

Introduction

This book is about sacred art and Catholicism in Rome during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is a social history of the reception of public art, focusing on altarpieces by Caravaggio, Guercino, and Guido Reni, who are famous today, and by Tommaso Laureti and Andrea Comodi, who are not. My study is based on two overriding premises. The first is that in order to write a social history of religious art one must practice both art history and religious history. But the kind of religious history that I must practice is not a kind generally employed by art historians who specialize in the Cinquecento and Seicento. Such scholars have tended to focus exclusively on 'fine art' (expensive paintings by known artists) in the context of 'official religion' (theology, church councils, politics, and papal and curial patronage). Other art historians, however, have treated sacred art and ephemera of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque eras in the context of 'popular' culture (largely cult practices); they have emphasized 'popular' prints (cheap, anonymous works) as illustrations of religious practices, such as processions and carnival celebrations.¹ These two approaches have advanced our knowledge, but because they bifurcate society and its art into the categories of 'elite' and 'popular,' they do not lend themselves to a holistic social history of reception.

My second premise is this: because in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Catholic reformers' interests in sacred art – especially in the public altarpiece – lay primarily in its power to instruct, delight, and move all members of society to lead virtuous Christian lives, the reception of sacred art among *all* levels of society – not just elites – demands close analysis.² In order to address Catholic beholders from a cross-section of society, I employ various kinds of evidence. Artists' visual responses to the altarpieces constitute one category of evidence. The visual responses in question were uneven from one altarpiece to the next, and extended from the years immediately following the original works' production until, in one case, well into the eighteenth century. In addition, some viewers, such as patrons and art critics, left detailed written discussions of public altarpieces, and I make use of them whenever possible. Visual and written evidence of these kinds, which are mainstays of historical reception studies, must not be taken at face value but instead interpreted in

their own cultural contexts. This is especially important in the case of artists' and critics' responses that postdate the altarpieces' execution by decades, thus constituting part of their afterlives.

Not all patrons wrote about the images they commissioned, yet it is often possible to gauge the presumed responses of well-known individuals and corporate entities such as confraternities, who commissioned altarpieces and placed them on public view. In such cases, patrons' appreciations of public altarpieces can be reconstructed on the basis of artistic contracts, documented preferences for certain styles and iconographies, participation in and promotion of specific rituals and devotions related to the altarpieces, and projections of individual and corporate personas. This is a time-honored approach to studying reception.

A different approach is needed, however, when it comes to examining the vast majority of viewers of public altarpieces; that is, the now anonymous churchgoers who were 'ordinary' in the sense of not being artistic or religious insiders – not patrons of altarpieces, artists, or critics, not prelates, theologians, or preachers. Until now these 'ordinary' viewers have not been addressed because they left no visual or written responses to public altarpieces. In this book I posit hypothetical responses for now-anonymous 'ordinary' churchgoers by reconstructing what Hans Robert Jauss long ago termed the 'horizons of expectation' of readers, based on their familiarity with a range of cultural phenomena.³ That is, I use a broad and heterogeneous range of cultural productions of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – visual, written, and performed rituals – to establish the knowledge bases and experiences of ordinary churchgoers.

It should be noted that many of the characteristic cultural productions that I analyze in this book used to be categorized as either 'elite' or 'popular.' Yet the term 'popular' is something of a misnomer, for it has long been well known that so-called 'popular' writings and imagery were directed to and known by all segments of society and that to varying degrees 'popular' cultural expressions betrayed familiarity with learned culture.⁴ My study further clarifies the situation by demonstrating that viewers made meaning of expensive altarpieces by known artists (that is, 'fine art') by drawing upon their familiarity with a far broader and more variegated range of Catholic cultural productions than has normally been assumed.

Access to various kinds of Catholic culture was of course conditioned by such characteristics as its language (Latin or vernacular, high style or simplified, both literary and pictorial), location or method of display (public or private, fixed or portable, including written edicts and visual art), and, of course, cost. While taking these factors into consideration it is helpful to treat various kinds of Catholic cultural productions more fluidly, recognizing that they coexisted and were interrelated. Therefore, through detailed study of evidence in many genres (such as paintings, prints, art criticism, ecclesiastical and secular art theory, sermons, exegesis, liturgy, devotional tracts, indulgences, edicts, rules of religious orders, rites of profession, theology, *avvisi* (news reports), cheap

pamphlets, drama, letters, confraternal diaries, rituals, pilgrimages, and charitable initiatives), I explore the contexts in which various Catholics, and to some extent dissenters, made meaning of public altarpieces.

As this list of types of evidence indicates, in attempting to reconstruct viewers' horizons of expectation I have taken what might be characterized as a total immersion approach to primary sources; that is, I have tried to find as many relevant primary sources as possible. I have proceeded this way for two reasons. First, I have done so to expand the *kinds* of evidence brought to bear. Second, I have done so in order to learn which ideas were typical and which unusual or even rare. The task of looking at repetitious images and reading repetitious texts was therefore exceedingly important to my enterprise, although I have tried not to subject the reader to this experience.⁵ Instead, I have been highly selective in my citations of visual and literary evidence. However, given that the distinctions among typical, unusual, and rare cultural expressions are vitally important in gauging the responses of different audiences, I endeavor to point them out in the chapters that follow.

In positing hypothetical responses for ordinary Catholics, I examine primary sources that are documented as having been known by the individual audiences under discussion. I attempt to reconstruct the horizons of expectation for certain now-anonymous viewers based on visual, written, and oral materials, such as stories in cheap pamphlets derived from oral culture, that were actually available in Rome, or at least in Italy, during the same years in which the altarpieces were painted or during subsequent viewing periods under consideration.

The problem of the survival rate of primary sources inevitably skews our understanding of Catholic culture. Learned literature of all genres, along with the names and identities of its authors, obviously survives in far greater numbers than other kinds of writing. I have made ample use of such sources. Some of them are well known, but a substantial number have not yet entered mainstream scholarship.⁶ As for the pictorial arts, expensive paintings by known artists far outnumber inexpensive ones by anonymous makers for the era in question. It is particularly unfortunate that inexpensive, anonymous Seicento Italian paintings ('popular' works) sold on the streets rarely survive, and that extant painted street shrines have been restored so many times that their original appearances are virtually irretrievable. Inexpensive prints sold by vendors and in shops were produced in great numbers, yet these typical images are also now remarkably scarce. In compiling such imagery, I have benefited from David Kunzle's *The Early Comic Strip. Narrative Strips and Picture Stories in the European Broadsheet from c. 1450 to 1825*, which includes reproductions and analysis of cheap prints on moralizing themes. In addition, I have combed through various collections to find prints relevant to this study, and few are cheap, anonymous ones.⁷ Despite these obstacles, I have attempted to reconstruct the horizons of expectation of my individual audiences on the basis of the most representative range possible of Catholic

cultural productions. By incorporating these sources into the equation, I seek to redress the imbalance in the scholarship.

My attempt to find typical yet generally overlooked cultural productions has borne considerable fruit in the realm of cheap pamphlets and 'popular' theater (that is, cheap pamphlets later known by the English word 'chapbooks,' and plays produced in public piazzas and churches).⁸ Although pamphlets and 'popular' theater have received much attention by scholars of early modern England and France, only fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian works of this kind have been studied in any detail, and much of that scholarship concerns secular works.⁹ Some of the pamphlets and *sacre rappresentazioni* (a genre of popular theater) on which my analyses depend are sources I found myself. But I am also indebted to Alfredo Cioni and Lorenzo Baldacchini for compiling catalogues of works of these types, which helped me devise strategies for locating other pamphlets and 'popular' theater.¹⁰ These kinds of cultural expression, along with learned literature and expensive and inexpensive pictorial imagery, are examined in detail in the chapters that follow. It should be noted here that because many accounts in pamphlets, such as saints' lives, derive from oral culture and were performed by *cantari* (singing poets), they are the closest we are likely to get to familiarity with religious stories known by heart by thousands of ordinary Catholics, that is, by the majority of beholders of the five altarpieces.

The particular methodological challenges that I faced in defining various groups of viewers and in reconstructing their responses are discussed as the issues arise in the given chapters. In each case I have selected groups of viewers – even anonymous ones – who came to the churches for a particular, documented reason. Moreover, although much of my evidence is prescriptive in character, thus illuminating what an ideal response to a given altarpiece should be according to standard Catholic teachings, some of my evidence is descriptive, thus disclosing actual responses, both orthodox and decidedly unorthodox. In addition, cheap pamphlets and plays printed without receiving the ecclesiastical approval required in Italy in this period document unofficial interpretations of various religious subjects. These overlooked primary sources provide new perspectives on well-known images and help to revise our view of early modern Catholic culture.

A much smaller number of beholders are nameable individuals, such as artists who created visual responses to the altarpieces, art critics who wrote explicitly about them, and patrons whose appreciations of the five altarpieces can be reconstructed. Although some of these responses to the altarpieces are well known, others are not, and most deserve fuller interpretation. This is especially true of artists' visual responses to Andrea Comodi's *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail*, which inspired pictorial reinterpretations well into the Settecento, and of art critics' written responses to the altarpieces of Caravaggio, Guercino, and Guido Reni. Some of the critical responses have been given sophisticated analysis, but only concerning artistic style. An exception is *The 'Divine' Guido*, in which Richard Spear offered a compelling

analysis of Reni's style and of his critics as beholders, while also shedding light on the interrelated notions of what Spear called visual and theological grace.¹¹ In the following case studies of the five altarpieces I explore early modern art critics' responses for what they reveal about attitudes toward style and such socio-religious issues as poverty, humility, and grace. Artistic practice and theory, regional biases, and personal agendas are normally recognized as having affected art critics' appreciations of paintings. I argue that because art criticism also bespoke ideological biases inherent to theories of art and cognition, specific socio-religious conditions exacerbated critics' negative responses to given styles and subjects.

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In analyzing the reception of these five altarpieces I accent what I term the *lived experience* of early modern Catholicism. That is, I maintain that for individual churchgoers Catholicism was an experience that unfolded in the course of their daily lives in the city of Rome (or on pilgrimages or other visits to the Eternal City). And I maintain that these individuals brought their experiences of Catholicism in its manifold dimensions to bear when looking at art. Sometimes individual persons beheld altarpieces when alone. At other times they viewed altarpieces as members of corporate entities, such as confraternities and religious orders, or as loosely bound groups, such as pilgrims or unreformed prostitutes. Sometimes viewers looked at altarpieces through the lens of artistic practice, sometimes through the lens of art criticism. Many viewers looked beyond the altarpieces and into themselves when praying. Others looked at altarpieces when processing through a church on a pilgrimage, or when listening to a sermon, or when defiantly not listening to a sermon. These viewing experiences were not necessarily mutually exclusive nor were they the only kinds that took place, although for practical reasons I necessarily present only a selective range.

In aiming to uncover this particular kind of experiential dimension of public altarpieces in Seicento Rome my approach differs in several ways from those taken in the various pioneering studies of reception that helped me conceptualize this book. In *The Power of Images* David Freedberg explored above all beholders' psychological and behavioral responses.¹² I take a deliberately more historical approach than Freedberg, and unlike him I consider responses to the images in question over time – that is, their lives and afterlives. This allows me to demonstrate how and why certain altarpieces that were initially well received later became controversial or were subject to reinterpretation. My approach also departs from that of John Shearman, who in *Only Connect* proposed a unified viewer.¹³ Indeed, in identifying audiences for the five altarpieces under examination in this book, I insist on analyzing a variety of responses, both at the time of the paintings' production and during the rest of the Seicento. Quite clearly, too, my historical approach to reception is unlike the fundamentally visual method practiced by Wolfgang Kemp, who in various studies emphasized artists' provisions of visual cues in their

paintings in order to manipulate and evoke responses on the part of ‘implied’ beholders.¹⁴

These approaches, stimulating as they are, do not suit my needs for they overlook the socio-religious dimensions of early modern Catholicism that affected the beholding and use of altarpieces in the public churches of Rome. Despite this, my study, like those of Shearman and Kemp, also depends on close examination of individual paintings and on consideration of artistic problem-solving. Moreover, like Freedberg I am concerned with the power of images. Nevertheless, in order to foreground the historical reception, which has been given far too little attention with regard to Seicento religious art, I have chosen not to examine psychological responses in detail. I do, however, acknowledge their importance when analyzing the extent to which church reformers were able to control the reception of sacred art.

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The five public altarpieces examined in this book were produced between about 1595 and 1625, yet in examining their afterlives my social history of reception extends over the course of the Seicento. I selected these five altarpieces with close attention to intersecting criteria: who made them, what is depicted in them, in what churches they were beheld and used, and by whom.

To begin with the artists, I have deliberately chosen three painters who, despite their fluctuating critical fortunes from their own day to ours, are currently considered major figures: Caravaggio, now regarded as among the greatest talents of the century, or even of the Western tradition; and Guercino and Guido Reni, now seen as leading figures in seventeenth-century art. My selection of altarpieces by Tommaso Laureti and Andrea Comodi – who, although successful in early Seicento Rome are now considered very minor figures – is also deliberate. Art that seems unappealing to many beholders today can nevertheless help us better understand early modern Catholicism and help throw into relief the achievements of artists such as Caravaggio, whose works are now so highly regarded.

In short, if in his psychological approach to response Freedberg pointedly opened up discussion to include imagery not generally deemed ‘art,’ my historical approach to response includes altarpieces not currently deemed ‘great’ or ‘innovative’ art. Indeed, I show that certain works now generally considered to be aesthetically impoverished were surprisingly influential in Seicento Rome, and that what we now regard as great art can be considered important for reasons other than aesthetics. Response and its companion, artistic taste, are unstable.

Another clarification about my treatment of artists is warranted. Although I consider artistic choices that the five painters made in creating their altarpieces, the subject of my book is not the artists’ intentions but rather the beholders’ responses to the altarpieces. This emphasis is needed because in comparison with artistic intentionality, the social history of reception has been sorely neglected. Moreover, in the case of Guercino, Reni, and especially

Caravaggio, I consider artistic intentionality to be too important and complex to be done justice in this study. And given the current critical fortunes of Laureti and Comodi, I doubt there is much of a demand for sustained treatments of their intentions. In any case, I hope that the new information and interpretations that I offer in this book will inspire new studies; above all, my chapter on Caravaggio's *Madonna of Loreto* suggests that his intentions merit further exploration.

To return to the criteria I used to select the altarpieces, all five paintings depict themes of particular importance in Seicento Rome and all were originally displayed on the altars of characteristic churches. The case studies of these altarpieces' reception afford us a panoramic view of Christian Rome, its inhabitants, and their multifaceted experiences of Catholic culture. The five altarpieces treat the execution of an early Christian virgin martyr, as seen in Tommaso Laureti's *Martyrdom of Saint Susanna* (Plate 1); the Madonna of Loreto holding the Christ Child while appearing to pilgrims praying at the door to her shrine, as seen in Caravaggio's *Madonna of Loreto* (Plate 4); a newly canonized male saint and his devotion to relics and care of the poor sick, as seen in Andrea Comodi's *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail* (Plate 7); the repentant patron saint of prostitutes weeping in devotion before relics of Christ's Passion, as depicted in Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene* (Plate 11); and the doctrine of the triune Christian God, as portrayed in Guido Reni's *Holy Trinity* (Plate 14). Thus, these themes concern old and new saints, both female and male, as well as the nature of God in three persons. The altarpieces depict martyrdom, prayer, the cult of relics, pilgrimage, and charitable activities.

The five altarpieces were painted for churches of different kinds and served a variety of functions in them for a variety of audiences. Laureti's *Martyrdom of Saint Susanna* is on the high altar of S. Susanna, an early Christian basilica that reputedly occupies the site of the saint's martyrdom. In addition to serving as the place of worship for Cistercian nuns, the church served the Catholic public as a Lenten station. Caravaggio's *Madonna of Loreto* hangs in the Cavalletti Chapel of S. Agostino. The altarpiece was the cynosure of the Cavalletti family's burial place where they also venerated the cult of Loreto. The Augustinian church's location on Rome's pilgrimage route also affected its reception by various spectators. Comodi's *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail* was once on the high altar of the Barnabite church of S. Carlo ai Catinari, dedicated to the recently canonized Carlo Borromeo. Because S. Carlo was a plague saint, pious viewers who had survived the pestilence and other illnesses appended votive offerings to the altarpiece's frame. In addition, Comodi's painting was the focal point of devotion for members of a sodality based at the church that cared for the poor sick in emulation of S. Carlo. Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene* was originally on the high altar of S. Maria Maddalena delle Convertite al Corso (now destroyed), the church of the converted prostitutes. It has never been recognized that in addition to serving the nuns, the church served the Catholic population at large, including active prostitutes, in its role as a Lenten station. Finally, Reni's *Holy Trinity* is

the high altarpiece of SS. Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti, the church of the eponymous archconfraternity dedicated to the care of poor pilgrims and convalescents. During Holy Week every year and throughout Jubilee Years, this was one of Rome's busiest churches.

This brief overview of the paintings' subject matter and the churches in which they were displayed barely hints at the complexity of the altarpieces' functions and at the range of responses they elicited. Few functions of these altarpieces, let alone responses to them, have been studied in any detail. This book's five main chapters, each dedicated to one of the altarpieces, constitute a series of case studies of the paintings' historical reception.

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The book's five chapters take up the altarpieces in the order of their execution. This chronological presentation gives necessary structure to my study, for although each of the chapters has a specific theme, it emerges over the course of the book that the themes are all interrelated, many in surprising ways. For example, the changing reception over the years of the theme of bare feet as signifiers of humble service helps revise our view of developments in Catholic culture and in art criticism. Indeed, precisely because I explore the individual altarpieces' reception by multiple audiences throughout the Seicento, a chronological structure helps draw attention to beholders' shifting responses to the paintings.

Each of the five case studies follows a similar organization in order to enhance understanding of site-specific ways in which viewers concretized the altarpieces. First, the given altarpiece is described visually. Then it is situated in its church and its church is situated in the urban fabric of Rome. Some of the churches have been renovated (in one case razed) and some of the altarpieces have been moved; in such cases the original viewing conditions are reconstructed. Next, the reception of the altarpiece in question is treated in detail from the perspectives of various specific groups of beholders.

Neither the audiences themselves nor the issues raised in examining them are uniform from altarpiece to altarpiece. For example, whereas the patron of Laureti's *Martyrdom of Saint Susanna* can be treated in detail as the painting's prime beholder, the patron of Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene* is unknown. And whereas neither Andrea Comodi himself nor his *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail* elicited sustained analysis by Seicento art critics, Caravaggio elicited a great deal of heated critical commentary, some of which focused on his *Madonna of Loreto*. The degrees to which I am able to gauge unauthorized responses to the altarpieces depends on the nature of my evidence, which varies a great deal. It is Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene* that receives the most sustained analysis in this regard.

Chapter 1 focuses on Tommaso Laureti's *Martyrdom of Saint Susanna* of ca. 1595–97 (Plate 1), which remains on the high altar of the church of S. Susanna as the centerpiece of a pictorial program that covers the tribune and nave walls. Cardinal Girolamo Rusticucci, Vicar General of Rome,

commissioned the whole decorative program to assert a triumphalist message tied to the church's stationary liturgy, which had early Christian origins. In examining the reception of Laureti's altarpiece, I bring to bear the perspectives of Rusticucci himself, the church's Cistercian nuns, and members of the general churchgoing public. Here I introduce for the first time the slippery problem of attempts to control the reception of sacred art. I suggest that viewers' familiarity with certain kinds of pictorial and literary culture may lead to their sexual arousal before sacred paintings regardless of endeavors to prevent such responses.

Caravaggio's *Madonna of Loreto* of ca. 1605–06 (Plate 4), the focal point of Chapter 2, is still *in situ* on the altar of the Cavalletti Chapel in the church of S. Agostino, yet it has never before been analyzed in its context of the burial chapel as a whole. This chapter centers on the following audiences for Caravaggio's altarpiece: the Cavalletti family, the Augustinians to whom the church belonged, pilgrims, and art critics. I demonstrate, in discussing the afterlives of Caravaggio's altarpiece from about 1640 to 1670, that although the critics were deeply concerned with Caravaggio's style, they did not see it as signifying only on an aesthetic level. I argue that to the critics, style had socio-religious implications; this had serious ramifications for the reception of his *Madonna of Loreto*.

Chapter 3 concerns Andrea Comodi's *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail* of ca. 1621–22 (Plate 7). Once the high altarpiece of S. Carlo ai Catinari, the painting is now in the church's retro-sacristy. This painting, although little known today, was widely influential on artists into the mid-Settecento. Pietro da Cortona's *S. Carlo's Procession of the Holy Nail* of 1651–67 (Fig. 3.2), now on the church's high altar, is a response to Comodi's altarpiece. So too, for example, are paintings by Pierre Mignard (Fig. 3.9), now in Caen, by Marcantonio Bassetti (Fig. 3.16) in S. Sebastiano in Via Appia, and by Stefano Parrocel (Plate 10) in S. Prassede in Rome. I also explore the responses to Comodi's altarpiece on the part of the Barnabite Order that commissioned it; female and male members of the Oratorio dell'Umiltà di S. Carlo (Oratory of the Humility of Saint Charles [Borromeo]); and now-anonymous pilgrims and plague survivors in Seicento and Settecento Rome.

Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene with Two Angels* of ca. 1622 (Plate 11) is the cynosure of Chapter 4. Now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, this painting was originally displayed on the high altar of S. Maria Maddalena delle Convertite al Corso, the long-ago-destroyed church of converted prostitutes. Today Guercino's painting is much better known than Comodi's *S. Carlo Venerating the Holy Nail*, but in the Seicento the *Penitent Magdalene* inspired remarkably few artistic responses. The patron of Guercino's work is unidentifiable, but the prostitutes-turned-Augustinian-nuns were its primary audience and I analyze their responses to it, both authorized and unauthorized. I address the painting's reception on the part of active prostitutes who heard sermons in the church, as well as the churchgoing public. Here again I treat difficulties that various authorities faced when trying to use sacred art to help reform

society. Beholders who retained mental images of past experiences deemed undesirable by Catholic reformers concretized altarpieces in light of them, while other viewers saw elements in the paintings that they were conditioned to see, whether or not they were actually there.

Chapter 5 centers on Guido Reni's *Holy Trinity* of 1625–26 (Plate 14), the high altarpiece of SS. Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti. The painting was commissioned by Ludovico Ludovisi, Cardinal Protector of the church's eponymous archconfraternity. Among the audiences whose responses to the *Holy Trinity* I treat are Cardinal Ludovisi, members of the archconfraternity, the poor pilgrims they served, artists, and art critics. In this case, the reception of now-anonymous beholders is unusually well documented, for the confraternal Holy Year diaries combine prescriptive and descriptive perspectives. In addition, building on Spear's work it is possible to explore further how artists' and art critics' appreciations of Reni's *grazia* (grace) were tied to conceptions of God's grace and even conceptions of the character of God in three persons.¹⁵ It may well come as a surprise to twenty-first-century readers, many of whom regard the Trinity as a remote, abstract doctrine, that many Seicento persons conceived of the doctrine in highly emotional ways that helped condition their reception of Reni's altarpiece.

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In addition to constituting a social history of reception of public altarpieces in Seicento Rome and an exploration of problems involved in trying to control responses to images, these case studies provide a window on early modern Catholicism itself. This introduction should make it apparent that certain themes crucial to an understanding of early modern Catholicism are woven together throughout this book. The highly complex, multilayered pictures of early modern Catholicism and its art that emerge throughout the course of this book coalesce at the end of the chapter on Reni's *Holy Trinity*.

Notes

- 1 For an overview of the study of art and Catholicism in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome, see Jones 2002.
- 2 These functions are overlooked by Hans Belting, whose focus in *Likeness and Presence* on the power of art as due to the presence of the divine in the painted likeness is too narrowly conceived for the study of the reception of public altarpieces of the late Cinquecento and Seicento. See my Conclusion for further discussion.
- 3 See Jauss, for example.
- 4 Long ago, members of the Annales School, for example, showed that the categories of 'elite' and 'popular' are overly reductive. For an overview of these issues, see Gentilcore. Although for decades historians had paid so much attention to history 'from below' that in 1990 Craig Harline saw a need to redress the imbalance by pursuing more studies of 'official religion,' in the realm of

art history 'popular' imagery has never garnered anywhere near the scholarly attention that 'fine art' has received.

- 5 For every devotional tract, pilgrimage manual, or account of a saint's life in a pamphlet that I cite, there are scores of similar ones that I have not cited.
- 6 This is certainly because various Roman libraries rich in expensive printed books of the early modern era, such as the Angelica and Vallicelliana, do not have online catalogues and their holdings are listed only by author's name and title. Because even many authors of relevant early modern learned literature are no longer familiar names, in order to find such works one must often guess what the first few words of a title might be. The situation is even more difficult in the case of cheap pamphlets and 'popular' plays, which are not as systematically catalogued. They are often bound together in large volumes with only one or two titles appearing in the library's catalogue.
- 7 Most studies of prints center on expensive ones by major artists, which in comparison with cheap ones, have survived in greater numbers due to the higher quality of both their materials and artistry. Inexpensive prints treating secular subjects are far better studied than those on religious subjects, at least as far as the late Cinquecento and Seicento are concerned.
- 8 In previous publications, I chose to use the English word 'chapbook,' which postdates the seventeenth century, because it is familiar to Anglophone scholars. However, here I take Barbara Wisch's advice in using the word 'pamphlet' instead.
- 9 See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the characteristics of pamphlets and 'popular' theater, and for scholarship on them; individual works of this kind are discussed throughout the book.
- 10 Baldacchini's introduction is particularly useful in providing an overview of a variety of issues related to pamphlets; also see Cioni 1961 and 1943, whose studies, however, do not extend to the Seicento.
- 11 Spear 1997, pp. 102–27.
- 12 Freedberg does incorporate a historical perspective to some extent, although it is not his main concern.
- 13 Shearman; also see Wolfgang Kemp's review (1994) of *Only Connect*, which assesses various approaches to the study of reception.
- 14 See, for example, W. Kemp 1997, 1994, and 1983.
- 15 Spear 1997, pp. 102–27.