

Alfred Bader

Alfred Bader Fine Arts

Italian Baroque Paintings - Purdue University

1967

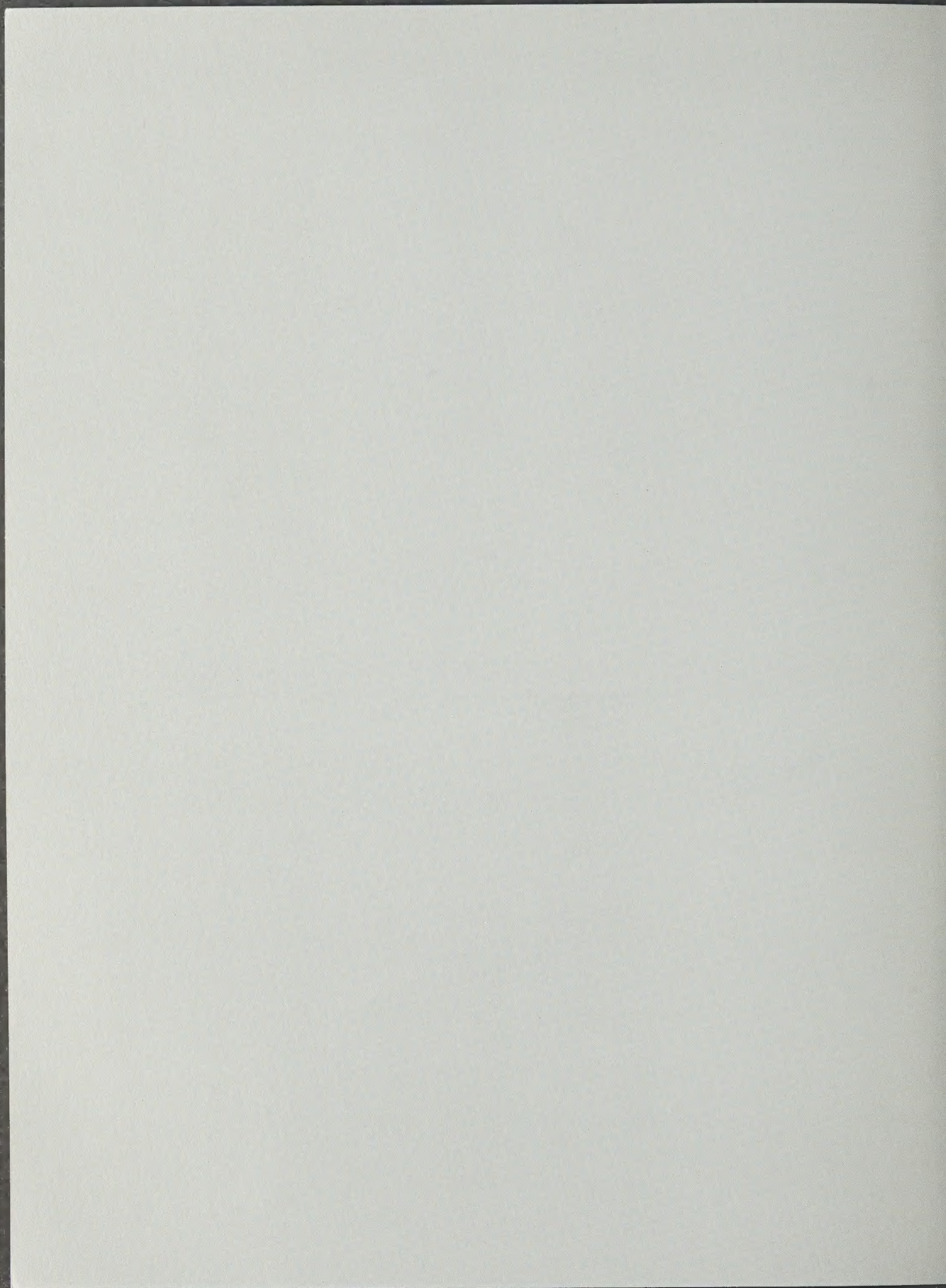
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*selections
from
the Bader
Collection*

ITALIAN BAROQUE
PAINTINGS

Purdue University Galleries



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PAINTINGS

selections from the Bader Collection

Union Gallery
Purdue University
March 30 - May 3, 1987

FOREWORD

It is almost seven years since the Purdue Galleries honored Prof. Herbert C. Brown, the 1979 Nobel Laureate, with an exhibition of paintings by Rembrandt and his students.

What Prof. Brown has known professionally all along, that there is such beauty in diversity, I have learned in collecting paintings. When I started, I was interested almost solely in Dutch and Flemish works of the 17th century, preferably of biblical subjects by Rembrandt students. Since then, I have discovered the beauty of Italian paintings, and while I have given a good many to museums, I have kept a favorite few, and some of these are shown here. Some—like the Fetti and the Guidobono are my favorites because they are masterpieces, of biblical subjects, and so close in spirit to what contemporary Dutch artists did with the same subjects. Others—like the Bolognese curtain—are just such fun to look at: what marvelous imagination that artist had to create such a trompe l'oeil.

Prof. Brown started his professional career as a brilliant physical organic chemist, co-discovered sodium borohydride and other commercially valuable metal hydride reducing reagents, became interested in reaction mechanisms, discovered the ether-solvent catalyzed hydroboration of olefins, one of organic chemistry's most useful and versatile reactions, and now, in his eighth decade, has discovered new pathways to the preparation of optically active compounds by use of chiral boron reagents that are likely to become of immense practical importance. There is such beauty in diversity: in science as in art.

Alfred Bader

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Old Students and Old Masters: The School of Rembrandt, an exhibition held at Purdue in the fall of 1980, marked the beginnings of our very rewarding association with Dr. Alfred Bader. All of the works in that exhibition were from the Baders' personal collection of 17th century Dutch paintings. On that occasion we were honoring the collector's very good friend, Purdue chemist and Nobel Laureate, Herbert C. Brown. It was an event which remains a landmark in the exhibition history of Purdue University Galleries.

During the intervening seven years, Dr. Bader has extended his collecting interests to Italian paintings and it is with great enthusiasm that we embark on another exhibition drawn from his collection *Italian Baroque Paintings*. Once again, the event is held in conjunction with ceremonies honoring Professor Brown. The opening of this exhibition coincides with the annual *Herbert C. Brown Lecture Series in Organic Chemistry* and with the dedication of Purdue's east chemistry building as the *Herbert C. Brown Laboratory of Chemistry*. Additionally, this year marks Brown's 30th year as a member of the National Academy of Science, his 40th year as a Purdue professor of chemistry, his 50th wedding anniversary, and his 75th birthday.

We commend Professor Brown for continuing to provide us with these occasions to celebrate, and we extend our gratitude to Alfred and Isabel Bader for being such generous and supportive lenders to these exhibitions. It has been a delight to work with them, as always, for their commitment to beautiful art is unwavering, and the pictures here on view are testimony to their unerring taste and discernment.

Finally I want to thank the individuals who worked on this catalogue: Kathryn Evans and Anne Gunshor for their dedicated efforts in preparing the introduction and entries (Mrs. Evans did some of the research on her honeymoon); Amy Sacuto, Wendy Minnis, Mary Whitehouse and Greg Bobay, members of the Student Design Service, and Charles Harmon, their faculty advisor, for their splendid work on the production of this publication.

Mona Berg
Director
Purdue University Galleries

INTRODUCTION

We at Purdue University owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. and Mrs. Alfred Bader who have generously lent the paintings on display from their private collection. The selections in this exhibition afford us a delightful opportunity to sample the range, diversity, and sheer virtuosity of Italian Baroque style. What we can appreciate as the marvel of Baroque diversity, however, was not always so well received.

When Vicente Carducho (1576-1638) attacked Caravaggio's work in his book *Dialogues on Painting* (publ. 1633) he was speaking for a generation of artists who were caught in the throes of the transition from Mannerism to Baroque. He attacked the dramatic, unaltered realism, the disregard for "ideal beauty", and painting which eliminates careful drawing preparation. All of this was "Nothing short of diabolic." Caravaggio was an antichrist—the death of painting.

Before Caravaggio ever came to Rome (prior to 1590) the strongholds of Mannerist formalism were giving way. This fresh wind was not coming from any particular European country, school, artist, or decade. All major centers of European painting experienced, simultaneously and independently, a profound interest in naturalism (often coupled with a dramatic chiaroscuro). Baroque naturalism grew from a variety of elements, including religious, scientific, and philosophic changes, and was manifested in many forms. At mid century, one finds many Baroque painters working along parallel lines, as well as reinterpreting, contradicting and marrying the styles of classicism, Caravaggesque naturalism, and Baroque decorativeness. Consequently, it is easier to determine the central themes of *Hamlet* than it is to separate the currents within the Baroque.

Caravaggio and the Carracci are major figures who are essential manifestations of tendencies already at work prior to 1590. They are not the progenitors of the move toward naturalism, neither is Caravaggio the originator of chiaroscuro. Rather, through their own artistic inventions, imagination and methods, they created an art that was quintessentially Baroque, art that was meant to stir the beholder's faith through sensory stimulation and an empathetic response.

Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564-1638), a Baroque art theorist, sees them as having a different emphasis but being part of the same movement. Caravaggio's naturalism, showing a use of strong local color, strong chiaroscuro, plebeian types and rather idiosyncratic compositional schemes, is not void of classical elements, ie. plasticity of form and a feeling for linear contour. Although dedicated to recapturing the simplicity and classical beauty of Renaissance form, Annibale Carracci's drawings and landscapes alone deny him a purely "classical" label. His profound interest in natural things is quite evident.

The painters in this exhibition represent the styles of the major art centers: Rome, Bologna, Naples and Genoa, with Venice being less important until the 18th century. The range of subjects is broad and necessary for the satisfying of the religious and aesthetic needs of a diverse patronage—from kings to merchants. Italian religious painting attempted to reaffirm the views of the Counter-Reformation Church along with heightening the religious experiences of the faithful through

its physicality. The devotion to Saints and an interest in Old Testament themes flourished. Two paintings of *Jacob's Dream*, by Fetti and de Matteis, may prefigure the coming of Christ through the symbolism of the ladder—Jesus being the bridge between man and heaven. Two episodes from the book of Tobit (Old Testament, Apocrypha) are included in the exhibition: Marco Ricci's *Tobias with Fish and Angel*, and the emotion filled *Tobias leaving his Father* by Guidobono. "Tobit's" theme speaks of the wisdom of faithfulness. *The Triumph of Mordecai* is taken from the book of Esther (Old Testament). Here you see Mordecai being led through the festive crowd by Haman—the man who wanted to hang him. This "bozzetto" (oil sketch) by Nicola Bertuzzi was done for a larger finished work. Pellegrini's vigorously executed *Study of a Saint* may depict one of the apostles.

Portraiture, both formal and informal, attempted to convey the personality of the sitter, often using the devices of gesture, poses inferring movement, and intimate, close-up views. *The Portrait of a Man* by Passerotti, although reminiscent of late Renaissance portraiture, has a psychological realism that penetrates its formality. The soft idealization of Carracci's *Study of Two Heads*, and the similar delicacy of modeling in the unattributed *Portrait of a Young Man* (possibly by the Northern painter, Willem Drost) sharply contrast with the darkly melancholic *Portrait of a Young Man* by Paolini, who was a follower of Caravaggio.

The Antique was much revered in the 17th century. *The Curtain*, by an anonymous Bolognese painter, may illustrate a story from the writings of Pliny. The *Caritas Romana* by Bellucci is based on the Roman story of *Cimon and Pero*, but is presented as an allegory of youth and old age.

"Genre" was another popular category of secular painting. The *Waiter Holding a Chicken*, from Bergamo, could belong to a series of paintings on the five senses, possibly representing "taste".

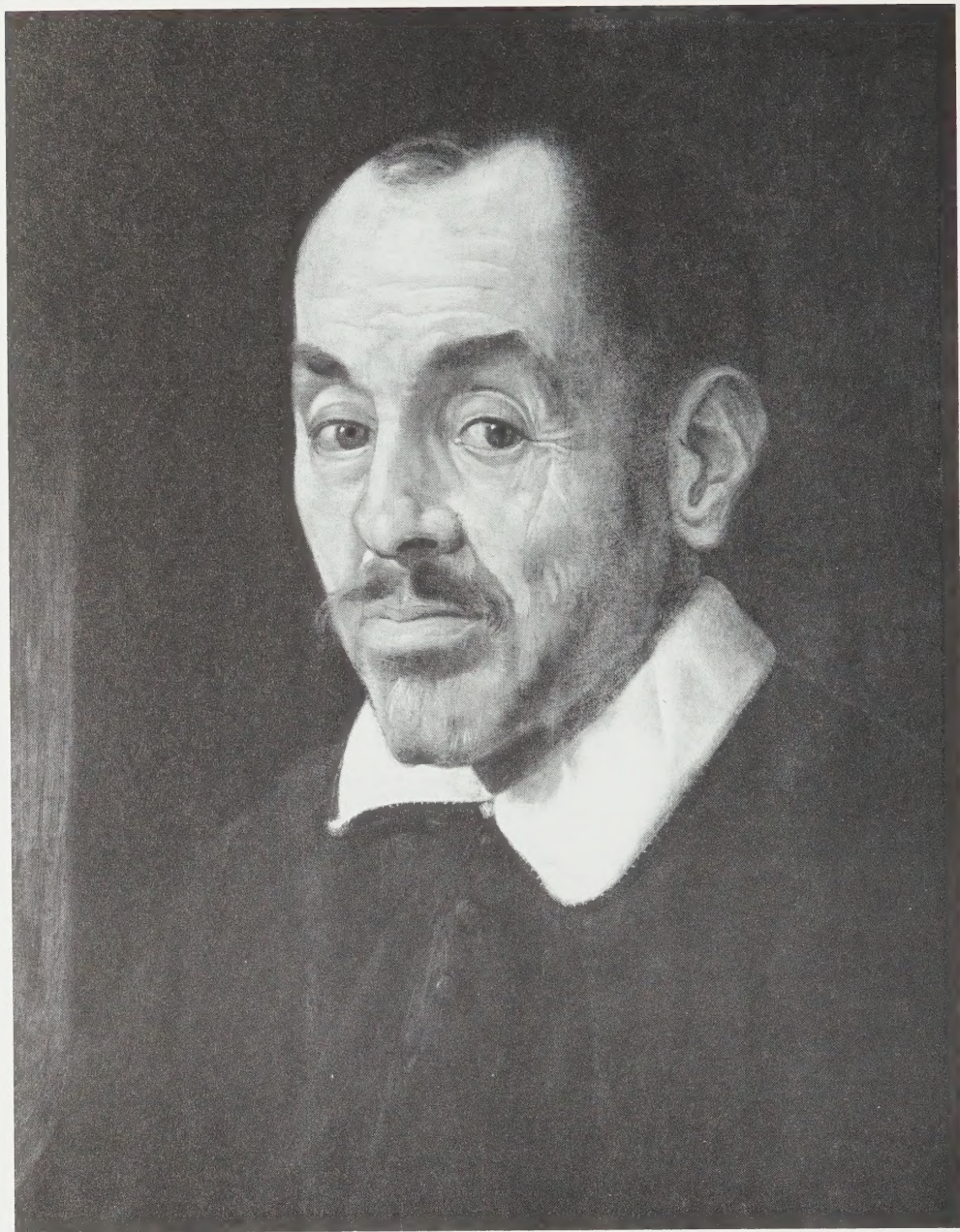
Landscape painting assumed many roles: as a backdrop, or as an independent agent, it was idealized, romanticized, marked with Classical ruins, or was relatively unaltered. The real and fanciful (capricci) landscapes done by the 18th century Venetian viewpainters, were done for export—souvenirs for the wealthy travelers who streamed in from Northern Europe. The Venetian Canal and its charm, represented by the school of Guardi painting, became the perfect subject for Italian Rococo landscape painting.

To end this introduction of the exhibition's works and concepts with Guardi and the Italian Rococo makes sense in chronological terms, and in terms of what one can trace from Passerotti to Guardi as a development from conceptual painting to a more purely perceptual style. The quick, responsive *ditocco* manner of painting, present in the best Venetian painting in the 18th century, is a more direct transcription of visual sensation than the painting which imposes formal concepts on perceptual sensations before the paint ever hits the canvas.

The Venetian interest in developing a perceptual style reaches a stopping point here with Guardi, and yet, one senses in his poetic temper a foreshadowing of the romantic light of Turner, still a century away.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mona Berg, Gallery Director at Purdue University, and Ann Gunshor, an undergraduate art major who prepared many of the entries in this catalogue.

Kathryn (Henke) Evans
Research Assistant
Purdue University



1.
Bartolomeo Passerotti (1529-1592)
Portrait of a Man
Oil on panel; 17½ × 13¾ inches



1.
*Portrait
of
a
Man*

A painter of fresco, portraiture, stillife, and genre, Passerotti was noted for his keen sense of realism and portrayal of the natural. Leaving Bologna, his birthplace, Passerotti departed for Rome, invited there by the architect, Vignola. He was a pupil of Taddeo Zuccaro for a number of years, and then worked independently. The artist stayed in Rome for nearly fifteen years, from 1551-1565, gaining distinction chiefly as a portraitist.

Probably the earliest work in the exhibition, the painting before us exemplifies Passerotti's realistic style and his ability to capture the contemplative mood of his sitter. The subject, whoever he may be, is depicted as rather stiff in costume and pose, but with a probing clarity of facial features. The emphasis on head and shoulders placed close to the picture plane, with head slightly turned and accentuated by the light, are characteristics present in most of Passerotti's portrait paintings, and they perhaps presage the innovations in portraiture which would continue throughout the seventeenth century in Italy. "Private and court portraiture continued to accrue a penetrating naturalism which strengthened the bond between viewer and sitter. Gestures, lively poses, and intimate close-up views of the sitter were common devices used during the period. Seicento artists produced vital portraits that attained greater union between the inner presence of man and his exterior appearance." (Vogel, 1984, 16-17).

A.G.



2.

Annibale Carracci (1560-1609)

Study of Two Heads

Oil on paper put down on wood; 10¼ × 15 inches

2.
*Study
of
Two
Heads*

A pupil of his cousin Lodovico, Annibale became by far the most famous and skilled of the three Carracci painters. Annibale, along with Caravaggio, was the painter to whom can be credited the invention and evolution of the Baroque style in Italy. With his cousin, and his brother Agostino, he founded a humanistic school of painting in 1582 where artists could meet, use the models and discuss art amongst themselves. This Academy became the training ground for most of the major Bolognese painters, including Domenichino, Reni, and Guercino.

Annibale's style evidences a constant development throughout his career. His earliest works reveal the naturalistic influences of Bartolomeo Passerotti (Spike, 1980, 36). Annibale was in direct opposition to the prevailing Mannerist style, and revived the High Renaissance practice of drawing from nature, encouraging a realistically solid sense of form (McCorquodale, 1979, 16). Between 1585 and 1588, the artist travelled in Tuscany, Lombardy, and Venice, assimilating the works of Raphael, Titian, Veronese and Barocci, and then producing what has been called the first Baroque picture, his *Pieta with Saints* (1585). During Annibale's pre-Roman years, 1585-1595, he moved toward a dynamic, painterly and emotional manner of expression (Myers, 1969, 504-505).

In 1595 Annibale was summoned to Rome by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, who commissioned the artist to decorate the Palazzo Farnese. He was later joined by Agostino who aided him in creating a series of decorative frescos for the ceiling of the Galleria Farnese on the theme of conflict between earthly and celestial love that were to influence nearly every artist in Rome (Spike, 1980, 36). During these years (1597-1600) Annibale not only developed his style in fresco, but also in historical and landscape painting. In these latter areas he revealed a strong sense of economy in figure composition and a force and precision of gesture (McCorquodale, 1979, 36).

The sketch before us is most appealing in its simple and direct, yet finely modeled treatment of the heads of two young boys. Although the purpose of this sketch is uncertain, it seems unlikely that it was painted in preparation for a larger composition. The fact that it is done on paper relates it more closely to Annibale's studio exercises in which the artist would record his observations directly from the model. Although most of these studies were made in chalk, another oil sketch on paper, *Study of an Old Man*, has been attributed to Annibale and is dated ca. 1590. The date of the *Study of Two Heads* is unknown.

A.G.



3
Domenico Fetti (1589-1623)
Jacob's Dream
ca. 1615
Oil on panel; 23½ × 17½ inches

3.
*Jacob's
Dream*

Domenico Fetti had a short but prolific career as a painter best known for his small scale "cabinet pictures" on Biblical themes. A native of Rome, he studied there from 1604-1613, with the Florentine painter, Lodovico Cardi, called Il Cigoli. Fetti's only documented painting from that period, an altarpiece now in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore points to the influence of his teacher, but also contains motifs found in Rubens's high altarpiece of 1608 in the Chiesa Nuova, Rome (Spike, 1980, 58).

In 1613 Fetti became court painter to Ferdinando Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. During the artist's nine years in Mantua, he studied the masterpieces in Gonzaga's collection, works by Veronese, Titian and Bassano, incorporating their coloristic innovations into his own paintings. Fetti saw many of Rubens's works as well, and the latter's influence is clearly seen in his work during his early Mantuan years, including our present painting. He fled to Venice in 1622, after an altercation with a nobleman, and he died there the following year.

The dream depicted in the painting on view came to Jacob as he journeyed to Haran, fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28, 10-15). This was a popular subject with Renaissance and Baroque artists. Fetti himself is credited with seven versions of this theme, in addition to the present one (Milwaukee, 1984, 5). In this version the artist portrays a rather chubby youth, dressed in contemporary garb, who has flung himself upon the rocky ground, exhausted and utterly dejected. His hand is raised to his brow in a gesture suggesting his astonishment at the vision he is experiencing. A dog lies patiently by Jacob's side. Although unmentioned by the scriptures, Huth points to the animal's presence in other artists' versions of *Jacob's Dream*, notably Elsheimer's and suggests it may be intended as a symbol of faith (Milwaukee, 1984, 5).

Fetti's expressive compositional elements, such as the diagonals formed by the sleeping Jacob and the descending angels, the swirling clouds, the brilliantly illuminated heavens, and the dramatic chiaroscuro, combine to make this picture an excellent example of early Baroque style.

A.G.



4.
Paolo de Matteis (1662-1728)
Jacob's Dream
ca. 1680
Oil on canvas; 29½ × 60 inches

4.
*Jacob's
Dream*

Born in Cilento, Matteis went to Naples to study with Luca Giordano, the most celebrated Neapolitan artist at the turn of the century. After a short time the youth departed for Naples, arriving there sometime before 1683, where he continued his studies with G. M. Morandi. It was here the artist received his first major commission from Marchese del Carpio, Spanish ambassador to Rome, who ordered from Matteis several sketches of altarpieces in St. Peter's (Maxon and Rishel, 1970, 232). In 1686 Matteis returned to Naples where he studied once again with Giordano. During this period, he worked in an "academic, proto-rococo style" (Milwaukee, 1984, 12) and this brought him to the attention and favor of the third Earl of Shaftsbury, who commissioned the artist to translate into visual terms his dogmatic essay, the "Choice of Heracles" (Maxon and Rishel, 1970, 232).

Matteis's *Jacob's Dream* provides interesting comparisons with Fetti's painting. The former's compositional organization is horizontal rather than vertical, very much in the manner of Luca Giordano and his *Jacob* is far more dominant and heroic. Fetti's diagonal planes, created by the intersection of the central figure with the angels, are more forceful, but Matteis's heavenly illumination is stronger, providing the source of light which models so dramatically the figure and the drapery. The dog is absent from the present painting, but the sheep, dimly seen in the background, may symbolize Jacob's future occupation as shepherd (Milwaukee, 1984, 12).

A.G.



5.
Pietro Paolini (1603-1681)
Portrait of a Young Man
ca. 1620-25
Oil on panel; 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 14 inches

5.
*Portrait
of
a
Young
Man*

Paolini's figure is a bravo, a street-type, wearing a feathered cap. This image was popular in Caravaggio's work and that of his followers through the secularizing influence of Manfredi (Caravaggio's subjects were religious after 1600). This portrait is obviously more concerned with character than physiognomy—the strong *chiaroscuro* creates a deeply melancholic image. Paolini's figures, often dark and haunting, as well as his preference for cruel and tragic themes, tinged with an occult flavor, were seen by some as directly related to his rather eccentric personality Caroselli, who was Paolini's teacher, was an equally bizarre personality and was believed to have influenced his taste.

The small group of portraits which have been firmly attributed to Paolini has certain features that remain constant: momentary expressions, the effect of being arrested in motion—the turning of the head or shoulders and strong eye contact with the viewer although never frontally. He had a liking for portraying intellectuals and artistic personalities, whether musicians, actors, artists or authors (Gregori, 1985, 215-220)

Although the mood of the present portrait is certainly in keeping with Paolini's taste, the stylistic traits here are atypical for his characteristic portrait style (Vogel, 1984, 2.3). "Moist, tightly drawn skin of the figures, the characteristics of full lips, almond eyes and inverted, tear-drop heads. . . ." (Spear, 1975, 224), they look much like Caravaggio's early Bacchanalian figures.

A Caravaggisti "once removed," Paolini is assigned by Spear to the group of "artists who were followers of Caravaggio for some years and then changed their styles or were erratic in their attachment to him" (Spear, 1975, 28).

K.E.



6.
Francesco Fracanzano (1612-1656)
Head of an Old Man
Oil on canvas: 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

6.
*Head
of
an
Old
Man*

This painting, believed to have been painted by one close to Ribera, has been recently attributed to Francesco Fracanzano, a 17th century Neopolitan student of Ribera

The son of a Veronese painter, Fracanzano came under a Venetian influence at an early age. Traveling to Naples, he saw the work of Titian, whose warm palette was in keeping with his own sensibilities. It was here that he also turned to Ribera for his ability to obtain a sculptural sense of relief through the manipulation of color. Note that this is not the same as obtaining relief through the manipulation of light (Caravaggio).

The contrasts of value seen in Naples after the 1630's can no longer be regarded as purely Caravaggesque. Earlier, though Carracciolo and Ribera had popularized this tenebrism there, the second generation of artists were dominantly influenced by the composition, color and expression of Bolognese principles. The classicists, Reni, Domenichino and Lanfranco, present in Naples, had a lasting significance as many younger artists showed a debt to both naturalism and classicism (Spear, 1975, 20).

Fracanzano was never able to grasp Caravaggio's work completely, due to his ambition to master color. Technically he shows an affinity to the painterly expressiveness of Lanfranco as well as to Ribera's bold brushwork, though spiritually he was more akin to Carracciolo's somberness than to Ribera's morbid realism (de Renaldi, 1976, 12).

Fracanzano's *Study of an Old Man* shows the directness of Ribera's broad approach tempered by the delicate retouches of paint. It is reminiscent of lighting and facial type of Ribera's *The Prophet Elijah*, of 1638-40, in Naples at the Certosa de San Martino (de Renaldi, pl. 4).

K.E.



7.
Antonio Bellucci (1654-1726)
Caritas Romana
Oil on canvas; 23 × 30 inches

7.
*Caritas
Romana*

Antonio Bellucci was among several Venetian artists, including Sebastiano Ricci and Antonio Giovanni Pellegrini, whose travels were credited with spreading late Baroque decoration throughout the courts of Europe and England. Bellucci is believed to have been a pupil of Domenico Disnigo, a Dalmatian artist in Venice. His early work, however, was clearly influenced by Venetian Masters, Pietro Liberi, Antonio Zanchi and Andrea Celesti, suggesting that he may have studied with one or more of them as well.

During the first twenty years of his career, Bellucci worked in his homeland, primarily in Venice, Vicenza, and Verona, but by 1692 his fame had spread to Vienna, resulting in his appointment as painter to the Viennese court of Joseph I. He worked there from 1696-1702, during which time the artist also executed a great number of commissions for Giovanni Adamo, the Prince of Liechtenstein. Bellucci returned briefly to Venice, then journeyed to Düsseldorf where, from 1705-1716, he painted for the Elector Palatine. In 1717 following the latter's death, Bellucci traveled to England and worked there for six years before retiring in 1722 to his native city.

Bellucci's mature style, which is decorative, delicately coloristic and bouyant in spirit, was influential in the transition from the Baroque to the Venetian Rococo (Spike, 1980, 28).

This allegorical painting, *Caritas Romana*, meaning Roman charity, depicts the Roman myth of "Cimon and Pero." Cimon, an aged man, is in prison awaiting execution and has been given no food. The jailer allows Cimon's daughter, Pero, to visit him. She nourishes her father by giving him her breast.

Bellucci has treated this subject as an allegory of youth and age and as a moral exemplar of filial piety, perhaps with sexual undertones. The subject was frequently represented by Baroque and Neoclassic painters of the eighteenth century (Hall, 1974, 267).

A.G.



8.
Bartolomeo Guidobono (1654-1709)
Tobias Leaving His Blind Father
ca. 1690
Oil on canvas; 51½ × 39½ inches

8.
Tobias
Leaving
His
Blind
Father

Guidobono's decorative sensibilities developed during his earliest artistic training under his father, Giovanni Antonio, a majolica painter in Savona (Manning, 1970, 32). Though he was initially dedicated to literature and was ordained a priest, Guidobono pursued his love for painting instead. He copied with astonishing exactitude the paintings of Benedetto Castiglione who was stylistically influenced by Strozzi and Fetti (Benezit, 1960, 23)). After a trip to Parma (where he studied Corregio), Venice, and Bologna (ca. 1680), he made a trip to Turin in 1685 before settling in Savona to work as a decorator of majolica, painting landscape scenes with figures, flowers and putti. He later turned to easel and fresco paintings.

In 1680 Victor Amadeus of Savoy called Guidobono to work in the court of Turin, where he remained until his death in 1709. Domenico, his brother, continued his work there, but on a lesser level of achievement (Manning, 1970, 33).

The present painting, which depicts an emotional episode from the book of Tobit (Old Testament, Apocrypha), reflects the development in Guidobono's style which begins to surface after his sojourns of 1680-85. Here he creates a centrally unified static composition. Much of the sense of calm is due to the refined use of light and dark tones, modeling the figures and the shadows. Guidobono's gentle orchestration of light, gesture, figure, and delicate sense of detail moves within a compactly unified and decorative design. All of this contributes to the mood of the painting that bespeaks Tobias' devotion to his father. In voicing blind Tobit's own turmoil at the parting, Guidobono places the figures against a dark ground and uses intensely rich colors.

This painting shows possible influences of other artists. The slight idealization of Tobias' face and the facile brushwork rendering Tobit's beard is reminiscent of Corregio and has a quality found in Strozzi's work, owing much to the followers of Rubens and Caravaggio.

Guidobono had a diversity of styles in his easel painting that appear concurrently within a period. *Tobit* is stylistically related through its composition and dark ground to a *Sibyl* which is dated ca. 1690. His other paintings from this period were done with a Rococo sweetness and delicacy of light and color (Vogel, 1984, 7,10). Some of his works were at one time even attributed to Jean Baptiste LePrince, a pupil of Boucher (Wixom, 1982, 326).

The theme of Tobit gained great popularity during the Counter Reformation. Tobit lived under difficult circumstances. Exiled in a land hostile to the Jews (8th c. B.C. Nineveh), beset by blindness and poverty, Tobit continued faithfully to uphold the law and minister to his compatriots along with Tobias, his son and Anna, his wife.

Believing his death to be near, Tobit sent Tobias to Medea to collect money due him. Tobias, who was seeking a traveling companion, met the Archangel Raphael who agreed to accompany him (Tobias took him to be an ordinary mortal). Raphael protected young Tobias on his journey, enabling him to fulfill his commission and also providing a means of healing the demonically beset Sara, Tobias' future wife, and Tobit's leucoma (Hall, 1974, 206,204,305).

The presence of Raphael as Tobias' companion was the initial image of "the guardian angel". Through an edict of Clement X, devotion to the guardian angel became widespread and fervent, necessitating an evolution in imagery that was accessible and independent of Biblical interpretation. Raphael soon became a protective angel-guide noted for overseeing the lives of young children (Vogel, 1984, 10).



9.

Attributed to Marco Ricci

Tobias with Fish and Angel

Oil on canvas; 24 × 29½ inches

9.
*Tobias
with
Fish
and
Angel*

When first purchased, this painting was considered to be Bolognese. More recently, Professor Dwight Miller has suggested that an attribution to the Venetian painter, Marco Ricci, be seriously considered.

Ricci, born at Belluno near Venice in 1676, was the nephew of the much celebrated Sebastiano Ricci. He, with Sebastiano, transformed Venetian painting by emphasizing color, a la Veronese, rather than chiaroscuro ("Drawing", 1968, 489,490; "Italian Art", 1968, 460, 461). This innovation, as well as Marco's ruin paintings, romantic landscape scenes and more soberly realistic landscapes, exerted an influence on other viewpainters such as Francesco Guardi and Canaletto.

An open admirer of Titian, albeit more factual as a landscapist, he was also influenced by Salvator Rosa's violent romanticism, possibly through contact with the work of Alessandro Magnasco (1667-1735). The picturesque country of his native Belluno, along with possible exposure to Netherlandish painting, may have contributed to his poetic realism, which was un-Venetian in its concrete factual record (Levey, 1980, 79-85).

The evidence for Professor Miller's suggested attribution may rest in the direct, yet lyrical depiction of the Northern Italian countryside which dwarfs the figures of Tobias and Raphael. The aesthetic expressed tends not toward idealization, nor violent or fanciful expression. It is rather Flemish in its directness, being seen and felt (Levey, 1980, 85).

In this picture we have, once again, an episode from the book of Tobit (see Guidobono's *Tobias Leaving His Blind Father*). They are in the midst of their journey to Medea, accompanied by Tobias' dog. Upon reaching the Tigris River, Tobias went in to bathe and was almost devoured by a great fish which leapt from the water. Raphael instructed him on how to catch it and gut it, saving the heart, liver, and gall, explaining that when burned, the heart and liver were effective for driving off evil spirits, and the gall would cure Tobit's blindness.

Several elements in the narrative are common in visual illustration of this story, but unusual in Jewish thought—possibly admitting to elements of Assyrian or Persian folklore. The dog was regarded by the Jews as unclean and is never mentioned in the Bible as man's best friend. In the Baroque period it was a symbol of faithfulness. In ancient magic the heart and liver of the crocodile were used as charms against demons, hence the "great fish" may not have been a fish at all. When carried by Tobias it is often depicted no larger than a trout (Hall, 1974, 304).

The theme of the curing of Tobit's blindness was given many interpretations in Baroque art, from anointings to the surgical removal of cataracts. It was the subject of devotional paintings commissioned by victims of eye disease with the hope of a miraculous restoration of their sight (Hall, 1974, 304).

K.E.



10.
Anonymous (from Bergamo)
A Waiter Holding a Chicken
Oil on canvas; 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

10.
A
*Waiter
Holding
a
Chicken*

Immigrant Dutch painters in Italy, an organized group known as Bamboccianti, were specialists in genre painting. They derived their name from their leader, Pieter van Laer, nicknamed "il Bamboccio" (literally, awkward simpleton, or ludicrous puppet) in reference to his deformed appearance (Gealt, 1983, 238). The group's subject matter was non-religious, presenting the life of the ordinary man, often with chiding, or condescending tone. Due to the intimacy of the scale, these paintings were desirable and affordable to a broad range of middle-class patrons (Bamboccianti, 1960, 207-212).

It is not known if the author of this painting was a member of this group, but it has much in common with the bamboccianti in subject and style. The half length figure of the waiter could possibly represent "taste" and may have belonged to a series of paintings on the senses, a popular subject among 17th century genre painters (Spear, 1975, 112).

Characteristic of this work, and other known bamboccianti are elements reminiscent of Caravaggio's early style: close up view of half-length figure(s) placed within a horizontal format, rather plain unidealized type, airless space, and local color.

K.E.



11.
A Northern Artist in Italy
Portrait of a Young Man
Oil on canvas; 23 × 19 inches

11.
*Portrait
of
a
Young
Man*

There has been much speculation as to the correct attribution for the portrait here exhibited. *Portrait of a Young Man* was believed by previous owners to be mid-seventeenth century Dutch, possibly by Frans Hals! The present owner, however, thought it might be Italian—perhaps Bolognese, and from an earlier period (Aldrichimica Acta, 1977, Vol. 8, No. 2). An attribution to Guercino was suggested by the late Dr. Ulrich Middeldorf. This now seems unlikely, as portraits by that artist are extremely rare. Moreover, the stylistic treatment of the present portrait differs from that of Guercino's dated works, which are remarkable for their carefully modeled form, distinctive facial features and meticulous attention to costume detail. The portrait before us is freer, more painterly, and the young man's costume is very simply treated (Milwaukee, 1984, 4).

More recently still, Prof. E. Haverkamp-Begemann has raised the possibility that this picture may have been painted by a northern artist working in Italy and has suggested Willem Drost (correspondence with the owner), who is believed to have been in Italy from about 1655 until the early 1660's (McTavish, 1984, 44).

A.G.



12.

Anonymous (Bolognese)

The Curtain

Late seventeenth century

Oil on canvas; 32½ × 26½ inches

12.
*The
Curtain*

During the Quattrocento, the writings of Antiquity were a source of plastic ideas of encouragement in introducing certain types of pictorial representation. Going a step further in the 17th century, artists began borrowing motifs from these writings, hoping that by studying them, Antique art could be recreated.

It is possible, due to the immense interest in the Greeks and Romans that the subjects of all still-life painting and genre painting in Europe owe their origins to the influence of Antique ideas (Sterling, 1981, 59-60).

At the end of the 16th century there arose, simultaneously with Baroque naturalism, an obsession with Antique trompe-l'oeil. By suggesting not only a spatial recession, but also that the space in front of the picture's surface projects aggressively beyond the frame, (ie. curtain) into the real space of the viewer, trompe-l'oeil painting aspires to lose its identity as a painting and become a fragment of our reality (Sterling, 1981, 152).

The Humanists long aspired to translate antiquity into a modern expression. The revival of still-life as an aspect of Antiquity formed part of their dream. Even so, to introduce into a man-centered art a painting that gave the prestige of great art to things alone was shocking. This novelty of subject fitted in beautifully with the mannerist propensity for visual and aesthetic shock. Often they would paint displays of food and "vulgarity" in the foreground of their genre or religious paintings while depicting religious figures in the background. In so doing they were following in the steps of ancient Piraikos and his delight in the bizarre (Sterling, 1981, 59-60).

The Curtain, in its rather cavalier treatment of the obscured historical drama, identified as the marriage of Alexander the Great to the Princess Roxanna (Aldrichimica Acta, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1977, 1) seems to have such a Mannerist flavor. The presence of a trompe-l'oeil curtain is no stranger to Baroque art, or to painting in general, however, it does not function in the same orderly manner as its visual cousins which hang vertically, partially blocking our view of the "stage" behind it, partners in the narrative.

This curtain takes center stage and thus becomes the subject. The precursor for such treatment can be found in the writings of Pliny who tells the story of two rival painters competing to see who could paint the most realistic picture. Zeuxis produced a painting of grapes so convincingly real that some birds attempted to pick them off. He had to admit defeat when, upon demanding that the drapery covering Parrhasius' work be drawn aside, he discovered the curtain itself was a painted illusion (Battersby, 1974, 9).

The Bolognese origin of the present work is suggested by the resemblance of the figures to types found in the works of the Carracci and their followers. The face of the woman on the left is very similar to Agostino's drawing, *Virgin and Child* in a feigned circular frame. Annibale's figure of Romulus in the Palazzo Magnani, Bologna, is much like the figure of the soldier in the lower right foreground (Milwaukee, 1984, 17).

Though the Carracci were avowed fighters of Mannerist formalism, their early still life and genre scenes had a definite mannerist restlessness in composition and concept (Sterling, 1981, 88). After reaching maturity the Carracci gave up still life painting for its own sake. Some of their followers were, however, still oriented toward such subjects. Perhaps the painter of *The Curtain* was such a one.

K.E.



13
Antonio Giovanni Pellegrini (1675-1741)
Study of a Saint
ca. early eighteenth century
Oil on canvas: 28 × 21 inches

13.
*Study
of
a
Saint*

A Venetian decorative painter, Pellegrini first studied under Paolo Pagani, a painter whose quick, florid style had a tremendous influence on his pupil (Maxon and Rishel, 1970, 82). Other influences on Pellegrini were Luca Giordano and Marco Ricci from whom he acquired a decorative quality characteristic in many of his works. An extensive traveler, Pellegrini played a major role in spreading the Venetian style of painting throughout Northern Europe. He is best known for his large decorative paintings which grace the walls of the country homes of English nobility, and for his monumental series of allegories commissioned by the short-lived court of the Elector-Palatine, Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz, at Düsseldorf. His early works are predominantly dark, with strong chiaroscuro and very soft rendering of flesh. In contrast, his mature style is progressively lighter with delicate colors and a quick, broad, sparkling brush stroke.

The painting before us was acquired by the present owner from a gallery in Copenhagen which in turn had just received it from the family of the famous French artist, Gauguin. At that time its painter was unknown. Since then, scholars have identified it as a work by Pellegrini. The subject matter of the picture, however, remains in question. The collector originally thought it might portray Ezekiel, an Old Testament prophet, and his vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones; but many art historians believe instead that it is a saint, perhaps one of the apostles.

Although the date of this work is still uncertain, the dark colors and dramatic lighting would appear to place it among Pellegrini's earlier paintings. The warm brown palette and quick brush strokes accentuate the somber mood of the picture and the brooding intensity of the saint.

A.G.



14
Nicola Bertuzzi, called Nicola l'Anconitano (c. 1777)
The Triumph of Mordecai (?)
Oil on paper laid down on canvas; 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

14.
*The
Triumph
of
Mordecai?*

Mordecai, Benjamite exile and Queen Esther's foster father, saves King Ahasuerus' life. Haman, the Agagite, is promoted to a place of honor and requires that all bow down before him, which Mordecai, as a devout Jew, refuses to do. In his rage over this, Haman decides to destroy all the Jews and erects a gallows especially for Mordecai. Esther risks her life to intervene for her people before Ahasuerus, and succeeds. The king remembers Mordecai's act of saving his life and honors him, much to the humiliation of Haman. Mordecai is exalted (Esther 8-10).

The subject of this oil sketch (bozzetto) has been tentatively identified as the triumph of Mordecai. The likelihood is great since it graphically illustrates the text of Esther 6:11 where a mortified Haman leads Mordecai through the city, which is in a state of perplexity. He proclaims: "This is what is done for the man the King delights to honor!"

The bozzetto was a preliminary sketch that was broadly painted and later could be reworked when dry. An aesthetic appreciation for bozzetti developed in the late 17th century for several possible reasons: an increased appreciation for personal characteristics of style, drawings and sketches were valued as expressions of raw inspiration, and there was a reaction against the polished smoothness of Classical art and excessiveness of the High Baroque (St. Lawrence, 1984, 16).

This particularly lively sketch is representative of a very large finished work, exhibited in Milan in 1977, which had a tentative identification of *The Triumph of Mordecai*. The present sketch, formerly in the collection of Dr. Alfred Scharf, was then believed to have been done by Guiseppe Bazzani.

The artist, Nicola Bertuzzi (or Bertucci), also called Nicola l'Anconitano, was a painter who was born in Ancona and died on January 2, 1777. He was a student at the Clementine Academy in Bologna where he carried off the first prize in painting in 1737.

In 1752 he became a member of the Academy, and was elected its president in 1774. The artist is noted for his painting of the *Five Mysteries of the Passion* (Church of Jesus, Ancona [Benezit, 1960, 623]) in connection with the Biblical miracle plays popular in the 17th century, combining church and theater (Fleming, 3rd ed., 326).

K.E.



15
Attributed to the School of Francesco Guardi (1712-1793)
Venetian Landscape
Oil on canvas; 21 × 27½ inches

15.
*Venetian
Landscape*

This painting has not been firmly attributed, but it is thought to be of the School of Francesco Guardi. Guardi was considered one of the most brilliant Venetian painters of the eighteenth century. "Abandoning figure painting around 1764 in order to concentrate exclusively on landscape, he thereafter devoted himself to depicting the monuments, crowded public squares, and gondola-filled lagoons of his native city" (Belgium, 1986, 106). Guardi was a viewpainter, whose landscapes and caprice paintings became sought-after souvenirs for wealthy European tourists. Departing from his earlier style which closely correlated with Canaletto, Guardi developed a more personal, less precise style in which form is dissolved into an atmospheric harmony of water, land and air, created by brilliant color and extremely loose brushwork. Guardi's colors, saturated with light are spread across the surface of his works in a series of vibrant tonal transitions. His late works almost foreshadow images of nineteenth century artists such as Turner, but are restrained by the Rococo principles and formulas of composition.

The artist, whoever he may be, has absorbed successfully the coloristic tenets of his master.

A.G.

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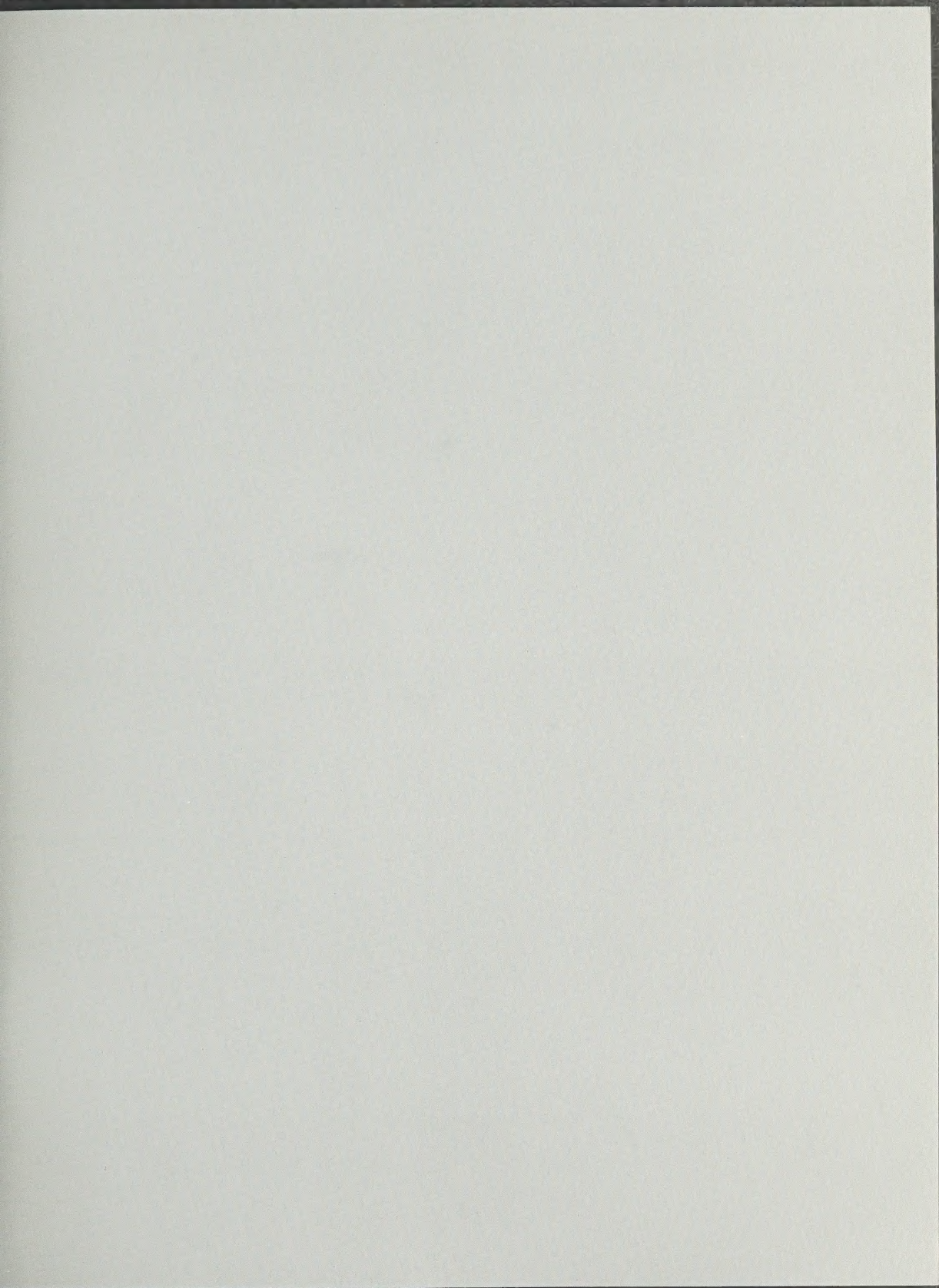
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