



 CATALOGUE ENTRY

Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist

about 1490–1500

Giovanni Bellini and Workshop

Italian, about 1431/1436–1516

egg tempera and oil on poplar panel

30 × 23 in.

(76.2 × 58.4 cm)

The Clowes Collection

2000.341

Marks, Inscriptions, and Distinguishing Features

Inscribed on parapet *cartellino*: IOANNES BELL/INUS

Entry

1 An estimated 18 replicas of this Madonna and Child composition, originating from the workshop of the fifteenth-century Venetian master Giovanni Bellini (1431–1516), are known. Among them, the Clowes *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist* deserves special attention. The inclusion of multicolored cherubim and the child St. John the Baptist, for example, is unique to the painting and, together with its fine craftsmanship and quality of material, point to the unique place it occupies among the numerous other versions.

2 Devotional images of the half-length Madonna and Child were the lifeblood of Giovanni Bellini's workshop and were produced in such large numbers that sorting out the prototypes, versions, and replicas of the many documented compositions has been a challenge for scholars.¹ The art historian Rona Goffen, in her seminal research on Bellini, estimated that more than eighty extant compositional variants derive from his workshop.² Intended for private use, this painting of the half-length Madonna, with its intimate vantage point and reverent yet accessible atmosphere, encouraged contemplation in the viewer and served as an aid to devotion.³ The variant seen in the Clowes painting seems to have been one of the most highly sought after, as evidenced by the frequency with which it was copied both within Bellini's workshop and beyond.⁴ This profusion of replicas is underscored in the Indianapolis Museum of Art's own collection, which contains a second, nearly identical copy of the same composition, attributed to Giovanni Bellini's pupil Niccolò Rondinelli (about 1450–about 1510) (fig. 1).



Figure 1: Niccolò Rondinelli (Italian, about 1450–about 1510), *Madonna and Child* about 1500, tempera and oil on panel, 30 × 23-1/8 in., Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, James E. Roberts Fund, 24.6.

3 At first glance, little sets the Clowes painting apart from the relatively consistent Marian types that issued from Bellini's workshop.⁵ The Madonna is depicted in half-length, seated behind an illusionistic parapet. On her right knee she supports the blessing Christ child, whose gesture and gaze are directed toward the supplicant St. John the Baptist, shown as a young boy wearing his identifying camel's hair garment. The saint folds his arms over his chest in a traditional posture of humility.⁶ His placement, in the lower-left corner of the picture plane, separated from the Madonna and Child by the parapet, recalls donor portraits and suggests that the Baptist may have held special meaning for this work's patron.

4 Paintings of the Madonna and Child that include the young Baptist, however, while relatively commonplace in late Quattrocento Florence, were rare in Venice before the sixteenth century.⁷ In fact, although the iconographic motif gained favor among the students and followers of Giovanni Bellini, including Rocco Marconi (active from 1504–died 1529), Marco Bello (died 1523), Vincenzo di Biagio Catena (about 1470–1531), Francesco Rizzo da Santacroce (active late 15th-early 16th centuries), and Pasqualino Veneto (active from 1496–died 1504), the Clowes version is the only known example attributed to Bellini that shows the prophet as a child. Within this context, as with other examples from Bellini's circle, the inclusion of the young Baptist is connected to the function of the painting as a private devotional image. St. John's gesture conveys the attitudes of humility, reverence, and submission befitting a supplicant, and as Brian D. Steel has argued, may have reminded its contemporary viewer of elements of the liturgy that, in turn, helped to bolster private rituals of devotion.⁸ Moreover, the depiction of the humble young saint emphasizes the virtue of humility before God, an attribute necessary for the worshiper, who was encouraged in contemporary religious texts to "become as a child" in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.⁹

5 The young Baptist also served as an exemplar for children. The Dominican Giovanni Dominici (1356–1419), in his *Regola del governo di cura familiare* (Rule for the Management of Family Care), advocated for the placement of paintings and sculptures of saintly children, specifically that of the young St. John, throughout the home, so that the child could see "himself mirrored in the Holy Baptist clothed in camel's skin, a little child who enters the desert, plays with the birds, sucks the honeyed flowers and sleeps on the ground."¹⁰

6 As a saintly intermediary, St. John's presence alongside Mary and Jesus would have seemed appropriate and familiar, recalling the Deesis, a representation of Christ enthroned between the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist that originated in Byzantium and spread throughout the West, primarily in depictions of the Last Judgment.¹¹ As the forerunner of Christ and the first person after Mary to recognize Christ's divinity, the Baptist's high rank in the celestial hierarchy made him an ideal intercessor for humankind. His inclusion in devotional images like the Clowes *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist* served to bring the viewer even closer to Mary and the Christ child, bridging the pictorial and symbolic gap

between the heavenly domain occupied by the Virgin and her son, and the earthly space in front of the parapet, where both the Baptist and the devotee would bear witness to the glorified holy pair.

7 In 2002, during conservation treatment, layers of discolored varnish and overpaint were removed to reveal a refinement of color and form.¹² Even more remarkable was the discovery of a significant quantity of costly materials used in the painting's execution, particularly ultramarine, a highly prized blue pigment that was more expensive than gold in fifteenth-century Venice.¹³ The liberal use of high-grade ultramarine suggests that the painting was created on commission for a wealthy client, who likely valued it not only as a devotional aid but also as a precious object of aesthetic beauty and a marker of status.¹⁴

8 In light of the large quantity and purity of pigments used, it is likely that the *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist* was painted in accordance with contractual stipulations specified by a patron who probably also required that the master have a direct hand in its making. Evidence of this is substantiated by several well-preserved and beautifully rendered passages of color, particularly in the areas of the Virgin's face and the magenta hue of her tunic, as well as in the pink cherubim surrounding her head. The refined handling in the complexity of the superimposed layers of color to achieve a wide range of chromatic effect points to a skilled artist and suggests direct supervision by Giovanni Bellini.¹⁵ If the artist's hand is discernible in the figures of the Madonna and Child, it is equally absent in the rendering of St. John. Surface examination and scientific analysis of paint samples taken from this area reveal a less refined technique—apparent in the simpler stratigraphy and the more coarsely ground and unevenly mixed pigments¹⁶—indicating that the task of painting the young saint, while planned from the beginning,¹⁷ was most likely relegated to a workshop assistant.

9 In significantly damaged areas, such as in the multicolored cherubim,¹⁸ authorship is far more difficult to determine because of the poor state of paint preservation. Very little remains of the original winged heads, with the exception of the pink ones crowning the Madonna. The extreme paint loss in the heads of the cherubim is lamentable given the still perceptible beauty in the figures of the Madonna and Child. We are left only to imagine what may have once been and try to reconstruct with fragmentary evidence a complete stylistic, symbolic, and functional understanding of these cherubim and the role they played in the work as a whole.

10 In 2004, the *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist* was the subject of a larger study published in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*. Prior to this, the first and only substantive and scholarly mention of this painting was in a 1935 article written by the art historian William (Wilhelm) Suida for the *Rivista di Venezia*, in which he described the angelic figures: "Around the meditative head of the Virgin, winged heads of angels, emerging from fringed clouds, form a crown. These angels show three distinct colors: red, greenish-blue, golden brown. It is certain that the red angels are Seraphims [sic], those golden brown ones Cherubins [sic]; we do not know, however, to which of the nine choirs of Angels the blue ones belong."¹⁹ The varied color scheme for the angels that Suida described, however far removed from the original, is consistent with those depicted in one of Bellini's greatest works, the Pesaro Altarpiece (Pesaro, Museo Civico), in which multicolored winged angels emerge from tufts of clouds in groups of three. The cherubim are resplendent in the wide-ranging variation and compelling combinations of color.²⁰

11 By 1948, however, after studying the recently cleaned painting, Suida revised his identification of colors in the heads of the angels to five: dark gray; green; red; brown; and, referring to the three in the center, the "rare red color called 'sinope.'"²¹ In response to this change, Suida posited a new iconographic interpretation correlating the nine completely visible winged heads with the nine choirs of angels, as described by the late fifth- or early sixth-century Christian theologian and philosopher Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in his *Celestial Hierarchy*. He associated the three pink heads, although not all fully visible, with the three cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and suggested that the other cherubim colors of gray, green, red, and brown alluded to the four elements of air, water, fire, and earth.²²

12 Suida's color identification and proposed iconographic program was contradicted in 2002 when the *Madonna and Child with St. John* underwent a thorough cleaning and restoration (see Technical Examination Report). At that time, the considerable extent of damage to the sky and cherubim was revealed, calling into question Suida's 1948 assessment of the work. Conservators relied on the scientific analysis of paint samples taken from preserved areas in order to reconstruct the original color scheme. In contrast to Suida's previously observed colors of gray, green, red, and brown, pigment analysis indicated that the original palette consisted of purple, green, red, and yellow, prompting new questions about the presence and the iconographic meaning of the winged angelic beings.²³

13 Depictions of winged angels occur with a moderate degree of frequency in works that issued from the Bellini workshop, although they are more rarely included in domestic devotional images of the Madonna and Child. With the exception of the Clowes *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist*, only two other half-length Madonnas attributed to Bellini—*Madonna of the Red Cherubim* (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia) and *Madonna and Child between St. Peter and St. Sebastian* (fig. 2)—include winged angelic heads. Their appearance is more frequent in larger public works, including the Barbarigo Altarpiece (Venice—Murano, Chiesa di San Pietro Martire), the aforementioned Pesaro Altarpiece, and the *Baptism of Christ* (Vicenza, Chiesa di Santa Corona).²⁴ In these examples, the winged cherub heads differ slightly, both in terms of their coloration and grouping. Some are completely painted in solid hues, while others are defined with pink complexions and multicolored wings. Evidently, the depiction of winged cherubim was not an occasion for standardization within the Bellini workshop but rather an opportunity for variation and invention. While earlier representations of winged cherubim and seraphim in Venetian art seem to adhere to the colors of red and blue—the symbolic colors for seraphim and cherubim, respectively—the use of multiple colors for representing these advanced angelic beings became more widespread, according to visual evidence, by the latter part of the fifteenth century.



Figure 2: Giovanni Bellini (Italian, about 1431/1436–1516), *Virgin and Child between St. Peter and St. Sebastian*, about 1487, oil on wood, 32-9/32 × 22-54/64 in. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY. The Louvre Museum, Paris, MI231.

14 The pictorial device of representing the winged heads of angels, most often interpreted to be cherubim (and/or seraphim) in visionary imagery, had been established by the fifteenth century in Venice and was grounded in scriptural references to the roles of cherubim as the attendants of God, bearers of the throne, and guardians of paradise.²⁵ Pictorially, they help to establish the visionary space by symbolically demarcating the divine realm from the earthly one occupied by the worshiper. Their presence, originally associated with the traditional device of the mandorla, points to the ever-challenging problem artists encountered of depicting the mystical, immaterial world in a visibly accessible way.²⁶ In Venice, the precedent for this type of imagery was explored within Bellini's own family: by his father Jacopo (about 1400–1470/1471), in images such as the *Madonna of the Cherubim* (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia); and by his brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna (about 1431–1506),²⁷ who often included them in combination with a mandorla, as seen in his *Trivulzio Madonna* (Milan, Sforza Castle Pinacoteca).

15 In the Clowes painting, Giovanni's contribution of a more naturalistic approach to the traditional visionary imagery is apparent. The winged heads emerge from a glowing cloud-filled sky, arrayed in the Aristotelian colors of the rainbow: purple, green, red, and yellow.²⁸ This association of the rainbow with cherubim is undoubtedly a general reference to divine vision, and calls to mind, more specifically, the biblical vision of Ezekiel,²⁹ which includes a description of a throne surrounded by living winged creatures and a rainbow-like brightness, upon which was seated the likeness of the glory of God. In this way, in the Clowes *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist*, Mary symbolizes the throne upon which her son, the physical incarnation of God, is seated. As one of her many devotional titles reveals, she is the *sedes sapientiae* or the Throne of Wisdom.

16 As mentioned above, the Clowes painting is unique in its depiction of the Baptist as a child, but two other versions ascribed to Giovanni Bellini—one in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt (fig. 3) and the other in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche in Urbino (fig. 4)—include St. John the Baptist as an adult, along with his aged mother, St. Elizabeth. Comparisons of manual tracings made from these two examples reveal that the Madonna and Child grouping share the exact contours of the Clowes painting and the aforementioned version by Rondinelli (fig. 5).³⁰



Figure 3: Giovanni Bellini (Italian, about 1431/1436–1516) and workshop, *Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Elizabeth*, about 1490–1500, mixed technique on poplar, 28-15/32 × 35-33/64 in. Photo © Städel Museum - ARTOTHEK. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, 853.



Figure 4: Giovanni Bellini (Italian, about 1431/1436–1516), *Sacra Conversazione (Virgin and Child with Saints)*, about 1490–1500, panel, 27-9/16 × 35-15/64 in. Photo Credit: Scala / Art Resource, NY. Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, Italy, 643.



Figure 5: Giovanni Bellini and Workshop, *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist*, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, with white tracing of compositional elements overlaid with black tracing of Frankfurt version (fig. 3).

17 Infrared reflectography (IRR) examinations of the Frankfurt, Urbino, Clowes, and Rondinelli paintings reveal the versatility of transfer techniques within the workshop system and point to a flexible workshop environment that was responsive to the changing needs of the master, his assistants, and their patrons. In the Frankfurt painting, which has often been considered the finest version because of its stylistic affinity to the master, IRR analysis points to the use of a detailed pounced cartoon that indicates both contours and areas of shadow. The forms of the underdrawing are further accentuated by closely spaced hatching that is typical of Bellini.³¹ This sensitively modeled underdrawing differs significantly from that found in the Urbino version, which is characterized by a traced outline with no hatchwork.

18 IRR did not reveal a carbon-based underdrawing in the Clowes painting.³² While this does not rule out the presence of an underdrawing rendered in an undetectable medium,³³ it does make analysis of the transfer technique and the painting's relationship to the other versions more difficult to discern. For example, IRR analysis of the Frankfurt painting reveals a number of changes that were made to the underdrawn proper right hand, fingers, and forearm of the Virgin that are not apparent on the paint surface. These very same alterations can be seen with the naked eye in the Urbino painting because they were made after the painting process had begun. While it is apparent that these same changes were followed in the Clowes painting, it is unclear whether they were already registered in the underdrawing.

19 Tracking these small changes from one version to the next can be useful in determining the sequence and relationship of one painting to another, as has been demonstrated with the IMA's Rondinelli version.³⁴ According to IRR analysis, the alterations to the Madonna's hand and arm that were being worked out in the Frankfurt and Urbino versions are fully realized in the traced underdrawing of the Rondinelli painting, suggesting that it was executed later, perhaps by means of a cartoon made from the paint surface of one of Bellini's most recognizable motifs. Doubtless Niccolò Rondinelli had a special connection to the Madonna and Child composition of the Clowes painting, as can be seen in the number of versions that

have been attributed to him, including the signed *Madonna and Child* (fig. 6) and *St. John the Evangelist Appearing to Galla Placidia* (fig. 7). In the latter, the Madonna and Child appear in the central altarpiece behind the figure of Galla Placidia, indicating that this popular design appeared in more than just private devotional imagery of the time.



Figure 6: Nicolò Rondinelli (Italian, about 1440—about 1520), *Madonna and Child*, about 1465–1510, oil on panel, 30-3/4 × 24-39/64 in. Photo credit: Alinari / Art Resource, NY. Galleria Doria Pamphili, Rome.



Figure 7: Nicolò Rondinelli (Italian, about 1440—about 1520), *St. John the Evangelist Appearing to Galla Placidia*, about 1490–1510, oil on panel, 68-57/64 × 68-57/64 in. Photo © Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, 91.

20 To this point, it is difficult to know the context from which this Madonna and Child compositional design originated. In addition to frequently appearing in smaller private devotional formats, it can also be seen in larger *sacre conversazione*, both full and half-length, as well as within larger narrative paintings like the *St. John the Evangelist Appearing to Galla Placidia*. Perhaps it is with an eye to these different types, with their depictions of celestial skies, attending saints, and supplicating figures, that we can best understand the Clowes *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist*, with its cherubim-filled sky and humble Baptist. In its traditional devotional function, its iconographical expansion sets it apart, while its fine material quality and stylistic and technical correspondence to the hand of Bellini categorize it as a work deserving of special attention.

Author

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Provenance

Possibly Baron Thienen-Adlerflycht, Salzburg.³⁵

Possibly (Otto Schatzker, Vienna, and for a time, Berlin) about 1932.³⁶

Possibly Berlin art market, about 1932.

(E. and A. Silberman, New York) before 1935;

Dr. George Henry Alexander Clowes, Indianapolis, in 1935;³⁷

The Clowes Fund, Indianapolis, from 1958–2000, and on long-term loan to the Indianapolis Museum of Art since 1971 (C10004);

Given to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, now the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, in 2000.

Exhibitions

Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1936, *Exhibition of Painting, Sculpture, and Graphic Arts*, no. 9;

John Herron Art Museum, Indianapolis, 1959, *Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes: A Memorial Exhibition*, no. 4;

The Art Gallery, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, 1962, *A Lenten Exhibition*, no. 5;

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, 1962, *Italian and Spanish Paintings from the Clowes Collection*, no. 18;

Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004–2005, *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*.

References

- Wilhelm Suida, "Una Madonna di Giovanni Bellini," *Rivista di Venezia* 13 (August 1935): 353–354 (reproduced);
- Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance: Venetian Schools*, 2 vols. (London: Phaidon, 1957), 1:37;
- Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes: A Memorial Exhibition*, exh. cat. (Indianapolis: John Herron Art Museum, 1959), no. 4 (reproduced);
- Fritz Heinemann, *Giovanni Bellini e i Belliniani*, 3 vols. (Venice and Hildesheim, 1962–1991), 1:30, no. 118 (g); 2:240, fig. 241 (reproduced); 3:14, no. 118g;
- Mark Roskill, "Clowes Collection Catalogue" (unpublished typed manuscript, IMA Clowes Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, 1968);
- A. Ian Fraser, *A Catalogue of the Clowes Collection* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973), 12–13 (reproduced);
- Ronda Kasl, ed., *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 91–159 (reproduced);
- Antonietta Gallone and Cinzia Mancuso, "Observations sur l'emploi de la couleur mauve dans l'atelier de Giovanni Bellini," in Hélène Verougstraete, ed., *La peinture ancienne et ses procédés / Copies, répliques, pastiches; colloque XV, Bruges (11–13 septembre 2003)* (Peeters: Leuven, 2006), 79–83 (reproduced).

Notes

1. The most comprehensive attempt to identify and sort the compositional designs of Giovanni Bellini and the replicas that followed is credited to Fritz Heinemann, *Bellini e i Belliniani*, 3 vols. (Venice and Hildesheim, 1962–1991). More recent considerations of this task include Andrea Golden, "Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 91–127. Anchise Tempestini, "Bellini and His Collaborators," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 256–271; and Augusto Gentili, "Giovanni Bellini, la bottega, i quadri di devozione," *Venezia Cinquecento* 1 (1991): 27–60.
2. Rona Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 23.
3. Concerning the function of private devotional images of the Madonna and Child in Renaissance Venice, see Ronda Kasl, "Holy Households: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Venice," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 59–89, and Margaret A. Morse, "Creating Sacred Space: The Religious Visual Culture of the Renaissance Venetian casa," *Renaissance Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 151–184.
4. For a list of versions of this composition, see Andrea Golden, "Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 120–121.
5. Rona Goffen, "Icon and Vision: Giovanni Bellini's Half-Length Madonnas," *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975): 487–518.
6. As Brian D. Steele points out, the iconography of crossed hands referred to the virtue of *humiliatio* and was traditionally limited to depictions of the Annunciate Virgin, the baptized Christ, or adoring magi and shepherds. Downcast eyes and an inclined head typically accompanied the gesture, although these are absent in the Clowes example. Brian D. Steele, "The Humblest Prophet: The Infant Baptist in Venice Ca. 1500," *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 168.
7. Bernard Berenson, "A Possible and an Impossible," in *Three Essays in Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 110–112; Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, "Giovannino Battista: A Study in Renaissance Religious Symbolism," *The Art Bulletin* 37, no. 2 (June 1955): 85–101; and Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, "Giovannino Battista: A Supplement," *The Art Bulletin* 43, no. 4 (December 1961): 319–326.
8. Brian D. Steele, "The Humblest Prophet: The Infant Baptist in Venice Ca. 1500," *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 165–190.
9. *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 109–116.
10. Translation: Giovanni Dominici, "On the Education of Children," in *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, trans. Arthur Basil Coté, PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1927, 34.
11. Anthony Cutler, "Under the Sign of the Deësis: On the Question of Representativeness in Medieval Art and Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 145–154.
12. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 153–159.
13. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 153–59, and Cinzia Maria Mancuso and Antonietta Gallone, "Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop: A Technical Study of Materials and Working Methods," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 129–151.
14. This point is argued in Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli, "Giovanni Bellini's Private Devotional Images: A Boom around 1500," in *Examining Giovanni Bellini: An Art 'More Human and More Divine'*, ed. Carolyn C. Wilson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 203–225.
15. The artist's signature, which is in the form of a painted illusionistic *cartellino*, is well preserved, and while its presence does not guarantee Bellini's authorship, it does indicate that the painting was a product of his workshop.
16. Cinzia Maria Mancuso and Antonietta Gallone, "Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop: A Technical Study of Materials and Working Methods," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 132–134.
17. X-radiography confirms that the figure of St. John the Baptist was left in reserve, to be painted after the forms of the Virgin and Child. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 154.
18. Winged angel heads, such as those depicted in the Clowes painting, are rather indiscriminately referred to as either cherubim or seraphim within Bellini's body of work. For the sake of consistency, if not clarity, the term cherubim will be used here.
19. Quote taken from a later translation provided by Suida. William Suida, no date, File 2000.341 (CI0004), Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. Wilhelm Suida, "Una Madonna di Giovanni Bellini," *Rivista di Venezia* 13 (1935): 353–354.
20. See Maria Rosaria Valazzi, *La Pala Ricostituita: L'Incoronazione della Vergine e la cimasa vaticana di Giovanni Bellini; Indagini e restauri* (Venice: Cataloghi Marsilio, 1988).
21. Taken from a July 1949 note in the Clowes Collection historical file, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields: "In 1948 I had the opportunity to study again very carefully the original. By cleaning it has become quite clear that five different colors are used in the winged heads of the little angels: two are dark grey, two are green, two red, two brown, three in the center finally show that rare red color called 'sinope' which had been discovered in Asia Minor, imported by the Fugger to Europe, and disappeared by exhaustion of the mines; therefore not available any longer for the artists after the sixteenth century."
22. In a postscript dated July 1949 in the Clowes historical file, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Suida writes: "Nine of the little winged heads are completely visible, nine are the choirs of Angels, — we are tempted to think that allusion to them is made in the picture. The head of the center is accompanied by two further semi-visible ones, all three in that rare red color. Should we call them Fides, Spes and

- Caritas? That would mean that the one head in the center has a double significance. The possibility has also to be taken into consideration that the four pairs of heads at both sides stand for the four elements: green for water, brown for the earth, red for fire, gray (originally perhaps blue) for air. This interpretation would increase the probability of the three in the center signifying the cardinal virtues. Whatever interpretation finally turns out to be correct, one thing is certain that Bellini's beautiful picture has a deep meaning, uniting the obvious religious subject with a great cosmic concept."
23. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 153–159, and Cinzia Maria Mancuso and Antonietta Gallone, "Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop: A Technical Study of Materials and Working Methods," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 144–145.
 24. Clouds full of winged heads of cherubim and seraphim were also uncovered in Bellini's *Blood of the Redeemer*. See Allan Braham, Martin Wyld, and Joyce Plesters, "Bellini's 'The Blood of the Redeemer,'" *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 2 (1978): 11–24.
 25. See Ezek. 1 and 28:13, and Gen. 3:24. For a more in-depth discussion of the many biblical roles assigned to cherubim, see Anna Rozonoer, "The Invariable Variability of the Cherubim," PhD diss., Boston University, 2014.
 26. Christian K. Kleinbub, "Making the Invisible Visible," in *Vision and the Visionary in Raphael* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 10–45.
 27. Regarding Giovanni's relationship to Jacopo and Andrea see Daniel Wallace Maze, "Giovanni Bellini: Birth, Parentage, and Independence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 783–823.
 28. Aristotle believed that the three colors of the rainbow were violet, green, and red. At times he mentions yellow in reference to the rainbow as a fourth, less primary color created because of the contrast between red and green. Aydin M. Sayili, "The Aristotelian Explanation of the Rainbow," *Isis* 30, no. 1 (1939): 65–83. For a contemporaneous example of the symbolic use of the colors of the rainbow to reference the dome of heaven, see JoAnne Gitlin Bernstein, "Science and Eschatology in the Portinari Chapel," *Atti del Convegno: Umanesimo problem aperti* 1 (1981): 33–40.
 29. Ezek. 1:28.
 30. The contours of the Madonna and Child in a fifth painting in the Galleria Doria Pamphili, Rome, this one signed by Niccolò Rondinelli, also correspond to the Clowes Madonna. See Andrea Golden, "Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 116–117.
 31. Rosella Bagarotto et al., "La tecnica pittorica di Giovanni Bellini," in *Il colore ritrovato: Bellini a Venezia*, ed. Rona Goffen and Giovanna Nepi Scirè (Milan: Electa, 2001), 184–194.
 32. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 153–159.
 33. In the absence of a carbon-containing underdrawing, [David Miller](#) considers two possible alternatives based on clues found during careful examination of the painting. The first is the existence of "thinly brushed red lines" apparent below the Madonna's fingers, pointing to the possible evidence of an underdrawing carried out in a red pigment that is undetectable in IRR. The second possibility is suggested by the presence of incised lines seen in X-radiography around some of the contours of the figures, which may indicate that an underdrawing was transferred using the *calcare* method. David A. Miller, "The Conservation of a Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and His Workshop," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 153–154.
 34. For further analysis of these underdrawings and the clues they offer regarding the chronological sequence of the paintings, see Andrea Golden, "Creating and Re-creating: The Practice of Replication in the Workshop of Giovanni Bellini," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed. Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 110–113.
 35. Art historian William E. Suida linked the name Thienen-Adlerflicht, Salzburg, with this painting, although this has not been corroborated; see Suida to G.H.A. Clowes, 22 January 1949, Correspondence Files, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. Two red seals on the back of the painting remain unidentified. (See [Technical Examination Report](#))
 36. References to the dealer Otto Schatzker (1885–1959) and the Berlin art market appear in Fritz Heinemann, *Giovanni Bellini e i Belliniani* (Venice: N. Pozza, 1962), 1:30, no. 118 (g), although neither has been corroborated. A custom's stamp dated 10 October 1933 applied in Buchs, Switzerland, on the border with Liechtenstein, is the only firmly documented and dated location of this painting. For more on Schatzker, see Gabriele Anderl and Alexandra Caruso, eds., *NS-Kunstraub in Österreich und die Folgen* (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen: Studien Verlag), 182–184. In 1929 Galerie Otto Schatzker is listed with a Berlin address, see *Berliner Adreßbuch 1929*, 1, part 2 (Kunstgewerbliche Ateliers), 437.
 37. Agreement of Sale between E. and A. Silberman and G.H.A. Clowes, 5 January 1935, File C10004, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.