THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PRUDENCE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ART
AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE VENETO: FROM MYTHOS TO LOGOS

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the connection between prudence and visual culture in the sixteenth-century Veneto. More specifically, I examine the iconographic transformation of the figure of Minerva, and how, through an adaptation from her mythical origins to a more astronomical association, the nature of prudence identified with the goddess became incorporated in art and architectural theory during the period. This study draws on Plato’s conceptions of myth and the impact of the Platonic academies, as well as treatises of architecture, and navigation. The role of poetry in the Platonic academies in Vicenza is also considered in order to reconstruct how debates about prudence and myth during the period were converted into visual forms.

To begin, Anselmo Canera’s fresco of Prudence in the Palazzo Thiene (1542) in Vicenza is analyzed for how the personification of the virtue acquires a cosmological significance. Next, Daniele Barbaro’s villa at Maser (1558) is examined to explore the articulation of prudence in architecture. Drawing on Barbaro’s definition of prudence as a temporal conversation – where the present is in communication with past and future, Chapter Two considers relations between time and space in his villa. Chapter Three investigates the Villa Rotonda (1570) and argues that Andrea Palladio’s developing interest in prudence can be aligned with the plan of the building, and the choices it offers for moving through its interior spaces. Focusing on the tricipitium, an emblem for prudence and Titian’s Allegory of Prudence, this dissertation concludes by considering how the emblem and painting elicited engagement with the complex meanings that accrued to the virtue.

By evaluating how pictorial and architectural representations of prudence substituted for written interpretations of the virtue for sixteenth-century Venetian humanists, this
dissertation considers how visual imagery was sometimes perceived to be a better vehicle than the written word when it came to philosophical debates.
Preface

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Michael Trevor Coughlin.
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my partner, Andrew Bruce Cameron, for standing by me every step of the way.
Introduction

Deep in the heart of the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza (1548-1555), on the ceiling of the Sala degli Dei – the main guest reception room – Anselmo Canera painted an unusual skirmish (Figure 1). In the center of the fresco a woman in a red dress, with one breast exposed, sits atop a writhing snake. While the woman seems to be dominating the creature, her victory has yet to be determined since the head of the snake turns toward her in one final attempt to force her off its back. The pair is positioned on a cloud surrounded by a cylindrical band containing the twelve signs of the zodiac, suggesting that the confrontation takes place at a cosmological level, adding an apocalyptic edge to the scene given the close relationship between the cosmos and God during the period.¹ In her left hand the woman holds a mirror as her only weapon. During the sixteenth century in Italy the mirror was often associated with the virtue prudence.

The virtue of prudence observes a tripartite time, a temporality that can also be experienced in a mirror. Often described as the practical reason that guides our choices when making conscious decisions that affect the future, prudence is rooted in a careful consideration of the present moment and the consequences of our actions, and may be defined as the use of the past in the present in order to prepare for the future.² A similar

² This definition of prudence in the sixteenth century was likely derived from Thomas Aquinas, whose treatise on Prudence during the fourteenth century (Summa Theologica II-II Q 47-56) borrows from Cicero’s definition of Prudentia: “Prudence is the knowledge of what is good, what is bad and what is neither good nor bad. Its parts are memory, intelligence and foresight. Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it acertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs.” Cicero, De inventione II, liii, 160, ed. and trans. M. H. Hubbel (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 326-27.
preparedness may be offered by a mirror, which allows vision of what remains behind in the past, of what is in the present, and of what lies ahead in the future. By depicting the woman armed with only a mirror, Canera’s painting acknowledges the role prudence plays in her struggle with the snake, a detail that raises several questions.

Why was prudence one of the primary themes on the ceiling of what was the most important gathering space for visitors to the palace? How would the image have functioned for the Thiene family and their guests? Prudence was much discussed, written about and deliberated on in Italy by figures such as Coluccio Salutati, Giovanni Pontano and Niccolò Machiavelli, all of whom considered it the most important of the cardinal virtues and one that guided the other virtues like temperance and justice through careful deliberation. Depictions of the virtues have a long history, but Canera’s fresco suggests that art participated in debates about prudence by inviting interpretation. The ceiling in the Palazzo Thiene is one of four case studies in this dissertation that argues for the formative role of debates about prudence in art and architecture in the sixteenth-century Veneto.

Prudence played a crucial role in how art and architecture were defined during the period. In his I dieci libri dell’architettura of 1556, Daniele Barbaro highlights the value of prudence for the arts by describing the importance of judgment for architects. As he writes: “Judgment is a matter of prudence; prudence compares preceding things with the moments, and evaluates things to come. Preceding things one has in memory.”3 To be prudent, Barbaro maintains, demands a presence of mind that compares the past with the present, and

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3 Daniele Barbaro, I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio, tradutti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto patriarca d' Aquileggia (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1556), Proemio, 12.
considers how the present will influence the future. What potential effects this theory may have had on architectural practice is one of the questions considered in this thesis.

A year later in his *Dialogo della pittura* of 1557 Ludovico Dolce argued that prudence plays a decisive role in guiding the artist’s ability to judge from practical experience. Elaborating on the argument, he distinguishes between the agency of the intellect and the eye as a means of proper judgment. For Dolce: “the eye cannot be deceived in its perception. The intellect, on the other hand, certainly can be, and very often is, when overshadowed by ignorance or attachment.”⁴ In contrast to the eye, which cannot be misled, the intellect is more easily deceived when making judgment calls. As David Summers has shown, the distinction between the eye and the intellect made by Dolce is likely derived from Thomas Aquinas who distinguishes between two approaches to prudence: natural prudence and true prudence.⁵ Aquinas argues that, unlike true prudence, natural prudence is based entirely on experience and circumstances, ignorant of the higher good.⁶ By privileging the eye when it comes to proper judgment, was Dolce intimating that the visual provides a better standard than the word by which to understand prudent behavior?

Dolce’s argument in favor of the eye over the intellect suggests that Canera’s visual representation of Prudence in the Palazzo Thiene may have been seen as a better means to foster discussion about the virtue than what could be learned from reading from a text. Indeed, the scene depicted in the fresco thwarts easy iconographic interpretation, thereby encouraging viewers to engage with the subject matter. The female figure in Canera’s

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⁶ Ibid. See also, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II.57.5
painting possesses accoutrements associated with prudence. However the astronomical setting points to an identification of the figure with Minerva, or Pallas, who was increasingly associated with the virtue of prudence, as introduced below and argued further in Chapter One. As the goddess of wisdom, Minerva benefited from prudence, which was a ubiquitous virtue in sixteenth-century discourse on topics including art, navigation, and politics. The appeal of the fresco to viewers to interpret its iconography warrants further consideration before turning to the case studies and the thesis as a whole.

**The Relationship between Minerva and Prudence**

For many in the period Minerva was increasingly recognized as the goddess of prudence, as readers became introduced to ancient texts in the Renaissance. The correlation between Minerva and prudence had been made since the time of Homer. In his commendation of Ulysses in the *Odyssey*, Homer teaches that prudence, which he refers to as Minerva, had been the hero’s constant companion. Still in the medieval period individuals like John of Salisbury recognized how Homer taught that “prudence, which after poetic custom he calls by the name Minerva” was essential to the story’s plot. However, it was Angelo Poliziano, who translated Homer’s works from the Greek into Latin in the late fourteenth century, who made the ancient author’s texts more accessible to Renaissance readers. In the sixteenth century, Homer was revered for being the first poet of the epic genre. His style and ideas were emulated in the writings of Giangiorgio Trissino, mentor to

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9 James K. Coleman, “Furor and Philology in the Poetics of Angelo Poliziano,” in *New Worlds and the Italian Renaissance: Contributions to the History of European Intellectual*
Andrea Palladio, and discussed in his *La Sofonisba* and *Italia liberata dai Goti*.\(^\text{10}\) As Franco Barbieri notes, Trissino captured the independent spirit of the protagonists of the *Italia liberata* through their exercise of prudence,\(^\text{11}\) but arguably it is through the angel Palladio (a name derived from Pallas-Minerva) that prudence comes to the forefront. In Dolce’s sixteenth-century translation of the *Odyssey*, printed in Venice in 1573, he makes the correlation between Minerva and prudence explicit arguing “anyone who wishes to embark on a venture with counsel needs to be in the company of Minerva, in other words prudence [Minerva, cioè la prudenza].”\(^\text{12}\)

In this dissertation it will be argued that as the works of ancient authors were made more available, the correlation between Minerva and prudence became so familiar that the boundaries between visual personifications of Prudence, and the ancient goddess Minerva, became blurred. For example, in Giambattista Castello’s Villa delle Peschiere in Genoa, scenes from the *Odyssey* painted in 1560 in the Salone di Ulisse illustrate how the deeds of Ulysses could only have been achieved through the prudence derived from Minerva’s

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interventions. As Marco Lorandi indicates, a similar association between Minerva and prudence was made in Giovanni Boccaccio’s Genealogia degli Dei.

The personification of prudence has various iconographic attributes. As Liana de Girolami Cheney points out, Prudence was often depicted as a woman with a double or triple head, holding a mirror or a snake. Alternatively, she could be portrayed carrying a compass or a book alluding to the Bible. Douglas P. Lackey’s study of this point is particularly interesting because it was in the late fourteenth century that he observes how Prudence undergoes a transformation due to the unimpeachable role Thomas Aquinas gives prudence in the Summa Theologica during the same period. As Lackey notes, instead of the customary mirror and snake, Prudence holds calipers, an instrument of astronomy. As Robert Place has noted, calipers often accompanied astronomers in illustrations of the Tarot during the period. Albrecht Dürer’s drawing from the "Tarot" of Prudence (Figure 2) from 1524 illustrates this point. Here Prudence is depicted with the faces, holding a mirror in one hand, and calipers in the other, standing on a dragon. This shift in iconography indicates that astronomy played a role in transformations of Prudence, and warrants a reconsideration of the iconographic tradition and its interpretations. This is important because a similar

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13 Marco Lorandi, Il mito di Ulisse nella pittura a fresca del cinquecento italiano (Milan, Jaca Book SpA, 1995), 263.
14 Ibid. See also Giovanni Boccaccio, La Genealogia de gli dei de gentili, trans. Giuseppe Betussi da Bassano (Venice, 1581), 99r and 163r.
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
orientation is also suggested in Canera’s fresco, where the female figure with the mirror that identifies Prudence is depicted in an astronomical setting, which, as we shall see, is associated with Minerva as I will argue below.

However, such associations between Prudence and Pallas/Minerva were already well established in the sixteenth century. Andrea Alciati included ten emblems for prudence in his *Emblematum liber*, often emphasizing the correlation between the virtue and Minerva.\(^{20}\) Alciati’s nineteenth emblem, *Prudens magis quam loquax*, describes the picture as follows: “For its arms Athens has an owl depicted which, loved by Athena (Pallas) as the most prudent birds signifies the man who is wise but not eloquent.”\(^{21}\) In Emblem 23, *Vino prudentiam augeri*, the epigram reads: “Pallas Athena as the goddess of the arts and sciences represents the prudent intellect.”\(^{22}\) Focusing on the iconography of the Greek and Roman gods in his *Le imagini degli Dei degli antichi* of 1556, Vincenzo Cartari notes how Minerva “brings prudence to the intellects of the mortals.”\(^{23}\) For Cartari, Minerva was “the esteemed goddess of prudence,”\(^{24}\) and the popularity of his work, published in Venice, suggests that this was a common correlation. Benedetto Varchi also made a similar conclusion in the minutes from a meeting of the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, as we shall see in Chapter Two.

If the female figure in Canera’s fresco would have engaged viewers in discussions about the virtue of prudence, partly through the association with Minerva as I argue in Chapter One, this interaction can be attributed to the potential of visual imagery to solicit

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21 Ibid. See also, Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum liber* (Lyons, 1543).
22 Ibid.
23 Vincenzo Cartari, *Le imagini con le de i dei de gli antichi* (Venice, 1556), 19.
24 Ibid., 70. “Minerva fu la stimate Dea della prudenza.”
interpretation. And this potential increased with the interest in myths by artists and patrons. For artists of the period, depicting the Olympian goddess would have been problematic since the myths in which she appeared were subject to various interpretations, and each retelling or documentation of a myth from ancient sources came with its own set of distinct parameters. It was Minerva, along with Juno, who waged war against the Trojans for Paris’s judgment that Venus was the most beautiful among goddesses in Homer’s *Iliad*. On the other hand, the *Odyssey* ends with Minerva shouting, “Refrain from war, ye men of Ithica,” and it is she who convinces both sides to make covenants of peace. Minerva could therefore symbolize war or peace, and thus the particular features and objects with which she was depicted helped Renaissance viewers to establish the specific identity of Minerva that the artist or patron wished to portray. For example, armour and a lance were sure demonstrations of her military prowess, while accoutrements such as an olive branch or an owl denoted her support of peace through wisdom.

For artists and humanists who were just beginning to understand how Minerva had been rendered in ancient texts that were becoming more accessible during the period, as Rudolf Wittkower notes, her contradictory nature would have been troublesome, especially since the literary and pictorial tradition of depicting Minerva in the Middle Ages shows the goddess in full armour as an aggressive warrior. This tradition is still observed in Andrea Mantegna’s *Pallas Expelling the Vices* (Figure 3) painted for Isabella d’Este’s *studiolo* in Mantua in 1498, where the goddess appears as the fourth cardinal virtue, Prudence, throwing

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her adversaries into chaos. Wittkower also observes that it was during the Renaissance that Minerva begins to undergo a pictorial transformation where she sheds her military attire, often removing her helmet, to become *Minerva Pacifica*.28

Several visual images from the period help illustrate Minerva’s metamorphoses. In Jacopo Caraglio’s engraving of *Minerva* of 1540 she still holds the *aegis* that helps identify her, but she is shown nude, a transformation that completely contradicts pictorial representations of the goddess from Antiquity.29 In Antonio Correggio’s *Allegory of Virtue* (Figure 4), also painted for Isabella d’Este in the late 1520s, Minerva appears with her helmet removed, a broken staff, and with her *aegis*-bearing shield placed on the ground, illustrating how she overcame the cruelties of fate armed only with prudence.30

Approximately two decades later, Canera painted his fresco on the ceiling of the Sala degli Dei in the palace of Gian Galeazzo Thiene, a close friend of Isabella’s husband. Unlike the paintings of Mantegna and Correggio, in which the narrative takes place against the customary backdrop of natural landscape for mythological scenes,31 in Canera’s painting the female figure appears in the cosmos. Given her association with prudence – with her mirror in hand, and the accompanying snake – ought she to be considered as part of the same transformation of Minerva and Prudence taking place at the time? What could Minerva’s

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peacekeeping role have to do with astronomy? Perhaps more importantly, what role might prudence have played in the transformation? What is argued in this dissertation is that during the period it was recognized that for the ancients there was a goddess who ruled over the virtue and rather than mere personifications of Prudence – with elements like a mirror to elucidate the temporal use of the virtue – something more could be learned from the attributes of the goddess Minerva herself. Minerva’s dual nature suggests that there were perhaps two different kinds of prudence.

The Duality of Prudence

A differentiation between two different ways of practicing prudence had been made since the Hellenistic period. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato makes a distinction between two kinds of prudence: divine prudence, and worldly prudence, which is allied with “a stingy way of doling out benefits,” and “will breed in your soul those vulgar qualities that the populace applaud as virtue.”32 Aristotle believed that prudence could be used for the advancement toward a reasonable end, but in adopting means to an end as an approach a person may proceed morally or immorally. When Albertus Magnus commented on Aristotle, he differentiated between the two ethical kinds of prudence to which Aristotle referred: animal – or natural – prudence, and true prudence. Elaborating on Magnus, Thomas Aquinas rejected natural prudence on the ground that it could be used toward both good and bad ends. True prudence, for Aquinas, consisted of right activity,33 emphasizing the ethical nature of the

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virtue as tied to morality, and it was this kind prudence that prevailed in the Christianity of the Middle Ages.

With the rediscovery of ancient texts during the Renaissance, however, prudence was thrust into a confrontation between the two moral systems of Christianity and paganism, where the ways of practicing prudence could be defined subjectively – in terms of individual desire – and objectively – based on the needs of the collective. Prudential pursuits that cultivated self-interests, like those advocated by Niccolò Machiavelli, were on the rise during the period. These remained contrary to conceptions of prudence prescribed by Aquinas, who believed the true nature of prudence should be oriented towards a universal good and promote harmony. As Victoria Kahn suggests, the confrontation of these two incompatible moral systems led to the distinction between ethical prudence and political prudence. Ethically prudence could be used more objectively for the common good through negotiation, unlike the subjective Machiavellian variety of the virtue, which prioritized the political aspects of confrontation over cooperation, emphasizing subjective aims as a means to an end. Aquinas’s perception of the virtue was far more objective than that of Machiavelli, having articulated prudence through a broader synthesis of reason and faith.

The confrontation between two kinds of prudence raises some important questions. Given that prudence was advanced in art and architectural theory during the period, as elaborated throughout this thesis, did artists and architects engage with different understandings of the virtue? And would viewers of works of art, such as Canera’s fresco in the Palazzo Thiene, have contemplated the meaning of prudence advocated by Machiavelli or by Aquinas?
To pursue these questions, this dissertation explores how prudence was taken up in different ways as a theme in art and architectural thinking in Northern Italy during the period, theoretically, visibly and physically. It should be noted that my attention to the physical consequences of prudence diverges from materiality, since my interest here is how the subtlety of philosophical and theological debates about prudence are expressed in the content of works of art and architecture. Beginning with the mythological allegory of Prudence in the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene (c. 1548), this study explores how concerns with prudence were absorbed and transformed in the frescoed ceilings of Andrea Palladio’s early palazzi in Vicenza. Prudence was also a crucial component of architectural theory and practice in the Veneto of the sixteenth century as we have just seen. By examining Venetian patrician Daniele Barbaro’s villa at Maser (1556-58), this dissertation considers how Minerva, the goddess of prudence, continued to be a major preoccupation, though increasingly detached from her mythic origins, and how, through her relationship to astronomy, she underwent a transformation from prudence to time. Also explored is how the estate became a site where the confluence of prudence and architectural theory and practice was negotiated. The Villa Rotonda (1570), built by Palladio who worked with Barbaro at Maser, is also investigated to determine the possible role of prudence in its conception. This dissertation will conclude with an examination of Titian’s Allegory of Prudence (1565-70), and explore how the painting participates in debates about prudence by underscoring its duality. Completed around the same time as La Rotonda, Titian’s painting exemplifies how the different ways of practicing prudence continued to be debated in art theory.

Myth and the Arts: Review of the Scholarship

My research has shown that in the sixteenth century in Italy prudence was most often conceptualized through its relation to myth by means of Minerva, the goddess with which the virtue was associated. Myth offers a discursive framework through which to explore emerging debates about prudence, and access the different intellectual fields that deliberated over the value of the virtue. Myth is therefore central to my methodology, which involves analyzing how sixteenth-century artists and humanists engaged with it.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, however, many scholars have regarded mythological subjects in art in the Renaissance with skepticism. As Stephen Campbell points out, much of the suspicion stems from the fact that they have too often been discussed “in terms of their “literariness,” a negative characteristic that stands in opposition to “painterliness.”” Part of the problem with their literariness, Campbell suggests, lies in how myth is subject to numerous understandings, since there are as many opinions as ancient authors who wrote about them. In her study of depictions of classical myths in the Renaissance, Luba Freedman reconciles this problem by focusing on the renewed interest in the art of the ancient Greeks and Romans, arguing that painting replaced textual illustrations as the principal vehicle for visual representations of mythological subjects. The artists responsible for mythological paintings were also active players in a movement generated by humanists, a development in which works were commissioned on the basis of the careful reading of ancient texts that discussed mythological subjects. Artistic interpretations of myths were therefore a negotiation between the textual and the visual.

35 Campbell, The Cabinet of Eros, 8.
36 Freedman, Classical Myths, 3.
37 Ibid., 15.
When it comes to the literary sources for mythological subjects there were several options. For Freedman, by far the most influential classical text on the subject was Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. According to Campbell, however, by the end of the fifteenth century in Northern Italy it was Homer and Virgil who were considered the “fountainheads” of universal wisdom. This was particularly true in Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil. Plato’s influence is also worth considering, although he considered myth trivial fiction. He also resorted to myth as a way of explaining his theory of knowledge. Plato’s issue with the fictionality of myths was related to the writing of them, since it was in recording them in texts that the stories became detached from their true meaning. What has yet to be explored is how painting may have become preferred over writing as the medium that could best communicate myth as soulfully as it was originally intended. Much less has been said about the relationship between myth and architecture, a lacuna I seek to address here by demonstrating how it, too, participated in efforts to articulate the complexity of myths by other means.

Campbell’s study of the mythological allegories of Isabella d’Este’s *studiolo* in Mantua is significant for the way he situates the arrival of myth within the literary boundaries of the *studiolo*’s resuscitation of ancient texts. For Campbell, myth signifies an “other speech,” from which it is possible to extract dimensions of the Renaissance self that were otherwise difficult to express within the boundaries of the sacred and profane that pervaded

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38 Ibid.
40 Freedman, *Classical Myths*, 142.
42 Ibid.
Renaissance thought. What has not been sufficiently explored is how artists may have aimed to break free from the literary origins of myths so overwhelmed with iconographic noise, and let the artwork speak for itself not through an ‘other speech’ but through a remythicization that results in an articulation of the multitude of meanings of myth.

One of the most prolific literary sources for myths was poetry. Leonard Barkan suggests that innovation in the painting of mythological subjects during the Renaissance consisted in freeing myth from its allegorical and philosophical restrictions in order to evoke the senses instead. For Barkin, this new tradition favoured sensuality and focused on a corporeal experience that was liberated from the conventionality of interpretation. Like Campbell, Barkan sees the revival of pagan myths in the Renaissance as the result of a struggle to release myth from any level of authenticity and allow it to be articulated beyond any one single level of signification. He also sees the survival of mythology as the product of a competitive relation between the visual and the literary. When it comes to the literary, it is poetry that comes to the forefront, and perhaps not surprisingly, as Freedman maintains, visual representations of myth even came to be described by contemporaries as poesie.

By focusing on poetry as a key determinant in the representation of myth in the visual arts, scholars have often overlooked what this dissertation argues is a critical constituent for the interest in poetic accounts of myth in the first place. It was poetry that was spared in Plato’s scathing critique of the writing down of myths in the Phaedrus. Is it not entirely possible that art was simply a better vehicle than poetry for providing different levels of

44 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 188.
47 Freedman, Classical Myths, xvi.
signification within a single medium? While the relationship between poetry and art is considered in this study, the focus will be on how art became the preferred medium for conveying the meaning of classical myths over the textual, particularly when it came to communicating the value of prudence. Furthermore, this examination of the influence of poetry on art will be conducted primarily in conjunction with Platonic thought, which was disseminated in the Platonic academies. This study also moves beyond the consideration of myth in the form of a sculpture, a painting as a framed object, or as a picture painted on a wall, and explores how architecture also developed alongside the contemplation of myths as they relate to prudence.

Review of the Scholarship on Architecture

Like painting, architecture, too, evolved in coordination with other disciplines; however, the focus in scholarship is all too often on the sciences. As Manfredo Tafuri has argued, the entire project of humanist architecture during the Renaissance is most often conceived as proceeding hand in hand with the sciences – what Tafuri refers to as “architectural mathematics.”48 Palladio’s architecture has often been described according to the irreducible rules and principles of arithmetic. Wittkower’s study of architectural principles offers a theory that rationalizes Palladio’s architectural practice as a ‘will to form’ based on the mathematical language of symmetry and proportion.49 His study of harmonic proportions in Palladio’s villa architecture emphasizes how the central theme in the

architect’s practice was the unity of art and science, urged by an Aristotelian bias for determining certain truths promoted by friends like Daniele Barbaro.\(^{50}\)

In his *I quattro libri dell’architettura* of 1570 Palladio emphasizes the importance of precise measurements and ratios, but his observations often move beyond a mathematical foundation. For some scholars, to focus on the scientific aspect of the architect’s architectural output is reductive and imposes an intellectual framework on Palladio’s architectural form.

As Alina Payne has argued, by privileging the architect’s mathematical intentions over the aesthetic reception of the viewer Wittkower’s study detracts from the way Palladio’s works are experienced subjectively by the visitor.\(^{51}\) While Payne’s study is of great value for demonstrating how invention and creativity in Palladio’s architectural practice was shaped by artistic independence as a claim to *licentia*, her analysis focuses on the architectural treatise and highlights external factors such as ornament in casting an eye towards viewer response.

Much less has been said about the interior spaces of Palladio’s villas.

Thus far, scholarship has also positioned Palladio’s architecture within a Venetian context, notably Venice’s shift from a mercantile economy to an investment in the reclamation of uncultivated lands for the purpose of agriculture.\(^{52}\) Lionello Puppi has situated Palladio’s villa project as an attempt to “support the proprietary needs of those [Venetians] who considered themselves as transformed from “city gentleman of splendor” to “country gentleman.””\(^{53}\) Of the thirty or so villas Palladio claims as his own in the *Quattro libri*,

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 69.


\(^{53}\) Ibid.
however, few actually belong to Venetian nobility. Some were constructed for patricians in Verona, while the majority of his villas were for his Vicentine compatriots, built to boost the power of the Vicentine nobility, rendering the rural land in their possession since medieval times richer, more important, and more modern.\(^{54}\) By shifting the focus from Venice’s influence to the role Vicentine citizens and their Platonic academies played in shaping villa design, this study will help return the focus on Palladio’s architectural theory and practice to the social sphere in which he was educated and became proficient, one in which the deliberation on the meaning of prudence was widespread. For Pier Vittorio Aureli, the self-sufficiency of Palladio’s villa architecture signals the villa’s relation to its regional context.\(^{55}\) These structures should therefore be read within a larger project to reform the anti-ideal city of Vicenza, which during the time of Palladio’s early career was in crisis. Palladio’s role in such a program of reform is key to understanding his work, especially when one considers the political and cultural chaos in Vicenza during the first half of the sixteenth century.

**Historical Context**

The extremist religious views of Vicenza’s citizens are key to understanding Palladio’s architecture in and around the city. At the time Vicenza was the Italian epicenter of Lutheran and heretical activities. Many of Palladio’s patrons were among those who protested publically against the Catholic Church.\(^{56}\) Palladio’s close friend and mentor, Giangiorgio Trissino, saw the divided state of the city’s religious system as a symptom of a

\(^{54}\) Gianni Moriani, *Palladio architetto della villa fattoria* (Verona: Cierre edizioni, 2008), 44.


larger political and social fragmentation, and he promoted architecture as an appropriate language for his project to reform the city.\textsuperscript{57} Trissino initiated the reinvention of Vicenza as a model of an Imperial Roman city, and Palladio’s name, conferred upon him by the humanist, makes clear from the outset that Palladio was also invested in the program.\textsuperscript{58} If, as Aureli suggests, Palladio’s architecture should be seen as an attempt to reduce violence, and recast Vicenza as “a model for an imperial city that evoked the Pax Romana … or conversely, an attempt to use the unifying architectural language of classicism to project a self-harmonizing sense of civic calm,”\textsuperscript{59} then Palladio’s villas should be seen as an extension of these concerns.

In this light, the buildings Palladio designed for his patrons in Vicenza, be they urban \textit{palazzi} or rural \textit{ville}, reflect the bigger trend of an aristocratic collective. As Aureli asserts, by inserting exemplary form into the fabric of an unstable city, Palladio carried out Trissino’s utopian vision of Vicenza as a Roman city.\textsuperscript{60} But of what exactly does such an exemplary form consist? If, as Aureli argues, such ideal form stems from Palladio’s mastering of the dialectic between continuity and discontinuity\textsuperscript{61} – by encouraging communication between interior and exterior, villa and landscape, microcosm and macrocosm – the debates about prudence in the Platonic academies initiated by his mentor Trissino could have provided Palladio with the means to become such a master.

My research suggests that poetry remained central to debates about the practice of prudence, particularly for Trissino, Palladio’s close friend, as we shall see. Also interested in

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{58} Aureli, \textit{Absolute Architecture}, 49. For more on the derivation of Palladio’s name see Franco Barbieri, \textit{Architettura palladiane} (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1992), 211-12.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 54.
art and architecture, Trissino cultivated the virtue of prudence in his epic poem *Italia liberata* through the character of Palladio, from which the architect acquired his name. Palladio provides evidence that he shared Trissino’s interest in poetry in his *Quattro libri*, when he praises fellow Vicentine Antonio Francesco Oliviera for his skills as an architect as well as for being an excellent poet. While Aristotle has most often been accredited with being the primary influence on Trissino’s poetic oeuvre, Plato was perhaps an even greater inspiration.

It has been noted that during the period in question Platonism was a more common philosophical pursuit south of the Apennines, while the popularity of Aristotelianism was located in Northern Italy, particularly among the circles of those who studied at the University of Padua, the center for Aristotelianism. The theological interests and writings of Palladio’s close friend and patron, Daniele Barbaro, who studied at the University of Padua and is thought to have been a major influence on Palladio’s thinking, are essentially Aristotelian in nature. Wittkower has also discussed Trissino’s Aristotelian tendencies, and their possible influence on Palladio, at great length. More recently, however, Branco

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61 Ibid., 57.
64 Cellaur, “Daniele Barbaro and Vitruvius,” 295.
Mitrovic’s study of architectural symbolism and tectonics in the treatises by Barbaro and Palladio has indicated a Platonist position on the architect’s part. While such an interpretation, Mitrovic acknowledges, contradicts what we know about Palladio’s humanist education under the mentorship of Trissino, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of his influence on Palladio’s philosophical thinking since he left few philosophical volumes behind for posterity. Palladio’s teacher did, however, leave a large library dedicated to poetry and the works of Plato. He also wrote numerous volumes of his own poetic verse, such as *Italia liberata*, that would have been discussed in the Platonic academy he initiated in Vicenza.

Trissino was probably introduced to the works of Plato during his early studies in Greek in Milan, where he studied under Demetrio Calcondela. His predilection for Plato is evident from a letter written to his dear friend Vicenzo Malgre in 1507, in which he professes his admiration for the Greek philosopher. Plato’s doctrine was also a popular theme at the Orto Oricellari, the gardens owned by the family of Giovanni Rucellai, and a popular meeting place for many sixteenth-century philosophers including Machiavelli and Trissino, who kept the traditions of the Florentine *Accademia Platonica* and the work of Marsilio Ficino alive. Having been a member of the *Accademia Malliana* in Rome and Ficino’s *Accademia Platonica* in Florence, Trissino housed an intellectual academy of his own at his villa at Cricoli under the name *Accademiae Trissineae lux et rus*, or the *Accademia Trissiniana*. It is my contention that in his Platonic academy, Trissino’s Platonic convictions

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67 Ibid., 45.
69 Ibid., 246, “il nostro Platone, cui non solo ammiro, ma se mi è lecito, io contemplo e seguo a lontani passi, adorandone.”.
70 Ibid., 247.
and the merits of prudence in his poetry would have been discussed at great lengths among the Vicentine nobility, whose involvement in Lutheranism would have inspired interest in debates about freedom of the will.

Chapter Summary

My research suggests that prudence was a primary concern during the period at the Palazzo Thiene (1546) in the city of Vicenza, which was a stronghold for Lutheranism, and where debates about free will were fervent. As Achille Olivieri notes, the Thiene – the patrons of Palladio’s first major project – were the main disseminators of Lutheran ideas in Vicenza, and their reformist practices were widely propagated at Trissino’s Platonic academy at his Villa Cricoli, where Palladio received his early education.\(^{71}\) In his scathing critique of idolatry Luther condemned images as less identifiable with truth by comparing them with the written word,\(^{72}\) a criticism, I argue, which initiated efforts to elevate the status of images by confirming that they, too, could correspond to truth by being better than anything textual for conveying the meaning of prudence.

Chapter One, “Prudence, Minerva and Plato’s Pilot of the Soul in the Palazzo Thiene” focuses on the central fresco in the Sala degli Dei of the Palazzo Thiene, and how the representation of Prudence underwent a transformation from mythology to astronomy. Questioning the possible relationship between prudence’s cosmological aspects and Plato’s pilot of the soul, this chapter investigates how prudence became involved in debates about

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\(^{72}\) Ernst Troeltsch. The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol. 2 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), p. 969. As Troeltsch notes, spiritual judgment, Luther argued, comes from distinguishing the written word from the living word of God, as well as “the image from the truth.”
free will. By understanding how the fresco was imbedded in the cultural debates about the virtue, I suggest that the Palazzo Thiene was perhaps a springboard from which ideals about prudence were reconfigured in architectural space. By comparing the mythological allegories of Prudence and Minerva commissioned by Isabella D’Este Gonzaga to the central figure of Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza, and drawing from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – a work that reorganized myth congruently in a Renaissance narrative – this chapter also explores concerns about the relationship between myth and prudence, and how these were absorbed and transformed in one of Palladio’s earliest projects in Vicenza.

The second chapter, “Daniele Barbaro and Scientific Prudence: Time as Logos at the Villa Maser,” investigates Palladio’s Villa Barbaro (1558) at Maser built for the Barbaro family, and explores how Daniele’s esteem for a future oriented type of prudence helped to shape the architectural space of his family villa, bearing in mind how he defined prudence in his *Dieci libri*. In effect, Daniele’s definition of prudence describes a temporal conversation. To be prudent requires that the present always be in communication with the past and the future. This chapter explores how this attribute of prudence as a conversation between different times gets articulated in architecture so that different parts of a structure are free to converse with each other, and how the algorithmic nature of prudence, where subsequent evaluations are dependent on preceding ones, permeated the relationship between different parts of the villa’s structure.

The third chapter, “Time and the *Machina del mondo* in Palladio’s Villa Rotonda,” investigates how prudence was differentiated in Palladio’s La Rotonda (1575) and how the estate registers a conception of prudence derived from the theories of time proffered by the architect’s humanist education in Platonic academies. The structure is positioned within the
realm of humanist debates about prudence that underscore the subjectivity of alternatives, highlighting the possibility of choice in assisting movement, encouraged by Plato’s conception of time.

As ideas spread through the Veneto, via Palladio and his friend and patron Daniele, debates about prudence were taken up by artists in Venice. The fourth and final chapter, “Duelling Tricipitia: Capturing the Multivalence of Prudence and Time in Titian’s Allegory of Prudence,” considers how Titian’s painting participates in similar discourses on prudence by engaging with theoretical debates disseminated by the Platonic academies. Titian’s painting is of particular value here not only because prudence is the subject matter of the painting, but because Titian was intensely involved in artistic debates of the period, and intimately connected with those who were. By focusing on architectural innovations proffered by Venetian friar Francesco Zorzi’s *De harmonia mundi totius* (1525), as well as important developments in theater during the period by Giulio Camillo, and Trissino, this chapter explores how endeavors to articulate the plurality of prudence were preserved in other mediums.

Prudence is deeply involved in questions concerning actions and behaviour, and yet during the sixteenth century in Italy the conflicting conventions for representing the virtue mirrors a similar confrontation during the period with antithetical conceptions of the very virtue Minerva signified. By exploring art’s role in negotiating the different meanings of prudence through its engagement with myth, this dissertation considers art and architecture’s capacity to mediate between the different meanings that constituted prudence in the complex system of classical myths.
Chapter 1: Prudence and Free Will in Palladio’s Palazzo Thiene

As in many sixteenth-century palaces in Vicenza, the walls of the Palazzo Thiene are covered with frescos depicting from classical myths. Mythological scenes were often intended as exempla by showing how to perform virtuous deeds while avoiding vice. Painted decorations also allowed patrons and visitors to reflect on questions raised by ancient philosophers and the problems of the human condition.\(^73\) In order to persuade their audience of the veracity of these edifying tales, the affairs of the gods and goddesses of mythology were portrayed as having occurred in open air and thus required the inclusion of natural scenery.\(^74\) The rooms of the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza contain countless episodes of classical myths that occur in a landscape environment. Only in the Sala degli Dei does the mythological theme of the fresco assume a very different dimension, one that is astrological in nature.

On the ceiling of the room Anselmo Canera has painted a female figure on a writhing snake surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac. The mirror in her hand, and the snake on which she sits, identifies her with prudence. The virtue was repeatedly associated with Minerva during the period as we saw in the Introduction; however the figure possesses no other accoutrements that might identify her as the goddess, such as the aegis-bearing shield, armour or a staff. While she appears to be in control there is also tension expressed in her face resulting from the skirmish. Prudence is clearly an asset in view of her confrontation with the snake.

Thus far scholarship on the painting has been directed towards identifying the central female figure, and her relation to prudence. Wearing a red dress, and with one of her breasts exposed, and holding the mirror of prudence, the woman is most often recognized as *Divina Sapienza*, or Divine Wisdom. The cylindrical ribbon containing the signs of the zodiac that surround the figure symbolize her governing powers that bring stability to the outer heaven that dominates the world. More recently, Fernando Rigon has proposed the figure is a personification of Prudence, and also Divine Providence, a generative force that acts as the powerhouse for the planetary universe. While these identifications allude to the power of prudence in creating order and harmony, they do not consider the social and intellectual environment in which the painting was created. Situating the fresco in this milieu, this Chapter argues that the iconography, and its potential to be interpreted in different ways, would have fostered discussions by the patron and visitors to the palace. One of the debates of particular significance during the period, and taking place in Platonic Academies in Vicenza, concerned the question of free will.

Canera’s painting is of great importance because it is the first work of art, to my knowledge, in which the personification of Prudence undergoes a conversion; the familiar attributes of the virtue – the mirror and the snake – are transformed by the addition of a cosmological frame. This change resonates, as I argue, with local disputes about prudence and freedom of the will. This chapter explores how this central image in the first major

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74 Ibid., 152-53.
project of Andrea Palladio acts as a springboard from which debates about prudence and free will would be played out in the art and architecture in many of his subsequent works. This chapter begins by outlining the political proclivities of the Vicentine nobility, and how questions about the freedom of the will were generated by the desire for church reform. This chapter also considers how the strong Lutheran following in Vicenza, particularly among the Thiene and Trissino families, encouraged religious debates about free will, and how Plato’s doctrine of the will was disseminated among the nobility of the city through academies that had their origins in the Platonic Academy of Marsilio Ficino in Florence. The strong ties between the Gonzaga and Thiene families will also be explored to determine the extent to which interests in free will, circulating at the court of the Gonzaga in Mantua, may have been taken up in Vicenza in part through the influence of Giulio Romano.

A Question of Ownership: Palazzo Thiene between Palladio and Giulio Romano

Several hands were involved in the construction of the Palazzo Thiene. After having taken voluntary exile in Mantua following the wars of the League of Cambrai, Gian Galeazzo Thiene proposed reconstructing his family palace upon his return to Vicenza. As early as 1524 Gian Galeazzo consulted with Giulio Romano – one time student of the painter and architect Raphael in Rome – as his desired architect, likely having met him during the expatriation of the Thiene family early in the century. In 1542, Marc’Antonio Thiene and his brother Adriano took responsibility for the new palace hoping to express the grandeur and importance of their name and family. Palladio’s hand in the construction and plan of the

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78 Lionello Puppi, Andrea Palladio (Venice: Electra Editrice, 1973), 251.
79 Ibid., 254.
building is confirmed by notarial documents, as well as his testimony of participation in his *Quattro libri*.\(^{80}\) Most scholars agree that Palladio likely acted as Giulio’s onsite assistant, taking over for him after his death.\(^{81}\) The palace can therefore be conceived as the outcome of contributions from Giulio Romano, Andrea Palladio, and the Thiene family. The Palazzo Thiene shares many similarities with the Palazzo del Te, constructed by Giulio Romano for Federico Gonzaga in Mantua.

According to Lionello Puppi, the structure of the Palazzo Thiene is based upon the Vitruvian conception of an ancient Roman house.\(^{82}\) The palace is arranged in the form of a square with rectangular rooms that extend from four octagonal chambers at each corner (Figure 5). It has a vestibule, where the motif of unfinished columns, used by Giulio Romano for the west entrance at the Palazzo del Te, are repeated. The façade contains massive rusticated blocks of stone, and the halls and chamber are richly decorated with frescoes and stuccowork. Not unlike the Palazzo del Te, the building envelops a central courtyard, which occupies an astounding 5800 square feet – the vast majority of space in the building.\(^{83}\) The arrangement of rooms around a central courtyard allows for different parts of the structure to be in communication with each other. Could such an articulation have been taken up in the interior?

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 252. See also Giangiorgio Zorzi. *Le opera pubbliche e i palazzo private di Palladio* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1965), 212-13, doc. 1 The contract for the project registered the names of the bricklayers that were hired as Pietro di Giulielmo and Girolamo di Comosantino da Vercelli, as well as “magistro Andrea quondam Petri lapicida,” or Palladio. See also, Witold Rybczynski, who explains how the term *lapicida*, or stonemason, suggests that Palladio’s original position was not as architect, and so it is possible that Palladio was only approached after Giulio Romano’s death in 1546, in *The Perfect House: A Journey with the Renaissance Master Andrea Palladio* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 66.


\(^{82}\) Puppi, *Andrea Palladio*, 253.
There is an undeniable homogeneity between the painted decorations of the Palazzo Thiene and the Palazzo del Te. The interior stuccowork, particularly that of the ceilings, is aligned with the articulation of architectural space, giving the impression that the painted images were pre-assigned to fit within the stucco decorations. Like the Palazzo del Te’s Sala di Ovidio, the Palazzo Thiene contains a Sala delle Metamorfosi filled with images derived from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. In the Palazzo Thiene the dominant motive for the room seems to have been the myth of Perseus. The Sala dell’Eneidi, like the Sala di Troia in the Palazzo del Te, contains images devoted to Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and both palaces have large rooms called the Sala di Psiche dedicated to the theme of the love affair between Cupid and Psyche. These ornate decorations are all distributed amongst the octagonal rooms at the corners of the edifice.

The octagonal form seems to have held a particular signification for the architect. In the Palazzo del Te there is a portrait of Giulio by Titian in which the architect presents to the viewer a building design from his *armadio*. The way Giulio clutches the top part of the sketch with his right hand and gestures to it with his left, suggests that he is very proud of this creation (Figure 6). The plan indicates that from the outside the building would have been a rotunda articulated with niches, while the interior is cruciform in shape, with two vestibules in each sector of the cross for a total of eight, and eight columns defining the central space. The design, as John Shearman points out, bears a striking resemblance to

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Antonio da Sangallo’s project for St. Peter’s in Rome, with its eight similar vestibules, an assignment that Giulio may have inherited.\[^{86}\] Was there something about the octagonal form that Giulio might have learned from Raphael – who also worked at St. Peter’s – that may have extended to the Palazzo Thiene?

The presence of the four octagonal rooms in the palace does suggest the shape was a preoccupation for the architects and patrons. The octagonal theme is reiterated in the largest room of the palace, the Sala degli Dei. This room – the primary gathering space for guests of the Thiene family – is the only frescoed room on the ground floor, and its position as the midpoint between the beginning and end of a clockwise or counterclockwise progression through the palace must have held particular significance for the patrons as a gathering place.\[^{87}\] Because of the combination of frescoes and stuccowork, this room stands out from the others. Although the room is rectangular, a concern for the \textit{octad} form is evidenced in the vaulted ceiling, which is adorned with gigantic stucco decorations by Alessandro Vittoria of eight mythological gods and goddesses that enclose the central section, much like the columns in Giulio’s drawing for a church plan in Titian’s painting.

**Prudence and Plato’s Pilot of the Soul**

There is much disagreement about the identity of the eight mythological stucco figures in the Sala Degli Dei, and their relation to Canera’s painting. Chiara Rigoni has identified the figures as Venus and Mars, Apollo and Diana, Hercules and Minerva, and Jupiter and Saturn.\[^{88}\] More recently, Fernando Rigon has proposed the paired figures are

\[^{86}\] Ibid., 174. See also note 32 at the bottom of the page.
\[^{87}\] Rigoni, “L’apparato decorativo,” 134.
\[^{88}\] Ibid., 114.
Amphitrite and Hercules, Apollo and Daphne, Venus and Mars, and Jupiter and Saturn.\(^{89}\) Above the gods and goddesses are small putti, and the whole stucco arrangement encircles four square-panels painted by Anselmo Canera, representing the four elements: Fire, Water, Earth and Air. These surround a central square panel, depicting the female figure, scantily dressed with one breast exposed, holding a large mirror in her right hand – the symbol for prudence – and sitting atop a large snake, on a monumental cloud (Figure 1). A narrow distance separates the face of the snake and the woman, and they seem to stare at each other as if they are in some sort of standoff. A golden ribbon containing the twelve signs of the zodiac encircles the entire scene in a cylindrical form.

Given the emphasis on astronomy designated by the center panel with its zodiac, one might expect to find the seven planetary gods Apollo, Mercury, Venus, Diana, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn below, but what about the eighth figure? Hercules may be identified as the last of the eight, recognizable by the lion skin draped over his shoulders, and the figure with whom he is paired probably represents Mercury, often mistaken as a female figure. While Mercury is often present as the messenger of the gods, his alchemical nature permits that he is often registered as a hermaphrodite, from which his Greek name Hermes is derived.\(^{90}\) The lack of any discernable breasts, that might distinguish it as female gendered, only adds to the figure’s androgyny. If the figure were Mercury, the room dedicated to the gods would then have the seven planetary gods represented. Hercules was the most famous demigod, and his position in the heavens as a constellation would be in keeping with the astrological theme of the room. With all seven planets accounted for, and the name of the room indicating its

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\(^{89}\) Rigon, “Itinerario iconografico,” 225.

dedication to the gods, the identity of the female figure riding the snake in the central panel remains open to interpretation. The mirror in her hand points immediately to prudence, which was the virtue often identified with the goddess Pallas/Minerva, an association discussed at length in the Introduction to this thesis. Through the use of perspective, the woman on the snake appears to be positioned above the cylinder containing the signs of the zodiac.

A similar female figure was painted by Raphael on the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura in the papal library in Rome. Raphael’s fresco of Astrology is set against an illusionistic background of gold mosaic, in which a woman clothed in green stares down through the firmament, designated by its many studded gold stars, and recognizable constellations. Incised on the sphere are lines representing the location of the meridian, ecliptic and celestial equator, and in its center is the Earth. David Beck has equated the figure of Astrology putting the stars in order as the Prime Mover or Primum Mobile.91 In the Paradiso, when Dante describes his ascent to heaven, he places the Primum Mobile as that above the fixed stars of the zodiac.92 This identification is in line with Aristotle’s definition of the Primum Mobile as that which possesses the first heaven.93 Aristotle’s explanation is derived from Plato’s conception of the pilot of the soul as a principle of movement related to the rotatory motion of the outer sphere of the heavens.

In Plato’s Phaedrus, Socrates likens the soul to a chariot being pulled by a black and white horse – the black horse representing appetite and the white one love – while the charioteer symbolizes reason. The horses are what move the soul, while the charioteer uses

reason to guide them. As Ilham Dilman observes, Socrates describes the white horse in words that depict constraint, consideration, and obedience, characterizing pure love and generosity, while the black horse is described in words that pronounce egocentricity, and are characteristic of greed, lust, and appetite.94 The natural propensity of the chariot, led by the white horse, is towards heaven, which is good, however, the black horse moves laboriously, “weighing down the charioteer to the earth when his steed has not been thoroughly trained: and this is the hour of agony and extremist conflict for the soul.”95 The soul therefore needs wisdom, and the study and contemplation of virtue to help guide it on its continued path towards the heavens. Thus, those who consent to a life of guidance, Dilman continues, can transform their appetites, and “by subduing the part of the soul that contained the seeds of vice and setting free that in which virtue had its birth they will become masters of themselves and their souls will be at peace.”96 Contemplation of the heavens is therefore key, since it is here that virtue resides.

By orienting oneself to the heavens, Socrates maintains, one is nearer to its goodness, and it is here that the Gods exist because their horses and charioteers are of good stock, and act in harmony, keeping them in “the abode of the reality with which true knowledge is concerned.”97 As Socrates explains, it is here that “the immortals, when they are at the end of their course, go forth and stand upon the outside of heaven, and the revolution of the spheres

96 Dilman, *Free Will*, 38.
97 Plato, “Phaedrus,” 45.
carries them round, and they behold the things beyond.”

At this point Socrates describes what he believes to be the source of all the harmony:

“But of the heaven which is above the heavens, what earthly poet ever did or ever will sing worthily? It is such as I will describe; for I must dare to speak the truth, when the truth is my theme. There abides the being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colorless, formless, intangible essence, visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul (italics mine). The divine intelligence, being nurtured upon mind and pure knowledge, and the intelligence of every soul which is capable of receiving food proper to it, rejoices at beholding reality, and once more gazing upon the truth, is replenished and made glad, until the revolution of the world brings her round again to the same place.”

Socrates’ describes the figure in the heaven above the heavens as female, which calls to mind Raphael’s figure of Astrology in the Stanza della Segnatura. The similarly of Canera’s female figure to Raphael’s, and the position of the former above the zodiac overseeing the room, suggests the iconography at the Palazzo Thiene may also be derived from this ancient conception of heaven. Canera’s woman holding the mirror may refer to Prudence but her position also recalls the pilot of the soul to which Plato refers in the Phaedrus. Before returning to this line of inquiry, it is useful to consider the relationship between Plato’s theory of the pilot of the soul and the freedom of the will.

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98 Plato, Phaedrus, 246D
99 My italics. Plato, “Phaedrus,” 52. See also Plato, Phaedrus, 247C.
In his *Phaedrus*, Plato makes the distinction between the will for good and the will for evil, and argues that the will is subject to the influences of the ego and its appetites.\textsuperscript{100} Plato believed that “evil is not voluntary and hence…no one does what is wrong and embraces evil willingly.”\textsuperscript{101} The determinism here seems undisputable since Plato admits that evil is not a compulsion of the will, but rather a determination of it.\textsuperscript{102} This determination of the will to do evil however, is neither voluntary nor intentional, but comes from a lack of moral knowledge or wisdom.\textsuperscript{103} When a person is at one with goodness, on the other hand, they are free to do as they choose.\textsuperscript{104} As Dilman has argued, for Plato it was not a question of intellectual knowledge but “an affective orientation which takes the form of a love and respect for others,” a love whose “concern and respect involves feeling for them in their pain and grief, being prepared to put oneself out to help them where one can, respecting their differences, forgiving their offences.”\textsuperscript{105} The desire to do good derives from an inherent will. This kind of knowledge is identical with virtue, since it is aligned with the desire for good.

Plato makes the relationship between the will and the desire to do good clear in the *Meno*, where Socrates succeeds in convincing Meno that everyone desires the good, and those who appear to Meno to desire evil, do so thinking that is it good and not recognizing that it is evil.\textsuperscript{106} Similarly, in the discussion between Callicles and Socrates in the *Giorgias*, Socrates contrasts the actions of a person who makes fair appraisal of the circumstances surrounding their actions and chooses what they ought to do, to one who acts to satisfy

\textsuperscript{100} Dilman, *Free Will*, 45.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
oneself. The former person is described by Socrates as someone who “does as he wills” while the latter is one who “does as he pleases.”

Socrates sees this latter type of service of the will as a form of bondage, the freedom from which requires moral knowledge. How might this relate to the central figure in the Sala Degli Dei? Canera’s painting seems to allude to Plato’s pilot of the soul and might therefore engage in debates about free will, but why? And what role does prudence play in such a debate?

Prudence and Free Will

Crucial to understanding the growing debate about free will during the Renaissance are prudential pursuits that cultivated self-interests as a means to an end. In the Phaedrus, Plato made a distinction between two kinds of prudence, divine prudence, which he admired, and worldly prudence which is allied with “a stingy way of doling out benefits,” and “will breed in your soul those vulgar qualities that the populace applaud as virtue.”

When making prudent decisions judgment is used to establish the true means of proceeding. For Aristotle, judgment could not be submitted to a general rule, per se, and instead required acting according to the particulars of a situation. Thus, for Aristotle, prudence is concerned with responding to decisions that present us with alternative possibilities. Victoria Kahn has argued that it is precisely this characteristic of prudence, as a virtue contingent upon alternative choices that opened up early humanist debates about the existence of free will.

107 Dilman, Free Will, 43.
110 Ibid., 21.
The ethics of prudence, however, is rooted in the importance of the means from which a choice is determined. Prudence is an action taken with respect to a variable, or a particular. When making prudent decisions judgment is used to determine the best means of proceeding, depending on the circumstances that surround the particular consideration in question. In adopting means to an end, a person may proceed morally or immorally. Moral pursuit is indistinguishable from prudence, whereas immoral pursuit denotes a certain diligence defined by Aristotle as deinotes.

For Aristotle, the goodness of an act resides in the agent; in other words, for an act to be good it must be performed by a virtuous person, by a prudent person with free choice and firm character. When Albertus Magnus commented on Aristotle he differentiated between two kinds of prudence referred to by Aristotle: animal or natural prudence, and true prudence. True prudence consisted of right activity, which emphasizes the ethical nature of the virtue as tied to morality.

Thomas Aquinas also took up this distinction between two types of prudence, adopting insights from Platonic philosophy, particularly the Phaedrus. Aquinas believed that right activity was ultimately decided by the will, where, as David Summers notes, the anticipated result for any alternative demanded “the right apprehension of the particular as well as the moral principles.” In his consideration of the life of Aquinas, Pietro Aretino – an Italian author who worked intimately with several of the protagonists of this dissertation,
including Giulio Romano and Titian – explains how Aquinas believed “prudence has no need of fortune, and divine wisdom can be executed without the counsel of attempting to acquire its own end, because it exists in the timeless.”\(^{116}\) For Aquinas, prudence required ethics, and was about alternatives; it was not about trying to anticipate the future, since this would obstruct the exercise of free will.\(^{117}\)

Contrary to the type of prudence prescribed by Aquinas, in the sixteenth century Niccolò Machiavelli advocated a kind of prudence that attempted to satisfy the way our desire of future unknowns play out.\(^{118}\) Machiavelli’s deconstruction of prudence was developed under the realization that there is something irreducibly practical about our actions.\(^{119}\) In contrast to monist forms of government, such as monarchies, Machiavelli believed that factious activity could create order and peace, due to the diversity with which it was able to advance a political aim or purpose.\(^{120}\) His pluralist variety of prudence emphasized competition over cooperation, prioritizing military virtue and denigrating compromise by praising popular judgment for the confidence it instills in those who manipulate, or successfully deceive.\(^{121}\) Machiavelli argued in *The Prince* that “a wise ruler [uno signore prudente] cannot, or should he keep his word when doing so would be to his

\(^{116}\) Cited in Pietro Aretino, *La vita di San Tomaso signor d’Aquino* (Venice: Fracesco Marcolini, 1543), 85 recto, “La prudentia non ha bisogno de la fortuna, e la sapienza puo far senza il consiglio in acquistare il fins suo, peroche ella sta ne le cose eterne; Chi sa reggere se stesso è Re di se medesimo.”
\(^{117}\) Ibid., “Si che per non esser possibile, che la libera voglia, & la prescienza del future stia insieme; si dee però credere, che la volonta nel suo arbitrio sia libero.”
\(^{120}\) Ibid., 80.
disadvantage and when the reasons that led him to make a promise no longer exist…but one must know how to disguise this nature well, and how to be a fine liar and hypocrite.”

John Martin’s study of prudence reveals that Machiavelli’s new sense of the virtue was tied to adaptation, where an individual concealed or revealed himself depending on the circumstances, and always to further the subjective aims of the individual.

By focusing on the future outcome of events, Machiavelli’s prudence worked in opposition to the concept of free will. For Machiavelli, the ultimate ends of a person’s actions – their objectives – were already predetermined, leaving no room for alternatives. If a future desire is the ultimate aim then the will is not free, but rather a slave to said desire, which is what Plato inferred when he referred to the service of the will to subjective aims as a form of bondage. In sixteenth-century Italy, therefore, there were competing understandings of the virtue: the Machiavellian variety of the virtue that prioritized its military aspects and the one advocated from Plato to Aquinas that sought to synthesizes reason and faith.

These debates about the nature of prudence were taken up in social and intellectual circles by the Vicentine nobility, including the Thiene, and thus warrant consideration with the iconography in the ceiling. What is important in the fresco, as I have already mentioned, is that the woman seems to be struggling with the snake. As Umberto Eco has argued, while imagery of a snake could point to the virtue of prudence, it could just as easily have

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121 Ibid., 81.
embodied the figure of Satan.\textsuperscript{124} Prudence could therefore be assisting the woman’s will in resolving the conflict between good and evil. I return to this idea below after addressing how ideas about the relationship between the soul and the will developed in Plato’s \textit{Phaedrus} may have been disseminated amongst the nobility of Vicenza in Platonic academies initiated by Giangiorgio Trissino, Palladio’s mentor, where it would have been given substantial consideration given the debate about free will in a time when the fascination with Lutheranism was vehement.\textsuperscript{125}

\textbf{Church Reform and Lutheranism in Vicenza}

In the history of the Reformation few subjects have been as important as the question of free will as it relates to church reform. When Luther began to make his protest against church Indulgences, he continued to address the Pope with the utmost respect.\textsuperscript{126} It was not until Pope Julius II that Luther’s scorn for the impiety and scandalous behavior of the Catholic Church would reach its peak.\textsuperscript{127} As Felix Gilbert points out, like Luther, Erasmus held Pope Julius II in contempt and considered him “the embodiment of war and all its evils.”\textsuperscript{128} When Erasmus was asked for his counsel about whether or not the papacy should

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\textsuperscript{126} Michael Mullet, \textit{Luther} (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1503.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. See also Michael Allen Gillespie, \textit{The Theological Origins of Modernity}, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 131.
\end{flushright}
join in the League against Venice in 1509, Julius II ignored his advice to abstain, and after his death in 1513 Erasmus gave full vent to his fury in his work *Julius Exclusus*. Luther encouraged Erasmus to join his movement, however differences between the two men prevented any union and instead produced a dispute that would culminate in the controversy over free will. In 1524 Erasmus had composed his *De libero arbitrio* (A Discussion or Discourse Concerning Free Will), a diatribe on free will issued against Lutheranism. Published in 1525, Luther responded with *De servo arbitrio* (The Enslaved Will) a work that raised important questions about the capability of human beings to contribute to their own salvation by their choices of what to do, or not to do. Luther’s chosen target was the Catholic Church, an enterprise that was also singled out by many sixteenth-century Italians, including members of the Thiene family and constituents of the Vicentine nobility.

Religious dissent in Italy was on the rise in the sixteenth century, particularly in the Veneto. In 1545 Pope Paul III cautioned the Venetian ambassador to Rome that Lutheranism was epidemic in the Republic. With a border that stretched for several hundred kilometers along Germanic lands, the Venetian Republic was not only more exposed to Reformist ideas, but also more receptive. In his study of religious dissent in Treviso, David D’Andrea notes how an increasing number of Protestant groups and literature flowed into the city’s

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As D’Andrea argues, the large German community in the city ensured that a steady stream of Lutheran literature entered the city in the first half of the sixteenth century. It should not be assumed, however, that the Veneto was awash with Lutheranism, but before the Council of Trent in 1545, which was intent on curbing serious errors of faith, it was certainly not uncommon.

A similar religious climate was also found in the city of Vicenza, which, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, had become a stronghold for Lutheranism. As Achille Olivieri has noted, during the period surrounding the construction on the Palazzo Thiene it was not uncommon in churches or local piazzas to encounter demonstrations of mockery against the pope, accusing him of being the “usurper of Christ.” Countless pamphlets, verses and letters written against the Catholic Church were published in Vicenza throughout the period, protesting against Catholic preachers like Fra Bonaventura da Catarzano when he supported free will in his sermons. Among those who protested was Trissino’s son Giulio who, collaborating with Marco Thiene, was the greatest circulator of the volumes of Luther and Calvin among the noble families of Vicenza.

The diffusion of heretical and reformist ideas were also distributed through academies, where groups of intellectuals and noblemen gathered to participate in the discussion of political and religious issues. As Olivieri has noted, Trissino’s academy, held

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135 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
at his villa Cricoli, was one of the sites where religious debates became embroiled in so-called heretical practices.\textsuperscript{140} Many of the members of the \textit{Accademia Olimpica}, founded in 1555, of which Palladio was also a member, took part in so-called heretical practices and discourses, including members of both the Thiene and Trissino families.\textsuperscript{141} In another study Olivieri has also raised questions about Palladio’s own religious beliefs, maintaining that his strong connections with heretics, in particular his intimate relationship with Odoardo Thiene – another one of the main disseminators of Calvinist propaganda in Vicenza – adds to the possibility that he sympathized with reformist ideas.\textsuperscript{142} Odoardo, for whom Palladio’s son Orazio was a lawyer, fled Vicenza in 1567 and took refuge with other Lutheran heretics in Heidelberg.\textsuperscript{143} In May of 1571, Orazio was summoned to testify against Odoardo before a tribunal, where Palladio’s son admitted to his own spiritual affinities towards Lutheranism.\textsuperscript{144} Many of Palladio’s clients including Iseppo Porto, as well as Ottavio and Adriano Thiene, were accused of being Lutheran in 1547.\textsuperscript{145}

As a result of Platonic academies initiated by Trissino, Lutheranism became a powerful force that was gradually absorbed into the infrastructure of Vicenza, particularly among members of the Thiene family.\textsuperscript{146} Such intense interests in Luther’s reformist ideas may have extended to the issue of free will, which poses some important questions. Given the Thiene family’s propensity for Lutheranism, and the religious debates that would have taken

\textsuperscript{140} Olivieri, “Microcosmi familiari,” 182.
\textsuperscript{142} Achille Olivieri, \textit{Palladio, le Corti e le famiglie: simulazione e morte nella cultura architettonica del ‘500} (Vicenza: Istituta per le ricerche di storia sociale e di storia religiosa, 1981), 32.
\textsuperscript{143} Beltramini, \textit{Private Palladio}, 52.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 53.
place at Trissino’s Platonic Academy, what might have been the impact of such activities on the Palazzo Thiene? Might debates about free will have helped to shape the image of Prudence in the Sala degli Dei? While the Thiene family left little evidence to assist such an inquiry, the historical records left by close friend and ally Trissino are numerous, and are worth considering here given the Thiene family’s regular participation in his Academy.

Church Reform, Giangiorgio Trissino, and the Political Proclivities of the Vicentine Nobility

A review the political relationship between Venice and Vicenza during the period provides insights pertinent to the Palazzo Thiene and questions raised by the fresco. During most of its existence the Venetian Republic concerned itself with controlling maritime trade with the East, and it was not until the fifteenth century that Venice began to annex territories from the terraferma as part of the Republic. By the sixteenth century Venice was one of the most populous centers in urban Europe, and demand for agricultural products became increasingly important. The advancement of the Ottoman Turks in the Mediterranean basin also caused considerable strain on Venetian domains in the Levant, adding to the need for expansion on the mainland. After the death of Pope Alexander VI on August 13th, 1503, Venice, her commercial hegemony strained and under constant threat from the Turks, decided to take possession of several mainland cities.\(^{147}\)

Having sequestered cities on terraferma, a bold move in itself, Venetian subjects proceeded to appoint their own candidate to the bishopric of Vicenza, a position Julius II,

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\(^{146}\) Olivieri, “trasmissione ereticale,” 180.

Alexander VI’s successor, wished to be occupied by one of his nephews148 – a move that would create dissension within the Vicentine nobility. Unhappy with the rapacity of the Venetians, and fully aware of the risk that pro-Venetian sympathies posed for the Vatican’s attempts to consolidate Papal control in Italy, Julius II formed an alliance with France and the Holy Roman Empire against Venice. When the Republic refused to return the cities she had seized, Venice suffered a complete collapse. It was the city of Vicenza that suffered the most, leaving many of its citizens disillusioned with the Roman Catholic Church.

Of the conflicts that derived from the League of Cambrai, the initial attack was on the city of Vicenza by Emperor Maximilian and his army in February of 1508, one that ended in defeat for the Venetians. A year later, in April of 1509, French soldiers marched into the Venetian Republic, with Vicenza the main target again, in part due to its location, but mostly, as noted above, because the Republic had appointed its own candidate to the vacant bishopric in the city, which Julius II took as an affront.

Between 1508 and 1517, no city was harder hit by the ravages of the war than Vicenza. As a result, the aristocratic class declared an anti-Venetian proclamation raising the prices of goods to exorbitant levels on the terraferma.149 The peasant class, on the other hand, distanced itself from oppressive measures of the noble class and, offended by the increase in costs, remained loyal to Venice.150 Oppressed by poverty and misery, and more numerous than the nobility, the peasant class was therefore considered a potential threat to

stability and peace. In 1527-28, Luigi da Porto described how in Vicenza at that time you couldn’t “walk along the street or stop in a piazza without a multitude surrounding you asking for charity: look at the hunger imprinted on their faces, in their eyes like rings deprived of gems, the misery of their bodies covered with skin shaped only from their bones.” The tragic circumstances led Trissino to confront the Doge of Venice.

In a letter dated 1532, Giangiorgio Trissino appealed to Doge Gritti, calling on his exercise of prudence to calm the distress of the Vicentine people. Trissino’s appeal is important because it identifies an intervention on his part to achieve stability and peace in the area by rebuilding the city to its former state of glory, if not to improve upon it, by calling on Venice to right its wrongs. Trissino’s plea points to his acknowledgement of Venice’s shortcomings, a detail substantiated further by his known allegiance to the Holy Roman

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150 Ibid.
151 J. S. Ackerman, *La villa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 130, “Oppressa dalla povertà e dalla miseria, vittima delle carestie ricorrenti e dei saccheggi bellici, analfabeta e virtualmente, la classe contadina era molto superior numericamente agli altri strati sociali ed era quindi considerate una potenziale minaccia per la stabilità e la pace.”
152 Moriani, *Palladio architetto*, “Non puoi passeggiare lungo la strada o fermarti in piazza senza che una multitudine ti circondi per chiederti la carità: vedi la fame impressa sulle loro face, sui loro occhi come anelli privi di pietra, la miersia dei loro corpi con la pelle sagomata solo dalle ossa,”
153 Giangiorgio Trissino, *Scritti scelti*, a cura di Attilio Scarpa (Vicenza: Officina Tipografica Vicentina G. Stocchiero), 1950, p. 60, Orazione al Serenissimo che non si frabbrica Vicenza con spese dei Vicentini (Ducale 29 settembre 1532), “La vostra fedelissima città di Vicenza, la quale, per essere stata la prima di terra ferma, che vene alla devozione di questo Illustissimo Domino, si può ragionevolmente chiamare sua primogenital…non dovrebbe pagar più nella sua fortificazione di quello, che ha pagato o Verona, o Padova, o Treviso, le quali non hanno speso niente; nè ancora vogliamo allegare, che per li capitoli, concessi per questo Illustissimo Dominio alla nostra città del 1406, la Illustissima Signoria promesse di pagare tutto quello, che si avesse a spendere nella riparazione e fortificazione della città di Vicenza….E però essa misera città si getta prostrate ai piedi di Vostra Sublimità e la prega umilmente con tutto il cuore, che voglia con la sua profondissima prudenza considerare lo stato e le forze di essa, e che voglia diminuirlle questa immoderate gravezza e darle tal peso che le sue deboli spalle lo possano soportare.”
Emperor. Trissino’s loyalty to the Imperial Crown goes back to the reasons for the Wars of the League of Cambrai in the first place.

It did not go unrecognized that the city of Vicenza remained a primary target throughout the war because of the pontiff’s self-interests, demonstrated in his effort to aggrandize a member of his own family. This nepotism urged many families of the Vicentine nobility, including members of the Thiene family, to appeal for church reform through the figure of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximillian. On June 5th 1509, a member of Trissino’s family, Leonardo Trissino, occupied Vicenza in the name of Maximilllian and smashed the statue of San Marco that was raised on a column, replacing it with the Imperial Eagle.154 Leonardo was eventually captured by the Venetians and spent the rest of his days in prison. Two weeks later, on June 17th of the same year, Maximillian and his army entered the city with great pomp, surrounded by members of several families of the Vicentine nobility including the Thiene, Chiericati and Porto families, all of whom would later become Palladio’s patrons.155 Among them was Trissino himself.

Trissino was severely punished for his betrayal when on the 12th of November, Vicenza was re-conquered by Venice and returned to the Republic, though the heart of its people remained with the emperor.156 Trissino, along with all those who had participated with Maximilllian, were considered a threat to the Republic and were therefore exiled. For seven years Trissino resettled in Germany until he was pardoned in 1516. For many,

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155 Ibid., 26.
156 Ibid.
Trissino’s return signified his submission to the Venetian Republic, which became a symbol of the surrender of the indigenous noble class and their resignation to the sovereignty of Venice, at least on the surface.\footnote{Ibid., 48.}

Though Trissino did a good job of veiling his allegiance to the Holy Roman Empire publicly – he later developed strong relationships with Leo X and acted as Venetian ambassador to the court of Clement VII – he could not hide his continued support for the Imperial Crown for long. With the ascension of Charles V to the Hapsburg throne in 1519, Trissino would continue to see in the new emperor a reflection of the triumphant figure represented in Dante’s De Monarchia, whose defense of the autonomy of secular authority would condemn the corrupt theocracy of the Catholic Church.\footnote{Franco Barbieri, “Giangiorgio Trissino and Andre Palladio,” Convegno do studi su Giangiorgio Trissino, (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1980), 196.} In many ways, the anticipated Sack of Rome in 1527 would only confirm the need for divine intervention upon the immorality of the Vatican.\footnote{Ibid.} When Trissino was called upon to be one of those to support the imperial coat during the coronation of Charles V in Bologna in 1530, Trissino might have played a role in securing his own enlistment.\footnote{Ibid.} In the late 1530s, precisely when Palladio was recruited to work on Trissino’s villa at Cricoli, and enrolled into the intellectual academy his mentor started under the name Accademiae Trissineae lux et rust, Trissino had finished the first volume of his epic work Italia liberata dae Goti.

Described by Franco Barbieri as the epic that reaffirms the aristocratic movement of the Vicentine nobility against the Catholic Church,\footnote{Franco Barbieri, “Giangiorgio Trissino and Andre Palladio,” Convegno do studi su Giangiorgio Trissino, (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 1980), 196.} the poem provides explicit evidence of Trissino’s fidelity to Charles V. The story follows the emperor Justinian’s war against the
Goths in the sixth century CE, specifically the campaigns of Belisarius in Italy. At the end of the first volume of the *Italia liberata* Belisario, the highest-ranking captain in charge of liberating Italy from the Goths, is given the opportunity of seeing into the future. Not surprisingly, it is Charles V that he sees as the person responsible for bringing peace and stability to the Italian peninsula. In the sixteenth canto of the second volume, the antagonism toward the papacy is made even more explicit when those who followed in the footsteps of St. Peter are denigrated for their avarice, licentiousness, and tyranny, but most of all for their political ambitions that looked to aggrandize their bastards. These antagonistic remarks, along with the dedication of the poem to Charles V when it was finally published in 1548, can only be interpreted as a sincere expression of Trissino’s devotion to the political aims of the Imperial Crown, and his designs for church reform. His desire for reform had the question of free will at its heart, a matter that would be played out in his Platonic Academies, in which members of the Thiene family were known collaborators.

**Church Reform and the Question of Free Will in the Platonic Academies**

Trissino’s preoccupation with the role of free will in the corruption of the church was fueled by his early education in Platonic philosophy. From 1538-40, after several years at the

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161 Ibid.
162 Ibid., 197. See also *Italia liberata*, in the poem Trissino not only introduces Charles V as the saviour, but includes other Holy Roman Emperors as his antecedents: “Vedi poi dietro a Federico terzo/ Quel Massimilian, che è suo figliuolo/ Questi sarà si valoroso in guerra/ Si liberale, e si benigno in pace/ Che le delizie sia di quella etade/ Guarda il nepotedi costui, ch’arriva/ Al grande Impero anz’il millesim’anno/ Che m’ha presisso a dimostrariti il cielo/ Questo sia Carlo, figlio di Filippo/ Mandato a voi da la Divina altezza/ Per adornare, e raffettare il mondo.”
Roman court, Trissino returned to his studies at the University of Padua, where his interest in Plato earned him the nickname “the new Socrates.” While there he became good friends with Marc Antonio Da Mula, who had recently written a small treatise on free will, composed with the intention of offering a rebuttal to the doctrine of Luther. In it, Da Mula argued, “man has the free will to be able to desire and choose between the good and the bad, but cannot act without the grace of God.” While Trissino agreed with Da Mula to a certain degree, his response was, in effect, an entirely new treatise on the subject. Because Trissino believed that man was intrinsically good, he agreed that man had the free will to choose what is good, but he believed that man “could not desire, choose or do voluntarily wrong, as wrong.” If he has chosen wrong it is because, obscured by ignorance, he has mistaken wrong for good. In order to avoid confusing bad for good, man must rely on good judgment and reason, which results from a good constitution, proper learning, or from the position or conjunction of the stars, which according to doctors, philosophers and mathematicians, is a force whose allowance depends entirely, like the desire and will, on the grace of God. The determinism in Trissino’s interpretation of free will is derived from the works of Plato, popularized during the period by Marsilio Ficino.

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165 Morsolin, Giangiorgio Trissino, 243, “un nuovo Socrates.”.
166 Ibid., 248.
167 Ibid., 250, “l’uomo ha l’arbitrio libero di poter volere ed eleggere il bene ed il male, ma non può operare senza la grazia di Dio.”
168 Ibid., 251, “egli non possa volere, eleggere e fare volontariamente il male, come male.”
169 Ibid., “offuscato dall’ignoranza e dall’errore, non intenda il bene, ne viene che anche la prima “voglia ed elegga quello, che le par bene, e non quello che è veramente bene.”
170 251 “A far, che l’intelletto, da cui piglia norma la volontà, non iscambi e confonda il bene col male, è necessario “il lume del giudizio e della ragione,” il quale, o venga dalla buona complessione, o dalla buona erudizione, e dagli aspetti e congiunzione delle stelle, seconochè pretendono alla loro volta i medici, i filosofi ei matematici, è forza concedere dipenda interamente, del pari che la volontà e l’arbitrio, dalla grazia di Dio.”
The question of free will became a matter of contention with theories of the immortality of the soul proposed by Ficino in his Platonic Academy of Florence. His main work, *Platonic Theology*, had been subtitled ‘On the Immortality of the Souls,’ and while it was not until the Lateran Council of 1513 that belief in the immortality of the soul was officially declared a Catholic precept, its inclusion drew the attention of many to Ficino’s basic concepts.\(^{171}\) If the soul was immortal, then its gradual ascent to moral perfection was its goal, for only then, when vice was eradicated, could we as human beings envision a future life in which the vision of God, who is the highest goal of contemplation, could be achieved. Like Trissino, Ficino was convinced that we are all drawn to the good of God naturally in our hearts.\(^{172}\) Similarly, if we do not see the true path to goodness through God, “it is because of physical or moral impediment, a blindness of spirit.”\(^{173}\)

Ficino believed that if Christianity could reform itself under the guidance of his Platonic theology – which was actually a mixture of Plato and several philosophers, including Thomas Aquinas – that it could be transformed into the true religion of peace and love that it once was.\(^{174}\) In the *Disputatio* (1477), he defended free will against the determinism of professional astrologers who claimed that the influence of the planets caused human action.\(^{175}\) In a letter to Francesco Marescaldi, Ficino wrote: “I am preparing a book on the providence of God and the freedom of human judgment, in which a case is moved against

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\(^{171}\) Ibid., 95  
\(^{173}\) Ibid., 11.  
\(^{174}\) Ibid., 26.  
\(^{175}\) Melissa Meriam Bullard, *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Winter, 1990), 687-708, (688). In a letter to Francesco Marescaldi, Ficino wrote: “I am preparing a book on the providence of God and the freedom of human judgment, in which a case is moved against the predetermination of the stars and the prophetic utterances of the astrologers.”
the predetermination of the stars and the prophetic utterances of the astrologers.”

Ficino’s words should be carefully considered in relation to the fresco in the Sala degli Dei because, like Trissino, he also believed it was prudence that helped one manage the planetary forces at work on an individual.

Trissino was introduced to the works of Plato during his early studies in Greek in Milan, where he studied under Demetrio Calcondela. His predilection for Plato is evident from a letter written to his dear friend Vicenzo Malgre in 1507, in which he professes his admiration for the Greek philosopher. Plato’s doctrine was also a popular theme at the Orto Oricellari, the gardens owned by the family of Giovanni Rucellai, and a popular meeting place for many sixteenth-century philosophers including Trissino, Machiavelli and Buonelmonte, who kept the traditions of the Florentine Accademia Platonica and the work of Ficino alive. Through his Accademia Trissiniana, Trissino’s Platonic convictions would have been discussed at great lengths among the Vicentine nobility, including the Thiene family, whose involvement in Reformist activities would have inspired interest in debates about freedom of the will. If such debates occurred at Trissino’s villa at Cricoli, might it not stand to reason that similar discussions took place in the Thiene’s family palace, particularly in their reception room, the Sala degli Dei? If the central figure painted by Canera were somehow implicated in such debates, her relation to Lutheranism would have had to be obscured given the Catholicism of the city’s ruling Republic.

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176 Ibid., 689.
177 Ibid., 698.
178 Morsolin, Giangiorgio Trissino (Vicenza: Gir. Burato, 1895), 26.
179 Ibid., 246, “il nostro Platone, cui non solo ammiro, ma se mi è lecito, io contemplo e seguo a lontani passi, adorandone.”
180 Ibid., 247.
Social Unrest and the Living Image: The Convenience of Art’s Ambiguity

Trissino’s response to Da Mula’s treatise on free will remains an explicit criticism of Luther’s belief that God is the mover and inciter of a servile will,181 which is not surprising given the Venetian presence in Vicenza at the time, where such activities would naturally have induced fear.182 The tensions caused by the strong Lutheran presence, however, meant that things were not always as they seemed. One year after writing the letter to his son, Trissino’s friend, Cardinal Ridolfi, the Apostolic Administrator of Vicenza, paid a visit to the city on September 15, 1543. His entrance was met with great pomp, and Vicenza was temporarily transformed into a city all’antica thanks to Trissino’s initiative. A triumphal arch was placed in front of the castle marking the beginning of the procession arranged for the celebration. Obelisks and other statues were organized along the processional route which ended at the contra’ Santa Barbara with another triumphal arch, this one bi-frontal. For many, the celebration was a front to disguise the anti-papal behavior so prevalent in the city. In the first part of the sixteenth century appearances were everything, and upon them hung the promise of one’s own destiny. If we return to the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene, we can see how the debate about free will may have been played out under the veil of a similar ambiguity.

If the Sala degli Dei were a product of the debates of the Platonic Academies in Vicenza at the time, then ambiguity would naturally play a significant role. The Sala degli Dei remains a powerful reminder that the question of free will was highly contested, specifically because of the ambiguous nature of the figures in the room, an obscurity tied to the law of perpetual change. As I have mentioned above, the eight figures carved in stucco

181 Cited in Gillespie, Theological Origins, 103.
around the central panel have not been easily, or accurately, identified. The figure of Mercury is particularly difficult to recognize, since the androgyny of the figure suggests that it may be a male or female god. In the *Cratylus*, Plato addresses the problems of etymological *logos* when it comes to the naming of the gods. Using Hermes as an example, Socrates explains to Hermogenes how the name of the god is connected to the duplicitous nature of *logos*, by being characterized as both a messenger of the gods and a deceiver.¹⁸³ Similarly, Pan, the son of Hermes, is also double formed and by embodying contraries he is like *logos*, since “*logos* signifies all things, moves circularly, is in perpetual motion, and is twofold…true and false together.”¹⁸⁴ The limitations of *logos* cannot fully explain the god, and amounts to a giving of names to that which cannot be rightly named.¹⁸⁵ This is because “the nature of things really is such that nothing is at rest or stable, but everything is flowing and moving and always full of constant motion and regeneration.”¹⁸⁶ Socrates therefore admonishes the naming of the gods because the law of perpetual movement decrees that they cannot be correctly named.¹⁸⁷ This instability is extended to the elemental deities of fire, water, air and earth, since each of these intervenes with the existence of the other through movement.¹⁸⁸ It is perhaps no surprise that these same elements frame the central panel that contain the female figure atop of the snake, hinting at the perpetuity of movement associated with the pilot of the soul. While all the other figures represented in the room allude to the shortcomings of *logos* – that is, the ability to bring to completion the manifestation of things

¹⁸² Olivieri, “trasmissione ereticale,” 181.
¹⁸³ Michael W. Riley, *Plato’s Cratylus: Argument, Form and Structure* (New York, Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2005), 71
¹⁸⁴ Plato, *Cratylus*, 408 b – c.
¹⁸⁵ 261
¹⁸⁶ Plato, *Cratylus*, 411 b – c.
¹⁸⁷ 260
by their being named – the pilot of the soul refers to the divine *logos*, which brings with it true knowledge that is free from all opinion and error,\(^\text{189}\) and she would therefore be animated with ambiguity.

Might Plato’s theory of *logos* have helped to conceal the female figure in Canera’s fresco beneath a similar veil of ambiguity? Why might the relationship between Plato’s pilot of the soul and the divine *logos* have been important enough for the Thiene family to have the figure depicted in the center of the ceiling of the largest room in their palace? *Logos* was also the term used by Luther to constitute scripture as the living word of God. Unlike Plato, who equates divine *logos* with absolute knowledge, Luther had Scripture in mind in his conception of the term.\(^\text{190}\) In the debate about free will taking place at the time, the figure on top of the snake could therefore assume both Plato’s conception of the will of the soul, or the Lutheran idea of the word as the mediator between God and humanity. The Greek metaphysical concept for *logos* was transformed into the word of God in Judaism, which later became equated with Christ for Christians.\(^\text{191}\) This transformation was verbally pronounced by John the Evangelist, who decreed, “and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”\(^\text{192}\)

In his *De christiana religione*, Ficino reflects on the different names given to divine *logos* by ancient theologians. “Orpheus,” Ficino asserts, “called it [logos] Pallas, born form the head of Jove alone.”\(^\text{193}\) Given the mirror held by the figure in Canera’s painting, which is usually associated with prudence, arguably the painting could simply represent the mythological

\(^{188}\) Riley, *Plato’s Crylatus*, 65.


\(^{190}\) Ibid., 247.


\(^{192}\) John, 1:14.
goddess associated with the virtue, but what of the snake on which she is sitting? Though this attribute may not be as familiar to the goddess as it was to Prudence, there are several contemporary sources that register the relationship in Northern Italy, as Minerva’s significance underwent a conversion from the goddess of war to the goddess of peace in Neo-Platonic circles.  

**Prudence Between Fate and Free Will**

My research suggests that debates about prudence were played out in images of the goddess of the virtue, Pallas/Minerva. Two paintings commissioned to decorate the private *studiolo* of Isabella D’Este in Mantua, illustrate this shift.

The first, known as *Pallas Expelling the Vices* (Figure 3), was painted by Andrea Mantegna somewhere around 1497. In a setting composed of boxwood hedges neatly trimmed to form an arcade, Pallas or Minerva, the goddess of chastity and prudence armed with a lance and a shield advances on a group of figures associated with vices. Hovering above the commotion, in a circular cloud in the top right corner of the painting, are three figures that have been identified as the other three cardinal virtues, Fortitude, Temperance and Justice. Despite the difficulties in identification of many of the figures, the painting is important because it singles out Prudence, in the guise of Pallas/Minerva, as the quintessential virtue needed in the triumph of virtue over vice, and hence suggests a correlation between prudence and free will. In the painting Minerva appears with her hallmark military accessories wearing a helmet and a cuirass, and holding a shield in her left hand.

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196 Ibid.

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Such a representation of the goddess is not unlike the pictorial tradition of the middle ages, which, as Rudolf Wittkower points out, showed Minerva in full armor characteristic of her role as the warlike defender of virtue.

The second painting, *Allegory of Virtue*, (Figure 4) created by Antonio da Correggio, has been dated to somewhere between 1528 and 1530, after the Sack of Rome. In the center of this image, a woman holding a broken lance in her right hand, and a helmet in her left is seated on a dragon. The aegis-bearing shield below her immediately identifies her as Minerva. Three nymphs, or angels, carrying a lyre and a flute hover above her, and below them a fourth places a crown of laurel on the head of the goddess. To the right of Minerva is a blond woman sitting on the skin on a lion, perhaps identifying her as Fortitude. To the left is a dark-skinned woman gesturing towards the heavens, accompanied by a child who points to the compass in the woman’s right hand, which is poised atop a large globe. The protagonist, Minerva, appears with the same attributes as she did in Mantegna’s painting, although here the aegis on her shield is clearly visible.

There is another significant difference between the two paintings. If, in Mantegna’s image, Minerva was in the midst of expelling the vices, in Correggio’s painting she is depicted as victorious, as suggested by the removal of her helmet, and the placement of the shield on the ground indicating she is no longer in battle. Such a representation is consistent with the transformation of Minerva who, as Wittkower observed, experienced a shift from the

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197 Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros*, 147.
198 For the attributes normally associated with the goddess see Rudolf Wittkower, “Transformations of Minerva.”
199 Ibid., 199.
200 Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros*, 225.
warlike goddess to a Minerva Pacifica. As Campbell argues, the sculpted topiary in the background of Correggio’s painting suggests that Minerva’s victory should be seen as an extension of Mantegna’s Pallas and the Vices. Would this mean that the dragon and vice are synonymous? With her left foot pressing down on the beast, one could interpret such a gesture as Minerva placing vice into submission. An extant drawing by Giulio Romano for the Palazzo del Te depicts a woman with her breast exposed like the figure in the Sala degli Dei except this time she has her right foot pressing down on a dragon. Philip Pouncey and John Arthur Giles Gere have identified the figure as Prudence, an interpretation accepted by Verheyen. While the woman has no accoutrements that may identify her with Minerva, the fact that she is presiding over a dragon like the goddess in Correggio’s painting suggests that the iconographic lines between Minerva and Prudence during the period may have been vague. There are other elements in Correggio’s painting that suggest that the dragon plays another key role to our understanding of the work in relation to the question of free will that was emerging during the period.

The dragon could be interpreted as a substitute for vice, but as Campbell has argued, it could also represent fate, a principle that was intrinsically tied to questions of free will at the time. Disputes about fate were rife after the Sack of Rome, perhaps expectedly, since many, including the Gonzaga, believed that the church had brought the terrible events of May 6, 1527 itself. In a letter to Federico on July 7, 1527 Pietro Aretino, who found a safe haven

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202 Campbell, Cabinet of Eros, 242.
204 Ibid. See also J. A. Gere and Philip Pouncey, Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Raphael and his Circle (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1969), 63.
at Federico’s court after fleeing from his adversaries in the church, drew parallels between the Sack of Rome and the fall of Troy in the *Aeneid,*\(^{206}\) describing the event as something fated.\(^{207}\) In the same letter, Aretino held Pope Clement VII personally responsible.\(^{208}\)

The responsibility of the church for the Sack of Rome was also confirmed in pamphlets, letters and sermons all claiming that the atrocity had been preordained.\(^{209}\) Even the bishop of Mantua, Ambrogio Flandino, attacked the degeneracy of the church in a dialogue that called for a renewed theology, and the reformist tone of his work drew heavily from the *Silenus Alcibiadis* of Erasmus.\(^{210}\) Only two years earlier, Mario Equicola, Isabella’s secretary, wrote in his *Libro de natura de amore* (1525) that the anxieties of fate and fortune could be overcome through the exercise of free will, particularly when the will is used to expel vices.\(^{211}\) Equicola’s ideas are contrary to those of Trissino who, as we have already seen, believed in the possibility of predestination as it was foretold by the position and

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 245-49.  
\(^{206}\) Ibid., 240.  
\(^{207}\) Cited in Campbell, 240, “The pious ghosts of Fabricius and Cato lament the fate of Rome with resounding voice, by other blows brought to an end without end; its ruin is so great and so grave, of all the pages recording the passing of the centuries, that Laocoön finally forgets his old woe with new grief [forgetting] Minerva, the serpents and this or that son of his.”  
\(^{208}\) Ibid., “Thus was Rome taken on the sixth day of May through the great goodness of wise Pope Penis. I come alive again all raging to see what is the truth of him, O cursed of God, O lord Clement, O discontented by small things; O shepherd, you’re a sheep. In the year ’27, in your honor, to iron and rage, to fire, pillage and ransom money, it was all done with no battle fought [by you].”  
\(^{209}\) Ibid., 241.  
\(^{211}\) Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros,* 245, “I do not doubt to affirm, following the ancient philosophers, that in the lower irrational and mortal part of the soul are to be located the emotions and perturbations of the mind, which motions the rational part can reduce to a mean...And we believe that as regards virtue and vice, we are like a blank sheet of paper, on which nothing is originally inscribed, but on which we have the power to write. Aristotle
conjunction of the stars. As Campbell notes, the Gonzaga persistently received predictions from prophets and astrologers.\textsuperscript{212} As such, the head and the tail of the dragon in Correggio’s painting – which are the only parts of the beast that can be seen – may refer to the \textit{caput} [head] \textit{et coda} [tail] \textit{draconis}, notational points in the heaven corresponding to the planetary trajectories used to draw up horoscopes and prophesize future events.\textsuperscript{213}

It is important to note, however, that while Campbell suggests the possibility that the painting may \textit{reference} the \textit{caput et coda draconis}, this does not mean that Isabella believed in the predestinations of fate, but rather was simply aware of the overreaching tendencies to give credit to them, since her husband Francesco and her son Federico had consulted regularly with the celebrated astrologer Tommaso Filologo.\textsuperscript{214} What is more likely, Campbell argues, is that the presence of the dragon under Minerva’s weight signals Isabella’s ability to detach herself from the perturbations of fate and the unknowable future with stoicism.\textsuperscript{215} For Campbell, this could be summed up by Isabella’s good friend, and tutor to her son Ercole, Trissino, who praised her in his \textit{Ritratti} dedicated to Isabella that she has, “the liberty to bring into being all which her appetite seeks to accomplish...because with a profundity or greatness of mind she cares little or not at all for the things of this world, but taking the intellect as a guide, she penetrates the Heavens with her soul, and with the eyes of the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 246.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 247.
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intellect she discerns many of those things which are withheld from our mortal selves, and in this she delights, and from this she acquires peace.”

In his tribute to Isabella, the Neoplatonic distinction Trissino makes between the mortal and the divine is conceived in terms of penetrating the heavens, an interpretation that recalls Plato’s *Phaedrus*. Correggio’s painting could therefore signify Isabella’s conviction, like that of Trissino, that the will is free to do good, but not evil, and is inherently aligned with universal harmony, an idea that is further confirmed by Trissino’s own interest in astronomy. The topiary in the background is sculpted suspiciously into the shape of a column or pole. As was conventional at the time, the affairs of mythological gods were depicted as having occurred in open air and thus required natural scenery. This was also the case in Mantegna’s painting as we have seen. With this in mind, Minerva’s transformation is somewhat cosmological, an aspect further emphasized by the globe at her feet. In the fresco from the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene, the analogy is more explicit.

**Navigation and the Harmony of the Spheres: The Cosmology of Trissino’s Minerva**

My research suggests that Minerva’s relationship to the snake is cosmological, and stems from her role as moral guide andmaintainer of cosmic harmony, an aspect that is better understood when we revisit Trissino’s attempts at reform. Looking for strategies to

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216 Giangiorgio Trissino, *Ritratti*, in Willi Hirdt, *Gian Giorgio Trissino’s Porträt der Isabella d’Est*, trans. Lukian-Rezeption (Heidelberg, 1981), 27, ‘E prima è da sapere, che, per essere molto honorato, non più si stima, ne per non essere appregiata, si sdegna; ne s’invaghisse, per havere famiglia honoratissima, e grande; ne per l’abondantia, che ha di tutte quelle cose, a le quali desiderio humano si possa appoggiare, ne perché s’habbia libertà din poter mettere in esecuzione tutto quello, che ne l’appetito suo cadesse di fare; anzi con una profondità, e grandezza di mente poco, o nulla di queste cose terrene si cura, ma, pigliando l’intelletto per guida, se ne penetra con l’animo al Cielo, e con l’occhio di quello discerne molte di quelle cose, ch’á nostra mortalità sono contese; e di queste si gode, et in loro s’aqueta…”


218 Freedman, *Classical Myths*, 137.
recreate peace and harmony in the Italian peninsula, Trissino originally advocated for a shared language that would eliminate rivalry and distrust. Influenced greatly by works such as *De monarchia* and *La divina commedia*, one of the first steps towards this reform was to make the works of Dante accessible by translating them into local dialect.\footnote{Morsolin, *Giangiorgio Trissino*, 170.} Though his efforts were mostly in vain the failure did not discourage Trissino and he continued to find new ways of inspiring peninsular concord. In a letter to his son Giulio, Trissino described his determination in Homeric terms:

“I will continue to sustain one of the labours of Hercules in keeping this boat on course; by so many winds she is overpowered.”\footnote{Ibid., 280 “Io sostengo una delle fatiche di Ercole a tener dritta questa barchetta: tanto è da diversi venti conquassata.”} Trissino’s words, while metaphorical, are significant for two reasons. First, the comparison of his own search for harmony to the labours of Hercules and his desire to keep his “boat on course” may be seen as a reference to Plato’s *Phaedrus* and the need to keep the ignoble steed on the right trajectory. Second, is the parallel between Trissino’s comment and Dante’s own words in the *Divina Commedia*, a similarity that reflects a shared interest in astronomy as it relates to the goddess Minerva.

At the beginning of the second canto of *Paradiso*, when Dante is just about to enter heaven, he explains what is required to guide him on his arduous journey:

“Minerva breathes, Apollo guides me, 

and the nine Muses show me the Bears.”\footnote{Dante Alighieri, *La divina commedia, Paradiso*, coretta, speigata e difesa dal P. Baldassare Lombardi (Rome: Stamperia de Romanis, 1977), 19, Voi, che sete in piccioletta barca/ Desiderosi d'ascoltar, seguiti/ Retr'al mio legno, che cantando varca/ Tornate a riveder li vostri liti/ Non vi mettete in pelago; che forse/ Perdendo me, rimarresti smarriti/ L'acqua,}
Those who follow Dante are described as being in a “piccioletta barca” or small boat, not unlike Trissino’s *barchetta*, which is the diminutive form of *barca*. Trissino’s determination to hold the course of his boat, despite the many winds she is engulfed in, echoes the last three lines of Dante’s quote, where the pilgrim warns that the waters he is taking have never been crossed, but Minerva breathes the wind, Apollo steers, and the nine Muses point him to the Bears. The Bears to which Dante refers are Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, those constellations most commonly used to determine the position of the North Pole. In Dante’s poem Minerva provides the wind that takes his boat safely to paradise, while in Trissino’s case there are many winds, but only Minerva, the goddess of prudence and also of navigation, can provide him with the right one. Trissino’s reference to navigation is no coincidence, and it coincided with his fascination with astronomy.

Trissino’s interest in astronomy derives from his concern for peninsular harmony. While studying with Nicolò Leoniceno in Ferrara, Trissino was introduced to the Harmony of the Spheres, through Ptolemy’s book, *Inerrantium Stellarum Significationes* (1533), which had been translated into Latin by Leoniceno. In 1541, Trissino presented the translated volume to Pope Leo X. It was through this new science that Trissino believed Italians could derive enlightenment.\(^{222}\) “Italians,” Trissino wrote, “dedicated to this science can derive much from its light.”\(^{223}\) Trissino was determined to see Italy united and enlightened by the light of judgment and reason associated with astronomy.\(^{224}\) Significant is how navigation, which depended on the stars for guidance, now became linked to harmony of the celestial

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\text{ch'io prendo, giamai non si corse/ Minerva spira; & conducemi Apollo/ Et nove Muse mi dimostran l'orse.}
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\(^{222}\) Morsolin, *Giangiorgio Trissino*, 283.
\(^{223}\) Ibid.
\(^{224}\) Ibid., 251.
bodies, a corollary also established in Franchinus Gaffurius’s *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum opus* of 1518.

In his schematization for the Harmony of the Spheres in the treatise (Figure 7), Gaffurius incorporates a woodcut linking the planetary spheres to their accompanying Muse via a three-headed snake, which, as we shall see, alludes to the role of prudence in the production of harmony. Though printed in Milan, Gaffurius treatise would have been found in libraries across northern Italy, acquiring particular importance in Mantua, where Gaffurius studied the music theory of Boethius under Vittorino da Feltre between 1473 and 1475, and also taught.²²⁵

The harmonic elements of mathematics and music in Gaffurius’s treatise were rooted in the cosmology of Pythagorean antiquity. Numerological and symbolic aspects of Pythagorean thought had reached their zenith of development in the architecture of the Renaissance, when developments in navigation, cartography and astronomy in the sixteenth century prompted a revived appreciation for the paths and trajectories of the planets.²²⁶ For the period in question, the earth remained the center around which the other planets and constellations revolved in circular paths consistent with the system formulated by Pythagoras in the Harmony of the Spheres. As Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier points out, in his *De architectura*, Vitruvius provided a more detailed account of Pythagoras’s contributions than any other writer of antiquity.²²⁷ This is important, since Vitruvius would become a key figure

in the Renaissance developments of architectural theory, particularly for Trissino who saw in the Roman predecessor the possibility of peninsular harmony through architectural renewal, and disseminated his ideas in his Platonic academy.

The relation between harmony and the cosmos laid out by Pythagoras in his theory of the Harmony of the Spheres has its origins in the harmonics of music. Music, like astronomy, was rooted in mathematics according to Pythagoras, who believed that the motion of the stars creates a perfectly melodic harmony.\textsuperscript{228} At the time of Pythagoras, the traditional system of pitches under which music operated contained seven notes that were associated with seven anciently recognized planets.\textsuperscript{229} This is the same theory used by Gaffurius for the woodcut illustration in his \textit{De harmonia musicorum opus}, with one exception.

In Valeriano’s woodcut there are eight spheres that make up the heavens, rather than the seven put forward by Pythagoras, the eighth of which is represented by a group of stars rather than a planet. We will recall that there are eight stucco figures surrounding the central image in the Sala degli Dei, and if we replace the \textit{Colum Stellatia} in Valeriano’s woodcut with Hercules, there are eight spheres represented by their corresponding deity. The addition of an eighth sphere is derived from Plato’s account.

While Pythagoras may have laid the groundwork for the Harmony of the Spheres, in the \textit{Timaeus} Plato elaborated on his theories and included an outermost belt, which housed the constellations, as an eighth sphere. Plato compared the outermost sphere, which contained a group of concentric rings formed by the seven innermost spheres, to a potter’s whorl “which is scooped out, and into this is fitted a lesser one, and another, and another, and

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 34.  
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 158.
four others, making eight in all.”

This arrangement, Plato continues, is pierced by a spindle, which is driven home through the center of the eighth, and outermost sphere. Plato goes on to describe the spheres, as well as their order, explaining that “the largest (of fixed stars) is spangled, and the seventh (or sun) is brightest; the eighth (or moon) is coloured and reflected by the light of the seventh; the second and fifth (Saturn and Mercury) are in colour like one another, and yellower than the preceding; the third (Venus) has the whitest light; the fourth (Mars) is reddish; the sixth (Jupiter) is in whiteness second…The eight together form a harmony.”

Extending from the pole of the earth, Gaffurius’s adaptation depicts a three-headed serpent that sweeps down the center of the composition, symbolizing the spindle to which Plato refers.

As Joseph Campbell has argued, the triple-headed form was translated into Christian Trinitarian terms denoting the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, an analogy for the one godhead of Christianity. Positioned above the earth as it is, the serpent, as a spindle, could also represent the North Pole, for it is around this point that the stars in the firmament were thought to have spun. This is, in fact, the case, as we can see from Dürer’s illustration of the constellations (Figure 8), where Draco, represented by a serpent, circles the North Pole between the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

As ancient myth Minerva was responsible for the dragon’s position among the constellations. In the Titanomachy, or the War of the Titans – a ten year series of battles fought between the gods at the beginning of the earth’s inception – the dragon, which had tormented the Olympian Gods for a decade, finally encountered Minerva, who grabbed it by

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231 Ibid., 623.
the tail and threw it to the North Pole where it immediately froze and began its eternal spin around the polar axis.\textsuperscript{233} Andrea Alciati recognized the interchangeability of the serpent and dragon in his \textit{Emblematum liber} (1531).\textsuperscript{234}

Referring to the image of the \textit{ouroboros} in Ambrosius Macrobius’s \textit{Saturnalia}, where a serpent that engorges itself surrounds the three heads of a wolf, lion and dog (Figure 9), Alciati maintains that both the dragon and serpent are representative of the cosmos.\textsuperscript{235}

Derived from ancient Egyptian mythology, the image is found in many sixteenth-century publications, including the \textit{Hypnerotomachia Poliphili}. As we have already seen in the second canto of Dante’s \textit{Paradiso}, finding the entrance to heaven was determined by locating the position of the North Pole, which was established by first locating Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. The fact that Dante received assistance by Minerva and the Muses is no coincidence, since Minerva was known to rule over the pole, where she had placed the dragon she had slain to remain forever as a constellation. In a description of the constellations of the North

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{233} Atlante delle origini: \textit{Miti e legend dello spazio siderale} (Colognola ai Colli: Demetra, S.R. L., 1998), 46, “Erano già trascorsi dieci anni di guerra quando il mostro scontrò con la dea ATENA che, dopo una lunga e terribile lotta, riuscì ad afferrarlo per la coda e lo fece roteare a lungo in aria. Quando il dragone raggiunse in questo modo una sufficiente velocità di fuga lo lanciò verso le stelle. Esauritasi dell’forza della spinta, incominciò a precipitare, ma la caduta si interruppe perché il suo corpo si impigliò intorno al Polo Nord Celeste. Laria, in quel luogo, era così gelida che il Dragone si congelò in questa posizione e incominciò a girare per l’eternità attorno alla STELLA POLARE.
\item \textsuperscript{234} Andrea Alciati, \textit{Il libro degli emblemi}, trans. Mino Gabriele (Milan: Adelphi Edizione, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 240, “In sintesi un simile dragone denota, pur nelle diverse sfumature concettuali, il cosmo e il suo perpetuo rinnovarsi secondo le leggi del tempo infinito.”
\end{itemize}
Pole, Ptolemy lists Draco among the constellations that include the most luminous stars, along with Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.\(^{236}\)

If we return to the image of the three-headed snake in Gaffurius’s woodcut, we can recognize a similar form in the Egyptian *Serapide* from Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*.\(^{237}\) Macrobius’s example is a representation of the three heads of the wolf, lion and dog, but rather than being at the end of a serpent, the heads are surrounded by one in the form of a circle eating its own tail. As a passage from Macrobius’s *Saturnalia* attests, the serpent surrounding the three heads is often referred to as a dragon, further highlighting the interchangeability of the two.\(^{238}\) In his book of emblems, immediately following his discussion of Macrobius’s *ouroboros*, Alciati lists two emblems (Figure 10) that depict the goddess of prudence, *Pallade Atena*, or Minerva, governing over a dragon which remains at her feet, with the quotation:

“Vera haec effigies innuptau Palladis, eius
Hic draco, qui dominae constitit ante pedes”\(^{239}\)

This correlation is substantiated by Hyginus in the second century, who situates Minerva’s reign in the firmament in his book on astronomy, *de Astronomia*.\(^{240}\)

\(^{236}\) Claudio Tolomeo, *Le previsione astrologiche (tetrabiblos)*, a cura di Simonetta Feraboli (Rome: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1985), 45 “Delle stele che formano le costellazioni a nord dello zodiaco, quelle luminose dell’Orsa Minore sono simili, nelle loro azione, a Saturno e in parte a Venere, mentre quelle dell’Orsa Maggiore a Marte; sotto la coda dell’Orsa…Le stelle luminose del Dragone producono gli stessi effetti do Saturno e Marte.”


\(^{238}\) Macrobius, *Saturnalia*. 1.20.338. The inscription describes the figure as: “el simulacro dagli Aegyptii di Serapi venerato portava: el quale era un capo di leone, all dextra prosilava uno capo di cane blandiente et dalla leava uno capo di rapace lupo; la quale effigie era tuta in uno volumine di draco contenta et circundata.”

\(^{239}\) Alciati, *Il libro degli emblemi*, 245.
As Mino Gabriele explains, the emblems represent the ideal that prudence safeguards man against the profanities of the world, but also preserves the integrity of that which is sacred.\footnote{Hygynis, \textit{de Astronomia}, ed. Gh. Viré (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubneri, 1992), 20, “hoc etiam segni erit quod in sereribus supra eum draconem herculis similacrum osten ditur, ut Eratosthenes demostrat; quare cuvis licet intellegere hunc maxime draconem dici. Nonnulli etiam dixerunt hund draconem a Gigantibus Minervae obiectum esse, cum eos oppungnaret; Minervam cuitem arreptum draconem contortum ad sidera iecisse et ad ipsum axem caeli fixisse; itaque adhuc eum implicate corpore vederi ut nuper ad sidera perlatum.”} In Gaffurius’s model of the Harmony of the Spheres, the eighth, and outermost sphere is that which lies between our tangible physical world and the heavenly realm where Apollo sits on his throne. It is Minerva who keeps it organized and separates the two domains by dominating over the dragon. In his commentary on Plato’s \textit{Cratylus}, Proclus explains that it is indeed Minerva who “perfects, guards, and covers all the cosmos with her own powers, since she connects all the encosmic heights and, herself, institutes all the lots in heaven.”\footnote{Mino Gabriele, in Andrea Alciati, \textit{Il libro degli emblemi}, 248, “Tale tuela serpentine assume così, nel nuovo contest emblematico, non soltanto la funzione simbolica dell’attenzione intelligente, che sorveglia da ogni corpo e la mente, ma anche quella di preservare da ogni profanazione l’integrità misterico del sacro.”} The figure in the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene then could be Minerva, who has become a symbol of the keeper of harmony by sitting over a snake that represents the constellation Draco. There is, however, one more attribute of the figure that further elucidates the shift in conception of Minerva from goddess of war to goddess of peace: the mirror.

The relationship between prudence and the mirror was already well established during the period. Camillo Camilli’s \textit{Imprese illustri di diverse}, printed in 1535, and later

engraved by Girolamo Porro, confirms the correlation. By holding the mirror in her hand, the figure on the snake recognizes the importance of prudence in the creation of harmony.

In Canera’s painting a clothed woman is sitting atop of snake – symbolizing the constellation Draco – which rests above the ring depicting the twelve signs of the zodiac. In her final transformation, Minerva has been transformed from the warrior-like goddess in Mantegna’s painting, and the more peaceful deity who has removed her helmet and cuirass in Correggio’s canvas, to the pilot of the soul, and the divine *logos*. Canera’s painting is perhaps the first instance in which a personification of Prudence is removed from the traditional representation of the virtue and acquires the cosmological position of Minerva. As such, the image seems to break free from the literary origins of myth, and register an attempt to return to the living word of knowledge over the written word, which is no more than an image. Could the mirror held by the figure imply that prudence may also preside over our own destinies in different ways depending on how the virtue is practiced?

The multivalence of the work would also safeguard the Thiene family’s good name. At the time of construction of the palace, the Thiene family was known to have undergone a crisis in reputation due to their Lutheran proclivities. In 1542, when Marc’Antonio Thiene and his brother Adriano decided to build a new palace that would express the grandeur and importance of their name and family, the brothers were the wealthiest men in Vicenza determined to preserve their status at any cost. As Howard Burns observes, the Thiene would

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243 Camillo Camilli, *Imprese illustri di diversi, coi discorsi di Camillo Camilli et con le figure intagliate in Rame di Girolamo Porro Padovano* (Venice, 1586), p. 128, When discussing the fragility of love, Camilli writes, “Mà io direi che un corpo d’Impresa formato di due cose tanto nobili, quanto sono il Sole, & lo specchio, che l’uno è simbolo della stessa divinità, e l’altro della prudenza.”

stop at little to maintain their power, even if it included violence. One of the first measures they would undertake to secure their social position was the marriage alliance confirmed the same year between Livia, Marc’Antonio’s sister, and Iseppo Porto, a member of the pro-Venetian faction, consolidating their joint allegiance with Venice and France. Allegiances should be taken lightly, however, especially in view of what we know about the Thiene’s Lutheran inclinations.

The Thiene’s sudden shift in allegiance from the Holy Roman Emperor to the Venetian Republic is somewhat dubious given their intimacy with the Gonzaga rulers in Mantua who supported Charles V. The Thiene were a product of the heretical idealism filtered through Trissino’s Academy at Cricoli however, and their project at the Palazzo Thiene must be understood as an exercise in self-aggrandizement within the “idealità di corte” which would see their accession as princely rulers. The problem for the Thiene was that at the time Vicenza was polarized into two different factions, one who supported the Holy Roman Empire, and one who sided with the Venetian Republic and France. Over the course of the century allegiances came and went as new groups of social classes emerged and the noble families sought to gain their support. Conveniently, the painting in the Sala degli Dei would reflect a similar ambiguity in allegiance. The Thiene were provided with the perfect model for how to use the ambiguity of art to their advantage by the Gonzagas who had participated in the debate about free will at the Palazzo del Te in Mantua.

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245 Olivieri, “trasmissione ereticale,” 177.
246 Howard Burns, Palazzo Thiene, eds. Guido Beltramini, Howard Burns e Fernando Rigon (Milan: Skira editore, 2007), 44.
247 Bazzotti and Burns, “Giulio Romano and the Palazzo Thiene,” 42.
248 Ibid.
249 Beltramini, Private Palladio, 44.
Closing Notes: Giulio Romano’s Palazzo del Te as Model

The theory that Canera’s painting of Prudence engages in debates about free will at the time can be tested against comparable developments at the Palazzo del Te. The strategies adopted by Federico Gonzaga, who experienced a similar shift in allegiance, are worth considering here since the architect of his palace, Giulio Romano, was also responsible for the frescoed interior. The polarization of allegiances in Mantua also seemed to stem from disputes about freedom of the will.

The similarities between the Palazzo Thiene and the Palazzo del Te suggest that the image in the central panel of the Sala degli Dei may have drawn from examples at the Mantuan court of the Gonzaga family, where the issue of free will was brought forward throughout the official palace in painted mythologies. As we have just seen, a drawing left by Giulio of a woman with one breast exposed and dominating a dragon has been identified as Prudence, and bears a striking resemblance to Alciati’s emblem for Pallas ruling over the dragon. Allegorical readings of Giulio Romano’s paintings in the Palazzo del Te, constructed for Federico Gonzaga in the late 1520s, have emphasized how the painted rooms are largely conditioned by “a kind of Herculean choice between virtue and vice.”250 The first room encountered upon entering the palace from the north, the Sala dei Cavalli, is filled with images of horses and the labours of Hercules, reminders of the tests he had to undergo in order to atone for his sins, after having surrendered to his anger and murdering his wife and children. The two largest rooms, the Sala dei Giganti and the Sala di Psiche, can also be considered conversations about the question of free will.

The Sala di Psiche, located in the northeast corner of the palace, depicts scenes from the love story between Cupid and Psyche, a tale that brings to mind the theme of free will, as Sally Hickson notes.\textsuperscript{251} Considered a popular exposition of Neoplatonic philosophy and the ascent of the soul, the tale of Cupid and Psyche celebrated the triumph of love over adversity.\textsuperscript{252} According to myth, Cupid is sent by Venus to report on the beauty of Psyche, where he immediately falls in love with the woman whose beauty exceeds that of his mother.\textsuperscript{253} Not wanting to be seen, Cupid can only visit Psyche at night, and in order to maintain their affair, Psyche must promise never to look at him, an oath she is destined to disobey.\textsuperscript{254} When she breaks her promise and looks at her lover by candlelight, Cupid quickly disappears and Psyche is destined to wander in exile until she can make restitution for her misdeed. As Hickson argues, the story remains a powerful commentary on the act of volition, and also the violation that results from the inability to prevent the will from choosing wisely.\textsuperscript{255} Linked to the Sala di Psiche by the Loggia di Davide, the Sala dei Giganti suggests a parallel meaning.

The Sala dei Giganti depicts the myth of the Gigantomachia – the war between the Giants and Jupiter – narrated by Ovid. On the ceiling, an angry Jupiter hurls lightning bolts down toward the Giants from atop a cloud. Surrounding Jupiter are the gods and goddesses of Olympus, as well as other creatures from Greek mythology. Above him, in a cupola surrounded by twelve gold columns, an eagle sits on a throne in the shape of the Shell of St.

\textsuperscript{251} Sally Hickson, “More than Meets the Eye: Giulio Romano, Federico II Gonzaga and the Triumph of Trompe-l’oeil at the Palazzo del Te in Mantua,” Disguise, deception and trompe-l’oeil: interdisciplinary perspectives, eds. Leslie Boldt-Irons, Corrado Federici, and Ernesto Virgulti (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 41-60, (45).
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid.
James. On the walls below, the Giants collapse beneath crumbling columns. The scene is derived from Francesco Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a weighty tome that had free will as one of its primary themes.256

Colonna’s tale consists of the quest of the main character, Poliphilo, for his love Polia, presented in the form of a dream where the theme of free will predominates. After journeying through a dark and ominous forest, where he searches for his beloved, Poliphilo emerges to a world filled with architectural wonders from the cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, and begins the true quest that will lead him to her. As he proceeds through the ancient portal of an ancient pyramid, he encounters Queen Eleuterilyda, whose name means literally “free will.”257 Around her neck, the queen wears an oval pendant etched with an animated episode of the Gigantomachia, the same event depicted in the Sala dei Giganti. In the image, Jupiter holds a lightning bolt in one hand, and a cornucopia in the other, signifying that man has the free will to choose his path in life.258 Given Giulio’s expertise in numismatics, the episode in the *Hypnerotomachia* would likely have appealed to the

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255 Ibid., 52.
258 Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 132. The two young nymphs chosen by the queen to be Poliphilo’s guides, Logistica and Thelemia, who symbolize reason and volition respectively, explain the meaning of the pendant to Poliphilo: “Logistica, understanding my honest request, immediately replied saying, ‘Know Poliphilo, that this gem is engraved with the image of almighty Jupiter, sitting crowned on his throne, while under his majestic and holy footstool are the vanquished giants who wanted to reach his high threshold, to seize his scepter and to be equal to him; and he struck them with lightning. In his left hand he holds a flame of fire, in his right he has a cornucopia filled with good things, and he holds his arms apart. This is all that is contained on that precious jewel.’ Then I [Poliphilo] said, ‘What is the significance of the two such different things that he holds in his divine hands?’ Thelemia replied knowingly, ‘Through his infinite goodness, immortal Jupiter indicates to earthlings that they can freely choose from his hands which ever gift they wish.”
architect, who often relied on coins and medals to create esoteric images. Strongly recognized for its elements of Platonic theory, the Hypnerotomachia could have been part of the regular curriculum in the academies of the period, including Isabella D’Este’s Academia de Santo Pietro at the Mantuan court in the 1520s when Giulio would have been present.

The Hypnerotomachia is also the likely choice for the iconography in the Sala di Psiche. Not only does the room contain several images that are direct quotations from Colonna’s treatise but also the design of the scene on the walls, which gives the impression of a large island, is a suggested reference to the island of Venus from the text. This argument is supported by Federico’s plan to place a statue of Venus in the middle of the room, just as it had been in the middle of the island of the Hypnerotomachia. The Hypnerotomachia also determines the way the scenes in the Sala di Psiche are distributed, where the images on the ceiling, which serve as a prelude to the life of happiness on the walls, imitate similar reliefs from the triumphal procession in Colonna’s text.

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263 Ibid.
264 Ibid., 26.
265 Ibid.
If the *Hypnerotomachia* is a possible source for the iconography at the Palazzo del Te, it is worth considering the narrative further for what it reveals about the question of free will and the way it relates to prudence, since this was also the subject of Canera’s painting in the Palazzo Thiene. The allusion to prudence is significant here since it is prudence, by way of the mirror, that is the major attribute of the female figure in the Sala degli Dei. In Colonna’s tale after enjoying a sumptuous banquet, Queen Eleuterilyda sends Poliphilo, accompanied by Logistica and Thelemia, to the Kingdom of Telosia, the realm of purpose or intention, where he is led to a cliff containing three doors from which he must choose before he proceeds. The first offers him heavenly glory, the second worldly glory, and the third one love. In order to choose wisely, Poliphilo is advised to “consign to oblivion” his past thoughts, and allow himself to be guided by Queen Telosia, “she who brings everything to its end,” and it is here that Poliphilo learns that he needs prudence to direct his will. Based on the advice Poliphilo receives, it would seem that prudence is necessary to guide Poliphilo’s will. Notably, the counsel on prudence provided to Poliphilo also comes with a temporal guideline.

Prior to reaching the three portals from which he must choose, Poliphilo and the two nymphs come across a beautiful three-sided obelisk of gold that explains the meaning behind the counsel he receives. The obelisk represents celestial harmony manifest in Egyptian hieroglyphs, which read: TO THE DIVINE AND INFINITE TRINITY, ONE IN ESSENCE. It rests on a circular base, which “has no beginning or end,” and thus

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266 Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia*, 122, Queen Telosia notes, “you will not know her unless modest prudence, together with sincere and right judgment, allow you to glimpse her.”

267 Ibid., 129.
represents the means between the two.\textsuperscript{268} As Logistica elucidates, in order to choose wisely, and in accord with celestial harmony, one requires the use of prudence, but one would also gain from grounding the operation of the virtue in the present moment.\textsuperscript{269} This type of prudence is in agreement with conceptions of the virtue prescribed by figures like Thomas Aquinas, who believed the true nature of prudence should be oriented towards a universal good and promote harmony, but contrary to the future driven sense of prudence as a means to an end theorized by Machiavelli.

In the Palazzo del Te we are able to discern a similar connection between prudence and the ascent of the soul sought by Plato and Aquinas. We have already noted how the first room one enters is the Sala dei Cavalli, where the viewer is introduced to the labors of Hercules and his pursuit of virtue over vice. From there one proceeds to the Sala di Psiche where one would be reminded of Psyche’s insoluble dilemma with regard to volition, and the act of looking. In the Sala dei Giganti, one is faced with the horrific alternative of having chosen evil instead of good. The last room one encounters as one proceeds through the palace in a clockwise fashion is the Sala del Sole. Here the ceiling comprises a light blue background, covered with white stucco lozenges. In a long panel in the center of the vault there is a large fresco of the sun god Apollo and the moon goddess Diana on their chariots, making their journey across the sky. Each of their chariots is pulled by two white horses, elements that recall Plato’s \textit{Phaedrus}. The white horses would reflect the purity of the soul of Diana and Apollo, which would have been immediately identifiable to anyone familiar with

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid., 130.

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., Logistica explains that: “On the pyramid there are three flat surfaces decorated with three circles, one representing each division of time: past, present and future. Understand that no one figure could contain these three circles except this unchanging one; no mortal could
Plato’s work, and spectators of the palace would have recognized the rewards of restraining the unruliness of their ignoble steed.

The theme was a popular trope in other buildings from the period. An almost identical scene was painted by Domenico Brusasorzi on the ceiling of the entrance hall in the Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza, another one of Palladio’s earliest projects, highlighting the extent to which Platonic ideas circulated among the nobility at the time. The theme of the Gigantomachia was also painted in the Palazzo da Porto Festa in Vicenza, and surely derives from Giulio Romano’s work in the Palazzo del Te, as Erik Forssman has argued. During the period the Da Porto family formed a marriage allegiance with the Thiene family, who would have been familiar with the theme of free will depicted on the walls of the Da Porto palace.

In many ways the Sala del Sole at the Palazzo del Te seems to act in conjunction with the Sala dei Cavalli. If, as scholars have argued, Federico’s palace registers an attempt to claim his right to princely status, then these rooms can be seen to befit the virtuous aspirations set out by Plato. The two rooms are situated on either side of the entrance to the palace, above which is found the Gonzaga coat of arms, alluding to the visit of Minerva, the goddess of prudence, to Mount Helikon. So named because of Federico’s devotion to horses – which enabled him in time to generate one of the most powerful studs in Europe –

perfectly discern or see simultaneously two sides of this figure, but only one at a time, and that is the present.”


273 Elmer, “Court Culture,” 71.
the Sala dei Cavalli may be seen to affirm the nobility of both of Federico’s steeds. It should be noted, however, that the use of mythological allegories did not necessarily conform to one fixed meaning. Such images served as a starting point for philosophical reflection, but could perform a variety of functions. As Peter Elmer notes, this would work to the advantage of Federico, who used the mythologies to operate in different ways, both private and public.274

The frescoes in the Palazzo del Te can be seen to take on different meanings, safeguarding Federico’s reputation depending on the viewer. Many viewers to the Sala dei Giganti would have seen a scene similar to the one described by Vasari.275 While it would seem that there is no direct reference to Charles V anywhere in the room, the Gonzagas could simply draw attention to the Imperial-looking eagle, symbol of the Holy Roman Empire, to affirm their support.276 The ambiguity of the fresco also invites another interpretation that engages with contemporary debates about logos as it relates to free will.

Logos is connected to the question of free will because it is associated with orality, which brings with it true knowledge that is free from opinion. In the Phaedrus, Plato’s most severe critique of the written word is that it will not provide the truth because it is invested with opinion, and “from opinion comes persuasion, and not the truth.”277 Persuasion is key here, because the Phaedrus is also about the progress of the soul towards its divine end, and

274 Elmer, “Court Culture,” 72.
275 Giorgio Vasari, The Lives of the Artists, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 370, “And after building this room in such a strange fashion, Giulio began to paint there the most fanciful compositions that one could encounter, that is, Jove annihilating the giants with his thunderbolts. And so, after depicting heaven, Giulio painted Jove’s throne on the highest part of the vault, foreshortening it from below upwards and from the front, inside a round temple above columns adorned in the Ionic style, with his canopy in the middle above his throne and his eagle, and all of this placed above the clouds.”
276 Campbell, Cabinet of Eros, 236.
277 Jowett, Phaedrus, 63.
how the coercive nature of opinion prevents the soul from willfully reaching this end. By becoming authoritative, writing prevents the soul from making its own judgment about truth, and this affects the soul’s movement. For Plato *logos* of the soul consists of self-movement. Only by being free from coercion can the soul come to its own conclusions and move itself.

Plato therefore advocates a different kind of word: the living word of knowledge, which “can defend itself and knows when to speak and when to be silent,” emphasizing the need for communication. It is the condemnation of images as less identifiable with truth, by comparing them with the written word, which initiated efforts to elevate the status of images by confirming that they, too, could correspond to the living word by participating in communication. What I will refer to as a “living” image in this dissertation will therefore correspond to Plato’s definition of *logos*, which is broad and multiple as we shall see, but one that always preserves an element that emphasizes the importance of knowledge as an exchange of ideas through dialogue, conversation, and most importantly alternatives.

The eagle enthroned in the center of the cupola on the ceiling of the Sala dei Giganti may well have represented Jupiter’s feathered companion or even Charles V, but it could also represent the divine *logos* through the relationship of the eagle to St. John. Of the four gospels in the New Testament it is the gospel according to St. John that most approximates God’s word. John’s gospel opens with a tribute to the divine *logos*: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

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278 Ibid., 53.
280 John 1:1.
John was often portrayed as an eagle, alluding to the lofty heights to which his writings soar.\footnote{Jeffrey F. Hamburger, \textit{St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 85.}

It is interesting to note how the space allocated for the eagle lies above the circular arrangement of figures representing the planetary gods, as if it were located in Plato’s heaven above the heavens where these gods reside, similar to the female figure in the Sala degli Dei. Like the female figure on the snake, the eagle also lies above a cylindrical form that projects down toward the viewer, although in the case of the eagle there are twelve pillars instead of twelve signs of the zodiac. The central image of the eagle could therefore take on multiple meanings depending on who the Duke was entertaining at the time. The ambiguity of the paintings would have allowed Federico the liberty of changing his allegiance through his own free will, should a sudden reversal of Charles V’s political fortunes transform his support into an embarrassment.\footnote{Elmer, “Court Culture,” 73.} The multiplicity of meanings would engage in Plato’s idea of \textit{logos} as a conversation that doesn't restrict meaning to a single authority.

I raise the themes in the Palazzo del Te here in order to consider their influence on the palace constructed for the Thiene family, who, as we have just seen, underwent a similar crisis in reputation. They were also among the greatest supporters of Lutheranism, with Adriano Thiene, one of the original patrons of the Palazzo Thiene, brought before a tribunal in 1547 for his Lutheran affinities.\footnote{Jeffrey F. Hamburger, \textit{St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 85.} The Thiene were originally included among those who supported the idea of uniting Italy under the banner of secular power offered by the Holy Roman Emperor. Their marriage alliance with the Da Porto family indicates that members of the Venetian Republic, which at this time was allied with the church in an attempt to free the
peninsula of Francis I of France, would have been potential visitors to the palace. More importantly, however, is how the fresco in the Sala degli Dei might also have participated in debates about free will initiated in the Platonic Academies at by Giangiorgio Trissino who sought church reform.

Conclusion

The central painting in the Sala degli Dei serves several purposes in the ongoing conversation about prudence and free will. Located above the eighth sphere of the constellations, the central figure in the painting could signify that prudence is Plato’s pilot of the soul, the divine aid needed to guide the ignoble steed towards the good. The painting may also refer back to the *caput et coda draconis* and the conviction that prudence, as an instrument to free will, could be used to circumvent fate which is destined in the stars. This type of interpretation adheres to the Machiavellian perception of free will, in which prudence is used to allow each individual agency in determining their destiny. The figure could also represent the Lutheran conception that the will is enslaved by the vestiges of original sin despite our attempt to exercise free will through virtues like prudence. This last interpretation becomes even more potent if we consider the indifferent look in the female figure’s face, as she sits atop the serpent, whose open jaws are uncomfortably close to her own head. She faces away from the mirror as if to acknowledge how prudence can’t help her here. In the spirit of Luther and Calvin, who equated Eve’s original sin with concupiscence, the figure flagrantly exposes one breast. Within the social context of sixteenth-century Vicenza, in

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which dissidence and disagreements were common precepts, and the city was divided into different factions – those who defended Luther’s views on free will, those who opposed it, and those who lay somewhere in between – it is perhaps not surprising that the central image in the largest room devoted to the gods, would be such a multivalent work. Depending on who the Thiene were entertaining, the painting could leap between different significations, safeguarding allegiances, and avoiding humiliation, or worse, accusations of heresy. The image also illustrates the different ways to practice prudence, and the distinct temporalities associated with each operation of the virtue, a detail that will become even more evident in subsequent chapters.

The notion that free will is temporally determined has already been alluded to in the Hypnerotomachia, where the present moment was required in order to exercise it morally. In Correggio’s Allegory of Virtue, time may also have been a factor. The inventory for Isabella’s studiolo, taken in 1542 by Stivini, describes the painting as “three Virtues, that is Justice and Temperance, who are teaching a boy to measure time.”

Cecil Gould dismisses Stivini’s assessment maintaining it was obvious that he did not fully understand its meaning, and anyone else keen on making subsequent attempts to interpret the painting should be discouraged since the various array of possible iconographic symbols are akin to solving the riddle of the sphinx. As conceptions of prudence migrate from mythology to cosmology, however, Stivini’s description will prove to be very insightful, as we shall see in the following chapter on the Villa Barbaro at Maser.

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Chapter 2: Daniele Barbaro and Scientific Prudence: Minerva and the Immobility of the Will at the Villa Maser

From Via Cornuda, which runs between the towns of Maser and Cornuda in the northern Veneto, the view to the Villa Barbaro (Figure 11) provides some overt signs about the program Daniele Barbaro had in mind when he and his brother Marc’Antonio commissioned the restoration of the family estate. Looking down the main lane leading to the structure, one is faced with a central façade decorated with four columns with Ionic capitals, capped with a large pediment furnished with the heraldic symbols of the Barbaro family. The central structure is flanked by two symmetrical colonnades, each terminated with large pavilions topped in turn with functioning sundials (Figure 12), features taken directly from the Ninth Book of Daniele’s commentary on Vitruvius, I dieci libri dell’architettura (1556). While these last two features are, aside from the central façade, perhaps the most striking, they have not been given adequate consideration in the literature.

Taking these two dominant attributes as its point of departure, this chapter explores the importance of time as a central component of the villa’s layout and decorative program. Scholars agree that Daniele played a prominent role in the design and decoration of his family villa.288 The significance of the temporal aspects of the design, I argue, emerges when considered in relation to his study of architecture, mathematics, and concomitant interests in prudence. Contributing to this argument is a reassessment of the iconography in the ceiling of

the Sala dell’Olimpo, painted by Paolo Veronese in 1560 (Figure 14), whose central female figure has been described diversely as, Divine Wisdom, the muse Thalia, and most recently, Love. A new identification for the figure will be proffered by drawing on archival documents from the Accademia degli Infiammati – a Platonic academy of which Daniele was a member – as well as the role of astronomy as it is outlined in his Dieci libri. Daniele’s interest in gnomonics in the Dieci libri will also be considered for how the art of constructing sundials signals an anxiety about the effects of time, and how, inspired by principles of navigation, his efforts can be seen as an attempt to control the ravages of time by directing the future outcome of events. Turning to the design of the villa itself, this chapter explores how time constitutes the principal theme for the entire complex through its relationship to divine logos, and outlines how Daniele’s temporal concerns informed his ideas of harmony, and consequently his ethics of space.

The Villa at Maser: Foregoing Analyses of the Sala del Olimpo

There were many hands involved in the villa’s design, as well as the interior decoration. The building of the villa at Maser is believed to have begun sometime between 1556 and 1558, in the hills near Asolo in the province of Treviso, on the same site where the farm of Daniele’s father, Francesco Barbaro, once stood. Modern restorations have shown that the present villa incorporated much of the previous structure.289 The reasons for rebuilding remain unclear, though there is evidence that the plans to remodel the pre-existing construction had already been in the works before any intervention by Daniele and his brother Marc’Antonio, since already, as early as 1548, Francesco had called two painters to

289 See Donato Battilotti, “Villa Barbaro a Maser: un difficile cantire,” Storia dell’arte, 53 (1985), 33-50, 37, and also Umberto Basso, La villa e il tempietto dei barbaro a Maser di
the villa. Sometime in early 1560, Daniele invited Paolo Veronese, with whom he had already worked at the Villa Trevisan and the Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci in the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, to fresco the interior of the villa. Though in his *Dieci libri* Daniele stresses the need for negotiation and cooperation between the architect and patron, the extent to which any efforts between he and Palladio were collaborative remains unclear. However, most scholars agree that Daniele was the brainpower behind much of the building’s design and the iconographic program of the interior.

When addressing the design of the villa, the large sundials that dominate the façades of the outer pavilions are usually mentioned in passing, and attributed to Daniele’s intense interest in time and clocks. Margaret Muther D’Evelyn is the first to recognize the decisive role that sundials – and the principles of gnomonics that are intrinsic to their use – played in Daniele’s architectural thinking. According to D’Evelyn, Daniele surpasses Vitruvius, crediting the inventors of analemmas – a type of sundial that plots the sun’s position throughout the year allowing mean time to be determined – with ingenuity compared to divine intellect, and praises analemmas themselves as creations “more divine than human.”

He even goes so far as to draw comparisons between the analemma, as a module to the

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sundial, and other systems used to design buildings.\textsuperscript{295} He bestows upon the ingenuity of the inventors of the analemma the highest of honours, because they act on the behalf of the benefit of all people in all time.\textsuperscript{296} Gnomonics was also associated with harmony, which extended to Daniele’s ideas of space. This aspect of his involvement with time is best appreciated if we examine the villa at Maser from the inside out, and begin with the frescoed interior.

Scholars agree that harmony constitutes the primary theme for the villa at Maser. Margherita Azzi Visentini notes that the Villa Barbaro has been interpreted as emblematic of the harmony of the cosmos, an accord that is mirrored in the union of Marc’Antonio and his wife Giustiniana.\textsuperscript{297} As Richard Cocke has shown, Daniele’s idea of harmony is grounded in music, where number and proportion are essential to its measurement, an idea that extends into configurations of the cosmos.\textsuperscript{298} For Daniele, the rules of mathematics are those that unite music and astronomy, where similar ratios and measurements appear in both musical consonances and movement of the planets.\textsuperscript{299} Harmony also represents the governing motif of the villa’s decorative scheme, particularly the Sala dell’Olimpo, where the frescoed ceiling contains explicit references to the cosmos.

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{297} Azzi Visentini, \textit{L’orto botanico}, 198, "Il ciclo di Maser è stato interpretato come una raffigurazione dell’armonia del cosmo cui sarebbe accostata l’armonia coniugale della famiglia di marcantonio Barbaro, alcuni dei cui membri sono ripresi, nella sala dell’Olimpo, in atto di assistere allo spattacolo dell’universo in azione, con i sette pianeti, i dodici segni zodiacali, i quattro elementi e le antiche divinità corrispondenti, mentre I paesaggi ed i trompe-l’œil alle pareti sono un’esplicita citazione classica."
\textsuperscript{298} Richard Cocke, “The Decoration of Villa Maser”, 232.
\textsuperscript{299} Daniele Barbaro, \textit{I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio} (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1567 edition), 24, Barbaro explains:"Le regole adunque dell'Arithmetica sono quelle, che fanno la Musica unita con l'Astrologia, perché la proporzione e commune, e universale in tutte le cose atte ad esser, misurate, pesate, e numerate."
Circumscribed by an octagonal frame, the ceiling fresco (Figure 13) consists of seven figures positioned in a circle around a central female figure wearing a white gown and sitting atop a dragon. The attributes of the seven figures in the outer circle clearly identify them as planetary deities. These are surrounded by the signs of the zodiac alluding to the other sphere of fixed stars. As to the identity of the central female figure, however, scholars cannot agree despite the fact that this figure, a voluptuous female, swathed in white drapery and perched on top of a dragon, seems to be the determining factor for every interpretation of the entire fresco cycle.

According to Cocke, for instance, the figure represents Thalia, the ninth muse from Mount Helicon. Cocke derives his argument from the fact that the Sala della Crociera – a cruciform shaped corridor linking the Sala dell’Olimpo with the Stanza di Bacco and the Stanza del Tribunale dell’Amore – has eight female figures depicted on its walls, each playing a musical instrument (Figure 14). The biographer Carlo Ridolfi identified the eight musicians as muses in the seventeenth century.\(^\text{300}\)

Scholars have doubted the veracity of Ridolfi’s observation because there should be nine Muses instead of eight, therefore the figure in the center of the ceiling in the Sala dell’Olimpo must correspond to the missing muse. Cocke has identified the missing Muse as Thalia, who appears in an illustration of the harmony of the spheres in Franchino Gaffurius’s De Harmonia Musicorum Instrumentorum Opus of 1518 (Figure 7).\(^\text{301}\) In Gaffurius’s depiction, Thalia appears, along with Euphrosine and Aglaia, with Apollo enthroned in the top portion of a diagram with eight spheres, seven of which are the seven planets in the Sala dell’Olimpo, separated from the other eight Muses by the tricipitium, a gigantic snake with

the three heads of a wolf, a lion and a dog.\textsuperscript{302} What Cocke overlooks, however, is the *tricipitium* in Gaffurius’ illustration, a symbol associated with prudence.

While other scholars have offered alternative hypotheses for the figure, they all have tended to articulate her in general terms. More recently, Inge Jackson Reist has suggested Boethius’s *De consolatione philosophie* as the source for figure's identity, a work that espouses Divine Love as the course to universal harmony.\textsuperscript{303} As Jackson Reist argues, Boethius’s work must have been familiar to Daniele through translations of the manuscript by Benedetto Varchi, a fellow colleague of Barbaro in the *Accademia degli Infiammati* at the University of Padua.\textsuperscript{304} Love, Jackson Reist insists, not only makes atonement for the two incompatible themes in the villa, reconciling Christian ideals with Pagan beliefs, but it is also compatible with the harmonic alliance associated with marriage, in particular the recent union between Marc’Antonio and his wife Giustiniana Giustiniani.\textsuperscript{305} Reist’s analysis is significant for my purposes by drawing attention to the possible relevance of the Platonic academy.

Any relation of the figure to Prudence has yet to be established. Luciana Crosato Larcher acknowledges the similarity of the central figure to Albrecht Dürer’s etching of *Prudence* printed by Albrecht Altdorfer,\textsuperscript{306} but dismisses the possibility for the ceiling at Maser, insisting that an error must have resulted from some confusion in scripture, where

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\textsuperscript{301} Cocke, “The Decoration of Villa Maser”, 231.
\textsuperscript{302} F. Gafurius, *The harmony of the spheres*, from *De Harmonia Musicorum Instrumentorum Opus*, (Milan: 1518), (231).
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{305} Jackson Reist, "Divine Love," 629-30.
\end{small}
prudence is compared to wisdom in Proverbs.307 Deborah Howard has recently revisited these interpretations, but of the central figure of the Sala del Olimpo she offers no evaluation of her own, noting how “the key to the overall programme remains so frustratingly elusive.”308 Howard does, however, emphasize how the theme of universal harmony is a critical component to the overall program of the frescoes, and takes note of the important role prudence played for the ideas of harmony Daniele confirmed in his Dieci libri.309

One further interpretation proposes the female figure represents Divine Wisdom. Nicola Ivanoff maintains the central figure – originally claimed to be a representation of Eternity by Rodolfo Palluchini310 – is a personification of La Sapienza Divina. Ivanoff bases her argument on evidence for a similar prototype she found in the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza (Figure 1).311 My analysis of the Veronese ceiling similarly draws on connections with Anselmo Canera’s fresco in the Sala degli Dei. As I proposed in Chapter One, the figure at Palazzo Thiene is multivalent, and could have been interpreted as Prudence, and also as Minerva, the goddess associated with the virtue of prudence.

In a room devoted to the Gods one might expect to find Minerva, whose importance was noted in the Renaissance. As Boccaccio noted in his Genealogy of the Pagan Gods, “she

307 Ibid., Larcher explains that the mistake was “Una contaminazione spiegabile, in quanto nel libro dei Proverbi biblici la Sapienza dichiara: “mea est prudentia.”
308 Howard, Venice Disputed, 41.
309 Ibid., 45. For quote, see Barbaro, dieci libri, 1556, p. 6, “Prudenza era habito, che disponeva l’intelletto à regolare la voluntà, perche habituate fusse in quelle virtù, che alla unione, & bene della Republica, & della fimiglia, & di se stesso convengono.”
was born not as we are, but from the head of Jupiter to show her unique nobility."^{312} Unlike the other primary gods and goddesses of mythology, Minerva is not generally assigned a planetary status. As we saw in Chapter One, however, in his commentary on Plato’s *Cratylus*, Proclus explains that it was Minerva who guarded over the cosmos.\(^{313}\)

The eight Muses in the Sala della Crociera constitute a key component of the iconography of the frescoed interior, and are linked to the Sala del Olimpo. They are also important to Daniele’s understanding of the conditions that allow the architect to achieve harmonic perfection in a building. He elucidates this aspect of his thinking in his Third Book, noting how it is in the construction of religious buildings that:

"one truly begins to see the beautiful things one awaits for from the mind and ingenuity of the architect. Here order has its place, arrangement is designed, here symmetry, decor and grace are proven, here one feels the usefulness of distribution, through which the value of the architect, the strength of art, and the sharpness of ingenuity shines - where the architect can say to himself, among the great poets: "Oh, Muses, oh, ingenuity that assists me now/ Oh intellect, that writes what I see/ Here your dignity is revealed."^{314}\)

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314 Barbaro, *dieci libri*, 1556, 96, "Ritorni hora alla distributione delle fabbriche pertinenti alla Religione...per il che si puo dire, che qui comincia tutto il bello, che di mano, & d'ingegno s'aspetta dello Architetto. Qui l'ordine ha luogo, qui la dispositione disegna, qui la simmetria, & il decoro, & la gratia fanno provo, qui si sente la utilita della distributione, nelle quali cose valore dello Architetto, la forza dell'arte, l'acutezza dello ingegno riluce. Onde egli si puo dire col gran poeta,
O Muse, o alto ingegno hor mi aiutate
O mente, che scrivesti ciò, ch'io vidi,
Qui si parrà la tua nobilitate."
As this excerpt suggests, Daniele’s ideas about ingenuity were inextricably tied to the Muses. The Muses were also connected to Minerva, the goddess of prudence, clues to which are provided in Daniele’s treatise on architecture.

The central theme in the Sala dell’Olimpo derives from the theory of the Harmony of the Spheres. As Cocke observes, in the Ninth Chapter of his Dieci libri, Daniele makes reference to the seven planets, providing a detailed account of the planetary movements, a reflection of Daniele’s determined interest in astronomy. Daniele not only refers to the planets and their movement, but he also provides their positions in space, presenting an orientation that exactly matches the ordering of the seven planets on the ceiling in the Sala dell’Olimpo. The movement of the epicycles of the planets could be based on Ptolemy’s description of the planetary orbits moving within the circumference of a larger one, that being the outermost circle of the heavens containing the twelve constellations of the Zodiac. As Daniele notes, “seven heavens are given to the seven planets already numbered: the closest to the earth is the Moon, the furthest is Saturn. The eighth heaven is made up of the fixed stars, called the firmament.” The fixed stars in the Sala dell’Olimpo are represented by the signs of the zodiac that surround the planetary deities. While the

316 Barbaro, dieci libri, 1556, 211, "Difficile è à giudicare qual sia di di spora ò Venere, ò Mercurio, percioche son quasi di pari movimenti...Dovemo adunque credere, che quelli pianeti siano al Sole vicinisimi, che hanno gli Epiciclo loro maggiori, & però Venere e Marte seranno dai lati del Sole...Sopra il Sole è Marte, sopra Marte è Giove, perche lo Epiciclo di Giove tiene piu simiglianza con quello di Mercurio, et quello di Saturno con quello della Luna, onde essendo lo Epiciclo di Saturno minore, che lo Epiciclo di Giove, per le dette ragioni Saturno è lonatanissimo dal Sole, & conseguentemente sopra di Giove, & questo è l’ordine dei cieli, il sito, e numero."
318 Barbaro, dieci libri, 1556, 211, "sette cieli si danno ai sette pianeti gia numerati: il piu prossimo alla terra è la Luna, il piu lontana Saturno. l'ottavo cielo è delle stelle fisse, detto firmamento."
Pythagorean model of the Harmony of the Spheres included the Earth as one of the orbs, Ptolemy’s later version, based on Plato’s account, discusses the harmony of the motion of the stars as eight spheres that rotate around the fixed earth.³¹⁹

Ptolemy’s later model was incorporated into Daniele’s ideas of astronomy. “Eight are the skies,” Daniele explains, “or better, the celestial machine contains the rotation of eight separate contingent skies.”³²⁰ Seven of these concentric rings, Daniele asserts, contain the seven planets, which, as we see in the villa, form the circle on the ceiling of the Sala dell’Olimpo. These are, from 12 o’clock, Jupiter, Saturn, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun and Mars. The allusion to chronometry here is no coincidence, a detail we will return to shortly. The eighth sky is made up of the fixed stars, or firmament, and moderates all the others. The presence of this sky is confirmed in the fresco by the twelve zodiac signs that also encircle the central female figure.

For Cocke, the role of the Harmony of the Spheres in the ceiling fresco must derive from Gaffurius’s treatise. However, his decision resides in the fact that Daniele’s theory of harmony is more aligned to Pythagoras’s theory of the Harmony of the Spheres, since Marsilio Ficino’s translation of Plato’s Timaeus makes no mention of the spheres. However, Daniele’s friend Girolamo Ruscelli wrote a treatise dedicated to Ptolemy’s version of the spheres, La geografia di Claudio Tolomeo Alessandrino, printed in Venice in 1561, in which he refers to Daniele as a distinguished astronomer.³²¹ Cocke’s assessment, of course, would depend on Daniele’s reliance on Ficino and Gaffurius, neither of which he mentions in his

³¹⁹ Girolamo Ruscelli, La geografia di Claudio Tolomeo, (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1561), 32.
³²⁰ Barbaro, dieci libri, 211, “Otto sono i Cieli, & le Sfere materiali, ò per dsir megliuo tutta la machina celeste contiene otto giri separsti contigui.”
³²¹ Ruscelli, La geografia di Claudio Tolomeo, 32.
Plato’s Harmony of the Spheres was, however, mentioned in Plutarch’s manuscript *Opusculi*, copies of which abounded in Venice during the period, and which Daniele cites as one of his sources in his *Dieci libri* several times.

In the *Opusculum*, Plutarch’s discussion of the spheres emphasizes the importance of the Muses. As Plutarch explains, in ancient times there were only three muses. These were divided into philosophy, rhetoric and mathematics. In later times, however, after the time of Hesiod, it was recognized the virtues of these three muses were far greater, and that these principal muses had an additional three differences, and so each was divided into three new muses: mathematics was divided into arithmetic, music and geometry, philosophy into logic, moral and natural. It was said that for Rhetoric the demonstrative was the first they learned to love, the second the deliberative, and the last was judicial. Here Plutarch also makes a distinction between the muses, reminding us that the nine could be divided into eight and one. After deliberating on the importance of the Muses, especially to poets and astronomers, Plutarch discusses the relation of the Muses to the spheres, a correlation he associates with Plato’s own account.

Plutarch’s description is worth considering for how it explains that none of the Muses

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322 Plutarch, *Opuscola omnia*, (Venice: 1535).
323 Plutarch, *Opuscoli*, (Milan: Francesco Sonzogno, 1827), 481 "gli antichi non conobbero più che tre Muse."
324 Ibid., 482, "Ma gli antichi avendo per mio avviso considerato che tutte le scienze ed arti maneggiate con ragione si riducono a tre generi principali, alla filosofia, alla rettorica, ed alla matematica, fecero che questi fusser doni e grazie di tre deità, che nominarono Muse. Dipoi nel tempo che visse Esiodo, venendo a scorprirsi maggiormente la virtù d' esse, conobbero che ciascheduna di queste tre principali aveano altre tre differenze, e le divisero in parti, e spezze: la matematica nell' aritmetica, musica, e geometria: la filosofia nella logica, morale e naturale. La retorica dicono che ebbe in principio la dimostrativa, che impiegaro in lodare, e nel secondo luogo ebbe la deliberativa, e nell' ultimo poi la giudiciale."
325 481 "Ben facesti a ricordarcelo in memoria, ma aggiungi che questo numero è composto dell' uno e dell' otto."
in the Sala della Crociera can correspond to the female figure on the dragon. Plutarch decrees that after having defined the axis that sustains the world as a spindle, and the stars as whirls, Plato inadvertently replaces the Muses for the Sirens. Plato only mentions eight Muses, and those eight are there to supervise the heavenly spheres, conserving and maintaining harmony among the planets with the fixed stars, and amongst themselves. This is a crucial observation in helping us decipher the female figure on the dragon at Maser, because Plutarch is clear that the Muses are specific to the planets, which is one realm, and the fixed stars of the Zodiac, which is another. Plato's harmony is not concerned with the earth, but only the eight heavenly spheres. If we look again at the Gaffurius’s depiction, we indeed see that he has represented above the Earth, eight spheres each with their corresponding Muse. In the example provided by Gaffurius, the eight spheres to which Plato refers are placed above the Earth, which has been labeled with the Muse, Thalia. She has been separated from the other Muses, and would therefore not have been placed up in the sky with the other planets, a detail Nicola Ivanoff has also previously argued. The eight Muses in the Sala della Crociera at Maser must therefore correspond to the eight Muses that lie above the Earth. On the ceiling of the Sala del Olimpo, there are also eight spheres, to which the eight Muses must correspond. Situated in the center of a depiction of the Harmony of the Spheres, however, the female figure on the dragon must play an important role in the harmony.

There are several reasons why Daniele may have placed Minerva above the fixed stars of the Zodiac. The first is found in documents relating to the Accademia degli

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326 Ibid., 486, "Platone con voci nuove nominò l'asse che sostiene il mondo fuso, e le stelle fusaiuoli, cosicchè in questo luogo, benchè con modo alquanto straniero, abbia nominato le Muse sirene"
327 Ibid., "Quelle otto adunque che ebbero la sprantendenza sopra le sfere celesti conservano e mantengono l' armonia de' Pianeti con le stelle fisse, ed ancora infra loro medisime."
Infiammati from the University of Padua, of which Daniele was a member. Along with Daniele, the members of the Infiammati were professors and students of the University of Padua, drawn to the sonnets and prose of Pietro Bembo, and also to the Homeric tradition reintroduced by Giangiorgio Trissino. It was from ancient texts, notably Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey, that Barbaro would be introduced to the importance of Minerva, as the goddess of prudence.

The Accademia degli Infiammati: Prudence, Minerva, and the Pathway to God

While only fragments of the minutes of the assembly of the Accademia degli Infiammati remain, the importance of prudence is at the forefront of the discussion. The document of the minutes opens with a lesson on one of Bembo’s sonnets, known as Piansi e cantai. Bembo’s sonnet begins with a passionate lamentation for the ravages of war, and an invocation to the Muses in their location on Mount Helicon, where Minerva visited them. The sonnet ends with an attempt to end the damaging effects of war by persuading the reader to have better judgment, and to choose the path of God rather than one that leads to profit on the road of life – in effect, to be more prudent when using the will.

It is interesting to note how the progression of the poem also follows a movement from the past to the present towards a future end that is inherent in prudent behavior. In the

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330 Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, BCP, Ms. B. P, 1830, 2 verso, Piansi e cantai lo strazio e l'aspra Guerra/ Ch'i' ebbi a sostener molti e molti anni/ E la cagion di così lunghi affanni/ Cose prima non mai vedute in terra/ Dive, per cui s'apre Elicona e serra/ Use far a la morte illustri inganni/ Date allo stil, che nacque de' miei Danni/ Viver, quand'io sarò spento e sotterra/ Che potranno talor gli amanti accorti/ Queste rime leggendo, al van desio/ Ritoglier l'alme col mio duro exempio/ E quella strada, ch'a buon fine porti/ Scorger da l'altre, e quanto adorar Dio/ Solo si dee nel mondo, ch'è suo tempio.
first stanza, the narrator *wept* and *sang*, followed by an invocation in the present tense, and lastly a move from the present towards what the reader will derive for his future end. Commenting on the poem in the minutes, Ugolino Martelli addresses this format a little further down, but first he provides his own interpretation for what that end should be (see Appendix 1).

Everything that is done in the world, Martelli insists, is done according to a particular end. Natural things progress towards their intended end, without being misled, guided not by instinct. A river, for example, flows incessantly and unhindered only to find rest in the vast and plentiful sea, the ultimate objective of all water. The valiant captain will persevere, night and day, the long and terrible provocation, and risk great and infinite danger solely to attain his ultimate aim of victory, which he will sometimes achieve, but more often than not, against all hope, he will experience the opposite. If everything moves towards an ultimate end, and everything desires, and tries to obtain, these ends, that are nothing more than their utmost success, what is the ultimate and supreme end of man? The answer, Martelli maintains, is found in that most noble and perfect part of man, the soul. Since the body is corporeal, and the soul is immortal, only the end objective of the soul can constitute the ultimate and supreme end for man. Conscious of the fact that the soul is immortal, it is self-evident that the desired end should be not the mortal or terrestrial end, but the eternal and immortal end, which must be the greatest, the most worthy, the most noble, perfect and ultimate God. He is our beginning, and as such, must be our true end.

If the purpose of Bembo’s verse is to move the reader towards an end, which is God, then it is prudence that provides direction, a detail that is highlighted in the movement created by the changing tenses of the verbs. As Martelli points out, the arrangement of the
sonnet, from the past to the present towards a future, is an essential component of the composition. He scolds Virgil who “non osservasse il medissimo ordine,” or does not follow the same order. He also reproaches him for “avendo egli primieramente invocato Venere,” that is to say for having made an invocation to Venus instead of Pallas, the goddess of prudence. The members of the academy, Martelli admits, prefer instead an organization that divides the sonnet into three parts; the first part is the proposal, the second part the invocation, and the third part the usefulness that we who read can put into practice.

Bembo, Martelli acknowledges, like Petrarch before him, has imitated the Greeks and made his sonnet conform to their rules, having said piansi and cantai in the past tense, not in the future. Such a literary trope recalls the temporality of prudence that uses the memory of the past, in the present, to move towards the future. We will recall that poetry was excluded from Plato’s scathing critique of the written word provided it was used to benefit mankind. As Martelli suggests, for poetry to benefit mankind it must consist of a movement through the tenses. It is movement in relation to prudence that makes it alive, since what we learn

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331 Ibid., 5 verso  
332 Ibid.  
333 Ibid., “divideremo I sonetto in tre parte principali, nel primo & nel secondo quartenario, & nei due ultimi terzernarii, nella prima parte egli propone quello che nel libro seguente si trattera nella seconda egli invoca, nella terza poi sogiugne l’utilita che noi legendo il libro potremo cavare.”  
334 Ibid., 6 recto, “Il nostro poeta si come ancora fece Petr. ha imitato in questo i greci, & fece questo sonetto poi che hebbe tutto il resto onde disse piani e cantai nel passato tempo e non nel future.”  
335 In the Republic Plato explains how poetry could redeem itself as a written source of knowledge is it could be useful to mankind: “But nevertheless let it be declared that, if the mimetic and dulcet poetry can show any reason for her existence in a well-governed state, we would gladly admit her, since we ourselves are very conscious of her spell. And we would allow her advocates who are not poets but lovers of poetry to plead her cause in prose without metre, and show that she is not only delightful but beneficial to orderly government and all the life of man. And we shall listen benevolently, for it will be clear gain for us if it can be shown that she bestows not only pleasure but benefit,”
from our past helps us to understand the future.

In a subsequent meeting, Varchi, the writer and another member of the academy, explains the importance of prudence specifically as it relates to Minerva, and particularly in relation to freedom of the will. He begins with homage to the ancient philosophers, including Homer, who have spent time speculating on all things human and divine alongside judgment and prudence. Of the many examples, however, which register the impact of prudence and judgment, Varchi believes the Judgment of Paris to be the most sublime. As he recounts the story, he explains how, when asked to choose between Juno, Pallas Athena and Venus, which of the three goddesses was the most beautiful, Paris blunders on account of his lust:

“And because, as most greatly manifested, the Nature of man is more inclined to wrong than good; to pleasure, and lust over labour, Paris judged Venus to be the most beautiful of all others.”

From the description that he provides of Pallas Athena, it is obvious that Paris made a grave error. Pallas is acknowledged for *la sapientia*, having been generated and produced from the head of Jupiter, from which her ingenuity and prudence come. When Paris chose Venus over Pallas, however, he set aside the proper objective of the competition in favour of worldly and sensual pleasures.

It is poor judgment that forces an individual from their true path, having confused their assessments, which have been appraised falsely, as the best ends. In Homer’s *Iliad*,

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336 Ibid., 131, *recto*, *Et per che, come è manifesto dalla maggior parte, la Natura del huomo è piu/tosto inclinata al male, che al bene: al piacere, et alla libidine più tosto/ che alla fatica, Paride guidicio esser Venere la più bella di tutte l’altre.*
Paris is a representation of recklessness and offenses against the Gods, motivated as he was by his lust and desire. Had he chosen more prudently, he would have opted for Pallas Athena, or Minerva, and the Trojan war would have been prevented, and harmony would have been preserved. As Varchi makes clear, the ultimate goal for man is to conduct oneself towards our true end that is God the eternal father.\textsuperscript{338}

As Varchi’s example suggests, the importance of prudence lies in determining the “path” one is to choose, and the virtue is therefore engaged with the question of free will. Varchi makes this explicit when he argues that Jove called upon Paris to choose between the three goddesses “only to demonstrate the free will that men have to do or undo that which they want.”\textsuperscript{339} The preoccupation with the question of free will was of grave importance during the period, as we saw in the previous chapter, but some key points are worth reiterating here in the context of the Platonic academies.

We will recall from Chapter One that in Plato’s \textit{Phaedrus} the question of free will was tied to the soul’s movement towards a divine banquet. By orienting oneself to the heavens, Socrates maintains, the soul advances toward “the abode of the reality with which true knowledge is concerned.”\textsuperscript{340} The region lies in the heaven above the heavens, where the pilot of the soul resides.\textsuperscript{341} Could the woman to whom Plato refers be the source for the central figure on the dragon in Veronese’s painting in the Sala del Olimpo? One reason to

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., 130, recto, “Pallade primieramente inteso per la sapientia si dice essere stata generate et prodocta del capo di Giove, perciocche, come sapete, l’ingegno et la prudenza consiste nel capo.  
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid., 131 recto.  
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., 129 verso, “solo per dimostrare il libero arbitrio che hanno avuto gli uomini di fare et disfare cio che egli vogliono.”  
\textsuperscript{341} Ibid., 52. Plato, \textit{Phaedrus}, 247C.
consider this idea further is suggested by Barbaro, who refers to the dragon in his *Dieci libri*. Although present in the ceiling of the Sala del Olimpo, the dragon’s role in iconography has not been given sufficient attention. We will recall from the Introduction that personifications of prudence underwent a transformation during the sixteenth century, and some, like that of Albrecht Dürer (Figure 2), were depicted standing on top of a dragon.

**Draco and Plato’s Pilot of the Soul**

In the *Dieci libri* Daniele explains his keen interest in astronomy as it relates to architecture. In the *Proemio* of his book, he notes how astrology is useful to the architect specifically when it comes to determining location. Ascertaining the effect of the sun's rays on the layout of a building can inform the architect where to construct an edifice so that the proper amount of shade and light can be controlled. It is paramount, then, to establish the position of the building site on the earth's surface, which can only be done by tracking the course of the Sun.342 If an architect wanted to maximize the amount of sun a building receives in winter, or shade it receives in summer, they would first have to determine where exactly the building site is located on the global sphere. The other planets are helpful with determining location, since their positions with respect to the poles will change throughout the year. The planets and constellations can be used to accurately locate a building site on the earth’s surface if one could determine the position of the poles.343 For those of us in the

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342 Barbaro, *dieci libri*, 1556 edition, 209, “l’ombra è diversamente proportionate, à gli edifice, alberi, & à tutte le cose levate da terra, e dritte imperoche in alcuni luoghi l’ombre è pare a le cose, che la fanno, in altri è maggiore, in altri è minore, grande occasione havemo da maravigliarci, & però per naturale instinto ci diamo a cercar d'onde venga la diversità dell'ombre; & vedendo che questa mutatione non puo venire se non dalla diversità dell'altezza del Sole, che a quelli tempo ad alcuni è più alto, ad alcuni è più basso, cominciamo ad investigare il corso del Sole.”

343 Ibid., 368, “Due sono i Poli, & cardini, i quali per diametro nel mondo opposti sono, ma che uno sia di sopra, & l’altro di sotto non è, se non per rispetto a gli habitanti della terra,
northern hemisphere, a building must exist somewhere between the equator and the North Pole. Once the position of the pole is determined, one can calculate the way the sun’s rays will vary from day to day over the course of the year, and this is extremely important to the architect.\textsuperscript{344}

In the Ninth Book, Daniele mentions how the location of the pole can be determined using the whereabouts of the planets, but it can also be found with even greater ease in the night sky using the constellations of the northern hemisphere also known as the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., “Volendo Vitr. esprimere molte cose diventa alquanto oscuro per la durezza del dire. Vedendo noi il certo, & continuato volgimento del cielo da Levante a Ponente, trovato havemo i due poli, & l’asse in certi, & determinati luoghi. Considerando poi il movimento, che fa il Sole in uno anno, & che hora nasce in una parte dell’ Orizonte, & da un vento, hora in un'altra, & che sul mezo di hora s'avvicina piu al punto che ci soprastà, hora è piu basso, & che varia i giorni, & le notti egualmente, sapemo, che per queste cose avvertite bene, & osservate, gli antichi hanno trovato la obliqua via del Sole, per laquelle andando egli con moto contrario al primo di giorno in giorno faccia tutta quella sensibile mutatione. Similmente avvertendo il corso de gli altri pianeti seguitare la via del sole, ma non così equalmente stargli appresso, diedero nome a quella via, per laquelle il Sole, & gli altri pianeti passavano, & la chiamarono cinta, o zona, perché si come una cinta cignendo non solo s'aggira con una semplice linea, ma tiene larghezza, così la via de i pianeti è stata imaginata & circolare, & larga, & è stata conosciuta piegar da una parte all’ uno de i Poli, & dall’ altra, all’altro, & abbracciare tutto il cielo ; cioè, essere uno dei circoli maggiori. & in quella anche sono state conosciute alcune compagnie di stelle, alle quali è stato imposto nome di segni; & perché siano dodici. Vitr. le chiama dodici parti pareggià.”
\end{quote}
Aside from the twelve constellations of Zodiac, there are others that assist in locating the pole by the way they are framed around the two constellations closest to it: Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. According to Vitruvius, Daniele explains, the two Bears derive their names from the Helice and Cynosura – the two nymphs who nursed Jove when he was being hidden from Cronus and were placed in the heavens in gratitude – and they are both looking down, the tail of one sloped toward the head of the other, and between them is the Serpent or Dragon, from which it is said the luminous star of the Pole is extended. Why is this important? Placing the female figure above the constellation Draco positions the goddess in the ninth sphere, beyond the eights sphere of the zodiac, corresponding to “the heaven which is above the heavens,” to which Plato refers in his *Phaedrus*. This possibility becomes even more salient if we consider Daniele’s intellectual background and his interest in the movement of the soul, a feature of the patron’s philosophy that may also have determined how space in the villa is distributed, and a point to which this Chapter will return later.

**Daniele Barbaro’s Early Works, and the Ethics of Movement**

Evidence of the relationship between the soul’s movement and the will is found in one of Daniele’s early works, *Della eloquenza*. In this work – which takes the form of a dialogue between the three characters Arte, Natura and Anima – movement plays a key role in helping to describe both mortal and spiritual appetites. When discussing the appetites, and

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345 Ibid., 391, "Pero si vede, che Vitr. Ha havuto intentione di esponer quello, che, appare sopra il nostro hemisfero, & però ha ragionato prima dei Poli in quell modo, come per legge perpetua il Settentrionale stesse di sopra."

346 Ibid., “Nel circolo settentrionale poste sono due orse, che voltano la spalle l’una all’altra, & hano I petti I altra parte rivolti, la minore Cynosura, & la maggiore Helice è detta da Greci: guardano amedeu all’ingiù, & la coda dell’una è volta verso il capo dell’altra, perciocche I capi dell’una, & dell’altra dalla cima lora uscendo per le code sopravanzandosi tra quelle, è stesto il serpent, ò Dracone, che si dichi, dal fine del quale è la stella luminosa, quella, che si
how they are motivated, the soul, or spirit, is said to act more rationally through verification and reason, a movement that demands an acquired knowledge of things because reason is a guide or councilor, both prudent and attentive.\textsuperscript{347} Using the intellect to determine the movement of the soul demands the use of the will, like that of the passionate sense, which has the virtue to place itself in front of the pleasing and escape the displeasing: “The will is Queen.”\textsuperscript{348}

When discussing the will, Barbaro makes specific reference to Plato. The objective of the will is to escape the bodily appetites so that the soul can achieve its ultimate goal, which according to the law of Plato is to return to the stars.\textsuperscript{349} Daniele’s reference to Plato here acknowledges his familiarity with the relationship between the soul and the will in the \textit{Phaedrus}. The figure on the dragon may therefore have served as a reminder that in order to remain on course, the soul must resist becoming weighed down by earthly desires. We will recall from the previous chapter that the identity of the figure on the snake in Anselmo Canera’s painting in the Sala degli Dei of the Palazzo Thiene could shift depending on the political inclinations of the guests. One of the characteristics of allegorical figures is their multivalence, and the figure at Maser was evidently also open to interpretation.

There is evidence to suggest that the figure on the dragon at Maser may also have had a Lutheran implication. There has been much debate about the possibility of Daniele’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{347} Daniele Barbaro, \textit{Della eloquenza} (Venice: Vicenzo Valgrisio), 10, “Muovesi adunque la ragionevol parte, che è nel anima, con le pruove, & con le ragioni; & tal movimento s’addimanda insegnare. Et perché la ragione è uno de’ consiglieri, prudente, et svegliato.”
\item \textsuperscript{348} Ibid., 9, “Ben ti dico ora delle forse mie, perché io conosco di dentro, & di fuori…& ciò si dimanda la volontà, come quello del senso appetite, il quale ha virtù di porsi dinanzi alle cose dilettevoli, & di fuggire le dispiecevoli. La volontà è la Regina.”
\item \textsuperscript{349} Ibid., 52, “Parer tornarsi l’anima alle stelle, secondo la sententia di Platone.”
\end{itemize}
involvement in heretical activities. The Platonic academies often became political gatherings for heretical and reformist practices.\textsuperscript{350} Daniele had close associations with the \textit{Accademia della Fama}, founded in Venice in 1557 by his close friend Federico Badoer, and later shut down for suspicions of heresy.\textsuperscript{351} As Tracy Cooper notes, Daniele Barbaro did not escape such aspersions despite his ability to quash them with his \textit{virtù}.\textsuperscript{352} Though his \textit{Della eloquenza} was not published until 1557, it was written in 1534, when Daniele was only twenty years old, and so it opens up a window into Daniele’s thoughts at a very young age. The dedication of the book, “Ai signori Academici Costanti di Vicenza,” underscores Barbaro’s close association with ideas circulating in Platonic academies in Vicenza at the time, as well as in Trissino’s Academy at Cricoli, whose official edict of those permitted entry to the academy includes the name of Daniele.\textsuperscript{353}

In the early 1550s, when he was Venetian ambassador to England, and where he would have had exposure to Protestant ideas, Daniele wrote several letters home to his aunt Cornelia Barbaro, a nun at the monastery of Santa Chiara in Murano. Though his letters are hardly heretical in nature, his perception of religious philosophy at the time has a strangely Lutheran quality. When discussing scripture with his aunt, Daniele highlights the importance

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., 212-215.  
of how God created everything for the Word incarnate.\textsuperscript{354} It was the Word of God that was manifest in the union between the Father and his son, as it is with the son of man.\textsuperscript{355} For Daniele, the word of Scripture was alive, like the spoken word, for it is through the Word that the present is manifested, and it is to the flesh as speech is to the voice.\textsuperscript{356} Luther’s emphasis on reading and hearing Scripture, indicated in his opening letter about Anabaptism (1528), and its implications for religious visual imagery are well known. The female figure on the dragon may therefore have prompted viewers to consider the capacity of human beings to contribute to their own salvation through free will.

Lacking the mirror that would immediately identify her as Prudence, the figure at Maser has also been stripped of the iconography usually associated with Minerva, save the dragon on which she sits. The result is a more intangible being to which Plato refers.\textsuperscript{357} Could it be that like Minerva, the virtue of prudence too has undergone a conversion or sorts? For Daniele, the Word of God also had a temporal quality, as we have just seen.\textsuperscript{358} Could Daniele’s conception of the temporality of the Word have informed the iconography of the central female figure in the Sala dell’Olimpo?

\textsuperscript{354} Daniele Barbaro, \textit{Lettere di Daniele Barbaro, date in luce la prima volta per l’ingresso di monsignor illustriissimo e revenrendissimo Sebastiano Soldato alla sede vescovile di Treviso} (Padua: Tipografia del Seminario editr., 1829), H, 60, “Iddio avea tutto creato per lo Verbo incarnato, così ricreasse ogni cose per il Verbo incarnate.”
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid., “Nè di ciascuna persona, ma del Verbo, nella quale tanta è stata l’unione che ciò che si dice del Figliuolo di Dio, si dice del figliolo dell’uomo.”
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., “il Verbo fu mezzo convenientissimo, come quello per il quale il presente si manifesta, ed è unibile alla carne come la parola alla voce.”
\textsuperscript{357} Plato, \textit{Phaedrus}, 52.
\textsuperscript{358} Barbaro, \textit{Lettere}, 60, “il Verbo fu mezzo convenientissimo, come quello per il quale il presente si manifesta, ed è unibile alla carne come la parola alla voce.”
Prudence, Minerva and the Ethics of Time

As I have already mentioned, the arrangement of the figures on the ceiling in the Sala del Olimpo bears a striking resemblance to the circular scale used to measure time in analog clocks. As Daniele asserts, the arrangement of the stars around the Pole may be used to determine the time in the evening using the stars of Ursa Minor, which was a strategy employed by mariners for the purpose of determining the time and location during navigation. It is from the seven stars of Ursa Minor that the northern hemisphere derives its name, *settentrione*, which, as Plutarch describes, was also the distinction given the goddess Minerva.\(^{359}\) Ursa Minor is composed of seven stars, and the last one on the tail of the bear – that is, the one closest to its body – is called the Tramontana and this star is closest to the Pole, and it is referred to as the “Stella del mare” because it is used by mariners.\(^{360}\) According to Daniele, “these stars are very clear, three of them form a horn that is dragged by the helm of the cart, which is made of four stars that form a square like a wheel that is made with four spokes, which move around the Pole in a period of twenty four hours from East to West – and the Tramontana, because it is the closest to the Pole, hardly moves, and for this reason, because the Pole is invisible, one can determine the level of the Pole above the horizon.”\(^{361}\) Here Daniele includes an illustration (Figure 15) explaining how “the

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\(^{359}\) Plutarco Cheronese, *Iside e Osiride*, Opuscolo (Florence: Stamperia Piatti, 1823), tradotto dal greco con note filologoche ed osservazioni al testo dal Cav. Sebatiano Ciampi, 12.

\(^{360}\) Barbaro, *dieci libri*, 1567, 394, “La tramontana, della quale si servono i nostri marinari, è quella stella, che è l'ultima nella coda dell'orsa minore. imaginiamo una linea dritta dalle ultime due stelle dell'orsa maggiore, cioè dalle ruote di dietro del carro, che vedi fin alla prossima stella che se le fa incontro, ivi è la stella vicina al polo del mondo, che si chiama stella del mare.”

\(^{361}\) Ibid., “Queste sono sette stelle assai chiare, tre di esse fanno un corno che si piglia per lo timone del carro, quattro poi fanno il quadrato secondo il sito di quattro ruote, si muovono d’intorno il polo con qual distanze in termine di hore ventiquattro da Levante a Ponente, & la
location of the Pole is also determined by one of the other seven stars, that is the brightest of
the two guardians, called the horologiale, and because it turns like the dial of a clock, one
can determine at any time of the year, what time it is at night.”

The Tramontana was also a wind derived from the North Pole that was used by mariners to help them return to port. If we recall Dante’s incantation in the second canto of Paradiso when he says, “Minerva blows; and Apollo guides me; and nine Muses show be the bears,” it is precisely Minerva’s position on the North Pole that was responsible for the wind that guided him.

From her position on top of the dragon in the Sala del Olimpo, at the center of the outer ring that forms the zodiac, Minerva does appear like one of the hands of a clock that spins, like the wind she creates, around the pole. In fact, Daniele makes such a correlation himself when he insists, in his discussion of sundials that “the Gnomon represents the axis of the world.” In other words, the pole corresponds to a gnomon. For Daniele, at least, Minerva, as gnomon, played a key role in determining the present time, but also in helping to determine the future outcome of events. It is as if time here takes the place of prudence, the prophetic virtue extraordinaire. If, through its contingence upon options, prudence opened up

Tramontana per esser più vicina al polo fa minor giro, & per quella, essendo il polo invisibile si conosce l’altezza del polo sopra l’Orizonte.”

Ibid., “il luogo del polo si conosce per un altra stella delle stelle, che è la più lucida delle dua guardie nominate: & quella stella è detta horologiale, perché girando come ruota di horologio da a conoscere in ogni tempo dell’anno, che hora sia del notte.”

Giovanni Battista Ramusio, Delle navigationi et viaggi, (Venice: I Giunti, 1583), “Avenne un giorno che’l vento di Tramontana cominciò a soffiar con grande impeto.”

Dante, La divina commedia, Paradiso, coretta, speigata e difesa dal P. Baldassare Lombardi (Rome: Stamperia de Romanis, 1977), 19, “Minerva spira; e conducemi Apollo; et nove Muse mi dimostran l’orse.”

Barbaro, dieci libri, 1556, 238, “il Gnomone rappresenta l’Asse del mondo.”
early humanist debates about the existence of free will, in the case of the villa at Maser, it would seem the will is something temporally determined.

**Time as Both Constructive and Destructive**

Minerva’s function in keeping time stems from her role as the goddess of prudence, a temporal distinction made by Daniele in his *Dieci libri* when he insists that the architect needs good judgment. Defining prudence, Barbaro writes: “Judgment is a matter of prudence; prudence compares preceding things with the moments, and evaluates things to come.” The emphasis on determining things to come, explicit in prudence, is also implicit in the science of gnomonics. Expanding on Vitruvius, Daniele describes the different kinds of shadow that exist, and explains the effects of the earth’s surface on the production of shadows, which will change depending on the shape of the surface on which the shadow is projected. Here he argues how with the help of perspective, it is possible to know and design the effects on a building, which one can read like a clock and from which one can even determine in which sign of the zodiac the sun is positioned. In other words, through the science of gnomonics and the use of sundials, one could predict, from the length of the shadow cast by the gnomon, what month of the year they were in and how long the day

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367 Barbaro, *dieci libri*, 1567, 12, “Il giudicare è cosa da prudente; la prudenza compara le cose seguite con le instanti, & fa stima delle seguenti. Le cose seguite per memoria si hanno.”
368 Ibid., 234, över Gnomone manda i raggi suoi nella superficie opposta della terra, se quella superficie è piana fa uno effetto, se cava un’altro, se curva un’altra, se dritta un’altro, & così in qualunque superficie, che cade il raggio solare si vede mirabile mutatione di effetti, i quali per ragione di prospettiva si possono divinamente conoscere, & disegnare, & con alcuni strumenti fatti à questo effetto chiaramente porre dinanzi à gli occhi…..& ogni Horologio ci mostra la quantita del giorno, il vero Merrigie con certi, & determinati termini, & se sono con il loro Analemmi descritti, ci mostrano ancho il grado, & in che segno si trova il Sole.
would be. As Daniele attests, such inventions were used by Egyptians like Ctesibio, and encouraged by the gods, so that they would not be “robbed” by time.\textsuperscript{369}

The desire to predetermine the effects of time was a major preoccupation for Daniele, and it seems prudence may have acted as a conduit through which these determinations were projected. As we have seen, prudence had strong associations with time, a feature that was particularly attractive to sixteenth-century Venetians who began to experience first hand how the passing of the years wreaked havoc on the city. According to Manfred Tafuri, in the sixteenth century, there was something particularly conspicuous in the Early Modern lagoon city that challenged the Venetians’ understanding of time as something that unified the past, present and future moments: the sea. Central to understanding Venetian history, is how the plurality of time as a merging of past, present and future, was disrupted during the sixteenth century by an ever encroaching sea that sought to claim more of the urban center all the time,\textsuperscript{370} displacing many Venetians from the city to the countryside. While the perception of time as universal became associated with the \textit{imago urbis} of La Serenissima, during the sixteenth century more and more it began to exist side by side what Tafuri describes as a ‘mechanical time,’ one which recognized the division of time into something that could be either constructive or destructive.\textsuperscript{371} As an example, Tafuri posits Daniele’s quote from his \textit{Dieci libri}, where the author laments:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 430, “Molte belle inventioni sono state quelle di Ctesibio, et volesse Iddio, che il tempo non ce le havesse rubbate.”
\textsuperscript{370} Manfredo Tafuri, \textit{Venezia e il Rinascimento} (Turin: Einaudi, 1985), 12.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., 14.
\end{flushright}
“...time, which generates every convenience and inconvenience, also grants that these two wage war on each other...”

While Tafuri acknowledges the circumspection in Daniele’s words, it is important to note that they are far from defeatist. In fact, the recognition that time could disrupt the natural equilibrium of things resulted in new strategies to control the damage of time on the lagoonal metropolis through the introduction of new technical innovations, methods that were also met with resistance. Such a concern with the effects of time prompted figures like Cristoforo Sabbadino to launch new measures to manage the fluvial waterways within the city by extending the *fondamente*, while others like Alvise Cornaro leaned towards a limitation on urban development of the city in favor of agricultural development in the *terrafirma*. Cornaro’s ideas were encouraged by many factors, including the increase in the diseases in the urban centers of Venice, as well as the decline of the Republic’s maritime prowess resulting from the conflicts of war that dominated the period.

The context of Daniele’s lamentation is also one of war. Immediately preceding his comment, he praises the new Venetian arsenal that was designed in such a way that it would remove the will of anyone that wished to disturb the liberty of the state. This is important, since, like Trissino before him, Daniele looked to architecture as a means of creating peace. As Tafuri notes, in the end Venetian officials preferred to limit the potentialities of technology, in favor of a “prudence” that benefitted from firmly established solutions.

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resulting from careful deliberation. What is important to take from these events is that, for the scientific elite in Venice the role of technology was to preserve nature, not to alter or disturb it, and only through the good practice of prudence could l’intervento “restaurare”, or restorative intervention, take place. Given Daniele’s comments in his Dieci libri, it is not surprising that these concerns would take command of the architectural design at Maser, nor that they would be invested in prudence specifically as it relates to Minerva.

**Gnomonics and the Control of Space and Time at Maser**

So far we have considered how debates about prudence and free will may have helped determine the iconographic program of the Sala dell’Olimpo at Maser. As we have seen, Daniele singles out prudence as the quintessential virtue for the architect. The prudent architect compares the past with the present, and considers how the present will influence the future. What effect might this have had on the architectural design of Daniele’s family villa? There is evidence to suggest that the layout of the villa conformed to the kind of scientific prudence Daniele championed.

At the Villa Barbaro, the cruciform shape takes precedence over any other manner of expression. The most obvious example is the Sala della Crociera that encompasses a space in the form of a cross, and from which the room derives its name. If we look at the plan for the villa provided by Palladio in his *Quattro libri* (Figure 16), we see how this is not the only space to be designed with the shape of the cross in mind. First, we must draw lines out from

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374 Ibid., 270, “s’introduce però nello Arsenale de’ Vinitiani uno apparato di aquistare le provincie, & I regni, & di levare anche le voglie a chi volesse in alcun modo turbare la libertà di quello stato.”

375 Tafuri, *Venezia e il Rinascimento*, 15.


377 Daniele Barbaro, *dieci libri*, 1556, Proemio, 12.
the center of the Sala dell’Olimpo, from right underneath the image of Minerva on the
Dragon representing the North Pole and the earth’s axis, and extend these lines to the ends of
the corridors, on either side of which are projected the images of a man – often believed to be
a self portrait of Veronese – and his dog who have just returned from the hunt at one end, and
a woman in a beautiful gown – presumed to be Veronese’s wife – holding a fan at the
other.\textsuperscript{378} If we then draw a line perpendicular to this line, once again through the center of the
Sala dell’Olimpo, and extend it at both ends to the front of the central block at one end, and
to the back of the nymphaeum at the other, we are left with another cross that is a perfect
square (Figure 17, Figure 18, Figure 19). The superimposition of these two crosses is
contained within a circularity similar to the face of a clock. This space contains the entire
living space of the villa. Similarly, if we follow a comparable design, but this time draw our
first line at the level of the outer archways of the colonnades, from a position that bisects
Palladio’s plan in half, and then extend the second line from the back of the nymphaeum to
the circular frame that encloses the villa, once again we achieve a configuration in the form
of a an exactly squared cross into a large circle (Figure 20, Figure 21, Figure 22).

The organization of the structure is reminiscent of the illustration of the four spoked
wheels (Figure 15) in Daniele’s Dieci Libri, used by mariners to tell time by locating the
North Pole using the polar star, which Daniele designates the Stella del mare. In his later
manuscript, De orologi, which remained unpublished, Barbaro gives an explanation of the
aforementioned procedure (Figure 23), though his instructions are sometimes vague, leaving
readers to figure out much for themselves. In his Arte del Navigare (1554), Pietro da Medina
discusses the method mentioned by Daniele on how one tells the time using the stars of Ursa

\textsuperscript{378} Antonella Fuga, Artists’ Techniques and Materials (Milan: Mondadori electa, 2004), 110.
Minor, but in a way that is much more intelligible, so it is worth considering here.

According to Pietro, first you must find the Tramontana star, and imagine that on top of it is a cross (Figure 24). Of the cross, Pietro continues, “the upper part is called the head and the part beneath the feet; the other two parts are the right and left arm respectively.” With this in mind, Pietro explains how one must be aware that within this shape four more lines must be placed which divide the other sections in half, so that between the right arm and the head there is a line, and between the head and the left arm there is a line, and also one between the left arm and the feet and the right arm and the feet. Once these lines are established, Pietro explains how one must then locate the largest of the two guardians of the Tramontana, which is the innermost of the two, also known as the horologiale, for in twenty four hours it passes around the eight sections above, taking three hours to get from one section to the other in such a way that if at the first hour of the night (midnight) the star is on the head, at three o’clock the star will be on the line between the head and the line between the head and the left arm, and at six o’clock the star will be on the left arm and so on (Figure 25). Pietro’s design is pretty much synonymous with that of

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380 Ibid., “Di questa croce la parte di sopra chiamano capo, & quella di sotto piedi, le altre due brazo destro, & brazo sinistro nel sequente modo.”
381 Ibid., “Saputo questo, si debbe ancora advertir, che tra questi rombi, over line ponemo altri quarto, quale divideno over parte no questo per mezzo, liquali chiamamo line in questa maniera. A talche tra il brazo destroy & il capo, è un a linea, & tra il capo, & il sinistro brazo, è l’altra linea, & tri il sinistro brazi, & li piedi, è la terza linea, & tra li piedi, & il destroy brazo la quarta linea.”
382 Ibid., “Havuta questa imagination glie da saper, che la stella maggior de li doi guardian, ch’è quella davanti, qual di sopra è stata nominate stella horologial, in xxiiiij, hore passa queste otto parte, tardando tre hore da una à l’altra di maniera che se à una hora de notte era nel capo, alle tre la sera in la linea tra il capo, & il brazo sinistro, et alle sei nel istesso brazo, & così si contara piu noltra.”
Daniele in his *Dieci libri*. What is important to draw from Pietro’s version of the procedure is the importance of the confluence of the cross and circle.

The cruciform design for the villa has obvious religious significance, but one that would have appealed to Daniele in particular. During his time as Venetian ambassador to England, Daniele was appointed by Giovanni Grimani, the current Patriarch of Aquileia, to be his successor as the Patriarch Elect in the event of Grimani’s death, a position that Daniele took very seriously. Breathing a religious tone into his new country home would have underscored his new position with the church. It would also have engaged with prudence in a way that reflects the tension between Christianity and Paganism, at a time when attitudes toward Pagan ethics were continually revised and challenged.\(^{383}\)

When viewed in terms of the Pagan ideology of Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad* the central figure in the Sala dell’Olimpo may be identified as Minerva, as we have seen, however, the figure could also represent one of the most significant biblical figures: the Virgin Mary. Wittkower has shown how the ancient conception of Minerva’s virginity was familiar during the Renaissance, and the identification of the goddess with the Virgin Mary was widely disseminated.\(^{384}\) More specific to the evidence I have just provided regarding the derivation of the central figure from the navigational determination of time, using the stars of the *Settentrione*, is the identification of the *Stella del mare* as the Virgin Mary. An excerpt from the Venetian manuscript, *Sei prediche in lode della Beata Vergine* (1583), dedicated to Mary, confirms the identification. When discussing the derivation of Mary’s name, Gabriel Fiamma affirms that her name is descended from none other than the *Stella del mare*, or

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illuminant one, because like a star she directs you into port. She is designated the illuminant one because she provides council on occasions of doubt, and she is called Stella del mare because she guides you when you are lost. In fact, in his opinion, and moreover that of the church, the Virgin not only merits the name Stella del mare, but more accurately the Stella del cielo or even better the Stella del mondo. The figure on the dragon evokes both Minerva and the Virgin Mary concurrently, and both figures warrant the location precisely because of the their role as guide. Sonja Ulrike Klug’s study of the figurative representation of the North Star taken from the Chartres cathedral has also shown how the Stella del mare is at once, the Virgin Mary, the Egyptian goddess Isis, and the Greek goddess Athena, or Minerva to the Romans.

Through the interchangeability of Minerva and the Virgin, the fresco of what might otherwise be a Greek and Roman goddess can be substituted with a female figure the Venetians held very dear on account of their history. According to legend the city of Venice was founded on the day of the Annunciation, underscoring the importance of the Virgin to

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386 Ibid., “Si chiama Illuminatrice, perche consiglia nelle cose dubbie; Stella del mare, perche ci scorge, quando siamo smarriti”
387 Ibid., 125 Ma che dico? che dice la Chiesa? che interpretazione è questa? Maria maris stella, Stella del mare, perche non piu tosto Stella del cielo? Perche non piu tosto Stella del mondo?
the city’s origins. There also existed the belief that Venice would one day be the locus for the return of the Golden Age, prophesied by Virgil in his fourth Eclogue, an event that would be marked by the return of the Virgin. Given the fact that the morality of both Christianity and Paganism were incommensurable and in constant confrontation with each other during the period, the painting can be said to “make the peace” so to speak. If, as we have seen, Daniele’s allegiance to the Catholic Church were in question, such a depiction would help confirm his loyalty before Catholic guests.

**Gnomonics and the Campaign against Uncertainty**

The aforementioned reconciliation between the religious beliefs of Christianity and Paganism presents a perfect example of the type of harmonizing ideology Daniele championed. The layout of the *Dieci libri* as a dialogue also promotes a compromise between the architect who reads the book, and the authority of Vitruvius. As Howard argues, in much of his writing Daniele remained an advocate of the need for equilibrium between the *vita attiva* and *vita contemplativa*. Daniele’s treatise is also a negotiation between art and science, a union encouraged by his fascination with arithmetic.

The source for Daniele’s keen interest in the arithmetic component of mathematics also solicited a kind of compromise, which can be attributed to Proclus’s *Elementi*. Proclus’s *Commentaries* on Euclid were translated by Francesco Barozzi, Daniele’s friend and teacher.

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391 Howard, *Venice Disputed*, 45.
at the University of Padua who also lectured on the topic.\textsuperscript{392} Barozzi emphasized that Proclus combined an Aristotelian theory of scientific demonstration with a Platonic appreciation for the sublimity of mathematics, particularly the notion that numbers played a key role in the conception of universal unity and harmony.\textsuperscript{393} By offering both Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives, Proclus provided the patriarch with a means to oscillate between the two, but it was perhaps in the area of geometry that Proclus made his greatest contribution.

For Barbaro, the importance of number to Proclus’s commentary would have been particularly important for its use in solving geometrical uncertainties. Daniele defines Geometry as the art of measuring, while the subject of mathematics relates to the intelligible quantity.\textsuperscript{394} He goes on to explain the significance of arithmetic to activities such as adding, subtracting, multiplication, division, but insists that what is useful to the architect is “arithmetic’s ability to demonstrate reasons for measurement, and to dissolve uncertainties which, for Geometry, are unsolvable.”\textsuperscript{395} Once more Daniele confesses his anxiety with regard to things that remain uncertain, such as the future. The algebraic type of measurement dependent on numerical accuracy that Daniele thought would mitigate unpredictability was determined by the science of gnomonics. Configuring the space at the Villa Maser in relation to the Virgin introduces an aspect of religiosity to the structure, but the fact that the representation of the figure is derived from the features of a clock, also projects a temporal component on the space.

Scholars have observed how the spatial organization of the central block of the villa

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{392} Paul Lawrence Rose, “A Venetian Patron and Mathematician of the Sixteenth Century: Francesco Barozzi (1537-1604), Studi veneziani, N.S. 1, (1977), 119-187, (124-126).
  \item \textsuperscript{393} Ibid., 125.
  \item \textsuperscript{394} Barbaro, dieci ibri, 14.
\end{itemize}
does not conform to Palladio’s conventional distribution of space. Azzi Visentini notes how
the residential block at Maser represents an anomaly with respect to the balance of Palladio’s
constructions, particularly the way it projects itself externally from the rest of the structure,
unlike the Villa Emo where continuity between the central and outer sections of the villa
exists.\(^{396}\) Unlike most of Palladio’s villas, the main complex is not identified with a portico
under the main pediment, which was used by Palladio to designate the entrance to the
residence.\(^ {397}\) Writing in the eighteenth century, Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi wrote that many
visitors to the villa did not like that the entrances to the building were from the two loggias
and archways attached to the colonnades on the side, since they were too far from where the
principal entrance should normally be.\(^ {398}\) For Palladio, the portico represented a middle
ground between the interior and exterior space of a structure, creating continuity between the
two, a priority evident in the architect’s drawings.

Through the use of orthogonal projections in his illustrations, Palladio demonstrates
the importance of movement between the inner and outer spaces of his constructions.
Palladio’s drawings, Cooper notes, represent “the total essence of the building, for, in its
drawn state, all is implied: the complete elevation, of exterior and interior simultaneously, the
entire circumference without so defined a prejudice for one aspect, and spare both without

\(^{395}\) Ibid., 15, “utile è l’Arithmetica a dimostrare le ragioni delle misure, & a sciorre le
dubitationi, che per Geometria.”
\(^{397}\) Andrea Palladio, *I quattro libri dell’architettura*, (Venice: Domenico Louisa Rialto, 1709), Palladio asserts: “Io ho fatto in tutte le fabbriche di Villa, & anco in alcune della Città il
Frontispicio nella facciata dinanzi, nella quale sono le porte principali: perciòche questi tali
Frontipici accusano l’entrata della casa, & servono molto alla grandezza, e magnificenza
dell’opera.”
\(^{398}\) Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi, *La Villa di Maser in Provincia di Treviso* (Rome: Cio tipo di
Forzani e C., 1904), 17
and within the building, as well as ornament and proportion. The ideal place for the viewing of the plan is in the mind’s eye.” Different views are often represented on the same page, offering a diagram that is divorced from the unitary context supplied by single-point linear perspective. In the drawings for structures, the portico itself provides a similar dissolution because movement in front of the portico provides different perspectives. Given Palladio’s preference for disengaging with the rules of linear perspective, why, then, was the villa at Maser deprived a portico?

A possible preparatory drawing for the villa provides potential evidence to suggest the lack of portico may have resulted from a compromise between the patron and his architect. In her recent study of the villa, Howard introduces a drawing from the Royal Institute of British Architects in London (sheet XVI, 5 verso) that shows a similar distribution of space to the villa at Maser and originates from the same period. Though Howard admits that it is difficult to determine whether or not the sheet is actually related to the villa at Maser, it does reveal an effort on the part of the architect to achieve a cruciform structure shaped to a perfect square by extending the stairs, which as Howard observes, would have raised the residence level of the villa by one floor. If Palladio were trying to maintain his preferred frontal entrance, while simultaneously making provisions for his patron’s desires for a cruciform arrangement, the drawing could prove useful in identifying the types of negotiations that took place between he and Daniele. Another preparatory drawing ascribed to Palladio depicts the Sala della Crociera with engaged columns on the

400 Ibid., 19.
401 Howard, Venice Disputed, 33.
lateral and central projections, communicating his desire to include a portico-like space.\textsuperscript{402} It is quite possible, however, that Daniele may have preferred to retain the lateral entranceways so as not to detract from the religiosity of the structure, a detail that may also be detected on the principal face of the villa.

**Perspective and the Problem of Coercion**

The broken entablature of the pediment on the front of the villa at Maser (Figure 26) remains undoubtedly one of the key features suggesting a difference of opinion between the architect and patron. As Howard notes, in his illustration of the villa in his *Quattro libri*, Palladio conceals the discontinuity with a garland, despite the fact that he had disregarded his own rule on the frontispiece of his treatise (Figure 27).\textsuperscript{403} In his *Quattro libri*, in between what appears to be two cross-sections of an arched tympanum, enthroned on a pedestal is a crowned female figure with a rod in her right hand, holding a book open with her left. The inscription above reads *Regina Virtus*, or queen of the virtues. It seems that the only instance Palladio chose to break with his own regulations was to make room for a figure of such great importance that warranted the tympanum’s interruption. As Puppi suggests, the interruption at Maser may have been the result of Daniele’s own intervention, an attempt to introduce a perspectival element to the building.\textsuperscript{404} Given Daniele’s renowned interest in perspective, culminating in his treatise *La pratica della perspettiva* of 1567, is it possible that he was harnessing the power of perspective to draw attention to something?

If he were drawing on the time keeping methods of navigation to determine the arrangement of the villa, the frame created by the disruption in the pediment would have

\textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{404} Puppi, 316.
served to identify the axis that intersects the horizontal line created by the colonnades, while simultaneously highlighting the location of the *Stella del mare* from the exterior of the building in the mind’s eye. Just as the stars of the night sky could be used to locate one’s position in the art of navigation, attributes of the villa can be used for purposes of location. Furthermore, the break in the entablature opens up the exterior façade inviting the viewer inside, while still denying them complete access, unlike a portico. This interruption is crucial, since it creates a distinction between the exterior space of the observer, and the interior sacred space belonging to the patron. However, there still exists a compromise since the arrangement allows the position of the virgin to be distinguished from both the exterior and interior. The exterior at Maser thus has the effect of drawing the viewer inside, through the use of perspective, and yet the missing portico and the lack of frontal entrance keep the viewer on the outside, creating a negotiation between the two. If we turn now to the interior space of the villa at Maser, we find a similar differentiation.

In the Villa Barbaro, the effect of single-point linear perspective situates the visitor as both the observer and the participant. From the center of the Sala dell’Olimpo, underneath the *Stella del mare*, the viewer is offered four separate perspectival vistas. The first looks through the Sala della Crociera to a large window that opens up to a view of the valley below. Another looks back towards the nymphaeum, which is shaped like a theater. The other two look down long hallways towards the east and west, at the ends of which are portrayed the images of a man and his dog (Figure 28), and a woman in a beautiful gown holding a fan (Figure 29). From this vantage point, the viewer has four views that appeal to subjective desire. At the same time, however, the viewer remains the object of the spaces beyond, in that he/she exists, like in a theater, as the person viewed by others. From the
window beyond the Sala della Crociera, the viewer remains the object of the external viewer as we have seen. The observer is also the object seen by the two figures at the end of the East and West corridors that stare back, positioning the viewer as both an actor participating in a play, and a spectator. The same can be said of the figures in the nymphaeum who gaze back toward the Sala dell’Olimpo. As the center of a cross that forms a circle, the nucleus of the Sala dell’Olimpo is positioned as both the vanishing point and the point from which all lines emerge, creating a sort of doubling effect.

Such a doubling effect is intrinsic to perspective, as Bronwen Wilson has argued. For Erwin Panofsky perspective enabled the objectification of subjective perceptions, since the artist’s viewpoint is imposed upon that of the viewer,\(^{405}\) while for Hubert Damisch, on the other hand, rather than empowering the perspectival gaze of the artist, perspective calls attention to the eye of the viewer, and therefore defines the subject.\(^{406}\) In the theatricality of Maser, the subject experiences what Henri Bergson would refer to as “oneiric automatism,” since the viewer becomes a spectator independent of a scene that the other plays, but is also converted “into automata,” transported into the world of theater as an actor themselves.\(^{407}\) In Bergsonian terms, the singularity of one-point perspective provides a viewpoint that belongs to both the subjective experience of the viewer, and the objective experience of the producer, simultaneously. As a result, the present sense-experience of the subject as spectator is compromised by the presence of a gaze that is “always already there.”\(^{408}\) As Gilles Deleuze points out, however, Bergson’s entire thesis consists in demonstrating that subjective


\(^{406}\) Ibid., 263.

\(^{407}\) Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 118.
experience can only be lived or livable in the perspective of a single time.\footnote{Hubert Damisch, \textit{The Origin of Perspective}, trans. John Goodman (New York: MIT Press, Zone Books, 1997), 446.} This is Bergson’s idea of pure duration, the form that the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating present from former states.\footnote{Gilles Deleuze, \textit{Bergsonism}, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 81.} Single-point linear perspective opposes and excludes lived experience then, by positing the so-called second time realized, namely the time of artist at the moment of creation of the perspectival image.\footnote{Henri Bergson, \textit{Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness}, trans. F. L. Pogson (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960) 100.} The presence of a second time disrupts the subjectivity of pure duration – a time that is completely, and subjectively, our own.

The break in pure subjectivity experienced at Maser can be understood further if we consider the problem in terms of Plato’s movement of the soul. We will recall that for Plato the movement of the soul toward God is the most important movement of all.\footnote{Deleuze, \textit{Bergsonism}, 82.} This region is the “abode of reality with which true knowledge is concerned…a reality without a colour or shape.”\footnote{Sallis, \textit{Being and Logos}, 144.} It is formlessness that prevents the soul from yielding to the egocentricity of envy, lust and other forms of vice.\footnote{Plato, “Phaedrus,” 52.} Envy and lust are egocentric emotions that cause the soul to lose its wings and fall to the sphere of “solid matter”, which partakes of the body.\footnote{Ilham Dilman, \textit{Free Will: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction} (London: Routledge, 1999), 37.} The loss of wings is crucial here, for in losing its wings the soul becomes immobile. It is
immobility that prevents the will from being free, since vice is a form of bondage that locks the will into an unhealthy relationship.

Compare Plato’s ideas of the movement of the soul to the movement of the eye at Maser. Looking up at the ceiling in the Sala dell’Olimpo, the visitor’s eyes can move from the poignant image of Diana rubbing noses with her dog, to the majesty of Jupiter with his arm around his eagle, willfully wandering to the image that best suits his or her thoughts and desires. The same applies to the walls of the room itself. One is free to admire the image of the figures perched behind the balustrade, or perhaps one of the landscape scenes. Then suddenly, the eye is caught by the perspectival effects, and for an instant it remains fixed, gazing at a hunter who has just returned from the hunt at one angle, or a woman holding a fan at another, who both return the stare, creating images that are singular in their immobility. If one were to walk down the corridor at the end of which is a painted image of a hunter and his dog, you would be forced to envisage that image as you pass through all the adjoining rooms, until you meet your final destination. From the other end, if you turn and walk in the other direction, you are faced with the image of Veronese’s wife until you arrive at the Sala dell’Olimpo.

This is not to suggest that the visitor to Maser would experience lust or envy when looking down the corridors to the two figures at either end, yet one is subservient to these images. Their function as images would reinforce their orientation, locking the viewer’s gaze to what Ilham Dilman refers to as a life “associated with the body.”\footnote{Ibid., 38.} The soul, after all is movement – pure movement from ignorance to knowledge – and anything that prevents this
movement is a form of coercion.\textsuperscript{417} If, for Plato, the will is directed towards an object insofar as it is good, and desirable, what happens when that object is undesirable and you are not presented with an alternative route? In the end it is perhaps Daniele’s fascination with perspective that triumphs.

Daniele explains his preference for perspectival space in term of geometry. In his \textit{Dieci libri}, when discussing the best shape for a forum, he acknowledges that the circular form is more capable and convenient; however, when capacity is considered, the square can be said to be just as effective; in fact, when it comes to the rules of perspective the square is more apropos, because the internal parts have closer proximity to the center, and the spectators will see the whole more equally.\textsuperscript{418} For the sake of perspective, the circle is compromised for a square, which Daniele utilizes in the form of a perfect cross.

Arguably, one of the spaces in the main living quarters of the Villa Barbaro remains somewhat divorced from the others: the Sala della Crocera. Writing about the villa Scamozzi noted that the Sala della Crocera was the “only situation in which one could configure oneself in the structure without interrupting the gracious internal disposition, and maintain communication with the porticoes and the adjoining apartments.”\textsuperscript{419} Scamozzi’s commentary is important for two reasons; firstly, it underscores how the Sala della Crocera remains a space on its own, detached from the rest of the family quarters; and secondly because it may

\textsuperscript{417} Sallis, \textit{Being and Logos}, 177-178.
\textsuperscript{418} Barbaro, \textit{dieci libri}, 1567, 209 “attento che la forma ritonda sia piu capace, & piu commode d’ogn’altra figura, & poi la quadrata, se noi guardemo alla capabilità, non ha dubbio, che la quadrata non sia piu capace…se consideramo la ragione della prospettiva, è piu al proposito la quadrata, perche tutte le parti d’intorno hanno piu vicinanza al centro, et gli spettatori vedeno piu egualmente il tutto, però io lascio questa considerazione a chi legge.”
\textsuperscript{419} Scamozzi, \textit{La Villa di Maser}, 17 “unica situazione per adattarle in questa fabbrica senza interrompere la graziosa disposizione interna, e mantenere una regolare comunicazione co’ portici, e cogli appartamenti adiacenti.”
help to explain Veronese’s frescoes in this part of the villa.

Also configured in the form of a cross, the Sala della Crocera remains a space in and of itself, but one that preserves the theatricality of the Sala dell’Olimpo in Veronese’s frescoed interior. Standing in the center of the room, underneath the groin, or cross vault, one looks forward to the view of the road leading to the villa, back towards the Sala dell’Olimpo, and east and west to the large pavilions topped with sundials. From this vantage point one experiences a similar type of “oneiric automatism” since from every direction the observer interacts with the painted images of Muses on the northeast and northwest walls, and a page and young girl opening a door on the southeast and southwest wall respectively (Figure 30, Figure 31). From the middle of the groin vault there is a suspended hook, dating to the time of the villa’s construction, from which something obviously hung. Along the other edges of the vault, on the north and south side, two masks are attached that stare back at each other. It is difficult to identify their gender. The one facing north (Figure 32) with her head swathed in linen, and a placid, serene look, seems to be a female, perhaps representing peace, or virtue. The other (Figure 33), wrapped in cloth that has been tied in knots at either side, appears to be a male in the act of screaming, perhaps representing a warrior, or a vice of some sort. Given their demeanor, they could represent active and contemplative life; however by the way their behaviours are set in opposition to each other, both figuratively and spatially, the scene seems to reflect the twofold nature of Plato’s logos, which in the Cratylus Socrates says “is twofold…true and false together.”

Standing underneath the center of the cross, the cosmological location of the pilot of the soul, one is at a middle ground, a balance akin to logos, an idea continued on the frescoes of the walls of the Sala della Crociera.

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420 Plato, Cratylus, 408 b – c.
Painted on the exterior walls of the Stanza di Bacco and the Stanza del Tribunale d’Amore, the only other rooms aside from the Sala dell’Olimpo that can be accessed from the Sala della Crociera on the second floor, are trompe l’oeil elements that beg investigation. Facing the center of the groin vault, as we have seen, are two frescoes that depict a pageboy and small girl emerging from fictive doorways. The rooms which they accompany have only one means of entry, via doors on the south side, something which would have undermined Palladio’s recommendations that the rooms in a house should be aligned beside each other so as to allow freer interchangeability.\footnote{Palladio, \textit{quattro libri}, 66, “Si avertirà poi nel resto della fabbrica, che vi siano stanze grandi, mediocri, e picciole; tutte l’una a canto al’altra, onde possano scambievolmente servirsi.”} Real doors, however, would have detracted from the kind of theatricality needed to maintain a visual balance between subjectivity and objectivity. Was the decision then, also a compromise between the patron and his architect? Through the illusion of the painted surface the imitation doors act as entranceways, at least metaphorically. Moreover, the trompe l’oeil opens up the space visually acting as living images in paint. Throughout the villa, Veronese’s frescos breathe life into the rooms, with many of the walls opening up to vistas of pastoral scenes, or balconies that appear so alive that they must be part of the actual architecture. Scattered throughout many of the frescoes are objects, such as a brush and a stool that look as if they were left by a servant, or images of cats and dogs that make the faux-architecture appear real. In many ways, Veronese’s paintings appear to be more successful at creating a living image than the architecture. This could explain Palladio’s failure to mention the frescos or the painter in his treatise, a detail that has continually troubled scholars.
The Objectivity of Movement

For the most part, movement in the villa at Maser is linear and directed by the objectification of time. Despite Daniele’s recognition that the horologiale star rotates around the Stella del mare continually, completing its circular cycle in a twenty-four hour period, most of the movement in the villa revolves around the linear axes that make up the cross, used to measure time. As we have seen, the only importance Barbaro ascribed to the use of astrology and gnomonics to architecture is for the purposes of location. 422 When it comes to determining location, Daniele only has faith in the straight line.

Daniele’s preference for the straight line stems from his interest in linear perspective. At the beginning of the First Chapter in the Dieci libri, Daniele summarizes Vitruvius’s thoughts on the relevance of geometry to the architect is derived from what can be learned from the use of the straight and circular line.423 When Barbaro expands on Vitruvius’s ideas, he skips over any mention of the circular line, and jumps directly to the straight line and its use in perspective, specifically as it relates to the distribution of light.424 The changing phenomenon of light was an enduring interest for Daniele, and informed his ideas of location, particularly with regard to the position of windows, as D’Evelyn suggests.425 When he

422 Barbaro, dieci libri, 1567, 20, "Una delle parti principali dell'Architettura è (come si vede al terzo capo del primo libro) cerca l'ombre causati dal Sole, & da gli stili necessarie a fare gli horologij da Sole, & questa parte è detta Gnomonica.. Quanto appartine à quella parte, che da gli ascendenti nel nascer nostro comprende i successi delle future cose; niuno uso si trova nell'Architettura, se forse noi non vogliamo cercare alcune qualità secrete de luoghi, le cognizioni delle quali non si possono referire ad latro che à gli ordini, & influssi dei pianeti, ad che molti mettono a fare la natività.

423 Ibid., 13, Vitruvius says, “La Geometria giova molto allo Architetto, perche ella insegna l’uso della linea dritta, & circolare.”

424 Ibid., 14, Barbaro says, “Prospettiva in generale è quell ache dimostra tre ragioni di vedere, la dritta, la riflessa, la rifranta. Nella dritta si comprende la cagione degli effetti che fanno le cose visibili mediante i lumi.”

425 D’Evelyn, Venice and Vitruvius, 180.
provides advice on how the windows of a house should be distributed, it is the straight line that comes to his aid, since stretching a cord towards openings on a building plan can demonstrate where light will fall, without a doubt.\footnote{Barbaro, \textit{dieci libri}, 1567, 299, “La dove adunque per dritta linea si puo tirare un filo allo scoperto, senza dubbio si puo havere il lume.”} For Daniele, the merit of the straight line resides in its ability to absolve doubt. Similarly, locating the \textit{Stella del mare} is achieved by drawing a straight line from the last of the two stars in Ursa Major.\footnote{Ibid., 394, “imaginiamo una linea dritta dalle ultime stelle dell’Orsa maggiore, cioè dalle ruote di dietro del carro, che vedi fin alla prossima stella che se le fa incontrà, ivi è la stella vicina al polo del mondo.”}

What do the decisions at Maser tell us about the question of free will during the period? Daniele’s early professional experience suggests he had an appreciation for the importance of prudence and the will in guiding the soul towards God. As his investigations into the scientific study of gnomonics continued, however, increasingly we see emerging a regard for the symbolic factor of time, represented algorithmically, where time seemed to replace prudence as a guide. Since Barbaro’s virtue came under the direction of Christianity, it was inspired by the teachings of Aquinas but also Plato, who sought to establish harmony between the new and old, the contemplative and the active, and even the subjective and the objective. His virtue was also guided by the more objective, scientific prudence of Aristotle, encouraged by a desire to predict the outcome of future events. As a result, the distribution of space at Maser is more objective, resulting in an environment that subjects the will to the temporal constraints of a space conditioned by theories of navigation intended to measure time. As mentioned in Chapter One, in the \textit{Phaedrus}, Plato makes a distinction between two kinds of prudence, divine prudence, and worldly prudence.\footnote{Plato, “Phaedrus,” in \textit{Selected Dialogues of Plato}, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: World Library, 2001), 159.} Adopting insights from
Platonic philosophy, particularly the *Phaedrus*, Aquinas believed that right activity was ultimately decided by the will, where the anticipated result for any alternative demanded “the right apprehension of the particular as well as the moral principles.” Aquinas believed prudence should be practiced without concern for the future, and divine wisdom could executed without attempting to acquire an end, because it exists in the timeless. The timeless is also an essential component of divine *logos*. It is in the timeless that *logos* is found, a detail we will explore in our next chapter on Palladio’s La Rotonda.

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430 Ibid., 273.

431 Pietro Aretino, *La vita di San Tomaso signor d’Aquino*, (Venice: Fracesco Marcolini, 1543), 85 recto, “La prudential non ha bisogno de la fortuna, e la sapienza puo far senza il consiglio in acquistare il fins suo, peroche ella sta ne le cose eterne; Chi sa reggere se stesso è Re di se medesimo.”
Chapter 3: The Temporality of Prudence: Time and the Machina del mondo in Palladio’s La Rotonda

The Villa Barbaro at Maser, and the Villa Rotonda in Vicenza, share many similarities. The cruciform nature of the Sala della Crociera in Daniele Barbaro’s villa at Maser is one of many spaces in Palladio’s villas that have cruciform arrangements. Placed at ninety-degree angles from each other, the four raised loggias that mark the entrance to the main area of the Villa Rotonda (1570) give the impression that the structure was designed as an amalgamation of the shape of a cross and a circle (Figure 34). In addition, while the ceiling in the Sala dell’Olimpo at Maser depicts a circular arrangement of the planets as mythological deities rotating around a central figure, the central space of the Villa Rotonda portrays eight planetary gods rotating around the central oculus. Both iconographic programs are clearly a reference to Plato’s Harmony of the Spheres – though in the latter case the gods are depicted on the surrounding walls as opposed to the ceiling. The similarities between the iconographic elements of the Villa Maser and La Rotonda may not seem unusual, given that the Harmony of the Spheres was a prominent theme in Palladio’s first project, the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza, as we have seen.

On the other hand, the spatial arrangement of the interior spaces of these two villas makes one question how the same architect could have conceived them both. In the Villa Barbaro, space is distributed in a linear fashion, where movement through the structure is determined by the geometry. For example, from the Sala dell’Olimpo, the spectator is directed linearly towards either the Sala della Crociera or the two long corridors to the east and west that lead, perspectively, towards the images of a beautiful woman in a dressing gown, or a hunter and his dog returning from a chase. Since both these routes lead to walls at
the end, once an individual has reached each of the extremities there is but one option – to turn around and go back from whence they came. In the Villa Rotonda, on the other hand, once inside the structure movement is unencumbered and the individual is able to move throughout the villa with much more freedom. This contrast of similarities and differences between the two structures raises a very important question. Why would Palladio have been involved in the conception of such a different arrangement of internal spaces for these two villas whose iconographic programs were so closely aligned? What, if anything, was the determining factor which encouraged such an alteration?

As I argued in Chapter Two, prudence played a pivotal role in the conception of Daniele’s villa at Maser on several levels. Daniele’s insistence on the importance of prudence to the architect in his Dieci Libri attests to the value placed on the virtue. As I proposed, the correlation between the virtue and the goddess Minerva shaped the iconographic program in the Sala dell’Olimpo.

Time may have played a key role in the architectural design at Maser, and Daniele’s interest in gnomonics likely played a part in its conception, as I argued in the previous Chapter. The focus on time at the Villa Barbaro is made explicit by the prominence of the two sundials on the upper portion of the pavilions of the villa, which were likely included in the design by Daniele, whose treatise, De horologi, was dedicated to time keeping methods. Could Palladio’s work at Maser, and his involvement with Daniele’s ideas, have influenced the design of La Rotonda? Prompted by iconographic similarities between the two projects, this Chapter explores this question.

If prudence and time are also theoretical components of La Rotonda, then the difference between the two villas may suggest a divergence in thought in their conception. It
is widely known that Daniele and his brother Marc’Antonio were major contributors to the renovation of their family villa. While Marc’Antonio is generally recognized for his role as the administrator of the estate, as well as the artist responsible for the ninfeo to the rear of the villa, Daniele has been acknowledged as the thinker behind much of the villa’s design, including the program for the frescoed interior.\textsuperscript{432} For many scholars, Daniele’s intervention in the design of certain aspects of the villa encouraged a construction that runs so contrary to Palladio’s idea of the perfect villa that the collaboration between the two men may have created a disagreement that would initiate a long-lasting rift in their relationship.\textsuperscript{433} The design of La Rotonda may provide clues about what Palladio learned from Daniele and their different approaches to architecture, time, and prudence.

In his \textit{I quattro libri dell’architettura} (1570) Palladio doesn’t mention his friendship with Daniele, or his role in the collaboration on Daniele’s \textit{I dieci libri dell’architettura} published in 1556. In Palladio’s commentary on the villa at Maser he does not even mention Daniele’s name, referring to him only as Monsignor Reverendissimo Eletto di Aquileia, while designating his brother “il Magnifico Signor Marc’Antonio.”\textsuperscript{434} Furthermore, as Howard Burns points outs, Palladio’s description of the villa suggests a certain awkwardness

\textsuperscript{433} For hypotheses that claim Daniele’s intervention encouraged a disagreement between the patron and the architect, see Lionello Puppi, \textit{Andrea Palladio} (Venice: Electa Editrice, 1973), 316. For Puppi, Palladio’s refutation of Daniele’s ideas may have encouraged the changed Daniele made to his \textit{dieci libri}, which was reprinted in 1567 with several amendments. For his part Guido Beltramini believes that the villa was executed without any concern for Palladio’s original designs. (See Guido Beltramini and Pino Guidolotti, \textit{Andrea Palladio Atlante delle architettura} (Venice: Marsilio, 2001), 211. Another good discussion of the problem can be found in Branko Mitrovic, Learning from Palladio, (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 110-112.  
and discomfort on the part of the architect, indicating that perhaps Daniele’s intervention shaped Palladio’s rather detached account.\textsuperscript{435} Despite any differences at Maser, however, the relationship between Palladio and Daniele remained exceptional at least until Daniele’s death, with Daniele leaving him 50 ducats in his will, where he referred to the architect as “Messer Andrea Palladio architetto nostro amorevole.”\textsuperscript{436} The possible tensions between Palladio and Daniele recognized by many scholars suggest a divergence in thought, one that led, at Maser, to the creation of a villa unlike any of Palladio’s other constructions.\textsuperscript{437} What might this difference in thought have been? Was this difference conceptual?

In practice both Palladio and Daniele were known to have considered Vitruvius as the preeminent guide to architecture. The pair is known to have made several trips to Rome together studying ancient ruins, with Palladio making a profusion of sketches. Many of these would be used as illustrations for Daniele’s \textit{Dieci libri}, a book devoted to the works of Vitruvius. In his \textit{Quattro libri}, Palladio also mentions his indebtedness to Vitruvius for his own work. It has recently been argued that Palladio’s knowledge of Vitruvius likely exceeded even that of Daniele’s own, and that the architect gave substantial assistance when it came to his textual interpretations and commentaries.\textsuperscript{438} As Margaret Muther D’Evelyn suggests, one way to distinguish between the methods of Palladio and Daniele is to “isolate elements that spring directly from the Venetian humanist’s own experience and

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\textsuperscript{435} Howard Burns, \textit{Andrea Palladio (1508-80): The Portico and the Framyard}, exhibition catalogue (London: 1975), 196.
\textsuperscript{436} Ibid., 185, see also ASV, \textit{Atti testament Vettor Mafei}, B. 657, n. 270 for Barbaro’s will in which he also leaves Palladio 50 ducats.
\textsuperscript{437} Margherita Azzi Visentini, \textit{L'orto botanico di Padova e il giardino del rinascimento} (Milan: Edizione il Polifilo, 1984), 181. See also Wittkower and Pignatti.
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education.\textsuperscript{439}

The disparate educational paths of the two men may have resulted in very different interpretations of Vitruvius’s commentary and ideals about architectural form. For Branko Matrovic the divergence in thought between Palladio and Daniele has its roots in the controversial relationship between the abstract and the material – a problem intrinsic to differences in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy.\textsuperscript{440} Daniele’s Paduan philosophical education helped determine a fundamental propensity for Aristotelian thought. In contrast, Palladio’s design principles consistently incorporate hypothesis and postulates that qualify as Platonist, a tendency that is likely the result of exposure to Platonic doctrine during his years with Giangiorgio Trissino.\textsuperscript{441}

It has often been noted that the Platonism in Palladio’s work resides primarily in his published plans, and his tendency to idealize in the \textit{Quattro libri}. Rudolf Wittkower insists that the origin of Palladio’s use of musical proportions in his plans was Plato’s \textit{Timaeus}. Bruce Boucher has argued that the drawings in Palladio’s treatise represent architectural ideas and ideal visions derived from the higher truths inherent to Platonic forms.\textsuperscript{442} For his part, Mitrovic has added the accuracy of Palladio’s tectonic representations in the \textit{Quattro libri} as a particularly overt example of Platonism in Palladio’s work. Mitrovic’s study is important for drawing attention away from the mathematical principles in Palladio’s work, and focusing on how form is theoretically, rather than mathematically, idealized. What has yet to be explored is how the Platonism in Palladio’s work may derive from categories that were conceived differently by Plato and Aristotle: prudence and time.

\textsuperscript{439} Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{440} Mitrovic, \textit{Learning from Palladio}, 110-112.
\textsuperscript{441} Ibid., 169.
This chapter investigates La Rotonda, and argues that the temporality of the design resonates with Plato’s conception of time, specifically as it relates to prudence, and by extension the goddess Minerva. To begin Palladio’s early career is reviewed, particularly with regard to the how the subject of time was disseminated in the Platonic Academies of Vicenza that were initiated by Trissino, as well as the Platonism in his Italia liberata dai Goti (1548), where the author confirms his trust in Plato’s conception of time. The importance of the figure of Minerva, recast as the angel Palladio, and the goddess’s role in the creation of harmony through her connection with time, conceived through the virtue of prudence will also be considered. Conceptions of time determined by the philosophies of both Plato and Thomas Aquinas, and how these principles were circulated in the Platonic academies like the Accademia Trissiniana, the Accademia Olimpica, and the Accademia degli Infiammati through other literary works during the period that focused on Plato’s theories will also be investigated for their possible influence on the villa. Focusing on the frontispieces of Palladio’s Quattro libri, and Daniele’s Dieci libri, the disparities between the two treatises will be scrutinized for what they might reveal about how prudence and time were conceptualized. La Rotonda’s connection with timekeeping as it relates to astronomy will be explored, and cross-referenced to the frescoed interior in order to elucidate what role prudence and time may have played in the conception of the villa.

La Rotonda’s Design and Plan

The first entry verifying Palladio’s involvement in the construction of La Rotonda is in his Quattro libri of 1570. Due to the villa’s proximity to the city, Palladio situated the building in his Second Book dealing with palazzi rather than in the section on villas. The
villa’s site is described by the architect as bathed on one side by the Bacchiglione River and surround on the others by lovely hills, giving the appearance of a grand theater.443 La Rotonda was commissioned by the prelate Paolo Almerico, a “huomo di Chiesa” as Palladio refers to him.444 Almerico was a member of the Accademia di Costozza, whose members would go on to be the founders of the Accademia Olimpico in Vicenza. According to Luca Trevisan, Almerico was a highly educated man who “wished to build a real home-temple where he could ambitiously cultivate humanist otium,” which allowed Palladio to forgo conventional villa models in favor of architectural principles inspired by antiquity.445 Save for adjustment by Vincenzo Scamozzi in the late sixteenth century – which include covering the oculus – the villa remains much like it appears in Palladio’s drawing of the structure in his Quattro libri (Figure 35).446

The drawing has often been the focal point when it comes to historical studies of La Rotonda, because it is here that the formal properties promise to reveal something of the role of architecture in Vicentine culture and society at the time it was conceived. As Mitrovic has argued, the drawing presents La Rotonda as a shape independent of its surroundings, and so must be central to any understanding of the villa’s design.447 Its placement on a hill on the outskirts of Vicenza contradict the plan, since two of the portico entrances abut the edge of the retaining wall of the platform on which the villa sits.448 Entering the villa from either of

443 Palladio, Quattro libri, Libro Secondo, 18, the Rotonda “è da una parte bagnato dal Bacchiglione fiume navigabile, e dall’altra è circondata da altri amenissimi colli, che rendono l’aspetto di un molto grande teatro.”
444 Ibid.
447 Mitrovic, Learning from Palladio, 142.
448 Ibid.
these porticos would be uncomfortable and even dangerous were it not for a fence that prevents the visitor from falling over the edge, and so the plan must supersede the constructed villa.\footnote{Ibid.}

At first glance, the plan suggests the classic conflation of a circle and a square – geometrical figures usually regarded as Platonic forms \textit{par excellence}. Indeed, the heart of the building is a perfect square with a central circular hall; however, the hall is traversed by four straight corridors that lead to four entrance loggias from which one can survey the surrounding countryside, underscoring the shape of a cross. The central hall is surrounded by eight rooms on the \textit{piano nobile} that are arranged centrifugally, and connect with each other through a series of passageways that also form a perfect circle.\footnote{Robert Streitz, \textit{La Rotonde et sa géométrie} (Lausanne, Paris, 1973), 19.} Some scholars have interpreted the villa as a perfect reconstruction of the Temple of Hercules Victor at Tivoli, while others have attributed the central circular form, accessed by a monumental pronaos, to the Pantheon in Rome.\footnote{Trevisan, \textit{Andrea Palladio}, 202, See also Lionello Puppi, \textit{Andrea Palladio} (Milan, 1973), 37.} Most, however, agree that the villa’s design is somehow related to the structure of the cosmos.\footnote{See Wolfram Prinz, \textit{Appunti sulla relazione ideale tra la Villa Rotonda e il cosmo, nonché alcune osservazioni su un mascherone posto al centro del pavimento della sala}, estratto dagli Atti del Convegno Internazionale su “Palladio e il Palladianismo,” Vicenza, 29 agosto – 3 settembre, CISA, 1980. (279-287), as well as Stefano Ray, \textit{Lo specchio del cosmo: da Brunelleschi a Palladio: itinerario dell’architettura del Rinascimento} (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1991) for hypotheses on the relationship between the cosmos and Palladio’s architecture.}

Given the circularity of the villa’s interior, scholars have commented on how the “rotonda” form mimics the daily revolution of the earth around the sun, or the annual rotation...
of the zodiac. Wolfram Prinz was perhaps the first to recognize that La Rotonda has all the features of the temple of Venus in the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, which was conceived as a type of cosmic clock. Prinz’s observations suggest the architect’s prior knowledge of the relationship between the circular temple and time. In his Quattro libri Palladio explains the importance of the cosmos to the architect specifically in the geometrical terms of the circle.

**Circularity as Perpetual Becoming: Temporality and the Machina del Mondo**

In the Renaissance, systems of ideal proportion to standardize beauty and harmony often relied on geometric shapes as their model, the circle in particular. Baldassare Castiglione, Manfredo Tafuri notes, legitimized the metaphysical idea of beauty in The Courtier using metaphors of circularity. In a similar fashion, Palladio’s esteem for “the beautiful mechanism [bella machina] of the world,” expressed in the Quattro Libri, seems to justify a preference for circular church plans. Such an implication is congruent with Wittkower’s assertion that architectural principles in the age of humanism were imbued with universal claims, however these assertions also seems reductive when they are set against the fact that architects negotiated with a multiplicity of harmonic models. Rather than concentrating on the formation of universals, Tafuri recommends it would be more useful to

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453 See Donata Battilotti, Le ville di Palladio (Milan: Electa, 1990), page 124 for one example.
454 Prinz, Villa Rotonda e il cosmo, 283, “è proprio nella literattura veneta che si ritrova la descrizione di un edificio rispondente a tutti questi quesiti e prerogative; il tempio di Venere dell’”Hypnerotomachia Poliphili” del 1499. Questo tempio è concepito come “orologio cosmico.”
455 Manfredo Tafuri, Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects (New Haven: Yale University and Harvard University School of Design, 2006), 4, “I say that Beauty – thus Baldassare’s Pietro Bembo – springs from God and resembles a circle, the center of which is goodness. And just as one cannot have a circle without a center, so one cannot have beauty without goodness.”
456 Ibid.
consider the way in which the “production of meaning” was conceptualized.\textsuperscript{457} We can apply this framework to interrogate how the circular form functioned in Palladio’s treatise in relation to astronomy.

When discussing the ancient temples of Rome in Book Four, Palladio explains the relationship between the \textit{machina del mondo} and time by highlighting the perpetual revolving of the heavens.\textsuperscript{458} Drawing attention to the continuity of the rotation of the heavens, Palladio is attentive to how harmony is temporarily dependent on the way the seasons change according to need, and how this movement between the seasons is always conserved. The relationship between the \textit{machina del mondo} and time is associated with the circular form, and can be compared to the movement of the sun and the moon around the earth, which is not only important in designating the location of a building, but also its layout.\textsuperscript{459} A few lines later, he explains how the circular form is prized above all others because “it is enclosed by only one segment, of which neither beginning, nor end can be found, nor one from the other distinguished; and having all its parts similar, everything participates in the figure of the whole; and finally in finding every part on its perimeter equidistant from the center, it is illustrious for demonstrating the Unity, the infinite Essence,

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\textsuperscript{457} Ibid., 3.  \\
\textsuperscript{458} Palladio, \textit{quattro libri}, Libro quattro, 1570, 3, “E veramente considerando noi questa bella machina del Mondo di quanti meravigliosi ornamenti ella sia riipiene; & come i Cieli co’l continuo lor girare vadino in lei le stagioni secondo il natural bisogno cangiando, & con suavissima armonia del temperato lor movimento se stessi conservino; non possiamo dubitare, che dovendo esser simili I piccoli Tempij, che nio facciamo.”  \\
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid., 6 “Hebbero gli Antichi riguardo à quello, che si convenisses à ciascuno de’ loro Dei non solo nell’elegger i luoghi, ne’ quali si doversero fabricare i Tempij, come è stato detto di sopra, ma ancho nell’elegger la forma: onde al Sole, & alla Luna, perche continuamente intorno al Mondo si girano, & con questo lor girare producono gli effetti à ciascuno manifesti, fecero i Tempij di forma ritonda; ò al meno che alla rotondità si avicinassero.”
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the Uniformity, and the Justice of God.”

The concern for the circular form expressed in the *Quattro libri* shows evidence of the difference in thought between the architect and his friend Daniele Barbaro. Palladio’s idea of perfect form – exemplified by the geometry of the circle – is tied to a state of Unity in which every part participates in the whole. This contrasts starkly with Daniele’s idea for exemplary architecture, where he states, “perfection is bestowed upon that, which has a beginning, middle, and end, because it both contains and is not contained.”

Palladio’s identification of oneness – or Unità – with the infinite – or infinita Essenza – is purely Platonic. On the other hand, Daniele’s philosophical definition of perfection stems from his Aristotelian concern for certain and uncertain truths. A similar disparity in thought is found during the Renaissance in relation to time.

**The Duality of Time and Prudence**

In the sixteenth century time was most often considered an antagonist due to its destructive nature. The prototype of Kronos/Saturn, established by Erwin Panofsky in his study of the personification of time, shows evidence that time was regarded, like the

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460 Ibid., “essendo essa da un solo termine rinchiusa, nel quale non si può ne principio, ne fine trovare, ne l’uno dall’altro distinguere; & havendo le sue parti simili tra loro, e che tutte participano della figura del tutto; e finalmente ritrovandosi in ogni sua parte l’estremo egualmente lontano dal mezzo; è attissima a dimostrare la Unità, la infinita Essenza, la Uniformità, & la Giustitia di DIO.”
462 Plato, *Timaeus*, 37D, “Now the nature of the ideal being was everlasting, but to bestow this attribute in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore [the demiurge] resolved to have amoving image of eternity and when he set in order the heaven, he made this image eternal but moving according to number, while eternity rests in unity, and this image we call time. Time is the moving image of eternity.”
planetary God chosen to represent it, a “relentless destroyer.” Similar, in her study of Petrarch’s *Trionfo del Tempo*, Simona Cohen’s interrogation of the changing conception of time related issues during the Renaissance reveals how the illustrations for Petrarch’s manuscripts became more disturbed over time, and conveyed the destructive power of time, as something that dissolves all mortal things in its ultimate flow towards death. The negativity of time can be traced back to Aristotle, who believed that by its nature time is “the cause of decay, since it is recognizable by change, and change removes what is.” We will recall from the previous chapter that Daniele Barbaro shared this perception of time, lamenting in the *Dieci libri* (1556) that “time, which brings every advantage and disadvantage, works … to wage war against us and do us great harm.” These examples show evidence for the perception of time as something negative, but there is often more than one conception of time operating at any given moment in history.

Existing alongside the conception of time as detrimental, my research reveals that in Venice time was also appreciated for its positive aspects, through its relationship to prudence. In Venice prudence was often conceived as an allegory for good government. It also coexisted with tradition, where, as Manfredo Tafuri argues, evidence of the compressibility of time – a conception that perceived of the past, present and future melding together in one omnipotent present – was visually manifested by a tripartite image of prudence, the *tricipitium*, as was discussed in previous chapters. As discussed in Chapter

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468 Ibid., 11.
One, the *tricipitium* – composed of the three heads of a wolf and dog, with a lion at its center – is found in many sixteenth-century treatises, including Franchinus Gaffurius’s *De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum opus* of 1518. Wittkower’s study included Gaffurius among the theorists that informed Palladio’s work. In a schematization of the Harmony of the Spheres, Gaffurius incorporates a woodcut linking the planetary spheres to their accompanying Muse via the *tricipitium*, alluding to the role of both time and prudence in the production of harmony.

The correlation between prudence and time in the Harmony of the Spheres is crucial because it is here that these features are identified as central components to the maintenance of cosmological harmony. Deriving meaning from Pythagorean models of the Harmony of the Spheres, in the *Timaeus* Plato explained how the cosmic order of the universe could be found in musical consonances that could find their equivalent in space.469 Of time, Plato writes in the *Timaeus* that “the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to the eternal essence; for we say that it "was," it "is," it "will be," but the truth is that "is" alone is properly attributed to it.”470 Given the differences in educational background of Palladio and Barbaro, is it possible that the principles of design behind La Rotonda are somehow related to a preference for Plato’s conception of time? In the previous Chapter we saw how Daniele’s anxiety about the future may have helped to shape the layout of his family villa. What might be the temporal effects of a time rooted in the present moment? Is it possible that these principles also relate to prudence? The answer to this may be found in the correlation between prudence and the goddess Minerva.

In La Rotonda there is an entire room dedicated to the triumph of Minerva, suggesting the goddess played a noteworthy role in the villa’s conception. Unlike Barbaro’s villa at Maser, where the Olympian gods representing the eight spheres are configured around an image of Minerva atop a dragon – alluding to the goddess’s role as keeper of cosmic harmony and her position above the North Pole – there is no such figure in La Rotonda. Instead, the images of the planetary gods and goddesses encircle an oculus. Could there be a correlation between Minerva and the oculus?

The oculus is one of the more curious features of the villa for visitors but it has never been given sufficient attention by scholars. In fact, when it comes to this focal point of the villa, scholars have paid more attention to the drain below the oculus, and the bizarre, faun-like face shaped by the perforations. Given Palladio’s tendency to idealize systematic features in his drawings, it is perhaps not surprising that little has been said about the oculus, since it does not appear in his plan for the villa. In his description of La Rotonda in the *Quattro libri*, however, he does make mention of the importance of the oculus for how it captures light from above. \(^{471}\) Roughly one meter in diameter, the oculus illustrates the changing effects that light would have on the interior as the sun changed position throughout the day allowing light to enter the aperture at different points (Figure 36). In the Pantheon the oculus is often regarded as the most spectacular feature “because the light it provides brings the rotunda to life.” \(^{472}\) This is particularly important in the Platonic context of Palladio’s educational background because for Plato time is defined in the *Timaeus* as “the


\(^{471}\) Palladio, *quattro libri*, Libro secondo, 18, “La Sala è nel mezo, & è ritonda, e piglia il lume di sopra.”

moving image of eternity.” If, as Mitrovic maintains, Palladio was “more concerned with the formal composition of spaces and architectural elements than the way they were perceived,” the oculus remains an exception to this postulation. The attention Palladio draws toward the oculus for its role in providing or distributing light suggests that time may have been a consideration, but what about prudence? In the frontispiece of his treatise on architecture Palladio calls attention to the relationship between time and prudence.

From Frontispiece to Timepiece: A Temporal Reading of the Title Page of the *Quattro libri*

The *Quattro libri* is worth considering here because of the way it elucidates Palladio’s theoretical consideration of prudence and time, and such a concern may have influenced La Rotonda. The frontispiece of Palladio’s *Quattro libri* contains several elements that suggest prudence and time were a major concern in the entire treatise (Figure 27). Desley Luscombe’s study of the importance of the frontispiece of architectural treatises as an historical archive has found that frontispieces “prioritize concepts found in the accompanying text and impose a hierarchal structure of importance for fundamental ideas.” As someone involved in providing many of the illustrations and the frontispiece for Daniele’s *Dieci libri*, Palladio was both author of his own treatise and designer of the frontispiece. As Luscombe suggests, designing the frontispiece for his own treatise offered Palladio the opportunity to express ideas denied to him during his collaboration with Daniele. The frontispiece depicts

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473 See note 411.
474 Mitrovic, *Learning from Palladio*, 60.
476 Ibid., 277.
477 Ibid.
an allegorical composition set within an architectural arrangement with a pedestal, a portico and a pediment. The pedestal is decorated with relief carvings on either side, each with its own reference to time. To the right is the figure of a reclined woman holding a *bucranium*, or the skull of a bull, in her left hand, positioning it between her legs. In ancient Egyptian religion, the *bucranium* was a symbol of regeneration due to the similarity between its shape and that of the uterus. It was also associated with water regeneration, a feature that references events that took place at the temple of Isis on the winter solstice, marking the return of light. On the other side of the pedestal, an old bearded man with wings is reclined, holding a perfectly balanced set of scales in his right hand. This image is synonymous with depictions of Father time from the previous century, while the one in Palladio’s treatise appears robust and holds a steady set of scales that may allude to balance. In the center of the composition, is an oval vignette depicting a scene that hints at the importance of Minerva and Plato to the treatise.

The scene contains a small ship at sea, set within a frame containing the figureheads of a ship’s prow on either side, perhaps hinting at the importance of navigation. The image calls to mind Trissino’s pledge to keep his tiny boat afloat despite the many winds that he encounters. On the ship there are two figures: to the left is a king, identified by the crown on his head, and to his left is a nude woman holding the sail that propels the vessel. The figure of the king brings to mind Plato’s works. In his dialogue, *The Statesman*, Plato draws a

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479 Ibid.

correlation between the statesman, or king, and the architect, placing the architect and the 
king on the same level because of the supervisory nature of their roles. The woman 
standing in the boat next to the king has billowing hair draped down to below her waist, and 
hers gaze is directed towards the viewer. In her hands she holds the two ends of a sail, her 
right arm raising the sail above her head so that it fills with air, to represent the wind. Given 
Dante’s acknowledgement of Minerva’s role in navigation, confirmed by his appeal, 
“Minerva spira; e conducem Apollo; Et nove Muse mi dimostran l'orse,” which alludes to 
Minerva’s responsibility for the wind that fills the sail of his boat, the image may have 
alluded to the goddess Minerva for some, particularly those familiar with Dante’s work 
through translations made accessible during the period by Trissino.

Turning to the upper region of the frontispiece we see the figure of a woman that is 
given a particularly exalted position. The woman is holding a scepter and an open book, and 
is seated on a throne that is formed by the broken pediment. She is crowned, and above her 
head is the inscription Regina virtus. The figure is depicted in frontal view, though her gaze 
looks down slightly to the open book. In her right hand she holds a scepter, or some other 
ornamental staff symbolizing her sovereignty. In Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi of 1571, 
Vincenzo Cartari describes Minerva in terms similar to the enthroned figure from Palladio’s 
treatise, and refers to her as the “esteemed Goddess of Prudence, and inventor of all the

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delle fatiche di Ercole a tener dritta questa barchetta: tanto è da diversi venti conquassata.”
482 Dante, La divina commedia, Paradiso, coretta, speigata e difesa dal P. Baldassare 
483 Anna Maria Chivacci Leonardi, in Dante Alighieri, Commedia, “è Minerva che gonfia le 
vele di questa nave.”
As Robert Tavernor argues, in Palladio’s vision Regina Virtus refers to “the mother of the arts, presiding over his architectural deliberations within.”

While Cicero may have referred to Justice as the “Queen of the virtues” (De Officiis 3.28) in the Renaissance it was the virtue of prudence that was dearest to humanists. As Quentin Skinner maintains, the belief that prudence should be regarded as queen of the virtues was one that most pre-humanists shared as well. In the Summa theologica Aquinas speaks of prudence as “nobler than all of the other virtues.” Prudence is also described as Regina virtus in Paolo Paruta’s Della perfettione della vita politica, published in 1578, just eight years after Palladio’s death. One of the characters in the book is named after Daniele Barbaro. When discussing the importance of virtue as a metaphor for Republican values Barbaro defers to Plato, exclaiming: “Plato called prudence the queen of the virtues, and all the others are in her service.” As Luscombe has argued, for Paruta to have used Daniele Barbaro as an interlocutor for his book required that he negotiate the power of Daniele’s

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484 Vincenzo Cartari, Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi, nelle quali si contengono gl'idoli, riti, ceremonie et altre cose appartenenti alla religione de gli antichi, raccolte dal sig. Vincenzo Cartari, con la loro esposizione et conbellissime et accommodate figure nuovamente stampate (Venice: Vincentio Valgrisi, 1571), 321, For Cartari, Minerva was “la stimata Dea della prudenza, & inventrice de tutte le arte,” and she is usually depicted “armata con una lunga haste in mano,” much like the enthroned queen on the frontispiece Palladio’s treatise.


488 Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologica, Qu. 47, art. 6, ad. 3, “Prudentia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus.”

489 Paolo Paruta, Della perfettione della vita politica, di m. Paolo Paruta nobile vinetiano (Venice: Dom. Nicolini, 1599), 170, “Platone chiama la prudenza regina delle virtù, e l’altrè tutte fa serve di lei.”
authority, suggesting that he would not have put words in Daniele’s mouth that could easily be interpreted as not his own. We will also remember that in his *Dieci libri*, Daniele highlights the importance of prudence to the art of governing as they pertain to the architect. The correlation between the Prudence and *Regina virtus* is communicated on the frontispiece. Enthroned and wearing a crown, a symbol of her rule over all the virtues she is the true “regina delle virtù” of prudence.

As true and legitimate daughter of reason, for Paruta and his interlocutors, prudence is the queen of the virtues – an analogy that endured over time. A little more than a century later, evidence of the importance of prudence as queen of all virtues still existed. In 1712, in his *Della scienza chiamata cavalleresca*, Scipione Maffei writes there is no better merit than “Prudence, who is the queen and the director of all the other virtues.” Enthroned and wearing a crown – a symbol of her rule over all the virtues and as the only true “regina delle virtù” – the figure in Palladio’s treatise could represent Prudence, or the goddess that rules over the virtue, Minerva. Another feature of the frontispiece that draws attention to the focus on prudence in the treatise is the book held by the enthroned goddess. As we saw in the Introduction, a book representing the Bible was often held by the personification of Prudence and used to identify her.

The figure herself could also draws attention to the idea of *logos*. The figure is

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reminiscent of Michelangelo’s Delphic Sybil in the Sistine Chapel, who holds a scroll to the side, but leans forward towards the viewer with her mouth open, as if to speak. While the enthroned figure on the frontispiece gazes down at her book, her sidelong glance and tilted head suggest she is going to turn toward the viewer and speak, a gesture that will ground the disparate temporalities of the book in the present. The association of *logos* with a temporality situated in the present recalls Barbaro’s early deliberation about *logos*.

The letters Daniele Barbaro wrote to his aunt from England when he was Venetian ambassador there share a similar emphasis on the present tense, and also express an interest in *logos*. For Daniele, the Word of God had a temporal quality, for it is through the Word that the present is manifested, and it is to the flesh as speech is to the voice. Confronted with a frontispiece that visually introduces elements of both time and prudence, the reader of the *Quattro libri* becomes aware of the importance of *logos* to the architectural theory presented in the treatise, and its relation to the present moment. The emphasis on the present moment on the frontispiece of the treatise, however, is in strong contrast to references to time found in Daniele’s *Dieci libri*.

The temporal references on Daniele’s frontispiece are also found in relation to prudence, however the referrals highlight a future oriented variety of the virtue, like those found in the treatise itself (Figure 37). Standing on a pedestal within an archway is a beautiful woman with long hair, wearing a crown and holding the shaft of a flagstaff that Cartari posits as an attribute of prudence, as was observed with the enthroned woman from

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493 Barbaro, *Lettere*, 60, “il Verbo fu mezzo convenientissimo, come quello per il quale il presente si manifesta, ed è unibile alla carne come la parola alla voce.”

494 Cartari, *Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi*, 321, Minerva the “la stimata Dea della prudenza, & inventrice de tutte le arte,” is usually depicted “armata con una lunga hasta in mano.”
Palladio’s treatise. Arguably, the figure in Daniele’s treatise may also refer to prudence. The importance allotted the virtue in Daniele’s treatise suggests that the central figure on the frontispiece of his treatise may be the same figure as the enthroned woman on that of Palladio’s, with one significant difference. Though her body is depicted in frontal view, her heads is turned at a 90° angle, looking to the right. This type of delineation is congruent with the faces depicted on the upper register of the pedestal on which the crowned figure stands, and also similar to the arrangement found in the tricipitum, as we will recall. Why then would the “Queen of the Virtues” be represented with her face directed towards the direction that is normally used to designate the future?

The future-oriented nature of the figure is not entirely surprising given Daniele’s perception of prudence as a prophesizing tool. As the character of Daniele suggests in Paruta’s book, “To entirely conceive of prudence, one needs three things, which are the remembrance of things past, a knowledge of the present, and a foretelling of the future.” As Annarita Angelina attests, Daniele’s prudence was rooted in a type of knowledge that operated between origins and end results, an idea that is underscored in the frontispiece.

In niches set within two sets of Corinthian columns that frame the central figure are two other female figures that draw attention to two different kinds of prudence. The one to the left is of a female figure looking towards the heavens, holding calipers in her left hand, highlighting the importance of astronomy. As we saw in the Introduction, in the late fourteenth century calipers began to replace the snake and mirror commonly used in the

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495 Paruta, *Della perfettione della vita politica*, 179, A formare intieramente la Prudenza, tre cose vi si richiedono, cioè il ricordarsi della cose passate, il conoscere le presenti, & il prevedere il futuri.”

The iconography of Prudence. The astronomical reference may indicate heavenly or divine prudence. The left-hand niche illustrates a two-headed figure that has often been understood as a symbolic attempt to resolve Platonic and Aristotelian principles. The figure also bears a striking resemblance to the Allegory of Prudence and Divine Wisdom in Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia*. Like the figure in Daniele’s frontispiece, the one in Ripa’s illustration also holds a mirror in one hand to demonstrate how the prudent individual cannot regulate their actions without the ability to know and correct their own defects. The image is consistent with other emblems of Prudentia from the period, where two faces allude to “knowing the past, and foreseeing the future.” The two faces of the figure are indicative of a type of prudence oriented towards the past and the future rather than the present, and defined by “an active habit comprising true reason with regards to possible things, in order to obtain good and escape bad, and procure a happy life as an end in itself.” The fact that the central figure of stares over towards this second kind of prudence suggests that a prudence interested in knowing the past and foreseeing the future is considered more desirable, highlighting the difference in temporality between Palladio and Barbaro’s treatise. The relationship between

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501 Ibid., “La prudenza…è habito attivo con vera ragione circa cose possibili, per conseguire il bene, & fuggire il male per fine della vita felice.”
prudence and time on the frontispiece of Barbaro’s treatise is in strong opposition to the temporally neutral use of the virtue found on Palladio’s frontispiece, in which the importance of the present moment is put to service over the future driven sense of prudence as a means to an end theorized by Machiavelli. The dedication of an entire room in La Rotonda to Minerva suggests that theoretical concerns regarding prudence, and the time associated with it, played at least a moderate role in the conception of the villa on an iconographic level, but how might some of these Platonic concerns been translated into architecture? To answer this it is helpful to re-examine Palladio’s early career and education with Giangiorgio Trissino, particularly as it relates to prudence and time, and the examples proffered by his mentor.

**Trissino’s Platonic Academies: Prudence and Time in *Italia Liberata dai Goti***

The loyalty Palladio felt for Trissino is strongly affirmed in the *Proemio* of his *Quattro libri*, where he explains how his interest in architecture as a profession had its roots in the architectural legacies he observed in cities like Rome and Venice, as well as the city of Vicenza. As Palladio writes, it was “specifically in Vicenza which, while being off the beaten track, is full of the noblest of intellects, and prosperity, and where I first had the occasion to practice that which I now bring to light for the common good, and where one finds extremely beautiful buildings, and many gentlemen that are highly educated in this art, men who, because of nobility and learning are not unworthy of being included among the most illustrious, such as Signor Giovan Giorgio Trissino the splendor of our times.”

While Palladio’s indebtedness to the architectural past extends beyond Vicenza’s architectural

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Palladio, _quattro libri_, Primo Libro, 1, “& massimamente in Vicenza Città non molto grande di circuito, ma piena di nobilissimi intelletti, & di richezze assai abbondante: & ove prima ho havuto occasione di praticare quello, che hora à commune utilità mando in luce, si veggono assaisime belle fabrice, & molti gentil’huomini vi sono stati studiosissimi di
treasures and the members of Vicentine nobility, it is widely accepted that Trissino, the man he refers to as “the splendor of our times,” played a major role in the architect’s career on many levels.

Palladio and Trissino met somewhere between 1538 and 1539 while the latter was reconstructing his Villa Cricoli. The details surrounding their first encounter are uncertain, but it is known that Trissino took an interest in the young architect right away and decided to educate him in the writings of Vitruvius because of his strong inclination toward the mathematical sciences. Having been a member of Platonic academies in Rome and Florence, Trissino housed an intellectual academy of his own at his villa at Cricoli under the name Accademiae Trissineae lux et rus. Unlike other academies, whose admission required the title of nobility, access to Trissino’s academy was based on merit, of which Palladio’s was recognized immediately. Andrea and Trissino took their first trip to Rome together in 1541, followed by two others in 1543 and 1544. It is during this time that the name Palladio was bestowed upon Andrea by Trissino. Derived from a character in his epic poem Italia liberata dai Goti, Trissino conceived of the angel named Palladio who was an expert on architecture, and instrumental in expelling the barbarians from Italy. The etymology of the name Palladio suggests that it is derived from Pallas Athena or Minerva, the goddess of prudence, confirming the importance of the virtue to the story.

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503 Zorzi, *I disegni delle antichità*, 17, il Trissino avendo scorto “il Palladio essere giovane molto spiritoso et inclinato molto alle scienze matematiche, per cultivar questo ingegno si indusse egli stesso ad esplicargli Vitruvio et a kondurlo anco seco in Roma tre volte.”
A closer look at the poem reveals how Trissino advocated a temporal use of the virtue that favored the importance of the present moment over the future driven sense of prudence as a means to an end theorized by Machiavelli. In the first canto of the poem, the angel Onerio visits the Imperador and urges the emperor to take arms against the Goths and liberate Ausonia, a commune in southern Lazio. Troubled by the visitation, the Imperador gathers together his closest allies, and asks for their help in allowing him to decide how to proceed, appealing to their skill in the use of prudence to determine the future outcome of events. The last to speak is Belisario, the poem’s protagonist. Rather than think about the future outcome of the war, be it negative like the results predicted by Giovanni, or positive like those anticipated by Narsete, Belisario defers to a type of prudence shared by God. Focusing on the matter at hand – the fact that their ancestors remain under the domination of the Goths – Belisario surrenders to the present moment, arguing that the only right thing to do is to come to the aid of their people, regardless of the outcome. For Belisario, the submission of their fellow countrymen is nothing more than an invitation from the heavens to take present action. Though prudence may have been the vehicle through which the Imperador’s petition for advice was made, temporally each of his supporters uses the virtue differently. Only Belisario rejects the future oriented type of prudence and chooses to remain in a time promoted by Plato and Aquinas: the present.

At the end of the first volume of the Italia liberata we find further evidence to suggest that Trissino’s conception of time was congruent with that proposed by Plato and

506 Giangiorgio Trissino, Italia liberata dai Goti, Libro Primo (Venice: 1543), 5, Ma voi, che per prudenza conoscete/ E le presenti, e le future cose/ Dite il vostro parer senza rispetto/ E soccorrere a l’alto mio bisogno.
507 Ibid., 7.
508 Ibid., “Il bel pensier, ch’al Signor nostro è giunto.”
Aquinas. In the ninth, and last, book of the first volume of the poem Belisario, the highest-ranking captain in charge of liberating Italy from the Goths, finds himself at the foot of a solitary mountain where he recognizes the sacred cave of Saint Benedict. The mountain, known today as Monte Cassino, is the location of St. Benedict’s abbey and is where Thomas Aquinas was educated.\footnote{Ibid., “A questo par, che’l cielo c’inviti.”} Weary of the battles of war, Belisario decides to climb to the top of Monte Cassino, urged further by the spirit of his father who appears to him and tells him of a Barone – an old man that lives in the monastery – who can show Belisario the future. Upon reaching the summit, Belisario is greeted by the Barone, who guides him down a deserted path that leads to an iron door, which he opens to reveal the cave of St. Benedict, flanked on either side by two large mirrors. The mirror of the left contained all that is past, while the one on the right illustrated all that is future, and in front of the cave could be seen the effects of the present, as a frenzy of events running from the past towards the future – but these, Trissino notes, are all seen by God as “un sol specchio” – a single mirror – even if they are differentiated by man.\footnote{Giangiorgio Trissino, \emph{Italia liberata dai Goti}, Libro Nono, 87, “Queste colle avea dal suo sinistro canto/ Un specchio grande, assai maggior che’l sole, Ov’eran tutte le passate cose/ E poi dal destro ne teneva un’altro/ Ch’avea dipinto n se tutto’l future/ E per quel colle ogni presente effetto/ Ch’usciva fuor del destro albergo, andava/ Correndo a l’altro con mirabil fuga/ Ma questi sono a Dio tutti un sol specchio/ Se ben pajon diversi a noi mortali.”} The conception of time highlighted in by Trissino is strongly reminiscent of the perception of time encouraged by Plato, who believed that time only exists in the present.

As discussed in our first chapter, Aquinas, whose opinions would have been widely disseminated in the Platonic Academies, shared such an idea of time. Aquinas believed that the division of time into past, present and future is a worldly understanding, and has nothing...
to do with God, who is eternal.\textsuperscript{512} In his \textit{Vita di San Tomaso}, Pietro Aretino – a member of the \textit{Accademia degli Infiammati} – paraphrases Aquinas, who argues, “Of things past, if they are past delight in their remembrance, if they are future in anticipation, it is no less arrogant, than impossible to want to know them…For Jesus we must desire to live.”\textsuperscript{513} In other words, living partakes in the here and now. As Trissino emphasizes in his poem, only God has knowledge of all things past, present and future, and not even the extreme grace of God is enough to make them perceptible to man.\textsuperscript{514} By acknowledging man’s incapability of foreseeing the outcome of future events, Trissino highlights the futility of wasting time in endeavoring to do so, particularly when it comes to the practice of the virtue of prudence.

That Trissino may have drawn from the philosophies of both Plato and Aquinas can be discerned from his early education. In his early career Trissino was known to have had a predilection for Platonic thought, having studied Plato in Milan under Demetrio Calcondila, who had transferred to the service of the Sforza from the Medici court in Florence, where Platonic thought was promoted in the \textit{Accademia Platonica}.\textsuperscript{515} Trissino’s appreciation for the teachings of Aquinas may have come from his devotion to Dante, who also promoted, in his \textit{Convivio}, the shared view that “the world should be united under one sovereign rule, and all

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{513} Pietro Aretino, \textit{La vita di San Tomaso signor d’Aquino} (Venice: Fracesco Marcolini, 1543), 83 recto, “Le cose passate se son passate dilettano per la rimembranza, se son future per l’aspettatione, è cosa non meno arrogante, che impossibile il voler conoscere…Per giesu doviamo desidare di vivere.”
\item \textsuperscript{514} Ibid., 87, Questo è la faccia del Signore eterno/ In cui descritte son tutte le cose/ Che son, che furo, e che dovrav venire/ Ma non la può, se non per grazia estrema/ Vedere uom vivo; e con tal grazia ancora/ Non gli si mostra mai ne la sua forma.”
\item \textsuperscript{515} Bernardo Morsolin, \textit{Giangiorgio Trissino} (Vicenza: Gir. Burato, 1895), 246.
\end{itemize}
the various kingdoms and republics to be politically subordinate to it.”

In the *Paradiso*, Dante asserts his loyalty to Aquinas, expressing his devotion to the Dominicans when he announces himself as one of “the holy flock that Domenic leads along the path.”

Furthermore, the fact that Aquinas’s speech is longer than any other in the *Divine Comedy* is a clear reflection of the esteem with which Dante regarded the Dominican. The ideas of time promoted by Plato and Aquinas were incorporated in Trissino’s poem, particularly when it came to the practice of prudence.

Trissino’s conception of time and prudence in the *Italia liberata* also extends to architecture, and there are several details that may prove useful for an analysis of La Rotonda. In Canto XIII, the angel Palladio directs Callidio to construct mills on the locations on the Tevere where the Goths destroyed the aqueduct, reinstating the water source for the Italian people and putting the aqueduct to better use by providing facilities to mill grain and help feed the nation. In this example prudence is put to use as a present circumstance arises, and is a more democratized use of the virtue that make use of the present conditions to make improvements. While the additions to the aqueduct would certainly benefit the future of the Italian people, prudence is not used here in the Machiavellian sense, which tries to satisfy the way our desires of future unknowns play out. The practice of prudence is about alternatives, not trying to anticipate the way things will unwind; prudence should always be

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519 Trissino, *Italia liberata*, Canto XIII.
used to improve the present, not to predict the future. As Aquinas asserts, to try to predict the future obstructs the exercise of free will, since the two cannot exist together.\textsuperscript{521} The preceding example from Trissino’s poem provides evidence that the author embraced a conception of time perceived by Plato and Aquinas, one that may have been shared by other members of the Academy. If, as Camillo Semenzato has argued, La Rotonda is arguably the edifice where many of Palladio’s theoretical concerns were put into practice,\textsuperscript{522} Trissino’s poem should be seen as a possible source for these concerns. We will recall how Palladio shared Trissino’s interest in poetry in his \textit{Quattro libri}, praising fellow Vicentine Antonio Francesco Oliviera for his skills as an architect as well as for being an excellent poet.\textsuperscript{523}

The ideas advocated in Trissino’s poem, would have been familiar among the members of Palladio’s circle. We know Palladio himself received one of the first copies after it was published in 1547.\textsuperscript{524} He also contributed to the few illustrations in the printed edition of the poem, as Burns has shown.\textsuperscript{525} The fact that he provided the architectural frame for

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item\textsuperscript{521} Aretino, \textit{La vita di San Tomaso}, 85 recto, Si che per non esser possibile, che la libera voglia, & la prescienza del future stia insieme; si dee però credere, che la volonta nel suo arbitrio sia libero.
  \item\textsuperscript{522} Camillo Semenzato, \textit{The Rotonda and Andrea Palladio}, trans. Ann Percy, Corpus Palladianum, Volume 1 (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), 11. “The Rotonda could be said to be symbolic of the whole of Andrea Palladio’s architecture, not simply because it best illustrates his genius by embodying so many of his architectural theories, nor because it is the most beautiful and best-known of his villas, but because in the Rotonda Palladio solved so many fundamental problems in such an original manner.”
  \item\textsuperscript{523} Andrea Palladio, \textit{I quattro libri dell’architettura} (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli Editore S.p.A, 1990). Libro primo, 5. After prasing Trissino as the “splendore de’ tempi nostri,” Palladio continues by making notes of other Vicentines who he considered noteworthy including “il Signor Antonio Francesco Oliviera, il quale oltra la cognitione di molt scienze è Architettto, & Poeta eccellente.”
  \item\textsuperscript{524} Morsolin, \textit{Giangiorgio Trissino}, 331.
  \item\textsuperscript{525} Howard Burns, \textit{Andrea Palladio, 1508-1580: The Portico and the Farmyard}, catalogue by Howard Burns in collaboration with Lynda Fairbairn and Bruce Boucher, Exhibition Catalogue, The Arts Council of Great Britian (London: Graphic Press, 1975), 82, “Palladio
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Trissino’s *impresa* suggests that Palladio may have supplied the sketch of the map of Rome, which includes the illustrations of several of the ancient monuments he would have seen on his trips to the capital with his mentor (Figure 40 and Figure 41). Palladio, and perhaps the patron of La Rotonda, Almerico, may have been introduced to the first volume of the poem, which was finished by 1525, during a gathering of the *Accademia Trissiniana*. Upon reading the poem, members of the academy would have learned of Trissino’s perception of ideal architecture, visually presented in the poetic experience by way of the narrative, which describes ancient monuments, and plans for buildings. In Canto V of the poem, the beautiful Areta’s home is described as a regal abode with a grand loggia for an entrance, opening onto a beautiful courtyard surrounded by four more loggias made of columns of the Doric order.526

Courtyards surrounded by four loggias, like the one described in Trissino’s poem were to become pervasive in much of the architecture of the private homes designed by Palladio, as seen in his early works for the Palazzo Iseppo da Porto and the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza whose courtyards are comprised of either the loggia or their alternative, the portico.

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526 Trissino, *Italia liberata*, Canto V, “Quindi arrivarono poi sopra la piazza/ Ch’era davanti al suo regale albergo/ Questo avea ne l’ingresso una gran loggia/ Più ricca assai, che delicate, o molle/ Con tanta simmetria, con sì bell’arte/ Che dava a gli occhi altrui molto diletto/ Ciascun de i canti di quell gran pallazo/ Ch’erano Quattro, aveano un’alta torre/ Fatta di larghe punte di diamante/ Nel mezzo poi s’apriva un bel cortile/ Da Quattro logge circondato intorno/ Do queste l’una, ove finial l’entrata/ E l’altra opposta quella, eran più lunghe/ De l’altre due, che lo cingean da i lati/ Perciò, che le più lunghe fur distinte/ In trentadue pilastri, e trentun vano/ Si come l’altre, che chiedeano i capi/ Ognuna in ventun foro era divisa/ Quei gran pilastri poscia avean nel mezzo/ Colonne eccelse sopra piedistali/ Che sosteneano il solido architrave/ Ch’avea sov’esso e zoforo, e cornice. Poi quel palazzo tutto era compost/ Con gran giudizio in Dorica misura/ Et era ancor d’una material eterna.”
As noted in the first chapter, for Lionello Puppi the Palazzo Thiene immediately brings to mind the Palazzo d’Aretta from the poem, a powerful reminder of Trissino’s influence.\textsuperscript{527} The open central court, or atrium, was given special importance in Palladio’s Second Book, where it was described by the architect as “una parte notabilissima.”\textsuperscript{528} There is also evidence that Palladio shared Trissino’s esteem for the perception of time championed by Plato and Aquinas.

Though Palladio did not provide any written testimony that verifies his interest in Aquinas’s writings, he did leave one very valuable piece of evidence to suggest he subscribed to the teachings of the famous Dominican. In 1578, two years before his death, he sent his son-in-law to Vicenza to purchase a tomb for himself and his family in the Dominican church of Santa Corona,\textsuperscript{529} confirming, at least, his observance of the theological insight provided by Aquinas, who was the major contributor to Dominican practice. To further investigate how conceptions of time encouraged by Plato and Aquinas found in Trissino’s poem may have influenced the layout of La Rotonda it will be helpful to test the hypothesis against other poetic publications that would have constituted part of the academic curriculum in Platonic Academies.

**Unity and Eternity in the Academies**

We will recall that Palladio identified oneness – or Unità – with the infinite essence – or infinita Essenza in his praise of the circular form in his Fourth Book.\textsuperscript{530} The analogy between oneness and the infinite made with regard to the circle in Palladio’s treatise is

\textsuperscript{528} Andrea Palladio, *quattro libri*, Libro Secondo, Cap. III, 24
\textsuperscript{529} Franco Barbieri, *Tesori da Santa Corona: Bellini, Veronese, Pittoni e altri meastri della pittura veneta dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, a cura di Davide Fiore (Vicenza: Diocesi di Vicenza, 2009), 43.
similar to Trissino’s metaphor of “un sol specchio” – one single mirror – for divine time in his *Italia liberata*. The circle is thus representative of the indivisibility of time, and it is through such a conception of time that one can truly appreciate God. As Aretino reiterates, Aquinas was clear on this point when he asserted that “the splendor of the unity of God is not felt by the gaze of those who are but a small shadow of his image.”

If the splendor of God existed in his indivisibility, it was something to aspire to, and Aquinas further articulated how this could be achieved through the proper practice of prudence. “Prudence,” Aquinas maintains, “has no need of fortune, and divine wisdom can be executed without the counsel of attempting to acquire its own end, because it exists in the timeless.”

The idea of being closer to God by approximating his manner of being was a familiar trope in sixteenth-century Venice. As Angelini notes, during the period men were encouraged to identify themselves as a “specchio del mondo” or “dio terreno.” Similar analogies were championed by Francesco Giorgi in his *De harmonia mundi* of 1518, in which he posited “the advancement towards divine truth is possible through the imitation of Christ, by means of recovering the original form that lives inside of us as the “statue” of God.” In other words, we are, each and everyone, a temple of God. Circular form therefore not only exemplified the essence of God, but also that, which could be used as a model to signify a

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530 Palladio, *quattro libri*, Libro quattro, 3.
532 Ibid., “La prudential non ha bisogno de la fortuna, e la sapienza puo far senza il consiglio in acquistare il fins suo, peroche ella sta ne le cose eterne; Chi sa reggere se stesso è Re di se medesimo.”
533 Angelini, *Sapienza*, 75.
way of being in the world. The choice of circular form as an epitome for the divine essence can also be found in another important work that enjoyed great popularity during the period: Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*.

The *Saturnalia*, an ancient text dealing with the Roman festivals of Janus, and a source of considerable importance when it came to matters of time, also established the interdependence between time, circularity and the *machina del mondo*. The work was well known during the Renaissance, and popularized through the efforts of figures like Andrea Alciati, whose *Il libro degli emblemi* discusses much of Macrobius’s ideas in great detail. Particularly important for the present investigation is Macrobius’s description of the statue of the god Sarapis from the first book of the *Saturnalia*. The god is represented enthroned, and in his right hand he holds a scepter with the image of a three-headed figure, with the head of a wolf on the left side, the head of a lion in the middle, and on the right the head of a dog all of which are entwined by a circular snake in the process of eating its own tail. The serpent, or dragon as he is referred to by Macrobius, is also know as the *ouroboros*, and is recognized as the custodian of the cavern of Time, his circular, self-eating form denoting time’s ability to consume everything and renew itself at the same time.\(^{536}\) As such, Alciati asserts, the *ouroboros* symbolizes cosmic time, and its circular form reflects the perfect, circular motion of the *machina universale*.\(^{537}\)

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\(^{536}\) Andrea Alciati. *Il libro degli emblemi: secondo le edizioni del 1531 e del 1534*, introduzione, traduzione e commento di Mino Gabriele (Milan: Adelphi, 2009), 240, “il drago ouroboros dalle scaglie sempre verdeggianti che cinge e custodisce la caverna del Tempo, consumando ogni cosa lentamente, mentre con silente movimento serpentine ripercorre di nuovo il suo cominciamento.”

\(^{537}\) Ibid., “In sintesi un simile dragone denota, pur nelle diverse sfumature concettuali, il cosmo e il perpetuo rinnovarsi secondo le leggi del tempo infinito. Da qui la valenza di immortalità che ne definisce il simbolismo, la sua funzione di attributo del dio Tempo, e la
Palladio’s regard for “the beautiful mechanism [bella machina] of the world’ has been discussed in the literature vis-à-vis his preference for churches with circular plans. However, the possibility of Macrobius’s *Saturnalia* as a source of inspiration suggests that the architect had prudence and time in mind when he wrote the *Quattro libri*. The similarities between Macrobius’s example and Palladio’s description from the *Quattro libri* indicate that the conception of the *machina del mondo* was temporally conditioned, hinting at the value of a time that was indivisible. Macrobius’s ideas were popularized in another text of the period that would have been important to Palladio because of its emphasis on architecture: the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

The *Hypnerotomachia* promotes a way of being in the world that is temporally dependent on circular time, but significantly it does so using architecture as model. Not unlike Trissino’s *Italia liberata*, the work presents the poetic experience of architecture through its narrative allowing the reader to participate “in the space of human desire though precise descriptions of sensuous components and geometrical lineaments.” Even more important is how the architecture functions ontologically as a directive through which humans can lead a virtuous life. As Alberto Pérez-Gómez maintains, architectural meaning in the *Hypnerotomachia* is presented as “a utopian vector for the imagination by construing the good life in the here and now.” Moreover, the spaces of architecture that appear in the *Hypnerotomachia* would have served as a lesson for any aspiring architect of the period. It must have been part of the curriculum of the Platonic Academies given that its publisher,

forma rotonda…che è esatta in sé in quanto riflette il circolare moto perfetto della *machina* universale.  


539 Ibid.
Aldus Manutius, established his own Platonic Academy in Venice. Could this have been the source for the conception of time expressed in the *Quattro libri*? The likelihood is particularly salient when we consider the similarities between the temporal aspects of the circle in the *Quattro libri* with those in the *Hypnerotomachia*.

In the *Hypnerotomachia* an analogy is made about the circular base of an obelisk, one that might add some insight into the use of prudence and time in the conception of La Rotonda, especially if, as Peréz-Gómez has argued, the work promotes “the necessity of cultivating prudence to develop a sound architectural practice.” Prior to reaching the three portals from which he must choose, the main character Poliphilo comes across a beautiful three-sided obelisk of gold that explains the kind of time sanctioned by the author. The obelisk represents celestial harmony, and is inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs, which read: TO THE DIVINE AND INFINITE TRINITY, ONE IN ESSENCE. It rests on a circular base, which, like Palladio’s circle, “has no beginning or end,” and thus represents the means between the two. This is important because it represents a concrete example of how conceptions of time can be articulated in architecture. Since Macrobius’s *Saturnalia* was known to be one of the primary sources for the story, the architect may have drawn from both the *Hypnerotomachia* and Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*.

The image described in Macrobius’s *Saturnalia* presents a synthesis of two conceptions of time.541

540 Ibid., 42.
541 Ibid., 12.
543 Ibid., 129.
544 Ibid., 130.
545 Ibid.
of time, but only the one represented by the snake can be conceived as indivisible. By depicting the faces of animals in profile, the three heads of the tricipitium show time as linear and divisible into three different times, whereas the ouroboros depicts time as circular and regenerative and therefore indivisible. Macrobius’s image has been highly contested by art historians because of its curious mixture of elements from different cultures.

The allegorical form of Macrobius’s image came to life under the influence of Greek, Egyptian and Persian influences. In the Renaissance, the image of the ouroboros was appropriated to signify eternity, such as the one that appears on the Tommaso Campeggi’s medallion of 1525 with the inscription “AETERNITAS.” The three-headed monster from the statue of Sarapis, on the other hand, is an Egyptian variation of Cerberus, the watchdog of the gates of Hades, and signifies the tripartite nature of time. While in the Classical age Cerberus was almost always depicted with three dog-heads, this was not always the case. Occasionally in Greek and Roman art Cerberus was given a leonine head, and a serpent’s tail, giving it a Chimera-like appearance. Cerberus was also associated with the thresholds between the land of the living and the land of the dead, and like Macrobius’s image, each of its three heads represent one of three modes: past, present and future.

The two conceptions of time represented in Macrobius’s description of the Sarapis are almost identical to those outlined in Trissino’s Italia liberata. For Trissino it is only man who divides time into three different mirrors representing the past, present and future. For God, time is un sol specchio. Like the ouroboros, the single mirror that symbolizes divine time is

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546 Panofsky and Saxl, "A Late-Antique Symbol," 181.
547 Ibid., 241.
also defined in terms of eternity, described by Trissino as “the face of God.” The analogy between the face of God and the mirror had ancient and medieval roots, and was made explicit in Macrobius’s *In Somnium Scipionis*, in which the author considers that things are reflective in their beauty, just as the single face of divinity can be reflected in as many mirrors. As Umberto Eco observes, echoes of Platonic thought run through Macrobius’s work. According to Plato, Unity is an idea that excludes its own opposite, Plurality, and therefore only Unity exists. Similarly, for Macrobius all things exist as part of the One even if they are diffused by the *Anima del Mondo* — or Spirit of the World — into something we perceive as a multiplicity. In the Neo-Platonism of the sixteenth-century academies, it is safe to assume that Macrobius’s works would have formed part of the curriculum.

Drawing on the idea of the *machina universale*, Macrobius compares his conception of Unity to the way the light of a celestial sphere illuminates everything, and at the same time is reflected in everything, like when a single face is reflected in several mirrors successively, all

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552 Ibid.
554 Eco, *Scritti sul pensiero medievale*, 940, “Macrobio pone al sommo della scala dell’essere il Bene, causa prima di tutte le cose, quindi il Nous, o Intelligenza, nata da Dio stesso, e che contiene le idee come esemplari di tutte le cose; il Nous, volgendosi verso se stesso e conoscedosì, produce un’Anima del Mondo, la quale di diffonde – mantenedosi unitaria – nella molteplicità dell’universo creato.”
555 Ibid.
of the mirrors will partake of that one face. From inside the central room of La Rotonda, one can imagine how a similar heavenly light would illuminate the space from above and reflect throughout the chamber.

The mirror was also a popular trope for medieval thinkers. Dante, for example, looked upon knowledge as the beholding of a reflected image of an invisible reality, repeating the familiar connection between a *speculari* and *speculum*. For Aquinas, the glory of God is beheld through the mirror of reason, in which there is an image of God. Temporally, however, the divine essence of God as a mirror of eternity resides in the present. As Aquinas attests, the mirror of eternity may be used to give form to the foreknowledge of God in the prophet’s mind, but God “in his eternity sees all things as present.” As a metaphor for eternity then, the circular snake devouring itself in Macrobius’s image can be seen to represent an eternal present and, given it’s association with the divine essence of God, must be considered a more positive configuration of time than the three headed Cerberus it surrounds.

Why is this important? In a city as divided as Vicenza, one in which architecture remained a key priority for the social reform initiated by Trissino, debates about temporality

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556 Eco, *Scritti sul pensiero medioevale*, 940, According to Macrobius, the *Anima del Mondo* “crea tutte le cose seguenti e le riempie di vita, e poiché questa sola luce illumine tutto e in tutto si riflette, e come on solo volo si può riflettere in diversi specchi successive, tutte le cose si susseguono in successione continue, degenerando via via sino al termine della serie.”

557 Dino Bigongiari, *Essays on Dante and Medieval Culture: Critical Studies of the Thought and Texts of Dante, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padova, and other Medieval Subjects* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1965), 25 The same derivations are found in the *Summa Theologica* (Sum. II, 2, 180, 3) where Aquinas states: “speculation dicitur a speculo nonn a specula,” and again (in Comm. 2 Cor. Iii, 3): “Speculantes non sumitur his a specula sed a speculo id est ipsum Deum gloriosum cognoscentes per *speculum rationis* in quo est quaedam imago Ipsius.”

must have become a part of the same structure of urban reinvention. Macrobius’s commentary would have been particularly salient for those interested in Plato’s Great Theory of the Harmony of the Spheres.

The role that Plato’s Harmony of the Spheres played in the conception of the plan for La Rotonda is elucidated in the frescoed interior. Beginning with the central, domed space one will note how the oculus is surrounded by a frescoed series of eight Olympic Gods which are easily identifiable as Jupiter, Bacchus, Venus, Saturn, Apollo, Diana, Mars, and Mercury (Figure 42 and Figure 43). With the exception of Bacchus, the arrangement consists of the same planetary Gods that encircle the woman seated on a dragon in Barbaro’s villa at Maser (Figure 13). According to the Bacchic rite, however, Bacchus was symbolic of the signs of the zodiac, having been dismembered by the twelve Titans of Hesiod. Furthermore, the heart of Bacchus, which symbolized the immortal center of the rational soul, was saved by Pallas-Minerva and placed in the heavens. In La Rotonda then, Bacchus may be seen as equivalent to the signs of the zodiac that encircle the woman on a dragon at Maser.

Though the images of the God were not painted until more than a century later by Ludovico Dorigny, at the end of the seventeenth century, Luca Trevisan argues “their

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559 Semenzato, La Rotonda, 42.
560 Manly P. Hall, An encyclopedic outline of Masonic, Hermeneutic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian symbolical philosophy; being an interpretation of the secret teachings concealed within the rituals, allegories and mysteries of all ages (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society Press, 1936), 86.
561 Ibid.
presence in the heart of the Rotonda only reiterates the villa-temple concept of this building, recalling the client’s original idea.”

According to Camillo Semenzato, all the decorations of the villa obey a precise iconographic program that is inseparable from the architectonic concerns. In addition, it is difficult to imagine that the Capra, the new owners who acquired the villa after Almerico’s death, would have made changes to the iconographic program given that the cultural climate had not profoundly changed. As Donata Battilotti has also argued, the decoration of the interior space of the villa, in stucco and fresco, must be seen as the fruit of a unitary seed, rendering possible Palladio’s participation in its conception. Given that La Rotonda may have been conceived with the Harmony of the Spheres in mind, Dorigny’s designs adhere to the eight spheres in Plato’s conception of the Great Theory.

The depiction of the gods and goddesses that represent the eight orbs in Plato’s Harmony of the Spheres would have been found in Gaffurius’s treatise, which Wittkower included as a likely influence on Palladio’s work. In Gaffurius’s treatise there are eight spheres representative of the Olympic deities that spin around an image similar to that in Macrobius’s treatise, with one exception. In Valeriano’s woodcut for Gaffurius’s treatise, the

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565 Ibid., “È molto difficile, anche se non impossibile, che i Capra lo abbiano volute cambiare, per lo meno nella sua sostanza, dato il poco tempo passato e il clima culturale non profondamente mutate.”
566 Battilotti, Le ville di Palladio, 127, “La decorazione dei vani interni, a stucco, e ad affresco, è frutto di un disegno unitario, tanto da rendere plausibile una partecipazione del Palladio alla sua ideazione.”
**ouroboros** and the *tricipitium* are conflated, where the snake portion now extends along the length of the image, representing the pole around which all the spheres rotate. The pole, as snake, might therefore be emblematic of the eternal present, but how?

**The Cosmology of Logos in the Settentrione**

If the oculus can be seen to fulfill the function of Macrobius’s circular snake, might such an emblem of an eternal present be represented architecturally elsewhere? The aspect of time is somewhat implied in Palladio’s drawing for the plan of La Rotonda, which – with its four porticoes at ninety-degree angles – resembles the apparatus of an analog clock.

There is evidence to suggest that La Rotonda was conceived as a kind of cosmic clock. In his *Dieci Libri* Daniele compared the analemma, as the module for the sundial, to other modules used in designing buildings. Most recently, it has been argued that Palladio gave substantial assistance when it came to Barbaro’s textual interpretations, and that his knowledge of Vitruvius likely exceeded that of Barbaro’s own, suggesting that Palladio may also have conceived of “la bella machina” described in his treatise in terms of timekeeping, with one exception. While Barbaro’s admiration of the analemma – particularly its ability to predict the future position of the sun – is reflected in several aspects of the villa at Maser, La Rotonda seems rooted in a different appreciation of time. If La Rotonda were conceived in relation to chronometry, is it possible that La Rotonda may have been conceived in terms of the Minerva/gnomon relationship we saw at Maser? The plan for La Rotonda bears a striking resemblance to the four-spoked system of measuring time using the seven Settentrione stars described by Daniele in his *Dieci libri*, a collaborative work between he and Palladio, among others.

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567 D’Evelyn, *Venice and Vitruvius*, 185.
In the Ninth chapter of Daniele’s *Dieci libri* he explains how the star closest to the Pole, known as the *Tramontana, Stella del mare*, or *Stella di Minerva* can be used along with one of the stars of Ursa Minor, the *horologiale*, to determine the time. It is from the seven stars of Ursa Minor that the northern hemisphere derives its name, *settentrione*, which, as Plutarch describes, was also the distinction given the goddess Minerva. According to Daniele, the stars in Ursa Minor “are very clear, three of them form a horn that is dragged by the helm of the cart, which is made of four stars that form a square like a wheel that is made with four spokes, which move around the Pole in a period of twenty four hours from East to West – and the *Tramontana*, because it is the closest to the Pole, hardly moves, and for this reason, because the Pole is invisible, one can determine the level of the Pole above the horizon.” Here Daniele includes an illustration explaining how “the location of the Pole is also determined by one of the other seven stars, that is the brightest of the two guardians, called the *horologiale*, and because it turns like the dial of a clock, one can determine at any time of the year, what time it is at night.” As we saw in the previous chapter on the Villa Maser, in his *Arte del Navigare*, Pietro da Medina explains how one tells the time in the evening using the stars of Ursa Minor in a way that is more intelligible.

According to Pietro, first you must find the Tramontana star, and imagine that on top of

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568 Ibid., 24.
570 Ibid., “Queste sono sette stelle assai chiare, tre di esse fanno un corno che si piglia per lo timone del carro, quattro poi fanno il quadrato secondo il sito di quattro ruote, si muovono d’intorno il polo con qual distanze in termine di hore ventiquattro da Levante a Ponente, & la Tramontana per esser più vicina al polo fa minor giro, & per quella, essendo il polo invisibile si conosce l’altezza del polo sopra l’Orizonte.”
571 Ibid., “il luogo del polo si conosce per un altra stella delle stelle, che è la più lucida delle dua guardie nominate: & quella stella è detta horologiale, perché girando come ruota di horologio da a conoscere in ogni tempo dell’anno, che hora sia del notte.”
it is a cross.\textsuperscript{572} Within this shape four more lines must be placed which dissect the other sections, so that the circle is divided into eight.\textsuperscript{573} Once these lines are established, one must then locate the \textit{horologiale}, for in twenty four hours it passes around the eight sections above, taking three hours to get from one section to the other.\textsuperscript{574} This same procedure is reiterated in Daniele’s \textit{Dieci libri}, as we have seen. What is important to draw from Pietro’s explanation of the procedure as it pertains to mariners is the conflation of the circle and the cross.

While La Rotonda has often been noted for its relation to the Vitruvian canon of proportion where a circle is inscribed into a square, with its four loggias extending from each of its four sides, the circular form of the interior can really be said to be superimposed with a cross. In fact, encircling the nucleus of the building, under the oculus of the dome, one can inscribe three circles that are all overlapped by the same cross,\textsuperscript{575} suggesting a clear articulation of the mechanism described by both Pietro and Daniele, which Palladio would also have known from Vitruvius. While the plan of La Rotonda mirrors the methodology

\textsuperscript{572} Pietro da Medina, \textit{Arte del navigate dell’eccel. Dotto Pietro da Medina} (Venice: Aurelio Pincio, 1554), 105, recto, verso, “Primamente si dei osservar la stella Tramontana, & imaginar sopra di essa una croce in questo modo.”

\textsuperscript{573} Ibid., “Saputo questo, si debbe ancora advertir, che tra questi rombi, over line ponemo altri quarto, quale divideno over parte no questo per mezzo, liquali chiamamo line in questa maniera. A talche tra il brazo destroy & il capo, è un a linea, & tra il capo, & il sinistro brazo, è l’altra linea, & tri il sinistro brazi, & li piedi, è la terza linea, & tra li piedi, & il destroy brazo la quarta linea.”

\textsuperscript{574} Ibid., “Havuta questa imagination glie da saper, che la stella maggior de li doi guardian, ch’è quella davanti, qual di sopra è stata nominate stella horologial, in xxiiiij, hore passa queste otto parte, tardando tre hore da una à l’altra di maniera che se à una hora de notte era nel capo, alle tre la sera in la linea tra il capo, & il brazo sinistro, et alle sei nel istesso brazo, & cosi si contara piu noltra.”

\textsuperscript{575} Streitz, \textit{La Rotonde et sa géométrie}, 19, Streitz was the first to conclude that three concentric circles could be found in the geometry of the structure. “Reportons-nous à la figure 7. D’un point O, pris comme centre, traçons trois circonférences A-B-C, tells que OA=AB=BC. De ce centre, menons deux droites: X-X’ et Y-Y’ qui se coupent à 90°.”
described to determine the time using the stars by superimposing a cross, emphasis is placed on the spatial continuum of the circle, where movement is unobstructed, and time seems to exist only in the present, without a beginning or end.

In his later manuscript, *De horologi*, which he dedicated to Palladio under the inscription “Ex Palladio de horis horarium manual,” Daniele gives a modified version of the aforementioned procedure (Figure 23). With its circularity denoting the twenty-four hours it takes for the *horologiale* star to rotate around the pole, I would argue that this is the *bella machina* to which Palladio refers in his own treatise, a feature exemplified in the pinnacle of his career with La Rotonda, except that here the measurement of time would have been superfluous. Unlike a clock, which measures the rotation of the sun around the earth in a twelve or twenty-four hour period, the oculus as a substitute for Minerva would illustrate, through the use of light, the deception of such a system since the length of a day or night is different depending on the season.

Though Minerva’s image is not present in the room, she is represented by the oculus, as the pole or gnomon around which the other Gods revolve. In the center of the floor, directly below the oculus, is a drain that would have been used to draw out rainwater that would have fallen into the room through the oculus before it was covered. The rays that surround the perforated face in the center could allude to the rays of the Sun, though they might also refer to the beams of a star – perhaps even the *Stella di Minerva* – used to locate the pole. The correlation between the oculus and Minerva is even more explicit in Palladio’s fourth chapter of the *Quattro libri* where he alludes to the importance of the goddess to the most exemplary ancient buildings.

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576 Howard, *Venice Disputed*, 36
La Rotonda and its Ancient Precedents

The circularity of La Rotonda has many ancient precedents that are related to Minerva, and her temporal role as goddess over the pole. In his *Quattro libri*, Palladio provides plans for many of the ancient temples that inspired him. Of all the ancient temples that he cites as noteworthy, however, Palladio deems the Pantheon, also known as the “Ritonda,” as the most celebrated. The Pantheon was so illustrious that in 1520 Raphael requested to be buried under its temple front or aedicule. Originally a Roman temple, the edifice was consecrated as a church by Pope Boniface IV in 609 and renamed Santa Maria Rotonda, confirming the structure’s association with the Virgin Mary. This correlation may have stemmed from the temple’s original attribution to Minerva.

In the third century Dio Cassius wrote that the Pantheon derived its name because the structure was dedicated to many Gods, but in his opinion the name comes from the vaulted roof, which resembles the heavens. Bearing in mind the astronomical preoccupations of the time it is reasonable to suppose, as William L. MacDonald asserts, that the planetary deities – Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, the Moon, the Sun and Saturn – were represented in the seven major niches. While Palladio recognizes that there are indeed seven niches in which there must have been statues, he also emphasizes that between one side-chapel and the next there was a tabernacle, making a total of eight shrines.

Throughout this dissertation we have seen how eight orbs in Plato’s Harmony of the Spheres – representing the seven

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577 Palladio, *quattro libri*, Libro quattro, 73, “Tra tutti i Tempi, che si veggono in Roma niuno è più celebre del Pantheon hoggi detto la Ritonda.”
579 Ibid., 76.
planetary deities and the outer ring of the zodiac – surround the woman on the snake at the Palazzo Thiene, the woman on the dragon at Maser, and the oculus at La Rotonda. In each case I have shown how the frescoes and the oculus could correspond to Minerva. Palladio acknowledges that the Pantheon was dedicated to all the Gods, however he also notes that it is said that among the most esteemed aspects of the temple was the statue of Minerva that was inside.\textsuperscript{581} Could the oculus have been understood to represent the goddess Minerva? According to MacDonald, what seems likely is that the central dome of the Pantheon was intended as a symbol of the heavens, the abode of the gods, ruled over by Zeus-Jupiter, the Sky Father. Given Minerva’s position over the nucleus around which the other planets spin in the Harmony of the Spheres, could the dome have been a symbol for the goddess responsible for maintaining harmony amongst the gods? This could be the case if the eighth shrine was reserved for the sphere of the zodiac.

There are other factors that suggest the Pantheon may have originally been consecrated to the goddess Minerva. For one, the Temple of Minerva Medica in Rome was modeled after the Pantheon.\textsuperscript{582} The Pantheon also opens up to the Piazza Minerva across from which lies a temple dedicated to the goddess, known today as the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. The church’s origin as a temple devoted to Minerva can be found in the Epistolario of Pier Paolo Vergerio of the thirteenth century where it is noted that the Predicatori of the church lived in the place where the temple of Minerva used to be:

\textsuperscript{580} Palladio, \textit{quattro libri}, 73, “Nella parte di dentro del tempio vi sono nelle grossezza del muro sette capelle con nicchi, nei quali vi dovevano essere statue; & tra una capella, e l’altra vi è un tabernacolo, do modo, che vengono as esservi otto tabernacoli.”
\textsuperscript{581} Ibid., “Fu questo Tempio chiamato Pantheon, perciocche dopo Giove fu consecrato à tutti gli Dei…Tra le cose più celebre, che si legge, ch’erano dentro del Tempio v’era una statua di Minerva di Auorio fatta da Fidia.”
\textsuperscript{582} MacDonald, \textit{The Pantheon}, 104.
“Praedicatorum collegium est ubi Minervae templum fuerat.” An anonymous treatise of 1411 entitled *Tractatus de rebus antiquis et situ Urbis Romae* also draws a similar comparison. Not surprisingly, Flavio Biondo, in his *Roma instaurata* of 1444-1446 associated the structure with the Temple of Isis. Not unlike Palladio’s La Rotonda, this Temple of Minerva consisted of a large quadrangular space, oriented to the four cardinal points, and delimited by porticoes on all four sides. In the center was the actual temple of Minerva in circular form. Palladio did several drawings for this Temple of Minerva now held in the Vicenza City Museum, and the porches of La Rotonda are consistent with the porch in the design D 21r. Even more significant, however, is how Palladio notes in his *Le antichità di Roma* the important finding of the obelisk in the apse of Santa Maria sopra Minerva when it was being rebuilt in 1374, acknowledging Minerva’s role in timekeeping.

The five-meter-high obelisk now stands on a small elephant built by Bernini in 1667 in the Piazza Minerva, and the architectural pedestal that supports the composite sculpture bears two inscriptions that explain the obelisk’s connection to both Minerva and time. The

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584 Ibid., “rentrum dictum locum Pantheonis fuit templum Minarvae Calcidae, videlicet vulgariter nunc est ecclesia Sanctae Mariae in Minerva, quae circa eam et in ea minfest paret.”
585 Ibid., 37, “Il Biondo localizza nell’area in questione il Tempio di Iside, prope Minerva Chalcidicam.”
586 Ibid., 38, According to Palmerio and Villettyi the temple consisted of a “grande spazio quadrangolare do forma allungata, orientate secondo i punti cardinali e delimitato ai quattro lati da porticati.”
587 Ibid., 39, “Il Tempio di Minerva Calcidica è riconoscibile nella pianta marmoreal, grazia alla relative epigrafe, in un piccolo tempio su plinto rotondo.”
obelisk’s connection to time is made explicit in the encomium, which says: “The obelisk, symbol of the rays of Sol, is brought by the elephant to the Seventh Alexander as a gift.” Both Palladio and Daniele make note of the obelisk in the Campus Martius erected by Augustus in their treatises. In his Dieci libri, Daniele notes how Vitruvius marvels at the use of obelisks to determine the length of the sun’s shadow and hence tell the time. Indeed, Daniele’s passionate interest in gnomonics can be said to stem from the cult of the obelisk, which for the ancients was the gnomon par excellence. It is only reasonable to assume Palladio shared in this interest, given his appreciation for the circularity of Minerva’s temple, which was connected with the worship of obelisks.

It is worth noting here that Bernini’s iconographic choices for the sculpture in the Piazza Minerva – likely derived from the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili – can also be found in the church of Santa Corona where Palladio was entombed. The elephant and obelisk combination likely became a symbol for the Dominicans, to whom the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva was associated. As Aretino notes in La vita di San Tomaso, it was also in Santa Maria sopra Minerva that Aquinas gave his first sermon in which he extolled the

dedicated to Divine Wisdom this obelisk sacred to the Egyptian Pallas [Palladis Aegyptiae]; the monument has been wrested from the earth so that it might be erected in Minerva’s piazza, which now belongs to the Mother of God.

Ibid., 37.


virtues of charity and peace, and denounced the use of violence, war and threats.\footnote{Aretino, \textit{La vita di San Tomaso}, 108, “Il Tomaso in pulpit, & in gettarsi in oration fu quasi tutto in un tempo. Egli con le ciglie tese al cielo, e con le palme rivoltate a l’aria, in suono piano, e domestic, recitò il salute angelico; e dipoi levatosi d’ inginocchioni per sapere, che quello, che si puo ottenere con la carita, con al pace, e con le prighiere, non si dee cercare di conseguire con la violenza, con la Guerra, e con le minaccie.”} In the same disquisition, as he advises on the benefits of the virtue of charity, Aquinas exhorts the contemplation of the present when he forewarns, “everything that the miserly have, on account of their tyranny, accumulated in many years, is removed by God in one day, and on the other hand, all that charitable people distribute in a long time, God restores to them in an hour.”\footnote{Ibid., 110, “tutto quello che gli avari hanno per lor tirannia accumulato in molti anni, da Dio è tolto in un giorno, e per lo opposite quell tutto che i limosinieri dispensano in un lungo tempo, il Signore gliene restituisce in un’hora.”} By highlighting how disparate conceptions of time have no value in the eyes of God, Aquinas is calling attention to how Eternity conceives of all time as the present.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, \textit{The Power of God}, trans. Richard J. Regan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 126.}

We have already seen how such a conception of time is promoted in the \textit{Quattro libri} through praise of the circle, in which one can find neither beginning, nor end. However, in the treatise time is more explicitly explained when Palladio discusses the only modern example of ideal temple form. The consideration of Bramante’s Tempietto in the cloister of San Pietro Montorio in Rome is another tribute to the circular temple, but it is here that the esteem for cyclical time is made crystal clear. After much praise is ascribed to his predecessors, including Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sebastiano Serlio, Jacopo Sansovino and Giorgio Vasari, Bramante is singled out for having been “the first to bring to light that great and beautiful architecture, which has been obscured until his time.”\footnote{Ibid., 110, “tutto quello che gli avari hanno per lor tirannia accumulato in molti anni, da Dio è tolto in un giorno, e per lo opposite quell tutto che i limosinieri dispensano in un lungo tempo, il Signore gliene restituisce in un’hora.”} Bramante’s rediscovery demonstrated that because all things are in perpetual motion, it happens that at...
times they climb to their pinnacle of perfection, and at others they descend to the other extreme towards their imperfection, and so the architecture of the times of their forefathers and ancestors retreats from the shadows which have been like a grave, and begins to allow itself to be seen again in the light of the world.\textsuperscript{598} Just as all things lit by the sun are later shrouded in darkness only to return to the light in time, so too are all things regenerated by the circular movement of time. It is this conception of time – that is the eternal present associated with circularity – I would argue, that finds its greatest expression in La Rotonda through the navigational system of time laid out in Daniele’s treatise on clocks, and Pietro de Medina’s \textit{Arte del Navigare}, among others.

\textbf{Minerva and Time in La Rotonda’s Interior}

Minerva’s presence in the rest of the villa’s iconography helps illustrate the goddess’s significance to the overall theme, particularly with regards to prudence and temporality. Paintings in the rest of the villa probably began sometime in the early 1570s under the direction of Palladio himself.\textsuperscript{599} The first of the four principal rooms decorated by Anselmo Canera – who Palladio worked with at the Palazzo Thiene where the artist painted the image of \textit{Prudence} in the Sala degli Dei – was the one facing east, whose ceiling depicts \textit{Virtue Dominating Vice} (Figure 41), represented by four allegorical female figures, surrounding a central young male being crowned who is usually identified as the original patron Paolo Palladio, \textit{quattro libri}, Libro quattro, Cap. XVII, 64, “Bramante sia stato il primo à metter in luce la buona, e bella Architettura, che da gli Antichi fin’à quell tempo era stata nascosa.”  
\textsuperscript{598}Ibid., “Ma perche, essendo tutte le cose humane in perpetuo moto, aviene che hora salgano fin al sommo della loro perfettione, e che hora scendano fin all’estremo della loro imperfettione; l’Architettura à tempi de’ nostril padre, & avi, uscita di quelle tenebre, nelle quali era stata lungamente come sepolta; cominciò à lasciarsi rivedere nella luce del Mondo.” 
\textsuperscript{599}Ibid.
Almerico in the guise of virtue. The ceiling in the room in the northwestern wing has been attributed to Bernardino India, who painted the figure of Divine Wisdom in a white dress holding a scepter on one hand and holding a circular snake biting its tail in the other (Figure 42). This is Macrobius’s ouroboros, seen here without the accompanying three heads of the tricipitium in the center. The white robes worn by the figure are in agreement with the virginal qualities of Minerva, who was also the goddess of wisdom, and so the figure can be said to be synonymous with her. The triumphant gesture of the woman holding aloft the serpent alludes to the virtue of prudence, and also suggests that this is the configuration of time championed by the goddess.

On the ceiling in the southeast room, the Triumph of Minerva (Figure 43) is dominated by the impressive figure of Minerva “who brings fame and fortune, overcoming fate and sin and lifting up to celestial glory.” The Triumph of Minerva was a popular trope in the Renaissance, as we have seen. In La Rotonda, however, arguably the goddess represents how virtue can be triumphant over time. An oval fresco on the wall adjacent to the Triumph of Minerva confirms this might be the case. In this image a female figure on the left contemplates a labyrinth, which probably represents time since this was a common association during the period. On her left is another woman cutting a tangled mass of rope with her sword. The confused network of lines associated with both the knot and the

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601 R. Cevese, *Ville della provincia di Vicenza*, vol. 1, Renato Cevese (Milan: Edizioni SISAR, 1971), 152
602 Ibid.
603 Ibid.
labyrinth suggest that there is a correlation between the two, and by cutting the knot, the woman on the right is disentangling the snarls of time. Minerva’s true “triumph” is that a time conceived in the circularity of an eternal present can free us from the divided time represented by the Cerberus. By admonishing the kind of temporality that relies on a past that is no longer, and an unforeseeable future, Minerva advocates a type of prudence that is free from the Machiavellian means to an end that can set us up for disappointment and hostility, preferring instead a prudence that is steeped in the present, thus allowing us to better triumph over those vices that are a challenge at the present moment. The temporality associated with Minerva also extends to the movement of the visitor in the villa.

**La Rotonda, Minerva and Divine Logos**

The circularity of interior space in Palladio’s La Rotonda mimics the representation of eternal time defined by the *settentrione* and the movement of Minerva’s star around the pole – the simultaneity of past, present and future expressed for us through the only solid reality of things we have, which is matter. As one moves through the circular space of the villa, one is constantly aware of time as a continuously moving present without beginning or end, at least theoretically. Visitors today are unable to experience the full effect because as one enters the villa from the path leading from the road, the rooms on the right are barricaded. As a result, visitors are directed to the left, forcing them to proceed in one direction within the circle, unless they head straight for the domed space of the oculus.

This is far removed from the way La Rotonda would have been experienced in Palladio’s day. Since all of the rooms are connected in a circular corridor one could have chosen which way to proceed. Since movement is uninterrupted, the participant is always offered an alternative, disallowing the possibility of predetermining future locations.
Uninterrupted movement is crucial to self-movement and Plato’s theory of the movements proper to the soul.

As discussed in previous chapters, for Plato proper movement of the soul exists only when the soul can move itself and movement is unrestricted. Such movement is tied to free will because it is immobility that prevents the will from being free and choosing a correct path. Immobility is temporally dependent on the past and future, since, as we witnessed at Maser, to traverse a path that obstructs movement with a wall means that the future path is already determined since one has to travel back the same path used in the past. Circular space recognizes that the future is not, and can never be, known until one arrives, and yet it is always there in its alternativity.

Providing options was crucial to Palladio’s idea of perfect architecture. When Palladio discusses the distribution of rooms in his Second Book, he highlights how they should be arranged next to each other so that the rooms can be accessed scambievolmente, or interchangeably. Derived from the verb scambiare, the term scambievolmente is about alternatives. It can also mean “to confuse” which is significant because having so many options does complicate movement through the space, which only underscores an appreciation for the present moment.

To be present in La Rotonda, one is always aware of a past and a future position, but unlike the commonly held teleological definition that ascertains the direction of time as moving from the past to the future, the circularity of space insists that both directions are

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605 Sallis, Being and Logos, 142.
606 Dilman, Free Will, 37.
equally probable. The will is free to choose. In the uninterrupted space of a circle there is no end or beginning, where the true meaning of time represented by the configuration of stars that form the *settentrione*.

The conception of eternal time as an aggregate of past, present and future that has its roots in the mechanical symbolism of the *settentrione* is found in a well-known text from the period that Palladio would have been quite familiar with, particularly since it was his mentor Trissino who made it accessible through translation: Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. In Canto XXX of *Purgatorio*, as Dante is approaching the outermost heaven which lies beyond the planets, where he must say good-bye to Virgil, the pilgrim recounts how he could only proceed:

“When the first heaven’s Seven-Stars [settentrion] had halted

(those stars that never rise or set, that are

not veiled except when sin beclouds our vision;”

Here the seven stars of the *settentrione* are described as never rising or setting. There is no beginning or end to their rotation, unlike the Sun that rises and sets at specific times each day. It is in this canto that Dante meets his beloved Beatrice for the first time since her death ten years prior. It is no coincidence that Beatrice is adorned with a veil “cherchiat de le fronde di Minerva,” or encircled with Minerva’s leaves from the olive tree, since they suit Beatrice who, like Minerva, stands for Divine Knowledge. For Dante, Minerva (as Beatrice) and the seven stars of the *settentrione* exemplify Plato’s idea of eternal circulation,

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609 Ibid., 280.
which he made famous in his *Timaeus* when he describes time as “the moving image of eternity,” and as such La Rotonda is the moving, and thus the *living*, image of time in space. Time is movement, and only in understanding it as such can we arrive, in the steps of Dante, to that heavenly realm.

Looking back to Plato’s *Phaedrus*, the role of Minerva as time in La Rotonda is in many ways congruent with the female figure represented as the pilot of the soul. We will recall how in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates refers to the figure in the first heaven as “the colorless, formless, intangible essence, visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul.” In La Rotonda, Minerva and the pole are represented by the oculus – a formless and intangible place. The absence of anything material is indicative of time, which is really only available to the mind. In this way, La Rotonda assumes the quintessential expression of the divine *logos*. The Greek metaphysical concept for *logos* was transformed into the word of God in Judaism, which later became equated with Christ for Christians. For Luther, *logos* was the term used to constitute God’s word. The Word of God also had a temporal quality, as Daniele mentioned in his letters to his aunt, for it is through the Word that the present is manifested, and it is to the flesh as speech is to the voice.

In a city where the debate about free will was fervent, La Rotonda represents a powerful reminder that man has the freedom to choose; or Plato’s conception of the will as something that is inherently good but needs the guidance of virtue to keep the soul from

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surrendering to vice by providing it with alternatives. With the eight figures painted in the interior room that surrounds the oculus, however, it is Plato’s concept of the pilot of the soul that comes to the forefront, one that demonstrates the crucial role of the present as a way of being in the world. We will recall that in the *Cratylus* Plato described *logos* as that which is timeless and “signifies all things, moves circularly, is in perpetual motion, and is twofold…true and false together.” By providing a trajectory for light through the central dome, the oculus of La Rotonda illustrates how time move circularly, is in perpetual motion, and is both true and false since it reveals the passage of time, but also demonstrates the deception in trying to measure it since the movement of light is inconsistent and changes every day as the inclination of the sun also changes.

As Pier Vittorio Aurelio attests, Palladio’s project must be seen as a cooperative venture, with Trissino who, with his Platonic academies, was attempting “to use the unifying architectural language of classicism to project a self-harmonizing sense of civic calm.” Anxieties about the future can only bring hardship since it can never be known, however, in knowing that change is the only constant, there is always hope that things will turn out. True presence is the only key to a virtuous life.

What was it about the location, the patron, or any other feature involved in the construction of La Rotonda that might have encouraged an embodiment of theoretical principles relates to time and *logos*? As for the structure itself, it should be noted that La Rotonda was not completely unique in its aspirations for circularity. Perhaps not surprisingly Palladio had designed a similar arrangement to La Rotonda, with a central circular space set

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613 Barbaro, *Lettere*, 60, “il Verbo fu mezzo convenientissimo, come quello per il quale il presente si manifesta, ed è unibile alla carne come la parola alla voce.”  
614 Plato, *Cratylus*, 408 b – c.
within a square and surrounded on all sides by four loggias, for the villa that he intended to build for Trissino’s relatives, in the hamlet of Meledo in Sarego. Though the villa was never completed due to a lack of funds, it seems fitting that Palladio would include a structure similar to the Temple of Minerva, with its circular interior surrounded by four loggias, in his design for the villa of the family of the man who introduced him to the importance of the goddess in the first place, Giangiorgio Trissino.

It should also be noted that Palladio designed many other buildings with circularity in mind. Though many other architects in the Renaissance were obsessed with centrally planned buildings, the circular form was usually reserved for non-secular structures like churches and chapels. In his *Quattro libri*, the first building that Palladio proffers as an exemplar in the section on *palazzi* is Floriano Antonini’s *palazzo* in Udine whose interior space allows for almost ideal circularity. Many of Palladio’s own inventions, such as the Villa Mocenico, the Ville Trivigiano and the Villa Ragona, to name a few, also attempt to configure circular movement through space. Site-specificity, however, surely would have been a factor in allowing Palladio to erect such a structure as La Rotonda. Its position on top of a hill is the ideal location for a building meant to represent the importance of the present moment, since the panoramic view would allow for complete continuity that would support the circularity he desired. As for the patron, Palladio writes, “among many honorable gentlemen of Vicenza one finds Monsignor Paolo Almerico man of the church, who was referendario for two popes

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Pius III, and V, and for his worthiness merited the status of Cittadino Romano with all its privileges.\textsuperscript{617}

Almerico was well respected and a devoutly religious man, who may have shared the distress about the current obsession with war and conflict. Almerico expressed his concerns in an essay published in Venice in 1562, where the author inquires: “What does it mean that many honorable nations love war more than peace?\textsuperscript{618} But perhaps there was something more. In his youth Almerico had been accused of murder, a crime for which he spent two years and two months in prison in Venice.\textsuperscript{619} Was the crime yet another example of violence in Vicenza initiated by the debate about free will? We might never know the answer. Although he was eventually absolved of the crime, it would have been a sobering experience. While in prison he would have had time to reflect on life, and learn the value of delighting in the present moment, which, as he might have learned, could change at any moment. He might have understood how the past and future both shrink into a single moment, which is both now and eternity. In a continuously moving present, the past is always present in our memories, and the future, too, is always there in the way we conduct our lives, “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”\textsuperscript{620} This, one might add, is also the true value of prudence.

\textsuperscript{617}\textit{Palladio, quattro libri}, Libro Secondo, 18, ‘Fra molti honorati Gent’huomini Vicentini si ritrova Monsignor Paolo Almerico huomo di Chiesa, e che fu referendario di due Sommi Pontifici Pio IIII, & V, e per il suo valore meritò di esser Cittadino Romano con tutta casa sua.’

\textsuperscript{618}\textit{Paolo Almerico, quattro libri de dubbi con le solutioni a ciascun dubbio accommodate} (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, et fratelli, 1562), 99, “Che vuol dire, che molte honorate nazioni amarono piu la Guerra, che la pace?”

\textsuperscript{619}\textit{Semenzato, The Rotonda}, 43.

\textsuperscript{620} Galatians 6:7-9
In the past three chapters I have tried to be attentive to the shifting conceptions of Prudence during the period, and their influence on art and architecture. We have seen how the image of Minerva as she relates prudence changed from Mantegna’s depiction of the goddess in full warrior gear, to one where the goddess lays down her arms and begins to assume a more cosmological and peaceful appearance in Correggio’s painting. In the Palazzo Thiene, we observed how Prudence loses all of her traditional iconographic accoutrements, save the mirror, emphasizing cosmological aspects of the virtue that are more aligned to the goddess Minerva. In the Villa Maser we saw the conversion of Prudence to time, but a divisible time, and finally in La Rotonda we see how Prudence acquires the pure temporality of the eternal present, where the *logos* has been restored to its original state, without the temporal constraints of a past or future – but as a living image in architecture.
Chapter 4: Duelling *Tricipitia*: Capturing the Multivalence of Prudence and Time in Titian’s *Allegory of Prudence*

The title ascribed to Titian’s hybrid image, *Allegory of Prudence* of 1565-70 (Figure 44), from the National Gallery, London, suggests that the painting should be positioned within the debates about prudence that have been discussed in the past three Chapters. The canvas consists of two separate triads, or *tricipitia*, one on top of the other, complete with an inscription above. The lower *tricipitium* consists of the heads of three animals – a wolf, a lion and a dog – while the upper one consists of three human heads. The *tricipitium* was an emblem for prudence, which offered a conflation of past, present and future.621

The *tricipitium* was a recurrent theme in sixteenth-century Venice. As Manfredo Tafuri argues, the diffusion of a symbol of the *tricipitium*, as an allegory for prudence, was established by the Venetian patrician class in the form of a three-headed serpent, an emblem that appeared depicted on coins in 1536, minted by Giovanni Zacchi, confirming the degree to which the theme had been assimilated by nobility.622 The configuration of the *tricipitium* attributed to prudence, as a symbol for the patrician class, was well disseminated through the writings of Nicolò Zen, and figures prominently in the art of the period.623 Examples of the emblem are found carved in stone on the façade of the Palazzo Vendramin at Santa Fosca, the Palazzo Trevisan Capello in Canonica, and the Palazzo dell’Odeo Cornaro in Padua.624 One of the most famous painted images of the *tricipitium* from the period is Titian’s

622 Ibid., 12.
623 Ibid.
624 Ibid.
Allegory, which collocates two renditions of the emblem – one consisting of the heads of three men and the other of three animals.

By including the three temporal components of time – past, present and future, the *tricipitium* demonstrates that prudence requires that all conditions of time are required for the practice of prudence. The compressibility of time that is visually manifested by the two *tricipitia* in Titian’s painting is repeated in a Latin inscription above that draws attention to the importance of prudence to the image, and from which the painting derives its name:

“EX PRAETERO –  
PRAESENS PRUDENTER AGIT –  
NI FUTURO(M)/ ACTIONE(M) DE TURPET”

Meaning “from the past, the present moves prudently, so as not to spoil future action,” the inscription spotlights the theme of prudence and time – and the relation between the two: the present moves from the past toward the future, directed by prudence.

Erwin Panofsky has proposed familial harmony as the primary theme of the painting, structuring his argument around the fact that the portraits in the upper field of the image represent Titian and other family members. By relying predominantly on visual evidence, however, Panofsky’s assessment does not situate the painting within historical and artistic discourses on prudence, and therefore undervalues the lower *tricipitium*. More recently, Erin Campbell ascribed the meaning of the painting to the central role prudence played in old age during the Renaissance. Campbell’s evaluation is noteworthy for the attention given the

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virtuous aspects of prudence conveyed by the painting, and for identifying the significant role time plays in it.

The focus of these scholars has been on the upper tricipitum of human heads, while the lower triad has been given less attention. The juxtaposition of the two tricipitia in the same painting, however, suggests that the two must work together in some way. Emphasis on the upper tricipitum has also resulted in the inscription being given less attention by scholars. The phrase conveys a typical definition of prudence from the period, similar to the one put forward by Daniele Barbaro in his Dieci libri dell'architettura. If the two tricipitia were as integrated into Venetian society as Tafuri claims, why does the painting have an inscription to explain them? One reason, as Augusto Gentili has suggested, is that the text, which is normally read in succession from left to right, may provide a standard by which to read the tricipitia. The inscription, as proposed below, may also have been added to assist in understanding the relation between the two tricipitia.

This chapter explores the role of the tricipitum in disseminating the value of prudence, and by extension time, in Titian’s Allegory. To begin, I outline wider artistic and intellectual considerations from figures in Titian’s creative circle. One important example is Francesco Zorzi, whose philosophy – informed by ancient texts of the Kabalah – promoted a middle ground by which to understand the world, by considering all sides of an argument. Turning to art criticism and theory, I analyze texts, notably Ludovico Dolce’s Dialogo della pittura (1557), highlighting discussions about prudence and discussing their potential influence. Giulio Camillo’s L’idea del teatro (1552) will also be explored, particularly with

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627 Daniele Barbaro, I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1567 edition), 12, “la prudenza compara le cose seguite con le instant, & fa stima delle seguenti. Le cose seguite per memoria si hanno.”
regard to the juxtaposition of text and image in Titian’s painting. Finally, this Chapter will propose that the combination of inscription and picture, and the meanings of the allegory, resonate with contemporary discussions about Plato’s *logos* and prudence in Titian’s circle of patrons.

Throughout much of the twentieth century Titian’s works have been conventionally situated within the *paragone* between painting and poetry. David Rosand has studied the origins of the painter’s affinity for poetry, translating *ut pictura poesis* into *ut pictor poeta* as part of a creative challenge that was taken on by Titian in particular. As Rosand observes, humanists of the period recommended painters “associates with men of letters, poets and orators, through whom he might be introduced to literary culture of antiquity.”

In his study of the relationship between Titian’s tragic painting and the liberal arts, Thomas Puttfarken has argued that by referring to his paintings as *poesie*, Titian was playing on the popular topos of *ut pictura poesis* for its ability to make abstract ideas available to the imagination.

Six of the mythological canvases Titian sent to Philip II of Spain were described as *poesie* and *favole*, poetic or mythological pictures. For Rosand, Titian’s translation of poetic metaphor into visible reality was achieved through colour and the dramatic potential of light and dark.

Light surely has a place in Titian’s *Allegory*, as we shall see, but the inscription suggests that writing also plays a role.

Interest in poetry during the period, as a mnemonic tool to make absent things present

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for the imagination suggests that the text may have been juxtaposed with imagery in order to clarify meaning in some way. We will recall how poetry was spared from Plato’s scathing critique of the written word in the *Phaedrus*, an exception further advanced by Marsilio Ficino in his *De divine furor*. By exploring how Titian’s *Allegory* promotes a conversation about different kinds of prudence and time, I consider how the painting moves beyond *ut pictura poesis* by illustrating that art is perhaps a better standard than writing for being objective and providing different points of view.

The Doubling Effect in Titian’s *Allegory of Prudence*

As noted above, the focus on Titian’s painting in scholarship has frequently been on the upper *tricipitium*.632 This *tricipitium* depicts the faces of men at different stages of life, identified by Panofsky as a portrait of Titian, his son Orazio, and a relative who worked in the artist’s studio, Marco.633 Of the three faces, the oldest – said to represent Titian himself – is to the left of the canvas, while the youngest – that of Marco – faces towards the right. Both of these are in profile: only the face in the center – that of Titian’s son Orazio – looks directly at the viewer. Below the faces of the three men is a similar *tricipitium* of animals, this time with a wolf facing to the left and a dog to the right, both in profile, while a lion stares back at the spectator. Noteworthy is how Titian presents two images of prudence, placing them one on top of the other visually – but also metaphorically through the use of light.

There is a division to the way light functions in the painting. In the upper *tricipitium* the light moves across the painting, highlighting the profile of young Marco and half the face

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633 Panofsky, “Titian’s Allegory,” 146-68. See also Campbell, “Old age and the politics of judgment,” 261.
of Orazio, while Titian’s profile fades into the shadows. Like a sundial that relies on the play of light and shadow to determine the time, the movement of light in the painting draws attention to the temporal aspects of the image, but this is only highlighted in the upper tricipitium. The lighting in the lower tricipitum is evenly distributed and all the faces appear in shadow.

Titian’s decision represents a novel intervention, according to Panofsky, because of his conflation of two unrelated iconographic traditions.\(^634\) They are distinct for Panofsky in that one is mythological and depicts animals, while the other represents men, and also temporally, since the lower tricipitum refers to an ancient tradition whereas the upper one is more modern.\(^635\) For Simona Cohen the repetition of meaning of the two tricipitia is simply redundant, and she therefore suggests that the lower one represents something different than the prudence proposed by Panofsky.\(^636\) If we revisit Panofsky’s choice of Pierio Valeriano’s Hieroglyphica of 1556 as the most likely source for Titian’s painting, then both tricipitia should allude to prudence.

In his Hieroglyphica, a Renaissance dictionary of symbols, Valeriano, a humanist who studied in Padua, discusses the meaning of the emblem in a section entitled De tricipitio, following the writings of the fifth-century Roman Macrobius.\(^637\) He provides two illustrations – one of a figure with three human heads (Figure 45), and another with the body of a human and the heads of a lion, wolf and dog (Figure 46). Following a description of the temporal

\(^{634}\) Erwin Panofsky, “Titian’s Allegory”, 147.
\(^{635}\) Ibid.
\(^{637}\) Pierio Valeriano, Hieroglyphica, Sive De Sacris Aegyptiorvm Aliarvmqve Gentivm literis, with comments by Ioannis Pierii Valeriani Bolzanij Bellunensis (Basil: 1556), 228v.
derivations for the animal heads, Valeriano identifies the *tricipitium* with prudence. Whether or not this was the actual source for the different *tricipitia* in Titian’s painting, the treatise is important for Valeriano’s discussion of two variations in association with prudence. However, Valeriano’s illustration of the *tricipitium* with three male heads suggests that there is something awry with Panofsky’s identification of them as Titian and his relatives.

In Valeriano’s illustration the three heads are discernible in age but not identity. They suggest, as Tafuri has argued, the three ages of man. As Cohen and others have noted, the idea that the heads represent Titian, Marco and Orazio is entirely conjectural. Like the three male heads in Valeriano’s image, they are likely meant to illustrate the importance of time to the virtue of prudence for which there is no need for any individuality. Questions also arise with the lower *tricipitium* composed of a wolf, a lion and a dog. The animals may represent distinctive characters, but they may also stand in for different ideas of time.

The animal heads likely refer to the three categories of time, as many scholars have noted. Panofsky was the first to point out the relationship between the painting and the passage from Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*. In his treatise Macrobius interprets the Cerberus that accompanied the statue of Serapide in the Serapeum of Alexander as follows:

“The Egyptians approached the statue of Serapide, the figure of an animal with three heads, of which the central and most prominent one was a lion; to the right one sees the head of a dog that seeks to persuade with an tame expression, while

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638 Ibid., 229r, “ostendimius huiusmodi tricipitium prudentiae convenire.”
639 Tafuri, *Venezia*, 12.
on the left the neck of the beast ends with the head of a rapacious wolf…The head of the lion, as such, indicates the present, whose condition, between the past and the future, is strong and vehement in actions of the present; the past is indicated by the head of the wolf, since the memories of things are devoured and annulled by the past; and the image of the dog that persuades indicates future events whose hope, although uncertain, always seem appealing.\textsuperscript{642}

The passage explains the three animal heads in terms of time, a connection also made in other works from Titian’s period. In a later analysis of the \textit{Allegory}, Panofsky proposed another potential source for the three animal heads: Valeriano’s woodcut in Francesco Colonna’s \textit{Hypnerotomachia Poliphili} (Figure 9).\textsuperscript{643} His argument was based on the relationship between the ancient representation of the Egyptian Serapide and the three dimensions of time: past, present and future.

Panofsky’s interpretation of the three animal figures has been challenged on the grounds that Titian’s painting lacks the serpent coil to which the triad is normally attached.\textsuperscript{644} As Cohen argues, despite the fact that the inscription above the figures of men makes explicit allegorical reference to prudence, animals in the Renaissance were not

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Macrob} Macrobius, \textit{Saturnalia}. 1.20.13-15. See also E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, "A Late-Antique Symbol in Works by Holbein and Titian", \textit{The Burlington Magazine} 49 (1926), pp. 177-81, “signum tricipitis animantis . . . quod exprimit medio eodemque maximo capite leonis effigiem; dextra parte caput canis ecoritur mansueta specie blandientis, pars vero laeva ceruicis rapacis lupi capite finitur . . . ergo leonis capite monstrat praeens tempus, quia condicio eius inter praeteritum futurumque actu praeenti valida fueruntque est. sed et praeteritum tempus lupi capite signatur, quod memoria rerum transactarum rapitur et aufertur, item canis blandientis effigies futuri temporis designat eventum, de quo nobis spes, licet incerta, blanditur.”
\bibitem{Panofsky} Panofsky and Saxl, "A Late-Antique Symbol,” 179.
\end{thebibliography}
normally associated with virtues but with vices.\textsuperscript{645} Is it possible that the coiled serpent in Valeriano’s woodcut is simply indicative of another kind of prudence? In the previous chapter we saw how the woodcut was representative of different conceptions of time, where the \textit{ouroboros} represented the circularity of eternal time, while the three animal heads were synonymous with linear time. Could Titian’s painting be making a similar distinction between different kinds of time? The inscription indicates that prudence plays a key role in the painting’s meaning.

Cohen has proposed an alternative signification for the animals as allegorical of vices that needed to be overcome on man’s journey through this life in preparation for the next. As visual evidence she provides the fourteenth-century capitals in the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, which are decorated with nine animal heads devouring their prey, each representative of a vice.\textsuperscript{646} For Cohen, Panofsky’s proposal that the lower \textit{tricipitium} may derive from Valeriano’s woodcut in the \textit{Hypnerotomachia}, which depicts the same three animals, cannot be correct because there is no evidence that it pertains to prudence. As we have already seen in Chapters One and Two, however, a similar image in Franchino Gaffurius’s \textit{De harmonia musicorum instrumentorum opus} of 1518 does, in fact, relate to prudence. The only difference is that in Gaffurius’s treatise the snake and the animal triad are conflated.

Stefano Pierguidi’s study of Titian’s painting has brought forward new evidence that supports Panofsky’s original argument. Pierguidi highlights the importance of the triad to Giulio Camillo’s work, \textit{L’idea del teatro} of 1532. As Camillo writes:

“the three heads of a wolf, a lion and a dog are as such. Macrobius writes that

\textsuperscript{644}Cohen, ”Titian's London 'Allegory'”, 47.
\textsuperscript{645}Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{646}Ibid.
the ancients, wishing to depict the three times, which are the past, the present and the future, painted the three aforementioned heads. That of the wolf signified past time, because it has already devoured; that of the lion the present (if the present can be) because preoccupations of the present generate such great terror they assume the face of a lion, which looms above the rest; and that of the dog signifies future time, because in the guise of the flattering dog, future time always promises something better.”

Camillo’s words highlight the role of time in the animal triad. It is curious to note his satirical remark about the precariousness of the present, given that we are confronted with a lion, which inspires so much terror. Camillo’s humour aside, his comments draw attention to the immediacy of mind with which one would be confronted, were one to come face to face with a lion. There would certainly be no time to think about the past or future in such circumstances. In fact, one of the most conspicuous aspects of the painting is that the head of the lion, and of the man, are in the center – and significantly in both triads it is only the head of the present that confronts the viewer directly, maintaining an ever-present stare. Look not to the past, or the future, they say, for the present is here and now. While the past and future are represented in strong connection to the here and now, it is the present that one must confront directly, for it is in the present that decisions are made that greatly affect our future.

For Camillo, the movement from the present to the future is represented “an ever-
praising dog” that “always promises something better.” The dog is thus far from the allegory of vice that Cohen suggests as the meaning for the animal in Titian’s painting. If anything, the dog, as future and representative of what the present will become, is far more hopeful than any vice. However, Cohen’s evaluation of the painting is important here for recognizing the negative connotations that animal references often had in Renaissance art. Cohen’s theory suggests that the two tricipitia are somehow in opposition to each other. How can we justify the contrast between the two representations of both time, and prudence? The answer is clear when we consider another possible source for the lower triumvirate. If Titian had not already been familiar with Valeriano’s Hieroglyphica, he may have come across an image of the tricipitum in Gaffurius’s De harmonia.

In a schematization of the Harmony of the Spheres, Gaffurius incorporates a woodcut linking the planetary spheres to their accompanying Muse via the tricipitum, alluding to the role of both time and prudence in the production of harmony. Gaffurius’s treatise would have been found in libraries across northern Europe, acquiring particular importance in Titian’s city of Venice, where it was also printed.

The woodcut in Gaffurius’s treatise has been linked to Plato’s conception of time. Derived from Pythagorean models of the Harmony of the Spheres, in the Timaeus Plato explained how the cosmic order of the universe as something that could be found in musical consonances that could find their equivalent in space.648 In his treatise Gaffurius championed the interconnection under the motto: “Harmonia est Discordia concors.”649 As we saw in the

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649 Cited in Tafuri, L’armonia e i conflitti, 52.
previous Chapter, Plato writes in the *Timaeus* that only the present exists.\(^{650}\) This idea of time was shared by Thomas Aquinas who believed that the division of time into past, present and future is a worldly understanding, and has nothing to do with God, who is eternal.\(^{651}\) It is this perception of time, I have argued throughout this dissertation, that links prudence with the pursuit of harmony, and also free will. The correlation between prudence and time implied in Gaffurius’s treatise is central to Titian’s *Allegory* because it identifies prudence as a central component to the maintenance of cosmological harmony. Gaffurius’s woodcut would have been familiar to Titian who was consulted for work on the church of San Francesco della Vigna, whose redesign was based on the proportions of musical harmony expressed in treatises like those of Gaffurius.

**Prudence, Music, and the Conductor of Cosmic Harmony**

When on August 15\(^{th}\), 1534, Doge Andrea Gritti laid the first foundation stone for the new church of San Francesco della Vigna, he commissioned Francesco Zorzi, a Franciscan monk from the attached monastery, to intervene.\(^{652}\) In his memorandum, Zorzi advises how the fabrication of the church should proceed according to harmonic proportions outlined in Plato’s *Timaeus*.\(^{653}\)

Zorzi’s reliance on the *Timaeus* suggests that Titian may also have been conversant in the ideas laid out in Plato’s dialogue. As Tafuri has argued, Titian, along with Sebastiano Serlio and Fortunio Spira, signed their approval of Zorzi’s memorandum, demonstrating “not only a familiarity with these ideas among artists, but also a readiness to apply them in

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\(^{652}\) Tafuri, *L’armonia e i conflitti*, 90.

\(^{653}\) Ibid.
practice.” Titian’s art also contains conspicuous references to music, referrals that can even be found implicitly in his Allegory. A detail of the three headed snake from Gaffurius’s treatise reveals the same arrangement of animals found in the lower triad of Titian’s canvas, suggesting perhaps the artist’s awareness and assimilation of the principles laid out by Plato and contemporary humanists like Zorzi. If this were the case, why would Titian’s painting conflate theories of musical harmony with prudence?

Titian’s intellectual curiosity was known to have extended to music, which was encouraged by his relationships with humanists such as Pietro Bembo, Pietro Aretino and Jacopo Sansovino. Anthony Rowland-Jones demonstrates how Titian’s use of the rare F5 clef, the shapes found in prints by Petrucci and Gardano and used for the bass viola, suggests an accomplished understanding of music, and even the possibility that he played the instrument himself. In the Carta del navegar pitoresco, in his chapter on Invenzione, Marco Boschini identifies Titian as the figure playing the bass viol in Paolo Veronese’s large canvas The Marriage at Cana, a painting Boschini praises for having “orchestrated the Harmony of Music in Paint.” Gaffurius’s woodcut may have been a source for the animal-headed tricipitium in his painting, but what might be the relationship of the emblem to harmony? The answer to this question may be found in the writings of Aquinas.

For Aquinas harmony was rooted in the practice of prudence. Without disclaiming the importance of the relationship between music and proportional harmony that remains rudimentary to architectural theory, Tafuri highlights how during the period in Venice the

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654 Tafuri, L’armonia e i conflitti, 94.
656 Ibid., 419.
objectivity of space as a mirror of the cosmos was set against the ideals of Aquinas, who believed that harmony began with the individual and in the healthy soul. For Aquinas, God’s omnipotence required that there not be a singular, exhaustible order of the cosmos, a disputation that challenged the harmonic analogy advocated by Zorzi. Prudence is therefore a better rubric than music, since it creates harmony by directing the other virtues, just as a conductor supervises the instruments of an orchestra. By directing the other virtues, prudence acts as a guide for the soul, encouraging its journey back to God.

The analogy between prudence and the conductor of an orchestra is similar to the pilot of the soul in Plato’s Phaedrus. In the Phaedrus, the pilot of the soul is described in terms of virtue and true knowledge, which are essential for the proper ascent of the soul to heaven. As Ilham Dilman points out, there is a strong correlation between Plato’s theory of the pilot of the soul and the freedom of the will. Is it possible then that Titian’s painting participates in the debates about free will going on at the time?

As in the writings of Plato and Aquinas, the painting seems to make a distinction between animal, or “worldly” prudence, and divine prudence. Unlike the animal triad, which represents distinct species each looking out for their own interests, the upper triad portrays the combined effort of individuals – be they members of a family, a professional environment, or a community – speaking directly to the harmonic ramifications of cooperation, respect and unity. The teachings of Plato would have been disseminated in the

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657 Marco Boschini, La carta del navegar pitoresco, ed. Anna Pallucchini (Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1966), 775, “Il Vecchio, che suona il Basso, è Tiziano.”
658 Tafuri, Interpreting the Renaissance, 17.
659 Ibid.
Platonic academies in Venice. The writings of Aquinas circulated widely in Venice at the
time, and Titian’s work with Dominicans would have increased the possibility of his
acquaintance with the priest’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{662} The distinction made by Plato and Aquinas
between two different types of prudence can be found in the two tricipitia in Titian’s
painting, but seems to fall short in Gaffurius’s illustration of the Harmony of the Spheres.

**The Inconsistencies of Prudence: Subjectivity versus Objectivity**

The woodcut depicts prudence as a three-headed snake, unmistakably represented as a
wolf to the left, a lion in the middle, and a dog to the right. The great snake, which links the
Muses with their corresponding planets and skies, is an allusion to the Harmony of the
Spheres, probably taken from Ficino’s proposals for schematizing the theory.\textsuperscript{663} In the
woodcut, Apollo, the God of music, sits on his throne with his lyre at his side. Separating the
muses from the planets is the snake, which symbolizes the North Pole, since it can be seen
originating from the top of the earth in the bottom of the diagram. The triad of animals
connected to the head of the snake is the same as the tricipitium to which Tafuri refers, and
represents Pallas Athena, also known as Minerva, the goddess of prudence, as has been
shown in Chapter one. It is she who uses prudence to promote harmony among the Gods and
Godesses who continue to fight among themselves, a gesture that conserves the movement
of each of the planetary spheres and the heavens. As already noted, the woodcut for
Gaffurius’s treatise is a conflation of the snake and the three heads found in the
Hypnerotomachia, where they are separated. By combining the two, the woodcut in

\textsuperscript{661} Ilham Dilman, *Free Will: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London:
Routledge, 1999)

\textsuperscript{662} Mary M. Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2006).
Gaffurius’s treatise presents a less objective view of time, let alone prudence, unlike Titian’s painting which seems to depicts two kinds of prudence and time.

Panofsky’s initial interpretation of the painting bears further consideration here because he suggests the painting engages with a tension between subjectivity and objectivity, which may help us to understand the different kinds of prudence. As Campbell points out, Panofsky interpreted the image in the context of Titian’s hopes of securing financial stability for his family. Such an interpretation suggests that Titian’s hopes were more objectively motivated, since he wasn’t simply looking out for his own subjective interests. As John Martin has argued, in the Renaissance, the demise of the ideal of concordia was at the heart of a major shift in the understanding of prudence, fostering an increased standard of subjectivity. Contrary to the Machiavellian sense of the virtue, where the individual’s subjective needs take priority, the importance of family concord was an important aspect in the maintenance of harmony. The emphasis on the three faces as a whole, rather than just one individual, registers that all three are responsible for the end product, relating the microcosm of the one, with the macrocosm of the family, or any given community.

Titian’s painting could highlight the difference in opinion that existed, between Venetian circles and those of her Florentine neighbours to the south, on the merit of prudence as a virtue. Campbell’s analysis of this point is very compelling, for she too agrees that the painting safeguards the family workshop from artistic abuses, like those issued against Titian

664 Campbell, “Old Age and the politics of judgment,” 265.
by Vasari in the *Vite*. As Campbell observes, at an epistemological level, theorists were at odds over the relationship between prudence and the visual arts. If Titian were responding to Vasari’s claims that Venetian painting is not based on judgment, as Campbell suggests, then I would argue that Titian’s painting of the allegory registers a more comprehensive meaning of prudence – one that can be used subjectively for the good of the individual, or one that can be used objectively for the good of the whole. I reiterate that the whole need not represent Titian’s family as has been argued, but any family, or members of a collective.

Bearing in mind the negative implications implicit in animal references suggested by Cohen, the painting does suggest a hierarchy of moral standards between the two by placing one on top of the other both visually and metaphorically. Depicting three distinct beasts, a lion, a dog, and a wolf, which would never coexist in harmony, the lower triumvirate shows evidence of a fracture in the image of time as continuous. Like the animals feasting on their prey on the columns in the Palazzo Ducale, these creatures are concerned with their own subjective interests. These animals are not free to do as they choose, but respond to instinctive desire. Nor are they free temporally, since each is reliant upon a specific time: the wolf is always conscious of its past prey kept hidden in a den, the lion is always hunting their prey in the present, and the dog remains fixed on a future reward. In the upper triad there is a connectedness between the three figures even if the viewer is aware that they all have a sense of individuality. The connectedness is emphasized in their shared humanity. Visually it is also represented through Titian’s use of light.

David Rosand has argued that the variations of light in the upper triad emphasize the

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666 Campbell, “Old Age and the politics of judgment,” 266.
667 Ibid.
668 Ibid.
temporal aspects of the painting by conveying the passage of time. The way the light is
distributed among the figures – with most of it shining on the younger figure, then half of the
central figure, and the top of the older figure’s head – suggests an interconnection between
the three, a shared participation in the light, even though one may receive more of it. Looking
at the image, the spectator becomes aware of how the intellects of three men are strung
together by threads of consciousness. Unlike the lower triad, the upper one is contingent
upon the three figures as a collective, in keeping with Plato’s philosophy concerning free
will.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato makes a correlation between the will and ego-centrism. An
egocentric life is that in which an individual’s gratification and self-interests are
paramount. Titian’s painting provides a visual metaphor of egocentrism. Cohen’s
argument is very compelling here since this seems to be the case for the animal metaphors in
the lower triad. They are not free to do as they choose, but are slave to their appetites. Virtue
and true knowledge are essential for the soul to be free, and thus ensure its proper ascent to
heaven. The kind of knowledge to which Plato refers is identical to virtue and is not an
intellectual knowledge, “but an affective orientation which takes the form of a love and
respect for others.” This type of knowledge is evident in the upper triad of Titian’s
painting where the individual members are working together, or learning from each other,
and sharing their experiences as human beings do. Plato is concerned with the individual’s
capacity “to consider the consequences of his actions for others, for himself and for the

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671 Ibid., 35.
future." Such deliberation has everything to do with the will. He believed one does not fall into good, but must grow metaphorical wings and rise into it. This ascent is made visual in the ordering of the composition of Titian’s painting, where the triad of human heads is placed above that of the animal heads, suggesting a spiritual climb.

The idea of a spiritual ascent is also present in Aquinas, when he considers free will as it relates to cosmological influences. Aquinas writes that though many believe celestial bodies influence the will this cannot be, for if the will is reason, and the intellect’s reason is not a bodily power, “it is impossible that the power of a celestial body should move the will directly.” Furthermore, Aquinas adds: “it is those who do not distinguish sense from intellect who hold that the wills of men are moved by the impression of a celestial body just as the appetites of brute animals are.” A similar distinction between men and brute animals is made in Titian’s painting. By juxtaposing the two emblems for prudence in one painting, Titian’s picture suggests that the virtue should be defined by more than the conflations of the tricipitium and the snake in Gaffurius’s woodcut.

**Prudence and the Paragone between Painting and Poetry**

To understand why Titian may have collocated two meanings for prudence in one painting it will be helpful to consider the image in the context of the *paragone* between the arts at the time. The issue of the *paragone* was discussed at great length during the sixteenth century in Venetian art criticism. Paolo Pino’s *Dialogo di pittura* (1548) and Ludovico Dolce’s *Dialogo della pittura* (1557) are two treatises on painting – specific to Titian in Dolce’s case – that remain decisive in their reflections on the importance of prudence to art.

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672 Ibid., 36.
theory and practice, specifically as they relate to the *paragone* between painting and poetry.  

Prudence played a role in guiding the principles of judgment developed in the art theory of both Pino and Dolce, as we saw in the Introduction. According to Aretino – one of the interlocutors in Dolce’s book on Venetian art theory – man’s ability to judge comes from a practical experience.  

Developing this argument further, Aretino distinguishes between the agency of the intellect and the eye as a means of proper judgment. Unlike the eye, which cannot be misled, he criticizes the intellect for being more easily deceived when making judgment calls, darkened by ignorance and emotion. Such a distinction between two approaches to prudence is derived from Aquinas’ criticism of “natural prudence”, which, as David Summers indicates, is based entirely on experience and circumstances, ignorant of the higher good.  

Similarly, for Pino, the image in the artist’s *imaginativa* is brought into existence by judging it against the reason and sense of the *vis cogitativa*, the highest of the internal senses. As a bridge between the intellect and the senses, the judgment inherent in prudence could guide the artist’s intellect in the creation of great works of art.  

Robert Klein has noted that the use of *giudizio*, as a form of intervention in creative expression, was more specific to the Venetian milieu of the mid cinquecento than other parts

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674 Ibid.
676 Ludovico Dolce in *Dolce’s Aretino*, 134.
677 Ibid., 135.
of Italy. As Klein indicates, the judgment associated with prudence was a popular trope drawn on by Titian’s closest friends Serlio, and Aretino who perceived it as the “figliuolo della natura e padre de l’arte” (the son of nature and the father of art), identifying the faculty with artistic personalities.

The proper use of judgment by an artist was defined in terms of the paragone between painting and poetry. In his Dialogo di pittura, Paolo Pino also wrote about the significance of giudizio, stressing the connection between the poet and the artist in its use. In Dolce’s Dialogo, when considering whether or not those who do not paint can be deemed to exhibit exceptional judgment with regards to painting, a similar comparison is made. Aretino, who is regarded as giudicosissimo by the second interlocutor, Fabrini, emphasizes how painters with even a spark of judgment would recognize that painting is poetry, and painting is history, and it is therefore no coincidence, Aretino says, that Petrarch referred to Homer as “the first painter of ancient memories.”

The significance of the correlation between painting and poetry for Venetian artists like Titian has been well documented, and has its roots in ut pictura poesis. The relationship between poetry and painting has existed since classical times but experienced a renaissance in the fifteenth century to support painting’s claim to being a liberal art. As Rosand emphasizes, ut pictura poesis was strongly allied to the minds image-forming

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680 Dolce, ‘Dialogo della pittura,’ 100, “Primo Pittor de le memorie antiche.”
681 David Rosand, “Ut Pictor Poeta,” 530. For Rosand, the painter’s affinity for poetry, translating *ut pictura poesis* into *ut pictor poeta* was a creative challenge taken on by countless artists, Titian in particular.
capacity and the “power of painting to make absent things present for the imagination.” Like Dolce, Pino too confirms in his *Dialogo della Pittura*, “painting is, in fact, poetry, an invention that makes visible that which is not.” This aspect of the *paragone* – the power to make absent things present – seems well developed in Titian’s painting when it comes to highlighting the different kinds of prudence and time.

Treatises containing images that conflated different meanings of prudence or time during the period would have been confusing and contradictory. In Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* there are two distinct conceptions of time laid out in the image: linear time – represented by the three animal heads that signify the past, present and future – and circular time – represented by the self-devouring snake. By combining the two, the woodcut for Gaffurius’s treatise essentially dismisses the circularity of time from the equation, since the snake’s body no longer coils and is attached to the three heads. In the image of the Egyptian Serapide, it is not really the ineffability of time that is portrayed, but rather its duality. By combining the snake and the three-headed beast, Gaffurius’s image conflated two types of time with a symbol for prudence, despite the fact that prudence has a dual nature, as we have seen. By engaging in the *paragone*, Titian’s painting can be seen to restore visibility to the two types of time and prudence that Gaffurius’s image obscured. By re-differentiating between the two types of time and prudence, the painting also makes a moral distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, particularly when we consider Titian’s image in the context of the ideals proposed by Zorzi for the design of San Francesco della Vigna.

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682 Ibid., 31.
683 Pino, *Dialogo di pittura*, 115 “la pittura è propria poesia, cioè invenzione, la qual fa apparere quello che non è.”
Like Titian’s Allegory, Zorzi’s translation of musical harmony to visual form contained both an objective and subjective component. Zorzi promoted the concept that the harmony of the cosmos could be mirrored objectively here on earth through the theory of musical consonance; however he also believed the heavenly ideal of harmony could be found subjectively within the individual. In his Promemoria, Zorzi insists “you are the temple of God.” Furthermore, the avenue by which one could approach God’s divinity was by way of imitating Christ the Savior – by rediscovering his primordial form, which exists in each of us as the “statue” of God. For Zorzi, this avenue towards spiritual purification also depends on a compromise between the “feminine and passive force” and the “masculine and active force.” Arguably, the passive, or contemplative force is more subjective, while the active life is more objective; however the problem was how to create harmony between the two. What Zorzi’s program seemed to lack was an anthropomorphic quality that would appeal to the nature of being in the world, something that could be satisfied ontologically through the use of prudence. That prudence could provide the vehicle for such a balance is evident in the 26th chapter of Aquinas’s Summa theologiae, where he argues, “prudence seems to pertain neither to active life nor to contemplative life, but to a middle kind of living.”

In Titian’s painting, a middle kind of living is articulated in the upper tricipitium. The arrangement of the two tricipitia suggests that the upper one ranks above the lower one in

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685 Tafuri, L’armonia e i conflitti, 51, “L’avvicinamento alla veritas divina è possibile attraverso l’imitatio Christi, attraverso la riscoperta della forma originaria che vive in noi stessi come “statue” di Dio”
686 Ibid., 51, “La strada della purificazione interiore, di uno spiritualismo esaltato…fra il livero arbitrio – “vis quaedam foeminea et passiva” – e la grazia, “vis masculea et activa.”
status and authority. The upper *tricipitium* is also the only one of the two to receive light, further highlighting its supremacy. I have already discussed how the animals below, concerned for their own self-interests, are representative of subjectivity. While the collaborative nature of the upper *tricipitium* suggests a more objective behaviour, the individuality of each of the figures also suggests that subjectivity is also a factor. When Dolce’s character Aretino discusses how painting can be beneficial to man we find some interesting reflections on how an artist’s use of good judgment can direct human behavior. Midway through the dialogue, after having dealt satisfactorily with the nobility of painting, Aretino asserts that the purpose of images should be to excite mankind to a life of virtue and good deeds.688 Titian’s painting seems to prioritize the middle way of living promoted by Aquinas and Plato.

**Logos and Camillo’s *L’idea del Teatro***

Plato promoted a middle ground, an idea incorporated into theatrical innovations during the period, particularly those advanced by Giulio Camillo in his *L’idea del teatro* of 1550. For Pierguidi, Camillo’s interpretation of the three animal heads must supersede the references to the triad of animals in both Valeriano’s woodcut in the *Hypnerotomachia*, and Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*.689 Not only is it more representative of Titian’s own depiction of the threesome, but also there is considerable evidence that Titian would have been familiar with the author’s book, or even Camillo.690 As Margherita Azzi Visentini notes, had Titian not known Camillo personally, he would have been familiar with his work through Vigkio

687 Aquinas, *Selected Writings*, 705.
688 Ibid., 113.
690 Ibid.
Zwichem, with whom Titian was connected through contacts like Pietro Bembo.\textsuperscript{691} Alfredo Gutiérrez-Kavanagh uncovered a letter in the library of San Lorenzo del’Escorial dated from 1576, that refers to a series of illustrated books, one of which was a version of Camillo’s \textit{L’idea del teatro} that included images in Titian’s hand.\textsuperscript{692}

Pierguidi’s study is valuable, for confirming the degree to which Camillo’s \textit{L’idea del teatro} was part of the artist’s experience. Pierguidi presents ample evidence to support Titian’s familiarity with Camillo’s interpretation of the three animals, so positioned, as representative of past, present and future, however the testimony depends on a written description by Camillo, who also cites Macrobius. Furthermore, Camillo makes no reference to prudence in his entire text, which in Titian’s painting remains the principal theme. Pierguidi’s proposal of Camillo as a possible influence on Titian’s painting is worth considering nevertheless for the relationship the author’s \textit{L’idea del teatro} establishes with \textit{logos}.

The \textit{L’idea del teatro} describes a wooden theater, assembled with images that could prompt the spectator to be talk about a profusion of topics. Camillo’s memory theater was intended to be a storehouse of existing knowledge in the form of emblematic images that could be put to memory, since pictures possessed the power to signify a reality words could not express.\textsuperscript{693} Ficino, who believed Egyptian ideas anticipated the universal truths of Christianity, defined Egyptian hieroglyphs as a symbolic form of writing that enabled the

\textsuperscript{691} Margherita Azzi Visentini, \textit{L’orto botanico di Padova e il giardino del rinascimento} (Milan: Edizione il Polifilo, 1984), 223.
\textsuperscript{692} Alfredo Gutiérrez-Kavanagh, \textit{La transformación de los emblemas en marcas en la sociedad postindustrial analizada desde la perspectiva de las nuevas tecnologías}, dissertation for the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, 2011.
human intellect to perceive of divine ideas. It was this same fascination that would compel the Venetian Francesco Colonna to explore Egyptian interpretations of divinity in his *Hypnerotomachia* of 1499. Similar enterprises were undertaken by Pico della Mirandola, who relied on the Hermetic mysteries and texts of the Kabalah to interpret the seven days of creation in his *Heptaplus* of 1489, after which Camillo’s *L’idea del teatro* was modeled. As Tafuri notes, the reliance on Kabalistic and Platonic texts by both Camillo and Zorzi, suggest a link between the ideologies espoused by these two key figures. Camillo’s text enjoyed great popularity and distribution in the sixteenth century thanks to Dolce whom Titian was also intimately acquainted with. Camillo’s entire literary production was collected in a codex that was edited by Dolce in 1552.

At the heart of Camillo’s memory theater seems to be a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. In Camillo’s theater the spectator stood on the stage and looked out toward the proscenium arch normally ascribed to the seating area. This reversal emphasized man’s position in the world as both spectator and subject. Angelini describes the experience in Camillo’s theater as one that creates a “duplice direzionalità” (dual directionality), emphasizing the importance of both subjectivity and objectivity. As Pierguidi’s study has

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694 Ibid, 49.
695 Ibid.
696 Ibid., 50.
700 Ibid.
701 Angelini, *Sapienza, prudenza*, 262.
shown, Titian was also probably familiar with Camillo’s work, and there is evidence that he even painted Camillo’s portrait.\textsuperscript{702} Camillo’s theater also embodies a metaphysical topology that simulates logos,\textsuperscript{703} which also pertains to memory.

We will remember how in his critique of writing in the \textit{Phaedrus}, Plato distinguishes between two types of logos. Unlike the logos associated with the written word, Divine logos is the living word of knowledge, “of which the written word is no more than an image.” Originally Divine logos existed as a form of oral history, but as speeches became written down, Divine logos – which was in many ways actually closer to myth – became detached from the rational search for timeless truths, and associated instead with a logos embroiled in a struggle for personal authority.\textsuperscript{704} Such a transformation marked a move from the symbolic to rational types of discourse. Writing, Socrates argues in the \textit{Phaedrus}, will not provide truth, but only the semblance of truth however there is another kind of discourse through which we can begin the establish contact with the truth: “an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself and knows when to speak and when to be silent.” When oral history began to be written down, a multiplicity of voices emerged, each with its own authority, and the whole represented in the living word of knowledge became divided into parts. It is memory that resolves the problem of the whole and the parts.\textsuperscript{705} Divine logos

gathers the parts originally available in the whole, and renders them determinate again through memory.

It is this second type of *logos* that Camillo sought to convey in his theater. Through memory, Camillo believed Divine *logos* “makes original wholes initially available, especially in their character as wholes of a gathering,” which is located within directedness towards the provocation of recollection. Camillo’s theater, with its seven tiers of seats, was intended as an architectonic encyclopedia that embodied all there is to know about the world and its history. One witness to the theater, Viglius Zuichemus, remarked to Erasmus that it allowed the beholder to “at once perceive with his eyes everything that is otherwise hidden in the depths of the human mind.” Camillo’s concept was therefore akin to *ut pictura poesis* in its attempt to make present for the mind that which is absent.

The emphasis on assembling a comprehensive reservoir for the knowledge of things was related to speech and how discussion allowed for disparate meanings to converge. Camillo compares his theater to the classical memory system of ancient orators in which is stored the “eternal nature of all things which can be expressed in speech.” Camillo discusses his encyclopedic system as a banquet that suggests Christ as the Divine *logos* according to St. John who highlighted in his Gospel, “in the beginning was the Word.” Under the images in the theater there were even drawers with speeches based on the works of

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706 Ibid., 177.
710 Ibid., 144. See also Meitel Shai, *Villa Grimani Molin Avezzù at Fratta Polesine*, PhD. dissertation, Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia, 2013, 341.
Cicero that helped decipher the subjects conjured by the images.\textsuperscript{711} Could the inscription above the \textit{tricipitia} in Titian’s painting act as a surrogate for one of Cicero’s speeches? When it came to truths about time and prudence, Titian’s painting certainly seems like a gathering of the different ways that both time and prudence are manifest.

Camillo’s treatise and Titian’s painting share the animal-headed \textit{tricipitium} representative of time. Camillo specifically equates the image with what he designates ‘Saturnine’ time.\textsuperscript{712} As Mircea Eliade explains, Saturnine time is itself an archaic, or primitive time, based not only on what happened in the past, or in history, but what he sees as a response to it.\textsuperscript{713} According to Kate Robinson it is a mythical time that is renewable and transcendent.\textsuperscript{714} Unlike the linear and quantifiable time associated with clocks, the \textit{tricipitium} represents time in a more introvert manner.\textsuperscript{715} It remains the time of ‘interior’ man.\textsuperscript{716} In Camillo’s theater the \textit{tricipitium} is represented in three of the seven tiers, each time appearing under the influence of Saturn to distinguish it from linear time, while the meaning of the image changes as it moves from through the different levels.

At its most basic level of the Sandals of Mercury, the \textit{tricipitium} deals with bringing things to an end. The level of the Sandals of Mercury represents the position at which operations are performed naturally without any art.\textsuperscript{717} This would correspond to the lower

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{711} Ibid., 148.
\item \textsuperscript{712} Giulio Camillo, \textit{L’idea del teatro} (Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550), 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{714} Kate Robinson, \textit{A Search for the Source of the Whirlpool of Artifice: The Cosmology of Giulio Camillo} (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), 65.
\item \textsuperscript{715} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{716} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{717} Ibid., 35.
\end{itemize}
tricipitium and the animal prudence of Aquinas that pertains to subjective desire, and instinct over cunning.

At the next level of the Pasiphae the tricipitium is differentiated to signify the individual being subject to time. As Robinson warns, this is not to be interpreted as the individual’s subjection to time in the sense of being on the clock. Rather it is described in less precise terms as in the ebb and flow of relationships, moving from the microcosmos to the macrocosmos. This might correspond to the human tricipitium in Titian’s painting, where the relationship between the individuals comes to the forefront.

Finally the tricipitium reaches the highest level of the three, what Camillo refers to as the Cave. Here Camillo says that the image refers to the propensity of human beings to slow down. This level is described as a primal soup, in which “according to the nature of its planet…[are kept] the compounds and elements pertaining to it.” Camillo talks about the power of the spirit of Christ to reconcile opposites. At this level all the elements of time have become mixed, where “matter and form evolve from the exalted Ideas of the Banquet.” In the Cave the focus is on the planet Saturn’s relationship to time; in the Pasiphae the agency of man is considered; and in the Sandals of Mercury elements of the theater have moved from the spirit towards matter.

We can draw a similar comparison between the three representations of prudence in Titian’s painting – the inscription, and the upper and lower tricipitium. The inscription could signify an idea of prudence distinct from how the virtue is expressed through the matter or form of a human or animal. The human tricipitium could refer to how the agency of man is

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718 Ibid., 67.
719 Ibid.
720 Camillo, L’idea del teatro, 29.
brought into the equation. As in the Sandals of Mercury, the animal *tricipitium* has moved away from spirit to an ‘animal’ or ‘worldly’ prudence interested only in the material gain of the subjective needs of each animal.

In her study of Camillo’s *L’idea del teatro*, Robinson explores the striking correlation between Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia* and Camillo’s work. Both authors share an interest in the interpretive progression from a lower to a higher message.\(^{722}\) In Camillo’s theater this takes the form of movement through different levels, while in Colonna’s narrative this takes the form of a great triumphal procession. The overlap illustrates just how much the exchange of ideas permeated different areas of thought during the period. Arguably, the Platonic academies played a significant role in the dissemination of such exchanges.

**Light as Logos in Painting**

The different ways to represent time in one image had already been attempted in the woodcut of the Serapide in the *Hypnerotomachia*, as we have seen. The image can also be said to address the debate about *logos*, especially if we consider how it is derived from Macrobius’s description, which was dependent on Platonic thought.

The Serapide also engages with the two types of *logos* discussed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and elsewhere. For Plato, the spoken word could be used to communicate what is incapable of being revealed by logical means alone.\(^{723}\) Once speech gets written down it also becomes invested with temporality, since it is concerned with historical truths. It becomes fixed in a directional time that depends on what precedes and follows it. This is the type of

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\(^{722}\) Ibid., 69.

logos implied by the triad of heads in the Hypnerotomachia. The spoken word, on the other hand, exists only in the present. As Plato described in the Cratylus, the spoken word, or logos, is timeless and “signifies all things, moves circularly, is in perpetual motion, and is twofold...true and false together.” While the self-devouring serpent in the image of the Serapide reflects the circularity and timelessness of the Divine logos to which Plato refers, it falls short when characterizing its twofold nature. In the upper tricipitium of Titian’s painting this insufficiency is taken care of by revealing both sides of human nature. As individuals each of the human heads has a subjective component, but the collaborative nature of the upper triad suggests a more objective attitude. One of the ways the painting draws attention to the upper triad as a collective is through the play of light, which was a symbol for logos.

As previously discussed, in the painting light comes in from the right illuminating the face of the youngest figure, and half of the face of the middle figure. The central face belongs to both the light and the dark side, revealing how the present moves from the past toward the future, and is invested with both – in keeping with the inscription above. The solar attributes of the painting, characteristic of the diurnal rotation of the sun, also situate the upper triad within the rubric of circular and perpetual time prescribed by Plato in the Cratylus. Though the older figure on the left is in shadow, his relation to the other half of the middle figure’s face, which is also in shadow, preserves his participation in the conversation.

In his L’idea del teatro Camillo proposes that the individual is made up of three souls, which he describes in terms of light:

“We have three souls, of which the one nearest to God is called by Mercurius Trismegistus and Plato mens, by Moses the spirit of life, by St. Augustine the

724 Plato, Cratylus, 408 b – c.
higher part, by David light, when he says ‘In thy light shall we see light’; and Pythagoras agrees with David in that celebrated precept, ‘No man may speak of God without light.’ Which light is called by Aristotle the intellectus agens, and it is that one eye by which all the three Gorgon Sisters see, according to the symbolic theologians. And Mercurius says that if we join ourselves to this mens we may understand, through the ray from God which is in it, all things, present, past, and future, all things I say which are in heaven and earth.”

For Camillo the three souls of man are temporal entities strung together by light, much like the human heads in the upper tricipitium of Titian’s painting. The ray of God to which Camillo refers encompasses all things in the manner of divine logos.

Light is associated with logos through the relationship of Apollo and Christ. In integrating pagan traditions into Christian ones, Petrarch equated Apollo with Christ. According to scripture God revealed himself through Christ, his son who was the Word made flesh. Since Apollo is identified with the sun, light is also synonymous for the word of God. In John 8:12 Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world,” equating the living word of Christ with the sun’s rays.

The relationship between conversation and light is key in Titian’s painting, especially in the context of logos. Though the light is striking the youngest figure directly, the diurnal rotation will ensure that eventually the figure on the left will receive light, get their moment in the spotlight so to speak, and have their voice be heard. In the Phaedrus, Plato highlights the importance of conversation to the spoken word. While the written word could be used to

725 Cited in Yates, Art of Memory, 153.
726 O’Rourke Boyle, Petrarch’s genius, 31.
727 John 1:14.
identify an historical truth, the spoken word allows for the realization of “an internal and significant truth concerning the human soul.” Writing, Socrates argues in the *Phaedrus*, will not provide truth, but only the semblance of truth however there is another kind of discourse through which we can begin to establish contact with the truth: “an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself and knows *when to speak and when to be silent* [my italics].” The living word is therefore a conversation, in which participants are able to perceive more than one side of a story. In Titian’s painting, the dialogue between the three human figures takes place through light.

By relying on the play of light to evoke a conversation, the painting also highlights the role of prudence in directing the will at the human level. The relationship between prudence and *logos* is rooted in Plato’s conception of the pilot of the soul, which is divine intelligence invested in true knowledge. True knowledge could only be found in *logos* in its purest state, before it became invested with authority, and when it is spoken and debated. It is through intellective reason, as the governing principle of the pilot of the soul that humans participate in the divine *logos*. It is this type of reason that the soul participates in whenever its *logos* is intellectively active. By relying on the pilot of the soul to engage with *logos*, the intellect can weigh both sides of an equation and make moral decisions that will keep the soul on its continued path towards heaven.

There was a correlation made in the period between the pilot of the soul and light. In his *Lo spaccio de la bestia trionfante* of 1584, Giordano Bruno refers to Plato’s pilot of the soul. 

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soul as “a certain light that resides in the crow’s nest, topsail, or stern of our soul, which light is called *synderesis* by some.” St. Jerome identifies *synderesis* as “that spark of conscience which was not even extinguished in the breast of Cain after he was turned out of paradise, and by which we discern that we sin, when we are overcome by pleasures or frenzy and meanwhile are misled by an imitation of reason.” It is the reason within our souls that allows us to properly judge between right and wrong, and there is no better guide for proper judgment than prudence.

**The Ontology of Prudence and Time**

By participating in debates about *logos* Titian’s painting prompts the viewer to deliberate about the value of prudence as a virtue. *Logos* was also a popular theme taken up by many in Titian’s circle, where emerging ideas conflating the objective and subjective experience of the world can be found in literary works of the period. As Kristin Phillips-Court has argued, Trissino’s literary effort *La Sofonisba* reveals a similar reciprocity between the categories of subject and object, with one exception. By privileging the rational speech and piety of the main character, Queen Sofonisba, the subjectivity of the queen becomes the ideological *logos* of the play. The ideas of Trissino were promoted in his *Accademia Trissiniana*, and it was those same ideas that later encouraged the formation of

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731 Ibid.
735 Ibid.
the *Accademia Olimpica* after Trissino’s death in 1550.\textsuperscript{736} Palladio was so inspired by Trissino’s ideas that in 1551 he founded the *Accademia Olimpica* with his close friend Daniele Barbaro.\textsuperscript{737}

One of the primary purposes of the *Accademia Olimpica*, J. V. Field maintains, was to construct a Vitruvian theater in which to perform ancient tragedy.\textsuperscript{738} The *Accademia* staged a production of Trissino’s *La Sofonisba* in 1562, before the theater’s completion, which was sponsored by none other than Palladio.\textsuperscript{739} Evidence of the *Accademia*’s support of Trissino’s ideals is clear from their choice of Hercules as their mascot, sculpted for the academy in the early years (Figure 47). It has even been suggested that Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza may have had Camillo’s *L’idea del teatro* as its source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{740}

In the gardens of the Teatro Olimpico, a statue that dates back to the *Accademia*’s inception offers a similar conflation of the subjective and objective prudence found in Titian’s painting (Figure 48). The statue combines the figure of a man with the heads of beasts, like the illustration in Valeriano’s treatise. Though the statue is damaged, it is possible to discern two of the heads for certain as that of a lion and dog (Figure 49), similar to those in the *tricipitium* in Gaffurius’s woodcut, and Titian’s painting.\textsuperscript{741} The remains of a neck, on the left side of the head (Figure 50), reveal the presence of a third head, which must have been that of the wolf, completing the triad.

\textsuperscript{738} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{739} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{740} Yates, *Art of Memory*, 173.
With its conflation of animal and human form, the statue is almost identical to Valeriano’s woodcut in the *Hieroglyphica* of the *tricipitium*, which he claims represents prudence. Given that the *Accademia Olimpica* was founded on the principles of prudence promoted by Trissino through the figure of Palladio in his *Italia liberata*, the sculpture could symbolize the ontological interpellation of prudence derived from Trissino’s literature on the importance of the virtue. It was, after all, a mascot for the *Accademia Olimpica*, which was founded in Trissino’s honour. Combining the individual figure with the three different heads suggests a conflation of subjectivity and objectivity, highlighting the sculpture’s twofold nature. That the sculpture exists as another extant example of the confluence of the *tricipitium* and human form does suggests that it resides, along with Titian’s painting, within the same ideological framework.

We know from Vasari’s historical account that Titian made several trips to Vicenza, so it is possible that the artist was familiar with the statue; however what is more important here is how the sculpture provides another example of how the conflation of subjectivity and objectivity as it relates to *logos* was being developed in the Platonic academies of the period. These developments would have been discussed at great length in the academies of which Titian’s closest friends and associated were members.

In his *Dialogo della pittura*, Dolce provides a final clue for how Titian’s painting may engage with the paragone between painting and *logos* as speech. As Aretino and Fabrini are discussing the similarities between the painter and poet – specifically the parallels between Titian and Ariosto – the two define painting in terms of speech. As Fabrini notes,

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the resemblance between the painter and the poet is so noteworthy that the painter is often referred to as a “mute poet” and the poet a “painter who speaks.”743 By drawing attention to Plato’s decree that only poetry simulates speech, Dolce relates painting to logos by insisting that although it cannot speak, it can function like speech.

If we accept that viewers of Titian’s painting may have understood the image to deliberate on different meanings of prudence, then the same could be said for time. As the various stages of life represented in the upper triad illustrate, time is subjective, and ontologically it only exists in the present. This is clear from the inscription above, which reads, “from the past, the present moves so as not to spoil future action.” Movement is key here, and it is the present that moves and prevents undesirable actions in the future. It also moves away from a past that is past. Here too, the placement of the tricipitium that engages with circular time over the one more invested in linear time positions circular time metaphorically superior to linear time. That said, through its correspondence with logos the upper triad recognizes that for humans time is twofold and can be experienced in both a linear fashion – represented by the three faces of man – or circularly – where time is simply the continuous movement of the present from the past to the future, much like the light of the sun. Time is therefore both subjective and objective, and the painting draws attention to how there should be movement between the two.

In this chapter I have argued that Titian’s painting highlights the different uses of prudence by engaging with ideas about logos in painting. By illustrating that prudence – and by extension time – can be both subjective and objective, Titian’s canvas refutes the

742 Ibid.
antithesis between the two by identifying painting with *logos*. In Giulio Cesare Cappacio’s *Delle imprese* of 1592, the author confirms the distinction between two varieties of prudence. Quoting the *Exegetic Homilies* of St. Basil, Cappacio maintains that even Scripture distinguishes between two types of prudence. One variety is about safeguarding and protection, while the other is about deceit. Significantly, one kind of prudence is described in terms of the *tricipitium*, while the more spiritual kind takes the form of a snake. A similar distinction was made in the *Hypnerotomachia* as we have seen, whereas in the case of Titian’s *Allegory* the snake is replaced by three human heads. Like Plato, who believed that *logos* is true and false, Titian’s *Allegory* recognizes that the two forms of prudence and time are not mutually incompatible.

Like the female figure in the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene, Titian’s image engages with different ways of thinking about prudence and time, which was not necessarily the case with the Villa Maser or La Rotonda, where we saw a particular kind of prudence and time conveyed. By engaging with *logos* the painting also surpasses the manner in which terms like prudence or time may be presented in a book where they risk being subordinate to the conventional opinion of the author.

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743 Dolce, *Dolce’s Aretino*, 96, “similmente è propria la similitudine tra il Poeta et il Pittore: havendo alcuni valenti huomini chiamato il Pittore Poeta mutolo, & il Poeta Pittore, che parla.”
745 Ibid., 41 verso.
746 Ibid., 56 recto.
Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to explore how prudence became a crucial component of art and architectural theory and practice in the Veneto of the sixteenth century. As artists and architects sought to free Minerva from her narrativized history, and conceive of a more comprehensive level of signification the goddess underwent a remythicization in which prudence was allowed to take on a comprehensive meaning. Beginning with a mythological allegory of Prudence in the Sala degli Dei in the Palazzo Thiene, I explored how concerns with myth were absorbed and transformed in Andrea Palladio’s early palazzi in Vicenza. Turning to architecture, I argued that prudence became a crucial component of architectural theory and practice in the Veneto of the sixteenth century, as Palladio and his patrons sought to articulate prudence in space through its relationship to time. Finally, I examined Titian’s Allegory of Prudence, where I showed how the painting participated in debates about prudence as it relates to the importance of logos. As we have witnessed the shifting iconographic character of Prudence toward Minerva, it seems that during the period art may have become preferred over writing as the medium that could best communicate myth as soulfully as it was originally intended by aligning it with logos – through what Hans Blumenberg has referred to as a “remythicization” that results in speech itself, or “the accomplishment of logos.”

According to Blumenberg, recovering and “remythicizing” the origin myths of ancient authors involves a process of conversion that constitutes a conceptual language similar to logos. As Raphael Falco has recently argued, in early modern Italy such an engagement with the transformation from mythos to logos was administered through the personal actions and

texts of Ficino (1433-1499), a central figure in the Neo-Platonic revolution. Combining the *Summa* of Aquinas and Platonic theology, Ficino believed that myth could support the same rationality as *logos*, if it could be made to preserve the emotional force with which it had originally been charged. Paraphrasing Plato in the *Phaedrus*, Ficino added that this could only be achieved if myth could be re-invested with “that quickening fervor of the soul which we experience ‘when there is a god within us.’” Ficino’s aim to restore a component of *logos* to myth placed particular importance on Minerva, the goddess of prudence, who he believed to embody *logos*.

For humanists and artists of the period, myths would have been problematic since they were subject to various interpretations depending on the author or text from which the myth was derived. As Lowell Edmunds has argued, each retelling or documentation of a myth produces “a new variant, which stands in some degree of antagonistic relation to other variants or other myths and thus takes its place in a system constituted by the proliferation of such relations.” Given the fascination during the sixteenth century with the myths of classical antiquity, and the proliferations of newly devised mythological allegories created during the period, Minerva was likely not the only mythological figure to undergo the remythicization to which Blumenberg refers, which could open new research possibilities on other mythological paintings.

1985), 27.


749 Ibid., 106.


By exploring how the debates about prudence extended into architectural theory and practice, this dissertation demonstrates that architecture, too, was also engaged with discourses about myth during the period, especially in the context of the Platonic Academies of Vicenza introduced by Giangiorgio Trissino, Palladio’s close friend and mentor, where Ficino’s revival of Plato was preserved.

My research into the role of prudence in art and architectural theory and practice of the Veneto in the sixteenth century has also shown that questions about time and the issue of free will went hand in hand with shifting conceptions of prudence. Because the practice of prudence is temporal in nature, time became a factor in the architectural layout of Palladio’s villas depending on the type of prudence. Similarly, since choice is something temporally determined – in that we can choose to act on present circumstances, or conditions that are fettered to a past long gone or a future unknown – questions of the will’s ability to choose freely helped determine how artists and architects negotiated with the virtue of prudence.

By exploring how Plato’s ideas were promulgated in Platonic academies during the Veneto of the period, my study provides an historical analysis of the importance of Platonic thought in the formation of what I refer to as a “living image” as a visual substitute for Plato’s idea of a living word. The living word, as Plato described it, allowed for conversation by being open and receptive, and it was this aspect of logos that was articulated most extensively by artists and architects alike. Beginning with a painted fresco on the ceiling of the Palazzo Thiene, we have seen how the conception of a living image was tied to Plato’s ideas of logos, and its relation to prudence, particularly through the way prudence encourages conversation by partaking of alternatives. At Barbaro’s villa at Maser we saw how the

752 Lowell Edmunds, “Introduction: The Practice of Greek Mythology,” *Approaches to Greek*
relationship between prudence and time encouraged an articulation of logos in space that was more temporally dependent, where time became the means of conversation between the past, present and future, a temporal exchange that was communicated in the ceiling fresco of the Sala del Olimpo as well as the distribution of architectural space. In La Rotonda we witnessed a transformation, where logos went from time to a conversation constituted of pure light. A conversation between disparate emblems for prudence was extrapolated from Titian’s Allegory where the tricipitium negotiated between different meanings for the virtue. By way of conclusion it is worth revisiting some of Daniele’s publications for what it might tell us about the implications of the complex relationship between prudence, time and free will as it relates to art and architecture.

In the years surrounding the construction at Maser, Barbaro’s interest in timekeeping is made quite explicit in the two sundials that decorate the outer two pavilions of his villa. The diagram he provides in the Dieci libri, explaining how the horologiale star could be used to tell the time at any point of the year, and what time it is at night, further illustrates this point. In later years, however, there is evidence to suggest that Daniele may have changed his mind about the meaning of time. In his later manuscript, De horologi (1569), which he dedicated to Palladio under the inscription “Ex Palladio de horis horarium manual,” Barbaro’s explanation of the aforementioned procedure lacks the overlapping crosses used in his original scheme (Figure 23). While the illustration on the right demarcates the 24 hours it takes for the horologiale star to rotate around the pole, the circle to the left is symbolic of the kind of circular time, without a beginning or end, we saw at La Rotonda. This shift in


Howard, Venice Disputed, 36
thinking, about the way to conceive of time as pure movement, was developed further in Daniele’s studies of linear perspective.

In the second version of his *Dieci libri* (1567), Daniele devised of a new way of putting two-dimensional objects in perspective to makes provisions for the movement of light through space as a critical component of representation. The procedure draws on prudence’s algorithmic nature, noting how the degree of every subsequent shadow is dependent on the shadow that precedes it. He begins by describing the different kinds of shadows that exist, and the different proportion of shadow received depending on the sun’s position. There are two kinds of shadow, he advises, a cast shadow and a form shadow. The cast shadow is that which is cast by an object standing on a surface, while the form shadow is that turned back on an object, like the ones that occur when one holds a stick out of a window.\(^754\) If the sun is at 45 degrees above the horizon the shadows will be the same size as the objects that produce them. If the sun is higher than 45 degrees the shadows appear smaller, and if it is at exactly 90 degrees then there will be no shadow at all.\(^755\) Next, Daniele goes on to discuss the effects of the earth’s surface on the production of shadows, which will change depending on the

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\(^{754}\) Barbaro, *Dieci libri* (1567), 231 Ma la proportione dell’ombra al ò stile si conosce dalla sotto scritta tavola, per la cui intelligenza e da notare, che sono due sorti di ombre, una si chiama ombra dritta, & è quella, che fa una cosa drizzata in piedi sopra il piano, come sono le torri, gli alberi, gli huomini, & tutto quello che si forma dritto sopra l’orizonte, l’altra si chiama ombra voltata, & è quella, che fanno le cose, che sportano in fuori dalle torri, & dalle case parallele al piano, come se uno porgesse fuori uno bastone d’una finestra.

\(^{755}\) Ibid., 231, Convengono però, che quando il Sole è in gradi 45 d’altezza sopra l’orizonte, l’ombra dritta, & la voltata sono pari alle cose, però chi volesse misurare, qualche altezza ò di torre, ò d’altro, che sia in dritta sopra il piano, aspetti che’l Sole sia a 45 gradi altezato, il che nelle nostri parti advene ogni giorno due due fiate da mezzo Marzo, fin’à Settembre, & misurare l’ombra, perché tanto saranno alte le cose, che la fanno quanto longa sera l’ombra loro. Ma quando il Sole sera piu alto di gradi 45 allhora l’ombra dritta sarà minore, & la rivolta maggiore, & se’l sole pervenisse all’altezza di gradi 90 la ombra dritta sarebbe nulla, & la rivolta infinita. Queste avvertimenti danno ad intendere molte cose belle, & secrete,
shape of the surface on which the shadow is projected. This he outlines in a drawing (Figure 51) explaining how, “The illustration … demonstrates how one can change and modify the shadows, by using the rules and form of clocks.” Afterward Barbaro delineates how the system is put to practice, describing how, “dividing the semicircle between the two poles into twelve parts, for a total of twenty-four for the entire circumference of the earth, whose system is the foundation of all clocks, one can represent the sky, the earth, and all the divisions that the sun, hour by hour, imparts onto the spaces of the surface” (Figure 52). In effect, what his plan suggests is that depending on where you choose to position the sun, the shadows it casts will vary according to the angular notation of a clock.

In his treatise on perspective published just before his death, *La pratica della perspettiva* (1569), he took this one step further. Making provisions for the mobility of the eye of the spectator, in the treatise Daniele explains how his system of using light over space as a means of putting things in perspective should be extended to individual objects in a composition because depending on where a viewer is situated, the objects in one part of an artwork should adhere to the way light impacts that particular section. Here Barbaro argues that it is from the changing effects of light over a surface that the physical, or material, object...
becomes something spiritual. In other words, it is the changing effects of light that generates a *living* image.

Given that debates about *logos* were rooted in questions of free will as we have seen throughout this dissertation, the shift in Barbaro’s position suggests that perspective may have been involved in debates about free will. In his critique of perspective Erwin Panofsky argues that by creating a link between subjectivity and objectivity it could be used as a powerful tool for the manipulation of subjects. As Margaret Iversen points out, by constituting the subject through an object in a highly reflexive way, perspective has profound implications for human agency and free will. This dissertation could promote further research into the impact of perspective on free will, particularly with regard to the problems the temporality of perspective creates for subjectivity through movement.

At Barbaro’s villa at Maser the changing effects of light were sacrificed for the measurability of time. As we have seen, the frontispiece of the villa was even denied a portico, a feature that would have added life to the villa allowing a play of light and shadow across the columns and intercolumniations. The portico was so important to Palladio that he advocated adopting it on contemporary church facades. Scholars have noted the sense of movement elicited by the dynamism of his church facades in Venice. In her seminal study of Palladio’s Venetian churches, Tracy Cooper argues that the intersecting temple fronts on the façade of San Giorgio Maggiore may result from Palladio’s positive opinion of the

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758 Daniele Barbaro, *La prattica della perspettiva* (Venice: Camillo & Rutilio Borgominieri fratelli, 1569), 7, “essendo che la luce faccia che la forma corporale diventi spiritual.”
760 Ibid., 197.
application of a portico to the façade of a church, as was implemented in ancient temples.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} The play of light over sculpture niches, engaged columns, and the jarring edges of protruding pediments that function like the gnomon of a sundial, give the impression that his façades may have been conceived with a solar clock in mind, however, the animation achieved by the changing effects of light and shadow also suggest they were created to be living images. Further research and analysis on this issue could benefit from the conclusions of my current study and even open up new investigations.

If we return to Barbaro’s villa at Maser for a moment, we encounter some curious elements that compensate somewhat for the deficiency in the changing effects of light that may have been sacrificed in order to determine the time. Throughout the interior of the villa Veronese includes peculiar details that point perhaps to an interest in the living image. Amongst his frescoed landscape scenes and faux-architectural elements Veronese has placed objects such as fans, brushes, etc., that seem out of place, but animate the painted surfaces and give them a “lived” in quality. Other features include the many dogs (Figure 53, Figure 54), and cats that appear on the trompe l’oeil balconies or ledges, and we have already discussed the pageboy and little girl who peak from behind doors that act, to some degree, like living images.

Over the course of this dissertation, my research into the relationship between prudence and art and architecture has elucidated how, in response to Luther’s scathing critique of the Church’s digression from the spoken word, \textit{logos} became something to be emulated by artists and architects during the period. By illustrating how \textit{logos} could be encapsulated in the space of buildings, the frescoed ceiling of a palazzo, or the painted
surface of a canvas, artists and architects of the period demonstrated the value of architecture
and painting in ways that surpassed *logos*, by creating living images that were vital and
spirited, and just as engaged in conversation. Through its relation to *logos*, by way of Christ’s
association with the Sun god Apollo, in the end it was light that prevailed as a way of
articulating *logos* as a living image, but not the light used to measure time with a sundial. It is
the relativity of light, Gilles Deleuze maintains, as much as its movement, that characterizes
the Baroque.763 As I hope my study has shown, it is movement that it key here. It is
movement, after all, that distinguishes the spoken from the written word of knowledge, a
movement that originates in a verbal exchange – perhaps the only condition in which the will
can truly be free. Be it the multivalence of an artwork that allows the mind to move from one
meaning to another, or the open doors of a villa that permits the mind to move between
alternatives in choosing a path, both art and architecture can be expressions of *logos* by
preventing immobility, whether the cessation of movement results from the wall of a
building, or the proverbial wall of opinion.

763 Gilles Deleuze, “The Fold,” *Yale French Studies*, No. 80, Baroque Topographies:
Figures

Figure 1 Anselmo Canera, Divine Providence, c. 1550. Sala degli Dei, Palazzo Thiene, Vicenza. Permission given by Banca Popolare di Vicenza.

Figure 2 Albrecht Dürer, Drawing from the "Tarot" Prudence, circa 1524, Musée du Louvre, INV, 18958 recto [Public domain] via WikiArt: http://www.wikiart.org/en/albrecht-durer/drawing-from-the-tarot-prudence

Figure 5 Andrea Palladio, Plan for Palazzo Thiene, 1570. *I Quattro libri dell’architettura*. [Public domain] via Wikimedia Commons. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palazzo_Thiene - /media/File:Palazzo_Thiene_Quattro_Libri.jpg

Figure 7 Pierio Valeriano, *Harmony of the Spheres*, 1518. woodcut. Franchino Gaffurius’s *De Harmonia Musicorum Instrumentorum Opus*. see page for author [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AThe_music_of_the_spheres.jpg

Figure 9 Serapis (with tricipitum), Francesco Colonna’s Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, 1499. It. trans. as La hypnerotomachia di Polipilo (Venice, 1545) [Public Domain] - photo by author. Permission given by Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.

Figure 10 Emblema XLII, Andrea Alciati, Il libro degli emblemi, translated by Mino Gabriele, (Milano: Adelphi Edizione, 2009) C2. (© 2009 Biblioteca Marciana, by permission)
Figure 11 Villa Barbaro, Maser, 1556-58. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 12 Villa Barbaro, detail (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 13 Paolo Veronese, Detail of Ceiling, Sala del Olimpo, Villa Barbaro at Maser. c 1558-60. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 14 Paolo Veronese, detail of Sala della Crociera, Villa Barbaro at Maser. c 1558-60. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 15 Diagram of Ursa Minor's wheel like rotation around the North Star, from Barbaro's *I dieci libri dell'architettura di M. Vitruvio*, tradutti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto patriarca d'Aquilegia (Vinegia: per Francesco Marcolini, 1567), 395. [Public Domain] via GoogleBooks. https://books.google.ca/books?id=aDlQAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA326&dq=dieci+libri+dell'architettura&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCkQ6AEwAWoVChMIn-yj-P05xglVysmlCh01ng2A - v=onepage&q=dieci libri dell'architettura&f=false
Figure 16 Andrea Palladio, Villa Barbaro at Maser, Plan, *Quattro libri dell’architettura*, 1570. [Public Domain] via Wikipedia.org.

Figure 17 Villa Barbaro at Maser, Plan. [Public Domain] via Wikipedia.org. Mark up by author.


Figure 23 Daniele Barbaro, cod. Marc. It. IV, 37 (=5133) f. 2 verso, 1567. [Public Domain] via Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.
Figure 24 Pietro da Medina, *Arte del Navigare*, 105 verso, Vinetia, 1554. Permission via Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

Figure 26 Villa Maser, Pediment. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 27 Andrea Palladio, Frontispiece, Plan, Quattro libri dell’architettura, 1570. [Public Domain] via Wikipedia.org
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Houghton_Typ_525_70.671_L_qvattro_libri_dell%27architettvra_-_frontispiece.jpg - /media/File:Houghton_Typ_525_70.671_L_qvattro_libri_dell%27architettvra_-_frontispiece.jpg
Figure 28 Paolo Veronese, *Hunter with dog*, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 29 Paolo Veronese, *Woman with fan*, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 30 Paolo Veronese, Sala della Crociera - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 31 Paolo Veronese, Sala della Crociera - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 32 Paolo Veronese, Sala della Crociera - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 33 Paolo Veronese, Sala della Crociera - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 35 Andrea Palladio, Frontispiece for *Italia liberata dai Goti*, Roma, 1543. [Public Domain] via Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio.
Figure 36 Detail of Oculus, La Rotonda, Vicenza. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission)

Figure 37 Andrea Palladio, Detail of map of Rome in *Italia liberata dai Goti*, Roma, 1543. [Public Domain] via Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio.
Figure 38 Daniele Barbaro, Frontispiece, *I dieci libri dell'architettura*, tradutti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto patriarca d'Aquilegia, Venice: per Francesco Marcolini, 1556. Permission by Museo Correr, Venice.

Figure 39 Ludovico Dorigny, Detail of Central Hall showing Apollo and Diana, late 17th century, La Rotonda, Vicenza. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission).
Figure 40 Ludovico Dorigny, Detail of Central Hall showing Jupiter and Bacchus, late 17th century, La Rotonda, Vicenza. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission).

Figure 41 Anselmo Canera, Virtue Dominating Vice, La Rotonda, c. 1570. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission).
Figure 42 Anselmo Canera, Divine Wisdom, La Rotonda, c. 1570. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission).

Figure 43 Anselmo Canera, Triumph of Minerva, La Rotonda, c. 1570. (© Centro di Studio di Andrea Palladio, by permission).
Figure 44 Titian, *Allegory of Prudence*, National Gallery, London, 1550-1570. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

Figure 45 Pierio Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, Sive De Sacrís Aegyptiorvm Aliarvmqve Gentivm literis*, with comments by Ioannis Pierii Valeriani Bolzanij Bellunensis, (Basil, 1556), 228v. [Public Domain]
https://books.google.ca/books?id=4rw_AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=pierio+valeriano+hieroglyphica&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCQQ6AEwAWoVChMlxKfzo_2SxgIv9CACh2TVwCf-v=onepage&q=tricipitium&f=false
Figure 46 Pierio Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica, Sive De Sacris Aegyptiorvm Allarvmque Gentivm litteris*, with comments by Ioannis Pierii Valeriani Bolzanij Bellunensis, (Basil, 1556), 228v. [Public Domain] https://books.google.ca/books?id=4rw_AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=pierio+valeriano+hieroglyphica&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCQQ6AEwAWoVChMlxKfzo_2SxgIVi9CACh2TVwCf-v=onepage&q=tricipitium&f=false

Figure 47 Statue of Hercules, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, c. 1550. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 48 Statue of *tricipitium*, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, c. 1545-70. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 49 Statue of *tricipitium*, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, c. 1545-70. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 50 Statue of *tricipitium*, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, c. 1545-70. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)

Figure 51 Daniele Barbaro, *I dieci libri dell’architettura di M. Vitruvio*, tradotti et commentati da monsignor Barbaro eletto patriarca d'Aquilegia (Vinegia : per Francesco Marcolini, 1556 edition, p. 235. [Public Domain] via Museo Correr.)

Figure 53 Paolo Veronese, Sala della Crociera - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
Figure 54 Paolo Veronese, Stanza dei cani - detail, Villa Barbaro, Maser, c. 1560. (© 2012, Michael Trevor Coughlin)
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Appendix

Ibid, 3 recto e verso, 4 recto, “Tutte le cose del mondo qualunche elle siano, fanno cio che elle si facciano a qualche fine, e a questo si come a lor sommo bene si forzanno tutte d’arrivare & di aggiungere, il che dale cose naturali per esser elleno guidate da una intelligenzia, non errante, sempre senza inganarsi giammai veggiamo, esser conseguito. Nelle aloe, si come di tutte le mundane cose adviene, bene spesso restiamo inganati. EccI fiumi si come tutto di veggiamo, corrono mai sempre quanto possono il piu, per riposarsi poi nel ampio & capacissimo mare, fine & termine ultimo di tutte l’acque al quale se non potessero quando che sia per venire piu tosto contra la nature nel mezzo del corso si fermerebbero, che egli non pur un poco si movessero: Sostiene giorno e notte nelle arme il valoroso capitano gravissimi & longhi affani, a rischiarsi a grandissimi & infiniti pericoli solo per conseguir una volta il desiderato fine della vittoria, il che talhora glie vien fato, bene spesso contra ogni speranza gl’aviene il contrario; Se tutte le cose adunque si muovono a qualche fine, & tutte si desideranno & cercano questo fine, che non è altro che il loro sommo bene, qual sara mai il fine e il sommo bene dell’huomo? Degnissimo certamente & sopra tutti gli altri fini perfettissimo fine debbe esser il suo, possia che egli fra tutte le cose create il più degne & il più perfetto. L’uomo infiamatissimi Accademici è compost di corpo & d’anima, si come ogni cosa create di material & di forma, & cosi come la forma è quella che da l’esser & la perfetione alla material che a lei, è soggetta, così l’anima nostra è quell ache fa l’uomo così nobile & cosi perfetto como egl’è. La onde se l’anima nostra è quell ache fa perfetto & nobile questo corpo, arditissimamente posiamo noi dire che l’anima di questo corpo è molto più nobile & più perfetta: Pero volendo noi trovar qual sia il fine del huomo, essendo l’anima la miglior & piu nobile parte di noi, se troveremo qual sia il fine & sommp bene dell’anima
nostra all’hora compitamente havemo trovato qual sia il fine & il sommo bene dell’huomo. Ma conciosiacosa cosa che l’anima nostra sia mortale, indubitata cosa è che il suo fine non mortale & terreno, ma eterno & immortale deve essere, ora se fra tutte le cose immortali il più degno, il più grande, il più nobile, il più perfetto, è iddio ottimo & grandissimo, chi è quegli che debba, o possa dubitar, che questo solo e non altri sia il fine & il sommo bene dell’huomo.”