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THE DRAFTSMANSHIP OF JACOPO CHIMENTI DA EMPOLI

by

MARY ALLEN PORTER

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis Adviser: Dr. Edward J. Olszewski

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CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

May, 1995
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THE DRAFTSMANSHIP OF JACOPO DA EMPOLI

ABSTRACT

by

MARY ALLEN PORTER

This study examines the draftsmanship of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli (1551-1640). As an artist working during the years of the Counter Reformation, Empoli's drawings and paintings reflect his awareness and response to the dictates of the Council of Trent as interpreted by Charles Borromeo. Adhering to the Tridentine decrees relevant to church decoration, Jacopo created simple compositional arrangements portraying devotional themes easily understood by the populace.

Rejecting the intellectual and decorative artifices of the High Maniera, and, following the artistic reforms of Santi di Tito, Empoli fervently studied the figure from life.

His drawings are characterized by a pronounced linearity articulating the contours of the human form. His studies of the nude figure reveal little anatomical definition while aggressive strokes of chalk describe the volumetric form of the figure. Empoli's practice of tinting the surface of the paper with colored washes was singular among his contemporaries and a hallmark of his graphic style.
to Muriel Butkin
"Sappiate... che allora io dico di aver finite le opere, quando io ho finiti questi [disegni]." Francesco Furini

A study of Jacopo da Empoli's drawings identifies the factors which shaped the artist's thoughts as he prepared to execute the painted altarpiece, and, further, such a study illuminates his process in creating a work of art. The drawings are understandably often more exciting than the finished product, given Furini's statement quoted above. The tools of the draftsman - chalk, pen, ink, brush and paper - allow the artist the creative freedom to explore, reject, re-cast, and finalize every conceivable solution to his intention for the painted work. This ephemeral mode of creation, by its very function, allows the artist to be spontaneous, uninhibited, and empirical. More often the drawings reveal those very elements which shape the mind of the artist and, consequently, his work. That artistic labor and mental perspiration end when the painting begins seems to be a period statement. The painting is created through no less talent, but through the ease of the hand knowing where it is going, confident and omnipotent. The painting brings the spectator to a different place than do the related drawings in his understanding of it, and in his visual appreciation of it. The drawing reveals the energy, the process, and the thought.

The purpose of this study is to characterize Empoli's draftsmanship, to clarify his stylistic development, to explain the function of his drawings for the final work of art, and
to examine their relationship to painting in terms of light shed on iconography. Empoli's drawings suggest that he was an artist with a clear mental vision of the image that he intended to portray. He knew what he wanted to express visually, and he could thus affix the image to the sheet with confidently rendered line and a conceptual simplicity. He often studied details with concentrated attention whether in the manner of light falling across the nude or clothed body, or the position of a hand, a foot, or the lay of drapery on the flat surface of the ground. Rarely did he change, manipulate, or eliminate the pose. Jacopo manifests his confidence in the idea by his sureness of hand in delineating the contours of the figure. If he deprives us of a certain spontaneity in execution, an impulse in visual terms of the development of his thought, he nonetheless impresses us with the power of his premeditated convictions and the fresh, fluid simplicity of his images.

The creative process that culminated in the painted altarpiece cannot be examined within the narrow context of the artist's studio. Ultimately it must be seen as a collaborative brain trust of patron and artist. In Chapter One, following a survey of the literary criticism that provides the foundation of scholarship informing this study, I discuss the significant events in Jacopo da Empoli's life that helped to shape his career. In Chapter Two, I analyze the religious, political, and cultural factors that influenced the artist's graphic and, consequently, his painting output. The impact of the Council of Trent, the circumstances of patronage, his contemporary Florentine artistic environment and the inspiration from the art of the early Cinquecento all have a role in defining the process and the fruition of Empoli's artistic efforts. Such factors are the conditions that
informed Empoli's choice of subjects, his approach to the execution of the altarpiece, and, to an extent, his selection of graphic media and manner of execution.

In Chapter Three, I characterize Empoli's style of draftsmanship by an examination of drawings related to his documented altarpieces. Preliminary studies for his paintings predict what one might expect to find in the painted altarpieces both formally and iconographically. But, at the same time, the drawings often disclose significant variations that reveal the artist's alternative plans, and problematic areas. When appropriate, I compare Empoli's work to that of his contemporaries in order to place his artistic achievements in the context of his own cultural environment.

In Chapter Four, I discuss the specific tools and materials, methods of execution, and function of the drawings of Empoli's artistic production. Tools and choices of media are discussed in terms of the consistency with which they were used and their inherent qualities that give expression to Empoli's work. Empoli's techniques in executing chalk studies and pen and wash composition drawings, are revelatory of his conceptual approach to the painted altarpiece. As part of Empoli's working method, I discuss the purpose of a given drawing, the artist's focus in resolving a variety of formal problems, and his choices of an iconographical nature. Important among these issues are his singular use of papers prepared with an often brilliantly tinted ground and the function of such total drawings in his preparation for the altarpiece. I will further discuss how the practice and function of those drawings executed on tinted papers by the hand of Empoli differ from those by his predecessors and contemporaries.
In Chapter Five, I discuss Empoli's draftsmanship in relationship to his contemporaries. As an introduction to the important differences and similarities in workshop methods and manner of draftsmanship that characterized drawing in early Seicento Florence.

In the concluding, summarizing chapter of the dissertation, I characterize Empoli as a "barometer" of his times whose manner of draftsmanship reveals aspects of the Florentine artistic practice in general. I highlight his artistic achievements in relationship to his graphic production, and I affirm his role in contributing to the rising status of the drawing as a collectible work of art in its own right. I shall identify Empoli as an exponent of the supremacy of Florentine disegno.

The volume of Empoli's graphic output defines the broad parameters of this study. Most of the drawings selected to characterize his style and to explicate the manner of his approach to the completed work are those which are attributable to the artist. My study, therefore, is not concerned with many beautiful sheets which need not only further study as to questions of attribution and style, but mere exposure to scholarly criticism and delight.

In his dissertation, published in 1976, Jack Spalding opened the first chapter with a quote from Frederick Hartt: "The late Cinquecento in Florence is still a kind of No Man's land...". Almost twenty years later, the late Cinquecento, and, even more so, the early years of the Seicento, await further studies. With this study I hope to make a significant contribution to the scholarship highlighting the career of Jacopo Chimenti da
Empoli, and in doing so, add to the body of literature that has increasingly given press to the artists who flourished during the early years of the seventeenth century. Finally, it is important, at this point in the scholarship of the artist, to give Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli proper recognition and exposure as to his considerable talents as a graphic artist.
PREFACE NOTES


3. See the literature survey in Chapter One, and the bibliography for citations of recent scholarship.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have dedicated my work to Muriel Butkin who has encouraged my efforts to complete my research with her generous financial and emotional support. As a connoisseur and a collector of art, Mrs. Butkin has become in recent years both a mentor and a role model for me. I deeply value her friendship.

No amount of gratitude can express the appreciation I feel toward my advisor, Dr. Edward Olszewski. Without his constant guidance and encouragement, I would not have been able to successfully organize, interpret and articulate the body of information I have gathered in the process of examining Jacopo da Empoli's draftsmanship. While I was studying Empoli's drawings in the Gabinetti degli Stampe i Disegni at the Uffizi, I was fortuante to have had the opportunity to meet Professor Miles Chappell. Since that occasion, Professor Chappell has been exceptionally generous in sharing his thoughts regarding many of Empoli's drawings. I feel privileged to have experienced his kindness and charismatic personality. I appreciate his gentle prodding to finish this dissertation, and his willingness to evaluate my work.

I am indebted to the helpful assistance of the staff of the Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi in Florence. I wish to also than the staffs of the Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florence, the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe in Rome and the Cabinet des Dessins in the Louvre in Paris who facilitated my research. The staff of the Ingalls
Library in the Cleveland Museum of Art has been immensely helpful to me while I researched this topic and they have given me encouragement to see the project through to completion.

I am most grateful to my friend, Angela Welsh, without whose emotional and spiritual support I would still be months beyond finishing this dissertation. Her generosity in giving up of her time to help me put this work in order can never be repaid. I also express my appreciation to Jayne Lauer for spending many hours typing revisions and offering constructive editorial criticisms.

Finally, I thank my colleagues, friends and family for their confidence in my ability to complete this project and for their endless words of encouragement.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 1980 M. Adelaide Bianchini published an exhaustive survey of the literature highlighting the life and art of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli. Since the most comprehensive essays about his career have been written in the twentieth century, Bianchini's survey will be summarized. More recent scholarship will be discussed in greater length.

The earliest sources recounting the life and art of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli derive from his two seventeenth century biographers, Verginio Zaballi and Filippo Baldinucci. According to the latter, Zaballi entered Empoli's studio in 1615 as a student and remained there for about fifteen years. An obscure artist for whom we have little documentation, Zaballi provides only brief statements regarding Empoli's early training with Maso da San Friano and Empoli's life-long study of the art of Andrea del Sarto. The major portion of Zaballi's biography of Empoli is devoted to citing about twenty-five paintings by Empoli with no reference to chronology. The remainder of Zaballi's text recounts anecdotal stories about occurrences in Empoli's workshop which shed some light on the master's personality and temperament.

Filippo Baldinucci, in his biography of 1681 - 1696, admits that much of his information derives from Zaballi with whom he was acquainted, but Baldinucci makes additional comments based on his own observations of Empoli's works. Baldinucci
augments Zaballi’s brief biography with an explanation of Empoli’s family origins but contributes no significant statements about the nature or duration of Empoli’s training in Maso’s workshop. Yet, Baldinucci’s remark that drawing was important in Empoli’s education is noteworthy since the biographer was a collector and thus had an appreciation for drawing as an art form. This explains his acclaim for Empoli as a draftsman, while Zaballi made no reference to this aspect of Empoli’s artistic practice. While Baldinucci devoted the greater portion of the text to listing more than thirty works by Empoli, he mentions only one date in reference to the Delivery of the Keys of 1605. In addition to referring to the apparati for the Medici and the reiteration of Zaballi’s account of the circumstances surrounding Empoli’s only fresco project, Baldinucci gives much attention to Empoli’s practice of copying works by Pontormo, Andrea del Sarto and Fra Bartolommeo. Most noteworthy for the purposes of this study are his remarks about Empoli’s studio practice in regard to his graphic exercises as preparatory for his altarpieces. He completes the biography with anecdotes about Empoli’s personality and social life, his relationships with his patrons, the condition of his poor health and poverty in his old age, and, finally, remarks about the disciples of the artist. Most of the seventeenth and eighteenth century references to the art of Empoli come from various guidebooks citing the works of the most famous Florentine artists. Although many of these books merely provide the reader with the name and location of the painting, the sources sometimes provide brief information about the nature of the commission; occasionally, laudatory comments are made in
reference to a particular painting. Thus Richa's *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne'suoi quartieri* of 1754-62, offers the reader information about Empoli's commission for the Gaddi family of the *Immaculate Conception* in the Church of San Remigio. Although often providing only cursory statements about Empoli's paintings, these early sources are important in that they attest to Empoli's being highly regarded as a Florentine master in these centuries, and such sources often cite paintings by the artist that were not mentioned by either Zaballi or Baldinucci.

Empoli's status as an acclaimed painter among Florentine artists, however, did not survive in the nineteenth-century sources where he nearly disappeared from the critical literature of Florentine art. Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, with second and third editions published in the early years of the nineteenth century, Luigi Lanzi saved the art of Empoli as well as that of his contemporaries from near oblivion by defining the art of the Seicento in a positive light. Lanzi's comments in reference to Empoli were more favorable toward his draftsmanship than his painting.

Art historians of the early decades of the twentieth century, with some exception, did not consider the art of the Italian Seicento worthy of much attention. Instead, they considered it as a negligible period in Florence's more celebrated artistic heritage. This opinion was expressed by Dami in 1924. Empoli is not mentioned, and his *Supper at Emmaus* is given to Tarchiani. One of the more important exceptions, however, was Kurt Busse's essay published in *Thieme-Becker* in 1912 which made the first attempt to place Empoli's paintings in chronological order.
Citing about twenty-five works, Busse made some errors in dating, but he provided new biographical information. Through his text, he recognized Empoli's superior skills of draftsmanship and stated that approximately two hundred sheets can be ascribed to the hand of Empoli of which half are preserved in the Uffizi. Colnaghi's *A Dictionary of Florentine Painters*, which was first published in English in 1928, offered new documentation about Empoli's early training and his participation in the Accademia del Disegno.

Simonetta de Vries' lengthy article in 1933 was the first scholarly study to discuss Empoli's draftsmanship at some length while examining his career as a painter. She cited many previously unpublished works with hitherto unpublished documents from the archival books of the Accademia del Disegno. Adolfo Venturi followed in 1934 with his essay on the art of Jacopo da Empoli in the *Storia dell'arte italiana*. Focussing mainly on Empoli's paintings and, like de Vries, showing errors in chronology, Venturi, nevertheless, provided a sound study of Empoli's manner of execution.

The later twentieth century has been kinder to the art of the Seicento. Between 1939 and 1960 several exhibitions that highlighted the art of the Seicento and illuminating, as well, the art of Empoli. The catalog for the San Miniato exhibition held in 1959 of the art of Ludovico Cardi (il Cigoli) included Mina Gregori's seminal essay which compared aspects of the art of Cigoli to that of his contemporaries and, in particular to that of Empoli. Particularly insightful was her
discussion of Empoli’s *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* which had been attributed to Cigoli by Busse and by De Vries, but which was rightly restored to Empoli by Gregori. It was not until 1962, however, that an exhibition focused attention on the art of Jacopo da Empoli alone. The *Mostra di Disegni di Jacopo da Empoli*, with the catalog by Anna Forlani and with the introduction by M. Adelaide Bianchini, remains the most thorough study published to date on the draftsmanship of Empoli with respect to characterizing his graphic style, his media and techniques, and his sources of influence. Consisting of seventy-one entries, fifty-four of which are illustrated, the catalog was the seminal study for this dissertation.

The decade of the 1960s also called attention to the genre of still life which became popular in Italy in the third decade of the seventeenth century, largely as a result of Empoli’s contributions to this genre. An article by Marongoni in 1922 remained an isolated study until the 1960s when more attention was given to the subject.

From the 1960s to date, exhibitions, articles and essays written as part of larger studies on Italian art have continuously examined the art of Empoli, Cigoli and their contemporaries. Among these publications are exhibition catalogs from various museums which have preserved a number of Empoli’s drawings. Many of these drawings were published for the first time and have added much to the understanding of Empoli as a draftsman. Two notable contributions to the scholarship of Empoli’s draftsmanship are those by A. Châtelet and Anna Forlani-
Tempesti (et al.).

In the last twenty-five years a new emphasis in art criticism and scholarship has been given to the art of the post-maniera years in Florence and the early years of the seventeenth century. Jack Spalding's study of the art of Santi di Tito which began with his doctoral thesis and has continued in many articles since its publication has helped to define the new directions toward reform that were inspired, only in part, from the dictates of the Council of Trent and the Counter-Reformation Church. His lucid studies examining the paintings and the drawings of Santi have contributed immensely to the understanding of the artistic roots from which grew the art of those Florentine artists, Empoli among them, emerging as independent masters in the last two decades of the sixteenth century.

Considerable contributions to the study of the art of the Seicento have been made by Miles Chappell. His investigations of the art of Cigoli, which also began with his doctoral thesis finished more than twenty years ago, have finally begun to give this neglected period of art the recognition and attention it merits with consistent and scholarly publications on the subject. For the last two decades, Chappell has continued publishing his research, not only in reference to the art of Cigoli, but with regard to characterizing the graphic production of the Seicento artists in the context of the tradition of Florentine disegno. His achievements in offering insightful analyses of the draftsmanship of Cigoli and his circle should be included with those of Anna Forlani-Tempesti who has continuously published articles and exhibition
catalogs highlighting the drawings of Seicento artists in the Uffizi collection, and with those of Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodini who has made noteworthy observations about the drawings of the period housed in the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe in Rome. Other valuable contributions which have focused on the art of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries have been made by Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani. Important among the scholarship published in 1977 is the Florentiner Zeichner des Frühbarock, a highly acclaimed and useful study by the German scholars, Christel Thiem. In this seminal study, Thiem considered Empoli’s manner of draftsmanship and studio practice as representative of the Florentine tradition of disegno in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and, as such, compared it with that of Annibale Carracci of the Bolognese school. In Florentiner Zeichner des Frühbarock of 1977, she drew comparisons between the two schools highlighting the similar studio practice of drawing the model from life, which at times caused problems of attribution among artists from both schools.

Edward Olszewski’s The Draftsman’s Eye has been useful in placing Empoli’s drawings within the context of his contemporaries, and within the broader context of the draftsmanship of the Italian schools in the late sixteenth century.

In addition to the Uffizi exhibition of Empoli’s drawings curated by Anna Forlani, the most thorough study of Empoli’s career both as a painter and a draftsman was written by M. Adelaide Bianchini in 1980. Having thoroughly examined previously published sources from the body of literature available and from archival
sources which document the artist's life and career, Bianchini uncovered new
documents that helped to establish the chronology of Empoli's projects with greater
accuracy. Her insights into his stylistic development and into the nature of his various
commissions have added valuable criticism of Empoli's work.

Important contributions to the scholarship of Seicento art and to the work of
Empoli in particular have continued to appear. Giuseppe Cantelli's *RePERTorio della
Pittiura fiorentina del Seicento* remains the most useful source for the paintings.\(^{27}\)
With some illustrations, it primarily serves as a list of paintings, some of which have
not been previously cited in any modern resource. While the exhibition catalog *Il
Primato del Disegno* of 1980 gives an excellent history both verbally and visually of
the tradition of Florentine disegno, the three volume catalog, *Il Seicento Fiorentino*,
published in 1986–87 for an exhibition of the art of the Seicento has become a singular
achievement in its comprehensive study of the art of the period.\(^{28}\) The first volume
focuses on the painting of the period. The major portion of the second volume is
dedicated to the draftsmanship of the Seicento artists. While the drawings are well
established works the catalogue entries offer informative discussions. The
biographies of the exhibited artists comprise the final volume of the catalog.

Although little new information about Empoli's life and career is given, the three
volume exhibition catalog is an extremely valuable research tool since it places the
artist's work in the context of his contemporaries and since it serves as an invaluable
visual resource with which to further study the art of the period.
Yet another valuable research tool, published in 1988, Francoise Viatte's

Inventaire General des Dessins Italiens III: Dessins Toscan XVIe Siècles - XIIIe

Siècles: Tome I, 1560 - 1640, catalogues the drawings by artists of the Italian

Seicento which are preserved in the Louvre, many of which derive from Filippo

Baldinucci's collection.\(^{29}\) Annamaria Petrioli Tofani and Graham Smith co-authored a
catalogue for the 1988 exhibition of Sixteenth Century Tuscan Drawings from the

Uffizi. This source is important for its scholarly text illustrated with color

reproductions of the drawings.\(^{30}\)

The first monographic study of Empoli's art, published in 1988 by Alessandro

Marbottini is a convenient summary of prior scholarship.\(^{31}\) In the preface of the book,
the author admits to not offering the reader much new information about the artist's
career, and moreover, in the chapter devoted to Empoli's draftsmanship, Marbottini

notes that since Anna Forlani-Tempesti and Maria Adelaide Bianchini exhaustively
examined the stylistic development of Empoli's graphic work, "it would be useless to
repeat what they already observed."\(^{32}\) Marabottini's monograph, however, is a very
important resource not only for the beautifully illustrated text but for the identification
of his drawings with his paintings. Many of Empoli's drawings are published in this
monograph for the first time. Marabottini also provides an extensive bibliography and
a chronology that cites important events in Empoli's life as well as identifying dated or
documented commissions. The only weakness in Marabottini's scholarship is that he
is tentative about Empoli's contributions to the art of the Florentine Seicento and about Empoli's role in the tradition of Florentine Disegno.

A few words must be said about four other important studies that have been useful in my research on Jacopo da Empoli's draftsmanship. If little is known of the artist's early training in the workshop of Maso da San Friano, little more is known about Maso's career itself. However, two scholars have attempted to identify and analyze some of the artists's drawings and paintings. Luciano Berti in 1963 and Valentino Pace in 1976 help to illuminate Maso's working methods and stylistic development so that the nature of Empoli's training might be better understood. Janet Cox-Rearick's two-volume study of the draftsmanship of Jacopo Pontormo has served to elucidate the manner in which Empoli's mentor, Pontormo, approached his graphic exercises. Moreover, his study has served as a paradigmatic example of a comprehensive essay on the draftsmanship of an artist. Finally, as Marabottini has written the first monograph on the art of Jacopo da Empoli, Franco Faranda, a few years earlier in 1986, published a monograph on Ludovico Cardi, detto il Cigoli. Like Marabottini's Empoli, it is richly illustrated and identifies Cigoli's drawings with his commissioned projects.

Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli was born in Florence in the quartiere of San Lorenzo on 30 April 1551 (fig. 1). The name, "Chimenti" derives from his father's baptismal name of Chimenti di Michele. Throughout the early years of research, Jacopo has often been erroneously referred to as "Chimenti". An article written by A
da Empoli in 1958 finally cleared up the controversy by stating that the artist should be correctly referred to as "Jacopo da Empoli". Jacopo Sansovino was Empoli's maternal grandfather but he seems to have had no observable influence on Empoli's art.

Empoli's drawings do not reveal the approach to the modelling of form that is characteristic of a sculptor - hatching and cross-hatching shadows as to demarcate the separation of planes.

No documented source indicates that Empoli ever left the city limits of Florence. In fact, Baldinucci's biography implies that Empoli preferred to remain in his neighborhood where he had his residence that also housed his workshop.

When he had the money in hand, it was not possible, as long as it lasted, for him to touch his brushes to new works, and in that interim, he wasted time sitting outside one or another studio of those "vetettai" near his room which was the one on the Via de'Servi... in Empoli's room where he usually stayed the most, he played cards with his comrades for a few quarterini... 38

On the basis of an eighteenth-century source, Empoli was reported to have taken a trip to Genoa, yet no other documentation exists to support this statement. 39 That Empoli never left the city is important since one, then, must consider how his art reflects influences from artistic centers outside of Florence.

The earliest document for Empoli's career is a payment discovered by Bianchini in the archive of the Accademia del Disegno in May 1568. 40 The payment of a tax of one lira and ten soldi, which was tendered every six months until 1572, is
surmised to have been Empoli's registration fee for enrollment in Maso da San Friano's workshop. Another document which testifies to Empoli's payment in 1572 to the workshop of Poccetti, suggests that, upon Maso's death in 1572, Empoli entered the studio of Poccetti, probably for a brief period of time.41

As an active and, subsequently, influential member of the Accademia del Disegno from his matriculation in 1576 until after 1635, Empoli participated greatly in the official business of the Accademia and its manner of education. He held official positions in the Accademia from 1589 when he was elected Provveditore until 1635 when he served as Conservatore.42

Despite his obligations in the academy, Empoli managed a busy workshop. Besides having an impressive number of students who went on to be professional painters, Empoli numbered among his followers many dilettantes or noble citizens of Florence who frequented his studio to receive instruction and practice art.43 These amateurs were more interested in painting still lifes than in rendering religious subjects. Among Empoli's serious students and besides Zaballi, were, Giovanni Battista Vanni, Clement Bocciardo ("il Genovese"), Felice Ficarelli ("il Riposo"), and Giovanni Battista Brazze ("il Bigio").44

Between Empoli's first documented altarpiece, the Madonna and Saints of 1579 (Louvre) until his last recorded painting, the Creation of Adam of 1632 (in storage, Florentine galleries), he executed mostly religious subjects. Baldinucci stated that Empoli painted numerous compositions of the Madonna and Child executed for
private patrons. Indeed, Empoli's paintings dating from c. 1599 until 1632 were mostly religious.

Jacopo's steady commissions for copies of works by Andrea del Sarto and Fra Bartolommeo will be discussed in the following chapter; however, one commission given to the artist early in his career, precipitated an experience that forever altered the direction of his art. In the 1580s Empoli was commissioned by the monks at the Certosa dell' Galluzzo to copy the works of Pontormo. While engaged in these projects, Empoli carried out his only fresco, the Sermon on the Mount. His biographers report that one day, on stepping back to view his work, he fell from the scaffolding. Although not severely injured, he never again painted in fresco.

By the late 1590s, he had developed his mature style which can be observed in the 1599 Pontedera Annunciation and in the Chaste Susanna dated 1600. This is the style of his masterpieces which are generally agreed by most scholars of the period to have been executed in the second decade of the seventeenth century. These include the Saint Charles Borromeo and the Rospigliosi Family of 1613, the Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II of 1614, and the Saint Yves, Potector of Widows and Orphans of 1616. Added to these works, I believe, must be the Immaculate Conception executed in the last decade of the sixteenth century for the Gaddi chapel in the Church of San Remigio, which I consider a work that heralds the mature style.

In addition to his sacred altarpieces, Empoli executed nature morte, according to Bianchini, from 1621 until 1626 for profit as well as his own personal pleasure.
Why he seems to have abruptly stopped painting compositions of this subject is often discussed in the literature of the genre. 48

That an Italian not only took an interest in such themes, but was one of the most sought-after painters of this genre is remarkable considering the success and popularity of such paintings executed by Northern European artists of the period.

His ability to execute portraits of the noble faction of Florentine society was praised by his biographers who related that his success in the execution of the portrait of Girolamo Biffì was so renown that the citizens of Florence, in Baldinucci's rhetoric, literally "ran to see that picture in which two miracles are perceived - one of nature and one of art." 49

Decorative projects commissioned from Empoli and from other respected artists of the city involved festival decorations for the various Medici Court functions that required elaborate artistic preparations.

What we know of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli's personality and temperament derives from the anecdotes recounted by his biographers. The stories about his interactions with friends, students and patrons reveal Empoli to have been querulous, improvident with his money, and rapacious in his appetite for food. 50 He would often refuse to finish a commissioned painting until he was paid in advance for his anticipated efforts. More often than not, he requested the payment to be made to him in the manner of edible compensation. When all of Florence rushed to see his highly acclaimed portrait of Girolamo Biffì, Empoli would not allow admittance to his studio
until he was given a gift which he preferred to be something to eat. During the years that he painted still lifes and was frequently visited by noblemen seeking lessons, he would tell his wealthy dilettantes that before the lesson, a visit to the market was in order, ostensibly to acquire specimens for the still life. Notwithstanding their use for this purpose, Empoli would delight in disposing them by way of his stomach.\textsuperscript{51}

Many scholars have surmised from Baldinucci's remarks that Empoli "wasted time" or that he executed "little work", that he was lazy in his practice. Yet the biographer never used the word "pigro" or any of its synonyms in reference to Empoli's character. If Empoli were lazy, he still was prolific in his graphic and painterly production. Why Baldinucci wrote,

\begin{quote}
This is how our painter spent a great part of his life; and for the little work that he did, and that was by force of necessity and spending a great part of what the works were worth before [receiving] the actual earnings, he was reduced in his old age of eighty years to leading a most difficult life.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

remains a mystery. None of the early sources, however, give any suggestion that Empoli studied anatomy or any of the liberal arts as his more erudite colleague, Cigoli, had done. Therefore, he may have been academically "lazy". In his apparent lack of effort to study the figure for its muscle and bone structure, he was not as thorough as he could have been in his representations of anatomy. As it will be examined later, his neglect of a disciplined study of anatomy may explain his difficulties with rendering the figure in a foreshortened pose.
Empoli reportedly had fits of temper that supposedly blew over as quickly as they erupted. This may actually be documented in one of his drawings. In the biography regarding Empoli's student, Giovanni Battista Vanni, Baldinucci related a story of how the young artist was so beautiful in his countenance that Empoli had him pose for the face of one of the widows in the *Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans* (1616, Florence Palazzo Pitti). The study for the widow (Uffizi n. 9382 F, fig. 203) in the Saint Yves painting shows the woman's head as it will appear in the painting with respect to the pose. The drawing shows slashes of wash over the face of the woman which, in my opinion, were not intentionally applied to suggest a veil since one does not appear as part of her head covering in the painting. Furthermore, the drawing is so confidently rendered and with such economy of means that no struggle with its execution is apparent. In fact the bold, impetuous strokes of wash from the brush actually seem to be greatly incongruous with Empoli's general graphic style. I believe, instead, that Empoli damaged the drawing in a fit of anger, inspired not by frustration with the execution of the study - an unlikely possibility for an accomplished artist - but for personal reasons, that is Empoli's anger with the young model. The last years of Empoli's life brought him poverty and illness. Because he had spent his profits with no apparent savings, the artist sought financial stability by selling his drawings. He not only sold sheets still in his own private collection, but made copies of his own drawings to raise enough money for survival. Apparently this was not enough to sustain him through his last, long illness. The confraternity of San
Martino and the charitable treatment of Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici administered to his needs.\textsuperscript{56}

Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli died at eighty-nine years of age, and he was buried in the family tomb in San Lorenzo. Some days before his death, he is reported to have told his students, "Do not do as I did - work, work, know to value the time and the occasion and think toward the future."\textsuperscript{57}
CHAPTER ONE NOTES


2. Verginio Zaballi's account of the life and art of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli has been reprinted with explanatory notes by G. Battelli in, "Notizie inedite sull'Empoli," *Arte e Storia* (1915): 207 - 211. The biography is preserved as the "Vita manoscritta dell'Empoli" in the Manoscritto Maglibechiano, II.II.110, cc.150-154, in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. Filippo Baldinucci's biography of Empoli appears in his *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, vol. IV, (1681-1728) previously cited.

3. Battelli 207.

4. Zaballi cites the location of these works and occasionally mentions the patron. In the notes to the text of Zaballi's manuscript, Battelli notes changes in these locations and makes some clarifying remarks about the original site of the painting or its state of survival.


7. This is not surprising since art historians of this century deemed late Cinquecento Florentine art as too provincial to merit much critical attention. (See Bianchini, "Jacopo da Empoli", 96.)


11. While errors in dating were frequently made in the literature of the early twentieth century, they have since been corrected as a result of recent cleanings, scientific analysis and archival studies.


15. Some of these exhibitions of importance to the literature of Empoli and the Seicento in general are: ______________, Mostra Medicea, Palazzo Medici-Ricardi (Florence: Casa Editrice Marzoco, 1939); ______________, Mostra del Cinquecento Toscano in Palazzo Strozzi (1940); R. Bacou, J. Bean, Dessins Florentin, Or, 959 op. cit. 1959; Luciano Berti, Anna Forlani, Mina Gregori, et. al., Mostra del Cigoli e del suo Ambiente (San Miniato, 1959).


23. For a complete citation of articles and exhibition catalogs that have contributed to the critical literature of Jacopo da Empoli's art, see the bibliography. Some of the more important publications are listed here. Many of Forlani-Tempesti's articles have been previously cited. For articles and exhibitions curated by S. Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, see the following: *Disegni fiorentini 1560 - 1640 dalle Collezioni del Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe*, exh. cat., (Rome, 1977); "Studi sul disegno


28. -----, Il Seicento fiorentino, 3 vols.: pittura, disegno (with incisione, scultura, and arti minori), and biografie, exh. cat. (Florence: Cantini Edizioni d'Arte, 1986 - 87).

29. Francoise Viatte, Inventaire General des Dessins Italiens III: Dessins Toscan XVIe - XVIIIe siècle: Tome I 1560 - 1640, (Paris: Editions de la Reunion des Musée Nationaux, 1988). Of the drawings which Viatte ascribes to Empoli some attributions are debatable. These drawings will be discussed in following chapters.


31. See note 18 above.

32. Marabottini 149.


36. This date appears in the *Registro dei Battezzati* in the archives of the Opera del Duomo. See, M. Adelaide Bianchini's entry of the life of Empoli in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 31 (Rome: Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Societa Grafica Romana, 1985) 640.


39. de Vries 331. She cites a passage from the *Almanaco pittorico*, p. 100, vol. V., 1796 as her source.

40. Bianchini, *Paradigma* 93.

41. Colnaghi 85.

42. Colnaghi lists Empoli's positions in the Accademia del Disegno as follows: Provveditore from 1589 -90, Scrivano from 1593 - 94, and again in 1610, Consul from August 1580 until December 1594, again from December 1607 until August 1614 and finally from April 1621 until February 1624-25, Infermiere and Councillor in September 1627, and Conservator in 1635. See Colnaghi, 85.


45. Baldinucci, *Notizie*, vol. III, 10. Baldinucci reported that Empoli's paintings of the *Madonna and Child* were too numerous to cite each one.


48 Marabottini 127.


53. Baldinucci related, "We see the portrait of this craftsman ["artifice", i.e. Vanni] of the time when he was a youth of seventeen years, made by Jacopo da Empoli who was then his master, in the most beautiful picture of Saint Yves which he colored for the men of the magistracy of orphans...Empoli made the portrait to represent the face of the widowed women." See *Notizie*, vol. IV, 547. It is curious why Baldinucci used the plural, "donne vedove" when it seems apparent that only the woman on the far right is studied in the drawing (Uffizi n. 9382 F).

54. For a discussion of this drawing, see Chapter 4.

55. Empoli seems to have used the same model for several figures in his altarpieces dating to the first and second decade of the seventeenth century. The Apostle who stands in the exact center of the *Delivery of the Keys*, the witness to the *Miracle of Charles Borromeo* who stands almost in the exact center of the composition, the attendant figure just to the right of center in the *Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II*, and perhaps the figure of Isaac in the *Sacrifice of Isaac* all appear to have been depicted from the same model. It is difficult to determine whether Empoli has used the same model again for the widow whose hair is almost completely hidden by her head covering. As an accessible model from Empoli's workshop, perhaps Giovanni Battista Vanni served as the model for these other figures as well.

56. Baldinucci refers to Empoli's almsgivers as the "buonomini" of San Martino, *Notizie*, vol. III, 16.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL FACTORS THAT SHAPED EMPOLI’S CAREER

Il fatto che la sua pittura appaia così emblematica di una particolare situazione storico-culturale, sia sul versante religioso che su quello politico ed artistico, lo rende di per se degno di attenzione.¹

The members of the closing session of the Council of Trent in 1563 dedicated themselves to implementing pervasive reforms throughout the Holy See. With the sincere intent to curb its own ecclesiastical excesses and abuses and to reaffirm its active role in saving the wayward souls of the Catholic community, the Church used every means possible to extinguish any possible Protestant criticism. Persuasive rhetoric informed every bishop to instruct the faithful within his own diocese on the true and ineluctable tenets of church doctrine. With this intent, religious imagery became, once again, one of the most effective instruments of Catholic propaganda and edification. Artists were enjoined to create visual exegeses of Biblical narratives that were easily legible and unequivocal in meaning for both the educated and the illiterate members of the congregation. The interpretation of theological doctrine by means of abstruse visual references was considered inappropriate for sacred works of art. Thus the appearance of pagan motifs and nude figures either to enhance the composition
aesthetically or to complicate the narrative were deemed as abhorrent distractions to the essential didactic purpose of sacred painting.

The Council's decrees were ambiguous regarding specific expectations for the appropriate decoration of church altars. Under the heading, "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and On Sacred Images", the Council gave purpose to the role of art, charging the bishops to insure proper depiction of Biblical narratives.

Moreover, let the bishops diligently teach that by means of the stories of the mysteries of our redemption portrayed in paintings and other representations the people are instructed and confirmed in the articles of faith, which ought to be borne in mind and constantly reflected upon...If any abuse shall have found their way into these holy and salutary observances, the holy Council desires earnestly that they be completely removed, so that no representation of false doctrines and such as might be the occasion of grave error to the uneducated be exhibited...Furthermore, in the invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, all superstition shall be removed, all filthy quest for gain eliminated, and all lasciviousness avoided, so that images shall not be painted and adorned with a seductive charm.²

While the bishops were expected to oversee the propriety of all forms of church decoration, theologians articulated in more specific language, the intent of the Tridentine decrees. In his Due Dialoghi of 1564, Gilio da Fabriano vehemently condemned the depiction of nudity in Michelangelo's Last Judgment and further warned artists to avoid seductively clothing figures in revealing drapery.³ This condemnation extended beyond the criticism of Michelangelo's nudes. According to the new standards for religious painting, much of Mannerist art was deemed guilty of
inciting lascivious thoughts in the mind of the spectator. Gabrielle Paleotti, archbishop of Bologna, had been an influential presence at the Council of Trent, and he made explicit that which constituted "abuses" in religious imagery implied by the Tridentine decrees. Paleotti proscribed any pictorial image that was "superstitious, apocryphal, false, idle, new, unusual". Although some suggestions for the reform of sacred art called for severe measures in the destruction of particular paintings, other suggestions were more concerned with defining the manner in which religious subjects should be depicted.

In general, however, theologians were in agreement as to what requisites conditioned acceptable sacred imagery. Clarity and simplicity in narrative, as well as the elimination of any pictorial element or manner of depiction that might embellish the narrative for purely aesthetic reasons were common themes in the literature of the reform critics. These themes included the censorship of convoluted poses assumed by muscular bodies in physical perfection, and strictures against pictorial motifs of a bizarre or capricious nature which were superfluous to the traditional biblical subject matter. Above all, these champions of ecclesiastical reforms required that the function of art be an affective form of catechism in which the faithful portrayal of sacred stories would inspire piety in the common man.

St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584) has been distinguished by history as the spirit incarnate of the Counter-Reformation. He was indefatigable in his commitment to implementing the reforms of the Church following the guidelines of the Council of
Trent.

On the day of the closing of the Council he [Borromeo] speaks of it as the greatest benefit which could have been conferred on the world, an enterprise redounding to the honor of the Pope, a thing both beneficial and necessary for Christianity, and one which had set free the Church of God from great danger at a moment of dire peril. Perhaps so distinguished a gathering would not meet again for centuries, and he [Borromeo] burned with zeal to see the Council carried into effect at once as the needs of Christendom demanded.⁵

Shortly after 1572, Borromeo published his Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticæ consisting of several volumes of discourse. His central theme dealt with the construction and decoration of church structures, and the manner in which the liturgical services should be constructed. Yet Charles' efforts to promote church reforms went beyond the persuasive impact of his text.⁶

Borromeo’s influence in Italy and in parts of Europe was profound in interpreting, executing and overseeing reforms throughout the Holy See. Nowhere was the impact of his endeavors more strongly felt than in Rome itself as "...people no longer came to Rome to make their fortunes, but to pray, and...the change in the city must be traced to the influence of Borromeo."⁷ During Borromeo's ecclesiastical career, Pope Pius V fervently endorsed the resolutions of the Council of Trent and urged their immediate implementation. His efforts and whole-hearted support were carried on by Pope Gregory XIII,

a man who was both tenacious and far-seeing, [and] stands out from the first days of his pontificate to his death as unceasingly occupied with the task of the reform decrees...⁸
Borromeo's single-minded mission to enforce the decrees influenced both pontificates, particularly regarding their insistence on canonical visits within every diocese to insure that reforms were in evidence. As Archbishop of Milan, Borromeo traveled frequently between Milan and Rome and visiting prominent cities along the way, took counsel with princes and prelates. For disseminating and promoting the Council's decrees throughout Italy, these visits were likely to have been more effective and expeditious than the written treatise. Borromeo was particularly intensive in his efforts to advise religious and secular leaders on the proper manner of church reform in 1570s and into the 1580s until his death in 1584. This period coincides with Jacopo da Empoli's early training and emergence as an independent master.

Neither of Empoli's biographers describes the artist as knowledgeable or even interested in current artistic or religious treatises. Yet his paintings reveal every evidence of an awareness of the new demands placed on sacred art. More specifically, they exhibit a familiarity with Borromeo's explicit instructions for artistic execution in compliance with the dictates of the Council.

Relative to religious painting, Borromeo's text of the *Instructiones* emphatically echoed contemporary reform critics in requiring clarity in composition and narrative. He advocated the elimination of extraneous pictorial motifs as unessential to the representation of traditional sacred stories, and further articulated, in a precise manner, the pictorial elements which were necessary in depicting sacred figures.
Angels must have wings; saints must have haloes and their particular attributes, or if they are really obscure, it may even be necessary to write their names below to avoid any confusion.9

Since Empoli was not known to be an educated man, he most likely never read Borromeo's treatise.10 However the theologian had urged communication between artists and their patrons. Therefore knowledge of Borromeo's expectations for the appropriate execution of altarpieces presumably reached Empoli by means of contractual language or dialogue with his patrons. More significantly, the artist could have met Borromeo personally or received reports of his activities during the Archbishop's visits to Florence. Empoli would have been only fourteen years of age in 1565 when Borromeo accompanied the future Archduchess, Giovanna d'Austria, to Tuscany just prior to her marriage to Francesco I de' Medici. However Borromeo visited Florence again in 1579 on a return trip from Rome to Milan.

As an independent master in the 1570s, Empoli's livelihood depended on commissions for altarpieces. Religious paintings of recondite narratives whose compositions were complicated with robust nude figures in contorted poses were, by this time, unpopular among Florentine patrons of sacred art. Therefore, Empoli must have been eager to conform with the Tridentine decrees as Borromeo interpreted them, if for no other reason than to insure continued patronage from wealthy families.

Empoli's narratives are easily legible, devoid of capricious pictorial motifs; sacred figures wear garments of modest design; the drapery reveals very little of the
body beneath the weighty material. While Empoli found no need in any of his signed or documented paintings to identify saints with inscriptions, his depiction of saints, in accordance with traditional iconography, represents them with haloes and attributes. Saint Anthony Abbot is represented in several works with his stick and, frequently also with a pig. Saint John the Baptist appears, in each instance, with his staff, crudely made into a cross and wearing a tunic of animal pelts under a red cloak (figs. 2 and 3). A red cardinal's hat lies beside Saint Jerome.

More significantly, the figure of Saint Charles Borromeo appears in no fewer than five paintings, and there also exists in the Uffizi a portrait study of his head for the Madonna and Child with Saints in Santa Lucia dei Magnoli, Florence (figs. 4 and 5). A recent cleaning of this altarpiece has revealed a halo above Borromeo's head. With this revelation, the dating of the altarpiece has become problematical.11 Traditionally, scholars have dated this panel to c. 1607, yet Borromeo was only canonized by Pope Paul V on 1 November 1610. Whether the theologian is given saintly status prematurely here or not, he is depicted precisely as he would have required Empoli to portray sacred figures. Seen on the extreme left of the composition, Saint Charles listens with devout reverence to the words of the Baptist on the right.

Appearing as a vision, the Madonna is seated on a throne of clouds and displays the Christ Child who, standing on Her lap, acknowledges and blesses only the figure of Saint John the Baptist. This arrangement of the Madonna and Child calls to
mind the traditional interpretation of Mary as symbolic of the altar upon which is displayed the body of Christ present in the Eucharist. The figure of the Virgin also represents the Church which embraces the Word of God and reminds the faithful of Christ's sacrifice for their salvation. The Baptist, with his characteristic gesture, invites the spectator to behold the vision and contemplate its significance. Indeed, Saint John's pose suggests that he is seeking the blessing of the Christ Child for the souls of the faithful. The directness of the appeal of this figure to the spectator is exemplary of Empoli's intentions to conform to the dictates of the Council of Trent. With the Baptist's invitation, the worshipper kneeling before this altarpiece may include himself among those saints depicted who witness that vision of the Virgin and Child. Indeed, Saint John's pose suggests that he is seeking blessing of the Christ Child for the souls of the faithful. The directness of the appeal of this figure to the spectator is exemplary of Empoli's intentions to conform to the dictates of the Council of Trent.

Saint Anthony Abbot and Saint Bernard kneel in front of Borromeo and at the feet of the Virgin. With an expression of ecstatic devotion and with hands joined together in prayer, Saint Bernard glances up at the miraculous vision. Other than the Baptist, he alone sees the holy apparition. Bernard's adoring contemplation of the Madonna and Child re-evokes the legendary event in his life when, while he was writing at his lectern, the Madonna appears as a vision of inspiration. The crozier and Bishop's mitre which laid before him make reference to his refusal to accept
ordination. Although not appearing with his usual attribute of a pig, Saint Anthony Abbot supports himself with a stick, an attribute which appears ubiquitously in representations of the saint. Like Saint Charles, he listens intently to the words of the Baptist. Beyond the fact that Borromeo's countenance bears a portrait-likeness to the saint, Empoli further identifies this figure as an archbishop by clothing him in a red cassock.

There is nothing ambiguous in meaning about this painting. Empoli presents the viewer with an arrangement of dignified, iconic figures. A sense of stillness pervades the scene which underscores the function of this altarpiece as a source for quiet contemplation. The devout observer joins the ensemble of saints in adoring the vision of the Madonna and Child. This painting inspires a timeless sense of piety in those who kneel before it, and is a visual exemplification of the Tridentine decrees for sacred art. With the appearance of Saint Charles Borromeo among the saints, one assumes at least an awareness of the archbishop's contributions to church reforms. The uncomplicated composition and specific iconography suggest Empoli's familiarity with Borromeo's instructions as well.

Empoli's preparatory drawings reflect, perhaps even more clearly, the artist's intentions to compose religious narratives with clarity, simplicity and dignity. With few exceptions, his compositional studies demonstrate through their style of execution and arrangement of pictorial and figurative elements, easily legible Christian themes. Empoli avoids shrouding forms in darkness or dissolving form in light for
the purpose of enhancing dramatic expression. He prefers instead to articulate every element of the composition resulting in images which are unequivocal in meaning.

Empoli's figural studies are executed with precise contour lines which delineate the volumetric forms of the body. This aspect of his graphic approach and his preference for static poses and reticent facial expressions impart a sense of stillness and tranquility to his compositions. His studies are translated into paintings, most often without significant variations, and, as such, they provide the viewer with timeless and iconic images of the Catholic faith and Christian story. The studies of individual figures for these compositions are equally representative of Empoli's desire to depict a cast of sacred and profane characters with which the faithful could identify while contemplating the scene portrayed before them. These figures are executed with a simplicity of line describing solid, three-dimensional, credible forms. The summarily rendered passages of light and shadow serve only to enhance the clarity of form. The preliminary drawings for the Sermon of Saint John the Baptist of c. 1608 are paradigmatic of Empoli's approach to the execution of the altarpiece (fig. 6). The compositional study (Uffizi, n. 947 F, fig. 7) varies in only the most insignificant of details with the final painting and shows an arrangement of figures giving prominent attention to the Baptist. Around the great promontory of rock upon which Saint John speaks, spectators, appearing to be from Empoli's own time, gather to hear the Baptist's message. By depicting careful distinctions of light and shadow, Empoli makes articulate the details of dress and hair, and other accoutrements of fashion that
identify these figures as individuals, not unlike the supplicants at the altar for which this narrative was intended to be seen. Empoli aggressively and confidently rendered a figural study of one of the middle-aged spectators for this project (Louvre, n. 1039, fig. 8). This figure, rendered from life, appears in the central middleground of the painting. Although it was not uncommon to depict the spectators who gathered at the Sermon of the Baptist as contemporary citizens (Fig. 9), Empoli's pictorial description of these figures, as seen in the Louvre drawing, is especially attuned to representing the bystanders with a specificity of detail linking the congregation, by unmistakable visual references, to the faithful of his own time.\(^{13}\) This aspect of his work was most sympathetic with the wishes of the Tridentine decrees.

Empoli's response to the dictates of the Council of Trent differs in significant ways from that of his exact contemporary, Lodovico Cardi ("il Cigoli"). Empoli's compositions of serene spiritual statements have suffered bad press in literary scholarship over recent decades. Criticized for its lack of emotional expression, Empoli's art is readily contrasted with Cigoli's paintings which vibrate with color, movement, and emotional tension, in their dramatizations of the Christian narratives.\(^{14}\) Empoli's more reticent figures and dignified, static arrangement of compositional elements have been construed as demonstrating his inability to portray the human form in movement and reflecting an insensitivity to the mechanics of dramatic narrative.\(^{15}\) Studies of his figures assuming active poses are almost completely absent from his entire corpus of drawings.
If Empoli's *oeuvre* is devoid of spirited figures and faces expressive of pathos, it must be understood that such an approach to the portrayal of sacred themes was not sympathetic to his conception of depicting Christian narratives. His intentions, to judge from both the paintings and the preliminary studies, were to express in visual terms the essence of the Christian message to the faithful inherent in the teachings of church doctrine and sacred stories. And this was precisely what Charles Borromeo exhorted artists to do in his interpretations of the decrees of the Council of Trent. One has only to acknowledge the curious repetition of the figure of Charles Borromeo in several of Empoli's altarpieces to conclude that the artist was at least superficially if not more profoundly aware of his importance to the current religious and cultural climate governing matters of Church practice and decoration. It must also be remembered that these paintings, which include the figure of Borromeo, were commissioned from separate patrons for various altars in churches throughout Florence and the nearby surrounding towns of Tuscany.

A comparison with the altarpieces executed by Cigoli reveals that Borromeo makes not one single appearance in this artist's work. Cigoli's more expressive and dynamic style, as observable in his *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (1597, Palazzo Pitti, Florence), was more sympathetic to the teachings of the Jesuits. The Jesuits and other reformers of the Catholic Church such as Gilio da Fabriano advocated the depiction of a more graphic visual exegesis of religious narratives.\textsuperscript{16} Their conception of the role of sacred painting went beyond that of the altarpiece as a didactic
instrument of Church doctrine. It was to invoke a more empathetic response from the spectator in order to make more explicit the sacrifice of Christ and His saints for the salvation of the faithful. Gilio instructed artists to "show to the full, the horrors of any scene of martyrdom which he may have to depict" and it can be no coincidence that scenes of martyrdom appear with regularity in the oeuvre of Cigoli while they are infrequent in the work of Empoli.

Gilio's advice to artists met with some resistance in Florence in the writings of Raffaello Borghini. In his Il Riposo published in 1584, Borghini, like Gilio, advised artists to represent images of the saints with decorum and piety and to evoke "honesty, reverence, and devotion" so that those whose looked upon their works would be "compelled to penitence." Yet Borghini directed artists to depict the saints with their instruments of martyrdom and holding the palm of victory in their hand, rather than specifically describe in visual terms the actual graphic scenes of martyrdom. These disparate views--the Borromeo and the Jesuit--characterize the essential differences in approach to the religious narrative between Cigoli and Empoli. Cigoli's art shares too many similarities with the teachings of the Jesuits to be merely superficial. The Jesuits and the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, of which Cigoli was a member, were especially appreciative of the paintings of Barocci whose influence on the art of Cigoli is well documented. The compositions of Barocci and his most ardent admirer, Cigoli, provide visual examples of a particular passage in the Spiritual Exercises:
...appeal through the senses for the excitement of religious emotion...the neophyte is urged to use all his five senses to realize, almost to re-enact, the scenes of the Passion, the torments of Hell, or the bliss of Heaven...to acknowledge these things with the mind, [and] he is to feel with the heart through the senses.\(^{21}\)

Cigoli's *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* of 1590, although an early work, is representative of the artist's manner of describing with psychological intensity and physical immediacy an event inherently dramatic by virtue of its violent subject (fig. 10). The artist exploits every means available to create a scene of credible characters enacting a brutal sentence of torture and death at night. This is achieved through the pictorial expressiveness of color, by the figures assuming active poses, and by the dramatically illuminated scene of martyrdom as the intense heat and glow of the flames penetrate the dark gloom of night. This painting must have inspired astonishment in the late sixteenth century spectator. Only the sense of smell is absent from the horror depicted, so realistic is the event that even the sounds of the tormentors and tormenté must have been imagined. This approach to the depiction of sacred themes is the métier of Cigoli following Ignatius of Loyola's appeal to the five senses in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

Differences between Empoli's and Cigoli's approach to the depiction of Christian themes are observable in their preparatory drawings. The numerous examples of Cigoli's draftsmanship attest to his conception of the altarpiece in terms of a pictorial expressiveness of color, light and shadow that results in images of
poignant reality. In contrast to Empoli's draftsmanship, the absence of any sense of repose in Cigoli's drawings is especially observable in his compositional studies (fig. 11). The sheet is animated with active line which never completely incarcerates the figure within its contours. Instead the line characterizes physical movement and defines a restlessness as well as an emotional expressiveness.

The differences between the artistic practices of Empoli and Cigoli are differences in kind rather than differences in skill or in artistic genius. Both artists are responding to influences in their environments that motivate choices of subject and style and, naturally, both artists must answer to the demands placed upon them by constraints of their particular commissions. That Empoli is sympathetic to the interpretations of the Council of Trent as promulgated by Charles Borromeo, while Cigoli is responsive to the teachings of the Jesuits and others is not to say that either artist was in practice a follower of these representatives of the Catholic Church. It merely suggests that their respective styles were most compatible to one or the other exponent of ecclesiastical reform in the formation of their artistic development.

Matters of patronage have relevance to the discussion of Empoli's development as a draftsman and painter. As will be shown, the frequency with which certain types of commissions were given to Empoli encouraged, to an extent, the development of his mature style. Further, his preparation for the painting and the actual painting itself reflect the expectations of the patron for the subject and compositional specifications.
Empoli was one of the most sought-after artists of his time to execute copies of works by the early Cinquecento masters. Baldinucci attested to Empoli's success in this genre when he praised the artist as being, "truly singular in the copying of works by Andrea del Sarto."\textsuperscript{22} When a wealthy patron of the arts such as Cardinal Carlo de' Medici acquired an original painting for his collection, he often commissioned an artist to execute an exact copy of the original to occupy its location over the altar from which it was removed.\textsuperscript{23} The early sixteenth-century Florentine masters whose works were most often copied were the same artists who were admired and studied by Empoli: Fra Bartolommeo, Pontormo, and Andrea del Sarto. Thus it is not surprising to find the continuing influences of these artists in his work throughout his career. Moreover, these very artists were praised for their paintings exhibiting clarity in form and content by Tridentine critics. As Bianchini observed:

Within the Florentine tradition at the beginning of the Cinquecento had been the great painters who had obtained precisely what was sought [in the years of the Counter-Reformation]. They were Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo. It was thus the best thing to copy their work until one grasped their way of narrative.\textsuperscript{24}

While copying the masters had been standard practice for centuries, Empoli turned practice into product, and his success earned him continuing patronage for this type of commission.\textsuperscript{25} But copying also encouraged and sustained a degree of caution and restraint which characterizes both his style of draftmanship and his approach to painting. Jacopo's compositions exhibit a classical equilibrium and a
sense of repose that derive, in part, from his observations of these elements in the art of such early Cinquecento masters as Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto. That Empoli received frequent commissions for copies of paintings by these two masters must have served as efficacious learning exercises in the development of his graphic and panterly style.

Most of Empoli's paintings are religious in subject. These religious commissions derived from the church community and from the merchant and aristocratic families of Florence and the nearby cities of Tuscany. There is no documented evidence that Empoli traveled outside the province, nor is there any documentation attesting to commissions received by him from Rome or other cities outside of Tuscany. This is significant because it suggests that Empoli had a somewhat limited exposure to current trends of artistic expression which were developed in other artistic centers. His only source of awareness of these developments came from contact with other artists returning to or arriving in Florence, particularly from Rome and Venice. This lack of direct contact also explains, in part, his more conservative artistic nature.

On one singular occasion, Empoli's conception for a commissioned altarpiece showed a daring resolution of the requirements specified in the contract. In the composition of the Immaculate Conception (fig 12), executed for the Gaddi Chapel in the Church of San Remigio, he radically altered his initial ideas for the composition of the final painting.²⁶ The significant changes suggest the intervention of the patron or
agent acting on the patron's behalf. In what is now agreed by scholars to be an early study for this painting, Empoli's compositional drawing, squared for transfer, puts visual emphasis on the figure of Saint John the Baptist in the central foreground of the scene. Although the Virgin Mary occupies the exact central point of the sheet, her diminutive size and distance from the foreground imply a subordinate role in the scene rather than the dominant one claiming focus of the viewer's attention. On the other hand, her placement among the throng of distant figures invites the spectator's eye to move into the space, explore its depth and, thus, to perceive the illusion of deep space. It is this aspect of the compositional study that foreshadows the dynamic spatial illusions that will become characteristic of the Baroque style. And it is precisely this daring aspect of the drawing which is sacrificed in the final composition.

In the painted altarpiece (fig.13), the figure of the Virgin is prominently placed in the central foreground, and silhouetted against the brilliant golden light of Heaven. The symmetrical arrangement of angels in the upper right and left corners of the composition, and the placement of the seated figures of Adam and an elder prelate in the lower left and right corners, reinforce the flatness of the picture plane, thus making emphatic the limitations of the illusion of penetrable space. Although the painting reflects growth and maturity in Empoli's development as an artist, it represents a more conservative solution to the requirements of the contract for the commission. That the patron demanded the change cannot be proven but must be considered likely. The lower portion of the compositional study is squared for
transfer, suggesting a degree of satisfaction with this arrangement of figures.
Although this is not the only instance in Empoli's oeuvre where the squared drawing deviates significantly from the final painting, the change, nevertheless, arouses speculation as to the motivations for rejecting this solution for the depiction of the narrative. It is tempting to imagine that Empoli presented the study, (fig. 12) to the patron for approval but was then sent back to the studio to develop revisions. Another explanation may be that Empoli recognized his "error" and recast the figures on his own, perhaps in compliance with the Council of Trent's dictates calling for greater clarity in meaning with regard to the painted altarpiece. Yet one cannot assume that the Tridentine decrees, alone, legislated to Empoli the manner in which he must compose his paintings. The concerns of the patron, whether sympathetic to the wishes of the Church or indifferent, must have helped to shape his final composition.

Unlike Cigoli, Empoli was not among the elite group of artists favored with continuing patronage of the Medici Grand Duchy. However, this situation cannot be attributed to a deficiency of talent, but rather to a matter of taste. During the years of Empoli's training, many artists of the High Maniera enjoyed frequent and lucrative commissions from Cosimo I. ³0 "Under the powerful and pervasive influence of Vasari, Cosimo's court painter and architect, artists were employed to execute works which ultimately served as visual testimony to the power of the the Medici."³¹ As J. R. Hale has observed, "He [Cosimo] did more than any of his predecessors had done
to make Florence into visibly a 'Medicean' city."\textsuperscript{32} Cosimo's death in 1574 coincided with Empoli's first years as an independent master, and, therefore, Cosimo's court provided the artist with little opportunity for commissions. Withdrawing from active leadership in 1564, Cosimo abdicated his position to his son, Francesco I. During the more than two decades of Francesco's rule, many of Florence's more prominent artists such as Santi di Tito, Naldini and Alessandro Allori enjoyed frequent court commissions, while Empoli and his colleagues, as younger artists, probably assumed a more collaborative role in these artistic enterprises.\textsuperscript{33}

Cardinal Ferdinand I succeeded his brother when Francesco died in 1587 leaving no heirs. Unlike Francesco, Ferdinando enjoyed holding the reins of Grandducal power and was skilled in the machinations of state affairs.

On a cultural level, Ferdinando, like Francesco, took pleasure in the pomp and spectacle of the theater. Theatrical productions, pageants, and a variety of dramatic forms of entertainment were popular at the time of Ferdinand's Grand Duchy as they were in the powerful courts throughout Europe.

This interest in the dramatic must account, in part, for the rapid development of the Baroque style. In Ferdinand's time, this element was observable in the paintings of Cigoli, but only intimated in the graphic works of Empoli.\textsuperscript{34} Yet despite Ferdinando's love of the theater and his relative ease at conducting the business of the court, his religious training, which culminated in his ordination as Cardinal, suggests that he was more appreciative of the simple piety of Empoli's art than was Francesco.
And, indeed, Empoli's involvement with the Medici family, even though limited, began with the court of Ferdinando I.

During Ferdinando's rule, Empoli was among those artists commissioned to execute the *apparati* for important and elaborate festivities of the court. The first occurred two years after Ferdinando assumed the title of Grandduke when he married Cristina of Lorraine in the Spring of 1589. Empoli was responsible for part of the decoration of the Triumphal Arch at the Canto degli Antellessi. The scenes destined for this arch depicted various episodes from the history of the Medici family. Empoli was entrusted to paint a chiaroscuro canvas depicting the event of the Florentine *Ambassadors Paying Homage to Cosimo I*.

The drawing, squared for transfer, for this painting is preserved in the Uffizi (n. 7731 F; fig 14). The study represents the first of several compositional studies for *apparati* commissioned by the Medici, and it illustrates a type of theme for which Empoli's style and narrative mode were well suited. Nearly all of Empoli's compositions for Medici *apparati* are characterized by dignified and noble figures gathered in a semi-circular arrangement around the central and principal group. In this instance, their attention is focused on the seated figure of Cosimo receiving the respect of the kneeling Florentine Ambassador. Most of the figures appear absolutely still; a few heads turn to address the viewer as if he has just arrived, or they seem to speak in whispers among themselves. These attitudes induce slight variations in pose, breaking the monotony of the line of heads of those figures located in the middle
ground. The deep, shadwowy space of the interior hall in which the action takes place adds a sense of solemnity and stillness to the event. The brilliant light illuminating the inner recesses of the architectural space leads one's eye directly to the Medici coat-of-arms over the distant doorway. This pictorial motif, in fact, vies for our attention with the figures of Cosimo and his ambassadors as the focal point of the composition, and, in doing so, emphatically accentuates the prominence of the Medici rule.

The semi-circular arrangement of solemn and illustrious figures gathered as witnesses to the public affairs of the Medici becomes Empoli's standard formula for future compositions destined for the painted chiaroscuro canvases of Medici festival decorations. For example, Empoli's study for the *Marriage of Catherine de Medici to Henry II* of 1600 (Uffizi, n. 940F; fig. 16) depicts a similar arrangement of figures. Vasari's painting on the ceiling of the Sala di Clemente VII (Palazzo Vecchio; fig. 15), of the same subject must have provided Empoli with the model for this composition. That he knew this painting seems more obvious when one observes the similarities between Vasari's composition and the one by Empoli depicting the same ceremony.

Documents show that Empoli was employed to execute the paintings of the *Marriage of Catherine de' Medici to Henry II* and the *Marriage of Maria de' Medici to Henry IV* (fig. 17) in 1600 on the occasion of latter's wedding. Empoli's composition for the *Marriage of Catherine* is characteristically more simplified with fewer figures who strike more static poses than one observes in Vasari's painting. In his
compositional sketch, Empoli is concerned with the placement and proportion of the figures and with the fall of drapery in straight plumb-lines that articulate the surface of the composition. These rhythmic and controlled pulses enhance the atmosphere of dignity which pervades the scene. Although in the drawing he makes no attempt to portray the facial likenesses of the actual participants, all of the figures in Empoli's painting appear to be portraits of specific individuals, some of which derive from Vasari's earlier version. The *Marriage of Maria de' Medici* offers little variation from its predecessor. Only the drawing remains, revealing minor compositional differences and changes in contemporary fashion. In its fluid line and similarity of some poses, however, it bears a resemblance to the group of dignitaries surrounding Charles V and Francis I in the right half of Taddeo Zuccaro's drawing of the *Armistice between Charles V and Francis I at Nice* (fig. 18) for the fresco of this subject in the Camera del Concilio at Caprarola (1565). Although these historical scenes are devoid of action and drama, they, nevertheless, consummately succeed in carrying out the intent of the decorative themes, the glorification of the House of Medici.

In observing both the secular festival decoration as well as the altarpiece, one senses the same paradoxical mixture of an ethereal realm and a mundane world. On the one hand, Empoli creates an atmosphere of other-worldliness, a realm of rarified air inhabited by self-composed and focused sacred and secular figures who appear respectively uncomplicated in their devout piety or courtly allegiance. On the other
hand, the physical description of these figures mirrors a worldly reality suggesting that these characters are firmly of this earth. Empoli achieves this duality by his detailed rendering of contemporary costumes and of portrait-like faces which, even in his sacred themes, seem to be modeled after contemporary Florentine citizens. The palpable, volumetric forms of figures, props, and setting contribute to the illusion of the natural appearance of all elements of the composition. These characteristics of Empoli's art lie at the heart of his conception for both altarpiece and apparato. They are clearly articulated in his drawings and eventually translated into paint.

Empoli's employment by the Medici court to execute funeral and festival decorations is not in itself sufficient to conclude that he was held in special favor by the Grandduke Ferdinand. He was one of several artists of reputation to complete the extensive decorative projects planned and executed for court ceremonies. But the commission from Ferdinand for the execution of the Capture of the Turkish Navy for the ceiling of Santo Stefano in Pisa in 1605 (fig. 19) was a more direct tribute to his favored status.

Ironically, this project, while attesting to the regard with which Empoli's talent was held by Ferdinand I, definitively reveals his limitations as an artist. The narrative, calling for active poses of figures in combat, is the very type of theme for which Empoli's talents were most ill-suited. The Capture of the Turkish Navy, for which no compositional drawing exists, depicts the victorious Cavalieri of Santo Stefano subduing the treacherous Turks, in May 1602, by taking command of the enemy
vessel. Although Empoli characteristically attempts to represent the elements of the narrative with verismilitude in his rendering of Turkish costumes, contemporary military attire and with detailed description of the infidels' ship, his figures are stiff and unconvincing in pose. The faces of both the victorious and the defeated are vacuous in expression. The composition lacks cohesiveness and a credible suggestion of receding space. Dramatic scenes of strenuous action were antithetical to his predilection for solemn gestures and quiet repose, inherently more appropriate for scenes inviting meditation and spiritual introspection.

A recently published notice reveals that Empoli was not only called upon to execute festival decorations and paintings commemorating military conquests for the Medici, but themes of a spiritual nature as well. On 23 April 1610, the Guardaroba Medicea made a payment of 300 soldi to Empoli for a Last Supper.

A painting of the same subject, signed and dated 1601, has recently been discovered by Elena Testaferrata (fig.20). She does not believe, however, that this painting, now located in the Church of San Giuseppe Artigiano al Galluzzo, represents the Medici commission cited in the notice. The idea that payment for the Medici Last Supper would have been remitted to Empoli nine years after completing the 1601 painting seems untenable to Testaferrata, especially considering the artist's reported demands for payment prior to the completion of the work. She further states that the Medici Last Supper measured two meters and 30 by five meters and 80 while the San Giuseppe painting measures only one hundred twenty-seven centimeters
high by one hundred ninety centimeters long. Yet given Empoli's practice of re-using the same composition for more than one commission, the San Giuseppe Last Supper may well have served as the frame of reference for the Medici painting.\textsuperscript{41}

Archival documents do not mention whether Ferdinand commissioned the Last Supper before his death in 1609 or whether his son and successor, Cosimo II requested the painting. Regardless, Empoli continued to enjoy, if infrequently, commissions from the Medici under Cosimo II's brief rule. Other than his participation as a member of the team of artists employed to execute Medici apparati, Empoli was one of three Florentine masters entrusted with painting canvases for the ceiling decoration of the Duomo in Livorno.\textsuperscript{42} Commissioned by the Medici court in 1619, Jacopo's contribution was the large \textit{Virgin Offering the Christ Child to Saint Francis} (fig. 23). In testament to its popularity, a replica of this painting was executed by Empoli, nearly contemporaneously, for the Franceschi Chapel in Santi Michele e Gaetano in Florence. That Empoli's talent in the execution of the altarpiece was appreciated by the young Grandduke is recognized by Jacopo's biographer, Zaballi, who relates that Cosimo referred to Empoli's \textit{Calling of Saint Peter} (Impruneta, Collegiata of Santa Maria) as his "dama", presumably meaning that he held the work in the highest esteem.\textsuperscript{43}

Artistic taste during the rule of Cosimo II reflected an interest in the Caravaggesque style manifest in the paintings of Artemisia Gentileschi and Bartolomeo Manfredi. Cosimo II was an avid collector of their work and also had an
interest in acquiring landscape paintings. The Grandduke's additions to the ever-growing Medici collection exhibit a taste for the picturesque as well as for paintings of expressive luministic effects. Although Empoli's style never reaches the pictorial expressiveness of light and shadow that informs the style of Cigoli nor displays the startling naturalism observed in the paintings of the circle of Caravaggio, both the graphic and painterly style of his mature and late works reflect his increasing interest in achieving verisimilitude in the rendering of surface description and the natural effects of light and shadow. Whether he was motivated by materialistic concerns in desiring to paint what pleased the prospective patron, or whether he simply continued to respond to current artistic trends, cannot be determined. Probably both factors came into play. Empoli's interest in rendering precise textual substances is made manifest by his prolific output of still life paintings during the third decade of the seventeenth century. His desire to paint this subject attests to his response to public, and more specifically, court taste for this genre.

Of the members of the Medici family, Cardinal Carlo de' Medici most often employed the artistic services of Jacopo da Empoli. As stated earlier, the Cardinal made frequent requests for copies of extant altarpieces executed by early Cinquecento masters to substitute for those he "acquired" for his personal collection. The regularity of these commissions had its impact on Empoli's style, and strengthened his considerable debts to these masters. Among other projects given to Empoli by the Cardinal, the only original work executed by the artist was The Judgment of Midas of
c.1622-23 (fig. 24). This painting, completed for the Salone Terrena of the Casino Mediceo in San Marco, depicts a rare example of a mythological theme executed by the artist.

If the patronage of the Church and State in the late sixteenth century contributed to the form and content of Jacopo da Empoli's work in varying degrees, more direct influence derived from the artistic and cultural environment of Florence. Empoli's career began at a time when the fire of the High Maniera still glowed in the dying embers fanned by the patronage of the Medici Granddukes. Yet with the deaths of Michelangelo, Bronzino and Vasari in the second half of the century, the young artists emerging as independent masters in the 1570s looked for new champions to emulate and for fresh approaches to express traditional sacred themes. At the same time, they re-examined the classical modes of the Florentine Renaissance masters in their quest to return to an art of formal and iconographical clarity and an authenticity in rendering the natural appearance of things.

There is much in Empoli's art that is retrospective and that recalls the visual clarity and narrative tenor of the Florentine fifteenth century. Neither Empoli nor any of his contemporaries would reject, without qualification, the practice, form and content that was embodied in the art of the Maniera. This is because some aspects of the paintings executed by Vasari, Bronzino and their pupils were elements found in the art of the Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. There is a continuous thread throughout Florentine art from the fifteenth century through the early decades of the
seventeenth century of an interest on the part of artists to include journalistic details in order to enhance the immediacy of the narrative image. One observes such veristic details in the altarpieces of Filippo Lippi and in the frescoes of Domenico Ghirlandaio. This interest in what has been called by Panofsky as the "reality of particulars" was evident in the art of Vasari's generation as well. But if the artists of the Maniera showed a preference for the bizarre in regard to pictorial details, even this aspect of their narrative mode was not new to Florentine painting. The Strozzi Chapel frescoes by Filippino Lippi or the strange mythologies of Piero di Cosimo exhibited writhing demons, fanciful antique armor, and swarming bees. It was the relationship of such elements to the narrative that differed between the generations of artists. In the art of the High Maniera, specific pictorial details, rendered with fidelity to nature, added to the arcane, intellectual meaning of the painting. One of the most well-known examples of this aspect of mid-sixteenth century Florentine painting is found in Bronzino's Allegory (fig. 25). The jeweled clasp of Cupid's quiver, the golden sphere held by Venus, a portion of honeycomb offered by the hybrid figure in the background are among the numerous pictorial elements of this painting that are rendered with a near microscopic description of reality. Yet, despite their specificity of substance, their appearance in the painting contributes to the bewilderment of the spectator uninitiated in the secrets they reveal.

The artists of Empoli's generation continued to show an interest in the veristic depiction of still life elements in sacred and secular compositions. But such elements
serve to underscore the didactic message of the narrative rather than to obscure it. Empoli's talent for rendering, with an absolute fidelity to nature, pictorial motifs that enhance the credibility of the narrative is apparent in his several versions of the Annunciation and in the Saint Eligius Presenting a Throne to King Clotaire II of France of 1614. In the latter composition, the tools of the goldsmith are prominently displayed behind the assembly of figures (fig. 26). Their appearance alludes to the profession of Saint Eligius who presents the finished product of his labor, two thrones, to the king. Their expository function in the narrative differs from that of pictorial motifs that appear in paintings of the mid-sixteenth century, but the descriptive manner in which they are rendered is carried out with the same intent on the part of the artist to mimic nature.

Empoli's drawings, particularly his figure studies, attest to his interest in rendering all of the elements of his compositions, even figural details, with verismilitude. His practice of studying the figure in the center of the sheet and then re-examining details of that figure: hands, arms, the head, and so forth, in the peripheral areas of the page reflects this interest. His attention to accurately reproducing details of the figure on paper is as intense as it is regarding the accurate description of pictorial motifs on canvas.

There are countless examples of this practice in Empoli's graphic oeuvre, but a sheet in the Musee des Beaux-Arts in Lille (n. 1265) provides a beautiful and paradigmatic illustration (fig. 27). A study of the figure of Saint Anne for the
Presentation in the Temple of 1604 depicts the elderly woman as she will eventually appear in the painting: hunched over from age and supporting herself with a staff, while glancing upward with an expression of reverence. In the drawing she extends her left hand outward as if in an act of offering or of supplication. But Empoli was apparently not satisfied with the position, or, perhaps, the anatomy of this hand and therefore re-studied this detail no fewer than five times on the lower portion of the sheet. In the painting, this part of the figure is hidden by the Virgin Mary who kneels on the steps leading to the altar as she presents the Christ Child to the High priest. Empoli's manner of studying the details of the figure in the margins of the sheet was not a new practice. One may observe the same method of examining aspects of the figure in the drawings of the early Florentine masters, such as Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolommeo, and Pontormo. Empoli would have also known of this practice from his observations of drawings executed by the Maniera artists, among them, Bronzino and his student Alessandro Allori.

The influence of the early Cinquecento masters had not only informed the art of Vasari and his circle as well, but also that of Empoli. How these artists of different generations responded to early sixteenth-century Florentine art, however, varied a great deal. Vasari and his circle made musculature an ideal to strive for based on their observations of the antique and the art of Michelangelo. Empoli modified his observations of Michelangelo's nudes by a close study of nature. For example, among Empoli's graphic exercises are three figure studies based on an early work by
Michelangelo, his marble *Bacchus* of c.1496-98 (figs. 28 and 29). In one of the studies, Empoli combined Michelangelo's figure with the pose of the left arm and head from Jacopo Sansovino's *Bacchus* (figs. 30 and 31). In each instance, he had a studio model assume the pose of the drunken god and then executed the drawing from the live model. This is evident from not only the head of Empoli's model, familiar from other figure studies, but from the character of the drawing as well. A third figure drawing preserved in the Uffizi (n. 9331) appears as the most natural of the three drawings (fig. 32). The model is more relaxed in his pose, and the contour lines confining the figure are more confidently rendered. The modeling of the flesh in all three studies suggests a sense of plasticity in the body, and the treatment of light and shadow seems to enhance the softness of the skin rather than accentuate the cold sheen of the marble's surface. Note, however, that the modeling of the shadows to define the musculature of the figures is nearly identical in all three drawings. Apparently Empoli used the live model more for a life-like description of the figure's silhouette than to study the play of light and shadow over the nude form.

Empoli borrowed this figural pose from Michelangelo and Sansovino for his figure of Saint John the Baptist in the *Madonna in Glory with Saints* of c.1606 for the church of Santa Margherita in Cortona (fig. 33). In the study which combines prototypes from Michelangelo and Sansovino, Empoli pursued, in a separate detail, the arrangement of drapery, which will become the saint's cloak gathered at the hip. His only debts to Michelangelo and Sansovino are in the figure's pose. There is
nothing of Michelangelo's heroic proportions visible in Empoli's mundane, secular figure of a saint. This figure would have been interpreted in a very different way by Vasari and his followers who would have exploited and stylized Michelangelo's robust forms, twisting pose and ideal beauty. The study of Michelangelo's Bacchus, re-cast as the figure of Saint John the Baptist, was probably used again in reverse and somewhat modified for the same figure in the Madonna and Child with Saints (Church of Santa Lucia dei Magnoli, Florence). Note that the contour lines in the drawing (Uffizi 9352 F) have been incised suggesting that Empoli may have transferred the figure to another sheet for a new context.

The influence of Michelangelo, although never entirely extinguished, emphatically diminished in the years following his death in 1564. The impact of the Council of Trent regarding the nature of church decoration was a major factor in the decision of artists to seek other models to follow. However, Empoli and his contemporaries eschewed the very element of Michelangelo's art that was so often emulated by Vasari's generation: the depiction of the nude of superhuman proportions which became, in essence, the subject of their compositions. Yet, even though Michelangelo's terribilita is completely absent from the art of Jacopo da Empoli the younger artist shares with the older sculptor the precision of outline and emphatic silhouette of the figure. Neither artist would tolerate the obscuring of form for the sake of dramatic expression.

While the art of Michelangelo and Raphael had the greatest impact on the
artists of the High Maniera, other artists of the early Cinquecento were not entirely neglected during this period. Among the artists admired by Florentine painters from mid-century on were Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo. Empoli's master, Maso da San Friano, owed a large debt to the art of Andrea del Sarto in ways that cannot be addressed within the scope of this thesis. That Sarto's typologies, color schemes and certain compositional motifs, borrowed by Maso, were passed down to Empoli, is evident particularly in Empoli's early paintings and, to a lesser degree, his early graphic work. These influences will be discussed in the following chapter. There is an unbroken link of influence passed on from master to student from Sarto to Pontormo, from Pontormo to Bronzino, from Bronzino to Alessandro Allori and, finally, from Allori to Santi di Tito. Pontormo's prolific output of drawings had its impact on his protege, Bronzino, who ardently encouraged the practice of drawing in his own workshop.

Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that Santi di Tito was a prolific draftsman. But the practice of drawing was, for Santi, a means to study nature in order to compose narratives of clarity and simplicity. The artists of Empoli's generation looked to Santi di Tito as a leader of reform in their efforts to return to a narrative mode that reflected nature and the everyday world. The prolific study of the nude from the studio model was the most singular act that separated the artists emerging as independent masters in the final decades of the sixteenth century from their predecessors.
That the artist used nature as a primary model rather than enhancing the image with the inventions of the mind, profoundly changed the direction of Florentine painting in the late sixteenth century and early decades of the seventeenth century. It was nature rather than the study of the antique and the art of Michelangelo that informed the art of Empoli and his contemporaries.

Two important factors contributed to the shift in the artist's approach to the execution of the painting: the emphasis on the practice of drawing from nature and the role of the Accademia del Disegno in shaping studio practice. Disegno became less a concept of the mind as articulated in various treatises published in the mid-sixteenth century, and more a concrete response on the part of the artist to his environment. Vasari's advice to artists regarding the study of the nude, as stated in his Vita of Titian makes explicit the difference in his attitude and approach to the function of drawing from the Baroque approach.

...Besides which, it is necessary to give much study to the nude, if you wish to comprehend it well, which you will never do, nor is it possible, without having recourse to paper; and to keep always before you, while you paint, persons naked or draped, is no small restraint, whereas, when you have formed your hand by drawing on paper, you then come little by little with greater ease to carry your conceptions into execution, designing and painting together. And so, gaining practice in art, you make both manner and judgment perfect, doing away with labor and effort wherewith those pictures were executed of which we have spoken above, not to mention that by drawing on paper, you come to fill the mind with beautiful conceptions, and learn to counterfeit all the objects of nature by memory, without having to keep them always before you or being obliged to conceal beneath the glamor of coloring the painful fruits of your ignorance of design...
Vasari criticized Titian for observing the nude model while "designing and painting together", rather than studying the figure on paper first. He further asserted his belief that the practice of drawing serves the artist as a means to "fill the mind with beautiful conceptions", in order to commit them to memory. The artist, then, was expected to create the figure from his imagination where he had conceived the perfect form. This, of course, led to willfulness in the conception of the figure.

If there was a consistent message for the artist of Vasari's generation delivered in the treatises of mid-century, it was that the artist was urged to recognize nature's flaws and, therefore, he was told that nature should be "corrected". Vasari made this point explicit when he wrote that,

...he who has not drawn much nor studied the choicest antique and modern works, cannot work well from memory by himself or improve the things that he copies from life, giving them the grace and perfection wherein art goes beyond the scope of nature, which generally produces some parts that are not beautiful.  

The practice of drawing the nude figure has two primary purposes, according to Vasari and his followers. The first is an instructional one: the repeated practice of drawing the nude figure from the studio model, or any other source, serves as an exercise of observation. It trains the "inner eye" to commit to memory images from nature. The second purpose of executing the nude form on paper is the articulation, in the graphic idiom, of the artist's idealized conception of the figure: the "visible expression of the inner conception". In Vasari's mature years, the practice of disegno
was inextricably tied to the idea of *disegno*. The notion that it was imperative for an artist to improve upon nature became the basis for the art of the High Maniera.

Artists of Empoli's generation rejected the visual language of the High Maniera: both the artifice inherent in the depiction of the nude figure, and the complex arrangement of figural motifs which characterized the narrative. The desire to depict a more accessible narrative statement induced Empoli and his colleagues to return to the study of nature with a critical eye. The practice of drawing served to train the artist to render the figure based on observations of the model in the studio. This is not to say that artists of Empoli's generation did not idealize the figure in any way. But such "improvements" were much more subtle than those rendered by Vasari and his circle:

...the realism, pageantry, pictorial harmony, and eclecticism of the Florentine style are understood best as a continuation - with a new sensibility - of venerated and guiding concepts of intention and means in art: persuasion of the beholder through accurate representation corrected on the ideas of decorum and beauty.⁴⁹

Nor can it be said that the treatise no longer held any importance for the artist of the late Cinquecento. There is a duality of meaning regarding the term, *disegno*, in the second half of the sixteenth century, a distinction in relationship to its concept and its practice. In the Albertian sense the term refers to outlining.⁵⁰ In the sixteenth century the term was expanded to include compositional functions and the use of good proportion. For Vasari and his generation, *disegno* encompassed all the arts:

But whereas in drawing we are dealing with lines traced
with a drawing instrument, the lines involved in the new 
*arte del disegno* are those which we observe in the finished 
product, be the latter a painting, a sculpture, or a building....There 
was room for confusion, especially because all three arts generally 
made use of drawing: and confusion did indeed generally prevail.\textsuperscript{51}

For Vasari the confusion must have been slight. Theory supported practice and vice 
versa. That the artist's portrayal of the nude figure, expressed in chalk or brush, was 
conceived in the imagination was observable in the intentional treatment of the figure 
with convoluted poses and exaggerated anatomies.

For Empoli and the artists of his generation, however, the theoretical views of 
contemporary treatises regarding *disegno* did not always find visible expression in 
graphic form. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the impact of theory on practice. 
For example, Raffaello Borghini states in his *Il Riposo* of 1584, that the drawing is a 
demonstration with lines of that which is first conceived in the mind of the artist and 
imagined in the idea.\textsuperscript{52} Borghini is inspired by Vasari's rhetoric, but, in the text that 
follows his definition of *disegno*, he significantly puts emphasis on practice rather than 
engaging in intellectual discourse. In the tradition of Cennini, he instructs the artist in 
the proper handling of the draftsman's materials and in the procedures to follow in 
preparation for the execution of the painting.\textsuperscript{53} Borghini's treatise had been widely 
read by the community of artists in Florence at the end of the sixteenth century. But, 
among the artists in the circles of Cigoli and Empoli, one finds no visible expression in 
their graphic work or in their paintings of intellectual concepts. The distinction 
between the intellectual conception of *disegno* and the practice of drawing is
articulated as late as 1607 by Federico Zuccaro in his *Idea dei Pittori, Scultori ed Architetto*. "Disegno interno", is the Idea, divine in origin; it is a Neo-Platonic philosophical concept distinguishing it from "disegno externo", the practical expression of the Idea. But the "Idea", as it came to be articulated on paper, was not, at least ostensibly, a construct of the artist's philosophical interpretation of the object perceived. Zuccaro, himself, was an keen observer of nature as demonstrated in his prolific graphic output, and particularly evident in the drawings he executed from his observations of his brother Taddeo engaged in various artistic activities.

The importance of drawing from life as an integral part of an artist's training found endorsement in the Accademia del Disegno of which Empoli was an active member throughout his career. Federico Zuccaro, although not a Florentine himself, made a formal proposal to the academy in c. 1578 urging its leaders to organize a more structured program of instruction, and, specifically, suggesting that a room should be made available for life studies. Although no specific action was taken in response to his recommendations, it is very likely that the practice of drawing from the studio model was at least encouraged, if not formally addressed in the manner of class instruction.

During the first year of its existence in 1563, the Accademia's enrollment reported seventy-five members. The leaders were masters of their own workshops, with their attendant apprentices, when they participated in the inaugural activities of the academy. But this institution had a more definitive role in promoting new trends
of artistic expression, as well as encouraging the proper manner of artistic study as practiced by the second generation of artists who had enrolled in the Accademia at the onset of their careers. Upon the deaths of the old guard of Florence's leading painters, sculptors and architects, the younger generation, dedicated to the practice of drawing based on direct observations of nature, contributed to a re-defining of the underlying aesthetic promoted in the academy.

Although scant information is available regarding the specific method of instruction provided within the academy, records of the archives show that graphic exercises, both in practice and in product, were an aspect of artistic training that was vital to the artist's education. Article 31 of the academy's statutes requests that its members bequeath "disegni, modelli, e statue" and architectural plans to be preserved in a library, presumably to be housed within the properties of the Accademia. There can be little doubt that drawings were circulated among the members of the academy thereby giving them the opportunity to study, borrow and learn from other artists' accomplishments, and that the leaders of the institution wished to establish a more formal system of collection and preservation. The statute also attests to the importance of drawings in the artistic process as a whole. In 1571 a decision was entered into the records of the Accademia del Disegno that twice a week, on Sunday and Thursday, artists must make clay models, cover them with drapery, and execute several studies. This entry makes reference only to practice; nothing is stated in regard to instruction, but it is another indication that artists were encouraged to study
from direct observation rather than from memory.

The Accademia del Disegno played a significant role in shaping the art of Jacopo da Empoli, as it did with his contemporaries. As an active member, and, eventually, one of its highly regarded leaders, Empoli would have had access to drawings not only executed by his peers, but by the draftsmen of the early Renaissance as well. The academy encouraged the study of the art of Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo, those masters of the early Cinquecento who were so influential in the development of Empoli's graphic and painterly styles. It is very likely that the Accademia possessed some examples of their graphic work as well as engravings after their drawings and paintings, and thus gave Empoli the means to study their narrative and formal style. The academy also provided an opportunity for the exchange of ideas regarding not only practice, but responses to the new trends of creative expression originating from other artistic centers such as Venice, Rome and Bologna. Since Empoli apparently never visited these "meccas" for the artists of his generation, the Accademia was an important source of knowledge and inspiration.

Thus a confluence of religious, political, or cultural factors informed the art of Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli as he emerged as an independent artist in the last decades of the sixteenth century. That his paintings conformed with the Tridentine decrees indicates that he was, at the very least, aware of the attitudes of the church in regard to proper church decoration. Because he frequently depicted Charles Borromeo
among those saints present in the *sacra conversazione*, he may have been particularly sympathetic to Borromeo's specific instructions for the painter of sacred themes. Yet the clarity and simplicity with which he visually narrates the Christian themes also derive from influences beyond the reach of the church.

His early training, at a time when the new generation of artists was looking to nature for the paradigmatic human figure, inspired him to seek instruction from the masters of the early Florentine Cinquecento. He also learned from older contemporaries, such as Santi di Tito, who had discarded the intellectual construct of the figure for a more natural one.

The importance of drawing from life as not only an integral part of the artistic practice, but, more fundamentally, as the source from which springs all artistic expression, found its greatest endorsement and promulgation in the Accademia del Disegno. Despite the ambiguous nature of the Accademia as an institution, it provided Empoli and his contemporaries with a common meeting ground where they would have the opportunity to share ideas and observe new artistic trends arriving in Florence from throughout Italy.

Although Empoli ostensibly never left Florence throughout his long career, his art reflects the many strands of influence that shaped Florentine painting in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His tenacious hold on the practice of composing lucidly organized compositions whose meanings are communicated to the faithful as legible statements of church doctrine, reveal him to be a quintessential artist
of the Florentine artistic tradition. Empoli's graphic and painterly production, as will be seen in the following chapters, reflect an equilibrium between the classical heritage of the early Cinquecento masters and the more dynamic and pictorially expressive art of his younger contemporaries. On one level, his art may be seen as a barometer of his times, a mirror of the political, cultural, and spiritual conditions that influenced the Florentine artistic community.
CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. Marabottini 8.

2. See H.J. Schroeder Canons and Decress of the Council of Trent (1941) 215 - 217. He reprints the text from the twenty-fifth (and last) session of the Council of Trent held on 4 December 1563.


7. Pastor 80.


9. See Blunt, Artistic Theory, 111. These instructions to artists derive from Book I, Chapter 17 of Borromeo's Instruciones Fabricae... .

10. Neither of Empoli's biographers write of his intellectual activities. No mention is made of the artist reading artistic or religious treatises. This is not to say that Empoli was not familiar with such publications; rather, that in the absence of reports of his interest in such subjects, one may assume that he was not an avid scholar. Throughout Baldinucci's Notizie..., he describes some of Empoli's contemporaries as having read various treatises. Therefore, if Empoli had shown a keen interest in the treatise by Borromeo, it would be likely that Baldinucci would have reported it.


12. The exceptional composition in Empoli's oeuvre is the early study for the Immaculate Conception for the Gaddi Chapel in Church of San Remigio. This study
will be discussed later in the text. This version was rejected by either the artist or the patron for a more legible composition in the final painting.

13. See, for example, Passignano's *Sermon of St. John the Baptist* of c. 1590 for the Church of San Michele Visdomini (fig. 9).

14. Bianchini was critical of de Vries' comparisons of Empoli's work with Cigoli's, stating that she placed too much emphasis on the Cigoli-Empoli relationships to the degree that she almost reduces Empoli to a follower of Cigoli. (See Bianchini, *Paradigma*, 100.) Throughout this text, I will also make comparisons between Empoli's work and Cigoli's, but I hope that, rather than minimalizing Empoli's qualities, it will serve to highlight the differences in approach to the depiction of sacred subjects taken by these two contemporaries.

15. See, for example, Baldinucci's comments regarding Empoli's difficulties in designing the figures of executioners in preparation for the *Martydom of St. Sebastian* (c. 1617, Church of San Lorenzo, Florence). Baldinucci, *Notizie* vol III, 11. See also Marabottini's criticism of Empoli's ability to successfully render the figure in poses of dynamic action. Marabottini, 76, 109, 113.


23. Baldinucci reported that Empoli was commissioned by Cardinal Carlo de' Medici to copy Fra Bartolommeo's *Resurrection of Christ* and its two side panels that were located at the time in Santissima Annuziata. The Cardinal intended to place Empoli's copies in the church and place the originals in his own collection. Baldinucci, *Notizie*, vol. III, 10.

25. Baldinucci cites the following paintings as copied by Empoli: "many copies of Andrea del Sarto's images of the Virgin Mary", and he mentions that Empoli copied the Porto Pinti Madonna more than once; also by Sarto, the Christ the Redeemer in SS. Annunziata, his Sant'Ambrogio Madonna, and an Annunciation by Sarto that was located in the badia of San Godenza. He copied the frescoes of Pontormo at the Certosa del Galluzzo and Pontormo's Christ with Two Disciples and Luke. (The copy of the Resurrection of Christ is the only specific painting by Fra Bartolommeo mentioned as copied by Empoli, but Baldinucci infers there were others.) See Baldinucci, Notizie, vol. III, 7 and 10.

26. Richa cited information about the nature and conditions of the contract as follows: the commission was given to Empoli by the Gaddi family for their chapel in San Remigio. The chapel had formerly belonged to Dante Alighieri. Niccolo Gaddi's will, notarized by Ser Andrea Andreini of Florence, stipulated that an Immaculate Conception was to be executed for the sum of 100 fiorini and that the subject should derive from Dante's Paradiso, "seeing Mary in the air with angels and at Her feet, the Holy Doctors". Richa then cites Dante's passage from Canto 23 [verses 79 - 111] of the Paradiso. Richa, vol. I, 259. Marabottini added that the will was drawn up in 1591. Marabottini, 184.

27. This project will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

28. Marabottini suggests that the older prelate seen in front of, presumably, Joseph in the lower right corner of the final composition, may be Saint Augustine, the "authoritative theologian of the Church, a follower of Saint Ambrose and a promoter of the double nature [i.e. the earthly and spiritual] of Christ." See Marabottini, 54.

29. All of Empoli's other compositional studies exhibit no significant changes in his intentions for the altarpiece. Therefore, the radical revisions made for the Gaddi Chapel, Immaculate Conception suggest to me that the patron, or an agent acting on behalf of the patron, requested such changes to be made.


31. See E. Borsook, "Art and Politics at the Medici Court I: The Funeral of Cosimo I de Medici," in Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institut in Florenz, XII (1965 - 1966): 31-54. Also see G. V. Daddi, "Di alcune incisioni dell' Apparato del


33. In 1589 Empoli and Cigoli, among other artists, assisted in the decoration of the Cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore.

34. Note, for example, the above mentioned compositional study for the San Remigio altarpiece (Uffizi n. 3412 F), and the rapidly executed compositional study for the *Madonna and Child Appearing to Saint Hyacinth*, (Uffizi n. 1737 S).

35. See G. V. Daddi, 88. Niccolo Gaddi had a role in those festivities and this may have led to Empoli's commission for the San Remigio altarpiece.


38. See Bianchini, *Paradigma* 124.


41. Empoli executed two compositional sketches and several figural studies in preparation for a *Last Supper* (see figs. 21, 22). Although the compositional study preserved in the Uffizi (n. 1739 E) clearly relates to the San Giuseppe *Last Supper*, the other drawings also seem to correspond to the painting in respect to the similarities between drawings and painting of figural poses and play of light and shadow. Moreover, the drawings stylistically conform to Empoli's graphic manner of the first decade of the seventeenth century. Indeed, the central portion of the Uffizi drawing (n. 1939 E) bears a striking resemblance to the nearly contemporary compositional study of 1609 for the Pomino *Supper at Emmaus* (Chapel of the Villa Frescobaldi) also in the Uffizi (n. 3408 F, fig. 128).
42. Ligozzi and Passignano were the other two artists employed on this project.

43. Zaballi 207.


"a prearranged plan originating in the intellect and materializing on paper by way of lines, and light and shadow after a series of studies and one or more acts of judgment." (p. 109)


48. Olszewski (On the True Precepts, 2) quoted Vasari's view of disegno: "a visible expression and declaration of our inner conception and of that which others imagined and given form in their idea."


51. Poirier 57.

52. R. Borghini states, "Il disegno non estimo io che sia altro che una apparente dimostrazione con linee di quello che prima nell'animo l'uomo si avea concetto e nell'idea imaginato" (137).

53. See Borghini, 136-146.

54. See C. de Tolnay, History and Technique of Old Master Drawings, N.Y.:


56. Karen-Edis Barzman notes, in her contributory essay in the exhibition catalog, *From Studio to Studiolo: Florentine Draftsmanship under the First Medici Grand Dukes*, that her article, "Disegniare al naturale: Figure-Drawing in the Florentine Accademia del Disegno", is in press. Hopefully this article will shed more light on the nature of instruction at the Accademia. (cited in the exhibition catalog edited by L. Feinberg, Oberlin, Ohio, 1991, 45)


58. Z. Wazbinski, *L'Accademia medicea* 432. The statute says that a studio should be created for youths to practice these arts.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPOLI'S DRAFTSMANSHIP IN RELATION TO HIS PAINTINGS

...e veramente se l'Empoli avesse premuto piu nel fuggire qualche durezza, che anno le sue figure, benché disegnate ottimamente, aggiungendovi alquanto di più ricco abbigliamento, ed avesse sempre tenuta la stessa maniera di colorire, sarebbe egli per certo da riporre nel numero dei più rari pittori, che avesse avuti mai la citta di Firenze.¹

Empoli's development as a painter was paralleled by his development as a draftsman. Assimilating influences from contemporary masters as well as from masters of the early Cinquecento, he created an eclectic approach to painting and drawing early in his career. As his abilities and observations matured, he shed the artificialities of the High Maniera in favor of a style and an approach to representation that demonstrates a closer observation of nature. From the beginning of his career, Empoli's paintings and drawings conformed to a classicizing matrix which was endemic to the decorative and highly intellectual manner of artists such as Vasari Salviati and Allori.

Highly refined elements of the Maniera can be observed in his work of the 1570s and 1580s, they have a superficial impact on his compositions as a whole. Figures are pressed into the foreground plane, but exist in more rational space than
one sees in the work, for instance, of Vasari. In Vasari's compositions the frontal plane undulates with a multitude of figures striking convoluted poses with little room to relax into natural attitudes. Empoli's figures, by contrast, exist in a more believable space with air to breathe and room in which to stand. Like Maso da San Friano, Empoli composed figures often clothed in voluminous drapery characterized by complicated folds of material bunched up on the ground at the figure's knees and feet. The drapery comprises a decorative arabesque of folds and a sense of movement typical of the characterization of drapery patterns by many artists of the High Maniera (fig. 34). In Empoli's drawings of this early period this manner of composing drapery is also observable where folds seem to have a life of their own, independent of the figure's body underneath (fig. 35). It is apparent, however, that Empoli seems uncomfortable with this manner of execution. His drapery studies exemplify his experimental approach to the problem and demonstrate an inability to successfully render the figure's apparel as either rationally responding to the body beneath or displaying a pleasing decorative arrangement. The results are often awkward and illogical. This is due not only to his inexperience as a young artist, but also to the difference in his own artistic temperament and sensibilities from that of his master Maso da San Friano.

Empoli quickly abandons the superficial decorative elements, while retaining the essence of grace and refinement that will inform nearly all biblical and sacred figures that appear in his paintings. And while he constructs idealized facial types for
some participants in his early works, others have a portrait-like quality that suggest he used models from his studio, or perhaps from the patron's family, for some of the significant figures in his compositions. Just as he eschewed the appearance of decorative draperies and crowded compositions, he would also eliminate ideal types from his repertory of characters except when depicting images of the Virgin or Christ. Yet even these most sacred figures have an air of humility and earthiness that is absent from the highly refined and aristocratic types of Allori.

One thread of continuity that is observable in his work from the earliest paintings to his latest altarpieces, is Empoli's insistence on the supremacy of form and the verisimilitude of details. This is also true of his drawings. His drawings show that he studied elements for his compositions by depicting precise contours and by rendering light and shadow in a manner that enhanced the definition of form rather than obscuring it. Figures that are studied on paper become translated into his paintings with the same interest in clarity of form. Figural details as well as still life elements are described with precision, and mirror a close observation of nature. His interest in the depiction of veristic elements is foreshadowed in his preparatory studies where he re-examines, again and again, details of hands, feet, heads, and elements of drapery in the margins of the sheets. Empoli's insistence on clear definition of form, an observation of nature evident in the delineation of veristic elements and still life objects, and, to an extent, the quality of grace combined with humility that characterizes his figures, derive from his inheritance of the Florentine artistic legacy.
In his art the very essence of the Florentine formal approach to the execution of the altarpiece is epitomized.

Empoli's earliest dated altarpiece, The Madonna and Child with Saints Luke and Yves is dated 1579 in an inscription appearing in the painting (fig. 36). No preparatory drawings are known. This work, however, provides a telling example of Empoli's early approach to composition and style. The artist synthesizes a wide range of influences into an integrated whole, but he lacks a maturity that is evident here in this unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the influence of Vasari's school with his own inclinations toward a more nature-oriented art. The Louvre painting is a reflection of the work of many young artists who, in the late 1570s, were struggling to establish their own style in an artistic environment where the art of the High Maniera was being replaced by new Counter-Reformation ideals.

In this painting, while paying respect to the recognized artistic leaders of Florence in certain manners of style and borrowing of compositional motifs, Empoli further seeks inspiration by looking back to the masters of the early Cinquecento and ahead to the art of Santi di Tito. From Vasari one observes a certain elegance in the physiognomy of his figures, the compression of the composition against the foreground plane, and the composition in general which is similar to Vasari's Madonna and Child with Saints in Arezzo (fig. 37). An abundance of drapery and the decorative arrangement of folds which are most visible on the figure of Saint Luke and on the young boy presenting the banderole to the Virgin derive from Maso. The
faceting of light and shadow over the drapery of this figure recalls the flickering manner of light that enlivens the compositions of Empoli's master.

Another source of inspiration from the art of the Maniera comes to Empoli from his observations of the work of Bronzino. The figures of the Virgin and Child reveal an underlying structure of geometry crystallizing into compact forms occupying three-dimensional space. A tautness of flesh and polish of surface, most evident in the face of the Virgin, recalls the icy-smooth surfaces characteristic of Bronzino's figures (fig. 25). Compact form and smooth surfaces are aspects of Empoli's approach to the figure that he would retain throughout his career. Lessons learned from Bronzino will reappear with constancy as his style matures.

Empoli greatly admired the art of Andrea del Sarto whose influence shaped Empoli's art to a significant degree. Sarto's impact on the younger artist's style is most visible in the depiction of the Virgin who appears more frequently in Empoli's art than any other sacred character (figs. 63 and 38). In Empoli's Madonnas, the glacial surfaces of Bronzino's figures are softened by the very slight blurring effect of shadow which Empoli would have observed, although with more expressive intensity, in Sarto's representations of the Madonna. The Louvre Madonna reveals only the incipient influence of Sarto, yet as Empoli's style matured, Sarto's influence would become more forceful.

A more profound inspiration comes from Bronzino's master, Pontormo. Empoli's exhaustive study of Pontormo's work is well documented by the
biographers. But the young artist's own work provides a greater testimony of his
debt to Pontormo than the written word. Although Empoli's figures lack the
emotional unease which characterizes Pontormo's figures, they show his borrowing of
formal elements of the early Mannerist artist. In the Louvre altarpiece the
proportions of the figures of Saints Luke and Yves are similar to figures of elderly
saints composed by Pontormo (figs. 39 and 40). Moreover, the rational structure of
graphy that informs the figures of the Virgin and Child, distinguished by the
rendering of faces with large round eyes set deep into the sockets attest to his study
of Pontormo's figures. Andrea del Sarto's and Pontormo's artistic legacies bequeathed
to the artists of Empoli's generation were strengthened by Bronzino's own debt to
these artists and was brought more closely to Empoli's attention by his master, Maso
da San Friano, whose work attests to influences particularly from Sarto.

Empoli's desire to rid his art of decorative and abstruse elements motivated
him to look to early Cinquecento art for models, and also to the current trends toward
naturalism pioneered by Santi di Tito who was rapidly becoming the most sought-
after artist in Florence in the 1570s. The Louvre altarpiece reveals definitive
influences from Santi. Santi di Tito's Sacra Conversazione (Florence, Church of
Ognissanti, c. 1565; fig. 41), shows a debt in the general composition and some of the
figural poses to Vasari's Arezzo Madonna and Child with Saints (fig. 37). Yet Santi's
figures are more human and humble than those depicted by Vasari. Empoli would
have had more opportunity to observe Santi's altarpiece than Vasari's work.
suggesting that perhaps the similarities to Vasari's painting visible in the Louvre altarpiece had come to Empoli via Santi's painting rather than through direct contact with Vasari's. Empoli's saints share a more human quality with those of Santi. The countenances of the figures express a quiet piety in the presence of the Virgin and Child. The figure of Saint Yves seems inspired by Santi's figure of Saint Jerome. Empoli's Madonna and Child appear as a synthesis of borrowings from Andrea del Sarto's Madonna of the Harpies (fig. 42) and Santi's Christ Child from the Ognissanti altarpiece. Empoli's Virgin corresponds to Sarto's Madonna in the geometric volume of the head, the similar typology of the face and the extended left arm. His figure of the Christ Child recalls Santi's figure in the sway of the pose. Although never a formal student of Santi, Empoli was well aware of the artist's zeal for a return to the observation of nature as fundamental to the practice and execution of painting. Throughout Empoli's career one witnesses an elegance and dignity about his figures, yet they remain humble in origin; his narratives are composed of a cast of characters taken from the populace of the Florentine neighborhoods.

In the crucible of Empoli's early style, one influence was reshaped by another. Therefore, although Empoli disassembled the Ognissanti altarpiece and reused elements for other projects of the 1570s, these motifs were re-cast by the eclectic influences that would eventually congeal into his personal style. He not only took motifs from other artists but frequently borrowed from his own works, a practice not uncommon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Two early altarpieces Empoli provide evidence of the artist's practice of creating compositions with motifs borrowed from other sources as well as from himself. These are the *Annunciation with Saints Michael and Francis and two Patrons* from Sassetta di Vernio and the *Trinity with Saints John the Evangelist and Michael with Angels and Putti* (1579) in the church of San Giovanni della Calza, Florence (figs. 43 and 44). The Annunciation seen in the upper portion of the Sassetta di Vernio Altarpiece appears to have been inspired by Andrea del Sarto's *Annunciation* (Pitti Palace; fig. 45) and from Maso da San Friano's treatment of the same theme known only from a compositional study in the Cabinet des Dessins of the Louvre in Paris (inv. 1310; fig. 46). From Sarto's composition, Empoli borrowed the spartan setting of curtains and simple ledge in front of which the angel and Mary appear in soft but radiant light that seems to undulate in a pastel spectrum of colors. But whereas Sarto's curtains symbolize an epiphany, Empoli used the motif in a more narrative sense to suggest the Virgin's bedchamber and to compositionally enframe the figure for visual emphasis. Empoli borrowed Maso's figure of Gabriel for his angel. So direct are the similarities between the two figures that one can assume Empoli had direct access to the drawing or to a related work. Below the *Annunciation* the central figure of Saint Michael dominates the composition.

An instance of Empoli's re-use of models, this figure re-appears in Empoli's *San Giovanni della Calza Altarpiece* (fig. 44) with variations in color but only slight variations in pose. Empoli drew from other sources such as Andrea del Sarto whose
diminutive Trinity appearing in the *Disputation over the Trinity* (fig. 47) occupies, proportionally, the same place above the figures in Empoli’s painting and from Santi di Tito’s *Ognissanti Altarpiece*. From Santi, Empoli derived the figure of Saint John the Evangelist standing on the left side of the altarpiece.¹

By the time of his commission for the Louvre Altarpiece, Empoli was already filtering out the decorative elements of the Maniera yet retaining the solid forms and almost polished surfaces inspired by Bronzino’s art. The underlying structure of geometry that Empoli utilized to create legible form derived from his continuing study of the art of Pontormo, a study that became more intensified a few years later when he was commissioned to copy Pontormo’s frescoes at the Certosa. Andrea del Sarto’s impact, at this point in Empoli’s artistic development, was still superficial, but nonetheless evident in certain color schemes and in the use of several figural and compositional motifs. It is also noticeable in the experimental nature of Empoli’s attempts to soften form with the technique of *sfumato*. This eclectic method of Empoli characteristic of his approach to draftsmanship as well as painting. It pertains to his manner of execution as well as his selection of compositional motifs. Those masters of the early Cinquecento and the High Maniera who shaped his style and contributed to his repertory of pictorial and compositional motifs are also important to the development of his early graphic exercises and studies. But just as he reconciled these influences with his own artistic judgments about the design of the paintings, he had the same intention in the study of the figure on paper. Two figure
studies of shepherds for what many scholars believe to be Empoli's earliest extant painting, the *Nativity* (fig. 48), attest to Empoli's training with Maso da San Friano.6 In the study of the kneeling figure (Uffizi 9300 F) destined for the right foreground of the composition (fig. 50), the elongated proportions and the spotty treatment of light and shadow are characteristic of Maso's style and have been adopted by Empoli without any logical function. The proportions of the shepherd are awkward. The effects of light and shadow are artificial rather than pictorial in the sense that they animate the figure as they do for Maso's figures. These formal problems reflect Empoli's inexperience as a young artist and are indicative of the incompatibility of his artistic sensibilities with the Maniera aesthetic.

Yet, while some influences reveal Empoli's perhaps too ardent eclecticism without real understanding, other influences anticipate the mature style. Empoli's insistent contours and volumetric form, although tentatively rendered here, are elements which will become more strengthened through his study of Pontormo's drawings and paintings and these are the very formal qualities that will become the hallmarks of his mature graphic style.

When Empoli borrowed figural poses directly from the work of other artists, he did not merely insert them into his compositions without first studying the figure. Among his drawings are studies of models from his studio assuming poses of figures borrowed from other artists' compositions. These studies suggest that Empoli desired to test established or stock poses against the actual human figure to insure the correct
rendering of the anatomy, drapery, and effects of light and shadow as they pertained to his specific composition. Empoli adopted a pose borrowed from Vasari's Camaldoli Nativity (fig. 51) for the shepherd standing along the right edge of the scene who removes his cap in the presence of the Holy Child. His drawing of the shepherd is a study (Uffizi n. 9338) of a studio member who assumes the pose destined for the painting (fig. 52). Only the upper torso of this figure appears in the compositional study (Uffizi n. 9281 F; fig. 49) and the final painting, yet Empoli studied the entire figure to understand fully its position in space. Even though Empoli's Nativity is indeed one of his earliest projects, one can see from the onset of his career, that, although the influence of the Maniera was apparent, it was a superficial one as he restructured these elements into images more in accord with observations from nature.

Significantly, the shepherds are dressed in clothing seemingly contemporary with Empoli's own time rather than in apparel suggestive of a much earlier time. This is in contrast to the paintings from which he drew inspiration for his Nativity. While viewing Empoli's altarpiece, the humble spectator might have been more inclined to identify with the shepherds, and thus participate in the adoration of the Holy Nativity. This accessibility of the narrative to the faithful beholders who knelt before the painting represents a striking break with many of the highly intellectual narratives of Vasari and his circle.

What is known of Empoli's art of the 1580s is devoted largely to his
commissions for the monks of the Certosa del Galluzzo. Documents attest to his copying the deteriorating frescoes of the Passion cycle painted decades earlier by Empoli's self-chosen mentor, Pontormo. The importance of this work in terms of Empoli's graphic development lies only, but fundamentally, in the fact that Pontormo's influence became fully absorbed into Empoli's style, so much so that drawings now correctly given to Empoli were at one time attributed to Pontormo.9

To my knowledge, the sole surviving drawing by Empoli, that can be directly connected to the Certosa work is the compositional study in the Witt Collection for Empoli's only fresco, the Sermon on the Mount (figs. 55 and 56). Although it differs from the fresco in regard to some of the figural poses, the correspondence between the two is close. As a rare example of Empoli's graphic style of the 1580s, the drawing reveals that his manner of execution and figural conception had changed little from the compositional study executed a few years earlier for the Nativity (fig. 49). Thick strokes of wash define drapery folds to create a pattern of ink binding the figures together as if carved of the same substance. This more decorative handling of the medium and the compression of form impart to the drawing a visual restlessness that characterizes the study for the earlier Nativity as well.

While some of the figural types in both studies show debts to counterparts in Vasari, others reveal Empoli's predilection for choosing humble figural types to enact the Christian drama. Empoli's Christ exhibits none of the Michelangelesque proportions and grandiose gestures typical of Vasari's figures. Instead, the figures
depicted in both Empoli's drawing and fresco appear more humble in stature and in dress. This conscious effort to depict figures that are plebeian in appearance attests to Empoli's incipient bias to look to nature for figure types rather than to conceive of the sacred characters as greater than life. In this way, from his earliest years as an independent artist, his paintings were more accessible to the faithful.

The study for the *Sermon on the Mount* also reveals Empoli's studio practice of re-using motifs in later projects. In this case, the figure in the drawing who appears seated at Christ's right foot was used for the *Immaculate Conception* of c. 1591 (fig. 12). This figure, albeit with changes in the design of the garment, reappears in the lower left-hand corner of the rejected compositional study (Uffizi n. 3412 F) for the project and, with variations in the figure of Adam in the final composition.10

The planning and execution of the *apparati* for the marriage festivities of Ferdinand I de' Medici and Cristina of Lorraine in 1589 brought together the talents of many young, promising Florentine artists, among them Empoli, Cigoli and Passignano.

That Passignano had just returned from Venice proved to be important to the development of each one of these artists' careers and had, in general, a catalytic effect on Florentine art. Empoli's drawings and paintings of the 1590s show that he was eager to experiment with new trends which were characteristic of Venetian art: the manipulation of color and light for expressive purposes. The interest in the Venetian
style of painting, however, was not initiated with the arrival of Passignano in Florence in 1589. It had already been introduced to Florentine artists, and cultivated by the keen admiration of artist and patron alike for the art of Titian, and by the presence of Ligozzi who had worked for the Medici court since the late 1570s. Moreover, the art of Passignano, Cigoli and Pagani already exhibited the influence of Correggio's and Barocci's colorism and brushwork.

Nevertheless, it was not until the decade of the 1590s that Florentine artists had fully integrated and exploited the expressive qualities of light and color typical of the Venetian style into their own work. And it can be no coincidence that the influence of Venetian art became widespread shortly after these artists were brought together upon Passignano's return to Florence from Venice. Cigoli's astounding masterpiece, The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence of 1590 (fig. 10), is a testament to the new painterly winds blowing from the north that would bring Florentine art to a point where the supremacy of form would be challenged by the pictorial expressiveness of light, shadow and color, threatening to sacrifice clarity of form for the sake of dramatic narrative.

Empoli's insistence on a rational structure of composition and clarity of form did not permit him to explore the potential for pictorial expressiveness inherent in the Venetian manner to the degree that one sees in Cigoli's drawings and altarpieces. Yet Empoli's work acquired a new sensitivity to light and color that he would eventually adapt for his own expressive purposes. His experiments with the pictorial and
dramatic effects of light are evident in his drawings where one still sees the predominance of solid forms, but now with an atmospheric tenebrism which creates a stronger appearance of naturalism (fig. 57). Reflecting his observations of Venetian art, and the vibrant color of Cigoli's paintings, Empoli's colors become clearer, and the hues warmer in tonality.  

Empoli's passion for depicting a veristic rendering of objects within his compositions also surfaces with greater intensity in the 1590s. His skill in rendering the object eventually led to a lucrative production of still life paintings that enhanced his already noteworthy reputation in the 1620s.

The *Saint Francis in Ecstasy*, painted in 1599 for the monks of Montughi (fig. 58), provides a fine example of the visual impact upon the viewer generated by the descriptive appearances of the frayed, coarse sackcloth worn by the saint and the presence of the skull, wooden cross, and partial view of the book, each rendered from a close observation of nature. A study for the figure of Saint Francis and a compositional study for this project reveal Empoli's concerns for describing the saint with an attention to the details of his impoverished garment, patched and frayed and bound at the waist with a length of knotted rope (figs. 59 and 60).

These highly veristic elements make the entire composition more visually direct--more tangible to the viewer--while maintaining a certain aesthetic distance. The worshipper of Empoli's time, kneeling before this altarpiece in prayer and contemplation, must have nearly believed he could reach into the painting and touch
the objects. Yet, since Empoli's approach to the subject was not one that communicated an emotional expressiveness with which the viewer could identify, the worshipper grasps the meaning of the scene before him while remaining emotionally distant.\textsuperscript{12} Empoli's distinctive synthesis of illusionism and fictive separation becomes immediately apparent when one compares the painting with Cigoli's treatment of the same theme in 1596.\textsuperscript{13} Cigoli's Saint Francis communicates a pathos so intense that the pious viewer cannot help but empathize with the emotional and spiritual torment (fig. 61).

The compositional study (Uffizi n. 1766 S.) of a Crucifixion with Saints Jerome and Francis (c. 1591) typifies Empoli's verism and visionary approach to painting at the onset of the 1590s (fig. 62). No specific painting is related to this study, but the figures of Saints Jerome and Francis are precisely repeated in the Torrigiani Altarpiece of 1592 (fig. 63).\textsuperscript{14} Following the traditional iconography, the Crucifixion is presented as a static, simple and symmetrical arrangement.

In terms of handling of media, Empoli executed the pictorial elements with the utmost control. The washes of bistre were applied carefully and, together with the white highlights, describe the effects of light and shadow as they define the fall of drapery over the figure. One senses a timid, almost self-conscious execution of layers of wash, and a deliberate desire on the part of Empoli to render the details of the garment and the nature of the cloth with line, wash and highlight. Even though the execution of the line appears as controlled as the application of wash, it is very fluid.
responding to the effects of light by diminishing in intensity and becoming stronger as it passes through layers of wash.

Empoli’s use of the tinted golden yellow paper acts as a secondary tone of highlight where Empoli has left the prepared surfaced untouched with either line or wash to provide a more subtle reflection of light than the white biaçca would allow. The use of a colored ground is significant here since, to my knowledge, the drawing represents the first occasion when Empoli applied a colored wash to the sheet prior to executing the study. The golden yellow tint adds warmth to the motionless figures and suggests divine light emanating from the upper left corner of the composition. Empoli’s graphic manner as exhibited in the study for the Crucifixion, suggests that early in the decade he was becoming sensitive to the expressive potential of light and shadow as recently exploited by his colleagues. The influence of the Maniera upon his early training is still evident in the fussiness of some of the folds of drapery seen in the mantle of Saint Jerome and in the folds of cloth about the knees of Saint Francis. Yet, in the depiction of Saint Francis’s impoverished and heavy garment, one can see Empoli’s interest in depicting the verisimilitude of substances and objects. This is also apparent in the precise description of the "still life" elements strewn about the base of the Crucifix: the skull, and the attributes of Saint Jerome (his book and Cardinal’s hat).

Empoli’s work of the 1590s also demonstrates a greater breadth of pictorial space which attests to a more confident approach to composition. His earlier
compositions showed little penetrable space, and figures occupied a shallow foreground ledge behind which a flat backdrop of dark modulated color provided no indication of setting or depth. In contrast, the spatial arrangement in the Crucifixion with Saints study (fig. 62) shows figures set back somewhat from the frontal plane and existing in an ample space with room to move freely. In the distance Empoli depicted a city stretching across the low horizon line. Throughout his career, Empoli rarely opened his compositions to let the eye explore deep space. He consistently placed the main narrative elements in the immediate foreground with an abrupt plunge into distant space, or, conversely, with no glimpse of a distant view. There is not a single composition where Empoli depicted successive and subtle recessions into the distance. But by the mid-1590s, Empoli created a greater amplitude of space in the foreground so that his figures were not as compressed against a relatively flat dark backdrop. Instead, when there is no specific setting, such as in his Madonna of Mercy (fig. 68) the figures seem to enact their drama in a murky atmospheric haze suggesting a space that is limitless rather than finite.

The paintings and drawings from 1590 to the end of the decade exhibit a growing interest in the description of space and of pictorial qualities of light and color. The Torrigiani Altarpiece, depicts the Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome, Francis, Lawrence (or Stephen) and Dominic. A comparison of the Louvre Altarpiece of 1579 with the Torrigiani painting (figs. 36 and 63), reveals a greater interest in light and color in the latter commission, inspired by the artist's observations
of works by Cigoli, Passignano and Venetian paintings in general.

No specific drawings exist for the 1592 altarpiece, but the compositional study
discussed above, the Crucifixion with Saints Jerome and Francis Kneeling before a the
Cross (Uffizi n. 1766 S) shows the saints in the nearly exact poses of Saints Jerome
and Francis in the Torrigiani Altarpiece. The remaining two saints, Lawrence or
Stephen and Dominic, appear in the compositional study (Uffizi n. 915 F), of the
Madonna and Child on a Crescent Moon Appearing Before Saints Lawrence or
Stephen and Dominic (fig. 64).¹⁶ No known paintings remain for which these studies
were executed, yet, based on stylistic analyses, they can be placed in the early 1590s.
The Uffizi drawing n. 915 F is perhaps the earlier of the two studies, possibly
preceding the Torrigiani Altarpiece itself. The figures are drawn by a less confident
hand than the Crucifixion study. Its contours are sure but weak: small heads
surmount layers of clothing that give no indication of the bodies beneath the clothing,
and the saints appear as if they were stiff and volumetric, similar in shape to a bell jar.
One sees very little contrast of light and shadow in the layers of wash which are only
summarily applied. The compositional study of the Crucifixion with Two Saints (fig.
62) is more advanced in the expressive treatment of light and shadow achieved by
more subtle and varying layers of wash. Empoli's depiction of the simple garments
worn by the saints is more sensitively rendered in the manner in which the cloth
responds to the bodies beneath. It is more likely that this drawing was executed
contemporaneously with the Torrigiani commission. The greater sensitivity to the
play of light and shadow and the more successful characterization of the clothed figure evident in the Crucifixion study demonstrates Empoli's growing maturity as a draftsman and reflects the influence of Venetian art.

The commission of the Immaculate Conception (c. 1592, fig. 13), or, as Marabottini described it, the Exaltation of Mary, was awarded to Empoli through Niccolo Gaddi's will of 1591 which stipulated that the painting be executed for his chapel once owned by the Alighieri family in the small church of San Remigio.17 Gaddi required that Empoli must paint as his subject a theme related to the Virgin Mary but must also relate it to Dante's Paradiso.

L' Empoli si trovo così impegnato in una impresa che da un lato tendeva ad esaltare, secondo la più recente teologia mariana tridentina, la figura della Virgine, e dall’ altro lo obbligava a farlo, ispirandosi al poema dantesco, vertice e insieme fonte preziosa di quella tradizione poetica e linguistica, che la Firenze medicea, non solo revendicava come propria, ma esaltava come esemplare per tutta la cultura di lingua italiana.18

The conflation of Marian theology with the interpretation of specific verses from Dante's Paradiso must have proven to be an interesting but difficult concept for Empoli to realize, as Marabottini suggests in the quote cited above. In fact Empoli's first compositional study for this project (Uffizi n. 3412 F, fig. 12) was rejected in favor of the one represented in the altarpiece which reflects radical differences from his initial intent (figs. 12 and 13). That his final painting was an acclaimed success is testified by the response of contemporary observers, critics as well as admirers, and from the positive press it has received from the seventeenth century to the present.
Of the painting de Vries wrote,

This painting is penetrated by the spirit of religious vision... The human figure is overwhelmed by the idea.19

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the work and the strongest indication so far in Empoli's career of the influence of Venetian art, is the treatment of light. Its luminosity impresses the viewer with the suggestion of revealing a vision of Heaven itself. The Virgin is seen in contra-light, silhouetted against the brilliant golden glow of Heaven. Empoli would have observed this treatment of illuminating the figure from his observations of Bronzino's painted ceiling in the Chapel of Eleonora. Marabottini has noted a stylistic relationship to works by Cigoli such as the Trinity (c. 1592, fig. 66). Charles Carman has compared Empoli's painting to Cigoli's Madonna of the Rosary of 1595 (fig. 67), suggesting that the figure on the left of Cigoli's composition is very much like Empoli's Virgin in its pose, yet he proposes that Empoli influenced Cigoli here.20 That both artists were exposed to and responded to the Venetian manner, that they shared a studio at an early time in their nascent careers as independent artists means that there was bound to be some reciprocal inspiration.

The task of deciphering when and how each painter depended upon the other for artistic resolutions to formal and iconographical problems, seems, at best, a frustrating endeavor at this juncture in the development of their careers. A detailed investigation of their work reveals how each artist utilized the respective sources of
influence. For example, Empoli's use of the strong contrasts of light and shadow in the Gaddi Chapel Immaculate Conception results in the communication of a more mystical expression, largely due to the golden tonality of the light permeating all but the deepest recesses of substantial forms. The dramatic effects of chiaroscuro in Cigoli's Trinity (fig. 66) creates a powerful and sensuous visual statement nearly overwhelming the viewer with this awe-inspiring view of the Holy Trinity. One painting inspires pious reverence, the other stirs strong emotions of remorse. These differences reflect, in essence, the fundamental differences in approach to the execution of the religious themes by Empoli and Cigoli, and they underscore the two distinct artistic trends in Florence at the close of the sixteenth century. One would become the basis of an academic artistic style and the other would lead to the theatrical and dynamic expression that defined the Baroque style.

The Gaddi Chapel Immaculate Conception represents the closest Empoli would come to composing a sacred subject with pictorial expressiveness and dramatic power. It is in this work he most closely approaches the achievements of Cigoli. His painting reveals a residual influence of the Maniera style of Bronzino in the volumetric description of form and polished surfaces of skin. Yet, Empoli's conception of the atmospheric golden haze of heaven populated by wraith-like entities barely perceptible in the shimmering light anticipates the Baroque manner of creating limitless space.

Empoli contrasts his description of a mystical golden light creating an ethereal
quality in space with his foreground forms which are quite substantial. The
volumetric, three-dimensional depiction of the Virgin and those figures closest to her
contrast with the luminescent multitude of the Blessed gathered in the golden mists to
witness her exaltation. The substantial angels in the upper foreground heraldically
enframe the upper corners of the composition and, with the figures below, emphasize
the principal axis and draw the eye back to the foreground plane. This manipulation
of space attests to Empoli's reluctance, even here, to allow our vision to probe the
depths of the celestial space. Instead he keeps our attention focused on the object of
the composition, the Virgin Mary.

The emphatic focal point of the painting, the Virgin, differs greatly from the
only compositional study (n. 3412 F; fig. 12) for this project. Although the figures in
the immediate foreground, like the painting, are more distinctly rendered than the
distant throng of the Blessed, the Virgin has been excluded from the foreground plane
and is seated as a diminutive figure in the farthest reaches of the background. It is
Saint John the Baptist, pointing toward the Holy Spirit in the form of the Dove, who
occupies the central position of the foreground grouping. The angels above are
symmetrically arranged to the left and right of the composition, and yet extend into
space by means of foreshortened bodies rather than accentuating the presence of the
foreground plane. Our eye is led from the Baptist in the foreground to the Dove,
revealed between the upper groups of angels, to the Virgin in the distance creating a
stable triangular movement that is counter-balanced by the female saint on the left
foreground and the cloaked female saint on the right. As was proposed in Chapter Two, Empoli may have radically altered the position of the Virgin in the final painting due to a request from the patron who clearly wanted the Virgin to have the most prominent position in the composition. And such a change is more in keeping with the dictates of the Council of Trent who advised artists to compose clearly legible doctrinal statements without any possibility of misinterpretation. In contrast to the painting, the composition of the preparatory drawing is more fluent in regard to space and light and more cohesive in its figural arrangement. Our eye moves in and out of space and easily around the circle of Blessed. While the subject of the compositional study must be searched out, not only in the identification of the figure of Mary in the distance, but in regard to the general theme as well, the painting is clearer regarding the revelation of the subject. The daring treatment of space and light in the preparatory study was unique in Empoli's oeuvre and no other drawing approaches its spontaneity and pictorial expressiveness of light. If a member of the Gaddi family did object to its ambiguity of subject, perhaps Empoli resolved never again to attempt such an unorthodox approach to the depiction of a sacred theme.

In contrast to the innovative spatial disposition seen in the preparatory study for the Immaculate Conception, Empoli, throughout his career, would consistently depict the main characters of his narratives in the foreground plane of his compositions. In the 1590s, however, he began to open up the space of the foreground plane so that the figures move in less congested areas and rotate at angles
away from the flatness of the foremost plane.

The Madonna of Mercy (Pitti Palace, signed and dated 1593, fig. 68), depicts the Madonna standing in the center of the composition, sheltering a terrified boy under her cloak and raising a stick in her right hand to strike the hideous demon behind and to her left.\textsuperscript{21} A young woman, presumably the boy's mother, kneels before the Virgin on the left of the composition.\textsuperscript{22} This woman, Virgin, and demon form a diagonal receding plane, the recession of which Empoli reinforced with color. The woman who is closest to the foreground plane wears an golden orange dress; the Virgin wears red and the demon, in shadow, is monochromatically brown. Therefore, the more vibrant hues pull the woman forward while cooler tonalities allow our vision to recede. Yet the emphasis on the Madonna is achieved by her dominating central position, a fulcrum at the center of an X-shape formed by her raised right hand with its stick to the outstretched leg of the infant as one diagonal of the X, and the diagonal of the demon accentuated by his pitchfork and completed by the imploring mother as the other. The entire arrangement of these principal figures rotates from the frontal plane and each character is given ample space to move in the setting.

The scene offers us no indication of place or time. The characters stand or kneel on a platform that has no apparent iconographical significance. It is simply a stage upon which the figures perform. Empoli rotated the pose of each figure so that, collectively, the figures complete a 360 degree revolution, and yet, despite this compositional device, he successfully minimized any attempt at foreshortening.
Indeed only the figure of God the Father above, commanding the angels to place a crown on the head of the Madonna, was arranged in a pose that demands extreme foreshortening. Empoli dissolved the figure in the golden light so that God is almost imperceptible and His outstretched arm tilts downward further avoiding too severe a foreshortened pose. The ectoplasmic character of Empoli’s depiction of God the Father is nonetheless impressive. It is as if he has captured the essence of a light-filled being highly charged with energy, yet lacking an earthly substance. This contrasts with the substantial volumetric forms of the figures. The heraldic arrangement of the angels holding the crown over the Virgin’s head is, by now, a constant motif in Empoli’s work. The woman on the left repeats the lost-profile and general position of the figure of the Virgin in the Gaddi Chapel Immaculate Conception and will reappear throughout Empoli’s career.  

It is curious that, despite the horrific face of the demon and the frightened face of the boy, the Madonna shows no emotion, neither one of protective concern nor rage at the devil. Instead she stands as a powerful force with dignity and poise as if displaying a quality that is beyond human emotion. It is this element, together with the absence of any historical context, indeed, any setting at all, that establishes this scene as one of timelessness, a statement of eternal truth, a visual tool to promote church doctrine.

Few drawings exist for this project. Figure studies of the cherubs (Uffizi n. 1801 S and 1802 S) and a study of the child (Uffizi n. 9303 F) posed in the same
manner as in the painting (figs. 69a, 69b and 70). A study for the figure of the Madonna with the boy clinging to her skirts (fig. 71) shows that Empoli studied the unusual arrangement of drapery gathered around the Virgin’s hips below which the child seeks shelter from his fears.25 What is significant about this sheet is the sensitive treatment of the play of light and shadow on the Madonna’s garment. Empoli was undoubtedly responding to influences that were already showing effects on the development of his style: the expressive description of light and shadow seen in Venetian works, and the potential to achieve coloristic effects with the application of the chalk to render the substance of the draperies and the play of light over the folds of cloth. The fall of the garment over the body of the Madonna is skillfully rendered and its form is clearly delineated without abandoning clarity for sensual expression of light and shadow. This is typical of Empoli’s reserve in not succumbing to the more painterly description of light and shadow. Yet with this drawing, Empoli revealed his growing maturity as an artist to recreate nature in a more precise and interesting manner than previously seen in his preparatory studies.

Also typical of Empoli is his generalizing manner of rendering the nude figure whether adult, adolescent or child. The studies of the putto angels and of the frightened boy reveal Empoli’s concern to correctly establish the pose and the volumetric form of the figures without any concern for the description of precise musculature. Emphasis is strictly placed on the outer contours of these figures with the inner contour lines summarily rendered to enhance the three-dimensional quality
of the bodies. Despite the artist's increasing awareness of the pictorial possibilities for
the rendering of light and shadow, he would, throughout his career, shun any detailed
delineation of musculature when studying the nude form.

The preparatory drawings for the *Immaculate Conception* (signed and dated
1596; fig. 72) reveal important developments in the early career of Jacopo da Empoli.
He was commissioned to execute a copy of Vasari's celebrated *Immaculate
Conception* of 1546 in SS. Apostoli, Florence (fig. 73). Borghini considered this
work by Vasari to be the most beautiful painting of the artist's career. 26 Despite
Empoli's fidelity to the original, there are slight but significant differences between the
two paintings that demonstrate the very qualities that set Empoli's art apart from
Vasari's and from the High Maniera in general. A comparison of the paintings shows
that Empoli simplified the garments and rendered his figures with more normative
portions than seen in Vasari. The drawings clearly reveal Empoli's intentions to
make such adjustments in the final painting. A drawing in Rome (F.C. 125062) for
the Virgin (fig. 57) and one in the Uffizi (n. 9368 F) for the upper torso of John the
Baptist (fig. 74) show Empoli's resistance to faithfully reproducing the
Michelangelesque proportions of Vasari's corresponding figures. His studies reflect
instead a closer observation of nature in their leaner proportions and more humble air.
The study for the Virgin repeats the pose of Vasari's figure but displays none of its
elongated and robust structure. Even the garment worn by the Virgin is greatly
simplified. Empoli's Madonna reflects his admiration for the Sartesque type,
diminutive in proportion but of solid form, conforming to the natural geometry that informs the female figure and expressive, not of pathos, but of sweetness and grace.

Empoli's sensitivity to the play of light and shadow articulating the rise and swell of the folds of the Virgin's garment demonstrates more than a response to the Vasari's painting, it attests to Empoli's awareness of the influences that had been shaping his art from the onset of the decade: the observation of the dramatic chiaroscuro effects exhibited in Venetian art and similar achievements seen in the works of his own Florentine contemporaries.

The sheet which depicts the figure of John the Baptist is noteworthy because Empoli appears also to have studied the lower torso of this figure even though it would not be visible in the painting. Although smaller in scale than the upper torso on this sheet, the stance of the figure is rendered in the lower left-hand corner. This suggests that Empoli probably used a model from his studio to assume the pose of the figure so that he could more accurately render the character. Empoli's constant practice of studying the figure from life, even if destined for a copy of another master's work, was directly opposed to Vasari's practice of studying the figure. And this distinction points out with utter clarity the essential difference in the approach to the preparation of paintings between the artists of Vasari's generation and those of the years following the Council of Trent. In his Vita of Titian, Vasari said,

Drawing on paper...one learns to depict all things in nature from memory, without needing to have them constantly before one's eyes...it is finally, in the repeated drawing of selected
antique, or modern works that the artist will learn how to endow
natural forms with a degree of perfection not usually found in nature.²⁷

Vasari would have condemned the practice of improving the figure by studying it
from life, considering it lacking correct judgment since the artist would risk
reproducing nature's flaws. Empoli and his contemporaries, on the other hand,
considered the study of the figure from life to be of utmost importance to the integrity
of the composition, and emphatically abandoned the artificialities of the Vasarian
figure type. The documented program of instruction at the Accademia del Disegno
underscores how this approach to the preparation of the painted work was
encouraged and widely practiced by the close of the sixteenth century.²⁸

Having seen Empoli's individuality regarding the practice of making a copy,
we turn to his re-elaboration of the same composition of his own devising. In
December of 1594 the Confessor of the monastery of Santa Maria Novella
commissioned Jacopo da Empoli to execute a painting of the Virgin and Child
Appearing Before Saints Hyacinth, Catherine, Mary Magdalen and Peter Martyr. The
entire project, from the interactions with the patron to the preliminary drawings, to
the logistics of the presentation, would prove to be problematical and frustrating for
the artist.²⁹ Empoli did, in fact, execute a second version of his composition for
reasons that are not entirely clear. The painting, signed and dated 1594 and presently
in the convent of Santa Maria Novella, depicts the Virgin and Child appearing only to
Saint Hyacinth (fig. 75).³⁰ The reasons for the exclusion of the other Dominican
saints, Catherine, Mary Magdalen, and Peter Martyr, are not discernible from either
the extant archival records or the surviving preparatory studies. A second painting,
nearly identical to the first but with the inclusion of Saint Peter Martyr beckoning the
spectator to witness the scene, is now in Santa Felice in Piazza (fig. 76).

The numerous studies for this project reflect perhaps better than any previous
body of preparatory studies, the elements of style that would shape his approach to
the painted altarpiece. These studies include aspects of Empoli's style that he would
keep for the remainder of his career, such as the volumetric rendering of the figure
enveloped in swaths of drapery that fashion the monk's garment. The studies also
include aspects of his style that he would reject, such as the handling of pen and wash
in the compositional study whose dark passages of wash merge figural elements into
the shadows of the setting. Further, these drawings attest to the influence of Cigoli's
style of draftsmanship and thus directly or indirectly the art of Venice as well. These
sheets include studies for the composition, figure studies of Saint Hyacinth, a
putto/angel, and portrait-like drawings from models for the saint. (See figs. 77 -
80.)

Of the two extant compositional studies both in the Uffizi, neither one
corresponds exactly to either the Santa Maria Novella painting or the San Felice in
Piazza version, but the sheet inventoried as n. 1737 S is most revealing of Empoli's
stylistic approach to the study of the narrative (fig. 77). In the foreground of this
sheet, Empoli depicted the Virgin and Child appearing in brilliant light hovering
before a tonsured and bearded saint kneeling on a platform. In the distance, through a
doorway bright light illuminates the diminutive figure of a man, perhaps the patron,
kneeling before an altar. In neither painting does one see a recessed area in which
this figure appears. The figures in the foreground of the paintings are surrounded by
a gloomy darkness that merely suggests an undefined depth of space.

Also on the Uffizi sheet appears another sketch of a figure barely discernible
in the right corner of the drawing. The figure is depicted with his back to the viewer
and points to the figure of the tonsured saint. Although it is difficult to determine
details, he appears to be dressed in contemporary clothes rather than those of a
sainted figure. At any rate, he differs radically in pose from the figure of Saint Peter
Martyr in the San Felice in Piazza painting. Perhaps Empoli or the patron rejected
this composition because our attention is directed from this figure to the saint and
holy apparition, and then to the illuminated suppliant at the altar. Our vision is
thereby led from the main figures to the distance when it should focus on the
miraculous event. This flaw is reminiscent of the rejected composition for the San
Remigio altarpiece where again the viewer's attention is distracted from the Virgin to
secondary figures.

Both of the compositional studies are skillfully composed. The expression of
divine light is particularly dramatic in the 1737 S study where the earthly light
illuminating the kneeling figure at the altar contrasts with the brilliance of the
miraculous light dispelling the darkness to reveal the saint and Virgin. Indeed, the
pictorial description of light and shadow in this compositional study is more daring than that of the San Remigio study and calls to mind similar drawings by Cigoli in its spontaneity of brushstroke and pen line and in the bold, contrasting layers of light and dark washes. That Empoli would cast the Virgin's face in deep shadow suggests his willingness to experiment with the expressive potential of light and shadow, even though he would not repeat such an obfuscation of the Virgin's features again in subsequent work. In the paintings all the faces are distinctly visible in light.

This compositional study shows the closest approach to Cigoli's style that Empoli would ever attempt. And it may be no coincidence that Empoli was especially aware of Cigoli's artistic achievements since this commission was executed as a pendant to Cigoli's Saint Peter Martyr for Santa Maria Novella. The rendering of ink lines and layers of wash that nearly fuse the figure of the Christ Child to the body of the Virgin, making the pose of the Child difficult to discern, comes dangerously close to Empoli abandoning form for painterly expression. This approach to the handling of pen and wash was not uncommon for Cigoli. For Empoli, however, it was not a method of compositional study he would often employ since he more often strove to articulate form in a precise manner.

The paintings reveal what is anticipated from the drawings: the dramatic contrasts of light and shadow as fitting to the nature of the narrative, but also attesting to the continued interest of patron and artist alike for the dramatic power of Venetian art. The theme of a miraculous vision of Virgin and Child appearing to
sacred figures in a burst of divine light dispelling dark and thunderous clouds was a common one in the north. Veronese and his school, for example, depicted several such themes in paintings and chiaroscuro woodcuts (figs. 81 and 82). It is very likely, given the increasing popularity for Venetian art in Florence, that prints and drawings from Veronese's studio as well as others which circulated among the workshops in Florence, were known to Empoli. The subject of a miraculous epiphany of the Virgin to earthbound figures was also taken up by the Bolognese artists such as Ludovico Carracci and Guido Reni (figs. 83 and 84).

One of Empoli's Florentine contemporaries, Bernardo Poccetti, executed a drawing (Uffizi n. 863 Fr) of the Virgin and Child Appearing to Saint Bernard for the Gilio Chapel in Santa Maddalena dei Pazzi, as part of a fresco project dating from c.1597 to 1600 (fig. 85). The similarities between the two compositions are obvious, but particularly analogous are the pose of the Virgin and the position of the Christ Child in both sheets. Judging from the dates of Poccetti's commission, it would seem that Empoli's solution may have influenced Poccetti in his painting. The subject offered to artists the opportunity to compose a powerful sacred image, rendered with dramatic contrasts of light and dark creating a theatrical tableau that was sympathetic to the growing taste for the emerging Baroque aesthetic. Yet Empoli's insistence of clarity in form and content would always ensure, as it did here, a more rational interpretation of the narrative rather than an emotional one. Therefore, the risks taken in the drawing are not translated into paint. Form is clearly delineated, and the
Christ Child distinctly emerges from the darkness of the Virgin's lap. All extraneous details, most notably the kneeling figure in the distance, have been eliminated. In the Santa Maria Novella painting the saint no longer kneels on a platform but on the pavement instead, and lilies resting on a book have replaced the figure in the right foreground of the compositional study. In both paintings, although the compositions have been greatly simplified, the details of the Virgin have been noticeably articulated. She appears wearing a crown and carries two slender scepters denoting her role as the Queen of Heaven.33 These attributes appear in the other extant compositional study for this project, the Uffizi sheet n. 1736 S.34

The figure studies of Saint Hyacinth for this commission also reflect the stylistic developments that shaped Empoli's artistic output from the mid-1590s into the early 1600s. In all the surviving figure studies of the saint, Empoli was concerned with two aspects of the figure: the pose of the outstretched hands and the arrangement of the drapery. Empoli's maturity as a draftsman is evident in the study (Uffizi, n. 9311 F, fig. 78) in which he rendered the saint's habit with graceful, flowing lines of black chalk delineating the long, weighty folds of drapery. The bunching of cloth gathered at the monk's knees and behind him is composed in a logical arrangement of folds clearly demonstrating Empoli's complete abandonment of the Maniera aesthetic describing convoluted arrangements of drapery. The nearly blended strokes of black chalk create shadows that excavate the recesses of the material. Highlights, suggested by the untouched paper or marked by the application
of white lead, set the figure in relief against the flat plane of the brown wash with which he prepared the surface of the paper. His rendering of light and shadow impart an almost sculptural quality to the figure, and, although these contrasts correspond simply to the rise and fall of the material over the saint's body, they denote a more sensitive approach to the depiction of the figure than one finds in most of Empoli's earlier drapery studies.

By the end of the decade of the 1590s, Empoli achieved a complete synthesis of all factors that contributed to his artistic training, and arrived at his own personal style of painting sacred themes, portraits, and historical narratives. His painting of the Susanna at the Bath (1600, Vienna, Kunsthistorische Museum) demonstrates this achievement (fig. 87). The variety of influences that shaped his style was enhanced by the powerful elements of the Venetian manner as he blended these aspects, distilling them with his passion for the naturalistic representation of all things.

The predisposing factor which informs Empoli's style is the articulation of form. All other formal elements are subordinated to the supreme importance of clarity. Such an emphasis lends an abstract quality to Empoli's paintings, and it explains the rational approach to his devotional interpretation of religious narratives and themes, rather than an emotional one evoking pathos. This distinctive approach is quite apparent in his painting of the Susanna at the Bath. The contours of the figures were, in places, outlined with black paint. The lines are particularly visible with regard to the figure of the kneeling maidservant where dark outlines emphasize
the contours of her off-white sleeves. The lighter, horizontal stripes of the fabric serve to enhance the illusion of three-dimensional form, while the heavy outlines remind us of the painter's artifice. Also abstract and intellectual is the underlying structure of geometry that establishes volumetric form consistent throughout the entire composition, and most obvious in the appearance of the tribune of SS. Annunziata looming above the dense foliage in the distant background.

Susanna and her attendants exhibit a sense of grace accentuated by their fluid movements and somewhat attenuated proportions. Yet despite these vestiges of the Maniera aesthetic, the air of domesticity evident in the unself-conscious demeanor of the figures and in the complete lack of pretension of this scene removes it completely from the sphere of the late Maniera in Florence. The spectator is struck by the sense of stillness, an ethereal silence, only disturbed by the rustle of leaves and the trickle of water flowing from the fountain. Only from close observation does one become aware of the two men, barely perceptible, intruding on Susanna's privacy by leering through the bushes in the background.

A popular theme in Venice at the end of the sixteenth century, the Susanna at the Bath was not a common subject for Florentine art. The subject often gave artists an excuse to portray a sensual Susanna, and to cater to the patrons' voyeuristic interests. Empoli, however, in depicting a chaste Susanna, chose not to take advantage of such an opportunity as one would expect of an artist sensitive to the dictates of the Counter-Reformation Church.
The drawings for this project predict what one finds in the painting. A study (Dis. C. 69) in the Marucelliana Library in Florence and another in the Uffizi (n. 343 F) were executed for the figures of the maidservants (figs. 88 and 89). The former sheet depicts the kneeling attendant, while the latter drawing is a study for the standing attendant. The study of the elegant, but domestic figure is a description with which one could compare with Santi di Tito's female figures of which Empoli was undoubtedly familiar, if only from his association with the Accademia del Disegno. The figure is drawn with loose, fluid lines. The play of light and shadow falling over the drapery is more sensitive than one finds in most of his earlier graphic work. This study reflects Empoli's observation of natural light falling across the figure. Note the appearance of the shadow cast from the extended arm of Susanna.

Both studies correspond closely to the paintings. There is one significant variation noticeable in the Marucelliana study: Empoli studied the figure from the studio model as is clear from the natural and quotidian pose and from the normative proportions of the woman. Although the pose was translated into paint, Empoli modified the proportions of the Vienna figure by slightly attenuating the upper torso and the thighs, causing the arms to be lengthened to a degree that is not in accordance with his observations of nature. She alone of the three figures in the painting appears somewhat awkward. The difference between the drawing and the painting attests to the fact that the artist had not quite reconciled his observations from nature, now skillfully rendered in the graphic medium, with the transcription into paint. It
represents a minor discrepancy, because, in the *Susanna at the Bath*, he had, in fact, arrived at his mature style. All the elements that will appear in his future projects are now present in this painting. Yet, as is apparent here, his Maniera roots would be discarded more slowly in his paintings than in his graphic work.

The Marucelliana sheet shows one of the first studies by Empoli where his loose rendering of contour lines demonstrates a spontaneity of approach and a confidence of execution not hitherto seen in his graphic oeuvre. This quality does not yet carry over into the painting where the figure is more carefully rendered. The sketch owes a debt to the manner of Pontormo in the flexibility of line and description of solid volumes, particularly the delineation of the oval head, cylindrical neck and the perfect ovoid shape of the upper torso. Volumetric form does, emphatically, characterize the figures in the painting. It is interesting to note that it is this loose, confident, study of the kneeling woman that corresponds to the very figure in the painting which Empoli has definitively executed in linear terms.

In the first two decades of the seventeenth century, Empoli executed several versions of the *Annunciation*, all variations of the same composition. Empoli's first painting of this theme (fig. 90) is signed and dated 1599, and was commissioned by the Cepperello family for the Duomo of Pontedera. A *bozzetto* for this painting in San Miniato, Genova (fig. 91), and a compositional study in brown ink and blue wash in the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (F.C. 130633) in Rome (fig. 92) show Empoli's preparatory ideas for the project. Two other studies, one for the figure of
Gabriel (n. 6253) and one for the Virgin (n. 9345 F) can be found in the drawings collection of the museum in Stuttgart and in the Uffizi, respectively (figs. 93 and 94). Empoli depicted this miraculous event as a visual exegesis of a doctrinal statement, devoid of extraneous details, providing only the basket of linens, and the modest prie-dieu upon which the Virgin kneels as indications of Her humble origins. A heavy curtain hangs along the right edge of the Pontedera composition (visible in the Rome drawing and the painting). Empoli may have intended this pictorial element to function as a symbol of an epiphany, yet in all of the later versions of this theme, he eliminates it from the composition.

Both the compositional drawing and the bozzetto depict a swirling drapery, fluttering in a wide arc behind the archangel Gabriel. Its precise relationship to the figure is unclear and, thus, one is not surprised to find that it does not appear in any of the paintings, including the Pontedera version. That it is intended to suggest movement is obvious, but it is a superficial flourish that distracts the eye from the interaction of the two figures and from the solemnity of the event. Empoli modified its design by altering the garment slightly so that the sash around Gabriel's waist and the drapery over his right shoulder flutter out behind him in a much more sedate manner.

The Pontedera painting has been considered a model for Cigoli's Montughi Annunciation of 1600. (fig. 95). Whether this can be proven remains speculative, but the formal differences between the two contemporaneous paintings are
pronounced. Cigoli's approach is painterly, sensuous in color and brushstroke, attesting to his admiration for Venetian art and for the achievements of Correggio and Barocci. The undulating movement of Gabriel contrasts with the attitude of quiet acquiescence implicit in the Virgin's pose. Yet the liquid, arabesque folds of her garment become a visual metaphor for her heightened state of mind. The two figures nearly fill the picture plane which, in effect, draws in the viewer's presence, as if the painting were a palpable and startling vision before his eyes. Empoli's painting, in contrast, does not invite the viewer's participation. The empty space of the foreground acts as a barrier separating the holy figures from those who witness the sacred event. An unearthly realm of impenetrable space creates a sense of tomb-like silence. All motion has ceased. The Archangel hovers above the awe-struck Virgin who remains transfixed by Gabriel's sudden appearance. It appears as if the golden light emanating from the Holy Dove and beyond has momentarily rendered the figures completely still, timeless in pose as the message is timeless in meaning.

Perhaps Empoli had kept in mind the composition of the **Annunciation** by his master Maso da San Friano, as is known to us by a drawing by Maso in the Louvre (fig. 46). Maso's composition shows the Archangel Gabriel appearing before an awe-struck Virgin who kneels at a lectern. Despite the brilliance of light emanating from the dove of the Holy Spirit, both figures display a gentility in their poses and gestures. The figure of the Archangel particularly shares elements of expression and pose and a similar hovering movement with Empoli's angel in the Rome study for the Pontedera
painting.

Typically, Empoli conceived of the figures in terms of solid, volumetric form. The elegance of gestures, the idealized, but unsophisticated, beauty of both figures, the smooth surfaces and graceful lines informing all elements of the composition, co-exist with the humble air, the spartan setting, the unpretentious apparel of the Virgin, and the simple and direct meaning of the Annunciation.

The compositional study for this painting varies only slightly from the final work. In the drawing the basket of linens is placed in the left foreground in front of and to the right of the Virgin, while it is pushed farther back, beyond both figures, in the painting. The Virgin's mouth is slightly open as if taking in a quick breath of air at the startling vision, thus displaying a more emotive response to the appearance of the Archangel. In the Pontedera painting, her lips are closed, exhibiting a more restrained and decorous attitude. That there are no pentimenti in this study, nor lines squaring the sheet for transfer, suggests that it may have served as a presentation piece for the patron's approval. Even though the line is thin and delicate, it is confidently rendered. The line is continuous and long, rarely breaking in its path around the silhouettes of the figures. It is the linear element of the drawing that defines three-dimensional form, rather than the layers of wash which serve only to indicate passages of light and shadow.

Empoli's application of wash, as was characteristic of his graphic work at the end of the sixteenth century, is more sensitive and skilled in expressing light and
nuances of shadow. Blue wash was rarely adopted by Empoli in his graphic work, and its appearance here reflects his interest at the end of the century in experimenting with a variety of stimuli deriving from his observation of Venetian art as well as exchanges with Cigoli and other Florentine contemporaries. Yet the expressive potential for the combination of brown ink and blue wash to achieve pictorial effects, which Cigoli exploited, was suppressed by Empoli. The layers of wash were carefully applied to the paper by the brush, almost as if he were using a flat tint, and with the specific intention to enhance the clarity of form.

In the delineation of contours, the study of the figure of Gabriel (Stuttgart) comparable to Empoli's sketch for the lower torso of the Virgin in the Madonna of Mercy. In both sheets Empoli studied the lower portion of the figure, having only barely delineated the outlines of the upper body. The garments are similar and the manner of execution, a certain heaviness of line describing the gathered drapery around the hips, and the treatment of light and shadow which gives the drapery a satiny texture, suggest that these two sheets were executed nearly contemporaneously, if not studied from the same model.

The study for the figure of the Annunciante in the Uffizi (n. 9345 F; fig. 94) is representative of Empoli's manner of draftsmanship at the end of the sixteenth century. His maturity as a draftsman is evident in the manner in which he rendered solid form with confident strokes of the chalk. The long, continuous contour lines articulate the silhouette of the figure, separating the image of the figure from the
background plane of the sheet. This manner of execution suggests that Empoli not only studied the graphic work of Pontormo, but was undoubtedly aware of the manner of Alessandro Allori as well. Empoli seemed to have admired Allori’s technique more than his Michelangelesque conception of the human figure. In Empoli’s drawing, the nearly continuous contour line encloses the figure in a pyramidal shape which is characteristic of Empoli’s conception of the figure in geometrical terms. The line is also responsive to the effects of light and shadow, appearing thicker in the shaded portions of the figure and thinner, sometimes disappearing, along the figure's right side which is bathed in soft light.

Empoli’s more consistent and logical treatment of light and shadow, lessons undoubtedly learned from his exposure to Venetian art as much as from his observations from nature, are visible in the touches of white highlight to the ridges of folds of drapery, giving the material the appearance of satin. This interest in describing the very substance of cloth would concern him, to a greater degree, in the early decades of the seventeenth century. The transcription into paint of passages of light and shade was not as skillfully achieved. In the painting, one observes a flickering of light, not always logically illuminating the figures and objects in the composition. Empoli selectively and self-consciously highlighted the various pictorial elements of the altarpiece. Although the passages of light and shadow were rendered more in accordance with nature than one observes in his earlier work, there is still a hesitancy in his treatment of light and shade, a lingering trace of his training with
Maso da San Friano.

Empoli's design of the Virgin's garment as rendered in the Uffizi study (fig. 94) also reveals that the artist had not yet completely shed all vestiges of the High Maniera. Although the drapery is not as decorative in conception as one observes in his earlier Annunciation depicted in the Sassetta di Vernio Altarpiece, it, nevertheless, seems contrived to a degree in both the study and in the painting. The garment appears cumbersome in relation to the diminutive figure of the Virgin. The cloak draped across her right forearm, hangs at her waist, creating the impression that her dress sags at the waistline as if too large for her body. The material appears heavy and the lower portions of both the dress and cloak seem to trap her in her pose. One can imagine that it might have been a difficult task for her to rise from the prie-dieu.

The development of Empoli's style is evident when comparing the Pontedera Annunciation with that of the Annunciation in the Strozzi Chapel of Santa Trinità (fig. 96), signed and dated a decade later in 1609. In the 1609 Annunciation, Empoli took a greater interest in describing the essential furnishings and accoutrements of the Virgin's bedchamber. These elements are of modest design but they were rendered with a fidelity to nature that is indicative of Empoli's growing concerns for describing pictorial elements more convincingly. They add to the quotidian nature of Empoli's conception of sacred narratives. Empoli rendered both figure and still life object with such palpable form and with a simplicity of design that the paradox of the narrative as existing in a divine realm yet with a tangible reality that heightens its visual impact
upon the viewer. The costumes of the Archangel and the Virgin are more humble in design. The natural fall and weightiness of the folds of drapery of the Virgin's domestic garment give her a greater sense of dignity than one observes in the more ponderous arrangement of drapery clothing the Virgin in the Pontedera painting.

A significant change in conception between the two altarpieces is represented in the figure of Gabriel. The difference in costume between the two figures is negligible, but the variation in pose is demonstrative of Empoli's intention to conceive of the narrative as having a more direct accessibility to the viewer. In the Pontedera altarpiece, the Archangel hovers above the Virgin with his left arm raised high in the traditional gesture indicating the divine source of his message. Two versions of the Annunciation by Alessandro Allori, one painted in the 1570s and the other signed and dated in 1603, depict the Archangel with this traditional gesture (figs. 98 and 99). In the Strozzi Chapel Annunciation, Empoli greatly modified this pose, and created one that is far more humble in demeanor, and more restrained in gesture. Gabriel still points upward with his right hand but, modestly, at shoulder level, while his left hand rests on his chest in an act of humility and deference to the exalted status of the Mother of Christ. The study for this figure in Christ Church, Oxford (n. 0562) shows a studio member taking the pose of this figure (fig. 97). He appears dressed in contemporary clothes over which Empoli had cursorily sketched the Angel's garment. The Archangel hovers slightly above the ground in the Strozzi painting, rather than dramatically sweeping in from above. In raising the figure from the ground, Empoli
had to modify the figure only slightly from the Christ Church study. In the Strozzi *Annunciation* the vertical alignment of the body lends to the figure an earthiness and weight as if affected by the natural laws of gravity. The slight diagonal pose of the Pontedera Archangel suggests some movement which underscores the divine nature of the figure in his miraculous power of flight. The Christ Church figure records the intention of Empoli to portray a more stable and iconic vision. In using a studio model for the study, he established the correct attitude of the figure in normative proportions as observed from life.

That Empoli varied the compositions for the *Annunciation* very little, provides an opportunity to observe more clearly the development of his style within the span of one decade. The Pontedera *Annunciation* and its preparatory studies show that the artist was still reconciling several sources of artistic inspiration. This painting demonstrates that he had not yet arrived at a personal mode of describing light and shadow that would serve his artistic aims of rendering form with unambiguous clarity and of palpable substance. Objects lose definition as they recede into the gloom of the Virgin's bedchamber. The preparatory studies underscore the experimental attitude with which he approached the execution of the project. He still conceived of the figural and pictorial elements of the sacred narrative with some expression of refined elegance. He was not yet successful in designing drapery that reveals the form of the human body beneath.

By the time Empoli had completed the Strozzi *Annunciation* in 1609, he had
command of the graphic and painterly media. Light and shadow work in concert to clearly define figures and objects. The celestial golden light seems to have begun as a soft luminescence, quietly emerging within the shadows of the humble dwelling of the Virgin, and, with increasing intensity, reveals the vision of the Archangel Gabriel and the dove of the Holy Spirit. As such, it lacks the dynamism characteristic of Baroque compositions and, in this respect, differs from Cigoli's more active Montugh Annunciation. Empoli's gentle epiphany finds a corresponding expression in the calm acceptance of the Virgin's countenance and gesture. If his composition lacks dramatic force, it impresses the viewer with a poetic expression of light and color, and creates an engrossing and solemn image. Empoli has described the miraculous Annunciation of Christ's inception as one of dignity and profound spirituality. It is a scene intended for our contemplation and, as a clear statement of Catholic theology, it is exemplary of Counter-Reformation art.

The figural study in Christ Church also documents Empoli's graphic development since the Pontedera commission. He rapidly and confidently sketched the figure with long, loose lines of black chalk, concerned mostly with establishing the pose and gesture of the upper torso, as this is the area of the figure which differs to the greatest degree from his earlier conception of Gabriel as it is depicted on the sheet in Stuttgart. No attempt was made to articulate light and shadow as it would correspond to the light and source in the painting. In fact, the drawing shows a light source coming from the opposite direction as it appears in the painting. Empoli was
more intent on capturing the pose taken by the studio model. This drawing is remarkable for the fact that it represents one of the earliest sheets associated with a dated painting in which the model is depicted wearing contemporary clothes, rather than dressed in historical garb to fit the context of the narrative. This is exemplary of Empoli’s approach to his conception of a figure destined for sacred narratives.

The *Susanna at the Bath*, executed only one year after the Pontedera Annunciation, reveals that Empoli learned valuable lessons from the earlier project and applied them to the commission for the *Susanna* painting. The Marucelliana study of the maidservant shows a greater breadth in handling of the chalk medium than seen in any drawing executed prior to this project. The Christ Church study was rendered with the same spontaneity of execution. In the preparatory sketches for the Vienna painting Empoli established the pose of the attendants, and described their domestic garments. This gave him the opportunity to study the female figure clothed in garments of simple design which articulated the human form beneath. Revealing the beauty of the nude female form scantily attired was not his aim. Rather his intent was to devise an accessible and credible narrative by clothing the figures in humble attire which would not impede the articulation of form, pose and gesture. Perhaps the most telling change in the Strozzi Annunciation from his earlier version is the simple, contemporary garment worn by the Virgin. With this humble and domestic portrayal of the Virgin, Empoli had abandoned all traces of artifice and decorative refinement that were apparent in his early work and lingered, still, in the Pontedera
altarpiece. The Susanna painting is characterized by the smooth pearlescent surfaces
of flesh and taut forms, inspired by his observations of the works of Bronzino and
Santi di Tito. The figures of the Strozzi Annunciation are characterized in the same
manner. This element of his style would remain constant throughout his career. The
smooth, taut surfaces of Bronzino's icy porcelain figures find parallels in Empoli's
Madonnas, but the aristocratic chill present in Bronzino's models is absent.

Empoli selected figural types for his characters from a more humble faction of
society, closely following the practice of Santi di Tito. Unlike the portraits and
participants of Bronzino's compositions, Empoli's became, in a sense, humanized,
given warmth by color saturated with light. The impact of Venetian light and color,
however, so dramatically expressed in the San Remigio altarpiece, was now tempered
by Empoli's insistence on clarity of form and a prosaic naturalness. Empoli would
never abandon an interest in surface description, which he shared with and learned
from the art of the High Maniera.

In 1602 Empoli executed the Doubting of Saint Thomas (fig. 100). The
compositional drawings show Empoli's concern with rendering dramatic contrasts of
brilliant light and cavernous shadows. But the treatment of light and shadow clarify
rather than obscure form. The figure of Saint Thomas, stepping forward to touch the
wound in Christ's side, is encased in a voluminous cloak, much like the manner in
which Andrea del Sarto depicted the cloak cast over the shoulder of Saint Michael for
the Vallombrosa Altarpiece of 1528 (fig. 101). In both instances, the draperies of the
figures were designed in a manner that created three-dimensional masses with deep
folds of cloth and hemlines that circumscribed the implied torso beneath. That
Empoli was particularly impressed with Sarto's figure can be seen by the fact that he
used the same model, with minor variations, for a painting, now in the Accademia
Etrusca in Cortona, of a male saint dressed in a shorter tunic but with a similar
voluminous cloak draped over his right shoulder (fig. 102). Empoli may also have
looked at Sarto's figure of Christ in the Noli Me Tangere of c.1509 for his figure of
Christ (Fig. 103). The similarities between the two figures are more apparent when
comparing Sarto's Christ with that by Empoli in his compositional drawing, squared
for transfer (Uffizi n. 927 F, see fig. 104.) where the pose and the design of the
drapery are nearly identical. Christ's face, in the Doubting of Saint Thomas, has the
same typology as Sarto's portraits of Christ. Note, for example the similarities
between Empoli's Christ and that of Sarto's Christ the Redeemer in SS. Annunziata
(fig. 105). Empoli borrowed extensively from Andrea del Sarto for pose, typology,
and, occasionally, drapery arrangements, especially for the depiction of his Madonnas
and figures of Christ. But his manner of draftsmanship has little in common with
Sarto' approach to the graphic medium. It was to the graphic work of Pontormo that
Empoli looked more often for guidance and inspiration. The manner of draftsmanship
observable in the Uffizi 927 F sheet, particularly evident in the rendering of the
background figures, owes a debt to the style of Pontormo in the long, continuous
strokes of pen lines delineating solid form and the notational marks of the pen
rendering the facial features in circular strokes.

There is a linear development in Empoli's mode of describing the characters or "actors" of the narrative. The interest in creating solid geometric forms coexists with a keen attention to the representation of the minutest details of costume and surface description of fabrics and accoutrements. Thus Empoli's images are more visually engaging, holding the viewer's attention so that he may contemplate the theological message presented before him. As Empoli's career developed, he sought to describe the pictorial elements of his paintings with greater accuracy.

The paintings and accompanying drawings of the Martyrdom of Saint Barbara of 1603 and the Presentation in the Temple, executed one year later, attest to these developments of his style. The extant drawings for the Martyrdom (figs. 106 - 110) show Empoli studying details of costumes: the lacings of the sleeve, the metallic sheen and design of the helmets, and their feathery plumes. One is not surprised, then, to see in the final painting, a specificity of costume and contrasting textures in the clothing of the soldiers' uniforms and the garment of Saint Barbara. But, despite the depiction of exotic apparel, the dramatic theme was not successfully rendered in terms of natural movements and convincing poses which would have made the illusion of a past events credible.40

The painting offers, by comparison, another example of how Empoli's manner was most compatible with doctrinal and timeless representations of sacred themes, much like he composed for the Doubting of Saint Thomas rather than scenes
requiring active poses as was needed for the **Martyrdom of Saint Barbara**. In the **Doubting of Saint Thomas**, the absence of a setting that might suggest a specific time or place in which the saint's encounter with Christ occurred underscores the contemplative purpose of the painting. That Empoli's aesthetic sensibilities were not compatible with composing a narrative like the **Martyrdom of Saint Barbara**, was best articulated by Marabottini when addressing the problems of that painting:

...le sue predilezioni per le forme plastiche e compatte e per un disegno di contorno molto nitido erano fatte per impedire gli effetti pittoreschi e dinamici.⁴¹

Where Empoli failed in this aspect of his work, Cigoli supremely succeeded in achieving a pictorial dynamism by rendering credible and emotive figures in active poses, and by composing narratives whose drama was intensified by exploiting the pictorial expressiveness of color, light and shadow. Empoli's approach to the narrative was different in nature and intent. His patrons seem to have recognized this as it is not often that he is commissioned to compose scenes of dramatic action.

Empoli's drawings betray his predilection for composing emblematic interpretations of the Christian narrative. Although his late graphic style shows a greater breadth in the handling of the chalk medium, a greater emphasis on describing the substance of things, and a more relaxed description of form, his insistence on delineating volumetric form, unobscured by enveloping shadows and brilliance of light, inhibits the portrayal of movement, that is, of fluid action and spontaneous gestures. Therefore, the **Presentation in the Temple** (fig. 111), executed in 1604
represents a much more successful work than the *Martyrdom of Saint Barbara*
executed the previous year.

The principle figures arranged around the central figure of the High Priest
Simeon, are clearly visible despite the murky darkness pervading the recesses of the
temple's interior. The tone of the compositional drawing in the Uffizi (n. 950 F, fig.
112) is keyed much higher and lighter than one sees in the painting. The clarity of
the contours of the figures, executed in pen lines, are not threatened by obfuscating
shadows. Yet the darkness in the painting enhances the air of dignity and solemn
stillness that locks the figures into a timeless *tableau vivant*. The female figure who
kneels at the steps to the altar along the right edge of the composition and who is
undoubtedly a member of the patron's family, glances out at the spectator as if
recognizing him as a co-observant to the ritual. Indeed, we are invited to behold the
event though the gesture of the young man standing to her right. A space is provided
for us at the base of the steps to the altar.

In 1606 Empoli made a replica of this painting for reasons which are not
known (fig. 113). Significantly, however, the female patron is no longer present.\(^1\)
Empoli modified the pose of the older man kneeling in the right foreground, so that he
engages the viewer's attention in place of the absent female figure. It is clear that it
was important for Empoli to compose the narrative in a way that would induce the
intellectual and spiritual participation of the viewer. Neither the compositional
drawing, nor the painting invokes an emotional response from the spectator.
At first glance, the differences between the compositions of the 1606 replica and the earlier version of the *Presentation in the Temple* appear relatively insignificant. Yet, even the differences reflect the developments that Empoli would continue to pursue in future projects. In the 1606 replica, one sees a more specific depiction of the details of the costume and a richer substance of cloth, most noticeably pertaining to the garments of the priest and patron kneeling in the right foreground. The enrichment of the surface texture characterizing the garments worn by the patron's family and by the High Priest heightens the contrast with the humble and domestic nature of the "Vergine popolana".

Moreover, from what is probably the earlier of the two extant compositional studies of the *Presentation in the Temple* documented in a drawing in the Ashmolean Museum (Parker, II, n. 213), Empoli modified the architectural setting, simplifying it as he developed his successive conceptions for the depiction of the solemn ritualistic event (fig. 114). The setting of the 1604 painting shows a change in conception from his previous idea which depicts the area behind the altar as a curving wall of round-headed, blind niches, suggesting an interior setting of what may have been a *tempietto* or circular temple. Instead he designed a less specific setting, whose main pictorial feature is an open doorway through which appears a view of the cupola of SS. Annunziata. Above the broken pediment surmounting the door is a glass-bottled window which allows light to penetrate the area behind the figures standing about the altar. In the 1606 replica, however, the door is surmounted by a full pediment with
no window to illuminate the darkened interior. This change places greater visual emphasis on the principle figures while casting the lesser important attendants in shadow.

The Presentation in the Temple underscores those elements of style and approach to subject that result in Empoli's most successful works in the early years of the first decade of the seventeenth century: compositions of minimal setting with emphasis on a core group of principal characters, a delight in the surface description of materials and objects, and, above all, a clarity of content defined by humble figures of solid form, classic gesture, and dignified pose.

The representation of meticulously rendered textures which characterize the richly patterned brocades and silks of garments became his consuming passion. This element of Empoli's graphic manner can be considered a hallmark of his style of draftsmanship in his late studies. The drawings executed toward the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century, however, reveal this development more explicitly than earlier sketches.

Jacopo da Empoli invested his figures with a sense of heroic grandeur in his works of the first decade of the seventeenth century. This is observable in the Doubting of Saint Thomas of 1602 where broad sweeps of drapery clothe the miraculous Christ, who, in a stable stance and with outspread arms, allows Saint Thomas to examine the wound in His side. But this aspect of his style finds its grandest expression in the Calling of Saint Peter (fig. 115), signed and dated 1606.
The extant drawings for this project represent some of the finest examples of Empoli's graphic work. The arrangement of drapery and the pose of Christ is studied in a sheet (fig. 116) in the Uffizi (n. 9402 F). The figure is posed in a classic stance, similar to the figure of Christ in the Doubting of Saint Thomas, but, in the Calling of Saint Peter study, he is attired in layers of drapery, arranged in broad planes, articulated by long, sweeping lines of chalk, diagonally and vertically delineating the contours of the figure. Rather than being overwhelmed by the weight and expanse of his cloak, Christ radiates power and authority, which is conveyed also in His calm but penetrating glance, far more expressive than the vacuous countenance of Christ in the Doubting of Saint Thomas. The simple design of the lower portion of the tunic appearing beneath the cloak, is characterized by folds that are gathered in slow rhythmical beats. When the figure appears in the compositional study (Uffizi, n. 9387 F, fig. 117), the heroic character of Christ is contrasted with the humble and reverent figure of Saint Peter who, wearing the garment of a common fisherman, kneels at Christ's feet. His lowly status is further accentuated by his unruly hair in distinct contrast to the classical, rhythmic curls of Christ. Yet, Saint Peter's cloak, draped over his left shoulder, gives him an air of dignity.

The figure of Saint Peter appears more animated in the compositional study than in the painting because Empoli slightly altered his pose. In the drawing, Saint Peter tilts his head to his left shoulder which enlivens his pose. He gazes upward into the eyes of Christ with profound reverence. In the painting, however, his head is
erect and eye contact with Christ is less direct. His expression is rapt, but more restrained in emotion. This modification weakens the expressive quality of the narrative to a degree.

The description of light in both the figure study and the compositional drawing depicts the powerful light of day, reflecting the sun's rays from the sky and sea. In the figure study, the light bleaches out the shadows which appear with intensity only in the deepest recesses of Christ's cloak. In the compositional drawing, the warmth and brilliance of light is intensified by the golden tint of the prepared paper and the warm tonality of the brown wash, so that, in this study, Empoli not only described the intensity of the sunlight but its warmth as well. The figure of Christ in the compositional study reflects the strongest light as if symbolic of the divine nature of Christ and, therefore, more powerful than the radiance of the sun. This suggestion is lost in the painting where Empoli decided to depict the cloak of Christ in deep tints of color, leaving only the face, hands and lower portion of the tunic bathed in light.

In the compositional study the two principle figures are arranged in the foreground plane as is typical of Empoli's manner in the description of figures in space. But here he created a more interesting spatial arrangement than one finds in his other projects, perhaps due to the nature of the Christian story. He created a curving sweep into the distance, leading the eye from the tall figure of Christ to the kneeling Saint Peter and then to the disciple who remains in the boat positioned along the left edge of the sheet. From there the eye is led to the diminutive fishing boat in
the distant waters behind Peter's vessel, and finally to the land mass which frames the
figural composition on the left. The vertical mast of the boat to which the sail is tied,
provides an effective counterpoint to the vertical figure of Christ and breaks the
monotony of the severe horizontal line of the water meeting the sky. The sun, visible
in the study, does not appear in the painting, at least, in its present state of
preservation.

Despite the more penetrating description of space rendered in the
compositional study and in the painting, Empoli described only the essential elements
necessary to characterize the narrative. His desire to communicate direct and legible
statements of the Christian narrative led him to devise compositions that were devoid
of extraneous detail and decorative flourishes that might distract from the meaning of
his altarpieces. But he gave full attention to rendering the pictorial elements of the
composition with verismilitude. Rather than exploring the expressive effects of light
and shadow to enhance the dramatic impact or underscore the emotional power of the
narrative, Empoli concentrated his efforts on visually interpreting the Christian stories
as direct statements of Catholic doctrine. In this respect, his altarpieces inspired
spiritual introspection in the spectator rather than arousing an emotional, empathetic
response. The credibility of the meaning was enhanced by the explicitness of the
physical description of participants and of the essential pictorial details.

His preparatory studies are executed with the same rational attitude as are the
altarpieces. One only has to compare Empoli's drawing of the figure of Christ for the
Calling of Saint Peter with Cigoli's study, in the Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. no. 29.555, fig. 118), of a Standing Male Figure which was destined to appear in several of Cigoli's projects. The similarity of pose and arrangement of drapery suggest that Empoli and Cigoli executed their respective studies from the same model. Yet the character of the study differs according to the intent of the draftsman.

Cigoli rendered the figure by applying the layers of brown wash on the green-tinted background in a painterly fashion. White highlights are generously brushed to the figure's upper torso while rich shades of brown wash carve deep recesses in the folds of the garment, and several layers of wash plunge the figure's lower torso and back into shadow. Line is rendered with the tip of the brush rather than the nib of the pen, and it is subordinated to the more powerful passages of brown wash and white highlight. Cigoli softly rendered the face and curls of hair with white highlight. With eyes cast downward, and the mouth slightly open, the head, emerging from the shadows, tilts gently to the figure's right shoulder. The dramatic visual impact of the drawing, achieved by the powerful contrasts of light and shadow and aggressive strokes of the brush, provides a counterpoint to the sweet pathos of the figure's expression and serenity of his pose. Cigoli's painterly and pictorial approach to the study of this figure predicts the manner in which he executed the painted altarpiece where one observes the same concerns for the pictorial treatment of light and shadow and the richness of color applied with fluid brushstrokes.

Both Cigoli and Empoli described the human figure in terms of solid
volumetric form, but Cigoli animated his figures with lively strokes of brush or pen, a
coloristic interpretation of light and shadow, and expressive facial features and
gestures. Empoli, on the other hand, subordinated all pictorial effects to the
supremacy of form. If Cigoli studied the play of light and shadow over the figure,
Empoli, in viewing the same model from a slightly different angle, studied the lay of
drapery over the figure. Line, rather than value, delineates the forms of the figure;
light and shade are rendered only as much as they differentiate layers of drapery and
indicate the general direction of the light source. Details of the figure are re-studied
further to determine the correctness of pose and arrangement of the sleeve. The
wine-tinted background serves only as a colored backdrop upon which to render the
figure. The strength of the drawing lies in the immediacy of the image, the classic
grandeur of the pose and the confident and sweeping strokes of the chalk. The
powerful and weighty expanse of drapery imparts a sense of dignity to the heroic
stance of Christ. As such, He is locked into place, a timeless image. This impression
is carried from the compositional study into the finished painting. And it is this
immobile and eternal quality of the figure that contrasts so greatly with the vibrancy
and emotive qualities that characterize all of Cigoli's figure studies.

Predictably, one observes the same differences in their respective approaches
to the altarpiece. Empoli presents timeless and stoic interpretations of the sacred
stories, while Cigoli invites the spectator to share with his characters the drama and
emotional impact of the event.
The Delivery of the Keys, executed for the Usimabardi Chapel in Santa Trinita, Florence (fig. 119), is neither signed nor dated. The dedicatory stone for the chapel bears the date 1607; yet I believe, based on stylistic considerations regarding both the painting and its preparatory drawings, that the project was begun soon after the Doubting of Saint Thomas of 1602, and possibly finished while Empoli had already begun his preparations for the Calling of Saint Peter.

The arrangement of the Apostles and Christ in the foreground plane of the composition and its severe simplicity of setting is comparable to the composition of the Doubting of Saint Thomas. Only the luminescent blue sky and twin palm trees indicates the outdoor setting. This aspect of the painting calls to mind the simple but powerful compositions of Empoli's Florentine predecessor, Giotto. Both artists included only the essential pictorial elements to suggest the setting, but the solid figures exist in three-dimensional space despite the shallow ledge of space on which they are arranged. Both Giotto and Empoli, therefore, presented the viewer with timeless images of the Biblical narrative. The actors of their narratives exhibit expressive gestures, classic poses, and a quiet dignity. Yet Empoli's painting is clearly a product of his time. His observations of nature are readily apparent in the the volumetric forms of the figures, the natural fall of drapery, the displacement of space occupied by each figure, and in the details of the precise description of the golden keys and the incandescent, metallic sheen of the haloes.

Few of Empoli's subsequent compositions, especially those which take place in
the outdoors, would exhibit such a stark setting. Empoli's growing interest in rendering the rich textures of cloth, and the precise description of still life objects was paralleled in his increasing desire to create more descriptive settings in which to arrange his figures. This is demonstrated in the nearly contemporaneous painting of the *Calling of Saint Peter*, and carried farther in the *Preaching of the Baptist*, and the *Supper at Emmaus*, both executed a few years later in the decade.

The preparatory drawings for the *Delivery of the Keys* more poignantly document stylistic growth in Empoli's career, demonstrating a pivotal development in his approach to the execution of the altarpiece (figs. 120 - 124). There is an unpublished drawing in the Uffizi (n. no. 15522, fig. 124) that was certainly an early study for this project. The figures, destined to become apostles, are arranged in the same poses, but in the opposite order from those in the final painting. The apostle standing along the right edge of the sheet takes the same stance and gesture as the figure on the left edge in the altarpiece. The sketch is rapidly executed in black chalk with the kneeling figure of Saint Peter, and a partial area of the two figures standing behind him, traced over in brown ink. Nearly all the figures are washed in brown tints, indicating shadows that suggest the direction of light source which is consistent with the direction of light in the final painting. Despite the cursory nature of the execution, the long continuous lines of chalk and ink suggest eloquent figures of noble gestures. Although the figure of Christ is absent, the gaze of each figure is directed to the empty place where Christ will eventually stand, albeit facing the other
way, in the painting. Empoli appears to have experimented with the arrangement of these figures. In the final composition, the poses remain unchanged, but the direction in which they face, is reversed from that of the early sketch.

The figure of Christ, facing the way he would appear in the painting, is depicted in bistre over black chalk on a sheet in the Uffizi (n. 3436 F, fig. 123) together with a fragment of the figure of Saint Peter along the lower left edge of the sheet. The fragmented figure of the saint suggests that this sheet was cropped at some point. Although the apparel of Christ differs from that of the same figure in the compositional studies for the *Doubting of Saint Thomas*, the pose is similar, especially in the position of the legs.

In both the later sheet and in all the studies of Christ for the earlier project, the figure leans back slightly, resting his weight on his left leg. Yet in the compositional study (n. 920 F, fig. 121), squared for transfer, and corresponding in every detail with the final painting, Empoli altered the pose of Christ so that he rests his weight on his right foot while extending his left foot outward in a classical contrapposto stance. A more significant change can be observed in the arrangement of the drapery. In the figure study of Christ for this project, three monotonous folds articulate the lower portion of the garment, and the cloak worn over the tunic is awkwardly designed. Satisfied with the lay of drapery on the upper torso, Empoli redesigned only the lower portion of the garment. The compositional study shows an arrangement of drapery that is more rhythmical in the articulation of the folds of material. This results in a
more classical and dignified description of Christ's apparel.

The contrapposto pose of Christ and the design of his garment as seen in the compositional study is repeated in the painting. With the exception of the pose of the left arm, the figure of Christ in the Delivery of the Keys is nearly identical to that of Christ in the Calling of Saint Peter. This suggests that the two paintings may have been executed at the same time and that Empoli used his design for Christ for both projects with minor alterations.

The painting of the Delivery of the Keys, and its attendant drawings, attest to the fact that Empoli was seeking, at this point in his career, to compose grander, more heroic, sacred figures clothed in drapery that enhanced the expressive power and dignity of the characters. His conception for the figure of Christ as seen in the Delivery of the Keys and in the Calling of Saint Peter, documents a new vision of expression in Empoli's manner of depicting both sacred and profane characters. One has only to observe the figure of King Clotaire in the painting of Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II, executed nearly a decade later in 1614, to recognize that Empoli was more than a little pleased with the design of this figure. Notwithstanding the change of costume, the figure of the King is given the same pose taken by Christ in the painting of the Delivery of the Keys. Such a stance imparts a sense of dignity and nobility to the royal figure as it did for the figure of Christ.

Empoli never deviated from his aim to present doctrinal interpretations of the Christian narrative, nor from describing that narrative in quotidian and naturalistic
terms. It was this latter aspect that led him to include more descriptive settings in his future compositions, beginning with the Calling of Saint Peter of 1606. His success in this endeavor is recorded in the Sermon of the Baptist (fig. 6) of c. 1608, a date based on the year recorded on the dedicatory stone of the Gianni Chapel in San Niccolo Oltrarno where the painting has remained since its completion.

To the right of the composition, Empoli depicted the Baptist delivering his sermon to a crowd of on-lookers gathered around the base of the rocky ledge upon which he stands. He exploited the needs of the narrative to represent the attending spectators as deriving from all strata of contemporary society. This then gave him the opportunity to design a wide variety of costumes worn by both male and female listeners, young and old. Three exotic figures who wear turbans sit to the left. The repoussoir figure of the man seen from the back and dressed in red damasked satin, a pearl earring dangling from his right ear, provides a worldly contrast to the group of peasant women and child seated just beyond the base of the ledge. In the right foreground, complementing the turbaned figure, a noble woman with a complicated coiffure and dressed in an attractive garment, points to the figure of the Baptist for the benefit of her female companion. This compositional device leads our eye to the saint, lest we linger too long on the interesting details of the crowd. Empoli took care to render the crude garment of the Baptist with a fidelity to nature, accurately describing the texture of the fur and the ragged quality of the animal pelt. That he chose for the foreground figures the elaborate costumes of the wealthy, was probably
intended to provide a telling contrast to the self-imposed poverty of the Baptist and send a moral message to the wealthy Christian supplicant who might kneel before the altar over which the painting is hung. But the message is clearly intended to be heard by both the rich and the poor which is well communicated in the painting by the representation of men from various factions of society standing in the clearing behind the great mass of stone.

A figure study in the Louvre (no. 1039) depicting a man of humble means, judging from his modest apparel and unshaven face, represents one of Empoli's finest life studies (fig. 8). A detail of a right hand grasping a portion of a wooden staff is sketched above his left shoulder. This detail may represent either an alternative pose for the rustic figure or an early idea to place the Baptist's staff in his right hand. Apparently pleased with this second description of the model's hand, Empoli included the figure with this gesture among the crowd of witnesses in the middleground of the painting, although little more than his head and shoulders is visible.

The manner in which the drawing was executed reveals two essential observations regarding the development of Empoli's draftsmanship. The first is that the influence of Pontormo continued to make a significant impact on Empoli's graphic manner. The round eyes set deep in their sockets and the continuous and fluid contour lines describing volumetric form with an economy of means attests to his lifelong study of Pontormo's methods of rendering the figure in chalk. His preference for a linear bias to describe form rather than a tonal or coloristic one, shows that Empoli
remained firmly rooted to the artistic tradition in Florence which called for the supremacy of disegno over colore, and remained an adherent of a Neo-Renaissance aesthetic rather than a Baroque one. More significantly in terms of Empoli's development of his graphic style, the loose, rapid, and confident handling of the chalk that renders the figure predicts the direction that his late graphic mode would take.\textsuperscript{47} In his earlier work, Empoli drew contour lines with a more consistent and unrelenting path around the forms of the figures. The Louvre drawing reveals that by the end of the first decade, he delineated form with a lighter touch in some areas and a heavier stroke in others which resulted in more animated and vibrant images. Secondly, the perceptions of Empoli recorded in the appearance of this humble and unassuming character reflect a practice of observing and drawing from nature that was passionately encouraged by Santi di Tito, and practiced by Empoli and his contemporaries. The coarseness of this figure is underscored by the simple garment stretched across his substantial girth (note the gap in the shirt at the waist responding to its tight fit). This study, in its accurate representation of nature, is a paradigmatic example of the artistic vision that characterized Florentine art at the close of the first decade of the seventeenth century.

That the theme of the Sermon of the Baptist gave Empoli the opportunity to revel in the rendering of surface description, and in particular, the distinction of the various types of fabric worn by his figures, is seen in the compositional study (Uffizi n. 947 F, fig. 7) for this project. The depiction of the exotic figure on the left,
wearing the turban, best articulates this aspect of Empoli's development as a draftsman. The use of wash applied in a thin tint, instead of pen lines, to depict the satin brocade patterns in the garment of this figure demonstrates Empoli's increasing proficiency and sensitivity in the handling of this medium. The layers of wash are skillfully rendered to denote the softness of the dull, matte sheen of cloth across the figure's back. More intense passages of wash carve crisp folds into the stiff satin material, and, together with the curved sash around the waist, reinforce the rounded forms of the torso. Empoli's mode of conceiving the figure in terms of geometric form is perfectly illustrated in the rendering of the turban worn by this figure.

On a separate sheet in the Uffizi (n. 3438 F, fig. 125), Empoli studied the design of the turban, rendering it in black chalk with white highlights on gray paper. His consummate skill in describing solid volumetric form is demonstrated in this drawing by the contours of chalk delineating the path of the thick white cloth around the oval of the head. The highlights in white not only illuminate the ridges of the folds, but suggest the whiteness of the cloth as well. In the compositional study, Empoli left areas of the paper untouched by wash to show the brilliance of light and to suggest the bleached white material of the turban.

The compositional study points out another aspect of Empoli's development in the conception of the narrative: the greater interest in a more descriptive setting. The iconography of both the Delivery of the Keys and the Sermon of the Baptist calls for an outdoor setting. Yet, in the earlier composition, only the twin palm trees and blue
sky were shown to denote the exotic setting for the scene. Had Empoli wished to conceive of the Sermon in the same manner, he could have composed a setting similar to that depicted in the Scalzo fresco by his mentor, Andrea del Sarto (fig. 126). There the Baptist stands upon a mound of earth in the center of a barren landscape where only a small outcropping of trees breaks the monotony of the stark land. But Empoli chose to depict the more traditional setting of a wooded area where the local gentry and peasants gathered to hear the Baptist's message.

In the compositional study, the landscape setting is summarily rendered in ink and wash, but shows a sensitivity to the description of natural elements in the depiction of the powerful tree trunks contrasted with their delicate foliage, in the description of the brilliant, natural light of day illuminating the background, and in the cool shadows cast over the crowd gathered under the shade of the trees. Perhaps this greater interest in setting reflects Empoli's observation of the work of his contemporaries, but it seems also that it represents a logical development of his continuous search for ways to conceive of the narrative in more convincing naturalism.

The setting is not described in a way that lends dramatic power to the narrative; it is conceived as means to deliver a more immediately accessible image that expounds a theological message, and it is manipulated to enhance the clarity of the figural composition as well. The rocks, trees, and open sky provide natural backdrops against which the figures dominate the space. Yet the populace gathered at
the Baptist's feet are as inert as the landscape elements. Despite expressions of rapt attention, with mouths open in silent awe, the figures remain motionless in stance, stilled in gesture, just as the viewer is transfixed in pious reflection while kneeling before the painting.

At the close of the first decade of the seventeenth century, Jacopo da Empoli's style of draftsmanship, as it related to his painted work, continued to demonstrate an influence of both Pontormo's graphic and painterly output, and, to a lesser degree, that of Andrea del Sarto. His greater interest in rendering the physical description of things can be attributed to his observations of the work of Santi di Tito, and to that of his closer contemporaries, Cigoli, Passignano, and, in some ways, to the work of the younger generation of Florentine artists, Cristofano Allori and Matteo Rosselli. Yet Empoli assimilates these resources into a style that is wholly his own. The Pomino Supper at Emmaus (fig. 127), signed and dated 1609, exhibits such a synthesis of the various factors that helped shape its composition.49

Although the two extant compositional studies for the Supper at Emmaus have not been conclusively recognized as studies for the Pomino project, they, nevertheless, represent the artist's various ideas for the narrative theme (figs. 128 and 129).50 The Louvre drawing (n. 1042), perhaps an early idea for the painting in Pomino, depicts the three principal figures and the servant in a corner of a room. The setting is stark and bare. Nothing distracts the viewer's attention from the figures. In this respect it is not unlike the composition of Pontormo's version for the Certosa,
copied by Empoli two decades earlier. In both compositions, Christ occupies the precise center of the space bisecting the scene into two equal halves. Other than the table, the loaves of bread, and few eating utensils, no elements of the setting are visible. Pontormo's figures emerge from the gloomy darkness, whereas Empoli's are set in relief against the middle tone of the flat expanse of wall.

The compositional study in the Uffizi (n.3408 F) shows a most significant departure from that of the Louvre sheet. The same characters now are placed in an open loggia with a view of a country landscape and what looks like the Campanile and Duomo of Florence in the distant background. There can be no doubt that for his conception of the setting, Empoli borrowed extensively from Santi di Tito's Santa Croce Supper at Emmaus of 1575, although, eliminating much of the detail (fig. 130). In both compositions, a massive pilaster emphatically leads the eye to the figure of Christ. In the Pomino painting, this element has become a column, shifted slightly to the left of Christ, and to which a heavy curtain is affixed serving variously as a kind of canopy, a cloth of honor, perhaps, over the divine figure, and as the curtain of epiphania.

The Uffizi study is rendered with rapid strokes of the pen and fluid passages of wash that, typically, serve to clarify form. If Empoli's more spontaneous manner of rendering in ink and wash reflected his observations of Cigoli's manner of execution in this medium, he differed radically from his contemporary by his insistence on the articulation of form. The rapid brush stroke that applies the wash coordinates with
the stroke of the pen. The freedom of execution in the compositional study was not translated into paint in the final product. Although the graphic mode, by its nature, allows for a more experimental and loose manner of execution, the spontaneity of the chalk or pen is sometimes reflected in the freedom of the brushstroke. This is observable, to a degree, in the work of Cigoli. But Empoli, while progressively demonstrating a freer approach in the handling of the graphic medium, remained consistently polished and controlled in the execution of the painted altarpiece.

Empoli’s drawings from the end of the second decade until his death in 1640 reveal his continuous effort to compose with a greater breadth of space to depict both the sacred and secular figure in a more classicizing manner with respect to gesture, drapery and amplitude of form. That his style was evolving in this direction from the beginning of his career, is evident when one compares, for example, the Torrigiani Altarpiece of 1592 (fig. 63) with the Presentation in the Temple executed in 1604 (fig. 111). Empoli’s manner of designing form and gesture with greater breadth is more acutely perceptible when comparing the Doubting of Saint Thomas of 1602 (fig. 100) with the Calling of Saint Peter (fig. 115) and the Delivery of the Keys (fig. 119), both executed only four years later. The conception of the figure in more heroic proportions and with grander gestures as in the study for the figure of Christ for the Impruneta altarpiece has been discussed above. Jacopo’s approach to the conception of the figure (indeed, the composition as well) as one of more monumental forms continued to characterize Empoli’s graphic manner with regard to the preparation of
the altarpiece in the remaining decades of his career.

Among the artistic and cultural resources available to Empoli which contributed to the development of his style in this manner were the artistic developments occurring in Rome. These developments could have been observed indirectly in the work of those artists returning to Florence from extended visits to the Papal city. His younger contemporary, Matteo Rosselli, had returned to Florence from a six month visit in Rome in 1605. Empoli's contacts with Rosselli may have been a significant factor influencing his conceptions for the Calling of Saint Peter and the Delivery of the Keys. This would explain such a discernible difference in his depiction of a more monumental figure of Christ in these two projects from that of the more diminutive figure of Christ in the Doubting of Saint Thomas completed just two years earlier.

Cigoli's brief return to Florence from Rome in the fall of 1607 and his residence there until the winter of 1608 provided Empoli with the opportunity to assimilate further new trends developing in Rome and which had coalesced in Cigoli's art partly as a result of his interaction with Annibale Carracci and Caravaggio. Cigoli's study of the Roman work of Raphael and his direct contacts with the artists of the Bolognese school influenced his emotive approach to the sacred narrative in terms of depicting a greater breadth of form and, at the same time, a more naturalistic rendering of figure and setting. Empoli learned valuable lessons from his observations of Cigoli's evolving style. These lessons are manifested in Empoli's drawing work by
evidence of a more monumental conception of the figure exhibiting more active poses and expressive gestures than ones sees in earlier studies. Stylistically, his approach to the rendering of the figure and graphic studies of the head became looser and more spontaneously executed. This is indicative not only of his growing confidence as a draftsman, but his willingness to surrender the concreteness of form defined by emphatic contour lines to the suggestion of form influenced by light, shadow and movement.

Empoli's work of the second decade of the seventeenth century is also characterized by a more focused attention to naturalism not only in the description of the substance of things but in terms of more specific details of the setting which his figures inhabit. The participants in the Miracle of Saint Charles Borromeo and the Rospigliosi Family of 1613 are typically gathered in the shallow ledge of space in the foreground plane of the picture (fig. 132). Yet, while the figures of Empoli's altarpieces habitually occupy at least two-thirds of the composition, here they are arranged along the lower half of the painting. A view of what appears to be a Florentine street looms in the upper half of the space. That Empoli diminished the proportions of the figures in relation to the pictorial surface in order to represent the setting of the miracle with more specificity, attests to his meticulous attention to description of pictorial details now extended to the setting.

This development is carried to the following year in another major commission of the decade, the Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II (fig. 26). Empoli's prolific
production of still lifes executed toward the end of his career attests to his interest in this genre of painting popularized by Dutch and Flemish artists. But his interests in the naturalistic description of still life objects is also apparent in the painted altarpiece as well, and most particularly evident in the Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II of 1614. This painting is a masterpiece not only in the rendering of the tools of the goldsmith's trade, but as a study in the surface description of things from the textures of various cloths (brocades, tapestries, velvets, silks, etc.), to the description of wood, marble, metal and a score of other substances including the hair of the small dog in the foreground. The narrative holds our attention only momentarily before our eyes explore the faithful rendering of a multitude of details. In this respect, it perhaps best reflects the influence of northern art on the mature style of Jacopo da Empoli. His works from the last decade of the sixteenth century, and continually since, included a meticulous description of objects that served as props to enhance the meaning of the narrative or as attributes to more precisely identify a saint. Yet, while these were viewed as isolated elements in earlier pictures, they took on a more important function in the works of the second decade and in the Saint Eligius commission in particular. This interest in the representation of things received continuous endorsement as well as inspiration from his observations of the graphic and painterly productions by Flemish and Dutch artists working in Florence and elsewhere in Italy, and from his knowledge of the work of Caravaggio and his school.

Paradoxically, while Empoli took a more avid interest in the details of setting
and in the realism of objects in these years, his graphic style became looser, his firm control of the contour lines defining the silhouette of the figure became softer and, in rendering the draped figure, more suggestive of volumetric form rather than precisely articulate. The more relaxed control of the chalk was translated into paint by a more visible brush stroke.

Figural studies for both the *Miracle of Saint Charles Borromeo* and the *Rospigliosi Family* and the *Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II* (figs. 134 - 139) demonstrate a confident and fluid description of the figure. The figures are no less solidly rendered against the flat background of the paper's surface, but Empoli modified his approach to the study of the draped figure by attending to the description of substance as well as the delineation of form. This can be attributed, on the one hand, to the use of charcoal, in some sketches, rather than black chalk to render line with a greater softness. On the other hand, it is indicative of Empoli's growing sensitivity to the surface description of things - the fugitive effects of light and shadow on the satin sleeve of Saint Eligius (Lugt inv. n. 3576, fig. 138), or the brilliant whiteness of Saint Borromeo's soft, lacy linen surplice (Leningrad, the Hermitage, inv. 40044, fig. 135). In both drawings Empoli's rapid strokes of charcoal capture the pose of the figures and accurately describe the essential characteristics of the costumes. Only in the earlier Louvre study for the rustic figure (fig. 8) destined to become a spectator in the *Sermon of the Baptist* does one see, prior to the St. Eligius and St. Borromeo studies, such a swift and loose rendering of line that responds to
the effects of light and shadow with the pressure of the charcoal.

Other works of this decade demonstrate that Empoli was looking at a variety of artistic sources from which to derive inspiration for the naturalistic rendering of his pictorial elements. In the *Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans* of 1617 (fig. 140), a group of nine adults and children stand about the elevated and seated figure of Saint Yves. Despite the simple setting of the saint's throne around which the figures stand in attendance, the specific description of costume and rendering of the substances of the various materials continue to reveal Empoli's now obsessive concerns with fidelity to the naturalistic appearance of things. The lustre of color and the richness of surface description emerging from the dark shadows of the saint's chamber call to mind the Caravaggesque manner of Artemisia Gentileschi whose work with that of her father Orazio was avidly collected by the Medici in the early decades of the seventeenth century.54

The painting of *Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans* of 1617 is representative of Empoli's mature style and was lauded as a masterpiece by his contemporaries.55 A comparison of the surviving compositional study for this project (fig. 141) with Empoli's study for the Plymouth *Nativity* and with his drawing of the *Madonna and Child with Saints Stephen and Lawrence* from his formative years shows that this level of excellence can be observed in his graphic work as well.56 Consistent throughout his career has been the traditional use of pen and wash to execute compositional studies. Yet while the study for the Plymouth *Nativity* shows a
more aggressive handling of the media, the pictorial elements are unified by the sweeping passages of wash that enliven the surface of the drawing but do little to distinguish one figure from another. From this decorative description of form and drapery, Empoli radically changed his manner of execution with the study for the Madonna and Child on a Crescent Moon Appearing to Saints Stephen and Lawrence of the early 1590s (fig. 64). In this study, fine lines carefully executed in ink delineate figures who assume static poses more in keeping with the theme of a sacra conversazione but also indicative of Empoli's desire to rid his art of maniera concetti. Wash is brushed to the figures and to the sparse elements of the setting with the palest of tints to denote shadows. This study documents Empoli's intentions to conceptualize compositions of sacred themes as simple and direct in meaning. In its weak chiaroscuro effects, however, it represents an anamoly in Empoli's graphic oeuvre.

The drawing preserved in the Allen Memorial Museum in Oberlin (n. 71.38) for the composition of the Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans, represents the culmination of Empoli's quintessential manner of rendering the modello, whether for his own use, or, for what was probably its function here, as a presentation piece for the patron.⁷ The solemn gathering of figures is articulated with fine lines of ink that circumscribe a less emphatic contour around each figure than one observes in earlier compositional studies. The linear quality of the drawing is rendered with more energy as if Empoli carefully but fluently moved the pen over the surface of the sheet,
exerting more pressure for lines of emphasis or shade, while relaxing the pressure for 
lines that respond to the bleaching effects of light. The various textures of the 
garments are described with even finer touches of the pen to the paper, creating 
delicate lines that characterize, for example, the fractured surface of the embroidered 
silk of the woman's garment on the far right, or the soft furry edge of the Saint's cape. 
Throughout most of the drawing, the wash is applied in a lively manner and with 
uniform intensity. Only a few areas are given a second layer of tint to create a greater 
density of shadow. But the tint of bistre is of sufficient strength to clearly carve from 
the shadows of the Saint's gloomy chambers each figure's position around the throne. 
While the strong contrasts of light and shadow do not have the pictorial 
expressiveness of Empoli's study for the San Remigio Immaculate Conception (Uffizi 
n. 3412 F), they brilliantly set each figure in relief against the ambiguous space of the 
chamber.

Empoli's interest in communicating the narrative elements of his compositions, 
whether in relationship to his graphic work or to his paintings, does not manifest itself 
in his conception of figural poses and expressions, nor in the manner of his technique. 
He did not manipulate figures into active poses or describe inner feelings with 
emotive espressions, nor did he exploit the media for purposes of creating dramatic 
effects of chiaroscuro. Rather, he presented to the viewer an image of intense realism 
heightened with an acute clarity of form that is dramatic in its immediacy of meaning.

The compositional study for the Saint Yves painting reveals the intentions of
the painter more eloquently than any other study of its type previously executed by the artist. With restrained gestures the figures petition the saint to intercede on their behalf. The widow on the right implores the saint to recognize the boy at the foot of the throne. This boy in turn gestures to his left, leading our eye to the group of figures gathered on that side of the composition. Here a woman who prominently displays her pregnant condition engages the viewer's eye as if to solicit sympathy for her unborn child. The circular arrangement of the figures is thus well articulated and keeps the scene from becoming too static. Empoli's intention to depict the figures with journalistic precision is foreshadowed in the drawing by the notational strokes of ink and with judiciously applied passages of wash to describe details of garments and to suggest what will appear in the painting as a more precise description of surface textures.

In translating this image into paint, Empoli altered only one aspect of the composition. As an attempt to depict a more decorous image, he re-shaped the silhouette of the pregnant woman so that her condition appears less emphatic. He softened the curve of her abdomen and diminished the contrast of her lower torso which is brilliantly illuminated in the drawing, but which he subdued in the painting as a result of the black hue of the widow's garment. He also altered the direction of her gaze so that she modestly casts her eyes down as if lost in thought.

Those commissions given to Empoli which required the principal characters to be nude according to the demands of the narrative are not among his most successful
works. There are several reasons for this, and they are best illustrated with his painting in San Lorenzo of The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian of c. 1616-1618 (fig. 142). One significant reason for Empoli's lack of success with these works is that the nature of the subject called for a more dramatic and, therefore, active figural composition. Empoli's shortcomings regarding this type of subject have been noted previously in this chapter. But another reason involves the nature of the preparatory process for which the paintings were planned and specifically, Empoli's manner of studying the nude form.

Apparently not an ambitious student of anatomy, Empoli primarily studied the nude model for investigating the correct pose and proportion of the figure. He described the figure with emphatic contour lines even when, in the later years of his career, he rendered the draped figure in a more spontaneous and open manner. This is not to say that his studies of the nude were inferior. But since it was his manner to describe the musculature of the nude form in a cursory fashion, his translations into his paintings of these figures lacked interest. This is in some ways paradoxical since Empoli reveled in recording sensory data. He did not, however, translate this interest into his rendering of the nude form. Thus Empoli's paintings impress the viewer with the visual power of a heightened realism conveyed by a convincing description of pictorial elements rather than by dynamic poses and dramatic chiaroscuro effects.

That Empoli could skillfully render the nude form is evident in his study for Saint Sebastian for the c. 1616 Martyrdom. (See Uffizi n. 9382 F and n. 9351 F, figs.
Not hitherto noted is that Empoli took inspiration for this figure from what may have been its prototype, the figure of the saint in the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* by il Sodoma now in the Pitti Galleries in Florence (fig. 145). Both figures exhibit a traditional posture for the saint. Yet, other than the change in the posture of the left forearm, Empoli’s drawing, (Uffizi n. 9351 F; fig. 144) bears an extremely close correspondence to il Sodoma’s figure. Empoli may have squared the drawing in order to facilitate copying the same figure in reverse onto another sheet. The figure depicted in the Uffizi study n. 9380 F corresponds to Saint Sebastian in the painting with respect to the orientation of the figure. Empoli rendered the upper torso of the nude (Uffizi n. 9380 F) with skill. The lower torso, however, exhibits a position that would be impossible to assume given the torsion of upper body. It is as if Empoli misunderstood the source from which the figure derived. He must have recognized this problem when he painted the San Lorenzo altarpiece since this portion of the figure has been corrected.

By the end of the second decade, Empoli rendered the draped figure with a *sprezzatura* that is absent in his nude studies of the same years. Although the preliminary studies for the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* reveal Empoli’s greater skill and confidence in the rendering of the nude, they demonstrate that he continued to approach the study of this subject with more deliberation and hesitancy than one observes in the preliminary drawings for the head and draped figures (fig. 146).

Other sketches of the nude executed in these years reveal the same cautious
manner of delineating the figure's silhouette. Two studies for one of Noah's sons destined for the *Drunkenness of Noah* (c. 1617, fig. 147) demonstrate both Empoli's skill in the rendering of the nude form and a certain self-consciousness in the tentative execution of line (figs. 148 and 149). An insistent line of black chalk or charcoal circumscribes the figure in a continuous path around the body in the Uffizi sketch (n. 9356 F). Very little interior modelling suggests the play of light over the nude forms. The model assumes a simple frontal pose that, in itself, flattens the figure, and, because the line is so dominant around the edge of the figure with little interior modelling to lead the eye within, the figure appears even more two-dimensional. A second study, preserved in the Gabinetto Nazionale in Rome (F.C. 125373), was executed in red chalk and re-examines the figure with greater attention placed on the definition of the figure's anatomical structure. The plasticity of the figure is made more emphatic by specific modelling of the anatomy in red chalk, also exploiting the intrinsic capabilities of the medium for characterizing the warm earth tones of the flesh. Although the Rome study demonstrates Empoli's ability to successfully articulate the nude figure, it provides another example of his manner of treating the nude figure with more careful and deliberate attention than he approaches the study of the draped figure.

During the last twenty years of Empoli's long career, he painted fewer altarpieces, and devoted more time to the production of still lifes. Cigoli had died in 1613 and no single master had since dominated Florence's artistic community.
Empoli's younger contemporaries, Matteo Rosselli, Cristofano Allori and Bilivert, for example, continued to synthesize within their own personal styles the various strains of influences that were woven into the fabric of Roman commissions by artists visiting the papal city from throughout Italy. Through participation in the Accademia del Disegno, as well as through other ways of interaction, these artists, among them Empoli, could share in the exchange of ideas, explore new techniques, and enrich their art by a greater awareness of the achievements produced in other artistic centers in Italy and abroad. In this manner, Empoli had long since assimilated and redirected into his own style the influences of Venetian art, but the art of his late career reveals his awareness of artistic developments originating from different centers - those of Bologna and Pisa.

Many of his studies executed in the late first and second decades of the seventeenth century demonstrated a debt to the art of Rome and to the Carracci and the Bolognese school. These influences of Rome and Bologna were manifested by a greater breadth of form and by a more monumental rendering of the image on the sheet, and continued to inform Empoli's graphic manner throughout the remainder of his career. (Note, for example, the study of the Head of the Veiled Woman (Uffizi n. 9382 F, fig. 203) for the Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans).

New influences, however, enriched the vocabulary of both Empoli's graphic and painterly work during the last two decades of his career.

When Artemesia Gentileschi arrived in Florence in 1614, she brought with her
not only the artistic vocabulary of her father, Orazio, but of Caravaggio as well. That Florentine artists took note of the Caravagesque style, the tenebroso manner with its realism heightened with luminous color and powerful chiaroscuro effects, is documented in their works, such as Cristofano Allori's Judith with the Head of Holofernes. Cosimo II's enthusiastic patronage of Gentileschi and of other artists from the Caravagesque school must have provided a further incentive for artists to become aware of these new trends in painting. Like his fellow Florentines, Empoli's aesthetic sensibilities were far too decorous to fully assimilate Caravaggio's more secular representation of reality. Yet his life-long interest in the naturalistic description of costumes and of the elements of the setting would have been enough to induce him to observe and appreciate such elements in the Caravagesque works.

Nevertheless, for an artist like Empoli whose conception of the sacred narrative included naturalistic details to enhance the visual impact of the subject, this aspect of Gentileschi's art would provide no new lessons. It was the luminous treatment of light, rich color and fluent stroke of the brush that inspired the elderly artist to carry into paint what he already had begun to express with his graphic tools. While Empoli studied the figure with a more rapid and spontaneous stroke of chalk and charcoal, his paintings showed far greater control of the brush. But his latest works, the Baptism of Christ of 1620 in San Francesco in Pisa (fig. 150) and the Madonna and Child with Angels and Saints Nicolas of Bari, Giuliana Falconieri, Andrew, and John the Baptist of c.1627-28 in the Palagi Chapel of Santissima
Annunziata in Florence (fig. 151) attest to new influences informing Empoli's style. The description of surface textures that characterizes the feathery branches of the tree, the soft drapery with fringed edges and the siken brocade garment worn by the angels in the Baptism, is articulated with loose brushstrokes of vibrant color. This livelier execution animates the surface of the painting so that the sacred figures seem to vibrate in the shimmering light. This same manner is evident in the Santissima Annunziata Madonna and Child as well, and most visible in the garment of Saint Nicolas of Bari. It is not surprising to observe, in the study for this figure (Uffizi n. 9336 F), the characteristic loose handling of the medium that skillfully and economically suggests the satiny sheen of the saint's cloak (fig. 154).

This more painterly execution for the altarpiece which is accompanied by radiant effects of light and deep obfuscating passages of shadow has its counterpart in Empoli's late graphic manner. Empoli's preparatory studies for his paintings of this period vibrate with light. His drawing for the head of the Baptist (fig. 155) for the Pisa Baptism of Christ is executed with charcoal that is touched to the face in soft diagonal strokes and, together with the untouched paper, creates a shimmer of light and shade, thus animating the face (Berlin, Staatliche Museum, inv. n. KdZ. 12 296). Longer, supple strokes characterize the saint's wind-blown hair. Empoli's new interests in articulating form with a greater luminosity, and his desire to extend to the brush the more spontaneous method of execution formerly experienced only with his graphic tools, demonstrate not only his response to the work of the Pisan Gentileschi,
but must also be attributed to the influence of Empoli's own younger contemporaries, especially Matteo Rosselli. Yet while these artists went farther in their investigations of the more pictorial and dynamic expressiveness of the media to create dramatic interpretations of the Christian story, Empoli's altarpieces gave only a glimpse of the new Baroque sensibility.

Throughout Empoli's career, one aspect of his work remained fundamentally unchanged in both his drawings and in his paintings. His consistent arrangement of the principle figures in the foreground plane of the composition. This conception of the sacred narrative as if enacted on a stage with the setting serving as nothing more than a backdrop to provide a temporal reference for the subject, underscores his intent to deliver clear, unambiguous messages of the Christian story. In his mature style developed in the first decade of the seventeenth century, he created settings which encompassed deeper space, but he still had his actors enact their roles in the foreground ledge of space. (Note, for example the Supper at Emmaus and its attendant compositional studies.) Only in the late version of the Nativity for San Michele Visdomini (fig. 156) did Empoli pull the group of the Virgin, Child and shepherds from the foreground plane to the middle ground, leading our eye in a circular motion around the gathering of sacred and lay figures. If it is curious that he never again pursued an investigation of dynamic spatial arrangements in his preliminary ideas for the altarpiece, one must remember that his aesthetic sensibilities were more sympathetic to the timeless and static, tableau-like interpretations of the
Christian narrative. His least successful drawings are those in which he was required, by the demands of the commission, to depict figures in action (the projects for the Cavalieri of Santo Stefano or the troublesome preliminary ideas for the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, for example). Further, he enjoyed a steady patronage which shows that his more conservative artistic vision must have found favor with a sympathetic faction of the Florentine society as well as with the Church itself.
CHAPTER THREE NOTES


2. See note 25 in Chapter Two.

3. See Chapter One.

4. A recent cleaning of the San Giovanni della Calza Altarpiece reveals Empoli's signature and date inscribed on the lower portion of the page visible in the open Gospel held by St. John. Elena Testaferrata published this finding in her recent catalogue, Il Pontormo a Empoli. (See catalogue entry no. 24, 117)

5. Empoli also used Santi's God the Father from this altarpiece for the God the Father of c.1585 (Fucecchio).

6. The original location of this painting is not known. Charles McCorquodale suggested that this Nativity may be the same one mentioned in archival documents that cite Empoli painted a Nativity for the pork - butcher, Luca Salesi who was not satisfied with the results. In 1588 litigation ensued between the painter and the patron. Marabottini doubts that this particular Nativity is the same painting executed for Salesi since a date of 1588 seems too late for the Plymouth painting to have been executed. McCorquodale, Marabottini and Bianchini believe the work, based on stylistic analysis, to have been executed prior to 1580. Forlani dated the compositional study (Uffizi n. 9281) to between 1570 and 1580. See, C. McCorquodale, Painting in Florence 1600 - 1700, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy, 1979) 28; A. Marabottini, 175; M.A. Bianchini, Paradigma 109; A. Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli 15.

7. This pose derives ultimately from Leonardo da Vinci's unfinished Adoration of the Magi where he depicted an elder bystander raising his right hand to his head.

8. Empoli also borrowed some compositional motifs for the Plymouth Nativity from Bronzino's Adoration of the Shepherds (fig. 53) in Budapest of 1523 - 40, and from Santi di Tito's Nativity (fig. 54) in S. Giuseppe, Florence of 1566. From Bronzino's Adoration of the Shepherds, Empoli found the setting for his composition.
From Vasari's, the general composition and isolated figural motifs, and from Santi di Tito's, the humble figure types.

9. The study for the Penitent Magdalen (Uffizi n. 6546 F) had been ascribed to Pontormo but was restored to Empoli by L. Marcucci, "Disegni di Pontormo" in Mostra del Pontormo e del Primo Manierismo Toscano", exh. cat. (Florence, 1956) 79.

10. Curiously, in the fresco of the Sermon on the Mount, this figure has been combined with figure behind him. The poses of their right arms have been reversed and the lower torso of the second figure takes on the pose of the first figure in the drawing thereby concealing most of the figure from view.

11. Empoli's new sensibility to color and light were reinforced by his continuing study of the work of Andrea del Sarto. Marabottini refers to this decade of Empoli's career as evincing a passionate study of the works of Andrea del Sarto. (Marabottini 49.)


13. Cigoli's Ecstasy of Saint Francis is signed and dated 1596 and was executed for the monks of Foligno (Uffizi, Florence).

14. Marabottini noted this recurrence of the figures of Saint Jerome and Saint Francis in the compositional study for a Crucifixion (n. 1766 S). See Marabottini 182.

15. On the open book of Saint Jerome in the Torrigiani altarpiece, a passage of text by the saint is discernible. It concludes with the identification of the saint, "Santo Jeronimo", providing a perfect example of Borromeo's instruction to artists to clearly identify sacred figures. The composition and several figural motifs were inspired by two of Andrea del Sarto's paintings, the Gambassi Madonna and Child in Glory with Saints of c.1528 (fig. 38) and the Disputation over the Trinity of c.1517 (fig. 47). Empoli adopted the general composition and, more specifically, the figural arrangement of the Madonna and Child from Sarto's Gambassi Madonna and Child with Saints. From the Disputation he seems to have been inspired by the arrangement of saints and particularly used the pose of Sarto's Saint Francis for his Saint Dominic. The particular arrangement of the Virgin and Child depicted in the Torrigiani Altarpiece will reappear at least twice in future projects. in the Madonna and Child
presently in the Leonini Collection in Florence, and in the background of the Saint Eligius and King Clodoveo in the Uffizi. They are just a few examples of Empoli’s habit of re-using his own motifs, often with little or no variations, in subsequent commissions. This practice relates to his graphic work as well. The silvery tonality evident in the Torrigiani Altarpiece can be seen in some of Sarto’s paintings as well, most notably in his Madonna della Scala (fig. 66) and in his Disputation over the Trinity where Sarto enlivens the silver and earth tones that dominate the composition with vibrant reds. Empoli followed this color scheme in the 1592 painting although with less intensity. His representations of the Madonna and Child never relinquished a dependency on those by Andrea del Sarto.

16. No extant painting survives for which the compositional study of the Virgin and Child with Saints Stephen and Jerome was executed. Forlani dates it generally, to Empoli’s youthful period. Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli, cat. no. 6, 17.

17. I find the title, Immaculate Conception acceptable for this painting. Adolfo Venturi, however, re-named the work, The Exaltation of Mary without an explanation for the change. (A. Venturi, IX, 666.) Antonio Paolucci supported this title, arguing that the verses from Dante’s Paradiso which inspired the subject more aptly suited it. He stated that the original title of the Immaculate Conception was "too partial". (Antonio Paolucci, Le Opere d’Arte, in la Communita Cristiana Fiorentina e Toscana nella dialettica religiosa del Cinquecento, exh. cat. (1980) 210 - 211.) Citing Paolucci’s arguments, Marabottini agreed with him. (A. Marabottini 55.)

18. Marabottini 51.

19. de Vries 378.


21. In his guidebook of 1762, Richa wrote that this is an image of a miracle: the Madonna of the Impruneta since she is depicted without Jesus. "...opera lodatissimo di Jacopo d'Empoli, il quale vi effigio un miracolo, e credo io della Madonna dell'Impruneta, poiche la Vergine e dipinta senza il Bambino Gesu." Richa, vol. X, 318 - 319.

22. The woman's right arm is too long for her body and her sleeve appears almost painted on the skin. It is too cylindrical to mimic the natural representation of the anatomy successfully.
23. Cigoli shows the same pose, almost identical in fact, as that taken by the woman in Empoli's *Madonna of Mercy* in his c.1594 *Heraclitus Carrying the Cross*. Since he shared a studio with Empoli earlier, could this figure have resulted from shared models? One also sees other similarities between Empoli's painting and Cigoli's *Heraclitus...* The pose of Empoli's Madonna is similar to the pose of Cigoli's bishop. Both are centrally located with their right arm raised. The figure of Empoli's demon strikes the same pose as the bystander on the right of Cigoli's composition of which we see only the shoulder and head. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how both figures tilt their heads back over their right shoulders which pivot toward the right edge of the composition. The treatment of light is similar in both paintings. The backs of the figures in the left foregrounds are lit. A flash of light illuminates the central figures and the backgrounds are steeped in darkness. Empoli most likely influenced Cigoli unless one agrees with Bianchini's suggestion that Empoli's painting must have been executed later than the date on the windmill, in which case, Empoli would have taken his cues from Cigoli's work. (Bianchini, *Il Seicento fiorentino*, vol. 3, 68.)

24. The literature which discusses this painting inevitably makes reference to the dramatic chiaroscuro and the violent expression of the small child's face. Some scholars suggest that this is evidence of Empoli's awareness, at an early date in his career, of the art of Caravaggio and his followers. Mina Gregori believes that the child derives from Empoli's observations of Raphael's possessed boy in his *Transfiguration*. (M. Gregori, *il Seicento fiorentino*, vol. I, 23.) Empoli may have known of Raphael's painting through a print. The expression of the boy, that is the typology of his face, strikes a harmonious chord with Caravaggio's pained or frightened adolescent faces. Raphael's figure shows an expression of madness or obsession respective to the iconography, whereas, the vehemence of Empoli's figure may derive more from the expressive types of Caravaggio. That the taste for the Venetian manner of light and color and an interest in naturalism paved the way for the popularity of Caravagesque works, is probable. Empoli's treatment of light here is the result of a continuation in his experiments in the pictorial potential of light and shadow.

25. This drawing appeared at a sale at Christies, Rome Nov. 12, 1974, sales cat. no. 82, 63.

26. This is cited in Marabottini, 60. The passage is taken from Borghini's *Il Riposo*, 1584, 191.

27. See Poirier 60.

29. Bianchini reported from the Ricordi di Archivio of the monastery of Saint Peter Martyr that Empoli was given the commission for a Virgin with Saints Hyacinth, Mary Magdalen, Catherine and Peter Martyr in December of 1594. This painting was first destined to hang in the monk's choir. But, when the confessor of the convent decided to hang the painting over an altar in the church, Empoli had to conceive of the painting in larger dimensions to accommodate the new location. That there are two paintings, one with Saint Peter Martyr and one without this figure, suggests that one was intended as the first commissioned painting and the other was executed for the new location. Yet neither one depicts the number of saints required in the original contractual arrangements. Therefore, the specific dates of execution of the two extant paintings and the question of which one was completed first remains problematic. Bianchini expressed her opinion as, "The first [painting], already begun, Jacopo finished 'for himself and for his workshop'...for when there would come some opportunity for other convents. That the painting [today] in Santa Maria Novella was that destined for the monk's choir of Saint Peter Martyr seems to me a well-enough founded hypothesis." (Bianchini, Paradigma 118.)

30. Saint Hyacinth was born in Poland in 1185 and died in 1257. While in Rome accompanying his uncle who was a Bishop himself, Hyacinth became one of the first members of the Dominican order. His missionary work in Poland earned him his canonization in 1594 conferred by Pope Clement VIII. (See the Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 7, 391) The commissions given to Empoli and Ligozzi in the same year of 1594 that depict the saint must have been ordered to commemorate his canonization (see note 33).

31. There are several studies for this project for which photographs were unavailable to me. A study for an angel is reported by Marabottini for sale in Munich (Marabottini 192.) Two other studies for the figure of Saint Hyacinth are preserved in the Uffizi. A study (n. 955 F) executed in black chalk with white highlights and a detail of the left hand in the upper right corner in red chalk on paper prepared with a rose-tinted wash depicts the tonsured saint kneeling with his arms outspread. Empoli seems to have had difficulty with the pose of the figure's left hand as it extends from the cuff of the sleeve. Yet, this drawing shows the closest proximity of the arrangement of the garment to that painted in the final version. The other figure study (n. 1738 S) shows Empoli now struggling with the pose of the right hand as it emerges from the cuff.

32. This element of the composition is paralleled in the composition for the apparato study of Cosimo I Receiving the Spanish Ambassadors of 1598.
33. Ligozzi's painting of the same subject, executed in 1594 for San Marco, depicts the Virgin wearing a crown and carrying a sceptre. (See fig. 86.)

34. One does not see these attributes depicted in any of the works reproduced here from Venetian or Bolognese examples of this theme.

35. Marabottini noticed that this painting is not mentioned by Baldinucci, and was not discovered until a citation in a catalog of 1719 reported it in a private collection in Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck. From there it was taken to Vienna where it was listed in a 1783 catalog of the Imperial Gallery. Marabottini also suggests that the painting may have been sent to a member of the Hapsburg family as a gift [perhaps from the Medici], and that this may explain the silence in the primary sources whose authors may never have had the opportunity to see the work. The subject derives from Daniel 13. (See Marabottini 199 - 201.)

36. The painting is signed and dated 1599 on the bottom right. Several sources have noted the name and stemma of the Cepperello family inscribed on the bench of the Virgin. (Marabottini 194.) The work was executed for the Chiesa Nuova of Pontedera.


38. The date for this painting was cited as 1603 in the literature published previously to Marabottini's monograph. Marabottini found the date of 1609 inscribed on the binding of the Virgin's prayer book resting on her prie-dieu. (See Marabottini 92.) The painting was commissioned by Alessio Strozzi for his newly renovated family chapel in Santa Trinita.

39. I do not accept the study for the Annunciata, Uffizi n. 3425 F, as attributable to Empoli. See the discussion of this drawing in Chapter Four.

40. Anna Forlani noted similarities between the drawing for Saint Barbara (Uffizi n. 918 F) and the drawings of the female maidservants for the Susanna at her Bath. She stated that these figure studies for both projects share affinities with the manner of Empoli's Sienese contemporaries, Casolani in particular, and that the sweetness of the forms are "Barocciesque" in character. (See A. Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli cat.no. 20, 25.)

41. Marabottini 76.
42. One can only speculate as to her absence. If she had died, this may have been the reason to commission a second version.

43. This is the painting to which the Grandduke Cosimo referred as his "dama", as reported first by Zaballi. (See Battelli 207.) An inscription reading, "Jacopo di Chimenti d(a) Empoli 1606", located on a rock near the kneeling boatman was discovered by Marabottini. (Marabottini 213.)

44. See Olszewski 39.

45. Cigoli's study was executed in preparation for his (lost) Assumption of the Virgin.

46. The sketch for the figure of Saint Peter (Uffizi n. 3463) that Marabottini connected with the Usimbardi Delivery of the Keys does not, in fact, belong to that project. Instead it should be considered as a preliminary study for a Madonna and Child with Saints Peter and Paul for which no painting survives. A compositional study in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (n. 62.130.1) documents the project. With the exception of the position of the head, the Uffizi study corresponds exactly to the Met composition.

47. Note the similar manner of draftsmanship executed for the contemporaneous figure of Gabriel (Oxford, Christ Church n. 0562) for the 1609 Sta. Trinità Annunciation.

48. de Vries stated that the model for Empoli's Sermon of the Baptist was Passignano's painting of the same subject in San Michele Visdomini. (de Vries 362.)

49. That Empoli continued to seek inspiration from Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, and Bronzino is evident in the Supper at Emmaus. Note the similarity of poses, for example, in the figure seated to the left who begins to rise from his stool with the figure on the far left of Andrea del Sarto's Last Supper (fig. 130) which ultimately derives from Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. (The same figure, only reversed in position, appears decades earlier in Empoli's only known fresco, the Sermon of the Mount for the Certosa.) Empoli has learned his lessons from Pontormo and Bronzino in the rendering of solid volumetric form unobscured by engulfing shadows. And, although not expressive of dramatic tension, his supreme sense of color and his description of liquid light and shadows can be seen as a response to, and synthesis of, his observations of Venetian art in general and, more directly, the achievements of Cigoli and Passignano.

51. The setting Empoli has created for this painting suggests to me the Via dei Servi in Florence.

52. Bianchini cited information from archival documents of the *Compagnia* of Saint Eligius dating 19 July 1608 stating that the commission was first given to Cigoli. A drawing, brought to my attention by Professor Miles Chappell, records Cigoli’s ideas for this project which he never completed. (See fig. 133) A subsequent document from the *Compagnia* records that on the date of 25 June 1614, in honor of the festival of Saint Eligius a painting of a “Miracle of the Saint” by the hand of Jacopo da Empoli was placed on the altar of the *Compagnia*. (See Bianchini, *Paradigma* 134.)

53. Ligozzi’s scientific studies might have influenced Empoli as well.

54. Artemisia Gentileschi was reported to have been in Florence in 1614 and payments to her were recorded from 1618 until 1620 in the Guardaroba Medicea (see Marabottini 107).

55. Baldinucci referred to this work by Empoli as, “the most beautiful panel by his hand” (*Notizie*, vol. 3, 12).

56. Edward Olszewski has observed that the placement of the throne and angels in Empoli’s *Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans* echoes Michelangelo’s prophets in the Sistine Ceiling and describes the Ark of the Covenant from which the voice of God is heard above the head of Saint Yves.

57. Marabottini admitted to not having seen this drawing and, therefore, could not make a sound judgment as to its correct attribution to Empoli. (Marabottini, 239.) Anna Petrioli Tofani doubted its attribution, suggesting that perhaps it is a copy after the completed painting. Spear and Feinberg both believe it to be executed as the final graphic exercise prior to the execution of the painting. (Richard E. Spear, "Jacopo da Empoli’s Saint Ivo with Widows and Orphans", *Allen Memorial Museum Bulletin, XXX*, (1972) 21; L. Feinberg, *Studio to Studiolo: Florentine Draftsmanship Under the First Medici Granddukes*, exh. cat. (1991) 104.

58. See Chapter 4.

59. This sheet will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
60. One source from which Empoli might have observed new trends from Bologna would have been through his interactions with Cigoli or Rosselli, who returned from Rome having learned lessons from the Bolognese.

61. In 1617 Cosimo II ordered a portrait of the Grandduchess from Caracciolo, a follower of Caravaggio from Naples, rather than commissioning a Florentine.

62. Compare Empoli’s composition of the Baptism of Christ with that of Maso da San Friano (fig. 152). One can see that, although both compositions follow the traditional arrangement of the figures with Christ and the Baptist exhibiting stock gestures, Empoli’s approach reveals none of his maniera training. The more refined and elegant poses and drapery arrangements of Maso’s figures have been replaced, in Empoli’s painting, with figures who assume natural attitudes deriving from his study of the model from life. Note the study in the Uffizi, n. 9341 F, for the figure of Christ (fig. 153). It is clear from this drawing that Empoli posed a studio member in the attitude of Christ so that he could render the figure according to nature.
CHAPTER FOUR

MEDIA, TECHNIQUE AND WORKSHOP PRACTICE

One sees by the hand of Empoli an infinite number of drawings in red chalk of the nude from nature and also clothed and others on colored paper touched most fiercely with powerful contours.¹

Jacopo da Empoli's preferred materials for his drawings were the traditional Florentine media for disegno: red and black chalk, most often used independently of each other for figure studies, and pen and ink wash for compositional studies. While most of his compositional studies were executed on white paper, he more often preferred paper prepared with a tinted ground on which to render studies of draped figures in chalk.

COLORED PAPERS

Empoli used papers prepared with a colored ground more consistently throughout his career than did his contemporaries. In a sense, this is a curious observation since Empoli did not exploit their chromatic potential to the degree that many other Florentine artists of his day did. The graphic and painterly works by Cigoli, Passignano, and Cristofano Allori, for example, show far greater debts to the achievements of the Venetian artists and of Barocci than Empoli's. Yet he used a
wide variety of tints to prepare the paper before executing the figure.\textsuperscript{2}

This practice can be understood when one compares the preliminary drawing with the painting for which it was intended. The tint of the ground almost invariably corresponds to the tint of color that is dominant in the figure's garment in the painting. And this, of course, also explains why Empoli used prepared paper primarily for draped figure studies while its use for other types of studies are relatively rare.\textsuperscript{3} Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate Empoli's use of prepared papers. Note the choice of a wine tint for the ground in the study of the seated male figure (Uffizi n. 9369 F) and compare this to the figure in the Pomino Supper at Emmaus for which it was intended. (See figs. 127 and 157.) The figure wears a red tunic with golden sleeves. A similar hue was used for the study of the figure of Christ (Uffizi n. 9402 F) for the Calling of Saint Peter since Christ's cloak was destined to be a tint of red (fig. 116). The numerous studies of monks, often specifically of Saint Francis, are almost consistently sketched on paper tinted in brown washes approximating the color of the monks' sack-cloth. For example, a figure study for which there is no extant painting (fig. 158), is the drawing in the Uffizi of the figure of Saint Francis holding a cross in his left hand (Uffizi n. 942 F). The study is executed in black chalk with white highlights on brown prepared paper. The choice of the brown tint coincides with the brown hue of the sack-cloth garment worn by the monk. It should be noted that Empoli preferred earth tones of greys and browns more often than other hues with which to prepare his surfaces. In this respect, he follows the practice of Fra
Bartolommeo. There are instances, also, when Empoli chose a value that would correspond to the tonality of the painting. Empoli's compositional drawing for the Calling of Saint Peter (Uffizi n. 9387 F) represents one of his rare uses of a colored ground for this type of study (fig. 117). Yet his selection of a golden yellow tonality that pervades the entire study corresponds to the tonality of the sun-drenched shore where Christ called Peter from his fishing boat. Many of the sketches for the Madonna of Mercy were executed on grey tinted paper, a somber neutral tone was perhaps chosen in anticipation of the dark, gloomy tonality of the painting.

Empoli used blue paper or paper tinted with a blue wash for several studies, although not with such frequency that would show a particular preference by him for this color. Nor does there appear to be any specific chromatic relationship between the use of this colored paper with the image studied and its final appearance in the painting. A sketch for the kneeling maidservant in the Susanna at the Bath of 1600 (fig. 87) is drawn on paper tinted with a rose wash which is close to the shade of red chosen for her garment in the painting. It must be noted that the companion study for the standing maidservant (fig. 89) was executed on blue paper which bears no relation to the rose and gold hues of the woman's garment seen in the painting. Empoli preferred to use white paper to render the figure studies in chalk. He also preferred white paper for compositional studies in pen and wash, yet an occasional nude or compositional study will appear on blue paper which, with few exceptions, has no apparent connection to the tonality of the intended altarpiece. Perhaps he used the
paper because it was easily attainable or because he observed its use among his mentor and colleagues. Blue paper was favored by Santi di Tito, and frequently used by his student, Cigoli. Both of these artists combined the color of the paper with bistre ink and wash in a painterly handling of the medium that exploited the chromatic potential of the materials and more closely approximated the appearance of a painting.  

If Empoli was not interested in using color for expressive purposes, he was certainly attempting to attain a greater verismilitude in the study of the figure destined for the altarpiece. Yet rarely did he use the color of the ground as a value in his figure study. It most often served as a flat colored surface upon which to study the drapery forms. As such, it undercores Empoli's aesthetic sensibility for the preeminence of disegno rather than colore to define form.

Among Empoli's drawings are approximately a dozen studies executed on prepared surfaces that have been washed over previous sketches still visible to the eye. These earlier sketches have no apparent connections to subjects of the later drawings. For example, a drawing in Cleveland depicting two views of a statuette of a nude woman (CMA 62.202) appears over an earlier sketch of a young male's nude upper torso (fig. 159). Empoli's practice of re-using a sheet of paper for a later study continued throughout his career as one can see from a study of two putti for the Madonna and Child with Saints for the Palagi Chapel in SS. Annunziata of 1628. These figures were drawn over a previous sketch of an architectural design, probably
for the altar over which Empoli’s painting would hang, although it does not seem to correspond in every detail with the Palagi Chapel in SS. Annunziata.

When the earlier sketch was rendered in red chalk, the mixing of the wash to cover the surface of the sheet combined with the chalk resulted in a muddy tint that diminished the quality of the drawing, but must have served its purpose well enough for the artist.  

BLACK CHALK

Empoli’s preference for black chalk to render studies of the draped figure, the head, and occasionally the nude remained consistent throughout his career. Early in his life, his graphic approach was characterized with black chalk delineating the contours of the figure as lines of consistent pressure defining the silhouette of the clothed or nude body. Shadows were sparsely hatched with diagonal strokes of the chalk. A sheet in the Uffizi (n. 3430) of a nude woman tied to a pole, executed in black chalk on grey paper illustrates Empoli’s immature explorations of the medium, yet, demonstrates the fundamental aspects of both his approach to the conception of the human form and his reliance on line as the primary element to render form, light and shadow (fig. 160). Identified by Forlani-Tempesti as one of Empoli’s earliest extant drawings, the youthfulness of the study is apparent in the unsophisticated manner in which he has cast the pole of the tree trunk in shadow.  

Strokes of black chalk zig-zag down the right side of the pole bisecting the form in a monotonous
fashion. The figure is similarly cast in shadow. Diagonal strokes of the chalk are applied from her hip to her ankles with a regularity that does not respond to the musculature of the body and, instead, seems to coalesce with the pole to which she is tied. A thick continuous contour line emphatically defines the silhouette of her body without responding to the play of light and shadow. Her facial features are merely noted with short strokes of chalk. Although this study lacks the sophistication of a mature hand, it demonstrates many elements of Empoli's mature style of draftsmanship: the continuous contour line that defines the volumetric form of the body, the diagonal hatching of the chalk to define shadows, the abbreviated indications of facial features.

As Empoli gained confidence in the handling of the medium and learned from his observations of the graphic work of the early cinquecento masters and from his contemporaries, his drawings in black chalk resulted in his most successful graphic endeavors. A beautiful study in the Uffizi (n. 932 F) for which no painting has yet been identified depicts a partially nude male figure (fig. 161). Executed in black chalk and heightened in white on golden brown tinted paper, the study demonstrates how far Empoli's skill in the use of the medium had come since the sketch of the Woman Tied to a Pole. While the silhouette of the figure is clearly rendered with a continuous line of black chalk, the line now responds to the play of light and shadow over the figure. Where the figure is illuminated in light, the line thins and fades in response. Where the body is cast in shadow, the line becomes thicker and more
emphatic as Empoli applied more pressure to the stroke. The shadows are diagonally hatched to cast the musculature in relief. Yet, as is typical of Empoli's description of the nude form, the anatomy of the figure is only summarily rendered in light and shadow. A greater sophistication in the handling of the chalk to define shadows is evident in the soft lines of hatching which, with the touches of white heightening, more sensitively characterize the plasticity of the human form. Long parallel strokes of chalk are externally hatched around the body to separate the figure from the background plane. 9

Any number of drawings of the human figure can serve to demonstrate Empoli's consistent handling of black chalk to render this subject. In nearly every instance, he creates shadows with parallel strokes of chalk, while exhibiting no interest in the use of cross-hatching. Even as his graphic manner became more loose and open in his later works, line is the dominant element that defines form. As Empoli became more interested in characterizing the surface description of his subjects, his handling of black chalk becomes more muted or blended in the rendering of shadows, and more responsive to the play of light in order to describe surface texture with greater precision.

Many of Empoli's drawings appear to have been rendered in charcoal rather than black chalk. The soft friable quality of the line betrays the use of this medium. He depended on it more frequently in his late graphic work which makes sense because his drawing style was more spontaneous and open in the rendering of form,
and charcoal readily lends itself to this type of execution. Compare, for example, the more precise handling of the black chalk in articulating line and shadow in the study for the figure of Saint Hyacinth (fig. 78) with the more open and loose treatment of line and shadow that defines the figure of Nicolas of Bari (fig. 154) for the Madonna and Child with Saints of 1628.

RED CHALK

Studies in red chalk are fewer in number in Empoli’s known graphic oeuvre than those in black chalk. Yet his studies of the nude show that he preferred not black but red chalk on white paper for this type of study. His preference for red chalk must have derived from the fact that the warm earthy color of the chalk more approximates the warm tint of the skin. As will be discussed further in this chapter, Empoli rendered the nude form with an economy of means that does little to demonstrate, here, his skill in this medium as exhibited in his mature studies of the draped figure.

Empoli’s development of the use of red chalk can be seen by comparing a youthful work, the Madonna and Child (fig. 35) for which no painting is extant, with a work that was probably executed in the second or third decade of the seventeenth century, the Lute Player (Rijksmuseum, n. 1948:357, fig. 162). Executed on unbleached paper, the earlier drawing demonstrates the influence of both Maso da San Friano and of Pontormo in a manner that Empoli has not yet synthesized into a
coherent style that is his own. His immaturity is evident in the manner in which the
Child's leg is fused with the drapery of the Virgin and in the confusing jumble of lines
that attempt to describe the folds of Her garment. He used the red chalk medium
without understanding its inherent potential for chromatic effects. Instead, he handled
it in the same manner as he did black chalk, that is, in an aggressively linear fashion.
The lack of a clear and logical definition of light and shadow on the Virgin's garment
as it responds to Her seated posture is attributable, in part, to Empoli's observation of
the flickering effects of light and shadow typical of Maso's graphic manner. It is also
attributable to his lack of experience in the handling of the medium.

The Lute Player, which was probably drawn from life as he observed the
figure in the act of playing the instrument, shows his maturity in the handling of the
red chalk and his greater skill as a graphic artist in general. The drawing also
demonstrates that Empoli had grasped an understanding of the medium's potential for
rendering form with more delicate line and describing the play of light and shadow
with more pictorial expressiveness. Rather than defining shadows with aggressive
diagonal strokes of the chalk, Empoli modelled form with more blended passages of
red chalk touched to the surface of the sheet.

By studying the drawings of his contemporaries, Empoli would not only have
had the opportunity to learn from their handling of red chalk, but he would have
observed in their work the influences of Barocci and the artists of the Veneto. His
continuing admiration for the graphic work of Pontormo and Andrea del Sarto
contributed, as well, to his success with the medium.\textsuperscript{11}

**BLACK AND RED CHALKS**

The use of both red and black chalk on the same sheet, while not new to
Empoli’s generation, became a more widespread practice by the draftsmen of the
seventeenth century. In the *Vocabulario Toscano Dell’Arte Disegno* of 1681,
Baldinucci discussed the use of black and red chalk on tinted or white paper to perfect
the head in a natural manner ("al naturale") and the figure "tanto vaghe" so that they
appeared colored. He praised Cristofano Allori, Andrea Commodi, and Cristofano
Roncalli for their skill in the combined use of red and black chalks so that their
drawings seemed like paintings.\textsuperscript{12}

The appearance of such mixed media is rare in Empoli’s graphic work. Two
studies (Uffizi nos. 9376 F and 9377 F) executed for either a *Transfiguration* or an
*Agony in the Garden* depict draped sleeping figures whose tunic, hands and face are
rendered in red chalk while the cloak, hair and background strokes are rendered in
black chalk (figs. 163 and 164).\textsuperscript{13} There are also areas within these drawings where
Empoli overlaid one color on the other. The left leg of the figure from Uffizi n. 9376,
for example, is drawn and shaded with both red and black chalks. Neither of these
drawings is particularly pleasing.

A more successful use of red and black chalks appears in a study for the
*Madonna in Glory* of 1612 (San Benedetto Bianco, fig. 164). Although known to me
only from a photograph, the drawing appears to be a very polished study by the hand of Empoli.¹⁴ The Virgin's dress, head, and hands are rendered in red chalk as is the nude cherub in the right corner of the sheet. The cloak of the Virgin and the narrow band of cloth that encircles the cherub are rendered in black chalk. The media of red and black chalks were chosen by Empoli for their ability to separate with greater clarity the expanse of material of the Virgin's cloak from her garment underneath, rather than for the capability of adding chromatic expression to the drawing with the intent to approximate the painterly expression of the figure in the altarpiece.

INK AND WASH

Empoli used pen and wash almost exclusively for his compositional studies, a practice that was customary within the Florentine tradition of disegno.¹⁵ He also preferred this medium for his studies of contemporary figures from life dressed in contemporary clothes where he could more spontaneously and swiftly capture the pose, proportion and garment of the figure. The use of ink and wash by him for draped or nude figure drawings that were executed in preparation for altarpieces is exceptional in his graphic oeuvre.¹⁶ His preference for the chalk medium rather than ink with which to execute draped figure studies is typical of Florentine workshop practice.¹⁷ The delineation of form by means of long, fluid and continuous contour lines in ink is analogous to the manner in which he handled chalk to describe form. Empoli layered passages of wash in clear and diluted tints of grey or bistre and, only
rarely, blue ink. His compositional studies that represent the final appearance of the altarpiece with few changes, are more carefully executed in ink and wash. Here it is evident that Empoli strove to control the application of wash so that it more precisely modelled the shadows of the draperies and elements of the setting without obscuring form (fig. 112). Thin and delicate lines of ink are touched to the paper with a deliberateness that reveals Empoli's intent to cautiously delineate the silhouette of the figure and the arrangement of drapery in clear articulated folds of the material. Even without the wash, the definition of volumetric form would be easily legible. The wash, therefore, plays a superfluous role in the description of the content, while indicating the direction of the source of light and its ensuing shadows. In neither the sketches of contemporary figures nor in the compositional studies does the diagonal hatching of lines appear to describe shadow or characterize surface texture as one finds in Empoli's black or red chalk studies (fig. 167). Empoli relied on line and wash alone without working into the drawing with the pen to hatch lines of shadow for greater relief.

Empoli's manner of handling ink and wash was more spontaneous in his compositional studies that were executed relatively early in the preparatory process as working drawings. These can be considered a type of compositional pensiero in their lively execution of ink and wash and in the manner in which the pictorial elements of the composition are summarily described (fig. 77). As such the pensieri call to mind the more painterly handling of the medium by Cigoli. Yet, although Empoli must
have learned from Cigoli's handling the more painterly application of ink and wash, he
does not exhibit in his compositional sketches the chromatic power of Cigoli's work.
Empoli is not as daring in the use of bold passages of wash which envelop portions of
the imagery in shadow.

The compositional study for the San Remigio Immaculate Conception (fig. 12) was rejected in favor of a more conservative one for the Immaculate Conception, it represents a pivotal work in Empoli's handling of the medium of pen and wash. Prior to this project of c. 1591, Empoli exhibited a far more conservative and tentative approach to rendering in pen and wash. This earlier handling may be observed in the compositional study in the (Uffizi, n. 915 F, fig. 64) which depicts the Virgin and Child seated on a crescent moon and appearing as a vision to Saints Stephen and Lawrence. One can almost sense the manner in which Empoli slowly and deliberately drew the long thin lines of ink that enclose the silhouettes of the figures. The regularity of the ink line contributes to the static appearance of this composition as much as the drawing's rigid symmetry in the arrangement and posture of the figures. Only the subtle layers of wash, despite the careful touch of the brush to the sheet, and the delicate thinness of the line impart to the drawing an energy and liveliness that save it from monotony.

Empoli had assimilated the lessons learned from his observations of the pictorial and poetic expressiveness of light and shadow achieved by the Venetians and manifested in his study for the composition for the San Remigio Immaculate
**Conception.** Subsequently, his handling of ink and wash became more spontaneously executed. The treatment of line and wash, while never sacrificing clarity of form for pictorial effects, became more open and loose. This is readily apparent in the compositional study depicting the *Madonna in Glory* for San Benedetto Bianco of 1612 (Albertina, inv. 662). (See fig. 168.)

**SUBJECTS**

That more than four hundred drawings are attributed to Empoli suggests that he was as obsessed with the practice of drawing as was his older contemporary Santi di Tito. The entire corpus of his drawings consists of figures studies in one form or another. Conspicuously absent are renderings of architecture, decorative elements, plants or animals. There are no studies for the numerous still life elements that appear in his altarpieces, and likewise, there are none for the still lifes he executed in the third decade of the seventeenth century.

Santi's advice to the young artists of the late Cinquecento to draw from nature found in Empoli a sympathetic response that would prevail throughout his career. His prolific number of figure studies depicting the nobleman, the merchant and the commoner of Florence, reflect his interest in faithfully characterizing the citizens who populated his world. Some of these figures studies were destined to be used for spectators or as participants in the religious narrative depicted. Others seem to have served as graphic studies for his own enjoyment and improvement, or as examples
executed for the benefit of his students. Empoli's habit of drawing from nature is also expressed in his practice of using a youth or *garzone* from his studio to assume the pose of a figure intended for the altarpiece. On these sheets he studied not only the correctness of the form but the plausibility of the pose itself for its function in the composition. Among the extant drawings for the *Delivery of the Keys to Saint Peter* is a study of a *garzone* (fig. 122) who assumes the pose intended for the figure of Saint Peter. The pose and the arrangement of folds of the sleeves appear nearly identical to the pose and sleeves of the kneeling Saint Peter in the compositional study for the altarpiece (fig. 121). Empoli selected these elements, transferred them to the figure of the Apostle, and added the more classical garment while re-casting the features of the face as one of a more elderly countenance.

The plebeian inhabitants of the streets of Florence provided Empoli with another source of figural types for his altarpieces. One of his most notable sheets depicts an old woman dressed in peasant clothing supporting her frail body with a staff in her right hand while her left hand is outstretched in front of her (fig. 27). Although the sheet was executed in preparation for the figure of St. Anne in the *Presentation in the Temple*, one might otherwise assume that Empoli had depicted a humble beggar.

Scattered among the hundreds of sheets of his graphic work are studies of classically draped figures and contemporary noblemen. Some of these studies were executed for paintings, while others appear to have been studio exercises. Of the
latter type, there are numerous examples of ink and wash drawings depicting fellow
members of the studio or perhaps acquaintances of the artist who are captured on
paper in the act of drafting, sleeping or posing. The point of view is frequently seen
from below looking up at the figure. This suggests that the same figure may have
simultaneously served as a model for other artists in the studio.

Although Empoli occasionally rendered the figure with the intention of
determining the figure's pose (note the drawing in Christ Church for the figure of
Gabriel, inv. 0562, fig. 97), he more often studied the figure primarily to determine
the design and arrangement of drapery. That there are few instances of pentimenti in
his figure studies attests to his confidence in the rendering of the pose. Yet, the
absence of any visual expression of Empoli's mental corrections in the conception of
the figure's pose also suggests that he was not daring in his composition of the figure.
Although he studied the figure from life using a studio model to accurately render the
proportions of the figure, the attitudes assumed by his figures are most often stock
poses. The traditional stances with rhetorical gestures assumed by sacred and profane
characters of the Christian narrative are those which convey the greatest sense of
dignity and restraint and, therefore, are more compatible with Empoli's artistic
aesthetic than the emotive and dynamic poses assumed, for example, by Cigoli's
figures. Among his repertory of poses, however, are those which reflect the quotidian
actions of more humble characters who play subordinate roles in his altarpieces. The
maidservant with the basket of linens kneeling at the feet of Susanna (fig. 88), the
fisherman (fig. 169) who strains in the boat to witness Christ's calling of Saint Peter (Uffizi n. 3409 F), and the spectators gathered about the rocky outcropping upon which Saint John the Baptist delivers his sermon (fig. 7), are some of the many characters who appear with regularity in Empoli's graphic work and who populate his Christian narratives. They demonstrate the artist's skill in characterizing simple actions from everyday life. These figures enhance the veracity of the sacred events depicted in his altarpieces making the Catholic dogma more accessible to the faithful.

If the sources for his figures derived, for the most part, from the streets of Florence, Empoli's formal models came from the earlier Cinquecento. With regard to both media and technique, Empoli looked to the work of Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo for inspiration and instruction. But he also was aware of the current artistic developments evolving in other centers in Italy, particularly, Rome and Bologna. This awareness also finds expression in his graphic work with regard to his studio methods, his technique and his choice of media.18

NUDE STUDIES

Empoli's rendering of the figure in his style of long, continuous contours is best demonstrated in his studies of the nude. There are few nude figures in Empoli's altarpieces, a fact which satisfied the dictates of the Council of Trent. And those in his graphic work are rendered with little interest in a detailed articulation of musculature. One can argue, however, that Empoli found little need to study the
nude form in detail since the figure would eventually be clothed.

That Empoli used a male model to pose for a female character in his graphic studies is evident from his half-length figure of *Saint Catherine* (Uffizi n. 3444 F) destined to serve two projects - that of the *Saint Catherine in Glory* (fig. 170) originally executed for the church of Santa Caterina in Faenza (fig. 171), and that of the *Madonna in Glory* executed for the Compagnia of San Benedetto Bianco, Florence (fig. 172). The muscled arms and boxy shape of the upper torso make apparent the male gender of the model, and the face lacks feminine expression.

Empoli examined the position of the torso and the arms with the hands held together in prayer. The foot, re-studied below, appears only in the *Saint Catherine* composition. It is not visible in the *Madonna in Glory* painting. The use of a male model to assume the pose for a female figure was common workshop practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with Michelangelo as its most conspicuous practitioner.  

On those infrequent occasions when a nude appears prominently in the composition as one sees in the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* or the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, the preparatory studies reveal Empoli examining the nude body in more detail with regard to the play of light and shadow over the muscle structure yet never with specific attention to muscle articulation. Empoli's study for the nude figure of Isaac (Rome F. C. 125051) reveals a sensitive rendering of value as expressed through line and shadow to describe form (fig. 173). The volumetric form of the torso is made
emphatic in the rendering of light and shadow around the figure's mid-section to articulate his rib cage and abdomen and the swell of the bicep of the left arm. Yet, even this cursory description of the figure's anatomy is more specifically delineated than one finds in those nude studies intended for the clothed or draped figure of the altarpiece.21

Early drawings of the nude show contour lines of uniform thickness which do not respond to the play of light and shadow. Empoli's confidence as a draftsman is expressed in the sureness of the line as it describes the silhouette of the figure, but its uniformity acts as stabilizing force making the figure appear static rather than fluid or moving. In the drawing of the Woman Tied to a Pole (fig. 160), the only liberal treatment of line is observed in the description of the hair arranged on the top of the head with some loosely drawn strands of hair falling free.

This sheet may be compared to the much later study for the figure of Saint Sebastian (fig. 143) whose hands are bound behind his body as are the those of the female tied to the pole. Both sheets depict the human form with only a cursory rendering of the musculature of the body. The poses of the two figures are also remarkably similar, except that the legs of the female figure are crossed at the ankle, causing the figure to seem less graceful. Sebastian's pose is more complex, since Empoli positioned the body in such a way that the bound hands are visible behind the upper torso. He clearly used a studio model in this manner to correctly describe the human form. While the earlier sheet describes the volumes of the figure, here the
body more assuredly occupies three-dimensional space.

Empoli’s maturity as a draftsman reveals itself in the Sebastian study in his rendering of the contour lines. Where the figure is cast in shadow, the line becomes stronger and heavier. In the lighted areas, it thins, nearly disappearing. The line itself is more descriptive of the forms of the figure’s silhouette. The rendering of light and shadow while passing over the forms of Sebastian’s body without highlighting the more subtle nuances of the muscle structure, is nevertheless executed with more sophistication. Empoli articulated the planes of the torso with a more pictorial play of light and shadow than one sees in many of his nude studies. The soft, muted tones of the chalk blend beautifully with the blue tint of the paper, and show a greater skill in utilizing the color of the ground to enhance the articulation of three-dimensional form. Empoli enjoyed a particular success with the rendering of the human form on blue paper throughout his career. This sheet represents one of his most expressive studies of the nude form.

In the Female Martyr study, his youthful inexperience is evident in the systematic diagonal hatching of chalk, slashing the merest hint of shadow down the right side of the figure from forehead to the ankle. The same stroke of the chalk casts the pole to which she is bound in shadow so that flesh and wood appear to be of the same substance. His youthful approach is also evident in the treatment of light and shadow. The axial arrangement of light and shadow over the nude forms of the figure suggests that, rather than observing the play of light and shadow on a live model,
Empoli sketched this aspect of the drawing from his imagination. The light comes from the left, illuminating the three-fourths of the figure which faces this direction. The entire right edge of the figure and the tree to which she is tied is cast in shadow. This presents an awkward and unnatural element in the drawing. The hatched lines of the chalk, monotonously stroked on the figure and the pole, and linearly aligned from the top of the sheet to the bottom, are interrupted only by the diagonal contour line of the figure's left arm tied behind her back. While Empoli demonstrated early in his career, his skill in defining the human body in terms of solid, volumetric form, his ability to render the effects of light and shadow is not yet developed. Yet although the sheet reveals Empoli's inexperience as a draftsman, it predicts his life-long interest in the rendering of volumetric form with clarity and an economy of means. His over-emphatic articulation of the lower torso, rendered with thick line and awkward in its description of the groin area, nonetheless, reveals Empoli's manner of approaching the human form in terms of implicit geometric form. This aspect of his style must be attributable to a significant degree to his study of the graphic work of Jacopo Pontormo.

In neither study is the rendering of the features of the face executed in detail. Both summarily denote the features. The expression is restrained. The female sweetly smiles as if in acceptance of her impending martyrdom. The face of Sebastian looks to the heavens as if anticipating spiritual release from his torment.

A study in the Uffizi (n. 9384 F, fig. 174) for the figure of King David in the
San Miniato *Immaculate Conception* of c.1600 serves to demonstrate the
development of Empoli's ability in the rendering of the nude form, since the date of its
execution probably lies mid-way between the study of the *Woman Tied to a Pole* and
the study of *Saint Sebastian*. Again Empoli apparently used a studio model to pose
for the figure intended for the painting as was his customary practice. One sees,
characteristically, the continuous outline of the black chalk, fairly consistent in
pressure, silhouetting the figure. He has not yet darkened the chalk line more
forcefully to make emphatic the form of the figure in shadow, but he has made the line
is now more wiry than in his earlier studies of the nude, and more descriptive of the
subtle changes in the figure's musculature as it is revealed along the silhouette of the
body. Empoli employed diagonal hatching to render the interior modeling of the
figure, but only the right side of the figure is cast in shadow, corresponding to the
direction of light in the painting. No details of musculature are articulated in chalk
except across the hip and under the right shoulder blade.

The face of King David is completely cast in shadow and the features are
executed in chalk with few lines. Empoli made no attempt to capture the likeness of
the model or suggest the imagined countenance of the king, but the figure appears to
be a youthful man, perhaps in his late teens. Empoli studied the head for this figure of
King David on the same sheet to the right of the nude. Here he rendered the face in
more detail with the purpose of describing the aged features of the Biblical character.
On two other portions of the sheet, Empoli sketched only the outline of the skull and
neck to ascertain the correct pose. The sinuous character of the line in this study shows that Empoli was refining his technique, becoming more aware of the expressive potential of the line to delineate form with energy and movement while sacrificing none of its power to render solid volumes.

An exceptional example of Empoli's skill in rendering the nude form in red chalk is seen in the Uffizi sheet (n. 2015 S) depicting a seated figure (fig. 175) which Marabottini believed to be preparatory for the Supper at Emmaus project of 1609, but is, instead, a study for the figure of Adam in the Immaculate Conception in San Remigio of perhaps a decade earlier (c. 11591). The figure depicted in this sheet sits rigidly as if transfixed by what in the painting will be the vision of Christ appearing in a golden mandorla.

Empoli insistently circumscribed with contour lines the silhouette of the figure, and skillfully handled the soft modeling of the red chalk to articulate the shadows that fall across most of the figure. Rather than defining the musculature of the torso, he cast the figure in shadow to make the brilliantly illuminated portions of the body more emphatic. The treatment of light and shadow is typical of Empoli's manner of describing in generalities the planes of the human form. Only a slightly stronger pressure of the chalk reveals the shoulder blades and the spine. From the buttocks to the knee, there is not even the subtlest nuance of variation in the description of shadow over thigh. The muscle tone of the right arm, however, is more descriptively rendered.
The hair is short and swept up about the face as if by the wind. To the right of the figure study is another rendering of the head and shoulders of the figure which more closely describes Empoli's conception for the appearance of Adam as he is seen in the painting. In this second rendering, the hair falls in thick locks against the neck rather than arranged as if blown away from the face by an insistent breeze. In each instance, the figure's face is in strict profile and brightly lit. The long graceful neckline is characteristic of Empoli's sensuous expression of the contour line to delineate form. This sheet executed in the last decade of the sixteenth century demonstrates Empoli's maturity as a draftsman.

An drawing in red chalk (Uffizi n. 9397 F) for the kneeling executioner in the San Lorenzo Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian of c.1616 (fig. 176) shows that Empoli rendered the musculature of the male nude in more detail than one commonly sees in his other nude studies destined for more fully clothed figures in the altarpiece (fig. 174, for example). Here Empoli explored the anatomy more articulately and quite successfully, although the pose is somewhat awkward in the tentative placement of the left thigh. The soft contour lines of the silhouette are executed in a manner typical of Empoli in the late second and third decades of the seventeenth century. Subtle, muted modulations of red chalk describe the faintest muscle tones of the back. The visible right arm is lean, but articulated in rippling muscles. The legs are not as detailed as the upper torso, yet are successfully delineated and modeled in light and shadow. Empoli's description of the face with its wide-open eyes, a line forming the
grimace of the mouth, and the soft curls of the hair, calls to mind the manner of Pontormo. This sheet exhibits the same level of skill observable in the study of the Lute Player (fig. 162) and of the sketch in red chalk of a reclining figure dressed in contemporary clothes (Uffizi n. 1728 S, fig. 177). From the similar handling of the red chalk medium and the manner in which it describes the musculature of the figure, the study for the executioner appears to have been drawn in the same years as the nude studies for the Drunkenness of Noah.

The consistent lack of attention to the specific description of the figure's anatomy suggests that Empoli had only a surface interest in the rendering of the figure according to nature. Showing no apparent interest in scientific disciplines, to judge from the lack of information regarding this aspect of his training from his biographers, Empoli was not concerned with how the human form was structured. This is also demonstrated by the fact that he never executed the "flayed" nude figure in anatomical detail as did Alessandro Allori and Cigoli. And there are no academic drawings attributed to him that depict even a studio practice of this type of study. Most of the extant studies of the nude are preparatory for a specific commission, and several of the sheets for which no painting is known, appear to have served the same function. (See fig. 178.) His cursory method of describing the nude form departs significantly from the manner of Cigoli who took a great interest in the detailed anatomical rendering of the nude (fig. 179). If this lack of attention to the specificity of musculature lends visible evidence to Baldinucci's implications that Empoli was lazy,
one must consider that he studied the nude primarily for the purpose of establishing
the pose of the figure. 34

DRAPED FIGURE STUDIES

Empoli's conception of classical dress was conventional: a cloak worn over a
simple tunic and arranged in a manner that adds weight and volume to the appearance
of the figure. Broad planes of cloth envelop the torso emphasizing the cylindrical
form of the body, while falling to the ground in rhythmic plumb-lines that firmly root
the figure to the earth. Observe, for example the beautiful drawing in the Uffizi of the
figure of Christ executed in preparation for the Calling of Saint Peter (fig. 116). The
figure is rendered in black chalk with white highlights on wine-tinted paper. While
blended diagonal strokes of chalk define soft shadows, powerful lines of chalk
delineate the planes of drapery masses and gathering of folds as they respond to the
figure beneath. The folds of the cuff of the sleeve seem to emerge from a cube of
drapery folds which demonstrate a sense of geometry that has been consistent
throughout Empoli's career. Such a conception of drapery emphasizes the volumetric
structure of the figure as it exists in three-dimensional space. Yet despite the gentle
rhythmic arrangement of folds, the dominant vertical rhythms and the weightiness of
the fabric prevent even the implication of movement. Therefore, this manner of
rendering the draped figure plays a significant role in creating the expression of
timeless, spiritual characters who enact the fundamental truths of Christian theology.
What is articulated in the drawing, in this respect, is translated into paint, as one observes in the voluminous arrangement of cloth that hangs over the shoulder of Saint Thomas in the compositional study for The Doubting of Saint Thomas (fig. 104). In the painting, the dominant orange hue of Saint Thomas' cloak underscores the weightiness of the material. Still, in this particular composition, Empoli must have had in mind the idea of creating a symbolic visual contrast between Thomas and Christ. The depiction of Thomas as nearly swallowed up in the yards of cloth symbolize his guarded and apprehensive nature, while the nude upper torso of Christ, revealed by the fall of drapery from His shoulder implies, by contrast, His openness and trust. The rhythmical folds of golden fabric cascading from His shoulder to His feet create a more harmonious arrangement of cloth mirroring His divine nature. The heavy cloak worn by the doubting saint suggests he carries his doubt as though a burden.

Empoli synthesized the lessons learned from the art of Andrea del Sarto and Fra Bartolommeo in his conception of the classical tunic and cloak worn by the biblical male and female figures that he studied in his graphic work and which, subsequently, appear in his religious altarpieces. It is from Sarto that Empoli conceived of the drapery in terms of voluminous swaths of material. These clothe the figure in great arcs around the torso as folds of fabric in the forms of brilliantly lit swells and densely shaded hollows. For Empoli's purposes, this conception of drapery allowed him to convey a greater sense of palpability and three-dimensional form. But
whereas Sarto reveled in the rendering of a multitude of shimmering facets in the fall of drapery over the figure (figs. 182 and 42), Empoli strove to create simple, rhythmical folds that responded in a more natural way to the human form beneath.

Fra Bartolommeo's drawings and paintings work offered Empoli a model for his conception of the draped figure. Like the majority of Empoli's draped figure studies, those by Fra Bartolommeo are executed in black chalk or charcoal on paper prepared in washes of brown, gray or golden yellow. Figures whose gestures and poses express dignified, restrained piety and devotion, are clothed in classical apparel which is arranged over the human form in simple, weighty folds that respond in a natural way to the laws of gravity. This must have struck a sympathetic chord in Empoli's aesthetic sensibilities. Compare, for example, Fra Bartolommeo's study of Saint Peter (Rotterdam Vol. M 128 verso) with Empoli's study for Saint Thomas (Uffizi 957 F). (See figs. 183 and 184.) Both are executed in black chalk, highlighted in white on gray prepared paper. Saint Peter and Saint Thomas are each clothed in a simple tunic over which is worn a cloak. The great expanse of material falls from the shoulders over the planes of the body in broad arcs responding to the pose of the figure beneath without the slightest artifice in articulation of the folds of cloth. Yet, whereas Fra Bartolommeo's rendering is more tonal in approach to the articulation of light and shadow, and expressive of a more painterly handling of the graphic medium, Empoli's manner is characteristically linear. In this respect Empoli's style is more analogous to the graphic manner of Pontormo and, to an even greater degree, the
manner of his older contemporary, Poccetti. (See fig. 185.)

Empoli executed his study of a seated draped figure holding a book in his left hand and gesturing with his right in preparation for the Trinity with Four Evangelists and Saints Lucy and Charles Borromeo, c. 1612, in San Bartolommeo, Prato (figs. 186 and 187). This beautiful sheet (Uffizi n. 16074 F) reveals Empoli’s mature manner in rendering the draped figure. He executed it in black chalk with traces of white highlights on blue-green-grey paper. Although it is apparent that Empoli studied the figure from life, he made the head small in proportion to the body. It is barely indicated, however, suggested only with a faint oval outline and dots for facial features. The pose and arrangement of the drapery correspond nearly exactly with those of God the Father in the altarpiece. Empoli rendered the drapery forms with more detail than was his usual custom. Folds of cloth are clearly defined in the illuminated portion of the garment instead of being washed out in the light. He was much more sensitive to the play of light and shadow over the figure but, as was characteristic of his manner, only in a way that clarifies the arrangement of drapery masses. Empoli correlated the color of the paper with the chalk and white accents as tonal elements articulating the values of light, medium and dark; here it serves as a middle tone.

Among Empoli’s late studies is the drawing of an angel (Uffizi n. 1826 S, fig. 188) for the Virgin Offering the Christ Child to Saint Francis, executed for the ceiling of the Duomo in Livorno c. 1620 (fig. 23). The figure corresponds in every respect to
the angel in the left foreground of the painting. Here is perhaps the only drawing of a draped figure by Empoli that suggests movement while articulating the fall of the garment over the figure. Empoli captured the expression of the swift flight of the angel by the rapid execution of chalk and his conception of the diaphanous garment. He applied white highlights mostly to the lower torso and touched a more intense stroke of white to the edge of the right wing. The areas where the white highlights are stronger correspond to the illuminated passages in the painting. Multiple rapid lines of chalk render both figure and cloth as if of the same substance, and soft strokes of chalk that appear to have been slightly smudged define shadows. Despite the sheer sense of the diaphanous drapery, one does not see the nude form beneath the garment - not even the figure's legs. Yet the form of the body is clearly implied by the folds of drapery at the bend of the knee, and the swell of the calf muscle of the right leg. The only solid form is the volumetric shape of the head, the angel's face barely visible in a lost-profile view.

That Empoli relinquished his insistence on the continuous contour line containing the figure, is typical of his late graphic style. In earlier drapery studies, the aggressive line imparted a sense of weight and stability to the classically dressed figure. But, in his late graphic exercises, Empoli's interests lay in the characterization of the textures of materials which often allowed him to articulate the ephemeral effects of light and shadow, suggesting the sheen of satin or, in this instance, the diaphanous quality of the celestial garment. Still, in the Livorno painting, the spontaneity of
execution is sacrificed for a more solid and poised figure who hovers motionless in the air below the seated Virgin.

HALF-LENGTH FIGURE STUDIES

During his preparation for the altarpiece, Empoli often sketched the upper torso of the nude figure to study the pose. Whether the figure would remain nude, as in the study for John the Baptist (Uffizi n. 9368 F) for the Immaculate Conception (Santa Maria a Ripa), or would be clothed as in the study for the angel (Uffizi n. 1834 S) for the San Remigio Immaculate Conception, these nude studies typically lacked detailed modelling of the anatomy (figs. 74 and 189). Many of his half-length studies for the draped figure, however, represent some of the finest examples of his skill as a draftsman.

A Half-Length Study of a Female Saint (Uffizi n. 9312 F) for which no extant painting survives (fig. 190) was executed in black chalk with white highlights on blue prepared paper. The figure fills the entire space of the sheet. The drawing exemplifies Empoli's skill as a draftsman. A continuous contour line completely encompasses the figure except at the bottom border where the folds and edges of the skirt fade into the blue ground. Despite the very sophisticated and sensitive rendering of light and shadow, it is the fluid and easy flow of the black chalk line that, typically, describes the volumes of the figure and establishes the pose. The influence of Pontormo is evident in the underlying sense of geometry that characterizes the neck.
as a cylinder, and the head as an oval while clearly suggesting the solid structure of
the torso beneath the drapery. Line traces the currents of the drapery folds and
moves along its path with nearly uniform intensity. The chalk has the appearance of
soft charcoal, yet on the hands, it becomes stronger in intensity where one sees
pentimenti - lines retraced and finally resolved in a more emphatic outline of the
fingers. This is true also along the right forearm where Empoli pulls the arm closer to
the body. With the simple, clearly drawn curve of the left cuff, and the line that
breaks the sleeve at the elbow, Empoli economically suggested the geometric cylinder
of the forearm. A few strokes of white highlights are touched to the veil on the right
side of the figure's head which corresponds to the direction of the light illuminating
the figure from the left. The silhouette of the veil is depicted within a simple
parabolic shape - the few folds pulled down by the weight of the cloth gathered over
the shoulder. This imparts a sense of calm dignity to the woman, and by the lack of
sophistication of the garment, in general, lends a domestic air to her that calls to mind
the figure types of Santi di Tito.

The face is rendered in typically Pontormesque fashion. The round eyes
express an astonishment, although milder in intensity than one observes in Pontormo's
anxiety-ridden faces. The irises and pupils nearly coalesce into black spheres. The
nose is a smudge and the mouth appears slightly open as if the saint has just caught
her breath. White highlights are stroked along the right side of the neck and upper
chest to accentuate the glow of her skin above the bodice.
In the center portion of the sheet, the long veil is gathered over the shoulder and grasped at the chest by the figure's left hand. Empoli articulated an interesting arrangement of drapery folds by line which he thickened in some places to depict recesses of folds, and strongly highlighted the upper ridges of the folds in white. The highlights and shadows on the left sleeve are particularly well rendered with a sensitivity to light and shadow and, together with the middle tone of the light blue ground, attest to Empoli's response to the influence of Venetian art in regard to the pictorial expressiveness of light and shadow. That within the figure Empoli used the blue ground as a middle tone, is a rare example within his graphic oeuvre where he utilized the tint of the ground to become an integral part in the definition of form.

Empoli depicted the pose of the figure skillfully. The face looks directly out at the viewer, while the upper torso turns to her left, and the hips revolve even farther to her left. This creates a rotation of form on the flat surface of the paper that speaks to Empoli's acclaimed skill for the rendering of solid form on the two-dimensional plane. The pose of the figure, as well as the sophisticated rendering of the figure, suggest that this study was executed when Empoli had reached maturity as a draftsman. Yet, because he soon abandoned such tight control of the silhouette of the figure and took a greater interest in describing the details of costume and varied substances of materials, the sheet should be placed early in the seventeenth century, perhaps in the first decade.28 The more dramatic contrasts of light and shadow that characterize such works as the Madonna of Mercy and The Susanna at the Bath are
paralleled in this drawing by the very articulate rendering of form enhanced by modulations in value.

That Empoli developed a more open, loose and flexible rendering of the figure is readily apparent in many of his works of the late second decade of the seventeenth century. A red chalk study of a half-length Magdalen (Uffizi n. 6546 F, fig. 191) demonstrates his late manner of rendering the figure with loose strokes of the chalk or charcoal that both lends a greater sense of movement to the figure and describes a more open definition of form, as the contour lines do not tightly and meticulously circumscribe the figure. Although the drawing shows Empoli's continuous debt to Pontormo in the use of line to describe the underlying geometry of the human form, the greater breadth of form, the more spontaneous delineation of the figure, and the expression of pathos of her face, suggest that Empoli was responding to the influences of the Bolognese school as well as the new, more emotive, style of his younger contemporaries, Cristofano Allori, Matteo Rosselli, and Billivert.29

FIGURE STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY PERSONS

Among Empoli's corpus of drawings is a large number of sheets of contemporary citizens, presumably Florentine, for which, with only a rare exception, no specific painting can be found. They are almost all executed in pen, ink and ink wash. Although this type of study reflects the post-maniera artistic trend to study the figure from nature, it is a practice that finds precedence among the artists of the
Quattrocento.

One of the foremost practitioners of this type of study was Maso da Finiguerra who sketched his contemporaries in the act of drawing and painting or assuming a pose for studio practice. (See figs. 192a and 192b.) More than a century later, this practice was resumed with almost an obsessive fervor by the Zuccari. Federico's drawings of his brother Taddeo sketching in Rome would likely have been familiar to Empoli who worked with the artist while Federico was in Florence in 1589 (fig. 193). And this practice of studying the figure in candid poses was encouraged at the Accademia del Disegno during Empoli's years of membership.

Yet in comparison to his contemporaries, Empoli seems to have found more enjoyment in the rendering of such figures than his fellow Florentine draftsman. A greater number of these sheets survive than one finds among the drawings of Cigoli, Passignano and other contemporaries. Generally scholars agree that Empoli executed the majority of these figures around the second and third decades of the seventeenth century when his graphic style had become loose and confident. Jacques Callot's arrival in Florence from France in 1611 may have provided the impetus for the more concentrated number of studies by Empoli of contemporary figures having no particular relationship to his commissioned projects. Callot's depictions of the citizens of Florence were numerous and would have appealed to an artist like Empoli (fig. 194).

Among Empoli's studies of contemporary figures are several which depict the
noble faction of Florentine society. Whether these figures were sketched in
preparation for portraits or would later appear as spectators in sacred altarpieces, or
were, like his sketches of studio models, drawn for enjoyment and self-improvement,
cannot be determined. With one exception that will be cited shortly, no specific
painting exists in which these figures appear. Although it is conceivable that Empoli
had a garzone wear the apparel of the aristocrat, it is more likely that the model was
in fact a noble citizen of Florence since, as Baldinucci related, Empoli's studio was
frequented by many nobleman who, under Empoli's instruction, engaged in artistic
endeavors as dilettantes.

An example of this type of figure study (Uffizi n. 9279 F) is represented by a
sketch of a three-quarter length aristocratic gentleman executed in black chalk with
white highlights on (faded) blue paper (fig. 195). Although the loose handling of the
chalk suggests that Empoli rendered this figure quickly and with the ease of a sure
hand, his concern with the minute details of the garment is evident. Note, for
example, the tiny buttons above the cuff of the sleeve and the button-loops along the
vest. The effort to define the precise characteristics of the costume attests to his
growing interest, becoming most evident in the second decade, to render the design of
the garment as well as the specificity of the material with such acute observation as if
to treat these elements of his figures as objects in a still life. The treatment of the
figure, in general, as an aggregate of clearly articulated forms rather than as a vehicle
to express the human condition through expression and pathos is further emphasized
by the now ubiquitous appearance of the parts of the figure studied in the lower margin of the sheet: in this instance, three studies of the figure's left hand. The precise function of this study is difficult to determine. It could be a preparatory sketch for a commissioned portrait or a study for a figure destined for the altarpiece. The head sporting a wide-brimmed hat, although lightly drawn, has a portrait-likeness. Below the thick eyebrows and small eyes is a bent and very narrow nose. A pointed goatee juts from his chin.

The difficulty in determining whether these studies served no other function than as graphic exercises, or were destined to serve as spectators in Empoli's narratives for the altarpiece is apparent when one discovers an occasional study that, in fact, relates to a commissioned work. A drawing in a private collection of a youth, executed in pen and wash, seems at first glance, to belong to the group of drawings that have no connection to a specific painting (fig. 196). The figure is rendered on the sheet with no reference to any other figure and with no setting. He is dressed in what appears to be contemporary apparel and strikes a casual pose. In these respects, the drawing shares a commonality with most of the studies of figures in contemporary dress that have no known relationship to a commissioned work. Yet upon closer inspection one can recognize that here Empoli has drawn a contemporary model from life taking the pose of the Apostle standing to the far left in the Doubting of Saint Thomas.

Some of the sketches, however, offer clues that the figure was perhaps drawn
as a studio exercise not only for Empoli's own improvement, but for his students as well. Among these are two sheets in the Uffizi both sketched in pen and ink with wash. A figure (n. 3457 F) of a youth standing on a platform and seen from behind is perhaps a member of Empoli's studio or a student at the Accaemia del Disegno (fig. 197). Empoli rendered the garzone who wears an apron about his waist in long strokes of the pen and brilliantly lit from the right. He conceived the body typically as solid and volumetric using washes to define planes, and he described the right arm as two cylinders joined at the elbow. The sleeve of the garment sheathes the arm tightly as if nearly painted on the skin.

The unnatural pose of the figure holding a book behind his head suggests that this study was in fact intended as a studio exercise and that the book was intended to reflect light upon the head perhaps simulating the effect of a halo. Yet the pose, with one arm reaching in front of the figure while the other is raised to the head, may simply have been devised as a means to study the proportions of the figure. The elevation of the garzone upon the platform would have made him more accessible to the view of other studio members who were likely to be drawing this figure from various vantage points around the model.

The clear delineation of the figure by pen line, and the application of a light tint of wash to indicate the source of light and cast shadow is typical of Empoli's approach to the rendering of the figure and typical, as well, of his handling of the media of pen and wash. Empoli has given a veristic description of the essential
aspects of the garment, and thus an accurate description of the figure as it is observed from nature rather than conceived from the artist's imagination.

In another study of what appears to be a studio exercise of a contemporary figure (fig. 198), one sees a man wearing a three-quarter length cloak and hat (Uffizi n. 3389 F). He stands facing the left edge of the sheet and is rendered in pen and bistre wash with traces of black chalk on white paper. Along the left edge of the sheet, and sketched very faintly in black chalk is a seated figure. This figure wears a hat and, judging from the tilt of his head, looks down toward his lap. A straight line is sketched at an angle just below his left arm, suggesting that this figure is in the act of drawing on a board. Since the edge of the sheet cuts half of the figure from our view, it is difficult to determine with certainty what activity is performed by this figure. One can imagine another member of Empoli's studio or perhaps a student at the Accademia del Disegno engaged in the act of drawing the model from life, although not necessarily the one depicted here by Empoli.

Empoli observed the model from a slight di sotto in su vantage point, as if he, like the studio member whom he sketched on the sheet, was seated while executing the drawing. He conceived the model's cape as a cone enveloping the figure and giving no hint as to the structure of the torso beneath. Only the lower portion of the legs and feet extend beyond the hem of the garment and assume a stable stance that firmly affixes the image to the page. With long, confident strokes of the pen line, the cloak falls from the figure's shoulders in straight, weighty folds, typical of Empoli's
conservative but dignified and classical manner of depicting drapery forms. Powerful contrasts of light and shadow are achieved by leaving the lighted portions of the paper untouched by wash, while the shadows are laid in with a medium value of bistre wash. The tint of the wash is slightly more intense where the hands are folded in front of the model. The distribution of light and shadow, rather than offering a pictorial and dramatic expression to the drawing, carves the material of the cloak into heavy folds while clearly establishing the source of light from the right.

This sheet, based on stylistic similarities, can be dated to the same period as the Uffizi drawing discussed above. Both sheets and several more like them were probably executed in the late first decade or early second decade of the seventeenth century. Compare the manner in which Empoli describes the arrangement of drapery on the cloaked figure (n. 3389 F), with the rendering of Christ's garment in the compositional study of the Calling of Saint Peter (Uffizi n. 9387 F, fig. 117). Both exhibit a classical arrangement of drapery and a similar handling of ink and wash. In each instance the weighty folds of the garments as they are arranged on the figure, are described with thin lines of ink and broad passages of wash with untouched areas of the surface creating stark contrasts of light and shadow.

**HEAD STUDIES**

The prolific number of head studies that are found within the corpus of Empoli's drawings parallel his interest in the genre of portraiture. His skill as a
portrait painter received considerable acclaim from his contemporaries, judging from the remarks by his biographers, Zaballi and Baldinucci, and from the number of extant portraits by his hand. His success in this genre is partly due to his practice on paper of the geometry, pose and individual components of the head. Even among his figure studies, although the head of the figure is only barely notated, Empoli often rendered the head of the figure as a separate detail on the same sheet (fig. 174).

A relatively rare example of Empoli’s rendering of the head in some detail as part of a figure study may be observed in the drawing previously discussed (Fig. 31) for the figure of Saint John the Baptist derived from Michelangelo’s Bacchus. Concerned with transforming his source into the more living and breathing figure of Saint John the Baptist, Empoli sensitively delineates the head. Even though the sheet is damaged, the manner of description is nonetheless evident. In this treatment of the head alone, one may observe the development of Empoli’s style in the first decade of the seventeenth century. The hair is softly and loosely drawn about the head. Its slight unruliness is not only typical of Empoli’s manner in drawing hair, but is characteristic of the Baptist’s unkempt hair from his days in the wilderness. The features of the face, although small in scale, are as detailed as his compositional studies executed in ink, but here they are softened by the medium of the chalk. The face is not quite a true profile, since the head tilts toward the figure’s left shoulder as he appears to gaze with reverence at his hand (as Bacchus ogled at his wine cup), rather than look upward as he often is depicted. Yet here he appears to cast a
knowing look upon his gesture, aware of its significance to the viewer.\textsuperscript{34}

Empoli’s success in portraiture may explain his motivations for executing numerous head studies. Yet, the demands of his commissions often required the artist to include portraits of the donors within the sacred narrative, not only as witnesses to the events depicted, but for the countenance of the principal figure also. For example, Baldinucci stated that Empoli used a member of the Nerli family as the model for the figure of Saint Sebastian in the San Lorenzo altarpiece.\textsuperscript{35} This is not to say that all of his head studies are specific portraits of contemporaries destined to appear in his altarpieces. On the contrary, the majority of the studies have no distinctive features which might suggest that Empoli was attempting to reproduce the specific likeness of his model. Indeed, most of his sacred figures in his altarpieces are idealized types. His Madonnas, in particular, are variations of the same prototype derived from those of Andrea del Sarto. Thus to render the precise likeness of his model, destined to become John the Baptist or the aged Saint Peter, for example, would have been unnecessary for his purposes.

Nevertheless, two observations can be made about his head studies that demonstrate his consistent practice of studying the figure from life, and his desire to accurately render the likeness of the individual only when it was essential to the nature of the subject intended for the altarpiece. One is that when he intended the model to appear as an idealized sacred figure in the altarpiece, Empoli began by using a model from his studio to assume the pose of the figure even if only studying the
detail of the head. Note, for example a beautiful study in red chalk (Uffizi n. 1964 S) of a male head seen in three-quarter view (fig. 200). One can assume that he has drawn a garzone from his studio whose specific characteristics are detectable from the precise rendering of the short-cropped hair and the slight cleft in the chin.

Marabottini has suggested the possibility that this study was executed in preparation for the Pomino Supper at Emmaus. But, instead, I believe it is most definitely a study for the Madonna of Mercy (fig. 68) executed several years earlier at the end of the sixteenth century. The air of the head - the pose, facial expression, and subtle shadow on the forehead and right cheek - is identical to that of the Virgin's in the painting. What is significant here, however, is that Empoli first posed a male model for this female figure in order to accurately render the solid volume of the head, its slight tilt to the left shoulder, the serene gaze of the eyes and the play of light and shadow over the head which will be eventually translated into the painted version.

The image of the Virgin in the Madonna of Mercy bears no resemblance to a specific individual. Yet the veristic description of her countenance is attributable to Empoli's fastidious study of his model prior to the rendering in paint. The fact that he executed this study in red chalk with a sensitivity to the potential of this medium calls to mind the manner of Passignano, whose work Empoli would certainly have had the opportunity to observe at the closing years of the sixteenth century.

Secondly, when the subject called for a portrait-likeness of a figure, Empoli studied the head with more specific attention to the figure's individual facial
description and particular shape of the head. His study of Charles Borromeo (fig. 4) reveals the physiognomy of the saint whom Empoli may have drawn from memory after having, at the very least, visual contact with Borromeo while he visited Florence. Empoli recorded the receding hairline of the Cardinal, his aquiline nose slightly large for his face, and his aging muscle structure. The eyes convey not only spiritual devotion but self-assurance guided by an inner wisdom. The numerous appearances of this saint in Empoli’s paintings have already been discussed. The pose of Borromeo varies in these paintings so that this particular study may not have served to determine the play of light and shadow on the face or the pose of the head in relation to the body for every occasion in which the figure appears in the altarpieces. These particular variations may be recorded in other studies of the saint which may or may not still exist.

Although the occasional portrait study appears among Empoli’s drawings, most of his head studies are executed in a less detailed manner with regard to the precise modelling of the muscle and bone structure. With the exception of his study of Pope Leo X (Louvre n. 1050) which he copied from Raphael’s portrait, Empoli rendered portraits for both sacred and secular figures with an economy of means that is typical of his approach to the figure in general. He studied the head to determine its basic volumetric shape, the pose of the head in relationship to the neck and shoulders, and the source of light as it revealed or concealed the topography of the face. Although these studies are not nearly as detailed in modelling as those by
Andrea del Sarto, the early sixteenth-century master appears to have influenced Empoli in this area of his draftsmanship. The strong contour lines defining the silhouette of the head, face and neck, the soft strokes of the black or red chalk that, in Empoli’s case, define only the essential anatomical structure of the head revealed from the play of light and shadow, and the loose and somewhat sparse strokes of chalk that characterize the graceful strands of hair attest to Empoli’s observations of Sarto’s work (fig. 201).

Typical of Empoli’s approach to rendering the head is a head study for the figure of Saint John the Baptist as seen in the final painted version of the Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist, Anthony Abbott, and Charles Borromeo (fig. 2) was executed in black chalk and white highlights on unbleached paper (Uffizi n. 3449 F, fig. 202). A continuous contour line confidently but sensitively describes the edge of the face in three-quarter view. Empoli’s growing maturity as a draftsman is evident in this head study, in which he renders a countenance that is quite expressive in its pious, awestruck, upward glance. The mouth is slightly parted and the eyes, rendered with only a few strokes of the chalk, express the saint’s concentration and devotion. The drawing is boldly rendered in long diagonal strokes of chalk to delineate the hollow of the cheeks and the shadows along and under the jaw. The face is mostly untouched with chalk to show a well-lit countenance, corresponding to the source of light in the painting as deriving from the celestial brilliance emanating from the Christ Child. The hair is loosely drawn with long, wavy chalk lines; a
moustache and goatee are barely indicated with a few strokes of the chalk. Just as Empoli defined the musculature of his nude studies with minimal modeling, he defined the muscle tone in the face with only a sparse rendering of subtle shades of light and shadow. He appears to have simply studied the pose of the head in relation to the intended source of light. The large size of the drawing (the head is slightly over lifesize) reflects his manner toward the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century to render the figure with a greater breadth and more monumental form.

His studies of the second decade show a greater freedom of execution that characterizes his draftsmanship in general in these years and attests to his awareness of the new developments by Bolognese artists. Showing even more monumental form and greater breadth than Uffizi n. 3449 is the study for the *Saint Yves, Protector of Widows and Orphans* of a woman's head in near profile (Uffizi n. 9382 F, fig. 203). A description by Baldinucci provides testimony to Empoli's practice of using a member of his studio to assume a pose so that he could study from life the figure intended for his paintings. In this reference, Baldinucci related that Empoli had his student, Giovanni Battista Vanni, pose as the model for the widowed woman "...which one sees in this portrait in the act of recommending the children to the protection of the saint."38 This is a succinct study with loose, rapidly drawn lines, rendering the veil of the head, with a more controlled delineation of the profile. The features of the face are merely drawn with line; the iris is shaded and the pupil marked with a darker stroke of chalk as is typical of Empoli's manner in rendering these
elements of the face. The head is supported on a graceful neck that is a signature element of Empoli's figures. As a large, bold rendering, the head fills the space of the sheet, calling to mind the manner of Guido Reni and the Bolognese school in general (fig. 204). This is an unassuming study, rendered with an economy of line and expressing a simple beauty. With only the essential lines of the chalk, Empoli has skillfully delineated the volume of the head, the features of the face and the sheer veil cascading to her shoulders.39

A final example of Empoli's manner of rendering the head in preparation for the altarpiece is seen in the study (Uffizi n. 3415 F) for the Madonna in Glory with Saint Francis of c. 1619 - 1623 for the ceiling of the Duomo in Livorno (fig. 205). This drawing for the Madonna belongs to the type of study that appears with regularity in Empoli's graphic oeuvre. Rather than just characterizing the specific pose of the head and features of the face, Empoli studied the arrangement of the head covering, the play of light and shadow, and, in some of these sheets, a surface description of the head covering.

Two earlier studies, the Turbaned Head (Uffizi n. 3438 F) for the Sermon of the Baptist of c.1608, and Two Heads with Helmets (Uffizi n. 9277 F) for the Martyrdom of Saint Barbara of 1603 reveal Empoli's concern for reproducing the specific substance of the head-covering (figs. 125 and 107). In the former example, he successfully rendered the white layers of cloth woven around the oval of the head, and, in the latter example, described the sheen of the golden metal and feathery
plumage of the helmet's ornament.

In the Livorno head study, Empoli was less concerned with describing the actual substance of the cloth than he was with its arrangement on the head. Executed in black chalk with white highlights on a greyish-brown prepared paper, Empoli rendered a beautiful image of the Virgin's down-cast head. Her countenance reveals an intimate expression of love and warmth directed toward the object of her gaze, which, although not seen here, in the painting, becomes the Christ child as He is cradled in the arms of Saint Francis. In typical linear fashion, the contours of the Virgin's veil frame her face, creating a cave-like hollow of form so that the head emerges as a solid volume from the concavity of the head covering. Rhythmical lines describe the folds of the veil around the head. The lines are soft, but defined. Much of the veil is left untouched by chalk to suggest the brilliance of light deriving, in the painting, from the heavens above. The shadows along the inside of the veil are hatched in short strokes and define three or four deep recesses of the veil as it falls forward, shielding the left side of Mary's face. White highlights, now barely visible, are touched to the ridges of the folds and are applied to the curve of the cheek, ridge of the nose, and above and below the eye. The white lead not only softly illuminates the face, but enhances the illusion of corporeal form. The Virgin's gentle expression is echoed by the soft tint of the prepared ground. If, in its use of line to render volumetric form, the drawing attests to the life-long influence of Pontormo, the soft shadows and quiet devotion of the Virgin's expression call to mind the Madonnas of
Sarto, the prototypes which Empoli used throughout his career. A drawing of a female figure by Cristofano Allori (Uffizi n. 7900 F), however, bears a strong resemblance to this study by Empoli (fig. 206). Identified by Giuseppe Cantelli and Giulietta Chelazzi Dini as a study for a female figure who distributes bread to the poor on the right of the Hospitality of San Giuliano (c. 1612), the head of the woman, covered by a veil, faces in the opposite direction from Empoli's Virgin. Yet, the morphology of the face, the arrangement of the veil, and the strong suggestion of the three-dimensional form of the head set within the cavity of the veil indicate that either Allori was aware of Empoli's drawing or Empoli was inspired by his younger contemporary. Allori's painting is generally dated to between 1615 and 1620, and it is conceivable that Empoli was influenced by Allori. In Empoli's later work, one often sees evidence of his response to new artistic developments by younger Florentine artists. It seems, however, more likely that Allori was influenced by Empoli's manner of rendering solid form with an economy of line, the hallmark of Empoli's mature graphic style. Empoli's study for the Virgin shows nothing new that may be attributed to his observation of Allori's work.

COMPOSITIONAL STUDIES

Compositional studies served three functions within the preparatory process for Empoli's altarpieces: as a pensiero to visualize his initial ideas for the composition (fig. 77), as a means to explore the arrangement, pose and proportion of the figures in
relation to each other and to the picture space (fig. 104), and finally, as a \textit{modello} or a final approximation to the painting. In the last case, such works may or may not have also served as a presentation piece for the patron (fig. 92).

The artist executed an early sketch to investigate initial ideas for the composition, the general arrangement of the figures, and the play of light and shadow. A number of these drawings exhibit a spontaneity in execution and a painterly manner in the handling of ink and wash that constitute some of Empoli's freshest and most pictorial examples of his graphic work. The majority of studies in this style was executed for projects dating toward the end of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century - the years when Empoli's graphic manner is most influenced by Cigoli and his circle. In his effort to investigate the play of light and shadow, Empoli came close to surrendering clarity of form for more dramatic contrasts of value. Yet, however willing he was to experiment with the expressive potential of light and shadow, his final paintings derived from these studies are characteristically more conservative in their clear definition of form and static arrangement of figures. An example of this practice can be seen in a compositional study for the \textit{Doubting of Saint Thomas} (Munich: Staatliche Graphische Sammlung inv. 2305, fig. 207). Empoli's rapid execution of fluent pen line and bold passages of wash articulates the basic arrangement of the figures and play of light and shadow that will appear in the final version. Yet, here, Empoli depicted an early idea for both the reciprocity of gestures between Saint Thomas and Christ, and the design of their
garments. In the dramatic rendering of the effects of light and shadow and in the
loose handling of the pen and wash, Empoli revealed his investigations into the
pictorial expressiveness that characterized Venetian art.

The compositional study in the Ashmolean Museum for the Presentation in the
Temple (fig. 114), represents another example of Empoli’s response to the influence
of Venetian art as he must have observed it in the work of Cigoli and Passignano.42
The tip of the brush creates thick lines that define the heavy folds of drapery. While
some of the faces are completely cast in shadow, others are bisected by the rich shade
of wash. Although the principle figures in the middle ground are clearly separated
from the bystanders by their central placement and connection to the strong vertical
stripe of the hanging curtain, they are, nevertheless, fused by their merging shadows.
The visual effect of such dynamic contrasts in light and shade animate this
composition, while the static poses of the figures impart a solemnity which the
Hebrew ritual demands. In the painting, although the ritual is carried out in the dimly
lit interior of the Temple, all powerful contrasts of light and shade, and spontaneity of
execution have been exorcised from the composition.

It is with these types of compositional studies that Empoli is most willing to
experiment with the pictorial expression of light and shade and a more painterly
handling of the media of pen and brush. His compositional study (Uffizi n. 3411 F)
for the Santa Lucia dei Magnoli Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist,
Anthony Abbott, Charles Borromeo and Bernard of c.1610-12 demonstrates his
attempt to explore the effects of light and shadow by means of a painterly application of ink, wash and white heightening (fig. 208). This is a quickly executed study with many pentimenti suggesting that Empoli was still not satisfied with this sheet even though it is squared for transfer. Numerous changes in the arrangement and poses of the figures were made before the final composition was acceptable to Empoli - perhaps the most dramatic being the change from the kneeling adolescent figure of John the Baptist in the drawing to the standing adult figure in the painting. Empoli's indecisiveness and subsequent struggle with his conception of this composition is evident from the fact that the figures are over-worked with pen lines and white heightening. He appears to have attempted to cover areas of the drawing with white wash to eliminate certain contour lines from the composition.43

Empoli applied his ink lines with a wide-nibbed quill. Nowhere do the fine ink lines that one customarily observes in the majority of his compositional studies appear.44 That Empoli chose to render line with thick strokes of the pen may derive from his concern for legibility of form. In his rapid execution of the composition, Empoli abandoned the continuous clear contours delineating the figures, but not the fluid and loose line quality. While the individual figures in the drawing are clearly separated one from another, the painterly handling of the media creates a flickering effect of light and shadow that threatens the legibility of the figural components. Although this particular study was not successful for Empoli's intentions for the altarpiece, he created a lively and powerful image.
These studies attest to Empoli's vigilant observations of the graphic work of his more innovative contemporary, Cigoli. A legion of examples of this manner of compositional study by Cigoli can serve to illustrate the debt Empoli owes to his contemporary. A paradigmatic example is seen in his compositional study of the Crucifixion with Saints (c. 1600, Uffizi n. 1009 Fr, fig. 210). More profoundly influenced by the Venetian coloristic and painterly approach to the graphic idiom, Cigoli preferred to use tints of blue and brown washes to render light and shadow, creating graduated tonal effects in his compositional studies. Such a combination of tints also found favor with Cigoli's mentor, Santi di Tito. And while Cigoli's subjects are clearly discernible in both his drawings and his paintings, he was more daring than Empoli in allowing the chiaroscuro effects of light and shade to compromise legibility of individual forms. Light appears selectively to illuminate some figures while others are thrust into shadow. In this respect his scenes are charged with movement and drama. For Cigoli, this is a fundamental characteristic of his artistic expression whether manifested in paint or ink and wash. Among Empoli's compositional studies, however, such free executions in ink and wash are relatively rare and served only to provide him with a general guideline for the placement of value changes in his paintings.

Having determined the general arrangement and direction of light source, Empoli executed a second study to examine more closely the precise pose, arrangement, and proportions of the figures to each other and to the picture space.
Most often these were executed in pen and ink with little or no wash indicating that Empoli was not concerned here with chiaroscuro effects. He sometimes squared the sheet probably for transfer to another sheet in order to more precisely study the effects of light and shadow within the composition. The compositional sketch Uffizi n. 9329 F for the *Virgin in Glory with Saints Verdana and Anthony Abbott* of 1600 (fig. 3) demonstrates these intentions. Although the figures are drawn with few *pentimenti*, one can hardly conclude that this served as a *modello* for the final painting since Empoli has applied no wash, and no hatched lines for shading other than the parallel lines inside the Virgin's cloak. Empoli simply appears to have composed the three figures within the arched format of the picture space. Minor changes in the gestures and attributes of the saints were made in the final version. The head of Saint Anthony Abbot, facing the spectator in the sketch, has been turned in the painting so that he gazes upon the vision of the Virgin in Glory. Instead of holding a bell in his right hand, he holds a book in his left, while in the drawing, Saint Verdana holds the book and, yet, is posed in the painting so that she merely crosses her hands on her chest in an act of devotion. The Virgin appears essentially the same in both sketch and altarpiece. This is not surprising since Empoli used the same figure of the Virgin in Glory for several compositions. Curiously, a more finished study exists in the Collection of Wolfang Ratjen in Vaduz where Empoli rendered the same figures as in the Uffizi sketch but has reversed them in the foreground (fig. 211). Here he also applied subtle layers of wash to study the play of light and shadow. Its more polished
appearance suggests that it was executed after the Uffizi drawing, yet with a different arrangement of the saints. Judging from Empoli’s customary practice of executing several studies of the composition prior to the execution of the altarpiece, one may surmise that at least one other study was executed for this project but is now lost.

The third type of compositional study is the *modello* and is found in greater numbers within Empoli’s graphic oeuvre. These show a wider range in his handling of media from more loosely rendered line and wash to a more careful execution, suggesting that this type may have served as a presentation piece for the patron. These studies depict figures and setting outlined with fine lines of ink which precisely contain shadows rendered in clear tints of wash. Whether the paper had first been prepared with color or whether it had been left white, the illuminated portions of the drawing are defined by areas left untouched by ink or wash.

Among these studies is the beautiful drawing for the *Delivery of the Keys* of c. 1604 (fig. 121). Demonstrating another instance of the influence of Cigoli, the drawing is rendered in pen and blue wash, a rare example of its appearance in Empoli’s graphic oeuvre. Executed on white paper, the drawing has been squared for transfer in red ink. Rather than lending a chromatic effect to the study, the blue wash contributes to the solemn stillness of the scene. Perhaps Empoli chose this tint of wash to anticipate the silvery blue tonality of the painting.

Although the blue wash is uncommon, the handling of media is typical. Each figure is locked in place by thin lines of ink distinctly delineating the forms of the body
and drapery. The four faces in the foreground are rendered with detail. The composition is bathed in light, while the shadows are thin and muted. The wash enhances the clarity and solidity of the form. It is applied so uniformly over the sheet that it has no chromatic effect. Instead it serves to indicate recesses of drapery folds and cast shadows. Hatched pen lines over the the blue shadows further emphasize the linear character of the drawing.

The squaring for transfer indicates that this was a working study rather than a presentation piece for the patron. Yet in its precision of form and detail it is not unlike those sheets that were destined for the patron's approval. Having previously decided upon the exact arrangement of figures and their relationship to the background (no pentimenti are visible), Empoli established the effects of the light source emanating from the upper left on the pictorial elements of the composition. In this respect, it stands at one end of the spectrum of Empoli's studies for such purposes, while those rapidly executed sketches in bold passages of wash, typified by the Ashmolean study for the Presentation in the Temple, stand at the other.

In between fall a range of drawings more closely associated with the Delivery of the Keys folio but not as controlled in execution nor as static in arrangement of figures. Among these sheets are some of Empoli's most vibrant drawings. Note, for example, the study for the Sermon of the Baptist or the sheet in the Uffizi for the Supper at Emmaus (figs. 7 and 128).

It is often difficult to judge the difference between the working drawing and
the presentation piece, so controlled and polished are many of Empoli's studies. Further problems arise when one attempts to sort out those copies Empoli executed after his own drawings late in his years when he attempted to sell his graphic work to provide an income. And, although they are easier to identify by the drier quality of rendering, there are those copies of his compositions that were executed by his students and followers for their own self-improvement. However, a few examples can be distinguished by their high state of refinement as worthy for presentation to the patron. A study for the Virgin Appearing Before Saint Hyacinth (Uffizi n. 1736 S) and another for the Healing of the Cripple (Vienna: Albertina inv. 661) are both rendered within images of what must have been their destined enframements (figs. 80 and 212). Architectural studies are not among the subjects studied by Empoli. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that these drawings were viewed by their respective patrons to demonstrate the projected appearance of the altarpiece. 46

A most beautiful example of a finished study by Empoli that was likely to have served as a presentation drawing is the study in Rome for the Pontedera Annunciation of 1599 (fig. 92). The drawing shows no pentimenti - the composition is translated into paint with no distinguishable differences - nor is the sheet squared for transfer. Executed in bistre ink and blue wash, it represents, along with the study for the Delivery of the Keys, one of the few examples of Empoli's foray into the graphic manner of Cigoli that was most evident in his work at the end of the sixteenth century and first decade of the seventeenth century. The line is thin and delicate and
confidently rendered. This is typical of Empoli's method of executing compositional studies when he had previously explored variations in figural poses and gestures and had investigated the play of light and shadow in earlier, more spontaneous sketches. The layers of blue wash, skillfully blended in places into the blue tint of the ground, are everywhere self-contained within the contours of the line. Even the muted tints of blue wash that suggest the ethereal clouds upon which the Archangel glides into the Virgin's chamber, are defined within the most delicate of bistre lines. By his manner of execution, Empoli has chosen to depict the Annunciation as a quiet and most solemn event, a momentous episode in the Christian narrative that is expressed as a timeless doctrine of truth. All human passion and tremulous emotion, so often characterized by the turbulent movement of draperies and by the emotive reaction of the Virgin upon receiving the profound message in examples of this theme by other artists, has been distilled from this scene.

STUDIO PRACTICE

The precise order in which an artist studies the various elements of his conception for the altarpiece can rarely be determined with absolute accuracy. Although this is true of Empoli's workshop practice, one can make some assumptions based on the prolific number of drawings which exist for some of his commissioned work. Judging from the number of compositional sketches that are little more than notations of figures, but nevertheless are squared for transfer, it would appear that
Empoli, very early in the preliminary plans for the altarpiece, executed a quick compositional pensiero to determine the general pose and arrangement of the figures.47 Sometimes this sketch was executed in ink and wash which was rapidly applied and which only summarily indicated the play of light and shadow.48

Having decided upon the components of the composition, Empoli then studied individual figures to render a more accurate description of the pose, drapery and play of light and shadow on the drapery. As it was his practice to study the figure from life, he would often have a garzone from his studio assume the pose of the figure destined for his altarpiece. This practice is best illustrated with two sheets, one of a studio member taking the pose for Saint Peter (fig. 122) for the Delivery of the Keys and another of a garzone in the stance of the Archangel Gabriel (fig. 97) for the Strozzi Annunciation of 1609. In both drawings Empoli made no attempt to conceal the simple garment of the garzone. Rather than specifically investigating the arrangement of drapery, which is the focus of many of his figure studies, Empoli was most concerned with accurately rendering the pose of the figure. On numerous sheets, he re-examined troublesome elements still unsatisfactorily rendered on the principle figure study. He occasionally executed details of the figure that were not specifically modelled on the figure - a foot or hand, for example lacking room to execute the particular element which was cut off from the edge of the sheet. (See fig. 186.)

From the evidence of his extant drawings, rarely did Empoli find the need to
render the figure as a separate study more than once for the composition unless he
was still not satisfied with the drapery arrangement after the initial investigations.
This was the case with his preparatory studies for the *Madonna and Child Appearing
before Saint Hyacinth* when Empoli had difficulty correctly rendering the pose of the
figure's right hand as it emerged from the sleeve of the garment. It also appears that
he was not satisfied with his initial design for the folds of drapery about the saint's
knees since he recast the arrangement of folds in subsequent studies.⁴⁹
Several examples among Empoli's figure studies show that, while he was primarily
concerned with rendering a single figure, a second figure may have been sketched
with a few notational lines on the same sheet to indicate its proximity to the principle
figure of the composition (fig. 89).

Having only indicated the head of the figure with faint lines of chalk, Empoli
studied the head separately to delineate the specific features of the individual, to
characterize the pose with greater clarity, and to render the effects of light and
shadow over the structure of the head and countenance. Among the drawings for the
*Madonna Appearing Before Saint Hyacinth* is the study for the saint's head (fig. 79).
In this instance, Empoli was primarily interested in capturing the portrait-likeness of
the figure. The rendering of light and shadow is minimal. Instead, the specificity of
the facial features is apparent in the balding pate of the monk, in the wide-set
cheekbones, and in the sagging musculature of the saint's face that suggests his aging
years.
Finally, Empoli re-drew the composition in greater detail and with more specific attention to the play of light and shadow over the composition as a whole. It was this aspect of his workshop procedure that often elicited a flurry of drawings which are not without incurring problems of attribution as was discussed earlier in this chapter. To my knowledge there are six extant compositional studies for the *Doubting of Saint Thomas*. Of these, Uffizi n. 945 F, by virtue of its dryness and self-conscious rendering of ink line, seems likely to have been executed by a follower or student of Empoli after Empoli’s drawing, probably Uffizi n. 926 F (figs. 213 and 214). The study in a private collection appears to also have been executed by an admirer of Empoli’s compositional study in Munich (figs. 207 and 215). Yet in this instance the draftsman has added details suggesting an interior setting and has recast the figures with more attenuated and elegant proportions belying a different aesthetic sensibility.

The study in the Ecoles des Beaux-Arts in Paris is probably an earlier design for this commission rather than a study for a second painting. As such, it would have been executed after the more spontaneous sketch of this composition in Munich which was previously discussed above (fig. 207). Empoli’s conception for the figure of Christ here is not as satisfactory as is that for the final version. In the Paris sheet Christ is depicted as wearing a inner garment revealing a slit through which Saint Thomas can touch his wound. As it is drawn, it appears that Thomas is examining a rip in the clothing rather than the wound inflicted in Christ’s side. In subsequent
studies Empoli more logically depicted Christ enveloped in a great expanse of material that falls to His waist on His right side to reveal the wound. Empoli made further changes by altering Christ's gesture so that it appears more heroic than depicted in the earlier sheet. He changed the design of the garment of Saint Thomas as well from the simple tunic emerging from under the cloak to the more monumental fabric one sees in later drawings and in the painting. 51

While making adjustments to the two major protagonists, Empoli characterized the group of Apostles who witness the event as virtually the same in both versions of the composition. This fact, and the manner in which Empoli described the effects of light and shadow in the same way in both versions, suggest that these two conceptions for the Doubting of Saint Thomas belong to the same project. The drawing of the composition represented in Uffizi n. 927 F (fig. 104), deviates from the painting in minor ways but in ways that suggest it did not yet represent the definitive solution. For example, the position of Christ's head turned to look at Saint Thomas is a more intimate gesture than one sees in the final version. From this sheet, which is squared for transfer, I believe Empoli executed the final compositional study in the study (n. 926 F, fig. 214).

In this last study, he drew the heads of the Apostles in greater detail, and altered the position of Christ's head so that He looks out beyond the figure of the Saint in a way that suggests He is transfixed by a more inward, perhaps, divine vision. It is possible that Empoli actually executed the painting from the previous study and
then incorporated the subsequent changes into the altarpiece. The final compositional study may have served the purpose of giving Empoli the opportunity to make final changes and to specify the particular facial features of the bystanders who perhaps take on the portrait-likenesses of the donor and his family. As a finished drawing, it may have served as a presentation piece for the patron.

The series of compositional studies for the Doubting of Saint Thomas underscores Empoli's practice of executing several versions of the composition for a single project, even if there were few changes made from one study to the next. This practice also calls attention to the problem of attribution when one must determine whether Empoli made a copy of the drawing for financial gain late in life, or whether a student or follower copied the drawing from admiration or for instruction.

Attempts to date many of Empoli's drawings with accuracy becomes problematic when one recognizes that Empoli habitually used the same study for future projects. His use of the same composition for the several versions of the Annunciation has been well cited in the literature. Numerous other examples can be called upon to demonstrate this aspect of his workshop practice. As was discussed earlier, the study of a half-length nude female with a study of her left foot sketched below the figure was used for both the Saint Catherine in Glory and the Madonna in Glory of 1612 for the Company of San Benedetto Bianco. While a terminus ante quem of 1612 can be established for the drawing, it raises a question as to whether the sheet was used first for the painting of Saint Catherine or for the Madonna in
Glory, making it difficult, without documentation, to specifically date the Saint Catherine in Glory. Another example of this practice is provided by the figure of God the Father who appears in the Trinity with Four Evangelists and Saints Lucy and Charles Borromeo of c.1612, and was used for the same figure in an unpublished compositional study also in the Uffizi (n. 1757 S) of the Coronation of the Virgin for which no painting exists (fig. 216). His many versions of the same pose for the Madonna borrowed from Andrea del Sarto have also been well documented in the literature.

Although Empoli's habit, throughout his career, of copying his own motifs does not seem to speak well of his willingness to create new inventions for traditional subjects, it must be remembered that he was prolific in his production of both drawings and paintings, and he was considered among Florence's most sought-after artists which earned him continuous patronage. Perhaps his patrons, sympathetic to his more conservative approach to the rendering of sacred themes, requested him to recreate pictorial motifs admired from previous commissions.

This practice by Empoli to copy his own motifs may have been what prompted Baldinucci to imply that Empoli was lazy. But Empoli's approach to the study of the human figure may have contributed, as well, to Baldinucci's defamation of the artist. Empoli's attempts to render the figure in a foreshortened pose were consistently unsuccessful. Many of his figure studies reveal his difficulty with describing a foreshortened leg or even a hand jutting out from a sleeve. In some instances these
struggles are evident by the appearance of the *pentimenti* on the principle figure study. See the left hand of the the model studied in fig. 186. More often, as if anticipating the difficulty, Empoli left mere notational marks to indicate the hand or foot, only to examine these figural details in the margins of the sheet. Surprisingly, having still not correctly rendered the foreshortened form, Empoli re-designed the pose to exhibit a more two-dimensional view. A most revealing example of this practice is seen in the study for the figure of Christ (fig. 116) where Empoli, unsuccessfully a second time, re-drew the hand extending from the cuff of the drapery enfolding the figure’s left arm. The compositional study shows that Empoli made a final attempt before executing the painting, to correctly articulate this element of the pose. The hand is still awkwardly drawn. In the painting, he bent the hand back in an unnatural manner that would be uncomfortable, if not impossible, to assume given the position of the arm. Nevertheless, the hand is shown in full view with the palm nearly completely facing the viewer, and, therefore, more easily rendered.

A final example illustrates Empoli’s practice of recasting an entire pose of a figure to avoid unsolvable problems of foreshortening. In the compositional study for the *Santa Lucia dei Magnoli Altarpiece* of c.1612 (fig. 208), Empoli’s earlier conception for the figure of Saint John the Baptist shows him as a kneeling figure who rests his weight on his right knee, while his left pushes forward toward the frontal plane of the picture space. As if to avoid the difficult articulation of the foreshortened thigh, Empoli depicted the figure with a portion of his cloak draped
over his leg. This results in yet another awkward rendering of a foreshortened pose and was rejected for the final painting. Rather than deal with the problems inherent in the earlier study, Empoli completely re-designed the figure so that in the painting, the Baptist is seen standing and, therefore, strikes a more conservative and less dynamic pose than that which is inherent to the foreshortened figure.

While foreshortened elements are not completely absent from Empoli's conception of the figure in both his graphic and painterly work, they make rare appearances throughout his career. Successful drawings of the nude in foreshortened poses, however, are conspicuously absent. It is curious that all but one of the extant figure studies for the Drunkenness of Noah depict completely nude figures. The model for the figure of Noah (Uffizi n. 9396 F) wears an undergarment covering the portion of the foreshortened left leg where the thigh connects to the torso which is the most difficult aspect of this pose to render (fig. 217). Neither of Empoli's biographers made reference to the specifics of Empoli's training as student nor do extant documents indicate that Empoli studied the human form through anatomical renderings. If he had, perhaps he could have overcome his difficulties in rendering foreshortened forms.

If one examines the corpus of Empoli's drawings and compares them to his extant paintings, one becomes aware of a consistent preference for more two dimensional poses assumed by nearly all of his figures. As his manner of rendering the human form matured, he described the figure with more ample, monumental form
and with a greater veristic description according to his observations of nature. Yet, by virtue of their more static poses, his figures never became active participants in the Christian drama. Rather than a weakness, however, Empoli’s manner of composing the pictorial elements of the altarpiece as timeless, quiet visions of the Christian faith, was his greatest strength as an artist.
CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

1. Baldinucci 12.

2. Of the extant compositional studies, only a few are executed on prepared paper.

3. Perhaps the discovery that there is such a correlation between the tint of the paper and the intended project will help to relate those studies for which no painting has yet been found and more securely attribute tentative drawings to the assumed painting.

4. An exception to this observation is the compositional study (Uffizi n. 920 F) for the Delivery of the Keys. The blue tonality of the drawing relates to the cool, silvery tonality of the painting.


6. This drawing is executed in black chalk, heightened in white on paper prepared with a yellow wash. The study can be dated to his youthful period, and as such, is comparable to the Woman Tied to a Pole (Uffizi n. 3430 F). The appearance of the palimpsest indicates that, from the beginning of his career, Empoli reused sheets in this manner. I am grateful to Mile Chappell for calling to my attention that this drawing is a study after a statuette also seen in Bandinelli's studio.

7. Some examples of palimpsests appearing among Empoli's graphic exercises are: CMA 62.202 Two views of nude female over Putto (fig. 158); Uffizi n. 9363 F Seated Female over a female head in lost profile (for the Sermon of the Baptist); Uffizi n. 1560 S, a servant for the Last Supper over a drawing in red chalk that is no longer detectable; Uffizi n. 9319 F of the two putti drawn over the architectural design; Uffizi n. 3434 of the figure of God the Father drawn over a figure of a nun with her arms raised in supplication; and a study for the Sermon of the Baptist but not used in the final painting depicts a female spectator (Uffizi n. 9363 F) over a sketch in
red chalk of a man or woman, standing and leaning over, and seen from the figure’s right side with arms stretched out in front, carrying something.

8. See Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli, no.5, 17. This study will be discussed in greater detail further in this chapter.

9. I date this figure to around the mid-to-late second decade of the seventeenth century. Note Empoli’s interest in characterizing the surface description of the cloth draped in front of the figure’s hips and the more sensitive handling of line as it responds to light and shadow.

10. A pensiero of this figure exists on the verso of Uffizi n. 3457.

11. Within the corpus of Empoli’s drawings at the Uffizi, are several red chalk drawings which depict tonal renderings of male figures dressed in classical attire. It is difficult to reconcile these studies with the far greater number of black chalk studies that depict more linear renderings of draped figures. This group of drawings needs closer examination in order to determine their correct attribution and, if they, indeed, belong to Empoli one might question why such tonal renderings of the figure did not influence his other graphic studies as well.

12. Filippo Baldinucci, Vocabulario Toscano Dell’Arte Disegno, 1681, 92.

13. Baldinucci reported that Empoli was commissioned from the monks of the Certosa to paint a Transfiguration and an Agony in the Garden, neither of which painting survives today. There are a number of sheets by Empoli’s hand in the Uffizi which depict figures in repose and dressed in classical drapery. A compositional study for a Transfiguration (Uffizi n. 928 F) may document the Certosa painting mentioned by Baldinucci. These are probably the only surviving evidence of the lost works. (See Baldinucci, Notizie, vol. III, 7.)

14. I am grateful to Miles Chappell for bringing this drawing to my attention.

15. Empoli customarily retraced the ink lines over faint thin lines of black chalk.

16. Among the examples of his drawings depicting draped figures rendered in pen and wash or ink alone are the study for the Saint Francis of Montughi in Witt Collection and the study of the kneeling figure of a female saint (Uffizi n. 9350 F) for the San Michele Visdomini Nativity. See figures 59 and 166.
17. See Olszewski 16.

18. The nature of the influences that shaped Empoli's graphic style are discussed throughout the text of this dissertation and need not be re-stated here.

19. The latter is dated 1612 and the former is believed to have been executed at about the same time.


21. The nude study in red chalk in Rome (F.C. 125358) may have been an alternative idea for the same figure of Isaac (fig. 173). It is interesting that it closely resembles Cigoli's figure of Isaac for same theme dating to c. 1606-08.

22. The study in the Cleveland Museum Art of two views of the female figure seen in three-quarter view from the front and from the back (fig. 159) must have been executed about the same time as this sheet. One sees the same handling of the chalk to render shadows executed as diagonally hatched lines that extend from the forehead to the ankle without any significant response to the more subtle forms of the figure's musculature.

23. Marabottini 222.

24. Thomas Mayerne visited Florence around 1600 and lectured at the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova on the subject of anatomy. Baldinucci reported that Cigoli and Mayerne became friends. Cigoli's ambitious study of anatomy was undoubtedly aided and encouraged by his association with Mayerne. By the lack of anatomical studies in Empoli's corpus of drawings, he seems not to have taken advantage of Mayerne's visit to Florence. (See Chappell, *Lodovico Cigoli: Essays* 78 and 274, n. 33.

25. The orange hue of the cloak also distinguishes Saint Thomas from his more trusting colleagues.

26. I am grateful to Miles Chappell for bringing to my attention the similarities between Empoli's composition for the *Doubting of Saint Thomas* and that of Dürer from his Small Passion series. (See fig. 180.) The woodcut by Dürer more closely corresponds to Empoli's compositional study in the Ecole des Beaux - Arts in Paris. (See fig. 181.) In particular, the arrangement of drapery and the pose of Saint Thomas seems to have been inspired by Dürer's print. But the relationship of the
figures to the picture space, and the sparse, box-like environment in which the Apostles and Christ are arranged is also similar to Dürer's composition. Empoli later modified the garment, and, to a degree, the pose of Saint Thomas as exhibited in the compositional study discussed above, Uffizi n. 927 F.

27. This study may have been executed in charcoal rather than black chalk. The sketchy quality of the stroke makes the identification of its substance difficult to determine.

28. Marabottini suggests a date around the middle of the first decade of the seventeenth century, perhaps executed about the same year as the studies for the Presentation in the Temple since, in his opinion, the manner of draftsmanship bears a resemblance to the half-length study for the Virgin (Uffizi n. 840 E) for that project. (Marabottini, 152.) I suggest a slightly earlier date closer to 1600. The period at the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth represents a time when Empoli was most influenced by Venetian art. His work shows a greater sensitivity to the play of light and shadow and the forms are more compact.

29. See A. Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli, cat. no. 61, 44 for a discussion of this drawing and those influences which may have inspired it.

30. See Colnaghi 85.

31. Anna Forlani believes this to be comparable chronologically to the study in the Uffizi (n. 3442 F) of a Cardinal (Borromeo) for the 1613 Saint Charles Borromeo and the Rospigliosi Family and even closer to the half-length study also in the Uffizi (n. 7596 S) of a male figure and detail of hand with sword. (A. Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli, cat. no. 54, 41.)

32. Miles Chappell expressed the opinion that this may not be attributable to the hand of Empoli. I believe, based on stylistic analysis, that it is by Empoli. For example, the geometric delineation of the arm clothed in a skin-tight sleeve appears frequently in Empoli's figure studies. Note, for example, the study of the figure of the female saint for the San Michele Visdomini Nativity of c. 1628 (Uffizi n. 9350 F). Rendered in the same media as the garzone study, Empoli again made emphatic the cylindrical shape of the arm culminating in a hand that gestures with long, tapered fingers. Moreover, on the verso of the sheet appears a faint image of a lute player sketched in fine lines of red chalk and a diminutive sketch of a male figure seen from behind with his arms behind his back. The lute player, although only barely notated here, is identical to the more polished study of the figure in collection of the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam (n. 1948:357). If Chappell is correct and the
contemporary figure depicted here is not Empoli's, then the drawing in the Rijksmuseum must be of doubtful attribution as well. The tiny figure also seen on the verso of this sheet may have been sketched as an idea for the King David of the c.1600 San Miniato Immaculate Conception, or for a martyrred saint for which there is no extant painting.

33. For Zaballi's remarks, see Battelli 208. See Baldinucci, Notizie, vol. III, 15.

34. Another example of Empoli's sensitive description of the head in a figure study is seen in the half-length study for one of Noah's sons (Uffizi n. 1823 S). (See fig. 199.) The study corresponds to the figure of the son in the painting of the Drunkeness of Noah who expresses anguish at the drunken state of his father. In terms of a head study, Empoli has skillfully captured the expression of the anguished emotion experienced by the youth. The soft rendering of the emotive face describes an open mouth and eyes that look imploringly upward. Loose stands of hair fly about the head. The manner of execution is consistent with the mid-to-late second decade, and as such, is comparable to the study (Uffizi n.2243 S) for the executioner in the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian.


36. See Marabottini 222.

37. See Chapter Two.


39. See Chapter One, pp. 16-17, for my explanation of the slash of grey wash applied over the woman's face.


41. Cantelli and Chelazzi Dini 38.

42. An earlier hand wrote the name, "Cigoli", on the lower left corner of the sheet. The mis-attribution attests to the similarity of style to the graphic manner of Cigoli.
43. As is typical of the intensity of ink, when the wash dried, the ink reappeared beneath the wash.

44. Compare this sheet, for example, to a study for the composition of the *Sermon of the Baptist* preserved in Genoa (Palazzo Rosso, n. A 635, 1287) and executed around the same time in 1608 (fig. 208).

45. See Miles Chappell, *Disegni di Lodovico Cigoli* 95-96 for a discussion of this drawing.

46. That the architectural enframements were drawn by Empoli rather than by a collector for presentation in an album, is obvious after observing these two sheets in the Gabinetto degli Stampe i Disegni at the Uffizi (inv. n. 1736 S and 661 F). One notes a consistency in the handling of the pen and wash between the execution of the figural studies and their respective enframements.

47. See the discussion of Uffizi n. 15522 for the *Delivery of the Keys* in Chapter Three for an example of this type of study.

48. See the discussion of the compositional sketch, Uffizi n. 1737 S, for the *Madonna and Child Appearing to Saint Hyacinth* in Chapter Three.

49. There are three extant studies for the figure of Saint Hyacinth for the *Madonna Appearing to Saint Hyacinth* of the mid-1590s. This might be attributed to the fact that Empoli executed two paintings of this subject, and, although he used the same pose for Saint Hyacinth in each instance, the drapery arrangement varies from one figure to the next. The drapery arrangement of the figure of the saint in Uffizi n. 9311 F more closely resembles the arrangement of folds of material cascading over the platform on which he kneels as seen in the pensiero sketch for the composition, and used in the San Felice in Piazza painting where he has included the figure of Saint Peter Martyr. This leads me to speculate that the San Felice in Piazza painting was executed before the Santa Maria Novella version.

50. I am grateful to Miles Chappell for bringing the *St. Thomas* drawing in the private collection to my attention, and for calling to my attention the similarity of the interior setting seen in both this sheet and the Munich *Saint Thomas* study.

51. A study in the Uffizi (n. 957 F) documents the initial conception of Thomas' garment and pose (fig. 184).

52. Note how Empoli re-used the figures of Saint Barbara and her
executioner from the painting of 1603 for the tiny scene below of the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine.
CHAPTER FIVE

EMPOLI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

E vero infatti (e faccio mia un' osservazione di Max Friedlaender) che i pittori continuavano ad essere 'piu vicino alla natura quando disegnavano che quando dipingevano.  

What distinguishes the art of Empoli and of his Tuscan colleagues in the early decades of the seventeenth century from the art of the Maniera or of the High Renaissance, for that matter, is best articulated in the preparatory process, that is, in the drawings. The fundamental premise of their art, based on nature as their primary model rather than on the intellectual constructs of the mind or the imitation of the antique, is eloquently stated in the legion of drawings executed, not only in preparation for the altarpiece, but as exercises that sharpened skills and improved powers of observation.

No single circumstance nor artistic genius brought about this impulse to turn to nature as an exemplar of instruction in decorum and proportion in the conception of the human figure. The Tridentine decrees, in denouncing the art of the Maniera, did not specifically define the manner in which artists should create church decoration. Their demands for a didactic art that appealed directly to the hearts and souls of the faithful rather than to the minds of the intellectually elite, motivated artists to seek out
more humble figural types with which to enact the Christian drama.

If Empoli and his contemporaries found the superhuman figural types of Michelangelo ill-suited for their more humble compositions, they, nevertheless, found much inspiration from the masters of the early Cinquecento, particularly, the latter's practice of drawing the nude from life. That the artists of the reform turned to the early Tuscan masters for less robust figural types - those of Sarto, and Fra Bartolommeo, for instance - and admired their techniques of draftsmanship as well as painting, underscores the eclectic foundations of their art. This bias to seek out several sources with which to compose and execute the altarpiece was invariably tested against their own observations of nature. The nearly obsessive practice of drawing elicited countless studies of the nude and draped figures and of members of the workshop in repose or citizens from the streets of Florence performing some aspect of their daily routine.

The prolific output of graphic studies provides evidence of a consensus approach to workshop procedures among the artists of Empoli's generation. This phenomenon may be explained, in part, by virtue of the instructional methods endorsed at the Accademia del Disegno or result from the interaction of one workshop with another.

The methods used by these artists were not, of themselves, unique to the Florentine tradition of studio practice, but it is noteworthy that there appears to have been such uniformity in the artistic process. In general, therefore, the earliest ideas
for the altarpiece were conceived as rapidly sketched compositional studies in pen and ink that resulted in little more than notational markings for the arrangement of the figures. These were followed by more finished studies of the nude and draped figure, often with additional details re-examined in the margins of the sheet. Draftsmen were not only concerned with determining the precise pose and drapery arrangement but, often investigated the play of light and shade as well. Within this stage of the preparatory process, artists frequently executed numerous studies of the figures destined for the final version appearing in the altarpiece, among which were sketches of workshop members assuming a pose which would later take on the guise of a sacred character. Finally, the definitive compositional study was executed in pen and wash over black chalk. At this stage of the creative process, Empoli produced more versions of the same composition than did his colleagues for reasons previously discussed.

Empoli appears to have preferred red chalk more often for nude figure studies and black chalk for draped figures. Yet such a distinction was not as rigidly practiced by his contemporaries who were much more flexible in their use of red chalk for draped figures as well as for nude studies. Moreover, Empoli's colleagues such as Cigoli, Pagani and Empoli's younger contemporary, Cristofano Allori, explored the chromatic potential of mixed chalks with more regularity than one finds among Empoli's securely attributed drawings. This fact underscores Empoli's bias to describe form and volume when rendering the figure, while his concern for the painterly values
of light and shadow were secondary. Ironically, Empoli, more so than his contemporaries, preferred the use of paper prepared with color on which to execute the figure.

That Empoli and his contemporaries shared sources of inspiration and practiced similar workshop methods is compounded by the fact that several of these artists, at the outset of their career, shared a studio as well. Baldinucci reported that around 1587 Cigoli, Pagani and Passignano sub-let a studio from Girolamo Machietti in a palazzo behind Santissima Annunziata.\(^2\) There can be little doubt that Empoli frequented the studio as well. As young, independent masters, these artists studied the figure from the same models if for different purposes.\(^3\) Although one cannot determine that a particular drawing was, in fact, executed in this studio, a comparison of many of their sketches reveals several figure studies that appear to be drawn after the same model.

From this practice arise questions of attribution. For example, a study (Uffizi n. 9344 F) of a nude figure, presumably for a youthful John the Baptist, posed in a characteristic gesture with his right hand raised and pointing upward, has been securely attributed to Empoli (fig. 218).\(^4\) Executed in black chalk and heightened in white on bluish-grey prepared paper, the study depicts a lean, adolescent, nude male. The upper torso is rendered with no apparent difficulty, but the extensive pentimenti around the legs expose Empoli's problems in rendering the lower torso. As usual, Empoli had difficulty with the articulation of the foreshortened right leg where one
sees an awkward transition from the knee to the hip as it joins the torso. Firm contours define the structure of the body with no attempt to render the nuances of the musculature. Simple diagonal hatching of the chalk on the figure's left side from the shoulder to the groin indicate the direction of the light and its ensuing shadow. This handling of the medium is typical of Empoli's approach to the study of the nude form.

Compare this sheet to a study by Cigoli (Uffizi n. 8815 F) for the same figure of John the Baptist (fig. 219). No extant painting has been unquestionably connected to either of these drawings. Notwithstanding the traditional pose assumed by both figures, these studies seem to have been executed at the same time by separate artistic personalities. The source of light is identical, the pose of each figure varies only in the slightest degree. Cigoli's nude, however, is rendered in red chalk on white paper. That he avidly studied anatomy is visible in the confident rendering of the nude form. He interpreted the model as a more monumental figure whose musculature is more subtly articulated in the soft and atmospheric modeling intrinsic to the medium of red chalk. The forms of the figure are securely delineated in line, responding to a variety of pressure as Cigoli more or less emphatically outlined the figure's contour. The play of light and shadow, however, imparts a pictorial expressiveness to the figure that is characteristic of Cigoli's approach to the study of the nude form.

During the last decade of the sixteenth century and early decade of the seventeenth century, the lure of Rome, with its promise of lucrative commissions, brought artists from all over Italy, as it had for centuries, to study the art of the past
and to exchange with one another their own artistic achievements of the present. Artists from Bologna and Florence collaborated on projects such as the chapel decoration in Santa Maria Maggiore for the Borghese family, thus providing ample opportunity for an exchange of ideas between artists. Cigoli and Passignano, among others, had ample opportunities to come into direct contact with the art of the Carracci, of Caravaggio, and, of inspiration to all, the art of Raphael and Michelangelo. Yet, despite the differences in artistic approach among these artists of diverse centers throughout Italy, they shared a common conviction in the study of nature as the foundation on which to create.

The importance of *disegno*, already articulated in the printed word decades earlier by Vasari, was eloquently addressed in a speech to the members of the Accademia di San Lucca in Rome by Cigoli. The emphasis on the practice of *disegno* based on the intensive and prolific study of the model from life is the singular most radical break from the art of the Maniera with its dependence on copying *all'antica*. The paintings by the artists of Empoli's generation reflect the study of nature in the depiction of humble figures assuming natural poses. This departs from even those masters of the High Renaissance who distilled from their life studies the most sublime form of the human figure, creating a vision that elevated the human body to the realm of the divine.

Florentine artists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries begin the creative process with the premise of nature as the true model, but they seek common
sources of inspiration with which to compose their paintings as an expression of their
own personal style. If at first they were encouraged by the example of Santi di Tito
to recast the language of the altarpiece in more humble and legible terms, they sought
a variety of influences with which to express this language.

Their interactions in Rome with artists outside of Tuscany introduced them to
the narrative style and the monumental figures of the Carracci and to the dramatic
chiaroscuro and earthy realism of Caravaggism. Empoli was aware of these artistic
developments without having to travel to Rome since he had the opportunity to
observe the assimilation of these influences in the work of his colleagues returning to
Florence and in paintings collected by her wealthy citizens.

Artists returning to Florence from Venice brought to their artistic circle
enthusiasm for the Venetian manner of rendering light and color with a pictorial
expressiveness that added a new dramatic power to the clear, articulate forms
characterizing the tradition of Florentine art. Empoli responded to the Venetian
influences by developing a more sensitive handling of light as seen in the Susanna at
her Bath (fig. 87), but did not exploit the poetic expressiveness of light and color to
the degree that is observed in the work of Cigoli, Passignano and their followers.

Empoli's primary concern for a formal and iconographical legibility of the
narrative discouraged him from experimenting with the painterly and pictorial effects
of light, shade and color which might compromise clarity of form.

The influence of Barocci and of Correggio that profoundly helped to shape the
graphic and painterly work of Cigoli, Pagani and Passignano held little sway with
Empoli. The impact of Barocci can be observed in the graphic work of Cigoli and his
circle. Head studies, for example, demonstrate the use of mixed chalks, red for
modelling the flesh, and black for the hair and eyes. The use of mixed chalks in
Empoli's graphic exercises is comparatively rare. Moreover, his occasional studies
executed in red and black chalks heightened in white are not nearly as successful as
his other drawings.

That the art of Barocci, Correggio and the Venetians, in general, had less of
an impact on Empoli's graphic work is also demonstrated by the differences in
techniques in the handling of chalks, ink and wash. Common among Cigoli's graphic
exercises are drawings executed in brush and wash on prepared paper. The painterly
handling of the wash and white heightening create strong effects of chiaroscuro, and
result in images, at times, of dramatic power, and at others, of lyrical expressiveness.
The use of blue and brown washes, rare in Empoli's graphic oeuvre, appears
frequently in Cigoli's and attest to his early years of training with Santi di Tito. Yet
the predilection for the dynamic effects of light and shade and the painterly handling
of the graphic media practiced by Cigoli, Passignano and others owe a greater debt to
Venetian prototypes and to the graphic achievements of Barocci, in particular.

Despite the differences of expression and technique that inform Empoli's
graphic manner and that of his colleagues, the fundamental premise in representing
the image with a truth to nature created a common ground upon which each forged
their own personal styles. With this foundation in nature, artists selected from a common pool of influences an eclectic vocabulary with which to communicate the Christian narratives. That they not only shared models but sought inspiration from similar sources is in part responsible for the difficulty often encountered in determining the correct attribution of many drawings.

These sources were brought together in the academies in the form of an exchange of influences between artists, and in the preservation of a collection of prints and drawings for graphic exercises and for figural and compositional prototypes available to all their members. Artists also had the opportunity to exchange ideas during work on collaborative projects. Not the least important among such projects were the various festival and funereal events that required elaborate decorative enterprises.

The following section of this chapter is devoted to observations about the relationship between various aspects of Empoli's graphic manner to those comparable treatments of his contemporaries. In many cases problems of attribution, generated primarily from issues discussed above, are addressed.7

EMPOLI AND POCCETTI

A drawing in the Uffizi (n. 3464 F) of a soldier seen from behind and carrying a lance in his left hand is executed in black chalk and heightened in white on a sheet prepared with a lilac tint (fig. 220). This study can be found among Empoli's
drawings but is attributable to Bernardo Poccetti. In fact, the figure appears among other soldiers in the frescoes executed by Poccetti (1608-09) in the Sala di Bona of the Palazzo Pitti. Its attribution to Empoli in the Uffizi collection is understandable considering the manner in which it is rendered. Long, sinuous contours lines with sparse shading define the volumetric forms of the figure. The choice of the lilac ground for the figure study is unusual even for Empoli, but even more unusual for Poccetti who rarely used prepared papers, preferring instead, white or blue.

The graceful curve of the soldier's pose is what first alerts one to question the attribution of this drawing. Such an elegant and fluid movement is not found in any of Empoli's figural studies. This vestige of maniera artifice is more commonly present among Poccetti's graphic exercises. (See Uffizi nos. 878 E and 878 F, figs. 221 and 222.) Other drawings that survive for Poccetti's frescoes share not only the same manner of execution, albeit in red chalk on white paper, but appear to be based on the same model. The sketch of a figure seen from behind but without the spear and with no description of the garment on the upper torso is clearly a study of the same model who also appears in a compositional study (Uffizi n. 8296 F) for a lunette fresco in the small cloister of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence (fig. 223). 8

Poccetti's manner of draftsmanship is characterized by a linear approach to the rendering of form with little concern for the effects of light and shade. Poccetti's emphasis on line to describe form may be attributable to the function of the drawing as preparatory for fresco painting which occupied the artist throughout most of his
career. The modelling of form with atmospheric effects of light and shade, quite possible by graphic means, is not easily translated into the fresco medium.  

Like Empoli and his colleagues at the outset of the seventeenth century, however, Poccetti eventually, if only superficially, responded to the influences of the Venetian manner of light which can be observed in his ink and wash compositional studies of the first decade of the century (Uffizi n. 863 F, fig. 85). Poccetti's early training with Buontalenti in the 1560s prepared him for the demands placed on an artist who must compose large, scenographic narrative themes frescoed in the cloisters and chapels of Florentine churches. But Poccetti's admiration for the draftsmanship of Alessandro Allori helped him to arrive at a graphic style that is characterized by firm contours to delineate form. Poccetti's figural types and compositions owe a debt to Andrea del Sarto, an artist from whom, like Empoli, Poccetti sought inspiration throughout his career. From his study of the art of the early Tuscan masters and his admiration for the art of Taddeo Zucarro and Santi di Tito, Poccetti successfully created a narrative mode that was populated with characters from everyday life. These figures often served as anecdotal elements that embellished the principle theme of the fresco. Among his graphic exercises are numerous sheets depicting his contemporaries in quotidain activities (Bassano Collection, Civico Museo, n. 528, fig. 224).

Empoli's graphic manner shares many characteristics with that of Poccetti. Extant documents suggest that Empoli may have studied with Poccetti in the early
1570s, after the death of his master Maso da San Friano. This might explain the similarities in their style of draftsmanship. Both rendered the figure with an economy of line and shading. While contours were emphatically delineated, shadows were sparsely hatched with diagonal strokes of the chalk. The artists shunned the more painterly potential of the graphic media and tools for a linear style that placed the highest priority on clarity of form. The large corpus of drawings that belongs to both artists includes many figural studies of contemporary citizens in action or repose attesting to their practice of studying the figure from life.¹¹

Poccetti's drawings exhibit qualities that are uniquely his as well. The majority of his figural studies are rendered in broken, angular lines that animate the figure to a greater degree than Empoli's more fluid approach. That Poccetti's figural poses are more active, reflects their more narrative role in the final composition. Yet Poccetti could alter his treatment of line to become more curvilinear and graceful for some figural studies, while sacrificing none of the energy apparent in the rapid execution of the chalk. The older artist showed a greater versatility, as well, in the use of red and black chalks. Many of his draped figure studies are executed in red chalk, the medium Empoli reserved primarily for nude figure studies. Toward the end of his career, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, he explored the chromatic potential inherent in the use of mixed chalks.

Poccetti's drawings are more lively and narrative in character than can be observed in the figural studies executed by Empoli. Yet Empoli's figures are
distinguished by a classical dignity and by a greater monumentality and breadth of
form. A heightened expression of realism is achieved by the description of surface
textures that is absent in the drawings by Poccetti.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{EMPOLI AND CIGOLI}

Much has already been discussed throughout the previous chapters about the
graphic approach of Empoli in relationship to his colleague, Cigoli. Particular
emphasis has been given to comparative remarks concerning these two artists. Some
additional comments, however, will shed more light on their individual approach to
the preparation and execution of the altarpiece. Like the melodic lines of a well-
orchestrated fugue within a piece of music, the individual artists' achievements
respond in different ways to a common need for a narrative art based on nature and
the desire to be comprehensible to the populace.

As a result of Cigoli's interaction with his contemporaries in Rome and with
his exposure to the art of Raphael, his paintings, in the later years of his career, evoke
a contemplative response from the viewer. This aspect of his work, however, is
characterized more by his choices in the content of the narrative rather than by the
vibrant manner of execution. In a sense, the paintings of his Roman years represent a
culmination of his investigations into the expressive effects of light and color.
Paintings such as the \textit{Ecce Homo} of c. 1604 and the \textit{Martyrdom of Saints James and
Josias} of 1605 reach an equilibrium between a classical restraint manifested in the
compositional balance and air of repose that pervades the narrative, and a dramatic expressive power that is achieved by rich, sensuous color, vibrant brushstrokes, and monumental form (figs. 227 and 228). Instead of depicting violent scenes of physical cruelty, Cigoli created scenes of psychological intensity. Yet while Cigoli's contemplative paintings, by their sensuous appeal, stir an inner emotional response in the spectator, Empoli's paintings evoke a more rational, if not to say a more mystical, response.

As one examines the prolific number of drawings that comprises Cigoli's graphic work in the Uffizi, one finds that his studies exhibit tremendous energy in the rendering of the figure, and even more so in the execution of compositional studies. No single study demonstrates a sense of quiet repose. Even if the figure assumes an attitude of contemplation, the vibrancy with which the medium is handled animates the image (fig. 229). Cigoli's compositional studies are energized with active lines that never completely enclose the figure within the confines of its silhouette (fig. 230). Physical movement and emotional expression are as much articulated by the descriptive path of the line as they are by the actual character of the execution.

The vitality of the creative process is dynamically expressed by the flurry of figural and compositional sketches that fill a sheet as Cigoli made visual impressions of his thoughts on paper (fig. 231). The intensity with which these tiny sketches were executed characterizes his graphic manner in general and is transformed in the final painting through color, light and brushstroke. In Cigoli's drawings, the pictorial
expressiveness of light and shade, the swift passage of the pen over the surface of the paper, the painterly treatment of the wash and white heightening, the shimmering modulations of the red or black chalk energize the drawing in a way that affirms Cigoli's place as a leading master in post-maniera Florentine art.

Empoli's approach, by contrast, is one of restraint and, although no less fluent than that of Cigoli, it is more rational. That Empoli's paintings and his graphic language, in general, are more conservative than those of Cigoli and his circle, may be explained by his conception of the altarpiece as a vehicle to communicate the eternal truths of Church doctrine. This predisposition motivated him to conceive of the sacred themes as expressive of a quiet stillness that transcends any historical time and place. With this in mind, his arrangement of figures within the shallow ledge of foreground space set against a backdrop of ambiguous space such as one sees in the Doubting of Saint Thomas or against a backdrop that appears to be little more than a stage flat of scenery as in the Sermon of the Baptist, serves his purpose of subordinating the setting to the principle characters in a most effective manner. Yet not only are his compositions two-dimensional in conception, but the individual figures, as well, assume two-dimensional poses. This aspect of his style is more apparent in his figural studies than in his paintings. Almost without exception, whether his figures turn away from the frontal plane of the paper's surface, or face it, the stance of the figure coincides with a frontal plane. In this respect, Empoli's manner reflects his study of the art of the early Renaissance masters, such as
Perugino, Botticelli and the early Raphael.

Cigoli's manner of composition reveals the influence of the Renaissance in the classical balance of figures arranged in the foreground plane of the picture space. Unlike Empoli, however, Cigoli invites the eye to penetrate a deeper level of space by creating diagonal movements into the picture plane. Cigoli arranged the figures in the Heraclius Carrying the Cross (1594, fig. 232) along either side of a diagonal passage of space leading into the middleground of the composition. Indeed, Cigoli places the principal figures on a diagonal axis away from the picture plane in nearly every one of his compositions. Further, within a single composition, each figure assumes a different rotation of pose so that as the eye travels from one figure to the next, a complete revolution in pose is accomplished collectively. This is readily observed in the Deposition from the Cross of 1607 (fig. 233). In this manner, Cigoli creates more visual movement within the altarpiece than one sees in Empoli's compositions.

Cigoli's concept of the figure in terms of dynamic movement is apparent in all of his figural studies. A conscious effort is made to avoid a strictly two-dimensional pose. Adept in the description of the foreshorted pose, Cigoli shows no self-conscious awareness of the frontal plane of the paper's surface. His figures twist and turn in space, at times evincing energetic action, and, at others, assuming more gentle attitudes. Compare Cigoli's nude study (n. Uffizi 8824 F) for an archer with Empoli's study of the same subject for his Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian (n. Uffizi 9348 F, figs. 234 and 235). Empoli's executioner calmly stands in the act of
dispatching the unseen arrow, and his pose conforms within a two-dimensional plane with the modest exception of the extension of the figure's left leg. Cigoli's figure, on the other hand, strains in the act of pulling the bow-string to his body. Both his right elbow and knee break through the frontal plane of the surface, while his shoulders twist one way and his hips another. \(^{14}\) Whereas Cigoli seemed quite intent on dissolving the flatness of the frontal plane, Empoli's figures seem drawn to it.

Cigoli's inclination to compose dynamic figural constructs is indicative of his conception of the altarpiece as one that inspires an emotive response in the viewer. Movement, sensuousness of color and light, and figural expression are among those tools he used to create a reality that is communicated through the senses. The response expected from his art is of a spontaneous expression in response to his blatant appeals to the sense of sight. On the contrary, by the manner Cigoli's visual appeals to the senses, his paintings inspire an emotional response in the viewer toward the Christian drama.

That Cigoli preferred this approach to the depiction of the sacred themes, is in part due to patronage. The Medici favored Cigoli as their court artist. The growing taste in Florence for pageantry and for elaborate theatrical productions in the early years of the seventeenth century, was openly encouraged by the Medici court. Its impact would have greater effect on the art of Cigoli's followers, yet the taste for the theatrical gave tacit support to Cigoli's more sensuous art. In addition the influence of the art of Venice and of Barocci and Correggio, and the inspiration of the early
Cinquecento masters helped to more definitively shape Cigoli's style as one of chromatic intensity. Yet, perhaps his own philosophical ideas about the role of the artist most profoundly motivated him to arrive at a more passionate manner of graphic and painterly execution. His drawings and paintings are characterized by a pictorial expressiveness of light and color. His figures exhibit gestures and facial expressions which reveal the passions of their souls. In his unfinished Prospettiva Practica of the first decade of the seventeenth century, Cigoli wrote,

> Our Soul, closed within our body, can know nothing of the world outside except what our senses relay to it...for the soul resides in the heart and gives it the power to function, and when it functions, almost of necessity it communicates to the eyes the outcome of its effect, and these having received it, show it to us as a mirror, in which is reflected all that is altered within us. Considering all this, some made so bold as to affirm that the greatest and most certain indications of the passions of the Soul could be seen from our eyes, rather than from any part of the body, For in them Anger, Clemency, Mercy, Hatred, Love, Sorrow, and in short every other affection of our mind can be clearly recognized.\(^\text{15}\)

If Cigoli's art reached an equilibrium between the classical ideal and Baroque dynamics, between disegno and colore, Empoli's art conveyed a balance between the vision of this world and the realm of the divine. His supreme ability to depict the reality of things was exploited to communicate the timeless doctrines of the Church.\(^\text{16}\)

**EMPOLI AND THE NEXT GENERATION**

Little is known of the achievements of Empoli's students. The artists emerging as independent masters in the early decades of the seventeenth century were
more inclined to build upon the artistic achievements begun by Cigoli and his circle. No single artist of this generation has been recognized as an innovator among his peers. Instead, artists such as Cristofano Allori, Matteo Rosselli, and Francesco Curradi responded more or less to the growing taste for pageantry and theatricality in the depiction of the Christian narrative, while continuing to offer the viewer an image that was articulated with a heightened realism.

These Florentine artists, in the tradition of their masters, were prolific in their graphic exercises of studies from life. In many ways, their drawings demonstrate a higher quality of success than can be said of their paintings. Unfortunately, however, problems of attribution are commonplace. This is partly due to the lack of research given to the study of these artists and partly due to the homogeneity of their graphic approach to the study of the figure. As a whole, the drawings executed by Empoli's younger generation demonstrate a greater interest in exploiting the chromatic potential of the graphic media. If some of their paintings can be faulted by their exaggerated sentimentalism, their drawings exhibit a more natural expression of human emotion.

Among the more talented of artists from this generation was Cristofano Allori, son of the artist, Alessandro. Since he lived only forty-four years, very few paintings have survived that can be securely attributed to his hand. The influence of Caravaggism as transmitted by Gentileschi mitigated with a sense of refinement and decorum inherited from his Florentine training, are revealed in his most famous
painting, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* of 1610-1612 (fig. 236). The precise
description of surface textures and the clarity of form reflects, at least a sympathy
with, if not influence from, the manner of Empoli. But the rich pictorialism and the
poetic expression of color and light derive from his training with Pagani and attests to
his admiration for the achievements of Cigoli.

Cristofano exhibits a versatility in his graphic approach to the study of the
figure. Firm contours delineate the silhouettes of the figures in long fluid strokes of
the chalk that recall the graphic manner of his father, Alessandro (fig. 237). Yet as a
result of the influence of Pagani, Cigoli and Passignano, not even the slightest labored
artifice is present in his conception of the figure. His life studies, often rendered on
light blue paper, depict figures in active poses and modeled in light and shadow that
impart a pictorial expressiveness to the study. Also among his drawings are figural
and head studies executed in mixed chalks that portray their subjects with an
atmospheric softness (fig. 238). The linear definition of form is subordinated to a
pictorial expression where form emerges through luministic effects of light and
nuanced modulations of shadow. Among his most successful explorations in this
idiom are his portrait studies, a genre for which he received well-deserved acclaim.

Allori's linear studies share with Empoli's drawings an emphasis on aggressive
contour lines to define the volumetric forms of the body. His study of a woman for
the *Hospitality of San Giuliano* (fig. 206) has already been identified as owing a debt
to the graphic manner of Empoli. The similarities between the two graphic manners
derive from the initial premise of the drawings to render the figure from nature, and also to the emphatic use of line to describe form. But Allori's graphic approach is inevitably more pictorial than Empoli's.

Although attributed to Empoli, a problematic study in red chalk of a male nude (Louvre n. 1048, fig. 239) actually shows us Allori's style. The model is posed on a series of steps which enable him to assume an extended attitude. Shielding a portion of his face, the figure's left arm is stretched above his head, while his right foot is supported on the second tread of the steps. The two diminutive and notational sketches on the left side of the sheet have been proposed to represent gestural ideas for Empoli's Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. Notwithstanding accidents of survival, however, the figure corresponds to none of the extant drawings for this project. Although the pose may in fact represent the martyred saint bound to a tree, it is more consistent with the traditional attitude assumed by Marsyas as he about to receive his punishment for his audacious boast before Apollo.

The study also does not conform with Empoli’s manner of rendering the nude. The soft tonal modelling of the torso is more typical of Cristofano Allori's graphic manner. Allori's interest in using the Gaddi Torso, a fragment from a Discobolus (fig. 240), as a prototype for the nude figure has been noted in the literature on Cristofano. His figural sketches for the Resurrection (fig. 241) of c. 1600 show that Cristofano incorporated the Gaddi Torso into his figure studies from life for the figure of Christ (figs. 242, 243a and 243b). The musculature is modelled with the
same knotty structure observed in the prototype. The Louvre study, although given to Empoli, repeats the extreme thrust of the torso. There can be little doubt that the Gaddi Torso served as a resource for this study as well as the figural drawings for the Resurrection and thus the study should be attributed to Allori. The mis-attrition to Empoli underlines the inherent problems of connoisseurship that arise from the practice of Empoli and his contemporaries to study the nude from life while often sharing models and employing similar techniques of execution. If the study is, in fact, a preliminary drawing for a Saint Sebastian, it may have been executed for a painting recorded by Baldinucci of a Madonna with Saints in a landscape for Carlo Davanzati Bostichi.23 One of the saints was a Saint Sebastian tied to a tree.24

Within the critical literature written about Empoli are frequent remarks that attest to a reciprocity of influence between Empoli and his younger contemporary, Matteo Rosselli. As a favored student in the workshop of Pagani, Rosselli's art exhibits a narrative style that he learned from his master. Yet his admiration for the achievements of Empoli is apparent in the borrowing of motifs from the older master and from a predilection for the description of surface texture and details of costume, for which he was criticized by his own contemporaries for being too excessive.25 His paintings and drawings show a clarity of form and classical balance that derives not only from his training with Pagani and his appreciation of the work of Empoli, but from an avid study of the art of Andrea del Sarto which seems to have informed the art of the Florentine school in a pervasive way in the early decades of the seventeenth
Rosselli's return from a brief visit to Rome in 1605 coincides with the period when Empoli's style becomes more heroic and monumental in conception. The lessons learned by Rosselli, as well as by Cigoli, from their exposure to the grandeur of the papal city and from the art of the High Renaissance were undoubtedly passed on to the older Empoli in these years. But Empoli's art shows a more perceptible influence from Rosselli in the later years of his career from about the mid-second decade of the seventeenth century until his death. It is during these years that Empoli's characters become more expressive and his settings become more descriptive as one sees in the Saint Eligius and King Clotaire II of 1614. The sweetness of Saint Sebastian's countenance as he looks to the heavens for deliverance recalls similar heads by Rosselli. The two artists would have had direct contact with each other at this time as they worked together in the decoration of the Casa Buonarotti.

Among the drawings attributed to both artists appear studies of standing draped figures that seem to have been executed simply as graphic exercises without relevance to specific projects. Although Rosselli's graphic manner was more chromatic in nature than that of Empoli, these figures are rendered with distinct silhouettes and exhibit a classical decorum that bestows an air of dignity upon them. There are a number of these draped figure studies among Empoli's drawings that appear far too chromatic and atmospheric in technique. If they were in fact executed by him, one must wonder why such expressive elements were not carried over in any
significant degree to his other figural sketches. It may well be that some of these drawings should be given to Rosselli. Further research into the function and attribution of the drawings is needed.

Rosselli's graphic manner is characterized by a preference for red chalk, sometimes in two different shades, that renders the nude or draped figure with luminous effects of light and shadow. He often blends the strokes of the chalk to achieve atmospheric effects that soften the linear elements of the study (fig. 245). His skill as a draftsman is demonstrated in several drawings, many of contemporary figures. The figures are given expressive faces and assume narrative poses. Drapery is modelled with an attention to describing the substance of the material, while the point of the chalk delineates subtly nuanced of folds. Many of his drawings exhibit a distinct silhouette as one finds in Empoli's graphic work, but Rosselli enriches the study of the figure with a poetic expression of light and shadow that creates a greater tonal range than observed among the graphic exercises by Empoli. The atmospheric quality of the drawing is enhanced by the rendering of chalk over the entire sheet, a practice that can be observed in Francesco Curradi's graphic exercises as well (figs. 246 and 247). Although the proportion of the head is often small in relation to the body, the figures themselves are not attenuated in the manner in which one observes in the figural studies of the Maniera artists. Less finished studies show a more rapid execution of the chalk creating thin strokes which are, at times, blended and, at others, widely spaced. His versatility of execution is enhanced by his variety of
media. His chromatic approach to the rendering of the figure led him to use both red
and black chalks together in the same drawing as is more common among the circle of
Cigoli and reflects the influence of Barocci on his followers.\textsuperscript{36}

CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE OUTSIDE FLORENCE

The influence of the art of the Bolognese school on the draftsmanship of
Jacopo da Empoli is probable but cannot be evaluated with any precision. With no
documentary evidence that Empoli ever traveled to Rome or Emilia, his contacts with
the art of the Carracci and of Guido Reni were likely to have been indirect. His
observation of Bolognese prints circulating among the members of the Accademia del
Disegno would have provided him with some visual contacts, but more likely his
exposure to their art derived from his interactions with his colleagues returning to
Florence from Rome. The increased breadth of form and the more classically heroic
stature of his sacred figures that were manifested in both his graphic work and in his
paintings, is attributable to such indirect influences coming out of Rome in the first
decade of the seventeenth century. Yet whether this attests to his awareness of
exemplary models from the High Renaissance art of Raphael or from the
achievements of the Bolognese artists working in Rome is not discernible.

Had Empoli the opportunity to exchange ideas with Reni and with the
Carracci, Annibale in particular, he would have noted that their's was a highly
narrative art, deriving in part from their exposure to the art of the Northern
Renaissance. Yet, examples of Flemish paintings were readily available to Empoli in Florence. More attractive to Empoli would have been his observation that, as in the workshop practice of the Florentines, the Carracci and their followers were prolific in their studies of the model from life. From the influence of Michelangelo and their studies of the antique, their nude drawings depict figures of heroic proportions (fig. 248). If Empoli was even indirectly aware of this aspect of their graphic manner, it might have been the inspiration to compose more monumental figures.

Contemporary Sienese artists were drawn to the circle of Cigoli, Passignano and Pagani, attracted by the innovative developments in color and light that characterized their art. Yet it cannot be understated that Empoli's clear and articulate manner of describing volumetric form tempered the more illusory effects of light and color. His influence in this respect, though more subtle, was nonetheless significant in shaping the art of the younger contemporaries and those artists of the Sienese school as well, a school which traditionally looked to Florence as a source of artistic authority.

The half-brothers Francesco Vanni and Ventura Salimbeni arrived at a graphic style that was as eclectic in its origins as that of their Tuscan neighbors in Florence. Their graphic work reveals the lingering influence of the maniera, most notably the manner of the Zuccari. This is revealed by the elegance of their figures who pose with graceful gestures and by the handling of the chalk that is often rendered with refined strokes meticulously modelling the shadows. But their exposure to the art of
Cigoli and Passignano, and to a greater degree for Vanni, the art of Barocci, encouraged them to study the figure from life as well as experiment with the pictorial effects of light and color. From Pocci and Empoli, they would have seen exemplary graphic studies executed with firm contour lines and descriptive of volumetric form (figs. 249a, 249b and 250).

Because these artists share similar artistic goals inspired from many of the same artistic sources, problems of attribution arise once again to cloud the secure division of workshop production. There are at least three drawings that have been given to Empoli that may belong, instead, to Francesco Vanni. A half-length study of a weeping male figure found among Empoli's oeuvre in the Uffizi (n. 1769 S) is consistent with Empoli's manner of draftsmanship in its emphasis on line to economically define form (fig. 251). Yet its highly narrative pose and expressive gestre is unusual among Empoli's drawings. A drawing by Vanni, also in the Uffizi (n. 4972 S) depicts three images of the same figure kneeling while wiping his eyes in a gesture of grief (fig. 252). The models in both sheets appear to be the same. Vanni's drawing is a study for the Communion of the Dying Saint Lucy in the Sienese Church of Saints Nicholas and Lucy. The linear manner of execution characterizing the sheet securely attributed to Vanni is similar to that of Empoli, yet, the narrative pose of the weeping figure calls to mind the anecdotal figures popular among the artists of the Carracci school. Such an emotive figure is rare among figural types conceived by Empoli.
Two other sheets, one in the Uffizi (n. 3425 F) and the other in the Kurt Meissner collection at Stanford University, appear to be pendant studies for an unknown project, rather than figural studies for the archangel Gabriel destined for an Annunciation (figs. 253 and 254). Both the physiognomy of the figures and the refined manner of execution appear far too elegant for Empoli’s more naturalistic bias. A comparison with the graphic approach of Francesco Vanni suggests that these two sheets may belong to his more manneristic style. Compare, for example the meticulous and refined manner of the use of the pointed chalk to model the folds of drapery with Vanni’s pair of figure studies in the Uffizi (n. 4628 S and n.4629 S, figs. 255a and 255b). Another sheet by the Sienese draftsman, although a more loosely executed compositional study (fig. 255), shares a similar morphology in the facial structure of the female figure on the left, with both figures attributed to Empoli in the Uffizi and at Stanford. That such problems of attribution arise shows that by the end of the sixteenth century and in the first decades of the seventeenth century the sharing of artistic sources and the practice of drawing the figure from life created similarities of a graphic approach that extended beyond the workshops of Florence.

Encouraged by patrons who enjoyed the pageantry and spectacle of court festivals and by patrons who avidly collected works by artists from the sphere of Caravaggio's influence, the young Florentine artists emerging as independent masters in the early years of the seventeenth century found meaningful lessons from Cigoli and his circle. Their training in the tradition of Florentine disegno taught them of the
importance of clarity in form. The influence of the Counter-Reformation church reminded them of the need for clarity of content, while their aesthetic sensibilities leaned toward a more pictorial, almost illustrative bias that was manifested in their graphic production.

With the intent to create works of art with dramatic power and sentiment, artists like Rosselli, Bilivert and others were drawn to the medium of red chalk with which to render atmospheric and luminous studies in preparation for the altarpiece. Drawings that were executed with a combination of red and black chalks heightened in white appeared sporadically in the graphic works of their predecessors, but the mixed media were preferred more often by artists of the seventeenth century because they provided a far greater range of pictorial and tonal possibilities for the draftsmen. A master in the use of red and mixed chalks, Francesco Curradi, executed draped figure studies that depicted the palpable substance of cloth as if molded from pliable, red clay out of the blue tint of the paper. And yet, the softness of the forms achieved by the blending of the chalks, and the luministic highlights touched in white create atmospheric effects that mitigate the sculptural quality of the drawing (fig. 257). Empoli's interest in describing the surface textures of the various garments worn by his figures was suggested in chalk and precisely articulated in paint. Yet Curradi used these graphic media to render the pictorial elements of costumes with an almost obsessional fascination.

As a whole, the followers of Cigoli, Passignano, Pagani and Empoli show
greater artistic mastery through their graphic work than in their more sentimental paintings. The importance of disegno to this generation is underscored by the vast number of studies produced. That Bilivert, for example, executed numerous studies with no apparent connection to any particular commission testifies to the increasing status of drawing as an independent artistic form. Empoli's own ambitious output of drawings is, by example, a contributory factor in the elevation of the drawing as an art form.

Empoli further contributed to the development of Florentine draftsmanship by his example of graphic restraint and decorum which helped to ground the art of his colleagues, and that of the younger generation, in the classical tradition that reflects the Florentine predilection for disegno. That Empoli was able to sell his drawings in the later years of his life, although motivated by the unfortunate circumstances of ill health and poverty, attests to the rising status of the graphic arts. By the end of Empoli's life in the mid-seventeenth century, drawings were highly regarded as valuable artistic expressions independent of their preparatory function for painting or sculpture. Vasari's il Libro de' disegni of the mid-sixteenth century represents the first compendium of drawings systematically collected. Baldinucci's collection and that of Leopoldo de' Medici to whom Empoli reportedly sold several drawings, are representative of a more consistent and persuasive interest in the drawing as an object for enjoyment and for profit.²⁷
CHAPTER FIVE NOTES


4. See Forlani-Tempesta, *Jacopo da Empoli*, cat. no. 35, 32. Alessandro Cecchi does not agree with A. Forlani, nor A. Marabottini that this figure represents an early study for the Saint John the Baptist which appears in the *Madonna and Child with Saints* in Santa Lucia dei Magnoli. He suggests, instead, that the figure may be associated with a painting of *Saint John the Baptist* executed for Ascanio Pucci. He cites a document that records a payment by Ascanio’s heirs to Empoli on 31 August 1596. (Alessandro Cecchi, "Cigoli’s *Jael and Sisera*, *The Burlington Magazine*, 134, (February 1992):

5. The artists involved in this project were: Cesare d’Arpino, Guido Reni, Giovanni Lanfranco, Giovanni Baglione and Cigoli. See M. Chappell’s discussion of the commission in *Lodovico Cigoli* 127-131.


7. It is not my intention here to provide the reader with a comprehensive essay on the draftsmanship of each of the artists discussed in this chapter. Rather I wish to highlight aspects of the artist’s style that share similarities with Empoli’s graphic approach, as well as point out differences. In doing so, some of the drawings that have been attributed to Empoli may be given to another hand.

8. The fresco series depicts scenes from the life of Saint Romualdo and was completed in 1600.


10. In this respect, he was influenced by the work of Ridolfo Ghirlandaio as
well.

11. Problems of attribution are inevitable. For example, within Empoli's graphic oeuvre is a figure study of a kneeling prelate (Uffizi n. 9314 F recto, fig. 225). Yet within Poccetti's corpus of drawings appears the compositional study (n. 1552 S) for which the figure, attributed to Empoli, was executed (fig. 226). I hesitate to attempt to re-attribute either drawing, until I have had further opportunity to examine both sheets again.

12. For a comprehensive study of Poccetti's draftsmanship, see P. Hamilton, Poccetti, cited above.

13. Although Cigoli employs a variety of graphic approaches to the study of a composition, depending on the function of the drawing, the energy of execution is apparent in everyone. The reproduction offered here to illustrate his manner of executing the compositional drawing represents only one type of such study in the preparation of the altarpiece.

14. One may observe the same differences in the nature of the pose while comparing the previously discussed drawings by Empoli and Cigoli for the figure of Saint John the Baptist (figs. 218 and 219).


16. For a comprehensive discussion of Cigoli's draftsmanship, see Mario Bucci, Anna Forlani, Luciano Berti and Mina Gregori, Mostra del Cigoli e del suo ambiente, (San Miniato al Tedesco, 1959); M. Chappell, Disegni di Lodovico Cigoli, and F. Faranda, 1986.

17. According to Baldinucci, Allori was criticized by Cigoli for not producing enough paintings. Cristofano's response to Cigoli was that he did not have time to paint all of Florence. Baldinucci, Notizie, vol. III, 733.


20. See Chapter Four.


24. There are no monographs, to my knowledge, written about the art of Cristofano Allori. For a discussion of his draftsmanship, see, Cantelli and Chelazzi Dini, *Disegni e Bozzetti di Cristofano Allori*, C. Pizzorusso, *Cristofano Allori, Ricerche*, and Chappell, *Cristofano Allori*.

25. This was reported by F. F. Guazelli, in *Il Seicento Fiorentino*, vol. 3, 160.

26. A thorough study of the graphic manner of Matteo Rosselli is needed.

27. Bianchini reported that, based on information from Baldinucci's *Lista di nomi dei pittori*, Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici owned two hundred sixty-eight sheets in 1635 and, forty years later, he owned three hundred sixty-two sheets. (See *Il Seicento fiorentino*, III, 69.)
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

...l'Empoli era considerato un maestro del genere e quindi la sua grafica un ottimo investimento.

Empoli's skilled powers of observation led him to render the figure according to the laws of nature. His willingness to observe and assimilate the lessons learned from the various strands of artistic influence arriving in Florence from his colleagues who traveled outside the city's borders also had its impact on his art. These influences are more apparent in his drawings than they are in his paintings, where he always remained conservative in his manner of rendering form with clarity and solidity, and where he filtered any elements that compromised the legibility of the narrative content. His admiration for the masters of the early Cinquecento, Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, and Fra Bartolommeo in particular, and his willingness to conform to the dictates of the Council of Trent, kept him from carrying over his more innovative investigations of light and space, evident in many of his drawings, into the altarpiece.

In response to what were probably Borromeo's interpretations of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, Empoli developed an artistic language that was clear and didactic. His visual interpretation of Church doctrine was communicated with quotidian figures dressed in contemporary clothing, yet existing in a timeless realm. In
this manner his art was accessible to the contemporary observer and inspired in him a
greater intellectual understanding of the Christian faith.

By contrast, Cigoli, as well as many of the artists of the late Florentine
Cinquecento and early Seicento, arrived at an artistic expression that was more
sympathetic to the Jesuits' interpretations of the Tridentine decrees. Emotive and
moving, the altarpieces by Cigoli and his followers inspired an sympathetic response to
the doctrinal message.

Empoli's dedicated practice of studying the human figure from life led him to
reject the concetti of the Mannerists and to conceive of the figure in more naturalistic
terms with regard to proportion, gesture, and pose. While revealing vestiges of his
training by mentors from the Maniera, his earliest drawings also reveal his predilection
for the clarity of form that would inform his art throughout his career.

Empoli's approach to the study of the human figure derives in part from his
admiration of the early Cinquecento Tuscan masters, and from the legacy of the
Florentine artistic tradition in general. His development away from a maniera aesthetic
toward one based on the laws of nature may be observed when one compares the
compositional study for the Plymouth Nativity (fig. 49) executed in his youth with the
compositional study executed late in his career for the San Michele Visdomini Nativity
of c.1628 (Uffizi n. 9273 F, fig. 258). The decorative arrangement of the draperies in
the earlier study is nowhere visible in the later version where, in each instance, the
folds of the heavy material respond to the pose of the human form and to the weight of
gravity in a rhythmical and dignified manner. The more active poses of the figures in the Plymouth Nativity which, together with the flickering of light and shadow, create a sense of restlessness in the scene, is perhaps the most remarkable difference in conception. In the San Michele Visdomini Nativity each figure calmly assumes a place in attendance around the creche and quietly worships the infant Christ Child. This underscores Empoli’s personal vision of the Christian narrative as one that invites an introspective contemplation of the meaning of the theme, rather than one which invites the spectator’s vicarious participation by presenting a vision of pathos, action, and drama.

Empoli possessed a consummate skill in synthesizing a variety of artistic sources into an original artistic creation. That Empoli’s Madonnas were inspired by those of Andrea del Sarto with respect to the morphology of the face, the pose and the use of sfumato, has been previously noted in the literature by numerous scholars.

Many other derivations from Sarto’s work are manifested in Empoli’s art in a general manner, in some instances, and, on other occasions, they appear as more literal borrowings. The Apostle on the left of Sarto’s Panciatichi Assumption stands an Apostle whose pose of the upper torso may have been used by Empoli for the figure of Saint Luke in the Louvre Madonna and Child with Saints Luke and Yves. The diminutive image of the Trinity which appears in Empoli’s Giovanni della Calza Altarpiece was taken from Sarto’s Disputation over the Trinity. The composition of the Torrigiani Altarpiece and several of its figural elements were inspired by the older
Tuscan master's Gambassi *Madonna in Glory* and his *Disputation over the Trinity*. Empoli's painting of the single figure of a Male Saint in the Accademia Etrusca in Cortona, and his figure of Saint Thomas from the *Doubting of Saint Thomas* are similar to Sarto's figure of Saint Michael in the *Vallombrosa Altarpiece*, specifically in regard to the design of the voluminous cloak worn on the right shoulder. Andrea del Sarto's Christ in his *Noli Me Tangere* may have served as an influence for Empoli's figure of Christ in the *Doubting of Saint Thomas*, although, this is more apparent in the compositional study (Uffizi inv. n. 927 F) than in the painting. The figure of Christ in this altarpiece is also similar in countenance to Sarto's *Christ the Redeemer*. Finally, the facial typology and pose of Sarto's Apostle who rises from his seat on the left of his *Last Supper* inspired Empoli's depiction of the rustic figure on the left of his *Supper at Emmaus*, although this pose ultimately derives from an Apostle in Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*.

If Empoli looked to Andrea del Sarto for figural poses and for occasional facial typologies with which to portray his sacred and lay figures, he studied the art of Pontormo as a model for the describing of form. As part of Empoli's own self-imposed training, he was particularly inspired by Pontormo's graphic work. Pontormo's drawings were instructional in the manner in which the artist used line, rather than the effects of light and shadow, to define volumetric form.

In this respect Empoli looked to the art of other early Cinquecento masters for diverse purposes. This is also evident in the rare appearance in Empoli's art of the
influence of Michelangelo. Empoli studied two versions of a sculpture of Bacchus, one by Michelangelo, and the other by Empoli's maternal grandfather, Jacopo Sansovino, for his figure of Saint John the Baptist in the Madonna in Glory with Saints in Cortona. Both sculptures, however, served Empoli's purposes only in regard to the pose. It is significant that Michelangelo's terribilità had no effect on Empoli's depiction of the male nude.

Influences from seventeenth-century contemporaries also contributed to Empoli's graphic and painterly development. In rejecting the artifices of the maniera, he was inspired by the achievements of Santi di Tito who was instrumental in instructing artists of the late Cinquecento to observe the laws of nature as the true source from which to study the human figure. From Santi's art Empoli found precedent to execute legible compositions which were populated with figures who were humble in character. Empoli's Madonna and Child with Saints Yves and Luke of 1579 reveals that from the beginning as an independent artist he was aware of the importance of Santi di Tito as a source from which he might derive inspiration for his own humble actors in the sacred dramas. In the next decade one finds again the use of quotidian figures to enact a biblical story. The compositional drawing for the Sermon on the Mount is the only sheet known to me that documents his graphic manner in the 1580s. Empoli's manner of executing a compositional study shows little change from the study for the Plymouth Nativity executed in the previous decade. But this sheet, perhaps more so than the earlier one, shows his interest in using more humble figural
types than one finds in the art of the maniera, and it attests to his awareness of the work of Santi di Tito. That Empoli continued throughout his career to synthesize a range of influences is evident in the Supper at Emmaus where, as has already been noted above, he observed the work of Andrea del Sarto for inspiration. Yet he also borrowed the motif of the landscape in the background and found prototypes for the humble figures who gather about the figure of Christ from Santi di Tito's painting of the same subject.

Much has been written of Cigoli's influence on Empoli's art and on the art of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Florentine school as a whole. Cigoli was a conduit of artistic inspiration for Empoli, and Cigoli brought the developments from Venice, Rome and Bologna to Empoli's paintings and graphic studies and used these observations in his own work in syncretistic ways. The impact of the expressive manner of Venetian art on the early work of Empoli has been thoroughly discussed in the preceding chapters. That Cigoli was a primary source from whose art Empoli had the most direct opportunity to observe the new artistic achievements from Venice is significant. It is indicative of the fact that Empoli rarely, if ever, travelled outside the borders of Tuscany, and thus, had to rely on his colleagues for information about outside artistic developments in Venice and elsewhere.

Empoli's participation in the apparati projects for the Medici court provided him with the opportunity to interact with his contemporaries who had recently returned from other artistic centers in Italy, and thereby introduced to him the
expressive effects of color and light characteristic of the Venetian style, and the monumental and classical style that was typical of the art of Rome.

Empoli's graphic work of the 1590s and early 1600s demonstrates that he experimented with the expressive effects of light and shadow and absorbed these lessons into his own manner of expression. Although his drawings lack the dramatic power inherent in the dynamic contrasts of light and shade which characterize the graphic work of many of his contemporaries, Empoli's drawings, nonetheless, exhibit a richer variety of *chiaroscuro* effects than one observes in his earlier sheets. The compositional study for the San Remigio altarpiece provides the paradigmatic example of both the influence of Venetian art and the more spontaneous handling of pen and wash that derived from Empoli's observations of Cigoli's graphic manner. Although the lessons learned from Venetian art are manifest in the pictorial expressiveness of light and shadow which animates the final painting, they are subordinated to the clarity of form. And, notwithstanding the intrinsic differences between the graphic medium and the painterly in terms of spontaneity of conception and execution, Empoli abandoned the more animated poses of the figures and the liveliness in the conception of the theme, in general, for a more static vision. Dramatic contrasts of light and shadow also characterize his compositional study for the *Madonna and Child Appearing to Saint Hyacinth* to the extent that form is obscured by dense layers of wash. Empoli's need to precisely describe the pictorial elements of his compositions led him to reject this more expressive handling of ink and wash in subsequent studies.
Evidence of Empoli's response to influences from contemporary developments in Rome and also from the art of the early Roman Cinquecento is manifested in his art of the first decade of the seventeenth century. The dating of the *Delivery of the Keys* can be placed between the *Doubting of Saint Thomas* of 1602 and the *Calling of Saint Peter* of 1606, based on evidence revealed in the preparatory studies for these three projects. Empoli used the figure of Christ from the *Doubting of Saint Thomas* and improved upon it for the *Delivery of the Keys*. He finally arrived at a most successful rendering of the figure in the *Calling of Saint Peter*. Here the design and execution of the drapery is more classical and monumental than in either of the earlier two projects. Rosselli's return from Rome in 1605 may have offered Empoli the opportunity to learn of artistic trends in Rome, and may have inspired him to render a more monumental figure of Christ in the latter painting. This development is well documented in the preparatory studies for these three commissions.

The influence of the art of Caravaggio's followers is evident in Empoli's later graphic work and paintings. The preparatory drawing of the head of the Baptist for the *Baptism of Christ* in Pisa is exemplary of Empoli's continuing experiments with light which began with his study of Venetian art, and, late in his career, reflected his knowledge of the work of the Pisan artist Artemisia Gentileschi. The vibrancy of color and light is carried into the painting with a greater intensity than one observes in Empoli's earlier altarpieces. Empoli would have had the opportunity to observe
Caravaggesque works of art first hand, as these were admired and collected by the wealthy citizens of Florence, and, in particular, the Medici court.

Despite the lessons learned by Empoli from his observations of the style and narrative mode of Lodovico Cigoli, his art varied in significant ways from that of his contemporary. These elements are indicative of the essential difference in aesthetic sensibility that informed their approaches to the communication of Christian narrative. For example, Empoli's interest in a naturalistic description of objects and of the surface of things manifested itself early in his career, and it is most apparent in his studies for the Montughi Saint Francis in Ecstasy. The attention to such elements helped to make the painting appear more tangibly real to the observer. This approach makes the meaning of the narrative more explicit while suppressing an emotional reaction to the experience of the saint. In this respect Empoli's approach to the representation of the Christian story is significantly different from that of his colleague Cigoli.

Foremost among their diverse methods was their manner of spatial construction. Cigoli's emotive and sensuous style was made more dynamic by his manner of posing the figure so that it appeared, through the torsion of the body, to extend in three-dimensions. Cigoli's compositions lead the viewer's eye into space with the diagonal placement of the figures away from the flat surface of the paper or canvas. This manner of figural construction differs dramatically from that of Empoli whose figures occupy a relatively shallow ledge of space even when the setting depicts a more penetrating view into the distance. His figures assume, for the most part, two-
dimensional poses. In this respect, the drawings predict what the paintings
demonstrate. The narratives of the paintings are enacted with static figures which,
despite their domestic appearance, seem to exist in a higher realm. This is
communicated through their stillness of pose and purity of form.

As such, Empoli's insistence on clarity of form inhibits success with themes that
require drama and movement. One has only to compare the Presentation in the
Temple with the roughly contemporaneous Martyrdom of Saint Barbara to observe
that his approach to the narrative mode was not compatible with scenes of action and
drama. The differences in the handling of space cannot be qualitatively judged. On
the contrary, they emphasize only the separate biases of Cigoli and Empoli. Cigoli
communicated the Catholic doctrines through emotive means, while Empoli preferred
a more rational and classical method to articulate the same messages.

No specific artistic source influenced Empoli in his conception of the figure in
grand terms and heroic proportions. His development in this direction resulted from a
synthesis of influences ranging from his assimilation of the new artistic developments
from Bologna, Pisa and Rome, from his continuous study of the works of Sarto and
Pontormo, and from his own predilection for depicting the figure based on his
observations of nature.

For Empoli, the final work of art, rather than being a composite of ideas taken
from older masters and contemporary colleagues, represents, instead, a synthesis of
sources that results in an artistic expression belonging to Empoli alone. If Empoli's art
cannot be considered innovative in the sense that his visual language is inventive in its articulation of the Christian narrative, it is nonetheless original in his personal manner of expressing in visual terms the absolute truth of Catholic dogma. The Susanna at her Bath of 1600 and the attendant drawings best represent this achievement in Empoli's career. The drawings show a debt to the art of Pontormo in the use of fluid line to describe geometric form. This is carried over into the painting with the depiction of clearly defined images whose silhouettes are delineated in visible lines. The painting also reveals the influence of the art of Venice in the vibrant color schemes and the expressive treatment of light and shadow. The slight use of sfumato derives from Andrea del Sarto, and the smooth, taut surfaces of the figures, from Bronzino. Empoli assimilates all these sources into his own artistic expression that represents, for the first time, his mature style.

Empoli's graphic style developed from one that was characterized by the tight control of line to delineate the contours of the figure to more confidently, but spontaneously, executed figure studies. A comparison between the Pontedera Annunciation of 1599 and the Strozzi Chapel Annunciation of 1609 illustrates the advancements in Empoli's graphic and painterly style. The later painting shows a greater interest in the description of setting underscoring the worldly element of the story of the Annunciation, while the reticent emotion and precise clarity of form illuminated in celestial light communicate the divine meaning of the event in unequivocal terms. The naturalistic description of man-made objects and substances
which serve to make the divine message more palpably understood by the faithful is
the hallmark of Empoli's artistic achievements. The surviving drawing in Oxford for
the figure of Gabriel in the Stozzi Annunciation is an important document of Empoli's
mature graphic manner. It represents a powerful testament not only to Empoli's
confidence and skill in the rendering of the figure, but attests to his willingness to
abandon tight control of the linear articulation of the silhouette for a more
spontaneous and lively description. Although an artist's drawings are traditionally
more freely executed than his paintings, Empoli's insistence on clarity of form in his
altarpieces throughout his career make the dichotomous approach to his graphic
studies such as this one more apparent. It was not until late in his career that the
relaxed control of the chalk was translated into a more painterly application of the
brush, although, this manifested itself as a conservative development in his manner of
executing the altarpiece.

Empoli's interest in rendering objects with verisimilitude, which led to his
prolific output of still lifes during the third decade of the seventeenth century, was
extended to his manner of rendering the figure in graphic terms. While the figure in
the central portion of the sheet was executed for the purposes of studying the pose,
figural proportions, or arrangement of drapery, individual features of the figure were
often re-studied in the margins. Rarely did Empoli examine details of the figure or
aspects of the drapery to explore alternative views of these areas. Rather he re-drew
these details to clarify further what may have been only sketched on the main figure
study, or he re-studied problematic areas to correct errors in conception. Although this was common studio practice for centuries, Empoli was diligent about accurately rendering individual elements of the figure, even if these aspects would not appear in the final version due to the overlapping of some other pictorial element. Note, for example his study for the figure of John the Baptist (fig. 74) for the Santa Maria a Ripa Immaculate Conception of 1596. Having drawn the upper torso of the figure, Empoli sketched the lower torso in a smaller sketch below, and its left foot to the right. Neither of these portions of the figure will be visible in the painting, a fact of which he must have been aware, since he borrowed his composition from Vasari. Nevertheless, he felt it necessary to thoroughly grasp the pose of the figure by studying these secondary views.

One of his most beautiful drawings where he fastidiously examined all aspects of the figure is his study of a standing monk, for which no painting survives (fig. 158). Executed in black chalk and heightened in white on brown tinted paper, the monk is seen in nearly strict profile, facing the left side of the sheet. Empoli studied the simple arrangement of the garment on the figure whose stock pose reflects a priestly gesture with the right hand held at his chest and the left holding a cross lightly in front of his upper torso. The pentimenti are few, yet, Empoli appears to have been dissatisfied with some aspects of the study since the hands and feet and the monk's cowl are re-studied in the areas around the figure. He drew the head in more detail to render the facial features and expression more explicitly. Such an exhaustive study of the figure
appears with regularity in Empoli's graphic œuvre, and it has its counterpart in his paintings in his acute rendering of naturalistic details in both figures and objects.

Empoli's interest in recording objects and figures precisely as they are seen in nature was also manifested in his drawings in his attention to descriptive details of costume and surface texture. In the late second and third decades of the seventeenth century, his drawings reveal this practice while, at the same time, in his attempt to capture in chalk or charcoal the surface texture of materials, he loosened his tight hold on the precision of contours that define the individual forms of the figure. Among such examples of these drawings is the study for Pope Leo X (Louvre, inv. 1050, fig. 259). The satiny sheen of the Pope's pluvial is contrasted with the sheer white linen surplice underneath. Although the solidity of the figure is not compromised - the cylindrical form of the figure is well established - the contour lines are softened and the specific design and substance of the garment create more visual interest than the figural pose. Empoli's drawings executed in charcoal late in his career, however, come precipitously close to surrendering volumetric form for more ephemeral effects of light, perhaps inspired by the brilliant surface lighting in the manner of the Pisan, Gentileschi, or reflecting the influence of his younger contemporary, Matteo Rosselli. These vibrant drawings, executed by the rapid stroke of the charcoal applied to the sheet with a confident but almost feathery touch, seem to glisten in light. The studies of the angel for the Virgin Offering the Child to Saint Francis (fig. 188) and for Saint Giuliana (Uffizi n. 3439 F, fig. 260) for the Madonna and Child with Saints in
Santissima Annunziata are among some of his most exciting graphic exercises, and add to the rich variety of graphic works that comprise his oeuvre. The more painterly handling of the media exhibited in these drawings is translated into paint with a richer, more vibrant brushstroke.

Of all Empoli's commissions, the group of drawings that has survived for the Virgin and Child Appearing to Saint Hyacinth best represent Empoli's approach to his graphic preparation for the painted altarpiece. Compositional sketches, figure studies that examine the arrangement of drapery and the play of light and shadow over the form, head studies and, finally, more polished compositional studies comprise the body of graphic work that typically precedes the execution of the altarpiece. These drawings reveal that Empoli's workshop practice was one that was commonplace among Tuscan artists for two centuries. These studies also articulate the development of Empoli's graphic style in the 1590s. Although this was the second decade in his career as an independent artist, his drawings still reflect an increasing level of maturity in the handling of the graphic media. They reveal that he was willing to experiment with the chromatic potential of pen and wash to create more dramatic expression in the compositional study. They mark the maturity of Empoli's skill in his handling of the chalk medium to describe the draped figure as a volumetric form clothed in layers of material. Drapery is rendered as a palpable substance responding to the structure of the body beneath and precisely articulated by the play of light and shadow.
Several observations can be made regarding Empoli's drawing practices. They are summarized as follows:

In Empoli's graphic studies, he did not use color for expressive purposes. For example, the tint of the ground often corresponded to the intended hue of the figure's garment in the painting. This explains why Empoli used prepared paper most often for drapery studies. Occasionally, the tonality of the sheet was affected by the appearance of a previous sketch. Empoli not only re-used drawings for future projects, but re-used the paper from a previous sketch by applying a wash over the earlier drawing before executing the new study. This resulted in a tint that was muddied by the chalk from the underdrawing.

Red chalk drawings are fewer in number than black chalk studies. Empoli used red chalk most often for studies of the nude figure, and so exploited its warm tonality to render flesh. Red chalk studies of the clothed figure appear with much less frequency and yet describe the human form in a more spontaneous treatment of line in comparison to the nude studies.

The use of mixed chalks, of red and black chalks on the same sheet, is also relatively rare in his graphic oeuvre. Since he did not explore the coloristic potential of drawing media, he used the mixed media to clarify further one form from another as, for example, in his study from a private collection of the *Virgin in Glory* where he chose red chalk to render the Virgin's tunic and black chalk to render her veil.
His exercises in pen and wash, although influenced in the treatment of light and shadow from the art of Venice, and more directly from the achievements of Cigoli and Passignano, demonstrate that he executed spontaneous and dynamic studies only for the pensiero sketches which served as early ideas for the altarpiece. His more polished compositional studies in pen and wash are more controlled in the layering of pale tints of wash to define various drapery forms and figural elements which are, in general, distinctly outlined in delicate lines of ink.

Since Empoli's studio was reportedly a meeting place for aristocratic dilettantes seeking to receive informal instruction from Empoli. This provided him with the opportunity to execute the numerous pen and wash sketches of contemporary citizens that appear frequently in his graphic oeuvre. Some of these sketches served as studies for compositions intended for the altarpiece; others appear to have been merely graphic exercises, and some may have served as teaching aids for his students.

One of most notable studies by Empoli is the drawing of the male head in the Uffizi (1964 S) that should be related to the commission for the Madonna of Mercy. Drawn from life for the figure of the Madonna in the painting, it reflects the artist's practice of using a male model for a female figure as he had done with some of his male nude figure studies that depicted female figures in the final work. In this particular sheet executed in red chalk, Empoli was most interested in studying the play of light and shadow and in determining the pose of the head.
In many instances, Empoli executed several studies of the same composition for one project, making it difficult to determine the order of his progress from one sketch to another. Yet, the fact that he copied his own drawings in the last years of his life to support himself further compounds the problem of chronologically determining the progression of his workshop procedure, since it is clear that some of the compositional studies are copies of previously executed sheets.

If Empoli struggled with the pose of a figure, the difficulty usually involved problems of foreshortening. Empoli made a few attempts at correcting the awkwardness of a foreshortened limb, but most often abandoned the pose altogether for a less demanding one. This resulted in an arrangement that was more two-dimensional rather than foreshortened.

Since Empoli, Cigoli and several of their contemporaries shared studio space early in their career, it is probable that they shared models as well. Evidence of this practice can be documented by a pair of drawings, one by Empoli and the other by Cigoli, of a male nude posed in the traditional attitude of John the Baptist. The physiognomy of the model and the specific direction of the light source visible in each of the drawings indicates that the two artists executed their studies while viewing the model at the same time.

Empoli’s manner of draftsmanship shares similar characteristics with Bernardo Poccetti’s handling of the chalk medium. Documents suggest that Empoli was a pupil of Poccetti after the death of Empoli’s master Maso da San Friano. Although this may
explain how Empoli assimilated elements of Poccetti's graphic style into his own style, it presents problems of connoisseurship. There are drawings attributed to Empoli that should be re-assigned to Poccetti such as Uffizi inv. 3463 F. The sheet depicts the study of a soldier for a fresco by Poccetti in the Sala di Bona in the Palazzo Pitti. Problems of attribution are further demonstrated with two sheets, one attributed to Empoli of a prelate kneeling and seen from behind, and the other a compositional study given to Poccetti where the prelate depicted on Empoli's sheet appears.

The need for more scholarly research examining the art of Empoli's younger contemporaries precludes a thorough discussion of the interaction of Empoli and these younger artists. The growing taste among members of the Medici Court, and prospective patrons in general, for pageantry and theatrical spectacles was manifested in the art of the next generation with a more chromatic and narrative handling of the graphic media and, subsequently, a more sensuous expression of the Christian story in their paintings.

Although Cristofano Allori was more influenced than Empoli by the art of Caravaggio and his followers, his drawings reveal an interest in articulating the surface description of various materials that is analogous to Empoli's descriptive studies. Both draftsmen render the figure with long continuous contour lines which make the volumetric form of the human body emphatic. However, there are a pair of drawings of nude male figures in the Louvre attributed to Empoli that should be reconsidered as executed by the hand of Cristofano Allori, even though they are rendered in confident
and continuous contour lines making the silhouette of the figure precise. The detailed description of the musculature of the figures is typical of Allori's description of the nude form.

Among Empoli's drawings in the Uffizi are several red chalk drawings of draped male figures that are tonal in the treatment of light and shadow. These sheets need to be re-examined in order to determine whether they, should remain ascribed to the hand of Empoli. They may be attributed to Rosselli since such a descriptive handling of the red chalk medium is characteristic of his graphic work.

The Sienese artists, Francesco Vanni and Ventura Salimbeni, shared artistic sources of inspiration with Empoli and his Florentine contemporaries. Similarities in their graphic work raise questions of attribution. There are a few drawings given to Empoli which, to me, seem more likely by the hand of Francesco Vanni. A Weeping Figure (Uffizi inv. n. 1769 S) attributed to Empoli may be ascribed to Vanni who studied other similar weeping figures (4972 S). There is also a figure of a female with her arms folded across her chest (3425 F) found among the drawings ascribed to Empoli. I believe that this should be re-attributed to Vanni as a pendant to the Kurt Meissner Collection figure of a kneeling angel.

If Empoli's altarpieces lack the freshness of execution and dynamic contrasts of light and shadow in an effort to convey unambiguous meaning, they offer the viewer a visual exegesis of Scripture that is clearly defined with "an extraordinary truth in the representation of things." Despite his limitations as a painter at a time when Baroque
tendencies were incipient in the art of his contemporaries, Empoli’s mature work shows a breadth of form and more ample spatial arrangements that enhanced the visual impact of his art. This development is foreshadowed in his preparatory studies.

More visible in Empoli’s graphic work than his altarpieces, his figures exhibit eloquent, if rhetorical, gestures as, for example, his study for Saint Eligius in the Lugt Collection in Paris (fig. 138). As his draftsmanship matured, his designs for the garments worn by sacred and clerical figures became more classical in their dignified arrangement of broad swaths of the cloak and simple tunics beneath. (See, for example, the study for Christ, fig. 116, for the Calling of Saint Peter or the study for Cardinal Borromeo, fig. 134, for the Charles Borromeo and the Rospigliosi Family.) These aspects of his figural conception, and the fact that the figure itself inhabits a greater breadth of space within the shallow confines of the foreground ledge, are carried into the final painting. As such, his altarpieces deliver a more powerful visual impact.

The Saint Giuliana drawing is paradigmatic of the culmination of Empoli’s development as a draftsman. It is executed in charcoal and heightened in white on paper prepared with a golden tint which corresponds to the tonality of the altarpiece. Indeed, the golden tonality of the paper plays an important role in creating the sense of an airy, ethereal quality that characterizes and energizes this study. The face of the saint is more emotive than one observes in earlier studies. With her head tilted to one side, she parts her lips as if taking in her breath as she gazes upward with an
expression of reverent awe. The physiognomy of her face, with its tilted head, open mouth and uplifted eyes, in concert with the free manner of execution, and the soft black shadows and luminous highlights create a moving image of pathos. This emotive characterization of the figure can be attributed to the influence of Rosselli and Vignali who were completing commissions in Santissima Annunziata while Empoli was at work during the same years in the Palagi Chapel. Loose and swiftly executed lines of charcoal render the nun's garment with a freedom not seen in Empoli's graphic work until the late years of the second decade of the seventeenth century. While clarity of form remains Empoli's highest priority in the study of the figure, the sense of solid volumetric form, so emphatically stated in his earlier studies, is here mitigated by the soft, free execution of line so that the volumes are sensed but not perceived in a palpable way. Perhaps inspired by the manner of Gentileschi, he described the play of light and shadow with a pictorial expressiveness that can only be seen in his study for the San Remigio Immaculate Conception of the late sixteenth century when Empoli was responding to Venetian influences. This study demonstrates that Empoli's late graphic and painterly work take his art to the brink of the new dynamism inherent in the Baroque style.

Empoli delighted in the delineation of volumes as visualized within the form of the human body. His interest in rendering the figure as a volumetric structure, or, more precisely, a composite of geometric forms, superceded his interests in exploring the expressive potential of the various graphic media. As such, the pen or chalk was
just a vehicle to delineate the fundamental structure of the body. For Empoli the representation of the human body was manipulated to communicate the eternal truths of Church Doctrine by means of rational and conservative imagery in order to make the significance of the Biblical stories explicitly clear. With this intent, the formal structure became, in itself, the subject of his figure studies. And if his figures, both in the graphic medium and in the painting, are humble in nature and dressed with decorum and simplicity, this is, in part, to facilitate articulating the volumetric structure of the draped figure.

Most of Empoli's figure studies reveal nothing of the nude form beneath the drapery. His approach to the rendering of the nude was paradigmatic of the Counter Reformation guidelines for Church decoration. These drawings are not as progressive in technique in comparison to his draped figure studies. While his late draped figure studies exhibit a more spontaneous and loose handling of the chalk medium, his nude figure sketches executed around the same time demonstrate a more self-conscious delineation of the human figure. They were more carefully executed with definitive contour lines inscribing the silhouette of the figure, and they reveal little interior modelling to articulate the musculature of the body. Empoli renders the figure summarily with an aim to establishing the pose and the source of light, and most importantly, the volumetric forms of the torso, arms and legs. That he showed little interest in the rendering of detailed interior modelling may be attributed to the fact that Empoli was not known to have fastidiously studied anatomy as a tool for improving
the accuracy of the nude or clothed figure. When Empoli studied a nude figure that would remain unclothed in the final painting, however, he rendered the musculature with only slightly more precision. A drawing in the Uffizi (fig. 175) depicting a seated male nude is one of Empoli's more exceptional studies, and it is one that should be assigned to the preparatory studies for the San Remigio Immaculate Conception.

Empoli's art represents an equilibrium between the human sphere and the divine. His humble, vernacular figures, articulated with a truth to nature in the details of costume, in the description of surface textures, and in the elements of the setting, contribute to an art whose meaning is accessible to the viewer. Yet the quiet stillness of his paintings, the profound sense of dignity expressed in his solemn figures, and the spartan environments which they inhabit, create visions of the Christian narratives that transcend time and place.

Jacopo Chimenti da Empoli stands as a singular and exemplary artist. In a highly personal manner, he communicated the fundamental truths of Church doctrine by means of an intensive investigation of reality conveyed through a mystical appeal rather than an empathetic or emotional persuasion.

It seems at a certain point we say that we know the work of these men, and it can no longer surprise us; anything that does not fit our constructed image must be rejected. This is the moment when the study of an artist effectively stops.6

There are many beautiful drawings in Empoli's oeuvre that I have not attempted to analyze with regard to technique and use of media, nor have I tackled all
the many thorny problems of attribution that have become apparent to me while examining the large corpus of his drawings. For the most part, these involve draped figure studies in red chalk that are atmospheric in the handling of the media. They have already been mentioned earlier in this text, but they serve here to underscore the wisdom of Shearman's words quoted above. One must be cautious in eliminating a body of drawings (or paintings for that matter) as not representative of an artist's "usual" manner of execution and, subsequently, concluding that they are not by the hand of that artist. Different media and techniques were used for different functions. Until further research of Empoli's graphic and painterly oeuvre reveals otherwise, and more is known of the graphic work of Empoli's contemporaries, these studies should remain within his corpus of drawings.

Much remains to be learned of Empoli's impact on his students. These obscure artists have slipped between the cracks of research primarily due to the scant body of information available about their artistic production. Much of what is known of their paintings, however, has revealed the inferior quality of their work as reactionary and provincial. Nevertheless, their graphic examples may prove, with more careful observation, to have been executed with skill and to be reflective of the artistic trends that shaped the graphic manner of Empoli and his contemporaries.

The fashions of the Spanish court were popular in Florence in Empoli's lifetime. Spanish costumes appear in Empoli's apparati executed for Medici court affairs. Spanish artists frequently visited Florence, drawn to the city by her rich artistic
heritage. Italian artists such as Federico Zuccari traveled to Spain and Spanish artists visited the Italian peninsula. Richa reported that the Spaniard Raffaello Ximenes was a famous follower of Empoli. His information derives from a report by Baldinucci that Ximenes bought many drawings from Empoli and enjoyed engaging in artistic enterprises himself. Roberto Longhi wrote of parallels in the late years of the sixteenth century between the art of Zurbarán and others with the art of Empoli and the Florentine school. Further analyses of the interaction between the artists of Spain and Italy would add to our knowledge of the many sources of influence that filtered into Florence during the years of Empoli's active career.

There is still much to be explored concerning the impact of the Accademia del Disegno upon the graphic practice of the artists of the Florentine Seicento. How much did influences from Bologna, Venice, and Rome shape the activities of the Accademia? How much did the Accademia promulgate new graphic developments and practices? As an active member of the Accademia del Disegno, Empoli's approach to his graphic exercises would be greatly affected by the established practices sanctioned there. Yet as an influential member, his manner of drawing might also have had an important impact on its philosophy and practice.
CHAPTER SIX NOTES

1. Marabottini 158.

2. Forlani identifies the figure, here noted as Saint Giuliana as Saint Chiara. (Forlani, Jacopo da Empoli cat. no. 70, 47.)

3. I am grateful to Professor Edward Olszewski for calling to my attention a relevant passage in Giovanni Armenini’s treatise, On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting. Armenini advised artists who executed studies in pastelli when travelling to use colors approximating the hue intended for the corresponding images in the painting. In this manner, these drawings served as guides for workshop attendants who were assisting their master in the execution of the painting. (Armenini 120.)


7. Richa 58.


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