

*Paragone: Past and Present:*  
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**Four Abstracts (Full Articles) for First Issue of the Journal**  
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**1. Brian D. Steele, Texas Tech University**  
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**Title:** Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow*, 'Meditational Poesia,' and the *Imitatione de Cristo*.

**Abstract:** This essay examines Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna of the Meadow* as a "meditational poesia," focusing first upon formal aspects that differentiate embracing landscape from figural group. With regard to the latter, Bellini's conception creates a sense of existing "in the world, not of it" (Jn 17:16) and conjoins multiple Madonna types, including the Madonna of Humility, the Pietà, and the Throne of Wisdom, in an evocative image capable of stimulating a variety of meditative devotions on the figures themselves, while also rife with implications for spiritualized readings of the landscape beyond. Second, I scrutinize Bellini's approach to this landscape and its contrasting staffage that elicits contemplative reflection. I contend that Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatione de Cristo* (Venice, 1488) provides thematic structures that most closely align with those characterizing Bellini's painting and intimate the artist's recourse to the treatise, a claim that engages multiple contestations with regard to devotional treatises that may have stimulated the artist.

Paolo Sanvito has elucidated late-15<sup>th</sup> century devotional tendencies at Venice in the context of the *devotio moderna* and Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* in a study that is best construed as explaining the reception of Giovanni Bellini's works dating to c. 1464-75. Bellini, whose literacy did not encompass fluent Latin, was unlikely himself to have inspected the *Imitatio* prior to its publication in Italian translation at Venice in 1488. His interest in the *Imitatione de Cristo* might be presumed on the basis of professional affiliation with the congregation of S. Giobbe and membership in the Scuola Piccola of San Cristoforo dei Mercanti at Sta. Maria dell'Orto since both churches adumbrated principles of the *Imitation of Christ*. In order to support my contention that the *Imitatione* engaged Bellini's attention, I probe both the treatise's form and its spiritual and thematic precepts for affinities with the artist's approach to typical landscape structures and distribution of sacral referents in the *Madonna of the Meadow*. However, also essential is evaluation of these features in relation to the themes and structures of two alternative devotional treatises that have been adduced as potential sources for the *Madonna of the Meadow*. Published in 1494, the *Giardino de Oratione fructuoso* begins with admonition

to imitate Christ and positions the reader as pilgrim (*peregrino*), but presents a structured series of meditations marked by recurring references to flowery gardens replete with unspecified fructiferous trees whose bounty the soul desires. In turn, gardens and fruits establish generalized touchstones from which to elaborate virtues, God and Virgin as exemplars of perfect virtue, and meditations on contrasting topics including death, purgatory, Hell, and Last Judgment. The *Giardino* ultimately provides an impetus for contemplation of Virgin, Christ, Passion, and Celestial City; however, neither do the generalized references to verdure accord with Bellini's imagery, nor does a structured sequence of devotional meditations coordinate well with a meandering visual journey through the landscape plain. Upon initial inspection, the *Monte del Oratione* (1493) introduces intriguing thematic similarities since Venetian devotional culture often identified physical with spiritual ascent and mountain as locus of spiritual refinement. The *Monte* begins by praising the Corpus Domini born of Mary and exalting nature's magnificence as God's handiwork, but then once again organizes meditations leading inexorably toward heavenly light and the mount as court of God. Individual exercises urge the devotee to acquire humility and obedience, to purge sin and acquire virtues, and to make a garden of the soul, again described vaguely as a perfumed garden offering sweet fruit and situated within a grove. This spiritual "orto" constitutes only a brief respite for the soul's cohabitation with its spouse Jesus before proceeding to densely forested fountain. Subsequent chapters prescribe ruminations on tree and fountain, love of God that inflames the soul, modes of prayer, and celestial vision that effects union with God. Although the *Monte*'s references to humility and renunciation of world suit Bellini's seated Madonna and mid-distant sojourn, nonetheless its verbiage overwhelms Bellini's imagery; moreover, insistent progression toward a singular goal wherein the garden exists as interlude en route to contemplation of forest, ascent of mountain, and experience of celestial vision conforms neither to the *Madonna of the Meadow* nor to the *Imitation of Christ*.

By contrast, the *Madonna of the Meadow* incorporates a principal figural group that evokes the sense of spiritual withdrawal from worldly action which typifies the *Imitatione*'s devotional attitude, while the treatise's form, recalling a *rapiaria* or compendium of spiritual sayings, parallels Bellini's conjoining of landscape vignettes multivalent in their potential significance. The relationships between the *Imitatione de Cristo* and the *Madonna of the Meadow* consist in affinities of theme, structure, and spirituality, but firmly situate the painting within Venetian devotional currents c. 1500; moreover, so striking are these affinities that they suggest the likelihood of Bellini's recourse to precepts adumbrated as related but discrete meditations in the *Imitatione de Cristo*.

**Short Bio:** Brian D. Steele, Ph.D. University of Iowa, with specialization in Venetian Painting of the Renaissance, is Associate Professor of Art History in the School of Art at Texas Tech University. His research focuses on 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venice: recent investigation of works by Giovanni Bellini, Titian, and Paolo Veronese engages issues of iconography, site, function, and viewer reception. He has presented papers at meetings of the Renaissance Society of America, the Sixteenth Century Studies and Conference, and the South-Central Renaissance Conference, and has authored essays in such venues as *Studies in Iconography*, the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, and *Source: Notes in the History of Art*; recent publications include "Clarissa Strozzi: Titian's Portrait of the Bride as Young Girl," in *The Early Modern Child in Art and History* (2015); "The Politics of Representation: Paolo Veronese, Benedetto da Mantova, the *Wedding at Cana* for S. Giorgio Maggiore," *Iconocrazia* 10 (2016); and "Force Constrained: Hercules in

Sixteenth-Century Venice,” *Iconocrazia* 13 (2018). A project forthcoming in *Iconocrazia* is “Open Secrets: Allah’s Presence in Mantegna’s *S. Zeno Altarpiece*.”

**2. Charles Burroughs, SUNY Geneseo**  
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**Title:** Boundary Stones and the Rebellion of Nature: Reflections on a Presumed Statue of Terminus in a Roman Sculpture Garden

**Abstract:** Renaissance designers made lavish use of anthropomorphic supports, including caryatids, both in the place of columns or as ornamental features. A common type, known as a “term,” consisted of a human upper body conjoined, below the waist, with a post or pillar; terms were not strictly distinguished from herms, consisting of a head above a post. On occasion terms might relate to the eponymous figure of Terminus, the Roman god of boundaries, which Erasmus of Rotterdam adopted as his personal emblem, after receiving an antique engraved gem in Rome with the motif of a bearded head on a block. But Erasmus’s emblem later featured a youthful figure, inspired, I suggest in this paper, by a composite figure of a torso on a block in a Roman sculpture collection. Erasmus’s reflections on the theme of Terminus, not least in relation to human mortality, owe much to his enthusiasm for the poems of Horace, for whom the setting of limits was a moral imperative, but who also played with the popular theme of a utopian landscape lacking boundaries, often associated with the nature god Pan. In the memorial window designed by Hans Holbein for his friend Erasmus, the various associations of Terminus converge, in a complex, even abundant image of the humanist stroking the hair of the youthful god between term figures marking the portal into the world beyond, but also ornamental elements that hint at an abundance without boundaries.

**Short Bio:** Since 2014, after retirement as Smith Professor of Humanities in the departments of Classics and Art History at Case Western Reserve University, Charles Burroughs has been Adjunct Professor of Art History at SUNY Geneseo. He has degrees from Balliol College of Oxford University (BA) and the Warburg Institute, University of London (MPhil, PhD); his publications include *From Signs to Design: Environmental Process and Reform in Early Renaissance Rome* (MIT Press, 1990) and *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade* (Cambridge University Press, 2002 and 2009), as well as articles on Alberti, Michelangelo, Palladio, Sixtus V, and Botticelli. Recent publications include the articles “Botticelli’s Stone: Giorgio Vasari, Telling Stories, and the Power of Matter” in *Artibus et Historiae*, and “Fluid City: River Gods in Rome and Contested Topography,” in *Mediaevalia*. He is completing a book on Botticelli’s *Primavera* as a political painting. Representing very different interests, his article “Honor, Classical Architecture, and the Issue of Slavery,” dealing in part with Alexander Hamilton’s house in Harlem, is included in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of the Classical Tradition in Architecture* (2019).

**3. Michael J. Giordano, Wayne State University**  
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**Title:** The Medieval Heraldic Shield and its Relation to the  
*Blasons anatomiques du corps féminin* (1543)

**Abstract:** In heraldic terminology the French verb *blasonner* signifies the act of describing the signs or charges that designate the referents of such ornaments such as families, individuals, groups, or institutions. In sixteenth-century France the French poet Clément Marot composed in the style of a Petrarchan love poem an epigram titled “Du Beau Tétin” (1535). This thirty-four line epigram minutely described an isolated part of the beloved’s body--the nipple or as some translate it, the breast. (*Marot: oeuvres complètes*, ed. François Rigolot, I, p. 454) After having invited his French colleagues to imitate him, collections of such poetry became very popular up to 1568-70. In these *recueils* each body part was illustrated and deployed in head to foot order followed by a poem that with devouring eyes praised, analyzed, and described the bodily feature. Each line unfolds in vivid metaphors that both color the illustration and tease the reader’s attention. Though the French noun *blason* could designate many types of vivid description and though Marot was not completely original, the collections that included and emulated his “Beau Tétin” solidified the close connection between the general sense of the word *blason*, the act of describing a heraldic shield, and of substituting parts of the woman’s body for the shield’s charges. The most attractively produced edition of such collections appeared in 1543 titled *Blasons anatomiques du corps féminins* (Paris: Pour Charles Langelier) whose most authoritative current edition is that edited by Julien Goeyu (Paris, 2016).

This chapter proposes to lay out the structural relations between the heraldic shield and the anatomical blasons where the fundamental components of the first strike up analogies with the second. The starting point will be two anatomical blasons by the French poet Maurice Scève, one on the neck (“La Gorge”), the other on the forehead (“Le Front”), These encapsulate key theoretical relationships between the art of the shield and the poetry of anatomical, partial wholes. The most obvious starting point is the fact locations on the shield itself are technically named by parts of the human anatomy such as the head (“le chef”), the left side (“le flanc senestre”), the right side (“le flanc dextre”) the heart (“le coeur”), the navel (“le nombril”) and the foot (“le pié). [Michel Pastoureau, *Traité de l’héraldique*, 98-99]. Like the woman’s body, the shield is technically divided into divisions, partitions, and compartments whose basic geometrical forms correspond to the four types of blow that could be delivered by the knight against his adversary: *parti* (high to low), *coupé* (“horizontal), *taillé* (“ from right to left descending), and *tranché* (left to right descending).[Geneviève D’Haucourt, Georges Durivault, *Le Blason*, pp. 46-48]. As the anatomical blason is a living vivisection one could multiply these simple divisions by two which gives a shield in quarters.

The idea of compartments can extend to isolated partial wholes that are symbolized on the shield in stylized metonymies such as the heart in the form of a tear, the eyes of a face looking outward, the palm of a hand, an arm surging out from the side of the shield, and the bust of a head and neck. [D’Harcourt and Durivault, 68].

According to J. P. Brooke-Little [*An Heraldic Alphabet*,] “anything placed on the field [of a shield] is a charge: thus a shield with three lions on it is said to be charged with three lions, each lion being a separate charge.” (p. 19). Scève describes the forehead of the woman in heraldic terms as “La table d’attente” meaning that like blank shield it is ready to accept all the praise and metaphorical symbolism including coloration crafted by the poet. I would call this the Pygmalion style. In other words the body part as illustrated as an anatomical entity is likened to a living mannequin on which the poet-lover in his accompanying poem projects a theoretically unlimited series of compliments. Like heraldic shields these metaphors can be gold/blue,

gold/red, blue/silver, silver/sable. The blasons' charges often have a mannerist cast for Scève will refer to the beloved's neck as a column, sacred *armoire*, altar, or checky shield "échiqueté."

One of the most important analogies between act of describing the components of the shield and the act of describing the features of the woman's body part is their deictic function. Both have as an extremely important aim to point out, identify, designate, show, and distinguish. In other words they both define or describe by showing or pointing. For example the identification of combatants and the description of heraldic shields are verbalized and pointed out scrupulously regarding each significant ornament to confirm the identity of the *titulaire*. Cécile Alduy has studied the art of the anatomical blason as the "archaeology of the close up" (l' "archéologie du gros plan"). In an obscene anatomical blason on the "Con" (the first of three) we see a picture of the woman's vagina that is wittily detailed in the accompanying poem pointing to its interior color, its "siege" or "seat," and its form and thickness---among many other traits.

The study of heraldry considers the concept of the *écu* as a whole. Although the contents of the shield contain its fundamental structures, historical records show the use of ornaments adjacent to and exterior to the inside of the shield. Fox-Davies names this "the complete achievement" used "to signify the whole, but which can correctly be used to signify anything which a man is entitled to represent of an amorial character" (pp. 46-47). These can consist of supports like animals real or fantastic, plants, trees or primitive men holding massive clubs. The irony is that although the essential constituents of the shield are internal to its boundaries these external elements also give additional information such as a motto about the *titulaire*. The whole thus includes what is fundamental (the interior of the shield) and what can be supplementary. In the *Blasons anatomiques* one finds a similar practice since towards the end of the sequence of individual poems depicting head to toe body parts there is a passing-in-review of all the body parts previously blasoned contained in one poem called *Blason du corps* (*Blason on the body*). But like the relation between internal and external signifying elements of the *écu*, these body parts are not integrated into a whole but juxtaposed to one another in a list or summary of individual parts already treated separately in each illustration-poem complex. As in the heraldic shield having interior necessary components and external supports there is an assemblage of all the body parts not a single, complete whole in the sense of single body parts linked to whole. Nor is there a single illustration that would form a complete, unified body of the woman.

The paper ends with the problems brought out by the comparison between anatomical blasons and heraldic shields and also suggests a positive note. Is the body composed of partial wholes that form a "tout" or do the *blasonneurs* attribute enormous powers to the individual body part that suggest self-sufficiency in the part? After all this is the optimism of the Renaissance.

**Short Bio:** Michael Giordano, Ph.D. University of Minnesota, is Professor of French, specialization in French Renaissance Poetry and Emblematics, author of articles on Maurice Scève, Joachim du Bellay, Michel de Montaigne, Béroalde de Verville, Agnolo Bronzino, the French emblem and *impresa*, recent papers and articles on the relations between the anatomical blasons and the Greek Anthology, the Latin Elegiacs, and Neo-Latin poetry. Book and article reviewer for *RSA*, *BHR*, *Emblematica*, and the Center for Renaissance Studies (University of Toronto). He is also the author of *The Art of Meditation and the French Renaissance Love Lyric* (Toronto, 2010), former member of International Advisory Board for the Society of Emblem Studies, Wayne State University awards for excellence in teaching, graduate student mentoring, Board of Governor's award for book, and Ph. D. Director of Program in Modern Languages.

Current book project: *The French Anatomical Blason and the Body of the Women in the Greek Anthology, the Roman Elegiacs, Petrarch, Neo-Latin poetry, the Heraldic Shield.*

#### 4. **Brendan Cole, Independent Scholar**

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**Title:** Jean Delville's 'L'Allégorie de l'Enfer' (c.1890) — or, Azrael and the Death of Solomon

**Abstract:** Jean Delville was one of the most talented artists of his generation, producing a prolific body of paintings, drawings, poetry and essays. In this article the author explores the relationship between a previously unknown drawing by the artist, recently come to light, and a long narrative-poem published in one of his earliest anthologies; *Les Horizons Hanté* (1892), titled 'Azrael'. These early works reveal themes that were to become a mainstay of the artist's *oeuvre* concerning the mystery of death, transcendence and the path of the Initiate.

**Short Bio:** Brendan Cole is an independent Art Historian and artist who specializes in late-nineteenth century non-realist art. He has published a detailed monograph on the art and writings of Jean Delville (*Jean Delville: Art between Nature and the Absolute*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) and has published widely in leading international journals (*Art Bulletin, Artibus et Historiae*) on Jean Delville, Fernand Khnopff and Nicholas Poussin. He completed his Doctorate at Christ Church, Oxford, on aspects of the work of Jean Delville, and tutored at the University of Oxford and the Open University before becoming a School Master at Eton College, which followed on from his work as Keeper of Collections at Knowsley Hall, the home of the Earl of Derby.

### **Three Abstracts (Notes) for First Issue of the Journal**

#### 1. **Nadia Raimos, University of Genoa**

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**Title:** The frescoes in the crypt of St. Adam: the nineteenth-century interpretations of Angelo Maria Rocchia and the differences with current studies.

**Abstract:** The research to be presented concerns the bibliographic and historiographical studies on the frescoed vaults in the crypt of St. Adam, which is located in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Guglionesi (CB). The environment has never been the subject of a detailed and in-depth study, in fact, it has been mentioned sporadically in some volumes of Molise art and history. The most ancient bibliographic information that can be recovered is reported in the nineteenth-century text by canon Angelo Maria Rocchia (Guglionesi, 1830-1907), *La Cronistoria di Guglionesi* and the three glorious translations of S. Adamo Abate, his protector. In his *Cronistoria*, the canon mentions the historical events that led to the setting up of the crypt and the changes in the pictorial decoration of the crypt.

The research has as its starting point the hypotheses of canon Rocchia, which are used to carry out a more in-depth and timely investigation of the crypt and the history of the frescoes, bringing to light the similarities and differences in the interpretation of the pictorial decorations.

**Short Bio:** Nadia Raimo was born in Naples in 1995. In 2020 she obtained a master's degree in Art History with highest grade at the University of Molise, discussing a thesis on the frescoes in the crypt of Sant' Adamo in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Guglionesi. During her university studies she has been involved in various excavation activities in archaeological areas and, in the last period, she has been involved in the organization of museum activities related to school and art. From the November 2020 she is a PhD student in Digital Humanities at the University of Genoa.

2. **Stefania Vai, University of Edinburgh**  
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**Abstract: Missing**

**Short Bio:** Stefania Vai a doctoral student at the University of Edinburgh. Received an MA from the The Warburg Institute's Art History, Curatorship and Renaissance Culture. She received her BS/BA in History of Art from the University of Rome, La Sapienza, and her MA in History of Art from the University of Rome, La Sapienza. She is a Renaissance and Baroque scholar. In 2014, she obtained a Certificate of merit awarded by The University of Rome, La Sapienza, by way of confirmation of a high level of competence and outstanding academic skills.

Publications include: 'Gli affreschi di palazzo Astalli', *Bollettino dei musei comunali di Roma*, Rome 2015, XXIX, pp. 5-16 and 'I soffitti lignei dell'appartamento nuovo del cardinale Flavio Chigi a Formello. Tra studi di ornitologia e passione per l'uccellazione' in *Mostrare il sapere* ed C. Volpi, in press.

3. **Emilie Passignat, University of Florence**  
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**Title:** History of Painters in Le Mousquetaire (1855)

**Abstract:** In Florence, where he stayed between 1840 and 1843, Alexandre Dumas was given a very prestigious editorial commission: to illustrate the collection of the Grand Duke's Gallery. The French famous writer delved into Florentine historiography, writing a history of the Medici family, as well as a history of painting from the Egyptians to the present day, and an *Histoire des peintres*. Less of twenty years later, recovering some of these texts, he published *Trois maîtres*, in 1861, and *Italiens et Flamands*, in 1862. It is impossible to understand the evolution of his selection of artists without taking into account an intermediate stage that has so far been forgotten: the publication of his *Histoire des peintres* in the feuilleton format in the pages of *Le Mousquetaire*, a journal founded and edited by Dumas himself between 1853 and 1857. This note therefore aims to briefly set out the history of this work, proposing some elements of commentary, programmatic of a necessary deeper study of this interesting case of pseudo-scientific popularisation, spread by exploiting new channels of mass communication.

**Short Bio:** Émilie Passignat received her PhD in art history from the University of Pisa. Her research concerns artistic historiography, theories of art, sculpture and decorative cycles, with the background question of the reception and description of the work of art, as well as cultural exchanges in Modern Europe. Part of her latest contributions focuses on Giorgio Vasari's *Ragionamenti*, Palazzo Vecchio and Medici's Florence. Recent essays deals also with the sources for art history (*Il Cinquecento. Le fonti per la storia dell'arte*, Rome 2017), the question of visual norm, the evolution of artistic vocabulary and the construction of art history as a discipline (*Nello specchio della traduzione: l'ecfrasi longhiana alla prova della lingua francese*, «Giornale storico della letteratura italiana», CXXXVI: 656 (2019), 498-521). She collaborated with various Italian and French universities, for research programs and for teaching. She is currently adjunct professor at the University of Florence.