

Bessarion's World: Art, Science, and Crusade

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## Abstract

“Bessarion’s World: Art, Science, and Crusade” examines the patronage and collecting practices of Basil Bessarion (b. ca. 1403, d. 1472) within the fifteenth-century culture of Crusade in Europe and Byzantium. Basil was born in the kingdom of Trebizond at the eastern end of the Black Sea and immigrated to Rome, Italy in 1440, when he converted from Eastern Orthodoxy and was appointed a cardinal in the Catholic Church. He lived in Italy for over thirty years, during which time he amassed an impressive collection of portable objects, ranging from illuminated manuscripts and incunables to relics, reliquaries, icons, and liturgical objects. I present the thesis that Bessarion’s patronage of the arts and sciences was fueled by two closely related endeavors: first, the cardinal’s lifelong travels through the Byzantine world and Europe; and second, his fervent desire to launch a Crusade to reclaim territories controlled by Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) and his Ottoman army. I argue that Bessarion acquired works of art for his collection in Rome to use them as instigations to Crusade and a moral mandate for Christian princes to take up the Cross and participate in a holy war against the Ottomans.

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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(Principal Advisor) Dr. Francesca Fiorani

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dr. Fotini Kondyli

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Dr. Karl Shuve

Approved for the University of Virginia Committee on Graduate Studies.

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife, Jessie, a source of guidance and love.

## Epigraph

“It is hard to say whether he was trying to understand the past in light of the present or the present in light of the past.”

-- Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (2007), 143, on the construction of Mnemosyne panels 78 and 79, devoted to the concordat between Pope Pius XI and Mussolini on February 11, 1929, and Gertrud Bing's account of Warburg's recollection of the ceremony in Rome

## Acknowledgements

I wrote “Bessarion’s World” during my time at the University of Virginia from 2014–20. The project began a few years prior, however, with a book recommendation from my then-advisor at the University of Alabama, Dr. Tanja Jones, and a statement she made about a gap in the literature of art and humanism. The book was Nancy Bisaha’s *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. The observation: “You know whose patronage needs more attention...”

Early annotations written in the margins of Bisaha’s book point to the current project, which owes so much to current and former teachers. I am deeply indebted to my primary advisor, Francesca Fiorani, and committee members Fotini Kondyli, Eric Ramírez-Weaver, and Karl Shuve. Many thanks also go out to department chairs and directors of graduate study in art history, namely Larry Goedde, Carmenita Higginbotham, and Douglas Fordham, who evaluated my work and supported conference travel and summer research in Rome, Venice, and Cesena as well as exploratory trips to Sassoferrato, Grottaferrata, and Urbino. Financial awards also included Crane and Hobby Foundation fellowships. I am grateful to those families and the endowments established in their names.

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Finally, to Jessie; my extended set of parents, Mark, Valerie, and Terry; and all my siblings, Sarah, Nikki, and Alex: I love you. Thank you.

*INTRODUCTION*

Bessarion's Body



Cardinal Basil Bessarion (b. Trebizond ca. 1403, d. Ravenna 1472) is a recognizable figure to many art historians. In painted portraits and woodcuts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including those from the studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro (fig. I.1) and Paolo Giovio's *Elogia virorum literis illustrium* (fig. I.2), Bessarion is represented as an old man in a red hat, a black tunic, and a gray beard. Regarded as a great man in his own day, he has been studied by specialists of Italian and Byzantine culture for his role at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–39), his immigration from Constantinople to Rome (1440), and the legendary collection of books he donated to the library of San Marco (1468), which constitute the core holdings of the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice.

Bessarion was an avid collector of works of art, including relics and reliquaries, and an important patron of his cardinal titular church, the basilica of Santi Apostoli in Rome. However, Bessarion's activities as a collector of artifacts has not received as much scholarly attention as his library, nor has it been placed into the context of the cardinal's advocacy for Crusade. Few studies have considered that Bessarion's collection was first and foremost a sign of his multifaceted identity as a scholar who converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism and as a humanist who was a man of the church with a defined political agenda surrounding Crusade. Usually, only passing references are given to his books and papers in the Marciana. In response, my dissertation is a study of the cardinal's engagement with works of art in the fifteenth-century culture of Crusade and his desire to defeat the sultan, Mehmed II, in the Byzantine world.

Bessarion lived in Rome for over thirty years following his immigration from Constantinople, during which the cardinal amassed an impressive collection of illuminated manuscripts, relics, reliquaries, Byzantine icons, scientific instruments, and liturgical objects.

What follows is an art historical examination of Bessarion's patronage of the arts and sciences, with specific attention to his leadership of papal legations to the courts of Europe, where he acquired some of the works in his collection. Attention is also given to the changes in meaning that the objects went through as they moved between, amidst, and beyond the geographic interval defined by the Greek and Italian peninsulas. This study contributes to the emerging body of literature that focuses on the construction of the Byzantine identity in Italy as part of the broader field of cultural interchange in the Mediterranean, particularly exchanges dealings with immigrants and the Greek diaspora.<sup>1</sup> This dissertation will focus on the materials of Bessarion's collection and assess the particularities of his agenda in promoting union between the churches.

#### Primary Research Question

My interest in Bessarion's engagement with the arts and sciences in the context of Crusade is guided by several research questions. When I began my research, I asked if specific objects from Bessarion's collection might be linked to his advocacy for Crusade, particularly from 1440 to 1472. A dominant theme emerged, namely that Bessarion's decades-long interest in Crusade, as evidenced by his travels in Italy and throughout Europe, was integrally linked to his patronage and collecting practices (map I.1, showing a few of the places Bessarion went during his lifetime). While scholars tend to mention Bessarion's theological role as a unionist at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and, occasionally, the contents of printed versions of his *Orationes ad principes Christianos contra Turcos*, or *Orations to Christian Princes Against the Turks* (1471), very few have dealt with the cardinal's activities as an advocate for Crusade and a collector *on the move*, as he participated in important legations to Ferrara and Florence (1438–39), Bologna (1450–55), northern territories that included

Nuremberg, Worms, and Vienna (1460–61), Venice (1463–64), and Château-Gontier in France (1472) (map I.2).<sup>2</sup>

Examinations of these legations, plus a journey undertaken by Thomas Palaiologos to Rome in 1460–61, frame the chapters that follow and offer new insight on the objects Bessarion collected. There are significant contributions to be made in linking Bessarion's travels to objects and speeches he gave to persuade the princes of Europe to join in a Crusade to Byzantium, including the cardinal's interest in the southern territory of Greece known as the Morea, a region that was particularly dear to him as the site of his early education with the Byzantine scholar George Gemistos Plethon. A focus on Bessarion's movement in Byzantium and Europe can also shed biases that describe the cardinal as a stranger in town. These moves across Europe were so pervasive that they offer a novel, organizing principle for a deeper investigation of Bessarion's world.

### Core Arguments

I have a few core arguments in this dissertation. The most fundamental is the claim that Bessarion used individual works of art as an *excitatio*, or exhortation, to Crusade. Bessarion's advocacy was fueled by lifelong travels in the Byzantine world and Europe, and I suggest that the cardinal's patronage and travels were mutually reinforced, constantly entangled, and guided by a desire to launch Christian soldiers to Byzantium. I discuss frescoes, oil paintings, and works on paper, but show an interest in objects including relics, reliquaries, icons, mosaics, and textiles, since these works were mobile like Bessarion and moved along material pathways between Byzantium and Europe. I argue that Bessarion acquired works of art for his collection in Rome to use them as tools to instigate Crusade

and inspire Christian princes to take up the Cross and participate in a holy war against the Ottomans.

## Literature Review

### *Bessarion's Textual Corpus*

Studies of Bessarion stretch from the birth of humanism in the nineteenth century to today's secular humanism. Given the weight of Bessarion's textual corpus—defined as everything that has been written about him, to this point—there is a real chance for reading to crush future interpretations, if only because there is so much to consider. One of the first goals of this study is to stand up to the historiographic pressure of Bessarion, in multiple languages, and to read analyses of his ecumenical body for details regarding his patronage. Admittedly, a focus on Bessarion's movement is not entirely new, as foundational studies by Henri Vast (1878) and Ludwig Mohler (1923, 1927, and 1942) devote some time to the cardinal's legations to Ferrara, Florence, Bologna, Vienna, Venice, and Château-Gontier.<sup>3</sup> However, such authors do not establish movement as a constitutive aspect of Bessarion's time in Europe and mention his works of art only as an afterthought in their analyses.

### *Patterns in Bessarion Studies*

As I wrestle with Bessarion's textual weight and attempt to move it across a broader geographic and temporal range, I also appreciate that prior studies of the cardinal are heavily patterned. Some of these patterns are found in stories about Bessarion's beard, the Council of Ferrara-Florence, and the materials in Marciana. Other patterns can be found in the ways that previous research has been constrained to his activities either before or after his

immigration to Italy in late 1440. Significantly, a focus on Bessarion's art collection facilitates an understanding of how his time in the kingdom of Trebizond, Constantinople, and Mistra, all prior to 1440, is closely tied to his time in Europe.

Another prevalent theme in Bessarion studies is the cardinal's reference to Venice as an "alterum Byzantium." In a letter to Doge Cristoforo Moro and the Senate of the republic, dated May 31, 1468, Bessarion writes: "Though nations from almost all over the earth flock in vast numbers to your city, the Greek are most numerous of all; as they sail in from their own regions they make their first landfall in Venice, and have such a tie with you that when they put into your city they feel that they are entering another Byzantium [alterum Byzantium]."<sup>24</sup> A proper use of the source shows the relatedness of Byzantine and Latin cultures in Venice, but citations have also been used to make the city a replacement for Bessarion's identity between and amidst cultures—as if his experiences prior to immigration were replaced by a more accessible alternative.

An additional, well-established notion pertains to Bessarion's character: he is figured as a young, sneaky, and sometimes disingenuous diplomat whose ambition and opportunism inspired him to leave his homeland and Orthodox faith for better opportunities abroad. Most importantly, there is also Cardinal Bessarion, who was a leader of the Catholic church and has no history prior to his move to Italy in 1440. In fact, Bessarion is often looked at as somebody who was barely Byzantine, with an identity that came from his assimilation into Latin culture.

The image of Bessarion as a political climber and opportunist also comes in more recent references to the conclaves in which the cardinal was almost elected pope, with a

focus on the elections of Pius II in 1458, Paul II in 1464, and Sixtus IV in 1471. These repeated references to Bessarion as an almost-pope are unsurprising in past and recent studies, but it is important to note how the biases and patterns of primary and secondary sources become facing mirrors, with Bessarion's body in between, imaged as an unshaved, wandering, always-immigrant social-climber and outsider. While the goal of my research is not to champion or defend Bessarion against his detractors, I wish to reassess the scant historical evidence that has been used to judge him, specifically when it comes to his supposed insincerity, turncoat politics, or lack of concern for his fellow Byzantines.<sup>5</sup>

### *Bessarion and the Birth of Humanism*

The Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt (d. 1897) shaped the future of Bessarion studies by including him in a brief discussion of Greek exiles in *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, or *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, first published in 1860.<sup>6</sup> Burckhardt's work was followed by a noticeable surge in interest by scholars such as Wolfgang Maximilian von Goethe, the grandson of the famous poet, Henri Vast, and Rudolf Rochell.<sup>7</sup> Most impactful, however, was Ludwig Mohler's *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann: Darstellung* (vol. 1; 1923), with later volumes devoted to the cardinal's *In calumniatorem Platonis*, or *Against the Slanders of Plato* (vol. 2; 1927), and the treatises, speeches and letters of his social circle (vol. 3; 1947). Rarely noted, however, is Mohler's role as a Nazi propagandist, or Brown Priest, and his affiliations with the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP; joined May 1, 1933) and the related National Socialist Teachers League (NSLB; joined July 1, 1934).<sup>8</sup>

*Bibliographic Studies*

More work could be done on Mohler's politics, expanding into an examination of how the early study of Bessarion and Hellenism, more widely, coincided with the development of the Humanismus educational system in Germany and the rise of Romanticism, nationalism, logics of racial purity, and their enactment as cultural genocide.<sup>9</sup> Mohler's fascism may be one reason for the steep drop in interest in Bessarion during the second half of the twentieth century, when many scholars of art and humanism were people with Jewish heritage who fled Nazi Germany and took up posts in British, American, and Italian institutions. Such scholars include Erwin Panofsky, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and Ernst Gombrich, who do not analyze Bessarion at any length in their written work. Bessarion does not reemerge as a topic of study until the 1970s, when bibliographers such as Lotte Labowsky, also of Jewish-German descent, turned to the materials in the Marciana.<sup>10</sup>

*Bessarion and Studies of Cultural Interchange in 1980s and 90s*

In the 1980s and 1990s, most of the research on Bessarion appeared in studies of cultural interchange in the Mediterranean alongside a deep commitment to the development of art and humanism. Within these interests, Bessarion emerged as a prominent example of Byzantines who either immigrated to Europe or moved back and forth between the Greek and Italian peninsulas. Important contributions were made by Deno John Geanakoplos, John Monfasani, and Jonathan Harris, who write on Greek scholars as "immigrants," "émigrés," "exiles," or "economic migrants," and discuss Bessarion's literary output and his historical context within a wider network of Greek travelers, diplomats, and cultural agents.<sup>11</sup>

*Monographs and Dissertations on Bessarion*

The growing interest in Bessarion also led to several monographs and anthologies devoted to the cardinal, specifically Concetta Bianca's *Da Bisanzio a Roma: Studi sul cardinale Bessarione* (1999) and Giuseppe Coluccia's *Basilio Bessarione: Lo spirito greco e l'Occidente* (2009).<sup>12</sup> A number of dissertations have also been written on Bessarion in the past thirty years: Fabrizio Lollini's "Il Cardinale Bessarione e le arte figurative" (1986–87), Jacquilyne Martin's "Cardinal Bessarion: Mystical Theology and Spiritual Union Between East and West" (2000) and, most recently, Laura Bolick's "Culture, Humanism and Intellect: Cardinal Bessarion as Patron of the Arts" (2014).<sup>13</sup> Another important publication was Andrzej Gutkowski and Emanuela Prinzivalli's (eds.) *Bessarione e la sua accademia* (2012), which was the first and remains the only book dedicated to the formation of Bessarion's humanist academy in Rome.<sup>14</sup>

*Bessarion Between and Amidst Cultures in the Mediterranean*

An inspirational starting point for future work on Bessarion was established by Claudia Märthl, Christian Kaiser, and Thomas Ricklin (eds.) in their volume "*Inter graecos latinissimus, inter latinos graecissimus*": *Bessarion zwischen den Kulturen* (2013). As they show, a newly arranged and more fluid grasp of Bessarion's body can be found between and amidst (zwischen) the cultures of the Mediterranean, reflecting Aby Warburg's notion, expressed in his diaries, of "eine Ikonologie des Zwischenraumes," ("an iconology of intervals"). The editors borrow their title from Lorenzo Valla, a fifteenth-century humanist and member of Bessarion's academy who once referred to Bessarion as the "greatest Latin among the Greeks and the greatest Greek among the Latins." The volume's contributors stay true to



Valla's assessment by refusing to reduce Bessarion's life in Italy to the act of giving up one cultural identity to assume another, instead focusing on what it means to develop a multiplicit identity that depends on a variety of cultural experiences.

### *Bessarion and the Visual Arts*

The only book-length publication on Bessarion and the visual arts, in any language, is the catalog for the exhibition *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo*, hosted by the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice in 1994 and curated by Gianfranco Fiaccadori in collaboration with Andrea Cuna, Andrea Gatti, and Saverio Ricci. The book includes important essays by Fabrizio Lollini and Antonio Rigo, among others, that range across Italy, Europe, and the Byzantine world, and as a collaborative work deals with sources in both Latin and Greek.<sup>15</sup> Silvia Ronchey has also written extensively on other aspects of Bessarion's world, including as an adopted citizen of Venice, his volti, or faces, represented in various works of art, and his attachment to the last Byzantine Emperor, Thomas Palaiologos.<sup>16</sup>

### *Recent Scholarship*

Translators have become increasingly interested in Bessarion's written work in the last decade. There are now Latin-to-Italian translations of Bessarion's *Against the Slanderers of Plato* (Eva Del Soldato, 2014), the *Oratio dogmatica de unione*, or Dogmatic Oration for Union, from the Council of Florence (Gianfrancesco Lusini and Antonio Rigo, 2001), and *De natura et arte*, or *On Nature and Art* (Pier Davide Accendere and Ivano Privitera, 2014), with the last appearing in another publication in German as *Über Natur und Kunst* (Sergei Mariev and Monica Marchetto, 2015).<sup>17</sup> One of the most famous works associated with Bessarion, the

Italo-Byzantine reliquary of the True Cross in Venice, was also recently restored by experts at the Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, with work beginning in March 2013 and conclusions presented at an international symposium at the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti in October 2013.<sup>18</sup>

My thoughts on the complexity of Bessarion's identity are also shaped by Hans Lamers' recent work in *Greece Reinvented: Transformations of Byzantine Hellenism in Renaissance Italy* (2015). Lamers' book is a key source in current debates over the development of Byzantine identity in Italy, and his work mentions many of the Greek communities that existed in Rome, Venice, and southern Italy. Like Lamers, my dissertation touches on the significance of Bessarion's ties to mixed Italian-Byzantine communities in Italy and what he calls "the secular Greekness of Cardinal Bessarion."<sup>19</sup> In focusing on the entanglement of Bessarion's religious and political commitments, my work also offers an art historical equivalent to Nancy Bisaha's *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (2006), a groundbreaking source on fifteenth-century humanists' adoption of antique models for writings on Crusade.<sup>20</sup>

#### Areas of Need

There are many areas of need in the study of Bessarion's patronage in the context of Crusade. While previous scholarship focused on theology and text offers tremendous opportunities to understand Bessarion's material world, much remains to be done on his art collection, particularly in English, from the most famous works associated with him to his interest in metalworking, textile weaving, and icon painting traditions. In focusing on his art collection, we can expand the canon of Bessarion studies to include the so-called

“sumptuous,” “minor,” or “sacred arts,” including liturgical objects, relics, reliquaries, and micromosaics. These objects may constitute a smaller ratio of Bessarion’s collecting practice, but they are also precious, both in terms of the wealth invested in their creation and the effort the cardinal undertook to acquire them.

Much more could also be done to contextualize Bessarion’s place within the Byzantine diaspora and the intellectual community in Europe. At one moment, an examination of objects may lead to an analysis that places Bessarion within a community of émigrés and the cultural flow of people and things from Byzantium to Italy. In the next, it may be necessary to frame Bessarion’s patronage in terms of trauma, displacement, and territorial loss. The challenge is to maintain some combination of these approaches, wherein Bessarion experiences exclusory behavior in Italy just as he engages with multicultural communities in Rome, Venice, and the legations he assembled and led to princely and imperial courts in Europe.

### Contributions

This dissertation is, in some ways, a classic patronage study in its devotion to an important personality from the fifteenth century and the works of art associated with Bessarion. It asks how objects fit within Bessarion’s biography, and examines the cardinal’s patronage as a way to expand into his social network, to important figures such as Niccolò Perotti, Georg von Peurbach, Johannes Müller (later, Regiomontanus), Thomas Palaiologos, Gregory Mammas, and Guillaume Fichet. Significantly, it is the start of a career-long project related to Bessarion’s academy of arts and letters on the move between Byzantium and Europe.

My work also establishes Bessarion as an important patron of the arts *and* sciences and relates these interests to Crusade. As discussed earlier, a small body of literature currently exists on Bessarion as a patron of the arts, with even less written on the cardinal's engagement with Greek and Latin science, particularly cartography, astronomy, ship-building, metallurgy, and time-keeping.<sup>21</sup> In viewing objects from Bessarion's milieu in the context of Crusade, I also argue for something beyond a preservation thesis, wherein Bessarion gathered the richness of Byzantine culture in Italy. While there is no doubt that Bessarion's acquisitions were driven by his desire to rescue aspects of Greek art, literature, and scientific knowledge from the Ottomans, I suggest that an emphasis on the benefit of the cardinal's collection to posterity has precluded a close examination of objects as weapons and rallying points for Crusade.

My narrative responds to major events in the history of Crusade in the fifteenth century, including the leadup to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman conquest of the Morea in the 1460s, the loss of the kingdom of Trebizond in 1461, and the capture of the Venetian colony of Negroponte in 1470.<sup>22</sup> My dissertation contributes to ongoing scholarship on art and Crusade in this period, within what is known as the "Later," "Renaissance," "early modern," or "ghost Crusade."<sup>23</sup> Inherent to my work is the claim that, contrary to the resilient belief that late medieval and early modern humanism was a secular movement, humanists were actively engaged in the military and religious implementation of Crusade.

Bessarion's path was framed by the Greek and Italian peninsulas, so my dissertation also looks to territories in Italy, Europe, and Byzantium and acknowledges the space between them—most notably the coasts, islands, port cities, and colonies that provided

pathways in the Middle Sea.<sup>24</sup> Each chapter also deals with objects that were created, acted on, and restored many times, works that frustrate a study of the moment of creation and require an analysis that moves across time and geographic borders. The Mediterranean offers an alternative to East and West, just as Bessarion's world resists the simple opposition of Greece and Italy. Based on the usefulness of a study amidst cultures, I interpret Bessarion's activities in the middle of time periods (late medieval and early modern), areas of interest (Italian and Byzantine studies), and geographic locales (Byzantium and Europe). The future of Bessarion studies lies in the interval, rift, or rend between areas of academic specialty, and will even show some disregard for administrative boundaries that are anything but hermeneutic.

## Methodology

### *Bessarion's Body without Organs*

I have mentioned that Bessarion's textual corpus is both heavy and patterned, with dominant characterizations being the bearded Bessarion, a Bessarion who belongs to the preservation thesis of patronage and collecting, and a sneaky or disingenuous Bessarion who works as an inside man for the Catholics at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. One way to resist patterns, however, is to pursue what the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari might call Bessarion's "body without organs."<sup>25</sup> The concept refers to a studied anatomy that is not arrayed in a usual or expected way, and Deleuze and Guattari specifically juxtapose a body without organs with one that is heavily patterned. By rejecting traditional pathways within Bessarion studies, we may embrace another, similar idea, borrowed from James Joyce, of "re-bodying," "drawing-together," and "reweaving" what is available in the

historical record.<sup>26</sup> After five hundred years, Bessarion's body is packed with circulatory systems for interpretation, and this project is about emptying out and working towards the elimination of bias. One step is realizing that the study of Bessarion is much more complicated than we thought; the second is finding ways to describe Bessarion's body as increasingly pluralistic.

*Intent, Materiality, and Layered Objects*

Another underlying methodological stake of this project is the claim that the meaning of works of art is not always controlled or intended by their owners. The realization that images do not always act the way we want them to is critically important in the study of art and humanism—including Bessarion studies—which has been marked by a need to show erudition by resolving every image analysis. Humanists often makes works of art into parables with morals that appear to have been signposted, all along. Given the fallacies of this method, there are many opportunities for interpretations that do not provide all the answers—not for the sake of descriptions that amount to an art history without a text, but to allow for the unexpected beyond one person's intent.

As I maintain an object-based approach in a monograph, one of my key contributions is the ability to understand Bessarion's world according to a view of Crusade. At times, I suggest that Bessarion's advocacy guided his acquisition of objects and, more rarely, his support for the creation of a work of art. The directionality of that statement is worth noting, however, as it moves from ideology to materiality, from thought to thing. Given the psychoanalytic tendencies in Bessarion studies (another pattern, rooted in what Bessarion thought or wanted at a given time) there is a need to use method and description

to describe what I call, possessively, “Bessarion’s world.” In fact, if we reverse the directionality of humanism, we can replace the question “What did Bessarion want of this object?” with “How did this object influence and even shape Bessarion’s interest in Crusade?”

The study of objects in Bessarion’s material world also requires an approach that deals with design and renovation; initial and subsequent locations; and a history of various owners. Beyond a study of patronage, this is a reception study, focused on the renovation, reuse, and alteration of artifacts between Byzantium and Europe. Discussions are split between Bessarion and the people or groups who owned a work of art before or after him. In all cases, I prefer a diachronic approach that highlights moments when an object was in transit, changed hands, or adapted for use in another cultural context. A focus on the cultural reframe, or re-re-frame, of a work of art often means a look into its layered surface, to its accretion as a bricolage and assemblage that often includes sumptuous gilding, precious stones, pigments, embedded glass, and layered inscriptions.

*Bessarion and Objects, On the Move*

My study has a foundational interest in Bessarion’s time on the move as a diplomat for Crusade. There were entire years, up to five at a time, when Bessarion was not at home in Rome. A history of Bessarion’s engagement with the arts and sciences can open the field by valuing movement over the sedentary factors fueling analyses, to this point, of Ptolemy’s *Geography*, the reliquary head of Saint Andrew, the reliquary of the True Cross, and the frescoes in Bessarion’s funerary chapel. My study also emphasizes objects in ritual arrays, both religious and diplomatic. Each chapter involves a legation that Bessarion either

undertook or contributed to in a meaningful way, be it trips to Bologna and the northern territories from 1450–55 and 1460–61 (Chapter 2), the arrival of Thomas Palaiologos and the reliquary head of Saint Andrew in Rome in 1462 (Chapter 3), Venice from 1463–64 (Chapter 4), and finally France in 1472 (Chapter 5).

As part of my focus on Bessarion and art on the move, I have a deep interest in works of art in various religious processions. My interest in art in a ritual array emerged from a reading of *The Power of Images: Studies in the History of Theory and Response* (1989) by David Freedberg, where he writes about works of art within various processions and ceremonies and shows how the power of art is found in an image's impact on its audience, both emotionally and bodily. Freedberg's insights on arousal and the way images work are a substantial contribution to my study, particularly when it comes to Bessarion's use of objects as weapons for Crusade. Most interesting, however, is how the entanglement of people and things can also be opposed to movement, and how Bessarion's goals for a given object may have been thwarted by its long history, his audience's inability to grasp the full meaning of a Byzantine object, or their desire to use a work of art for a purpose other than Crusade.

#### *Objects as Exhortations to Crusade*

As one minds the gap between Byzantine and European cultures, there is also a need to theorize what kernel of meaning was retained during repeated cultural framings. Along the way, there is an opportunity to answer basic questions regarding Bessarion's use of objects as exhortations to Crusade. For example, how did Bessarion use works of art to craft his self-image after his immigration to Italy and effectively portray himself as a champion for Crusade? How did Bessarion use objects as instigations and rallying points for Crusade? And



what specific territories in Byzantium or the Holy Land did Bessarion hope to save through his efforts?

In my study, I link the concept of excitatio to Bessarion's tendency to relate objects and descriptions of violence, and to use those citations to excite and arouse the leaders of Europe to Crusade. This interest also relates to David Freedberg, specifically his investment in "how images are made to work," "the candid faith in what images could do or bring about," and why they "elicit, provoke, or arouse the responses they do."<sup>27</sup> While Freedberg's discussion of "arousal by image" begins with marital eroticism, it also refers to a desire for violence and "instances of arousal to tears, to militant action, to follow causes, to make long journeys, [and] to make other images like the one that has deeply moved us."<sup>28</sup> In this regard, Freedberg's work is also meaningfully linked to Georges Bataille's writing on the attachment of religion and violence in *The Tears of Eros* (first published as *Les Larmes d'éros*, 1961), and beyond that a speech Bessarion gave at the church of Old Saint Peter's in 1462, when he makes repeated references to European leaders' manhood and the embarrassment that would follow if they weren't properly moved to take up the Cross.<sup>29</sup>

## Roadmap to the Dissertation

### *Chapters 1 and 2*

Chapter 1 is an intellectual biography of Bessarion that stresses his travels in Byzantium and Europe, his engagement with relics and works of art, and the circumstances that favored the acquisition of important items in his collection.

Chapter 2 is devoted to Bessarion's interest in Greek cartography and astronomy, via his engagement with a copy of Claudius Ptolemy's (b. ca. 90 – d. 168 CE) *Geography* that is now in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice and cataloged as Codex Gr. 388 (= 333). I focus on a painting that appears on folio 6, verso, which was commissioned by Bessarion and completed by an unknown Italian artisan around 1454 (fig. I.3), and that relate the object to Bessarion's participation in legations to the Council of Ferrara-Florence, Bologna, and Vienna. I discuss how Ptolemy's *Geography* was an object of common interest to Byzantines and Latins and a potential rallying point for imagining, rendering, and reclaiming territories controlled by the Ottomans.

### *Chapter 3*

Chapter 3 focuses on a reliquary head of Saint Andrew that arrived with Thomas Palaiologos in Rome on Holy Tuesday, 1462 (fig. I.4). Fragments of Andrew's skull and jaw had been preserved in the Byzantine city of Patras for over a thousand years until 1460, when a significant Ottoman incursion into the Morea led to the relics and reliquary being removed from the old church of Saint Andrew and brought to Italy. Bessarion played a key role in facilitating Thomas' arrival in Rome, and I discuss the reliquary in relation to a speech the cardinal delivered in the church of Old Saint Peter's in which he spoke through the object, in the voice of Saint Andrew, exhorting the princes of Europe to participate in Crusade. The chapter shows how skillfully Bessarion used a famous relic that had just arrived from Byzantium to Rome, a prestigious ceremony in Saint Peter's, and papal interest in the unity of the churches to advance his call for Crusade to liberate the Morea from the Ottomans.

#### *Chapter 4*

Chapter 4 concentrates on an Italo-Byzantine staurotheke, or reliquary of the True Cross, that was given to Bessarion by Gregory III (Gregory Mammas), Patriarch of Constantinople from 1444/45 – 51, before his death in Rome in 1459 (fig. I.5). Gregory brought a component of the reliquary with him to Italy after his position as the spiritual leader of Constantinople was cancelled by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI (r. 1449–53). I begin the chapter by summarizing the evolution of the object over time, with a focus on the tripled-barred cross that is at the heart of the object, today. Having established a more accurate history of an aspect of the object in Byzantium, I discuss the translation of the imperial symbol to Italy and Bessarion’s decision to donate it to the brothers of the Scuola della Carità in Venice in 1463, in light of his legation to the same city in 1463–64, when he convinced the Senate to launch a Crusade to rescue the Morea from the Ottomans. The history of the reliquary, its transformations, and its changes of ownership are all germane to explain Bessarion’s special attachment to this object and the significance it had as an instrument of Crusade.

#### *Chapter 5*

Finally, in Chapter 5, I focus on the frescoes in the funerary chapel of Bessarion in the church of the Twelve Apostles in Rome (fig. I.6). The decorative cycle was completed by the Italian artist Antoniazio Romano in the 1460s and features scenes of the “apparitions,” or appearances, of Saint Michael, Archangel in Europe. Since the theme is relatively rare in Italian art, I explain the cardinal’s request for such imagery, including the iconographic history of Saint Michael as the protector of Christendom in relation to the cardinal’s

important writings on the Crusade from the 1460s, including the *Oration to Christian Princes Against the Turks*. I interpret Romano's frescoes for the chapel as forerunners of Bessarion's legation to France in 1472, during which he tried to convince King Louis XI to liberate Byzantium from Ottoman control.

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Due to the emphasis on entangled readings grafted to movement, there will always be the question of how much meaning an object can carry. Because of this, there is an even greater need to embrace what Ernst Gombrich calls a "period of curiosity and questioning" in the examination of objects, as opposed to their resolution.<sup>30</sup> This is one reason the study of Bessarion matters, today, and why my topic developed during a migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, wars in the Middle East, and, most locally, the Summer of Hate and the events of August 11 and 12 in Charlottesville, VA. To follow Christopher Celenza, and through him Dominik LaCapra, I am still trying "to come to terms with just what we are doing when we talk about the past," and how "historians are involved in the effort to understand both what something meant in its own time and what it may mean for us today."<sup>31</sup> I also acknowledge a substantial debt to Aby Warburg via a quote from Philippe-Alain Michaud. The latter evokes the construction of Mnemosyne panels 78 and 79, devoted to the concordat between the pope and Mussolini in 1929, and writes: "it is hard to say whether he was trying to understand the past in light of the present or the present in light of the past."<sup>32</sup>

## NOTES

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1. In a vast literature on Byzantine immigrants and the Greek diaspora, see Natasha Constantinidou and Han Lamers, eds., *Receptions of Hellenism in Early Modern Europe: 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Hans Lamers, *Greece Reinvented: Transformations of Byzantine Hellenism in Renaissance Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); John W. Barker, “Emperors, Embassies and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy,” in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 158–82; Claudia Rapp, “Hellenism and Identity in Byzantium,” in *Hellenisms. Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. K. Zacharia (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 127–48; Sophia Mergiali-Sahas, “A Byzantine Ambassador to the West and his Office During the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: A Profile,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 94 (2001): 588–604; Jonathan Harris, “Being A Byzantine after Byzantium: Hellenic Identity in Renaissance Italy,” *Kambos: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greek* 8 (2000): 25–44; Jonathan Harris, “Common language and the common good: aspects of identity among Byzantine émigrés in Renaissance Italy,” in *Crossing Boundaries: Issues of Cultural and Individual Identity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Sally McKee (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 198–202; Jonathan Harris, *Greek Émigrés in the West, 1400–1520* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1995); John Monfasani, “Greek Renaissance Migrations,” in *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 1–14; John Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy. Cardinal Bessarion and other Émigrés: Selected Essays* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1995); Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); and Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1976).
2. For Bessarion’s uniate politics, see Joseph Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence, and Other Essays* (New York, Barnes & Noble 1964), 45–64; Joseph Gill, “The Sincerity of Bessarion the Unionist,” in *Miscellanea marciani di studi Bessarionei*, eds. Rino Avesani, Giuseppe Billanovich, and Giovanni Pozzi (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1976), 119–36, reprinted as Joseph Gill, “The Sincerity of Bessarion the Unionist,” in *Miscellanea marciani di studi Bessarionei*, eds. Rino Avesani, Giuseppe Billanovich, and Giovanni Pozzi (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1976), 119–36; and Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1961). For translations of the *Dogmatic Oration*: Basil Bessarion, *Oratio dogmatica de unione*, trans. Emmanuel Candal (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1958); and Basil Bessarion, *Bessarione di Nicea: Orazione dogmatica sull’unione dei Greci e dei Latini*, trans. Gianfrancesco Lusini and Antonio Rigo (Naples: Vivarium, 2001).
3. Most work on these delegations can still be found in Henri Vast, *Le Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472): Étude sur la Chrétienté et la Renaissance vers le Milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1977) (originally published in 1878); and Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*.

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4. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. Lat. XIV 14 (=4235), folio 3 (verso). Patrici Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 145. Martin Lowry, “The Origins of St Mark’s Library: Cardinal Bessarion’s Gift, 1468,” in *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1630*, eds. David Chambers and Brian Pullan, with Jennifer Fletcher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 357–58.
  5. Gill, “Sincerity of Bessarion,” 377–92.
  6. Burckhardt’s discussion of Greek exiles in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* clearly adheres to a nation-state model, as he describes Bessarion as “the famous Greek...in whom patriotism was mingled with zeal for letters.” Burckhardt also claims that the cardinal was part of a “colony of learned exiles” who fled their “unhappy country” for Italy. There are also troubling aspects to how Burckhardt uses the study of Bessarion for the sake of nation-building, or as an embodiment of the kind of skills that build what he calls “Der Staat als Kunstwerk.” However, it should be noted that Burckhardt argued against the historian Franz Kugler’s (d. 1858) belief in the Germans as the rightful inheritors of Greek culture. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 131, 133–34.
  7. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Studien und Forschungen über das Leben und die Zeit des Cardinals Bessarion, 1395–1472* (Jena: F. Frommann, 1871); Vast, *Cardinal Bessarion*. Rudolf Rocholl, *Bessarion: Studie zur Geschichte der Renaissance* (Leipzig: Georg Böhme, 1904).
  8. Mohler also gained a faculty position at the University of Würzburg in 1935, when Bernhard Rust made him the chair of church history and dean of faculty as a replacement for Sebastian Merkle, who had criticized Adolf Hitler and retired from his post. See the entry for Ludwig Mohler within an appendix listing “The Brown Priests—Biographical Data,” as those “who publicly supported National Socialism,” with identifications “checked... against the extant membership cards and personal files of the NSDAP and its organizations.” Kevin P. Spicer, *Hitler’s Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008), 239; and Robert A. Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 170.
  9. For these themes, see Davies, *Humanism*, 11–17; and Augusto Campana, “The Origin of the Word ‘Humanist,’” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 9 (1946): 60–73.
  10. An important publication from this period was Lotte Labowsky, *Bessarion’s Library and the Biblioteca Marciana: Six Early Inventories* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1979), and after her Mariano Zorzi, *Bessarione e i codici greci* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 2002) and John Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus: A Study of Cardinal Bessarion’s Latin Library* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).
  11. Harris, *Greek Émigrés*, 24. Bolick, “Culture, Humanism, Intellect,” 2–3, 8. In addition to Harris, also see Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West* and Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy*.

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12. Concetta Bianca, *Da Bisanzio a Roma: Studi sul cardinale Bessarione* (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 1999); and Giuseppe Coluccia, *Basilio Bessarione: Lo spirito greco e l'Occidente* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009).

13. Bolick, "Culture, Humanism, Intellect." Jacquilyne Martin, "Cardinal Bessarion: Mystical Theology and Spiritual Union Between East and West" (PhD dissertation. University of Manitoba, 2000). Fabrizio Lollini, "Il Cardinale Bessarione e le arte figurative" (PhD dissertation, University of Bologna, 1986–87). Lollini's dissertation is not available outside of the print archives of the University of Bologna but its contents were revised for several published articles that show a strong grasp of the cardinal's portraits and his engagement with objects in a range of artistic media. These later works are Fabrizio Lollini, "Bessarione e le arti figurative," in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 148–70; Fabrizio Lollini, "Bessarione e Perotti diffusori della cultura figurative bizantina," *Studi umanistici piceni* 11 (1991): 127–42; and Lollini, "Iconografia di Bessarione," 275–83.

14. Andrzej Gutkowski and Emanuela Prinzivalli, eds., *Bessarione e la sua accademia* (Rome: Casa Editrice Miscellanea Francesca, 2012).

15. Lollini, "Bessarione e le arti figurative," 148–70; and Antonio Rigo, "Gli interessi astronomici del cardinal Bessarione," in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 105–19.

16. Silvia Ronchey, "Bessarion Venetus," in *Philanagnostes: Studi in onore di Marino Zorzi*, eds. C. Maltezos, P. Schreiner and M. Losacco (Venice: Edizioni dell'Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini, 2008), 375–401. Silvia Ronchey, "Il volto giovanile di Bessarione," in *Le Rotte dei Misteri: La cultura mediterranea da Dioniso al Crocifisso*, ed. Leo Di Simone (Florence: Edizioni Feeria, 2008), 255–88; Silvia Ronchey, "Volti di Bessarione," 539–51; Silvia Ronchey, "Orthodoxy on Sale: The Last Byzantine, and the Lost Crusade," in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress in Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. Jeffreys (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 313–44; Silvia Ronchey, "L'ultimo bizantino. Bessarione e gli ultimi regnanti di Bisanzio," in *L'eredità greca e l'ellenismo Veneziano*, ed. Gino Benzoni (Florence: Olschki, 2002), 75–92; Silvia Ronchey, "La 'mummia' di Mistra: Bessarione, Cleopa Malatesta e un abito di damasco Veneziano," *Thesaurismata* 31 (2001): 75–89; Silvia Ronchey, "Bessarione poeta e l'ultima corte di Bisanzio," in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al., ed. G. Fiaccadori (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 47–65.

17. Bessarion, *Orazione dogmatica*. Basil Bessarion, *Contro il calunniatore di Platone*, trans. and ed. Eva Del Soldato (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2014). Basil Bessarion, *La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014). Bessarion, *Natur und Kunst*.

18. For more information on the restoration of the reliquary of the True Cross, see the section on "Il restauro della stauroteca" in the related publication, *La stauroteca* (2017), with contributions from Clarice Innocenti, Serena Bidorini, Mari Yanagishita, Andrea Cagnini, Monica Galeotti, Simone Porcininai, Alessandra Santagostino Barbone, and Francesca Bettini. Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto, eds., *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti, 2017), 43–95.

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19. Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 92–132.

20. Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

21. For an introduction to relevant literature on Bessarion as a patron of the arts and sciences, see Labowsky, *Bessarion's Library*; Vitaliano Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano: Per il Cardinale Bessarione a Roma* (Perugia: Edart, 1992); Gianfranco Fiaccadori, ed., et al., *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra* (Naples: Vivarium, 1994); Zorzi, *Bessarione e i codici greci*; Ebe Antetomaso, "La collezione di oggetti liturgici del cardinale Bessarione," in *Il Collezioni di Antichità a Roma fra '400 e '500*, ed. Anna Cavallaro (Rome: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2007), 225–32; David King, *Astrolabes and Angels, Epigrams and Enigmas: From Regiomontanus' Acrostic for Cardinal Bessarion to Piero della Francesca's Flagellation of Christ* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007); Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*; and Bolick, "Culture, Humanism, Intellect."

22. A fifteenth century or Renaissance Crusade can be considered part of the Later Crusades, which may mean the period ranging from the Fifth (1221) through the Ninth Crusade (1272) and/ or those of the late medieval and early modern periods. For important work on the Crusades in the fifteenth century, see the authorial and editorial projects of Norman Housley: Norman Housley, ed., *Reconfiguring the Fifteenth-Century Crusade* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Norman Housley, *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Norman Housley, *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures* (2016); Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Norman Housley, *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); and Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades: From Lyons to Alcazar, 1274–1580* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Also Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 2nd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Cecily J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Towards the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean: 1204–1500* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Marco Pellegrini, *La crociata nel Rinascimento: Mutazioni di un mito, 1400–1600* (Florence: Le lettere, 2014); Benjamin Weber, *Lutter contre les Turcs: les formes nouvelles de la croisade pontificale au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013); Bisaha, *Creating East and West*; D. S. Chambers, *Popes, Cardinals, and War: The Military Church in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); and James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111–207.

23. Silvia Ronchey, *L'enigma di Piero: L'uomo bizantino e la crociata fantasma nella rivelazione di un grande quadro* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2017); and Pellegrini, *Crociata nel Rinascimento*.

24. Eric R. Dursteler, "On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts," *Journal of Early Modern History* 15, no. 5 (2011): 413–34. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).



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25. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin Books, 1977).
26. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 43.
27. David Freedberg, introduction to *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 4, 26, 19–20.
28. Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 26.
29. An example of Freedberg's discussion of sexual arousal and repression is found in his discussion of the lounging figures in Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Giorgione's *Venus*, as well as his summary of Leo Steinberg's work on the sexuality of Christ. Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 12–15, 17.
30. E. H. Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 42.
31. Christopher S. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 58.
32. Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2004), 143.

*CHAPTER 1*

An Intellectual Biography of Bessarion

### Bessarion's Birth in the Kingdom of Trebizond

Bessarion was born around 1403 in the kingdom of Trebizond at the southeastern end of the Black Sea, when he was baptized under the name Basil (map 1.1).<sup>1</sup> The social rank of his parents is unclear, though Mariano Zorzi, a scholar from the Biblioteca Marciana, writes, “According to a very late work [1636], which draws on more ancient sources, his mother may have been the daughter of a Komenoi, John, who was called Teodula after her husband’s death and her entrance into a monastery.”<sup>2</sup> A connection to the imperial line would have placed Basil’s mother in the highest echelon of the Pontic empire of Trebizond, since the Komenoi had ruled the Byzantine successor state since the end of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. However, another eminent scholar and expert on Bessarion’s books, Lotte Labowsky, follows a funerary oration for Bessarion in 1472 when she writes that Basil came from a “famiglia artigiana.”<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case, Basil grew up at the boundary of the Byzantine empire, in a territory along the Silk Road that was meaningfully linked to Islamic and Byzantine cultures from the Caucasus mountains to the Black Sea to the Golden Horn and beyond. In modern terms, the kingdom of Trebizond stretched long and thin along the coast on either side of Trabzon, in Turkey, with overland neighbors such as Mtskheta and T’bilisi to the northeast and Sinope to the west, on the brief peninsula jutting into the Black Sea.

### Constantinople, and a Return to Trebizond

Around 1416/17, Basil left with the metropolitan (or archbishop) of Trebizond, Dositheos, and went to the imperial capitol of the Palaiologoi in Constantinople,<sup>4</sup> where he began his studies with John Chortasmenos, the archbishop of Selymbria and notary of the

chancery of the patriarch.<sup>5</sup> The office of the ecumenical leader of Constantinople was both an archive and the producer of official documents, and the position gave Chortasmenos access to one of the great libraries in the world. Basil's teacher capitalized on his position by becoming an avid collector of scientific texts, including works on astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics, and would play an important role in the rebinding and annotation of the sixth-century Vienna Dioscurides, a version of *De Materia Medica*, one of the most important antique texts on medicinal plants.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Basil was instructed by a scholar referenced only by a single name, Chrysokokkes, who Zorzi believed was either Manuel or Michael Chrysokokkes, with the latter being a "notary of the church and author of a treatise on astronomy."<sup>7</sup>

Basil became a monk when he arrived in Constantinople, in what might be called, in the West, the Basilian order. In a Byzantine monastic context, Basil's community was organized under a typikon that responded to the teachings of Saint Basil of Caesarea, a bishop in the fourth century. Basil was tonsured, at this point, and took the name Bessarion in honor of a saint who was born in Egypt and had a committed following in Trebizond.<sup>8</sup> In 1426, after about ten years since his arrival in Constantinople, the monk Bessarion traveled with a Palaiologan legation to convince the Emperor of Trebizond, Alexios IV Komnenos (r. 1417–27), to allow his daughter, Maria Komnene, to marry the newly-crowned John VIII (r. 1425–48).<sup>9</sup> Following the group's arrival, Bessarion wrote a speech in Alexios' honor, several elegies, and a poem dedicated to his wife, Theodora Kantakouzene, who had just passed away. The delegation from emperor-to-emperor eventually met their goal, and Maria and John's wedding took place in Constantinople the following year.<sup>10</sup>

## Education in Mistra, and Back to Constantinople

Bessarion ascended up the ranks of his monastery in Constantinople in the 1430s and continued to live in the city until sometime between 1430 and 1433, when he left for the second phase of his education in the city of Mistra, in the region known as the Morea (map 1.2). The Morea is a territory in Greece below the isthmus of Corinth, and had been known since antiquity as the Peloponnesus; the city of Mistra is located just a few miles west of Sparta.<sup>11</sup> Bessarion went to Mistra to study in the neo-Platonic academy of the Byzantine scholar George Gemistos Plethon, and remained there for at least three years. Mistra was an important site of Byzantine learning for centuries, and a letter sent by Bessarion to Plethon's children in 1454, after their father's death, suggests a deep attachment between student and teacher.<sup>12</sup>

In his work on "Emperors, Embassies and Scholars," John Barker calls Plethon a "multicultural freethinker" and a "maverick" who had been sent to the Morea by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II (r. 1391–1425) and "scandalized his contemporaries and critics by moving through neo-Hellenic patriotism to neo-paganism."<sup>13</sup> Bessarion's time in Mistra thus had associated risks, as Plethon's move to the region was both externally-motivated and self-imposed. Bessarion's time with the elder scholar gave him a broader educational grounding in Greek philosophy, math, and science, as well as some notion of what an academy based on an Athenian model could look like. Plethon's status in the Morea was certainly short of outcast, however, as he was included in the official task of representing Byzantium at the Council of Ferrara in 1438.<sup>14</sup> Bessarion maintained attachments to the Palaiologoi during his time in Mistra, and it is documented that he helped resolve a dispute between the current despot of the Morea, Theodore II, and his older

brother, the emperor John.<sup>15</sup> Bessarion would remain in Mistra until about 1436, when he returned to Constantinople and became abbot of the monastery of Saint Basil.<sup>16</sup>

### The Journey to Ferrara

Bessarion's ecclesiastic trajectory in Byzantium culminated with his appointment as metropolitan, or archbishop, of Nicaea in 1437.<sup>17</sup> The decision to elevate Bessarion to the post came immediately before the Byzantines sailed for the council in Ferrara on November 24, 1437, and was done to increase the scholar's profile rather than assign any duties in Nicaea, at least in the short term.<sup>18</sup> The Greek delegation sailed from Constantinople (1) (map 1.3) and was in Modon (2), a coastal city on the southwestern tip of the Morea, by the end of the year. Bessarion brought a cache of books with him, to this point, and left some on site before turning north and passing through the Adriatic to land at Venice (3).<sup>19</sup> The arrival of the delegation is described in detail in the memoirs of Sylvester Syropoulos—another Byzantine official who joined the imperial retinue—which included a report on the group's "despondency, pain, and dejection" in seeing objects on display in the basilica of San Marco that were looted from the Pantokrater monastery in Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.<sup>20</sup>

The Greek delegation arrived in Ferrara (4) by early March, in time to attend a council session in April 1438. Bessarion and Manuel Eugenikos, the metropolitan of Ephesus and a chosen delegate from Alexandria, were appointed spokesmen for the Greeks.<sup>21</sup> The key issues debated at the Council involved disagreements between the Orthodox and Catholic churches regarding the remission of sins in Purgatory, the relation between members of the Trinity (pertinent to the Western church's addition of the Latin

“filioque,” meaning “from the Son,” to the Nicene Creed and returning to the Carolingian synod of 809), whether the Eucharistic host should be made of leavened or unleavened bread, and the primacy of the Holy See.<sup>22</sup> In hindsight, the Council of Ferrara-Florence began fifteen years before the fall of Constantinople in 1453, but when the leaders of the Byzantine church arrived in Italy the city was under immediate threat from the Ottomans.<sup>23</sup>

Bessarion argued for the union between the churches during his first oration at the council and continued to be a force for conciliation, throughout.<sup>24</sup> However, the proceedings were derailed by the onset of plague in Ferrara, with attendees forced to move further inland to Florence (5) (map 1.3). Debates continued from January to April 1439, when Bessarion gave his “Dogmatic Oration for Union” between the churches,<sup>25</sup> followed by his recitation of the written testament of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II (r. 1416–39), after he died in Florence in early June. A few weeks later, on July 6, Bessarion read the Greek version of the decree of union between the churches in the duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore. Bessarion’s counterpart, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, read the Latin version of the compact, known thereafter as “*Laetentur caeli*” (“Let the heavens rejoice”).<sup>26</sup> With the decree of union finally struck, Bessarion left Italy with the rest of the Byzantium legation in October 1439, and arrived in Constantinople before the end of the year, as established by a letter to Alexios Laskaris Philanthropenos.<sup>27</sup>

### One Year in Constantinople

Upon his arrival, Bessarion received confirmation that Pope Eugenius IV had made him a cardinal in the Catholic church and assigned him the titular church of Santi Apostoli with its adjacent palace in Rome.<sup>28</sup> The appointment likely came as no surprise, as the pope

had already offered Bessarion a sizable pension to remain in Italy.<sup>29</sup> The journey between Constantinople and Venice took many weeks, but Bessarion had to return to Constantinople to attend the funeral of Joseph II and see the election of the new patriarch, Metrophanes II (r. 1440–43). Bessarion also could not have been prepared to make a permanent move to Italy when he attended the Council and needed to return to consider Eugenius' proposal and plan for his immigration, if need be. Bessarion continued to work on issues raised at the Council in 1440, including the start of a theological tract against the belief that the Holy Spirit had its origins in God the Father, alone.<sup>30</sup> The initial request for a written refutation of Manuel's position came in 1440 from the monk Gregory Mammias—soon to be named Gregory III, Patriarch of Constantinople (r. 1444/45 – 51)—and was issued, at first, to the Byzantine scholar Gregory Scholarios, who may have known Bessarion since their schooling with Chrysokokkes in Constantinople. However, Scholarios eventually became convinced of the Orthodox position, so the task of completing the tract fell to Bessarion, who also worked on the project in Italy from 1455–59.<sup>31</sup>

### The Decision to Immigrate

By the end of 1440, Bessarion made the decision to accept Eugenius' offer, convert to the Latin rite, and immigrate to Italy. By December 1440 he was back in Florence, where the council was still open.<sup>32</sup> Pope Eugenius was critically involved in Bessarion's passage from Byzantium to Italy, as the pope had presided over the Council of Basil, which had opened in 1431 during the reign of his predecessor, Pope Martin V (r. 1417–31), and its extension in Ferrara and then Florence. Martin was a member of the powerful Roman Colonna family, and after his death Eugenius became locked in a struggle against the Colonna over control of their palazzo in Rome and the church of the Twelve Holy Apostles.



The Colonna had renovated the space when the papacy returned to Rome after the end of the Western Schism in 1417, but after his election Eugenius had the palace sacked and its current occupant, Cardinal Prospero Colonna (d. 1463), removed and excommunicated.<sup>33</sup> While these events were more than a decade old by the time Bessarion arrived in Rome, the assignment of the church and its associated palazzo to him was clearly part of a papal strategy to replace old adversaries with a new ally.<sup>34</sup> Conscious of the importance of this palace for the affirmation of papal power over Roman aristocracy, Bessarion lavishly spent to ameliorate his residence and his titular church.

### The Legation to Bologna

Eugenius died in 1447, and it was his successor, Pope Nicholas V (r. 1447–55), who set Bessarion's European career in motion. Nicholas named Bessarion his legato a latere to the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions in 1450 and the cardinal set his headquarters in the city of Bologna for the next five years. During that span, Bessarion forged an alliance with the local Bentivoglio family and helped monitor the humanist Stefano Porcari, who had railed against the pope's authority in Rome and been banished to a not-too-distant city where he could be surveilled.<sup>35</sup> During his time in Bologna, Bessarion also supported the Studium, the famous university of Bologna; among other things, he installed his secretary, the Italian scholar Niccolò Perotti, in a chair of rhetoric.<sup>36</sup> He also commissioned important books for his collection, including a custom-made copy of Ptolemy's *Geography*.

Bessarion invested a substantial sum in what are now called i corali del Cardinale Bessarione, or the choral books of Cardinal Bessarion; some of these volumes are preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale Malatestiana in Cesena, Italy. The original set had eighteen

volumes containing chants from the Latin liturgy and was intended for the Franciscan convent of Saint Anthony of Padua in Constantinople. However, because of the siege of the city and the subsequent Ottoman victory in May 1453, it became difficult to deliver Bessarion's gift, so the volumes were allocated to the church of Santa Maria Annunziata in Cesena, about fifty miles from Bologna and to the city of Ferrara. Only eight volumes survive, today, but the remaining books include some particularly beautiful pages showing Bessarion's coat of arms and King David offering his soul to God.<sup>37</sup>

During this period Bessarion's patronage extended to works not on paper. He supported the renovation of the twelfth-century church of the Madonna del Monte on a hill outside of Bologna on the Via dell'Osservanza, an edifice that eventually became part of the Villa Aldini (and should not be confused with the well-known Sanctuary of the Madonna of Saint Luke, located to the west of the city, on another promontory). Bessarion had an interest in both mountain churches due to the presence of powerful Byzantine icons at each site, and his efforts related to the Madonna del Monte are recorded in a drawing in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio that shows the cardinal's coat of arms and the crossed keys of Nicholas V above the main entrance to the church.<sup>38</sup>

### The Reigns of Pope Callixtus and Pius

Bessarion ended his appointment in Bologna in 1455, just prior to Nicholas' death, and had an early opportunity to be elected pope, himself, during the ensuing conclave in Rome. The eventual choice, the aged Alfonso Borgia, took the name Callixtus III (r. 1455–58). While little is known about the trip, Bessarion seems to have gone immediately to Naples to advocate for Alfonso V of Aragon's participation in a Crusade against the

Ottomans.<sup>39</sup> Soon after, in 1456, Bessarion was named commendatory abbot over the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, in the commune of Serra Sant'Abbondio, a territory near the headquarters of Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino. While an appointment in commendam was an honorary position tied to ecclesiastic revenues, the abbey amongst springs and hazel trees also housed a scriptorium and, less famous, a precious textile embroidered with an image of a militant Saint Michael, Archangel that had been in the treasury of Fonte Avellana since before 1425.<sup>40</sup> As a further sign of his favor for the monastery, Bessarion also donated a gilded niello, now lost, that featured panels with images of Michael and his fellow archangel, Gabriel.<sup>41</sup>

Bessarion's wealth grew during his second decade in Italy, as he strategically acquired and had ecclesiastic appointments transferred to him by the pope on the eastern coast of Italy, facing Greece, the island of Sicily, and Rome.<sup>42</sup> The cardinal missed being elected pope, once again, in 1458, when the cardinal from Siena, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, became Pope Pius II.<sup>43</sup> Bessarion's nearness to the papacy was another sign of his power, and the new pope fueled Bessarion's rise by making him protector of the Order of Friars Minor, or Franciscans, in Italy—a group that was well-funded and an important instrument in the war against the Ottomans as they were in charge of important sites in the Holy Land.<sup>44</sup> Bessarion granted them a permanent home in the church and cloisters of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles, a community that still functions, today, and is dedicated to the cardinal's history.

In the following year, 1459, the former patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III—who had immigrated to Italy after falling out of favor in the court of Constantine XI (r. 1449–53)—gave a precious reliquary of the True Cross to Bessarion on his deathbed.

Bessarion continued to write in Greek and Latin, and in the same year he began one of his masterworks, *Against the Slanderers* (or *Attackers*, or *Calumniators*) of *Plato*. The book was an important response to his rival, George of Trebizond, another Byzantine émigré born in the Venetian colony of Candia and settled in Italy at the time.<sup>45</sup> Bessarion would toil over the work for about a decade, until it was printed and distributed at Subiaco, near Venice, in August 1469.<sup>46</sup>

### The Legation to the Northern Princes

Bessarion took up his second long-term European legation in 1460 on behalf of Pius II. Bessarion's charge was to the territories across the Alps, in what is now Germany and Austria, with the goal of resolving local disputes between the northern princes for the sake of a larger, Crusader alliance among the leaders of Europe. Bessarion spoke with leaders at diets in Nuremberg and Worms before an all-important meeting with the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick III (r. 1452–93), in Vienna. Bessarion and his retinue began their journey in January 1460, directly after the conclusion of the Council of Mantua, and made their way towards the mountains along the Imperial Way to the Brenner Pass at an elevation of 4,500'—all in the dead of winter.

After reaching the neck between the mountains, Bessarion's legation descended to initial meetings with the princes, which went very poorly due to a lack of interest and, relatedly, attendance. Still determined, the delegation went all the way to the imperial court residence of Frederick III in Vienna. They would not leave the city until September 1461, after a long winter and a breakdown in communication that likely led to Bessarion spending more and more time with the Viennese astronomer, Georg von Peurbach, and his talented

pupil, Johannes Müller, at the university known as Universitaet Wien, thus further expanding his already considerable interests in the geography and astronomy. After resolving a debilitating dispute between the Holy Roman Emperor and his brother, Albrecht of Brandenburg, the delegation and its leader were finally able to retrace their steps to Rome, where they arrived by November 1461.<sup>47</sup>

### The Arrival of Thomas Palaiologos

Bessarion's arrival in Rome late in 1461 was timely, as Thomas Palaiologos was already en route from Mistra to the Eternal City. Thomas was the reigning despot of the Morea, with his seat in the southern city of Mistra, and also the assumptive Byzantine Emperor in deciding to flee the region as the army of Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) claimed greater portions of his former territory. Before journeying up the western coast of Greece towards Italy, Thomas had an agent secure precious relics of Saint Andrew from the northern city of Patras, which was controlled by his brother, Demetrios, who had already gone over to the Ottomans. Thomas carried the reliquary as far as Ancona and saw it arrive in Rome in time for Holy Week, 1462, when Bessarion gave a speech in the church of Old Saint Peter's in which he spoke through the Byzantine reliquary in the voice of the apostle.

In 1462, the astronomer Johannes Müller—now going by the more classicizing name of Regiomontanus—gifted a newly-made astrolabe to the cardinal featuring a dedicatory inscription to Bessarion, whom he called his divine patron.<sup>48</sup> In his *Commentaries*, Pius foreshadows Bessarion's appointment as the apostolic administrator of the Catholic patriarchate of Constantinople in December 1462, after Thomas' arrival with the reliquary head of Saint Andrew, given that the current patriarch, Isidore of Kiev, suffered from

apoplexy.<sup>49</sup> In the same year, Bessarion also received permission from the pope to exchange his control over the Basilian monastery of San Salvatore in Sicily for a foundation with the same affiliation in Grottaferrata, only ten miles from the outskirts of Rome and closer to the cardinal's summer villa.<sup>50</sup> Bessarion eventually donated a chalice decorated with his coat of arms and a paten with a medallion showing an image of the dead Christ to the abbey of Saint Nilo, as well as a copy of theological and rhetorical treatises by the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II, clothed in turquoise-blue silk.<sup>51</sup>

### The Legation to Venice

Bessarion was about sixty years old by 1463, when he gained permission from Pius to be buried in the Chapel of Saints Eugenia and Claudia in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles.<sup>52</sup> On July 5, 1463, Pius also charged Bessarion with another major legation to Venice, and when Bessarion arrived on July 22 he was greeted by Doge Cristoforo Moro (r. 1462–71) on the banks of the piazzetta in front of the ducal palace.<sup>53</sup> Bessarion's goal was to convince the Venetians to make an outward declaration of war against the Ottomans, and during the cardinal's time in the city he lodged with the brothers of the Benedictine order on the isola of San Giorgio Maggiore, just across the water from the basilica of San Marco. On this occasion, Bessarion promised the monastery all of the Greek and Latin manuscripts in his collection—an offer he would later rescind. The Grand Guardian of the Scuola della Carità in Venice, Marco da Costa, also paid Bessarion a visit during his stay on the isola and made the cardinal an honorary member of their order. Immediately before or after, Bessarion promised the scuola the reliquary of the True Cross gifted to him years before by the patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>54</sup>

### Preparations for Bessarion's Tomb and Major Gifts

Around this time, Bessarion also developed plans for his funerary chapel, in a space he called the “Cappelle sancti Angeli,” in his titular church in Rome.<sup>55</sup> In 1464 Bessarion commissioned an elaborate cycle of frescoes from Antoniazio Romano (active after 1461; d. 1508/9) to cover the space, with work completed by ca. 1467–68. It is likely that Bessarion also commissioned an oil painting from Romano at this time, namely an image of the Madonna of the Holy Conception that may have been modeled on the thirteenth-century Byzantine icon of the Madonna and Child that Bessarion donated to the nearby church of S. Maria in Cosmedin in Rome.<sup>56</sup>

Bessarion also donated a number of works of art to the church of Old Saint Peter's sometime between 1462–67, as established by a Vatican inventory copied by the archivist Giacomo Grimaldi (d. 1623) in the seventeenth century. The record is thorough in mentioning the origins of the objects: several were gained from Cardinal Prospero Colonna (forced out of what became the Palazzo Bessarione, next to Santi Apostoli); others came from Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, the Catholic-appointed Patriarch of Constantinople; a single cross was made in Bologna; and chalices were made for Bessarion by a “magister Simeon aurifex.”<sup>57</sup> A related inventory from 1621 also lists seven mosaic icons, including two micromosaics, “ex opera mosayco minute,” featuring images of Saint Michael and Christ's entry into Jerusalem, which are presumed lost.<sup>58</sup>

Pope Paul II (r. 1464–71), the new leader of Christ's church, allowed Bessarion to renege on the donation of his books to the brothers of San Giorgio Maggiore in 1467 and give them to the basilica of San Marco, instead.<sup>59</sup> By this time, Bessarion had two wills

drawn up, the first in 1464 and the second in 1467.<sup>60</sup> These documents provide a look at some of the objects in Bessarion's collection, including vestments (*paramenti sacri*), altar cloths (*tovaglie per altare*), chalices (*calici*), censors (*turiboli*), and mosaic icons (*icone musive*). The Venetian Senate acknowledged Bessarion's gift of books in 1468 and promised to keep them in a special room in the Palazzo Ducale, as Jacopo Sansovino would design the Biblioteca Marciana over a century later.<sup>61</sup> Bessarion had the donation authorization drawn up on May 14, 1468 from the baths of Viterbo,<sup>62</sup> and also wrote an elaborate, ornamented letter to the Senate, dated May 31, 1468, in which he explained the reasons behind his gift.<sup>63</sup> While often overlooked, Bessarion also donated several reliquaries to the basilica of San Marco, including a reliquary for the *Sacra Porpora*, or seamless and purple cloak of Christ, and, possibly, a casket reliquary (*confanetto*) of the Martyrs of Trebizond created in the kingdom in ca. 1420–40.<sup>64</sup>

The first shipment of Bessarion's books arrived in Venice in 1469. Soon after, Bessarion's *Against the Slanderers of Plato* was released, also near Venice, and he completed his Greek-to-Latin translation of the "First Olynthiac Oration" by the statesman Demosthenes.<sup>65</sup> The first edition of Bessarion's *Orations and Letters to Christian Princes Against the Turks*, printed in Latin at a press at the Sorbonne in Paris, was also complete by April 1471, with copies circulated widely and manuscript or incunabula versions delivered to King Louis XI of France (r. 1461–83) and King Edward IV of England (r. 1461–70), among other European leaders.<sup>66</sup> An Italian version—closely related to but produced independently of the French *editio princeps*—entitled *Oratione a tutti gli Signori d'Italia*, or *Orations to all the Lords of Italy*, appeared in a translation by Lodovico Carbone, from the Venetian press of Christopher Valdarfer, almost immediately after.<sup>67</sup> These were among his most pointed essays to argue for the need for Crusade and the moral imperative for European leaders to support it.



## The Legation to France

Manuscript and printed versions of Bessarion's *Orations* were an important prelude to Bessarion's fourth and final long-term legation from Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–84), who gave the cardinal a mission to France, Burgundy, and England in December 1471.<sup>68</sup> Bessarion spent the winter in Rome and left the following April, heading first to Urbino, where he participated in the confirmation of Federico's son, Guidobaldo.<sup>69</sup> By May, Bessarion was in Cesena and then in Bologna, where he made arrangements related to Zoe (later Sophia) Palaiologina's (d. 1503) marriage to prince Ivan III, later known as Ivan the Great, czar of Russia (d. 1505).<sup>70</sup> This time, Bessarion's delegation took a different route over the Alps than in 1460–61, traveling over an even higher, 7000' pass at the base of Montcenisio (Fr., Mont Cenis). The group eventually passed through Grenoble and Lyon before going north to Château-Gontier, where he met with King Louis XI for only a few days, from August 23 to 24, 1472.<sup>71</sup> By October, Bessarion was back in Italy and in poor health. He decided to make his way to Ravenna, where he died on November 17/18.<sup>72</sup> His body was transported back to Rome, where he was laid to rest in the chapel and tomb prepared in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles. A service was held in his honor. Funerary orations were delivered by Niccolò Capranica, bishop of Fermo, Michael Apostoles, his friend from Crete, and the soon-to-be Vatican librarian, Bartolomeo Platina.<sup>73</sup>

## NOTES

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1. The precise date of Bessarion's birth is unclear. Several scholars, including Lotte Labowsky and Jonathan Harris, suggest 1402 or 1403. *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, s.v. "Bessarione," by Lotte Labowsky, accessed March 12, 2020. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/). Cited hereafter as Labowsky, "Bessarione." *Oxford Art Online*, s.v. "Cardinal Bessarion," by Jonathan Harris, accessed March 3, 2020, doi: [10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T008469](https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T008469). In his useful timeline of Bessarion's life, Mariano Zorzi chooses the most expansive range, 1399–1408. Mariano Zorzi, "Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia," in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivano Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 39. Cited hereafter as Zorzi, "VB." As Scott Kennedy writes in the introduction to his recent translation of Bessarion's *Encomium on Trebizond*, "The exact date of his birth has been the subject of considerable controversy, with dates ranging from 1400 to 1408, but 1403 seems the most preferable year." Scott Kennedy, introduction to *Two Works on Trebizond: Michael Panaretos/ Bessarion*, trans. and ed. Scott Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), xxii, note 19. Also see Scott Kennedy, "Bessarion's Date of Birth: A Reassessment," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 111, no. 3 (2018): 641–58; and Brigitte Tambrun-Kraker, "Bessarion de Trébizonde à Mistra: Un parcours intellectuel," in *Inter graecos latinissimus, inter Latinos graecissimus: Bessarion zwischen den Kulteren*, eds. Claudia Märtil, Christian Kaiser, and Thomas Ricklin (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 1–35.
  2. "Secondo un'opera assai tarda (1636), che peraltro attinge a fonti piu antiche, la madre sarebbe stata Eudocia, figlia di un Comneno, Giovanni, chiamata Teodula dopo l'ingresso da vedova in monastero." "VB," 39. Lotte Labowsky, writing in Italian, also refers to Basil's parents as Teodoro and Teodula. Labowsky, "Bessarione." For Basil's early years in the kingdom of Trebizond, also see Kraker, "Bessarion de Trébizonde à Mistra," 1–4; and Elpidio Mioni, "Vita del Cardinale Bessarione," *Miscellanea Marciana* 6 (1991): 11–219.
  3. Labowsky, "Bessarione."
  4. Mariano Zorzi puts Dositheos and Basil's departure from Trebizond in 1416, while Kennedy sets it more broadly as 1416/17, alongside Kraker. "VB," 39. Scott Kennedy, *Two Works*, xi. Lotte Labowsky puts their departure even earlier, in ca. 1415. Labowsky, "Bessarione."
  5. Zorzi, "VB," 39.
  6. Chortasmenos often appears in discussions devoted to the rebinding and restoration of the Vienna Dioscorides, a sixth-century, illustrated version of the Greek surgeon Pedanius Dioscorides' first century text on medical plants, later known as *De Materia Medica*, or *On Medical Material*. It is the oldest surviving Byzantine manuscript based on the original work, which is not extant. The Vienna Dioscorides is a key source on the healing properties of plants, and while Chortasmenos' preservation efforts predated Basil's time in Constantinople by about ten years, the episode provides some insight into the young monk's interests and points of emphasis in his early education.

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7. As Scott Kennedy notes, Chrysokokkes led a school in Constantinople but little is known about his history. Scott Kennedy, *Two Works*, xii. Mariano Zorzi writes that this “Crisococca” was “perhaps Giorgio Crisococca, a grammarian and copyist, but more likely either (1) Manuele, a referendary of the Patriarchal Church, deacon, and grand secretary, or (2) Michele, a notary of the Church and author of a treatise on astronomy” (“forse Giorgio Crisococca, grammatico e copista, ma piu probabilmente Manuele, referendario della Chiesa patriarcale, diacono e gran sacellario, o Michele, notaio della Chiesa e autore di un trattato di [astronomia].” Zorzi, “VB,” 39. Francesco Filelfo, and possibly Gennadios Scholarios, were also students in Chrysokokkes’ school of rhetoric at this time. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

8. Lotte Labowsky writes that Bessarion took the staurophoros, or little habit, in 1423 and became a diacono, or deacon, in the order of Saint Basil in 1426. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

9. Zorzi, “VB,” 40. The legation to Trebizond is also mentioned in Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

10. Zorzi, “VB,” 40. Scott Kennedy, *Two Works*, xii–xiii.

11. The precise date of Bessarion’s departure from Constantinople to Mistra is not clear. Lotte Labowsky puts it after 1431 but before 1433. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

12. Zorzi, “VB,” 46.

13. John Barker first presented his work on “Emperors, Embassies and Scholars” at a conference on Manuel Chrysoloras 1997. It was eventually published in an edited volume from 2009. John W. Barker, “Emperors, Embassies and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy,” in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 166, 169.

14. For a mention of Maximos Planudes’ conversations with humanists at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, see Barker, “Emperors, Embassies and Scholars,” 167.

15. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

16. Zorzi refers to Bessarion’s appointment to the rank of igumeno (or hegumenos), which he equates to an abbot. Zorzi, “VB,” 41. Bessarion’s appointment is also mentioned in Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

17. Scott Kennedy, *Two Works*, xiii. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

18. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

19. Zorzi, “VB,” 42.

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20. Sylvester Syropoulos, *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean: Themes and Problems in the Memoirs, Section IV*, eds. Fotini Kondyli, Vera Andriopoulou, Eirini Panou, and Mary B. Cunningham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 185–238, especially 216. For the path of the Greek delegation to Italy, see Fotini Kondyli, “The Logistics of a Union: The Travelling Arrangements and the Journey to Venice,” in *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean: Themes and Problems in the Memoirs, Section IV*, eds. Fotini Kondyli, Vera Andriopoulou, Eirini Panou, and Mary B. Cunningham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 135–53.

21. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

22. Bessarion delivered an oration at the Council on the filioque, specifically. The Nicene creed is a profession of faith that has been recited by the Latin and Orthodox Churches since the First Ecumenical Council in 325 CE, and the Greeks claimed that the addition of the filioque was inappropriate because the change had occurred after the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE, when it was allegedly decided that the creed could not be altered without mutual consent from the two churches. After Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini (d. Varna, 1444) rallied evidence for his rebuttal to the Greek position, Bessarion was convinced that Ephesus did not, in fact, prohibit changes and that the Latin church was permitted to make additions. For the scholarly debate over the filioque see Gill, *Personalities*, 46–50. For a summary of theological debates at the Council, with a focus on Bessarion: Jacquilyne Martin, “Cardinal Bessarion: Mystical Theology and Spiritual Union Between East and West” (PhD dissertation. University of Manitoba, 2000).

23. Joseph Gill writes that “Meanwhile [at the start of the Council] the Greeks were in a panic, for news had been brought from Venice, confirmed later by letters from Constantinople, that the Turk was preparing a fleet of 150 ships and an army of 150,000 men against the Byzantine capitol.” Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 116.

24. Labowsky, “Bessarione.” For more information on Bessarion’s role at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, including his speech at the opening of the Council, statement on the Eucharist, approval of the Latin position on the filioque, and his signing of the Greek decree of union between the churches, see Martin, “Cardinal Bessarion”; Gill, *Personalities*, 45–64; and Gill, *Council of Florence*, 143–144, 240–41, 260, 292–94.

25. Zorzi, “VB,” 43. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

26. Zorzi, “VB,” 43. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

27. Antonio Coccia, *Il Cardinale Bessarione nel V centenario della morte* (Rome: Herder, 1972), 132.

28. Zorzi, “VB,” 43. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

29. Zorzi, “VB,” 43. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

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30. The passage of the Holy Spirit from the Father was the majority Greek opinion in the fifteenth century, based on earlier writings by Maximos Planudes and their elaboration in the work of Manuel Eugenikos, Bessarion's fellow spokesman at the Council. Gill, *Personalities*, 46–50.
31. Zorzi, “VB,” 43–44.
32. *Ibid.*, 44.
33. Eduard A. Safarik, *Palazzo Colonna* (Rome: De Luca Editore d'Arte, 2009), 292–93.
34. John Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus: A Study of Cardinal Bessarion's Latin Library* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 10, note 33. Zorzi, “VB,” 44. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”
35. Zorzi, “VB,” 45–46. Labowsky, “Bessarione.” For the Bentivoglio, see David J. Drogin, “The Bentivoglio in Bologna,” in *Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity, 1300–1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004); and David J. Drogin, “Bologna's Bentivoglio Family and its Artists: Overview of a Quattrocento Court in the Making,” in *Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity, 1300–1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004).
36. Giovanni Mercati, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perroti* (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1973), 16–43. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”
37. Fabrizio Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 156–57. Pia Palladino, *Treasures of a Lost Art: Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 85.
38. For Bessarion's engagement with the arts and letters during his time in Bologna, see Fabrizio Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 152, 157, 165. Labowsky also writes that Bessarion supported a project related to the renewal of “la cappella della Madonna di San Luca.” Labowsky, “Bessarione.”
39. Zorzi, “VB,” 46.
40. Luigi Serra, “A Byzantine Naval Standard (circa 1141),” *Burlington Magazine* 34 (1919): 152.
41. Zorzi, “VB,” 47. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

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42. In addition to appointments as a commendatory abbot of the monastery of S. Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna and the monastery at Fonte Avellana near Urbino, Bessarion was also the cardinal of the church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome from 1439–1472; archbishop of Siponto from 1446–49; cardinal bishop of the church of Santa Sabina from 1449–68; cardinal bishop of Mazzara, Sicily in 1449, an appointment that was soon replaced with a position in Tusculum, near his summer villa (1449–72); archimandrite of the convent of SS. Salvatore in Messina, Sicily from 1456–62; archimandrite of the abbey at Grottaferrata, replacing SS. Salvatore, from 1462–72; and ceremonial or Catholic-appointed patriarch of Constantinople (1463–72). For mentions of these appointments, see Zorzi, “VB,” 43, 45, 47, 50, and 53. Also Labowsky, “Bessarione”; and for a rare mention of the appointment in Ravenna, Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 10, and note 33.

43. Pius II, *Commentaries (Books I–II)*, eds. Margaret Meserve and Marcello Simonetta, vol. 1, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 140–41.

44. Zorzi, “VB,” 47. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

45. Zorzi, “VB,” 47. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 28.

46. Zorzi, “VB,” 54.

47. *Ibid.*, 49.

48 This draws from the inscription Regiomontanus had inscribed on the astrolabe he donated to Bessarion in 1462: “SVB DIVI BESSARIONIS DE | CARDINE DICTI PRAESI | DIO ROMAE SVRGO IO | ANNIS OPVS: -1462.” (“Under the protection of the divine Bessarion, said to be from the cardo, I arise in Rome as the work of Ioannes in 1462”). David King and Gerard L’E. Turner, “The Astrolabe Dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion by Regiomontanus in 1462,” in *Bessarione e l’Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 343.

49. Zorzi, “VB,” 50.

50. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

51. Robert S. Nelson, “The Italian Appreciation and Appropriation of Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts, c. 1200–1450,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 228.

52. Antonio Coccia, *Il Cardinale Bessarione nel V centenario della morte* (Rome: Herder, 1972), 138–39.

53. Zorzi, “VB,” 50. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”

54. Antonio Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio, or the Cardinal’s last stay in Venice” *Lettera da San Giorgio (Fondazione Giorgio Cini)* 8, no. 12 (March–August 2015), 17–18. Renato Polacco, “La stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” in *Bessarione e l’Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 369.

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55. Vitaliano Tiberia, *Antoniaζζο Romano: Per il Cardinale Bessarione a Roma* (Perugia: Ediart, 1992), 121.
56. For the commission from Bessarion to Romano: Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” 158–59. Jonathan Harris writes that the Madonna of the Holy Conception is “thought to have been commissioned by Bessarion,” and also remarks that the image “may have harked back to the tradition of the Virgin as the protector of Byzantium.” Harris, “Cardinal Bessarion,” in *Oxford Art Online*. For the Byzantine icon donated by Bessarion to S. Maria in Cosmedin and other sacred images associated with the cardinal: Laura Bolick, “Culture, Humanism and Intellect: Cardinal Bessarion as Patron of the Arts” (PhD dissertation, The Open University, 2014), 114–17.
57. Ebe Antetomaso, “La collezione di oggetti liturgici del cardinale Bessarione,” in *Il Collezioni di Antichità a Roma fra '400 e '500*, ed. Anna Cavallaro (Rome: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2007), 225, 232. Eugène Müntz, *Les arts à la cour des papes pendant le XVe et le XVIe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Thorin, 1879), 298, 300, 302. Eugène Müntz and A. L. Frothingham, *Il Tesoro della Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano dal XIII al XV secolo* (Rome: Societa Romana di Storia patria, 1883), 111–13.
58. Müntz, *Arts à la cour des papes*, 298, and note 3.
59. Zorzi, “VB,” 53.
60. Antetomaso, “Collezione di oggetti liturgici,” 225, 232. Müntz, *Arts à la cour des papes*, 298, 300, 302. Müntz and Frothingham, *Tesoro della Basilica di S. Pietro*, 111–13. For a transcription of Bessarion’s first will, drawn up from Venice on February 17, 1464: Tiberia, *Antoniaζζο Romano*, 120–21. For a transcription of Bessarion’s second will from April 10, 1467: Basil Bessarion, *Cardinalis Bessarionis opera Omnia: Patrologiae graecae*, ed. J.-P., Migne, vol. 161 (Turnholt: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1866), LXXXIII–XCI.
61. Zorzi, “VB,” 53.
62. *Ibid.*, 54.
63. Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 145. For more on the Reliquary of the Martyrs of Trebizond, documented in treasury of San Marco as early as 1634, and a possible connection to Bessarion: Brandie Ratliff, “Trebizond Casket,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 138–39.
64. Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” 166. The Trebizond Casket could be an object that was retrieved by Niccolò Perotti during a mission to the kingdom of Trebizond. Robert S. Nelson, “The Italian Appreciation and Appropriation of Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts, c. 1200–1450,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 231, and note 156. For this little-mentioned trip, see Giovanni Mercati, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perrotti* (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1973), 40–41.

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65. Zorzi, "VB," 54.
66. James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 118–19.
67. Zorzi, "VB," 55.
68. Ibid.
69. Idem.
70. Idem.
71. Labowsky, "Bessarione."
72. Zorzi, "VB," 56. Labowsky, "Bessarione."
73. Zorzi, "VB," 56. For transcriptions of the funerary orations: Bessarion, *Bessarionis opera Omnia*, CIII–CXVI, CXXVII–CXL.



*CHAPTER 2*

Ptolemy's *Geography* and the Reclamation of a Christian World

Bessarion was named apostolic legate to the Emilia-Romagna and Marche regions of Italy by Pope Nicholas V in September 1449 (map 2.1).<sup>1</sup> The cardinal took up residence in the city of Bologna from 1450 to 1455, a time marked by multiple artistic engagements, including his protection of Byzantine icons of the Virgin glykophilousa in the Basilica of Santa Maria dei Servi, a Virgin Theotokos in the Church of the Madonna del Monte, and a famous example of the same type in the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Saint Luke outside the city.<sup>2</sup> It is also likely that Bessarion commissioned an image of Christ from the so-called “Maestro di Breviario Franciscano” around this time, as well as frescoes devoted to the Funeral of the Virgin, now destroyed, from an artist whose identity is not secure but often identified as Galasso Galassi.<sup>3</sup>

### The *Geography* of Bologna

Bessarion’s experiences in Bologna also went beyond an interest in Byzantine icons. He supported the production of a magnificent copy of Claudius Ptolemy’s (b. ca. 90 – d. 168 CE) great cartographic work, the *Geography*, which is now preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, where it is cataloged as Codex Gr. 388 (= 333).<sup>4</sup> The attraction of this particular copy of Ptolemy’s *Geography* is due, in part, to a painting on the gilded frontispiece on folio 6 (verso), which features an image of the author-astronomer holding an astrolabe in his right hand (fig. 2.1). The decoration on the frontispiece was completed by an unknown Italian book painter around 1454, while the polyglot inscription beneath the image was completed by the cardinal’s then-secretary, Niccolò Perotti, and the body text, initials, and marginalia on subsequent pages by the Cretan scribe, Ioannis Rhosos.<sup>5</sup> The work may have been copied and ornamented in Bologna and was certainly there in almost-completed form in the 1450s, based on a letter from Perotti to Iacopo Costanzi da Fano, sent in either

December 1454 or early January 1455, where he writes: “In accordance with a recent instruction from our prince [meaning Bessarion] I translated into Latin the epigram about Ptolemy which he told me to inscribe on the portrait of Ptolemy in his *Geographia*, a work he has but recently had made, the most splendid and most precious of any I have yet seen.”<sup>6</sup>

The painting on the frontispiece introduces the text within the manuscript, which is written in Greek and contains very little prose.<sup>7</sup> The text is made up of coordinates that could be used, at least in principle, to map the locations of places and geographic features across the known world.<sup>8</sup> The painting takes up more than half of folio 6, and is set within an elaborate border of pinnacles and lozenges in gold, blue, and pink. The gilding around the border and in the damask pattern on Ptolemy’s robe is dulled, significantly, in reproduction, as is the ornamentation overtop the astronomical instruments in Ptolemy’s hand and those arranged in the studiolo, to the right.

Ptolemy appears amidst a golden scene in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, where he lived and worked during the late first and early second centuries after Christ (fig. 2.2). The artist depicts the astronomer in profile, wearing an elaborate, bejeweled crown. He has a single white glove on his left hand, having removed the other to grasp a planispheric, or star-based, astrolabe with his right. Astrolabes have been used since antiquity to determine the user’s location on earth, the date, and time of day based on the angle between their eye and the position of fixed stars in what they considered a heavenly sphere, and in this case the astronomer looks across the side of the instrument concealed from the viewer to take a measurement.

While it may not be immediately apparent to modern viewers, the blue sky above Ptolemy may suggest that the scene takes place at night, in line with so many other astronomical maps from the period, including an example—made even more famous by Aby Warburg—above the high altar of the Old Sacristy in the church of San Lorenzo in Florence (fig. 2.3). The viewer thus stargazes or measures the position of the sun alongside Ptolemy, with our mutual attention drawn to the celestial body in the upper right (figs. 2.4 and 2.5). While it is difficult to argue for one occurrence over another, rays of light extend from concentric quarters of light and dark to the ground, below, with a few passing through branches and birds in the trees, turning them gold. The longest ray, which is isolated after cutting through the Italian cypress trees, stretches to a tower on a distant hill, suggesting further that an astronomical observation takes place.

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This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the Marciana manuscript, considering Bessarion's legations to Bologna (1450–55), the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–39), and northern cities beyond the Alps (1460–61) (map 2.2). As I introduce each legation, I focus on Bessarion and objects on the move and discuss how the cardinal's engagement with the arts and sciences ran parallel to his advocacy for Crusade during his first decades in Europe. In the first half of the chapter, I tell Bessarion's story by relating the Marciana *Geography* to another copy of the text that Bessarion brought with him to the Council of Ferrara—and then ask why he brought such a text, as opposed to more “useful” sources that could be used to refute the theological positions held by his Catholic counterparts. I then return to the Marciana frontispiece and identify the central figure as a composite portrait of the astronomer, Ptolemy, and King Ptolemy (I) Soter (ca. 367–282 BCE) as the founder of the

Library of Alexandria in Egypt. I avoid extended, formal, and side-by-side discussions of a potential triple portrait—wherein the third, layered personality would be Bessarion, himself—and focus instead on the painted astrolabe in the figure’s hand, which relates to at least one and possibly two instruments in Bessarion’s collection. In conclusion, I return to the polyglot inscription beneath the frontispiece, which is lifted from the Byzantine scholar Maximos Planudes’ *Anthologia Hellenike*, or *Greek Anthology*, an edited volume of prose and poems that was collected in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Planudes was a key figure in the rediscovery of the Greek text of the *Geography* around 1300, and I use Bessarion’s interest to discuss how a shared and reliable representation of the world is linked to the ability to reclaim Christian territories lost to the Ottomans, particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

#### A Byzantine *Geography* at the Council of Ferrara

The *Geography* was clearly dear to Bessarion, based on the tremendous financial investment in the work on calfskin in the Marciana, which is decorated with “miniatures” so large and elaborate that they really look like stand-alone paintings. The Marciana or Bologna Geography is a lasting testament to Bessarion’s interest in Greek science and cartography, and it is interesting to note that he also brought a Byzantine copy of the text with him to the Council of Ferrara in 1438, where he had gone to debate the case of the Orthodox church as a theologian and diplomat. The young monk carried the precious copy from Constantinople through Modon, where he selected certain volumes to carry on to the port at Venice and into north Italy (map 2.3).<sup>9</sup> It was a long way to transport any manuscript, and such an effort was meaningful, in part, because the works were closely related to Bessarion’s areas of expertise. Math, science, and philosophy were the pillars of Bessarion’s education with

Plethon in Mistra from ca. 1430–33 – 36, and he would have studied early Orthodox writings, intensely, during his upbringing in the order of Saint Basil in Constantinople. As a young man, he was also likely to imitate his master, Plethon, who also traveled with the Greek delegation and carried a copy of Strabo’s *Geography*, thus reintroducing this important text to the Latin west.<sup>10</sup>

An important document pertaining to the copy of Ptolemy’s *Geography* that Bessarion brought to Ferrara, distinct from the example in the Marciana, is a letter sent from the Italian humanist Ambrogio Traversari from Ferrara to Francesco Peruzzi in March or April 1438.<sup>11</sup> Traversari was one of the great scholars of his time, learned in Greek, and appears most frequently in studies of literature, regarding his interest in the fathers of the Orthodox church, and the completion of Greek-to-Latin translations of the works of John Chrysostom and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.<sup>12</sup> In his letter to Peruzzi, Traversari describes Bessarion as a man of “singular erudition and merit” (“singularis eruditionis ac meriti”) and “intense ability” (“ardet ingenio”), though he was “the youngest of all” the delegates (“ceteris iunior”) at about thirty years old (“tricentarius”).<sup>13</sup>

As Traversari pays these compliments, he is most interested in Bessarion’s books. He mentions a few volumes that Bessarion brought with him to Ferrara, including the work of the patriarch, Cyril of Alexandria, and Euclid.<sup>14</sup> The Italian’s most specific reference, however, is reserved for a copy of Ptolemy’s *Geography*, which he describes as a manuscript “cum figuris aptissimis,” or “with associated images.”<sup>15</sup> Traversari goes no further in his description, but even these few words suggests that the Italian scholar handled the manuscript—how else to know about the images inside?—and that the value of the book was in its illustrations. While the volume in Traversari’s hands has not been identified, to this

point, the scholar's description and the context of Bessarion's arrival in Ferrara determine a few key aspects of the work, namely that it was a Greek manuscript from Bessarion's collection, created in Byzantium before 1438, and illustrated.

If we look deeper into the history of Ptolemy's *Geography*—or the *Cosmographia*, as the text came to be known after its transmission to Europe—we can also appreciate that the Council copy was not the first version to be presented to an Italian audience.<sup>16</sup> The text arrived in Italy over thirty years earlier, when the banker-scholar Palla Strozzi (d. 1462) acquired a copy in Greek in Constantinople around the time that the Byzantine scholar, Manuel Chrysoloras, was teaching at the University of Florence. That manuscript, which may now be a volume in the Vatican Library that was earlier part of Federico da Montefeltro's library in Urbino, shares some of its history with a Latin translation of the *Geography* completed by Chrysoloras' student, Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia, around 1406–9. Jacopo's work was known to Traversari, as he urged the Florentine book collector Niccolò Niccoli to stop the Venetian Piero Tommasi from producing a bad revision of the work in 1427—meaning Traversari had a longstanding interest in Ptolemy's *Geography*, which further explains his comments on Bessarion's copy at the council.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Traversari emerges as a kind of protector of the text, and someone who was excited to see another version of the Greek text arrive in Italy in 1438.

The main part of Bessarion's library exists today in the Biblioteca Marciana, which keep numerous fourteenth- and fifteenth-century copies of the *Geography* in addition to later, printed versions. Two of these are Latin translations of the Greek text, without tables, figures, or illustrations.<sup>18</sup> Another is the Bologna manuscript, created after the Council of Ferrara, around 1454. A final example is Ms. Gr. Z, 516 (= 904), a Byzantine manuscript

from the fourteenth century that is illustrated.<sup>19</sup> While there is no guarantee that this is the copy carried by Bessarion at the council and handled by Traversari, the volume does meet the criteria, listed above—it is Greek, belonged to Bessarion, and illustrated—and bears some similarities to the Bologna manuscript.

One similarity between these two volumes is the author portrait. Like in the Bologna copy, the frontispiece of Ms. Gr. Z, 516 represents an astronomer, who rides in a red litter, cushioned with pillows, on the back of an elephant. Like the Bologna *Geography*, which includes a world map (more on that, later) the fourteenth century manuscript includes a full-page image of the cosmos as a circle, divided into thirds. The first is the *meris oikoumènes*, or zone of the inhabited earth, shown to the viewer's right with the oceans in blue and the continents determined by the bare page, underneath. The second is the *meris paradeïson*, or zone of paradise, shown as three hemispheres in the top left, with a black sun within a fiery red hemisphere (bottom edge), the night sky in black (middle), and a crescent moon on a light green background (top edge). The final third, at the bottom of the page, is the *meris katepsygmenou*, or glacial zone, which is almost entirely blank.<sup>20</sup> Like the Bologna *Geography*, the fourteenth-century manuscript also includes regional maps—twenty-two, in this case—that stretch between facing pages, with folio 129, recto, showing Ptolemy's home in the city of Alexandria and the Nile River Delta.

More work could be done on Ms. Gr. Z, 516 (= 904), particularly when it comes to its attachment to Bessarion, the Council of Ferrara, and Traversari's letter. For now, the manuscript at least compares to the work mentioned by the scholar in spring 1438, with the image of Ptolemy riding on the back of an elephant providing a much more vivid sense of the scholar's excitement in seeing a work “with associated images.” Those three words from



Traversari also imply interactions over the manuscript, possibly with Bessarion, and the early manuscript brings us much closer to a social imagination of the two scholars hovering over the book, in solidarity, and how Bessarion brought the manuscript to be shared with people at the Council.

The fourteenth-century copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* in the Marciana is also evidence of a long-established interest in the astronomer, both by the monk-soon-to-be-cardinal and the scholars who attended the Council of Ferrara-Florence from 1438–39. The manuscript provided a welcome alternative, or at least a respite, to the granular theological debates taken up at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and, viewed in a more creative vein, an opportunity to bond over a precious item of mutual interest. If we return to the frontispiece from the Bologna manuscript, we can also move through iconographic details to the object's personal value to Bessarion, combined with a more communal understanding of the corpus of Ptolemy based on engagements with the text by the astronomers George von Peurbach and Johannes Müller and the Byzantine scholars Maximos Planudes and Manuel Chrysoloras.

#### A Double Portrait

The artist who painted the Bologna frontispiece shows the astronomer, Ptolemy, with an astrolabe in his hand. In this regard, it is a traditional author portrait. As pointed out by Jean Massing in an excellent catalogue entry for the exhibition *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, the figure is also crowned, so the painter participates in a long tradition of either conflating or confusing the Egyptian astronomer of the first and second centuries with the earlier King Ptolemy (I) Soter, the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt and, possibly, the famous library of Alexandria.<sup>21</sup> Since Bessarion was already an avid collector of books by

the time the Bologna manuscript was completed around 1454, I suggest that the layering of two Ptolomies was purposeful by artist and patron.

In line with the “cottage industry” of finding Bessarion in images from the fifteenth century, there has also been a move to triple the image by adding the patron to the layered personalities found, therein.<sup>22</sup> Some support for this comes from the artist’s strict adherence to a recognizable profile, which could be compared to the portraits of Bessarion found in an oil painting by Joos van Wassenhove and Pedro Berruguete from around 1476 (fig. 2.6) and a woodcut based on a drawing by Tobias Stimmer, completed in 1577 (fig. 2.7).<sup>23</sup> These attributions involve the forked beard, and are only two of many surviving images of the cardinal. But rather than searching for some Zeuxian composite of what Bessarion really looked like in the fifteenth century, we can move directly to Bessarion’s coat of arms and several donor portraits, with an eye to how these formal and contextual comparisons relate to the figure at the center of the Bologna frontispiece.

### The Patron’s Image

#### *Bessarion’s Coat of Arms*

One of the most enduring images of Bessarion is the cardinal’s self-presentation through his coat of arms. The emblem appears in so many of the books in the Marciana as a patron and owner’s stamp, with several beautiful examples appearing on frontispieces to Bessarion’s choral books in the Biblioteca Malatestiana (fig. 2.8).<sup>24</sup> Bessarion’s coat of arms is also a frequent companion to works not on paper, including a gold chalice created in the second half of the fifteenth century that Bessarion commissioned and donated to the Basilian monastery of San Nilo in Grottaferrata, Italy and the façade of the church of the

Madonna of the Mountain outside of Bologna in ca. 1450–55 (the latter is recorded in an eighteenth-century drawing in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, also in Bologna, fig. 2.9).

The study of Bessarion's coat of arms has never matched the intensity of interest in his portraits, but the emblem has been used to represent the cardinal, like his beard. While there are variations, every iteration of the impresa shows two arms grasping a central, triple-barred cross from opposite sides. In a rendering from volume 8 of the Bessarion choral books, the arms are draped in black and red, with the sleeves often identified as an Orthodox priest and Catholic cardinal, respectively. If we adopt this interpretation, at least for a moment, we can understand how such readings transition from the contemplation of literal arms within a coat of arms to the identification of two ecumenical bodies that are engaged in the cooperative, liturgical exercise of lifting a red cross as a conflated symbol of Crusade and the Eastern Orthodox church, with divine light shining on the enterprise.

#### *Bessarion's Donor Portraits*

Bessarion also extended himself into objects via another artistic convention, the donor portrait. The most famous of these is an oil painting by Gentile Bellini, completed around or slightly before 1476, that was once in the Scuola della Carità in Venice and is now in the National Gallery in London (fig. 2.10). There is also a related, lesser-known image made by an anonymous, sixteenth-century painter from the Veneto that was also commissioned by the scuola in 1540, nearly fifty years after Bessarion finally relinquished the reliquary of the True Cross to the brothers in 1472 (fig. 2.11). Perhaps the most interesting, however, are two details from the corali di Bessarione that were created in central Italy

leading up to and following 1453. The volumes were initially intended for the Franciscan convent of Saint Anthony of Padua in Constantinople, but after the Ottoman siege of Constantinople it became much more difficult to deliver the gift, with the volumes eventually allocated to the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Annunziata in Cesena.<sup>25</sup>

One painting from the first page of the fifth volume shows a figure that is often identified as a “monaco orante,” or “praying monk” (fig. 2.12).<sup>26</sup> He is framed on the left by the initial, “I,” disguised as an acanthus stalk with leaves that spread from top and bottom. The monk makes his appearance on the first decorated page in the manuscript, in a place we might expect to find a donor’s portrait, and volume 5 marks an important place within the larger set in containing songs to be sung from the Sunday of the Passion to the vigil of the Ascension (something that also explains the display of the Jesus’ wounds on hand, feet, and side as he sits on the bright curve of the heavenly firmament). Beneath him, transfixed, is the tonsured monk, who kneels at a small desk, offering some text, with hands clasped.

It was natural for Bessarion to have his image imposed on a commission, especially given the tremendous scale of the work. The praying monk is also not Franciscan, like the foundations it was slated for. In this instance, we see the characteristic black frock of the Basilian order, and while the monaco orante is rarely identified as an image of Bessarion it is clearly him, as there is a red cardinal’s hat at the threshold of the schematized church on the other side of the desk (fig. 2.13). And if the praying figure from volume 5 is the patron, then it is also likely that he appears in a similar place in volume 2, within an image, similar to the painting from Gentile Bellini, that has been described as a “monaco inginocchiato che offre l’anima a Dio,” or a “kneeling monk who offers his soul to God” (fig. 2.14).<sup>27</sup> When seen up close, one can make out the novel detail of a totemic representation of Bessarion’s soul

being launched into the heavens and another cardinal's hat, looking something like an overturned bowl, at the hem of his cloak (fig. 2.15).

Marking a work of art with the patron's coat of arms or a donor portrait fits within the artistic conventions of art patronage in the fifteenth century. However, Bessarion's self-imposition into the works he funded is also insistent, as seen in so many works on paper in Venice and Cesena and a variety of other media. In considering Bessarion's engagement with the arts across decades, the cardinal was particularly eager to gain credit and externalize his support for various project, with his coat of arms used to spread his image and provide a visual shorthand for his commitment to Crusade.

A discussion of the image of the patron from this period takes us to cities near Bologna, such as Cesena, with relevant comparisons showing Bessarion's penchant to have his body and goals represented in works of art. In some instances, he achieved this imposition via a symbolic image that emphasized divine support for Crusade—see the shining stars at the top of his coat of arms, most visible in an example in relief from Bessarion's tomb monument in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome (fig. 2.16). In images from related manuscripts, a red, triple-barred cross appears on a blue shield and is grasped on either side by members of the Eastern and Western churches as a sign of the need to “take up the cross” and embark on Crusade. In other cases, Bessarion projected himself via images of supplication, as seen in Venetian paintings of the cardinal made after his death in which the cardinal holds the Italo-Byzantine reliquary he donated to the members of the Scuola della Carità. With all of this in mind, it is possible that Bessarion went a step further in the manuscript of Ptolemy's *Geography* from Marciana, and had himself

included in a triple portrait that layered his persona over that of the ancient astronomer as well as of the king of Alexandria.

### Two Painted Astrolabes

The likelihood that the figure on the frontispiece is made up of two Ptolomies, plus Bessarion increases when we consider the planispheric astrolabe in the figure's right hand (fig. 2.2). Among the array of astronomical instruments in the studiolo to the right, the astrolabe dominates (fig. 2.17). The instrument hangs from a nail driven into the wall just below a jumbled shelf of books, and the painter takes great care in depicting the instrument's rule, or revolving hand, and the degrees marked along its edge. The astrolabe in the studiolo works alongside the example in Ptolemy's hand, and this multiple representation allow for a comprehensive view of an astrolabe, from both sides. For the example held by Ptolemy, the complexity of the object in miniature works against its legibility, though the viewer can still make out hints of the instrument's revolving plate and the markers used to point out the position of certain celestial bodies.<sup>28</sup> For the example in the studiolo, there is a view of the alidade that determined the angle between the user and a certain named star.

Given the level of demonstrated artistic interest in the astrolabe, it is also important to note what an astrolabe does and why it might be shown, here. An astrolabe is, fundamentally, a timekeeping device that could also be used to determine the latitude of its user to determine the date within an established (i.e., Julian) calendar, the time of day (based on the position of the sun), or night (based on the position of another known star).<sup>29</sup> Its representation is a logical starting point for the *Geography*, since it was an object whose use pertained to the coordinates discussed in the text. We also appreciate an emphasis on the

astrolabes among a host of arresting details, and in looking through or past it we find our way to additional aspects of the scene. We notice Ptolemy's robe, with its gilded pattern and ermine lining, and how it lays overtop an undergarment with swirling cosmic designs, with glimpses at Ptolemy's right sleeve, chest, and the slit of fabric around his feet. Similar tones appear in the blue painted vault above the collared dog, to the left—also decorated with stars—as well as the study with its assorted sundials, quadrant, and an open book of constellations.

The artist shows Ptolemy's use of the planispheric astrolabe with some ability, as the astronomer holds the object up to his eye and looks along the sighting vane, or alidade, to measure the height of a celestial body above the horizon.<sup>30</sup> In the operation of the instrument, the astronomer needed to know what part of the world they were in (one of up to seven possible zones, or "climates," along a certain latitude), insert the matching climate plate, and suspend the instrument from a chain at eye level. With the instrument hanging in plumb, the astronomer would then select a celestial body they recognized and measure its height above the horizon—either the sun during the day or a star at night—using the alidade as a guide. Since the hand now marked a degree on the outermost edge of the astrolabe, the user could then rotate the rete on the opposite side of the instrument so that the pointer for the star being measured matched the same degree on the underlying climate plate.

The plate was a critical source of information for the user, as it provided a two-dimensional representation, or projection, of a three-dimensional world. Climate plates were heavily inscribed with circles that could be traced to determine the position of the astronomer, the date, and the time of day. In an elegant system, climate plates also featured inscribed circles (almucantars), that showed the constant altitude of stars above the horizon

in each region; pathways for corresponding azimuth values; and, after some calculation, the direction of true north. When the celestial and terrestrial information provided by the rete and climate plate were aligned, the object also rendered the positions of other stars in the region—details that could be used to determine the exact hour and the length of day and night. In addition, the back of many Latin astrolabes also feature a complete eccentric circle and radiating arcs of circles that, based on the position of the sun, could also be used to determine the date within an established calendar and the amount of sunlight to be expected.<sup>31</sup>

The artist's depiction of the instrument and its use is remarkably accurate, with two notable exceptions. Against all other details, the astronomer fails to orient the astrolabe towards the night sky. Also, instead of suspending the astrolabe in front of his eye from a chain, Ptolemy clutches at the sides of the instrument, with his right hand turned awkwardly and his fingers obstructing the moving parts within the rete. These details could be dismissed as mere mistakes, leading to the end of interpretive effort by the viewer. We could suggest that the artist had an astrolabe in front of him as he worked, but never had the opportunity to see the instrument in use, leading to a few mishaps. This is the easiest solution, since it leans on the notion of an uneducated artist working at the limit of his ability. But there is also an alternative to go further, in ways that do not denigrate the anonymous artist, and say that Ptolemy's grasp of the object is a significant error in showing multiple goals in conflict. As already noted, the artist depicts at least two and likely three personalities in the frontispiece, and to do this successfully he shows the figure in profile. This means he must orient the figure in miniature towards the viewer, not the night sky, even if it works against the coherency of the scene as an image of stargazing. More than a mistake, the artist's choice is a symptom of an emphasis on figural representation over



astronomical observation, an indication that the frontispiece is burdened with significance, and contains an image of Bessarion.

### Two Astrolabes in Bessarion's Collection

There was also one, possibly two, very real astrolabes in Bessarion's collection. The first example—at this point, only tenuously connected to the cardinal—was produced in Greek-occupied Persia in the eleventh century and preserved in what was the Santa Giulia Museo della Città and is now part of the Civici Musei d'Arte e Storia in Brescia, Italy.<sup>32</sup> It is an extraordinary example of its type, in being almost 15" in diameter and made out of brass. The instrument points to fourteen fixed stars, including one marker, closest to the center of the rete, in the shape of a bird with a sharp beak. Details of the object's creation are recorded in an inscription that runs along its outermost edge, which reads: "(This is) an image manifest of the heaven's movements,/ Making distinct and clear the course of the stars,/ The changing of the seasons and the passages of the times,/ Which, being an intricate work, with ardent mind fashioned Sergius the Persian, holding a consul's rank."<sup>33</sup>

The climate plate currently set within the astrolabe in its reproductions corresponds to a latitude that includes portions of the Anatolian peninsula and the major cities of Rhodes, Hellespont, and Constantinople, territories with significant links to Bessarion's time in Byzantium.<sup>34</sup> There is also the other astrolabe from Bessarion's collection, firmly attached to the cardinal, that was given to him by the astronomer, Regiomontanus, who was born Johannes Müller (fig. 2.18).<sup>35</sup> The work from the fifteenth century is about a quarter the size of the Greco-Persian example; it was made either in Vienna or, more likely, in Rome. The Latin inscription that appears in the cartellino at the base of the reverse seems to suggest the

latter: “Under the protection of the divine Bessarion called Cardinal, I arise in Rome as the work of Johannes: -1462.”<sup>36</sup>

It is unclear how, when, or even if the massive eleventh-century astrolabe came into Bessarion’s possession, though the argument for ownership is made by David King.<sup>37</sup> The gift from Regiomontanus to Bessarion also took place about eight years after the Bologna manuscript was completed—so it is impossible to argue that the two painted astrolabes from the frontispiece are the two objects from the cardinal’s collection. However, the chain of indebtedness can just as easily flow in the opposite direction, from fictive to so-called “real,” with the instruments in the frontispiece being signs of Bessarion’s early interest in Greek astronomy, developed during his education with George Gemistos Plethon in Mistra, and looking forward to his acquisition of the physical instruments at a later date.

#### Bessarion’s Northern Legation

The connection between Bessarion and the astronomer Regiomontanus began, albeit indirectly, at the Council of Mantua in 1459, an event that took place just after the election of Enea Silvio Piccolomini as Pope Pius II. The gathering of church officials was an instigation to Crusade, and in an important meeting in which the pope himself intervened to push for a military campaign that could reclaim Byzantine territories lost to the Ottomans, Bessarion was the cardinal who spoke directly after him, reinforcing the papal message. Among other aspects of his speech, Bessarion suggested an accord between the pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the king of France that would allow for commitment on a pan-European scale. His speech was one of the few occasions that moved the assembly to action.<sup>38</sup> Before the council was dismissed, Pius gave Bessarion the “power of raising and

organizing armies, collecting the tithe, naming preachers for the crusade, pronouncing ecclesiastical sentences, and taking money deposited in churches,” and also charged him with a mission to what is now Germany and Austria to negotiate terms of unification with the northern princes and the reigning emperor, Frederick III (r. 1452–93).<sup>39</sup>

Bessarion left Mantua on January 19, 1460, with a legation of fifteen to twenty people that included his secretary, Niccolò Perotti, and the future prefect of the Vatican Library, Bartolomeo Platina (map 2.4).<sup>40</sup> The legation’s final destination was the imperial court residence in Vienna, but the group had much to do along the way. From Mantua, they traveled to Venice and then Sterzing, a city on the northern border of the papal states, close to the crossing over the Alps at the Brenner Pass.<sup>41</sup> Since it was early February, they traveled by sleigh. While it is not clear who insisted on making the trip in the dead of winter, either Pius or Bessarion, the willingness to undertake the journey at this time made the urgency of the legation clear.<sup>42</sup>

Bessarion and his retinue were in Augsburg by early February, where the cardinal spent a single night in the Episcopal palace.<sup>43</sup> By the middle of the month, the group was in Nuremberg for an initial diet, intended as a gathering of German princes.<sup>44</sup> The parliament began on March 2, and there were early indications that it would not be a success.<sup>45</sup> The Holy Roman Emperor did not attend, though he was represented by the Cardinal of Augsburg and bishops from Speier and Bamberg. Only one of the northern princes came, and most didn’t bother to send ambassadors.<sup>46</sup> The brazenness of the princes was likely fueled by their anger towards Pius, who they saw as meddling in local affairs.<sup>47</sup> Bessarion attempted to rally the troops in a speech to the assembly, and showed some frustration as he appealed to the delegates’ sense of pride, saying: “You can still save your honor; you can still

reap Fame when you set off against the enemies of the Faith. Therefore conclude peace with each other, illustrious princes! For my part, I promise all the effort, hard work, and diligence required for this righteous cause.”<sup>48</sup> In spite of these words, the attendees were completely uninspired, and Bessarion apparently dismissed them by offering a blessing with his left hand.<sup>49</sup>

Bessarion’s delegation went further west after the disaster in Nuremberg, first to Frankfurt and then to Worms, where a second diet was already underway.<sup>50</sup> Frederick III called the assembly to repair the damage done in Nuremberg, but Bessarion was a week late and nothing was accomplished.<sup>51</sup> In early April, Bessarion went on to Mainz, Aschaffenburg, and finally Vienna.<sup>52</sup> On May 4, 1460, Bessarion and his legation were treated to a ceremonial greeting by the emperor about a mile outside the city.<sup>53</sup> Upon his arrival, Bessarion took up residence in Vienna’s Franciscan abbey, or Barfüßerkloster, and waited for the diet to begin.<sup>54</sup>

Again, the proceedings did not go as planned. While the meeting was scheduled for September 1, it was now the princes’ turn to be late, and the assembly was postponed for several weeks.<sup>55</sup> On September 17, the assembly opened in the Wiener Hofburg, and this time the convention was attended by thirteen princes, ten bishops and archbishops, and about eighty ambassadors from thirty-four cities.<sup>56</sup> It was a substantial improvement, and one made possible by Frederick’s leadership, but overall still poorly attended.<sup>57</sup> As before, Bessarion begged for Christian aid and left the princes of Europe unconvinced.<sup>58</sup> According to the modern scholar Polychronis Enepekides, Bessarion was thoroughly discouraged and retreated to lodgings he took up in a Carmelite monastery associated with the imperial court.<sup>59</sup> By the end of September the cardinal refused to take part in any public meetings,

and by October he had closed himself off, completely. When various ambassadors tried to call, they were dismissed.<sup>60</sup> Bessarion would remain in Vienna for about a year due to weather and also because of a siege against the city led by Frederick's brother, Albrecht of Brandenburg.<sup>61</sup>

Bessarion spent some of this time at the Universitaet Wien, working with the Austrian astronomer Georg von Peurbach and his pupil, Johannes Müller von Königsberg.<sup>62</sup> Peurbach and Müller had been engaged in studies of comets and lunar eclipses prior to Bessarion's arrival, and their labor included the observation of Halley's Comet in the skies above Europe in 1456 as well as the completion of Peurbach's *Tabulae eclipsium*, or set of eclipse tables, around 1459.<sup>63</sup> Earlier in his life, Peurbach had composed a treatise on the fashioning of astronomical instruments, an interest Bessarion shared as suggested by the astrolabes represented in the frontispiece of his Bologna copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* and, even more pointedly, in the gift of an astrolabe he received from Regiomontanus in 1462.

During their time at the university, Peurbach, Müller, and Bessarion discussed and began work on an epitome, or summary, of another great astronomic work by Ptolemy, the *Almagest*. Peurbach finished about half before his death in April 1461, while Bessarion was still in residence in Vienna and five months before his departure and return to Italy.<sup>64</sup> Bessarion offered to bring Peurbach to Rome prior to his illness, leading to a request that Müller come, too, as his most talented pupil and research assistant.<sup>65</sup> Bessarion honored his compact with the younger scholar after Peurbach's passing, and after sixteen months in the city Bessarion finally left Vienna with Müller and the rest of his delegation around September 1461.<sup>66</sup> The cardinal had exhausted all of his funds, to date, and was forced to

petition the papal secretary, Jacopo Ammanati, for additional support.<sup>67</sup> By November the group was back in Rome, and shortly thereafter Regiomontanus completed the epitome of the *Almagest* and presented it to Bessarion as his patron.<sup>68</sup>

An extended discussion of Bessarion's northern legation shows how the painted astrolabes from the Bologna frontispiece pertain to the cardinal's first and second European legations following his immigration in 1440, and beyond that his early involvement at the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Through the iconographic details of the painted astrolabes from the frontispiece, we also see how Bessarion's involvement with the corpus of Ptolemy extended beyond the *Geography* to the *Almagest*, one of the greatest works of astronomy before the heliocentric revolution of Copernicus and Kepler. In describing the breakdown in communication between Bessarion and the northern princes, there is also at least a sense that Bessarion valued his scientific and intellectual interests over the task he was assigned, namely the mission to convince Frederick III to participate in Crusade, with the possibility deserved of some attention.

The legation to Vienna could be an occasion to judge Bessarion, to call him unfocused, and to make strong statements regarding his true motives for undertaking the journey to the northern territories... but we should avoid these pursuits. At this point, it is not clear how much time Bessarion spent with Peurbach and Müller at the university, as opposed to negotiating the terms of Crusade with the northern princes and the Holy Roman Emperor. However, Bessarion's engagement with the astronomers is part of an early pattern, wherein the cardinal used an appointment to spend time at a famous university, be it the Studium in Bologna, the Alma Mater Rudolfina in Vienna, or even the unexpected visit to the city of Florence as an extra-Byzantine center of Greek knowledge.

If we look to events immediately after the return of the northern delegation in late 1461, there are also further signs of Bessarion's investment in the work of Peurbach and Regiomontanus, including his support for a clarification of the epitome of the *Almagest* by the young scholar known as the *Problemata almagesti*. The project begun around 1463 is now lost,<sup>69</sup> but notes by Bessarion are preserved in a copy of Peurbach's *Tables of Eclipses* that was hand-copied by Regiomontanus. Most striking is the preface to the manuscript, also in Bessarion's hand, where the cardinal identifies it as "The recently written tables of eclipses of the no less philosophical than scholarly, very scholarly Georg von Peurbach, which he sent me, before he died in April 1461. May his soul rest in peace."<sup>70</sup> During his time in Bessarion's academy, Regiomontanus and his patron also worked on the reform of the Christian calendar, which included calculating the precise date of Easter. Such a project was in line with Bessarion's general interest in order, from the reformation of Basilian and Franciscan monasteries in Italy to the erection of a public clock in Bologna, with work to trace the movements of the stars and planets related very deeply to the unity of the two churches. When reform of the calendar was finally approved in 1582, the Orthodox church did not accept it, leading to differences in the liturgical calendars in use, today—yet another sign of the difficulty of Bessarion's project in the fifteenth century.

All of this could imply that Bessarion valued scientific pursuits over—or at the cost of—his Crusade agenda. However, that is a dualist approach, wherein one interest suffers for the other to thrive, whereas this project is built on evidence leading to claims regarding the entwinement of Bessarion's interest in art, science, and Crusade. Bessarion did not go to Vienna to meet with Peurbach and Müller at the expense of other opportunities, but when events did not go as planned, time and time again, the cardinal had the ability to pivot and

remain productive. I would like to follow a different path, then, in suggesting that Bessarion's engagement in the arts and sciences became even more important when diplomacy and persuasive speech failed.

### The Epigram on the Bologna Frontispiece

#### *Ptolemy's Geography and a World in Crisis*

One way to show the value of the arts and sciences for Crusade is to return to the historical context of the Bologna manuscript. After a long period of uncertainty, Constantinople was finally claimed by the Ottomans in May 1453, with the news reaching Italy a few weeks later. Initial messages were vivified by a wave of wealthy Byzantines who came to Italy, soon after, including the reigning Patriarch of Constantinople, Isidore of Kiev, who had immigrated years before and undertaken his own papal mission to the Byzantine Emperor in the leadup to the fall of the city. On his return to Rome, he was hosted by Bessarion in Bologna, and likely gave the cardinal some account of the situation. The Fall of Constantinople was, of course, a substantial shock to those in Italy, since they knew that the loss would leave the Morea, the Adriatic, and the southern regions of Italy open to attack from the Ottomans. The production of the Bologna manuscript around 1454 should thus be viewed in direct relation to anxieties regarding the fate of Christendom after 1453.

One sign of anxiety in Europe is found in the epigram that appears just below the framed scene in the Bologna frontispiece (fig. 2.19). As mentioned, earlier, it is a polyglot inscription in Greek and Latin, with the former being an excerpt from the Byzantine scholar Maximos Planudes' *Greek Anthology*. The *Anthology* is an edited volume of prose and poems collected in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and it is known that Bessarion



acquired a copy from Giovanni Aurispa prior to the Italian's death in 1459.<sup>71</sup> The author of the epigram is unknown but the speaker is Ptolemy, with the transcription of the Greek and its translation done by Perotti,<sup>72</sup> as established by the letter to Iacopo Costanzi.<sup>73</sup> If we follow the Latin inscription, it reads:

Epigramma Ptolemei.  
 Mortalem vitam perituraque membra dedere  
 fata mihi, & summum prestituere diem .  
 Sed Iovis ambrosia vescor, terramque relinquo  
 ingenio cursus dum noto sydereos.

The fates have given me a life that is mortal and bodily parts that perish, and they have prescribed the date of my death. But when I set my mind on the observation of the heavenly bodies and leave the earth behind, I drink the nectar of Zeus.<sup>74</sup>

The author describes the experience of stargazing from a geocentric worldview, the only belief prior to the first heliocentric models of the universe. According to the self-referred mortal, he stands on the earth and is surrounded by the “heavenly bodies,” and upon looking finds himself transported to Mount Olympus to drink an elixir that would make him a demigod, like Hercules.

Perotti plays a key role, here, not only as a member of the legation to Bologna but also in being highly skilled in Greek and Latin. A few scholars have written on the quality of Bessarion's Latin following his immigration to Italy, most notably John Monfasani, who makes it clear that when the cardinal arrived in Florence he was still learning but then “mastered Latin by the early 1440s.”<sup>75</sup> Perotti praised Bessarion, in fact, in the preface to own his treatise on poetic meter, entitled *De Generibus Metrorum*, a work that was completed in 1454, around the same time as the Bologna manuscript. As Niccolò writes, “When Bessarion writes in Latin, the Muses themselves begin to speak like the Romans.”<sup>76</sup>

Bessarion did not have to depend on Perotti's abilities—put another way, he was not lost when it came to Latin, without him. With that being said, Perotti's hand on the frontispiece is evidence of Bessarion's tendency to surround himself with scholars who were polyglots, themselves, and could assist in the cardinal's endeavors between cultures in the Mediterranean.<sup>77</sup> As a sign of Bessarion's multilingualism, the inscription shows a cooperation between the cardinal and his secretary, especially when it comes to a Greek manuscript that was also presented, on its very first page, to Latin readers.

*Diplomatic Relations: Planudes, Chrysoloras, and Bessarion*

The quotation from the *Anthology* on the Bologna frontispiece is appropriate, first and foremost, because it is an “Epigrama Ptolemei” that refers to the Egyptian astronomer and offered in his voice. Bessarion's strategy of voice-taking will be examined further in the pages that follow, particularly in relation to a Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew in the early 1460s and his translation of Demosthenes' “First Olynthiac Oration” in the early 1470s. Ptolemy is present through his epigram, which is simultaneously about him, the act of stargazing, and the transportive power of such activity. Planudes is nowhere credited as the collector of the *Anthology*—something that may involve the cardinal's disagreement with the scholar's writings on the procession of the Holy Spirit—but for those with some knowledge of Greek literature the attachment is there.

The uncited evocation of Planudes is important because the Byzantine scholar credited himself, and others, with the rediscovery of the *Geography* in the early fourteenth century. A key source is a poem in which Planudes expounds on the roles played by the Byzantine Emperor, Andronikos II (r. 1282–1328), and the reigning patriarch of Alexandria,

the second Athanasios I (II) (r. 1303–9). As quoted by J. Lennart Berggren and Alexander Jones, one author from the period identified the poem as “Heroic verses by the most wise monk Maximos Planudes on the *Geography* of Ptolemy, which had vanished for many years and then had been rediscovered by him through many toils.” In their translation of the poem, originally written in Greek in hexameter, Berggren and Jones write: “What a great wonder, the way that Ptolemy has brought the whole world into view, just like someone making a map showing just a little city. I never saw anything so skillful, colorful, and elegant as this lovely *geōgraphia*. This work lay hidden for countless year and found no one to bring it to light. But the emperor Andronikos exhorted the bishop of Alexandria, who took great troubles that a certain free-spirited friend of the Byzantines [meaning Planudes] should restore a likeness of the picture worthy of a king.”<sup>78</sup>

There is some ambiguity in the reference to a “hidden” or “concealed” manuscript, making it unclear if the text was truly lost or merely encountered in an archive in Constantinople or Alexandria through efforts facilitated by Planudes. In any case, the author of the poem suggests that Planudes acquired a precious copy of the *Geography* and used it to make an illustrated version of the text (“a likeness of the picture worthy of a king”), including a map of the known world, or *oikoumene*.<sup>79</sup> Ptolemy’s epigram and the contributions from Planudes bring Traversari’s letter to Peruzzi to mind, once again—and a manuscript “cum figuris aptissimis”—and by placing the inscription from the *Anthology* beneath the image of the Ptolomies-Bessarion the patron held up his own, renewed manuscript as equivalent to the rediscovery of the *Geography* in Byzantium around 1300.

Bessarion’s claim was significant, as the *Geography* was known in Italy. To elaborate on the information already provided, the earliest copy of the *Geography* is often attached to

Palla Strozzi, who likely acquired an illustrated version around 1398–1400,<sup>80</sup> while Manuel Chrysoloras was at the University of Florence from February 1397 to March 1400.<sup>81</sup> Strozzi's copy may be the famous Urbino graecus 82, which is also a large parchment codex, like the Bologna manuscript, and predates it by over a hundred years. One facet of the manuscript's importance is its relation to the Italian scholar Jacopo Angeli's Latin translation of the text, which was completed in manuscript form sometime between 1406–9, with the work dramatically increasing knowledge of the *Geography* in Italy and beyond.<sup>82</sup>

The production of the Bologna *Geography* is thus bound up with earlier efforts by Planudes, Chrysoloras, Strozzi, and Angeli and the copy of the text that Bessarion carried in his luggage to the Council of Ferrara. Bessarion's intense interest in the *Geography* should be seen as a multivalent form of diplomacy—defined as a critical examination of documents and a political endeavor—in playing to an established interest in the *Geography* in Italy, offering the opportunity of comparative study, and aligning the cardinal with illustrious Byzantines who had engaged with Ptolemy's work in the past. Significantly, Planudes and Chrysoloras were also experienced diplomats who advocated for Crusade in their own times. For his part, Planudes worked on Greek-to-Latin translations of theological texts and went on a diplomatic mission to Venice for the same Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II from 1295–96.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, when Chrysoloras came to Italy as an instructor of Greek his teaching was mixed with diplomatic activities and descriptions of the threat posed by the Ottomans to Byzantium.<sup>84</sup>

### Uses of the *Geography*

Recent work by Sean Roberts and others has drawn additional attention to the uses of *Geography* (or *Cosmography*) in Italy and the Ottoman Empire, with special attention to Francesco Berlinghieri's production of a printed version of the *Geography* in 1482 in Tuscan verse (terza rima, the same format as Dante's *Divine Comedy*) and the Florentine merchant Paolo da Colle's gift of a copy to Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) in Constantinople. Robert's notion of "Ptolemy in transit" between European cities such as Florence and the Ottomans in Constantinople (as well as its relation to Ottoman exiles like Cem, the half-brother of Bayezid, on the island of Rhodes and then Savoy) also raises the possibility that Bessarion's Bologna manuscript was produced as a diplomatic gift.<sup>85</sup> Such a use could be implied by the size of the manuscript, with individual folios measuring about 23" tall and 17" wide, making the book nearly two feet by three feet when open. It is exceedingly large for a work on parchment and this, combined with the amount of gilding, could lead to the logical supposition that the volume was intended as a presentation copy for someone other than Bessarion. However, if this was the book's initial purpose, it was never fulfilled, as the manuscript remained in Bessarion's collection and was donated alongside other materials to the basilica of San Marco in Venice.<sup>86</sup>

We can also ask why such a beautiful copy the *Geography* was hand-copied by the scribe Ioannis Rhosos in Greek, as opposed to translated into Latin and covered with the lavish ornamentation we see, today. One answer has already been suggested: by the mid-1450's, the *Geography* already had a dominant Latin translation completed by Jacopo Angeli and dedicated it to the anti-Pope Alexander V (r. 1409–10) in 1410.<sup>87</sup> There is also another reason for a renewed Greek version of the *Geography* if we look to the moment the Bologna

manuscript was produced, a few years before George of Trebizond (d. 1484) completed a competing translation of the *Geography*, against Jacopo Angeli's version. George's translation was originally commissioned by Pope Nicholas V (r. 1447–53), but immediately following its completion the work was heavily criticized by his peers. Because of this, the translation was never presented to Nicholas in a formal way, though it does survive in a manuscript that was given to Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–84) by George's son, Andreas.<sup>88</sup> Given the outcry against George's translation, the Bologna manuscript may have been offered as a version of the text that was close to its source—presumably, in being based on a version that Bessarion carried from Constantinople—and offered as a fresh starting point for scholars who might want to undertake translations in the future.

Over the years, Bessarion and George were more and more at odds, to the point of becoming bitter rivals. Their animosity can be traced to debates over the value of Plato versus Aristotle, and the philosophers' commensurability with the tenets of Christianity. But the *Geography* also presents another, less familiar field of battle between the scholars, one that was manifested in the work of Regiomontanus, once again. We first encountered Regiomontanus in relation to Bessarion's trip to Vienna and the astrolabe given to the cardinal in 1462, and in this case we find critiques of both Jacopo Angeli and George's work in the astronomer's *Annotationes Joannis de Regio Monte, in errores commissos a Jacobo Angelo in translatione sua*, published in 1474, shortly after Bessarion's death in 1472.<sup>89</sup> When Regiomontanus produced his annotations and comments on Jacopo's translation, he made the important decision to have the text vetted by the Byzantine scholar, Theodore Gazes, who was a deeply respected, elder member of Bessarion's humanistic academy in Rome. By inviting this review, Regiomontanus learned from George's hastily produced translation for Nicholas V, and, like other members of Bessarion's social circle, was committed to

producing the best version of the *Geography* in Latin. Because of this, we can at least speculate that the Bologna *Geography* was never intended as a gift, but always as a lavish, attractive, and dependable scholarly resource.

### A New Library of Alexandria

By 1454, Bessarion's book collection was well on its way to becoming another Library of Alexandria, with some of the cardinal's ambition captured in the frontispiece to the Bologna manuscript. The Library of Alexandria was one of the most important repositories of knowledge in ancient times, alongside the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, in spite of the fact that the institution was likely burned by Julius Caesar in the first century BCE, the Emperor Aurelian in the third century, and/or a Muslim army led by 'Amr ibn al-'As al-Sahmi in the seventh century.<sup>90</sup> As already noted, King Ptolemy (I) Soter is often put forward as the potential founder of the Library, and I suggest that the painter of the frontispiece shows him amidst the city of Alexandria, inflected by the architectural hallmarks of Bologna.<sup>91</sup> First, the structures around the Ptolemies are Italian Gothic, an influence that defined Bolognese architecture in the fifteenth century, with the most prominent connection being the pointed archways and covered pink cannonades that stretch into the distance. Alexandria is also evoked by the simple fact of the Ptolomies' presence, given that both lived and worked in the city, and the delicate tower above the figures' head, which may be a vision of Alexandria's famous lighthouse (figs. 2.20 and 2.21).

The artist responsible for the frontispiece also shows the central figure in an architectural precinct that reflects key aspects of ancient descriptions of the Library of Alexandria, which, according to those accounts, was set within a palace (fig. 2.1). The green

space behind the figure representing the two Ptolemies plus Bessarion may allude to the gardens that were part of these grounds, with the painter going to some lengths to depict birds alighting on the topmost branches of the trees. A key source on the appearance of the library is a commentary on three plays by Aristophanes written by the Byzantine scholar Johannes Tzetzes, where he mentions an “external library” near the Temple of Serapis (in a precinct known as the Serapeum), and a much larger “internal library” within the palace at Alexandria.<sup>92</sup> Strabo also describes the center of the city in Book 17 of his *Geography*, specifically the palaces as an area that includes the royal grounds, gardens, and the Museum (which he calls the “shrine of the Muses,” mirroring the epigram from Ptolemy and Planudes and the astronomer who drinks “the nectar of Zeus”).<sup>93</sup> Oddly, Strabo never mentions the library itself, but in his description the Museum “...has a walkway, an arcade, and a large house, in which there is the eating hall of the men of learning who share the Museum. They form a community with property in common and a priest in charge of the Museum, who was formerly appointed by the kings but is now appointed by Caesar.”<sup>94</sup>

A walkway and an arcade also appear in the Bologna frontispiece, as they still do in the streets of the Italian city. In his work on the Library of Alexandria, the scholar Daniel Heller-Roazen writes that the work of those who lived communally in the Museum “took the form of a massive project aimed at the conservation and, more radically, the ‘emendation’ and ‘rectification’ of the works of the classical Greek authors.”<sup>95</sup> Heller-Roazen also emphasizes the editorial work that took place in the library, and the fact that philology was, in one sense, created in Alexandria—practices that have a direct correlation to Bessarion’s *Geography* as a scholarly resource that was textually pure and available to those who would complete a translation.<sup>96</sup>



These texts are cited to reinforce the notion that the artist who painted the Bologna frontispiece depicted the two Ptolemies and Bessarion within the ancient Library of Alexandria, which had architectural features such as the porticos that were similar to those of the Renaissance. The structural conflation of Alexandria and Bologna was particularly significant after the Fall of Constantinople, and in line with Bessarion's penchant for linking contemporary events to those from antiquity. And, most relevant to the context of Crusade, the fifteenth-century frontispiece called to mind the destruction of the library by Muslims in the seventh century, with typological connections to ongoing events.

### The Notion of Transport

An interpretation of the Bologna frontispiece that describes Bessarion's collection as another the Library of Alexandria fits within long-held theories regarding the cardinal's engagement with the arts, or what I have called the preservation thesis of Bessarion studies. According to many scholars, Bessarion's collecting practices were defined by the cultural migration of Byzantine artifacts to "alterum Byzantium," be it Venice or, more broadly, the Italian peninsula.<sup>97</sup> However, the Bologna manuscript relates to Bessarion's interests in the arts and sciences *and* his Crusade agenda, specifically in being an object of interest at the Council of Ferrara-Florence, a visual aid to a shared vision of the world, and referent to a great repository of ancient knowledge in need of preservation.

In this vein, we can turn to the epigram from Planudes' *Anthology*, once again, to see it as part of the same endeavor to live communally with Christians against the Ottomans—specifically, the moment when the poet describes what happens "when I set my mind on the observation of the heavenly bodies." As he writes, such an action causes him to "leave the

earth behind” and “drink the nectar of Zeus” on Mount Olympus. The key concept here is vision that enables transportation, and the mortal astronomer becoming a demigod. The poet admits that such a transformation should be impossible—“The fates have given me a life that is mortal and bodily parts that perish, and they have prescribed the date of my death”—and yet stargazing is a transformative exception that brings the observer to a realm of being that was previously impossible.

The notion of transport pervades Italian adaptations of the *Geography*, with a notable example being Berlinghieri’s *Septe giornate dela Geographia*, or *Seven Days of the Geography*, a work completed in the early 1460s but published in 1482.<sup>98</sup> Berlinghieri’s version is a creative take on the original text, hung on a framework that emphasizes time and place. In his version, the author—and by extension, the reader—go on a miraculous seven-day journey around the world, visiting the places mentioned in Ptolemy’s text. Some versions of the *Seven Days* include illustrations, and the sense of being “carried away” by its contents is captured in a manuscript that was once owned by Lorenzo de’ Medici and includes a miniature that shows Berlinghieri and the Platonist Marsilio Ficino just before they are lifted up into the sky by Ptolemy, who looks like God the Father with his arm extended.<sup>99</sup>

The *Geography*’s potential as a vehicle, or a method of transport, to Olympus is not reserved for astronomers. It also pertains to stargazers, past and present, Byzantines and Latins, cardinals and secretaries, church leaders and the commanders of armies. I emphasize the final category, especially, because the representation and visioning of distant locales was also linked to the ability to get there, physically. This is another reason why Bessarion brought the Byzantine copy of the *Geography* to the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1438. As his fellow humanists gathered around the work, the cardinal had the opportunity to point

and say, “This place”—say, the Morea—“is threatened. We need to launch Christian forces to secure it against the Turks.” Admittedly, this is an imagined historical scene but one that evokes Traversari’s letter and the embedded suggestion that the scholar stood with Bessarion and paged through a manuscript that offered a communal vision of the world to the people who gazed at it.

### A Shared Vision and the Reclamation of a Christian World

With all of this in mind, we can finally turn to another important aspect of the Bologna *Geography*: the world map that stretches across folio 50, verso, and folio 51, recto (fig. 2.22). The large-scale map, nearly two feet tall and three feet wide, was built for communal vision. The corners of the map, outside the curve of the oikoumene, is gilded, and includes personifications of the winds represented as various racialized types, corresponding to the continent nearby. Regions, rivers, and oceans are marked with golden letters, with the largest mountain ranges running through the map in green. In a humorous detail, two fish swim in the Indian Ocean—the symbol for Pisces. The color of the continents is determined by the vellum, underneath, and there are cartographic lines that run over these areas and separate the world map into trapezoids that frame the smaller, regional maps.

The ability to create a shared image of the world was revelatory to a European audience in the fifteenth century. In such an imagination, the spread of the Ottoman army could be traced, reliably. Details also brought the viewer’s attention to areas that had recently been lost, including the Golden Horn, the Morea, and the Holy Land. Perhaps more important than considering what was lost, however, was how a new, cartographic

imagination could encourage the reclamation of the Christian world. In giving Christian communities an object to rally around, the *Geography* was an image of a unified Mediterranean and a cartographic tool that could be used as part of a coordinated, militarized response to the Ottoman incursion.

Regional maps appear immediately after the world map and take up the entire second half of the Marciana manuscript. Their scale (full folio) and detail are astounding, even now. They were also an expansion, in the 1450s, of the “associated figures” in the council copy viewed by Traversari. The regions were determined by the grid that runs through the oikoumene, and the isotropic element of dividing the world into zones, as with the climate plates in astrolabes, was another step towards a detailed and reliably rendered space. The logic of late medieval and early modern cartography was not distant or abstracting, however, since such reasoning could be used as a holy weapon and a political instrument.

In its finished form, the world and regional maps within the Bologna *Geography* visualized the oikoumene according to a sacred project, namely the reclamation of Christendom from the Ottomans. We saw a hint of this purpose as early as the Council of Ferrara-Florence, when theological unity was linked to military and, I suggest, cartographic unity. It was also evident in the layering of personalities and sites on the frontispiece, which made powerful connections between the Library of Alexandria, famously destroyed, and the collection Bessarion was building in Italy. Themes of philological, cartographic, and celestial order are found, throughout, and offered during a period some considered the End Times.<sup>100</sup> As a set of instructions to its readers, alluding to maps yet-to-be-rendered but with cartographic exemplars, nearby, the text of the *Geography* was also latent with the possibility of restoring the world to order. Bessarion showed a constant interest in regimenting projects

throughout his career in Italy, from his support for the first public clock in Bologna to his efforts to reform the Basilian and Franciscan order across Italy. Because of this, Bessarion's patronage of the *Geography* can be viewed as an ordered response to the chaos introduced by the Ottomans, which are so often described in period sources as an unspeakable, unknowable force.

## NOTES

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1. Mariano Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia,” in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 45. Cited hereafter as Zorzi, “VB.” For details of the trip, also see Franco Bacchelli, “La legazione bolognese del cardinale Bessarione (1450–1455),” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 137–47.
  2. Fabrizio Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 165.
  3. For mentions of these Byzantine icons and the frescoes related to Funeral of the Virgin, see Lollini, “Bessarione e le arti figurative,” 148–170.
  4. The Marciana manuscript has received attention from scholars such as Nikolaus Egel, Susy Marcon, Leonora Navari, Sebastiano Gentile, Antonio Rigo, and Maria Cecilia Ferrari, among others. Nikolaus Egel, “Bessarion als Geograph? Bessarions Rolle in der Vermittlung der Geographia des Ptolemaus und ihre Aufnahme durch die italienischen Humanisten,” in *“Inter graecos latinissimus, inter latinos graecissimus”: Bessarion zwischen den Kulturen*, eds. Claudia Märthl, Christian Kaiser, and Thomas Ricklin (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 203–28. Sebastiano Gentile, “Umanesimo e cartografia: Tolomeo nel secolo XV,” in *La cartografia europea tra primo Rinascimento e fine dell'Illuminismo: Atti del convegno internazionale, The Making of European Cartography*, ed. Diogo Ramada Curto, Angelo Cattaneo, and André Ferrand Almeida (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003), 4–18. Susy Marcon, “Cardinal Bessarion’s Ptolemy Codex, A Book of Inestimable Worth” in *Ho Hellenikos kōdikas 388 tēs Markianēs Vivliothēkēs tēs Venetias*, vol. 1 (Halimos: Ekdoseis Milētos, 2000), 23–32. Leonora Navari, “Claudius Ptolemaeus, His Geographiké Hyphegesis, and the Ptolemaic Problem,” in *Ho Hellenikos kōdikas 388 tēs Markianēs Vivliothēkēs tēs Venetias*, vol. 1 (Halimos: Ekdoseis Milētos, 2000), 51–64. Antonio Rigo, “Gli interessi astronomici del cardinal Bessarione,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 105–17. Sebastiano Gentile, “L’ambiente umanistico fiorentino e lo studio della geographia nel secolo XV,” in *Amerigo Vespucci. La vita e i viaggi*, ed. Luciano Formisano (Florence: Banca Toscano, 1991), 9–63. Maria Cecilia Ferrari, “La Geografia del Tolomeo fatta miniare del Cardinale Bessarione,” *La Bibliofila* 40 (1939): 23–37.
  5. For the involvement of the Cretan scribe Ioannis Rhosos: Mariano Zorzi, introduction to *Ho Hellenikos kōdikas 388 tēs Markianēs Vivliothēkēs tēs Venetias*, vol. 1 (Halimos: Ekdoseis Milētos, 2000), 9; and Marcon, “Cardinal Bessarion’s Ptolemy Codex,” 27–28.

6. "... et nuper iussu principis nostri epigramma Ptolemaei latinum feci, quod ille in eius geographia, quam nuper omnium quas umquam viderim et pulcherrimam et pretiosissimam fecit, supra Ptolemaei imaginem iussit inscribi." For the English translation and date of the letter from Perotti to Iacopo Costanzi da Fano: Marcon, "Cardinal Bessarion's Ptolemy Codex," 23; John Monfasani, "Il Perotti e la controversia tra platonici ed aristolelici," *Res Publica Litterarum* 4 (1981): 225–31 (Appendix C); Monfasani's article is also republished in John Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Emigrés* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1995), I; for the Latin text, see Angelo Maio, ed., *Classicorum auctorum e vaticanis codicibus editorum*, vol. 3 (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1831), 307.

7. For an introduction to Ptolemy's *Geography* in the late medieval and early modern periods: Francesca Fiorani, "Mapping and Voyages," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Michael Wyatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 59–83; James Hankins, "Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance," in *The Marks in the Fields: Essays on the Uses of Manuscripts*, ed. Rodney G. Dennis, with Elizabeth Falsey (Cambridge, MA: The Houghton Library, 1992), 118–27; Sean Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); and J. Lenart Berggren, "Ptolemy's Maps as an Introduction to Ancient Science," in *Science and Mathematics in Ancient Greek Culture*, ed. Christopher J. Tuplin and Tracey E. Rihll (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 36–55.

8. Ptolemy referred to his own project in the second century as the Γεωγραφικὴ Ὑφήγησις, or *Geōgraphikē Hyphēgēsis* (*Guide to Cartography*), with the earliest versions written on rolls of papyrus, now lost. Extant manuscripts from the fourteenth century contain long lists of coordinates and instructions for depicting the known world in maps. The most complete versions of the *Geography* are made up of eight books in three sections: a short introduction, in which Ptolemy describes his project as "an imitation through drawing of the entire known part of the world together with the things that are, broadly speaking, connected with it"; an extensive catalog of places and their coordinates; and concluding theoretical chapters with discussions of various "projections," or instructions for rendering a globe on a flat surface. Claudius Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Geography: An Annotated Translation of the Theoretical Chapters*, trans. J. Lennart Berggren and Alexander Jones (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Claudius Ptolemy, *Geography of Claudius Ptolemy*, trans. Edward Luther Stevenson (New York: The New York Public Library, 1932). About fifty-six copies of the Greek text of the *Geography* survive today, works that have been painstakingly catalogued and described in Schabel's *Text und Karten des Ptolemaeus* (1938), which remains a seminal text for scholars interesting in the uses of Ptolemy's work. Paul Schnabel, *Text und Karten des Ptolemäus* (Leipzig: K. F. Koehlers Verlag, 1939). For the earliest surviving manuscripts of the *Geography*, related to Planudes' rediscovery, see Aubrey Diller, "The Oldest Manuscripts of Ptolemaic Maps," in *Studies in Greek Manuscript Tradition* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1983), 99–107; Alexander Jones, ed., *Ptolemy in Perspective: Use and Criticism of his Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010); and Alexander Jones, "Ptolemy's Geography: Mapmaking and the Scientific Enterprise," in *Ancient Perspectives: Maps and their Place in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome*, ed. Richard J. A. Talbert (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 109–28.

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9. Robert S. Nelson, “The Italian Appreciation and Appropriation of Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts, c. 1200–1450,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 225. Charles Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (Albany, 1977), 210. Zorzi, “VB,” 42.
10. Fiorani, “Mapping and Voyages,” 64.
11. In the context of the Council of Ferrara–Florence, Robert Nelson writes that “John VIII also brought a great many books, according to Ambrogio Traversari. In a letter, written in March or April of 1438, Traversari explicitly mention what would have interested him most – complete editions of Plato and Plutarch and a commentary on the works of Aristotle. The same letter states that although Bessarion left many manuscripts behind in Modon in the Morea, he did have with him a Ptolmey ‘cum figuris aptissimis.’” Nelson, “Italian Appreciation and Appropriation,” 225. For a transcription of the letter from Ambrogio Traversari to Francesco Peruzzi, sent from Ferrara to Florence between March 11 and April 7, 1438: Ambrogio Traversari, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti*, vol. 1., ed. Giovanni Mercati (Vatican, 1939), 24–26. For the friendship between Traversari and Bessarion, see Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers*, 209–10.
12. Traversari completed Greek-to-Latin translations of Ps.-Dionysius’ *De caelesti hierarchia*, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, *De divinis nominibus*, *De mystica theologia*, and his letters. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers*, 158–62. Bessarion also owned several translations by Ambrogio Traversari. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 7–8, 16.
13. Traversari, *Ultimi contributi*, 25. Zorzi, “VB,” 42–43.
14. Mercati, *Ultimi contributi*, 25–26.
15. *Ibid.*, 26.
16. James Hankins writes about the keen interest in Ptolemy’s *Geography* in the fifteenth century: “So it is no surprise that the young Florentine merchant-banker Palla Strozzi, a member of the Greek study group [of Manuel Chrysoloras], had sought out a Greek manuscript of the *Geography* while in Constantinople and had brought it back to Florence for use in Chrysoloras’ classes.” Hankins, “Ptolemy’s Geography,” 119. Also Patrick Gautier Dalché, “The Reception of Ptolemy’s *Geography* (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century,” in *The History of Cartography: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, vol. 3, bk. 1, eds. J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 285–364. Zur Shalev, “Main Themes in the Study of Ptolemy’s Geography in the Renaissance,” in *Ptolemy’s Geography in the Renaissance*, eds. Zur Shalev and Charles Burnett (London: Warburg Institute, 2011), 1–14.
17. Traversari’s advice to Niccolò Niccoli, related to Piero Tommasi’s proposed revision of Jacopo Scarperia da Angeli’s Latin translation of the *Geography*, came in 1427. Shalev, “Ptolemy’s Geography in the Renaissance,” 5, note 17.



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18. Ms. Lat. X, 25 (=3128), Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Cosmographia libri octo*, 1445. Ms. Lat. X, 229 (=3702), Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Cosmographia*, fifteenth century.

19. The regional maps for the continent of Africa from Ms. Gr. Z, 516 are reproduced in Silvio Bernardinello, “Le carte dell’Africa nella Geographia di Tolomeo,” in *Atti e Memorie dell’Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti (Parte III: Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali Lettere ed Arti)*, vol. 59 (Padua: Accademia di Padova, 1996–1997), 49–95. Also see the chapter on the illustrations in Gr. 516 in Italo Furlan, *Codici Greci Illustrati della Biblioteca Marciana*, pt. 4 (Milan: Stendhal, 1978), 30.

20. My description of the *meris oikoumènes*, *meris paradeïsou*, and *meris katepsygmenou* draws from the Marciana catalog entry for “Gr. Z, 516 (=904), ff. 5–139v Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Geographia, libri octo*, sec. XIV,” accessed March 9, 2020, <http://193.206.197.50/cms/images/stories/MsGeo/00904.pdf>.

21. King Ptolemy (I) Soter was the first monarch to rule after the death of Alexander the Great. Most scholars, following Irenaeus’ description of the Library of Alexandria from the second century CE, argue that he was the founder. However, others suggest the second Ptolemaic monarch, Ptolemy Philadelphus (r. 285–46 BCE), in line with the Byzantine Johannes Tzetzes’ description of the library in his *Prooemium*, or commentary, on three plays by Aristophanes. For a summary of the debate, see Daniel Heller-Roazen, “Tradition’s Destruction,” *October* 100 (Spring, 2002): 135; and Roy MacLeod, ed., *The Library of Alexandria: Centre of Learning in the Ancient World* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 64.

22. The reference to studies of embedded portraits of Bessarion as a “cottage industry” comes from *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, s.v. “Cardinal Bessarion,” by John Monfasani, accessed March 3, 2020, doi:10.1093/OBO/9780195399301–0230. For the embedded portraits of the Ptolemies in the Bologna frontispiece, see Maria Cecilia Ferrari, “La Geografia del Tolomeo fatta miniare del Cardinale Bessarione,” *La Bibliofila* 40 (1939): 23–37; and Jean Massing, “Portrait of Ptolemy,” in *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, ed. Jay A. Levenson (New York: Yale University Press, 1991), 226–27.

23. The portrait of Bessarion by Joos van Wassenhove and Pedro Berruguete was originally part of the famous series of twenty-eight portraits that ringed the studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino. In its original arrangement, Bessarion’s image was juxtaposed with a portrait of Ptolemy, something that further strengthens the connection between the two. While the image cannot be fully trusted as documentary, the portrait from the studiolo is one of the only examples where there are signs of the Bessarion’s ethnic origins in the kingdom of Trebizond, an area in far eastern Anatolia, in modern day Turkey.

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24. Since Bessarion's coat of arms includes his red cardinal's hat, it was certainly designed after his immigration to Italy in December 1440. The most focused study of Bessarion's coat of arms was completed by Irving Lavin in an article on "Bonaventure, Bessarion, and the Franciscan Coat of Arms," where he compares the cardinal's emblem to the crossed arms in the coat of arms of Saint Bonaventure, the famous biographer of Saint Francis, which became a prototype for the symbol of Franciscan order. Lavin makes a strong case for the relatedness of Bonaventure and Bessarion: both men fought for the union of the Greek and Latin churches (at the Second Council of Lyon from 1272–74 and the Council of Ferrara-Florence from 1438–39, respectively) and Bessarion was also named protector of the Franciscan order in 1458. Lavin notices much about Bessarion's symbol, including its relation to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, liturgical celebrations of the Exaltation of the Cross, and Byzantine coinage stamped with an image of the emperor and empresses holding a processional cross between them that doubles as a battle standard. Irving Lavin, "Bonaventure, Bessarion and the Franciscan coat of arms," in *Beyond the Text: Franciscan Art and the Construction of Religion*, eds. Xavier Seubert and Oleg Bychkov (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013), 229–30.

25. See a section on "The Choir Books of Cardinal Bessarion" in Pia Palladino, *Treasures of a Lost Art: Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 78.

26. A bibliographic description for volume 5 of the choral books, including the reference to a "monaco orante," can be found in the *Catalogo Aperto dei Manoscritti Malatestiana*, s.v. "Corali Bessarione 5," accessed March 9, 2020, [http://catalogoaperto.malatestiana.it/ricerca/?oldform=mostra\\_codice\\_completo.jsp?CODICE\\_ID=414](http://catalogoaperto.malatestiana.it/ricerca/?oldform=mostra_codice_completo.jsp?CODICE_ID=414)

27. A bibliographic description for volume 2 of the choral books, including the reference to the "monaco inginocchiato che offre l'anima a Dio," can be found in the *Catalogo Aperto dei Manoscritti Malatestiana*, s.v. "Corali Bessarione 2," accessed March 9, 2020, [http://catalogoaperto.malatestiana.it/ricerca/?oldform=mostra\\_codice\\_completo.jsp?CODICE\\_ID=411](http://catalogoaperto.malatestiana.it/ricerca/?oldform=mostra_codice_completo.jsp?CODICE_ID=411)

28. Like all planispheric astrolabes, the examples in the Bologna frontispiece would have had four layers. They are: (1) the mater, or mother, the base for climate plates to rest upon; (2) the solid climate plate or disk that rests on top of the mater, with inscribed lines showing the paths of the stars; (3) the rete, or intricate inner piece of concentric arcs, that rests on top of the climate plate, rotates 360 degrees, and features triangular pointers that showed the location of fixed stars; and (4) the alidade, which was used to calculate the angle of a fixed star above the horizon.

29. Stephen C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165.

30. Or, alternatively, from the zenith. J. D. North, *Stars, Minds and Fate: Essays in Ancient and Medieval Cosmology* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1989), 211.

31. For more on what an astrolabe is and how it works, see David King, *Astrolabes and Angels, Epigrams and Enigmas: From Regiomontanus' Acrostic for Cardinal Bessarion to Piero della Francesca's Flagellation of Christ* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007), 189–201; David King and Gerard L'E. Turner, “The Astrolabe Dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion by Regiomontanus in 1462,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 341–67; McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures*, 165–87; and North, *Stars, Minds and Fate*, 211–20.

32. In The International Instrument Checklist (CCA, IC, ICA or IIC), the astrolabe is cataloged as inv. no. 2. The most focused scholarship on the instrument is O. M. Dalton, *The Byzantine Astrolabe at Brescia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926). For the object's connection to Bessarion, including a suggestion that the cardinal took the instrument with him to Vienna: King, *Astrolabes and Angels*, 27–31, 220–33.

33. The “Sergius” referred to is a Greek consul, as Persia was occupied by Greece in the eleventh century. Dalton, *Byzantine Astrolabe*, 5, 7–8.

34. King, *Astrolabes and Angels*, 28.

35. Rudolf Mett, *Regiomontanus in Italien* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989). Michael H. Shank, “Regiomontanus on Ptolemy, Physical Orbs, and Astronomical Fictionalism: Goldsteinian Themes in the ‘Defense of Theon against George of Trebizond,’” *Perspectives on Science* 10, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 179–207. N. M. Swerdlow, “Regiomontanus on the Critical Problems of Astronomy,” in *Nature, Experiment and the Sciences*, eds. William Shea, Stillman Drake, and Trevor Harvey Levere (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 165–95. N. M. Swerdlow, “The Recovery of the Exact Sciences of Antiquity: Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography,” in *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture*, ed. Anthony Grafton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 125–67. Ernst Zinner, *Regiomontanus: His Life and Work*, trans. Ezra Brown (New York: Elsevier Science Publishing Company, 1990) (originally published as *Leben und Wirken des Job. Müller von Königsberg*, 1968).

36. “SVB DIVI BESSARIONIS DE | CARDINE DICTI PRAESI | DIO ROMAE SVRGO IO | ANNIS OPVS: -1462.” Translation and transcription from: King and Turner, “Astrolabe Dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion,” 343. A slightly different translation, based on an embedded pun, is: “Under the protection of the divine Bessarion, said to be from the *cardo*, I arise in Rome as the work of Ioannes in 1462.” King, *Astrolabes and Angels*, 37. The differences between these translations (involving the inclusion or omission of the phrase “from the *cardo*”) is explained by King and Turner: “The reference to Bessarion as ‘called *de cardine*’ could relate to the *cardines*, a concept of prime importance in astronomy and astrology, and then constitute a pun on the title Cardinal, the original form of which was, indeed, *de cardine*, and possibly a further pun based on the use of *cardo* to mean the East (Bessarion came to Rome from the East).” King and Turner, “Astrolabe Dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion,” 348. For more information on the astrolabe from Regiomontanus: Antonio Rigo, “Gli interessi astronomici del cardinal Bessarione,” in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 109–13.

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37. King, *Astrolabes and Angels*, 27–31, 220–33.

38. Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1978), 208–14.

39. According to Setton, “In a letter dated 15 January [1460] Pope Pius informed Bessarion that he would participate in the expedition [to the northern princes and the Holy Roman Emperor] himself if his health permitted; he had granted crusading indulgences more ample than those of his predecessors; and had had decreed a general tithe of clerical goods, without excepting his own apostolic goods or those of the cardinals. Bessarion was to have the power of raising and organizing armies, collecting the tithe, naming preachers for the crusade, pronouncing ecclesiastical sentences, and taking money deposited in churches.” Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, 213–14.

40. Zorzi, “VB,” 48. For Bartolomeo Platina and Niccolò Perotti’s presences in the legation to the northern territories: Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, vol. 1 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1923), 294; Mercati, *Niccolò Perrotti*, 44–54. On the context of the legation to the northern princes and the Holy Roman Emperor, more broadly: Dan Joan Mureşan, “Bessarion’s *Orations against the Turks* and Crusade Propaganda at the Große Christentag of Regensburg,” in *Reconfiguring the Fifteenth-Century Crusade*, ed. Norman Housley (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 207–44; Claudia Märkl, “Kardinal Bessarion als Legat im Deutschen Reich (1460/1461),” in *“Inter graecos latinissimus, inter latinos graecissimus”: Bessarion zwischen den Kulteren*, eds. Claudia Märkl, Christian Kaiser, and Thomas Ricklin (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 123–50.; Erich Meuthen, “Zum Itinerar der deutschen Legation Bessarions,” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 37 (1957): 328–33; Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 281–303 (on “Bessarions Stellung bei der Kurie. Auf dem Kongreß von Mantua und als Legat in Deutschland”); and Henri Vast, *Le Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472): Étude sur la Chrétienté et la Renaissance vers le Milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1977), 242–54 (on “Sa Légation en Allemagne”).

41. Zorzi, “VB,” 48.

42. Ludwig Mohler summarizes Platina’s account of the trip over the Brenner Pass, including how the group traveled by sleigh at the most difficult places. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 294.

43. *Ibid.*, 294.

44. *Ibid.*, 377–98.

45. Zorzi, “VB,” 48.

46. The only prince to attend the first diet at Nuremberg was the Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg. A few Grand Electors and the Duke Ludwig of Bavaria also sent ambassadors. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 294.

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47. Tensions between northern leaders and the papacy had escalated into furious debates over the supremacy of the Holy See at the Council of Basil (1431) and its continuation at the Council of Mantua (1459–60). For conflicts between the pope and Gregor von Heimburg at the Council of Basil and Diether von Isenburg at the Council of Mantua, see Polychronis Enepekides, “Die Wiener Legation des Kardinals Bessarion in den Jahren 1460–1461: Unter Berücksichtigung der neuentdeckten urkundlichen Quellen in Wien,” in *Miscellanea marciiana di studi Bessarionei*, eds. Rino Avesani, Giuseppe Billanovich, and Giovanni Pozzi (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1976), 76; and Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 295.
48. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 295, and cites to Cod. Vat. lat. 4037, fols. 85 (recto) – 93 (verso).
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., 296.
51. Ibid., 295.
52. Ibid., 297. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 72. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s *Orations*,” 207–44.
53. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 69, 72. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 298. Zorzi, “VB,” 4.
54. The Franciscan abbey is the current location of the Church of Saint Augustine, or Augustinerkirche, in Vienna. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 77.
55. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 72, 76. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 300.
56. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 299–300.
57. Thirty-four cities were represented at the imperial diet; 110 were invited. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 76.
58. As Enepekides writes, the diet in Vienna ended “somewhere between yawning and empty promises.” The scholar also notes that during his oration “Bessarion spoke like the last Byzantine Emperor addressing his soldiers filing out of Byzantium,” and that while he was “in the castle in Vienna he preached like was in the pulpit at Hagia Sophia.” Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 76–77. For a transcription of Bessarion’s speech in Vienna, see Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 399–401.
59. This was the Karmelitenkloster am Hof, or Kloster der Karmeliterinnen am Hof, now destroyed. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 73.
60. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 302. Enepekides, “Wiener Legation,” 76–77. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 302. For letters sent between the German princes and Bessarion: Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 401–2, 403–4.

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61. Earlier in summer 1461, Frederick III left for his court residence in Graz. The emperor's brother, Albrecht of Brandenburg, took the opportunity to send mercenary forces against the city of Vienna. In an attempt to escape the city, Bessarion rode out from Vienna to Albrecht's camp in Inzersdorf and helped negotiate an end to the conflict. Bessarion also played an important role in the armistice of Luxembourg, an accord that finally made peace between Frederick, Albrecht, and the King of Bohemia. Enepekides, "Wiener Legation," 79.

62. For more on Georg von Peurbach, Johannes Müller, and their collaboration with Bessarion on the epitome of the *Almagest* during the cardinal's time in Vienna: Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, 300; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Georg von Peurbach," by Michael Shank, accessed March 9, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Georg-von-Peurbach>; and Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 17–30.

63. Much of what is known about Peurbach is due to Müller, who continued the scholar's work on comets and the prediction of eclipses. Only a few of Peurbach's works survive, today, though he is best known for his work on the *Theoricae novae planetarum*, or *New Theories of the Planets*, completed in 1454 and printed in Nuremberg in 1472 through Regiomontanus' efforts. Some useful information also comes from Regiomontanus' scrupulous notes on his teacher's lectures, which he took while attending the Bürgerschule, or Viennese Citizens' School (some of these are preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana, MS Lat. 342). During his lifetime, Peurbach was also actively engaged in creating auxiliary tables, which provide the planetary positions for each day of the year for use in almanacs. Among other commentators, Pope Callixtus also called Haley's Comet a sign of the devil and tried to excommunicate it. Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 23, 27.

64. Michael Shank writes that it was Bessarion who suggested the creation of the summary: "At the urging of Cardinal Bessarion, Peurbach began an epitome, or abridgment, of Ptolemy's *Almagest* in 1460. At Peurbach's untimely death he had finished only the first six (of 13) books; Regiomontanus not only completed the work (c. 1462), published in 1496 as *Epytoma...in Almagestum Ptolomei*, but he also raised it to new critical heights." Michael Shank, "Georg von Peurbach." The epitome was likely based on a Greek-to-Latin translation of the *Almagest* by Gerard of Cremona from the 12th century, and to a lesser degree a version by George of Trebizond. Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 54.

65. Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 51.

66. The date of Bessarion's departure from Vienna is suggested by benefices Bessarion gave to the chapel of St. Florian and Christopher in the imperial court residence at Wiener Neustadt, compared to additional favors to the chapel of Saint Leonard in the Sachsenburg castle near Salzburg on September 23, signaling his departure from the city. Enepekides, "Wiener Legation," 69, 79. Zorzi, in both useful timelines, puts the departure from Vienna in "autunno," only, but does mention a letter from Bessarion to the "frate Graziano" that puts the cardinal in Venice on October 14. Zorzi, "VB," 4, 49.

67. For Bessarion's petition for funds to Jacopo Ammanati, in a letter sent from Leoben (modern day Leoben), Austria, on September 18, 1461: Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 51.

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68. The volume is available in the Marciana, today, and cataloged as Lat. Ms. 63. For the journey back to Rome, see Zorzi, “VB,” 4, 49. David King also has a useful “Selective chronology of Bessarion’s and Regiomontanus’ activities mainly from 1460 to 1464,” which includes a stop in Ravenna. King, *Astrolabes and Angels*, 20–23.

69. Zinner points to notes related to the *Problemata almagesti* in Marciana Gr. 526. Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 51–52, 74–75.

70. The manuscript copy of Peurbach’s *Tables of Eclipses* is cataloged in the Biblioteca Marciana as San Marco Latin MS 89. Regiomontanus also dedicated a manuscript version of his work *De triangulis, On Triangles*, to Bessarion in 1464, with an additional, important document being a letter from Regiomontanus to Bessarion, entitled *De compositionis et usu cuiusdam metereoscopii* (“On the composition and use of certain astronomical instruments”). Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 55–60.

71. Bessarion acquired the copy of Planudes’ *Greek Anthology* from Giovanni Aurispa. In mentioning Aurispa’s death in June 1459, Zorzi mentions that Bessarion “...had previously acquired *l’Homerus Venetus A*, *l’Homerus Venetus B*, the *Anthology* of Planudes, commentary by Eustazio on the *Illiad*, the *Biblioteca* of Fozio, and the orations of Demosthenes.” Zorzi, “VB,” 48.

72. Niccolò Perotti has his own, interesting history, having been affiliated with Grey, Bishop of Ely, and serving as a representative of the English King Henry VI in the Roman Curia. Grey was an avid book collector, and Niccolò duties as his secretary included acting as a book hunter and scribe (including making handwritten copies of Guarino da Verona’s inaugural lectures and a grammar miscellany). Constance T. Blackwell, “Niccolò Perotti in England: John Anwykyll, Bernard André, John Colet and Luis Vives,” *Studi umanistici piceni* 2 (1982): 14. Perotti followed Bishop Grey to Rome, arriving around 1446–47, when he met Bessarion and became affiliated with his household. Mercati, *Niccolò Perroti*, 27, 32; and John Monfasani, “Niccolò Perotti and Bessarion’s *In Calumniatorem Platonis*,” in *Greek Scholars between East and West in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 183.

73. Mercati, *Niccolò Perroti*, 44. Massing, “Portrait of Ptolemy,” 226–27. Marcon, “Cardinal Bessarion’s Ptolemy Codex,” 23; Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars*, I.

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74. According to Jean Michel Massing, “These verses, from a collection of ancient and medieval Greek poems known as the *Greek Anthology* (IX, 577)... are especially appropriate here, not just because they relate to Ptolemy but also because Maximus Planudes, who promoted a new interest in Ptolemy’s *Geography*, was also famous as an anthologist of Greek epigrams.” Massing, “Portrait of Ptolemy,” 227. The Greek differs slightly: “I know that I am mortal, a creature of the day; but when I search into the multitudinous revolving spirals of the stars my feet no longer rest on earth, but, standing by Zeus himself, I take my fill of ambrosia, the food of the gods.” For the Loeb transcription and translation of *Greek Anthology*, Book 9, no. 577, see W. R. Paton, trans., *The Greek Anthology, Volume III: Book 9: The Declamatory Epigrams*, Loeb Classical Library 84 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917), 320–21. For a discussion of the use of Planudean anthologies and *Anth.Pal.* 9.577, in particular, in works on Greek astronomy, see Christian Tolsa, “The ‘Ptolemy’ Epigram: A Scholion on the Preface of the *Syntaxis*,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 54 (2014): 687–97.

75. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 10, 64. John Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” *Rinascimento* 21, no. 2 (1981): 165–209. Reprinted as John Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” in *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy. Cardinal Bessarion and other Émigrés. Selected Essays* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1995), II.

76. “Cum scribit [Bessarion] Latine, Muse ipse Romane loqui videntur.” Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 27, note 3.

77. As Monfasani writes, Bessarion’s Latin was “fluent and correct” by the 1450s but the cardinal “eventually had Niccolò Perotti revise much of his published Latin oeuvres to bring them up to contemporary humanist standards.” During his time in Italy, Bessarion composed some of his works that were intended for an Italian audience in his native Greek, and then had them translated into Latin, including, *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, *De Sacramentno Eucharistiae*, and *In Illud Evangelii*. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 28–30.

78. Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy’s Geography*, 49. Berggren and Jones also reference “the patriarch of Alexandria, Athanasios II (who was in Constantinople at the time).” They likely refer to the second Athanasios I (II), who reigned from 1303–9. For a transcription of the entire Greek poem, see Navari, “Claudius Ptolemaeus,” 57.

79. Berggren and Jones, *Ptolemy’s Geography*, 49. For more on Planudes and the *Greek Anthology*, see Alan Cameron, *The Greek Anthology: From Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).



80. In Vespasiano da Bisticci's biography of Palla Strozzi, he writes that "Messer Palla sent to Greece for infinite volumes of books, all at his own expense. He even had Ptolemy's *Cosmography* [*Geography*] with the illustrations sent from Constantinople, along with the *Lives of Plutarch*, the works of Plato, and an infinite number of books of other others." There is also Vespasiano's note in his biography of Alessandra de' Bardi, where he mentions Strozzi's copy: "...at his own expense he had the Greek *Cosmography* come from Constantinople; he had the first copy done in Constantinople, with the writing and the pictures." Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's *Geography*," 288. Vespasiano da Bisticci, *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, trans. William George and Emily Waters (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1926), 235–45. For the realization that "It is probable, but not certain, that Urbinas Graecus 82 belonged to Palla Strozzi," see Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's *Geography*," 288. Some concerns are raised through a close reading of Palla's will and his use of the word "cosmographia." Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's *Geography*," 288–89. James Hankins also states that the *Geography* was not brought to Italy by Chrysoloras, himself, but was acquired by Palla Strozzi in Constantinople and brought back to Florence while he was part of Chrysoloras' study group. Hankins, "Ptolemy's *Geography*," 119.

81. Chrysoloras would also return to Florence in the summer 1413 and again from January to February 1414, related to his work on behalf of Pope John XXIII. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers*, 16–17.

82. Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia's schooling in Constantinople began in late 1395. It is possible that he acquired the influential copy of the *Geography* at this time. However, we also know that Jacopo traveled with Chrysoloras from Constantinople to Venice in 1396, and subsequently onto Florence, before returning with Chrysoloras to the Byzantine capital around 1400. For a brief profile of Jacopo's life, see "Appendix I: Profiles," in Lauro Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390–1460* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 309–10; John W. Barker, "Emperors, Embassies and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy," in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 163; and Roberto Weiss, "Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia (c. 1360–1410–11)," in *Medioevo e Rinascimento, studi in onore di Bruno Nardi*, vol. 2 (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1955), 803–27. On the process of translating the *Geography* from Greek into Latin, involving contributions from Chrysoloras, Jacopo Angeli, and Leonardo Bruni, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, "The Reception of Ptolemy's *Geography* (End of the Fourteenth to Beginning of the Sixteenth Century)," in *The History of Cartography: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, vol. 3, bk. 1, eds. J.B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 290–92.

83. For Planudes' Latin translations of Greek texts: Jonathan Harris, *Greek Émigrés in the West, 1400–1520* (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1995), 42.

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84. For Chrysololars's teaching in Italy and his diplomatic activities: Barker, "Emperors, Embassies, and Scholars," 158–79. For the practice of Byzantine conversion to the Latin rite, more generally: Tia M. Kolbaba, "Conversion from Greek Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism in the Fourteenth Century," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 19, no. 1 (1995): 120–34.
85. Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World*.
86. Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 1–3.
87. The dedication to Pope Alexander helps locate Jacopo's translation of the *Geography* in the chaotic political and religious context of the time, as surviving manuscripts of his work make it clear that the work was initially dedicated to Pope Gregory XII in Rome (r. 1406–15). However, following the Council of Pisa (1409), Jacopo switched his allegiance to the "beatific Pope Alexander V" (r. 1409–10), who lived in Pisa during the Western Schism. Shalev, "Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance," 3–4.
88. George of Trebizond's Greek-to-Latin translation of the *Geography* is cataloged as Vat. Lat. 2055.
89. Shalev, "Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance," 5, note 19.
90. References to each destruction are difficult to reconcile and there are several prevailing theories. Some sources suggest the library was burnt by Augustus Caesar during his involvement in the Egyptian civil war between Cleopatra and her brother in the first century, when Caesar set fire to his opponent's fleet and the flames overtook the Museum, by accident. However, many sources from the same period fail to mention the burning of the library. The fourth century destruction of the Library of Alexandria was iconoclastic, the result of the Emperor Theodosius' (r. 379–92) attempt to root out paganism (391 CE). The seventh century destruction was contributed to by the Muslim forces of 'Amr ibn al-'As al-Sahmi (b. ca. 573 – d. 664). Daniel Heller-Roazen, "Tradition's Destruction," *October* 100 (Spring, 2002): 148–50.
91. For the history of the Library of Alexandria: Herwig Maehler, "Alexandria, the Mouseion, and cultural identity," in *Alexandria, Real and Imagined*, eds. Anthony Hirst and Michael Silk (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 1–14.
92. According to Johannes Tzetzes, the "external library" had 42,800 books, while the "internal library" within the palace complex was much larger, with 400,000 mixed books and 90,000 single, unmixed books. Heller-Roazen, "Tradition's Destruction," 140.
93. Heller-Roazen, "Tradition's Destruction," 134–35, 137.
94. *Ibid.*, 135–36.
95. *Ibid.*

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96. Ibid., 151.

97. The phrase “alterum Byzantium” comes from Bessarion’s letter to Doge Cristoforo Moro and the Venetian Senate, dated May 31, 1468, cataloged in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana as Cod. Lat. XIV 14 (=4235). Martin Lowry, “Origins of St Mark's Library: Cardinal Bessarion's Gift, 1468,” in *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1630*, eds. David Chambers and Brian Pullan, with Jennifer Fletcher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 357–58.

98. For an extended discussion of Francesco di Niccolò Berlinghieri and his version of the *Geography*: Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World*, 45–88.

99. For the image of Ptolemy flying down towards Ficino and Berlinghieri, see a detail of book one from Berlinghieri’s *Geographia* (Florence, 1482) in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan, reproduced in: Sean Roberts, “Poet and ‘World Painter’: Francesco Berlinghieri’s *Geographia* (1482),” *Imago mundi* 62 (2010): 145–60.

100. See the section on “apocalyptic thought” in Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 143–61.

*CHAPTER 3*

The Reliquary Head of Saint Andrew and the Preservation of the Morea

A Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew arrived in Rome on April 12, 1462 (fig. 3.1). According to the *Commentaries*, or veiled autobiography, of Pope Pius II, people lined the streets on a processional route laid between the Milvian Bridge, the Porta Flaminia at the northern end of the city, and the basilica of Old Saint Peter's (map 3.1).<sup>1</sup> Devotees were eager to see, and possibly touch, a miraculous object that had the ability to remit sins, guard the city, and even act out against the enemies of the Faith. The head of Saint Andrew was appreciated as powerful because it contained fragments of the skull and jawbone of a saint who was the "first called" of the apostles, the follower who ushered his brother, Simon Peter, into the faith, and a vessel for the Holy Spirit. The relics and their container had been kept in the city of Patras in the Morea for well over a thousand years. In 1460, a significant Ottoman offensive into the region led the assumptive Byzantine Emperor, Thomas Palaiologos (d. 1465), to send an agent to Patras to remove the relics and have them brought to him on his way out of Greece.

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This chapter tracks Emperor Thomas' path from Mistra to Rome in the early 1460s and his transport of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew (map 3.2), with an interest in the religious and political use of the Byzantine reliquary leading up to a celebration in the church of Old Saint Peter's on Holy Tuesday, April 13, 1462. Although these relics never belonged to Bessarion's collection, they were highly regarded by the cardinal. Most notably, Bessarion used the head of Saint Andrew during a speech he gave in Old Saint Peter's: he spoke through the reliquary coming from the Morea, in the voice of Saint Andrew, asking the attending princes of Europe to participate in a Crusade to the Morea to rescue the territory from the Ottomans.

### The Power of Andrew's Relics

The relics of Saint Andrew are now strewn across a sacred landscape that includes Scotland, Poland, Germany, and Italy.<sup>2</sup> But the history of Andrew's body after his death begins with his martyrdom in Patras in the first century, with other geographic and temporal nodes being Constantinople in the fourth century and Amalfi at the start of the thirteenth. Andrew's power was also rooted in his status as a vessel for the Holy Spirit, since he was one of the followers who had tongues of flame alight on their heads from above as they gathered in the Upper Room during the Jewish festival of Shavuot, on an occasion came to be known, in the Christian tradition, as Pentecost. For the Orthodox church, Andrew had added significance. He was revered as the first patriarch and the man who brought Christianity to centers of what would become the Byzantine Empire.

The Holy Spirit's entrance into the Upper Room in the city of Jerusalem is the primal, cultural scene for the spread of global Christianity, since the fiery manifestations gave the apostles the ability to speak in tongues and, more lasting, proficiency in foreign languages that would be needed in their "mission to the nations." Andrew took the lingual ability granted to him and preached the Gospel across the Anatolian peninsula, the borderlands of the Black Sea, and Achaia—all territories of the future Byzantine Empire, including the city of Patras in the Morea. Andrew's direct connection to two thirds of the Trinity was captured in conventions of his artistic representation, specifically the emphasis on his head (including its "crown," through which the Holy Spirit entered his body) and the physical features of his eyes, cheeks, and mouth. Andrew's eyes had power because he bore witness to the Crucifixion and Christ's Assumption into heaven; his cheeks had power because they were kissed by Christ; his mouth had power because he had spoken with Jesus and preached the

Gospel; and even his beard had power, as it communicated his maturity and rank as the older brother of Peter, who was eventually initiated as the first pope in Rome.

#### A Byzantine Reliquary Head of Saint Andrew

The Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew from Patras is an elusive object, in many ways. The precise date of its creation is unclear, as is the name of the artist who was responsible for it. Its style has been described as Byzantine or Italo-Byzantine, with the latter based on the addition of a blue, lapis lazuli base in Rome in the early 1960s, just before the object was repatriated to Patras and the new church of Saint Andrew, which like the old church faces the Gulf of Patras and, beyond that, the Ionian Sea. As a sign of other substitutions, yet to come, the relics of Saint Andrew were apparently moved to a different reliquary shortly after they arrived in Patras in 1964, with the new container in the shape of a Greek Orthodox church with a prominent dome and window that allows for a view of the relics, inside. This matches the early history of Andrew's relics, which were brought to the basilica of Saint Peter in April 1462, where the cranium remained until 1964. His mandible, however, was sent by Pius to his hometown of Corsignano in August 1462, when the city was renamed Pienza. The jaw thus had to be fetched, again, five hundred years later when the relics were re-gathered and repatriated to Patras.<sup>3</sup>

The current location of Thomas' Byzantine reliquary head, separate from the architectural reliquary in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Patras, is unclear. The most reproduced photo of the object shows it in front of an icon of the saint, on the right, and a text overlaid with the two crossed bars as the symbol of Andrew's crucifixion (fig. 3.1). The appearance of Thomas' reliquary can also be gleaned from archival images from 1964,

particularly a set of photographs that were taken during the examination of the object in Rome, before it was returned to Greece (figs. 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4), newspaper clippings from *The New York Times* (figs. 3.5 and 3.6), and screenshots from a video uploaded to the National Hellenic AudioVisual Archive that shows the arrival of the relics in the square of Trios Almamas and in front of Saint Andrew's Metropolitan Church in Patras on September 26, 1964 (fig. 3.7).<sup>4</sup>

From these images and other, textual descriptions, we can gather that the reliquary head from Patras was cast in silver and covered in gold, with the hammering of these sheets contributing to the uneven appearance of its surface. The reliquary is hollow and consists of four sections, made up of the face, the back of the head, the crown, and the neck and bust. Rather than lifting the top of the head to access the relics, inside, the face and the back of the head could be separated via a seam that runs from top to bottom, just behind the ears. The reliquary is a bust, with exceedingly narrow shoulders and a thin neck, features that help emphasize the head of the saint. The saint's appearance is pointed, with an elongated face, almond-shaped eyes, prominent cheeks, and hair parted down the middle. Andrew's contact with the Holy Spirit and his role as the first patriarch explains the crown on his head, which is studded with precious stones and pearls and easily separated—meaning it may be spolia from another period.<sup>5</sup>

#### Pius' *Commentaries* and Andrew's Head

##### *Andrew's Martyrdom and Move to Amalfi*

A key source of information on the Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew is *I commentarii* of Pope Pius II.<sup>6</sup> The *Commentaries* is composed of twelve books, with the first



dedicated to the origins of the Piccolomini family, the youth of Enea Silvio (later Pope Pius), and his time in the imperial court of Frederick III in Vienna, beginning in 1440. However, the largest part of the autobiography is given over to his time as pope, covering the period from 1458–63, or one year before his death. In book eight, Pius traces the path of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew out of the Morea to the papal states.

Since the origin point for Andrew’s relics is his martyrdom, Pius begins his treatment with what happened to Andrew’s remains immediately after his death. As Pius writes: “His body was embalmed with spices and buried by a pious woman named Maximilla [the wife of the Roman governor who ordered Andrew’s execution], but long afterward it was removed to Italy and buried in the city of Amalfi, which was made a metropolitan out of reverence for him. His tomb is famed for the magnificence of its workmanship and the throngs that visit it. His head however remained at Patras, where it was closely guarded with the utmost veneration till 1460, when it was transferred in the following manner.”<sup>7</sup>

Pius’ narrative appears factual, though its shifts are remarkably swift. The pope begins in Patras, as he must, but he moves as quickly as he can to the transfer of Saint Andrew’s body to the city of Amalfi in southern Italy. As another sign of papal priorities, Pius also makes an early distinction that tracks the movement of Andrew’s head and body *separate from one another*—specifically, how the saint’s body went to Amalfi while his head remained in Patras.

#### *Andrew’s Relics in an Imperial Capital*

Part of the effectiveness of Pius’ narrative is his ability to focus only on what matters to him. This comes as no surprise in a memoir, which often claim self-awareness and give

back a dim reflection. However, the deceptions themselves are interesting, particularly for the historian who can go behind and fill in a few gaps. For example, we know that the fragmentation of Andrew's relics began in the fourth century, when his body was moved from Patras to the newly-built Apostoleion, or Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles, in Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> According to Paulinus of Nola (d. 431), the *translatio* was ordered by the Emperor Constantine, who decided to reinforce Constantinople, as the new center of Christendom, with sacred relics. Since the city lacked tombs relevant to Biblical history, these bits of holy matter had to be imported by imperial agents. Once the relics were reinterred in the Apostoleion, the bodies of Saints Andrew and Timothy took on architectural and military significance. As Paulinus writes,

When Constantine was founding the city named after himself, and was the first of the Roman kings to proclaim himself a Christian, the godsent idea came to him that since he was then embarking on that splendid enterprise of building a city that would rival Rome, he should likewise emulate Romulus' city with a further endowment—he would eagerly defend his walls with the bodies of apostles. He then removed Andrew from the Greeks and Timothy from Asia; and so Constantinople now stands with twin towers, vying to match the hegemony of great Rome, and more genuinely rivalling the walls of Rome through the eminence that God bestowed on her, for He counterbalanced Peter and Paul with a protection as great, since Constantinople gained the discipline of Paul and the brother of Peter.<sup>9</sup>

The relics of Andrew and Timothy as “twin towers” also bore additional weight, as the full intent for the Apostoleion was never met. As the name suggests, the edifice was intended to contain relics of all the apostles of Christ, though its primary treasures were the skulls of Luke, Timothy, and body of Saint Andrew, only.<sup>10</sup>

Pius leaves out this aspect of Byzantine history in his *Commentaries*, including the loss that must have been felt after Andrew's body was stolen from the Apostoleion, when the church was stripped by Latin forces. The key figure in the removal of Andrew's body was the Italian Cardinal Pietro Capuano, who was born into a wealthy merchant family in Amalfi

and pursued his studies as a theologian until he became a cardinal at the end of the twelfth century.<sup>11</sup> The early years of his appointment were taken up with the activities of the Fourth Crusade, with Pietro acting as a liaison between Rome and the emerging Latin kingdom. Pietro made repeated journeys between Italy and the Holy Land during these years and, beyond that, served as a spiritual adviser to Crusaders who were bound for Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> As is well known, these soldiers never reached their declared goal, as they stopped short to attack the city of Constantinople. While the precise date of the removal of Andrew's body is unclear, Pietro undoubtedly took advantage of the transfer of power from Greeks to Latins, with 1208 serving as a late date for the relics' arrival at the duomo in Amalfi.<sup>13</sup>

### *Constantinople, Erased*

Interestingly, in Pius' narrative there is no mention of the fact that Andrew's body was in Constantinople for nearly a millennium, from the fourth to the early thirteenth century. The history of Andrew's body in the imperial capital was certainly known to Pius, given his own emphasis on the provenance of Andrew's head and how the body of the saint was brought to Amalfi. Pius' omission is also more than a matter of focus on Andrew's head—after all, the pope mentions the saint's body, himself. It also was not a matter of shame, or wanting to avoid any reference to *how* Pietro acquired the body of Saint Andrew, since the theft of relics was a celebrated practice from the Middle Ages, onwards.<sup>14</sup> It is much more likely that Pius knew of the apostle's time in Constantinople and left it out for the sake of his own claim on Andrew's head.

Pius' descriptions of Andrew's relics are marked by a need to prove their authenticity, again and again, as evidenced by the apparent completeness of Pius' summary

of their history from Andrew's martyrdom in Patras to their arrival in Rome in 1462. Naturally, the narrative serves Pius, most of all, and the conclusion was never going to be anything but the authenticity of the relics. Pius' narrative is bent on establishing the power of Andrew relics through their provenance, via a record that is presented as complete. It is interesting to read the memoir against itself, however, with the goal of breaking the author's goals for the reliquary and pursuing an exploded view of book eight that includes the uses of the object by Thomas Palaiologos and Bessarion, respectively.

A more complete history of Andrew's relics in the Byzantine world changes our interpretation of them, beginning with the appreciation that Pius ignores Constantinople, the Apostoleion, and Pietro's *furta sacra*. In fact, if there is any attention to the path of Andrew's relics out of Byzantium on Pius' part, it is only done so that Andrew's head can arrive in Italy, be reunited with his body, and exist as a testament to the pope's ability to secure it from Thomas Palaiologos. If not over, Pius' efforts were certainly related to the misfortunes of the Byzantine Empire, and are also a conscious undoing of Constantine's efforts to create an alternative Christian capital. Understanding Constantine's efforts in the fourth century resonates with Pius' actions in the fifteenth, since the pope seized on the external threat posed by the Ottomans to shift a locus of power westward and complete a process of cultural appropriation begun by Cardinal Capuano.

#### Thomas' Path to Rome

Another way to read the *Commentaries* against Pius' intent is to use the author's preoccupation with the authenticity of the relics—and the related, detailed description of Thomas Palaiologos' path out of the Morea—for what it says about the Byzantine emperor.

According to Pius, Thomas' flight out of the Morea "with his wife and children and many Greek nobles" began in Mistra in 1460 (map 3.3), with the next documented stop being the island of Santa Maura, or Lefkada.<sup>15</sup> Santa Maura was a remaining stronghold for Leonardo (III) Tocco, who Pius describes as Thomas' "royal kinsman" and the last Byzantine to rule the region of Epirus on the mainland of Greece.<sup>16</sup> Thomas' refuge on the island was strategic, as it was just north of the port of Patras and famous for its fortress, one of the few places the Emperor could remain with some safety. Thomas stayed with Leonardo for some time, "guarding the sacred head as closely as he did his wife and children."<sup>17</sup>

Thomas' arrival at Santa Maura initiated a bidding war for the relics. Pius tells how "many Christian princes, both in Italy and beyond the Alps, hearing that the Apostle's head had been taken out of Greece, sent ambassadors to Thomas to offer large sums for the holy relic."<sup>18</sup> Faced with competition, Pius sent a letter to Thomas that was a mix of threats and enticements. Pius refers to Thomas and the reliquary, respectively, in writing that "He would however be acting impiously and cruelly if he surrendered it to any but the Pope, whose prerogative it was to decide on the honors paid the saints, and if he desired it to rest elsewhere than with the bones of its brother at Rome."<sup>19</sup> Pius' persuasion is built on strength, and his strategy is contained in the command that the reliquary must be delivered to Rome and that Thomas would do so "unless he wished to incur the anger of the Apostles."<sup>20</sup>

With the wrath of the twelve poised above Thomas' head, Pius' tone softens, writing that the despot "need not plead poverty as an excuse, for if he would come to live at Rome, he should be maintained in the style befitting a prince."<sup>21</sup> The phrasing is significant, as the person Pius refers to is not the ruling, or at least de facto, emperor of Byzantium, but a mere

“principe,” among many others. Whether Pius had this demotion in mind or not, Thomas apparently viewed the safety and stipend of Pius’ court as the best option before him, and with his decision made the retinue went further up the coast to Corfu and the monastery of the Pantokrater at Chlomos.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas’ itinerary is blurred, from this point. Corfu is located at the confluence of the Ionian and the Adriatic Seas, less than seventy miles over water to Otranto and a hundred miles to Brindisi, also on the heel of Italy. It is possible that Thomas hoped to make a brief crossing between peninsulas, from Chlomos, but archival work by Silvia Ronchey suggests that the Byzantine emperor followed a much lengthier path in sailing all the way to Sicily to rendezvous with his agent, Giovanni Cerva, who “carried the head of Saint Andrew to Ragusa to save it from the hands of the Turks.”<sup>23</sup> While the journey from Santa Maura to Ragusa seems a clear instance of taking the long way around, Pius also mentions the “violent and terrific gales which that year more than usual lashed the Adriatic and sank innumerable ships,”<sup>24</sup> making it possible that wind and waves blew the retinue south and forced them to gather further south.<sup>25</sup> In reading Ronchey, and through her Giacomo di Pietro Luccari’s *Copioso ristretto de gli Annali di Rausa* from 1605, Thomas then left Sicily and traveled up the eastern coast of Italy, “accompanied by armed vessels, because of the danger of pirates; and from Ancona he went onto Rome.”

#### Pius’ Use of Thomas

Another remarkable erasure occurs, at this point. Having sailed from the Morea and traveled the length of Italy to deliver the reliquary head of Saint Andrew to Pius’ representatives at Ancona, Thomas is never mentioned in *Commentaries*, again. Like Pius’

denial of the bones of Saint Andrew in Constantinople, Thomas' disappearance has a strong presence in the pope's narrative, specifically in haunting its edges, as seen in several visual records of the arrival of the Byzantine emperor by artists from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, including a cycle of paintings by the artist Bernard van Rantwijck now in the Museo Diocesano of the Palazzo Borgia in Pienza, Italy, and frescos by Guidobaldo Abbatini and others devoted to the reception of the reliquary head at the Milvian Bridge in the Chapel of Saint Helena (once the Chapel of Saint Andrew) in the Vatican Grottoes. These images deserve further analysis, in the future, but for now it is enough to note the uniqueness of Thomas' textual erasure and the utter silence of the Byzantine emperor following the landing at Ancona. The key, of course, is the arrival of the relics, which shows that Pius' use of Thomas is as the carrier of a precious object, sourced from Byzantium, and as another proof of their authenticity.

The erasure of Thomas lingers in Pius' account. If we return to the *Commentaries* with this technique in mind, there are many instances where the pope builds Thomas up or tears him down for his own gain. Pius is sure to mention that the leadership of the Morea is divided between Thomas and his older brother, Demetrius, who were both sons of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II (r. 1391–1425) and the only surviving, male siblings of Constantine XI, who died during the siege of Constantinople (r. 1449–53).<sup>26</sup> Pius appears to treat the brothers gently in his brief account of the fall of the Morea in book eight, to the point of understanding why Demetrius aligned himself with the Ottomans after they took the city of Patras. As he writes, “Demetrius, the elder... when he found he could get no adequate help from Christians, went over to the Turks and received possessions elsewhere which would afford him the means of livelihood.”<sup>27</sup> It seems an empathic reading of Demetrius' situation, until Pius contrasts him with his younger brother: “But Thomas... who

was regarded as the heir to the throne, could not be induced to submit to those who had murdered his brother, robbed the Greeks of their empire, and defiled Christian altars.”<sup>28</sup>

Pius’ assessment of the Byzantine empire is purposefully bleak. Manuel’s sons are scattered. Demetrius has gone over to the enemy. Thomas must depend on the strength of the pope of Rome. The account also reflects fears that circulated after the loss of the Morea, specifically the knowledge that the Ottomans could now sail around Greece and land in southern Italy, just as Thomas did. Pius is also engaged in creative manipulations, as he adapts the Byzantine line of succession to suit own influence. While Constantine died in 1453, Demetrius was very much alive in 1460–61 and living “elsewhere,” meaning Thrace, on financial support provided by sultan Mehmed II. His remove meant that Thomas was the last heir to the Byzantine throne that Pius could hope to control, and he treats Demetrius’ alliance as a disqualification to raise up his younger brother. Pius is also creative in assigning Byzantine territory to Thomas, especially in writing that on his way out of the Morea he “went to Patras, which was still his, and from the sanctuary, of which he himself was the keeper, he took the most precious head of St. Andrew, the Apostle.”

Pius is a master craftsman, and in the story Thomas emerges as the better brother, with Demetrius looking, at turns, helpless and a traitor. The messages also conflict, as Thomas is a mere prince and the sole heir to Manuel II, with a right to despotates in the southern *and* northern Morea. The territorial scope is clear in Pius’ possessives—“Patras, which was still his”; and “the sanctuary, of which he himself was the keeper”—but the significance of the chain of ownership is in passing through the Byzantines to Pius, who would soon accept the reliquary head of Saint Andrew and an imperial-like responsibility for the Byzantine world.



### The Tomb of the Pope

Pius considered the arrival of Andrew's relics in Rome as a distinctive achievement of his papacy, to the point of having it represented on his tomb—the only scene he chose to be remembered for posterity. The tomb was once located in a side chapel of the church of Old Saint Peter's in Rome but is now re-installed in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, across the Tiber (fig. 3.8).<sup>29</sup> The rectangular reliefs within the monument were carved by the Italian artist Paolo Romano, likely with some assistance from the so-called "Master of Pius II,"<sup>30</sup> with work completed after Pius' death in 1464 and before Romano's in 1470.<sup>31</sup> Financial support for the project was supplied by the pope's nephew, Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini, who appears alongside Pius in the scene in the topmost register, featuring Saints Peter, Paul, and the Madonna Enthroned.

Like Pius' *Commentaries*, the design of the pope's tomb shows a need to extol his accomplishments.<sup>32</sup> It is particularly important that the only scene visualized on Pius' tomb, related to his biography, involves a reliquary head of Saint Andrew (fig. 3.9). Romano shows the object amidst a crowd that includes a line of bishops, to the right, and an assorted group of soldiers and secular leaders, on the left. Pius grasps the reliquary at the center of the scene, holding it just above the horizontal surface of what could be an altar or a sarcophagus with two ringed handles (fig. 3.10). Bessarion appears on the left and looks towards the reliquary with his hands clasped in reverence (fig. 3.11).

The format of the scene is stretched, and Romano shows what used to be a procession but is now a gathering. There is a decided lack of dynamism in the scene, as the patron's choice means everyone stands around and looks at the reliquary head. The artist is

apparently aware and does his best to insert some drama by depicting the head just a few inches above its resting place. The pope also holds the reliquary with impossible ease, given that the bust is beyond life-size and extended far beyond his center of gravity. Romano also uses the repetition and patterning of the crowd to draw attention to reliquary, which faces the viewer and is effectively highlighted by the arch, behind it.<sup>33</sup>

Romano's chosen moment is textual, as it corresponds to details provided in the *Commentaries*. Pius notes that after the collect (part of the Introductory Rites of the Mass, often accompanied by a moment of silence), "he rose and laid the famous relic on the altar, that it might be exhibited that day for all to see, and the auditors of the holy palace were set to guard it."<sup>34</sup> The time of the event is also clear, as it is said to take place during the week leading to Easter Sunday, or Holy Tuesday 1462. Romano grounds the viewer in the scene by depicting at least one of the auditors, in full armor, who led the way from the Porta Flaminia to Old Saint Peter's with his cudgel (fig. 3.9, d).<sup>35</sup> Cardinal Bessarion appears just in front of this figure, ready to step forward to give his speech on the need for Crusade (c). Behind Pius is his nephew, Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini, the future Pope Pius III, who holds back the pope's stole (e). A final figure, extra-textual, is Thomas Palaiologos, who appears at the far right of the scene and gestures to the reliquary with his right hand (f).<sup>36</sup>

The figures in the niches along the edges of the monument are allegorical, and include depictions of either Temperance or Charity (with a bowl and a torch), Faith (with a book), Justice or Courage (with a sword), and Fortitude (with a column). At the base of the monument, between two coats of arms, is an extended inscription that relates the key accomplishments from Pius' lifetime, including the pope's leadership of the Congress of Mantua, how he "resisted the enemies of the Papacy within and without Italy," dealt with

France's challenge to papal authority by annulling the Pragmatic Sanction, and "made ready a fleet and enjoined the Doge of Venice and his Senate to be his fellow-warriors for Christ in the Turkish war," and "died at Ancona, and was brought back to Rome and buried in S. Peter's, in the place where he had enshrined the head of S. Andrew the Apostle when it came to him from the Peloponnesus."<sup>37</sup>

The close connection between Pius' tomb and the head of Saint Andrew was even clearer in the original location of the pope's tomb, which was just inside the entrance to Saint Peter's basilica. A key source on the original architectural and spatial context of Pius' tomb in the fifteenth century are engraved versions of Tiberio Alfarano's original ground plan for Old Saint Peter's (fig. 3.12). The engraving was produced in ca. 1589–90, based on Alfarano's original drawing from 1571, with Pius' funerary chapel shown just inside the entrance to the church, after the atrium, in the southeastern corner. If we look closer (fig. 3.13), after entering through the Door of Judgement (no. 137 in the pianta), visitors would have turned left to see the tombs of Pope Pius II (no. 84) and the altar of Saint Gregory the Great surrounded by four columns (no. 85), with the altar and the bases of the columns just visible.

The annotations for these features also mention Gregory's altar, "...above which is the head of Saint Andrew the Apostle, of Pope Pius II."<sup>38</sup> The overarching structure refers to a tempietto attributed to the architect Francesco del Borgo, dated between ca. 1464–68, or roughly contemporary with Pius' tomb.<sup>39</sup> The ensemble is captured in a beautiful drawing by Giacomo Grimaldi from his *Descrizione della Basilica Antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, completed in or before 1619 and presented to Pope Paul V (r. 1605–21) in 1620, which includes an image of a statue of Andrew that was eventually reinstalled in a vestibule that

leads to the sacristy of the new basilica of Saint Peter's (fig. 3.14, with components marked in fig. 3.15).<sup>40</sup> Based on architectural fragments preserved in the Clementine peribolos of the Vatican Grottoes, compared to Grimaldi's drawing, it is clear that the tabernacle on the upper level of the tempietto was adorned with three lunettes featuring images of the head of Saint Andrew, one on each side of the engaged structure (fig. 3.16).

Grimaldi's drawing is also accompanied by a description of how the reliquary head of Saint Andrew was carried to Italy by the despot of the Peloponnesus; how Pius II built a structure to contain it over the tomb and altar of Saint Gregory; and how the pope was buried in the chapel.<sup>41</sup> The ensemble over the altar is no longer extant, as the entire church of Old Saint Peter's was dismantled by the early seventeenth century, but textual sources contain details of a procession to install a reliquary of Saint Andrew in the Chapel of Saint Gregory, prior to Pius' departure to launch the Crusade from Ancona in June 1464 and his death in August. As these sources make clear, Pius paid for a number of embellishments to the space, including a commission for four columns over the pre-existing altar and placing a reliquary head of Saint Andrew in a ciborium incorporated into the tabernacle.<sup>42</sup>

#### Bessarion's Speech

The placement of the reliquary on the high altar of Old Saint Peter's was the culmination of the object's path out of Greece, and after its disposition Bessarion and Pius gave speeches to celebrate the occasion. In the *Commentaries*, Bessarion is said to have begun his oration by "holding the right horn of the altar, with the Apostle's head on one side and the Pope on the other."<sup>43</sup> Among other significances, the horn connects Bessarion's oration and its sacred context to the horns on the altar of the burnt offering in Moses' Tabernacle, a

prototypical place of worship that had power like the high altar in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup> In Leviticus 4:7, priests were instructed to put blood on the Tabernacle horns to purify them before making a sacrifice to God, and Bessarion's grasp in Old Saint Peter's seeks a similar influence on a speech that was a violent call to action against the Ottomans.<sup>45</sup>

The full content of Bessarion's speech on Holy Tuesday appears in the *Commentaries* in passages in which the cardinal's rhetoric is meaningfully linked to the saint's martyrdom as told in The Acts of Andrew, part of the New Testament Apocrypha. The transcription is marked by Bessarion's use of the voice of Saint Andrew, and how he speaks through the reliquary head.<sup>46</sup> While Bessarion's appropriation may strike the interpreter as bold, Andrew was considered the first Patriarch of Constantinople, a position that Bessarion would occupy just a year after he gave the speech, following the death of the current leader, Isidore of Kiev, in 1463. Bessarion was prepared to perform some of Isidore's duties even then, in 1462, as the so-called "Cardinale Ruteno" was in poor health and suffered from apoplexy.<sup>47</sup>

Bessarion begins his oration in his own voice, and asks Saint Peter to see and help his brother, Andrew: "O most blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles... behold your brother!"<sup>48</sup> The cardinal remarks on established aspects of Andrew's power, including the common epithet of the "first-called" and the reliquary head as a "chosen vessel" for the Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup> Bessarion also praises the Greeks for protecting the saint for so long,<sup>50</sup> and at that moment switches to speak not just alongside but as the saint whose presence is vivified on the high altar. In claiming Andrew's voice, Bessarion's oration depends on *prosopopeia*, a rhetorical device where the performer takes an object and "makes a face" (from *πρόσωπον*/*prosopon*, meaning "face" or "person," and *-ποια*/*-poeia*, "denoting the making or creating of a thing... expressed").<sup>51</sup>

As Bessarion speaks his first words as Andrew, he also calls out to the saints buried beneath the floor of Saint Peter's. He evokes Andrew's brother ("O most blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles"), followed by Paul, the "chosen vessel and teacher of the Gentiles, who, though called last to apostleship, dost share equally with St. Peter the primacy."<sup>52</sup> In affirming these pillars of the Christian church, Bessarion-as-Andrew also calls witness to the saint's power and significance: "Behold, I say! your Andrew, who, first to be called, showed the rest the way to the Savior."<sup>53</sup> The order of these references is unsurprisingly diplomatic, as the speakers manage to observe the Catholic hierarchy at the site—Peter, Paul, then Andrew—while finding a way to expand an established locus of Roman influence to include Andrew as a figure with unique power in the Orthodox church.

After negotiating a new triumvirate in Rome, Bessarion begins another maneuver: the militarization of Andrew against the Ottomans. In few words, Bessarion switches back to his own voice and links the movement of Andrew's relics to the current plight of the Morea, as well as hopes for its reclamation: "The reason for this his coming is assuredly not unknown to you who behold not only all things past but much that is to come."<sup>54</sup> Bessarion reiterates Pius' concern for the relics of Saint Andrew—the establishment of power through a detailed historical account—by returning to Andrew's first person and sharing details of his martyrdom in the city of Patras, most notably how "I was buried by Maximilla, the proconsul's wife, and until now have rested there, honored by the worshipers of Christ and extolled by their fervent praise."<sup>55</sup> The reference to Patras scratches the itch related to the authenticity, once again, but it also a way for Bessarion to foreground Andrew's present significance: "But when the Mohammedans (ah, piteous and tragic tale!) following the son of Satan, the antichrist Mahomet, after seizing the rest of Greece and the Orient, finally in these latter days most impiously subjugated Achaia too and perverted it with infamous worship,

then by God's aid I fled thence from the clutches of the heathen and I have come to thee, most holy brother, to thee, teacher and master, to thee appointed by God the universal shepherd of Christ's flock."<sup>56</sup>

It is a key moment from Bessarion's speech, in which the cardinal builds on the alliance between the apostles to do work against the so-called "Mohammedans," "the son of Satan" and the "antichrist Mahomet" in the fifteenth century. Having established the strength of the three saints as a unit, the speakers also look to activate all the descendants of Christian converts of Saint Andrew from the first century, onwards, and re-task them as soldiers of the faith. They address Peter and Paul, once again, and say, "... so I too taking refuge with thee, may by thy power and help restore to their former liberty the sons whom I had begotten to myself, or rather to thee, nay to Christ our Lord, who are now subject to an impious and most savage enemy and not only deprived of physical freedom but in danger of losing the integrity of their faith; and that I may bring them back to the worship of the true God and present them safe and cleansed of all heathen vileness before Christ our Lord, a purpose assuredly welcome and most acceptable to thee."<sup>57</sup>

Bessarion's call to action to the princes of Europe who gathered to see the disposition of the reliquary comes next: "*What wilt thou do now?*" With this instigation hanging in the air, undesirable outcomes, phrased as real possibilities, come first: "Wilt thou be inert or slow against the impious Turks, the bitterest enemies of the most holy Cross of our salvation, through which He who redeemed us by it gathers to Himself both thee and me against barbarians who are savagely rending asunder Christ's limbs and continually assailing Christ Himself with blasphemy and insult? Wilt thou endure such deeds?" The language is purposefully graphic, as the audience pictures Christ's body dismembered and scattered

(“rent asunder”) across a Christian landscape now controlled by the Ottomans. To combat the enemies of Christ, the speaker requires commitments, and the oration turns from questions to imperatives: “Now plowshares must be beaten into swords, now the tunic must be sold and the sword bought, now must thy zeal blaze forth, now must thy Paul’s blade be whetted, that by thy power and aid, working through the mightiest princes of the west, the faith which thou didst preach and approve, by which thou didst become the father of all, may be defended and the Church founded on the rock that is Christ may prevail against the gates of hell through the authority and testimony of our Lord, Jesus Christ Who is very truth.”<sup>58</sup>

Bessarion’s oration is not finished but its emotional climax has been reached. In the denouement, the speakers make a final address to Pius, and in this relationship they not able to make demands. From the framework of “now... must,” they turn to the language of supplication. “Thee, Pope Pius, I beg, implore, beseech that what I have asked of my brother thou who deservedly sittest in his seat, who art his most worthy successor in the pontificate, wilt pursue and consummate.”<sup>59</sup> This section is built around an acknowledgement of Pius’ authority and his ongoing commitment to Crusade, which they hope will be resilient to the excuses and inaction of the Christian princes. And, strikingly, their last words are a reminder to Pius to return Andrew’s remains to Greece as soon as possible.<sup>60</sup>

### Pius’ Speech

Pius’ speech follows Bessarion’s, and in transitioning from one orator to the next the author characterizes the audience as tired. Pius’ undermining is not-so-subtle, once again, when he writes, “Bessarion was heard with attention and favor, though the Fathers, wearied



with the march, desired rest and it was already the sixteenth hour.”<sup>61</sup> Pius’ speech is substantially briefer than Bessarion’s, though it also begins with the relationship between Peter and Andrew, as told in the Book of Matthew. According to the Gospel writer, “Jesus saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishermen); and he said to them, Come and follow me; I will make you into fishers of men.”<sup>62</sup> The episode is one of the most famous Biblical stories, and provides a fitting introduction to Pius’ comments on Andrew’s bond with Peter. Like the entrance of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room, the story of drawing out fish is a beginning point for the Christian community, with the magnification of these brothers into the “mission to the nations” and the dispersal from Jerusalem leading to Rome and Patras. Pius’ selection of Mathew 4:19 is about more than fraternal connection, however, since it was one of several accounts from the Bible to describe the calling of Andrew and Peter as simultaneous. Another passage, from John 1:40–41, provided the exegetical basis for Andrew as the “first called” and the person who led his brother to the faith—something that was of deep significance in arguing for the power of the Orthodox church relative to the Holy See.<sup>63</sup>

Unlike Bessarion, Pius speaks in his own voice, based on his own authority. Some themes are shared, however, including when Pius acknowledges that Andrew’s stay in Rome is temporary: “Meanwhile thou shalt tarry a space with thy brother and shalt enjoy like honor with him.”<sup>64</sup> Like Bessarion, Pius also emphasizes the importance of Andrew’s head as hollow but not empty: “Behold the abode of the Holy Ghost, the throne of divinity. Here, here the Spirit of God alighted, here the Third Person of the Trinity was made visible, here were the eyes that often beheld God in the flesh. This mouth often spoke to Christ, these cheeks surely Jesus often kissed. Behold a mighty shrine!”<sup>65</sup>

Pius' speech also draws on the power of Ezekiel's prophesy to the Israelites when the Old Testament figure was "carried away and set down in the midst of the plain, which was covered with bones," specifically in imagining a scene where the dry bones under the church come alive. Pius evokes the presence of Peter, Paul, and the context of Crusade in saying, "If the most holy bodies of the blessed Apostles which lie beneath the altar could speak, they would assuredly rejoice exceedingly at the coming of thy most reverend head, divine Andrew, and would express their joy in noble words and voluntarily promise the aid thou hast asked."<sup>66</sup> However, almost with the same breath, Pius emphasizes how Peter and Paul "lie voiceless till the day of Resurrection," and shifts responsibility to the leaders of Europe to do something, themselves.

A strategy of animating the dead is shared by Pius and Bessarion, with the pope's vision imagined and deferred to the End Times, with the onus on princes to act now, and the cardinal's personal and performed through the device of prosopopoeia. Pius also mirrors Bessarion's structure in arriving at a final request, specifically for God to give Christian soldiers "the divine aid to restore this head of thine to its own throne"—meaning the church of Saint Andrew in Patras. When it comes to the ability of the relics, Pius is inclined to defense rather than a battle in the Morea, as he asks Andrew to "be our advocate and protector." However, when it comes to the latent possibility of the crowd, there are also allusions to turning the gathering into a campaign and willingness to "... promise willingly and eagerly all the aid in our power to recover thy sheep and thy home here on earth. For nothing is closer to our heart than the defense of the Christian religion and the orthodox faith, which thine enemies and ours, the Turks, are striving to trample underfoot. But if Christian princes and people will hear our voice and follow their shepherd, all the Church

will see and be glad that we have not neglected the duties of our office and that thou hast not in vain come hither to obtain thy brother's aid."<sup>67</sup>

### Substitution and Uncertainty

There is some momentum, here, and shared messaging between Bessarion and Pius, related to Crusade. Both want a Crusade to the Morea, and both use the history of Andrew's relics to leverage action from the European leaders who came to see, touch, and it turns out, hear from the miraculous object from Byzantium. Reading the version of events from Pius' *Commentaries* and viewing Romano's relief for the tomb of Pius II gives us a sense of the significance of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew that Thomas brought from Patras to Rome in relation to papal priorities towards the Orthodox church and Crusade, and Bessarion's role in implementing them. The greatest surprise, then, is when we realize that the object depicted in Romano's relief is not this head, at all.

If we look again—something like a doubletake—we confirm that the object at the center of Romano's scene is nothing like Thomas' reliquary (figs. 3.17 and 3.18). As established in the introduction, the Byzantine reliquary head has an abbreviated torso, a slim neck, and a triangular head. Its hair is rendered in shallow, stylized curves that frame the face and is parted down the middle. In contrast, the reliquary at the center of Romano's relief is a complete bust with drapery and a prominent jewel on its chest. The saint also has a circular halo, tousled hair, and a forked beard. Its style is distinctly Latin, in belonging to a portrait-bust type that was common to Italy and centers of metalworking north of the Alps in the fifteenth century.

It is an abrupt rupture, when the viewer becomes disoriented and separated from the notion that they knew and recognized an image. One of the goals of the first half of this chapter was to establish and think in a substitutional mode, particularly when it came to the historical elision of Andrew's relics in Constantinople and the textual erasure of Thomas Palaiologos after he sets foot on the beach at Ancona. The value in insisting on Byzantine history in Italy becomes apparent, once again, as it paves the way for unrecognizability and uncertainty. Due to my own emphasis on reading Romano's relief through the *Commentaries*, it seemed natural that the object in Pius' hands was the same one that Thomas carried from Patras. It also seems long overdue when we appreciate that the object in question is another, known object—an entirely new, Latin reliquary that Pius commissioned to replace the Byzantine container after Holy Week and the speeches delivered by Bessarion and Pius in April 1462 (figs. 3.19 and 3.20).

#### A Latin Reliquary Head of Saint Andrew

The replacement container for Andrew's relics was made by the Florentine goldsmith Simone di Giovanni Ghini, whose life is described by Giorgio Vasari, likely between December 1463 and mid-June 1464.<sup>68</sup> Sources on the Latin container are discussed by Arianna Antoniutti in an excellent article on Pius' devotion to Saint Andrew, with the earliest of these composed in the same year as the ceremony for the Byzantine reliquary, in 1462. The document pertains to a promised payment of 200 ducats from Pius "to the master, Simone, a goldsmith from Florence," "to make and adorn a reliquary of the head of Saint Andrew."<sup>69</sup> Another document, also related to an ongoing project, comes from December 10, 1463, contains details related to the master Simone and the precious materials needed to produce the reliquary.<sup>70</sup> Finally, an annotation from Alfarano's plan deals with

the procession of the Latin reliquary head to the Chapel of Saint Gregory (the future location of Pius' completed tomb and tempietto), likely in 1464, where Pius is said, within a lengthier passage, to have "ornamented the head of the Apostle Andrew with silver, gold, and precious stones and installed it with a procession of the entire Curia and many Roman clerics on the third Sunday of June with the highest honors."<sup>71</sup>

There is considerable effort in parsing these sources, and even more in determining the relation between Simone's Latin reliquary and the representation in Romano's relief. If we use Antoniutti's work to look back at the events shown in the tomb of Pius II, we can appreciate the fact that Romano carved an image of a reliquary *that did not exist* during the celebrations and speeches in Old Saint Peter's on April 13, 1462. If we follow a timeline from Thomas' arrival at the coast of Italy with the Byzantine reliquary head (1461) to the celebration for the Byzantine head on Holy Tuesday (1462) to the completion of its Latin replacement (ca. 1463–64), we can also realize that the Latin reliquary *was* complete by the time Romano and his assistants carved Pius' tomb (ca. 1464/65–70)—one reason we can see it represented, there.<sup>72</sup>

All of this ordering and reconstituting provides an explanation for how—if not why—Pius' tomb looks the way it does. In some ways, the timeline rights the hermeneutic ship, which was dangerously off kilter during the moments of unrecognizability and the labor it took to see the central object as something else. A sense of dissonance lingers, but there is at least some reassuring ability to name Romano's inclusion as an anachronism and an act of substitution. In fact, if we look back to our interpretative path, to this point, Pius and Romano's substitution is something we recognize, in being a technique that the pope employs throughout the translation of Andrew's relics to Rome.

Pius' choices have deeper consequences, leading to the instability of meaning that stretches beyond a brief unfamiliarity to the failure of Panofsky's salutary sign, relevant to the acquaintance who doffs his hat to the scholar on the street.<sup>73</sup> Beyond the momentary unrecognizability of the reliquary, brought about by cultural dislocation, the viewer does find a new answer to *what* they see, but loses confidence regarding *where* Romano's scene takes place. Initially, the architectural setting around the reliquary seemed secure as the crossing of Old Saint Peter's, looking west towards the high altar and apse (and here we can recall the unusual orientation of the church, required by the location of Peter's tomb and the slope of the Mons Vaticanus, with the entrance to the east and the altar to the west) (fig. 3.21).

In this line of thinking, the arch behind the Latin reliquary head would be the contour of the apse, with coffers that resemble a detail from a drawing by Maerten van Heemskerck from about 1532–36, or about sixty years after the completion of Pius' tomb (fig. 3.22). The view is also similar to a sketch attributed to Battista Naldini from the end of the sixteenth century, though we should exclude any consideration of the tegurio of Bramante, which was commissioned by Pope Leo X (r. 1513–21) to protect the tomb of Saint Peter during the construction of the new church in 1513 (fig. 3.23, with the hut marked).<sup>74</sup> The obelisk topped by an orb and cross at the top right corner of Romano's relief would then be the Vatican Obelisk, which Romano shows inside the church, rather than according to its true position outside the circular chapel of Santa Maria della Febbre, as shown in the Carlo Fontana's view of the south exterior wall in his *Templum Vaticanum* (fig. 3.24).

Romano uses the iconic obelisk to show that the disposition of the reliquary takes place at Saint Peter's, without question. He conflates indoors and outdoors and balances a

clear communication of setting with what we might call, today, a lack of documentary impulse. While the formal comparison between the archways may support the early opinion that Romano shows a placement on the high altar on Holy Tuesday, 1462, the substitution of a Byzantine for a Latin head makes the modern viewer question everything they see—and we have already learned to question everything we read in the relevant portion of book eight in Pius’ *Commentaries*. So, if Romano does show the apse at Old Saint Peter’s, it is odd that there is no aedicule over the body of Saint Peter. No baldacchino. No horn for Bessarion to grasp. And, perhaps most importantly, the high altar in Romano’s relief looks more like a Roman sarcophagus—and the effigy of Pope Pius II, just above it—than a cover for the bones of Saint Peter (fig. 3.25).

#### An Altered Setting, Close to Gregory

The oddity of Romano’s depiction of the altar, which evokes the “dry bones” of Pius much more than Peter, raises the possibility of another time and place. Namely, that Romano does not show a scene that takes place on April 13, 1462 at the crossing of Old Saint Peter’s, but on that “third Sunday in June,” likely 1464, related to the placement of the Latin reliquary head near his tomb-in-progress in the chapel of Saint Gregory. As Alfarano notes, on this occasion was also “a procession of the entire Curia and many Roman clerics,” and Bessarion certainly attended and reprised his role from Holy Tuesday, a few years before.<sup>75</sup>

The reasons for depicting the pope’s funerary chapel are many, as Pius’s actions show that he wanted to be buried alongside the relics of Saint Andrew in a space that already served as an oratory to Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590–604), a father of the Latin church.<sup>76</sup>

Pius' early intervention in the space in ca. 1464 was to commission a tempietto, tabernacle, and ciborium over Gregory's altar to contain the Latin reliquary, with the old Byzantine container, containing only the jaw of the saint, sent to Pius hometown of Corsignano (renamed Pienza with the arrival of the reliquary and relic in August 1462). While the altar of Saint Gregory remained a key feature in the chapel, Pius was keen to have his remains rest alongside those of Andrew and Gregory. The installment of Andrew's head in a new container and the completion of Pius' tomb and tempietto, all in this space, were the culmination of all the pope's plans, including his courting of Thomas and his desire that Andrew "shalt tarry a space with thy brother and shalt enjoy like honor with him."<sup>77</sup>

Pius' decision to claim the chapel as his eternal resting place may also be attributed to the "Greekness" of Gregory the Great as a Latin Father of the Church.<sup>78</sup> Before Gregory's election as pope in the late sixth century, he was sent by Pope Pelagius II (r. 579–90) as an ambassador to Byzantium. Gregory stayed in Constantinople for about six years, while Rome was under threat from the Lombards, seeking their military support.<sup>79</sup> Several Latin authors make it clear that help was never offered, and it is interesting to note the rapidity of their turn away from diplomatic issues to the superiority of Gregory's opinions on the theological issue of the palpability of Christ's risen body.<sup>80</sup>

If we dig even further into Gregory's time in Constantinople, we also discover a history of fraught interactions between the future pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople, leading to the conclusion that Gregory's time in Byzantium was a cautionary tale when it came to co-operations between the Eastern and Western churches. However, these experiences were apparently enough for Pius, who in this case capitalized on an aspect of Byzantine history to justify his claim on the space. Because of the obvious failures of



Gregory's legation to Byzantium, we should view the pope's sixth-century attachment to Andrew through its Roman, rather than Greek, context, and based on his role as the founder, resident, and eventual abbot of a community dedicated to Saint Andrew on his family's property near the Circus Maximus on the Caelian Hill.<sup>81</sup> In this context, it is possible that the removal of Andrew's relics from Greece was Pius' way of making Andrew Roman, and weaponizing his relics to protect the Eternal City. Despite early indications from Pius' speech, the long-term use of the relics was always for the defense of Rome and their personal use to Pius, not for the reclamation of the Morea.

Changes to the meaning of Andrew's relics, relative to Crusade, were accomplished primarily by Pius, one of the foremost advocates for a war against the Ottomans. On Holy Tuesday, 1462, Pius had asked Andrew to remain in Rome while Patras remained unsafe ("interea temporis"), to "tarry for a while" (*aliquandiu moraberis*), and to enjoy the same honors as his brother ("et honore pari cum eo potieris").<sup>82</sup> However, just as Pius uses Andrew to inspire instant action, he also makes preparations for a permanent home for the saint above the altar of Saint Gregory, near the future location of his tomb. Doublespeak becomes the dominant mode, because if we believe Pius-as-author, we understand that the head of Saint Andrew will be returned to Patras as soon as possible; but if we believe Pius-as-builder, we see the development of an architectural ensemble made for perpetuity.<sup>83</sup>

Like so many other papal interventions at the church of Old Saint Peter's, the renovation of the Chapel of Saint Gregory was based on a logic of accumulation, wherein the desires of the present were intertwined with traces of the past. Due to the scale of Pius' plans for the oratory, it was not possible to install Andrew's relics in their permanent place on their arrival in Rome (April 1462). After being celebrated at the high altar, the relics were

presumably stored in a provisional location until Simone's Latin reliquary was complete, with the container placed in the chapel in 1464 at the end of the procession mentioned by Grimaldi.

Significantly, none of this resolves what scene appears in Romano's relief. Textual details, gleaned from the *Commentaries*, suggests the high altar at Old Saint Peter's. Visual details, such as the presence of Simone's Latin reliquary and the Roman sarcophagus resembling Pius' effigy, suggest the Chapel of Saint Gregory. The suspension of interpretation is the lasting influence of Pius' substitution of a Latin for a Byzantine head. When the substitution was first realized, it was admittedly disorienting, with recognizability becoming unrecognizability and the inability to determine time and place. Looking closer and applying a more rigorous iconographic method does not resolve these difficulties. In fact, during this process, the textual stability of the *Commentaries* as the source of Romano's composition breaks down, leading to the final erasure of Bessarion's more extraverted goal to use the reliquary for the preservation of the Morea. In the end, it is Pius' personal goals that win out.

## NOTES

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1. For the procession from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore to the church of Old Peter's in Rome and the people who lined—and sometimes blocked—the processional route: Pius II, *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II (An Abridgment)*, trans. F. A. Gragg, ed. Leona C. Gabel (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), 250–54. Cited hereafter as *Memoirs*. For a transcription of the Latin text of Book 8 of the *Commentaries*: Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, ed. Luigi Totaro, vol. 2 (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1984), 1494–1563
  
  2. For the mobility of Andrew as a preacher and posthumously via his relics, as well as another discussion of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew in Rome, see Maya Maskarinec, “Mobilizing Sanctity: Pius II and the Head of Andrew in Rome,” in *Authority and Spectacle in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honor of Teofilo F. Ruiz*, eds. Yuen-Gen Liang and Jarbel Rodriguez (New York: Routledge, 2017): 186–202.
  
  3. Maskarinec, “Mobilizing Sanctity,” 186–202.
  
  4. The photographs were taken in Rome immediately before the object was repatriated to Greece in 1964. Pope Paul VI can be seen alongside three other men, with the reliquary dismantled on the table before them. Two of these church officials can be identified as the scholars Panteleimon (Rodopoulos) of Tyroloa and Cardinal Willebras. Photos of the examination of the relics before their repatriation were posted to a Greek blog on September 26, 2012. Panagiotis Andriopoulos, “ΦΩΤΟΓΡΑΦΙΕΣ–ΝΤΟΚΟΥΜΕΝΤΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΙΑΝΑΚΟΜΙΔΗ ΤΗΣ ΤΙΜΙΑΣ ΚΑΡΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΚΛΗΤΟΥ ΣΤΗΝ ΠΑΤΡΑ,” *Ιδιωτική οδός*, accessed March 9, 2020, [http://panagiotisandriopoulos.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post\\_26.html](http://panagiotisandriopoulos.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post_26.html).
  
  5. Arianna Antoniutti transcribes a portion of an inventory of the Opera of the Cathedral of Pienza from October 20, 1784, related to the Byzantine head: “Busto d'argento dorato di libbre sette di peso compresa la grillanda, rappresentante la testa di Sant'Andrea Apostolo donata alla Cattedrale pientina dalle s.m. di Pio II e sigillata col sigillo Piscatorio del detto sommo pontefice, in cima della quale testa vi esiste una grillanda d'argento dorata, composta da quattordici pezzi molleggiati con dieci pietre dure di diversi colori e di diverse figure legate in argento dorato, ed inoltre con altre piccole pietre nell'angolo di detti pezzi legate parimenti in argento dorato in numero di quarantotto e numero cinquantadue perle buone dette scaramazza di diverse grossezze, ma non superiori alla figura di una lenticchia, legate in piccoli filettini d'argento dorati.” Arianna Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant'Andrea. Le ragioni della devozione,” in *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: Arte, Storia e Cultura nell'Europa di Pio II*, eds. Roberto di Paola, Arianna Antoniutti, and Marco Gallo (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006), 339.

6. The *Commentaries* does not acknowledge Pius as its author. The text was first printed during the Counter Reformation, and it wasn't until the scholar Ludwig Pastor identified Vatican Codex Reginensis 1995 as an original manuscript of the *Commentaries* in Pius' hand and a scribe's that he was identified as the biographer, writing in the third person. *Memoirs*, 21–23.

7. *Ibid.*, 241. There is considerable debate as to whether it was the Emperor Constantine or his son, Constantius, who had the body of Andrew moved from Patras to Constantinople in the fourth century. Ernst Christoph Suttner supports the notion that it was Constantius, in 356–57. Ernst Christoph Suttner, “Die Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas und ihre Verehrung in Patras, Konstantinopel, Amalfi und Rom,” in *Amalfi and Byzantium (1208–2008)*, ed. Edward G. Farrugia (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2010), 45. For a discussion of the separation of Andrew's body from his head: Suttner, “Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas,” 46–47, 52.

8. As suggested, above, the precise date of the translation of Andrew's relics from Patras to Constantinople is difficult to determine. As Holger Klein notes, the early translation is based on the Alexandrian Chronicle and a relevant poem by Paulinus of Nola. Holger A. Klein, “Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople,” in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft: Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell* (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari, 2006), 82, and note 18. Based on Paulinus poem, Klein gives a precise date for the arrival of Andrew's relics in Constantinople as March 4, 357. Holger A. Klein, “Sacred Things and Holy Bodies: Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance,” in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, eds. Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 56, and note 16. Also Cyril Mango, “Constantine's Mausoleum and the Translation of Holy Relics,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990): 51–62; and David Woods, “The Date of the Translation of the relics of SS. Luke and Andrew to Constantinople,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45, no. 3 (September, 1991): 286–92. Another source is the description in a tenth-century poem by Constantine of Rhodes that describes the Apostoleion in Constantinople, including its architecture and the mosaics on the interior. Constantine of Rhodes, *Constantine of Rhodes, on Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*, eds. Liz James and Ioannis Vassis (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012).

9. The reference to the movement of Andrew's relics appears in Paulinus of Nola, Poem 19: “When Constantine was founding the city named after himself, and was the first of the Roman kings to proclaim himself a Christian, the godsent idea came to him that since he was then embarking on that splendid enterprise of building a city that would rival Rome, he should likewise emulate Romulus' city with a further endowment—he would eagerly defend his walls with the bodies of apostles. He then removed Andrew from the Greeks and Timothy from Asia; and so Constantinople now stands with twin towers, vying to match the hegemony of great Rome, and more genuinely rivalling the walls of Rome through the eminence that God bestowed on her, for He counterbalanced Peter and Paul with a protection as great, since Constantinople gained the discipline of Paul and the brother of Peter.” Paulinus of Nola, *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, trans. and ed. P. G. Walsh (New York: Newman Press, 1975), 142–43.

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10. Suttner, “Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas,” 45. Derek Krueger writes that in addition to serving as the mausoleum of the Byzantine emperors, the relics of Andrew, Timothy, and Luke were kept beneath the high altar of the Apostoleion. Derek Krueger, “The Religion of Relics in Late Antiquity and Byzantium,” in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, eds. Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 13. Also Glanville Downey, “The Tombs of the Byzantine Emperors in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959): 27–51.

11. Pietro Capuano was born in Amalfi to a wealthy merchant family and pursued his studies as a theologian, likely in Paris, in 1180s and 1190s. After Pope Celestine appointed him a cardinal in 1193, a good portion of his early life was spent on legation. He accepted appointments to Sicily, Bohemia, Poland, and then France. With the appointment of Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216) and the launching of the Fourth Crusade, however, Pietro became a liaison between Rome and the new Latin Kingdom. Peter is said to have treated the Byzantine clergy in Constantinople badly, as he was sharply criticized in a letter from Innocent III that essentially removed him of his duties until a new legate could arrive. Pietro stole the body of Saint Andrew from the Apostoleion around 1208, or slightly before. Several authors note the relics’ effect on Amalfi, including the renewal of the duomo as a fitting architectural surrounding for the apostle, the city being named the seat of a new bishopric, the construction of stairway into the crypt, and an increased flow of pilgrims. Some relics of Saint Andrew are now buried in the crypt beneath the high altar of the church, with other relics in a golden head reliquary from the seventeenth century that is processed through the city on Andrew’s feast day, when it is also rushed up the stairs of the church, as quickly as possible, with much fanfare. For more on Pietro Capuano, see Werner Maleczek, *Pietro Capuano. Patrizio amalfitano, cardinale, legato alla quarta crociata, teologo (1214)* (Amalfi: Centro di cultura e storia amalfitana, 1997); and *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (Trecanni)*, s.v. “Capuano, Pietro,” by Norbert Kamp, accessed March 3, 2020, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-capuano\\_res-e2ffb27c-87e9-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-capuano_res-e2ffb27c-87e9-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

12. Suttner, “Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas,” 51. Silvia Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio. Implicazioni ideologiche del ricevimento a Roma della testa del patrono della chiesa ortodossa nella settimana santa del 1462,” in *Dopo le due cadute di Costantinopoli (1204, 1453): Eredi ideologici di Bisanzio*, eds. Marina Koumanoudi and Chryssa Maltezou (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 2008), 268.

13. Suttner, “Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas,” 51.

14. Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). First published in 1978.

15. Pius notes that Thomas fled the Morea “with his wife and children and many Greek nobles.” *Memoirs*, 242. For Thomas and his retinue’s stop on the island of Santa Maura: *Memoirs*, 242; and Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 260.

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16. *Memoirs*, 242. Leonardo (III) Tocco was at one time the despot of Arta, with his territory in areas of the Greek mainland that had been conquered by the Turks in 1449. From that point, Leonardo was under the protection of the Venetians on the island of Santa Maura, and was still, technically, in control of the islands of Cephalonia (Kefalonia/ Cefalonia), Zante (Xante), Ithaca, and Lefkada. Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 260.

17. *Memoirs*, 242.

18. *Idem*.

19. *Idem*.

20. *Ibid.*, 242–43.

21. “Caveret ne rem sacrem iniussu Papae cuiquam crederet, nisi apostolorum indignationem vellet incurrere; nec inopiam causaretur: venturo enim ad Urbem ibique mansuro hi sumptus fierent qui Principi convenirent.” Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *Commentarii*, 1500.

22. Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 260.

23. Pius’ *Commentaries* suggest that Thomas went to Patras to fetch the relic, himself. However, Silvia Ronchey mentions a chronicler from Ragusa named Giovanni Gondola, who describes how Thomas sent an ambassador to Patras to fetch the relic for him. Gondola writes that “Giovanni Cerva, the agent of Thomas, despot of the Morea, went all the way to Samandria...” and later how “The ambassador of Thomas, despot of the Morea, Giovanni Cerva, carried the head of Saint Andrew to Ragusa in order to save it from the hands of the Turks.” Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 260–61.

24. *Memoirs*, 243.

25. Ronchey produces several primary sources regarding festivities for the arrival of the relic of Saint Andrew in Ragusa, including Giacomo Luccari’s *Copioso ristretto de gli Annali di Rausa*, which also mentions the relic’s travels from Ragusa to Ancona and how Thomas’ ship was “accompanied by armed vessels, because of the danger of pirates; and from Ancona he went onto Rome.” Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 261.

26. *Memoirs*, 241–42.

27. *Ibid.*, 242.

28. *Idem*.

29. The tomb monuments of Pius II and Pius III in the chapel in Old Saint Peter's were moved to the church of Sant' Andrea della Valle with the help of Cardinal Peretti in 1614, during the second phase of its construction by Carlo Maderno (after a brief start in 1491, the church was built on the architect's designs from 1601–29, on a site formerly occupied by the Piccolomini family palace). The monument to Pius II is now embedded high on the left side of the nave, near the crossing of the church, where its details are difficult to view. The bones of the Pius II and III remained in the Vatican crypt until January 6, 1623, as established by an account in the manuscript diary from the Theatine Archives. Cecilia Mary Ady, *Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini), The Humanist Pope* (London: Meuthen, 1913), 339–40.

30. Antoniutti, "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 262.

31. For work on Pius' tomb taking place between 1465–70: Antoniutti, "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 339. Financial support came from pope's nephew, Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini (of Siena), who became Pope Pius III and was buried in the chapel "at the feet of his sainted uncle." Ady, *Pius II*, 339–41.

32. "He held a Congress at Mantua for the deference of the faith. He resisted the enemies of the Papacy within and without Italy. He numbered Catherine of Siena among Christ's saints. He annulled the Pragmatic Sanction in France. He restored Ferdinand of Aragon to the kingdom of Sicily. He raised the estate of the Church. He instituted alum works at Tolfa. A lover of justice and religion, most admirable in eloquence, he made ready a fleet and enjoined the Doge of Venice and his Senate to be his fellow-warriors for Christ in the Turkish war. He died at Ancona, and was brought back to Rome and buried in S. Peter's, in the place where he had enshrined the head of S. Andrew the Apostle when it came to him from the Peloponnesus." There is also a shorter inscription beneath it, from the seventeenth century, was installed by Cardinal Peretti di Montalto (I), who helped move the tomb relief from Old Saint Peter's to Sant'Andrea della Valle: "ALEXANDER · PERETTIVS · / S · R · E · VICE CANCELL/ CARD · MONTALTVS/ IN · PICCOLOMINE ORVM · DOMO · / A · CONSTANTIA · AMALPHIS · DVCE/ CLERICIS · REGVLARIB · DONO · DATA/ B · ANDREAE · TEMPLVM · AEDIFICAVIT/ PIO · II · P · M · MONVMENTVM/ RESTITVIT · ET · ORNAVIT/ AN · SAL · MDCXIII." Ady, *Pius II*, 339–41.

33. The figure behind Pius, holding his stole, is his nephew, the Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini, who became Pope Pius III and financed the construction of his uncle's monument. Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini also features in Pius' narrative of the arrival of the reliquary in the *Commentaries*: "The while the cardinals and bishops sang praises to God with a loud voice, he went to a place where he could be seen by all [possibly the benediction loggia] and blessed the multitude, and the Cardinal of Siena, his nephew after the flesh, announced plenary indulgence." *Memoirs*, 258.

34. Idem.

35. These auditors also feature earlier in the narrative, during the procession of the reliquary to Old Saint Peter's: "It was already the thirteenth hour and such throngs had blocked the streets that soldiers massed around the Pope could scarcely open a way with their cudgels." *Ibid.*, 252.

36. For the identification of the peripheral figure as Thomas Palaiologos: Ronchey, "Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio," 259–317, and Tav. 3. It is important to note that art historians have done a tremendous amount of work on the meaning of the pointed hat that the figure wears in Romano's relief, leading to the conclusion that it only signifies the Byzantine Emperor, on occasion, and can be better understood as a broad signifier of cultural Otherness. Alessandra Pedersoli, "Giovanni VIII Paleologo: un imperatore e il suo ritratto. Profili e suggestioni, potenza e fortuna di un'immagine," *La Rivista di Engramma (Online)* 9 (June 2001), accessed March 10, 2020, [http://www.engramma.it/eOS/index.php?id\\_articolo=2477#compendium](http://www.engramma.it/eOS/index.php?id_articolo=2477#compendium).

37. Ady, *Pius II*, 341.

38. "...supra quod e caput S. Andrea Ap. a Pio II." Some appreciation for the space can also be gained from drawings by Giacomo Grimaldi—and soon after, Domenico Tasselli—that show a view of the left side isle of the church, including a view of the tomb of Pope Pius III (but not Pius II). Giacomo Grimaldi's *Descrizione Della Basilica Antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano* was written before 1619, based on the date on its title page, and presented to Pope Paul V in 1620. For Grimaldi's drawings of the side chapel, see Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 2733, 128v–129r. Also Domenico Tasselli, *Monumentorum veteris basilicae vaticanae delineationes et exempla picta vel adumbrata a Domenico Tassellio de Lugo et etiam ab aliis cum didascaliiis Iacobi Grimaldi Sec. XVI–XVII*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.A.64.ter, 21r.

39. Arianna Antoniutti attributes the tempietto structure to Francesco del Borgo, and writes that the ensemble of tempietto, tabernacle, and ciborium was likely not completed before 1464. Antoniutti, "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 336–37.

40. The artist Paolo Romano may be responsible for the associated statue of Saint Andrew on the altar in the chapel, similar to his statue of Saint Andrew at the Milvian Bridge, though Antoniutti re-attributes it to Niccolò Longhi da Viggiu and describes how the work was eventually moved to the vestibule that leads to the sacristy of New Saint Peter's. Antoniutti, "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 338, 341, and reproduced on 342.

41. Giacomo Grimaldi, *Descrizione Della Basilica Antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano: Codice Barberini Latino 2733*, ed. Reto Niggli (Rome: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1972), 76–79.



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42. These details are recorded in Tiberio Alfarano's *De Basilicae Vaticanae* from the sixteenth century: "Tandem hoc Oratorium et Altare Pius secundus marmoribus elegantissimis exornavit, ac desuper altarem marmoream deauratamque cameram super quatuor columnas extruxit, venerabile beati Andreae Apostoli Caput, silver, auro gemmisque ornatum solemnem processionem totaque Curia, Romanoque Clero comitante, Dominica tertia Iunii summo cum honore collocavit, versibusque elegantissimis exornavit." Antoniutti, "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 335.

43. *Memoirs*, 255.

44. The horns are mentioned in the book of Exodus, where the Jewish people are told to construct the altar of burnt offering in Moses' Tabernacle: "Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide. Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze. Make an altar, too, of acacia wood, with a surface five cubits square, and a height of three cubits. It must have horns at the corners, all of a piece with it, and it must be plated with bronze." *New Advent*, Exodus 27:1–2, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/exo026.htm>.

45. The reference comes in a passage where the Lord speaks to Moses and gives instructions for how men can atone for their sins through the sacrifice of a bull as a burnt offering on the altar in the Tabernacle: "Some of this blood he will smear on the horns of the altar; that altar within the tabernacle, on which the fragrant incense is burnt for the Lord's acceptance; the rest he will pour away at the foot of the sacrificial altar, near the tabernacle door." *New Advent*, Leviticus 4:7, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/lev004.htm>.

46. For another mention of Bessarion "speaking for St. Andrew": Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 177; and John Monfasani, "Bessarion Latinus," in *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and other Émigrés* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1995), 166–67, and note 6. Peter Goodman describes Bessarion's oration as "a speech ringing with apostrophes to Saints Peter and Andrew, rich in antithesis and exclamation, and replete with praise of the pope. Its subjects are the recovery of Greece and the war against the Turks. The cardinal's rhetoric is bellicose and blunt as he pleads for a cause that admits no nuance." Peter Goodman, "Pius II in the Bath: Papal Ceremony and Cultural History," *English Historical Review* 129, no. 539 (August, 2014): 822.

47. Bessarion was named apostolic administrator of Constantinople at the end of 1463 and took up the full title and responsibilities of the patriarchy after Isidore's death in April 1463. Mariano Zorzi puts Bessarion's appointments as administrator and Patriarch on December 13, 1462, and April 27, 1463, respectively. Mariano Zorzi, "Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia," in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 50.

48. *Memoirs*, 255.

49. *Ibid.*

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50. Ibid.

51. *Oxford English Dictionary (Online)*, s.v. “prosopopoeia,” accessed March 10, 2020, doi:10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001.

52. *Memoirs*, 255.

53. Idem.

54. Idem.

55. *Memoirs*, 256.

56. Idem.

57. Idem.

58. Ibid., 256–57.

59. Ibid., 257.

60. Idem.

61. Idem.

62. *New Advent*, Matthew 4:19, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/mat004.htm>.

63. Pius’ account of the miraculous draught of fishes relates to Matthew 4:18–20 and Mark 1:16–18, as opposed to John 1:40–41: “One of the two who had heard what John said, and followed him, was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. He, first of all, found his own brother Simon, and told him, We have discovered the Messiah (which means, the Christ), and brought him to Jesus.” *New Advent*, John 1:40–41, accessed March 23, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/joh001.htm>.

64. “... interea temporis cum tuo germano aliquandiu moraberis et honore pari cum eo potieris.” Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, ed. Luigi Totaro, vol. 2 (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1984). *Memoirs*, 257.

65. *Memoirs*, 246.

66. Ibid., 257.

67. Ibid., 258.

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68. Simone was a goldsmith who is perhaps best known for multiple golden roses: one for Thomas Palaiologos in 1462 and another in 1463 for the cathedral of Pienza that is now in the Museo Diocesano of Pienza. Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 338, and note 49.

69. “... a magistro Simone aurifabro de Florentia,” “de commissione et de mandato sanctissimi domini nostri papae ad ornandum et decorandum caput Sancti Andreae.” Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 337–38, and note 42.

70. “Honorabilis viro magistro Symoni Johannis de Florentia aurifabro in Roman curia florenos auri d.c. 554 et bo. 42 preme auri et argenti ac manufactura capitis S. Andreae per eum facti.” Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 339, and note 52.

71. “Tandem hoc Oratorium et Altare Pius secundus marmoribus elegantissimis exornavit, ac desuper altarem marmoream deauratamque cameram super quatuor columnas extruxit, in qua venerable Beati Andreae Apostoli Caput, argento, auro gemmisque ornatum solempni processione totaque Curia, Romanoque Clero comitante, Dominica tertia Iunij summo cum honore collocavit, versibusque elegantissimis exornavit.” Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 335, and note 29. Based on the late date of the source related to payment for materials, the “third Sunday in June” would likely mean 1464, or about fourteen months after the celebrations in Old Saint Peter’s and just two months before the Pope’s death at Ancona.

72. Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 339.

73. Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art,” in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 26.

74. As already noted, Romano carved the reliefs for the tomb of Pius II between 1465–70, well before Leo X commissioned the structure to protect the tomb of Saint Peter during the construction of the new church in 1513. For the tegurio, see the chapter “The Primitive Hut Amidst the Ruins of St. Peter’s” in Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2010), 313–19; and William Tronzo, “Il Tegurium di Bramante,” in *L’architettura della Basilica di San Pietro: storia e costruzione*, eds. Gianfranco Spagnesi and Giuseppe Zander (Rome: Bonsignori, 1997), 161–66.

75. Antoniutti, “Pio II e sant’Andrea,” 335, and note 29.

76. The chapel's affiliation with Gregory is secure, as an annotation by Domenico Tasselli in a drawing of the tempietto and ciborium identifies the structure as the "Shrine of Saint Andrew the Apostle, above which is the celebrated ciborium decorated with precious stones by Pius II, which contains the head of Saint Andrew, and below the body of Saint Gregory the Great in mother of pearl (?)" ("Sacellum S. Andrea Apostoli supra est ciborium nobilissimus lapidibus ornatum a Pio II ubi est caput S. Andrea Apti. infra est corpus S. Gregorii Magni in concha lapidea"). *Monumentorum veteris basilicae vaticanae delineationes et exempla picta vel adumbrata a Domenico Tassello de Lugo et etiam ab aliis cum didascalis Iacobi Grimaldi Sec. XVI–XVII*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.A.64.ter, 23r. A similar account is found in Giacomo Grimaldi's *Descrizione*, where he tells the "History of how the heads of Saint Andrew and Saint Gregory were moved from Old Saint Peter's to the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle through the authority of Pope Paul V" ("Historia repositionis capitis S. Andreae Apti. et S. Gregorii Magni ex marmoreo Pii secundi sepulcro in ecc.a. S. Andrea de Valle, ad quam Pauli V Pont. Max. auctoritate e Vaticano ob veterem deturbata Basilicam translate fuit"). Grimaldi's *Descrizione Della Basilica Antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, also known as the *Instrumenta autentica*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 2733, 51v.

77. *Memoirs*, 246.

78. Suttner, "Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas," 45–59.

79. Robert Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145.

80. There were particular disagreements between Gregory and Eutychios (r. 552–65), the Patriarch of Constantinople, regarding the Resurrection. For his part, Eutychios believed that the bodies of those who would be resurrected would be "more light than air." Gregory argued for the materiality of Jesus' body after his Resurrection. Robert Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 98.

81. Markus, *Gregory the Great*, 10. Suttner, "Reliquien des hl. Apostels Andreas," 54.

82. *Memoirs*, 246.

83. Pope Paul V oversaw the dismantling of the chapel during the early seventeenth century. The tombs of Pius II and Pius III in the chapel were opened in 1608, when the bodies were placed in sarcophagi in the Vatican Grottoes. The funeral monuments, themselves, were transferred to the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle in 1614, and the remains of the pontiffs followed nearly a decade later, in 1623. "Pio II e sant'Andrea," 341–42. Ady, *Pius II*, 39.

*CHAPTER 4*

The Staurotheke of Cardinal Bessarion as a Weapon for Crusade

The so-called “Reliquary of Cardinal Bessarion” is better referred to as an Italo-Byzantine staurotheke, or container for relics of the True Cross of Christ, and is now in the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice, Italy (fig. 4.1).<sup>1</sup> The object is composed of a variety of materials, including wood, cloth, silver, gold, glass, enamel, and a variety of precious stones, and is a fundamentally layered object that underwent renovations first in the Byzantine world, where the core component of the triple-armed cross with gold filigree was produced, and subsequently in the Italian peninsula, where the object was outfitted with a surrounding tablet, oil paintings around its frame, an elaborate silver processional handle, and a wooden stand.<sup>2</sup>

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The history of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary is marked by successive renovations and changes in ownership, and the goal of this chapter is to move from a discussion of the layered surface of the object to its importance in the context of Crusade in the 1450s and 60s. In line with the object’s accumulated materiality, I begin by highlighting a few key moments in the object’s creation over time and describe how a history of modifications made the work into an assemblage that for Bessarion was full—and possibly even overly-burdened—with personal, political, and religious meaning.

#### A Brief History of the Reliquary

The object that now contains four relics, and is thus a reliquary, developed in eight phases when the object was in transit or transferred from one owner to another (for a version of the narrative that follows, see Appendix 2). The triple-barred cross that forms the

core of this object was commissioned by Eirene Palaiologina—possibly the Eirene who married Matthew Kantakouzenos in 1341 in Salonica—as an autonomous, devotional object that had no relics inside and may date to the middle of the fourteenth century (fig. 4.2).<sup>3</sup> The connection to Eirene is based on a donor inscription that runs along the edge of the cross which includes the name of the patron, Eirene Palaiologina, as well as her relation to the emperor: she is the “daughter of the brother of the emperor,” or the imperial niece.<sup>4</sup> While there are many important women named Eirene from this period in Byzantine history, this particular Eirene is most likely the daughter of the despot of the Morea, Demetrius Palaiologos (d. after 1343), who was the brother of the Byzantine Emperor Michael IX Palaiologos (r. 1294–1320).<sup>5</sup> Sometime later in the fourteenth century, the cross may have been donated by Eirene to a man who served as her spiritual advisor, the fourteenth-century Byzantine monk Gregory Palamas (d. ca. 1357–59), whose first name is recorded at the opposite end of the cross, where he is identified as “Gregory pneumatikos,” or “Gregory, the Spiritual (Father).”<sup>6</sup>

The details of the alleged transition from Eirene to Gregory Palamas are unclear, though they were contemporaries and spent time in Constantinople, with Eirene living in Thrace and the Morea and Gregory based in Salonica. It is clear, however, that the cross was later acquired by another Gregory—Gregory Mammias—who was a confidant of John VIII Palaiologos (r. 1425–48) and, for a brief time, Patriarch of Constantinople as Gregory III (r. 1444/45 – 51).<sup>7</sup> Gregory III likely brought the cross of Eirene with him when he immigrated to Rome in 1451 (fig. 4.3, a), after which he had it embedded in a surrounding wooden tablet with relics, a frame of oil paintings showing the Passion of Christ (b), and an icon of the Crucifixion on a sliding lid (not shown; see figs. 4.28 and 4.29). According to an account from J. B. Schioppalalba’s treatise on the Bessarion reliquary from 1767, entitled *In*

*perantiquam sacram tabulum graecam insigni sodalitia Sanctae Mariae Caritatis Venetiarum ab amplissimo Cardinali Bessarione dono datam dissertatio* (“A discussion of the remarkable ancient Greek tablet given by Cardinal Bessarion to the [the Scuola] of Santa Maria della Carità in Venice”), Gregory III gave the reliquary to Bessarion in his will from 1459. Later, Bessarion commissioned the addition of a silver processional handle (c) and promised the reliquary to the brothers of the Scuola della Carità in 1463, though he retained ownership and kept the reliquary in his collection.<sup>8</sup> After the cardinal’s death in 1472, the scuola added a silver plaque to the back of the reliquary, honoring Bessarion as the donor, and commissioned a stand for the processional handle.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Dismantled Object

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary developed in a cumulative process and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bessarion, and the brothers of the Scuola della Carità took the contributions of previous owners, beginning with Eirene, but also modified the object to suit their needs. The reliquary in Venice was built from the inside, out, as frames within frames and an accumulated surface. Its encrustation can be described in terms of archaeology and landscape—as strata, as a varied topography, as digging into a layered surface—but such processes can also fail, especially when the viewer is confronted with so many photographs and reproductions of the reliquary from out in front (fig. 4.4).

These images provide a sense of the object, from a distance, and necessarily flatten a three-dimensional object. One solution is to have the privilege of seeing reliquary in the Gallerie dell’Accademia, in person, according to multiple views. However, the promises of first-hand experience are also denied in the current display, since the reliquary is encased in a



glass niche in the Sala del'Albergo (fig. 4.5).<sup>10</sup> As in reproduction, there is a flattening effect to the reliquary's placement in the gallery, and the body of the viewer is affected in having a limited range of motion in front of the object. The curators are also aware of these limitations, as they have installed a mirror behind the reliquary to provide a view of the donor plaque, related to Bessarion (fig. 4.1, and the reflection on the right side of the photograph).

To do work on the object, first- and second-hand experiences become composite, like the name of the "Italo-Byzantine reliquary," itself, which refers to a range between cultures. A notable exception to the withdrawal of the object was the recent restoration of the reliquary of the True Cross, undertaken as a cooperation between the Gallerie in Venice and l'Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, with work beginning in March 2013.<sup>11</sup> On this occasion, and thanks to many documentary photographs, we find that the best way to understand the accumulated object are records of it being dismantled.

One of the photographs taken during the restoration process shows the object not out in front but lying on a tabletop (fig. 4.6). The vantage seems incidental, the product of needing to work on the object's surface, but the photograph captures an important moment in the history of the object during its breakdown by conservators. As the cross-shaped frame that seals Eirene's contribution to the tablet is lifted out, the photograph shows a view of the object from the bottom, up, and an oblique angle that gives a better understanding of the varied surface of the object. If most reproductions show the object's elevation, this view is its cross-section, with the vantage leading to the realization that the depth of various components within the reliquary is an index of ownership.

In another view from the restoration, also from the side, we see the red paint underneath the removed cross of Eirene, and how the recess for the symbol is set the deepest within the wooden tablet (fig. 4.7, a), something that allows for the golden relief of the crucified Christ to sit just above the surface of the surrounding tablet. Around the receptacle for the cross, there are also two shards of the wood of the True Cross (b); bits of fabric from the Seamless Tunic of Christ (c); images on glass, set in enamel, of Helena (d) and her son, Constantine (e); and a restricted view of the scenes from Christ's Passion around the U-shaped border (f), which are layered with strips of silver revetment with precious stones (g). Except for the cross of Eirene, these surrounding elements likely correspond to Gregory III's ownership of the object, with the final addition being the silver processional pole (h) added at Bessarion's request between ca. 1463–72.

#### An Organized Assemblage

One of the most interesting aspects of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary is that while it is an assemblage, its arrangement is not haphazard. In fact, the unfolding of the object is not concentric so much as nested, beginning with the cross of Eirene (fig. 4.8). Its arrangement is a strict grid, with zones determined by the arms of the triple-barred cross, including its stylized titulus and footrest. In being modular, it is also made of frames, with Eirene's cross surrounded by a wooden tablet that includes flanking windows for the display of relics and plaques featuring images of the first imperial family. These features are then re-framed by oil paintings of Christ's Passion (fig. 4.9), which begin at the top left and wind from one side of the tablet to the other, depicting the betrayal of Jesus (a), his mocking (b), the flagellation (c), the way to Calvary (d), Jesus nailed to the Cross (e), the deposition (f), and finally the entombment (g). As another indication of modularity, the scenes are re-re-framed by the

addition of silver revetment and precious stones on top of the painted scenes (fig. 4.10), which unify the tablet with the acanthus leaf base.

The gridded assemblage proves that the cross of Eirene was the inspirational starting point for the accumulated object, with other elements arrayed next to and around this important kernel. And yet the cross and its female patron have been almost completely erased from historical retellings related to the reliquary, with the notable exception of comments made by Bissera Pentsheva at a symposium to celebrate the restoration of the object and her essay in the related volume.<sup>12</sup> Because of this, an appreciation for changing material, cultural, and historiographic frames becomes even more significant, since such alterations can be used to determine how Eirene's significant contribution was re-inscribed and co-opted by male patrons whose actions dominate the stories that get told about the reliquary. While Gregory III and Bessarion's interventions were undoubtedly related to the triple-barred cross, the effect of their ownerships has been Eirene's removal. The erasure of Eirene can no longer be ignored, since the work she contributed is at the heart of the reliquary as we see it today.

#### Lifespans, or a History of Ownership

The notion of altered frames can be usefully expanded to speak to the history of ownership of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary, including the cultural translation of the cross of Eirene from Byzantium to Italy. In this line of thinking, a discussion of the reliquary built on changing frames is valent to questions regarding the cultural reception of various components of the object, defined here as the varied experience of viewers over time. A study of provenance, leading to historiographic critique, can also be used as a weapon against

the misogyny found in current scholarship. This includes the tendency to refer to the object as “the reliquary of Cardinal Bessarion,” a title I borrow for my own work to highlight a nomenclature of convenience that is infatuated with a male, celebrity patron. If we adhere to personalities in historical retelling, the most accurate, abbreviated title for the object related to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would be “the reliquary of Eirene Palaiologina, the two Gregories, Bessarion, and the members of the Scuola della Carità in Venice”—an unwieldy construction, no doubt, but one that shows how attention to Bessarion, at the level of the word, hinders the acknowledgment of other actors. Moving forward, it is critical to name Eirene, despite uncertainties, and show how her contribution reverberates across the history of the object.

### *Eirene*

The cross of Eirene is not a reliquary, itself, though it does resemble containers for relics of the True Cross from Byzantium and other localities whose arms contain shards of the holy wood. In Eirene’s possession, the cross was an object of personal devotion, and based on the tetragrams, cryptograms, and epigram that cover all facets of the cross, the object was made to function in three dimensions.<sup>13</sup> A personal use for the cross also applied to Gregory Palamas, with Gregory III and Bessarion adapting the object for a more public and processional purpose.

Due to their inventions, it is difficult to grasp the initial use of the cross as a devotional object for the remission of sins, since Eirene’s inscriptions are obscured, buried in later framing, especially in Gregory III’s tablet. For example, the back of the cross—embedded in the tablet—features a cryptogram and a tetragram that expand, respectively, to

the messages “Jesus Christ conquers” (fig. 4.11) and “Christ’s light is shining for all” (fig. 4.12).<sup>14</sup> The letterforms are beautiful, and the legibility that comes in expanding from single initials to a four-letter phrase is guided by the designer’s ability to move the viewer’s attention across the surface of the cross, from top to bottom and left to right, in reference to the sanctifying action of crossing one’s chest with a hand (see fig. 4.11, with this motion traced).<sup>15</sup>

The back of the cross of Eirene is covered with delicate filigree beads that make up a complicated, scrolling pattern, like depictions of the True Cross that emphasize its connection to the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden. What is striking, then, is that this facet of its decoration and textual program was deemed expendable when the cross was incorporated into Gregory III’s tablet. In contrast to the messages now obscured, still-visible inscriptions on the front of the cross identify the central figure as Jesus, the scene as the Crucifixion, and the deceased *Christus patiens* as the King of Glory (fig. 4.13).<sup>16</sup> There is also a message inscribed on the lateral arm of the cross, behind Jesus, that pertains to the devotional purpose of the object and the words of one of the thieves who was crucified alongside Jesus on the hill of Calvary, from Luke 23:42: “Remember me, o Lord, when you comest to thy kingdom” (and, in the following verse: “Jesus said to him, I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise”) (fig. 4.14).<sup>17</sup> There are also tetragrams on the front of the cross. The first reads “The place of Kranion [the skull] became paradise,”<sup>18</sup> an allusion to Golgotha as the place where Christ was crucified and the burial place of Adam as a site from which God would renew the world (fig. 4.15). The second tetragram also relates to the redemption of Man, but with a significance that militarizes Christ’s sacrifice—“the demons fear this typos,” or sign<sup>19</sup>—wherein the cross is held out as a weapon against the forces of evil (fig. 4.16).

I will return to the preserved military significance of the cross of Eirene at greater length in the pages that follow. For now, it is important to note that Gregory III's intervention made the cross of Eirene a permanent part of the surrounding tablet, making it impossible to lift it out and read the totality of its textual program. We only have access to these inscriptions because the reliquary was taken apart on two occasions, with the first in the late eighteenth century, with oversight from Schioppalalba as a member of the Scuola della Carità, and the second during the restoration of the object in 2013. A key document on this process is his "Discussion of the remarkable Greek tablet given by Cardinal Bessarion to [the Scuola of] Santa Maria della Carità in Venice," published in Venice in 1767, with records suggesting more about the militance of the object.<sup>20</sup>

Schioppalalba's large printed book includes several engravings of what he calls Bessarion's "ancient" or "centuries-old Greek tablet," including an image of the back of the cross of Eirene (fig. 4.17). The engraving provides a unique view of the object, and issues of legibility, illegibility, and erasure return when we consider that the lengthy donor's inscription that appears on the outside edges of the cross and transcribed by the author. Eirene's name appears in abbreviated Greek in the line that begins in the bottom right quadrant, just below the stylized footrest (figs. 4.18 and 4.19). In its entirety, the donor inscription (in majuscule, but transcribed here in lowercase) reads: "Eirene Palaiologina, daughter of the brother of the emperor, decorates with silver the world wide venerated image of the cross, for the attainment of salvation, for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>21</sup>

Schioppalalba shows some interest in Eirene, as he takes great care to transcribe the inscription on the triple-barred cross. He also engages in an extended description of the reliquary, including an iconographic analysis of the oil paintings along the frame; "the silver

gilt cross in the interior of the tablet” (“de Cruce argentea deaurata in interiori Tabula nostra sita”); images of Constantine, Helena, and the archangels Michael and Gabriel; the icon on the sliding lid; and the related relics of the Cross and the Tunic of Christ. However, as a member of the Scuola della Carità, he is most interested in how the ancient tablet (“antiquis tabulae”) came into “our possession” (“nostra possessoribus”), from the early promise of the reliquary to the scuola in 1463 to the final translation of the reliquary from Bessarion’s collection to Venice in 1472, near the end of the cardinal’s life.<sup>22</sup> Schioppalalba mentions an Eirene Palaiologina (“Irene Palaeologina”), on several occasions—and much more could be done to analyze the provenance established by the scholar—but it is important to note that the structure of the brother’s narrative serves his home institution and their claim on a precious and powerful object.<sup>23</sup>

*Two Gregories: Palamas and Mammas*

The next phase in the history of the Byzantine reliquary was, possibly, the gift of the cross from Eirene to a fourteenth-century priest, Gregory Palamas, who in the inscription on the top edge of the titulus is called “Gregory pneumatikos” (figs. 4.20 and 4.21). As mentioned, earlier, the proposed social connection between Eirene Palaiologina and Gregory Palamas requires additional, contextual analysis, though it is clear that they both spent time in Constantinople, with Eirene living in Thrace and the Morea and Gregory in Salonica. A hundred years later, the object passed to a second Gregory, namely Gregory Mammas, either before or after he became Gregory III, Patriarch of Constantinople.

Gregory Mammas’ closeness to the imperial court led to his appointment as Patriarch of Constantinople in 1444/45, during the reign of John VIII Palaiologos, a

position that made him one of the highest-ranking officials in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Sources on Gregory are scarce but he spent considerable time in Constantinople and concluded his career in Italy, as he saw his prospects suffer with the succession of Constantine XI in 1449.<sup>24</sup> One explanation for Gregory being replaced as Patriarch pertains to his opinions regarding the need for union between the Catholic and Orthodox churches, a stance he maintained before and after his attendance at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–39 (according to Donald Nicol, following the council and the debate over union versus anti-union, “The tension in ecclesiastical circles [in Constantinople] was so intolerable that the Patriarch Gregory abandoned his charge in disgust or despair and went to Rome in August 1451”).<sup>25</sup> Pope Nicholas V soon became Gregory’s advocate, even asking Constantine to reinstate Gregory as Patriarch and requesting that the decree of Union be read in the church of Hagia Sophia. He appointed the Cardinal Isidore of Kiev as a papal legate to Constantinople in May 1452 to help bring this about.<sup>26</sup> We see Gregory’s closeness to the Holy See reflected in his work *On the Primacy of the Pope in Rome*, which summarized the scholar’s opinions on the Petrine supremacy and curried favor in his new surroundings.

When Gregory left Constantinople in 1451, he likely went with Eirene’s cross in hand, though there are no sources to establish this with certainty. The supposition is based on the fact that Gregory owned the cross in 1459, when it was already embedded in a surrounding tablet, and given to Bessarion, as told in documents related to the cardinal’s donation to the Scuola della Carità from 1463 and 1472.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that Gregory sought out Bessarion following his immigration in 1451, either in Rome or Bologna, where the cardinal was in residence during his own legation from Nicholas. Gregory’s reasons to connect with Bessarion were many, as the cardinal was a fellow immigrant who possessed a decade of experience when it came to the dynamics of the papal court. By the early 1450s,



Bessarion had also developed a number of households in and around the city of Rome, most notably the palazzo attached to the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles that became a locus for Byzantine intellectuals and an attractive starting point for someone looking to make connections in a new city. Based on the crude Greek letterforms in the inscriptions over the paintings of Christ's Passion and the style of these rectangular scenes, it is likely that Gregory took the cross of Eirene, embedded it in a wooden tablet, and had it surrounded with elements including relics of the True Cross and the seamless and purple tunic of Jesus Christ after his immigration in 1451, when the work was completed by Byzantine and/or Cretan artists living in Italy.<sup>28</sup>

### *Bessarion*

Although there are many uncertainties regarding the relation between the two men, it is documented that Gregory bequeathed the reliquary to Bessarion on his deathbed in 1459.<sup>29</sup> The gift is undeniable evidence of the close relation between the two. But why did Gregory give the reliquary to Bessarion, specifically? For one, the two had similar political views, particularly when it came to the union of the Eastern and Western churches. The object was also a link between former and future patriarchs as Gregory died in 1459, just four years before Bessarion became the Catholic-appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. It is at least possible that Gregory relinquished the object with the expectation that Bessarion would one day assume his position.

Beyond similarities in uniate politics, it is important to note that the siege and eventual fall of Constantinople took place in 1453, just a few years after Gregory's relocation to Rome. The event created a greater sense of urgency in the Christian world to maintain

what remained of formerly Byzantine territories, including their cultural patrimony. The cross of Eirene in Gregory's tablet were precious tokens of that world, and the transfer to Bessarion was likely guided by a desire to preserve an object that was a pocket of Byzantine culture and symbolic of the ongoing struggle against the Ottomans.

The oil paintings around the cross of Eirene, likely commissioned by Gregory III, are also part of this endeavor, and have been described, stylistically, as belonging to a Venetian school or done in a Cretan style.<sup>30</sup> The paintings of Helena and Constantine on glass, embedded in enamel, have also been called crude, like the Greek letters overtop the miniature cycle of paintings devoted to Christ's Passion, suggesting that the tablet was created after Gregory III's immigration by Byzantine and/or Italian artists working on the peninsula. Just as interesting as when—and even by whom—is how the typos, or sign, of Eirene Palaiologina is an imperial and patriarchal cross that had strong connotations to the Orthodox church.

#### The Reliquary as a Weapon

The link between the Italo-Byzantine reliquary and the Cross of Christ as the source of all the relics on the tablet is particularly evident in a mosaic from the west vault of the central dome of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice, where the instrument of Christ's Passion, visualized as a tripled-barred cross, becomes the weapon he wields in scenes of the Harrowing of Hell (fig. 4.22). In this famous mosaic, the cross is a tool to defeat Death, and in later scenes from the same iconographic tradition the cross is metamorphosed into a white battle standard covered with a red cross. If we move three hundred years from the death of Christ, we also find that the cross from the mosaic and the one owned by Eirene

are meditated by the sign the Emperor Constantine saw in the sky during the campaign against Maxentius, leading to his conversion, from book one of Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*:

About the time of the midday sun, up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light, and a text attached to it which said, 'By this conquer' [*in hoc signo vinces*]. Amazement at the spectacle seized both him and the whole company of soldiers which was then accompanying him on a campaign he was conducting somewhere, and witnessed the miracle. He was, he said, wondering to himself what the manifestation might mean; then, while he meditated, and thought long and hard, night overtook him. Thereupon, as he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him with the sign which had appeared in the sky, and urged him to make himself a copy of the sign which had appeared in the sky, and to use this as protection against the attacks of the enemy. When day came he arose and recounted the mysterious communication to his friends. Then he summoned goldsmiths and jewelers, sat down among them, and explained the shape of the sign, and gave them instructions about copying it in gold and precious stones... This saving sign was always used by the Emperor for protection against every opposing and hostile force, and commanded replicas of it to lead all his armies.<sup>31</sup>

Another answer as to why Gregory gave the Italo-Byzantine reliquary to Bessarion is less social, more visual, and referent to the cardinal's coat of arms. Some of the first instances of Bessarion's personal insignia appear on illuminated manuscripts that were copied soon after his immigration to Italy in 1440, and the symbol can also be found on book covers, church facades, and liturgical objects associated with the cardinal. A representative example, already mentioned in Chapter 2, comes from the multi-volume set of Bessarion choral books in Cesena (fig. 4.23). The background of Bessarion's coat of arms is, appropriately, a blue shield that provides a military backdrop for the liturgical action taking place before it. The design of Bessarion's coat of arms can be read as an image of the ideal union between the Eastern and Western churches, which Bessarion pursued as early as the Council of Ferrara-Florence from 1438-39. The image is also a visual equivalent to the persuasive content of Bessarion's "Dogmatic Oration for Union," a speech he delivered in Ferrara before the council was moved to Florence. Rarely mentioned, however, is that the

cross at the heart of Bessarion's self-presentation in Europe is a manifestation of the cross of Eirene Palaiologina.

If Gregory III obscured Eirene's name and aspects of her textual program, Bessarion took Eirene's symbol and made it his own. Admittedly, it is difficult to say that Bessarion's coat of arms depicts the cross of Eirene, since the earliest possible date for the cardinal's awareness of the reliquary was after Gregory's immigration in 1451, after the design for the coat of arms was already established. However, the question of artistic indebtedness, or which form came first, is not nearly as interesting as the simultaneity of the images in the late 1450s. Rather than having to *be* the cross of Eirene, the red cross from Bessarion's coat of arms is resonant with it and the manifestation of shared interests.

Bessarion's coat of arms and the cross of Eirene are images of one another, in ways that highlight a shared military significance. The connection begins with the cross of Eirene and continues with Bessarion's coat of arms, which documents the physical act of taking up the Crusader cross. The ritual had been enacted for centuries as part of a commitment to become "soldiers of the faith."<sup>32</sup> While the space of ritual depicted on the blue shield is imaginary and aspirational, in relating to a commitment to do something in the future, the design also makes specific references to tangible actions, a unified future, and a drive to holy war that Bessarion hoped to inspire. We can also appreciate how Bessarion may have recognized himself in the Italo-Byzantine reliquary, including when the object was in Gregory's possession. The recognition could have been mutual, since it is likely that Gregory also knew of Bessarion's coat of arms and conflated the reliquary with the cardinal himself.

Whatever the case, this is no question that in later decades the reliquary was part of Bessarion's self-presentation, resonating with the design of his coat arms and interest in

Crusade. Two related portraits, made posthumously, show this close connection. The early version is a painting by an anonymous sixteenth century painter from the Veneto that once hung in the Sala del'Albergo of the Scuola della Carità, near the reliquary (fig. 4.24). The painting was paid for by the brothers and shows Bessarion holding the Italo-Byzantine reliquary out in front of his body, wearing a white shirt. He is surrounded by a variety of attributes, including a red cardinal's hat (almost invisible on the wall behind him, to the right), a white bishop's miter, a staff surmounted by a Greek cross, and the reliquary, itself, which is half-turned between him and the viewer.

The Venetian portrait was eventually copied for the engraved frontispiece to Schioppalalba's dissertation, and in this image Bessarion's body and the processional handle of the reliquary become a vertical axis that runs through the coat of arms in the lower register (fig. 4.25). Bessarion holds the reliquary in a way that reminds the viewer of his coat of arms; the reliquary reflects his body and faces him; Bessarion looks like a Crusader, himself, in taking up the cross; he brandishes the reliquary as much as holds it; and the significance of the reliquary as a weapon returns via the outward facet of the cross of Eirene: "The demons fear this sign."

To fully appreciate the reliquary as a weapon, we also need to delve deeper into the use of reliquaries of the True Cross as battle standards that went ahead of Byzantine armies. These Byzantine palladia included powerful Passion relics as well as bodily fragments of militant saints like Demetrios, George, or Theodore, and were often brought out in simple caskets, processed, and packaged as amulets that were believed to act out on the battlefield, protect soldiers from harm, and heal devastating wounds.<sup>33</sup> In the enactment of holy war, shards of the True Cross were weaponized in the same way as icons of the Virgin Mary and

Christ, and given the declaration that God was on their side, Muslim armies would sometimes culminate a military victory with the ritual destruction of Christian images.<sup>34</sup>

### The Reliquary as a Diplomatic Tool

The visual entanglement of the reliquary and the design of Bessarion's coat of arms suggests that the object had great personal value to the cardinal. It is no surprise, then, that when Bessarion promised the object to the members of the Scuola della Carità in 1463 he included a stipulation that the object would stay with him till the end of his life (and he would only relinquish the object in 1472, a few months before his passing).<sup>35</sup> A key question, however, is why Bessarion was willing to sublimate his personal attachment to the object for the sake of the donation? And why did he give the reliquary to the scuola, specifically?

One answer lies in the history of Crusade in the fifteenth century, seen through the lens of a diplomatic legation that Bessarion undertook to Venice in the summer of 1463 (map 4.1). At that time, large portions of what had been the Byzantine Empire were controlled by the Ottomans, and Bessarion's mission to Venice from Pope Pius II (r. 1458–64) was to enlist the city's support for Crusade via a declaration of war against the Ottomans.<sup>36</sup> As noted in preceding chapters, Bessarion's trip to La Serenissima was necessitated by Mehmed's expansion through the Morea and related to the cardinal's attempts to grow support for Crusade at the Council of Mantua (1459) and during the legation to the imperial court of Frederick III in Vienna (1460–61), which were largely failures. As the Ottoman expansion continued, the kingdom of Trebizond also fell in 1461, news that was a great blow to someone who grew up in the region.

It was in this context that Bessarion undertook the legation to Venice, and when he arrived in the city on July 22, 1463 he was received by Cristoforo Moro on the city's great ceremonial barge, the Bucintoro.<sup>37</sup> Bessarion barely had time to settle into his lodgings in the monastery on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore before delivering a speech to the Grand Council the very next day. In his comments, Bessarion asked the members to refuse any alliance with the Turks and instead to join the pope in a Crusade to Greece. After several days of deliberation, the Senate decided to go to war.<sup>38</sup>

Bessarion remained in Venice for almost a year following the Council's decision, keeping an eye on the preparation of the Venetian fleet.<sup>39</sup> During Bessarion's extended stay in the city he was visited by Marco da Costa, the Grand Guardian of the Scuola della Carità, who made the cardinal a member of his confraternity.<sup>40</sup> Bessarion accepted and appears to have offered the Italo-Byzantine reliquary as a kind of thank you gift, with the contract overseen by the cardinal's secretary, Niccolò Perotti, and witnessed by three other cardinals.<sup>41</sup> The requirement that the reliquary would stay with Bessarion during his lifetime was guided by the cardinal's arrival in Venice just a few months after he was named Patriarch of Constantinople. But once again—why did the new patriarch give the reliquary of the patriarch-in-Rome to a lay organization in Venice?

Some help comes in considering the membership of the Scuola della Carità. Significantly, the members of the organization were not priests, cloistered or otherwise, and the group included some of the most powerful citizens of Venice.<sup>42</sup> The gift can thus be contextualized within Bessarion's larger strategy of material diplomacy and a desire to create an even stronger bond with a republic whose navy and colonies on the coasts of the Morea could be major forces in its reclamation.<sup>43</sup> Bessarion's strategy went beyond the Italo-

Byzantine reliquary, in fact, because his stay on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore from 1463–64 led to his promise to donate his entire collection of books to the brothers of the monastery—a commitment he revoked in 1468, when the books were promised to the library of San Marco, instead. Bessarion’s advocacy from 1463–64 was a series of transactions with Venetian officials, a give and take that was beneficial and dear to both parties. And the exchanges did not stop there, as the donation of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary and his books also relates to his induction as a member of Venice’s Major Council in 1461, a position that conferred on him all the benefits of a nobleman of Venice and his name being written in the *libro d’Oro*.

We should also pause, at this moment, to realize that the Italo-Byzantine reliquary and Bessarion’s books were promised to a Venetian confraternity and monastery, respectively, while the cardinal was on legation as a servant of the pope in Rome. The gifts are extraordinary and cannot be explained simply by his role as a papal diplomat who wished to ingratiate himself to the Venetians—in fact, the gifts are more about stepping out from the dictates of the pope than falling in line with Pius’ instructions.<sup>44</sup> However, the lavish generosity of the gifts may help explain why the reliquary and Bessarion’s books were promised to organizations that were, in some ways, peripheral to the authority of the doge. As a papal legate, there was a clear and present danger in giving the battle standard of the patriarch to the doge of Venice, especially given the city’s roots as an outpost of the Byzantine empire and its status as what Bessarion himself called “another Byzantium.”<sup>45</sup> In giving his treasures away in such a calculated manner, Bessarion deftly sidestepped a potential political quagmire. During his time in Europe, Bessarion constantly walked a tightrope of allegiance to the popes in Rome, the last emperors of Byzantium, and the successor states of Byzantium in places like the Morea and the kingdom of Trebizond, and



by giving the reliquary to the doge or his designated church Bessarion risked disturbing that delicate balance. The cardinal's donation of the reliquary to the Scuola della Carità was a careful diplomatic choice, not too close to the pope or the doge, and one that maximized the number of people who would be impacted by his gift.

Bessarion was good to his word and donated the reliquary to the scuola in 1472, about six months before his death in Ravenna. In a letter dated May 12, 1472, sent from Bologna, Bessarion ordered that the reliquary be moved to Venice, presumably after being fetched from his palazzo in Rome. When Bessarion composed the letter, he was on his way to France, and he may have realized that he would not return from another difficult journey over the Alps. In this regard, he was exactly right. The letter also suggests an important modification to the reliquary: sometime in the last thirteen years and since the gift from Gregory, Bessarion commissioned the addition of a silver processional pole.<sup>46</sup>

#### The Reliquary in a Ritual Array

Dating the addition of the silver processional pole is not easy, though it can be said to have taken place between Bessarion's initial promise to the Scuola della Carità in August 1463 and the cardinal's letter authorizing the transport of the reliquary in May 1472. Some help also comes from the dedication plaque on the back of the reliquary (fig. 4.26), which refers to Bessarion as "the bishop of Sabina, the cardinal of Nicaea, and the Patriarch of Constantinople" and names the recipient of the gift as the scuola of the Blessed Virgin in Venice.<sup>47</sup> The clue is in the titles given, since Bessarion received the appointment as Bishop of Sabina in 1449, relinquished it the next month to become the bishop of Tusculum, and finally reclaimed the affiliation on October 14, 1468—meaning that the dedicatory plaque

was added after this date.<sup>48</sup> Because of recent research by Rosella Lauber, we also know that plans for a dedicatory plaque are mentioned in a letter from Andrea dalla Siega, another grand guardian of the scuola, to Bessarion, dated July 6, 1472, with these additions likely made after the processional pole was added.<sup>49</sup>

Late interventions show the need for ranges and phases, once again, as the precise moment when Bessarion's intervention took place is difficult to determine. We can speculate, however, about Bessarion's addition in these ten years, especially since there is a tradition of reliquaries of the True Cross taking the form of tablets with no handles or handles on their sides, rather than a processional pole. Bessarion's addition looked to reinforce a certain, targeted meaning—namely, that the object should be processed as a battle standard—with this use captured in his posthumous portraits. On a deeper level, Bessarion's support for the addition of a silver handle gestures to a history of the Cross of Christ being used as battle standards, including by the Emperor Constantine. Put another way, the addition of the silver handle heightened the object's abilities and looked to ensure the reliquary's use as part of ritual array that could move an intended audience to action.

If we imagine the reliquary in the streets of Venice, we can also see how the final addition of silver revetment and precious jewels on top of oil paintings of Christ's Passion—possibly by Bessarion but more likely by the members of the Scuola della Carità—gave the object a dazzling impact (fig. 4.10). The revelatory aspects of the object were further heightened by a sliding lid showing the Crucifixion, itself, which forms a chiasmic relationship between the relics contained beneath the lid and the painted image (figs. 4.27 and 4.28). The lid of the reliquary was not one of Bessarion's interventions, as it relates, structurally, to Gregory III's decision to embed the cross of Eirene in the wooden tablet prior to 1459.

However, the lid did serve multiple functions that were played upon by Bessarion's addition of the silver handle in ca. 1463–72. The icon shows an image of Christ crucified on the Cross, with three Roman soldiers gambling over his purple robe, down below (fig. 4.29). The scene is historiated, meaning it represents a narrative related to the relics contained inside—simultaneously a preview and a history of those fragments.

By withholding and then revealing the relics, the kineticism of the shrine enacted a revelatory process. When the reliquary was in use, the painted panel represented an iconic image of Christ, until the moment the shutter was drawn away, from bottom to top, to reveal his presence on earth via the traces of his body. The lid also tells the story of the Cross when it was stained with Jesus' blood, at the moment it became sacred (and we see the blood trickling down the cross in the painting, flowing over Adam's skull in a cavity in the hill of Golgotha). Similarly, when the cover is removed, you see Constantine and Helena, and an evocation of the rediscovery of the Cross in the fourth century; and finally, the implication is that the history of the Cross is still being enacted, today, via the fragments on display within the reliquary.

### The Miraculous Object

The Scuola della Carità made the Italo-Byzantine reliquary uniquely visible to a Venetian audience, and in giving the precious object to the confraternity with a new processional handle Bessarion encouraged a purpose that was expressly public. We get some sense of the reliquary's use in a ritual array immediately following its donation, when it went on display on the high altar of the basilica of San Marco, with the Pala d'Oro as a magnificent backdrop.<sup>50</sup> After being highlighted in this way, the brothers carried the reliquary

to their scuola, where they would eventually place it in the tabernacle in the grand hall. The reliquary received heavy use out of this resting place, as attested by the abraded condition of Gentile Bellini's painting on the tabernacle door (where, in a telling detail, you can see the damage to the painting near the keyhole, now filled with putty).

### The Demilitarized Object

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary is yet another example of how Bessarion tried to use works of art from his collection to arouse military action. The significance of the reliquary to foster his view on Crusade is reflected in the still-visible tetragram on Eirene's cross, which could be held out as a weapon against demons, Gregory III's advocacy for union between the Churches, the historical use of crosses as weapons in the Byzantine world, and the visual attachment between the object and the militarism of the cardinal's coat of arms. The twist in the narrative, however, is what happened after Bessarion's legation to Venice in 1463–64, and after he gave the object away in 1472. Venice never went on a Crusade led by Pius II. While there was a commitment after Bessarion's speech to the Senate in 1463, and Venetians did gather at Ancona on the eastern coast of Italy in 1464, the operation was abandoned as soon as Pius died in that same year. Significantly, despite the object's long history of military significance—built up over a hundred years and several owners—such resonances were not shared, at least long term, by Bessarion's audience in Venice. Instead, the Italo-Byzantine reliquary soon came to be seen as a miraculous image of healing, rather than as a salutary sign for the need to take up the cross or a moral mandate to rescue Byzantine territories recently lost to the Ottomans.

While it would be easy to say so, the shift in the object's meaning was not primarily about an erosion of significance, an act of cultural translation or misunderstanding, or the distance or difference between the Greek peninsula and Italy—though some losses did take place when the object was transferred from hand to hand. Instead, changes in the meaning of the object were most powerfully brought about by local choices, including the desires of the brothers of the Scuola della Carità. By the 1470s the Venetians were already exhausted by the Crusade effort, and they made the decision to either consciously ignore—or merely show disinterest in—the reliquary's use as a weapon.

Throughout this chapter, I argued that Italo-Byzantine reliquary was imbued with Bessarion's persuasive speech, directed towards Venice's participation in Crusade. The reliquary was filled with diplomatic rhetoric, and as such was the material equivalent to a speech act that required cultural context. While Bessarion was skilled in material diplomacy, he was not unique in his ability to interpret the reliquary. The citizens of Venice also had the ability to see the reliquary as a weapon—and choose not to. Bessarion may have anticipated some difficulties in the object's translation into an Italian, Crusade-driven context, but he also counted on his own ability and the relics as powerful signs that would allow the work to be understood across cultures. While Bessarion used his donation of the reliquary to solidify a bond with one of his adopted cities, after his death he could not perform the same didactic role of shaping the object to his Crusade agenda.

## NOTES

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1. Knowledge of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary took a substantial leap forward with the gathering of scholars at the symposium for “La stauroteca di Bessarione,” an event organized by the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti from October 17–18, 2013. The volume that came out of those proceedings was Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto, eds., *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti, 2017). Other key sources on the reliquary of the True Cross in Venice include: Anthony Cutler, “From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine Artifacts,” in *Byzantium, Italy and the North: Papers on Cultural Relations* (London: Pindar Press, 2000), 281–86; Maria Georgopoulou, “Cover for the Staurotheke of Cardinal Bessarion,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 540–41; Holger Klein, “Die Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion: Bildrhetorik und Reliquienkult im Venedig des späten Mittelalters,” in *“Inter graecos latinissimus, inter Latinos graecissimus”: Bessarion zwischen den Kulturen*, eds. Claudia Märkl, Christian Kaiser, and Thomas Ricklin (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 245–76; Renato Polacco, “La storia del reliquiario Bessarione dopo il rinvenimento del verso della croce scomparsa,” *Saggi e memorie di storia dell’arte* 18 (1992): 85–95; and Renato Polacco, “La stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” in *Bessarione e l’Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994); 369–78.

2. The triple-barred cross can be traced to Byzantium based on inscriptions that appear along its edge, mentioning an “Eirene” (EIPHH) and a “Gregory *pneumatikos*,” or “Gregory the Spiritual [Father]” (ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΠΙΝ[EYNAT]ΙΚΟΥ). For detailed discussions of the textual program on the central cross: Andreas Rhoby, “The Textual Programme of the Cross of Bessarion’s Staurotheke and its Place within the Byzantine Tradition,” in *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, eds. Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti, 2017), 113–32; Peter Schreiner, “La croce della stauroteca all’epoca dei Paleologi,” in *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, eds. Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti, 2017), 102–5; Andreas Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst,” in *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst: nebst Addenda zu Band 1 “Byzantinische Epigramme auf Fresken und Mosaiken,”* eds. Wolfram Hörandner, Anneliese Paul, and Andreas Rhoby (Vienna: Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 248–51; and the transcriptions in Giovanni Battista Schioppalaba, *In perantiquam sacram tabulam Graecam insigni Sodalitio Sanctae Mariae Caritatis Venetiarum ab amplissimo Cardinali Bessarione dono datam dissertatio* (Venice: Modesti Fentii, 1767).

3. The life dates of Eirene Palaiologina are unclear, though at least one scholar suggests that she was born after the death of her uncle, the Byzantine Emperor Michael IX, around 1320, based on the date of her marriage to Matthew Kantakouzenos, despot of the Morea (r. 1380–83; m. 1341). For Eirene’s birth after 1320: Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme,” 249–50. For Eirene’s marriage to Matthew Kantakouzenos: Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 103. Matthew Kantakouzenos was born in ca. 1325 – d. 1391, reigned as Byzantine Emperor from 1354–57, was the one-time ruler of Thrace, and the eldest son of the Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1341–54) and Eirene Asenina Kantakouzene. Matthew was an active participant in the power struggle between John VI Kantakouzenos and his uncle, John V Kantakouzenos, for control of the Byzantine Empire, including serving as one of his father’s generals. Matthew had imperial aspirations, himself, and for a time he settled for the position as the ruler of Thrace and the city of Adrianople (Edirne). He was eventually crowned as Byzantine Emperor by his father in February 1354, with Eirene coronated in the church of the Virgin in Blachernai in Constantinople. Matthew’s position was temporary, however, as the civil war between John VI and John V was ongoing. After the end of the conflict and the rise of John V, Matthew’s influence was confined to the Morea. For more information on Matthew Kantakouzenos, including a family tree, see M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1968), 35–103, 108–22.

4. “Eirene Palaiologina [“Εἰρήνη... Παλαιολογίνα”], daughter of the brother of the emperor, decorates with silver the world wide venerated image of the cross, for the attainment of salvation, for the forgiveness of sins” (“Τὸν κοσμοπροσκύνητον στ(αυ)ρικὸν τύπον/ ἀργυροκοσμῆ ἀδελφοῦ βασιλέως/ Εἰρήνη θυγάτηρ Παλαιολογίνα/ σωτηρίας ἔντευξιν, λύτρον πταισμάτων.” Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 117.

5. The attachment between the fourteenth-century Empress Eirene Palaiologina and the cross in the Italo-Byzantine staurotheke is argued for in: Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 102–5. The attribution is anything but secure, however, as Maria Georgopoulou points out that components of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary have been linked to Byzantine Emperors Michael VIII (r. 1259–82), Michael IX (r. 1295–1320), John VIII (r. 1425–48), and Constantine XI (r. 1449–53). Georgopoulou, “Cover for the Staurotheke,” 540. Andreas Rhoby also has significant reservations about the connection to this Eirene, since it means that the “emperor” referred to in the donor inscription would be Michael IX, who died as early as 1320, likely before Eirene was even born. Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme,” 249–50. For a summary of opposing theories regarding which Eirene is referenced in the donor inscription: Cutler, “Loot to Scholarship,” 285, and note 133. Also Renato Polacco, who associates Eirene with the “nipote,” or niece, of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI, who was killed during the Siege of Constantinople. Polacco, “Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” 371.

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6. If the attachment to the fourteenth-century Empress Eirene Palaiologina is correct, then the inscription at the top of the cross could be a reference to the monk Gregory Palamas (b. ca. 1296, d. 1357/59). Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 100. Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 114. Peter Schreiner has, once again, done the important work of establishing Gregory Palamas as a contemporary of Eirene Palaiologina and separating him from the much later Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III Mammias. Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 105–6.
7. The fourteenth-century Gregory Palamas and the fifteenth-century Gregory Mammias should not be confused, though there is a tendency to do so, since both Gregory are involved in the object’s history. Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 105–6. Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme,” 248–50.
8. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 248.
9. The question of when the silver revetment over the oil paintings of Christ’s Passion, related inscriptions, and ornamentation over the icon of the Crucifixion will not be taken up, here, except to say that they are also likely Italian additions, added when the object was owned by Gregory III, Bessarion, or the Scuola della Carità. As Andreas Rhoby notes, the Greek inscriptions lack quality and have some mistakes. Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 116. This suggests, at least to the present author, that the revetment over the oil paintings and their related inscriptions not completed in Byzantium or Venetian Crete. For the most complete treatment of the revetment, see Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 245–76.
10. The narrow case that holds the Italo-Byzantine reliquary has its own embedded history, as it approximates the original placement of the object in a tabernacle commissioned by members of the Scuola della Carità, with a door painted by Gentile Bellini. The scuola building was repurposed as a museum following the suppressions of Napoleon Bonaparte in the early nineteenth century, and while the tabernacle was never used to display the reliquary, per se, it did contain the object when it wasn’t in use.
11. The restoration of the reliquary was a cooperation between the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice and l’Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence, with the project suggested by Peter Schreiner in 2010 and work beginning in March 2013. For this process, see the section on “Il restauro della stauroteca,” with contributions from Clarice Innocenti, Serena Bidorini, Mari Yanagishita, Andrea Cagnini, Monica Galeotti, Simone Porcinai, Alessandra Santagostino Barbone, and Francesca Bettini, in Klein, Schreiner, and Poletto, eds., *Stauroteca di Bessarione*, 43–95.
12. Bissera V. Pentsheva, “Cross, Tunic, Body: Theology through the Phenomenology of Light,” October 17, 2013, 56:33-1:27:00, symposium lecture at “La stauroteca di Bessarione: Restauro, provenienza, ambito culturale tra Costantinopoli e Venezia,” sponsored by the Gallerie dell’Accademia, Istituto Ellenico, and Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8YWVZmzTq8>; and Bissera V. Pentsheva, “Cross, Tunic, Body: Liturgy, Materiality, and the Phenomenology of Salvation,” *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, eds. Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti, 2017), 257–88.



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13. Pentsheva, “Cross, Tunic, Body,” 261–70.
  14. Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 122.
  15. Pentsheva, “Cross, Tunic, Body,” 270–77.
  16. Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 120.
  17. Idem.
  18. Ibid., 121.
  19. Pentsheva, “Cross, Tunic, Body,” 264.
  20. Schioppalalba, *Sacram tabulam Graecam*.
  21. “Τὸν κοσμοπροσκύνητον στ(αυ)ρικὸν τύπον/  
ἀργυροκοσμεῖ ἀδελφοῦ βασιλέως/  
Εἰρήνη θυγάτηρ Παλαιολογίνα/  
σωτηρίας ἔντευξιν, λύτρον πταισμάτων.”  
Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 117.
  22. Schioppalalba, *Sacram tabulam Graecam*, 10.
  23. Ibid., 58, 63.
  24. Schreiner, “Croce della stauroteca,” 109.
  25. Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), 371–72.
  26. Ibid., 372.
  27. These are Bessarion’s donation certificate to the members of the Scuola della Carità, authenticated on August 29, 1463, and Bessarion’s letter from May 12, 1472, likely sent from Bologna, authorizing the transfer of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary to Venice. Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione,” 56. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 248; and Polacco, “Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” 369.

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28. Referring to the tablet, oil paintings, and ornamentations around the “triple-barred Byzantine silver filigree cross,” Anthony Cutler writes: “This setting is almost certainly a Venetian addition.” Cutler, “Loot to Scholarship,” 281. If the tablet was produced in Italy, it had to have been made after 1451, when Gregory III immigrated from Constantinople and brought the cross of Eirene with him. For the date of Gregory’s arrival in Italy see Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme,” 249; and Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 113–32. Gregory died in 1459, which provides a limited range for changes to be made. Andreas Rhoby notes, very kindly, that “the engraver of the inscription [overtop the oil paintings] was obviously not the best and the inscription is certainly not a masterpiece of late Byzantine epigraphy.” Rhoby, “Textual Programme,” 116.

29. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 247. Polacco, “Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” 369.

30. For a summary of previous scholarship on these paintings, see Rhoby, “Byzantinische Epigramme,” 248–49. Renato Polacco also suggests that the paintings around the edge of the tablet were done by a Byzantine artist living in Venice or in Venetian Crete. Polacco, “Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” 369–78; and Polacco, “Storia del reliquiario Bessarione,” 85–95.

31. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 80–82.

32. Interpretations of the cross in action are rare, but those that do, such as Irving Lavin, emphasize the object’s role in a liturgical performance—meaning, how the cross is the focal point of a significant religious gesture and processed by two priests—and this can also be used to seek out the relevance of the coat of arms to Crusade in the fifteenth century. Irving Lavin, “Bonaventure, Bessarion and the Franciscan coat of arms,” in *Beyond the Text: Franciscan Art and the Construction of Religion*, eds. Xavier Seubert and Oleg Bychkov (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013), 228–31.

33. Jonathan Shepard, “Imperial Constantinople: Relics, Palaiologan Emperors, and the Resilience of the Exemplary Centre,” in *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150*, eds. Jonathan Harris, Catherine Holmes, and Eugenia Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61–92. Sophia Mergiali-Sahas, “An Ultimate Wealth for Inauspicious Times: Holy Relics in Rescue of Manuel II Palaeologus’ Reign,” *Byzantion* 76 (2006): 264–75. Sophia Mergiali-Sahas, “Byzantine Emperors and Holy Relics: Use, and Misuse, of Sanctity and Authority,” *JÖB* 51 (2001): 41–60. Robert S. Nelson, “‘And So, With the Help of God’: The Byzantine Art of War in the Tenth Century,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65: 169–92.

34. Bissera V. Pentsheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

35. The donation certificate to the members of the scuola was authenticated on August 29, 1463, with Niccolò Perotti present. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 248.

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36. Key sources on Bessarion's participation in the Venice include Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, vol. 1 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1923), 304–16; Henri Vast, *Le Cardinal Bessarion (1403–1472): Étude sur la Chrétienté et la Renaissance vers le Milieu du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1977), 255–80; and Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 245–76.
37. Bessarion arrived with the legation to Venice on July 22, 1463. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 245. Antonio Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio, or the Cardinal's last stay in Venice” *Lettera da San Giorgio (Fondazione Giorgio Cini)* 8, no. 12 (March–August 2015), 17.
38. Mariano Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia,” in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 50.
39. According to Antonio Rigo, Bessarion spent this time watching over the collection of the Venetian fleet and arguing for the ability of Jews to continue living in the ghettos of Venice and holdings on terra firma. Rigo also mentions that Bessarion “spoke out in favour of the Eastern Communities (Greeks and Slavs) in the lagoon, whose number had gradually swollen with the arrival of many refugees driven out by the Turkish advance.” Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio,” 17–18.
40. Rigo writes that the Grand Guardian of the scuola, Marco da Costa, made a special visit to the island of San Giorgio Maggiore to make Bessarion an honorary member. Bessarion filled the place of the recently deceased Cardinal Colonna. Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio,” 18.
41. Klein, “Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion,” 246–47.
42. At the promising ceremony on August 29, 1463, besides Niccolò Perotti, there was also Ulisse Aliotti, the Grand Guardian of the scuola, and the bishops Maffio Valaresso, Giovanni Barozzi, and Gerolamo Valaresso. Polacco, “Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione,” 369.
43. Bessarion's library was initially promised to the brothers of the monastery on the isola San Giorgio Maggiore in late 1463 or early 1464. Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio,” 18. Bessarion made a significant change in 1468 by promising his collection to the basilica of San Marco, as recorded in the famous letter addressed to the Venetian Senate, dated May 31, 1468. Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 145. The donation authorization was drawn up on May 14, 1468, at the baths of Viterbo. Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione,” 53–54. At the time, Bessarion also promised several reliquaries to Venice, the confanetto of the Martyrs of Trebizond among them. The books finally made their way to Venice by what Antonio Rigo calls “a long train of mules sometime between 1469 and 1474,” in 56 crates. Rigo, “Bessarion and San Giorgio,” 19.

44. The claim relates to John Barker's thoughts on Demetrios Kydones, Manuel Chrysoloras, and George Gemistos Plethon as examples of a "scholar-diplomat" or "emissary-diplomat" who traveled to Italy, and his argument that "the diplomatic activities of scholars then were as much a part of their stepping out of Byzantium as they were serving it." John W. Barker, "Emperors, Embassies and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy," in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 170.

45. The phrase "alterum Byzantium" comes from Bessarion's donation authorization of his books to library of San Marco to Doge Cristoforo Moro and the Venetian Senate, dated May 31, 1468, and cataloged in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. Lat. XIV 14 (=4235). The letter is partially transcribed and translated in Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity*, 145, with folio 1 reproduced. Also Martin Lowry, "Origins of St Mark's Library: Cardinal Bessarion's Gift, 1468," in *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1630*, eds. David Chambers, Brian Pullan, with Jennifer Fletcher (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 357–58.

46. The letter authorizing the transfer of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary, following promise of the object many years before, in 1463, was dated May 12, 1472 and likely sent from Bologna. Zorzi, "Vita del Bessarione," 56. Klein, "Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion," 248. Bessarion sent three agents to fetch the reliquary, presumably from Rome, and bring it to Venice: Giacomo Perleoni, Gualtiero Giustiniani, and Giacomo Sceba. Polacco, "Stauroteca del cardinal Bessarione," 369. Interestingly, Giacomo Perleoni would become a brother in the scuola in 1473. Rosella Lauber, "For a New Reading of Gentile Bellini's Panel Showing the Portrait of Bessarion in Prayer before the Stauroteca, with Two Brethren of the Scuola della Carità," in *Padua and Venice: Transcultural Exchange in the Early Modern Age*, eds. Brigit Blass-Simmen and Stefan Weppelmann (Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 72.

The key source on Bessarion's silver processional handle is the letter from the cardinal to the scuola from May 12, which mentions the addition. Klein, "Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion," 248. Lotte Labowky, "Per l'iconografia del cardinal Bessarione," in *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 287–94. Lauber, "For a New Reading of Gentile Bellini's Panel," 70. The addition can thus be placed sometime between August 29, 1463, when the object was promised to the scuola, and May 12, 1472, when Bessarion authorized the transfer.

47. "BESSARIO · EPISCOPVS · SABIN[ENSIS] · CAR[DINALIS] · NICAENVVS · PATRIARCHA · CONSTANTINOPOLITANVS · BEATAE · VIRGINI · MARIAE · SCHOLAE · CARITATIS VENETIIS." Klein, "Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion," 250.

48. For these appointments: Zorzi, "Vita del Bessarione," 45, 53–54.

49. Lauber, "For a New Reading of Gentile Bellini's Panel," 70.

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50. The procession of the reliquary through Venice and the ceremonies at San Marco and the church of Santa Trinita on June 7, 1472 are mentioned by Labowky, "Iconografia del cardinal Bessarione," 288–89; and Klein, "Staurothek Kardinal Bessarion," 248. The arrival of the reliquary in Venice is also described in a letter by Ulisse Aliotto, at that time still the Grand Guardian of the Scuola della Carita. Cutler, "Loot to Scholarship," 282.

*CHAPTER 5*

The Chapel of Bessarion and the Archangel Michael as the Protector of Christendom

Bessarion remained in Venice after his speech to the Senate in July 1463 and was at the coastal city of Ancona in the summer of 1464 (map. 5.1), when the cardinal met Pope Pius II to launch a Crusade to rescue the Morea from the Ottomans, who had by that time taken over large parts of the Greek peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The gathering at Ancona was preceded by about a year by the gift of a blessed sword from Pius to the recently-elected Doge Cristoforo Moro (r. 1462–71), as a sign of a hoped-for, common dedication to the Crusading effort (fig. 5.1). More immediate to the gathering at Ancona was a message from Pius to Bessarion, sent in May 1463, in which the pope invited the cardinal to meet him and the Christian fleet—now backed by the Venetian navy—at Ancona. Pius left Rome in mid-June and arrived in Ancona about a month later, in mid-July. He was dead a month later, on August 14, 1464, without ever leaving the Italian coast.<sup>2</sup>

The loss of their Christian commander put plans on hold, as Pius had been a motivating force for Crusade since before the Council of Mantua in 1459. Many church leaders had gathered at Ancona and now had to return to Rome to elect a new pope. The assembly at Ancona was as close as Bessarion would ever get to enabling a wide-scale Crusade to Byzantium. When the Venetian Pietro Barbo was elected as Pope Paul II (r. 1464–71), the cardinal was forced to shift his focus. There are signs that Bessarion's health wavered at this time, including the fact that he drafted a first will on February 17, 1464. Another would be drafted several years later, on April 10, 1467, and he took a trip to the healing baths at Viterbo in May 1468. In the first years of Paul's papacy he also made a series of personal decisions that amount to a turn inward, and a careful consideration of a redesigned chapel and tomb that could act as his eternal resting place in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome.<sup>3</sup>

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This chapter is an analysis of the frescoes that make up the decorative cycle of Bessarion's funerary chapel, completed by the Italian artist Antoniazio Romano and assistants in his workshop, including Melozzo da Forlì, beginning around 1464 and completed by 1467–68. I analyze the frescoes with an interest in their attachment to important events in the history of Crusade from the mid-1460s to the early 1470s, and according to Bessarion's sustained interest in the iconography of Saint Michael, Archangel. I place Bessarion's commission and artists' work on the frescoes devoted "apparitions," or appearances, of the archangel in Europe alongside one of the cardinal's most important textual works, the *Orationes ad principes Christianos contra Turcos*, or *Orationes to Christian Princes Against the Turks*, which was written in manuscript form prior to December 1470 and printed at the Sorbonne in Paris between April and the end of August 1471.<sup>4</sup> As in preceding chapters, I discuss the frescoes in the funerary chapel alongside a legation Bessarion undertook to France and the court of King Louis XI in 1472, and assess the urgency of the trip in light of the loss of the Venetian colony of Negroponte in July 1470 (map 5.2).

### The Chapel in the Church

While sources do not make for a precise chronology, Romano and the artists in his workshop likely worked on the frescoes in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome from about 1464 through 1467–68.<sup>5</sup> The chapel is located at the southeastern end of the church, at the rounded edge of the south transept, in a space that cuts into the wall of the adjacent palazzo (figs. 5.2 and 5.3).<sup>6</sup> Pope Eugenius IV (r. 1431–47) allocated the church and its attached residence to Bessarion in January 1440, shortly after the conclusion of the



scholar's role at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and his return to Constantinople at the end of 1439, likely the result of ongoing conversations and negotiations that took place at the ecumenical gathering.<sup>7</sup> Following a necessary return to the imperial capitol with the Byzantine delegation, Bessarion took about a year before immigrating to Italy in December 1440, with the Church of the Twelve Apostles becoming the seat of the cardinal's power in Rome.<sup>8</sup>

The granting of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles to Bessarion established an important, early bond between the cardinal and the Franciscan order in Italy, a community that had a long-standing commitment to Crusade. Bessarion's control of the basilica and of its neighboring palazzo was linked to the misfortunes of the Colonna family, who were rivals of Eugenius following his election after Pope Martin V (r. 1417–31), born Oddone Colonna. Members of Martin's family had refurbished the space and occupied it once the papacy returned to Rome after the end of the Great Schism, but when Eugenius was elected in 1431 he had the palazzo sacked and its current occupant, Cardinal Prospero Colonna, removed, excommunicated, and eventually replaced by Bessarion a decade later.<sup>9</sup>

The assignment of the church and palace to Bessarion ensured the upkeep of these buildings and solidified a new alliance between the cardinal and Eugenius. For Bessarion, the church was also meaningfully linked to the Apostoleion, or the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles, in Constantinople, which he had certainly visited during his time in the city.<sup>10</sup> The Byzantine church was founded by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, with the declared goal of collecting relics on site related to the twelve Apostles (as noted in Chapter 3, the Byzantine emperors eventually settled on relics of Saints Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, alongside the imperial cemetery). A similar adjustment in goals befell the Roman foundation,

which based on its name aspired to collect relics of all the apostles but was limited to the remains of James and Philip, brought from the East.<sup>11</sup> The connection between the sibling churches in Constantinople and Rome made the site a logical choice for the center of Bessarion's influence, with the decision taking on added significance after the destruction of the Byzantine church by the Ottomans in the early 1460s, a result of plans to build Mehmed II's Fatih Mosque on the same site as the church in Constantinople.<sup>12</sup>

Bessarion received permission to use the chapel as his funerary space with a papal bull from Pope Pius II, issued April 30, 1463, which was confirmed with another decree by his successor, Pope Paul II.<sup>13</sup> According to Carol Richardson, Bessarion laid out "the main elements to be included in the chapel's decoration" in his first will, drawn up during the latter part of the cardinal's legation to Venice and dated to February 1464.<sup>14</sup> The space is referred to as the "Cappelle sancti Angeli" in the first payment authorization from September 14, 1464, related to frescoes to be painted after Bessarion's return from the failed launch at Ancona.<sup>15</sup> Since plans for the chapel are also mentioned in Bessarion's second will from April 1467, scholars often place the completion of the cycle to this year or, more cautiously, the following.<sup>16</sup> According to Gregory Hedberg, work also proceeded in two related phases. In the first phase, beginning around 1464, the artists worked on the frescoes in the vault above the chapel, depicting Christ Enthroned surrounded by the heavenly host. In the second phase, they completed the lower scenes related to the apparitions of Saint Michael, Archangel and the life of John the Baptist (fig. 5.4).<sup>17</sup>

Bessarion's intervention in the chapel repurposed the space, as it already contained relics of Saints Claudia and her daughter, Eugenia of Alexandria, who were both martyred in Rome and had their relics in a porphyry tomb that is currently set in the rear wall of the

chapel, near the interior of the church. According to Bonaventura Malavasia's description of the chapel from his *Compendio storico della Ven. Basilica di Ss. Dodici Apostoli di Roma*, or accumulated history of the church from 1665, Bessarion's tomb was located on the right side of the chapel, on the same wall as the high altar and, many years later, next to a painted altarpiece of the Madonna of the Holy Conception, sometimes referred to as the "Bessarion Madonna" (fig. 5.5, with the drawing being a reconstruction of the chapel by Franco Adamo, with the only surviving portion of the chapel decoration from ca. 1464–68, marked; fig. 5.6 shows the oil painting of the Madonna in its current location in the Saint Bonaventure chapel of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Rome, near the entrance; the icon in the Chapel of the Holy Angels is a modern reproduction).<sup>18</sup>

The space of the Bessarion Chapel, itself, has an interesting history, as it was "lost" for over three hundred years, from the early eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The frescoes were visible around 1664/65, when Malavasia visited the church and wrote his *Compendio storico*, but the entire chapel was walled up in the first decades of the 1700s, during renovations to the church and the attached Palazzo Colonna.<sup>19</sup> The negative space between the church and the palazzo was then forgotten until 1959, when the chapel was rediscovered and sketched by the architect Clemente Busiri Vici (figs. 5.7 and 5.8).<sup>20</sup> Today the chapel is shallow space, no more than twenty feet deep, with a scaffolding to allow a better view of the work by Romano and his assistants.

### The Frescoes in the Chapel

Bessarion's goal in the 1460s was to refurbish the chapel with his own eternal well-being in mind, so he layered the site with additional dedications to his chosen saints,

specifically Saint John the Baptist and the archangel, Michael.<sup>21</sup> An affiliation with John was an interesting choice, as he became a kind of patron saint for Bessarion as a renowned preacher, messenger, and the first person to recognize Jesus as the Son of God.<sup>22</sup> Saint Michael was another interesting choice, as he was the commander of the heavenly army, the acknowledged enemy of the Anti-Christ, and is often depicted slaying a dragon. A pictorial cycle devoted to the apparitions of the Archangel was more rare in Italian and Byzantine art of the period, though examples do appear in Gothic and Franciscan contexts, as attested by the frescoes in the Velluti Chapel in the church of Santa Croce in Florence and related stained glass windows from the fourteenth century, now re-installed in the Bardi Chapel, which illustrated Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael's appearance to the Emperor Constantine.<sup>23</sup> As Meredith Gill notes, there was also an identifiable surge in the iconography of Michael in Rome in the fifteenth century, following the dedication of a chapel and statue at the top of the Castel Sant'Angelo by Pope Nicholas V in 1453.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, less can be said about the lost scenes related to the life of John the Baptist, which were damaged and eventually replaced with images related to the chapel's original commitment to Claudia and Eugenia (fig. 5.9).

#### *The First Apparition at Monte Tumba*

Like so many works associated with the cardinal, Bessarion's funerary site is a layered space that survives in the current church as a chapel-behind-a-chapel. A modern visit is a cramped experience due to the shallowness of the space, a dimension that also makes the works difficult to photograph (fig. 5.10). In the first fresco in the series, in the upper left of the decorative program, Romano depicts the apparition of Saint Michael on Monte Gargano, a promontory near the Italian city of the same name in Apulia (fig. 5.11 and map 5.3). The

scene draws from Jacobus de Voragine's account of Saint Michael in the *Golden Legend* from the thirteenth century, related to events that took place in 390 CE.<sup>25</sup> In that year, a rich man named Garganus—the eponyms are tight, here—allowed his cattle to graze on the slopes of Monte Gargano. According to Jacobus, "... it happened that one bull separated himself from the rest and climbed to the top of the mountain. When the herd came in and this bull's absence was discovered, the landowner mustered a band of his people to track it up the mountain trails, and they finally found the animal standing in the mouth of a cave at the top. The owner, annoyed at the bull for having wandered off alone, aimed a poisoned arrow at it, but the arrow came back, as if turned about by the wind, and struck the one who had launched it."<sup>26</sup>

Romano follows Jacobus' account closely, as the bull stands at the entrance to the cave, with a group of assailants, below (fig. 5.12). Immediately behind the mountain and to the right is the city of Gargano and beyond that, the coastal city of Siponto, with the façade of its duomo in silhouette (fig. 5.13; for the proximity of Monte Gargano and the main church of Siponto, a distance of little more than 10 miles, see map 5.3). Romano shows the band gathered by the rich man looking up at the summit, with most engaged in a similar set of activities, either bending a bow or setting a string, with a focus on a beautiful youth in a red cap (fig. 5.14). Next to the young man, at the center of the scene, is an archer in a blue shirt (fig. 5.15). This is the rich man, Garganus, and the main action of the scene belongs to him, as he has just loosed a poisoned arrow and had it returned, "as if turned about by the wind." As viewers, we understand that two moments are compounded into one. Garganus has just loosed the arrow, as shown by the slackened bow, and had it fly back on him, all at once. His surprise is communicated by his open right hand, with the palm turned outward in surprise, like the man next to him. In an elaboration of Jacobus' text, Romano also shows an

additional arrow, which flies down the slope of the mountain towards the man in the red tunic, who is helpless to avoid it.

Romano's style involves abstracting, elegant forms of violence, and an interest in the moment just before the poisoned arrows find their targets. He chooses this instant, as opposed to the next, when the leaders of the party will be struck, blood will be involved, and the men left to suffer the effects of their own poison. While Garganus' fate is partially obscured in the *Golden Legend* and Romano's fresco, the reader/ viewer presumes him dead based on his absence from the narrative, from this point. For his part, Jacobus merely writes that the return of the poisoned arrow "... dismayed the townsmen, and they went to the bishop and asked him what he thought of the strange occurrence. The bishop bound them to a three-day fast and admonished them to direct their questions to God. They did, and Saint Michael appeared to the bishop and said: 'Know that it was by my will that the man was struck by his arrow. I am the archangel Michael, and I have chosen to dwell in that place on earth and to keep it safe. I wished by that sign to indicate that I watch over the place and guard it.'"<sup>27</sup>

Michael speaks just a few words in his legend, directed to the bishop from the nearby city of Siponto. However, his lines carry weight in reinforcing the archangel's capability for violence: "*Know that it was by my will* [emphasis added] that the man was struck by his arrow." Significantly, the bull is not an avatar of Michael, like Zeus in Greek mythology, but the animal is under Michael's protection in a sacred space that is a kind of architectural *acheiropoieton*, or a shrine not-carved-by-human-hands. Romano's depiction of violence is subtle—withheld, for the most part—but the viewer understands that the archangel is present and dangerous, to the point of holding the power of life over death. Michael's ability

is especially potent because he is not threatened in the scene. Instead, the violence from Garganus' gang is directed at the bull who climbed the hill, has nowhere to go, and falls under the protection of the archangel.

The legend of the first apparition at Monte Gargano is the origin story for the Sanctuary of Saint Michael at the same site, the oldest space devoted to the archangel in Italy. The history of the site following Michael's invention is also recounted by Jacobus, who writes that the followers of the archangel could not bring themselves to enter the cave after recognizing the return of the poisoned arrow as a sign from the saint: "The bishop and the townspeople formed a procession and went to the cave, but, not presuming to enter, stood around the entrance, praying."<sup>28</sup> The townspeople thus show an abundance of caution, born of fear, and do not presume that the saint's promise to "watch over the place and guard it" means that they can enter, themselves—another sign that the fear of Michael is a key part of his veneration. While Romano's fresco of the apparition may not feature an image of Michael brandishing a sword or smiting a dragon, it is a representation, somewhat slant, of a saint who can act out in powerful ways.

#### *The Second Apparition at Mont Saint-Michel*

The next scene in Bessarion's funerary chapel, appearing in the upper right, shows the second apparition of Saint Michael at Monte Tumba, or Mont Saint-Michel, on the northern coast of France (fig. 5.16). Jacobus describes Michael's appearance in the *Golden Legend*, once again, in an episode "At a place close to the sea, called Tumba, about six miles from the city of Avranches" (map 5.4).<sup>29</sup> According to Jacobus, "Michael appeared to the bishop of the city [meaning Avranches] and ordered him to build a church at the

aforementioned place, at which church, as at Mount Gargano, the memory of Saint Michael the archangel was to be celebrated.”<sup>30</sup> A bull features in the story, once again: “When the bishop was uncertain about the exact place where the church should be built, the archangel instructed him to build at a spot where he would find that thieves had hidden a bull. The bishop also had doubts about how large the church should be, and was ordered to use as a measure the circuit marked by the bull’s hoofprints.”<sup>31</sup>

In Romano’s rendition, the bull appears at the top right of the now-fragmentary scene, at the summit of Mont Saint-Michel (fig. 5.17). The animal plants his hooves and looks towards a cross at the foot of the hill as a marker of the future location of the church, which is also near a boulder—one of two in the *Golden Legend*—that “was so massive that no human strength could move them” (fig. 5.18).<sup>32</sup> Romano’s work on fresco shows a detailed knowledge of place, as the figures in the associated procession gather on a sandy causeway, punctuated by seashells, that extends to the outcropping (fig. 5.19). As any modern visitor to Mont Saint-Michel will attest, this passage remains as a narrow strip between the coast and the monastery that is passable at low tide and flooded at high tide (map 5.5). The walled city in the fresco, in the distance, is not Mont Saint-Michel but the bishopric of Avranches, which features like the city of Siponto from the first apparition (fig. 5.20). The winding “road” between Mont Saint-Michel and Avranches, with its twists and turns, is the La Sée river (map 5.6).

These highly specific details suggest Romano’s debt to the *Golden Legend*, once again, but the specificities of the causeway and river go beyond an attachment to the text to a conscious and repeated need to show the particularities of an important site in France. If we study the fresco for what it reveals about unique localities, the careful representation of



scalloped seashells is more than novel and speaks to the experience of the site. In moving past the shells as attention-grabbing details, we can also identify the figure at the front of the procession as Bishop Aubert of Avranches, a church leader who lived in the eighth century and oversaw the foundation of the monastery at Mont Saint-Michel (fig. 5.21). The bishop offers a blessing with his right hand towards a portion of the fresco that is now lost, and the portrait may contain a flattering, embedded image of Louis XI of France (r. 1461–83) (fig. 22). Behind the possible portrait of the king are other participants in a celebration for the founding of the monastery, including several men holding lit tapers. The man in profile, in red, is Cardinal Francesco della Rovere—Bessarion’s long-time friend, the future Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–84), and the man who would send Bessarion on the legation to France in 1472 (fig. 5.23, with fig. 5.24 showing a slightly later painting by Romano’s assistant, Melozzo da Forlì, of Sixtus on his papal throne). Francesco’s young nephew, Giuliano della Rovere—who would become the fearsome Pope Julius II (r. 1503–13)—is shown next to his uncle in three-quarter view with his face partially obliterated (fig. 5.23, with fig. 5.24 showing Giuliano to the left, in cardinal’s robes).

*The Fourth Apparition: The Order of Angels*

The third, and possibly the most famous, apparition of Saint Michael was his appearance in Rome at the top of the Tomb of Hadrian, or what came to be known as the Castel Sant’Angelo. The appearance took place in the reign of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), and it is strange to note that there no indication that the scene was ever painted or planned for the funerary chapel. Just as striking is the patron’s decision to omit additional apparitions of the archangel, which involved a miraculous healing at Chonae (or modern Honaz, near the home of Paul’s Colossians) in western Anatolia and several appearances

near Constantinople, on the future site of the Michaelium.<sup>33</sup> Such references would seem close and obvious for Bessarion, and there is certainly a need for future analyses to speculate, further, on the cardinal's decision to split the chapel between iconography devoted to Michael and John, especially given the opportunity for a complete, five-scene cycle devoted to the apparitions.

In the meantime, we can note that the scene in the chapel vault corresponds to the fourth apparition of Saint Michael, within what is commonly referred to as the order of the angels (fig. 5.25). The ceiling is the most damaged of the works from ca. 1464–68, since the eighteenth-century wall cuts into the scene, substantially. However, even in its fragmentary state, the scene has a strong attachment to the celestial hierarchy as described in the *Golden Legend*. Unlike the first two scenes in the decorative cycle, where Michael appears at identifiable sites in Italy and France, the vault of the chapel is organized as a taxonomy devoted to the activities of the angels in heaven, earth, and the space between. All nine bands are visible in the abbreviated vault, with the artist arranging them in a concentric pattern around what was a mandorla containing an image of God the Father, with only the folds of his purple cloak visible in the extant fresco.

The iconography of the angels around God the Father are also sourced from the *Coelesti Hierarchia*, or *Celestial Hierarchy*, written by the neo-Platonic author Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the late fifth or early sixth century.<sup>34</sup> According to both Ps.-Dionysius and Jacobus—and, significantly, opposed to the opinions expressed by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, Question 108, “Of the Angelic Degrees of Hierarchies and Orders”—the angels are divided into three hierarchies with three orders, each, for a total of nine heavenly divisions.<sup>35</sup> The bands of the first hierarchy, Epiphany, appear closest to the Godhead, at his

feet (fig. 5.25). As described by Ps.-Dionysius and Jacobus and rendered by Romano, the members of first hierarchy, namely the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, have three sets of wings, as told in the book of Isaiah: “I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.”<sup>36</sup> These Seraphim, “whose name means a fire with love,” are the very closest to God, in a deep shade of red; the Cherubim are in blue; and the Thrones, appropriately, are in gold.<sup>37</sup>

The second hierarchy, the Hyperphany, begins with the fourth concentric band of the mandorla (fig. 5.26). According to Jacobus, the nature of the first division of the hierarchy “consists first in presiding or commanding, and this belongs to the order of Dominations, whose role it is to be at the head of those inferior to them, to direct them in all divine ministries, and to give them all necessary commands.”<sup>38</sup> In a beautiful detail, one member of the Dominations, clad in a green robe, gestures with authority with its right hand, as it rests a rod on its left shoulder. Another Domination appears just above it, and though damaged, enough remains to intuit a similar gesture, directed towards a member of the order in the next band. These are the Virtues, whose job “consists in the works to be done” and “for whom nothing that is commanded is impossible.”<sup>39</sup> The members of the third order, the Powers, appear in red with Resurrection flags, mutated versions of the Cross of Christ, the sign of Constantine (“in this sign, win”), and an adopted symbol of Crusade.

The role of the Powers “consists in getting rid of obstacles and resisting attacks,” so their standards go ahead of the soldiers that begin the third and final hierarchy, the Hypophany (fig. 5.27). These bands are the most abbreviated in the vault, due to damage,

but there is enough to identify the Principalities as the soldiers in full armor with maces, archangels with blond hair in yellow gowns, and angels holding personifications of individual naked, kneeling souls. While their “sphere of influence is fixed and limited,”<sup>40</sup> the orders of the Hypophany are uniquely engaged with human affairs, and Jacobus describes them according to an earthly and geographic imagination: the Principalities rule over a certain region; the archangels rule over a multitude of people; and the angels have “a single person placed in their charge.”<sup>41</sup>

Romano’s representation of the celestial hierarchy is relevant to Crusade, in many ways, as they constitute a heavenly army and a model for those on earth. They are also highly organized, with roles that are clearly delineated. The members of the second and third order, the Hyperphany and Hypophany, are said to make miraculous interventions on earth. The chain of command within the second class is particularly clear (fig. 5.26). As Jacobus writes, “The three orders in the middle hierarchy [the Hyperphany] are leaders and rulers over the universe of men as a whole.”<sup>42</sup> The Dominations command, direct, and preside.<sup>43</sup> The Virtues execute those commands, and their ability is miraculous, “because it is given to them to be able to rise above all difficulties encountered in the service of God.”<sup>44</sup> The Powers, as standard bearers, “are charged with driving off opposing powers,” something that makes them both active and protective.<sup>45</sup>

The abilities of the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers, with their generals and foot soldiers, would have been an encouragement to Bessarion in the late 1460s, specifically in his hopes for intervention against the Ottomans. As the writings of Ps.-Dionysius and Jacobus show, there was also an integral attachment between celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies, with these relations mirrored in Romano’s fresco through the connection between the order

of angels in the vault and the religious leaders who participate in the procession at the foot of Mont Saint-Michel. The French king, acting as a bishop, is at the head of this hierarchy as a sacred and secular leader, with some of the most important members of the della Rovere family just behind him, possessing their own power. The causeway is also filled with monks and clerics of various orders, including Franciscans, Benedictines (after the initial dedication for the monastery), and two men in elaborate copes featuring embroidered images of John the Evangelist and the Madonna and Child (fig. 5.28). In this case, the ecclesiastic ranks are in accord with monarch's power, reflecting Jacobus' statement that "This ordering and ranking of the angels can be understood by its similarity with the organization of a royal court."<sup>46</sup>

#### Bessarion's Sustained Interest in the Archangel

The funerary chapel of Bessarion is the most elaborate example of the cardinal's engagement with images of Saint Michael. However, it is only one instance of a sustained interest in the archangel in the 1460s. One sign of Bessarion's devotion is involved in his donation of seven portable mosaics to the church of St. Peter's between ca. 1462–67, objects that are mentioned in Giacomo Grimaldi's transcription of an inventory that was originally in the sacristy of the old church. While the locations of Bessarion's gifts are difficult to trace, one may be a miniature mosaic of Saint Theodore Teron (the "Recruit") made in Constantinople, likely in the fourteenth century, and now on display in the Vatican Museums (fig. 5.29).<sup>47</sup> Bessarion's two wills also reference objects to be left to the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles and Saint Peter's, respectively, with copies from later centuries containing references to vestments (*paramenti sacri*), altar cloths (*tovaglie per altare*),

chalices (calici), censors (turiboli), and mosaic icons (icone musive), including several images of the Virgin Mary and one of Saint Michael, Archangel.<sup>48</sup>

There are also additional images of Michael in Bessarion's collection, including an embossed plate on the Italo-Byzantine staurotheke in Venice (fig. 5.30) that is flanked by another repoussé panel featuring Gabriel. A similar arrangement is found on the gilded niello that Bessarion donated to the monastery of Fonte Avellana, now lost, with its appearance recorded in an extant engraving (fig. 5.31). A final representation may be the figure inscribed on the astrolabe that Regiomontanus gave to Bessarion in 1462, after both had returned to Rome from Vienna (fig. 5.32). The archangel appears on the back of the astrolabe and bears a marked similarity, in hairstyle and dress, to the celestials that would appear on Romano's vault a few years later. The presiding angel relates to the inscription on the scroll at the bottom of the astrolabe, which links the guardianship afforded by an angel or archangel to Bessarion's patronage in reading, "Under the protection of the divine Bessarion called Cardinal, I arise in Rome as the work of Johannes: -1462."<sup>49</sup>

#### The Warrior at Fonte Avellana

Another example of Bessarion's interest in images of Michael is a Byzantine embroidered silk, also from the treasury at Fonte Avellana, from the early fifteenth century that is often referred to as the "standard of Manuel Palaiologos" (fig. 5.33).<sup>50</sup> The silk is square, approximately two and a half feet wide, and may have been used as a *podea* to cover and hang below a Byzantine icon, with an image of Saint Michael being a possibility. The silk is a shade of crimson, with the artist using the tone to create a visual relation between the substrate and the famous red mantle of the archangel, which was an important relic at Monte

Gargano and, later, the abbey at Mont Saint-Michel.<sup>51</sup> The embroidered Byzantine silk was not commissioned, owned, or donated to the monastery of Fonte Avellana by Bessarion, though the cardinal was named a managing abbot, in commendam, by Pope Callixtus in 1456.<sup>52</sup> Records indicate that the Byzantine textile arrived in the treasury of the monastery sometime before 1425 and remained under the protection of the brothers of the Venerable Hermitage of the Holy Cross until 1915, when it was moved to the Museo Nazionale in Urbino.<sup>53</sup>

The monastery of Fonte Avellana is in the Marche region, not far from the southern border with Umbria and within twenty miles of Federico da Montefeltro's headquarters in Urbino. Unlike his duties as a papal legate, Bessarion did not have to relocate for a commendatory position, since such titles were given to fill a gap in leadership and, more commonly, as a financial benefit to their recipient. It is unclear if Bessarion ever visited the abbey, though he was with Federico and his sons in Urbino on at least two occasions, twenty years apart, in 1450 and 1472.<sup>54</sup> Regardless of Bessarion's physical presence, something needed to draw the cardinal's attention to the site, as he made a habit of altering his ecclesiastic appointments based on money, influence, and cultural opportunity.<sup>55</sup> In some ways, the affiliation does not fit within Bessarion's patterns of patronage, since it was Camaldolese (under the teachings of Saint Romuald) and outside the cardinal's more established contacts with the Franciscan and Basilian orders in Italy. However, the monastery was particularly rich and maintained a scriptorium—a major draw for a book collector. What has not been considered, to this point, is how the Byzantine silk and other Avellana treasures, recorded in inventories from 1425 and 1641, were an added attraction for Bessarion.<sup>56</sup>

The textile now in Urbino shows Saint Michael as a Byzantine soldier from the Palaiologan era. As with the micromosaic of Saint Theodore in the Vatican, the archangel wears a paludamentum (a cloak fastened at the shoulder and worn by military commanders), pteryges (a defensive skirt), guards himself with cuirass and shoulder pads, and has the capped hairstyle that is typical of so many militant saints of the period. There is also an empty scabbard at Michael's hip, since his pearl-lined sword is held aloft as a threat to his enemies and in defense of the supplicant at his feet, whose back is turned and utterly unprepared, himself, to rebuff an attack. Michael's eyes are turned in the direction enemies may come, with his wings outstretched and the longest pinions covering the man whose gaze is fixed on him. There is also a round disk under the archangel's boots, which may be the slab of marble he stood on at Mount Gargano, leaving his footprints. The contact relic is mentioned by Jacobus in the *Golden Legend*, when the author establishes a link between the mantle, the slab, and the major shrines in Europe. He writes, "When the church was built [at Mont Saint-Michel], they brought from Mount Gargano a cutting from the mantle Saint Michael had spread over the altar there and a slab of the marble on which he stood, and placed them in his new church."<sup>57</sup>

The kneeling figure is most often identified as Manuel nothos, the illegitimate son of the Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos (d. 1391), though he is not named in any of the inscriptions on the border or interior of the work.<sup>58</sup> Unlike Michael, who is equipped and ready for battle, Manuel appears as a member of the imperial household, with his neck, sleeves, and legs stitched with long threads of imperial purple.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, little is known about Manuel nothos, with the exception of a few references to him in *The Histories* of the fifteenth-century Byzantine scholar Laonikos Chalkokondyles. In his text,



Chalkokondyles alludes to a rivalry between Manuel nothos and his half-brother, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II (r. 1391–1425), with the proposed dynamic difficult to confirm through other sources.<sup>60</sup> The author does compliment Manuel nothos' military abilities, however, consistent with his title as a *droungarios* (roughly, an admiral) of the Byzantine navy.<sup>61</sup> Because of the object's association with a naval commander, the textile is often discussed as a literal battle flag, or *stendardo*, with more recent scholarship identifying it as an *encheirion* (a vestment worn over a bishop's tunic and attached to his belt so it hung over his legs) or, more commonly, a *podea*.<sup>62</sup>

The work of reidentifying and repurposing the textile has been done by Antonio Carile, Cecily Hilsdale, and Ivan Drpić, and their conclusions have moved interpreters away from the long-standing misidentification of the work. There is some value, however, in considering why the battle standard thesis endured for so long. There is Manuel nothos' role as a *droungarios*, of course, and secondary scholars apparently imagined the cloth flying from one of his masted ships (though, as Drpić writes, “its precious materials, format, iconography, and verse inscriptions militate against this identification”).<sup>63</sup> The Greek inscription, which runs around the edges and in lines in the interior of the textile, also reinforces a militant reading. The passage begins in Manuel's voice, who says:

As once Joshua, the son of Nun, falling on his knees threw himself at your feet, begging you [to grant him] power to subdue the hordes of foreign tribes, so I, your servant Manuel, son of the illustrious and thrice-blessed Eudokia, whose father was a kaisar, and whose mother was a purple-blossoming branch [i.e., imperial offspring], now I throw myself in a supplicatory manner at your feet and beseech you to protect me with your golden wings and deliver me in advance from every danger; be the protector and guardian of my soul and my body, as long as I live; and at the last and dreadful judgment may I find, thanks to you, the Lord merciful. For, since my mother's womb, I have been entrusted to you, O commander of the incorporeal ones.<sup>64</sup>

In the lines just above Manuel's head, the archangel responds: "My ear gave heed to your petition and I protect you with my own wings as my servant. With my sword I shall destroy your enemies."<sup>65</sup>

Additional research might determine the material pathway of the textile from Constantinople to Fonte Avellana in the early fifteenth century, shortly after its creation. Even without such useful information, a mention of the object in an inventory of the Avellana Treasures from 1425 means the object arrived decades before Bessarion became commendatory abbot of the institution in 1456. As with other objects discussed in these pages, including the reliquary head of Saint Andrew, the relation between Bessarion and the Byzantine textile is more about intersection than possession, and shows that the cardinal's artistic milieu was more extended than the objects he held in Rome. While Bessarion never acquired the textile at Fonte Avellana it was certainly under his protection, and this relation, even at a distance, contributes to a larger discussion of the cardinal, the archangel, and the context of Crusade.

#### Michael as a Protector

With these comparative works in mind, it is interesting that Michael's role as a celestial general is not what is emphasized, explicitly, in Romano's frescoes for the Chapel of Holy Angels. Michael is not represented at all, in fact. As discussed earlier, while a bull appears in multiple scenes, the animal is not an avatar, a proxy, or a shape-shifted image of the saint. While Michael could be one of the archangels with blond hair in an outer band of the celestial hierarchy in Romano's vault, there is no attempt to distinguish him from, say, Gabriel or Raphael. The lack of out-and-out militancy—with viable alternatives being

Michael slaying the dragon or just appearing in armor—seems a lost opportunity for Bessarion, similar to the decision to leave out the scene of the Castel Sant’Angelo, Michael at Chonae, or some allusion to the foundation near Constantinople, built by Constantine, known as the Michaelion. As viewers, we understand all the ways that Michael could be construed as militant, given his background in image and text. So why did Bessarion make choices, as the patron, to tamp down this significance? Why the focus on localities like Gargano, Siponto, Mont Saint-Michel, and Avranches, when he could show Michael with his sword drawn over Rome or Constantinople?

We should remember that Bessarion paid for the frescoes as the decoration for his funerary chapel and for the eternal benefit of his soul. Another facet of Michael’s significance was appropriate, in this regard, specifically the iconographic tradition of the showing the archangel weighing souls on scales, related to the duty of other archangels who watched over the Blessed Gate into Paradise (something that was important at the Expulsion from Eden and during the End Times). Bessarion certainly hoped for such passage at the end of his life, and we see this role referenced in the Urbino textile: “be the protector and guardian of my soul and my body, as long as I live; and at the last and dreadful judgment may I find, thanks to you, the Lord merciful.” There is also the broader purpose of Michael as a kind of patron saint for Bessarion, alongside John the Baptist. Not a name saint—since he was baptized under the name Basil and took the monastic name, Bessarion—but certainly a chosen saint, relevant to his own move from Byzantium to Europe.<sup>66</sup>

Michael held multiple roles as a participant in military offensives, a guardian, and a protector of souls, with the first two emphasized in the few references to him in the Bible. For example, in the book of Daniel 12:1, in relation to the End Times, we read: “At that

time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is written in the book—will be delivered.” Another example appears in Revelation 12:7, which flips the Christian timeline by referencing the expulsion of the angel, Lucifer: “Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

Michael thus enjoys a “threefold victory”: the first, when he cast Satan and his followers down from Heaven; the second, the victory “that the angels win over the demons every day”; and the third, his future defeat of the Antichrist on Mount Olivet.<sup>67</sup> Michael’s guardianship is also emphasized during the Last Judgement, and Jacobus glosses Daniel in writing that “in the time of the Antichrist Michael will rise up and stand forth as defender and protector of the elect.”<sup>68</sup> In moving from the notion of guardianship to Michael’s role as the greatest Christian soldier, Jacobus also says that “He is held to be Christ’s standard-bearer among the battalions of the holy angels. At the Lord’s command he will kill the Antichrist with great power.”<sup>69</sup>

Like comparative images of Saint Michael, Biblical passages emphasize the archangel as a soldier, meaning that the significance of the frescoes in Bessarion’s funerary chapel is somewhat slant in holding the saint’s militancy alongside a more personal deployment by Bessarion. We can also note that the unexpected aspects of Romano’s cycle matches the withholding of the saint, himself, who haunts his own decorative cycle (or at least what

survives of it).<sup>70</sup> Instead, we understand that the saint is present in Europe through his absence and in significant acts of guardianship, both in saving the bull from the poisoned arrow at Monte Gargano and helping the French bishop identify the future site of the saint's sanctuary at Mont Saint-Michel via his hoofprints.

The fittingly titled “apparitions” of Saint Michael are thus representations of the archangel from a distance, with an intense, local interest focused on place and his architectural imprint in Europe. Romano's frescoes offer a built imagination, wherein the legend of the saint explains the presence of important sanctuaries in Italy and France and, in so doing, links the sites. The archangel designated these sites through his protection of two bulls and named each site as sacred, without any former architectural presence or actions to speak of. The notion of an architectural imprint becomes particularly important when we remember the bull-turned-surveyor and the marble slab that Michael stood on at Monte Gargano—proof of presence, even if their makers were not seen, after the fact. The index of Michael was kept in the underground chapel at Gargano until the founding of Mont Saint-Michel, when fragments of the slab and his mantle consecrated the new site in France.<sup>71</sup> As Glenn Peers notes in his own study of angels in the Byzantine world, all of these techniques are in keeping with a demonstrated avoidance of Michael's image, amounting to an apparition within the apparitions.<sup>72</sup> For his part, Romano shows Michael just beyond representation, sublimated into relevant sites.

#### Bessarion's Chapel in the Context of Crusade: Three Sources

In the introduction to his account of Michael in the *Golden Legend*, Jacobus writes, “Michael is interpreted as meaning ‘Who is like God?’ [Quis ut Deus] and it is said that when

something requiring wondrous powers is to be done, Michael is sent, so that from his name and by his action it is given to be understood that no one can do what God alone can do.”<sup>73</sup> The passage involves credit-taking, or the lack, thereof—Michael is God’s legatus a latere and does the impossible so no one can claim they did it, themselves. The role of emissary was more than familiar to Bessarion, and Michael’s role as an agent of God pertains to the lost frescoes of another prototypical messenger, John the Baptist.

Romano’s work on the frescoes on Bessarion’s behalf came at a critical moment after the death of the cardinal’s most important ally, Pius II, and during the reign of Paul II, who showed considerably less interest in Crusade. From 1464 to 1468, Bessarion and others in Christendom believed that they were living in the End Times, given the Ottoman’s success in Constantinople, the loss of the kingdom of Trebizond, and the takeover of the Morea—and hoped that Michael would arrive to slay the serpent, Mehmed, very soon.<sup>74</sup>

Another major event in the history of Crusade, one that contributed to a growing sense of panic in the papal states, was the fall of the Venetian colony of Negroponte, on the southeastern coast of the Greek mainland, on July 12, 1470, with news reaching Bessarion about three weeks later, on August 4 (map 5.7).<sup>75</sup> As Dan Ioan Mureșan notes in his excellent summary of Bessarion’s *Orationes to Christian Princes Against the Turks*, Negroponte was the de facto seat of the Latin patriarchy after 1453, a position Bessarion had assumed, at least in name, since the death of Isidore of Kiev in 1463. Beyond Negroponte’s personal value to Bessarion, the inability to hold the Venetian colony was a severe blow for Christian forces, since the outcropping was maintained as a barrier to westward expansion. Among other trade benefits, a Venetian presence on the eastern coast of Greece kept the Ottomans from sailing around the tip of the peninsula to Italy, with the most accessible landing points

being Otranto, Brindisi, Siponto, and Ancona.<sup>76</sup>

The defeat at Negroponte led to some response from the leaders of Italy, including the formation of *la lega generale* against the Ottomans.<sup>77</sup> Despite the promises that were made, the pope's alliance proved ineffective, once again, when measured according to the number of troops launched or the effectiveness of a new military campaign. The Crusading effort had not recovered from Pius' death in 1464, even by 1470, since his successor, Paul, had shown so little interest in Crusade. One exception to Paul's inaction was his appointment of a special commission for crusading affairs led by Bessarion, the French Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville, and the Spaniard Juan de Carvajal at the beginning of his papacy. The small committee managed the *depositeria della crociata*—essentially, the checking account for Crusade—beginning in 1465, with the members having control over the tangible means that could bring success against the Ottomans.

#### *The First Olynthiac Oration*

A key source from this period, and one that should be read alongside Romano's work in the chapel, is Bessarion's translation of the first Olynthiac oration by the Greek statesman Demosthenes. The cardinal completed the work shortly after the fall of Negroponte, having acquired a copy of the Greek text from the Italian book collector Giovanni Aurispa years before.<sup>78</sup> Bessarion made the translation into Latin, with his interest based on typological connections to the fifteenth century. The orator and author, Demosthenes, wrote the speech in the fourth century BCE, and in it he describes the threat posed by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who built a professional army to conquer the Greek city-states.<sup>79</sup>

In his message to the Athenians, Demosthenes pushes for a unified action against the Macedonians, saying, “The present crisis... calls on you, almost with an audible voice, to take into your own hands the control of your interests in the North, if you are really anxious to safeguard them.”<sup>80</sup> These “interests in the North” are the residents of the city of Olynthus, up the Aegean coast and much closer to the Macedonian frontier, about to be swept aside by Philip’s army (map 5.7). Demosthenes’ message is a response to Philip and a call to launch two coordinated expeditions: the first to rescue Olynthus, and the second to attack the heart of Philip’s territory in Macedon.<sup>81</sup> It is also a fundraising campaign, as Demosthenes remarks that the Athenians have plenty of money but “appropriate it yourselves, to suit your own pleasure.”<sup>82</sup> As he says, “Only money we must have, and without money nothing can be done that ought to be done.”<sup>83</sup>

Demosthenes’ exhortation to the leaders of Athens was a useful template for Bessarion, and as its translator he fuses his own voice with Demosthenes’ to create a persuasive tract for Crusade in the fifteenth century. The cardinal’s translation is yet another example of a strategy of conflation in Bessarion’s world, seen in the layering of personalities and sites in the frontispiece to Ptolemy’s *Geography*, his call to violence through the reliquary head of Saint Andrew, and most recently the portraits of Louis XI, Francesco della Rovere, and Giuliano della Rovere in his funerary chapel. Since the oration by Demosthenes comes in the first person, those familiar with Bessarion’s work would have layered ancient and contemporary voices, especially given that the orator’s opinion on Philip was as clear as Bessarion’s on Mehmed: “My own idea would be to vote an expedition at once, to make instant preparations for its dispatch...”<sup>84</sup> Otherwise, Philip-Mehmed will certainly “wrest from us something of vital importance.”<sup>85</sup>



The equivalents between past and present are easy, even heavy-handed. Bessarion gives Demosthenes a voice in Latin; Phillip is the sultan, Mehmed, who sweeps down from the north to take control of Greece; the republics, empires, and kingdoms of Byzantium and Italy are the ancient city-states; and the fifteenth-century Romans are the fourth-century Athenians. In both instances, the battleground is the eastern coast of the Greek mainland, leading to Athens, leading to the Morea. As Bessarion-as-Demosthenes writes, the stakes are not just Olynthus and Athens, but the Greek and Italian peninsulas: “It is therefore our duty, men of Athens, to keep a careful eye on the future... if we leave these men too in the lurch, Athenians, and then Olynthus is crushed by Philip, tell me what is to prevent him from marching henceforward just where he pleases... Seriously, is anyone here so foolish as not to see that our negligence will transfer the war from Chalcidice to Attica.”<sup>86</sup>

*The Letter to Abbot Bessarion*

Another important source from after the fall of Negroponte in July is Bessarion’s letter to a churchman of the same name, Abbot Bessarion of San Severino, addressed August 5, 1470.<sup>87</sup> Abbot Bessarion was in charge of a monastic community a few days south of Naples, a region that had a large Greek population, under immediate threat, and likely one of the first to be taken if Mehmed launched an invasion into southern Italy. In his letter, Cardinal Bessarion offers a brutal assessment of the state of Christendom. In a passage translated by Margaret Meserve, Bessarion writes, “The Turkish navy will soon be at Brindisi, then Naples, then Rome. With the Venetians defeated, they rule the seas as they do the land.”<sup>88</sup> The cardinal offers a grim picture of the Ottoman advance from coast to coast in southern Italy, in the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian, and his dissolution comes as some surprise: “Perhaps I should leave this problem to the states of Italy, just as they have

abandoned me. I called from the watchtower [like the Old Testament prophets Habakkuk, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, leading to John the Baptist], but they turned a deaf ear. I preached, I showed them precisely the danger in which they lay! But nothing I've done — either as a monk or as a cardinal — has had the slightest effect.”<sup>89</sup>

Bessarion's comments are an indictment of all his efforts in Byzantium and Italy, and he is more than discouraged in suggesting he might end all of his Crusading efforts and let Italy be overrun. The letter is more than a rumination for an audience of one, since Bessarion distributed hand-copied versions of the letter to people other than Abbot Bessarion. In this case, the willingness to walk away—to say, “Look! I'm going now”—is a rhetorical strategy that reflects the cardinal's exhaustion and frustration after 1464. Bessarion was in his mid-sixties at the time of writing, possibly in poor health, and the letter is a frank expression of being ignored by those in power, even in the face of a continual Ottoman threat.<sup>90</sup> If the letter feels personal, there is also a performance taking place. With some drama, Bessarion figures himself as the lonely guard of the citadel who looks out for the enemy only to be ignored when they approach: “I should leave the pope to look after his own affairs and defend the papal state... I should leave the king of Sicily to the care and defense of his kingdom... Let Florence, Genoa, Venice, and Milan look to themselves for salvation. The enemy will overrun the entire realm. He will make his way easily to Rome. Woe to Italy, to Christians everywhere, woe to these purblind men!”<sup>91</sup>

*The Orations to Christian Princes Against the Turks*

A final source related to the completion of Romano's frescoes is Bessarion's *Orationes ad principes Christianos contra Turcos*, or *Orations to Christian Princes Against the Turks*, a work he

was prepared to write based on a lifetime of experience and pursued, in earnest, until copies were produced on the printing press at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1471. In its original arrangement, in manuscript form, the contents of the *Orations* included a preface and epilogue addressed to Pope Paul II, two new speeches by Bessarion on the topic of Crusade, and the cardinal's Greek-to-Latin translation of Demosthenes.<sup>92</sup> In the first oration on Crusade, Bessarion summarized the threat posed by Mehmed, as Demosthenes did for Phillip. In the second, the cardinal stressed the need for unity between the Italian states if they were going to defeat the Ottomans.<sup>93</sup> According to Meserve, hand-written copies of the *Orations* were initially passed, hand-to-hand, to ambassadors-in-residence in Rome.<sup>94</sup> Like other sources from the period, Bessarion picked up his work on the *Orations* with increased energy after the fall of Negroponte, with the latest possible date for its completion determined by a letter and package with the completed manuscript sent from Bessarion to Guillaume Fichet (d. ca. 1480), the rector of the University of Paris, on December 13, 1470.<sup>95</sup>

Bessarion's letter to Fichet is now available in print, since it was also included in the first French printing of the *Orations* between April and August 1471. The note was one message within a larger set of correspondence between Bessarion and Fichet leading up to the cardinal's legation to France, with the editio princeps produced at least a year prior to Bessarion's arrival at the court of King Louis XI on August 23, 1472. The effort to turn Bessarion's manuscript into a printed book was overseen by Fichet and undertaken by Ulrich Gering, Michael Friburger, and Martin Crantz as the *Epistolae et orationes contra Turcos*, or the *Letters and Orations Against the Turks*.<sup>96</sup>

The adjustment in the title—not just the *Orations*, but the *Letters and Orations*—is due to the addition of the message from Cardinal Bessarion to Abbot Bessarion in August 1470, from Bessarion to Fichet in December 1470, and an additional, undated letter from the cardinal to Christian princes.<sup>97</sup> These materials were all sent to Fichet prior to Bessarion's arrival in France, but it is interesting to note that the cardinal never asked the rector to produce a printed volume, explicitly. As Meserve notes, "... he was surprised and delighted to hear of his [Fichet's] efforts on his behalf."<sup>98</sup>

Only twenty copies of the *Letters and Orations* survive, today, out of an initial run of less than 120.<sup>99</sup> To tailor the books, Fichet wrote dedicatory prefaces to some of the recipients of the text, both manuscripts and incunabula. Based on this practice, we know that the first volume produced in Paris was given to Cardinal Jean Rolin, a chancellor of Burgundy and the son of Nicholas Rolin, depicted in the famous oil painting by Jan van Eyck.<sup>100</sup> Since the copy is now lost, it is unclear whether the version was an incunabulum or produced entirely by hand as a deluxe manuscript.<sup>101</sup> Rolin likely received the honor because he was an important patron of Fichet's, and someone with an interest in rallying support for Crusade in France.<sup>102</sup>

The second copy of the *Letters and Orations* went to Louis XI, with the book delivered by Fichet, personally.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, that copy is also lost, but its appearance and arrangement may be gleaned from a version presented to King Edward IV of England (r. 1461–70, 1471–83) and preserved in the Vatican Library (fig. 5.34).<sup>104</sup> As with other extant versions made for the most elevated clientele, the version for Edward is printed on vellum with a full-page illumination on the first folio. The incunabulum includes a salutation from Fichet to King "Eduardo," with the illumination on the frontispiece showing a personal

interaction that did not take place.<sup>105</sup> In the image, Fichet kneels at the foot of the royal dais between Edward and Bessarion, who presents the scholar to the king with a subtle, supportive gesture on the small of his back. The volume in Fichet's hands is shown with a tooled cover and clasps and appropriately small, as a quarto with forty leaves.<sup>106</sup> While the book is Bessarion's, the illumination foregrounds Fichet.<sup>107</sup>

There is another source that helps us draw closer to the copy of the *Letters and Orations* given to King Louis. It is also drawn from the correspondence between Fichet and Bessarion, specifically a letter from the rector to the cardinal dated March 21, 1472.<sup>108</sup> The message contains a few details on the appearance of Louis' volume, including how it was done on vellum with a large illumination on the first page.<sup>109</sup> The description of Fichet's presentation to the French king is more extensive. The scholar writes that during his audience with Louis:

I presented your orations, which I had prepared elaborately as I could, to the king, and I spoke to a few people both about the need for concord among the Christian princes and the project of a war against the enemies of the cross, and I omitted nothing which should have been said to the king in your name. He took the book with an agreeable expression and for a short while read the little preface which I wrote at the start of your work. Then, turning the parchment pages, he looked closely at the paintings and figures scattered in the margins. Next, he read almost all the glosses to the Demosthenes orations (which you yourself had provided), for they had been inserted into the text in gold and various colours. While he read he asked me some questions to which I gave a ready reply. Finally, he returned to the beginning of the book and read three or four times the distich which he found at the foot of the painting in which he himself appeared:

Fausta futura tibi, Rex, accipe Bessarionis  
munera, quae tibi prosint et foris atque domi

[Oh king, receive from Bessarion this gift which will be a happy augury for  
your undertakings at home and abroad.]

One of the secretaries who was present then took the book away for safekeeping."<sup>110</sup>

Fichet's interaction with the French king would appear to have gone well, until the scholar concludes on a dour note: "To speak the truth, the king uttered not one word about peace at home or the need for war abroad."<sup>111</sup>

Each of the sources described above speak to Bessarion's advocacy for Crusade during an intense period of work in 1470, following the loss of Negroponte and anticipating the cardinal's legation to France. In these works, we see Bessarion looking to codify and distribute his efforts for Crusade in manuscript and printed form, with these productions magnified by Fichet's use of the printing press. The intense effort of 1470–71 was meaningfully preceded by the development of Bessarion's funerary frescoes, and we can understand how Italy and France were entwined based on Romano's representation of Mont Saint-Michael and the embedded portrait of Louis XI, which look forward to Bessarion's final papal legation and the end of his life.

### The Legation to France

Bessarion received his appointment to France, alongside Burgundy and England, in December 1471.<sup>112</sup> The appointment was undoubtedly inspired by the loss of Negroponte, but it took the death of Paul II and the election of Francesco della Rovere as Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–84) in July to bring the mission about. The legation to France was a long time coming, as it relates to resolutions from the Council of Mantua (1459) over a decade earlier and shows Bessarion's continued commitment to Crusade, despite his comments to Abbott Bessarion. The legation to France was also an important sequel to the unsuccessful legation to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III in 1460–61. To explain the gap between legations, we should realize that Bessarion had almost realized his goal in 1464, only to see

the mission crumble on the beach at Ancona. Following Pius' death, Bessarion may have hoped for his own ascendancy to the papacy with help from the Venetians—and was foiled in that regard, as well. He was also stymied from going north by concerns in France, specifically the ongoing tension between Louis XI and Charles the Bold.<sup>113</sup> To state the obvious, France was a long way from Italy, and Bessarion had to measure the value in traveling over eight hundred miles to reinforce the message of the *Orations* in person. The journey required another difficult traverse, in this case approaching the Alps from Turin and the Susa Valley. Having reached the foothills, the legation would have to climb from just above sea level to a mountain pass at over 7000', looking at surrounding peaks over 12,000'. Work on his funerary chapel suggests the cardinal was aware of his advanced age, and he had already prepared two wills. He decided to undertake the journey, nevertheless.

The legation to France left Rome on April 20, 1472 (map 5.8). The itinerary suited Bessarion, as they went first to Urbino so he could bless Guidobaldo, the young son of Federico da Montefeltro, and on to Bologna, where he made preparations for the exile Zoe (later Sophia) Palaiologina, the daughter of Thomas Palaiologos, to marry prince Ivan of Moscow. The party then turned north and west, moving quickly through the cities of Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma, Piacenza, and Pavia. After another quick stop in Milan on May 22, the party passed through Novara and arrived in Chivasso on May 28.<sup>114</sup> At that point, the party had been on the road for over a month, and the most difficult portion was still ahead of them. The party would make their way from Chivasso through the Susa Valley, towards the mountains, and climb over 6,000' to Mont Cenis, or Moncenisio. There is a twenty-three-day gap between the party's presence in Chivasso and their arrival in the French city of Lyon on June 20, suggesting it took about two weeks to complete the hundred-mile journey through the mountains. About a month later, on August 23–24,

Bessarion was finally with Louis XI at Château-Gontier.

The meeting with the French king was meant to be the culmination of Romano's frescoes in Bessarion's funerary chapel. By embedding the king's portrait in the historical figure, Bishop Aubert of Avranches, Louis became a willing servant of Saint Michael, someone who would act according to a mandate to launch a Crusade to the Byzantine world. The inclusion of Francesco della Rovere—prior to his election as pope in 1471—also proved prophetic, as Sixtus sent Bessarion to Louis. There was room for optimism when it came to the bond between Bessarion and Sixtus, since Francesco had an attachment to the cardinal's informal academy going back to their shared travels to Bologna in 1450 and their common role as protectors of the Franciscan order.<sup>115</sup> In placing Giuliano della Rovere in the scene, as well, Romano and Bessarion placed Louis in front of some of the most important Italian decision-makers, in the hope that they could work together for the sake of Crusade.

The frescoes were not meant for Louis, but they were certainly about an alliance between Italian leaders and the monarchy. And just as Bessarion had a sustained interest in images in Saint Michael, Archangel, there were indications that Louis might be similarly inclined, given his founding of the chivalric Order of Saint Michael on August 1, 1469. If we return to the profile portrait of King Louis XI by an unknown French artist from ca. 1470 (fig. 5.22), we see him wearing the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel, with its scalloped seashells resembling those in the causeway in Romano's painting (fig. 5.19, respectively). The order of Saint Michael was an association of knights built on the tradition of militant orders from the early Crusades, with the members from the fifteenth century drawn from the French nobility. The foundation of the order occupies an interesting, unexplained place



between the completion of the frescoes (ca. 1464–68), Louis' creation of the order (1469), and Bessarion's legation to France (1472), and even if we cannot resolve the connection, at this moment, we understand how Louis' interest in Saint Michael would have encouraged Bessarion.

The most striking aspect of Bessarion's legation, with all its build up and preparation, is that the cardinal only spent two days at Château-Gontier. Having made an extraordinarily long trip, the legation turned around, very quickly, to return to Rome (map 5.9). After crossing over the Alps, the legation stayed further north than they had, previously, moving from Turin to the nearby towns of Casale and Vercelli and onto Ferrara and finally Ravenna. The group needed an entire month to travel from Susa to this stopping point. By the time the legation arrived in Ravenna at the end of October, Bessarion was very ill. He took up residence with the governor, Antonio Dandolo, and died on the night of November 17 or the following morning.<sup>116</sup> On December 3, Bessarion's remains were transported to Rome and laid to rest in the tomb in his funerary chapel.<sup>117</sup> Pope Sixtus IV attended the funeral and would have seen his own image in the fresco of Mont Saint-Michel.

The end of Bessarion's life is, admittedly, anticlimactic. In building a narrative in this chapter from the frescoes in Bessarion's funerary chapel to an intense period of writing on the Crusade to his legation to France, there is a sense of momentum—one that is wiped away by Bessarion's arrival at Château-Gontier and the few moments he had to make his case to the French king. There is a marked self-awareness in Bessarion's activities in the 1470s, related to the need to advocate for Crusade from afar with the help of the printing press. The appointment from Sixtus IV to France, Burgundy and England was an exception to Bessarion's new, second-hand approach, and the undertaking came apart even more

spectacularly than the legation to the northern territories in 1460–61. Whether through sickness or a myriad of other obstacles, we see Bessarion's legation traversing 1,500 miles and incredible elevations for a few moments with the French king.

## NOTES

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1. Details of events in the history of Crusade in the Morea in 1463 are summarized by Mariano Zorzi, who notes how Venetian ground troops landed at Modon (Methoni), on the southwestern tip of the peninsula, in August 1463, moved north to Argos, and finally drove the Ottomans to the fortress and strait of Corinth, near the mainland of Greece. The Ottomans fortified their position, from this point, including rebuilding portions of the ancient Hexamilion wall. Bertoldo d'Este, the commander of Venetian ground troops, attacked the fortress at Corinth in October 1463 and suffered a terrible defeat. Christian forces were then forced to retreat south, back the way they came, and by November 1463 the Ottomans were in control of the Morea, once again. Mariano Zorzi, "Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia," in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 51. Cited hereafter as Zorzi, "VB." Bessarion's extended stay in Venice is discussed, albeit briefly, in Antonio Rigo, "Bessarion and San Giorgio, or the Cardinal's last stay in Venice" *Lettera da San Giorgio (Fondazione Giorgio Cini)* 8, no. 12 (March–August 2015), 16–19, and suggested by the date of his first will, which was drawn up in Venice in February 1464. Carol M. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 221. Vitaliano Tiberia, *Antoniazzi Romano: Per il Cardinale Bessarione a Roma* (Perugia: Ediert, 1992), 120–21.
  2. Pius sent the note to Bessarion on May 27, 1464, with the cardinal receiving the message on June 18 and departing for Ancona in the middle of July 1464. Zorzi, "VB," 51.
  3. A full transcription of Bessarion's first will from February 17, 1464 can be found in the "Appendice documentaria" compiled by Adele Cecchini in Tiberia, *Antoniazzi Romano*, 120–21; and Gregory Hedberg, "Antoniazzi Romano and his School" (PhD thesis, New York University, 1980), 103. For a transcription of the second will from April 10, 1467, see Aloysius Bandinius, "Bessarionis Cardinalis," in *Cardinalis Bessarionis opera Omnia: Patrologiae graecae*, ed. J.–P. Migne, vol. 161 (Turnholt: Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1866), LXXXIII–XCI. For a mention of the trip to Viterbo in May 1468: Zorzi, "VB" 54.
  4. Dan Ioan Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Orations against the Turks* and Crusade Propaganda at the Große Christentag of Regensburg," in *Reconfiguring the Fifteenth-Century Crusade*, ed. Norman Housley (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 213. For important background on the editio princeps of the *Orations* in Latin, produced in France, and a subsequent version in Italian, produced in Venice: Margaret Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press: Guillaume Fichet and the First Edition of Bessarion's *Orations Against the Turks*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 97 (2003): 521–88.

5. Bessarion gained the right to use the chapel of Sant'Eugenia as his funerary space in 1463, based on a papal bull from April 30, 1463, issued by Pius II. Bandinius, "Bessarionis Cardinalis," LXXVI–LXXVII. Another bull issued by Pius' successor, Pope Paul II, confirmed the allocation of the chapel to Bessarion. Bandinius, "Bessarionis Cardinalis," XCI–XCIV. The early date of Romano's frescoes is determined by Bessarion's first will from February 17, 1464, in which the cardinal laid out initial plans for the decorative program. Carol M. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 221; and Adele Cecchini's "Appendice documentaria" in Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 120–21. Bessarion first authorized payments to the artists on September 14, 1464, in a document where the space is referred to as the "Cappelle sancti Angeli," and again in August 23, 1465. Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 121–22. The late date of the frescoes, 1467–68, is offered according to the date of Bessarion's second will from April 10, 1467, which provides some additional information on the cycle. Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 122. Bandinius, "Bessarionis Cardinalis," LXXXIII–XCI. For additional transcriptions of primary sources related to the funerary chapel: Sabina Isidori, "Il Cardinal Bessarione e gli affreschi della Cappella dei Santi Eugenia, Giovanni Battista e Michele Arcangelo nella basilica dei Santi XII Apostoli in Roma," in *Bessarione e la sua accademia*, eds. Andrzej Gutkowski and Emanuela Prinziavalli (Rome: Casa Editrice Miscellanea Francesca, 2012), 135–55.

6. The south wall of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles is shared with what is now called the Palazzo Colonna. The palazzo was Bessarion's residence after 1443 and a place to store his library and collection of antiquities. For an introduction to the palazzo in the fifteenth century: Antonio Coccia, *Il Cardinale Bessarione e la Basilica dei SS. XII Apostoli in Roma* (Rome: Associazione Culturale Miscellanea Francescana, 1973); Sara Magister, *Arte e Politica: La Collezione di Antichità del Cardinale Giuliano Della Rovere Nei Palazzetti Ai Santi Apostoli* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 2002); L. Finocchi Ghersi, *La basilica dei SS. Apostoli a Roma. Storia, arte e architettura* (Rome: Artemide, 2011); and Isidoro Liberale Gatti, *Il Palazzo della Rovere ai Santi Apostoli di Roma: uomini, pietre e vicende (Il Quattrocento, Parte Prima, I cardinali Bessarione e Riario)* (Rome: L' "Apostoleion," 2015), 47–93. For the palazzo as a gathering place, see the section on "Roma e l'Accademia di Bessarione" in Giuseppe Coluccia, *Basilio Bessarione: Lo spirito greco e l'Occidente* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009), 227–80; as well as "Roma e l'accademia bessarionea" and "L'accademia del Bessarione tra Roma e Urbino" in Concetta Bianca, *Da Bisanzio a Roma: Studi sul Cardinale Bessarione* (Rome: Roma nel Rinascimento, 1999), 19–42, 123–40.

7. Bessarion's appointment as a cardinal by Pope Eugenius IV (r. 1431–47) took place on December 18, 1439, while Bessarion was still in route to Constantinople with the Greek delegation following the Council of Ferrara-Florence. Zorzi, "VB," 43. According to Lotte Labowsky, Eugenius enticed Bessarion to stay in Italy with a sizable pension, prior to his departure with the Greek delegation, with the then-monk hearing of his appointment as cardinal upon his arrival in Constantinople in late 1439. *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (Trecanni)*, s.v. "Bessarione," by Lotte Labowsky, accessed March 3, 2020, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). Cited hereafter as Labowsky, "Bessarione." Coccia, *Cardinale Bessarione*, 132.

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8. Mariano Zorzi writes, “L’atmosfera fieramente avversa all’Unione induce il Bessarione a trasferirsi in Italia, dove pensa di poter essere più utile ai connazionali.” Zorzi, “VB,” 44. Both Zorzi and Lotte Labowsky have Bessarion back in Florence, where the Council was still in session, by December 10, 1440. Zorzi, “VB,” 44. Labowsky, “Bessarione.”
9. Eduard A. Safarik, *Palazzo Colonna* (Rome: De Luca Editore d’Arte, 2009), 292–93.
10. The foundation of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome dates to the second half of the sixth century, when it was begun under the patronage of Pope Pelagius (r. 556–61) and dedicated in 572. The building project was begun after the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65) and his general, Narses, rescued Rome from the Goths in 553. The Roman foundation thus came shortly after the Apostoleion in Constantinople, which dates to 550. Gatti, *Santi Apostoli di Roma*, 53–55. For the history of the Apostoleion in Constantinople: Cyril Mango, “Constantine’s Mausoleum and the Translation of Holy Relics,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990): 51–62; and Janna Israel, “A History Built on Ruins: Venice and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople,” *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 9, no. 1 (Summer 2012): 106–22.
11. Gatti, *Santi Apostoli di Roma*, 53–55.
12. Israel, “History Built on Ruins,” 106–22.
13. For the bull from Pius II: Bandinius, “Bessarionis Cardinalis,” LXXVI–LXXVII. For the bull from Paul II: Bandinius, “Bessarionis Cardinalis,” XCI–XCIV.
14. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 120–21. Hedberg, “Antoniazzo Romano,” 103.
15. Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 121.
16. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 221.
17. Hedberg, “Antoniazzo Romano,” 183–84.
18. “Nell’angolo della destra parte della detta Cappella vi è il Sepolcro del medesimo Cardinale in quella forma digrandezza, altezza, e longhezza, che lui stesso nel sudetto testamento ordinò con queste parole...” Bonaventura Malavasia, *Compendio storico della Ven. Basilica di Ss. Dodici Apostoli di Roma* (Rome: Ignatio di Bazari. 1665), 37. Some of Malavasia’s comments on the funerary chapel of Cardinal Bessarion can be found in Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 125.
19. Hedberg, “Antoniazzo Romano,” 24.
20. Clemente Busiri Vici, “Un ritrovamento eccezionale relativo all’antica basilica dei SS. Apostoli in Roma,” *Fede e arte* 13 (1960): 70–83.

21. The upper scenes related to the appearances of Saint Michael are still visible, today, in a fragmentary state. The lower scenes related to the life of John the Baptist are, unfortunately, destroyed. Their existence is based on a description from Bonaventura Malavasia's *Compendio* in 1665: "Ordino che sosse dipinta, come fu essequito: sopra la volta vi era dipinto il Saluatore e on li noui chori degli Angeli, piu sotto la sac. Historia dell'Apparitione dell'Archangelo S. Michele nel Monte Gargano; piu a basso finalmente la Natiuita di S. Gio Battista; sopra la volte dell'Arcone vi erano dipinti di quattro Evangelisti, li quattro Dottori della Chiesa Latina, e li quattro della Chiesa Greca, le quali pitture dall'ingiuria del tempo, e dalla grande humidita haudo grademente patito, sono andate continuamente cadendo e rouinandosi in tanto, che sforzato dall necessita per abbellimento della Capella se gli e dato di bianco." Malavasia, *Compendio historico*, 36–37. Gregory Hedberg reproduces a different version of Malavasia's text, which in addition to mentioning a painting of "the birth of John the Baptist" ("la nascita di S. Giovanni Battista") mentions a scene of "John the Baptist and the three Archangels" ("S. Giovanni Battista e i tre Arcangeli"): "Sulla volta l'artista aveva affreschi il Figlio di Dio nella gloria del Cielo, circondato dai nove angelici in campo azzurro tempestato di stelle e chiuso da cornice. Agli angoli i quattro Evangelisti tra un Padre latino ed uno greco, al di sopra dell'altare la nascita di S. Giovanni Battista e più in alto la meravigliosa apparizione di S. Michele sul Monte Gargano. Nelle pareti laterali, interrotte da finestre vere e dipinte, S. Giovanni Battista e i tre Arcangeli. Nella metà inferiore delle pareti vi erano dipinti dei cortinaggi fregiati di fiocami lumeggiati d'oro." Hedberg, "Antoniazzo Romano," 183–84. Also Cf. a transcription of Malavasia in Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 125.

22. Much more work could be done to analyze the connection between John the Baptist and Bessarion, given that the cardinal is referred to as "Johannes" in some secondary sources. As Vitaliano Tiberia suggests, John the Baptist was attached to the history of Crusade, as he was the guardian of the church of Saint John of Acra in the Holy Land, lost to the Ottomans in 1291. Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano*, 21, 30. Meredith Gill also follows Carol Richardson in writing that John the Baptist was "Effective as a saintly force against the Turks" in the fifteenth century. Meredith J. Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 261, note 43; and Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 220–32.

23. Marco Verità, Susanna Bracci, and Simone Porcinai, "Analytical investigation of 14th century stained glass windows from Santa Croce Basilica in Florence," *International Journal of Applied Glass Science* 10, no. 4 (October 2019): 546–57; and Nancy MacKay Thompson, "The Fourteenth-Century Stained Glass of Santa Croce in Florence" (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1999). Many great Gothic churches with a second story over the west façade narthex also include a chapel in honor of the Archangel Michael.

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24. Meredith J. Gill notes, “St. Michael was the focus of renewed interest in the Roman fifteenth century because of the rebuilding of the Castel Sant’Angelo by Pope Nicholas V in 1453, the designation of a chapel to honor the saint at the very top, and the fashioning of a wooden and bronze statue (all alluding to the saint’s appearance to Pope Gregory the Great).” There is also the relationship between Bessarion and the French Cardinal Guillaume d’Estouteville (d. 1483), another important figure in the history of Crusade, who included an image of the archangel slaying the dragon in his funerary chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore (now surviving only as a sinopie). Gill sees the Roman chapels of Bessarion and d’Estouteville as pendants, linked by the cardinals’ common advocacy for Crusade in the 1460s. Meredith J. Gill, “Where the Danger Was Greatest”: A Gallic Legacy in Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome Source,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59, no. 4 (1996): 506, 508, 513, with the frescoes reproduced. Interestingly, d’Estouteville was also the commendatory abbot of Mont Saint Michel, with his brother, Louis d’Estouteville, serving as its captain. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, 227.

25. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 201–11. Cited hereafter as *Golden Legend*.

26. *Golden Legend*, 201.

27. *Ibid.*, 201–2.

28. *Ibid.*, 202.

29. *Idem.*

30. *Idem.*

31. *Idem.*

32. *Idem.*

33. As Glenn Peers notes, the apparition of Saint Michael, related to the miracle at Chonae, was “the most popular miracle of Michael in the Byzantine world,” with the earliest versions dating to the eighth century. In his gloss on the texts, Peers notes that pagans tried to destroy a shrine at Chonae and its guardian, Archippus, by flooding it. Then “Michael appears and creates a chasm into which the water is forced to flow. The shrine and its newly fashioned spring henceforth work wonders.” Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 158. Other appearances are alluded to in the *Golden Legend*: “There was a fifth apparition of the archangel Michael, and we read about it in the Tripartite History. Not far from Constantinople is a place where the goddess Vesta was worshipped in the past, but where now stands a church built in honor of Saint Michael, for which reason the place itself is named Michaelium. A man named Aquilinus was overtaken by a raging fever known for the redness that accompanies it. The doctors gave him a potion to break the fever, but he vomited it and continued to vomit whatever he ate or drank. Knowing that he was near death, he had himself carried to the place mentioned above, thinking that there he would either die or be relieved of his malady. Saint Michael appeared to him and told him to prepare a mixture of honey, wine, and pepper and to dip everything he ate in this mixture, and he would be wholly cured. He did as directed and was indeed made well, though it seems contrary to medical science to administer hot drinks to the feverish.” *Golden Legend*, 204.

34. The *Celestial Hierarchy* was a foundational source for descriptions of the angels in the Middle Ages, from the *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*, or *Tripartite History*, of the medieval church from the sixth century (covering the period from the conversion of Constantine in 330 to 439 CE) to Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* from ca. 1265–1274, specifically Question 108, in eight articles, “Of the Angelic Degrees of Hierarchies and Orders”). For an introduction to Ps.-Dionysius and the historical context of the *Celestial Hierarchy* and other works by the author: Pseudo-Dionysius (the Areopagite), *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, ed. Paul Rorem, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 1–46. Given the iconographic details of the frescoes in Bessarion’s funerary chapel, I focus on excerpts from the *Golden Legend* as a widely available source. However, it is important to note that while Bessarion had a manuscript that included some sermons by Jacobus de Voragine, he did not own a copy of the *Golden Legend*. John Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus: A Study of Cardinal Bessarion’s Latin Library* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 137–38. He did own a copy of the *Celestial Hierarchy* in Greek (Gr. Z. 142 [=474], 1r–66r), however, in a volume containing other works by Ps.-Dionysius, including the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. The *Celestial Hierarchy* was also available in Latin by the 1460s, since the Italian scholar Ambrogio Traversari had translated the complete works of Ps.-Dionysius from 1431–37. For more on the Italian interest in Ps.-Dionysius and the translations of his opera by Traversari: Charles Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (Albany, 1977), 158–61.

35. Voragine’s taxonomy works against the unity of angels presented in the objections and replies to Ps.-Dionysius in Question 108 of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*. For his part, de Voragine acknowledges that his text is indebted to both Ps.-Dionysius and the *Tripartite History* of the Latin church. *Golden Legend*, 204.



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36. *New Advent*, Isaiah 6:1–8, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa006.htm>.

37. *Golden Legend*, 203

38. *Idem*.

39. *Idem*.

40. *Ibid.*, 204.

41. *Idem*.

42. *Ibid.*, 203.

43. *Idem*.

44. *Idem*.

45. *Ibid.*, 203–4.

46. *Ibid.*, 203.

47. For more on the micromosaic of Saint Theodore “the Recruit” (often confused with Saint Theodore Stratelates, “the “General”): Arne Effenberger, “Mosaic Icon with Saint Theodore Teron,” in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 231. Effenberger’s entry also excerpts a 1498 inventory from the church of Old Saint Peter’s in Rome, which references gifts from Bessarion to the church and specifically an “Icon of a warrior saint with a lance in his hand, decorated with silver-chased roses and leaves” (“Icona cum uno santo armato cum lancea in manu, ornata argento sculpto ad rosas et alia folia”). As Effenberger notes, it is not clear whether this object is Bessarion’s micromosaic, but it is a possibility. For a transcription of the inventory: Eugène Müntz and A. L. Frothingham, *Il Tesoro della Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano dal XIII al XV secolo* (Rome: Società Romana di Storia patria, 1883), 112.

48. Arne Effenberger also writes on these sources, which are based on a copy of the inventory from 1467 that was known to Giacomo Grimaldi in the seventeenth century and preserved in a version from 1621. Effenberger, “Mosaic Icon with Saint Theodore Teron,” 231; and Eugène Müntz, *Les arts à la cour des papes pendant le XV<sup>e</sup> et le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Thorin, 1879), 298, and note 3. For Bessarion’s wills and related inventories of objects donated to the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles and the Church of Old Saint Peter’s in the 1460s: Ebe Antetomaso, “La collezione di oggetti liturgici del cardinale Bessarione,” in *Il Collezioni di Antichità a Roma fra ‘400 e ‘500*, ed. Anna Cavallaro (Rome: De Luca Editori d’Arte, 2007), 225, 232; and Müntz, *Arts à la cour des papes*, 298, 300, 302; and Müntz and Frothingham, *Tesoro della Basilica*, 111–13.

49. “SVB DIVI BESSARIONIS DE | CARDINE DICTI PRAESI | DIO ROMAE SVRGO IO | ANNIS OPVS: -1462.” David King, “The Astrolabe Dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion by Regiomontanus in 1462,” in *Bessarione e l’Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 347–48. David King, *Astrolabes and Angels, Epigrams and Enigmas: From Regiomontanus’ Acrostic for Cardinal Bessarion to Piero della Francesca’s Flagellation of Christ* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007), 37.

50. Ivan Drpić, “The Patron’s ‘I’: Art, Selfhood, and the Later Byzantine Dedicatory Epigram,” *Speculum* 89, no. 4 (October 2014): 895–935. Ivan Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 67–70. Cecily J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 130–33.

51. Voragine writes in the *Golden Legend*: “When the church was built [at Mont Saint-Michel], they brought from Mount Gargano a cutting from the mantle Saint Michael had spread over the altar there and a slab of the marble on which he stood, and placed them in his new church.” The author also notes that when the devotees of Saint Michael entered the shrine they found an altar “of imposing dimensions” that “was covered all around with a red mantle.” *Golden Legend*, 202, 207.

52. Zorzi, “VB,” 56.

53. As Luigi Serra writes, “A proposition attributing to Cardinal Bessarion the gift of this standard to the Monastery of Sta. Croce at Avellana, is without foundation.” Serra provides critical information as to how the arrival of the Byzantine textile is determined: “It is true that it is recorded in an Inventory drawn up in 1425 by the Dominicans of Gubbio, to whom at that date the Avellana Treasures were entrusted for greater security, thus: ‘a small banner embroidered with an angel armed with a sword.’ In another Inventory of 1641 it is thus described: ‘a very ancient standard embroidered in gold and small pearls, representing St. Michael and the Emperor Manuel, who died in the year 1180.’” Luigi Serra, “A Byzantine Naval Standard (circa 1141),” *Burlington Magazine* 34 (1919): 152.

54. The commune of Serra Sant’Abbondio, the location of the monastery of Fonte Avellana, is about eighteen miles south of Urbino. Bessarion was attached to the family of Federico da Montefeltro in a variety of ways, including the cardinal’s baptism of Federico’s son, Antonio, in the spring of 1450, an exchange of letters with Bounconte, and the blessing of Guidobaldo in April 1472. Zorzi, “VB” 45, 47, 55. There is also the portrait of Bessarion by Joos van Wassenhove and Pedro Berruguete, completed around 1476, which was part of a series of twenty-eight portraits painted for Federico’s studiolo in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino and is now in the Louvre. For the most concentrated studies of Bessarion’s attachment to the court at Urbino, see the chapter on “L’Accademia del Bessarione tra Roma a Urbino,” in Bianca, *Bisanzio a Roma*, 123–40.

55. Bessarion exchanged ecclesiastic appointments and benefices throughout his lifetime. For mentions of relevant appointments, see Zorzi, “VB,” 43, 45, 47, 50, and 53; Labowsky, “Bessarione”; and Monfasani, *Bessarion Scholasticus*, 10, and note 33.

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56. Serra, “Byzantine Naval Standard,” 152.

57. *Golden Legend*, 202.

58. There is considerable debate over the identity of the kneeling figure in the Byzantine textile. Cecily Hilsdale writes, “The figure in question is generally taken to be Manuel, illegitimate son of Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos (1373–91), distinguished from his brother and future Emperor Manuel II (1391–1425) by the epithet *nothos* (illegitimate).” Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, 130. Ivan Drpić expresses a different opinion in summing up the debate: “The identity of the portrayed supplicant has yet to be established. In the inscription on the frame, which I quote below, Manuel takes pride in the illustrious ancestry of his mother Eudokia, whose parents were a *kaiser* and a princess born in the purple. Most scholars, following Cozza–Luzi 1890, identify him with Manuel, an illegitimate son of John V Palaiologos who won a minor naval victory over the Ottoman Turks in 1411, but there is no evidence to support this identification.” Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion*, 67, note 2.

59. Beyond the glimpses of imperial purple, Manuel also wears a white undergarment just visible at the neck, a mantle with lozenges and fleurs-de-lis, and a densely hatched tablion to show his elevated rank. The most extended description of the figure can be found in Appendix Three, catalog number 68, in Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 339.

60. John Barker summarizes the relationship between Manuel nothos and Manuel II, as told by Chalkokondyles, specifically how the author “adds the statement that the Emperor, jealous of this brother’s success and esteem, had him seized and imprisoned with his children for seventeen years.” Barker also notes that “Such an accusation seems quite irreconcilable with Manuel’s character, and either it is untrue—suggested perhaps, by its omission from the other sources—or it is a confused and incomplete representation of more facts not fully revealed.” John Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 285, and note 153.

61. John Barker mentions the Bonn edition of *The Histories*: “It is interesting to note that Chalcocondyles’ warm description of the bastard Manuel portrays him as one skilled in warfare, a professional service man, as it were. Note also that the sophisticated Pseudo-Phrantzes call him *δρουγγάριος*, which was a title borne in earlier times also by commanders of the Byzantine navy.” Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 285, and note 153. According to Maria Parani, it was Manuel II who named Manuel nothos a droungarios. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 339.

62. Serra, “A Byzantine Naval Standard,” 152. As Ivan Drpić writes, “The Urbino textile has often been mistaken for a banner, but its precious materials, format, iconography, and verse inscriptions militate against this identification. Originally, it most likely served as a *podea*, a cloth hanging suspended from the lower edge of a particularly venerated cult image – in this instance, probably an icon showing Saint Michael.” Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion*, 69–70. The first scholar to make the shift away from the naval standard thesis was Antonio Carile, who argued for its identification as an encheirion. Antonio Carile, “Manuele Nothos Paleologo. Nota prosopografica,” *Thesaurismata* 12 (1975), 137–47.

63. Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion*, 69–70.

64. “Ὡς πρὶν Ἰησοῦς τοῦ Ναυῆ κάμψας γόνυ/  
τῶν σῶν ποδῶν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτὸν ἐρρίφη/  
αἰτῶν παρὰ σοῦ δύναμιν εἰληφέναι/  
ὡς ἀλλοφύλων ὑποτάξῃ τὰ στίφη/  
οὕτως ἔγωγε Μανυῆλ σὸς οἰκέτην/  
Εὐδοκίας παῖς εὐκλέους τρίσολβίου,  
φυτοσπόρον μὲν καίσαρα κεκτημένης,  
γεννήτριαν δὲ πορφυράνθητον κλάδον,  
τὰνῶν ἑμαυτὸν ἰκετικῶ τῷ τρόπῳ/  
ρίπτω ποσὶ σου καὶ λιτάζομαι δέ σε,  
ὡς σαῖς σκέπης πτέρυξι κεχρυσωμέναις/  
καὶ προφθάνων ῥύης με παντὸς κινδύνου·  
καὶ προστάτην ἔχω σὲ καὶ φύλακά μου/  
ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος ὧν ἐν τῷ βίῳ·  
κὰν τῇ τελευταίᾳ δὲ καὶ φρικτῇ κρίσει/  
εὐρῶ προσηνῆ διὰ σοῦ τὸν δεσπότην·  
ἐκ κοιλίας γὰρ μητρικῆς ἐπερρίφην/  
ἐπὶ σέ, ταξίαρχε τῶν ἀσωμάτων.”

Ivan Drpić, “The Patron's 'I,’” 932. Cecily J. Hilsdale includes a slightly different translation in: Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, 132, and cites Carile, “Manuele Nothos Paleologo,” 143–44.

65. “Οὓς μου προσέσχε σῆ δεήσει καὶ σκέπω/  
σὲ μὲν πτέρυξιν ἰδίαις ὡς οἰκέτην·  
ἐχθροὺς δὲ τοὺς σοῦς ἀνελῶ μου τῇ σπάθῃ.”  
Ivan Drpić, “The Patron's 'I,’” 932.

In her analysis of the inscription, Hilsdale compares Manuel *notbos* (?) and the archangel to Joshua and the angel at the wall of Jericho, respectively, as told in the book of Joshua 5:13–16. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, 130–31

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66. Bessarion's parents baptized him under the name Basil, and he took his second name, Bessarion, in honor of a saint venerated in the kingdom of Trebizond. Zorzi, "VB" 39. Labowsky, "Bessarione."
67. *Golden Legend*, 205–6.
68. *Ibid.*, 201.
69. *Idem.*
70. Glen Peers has some important thoughts on Michael's absence as a key feature of his hagiography and iconography, as celestial beings were inherently elusive and could not be depicted with fidelity (what Peers calls the "subtle body" of the saint). Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 6–11, 157–93. Meredith Gill also notes Michael's absence from his own cycle, and puts it beautifully: "As an angel, as a transcendent being, his representation in any form – linguistic or otherwise – is unstable; the existence of a representation must in a curious way simultaneously deny the possibility of resemblance. Many of the accounts of Michael's miracles and visions allude to a kind of shattering light or to the fire-filled potential of his being, taking up his awe-inspiring scriptural (that is, textual) portrait quite directly. This kind of intellectual conundrum between the represented and the unrepresentable would not have been lost on Bessarion." Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven*, 82.
71. *Golden Legend*, 202.
72. Peers, *Subtle Bodies*, 6–11, 157–93.
73. *Ibid.*, 201.
74. Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 143–61.
75. Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda," 522.
76. Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Oration against the Turks*," 208.
77. The *lega generale* was formed on December 22, 1470. Mureşan, "Bessarion's *Oration against the Turks*," 208.
78. Zorzi, "VB," 48.
79. The Olynthians made their appeal for an alliance with Athens in 349 BCE, one year after Philip threatened the city in 350 BCE. The oration by Demosthenes was likely delivered around the same time. My comments on the oration are based on the Loeb translation: Demosthenes, "The First Olynthiac," in *Demosthenes I (Olynthiacs, Philippics, Minor Public Speeches, Speech Against Leptines I–XVII, XX)*, trans. J. H. Vince, ed. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930).

80. Demosthenes, “First Olynthiac,” 5.

81. Demosthenes summarizes the strategy in the conclusion to his oration: “It is the duty of all of you to grasp the significance of these facts, and to send out an expedition that shall thrust back the war into Macedonia: it is the duty of the well-to-do, that spending but a fraction of the wealth they so happily possess, they may enjoy the residue in security; of our fighters, that gaining experience of war on Philip’s soil, they may prove the formidable guardians of an inviolate fatherland; of the statesmen, that they may give a ready account of their stewardship, for as is the issue of these events, so will be your judgement of their policy. On every ground may that issue be prosperous!” Ibid., 21.

82. Ibid., 15.

83. Idem.

84. Ibid., 5.

85. Ibid., 7.

86. The message is repeated at the end of the oration: “Do not forget that you can to-day choose whether you must fight there or Philip must fight here. If Olynthus holds out, you will fight there, to the detriment of his territory, while you enjoy in security the land that is your home. But if Philip takes Olynthus, who is to prevent his marching hither?” Ibid., 11, 13.

87. For the date of the letter from Cardinal Bessarion to Abbot Bessarion: Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 570. The Latin text of the letter, based on four manuscripts—not Mohler’s edited version—is transcribed in John Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” in *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and other Émigrés* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1995), 196–201. For the edited version: Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, vol. 3 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1923), 550–53.

88. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 522. “Paulo post navalis Turcorum Brundusii erit exercitus, presto Neapoli, presto Rome. Iam ita mari dominatur, Venetis pulsus, quemadmodum terra.” Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” 196–201.

89. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 522. “Relinquamus principatibus Italie curam istam. Nam et illi nos reliquerunt et obaudiunt frustra tamquam e specula clamantes, predicantes, proponentes, ante oculos eorum pericula... Sed ego quod iam tot annis conatus quoad potui, nihil professione mea, nihil cardinalatus officio profui.” Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” 196–201.

90. The supposition that Bessarion’s health was in decline from ca. 1464–68 is based on the drafting of two wills (on February 17, 1464 and April 10, 1467), his trip to the healing baths at Viterbo in May 1468, and a comment from Pius II about Bessarion’s health when he gave the cardinal his mission to the northern territories in 1459.

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91. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 522. “Relinquamus summo pontifici rerum suarum custodiam et temporalium defensionem... Relinquamus serenissimo Sicilie regi sui imperii curam et defensionem... Videant Tuschi, Ligures, Mediolanenses, Veneti quomodo se tueantur... Percurret totum regnum hostis. Facile Romam usque perveniet. Veh Italie, veh Christianis omnibus, veh hominibus excectis!” Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” 196–201.

92. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 207–44.

93. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 208. Meserve summarizes the content of both orations at greater length: “The arguments Bessarion employed in the text were hardly the stuff of traditional crusade rhetoric. Instead of stirring exhortations to holy war against the infidel, Bessarion’s orations present hard-headed political analysis: the first assays the state of the Turkish empire, the tactics and intentions of the sultan, the political and economic pressures under which he operates, and the practical question of whether Christian Europe is prepared to repel his assaults. The answer to this last question being a resolute ‘no,’ the second orations presents a forthright appeal for peace and concord in Europe and an end to cynical competition among individual states; without these, Christendom is surely doomed.” Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 524–25.

94. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 524.

95. *Ibid.*, 529–30.

96. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 213.

97. The French edition of the *Letters and Orations* from 1471 was closely followed by another printed version, produced independently in the same year in Venice. This version—a translation from Latin into Italian—was produced by Ludovico Carbone and printed by Cristoforo Valdarfer in Venice between late July and early August 1471, under the title *Oratione a tutti gli Signori d’Italia*, or *Orations to all the Lords of Italy*. The date of the Italian edition is based on work by Dan Ioan Mureşan, who notes Carbone’s advocacy for Bessarion’s election as pope, and thus the placement of the work between the reign of Paul II (d. July 1471) and Sixtus IV (elected August 1471). Mureşan writes that the preface, written by the translator, functions as “an extraordinary *apologia* for Bessarion’s election as pope.” Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 216. The Italian edition was also completed before August 20, 1471, since the work was dedicated to the Duke of Ferrara, Borso d’Este, who died on that date. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 216.

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98. Meserve supports her argument related to the initiative shown by Fichet with a quote from a letter sent by Bessarion to the rector on August 31, 1471. In her translation, Bessarion writes: “Lately, when I was sincerely desirous to know whether you had received the orations which I wrote... together with the refutations of the attack against my work in praise of Plato (for I sent both of those to you a long time ago), by chance of the secretaries of the [French] king came here and said that he had seen the orations in your hands, and that they had, thanks to your efforts, been printed and distributed to many people... I was hoping very much that you might read them; and for this reason I rejoiced at this news and gave thanks for your kindness, since you thought so highly of my trifles that you decided they deserved a wide audience.” Margaret Meserve, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 536.

99. Dan Ioan Mureșan suggests a printing of about 100. Margaret Meserve suggests less than 120. Cf. Mureșan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 223; and Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 538. Meserve also compiles a catalog of extant versions of the Orations in Appendix C of Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 575–78.

100. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 537.

101. King Edward IV of England, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III, and Duke Ludwig of Bavaria all received ornate printed versions. *Ibid.*, 537–38, 544.

102. Rolin’s support for Fichet is captured in the rector’s dedication of a printed edition of his *Rhetoric* to his patron. Mureșan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 213, 215.

103. As Meserve notes, the prefatory letter from Fichet to Louis XI is dated August 5, 1471. However, Fichet waited until March 1472 for an opportunity to present the book to the king, in person. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 538, and note 41, 560. Mureșan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 225.

104. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 538, 544.

105. Fichet sent a copy of the *Letters and Orations* to at least forty-six recipients, according to his own account in a letter sent to Bessarion on March 21, 1472. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 538, note 41. While primary sources prove that Fichet hand-delivered a copy to the French King Louis IX, Fichet sent the volume to King Edward IV of England through other contacts, with the personalized preface and donor image on the frontispiece intended to bridge the gap between the producer of the book and its recipient.

106. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 534.

107. For other descriptions of the image: Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 561–62; and James Hankins, “Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 118–19.

108. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 574.



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109. Ibid., 544.

110. Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda,” 562. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 225.

111. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 225.

112. Zorzi, “VB,” 55.

113. France was fighting with its neighbor, Burgundy, in the campaign of the Somme towns. Mureşan, “Bessarion’s Orations against the Turks,” 211. Bessarion’s departure for France came almost exactly a year after the end of these hostilities.

114. Zorzi, “VB,” 55–56.

115. Monfasani, “Bessarion Latinus,” 35.

116. Zorzi, “VB,” 56.

117. Coccia, *Cardinale Bessarione*, 13.

*CONCLUSION*

Bessarion's Body, Continued

When Bessarion's body arrived in Rome in 1472 it was placed in the tomb he prepared in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, during the time Antoniazio Romano and his assistants worked on the frescoes. As seen in the reconstruction drawing by Franco Adamo, the tomb was situated beneath one of two scenes devoted to the life of John the Baptist (fig. C.1, with the tomb marked).<sup>1</sup> The position of the sarcophagus draws from Bonaventura Malavasia's *Compendio storico* of the church, published in 1655, which reflects on the state of the chapel in the seventeenth century: "In the corner of the right side of the Chapel is the Tomb of the Cardinal himself, of grand proportions in height and width, which he ordered in the testament, already described, to be marked with these words..."<sup>2</sup>

The tomb was intended as Bessarion's eternal resting place, but it is not in the chapel, today, as his body was moved to the second cloister of the Franciscan monastery next to his cardinal church (fig. C.2). The transport may not equal that of Bessarion's teacher, George Gemistos Plethon—whose remains were exhumed in Mistra in the 1460s by Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, the leader of Venetian ground troops in the Morea, and reinterred in a sarcophagus under an archway of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini—but it is another example of Bessarion on the move, even posthumously.<sup>3</sup> The removal of Bessarion's body from the chapel on the south side of the church (fig. C.2, 1) to the cloister on its north side (2) was brought about by renovations to the attached palazzo (a), a project from the early eighteenth century that led to the walling off of the Chapel of the Holy Angels and the destruction of major portions of its decorative cycle.<sup>4</sup> This move, or one slightly earlier, is supported by a separate monument and epigraph to Bessarion that was installed on a pillar just inside the entrance to the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles. The

commemoration dates to 1682 and lists the cardinal's accomplishments, including his leadership of various papal legations and advocacy for Crusade.

Bessarion's tomb can still be found in the second cloister in a fragmented and reassembled state (fig. C.3). The front of the sarcophagus with an inscription in Greek and another epigraph in Latin are now stacked and surmounted by an arch in a darker stone that was not part of the fifteenth-century ensemble. A key source on Bessarion's tomb is a diptych from 1592, painted on front and back, for a total of four sides, that is now in the Biblioteca Marciana. The painter shows Bessarion's coat of arms and an inscription, now heavily abraded, on the outside, with a profile portrait of Bessarion and a representation of his tomb, on the inside.<sup>5</sup> The tomb has two distinct levels, with the sarcophagus set on the floor and the message in Latin above it. The Latin reads: "Bessarion, Bishop of [Tusculum], Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Patriarch of Constantinople, born and descended from noble Greece, erected [this] for himself while alive, in the Year of Redemption 1466." The Greek continues: "I, Bessarion, erected, when I was still alive, this monument for my dead body: My spirit shall flee to God immortal."<sup>6</sup>

The message in Greek is flanked by Bessarion's coat of arms, including the now-familiar shield and cross, surmounted by stars that radiate divine light (fig. C.4). Text and image relate to the epigram from Planudes and the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*, produced during Bessarion's time as a legate in Bologna: "The fates have given me a life that is mortal and bodily parts that perish, and they have prescribed the date of my death. But when I set my mind on the observation of the heavenly bodies and leave the earth behind, I drink the nectar of Zeus." The tomb is also an encapsulation of Bessarion's artistic interests, since there is a direct connection to a page from the cardinal's choral books where he offers

his soul and sees it jet out of his palms to God the Father, who is ready to receive it (figs. C.5 and C.6). The totemic soul is a motif from Bessarion's patronage, as it is also found in a detail from a now-separated leaf in the J. Paul Getty museum that contained music for the Divine Office. King David sings, plays the harp, and performs a similar action with his right hand (fig. C.7).

The inscription on Bessarion's tomb speaks to the cardinal's desire to control his legacy "for himself while alive," and has an important connection to the order of angels painted on the vault that was once above it. If we place Bessarion's tomb back in the Chapel of the Holy Angels, we realize how the Greek inscription relates to Romano's monumental, lost fresco of Christ Enthroned, with only the train of his robe visible, today (fig. C.8). When seen alongside earlier artistic projects, Romano's frescoes are an expansion of the paintings Bessarion commissioned in his choral books, appropriate to the song of the angels in the book of Isaiah 6:1–3: "And ever the same cry passed between them, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory."<sup>7</sup> More than that, Bessarion's tomb also has both celestial *and* astronomical significance, according to its link to the "epigrama Ptolemei" from the Marciana *Geography*, where the cartographic tradition of Ptolemy is linked to the notion of transport and the nectar of Zeus on Olympus that brings immortality.

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This dissertation has been an extended examination focusing on how Bessarion's material and social worlds involve the cardinal's advocacy for Crusade in the fifteenth century. It was devoted to movement as immigration, legation, religious procession, and interpretative multiplicity. I focused on Bessarion's life as one episode within a cultural flow

of people and things from Byzantium to Italy, and how the cardinal's collecting practices were correlated with major legations in Europe. I argued that Bessarion used an altered, European context for Byzantine books, relics, and imagery to heighten their significance related to Crusade, and specifically as a moral mandate for Christian princes to lend prayers, troops, ships, and money to reclaim Byzantine territories lost to the Ottomans. Throughout, I focused on the kineticism of objects and their ritual use in diplomatic and sacred settings and made it clear that the cardinal's collection had an expressly public purpose that he bent towards a Crusade agenda. Significantly, this agenda was more targeted than appreciated, at the offset, in being less about the recovery of Constantinople, the Holy Land, or the kingdom of Trebizond and more towards the reclamation of the Morea.

I discussed some of Bessarion's victories, including his ability to negotiate peace between the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III and his brother, Albrecht of Brandenburg, which allowed the cardinal to escape Vienna in 1461. I also mentioned Bessarion's speech to the Venetian Senate in 1463, leading to their declaration of war against the Ottomans, and the cardinal's oversight of preparations to launch a Crusade from Ancona in 1464. The role of works of art as rallying points for Crusade was perhaps most powerfully expressed in Bessarion's speech in the basilica of Saint Peter from April 13, 1462, and his pointed address to Christian princes in the voice of Saint Andrew: "What wilt thou do now?" There were also other, clear examples of Bessarion's use of the object as exhortations to Crusade, including his acquisition of the reliquary of the True Cross from the former Patriarch of Constantinople. We also encountered the cardinal's tendency to tell the Crusade significance of objects somewhat slant. Bessarion was more subtle in his support to produce a copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* to inspire a reliable Greek-to-Latin translation of the text and a shared vision of the world. This was similar to Bessarion's commission of frescoes from

Antoniazio Romano, which established the presence of Saint Michael in Europe in three apparitions, without showing the archangel as the commander of the Christian army or depicting him, at all.

There were also substantial treatments of Bessarion's failures, including the cardinal's inability to rally the northern princes to Crusade at diets at Nuremberg, Worms, and Vienna from 1460–61 as well as the few days he spent with Louis XI at Château-Gontier in 1472. It is critical to realize that Bessarion failed to launch a Crusade during his lifetime. Bessarion's inabilities involved failures of speech, the powerful inertia of local conflicts, and the cardinal's material diplomacy, which ultimately proved ineffective in bringing a large-scale military offensive to Byzantium. In embracing a process related to the translation and dislocation of objects and their meaning, it is just as important to acknowledge their multiplicity, beyond Crusade, and how they built Bessarion's social network, bonded him to Greek and Latin communities, preserved Byzantine culture, and increased his own prestige.

## NOTES

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1. The drawing reproduced in figure C1 is based on an assessment of archival sources by Vitaliano Tiberia, with assistance from Adele Cecchini. Vitaliano Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano: Per il Cardinale Bessarione a Roma* (Perugia: Ediart, 1992), 17.
  2. “Nell’angolo della destra parte della detta Cappella vi è il Sepolcro del medesimo Cardinale in quella forma digrandezza, altezza, e lunghezza, che lui stesso nel sudetto testamento ordinò con queste parole...” The “testament” is Bessarion’s will from 1464. Bonaventura Malavasia, *Compendio storico della Ven. Basilica di Ss. Dodici Apostoli di Rome* (Rome: Ignatio di Bazari. 1665), 37.
  3. Mariano Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia,” in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l’arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivanoe Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 52.
  4. For the date of renovations to the neighboring palazzo: Gregory Hedberg, “Antoniazzo Romano and his School” (PhD thesis, New York University, 1980), 24; and Vitaliano Tiberia, *Antoniazzo Romano: Per il Cardinale Bessarione a Roma* (Perugia: Ediart, 1992), 129–31. For the rediscovery of the chapel, see Clemente Busiri Vici, “Un ritrovamento eccezionale relativo all’antica basilica dei SS. Apostoli in Roma,” *Fede e arte* 13 (1960): 70–83.
  5. Fabrizio Lollini, “Venezia. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, s.nr.: dittico di Bessarion,” in *Bessarione e l’Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra*, ed. Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al. (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 517–18.
  6. “BESSARIO EPISCOPVS THVSCVLANVS | SANCTAE ROMANAE ECCLESIAE CARDINALIS | PATRIARCHA CONSTANTINOPOLITANVS | NOBILI GRAECIA ORTVS ORIVNDVSQUE | SIBI VIVENS POSVIT | ANNO SALVTIS MCCCCLXVI || ΤΟΥΤ ΕΤΙ ΒΗΣΣΑΡΙΟΝ | ΖΩΖ ΑΝΥΣΑ | ΣΩΜΑΤΙ | ΣΗΜΑ · | ΠΙΝΕΥΜΑ ΔΕ ΦΕΥΞΕΙΤΑΙ | ΠΡΟΣ | ΘΕΟΝ ΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ.” Hans Lamers, *Greece Reinvented: Transformations of Byzantine Hellenism in Renaissance Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 115, note 80.
  7. *New Advent*, Isaiah 6:3–4, accessed March 10, 2020, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa006.htm>.



APPENDIX 1

Timeline<sup>1</sup>

ca. 1403

Basil born in the kingdom of Trebizond

ca. 1416/17

Basil leaves Trebizond for Constantinople with the metropolitan, Dositheos

1421

Murad II becomes sultan

1423

Basil becomes a monk in Constantinople under the rule of Saint Basil and takes the name Bessarion

1426

Bessarion joins a legation to Trebizond

ca. 1430–33

Bessarion leaves Constantinople to study with George Gemistos Plethon in Mistra

ca. 1430–33 – 36

Bessarion studies in Mistra

1431

Eugenius IV elected pope

ca. 1436

Bessarion leaves Mistra and returns to Constantinople

1437

*November* Bessarion elected archbishop of Nicaea; the Greek delegation sails from Constantinople to attend the Council of Ferrara

1438

*February* The Greek delegation arrives in Venice

*March* The Greek delegation arrives in Ferrara

*April* The first council session opens in Ferrara with the Greeks in attendance

1439

*January* The council moves to Florence because of the plague

*April* Bessarion gives his “Dogmatic Oration for Union”

*July* Bessarion reads the Greek version of the decree of Union between the churches

*October* The Greek delegation leaves Italy

*December* Bessarion named a cardinal in the Catholic church and arrives in Constantinople

1440

*January* Bessarion gains control of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome

*December* Bessarion immigrates and arrives in Florence

1443

*September* Bessarion is in Rome

1444

*August* Mehmed II becomes sultan

*November* The Ottomans win the Battle of Varna

1446

*September* Murad II is sultan, once again

1447

*March* Nicholas V elected pope

1449

*September* Bessarion receives his mission to Bologna from Pope Nicholas V

1450–55

Bessarion leads the legation to Bologna

1451

Gregory III, the former Patriarch of Constantinople, immigrates to Rome

*February* Mehmed II becomes sultan, once again

1453

*May* The fall of Constantinople

ca. 1454

The Bologna *Geography* is complete

1455

*April* Callixtus III elected pope; Bessarion goes to Naples

1456

Bessarion named commendatory abbot over the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana

1458

*August* Pius II elected pope

1459

Council of Mantua

Gregory III dies in Rome and leaves the Italo-Byzantine reliquary to Bessarion

Bessarion begins work on *Against the Slanderers of Plato*

1460–61

Bessarion leads the legation to the northern territories and the imperial court in Vienna

1460

Thomas Palaiologos leaves the Morea

*January* Bessarion leaves Mantua and leads the northern legation

*March* Diet with the northern princes at Nuremberg

*April* Diets with the northern princes at Worms and Regensburg

*May* Frederick III meets Bessarion outside of Vienna

*September* Imperial diet in Vienna

1461

Thomas Palaiologos lands at Ancona

Bessarion inducted into Venice's Major Council and has his name written in the libro d'Oro

*April* Georg von Peurbach dies in Vienna

*August* Fall of the kingdom of Trebizond

*September* Bessarion leaves Vienna with Johannes Müller

*November* Bessarion back in Rome

ca. 1462–67

Bessarion donates objects to the church of Old Saint Peter's

1462

Regiomontanus dedicates an astrolabe to Bessarion

*April* The Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew arrives in Rome during Holy Week; the Ottomans control the city of Argos in the Morea

*September* Massacre at Lesbos

*December* Bessarion named apostolic administrator of the Catholic patriarchate of Constantinople

ca. 1463–64

Simone di Giovanni Ghini works on the Latin reliquary head of Saint Andrew

1463–64

Bessarion leads the legation to Venice

1463

*April* Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, the Catholic-appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, dies in Rome; Bessarion gains permission to use the Chapel of Saints Eugenia and Claudia in the church of the Twelve Holy Apostles as his eternal resting place

*May* Bessarion becomes Patriarch of Constantinople

*July* Bessarion leaves Rome and leads the legation to Venice

*August* Bessarion promises the Italo-Byzantine reliquary to the brothers of the Scuola della Carità in Venice; he promises his library to the Benedictine monastery on the isola San Giorgio Maggiore

*September* Christian forces reclaim the Morea, from Modon to Corinth

*October* Christian forces fail to take the fortress at Corinth

*November* Christian forces retreat; the Ottomans reclaim the Morea

ca. 1464–65 – 70

Paolo Romano and his assistants work on the tomb of Pius II in the pope's funerary chapel in the church of Old Saint Peter's

ca. 1464–68

Francesco del Borgo and others work on the tempietto, tabernacle, and ciborium for the reliquary head of Saint Andrew in Pius' funerary chapel

1464

*February* Bessarion's first will

*June (?)* The Latin reliquary head of Saint Andrew installed in Pius' funerary chapel; Pius leaves Rome to launch a Crusade from Ancona

*July* Bessarion arrives in Ancona

*August* Pius dies at Ancona; the Crusade fails; Paul II elected pope

*September* Bessarion authorizes payment to Antoniazio Romano for frescoes in his funerary chapel

1467

Bessarion revokes the decision to donate his books to the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore

*April* Bessarion's second will

1468

*March* Bessarion promises his books to the library of San Marco

*May* Bessarion writes a donation authorization and letter to Doge Cristoforo Moro and the Venetian Senate, explaining the reasons for his gift

1469

*April* The first shipment of Bessarion's books arrive in Venice

*August* Bessarion's *Against the Slanderers of Plato* is printed in Rome; King Louis XI founds the chivalric Order of Saint Michael, Archangel in France

1470

Bessarion translates Demosthenes' "First Olynthiac Oration" into Latin

*July* The Venetian colony of Negroponte taken by the Ottomans

*August* Bessarion writes a letter to Abbot Bessarion of San Severino

1471

*April* Bessarion's *Orations and Letters to Christian Princes Against the Turks* is published in Latin in Paris; the *Orations to all the Lords of Italy* is published in Italian in Rome soon after

*August* Sixtus IV elected pope

*December* Bessarion receives his mission to France

1472

*April* Bessarion leaves Rome and leads the legation to France

*May* Bessarion writes a letter that allows the Italo-Byzantine reliquary to be brought to Venice

*August* Bessarion meets with Louis XI at Château-Gontier

*October* Bessarion is back in Italy

*November* Bessarion is in Ravenna and dies on the 17/18

*December* Bessarion's funeral is held in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles

1480

The Ottomans claim the city of Otranto in southern Italy

1481

Mehmed II dies and the Ottomans leave the Italian peninsula

## NOTES

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1. Many elements within the timeline are based on Mariano Zorzi, “Vita del Bessarione: Cronologia,” in *Bessarione: La natura delibera, La natura e l'arte*, trans. Pier Davide Accendere and Ivano Privitera (Milan: Bompiano, 2014), 39–55 and *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, s.v. “Bessarione,” by Lotte Labowsky, accessed March 12, 2020. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bessarione_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/), with added notes on works of art.



## APPENDIX 2

Phases in the Development of the Italo-Byzantine Reliquary

## Phase 1

Eirene Palaiologina commissions a triple-barred cross in Byzantium, possibly in the mid-fourteenth century; she may be the same Eirene who marries Matthew Kantakouzenos in 1341

## Phase 2

Eirene gives the cross to the Byzantine monk Gregory Palamas (?), the spiritual father; Gregory dies ca. 1357–59

## Phase 3

Gregory Mammias, later Gregory III, Patriarch of Constantinople, acquires the cross of Eirene at an unknown date

## Phase 4

Gregory III brings the cross of Eirene with him when immigrates from Constantinople to Rome in 1451

## Phase 5

Gregory III has the cross embedded in a surrounding tablet with relics, a frame of oil paintings, and a sliding lid before his death in 1459

## Phase 6

Gregory III gives the reliquary to Bessarion

## Phase 7

Bessarion commissions a silver processional handle for Gregory's tablet, ca. 1463–72

## Phase 8

The brothers of the Scuolà della Carità in Venice have a silver plaque added to the back of the reliquary, honoring Bessarion as the donor; they also commission a wooden stand for the reliquary sometime after 1472

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## FIGURES

For figure credits, see page 393

## INTRODUCTION



Figure I.1

Joos van Wassenhove and Pedro Berruguete  
Portrait of Cardinal Bessarion  
ca. 1476  
Oil on panel  
Approximately 3' 7 1/2" x 1' 10" (115 cm x 56 cm)  
Musée du Louvre (Paris, France)



Figure I.2

Woodcut based on a drawing by Tobias Stimmer

Portrait of Cardinal Bessarion

Completed in 1577

From a printed version of Paolo Giovio's *Elogia virorum literis illustrium*

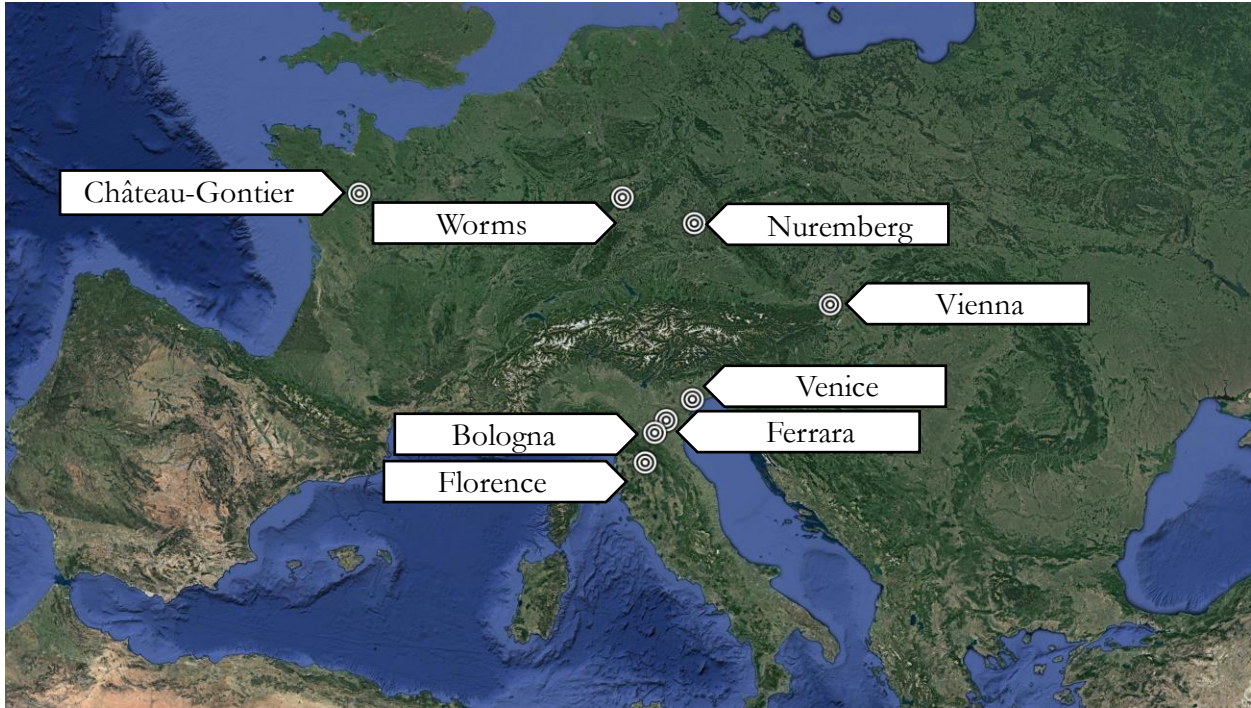
Warburg Institute (London, England)



Map I.1

A few of the places Bessarion went during his lifetime,  
with the destinations of four major legations to Bologna, Venice, Vienna, and Château-Gontier  
marked with larger dots





Map I.2

Destinations of all Bessarion's major European legations

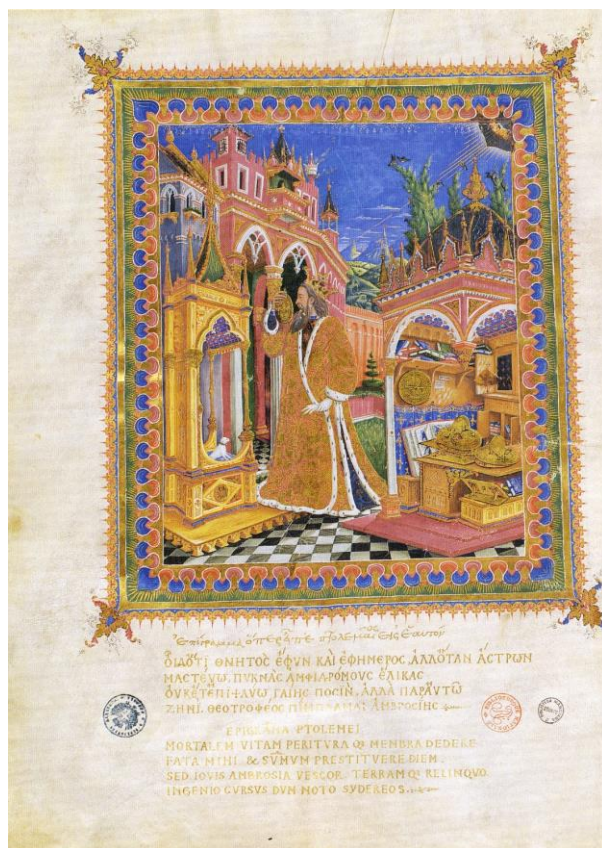


Figure I.3

Frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*

Cod. Gr. 388 (= 333), folio 4 (verso)

Paintings on vellum, completed by an Italian artist in ca. 1454

Polyglot inscription in the hand of Niccolò Perotti

Individual folio approximately 23" x 17" (58.5 cm x 43.5 cm), or 2' x 3' when open

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Venice, Italy)





Figure I.4

Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew  
Silver gilt, with a crown of precious stones  
Kept in the old church of Saint Andrew in Patras, Greece, prior to the fifteenth century  
Brought to Rome by Thomas Palaiologos 1462 and in Pienza, Italy, until 1964  
Now in the new church of Saint Andrew in Patras (?)



Figure I.5

Italo-Byzantine staurotheke, or Reliquary of the True Cross  
Wood, silver, gilt filigree, enamel, glass and precious stones  
Tablet approximately 12.5" wide x 18" tall  
Gallerie dell'Accademia (Venice, Italy)

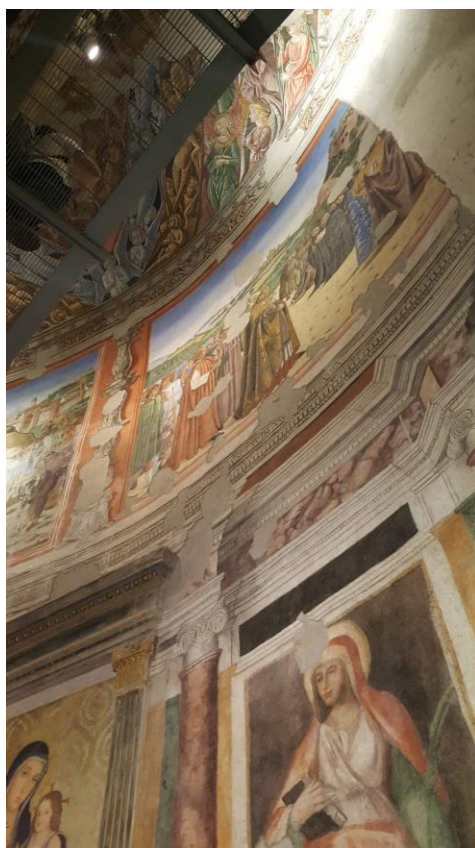
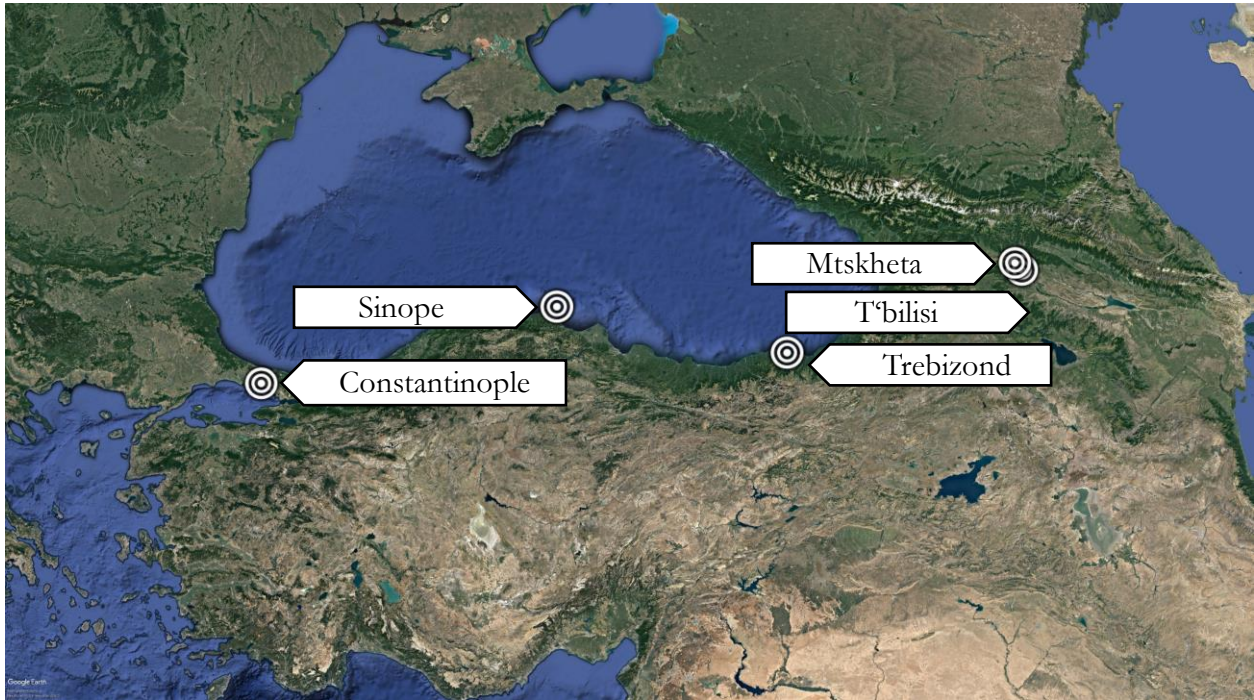


Figure I.6

Antoniazio Romano and workshop  
Frescoes in the funerary chapel of Bessarion  
Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles (Rome, Italy)  
Featuring scenes of the appearances of Saint Michael, Archangel in Europe  
Work begun in ca. 1464, continuing in ca. 1467–68 (?)

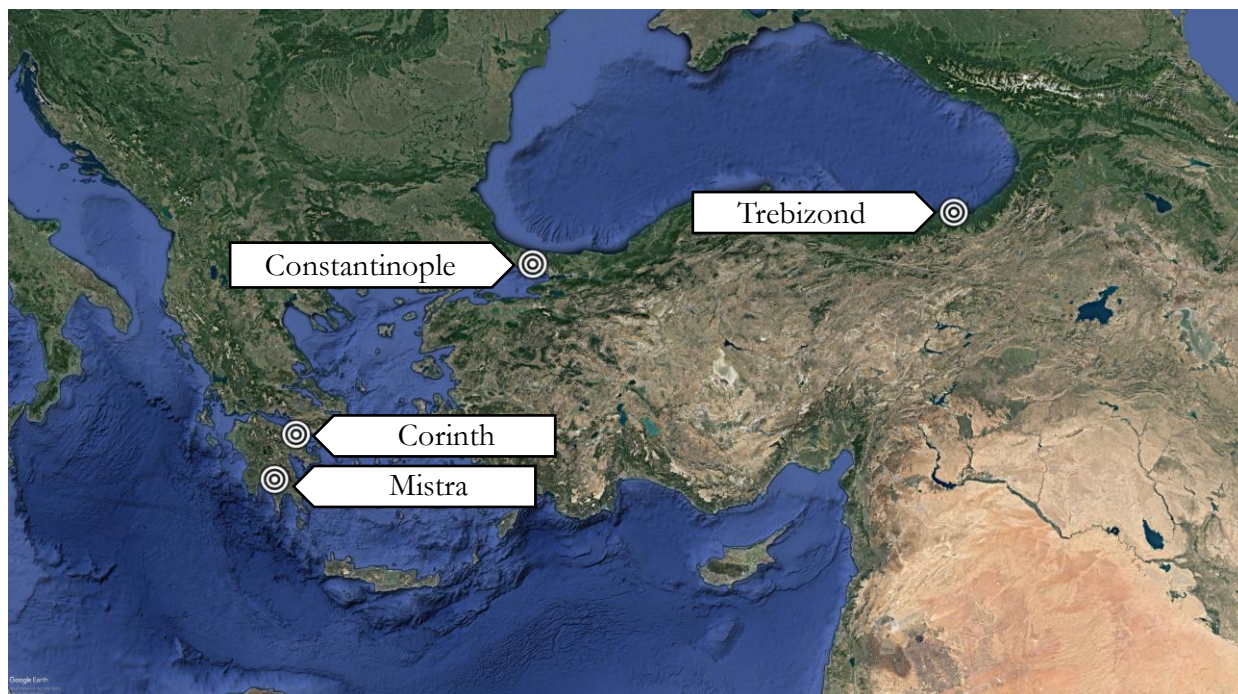
CHAPTER 1



Map 1.1

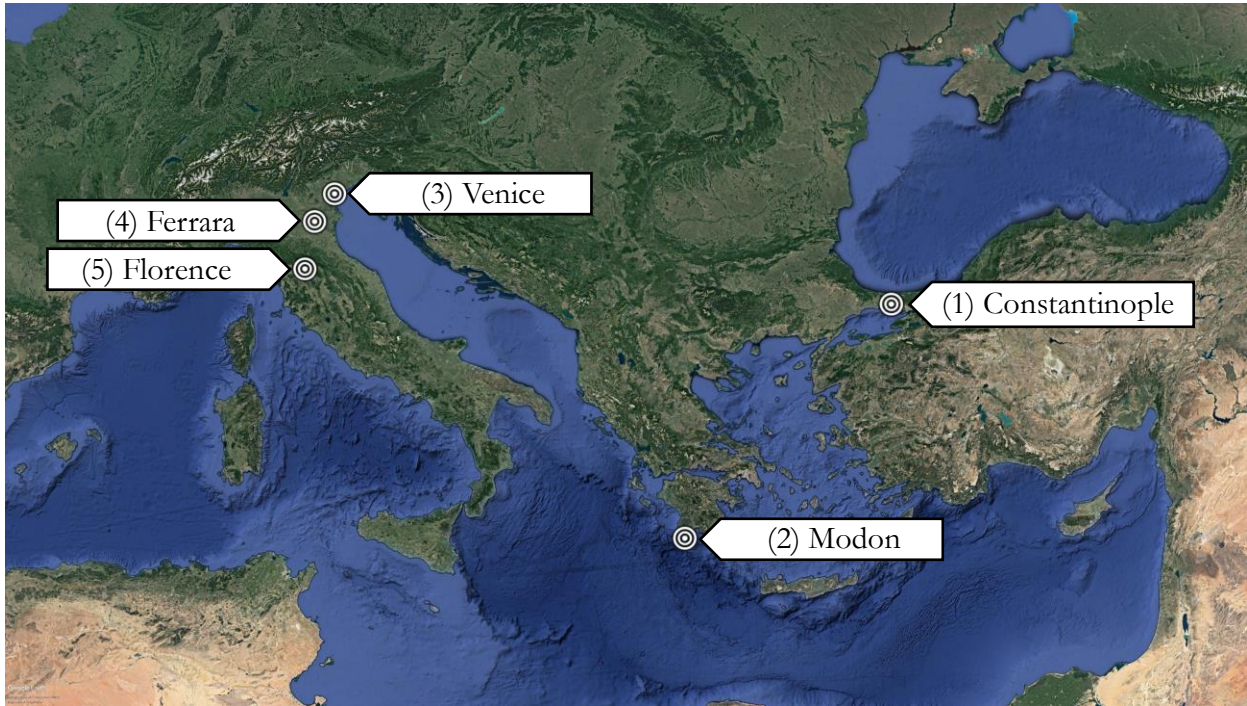
Cities in and around the kingdom of Trebizond





Map 1.2

The second phase of Bessarion's education in Mistra

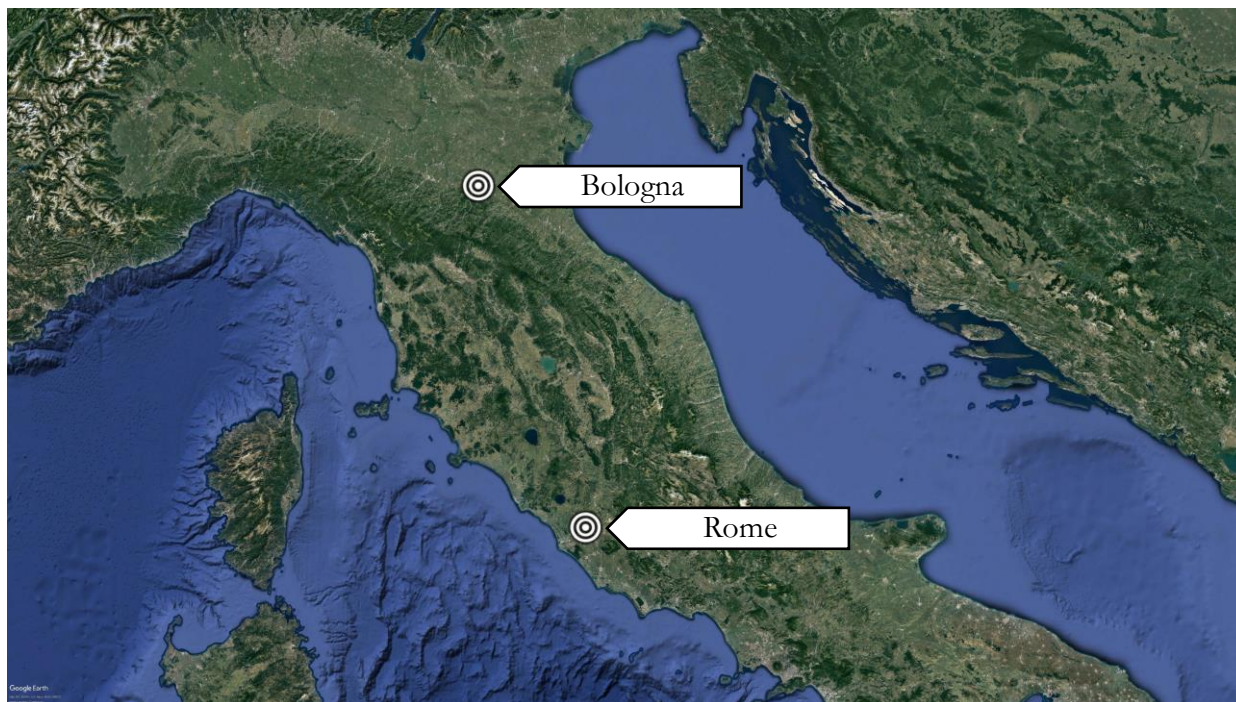


Map 1.3

A few stops in the path of the Greek delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence

CHAPTER 2





Map 2.1

Bessarion's legation to Bologna



Figure 2.1

Frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*

Cod. Gr. 388 (= 333), folio 6 (verso)

Paintings on vellum, completed by an Italian artist in ca. 1454

Polyglot inscription in the hand of Niccolò Perotti

Individual folio approximately 23" x 17" (58.5 cm x 43.5 cm), or 2' x 3' when open

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Venice, Italy)



Figure 2.2

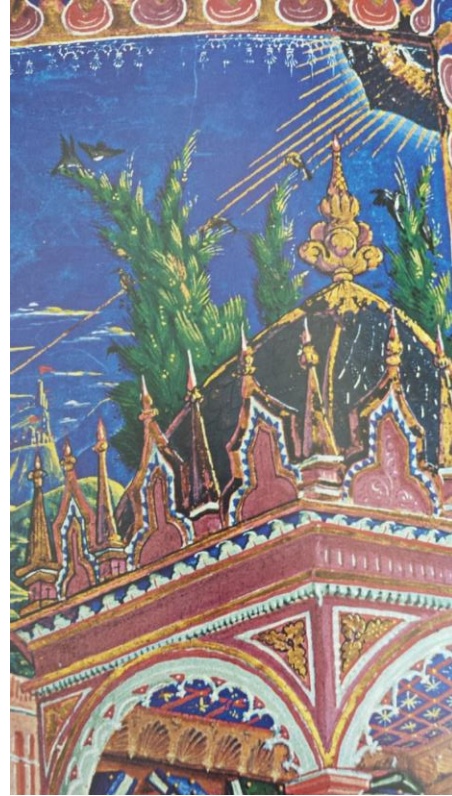
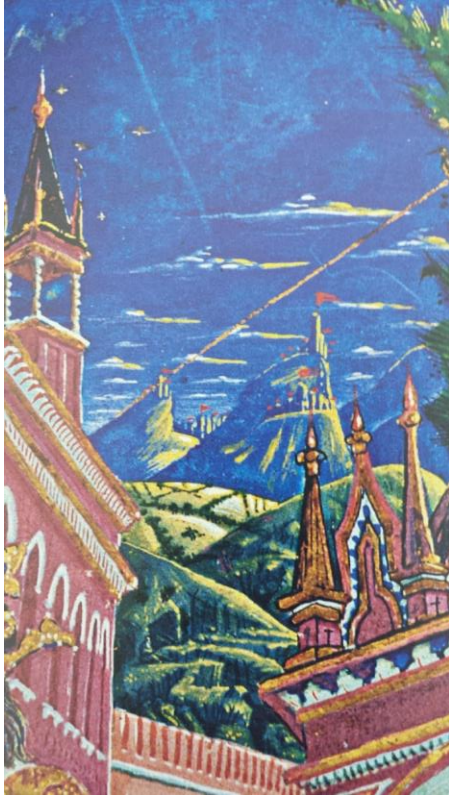
The central figure from the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*





Figure 2.3

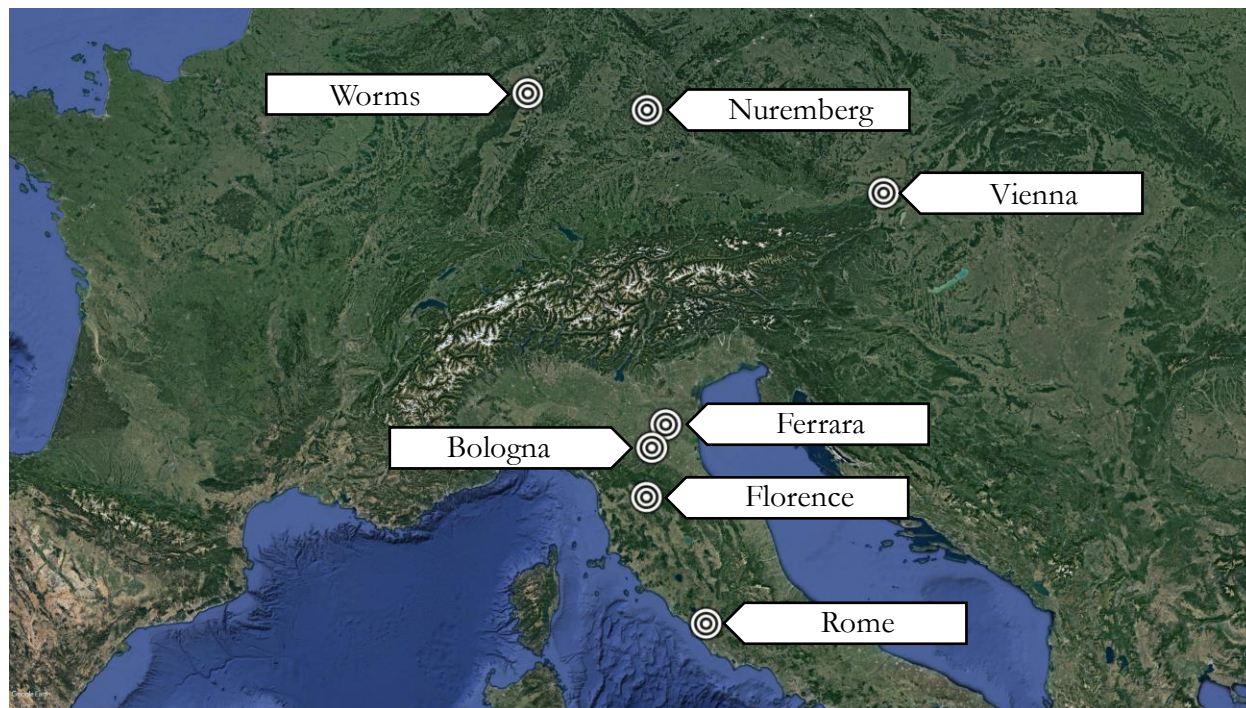
Astronomical map from the vault over the high altar of the Old Sacristy in San Lorenzo  
(Florence, Italy)



Figures 2.4 and 2.5

Details of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*

*Left*, A ray of light strikes a tower on a distant hill  
*Right*, A celestial event

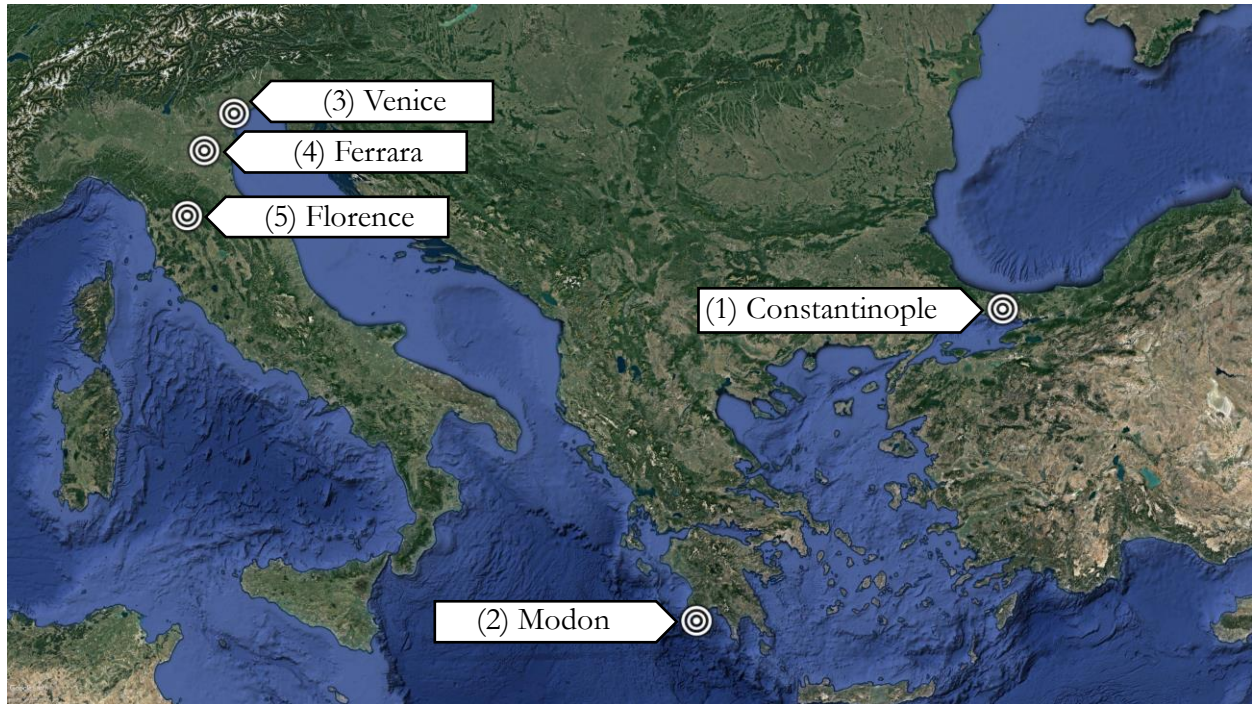


Map 2.2

Arrival points for several legations undertaken by Bessarion in Europe from 1438-61

Council of Ferrara-Florence, 1438–39  
Bologna, 1450–55  
Nuremberg, Worms, and Vienna, 1460–61





Map 2.3

Several stops on the Greek delegation's path to the Council of Ferrara-Florence



Figure 2.6

*Left*, Detail from Joos van Wassenhove and Pedro Berruguete's Portrait of Cardinal Bessarion  
ca. 1476

Figure 2.7

*Right*, Detail from a woodcut portrait of Cardinal Bessarion  
1577





Figure 2.8

Detail of a frontispiece from the Bessarion choral books, with an image of his coat of arms

Volume 8, c. 1r

Begun before 1453, or ca. 1452 (?)

Tempera and gold leaf on parchment

Biblioteca Malatestiana (Cesena, Italy)

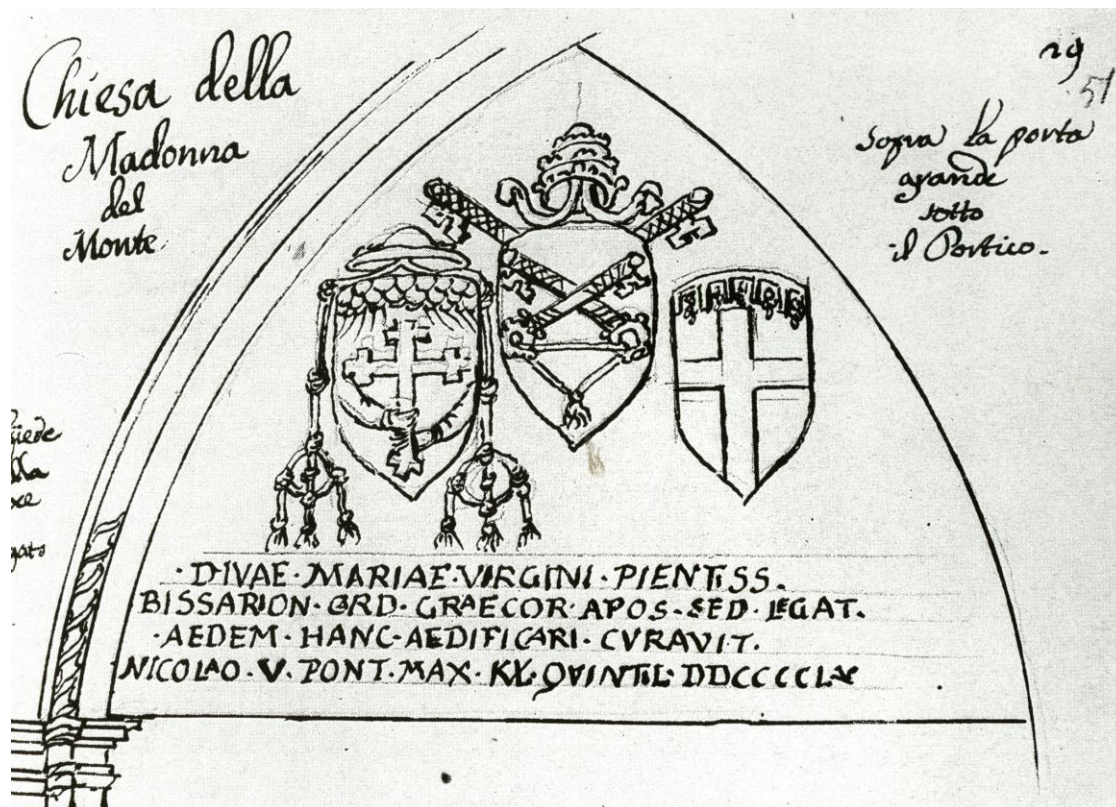


Figure 2.9

Drawing of the coat of arms of Bessarion and Pope Nicholas V above the main door of the Chiesa della Madonna del Monte, outside of Bologna  
Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Ms. B. 114 (Bologna, Italy)



Figure 2.10

Gentile Bellini

Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità  
in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary  
ca. 1472–73, or before April 11, 1474  
Egg tempura with gold and silver on panel  
Approximately 3' 6" tall x 14 1/2" wide (102.3 cm x 37.2 cm)  
National Gallery (London, England)

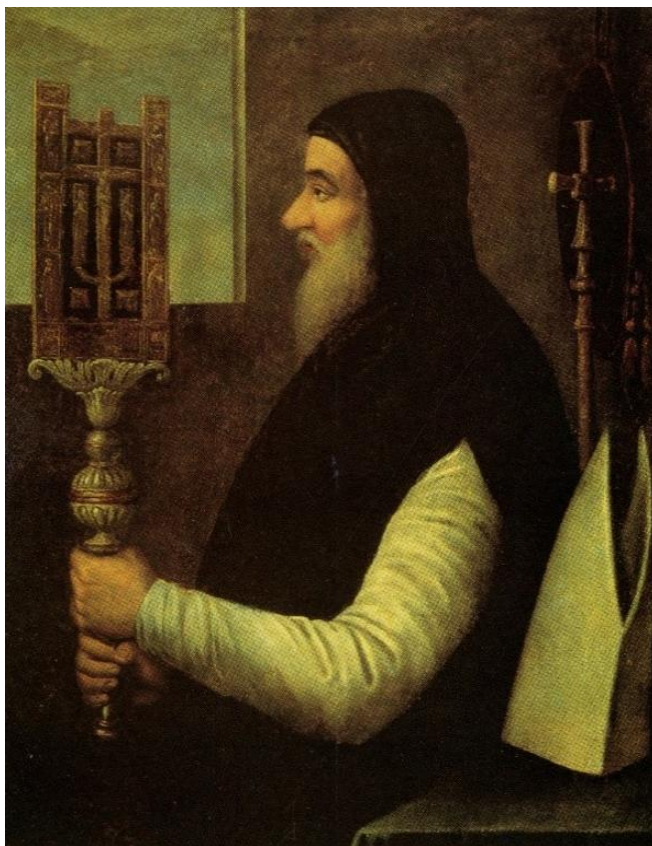


Figure 2.11

Anonymous painter from the Veneto  
Posthumous portrait of Bessarion holding the Reliquary of the True Cross  
Commissioned by the brothers of the Scuola della Carità in 1540  
Canvas approximately 3' 9" tall x 3' 1" wide  
Gallerie dell'Accademia (Venice, Italy)





Figure 2.12

Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a “praying monk”

Volume 5, c. 1r

Begun before 1453, or ca. 1452 (?)

Tempera and gold leaf on parchment

Approximately 26 1/2” tall x 16” wide (57.5 cm x 41 cm)

Biblioteca Maltestiana (Cesena, Italy)



Figure 2.13

Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a red cardinal's hat  
Volume 5, c. 1r  
Biblioteca Maltestiana (Cesena, Italy)



Figure 2.14

Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a “kneeling monk offering his soul to God”

Volume 2, c. 1r

Biblioteca Maltestiana (Cesena, Italy)

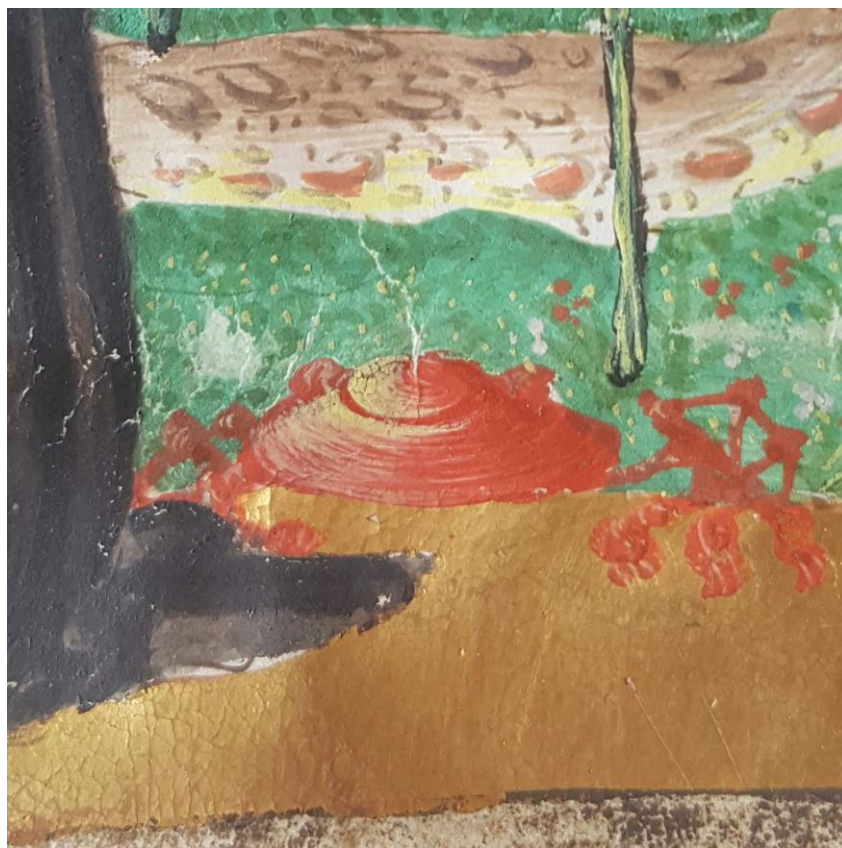


Figure 2.15

Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a red cardinal's hat

Volume 2, c. 1r

Biblioteca Maltestiana (Cesena, Italy)





Figure 2.16

Detail of Bessarion's coat of arms, showing stars and rays of light,  
from the cardinal's tomb monument in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles



Figure 2.17

Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography* showing a second painted astrolabe

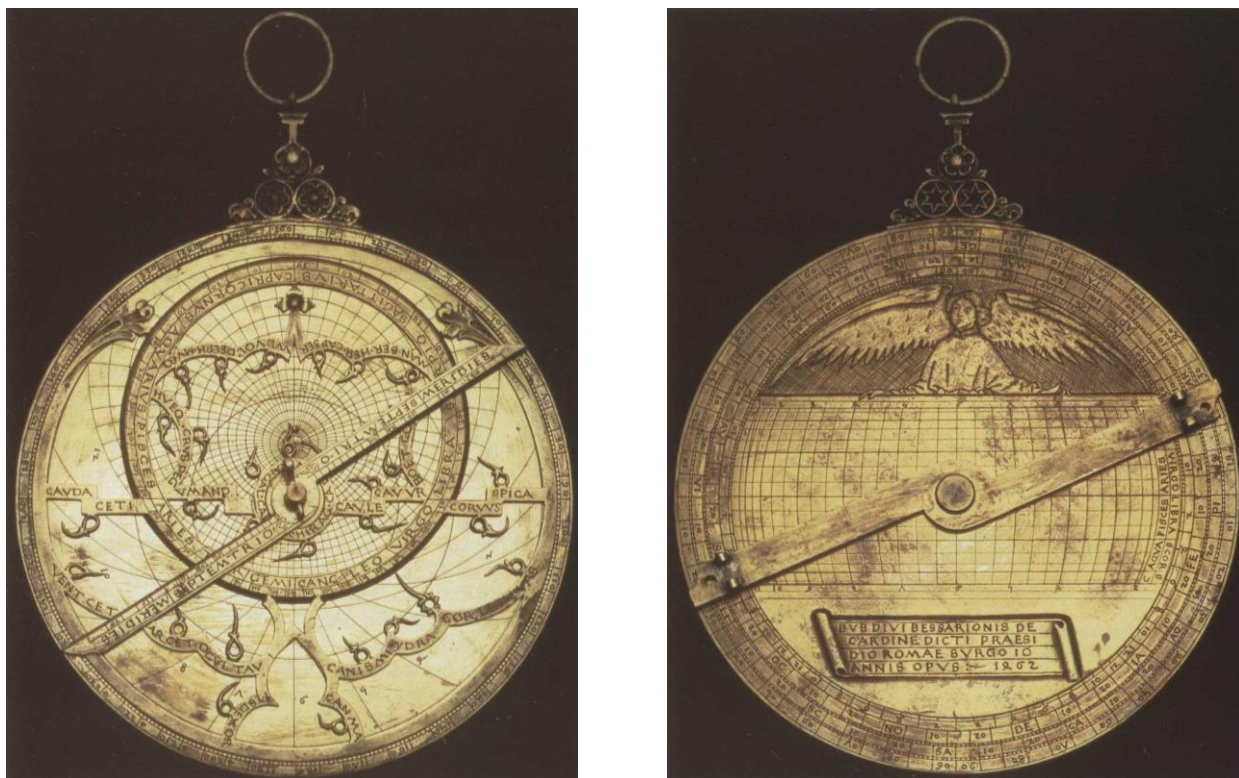


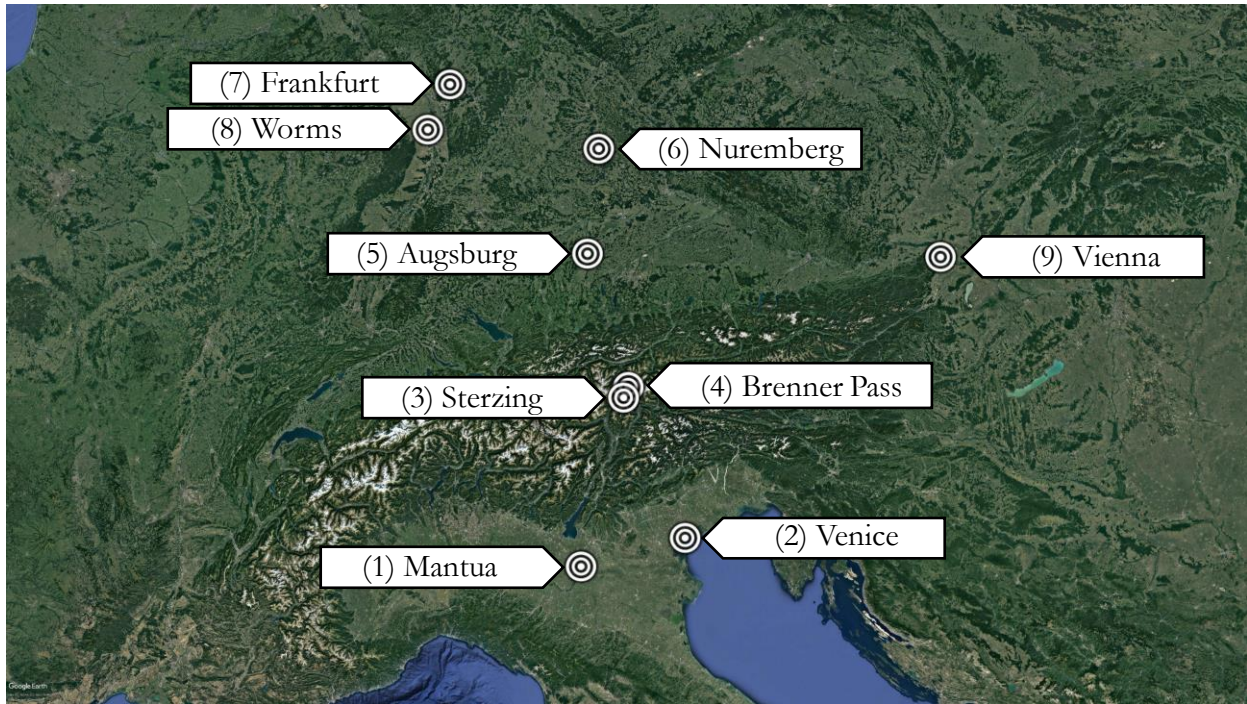
Figure 2.18

Astrolabe commissioned by Regiomontanus and dedicated to Bessarion in 1462 (front and back)

Approximately 4" in diameter

Private collection





Map 2.4

Several points on Bessarion's legation to the northern territories from 1460–61,  
Including the diets at Nuremberg, Worms, and Vienna

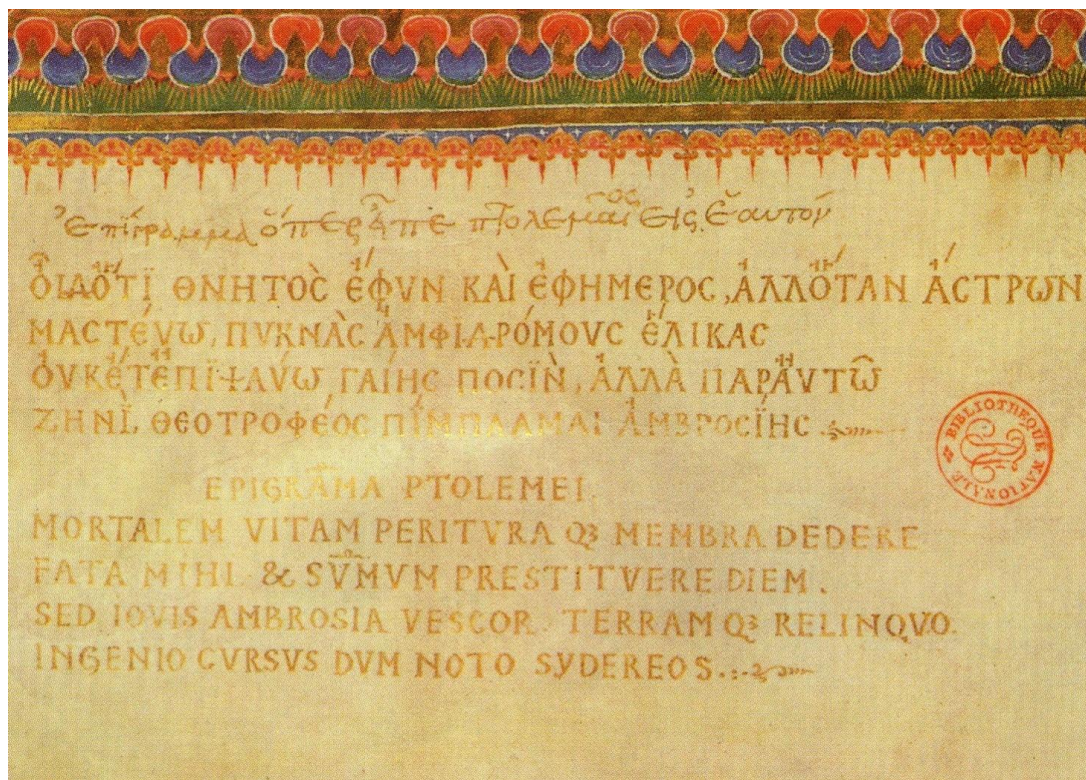


Figure 2.19

Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*  
 Showing the epigram from Planudes' *Greek Anthology*



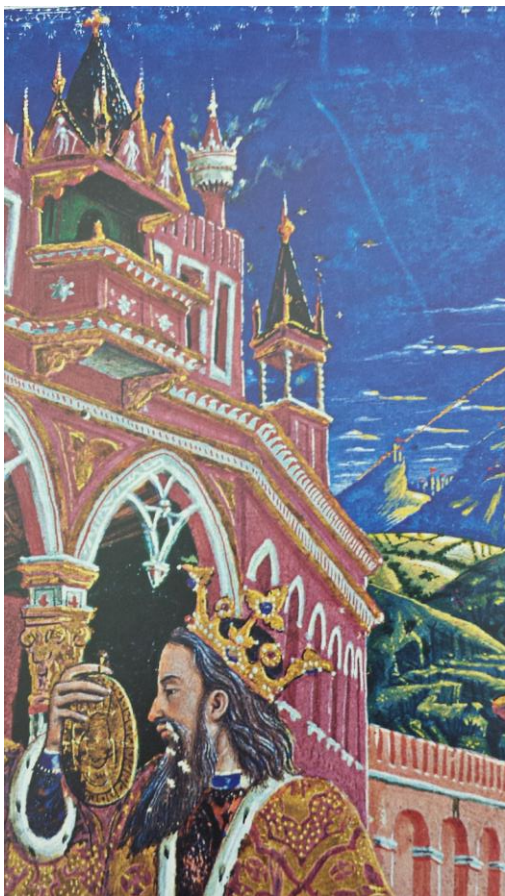


Figure 2.20

*Left*, Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*, showing an observation tower

Figure 2.21

*Right*, Mosaic of Saint Mark's Voyage to Alexandria  
 Basilica of San Marco (Venice, Italy)  
 14<sup>th</sup> century



Figure 2.22

Facsimile of the world map from Ptolemy's *Geography*  
 Cod. Gr. 388 (= 333), folio 50, verso - 51, recto  
 Original in the Biblioteca Marciana (Venice, Italy)

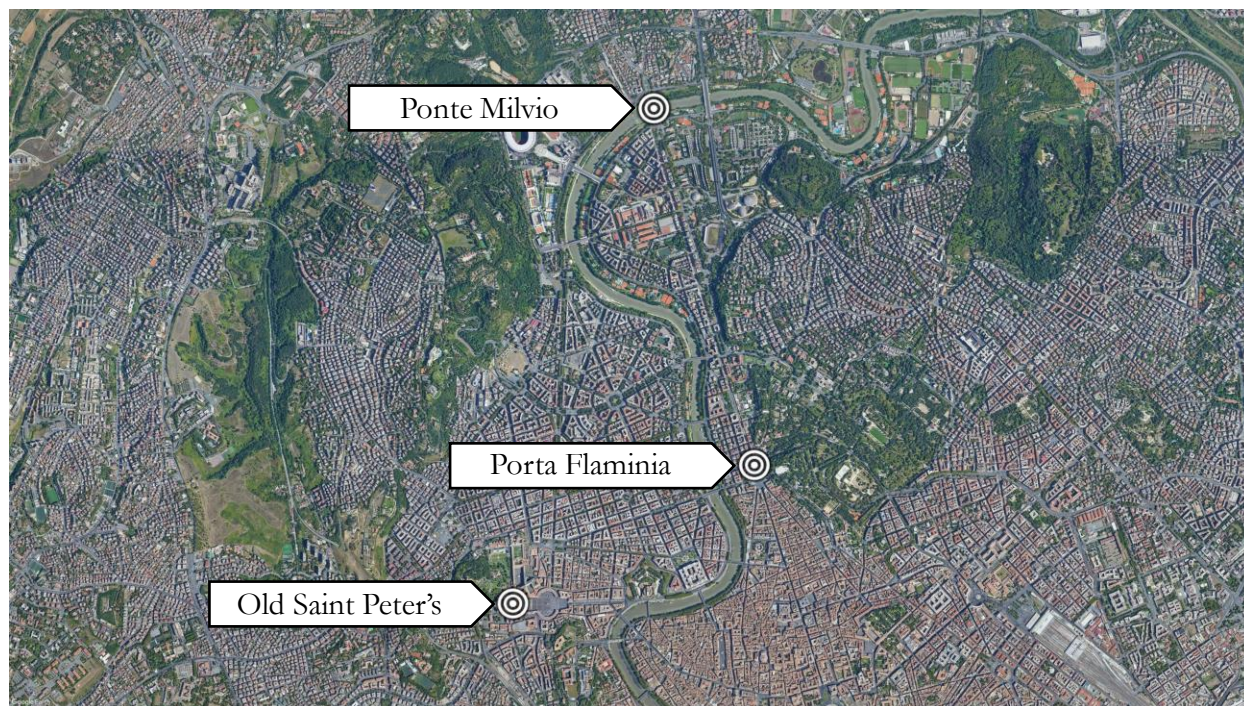
CHAPTER 3





Figure 3.1

Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew  
Silver gilt with a removable crown of precious stones  
Kept in the old church of Saint Andrew in Patras, Greece, prior to the fifteenth century  
Brought to Rome by Thomas Palaiologos 1462 and in Pienza, Italy, until 1964  
Now in the new church of Saint Andrew in Patras (?)



Map 3.1

The procession of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew from the Milvian Bridge to the Porta Flaminia; and from the city gate to the church of Old Saint Peter's





Map 3.2

Points in Thomas Palaiologos' path from Mistra to Rome and the transport of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew from Patras



Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4

Pope Paul VI examines the contents of the Byzantine reliquary head Saint Andrew in 1964 with other church officials and carries it in a procession through the church of Old Saint Peter's in Rome

**U.S. CLERICS BACK RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1  
spect for the opinion of mankind."

The Boston Cardinal then turned to Lord Acton for the remark that "freedom is the highest political end."

The declaration is intended to erase the concept, abandoned long ago in practice but never formally in theory, that the church has the right to adopt any means to save souls from heresy.

Another intention of the declaration, as Raul Cardinal Silva Henriquez, Archbishop of Santiago, Chile, pointed out, is to dispel a belief encountered in the non-Catholic world that the church supports religious liberty where it is in a minority position but would suppress it for others where its dominance would permit. Until recently, this was the case in predominantly Catholic Spain.

These and similar arguments were made by the Most Rev. Emile-Joseph de Smedt, Bishop of Bruges, Belgium, in presenting the draft to the Council and by two other American prelates, Joseph Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis and Albert Cardinal Meyer of Chicago. Cardinal Ottaviani and other Italian and Spanish prelates replied with traditional views of the issue.

**Defense of Faith Urged**

The 73-year-old Cardinal Ottaviani, a Curia prelate making his first appearance at the present session, argued, according to a summary of the Latin debate, that "those professing revealed religion have rights over and above those coming from the natural law" and that "we must profess and defend our Catholic faith no matter what the consequences."

He challenged the implicit idea of the draft that the state should be content to leave reli-

**Pope Takes Relic of Saint to Council**



**Pope Paul VI opens morning session of Ecumenical Council carrying reliquary with what is venerated as head of St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, to be sent to Greece.**

Special to The New York Times

ROME, Sept. 23—Pope Paul VI attended the opening of today's session of the Ecumenical Council, carrying in solemn procession the gold reliquary containing what is said to be the head of St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter. The relic is to be returned Saturday to Patras, Greece,

where the saint was crucified. The relic was sent to Rome in 1452 for safekeeping against Moslem expansion in the Middle East. Its return is interpreted as a gesture of goodwill toward the Eastern Orthodox Church, with which the Roman Catholic Church is seeking reconciliation and unity.

done at the Council will have much importance." . . . else the full power of the church under the leadership of the Pope.

**'Church Must Be Champion'**

ROME, Sept. 23 (AP)—Cardinal Cushing's address added a touch of drama to the session since it was the first time the unconventional, craggy-faced prelate had spoken in debate.

After his 10-minute talk in Latin, delivered in his booming voice with an unmistakable Boston accent, the Council ignored the rules and burst into a roar of applause.

"The church must become the champion of religious freedom," said the Cardinal. "We must insist on this declaration because it is so important for all nations. . . . It is something the Catholic world and non-Catholic world alike have been waiting for."

**Vatican Denies Charges Of Attacks on Red Regimes**

Special to The New York Times

ROME, Sept. 23—The Vatican radio denied today Hungarian Communist charges that Pope Paul VI and the Italian bishops had opened "attacks on Communist regimes."

The charges were made in a recent article in the Hungarian periodical *Vortele*, which also asserted that Pope Paul had broken with the policy of Pope John XXIII. Pope John, who died last year, sought contacts with some Communist countries to ameliorate the condition of Catholics in those countries.

"It would be wrong to consider the document of Sept. 15 [the limited agreement between the Vatican and Hungary] as an indication of a change in the radical ideological opposition of the world and of life," the Vatican radio said.

The statement said it would be dishonest to resort to unfounded accusations and threats of reprisal "that recall a method and mentality that should be . . . abandoned."

Figure 3.5

News clipping from *The New York Times* from Thursday, September 24, 1964, with the headline: "Pope Takes Relic of Saint to Council" and the caption "Pope Paul VI opens morning session of Ecumenical Council carrying reliquary with what is venerated as head St. Andrew, brother of St. Peter, to be sent to Greece"

## Pope Returns a Relic of Apostle To Greeks After Five Centuries

**Cardinal Bea Carries Object  
Venerated as St. Andrew's  
Skull to Port of Patras**

Special to The New York Times

**PATRAS, Greece, Sept. 26—** A relic venerated as the skull of St. Andrew the Apostle was returned today from the Vatican to Patras in a gesture of goodwill to the Greek Orthodox Church.

It was taken from this southern Greek port to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome 504 years ago. Its return by Pope Paul VI was marked by a striking revival of Byzantine pomp—and of the religious feuds that raged in the Middle Ages.

The ceremony was boycotted by Greece's 84-year-old Orthodox Primate, Archbishop Chrysostomos and scholars challenged the authenticity of the relic.

Resting in a golden reliquary shaped into the features of St. Andrew wearing a crown, the relic was brought by Augustin Cardinal Bea, the 83-year-old German Jesuit who is president of the Vatican Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian



Associated Press Cablephoto

**The golden reliquary being borne in Rome procession.**



Figure 3.6

News clipping from *The New York Times* from Sunday, September 27, 1964, with the headline “Pope Returns a Relic of Apostle To Greeks After Five Centuries” and the tagline “Cardinal Bea Carries Object Venerated as St. Andrew’s Skull to Port of Patras”

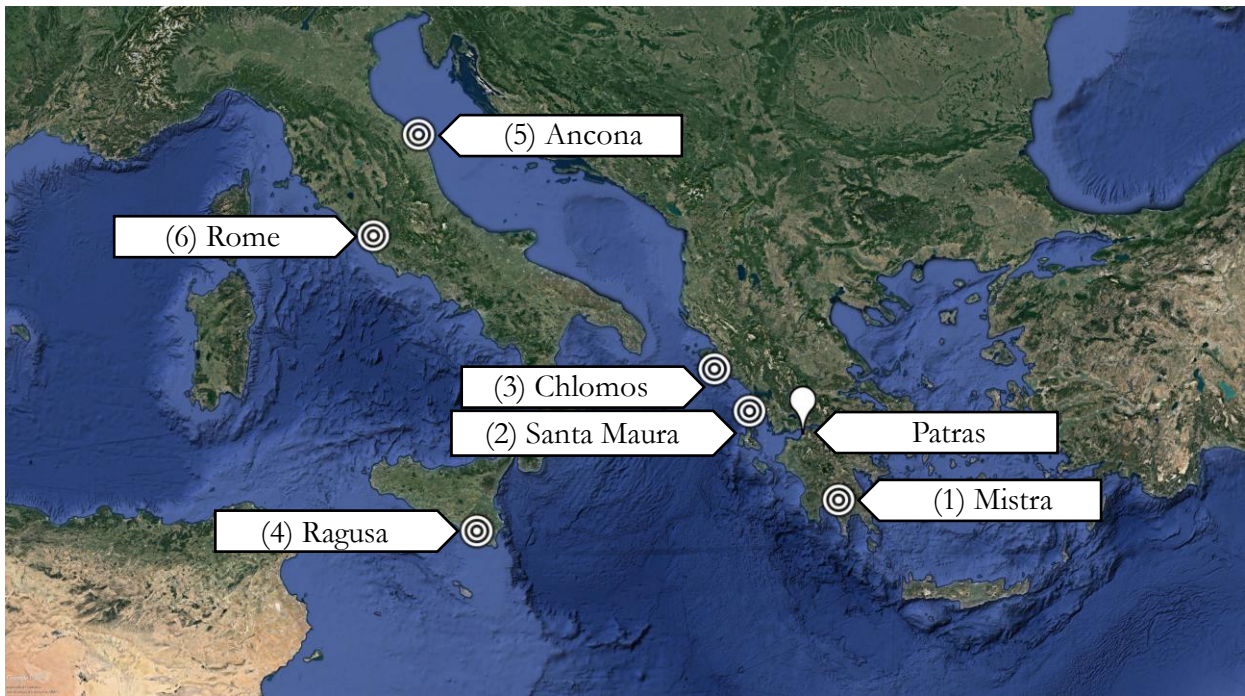




Figure 3.7

Screen shots of still frames from a video uploaded to the National Hellenic AudioVisual Archive, showing the arrival of the relics of Saint Andrew in Patras, Greece, on Saturday, September 26, 1964

*Top right, top left, and bottom left* The relic in the square of Trios Almamas in Patras  
*Bottom right* The reliquary in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Patras, showing Irene, the Crown Princess of Greece, kneeling in front of the object



Map 3.3

Thomas Palaiologos' path to Rome





Figure 3.8

Paolo Romano, with assistance from the “Master of Pius II” (?)  
 Tomb of Pope Pius II in the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle  
 Completed between ca. 1464/65 – 70

Rome, Italy

Tomb formerly in the Chapel of Saint Gregory in the church of Old Saint Peter’s  
 Structure moved to its current location in 1614  
 Pius’ remains moved from the Vatican Crypt around 1623



Figure 3.9

Detail of the tomb of Pope Pius II  
 Formerly in the chapel of Saint Gregory in Old Saint Peter's  
 Now in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle (Rome, Italy)

- (a) A reliquary head of Saint Andrew
- (b) Pope Pius II
- (c) Bessarion
- (d) An auditor
- (e) Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini
- (f) Thomas Palaiologos



Figure 3.10

Detail from the tomb of Pope Pius II  
Showing Pius and the reliquary head of Saint Andrew



Figure 3.11

Detail from the tomb of Pope Pius II  
Showing Bessarion with his hands clasped in prayer

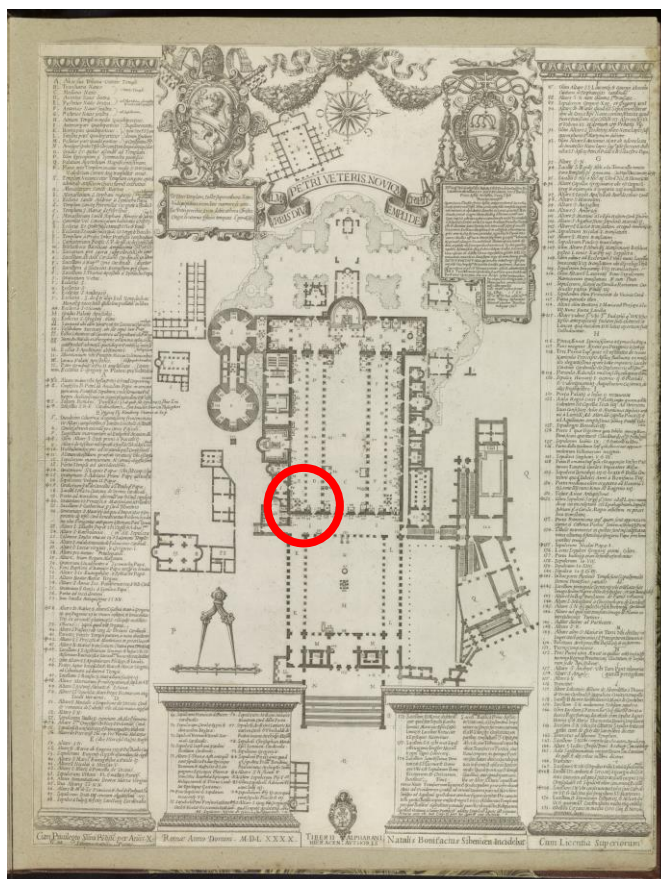


Figure 3.12

Engraved version of Tiberio Alfarano's plan of the basilica of Old Saint Peter's  
 Showing the location of the Chapel of Saint Gregory  
 ca. 1589–90, based on a drawing from 1571  
 Approximately 22" tall x 17" wide (56 cm x 43.5 cm)

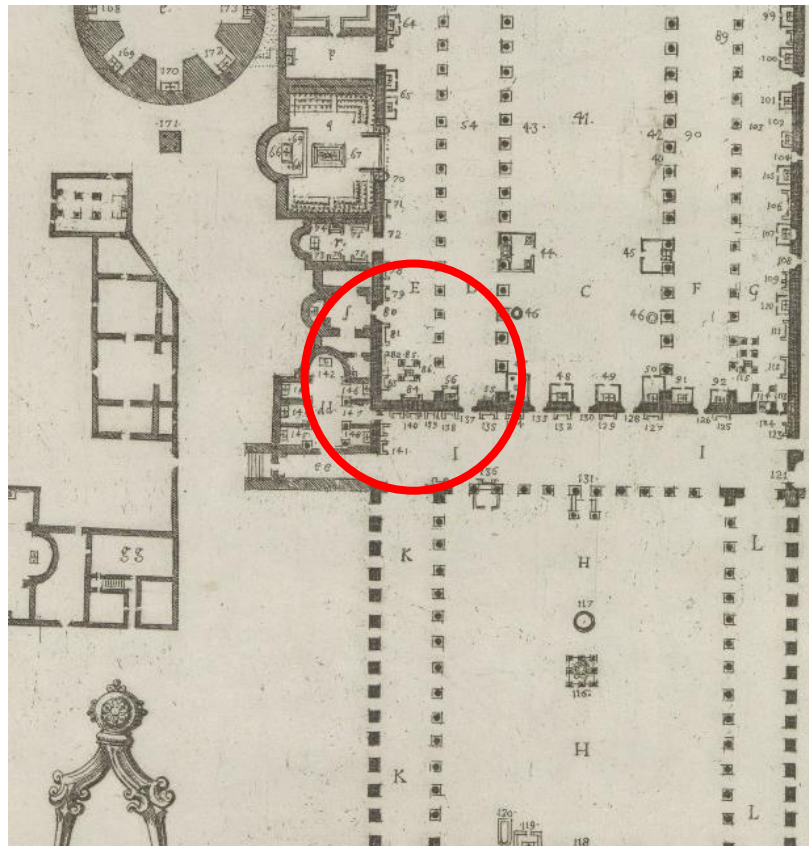


Figure 3.13

Detail from Tiberio Alfarano's plan  
Showing the Chapel of Saint Gregory





Figure 3.14

Giacomo Grimaldi

Drawing of the tempietto and ciborium of Saint Andrew over the altar of Saint Gregory

From the *Descrizione Della Basilica Antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*

Completed in or before 1619 and presented to Pope Paul V in 1620

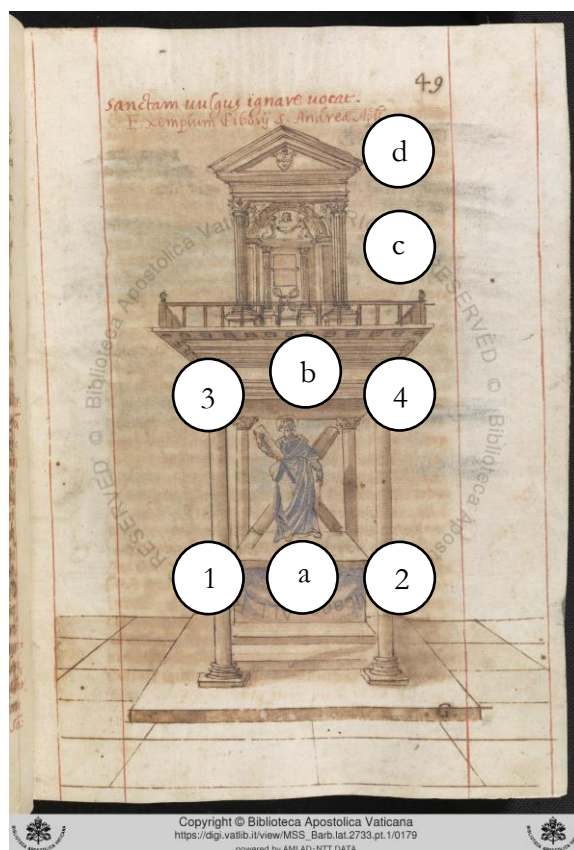


Figure 3.15

Grimaldi's drawing from the *Descrizione*  
Tempietto completed by Francesco del Borgo, ca. 1464–68

- (a) Altar of Saint Gregory
- (1), (2), (3), (4) Four columns commissioned by Pius II
- (b) Statue of Saint Andrew
- (c) Ciborium containing the reliquary head of Saint Andrew
- (d) Three-sided tabernacle



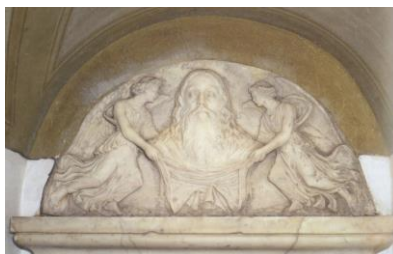


Figure 3.16

Lunettes from the tabernacle of Saint Andrew  
Featuring the exposition of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew

*Top*, Workshop of Paolo Romano (d. ca. 1470)

*Middle*, Workshop of Isaia da Pisa (d. ca. 1465)

*Bottom*, Workshop of the "Master of Pius II"



Figure 3.17 and 3.18

Comparison of Thomas' Byzantine reliquary and the reliquary in Romano's relief



Figure 3.19 and 3.20

Comparison of a Latin reliquary head of Saint Andrew created by the Florentine goldsmith Simone di Giovanni Ghini in ca. 1463–64 and the reliquary in Romano's relief

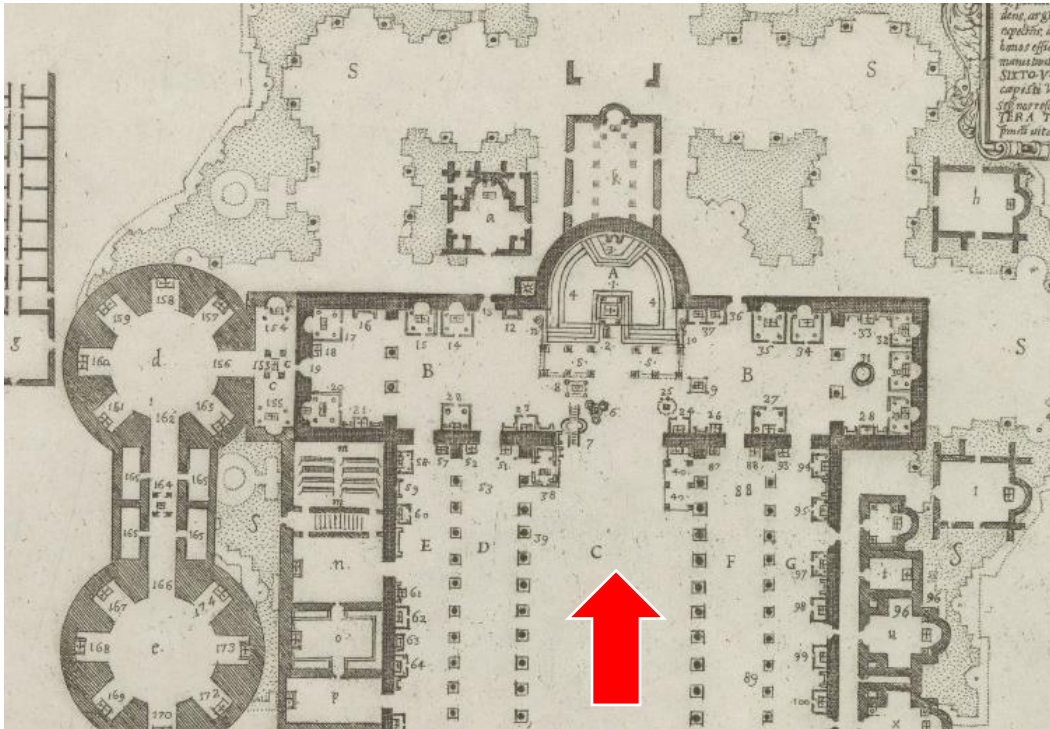


Figure 3.21

Detail from Tiberio Alfarano's plan of Old Saint Peter's  
 Showing the vantage of Romano's relief





Figure 3.22

Maerten van Heemskerck

Sketch of the interior view of the nave of Old Saint Peter's, including a view of the new dome  
and the hut of Bramante

ca. 1532–36

Pen and brown ink with wash

Römisches Skizzenbuch II (Roman Sketchbook II), folio 52, recto

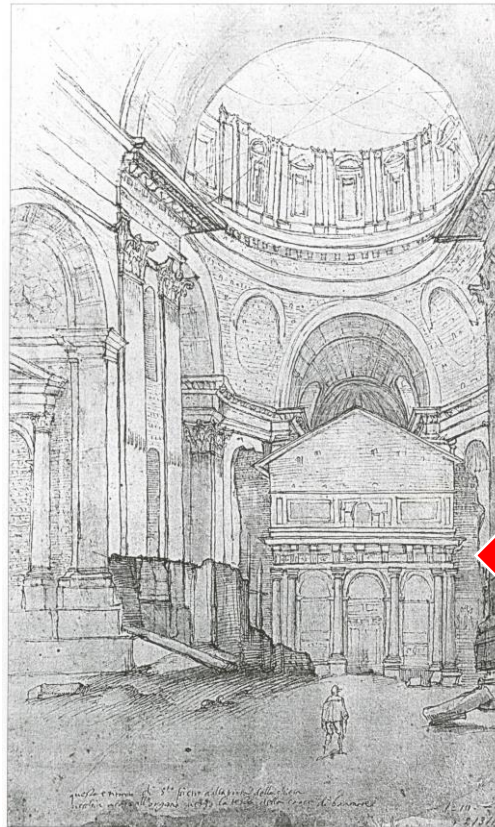


Figure 3.23

Battista Naldini (?)

*La tribuna di San Pietro vista dalla navata*

View of the nave of Old Saint Peter's, looking west, towards the high altar  
Hamburg Kunsthalle 21311

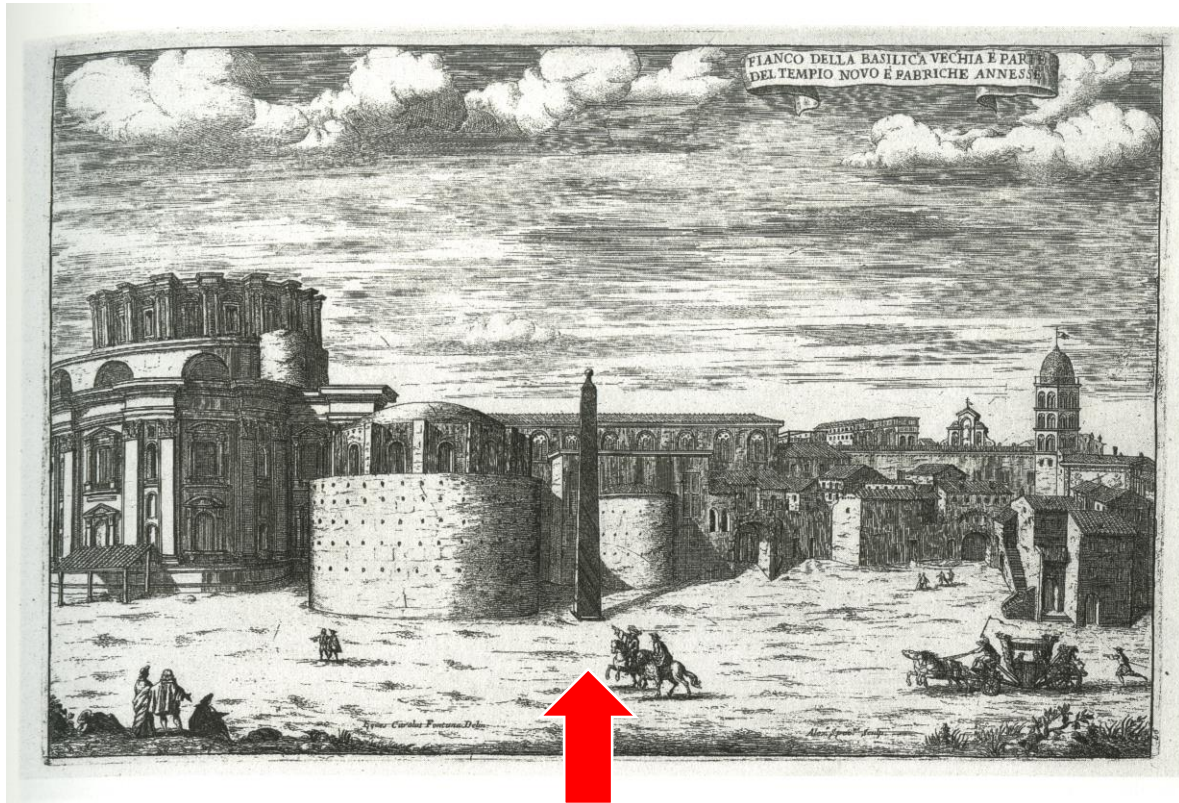


Figure 3.24

View of the south side of the church of Old Saint Peter's  
Showing the Vatican Obelisk  
From Carlo Fontana's *Templum Vaticanum*, published in 1694



Figure 3.25

Detail from the tomb of Pius II, showing the pope's effigy



CHAPTER 4



Figure 4.1

Italo-Byzantine staurotheke, or Reliquary of the True Cross  
Wood, silver, gilt filigree, enamel, glass and precious stones  
Tablet approximately 12.5" wide x 18" tall  
Gallerie dell'Accademia (Venice, Italy)



Figure 4.2

The cross of Eirene Palaiologina (front and back)

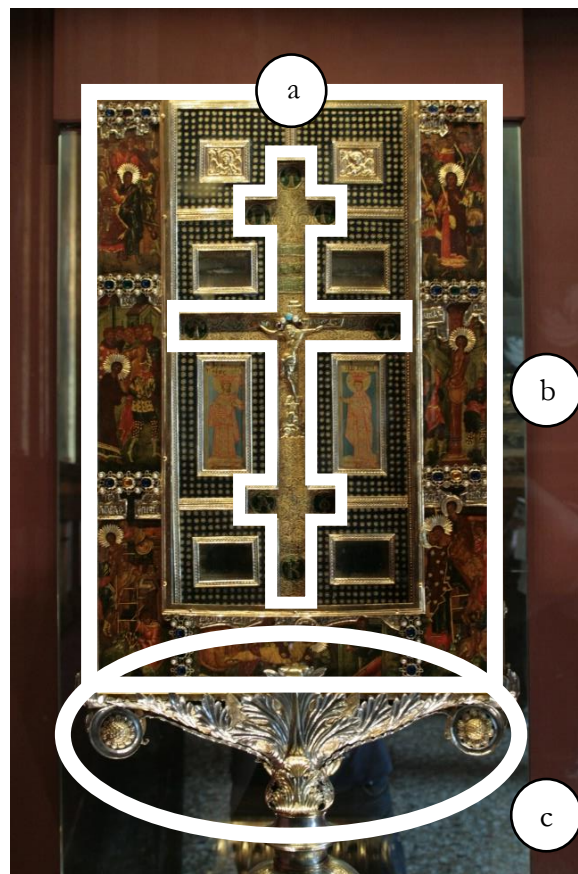


Figure 4.3

Early phases in the development of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary

- (a) Cross of Eirene, a freestanding, devotional object
- (b) Cross of Eirene is embedded in a surrounding wooden tablet
- (c) Bessarion commissions the addition of a silver processional handle

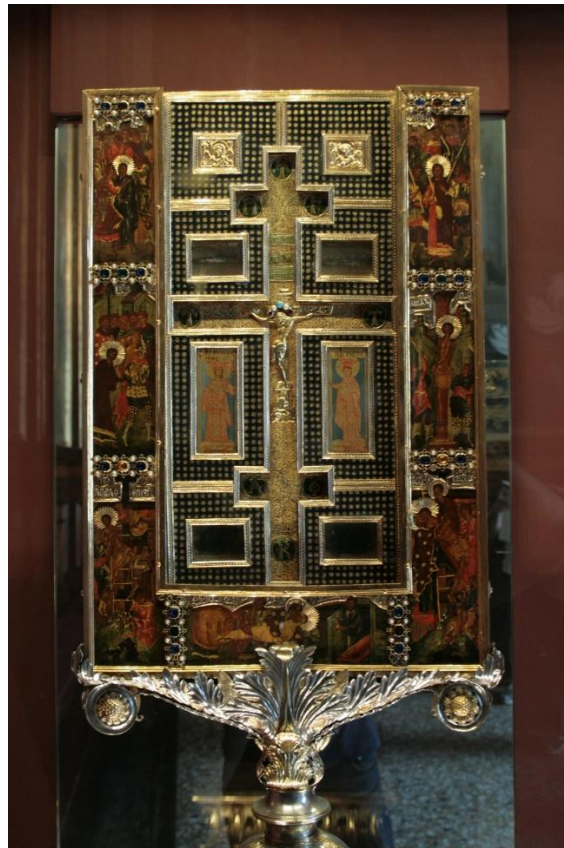


Figure 4.4

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary from out in front



Figure 4.5

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary  
Encased in a glass niche in the Sala del'Albergo



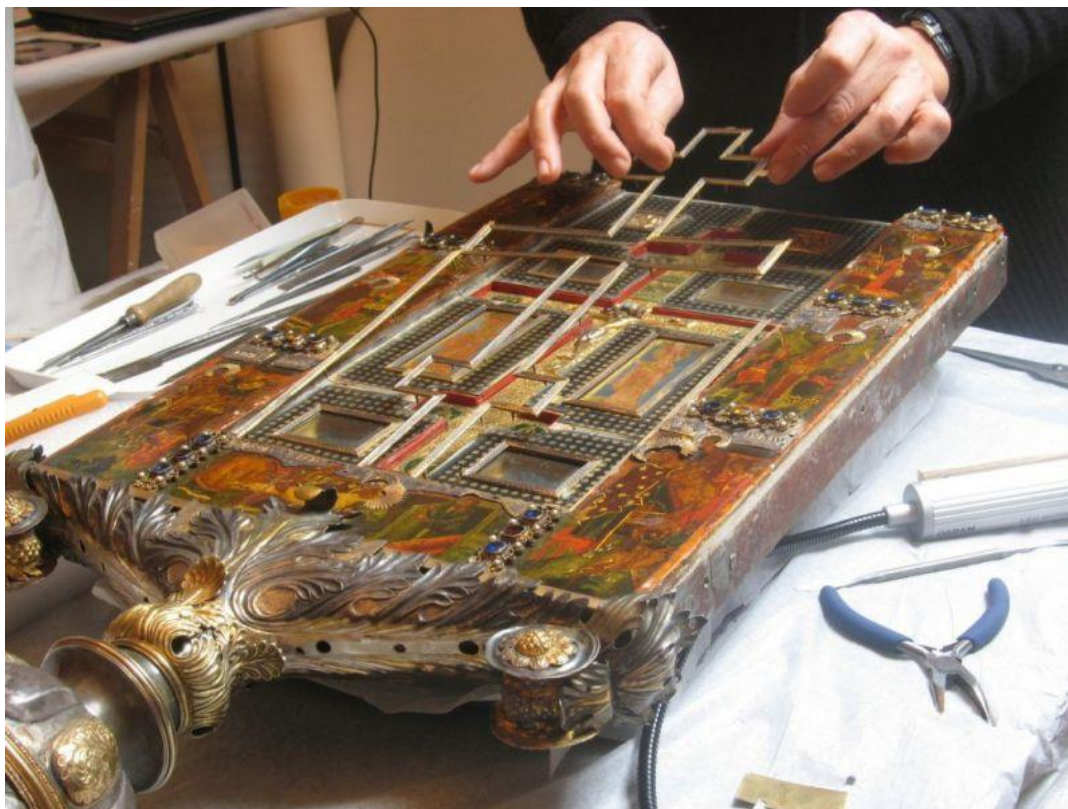


Figure 4.6

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary during restoration

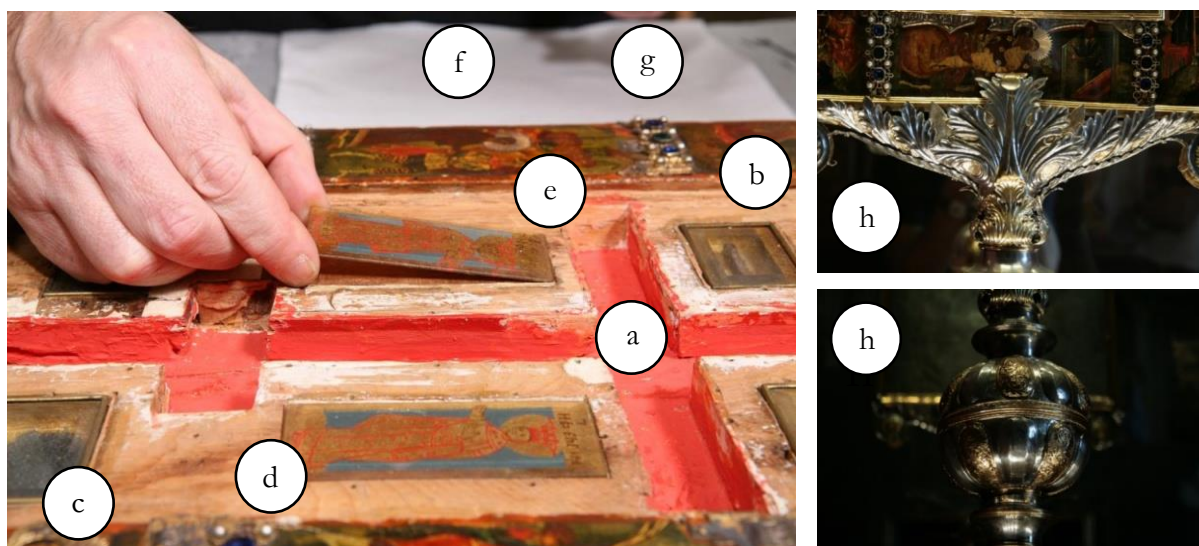


Figure 4.7

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary during restoration

- (a) The recess for Eirene's cross (removed)
- (b) Wood shard of the True Cross
- (c) Fabric from the Seamless Tunic of Christ
- (d) Painting on glass, set into enamel, of Helena
- (e) Painting on glass, set into enamel, of Constantine
- (f) Oil paintings of Christ's Passion
- (g) Strips of silver revetment with precious stones
- (h) Two views of the silver processional pole



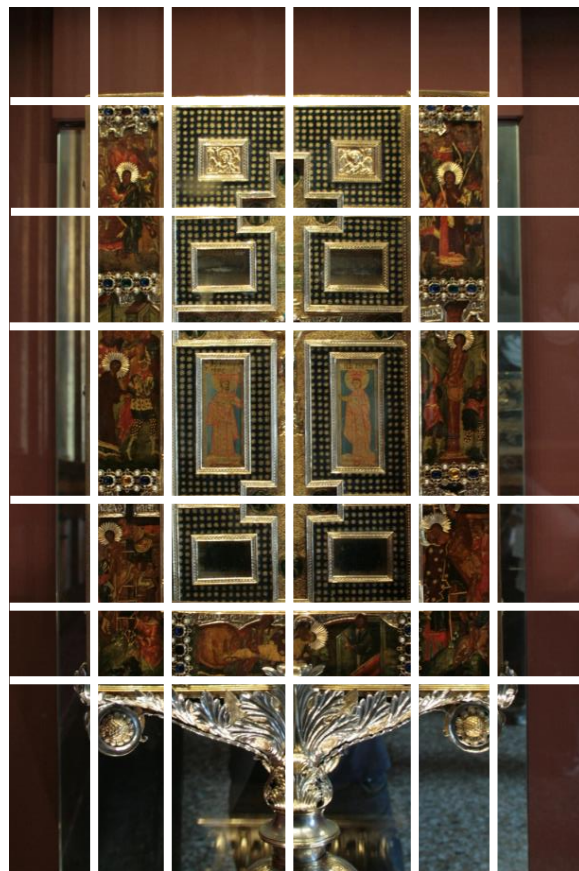


Figure 4.8

The rectilinear arrangement of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary

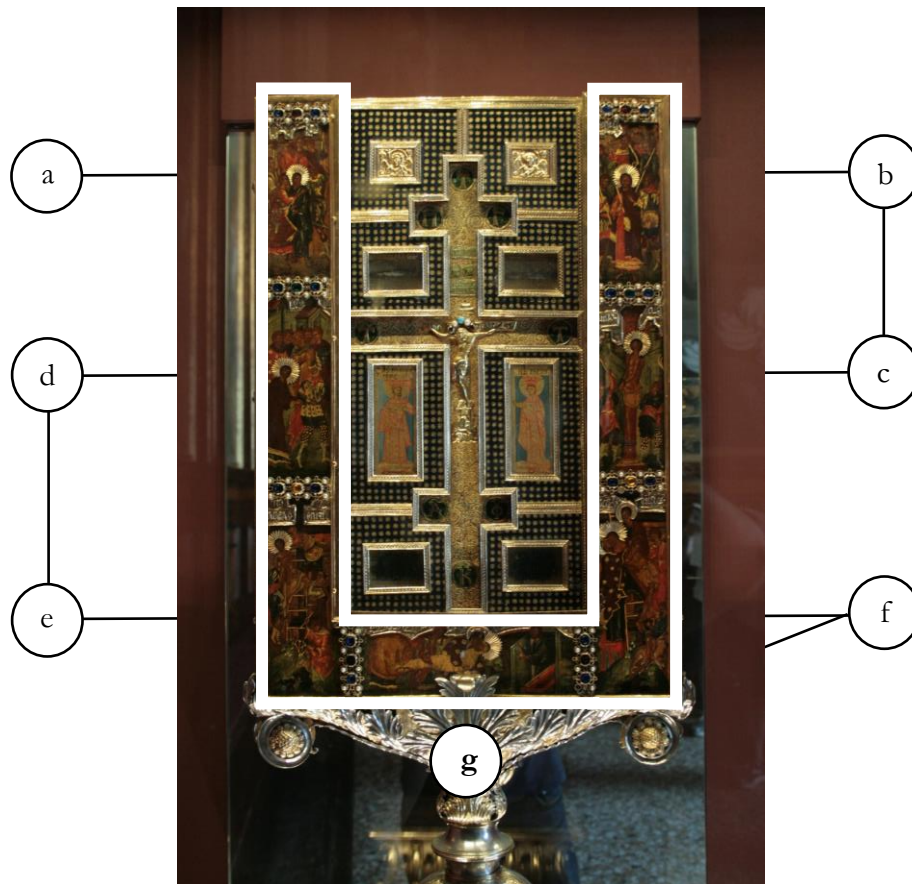


Figure 4.9

Oil paintings of Christ's Passion from the Italo-Byzantine reliquary

- (a) Betrayal
- (b) Mocking
- (c) Flagellation
- (d) The way to Calvary
- (e) Jesus nailed to the Cross
- (f) Deposition
- (g) Entombment

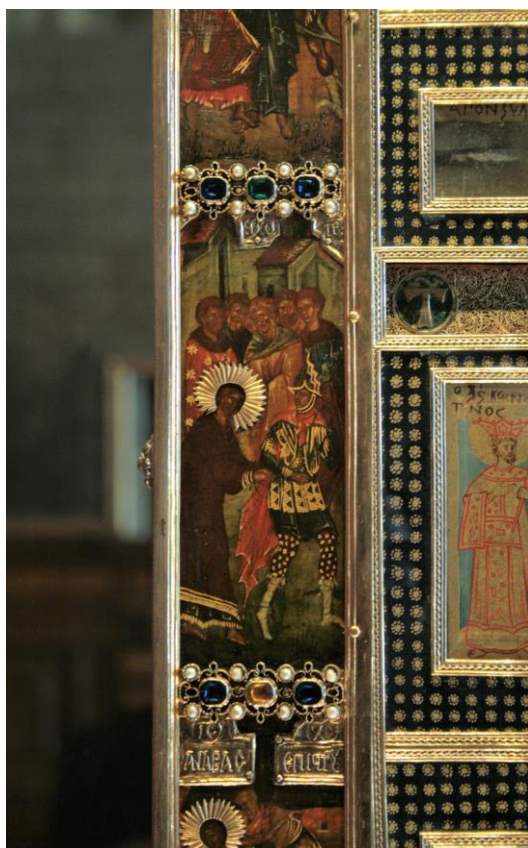


Figure 4.10

Detail of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary  
Showing the way to Calvary and the addition of silver revetment and precious stones

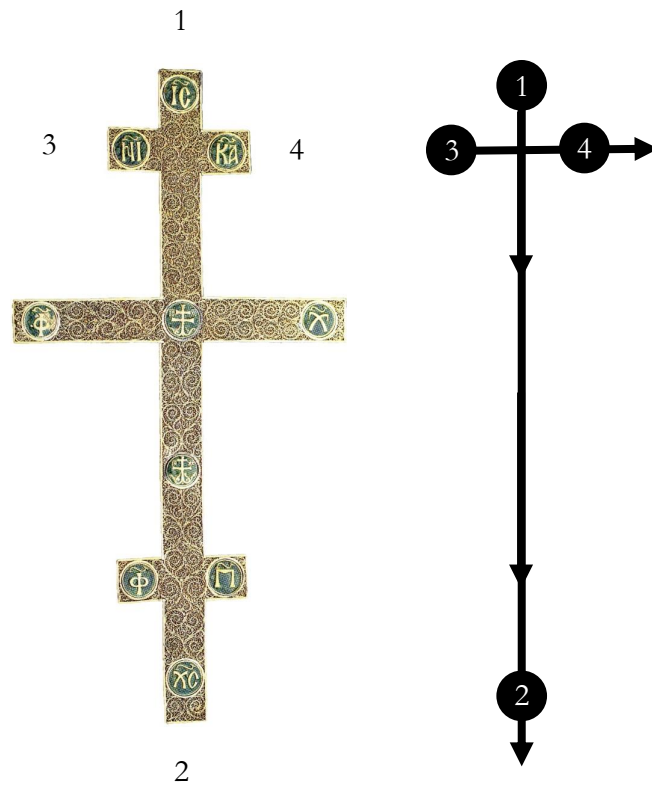


Figure 4.11

Back of the cross of Eirene  
 “Jesus Christ conquers”: IC XC NI KA

*Right* Showing the sanctifying action of crossing one’s chest with a hand

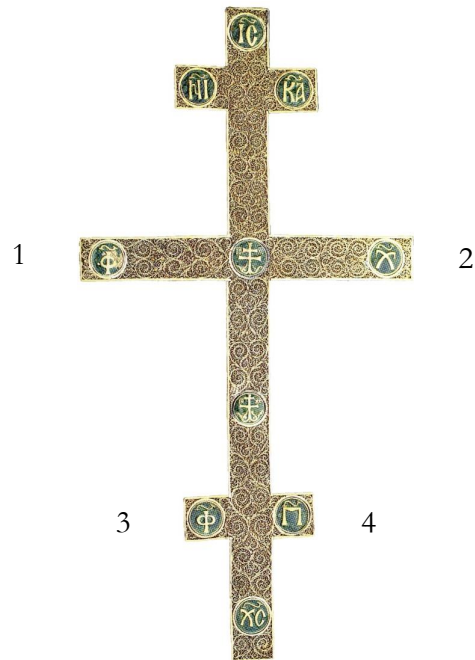


Figure 4.12

Back of the cross of Eirene  
"Christ's light is shining for all": Φ-X-Φ-Π



Figure 4.13

Front of the cross of Eirene  
“Jesus Christ”  
“The King of Glory”





Figure 4.14

Front of the cross of Eirene  
“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom”



Figure 4.15

Front of the cross of Eirene

“The place of the skull has become paradise”: Τ-Κ-Π-Γ





Figure 4.16

Front of the cross of Eirene

“The demons fear this typos,” or sign: T-T-Δ-Φ

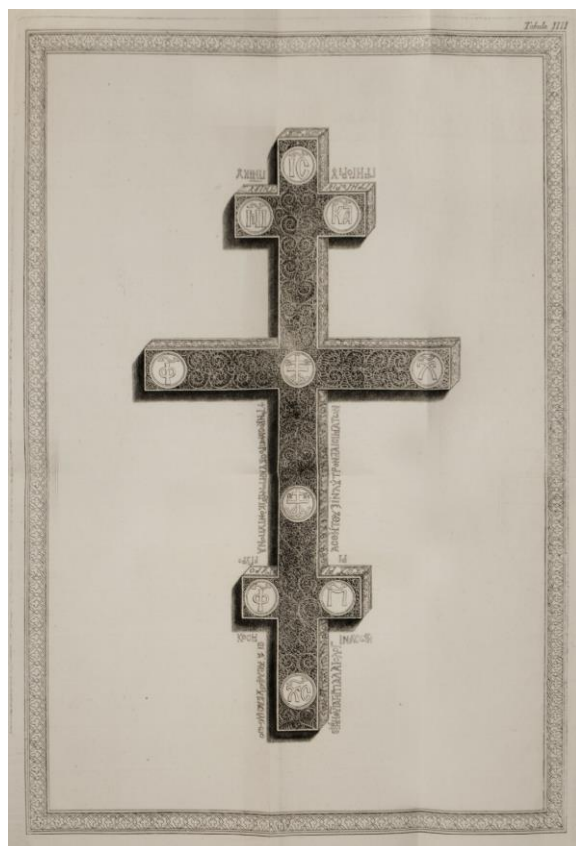


Figure 4.17

Engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene

Including a transcription of the donor's inscription along the outside edge

From J. B. Schioppalalba's *In perantiquam sacram tabulum graecam insigni sodalitate Sanctae Mariae Caritatis Venetiarum ab amplissimo Cardinali Bessarione dono datam dissertatio* ("A discussion of the remarkable ancient Greek tablet given by Cardinal Bessarion to the [the Scuola] of Santa Maria della Carità in Venice")

1767

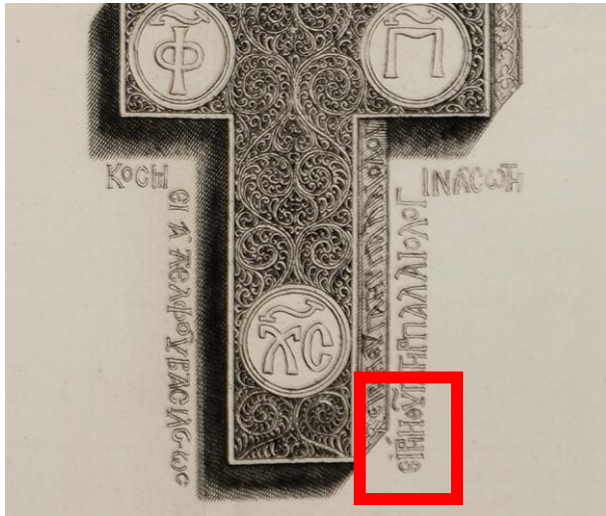


Figure 4.18

*Top*, Detail of the engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene  
With Eirene's name marked (ΕΙΡΗΗ; Εἰρήνη)

Figure 4.19

*Bottom*, Cross of Eirene, taken during the restoration process  
With Eirene's name, marked



Figure 4.20

*Top*, Detail of the engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene  
With “Gregory *pneumatikos*” marked (ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΠΙΝ[ΕΥΝΑΤ]ΙΚΟΥ)

Figure 4.21

*Bottom*, Cross of Eirene, taken during the restoration process  
With “Gregory *pneumatikos*” marked



Figure 4.22

Mosaic of the Harrowing of Hell  
Detail from the west vault of the central dome in the Basilica of San Marco  
Venice, Italy





Figure 4.23

Detail of a frontispiece from the Bessarion choral books, with an image of his coat of arms

Volume 8, c. 1r

Begun before 1453, or ca. 1452 (?)

Tempera and gold leaf on parchment

Biblioteca Malatestiana (Cesena, Italy)

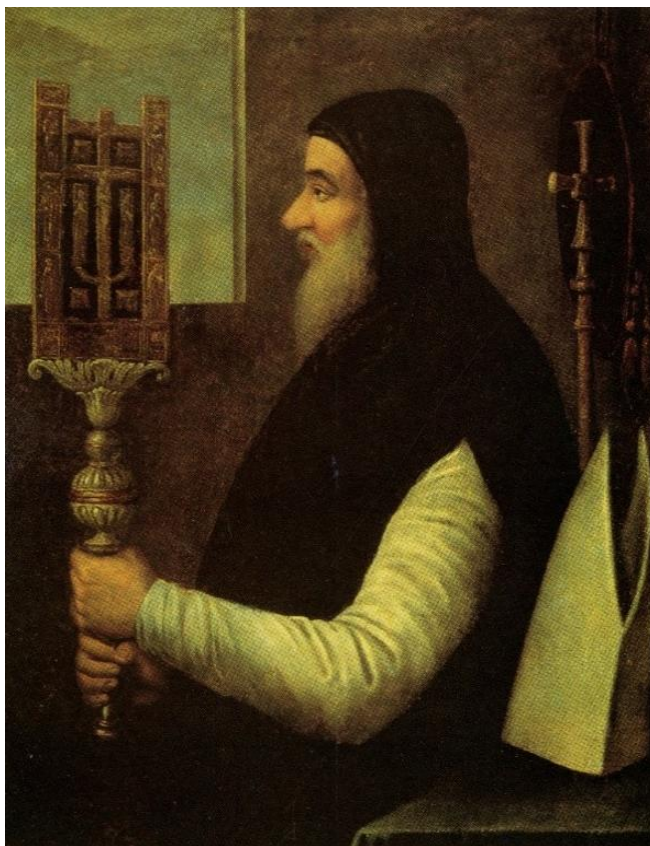


Figure 4.24

Anonymous painter from the Veneto  
Posthumous portrait of Bessarion holding the Reliquary of the True Cross  
Commissioned by the brothers of the Scuola della Carità in 1540  
Canvas approximately 3' 9" tall x 3' 1" wide  
Gallerie dell'Accademia (Venice, Italy)

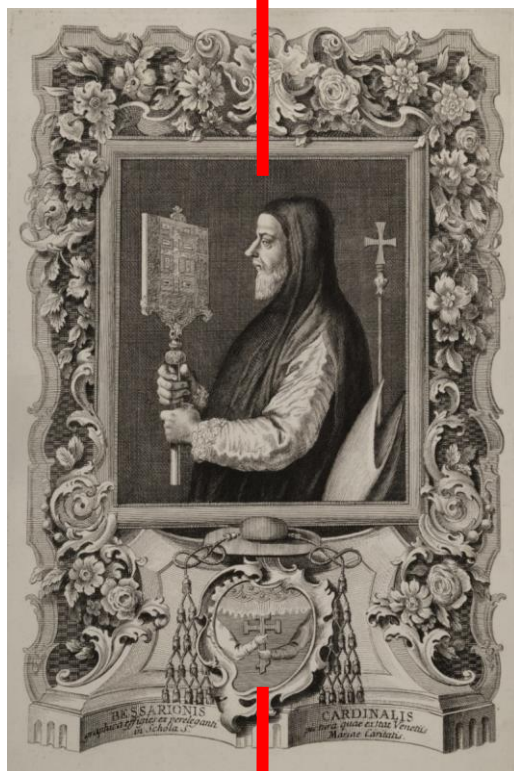


Figure 4.25

Posthumous portrait of Bessarion with the Italo-Byzantine reliquary and his coat of arms  
From J. B. Schioppalalba's treatise on the reliquary





Map 4.1

The legation to Venice (1463–64) and the gathering at Ancona (1464)



Figure 4.26

The back of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary  
Showing the dedicatory plaque that mentions Bessarion



Figures 4.27 and 4.28

Engravings showing the sliding lid of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary  
 From J. B. Schioppalalba's treatise on the Bessarion reliquary



Figure 4.29

The sliding lid of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary, featuring an icon of the Crucifixion

CHAPTER 5





Map 5.1

The gathering at Ancona



Figure 5.1

Blessed sword, a gift from Pope Pius II to Doge Cristoforo Moro in 1463  
Now in the armory of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, Italy



Map 5.2

The Venetian colony of Negroponte





Figure 5.2

Location of the Chapel of the Holy Angels in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles  
Rome, Italy

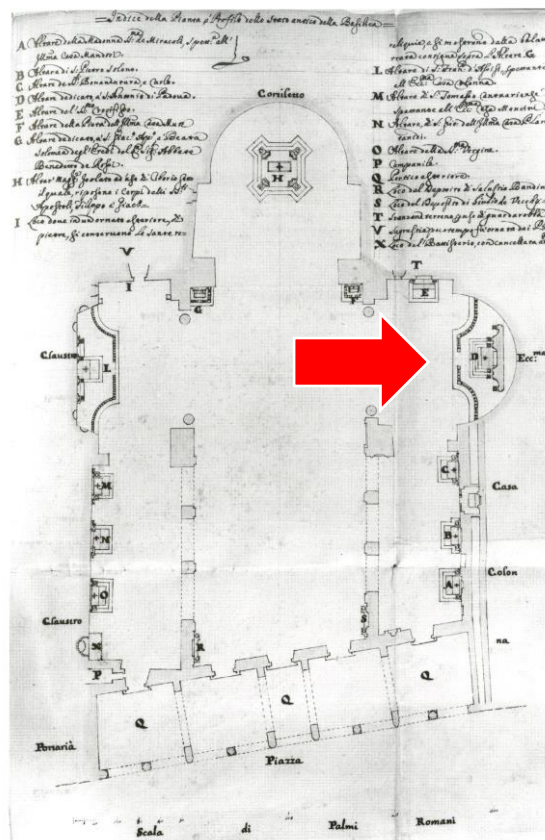


Figure 5.3

Francesco Fontana, *Pianta della chiesa dei Santi Apostoli*  
 Showing the location of the Chapel of the Holy Angels  
 Archivio di Stato di Roma, Archivio dei Trenta Notai Capitolini, uff. 18, 1701, n. 565

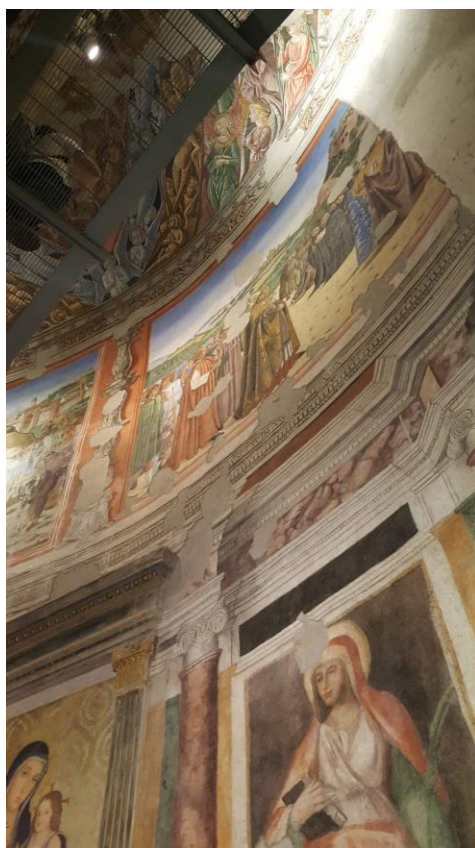


Figure 5.4

Antoniazio Romano and workshop  
Frescoes in the funerary chapel of Bessarion  
Showing scenes of the apparitions, or appearances, of Saint Michael, Archangel in Europe  
Work begun in ca. 1464, continuing in ca. 1467–68 (?)

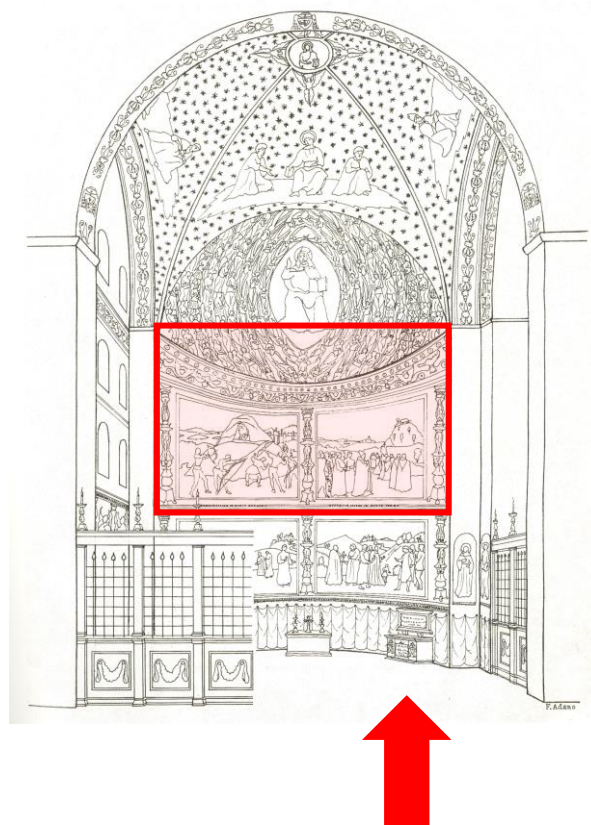


Figure 5.5

Drawing by Franco Adamo

Reconstruction of the Chapel of the Holy Angels

Adapted to show the surviving portion of the original chapel decoration from ca. 1464–67 – 1468 (the red rectangle) and the location of Bessarion's tomb (the red arrow)



Figure 5.6

The Madonna of the Holy Conception

Commissioned by Bessarion from Antoniazio Romano in 1464 (?)

Completed in the 1490s (?)

Oil on canvas

Approximately 4' 4" tall x 2' 11" wide (134 cm x 90 cm)

Currently in a side chapel in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome, near its entrance



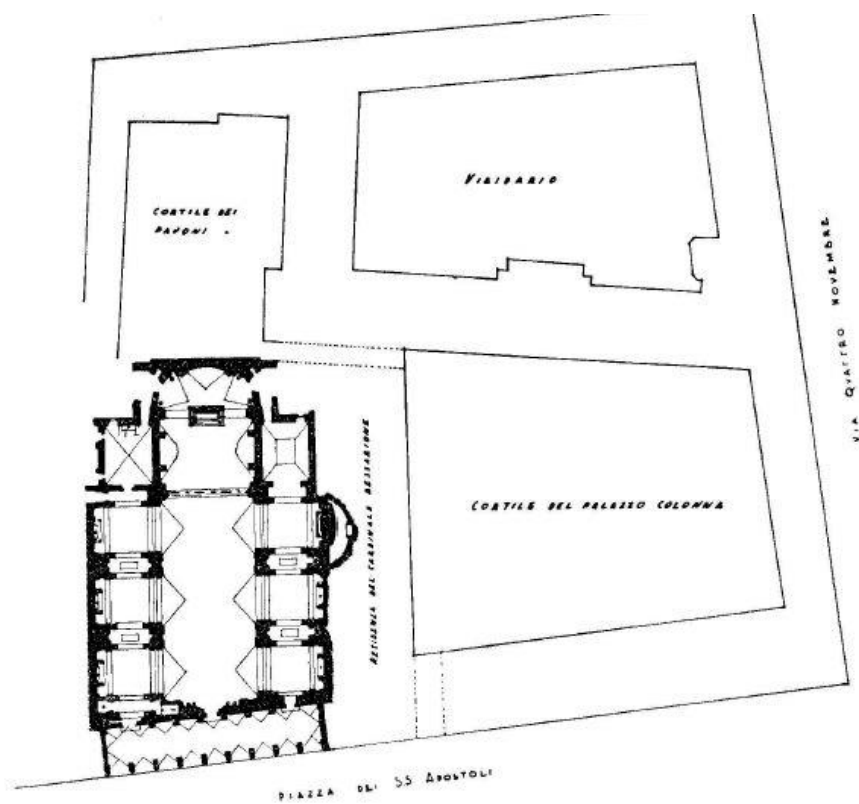


Figure 5.7

Clemente Busiri Vici  
Ground plan of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles  
Showing the Chapel of the Holy Angels after its rediscovery in 1959

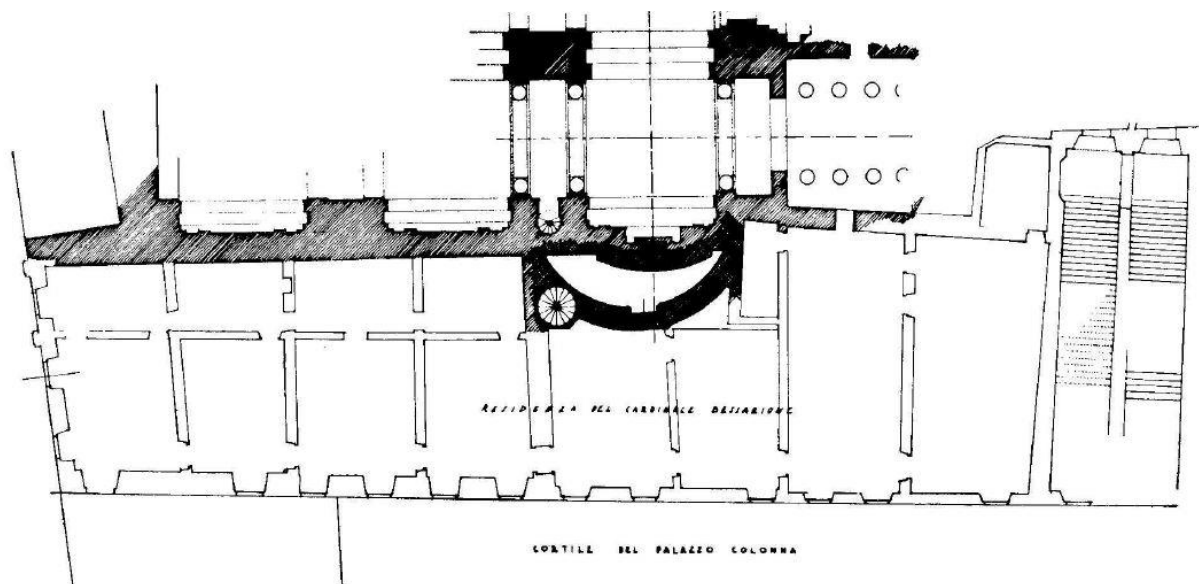


Figure 5.8

Clemente Busiri Vici

A more detailed plan, showing the Chapel of the Holy Angels



Figure 5.9

Frescoes in the lower register of the Chapel of the Holy Angels  
Showing images of Saints Eugenia (on the left) and her mother, Claudia (on the right),  
on either side of a modern reproduction of the Madonna of the Holy Conception



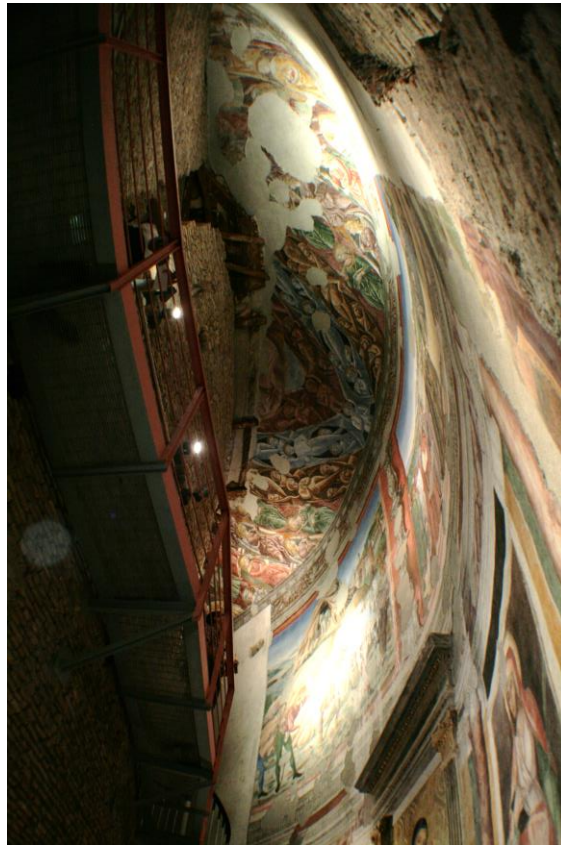


Figure 5.10

The Chapel of the Holy Angels, looking up into the vault



Figure 5.11

Frescoes in the upper register of the Chapel of the Holy Angels

*To the left* The first apparition of Saint Michael, Archangel at Mount Gargano

*To the right* The second apparition of the archangel at Mount Tumba



Map 5.3

Nearby cities of Gargano and Siponto



Figure 5.12

Detail from the first apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the bull in the cave on Mount Gargano





Figure 5.13

Detail from the first apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the cities of Gargano and Siponto



Figure 5.14

Detail from the first apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing a youth bending a bow and setting the string



Figure 5.15

Detail from the first apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the rich man, Garganus, about to be struck by a poisoned arrow



Figure 5.16

The second apparition of Saint Michael





Map 5.4

Mont Saint-Michel, near Avranches



Figures 5.17 and 5.18

Details from the second apparition of Saint Michael

*Left*, The bull hidden by thieves on Monte Tumba

*Right*, One of “two boulders so massive that no human strength could move them”



Figure 5.19

Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the causeway leading to the mountain



Map 5.5

Aerial view of Mont Saint-Michel, showing the road leading to the causeway



Figure 5.20

Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the La Sée river twisting its way towards the city of Avranches





Map 5.6

The La Sée river, between Mont Saint-Michel and Avranches



Figure 5.21

Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing the embedded portrait of the French King Louis XI as Bishop Aubert of Avranches



Figure 5.22

Profile portrait of King Louis XI wearing the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel

French School, ca. 1470

Oil on panel

Approximately 14 3/8" x 8 3/4" (36.5 cm x 22.2 cm)





Figure 5.23

*Left*, Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing Francesco della Rovere (in red) and Giuliano della Rovere (in purple)

Figure 5.24

*Right*, Detail from Melozzo da Forlì's *Sixtus IV della Rovere with his Nephews and Bartolomeo Platina*  
1472

Fresco, detached, transferred to canvas  
Approximately 13' tall x 9' 8" wide (400 x 300 cm)  
Pinacoteca Vaticana (Rome, Italy)



Figure 5.25

The fourth apparition of Saint Michael  
The first order: Ehipany



Figure 5.26

The fourth apparition of Saint Michael  
The second order: Hyperphany





Figure 5.27

The fourth apparition of Saint Michael  
The third order: Hypophany



Figure 5.28

Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael  
Showing priests of various orders gathered in the causeway



Figure 5.29

Micromosaic of Saint Theodore Teron (the "Recruit")

Created in Constantinople, possibly in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (?)

Mosaic with gold and colored tesserae embedded in wax on wood panel

Mosaic surface approximately 5 1/2" tall x 2 1/2" wide (14 cm x 6.4 cm)

Added strip, dating the mosaic to the eleventh century, approximately 6 7/8" tall x 2 1/2" wide  
(17.5 cm x 6.4 cm)

Vatican Museums (Rome, Italy)





Figure 5.30

Detail of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary  
Showing a repoussé panel of Saint Michael, Archangel

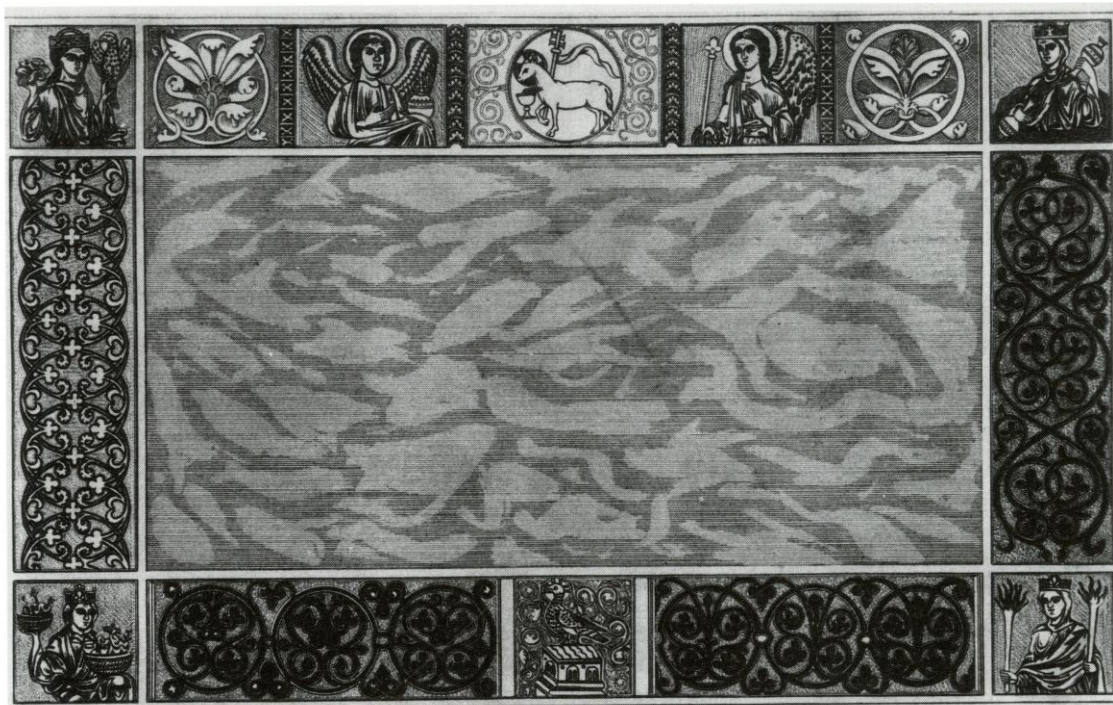


Figure 5.31

Engraving of the gilded niello Bessarion donated to the monastery of Fonte Avellana  
Showing Michael (top right) and Gabriel (top left)



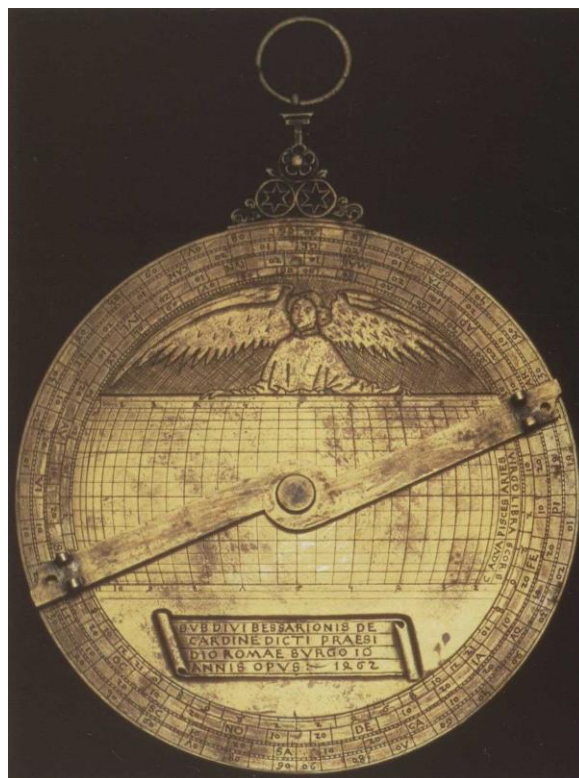


Figure 5.32

Astrolabe commissioned by Regiomontanus and dedicated to Bessarion in 1462, front and back

Approximately 4" in diameter

Sold at auction; now in a private collection



Figure 5.33

Byzantine icon podeda (?) of Saint Michael, Archangel protecting Manuel nothos Palaiologos (?)

Sometimes called the “Standard of Manuel Palaiologos”

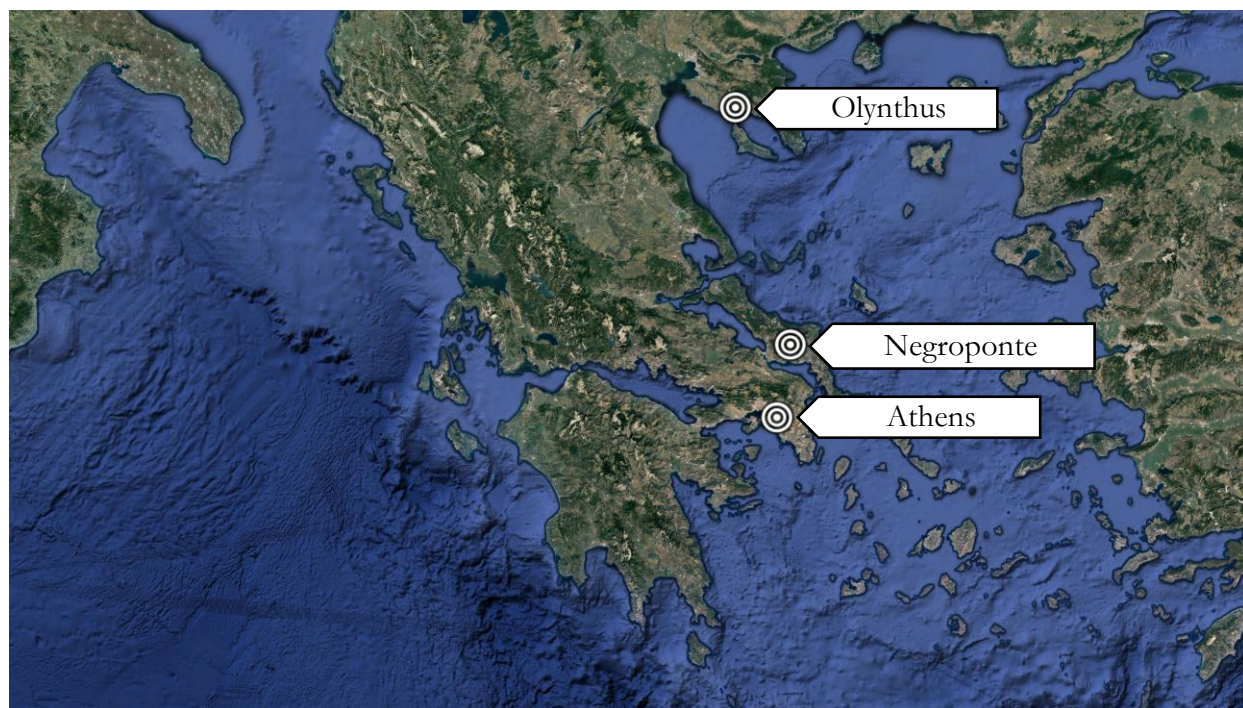
Byzantine art, early fifteenth century, before 1411 (?)

Embroidered silk with gold, silver, and pearls

2' 6 x 2' 6" (76 cm x 76 cm)

Formerly in the monastery of Fonte Avellana, before 1425 to 1915

Now in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche (Urbino, Italy)



Map 5.7

East coast of Greece



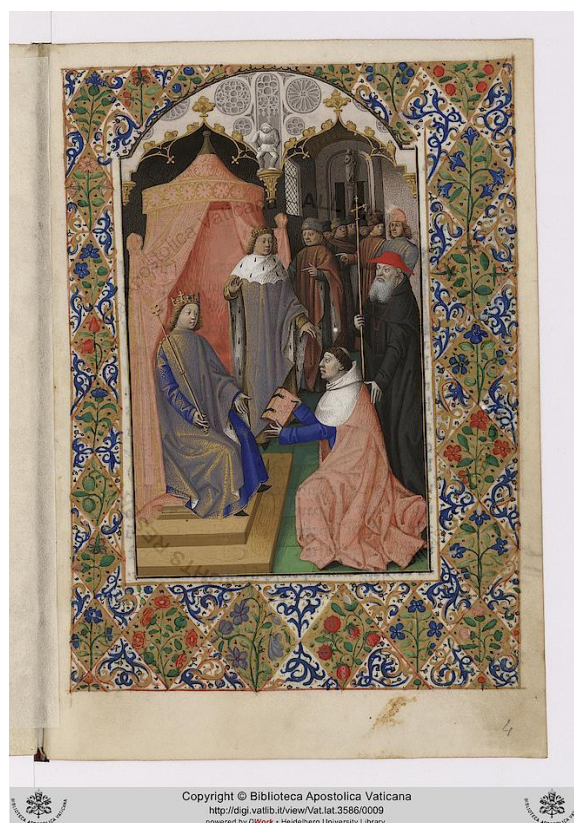


Figure 5.34

*Orations to Christian Princes against the Turks*

Showing Guillaume Fichet presenting a copy of the *Orations* to King Edward IV of England

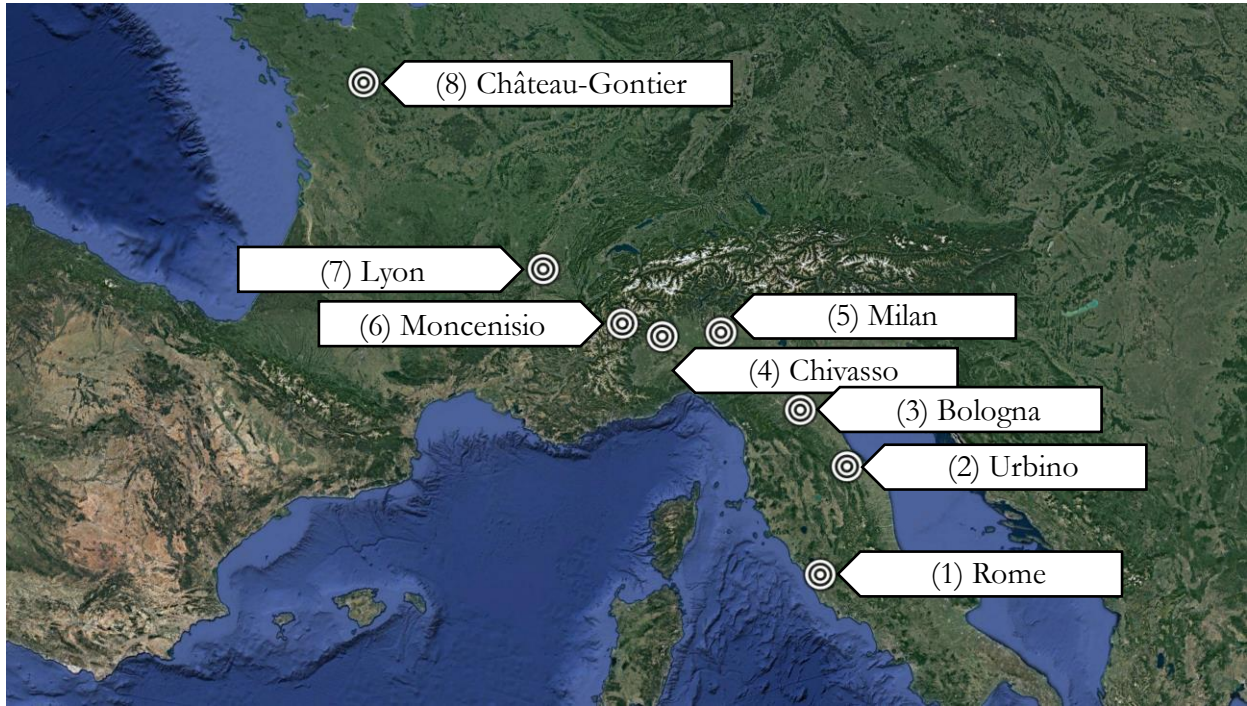
1471

Illuminated on parchment

Vat. lat. 3586, fol. 1 recto

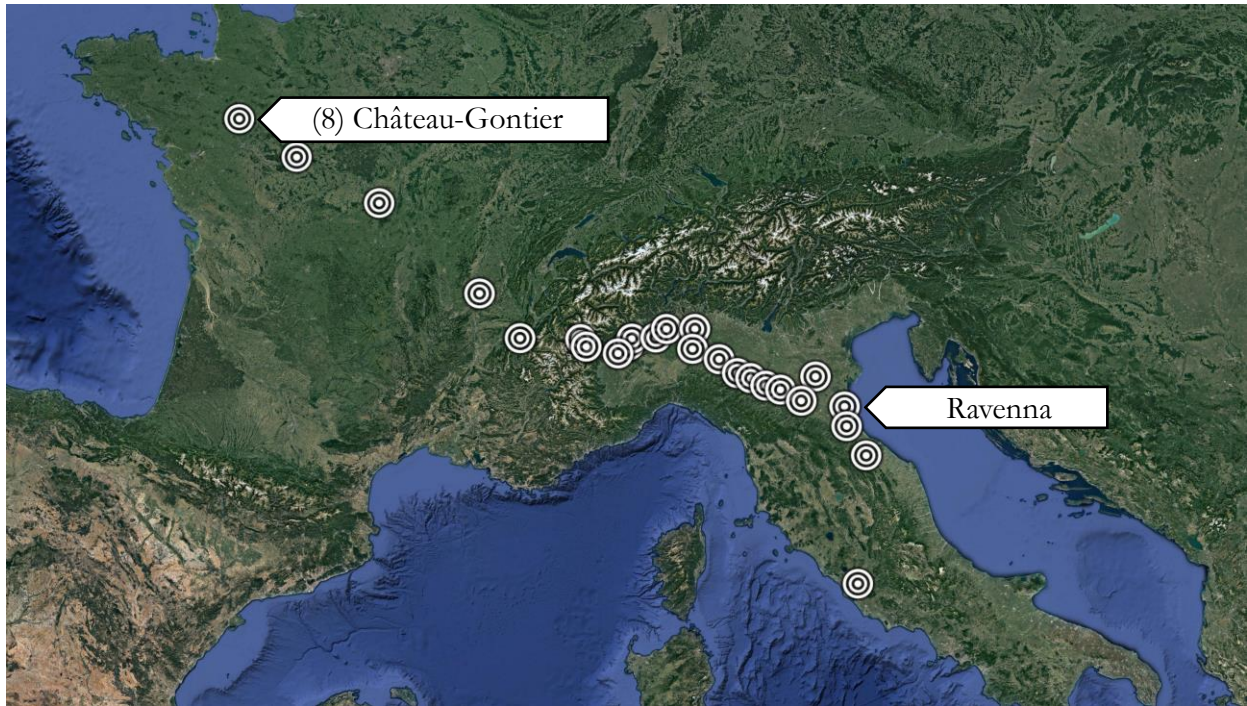
Printed in Latin

Published at the University of Paris by Gering, Crantz and Friberger



Map 5.8

Key points on the legation to France



Map 5.9

Cities on both legs of the legation to France, ending in Ravenna

## CONCLUSION





Figure C.1

Drawing by Franco Adamo

Reconstruction of the Chapel of the Holy Angels

Adapted to show the surviving portion of the original chapel decoration from ca. 1464–67 – 1468 (the red rectangle) and the location of Bessarion's tomb (the red arrow)



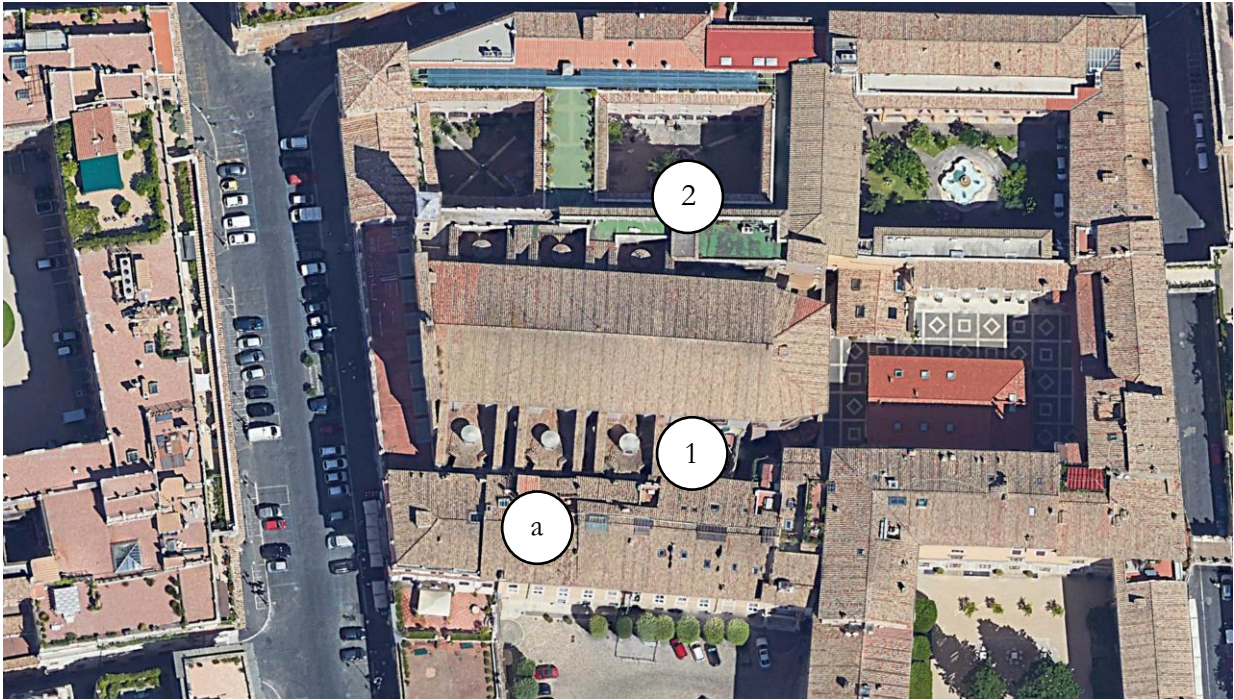


Figure C.2

Ariel view of the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome

- (1) Chapel of the Holy Angels, the original location of Bessarion's tomb
- (2) The second cloister of the monastery, the current location of Bessarion's fragmented tomb
- (a) The former palazzo Bessarione



Figure C.3

Tomb of Bessarion  
Completed 1466

Formerly in the Chapel of the Holy Angels in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles  
Now in the second cloister of the attached Franciscan monastery  
Rome, Italy



Figure C.4

Detail of the tomb of Bessarion, showing his coat of arms

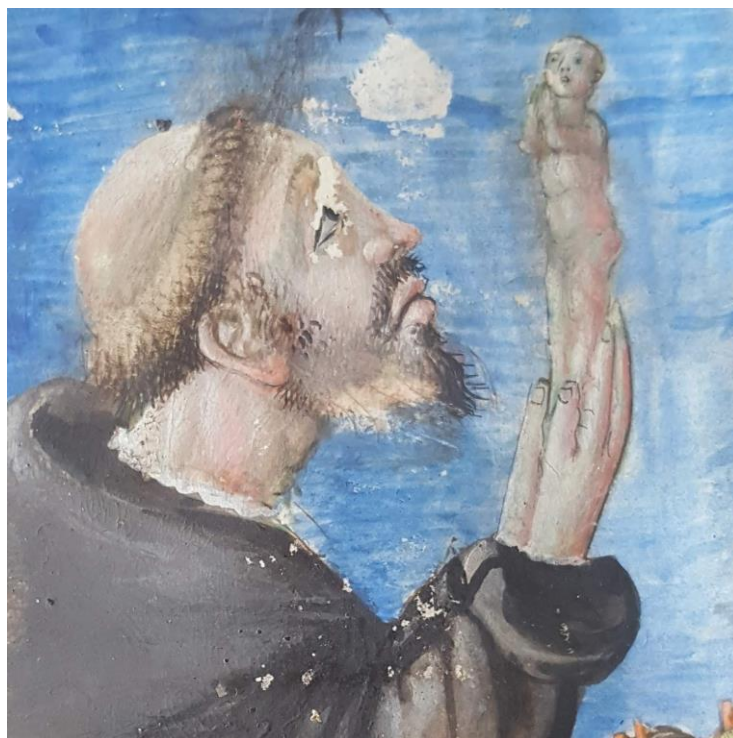


Figure C.5

Detail of a page from the Bessarion choral books,  
showing a totemic representation of Bessarion's soul  
Volume 2, c. 1r  
Biblioteca Maltestiana





Figure C.6

Detail from a page from the Bessarion choral books, showing God the Father

Volume 2, c. 1r

Biblioteca Maltestiana



Figure C.7

Detail of a leaf from the Antiphonal of Cardinal Bessarion,  
showing King Daniel offering his soul to God

Franco dei Russi, illuminator

Tempera colors, gold leaf, and ink on parchment

ca. 1455–61

28" tall × 20 1/4" wide (71.1 × 51.4 cm)

J. Paul Getty Museum

Ms. 99 (2007.30)



Figure C.8

Robe of God the Father,  
from the Chapel of the Holy Angels

FIGURES CREDIT



## INTRODUCTION

## Figures

## I.1

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## I.3

Frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*/ Scanned from a reproduction in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 127

## I.4

Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew/ “Η σπάνια βυζαντινή χρυσή λειψανοθήκη της Κάρας του Αποστόλου Ανδρέα,”  
<https://www.vimaorthodoxias.gr/theologikos-logos-diafora/i-spania-vyzantini-chrysi-leipsanothiki-tis-karas-tou-apostolou-andrea/>

## I.5

Italo-Byzantine staurotheke/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/))

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Frescoes in the funerary chapel of Bessarion/ Photograph © 2020 Jessica Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/))

## Maps

## I.1

A few of the places Bessarion went during his lifetime/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## I.2

Destinations of all of Bessarion's major European legations/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## CHAPTER 1

## Maps

## 1.1

Cities in and around the kingdom of Trebizond/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## 1.2

The second phase of Bessarion's education in Mistra/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## 1.3

A few stops in the path of the Greek delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

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## 2.1

Frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*/ Scanned from a reproduction in Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity*, 127

## 2.2

The central figure from the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*/ Scanned from a reproduction in Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity*, 127

## 2.3

Astronomical map from the vault over the high altar of the Old Sacristy in San Lorenzo/ Artstor Digital Library Content, image and original data provided by © 2006, SCALA, Florence/ART RESOURCE, N.Y., [https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA\\_ARCHIVES\\_1039615007](https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_1039615007)

## 2.4

Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*, a ray of light strikes a tower on a distant hill/ Claudius Ptolemaeus, "Ho Hellēnikos kōdikas 388 tēs Markianēs Vivliothekēs tēs Venetias," in *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis (Geographia)*, vol. 3 (Halimos, Greece: Ekdoseis Milētos, 1991), reproduced from a facsimile at the Dumbarton Oaks Library, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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Detail of a frontispiece from the Bessarion choral books, with an image of his coat of arms/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)), reproduced from a manuscript at the Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cesena, Italy

## 2.9

Drawing of the coat of arms of Bessarion/ Scanned from a reproduction in Gianfranco Fiaccadori, et al., *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo: Catalogo della mostra* (Naples: Vivarium, 1994), 151

## 2.10

Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità/ Artstor Digital Library Content, © The National Gallery, London, [https://library.artstor.org/asset/ANGLIG\\_10313768386](https://library.artstor.org/asset/ANGLIG_10313768386)

## 2.11

Posthumous portrait of Bessarion holding the Reliquary of the True Cross/ Scanned from a reproduction in Fiaccadori, et al., eds., *Bessarione e l'Umanesimo*, 280

2.12

Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a “praying monk”/  
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Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a “kneeling monk offering  
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Page from the Bessarion choral books, showing a red cardinal’s hat/  
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2.16

Detail of Bessarion’s coat of arms, showing stars and rays of light/  
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Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy’s *Geography* showing a second painted  
 astrolabe/ Claudius Ptolemaeus, “Ho Hellēnikos kōdikas 388,” reproduced  
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 D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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Astrolabe commissioned by Regiomontanus and dedicated to Bessarion in  
 1462/ Scanned from a reproduction in Fiaccadori, et al., eds., *Bessarione e  
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Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy’s *Geography*/ Scanned from a  
 reproduction in Fortini Brown, *Venice & Antiquity*, 127

## 2.20

Detail of the frontispiece to Ptolemy's *Geography*, showing an observation tower/ Claudius Ptolemaeus, "Ho Hellēnikos kōdikas 388," reproduced from a facsimile at the Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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## 2.22

Facsimile of the world map from Ptolemy's *Geography*/ Reproduced from an original in the Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division, LCCN 2005626428, Washington, D.C., <https://lccn.loc.gov/2005626428>

## Maps

## 2.1

Bessarion's legation to Bologna/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## 2.2

Arrival points for several legations undertaken by Bessarion in Europe from 1438–61/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## 2.3

Several stops on the Greek delegation's path to the Council of Ferrara-Florence/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## 2.4

Several points on Bessarion's legation to the northern territories from 1460–61/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

## CHAPTER 3

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Byzantine reliquary head of Saint Andrew/ “Η σπάνια βυζαντινή χρυσή λειψανοθήκη της Κάρας του Αποστόλου Ανδρέα,”

<https://www.vimaorthodoxias.gr/theologikos-logos-diafora/i-spania-vyzantini-chrysi-leipsanothiki-tis-karas-tou-apostolou-andrea/>

3.2, 3.3, and 3.4

Pope Paul VI examines the contents of the Byzantine reliquary head Saint Andrew/“Η σπάνια βυζαντινή χρυσή λειψανοθήκη της Κάρας του Αποστόλου Ανδρέα,”

[http://panagiotisandriopoulos.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post\\_26.html](http://panagiotisandriopoulos.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post_26.html)

3.5

News clipping from *The New York Times* from Thursday, September 24, 1964/ Digital archives of *The New York Times*, “Pope Takes Relic of Saint to Council,” <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/09/24/archives/pope-takes-relic-of-saint-to-council.html>

3.6

News clipping from *The New York Times* from Sunday, September 27, 1964/ From the digital archives of *The New York Times*, “Pope Returns a Relic of Apostle to Greeks After Five Centuries,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/1964/09/27/archives/pope-returns-a-relic-of-apostle-to-greeks-after-five-centuries.html>

3.7

Screen shots of still frames from a video uploaded to the National Hellenic AudioVisual Archive/ “Τελετή παράδοσης της κάρας του Απόστολου Ανδρέα στην Πάτρα,” © Hellenic National AudioVisual Archive, Asset ID D3237,

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3.8

Tomb of Pope Pius II in the church of Sant’Andrea della Valle/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/))

3.9

Detail of the tomb of Pope Pius II/ Non-Artstor, Institutional Collections Content, [https://library.artstor.org/asset/ARCHIVISION\\_105310237021](https://library.artstor.org/asset/ARCHIVISION_105310237021)

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Detail from the tomb of Pope Pius II/ Scanned from a reproduction in Silvia Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio. Implicazioni ideologiche del ricevimento a Roma della testa del patrono della chiesa ortodossa nella settimana santa del 1462,” in *Dopo le due cadute di Costantinopoli (1204, 1453): Eredi ideologici di Bisanzio*, eds. Marina Koumanoudi and Chryssa Maltezou (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 2008), 315

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Detail from the tomb of Pope Pius II/ Scanned from a reproduction in Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 316

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Engraved version of Tiberio Alfarano’s plan of the basilica of Old Saint Peter’s/ Rijksmuseum, “Plattegronden van de Sint-Pietersbasiliek en omliggende gebouwen te Vaticaanstad,” object number RP-P-2016-345-9, Public Domain, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.623188>

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Detail from Tiberio Alfarano’s plan/ Rijksmuseum, “Plattegronden van de Sint-Pietersbasiliek en omliggende gebouwen te Vaticaanstad,” object number RP-P-2016-345-9, Public Domain, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.623188>

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Drawing of the tempietto and ciborium of Saint Andrew over the altar of Saint Gregory/ © Vatican Library, Barb. Lat. 2733, 49r [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Barb.lat.2733.pt.1](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.lat.2733.pt.1)

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Tempietto completed by Francesco del Borgo, ca. 1464–68, Barb. Lat. 2733, 49r/ © Vatican Library, Barb.lat.2733.pt.1, [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Barb.lat.2733.pt.1](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.lat.2733.pt.1)

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Comparison of Thomas’ Byzantine reliquary and the reliquary in Romano’s relief/ Scanned from a reproduction in Ronchey, “Andrea, il rifondatore di Bisanzio,” 316

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Comparison of Thomas' Byzantine reliquary and the reliquary in Romano's relief/ "Η σπάνια βυζαντινή χρυσή λειψανοθήκη της Κάρας του Αποστόλου Ανδρέα," <https://www.vimaorthodoxias.gr/theologikos-logos-diafora/i-spania-vyzantini-chrysi-leipsanothiki-tis-karas-tou-apostolou-andrea/>

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Comparison of a Latin reliquary head of Saint Andrew created by the Florentine goldsmith Simone di Giovanni Ghini in ca. 1463–64 and the reliquary in Romano's relief/ "Simone di Giovanni Ghini, Busto reliquiario di sant'Andrea, 1462-63 (Pienza, Museo diocesano, dalla concattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta)," photograph by Pufui PcPifpef, taken 12 February 2020, Wikimedia Commons, Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International ([CC BY-SA 4.0](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Simone_di_Giovanni_Ghini,_Busto_reliquiario_di_sant%27Andrea,_1462-63_(Pienza,_Museo_diocesano).jpg)), [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Simone\\_di\\_Giovanni\\_Ghini,\\_Busto\\_reliquiario\\_di\\_sant%27Andrea,\\_1462-63\\_\(Pienza,\\_Museo\\_diocesano\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Simone_di_Giovanni_Ghini,_Busto_reliquiario_di_sant%27Andrea,_1462-63_(Pienza,_Museo_diocesano).jpg)

3.21

Detail from Tiberio Alfarano's plan of Old Saint Peter's/ Rijksmuseum, "Plattegronden van de Sint-Pietersbasiliek en omliggende gebouwen te Vaticaanstad," object number RP-P-2016-345-9, Public Domain, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.623188>

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Sketch of the interior view of the nave of Old Saint Peter's/ Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Ident.Nr. 79 D 2 a, fol. 52 recto, © SMB-digital, Foto: Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Fotograf/in: Volker-H. Schneider, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Germany License ([CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 DE](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/de/)), <http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=800842&viewType=detailView>

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View of the nave of Old Saint Peter's, looking west/ Scanned from a reproduction in William Tronzo, "Il Tegurium di Bramante," in *L'architettura della Basilica di San Pietro: Storia e costruzione*, eds. Gianfranco Spagnesi and Giuseppe Zander (Rome: Bonsignori, 1997), 163

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View of the south side of the church of Old Saint Peter's/ Scanned from a reproduction in Brian A. Curran, et. al, *Obelisk: A History* (Cambridge, MA: The Burndy Library, 2009), 91



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Detail from the tomb of Pius II, showing the pope's effigy/ Non-Artstor, Institutional Collections Content,  
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Points in Thomas Palaiologos' path from Mistra to Rome and the transport of the reliquary head of Saint Andrew from Patras/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

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## CHAPTER 4

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Italo-Byzantine staurotheke, or Reliquary of the True Cross/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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The cross of Eirene Palaiologina/ Scanned from a reproduction in Holger Klein, Peter Schreiner, and Valeria Poletto, eds., *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere ed arti, 2017), Tav. 8 and 9, object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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Early phases in the development of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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The Italo-Byzantine reliquary from out in front/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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The Italo-Byzantine reliquary, encased in a glass niche in the Sala del'Albergo/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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The Italo-Byzantine reliquary during restoration/ Reproduced from the website of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, "Reliquiario della Vera Croce del Cardinal Bessarione,"

<http://www.opificiodellepietredure.it/index.php?it/783/reliquiario-della-vera-croce-del-cardinal-bessarione-xiv-xviii-secolo-venezia-gallerie-dell'accademia>

4.7

The Italo-Byzantine reliquary during restoration/ Reproduced from the website of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, "Reliquiario della Vera Croce del Cardinal Bessarione,"

<http://www.opificiodellepietredure.it/index.php?it/783/reliquiario-della-vera-croce-del-cardinal-bessarione-xiv-xviii-secolo-venezia-gallerie-dell'accademia>, photo of the handle by author

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The rectilinear arrangement of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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Oil paintings of Christ's Passion from the Italo-Byzantine reliquary/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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Detail of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary, showing the way to Calvary/ © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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Back of the cross of Eirene/ Scanned from a reproduction in Klein, Schreiner, and Poletto, eds., *Stauroteca di Bessarione*, Tav. 9, object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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Engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene/ © Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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Detail of the engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene/ Schioppalalba, *Sacram tabulum graecam*, © Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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Detail of the engraving of the back of the cross of Eirene/ Schioppalalba, *Sacram tabulum graecam*, © Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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Mosaic of the Harrowing of Hell/ Artstor Digital Library Content, [https://library.artstor.org/asset/AHSC\\_ORPHANS\\_1071314292](https://library.artstor.org/asset/AHSC_ORPHANS_1071314292)

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Detail of a frontispiece from the Bessarion choral books/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)), reproduced from a manuscript at the Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cesena, Italy

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Posthumous portrait of Bessarion holding the Reliquary of the True Cross/ Schioppalalba, *Sacram tabulum graecam*, © Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection, Washington, D.C., Trustees for Harvard University

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The sliding lid of the Italo-Byzantine reliquary/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)), object in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy

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The legation to Venice and the gathering at Ancona/ Underlying satellite image downloaded from Google Earth, modified to include markers and place names. Map data: Google Earth, SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

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The second apparition of Saint Michael/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#))

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Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#))

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Profile portrait of King Louis XI wearing the collar of the Order of Saint-Michel/ "Louis XI of France," Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Louis-XI.jpg>

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Detail from the second apparition of Saint Michael/ Photograph © 2020 Jessica Greenlee, Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International ([CC BY-NC 4.0](#))

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Detail from Melozzo da Forlì's *Sixtus IV della Rovere with his Nephews and Bartolomeo Platina*/ Artstor Digital Library Content, image and original data provided by © 2006, SCALA, Florence/ART RESOURCE, N.Y., [https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA\\_ARCHIVES\\_1039488887](https://library.artstor.org/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_1039488887)

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Tomb of Bessarion/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee, Attribution-Non-  
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Detail of the tomb of Bessarion/ Photograph © 2020 Justin Greenlee,  
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Robe of God the Father, from the Chapel of the Holy Angels/ Photograph  
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