bernardino proposed as a replacement for the superstitious and maleficent *brevi*.[225] Ioriatti devotes an entire section of her thesis to the concept of the substitution of Name of Jesus as the 'breve de' brevi' in relation to the sermons of Bernardino of Siena and Giacomo della Marca.[226] However, they do not investigate how the promotion of the Sacred Monogram resulted in use of the symbol in devotional practice and everyday life. This chapter instead draws links between the promotion of the Sacred Monogram as both an alternative sacred symbol and as an orthodox protective device by exploring how it appears in the material record, focusing particularly on how it was worn on the body.

The Roccapelago IHS Breve

Returning to the slip of paper printed with four versions of the Sacred Monogram in the *IHS* form, what does an analysis of the material object suggest about the devotee's relationship with the Sacred Monogram? While the burials at Roccapelago date from the mid-sixteenth through to

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221 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 148-49.
222 Scholars believe that the trial took place in 1426: Mormando, 54, and Appendix I: 'The Date of the Roman Witch Trial and of Bernardino's Heresy Trial', 235.
223 San Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV', II, 179-82.
224 Mormando, 103-05.
225 Bolzoni, 215 and note 204; Piero Bargellini, *San Bernardino da Siena* (Siena: Cantagalli, 2012), 131-32.
226 Ioriatti, 131-45.

the eighteenth centuries, the paper cannot be securely dated.[227] The sheet is imprinted with four different versions of the Sacred Monogram framed by a cloud: in the right-hand imprints, the *IHS* is surrounded by fluffy clouds and is surmounted by the cross, as it was often depicted. The cross atop the H in the upper-right quadrant has floriated ends in the style of the *croce gigliata*, while the cross in the lower-right quadrant is made of simple lines.[228] Two additional symbols accompany the Sacred Monogram printed on the left-hand side of the sheet, which are both framed by rays of light that reflect the influence of Bernardino's solar version of the Sacred Monogram. The *IHS* appears above three nails in the upper left-hand quadrant and above a heart in the lower left-hand quadrant. The three nails are symbolic of the Three Nails of the Crucifixion and when the Jesuits adopted the Sacred Monogram, they often incorporated this symbolic detail. The *IHS* accompanied by the Sacred Heart is also linked to later depictions of the Sacred Monogram, particularly in Jesuit devotion. The decoration on top of the Sacred Heart is difficult to read; it may be a depiction of the Crown of Thorns, the Three Nails of the Crucifixion, or a flaming heart (an attribute of Ignatius of Loyola).[229] Therefore, this object might be linked to the promotion of the Sacred Monogram by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, following the legacy of the Franciscans' efforts in the fifteenth century.[230]

To fit into a pouch the sheet of paper was folded in four along the lines that divided the four versions of the Sacred Monogram. The small size of the sheet and the variety of the depictions of the Sacred Monogram also raise further questions. Was this object intended to be worn as a set of four images, or were the squares meant to be cut up and used separately? Was the paper part of a larger sheet imprinted with more varieties of the Sacred Monogram or with repetitions of these various types? Devotees may have drawn parallels between these small cells, with the *IHS* set in a circle, and the Eucharistic wafer. Typically, Eucharistic wafer irons included a design to make a larger host for the priest to break apart during the blessing as well as smaller circular hosts impressed with a symbol, most often the Sacred Monogram (*IHS/yhs*) or the cross, for distribution to the faithful (Figure 2.4).[231] *Agnus Dei* wax medallions were valued for their

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[227] Labate, 'Documenti cartacei', 259.

[228] See Chapter One, p. 15 for an exploration of another *breve* embellished with a *croce gigliata*.

[229] The flaming Sacred Heart was used as an attribute for Saint Ignatius of Loyola and was promoted by his followers as a devotional symbol. It was also used as a symbol of the Paduan saints, Antony, and Augustine: Bernard L. Fontana and Edward McCain, *A Gift of Angels: The Art of Mission San Xavier Del Bac* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 149; Margaret Emma Tabor, *The Saints in Art with their Attributes and Symbols Alphabetically Arranged*, 2nd edn (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1913), xxvii; Fassl, 191.

[230] James Clifton, 'A Variety of Spiritual Pleasures: Anthonis Sallaert's Glorification of the Name of Jesus', in *Jesuit Image Theory*, Intersections 45, ed. by Wieste de Boer, Karl A.E. Enenkel, and Walter S. Melio (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 318-51.

[231] While this Italian Eucharistic wafering iron is undated, Kumler illustrates similar medieval and early modern irons from France and Spain. See Aden Kumler, 'The Multiplication of the Species: Eucharistic Morphology in the Middle Ages', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 59/60 (2011), 179-91 (185); Oleg Zastrow, 'Antiche inedite schiacce decorate artisticamente', in *Rassegna di studi e di notizie*, 34, Year 38 (Milan: Settore Musei, Castello Sforzesco, 2011), 245-76 (246).

visual and tangible links to the Eucharist, the body of Christ, and were often worn on the body.[232] Would the visual link between the sheet of paper and the Eucharistic wafer add devotional value to the object? It is also possible that these small *IHS* paper prints were meant to be cut up and consumed like the Eucharist. Sheets of paper stamped with small devotional symbols set in a grid that were meant for consumption were popular in Germany, where they were known as *Schluckbildchen* ('papers for swallowing'), in the Alps, and in Italy, where they were known as *santini eduli* (Figure 2.5).[233] While most of the surviving printed sheets with edible images date to the seventeenth century and later, probably due to their ephemeral nature, other slips of paper that were inscribed with devotional texts known as *Esszettel* ('papers for eating') are documented from the middle ages.[234] Before the age of print these would have included hand-written words, but later might include either handwritten or printed texts. Therefore, printed *santini eduli* may have a longer history that was either undocumented due to their ephemerality or was conflated with edible devotional texts (*Esszettel*). Did the Sacred Monogram on this sheet qualify as word (*Esszettel*) or image (*Schluckbildcher*) to be consumed? The designation probably depended on the devotee's interpretation and understanding of the Sacred Monogram as either the abbreviation of the Name of Christ or an embodiment of Christ Himself.

The small squares of the *Schluckbildcher/santini eduli* and *Esszettel* were meant to be cut up and eaten as both spiritual and practical medicine, often used to treat fevers and pains. They might be applied to a piece of bread to make them more palatable, while simultaneously referencing the Eucharistic wafer. They might also be soaked in water until they dissolved, to make them easier to swallow, or perhaps even rolled up and swallowed with water like a pill. Sources also indicate that they were mixed in with the food of farm animals to protect and heal their diseases.[235]

Often these edible sheets were collected at pilgrimage sites where they were touched to a relic or miraculous image to absorb the healing power and protection of the holy figure. They might also be blessed by a priest to enhance their efficacy. Among the pilgrimage sites in Italy where these types of paper pills were sold were the Marchigian shrine of the Madonna of Loreto

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232 Galandra Cooper, 'Investigating the "Case"'; Irene Galandra Cooper, 'The Materiality of Devotion in Cinquecento Naples' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 2016), 170-77.

233 Gianfranco Crupi, '"Mirabili visioni": from movable books to movable texts', *JLIS: Italian Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science (Rivista italiana di biblioteconomia, archivistica e scienza dell'informazione)*, 7 (2016), 26-87 (48); Katharina Wilkens, 'Drinking the Quran, Swallowing the Madonna', in *Alternative Voices: A Plurality Approach for Religious Studies. Essays in Honor of Ulrich Berner*, ed. by Afe Adogame, Magnus Echtler, and Oliver Freiberger (Göttingen and Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2013), 243-59 (248-49); Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Kimberly Nichols, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 68-69; Lisa Pon, *A Printed Icon in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 59-63.

234 See the discussion of slips of paper inscribed with devotional text meant to be consumed for healing purposes discussed in the previous chapter (pp. 44-47); see also: Wilkens, 249, and Schmidt and Nichols, *Altered and Adorned*, 68.

235 Wilkens, 248-49.

and the shrine of the Madonna del Buon Consiglio in the town of Genazzano in Lazio.[236] Although the Sacred Monogram was not particularly linked to Loreto, other objects found in the crypt of Roccapleago, including pilgrimage medals, indicate links between the community and devotion to the Madonna of Loreto.[237] The Roccapelago *IHS* slip may have come from the pilgrimage site of Giacomo della Marca, who was a follower of Bernardino of Siena and who was known to promote the healing and protective merits of the Sacred Monogram. At Giacomo della Marca's pilgrimage site in the Marchigian town of Monteprandone, Giacomo's successors also passed out small sheets of paper stamped with an image of the saint and a short Latin prayer (Figure 2.6). Slips of paper like this may have functioned as a *breve* or as medicine meant to be consumed. The *breve of San Giacomo* appears to have been made of two separate sheets of paper, image and text, which have been joined (or re-joined). Perhaps devotees might eat the *breve* of San Giacomo della Marca, the image or the text, or wear it in a pouch. In fact, the survival of the *IHS* sheet at Roccapelago might indicate that devotees wore these edible texts as *brevi* until they were needed for more immediate healing purposes, when they would be consumed.

'Portarlo ne' patarnostri e a collo'

While the Roccapelago *IHS* bronze medallion was worn hidden in a pouch on the body of the deceased like a *breve*, the devotee may have worn it more prominently as an object of adornment during life, perhaps around the neck as a pendant on a chain or simple leather cord. It may also have been pinned to clothing in the way that pilgrimage badges were often displayed to protect the devotee during their return journey and after their pilgrimage.[238] A painting of Saint Catherine of Alexandria illustrates the saint with a similar medallion used as a brooch on her garment (Figure 2.7). That the Roccapelago medallion is impressed with holy monograms of the Names of Jesus and Mary on each side indicates that one side would be put on display to the world while the other side would touch the devotee's skin and be hidden. The Marian Monogram, though less prominent than the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus, also reached new levels of popularity between the early sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries.[239] Two-sided objects with religious symbols or images on each side were also a popular format for devotional tools. Often the Sacred Monogram was depicted on one side, possibly as a prompt to guide the early stages of meditation. When the double-sided object was not being used for prayer, the image might be turned over so that the Sacred Monogram was on display, illustrating the piety of the home's

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236 Wilkens, 248.
237 Gruppioni, Labate, Mercuri, et al., 'Gli scavi', 232.
238 Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 73-74; Megan H. Foster-Campbell, 'Pilgrimage Through the Pages: Pilgrims' Badges in Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts', in *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), I, 227-74 (231-33).
239 Corinna Tania Gallori, *Il monogramma dei nomi di Gesù e Maria: storia di un'iconografia tra scrittura e immagine* (Asola: Gilgamesh Edizioni, 2011), 31.

inhabitants and its presence serving a protective role.[240] For example, fifteenth-century panel paintings (and polyptychs) meant for personal devotion often depicted the Sacred Monogram on one side and a devotional image on the other, such as a painting illustrating the story of Tobias and the Angel on one side and the Sacred Monogram set in a radiant sun on the opposite (Figure 2.8).[241]

The medallion found at Roccapelago suggests other ways that devotees might wear the Sacred Monogram on their bodies, as proposed by San Bernardino. Bernardino prescribed 'che sempre nel cuore si portasse questo nome e à collo', indicating that devotees should both internalise their devotion to the Name of Jesus, but that they should also wear outward manifestations of their devotion around their necks.[242]

Rosaries, Paternostri, & Pendants

In his 1425 Sienese sermon on the Name of Jesus, Bernardino references the teachings of Blessed Vincent and also orders that devotees should 'Così portarlo ne' patarnostri e a collo', però che Idio gli à dato Nome che è sopra a ogni nome'.[243] Bernardino suggested that devotees carry the Sacred Monogram with them by including it as part of their 'patarnostri' [*sic*]. The terms *paternostri* and *corona del Rosario* were often used interchangeably to reference beads used for counting prayers that were becoming a popular devotional tool over the course of the fifteenth century.[244] The term *paternoster* was also often used to refer generically to beads, so Bernardino's suggestion that devotees wear the device on their *paternostri* might also be interpreted as a sign that they should wear it as a pendant on any beaded necklace, in addition to the more explicitly devotional rosaries and paternosters.[245] A man by the name of Antonio di Giovanni pawned 'una collana di coralli con una luna d'argento aniellata col nome di Gesù' along with other devotional

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240 This second side may have taken the place of the shutters or curtains often used to cover and protect the devotional image when not in use: see Deborah Howard, 'Family Life', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 8-11 (10).

241 See Chapter Five for further analysis of these types of paintings (p. 153). A great number of small panels depicting the story of Tobias and the Angel Raphael survive from Renaissance Tuscany, indicating that they were possibly popular for personal devotion. The story is seen as particularly relevant for adolescent boys, and it has been proposed that these were commissioned to provide protection for the sons of merchants during their business trips on behalf of the family. See Ludovica Sebregondi, 'Clothes and Teenagers: What Young Men Wore in Fifteenth-Century Florence', in *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society, 1150-1650*, ed. by Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002), 27-50 (34, note 24).

242 Letter from Bernardino da Siena attached to a copy of sermons from Prato in the Spring of 1424, in Dionisio Pacetti, 'La predicazione di s. Bernardino in Toscana. Con documenti inediti estratti dagli Atti del Processo di Canonizzazione', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 33 (1940), Part 1, 268-318; 34 (1941), Part 2, 261-83 (Part 1, 294-97), cited in Ioriatti, 154.

243 The *IHS* was also a symbol of Saint Vincent Ferrer, probably the Blessed Vincent who Bernardino refers to in this sermon. Vincent Ferrer was a Dominican predecessor (d. 1419) of Bernardino of Siena. San Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV', II, 180 and 186, note 59; Fontana and McCain, *A Gift of Angels*, 38 and 297.

244 On the technical distinctions between *paternostri* (paternosters), which typically had one set of 10-11 beads and *corone* (rosaries), which had 5 *decine* (or sets of 10) representing *Ave Maria* prayers separated by larger beads representing *Pater Noster* prayers, see Mary Laven, 'The Rosary', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 94-96.

245 On the use of paternoster to refer to beads, see Galandra Cooper, 'The Materiality', 200.

items including an amber icon, a white bone cross, and a black *paternoster* in 1595 at the Monte di Pietà in Urbino.[246] It is unclear if Antonio's coral beads with a moon-shaped Sacred Monogram pendant also functioned as a rosary (with a specific number of beads meant to mark prayers), or if it was merely considered a necklace. Devotees might also include medallions, such as the one found at Roccapelago, on their rosary, like the pendant depicting the Annunciation that hangs from the rosary in Leandro Bassano's *Woman at her Devotions* (Figure 2.9 & detail).

In other cases, the Sacred Monogram might be inscribed on the rosary beads themselves. A string of hexagonal rosary beads was enamelled with flowers as well as devotional symbols and words. The flowers represent the origins of the *corona del rosario* as the Virgin's crown of roses, with each flower representing a prayer to the Virgin.[247] The other devotional content includes symbols from the *Arma Christi*, such as the cross, ladder, and pliers, as well as a variety of inscriptions, such as the Sacred Monogram (Figure 2.10).[248] During prayer using such a rosary devotees could feel the letters beneath their fingers while also looking at the symbols illustrated on the rosary, thus creating both tangible and visual links to the various episodes from the Life of Christ and the Virgin that the devotee was called to meditate upon during rosary prayer. The feel of the *IHS* beneath the devotee's fingers might help them to recall the meaning and power of the Sacred Monogram as they reflected on the Name of Jesus.

Scholars have demonstrated links between the set of beads now in Berlin, as well as others in museum collections, and a painting by Bartolomeo Veneto (Figure 2.11).[249] In the painting a woman wears the rosary beads around her neck in the form of a necklace, rather than holding them in her hands or suspended from her girdle in the way that prayer beads are usually illustrated in the Renaissance. In this way, her application of the Name of Jesus (*IHS*) to her body follows both of Bernardino's instructions: to wear the Sacred Monogram around one's neck and to wear it on one's rosary.

In addition to the humble medallion found at Roccapelago, other pendants inscribed with the Sacred Monogram have survived from Renaissance Italy. These pendants were occasionally made with hollow recesses between the sides of the pendant that are thought to have been used as containers for holy substances, such as relics or sacramentals in the form of blessed wax *Agnus*

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[246] I am grateful to Alessia Meneghin for sharing the results of her research in the Marchigian Monte di Pietà and her forthcoming article with me. Antonio di Giovanni, 17/2/1595, Urbino, Monte Pietà, busta 2, 78v, cited in Alessia Meneghin, 'Fonti per la storia', (forthcoming).
[247] Laven, 'The Rosary', 94.
[248] Irene Galandra Cooper, 'The Pious Body', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 122-29 (125-26).
[249] Nicholas Penny, *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Paintings*, 3 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the National Gallery, 2004), I: Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona, 10-14; Galandra Cooper, 'The Pious Body', 125; Mary Laven and Irene Galandra Cooper, 'The Material Culture of Piety in the Italian Renaissance: Re-touching the Rosary', in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Richardson, Hamling, and Gaimster, 338-53 (345-48).

Dei.[250] On many of these container-pendants, the side opposite the Sacred Monogram bears an image of the Lamb of God, which might specify its contents.[251] One pendant trimmed in gold depicts the Sacred Monogram in the *yhs* form. The edges of the letters have been designed so that they terminate in decorative floriated scrolls, while the cross dominates the composition (Figure 2.12). *Agnus Dei* were often counterfeited and the Church was determined to protect devotees from the trade of these fake wax medallions.[252] Therefore the depiction of the Sacred Monogram opposite the Lamb of God adds a second sacred stamp of legitimacy to the pendants and signifies that the substance contained within was in fact the blessed sacramental. This suggestion leads to further research questions: would devotees purchase these pendants separately and insert their own piece of blessed wax? Or were they purchasing the pendants with wax inside and trusting the holy symbols (the Sacred Monogram and *Agnus Dei*) on each side as proof that a sacramental was contained within? Less expensive than elaborate jewellery set with costly gemstones, but more expensive than the humble bronze pendant found at Roccapelago, a variety of parcel-gilt and *niello* silver and copper-alloy dual-sided pendants survive, illustrating their popularity in Renaissance Italy (Figure 2.13).[253] Archival documentation, including the pawn records of the Monte di Pietà in the Marche, illustrates that the Sacred Monogram often appeared on container-pendants meant to hold *Agnus Dei* with details of objects like 'un collo di coralli e un agnus dei d'argento dov'è il nome di Gesù', pawned by Messer Carlo d'Asti in 1593.[254]

The use of the Sacred Monogram on these assumed *Agnus Dei* containers also offers another interesting point of reflection. As discussed earlier, the terms *Agnus Dei* and *breve* appear to have occasionally been used interchangeably, an ambiguity which must be considered when these terms appear in the archival record.[255] On another two-sided pendant at the British Museum the *IHS* is clearly inscribed on one side in *nielloed* silver and gold pendant, while the *Agnus Dei* illustrated on the opposite side is less recognizable (Figure 2.14). On this pendant, the loop used to suspend the pendant has been placed so that the *IHS* symbol appears upside-down. This may have been done intentionally so that the wearer would see the *IHS* clearly when looking down at the pendant around their neck, but it may also have been a mistake by the maker or by a later restorer.

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[250] Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space', 163-64; John Cherry, 'Containers for Agnus Dei', in *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. by Christopher Entwistle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 171-84 (172-75); Galandra Cooper, 'Investigating the "Case"'; Galandra Cooper, 'The Materiality', 147-59; Musacchio, 'Lambs, Coral, Teeth', 148-50.
[251] See container pendant inscribed with the *Agnus Dei* prayer in the following chapter, p. 80, fig. 3.26.
[252] Galandra Cooper, 'Investigating the "Case"'; Galandra Cooper, 'The Materiality', 169-70; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art, Marriage and Family*, 176-77.
[253] Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001), 62.
[254] Messer Carlo d'Asti, 20/2/1593, Urbino, Monte Pietà, busta 2, 36v cited in Meneghin.
[255] See Chapter One, p. 23, fig. 1.3.

Other similar pendants bearing the Sacred Monogram on one side and the image of a couple facing each other on the opposite side also raise questions regarding their purpose (Figures 2.15 & 2.16). Did they hold another devotional substance, such as a relic, sand from the Holy Land, or even a slip of paper inscribed with a prayer in the form of a *breve* instead of an *Agnus Dei*? It has been proposed that the examples with the couples were given as pious love tokens, perhaps during courtship or at the point of marriage, and that they may or may not have held a sacred substance.[256] Musacchio argues that the examples depicting a couple probably did not hold an *Agnus Dei*, but were instead more secular tokens, yet the presence of the Sacred Monogram on the opposite side does indicate a religious association. *Agnus Dei* pendants inscribed with the Sacred Monogram might also be given to children. In the painting of the *Madonna della Pergola*, John the Baptist offers the Christ Child a set of protective charms that includes a crucifix, branch of coral, a tooth, and a pendant that Musacchio refers to as an *Agnus Dei* container (Figure 2.17).[257] When viewed up close, the *Agnus Dei* pendant appears to be decorated in enamel with a sun that resembles the one that so often framed the symbol of the Sacred Monogram.

Rings

Seeing the Monogram of the Name of Jesus on a piece of jewellery could provoke the wearer to honour the Name of Jesus in their thoughts in the way Bernardino suggested, but its presence might also serve as a protective device against illness and harm like the *breve* inscribed with the Sacred Monogram recommended by Bernardino. Though not specifically prescribed by Bernardino, rings also offered the opportunity for devotees to display their devotion to the Name of Jesus. Of the thirty inscribed devotional rings surveyed for this thesis, seven are inscribed with the Sacred Monogram (Table 1).[258] Of these seven, the Sacred Monogram appears twice on its own and five times as part of another inscription, such as the name of the ring's owner. Other rings include the Sacred Monogram alongside or as part of a longer devotional phrase; these will be discussed in the next chapter, which explores other types of devotional inscriptions on jewellery. The records of the Marchigian Monte di Pietà provide archival proof of those who owned (and pawned) such rings. For example, along with a small *Agnus Dei*, Messer Fabio Mercurio pawned 'un anello d'oro col nome di Gesù' in December of 1597.[259]

One Sacred Monogram ring was made to be used as a seal ring and is etched with the Sacred Monogram surmounted by the Cross and accompanied by the Three Nails of the

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[256] See also Musacchio, *Art, Marriage and Family*, 176-77; Musacchio, 'Lambs, Coral, Teeth', 148-49.
[257] Musacchio, 'Lambs, Coral, Teeth', 139-40, 148-50; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, 'Conception and Birth', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 124-35 (128-29).
[258] The Sacred Monogram appears three times in the *yhs* form and four times in the *IHS* form.
[259] Messer Fabio Mercurio, 20/12/1597, Urbino, Monte di Pietà, busta 2, 146v, cited in Meneghin.

Crucifixion (Figure 2.18). Around the frame of the bezel, the name GIRONIMO GODO is inscribed, probably the name of the owner.[260] The wearer would not only be able to wear a sign of devotion to the Sacred Monogram, but would also be able to use this tool to mark documents with his name accompanied by the Name of Jesus, presenting himself as devout and the document as trustworthy.[261]

Of the two rings inscribed solely with the Sacred Monogram, one is a simple silver ring with the *yhs* form inscribed with *niello* on the bezel (Figure 2.19). The Sacred Monogram is flanked by two roughly-drawn stars, while the band is etched with decorative designs. A more elaborate ring set with a topaz or pink ruby and embellished with decorative enamel designs appears to be an object of luxurious adornment (Figure 2.20). However, inscribed inside the bezel of the ring set in enamel, the symbol of the *IHS* appears. The Sacred Monogram is again topped by the Crucifix and accompanied by the Three Nails of the Crucifixion, which would touch the wearer's finger. Even when hidden from view, the Monogram offered protection to its wearer through contact with the body.[262]

Garments

Devotees also applied the Name of Jesus to their bodies in other ways. A linen shirt made for a boy, which has been elaborately embroidered with red and silver-gilt thread in decorative patterns, has also been embellished with a version of the Sacred Monogram on the collar (Figure 2.21).[263] The H surmounted by the cross is prominent within the circle surrounded by rays of light, although the y/I and S seem to have been excluded. However, an embroidered indication meant to resemble the Three Nails of the Crucifixion appears below the H. Linen shirts were worn as undergarments by most levels of society by the sixteenth century, and functioned as symbols of cleanliness and health.[264] This example's embroidery indicates a higher social class. The decorative embroidered edges on shirts may have peeked out under other layers of clothing, displaying the wearer's devotion. The location of the *IHS* design would also have allowed the wearer to have the Sacred Monogram near his heart. Printed embroidery manuals that were becoming popular in the sixteenth century provided patterns for both professional embroiderers and at-home practitioners to embellish clothing and other textiles with a variety of versions of the Sacred Monogram (Figures 2.22 & 2.23). While the Sacred Monogram patterns might be

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[260] While these rings with the Sacred Monogram and Nails of the Crucifixion have often been linked to the Jesuits, there is no specific evidence to indicate that Gironimo was a Jesuit.
[261] See Bedos-Rezak, 1.
[262] For further discussion of this object and the significance of bodily contact with religious symbols see Katherine Tycz, 'Devotion to the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 104-07, and Galandra Cooper, 'The Pious Body', 122-23.
[263] Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 4: Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women, c. 1540-1660* (Macmillan, London, 2008), 19, pattern p. 67.
[264] Sandra Cavallo, 'Healthy, Beauty and Hygiene', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 174-87 (182-83).

viewed as intended for liturgical use and ecclesiastical vestments, the example of this boy's shirt indicates that the Name of Jesus might also be applied to lay clothing and household textiles.

As this shirt illustrates, children were particularly likely to have clothing, perhaps lovingly embroidered by their mothers, with holy words such as the Sacred Monogram inscribed for both protection and as signs of devotion. Wealthy children often wore veils to their baptisms embroidered with words like the name of God in gold thread.[265] Children often spent the first perilous months of their life swaddled, both to soothe them and to encourage the development of proper posture. While most swaddling bands do not survive, extant elaborately decorated bands that would have functioned as the outer layers of swaddling on festive occasions do survive in small numbers. These more decorative swaddling bands would have been used during the period after birth when the new family was visited by friends and family, or as Christening garments.[266] One swaddling band was lavishly embroidered with designs in red and gold thread and the Sacred Monogram (*IHS*) surmounted by a cross (Figure 2.24). Other bands might be embroidered with other devotional symbols, such as a cross (Figure 2.25). The use of red and white in swaddling was common as often an expensive layer of red cloth was used to cover the white linen (Figure 2.26).[267]

Adults, too, might rely upon the protection of the Sacred Monogram, in both daily life and in extraordinary circumstances. A suit of armour meant for a mounted soldier is decorated with devotional imagery including the Sacred Monogram at the centre of the chest, over the heart (Figure 2.27). The Sacred Monogram is set in the sunburst and topped by the Cross over the H. It is flanked by two protective saints, Catherine and Sebastian, who both suffered painful martyrdoms; their presence might be intended to protect the wearer from excruciating death.[268] While this might have been parade armour, it may have also been worn during battle or during a joust, with the Sacred Monogram and saints adding divine protection to the physical protection of the layer of metal.

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[265] Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 49; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, '35a. & 35b Pendants with Facing Couple (obverse) and Sacred Monogram (reverse)', in *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Andrea Bayer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 103-04.

[266] Nancy Edwards, '128. Portrait of a Baby', in *Art and Love*, ed. by Bayer, 277-78; Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 49.

[267] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'Appendix. Extracts from the Journal of a Florentine *balio*, Piero di Francesco Puro da Viccio', in *Woman, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. by Lydia Cochraine (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 163, note 103; Edwards, '128. Portrait of a Baby', 278.

[268] While the Sacred Monogram appears flipped in the image, this may be a result of a photo error rather than an error of the maker, and this issue requires further investigation. 'Armatura, Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna', *Patrimonio culturale dell'Emilia Romagna* <http://bbcc.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it/pater/loadcard.do?id_card=179721> [accessed 23 April 2017].

Miracles Attributed to the Material Power of the Sacred Monogram

In his sermons on the virtues of the Name of Jesus, Bernardino not only recommends that devotees wear the Sacred Monogram on their bodies, but also provides evidence of the efficacy of the Sacred Monogram for those who heed his advice. Throughout the sermons, Bernardino references miracles in which devotees placed the Sacred Monogram on their bodies and were healed. According to Bernardino, the Sacred Monogram helped possessed people. The Name of Jesus had long been seen as a potent tool against demonic possession due to the biblical passage that describes how Jesus instructed his followers, 'In my name you will cast out demons'.[269] Bernardino tells the story of 'una donna […] a Brescia, la quale era spiritata. Posto che le fu adosso el Nome di Gesù, subbito fu liberata da quello spirito'. Bernardino places emphasis on the importance of the written word, specifically the text of the Sacred Monogram: 'Anco per lo Nome di Gesù scritto, un indimonata guarì. E fulle posto quello Nome non avedutamente da uno fanciullo'. Another girl, who was unable to eat, was healed when the Name of Jesus was placed on her body.[270] In the recorded miracles attributed to Giacomo della Marca after his canonization, a lengthier description of a miracle explains how Giacomo harnessed the power of the written Sacred Monogram during his years of preaching. He encouraged devotees suffering from illness to use the material form of the Sacred Monogram as medicine. According to one story from the life of Giacomo della Marca,

> Predicando il santo [Giacomo della Marca] una Quaresima nella Città di Ancona, una Signora nobile il mandò à pregare, che facesse oratione à Dio per una sua figliuola, ch'era tutta piagata, senza trovar rimedio, che le fusse giovevole, & era già disperata di vita. Il Santo con la sua infinita carità, e fervore fece oratione per quella inferma, poi le mandò scritto il nome di Giesù; la madre con viva Fede glielo legò al collo, essortandola à ricevere con divotione, e Fede così sicura medicina, & à sperare la salute da quel nome Santissimo: Credette la figliuola alla madre, onde la seguente mattina si levò sana del letto. Venendo il Medico alla sua hora à visitarla, per curarla, e trovandola fare le sue facende per casa, restò tutto pien di stuppore: & inteso il modo della sua salute, & un Zio della giovanetta dopò la condussero al Santo, dandoli conto dell'infermità, ch'in quella notte era sanata col nome di Giesù. [271]

The power of this 'nome di Giesù' came both from its inherent power as the manifestation of Christ, but also because it was handwritten by the holy man. According to the story the faithful prayers of the mother and the daughter coupled with the presence of the Sacred Monogram on the body of the ailing girl worked in tandem to harness the power of the Name of Jesus to heal her so quickly that she could tend to her household chores a day after being on her deathbed.

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[269] Mark 16:17; see also: Mormando, 104.

[270] Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV', 181-82.

[271] Orazio Diola Marcos and Diego Navarro, *Croniche de gli ordini instituiti dal padre S. Francesco; che contengono la sua vita, la sua morte, i suoi miracoli, e di tutti i suoi santi discepoli, & compagni; composte dal r.p.f. Marco da Lisbona in lingua portughese: poi ridotte in castigliana dal r.p.f. Diego Nauarro; e tradotte nella nostra italiana da m. Horatio Diola bolognese, & hora di nuouo ristampate, & con somma diligenza ricorrette. L' opera è diuisa in due volumi* (Venice: Fiorauante Prato, 1585), Parte terza, libro sesto, 194v.

Fuelled by the preaching of Bernardino of Siena and his Franciscan followers, the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus rose to prominence as one of the primary acceptable devotional texts to be worn on the body. Although the Monogram had more ancient origins, in the early decades of the fifteenth century its popularity increased on the Italian peninsula due to the efforts of preachers like Bernardino of Siena and Giacomo della Marca. Its reputation continued to grow over the course of the sixteenth century when it became linked with the devotional programme of the Jesuits.

Extant objects, archival records, and miracle stories help illuminate the ways in which devotees engaged with the devotional objects inscribed with the Sacred Monogram prescribed by these holy men. The material evidence illustrates that devotees placed great faith in the Name of Jesus, particularly in the form of the Sacred Monogram. Objects decorated with the Sacred Monogram that were meant to be worn on the body offered devotees a personal way to engage with the holy symbol during their everyday life. By wearing the Sacred Monogram, devotees signalled their devotion. While some of the articles discussed might be displayed prominently by the wearer, others would have been hidden from view and kept in close contact with the devotee's flesh, the inscribed object's presence known only by the wearer and by God. As this chapter argues, devotees believed that by applying the Sacred Monogram to their bodies they could obtain the benefits of its miraculous, holy, and protective powers.

PART I: ON THE BODY

CHAPTER THREE

Religious Inscriptions on Objects of Adornment

Jewellery

In the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, a fifteenth-century Italian ring illustrates how Renaissance devotees applied the Sacred Monogram to their objects of adornment (Figure 3.1). In addition to the Sacred Monogram in the *IHS* form that is engraved into the bezel of the silver ring, the ring's hoop is engraved with letters punctuated by cross marks on both the outside and the inside. While one ring inscribed with the Sacred Monogram discussed in the previous chapter also included the owner's name, the supplemental inscription on this ring holds more powerful significance. The inscription on the exterior of the band reads: '+HCER + S + DIA + BIZ + SA + SI +', while the internal inscription is transcribed as 'ABIZ + SAN + HCBERBN'. The letters have been identified as the Zacharias blessing, which was traditionally abbreviated as '+Z+DIA+BIZ+SAB+ZHCF+BFRS'.[272] The blessing was believed to possess the power to protect wearers from succumbing to a painful death caused by pestilence.

Although it is often interpreted as being used for pseudo-religious magical protection, the Zacharias blessing was even said to have protected the participants of the Council of Trent from plague between 1546 and 1547.[273] Pope Gregory XIII allegedly endorsed the efficacy of the Zacharias blessing, which has been associated both with the eighth-century pope Saint Zacharias, and the sixth-century Patriarch of Jerusalem.[274] Crosses in the shape of the 'Cross of Lorraine ✝' with two cross bars, known as 'Scheyern' crosses or *Pestkreuze* in southern Germany, were associated with the Benedictine order and used as amulets against plague. These crosses also were often inscribed with the Zacharias Blessing (*Zacharias-segen*) (Figure 3.2).[275] The blessing was frequently written on doors or engraved on church or civic bells.[276] While these examples illustrate the popularity of the prayer in northern Europe, a late nineteenth-century amuletic printed prayer sheet includes an image of the Zacharias blessing printed on a similar cross, emphasising the enduring value of the prayer in popular devotion (Figure 3.3). The title in Italian

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[272] The blessing could be written in variations of this abbreviation as well, much like the one on the ring. Alfons A. Barb, 'St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr: A Study in Charms and Incantations', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11 (1948), 35-67 (38); see also: Edmund Waterton, *Dactyliotheca Watertoniana: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Finger-Rings in the Collection of Mrs Waterton* (1866) (London, National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, MSL,1879/1275), 321-24.

[273] Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 224.

[274] It may also be associated with Saint Zacharias, John the Baptist's father. Walter Leo Hildburgh, '"Caravaca" Crosses and Their Uses as Amulets in Spain', *Folklore*, 51 (1940), 241-58; Johnson, 224; Barb, 38, note 5.

[275] The opposite side was often inscribed with the Benedict blessing and his image, which offered general protection: Bruno Kisch, M.D., 'Plagues and Coins', *Ciba Symposia* (1948), 807-10 (807-08); Hildburgh, 243-45.

[276] Ellen Ettlinger, 'The Hildburgh Collection of Austrian and Bavarian Amulets in the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum', *Folklore*, 76 (1965), 104-17 (108).

explains how the prayer against the plague was thought to be linked to Zacharias of Jeusalem. Surrounding the cross, an exposition in Latin explains the significance of each letter of the abbreviated prayer and further emphasises its protective potency. This Zacharias prayer concludes with a rubric that links the prayer's power to its historic use during the Council of Trent: 'Questa Orazione recitata con tutta venerazione e fede viva preserva mirabilmente da ogni male contagioso come si sperimentò dai PP. del Concilio di Trento nel 1546'.[277] While much of the inscription is hidden on the inside of the ring, the proximity of the inscription to the wearer's flesh offered both a prompt to devotion and powerful protection.

Other objects of adornment marked with religious inscriptions were worn by Renaissance Italians in their daily lives. This chapter considers both the minute religious inscriptions that would be mostly hidden from view, known to the wearer alone, as well as more prominent inscriptions visible to others. It analyses how objects of adornment, including rings, pendants, belts, and armour with devotional inscriptions functioned as material prayers for their wearers. Renaissance Italians might wear religious jewellery as a symbol of their piety, for protection, or to gain the favour of God. Indulgences were occasionally promised to devotees who wore devotional jewellery. One indulgence notice issued by Pope Sisto V, 'Alle Corone, Grani, et Medaglie benedette', dated 23 March 1586, conferred tantalising benefits upon those who feared Purgatory: 'Chi havera adosso una de dicte Corone, Grani ò Medaglie benedetti in punto de morte dicendo continuamente *yhu* con il cuore non pote[n]do con la bocca havera indulgentia plenaria et remissione de tutti li suoi peccati à culpa et Pena'.[278] Religious inscriptions on objects of adornment might also function as a devotional prompt for wearers, offer protection like the Zacharias blessing, or serve as information bearers. For example, the identifying captions that accompany small depictions of saints on a set of rock crystal rosary beads provide information about potentially confusing or difficult to read iconography.[279] One banner above two of the saints identifies 'S. IOHANUS AND S. DURADE', providing the devotee with details about the saints so they knew who to envisage as they prayed the rosary (Figure 3.4).

Rings

As common objects of adornment exchanged at weddings, given as gifts, or passed down from generation to generation, rings often incorporated holy and protective inscriptions or images.[280]

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[277] *Croce: Li San Zaccaria vescovo di Gerusalemme* (Bologna: Tipi Chierici, c. 1890?)

[278] *TRANSCRIPTS of numerous Papal Indulgences granted to Paters, Ave Marias, Rosaries, Crowns, Medals, Crosses, etc., by the Popes Adrian VI., Paul III., Pius IV., Pius V., Gregory XIII., Sixtus V., Clement VIII., and Paul V., from the year 1522 to 1606*, London, British Library, Add MS 12061, f. 125.

[279] Galandra Cooper, 'The Pious Body', 126.

[280] Diana Scarisbrick, 'Part 2: Medieval and Later Rings', in *Finger Rings from Ancient to Modern*, ed. by Diana Scarisbrick and Martin Henig (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2003), 26-29. On ring exchanges as part of the wedding ritual, see: Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Griselda Complex: Dowry and Marriage Gifts in the Quattrocento', in *Women, Family and Ritual*, trans. by Cochraine, 231-37.

While the devotional inscriptions decorating the surface of rings are often miniscule and therefore difficult to read, their presence would have been important to the wearer for a variety of reasons.

A sample of thirty-one rings with inscriptions that I have classified as religious was surveyed for this chapter (Table 1). This chapter only considers those linked to Italian production or consumption, and specifically those that have been dated between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.[281] Dating for these types of objects is fluid, often based upon styles rather than definitive provenance or dates of manufacture. Some dates are based upon the font style of the inscription. When many of these pieces of jewellery were dated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, they were linked to the late medieval period because of the presence of religious and apotropaic inscriptions, and many of these dates need to be revised. Pieces of jewellery, valued for their powerful qualities and precious materials, might function as family heirlooms that could be passed down from generation to generation. Inventories often indicate the presence of antique rings in households, such as a fifteenth-century inventory of the Sgaraglia family from Ascoli Piceno which lists 'un anello antico d'oro locrato' along with other items of adornment.[282] For this chapter, rings were selected from collections in the United Kingdom, specifically the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford, because their collections include a substantial number of Italian medieval and early modern rings and because their detailed online catalogues include specific records of inscriptions. Only rings bearing religious inscriptions were selected to illustrate both the variety of types of devotional inscriptions as well as the frequency with which they appear.[283] However, regarding the inscriptions with religious sentiment, it is important to emphasise, as Fenton notes, that '[r]ings were credited with religious powers, with magical properties and with medical virtues, but it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between these three, since the wearers and makers of these rings made no clear distinctions themselves'.[284] Some rings include more than one religious inscription and each inscription has been counted separately in the table. The rings from the table discussed below have been selected as representative of various types of devotional inscriptions and ring styles. Of the rings surveyed, eleven (one-third) bear an owner's name in addition to the religious inscription(s).

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[281] While many other rings in these museum collections may have links to Italy, museum catalogues record other places or a general "European" place of production, they could therefore not be definitively included.
[282] The inventory does not contain a year, only a note that it was made on the twenty-first of December: Archivio di Stato di Ascoli Piceno, Archivio Sgariglia, Casetto 1, Fasciolo 8, A, f. 7v.
[283] This sample may be skewed because of collecting practices and collectors' interest in certain types of inscriptions. Rings with inscriptions that would not be considered religious (names, dates, poems, aphorisms, mottos, coats of arms, etc) and rings without inscriptions were also popular in medieval and early modern Italy, but have not been included in this table.
[284] James Fenton, 'Collecting Rings', in *Finger Rings*, ed. by Scarisbrick and Henig, 4-12 (8).

The Angelic Salutation to the Virgin Mary, 'Ave Maria', appears in many variations on six of the selected rings. One fifteenth-century silver ring includes a ribbon design in *niello* decorating the surface of the band (Figure 3.5). However, closer inspection reveals that the letters for 'AVE MARIA' have been inscribed on the ribbon along with stars. While the devotional words are not immediately obvious on the decorative band, their presence would have been known to the wearer, who might run his or her fingers over them during moments of prayer to the Virgin.

A similar bronze ring called for more tactile engagement with the letters that formed 'AVE MARIA' (Figure 3.6). The letters are etched in Gothic-style lettering on the flat portions of the band between the sixteen raised flutes. Each letter is separated by a vegetal design resembling a palm, perhaps as a reference to the palms laid on the ground before Jesus upon His re-entry into Jerusalem before His death, commemorated as Palm Sunday in the liturgical calendar. The vegetal design may have also been intended to reference the flowers of the Virgin, the roses of her *corona*, which inspired the rosary prayer, like those decorating the surface of the rosary beads with champlevé enamel flowers in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figure 3.7).[285] These enamelled rosary beads resemble those discussed in the previous chapter, which were inscribed with the Sacred Monogram, and they incorporate other devotional inscriptions, including 'AVE' and 'MA'.[286] The ring itself may have been used as a type of rosary, with the peaks and valleys of the ring—thirty in total—marking each prayer as the devotee's finger passed over them, rather than the beads on a rosary. Similar rings, known as 'decade' rings, were popular in Europe beginning in the fifteenth century. They were designed with raised beads meant to mark one decade of rosary prayer (ten *Ave Marias* and one *Pater Noster*) as a seventeenth-century Italian example with a depiction of the Virgin of the Rosary on the bezel demonstrates (Figure 3.8).[287]

Another ring, said to have been 'found' in Volterra, a town near Pisa, is inscribed with the longer version of the Hail Mary greeting; it is unclear if the use of the term 'found' refers to the fact that it was excavated rather than purchased. The Salutation to the Virgin, '+AVE MARIA GRAT/IA PLENA DOMINI C', is inscribed on both sides of the flat hoop (Figure 3.9). The ring also includes claws that once held a stone.[288] Other rings inscribed with the *Ave Maria* could have had practical as well as devotional uses, such as a silver ring etched with the letters 'AVE

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[285] Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), xii.
[286] Galandra Cooper, 'The Pious Body', 125-26; Galandra Cooper and Laven, 338-53.
[287] George Frederick Kunz, *Rings for the Finger: From the Earliest Known Times, to the Present, with Full Descriptions of the Origin, Early Making, Materials, the Archaeology, History, for Affection, for Love, for Engagement, for Wedding, Commemorative, Mourning, etc.* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1917), 34-35; Edward A. McGuire, 'Old Irish Rosaries', *The Furrow*, 5 (1954), 97-105 (103-04).
[288] Ormonde Maddock Dalton, *Franks Bequest Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Early Christian, Byzantine, Teutonic, Mediaeval and Later, Bequeathed by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, KCB, in Which are Included the Other Rings of the Same Period in the Museum* (London: Longmans & Co for The British Museum, 1912), 104, cat. 688.

MRA' on its bezel, which could be used as a signet ring, stamping the wearer's documents with a sign of their devotion rather than a personal insignia (Figure 3.10).[289]

Devotional inscriptions on other rings were derived from familiar biblical passages or parts of the Mass. A sixteenth-century silver ring set with a yellow marble cameo is inscribed with the Greek words 'AGIOS + OTEOS + ATANTO', meaning 'God (is) holy (and) immortal' (Figure 3.11).[290] These words abbreviate a longer phrase, 'Agios o Theos, Agios ischyros, Agios athanatos, eleison imas', which refers to the qualities of God—holy, strong, and immortal—and asks for His mercy. They would be familiar to devotees as part of the Good Friday Mass in the Roman liturgy.[291] Excerpts from this Praise of God also appear in rubricated protective prayers from the Renaissance, like one called the 'Orazione al Signore per passare il giorno senza pericoli' which appears in a longer book of prayers, *Scelta di orazioni devotissima al Signore, & alla Vergine* (1568), attributed to the Camaldoese monk Don Silvano Razzi and dedicated to Suor Maria Vettoria de' Massimi, a nun at Santa Lucia in Florence.[292] The extended prayer calls upon the protection of the Archangels, particularly Michael, and includes the familiar promise of protection against death from 'fire, water, war, and sudden death', as well as promising safety both inside and outside the home. The inclusion of the 'Agios Oteos' invocation on the ring might offer similar general protection.

Other rings with devotional inscriptions incorporated ancient stones in the form of cameos and intaglios illustrating the dual religious and humanistic virtues of the ring's owner.[293] Adding a devotional inscription or image to a gemstone was believed to enhance the powers ascribed to the material.[294] One fourteenth-century gold ring set with a third-century onyx intaglio of a rampant lion, possibly valued by the owner because of links to his family's heraldry, also included a phrase extracted from the Gospel of Luke (Figure 3.12).[295] The band is inscribed in Lombardic characters with *niello*: '+IN MANUS: 'TUAS: DOMINE: COMENDO: SPIRITUM: MEUM', the final words uttered by Christ on the Cross according to Luke 23:46. The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross, of which Luke 23:46 was one version, often appeared written on amulets to be worn on the body.[296] The *Malleus maleficarum* even recommended that the judge dealing with a suspected witch should wear a sheet of parchment that was the size of the Measure

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[289] This may have been used by a member of a religious order or Church official: Dalton, 42, cat. 243.
[290] The Greek has been Romanised from 'Ἅγιος ὁ Θεός, ἀθάνατος' and is part of the Trisagion: Dalton, 141, cat. 892.
[291] Maurice B. McNamee, S.J., *Vested Angels: Eucharistic Allusions in Early Netherlandisth Paintings* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 172, note 2.
[292] Don Silvano Razzi, *Scelta di orazioni devotissima al Signore, & alla Vergine, di latine, Fatte nuovamente volgari, Et di nuovo Stampate, & corrette la Terza volta* (Florence: Giunti, 1568), 96-98.
[293] Syson and Thornton, 83-86.
[294] Paola Venturelli, *Gioielli e gioiellieri milanesi: storia, arte moda (1450-1630)* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1996), 134.
[295] The letter P, perhaps the initial of the owner's name, appears on the reverse of the bezel: 'M.190-1975 Signet Ring', *Victoria & Albert Museum Online Catalogue* <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O121100/signet-ring-unknown/> [accessed 27 May 2017].
[296] See examples in Skemer, *Binding Words*, 49, 83-89, 213-16, 222, 230.

of Christ and was inscribed with the Seven Last Words of Christ.[297] Prayers about the Seven Last Words were also common in books of hours, gaining part of their power from their association with the number seven, which was considered to be a mystical and holy number.[298]

In addition to the seven rings inscribed with the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus already discussed, two other rings refer to the Name of Jesus in their inscriptions. One of these, a tiny ring probably made for a young child, is inscribed '+ISAI +IESU +EMANUEL' (Figure 3.13).[299] The inscription refers to the Old Testament passage from the prophet Isaiah, 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel'.[300] This passage was seen to prefigure the birth of Christ and was repeated in the New Testament when the angel visited Joseph to announce Mary's pregnancy and to indicate that the child should be named Jesus.[301] Perhaps given as a Christening gift, thus linking the birth of the Saviour to the sacrament of baptism, the ring may have been offered for protection as well as a symbol of faith.

Another inscription on a ring praises the name of Jesus and is inscribed, 'IESUS NOMINE TUO S(ALUS)' is etched on the band (Figure 3.14). The band is also inscribed with a biblical verse from the Gospel of Luke which mentions Christ, '+IESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIUM ILLORUM IBAT'.[302] This verse from Luke 4 appears on eight rings in the selected sample and is the most common devotional phrase found on these rings (present on circa 25.8% of the rings). These words tell of Christ's escape to Capernaum from a crowd that wanted to execute him in Nazareth. The inscription would also help the wearer to escape from danger, especially while travelling, and offer protection against thieves.[303] The ring is also inscribed with the name of the owner on the bezel around the gem, '+NOARIU DE PETRUCIU MERCATAT', which identifies the ring's owner as a merchant. An amuletic inscription to aid in travel would be advantageous for someone involved in trade. The ring is set with an engraved intaglio depicting a classical-style bust of a man in profile wearing a laurel wreath. The stone has been identified as a sard, a gemstone that was believed to be efficacious in many situations. According to Hildegard of Bingen's *Physica*, sard was useful to ward off pestilence, could be placed on the head to cure ailments related to the head, could cure jaundice,

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297 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 66.
298 Roger S. Wieck, 'Prayer for the People: The Book of Hours', in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Roy Hammerling (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 389-40 (408); Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 71.
299 Maya Corry, 'Childhood', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 34-37 (36).
300 Isaiah 7:14.
301 Matthew 1:20-23 discussed in Helen C. Evans, '146. Pendant Icon with Christ Emmanuel', in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, ed. by Helen C. Evans (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 238, note 2.
302 Luke 4:30.
303 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 94; Scarisbrick and Henig, *Finger Rings*, 8; Skemer, *Binding Words*, 89-90; Eamon Duffy, 'Two Healing Prayers', in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. by Miri Rubin (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 164-70 (168).

could heal wounds, and when soaked in wine and placed on the affected ear with a linen cloth, could aid those who were hard of hearing.[304] Sard was also thought to aid a woman struggling to give birth and should be rubbed on a labouring woman's thighs to facilitate a safe delivery. During this ritual, Hildegard, a Benedictine abbess, mystic and polymath, recommended that the following prayer be recited: 'Just as you, stone, by the order of God, shone on the first angel, so you, child come forth a shining person, who dwells with God […] Open you, roads and door, in that epiphany by which Christ appeared both human and God, and opened the gates of hell. Just so, child may you also come out from this door without dying, and without the death of your mother'.[305] Like the inscription on the ring that promises protection for travellers, sard was believed to aid in this other type of a safe passage of a child into the world, with words reminiscent of Luke 4:30.

Other rings with the travel inscription from Luke 4 also appear to have been made for men who were possibly merchants. One gold example inscribed with a variety of devotional and heraldic inscriptions was found at Aegium on the Greek mainland, but was probably made in Venice for a Venetian merchant trading in the area (Figure 3.15).[306] While the shape resembles that of a bow-ring or an archer's ring, popular in the Middle East and Asia as a tool to aid in shooting an arrow, they are not known to have been used in this manner in Europe, where thumb rings were most often used as signet rings.[307] On the octagonal bezel, the arms of the Donati family are surrounded by the words 'S[IGNUM] DE ZENO DONAT[I]', indicating that the ring was meant to be used as a seal. Inside the band, a column cut by a scythe is topped with a scroll which appears to be inscribed 'AIDA MEDIO[?]', possibly a personal motto.[308] The passage from Luke 4 appears on the outside of the band made visible by a *niello* background, '+IEXUS* AUTEM*TRANSIENS* PER MEDIUM ILLORUM* IBANT* ELOI', with the addition of the Name of God in Aramaic, 'Eloi', at the end of the Gospel passage. Jesus implored God upon the Cross in Aramaic with the words, 'Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani' ['My God, My God, why have You forsaken me'] (Mark 15:34).[309] Eloi was one of the divine names of God and was thought to offer protection and was also occasionally 'misused' in more mystical occult

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[304] Hildegard von Bingen, *Hildegard von Bingen's 'Physica': The Complete English Translation of Her Classic Work on Health and Healing*, trans. by Priscilla Throop (Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1998), 144; Joan Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, particularly in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), 30.
[305] Hildegard von Bingen, 144.
[306] Dalton, 41, cat. 239.
[307] Diana Scarisbrick, *Historic Rings: Four Thousand Years of Craftsmanship* (Tokyo, New York, and London: Kodansha International, 2004), 303; Hugh Tait, *Jewelry: 7,000 Years, An International History and Illustrated Survey from the Collection of the British Museum* (New York: Abrams, 1987), 234; Hugh Tait, *Jewellery through 7000 Years* (London: British Museum Publications, 1976), 251-52.
[308] Dalton, 41, cat. 239; Anne Ward, John Cherry, Charlotte Gere, et al. *The Ring from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 144.
[309] Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text & Cannon*, 2nd edn (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 52.

endeavours.[310] Another ring is inscribed with the verse from Luke 4 and the name 'GALGANO D'CICHO' in reverse so that it functioned as a seal ring and a merchant's mark (Figure 3.16). The merchant's mark served as a symbol of Galgano's firm and would be used to mark all transactions, account books, and merchandise as authentic and to function as a guarantee of quality on behalf of the merchant.[311] These inscriptions—some amuletic and religious, others relating to the owner, or serving as symbols of commerce—illustrate the intermingling of business, family honour, and religion in the medieval and early modern world.

A gold ring set with a toadstone is inscribed with two biblical verses, including the verse from Luke 4 (Figure 3.17). The biblical inscription begins on the band with the symbol of the cross and the words from the Gospel of Luke: '+IEXVS AUTEN TRANSIENS PER MED/IUN ILLORUN IBAT'.[312] The inscription continues from the band onto the underside of the bezel with: 'ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST ET'.[313] Extracted from the beginning the Gospel of John, the second portion of the inscription refers to the moment when God's Word became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ. The toadstone (*pietra della botta*) offered further protection. Renaissance Italians thought toadstones grew in the heads of toads, and as with many other materials, they believed this substance held special powers.[314] Toadstones supposedly offered protection against witches, prevented dropsy (edema), cured kidney disease, and functioned as a charm for children and pregnant women.[315] Giovanni Maria Bonardo explained that a toadstone set in 'un'anello d'oro' would alert the wearer if poison was near, as the finger wearing the ring would become hot.[316]

The words 'ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST ET' appear on five rings in the sample (16%), including one inscribed in Lombardic font (Figure 3.18).[317] This popular inscription from Gospel of John was one of the most familiar Gospel passages and was often recited as part of the daily Mass or used in Christmas Masses; it was also included in children's primers as one of the first texts they would learn to read.[318] Found on the island of Euboea, which was then a Venetian territory known as Negroponte, this ring most likely belonged to a prosperous merchant

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310 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 120; Benedek Lang, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 186-87.
311 Richard Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 65.
312 The correct Latin rendering of the verse is 'autem transiens per medium illorum ibat': Luke 4:30.
313 The presence of the two 'ET [and]' indicate that neither inscription came first and they should instead be read cyclically: John 1:14.
314 Toadstones were the fossilised teeth of the Lepidotes fish: Giancarlo Baronti, *Tra bambini e acque sporche: Immersioni nella collezione di amuleti di Giuseppe Belluci* (Perugia: Morlacchi, 2008), 216.
315 Baronti, 218; Marian Campbell, *Medieval Jewellery in Europe 1100-1500* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2009), 75; Scarisbrick and Henig, 27.
316 Giovanni Maria Bonardo, *La Minera Del Mondo. Dell'illustre S. Gio. Maria Bonardo Fratteggiano Conte, e Cavaliero, Nella qual si tratta delle cose più secrete, e più rare de' corpi semplici nel mondo elementare, e de' corpi composti, inanimati & animati d'anima vegetativa, sensitiva, e ragionevole* (Venice: Fabio & Agostino Zoppini Fratelli, 1589), 21r.
317 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 88-89; Catherine Rider, 'Common Magic', in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*, ed. by David J. Collins, S.J. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 303-31 (313-14); Scarisbrick and Henig, 36.
318 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 90, note 40; Grendler, 147-54.

participating in the Venetian Republic's maritime trade. The ring was found in 1840 in the former castle of Chalcis, along with other rings in a hoard which is believed to have been concealed by the castle's inhabitants along with other valuables before an anticipated Ottoman invasion in 1470.[319] Though the ring is dated to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, its presence in the mid-fifteenth century hoard illustrates how rings maintained value and continued to be worn after their manufacture. The ring is set with an ancient amethyst, a stone thought to prevent drunkenness. The amethyst intaglio is etched with a personification of *Fortuna* and could also be used as a seal.[320] Amethyst was also believed to cure skin problems, shrink tumours, and cure spider bites.[321] The ancient intaglio demonstrates the owner's interest in the classical world and thus the coexistence of religion and humanism in the daily lives of Renaissance Italians.

Another ring employed a longer version of the phrase from the Gospel of John: '+*ET VERBU: CARO. FACTU: E:ET ABITANT: NOB*' (Figure 3.19).[322] The moment of the Incarnation is captured here, but also the continuing presence of God's Word on Earth in the form of Jesus. Set with an ancient Roman intaglio red-jasper engraved with clasped *fede* hands, this ring was also used as a personal signet. The Latin inscription around the gem identifies the ring's first owner: '*SIGILLU. THOMASII.DE. ROGERII S.DESUESSA*'. Owned by Tommaso of Suessa, the ring never travelled far from its original home, as it is said to have been found in the church of Santa Maria in Commedia in Sessa [Suessa] Aurunca, a hamlet near Naples, in the mid-nineteenth century.[323] While this ring was used by Tommaso as a seal, its other inscriptions reveal more about its function. Embossed around the band in parallel rows are the words '+*XPS VINCIT X XPS X REGNAT X XPS: IMPERA*'. Taken literally, both inscriptions reflect the Christian identity of the ring's owner. However, these two holy phrases also protected the wearer in daily life and from a variety of ailments.[324] Red jasper had long been used for protective and curative purposes and the stone on this ring garnered further power from its ancient origins.[325] In combination with the jasper, the efficacy of these religious and apotropaic inscriptions would have held great power for the ring's wearer.

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[319] Scarisbrick and Henig, 32-36.
[320] Amethysts were associated with wine because of their purple colour and were thought to prevent the wearer from intoxication from imbibing, and in Greek, the word amethyst means 'not drunken': William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 214; Glyn Davies and Kristin Kennedy, *Medieval and Renaissance Art: People and Possessions* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum; New York: Distributed in North America by Harry N. Abrams, 2009), 245.
[321] Hildegard von Bingen, 149-50.
[322] The unabbreviated Latin reads: 'et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis': John 1:14.
[323] Ward et al., *The Ring*, 66-7, cat. 135.
[324] Skemer *Binding Words*, 90.
[325] Red jasper resembled blood and, among other applications, was employed as an amulet during childbirth: James Robinson, 'From Altar to Amulet: Relics, Portability, and Devotion', in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 111-16 (114).

Another signet ring incorporated the extended 'Verbum Caro' inscription as well as the name of the owner, 'Ihoanes de Coltario', inscribed around his coat of arms on the bezel (Figure 3.20), both of which would appear in the seal impression. The coat of arms is also replicated on each of the shoulders, adding further emphasis to his family's status. Giovanni, the original owner of the ring, was probably from the small town of Coltaro in the Po river valley. The devotional inscription on the band, 'VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST E|T ABITABIT IN NOBIS IhOANES', also included the name 'Ihoanes', attributing the quotation to the Gospel of John. In addition to its spiritual and protective powers, this passage from the Gospel of John may have held special meaning for the owner, also named John.

Rings were also inscribed with phrases linked to the saints: the 'Mentem sanctam' prayer associated with Saint Agatha is inscribed on two of the selected rings. Agatha, as a patron saint of jewellers, was a particularly appropriate reference on a piece of jewellery.[326] The inscription was known for its power to protect from natural disasters and bad weather, particularly lightning strikes and hail. As already discussed, in Pavia, sheets of paper were inscribed with the prayer on Agatha's feast day and planted in the fields to protect the crops.[327] One ring at the British Museum includes the full miracle-working inscription from the marble tablet placed on Saint Agatha's grave by the angel, which is etched on the hoop: '+MENTEM: SAN[C]TAM: SPONTANEVM: HONOREM: DEO: PATRIE: LIBER' (Figure 3.21).[328] The ring is set with an ancient Roman intaglio *nicolo* of a bust of a man. Around the bezel an ownership inscription indicates the name of the owner: 'ANULO: PIERELLU: PISANO'. Hill proposes that the name Pisano references the Sicilian Pisani family as opposed to a citizen of Pisa since the strongest veneration of Saint Agatha took place in Sicily, where the miracle surrounding her grave occurred. He also notes that 'Pierellu' appears to be a Sicilian name, possibly a diminutive of Pirro or a variation of Pierello.[329] Another ring dated to the fourteenth century has a worn inscription that is believed to be an abbreviated version of the Saint Agatha prayer, 'MERTE M...CT M...ORT.RE MOR' (Figure 3.22). The ring is set with a garnet that is engraved with a coat of arms on a shield. It also includes an inscription around the stone on the bezel identifying

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326 Agatha was also the patron saint of breast diseases, wet-nurses, and bell founders: Susan L'Engle, 'Depictions of Chastity: Virtue Made Visible', in *Chastity: A Study in Perception, Ideals, Opposition*, ed. by Nancy van Deusen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 87-126 (110, note 72).

327 See Chapter One, pp. 50, for a discussion of this practice in Pavia: Frugoni and Frugoni, 45; L'Engle, 110, note 172.

328 Though it is poor quality, the only available image of this ring has been included in the List of Illustrations. The original can be found in the article: George Francis Hill, 'Di un anello d'oro con le lettere di S. Agata (Dai Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries di Londra dell'8 Marzo 1917)', in *Archivio Storico per la Sicilia orientale*, 26-27, ed. by Vincenzo Giannotta (Catania: S.M. la Regina Madre, 1919-1920), 47-57 (49-50, fig. 1).

329 Geneviève Bautier-Bresc and Henri Bresc, 'La Cloche de Šibenik qui Sonnet pour la Libération de la Patrie', in *Come l'orco della fiaba studi per Franco Cardini*, ed. by Marina Montesano (Firenze: SISMEL, 2010), 49-72 (68); Hill, 47-49, 53; 'Intaglio Finger Ring, BM 1917,0407.1', *The British Museum Online Catalogue* <http://britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=51061&partId=1&searchText=1917,0407.1&page=1> [accessed 29 May 2017].

the owner as part of the signet. The inscription reads 'AVIERI DI LAURIA VERBUM'. This inscription probably refers to a member of the Avieri family of Lauria, in the Basilicata region near Calabria. The word 'Verbum' probably also refers to the Incipit of John, 'Verbum Caro factum est'.[330]

Beads & Pendants

The inscription from John 1 also appears on other pieces of jewellery. A tiny pendant cross (2.8 cm high) embellished with sapphire, rubies, and pearls was worn on a chain around the neck, much like the pendant worn by the girl in Agnolo di Domenico Mazziere's portrait (Figures 3.23 & 3.24).[331] The reverse is inscribed with the phrase 'VERBUM CARO' across the bars of the cross, with the pearl embellishments visible (Figure 3.23 reverse). It is unclear if it was meant to be reversible or if the jewelled side was always supposed to be displayed, with the inscription touching the wearer's skin. Nevertheless, by emphasising the moment when the Word became flesh, the inscription's protective powers could have been fully activated when they touched the flesh.

A larger pectoral cross (8.4 cm high) would be displayed more prominently by the wearer. It is set with heliotrope intaglios, some ancient and others of contemporary production, that illustrate six signs of the zodiac (Figure 3.25). Heliotrope, or bloodstone, was valued for its ability to bring down fevers and stop nosebleeds, and wearing a ring set with a bloodstone was supposed to prevent haemorrhoids.[332] It was also thought to make its wearer invisible, as the tale of Calandrino and the infamous heliotrope from Boccaccio's *Decameron* demonstrates.[333] The signs of the zodiac range from Aries at the top to Gemini, Pisces, and Leo along the cross-bar, to two examples on the bottom half that are difficult to read from the image, but might represent Scorpio and Cancer. Around each of the intaglios a devotional phrase is inscribed, creating a comprehensive textual programme. It begins with 'DUM SPIRO UNICUM CHRISTUM SPERO' at the top around Aries, emphasising the power of hope in Christ. Around Gemini the words 'AUREA CEU RU SANGUINE' appear to reference the gold and bloodstone. Around the centre stone with the Pisces intaglio, the words 'BEI(?) HAEC CRUCIS HAC IN' (top) and 'SIC RUBEAT SPES MEA' (bottom) again reference hope in the salvific power of the cross. The words around the Leo reference the connection between Christ and the zodiac, 'IMAGINE STELLA CHRISTE TUO'. The words etched on the gold around the two stones at the bottom

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330 Dalton, 45, cat. 259; Hill, 53-54.
331 Maya Corry, 'The Family', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 14-15.
332 Diane Morgan, *Gemlore: Ancient Secrets and Modern Myths from the Stone Age to the Rock Age* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 33-37.
333 Douglas Blow, *Mirabile Dictu: Representations of the Marvelous in Medieval and Renaissance Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 89-91; Curzio Cipriani, Alessandro Borelli, and Kennie Lyman, *Simon and Schuster's Guide to Gems and Precious Stones* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 13.

of the pendant can be identified as a popular protective prayer endorsed by Saint Anthony of Padua. On the pectoral cross the words read 'ECCE + DOMINI FUGITE PARIES ADVERSA ECCE' and 'VICIT LEA DE TRIBU IUDA', but the concluding words of the prayer, 'Rad.x David. Alleluja', are missing.[334] Known as Saint Antony's Brief (*Breve*) or Letter, these words also appear at the end of the *Breve of San Vincenzo Ferrer and the Responsorio of S. Antonio di Padova* discussed earlier, where they are subtitled the 'Breve di San Antonio contro i Demonj', emphasising the power of this prayer against demons.[335] This pectoral cross offered the wearer the opportunity to illustrate knowledge of ancient intaglios and the zodiac, while the shape of the cross and the inscription demonstrated the wearer's devotion to Christ and provided further protection.

Inscriptions on other pendants offer not only devotional content and protective properties, but also provide information about the objects. Pendants that doubled as containers were often inscribed with words to indicate their contents, as the *Agnus Dei* pendants discussed in the previous chapter illustrate. While those containers used images to indicate that the wax *Agnus Dei* were probably kept inside, other pendants suggested these contents through inscriptions. One pendant has an openwork face so that the contents can be viewed, but the inscription that unfurls around its edges confirms what was meant to be kept inside: '+AGNIE +DEI +MISERERE +MEI +QUI CRIMIA +TOLLIS +' (Figure 3.26).[336] The Latin inscription is a variation of the *Agnus Dei* prayer, interrupted by the imploring words 'Miserere Mei', the first words of Psalm 50 (51), asking for God's Mercy. Inscriptions on pendants might also indicate other holy substances kept within. A fourteenth century bar pendant is enamelled with the inscription '+ REIQU/IA. SA[NCT]I. LE' and 'ONARDI.* CREMONE*', indicating that it was meant to hold the relics of Saint Leonard of Cremona (Figure 3.27).[337] The devotee may have been particularly devoted to Saint Leonard or may have worn the relics as daily spiritual protection.

Policing the Use of Inscribed Jewellery & Brevi Worn as Jewellery

Similar pieces of jewellery might have functioned as containers for the *brevi* discussed in the previous chapters.[338] Rather than the simple or embroidered textile sachets discussed earlier, decorative metal pendants might prove to be more durable while also functioning as objects that

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[334] Thomas Aquinas, 276, note 67.
[335] See Chapter One, pp. 51 and Fig. 1.30; Katherine Tycz, 'Praying for Protection', 116-17; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 250, note 68.
[336] Irene Galandra Cooper, 'Plate 128. Silver-gilt Agnus Dei (recto) and Veronica veil (verso)', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 130-31; Venturelli, 135.
[337] Lightbown was not able to identify a saint known as Leonard of Cremona, but this might have referred to Leonard of Limousin or Leonard of Noblat, who was popular in Cremona, or perhaps a local holy figure: Ronald Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1992), 502, cat. 35. For similar objects, see Robinson, 112-14.
[338] Venturelli, 134.

could simultaneously serve a decorative purpose and illustrate the wearer's devotion. However, objects like these container-pendants and the rings discussed above aroused the suspicion of Church authorities who suspected potential superstitious content and usage. An edict issued by Cardinal Carlo Borromeo on 7 September 1576 prohibited 'Bolletini, Anelli, e simili cose per le peste'. The edict notes that

> E venuto à nostra notitia, che certi Bollettini, ò Brevi, scritti, ò stampati in carta, over scolpiti in Anelli, e Medaglie, che comminciano con queste parole, '*Cruceum pro nobis subiit*, &c. [ecc.] & altri, *Caspar fer myrram* &c. [ecc.] si vanno spargendo appresso di molti, sotto nomi, c'habbino virtù di preservar ciascuno che gli porta adosso dalla peste, quali habbiamo trovati essere accompagnati da varie superstitioni […].

While inscribed objects worn against the plague are targeted here because they are often accompanied by superstitious elements, the texts cited may have been interpreted by the wearers as acceptable because of their 'pious' content. One of the Latin texts beseeches the Cross for intercession, while the other, 'Caspar fer myrram', refers to the gifts of the Three Magi. While the Magi would have been familiar biblical figures, they were also seen as amuletic and closely associated with magical practices.[339] Cardinal Borromeo therefore declares:

> prohibiamo à ciascuna persona di qual si voglia stato, grado, e conditione, si huomo, come donna, che non dissemini, ò dia ad altri, ne tenghi, ò porti adosso, ne usi in qual si voglia modo i sudetti Bollettini, over Brevi, ò parole scritte, ò scolpite, ne meno altre di qual si voglia sorte […].[340]

While Cardinal Borromeo's prohibition is directed at those wearable objects inscribed with texts against the plague, records of the Roman Inquisition provide further insight into concerns regarding objects inscribed with amuletic texts. In 1585 Hippolta de Caserta, a seventy-year-old woman living in Naples, was accused of 'stregarie et fattocchiaria'.[341] Attached to the trial records are an array of superstitious texts confiscated when Hippolita was arrested. These include prayer sheets like those discussed in the previous chapters, but also several small slips of paper and parchment, resembling *brevi*. Instructions indicate that these were magical *brevi* intended to aid the wearer in obtaining the love of a man or gaining one's wishes, and the way in which they are meant to be employed is particularly interesting. The instructions read, 'Per essere amato da un signore o, da altri d[el] magnano cote, et haverne gratia portarai queste littere sopra dit: + d.b.s.e.a.or.ih.m.c.m:u.vo' and 'Per obtinere quello domandi haverai sopra dite immano sinistra

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339 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 62, note 115; Karen Jolly, 'Part I: Medieval Magic: Definitions, Beliefs, Practices', in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. by Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 6-71 (6 and 47).

340 Pietro Galesini, Carlo Borromeo, and Federico Borromeo, *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis, A Sancto Carolo Cardinali S. Praxedis Archiep. Mediolan. Condita, Federici Cardinalis Borromaei Archiepiscopi Mediolani Jussu Unddique diligentiùs collecta, & edita.* Editio Nova, Et Emendatior, in Qua quod in aliis Italicè scriptum erat, latinitate donatum est. Tomus Primus (Lyon: Ex Officina Anissoniana et Joan. Posuel., 1683), 974; Venturelli, 134.

341 I am indebted to Irene Galandra Cooper who discovered this fascinating trial and shared images of the documents with me: Archivio Diocesano di Napoli (hereafter ADN), Trial 653, Hippolita di Caserta, May 1585.

queste littere. A.v.e. a.cr. b.s.a.buca.ab.a.c.k.a.z' (Figure 3.28).[342] According to the instructions, these *brevi* would be activated when worn on the finger. It is unclear if these texts were meant to be placed inside rings so that they could be worn for prolonged periods of time, or wrapped around the finger until they fell off or disintegrated. Though the amulets are indecipherable formulae, the presence of the cross and their resemblance to other types of charms may have made them seem acceptable to illiterate wearers. Church authorities were concerned because of their superstitious application to the body and their unknown content (Figure 3.29 a-c).[343]

Inscriptions as Pious Armour

While many of the objects discussed up to this point are small, with miniscule and nearly illegible inscriptions, other inscribed objects of adornment formed part of more visible elements of dress. A luxurious fifteenth-century girdle embellished with *niello* medallions, includes one with an inscription invoking the Grace of God: 'SPERA IN DIO. (Figure 3.30). Other inscriptions on the belt's medallions, such as 'AMOR VOL', an abbreviation of the popular saying 'Amore vuole fede', indicate that this gift may have been given to a betrothed girl as an expression of her bridal virtue.[344] The words may have served as a prompt to devotional activity and could have offered the wearer God's protection. Girdles were often given as love tokens and wedding gifts throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[345]

A suit of armour manufactured in early sixteenth-century Milan further reinforces the ways in which devotees combined devotional imagery and inscriptions to steel themselves against both ordinary daily worries and extraordinary circumstances (Figure 3.31). Probably meant to be worn as parade armour, the decorative surface of the breastplate is embellished with an image of the Virgin and Christ at the centre flanked by Paul and George, two soldier saints meant to offer pious protection to the wearer, probably inspired by contemporary prints. On the collar, or gorget, the Trinity is illustrated. The religious power of the image is enhanced by the Latin inscription below, which reads 'CHRISTUS RES VENIT IN PACE ET DEUS HOMO FACTUS ES', emphasising how Christ came in peace. On the backplate another familiar inscription offers further protection to the suit's wearer. Inscribed with a verse from Luke 4:30,

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342 ADN, Trial 653, S9.
343 ADN, Trial 653, S4, S5, S6.
344 Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 'Marriage and Sexuality', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 104-19 (108-09).
345 On belts as symbols of courtship, see: Deborah Krohn, '55. Belt or Girdle with a Woven Love Poem', in *Art and Love*, ed. by Bayer, 128-29; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, '36a. Girdle & 36b. Girdle End with a Profile Couple (front) and a Woman Holding a Pink (back)', in *Art and Love*, ed. by Bayer, 105-07; Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, & Family*, 168-74; Syson and Thornton, 55-56; Venturelli, 183-90.

'IESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS PERMEDIUM ILORUM IBAT', the apotropaic words would function as spiritual armour for the wearer during his journeys and in battle.[346]

The objects discussed in this chapter reflect the desire of devotees to adorn themselves with objects and words associated with their faith. These wearable material prayers had many possible functions, and many of the objects of adornment also incorporated religious symbols or images in addition to their inscriptions. Sometimes the material and textual clues of individual inscribed objects offer insight into how the inscriptions were perceived by devotees, but it is also possible that they were appreciated and worn with a multi-layered intentions.

Some of the objects of adornment emphasised the wearer's piety by signalling both to God and to those with whom the wearer interacted that they were devout. Inscriptions on these wearable objects may have helped these objects function as devotional tools; they may have served as a simple reminder to pray or as *aides-memoire* that provided prompts for popular or useful prayers. The inscriptions on these objects of adornment also may have encouraged tactile engagement during prayer: as the devote prayed they might run their fingers over the inscription. Many of the texts inscribed on these material prayers also helped devotees access divine intercession and protection. In many of these cases, the religious inscriptions on objects meant to be worn on the body, close to the skin, offered a layer of defence that was sometimes further enhanced by the efficacious materials that comprised the object. Though not all of these inscribed examples resemble the suit of armour, when a devotee wore these material prayers, they also donned a form of pious armour.

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[346] '9. Armour', in *The Art of Chivalry: European Arms and Armor from The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. by Helmut Nickel, Stuart W. Pyhrr, Leonid Tarassuk, Joseph P. Ascherl (New York: The American Federation of the Arts, 1982), 34-38.

PART II: THE HOME

CHAPTER FOUR

Doorway Devotions

An Inscribed Interior

Material prayers populated the home in the form of books, written and printed prayers, and inscriptions on both personal and household objects. From the threshold to the interior, these prayers permeated the structure and spaces of the home. They might be inscribed on the walls of the home—etched in stucco or carved in stone. Prayers on sheets of paper could be pasted or hung on walls in the form of tiles and painted panels. Early modern Italian homes, especially those inhabited by ordinary people, have been modified over the centuries, or demolished and replaced in favour of newer accommodation. Even homes that purport to be authentic to a period have been modified and curated by subsequent owners.[347] Since untouched fifteenth- and sixteenth-century homes do not survive in Italy, scholars must rely on written accounts, images, fragments, and extant (albeit altered) buildings to begin to reconstruct these domestic spaces.

Unlike areas of Northern Europe and England where surviving images of families at home are common and can be utilised to explore daily lives in domestic dwellings, similar images are rare from Renaissance Italy. However, scenes—whether historic, mythical, or biblical—set within a contemporary atmosphere offer glimpses into Italian domestic spaces. Depictions of religious figures and stories set in contemporary domestic dwellings, such as *The Birth of the Virgin* or *The Birth of Saint John the Baptist*, or even *St Jerome in his Study*, are particularly rich visual sources.[348] It is important to note that these depictions might have been inspired by the artist's personal experience or the patron's request to create an idealised space worthy of these holy scenes. Despite their questionable overall accuracy, these types of images often incorporate details of everyday life that convey tangible traces of contemporary spaces and objects.[349] Occasionally such details permit us to understand how material prayers might have been displayed in the early modern Italian home.

Vittore Carpaccio's early sixteenth-century painting of the *Birth of the Virgin* illustrates the use of devotional inscriptions within a contemporary home (Figure 4.1). Carpaccio's version of this story, which depicts the miraculous birth of the Virgin Mary to Saint Anne, is set in a home that might have been owned by a contemporary Venetian patrician rather than in pre-Christian Israel. In this quotidian scene, the new mother Anne is offered a bowl, as the freshly washed, new-

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[347] On Elia Volpi's renovations and manipulations of Palazzo Davanzati in Florence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see: Adriana Turpin, 'Objectifying the Domestic Interior: Domestic Furnishings and the Historical Interpretation of the Italian Renaissance Interior', in *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior*, ed. by Campbell, Miller and Consavari, 207-25.

[348] See Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991) for the use of similar paintings to study the domestic interior.

[349] Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 81-102.

born Mary awaits swaddling, and servants launder clothes and prepare food. Carpaccio depicts a relatable moment of daily life highlighting the ordinary activities following most Renaissance births, yet details in the scene indicate that the birth should also be considered *extraordinary* by the viewer. Above the shelf next to the bed, a panel painted with an inscription in Hebrew offers the first clue that this is not an ordinary birth in a typical elite Venetian home (Figure 4.1, Detail a). The Hebrew reads (in translation): 'Holy, holy, holy! in Heaven. May he who enters be blessed in the name of the Lord' (Isaiah 6:3 and Psalms 118:26).[350] The use of a Hebrew inscription reveals first and foremost that this painting is set in a Jewish household, while insinuating that the baby born there is blessed. Both phrases are traditionally interpreted in the Christian tradition as foreshadowing both Christ's birth (Luke 2:11-14) and His entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:9).[351] In their spoken Latin form, they also would have been familiar to contemporary viewers as the *Sanctus* said during the Mass.[352] Carpaccio's use of this specific prophetic inscription might also have been intended to encourage the viewer to look more closely at his painting. If taken literally the inscription refers to 'he who enters', perhaps guiding the viewer to the point of entry.

Seemingly etched in the stone beneath the elaborate frieze of the doorway, the letters '*ISU*' are barely visible on the lintel (Figure 4.1, Detail b).[353] These letters can be read as an abbreviation for the name of Christ in Latin, which would have been expressed as *Jesu* or *Iesu*, or in Italian as *Gesù* or *Giesù*. A variation of the Sacred Monogram, the *ISU* inscribed above the door held several symbolic connotations. In theological terms, the birth of the Virgin Mary was a necessary event in the Christian story, since Mary would later become the Mother of Jesus. Therefore, the *ISU* inscription combined with the biblical plaque on the wall functioned as a prediction of Christ's birth, made possible through the birth of Mary.[354] Jesus described himself as the door to salvation, saying, 'I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures'.[355] While the *ISU* inscription may reflect these symbolic undertones, it might also represent something more tangible about devotion in Italian Renaissance domestic spaces.

'At the threshold and at the doorways'

Bernardino of Siena suggested that the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus panel that he displayed to devotees as a material symbol of faith held both devotional and protective purposes.

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350 Shalom Sabar, 'Between Calvinists and Jews: Hebrew Script in Rembrandt's Art', in *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture*, ed. by Mitchell B. Merback (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 371-404 (375).
351 Sabar, 'Between Calvinists and Jews', 375-76.
352 Gad B. Sarfatti, 'Hebrew Script in Western Visual Arts', in *Italia: Studi e richerche sulla storia, la cultura e la letteratura degli ebrei d'italia*, 13-15 (2001), 451-547 (492).
353 Giulio Busi, *L'enigma dell'ebraico nel Rinascimento* (Turin: N. Aragno, 2007), 137-38.
354 Busi (and others) have noted the *ISU* above the door but have not explored the links between the inscription and actual domestic spaces, considering it rather another sign that foreshadows Christ's birth: Busi, 137-38.
355 John 10:9. For more discussion of Christ as the door: Daniel Jütte, *The Strait Gate: Thresholds and Power in Western History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 36.

Bernardino encouraged his listeners to display the Monogram in their homes, saying, 'Anco il venerabile beato Vincente, dell'ordine de' Predicatori, à condotta tale usanza, che in ogni casa, è il Nome di Gesù. Così voi prego, per suo onore e per sua riverenza, il teniate a le case vostre, all'uscio, e anco all'uscio de le camare vostre'.[356] Bernardino references the teaching of the Dominican preacher Saint Vincent Ferrer, regarding the domestic role of the Name of Jesus. Further, Bernardino presents specific locations—'at the threshold, and also at the doorway of […] rooms', where devotees should display the Sacred Monogram, 'for [Christ's] honour and His reverence'. Carpaccio's placement of the letters *ISU*, therefore, potentially indicates his personal adherence to Bernardino's teaching. Further, the appearance of this abbreviation above the doorway of an interior room in the *Birth of the Virgin* may reflect a common practice in contemporary homes.

In a second sermon on the Name of Jesus on the following day, Bernardino further described how his audience could acquire and possess their own versions of the Sacred Monogram, the appearance of which could be adapted to fit their personal preference and needs. He explains: 'E sia quadrato. E se è posto in alto, sia un poco più l'altezza che la larghezza; e se è tondo o come scudo; e ai forma.' Bernardino proposes various shapes—square, round, or shield; he also takes perspective into account, explaining that if the Sacred Monogram is to be placed at a certain height, the measurements of a square-shaped panel should be slightly adjusted to make it appear to be a perfect square from a lower point of view. Bernardino's instructions also promote the addition of the instructional inscription in addition to the Sacred Monogram: 'E se è quadro o tondo, e si possa mettervi quelle lettare che dicono: *In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur, celestium, terrestrium, et infernorum*.' Bernardino also provides further instructions to place the Sacred Monogram at the threshold, specifying that it can be placed above the door, 'in castella capo le porti'.[357]

As a result of the prolific preaching of Bernardino and his successors, scholars suggest that these prescriptions led to the common practice of displaying the Sacred Monogram in Renaissance Italian homes; however, extant examples are rarely cited.[358] Analysing the material evidence of the presence of the Sacred Monogram allows us to explore how early modern devotees displayed their devotion to the Name of Jesus. Further, it illustrates the degree to which devotees began to adhere to the advice of Bernardino and his followers to keep the Sacred Monogram 'in casa dove s'abita e in piazze e parti di Prato, e iscolpito più degnamente che si può fare', and how eventually such devotional displays became commonplace in the decoration of their homes.[359] The variety of manifestations of the Sacred Monogram present in the domestic context demonstrates

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356 Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV', II, 179-80.
357 Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXV', II, 190.
358 Mormando makes this statement regarding Italy, while D'Andrea notes that many houses in Treviso still bear this mark: Mormando, 104; David Michael D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy: The Hospital of Treviso, 1400-1530* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 130.
359 Letter from Bernardino da Siena attached to copy of sermons from Prato in Spring of 1424 in Pacetti, 'La predicazione di s. Bernardino in Toscana', cited in Ioriatti, 154.

how devotees interpreted and adapted this symbol to fit their own devotional needs. This chapter will analyse extant examples of the Sacred Monogram on domestic fifteenth- and sixteenth-century buildings, focussing on the Marche, where preachers continued to espouse Bernardino's message about devotion to the Name of Jesus in the decades after his own sermons.[360]

The Monogram of the Name of Jesus in the Veneto & in the Marche

The Sacred Monogram endured over the course of the following centuries as the symbol was dispersed and remained popular across the Italian peninsula. On the Adriatic coast abundant evidence remains for the practice of displaying the Sacred Monogram as Bernardino of Siena prescribed, 'at the threshold and at the doorways of your rooms'. Influenced by travelling Franciscan preachers and followers of the teachings of Bernardino of Siena, such as Giacomo della Marca, who offered their own sermons in the Marche region on the merits of the 'Nome di Gesù', Marchigian towns and cities preserve strong evidence for the practice.

Two fifteenth-century inscriptions of the Sacred Monogram in Cingoli illustrate this Marchigian town's adherence to Bernardino's prescription. Prior to its relocation to Cingoli's museum, an inscribed stone tile was kept in the atrium of the town's Palazzo Comunale as a historic document, but before this civic function, it had been located over the entryway to a house near Porta dello Spineto.[361] Although it is now removed from its architectural context, its inscription and its history provide more information about its original place in the city (Figure 4.2). On the sandstone slab the Sacred Monogram is carved in relief and takes the *yhs* form, but a large cross supplants the *h*, whose ascender in the Sacred Monogram was usually embellished with a crossbar instead. The Monogram is accompanied by the incised inscription: '1495/A DI RO AGOSTO FERIANO'.[362] The date 20 August 1495 may indicate when the tile was made or perhaps note a significant day for the plaque's commissioner. Avarucci and Salvi have linked the name—'Feriano'—to a man named Feriano Gasparis de Matelica, who appears in contemporary archival records. According to these records, Feriano was a blacksmith, who occasionally worked for the town, and who owned land in the *contrade* of Scalelle and Celogne. Feriano was nominated to the post of gatekeeper of the Porta dello Spineto, from 1492 to 1494 and again in 1503. He also lived in the neighbourhood of Porta dello Spineto, where the tile was originally found.[363] Therefore, it can be surmised that the tile was placed above the doorway to his dwelling, perhaps as a signpost for his workshop, while also pointing to his devotion. Next to the inscription on Feriano's stone, a

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360 For locations of sermons given by Bernardino da Siena and his successors, such as Giacomo della Marca and Giovanni da Capistrano: Ippolita Checcoli and Rosa Maria Dessi, 'La predicazione francescana nel Quattrocento', in *Atlante storico della letteratura italiana*, ed. by Sergio Luzzatto and Gabriele Pedullà (Turin: Einaudi, 2010), I: *Dalle origini al Rinascimento*, ed. by Amedeo De Vincentiis, 464-76.
361 Giuseppe Avarucci and Antonio Salvi, *Le iscrizioni medioevali di Cingoli* (Padua: Antenore, 1986), 134-35.
362 Avarucci and Salvi, Plate 54.
363 Avarucci and Salvi, 135-36.

hand with a pointing finger gestures to the symbol of the Sacred Monogram. The gesturing hand resembles manicules added to texts by readers to mark important passages, thus linking the act of reading this public tablet with common personalised reading practices; the role of the monumental inscription and the codex are conflated in this example.

Another late fifteenth-century inscription can be found *in situ* on a building on the Vicolo San Marco in Cingoli. The stone is embedded in an exterior wall about 160 cm from street level—at a height well within eyesight of the average pedestrian. The irregular-shaped sandstone slab was originally carved with a Latin cross in high relief (Figure 4.3). Later, a decorative border and the letters *yhs* were roughly etched in the stone, transforming the original cross into the Sacred Monogram.[364] Like the inscription from the home near the Porta dello Spineto, the cross dominates the composition. The prominence of the cross in these two examples may reflect both local aesthetic tastes and illustrate that devotees affiliated the Sacred Monogram with the symbol of His suffering on the Cross.

The southern region of the Marche is exceptional for its preservation of homes bearing the Sacred Monogram. At least eleven buildings in Ascoli Piceno, presumably all originally domestic dwellings, bear the mark of the Sacred Monogram above their exterior entryways. Many of these examples can be dated to the early sixteenth century, based upon accompanying inscriptions or stylistic comparison to other nearby dated inscriptions. The Sacred Monogram inscriptions adopt the variety suggested by Bernardino nearly a century earlier. In Ascoli Piceno, some of these Sacred Monograms stand alone as a monument to the inhabitant's faith, while others accompany other inscriptions and form a textual programme.[365] One composite example proclaims: 'IACOBUS *IHS* TURRERI', the Latinised name of the owner, Giacomo Turreri, punctuated by the Sacred Monogram (Figure 4.4).[366] In this permanent written proclamation, Giacomo Turreri not only aligned his name with his faith, but also announced the devotional affiliations of the household to all who passed, and preserved his devotion to the Name of Jesus for posterity.

Like the *ISU* in Carpaccio's painting, in another example the Sacred Monogram appears on the lintel above the doorway of a sixteenth-century edifice in Ascoli Piceno (Figure 4.5); this version is etched simply into the travertine (*pietra serena*) in the *IHS* form.[367] A recessed lunette above the lintel of this doorway contains remnants of stucco and may have once displayed a devotional fresco or relief. The wider lintel with the *IHS* was placed atop a decorative scrolled

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364 Avarucci and Salvi, 136 & Plate 55.
365 These composite inscriptions, which combine the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus with another inscription, will be discussed in the following sections.
366 This example can be found at the modern Corso Mazzini (n. 333) in Ascoli Piceno. All future references to streets in Ascoli Piceno will use their modern names: Serafino Castelli, *Iscrizioni sulle case ascolane del Cinquecento* (Ascoli Piceno: Centro Studi Stabiliani, 1975), 10.
367 Via Annibale Caro (n. 36).

carving, perhaps an update to the building that was meant to reflect a new inhabitant's piety or new focus of devotion.

A symbol etched in a similar font, perhaps by the same stone carver, can be found above another type of doorway. This home's portal is arched instead of rectangular, and the *IHS* is inscribed at the highest point of the arch, where a keystone would normally be set (Figure 4.6). Here, the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus represents the stability of a keystone, which functioned as an integral point of support in an arch, and therefore in the structure of a building. Medieval theologians such as Suger, the twelfth-century Abbot of Saint-Denis in Paris, considered Christ to be a keystone since he was a 'uniter of sides'. In his discussion of the theological underpinnings of the construction of Saint-Denis, Suger referenced Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, which described Jesus as, "'[...]the chief keystone," which joins one wall to the other, "in whom all the building" whether spiritual or material, "groweth unto one holy temple in the Lord.'"[368] In his translation, Suger conflates the translations of the terms keystone and corner or headstone. Although he discusses the construction of a sacred and consecrated space, Suger also describes the Church as a 'household'.[369] While ordinary Italians might not have grasped the complex relationship between this scriptural exegesis and the construction of the house of God, they might understand the importance of the keystone in functioning as a load-bearing and integral part of the arch, and they would most certainly recognise the importance of the Name of Jesus that had been placed at the highest point of the doorway.

One lintel displays the *IHS* in a sunburst like that promoted by Bernardino of Siena (Figure 4.7). The Sacred Monogram is framed in a wreath tied with ribbons, typical of Renaissance decoration that symbolically marked fame, glory, or triumph—a fittingly noble attribute to glorify the Holy Name of Jesus.[370] In another example, a *yhs*, most typical of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century iterations of the symbol, appears not on the lintel but above the door in a roundel (Figure 4.8). The Sacred Monogram has been carved into the stone in a ribbon style with floriated scrolls embellishing the ends of the letters.

Various villages in the orbit of Ascoli Piceno also bear evidence of devotion to the Name of Jesus. Many of these rural outposts, located in the mountains near Ascoli, functioned as the main suppliers of the silvery travertine upon which Ascoli's inscriptions were etched. This Marchigian travertine was found along the Tronto river, mostly in the upper valley between Ascoli

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[368] Translated in Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and Its Treasures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 104-05, cited in Günter Bandmann, *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning*, trans. by Kendall Wallis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 62; see also Ephesians 2:20-21.
[369] See Bandmann, 62.
[370] Based upon classical precedents, wreaths became popular decorative ornaments on or around coats of arms and crowning portrait busts: Clare Lapraik Guest, *The Understanding of Ornament in the Italian Renaissance*, Brill Studies in Intellectual History, 245 and Brill Studies on Art, Art History, and Intellectual History, 10 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 217.

Piceno and Acquasanta Terme.[371] Travertine quarrying functioned as one of the main economic activities of the region throughout the medieval and early modern periods, and based upon its local availability, it was a dominant building material in the area.[372]

Paggese di Acquasanta, only about twenty kilometres from the city centre of Ascoli Piceno, is one mountaintop hamlet that preserves evidence for the dispersal of the Sacred Monogram on domestic exteriors. While the population and area of Paggese was much smaller than Ascoli Piceno, at least four versions of the Sacred Monogram are preserved on extant Renaissance buildings, demonstrating the popularity of the symbol. The doorways of Paggese's houses are simply hewn from the local travertine. On the lintel of one doorway of a turn of the sixteenth-century *casa torre* the letters *yhs* are set in a roundel with carved serrated edges (Figure 4.9).[373] This Sacred Monogram roundel is currently coated in a layer of whitewash, helping it stand out from the unpolished grey stone. The whitewashing of this example raises the possibility that other carved examples were embellished with paint, perhaps the blue and gold of Bernardino of Siena's plaque. The Sacred Monogram provides sacred protection to this *casa torre*, a fortified type of dwelling that became popular in the middle ages and whose tower provided both a defensive vantage point and a symbol of status for its inhabitants.[374]

One *casa padronale* in Paggese displays its devotion to the Name of Jesus not on a doorway, but above a window on the second floor of the building: the Sacred Monogram and sunburst with radiating rays are carved in relief (Figure 4.10). The date 1513 is etched in the stone, possibly indicating when the house was first built.[375] This display of the Sacred Monogram at a higher elevation made the symbol visible from farther away, not just to those who passed by the doorways on the narrow streets. As a *casa padronale*, a rural home of the local feudal lord, it would be visited by the townspeople, the *padrone*'s family and guests, and visitors who could both witness and utilise the devotional space when they entered the building.

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371 Salvi notes fifteenth-century documents that refer to the 'lapides triburtinos' near the Castel di Luco. Alfonso Acocella, 'Travertino Pietra Italiana: I luoghi e i caratteri della materia [Travertine, an Italian Stone: Location and characteristics of the material]', in *Travertino di Siena* [*Sienese Travertine*], ed. by Alfonso Acocella and Davide Turrini, trans. by Arabella Fiona Palladino (Florence: Alinea Editrice, 2010), 18-35 (25), and Checcoli and Dessi, 23.
372 Acocella, 25.
373 This tower house is marked 101 in Paggese di Acquasanta. It is dated to the end of the fifteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, with later sixteenth-century renovations and nineteenth-century additions. Catalogued by the Beni Culturali of the Marche (ID: 1100060621) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69494/Casa-torre/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].
374 Rinaldo Comba, 'La dispersione dell'habitat nell'Italia centro-settentrionale tra XII e XV secolo. Vent'anni di ricerche', *Studi Storici*, 25 (1984), 765-83 (774).
375 This earliest date marked on this house is 1513, but a later inscription on a door to the courtyard provides evidence for an expansion in 1550. Some portions of the house were also renovated in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Catalogued by the Beni Culturali of the Marche (ID: 1100060620) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69493/Casa-padronale/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

In the city centre of Paggese another *IHS* appears on the prominent keystone of an arch accompanied by the Three Nails of the Crucifixion (Figure 4.11). While this inscription dates to the latter half of the sixteenth century at the earliest due to the Jesuit influence, and perhaps better represents the style of the seventeenth century, it illustrates the enduring prominence of the Sacred Monogram as a devotional symbol decorating the doorways of Italian homes throughout the early modern period. Above the carved keystone, a rectangular recessed niche houses a shelf where a religious statuette might have been placed (Figure 4.11, Detail). Most of the thresholds studied in this section most likely date to the fifteenth century and the earlier half of the sixteenth century, following decades of the promotion of the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus by itinerant Observant Franciscans. However, the few later examples dating to the second half of the sixteenth century demonstrate lasting devotion to the Sacred Monogram and its development as a symbol. In these later iterations, it is often written as in the capitalised *IHS* form rather than *yhs*, and occasionally symbols are added, such as the Three Nails of the Crucifixion, a version made popular by the Jesuits.

The nearby fortified Castello di Luco in Acquasanta Terme, just a short walk from the community of Paggese, also displays the Sacred Monogram (Figure 4.12). Located on a lintel on the outer wall of the Castello di Luco, the symbol in the form *yHs* is carved inside a roundel decorated with a frame of vegetal motifs. As with the examples in Cingoli, the H in this version of the Monogram is transcribed as a capital letter, though the cross above is not as dominant as in the Cingoli examples. The area of Acquasanta was well known for its healing waters, noted by Pliny and used by Charlemagne.[376] The rotund castle, built on a large outcrop of travertine, was first recorded when it was donated to the monastery of Farfa in 1039.[377] During the early modern period, the castle was maintained by the Ciucci family, who had established themselves in Luco and were known as the 'Signori di Lugo'.[378] The Sacred Monogram was most likely carved over the door during the Ciucci family's habitation. Since the family's acquisition of the Castello di Luco (1436) coincided with the increasing popularity of the Sacred Monogram spread by the Marchigian sermons of Giacomo della Marca (1420s-1470s) and Giovanni da Capistrano (1420s-1440s), this symbol may have been added during a period of renovation as the new family established themselves as *signori*, demonstrating their devotional affiliations.[379]

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[376] William Paget Jervis, *The Mineral Resources of Central Italy: Including Geological, Historical, and Commercial Notices of the Mines and Marble Quarries; With a Supplement, Containing an Account of the Mineral Springs, Accompanied by the Most Reliable Analyses* (London: Edward Stanford, 1868), 121, and Bernardo Cardinale, 'La pianificazione delle aree protette in Italia. Il caso del Parco Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga', in *L'economia della provincia di Teramo: Modelli produtttivi e cambiamenti strutturali*, ed. by Giuseppe Mauro (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2007), 205-30 (220).
[377] Antonio Salvi, *Iscrizioni medievali nel territorio ascolano: Documenti epigrafici con relative note storiche*, Testi e Documenti, 9 (Rome: Istituto Superiore di Studi Medievali "Cecco d'Ascoli", 2010), 5.
[378] Bernardo Carfagna, *Il lambello il monte e il leone: Storia e araldica della città di Ascoli e della Marchia meridionale tra Medioevo e fine dell'ancien régime* (Ascoli Piceno: Librati Editrice, 2004), 132-33; Salvi, 6-7.
[379] Checcoli and Dessi, 466-67.

Other fifteenth- and sixteenth-century homes in Acquasanta Terme display the Sacred Monogram above their portals. In the borgo of Piedicava, the symbol can be found carved in relief above the threshold of a *casa torre*, which can be dated to the fifteenth century based upon its stylistic attributes (Figure 4.13).[380] A nearby house on the outskirts of Acquasanta Terme also displays the Sacred Monogram in a lunette over its door with the date 1517 carved in relief (Figure 4.14).[381] The cross dominates the Sacred Monogram and the sunburst is framed in a circle and embellished with two leaves, creating the impression of a flower. The Sacred Monogram in the radiant sun was also carved on the lintel above the door of a contemporary row house (*casa a schiera*) in Acquasanta (Figure 4.15). The sun is carved with decorative details, concentric circles of repetitive patterns, which frame the *yhs*, and the cross also dominates in this example. The lintel is framed by lush carved foliage and on either side of the Sacred Monogram the numbers '1518' are incised, providing a date for both the inscription and the house.[382] These houses illustrate both the lasting popularity of the Sacred Monogram in the area of Acquasanta and also suggest an increase in the construction of domestic architecture in the second decade of the sixteenth century, perhaps reflecting a population increase or the increased ability of locals to afford new homes with decorative aspects.

In the hamlet of Pito di Acquasanta the Sacred Monogram also appears twice on one sixteenth-century fortified house (*casa fortificata*) (Figure 4.16).[383] The smoothed outline of the Bernardino-style sun is still visible with the faint outline of the *yhs* inside an arch over the doorway (Figure 4.16, Detail a). This Sacred Monogram is located inside a slightly recessed lunette with a pointed arch, the outline of which on the travertine can be seen faintly in the photo. This framing device of the lunette would highlight the importance of the Sacred Monogram; the use of a lunette above an entryway is reminiscent of church doorways, where religious figures, words, and symbols would be painted or sculpted to greet the congregation. To the left of the lunette an outline carving of a ferocious animal that resembles a rampant lion, perhaps an armorial symbol of the family who owned the house, is carved in very low relief. Above one window the *yhs* is encircled again by the radiant sun and framed inside an additional roundel (Figure 4.16, Detail b). The window frame is carved with decorative embellishments of lush stylised foliage. Underneath the decoratively

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380 The house has been dated to the fifteenth century because of the primitive construction, its attributes, and the fact that the *borgo* dates to this era. Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100220298) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/78498/Casa-torre/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

381 Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060674) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69547/Casa-rurale/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

382 Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060661) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69534/Casa-a-schiera/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

383 Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060650) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69523/Casa-fortificata/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

carved head of the cornice, an inscription records the name of the *scalpellino* (mason), Magistro Pietro and a date in the sixteenth century (15--).[384] It is unclear if the name of Magistro Pietro above this window indicates his role in building the edifice and carving the window frames, or if he also inhabited this building, decorating his home with detailed carvings and adding the Sacred Monogram as a mark of his devotion to the Name of Jesus.

The neighbourhood of Uscerno di Montegallo also includes extant inscribed buildings dated to the Renaissance. On one building the letters *IHS* have been etched in the centre of the architrave of the northern facing door framed in a box emphasising their importance (Figure 4.17). The cross that surmounts the H is decorated with floriated ornament terminating in three leaves at the tip of each of the three points, perhaps referencing the Trinity. The inscription also dates the Sacred Monogram to 1568.[385] This inscription is also bordered by carved decorative ornaments—a decorative spiral on the viewer's left and a French-style fleur-de-lis on the viewer's right.

While the examples of the Sacred Monogram in the Marche discussed to this point have been the sole inscription or accompanied by identifying information, such as a name or date, the symbol was sometimes paired with other devotional inscriptions. Occasionally, these accompanying inscriptions directly referenced or enhanced the meaning of the Sacred Monogram. One now-lost inscription in Ascoli Piceno replicated the instructional words of praise Bernardino of Siena had suggested adding to the symbol, 'IN NOMINE IHS OMNE GENU FLECTATUR CELESTIUM TERRESTIUM ET INFERNORUM'.[386] Above a relief-carved Sacred Monogram in a sunburst, another extant doorway in Ascoli Piceno proclaims the salvific power of the Name of Jesus: 'UNICA SPES HOMINUM EST SALVANTIS NOMEN IESU' (Figure 4.18).[387] A preserved *terracotta* panel embedded into a wall next to a doorway displays the Sacred Monogram in Bernardino's sunburst on a building in the city of Verona (Figure 4.19).[388] The *IHS* has been sculpted in a raised relief with the date 1546 etched above. The tangible quality of the raised surface may have invited someone entering or exiting the building or a passer-by to touch the symbol in a moment of contemplation or prayer. Below the symbol, the Latin inscription 'QUICUNQUE HONORIFICAVERIT ME GLORIFICABO EVM' reminds those who view the symbol that those who honour Christ will be glorified by Him. These words are adopted from the First Book

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384 The exact transcription is not provided by Leporini and according to the Beni culturali database the year portion of the inscription is illegible: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Picecno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 228, and Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060650).

385 Another inscription above a window on the façade of this building is dated to 1569; presumably the building was under construction/reconstruction in the late 1560s and these embellishments were added over the course of time: Leporini, 256.

386 S. Castelli, xxiv.

387 Via Quinto Curzio Rufo (n. 26): S. Castelli, 36.

388 I must thank Professor Deborah Howard for alerting me to the existence of this plaque, which is located across the street from the Chiesa di San Fermo in Verona.

of Samuel: 'sed quicumque glorificaverit me, glorificabo eum: qui autem contemnunt me, erunt ignobiles'.[389]

Domestic Inscriptions in Ascoli Piceno & the Surrounding Regions

In addition to the Sacred Monogram, the Marche region is exceptional for the wide range of inscriptions on domestic buildings that survive from the early modern period. Inscriptions appear on buildings' exterior walls, over windows and doorways, and over doors in entryways. In Ascoli Piceno, 141 extant Renaissance inscriptions have been accounted for on the city's buildings. Additionally, around another fifty-one inscriptions were recorded by nineteenth-century scholars before early modern buildings were demolished (see Table 2).[390] Both devotional and 'secular' inscriptions on domestic dwellings are also preserved in other towns and villages in the region around Ascoli Piceno. The survival of these Marchigian inscriptions attests to the textual culture of early modern Italy, perhaps revealing remnants of an inscriptional tradition that stretched beyond the region to other areas of Italy.

Scholars such as Daniel Jütte have discussed the threshold, and particularly the space above the doorway, as a place for devotional inscriptions in areas of Northern Europe, dismissing their existence south of the Alps. Jütte suggests that Catholics placed images of the Virgin Mary over their doors while Protestants displayed their devotion to the 'Word of God' through inscriptions, such as the ubiquitous 'Verbum domini manet in (a)eternum' or its acronym 'VDMIE'.[391] However, a survey of the inscriptions preserved in the southern part of the Marche, in the area around the city of Ascoli Piceno, illustrates that now lost devotional doorways might have populated the streets of early modern Italy, appearing on the homes of Catholic devotees both before and after the Council of Trent.

Most inscriptions in the region date to the first half of the sixteenth century, a period of extensive building and renovation in Ascoli Piceno.[392] While these sixteenth-century inscriptions are the focus of this chapter, later examples demonstrate the lasting popularity of this type of devotional display. Devotional inscriptions derive from a wide range of inspiration, including literature, the Bible, and popular sayings. Occasionally inscriptions preserve the memory of the building's inhabitants, providing information not preserved in the archival record. Some inscriptions recorded the ancestral name of the home's inhabitants, such as the Mandocchi family's name, 'DE MANDOCCHIS', which is inscribed over a ground floor window on one building.[393]

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389 1 Samuel 2:30.
390 For transcriptions of all the accounted for inscriptions see Table 2.
391 Jütte, 62-63.
392 Giuseppe Fabiani, *Ascoli nel Cinquecento*, Collana di pubblicazioni storiche ascolane, 10, 2 vols (Ascoli Piceno: Società Tipolitografica Editrice, 1957), I, 34.
393 Via dei Saladini, 4: S. Castelli, 28.

Others provide information about the family's origins, such as one building in Piazza San Gregorio inscribed 'PAULUS D. PERLEONIBUS ROMANUS', explaining that Paolo Pierleoni was a Roman transplant in Ascoli Piceno.[394] Some noted vernacular names of owners, such as one marking the name 'GIOVANNI FRANCESCO CERRI',[395] while others presented names in their Latinised forms, such as that of Pietro Ferri, accompanied by a date, 'PETRUS FERREUS MDVIIII', perhaps indicating that he built the home or acquired the building in 1509 (Figure 4.20).[396] An inscription that was found repurposed for a low wall surrounding a farmhouse outside the Porta Romana reads 'VINCENTIUS DE GENESTRIS AROMATARIUS'; this inscribed stone was probably once over the doorway of the property owned by Vincenzo Ginestri, a spice dealer, perhaps functioning as a pronouncement of his trade while also marking his shop as a place of business.[397]

Others are more explicit in describing the named person's stake in constructing the building, such as one plaque over a door that reads: 'MARIANUS ALVITRETIS FUNADVIT. MDXLVI', explaining that the edifice was built by Mariano Alvitreti in 1546; however, it is not entirely clear if Mariano physically built the structure or simply commissioned it.[398] A plaque above a 1576 doorway called for God's assistance in completing the construction of the building: 'PERFICE DOMINE DOMUM ISTAM QUAM AEDIFICAS VIRTUTE TUA. MDLXXVI'.[399] Others wished peace on the house and its inhabitants—'PAX HUIC DOMUI'—or good health to those who passed by: 'PER VIAM SALUTA VERITIS MDXXV'.[400]

While most preserved inscriptions can be found carved in durable stone, other examples offer insight into other ways in which doorways were adorned with textual information and demonstrations of piety in the early modern period. The name SIGISMUNDUS is etched along the top of a rare surviving early modern wooden door on the sixteenth-century Palazzo Miliani (Figure 4.21). Nestled between the inscribed door and the lintel is a carved wooden panel. Although it is now worn, the human figures on the panel are still identifiable, including saints, *putti*, and a scene of the Annunciation; these outlines may indicate where relief or painted figures once

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394 Above a window on the first floor of Piazza San Gregorio (n. 4): S. Castelli, 28.
395 Via dei Soderini (n. 44): S. Castelli, 22.
396 Via Benedetto Cairoli (n. 10): S. Castelli, 19.
397 G. Angelini Rota, *Silloge epigrafica ascolana*, Biblioteca comunale-Ascoli Piceno, cronaca manoscritta, n. 35 (1931), 4-17, cited in S. Castelli, xxxi. On the use of images for early modern shop signs to aid the illiterate: Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 137-40.
398 Via degli Alvitreti (n. 12): S. Castelli, 22.
399 Via Luigi Dari (n. 8): S. Castelli, 35.
400 These are listed amongst the 'lost inscriptions' in C. Mariotti, *Guida di Ascoli Piceno* (Ascoli Piceno, 1925), 139-41, cited in S. Castelli, xxix and 14.

appeared (Figure 4.21, Detail).[401] Palazzo Miliani was designed by the artist Cola dell'Amatrice.[402] This doorway stands beneath an arched portal carved in the popular fifteenth-century *punta di diamante* pattern; atop the lintel a lunette is covered with a grille of wrought-iron, which would provide light in the entryway.[403] An inscription over a ground-floor window on the same building is dated to 1520 and reminded those who passed by the home to give thanks with the words 'GRATIUS AGIMUS DOMINO. MDXX' (Figure 4.22).[404] These words would have been familiar to devotees who regularly attended Mass as they formed part of an exchange with the congregation during pre-Eucharistic prayers; the words 'Gratias agamus domino Deo nostro' are sung by the priest, to which the congregants reply 'Dignum et justum est'.[405]

The inscriptions appearing on sixteenth-century homes in Ascoli Piceno have most often been carved in a classicising font. The people of the neighbouring villages commissioned similar types of textual thresholds as their city-dwelling neighbours; many are more roughly hewn, suggesting that they were made by provincial artisans or non-professionals, perhaps even etched by the home's inhabitants. Although the great variety of inscriptions warrants further research, the remainder of this chapter will consider the three other types of devotional inscriptions present at the threshold of the Italian Renaissance home. The following sections will analyse the material prayers inscribed on the homes of Ascoli Piceno and the surrounding region in three categories: Marian, Aphoristic and Humanistic, Biblical and Intercessory.

Marks of Marian Devotion

Above the portal of the former Chiesa dei SS. Filippo e Giacomo in Ascoli Piceno, the words 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM' are inscribed, the first words of the Hail Mary prayer.[406] Perhaps those who entered the church through this portal were meant to recall and replicate the Angelic greeting, or to recite a full *Ave Maria* prayer. Another inscription is found not on a church doorway but on the exterior wall of the former Augustinian convent attached to the Church of San Tommaso Apostolo.[407] Above a recessed fresco set into the wall of the convent, the words 'MATER DIVINA GRATIE' are inscribed (Figure 4.23). This Marian image and text

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401 Via Bonaccorsi (n.13): Leporini, 112, fig. 109. See also: 'PALAZZO MILIANI (sec. XVI)', *Scheda Informativa*, Comune di Ascoli Piceno <http://www.comuneap.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1371> [accessed 1 August 2016].
402 Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100021916) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/65478/Palazzo-Miliani/Default.aspx> [accessed 1 August 2016].
403 Jütte notes that the inclusion of grilles was more common in Northern Europe, but this example illustrates their use on the other side of the Alps: Jütte, 60; Leporini, 90.
404 Via Bonaccorsi (n. 13): S. Castelli, 45.
405 Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for the Mass and Office: Guide to Their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 88.
406 Luke 1:27; S. Castelli, 50.
407 The convent buildings are now the Museo dell'Arte Ceramica.

composition functioned as what is traditionally called a 'street-corner' Madonna.[408] While this example is not actually on a street corner, it functioned as a focal point for the daily devotion of the neighbourhood. Above a window on a domestic building across the street the words 'AVE MARIA GRATIE' are incised (Figure 4.24). Pedestrians who passed by the image of the Madonna and inscription could greet the fresco of the Virgin with these words.

The first words of the *Ave Maria* appear on other doorways in Ascoli Piceno, revealing widespread devotion to the Virgin. An example on a residential building announces, 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS S TECUM' (Figure 4.25).[409] Another simple rendition of the first words of the Angelic Salutation 'AVE MARIA' appears over an interior doorway in the foyer of another building (Figure 4.26).[410] Since many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century interiors have been renovated removing traces of these types of inscriptions or remain inaccessible to scholars, this rare recorded example provides evidence for the practice of inscribing devotional mottos over the doors of interior domestic spaces, reminiscent of the *ISU* etched over the door of the bedchamber in the *Birth of the Virgin* by Carpaccio. It also illustrates how early modern Italians followed the advice of preachers, like Bernardino of Siena's recommendation that the Name of Jesus should be placed both 'at the thresholds and doorways of […] rooms'.[411]

Another inscription combines the Monogram of the Name of Jesus with the name 'MARIA' (Figure 4.27). The names are etched on the keystone, which resembles a scroll, drawing attention to their textuality. The dual inscription illustrates one way in which the Sacred Monogram was combined with other devotional words to form a joint textual invocation to the Mother and Child. The combination of the Name of Jesus and the Name of Mary could function much in the same way as other iconographical combinations of Christ and Mary, Mother and Child depicted together, such as the Virgin and Child or the *Pietà*.[412]

Other houses combined a variety of types of inscriptions, incorporating Marian phrases into the devotional programme. The façade of a now-demolished house on the Via Bonaccorsi has been transplanted to a building on the Via Pretoriana (Figure 4.28).[413] The lintel to the left of the central portal is embellished with the armorial shield of a family and is inscribed with 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS' (Figure 4.28, Detail a). The motto inscribed over the door to the right of the central portal announces, 'EX DEO ET LABORE' (Figure 4.28, Detail b).[414]

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408 This fresco and these inscriptions are on the modern Via Costanzo Mazzoni (n. 11). On 'Street-Corner' Madonnas: Edward Muir, 'The Virgin on the Street Corner: The Place of the Sacred in Italian Cities', in *The Renaissance: Italy and Abroad*, ed. by John Jeffries Martin (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 279-96.
409 S. Castelli, xxvi-xxvii, records two other variations on buildings that have since been destroyed.
410 Via dei Soderini 16: S. Castelli, 23.
411 Bernardino da Siena, 'XXXIV', II, 179-80.
412 On the symbolism of the combination of the Name of Jesus and Mary, see Gallori.
413 Giorgio Giorgi, 'Un tuffo nel passato ad Ascoli Piceno: Via Pretoriana', *Visit Ascoli* <http://visitascoli.it/punti-interesse/un-tuffo-nel-passato-ad-ascoli-piceno-via-pretoriana/> [accessed 1 August 2016]. See also S. Castelli, 67, note 31, which discusses the relocation of this façade in preparation for the building of Piazza di Cola dell'Amatrice.
414 Via Pretoriana (n. 43).

This moralising motto presumably credited both God and the workers for the successful construction of the building and encouraged the correct way to live. Variations of this motto appeared in a variety of media; for example, a portrait medal of Tomasso Rangone by Alessandro Vittoria was inscribed with the maxim 'VIRTUTE PARTA DEO ET LABORE'.[415] Perhaps the abbreviated version that appears over the door in Ascoli Piceno was meant to express the same sentiment, that virtue was a result of both God's grace and one's work.

Etched above the central portal of an edifice dated to 1526 the words 'IN SUDORE VULTUS TUI VESCERIS PANE. MDXXVI' explain the daily tribulations of human life: one must exert oneself to feed oneself while on earth (Figure 4.28, Detail c).[416] This phrase from the Book of Genesis appears over two extant doorways in Ascoli Piceno.[417] The line from Genesis, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread', continues with the familiar words, 'till thou return to the earth, out of which thou was taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return', which are uttered both during the distribution of the ashes on Ash Wednesday and during funerals.[418] Using the incipit of this line from Genesis might have inspired the spectator to recite or ponder the complete passage as a *memento mori*.

Devotional Aphorisms & Renaissance Maxims

The next type of inscription that appears over the doorways of domestic structures can be loosely defined as generic devotional aphorisms and Renaissance maxims. These range from ubiquitous Renaissance mottos such as 'VIRTU VINCIT OMNIA', inscribed over at least two doorways in Ascoli Piceno,[419] to more erudite citations from literature, such as the Dantean 'LA VERITA NULLA MEZOGNA FRODI'.[420] These mottos occasionally reflect the piety of the home's inhabitants in addition to their humanistic lifestyle, proclaiming sentiments like 'VIRTUTIS PRAEMIA SOLI DEO DEBENTUR'.[421] Others praise God's magnanimity, 'A DEO BONA OMNIA', or His omniscient empathy in understanding earthly suffering, 'SOLUS DEUS SANAT LANGUORES NOSTROS'.[422] The presence of aphorisms and references to humanistic literature

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415 Allison Sherman, '"Soli Deo honor et gloria"? Cittadino Lay Procurator Patronage and the Art of Identity Formation in Renaissance Venice', in *Architecture, Art and Identity in Venice and its Territories, 1450-1750*, ed. by Nebahat Avicioğlu and Emma Jones (Farhnam and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 15-32 (26).

416 Via Pretoriana (n. 41, 45, 47): S. Castelli, 38.

417 An abbreviated version of this citation from Genesis 3 appears on another home in Ascoli Piceno; only the words 'IN SUDORE VULTUS TUI' are inscribed and two sculpted saints flank the inscription. The doorway of this home also bears another inscription, 'IN TE D[OMI]NE COFIDO MD', which will be discussed later in this section: Via dei Soderini (n. 38): S. Castelli, 22, and Leporini, 355.

418 Genesis 3:19.

419 The motto appears on an interior doorway on Corso Mazzini (n. 275); another door inscribed 'VIRTU VINCIT' was recorded amongst the now lost inscriptions: see Leporini and S. Castelli, 353-56.

420 Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 2004), Canto XX, line 99; Fabiani, I, 33, note 3.

421 Via Manilia (n. 21).

422 Via del Teatro (n.4); Via Manilia (n. 21).

has been the focus of the limited attention paid to the inscriptions of Ascoli Piceno, in the work of Fabiani, but a comprehensive study interpreting the devotional aspects of these inscriptions is lacking.[423]

While the supplementary sayings that sometimes accompanied devotional text do not directly reference religion, their role as words of wisdom and morality complement the devotional programme. For example, some inscriptions serve as *memento mori*, reminding the inhabitants and viewers of the passage of time, and their meaning is enhanced by their relationship with the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus. One inscription reminds those who pass by, 'FAC BONUM ET NON TIMEAS ANOS MDXXV' (Figure 4.29).[424] When read alone, this message encourages living a good life without fear of inevitable aging, but also reminds the reader of the passage of time. Below the inscribed lintel, a roundel with the Sacred Monogram set inside the flaming sun adds another layer of meaning. With the addition of a Christian symbol, the message to 'do good' can be read as a reminder to live according to Christian principles, while the order to 'not fear the years' reminds readers to have faith in the Resurrection of the dead. Another doorway in Ascoli Piceno carries a similar message, 'HOMO AD MORTEM DIES AU[T]E[M] AD FINEM' (Figure 4.30).[425] This inscription serves as a reminder of the mortality of all who enter through the portal, yet the *IHS* in the middle reminds the viewer of salvation through Christ.

Renaissance mottos also appeared alongside the Sacred Monogram in other Marchigian towns. In the village of Forca di Montegallo one house's elaborate doorway is carved with information that reveals much about the home's inhabitants (Figure 4.31). In the centre of the lintel the *IHS* appears between two carved florets and the date, 1562. Below the Monogram are the words 'non senza sati[s] pacient[i]a sapient[i]a'; these words are not explicity devotional but explain that knowledge cannot be obtained without patience.[426] Unlike many of the inscriptions studied to this point, carved or etched in capital classicizing letters, here the words are in a lower-case font. While many inscriptions are in Latin, this mixed text illustrates the use of the vernacular in some inscriptions. Above the inscription a contemporary rectangular stone is inscribed with the name 'BECIONE' below the family's coat of arms and the letters 'MIORO'. This may reference the family names of a matrimonial union, or perhaps the name of the home's owner.

A vernacular inscription in Ascoli Piceno pronounces 'NON FU MAI TARDE GRATIE DEVINE' (Figure 4.32). The words have been adapted from Petrarch's 'Triumphis Eternitatis [Trionfo dell'eternità]': 'Ma tarde non fur mai grazie divine'.[427] The Petrarchan quotation not only

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423 Leporini and Castelli provide incomplete lists of the inscriptions and some images, while Fabiani mostly discusses their humanistic content; Leporini; S. Castelli; Fabiani, I, 32-38.
424 Via Quinto Curzio Rufo (n. 13): S. Castelli, 35.
425 Via Benedetto Cairoli (n.8): S. Castelli, 19.
426 Leporini, 251, fig. 270.
427 Francesco Petrarch, 'Triumphis Eternitatis [Trionfo dell'eternità]', in *Trionfi*, ed. by Guido Bezzola (Milan: Rizzoli, 1957), 56-60 (56, line 13). Petrarch's *Trionfo dell'eternità* was also known as the *Trionfo della divinità*, emphasising the

illustrates the inhabitants' knowledge of literary sources, but when divided from the context of the poem, its meaning, 'Divine Grace is never late coming', attests to the power of God's Grace and reminds those who pass through the portal to have faith.

Another inscription, dated to 1555, 'IHS QUOD TIBI NON VIS ALTERI FECISSE CAVETO MDLV', references the concept of the Golden Rule.[428] The text is modified from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke when Jesus explains the concept.[429] The rule also appears in the Old Testament in Tobit (Tobias), 'quod ab alio odis fieri tibi vide ne alteri tu aliquando facias'.[430] A closely related textual parallel appears in a text on how to properly raise good Christian children, written by the priest Silvio Antoniano.[431] Though the 1555 inscription predates Antoniano's 1584 *Tre libri dell'educatione christiana dei figliuoli*, the contemporary meaning of the phrase can be understood through Antoniano's lens. Antoniano connects the phrase 'Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris' to the Roman emperor Alexander, who was not a Christian but had learned the precept from them. According to Antoniano, history recorded how Alexander understood the importance of seeing this rule written in its material form, 'et tanto si delettava di questa sentenza, che elgi l'haveva anchor fatta scolpire in varii luoghi del suo palazzo, et ne gli edificii publici'.[432] By copying this phrase onto his own home, the resident in Ascoli Piceno not only presented the moral motto as his personal maxim, he also copied the actions of a famous Roman emperor. In addition to explaining its meaning, Antoniano offers advice as to how this phrase should be applied to daily life, emphasising the importance of living according to the precept:

> Quanto adunque più si conviene che il padre christiano ammonisca il figliuolo alla osservanza di questo saluitifero precetto? Il che se si facesse, non ci haverebbe bisogno di tante liti, et giuditii, et si viveria tra gli huomini con semmo amore et pace.[433]

In the example in Ascoli Piceno, the Christian aspects of the message are emphasised by the addition of the Sacred Monogram to the doorway.

Biblical Benedictions & Intercessory Requests

The residents of Ascoli Piceno used both the Old and New Testaments as sources for their displays of devotion on their homes. Most of the New Testament threshold inscriptions discussed in this

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pious undertones of the *Trionfi*; see: *A bibliographical Catalogue of Italian Books Printed in England 1603-1642*, ed. by Soko Tomita and Masahiko Tomita (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 139, note 156. See also Fabiani, 33, note 3.

428 Corso Mazzini (n. 300): S. Castelli, 9.

429 Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

430 Tobit 4:16.

431 Cardinal Carlo Borromeo encouraged Antoniano to write the *Tre libri*, which became a popular guidebook following the Council of Trent. Antoniano later became a cardinal: Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400-1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 197.

432 On Emperor Alexander Severus' uses of the Golden Rule, including the inscription in gold on his palace's façade: Harry J. Gensler, *Ethics and the Golden Rule* (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 184: Silvio Antoniano, *Tre libri dell'educatione christiana dei figliuoli* (Verona: Sebastiano dalle Donne, Girolamo Stringari, & Compagni, 1584), c. 96v.

433 Antoniano, c. 96v.

section derive from the Gospels, but are no longer extant. Evidence also illustrates that excerpts from the Old Testament Psalms were particularly popular for doorway devotions.

A familiar verse that appears in both the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, 'QUOD DEUX CONIUXIT HOMO NON SEPARET', has been recorded amongst the lost domestic inscriptions of Ascoli Piceno.[434] This phrase appears in a passage in which Jesus discusses the concept of divorce with the Pharisees and explains that humans cannot separate things joined together by God. The presence of this message on a domestic doorway is interesting for its relationship to marriage. Theologians such as Saint Thomas Aquinas cited this passage in their discussions of marriage, but its use in weddings is not well-recorded before the Renaissance. By the mid-sixteenth century it had become a fairly common part of the marriage ceremony, sometimes said by the priest in the pre-nuptial hand-joining ceremony or read as the Gospel reading during the wedding mass in post-Tridentine marriages.[435] Before the Tridentine standardisation of the ceremony, marriages might be contracted and vows exchanged in the domestic setting or at the church's threshold by a priest or notary, and laws did not require that the ceremony be accompanied by a full-marriage mass inside the church.[436] The domestic threshold also played a key part in the rite of passage as the bride was led from her parent's home to her new husband's home; this symbolic ritual reflected the union and transfer between the families as the bride became part of her husband's family when she crossed the threshold and entered his house.[437]

Another biblical inscription was derived from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 'SI DOMINUS PRO NOBIS QUIS CONTRA NOS?'[438] When extracted from the Epistle, this quotation makes the bold statement that 'If God be for us, who is against us?'[439] Marking a family's home with this phrase demonstrates their allegiance to their faith as well as God's allegiance to them and their success. This phrase challenges anyone to rise against this family and may have offered a sense of God's protection to the home's inhabitants.

Although nearly all the inscriptions that survive in Ascoli Piceno can be dated to the sixteenth century, one preserved portal demonstrates the city's earlier penchant for displaying biblical inscriptions above doors.[440] An inscription reading '+Adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini qui fecit coelum et terram' has been roughly etched on the travertine architrave of a

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[434] It appears that the inscription was taken from the Matthew version, which uses the word 'coniunxit' rather than 'iunxit': Mark 10:9 and Matthew 19:16; the inscription is recorded in S. Castelli, xxx.
[435] No written record exists for the use of this phrase during the marriage ceremony between the ninth century and a 1498 record from Lyon: Philip Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 93.
[436] Jennifer Ward, *Women in Medieval Europe: 1200-1500*, 2nd edn (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), 34-35; Jütte, 45.
[437] Deborah Krohn, 'Marriage as a Key to Understanding the Past', in *Art and Love*, ed. by Bayer, 9-15 (12).
[438] Romans 8:31; S. Castelli, xxix.
[439] Romans 8:31.
[440] Fabiani, I, 34.

doorway (Figure 4.33).[441] The gothic font of this inscription has been tentatively dated to the fourteenth century by Sestili and Torsani. The inscription derives from Psalm 123 (124), which references God's role as creator of Heaven and Earth and calls for His help and protection. The doorway bearing this inscription was once the entrance to a *bottega* or shop on the ground floor, probably preserved because of its devotional content while the rest of the edifice underwent later periods of renovation.[442] Although this was a shop door, the residents would live on the first floor. Domestic and business functions were conflated, as inhabitants, particularly male artisans and shopkeepers, moved between the two spaces throughout the day.[443] Sestili and Torsani also note the presence of an entryway to a pigsty located to the right of the inscribed doorway.[444] The presence and preservation of the earlier Psalm inscription raises several questions. Was this unique example preserved because of its holy content? Is it a chance survival of a type that was ubiquitous? Did the later inscriptions replace or replicate earlier examples?

Renaissance doorways from across the Marche region display other phrases from the Psalms. The words 'IN TE D[OMI]NE SPERAVI NON CONFVNDAR IN E[T]ERNUM', from Psalm 30 (31), were particularly popular (Figure 4.34).[445] On a building in Ascoli Piceno, two doorways together combine to produce a slight variation on this Psalm; the first reads 'IN TE D[OMI]NE COFIDO MD' and the second 'NON CONFUNDAR I[N] ETERNVM XXX9' (Figure 4.35, Details a & b).[446] Presumably, this building with two portals with the date 1539 once belonged to one family, who illustrated their faith by displaying this line from the Psalm. Underneath the date of 1588 carved into the architrave of a row house (*casa a schiera*) in Arquata del Tronto, the words 'IN TE D[OMI]NE SPERAVI NON CONFUNDAR IN ETERNUM' have been carved into a slightly recessed and smoothed panel of the mottled stone (Figure 4.36, Detail a).[447] Although the word 'Domine' has been abbreviated according to traditional written conventions, it appears that the stone carver did not fully plan the length of the inscription before carving, and the final letters of 'Eternum' did not fit in the allotted space. A niche to the left of the door perhaps once held a devotional relief or statuette (Figure 4.36, Detail b).[448] The phrase is

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441 Psalm 123 (124); the inscription is on a building on the modern rua Lino della Rocca (n. 2): Osvaldo Sestili and Anita Torsani, *Ascoli e l'edilizia privata medievale nei secoli XII, XIII, e XIV* (Ascoli Piceno: Giannino and Giuseppe Gagliardi, 1995), 79.

442 The interior of this door reveals sixteenth-century remodelling of the portal over the Romanesque (eleventh-twelfth century) original: Osvaldo Sestili and Anita Torsani, *Case e torri romaniche di Ascoli* (Ascoli Piceno: Cesari, 1966), 100, note 68, cited in S. Castelli, 56, note 15.

443 See description of building on Via Apollo (numbers 9, 11, 13): S. Castelli, 79; on shops: Welch, 125-34.

444 Sestili and Torsani, *Ascoli e l'edilizia privata*, 79.

445 Psalm 30:2 (Psalm 31:1).

446 Via dei Soderini, 38-40.

447 This traditional row house has been dated to the sixteenth century based upon its construction, specifically its simple windows and doors. Beni Culturali Marche (ID 1100221941) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/80100/Casa-a-schiera/Default.aspx> [accessed 23 July 2016].

448 While the niche may be a result of a missing stone, the location and shape seems to point to its intentional placement.

also etched over a doorway in the mountainside town of Uscerno di Montegallo. This citation forms part of an inscriptional programme on the home accompanied by the date 1571 and decorative vegetal flourish (Figure 4.37, Detail a).[449] Above a window on this same home the Sacred Monogram appears inside a flower and is flanked by rhombus-shaped and floral carvings in relief, with the date 1571 repeated above (Figure 4.37, Detail b). A third inscription which reads 'IL MOR[IRE] CON HONORE VITA RINOVA' appears above another window on this home (Figure 4.37, Detail c).[450] Within the devotional programme of the house, the third inscription takes on the Christian meaning that by living and dying well, one can obtain everlasting life.

The phrase from Psalm 30 is uttered by the angels who greet Dante's Beatrice when she returns from the Garden of Eden in Canto 30 of *Purgatory*.[451] The use of Psalm 30 on these doorways is particularly interesting not only for its general expression of faith linked with the Bible, and for its connection to Dante's poem, but also for its powers that were part of common knowledge. A 1536 commentary on various uses of the Psalms called *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia* explains that this Psalm is particularly efficacious in protecting people from those who are possessed (according to St Jerome), and protects against the dangers of demons and the world (citing Saint Cassiodorus).[452]

Another inscription derived from Psalm 111 (112) refers to the space of the home, 'GLORIA ET DIVITIE IN DOMO', offering a benediction of glory and wealth.[453] Other excerpts from the Psalms expressed the inhabitants' faith, such as one that read 'SALUS MEA IN TE DOMINE', an excerpt from Psalm 61 (62) that remembered the importance of placing one's hope in in God.[454] Above another, now-lost threshold, the words 'NON NOBIS DOMINE NON NOBIS SED NOMINI TUO DA GLORIAM' from Psalm 113 (115) reminded those who passed by or into the house to give glory to God's Name.[455] The first words of this line from the Psalm, 'Non nobis, domine', were also inscribed on the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi in Venice, which was known as the Ca' Loredan before about 1502. Sherman suggests that upon reading this maxim those who passed by would complete the line.[456] Another inscription from Psalm 120 (121),

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449 The quotation from Psalm 30 appears as: 'IN TE DOMINE. SPERAVI. NON ~ CONFVNDAR. IN. ETRNVM 1571': Leporini, 257.
450 Leporini, 257; see S. Castelli, 19, for another house in Ascoli Piceno bearing the same inscription, 'IL MORIR CON HONOR VITA RENOVA. MDXLVII', dated to 1547 (Via Carioli, n. 4).
451 *Purgatorio*, XXX, ll. 83, cited in Meredith J. Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 39.
452 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia il quale fece il propheta David: con le vertù de i detti Salmi: appropriate alla salute di l'anima: e dil corpo: et per lo accrescimento dilla sostanza di questo mondo. Con la sua tavola per ordine de i Salmi perpoter trovar ogni cosa più facilmente* (Venice: per Petrum de Nicolinis de Sabio: sumptu vero, & requisitione Guilielmi de Fontaneto Montisferrati, April 1536), c. 24v.
453 Psalm 111 (112):3; Via del Lago (n. 12): S. Castelli, 27.
454 Psalm 61:8 (62:6).
455 Psalm 113:9 (115:1); S. Castelli, xxv.
456 Sherman, 25.

'CUSTODIAT DOMINUS EXITUM ET INTROTUM TUUM', asks for the Lord's blessing for those coming and going out, a particularly potent message at this entryway in Ascoli Piecno.[457]

Some of the quotations from the Psalms over doorways might also be familiar as parts of the Mass that appeared at different points in the liturgical year. For example, one doorway was inscribed with the words from Psalm 118 (119), 'IUSTUS ES DOMINE ET RECTUM JUDICIUM TUUM', which was the entrance hymn used in the Mass on the seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.[458] This Psalm was used as a Hebrew hymn that celebrated King David's military victory.[459] A variation of this line from the Psalm, which expresses God's role as a just Lord, appeared around a scene of the *Last Judgment* on a medal celebrating Pope Paul II minted in the 1460s, 'IUSTUS ES DOMINE ET RECTUM IUDICI TUM MISERE NOSTRI DO MISERE NOSTRI', emphasising his role as a judge and representative of the Church's justice.[460] Perhaps the owner of the home was inspired by an inscription on a medal like this, or was involved in a legal profession.

One doorway in Ascoli Piceno is inscribed with the words 'O BONE IESU IHS ILLUMINA OCULOS MEOS' (Figure 4.38).[461] The words 'O bone Iesu' and the Monogram of Christ were added to a phrase from Psalm 12 (13) that reads 'Domine Deus meus ilumina oculos meo'.[462] Girolamo Savonarola, in his 1496 sermon 'On the Art of Dying Well', recommended reciting this Psalm often, focusing upon these lines, to aid one in obtaining clarity from God.[463] While this inscription is stylistically similar to other sixteenth-century inscriptions in Ascoli Piceno, an additional inscription in the lunette above the doorway suggests that by the middle of the seventeenth century the building was no longer inhabited by lay people, and instead had become a Jesuit residence.[464]

The relative ubiquity of inscriptions extracted from the Psalms on domestic buildings in the Marche attests to the popularity of the Psalms in the domestic context. How did devotees interact with these inscriptions? Did these citations from the Psalms serve solely as protection for

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457 Psalm 120 (121):8; Leporini, 356.

458 Psalm 118 (119):137; Laurence B. Kanter, Barbara Drake Boehm, Carl Brandon Strehlke, et al., *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300-1450* (New York: Abrams for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 290.

459 Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1985, repr. 1998), 382, note 7.

460 See example at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (50.58.19): Anne Leader, 'Michelangelo's L*ast Judgment:* The Culmination of Papal Propaganda in the Sistine Chapel', *Studies in Iconography*, 27 (2006), 103-56 (118).

461 Rua delle Conce (n. 9): S. Castelli, 17.

462 Psalm 12 (13):4.

463 Girolamo Savonarola, 'On Ruth and Michah, Sermon 28 (2. Nov. 1492) "On the Art of Dying Well"', in Girolamo Savonarola, *A Guide to Righteous Living and Other Works*, trans. by Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 119-48 (131).

464 In the later lunette two founding Jesuits, Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Francis Xavier are carved in relief with their names along with the date 1635, the Sacred Monogram with the Three Nails of the Crucifixion, and a coat of arms. They are also accompanied by other inscriptions, which read: 'P. GISMUNDO PALUCCI' and 'NELL CONPAG DI GESU'.

the home and its residents, as suggested in *Il salmista secondo la Bibia*? Did devotees recite or even sing the Psalm upon entering, exiting, or passing by the edifice? Or did these Psalms solely function as a mark of the inhabitants' piety and function as decorative devotions?

More generic calls for intercession and blessing also appear over doors in Ascoli Piceno, echoing the words of the Mass and its music. One lost inscription, 'SANTUS SPIRITUS DA NOBIS GRATIAM', may have served as a blessing upon the home and its inhabitants.[465] God was also called upon to offer protection and to grant peace with phrases such as 'DOMINE DA PACIEM IN DIEBUS NOSTRIS'.[466] This familiar invocation for peace is etched in the travertine over the main portal of a villa in Castagneti, just outside the city centre of Ascoli Piceno. While the first words, 'Domine da pacem', derive from the Book of Isaiah, the complete request would have been sung as an antiphon during the Mass, particularly in Masses for peace during tumultuous times.[467]

Another potent phrase, 'CHRISTUS VINCIT CHRISTUS REGNANT CHRISTUS IMPERAT', was inscribed over the door of a now destroyed building.[468] As previous sections have illustrated, this phrase was a popular amuletic formula that appeared on a wide variety of media: by inscribing it above the door of a home, the inhabitants may have sought protection from illness, disaster, and death.[469] It is important to note another possible purpose for the use of the 'Christus vincit' inscription within the context of these doorway inscriptions, which were prominently displayed on the home. This chapter has discussed how many of the doorway inscriptions may be linked to music, and has suggested that the text inscribed over doorways may have prompted those passing by or through the doorway to sing a devotional song. The *lauda (laude)*, 'Christus vincit, Christus regnant, Christus imperat', appeared in the *Laudes regiae* by the twelfth century. Like the aforementioned examples, this doorway in Ascoli Piceno inscribed with this incipit of a *lauda* may have functioned as a cue to inspired devotees to sing this hymn of praise.[470] According to Fabiani, the same acclamation was also popular on buildings in Rome.[471] As the many discussed examples illustrate, when familiar devotional phrases were inscribed over doorways they carried multiple

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465 John 3:8; S. Castelli, xxv.
466 Villla Massei-Serianni, Castagneti (n. 39): S. Castelli, 50. See also S. Castelli, 67, note 31, regarding another version of this inscription on an architrave dated 1512 that was found in the garden of a house in Via Montella (n. 2).
467 Isaiah 26:12; Edward E. Lowinsky, 'Music in Renaissance Culture', in *Renaissance Essays*, ed. by Paul Oskar Kristeller, and Philip P. Wiener (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1968, repr. 1992), 337-81 (341). This antiphon was also converted into a motet during the Renaissance and combined with verses from Psalm 122: Richard Freedman, 'Paris and the French Court under François I', in *The Renaissance: From the 1470s to the End of the 16th century*, ed. by Iain Fenlon (Houndmills and London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 174-96 (180).
468 S. Castelli, xxix.
469 See Chapter One, p. 46 and Chapter Three, p. 77.
470 The *Laudes regiae* had been used in the coronation ceremonies of the Holy Roman Empire from the eighth century onwards: Mehmet Sinan Birdal, *The Holy Roman Empire and the Ottomans: From Global Imperial Power to Absolutist State* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 2. The term *lauda* (plural *laude*) may also appear as *laude* (plural *laudi*): V. Louise Katainen, 'Lauda', in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Christopher Kleinhenz, 2 vols (New York and London: Routledge 2004), II: 615-17.
471 Fabiani, I, 35.

connotations and purposes: they might be inscribed not only to inspire devotional praise or to serve as a symbol of the inhabitants' devotion, but also to mark the home with a holy protective device.

The Threshold

The vast array of surviving and documented inscriptions in the region around Ascoli Piceno requires us to question: 1. Did this type of textual devotion proliferate in other regions in Italy? 2. Why have they been preserved so well particularly in the southern part of the Marche? 3. Why was the threshold such an ideal space for devotional inscriptions? 4. How did devotees interact with these devotional inscriptions?

1. Early Modern Devotional Inscriptions in Other Italian Regions

In response to the first question, some scholars have noted the presence of devotional inscriptions dating to the early modern period in other Italian towns. For example, elaborately carved slate or marble panels were placed over lintels of domestic and religious spaces in modern Genoa. These panels, known as *sopraporte*, could provide an interesting point of comparison for future studies of domestic devotional doorway decorations in early modern Italy, especially those with religious content.[472]

In his discussion of domestic architecture in *The Stones of Venice*, John Ruskin noted the decoration of doorways. Ruskin explained that Venetians had long placed symbols of devotion over their doorways, and notes the transition of the doorway decoration during the Renaissance. He introduces his own commentary and prejudices about the newfound rationality of Renaissance decoration, while explaining that decorative elements such as crosses and angels were replaced by satyrs, which 'in our own domestic institutions, we have ever since, with much piety and sagacity, retained'. Ruskin not only discusses images and symbols, but also explains the use of inscriptions, including those of a devotional nature, a practice that endured from 'earlier ages' to the Renaissance. According to Ruskin, 'It seems to be only modern Protestantism which is entirely ashamed of all symbols and words that appear in anywise like a confession of faith'.[473]

In the late nineteenth century, Margaret Symonds and Lina Duff Gordon recorded various inscriptions over the doors of domestic buildings in Perugia. Along with the 'garlands of flowers and fruit bound with ribbons' carved into the travertine, they list a few inscribed phrases they encountered. The inscriptions include self-referential descriptions of doors, such as 'Pulchra janua

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[472] Ronald W. Lightbown, 'Three Genoese Doorways', *The Burlington Magazine*, 103 (1961), 412-15, 417; Madeline Ann Rislow, 'Abstract' of 'Dynamic Doorways: Overdoor Sculpture in Renaissance Genoa', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kansas, 2012), <http://hdl.handle.net/1808/10462> [accessed 17 April 2018].

[473] John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (New York: John Wiley, & Son, 1867), II: The Sea-Stories, 305-07.

ubi honesta domus (beautiful the door of the house which is honest)' as well as moralising mottos 'Solicitudo mater divitiarum (carefulness is the mother of riches)'. However, Symonds and Gordon emphasise that these 'very beautiful Latin inscriptions […] show a strong religious sentiment', with phrases such as 'A Deo cuncta—a domino omnia (all things from God)' and 'Ora ut vivas et Deo vives (pray to live and thou shalt live to God)'. While none of these inscriptions replicate those found on the houses in Ascoli Piceno and the surrounding towns, they do express similar sentiments. One devotional inscription recorded by Symonds and Gordon also incorporated the Sacred Monogram, although they do not provide a description of its visual appearance: 'Ecce spes I.H.S. mea semper (Christ always my hope)'.[474]

2. Survival of Devotional Inscriptions

If these sources indicate the presence of domestic inscriptions in other areas of Italy, what might be the reasons for their lack of survival? Besides the destruction of Renaissance domestic buildings in favour of new accommodation, the material upon which the inscriptions were written may not have been as durable as the travertine stone in the Marche region. The devotional inscription above the doorway of another Marchigian home might offer a clue to how similar inscriptions were created in early modern Italy.

While Ripatransone is in the province of Ascoli Piceno, it is outside the area most heavily dominated by inscriptions discussed above, which were etched almost exclusively above doorways made from the local travertine stone. In Ripatransone, some devotional inscriptions carved in stone doorways and windows do survive, such as those exalting 'CUN[C]TA EX ALTO IDEO' and 'SOLI DEO HONORISSII' on one house (Figures 4.39 and Details a & b).[475] Another late fifteenth-century Ripatransone home bears an inscription over its stone portal reading 'DEO ET PATRIAE' (Figure 4.40); this home was most likely preserved due to its connection to Michelangelo's follower and first biographer, Ascanio Condivi, who lived in the building between 1554 and 1574.[476]

Many of Ripatransone's Renaissance buildings are constructed of brick and coated in stucco, presumably more affordable building materials, with doorways crafted from terracotta rather than stone. In fact, Ripatransone is famous for the terracotta ornamental decoration that survives on a brick building, a fifteenth century house known as the Casa dei Grifoni because griffons decorate

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474 Margaret Symonds and Lina Duff Gordon, *The Story of Perugia*, 5th edn (London: J.M. Dent, 1904), 95.
475 Ripatransone, Corso V. Emanuele (n. 91-93).
476 The house is located on Corso V. Emanuele. Built in the fifteenth century by the Bruni family, it was also inhabited by the Checchi and Marezi families before it was acquired by the Condivi family (around 1551); the windows appear to date to the early sixteenth century, but the doorway has been dated to a slightly later period, perhaps when it was acquired by the Condivi family: Marco Cocchieri, '183. Ripatransone (AP), Casa Bruni Condivi', in *Architettura del classicismo tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento: Marche*, ed. by Francesco Quinterio and Ferruccio Canali (Rome: Gangemi, 2009), 211.

its façade (Figure 4.41).[477] To the right of the window on the upper floor, a devotional image is also incorporated in the stylised vegetal decoration (Figure 4.41, detail). A terracotta relief of the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked by a saint on either side, has been inset into the façade; both saintly figures appear to be wearing the garb of pilgrims, and might be Saint James and the plague saint, Roch, since both these saints were often depicted as pilgrims.[478] Like many of the devotional inscriptions, the image functioned on many levels: it served as a mark of household piety to those who viewed or entered the house, it functioned as a devotional tool, and it offered the house and its residents protection.

In addition to the terracotta decoration on the exterior of the Casa dei Grifoni, other homes were embellished with terracotta in Ripatransone. An inscription etched into the terracotta doorframe on a sixteenth-century brick house records the name 'BERNARDUS GALLUS 150[?]' (Figure 4.42).[479] Above this identifying inscription is the devotional phrase 'PROTECTOR IN TE SPERANTIUM'. These words are the incipit of a common prayer, recited during the Mass or read during private devotions.[480] The prayer often appeared in books of hours after a pericope of the Gospel of John.[481]

3. Why the Threshold? The Talking Place & a Liminal Space

One home in Ascoli Piceno preserves various inscriptions over its windows, which form the phrase 'SPERNUNT TIMORES QUI TIMENT DOMINUM VERUM VIRTUTIS AMORE'.[482] Over the residence's arched portal, the keystone has been carved into a grotesque face with a wide-open mouth (Figure 4.43). Daniel Jütte has investigated the tradition that began in the Middle Ages of considering the door as the mouth of the home.[483] This tradition continued into the Renaissance. Architect and theorist Vincenzo Scamozzi stated that, 'L'entrate vogliono esser poste nel mezo

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477 'Ripatransone-Notizie generali', Musei Piceni <http://www.museipiceni.it/page.asp?id=101022200> [accessed 26 July 2016] and Beni Culturali Marche (ID: 1100047487) <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/66452/Casa-dei-Grifoni/Default.aspx> [accessed 26 July 2016].

478 The two saints are wearing broad-brimmed hats, iconographical marks of pilgrims. James the Greater and Roch were often depicted as pilgrims, as were the female saints Bridget and Alexis. The saint on the left appears to be accompanied by a smaller figure, perhaps a dog, and can therefore be tentatively identified as Saint Roch: Sarah S. Gibson and Alicia Craig Faxon, 'Journey/Flight', in *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, ed. by Helene E. Roberts, 2 vols (Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), I, 435-48 (440).

479 Via Angela Zingaro (n. 2), 'Vista della Città', Comune di Ripatransone, sito istituzionale <http://www.comune.ripatransone.ap.it/c044063/zf/index.php/servizi-aggiuntivi/index/index/idservizio/20021> [accessed 26 July 2016].

480 Maryan W. Ainsworth, '23. Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane', in *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures: Jan Gossart's Renaissance: The Complete Works*, ed. by Maryan W. Ainsworth (New York and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 192-95 (194, note 7); this prayer functioned as one possible collect on Sundays and on feast days in liturgical celebrations in Umbrian confraternities, specifically the Confraternity of Santo Stefano: Mara Nerbano, *Il teatro della devozione: confraternite e spettacolo nell'Umbria medievale* (Perugia: Morlacchi, 2006, repr. 2007), 52, note 31.

481 This has been noted in French and Dutch books of hours dating to the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth centuries: Ainsworth, 192.

482 Via dei Soderini (n. 25): S. Castelli, 23.

483 Jütte, 53-54.

della faccia della casa: perche si come dalla bocca si riceve l'alimento per tutto il corpo dell'animale, così à punto s'introduce, & estrahe tutto quello, che fa bisogna alla Casa'.[484] By extending metaphor of the door as the mouth of the anthropomorphised home, the inscriptions etched above these doors seem to issue forth from these mouths, speaking on their inhabitants' behalf to God and to all who pass by and enter.

Why did Bernardino of Siena prescribe that devotees place the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus 'at the thresholds and the doorways of your rooms'? The threshold has been viewed by anthropologists, such as Arnold van Gennep, as a place where transition rites took place in many cultures.[485] While most scholars have focused upon exceptional and pivotal cultural moments centred around the doorway, recently scholars have begun to focus upon the daily symbolic meaning and functional aspects of the doorway.

In their study of domestic spaces in Renaissance Rome, Elizabeth and Thomas Cohen have emphasised the social role of the threshold through descriptions of daily life, rather than focusing on prescriptive architectural literature and societal norms regarding the domestic space.[486] Their study revealed that not only was the doorway a space of transition—of entry and exit—but also an active space in the social life of ordinary Romans. Doors, as an emblem of the home and family virtue, were often targeted in disputes; disgruntled neighbours might vandalise a door in a symbolic manner by setting it on fire, covering it with blood or excrement, writing foul text and images in the form of graffiti in ink on it, or posting paper accusations or cuckold's horns.[487] Cohen and Cohen define the neighbourhood as an amphitheatre and the home, particularly the doors and the windows, as the prime location from which people watched, listened to, and participated in daily drama. They argue that from windows and doorways, women confined to domestic tasks could participate in the social life of the community, particularly in the form of gossip.[488] As female inhabitants—mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and servants—lingered to observe and participate in the everyday life of the community, they would be framed by the devotional inscriptions that were etched over window and doorways.[489]

Guido Ruggiero also argues that the threshold and door were important spaces for practices that might would be considered magical or superstitious, particularly those with malicious intentions. As his examples illustrate, these rituals often utilised religious references and may have been carried out either with the desire to harm the home's inhabitants or out of ignorance that the

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484 Vincenzo Scamozzi, *Dell'idea della architettura universale* (Venice: Giorgio Valentino, 1615), Parte Prima, Libro 3, Capitolo 18, 302.
485 Gennep's theory about the threshold which he proposed in *Rites of Passage* (1909) is discussed in Jütte, 12.
486 Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, 'Open and Shut: The Social Meanings of the Cinquecento Roman House', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 9 (2001-2002), 61-84 (62).
487 E. Cohen and T. Cohen, 64 & 69-70.
488 E. Cohen and T. Cohen, 68.
489 Cohen and Cohen note that servants caring for children often sat in the doorway to participate in the neighbourhood gossip: E. Cohen and T. Cohen, 69.

practice was not licit in the eyes of the Church.[490] Ruggiero describes one ritual performed by a woman named Isabella Bellocchio who tried to curse a romantic rival's door by having her servant 'anoint the door sill and the door in the form of a cross' with a substance made of fennel harvested from the gallows, faeces, water of San Alberto and other ingredients.[491]

While understanding of early modern popular religious rituals is still developing, some sources provide an insight into how early modern people carried out practices that they considered to be devotional in nature at the doorway. A trial of the Roman Inquisition in Venice contains information a popular ritual of blessing involving the door. In this 1590 trial three women, Elisabetta (Betta or Bettina) Grassa, Angela [Angila] Grec[i]a, and Giubila [Jubila] Padoana, are accused of witchcraft and superstitious practices.[492] The witnesses are certain that they have witnessed Betta washing the door of Angila's house in the neighbourhood of San Moisè in a superstitious manner. A woman who lived with Angila for seven years has denounced these women to the Sant'Uffizio in a letter written by a man on her behalf; during her testimony she claims that 'Betta grassa veniva da questa A[n]gila ogni principio di luna a lavar la porta della casa di questa Angila con acque sante ei con scongiuri, che lei diceva che l'era acqua santa'.[493] She explains that Betta placed the water under the Altar so that it could be blessed when the Mass was said: 'questa Betta Grassa a tempo che si benedisse le acque questo Agnus Dei sotto l'Altar a farli benedi'.[494] Another woman, donna Clareta, claimed that she watched Betta wash Angila's door at one o'clock in the morning, at the hour of the first mass.[495] On July 21, 1590, the witness Jo. Maria, a painter who lived in the house of Manello in San Moisè, explained that he had known these women for about six or seven years and that he was a neighbour of both Angila and Jubila. He provided more specific details about the door washing ritual, 'ho visto piu volte, che la massara di detta Angela chiamata Lutetia andava a pigliar l'acqua dal Canal ei poi lavava la porta della sua casa in crose'.[496] Here we learn that the water was wiped on the door in the form of a cross, although he does not say that the water was blessed, but instead came from the canal. It is possible that a disgruntled servant and her cohorts spun a tale around the ordinary task of washing the door, turning it into a superstitious practice in order to seek revenge on these women for some sort of wrongdoing. While the servant claims that the woman uttered *scongiuri* as they washed the door with the 'blessed' holy water, it is unclear what these curses were, and whether the women understood them to be

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490 Ruggiero, 112.
491 Isabella Bellocchio testimony, 23 June 1589, ASV, SU, pezzo 63, cited in Ruggiero, 112.
492 'Trial Against Elisabetta Grassa/Angila Grecia, Giubila Padoana for stregherie in 1590', ASV, SU, pezzo 66, fasc. 29.
493 This door-washing episode is also briefly discussed by Guido Ruggiero in *Binding Passions*, 113-14; ASV, SU, pezzo 66, fasc. 29, c. 1v.-2r.
494 Betta also placed an *Agnus Dei* under the altar: ASV, SU, pezzo 66, fasc. 29, c. 2r
495 Clareta also accused Betta of washing the waists of women, 'lava le vite alle donne': ASV, SU, pezzo 66, fasc. 29, c. 3v.
496 ASV, SU, pezzo 66, fasc. 29, c. 5v.

curses, or if instead they believed that they were performing an act of piety accompanied by prayers. Although they were accused of this superstitious practice and others, it is possible that these women and others like them attempted other ritualistic blessings to protect their homes. Their attention to this space of passage between the outside and inside world is particularly interesting given the multivalent social, cultural, and religious symbolism of the door.

The significance of the door and the placement of text on the entrances of homes has biblical origins. In the book of Exodus, God unleashes plagues upon the people of Egypt to encourage the Pharaoh to free the Jewish people from oppression. God appears to Moses to direct him to lead the Jewish people to freedom in Israel. As the final plague is about to begin in which 'every firstborn in the land of Egypt both man and beast' will be killed, Moses is instructed by God to direct 'the whole assembly of the children of Israel' to slaughter a lamb, and then, 'take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it'.[497] According to God, the marked doorposts will serve as 'a sign in the houses where you shall be: and I shall see the blood, and shall pass over you: and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you'.[498] God also directed that the Jewish people should commemorate this event every year and provided instructions for how the holiday, which would become Passover, should be observed.[499]

In the Bible the door continued to serve as a place to post marks of faith, including written messages. In Deuteronomy, following the proclamation of the Ten Commandments to Moses, it was prescribed, 'And thou shalt write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house' (6:4-9 and 11:13-21).[500] One inscription on a lintel in Ascoli Piceno derives from the First Commandment as proclaimed by God to Moses in Exodus 20. This inscription, 'UNUM COLE DEUM', acknowledges the monotheistic belief in only one God.[501] Although it does not directly replicate the Latin text of the First Commandment, it repeats this fundamental principle of Judaism and Christianity.[502] The phrase was utilised in motet arranged by Jachet (Iachet) of Mantua in 1538 and distributed in printed form in Italy.[503] While the inscription may have been etched earlier in the sixteenth century, later viewers of the inscription may have been familiar with the motet or another song, and may have been inspired to sing the verses aloud.

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497 Exodus 12:7-12.
498 Exodus 12: 12-13.
499 Exodus 12.
500 Deuteronomy 6:9; also Deuteronomy 11:20.
501 Corso Mazzini (n. 298): S. Castelli, 9.
502 Exodus 20:2-3.
503 The first edition of Jacquet of Mantua's *Motecta quatuor vocum liber primus* was published by the Scotto Press in 1539, with two later editions by the same press in 1544 and 1565. Another edition was published by Gardano in 1545 further expanding the dissemination of the book. All four editions included the motet 'Unum cole Deum'. Jacquet's arrangement of this motet also appeared in other books printed in this period and other versions appeared in other printed music books as well, such as the example in a book filled with compositions attributed to Maistre Jhan also produced by the Scotto Press. See Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press, 1539-1572* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 235-37, 286-87, 307-90, and 351-52, note 5.

In Jewish tradition, this prescription developed into the mezuzah, a container that held a piece of kosher parchment inscribed with these two passages from Deuteronomy and which was attached to the doorpost.[504] Many employed these objects both to follow the Jewish law and to protect the home from evil spirits. In the Middle Ages, names of angels, the name Shaddai (Almighty), Kabbalistic formulae, and magical symbols might be added to the parchment to enhance their amuletic potency, much in the way that similar words and symbols were added to Christian amulets.[505] The Rabbi Judah Leon de Modena, who wrote about Jewish rituals in the *Historia de riti hebraici*, explained that the mezuzah containers of Renaissance Italy were made of reeds following early traditional examples.[506]

Christians in Renaissance Italy were also aware of the biblical origins of this Jewish practice, as expressed by Rutilio Benzoni, Bishop of Loreto and Recanati: '[a]nzi dobbiamo far quello, che l'eterno Dio coma[n]dava al popolo Hebreo, cioè scrivere sopra le istesse porte la divina legge, & li suoi comandamenti, come si legge nel Deuteron. cap. ij. *Ponite verba mea* […] *quandeo sederis in domo tua, & amulaveris in via, & accubeueris, atq; surrexeris, scribes ea super postes, & ianuas domus tuae*'. Benzoni continued to describe other ancient uses of inscriptions above the door, noting that according to classical authors loose women often wrote their names over their doors: 'Et se appresso i Gentili erano conosciute le donne infami dall'inscrittione del nome, & condition loro, che tenevano sopra le porte di casa, come scrive Seneca lib. 2 controv. 2.' Early Christians, too, were known by the sign and name of Christ that they placed above their doorway: 'così i veri Christiani saranno conosciuti dal segno & nome di Christo, scritto, & portato sempre nelle fronti loro'; thus Benzoni draws connections between contemporary practices of displaying the Name of Jesus on one's home and tradition. He also mentions special embellishments: 'nei giorni di gra[n] solennità, come narra Tertull. lib.2. ad uxorem, & nell'Apologia, & altri luoghi, ornavano le porte co[n] il lauro, & vi ponevano intorno molte lucerne, & lampade accesse'; as has been noted, some of the extant examples of the Sacred Monogram over doorways were in fact embellished with laurels or other vegetal decorations. In this text Benzoni then calls for contemporary Renaissance Christians to do the same:

> così noi Christiani dobbiamo spiritualme[n]te ornar queste nostre porte con i lauri, della perseveranza ne servitio di Dio, & con le lucerne dell'opere buone in ogni tempo, ma particolarmente nei giorni santi, & festivi, non lasciando mai estinguere in noi la solennità, & allegrezza ricevuta nell'Anno santo.[507]

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[504] Shalom Sabar, 'Mezuzah', in *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, ed. by Raphael Patai and Haya Bar-Itzhak, 2 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 2013, repr. 2015), II, 362-64 (362-63).
[505] Sabar, 'Mezuzah', 362-63, and Skemer, *Binding Words*, 33-35.
[506] Sabar, 'Mezuzah', 362-63.
[507] Rutilio Benzoni, *Lettera pastorale overo Sermone del reverend.mo monsignor Rutilio Benzoni romano, vescovo di Loreto, et di Recanati sopra i misterii contenuti nella sacra cerimonia di serrar la porta santa. Con il numero delli pellegrini venuti in Roma, et il numero delli vescovi alloggiati nell'ospitio deputato dalla santità di n.s. Clem. VIII* (Rome: Guglielmo Faccioto, 1600), 69.

Although Benzoni's call is for spiritual decoration of the doors in service to God and good works, his use of the metaphor of the inscription above, and decoration of, the doorway infers that these images would be understandable to his audience.

Devotional inscriptions were not confined to official places of worship, but instead appeared on the exteriors of many buildings in early modern Italy, including domestic dwellings. This chapter has not considered the inscriptions that appeared on churches and other ecclesiastical buildings in Ascoli Piceno and the surrounding towns. As with elsewhere in Italy, inscriptions over the portals of churches were common in the region. Inscriptions also appeared over the doorways and windows of buildings inhabited by the clergy and the religious. These monasteries, convents, and clerical homes might be considered a bridge between the inscriptions that appear on the ecclesiastical spaces and those that appear on structures inhabited by the laity.

Perhaps the most famous domestic structure in Ascoli Piceno, the ecclesiastical palace now known as Palazzetto Bonaparte, is covered with early sixteenth-century phrases inscribed at the behest of Francesco Calvi. As the Canon of Ascoli Piceno, Calvi lived in the palace in the sixteenth century before it was acquired by the Bonaparte family. His name and title are inscribed along with the date 5 January 1507 and the Sacred Monogram in a sunburst (Figure 4.44).[508] In addition to these identifying marks, other devotional words and esoteric symbols are etched on the façade.[509] Other phrases, such as 'MANET MENTE REPOSITUM', were written over interior doorways (Figure 4.45). On the centre of the façade, a circular seal with a Solomonic pentagram inside is carved along with the words 'IESUS + AGIOS O THEOS IN SOLO FIL[IO] P[AT]RIS O CO[N]FERENTIS O PRO GENTE O INCAR[N]ATIONE O SPIRITUS S[AN]CTI' (Figure 4.46).[510] While this symbol resembles many of the magical signs often found in amulets, inside this symbol devout words and crosses are etched. Finding this textual symbol on a building inhabited by a prominent religious figure in Ascoli Piceno further illustrates the co-existence and intermingling of beliefs that might be considered religious and magical even among high-level clerical figures.

Church portals are often studied as places replete with figural decoration and inscriptions that prime the devotees who enter for their devotional experience. Above the doorway to the Church of San Cristoforo della Morte in Ascoli Piceno, the words 'DOMUS MEA DOMUS ORATIONIS EST' describe the building as a 'house of prayer', drawing connections between the church and the home (Figure 4.47).[511] Might we consider the passageway into a home, a family's

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[508] Leporini, 354, and S. Castelli, 46-47. For a complete list of inscriptions on Palazzo Bonaparte, see Table 2.
[509] The Canon, Francesco Calvi, was known for his interests in the esoteric, which developed when he was a student in Perugia: Ferruccio Canali, 'Pesaro malatestiana (1400-1445): la stagione filo-fiorentina dell'Umanesmo Gentile tra Ghiberti e Brunelleschi (e relativi Approfondimenti in cinque schede)', in *Architettura del classicismo: Marche*, ed. by Quinterio and Canali, 30-57 (44).
[510] S. Castelli, 46-47.
[511] S. Castelli, 14.

space, to hold similar connotations to the threshold of a church, which, according to Michele Bacci, was considered 'un limite e un passaggio […] investito di un forte significato simbolico, che alludeva al mondo ultraterreno'?[512] One inscription over another domestic door in Ascoli even reads: 'HEC EST PORTA PARADISI 1519' (Figure 4.48).[513]

4. Devotion at the Doorway

Was the threshold a place worthy of pause and contemplation before entering the devotional space of the home? Perhaps homes marked with the Name of Christ or the simple sign of the cross might also elicit those who entered, exited, and passed by the house to praise God by making the sign of the cross. One large doorway in Paggese di Acquasanto is marked with this symbol, a cross etched along with the date, 1550 (Figure 4.49). Contemporary prescriptive texts recommended that devotees perform this devotional gesture at the threshold. Silvio Antoniano's 1584 *Tre libri dell'educazione dei figliuoli*, directed to heads of households, discusses the importance of teaching the sign of the cross to one's children: 'Perilche delle prime cose, che si devono insegnare al fanciullino, si è il farsi il segno della Santa Croce'.[514] He also expresses the importance of making the sign of the cross at various key points throughout the day:

> et replicarlo spesse volte il giorno […] l'esempio de i quali doverà imitar il buon padre insegnando il figliuolo à cosi fare, almeno quando si lieva, et esce di casa, et fa cose gia dette, nelle quali principalmente si dispensa il giorno, et quando entra à fare qualche cosa di momento, come ne i negotii.[515]

Antoniano also explains the spiritual intentions behind the gesture, which should also be conveyed to the children: 'cominici da questo buon principio, invocando come è solito nel farsi la Croce tutta la Santissima Trinità, acciò nel nome, et nella virtù sua, et per i meriti della passione di Christo ogni nostra attioni succeda felicemente'.[516] Other instructional treatises, such as the 1586 *Opera nova sopra la natività di Giesú Christo*, reiterated the importance of making the sign of the cross upon exiting. According to this text, 'all'oscir de casa anchor fate segni con il nome del Padre, del Figlio et dello Spirito Santo'.[517]

Scholars have discussed the domestic doorway as an ideal space for religious images in Catholic regions. Jütte has argued that early modern European Catholics might place an image of the Virgin near their doors, especially in regions where they lived amongst Protestants, who were more likely to display devotional inscriptions.[518] In Italy, three-dimensional busts of a youthful

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512 Michele Bacci, *Investimenti per l'aldilà: Arte e raccomandazione dell'anima nel Medioevo* (Rome and Bari: Editori Laterza, 2003), 8.
513 Corso Mazzini (n. 313): S. Castelli, 9.
514 Antoniano, c. 55a.
515 Antoniano, c. 55a.
516 Antoniano, c. 55a.
517 *Opera nova sopra la natività di Giesú Christo. Con un bellissimo capitolo. Aggiontovi di novo gli misterii della Messa, in significatione di tutta la passione di Giesú Christo* (Venice: in Frezzaria, al segno della Regina, 1586).
518 Jütte, 62-63.

Christ or saints, particularly those of the young Saint John the Baptist (San Giovannino), might also be positioned on the mouldings over interior doorways.[519] Margaret Morse proposes that images of Saint Christopher, a protector of travellers and merchants, would be located near the doorway in Venetian *porteghi*. Morse bases this argument upon the fact that both painted and sculpted images of Saint Christopher were most often positioned at the doorway of churches. She combines this ecclesiastical tradition with her analysis of inventories which note the great number of images of Saint Christopher kept in the *portego*, a reception room that functioned as the entryway of Venetian homes between the exterior and more private interior rooms.[520] Three extant examples of Saint Christopher images in Renaissance domestic interiors support this hypothesis.[521] Morse argues that images of Saint Christopher placed near the exterior doorway of the *portego* served a talismanic function for the home's inhabitants, protecting those living in the house as well as those who exited through the portal to go about their business (both locally and abroad) from sudden death.[522]

Closing Remarks

A rare surviving domestic dwelling in the hamlet of Trisungo di Arquata del Tronto provides tantalising evidence of the combination of devotional text and image appearing above the exterior doorways of domestic dwellings (Figure 4.50).[523] The inscriptions reveal something about the house and those who built and inhabited it. On the ground floor, an inscription etched into a shield above the left side-door gives the date 1515 (Figure 4.50, Detail a).[524] Above the door on the right side of the ground floor, a Sacred Monogram is carved in relief in the traditional form of the *yhs* in the sunburst and is framed in a garland of honour (Figure 4.50, Detail b).[525]

Two sets of stairs provide access to doors on the first floor. The lavish decoration above these doors suggests that they were prime reception doors to greet guests, while the ground floor doors probably served daily use. An illegible devotional inscription etched in a banderol on the lintel above each door is watched over by an angel carved in relief (on the left) and what appears to be the Sacred Monogram (on the right). Above the lintels, recessed lunettes framed within an

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519 Stephanie R. Miller, 'Parenting in the Palazzo: Images and Artifacts of Children in the Italian Renaissance Home', in *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior*, ed. by Campbell, Miller and Consavari, 67-88 (74); Musacchio, *Art, Marriage and Family*, 79-81.
520 Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space', 161-63.
521 These are located in Florence (Palazzo Davanzati), Prato (Palazzo Datini), and Venice (Palazzo Ducale): Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space', 162, note 36.
522 Morse, 'Creating Sacred Space', 162-63.
523 This house is catalogued as Beni Culturali Marche (ID: 1100109804), though their catalogue provides no further information <http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/71527/Casa-datata-1515/Default.aspx> [accessed 31 July 2016].
524 Leporini, 236.
525 Leporini, 236.

arch carved with vegetal decoration contain devotional frescoes, each of which illustrates the Virgin and Child accompanied by saints in the form of a *Sacra Conversazione*.

The lunette on the left is better preserved and shows the Virgin in her red robe and blue mantle with the Christ Child seated on her lap (Figure 4.50, Detail c). The saints accompanying the Virgin and Child are also easier to distinguish—on the left Saint Roch points to the wound on his leg and on the right a saint holds the palm frond of martyrdom. The inscription is eroded, but it is most certainly devotional in nature given its context below the devotional image and angel (Figure 4.50, Detail d.)

The Virgin and Child in the lunette over the right side-door are more worn, but an elderly bearded saint to the left is evident, as well as the shirtless Saint Sebastian who is shot with arrows to the right (Figure 4.50, Detail e). The presence of these two plague saints—Sebastian and Roch—and their position over the door suggests a prophylactic purpose, protecting the home's inhabitants from plague. The double appearance of the Virgin and Child begs the question of whether these two doorways were part of one home or if the house was perhaps inhabited by two branches of the same family who lived in divided apartments.[526] These paintings can tentatively be linked to the original construction of the house (or its remodelling) in 1515 according to the date above the door.

The rare surviving devotional programme of this now abandoned house in Trisugno di Acquasanta incorporates material prayers discussed throughout this chapter, including the Sacred Monogram and other devotional inscriptions. The extant frescoes in the lunettes suggest how many of the buildings discussed in this chapter might have once appeared.[527] Devotional inscriptions etched over doorways of the home functioned as displays of and prompts to devotion, and might also offer divine protection to the home's residents. These inscriptions illustrate how '[t]he door in premodern times was not simply a functional object separating inside from outside; in fact, it was also a hub of information and a particular form of material text'.[528]

Though further research must be done on doorway inscriptions still extant in other areas of Italy, this case study focusing on the Marche has suggested the variety of inscriptions early modern Italians etched above their doors. Following this research, a comparison between the other extant inscriptions and those in the Marche might offer insight into similarities and differences between the regions regarding the selection of inscriptions, regional variations in dialect, their appearance, as well as the material into which they were carved. The examples that incorporate dates allow us to tentatively date nearby and similar inscriptions carved in the same style. Though

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[526] These two doors are now separated by a wall and the house appears to be split into separate apartments, but it is not clear if this was the case in the sixteenth century.
[527] 'A Trisungo, borgo del centesimo chilometro', *Vivere il Piceno*, 4 November 2015 <http://www.vivereilpiceno.it/trisungo/> [accessed 31 July 2016].
[528] Jütte, 178.

preliminary archival work did not return any results, further efforts might help us determine if any of the families who inhabited these inscribed buildings can be identified.

With the limited information available to us about the creation and use of these inscriptions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is impossible to know exactly why they were made and how they were viewed and engaged with over time. Yet, their visual appearance, the meanings of the phrases, and their cultural associations offer clues to better understand their significance for devotees. This chapter has illuminated how many of these Marchigian inscriptions were devotional in nature and how they might be combined with other devotional symbols or images as part of a pious programme.

Throughout this chapter, examples illustrate how devotional phrases inscribed over doorways in early modern Italy were multivalent. They could simultaneously function as a reminder of faith for those living within and passing by the home, signal the devotional dedication of the inhabitants to both neighbours and God, serve as a cue to sing or recite a prayer, while also providing the home with a mark of protection against evil forces, untimely death, disease, and natural disasters. These signs of doorway devotions remain to speak on behalf of the unidentified people who once inhabited these homes, offering us an insight into their values, anxieties, and daily devotional lives.

PART II: THE HOME

CHAPTER FIVE

The Writing on the Wall

A Discovery in Bassano

In 1884, during the demolition of buildings in Bassano in the Veneto, workers uncovered a trove of early Renaissance woodcuts in a house dating to the fifteenth century. Formerly pasted to the inside of the wooden door, the survival of these early woodcuts attests to the domestic devotion of the home's long-forgotten inhabitants.[529] An analysis of the fragments reveals that at least nine distinct prints had been pasted in this interior entryway around the turn of the sixteenth century.

Many of the prints connected to the doorway in Bassano incorporated devotional inscriptions. While most scholarship focuses on the images depicted in early modern prints, devotional text in the form of identifying or narrative captions, biblical quotations, or prayers was common, including on prints meant for and used in domestic display. Text might have been included in the original design of the carved woodblock or engraving plate, typeset in a matrix along with the woodblock or plate, or added as a handwritten annotation.

This chapter moves from the threshold into the space of the home as a place for devotion. Beginning with the devotional prints hung just inside the doorway in the home in Bassano, it outlines the various ways pious text cloaked the walls of Renaissance homes and suggests how devotees might have engaged with these words. It considers surviving inscribed single-sheet prints intended for homely adornment rather than the personal protection of the wearer's body. It considers the physical writing of text on the walls in the form of interior graffiti, as well as the use of objects hung on or embedded in the walls, such as paintings and plaques. It discusses interaction between image and text in these objects, focusing on how the text functioned to unlock the devotional properties of the image. It also considers how such objects might have been displayed in the home. An investigation of these types of devotional wall decorations illuminates how the house's internal structural features functioned as important spaces for the display of material prayers, allowing us to develop a deeper understanding of the textual world of Italian Renaissance homes.

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[529] The exact location in the home was not documented. According to Pon, Friedrich Lippman described it as being found over the door frame, *The Art of Wood-Engraving in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Quaritch, 1888), 157-58; and Campbell Dodgson described it as being removed from the door itself, *Woodcuts of the XV Century in the Department of Drawings*, 2 vols (London: British Museum, 1934), I, 23-24, no. 150: Pon, 48 and 226, note 144; Evelina Borea, 'Stampa figurativa e pubblico dalle origini all'affermazione nel Cinquecento', *Storia dell'arte italiana*, Part 1: Materiali e problemi, ed. by Giovanni Previtali (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), II: L'artista e il pubblico, 317-413 (325).

The Bassano Devotional Woodcuts: A Case Study

Scholars often operate on the educated hypothesis that many early modern people acquired prints (both engravings and woodcuts) and hung them on the walls of their home.[530] While some assume that prints functioned solely as an inexpensive alternative to other types of wall décor, and in many cases people at lower income levels could afford these options, prints appealed to people from across the socio-economic spectrum.[531] As a result of the ephemerality of single-sheet printed material and the redecoration of extant buildings, limited physical evidence for this decorative practice survives, especially in Italy. The provenance of the collection of Bassano woodcuts, therefore, offers rare physical evidence for the practice of hanging Renaissance prints on the walls of the home. This case illustrates how pious prints could be displayed together, providing a set of images and texts for the family to engage with during their daily devotions.

The best preserved of the Bassano prints depicts the *Virgin Enthroned Suckling her Child* and is now housed in London's British Museum (Figure 5.1). The remaining eight Bassano woodcuts are now preserved in in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin.[532] These woodcuts have been largely ignored by modern scholarship, and any attention the Bassano find has received has been based solely on the British Museum example.[533] While each print is devotional in nature, the Bassano prints have been dated across a span of years from the 1440s to the end of the fifteenth century, suggesting that they were added to the wall over time and that the display grew alongside the family that inhabited the home. It is therefore important to consider them as a group when thinking about the use of prints, especially those that combine text and image, in the context of domestic devotional practices. Referencing the work of Peter Schmidt, David Areford proposes that

> Schmidt convincingly argues that since print designs were easily copied and prints were widely diffused, it is unproductive to focus on stylistic analysis as a key to localization (and even dating). […] it is much more fruitful for scholars to move beyond "style" and explore the surviving contextual evidence in order to understand how these images functioned for their original viewers.[534]

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530 For a nuanced discussion of how scholars are working towards a more complete understanding of the consumption, use and display of prints: Peter Schmidt, 'The Multiple Image: The Beginnings of Printmaking, between Old Theories and New Approaches', in *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth Century Woodcuts and Their Public*, ed. by Peter Parshall and Rainer Schoch (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 37-56.

531 Arne R. Flaten, 'Reproducible Media in the Early Fifteenth Century, Mostly Italian', *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 3 (2012), 46-62 (48).

532 David Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 3-4; Arthur M. Hind, *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut*, 2 vols (London and New York, 1935), II, 430; Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holz- und Metallschnitte des XV Jarhunderts*, 8 vols (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1926), I: Mit Darstellungen aus dem Alten und Neuen Testament, den apokryphen Evangelien und biblischen Legenden, nos. 23, 166, 167, 338, 636; and Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber, *Handbuch der Holz- und Metallschnitte des XV Jarhunderts*, 8 vols (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1926), II: Holzschnitte mit Darstellungen der Hl. Dreifaltigkeit, Gottvaters, Jesu Christi und der Jungfrau und Gottesmutter Maria, cat. 948, 1020, 1045, and 1127.

533 Areford, *The Viewer*, 4, and Pon, 47-48.

534 David Areford, 'The Image in the Viewer's Hands: The Reception of Early Prints in Europe', *Studies in Iconography*, 24 (2003), 5-42 (35, note 9).

This chapter will utilise this approach to move beyond the stylistic analysis that usually forms the basis for studies of Italian Renaissance prints to understand how the selected devotional prints functioned for their original viewers.

An analysis of their visual content, which ranges from the *Virgin and Child* to the *Last Supper*, as well as the devotional text incorporated in these woodcuts, reveals much about the piety of the family that amassed these prints over the years. In fact, nearly half of the Bassano woodcuts (four out of nine) display some form of devotional text along with the religious images. The large sizes and the hand-colouring of many of the Bassano woodcuts indicate that they may have been customized for the purchaser. Although relatively few hand-coloured Italian woodcuts survive, various extant examples demonstrate how woodcuts functioned in a similar manner to paintings, even in the decades prior to Gutenberg's invention of the printing press.[535] Consumers might request personalised colours or purchase pre-coloured examples to enliven the black and white designs. While some rare later examples were printed in multiple colours, many more woodcuts were ornamented with hand-colouring, like the examples from Bassano.[536]

When the workers discovered the woodcuts in the Bassano house, they found a wide range of devotional images in various states of decay. Areford proposes that since this group of prints contains duplicate iconography some might have been pasted over earlier examples as replacements, and he refers to the group as a type of large-scale palimpsest.[537] In addition to the British Museum *Virgin and Child*, three other Marian images were found: another smaller version of the *Madonna Lactans*, a scene illustrating *The Birth of the Virgin*, and an image linked to a Rosary confraternity. The other images were Christological in nature; one of these woodcuts depicted Christ in the traditional *Salvator Mundi* format, while the remaining fragments derived from narrative scenes: two incomplete versions of the *Last Supper*, *Judas' betrayal*, *Christ brought before Pilate*, *The Crucifixion*, and angels bearing instruments of the *Passion*. The appearance of these scenes from the Passion story may imply that the full story was depicted on the wall in a pictorial cycle for the home's inhabitants to reflect upon, alongside the static images of the Virgin and Christ as *Salvator Mundi*.

The two woodcuts of the *Virgin Nursing the Christ Child* offered a focus for the family's prayers to the Virgin. The composition of the British Museum *Virgin Nursing the Christ Child* (Figure 5.1) is similar to the Berlin version (Figure 5.2), but it is larger and its colouring is more detailed and elaborate.[538] In the British Museum version the delicate folds of the Virgin's blue

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535 Pon, 49.

536 Ad Stijnman and Elizabeth Savage, 'Materials and Techniques for Early Colour Printing', *Printing Colour 1400-1700*, ed. by Ad Stijnman and Elizabeth Savage (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 11-22 (12).

537 Areford, *The Viewer*, 4

538 Figure 5.1: British Museum, 1895,0122.1187 (Schreiber, II, cat. 1158); Figure 5.2: Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 887-301 (Schreiber, II, cat. 1045; Paul Heitz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), cat 12).

mantle are highlighted in a lighter blue paint and traces of metallic lustre are visible in the raised white pigment that survives on the haloes. Areford suggests that the British Museum version may have replaced the Berlin version, thus explaining the greater disintegration of the Berlin *Virgin Nursing the Christ Child*.[539] Both woodcuts depict scenes of the Annunciation as well as two male and two female saints. Two roundels on the top of the woodcuts depict the scene of the Annunciation, and Mary dominates the central portion of the composition, sitting enthroned as she nurses the swaddled Christ Child, in fulfilment of the Archangel's announcement in the scene above. The maternal theme of these two scenes was fitting for the domestic setting, where they could have functioned as a didactic and devotional focus for the home's inhabitants.[540] Both woodcuts also incorporate four saints—two males and two females—who attend the nursing Virgin. In the British Museum woodcut, Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Lucy can be identified by their attributes, while the two male saints on the right are more difficult to identify due to the poor condition of the woodcut.[541] The details of the *Annunciation* and saints are not visible in the fragmentary Berlin version, but a surviving woodblock in Modena shows these details and allows the saints to be identified as Catherine, Lucy, Anthony, and John the Baptist.[542]

While these two images of the *Virgin Nursing* do not contain any inscriptions, the two other Marian images found in the entryway in Bassano incorporate various types of text in their visual programme. Though in a poor state, the print depicting *The Birth of the Virgin*, which was hand-coloured with blue and yellow, includes text in two forms: as symbols and as captions (Figure 5.3).[543] In the arch above Saint Anne's bed, the letter M is inscribed in a roundel, the monogram of the Virgin Mary. In the panel alongside the scene of the birthing chamber, various figures are illustrated and are identified by the names inscribed in banderols that encircle them. While the inscriptions on these banderols are difficult to read, the inscriptions accompanying the figures in the two lower registers are legible. At the bottom, a tonsured saint is identified as 'STEFANUS' and his name is accompanied by 'PRO M', an abbreviation of 'Protomartyr', referring to St Stephen as the first Christian martyr. Above Stephen, a man and woman are identified as 'IOACHIN' and 'ANNA', the parents of the Virgin Mary.[544] Although the other

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539 Areford, *The Viewer*, 4

540 Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 'Persuasive Pictures: Didactic Prints and the Construction of Social Identity of Women in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. by Letizia Panizza (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 285-314 (285-99).

541 The staff and pouch carried by the saint in the foreground might indicate a pilgrim, possibly Saint James of Compostela.

542 While the Madonna of the Berlin version appears to date to the fifteenth century, Schreiber suggests that the four saints might have been latter additions to the Modena woodblock, explaining why they do not appear in the Berlin print: Schreiber, II, 122, cat. 1045.

543 While Schreiber identified this scene as *The Death of the Virgin* and the infant Mary is not included in the image fragment, the details, such as the accompanying scene of the Annunciation and Angel bearing the crown for the Coronation of the Virgin, point to a scene depicting *The Birth of the Virgin*. Figure 5.3: Kupferstichkabinett, 868-301 (Heitz, cat. 6; Schreiber, I, cat. 636).

544 This image of Anne resembles that of the woman in bed, further proving that the scene is of *The Birth of the Virgin*.

banderol inscriptions are damaged, one appears to identify two Old Testament figures, King David as 'DAVIT' and a young boy as 'IACOBO', Jacob. These identifying inscriptions would help devotees to interpret the images and might serve as a didactic aid to teach children and the illiterate how to read names by linking them with familiar holy figures.

The other print that falls into the category of Marian devotion incorporates a variety of texts and images and has been vibrantly hand-coloured (Figure 5.4).[545] This large-scale woodcut (56.5 x 38.5 cm) is nearly equal in size to the British Museum's *Virgin Nursing the Christ Child* (53.6 x 41.2 cm) and would have provided a visual counterpoint to that print. Lisa Pon also notes that although these fifteenth-century large-scale Marian woodcuts survive in limited numbers, they are comparable to contemporary panel paintings meant for private devotion and probably functioned in the same manner.[546] The partial surviving inscription along the top reads: 'confratria […] beatissime semper [?] Jes […] virginis Marie:~', explaining that the woodcut was issued by a Confraternity of the Rosary (Figure 5.4, Detail a). Schreiber attributes the print to the city of Venice, a centre of print-making near Bassano, and dates it to the last decade of the fifteenth century. Devotion to the rosary was rapidly increasing in Italy in the late fifteenth century as a result of promotional efforts by the Dominicans as well as the establishment of lay confraternities where people congregated to pray the rosary together.[547] In addition to the large banderol linking the print to the confraternity honouring the 'Blessed Virgin Mary', a second Latin inscription at the bottom, above a group of figures kneeling in prayer with their rosaries (including devotees, Saint Dominic and the Dominicans, two cardinals, two bishops, and the emperor), reads 'S dominiscus fui […] cconfratrie ppsaltori: 290', providing a link between the establishment of this confraternity and the Dominican order (Figure 5.4, Detail b).[548] This print functioned as a take-home guide for members of the confraternity, a visual aid to accompany the meditations on the rosary, much like illustrated and printed rosary manuals. In fact, the various roundels connected by the interlocking circle illustrate the Fifteen Mysteries that devotees were instructed to meditate upon during each decade of rosary prayer; various scenes from the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries are still visible in the fragmentary print. Above the scene of the Nativity, the words 'GLORIA IN EXCEL' are printed as an abbreviation of 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo', the verse sung by the angels after the Birth of Christ (Luke 2:14) (Figure 5.4, Detail c). This inscription may have functioned as a prompt for devotees to sing the verse or to

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545 Figure 5.4: Kupferstichkabinett, 997-301 (Schreiber, II, no. 1127; Heitz, no. 13).
546 Pon, 44-49.
547 Galandra Cooper and Laven, 342; Christopher F. Black, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 132-34.
548 Transcribed in Schreiber, I, 152, cat. 1127.

pause to reflect on it when they reached that Mystery in the rosary sequence.[549] These mystery images have also been linked to two elaborately illustrated gilded and enamelled rosaries, which are probably contemporaneous to the image (See Figure 3.4).[550] While the boldly-coloured visual components of this print dominate the scene, the additional texts in the lower right- and left-hand corners provided context and aids to prayer using the print. Though the text on the viewer's left is damaged, it appears to offer instructions on how to pray the rosary and explains how to utilise the scenes from the mysteries illustrated above, such as the *Annunciation* and the *Visitation*, during each pass through the decades on the beads (Figure 5.4, Detail d). The text of the right-hand column continues from the now-missing bottom of the left side with a list of instructions and rules for members of the Confraternity, including regulations regarding when they must go to confession, feast days they are required to observe, and information about plenary indulgences awarded for prayer (Figure 5.4, Detail e).

The Christological images from Bassano include fragments of various scenes from the Passion of Christ. These images include large scale images depicting scenes such as *Judas Betraying Christ with a Kiss* and *Christ before Pilate* (Figure 5.5),[551] as well as a fragment of the *Procession to Calvary*.[552] In addition, small pieces survive that illustrate an angel carrying the column upon which Christ was flogged and another angel bearing the Cross of the Crucifixion (Figure 5.6, Part 1).[553] Due to their extremely poor state, it is difficult to determine if any text was once present in these scenes. However, one of the three fragments of *Last Supper* woodcuts incorporated identifying captions with inscriptions on the haloes of Jesus' Apostles 'TOMAS' and 'IOAN' (Figures 5.6, Part 2, and 5.7).[554] On a final Bassano woodcut Christ stands holding an orb which represents the world and raises his right hand in a gesture of benediction with the inscription below: '[SAL]VATOR MUNDI VERITAS' (Figure 5.8).[555] Such an image would be a fitting conclusion for a series of devotional images such as those illustrating the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Passion which were found in Bassano—after Christ suffered on the Cross and triumphed over death, he consolidated his role as Saviour.

The woodcuts found on the walls of the home in Bassano formed part of a devotional programme that provided prompts to prayer and offered protection to the dwelling and its residents. While the Bassano woodcuts predate Silvio Antoniano's text by nearly a century, the

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549 On the development of rosary prayer and meditation upon the fifteen mysteries: Winston-Allen; and on sensory engagement with rosaries and the mysteries: François Quiviger, *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 41-47.
550 Galandra Cooper, 'The Materiality', 249-55.
551 Figure 5.5: Kupferstichkabinett, number unknown (Schrieber, cat. 23, Heitz, cat. 2).
552 This is not reproduced in Heitz, but is described in Schrieber, cat. 338. It is among those listed by Areford, *The Viewer*, 18 note 14, as found in Bassano.
553 Figure 5.6, Details a & b: Kupferstichkabinett, 874-301, 878-301, and 879-301 (Schrieber, I, cat. 166 and possibly 338?; Heitz, cat. 3).
554 Figure 5.7: Kupferstichkabinett, 876-301 (Schreiber, I, cat 167; Heitz, cat. 4).
555 Figure 5.8: Kupferstichkabinett, 882-301 (Schreiber, II, cat. 832: Heitz, cat. 7).

instructions he provided in his 1584 treatise on the religious education of the family were probably based upon his observations of devotional practices and objects used by those who fit his definition of the ideal *famiglia christiana*. Antoniano encourages families to place many images together to create a spiritual garden to foster pious development: 'starà anchor bene haver molte imagini insieme, disposte con ordine, & conseguenza elle cose […] & si fatti luoghi sono come giardini spirituali, per ricreazione dell'anima'. Antoniano's suggestions regarding what kind of images to include in this organised display mirror the types found in Bassano, as he suggests: 'per esempio, i quindici misteri del Santo Rosario della Madonna, & simili'.[556] The inhabitants of the Bassano home might have gathered in the entryway with their rosaries following the instructions of the large printed model issued by the Rosary confraternity while utilising the enlarged images of the Birth of the Virgin, the Nursing Virgin, and scenes of the Passion to reflect upon the Joyful and Sorrowful Mysteries which formed the spiritual focus of the rosary prayer. The home's inhabitants would have passed by these woodcuts located near the threshold regularly, providing a place for reflection and remembrance of their faith during their quotidian activities as well as during designated times of prayer.

Documenting Domestic Devotional Prints

Since the case of the Bassano woodcuts remains a unique example connecting an ensemble of pious prints to domestic display in Renaissance Italy, it is important to employ the other types of sources, such as paintings, archival documents, and historical accounts, to demonstrate how prints were displayed in the home. Archival and historical documentation contains relatively little information about their locations within the home and any inscriptions they included.

Paintings occasionally illustrate prints on display in the domestic interior, such as a Netherlandish *Portrait of a Female Donor* by Petrus Christus, which shows a devotee praying at her *prie-dieu* with a woodcut of Saint Elizabeth on the wall beside her (Figure 5.9 and Detail). The painting reveals details about the display of devotional woodcuts in spaces dedicated to prayer: the hand-coloured woodcut was attached to the wall with red wax. Christus's representation of the woodcut even illustrates that it included a devotional inscription, which, though illegible, probably invoked the saint's intercession.[557] Unfortunately, unlike similar images from Northern Europe, which illustrate the display of devotional prints in interior spaces, such images are not available from Renaissance Italy and scholars must rely upon other sources for evidence.

The famous miracle story of a paper image that survived a fire in 1428 in Forlì remains one of the most cited examples of fifteenth-century lay people decorating their interiors with

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[556] Antoniano, 54v.

[557] David Areford, 'Multiplying the Sacred: The Fifteenth-Century Woodcut as Reproduction, Surrogate, Simulation', in *The Woodcut in Fifteenth Century Europe*, ed. by Peter Parshall, Studies in the History of Art, 75 (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2009), 118-53 (118-20).

devotional images (Figure 5.10).[558] The woodcut was in a house inhabited by the schoolteacher Lombardino di Ripetrosa. Lombardino both lived in the home and used the space as a schoolroom during his tenure in Forlì. According to a miracle story recorded by the painter Giovanni di Mastro Pedrino, who lived in Forlì when the fire burned down Lombardino's house, 'non ne romaxe altro che le mura e una carta con alcuna figura e nostra Donna in mezzo'.[559] Giovanni di Mastro Pedrino explained how the paper image was attached to a wall that survived the fire and described the image's appearance with the Virgin Mary at the centre of other figures. The print itself, now enshrined in a chapel in the Cathedral of Santa Croce, includes depictions of the Crucifixion and Annunciation as well as the other figures referred to in Giovanni's chronicle, which include a litany of popular saints, some of which can be identified as Paul, Francis, Christopher, Anthony Abbot, John the Baptist, Jerome, Lawrence, and Peter.[560] The *Virgin and Child* print translated a design usually found on large-scale altarpieces into a smaller and more affordable format for the domestic space, in this case one inhabited by a local schoolteacher. Following the miracle during the fire the woodcut gained the name of the *Madonna del Fuoco* as it metamorphosed from an ordinary devotional, domestic, and didactic image into a legendary miracle-working object and a focus of pilgrimage.[561]

The spread of the legend of the miraculous nature of the *Madonna del Fuoco* probably inspired more devotees to decorate the walls of their homes with images of this kind.[562] In fact, the large *Virgin and Child* from Bassano is similar in size and style to the woodcut of the *Madonna del Fuoco* and may have followed in the wake of the legend of the miracle-working woodcut. One example of the enduring popularity of these types of images might be the image of the Virgin *Madonna Lactans*, comparable in size to both the *Madonna del Fuoco* and the *Nursing Madonna* from Bassano, but replete with devotional inscriptions, which survives in one impression (Figure 5.11).[563] While a scene of the *Last Supper* has been added to the bottom of this printed version of the *Nursing Madonna* with a separate woodblock, both images appear to be contemporaneous and stylistically resemble the Bassano woodcuts, although the iconography of the upper portion has been flipped. Like some of the surviving fragments of the Apostles from the Bassano *Last Supper* woodcuts, the haloes of the twelve Apostles and the attendant saints in this woodcut have been inscribed with their names.[564] While the original location of this image is unknown, the

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558 Roberto Cobianchi, 'Printing a New Saint', in *The Saint Between Manuscript and Print: Italy 1400-1600*, ed. by Alison K. Frazier (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015), 73-79 (74); Pon, 1.
559 Giovanni di M. Pedrino, *Cronica de suo tempo*, ed. by Gino Borghezio and Marco Vattasso (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1929), 167-68, cited in Pon, 83, note 273.
560 Pon, 17.
561 Pon, 85.
562 Pon, 46-49.
563 This impression has been in private collections for about 100 years. It was sold at Christie's in New York on 9 May 1994, Sale 7878, lot 69, and again on 25 January 2017 at Sale 14020, lot 16.
564 In this print, the male saints to the viewer's left (the opposite of the Bassano print) of the Virgin and Child are identified as 'Antonio' and 'S. Iovan', perhaps allowing us to identify those in the Bassano print as well. For

documented presence of similar prints in domestic settings indicates that this print or other impressions were probably displayed in Renaissance homes.[565] In addition to the identifying captions, the haloes and robes of the Virgin and Child are filled with devotional inscriptions. The halo of the Virgin has been inscribed with a prayer of praise, 'REGINA CELI PETAR ALEUIA AMEN', while her robe is decorated with the phrases 'MATER DEI' along the collar, 'VENIT' on her left sleeve, and 'GIEXUSS HRISTU' (a modified form of 'Iesu Christus') along the opening.[566] The nimbus of the Christ Child is similarly inscribed with an excerpt from the Gospel of John, 'EGO SUM LUXS MUNDI'; in the full verse from John, Christ calls for devotees to follow him to escape an eternity of darkness and this glorifying inscription can be interpreted as an evocative reminder of this passage for the print's viewers.[567] The frames around the components of the *Annunciation* illustrated in the upper corners are also inscribed. Around the Archangel Gabriel (viewer's right), the words Gabriel announced to Mary are etched, 'AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM BENEDITA TUA'.[568] Upon viewing Gabriel's words, which are also the beginning of the *Ave Maria* prayer, the devotee contemplating the image might recite this prayer of praise while thinking about the Virgin's experience when she received the news that she would give birth to the Saviour. Mary kneels in prayer before a lectern with a book upon it. Around the scene 'MICHI SECONDUM VERBUM ECCE ANCILLA DOMINE FIAT' is written, the phrase Mary proclaims in humble acceptance of her role as the 'Handmaid of the Lord'.[569] Devotees might model themselves on the Virgin and pronounce their own role as servants of God when reading this inscription. In this printed version of the *Nursing Virgin with the Last Supper*, the devotional meaning of the image has been enhanced by the addition of identifying inscriptions, prayers, and biblical verses, which devotees could use as tools to enhance their understanding of the image and as a script to initiate and focus their prayers.

Silvio Antoniano recommended various types of devotional pictures to his readers, and in a section of his book that focuses on images of the saints, Antoniano explains that 'è molto espediente avere nelle case proprie'.[570] According to Antoniano, printed images can function as affordable alternatives to paintings: 'chi non può havere di quelle fatte con colori, & con maggior artificio, bastarà avere delle stampate, che ve ne sono di bellissime, & si hanno per piccolo

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information about the possible influence of the woodblock used to create the Bassano print on this example, see the essay for the Christie's 2017 sale: 'Lot 16. NORTH ITALIAN SCHOOL (LATE 15TH OR EARLY 16TH CENTURY)', Sale 14020, 25 January 2017 <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/prints-multiples/north-italian-school-madonna-lactans-with-the-6054047-details.aspx?from=salesummery&intobjectid=6054047&sid=74d63184-b154-460b-922d-d9e03c4b8961> [accessed 11 January 2017].

565 The image is covered in tiny pin holes, suggesting devotional offerings were pinned to it in a shrine. However, these pins holes might also have accrued over the years on display on a wall or if the image was attached to a textile support: 'Lot 16. NORTH ITALIAN SCHOOL'.

566 The inscription on Mary's right sleeve is blurred by wear and repair.

567 John 8:12.

568 Luke 1:28.

569 Luke 1:38.

570 Antoniano, 54v.

prezzo'.[571] Antoniano praises the beauty of available printed images and also offers the clue that these might have been displayed as they were originally printed—without colouring. He also explains how and where these devotional images should be arranged: 'è bene collocarle secondo la grandezza della casa, non confusamente, ma in certi luoghi principali, benché in alcuna parte della casa, come in qualche oratorietto, ò loggia'.[572] In this passage he focuses on two domestic spaces, one which would be specifically dedicated to prayer—an *oratorietto*—as well as a *loggia*, an arcaded porch. The *loggia* was a transitional space as well as a space where daily chores and pastimes were performed; it can be compared to the Venetian *portego*, or to the doorway.[573]

Prints could be displayed on walls in a variety of ways—attached to wooden supports and hung either framed or unframed, or tacked to the surface using glue or wax.[574] As displayed in Petrus Christus's painting, Italian documentary evidence often describes the substance used to affix the pictures to the wall as 'red wax', probably referring to the seal wax used to seal letters and provide them with a secure sign of legitimacy. Another miracle was associated with a paper image of the Virgin. In 1597, an image of the Virgin in Reggio Emilia, which had been displayed in a domestic setting as a replica of a famous painting, miraculously survived a fire that engulfed a building near the monastery of San Marco. The miracle story surrounding the survival of the *Madonna di Reggio* describes how the red wax attaching the image to the wall did not even melt in the excessive heat of the fire.[575]

Due to the lack of surviving prints still displayed on the walls of extant Renaissance homes, scholars often rely on limited written descriptions of early modern interiors and possessions. In her analysis of early modern Italian inventories, Chriscinda Henry has argued that the use of the term *quadro* is ambiguous. According to Henry, the term *quadro* is traditionally interpreted as referring directly to paintings, but it should instead be understood more broadly as an image of any media meant to be hung on the wall.[576] While inventories rarely provide detailed descriptions of the pictures meant as wall decorations (*quadri*), they sporadically specify the material and content of the image. Henry notes entries such as 'un quadro di una pietà stampado di miniado', 'quadri di carta', and 'dodici santi in carta', that illustrate the common appearance of devotional printed images in inventories.[577]

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571 Antoniano, 54v.
572 Antoniano, 54v
573 Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy* (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 159.
574 Elizabeth Miller, 'Prints', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 322-31 (322); Chriscinda Henry, 'What Makes a Picture? Evidence from Sixteenth-Century Venetian Property Inventories', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 23 (2011), 253-65 (255).
575 Pon, 96. See discussion of the symbolism of sealing in relation to the prayer sheet from Roccapelago in Chapter One, p. 32 of this thesis.
576 Henry, 255.
577 Henry, 261.

The description of the domestic space in a 1591 Inquisition trial tells us even more about the practice of displaying paper images of saints on the walls of the home. The trial involves a man named Giovanni Maria Daldo from 'a valley in Vicenza near Trent', who was accused of living an immoral life—'mala vita'—and of engagement with unorthodox Lutheran religious beliefs.[578] As the witnesses discuss these serious matters, details about the devotion of his household seep into the descriptions of Giovanni Maria Daldo's wrongdoings. During her testimony his step-daughter explains that the paper images posted on the walls of the house were the targets of his bad faith: 'è mio paregno, che vive malamen[t]e in materia della fede perche lui straccia tutte le carte de santi che noi attacamo per casa'. She explains that she and her maid, Paula, had found the 'pezzi dei carta de santi' and showed the shredded images to her mother and the Madonna Vienna Ferrarese, a tenant who also lived in the house.[579] She also accuses Giovanni Maria of breaking images and walking 'supra l'imagine della Madonna, e del S[igno]re ei particularmente levò di camera di sopra dove lui dormiva un quadro che ne era depenta la Madonna che teneva in braccio el N.S.re ei portò fuori li nel porteghetto, ei con li piedi li desuso, che lo rompè'. She had witnessed this behaviour together with her mother, who reprimanded Giovanni for his impious acts. Apparently Giovanni responded to this rebuke with the defence that he was destroying something that was 'solamente una figura', and to prove his point 'el brusò nel fuoco una Imagine della Madonna di carta, che era in camera de mia madre'.[580] According to his step-daughter's testimony, Giovanni Maria Daldo believed images of the Virgin, Christ, and saints did not deserve the same respect as the protagonists themselves; this is the root of his blasphemy. From this description, we also learn something about the display of paper images in homes in the Veneto in the late sixteenth century. The images of the saints, which were presumably printed, were affixed to the walls by various members of the family ('noi attacamo per casa') and the lady of the household (the girl's mother and Giovanni Maria's wife, Catherina Romana) kept a paper image of the Virgin in her chamber. The types of images mentioned—of the Virgin and saints—reflect those found in the surviving material record. The description of the presence of many such images in the home of this family might indicate that it was common practice to display paper images on the walls of the home.

578 'Trial against Gio: Maria Daldo from Vicenza in 1591, accused of luteranismo and mala vita', ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 13, f. 1r.
579 'ei con quelli si fobbe le parte vergognose ei habbiamo trovati li pezzi die carta de santi imbratta di Jo, ei Paula Massana, che li havemo mostrati alla S.ra Madre, e ha visto il med.o mad.a Vienna ferrarese, che sta nella m[i]a casa': ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 13, f. 2v.
580 ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 13, f. 2v.

Acquiring Prints

Evidence demonstrates that devotional prints were given as tokens at pilgrimage sites or during special celebrations such as saints' days from at least the early fifteenth century.[581] Roberto Cobianchi argues that a unique painted portrayal of a contemporary hand-coloured woodcut image of the *Virgin of Mercy* tacked on the wall of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned between Saints Sebastian, Anne, Francis and Chiara*, known as the Pala Grossi, might represent the type distributed at festivals and pilgrimage sites (Figure 5.12 and Detail).[582] Though they survive in limited numbers, due to the reusable and ephemeral materiality of early modern paper, as well as the fact that they were tokens to be passed out, consulted during personal devotions, or pasted on the walls of one's home as a reminder of faith, rare examples of early fifteenth-century woodcuts of saints and local holy figures also illustrate that text was incorporated in their composition from an early date.[583]

Two such early woodcuts depicting Saints Dominic and Thomas Aquinas are possible surviving examples of this type of woodblock print.[584] The woodcut of Dominic included a xylographic caption (an inscription carved into the woodblock itself) that identified the figure as 'S[an]c[tu]s Dominicus' (Figure 5.13).[585] Although the two prints appear to have been made as part of a series, the print of Saint Thomas Aquinas does not contain a xylographic inscription; it has been embellished with manuscript annotations made in a fifteenth-century hand, presumably contemporary to both the production and hand colouring of the image (Figure 5.14).[586] Annotations appear in each of the three divided fields of the print; at the bottom the hand-written caption identifying 'Sanctus Thomas doctor et virgo' fills the same space in which the xylographic caption appears in the woodcut of Dominic, but provides a more detailed description of the depicted saint by identifying him as a 'doctor [of the Church] and virgin'. Thomas Aquinas holds a book inscribed with words from the Book of Wisdom, 'Ivocavi et venit in me spiritus sapientie', which were read during the liturgy of the Mass celebrating Thomas Aquinas's feast day as a testament to the saint's wisdom. The final annotation appears in the Crucifixion scene above the figure of the saint; these words unfurl from Christ's mouth: 'Bene scripsisti de me Thoma'.

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581 Cobianchi describes how easily reproducible images on paper of Catherine of Siena were made to promote her cult during the trial for her canonization in 1411-1412: Cobianchi, 79.

582 Cobianchi, 96, fig. 1.5.

583 Kevin M. Stevens, 'Vincenzo Girardone and the Popular Press in Counter-Reformation Milan: A Case Study (1570)', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26 (1995), 639-59 (640-41).

584 Yoon claims that these prints originally belonged to the collection of the Renaissance print collector Jacopo Rubieri, who was known to paste the woodcuts he collected into his books and embellish them with colours and annotations. These prints were stored with some of Rubieri's books in the Biblioteca Classenense in Ravenna before they were acquired by the National Gallery: Rangsook Yoon, '43a & b. Saint Dominic and Saint Thomas Aquinas', *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trinita Kennedy (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2014), 190.

585 Peter Parshall and Peter Schmidt, 'Saint Dominic', in *Origins of European Printmaking*, ed. by Parshall and Schoch, 315, cat. 101a.

586 It looks like this may have worn off and been covered by the manuscript additions.

While these words of praise to Thomas appear to come directly from Christ, they were recorded in the *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas* written by Guilelmus de Tocca. According to his biographer, when Thomas was praying before a crucifix in a Neapolitan monastery, he was observed levitating as the crucifix pronounced these words.[587] These annotations fulfil a variety of functions: identification, narration, and illustration.

Customers might also purchase single-sheet religious prints directly from printers or from street-sellers, and some evidence exists of their production. In the late fifteenth century, the nuns at the Florentine Ripoli press produced printed prayer booklets, longer texts, as well as single-sheet prayers.[588] A late sixteenth-century notarial inventory of a bookseller's shop in Milan reveals that it both sold and produced religious images.[589] The 1570 post-mortem inventory records the contents of Vincenzo Girardone's estate (house and print shop), and reveals that his stock included bound and unbound devotional books such as '*Officioli de sette psalmi*',[590] '*Offitti della madonna*',[591] and '*Letanie del nome de Jesu*'.[592] Girardone's inventory also noted his supply of printed images, which he had imported from Venice to sell in his shop. These images are described as both *colorati* (whether hand-coloured or printed in colour is not specified) and *senza colore*, and occasionally arrive bound together in sets of three sheets: 'Altri pezzi n. 5 dissegni colorati da Venetia incolati à 3 folie', 'folie reale n. 43 de dissegni colorati da Venetia in legno', and 'folie n. 207 dissegni in legno senza colore'.[593] Girardone also owned woodcut blocks to make printed images and many of these are devotional in character, ranging from 'figurette n. 7 de setti pecati morali',[594] and 'figurette n. 12 d'Apostoli',[595] to 'Pezzi n. 16 figure di Santa Margarita', and 'Pezzi n. 24 de San Giovanne'.[596] The matrices listed might have been used to make single-sheet prints or to create illustrations for books and pamphlets as specified in entries that describe 'Pezzi n. 12 per far *offitti* in ottavo'.[597]

Prints might be acquired from pilgrimage sites, pedlars, or printers, and it is important to note that devotional prints might also be kept by their owners in a variety of ways—carried on their bodies for daily protection, pasted into their prayer books as meditation aids, used to decorate the insides of chests, or even collected as art items and stored in a connoisseur's cabinet. As the preceding accounts demonstrate, evidence points to the varied ways in which people

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587 Parshall and Schmidt, 315, cat 101a & b.
588 Nesi.
589 Stevens, 639-59.
590 These are described as 'legati in cartonzino n. 321 posti in una cassetta de pobbia solia': Inventory of Vincenzo Girardone's print shop: 'Robbe pertinenti al esercitio della stamparia', Archivio di Stato di Milano, notarile, Giuseppe Peri (Pirro), May 13, 1570, filza 14470 transcribed in Stevens, 658-69, n. 54.
591 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory nos 56 and 62.
592 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory no. 63.
593 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory nos 63, 59, and 61.
594 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory no. 71.
595 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory no. 73.
596 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory nos 81 and 82.
597 Stevens, 658-69, Inventory no. 80.

across the social spectrum—from ordinary Venetians to a schoolmaster in Forli—might have displayed prints on the walls of their home.

Prints for Piety & Protection

While documentary evidence provides clues as to the domestic display of devotional prints, the information about the content and appearance of these images and texts is scarce. An analysis of the prints that survive in museum and library collections allows us to better understand the great variety of printed images that decorated the homes of Renaissance Italians. Although these prints lack a provenance, their themes, appearance, and devotional content would have made them fitting tools for domestic devotion. The prints discussed in the following section have been selected to demonstrate the spectrum of devotional text and image combinations available to Renaissance Italians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Many of these types of inscriptions are also found on other surviving domestic wall decorations, such as plaques and paintings, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

A sixteenth-century woodcut of the *Crucifixion* demonstrates multivalent uses of text in devotional images (Figure 5.15). The image is laden with the symbols of the Crucifixion, known as the *Arma Christi*. Even Christ himself is not displayed on the Cross in human form, but is instead represented by a material object—Veronica's Veil.[598] The image also contains symbolic text in the form of the inscription posted at the head of the Cross, INRI, the abbreviation for the Latin phrase, 'Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum'. The actual relic known as the *Titulus Crucis* was rediscovered in the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome on January 31, 1492 during renovations (Figure 5.16).[599] The Gospel of John describes how Pontius Pilate wrote the *Titulus Crucis* and posted it to the top of the Cross to identify Christ and His crime:

> And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore many of the Jews did read: because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written.[600]

Like the biblical description, the *Tituls Crucis* is inscribed in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; the inscriptions in Greek and Latin are written in mirror script, a detail not provided in the Gospel account.[601] News of the discovery spread all over the Italian peninsula and Europe,

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598 Many thanks to Irene Galandra Cooper for sharing this image. Irene Galandra Cooper, 'Plate 58, Crucifixion above a prayer against earthquake and sudden death', in *Madonnas and Miracles,* ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 58-59.

599 Areford gives the date of February 1st: Areford, 'Multiplying the Sacred', 135; Alexander Nagel, 'Twenty-Five Notes on Pseudoscript in Italian Art', *RES*, 59/60 (2011), 228-48 (235).

600 John 19: 19-22.

601 Nagel, 235.

drawing the attention of scholars and devotees.[602] Soon woodcuts depicting the *Titulus* were being produced as far away as Germany and Austria (Figure 5.17).[603] As an object and relic associated with the Crucifixion, the *Titulus Crucis* exemplifies how the material text can be laden with meaning and power, which can be translated through copies. Although the origin of the INRI inscription is a Latin phrase, its association with the Crucifixion would have made it a well-known visual symbol to devotees. Its meaning would have been enriched following the discovery of the actual object in the late fifteenth century, when the relic could be venerated through both pilgrimage and print. Devotees meditating upon images of the Crucifixion, such as this woodcut of the *Crucifixion with the Arma Christi*, could now envisage the tangible textual object they saw.

While these images and texts offered a focal point for prayer, devotional prints displayed on the walls of the home may have been employed for protection. In addition to this textual symbol, the *Crucifixion with the Arma Christi* also contains a note that explains a use for the print beyond the contemplation of the image. The inscription along the bottom explains 'S.S. CROCE SOPRA LA MORTE IMPROVVISA ED IL TERREMOTTO' (Figure 5.15). The inscription promises that the paper cross offers protection to those who own or display it, and the use of the vernacular would have made this promise accessible to people from a wider social group than a Latin inscription. Protection against 'morte improvvisa' was a common guarantee made in apotropaic devotional tools, already discussed in relation to *brevi*.[604] The offer of protection from earthquakes was particularly fitting for a domestic setting; the presence of the print will not only protect human life during an earthquake, but will also protect the building in which it was displayed. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, were a great concern for Renaissance Italians, as they could easily destroy their homes and livelihoods. Since the Italian peninsula is susceptible to earthquakes, this print appears to be particularly targeting a community for which such disasters were a common concern.[605]

An engraving of the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* is also accompanied by a protective prayer (Figure 5.18). Sentenced to be executed, Sebastian survived numerous attempts by Roman soldiers to kill him with arrows, only becoming a martyr when he was eventually clubbed to death.[606] During the Renaissance the suffering of the plague was associated with the agony caused

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[602] Nagel, 235 and 246-47, note 11.

[603] Areford discusses the woodcut produced in Wittenburg in the mid-1490s; it closely reproduces the appearance of the *Titulus* and was inserted into Hartmann Schedel's personal copy of his *Nuremburg Chronicle* along with two other woodcuts of the *Titulus* from the 1490s, with a vernacular German caption documenting the discovery. Another woodcut illustrating the textual relic was printed in Vienna in 1501: Areford, 'Multiplying the Sacred', 135-36 and 152, notes 71 and 82.

[604] See discussion in Chapter One, p. 52

[605] For an account of the 1570 earthquake that devastated the city of Ferrara: Gregorio Zuccolo, *Del terremoto* (Bologna: Alessandro Benaccio, 1571).

[606] Sebastian developed into a patron against plague during the fourteenth century. Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* appears to be the first time that Sebastian is described as having the ability to help people suffering from illness; Voragine based this upon an account he read of Sebastian's intercession during plagues in Rome and Pavia in the seventh century by Paul the Deacon: Sheila Barker, 'The Making of a Plague Saint: Saint

by the arrow wounds that Sebastian endured and survived. On this engraving, a Latin prayer fills the sky around the body of Sebastian, who is tied to a tree as soldiers bombard him with arrows. The words of the prayer were etched into the engraving plate along with the image. After an invocation calling upon Sebastian's general intercessory power, 'VER ORA PRO NOBISSE SEBASTIANE', a prayer specifically notes Sebastian's ability to protect against the plague. The text also instructs users that 'QUICUNQUE HANC ORATIONEM SUPER SE PORTAVERIT DIXERTI CON SIMIL MORBO SEU PESTE REVOCANDO SUB CONFIDENTIA REFUGIO IPSIUS PRECEP ET MERITISABISE PESTE SEU EPIDDIMIA OMNIO TRIBULATIONE LIBERETUR[…]'. The lack of folding in relation to this specific example suggests that it was not worn on the body and was instead preserved in a safe place, perhaps because the owner admired the quality of the image and gazed upon it in daily devotions. The owner might have followed the second half of the instruction to 'DIXERIT', say the prayer aloud, to take advantage of its protection.

Other devotional prints destined for the walls of homes might have been associated with pilgrimage sites. Those unable to travel might acquire prints from friends or family who had made the pilgrimage, or purchase them from shops or itinerant sellers. These prints could function both as mementos and as tools to participate in a mental pilgrimage. The texts that accompany the images on the prints could provide information about the pilgrimage site as well as prayers and instructions to facilitate the process of participating in such a spiritual journey.

Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood discuss the role of xylographic inscriptions on devotional woodcuts using the example of fifteenth-century woodcuts depicting the miracle-working *Maria im Ährenkleid* (*Maria in the Robe of Wheat Ears*). The inscriptions explain that the woodcut image 'is the image of Our Lady when she was in the Temple', but also explain that the images are replicating another image that was enshrined in the Cathedral of Milan.[607] Wood and Nagel emphasise how the inscription provides a seal of authority and marks the image as an authentic reproduction, a 'reliable notation […] a sequence of pictures of unspecified medium all capable of standing in for each other and leading back to the ur-picture in Milan that preserves the true image of the Virgin'.[608] Identifying inscriptions on prints might have served much in the same way that seals functioned on letters and official documents, proving their validity as objects worthy of focus during prayer.

Other woodcuts related to Italian shrines may have found their way onto the walls of Renaissance Italian homes. The inscriptions provide insights into how devotees understood and

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Sebastian's Imagery and Cult Before the Counter Reformation', in *Piety and Plague: From Byzantium to Baroque*, ed. by Franco Mormando and Thomas Worcester (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2007), 90-131 (95-100).

[607] The Virgin is no longer in Milan: Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, in *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 21-22.

[608] Nagel and Wood, 22.

interacted with text and devotional images. The text accompanying a rare extant example of an Italian coloured woodcut, an image of the *Madonna of the Carmelites*, enhances the meaning of the image for devotees (Figure 5.19).[609] Although viewers might have recognised the Virgin as the Virgin of the Carmelites based upon the iconography in which she bestows devotional scapulars, the text confirms her identity as 'S. MARIA CARMELITANA'. The additional title below confirms her role as 'REGINA CARMELITANA REFUGUM PECCATORUM', which refers to her promise to Saint Simon Stock in a thirteenth-century vision, that anyone who wore her scapular would be freed from purgatory and their soul would enter heaven at their death.[610] Small images that occupy cells in the frame surrounding the Virgin and Child illustrate a variety of miracles attributed to the *Madonna Carmelitana*. Brief narrative captions explain miracles depicted in each scene. At the top, the caption indicates that the *Madonna Carmelitana* saved criminals from death at the gallows in Cremona, perhaps indicating that the print was also made in Cremona. The scenes also demonstrate the presence of miracles in daily life. One illustrates a woman who had suffered from possession for seven years being healed (Figure 5.19, Detail a). In another scene, the caption indicates that 'Fuoco in una casa viene fi~~u~~ato con l'abito del Virgine' (Figure 5.19, Detail b). While this scene is visually ambiguous, the caption illuminates that a fire was miraculously extinguished by the power of the Virgin's 'abito', referring to the scapular—either the famous relic given to Simon Stock or a personal version—capable of saving the home. The inclusion of such a miraculous scene on this print might have led devotees to display it on the walls of their home to protect their domestic spaces from fire as well.

The woodcut depicting the *Madonna of Loreto* demonstrates other ways in which text was incorporated with images associated with pilgrimage sites and provides clues to its possible devotional uses (Figure 5.20). At the top of the print a xylographic caption describes the 'Porto de S. Maria da Loreto', and appears surrounding an image of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child who hover in a *mandorla* above the image of sailors arriving at a port. At the bottom, two cityscapes are identified by captions as Recanati and Ancona, Loreto's two neighbouring cities. Another xylographic caption appears above a man kneeling in prayer before a depiction of the Holy House of Loreto, which is covered in votive offerings suspended from its exterior wall. This text identifies him and explains his faith story in three words: 'iudeo fato christiano'; this brief inscription carries with it layers of meaning. Had this kneeling formerly-Jewish man been converted to Christianity by the power of the Santa Casa? Did he represent the large population

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[609] It is not clear if the colour was added with stencils, a common post-printing method, or if each colour was printed from separate woodblocks. In some places the different coloured inks extend outside of the black outlines on this print. On colour-printing in early modern Europe, see *Printing Colour*, ed. by Stijnman and Savage.

[610] Joseph Hammond, 'Negotiating Carmelite Identity: The *Scuola dei Santi Alberto e Eliseo* at Santa Maria dei Carmini in Venice', in *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Sandra Cardarelli, Emily Jane Anderson, John Richards (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 219-42 (221).

of *conversos* who migrated to the Marche?[611] Did he serve as a model of proper prayer for these 'New Christians', illustrating how they should participate in pilgrimage to holy sites and pay homage to holy figures? The Marche region, where the shrine to the Madonna of Loreto was located, had a large population of Jews and converts.[612] The city of Ancona, pictured at the bottom, had a large Jewish community and remained a place where Jews were allowed to live even after Pope Pius V expelled Jews from the Papal States in 1569.[613] Without the accompanying inscription, viewers might interpret him as a kneeling man.

In the column nestled between the two cityscapes, the long inscription provides viewers with a prayer to the Virgin in the vernacular (Figure 5.20, Detail):

> Ave dolce Maria di gratia plena | ave maria de Dio figliola e sposa | vergine santa in ciel si gloriosa | ab eterno la fu sempre serena | El tuo servo fidel qual Magdalena | vien' a toi pie con faza lachrimosa | che pregi il tuo figliuol dona pietosa | chel guardi e scapi[614] dalla eternal pena | Vedi il pien di speranza e di conforto | che sotto il nome tuo sempre se fida | salvarse in questo mar si tempestoso | Tu sei la stella so' tu sei la guida | sempre il servo tuo conduci in porto | e nella fine il Cielo li dai riposo.[615]

The language of the prayer evokes details related to the Santa Casa of Loreto; in particular the line that refers to the Virgin's power to 'salvarse in questo mar si tempestoso' might be connected to the transition of the Santa Casa from Nazareth to Jerusalem, referenced by the angels holding the sides of the Santa Casa in the woodcut. When taken literally, the verse 'tu sei la stella so' tu sei la guida | sempre il servo tuo conduci in porto' evokes the journey of pilgrims to the sacred shrine and indicates that the Virgin will guide them there safely. This Marian prayer was composed by the Florentine poet Bernardo Bellincioni, who spent much of his adult life writing at the Sforza court in Milan. With only slight spelling variations, the woodcut replicates Bellincioni's sonnet 'Alla Nostra Donna per il Conte Alessandro, il quale era infermo'.[616] As the title reveals, the prayer was written for Count Alessandro during an illness, perhaps to provide both spiritual solace and a prayer to safely help him through this malady, as is suggested by the words 'tu se la guida | sempre il servo tuo conduci in porto'. The prayer also praises the Virgin

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[611] Pope Paul III let Portuguese *conversos* move to Ancona, which was part of the Papal States, and issued a bull in 1547 guaranteeing their right to settle. These policies were reversed by his successors, including Pius IV, who had *conversos* who had returned to Judiasm executed in Ancona in 1555: Jonathan S. Ray, *After Expulsion: 1492 and the Making of Sephardic Jewry* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2013), 72-73, and David Sorkin, 'Merchant Colonies: Resettlement in Italy, France, Holland, and England: 1550-1700', in *Reappraisals and New Studies of the Modern Jewish Experience*, ed. by Brian M. Smollet and Christian Wiese (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 123-144 (128-29).

[612] There was a great migration of Jewish people to the Marche between 1492-1511, particularly those who fled the Spanish-ruled Kingdom of Naples. They settled in Ancona, Fano, Ascoli, and Camerino. Between 1514 and 1518 Jewish merchants were granted rights to trade in Ancona: Moses Avigdor Shulvass, *The Jews in the World of the Renaissance*, trans. by Elvin I. Kose (Leiden: Brill and Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1973), 24, and Sorkin 'Merchant Colonies', 128.

[613] See Ray, 73.

[614] '*Salvi*' in the original.

[615] Transcribed from *Madonna of Loreto*, Italy, woodcut, after 1493, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.42.35.

[616] Bernardo Bellincioni, 'Sonetto LXIII. Alla Nostra Donna per il Conte Alessandro, il quale era infermo', in *Le Rime di Bernardo Bellincioni Riscontrate sui Manoscritti*, ed. by Pietro Fanfani (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1876), 92-93.

and her intercessory ability. This personal poem was included in a posthumous compilation of Bellincioni's poetry, *Rime del arguto et faceto poeta Bernardo Belinzone fior[e]ntino*, published in 1493.[617] Its appearance on a woodcut related to a pilgrimage site across the peninsula in the Marche demonstrates the dispersal of spiritual poetry through the print. While the sonnet may have held personal meaning for Conte Alessandro, its authorship may have made the print more appealing to literary connoisseurs. Other owners of this woodcut may also have appreciated its value as a poem to the Virgin that they could read silently during their private prayers or recite aloud alone or with family. Renaissance readers may have also recognised the sonnet as one originally made as a prayer to aid the sick. Loreto became increasing associated with healing miracles during the fifteenth century, and therefore the print may have held special significance for those suffering from illness and infirmity.[618] Although this print is covered in text that conveys powerful information about the holy site and provides a script for prayer and meditation, its images could be appreciated by devotees unable to read, but when combined, the text and images convey a devotional programme that might allow devotees to relive their pilgrimage to Loreto or participate in a mental journey to the site, following the flight of the Holy House of the Virgin from Nazareth to Loreto.

Other prints contained familiar prayers to serve as prompts and reminders for viewers in their devotions. The vernacular version of the 'Act of Contrition' accompanies a woodcut image of the Virgin cradling the Body of Christ in a *Pietà* scene set in an elaborate frame (Figure 5.21). The text also informs the reader that the print is dedicated 'Al Molt' Illust. E Molto Rever. Sig. Ettore Ariosti' by the maker 'Gio. Battista Fontanelli D.D.D'.[619] The prayer, which was meant to be said during penance after confession, is provided in the vernacular. While the printed prayer might have been posted to a wall near a confessional space, by placing such a print in a prominent space in the home the family would have easy access to the prayer to recite after returning home from confession.[620] The use of the vernacular might have served to make the meaning of this important prayer of penance accessible to all members of the family so that they could pray with true contrition.

In his treatise Silvio Antoniano suggests reasons for the inclusion of prayers that good Christians were expected to know, such as the 'Act of Contrition', on images displayed in the home. Utilising an example of a print that he had seen, Antoniano praises the quality of the

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617 Bernardo Bellincioni, *Rime del arguto et faceto poeta Bernardo Belinzone fior[e]ntino* (Milan: Filippo Mantegazza, 15 July 1493), n.n.

618 Carlos N. M. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 406.

619 Ettore Ariosti (1525-1577), a Bolognese patrician who married Cassandra Gaddi Ariosti, rebuilt the family's Palazzo Zagnoni in 1540: Muzio Manfredi, *Per Donne romane, rime di diversi* (1575), *Fondation Barbier-Mueller pour l'étude de la poésie italienne de la Renaissance*, note 17 <http://www.fondation-italienne-barbier-mueller.org/MUZIO-Manfredi-Per-Donne-romane-rime-di-diversi-1575#nh17> [accessed 9 January 2017]; Mara Casale, 'Palazzo Zangoni' <http://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/palazzo-zagnoni-1331-luogo> [accessed 9 January 2017].

620 This is common practice in confessional booths today.

engraving: 'Io ho veduto gli articoli della nostra fede, contenuti nel Simbolo Apostolico, esser stati intagliati in rame maestrevolmente, et stampati in un foglio.' Antoniano provides a description of the printed engraving, 'tal che si vedeva in una occhiata tutta la dottrina del Simbolo, disposta ordinatamente, et sotto ciascun mistero vi erano le parole dello stesso Simbolo', and he applauds the combination of image and text on this devotional tool to convey the Articles of the Faith in a clear and digestible manner. In this case, the Article of the Faith Antoniano refers to is the 'Credo'. He further extols the didactic benefits of such a print: 'La qual pittura mi par che possa molto servire, perche il fanciullo impari con diletto il Credo che noi diciamo, et perche lo intenda, et lo ritenga più facilmente alla memoria'. Antoniano also suggests keeping similar images on display and refers to an image he had seen that depicted the Seven Sacraments:

> et cosi delle altre pitture simiglianti; come in specie mi ricorda haver veduto non è anchora gran tempo dei sette sacramenti della Chiesa, li quali per autorità d'una gran persona ecclesiastica di somma bontà, et dottrina, furono rappresentati in figura molto vagamente, et dichiarati brevemente con una bella et accommodata instruttione.[621]

Prints that combined text and image pasted on the walls of the home would be easily accessible to all members of the household. The combination of text and image would facilitate children's understanding of the lessons and prayers of their faith while also allowing them to improve their reading skills by providing them with familiar terms and prayers in written form accompanied by explanatory images.

While the devotional text on some prints reminded viewers of familiar prayers or provided them with spiritual poetry for meditation, other inscriptions declared tenets of the religion or offered points upon which to reflect. The inscription accompanying a hand-coloured print of *Christ Carrying the Cross* possibly fulfilled the latter purpose (Figure 5.22). The close-up view of Christ and the vivid additions of red ink to represent blood dripping from Christ's Crown of Thorns accompanied by the derisive faces of the crowds that surround him provided viewers with an intense connection to the suffering Christ. Writers of devotional guides, such as Girolamo Savonarola, called upon devotees to meditate upon Christ's suffering during the Passion. In his *Trattato dell'amore di Gesù Cristo*, Savonarola calls for devotees to envisage and to feel the pain of Christ's thorns: 'O capo aureo, come per amor mio ti vedo perforato e coronato di spine pungenti […] Come mai tanto sangue.'[622] The inscription along the bottom of the print guides this type of contemplation, telling viewers that 'PECHATORE ROPE LA PIETRA DEL

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[621] Antoniano, *Tre libri*, 54v.

[622] Girolamo Savonarola, *Trattato dell'amore di Gesù Cristo* in *Itinerario spirituale*, ed. by P. Tito Sante Centi, O.P. (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 1993), 179; see also: Donald Weinstein, 'A Man for All Seasons: Girolamo Savonarola, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation', in *La figura de Jerónimo Savonarola O.P. y su Influencia en España y Europa*, ed. by Donald Weinstein, Jùlia Benavent, and Inés Rodríguez (Florence: SISMEL, 2004), 3-21 (11-12), and *Storia della spiritualità italiana*, ed. by Pietro Zovato (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 2002), 199.

TUO DURO CORE | GUA[R]DA EL TUO BELIGNIO CREATORE A PORTARE STAPEVATE CROCE AL MO[NT]E CALVARIO STENIRE MORTE FEROCE P[ER] LI PECATORE'. Reminding viewers that they were sinners who were saved from eternal suffering by the earthly compassionate suffering of Christ, these words could be recited or reflected upon silently to enhance the devotional experience.

A woodcut illustrating Bernardino of Siena contains both informative inscriptions and powerful symbolic text (Figure 5.23). The woodcut dates to a few decades after the death of the saint (1444), illustrating the immediacy with which his teachings and cult spread, and the use of printed text and image to promote new saints.[623] At the top, a banderol is inscribed with the abbreviated inscription that identifies the figure as 'Sanctus Bernardino di Siena', indicating that this was made following his 1450 canonisation. Next to the prominent image of the saint, the depictions of three churches topped by bishop's hats and the accompanying inscription, 'Seis. ferrarie. urbini', provide the viewer with information about Bernardino's life. Bernardino was offered the bishop's seat of the cities of Siena, Ferrara, and Urbino, but did not accept these posts so that he could devote himself to his ministry rather than to acquiring positions of power.[624] The images combined with this caption would serve as a reminder of Bernardino's humility to those familiar with his story. As earlier discussions of the Sacred Monogram have illustrated, the attribute and symbol that Saint Bernardino holds aloft in this woodcut became popular while he was still alive and spread even more widely following his death. The increasing availability of printed depictions of Bernardino's Sacred Monogram probably facilitated the spread of the symbol. On this woodcut, the presence of the Sacred Monogram displayed in Bernardino's hand might function on different levels for the print's viewer. Displayed on the wall of the home, it might serve as an identifying attribute, as a focal point for meditation on the glory of Christ's name, or as an apotropaic symbol of protection for the home and family—and, notably, the latter two functions were both promoted by Bernardino.

The symbolic role of the Sacred Monogram has been exaggerated in another version of the Monogram of Christ, which survives in both French and Italian prints, including one currently located at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco (Figure 5.24). In these examples the *IHS* has been intertwined with the letter M, the Monogram of the Virgin Mary (Figure 5.25).[625] In addition to the San Francisco version, an identical print, vibrantly hand-coloured, has been discovered amongst the trials of the Inquisition in Udine (Figure 5.26).[626] The two prints are both

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[623] Mormando, 38-39; on print and promoting the cults of new saints, see Cobianchi.
[624] Carolyn Muessig, 'Bernardino da Siena and Observant Preaching as a Vehicle for Religious Transformation', in *A Companion to Observant Reform in the Late Middle Ages and Beyond*, ed. by James M. Mixson and Bert Roest (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 185-203 (189).
[625] For a complete analysis of the symbol and the woodcuts: Gallori, 64-78.
[626] 'Processo formale contro Valentino Tischlar per mancata pratica dei sacramenti e cibi proibiti a Gemona', Archivio della Curia Arcivesvoile di Udine (henceforth ACAU), Fondo Sant'Officio, b. 1283, fasc. 102.

Italian in origin and can probably be ascribed to an engraver working in Lombardy under strong German influence.[627] In this print of the *Sacred Monogram with the Arma Christi and Saints*, the letters themselves and the surrounding field have been packed with images and figures. As in the inscription above the door in Ascoli, the combination of the names of the Virgin and Christ held specific devotional and protective potential for all who passed through the door. While devotees could meditate upon the names of Mary and Christ as many devotional treatises advised, the letters themselves become frames for images and symbols for further contemplation. These symbols and scenes are related to the Passion to aid in meditation. The incorporation of the *Arma Christi* alongside the Passion narrative enhances the viewer's understanding of the scenes and symbols. Christ is crucified at the point where the two Monograms intertwine, at the summit of the central bar of the M and on the 'h' of the *ihs*. The four Evangelists are nestled in the corners of Maria's M and at the bottom of the centre of the M, the Mass of Saint Gregory is illustrated, while on the sides the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist are presented in mourning.[628] Standing at the bottom, two saints wait to intercede on behalf of the viewer; these are the plague saints, Sebastian and Roch, who are identified by a name in a banderol and by the arrows piercing Sebastian's body. Displayed in large scale in the Church of Sant'Andrea in Asola, Italy, the composition of this figural Monogram was also transferred to various media across the early modern world.[629] Gallori suggests that the two Italian versions discussed here (from Udine and San Francisco) were produced from an early or original version of the composition that facilitated the dispersal of the textual image around the early modern world.[630] A similar print is documented in the inventory of the early sixteenth-century collection of Ferdinando Colombo.[631]

The two Italian versions of the intertwined *Monogram with the Arma Christi and Saints* demonstrate how the same prints might be coloured to suit their owner's tastes. While the copy currently kept in San Francisco bears traces of colour, it appears that much less attention was given to its embellishment than was the case with the Udine version, which has a significant provenance. Found in the records of the Sant'Uffizio in Udine's Archivio della Cura Archivescovile, the image was included in a trial against a certain Valentino Tischlar 'per mancata pratica dei sacramenti e cibi proibiti a Cremona'.[632] The trial describes how Valentino then kept

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[627] Gallori, 73.
[628] The Mass of Saint Gregory in the Italian versions is shown where Christ is depicted praying in the garden of Gethsemane in the earlier French version: Gallori, 19 and 64
[629] See Gallori, 71, for objects decorated with this textual symbol over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—from a Bishop's mitre to a Mexican featherwork tapestry.
[630] Gallori, 73.
[631] Ferdinando, cousin of Christopher, was a famous print collector. Gallori discusses the small differences between the description and the Udine print, indicating that Columbo probably owned a slightly different version, which was similar in size and appearance: Gallori, 75-76.
[632] Many thanks to Marco Faini for hunting down this image and sharing it with me, along with the contents of the Inquisition trial in which it served as a piece of evidence. See also: Ottavia Niccoli, *Vedere con gli occhi del cuore: alle origini del potere delle immagini* (Rome: Laterza, 2011), 67-68, fig. 15, for a reproduction and brief discussion of this woodcut.

the print, 'in quadam eius stupha terranea in uno ex parietibus eiusdem reperiit folium unum carta affixum'. Presumably this underground room was intended as a space for prayer, with the image attached to the wall. The trial also provides a complete description of the print: 'in quo picta erant imagines Sanctissimi Domini nostri crucifixi, Beatae Virginis matris, sancti Ioannis evengelistae ac sanctorum quatuor evangelistarum, ac beatorum Sebastiani, Rochi et Antonii, cum mysteriis Passionis eiusdem Salvatoris nostri descriptis'.[633] According to the testimony, Valentino was accused of writing false things on the walls and print with 'gypso theutonice', a chalk-like substance.[634] However the authorities found it odd that this was the only image of the Virgin, Christ, or the saints kept in the home and determined that this signified his lack of devotion, which perhaps indicates that it would have been common practice for all devotees to keep a great number of such images on prominent display in their homes.[635]

As the prints discussed in this chapter have demonstrated, image and text combinations destined for display on the walls of the home could function on many levels—they could serve as educational tools, reminders of common prayers, poetry to inspire contemplation, mementos from pilgrimages, or amuletic texts to protect the home. While these printed papers were cheap and accessible to wide swathes of the population, other devotees chose more expensive or permanent inscriptions to adorn the interiors of their homes.

The Hearth

In addition to her explanation of the items displayed on the walls of the home, in the 1591 Inquisition trial discussed above, the stepdaughter of Giovanni Maria Daldo provided further details about the display of devotional objects throughout the house. She explained how 'la detta mia madre già tre mesi circa mi comprò una Madonna di pietra la qua Io messi sopra il camino della camera de detto mi Zan Maria'.[636] From this description, we learn that a stone sculpture of the Virgin was placed over the hearth in the chambers of the Daldo home. In Renaissance Bologna, fireplaces in domestic spaces were often decorated with figural imagery for the moral

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633 ACAU, Fondo Sant'Officio, b. 1283, fasc. 102., f. 123r.

634 'Qua quidem carta tota desuper cum gypso theutonice scripta apparebat; et postea eadem scripta cum gypso etiam delineata erat[…]', ACAU, Fondo Sant'Officio, b. 1283, fasc. 102, f. 123 r. On the use of gypsum (sulphate of lime) as an ingredient in whitewash in the early modern world: Juliet Fleming, 'Whitewash and the Scene of Writing', in *Shakespeare Studies*, 27 (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2000), 133-38 (135): Cennino Cennini compared it to chalk in 1427: Antonella Fuga, *Artists' Techniques and Materials*, trans. by Rosanna M. Giammarco (Los Angeles: The John Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 28.

635 'et postea diligenti facta perquisitione per totam domum nullam aliam Iesu Christi, nec Virginis matris, neque sanctorum imaginem invenit': ACAU, Fondo Sant'Officio, b. 1283, fasc. 102, f. 123 r.

636 Giovanni Maria Daldo was accused of violently attacking the stone image of the Virgin and Child by his step-daughter: 'il qual piglio detta figura una sera et con la candela accesa li burstollo la testa, e le man, et Io la piglia con la S.ra Madre per lavarla e nettarma, et perche la non posse venni ben netta la mettessimo sopra la credenza nettarla un altra volta, li do li dui di havendola lui veduta l'ha pigliata con un cortello ha talgiato la testa e le manni alla Mad.a ei al figliuolo': ASV, SU, Pezzo 68, fasc. 13, f. 2v-3r.

and religious instruction of the family.[637] Francesco Sansovino ascribed great virtue to keeping fireplaces in all *camere* of the home because 'when one gets out of bed the fire not only dries out the damp that gathers while one sleeps during the night, but it warms up the room and purges it of unhealthy vapours'.[638] In addition to providing heat and enabling cooking, fireplaces also functioned as the symbolic focus of the *sala* in high-status homes, and special furniture would often be designated as belonging to the area around the hearth in the *sala*.[639]

Across early modern Europe, the hearth functioned as a gathering space for the family to practice their devotions and was a prime place for the display of religious images and symbols. The space over the mantel was an integral focal point for the display of devotional imagery in England.[640] In Northern Europe, particularly in the region of the Swiss, Austrian, and German Alps, stoves decorated with ceramic tiles with religious imagery took the place of fireplaces. Before the Reformation, these northern stoves illustrated figures such as the Virgin Mary and saints to aid in devotion. After the Reformation, stoves constructed in Protestant areas illustrated Old Testament and morality stories as well contemporary religious figures, which served a didactic purpose.[641] A 1643 portrait of the Bodmer family of Zurich illustrates the place of such ceramic stoves in the home (Figure 5.27). The Bodmers' stove is covered with tiles of didactic images of the virtues of a good Christian (Figure 5.27, Detail) as part of the devotional decoration of the family's home, which also included religious-themed stained-glass windows. A tablet on the wall behind the Bodmers' stove is inscribed with the words 'Im heyssen Ofen | Der truebsal […]| Probiert Gott sin | Kinder a […]| O Jesu Christ Dein tueres [Blut?] | Bewar uns vor | Der hellen [Gluot]' (In the hot stove of our afflictions, God tests his children … | O Jesus Christ, protect us from the fires of Hell with your hard-won blood). Morrall notes that while this tablet might be interpreted as a literal reference to the physical stove, it also references a biblical passage, Isaiah 48:10. By evoking the fires of Hell, the wall plaque encourages the family to lead pious lives. The text might have served an amuletic purpose in the Bodmer home, protecting the family from real fires caused by the stove. The text also functions as a play on words as the warm

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637 Erin Campbell, *Old Women and Art in the Early Modern Domestic Interior* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 38.

638 Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia: Città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice, 1581) with additions by Giustiano Martinioni, 2 vols (Venice, 1663), I, 383-84, cited in Patricia Fortini Brown, 'The Venetian Casa', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 50-65 (58).

639 Brenda Preyer, 'The Florentine Casa', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 34-49 (37).

640 Tara Hamling, 'To See or Not to See? The Presence of Religious Imagery in the Protestant Household', *Art History*, 30 (2007), 170-97 (172).

641 David Gaimster, 'Archaeology of an Age of Print? Everyday Objects in an Age of Transition', *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 133-44 (139-40), and Mary Laven, 'Devotional Objects', in *Treasured Possessions from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. by Victoria Avery, Melissa Calaresu, and Mary Laven (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015), 239-45 (241-42).

space in which it is displayed, between the stove and the wall, was often referred to as the 'Helle' or 'Hoelle'.[642]

These association of the fiery hearth with Hell was also prevalent in Italy, particularly in the Veneto, where the space was seen as place where demonic figures, such as the Devil and other evil spirits, congregated.[643] Perhaps, then, it would be fitting to decorate the hearth and the area around it with religious imagery, symbols and inscriptions, especially those with protective and apotropaic properties. Two extant fireplaces in the Marche demonstrate how textual devotional symbols might be displayed over the hearth. The Sacred Monogram was carved onto the mantle of these fireplaces, in the same place of honour at the heart of the room where family arms or emblems were often placed.[644] As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Sacred Monogram also often appropriated the location of the family arms on door lintels; for early modern Christians, the Sacred Monogram represented Christ in the same way that coats of arms represented families. One fireplace emblazoned with the Sacred Monogram is located in-situ in the Casa Natale di Raffaello in Urbino (Figure 5.28). Based upon a comparison with the designs of some of the dated doorway monograms, the Monogram in Raphael's house appears to have been carved on the mantel in the first half of the fifteenth century. Raphael was born in the house in 1483 and it remained his property until his death in 1520 when it was inherited by his heirs, Ciarla and Vagnini; it is therefore possible that this *IHS* played a role in the devotional life of his family.[645]

In the town of Forca di Montegallo in the southern part of the Marche, another hearth is etched with a different version of the Sacred Monogram (Figure 5.29). The mantel is carved with a version of the *IHS* surmounted by a cross created from stylised vegetal motifs set in a rectangle and is accompanied by the date '1570'.[646] A textual devotional symbol such as the Sacred Monogram provided a focal point for contemplation and meditation for the family gathered around the hearth to benefit from its warmth and light. Since the fireplace served as a gathering place, the symbol may have also served as a marker of the family's faith, illustrating their piety to visitors hosted in the room. The placement of the Sacred Monogram within the home provided sacred protection for the home and its inhabitants. Perhaps it was placed specifically above the hearth to protect these homes and their inhabitants from conflagration. As the miracle story of the *Madonna del Fuoco* illustrates, holy images and symbols were believed to have power over fire.

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642 Morrall, 'Domestic Decoration', 9-10, and Morrall, 'Inscriptional Wisdom', 127.
643 Ruggiero describes a test to determine if the hearth had been compromised by the Devil in which salt was tossed into the coals and if the salt caused a reaction, the hearth had been possessed: Ruggiero, 110.
644 On the display of family arms on fireplaces, see: Brenda Preyer, 'The *Acquaio* (Wall Fountain) and Fireplace in Florence', in *At Home*, ed. by Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, 284-87 (284), and Preyer, 'The Florentine Casa', 38-40.
645 Many thanks to Zuzanna Sarnecka for sharing this inscription. See: 'Casa Raffaello', *Accademia Raffaello* <http://www.accademiaraffaello.it/casaraffaello.html> [accessed 18 January 2017].
646 This resembles some of the exterior versions of the Sacred Monogram in this region and can perhaps be attributed to a popular local style and perhaps even one workshop: Leporini, 252.

Writing on the Wall

'Et se nel tempo della guerra sarà detto, *over che el sia scritto ne i luoghi pericolosi, come nelli palagi in qualche luogo mondo*, quei tai luoghi e li huomini che in essi habitaranno saranno salvi.'[647] These rubricated instructions accompany Psalm 5 in the 1536 guide to the psalms, *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia*.[648] By writing Psalm 5, which begins '*Berba mea auribus percipe*', in unsafe places, such as in *palazzi*, the building and the people who live there will be safe. The rubric accompanying Psalm 5 explains the virtues of the written psalm, 'Anchora vale (secondo santo Girolamo) per impetrare le cose necessarie alla vita e contro la tentatione del Demonio e contro li huomini bugiardi e ingannatori; e massimamente se con il cuor contrito sarà detto nelle sue necessità per la vertù di questo sarà essaudito'.[649] In addition to this example, other instructions in the *Salmista* demonstrate the strong links between the psalms and the protection of the home and family. However, what proof exists that people inscribed their walls with devotional texts as *Il Salmista* prescribed? Was *Il Salmista* unique in proposing that people should cover the walls of their home with text?

Extant evidence suggests that people across early modern Europe also inscribed the walls of their home with words written with paint, ink, chalk, pencil, marking stone, or by incising the plaster or whitewash.[650] Archival evidence also demonstrates the use of charcoal to write graffiti in Venetian public spaces.[651] Inscriptions might even have been part of a planned decorative programme, like those discussed in studies of post-Reformation English domestic spaces. In early modern England, prescriptive texts instructed readers to adorn their walls with a variety of inscriptions—from religious and moral, to those for entertainment and intellectual pursuit.[652] Tara Hamling discusses the 'great fashion for religious and moral texts in wall painting of the Elizabethan period. Often the inscriptions formed a frieze around the top of the painted walls, with decorative scrollwork, fruit and flowers, or geometrical designs adorning the main body of the wall'.[653] Andrew Morrall and Juliet Fleming have also noted the popularity of the psalms for wall inscriptions in early modern England.[654]

Fleming has argued that the 'bulk of early modern writing was written on walls'.[655] Wall text was ephemeral since it could be erased with a coat of whitewash.[656] Again, Northern

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647 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia*, 8v-9r [emphasis added].
648 On the merits of Psalm 30 according to *Il Salmista*, see discussion on p. 95 of this thesis.
649 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia*, cc. 8v-9r.
650 While the term graffiti derives from the word *graffito* meaning to incise, it has come to be applied to writing applied to surfaces where it was not part of the decorative programme: Fleming, *Graffiti*, 34 and 50, and Fleming, 'Whitewash', 134.
651 Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 194-95.
652 Morrall, 'Inscriptional Wisdom', 121-38; Fleming, *Graffiti*, 29; Hamling, *Decorating*, 106-11.
653 Hamling, *Decorating*, 108-09.
654 They note poet George Herbert's description of a country parson's house where the second verse of Psalm 101 is inscribed: Morrall, 'Inscriptional Wisdom', 126, and Fleming, *Graffiti*, 58.
655 Fleming, *Graffiti*, 50.

European paintings provide an insight into the appearance and textual nature of wall decoration in domestic interiors. A Dutch brothel scene offers one visual source for how writing might have been executed in a haphazard way on the walls (Figure 5.30).[657] Plesch notes that when graffiti is depicted in paintings of interiors, it is meant to indicate the low social status of the space. However, the evidence explored by Sarti illustrates that even the Ducal palace of Urbino was not immune to embellishment in the form of graffiti.[658] Though the brothel scene is obviously a secular image and the graffiti not devotional, it provides evidence for the variety of colours and writing materials used to write on the walls. Another example attributed to Jan van Amstel illustrates how devotional prints might be displayed in combination with text and symbols inscribed on the walls; a print illustrating the Virgin and John the Baptist mourning at the foot of the Cross is juxtaposed with the graffiti scribbled over the fireplace (Figure 5.31). Fleming proposes that by acknowledging the great amount of text that surrounded ordinary people daily, we can challenge 'current assumptions about the constitution and statistics of literacy and schooling in the early modern period'.[659] While some inscriptions were carefully planned, like those discussed by Fleming, Hamling, and Morrall, others were probably created in the moment—words composed or copied quickly for a variety of reasons.[660]

Studies of early modern Italian graffiti have focused mainly upon writing in places like prisons, public buildings, palaces, and churches.[661] In addition to acts of vandalism and iconoclasm, inscriptions note local historical events, record the names of parishioners, function as votive messages, and commemorate visitors' pilgrimages.[662] The frescoes of the Chapel of Santa Maria della Petrella on the outskirts of Ripatransone have been covered with inscriptions over the centuries (Figure 5.32). Many record weather and historical events as well as names of visitors and parishioners, and some are also devotional. The prayers inscribed on the walls include an invocation, which begins with the word 'Regina' and calls upon Mary, the Queen of Heaven, to whom the chapel was dedicated (Figure 5.32, Detail). In Paggese, inscriptions etched into a fresco in the 'Sala del Parlimento' of the Church of San Lorenzo tell more about the life of the community (Figure 5.33). The fresco depicts a seated saint, possibly Anthony Abbot, between Sebastian and Roch, and has been tentatively attributed to Stefano di Pietro, an artist living and

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656 Fleming, *Graffiti*, 50, and Fleming, 'Whitewash', 134-35.
657 Plesch, 'Destruction or Preservation', 142-43.
658 Raffaella Sarti, 'Renaissance Graffiti: The Case of the Ducal Palace of Urbino', in *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 51-81.
659 Fleming, *Graffiti*, 50.
660 It is important to note this early modern distinction, as we often think of writing on walls in the form of graffiti as an act of vandalism, even though some modern graffiti is carefully planned by artists: see Fleming, *Graffiti*, 29-36 for a more detailed discussion of modern versus early modern perceptions. On the difference between planned inscriptions and graffiti: Sarti, 51-52.
661 Sarti, 51-81; Véronique Plesch, 'Memory on the Wall: Graffiti on Religious Wall Paintings', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 32 (2002), 167-97; Plesch, 'Destruction or Preservation', 137-72.
662 Plesch, 'Memory on the Wall', 168-72.

working in nearby Ascoli in the mid-fifteenth century.[663] Along with inscriptions that chronicle events of the community, such as outbreaks of plague or a murder, the amuletic palindrome, the SATOR-ROTAS square, was inscribed on the left knee of the seated saint.[664] The location of the SATOR square is interesting in comparison to the inscribed book the saint holds in his left hand, upon which the pious words of invocation and faithful resignation were painted in the vernacular: 'LASSATE LOVITO E LO PECCATO DENA[N]TE ADIO SEROVO [NO]STRO AVOCATO.' Again, Saints Sebastian and Roch appear in their traditional role as saints invoked against plague. Anthony Abbot was called upon to aid those suffering from ergotism (St Anthony's Fire), and he was also a patron saint of livestock (mainly pigs and horses) and would have therefore been popular in a rural town like Paggese.[665] Perhaps the addition of the amuletic SATOR square to these healing saints was believed to enhance their efficacy, especially on behalf of the inscriber. Plesch notes the devotional aspects of inscribing religious images with text in the form of graffiti of any kind (both devotional and mundane). The graffiti

> tangibly bear[s] witness to a physical interaction with the images, and this interaction is devotional in nature, for it bears the hope that through the marks the holy figure will be reached: thanked for good things (a good harvest, for example) or begged for protection from bad things (war, natural disasters, etc.) […] writing on the very substance of the image can also be seen to be a devotional act, a material concrete immersion […].[666]

The texts discussed in this section might not have been applied to devotional images in the same manner as the words etched into the church frescoes, yet Plesch's theory can be transferred and applied to domestic inscriptions. The act of inscribing a devotional image was an act of, in Plesch's terms, 'contemplative immersion' and may be applied to the act of inscribing devotional texts into ordinary domestic walls.

The instructions in *Il Salmista* infer that the holy and protective psalms might be written on the interior walls of the home. Since the text does not specify how these words should be inscribed, one must imagine that each executor selected the most suitable method for their situation—possibly etched like the inscriptions on the walls of the church, written in charcoal, chalk or ink, or painted with a more decorative fresco technique. The instructions that accompany Psalm 5 in *Il Salmista* are not unique in the text, which also offers guidelines for inscribing other psalms in domestic spaces. The rubric accompanying Psalm 40, 'Vale se il si scriverà nei muri dilla [*sic*] casa', explicitly indicates the act of writing ('scriverà') and a location

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663 Liliana Leopardi, 'Aesthetic Hybrids: Interpreting Carlo Crivelli's Ornamental Style' (unpublished doctoral thesis, New York University, 2007), 133, and 'Chiesa di San Lorenzo', *Terre del Piceno* <http://www.terredelpiceno.it/monumenti/chiesa-san-lorenzo-acquasanta-terme/> [accessed 29 January 2017].
664 'Chiesa di San Lorenzo'. For more on the amuletic powers of the SATOR square with its Christian undertones, see Fishwick, and Chapter One, p. 44 of this thesis.
665 Plesch also notes that St Anthony Abbot was a target for graffiti in the Oratorio of San Sebastiano in Arborio (Piedmont): Plesch, 'Destruction or Preservation', 137-50; Plesch, 'Memory on the Wall', 181.
666 Plesch, 'Memory on the Wall', 182-83.

('nei muri dilla casa'). It further explains the power of the words to provide protection and blessings over the home's inhabitants, 'accioché quelli i quai in essa habitaranno, la misericordia e la benedittione possano conseguire'. The presence of these words written upon the family's walls might also serve as a reminder to be considerate of the poor and to participate in charitable endeavours. According to the rubric, Saint Cassiodorus had also indicated other merits of Psalm 40, including the power to broker reconciliation and restitution: 'Et santo Cassiodoro dice che per la vertù di questo Salmo, il tuo nemico venerà da ti con buona pace, se sarai disposto da rimettere le ingiurie e di restituire i beni del prossimo come è il dovere'.[667] While *Il Salmista* suggested that Psalm 5 should be written in *palazzi* (referring to elaborate architectural structures inhabited by the wealthy), the instructions to Psalm 40 indicate a more democratic, domestic destination by using the word for house—*casa*. The potential for Psalm 40 to protect homes—both grand and humble—is reinforced by the words of the Psalm, which begins *Beatus qui intelligit*, and praises those who help the poor.[668]

Il Salmista also recommends that Psalm 47 'Vale per la conservatione della città accioché non sia roinata e distrutta. Similmente de i castelli e palagi'. According to the rubricated instructions, to unlock the protective power of Psalm 47 for the city, castles, and *palazzi*, 'se debbe dire o scrivere suso alcuna pietra divotamente, a laude de Iddio'.[669] While the instruction to write on a rock is ambiguous, the term *pietra* here might refer to building blocks, such as the cornerstone or foundation of these buildings. Here, the act of inscribing the Psalm is described as an act of devotion. The words of the Psalm, which begins *Magnus Dominus*, are particularly fitting for the protection of urban structures. The Psalm continues with domestic language that can be interpreted as offering God's protection to devout households: 'With the joy of the whole earth is mount Sion founded, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king | In her houses shall God be known, when he shall protect her'.[670] The rubric also indicates that Psalm 47 provides individualised protection: 'Anchora, colui il qual ogni giorno il dirà o con divotione addosso il portarà nelle sue facende che haverà da fare, sarà fortunato'.[671] In this second instruction, *Il Salmista* connects the power of writing the Psalm to reciting it or wearing a written form on the body, thus linking the practices of inscribing walls of the family home to the more personal kinds of written protection, in the form of *brevi* and devotional jewellery. As we have seen, the psalms are commonly linked to private devotional practices and appear on a range of domestic objects. The psalms, particularly the Seven Penitential Psalms, were ubiquitous in the medieval and early modern era: they were amongst the first texts school children learned to read and copy from

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667 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia*, 32v.
668 The term *palazzi* might also have indicated a large building divided up and occupied as apartments.
669 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia*, 37r.
670 Psalm 47: 2-4.
671 *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia il quale fece il propheta David*, 37r.

psalters, they were commonly recited as part of daily devotions, and therefore formed an integral part of most books of hours.[672] These instructions in *Il Salmista* demonstrate how Old Testament psalms were also viewed as material prayers by devotees who believed their physical presence offered divine protection to them and to their homes.

The *zibaldone* of Bartolomeo dal Bovo and his family provides possible evidence of the presence of amuletic devotional text inscribed on the walls of the home. In an entry in this *zibaldone*, belonging to a family of Verona, the following instructions are recorded, possibly in the hand of the original writer of the book, Bartolomeo dal Bovo: 'ad tempestates. Scribe in candelas benedictas [?] | *Mentem sancta*[*m*] *spontanea*[*m*]. *deo honorem. Et patrie liberationem*' (Figure 5.34).[673] The writer of this entry suggests that, for protection from storms, the words associated with Saint Agatha's protective abilities should be inscribed on a blessed candle.[674] The words were commonly used to protect buildings from natural disasters, particularly lightening, fire, hail, and earthquakes.[675] The protective qualities of this prayer extended back through the Middle Ages, and as already noted, it was often inscribed on church bells, which were lightning conductors.[676] A note, in a slightly later hand, offers an insight into another potential use of these words: 'Queste sono littere scrite o sia dopento per la n[ostr]a casa dal bovo per la chamareta vechia de sotto. Questo la t[r]ovo dove sono queli e molti dopenti.'[677] The description of the 'old room' in the home 'where one finds these words and many paintings' suggests that previous inhabitants of the dal Bovo home had not only utilised Saint Agatha's prayer in the manner prescribed, but had also inscribed it on the walls. The suggestion of a place where paintings were also displayed may indicate a space dedicated to devotion.

Painted Prayers: Paintings, Plaques, & Reliefs

An early sixteenth-century maiolica plaque offers further evidence for the display of Saint Agatha's prayer on the walls of the home (Figure 5.35). The plaque depicts the *Madonna lactans* based upon an earlier German woodcut and is dated 1521.[678] Surrounding the nursing Madonna, Saint Agatha's prayer is written on a banderol in an abbreviated and slightly altered form,

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672 The term 'reading the psalter' was used to refer to novice readers because they used the psalms as their primary texts: Reinburg, 16-17 and 108; Grendler, 143-56.

673 'Deo' and 'Honorem' have been reversed from the original prayer: Verona, Biblioteca Civica, MS 827, 29v.

674 It is unclear if the candle should be lit during the storm to offer protection. See Chapter One, pp. 16 and 50 as well as Chapter Three, p. 78 for a discussion of the efficacy of Saint Agatha's prayer. On the legend of Saint Agatha, see: Jacobus de Voragine, no. 39, 154-57 (156).

675 Frugoni and Frugoni, 45; L'Engle, p. 110, note 72.

676 Frugoni and Frugoni, 45.

677 Verona, Biblioteca Civica, MS 827, 29v. After a space in the text, a list of names, births, and deaths is recorded in the same hand. While Anne Dunlop suggests this information was inscribed on the walls, it is unclear when reading the manuscript which 'littere' the author referred to. As the Saint Agatha prayer was known for its ability to protect buildings, the 'Mentem sanctam' prayer would be suitable. In either case, the description of the wall to record family information or prayers is interesting. See Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 167-68.

678 Stephen Duffy, *The Wallace Collection* (London: Scala Publishers, 2005), 36, and Hill, 52, fig. 3.

'mentem; sa[nc]tam. | spo[n]taneam. hono|re deo. Et. patri. libera|cionem'.[679] Though it has been linked to a German woodcut, it also closely resembles the late fifteenth-century Italian example illustrated in Figure 5.2. Its unfinished edge indicates that it may originally have been embedded into the plaster of a wall. Such a plaque could be displayed on the interior walls of the home (or on its exterior) to call upon the intercession of the Madonna and Child along with Saint Agatha. Like the inscription on the wall in the dal Bovo home, the plaque may have offered protection from natural disasters. Further, Saint Agatha was the patron saint of breast diseases and nursing mothers, and this image and inscription may have been called upon to protect the women and children of the home.[680] The use of the image of the *Madonna lactans* along with Agatha lends credence to this interpretation, thus further enhancing its multi-layered protective role in the domestic sphere. Like the inscribed plaque behind the stove in the Bodmer family portrait, material prayers in the form of paintings and tablets that incorporated both text and image in their visual program were also employed for devotional décor in the Italian Renaissance home. This section will provide a sample of devotional inscriptions present on objects such as paintings and plaques, meant to be hung on the walls of the home. Despite the material differences between inscribed paintings, plaques, and prints discussed earlier in this chapter, they were displayed in the same manner and served similar devotional purposes.

The round shape of the maiolica *Plaque with the Virgin and Child and Prayer of St Agatha* can be compared to painted *tondi*, commonly associated with the Tuscan domestic display.[681] It has been proposed that the *tondo* form developed from the popular circular or polygonal childbirth trays (*deschi da parto*), which were often commissioned to celebrate a marriage or the birth of a male heir by leading Florentine families. While Tuscan childbirth trays typically illustrated scenes of mythology, jovial putti, and childbirth, *tondi* were mostly devotional in nature, depicting scenes from the Nativity or other images of the Holy Family.[682] From his analysis of late fifteenth-century archival documentation of the Florentine elite, Lydecker proposed that devotional *tondi* were amongst the art acquired when a man was establishing his new household around the time of marriage.[683] These paintings were most often displayed in the *camera* (the main chamber of the residence) and were probably placed high up on a wall, perhaps resting on a shelf.[684] Though paintings are often studied for the visual and devotional qualities of the image, they were also a prime locus for devotional text. One *tondo* depicting the *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist*

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679 The prayer should read 'Mentem Sanctam, Spontaneam, Honorem Deo et Patria Liberationem': Jacobus de Voragine, p. 156.
680 I would like to thank Mary Laven for pointing out this connection. See L'Engle, 110, note 72.
681 Deborah Krohn, 'The Framing of Two Tondi in San Gimignano Attributed to Filippino Lippi', *The Burlington Magazine*, 136 (1994), 160-63.
682 Olson, 31-65.
683 Lydecker, 145-83.
684 Victor M. Schmidt, 'Religious Material Culture in Late Quattrocento Florence: The Case of the Tornabuoni', in *Ghirlandaio y el Renacimiento en Florencia*, ed. by Gert Jan van der Sman (Madrid: Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, 2010), 308-16 (310), and Olson, 48-49.

and Angel is framed by a prayer: 'GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO ET IN TERRA PAX HOMINIBUS BONE VOLUNTATIS LAUDAMUS TE' (Figure 5.36). This invocation for peace and offering of glory to God form the Latin words of the *Gloria* prayer, sung at the beginning of Mass (except during Advent and Lent).[685] Occasionally, frames of domestic paintings would be outfitted with candleholders to illuminate the image during times of prayer. The golden background in the *tondo* and the gilded words would glisten in the candlelight and create the feeling of the presence of the Virgin and Child accompanied by a living prayer.

Another painting of the *Virgin and Child with Infant Saint John the Baptist* incorporates the *Gloria* along with a prayer to the Virgin (Figure 5.37). The panel is in another popular domestic form known as a *colmo*, which refers to a rectangular painting with a semi-circular top.[686] The words of the *Gloria* are inscribed in gold on a red background in a frame around the sides and top of the *colmo*, while 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA' is written across the base of the frame.[687] These inscriptions aided devotees who gathered before the images in their prayers, serving as memory prompts and guides to recite or sing the words of praise. A veil, curtain, or shutters might be used to cover and protect domestic devotional images when not in use.[688] Victor Schmidt notes that the 'Ave Maria' was the most common phrase inscribed on the frames of domestic devotional images depicting the Virgin and Child during the Renaissance, but other phrases of praise for the Virgin and Child and requests for intercession were also common.[689] Inscribed devotional tabernacles of the Virgin and Child were available in various forms—from paintings to moulded stucco and terracotta as well as ceramics and marble sculpture.

While prayers of praise and invocation to the Virgin were often inscribed around the frames of paintings, an early fifteenth-century Marchigian painting of the *Virgin and Child with Angels* illustrates how devotional text was integrated into the picture itself (Figure 5.38).[690] The Virgin is seated in a garden holding the Christ Child and a choir of angels surrounding them. Keith Christiansen has noted that this painting probably functioned as a tool of private devotion.[691] As in the prints discussed above on pp. 115-16, the Virgin's halo is inscribed with a gilded abbreviation of the Archangel Gabriel's Annunciation greeting from Luke 1:28, 'AVE GRATIA PLENA D[OMIN]US TECU[M]' (Figure 5.38, Detail a). On her crown, the words 'ACCIPE CORONAM' are written, while 'REGINA C[O]ELI' is inscribed across the collar of

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685 Hughes, 66.
686 Olson, 35.
687 *Fogg Art Museum: Harvard University Collection of Medieval and Renaissance Paintings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 71-73.
688 Olson, 33.
689 Schmidt, 'Religious Material Culture', 312.
690 The artist's dated signature, 'petrus ·dominici ·demonte ·pulitiano ·pinsit· M·CCCC·XX·', is inscribed along the bottom of the frame, which is original.
691 Keith Christiansen, 'Madonna and Child with Angels, Pietro di Domenico da Montepulciano, MMA 07.201', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection Online* (2011) <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437290> [accessed 24 July 2017].

her dress, both phrases referencing her coronation and role as Queen of Heaven (Figure 5.38, Details b & c). On her sleeves, the words 'AVE MARIA' reference the Archangel Gabriel's greeting in the Annunciation and the words of the prayer dedicated to her (Figure 5.38, Detail d). Along with the ring she wears upon her finger, the phrase 'MARIA VIRGO SPONSA CHR[ISTI]' along the golden edge of her mantle confirms her eternal virginity and her dual roles as Heavenly Bride and *Ecclesia*, titles with which she was bestowed during her coronation (Figure 5.38, Detail e).[692] Along the border of the blue mantle an ornamental script is used for embellishment, and no words or letters are discernible. In this case the pseudoscript on the Virgin's mantle appears to imitate an orientalising script, perhaps a Arabic inscription in the Kufic-style, demonstrating a popular decorative use of text. Pseudoscripts were commonly depicted in medieval and Renaissance paintings for many reasons: textiles and other objects with Arabic inscriptions were imported and highly valued exotic objects of luxury in medieval and early modern Europe and consumers showed preference for objects coming from the Holy Land. Text in Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek were believed to be fitting embellishments for holy figures who lived in the time of Christ.[693] Alexander Nagel also notes their otherworldly nature: '[p]seudoscripts wilfully dismantled and recomposed the medium of language, pointing to a language beyond language, or perhaps a state before conventional language'.[694] Through these inscriptions, the Virgin embodies her role in the Word becoming flesh, who is seated on her lap as a fulfilment of this textual transformation.

Though the colour is now worn, a painted stucco depicting the *Madonna of the Candelabra* illustrates how the importance of the concept the Word becoming flesh permeated domestic devotion in Renaissance Italy (Figure 5.39). Below the image of the Virgin and Child the gilded words read 'VERBUM CARO FA[C]TUM EST DE VIRGINI [*sic*] MARIA': the first line from the Gospel of John has been adapted to reflect the Virgin's role in the Incarnation. This image is in a classicising frame with architectural features referred to as a tabernacle; such frames incorporated pilasters topped by capitals and a pediment and reflect a type commonly found in fifteenth-century inventories, often referred to as *all'antica*.[695] This stucco relief reproduces Raphael's painting of the same subject and at least fifty copies made by Rossellino are known to survive. By making these reliefs in moulds, they could be produced, finished, and embellished quickly to meet the demands of the market for lower-cost devotional products. That examples from Rossellino's workshop survive in such high numbers reflects both their availability and

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692 Ulrike Wiethaus, 'Bride of Christ: Imagery', in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Margaret C. Schaus (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 94-95.
693 On the use of pseduoscripts in early modern Italy: Nagel, 'Twenty-five notes', 228-48.
694 Nagel, 'Twenty-five notes', 237.
695 Schmidt, 'Religious Material Culture', 311.

popularity as domestic devotional objects at the time, as well as their durability.[696] Fittingly, the words also formed the first part of a *lauda* and of a popular carol sung at Christmas, when the Incarnation took place.[697] Their presence on the frame may have prompted individuals or the family to gather before it to sing as part of their devotions. Inscriptions on another tabernacle image of the Virgin and Child suggest that singing was a common part of engagement with these images. An inscription on a brightly-coloured terracotta *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Angels* uses words to call upon the Virgin's intercession that were also part of a popular song (Figure 5.40). The song begins 'Recordare, Virgo Mater [Dei] dum steteris in conspectus Domini, ut loquris pro nobis bona et ut avertat indignationem suam a nobis', and was used as the Offeratory hymn in Masses dedicated to the Virgin.[698]

Christocentric inscriptions were also incorporated into the decorative programme of paintings intended for domestic devotion. The base of the architectural frame of a vibrantly coloured terracotta Virgin and Child is inscribed with the Names of Jesus in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, 'IESUS. XRS. EMANUEL. ADONAI. SABAI. ELOI. SABOT' (Figure 5.41).[699] Lists of the Names of God were believed to have protective powers, and various arrangements were often evoked in early modern amulets and as amuletic prayers inscribed in books.[700] Other Christological inscriptions can be found on images of the Passion and crucified Christ meant for domestic devotion. An intimate triptych with foldable side panels was made as a portable and personal devotional image. The isolated and suffering figure of Christ is the only one depicted in each one of the three images which compose the triptych. On the left panel Christ carries the Cross on a stark black background and on the right Christ is crucified at Golgotha with the *Titulus Crucis* posted at the top of the Cross. At the centre, the bust of Christ as the *Ecce Homo* called for devotees to meet directly the pained gaze of the crucified Christ, whose blood drips from the Crown of Thorns encircling his head (Figure 5.42). Around Christ's halo a variation of the Latin words of the *Titulus Crucis* have been inscribed: 'IHESUS CHRISUS NAZARENUS RECX'. This inscription stands out in the same shade of red and probably helped devotees to meditate upon the suffering of Christ. On the collar of his robe, a more uplifting inscription is written to remind viewers of the promise of salvation through Christ, 'EGO SUM LUX MUNDI', from John 8:12.

Annunciation scenes were also commonly used in private devotional images, and they are often set in contemporary domestic spaces. An illustrated maiolica tile from Pesaro depicting the

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696 Goldthwaite, 389.
697 Reinhard Strohm, *The Rise of European Music, 1380-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 331 and 610.
698 Schimdt, 'Religious Material Culture', 312 and note 57.
699 The inscription should read 'IESUS. CHRISTUS. EMANUEL. ADONAI. SADDAI. ELOI. SABAOTH'.
700 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 111-15; Nadia Carrisi, 'I nomi di Cristo e di Maria in un libro d'ore quattrocentesco di Varese', *Aevum*, 80 (2006), 529-50.

Annunciation incorporates both a vibrant image and an accompanying inscription (Figure 5.43).[701] In the scene, the Virgin Mary kneels at her *prie-dieu* next to her canopied bed with a book in hand, as the Archangel Gabriel approaches her with his hand raised in a gesture of Annunciation. God emerges from a cherub-filled cloud that covers the elaborately coffered ceiling of her chamber. The words of the corresponding biblical passage have been inscribed on the plaque (Luke 1:28-38). The words of Gabriel are written across the floor, 'AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS TECUM BENEDICTA TU IN MULIERIBUS', while the Virgin's response, 'ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI FIAT MIHI SECUNDUM VERBUM TUUM', is contained in a cartouche at the bottom. While the scene, which was adapted from an engraving by the school of Raphael, has been meticulously depicted, the inscription appears to have been added as an afterthought, as the words of Gabriel do not fit and appear not to have been a planned part of the decorative programme.[702] Perhaps the inscription was added at the behest of the purchaser to further enhance the plaque's role as a devotional tool.

A painting of the Annunciation created for domestic devotion illustrates an abbreviated version of the inscription ending 'MIHI SECUNDUM' on the bed's canopy, below a lunette illustrating a lavishly framed Sacred Monogram of Christ (Figure 5.44).[703] Paintings might also incorporate longer biblical passages in their visual programme. Another Annunciation scene contains a variety of textual references (Figure 5.45). The date 1508 appears on the Virgin's chair. In addition to the pseudoscript on the Virgin's robe, a book falls open on the storage chest or footstool that surrounds the Virgin's bed. The bed's canopy itself is inscribed with faded letters that form an ambiguous inscription, which appears to end with an abbreviated reference to God.[704] Along the base of the frame a passage has been inscribed:

> BEATISSIMUS HIERONIMUS DE SPLENDORE VI TUS NO[ST]RI IESU, QN DE TELONEO EVOCAVI MATTIEU | Certe fulgor ipse et maiestas divinitatis occultae, qu[a]e et[iam] in humana facie relucebat | ex primo ad se videntes trahere poterat ascpectu | ~Scriptu in ha[e]c o lector cod fige.

This inscription first explains that the following passage was written by Saint Jerome on the Gospel of Matthew. It then copies a passage from Jerome's *Commentary* on Matthew 9:9, the passage that discusses Matthew's calling to follow Jesus.[705] While the juxtaposition of the

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[701] The plaque is also dated (1567) and signed 'Sforza D.P.', referring to the maiolica painter, Sforza di Marcantonio of Pesaro: Dora Thornton and Timothy Wilson, *Italian Renaissance Ceramics: A catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, 2 vols (London: The British Museum Press, 2009), I, 357-58, cat. 211.

[702] Thornton and Wilson, I, 357-58, cat. 211.

[703] Maria Pia Mannini, ed., 'Cat. 22. Maestro filippinesco, *Annunciazione*', in *Filippino Lippi, un bellissimo ingegno: origini ed eredità nel territorio di Prato* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, 2004), 63.

[704] The inscription remains ambiguous, but probably refers to the Virgin's virtues or the Annunciation story, and may read: 'HEC E[S]T Q[UAE] N[UNZIAVI]T TIO IN D[OMIN]E (or DEUM)'. Many thanks to Abigail Brundin and Marco Faini for their help with possible readings of this inscription.

[705] Saint Jerome, *The Fathers of the Church: St. Jerome Commentary on Matthew*, trans. by Thomas P. Scheck (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 106-07, and 'Lorenzo di Credi, *The Annunciation*, 1508, Harvard Art Museums, 1971.17', Label Copy in Object File.

Annunciation scene with an exegesis on the calling of Matthew might seem unusual, both stories illustrate ordinary people being called to accept a life of faith and devotion. Such a combination may have been fitting in a monastic setting or for the clergy, but it might also have been employed in a lay person's private devotions as a reminder of faith. In fact, the words selected from Jerome's *Commentary* reflect upon how the 'splendor and majesty of his hidden divinity […] was capable from the first glance of drawing those who looked toward it', and made Christ like 'a magnetic stone' for those who followed him.[706] The inscription links the divinity of Christ and his power to draw the faithful around him with the moment in which Mary, his first devotee, was imbued with faith in Christ.

Paintings and plaques depicting the Sacred Monogram, meant to be suspended from the walls or hung over doorways as Bernardino prescribed, also survive in a variety of materials. One painting made by Sano di Pietro in the decades following San Bernardino's preaching appears to be a typical image of the Virgin and Child accompanied by saints and angels (Figure 5.46). On the Virgin's halo the traditional words of her prayer are written, 'AVE MARIA, GRATIA PLENA'. On the reverse of this *colmo* another text-centric devotional tool is illustrated. Gilded on a field of blue, the Sacred Monogram is depicted according to the prescriptions of San Bernardino in a resplendent sun and bordered with the words Bernardino inscribed on his own tablet, 'IN NOMINE YHS ONNE GENUMFLECTATUR CELESTIUM TERRESTIUM'.[707] The medallion is held aloft by blue cherubim and red seraphim who give an appearance of lifting the Monogram to the heavens so that everyone can kneel before it as the inscription orders; this celestial appearance would have been enhanced by the reflection of light on the gold leaf. The side bearing the Sacred Monogram is as detailed as the other side with as much gold leaf, indicating that one side did not take primacy over the other for display. Many painted tablets that copy Bernardino's version of the Sacred Monogram survive, but this example provides a rare dual devotional experience with the *Sacra Conversazione* depicted on the opposite side. The double-sided image meant that the owner could decide which side to display during daily life and during devotional activities. Perhaps the panel was flipped during devotions so that devotees could progress from contemplating one side's message to the other. The two sides may have also been displayed at different times in the liturgical calendar.

Extant evidence suggests that people across Italy displayed the Sacred Monogram in their homes beginning in the fifteenth century. A maiolica roundel from Faenza illustrates the Sacred Monogram in the *yhs* form with the symbol set in a blazing gold and blue sun, and the *h* doubling as a cross (Figure 5.47). A later version, also from Faenza, reflects the appearance of Bernardino's square tablet with the golden Monogram on a blue ground, but utilises the *IHS* form of the

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[706] Saint Jerome, 107.
[707] See Chapter Two, pp 55-56 and Chapter Four, p. 86.

Sacred Monogram typical of sixteenth-century versions (Figure 5.48). Examples also survive in *terracotta invetriata*. A circular Marchigian example displays both the Sacred Monogram and the date 1578 (Figure 5.49). Nearly twice the size of the earthenware examples, a version of the Sacred Monogram also survives in a rare gilded *cartapesta* medallion (Figure 5.50). Though *cartapesta* was an inexpensive and easily reproducible medium, the gilding on this example would have made this a valuable piece.[708] This *cartapesta* example also contains an engaged floral frame with ribbons typical of fifteenth-century painting, terracotta reliefs, and mirror frames, indicating that it was probably displayed in a similar manner. The delicacy of the materials indicates that it was probably displayed indoors, and would make an eye-catching devotional image that glistened in the candlelight.[709] The material record of these Sacred Monogram tiles illustrates their durability and enduring presence as devotional decorations.

Many images represented the plague saints Roch and Sebastian together to increase the efficacy of their intercessory powers. A painting of these two saints before a cityscape of Pisa accompanied by the saints Nicholas of Tolentino and Bernardino of Siena was created to invoke their protection (Figure 5.51). Their names are emblazoned on their haloes and the painting is filled with inscriptions to convey its purpose. The painting was commissioned by the two smaller figures in the foreground, as the inscription indicates, 'QVESTI IIII·SANTI DIFENSORI | DELLA PESTILENTIA A FATTFARE | PIETRO DIBATISTA DA RIGO DIM INOE | CITADINO PISANO·M· CCCC·LXX XI'. Though the cityscape might suggest that it was commissioned to protect the city and for display in a public space, the small format (76.5 x 59.7 cm) may also indicate that it was intended for more private domestic devotions. The text inscribed on the book held by Bernardino of Siena calls upon the protection of God on behalf of these devotees; it reads: 'PATER M|ANIFES|TAVI N|OMEN T|VVM O|MNIB|VS· [ ]E ||[ ]FA[ ] |MI[SERICORDI]AM T|VA[M] NOB|IS DOMI|NE CLE|MENTE ||[ ]OSTE|NDE [ ]'. The first part of this inscription derives from John 17:6 while the second part asks for God's mercy.[710]

A lead-glazed earthenware (slipware) plaque from the Veneto decorated with an image of the *Virgin and Child with the Saints Sebastian and Roch* has a hook at the top, indicating that it was meant to be hung on a wall (Figure 5.52). Sebastian and Roch stand to each side with the attributes of their suffering. In the centre, the Virgin holds her child in a tender maternal embrace as angels soar above playing their horns in celebration. The triumphant nature of the angels

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[708] *Cartapesta* was made by pressing a mixture of softened paper, gesso, and glue into a mould: Filippo Baldinucci, *Vocabolario Toscano dell'Arte del Disegno* (Florence, 1681, facsimilie edition), 37, cited in *Iacopo Sansovino: la Madonna in cartapesta del Bargello: restauro indagini*, ed. by Massimo Bonelli and Maria Grazia Vaccari (Roma: Gangemi, 2006), 53.
[709] Cesare Molinari, '5.1. Tondo con il monogramma di San Bernardino', in *Le tems revient 'l tempo si rinuova: feste e spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. by Paola Ventrone (Florence: Silvana Editoriale, 1992), 209-10.
[710] 'Benozzo Gozzoli, *Saints Nicholas of Tolentino, Roch, Sebastian, and Bernardino of Siena, with Kneeling Donors*, 1481, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976.100.14' <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436561> [accessed 31 January 2016].

indicates to the viewer that through prayer to the Virgin and Christ as well as these two saints, one can be triumphant over death. Further, the inscription under the Virgin and Child, 'AVE REGINA CELORVM', celebrates the Virgin and, along with the music-making angels, might have served as a reminder to greet the image of the Virgin aloud, since these were also the first words of a familiar song.[711] The plague saints on the plaque had the power to protect against disease and to comfort those already suffering from plague, but the pious were reminded that even if they succumbed to an earthly death, heavenly salvation awaited them.

Conclusion: From the Doorway to the Wall

Finally, let us reconsider the image of the *Birth of the Virgin* by Vittore Carpaccio discussed in Chapter Four, where text was displayed both over the door with the inscription of the Name of Jesus (*ISU*) and on the tablet on the wall that prefigures the arrival of Christ. The tablet on the wall in Carpaccio's painting illustrates a type that would have been commonly displayed in Jewish Italian homes to protect babies from the child-killing witch, Lilith.[712] While Sabar suggests no tablets of the type survive from Renaissance Italy, a more generic amulet of protection in the demonstrates the use of protective religious text in the Jewish home (Figure 5.53). The bronze cast and gilt amulet was probably created by a maker of Hanukkah lamps, since it borrows the form and decoration of contemporary lamps. It is embellished with dolphins and vegetation as well as an inscription that translates as 'May no evil grieve you' from Psalm 19:10.[713] The practice of displaying the psalms in the home must have been popular across the religious divide and can be linked to the desire for protection through the material text.

As the examples discussed throughout this chapter elucidate, the early modern Italian home was a prime place for the display of material prayers to a far greater extent than has been acknowledged in previous scholarship. Many people decorated the interior and exterior walls of their homes with devotional text in the form of carved and written inscriptions, prints, paintings, and plaques. As the availability and variety of printed images increased over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, affordable devotional decorations became more accessible to a wider range of the population. From inscriptions written on walls with simple paint or charcoal to ceramic plaques, paintings and carved marble fireplaces, the inscribed wall decorations discussed in this chapter illustrate the range of objects that would have been available to

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711 The words 'Ave Regina Caelorum' had long been the beginning of a popular and well-known antiphon, but in the fifteenth century they were transformed into a motet that circulated widely across Europe: David J. Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123-25.

712 Sabar, 'Between Calvinists and Jews', 376.

713 Chaya Benjamin, *The Steiglitz Collection: Masterpieces of Jewish Art*, trans. by Malka Jagendorf (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1987), 390-91, cat. 263, and Debra Kaplan, 'Personal and Ritual Items in Italy's Jewish Homes', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 40-43 (42, plate 43).

consumers at various costs. Each home that employed such devotional decoration probably selected the methods and material best fitting their economic abilities to display their devotion.

CONCLUSION

Prayers Materialized

In his life of Saint Francis, Tommaso da Celano, Francis's follower, biographer, and friend, recorded how the saint collected stray pieces of parchment inscribed with both religious and secular text. When questioned by a disciple about this habit, Francis responded 'Fili mi, litterae sunt ex quibus componitur glorioissimum Dei Nominum'.[714] As this thesis has demonstrated, like Saint Francis, early modern Italians valued scraps of parchment and paper inscribed with holy words, phrases, and prayers, including the 'gloriossismum Dei Nominum', for their ability to provide spiritual solace and intercessory assistance in moments of need.

The spring 2017 *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy* exhibition organised by the *Domestic Devotions* project in collaboration with the Fitzwilliam Museum illustrated that people are still drawn to these objects today. A scientific analysis of visitor patterns revealed that among the sections most frequently visited by exhibition guests was a section dedicated to the humble scraps of paper covered with prayers, despite fears that they would be ignored in favour of more colourful and eye-catching masterpieces. One exhibition reviewer articulated how, through the

> fascinating array of higher-end religious images (painting, drawing and sculpture) created to facilitate domestic devotion (some by notable artists), alongside household objects […] and even tiny, screwed-up pieces of paper containing images and prayers […], we truly have history and a history of art told by ordinary people, rather than by wealthy rulers and learned institutions.[715]

Thermal mapping also revealed that visitors paused at this section on 'tiny, screwed-up pieces of paper containing images and prayers' for relatively long periods of time, presumably to read the informative labels and to view the objects.[716]

This thesis has argued that devotees engaged with material prayers throughout their daily lives, by wearing them on their bodies, by populating their homes with inscribed objects, and by covering the architectural features of their homes with religious inscriptions. Rather than analysing inscribed objects in one medium, this thesis has brought together a wide range of material prayers present within the daily lives of ordinary people. From minute inscriptions on

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[714] Thomas da Celano, *Vita prima*, 83.2-4 in *S. Francissci Assisiensis Vita et Miracula*, ed. by Edouard d'Alençon (Rome: Desclée, Lefebvre et soc., 1906), cited in Domenico Pietropaolo, 'Whipping Jesus Devoutly: The Dramaturgy of Catharsis and the Christian Idea of Tragic Form', in *Beyond the Fifth Century: Interactions with Greek Tragedy from the Fourth Century BCE to the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ingo Gildenhard and Martin Revermann (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 397-424 (404); Michael T. Clanchy, '"Tenacious Letters": Archives and Memory in the Middle Ages', *Archivaria*, 11 (1980-1981), 115-25 (119-20); James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text: Imagining the Book in Reformation England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 15.

[715] Allison Cole, 'Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge', *The Arts Desk Online*, 14 March 2017 < http://www.theartsdesk.com/visual-arts/madonnas-and-miracles-holy-home-renaissance-italy-fitzwilliam-museum-cambridge > [accessed 4 August 2017].

[716] Tracking Final Report, July 2017, Fitzwilliam Museum: *Madonnas and Miracles*, 2-5.

rings to monumental inscriptions carved over the doorways of their homes, the variety of material has illuminated the complex relationships between devotees and material manifestations of devotional text. Material prayers might be used as prompts to devotion, but might also be employed as protective and intercessory devices during both daily life and moments of anxiety.

Bringing these objects into conversation with each other has been particularly illuminating. As the evidence demonstrates, certain brief inscriptions, particularly the Sacred Monogram and the *Ave Maria*, were ubiquitous. Other short texts that were familiar to devotees found their way out of the bindings of books to cover objects of adornment and the home. The incipit of the Gospel of John and the psalms appear on a range of objects and spaces discussed in this thesis. These two biblical texts were used as introductions to reading and writing, and along with the *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*, they were considered texts that all devotees should be able to recite by heart. It is, perhaps, oral familiarity with these texts that made them the most appealing for inscribing on objects and domestic spaces encountered in daily life. Even if devotees were not fully literate, they may have been able to recognise portions of these inscribed prayers and passages, permitting them to understand the content and intent of the inscriptions.

Future Lines of Research

Though they have not been discussed in this thesis, a great quantity of household objects inscribed with devotional texts also survive from early modern Italy. These include an array of ceramics and household boxes, ranging in size from *cofanetti* to *cassoni*. Many of these objects are inscribed with short salutations to the Virgin Mary in the form of 'Ave' or 'Ave Maria' (Figures 6.1 and 6.2), while others present slightly longer invocations to Mary, such as two *cuir-bouilli* leather boxes inscribed 'O Maria Mater Dei Memento Mei' (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). An even greater number of household objects are embellished with decorative versions of the Sacred Monogram of Christ, including luminous maiolica and glassware, their metallic lustre drawing attention to the Name of God, as well as humbler slipware ceramics (Figures 6.5-6.10). The Sacred Monogram was also applied to *cassoni*, objects often linked to the ritual of marriage and the establishment of the home (Figure 6.11).[717] *Cassoni* inlaid with luxury woods and bone survive from the Veneto; many of these examples functioned both as objects for storage and objects of daily entertainment, with a chessboard decorating the top. The *IHS* displayed in the underside of the lid in many cases could provoke a moment of meditation upon the Name of Jesus when opened (Figure 6.12).

Documentation, including inventories, often excludes information about inscriptions on objects and historical sources do not illuminate how devotees engaged with these simple

[717] Deborah Krohn, 'Rites of Passage: Art Objects to Celebrate Betrothal, Marriage and the Family', in *Art and Love*, ed. by Bayer, 60-67.

devotional phrases. These silences make it difficult to contextualise how they were viewed and used by devotees within the home. For these reasons, these types of objects have not been included within the parameters of this thesis, but further work remains to be done on the role of devotional inscriptions on household objects. Selecting one devotional phrase to focus on, and studying its significance across a spectrum of objects, both those intended for the home and those intended for religious spaces, might provide one way to further illuminate the role of these inscriptions.

Where possible this thesis has touched upon various sensory interactions with the material text. It has considered how devotees viewed, touched, recited or sang, and even tasted material prayers, but more research is required to develop a more complete understanding of the sensory nature of interaction with inscribed objects. The oral and auditory aspects of many of the rubricated prayers would be a fruitful avenue for future research. Scholarly interest in the oral culture of early modern Italy has been expanding in recent years.[718] It would be beneficial to understand how popular prayer texts, particularly rhyming ones, were transmitted orally within communities and from region to region. Further, many of the prayers contain instructions indicating that the texts themselves as well as supplementary or substitute prayers should be read aloud to activate their efficacy. Following the precedent of Flora Dennis's study of a group of knives inscribed with the verses and musical notations of the Benediction and the Grace to be sung before and after the meal, the relationship between the inscriptions and musical verses on many inscribed household objects also requires further research (Figure 6.13).[719]

Where previous scholarship has emphasised the regulation of material prayers employed in an unorthodox manner, as well as ecclesiastical concerns regarding the superstitious and magical misuse of holy words and prayers, this thesis has instead tried to understand these practices and objects through the eyes of ordinary devotees. Viewing archival sources, such as trial records, through a different lens can help scholars to bring the voices of early modern devotees to life. The ordinary and extraordinary stories of many devotees in early modern Italy remain untold.

The printed paper single-leaf prayers and short devotional pamphlets present another line for future research. While many do not contain printer's information, a city of publication, or even a date, information might be gleaned from these types of documents if they are gathered together and studied as a group. A material analysis of these prayers, considering similarities of typeface, watermarks, and related woodcuts might allow scholars to determine areas of

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[718] See the outputs of the research project based at the University of Leeds, *Italian Voices: Oral Culture, Manuscript and Print in Early Modern Italy* (2011-2015), funded by the European Research Council, for increasing interest in the relationships between oral and written culture.

[719] Flora Dennis, 'Scattered Knives and Dismembered Song: Cutlery, Music, and the Rituals of Dining', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), 156-84; see also: Deborah Howard, 'Plate 24. Four knives inscribed with musical notation, 16th century', in *Madonnas and Miracles*, ed. by Corry, Howard, and Laven, 20-21.

production and who was printing, selling, and acquiring these objects. The work of Rosa Salzburg on the creation and dissemination of cheap print in Venice and Tessa Watt's study of English printed devotional materials might serve as useful models for the future analysis of cheap devotional print in other cities and across early modern Italy.[720]

Final Words

During the research and writing of this thesis, a series of earthquakes ravaged the Italian peninsula, particularly in the mountainous regions in the Marche, Abruzzo, Umbria, and Lazio, resulting in great loss of life and damage. The Marchigian province of Ascoli Piceno was particularly affected, including the towns where many doorway inscriptions discussed in Chapter Four are preserved, particularly the town of Arquata del Tronto and its environs.[721] While it is still unclear which buildings with early modern inscriptions survived the destruction, these natural disasters emphasise the important work that must be done to document the traces of early modern life preserved on and in buildings, especially those not under the protection of cultural institutions.

The devastation wrought by the earthquakes serves not only as a poignant reminder of the fragility of human life and cultural patrimony, but also illustrates why early modern Italians placed their faith in objects inscribed with the words of Saint Agatha's prayer, carried the 'BREVE Contro i Tuoni Tremuoti e pestilenze' on their persons, or pasted the woodcut of the 'S.S. CROCE SOPRA LA MORTE INPROVVISA ED IL TERREMOTTO' onto the walls of their homes.

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[720] Salzberg; Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[721] Anna Lombardi, Agnese Ananasso, Katia Riccardi, and Simona Casalini, 'Terremoto 6.0 devasta il centro Italia. Centinaia fra morti e feriti. Si scava fra le macerie. Amatrice, Accumoli e Arquata i centri più colpiti', *La Repubblica* (24 August 2016) <http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/08/24/news/sisma_del_6_4_nella_notte_vicino_perugia_avvertito_in_tutto_il_centro_italia-146516780/> [accessed 26 July 2017]; 'Terremoto 30 ottobre, ad Arquata e ad Amatrice crollano i pochi edifici che avevano resistito alla scossa del 24 agosto', *HuffPost* (30 October 2016), <http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2016/10/30/terremoto-arquata-del-tronto-30-ottobre_n_12711918.html> [accessed 26 July 2017]; Elisabetta Polovedo, 'Powerful Earthquake in Italy Kills at Least 241 and Shatters Towns', *The New York Times* (24 August 2016) <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/25/world/europe/italy-earthquake.html> [accessed 4 August 2017].

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Material Prayers: The Use of Text in Early Modern Italian Domestic Devotions

VOLUME TWO:
Supplemental Materials

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Tables

TABLE 1: Inscriptions on Rings

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	Image	Description	Museum	Accession #	Date	Place Made	Other info	Materials & meaning	Inscription	John 1 (Et verbum)	Luke 4 (Jesus Autem)	S.Agatha	yHs/ IHS	Other Names of Jesus	Ave Maria	Other	Name of Owner
2		Silver ring, the flat oval bezel with line edging, inlaid with the Sacred Monogram (the back of the H forming a cross between two stars), the oblong hoop panelled in lozenges and rosettes; all in niello	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F417	15th Century	Italy	Bought in Naples; 16.71 mm internal ring diameter; 11.28 g weight	silver, niello	"yhs +"				1				
3		Silver ring with an applied square bezel engraved with the sacred monogram and a cross. The flat hoop is inscribed in lombardic characters.	Victoria & Albert Museum	710-1871	15th Century	Italy	Height: 2.2 cm, Width: 2.3 cm, Depth: 0.9 cm	silver	"IHS +" on bezel; The flat hoop is inscribed in lombardic characters "+HCER + S + DIA + BIZ + SA + SI +" (variation Contra Pestem) and on the inside "ABIZ + SAN + HCBERBN" (part of the Zacharias blessing)				1			1	
4		Nielloed gold signet ring with an octagonal bezel set with an onyx intaglio of a lion rampant with the initial 'P' behind.	Victoria & Albert Museum	M.190-1975	14th century? (intaglio 3rd century)	Italy	Height: 2.5 cm, Width: 2.2 cm, Depth: 1.3 cm	gold, niello, onyx	*"+IN MANUS: TUAS: DOMINE: COMENDO: SPIRITUM: MEUM."*							1	
5		Gold signet ring with an oval bezel set with a Roman jasper intaglio with a fede device and initials	Victoria & Albert Museum	M.275-1962	14th century? (intaglio 3rd century)	Italy	Height: 2.4 cm, Width: 2.6 cm, Depth: 1.9 cm. Said to have been found in the church of Santa Maria in Comedia, Suessa Arunca (near Naples), in 1845.	Engraved gold and red jasper	*"CCPS/ IPD: "SIGILLU. THOMASII.DE. ROGERII S.DESUESSA" ["The seal of Thomas de Rogerii, priest of Suessa]"; "+ ET VERBU: CARO. FACTU: E:ET ABITANT:/ NOB/ ["and the word was made Flesh and he dwelt among us' John, 1, 14]"; "+ XPS VINCIT X XPS X REGNAT X XPS: IMPERA" ["Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules"]*	1						1	1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
6		Gold signet-ring; hoop of triangular section; hollowed chased shoulders with a merchant's mark on the lower part of each. Oval bezel containing sard engraved in intaglio with a laureate imperial bust. Hoop and bezel inscribed.	British Museum	1853,0218.13	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.9 inche; Length: 0.52 inches (bezel)s Weight: 118 grains; The oval bezel containing a sard (a type of carnelian) - engraved in intaglio in the Middle Ages with an imperial bust in profile. The oval bezel is slightly raised up from the shoulders of the ring, where a merchant's mark (a cross above a circle, Fig. 10d) confirms that this ring was the property of an Italian merchant.	Gold; Sard (Carnelian)	The hoop of triangular section is engraved with the lombardic inscription: + IESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIUM ILLORUM IBAT' IESUS NOMINE TUO S(ALUS). ('But He passing through the midst of them went His way'), Luke IV: 30 together with the phrase, 'Jesus your name is sacred'. Also inscribed: +NOARIU DE PETRUCIU MERCATAT' (sic) ('Noarius of Petrucius, merchant).		1			1			1
7		Gold ring, the rectangular bezel engraved with a merchant's mark and inscribed in lombardic characters	Victoria & Albert Museum	88-1899	14th century	Italy?	Height: 2.1 cm, Width: 2.3 cm, Depth: 1.1 cm	Gold	+ GALGANO D'CICHO'; and '+ IESUS. AUTEM. TRANSIENS. PER. MEDIUM. ILLORUM. IBAT.' 'but he (Jesus) passing through the midst of them went His way'		1						1
8		Gold signet-ring; faceted hoop engraved with reserved inscription. Flat shoulders decorated with shields of arms: paly. Octagonal bezel engraved with same shield, but oval, surrounded by inscription with words separated by quatrefoils. Nielloed ornament beneath bezel facets.	British Museum	1872,0604.377	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 1 inches; Length: 0.63 inches (bezel); Weight: 245 grains	Gold; niello	"VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST E/T ABITABIT' IN NOBIS IhOANES." & "IhOANES DE COLTARIO".	1							1
9		Gold signet-ring; hoop terminating in oval panels with scrolls and engraved with inscription; octagonal bezel set with garnet engraved with shield of arms: two bars and inscription.	British Museum	AF.584	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.8 inches; Length: 0.53 inches (bezel); Weight: 77 grains	Gold; garnet	"MERTE M..CT M..ORT.RE MOR." &"AVIERI DI LAURIA VERBUM"	1		1					1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
10		Amulet-ring; gold; engraved; hoop of triangular section with reserved inscription and projecting rosettes decorated with floral scrolls; decorated panels flanking projecting oval bezel set with cameo sard depicting three-quarter view head of genius or cherub.	British Museum	AF.1010	14th century ring; 16th century intaglio	Italy	Diameter: 1.1 inches; Length: 0.34 inches (bezel); Weight: 37 grains	Gold; Sard (Carnelian)	"+IEXUS/AUTEM T/RANSIENS/ILUI/IEXUS AUTEML/TRANS/IENS LL" with rosettes		1						
11		Gold amulet-ring; projecting oval bezel set with "toadstone"; thin hoop of triangular section with raised rosette at back and on each shoulder, where there are also panels of engraved conventional ornament. Engraved reserved inscription with rosettes between words on two outer faces and underside of bezel.	British Museum	AF.1023	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 1.12 inches; Length: 0.53 inches (bezel); Weight: 72 grains	Gold; toadstone (fossilised fish tooth)	hoop: "+IEXVS AVTEN TRANSIENS PER MED/IUN ILLORUN IBAT ET VERBUM CARO" & under bezel "H[F]ACTUN[M] EST ET"	1	1						
12		Amulet-ring; gold; engraved; flat hoop thickening towards pyramidal bezel set with very pointed diamond; reserved inscription interspersed with rosettes on hoop.	British Museum	AF.1011	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.98 inches; Weight: 90 grains	Gold; diamond	IEXUS*AUTEN*TRANSIEN S*PER*MEDIUN*ILLOR		1						
13		Finger-ring; gold; hoop inscribed along both sides of a central rib; shoulders with tear-drop shapes; octagonal bezel with antique nicolo intaglio of a classical head and inscription around the edge.	British Museum	1917,0407.1	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.9 inches	Gold; nicolo intaglio	hoop " + MENTEM:SANTAM:SPONT ANEVM:HONOREM:DEO:P ATRIE:LIBER" & intaglio " ANVLO:PIERELLV:PISANO "			1					1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
14		Gold signet-ring; in form of bow-ring. Octagonal bezel is engraved in intaglio with shield of arms: per bend, column and three bends, for Donati(?), surmounted by crest and helm with mantling. Engraved with inscription; pearled border; nielloed reserved inscription around hoop with rosettes between several words. Extended back of ring decorated with column between confronting wyverns and trefoil between leaves, all on ground of niello. Interior of hoop engraved with column upon mount cut by scythe with handle upwards and surmounted by inscribed scroll.	British Museum	AF.568	14th century	Venice, Italy	Found in Aegium, Greece; Diameter 1.5 inches; Diameter (bezel) 0.54 inches	Gold; niello	hoop: "+ IEXUS*AUTEM*TRANSIEN S*PER MEDIUM ILLORUM*IBANT*ELOI"; interior of hoop: "AIDA MEDIO[?]" & bezel: " S[IGNUM] DE ZENO DONAT[I]" with rosettes		1					1	1
15	NO IMAGE	Silver signet-ring; hoop engraved with two lines of Gothic style inscription in niello. Oval bezel engraved with monogram.	British Museum	AF.605	15th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.88 inches (hoop); Length: 0.77 inches (bezel)	silver, niello	IESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS PER MEDIUM ILLORUM IBAT.		1						
16		Finger-ring; gold; inscribed hoop of triangular section terminating in monsters' heads; two claws remaining of bezel.	British Museum	AF.877	14th century	Volterra, Italy	Found in Volterra; Diameter: 0.88 inches; Weigh 30 grains	gold	+ AVE MARIA GRAT/IA PLENA DOMIN						1		
17	NO IMAGE	Finger-ring; silver; inscribed thick flat hoop; raised foliated bezel with coral stud revolving on pin.Inscription in Gothic script	British Museum	1872,0604.966	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 1.04 inches; purchased from Alessandro Castellani	gold, coral	AVE MARIA GRACIA PLE						1		
18	NO IMAGE	Finger-ring; gold; engraved; inscribed hoop with letters with concave panels, quatrefoils between words; pyramidal bezel decorated with foliate designs.	British Museum	AF.879	15th Century	Arezzo, Italy	Diameter: 0.94 inches; Weight 108 grai	gold	AVE MARIA G						1		
19		Silver signet-ring; hoop of triangular section with ribbed shoulders; circular bezel with flat centre engraved with lion passant; inscribed bevelled edge.	British Museum	AF.572	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.84 inches (hoop); Diameter: 0.54 inches (bezel)	silver	AVE MRA.						1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
20		Gold signet ring, the high bezel with four claws holding an oval amethyst intaglio depicting the figure of Fortuna (second century B.C),	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F389	Late 14th century/ first half 15th century	Veneto-Byzantine	This ring is part of a collection of 'Veneto-Byzantine' jewellery found in 1840 in the Castle of Chalcis on the Greek island of Euboea (known as Negroponte by the Venetians). Euboea was one of the most important Venetian colonies in the Aegean before it was captured by the Turks in 1470. This jewellery, hidden by the rich inhabitants of the island at the threat of invasion, exemplifies the unique and elegant tastes of these Venetian expatriates. 17.53 mm internal ring diameter; 7.13 g weight	gold; amethyst	ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST ET' translating, 'and the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us' (St.John I, v.14)	1							
21		Finger-ring; silver; engraved; decorated shoulders; oval bezel depicts cross and three nails; sacred monogram; inscription round border.	British Museum	AF.943	16th century	Italy	meter: 1.14 inches; Length 0.7 inches (be	silver	" GIRONIMO GODO" & "IHS" with cross and 3 nails on bezel				1				1
22		Finger-ring; silver; engraved; circular bezel with sacred monogram upon hatched background.	British Museum	AF.894	15th Century	Italy	Diameter: 0.9 inches; Length: 0.6 inches (bezel)	silver	ihs				1				
23	NO IMAGE	Gold signet-ring; inscribed letter on each shoulder; octagonal bezel engraved with shield of arms: six-point star, helmet and crest a goat's head; Gothic inscriptions on front and back of bezel.	British Museum	AF.592	15th century	italy	Diameter: 0.98 inches (hoop): Length: 0.55 inches (bezel); Weight 168 grains	gold	front of bezel: " RUSSUS DE DIGNO" & back of bezel: "ihs"				1				1
24	NO IMAGE	Gold signet-ring; oval bezel engraved in intaglio with shaped shield barry of hurts(?), helmet and demi-eagle; front and back of bezel inscribed.	British Museum	AF.600	14th century	Italy	Diameter: 0.98 inches (hoop); Length: 0.62 inches (bezel); Weight 278 grains	gold	front of bezel- illegible; & back of bezel: "yhs"				1				?
25		Bronze devotional ring of externally fluted hoop; 16 transverse flutes, every other one engraved with a letter of the inscription alternating with a spray of palm leafage	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F757	4th/15th centu	Italy?	17.12 mm internal ring diameter; 1.17 g weight	bronze	Ave Maria" in Gothic characters alternating with a spray of palm leafage						1		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
26		Silver ring, the hoop is decorated with a ribbon in niello and inscribed AVE MARIA	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F760	15th century	Italy	Bought in Rome; 16.31 mm internal ring diameter; 3.37 g weight	silver	AVE MARIA						1		
27		Silver child's charm, the hoop inscribed on the outside in niello with talismanic names	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F759	15th Century	Italy?	11 mm internal ring diameter; 1.1 g weigh	silver, niello	"+ISAI +IESV +EMANVE"L					1			
28		Bronze-gilt signet ring, the bezel with a single-masted ship and inscribed with the owner's name	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F401	4th/15th centu	Italy	Bought in Rome; 20.78 mm internal ring diameter; 13.48 g weight	gilt bronze	MAG.ITIATRI and an abbreviation of IESUS AUTEM TRANSIENS (Luke 4, v. 30, 'But passing through the midst of them he went away')		1						1
29		Silver signet ring, circular bezel with a shield of arms between the letters M and A, a circular hoop with inscriptions in Lombardic letters	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F403	14th century	Italy	Bought in Rome; 19.96 mm internal ring diameter; 12.44 g weight	silver	shield of arms between the letters M and A, a circular hoop with inscriptions RESPICE.FINEM.SAPIENS.E STO and SI DEUS. PRO NO/BIS.QUIS.CON [TRA NOS] (If God is for us, who shall be against us? Study your end: be wise)							1	1
30		Cabalistic ring: Silver ring with inscriptions on the circular hoop.	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F367	4th/15th centu	Italy?	Bought in Rome; 17.53 mm internal ring diameter; 6.3 g weight	silver	The first half of the inscription stands for "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen" (In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost); the second half has not been explained								
31		Gold ring, the square bezel enamelled with white on black leaf moulding and set with a pink topaz or ruby (?), at the back of this is the Sacred Monogram IHS, surmounted by a cross and three nails in black and white, the hoop chased in corded work with scrolls and trefoil and enamelled black and white on the shoulders	Ashmolean Museum	WA1897.CDEF.F47	16th century	Italy	Bought in Florence; 12.85 mm internal ring diameter; 2.79 g weight	gold, ruby	back of the ruby is the Sacred Monogram IHS, surmounted by a cross and three nails in black and white				1				
32		Amulet-ring; silver; inscribed; oval bezel set with yellow marble cameo depicting mask	British Museum	1865,1203.34	16th century	Italy	Diameter: 2.34 cm(0.92 in) Length (bezel): 1.65 cm (0.65 in)	Silver, marble cameo	AGIOS+OTEOS+ATANATO (God is holy and immortal)							1	
33									Totals	5	8	2	7	2	6	6	11

TABLE 2: Exterior Domestic Inscriptions in Ascoli Piceno

Note: This table only records pre-1600 inscriptions and those that are not dated. In an effort to focus on the domestic role of inscriptions, it does not record inscriptions on churches or known public buildings. (Text in [brackets] has been expanded and V has been converted to U when appropriate).

	Inscription *(Most inscriptions appear over exterior doorways unless otherwise noted)*	**Current Location**
1	DIFFICILE PIACERE MULTIS	Palazzo dei Capitani
2	PER VIAM SALUTA VERTIS MDXXV (1525)	Via delle Canterine, 1
3	HUMILITAS DEO HOMINIBUSQUE PLACET	Via delle Canterine, 7
4	LIGUA IGNIS EST (over window)	Via dei Sabini, 5
5	SERA IN FUNDO PARCIMONIA	Via Vidacilio, 4
6	1582/6 OMNIU[M] RER[UM] VICISSITUDO EST	Via Vidacilio, 10
7	HOMO AD MORTEM **IHS** DIES AUTEM AD FINEM	Via Benedetto Cairoli, 8
8	PENZA P[ER] TE IUDICA ME	Rua della Colombella
9	IN QUA MESURA MESI FUERITIS REMETIETUR	Corso di Sotto/Corso Patrioti Piceni, 58
10	INIURIA BENEFICIUM	Via dei Saladini, 2/4
11	MA LASSATE PUR DI CHI PUR DIR VOLE (interior doorway)	Via dei Soderini, 2
12	AMICITIA ONIBUS REB ANTEPONENDA	Via del Lago, 12
13	GLORIA ET DIVITIE IN DOMO (over window)	Via del Lago, 12
14	DUM FATA SINUT VIVITE LAETI (over window)	Via del Lago, 12
15	VIRTUS VIRTUTE SUPERATUR	Via Carboneschi, 18
16	MENTEM HABEAS VATRI POLIPI	Via delle Torri, 14
17	HIC HOSPITA HAUD HOSTIS	Corso Vittorio Emanuele, 2
18	NEMO SUA SORTE CONT.	Via Bonaccorsi, 22
19	IUSTI IN PERPETUUM VIVENT	Rua degli Albanesi, 1
20	QUID ULTRA BENE VIVERE ET LAETARI	Via Tornasacco, 27
21	IN SUDORE VULTUS TUI VESCERIS PANE. MDXXVI	Via Pretoriana, 45
22	FAC BONUM ET NON TIMEAS ANO S MDXXV (1525) **IHS** (In sunburst with cross above H)	Via Quinto Curzio Rufo, 13
23	OCIOR MATURATA VELOCITAS	Via Antonio Orsini, 9
24	HAEC EST PORTA PARADISI 1519	Corso Mazzini, 313
25	IHS QUOD TIBI NON VIS ALTERI FECISSE CAVETO MDLV (1555)	Corso Mazzini, 300
26	SAPIENS NEUTRI FORTUNE SUCCUMBIT	Corso Mazzini, 152
27	E RE NATA CAPITUR CONSILIUM	Corso Mazzini, 170
28	DISCE PATI SI MAGNA QUERIS	Corso Mazzini, 17

29	NON OMNIA POSSUMUS OMNESS MDXXVI	Corso Mazzini, 192
30	CIÒ CHE PUÒ L'HUOM FA QUI, FORTUNA A VOGLIA	Corso Mazzini, 260
31	VIRTUS VIC[NC]IT O[M]NIA (interior entryway)	Corso Mazzini, 275
32	VEDI QUAL BRIAREO, TOCCA QUAL ARGO	Corso Mazzini, 264
33	IO B BAIARDUS PARM. GUB VE MUSAE ET FURCENSIS INSTAURATOR 1568	Via d'Argillano
34	CHI PO NON VO CHI VO NON PO CHI SA NON FA CHI FA NON SA E COSÌ NEL MUNDO MAL VA MDXXVIII (1528)	Rua Lunga, 19
35	O BONE IESU **IHS** ILLUMINA OCULOS MEOS *[Lunette above may postdate inscription?= P. Gismundo Palucci (kneeling in prayer with rosary); IHS (in sunburst); (coat of Arms); S. IGNATY 1635 S. FRANCISCO SAVERI (praying); NELL. CONPAG DI GESU]*	Rua delle Conce, 9
36	CHI MORTE TEME DE VITA NON È DEGNO	Corso Mazzini, 19
37	DISCE PATI. SI MAGNA QUERIS (over window)	Corso Mazzini, 19
38	LA VERITÀ NULLA MENZOGNA FRODI	Corso Mazzini, 19
39	PURGUM ARTIS LANA GENTIS (over window)	House in Borgo Solestà
40	SOLUS DEUS SANAT LANGUORES NOSTROS	Corso Mazzini, 64
41	PALUS MELLIOR (interior entryway)	Corso Mazzini, 105
42	MEDICUS CAMERAE. REGINAE CATHOLICAE (over window)	Corso Mazzini, 66
43	CAESAR FERREUS (over window)	Corso Mazzini, 112
44	NON OMNIA POSSVMS OMNES MDXXV	Corso Mazzini, 192
45	PETRUSANTE CAPUD. AQNSIS CANC. AESCULAN ME F. MDXXIV	Corso Mazzini, 262
46	UNUM COLE DEUM	Corso Mazzini, 298
47	IACOBUS IHS TURRERI	Corso Mazzini, 333
48	ANTE OMNIA COLE NUMEN (interior entryway)	Corso Patrioti Piceni, 58
49	IO. MARIA SPI. MDXI (interior entryway)	Piazza Arringo
50	PAULUS D. PERLEONIBUS ROMANUS (over window)	Piazza S. Gregorio, 2
51	ADIUTORIUM NOSTRUM IN NOMINE DOMINI QUI FECIT COELUM ET TERRAM	Rua della Rocca, 2
52	MARIANUS ALVITRETIS FUNADVIT. MDXLVI	Via degli Alvitreti, 10
53	UN GIORNO VIEN CHE TUTTI GLI ALTRI AVANZA	Via d'Ancaria, 52
54	NON SENZA FATIGA ~	Via Annibal Caro, 44
55	GRATIUS AGIMUS DOMINO.MDXX (over window)	Via Bonaccorsi, 11
56	SIGISMUNDUS (on the wood door itself with images of *Annunciation* carved on lintel)	Via Bonaccorsi, 13
57	VICTRIS FORTUNAE PATIENTIA (door in hallway)	Via Bonaccorsi, 10

58	MANE MENTE REPOSITUM (interior entryway)	Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte 24
59	E GURGITE VASTO EVASIT MUS DUCE VIRTUTE (interior entryway)	Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte, 24
60	**IHS** (In sunburst with cross above H) M. SO. 7. MANET. ALTA. MENTE. REPOSITVM ADIS DE GEATRE	Palazzo Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte, 26
61	(Circular Seal with pentagram) In centre IESVS+ (around) +- AGIOS (in points of pentagram)- O THEOS (around pentagram) – IN. SOLO. FIL[IO]. P[AT]RIS O CO[N]FERENTIS O PRO GENTE O INCAR[N]ATIONE O SPIRITVS. S[AN]CTI ≡ (façade in a pentagram)	Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte, 24-26
62	**IHS** (In sunburst with cross above H) FRANCISCUS CALVUS CANONICVS ASCULAVS MD 7ET DIE V IAU RII (1507 DAY 5 JANUARY)	Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte, 24
63	IL MORIR CO HONOR VITA RENOVA MDXLVII	Via Benedetto Cairoli, 4
64	IOANNE BAPTISTA CARPANUS PRAEPOSIT V.S. S. MART. MDCL – FRANCICSUS CARPANUS MDLXX	Via Candido Augusto Vecchi, 6
65	.MEDIO. POSUIT. DEUS. O[MN]IA. CAMPO	Via Centini Piccolomini, 26
66	PROTEGAT NOMEN DEI IACOB 1574	Via dei Conti, 10
67	. NON. FU. MAI. TARDE. GRATIE. DEVINE	Via Costanza Mazzoni, 15
68	IN TE D[OMI]NE SPERAVI NON CONFVNDAR IN E[T]ERNVM	Via Costanzo Mazzoni, 3
69	SOLI DEO HONOR ET GLORIA 1657	Via Erasmo Mari, 84
70	IUSTUS UT PALMA FLOREBIT (over window)	Via del Lago, 10
71	NON SEMPER GLADIO SED SEMPER SERVITIO VINCIT AMICUS (over window)	Via del Lago, 10 -12
72	AMICITIA OMNIBUS REBUS ANTEPONENDA (over window)	Via del Lago, 10
73	VIRTUTIS PRAEMIA SOLI DEO DEBENTUR	Via Manilia, 21
74	CIRCA DIFFICILE VIRTUS	Via Orsini, 12
75	VIRTUS IN MEDIOCRITATE	Via Orsini
76	ROBERTUS SANCTUCTIUS	Via Orsini, 17
77	OCIOR MATURATA VELOCITAS	Via Orsini, 17
78	ALEXANDER BAPTISTA DE IANNELLA. MDXII	Via Ottaviano Ianella, 16
79	EX DEO ET LABOR	Via Pretoriana, 43
80	DIMIDIA PARS PRO TOTO (over window)	Via Sabini, 7
81	IN SUDORE VULTUS TUI (between 2 carved saints)	Via dei Soderini, 38
82	QUI TIMENT DOMINUM VERUM (over window)	Via dei Soderini, 25
83	VIRTUTIS AMORES (over window)	Via dei Soderini, 25
84	SPERNUNT TIMORES (over window)	Via dei Soderini, 25

85	DE MANDOCCHIS (over window)	Via dei Saladani, 2
86	BOS LASSUS FORTIBUS TIGIT PEDEM	Via dei Saladini, 2/4
87	CHI ALTRI TRIBULA A XE NON DA PACE	Via delle Torri, 33
88	DE NON POTERE ME SCUSA (over window)	Via delle Torri, 33
89	PET. CAMAIANUS EPS. ET PRIN. ASCUL.	Via delle Torri, 10
90	SUPER CHENICE NON SEDENDUM	Via Vidacilio, 1
91	LA TURVINADOLAMAFA (LA VIRTÙ DONA LA FAMA]	Via delle Canterine
92	IN TE DNE COFIDO M D (1500)	Via dei Soderini, 38
93	NON CONFUNDAR I[N] ETERNVM XXX9	Via dei Soderini, 40
94	**IHS** (*with* + *over H*)	Via Annibal Caro, 36
95	DIES PARENS ET NOVERCA 1523	Via delle Torri, 14
96	UNICA. SPES. HOMINUM. EST. SALVANTIS. NOMEN. IESU. **IHS** (In sunburst with cross above H)	Via Quinto Curzio Rufo, 26
97	PETRVS FERREUS MD VIIII (1509)	Via Benedetto Cairoli, 10
98	**IHS** (cross over H) MARIA	, 11
99	**yHs** (cross over h)	, 11
100	MATER DIVINAE GRATIAE (above painting) AVE ~ MARIA ~ GRATI (above window across street)	Via Costanzo Mazzoni, 11
101	**IHS** (In sunburst with cross above H)	, 21
102	**IHS** (Cross above H)	, 30
103	VIRTVTE POSVERE DEI SVDORE PARADAM	, 9
104	AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINVS	Via Pretoriana 47
105	AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINVS TECVM	Via Tornasacco, 10
106	PHYLOS ROVERLLA (over upper window)	Palazzetto Caffarelli
107	PHYLOS ROVERELLA EPISCOPUS ET PRINCEPS ASCULANUS (over lower window)	Palazzetto Caffarelli
108	MAPHEUS SALVION	Unknown
109	IOHANNES MARIA SPINOLA (Above 4 windows on the first floor)	Palazzo Panichi
110	IOHANNES MARIA SPINOLA. MDXLIIII (over interior doorway)	Palazzo Panichi
111	IOHANNES MARIA SPINOLA (over interior doorway)	Palazzo Panichi
112	PETRUSANTES CAPUDAQUENSIS CANONICUS AESCULANUS ME FECIT. MDXXIII	Corso Mazzini, 262
113	THOMAS ANTONIVS MALA SPINA (over window)	Via Malaspina, Palazzo Malaspina
114	VIRTUTEM POSUERE DEI SUDORE PARANDAM	Via d'Argillano, 9
115	LINGUA IGNIS EST (over window)	Via dei Sabini, 5
116	PRAESIDIUM ET DULCE DECUS (over window)	Via dei Sabini, 8
117	QUISTO POZIO A FATU FARE IOVANNE DE	Via Antonio Ceci, 7

	PELA (on well in garden)	
118	PETRUS FERREUS. MDVIIII	Via Carioli, 10
119	HYLARIUS TULLIUS (upside-down)	Rua della Campana
120	QUI SI PONE LA CHARITÀ	Borgo Solestà
121	GIOVANNI FRANCESCO CERRI	Via dei Soderini, 44
122	AVE MARIA (interior entryway)	Via dei Soderini, 16
123	IN QUA MENSURA MENSI FUERITIS REMETIETUR (interior door)	Corso di Sotto, 58
124	HIPOLITO VALOMEO (interior entryway)	Via Mailia, 13
125	INIUSTI PRAECIPITABUNT (interior entryway)	Via del Lago, 12
126	GLORIA ET DIVITIE IN DOMO (over window)	Via del Lago, 12
127	ALPHONSO MASSIARELLO	Rua David d'Ascoli, 2
128	SOLO DEO HONOR ET GLORIA 1588 (over window)	Via dei Tibaldeschi, 20
129	PERFICE DOMINE DOMUM ISTAM QUAM AEDIFICAS VIRTUTE TUA. MDLXXVI	Via Luigi Dari, 8
130	A DEO BONA OMNIA (interior entryway)	Via del Teatro, 4
131	INNOCENTO ANTONIO (interior entryway)	Via del Teatro, 4
132	CAMILLO MANDOCHO	Via della Fortezza, 8
133	QUID ULTRA? BENE VIVERE ET LAETARI	Via Tornasacco, 27
134	HOC OPUS FIERI IUSSIT ANNIS TRIBUS	Rua della Canonica, 13
135	TIBERII IUSSU CAFARELLO SANGUINE CRETI CANONICI ASCULEI CONDITA PORTA FUIT	Rua della Canonica, 17
136	ANTONIO MIGLIANO (over window)	Rua Pietro della Scala, 12
137	ANTONIO MIGLIANO (interior entryway)	Via Bonaccorsi, 11
138	NEMO SUA SORTE CONTENTUS	Via Bonaccorsi, 22A
139	FRANCISCHINO BIANCHINO (interior doorway, first floor)	Via Luigi Mercantini, 6
140	SIGISMUNDUS DONATUS EPISCOPUS ET PRINCEPS ASCULANUS	Corso Vittorio Emanuele, 2
141	FRANCISCUS CARPENUS. MDLXX (interior doorway, first floor)	Via Candido Augusto Vecchi, 6
142	DOMINE DA PACIEM IN DIEBUS NOSTRIS	Villa Massei-Serianni, Castagneti (n. 39)

	LOST INSCRIPTIONS in Ascoli Piceno**	
143	F. IO. BATT. CALDARARIUS VICENTINUS DOMUNCULAM HANC DIRUTAM ET OLLAPS IN HANC COMMODORIEM ET URBANIOREM FORMAM SUMPTIBUS PROPRIIS REDIGI CURAVIT. ANNO DOMINI MDCXXXIX	The stone was lost after demolition of the house in Rua Cisterna.
144	APES MEL ET FEL	unknown
145	CHRISTUS VINCIT CHRISTUS REGNANT CHRISTUS IMPERAT	unknown
146	CUSTODIAT DOMINUS EXITUM ET INTROTUM TUUM	unknown
147	DIIS MELIORA PIIS	unknown
148	EST BENE VIVERE NUNQUAM MORI	unknown
149	EX NOCTE CAPITUR CONSILIUM	unknown
150	HABEBIS MULTA BONA SI TIMUERIS DEUM. MDLIII	unknown
151	HUMILIBUS DAT GRATIAM	unknown
152	IN MANU LINGUAE VITA ET MORS	unknown
153	IN PARVIS QUIES	unknown
154	IUSTUS ES DOMINE ET RECTUM JUDICIUM TUUM	unknown
155	LUX VERA LUCET IN TE	unknown
156	MINUS FORTUNA IN PARVIS FURIT	unknown
157	NEMO CONFIDET NIMIUM SECUNDIS	unknown
158	NIHIL MELIUS QUAM TIMOR ANIMI	unknown
159	NIHIL MELIUS QUOD TIMERE DOMINUM	unknown
160	NOLI ULTRA CREPIDAM IUDICARE	unknown
161	NON E VIRTU CHE POVERTA NON GUASTI	unknown
162	NON NOBIS DOMINE NON NOBIS SED NOMINI TUO DA GLORIAM	unknown
163	OMNIA TEMPUS HABENT	unknown
164	PAX HUIC DOMUI	unknown
165	PRUDENTIA REGNAT	unknown
166	QUOD DEUX CONIUXIT HOMO NON SEPARET	unknown
167	QUAL FARA CHE DIO VORRA	unknown
168	SALUS MEA IN TE DOMINE	unknown
169	SANTUS SPIRITUS DA NOBIS GRATIAM	unknown
170	SEMPER FESTINALIENTE	unknown
171	SENZA FATICA NON SI ACQUISTA	unknown
172	SI DOMINUS PRO NOBIS QUIS CONTRA NOS?	unknown
173	SI PATIENS SAPIENS	unknown
174	SUB ALA TUA	unknown
175	VIRTUS VINCIT	unknown
176	VIRTUS PERPETUO VIVIMUS	unknown
177	VIRTUTIS HOSTIS OTIUM	unknown
178	VITA VIGILIA EST	unknown

179	PETRUS CAMAIANUS EPISCOPUS ET PRINCEPS ASCULANUS	Prior's house in Via delle Torri, internal doorway
180	HIERONYMUS ROVERELLA EPISOPUS ET PRINCEPS ASCULANUS	Window in Episcopal Palace, in front of Palazzo Alvitreti
181	IN NOMINE IHS OMNE GENU FLECTATUR CELESTIUM TERRESTIUM ET INFERNORUM	Unknown
182	VITA ENIM VIGILIA EST	Unknown
183	QUESTA PORTA HA FACTA FARE PER MARINO DE CIMINAGA POSUIT SIBI TITULUM MDXXX	Unknown
184	IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI	Unknown
185	CORNELIUS BONAMICI	Unknown
186	AVE MARIA DOMINUS TECUM	Unknown
187	AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA	Unknown
188	PRO DOMO PRO LIBERTATE	Casa De Angelis
189	DOMI COGITA QUOD FORIS AGAS	Via dei Soderini, 6 – with two coats of arms over internal doorway, 16th century
190	UN GIORNO VIEN CHE TUTTI GLI ALTRI AVANZA MDXXXXIIII	Via d'Ancaria 3
191	IUSTI IN PERPETUUM VIVENT	Via del Lago, 12- Over well in garden of Palazzo Giacomini
192	VICTRIX FORTUNAE PATIENTIA	Unknown
193	VINCENTIUS DE GENESTRIS AROMATARIUS	Found outside farmhouse outside the Porta Romana (once owned by the Giorgi Ciccarelli family)

*These inscriptions have been transcribed from the author's fieldwork as well as from Luca Luna, *Ascoli Piceno: Guide Book*, ed. by Erminia Tosti Luna (Ascoli Piceno: D'Auria Industrie Grafiche, 2006), 122; Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 353-355.
** Records inscriptions that were once documented in Ascoli Piceno, but are now lost. These can be found in Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 356 and Serafino Castelli, *Iscrizioni sulle case ascolane del Cinquecento* (Ascoli Piceno: Centro Studi Stabiliani, 1975), xxiii-xxxi. Some inscriptions marked as lost in these two books are recorded with their current locations in other sources, so they have been removed from the 'Lost Inscription' list.

Illustrations

Introduction

Domesticating Devotional Text

Figure 0.1
Title page of *La vita e leggenda e oratione del Glorioso Santo Alovisse sora al mal caducho, al qual e da tenire in casa con gran devotione*
[Italy?: s.n., c. 1530]
Print and woodcut on paper
8 pp, 14 cm (octavo)
Yale University, Beinecke Library 2011 1343

Part I: On the Body

Chapter One

Wear it With Devotion: Physical Engagement with Material Prayers

Figure 1.1
Oratio santi Iuliani
Fourteenth century (possibly early fifteenth century)
Italy
Manuscript (ink on parchment)
17 x 25 cm (6 x 6.5 folded)
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Nuovi acquisti n. 201

Figure 1.2
El paternoster de san Giuliano
Sixteenth century
Italy
Print and woodcut on paper
Viterbo, Chiesa di S. Francesco
Image: Giulio Battelli, 'Tre "brevi" devozionali del '500. Un nuovo testo del *Pater Noster* di San Giuliano', in *Miscellanea di studi marchigiani in onore di Febo Allevi*, ed. by Gianfranco Paci (Agugliano: Bagalioni, 1987), Fig. 1

Figure 1.3
Breve found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
Late sixteenth or seventeenth century
Pressed paper image and devotional medallion in a cloth pouch
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago
Image © Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago

Figure 1.4
Portrait of a Lady
Domenico Ghirlandaio
c. 1490
Florence
Tempera and oil on panel
56.1 x 37.7 cm
Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.938
Image: ArtStor

Figure 1.5
Portrait of a Woman (La donna gravida)
Raphael Sanzio
c. 1505-1506
Italy
Oil on panel
66 x 52 cm
Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence
Image: ArtStor

Figure 1.6
Portrait of a Lady
Attributed to Lorenzo Lotto
Early sixteenth century
Italy
Oil on panel
33.3 x 27.6 cm
Worcester Art Museum, 1922.153
Image: ArtStor

Figure 1.7
Portrait of a Girl
Andrea Piccinelli
c. 1510-20
Italy
Oil on panel
47.3 x 37.5 cm
Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena,
Chigi Saracini family colllection
Image: ArtStor

Figure 1.8
Reliquary Purse
c. 1400-1500
Italy
Lampas, gold thread, taffeta, parchment, rock crystal, and glass
10 x 10 cm
Cathédrale Saint-Paul, Liège, Inventory number, 483, file 1991.04704
Image:
Belgian Art Links and Tools (BALaT), Object number 10069247
Permanent Link:
http://balat.kikirpa.be/object/10069247
[accessed 22 August 2017]

Figure 1.9
The Virgin with the Christ Child as protector or the Carmelites surrounded by scenes of miracles
c. 1500-1530
Italy
Coloured woodcut
38.7 x 27.9 cm
The British Museum, 1880,0710.655

Figure 1.9 detail
Detail of the Virgin handing out Scapulars

Figure 1.10
Revalatione fatta da nostro signore Giesù Christo à S. Elisab[e]tta à S: Brigida e a S: Metilde (*Lettera di Rivelazione di Maria Ori*) with image of the *Virgin and Child* (attached)
Late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
Manuscript (ink on paper), woodcut, glass, copper
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago
Image: © Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago

Figure 1.10 (*recto*)
Revalatione fatta da nostro signore Giesù Christo à S. Elisab[e]tta à S: Brigida e a S: Metilde (*Lettera di Rivelazione di Maria Ori)*
Late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
Ink on paper
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago
Images: © Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago

Figure 1.10 (*verso*)

Figure 1.10 details
Image of the Madonna and Child
Late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
Woodcut, copper backing with a glass cover
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago
Images: © Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago

Figure 1.11
Instructions for making an inscribed girdle for pregnant women
Bartolomeo Dal Bovo
Fifteenth century
Verona
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Verona, Biblioteca Civica, ms. 827, f. 35v
Image: Author's

Figure 1.12
Orazione della misura di Cristo
(Italy, Unsigned, c. 1500)
Print on paper
10.5 x 22.0 cm
The Morgan Library and Museum, Check List 1360, PML 16529

Figure 1.13
Oratione devotissima alla matre di Dio trovata nel S. Sepolcro di Christo
(In Barzellona, e ristampata in Venetia, co[n] licenza de' Superiori)
Undated (sixteenth century?)
Print and woodcut on paper
175 x 12 cm
Rome, Biblioteca Alessandrina, Mischellanea XIV D 27 8
Image: © By kind permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e il Turismo.

Figure 1.14
Title page of the *Legenda et oratione di Santa Margherita vergine, & martire historiata; laqual oratione legendola, ouer ponendola adosso a vna donna, che non potesse parturire, subito parturirà senza pericolo*
(Venice, Francesco de Tomaso di Salò e compagni: 1550)
Print and woodcut on paper
Octavo
London, The British Library, General Reference Collection C.38.b.34., not paginated
Image: © British Library Board

Figure 1.15
Madonna and Child with Angels
Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (lo Scheggia)
c. 1450-1480
Florence
Tempera on panel
Private Collection [Last Known: Collection H. Kisters, Kreuzlingen, Switzerland]
Image: Photo library of the Federico Zeri Foundation, n. 10956

Figure 1.15 detail

Figure 1.16
Madonna and Child with Angels
Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (lo Scheggia)
c. 1460-1480
Florence
Tempera on panel
76 x 40 cm
Private Collection [Last sold 30 June 1971, Sotheby's London, lot 102]
Image: Photo library of the Federico Zeri Foundation, n. 10967

Figure 1.17
Madonna and Child with Angels
Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (lo Scheggia)
c. 1430-1460
Florence
Tempera on panel
Private Collection, Genoa
Image: Photo library of the Federico Zeri Foundation, Image n. 10979

Figure 1.18
Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist
Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (lo Scheggia)
c. 1430-1440
Florence
Tempera on panel
40 x 30 cm
Private Collection, France
Image: Photo library of the Federico Zeri Foundation, n. 10951

Figure 1.19
Questa sie la oratione de santo Christoforo, chi la dira o fara dire con bona deuotione non morira de pestilenza
Italy
c. 1530
print and woodcut on paper
[8] p.: ill.; 14 cm (16mo)
Three small woodcuts depict: St. Sebastian, St. Christopher, and St. Roch
Beinecke Library, Yale University; Call Number: 2012 94
Image: Author's

Figure 1.20
Coronation of the Virgin
(after the *San Pantaleone Altarpiece* by Giovanni d'Alemagna and Antonio Vivarini),
in *TREATISE ON THE COMPOTUS, with other astronomical and chronological matter*
Barozzi Family?
mid fifteenth century (c. 1454)
Veneto
Illuminated miniature on parchment
British Library, Additional MS 41600, fol. 90v
Image: The Warburg Institute Iconographic Database, Hamburg stamp collection (Bibliothek Warburg)
http://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/record.php?record=6868

Figure 1.21
'Contra pestilentiam'
in *TREATISE ON THE COMPOTUS, with other astronomical and chronological matter*
Barozzi Family?
mid fifteenth century (c. 1454)
Manuscript (ink on parchment)
Veneto
British Library, Additional MS 41600, fol. 91v

Figure 1.22
Oratio ad sanctam crucem
Johannes Mercurius (Corigiensis)
(Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1499)
print on paper
29.2 x 20.2 cm (folded 4 x 6 cm)
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,Munich, Einbl. VII,23

Figure 1.23
Prayer sheet of Franciscus with the *Crucifixion*, Four Evangelists, and Seals
late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Italy
Manuscript (ink on paper)
About 45 x 31 cm
in *A Volume of Miscellaneous Drawings, formerly belonging to the Sloan Collection*
British Library, Additional MS 15505, f. 22r.

Figure 1.24
Recipe 'To protect against the bite of a rabid dog'
Notarial Register (aa.) of Rubino di Giacomo di Nicolò, c. 1482-1484
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Perugia, Archivio di Stato
Image: Roberto Abbondanza, 'Il notariato a Perugia: mostra documentaria e iconografica per il XVI Congresso nazionale del notariato (Perugia, maggio-luglio 1967)', in *Congresso nazionale del notariato*, , (Perugia, Maggio-Luglio 1967) (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale del Notariato, 1973), fig. 43.

Figure 1.25
Recipe for remedy 'To Staunch Blood' to be written on a host with diagrams
Zibaldone da Canal
Fourteenth – fifteenth century
Venice
Manuscript (nk on parchment)
Yale University, Beinecke MS 327, f. 52v
Image: Author's

Figure 1.26
Questa sie la vera Oratione de Santo Paulo
Printed for 'Magistro Jo. Angelo'
Sixteenth century
Italy
woodcut and typeset on paper
Raccolta delle stampe 'Achille Bertarelli',
Milan, S.P. 31 50

Figure 1.27
Terra sigillata
undated
Malta
Impressed clay tablets
Wellcome Library, London, Museum
No. R5309, R5303, R5300
Image M0020092

Figure 1.28
Inventory of items in satchel found by Jacobo Tinctoris
5 October 1591, 'Interview of Jacobi Tinctoris by the Inquisition'
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio (Savi all'eresia), Pezzo 68, fasc. 27, cc. 1-2
Image: Author's

Figure 1.29a & b
Bolletini found on Bernardo di Lodi
15 December 1590, 'Inquisition trial against Bernardo Lodi from Milan for *sortilegio*'
Ink on paper
Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio (Savi all'eresia), Pezzo 67, fasc. 11 (Old Index: fasc. 5)
Image Source: Author's images

Figure 1.29a (*recto* and *verso*)
Hoch est enim corpus meum cich osto enim chalis sui sanguines meum'
Paper marked attachment '#'

Figure 1.29b (*recto* and *verso*)
'Oracione devotissima qual a trovato, adosso, dei z. Piero capellano...'
Paper marked attachment '+'

Figure 1.30 (*recto* and *verso*)
Breve di S. Vincenzo Ferrerio contro la Febre, Breve Contro i Tuoni Tremuoti e pestilenze
reverse: *Responsorio di S. Antonio di Padova*
Sixteenth – seventeenth century
Italy
Print and woodcut on paper
11 x 9.5 cm (11 x 4 cm folded)
Milan, Civica Raccolta Stampe A. Bertarelli, S.P. pp 25 172

Figure 1.31 (*recto* and *verso*)
Questo è quel gran secreto di esser sicuro à tempo di peste
quarter folio
c. 1575
Print and woodcut on paper
March 1575, Inquisition trial of Pietro de Faris for printing prayers against the plague without a license'
Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio (Savi all'eresia), pezzo 39, fasc. 14
Images: Author's

Figure 1.32
Questo è quel gran secreto di esser sicuro à tempo di peste with prayers to Saint Roch and Saint Martha
half folio
c. 1575
March 1575 'Inquisition trial of Pietro de Faris for printing prayers against the plague without a license'
Print on paper
Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio (Savi all'eresia), pezzo 39, fasc. 14
Image: Author's

Figure 1.33
Oratione da dirsi nel tempo della Peste
Sixteenth century
Ascoli Piceno, Italy
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Archivio di Stato di Ascoli Piceno, Archivio Sgariglia, Cassetto V, Fascicolo 4, G
Image: Author's

Chapter Two

The Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus

Figure 2.1
IHS Paper Sheet
Late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
5 x 7.2 cm
Woodcut on paper
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago
Image: Donato Labate, 'Documenti cartacei tra le mummie della cripta cimiteriale della chiesa di S. Paolo di Roccapelago-Pievepelago (MO)', *Quarderni Estensi*, 4 (2012), 264.

Figure 2.2
IHS Medallion (colour); front and back (black and white)
Reverse: Marian Monogram
Late sixteenth – early seventeenth century
Found in the crypt of the Chiesa di San Paolo Apostolo
Bronze
1.98 cm
Roccapelago di Pievepelago, Museo delle Mummie di Roccapelago

Colour image: Author's
Black and white images: Courtesy of Mirko Traversari

Figure 2.3 and detail
San Bernardino Preaching in the Campo of Siena
Sano di Pietro
1445
Siena
Tempera on panel
162 x 102 cm
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena
Image: © 2016. Photo Opera Metropolitana Siena/Scala, Florence

Figure 2.4
Wafer Press for Eucharist
Undated
Northern Italy
20 x 84 x 8 cm
iron
Museo Etnografico Tiranese, Tirano (SO), Italy, Inventory number, 3779, Catalogue number: 01984882

Image:
http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/beni-etnoantropologici/schede/3i010-01018/ [accessed 23 August 2017]

Figure 2.5
Schluckbilder
Balthasar Montcornet?
Seventeenth century
Engraving on paper
13.5 x 19.9 cm
Kunstsammlungen der Fürsten zu Waldburg-Wolfegg
Image: Lisa Pon, *A Printed Icon in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 61

Figure 2.6
Breve of San Giacomo della Marca
late sixteenth-seventeenth century
Woodcut and typeset
About 2.5 x 6.35 cm
Santuario di San Giacomo della Marca, Monteprandone
Image: Author's

Figure 2.7
Saint Catherine of Alexandria
After Bernardino Luini
Italy
c. 1507-1532
Oil on panel
57.8 x 45.7 cm
Stourhead, Wiltshire
National Trust, NT 732122

Figure 7 detail

Figure 2

Figure 2.8
The Archangel Raphael and Tobias (Side 1);
yHs (Side 2)
Neri di Bicci
c. 1460
Florence
Tempera and gold on wood
Overall (with engaged frame): 30.2 x 23.2 cm; Painted Surface (26.4 x 19.1 cm)
The Robert E. Lehman Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.1.71

Figure 2.9
Woman at her Devotions
Leandro Bassano
c.1590–1600
Veneto
oil on canvas
105 x 88.5 cm
U.K., Private Collection

Figure 2.9 detail

Figure 2.10
Rosary (partial)
Sixteenth century
Italy or South Tyrol
gilt bronze with white, red, black and green enamels
17 cm
Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum, F.3477

Figure 2.11
Portrait of a Young Lady
Bartolomeo Veneto
c.1500–1510
Ferrara (possibly)
oil on panel
55.5 x 44.2 cm
The National Gallery, London
NG 2507
Salting Bequest, 1910

Figure 2.12 (*recto* and *verso*)
Medallion with Sacred Monogram
and Agnus Dei
late fifteenth– early sixteenth century
Italy
silver, *niello* and gold
Height 3.96 cm
The British Museum, AF.2892

Figure 2.13 (*recto* and *verso*)
Medallion with Sacred Monogram and Agnus Dei
Fifteenth-sixteenth century
Italy
silver inlaid with *niello* and gilt-copper border
Height: 3.38 cm
The British Museum, AF. 2898

Figure 2.14 (*recto* and *verso*)
Medallion
late fifteenth – early sixteenth century
Italy
silver, *niello* and gold
Height: 2.286 cm
The British Museum, AF.2896

Figure 2.15 (*recto* and *verso*)
Pendant (one of a pair)
Fifteenth century
Northern Italian (probably)
Silver, *niello*, gilt silver
Diameter: 3.8 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.968

Figure 2.16 (*recto* and *verso*)
Pendant (one of a pair)
Fifteenth century
Northern Italian (probably)
Silver, *niello*, gilt silver
Diameter: 2.9 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.965

Figure 2.17 & detail
Madonna della Pergola
Bernardino d'Antonio Detti
1523
Pistoia, Italy
Tempera on panel
Museo Civico, Pistoia
Image: Nicolò Begliomini on
http://www.discoverpistoia.it/it/argomenti/arte/3041-19-03-la-madonna-della-pergola.html
[accessed 23 August 2017]

Figure 2.18
Finger Ring with Sacred Monogram
Sixteenth century
Italy
Engraved silver
Diameter: 1.14 inches
British Museum, AF. 943

Figure 2.19
Finger Ring with Sacred Monogram
Fifteenth century
Italy
silver and *niello*
Diameter: 1.67 cm
The Ashmolean Museum,
WA1897.CDEF.F417

Figure 2.20 (front and back)
Ring with Sacred Monogram
Sixteenth century
Italy
Diameter: 1.28 cm
gold, topaz or pink ruby and enamels
Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, WA1897.CDEF.F477

Figure 2.21
Boy's Linen Shirt with red and gilt embroidery on sleeves with S motif, while the front chest has the monogram of Christ with tapered sleeve and a gathered high collar.
c. 1560-1580
Italy
crimson silk and silver-gilt embroidery on linen
Museo del Tessuto di Prato
Image: (top) Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 4: Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women, c. 1540-1660* (Macmillan, London, 2008), 19; (bottom) http://aneafiles.webs.com/renaissancegallery/extantmen.html [accessed 20 August 2017]

Figure 2.22
Essempio di recammi, p. 17r
Giovanni Antonio Tagliente
(Italian, Venice ca. 1465–1528 Venice)
(Venice: Giovanni Antonio di Nicolini da Sabio e i fratelli, 1530)
Woodcut on paper
19.8 x 15.7 x 1 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 35.75.3(33)

Figure 2.23
Libbretto nouellamete composto per maestro Domenico da Sera...lauorare di ogni sorte di punti, p. 9v
Domenico da Sera
(Lyon: Jehan Coste[?], April 12, 1532)
Woodcut on paper
20.5 x 16 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 35.79(18)

Figure 2.24
Embroidered Swaddling Band (*fascia*)
c. 1550-1600
Italy
Gold and silk embroidery on linen
Museo del Tessuto di Prato
Image: http://www.museodeltessuto.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Museo_Tessuto_Collezioni_ricami_01-1024x288.jpg [accessed 23 August 2017]

Figure 2.25
Embroidered Swaddling band
Sixteenth century
Linen
200.7 x 14 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 20.186.363

Figure 2.26
Birth of the Virgin (and Detail)
Paolo Uccello
c. 1435
Fresco
302 x 361 cm
Duomo, Prato
Image: Web Gallery of Art
http://www.wga.hu/art/u/uccello/2prato/03prato.jpg [accessed 23 August 2017]

Figure 2.27 and detail
Coat of Arms for Cavalry
c. 1510-1515
Milan, Italy
Embossed and engraved steel
Musei civici d'arte antica, Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna
Image: Istituto per i beni artistici culturali e naturali, Patrimonio culturale dell'Emilia-Romagna: http://bit.ly/2gpMYJk [accessed 28 August 2017]

CHAPTER THREE

Religious Inscriptions on Objects of Adornment

Figure 3.1 (various views)
Finger Ring
Fifteenth century
Italy
Engraved silver
Height: 2.2 cm, Width: 2.3 cm, Depth: 0.9 cm
Victoria & Albert Museum, 710-1871

Figure 3.2
Zachariah's Cross
(A double cross, on one side Zacharias and his blessing, on the other St. Benedict and the lettering of the cross of St. Benedict)
Undated
No place of production
Engraved silver?
Wellcome Library, London, Wellcome Images, M0016846

Figure 3.3
Croce: Li San Zaccaria vescovo di Gerusalemme, al quale facendo orazione a pro quella città devastata della peste, fu inspirato il presente mistero col quale restò placata sua Divina Maestà facendo cessare il sopraccennato castigo
Bologna, Italy
Tipi Chierici, Bologna, c. 1890?
Print on paper
15 x 25 cm
Wellcome Library, London, Closed Stores Ephemera EPH501:40, Record no. 457778990

Figure 3.4 (with details)
Rosary
Sixteenth century
Northern Italy
enamelled rock crystal beads with silver-gilt mounts, with a crucifix attached
Length: 38 cm
Turin, Palazzo Madama, Museo Civico di Torino, V.O. 97-2984

Figure 3.5
Ring
Fifteenth century
Italy
Silver with *niello*
Diameter: 1.631 cm
The Ashmolean Museum,
University of Oxford,
WA1897.CDEF.F760

Figure 3.6
Ring
Fourteenth or fifteenth century
Italy (probably)
Bronze
Diameter: 1.712 cm
The Ashmolean Museum,
WA1897.CDEF.F757

Figure 3.7
Beads from a Rosary
Early sixteenth century
Italy
gilt copper with champlevé enamel
24.5 cm
The Cleveland Museum of Art,
1952.277

Figure 3.8
Decade Ring with Virgin of the Rosary
Seventeenth century
Italy
Silver, cast and parcel-gilt
Height: 2.4 cm, Width: 2.5 cm,
Depth: 1.2 cm
Victoria &Albert Museum,
M.815-1926

Figure 3.9
Finger Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy (found Volterra)
Gold
Diameter: 2.235 cm
The British Museum, AF.877

Figure 3.10
Signet Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
Silver, engraved
Diameter (hoop): 2.13 cm
Diameter (bezel): 1.37 cm
The British Museum, AF.572

Figure 3.11 (and detail)
Cameo/Amulet Ring
Sixteenth century
Italy
Silver and marble cameo
Diameter: 2.34 cm
Length (bezel): 1.65 cm
The British Museum,
1865,1203.34

Figure 3.12
Signet Ring
fourteenth century (ring) and third century ACE (*intaglio*)
Italy
Engraved gold with *niello* inscription and onyx *intaglio*
Height: 2.5 cm, Width: 2.2 cm, Depth: 1.3 cm
Victoria & Albert Museum, M.190-1975

Figure 3.13
Child's Ring
Fifteenth century
Italy (possibly)
silver with *niello* inscription
11 mm internal ring diameter;
Ashmolean Museum, University
of Oxford, WA1897.CDEF.F759

Figure 3.14
Signet Ring with *Intaglio* and
Merchant's Mark
Fourteenth century
Italy
Gold with sard *intaglio*
Diameter: 2.28 cm
Length (Bezel): 1.35 cm
The British Museum, 1853,
0218.13

Figure 3.15 (various views)
Signet Ring in form of a bow-Ring (Archer's Ring)
Fourteenth century
Venice, Italy
Gold with *niello*
Ring Diameter: 3.81 cm
Bezel Diameter: 1.37 cm
The British Museum, AF.568

Figure 3.16
Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
Gold, engraved
Height: 2.1 cm, Width: 2.3 cm, Depth: 1.1 cm
The Victoria & Albert Museum, 88-1899

Figure 3.17
Amulet Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
gold, toadstone
The British Museum,
AF.1023

Figure 3.18
Signet Ring
Late fourteenth or early fifteenth century
Veneto-Byzantine
Gold with amethyst intaglio
diameter (ring): 1.753 cm
The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, WA1897.CDEF.F389

Figure 3.19
Signet Ring with Ancient Roman *Intaglio* and Biblical Inscription
fourteenth century (ring) and third century (*intaglio*)
Italy
gold with an oval bezel set with a Roman jasper intaglio
2.4 x 2.6 x. 1.9 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, Given by Dame Joan Evans, M.275-1962

Figure 3.20
Signet Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
Gold, *niello*, engraved
Diameter: 2.54 cm
Length (Bezel): 1.6 cm
The British Museum, 1872,0604.377

Figure 3.21
Intaglio finger ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
Gold and nicolo intaglio
Diameter: 2.29 cm
The British Museum, 1917,0407.1
Image Source:
George Francis Hill, 'Di un anello d'oro con le lettere di S. Agata (Dai Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries di Londra dell'8 Marzo 1917)', in Archivio Storico per la Sicilia orientale, 26-27, ed. by Vincenzo Giannotta (Catania: S.M. la Regina Madre, 1919-1920), fig. 1

Figure 3.22
Signet Ring
Fourteenth century
Italy
Gold and garnet
Diameter: 2.03 cm
Length (bezel): 1.35 cm
The British Museum, AF.584

Figure 3.23
Jewelled Cross Pendant
Sixteenth century (possibly)
Italy
gilt metal, set with a sapphire, rubies and pearls, inscribed on reverse
Height 2.8 cm
The British Museum, AF.2907

Figure 3.24
Portrait of a Young Woman
Agnolo di Domenico Mazziere
c.1485–1490
Florence
oil on panel
45.4 x 34.8 cm
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie, cat. no. 80
Photo: bpk/Jörg P. Anders

Figure 3.23 reverse

Figure 3.25
Pectoral Cross Set with *Intaglios* with Signs of the Zodiac
Sixteenth century
Italy
Gold set with heliotrope *intaglios*
8.4 cm
Sotheby's London, 4 December 2013 (Sale L13231), Lot 92
http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/european-sculpture-works-of-art-l13231/lot.92.html
[accessed 2 June 2017]

Figure 3.26
Medallion with Agnus Dei and Rose (recto) and Veronica veil (verso)
Sixteenth or seventeenth century
Italy
Silver, *niello*, gold and cotton
Diameter: 5.2 cm
The British Museum, BEP, AF.2899

Figure 3.27 (front and back)
Reliquary Pendant
c. 1350
Italy
Silver and silver-gilt, enamelled
Height: 5.2 cm with suspension ring, Width: 1 cm, Depth: 0.6 cm
Victoria & Albert Museum, 358-1864

Figure 3.28
Instructions to make amulets to be worn on the finger
c. 1585
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Archivio Diocesano di Napoli, Trial 653, Hippolita di Caserta, May 1585, S9

Figure 3.29 a- c
Amulets to be worn on the finger
c. 1585
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Archivio Diocesano di Napoli, Trial 653, Hippolita di Caserta, May 1585, S4, S5, S6

Figure 3.30 (with details)
Girdle
c. 1450
Lucca (made) and Venice (woven)
Tablet woven lampas with gilded and enamelled metal, silver with *niello* and stamped brass
Length: 154.5 cm, Width: 6.6 cm woven textile, Length: 12 cm buckle, Width: 9.5 cm buckle at fastening point, Width: 7 cm buckle at point where it joins girdle, Length: 10 cm strap end from tip to point where it joins girdle, Depth: 0.6 cm back to front of strap end at flattest point, Depth: 2.2 cm strap end at widest point of cylindrical part
The Victoria & Albert Museum, 4278-1857

Figure 3.31 (reverse and detail)
Elements of a Light Cavalry Armor
c. 1510
Milan, Italy
Steel, gold, copper alloy
Weight: 19 lb 13 oz (8987 g)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
14.25.716b-f

Image source (reverse): '9. Armour', in *The Art of Chivalry: European Arms and Armor from The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. by Helmut Nickel, Stuart W. Pyhrr, Leonid Tarassuk, Joseph P. Ascherl, and American Federation of Arts (New York: The American Federation of the Arts, 1982), pp. 36

Part II: The Home

Chapter Four

Doorway Devotions

Figure 4.1
Birth of the Virgin
Vittore Carpaccio
c. 1505-06
Veneto
oil on canvas
126 x 129 cm
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo
Image Source: ArtStor

Figure 4.1 (Detail a)
Detail of the *Birth of the Virgin*

Figure 4.1 (Detail b)
Detail of the *Birth of the Virgin*

Figure 4.2
Stone inscribed *yhs + 1495 A DI. RO. DE AGOSTO. FERIANO*
1495
Cingoli
Sandstone
35 x 56 x 12 cm
Museo Archeologico Statale, Palazzo Communale, Cingoli
Image Source: Giuseppe Avarucci and Antonio Salvi, *Le iscrizioni medioevali di Cingoli* (Padua: Antenore, 1986), 134-35 and Table LIV.

Figure 4.3
Latin Cross in relief with etched *yhs*
Late fifteenth century
In situ on the Vicolo San Marco (n. 11), Cingoli
Sandstone
33 x 32 cm, positioned 160 cm from street level
Image Source: Giuseppe Avarucci and Antonio Salvi, *Le iscrizioni medioevali di Cingoli* (Padua: Antenore, 1986), 136 and Table LV, I.

Figure 4.4
Lintel inscribed *IACOBUS IHS TURRERI*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Corso Mazzini (n. 333), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.5
Lintel inscribed *IHS*+
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Annibale Caro (n. 36), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.5 detail

Figure 4.6
Arched doorframe inscribed *IHS*+
Sixteenth century
In situ in Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.6 detail

Figure 4.7
Lintel with carved relief *IHS*+ in sunburst with garland frame
Sixteenth century
In situ in Ascoli Piceno; Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.7 detail

Figure 4.8
Roundel above door with *yhs*+
Late fifteenth – sixteenth century
In situ in Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.8 detail

Figure 4.9
Lintel inscribed *yhs*+ on a *casa torre*
Late fifteenth – early sixteenth century
In situ in Paggese di Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source Author's image

Figure 4.9 detail

Figure 4.10
Window frame inscribed *yhs*+ in sunburst and 1513 on a *casa padronale*
1513
In situ in Paggese di Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.11
Carved *IHS*+ (with Three Nails of Crucifixion) on keystone
Late sixteenth century
In situ in Paggese di Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.11 detail

Figure 4.12
Lintel with *yhs*+ in vegetal frame carved in relief
Fifteenth century
In situ on the Castello di Luco in Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.12 detail

Figure 4.13
Lintel inscribed *yhs*+ on a *casa torre*
Fifteenth century
In situ in Piedicava di Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source:
Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100220298):
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/78498/Casa-torre/Default.aspx (accessed 23 July 2016)

Figure 4.14
Lunette over doorway with *yhs*+ sunburst carved and 1517 carved in relief on the lintel
1517
In situ in Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source: Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060674):
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69547/Casa-rurale/Default.aspx (accessed 23 July 2016)

Figure 4.15
Lintel with vegetal border and in centre *yhs+* in sunburst carved in relief, and '*15'* and '*18'* etched on the sides on a *casa a schiera*
1518
In situ in Acquasanta Terme
Travertine
Image Source:
Beni Culturali Marche (ID: 1100060661):
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69534/Casa-a-schiera/Default.aspx (accessed 23 July 2016)

Figure 4.15 detail

Figure 4.16
Casa fortificata
Sixteenth century
In situ in Acquasanta Terme
Image Source: Beni culturali Marche (ID: 1100060650):
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/69523/Casa-fortificata/Default.aspx
(Accessed 23 July 2016)

Figure 4.16 (Detail a)
yhs+ in sunburst in lunette over door
of *casa fortificata*
Sixteenth century
Travertine
In situ in Acquasanta Terme

Figure 4.16 (Detail b)
Detail window of *casa fortificata* with *yhs*+ in sunburst carved in relief in centre, vegetal ornament, and the name of *'Magistro Pietro 15--?'* etched on top of frame
Sixteenth century (15--?)
Acquasanta Terme
travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 228

Figure 4.17
Lintel with inscription *1/5 IHS+ 68* on southern-facing door
house dated 1568 and 1569
Uscerno di Montegallo
Travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 256

Figure 4.18
Inscription *UNICA SPES HOMINUM EST SALVANTIS NOMEN IESU* over *IHS*+ in sunburst
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Quinto Curzio Rufo (n. 26), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's Image

Figure 4.18 detail

Figure 4.19
Inscription *IHS*+ in sunburst above *QUICUNQUE HONORIFICAVERIT ME GLORIFICABO EVM*
1546
In situ in Verona near the Church of San Fermo
Image Source: Author's Image

Figure 4.20
Lintel inscribed *PETRUS FERREUS MDVIIII*
1509
In situ on Via Benedetto Cairoli (n. 10), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.21
Wooden door set in *punto di diamante* doorway with figural carvings of the *Annunciation* and the name, *SIGISMUNDUS* on Palazzo Miliani
Designed by Cola dell'Amatrice
Sixteenth century (c. 1520)
In situ on Via Bonaccorsi (n.13), Ascoli Piceno
Wood and travertine
Image Source: The Habitual Tourist: http://www.habitualtourist.com/palazzo_miliani(ascoli_piceno) (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.21 detail
Annunciation over the name *SIGISMUNDUS* on the Palazzo Miliani

Figure 4.22
GRATIUS AGIMUS DOMINO. MDXX inscribed over window on Palazzo Miliani
Cola dell'Amatrice (designer)
c. 1520
in situ on Via Bonaccorsi (n.13), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: The Habitual Tourist:
http://www.habitualtourist.com/palazzo_miliani(ascoli_piceno) (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.23
Fresco of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned* with the inscription *MATER DIVINA GRATIE* on top of frame
Sixteenth century
In situ on the exterior wall of the former convent of San Tomasso Apostolo, Ascoli Piceno
Travertine frame and fresco behind modern glass and wrought iron
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.24
Window frame with inscription *AVE MARIA GRATIE*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Costanzo Mazzoni (n. 11), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.25
Lintel inscribed *AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS STECUM*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Tornasacco (n. 10), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Google Maps, image captured November 2014 (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.26
Lintel of door in entryway inscribed *AVE MARIA*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via dei Soderini (n. 16), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Serafino Castelli, *Iscrizioni sulle case ascolane del Cinquecento* (Ascoli Piceno: Centro Studi Stabiliani, 1975), 23

Figure 4.27
Decorative scroll keystone of arched doorway inscribed *IHS MARIA*
Sixteenth century
In situ in Ascoli Piceno
travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.27 detail

Figure 4.28
Façade of house transplanted from the Via Buonaccorsi to Via Pretoriana (n. 41-47)
Sixteenth century (c. 1526)
In situ in Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Google Maps, Image Capture December 2014 (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.28 (Detail a)
Lintel of door inscribed *AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS* above armorial shield
Sixteenth century (c. 1526)
In situ on Via Pretoriana (n. 47), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Pierluigi Giorgi, 'Un tuffo nel passato ad Ascoli Piceno: Via Pretoriana', *Visit Ascoli*, http://visitascoli.it/punti-interesse/un-tuffo-nel-passato-ad-ascoli-piceno-via-pretoriana/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.28 (Detail b)
Lintel of door inscribed *EX DEO ET LABORE*
Sixteenth century (c. 1526)
In situ on Via Pretoriana (n. 43), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Pierluigi Giorgi, 'Un tuffo nel passato ad Ascoli Piceno: Via Pretoriana', *Visit Ascoli*, http://visitascoli.it/punti-interesse/un-tuffo-nel-passato-ad-ascoli-piceno-via-pretoriana/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.28 (Detail c)
Lintel of door inscribed *IN SUDORE VULTUS TUI VESSERIS PANE MDXXVI*
Sixteenth century (c. 1526)
In situ on Via Pretoriana (n. 45), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Pierluigi Giorgi, 'Un tuffo nel passato ad Ascoli Piceno: Via Pretoriana', *Visit Ascoli*, http://visitascoli.it/punti-interesse/un-tuffo-nel-passato-ad-ascoli-piceno-via-pretoriana/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.29
Lintel with Sacred Monogram (*IHS+*) in sunburst with *FAC BONUM ET NON TIMEAS ANOS MDXXV* inscribed above
1525
In situ on Via Quinto Curzio Rufo (n.13), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.29 detail

Figure 4.30
Lintel inscribed *HOMO AD MORTEM IHS+ DIES AVTE[M] AD FINEM*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Benedetto Cairoli (n. 8), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.31
Architrave inscribed *15 IHS+ 62 NON SENZA SATIS PACIENTA SAPIENTA* above coat of arms and name *MIORO BECIONE*
1562
Forca di Montegallo
Travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 251, fig. 270

Figure 4.32
Lintel inscribed *NON FU MAI TARDE GRATIE DEVINE*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Costanza Mazzoni (n. 15), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.33
Lintel inscribed +*Adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini qui fecit coelum et terram*
Fourteenth century
In situ on Rua Lino della Rocca (n. 2), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source; Serafino Castelli, *Iscrizioni sulle case ascolane del Cinquecento* (Ascoli Piceno: Centro Studi Stabiliani, 1975), 18

Figure 4.34
Lintel inscribed *IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI NON CONFVNDAR IN ETERNUM*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via Costanzo Mazzoni (n. 3), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.35 (Detail a)
Lintel inscribed *IN TE DOMINE CONFIDO MD*
Sixteenth century (1539)
In situ on Via dei Soderini (n. 38), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.35 (Detail b)
Lintel inscribed *NON CONFUNDAR I[N] ETERNUM XXX9*
Sixteenth century (1539)
In situ on Via dei Soderini (n. 40), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.36 (Detail a)
Lintel inscribed *1588 IN TE D[OMI]NE SPERAVI NON CONFUNDAR IN ETERNUM* on a *casa a schiera*
1588
Arquata del Tronto
Image Source:
Beni Culturali Marche (ID 1100221941)
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/80100/Casa-a-schiera/Default.aspx (accessed 18 August 2016)

Figure 4.36 (Detail b)
Detail of the doorway and niche of the *casa a schiera*
1588
Arquata del Tronto
Image Source:
Beni Culturali Marche (ID 1100221941)
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/80100/Casa-a-schiera/Default.aspx (accessed 18 August 2016)

Figure 4.37 (Detail a)
Lintel inscribed *IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI NON CONFUNDAR IN ETERNUM 1571*
1571
Uscerno di Montegallo
Travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 257, fig. 279

Figure 4.37 (Detail b)
Lintel with decorative carvings inscribed *1571* and *IHS* + in a flower
1571
Uscerno di Montegallo
Travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 257, fig. 278

Figure 4.37 (Detail c)
Window frame inscribed *IL MORIRE CON HONORE VITA RINOVA*
1571
Uscerno di Montegallo
Travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 257, fig. 280

Figure 4.38
Lintel inscribed *O BONE IESU IHS ILLUMINA OCULOS MEOS*
Sixteenth century (with later additions in lunette above)
In lunette: *P. GISMVNDO PALVCCI* (kneeling in prayer with rosary)*; IHS* (in sunburst); (coat of Arms); *S. IGNATY 1635* and *S. FRANCISCO SAVERI* (praying)*; NELL. CONPAG DI GESU*
In situ on Rua delle Conce (n. 9), Ascoli Piceno
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.39
House with inscriptions
Sixteenth century
In situ on Corso V. Emanuele (n. 91-93), Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.39 (Detail a)
Window frame inscribed *CUNCTA EX ALTO IDEO*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Corso V. Emanuele (n. 91-93), Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.39 (Detail b)
Window frame inscribed *SOLI DEO HONORISSII*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Corso V. Emanuele (n. 91-93), Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.40
Lintel inscribed *DEO ET PATRIAE*
Sixteenth century
In situ on Corso V. Emanuele (n. 70), Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.40 detail

Figure 4.41
Complesso dei Grifoni with the *Virgin and Child with Saints*
Fifteenth century
In situ Via Garibaldi (n. 17), Ripatransone
Terracotta
Image Source: http://www.museipiceni.it/_uploads/1103/2CD44FE9-E367-42C9-A296-ABFCC289C375.jpg (accessed 18 August 2016)

Figure 4.41 detail
Virgin and Child with Saints on the Complesso dei Grifoni
Fifteenth century
Via Garibaldi (n. 17), Ripatransone
Terracotta

Figure 4.42
Lintel inscribed *PROTECTOR IN TE SPERANTIUM/BERNARDUS GALLUS 150?*
Early sixteenth century (c. 150?)
In situ on Via Angela Zingaro (n. 2), Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.43 (Detail)

Figure 4.43
Arched Portal with Grotesque Mouth Keystone
Sixteenth century
In situ on Via dei Soderini (n. 25), Ascoli Piceno
Image Source: Google Map, image captured November 2014 (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.44
Lavishly decorated doorway with the Sacred Monogram (*IHS+*) in a sunburst above the lunette and lintel inscribed *FRANCISCUS CALVUS CANONICVS ASCULAVS MD 7ET DIE V IAU RII*
5 January 1507
In situ on Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte (n. 24-26), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's Image

Figure 4.44 detail

Figure 4.45
Lintel of interior doorway inscribed *MANET MENTE REPOSITUM*
Sixteenth century (c. 1507)
In situ on Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte (n. 24-26), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.46
Solomonic pentagram inscribed *IESUS + AGIOS O THEOS IN SOLO FILIO PATRIS O CONFERENTIS O PRO GENTE O INCARNATIONE O SPIRITUS SANCTI*
Sixteenth century (c. 1507)
In situ on Palazzetto Bonaparte, Via Bonaparte (n. 24-26), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.47
Lintel of church inscribed *DOMUS MEA DOMUS ORATIONIS EST*
Sixteenth century
Church of San Cristoforo della Morte, Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image Source: Serafino Castelli, *Iscrizioni sulle case ascolane del Cinquecento* (Ascoli Piceno: Centro Studi Stabiliani, 1975), 14

Figure 4.48
Lintel inscribed *HEC EST PORTA PARADISI 1519*
1519
In situ on Corso Mazzini (n. 313), Ascoli Piceno
Travertine
Image: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973) 94, fig. 83

Figure 4.49
Lintel of low door inscribed *15 +50*
1550
Paggese di Acquasanta
Travertine
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 4.49 detail

Figure 4.50
House with two lunettes with devotional frescoes and inscriptions
Sixteenth century (c. 1515)
Trisugno di Arquata del Tronto
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 234, fig. 249

Figure 4.50 (Detail a)
Lintel of left-side ground floor door with shield inscribed *1515*
1515
Trisugno di Arquata del Tronto
Travertine
Image Source: Raimondo Fugnoli, 'Borgo di Trisungo – Arquata del Tronto (AP)' http://www.iluoghidelsilenzio.it/borgo-di-trisungo-arquata-del-tronto-ap/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.50 (Detail b)
Lintel of right-side ground floor door with Sacred Monogram (*IHS*+) inside sunburst framed in garland
Sixteenth century (c. 1515)
Trisugno di Arquata del Tronto
Travertine
Image Source; Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), p. 236, fig. 251

Figure 4.50 (Detail c)
Lunette *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saint Roch and Martyr Saint* and inscription above left-side door at top of stairs
Sixteenth century (c. 1515)
Trisugno di Arquata del Tronto
Fresco and travertine
Image Source: Raimondo Fugnoli, 'Borgo di Trisungo – Arquata del Tronto (AP)' http://www.iluoghidelsilenzio.it/borgo-di-trisungo-arquata-del-tronto-ap/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.50 (Detail d)
Detail of unidentified inscription of underneath left-side fresco
Image Source: Raimondo Fugnoli, 'Borgo di Trisungo – Arquata del Tronto (AP)' http://www.iluoghidelsilenzio.it/borgo-di-trisungo-arquata-del-tronto-ap/ (accessed 1 August 2016)

Figure 4.50 (Detail e)
Detail of two lunettes
Sixteenth century (c. 1515)
Trisugno di Arquata del Tronto
Fresco and travertine
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Piceno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 237, fig. 254

Chapter Five

The Writing on the Wall

Figure 5.1
Virgin Enthroned Suckling her Child with saints and *Annunciation* above
c. 1440-80
Venice
Hand-coloured woodcut
53.6 x 41.2 cm
The British Museum, 1895,0122.1187

Figure 5.2
Madonna Lactans
Fifteenth century
Venice
Hand-coloured woodcut
35 x about 26.3 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 887-301

Image Source: Paul Hetiz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), fig. 12

Figure 5.3
The Birth of the Virgin
Late Fifteenth Century
Venice
woodcut
39 x 21 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 868-301

Image: Paul Hetiz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), fig. 6

Figure 5.4
The Rosary: Madonna and the Dominican Order
c. 1490-1500
Venice
Hand-coloured woodcut
56.5 x 38.5 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 997-301
Image Source; © Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz Fotograf/in: Volker-H. Schneider

Figure 5.4 (Detail a)

Figure 5.4 (Detail b)

Figure 5.4 (Detail c)

Figure 5.4 (Detail d)

Figure 5.4 (Detail e)

Figure 5.5
Scenes from the Passion
c. 1500
Venice
Hand-coloured woodcut
25 x 25 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, number unknown

Image Source: Paul Hetiz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), fig. 2

Figures 5.6 (Part 1-top) and 5.6 (Part 2 - bottom)
Fragments of figures from the *Last Supper* and other *Passion* scenes
c. 1500
Venice
hand-coloured woodcuts
50 x 60 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 874-301, 878-301, and 879-301

Image Source: Paul Hetiz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), fig. 3

Figure 5.7
The Last Supper
Late fifteenth century
Venice
hand-coloured woodcut
16 x 16.5 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 876-301
Image Source: © Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz Fotograf/in: Dietmar Katz

Figure 5.8
Christ as Salvador Mundi
c. 1490
Venice
Hand-coloured woodcut
47.5 x about 24 cm
Kupferstichkabinett der Staalichen Museen zu Berlin, 882-301
Image Source: Paul Hetiz, *Italienische Einblattdrucke in den Sammlungen Bassano und Berlin* (Strasburg: Heitz, 1933), fig. 7

Figure 5.9
Portrait of a Female Donor
Petrus Christus
c. 1455
Netherlandish
Oil on panel
Overall: 41.8 cm x 21.6 cm
The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961.9.11

Figure 5.9 (Detail)

Figure 5.10
Madonna del Fuoco
Before 1428
Forlì
Hand-coloured woodcut
Sheet: 49.3 cm x 39.7 cm
Cathedral of Santa Croce, Forlì, Italy
Image Source: Wikimedia Commons
https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madonna_del_Fuoco#/media/File:Madonna_del_Fuoco.JPG (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.11
Madonna Lactans with the Last Supper
c. 1530
North Italian School
Hand-coloured woodcut
50.8 x 38.6 cm
Private collection, sold at Christie's: Sale 14020, Old Master Prints, 25 January 2017, New York, Lot 16
Image Source:
https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Madonna-lactans-with-the-Last-Supper/AB63AFC8795F1252# (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.12
Madonna and Child Enthroned between Saints Sebastian, Anne, Francis and Chiara
Maestro della pala Grossi (Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, Il Sodoma?)
c. 1450-1500
Modena
tempera on canvas
160 x 230 cm
Private Collection
Image Source: Comune di Modena, http://www.comune.modena.it/salastampa/archivio-comunicati-stampa/2013/2/musei-civici-lenigma-rinascimentale-della-pala-grossi/la-pala-grossi/view (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.12 detail

Figure 5.13
Saint Domicic
c. 1450
Italy
Hand-coloured woodcut
Sheet: 29.1 x 14 cm; Image: 27.3 x 10.8 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1963.11.7

Figure 5.14
Saint Thomas Aquinas
c. 1450
Italy
Hand-coloured woodcut with inscription in pen and ink
Sheet: 29.2 x 14.3 cm; Image: 28.1 x 11.1 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1964.8.33

Figure 5.15
Crucifixion and the Arma Christi with a prayer against sudden death and earthquakes
Sixteenth century
Italy
Woodcut
27 x 36.5cm
Bertarelli Collection of Popular Prints, not inventoried

Figure 5.16
Fragment of the *Titulus Crucis*
Found in Rome in 1492
Wood
Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome
Image Source: http://www.wikiwand.com/it/Titulus_crucis (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.17
Titulus Triumphalis Jesu Christi Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum
c. 1492-1496
Wittenburg
Woodcut
28.41 x 33.19 cm
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, Rar. 287, fol. 334r
Image Source: http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00102722/image_1 (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.18
The martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, three archers below, an angel arrives bearing the crown of martyrdom
c. 1480-90
Florence
Engraving
Sheet: 29 x 20.8 cm; Plate: 23.5 x 14.7cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 28.97.109

Figure 5.19
The Virgin with the Christ Child as protector or the Carmelites surrounded by scenes of miracles
c. 1500-1530
Italy
Coloured woodcut
38.7 x 27.9 cm
The British Museum,
1880,0710.655

Figure 5.19 (Detail a)
'Libera una dona dimoniata di sette ani'

Figure 5.19 (Detail b)
'Fuoco in una casa viene fiuato con l'abito del Virgine'

Figure 5.20
Madonna of Loreto
After 1493
Italy
Woodcut
Sheet 38.3 x 27 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.42.35
Image: Author's image

Figure 5.20 detail
Sonnet *Alla Nostra Donna per il Conte Alessandro, il quale era infermo*
Bernardo Bellincioni
Before 1493

Figure 5.21
Pietà with Act of Contrition in Vernacular
c. 1525-1577
Italy
Woodcut
Sheet 40 x 27.2 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 56.648.24
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 5.22
Christ Carrying the Cross
c. 1510-1525
Italy
Hand-colored woodcut
Sheet: 50.5 × 41.5 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1984.12.1

Figure 5.23
Saint Bernardino of Siena
c. 1470-1480
Italy
Woodcut
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1943.3.744

Figure 5.24
The Sacred Monogram of the Names of Jesus and Mary
c. 1500
Italy
Woodcut with traces of colouring on a wooden panel
40.2 x 28.8 cm
Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, 1964.142.135

Figure 5.25
The Components of the Sacred Monogram of the Names of Jesus and Mary
Image Source: Corinna Tania, *Il monogramma dei nomi di Gesù e Maria: storia di un'iconografia tra scrittura e immagine* (Asola: Gilgamesh Edizioni, 2011), 17, fig. 2.

Figure 5.26
The Monogram of the Names of Jesus and Mary
Fifteenth – sixteenth century
Italy
Hand-coloured woodcut
'Processo formale contro Valentino Tischlar per mancata pratica dei sacramenti e cibi proibiti a Gemona'
Archivio della Curia Archivescovile di Udine, Fondo Sant'Officio, b. 1283, fasc. 102

Figure 5.27
Portrait of Hans Conrad Bodmer and his family
1643
Schloss Greifensee, Greifensee (Zürich)
oil on canvas
93 cm x 73 cm
Schweizerisches Landesmuseum (Private Owner), Zürich
Source: Wikimedia Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Familienportrait_Hans_Conrad_Bodmer.jpg (accesed 3 September 2017)

Figure 5.27 detail

Figure 5.28
Fireplace with carved *yhs*+ in sunburst on mantel
Late fifteenth century
Casa Natale di Raffaello, Urbino
Photo: Zuzanna Sarnecka

Figure 5.28 detail

Figure 5.29
Fireplace with mantel inscribed *15 IHS+ 70*
1570
Forca di Montegallo
Image Source: Luigi Leporini, *Ascoli Piceno: L'architettura dai maestri vaganti ai Giosafatti* (Ascoli Picecno: Cassa di Risparmio di Ascoli Piceno, 1973), 252

Figure 5.29. Detail

Figure 5.30
Tavern or Brothel Scene (Merry Company or Bordellszene)
The Brunswick Monogrammist (Jan van Amstel?)
c. 1540
oil on panel
29 x 45 cm
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, inv. no. 558
Image Source: Brunswick Monogrammist (fl. between 1525 and 1545) - Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21876480 (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.31
Interior of a Brothel
Jan van Amstel (attributed to)
Mid-sixteenth century
38 x 54.5 cm
Private collection, Sole June 28, 2015: Mobilier, Objets d'Art Anciens, Sculptures, Tableaux, Dessins, Hôtel des Ventes de Monte-Carlo, Monaco
Image Source:
http://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/attribue-a-jan-van-amstel-interieur-de-bordel-3-c-51d4b958db (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.32
Interior of the Church of Santa Maria della Petrella
Ripatransone
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 5.32 detail
'Regina' prayer
Inscription etched in fresco
Church of Santa Maria della Petrella, Ripatransone

Figure 5.33 and detail
Saints Lawrence, Sebastian and Roch with *SATOR* square
fresco
Sala del Parlamento, Chiesa di San Lorenzo, Paggese
Image Source: Zuzanna Sarnecka

Figure 5.34
Zibaldone of Bartolomeo dal Bovo and family
Fifteenth – sixteenth century
Manuscript (ink on paper)
Biblioteca Civica di Verona, MS 827, f. 29v
Image Source: Author's image

Figure 5.35
Plaque with the *Virgin and Child* and *Prayer of St Agatha*
1521
Italy
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
Diameter: 34.8 cm
The Wallace Collection, C79

Figure 5.36
Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Angel
Follower of Filippo Lippi and Francesco Pesellino
c. 1460-70
Florence
Tempera on panel
Diameter 105 cm
Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Assis Chateaubriand, 6P

Figure 5.37
Virgin and Child with Infant Saint John the Baptist
Pseudo Pier Francesco Fiorentino
c. 1450-1500
Florence
Tempera on panel
86 x 58 cm
Harvard Art Museums, 1904.17

Figure 5.38
Madonna and Child with Angels
Pietro di Domenico da Montepulciano
c. 1420
The Marche
Tempera on wood on a gold ground
Overall, with engaged frame: 87.9 x 66.7 cm
Painted surface 77.8 x 56.5 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 07.201

Figure 5.38 (Detail a)
Inscription on halo:
'AVE GRATIA PLENA
D[OMIN]US
TECU[M]'

Figure 5.38 (Detail b)
Inscription on crown: 'ACCIPE CORONAM'

Figure 5.38 (Detail c)
Inscription on collar: 'REGINA C[O]ELI'

Figure 5.38 (Detail d)
Inscription on sleeves: 'AVE MARIA'

Figure 5.38 (Detail e)
Inscription on border of mantle: 'MARIA VIRGO SPONSA CHR[ISTI]'

Figure 5.39
Madonna of the Candelabra
Antonio Rossellino
c. 1460-1470
Florence
Polychrome stucco
Overall: 74.5 x 50.8 cm
Framed: 118.7 x 96.8 x 22.9 cm
Yale University Art Gallery,
1943.273

Figure 5.40
Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist and Angels
Benedetto da Maiano
c. 1451
Florence, Italy
Polychrome stucco
105 x 88 cm
Slezské zemské muzeum, Czech Republic, U 238 B-1
Image Source:
http://www.esbirky.cz/predmet/3477373

Figure 5.41
Madonna and Child
c. 1430
Tuscany
painted and gilded terracotta
overall (w/out tabernacle): 66.7 x 45.7 cm
framed: 130.8 x 86 x 13 cm
accessory size: 130.8 x 85.1 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961.9.103

Figure 5.41 (Detail)

Figure 5.42 (Detail a)
Christ Carrying the Cross; Christ the Redeemer; the Crucifixion triptych (open)
Benedetto Bonfigli
c. 1455-1460
Perugia
Tempera on panel
Framed (central panel) 56 x 42 cm
Framed (wings) 57 x 21 cm
Yale University Art Gallery, 2012.65.1

Figure 5.42 (Detail b)
Christ Carrying the Cross; Christ the Redeemer; the Crucifixion (closed)
Yale University Art Gallery, 2012.65.1

Figure 5.43
Annunciation Plaque
Sforza di Marcantonio
1567
Pesaro
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
Height: 26.5 cm; Width: 20.4 cm;
Thickness: 2.5 cm
The British Museum, 1893,0614.2

Figure 5.44
Annunciation
School of Filippino Lippi
late fifteenth – early sixteenth century
oil on panel
70 x 65 cm
Prato, Museo Civico, inv. Museo 1174

Image: Maria Pia Mannini, 'Cat. 22. Maestro filippinesco, *Annunciazione*', in *Filippino Lippi, un bellissimo ingegno: origini ed eredità nel territorio di Prato* (Florence and Milan: Giunti, 2004), 63.

Figure 5.45
The Annunciation
Attributed to Lorenzo di Credi
c. 1508
Florence
Oil on panel
34.6 x 27.6 cm; Frame: 54.7 x 49.7 cm
Harvard Art Museums, 1971.17

Figure 5.45 detail

Figure 5.46a
Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist, Saint Bartholomew, and Four Angels; on reverse: *Emblem of St. Bernardino (*Side b)
Sano di Pietro
c. 1460-1480
Tempera and gold on wood
Painting: 63.5 x 45.7 cm
El Paso Museum of Art, 1961.1.8.
Image Source: ArtStor

Figure 5.46b
Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist, Saint Bartholomew, and Four Angels; on reverse: *Emblem of St. Bernardino* (Side b)
Sano di Pietro
c. 1460-1480
Tempera and gold on wood
Painting: 63.5 x 45.7 cm
El Paso Museum of Art, 1961.1.8.
Image Source:
http://www.oberlin.edu/images/Art335/335-076.JPG (accessed 2 February 2017)

Figure 5.47
Roundel with *yhs*
c. 1475
Faenza, Emilia-Romagna (possibly)
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
Diameter: 34.5 cm
The Victoria & Albert Museum, C. 196-1937

Figure 5.48
Plaque with the *Emblem of Saint Bernardino of Siena*
Mid – late sixteenth century
Faenza, Emilia-Romagna (possibly)
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
20.3 x 19.7 x1.6 cm
Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1998-176-21

Figure 5.49
Bernardino's Emblem *(IHS+* in sunburst)
1578
Central Italy
Terracotta *invetriata*
Diameter: 20 cm
Pinacoteca Comunale, Ostra, Beni Culturali Marche
1100115978
http://www.beniculturali.marche.it/Ricerca/tabid/41/ids/9247/emblema-bernardiniano/Default.aspx

Figure 5.50
Tondo with the *Monogram of San Bernardino* (*yhs+)*
c. 1475-1500
Tuscany
Gilded *cartapesta*
Diameter: 68 cm
Museo Stibbert, inv. N. 534
Image Source
Paola Ventrone, *Le Tems revient= 'l Tempo si rinuova: feste e spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Firenze, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, 8 aprile – 30 giugno 1992* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 1992), 209, cat. 5.1.

Figure 5.51
Saints Nicholas of Tolentino, Roch, Sebastian, and Bernardino of Siena, with Kneeling Donors
Benozzo Gozzoli
1481
Pisa (possibly)
Tempera and gold on canvas, transferred from wood
Overall, with added strips 78.7 x 61.9 cm; painted surface 76.5 x 59.7 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976.100.14

Figure 5.52
The Virgin with Saints Roch and Sebastian
c. 1500-1510
Venice or the Veneto
Lead-glazed earthenware (slipware)
Height: 33.7 cm; Width: 27.8 cm; Depth 1.7 cm
The Fitzwilliam Museum, EC.1-1938

Figure 5.53
Amulet adorned with Hebrew blessing and surmounted by dolphins
Sixteenth century
Italy
Bronze, cast and gilt
Height: 6.6 cm; Width 5.6 cm
The Stieglitz Collection, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, B86.0255; 103/958

Conclusion

Prayers Materialized

Figure 6.1
Drug Jar (Side A and B)
Deruta, Umbria
Fifteenth century
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
The Victoria and Albert Museum, 1117-1904

Figure 6.2
Plate
Workshop of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli
c. 1500-1525
Gubbio (perhaps), Umbria
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*) with lustre
22.3 x 3.2 cm
The British Museum, 1855,0313.5

Figure 6.3
Box
Fifteenth century
Italy
Leather (*cuir bouilli*) over turned-wood core
6.4 x 9.8 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 26.284.2a, b

Figure 6.4
Box
Late fifteenth century
Italy
Leather (tooled) over wooden core
11 x 27.6 x 19.4 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.55

Figure 6.5
Dish (bowl)
Workshop of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli
1530
Gubbio, Umbria
23.4 x 6.5 cm
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*) with lustre
The British Museum, 1878,1230.394

Figure 6.6
Dish
c. 1500
Faenza
Tin-glazed earthenware (*maiolica*)
32 cm
The Victoria & Albert Museum, 1221A-1901

Figure 6.7
Globe
Fifteenth-century or later
Italian, possibly Deruta
Tin-glazed earthenware
(*maiolica*)
15.2 x 15.9 x 15.9 cm
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, 41.72.

Figure 6.8
Vase
c. 1520
Deruta, Italy
tin-glazed earthenware
(*maiolica*) with lustre
26.4 x 25.7 x 18.4 cm
The Metropolitan Museum of
Art, 04.9.24

Figure 6.9
Bowl
c. 1500
Venice
Glass, gilded
Height 6 cm; Diameter 15.5 cm
The British Museum, S.367

Figure 6.10
Bowl
c. 1480-1510
Veneto, Possibly Padua
Glazed and incised earthenware
Diameter: 10.9 cm; Height 6 cm
The British Museum, 1893,0909.2

Figure 6.11
Cassone
Sixteenth century
Northern Italy
Carved wood (noce d'India)
Height 48.5 cm; Length; 164 cm; Width 47.5 cm
Palazzo Madama, Torino, inv. 1770/L

Figure 6.12
Cassone (coffer)
c. 1540-1560
Northern Italy (Veneto)
Inlaid with geometrical patterns in wood and ivory
The Victoria & Albert Museum 7822-1861

Figure 6.13
Four knives inscribed with musical notation (Side A-Benediction, top; Side B-Grace, bottom)
Sixteenth century
France (possibly) for use in Italy
Incised steel blades, ivory and ebony handles
Musée de la Renaissance – Château d'Écouen:
[a] *Superius* (ivory handle): Cl. 22.209
[b] *Contratenor* (ebony handle): Cl. 22.205 C
[c] *Tenor* (ebony handle): Cl. 22.205 A
[d] *Bassus* (ivory handle): Cl. 22.207