A' FRUTTI LORO LI COGNOSCIARETE:
GENDER AND GENRE IN A QUATTROCENTO ALTARPIECE

by

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In the Cleveland Museum of Art there is a fifteenth-century Italian altarpiece called The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve, which shows the Virgin Mary nursing the Child with Eve lying below her, almost completely naked and the snake between her thighs. Nothing is known about the circumstances of the panel’s commission or provenance, save that art historical consensus attributes it to a "minor master" from the Papal Marches called Carlo da Camerino and dates it to about 1400.

While related to an established tradition linking Mary and Eve, this image is a departure from older representations of the theme; compared to the few iconographically similar works that have come down to us, the image of the Cleveland panel seems to present a different relation to the viewer, stressing the bipolar nature of these two females figures through, among other things, the careful differentiation of their physical bodies. Clearly anomalous in the received canon of Trecento and Quattrocento works, the Cleveland panel creates immediate questions about the place of gender and the female body in the imagery of Renaissance altarpieces.

This thesis seeks to determine what, as an altarpiece, The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve could offer
its viewers in fifteenth-century debates about gender and female sexuality, by focusing on two aspects which shaped both the panel and its viewers’ responses: the dichotomous and contradictory nature of constructions of femininity, and the conventions and expectations of the altarpiece as a genre.
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Finally, to Bill, Carlo’s greatest advocate.
A la stagion che 'l mondo foglia e fiora 
acresce gioia a tutti fin' amanti: 
vanno insieme a li giardini alora 
che gli auscelletti fanno dolzi canti;

la franca gente tutta s'inamora, 
e di servir ciascun trages' inanti, 
ed ogni damigella in gioia dimora; 
e me, n'abondan marimenti e piani.

Ca lo mio padre m'ha messa 'n errore, 
e tenemi sovente in forte doglia: 
donar mi vole a mia forza segnore, 
ed io di ciò non ho disio né voglia, 
e 'n gran tormento vivo a tutte l'ore; 
però non mi ralegra fior né foglia.

-La Compiuta Donzella, thirteenth century.

In the Cleveland Museum of Art there is a panel called, descriptively enough, The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve (fig. 1). It is a large work, 191.2 x 98.7 cm, which the Museum dates to about 1400 and attributes to an almost unknown artist from the Italian Papal Marches named Carlo da Camerino. For a modern viewer the work can only be described as extremely odd, its imagery filled with a proliferation of bizarre and unexpected details. The panel shows the Virgin Mary seated on a low dais and cradling the nursing Christ Child in her lap; his round face is turned to stare out pop-eyed at the viewer. Around Mary’s head is a halo of twelve stars, each of which contains a tiny relief
bust of an apostle, carefully differentiated by age and appearance; above her head is a small sun, with a chubby-cheeked face visible in it, and at her feet is a thin semi-circle which might be a crescent moon. But odder still is the appearance of Eve at Mary’s feet, reclining in a narrow green space where the shadowy forms of trees and plants are dimly visible (fig. 2). She is shown perpetually caught at the moment of the Fall, forbidden fruit in hand and female-headed serpent emerging from between her legs; she is also quite naked except for a bit of fur around her hips and thighs, and the outline of her breast and limbs is stark against the dark background. The ornate relief edge of the dais separates Eve from Virgin and Child, but at the left of the panel a slim wedge of green meets the gold horizon, making it clear that the two figures do in fact occupy a continuous space. Directly above Eve’s blond head, in a smaller scale, is the Archangel Gabriel in the traditional pose of the Annunciation (fig. 3), while to Mary’s left Michael appears with the scales of the Last Judgment. George is below, shield and sword in hand (fig. 4).

Was the panel also surprising to its original viewers? Another startling aspect of the Cleveland panel suggests that, for at least one person, it created a unpleasant shock: although the panel is generally in good condition, the surface of the work has been subjected to a systematic vandalism.
Eve’s wrist, legs, face, and breasts are marked by a series of gashes, neatly parallel to each other and of similar length; a small nail is visible in the nipple which another gash severs from her breast. The area where the Child’s mouth touches the Virgin’s breast has also been abraded, along with the face of the Angel Gabriel and the coat of arms at the bottom right of the panel. It seems clear that the pattern of gashes has a specific underlying logic, targeting Eve’s bare flesh especially but also the Child’s nursing mouth and, through the defacement of the crest, the donor who commissioned the work.

Although it is impossible to know when the panel was defaced, this vandalism raises several questions. According to Michael Camille, throughout the later Middle Ages and Renaissance systematic vandalism was often practised against images perceived as evil, sinful, or inappropriate; what he terms "key life signifiers," heads, limbs, genitals, or other important organs, would be subjected to an iconoclastic erasure, thereby disempowering an image marked by the signs of fallen sexuality or sinister power. Certainly to a post-freudian viewer the imagery of the Cleveland panel has definite sexual overtones: the snake on the tree of evil rises suggestively between Eve’s bare thighs, as if she were giving birth to it or else having sex with it; the form of the forbidden fruit conspicuously echoes the shape of her breast.
and of the snake's head, an obvious contrast to the small and distinctly unnatural breast which nurses Christ. Eve, carefully modeled and large-scale, is also startlingly naked against Mary's heavily-draped form. But the hand that defaced the panel was obviously not post-freudian; if these scratches are the traces of a disavowal, a disempowering of an image deemed threatening or inappropriate, was it improper imagery or evil sexuality that this unknown iconoclast wished to erase?

All of this begs a number of fundamental questions. This is after all a religious painting, large enough and lavish enough that it must have been for public and shared devotions rather than private worship, an altarpiece for a church rather than a private home; the prominently placed coat-of-arms suggests a private commission by an individual or group of individuals who wished their gesture to be known and remembered. But who would worship before this panel? Why would anyone commission it? Although it seems almost impossible for an altarpiece, especially one as lavish as this embossed and gold-covered panel, to evoke such a blatant "Madonna/Whore" juxtaposition in a sacred and public setting, the panel exists nonetheless, raising the question of how genre and religious tradition mediated viewer understanding of its imagery.

In the introductory essay to the book The Altarpiece in
the Renaissance, Martin Kemp gives a straightforward and practical definition for the altarpiece category:

a structure containing a figurative image or complex of figurative images (almost invariably painted or sculpted) which is directly associated with an altar and comprises the upper part of the combined ensemble of the altar and its furnishings. It generally serves as a superstructure (either in a literally structural or in a visual sense) behind the table-top of the altar. The subject-matter of the image or images and the structural form of the altarpiece will be expected to bear some kind of relationship to its physical situation, with respect both to the altar and to the location of the altar itself within its own setting.6

The last point is very important: the expectation is that altarpiece iconography will be linked to and appropriate for the church setting and the sacred role of the altar in the liturgy.7 This is why the Cleveland panel seems so incongruous. What did it offer its viewers? Did they perceive it as an appropriate object for worship, its subject matter bearing "some kind of relationship" to the mass? After all, since at least the papacy of Gregory the Great the three putative canonical functions of religious imagery had been established: to narrate scripture clearly, to arouse appropriate feeling about the subject matter, and to impress it on memory.8 Like other images, altarpiece paintings were justified as the "Bible of the Illiterate," and as John of Damascus had declared, the honour due to the image was transferred to the prototype.9 An altarpiece had a specific role to play for the faithful; it was expected to act as an
aid for their worship and devotion. The Cleveland altarpiece is clearly based on the exegetical tradition, common since at least the first centuries of Christianity, of Mary as the Second Eve: through the virgin birth she undid Eve’s sin and saved humanity from everlasting damnation. It is very uncommon in visual representations, however; its treatment in the Cleveland panel seems to raise classic gender stereotypes, and the work bears the traces of an iconoclastic attack that may have been motivated by a sexual element in the imagery. How then did the original audience of the Cleveland panel react to this painting? For them, did its imagery include traces of sexuality and of gender stereotypes, and how did these traces function within the framework of viewership created by religious, secular, and genre expectations?

Any attempt to answer these questions is complicated by the methodological problems presented by The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve, which in many ways are paradigmatic for the great majority of early Renaissance works. It is a panel from art historical nowhere, done by an artist no one has ever heard of, and it has no history before 1884. It was given to the Cleveland Museum of Art by Mrs Liberty E. Holden in 1914, and before her had belonged to the American art critic and art historian James Jackson Jarves, but its links to any specific local context or history were lost long ago, along with the circumstances of its original
commission and location. Furthermore, the artist to whom it was attributed in 1950, Carlo da Camerino, is known from a single crucifix signed and dated 1396, discovered quite by accident when it was cleaned for an exhibition of Riminese painting in 1935. There are no other historical traces of him. In an odd reversal of the modern "death of the author," he has been painstakingly resurrected: Carlo da Camerino’s entire artistic personality has been reconstructed by a small group of twentieth-century art historians, notably Federico Zeri, who made the first attributions in 1948, and Pietro Zampetti, who has written extensively on art in the Marches and the Papal States. Little by little a life has been created for Carlo, although there is still some disagreement about the works to be attributed to him and their chronological sequence: it is argued he worked in the area around Ancona in the Papal Marches because that is where a number of the works attributed to him have been found, and on the basis of perceived Sienese, Riminese, Bolognese, and Venetian influences in his works, some art historians have even felt comfortable discussing his personality and probable travels. Even if one accepts the attribution to Carlo da Camerino the Marchigian context in which he worked is still little known; there are almost no modern studies of it in the English literature. With the obvious exception of Gentile da Fabriano, who is usually treated in discussions of Venetian or
Florentine painting,\textsuperscript{17} it is difficult to name a single artist from the Marches in the Quattrocento artistic canon. With no knowledge of the local context, it does seem as if the Cleveland panel appeared "apparently from nowhere."\textsuperscript{18}

Not surprisingly, the panel still floats in an odd museological limbo, the residue of a peripheral and disparaged provincial art with no history beyond the constructed links of iconography, attribution and approximate date. The literature on the work is extremely sparse, with little comment on the imagery per se; it consists mainly of passing mentions in connoisseurial surveys of the "minor regional schools" of Italian Renaissance painting, and of brief footnote mentions in articles devoted to other topics. Ironically, even its final attribution to Carlo da Camerino in 1950 was made in an article devoted to another painter.\textsuperscript{19} Before then the panel had been attributed to everyone from Giotto to Andrea da Bologna, and this too is typical of early Renaissance artifacts: art history has traditionally dealt with "provincial" works like the Cleveland panel by relating them to known works by "major masters," tying them into long and often convoluted chains of innovation, influence, and imitation.\textsuperscript{20} But at least two modern writers have raised issues of sexuality and gender in relation to the image, and their attempts are somewhat emblematic of the difficulties of the undertaking. The first is Leo Steinberg, who in the
extensive excurses to his book *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* uses the work as an illustration of what he calls "The signal at the breast;" this is characterised by "(t)he nursling eyeing the viewer and calling attention to what he is doing." He does not discuss any other element of the imagery; the panel becomes part of Steinberg’s larger thesis that there is a long visual tradition stressing Christ’s assumption of all aspects of human existence, including hunger and sexuality, which Steinberg equates with the male genitals. The limitations of Steinberg’s approach have been clearly articulated by the historian Caroline Walker Bynum, whose own work on gender and medieval piety is well known. In her response to Steinberg she points out that sexuality has not been written on the body in a static and transhistorical fashion; there is a definite place for an erotic or sexual component in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious imagery, but it cannot be simply equated with portrayals of male genitals, or female breasts, for that matter; rather it functions as one part of a total code, in which sexuality could be linked to humility or to sin, and the holy body and its suffering could be linked to salvation. Steinberg’s weakness is his simplification of that code, based on an anachronistic definition of sexuality in imagery.

More recently, Margaret R. Miles chose the Cleveland
panel as the dust jacket illustration for her book *Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West.* She discusses it in a chapter called "The Female Body as Figure," noting:

figures of the ideal woman - like the Virgin - played as important a role in shaping real women's subjectivity and socialization as negative female images that formulated what women must avoid. Together, 'positive' and negative figures defined the range of acceptable appearance, attitudes, and behaviour prescribed for women.

Describing the piece, she states that Eve's naked body "signals her sinfulness, just as the Virgin's lack of body reveals her goodness," but immediately adds: "(i)t is impossible to identify with precision the social effect on historical women of representations of the female body as literary figure and artistic device." First she states categorically that the image would have had a role in the policing of its female viewers, specifically because of its contrasting portrayals of the bodies of Mary and Eve, and then she avers it is impossible to know what that role was. Yet the history of the altarpiece as an object of worship and the specific genre expectations of its audience are not even raised as issues, and neither are the specific historical conditions of its creation and interpretation. Miles seems to be falling into the trap of what Diane Owen Hughes has called "isomorphic reflection," that is, the tendency to posit art as a perfect and transparent gauge of social concerns, based on the assumption of an uncomplicated and unmediated relationship
between Renaissance images and the social forces that produced them. But images do not tie down meaning in a static fashion, something that Steinberg and Miles do not openly acknowledge; their discussions point to the need, in any discussion of sexuality and gender, for historical specificity and a sensitivity to audience expectations based on social factors and on genre.

In a case like that of the Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve where the specific local history of the work is unknown, genre must be a crucial consideration in any examination of gender and sexuality in the work. Although the imagery is rare, the Cleveland panel is not the only example of early Renaissance Italian altarpieces juxtaposing Mary and Eve; there are a small number of other late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century examples from the Papal Marches, Umbria, and Tuscany. If we posit that these different representations fulfil similar genre expectations and that they may be seen as variations on a basic iconographic schema, it is possible to focus more exactly on what is unusual and noteworthy about the Cleveland panel. Several divergences are striking: physically, the Cleveland panel is by far the largest altarpiece example and the only one clearly intended for shared devotions in a public church setting; it also has no predella scenes, wings or other focal points separate from its framed central image. And there are further differences
within the frame: unexpected details like the Virgin’s attributes, the smiling sun, sickle moon, and crowning stars, and the use of gesso relief and punched designs.²⁹ Perhaps most importantly, for the question of sexuality, gender, and the altarpiece genre, the figure of Eve has acquired a greater physical presence as a sexed body, and the spatial composition of the image does not construct a single predetermined viewing position for the worshipper.

A series of brief comparisons will underline the last points. The earliest example of these Mary/Eve juxtapositions is in fact a fresco, Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s mid-Trecento Maestà (fig. 5) in the church of San Galgano in Montesiepi near Siena.³⁰ A fresco image obviously responds to and is constructed by very different needs than a single altarpiece image; it forms part of continuous cycle and is understood in relation to the whole. But it is still useful to examine this work as one starting point for the iconography. The Monte Siepi image is found in the lunette of the altar wall of the chapel, and its composition has obviously been partly determined by the form of the space. It is centred around the Madonna and Child, enthroned at a safe distance above Eve and encircled by an honour guard of saints. Within the lunette, the Virgin Mother is the focus of both the horizontal and the vertical axis, a dominance that the earlier version of the composition redoubled, for instead of holding the Child Mary
was pictured as a crowned queen, with a sceptre in her left hand and an orb in her right. Eve (fig. 6) is clothed in a loose white robe that covers her completely, and over her back and hips is thrown a goat-skin. In one hand she holds a banderole in Tuscan which explains the theological point of the image: because of Eve’s sin, Christ needed to be born of Mary to redeem humanity - FEI PECCHATO P(ER) CHE PASSIO/NE SOFERSE XNO CHE QUES/TA REHA SORTE NEL VENTRE/A NOSTRA REDENTIONE. This theme ties the image to others in the cycle, for the fresco directly below the inscription is an Annunciation.

The same iconographical schema also appears in small altarpiece triptychs, the kind used for private devotions within the home or chapel. The smaller and primarily vertical format of these works necessarily curtails the horizontal splay of figures found in the lunette fresco, but the basic composition remains. In a small panel of about 1380-90 by Paolo di Giovanni Fei (fig. 7), still in its original ornamented frame, once again space is carefully centred and coherent around the Madonna, whose place in the hierarchy is accented by her enthroned position against a cloth of honour and the focused gazes of the saints and angels assembled around her in adoration. Eve, trapped below her in the cut-out space of the gradino, is a small and awkward attribute of Mary as the Second Eve, completely dominated by the much
larger enthroned figure above her. A similar pattern occurs in Angelo Puccinelli’s *Madonna with Angels and Saints* (fig. 8), the centre panel of a small triptych now in Altenburg.\textsuperscript{34} This is an intimate image, meant to be seen at close range, where the figures are almost doll-like; hierarchy is established by size, and once again the distance between Mary and Eve is clearly defined, this time by a gradino and the patterning of the floor. The strong vertical axis of the composition also draws the eye to Mary, once again framed by her court of saints, while the "ascent" of redemption is clearly indicated by the direct vertical axis linking Eve and the serpent, Mary and the Child, and the Crucified Christ in the gable.

Hierarchy by size is also a feature of the small reliquary triptych of 1358 by Lippo Vanni now in SS. Domenico e Sisto in Rome (figs. 9, 10).\textsuperscript{35} Eve has become a tiny figure below the towering Madonna and saints; her arms and legs are bare but her flesh is swathed in a loose garment and cloaked in the fall of her long hair, her body turned away from the viewing eye. In this work, unlike the other examples, the wings still survive; the central panel is flanked by scenes from the legend of Saint Aurea, an appropriate example of a female martyr alongside the iconic central focus. The choice is intriguing: perhaps the other little triptychs also featured female saints in their wings, making the choice of
Mary and Eve part of an overall stress on female religious figures.

Apart from the fresco, which represents a special case, all of these altarpieces share a number of basic features. For one thing the relation between Mary and Eve is made very clear by the spatial composition itself, while other clues reinforce it. Mary has complete dominion; she is the necessary step for salvation; Eve remains a small reminder of Mary’s great victory, or perhaps more exactly the victory of humanity through Mary and Christ. The composition itself is an important tool for making the theological point clear and memorable to viewers, as an altarpiece should. As David Rosand has stated, a "dominant vertical axis enables the pictorial accommodation of notions of heaven and earth," while "(w)hat we might call the iconic imperative of the altarpiece enforces that centrality of focus; the lateral forces of the field operate centripetally, with reference to the centre." In each of these examples Mary is that centrality of focus, set apart, enthroned; she causes the saints and the space to fall in around her, while an age-old convention of privileging the vertical establishes the relationship of ruler to ruled. This is equally true of the work by the Master of the Straus Madonna (fig. 11), another small panel for intimate devotions, where a doll-like Eve lies once again at the steps of the Madonna’s throne; and in the three small altarpiece
treatments of the theme by Giovanni di Simone da Lucca (figs. 12, 13, 14).  

The Cleveland panel is strikingly different. To begin with, the work is extremely large and lavish and can only have been intended for a public setting; its central image is unmediated by hagiographical stories on wings. The number of figures in the work has been drastically limited, tightly focusing on the dichotomy of the two women and their attributes, the snake and the Christ Child; the court of saints has been reduced to Gabriel, Michael, and George, who hover asymmetrically against the gold background. The representation of Mary and Eve has also changed. No longer enthroned, Mary seems in greater proximity to the viewer and to Eve; she is seated at a slight angle to the surface plane and turns her head toward the viewer, breaking the strict hieratic frontality of the other representations. Mary’s body is primarily a maternal body: she does not merely hold the Child, as in other examples, but cradles him in her lap, her arms draped around him protectively and her fingers spread to hold him. Her body is both suggested and denied by a heavily draped blue robe; it covers her like a tent but gold striations model the knees needed to support Christ and the arms that hold him. A tiny breast emerges from her collarbone; existing solely to provide Christ with milk, it has no mate.
Furthermore, Mary is portrayed with the attributes of another miraculous biblical mother, the Woman of the Apocalypse from the Book of Revelations of Saint John, reinforcing her maternal role. This story, like that of the Annunciation, concerns a miraculous birth and the triumph of God over evil. John’s twelfth chapter describes a woman with the same attributes as Mary in the Cleveland panel: "clothed with the sun, with the moon at her feet," and crowned with twelve stars. Initially this woman is in labour, struggling to give birth to a son who will be the king of all nations of the earth. Attacked by a red dragon or serpent (the Greek word is the same) she flees to the desert for safety and her newborn is taken up to God on his throne. "The ancient serpent, who is called Devil and Satan; ... he who deceives the whole world" is then routed by a heavenly army led by the Archangel Michael. The presence of Gabriel, Michael, and George is now clear. Rather than a simple court of saints, they too function as attributes of the Virgin: Gabriel indicates the moment of the Annunciation when she repaired Eve’s fault; Michael with the scales of the Last Judgment indicates the moment Eve placed in jeopardy and Mary redeemed with Christ’s birth; and together Michael and George are reminders of the victory of good over evil, here conspicuously present in the form of Eve’s snake.

Carlo da Camerino was not the first to conflate the
Virgin Mary with the Woman of the Apocalypse; the iconography was a favourite in the Marches where he worked. But its maternal stress gains a special emphasis in this panel by being juxtaposed with Eve, whose portrayal in the work is also distinct from other examples. Although their facial features are similar, physically Mary and Eve are carefully distinguished; the Cleveland panel seems to suggest there is something both identical and inimical about these female figures, and that the difference can be read in their flesh. Eve is now almost naked, animal fur, a traditional symbol of lust, wrapped around her hips and coiled around her thighs; unlike Mary her body is carefully detailed and modeled, its nudity a startling contrast to Mary’s enveloped maternal form. Eve’s body is pushed up against the plane of the altarpiece and the viewer’s space; the larger scale of the panel means that her body is also much more approximate to the size of the viewer’s own. Her gaze is averted from the viewer and raised toward Mary; she is seen by the viewer but does not see back. On the one hand, no contemporary viewer would have missed the allusions to Mary Magdalene, female prototype of the sexual sinner, or even to allegorical representations of lussuria in this blond, fur-clad figure at Christ’s feet. But Eve’s body is also attractive in its own right, as if the dangers and attractions of female flesh had been given carnal form and laid out for inspection; facially and physically, she
corresponds to the ideal female type of the period: pink and white skin, high breasts, small feet, tapered hands, and long blond curling hair.  

This stress on her body is surely significant at a time when art in general was marked by an increased interest in the human body: some viewers may well have been especially attuned to this aspect of the portrayal.  

If Mary is the mother of both the Annunciation and the Apocalypse, Eve is the carnal sinner of Genesis, apple in hand and Satan rather than Saviour in her lap, but a sinner attractive nonetheless.  

The second important divergence in The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve from other altarpiece examples lies in its spatial composition, and the consequent viewpoint constructed for the worshipper within the image itself. There is a much lesser insistence on hierarchical size in this panel; originally Mary and Eve were even more commensurate, but the panel has been cut down at the bottom and part of Eve’s figure has been lost.  

Furthermore, the clearly hierarchical space, with Mary as its centre and raison d’être, has been undermined: while Mary is still central to the composition, each figure in the panel is now represented from a slightly different viewpoint. Eve is seen head-on, but Mary is seen only slightly from below, and indeed seems almost level with the worshipper, who is apparently looking up at the Child. One might attribute this to a simple wish to
differentiate the physical space of the women, which seems to be the function of the ornamented dais edge, much retouched, which divides them, but the same spatial contradiction is repeated in other figures: Gabriel is seen almost head-on, as is the face in the sun, but Michael and George are not. It is not enough to declare that this disjunction is only the proof of a minor master’s faulty grasp of spatial construction, blatantly apparent due to the large scale of the piece; rather it is important to examine the possibilities that this fracturing of the picture plane might have created for worshippers. The viewer now has more equal visual access to every element of the composition; she or he is not locked into a static viewpoint between two poles, Mary and Eve. Rather than the clearly focused compositions of other examples within the tradition, here Mary and Eve are more dynamically related; the gaze slides from one pole to the other and back again, only to be diverted by unexpected pleasures like a face in the sun or an apostle in a star.

Several things follow from this combination of shifting spatial composition and increased emphasis on Mary’s miraculous motherhood and Eve’s carnality (in the sense of both “infleshedness” and “sensuality”). Any attempt to hold Mary and Eve in a static relation to one’s own body collapses under the pressure of spatial ambiguities and the circling visual interrelations of the various figures and the viewer.
Carnal sin is now given a strongly carnal form, while contrasted to the maternal body, all in immediate relation to the worshipper’s own space and body.

I believe that the Cleveland panel’s changes in the basic representational schema linking Mary and Eve must be related to debates within the patron classes, that is specifically the urban upper classes who, as Michael Baxandall has convincingly shown, were the main donors of large public images like The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve. 48 This image and the problems of viewership it raises point to an important feature of late Trecento and Quattrocento urban Italy: the attempt, in various secular and religious discourses, to define new subject positions for women. As writers as disparate as Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, David Herlihy, and Ian Maclean have argued, the transition from so-called medieval to Renaissance society in Italy marked the beginning of increasingly enclosure and a narrowing of the spheres available to women, especially of the emerging urban bourgeoisie; for this group the family was increasingly the locus of honour, and interfamily alliance became the key to civic power. 49 As a new definition of the feminine was constructed, women were linked to the private sphere and the needs of their line. In the social movements of merchants, bankers, and the small aristocracy, the ideals of female behaviour were redefined, tailored to meet new demands, and
paradigms reinvented or reworked to fit the new stresses.

It is from this context that The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve emerges, and, like any other form of representation, it too could have a role to play in this shift. It is tempting to believe that, by opening up the possibility of a more dynamic relationship among Mary, Eve, and the viewer, this panel could provide its viewers with an opportunity to define and examine their own position along a spectrum of stereotypes of female sexuality and behaviour. As an altarpiece, however, what kind of role could it have played in this redefinition of feminine positions? What is on offer here?

The next two sections of this discussion of The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve deal respectively with social constructions of gender and the needs of altarpiece worship. The second section will centre around the problems of viewership and "feminine" positioning: it examines the social factors affecting viewing in early Quattrocento Italy, discussing the social definition and construction of "feminine" positions by the urban elites who shaped and commissioned these works and images. The third and final section returns to the specific case of The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve: it looks at the conventions and expectations of the altarpiece as a genre to determine the work's own place in the redefinition of the
"Oh quanto so’ preziosi i frutti della buona donna! Inde hai il detto della Scrittura: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscestis eos: A’ frutti loro li cognosciarete."
-San Bernardino da Siena, Prediche volgari.  

In recent years the construction of viewing positions in early Renaissance images has been the subject of a number of studies, and Norman Bryson’s 1983 book Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze made a fundamental contribution to the debate.  

Bryson argues that a Renaissance religious image is organised first and foremost around an individual embodied viewer in real space (he cites the Washington Annunciation by the Master of the Barberini Panels or Masaccio’s Trinity fresco in S. Maria Novella as examples). Such images rely for their effect on a worshipper skilled in the interpretation of spatial and narrative clues based on a specific, idiosyncratic knowledge and experience; they “assume the viewing subject as an actual bodily presence, reacting to scale within the image as though to the scale of normal experience: the vocative address of the image is directly somatic.”  

Bryson also points out that the body occupies a unique place in Western art, for while the spectator’s body is the inscribed
interlocutor of the composition, the body is also present as an object of the spectator’s gaze, in a long and specifically Western tradition of the nude; the viewer is given the "pleasures of seduction," the body as "sexual mask." I t seems to me that in at least two respects, however, Bryson’s discussion does not address the problems it inevitably raises. The first omission is a consideration of genre expectations: not once in Bryson’s discussion of altarpieces does he acknowledge that these were votive images created to aid devotion and to focus attention on the Mass. The "viewing subject," the "actual bodily presence" reacting to an early Renaissance altarpiece was first and foremost a worshipper, with very specific expectations. Secondly, Bryson ignores the fact that the body of the viewer singled out and seduced as an individual is socially positioned and as such gendered; this will necessarily mediate and affect his or her interaction with an image, especially an image where a represented body is posited as a central object of visual pleasure. Like Steinberg Bryson’s discussion is not historically specific; like Miles it is not generically specific.

This chapter is an attempt to be historically specific about gender and the reception of the Cleveland altarpiece. It focuses first on three Quattrocento textual constructions of feminine positions, and then moves to the context from which they and the Cleveland panel emerged. In the early
Renaissance, marriage manuals and advice books began to proliferate, laying out new ideals of social and individual behaviour; these genres, along with texts as disparate as sermons and medical tracts, were sites for articulating new gender roles and stereotypes. I have chosen to discuss Barbaro’s *De re uxoria*, Alberti’s *I Libri della Famiglia* and Bernardino’s *Prediche volgari* because, like many other texts of the period, they seek to define new codes of behaviour for the individuals and families of the privileged urban upper classes, those classes that commissioned objects like the Cleveland altarpiece. Just as importantly, they are three very different works, aimed at distinct audiences and shaped by very different expectations. As Stephen Greenblatt has put it:

> Any one text in this field [of sexual discourse] is rarely of decisive importance (for even the strongest tradition generates countertraditions), but taken as a whole a culture’s sexual discourse plays a critical role in shaping individuality. It does so by helping to implant in each person an internalized set of dispositions and orientations that governs individual improvisations. In any given life-experience it is the quality of the particular improvisation that is most acutely registered, but improvisation itself is inconceivable without what Michelle Rosaldo... calls shared ‘structures of opportunity and constraint,’ against which each individual marks off a more or less deviant course.\(^55\)

To determine the ways in which "an internalized set of dispositions and orientations" for feminine behaviour was constructed in urban Quattrocento Italy, and the relation of
these constructions to the imagery of the Cleveland panel, both the similarities and the differences of these three works must be discussed; taken together they expose both the possibilities and the contradictions inherent in contemporary gender constructions.

Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) might be considered the father of the marriage treatise genre. The scion of an ancient and noble Venetian family and an avid scholar of Latin and Greek, he composed *De re uxoria* (On Wifely Duties) in 1415-16 as a gift for the marriage of his friend Lorenzo de’ Medici, younger brother of the first Medici ruler of Florence, to Ginevra Cavalcanti.\(^56\) Elite and scholarly, *De re uxoria* is a short treatise on the ideal wife and mother, composed, as Barbaro explicitly states, as a guide for his contemporaries and peers, other erudite and noble young men.\(^57\) In true humanist fashion it was written in a literary Latin and based almost entirely on classical prototypes such as Plutarch’s *Coniugalia praecepta* and Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, setting a precedent that would be followed by Barbaro’s literary successors; the writer also cites the opinions of his erudite humanist colleagues, including Zaccaria Trevisan, Leonardo Bruni, and Guarino da Verona.\(^58\) The work received immediate scholarly acclaim: both Poggio Bracciolini and Pier Paolo Vergerio wrote in praise of the good sense and deep erudition of Barbaro’s work, and there are more than fifty fifteenth-
century manuscripts extant in Italian libraries alone.\textsuperscript{59} 

I Libri della famiglia by Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), is a slightly later and much more prolix contribution to the advice book genre, written sometime before Alberti’s thirtieth birthday in 1434.\textsuperscript{60} It is the bourgeois merchant family that concerns the writer, rather than the ideal stoic wife of De re uxoria; Alberti’s goal is “to investigate the nature of those things which exalt and increase the family, and to see how it is maintained at a high level of honor and happiness.”\textsuperscript{61} Far more extensive than Barbaro’s short treatise, Della famiglia comprises four books which centre loosely on the stages of a man’s life: childhood, youth and marriage, fatherhood and care of the household, and the mature man’s responsibilities in society. Alberti, like Barbaro, draws extensively on classical sources from Greece and Rome; he acknowledges openly that Book III is modeled directly on the Oeconomicus of “the charming and delightful Greek writer Xenophon.”\textsuperscript{62} But rather than a scholarly exposition of Antique examples, Alberti chooses to present his thoughts in the form of dialogues among male family members, allowing a greater range of opinions to be presented; it is 1421, and they have gathered at the deathbed of the author’s father. He also writes in the vernacular, a choice he justifies by noting that it would permit even the unlearned to learn from his words.\textsuperscript{63} Della famiglia was not dedicated to a powerful patron, nor
does it make frequent references to a coterie of scholarly friends. Rather than a scholarly elite, Alberti’s audience may predominantly have been, like himself and his characters, cultivated men of the merchant classes and petty nobility, well established in the urban activities of trade and commerce; when Book IV of Della famiglia was presented at a Florentine poetry contest in 1441, not only did it not receive any prize, it was not even considered worthy to be read aloud.

Whatever the differences in the audiences and receptions of De re uxoria and I Libri della famiglia, both writers were speaking to their peers, men who were likely to share their ideals and concerns. By the same token, however, they reflect the views of a relatively small (if wealthy and influential) circle of men; they are also completely secular documents, drawing mostly on literary tradition. Just as much as Alberti or Barbaro, the sermons of San Bernardino (1380-1444) sought to provide ideal models for practical situations, but they reflect religious as well as secular constructions of gender and social behaviour; they also needed to address and reflect the needs of a much wider and more diverse audience, an audience which was present, shaping Bernardino’s words, and which explicitly included women as well as men. All forty-five sermons of Bernardino’s 1427 Sienese Lenten cycle have survived as the Prediche volgari, including the three
sermons which he devoted entirely to relations between husbands and wives;\textsuperscript{66} the sermons were recorded by a member of the Sienese wool guild called Benedetto di Maestro Bartolo on wax tablets in a self-taught shorthand, and later transcribed.\textsuperscript{67} In contrast to Barbaro’s erudite and classical treatise or Alberti’s staged dialogues, Bernardino’s rhetorical strategy is based firmly in narrative; his sermons, which could last up to four hours at a stretch, typically begin with an excerpt from scripture, and then use parables drawn from everyday life to develop his points and to engage his listeners. As sermons they also could also impress the audience with a recognised authority quite different from a professional humanist’s: charismatic and intensely popular, Bernardino spoke in squares throughout Italy; at his death the little donkey bearing his personal possessions was nearly skinned alive by Sienese seeking a relic of the holy man.\textsuperscript{68} As a transcription of an oral and performative experience, the \textit{Prediche volgari} is admittedly a hybrid document, but it provides a point of entry into everyday religious discourse on ideal gender behaviour.

We are thus dealing with three very distinct texts: one by a noble Venetian for his scholarly peers, one by an ambitious exile for his merchant and bourgeois class, and one by a mendicant friar who had repudiated the wealthy, upper-class background that shaped him.\textsuperscript{69} And yet it is
quickly evident that the three texts have several common elements. One point above all is clear: for the men who write these books (and to whom they are most often addressed) the correct sexual and social behaviour of their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters is of paramount importance; it is also a source of great anxiety.

All three authors connect the woman explicitly with the home and the family, the man with the world outside; male and female are defined as opposites in every respect. Their works treat women primarily or exclusively as wives and mothers, and dwell at some length on their duties toward husband and children. Barbaro’s work is entirely devoted to a definition of wifely and maternal ideals; no other role for women is discussed. The figure he constructs is prolific and devoted to her children, nursing them herself if possible; she is also the careful, watchful, and thrifty caretaker of her husband’s goods and does not hesitate to perform the most menial tasks if it will ensure his comfort. Nature suits her to this useful role, because, according to the author:

Men are naturally endowed with strength of mind and body; both for these and other reasons, they provision their homes by their labor, industry, and willingness to undergo hardships. Conversely, I think we may infer that since women are by nature weak they should diligently care for things concerning the household. For weakness can never be separated from cares nor cares from vigilance. What is the use of bringing home great wealth unless the wife will work at preserving, maintaining, and utilizing it?
The general characteristics of Alberti’s ideal woman are quite similar to those found in *De re uxoria*: her first role is to provide children for the family so that, in the words of one speaker, there will be sons to inherit "in the place and name of the fathers." Wives must also care for their husbands and obey them in all things. Perhaps not surprisingly, the merchant Alberti devotes a great deal of space to the need for women to take care of the household goods and chattels, stating, in an echo of Barbaro, that women "are almost all timid by nature, soft, slow, and therefore most useful when they sit still and watch over our things." The division of tasks is absolute: as one speaker says:

> it would hardly win us respect if our wife busied herself among the men in the marketplace, out in the public eye. It also seems somewhat demeaning to me to remain shut up in the house among women when I have manly things to do among men, fellow citizens and worthy and distinguished foreigners.

Bernardino concurs: for happiness and prosperity, men should amass things in honourable trade; women should watch over the household and the children in all diligence, seeing to the needs of the family; husband and wife must live united in friendship and purpose, honouring and pleasing God, as He decreed by united Adam and Eve.

Unfortunately, real life does not always work this way. Alberti’s text introduces the theme of marriage by stating that the love between husband and wife is the greatest of all, noting that "(i)t governs areas of life so vital to women that
almost anyone would suppose nothing for them could be more sacred and constant than conjugal love." But, it is immediately added: "somehow, I do not know why, it happens not infrequently that a woman prefers a lover to her own husband." If the ideal woman is a diligent and prolific wife and mother, she must also be, paradoxically, chaste: a public reputation for virtue should be a woman’s primary concern. Each writer stresses the point in a characteristic way. For the Venetian this stoic self-denial serves as a measure of her relative worth; any excess of physical behaviour, eating, drinking, gesticulating or whatever, becomes the outward sign of flaws in her natural honour and virtue, and will thus weaken her honourable reputation. Women should eat, drink, and speak little; he states categorically: "I should have them take care first of all to abstain from those things that encourage, instill, or increase the desires of the flesh." Even in sexual relations wives must maintain a chaste measure, for, as Barbaro puts it, "nothing should seem so pleasant and delightful that it would ever keep them from their obligation to do everything in a modest manner." In Chapter Seven, "On the Regulation of Lovemaking," Barbaro states categorically that sexual moderation serves to differentiate the upper-class woman from the common or the "vile" one:

I wish that (a woman) will curb herself so that she will be, or at least seem to be, chaste in that sort of temperance from which chastity is derived. It would be conducive to achieving this result if,
from the very beginning, husbands would accustom themselves to serving as the helpers of necessity rather than of passion. And wives should bear themselves with decorum and modesty in their married life so that both affection and moderation will accompany their lovemaking. Lust and unseemly desire are harmful to their dignity and to their husbands, even when they later say nothing about it. Herodotus writes that women lay aside their modesty together with their undergarments; if they make love with adulterers, let us acknowledge that this is true, but if wives will listen to us they will maintain their dignity with their husbands. (....)But wives, even though the light has been far removed, do not behave at all like these vile women.(....)For at all times a wife ought to do her duty, and although her body cannot be seen, still she ought always to observe decency so that she will justly seem decent to her husband even in the dark. Hence, when the wife of the famous Commodus attempted to entice her husband to use unusual and improper pleasures on her, he answered: ‘How far one can go in doing such things depends on the woman, but the term wife is surely a name of honour, not of pleasure.’

The conflict is pronounced: Barbaro admits the existence and proclivity for pleasure, but he directly opposes it to honour. The sexual act in marriage must be seen to be different from the same act outside it; wifely behaviour must also be distinct, and pleasure is for those women who are not wives, those who traffic in lust and unseemly desire. His injunction against uxorial passion is all the more noteworthy in an era when medical authorities held that conception was more likely to take place when a woman’s womb was adequately prepared and "heated up" by her passion.

For Alberti, a woman’s reputation for chasteness is imperative for her, but also for her family’s honour in the
community: when Lionardo, a thirty-something bachelor, explains to the other characters what qualities one should look for in a wife, he states simply: "I myself do not know which is worse for a family, total celibacy or a single dishonoured woman." Chasteness is the first duty of the wife and the dowry a woman bequeaths her daughters; one speaker tells his wife:

nothing is so important for yourself, so acceptable to God, so pleasing to me, and precious in the sight of your children as your chastity. (...) Unchastity angers God, and you know that God punishes nothing so severely in women as he does this lack. All their lives he makes them notorious and miserable.

Bernardino also expounds upon chaste sexual behaviour at some length. Not only is chasteness most important to a woman’s honour, but the correct sexual behaviour of both husband and wife is a woman’s concern, part of her skilled management of the family good(s). A wife’s most pressing duty, overriding any other consideration, is to preclude any possibility of "unnatural acts" between herself and her partner; these are classed in a hierarchy spanning everything from masturbation to incest to "l’abominabile peccato della maladetta soddomia." As an example, although sexual contact during menstruation would normally be taboo, especially since it was said a leprous child would result from such a union, Bernardino says a wife who believes her husband may turn to sodomy if she refuses her conjugal debt because she is menstruating should
simply not tell him and carry on as usual; the lesser sin is absolved by the avoidance of the greater. Nor is ignorance any excuse for falling into sin: when a woman gets married she has chosen her "mestiere" and must know how to practice it, something her mother is required to instruct her: "You will say: I’m only a girl, and I don’t know anything about it. And I tell you that you should know what you will need to do; and your mother should explain it to you, and you should master what you are required to do. And if she doesn’t tell you what to do, she’ll go to the devil’s house, and you with her."88

But in light of the Cleveland altarpiece imagery, one rhetorical feature of these texts is striking above all: they make constant recourse to dichotomous role models to define a feminine position. The writers rely on a careful balancing of good and bad examples of feminine behaviour to construct what Barbaro terms "a middle way."89 In De re uxoria this takes the form, naturally, of a series of examples culled from antiquity, in a display of erudition which Barbaro’s elite readers are called upon to match. Thus Brasilia, who tricked her pirate captor into cutting her throat in an effort to preserve her chastity, is held up as an example of female sexual moderation;90 the wife of Marcus Cato the Censor, as an example of a woman who virtuously nursed her own children;91 Gorgo, who said she never made advances to her husband, waiting instead for him to come to her, is presented, oddly,
as an example of wifely obedience;\(^{92}\) the moderation of Lucretia’s table is contrasted to the excess and vice of Cleopatra.\(^{93}\) Nor is the exemplar always female: Hannibal overcome by the luxuries of Capua becomes the example of the wages of immoderation.\(^{94}\) Only very occasionally, amidst the bipolar examples from antiquity, does Barbaro refer to the imperfections of real life, including women who refuse to sleep with their husbands when they are unhappy with them or who consider separation because their husbands are unfaithful;\(^{95}\) in another striking passage women “who seek to arouse their husbands to love by means of potions and amorous incantations” are compared to fishermen who catch fish with poisoned bait, making it inedible.\(^{96}\) The reason for curtailing these references seems fairly obvious: they expose the gap between De re uxoria’s idealising construction of the perfect upper-class wife -- obedient, moderate, chaste, devoted to her husband and children -- and a less perfect reality.

Unlike his Venetian predecessor, Alberti relies at least as much on bipolar examples from daily experience as on the precepts of classical learning. The example of a loving mother who died of happiness when her son returned unharmed from battle is contrasted to examples of vice and lust: “There only madness, here reason! There shame, here honor; there vice, here excellence; there cruelty, here gentleness!”\(^{97}\) Good wetnurses are contrasted with bad;\(^{98}\) women of authority
to harridans who scream and rant; bourgeois wives to peasant girls shrieking on mountain slopes.  

Bernardino uses a similar strategy. To convince his listeners of the importance of friendship and purpose in marriage, for example, he uses a somewhat surprising parable, contrasting examples of the clean, diligent mistress who is loved and valued and the dirty lazy one who is quickly despised:

It's like the man who has a mistress who tends things, cleans, cooks, sets the table, and so on; if with all that he also has the delights of lust, then he will care more for her. If she were a pig, if she weren't clean and tidy, and she didn't care for his house as she should, the delights would be fewer and he would not care for her as much. It would be alright for a little while; but if she then gets sick, he'll ship her off to the hospital. You get sick and yellow, and there's no caring left, because for him you're neither delightful nor useful.

Elsewhere sensible women who bring their daughters to hear his words are juxtaposed with those, "meno che buona," who have left them at home in bed; Monna Pigara (Mrs. Lazy) is contrasted to Monna Sollecita (Mrs. Diligent).

But nowhere are dichotomous female examples used more extensively than around the figure of the ideal housewife and mother in Book III of I Libri della famiglia. The passage is an important one for our discussions, because it lays bare many of conflicts and contradictions of gender positioning in these texts. The speaker is the elderly paterfamilias Giannozzo, who has been asked to explain to the younger Albertis how he "instructed" his new wife to insure a happy,
peaceful, and prosperous future; dichotomous examples form the basis of his lessons to his young bride, the only major interlocutor of the work whose speech is always reported in the third person and who is never named. He teaches her not to pry by talking about the prying wife of Messer Cipriano’s friend, who was once cautioned not to be over-interested in the movements of her husband lest she be suspected "of having men too much on her mind." He teaches her to make herself respected by talking about those women who are disdained; he instructs her to be cheerful and diligent by invoking wives who are quarrelsome or who sit all day with their sewing without making a single stitch; and clever thrift is illustrated by the counterexample of "little old widows" who scrimp and save only to have everything rot in the end.

Giannozzo’s harshest lesson, however, and the one which he describes in the most detail, centres on his wife’s use of cosmetics. Giannozzo tells his wife:

To be praised for your chastity, you must shun every deed that lacks true nobility, eschew any sort of improper speech, avoid giving any sign that your spirit lacks perfect balance and chastity. You will disdain, first of all, those vanities which some females imagine will please men. All made up and plastered and painted and dressed in lascivious and improper clothing, they suppose they are more attractive to men than when adorned with pure simplicity and true virtue. Vain and foolish women are those who imagine that when they appear in make-up and look far from virtuous they will be praised by all who see them. They do not realize that they are provoking disapproval and harming themselves. Nor do they realize, in their petty vanity, that their immodest appearance excites
numerous lustful men. Such men all besiege and attack such a girl, some with suddenness, some with persistence, some with trickery, until at last the unfortunate wretch falls into real disgrace. From such a fall she cannot rise again without the stain of great and lasting infamy upon her.  

The paterfamilias is explicit about the links: use of cosmetics leads inexorably to sexual infamy and shame, because cosmetics are the evidence of an imperfectly chaste character, the signs of sexuality written on the body for all to see. Therefore, when his new wife appears at an Easter dinner with her face "covered in pumice" and "showing off and being merry with everyone," Giannozzo waits until their guests have left and then asks her how she got her face so dirty, adding: "Go wash yourself, quick, before these people begin to make fun of you. The lady and mother of a household must always be neat and clean if she wants the rest of the family to learn good conduct and modest demeanor." He concludes the tale: "She understood me and at once began to cry. I let her go wash off both tears and make-up. After that I never had to tell her again."  

But Giannozzo does not content himself with humiliating words; a real woman is used for a counter-example. He points out a neighbour, "a woman who had few teeth left in her mouth, and those appeared tarnished with rust. Her eyes were sunken and always inflamed, the rest of her face withered and ashen. All her flesh looked decomposed and disgusting. Her silvery hair was the only thing about her that one might regard
without displeasure." When asked, Giannozzo's teenaged bride replies she believes the neighbour to be about the age of her mother's wetnurse; her husband assures her that the woman is in fact only two years older than he is, and not yet thirty-two. The mortal signs of the neighbour's attempt to be attractive to eyes she should not wish to attract are visible in the breakdown of her flesh: the word used to describe her body is "decomposed."

Barbaro, however, is not opposed to sumptuous and attractive clothing for women, arguing that "gold, jewels, and pearls...are the sign of a wealthy, not a lascivious, woman and are taken as evidence of the wealth of the husband more than as a desire to impress wanton eyes." But Bernardino agrees entirely with Alberti about feminine clothing and cosmetics, telling his audience:

Some there are among you whose mouth stinks from your cosmetics, some who reek of sulphur, some who anoint themselves with this and that, and stink so much in the presence of your husbands that you turn them into sodomites. How many of you have teeth which have rotted from so much painting? Bear in mind that this is the devil's work, to weaken both your husband and yourself, and thus get both your souls. Do not wonder if your husbands cannot bear the sight of you: it is your own fault.

Alberti's decomposing neighbour has now been transformed: no longer a neighbour, she has become a threatening, emasculating creature lurking inside every woman. Positive and negative poles of female behaviour are now two aspects of the same thing, governed by constant effort and constant negotiation.
There is obviously a great deal of variation among these writers, based on audience and genre; Bernardino’s colloquial expressions and earthy anecdotes are very distinct from Barbaro’s learned references or Alberti’s imagined dialogues. Still, in their attempts to define the place and purpose of women and of female sexuality within the context of the urban, and usually upper-class, family setting, they are suggestive of a larger pattern. It is intriguing that these three writers, who agree on so much, cannot agree on the topic of feminine apparel, for this is a subject where several aspects of their ideal woman collide. The prospective patriarch has a lot on his plate: for individual and family honour, there is a need for public displays of wealth and largesse, including luxurious clothes, fine food, and elegant living quarters. But the women of the family become a problem in such a display system: as women they must be prolific mothers, with a sexuality expressed exclusively within the wedded pair and a reputation for absolute chastity, but the honour and standing of the family demand that they also be elegantly attired and attractive in others’ eyes, with all the dangers that might entail. It is obvious that Giannozzo cannot tolerate cosmetics because they are a visible sign of his own loss of complete dominance over his wife; they signify that her body, by her own actions, might be attractive and even available to others beyond the limits of her husband’s
home, attracting men’s attention as his silvery-blond
neighbour has attracted his. As Joan Kelly has pointed out,
the conflict became extremely pronounced as the Renaissance
progressed;\textsuperscript{112} the ideal upper-class woman needed to be cast as
both “an absolutely non-circulating use-value (the mother) and
an exchangeable commodity (the daughter).”\textsuperscript{113} Many Italian
cities had laws which allowed unmarried girls to dress more
extravagantly than their married counterparts of the same age;
for others, however, at the statutory age when a little girl
reached sexual maturity her clothing had to become simpler and
more modest.\textsuperscript{114}

The constructions promulgated by Alberti, Barbaro,
Bernardino, and others worked to contain these types of
paradox, ordering them from a male point of view and excluding
any female voice; but they also make apparent both the
conflicts of the system and a male anxiety to reconcile them
through, among other things, a constant recourse to
dichotomous examples. Even within these texts another, more
disruptive, image emerges: Barbaro’s example of women who
entrap men with love potions, Alberti’s example of his
decomposing but golden-haired neighbour, and Bernardino’s
stories of slovenly mistresses bear witness to a very
different and negative type of feminine positioning within the
social body. These paradoxes and fissures are to be expected,
however, in a society which was marked by radically evolving,
and often conflicting, roles for women.

The early Renaissance in Italy brought real changes for upper-class women, and it is generally agreed that the net effect of these changes was a deterioration in real status and power. The period of the late Trecento and the early Quattrocento is marked by a sharp rise in urban population: by 1300 the population of Florence had reached 100,000, Siena stood at 40,000, and some twenty-three Italian towns numbered more than 20,000 people; new laws were put into place, often based quite closely on Roman prototypes, to deal with the new demands placed on the expanding civil body, and wealth in the hands of women was one of the first areas targeted by the new legislation. In 1221 a law was passed concerning proportion of the "donatiri maritali," the goods given by the husband to the wife at the time of the marriage, which dropped from an amount equal to the goods brought in dowry to one half this amount; the legal claim of a wife to her husband's estate, which was originally up to one quarter of its total value, would be reduced to the restitution of the dowry she had brought to the union. According to Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "the dowry was not considered a female share in inheritance; to the contrary, it worked to exclude its
beneficiary from inheritance. In Florence, daughters, dowered or not, could inherit from their fathers, in the absence of brothers or nephews, only up to one-quarter of their father's estate, the remainder going to agnatic kin. In many regions of Italy, especially in Emilia, Lombardy, Piemonte, and the Veneto, the dowered daughter had absolutely no claim on her father's estate. While married her husband had full use of the dowry funds and could invest them as he saw fit, and restitution upon the death of a spouse was often next to impossible. The dowry became essentially usufruct: a woman's children or her family became the real heirs. The Italian legal historian Manlio Bellomo has argued that the net effect of these changes was to consolidate available goods and wealth in the hands of the male citizens who ran the communes, an important consideration at a time when city-states needed to maintain mercenary armies for their frequent territorial disputes. But the corollary was a dramatic change in the political and economic status of the disenfranchised, that is, everyone who was not a male of at least thirty years old, a resident, and a taxpayer. The absolute separation between a masculine, public arena of action and a feminine domestic space found in the writers of the period was more than a literary trope: the public and commercial roles available to women were narrowed, often by changes to laws governing trade and contracts, making marriage or religious vocation almost
the only real options for upper-class women who legally could no longer inherit or manage their own affairs. The "natural" separation between the two realms was increasingly absolute; women were finally barred from the funerals of their relatives, because these were both public and civic rites.

The prolific motherhood and obedient matrimony stressed by Alberti, Barbaro, and Bernardino also have a corresponding demographic reality. According to Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, the early Renaissance period is marked by "something like a tendency to reintegrate women into male-directed domestic group - a tendency independent of population structure by age and sex." Those girls within the urban upper classes who were destined for matrimony could expect to wed at an average age of about seventeen, to a man who was likely to be twelve or fifteen years older. Women of these rich urban families could also expect to have more children than any other segment of the population, partly perhaps because they were better fed and in better health, partly because they tended to marry earlier, and partly because they were not expected to nurse their offspring, losing the period of relative infertility associated with breast-feeding. Children, a luxury the poor could little afford and actively worked to avert, were of paramount importance to the wealthy; the family that could afford a prolific line, already a sign of status, had more players for its games of alliance.
Marriages between lineages became the preeminent tool of upper-class family mobility strategies, uniting former enemies and creating new "parenti, amici, and vicini" to call upon in times of need. The stakes were high. Dowries were subject to rapid inflation and maximum financial foresight was needed to ensure a daughter's matrimonial future. Florence established the Monte delle Doti, a sort of investment fund for fathers who wished to dower their daughters; for the greatest rate of return the first deposits needed to be made very early, often when the girl concerned was only six years old and could have little say in the matter. Wealthy girls who were too unhealthy or too unattractive, or those whose fathers could not afford a suitable match, could be placed in convents near the family home, often at about the same age or only slightly older. San Bernardino once described these forgotten children as "quasi spunum vel vomitum saeculi," the "scum and vomit of the world." Women of the urban bourgeoisie were trained almost from birth for their role. By the late fourteenth century little girls no longer attended the city schools with their brothers as they had when Giovanni Villani wrote his mid-Trecento Cronica; any formal education they received occurred either in the home itself or in convents. In a period when classical erudition was a valued indication of a man's privilege and social worth, many women of the same class never learned to
read and write, even in their own vernacular. Some women did become famous for their learning, but they were notable exceptions and paid a price for their choice; many were child prodigies who could not continue their studies after marriage, and others retired to convents where they were praised for their chastity at least as much as their writing.¹³⁴ Writers on the subject of education tended to stress that girls should learn the things that would make them honourable wives and mothers: a love of chastity, a becoming shame and obedience, and a hatred of any kind of notoriety.¹³⁵ Participation in domestic duties was also considered both practical and character-forming: Bernardino, for instance, stated that a young girl should never be idle, and if she showed a tendency to be curious about what was going on outside her home, her mother should give additional duties to keep her properly occupied.¹³⁶ Most of all girls needed to learn that danger to their honour and reputation lurked at every corner: Silvio Antoniano warned that even fathers should not cuddle and kiss their little daughters too often, because they might acquire a certain familiarity with men and lose, little by little, "the fear of shame which is like a wall to a chaste woman."¹³⁷

As the social circumstances which governed their lives were altered, women in turn developed new strategies to maintain maximum control over their goods and property, making creative use of local customs. Female members of the Venetian
patriciate, for instance, tended to leave wills more often than their brothers and spouses, and to go into far greater detail about the desired disposition of goods. Furthermore, they tended to give money to relations in their natal, rather than agnatic, family, often leaving monies specifically earmarked for their own daughters’ future, to allow the girls a limited freedom of choice between marriage and vocation.\textsuperscript{138} In cases like this, where the documentary record is available for study, there is ample evidence of urban, upper-class women making inventive use of appropriated forms, constructing new possibilities from established positions.

When placed in its fifteenth-century social context the Cleveland \textit{Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve} is doubly interesting, for it appears to fit into larger social paradigms. Like the society that produced it, the panel seems marked by a need to define feminine positions, and uses dichotomous examples to do so. Furthermore, in an interesting echo of contemporary textual stereotypes, the Cleveland panel seems to juxtapose an image of idealised, chaste motherhood with a sinful but appealing female sexuality.

I began this chapter by stating that any discussion of the Cleveland panel’s viewership needed to take two things into account: fifteenth-century gender constructions and fifteenth-century practices of worship. It is time to turn to altarpiece worship and the central questions of this thesis:
how does The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve, as an altarpiece, respond to viewers accustomed to negotiating between contrasting female stereotypes? In contemporary upper-class constructions of gender and position, what role could it play?
CHAPTER THREE

The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve: Gender, Genre, and the Quattrocento Altarpiece

Ad te clamamus, exules filii evae
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
In hic lacrimarum valle.
Salve Regina, twelfth century.\textsuperscript{139}

Se Eva fu caduta, e Maria fu stabile e ferma.
-San Bernardino da Siena.\textsuperscript{140}

In recent years there have been a number of studies focused on the relation between the construction of femininity in the urban ruling classes of the Quattrocento and the visual representations that these classes commissioned; these studies, however, have generally focused on representations within the domestic space.\textsuperscript{141} As the concrete locus of lineage, wealth, and family honour, urban upper-class houses were decorated with all the products of the luxury trade; wall panels, ceramics, lavish furniture, and a whole panoply of small secular objects provided sites to single out and construct the "feminine" viewer. Two forms have been of particular interest: the marriage chests known as cassoni or forzieri, and the birth salvers known as deschi da parto.\textsuperscript{142} The images on these objects drew on literary and mythological narratives, presenting them in a limited formal vocabulary based on models familiar to their viewers.\textsuperscript{143}

The scholarly consensus is that the images on these
objects worked to shape the behaviour of their female viewers while making a public declaration of their virtue. As Rose Marie San Juan has recently argued, furniture paintings could offer several specific pleasures: intimately connected to the domestic space of the family, a portrayal of the story of Eurydice or the rape of Lucretia allowed a narrative reworking of various positionings for women and female sexuality through visual pleasure centred on the body, feminine suffering cast in the heroic mode. These images could also offer a definite erotic content: in about half the extant cassoni pairs there is a reclining figure painted on the inside of each lid; typically one of the pair has a male figure, either fashionably dressed or semi-nude, and the other, a female nude (fig. 15). Although destined for a domestic interior, cassoni were carried in public wedding processions, but the pleasures of viewing these inner figures were private, specifically hidden from the public sphere; the sexualised imagery was seen only in the sanctified space of sexuality, the master bedroom.

But a narrative representation of the story of Eurydice or Lucretia on a marriage chest or birth salver is subject to very different genre expectations than a large altarpiece like The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve. Both might offer constructions based on stereotypes of the feminine; both were often the property of the same upper-class
families and therefore potentially shaped by the same types of concerns. But in the case of an altarpiece, the viewing position contains another component, that of worshipper: unlike the visually pleasurable sufferings of mythological and biblical heroines on furniture paintings, the pleasures of looking at an altarpiece had to be tempered by the consciousness of the end of that gaze, and they had to take forms which worship would allow. As David Rosand has stated:

viewing an altarpiece is hardly an act of detached aesthetic experience....In no other pictorial category is seeing quite so charged with responsibility - and, potentially, with such consequence...Its own authority as an image is enhanced and validated by its presence at the elevation of the host. That special aura clings to it even, as it were, off hours.¹⁴⁶

This last section of the thesis discusses the altarpiece as a genre and the ways in which the specific needs and traditions of worship mediated the dichotomous imagery of the Cleveland panel for its viewers; it seeks to determine what, as an altarpiece, The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve could offer in Quattrocento gender positioning.

What was the role of an altarpiece like the Cleveland panel around 1400? For the official Church its primary religious function was straightforward, if a little vague: it centred attention on the Mass and honoured the Mensa,¹⁴⁷ providing a focus for a shared liturgy. As a devotional image it had a minimum of three specific canonical functions: to narrate scripture clearly, to arouse appropriate feeling in
the worshipper, and to impress a clear understanding of its subject matter on his or her memory.\textsuperscript{148}

But the early Renaissance guidelines for accomplishing this were rather amorphous. According to Donald L. Ehresmann:

\begin{quote}
(t)he extensive study of documents pertaining to the history of the Christian altar by Joseph Braun has uncovered not a single instance in which the medieval Church officially proscribed or prescribed the use of altarpieces. The single most specific pronouncement concerning the use of altar decoration, a degree of the archdiocesan synod of Trier held in 1310, reveals that at the time of the great experiments with the new altarpiece forms, the official Church was concerned only that the titular saint of the altar be clearly identifiable...by a sculpture or painting of the saint or simply by a clearly readable inscription above or behind the altar.\textsuperscript{149}
\end{quote}

Thus within the religious tradition there was a considerable range for choice, and in practice almost every aspect of an altarpiece -- iconography, size, shape, lavishness -- would be determined by its donor(s); from the vast selection of subject matter based on hagiography and scripture, patrons could choose those elements that most conformed to their personal devotions. There was a often definite element of personal propaganda to their choices: for the first ten years of Cosimo de' Medici's rise to power he devoted the wealth he acquired almost exclusively to donor activities for churches and convents, covering the religious centres of Florence with the signs of his wealth and influence; Medici family saints Cosimo and Damiano multiplied.\textsuperscript{150}
commissioned, public markers of their piety which had to be worthy to carry their coat of arms. One typical patron, Giovanni Rucellai, explained that in addition to the joy of spending money well commissions fulfilled three important functions: "(t)hey serve the glory of God, the honour of the city, and the commemoration of myself."\textsuperscript{151} The altar or chapel endowed was most often in a church associated in some way with the patrons, maintaining a close link between object and specific family for its viewers, and the works remained the property of the groups or families that had commissioned them; the spaces in which they were placed would often serve as family burial chapels.\textsuperscript{152} As Michael Baxandall has shown, donating a painted altarpiece presented a unique - and relatively inexpensive - opportunity for a public display of one's generosity, wealth, good taste, piety, and civic pride in the most central of settings;\textsuperscript{153} patrons scrambled to outdo each other, altars proliferated, and worshippers favoured the altars of families who were allied to them, or whom they aspired to impress favourably.\textsuperscript{154}

Perhaps more than any other genre of representation, an altarpiece could bring together many different associations and meanings for its viewers; it was inherently both sacred and secular. It was a functional religious object, with a given ability to focus the worship of the faithful toward a state of grace and salvation; any object which failed in this
work, for whatever reason, was likely to be dismissed by an individual or even a whole congregation. There are many examples of picture surfaces obliterated by the caresses and kisses of the faithful, but there are also stories of altarpieces being desecrated, vandalised, cut down when burned by candles, banished to the provinces, or even summarily shat upon by "dissatisfied customers." It was also a civic object, fulfilling the multiple ceremonial needs of the congregation and the civic body; one Madonna in Padua was featured in mystery plays, while in Florence the Madonna of Impruneta was regularly carried in procession to bring rain to the commune. Yet the Madonna of Impruneta also "belonged" to the Buondelmontes: those whose prayers were answered had both the Madonna and her family to thank. As discussed in the last chapter, at the beginning of the Quattrocento the urban classes who commissioned objects like the Cleveland panel were in the midst of an anxious redefinition of feminine roles for changing social conditions. The new ideal was at once chaste and virtuous and a prolific wife and mother; her virtues were defined in opposition to negative examples like Alberti’s flamboyant neighbour or Bernardino’s slovenly mistress. Given that the blatantly dichotomous imagery of The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve was no doubt chosen by the patrons whose crest adorns it, men seeped in the type of gender construction offered by Barbaro, Alberti,
Bernardino, and others, how is the iconography of the panel a function of the concerns of these classes?

It has been suggested that the Biblical narrative of the Annunciation was conceived as a formal parallel to the earlier story of Eve’s temptation, making the linking of these two figures implicit in the Biblical text itself: as Eve, alone, had been approached by a supernatural being so too was Mary; as Eve assented to the other’s will so too did Mary, and the latter "undid" the damage caused by the former, saving those who had been damned.¹⁶¹ Their opposition is also a commonplace of early patristic writings. In the first century, for example, Justin Martyr wrote:

The firstborn of the Father is born of the Virgin, in order that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same manner in which it had originated. For Eve, an undefiled virgin, conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, when the Angel Gabriel announced to her the glad tidings...answered: "Be it done to me according to thy word."¹⁶²

Tertullian noted: "For unto Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the devil’s word, the framer of death. Equally, unto a virgin was introduced God’s word, the builder of life: so that what had been lost through one sex might through the same sex be saved."¹⁶³ By the fourth century the trope was so established that Jerome could state categorically: "Now that a virgin has conceived in the womb a child (...) the fetters of the old curse are broken. Death came through Eve, life has come
through Mary. The dichotomy only became more prevalent as time went on: well over a hundred instances of Mary and Eve as type and antitype have been documented in religious writings of the eighth to the eleventh centuries alone.\(^\text{165}\)

By the beginning of the Renaissance in Italy, the trope had acquired a number of definite variations in literature and religious discourse; it was also gaining a very limited prominence in the visual arts. In the *Commedia* Dante placed Eve at Mary’s feet in the Rose of Paradise, describing her as "tanto bella;" the canto explains that Mary closed the wound opened by Eve’s sin.\(^\text{166}\) The pair were a favourite theme of San Bernardino. In his sermon on the Annunciation he notes that the angel greeted Mary with AVE, which is Eva in reverse, signifying that one is the antithesis of the other: "What does Eva mean? It means pain and woe. And what does Ave mean? Ab a quo est sine ve, that is without pain and without worry."\(^\text{167}\) He then expands on the theme, directing his remarks to the female members of the audience:

> Know that by the sin of Adam our first father and of Eve our first mother, women were threatened by three things: first by shame; second by sterility; third by fragility. (…) It was Mary who relieved you of all these shameful burdens. She has relieved you of shame, of sterility, and of fragility.\(^\text{168}\)

He also makes a very interesting point: the fact that both Mary and Eve existed proves that real women can choose to resemble either:
If you say, "It was a woman who made us fall into sin and death," I’ll say that your right, but that it was also a woman who saved us. If somebody else says, "If you think about it, woman was the beginning of all evil," I’ll respond, "She was the beginning of goodness." Another one says, "Still, woman is less than man, because she is subjected to him by God’s command," and I say to you that she is greater than any man.

The *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine presents a different interpretation. The entry for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin paraphrases John Damascene:

> Of old God drove from paradise the parents of humankind, slumbering in the death of sin, buried beneath the mountain of disobedience, besotted with evil: how now shall Paradise not take her up, and Heaven not ope its gates with joy to her, who brought life to all mankind, showed forth obedience to God the Father, and abolished the infliction of all suffering? Eve lent her ear to the serpent, drank the poisonous draught, was seduced by pleasure, was made subject to the pangs of childbirth, and was condemned with Adam. But she who lent her ear to God, who was filled with the Holy Ghost, who bore the Mercy of the Father in her womb, who conceived without the knowledge of man and gave birth without pain - how shall death swallow her up? How shall corruption dare to sully the body that carried Life itself?

If Dante places both women in Paradise, and Bernardino stresses the victory of one over the other, the *Golden Legend*, with its echoes of Justin Martyr’s earlier words, introduces another aspect of the Mary/Eve trope in its early Renaissance form: a dichotomy between Eve’s fallen sexuality and Mary’s immaculate motherhood. Eve is "seduced by pleasure" while Mary is "filled with the Holy Ghost;" Eve is "made subject to the pangs of childbirth" while Mary "conceived without the
knowledge of man and gave birth without pain." Even in translation the sexualised aspect of the vocabulary comes through, a reflection based on a very old theme, current since the time of Augustine, linking Eve’s sin to improper sexual behaviour. This view of the Mary/Eve dichotomy underlies much of early Renaissance interpretation. When Boccaccio, in his Concerning Famous Women, writes of Eve that "(b)efore doing anything else, she brought her pliant husband to her way of thinking with enticing suggestions," his vocabulary bears the trace of Original Sin perceived as female sexual transgression. The same view colours even a fifteenth-century epistolary debate between Ludovico Foscarini, a Venetian nobleman, diplomat, and lawyer, and Isotta Nogarola, a scholar and gentlewoman of Verona. The debate is centred on Augustine’s dictum in De Genesi ad litteram libri that Eve and Adam sinned unequally according to sex, but equally according to pride. Contending that Adam’s sin was greater than Eve’s, Nogarola cites Eve’s greater proclivity to sensuous or sensual pleasure in her defence. Sexualised sin haunts even the last words of their debate, which are Foscarini’s: "The first mother kindled a great fire, which to our ruin has not yet been extinguished."
altarpieces in the small group of Quattrocento images which juxtapose the two women. I stated that, in comparison to other works predicated on a strong vertical axis and a space constructed rigidly around the Virgin Mary, the Cleveland panel's composition seems to open up a more dynamic interrelation between the figures and the viewer; caught in an ambiguous and fractured space, what is usually a one-way vertical progression from Mary to Eve, sin to salvation, becomes a visual loop, with one figure constantly sending the viewer back to the other. I also stated the nature of the Mary/Eve opposition in the panel is different, bringing the issue of the female body more forcibly into play: Mary's figure shows a greater emphasis on her miraculous motherhood, conflated with that of the Woman of the Apocalypse and highlighted by the fact she is nursing; the figure of Eve is a more detailed sexual presence, startling in its direct contrast to Mary's generalised form.

But, with the relative fluidity of its composition and the visual attractions of both figures, has the basic theological point of The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve, Mary as the Second Eve, been undermined? Was The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve too blatantly dichotomous and yet not quite clear enough, ambiguous according to its generic function of arousing appropriate emotion about its subject matter? For the modern
viewer, and perhaps for the unknown iconoclast who scored its surface, the answer may well be yes, especially if the Cleveland panel is compared to slightly later altarpiece representations linking Mary and Eve. Within a few decades of the Cleveland panel’s creation, the pairing of the two figures took another form, usually with the Annunciation as the central event and the Fall alluded to in a more subdued manner. Fra Angelico’s altarpiece from San Domenico in Cortona, now in the Museo Diocesano and generally dated to c. 1430-34 (fig. 16), presents the Annunciation in the foreground, set in a white arcaded loggia which occupies the great majority of the space; Mary sits against a cloth of honour, caught at the moment in which she accedes to the will of the Father. To the left is a verdant garden, clearly marked off by the colonnettes of the loggia, where Adam and Eve, demurely clad in fur tunics, are being escorted out of Eden by the angel. The predella is made up of scenes from Mary’s life, underscoring her preeminence. The composition is almost repeated in the same artist’s altarpiece for Sta. Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Valdarno (fig. 17) where Adam and Eve have become two tiny figures in the extreme upper left corner, their faces barely visible. Again, the predella is composed of scenes from the Virgin’s miraculous life. A similar scene is found in a predella panel by Giovanni di Paolo now in Washington (fig. 18). While the theological
point of these works is essentially the same as that of the Cleveland panel, their differences highlight its peculiarities. They offer a clear indication of each figure’s relative importance, as well as a clearly delimited separation between the narrative space and time of the Fall and its redemption, now set apart by the architecture of the composition; in these images narrative cause and effect are clear, underlined by the compositions: the central mystery is in no way conflated with the prior defeat. Furthermore, the element of female sexuality, both carnal and maternal, has been all but erased: in both the Fra Angelico images Adam and Eve are covered and remorseful, having lost the physical presence of the Cleveland Eve.

I believe, however, that the apparent paradox of The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve was much less problematic for its original viewers, and may even have constituted a hidden strength. On the one hand the Cleveland panel offered the same type of neat dichotomy between Eve and Mary, sex and motherhood, damnation and redemption, which was prevalent in its patrons’ context. A familiar type of dichotomy received a new and specific force for its viewers, strengthened by centuries of religious tradition: failure to accept the image might put one’s own salvation at stake and could not fail to be notice by God, other members of the congregation, and the Madonna herself.¹⁷⁵
But at the same time the Cleveland panel could acknowledge the attraction of both poles, each a source of visual pleasure in distinct ways but possibly equal measure. Mary is surrounded by a wealth of detail designed to draw the eye up to her: her direct gaze, her greater size, the elaborate pattern of gold on her robe, the crown of relief stars, each with its tiny apostle, and the angels which adore her and invoke her triumph over evil, all conspire to attract, to compel the worshipper to linger on her many attributes. But the viewer is not necessarily less aware of Eve for all that: her position against the plane, her size, even the similarity of her face to Mary’s and her pose to Christ’s call the eye back to her. Above all, the physical presence and detail of her almost naked body, at a time when female nudes were hidden under cassoni lids for private delectation, may have offered male and female viewers a strong visual pleasure, with the erotic overtones of something usually hidden and private. It was a also a display of sexuality sanctioned by an exegetical tradition as old as Justin Martyr and as current as The Golden Legend, an accepted part of the Eve/Mary trope, and one which a viewer was encouraged to consider and contemplate by the ritual of altarpiece worship.

This is not to say that the imagery of the Cleveland panel was inherently any less ambiguous for its fifteenth-century viewers than it is for its twentieth-century admirers.
Rather the viewers and the viewing conditions were different. The creators of the Cleveland altarpiece could assume, more or less consciously, that the combination of social and genre conventions involved in worship of this altarpiece would favour certain readings over others, curtailing the ambiguity of the imagery. Furthermore, the Cleveland panel called on paradigms, both religious and social, which may have been habitual for its patrons and viewers; it encouraged them to construct gender roles in a fashion which was already familiar; and it reinforced those same conceptual paradigms.

Nevertheless, the real ambiguity of the panel remained, and in the last analysis may have provided the specific danger of the Cleveland altarpiece. Despite the conditions which would encourage a "correct" reading of the work, some viewers may have found it unclear or ineffective as an aid to devotion; this is the reason, perhaps, that the linking of Mary and Eve soon took other forms. But the potential ambiguity of the image may also have constituted the special attraction and strength of the work: a woman who in her worship of Mary overcame the attractions of Eve -- a figure who mirrored her own position as supplicant -- had scored a definite victory; she had actively overcome temptations and pleasures not present in other altarpiece juxtapositions of the two women. In the process, she undoubtedly internalised, once again, the oppositions of good and bad, miracle mother
and sexual sinner, which were used in her culture to construct the feminine; but she also could be conscious of an active choice in the matter, one which moreover could be shared and reinforced in the act of worshipping with others, in a public declaration of faith in both religion and societal norms.
1. In the season when the world’s in leaf and flower
the joy of all true lovers waxes strong:
in pairs they go to gardens at the hour
when little birds are singing their sweet song;

All gentle folk now come beneath love’s power,
and the service of his love is each man’s care,
while every maid in gladness spends her hours;
but I am filled with weeping and despair.

For my father has treated me most ill
and keeps me often in the sorest anguish:
he would give me to a lord against my will.

And this I neither do desire nor wish,
and every hour I pass in sharpest grief;
and so receive no joy from flower or leaf.

[from Beverly Allen, Muriel Kittel, and Keala Jane Jewell, eds.,
The Defiant Muse: Italian Feminist Poems from the Middle Ages to
the Present (New York, 1986) 2-3.]

2. The physical specifications of the panel are given in Cleveland
Museum of Art European Paintings Before 1500: Catalogue of
Paintings Part I (Cleveland, 1974), which is the Museum’s most
recent publication of the work. A full list of the literature on
this panel is included as the first section of the bibliography to
this thesis.

3. The identity of the figure has been disputed, and in the early
catalogue descriptions of the panel he is listed simply as a saint.
The figure does correspond to one of the typical "Central Italian
School" iconographies of George compiled by George Kaftal: "Young,
beardless, and holding a shield inscribed with the cross often seen
on his banners." See Iconography of the Saints in Central and
South Italian Schools of Painting (Florence, 1965) Vol I, 503-505.
Gertrud Schiller has suggested that the presence of the saint may
be attributable to the wishes of the donor, whose shield has the
same typical shape of the period, but she does not expand on the
idea. See Schiller, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst, Band 4,2:
Maria (Gutersloh, 1980) 191.

4. An examination report prepared by the Cleveland Museum of Art’s
Conservation Department in 1981 states that the work is composed of
a three-member wood panel, probably poplar, with diagonal cross
bracing fixed to the reverse. At that point the tempera surface
was scarred by vandalism, abrasion, crackle, and retouching which
had darkened; the relief molding had been replaced and heavily
repainted. The report recommended that the panel be cleaned of
dirt, varnish, and retouches, and then revarnished, and retouched
to "minimize the distraction of the damages without falsifying the physical history of this work." See Examination Report, Carlo da Camerino, Madonna of Humility, 16.795, submitted April 28, 1981.


7. see for example Staale Sinding-Larsen: "An iconography spatially connected (permanently or by intended use: e.g. an illustrated sacramentary, a Eucharistic chalice) with an altar is thematically related to the functional operation, expressed through liturgy, of the altar." And, "Such an iconography expresses, represents or reflects concepts in the liturgy (formally stated in it or traditionally ascribed to it) in such a manner that the modes of iconographical interrelations between the concepts do not violate or distort the principles according to which the prototype concepts are interrelated in the liturgy formally or in accordance with Traditional interpretations." Iconography and Ritual: A Study of Analytical Perspectives (Oslo, 1984) 143.


10. this tradition and its history will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

11. Cleveland Museum of Art European Paintings Before 1500 59-61. Jarves left no record of the provenance of the collection he sold to Mrs. Liberty E. Holden: the catalogue that he prepared for the 1883-4 exhibition says only that "the old masters of this gallery were secured many years ago, when circumstances for their acquisition were more favorable than at present." James Jackson Jarves, Handbook for Visitors to the Hollenden Gallery of Old Masters Exhibited at the Boston Foreign Art Exhibition in 1883-4, collected by James Jackson Jarves and Purchased by L.E. Holden of Cleveland, Ohio...1884 3.

like many late Trecento and early Quattrocento figures, he is in this sense an extreme example of the author as "putative creative subject" according to Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson; on the basis of almost forensic analysis of a series of works a single entity has emerged, "the totalized narrative of the-man-and-his-work." See their discussion of "senders" in "Semiotics and Art History" Art Bulletin 78/2 (June 1991): 174-208.


15. see for instance Zampetti's Pittura nelle Marche (2 vols.), which is useful because it includes a detailed chronology and extensive bibliography for the region as well as a full list of attributions and writings on Carlo da Camerino; see also his Paintings from the Marches: Gentile to Raphael, Trans. R.G. Carpanini (London, 1971). Other studies of Carlo can be found in Vitalini Sacconi, Pittura marchigiana: la scuola camerinese, 53-68; ibid., "Carlo da Camerino in Sant'Agostino a Recanati" Antichità viva 15 (1976): 12-17; Michele Polverari, La Circoncisione: Una tavola attribuita a Carlo da Camerino (Pinacoteca Francesco Podesti, Ancona, 1988); ibid., Carlo da Camerino (Pinacoteca Francesco Podesti, Ancona, 24 June to 29 October, 1989).

16. Perhaps the most extreme example of this is a recent description of Carlo by Giampiero Donnini: "a receptive and lively figure, he was able to turn his own eccentricity and his nomadic life into strong points...." (Personnaggio ricettivo e vivace, costui seppe fare della propria eccentricità e del proprio nomadismo altrettanti punti di forza.....). Giampiero Donnini, "La Pittura nel XV secolo" Arte e Cultura nella Provincia di Pesaro e Urbino dalle Origini a oggi, ed. Franco Battistelli (Venice, 1986) 127.

17. see for example Frederick Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, and New York, 1979) 188-192, who, apart from a mention of Gentile's birthplace and two early works in Fabriano, makes no mention of his regional origins or training.

18. "Every now and then in Italian art painters of great ability arise, apparently from nowhere, in centers that lack an important school of painting that could have formed and directed their early work. Gentile da Fabriano was such a case, so was Piero della Francesca, and so, a little later, was Melozzo da Forlì (1438-94)." Hartt 375 (emphasis mine). Gentile is the only Marchigian painter in Hartt's great survey, Piero from Borgo San Sepulcro, and Melozzo from Forlì in Romagna, all three in the Papal States.

As stated, the literature on art in the Marches is fairly limited, especially in English. In addition to the works already


20. the attribution to Giotto: Jarves 7. He stated the coat of arms belonged to the family of Dante, and since Giotto was a friend of Dante’s, "presumably this altar-piece was painted for his family by Giotto." It should be mentioned that he was trying to sell this panel and others in the collection at the time. The attribution to Andrea da Bologna was made by Frank J. Mather in a note to the CMA dated May 17, 1921. The panel has also been attributed to the Sienese School and the Ligurgian School; a full list of attributions can be found in Cleveland Museum of Art European Paintings Before 1500, 61.


24. Margaret R. Miles, Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West (Boston, 1989). The work is also illustrated and discussed as figure 24.

25. Miles 139.
26. Miles 141.


For bibliography and basic biographical information on the various artists discussed see: Dizionario Enciclopedico Bolaffi dei Pittori e degli Incisori Italiani dall'XI al XX secolo, 11 vols. (Turin, 1972).

29. This type of patterning was common in the Marches, and has been systematically studied: Laura Baldelli, "Una proposta di classificazione dei punzoni su tavola nei dipinti del XIV e del XV secolo nelle Marche" Storia dell'arte 72 (1991): 145-182. Baldelli includes examples of works attributed to Carlo da Camerino, but does not discuss the Cleveland panel.


31. Frugoni 44.

32. Frugoni (p. 44) interprets this as: "FEI PECCHATO PER CHE PASSIONE SOFERSE CRISTO CHE QUESTA REINA PORTO NEL VENTRE A NOSTRA REDENTIONE, I committed the sin for which Christ, whom this queen bore in her womb, suffered the Passion for our Salvation." Mazzoni (p. 149-150) reads the inscription in the same way, although his
explanation of it is more voluble: "Io sono Eva, la peccatrice per colpa della quale Cristo sofferse la passione; Cristo, che questa Regina, a' cui piedi io mi trovo, ebbe l'alta sorte di portarsi nel ventre affinchè ne fosse redento dal peccato originale il genere umano."


38.Berenson, vol. I, 196. Other works with the same type of juxtaposition of Eve and Mary:


II. Coronation of the Virgin fresco, San Agostino, Montefalco. See: Van Marle, V. 107.

III. Cola di Petruccioli or workshop, Madonna and Child with Saints, central panel of a dismantled triptych, Italy, private collection. See: Esche, fig. 38; Guldan 217; Mallory 214; Van Marle, V, 106.

IV. Tree of Life Allegory, central panel of a dismantled triptych, Hannover. See: Gertrude Coor, "Bemerkungen zu einem
"In Renaissance documents, as in modern Italian, we read either of just the Madonna, or of the Madonna with the Child; and in paintings of the period inscriptions very frequently underline the fact that it is the Madonna who matters. Because the infant Christ does not appear in this context as a character in his own right but as an attribute of his mother, he is often represented as an adult elsewhere in an altarpiece." Charles Hope, "Altarpieces and the Requirements of Patrons" Christianity and the Renaissance: Images and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento, eds. Timothy Verdon and John Henderson (Syracuse, 1990) 544.


it is this iconography of the Madonna seated on the ground or a cushion, often nursing, and often with the attributes of the Woman of Revelations, which gives the panel its title Madonna of Humility, a name developed for classification purposes in the twentieth-century literature (Anna Jameson does not use in her Legends of the Madonna, for example). The canonical article on the subject is Millard Meiss, "The Madonna of Humility" Art Bulletin 18/4 (December 1936): 435-464, which mentions the Cleveland panel several times without discussing the juxtaposition of Mary and Eve (notes 23, 76, 88, 105). Meiss claims the type must be based on a lost work by Simone Martini, arguing that the "new and remarkable creation" could only have been the work of "a leading painter in a progressive Italian center"(436). He states the lost prototype must have been similar to Martini's Notre-Dame-des-Doms lunette fresco in Avignon, which, far from any mention of humility, is inscribed SALVE REGINA, although Meiss neglects to mention it. Meiss's article seems to have been written to dismiss and refute the conclusions of Georgiana Goddard King, "The Virgin of Humility"
Art Bulletin 17/4 (December 1935): 474-491, an article which argued that the type should be linked to peripheral areas of Franciscan Spiritualism, notably the Marches and the Kingdom of Aragon. Meiss’s conclusions have been almost universally adopted and King’s article has all but disappeared. See for example Carl Huter, "Gentile da Fabriano and the Madonna of Humility" Arte Veneta 24 (1970): 26-34; Michel Laclotte and Elisabeth Mognetti, Inventaire des collections publiques francaises: Peinture Italienne (Paris, 1976) fig. 78; or Henk Van Os, Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460 (Groningen, 1990) vol II, 75-85. As a label "Madonna of Humility" has served to link together very disparate images, ignoring their specificities: thus when Meiss mentions the Cleveland panel in several footnotes, he never discusses the presence of Eve. On the central role of classification in (academic) discourse, see Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (New York, 1973): xv-xxiv.

Other examples of the "Madonna of Humility ascribed to Carlo himself:
II. Madonna del'Umiltà ed Angeli, Milan, Lampugnani Collection. See: Shorr, fig. 9 Bologna 2.

43. According to Frugoni 45, animal fur, and especially goat skin, was a symbol of lust and the fallen state in the Middle Ages, as had been indicated by Church Fathers such as St. Jerome: "Eva in paradiso virgo fuit: post pelliceas tunicas iniptio sumpsit nuptiarum... virginitas esse naturae, nuptias post delictum."

44. see for example the drawing of Luxury (Vienna, Albertina) by Pisanello, Gian Alberto dell'Acqua and Renzo Chiarelli, L'opera completa del Pisanello (Milan, 1972) fig. 126, plate VI, where Luxury is a naked woman, lying on her side on a fur and facing the viewer.


46. it is a cliché found in almost any art history survey text that the Renaissance was marked by an interest in the human body and its functioning, both in art and science. The early Renaissance is also marked, however, by a medical curiosity about the workings of the female body and anatomy in general, spurred by the discovery of Celso’s Medicina, the Cicero medicorum, in 1426 in Siena; Fallopio a century later might be considered the acme of the movement. The most notable Quattrocento work is probably Michele Savonarola’s Il
Trattato Ginecologico-Pediatrico in Volgare: subtitled "Ad mulieres ferrarienses de regimine pregantium et noviter natorum usque ad septennium," the book is a good summary of fifteenth-century thinking on what Savonarola calls "la dolce canzuone di la natura ensegnata."


50. "Oh how precious are the fruits of a good woman! As the Scriptures tells us: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos: -By their fruit shall ye know them."


53. Bryson 108.


57. Barbaro 190.
59. For information about Barbaro and the work’s early reception, see Kohl’s introduction, 181-186.


63. Alberti 152-153.

64. In 1434 Alberti was in a very different situation than Barbaro in 1415-16. Although both writers were brilliant young scholars from wealthy families, Alberti was in no position to dedicate his work to a powerful patron: his family had been exiled from Florence many years before. Furthermore, Battista himself was something of a poor relation in the Alberti clan: one of two illegitimate boys taken in by their father at their mother’s death, there is some evidence that as a young man he was dependent on the financial goodwill of other members of his family, making his interest in the family’s obligations to its offspring, which he develops at some length in his work, a subject very close to his own heart at the time. See Alberti 4.

65. Alberti 8.

66. San Bernardino da Siena, Le Prediche volgari, ed. Piero Bargellini (Milan and Rome, 1936). When translations are available they will be taken from Iris Origo, The World of San Bernardino (London, 1963); otherwise the translations will be mine and the Italian passage provided. Bernardino devoted Sermons XIX, XX, and XXI exclusively to marriage and relations between husband and wife.

68. Origo 244.
70. Barbaro 220-226.
73. Alberti 51.
74. Alberti 207.
75. Alberti 207.
76. “La donna è quella che sa governare la casa: d’ogni altra cosa si fa beffe.” Bernardino 419.
77. Bernardino 400.
78. Alberti 98.
80. Barbaro 214.
81. Barbaro 213.
82. see for example Michele Savonarola, Il Trattato Ginecologico-Pediatrico in Volgare: Ad mulieres ferrerienses de regimine pregantium et noviter natorum usque ad septennum, ed. Luigi Belloni (Società Italiana di Ostetrica e ginecologia, 1952) 27, 41-42
84. Alberti 211-213.
85. Alberti 213.
86. see especially Predica XX: Qui appreso in questa predica si tratta pure dell’ordinato amore che debba essere infra la moglie e l’marito.” Bernardino 420-447.
89. Barbaro 204.
"come colui che si tiene una amica, la quale il governa, lava, cuoce, aparechia e simili cose, e ha con questo utile anche il diletto de la lussuria, eeci piu amicizia. Che se ella fusse una porcaccia, ch’ella non stesse netta e pulita, e non tenesse la casa come dovrebbe tenere, non e tanto il diletto, ne l’amicizia. Basta un tempo a questo modo; ma poi se ella inferma, allo spedale ne vai. Come tu ingiallarai, non v’è piu amicizia, per che non v’è né diletto, né utile." Bernardino 393-394.

on the importance of munificent display for public honour and reputation see for example Alberti 270ff.


118. Klapisch-Zuber 216.


120. Besta 150.

121. Bellomo 220-222.


125. Klapisch-Zuber 31. This statement is based on an analysis of the Catasto tax census filed in Florence and its region in 1371, 1427, and 1470.


129. Klapisch-Zuber 68-93. For studies of specific familial marriage strategies see: Georges Duby and Jacques Le Goff, eds., Famille et Parenté dans l’Occident médiéval (Rome, 1977) "Troisième Partie, Italie." P.J. Jones, The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State: A Political History (Cambridge, 1974) gives examples of alliances by marriage in the Marches, the territory where Carlo da Camerino is believed to have worked.

130. on the Monte delle Doti and dowry strategies see Julius Kirshner, "Pursuing Honor While Avoiding Sin, the Monte delle Doti of Florence" Studi senesi 89 (1977): 175-258; Julius Kirshner and Anthony Molho, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market in Early Quattrocento Florence" Journal of Modern History 50/3 (September 1978): 403-438. See also Klapisch-Zuber’s essays.


Perhaps ironically, considering his youthful remarks on women, Francesco Barbaro’s daughter Costanza Barbaro was a notable humanist scholar. For information on her and a letter from father to daughter, see: "Francesco Barbaro to his Daughter Costanza" Her Immaculate Hand, 106-111.


136. Origo 64-65.

137. Kelso 40-41.

To thee we cry, banished children of Eve.
To thee do we sigh, groaning and weeping
In this vale of tears.
[from Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 115].

If Eve fell, Maria was stable and firm."  Bernardino 651.

140. "If Eve fell, Maria was stable and firm." Bernardino 651.

141. Not surprisingly, in light of its emphasis on family standing and honourable, public displays of wealth, the Quattrocento was marked by increasingly elaborate domestic architecture and decoration. See Richard Goldthwaite, "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture" *American Historical Review* 77 (1972): 997-1012; and "The Empire of Things: Consumer Demand in Renaissance Italy" *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. F.W. Kent and Patricia Simons (Canberra and Oxford, 1987) 153-176.


An upper-class marriage, which marked the entrance of the bride into her husband’s line and the consolidation of the two families, would be officially and publicly signalled by the procession of the girl to her new home. This aspect was considered so binding that in Lucca the groom could claim the dowry immediately afterward, whether or not the marriage had been consummated (Witthoft 57, nt. 42). The wedding was also marked by an exchange of goods: the bride was accompanied by the goods she brought in dowry and the clothing and gifts her spouse had given her (which remained his to reclaim and in fact were sometimes borrowed or rented for this occasion; see Klapisch-Zuber 228). His presents would often carry his coat of arms, as a clear sign of her new ties; she could be clad in the visible proof of both families’ wealth and honour, her body a marker of the newly consolidated alliance. And to carry these goods during the procession, the groom or his family would typically commission a pair of chests, usually with painted scenes, called forzieri or cassoni (Witthoft 52). These were flat-topped, narrow boxes, often carved and with painted side panels, and could later be used for linen storage and as benches in the marriage chamber. A key element of the bedroom furnishings, cassoni were sometimes painted with the same imagery as the marital bed, forming a continuous narrative sequence (Callmann 1980, 1). Like much of Quattrocento furnishings, they
became increasingly elaborate throughout the century, while the painted panel scenes became more complex, often featuring often a narrative rather than a simple scene, a change Witthoft has linked to the display needs of the marriage procession.

The desco da parto also marked both a public and a domestic event. At the birth of a child the new mother of a bourgeois line would remain in bed for a lying-in period, receiving visitors, congratulations, and sweets and gifts on a ceremonial desco (or tondo) da parto. Deschi were usually painted on both sides, with a vignette or allegorical scene on the obverse and sometimes with a chessboard, checkerboard, or the family coat of arms on the reverse.

143. Callmann (1974) 30-35. Favourite choices of topics included literary sources like Boccaccio and Petrarch or stories from Greek and Roman mythology: Callmann (1974) 39-51. Deschi also feature scenes with a birth or a visit to the new mother, including traditional religious iconography like the Birth of the Virgin or the Adoration of the Magi; one tondo even shows a deputation of the Signoria, heralded by a trumpeter with the banner of the State, coming to honour and to congratulate the mother’s contribution to the Commune, leaving no doubt about motherhood’s important role. Schubring, nt. 78ff, plate 11; Martin Wackernagel, The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist: Projects and Patrons, Workshop and Art Market, trans. Alison Luchs (Princeton, 1981) 168-169.

144. Rose Marie San Juan, "Mythology, Women and Renaissance Private Life: The Myth of Eurydice in Italian Furniture Painting," typescript [to be published in Art History 15/2 (June 1992)].


146. David Rosand, "‘Divinità di cosa dipinta:’ pictorial structure and the legibility of the altarpiece" The Altarpiece in the Renaissance 146.


152. Wackernagel 131, 241-242.


156. Zeri 91, 94.

157. Trexler 119, cites an image of Antonio Rinaldeschi throwing dung at the Virgin’s face.


159. Trexler 63-66.

160. Trexler 93.


169. "Se tu dirai: - la donna fu quella che ci fece cadere ne la morte; - dico che tu dici vero; ma pure la donna fu quella che ci rilevò e riuscito. Quell’altro dice: - oh, se tu procurarai, la donna è stata il principio d’ogni male. - E io ti rispondo: la donna è stata principio di ogni bene. Dice quell’altro: - pur la donna è da meno che non è l’uomo, però che ella è sottoposta a l’uomo per boca di Dio; - e io ti dico che è di più che non è niuno omo." Bernardino 648.


171. In *The City of God* Augustine relates Genesis 3:6 (The woman saw then that the wood was good to eat and beautiful to the eyes and of delightful form and she plucked some of its fruit and ate it and gave it to her husband) to Matthew 5:28 (If anyone looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart); he notes that both sins are based in sight and equates Eve’s desire for the tree with the carnal lust evoked by Matthew: Stephen G. Nichols, "An Intellectual Anthropology of Marriage in the Middle Ages" The New Medievalism, eds. Marina S. Brownlee, Kevin Brownlee, and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore and London, 1991) 77. For a look at the specific political and social circumstances surrounding Augustine’s work, see Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York, 1988); for a close reading and interpretation of the Genesis narrative itself, see Mieke Bal, “Sexuality, Sin, and Sorrow: The Emergence of Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3)” *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge, MA and London, 1986) 317-338.

As writers like Pagels, Nichols and Mieke Bal have indicated, interpretation of the Genesis narrative has always had a political edge in the West: believed to have taken place in real historical time, the story was considered God’s template for the correct relations and behaviour of the two sexes.

173. Isotta Nogarola, "Of the Equal or Unequal Sin of Adam and Eve" Her Immaculate Hand 57-69; the same work also includes letters to Nogarola from Foscarini and from Lauro Quirini. The dispute was complied by Nogarola with Foscarini’s consent, based on their correspondence.

174. Nogarola 68.

175. Trexler 68-69: not only other members of the congregation but the altarpiece Madonna herself observed the viewer at worship: "when one ‘saluted the Madonna,’ the sensory quality most frequently noted was her sight....Mary’s vision was in the image. Both San Bernardino in the 1420s and Savonarola at the end of the century warned Florentines against committing sins ‘in the eyes of the Virgin Mary.’ of the Annunziata, another important Florentine Virgin, ‘as if to say to the Virgin there: I do insult you.’ Savonarola assured Florentine women that the same Virgin did not take kindly to their appearance in the church heavily cosmeticized and dressed like prostitutes. (...) One Virgin, looking our from her perch over a church entrance upon the unseemly behavior in the street, closed her eyes."
I. Literature on the Cleveland Panel:


Mather, Frank J. "Holden Collection" *The Nation* 95 (October 24, 1912): 392-393.


*Cleveland Museum of Art Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition Catalogue*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1936.


Steinberg, Leo. The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion. New York: Pantheon/October, 1983; first published as October 25 (Summer 1983).


II. General Reference Works:


Coor, Gertrude. "Neither a Rose nor an Apple but a Fig." *Burlington Magazine* 104/2 (July 1962): 305.


Figure 1: Carlo da Camerino, *Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve*. c. 1400. Cleveland Museum of Art.
Figure 2: Eve, detail (bottom) of Figure 1.
Figure 3: Gabriel, detail (middle left) of Figure 1.
Figure 4: Michael and George, detail (upper right) of Figure 1.
Figure 5: Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Maestà*. c. 1330-32. Lunette fresco, San Galgano, Montesiepi.
Figure 6: Eve, detail of Figure 5.
Figure 7: Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*. c. 1380-90. Lehman Collection, New York.
Figure 8: Angelo Puccinelli, *Madonna with Angels and Saints*. c. 1360-70. Staatliches Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg.
Figure 9: Lippo Vanni, Madonna and Child Enthroned, with Scenes from the Legend of St. Aurea. 1358. SS. Domenico e Sisto, Rome.
Figure 10: Central panel of Figure 9.
Figure 11: Master of the Straus Madonna, Madonna and Child with Angels and Saints, c. 1390–1410. Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, Stalybridge.
Figure 12: Giuliano di Simone da Lucca, Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints. Formerly Leghorn, Larderel Collection.
Figure 14: Giuliano di Simone da Lucca, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels and Saints*. Pinacoteca, Parma.
Figure 15: A Male Youth and a Female Nude. Inside lids of cassoni pair, present whereabouts unknown.
Figure 16: Fra Angelico, Annunciation Altarpiece. c. 1433-34. Museo Diocesano, Cortona.
Figure 17: Fra Angelico, **Annunciation Altarpiece**, c. 1430-40. Sta Maria delle Grazie, San Giovanni Valdarno.
Figure 18: Giovanni di Paolo, *Annunciation*. c. 1440-50. Predella panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington.