


**Predella** journal of visual arts, n°47, 2020 [www.predella.it](http://www.predella.it) - Monografia / Monograph 

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**Predella** pubblica ogni anno due numeri online e due numeri monografici a stampa /

**Predella** publishes two online issues and two monographic print issues each year

*Tutti gli articoli sono sottoposti alla peer-review anonima / All articles are subject to anonymous peer-review*

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**Predella** journal of visual arts - ISSN 1827-8655

*This Festschrift highlights innovative research on art and architecture spanning the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It offers new perspectives on artists, places, and topics that have engaged Diane Cole Ahl over the course of a lifetime. The volume comprises 15 essays that are organized chronologically and geographically, traversing northern and central Italy and culminating in Vienna. Major themes recur throughout the volume, among them: artistic exchanges (regional, north/south, east/west); princely ambitions and dynastic aspirations; personal contemplative experiences and grand public displays of piety; and renovation and conservation practices.*

In fifteenth-century Italy, *magnificenza* – magnificence – was lauded as an aesthetic judgment, and even more significantly as a moral virtue. Closely linked with munificence, the two were classified under the cardinal virtue of Fortitude. In 1446, just days before his consecration as Archbishop of Florence, the Observant Dominican friar Antoninus Pierozzi (1389-1459; canonized 1523) preached that «Nothing is more magnificent than to bestow the riches one possesses in beneficence and generosity»<sup>1</sup>.

Diane Cole Ahl's true riches lie in her generosity of spirit towards students, colleagues, friends, and family. She has shared a lifelong love and profound understanding of Italian Renaissance and Baroque art in four decades of highly esteemed teaching at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. There she was the first Arthur J. '55 and Barbara S. Rothkopf Professor of Art History. As the author and editor of many brilliant, internationally acclaimed publications and in her curatorial activities in Italy and the United States, Diane has transformed our perception of Quattrocento visual culture. A keen eye developed over decades of travel, her immersion in the newest conservation techniques that reveal painters' innovative materials and methods, her formidable grasp of the scholarly literature and her insightful mining of archival and primary sources have given rise to an impressive corpus that continues to challenge assumptions and open new avenues of research. And, finally, her firm moral compass and steadfast self-discipline, magnified by her deep engagement with life, letters, music, and cultural institutions, are also indelibly part of Diane's unique *magnificenza*. *Gaudeamus igitur!*

This issue of «Predella. Journal of Visual Arts» has its origin in *Celebrating Magnificence: A Symposium on Italian Renaissance Art in Honor of Diane Cole Ahl*,

held at Lafayette College on 9-10 November 2018. With magnificence as its theme, the symposium gathered eight eminent American colleagues, curators, and former students of Diane who presented papers highlighting their new research. Spanning art and architecture from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, many of those cutting-edge studies are included here. In an effort to better pay tribute to Diane's own publications and wide-ranging art historical interests, Barbara Wisch, the editor of this volume, and Gerardo de Simone, the scholarly and managing co-editor of «Predella», invited additional American and European colleagues to contribute to this Festschrift. Thus, the 15 essays that comprise this volume not only celebrate Diane Cole Ahl's scholarship, friendship, and mentorship, but each sheds new light on major themes that appear throughout the texts. The essays are organized chronologically and, to a certain extent, geographically, while taking into account how often artists traversed the Italian peninsula and the Alps seeking inspiration, aspiring to more substantial employment, or emigrating at the behest of wealthy, influential patrons.

As a highly praised quality in Renaissance Italy, the virtue of magnificence was credited with inspiring exquisite works of art and splendid buildings of great technological achievement. Thus, the volume opens with an encomium to the magnificence of Renaissance art, the subject of Paul Barolsky's essay. As Diane's mentor since her days as a graduate student, Barolsky offers an eloquent overview of selected examples of painting, sculpture, and architecture that continue to enthrall and elevate beholders, imbuing us with wonder and admiration. Among these masterpieces are works about which Diane has written so memorably – Leonardo da Vinci's plans for the colossal bronze *Sforza Monument Horse* and Benozzo Gozzoli's *Journey of the Magi* in the Palazzo Medici chapel, celebrated by contemporaries for its peerless beauty<sup>2</sup>. To balance the equation, Barolsky also singles out failed aspirations to magnificence, works characterized by pomposity and pretentiousness. His elegant prose and witty observations set the stage for the studies that follow.

The second and third essays in this volume by Keith Christiansen and Gail E. Solberg examine the extensive travels by late Trecento artists in northern Italy – where we shall return again and again – and explore the rich cultural exchanges that ensued. But, as also will be demonstrated, artists' mobility could cause disruptions and jealous rivalries in local circles. These authors – and contributors throughout the volume – consider the difficulties wrought by the destruction of artworks, loss of documentation, and the consequences of previous restorations in their efforts to reconstruct and evaluate an artist's oeuvre and its cultural contexts, topics that Diane has investigated extensively.

Keith Christiansen focuses our attention on a recent acquisition by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: an exquisite gold-ground panel painting of the *Crucifixion* that he has convincingly attributed to the young Stefano da Verona (1375-after 1438) around 1400, an opinion that Diane shares. Stefano, together with his French-born father, was among the array of international artists who, during the last quarter of the Trecento, were attracted to the Visconti courts in Milan and Pavia to execute Gian Galeazzo's grand building and decorative projects. With little documentary evidence and the painter's few surviving works datable to the 1420s in a compromised state, Christiansen acknowledges concern about properly evaluating the artist. Nonetheless, based on his incomparable firsthand knowledge of Renaissance painting, he argues convincingly that the *Crucifixion* suggests Stefano's own inflected response to the vibrant culture of Visconti Milan in the 1390s. He proposes that the panel is crucial to understanding Stefano's formative years as well as his place in Quattrocento painting of Lombardy and the Veneto. Christiansen points out that the notable presence of Franco-Flemish artists – painters, sculptors, manuscript illuminators – who deeply influenced Stefano's oeuvre signaled not only Gian Galeazzo's aesthetic choices, but also his political alliances with the Valois courts in France and Burgundy, creating a rich artistic environment that deserves more study.

Gail E. Solberg continues the examination of artistic exchanges in the late Trecento, focusing on Tuscan itinerant painters in Liguria and the Piedmont – especially the Sienese Taddeo di Bartolo (ca. 1372-1422), who profoundly influenced the style of altarpieces during his second Genoese sojourn (late 1397-1398). Taddeo accrued whirlwind success by introducing the grand Tuscan polyptych-style altarpiece to appreciative patrons. But he also incurred such resentment from a Piedmontese painter that the civic authorities had to step in to settle disputes, including accusations of physical assault. Through her extensive research in the Genoese archives, Solberg has recovered the professional lives and associations of many non-native as well as local painters whose works – in contrast to Taddeo's impressively large oeuvre – no longer survive. The conundrum of this imbalance prompts Solberg to reflect upon the means by which scholars might justly evaluate Genoa, a wealthy cosmopolitan port city, as a vital cultural center. Solberg's essay coincides with her catalogue and major exhibition on Taddeo di Bartolo, held at the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria di Perugia<sup>3</sup>, and affords a welcome preview of her forthcoming monograph on Taddeo.

We then turn to Tuscany, first to San Gimignano, where Cristina Borgioli brings to light a remarkable yet little-studied reliquary cross that was once the proud possession of the Monastero di Santa Chiara. This important, wealthy convent

of Clarissan nuns was founded around 1261 outside the city walls, in close proximity to the Franciscan friars' convent that was home to the author of the influential *Meditations on the Life of Christ* – a devotional treatise composed in the later Dugento or early Trecento for the spiritual instruction (as seems likely) of the Poor Clares in San Gimignano. Borgioli's archival discoveries and expert analysis of the facture of the cross allow her to reconstruct its original appearance and later refashioning, thus attributing its production to a lesser-known Siense workshop in the last quarter of the Trecento. Borgioli's identification of the relics, taken from unpublished documents, combined with her clarification of the larger enamel scenes embellishing the cross, affirm its decidedly emotive Franciscan character – and the particular spirituality of these Clarissans – leading to significant, new conclusions about female Franciscan iconography and patronage.

In a dramatic departure from Trecento Tuscan developments in the intricately carved, gilt-framed polyptych, a unified, rectangular panel evolved as the new fashion in altarpieces in early Quattrocento Florence. Christa Gardner von Teuffel cogently demonstrates how this innovation inspired Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) to design a novel classicizing, architectonic frame – made of wood and painted to imitate marble – thereby «reframing a revolution». Gardner von Teuffel's groundbreaking scholarship on Italian altarpieces and their settings is well known. In this essay, she systematically reviews the literature on fictive marbled frames and exactly identifies the formal and material elements of what, by the mid-Quattrocento, came to be called the *tavola all'antica*. She credits Filippo Lippi's *Martelli Annunciation* in San Lorenzo, Florence, as the first panel painting to use the new classicizing, fictive marble architectural frame, designed by Brunelleschi and installed under his supervision by the early 1440s. Although surviving painted marbled frames are rare, Gardner von Teuffel calls for more focused research and more comprehensive conservation reports, among other suggestions, to enable scholars to reconstruct the church settings of altarpieces with their original frames, which, she posits, will affirm Brunelleschi's pioneering achievement.

Gerardo de Simone focuses on the renowned fresco cycle (ca. 1438-1442/1443) in the Observant Dominican convent of San Marco, Florence, by Fra Angelico, an artist on whom Diane has written numerous articles and a highly acclaimed monograph. De Simone explores a neglected and highly significant aspect of the iconography: the Seven Last Words spoken by Christ on the cross – a subject rarely portrayed, but one that resonated deeply in theological and devotional literature from the early Middle Ages onwards. Although the Crucifixion was illustrated numerous times throughout the San Marco decorative program, evoking the friars' special devotion to the Eucharist and Christ's Passion, the Seven Last Words were

notably depicted in seven cells along the cloister's north corridor where the lay brothers resided. Drawing on his expert knowledge of Fra Angelico, de Simone analyzes the particular iconography of the Seven Last Words and contextualizes the frescoes within the celebrated cycle, demonstrating the originality of Fra Angelico's version of the theme and positing Antoninus Pierozzi, the convent's prior, as the crucial iconographic advisor.

Filippo Lippi (ca. 1406-1469) is credited with the first panel painting to be framed *all'antica* with illusionistic marble in the *Martelli Annunciation*, as Gardner von Teuffel has observed here. In the following essay, Jean K. Cadogan explores the artist's final mural project (1466-1469) for the Cathedral of Spoleto, an Umbrian city located roughly equidistant between Florence and Rome. Although much of the decoration of the church's triumphal arch was destroyed in renovations, Lippi's monumental apse paintings, which illustrate the Virgin's final days on earth, her Assumption, and her triumphant Coronation in heaven, are mostly well preserved. This major commission and the concurrent construction of a new chapel (destroyed) for city's treasured Marian icon were jointly initiated and largely financed by Berardo Erolì, Bishop of Spoleto. In documenting these ambitious projects as an inextricable pair, Cadogan significantly recovers the patronage of Erolì and his nephew Costantino, who succeeded his uncle as bishop and continued the cathedral's renewal. Their projects elevated Spoleto by emulating the art and rituals of the most venerable Marian church in Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore. Cadogan demonstrates how both Berardo and Costantino Erolì's personal knowledge of those traditions was deepened by their experience as members of the Eternal City's most elite fifteenth-century confraternity, Santissimo Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum, which played a key role in the lavish Assumption Day festivities that culminated in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Emulating the chivalric, princely courts of France and Burgundy or modeling themselves on the rich international culture shaped by the powerful Visconti and Sforza dukes in Milan and Pavia, the smaller northern Italian courts headed by *condottieri* – Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, and Pier Maria Rossi, a Sforza-allied lord who controlled much of the Parmense – elevated their status by extraordinary commissions that inventively fused scholarly erudition with religious devotion. In the essays by Marilyn Aronberg Lavin and Timothy McCall, we find both rulers besotted by their mistresses, enlisting court humanists to laud their Greek and Latin learning, and weaving their dynastic ambitions with personal and public displays of piety.

Renowned for her groundbreaking studies on Piero della Francesca (ca. 1412/1413-1492), Marilyn Aronberg Lavin recounts her extraordinary scholarly

journey over more than four decades to expand her understanding of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, who commissioned Piero's remarkable portrait of him kneeling before his patron Saint Sigismund in the Chapel of the Relics in the Tempio Malatestiano, Rimini. The 600th anniversary of Sigismondo's birth in 2017 provided a perfect occasion to assemble distinguished Italian and American scholars – Lavin foremost among them – to reconsider Malatesta literary and visual culture and reassess Sigismondo's role in Renaissance society. With long-held, erroneous notions of Sigismondo as the devil incarnate finally laid to rest and new studies recovering the learned Greek and Latin works produced by the humanists in his court, the “clash” of Christian and pagan culture in Rimini was also reevaluated. In her essay, Lavin has updated her own discussions with new evidence and analyses, which not only support the original ideas she first published in the 1970s but instill her authoritative voice on Sigismondo's «surprising duality» with even greater resonance.

In insightful new ways, Timothy McCall explores how the sacred melded seamlessly with a seemingly secular courtly space – the resplendently gilded Camera d'Oro (ca. 1460) in Pier Maria Rossi's hilltop castle at Torrechiara, south of Parma. McCall reconsiders a published, but mostly overlooked letter, written by the Lombard painter who had executed the green-ground frescoes of illustrious men in what was called the «studiolo oratorio» – a place of study and prayer that formed a discrete structure with somber monochromatic decoration within the opulent larger chamber. Although the Camera d'Oro has traditionally been considered a private erotic space celebrating Rossi's mistress, McCall reinterprets the decoration as an elaborate public display that promoted Rossi's authority and advanced his dynastic aspirations. He reconstructs the *studiolo oratorio* and its iconography in comparison to other Quattrocento princely *studioli*, then assesses the remaining fragments and identifies what is lost. This smaller enclosed space, private and accessible to only the most privileged visitors, encouraged contemplation, both sacred and profane, all the while demonstrating publicly Rossi's own erudition, wealth, power, and piety, qualities requisite for princely rule.

Giorgio Bonsanti returns us to the splendid Milanese court, which continued to attract international artists. Michael Pacher (ca. 1435-1498) from South Tyrol crossed the Alps to Milan in the mid-1470s. There, his direct encounter with painting, particularly works by Vincenzo Foppa, deeply influenced his own creations. Bonsanti had proposed Pacher's Milanese sojourn in his earliest publications, a hypothesis confirmed by documents discovered in 2014. In his essay, Bonsanti looks back over the course of 50 years, a golden anniversary, as it were, of his *tesi di laurea* on Michael Pacher at the Università di Firenze, to review

the scholarship. Through his consummate critical eye and peerless professional knowledge of conservation, Bonsanti assesses the errors others made in rejecting his initial attributions to Pacher – from his first groundbreaking article in 1969 through those of the 1970s – and, ultimately, the reasons for their acceptance. He also reexamines a polychrome wood sculpture of Saint Lawrence from the saint's altar (which once comprised many figures and painted narrative panels) in the parish church of Sankt Lorenzen, near Pacher's native town of Bruneck. Dated to the mid-1460s, the altar was Pacher's first great "Renaissance" work synthesizing North and South, which offers crucial insight into his formation as an artist.

Quattrocento Venice presided over an international mercantile empire. Of the city's many masters, the Bellini dynasty was preeminent, filling churches, domestic spaces, and confraternal residences with paintings that transformed Venice's Byzantine heritage. In their oeuvre, the allure of sumptuous "exotic" wares – textiles, metalwork, vessels, and carpets shipped from Eastern ports – is explored by Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli, who considers Jacopo Bellini in particular. Eric R. Hupe then analyzes Giovanni Bellini's depictions of a light-suffused natural world that blended science with faith.

Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli revisits the question of Venetian painters' interactions with the East and their perceptions of Islamic artefacts. She sheds fascinating new light on the reception and elaboration of Arabic calligraphy that Jacopo Bellini (ca. 1400-ca. 1470) depicted on garments and haloes in his exquisitely refined devotional works. She introduces the styles of Islamic calligraphy – Kufic, *nashki*, and *thuluth* – that appeared most frequently on imported goods, especially luxury textiles. However, she cautions that by the Quattrocento these scripts were widely copied on lavish Italian-made fabrics that were exported internationally, complicating identification of their provenance. Although pseudo-Arabic had appeared in representations of fabrics in fourteenth-century Venetian painting – even imaginatively painted on patterned Chinese silks imported via the Mamluk Empire – Schmidt Arcangeli posits that the origin of the use of pseudo-script in haloes probably belongs to Florentine painting of the early 1420s, since no earlier evidence in Italian art survives. During their Florentine stay around 1423, Jacopo and his teacher Gentile da Fabriano learned from those examples. When Jacopo returned to La Serenissima, he introduced this new decorative element, which was quickly adopted by competitive workshops and inspired the following generation of painters, notably Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna.

Eric R. Hupe considers a markedly different aspect of the oeuvre of Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1435-1516)<sup>4</sup> by analyzing the *Resurrection of Christ* (ca. 1475-1477;



Berlin, Gemäldegalerie), a particularly apposite subject for the altar of the new Zorzi chapel in San Michele in Isola, the Camaldolese church on the cemetery island of Venice. Although recent studies have underscored the mystical significance of Bellini's poetic yet naturalistic landscapes, Hupe proposes deeper theological dimensions that conflate specific paschal metaphors and eschatological themes. He focuses attention both on the dramatic light that suffuses the *Resurrection* and responds to the natural light of the chapel and on the skyscape, especially the darkened cumulus cloud that accentuates Christ's resplendent alabaster body. Hupe offers interpretations of clouds drawn from the writings of saints Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bonaventure. He also contextualizes the painter's seeming awareness of contemporary texts on perspective and optics in which natural philosophers and theologians sought to align an understanding of corporeal sight with deeper spiritual vision. Through the extraordinary interplay of light and color that adds such expressive drama to the landscape, Hupe elucidates how Bellini imbued material reality with the visionary and transformed the subject of the Resurrection.

We then move forward almost a century to northern Italy and Rome, at the time when Protestant challenges to traditional Catholic tenets and devotional practices deeply affected both secular and religious art. Fredrika H. Jacobs's essay was inspired by a major exhibition at The Frick Collection, New York, which featured stunning portraits by the Lombard painter Giovanni Battista Moroni (1520/1524-1579/1580)<sup>5</sup>. Jacobs focuses on the three so-called "sacred portraits" (ca. 1555-1560), in which demonstrably pious individuals are depicted in close proximity to the visionary presence of holy figures. Jacobs probes whether or not these celebrated works created a new pictorial type that might be best understood in the climate of escalating religious reform. Since nothing is known about the patrons or the paintings' original locations, she parses each depiction in an effort to elicit its possible devotional function, such as spiritual meditation (at that time often based on Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*) and votive practices, on which she has eloquently written. Jacobs explores how Moroni melded two coexistent visual modalities of the portrayed and the viewer, which, in turn, authenticates the truth of the holy vision for both. She also draws attention to Augustine's fundamental articulation of how the material world enables the contemplation of divine things, rendering the invisible visible, which parallels Hupe's interpretation of Giovanni Bellini's *Resurrection*. Since Moroni's astounding capacity to render material things has tended to overshadow his conjuring of the immaterial world of faith, Jacobs encourages scholars to «rethink» his contribution to Cinquecento painting.

Shifting from the private contemplative experience, we now encounter the grand spectacles of religious devotion that took place in Rome in the oratory of the Archconfraternity of the Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti. Barbara Wisch relates how this confraternity, officially instituted in 1548, vaulted to fame through its philanthropic housing of poor pilgrims and convalescents. Elevated in 1562 to the prestigious status of archconfraternity, it quickly outranked sodalities that were centuries old, such as the elite Santissimo Salvatore, discussed by Cadogan. Confraternal oratories, even those that were elaborately decorated, were traditionally private spaces for pious rituals and administrative functions. However, acceding to sixteenth-century “spectacle culture,” oratories became far more accessible – theaters for impressive public displays of the group’s identity. Within this context, Wisch corrects the long-held scholarly view that the Trinità oratory (built 1570-1571; demolished 1940) remained undecorated due to lack of funds. Based on unpublished documents and published ones that have not been brought to bear, she proposes a reconstruction of what was once the largest oratory in Cinquecento Rome, boasting a rich interior crowned by an intricately carved and gilded ceiling. As the setting for Rome’s first compulsory, conversionary preaching to the Jews, begun in 1576, the Trinità oratory is interpreted as a physical and visual environment that forcefully inflected the religious, social, and political events occurring there, deeply impressing the multiple audiences – *confratelli*, pilgrims, high-ranking ecclesiastics, foreign visitors, and Jews – who gathered within its walls.

The volume concludes in early eighteenth-century Vienna, where the exceptional expertise of Bolognese *quadratura* fresco painters was held in the highest regard. Christina Lamb Chakalova studies the preeminent Bolognese masters who were summoned to the splendid Viennese court of Prince Eugene of Savoy to decorate the ceilings and walls of the Belvedere, his new summer palace. She demonstrates that rather than being a mere decorative accessory to the grand allegorical compositions at the ceilings’ centers, the exciting and mathematically complex illusionism of *quadratura* appealed equally to the prince’s intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities. Chakalova places new emphasis on Marcantonio Chiarini (1652-1730), the foremost master of this advanced technique who arrived in Vienna in 1715. His virtuosic demonstrations of *quadratura*, preserved *in situ*, dramatically challenge the viewer’s perception of objective reality. Of utmost importance, Chakalova argues, is the conception of the Belvedere’s *quadratura* as a science based on a comprehensive knowledge of geometric perspective and optics. Adorning rooms that contained rare objects ranging from exquisite Asian porcelain to such up-to-date scientific and astronomical instruments

as telescopes and an early model of the solar system based on Copernicus's heliocentric theory, *quadratura* was an essential component of the extraordinary material spectacle that transformed the palace into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It served to convey the prince's own intellect, knowledge, power, and ability to govern – in sum, his magnificence.

The essays in this volume expand upon artists, places, and topics with which Diane has been engaged over the course of a lifetime. The *Biographical Sketch* and *Bibliography* bear witness to this. Her compellingly nuanced prose, composed with precision and patience, is thoroughly grounded in meticulous research. Diane's brilliant scholarship informs us, challenges us, and compels us to further enrich the study of Renaissance and Baroque art, as this Festschrift attests. Moreover, her esteemed teaching and her profound dedication to colleagues and friends have forged indelible bonds that continue to resonate magnificently – encompassing that very generosity of spirit with which we began.

*I would like to extend special thanks to Gerardo de Simone and Emanuele Pellegrini, scholarly and managing editors-in-chief of «Predella. Journal of Visual Arts», and to the excellent editorial assistants, Elisa Bassetto, Elisa Bernard, Silvia Massa, and Michela Morelli. My utmost gratitude goes to Elisa Bernard, who worked tirelessly on the layout of the essays, and to Elisa Bassetto, who designed the cover. Without their boundless energy, judicious attention to detail, and infinite patience, this splendid volume could not have been produced.*

- 1 P.F. Howard, *Creating Magnificence in Renaissance Florence*, Toronto, 2012, p. 70, citing Antoninus, *Sermones*, Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 308, f. 142r, «Nihil enim magnificentius quam habitas divitias ad beneficentiam liberalitatemque conferre».
- 2 *Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza Monument Horse: The Art and the Engineering*, ed. by D.C. Ahl, Cranbury, N.J., 1995; *ead.*, Benozzo Gozzoli, New Haven-London, 1996, p. 85.
- 3 *Taddeo di Bartolo*, exh. cat., Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria 2020, ed. by G.E. Solberg, Cinisello Balsamo, 2020. See also <https://gallerianazionaledellumbria.it/exhibition/taddeo-di-bartolo/> (accessed 17 April 2020).
- 4 The date of Giovanni Bellini's birth is a fraught issue. Although 1435 or thereabout is still accepted by most scholars, new evidence for an earlier date of 1424/1428 has been proposed by D.W. Maze, *Giovanni Bellini: Birth, Parentage, and Independence*, in «Renaissance Quarterly», 66, 2013, pp. 783-823.
- 5 *Moroni. The Riches of Renaissance Portraiture*, exh. cat., New York, The Frick Collection 2019, ed. by A. Ng, S. Facchinetti, A. Galansino, New York, 2019.