

## *Pictura* and *Scriptura*: Cosmè Tura and style as courtly performance

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### I

This essay takes the view that early humanist commentary on art and artists frequently employed rhetorical *formulae*, not mechanically and unreflectively, but pointedly and deliberately in the service of political and professional agendas. I will propose that humanist commentary influenced the visual character of painting in Ferrara in the later fifteenth century, and that this influence is manifest in the social ambition and artistic practice of the most eminent painter of the city: Cosmè Tura. Subsequent to the researches of Michael Baxandall in the 1960s, the Ferrarese provenance of much early poetic and rhetorical commentary on painting has been accorded little significance, least of all with regard to the emergence of a highly distinctive local artistic tradition.<sup>1</sup> I will propose, however, that by considering the dynamic relation of art, power and intellectual culture, we might assess the importance of North Italian court society for the emergence of a value system which upheld the cultivation (even fabrication) of artistic individualism.<sup>2</sup> Studies of court artists such as Mantegna have tended to regard the expression of artistic personality as a quality at odds with 'despotic' working conditions, rather than as being produced and even demanded by them. Only very recently has his career been considered in terms of the sociology of court dependency and his work as exemplifying the relation between 'regimes of power' and 'regimes of symbolic practice'.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that in the wake of Alberti's pioneering treatise on painting from 1435, remarks on painting by Ferrarese humanists have an apparently derivative and predictable character. Ludovico Carbone's comments on the nobility of art in his *Oratio pro nipote Galeotti Assassini* from 1460 is one such apparently derivative text.<sup>4</sup> Baxandall showed a certain enthusiasm for Angelo Decembrio's *De politia litteraria*, mainly for its reflections of Alberti, but made no secret of the fact that he considered it a boring text, 'a long and badly written book that repels attention in several ways'.<sup>5</sup> These works, however, can be found interesting less from the point of view of original statements about painting than from their ideological framing of the question of art and its value. Particular circumstances led these authors to consider the relation between princely regimes and the kinds of cultural activity promoted by them. Although both are concerned with the promotion of literary culture at court, they differ substantially in their



34 Cosmè Tura, *Annunciation*, inner face of organ shutters, Ferrara: Museo del Duomo. Photo: Alinari/Art Resource.

appreciation of artistic activity and its status. While their pronouncements certainly reflect a familiar debate about the claims of painting and sculpture to be liberal arts, they can also be read as being more specific and more political in their address.

A sense of this specific historic dimension can lead us to make deductions about the perception of art and artists by the audience who encountered the work of painters like Cosmè Tura. My concern here will be to show how this perception influenced the formation of a status and an identity associated with the office of a painter in court service, and how this identity might be produced in artistic performance – how it might lead, in other words, to the formation of a style. Hence, in my account the ‘institutional’ factor, the court environment, takes precedence over any personally expressive or individualist dimension to Tura’s style, an aspect which has been overplayed in scholarship on the artist.<sup>6</sup> However, one of my chief concerns will be to show how and why this style, although adopted by several Ferrarese painters, is powerfully productive of an individualizing effect.

Carbone’s remarks on *pictura* affirm its liberal and not its manual status. The ancients, he says, regarded painting as a form of poetry, and painting is what he himself takes most delight in after his books:

For painting was called mute poetry by the ancients, and our Horace wrote that painters and poets were of equal powers, because both can confer immortality on men. Indeed, in my opinion there was never anyone of noble and elevated mind who did not take pleasure in painting. I might name and set before you many princes who devoted themselves to painting and carving, especially Augustus and Nero, who were extraordinarily and unbelievably pleased by painting. I declare that the best images which ever came into my hands were those made at the time of Octavian or Nero. The merits of the princes are reflected in the natural talents of their subjects. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Carbone’s rhetorical purpose is to link the works of art produced under a prince’s rule with the prince’s own virtuous qualities. Works of art are not only expressions of princely magnificence but the products of the noble minds in his service; the prince might be judged according to the *ingenium* of the artists he supports. Nothing very extraordinary here, but the orator’s observations on art and nobility can be shown to have a significant political dimension with a certain bearing on the very claim of Borso d’Este to be a ruling prince.

The *oratio* is a panegyric on the not particularly distinguished nephew of the high-ranking courtier Galeotto dell’Assassino, which turns into a celebration of more illustrious members of the family. In the reign of Borso’s father Niccolò III, Galeotto worked as a goldsmith; his family fortunes rose dramatically, however, when his sister Stella became mistress of the Marchese Niccolò himself and the mother of both Leonello and Borso, future rulers of Ferrara. Galeotto was elevated to the position of *camerlengo* and appears to have operated as a kind of artistic impresario with responsibility for overseeing the major court commissions. It was he who directed the team of miniaturists who worked on Borso’s famous illuminated Bible, the most sumptuous illustrated book produced in the Quattrocento.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, for Carbone, the praise of *pictura* and *imagines* has a direct bearing on more crucial contemporary issues – the nobility of artistic practice had to be affirmed in order to vindicate the nobility of the family of Duke Borso's mother. This in turn can be related to a broader preoccupation with the issue of nobility which centred on the problem of Borso's illegitimacy, and the insecurity of his claim to the succession after the death of Leonello d'Este in 1450. Although Borso had been acclaimed by the *popolo*, the civil government and the leading nobility, it was known that there were several contenders with stronger claims, including Borso's illegitimate half-brother Ercole and the son of his predecessor Leonello. Borso sought to counterbalance the potential weakness of his position by restructuring the Ferrarese nobility, creating a strong circle of newly ennobled supporters who were dependent on his patronage for their entitlements and distinction.<sup>9</sup> The resulting social mobility transformed the aristocracy. Several old families dwindled in importance; others fell under the displeasure of the prince and had their properties confiscated and redistributed to Borso's favoured *creati*. Borso's calculated and highly publicized cultivation of princely liberality enabled those he favoured with grants of land, money or urban property to claim socially elevated status on the basis of wealth and personal merit rather than noble blood, and hence to qualify for high-ranking civic and court positions. Controversy arose as the urban new rich laid claim to noble status and its prerogatives of display, such as immunity from sumptuary restrictions.<sup>10</sup> Humanist defences of the nobility of virtue against the claims of old wealth and lineage found a sympathetic audience. In Ferrara, as in Florence, *nobiltà* could designate not merely a generalized merit or virtue found in individuals irrespective of birth, but could provide a moral basis for social elitism; Carbone's oration merely extends such polemics into the debate regarding the definition of the liberal arts.<sup>11</sup> The process of opening the ranks of court society continued under Ercole I, when court and civic offices were literally put up for sale every year.

Such social mobility was also manifest in the cultural sphere, chiefly with regard to the status of artists and scribes. As we shall see, the very definition of a scribe as one who merely transcribes a text rather than editing, translating and commenting upon it proved controversial. More than one scribe working for the court professed humanistic interests, writing histories, Latin and vernacular compositions and translations.<sup>12</sup> The phenomenon was not exclusively Ferrarese; but some of those in Ferrara who enjoyed the benefits of this transformation of status were the most prompt to criticize the very liberalization of a cultural *status quo* which had enabled their own rise.

The *volgare*, including writing in the Ferrarese dialect, was prominent in the literary production of these scribe-authors. The vernacular romance tradition absorbed some of the ethical values of the humanists, but provided ideals of merit and models of speech and behaviour which were more accessible than the classical curriculum to many entering the prince's service.<sup>13</sup> Translation from the classics became an important form of court-sponsored literary production, a circumstance which has caused modern scholars unjustly to characterize Borso's reign in terms of a prevailing anti-intellectualism or even anti-humanism.<sup>14</sup> The literary activities of Leonello's circle of humanists continued under Borso's sponsorship. Carbone, a pupil of Guarino and professor of rhetoric and *humanae litterae* at the University

of Ferrara, was himself one of the great success stories of Borso's reign, rising from humble mercantile origins to a condition of great luxury, and receiving noble titles from the Pope and the Emperor.<sup>15</sup> In a Latin dialogue from the 1470s he pays a compliment to one of his contemporaries at the court, 'Cosmos noster, pictor nobilissimus' – that is, the court painter Cosmè Tura.<sup>16</sup>

Although a painter clearly lacked the resources for advancement available to a humanist or a scribe, there are a number of interesting parallels between the fortunes at court of Tura and Carbone. Carbone was the son of a small merchant, Tura of a shoemaker. Almost the same age, both took minor religious orders, Tura receiving his clerical tonsure in 1460. As neither afterwards appears to have practised a religious calling, it is possible that this was a career move, undertaken in order to acquire benefices; Este retainers frequently took minor orders in order to achieve lucrative benefices through princely patronage.<sup>17</sup> With their court connections, Carbone could play a leading role in academic and court life, while Tura was able to monopolize major commissions for the cathedral, the clergy and prominent Ferrarese families.

By the year of Borso's death (1471), Tura had acquired considerable wealth. In a will made that year we find him making a bold assertion of status: as well as leaving a bequest to the poor of Venice, he proposes to erect and decorate a church dedicated to Cosmas and Damian.<sup>18</sup> This intention, although never carried out, aligns Tura with two of the most socially ambitious and self-publicizing artists of the Quattrocento who had themselves commemorated in this way: his counterpart Andrea Mantegna at the court of Mantua and the Sienese painter-sculptor Vecchietta.<sup>19</sup>

Tura's monthly salary of 15 *lire marchesine* between 1469 and 1472, while he was working on the decoration of Borso's chapel at Belriguardo, may seem modest when compared to Mantegna's 38 lire from the Gonzaga court, but corresponds to twice what Carbone was earning in 1457 from his academic position.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the final payments for labour and materials for a commission such as Borso's chapel were extremely high by the standards of the court, and must have involved a tidy profit for the painter.<sup>21</sup> As with Carbone, the artist's means were enlarged by privileges such as the provision of a house at the prince's expense.<sup>22</sup>

The patronage of court artists by Borso was more than a matter of ordering and paying for work; in one documented case it can be seen to have had a distinctive ritual aspect which suggests a kind of feudal clientage. Angelo da Siena had been appointed court painter by Leonello, Borso's predecessor; when Borso took him into his service in 1455, an arrangement was made whereby in return for a grant towards a house in the city, Angelo was to present every year on a certain day a painting of 'a most beautiful rose or other flower as Master Angelo wishes'.<sup>23</sup> Such a ritual recalls the formalized friendship between Leonello d'Este and Pisanello, a relationship between unequal partners where, in return for the prince's protection, the artist would pay unsolicited tribute, as in the wedding presents – an image of Julius Caesar and one of the Virgin – which Pisanello sent to Leonello in 1435.<sup>24</sup> We have no comparable information about any formal investiture of Tura as 'court painter', if indeed there was any such event.<sup>25</sup> From 1457, when he is recorded as housed in the '*casa de forestieri*' by order of the

Duke, it appears that the artist was paid a regular salary, and the grant of rent-free accommodation in 1464 may have come with official retainership, 'per altre tanti che dicto m.o Cosmo e tenuto ala Camera de la sua ducale S.ria'.<sup>26</sup> By the 1480s Tura was a prominent and established citizen with aristocratic pretensions; he is distinguished in various notarial acts as 'nobilem et praestantem virum Cosimum pictorem', 'egregius, et nobilis pictor', a practitioner of the 'ingeniosam artem picture'.<sup>27</sup> The record of his death in April 1495 refers to him as 'el Nobile et Excellente homo Mo. Cosimo dal Tura Pictor Excellentissimo'.<sup>28</sup>

One other circumstance needs to be mentioned regarding this figuratively noble status of painting at the Este court with which we began. Galeotto dell'Assassino was not the only artist among Borso's relations. One of Tura's painter colleagues at court was Baldassare d'Este, who is thought to have been another illegitimate son of Niccolò III. Baldassare, referred to as 'nobil pittore e famigliare di Sua Eccellenza', held a number of official and military posts, and in the reign of Ercole d'Este is said to have signed his works with the *diamante*, the Duke's own device.<sup>29</sup> Another artist held a role which could be loosely described as that of 'court favourite'. Like the pre-eminent favourite Teofilo Calcagnini, Petrecino da Firenze began his career as a *ragazzo del nostro signore* (page), but is recorded as working on a set of playing cards with colours and gold leaf in 1457, and we also have high-quality portrait medals of Borso d'Este and members of his court from his hand. Petrecino retired to the monastery of San Giorgio in 1460, with copious privileges and benefits from the Duke.<sup>30</sup>

To summarize: I propose that Carbone's humanist celebration of art may have reflected a pressing ideological need to idealize art as a more than manual discipline. This followed from the involvement of relations and intimates of the Duke in a profession which could still be perceived as basely menial or *ignobilis*, thereby implicating art in the problem of redefining nobility. The attitude to art manifest in Carbone's oration, the feudal clientage of Angelo da Siena, parallels in the careers of court artists and men of letters, continual references to Tura as '*nobilissimo*' also reflect a loosening of social and professional hierarchies under Borso which enabled advancement at court by members of the lower professions and those without family connections. This did not revolutionize the situation of artists in general; it did not mean that artists would necessarily have affected gentlemanly status in everyday life, nor that they would cease to be regarded as craftsmen. The attitude emerges from a courtly competitiveness concerning the merits of those who surround the prince, reinforced by humanist ideas of art as an intellectual virtue which reflects honourably on both the patron and the practitioner. Such idealism accompanies the enlargement of the status, the material circumstances of artists in advantageous positions like Tura, but Francesco Cossa's letter to Borso of 1470 stands as testimony to the sometimes perfunctory treatment of even highly qualified artists contracted for occasional tasks.<sup>31</sup> Tura as an historical personality is less retrievable (because less important) than the way in which, as I hope to show, his work responds to notions about *ingenium* in the service of the prince and in which, through its stylistic features, it perpetuates this mythology by creating a fictitious identity or persona. Tura was finally unable to actualize this mythology, to manifest an identity between the artist and the work, the career and the rhetoric, in the way that Leonardo or Mantegna could.

Superseded as leading painter by Ercole de'Roberti in the 1480s, we find him in his old age living in poverty and unable to provide for his family, as he relates in a letter to Duke Ercole of 1490.<sup>32</sup>

## II

The question to be considered now is how Tura lays claim to a certain status through his work – or, how the work of the hand can present itself as dignified and worthy of the attention of noble minds. I will be arguing, against the grain of much Tura scholarship, that Tura's style is neither a passive reflection of an elitist, sophisticated court taste nor an eccentric Gothic distortion of a more progressive tendency whose centre is elsewhere – Florence or Padua. Tura's style should be seen as something calculated as such, a response to a consumer demand. I define style here in the sense for which I believe it was most meaningful for the fifteenth century – as a set of gestures or signs, through which an artist *performs* his distinctiveness and virtuosity. Quality and individuality become interdependent, to the extent that individuality becomes a conventionalized version of quality. As the evaluator of Mantegna's work in the Eremitani Chapel implied in 1457, individual hands can be recognized in a work, but especially when the hand is that of a superior painter.<sup>33</sup> This implies a recognition of distinguishable artistic identity, but one based on quality or superior performance, the possession of certain properties which distinguish the master artist from the common herd. In documents of commission or payment this quality might be referred to as *ingegno*, or *difficoltà*, or *magistero*, a term which is used in connection with leading painters at Ferrara.<sup>34</sup> For rank-and-file artists, however, especially for those working in collaboration or in subordination to a master, individualizing tendencies are viewed perjoratively in the assessment of quality.<sup>35</sup> Hence the indifference encountered by Francesco Cossa when he sought extra remuneration for his superior technique, and for giving evidence of 'study' (perhaps his stylistic emulation of Piero della Francesca) in the Salone dei Mesi in Palazzo Schifanoia. On the other hand, an obviously competent painter such as the September Master may have provided just what was required when he carried out his portion of the work in the distinctive manner of Cosmè Tura, the chief painter and probable overseer of the work. Differences between 'celebrity artists', on the other hand, were recognized and even encouraged at the Este court – on one famous occasion Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini were encouraged to compete with each other for the portrayal of Leonello d'Este.<sup>36</sup> In another artistic competition, sculptors presented different projects for an equestrian monument to Niccolò III – the judge in this case was Leon Battista Alberti.<sup>37</sup>

The conception of the painter as an authorial figure possessing *ingenium*, and of pictorial composition as analogous to literary invention, is central to the most powerful fifteenth-century claim for painting's dignity and status as a liberal art. This was Alberti's *De Pictura*, which was studied and circulated at the court of Ferrara – a copy survives with annotations by Ludovico Carbone himself.<sup>38</sup> Alberti places painting among the liberal disciplines requiring *ingenium*, the individual creative faculty possessed most characteristically by the poet.<sup>39</sup>



35 Cosmè Tura, *St George*, detail from outer face of organ shutters, Ferrara: Museo del Duomo. Photo: Alinari/Art Resource.



36 Cosmè Tura,  
*Execution of St  
 Aurelius*, Ferrara:  
 Pinacoteca. Photo:  
 Alinari/Art Resource.

*Ingenium* for Alberti is manifest in demonstrations of quality, in the painter's evident mastery of proportion, perspective, the movements and expressions of figures according to nature, and other aspects of the *scientia* of painting. Painting, however, is defined as the representation of things seen, a conception underscored by analogies with the window and the mirror. Whatever the artist portrays it must appear persuasively natural, ruled by the principles of plausibility and decorum, 'suaves enim et gratos atque ad re de qua agitur condecetes'.<sup>40</sup> What Alberti strongly opposes, however, is the artist who seeks to advertise *ingenium* through gestures and movements which defy plausibility, resulting in figures which are 'impossibile factu, tum indecentissimum visu'. While painting should be richly varied and copious in visual interest, a certain threshold must not be crossed. This is the point where painting looks too much like the work of a craftsman, where the artifice that enables painting becomes visible as such. Alberti denounces the use of gold, the emphasis on outline, the portrayal of figures in frenzied or theatrical poses.

The *Annunciation* on the organ shutters for the cathedral of Ferrara, painted by 1469, features a series of *grisaille* figures which recall directly Alberti's prescriptions for the seven movements in painting and the principles of weight shift, together with his directions for correlating movement and the expression of emotions, and his recommendation of a variety of nude and partly draped figures (plate 34): 'There should be some bodies that face towards us and others going away, to the right and

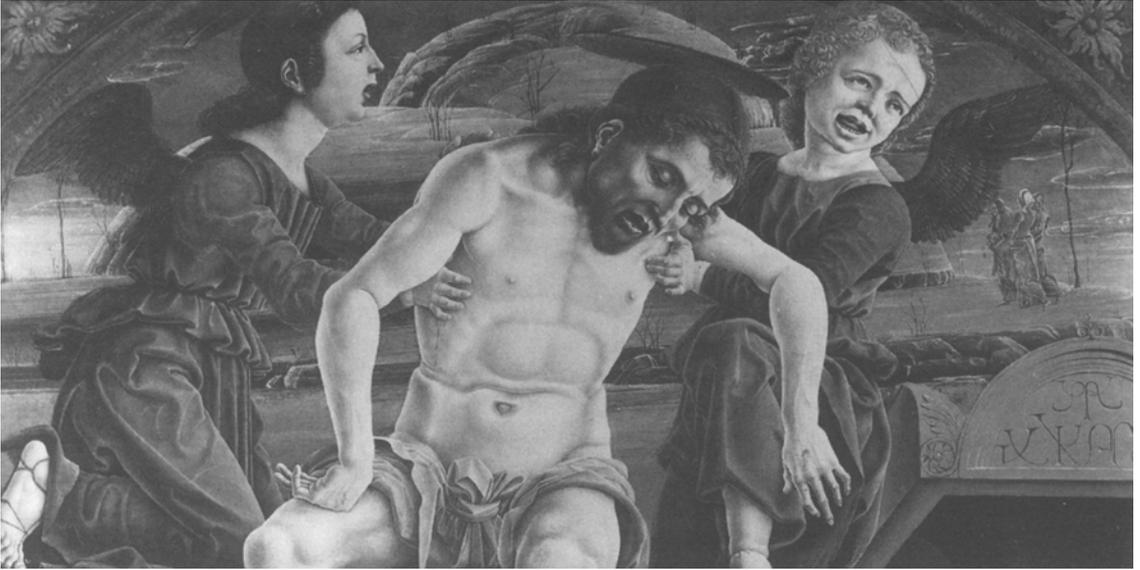
the left. Of these some parts should be shown towards the spectators and others should be turned away; some should be raised upwards and others directed downwards.<sup>41</sup> The lower left-hand figure on the panel with the Virgin recalls the following prescription: 'I have also seen that, if we stretch our hand upwards as far as possible, all the other parts of that side follow that movement right down to the foot, so that with the movement of that arm even the heel of the foot is lifted from the ground.'<sup>42</sup> Tura's evocation of Alberti suggests that he is laying claim to the *ingenium* and the *scientia* of Alberti's learned artist. Yet Tura is obviously pursuing other effects, which Alberti's principles clearly do not endorse. There are elements which could be considered excessive or wilfully artificial, especially the manner in which the drawing tends away from its descriptive function and takes on an independent, decorative life of its own, especially in the broken, hard-edged forms of the draperies. Such a feature may be seen to violate Alberti's strictures against making outlines visible, in making *circumscriptio* subordinate to relief: 'I believe', he wrote, 'one should take care that circumscription is done with the finest possible, almost invisible lines . . . Circumscription is simply the recording of the outlines, and if it is done with a very visible line, they will look in the painting, not like the edges of surfaces, but like cracks [*rimulae*].'<sup>43</sup>

Throughout Tura's work we find many passages of decorative linear elaboration, sometimes made more visually compelling by being rendered in red. These include the red bridle of the horse in the Ferrara Cathedral *St George* (on the outer face of the organ shutters, plate 35), which aligns itself strikingly with the pictorial surface, and the extravagant calligraphic flourish of the banner in *The Execution of St Maurelius* (plate 36).

There are various ways in which this quality can be associated with the production of an artistic persona. It is conceivable that Tura's style, which is not without parallel in quattrocento Sieneese painting, bears some relation to his celebrated predecessor as court painter, Angelo da Siena. Visiting Ferrara in 1449, the famous antiquarian merchant traveller Ciriaco d'Ancona wrote a description of two lost paintings of Muses by Angelo and was prompted to refer to the artist as 'Angelus Parasius'.<sup>44</sup> Was it something about the appearance of these works which prompted Ciriaco to invoke the name of Parrhasius? Ciriaco the antiquarian was probably aware of what, according to Pliny in particular, the distinguishing quality of this ancient painter was. The following passage from Pliny stresses the greater importance of contour over relief, a priority which Alberti reversed in *De pictura*: 'By the verdict of artists [Parrhasius] won the palm in the rendering of outline, which is the highest subtlety in painting. To render mass and relief is no doubt a great achievement, yet many have succeeded in doing this. But an artist is rarely successful in finding a contour which shall enclose the internal forms of the figure.'<sup>45</sup>

The line features in the mythology of ancient painters in another famous case, which has particularly to do with the identifiability of artists – the hand of Apelles was recognizable from a single fine line drawn by him, which nobody else could have executed so skilfully. The line in this case would have the status of a signature, an assertion of distinctness, but this recognizability is, significantly, based on the assessment of the quality or virtuosity of the line rather than on any individual autograph character.<sup>46</sup>

Another distinctive feature of Tura's painting is the tendency of his



37 Cosmè Tura, *Dead Christ with Angels*, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum. Photo: courtesy of the Junsthistorisches Museum.

calligraphic line actually to assume a relationship to writing. Tura's works are dense with inscriptions; these range from a Roman epigraphic type in his Venice and London Madonnas, while in the latter, which come from the Roverella altarpiece of the mid-1470s, a Hebrew inscription is prominently displayed. There also appears, in other works, a kind of cryptic epigraphy, strange markings inscribed in stone just where we would expect inscriptions to occur. One of these occurs in the Vienna *Dead Christ with Angels* (plate 37); its appearance on a sarcophagus suggests that it is a name in ciphered form. The painting can be seen as producing, but masking and even burying an identity; a *persona* is invoked, whose name or relation to an actual historical person is not revealed.<sup>47</sup> On other occasions the writing on the sarcophagus assumes a far more pictorial, decorative form, as in the Correr Museum *Pietà* (plate 38) – a series of raised, scroll-like forms which occasionally assume shapes suggestive of the Latin alphabet. The inscription or pseudo-inscription on the throne of the *St James* at Caen is closer to generic kufic or decorative Oriental script.<sup>48</sup> While some of these quasi-inscriptions may have had legible meaning for certain members of Tura's audience, their deliberately cryptic nature turns attention away from any content to their formal or pictorial character, to their status as a kind of pure calligraphy ambiguously hovering between writing and patterning. The Washington *Madonna and Child* (plate 39) provides the most dramatic example of writing removed from the sphere of legibility and being exploited as the basis of linear pattern. Here the forms on the 'sarcophagus' are derived from the flourishes and embellishments of Gothic miniscule, which had a wide currency in the IHS monogram of St Bernardino of Siena (which itself appears in another work by Tura: the *Madonna and Child* in Venice, plate 40). The pseudo-inscription in the Washington picture is composed of the same flat, bent, metallic strips, and these



38 Cosmè Tura, *Pietà*, Venice: Museo Correr. Photo: Alinari/Art Resource.

calligraphic ornaments, demonstrations of masterly penmanship, are picked up explicitly in the broken, intricate folds of the Madonna's mantle.

### III

In the first place, because it was said that the book is 'judiciously and elegantly written', I did not only mean the nature of the poetry, but also the work of the scribe, insofar as the well-formed and beautiful appearance of the letters, and the correct and antique mode of writing known as 'orthography', is appreciated by the eyes in reading.<sup>49</sup>

There are several rhetorical and social contexts for the analogy between painting and writing which these paintings appear to be presenting. One, which will presently concern us, is the ambiguity of the term *scriptor* regarding 'manual' and 'authorial' spheres of operation, exploited by Guarino above in his rather disingenuous retraction of a letter defending a volume of scandalous Latin poetry. Another is the association of writing with physiognomic differences or 'signature' effects. Tura might be seen to be drawing quite deliberately on the kind of



39 Cosmè Tura, *Madonna and Child*, Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art. Photo: courtesy of the National Gallery, Washington DC.

observation we find in Filarete's *Trattato* comparing the differences between painters to those between scribes:<sup>50</sup>

One is known from what one builds, and like one who writes or one who paints is identified by his hand; one who paints is known by his manner or rendering forms, and so the style of each is recognizable to all. And this is another matter, that everyone, no matter how greatly he may vary (in his own work), is known by the products of his hand . . . I have also seen scribes to differ in their forming of letters. Where this subtlety, property and comparison comes from, we will leave for the aforementioned intellectuals to decide.

The relation between painting and writing, or between artists and scribes, also becomes an issue in one of the most important literary products of fifteenth-century Ferrarese humanism, the *De politia litteraria* of Angelo Decembrio.<sup>51</sup> The relation here is formulated in decidedly negative terms, and this is in keeping with



40 Cosmè Tura,  
*Madonna and Child*,  
Venice: Accademia.  
Photo: Alinari/Art  
Resource.

the dominant agenda of the work. Although it has been seen as a nostalgic account of exemplary learned conversations during the ‘Golden Age’ of Leonello d’Este, Decembrio’s text reads as a mythologizing of the previous reign in order to criticize the cultural milieu under Borso d’Este, to whom the work was dedicated in 1465.<sup>52</sup> The conversations in *De politia litteraria* implicitly strike at several features of court culture under Leonello’s successor: the reduction of nobility to a

form of display or masquerade, the decline in 'polite' standards of Latin style, the encouragement of the vernacular, the license of scribes and the privileging of beautiful appearance over philological rigour in the production of books. The historical Leonello who wrote Petrarchan poetry and, in emulation of the court of Burgundy, established a tapestry workshop in Ferrara, is transformed by Decembrio into an antiquarian purist who excludes Dante and Petrarch from his library and who mocks the art of tapestry as 'transalpinae gentis vanitate'.<sup>53</sup>

The 'dialogue on art' published by Baxandall belongs to the work's later phase of composition and can be read as a response to tendencies in artistic patronage during the reign of Borso. Keeping Tura's painting in mind, it is interesting to read what Decembrio, speaking in the person of Leonello, has to say about the painting of his time. The speaker clearly judges painting according to a selective reading of Alberti, understanding the prescriptions on decorum in *De pictura* in terms of a curtailment of manifest artifice, and of individualizing tendencies on the part of the painter. Leonello is made in the dialogue to denounce the rivalry of modern painters such as Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini, whom he contrasts with the artists of antiquity: 'Artists would show their work to each other and then correct it, whereas nowadays, as we know, they are consumed by rivalry with one another.'<sup>54</sup> The ancients did not engage in competitive individualism, nor in the satisfaction of tastes and fashions. Instead, they devoted themselves to the eternal truth of Nature which stands outside period fashions (*temporum novitate*), seeking to render the correct and invariable proportions and movements of the human figure. The body was represented nude and independent of the temporal variation of fashion. More interestingly, the speaker goes on to remark that the painters of his own time (like Tura?) are more concerned with 'colours, edges and outlines' than with the *scientia* of painting. In making themselves agreeable to the ignorant multitude through such crowd-pleasing ornamental effects, they make errors in the description of nature, and their ineptitude resembles that of scribes and copyists: 'sunt et inter nos quoque et apud librarios ac scriptores eos errores'. Failure to standardize and rationalize the hand is a failure to manifest pictorial *scientia*. Giving a specific instance of this failure, 'Leonello' cites the tapestry-makers of northern Europe, who pander to the extravagances of princes and the stupidity of the crowd by over-emphasizing 'colorum magis opulentia telaque levitate quam picturae ratione'.<sup>55</sup>

A glance at Tura's *Pietà* in Venice reveals a number of the characteristics that Decembrio may have singled out for criticism (plate 38). This is perhaps the most 'transalpine' of Tura's paintings, in its subject, its style and its possible imitation of the glazes and jewel-like colours of Flemish oil technique. The monkey in the tree strikes an intrusive note of *levitas*, and Tura's handling of human proportions has a calculatedly shocking effect. Line enforces hard-edged pattern and suppresses the distinctive textures of flesh, stone and fabric. The emphatic and surface-affirming drawing seems to undermine the normal relation of parts of the body, and the dead Christ is drawn out into a single, nervous, tapering arabesque. Every variation in the silhouette has been relentlessly emphasized and distinguished, with a priority on novelty and anomaly, most glaringly in the disjunction of the large head with the brittle, tapering legs.

We noted that for Decembrio edges and outline are related to presumptuous

individualism and to the waywardness of professional scribes. His 'Leonello' is moreover disturbed by the fact that Alberti attributes the poet's *ingenium* to the painter; he finally denies that painters have this faculty, just as he has implied that neither is it possessed by scribes: 'poetarum ingenia: quae ad mentem plurimum spectant: longe pictorum opera superare'.<sup>56</sup> The comment brings about a rejoinder from Guarino, who insists that poets and painters have equal claim to *ingenium* and, more remarkably, that among the ancients the activities of both were referred to as *scriptura*.<sup>57</sup>

Why should Decembrio have equated the perversity of painters with the bad practices of scribes? The term 'scribe' appears to have been a recurrent epithet of abuse among the humanists, deployed as a constant, jarring reminder of the humbler origins of several ambitious literary professionals, such as Decembrio himself.<sup>58</sup> The answer might lie in the ambiguous reference of *scriptura* in the speech ascribed to Guarino. *Scriptura* can refer both to what is written – the text as authorial pronouncement – and to the material substance of writing itself. Decembrio in his dialogue is heavily preoccupied by this distinction: between *scriptor* as author – one who can lay claim to *ingenium*, to an inventive faculty – and the *scriptor* as copyist – a mechanical, reproductive, basely commercial function. Artists for Decembrio belong within this latter group. The polemic here, I would suggest, is ultimately against scribes who would usurp this distinction, pass themselves off as the *auctores* they were not, and this is identified with a corresponding presumption on the part of painters, the notion that they could lay claim to the poet's *ingenium*.

At stake here is a notion of textuality which may be seen as defining the innovative character of humanism as distinct from previously scholarly traditions. Mary Carruthers has proposed that in the Middle Ages a written text was considered provisional, imperfect and in need of revision. The physical writing down of a text is always a secretarial, scribal function, whether the activity is performed by the author or by a copyist: 'The author produces a *res* or *dictamen*; that which is a *liber scriptus* is in a formal hand on parchment, and the product of a scribe.'<sup>59</sup> Beginning more or less with Petrarch, a number of changes are observable. Firstly, the separate activities of composing and writing are conceived to a greater extent as professional distinctions. Secondly, the idea of the text as always open to revision and transformation in the hands of other author-copyists is replaced by the text as a static and closed object, with the 'archaeological' notion of restoring the text to an originary purity. Scribes, almost by definition, are considered mere labourers who require constant supervision if they re not to pervert what they are transcribing, and who can subvert the transmission of the authentic copy by over-indulgence in the *manual artifice* of their trade. Thus we find humanists from the time of Petrarch devising strategies to normalize the hand, extolling the advantages of a new, chaste and reformed script, purged of personal idiosyncracies.<sup>60</sup> Petrarch wrote to Boccaccio in 1366 of his collected letters, written,

not however with the voluptuous and unrestrained writing, which is that of the scribes or I should say of the painters of our times, which caresses the eyes from a distance, but from close up it fatigues and disturbs them, and

could not be called 'readable writing' as the prince of grammaticians would say. It is written instead in a clear and chaste style which pours itself beyond the eyes and which you will say to lack nothing of orthography or of grammatical method.<sup>61</sup>

The 'dialogue on painting' relates also to humanist debates on the distinction of liberal from mechanical arts. Whereas the work of the artist might still be open to accusations of being mechanical, writing did have a more prestigious status as an attribute of the liberally educated, the free-born rather than the servile. In the Aristotelian systematization of the arts, writing is included as a part of grammar.<sup>62</sup> In humanist pedagogical theory we encounter drawing among the disciplines constituting a liberal education, but only under the *aegis* of writing. 'Nowadays', wrote Pier Paolo Vergerio at the court of Padua around 1400, 'drawing does not in practice pass as a liberal art except so far as it pertains to the writing (*scriptura*) of characters – writing being the same thing as painting and drawing – for it has otherwise remained in practice the province of painters. But as Aristotle says, among the Greeks activity of this kind was not only advantageous but also highly respected.'<sup>63</sup>

While writing could maintain its prestigious status as a sign of authority, learning and literacy, the terms *scriptura* and *scriptor* could elide or conceal the supposed split between the manual function of the scribe and the intellectual one of the author.<sup>64</sup> Scribes at the Este court often used the term *scriptor* when they signed their names on manuscripts, even though a more precise term – *librarius* – existed to designate the function of copyist. As has been mentioned, several went on to develop humanist authorial pursuits of their own. Carlo di San Giorgio was involved in every stage of book production (as author, scribe and illuminator); the scribe Jacopo Landi also made forays into Latin composition.<sup>65</sup>

In a Latin poem by Guarino from 1460 we find the skill and fame of *librario politissimo* Landi compared with that of two painters. One of the painters is the miniaturist Guglielmo Magri (known as Giraldi), the other is a painter called 'Cosmo'. As the poem implies that both painters possessed a particular fame, this is most likely to have been Tura; he was certainly the most famous painter called 'Cosmo' in Ferrara by 1460.

Guarino of Verona to Jacopo Landi the most elegant of scribes ...

That I may lay off from the praise of shining ancient minds, and  
pronounce the fate of Daedalian hands: As much glory comes to you,  
Landi, from your pen, as to Cosmo and Macro, the painters of our age.<sup>66</sup>

Even if Tura is not referred to here, the central point is that a scribe is being compared to two painters. Guarino's poem is yet another example of a North Italian *paragone* of painters and writers which would culminate in Leonardo da Vinci's well-known exploitation of the dual aspect of writing in making his claim for the dignity of painting.<sup>67</sup> The *paragone* may have possessed added force in Ferrara because of the expanded competencies of many of the personnel involved in the production of books. Throughout the fifteenth century a host of scribes working for the Este were also active as miniaturists.<sup>68</sup> There was no practical

reason why one trained in calligraphy should not have been able to execute decorated initials and historiated capitals; beyond the circumstances of court patronage, however, there may have been professional obstacles.<sup>69</sup>

The work of these scribes was highly diverse; it was by no means a matter of producing a uniform bookhand based on the Florentine model of humanist *littera antica*. Scribes such as Carlo di San Giorgio appear to have devised distinctive hands for use on particular projects, including variation of the humanist hand adulterated with Gothic features.<sup>70</sup> Transcribing a text could become the occasion for demonstrations of calligraphic virtuosity by the scribe himself; the most famous, even notorious exemplar of this practice beyond the Este court was Felice Feliciano, who in the 1460s and 1470s was pursuing an erratic itinerary from one North Italian town to another.<sup>71</sup> An example of the priority placed by the court on demonstrations of fine writing is illustrated by a payment from 1455 to one Domenico Gatto da Bagnacavallo 'per havere exemplato arte scripture'; the scribe was rewarded for his virtuosity rather than for delivering a commissioned copy.<sup>72</sup>

The work of the scribe and miniaturist is intimately related to the production of identity, in that the physical appearance of books was central to an author's ceremonial self-presentation at the Este court.<sup>73</sup> In the dedication page of Giovanni Bianchini's *Tabulae Astrologiae*, made for a member of the court in the 1450s, the decoration of the book thematizes the author's courtly identity. The lavish combination of a florid Gothic bookhand with an illumination in the manner of Tura continues the process of 'presenting' the author, conferring on him and his work the capacity to attract and to please a patron, which is the theme of the presentation miniature. This is, in fact, a double-patronage scenario, where Borso d'Este, the author's protector and employer, presents Bianchini to the Emperor Frederick III (plate 41).<sup>74</sup>

It is this state of affairs that Decembrio also finds repugnant. He manifests a Petrarchan prejudice against the work of scribes, considering them ignorant, wayward and careless in their transmission of valuable texts. Book v, section 60 of *De politia litteraria* contains a dialogue on the evaluation of books and modern authors which has recently been studied by Jon Pearson Perry. In part this is a polemic against the commodification of decorated books and fine writing encouraged at the court of Borso d'Este. The dialogue is Decembrio's account of the reception of the playwright and popular entertainer Ugolino Pisano by Leonello and his circle in 1437. Ugolino, who hoped to extend his popular success into elite circles by presenting Leonello with a copy of his latest comedy, is portrayed by Decembrio as a deranged figure who ends up being ridiculed for his presumption by Leonello's supercilious little group of 'generis nobilitate et equestrii ordine praestantes'. His downfall results from his theatrical manner of self-presentation (Decembrio refers to him as *laureatus larvatus* [the masked or phony laureate]); he is dressed incongruously in sumptuous, princely style, and this signifies his crowd-pleasing vulgarity and theatrical shallowness. Although scattered with learned classical allusions, his speech in the prince's presence rapidly degenerates into coarse, scatological witticisms, and his play, while beautifully outfitted in elegant script, is an unseemly low-life farce about cookery's claim to be a liberal art. Central to Decembrio's attack is the point where Ugolino truly damns himself, by maintaining that the physical appearance



41 Master of the Borso d'Este Missal, frontispiece of the *Tabulae Astrologiae* of Giovanni Bianchini, Ferrara: Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea. Photo: courtesy of the Biblioteca comunale Ariostea.

of a book is as important as its content. In the person of Ugolino Pisano, the author and the scribe are an incorporated, indivisible entity; the scribe is essential to the author's self-fashioning, his generation of a public mask. The point is made all the more forcibly in the text by a confusion of words which scandalizes Ugolino's interlocutors:

'Which kind of handwriting do you regard as the most fitting?'

'It is certainly the one that you behold there in this little book, in which I undertook the greatest pains to have the writer copy it in the loveliest hand.'

'Come now,' Tito [Strozzi] replies, 'Shame on you for your vulgar, corrupt way of speaking! Do you call him thus by the name writer [*scriptor*] when you meant to say copyist [*librarius*]?'<sup>75</sup>

This distinction was a matter of the utmost concern to Decembrio who actually wrote a tract called '*De scriptore et librario deque eorum variis officiis*' ('Of the writer and the copyist and of their different responsibilities').<sup>76</sup>

Ugolino is finally dismissed with the following rebuff:

One book will be superior to another in worth as much as a poet larvate differs from a poet laureate; or as if you were to weigh in the scales here the works of Plato and Aristotle, written on paper and cheaply bound, and there those of a certain Scotus, written on 'the lovely stuff' as the saying goes. To which do you think we ought to be more inclined?<sup>77</sup>

Tura pursued a form of self-fashioning comparable to Ugolino's, as – to a less self-conscious degree – did other Ferrarese artists working in a similar style. The painter's appropriation of calligraphic skill is an emulation of the prestige of writing, something of which professional writers were also able to take advantage.<sup>78</sup> Writing offers a model for the production of a certain kind of identity – as is stated most explicitly by Filarete, it is associated with the autograph and the distinguishability of hands in painting. However, this is an identity which for scribes and painters is assumed and performed through training rather than natural endowment. If a scribe lays claim to an identity through his style, it is on the basis of his skilled penmanship; a scribe has no autograph hand expressive of himself alone. Although his pen is mainly at the service of the visual production of the author, the scribe can occasionally recoup this visual identity as an advertisement for himself. Surviving written samples by Felice Feliciano show not only his command of various types of writing (including a Roman epigraphical majuscule), but also a multi-coloured assortment of figures, intricate patterns and flourishes, labyrinths, knot motifs and figure drawings which demonstrate the full extent of his skill with the pen (plate 42).

Felice's demonstrations of brilliant calligraphy anticipate certain kinds of invention produced by Leonardo at the Milanese court; we might recall that in his poem to Jacopo Landi, Guarino referred to the scribe in connection with Daedalus, the famous deviser of labyrinths. Felice's own signature is a calligraphic demonstration of this kind. His name is presented in enciphered form, concealed





43 Antonio da Crevalcore, *St Paul*, Rome: Fondazione Memmo. Photo: courtesy of the Fondazione Memmo.

within the Latin words 'Felix Augusta', and this places his identifiability as much in the form of the words and in the quality of their execution as in their sense. The fabulous red banner in Tura's *Execution of Saint Maurelius*, a labyrinthine fantasy claiming much of the visual interest in this little scene showing the martyrdom of Ferrara's patron saint, might be identified as a similar kind of virtuoso demonstration (plate 36). The unusual *tondo* form of this and other narrative scenes by Tura may itself reflect the modes of pictorial framing characteristic of book production.

There are other kinds of evidence for the social significance such demonstrations of calligraphic virtuosity could have possessed. The foregrounding of skilful penmanship bears a direct relation to the expansion of writing practices in the secular sphere – chancelleries, court bureaucracies, secular libraries – and an increase in professional openings for those trained in the various forms of writing in demand. Although definitely an eccentric and extreme case, the migratory pattern of Felice Feliciano's career, in which the profession of scribe expands opportunistically into a host of other occupations such as illustration, archaeology, composing romance fiction, printing and even alchemy, could be seen as paradigmatic.<sup>79</sup> There are concrete remnants of professional advertisements by other migratory scribes who wandered from court to court, from city to city, from one bibliographical project to another. These are advertisements in the most literal sense – sample books which demonstrate the scribe's command of



44 Crevalcore,  
*St Peter*, Rome:  
 Fondazione Memmo.  
 Photo: courtesy of  
 the Fondazione  
 Memmo.

various bookhands, current hands and book decoration – and these occur throughout Europe in the fifteenth century.<sup>80</sup> They ‘sell’ the craft of the scribe as the key to the world of learning and to jobs in high places, especially the court.<sup>81</sup>

In conclusion, the calligraphic element in Tura’s style, manifest in intricate contour, complex linear patterns and calligraphic marks, is to be seen as the self-conscious production of a style, the invention of an identity through devices associated with manual virtuosity. The practice of the scribe shares with that of the painter a manipulation of the individualizing mark in the service of creating a professional persona. Writing serves as the model for the painter because of its connotations of social prestige and its association with an ‘authorial’ effect. The social prestige of calligraphy increased with the rise of printing. In the early decades of the following century, printed treatises and handbooks on fine writing were among the earliest manifestations of a literature which purported to teach its readers the principles of excelling in an art in accordance with its practice at court.<sup>82</sup>

The irony of Tura’s style, which first appears so extravagantly personal and distinctive, is that it ultimately presents the repeatability of the mark, the trace of the hand, along with its individuality. Even though in Tura’s work we seem to encounter a hyperbolic presence of the author, this presence is something which is itself being painted or written as much as it is the agent of the writing. Whether or not they are signatures, the unreadable marks associate the paintings with an identity not autonomous but prescribed, that of a particular office of court, a functionary’s sphere of operation. That this style is eminently repeatable and open

to appropriation by other painters has not always been borne in mind by scholars who seek to identify Tura's hand. Hence the large areas of indecision at the edge of Tura's oeuvre, the controversy over the authorship of the Schifanoia *September*, and the fact that works sometimes given to Tura have at other times been attributed to Costa, Ercole Roberti, Marco Zoppo, Jacopo Filippo d'Argenta, Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Antonio Cicognara and Giovanni Bellini.<sup>83</sup>

The same pursuit of the individual effect is taken up by several of Tura's followers and later fifteenth-century Emilian painters – frequently by transforming themselves into Tura. In a few cases the display of writing or exotic inscription – of the artist working as a scribe or a cipherer – goes along with a curious withholding of the artist's historical identity. Lorenzo Costa's *St Sebastian* (Dresden), signed by the artist in Hebrew characters, was nonetheless identified as the work of Tura by Berenson, an ironic effect probably intended by the artist who affirmed yet veiled his authorship.<sup>84</sup> The mysterious Antonio Crevalcore, one of the latest and strangest practitioners of a manner closely related to Tura's, signed at least one of his works with a regular written signature. The recently discovered *St Peter* and *St Paul* are the most developed examples of this style's self-reflexive aspect, its tendency towards visual wit and paradox (plates 43 and 44).<sup>85</sup> The artist again seems to associate his pictorial mastery with the work of the scribe; one of the most visually compelling elements in the *St Paul* is the still-life of ink-well and pens accompanying the opened codex turned towards the picture surface. The irony here is that this writing stands again as a mask, a concealment of the artist; his identity is not presented in the writing in the painting, which has the status rather of represented handwriting, the writing of an Other. In the pendant painting of *St Peter*, the artist's identity is disclosed, but ironically distanced from the painting's indexical, manual register. The sign of authorship is buried in the painting, among the ruins and on the sepulchre, in the severed inscription which forms an anagram of his name.

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### Notes

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- 1 M. Baxandall, 'A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este: Angelo Decembrio's *De politia litteraria Pars LXVII*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, no. 26, 1963; 'Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, no. 28, 1965; *Giotto and the Orators*, Oxford, 1971.
- 2 M. Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, Cambridge, 1991 (hereafter *Court Artist*), provides the most persuasive

arguments that the early modern transformation of the status of the artist, and the perception of art as liberal or noble, was owing in large measure to the prestige and possibilities offered by court service rather than guild-regulated practice in the city republics.

- 3 To borrow a phrase from R. Starn, 'Seeing Culture in a Room for a Renaissance Prince', in L. Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley, 1989, p. 205. See also R. Starn and L. Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State*

- in *Renaissance Italy*, Berkeley, 1992, and E. Lincoln, 'Mantegna's Culture of Line', *Art History*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1993, pp. 35–57; a paradigmatic study of courtiership as cultural production is S. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*, Chicago, 1980.
- 4 The oration is preserved in the Vatican Library, Codice Ottoboniano 1153, fols 155–6. The translation of Carbone's oration which follows is based on the Latin text in G. Zippel, 'Artisti alla corte Estense nel '400', *L'Arte*, vol. 5, 1905, pp. 405–7.
  - 5 Baxandall, 'Dialogue on Art', op. cit., p. 304.
  - 6 R. Molajoli, *L'Opera completa di Cosmè Tura e i grandi pittori ferraresi del suo tempo*, Milan, 1974, pp. 10–12, and J. Bentini, *San Girogio e la Principessa di Cosmè Tura*, Bologna, 1984, pp. 21–41. Both include an 'Itinerario critico' which can be seen to illustrate the successive expressionist, surrealist and even 'existentialist' characterizations of Tura in twentieth-century scholarship.
  - 7 For the Latin text, see Zippel, 'Artisti', op. cit., pp. 405–7.
  - 8 On Galeotto, see Venturi, 'L'arte a Ferrara nel periodo di Borso d'Este', *Revista storica italiana*, vol. 2, 1885, p. 625; C. Rosenberg, 'Art in Ferrara During the Reign of Borso d'Este: A Study in Court Patronage', dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974, p. 119f.
  - 9 See R.C. Tristano, 'Ferrara in the Fifteenth Century: Borso d'Este and the Development of a New Nobility', dissertation, New York University, 1983.
  - 10 See the case cited by R.G. Brown, 'The Politics of Magnificence in Ferrara, 1450–1505', PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1982, pp. 436–7, concerning a merchant's successful appeal against sumptuary provisions and his status of *ignobilis* on the basis of personal fortune as well as paternal relatives.
  - 11 The *Disputatio de Nobilitate* (1429) by the Pistoian Buonaccorso de Montemagno, which features a lively debate between proponents of the claims of virtue and birthright, had a very broad dissemination and was probably known in its original form in Ferrara before the 1470s, when we find Carlo di San Giorgio making a vernacular translation for Eleanora d'Aragona, the wife of Ercole I; see D. Fava, *La Biblioteca Estense nel suo sviluppo storico*, Modena, 1925, p. 54 (wrongly attributing the text to Leonardo Bruni).
  - 12 Carlo di San Giorgio is the most outstanding example. The professional scribe Tommaso da Vicenza 'collaborated' with Guarino and Guglielmo Capello on their edition of Pliny's *Natural History*, according to the colophon on a manuscript now in Munich (Cod. lat. Monac. 11301). See R. Sabbadini, *La scuola e gli studi di Guarino Guarini Veronese*, Catania, 1896, p. 117.
- G. Bertoni, 'Notizie sugli amanuensi degli Estensi nel quattrocento', *Archivum Romanicum*, vol. 2, 1918, p. 55n, documents the learned Carmelite Battista Panetti working as both scribe and translator of a manuscript of Josephus acquired by the court library in 1472. Bertoni also refers to the career of the scribe Jacopo Landi, who refers in a letter to a volume of orations transcribed by him 'in quibus scripte erant aliquae orationes manu mea propria' (p. 41).
  - 13 Tristano, *Borso d'Este*, op. cit., pp. 245–9. On the culture of the *volgare* in Ferrara, see also Venturi, 'L'arte nel periodo di Borso d'Este', op. cit., pp. 690–3; E. Gardner, *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara*, London, 1904, pp. 83–8; for a recent comprehensive account of the production of vernacular editions of the classics, see A. Tissoni-Benvenuti, 'Guarino, i suoi libri, e le letture della corte estense', in A. Mottola-Molfino and M. Natali, *Le Muse e il Principe. Arte di corte nel rinascimento padano*, vol. 2, Milan, 1991, pp. 63–82.
  - 14 The allegation rests on an over-literal understanding of a complaint to Borso by the scribe-humanist Carlo di San Giorgio regarding the glaring lack of letters in one who was otherwise so highly accomplished. See A. Cappelli, 'La Congiura contro il Duca Borso d'Este scritta da Carlo di San Giorgio', *Atti e memorie delle RR. Deputazioni di Storia Patria per le Provincie Modenesi e Parmensi*, vol. 2, 1864, pp. 377–8. Carlo's statement should be offset against the fact that Borso continued to be the dedicatee and active patron of numerous humanistic works in Latin. His commissioning of books is no proof that he read them; however, his constant promotion of the vernacular and demand for translations is an indication of interest in their contents, and of a desire to make them available to a broader circle of courtiers than those with classical training.
  - 15 On Carbone, see W. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism*, Princeton, 1973, pp. 165–8; G. Bertoni, *Guarino da Verona fra letterati e cortigiani a Ferrara*, Geneva, 1921, pp. 112ff. and *passim*; L. Paoletti, 'Carbone, Ludovico', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 19, 1976, pp. 699–703.
  - 16 *Dialogus de amoenitate, utilitate, magnificentia Herculei Barchi*, in A. Lazzari, 'Il Barco di Ludovico Carbone', *Atti e Memorie della Deputazione Ferrarese di Storia Patria*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1919, p. 34.
  - 17 E. Peverada, 'La tonsura clericale di Cosimo Tura', *Analecta Pomposiana*, vol. 10, 1985, pp. 159–68. Court musicians and singers were being rewarded with benefices by the reign of Ercole d'Este; see L. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505*, Cambridge, 1984.
  - 18 The will is published by L.N. Cittadella, *Ricordi e documenti intorno alla vita di Cosimo Tura*

- dette Cosmè*, Ferrara, 1866, p. 12. A later will of 18 April 1491 refers to a son of Tura named Damiano.
- 19 On Mantegna's funerary chapel in San Andrea, Mantua, see R. Lightbown, *Mantegna*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 248–9, 452–4. On Vecchieta's equally elaborate multi-media project in S. Maria della Scala in Siena, see H. Van Os, 'Vecchieta and the Persona of the Renaissance Artist', in I. Lavin and J. Plummer (eds.), *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, New York, 1977, pp. 445–53. Van Os sees Vecchieta's much-vaunted versatility and 'pyrotechnic display' of illusion and artifice in terms of a 'conscious stylization of his persona as artist'.
  - 20 The information on artists' salaries comes from T. Tuohy, 'Domestic Expenditure at the Court of Ferrara', dissertation, University of London, 1984, p. 116. On Carbone's annual academic teaching of 100 lire, see G. Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 6, Venice, 1795, p. 849.
  - 21 While in his early works for the court, such as the Belfiore Muses, Tura was provided with the more precious substances such as ultramarine; in the case of the Belriguardo Chapel the artist himself provided all the materials, including gold, silver and ultramarine. In July 1469 the artist is recorded as buying 'oro et coluri' in Venice, which raises the possibility that he himself could have profited from commercial dealing in precious minerals. Tura was engaged in a number of non-artistic commercial ventures, including real estate and investments in the commercial companies of goldsmiths, leatherworkers, wool merchants and others; see Cittadella, *Ricordi e documenti*, op. cit., pp. 7–8. For documents concerning the chapel, see Venturi, 'Cosma Tura Genannt Cosmè, 1432 bis 1495', *Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 8, 1887, pp. 13–22.
  - 22 For the document of 14 July 1464, see Venturi (as in note 21), p. 9.
  - 23 Venturi, 'L'arte nel periodo di Borso d'Este', op. cit., p. 708.
  - 24 On Pisanello and Leonello see, most recently, J. Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello's Arthurian Frescoes*, Princeton, 1988, pp. 33–6.
  - 25 For further consideration of this issue, see my dissertation, 'Cosmè Tura: Art and Social Identity in Fifteenth-Century Ferrara', Johns Hopkins University, 1993, p. 22.
  - 26 Venturi, 'Cosma Tura', op. cit., 1887, p. 9. On Tura's salary, see Cittadella, *Ricordi e documenti*, op. cit., p. 8, note 1.
  - 27 Cittadella, *Recordi e documenti*, op. cit., p. 10, citing from the notaries Carlo Contughi and Bartolomeo Goggi in the Archivio di Stato, Ferrara. These are not standard notarial forms which were bestowed lightly. In the case of Goggi, whose *fondo* I have examined more thoroughly, the usual formula for the notary's bourgeois clients was 'Egregius vir' or 'Spectabilis vir'.
  - 28 G. Campori, 'I Pittori Estensi del sec. xv', *Atti della Deputazione di Storia Patria Modenese*, ser. 3, vol. 3, no. 2, 1886, p. 32.
  - 29 For documentation on Baldassare, see Venturi, 'L'arte nel periodo di Borso d'Este', op. cit., 1885, pp. 719–22; for a discussion of current attributions, see A. Bacchi, *Dipinti ferraresi dalla collezione Vittorio Cini*, Vicenza, 1990, pp. 44–52.
  - 30 Documentation of various gifts to Petrecino 'che fu famio de lo Ill.mo N.S.', including the payment of certain debts 'in elimoxena', is included in Modena, Archivio di Stato, *Libri camerati diversi*, vol. 41 (1463), fols 102, 104. For Petrecino as artist, see Venturi, op. cit., pp. 731, 743; *From Borso to Cesare d'Este*, London, 1984, p. 130 (with erroneous dates); Mottola-Molfino and Natali, *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 80–2.
  - 31 The most sensible discussion of the letter is that by C. Rosenberg, 'Francesco Cossa's Letter Reconsidered', *Musei Ferraresi* 5/6, 1975–76, pp. 11–16, which qualifies Baxandall's generalization in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 1–2, that the Duke of Ferrara paid his fresco painters by the square foot.
  - 32 Letter reproduced in Venturi, 'Cosma Tura', op. cit., 1887, pp. 30–2.
  - 33 On the controversy regarding Mantegna's work in the Eremitani, see M. Warnke, 'Praxisfelder der Kunsttheorie: Über die Geburtswehen des Individualstils', *Idea: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, vol. 1, 1982, pp. 54–71.
  - 34 See H. Glasser, 'Artists' Contracts of the Early Renaissance', dissertation, Columbia University, 1965, pp. 84–5. In a memoir from 1447, Leonello directs that Angelo be paid for a 'certo lavoro del suo magistero'. See Venturi, 'I primordi del rinascimento artistico ferrarese', *Rivista storica italiana*, vol. 1, 1884, p. 19.
  - 35 For examples of a princely patron's dissatisfaction with individualizing tendencies, see E.S. Welch, 'The Process of Sforza Patronage', *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 3, 1990, p. 383.
  - 36 On the competition, see N. Grammatici, 'Wie Jacopo Bellini Pisanello Besiegte: Der Ferrareser Wettbewerb von 1441', *Idea: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle*, vol. 1, 1982, pp. 27–53.
  - 37 The evidence for this is in Alberti's *De equo animante* dedicated to Leonello d'Este, in G. Mancini (ed.), *Opera inedita*, Florence, 1890, pp. 238–9.
  - 38 For an account of the manuscript, now in the Biblioteca Classense of Ravenna, see Mottola-Molfino and Natali, *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 167–9.
  - 39 Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, ed. C. Grayson, London, 1972, p. 64. References to

- the *pictoris ingenium* occur throughout Alberti's text; early in Book II painting is described as 'worthy of free minds and noble intellects [*liberalibus ingeniis et nobilissimis animis*]'.  
 40 *ibid.*, p. 84.  
 41 *ibid.*, p. 83.  
 42 *ibid.*, p. 84.  
 43 *ibid.*, pp. 66, 67.  
 44 Ciriaco's text, actually a celebration of 'Rugerus Brugiensis pictorum decus', is most conveniently available in Mottola-Molfino and Natali, *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 326, from which I quote: 'Cuius nempe inclytae artis et eximii artificium ingenii egregium equidem imitatore Angelum Parasium, quem Senensem recens picturae in Latio specimen vidimus ...'  
 45 Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, vol. 35:65: 'primus symmetriae picturae dedit, primus argutias volutus, elegantiam capilli, venustatem oris, confessione artificium in liniis extremis palmam adeptus: haec est picturae summa subtilitas. corpora enim pingere et media rerum est quidem magni operis, sed in quo multi gloriam tulerint; extrema corporum facere et desinentis picturae modum includere rarum in successu artis invenitur'. The Latin text is from the Loeb edition edited by H. Rackham, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 310, 312. Quintilian's reference to Parrhasius anticipates Alberti to a greater extent in making him an investigator of light and shade and of 'subtilius lineas', *Institutio oratoria*, XII.x.4.  
 46 See H. Van de Waal, 'The Linea Summae Tenuitatis of Apelles: Pliny's Phrase and its Interpreters', *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 12, no. 1, 1967, pp. 5–32.  
 47 Another parallel with Parrhasius is suggestive here: the orator Themistius (*Orations*, vol. 2, p. 29c) refers to the painter making a portrait of himself in the persona of Mercury, and further mystifying his identity by signing the work with a pseudonym.  
 48 On kufic and actual Oriental script in paintings, see H. Tanaka, 'Oriental Scripts in the Painting of Giotto's Period', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, vol. 113, 1989, pp. 214–21, and M. Barasch, 'Some Oriental Pseudo-Inscriptions in Renaissance Art', *Visible Language*, vol. 23, 1989, pp. 171–87.  
 49 'Principio quod dictum est de libro "prudenter politeque conscripto" non modo de versus genere, sed etiam de librarii opera intelligi: adeo litterarum facies formosa venustaque, et recta et vetusta scribendi formula, quam orthographiam appellat, legentis oculos alliciebant': Guarino Veronese, Letter to Giovanni Lamola, in R. Sabbadini (ed.), *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese*, vol. 2, Venice, 1915–19, p. 201.  
 50 Filarete grounds this observation in the comparison of portraits by different artists of the same individual, which recalls the competition of Pisanello and Bellini at the Este court: 'Che se uno tutte le fabbricasse, come colui che scrive o uno che dipigne fa che le sue lettere si conoscono, e così colui che dipigne la sua maniera delle figure si cognosce, e così d'ogni facultà si cognosce lo stile di ciascheduno; ma questa è altra pratica, nonostante che ognuno pure divaria o tanto o quanto, benché si conosca essere fatta per una mano. ... E così ho veduti scrittori nelle loro lettere essere qualche differenza. Donde questa sottilità e proprietà e similitudine si venga lasceremo alli sopradetti speculativi dichiarare': *Trattato di Architettura*, ed. A. Finoli, L. Grassi, Milan, 1972, vol. 1, p. 28.  
 51 The final version was dedicated to Pius II (now Vat. lat. 1794), while the copy recorded as being sent to Borso and illuminated by Taddeo Crivelli in 1466 has not survived. I have consulted the Basel edition of 1540. Passages cited here are from the translations in Baxandall, 'Dialogue on Art', op. cit., 1963, and in J. Pearson Perry, 'A Fifteenth-Century Dialogue on Literary Taste: Angelo Decembrio's Account of Playwright Ugolino Pisano at the Court of Leonello d'Este', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 39, 1986, pp. 613–43. In addition to the bibliography on Decembrio cited by these authors, see P. Piacentini, 'Angelo Decembrio e la sua scrittura', *Scrittura e civiltà*, vol. 4, 1980, pp. 247–77; A. Biondi, 'Angelo Decembrio e la cultura del principe', in G. Papagano and A. Quondam (eds.), *La corte e lo spazio: Ferrara Estense*, vol. 2, Rome, 1982, pp. 637–57; Mottola-Molfino and Natali, *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 162–5.  
 52 This is also the opinion of A. Tissoni-Benvenuti, 'Guarino', op. cit., pp. 76–8. In an appeal to Borso from the mid-1460s, Decembrio reminds the Duke of an 'opus ... Artis Oratoriae in quo laudes ... celeberrimae urbis tuae, ... et in primis ill. fratris olim tui Leonelli perpetuae memoriae commendavi'. See A. Della Guardia, *La 'Politia Litteraria' di Angelo Decembrio e l'umanesimo a Ferrara nella prima metà del secolo XV*, Modena, 1910, p. 21.  
 53 Baxandall, 'Dialogue on Art', op. cit., 1963, p. 317; on Ferrarese tapestry during the reign of Leonello, see G. Campori, *L'arazzeria estense*, Modena, 1876, pp. 10–18, and N. Forti Grazzini, 'Leonello d'Este nell'autunno del Medioevo. Gli arazzi delle Storie di Ercole', in *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 53–62. On relations between Ferrara and Burgundy during his reign, see E. Kantorowicz, 'The Este Portrait by Rogier van der Weyden', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 3, 1939–40, pp. 165–80, and Lockwood, op. cit., p. 57. The discussion of the ideal library is in *De politia litteraria*, Pars I.I.iii.  
 54 Baxandall, 'Dialogue on Art', op. cit., 1963, p. 314.  
 55 *ibid.*, pp. 316, 317. E. Lincoln, 'Mantegna's Culture of Line', op. cit., approaches the prints of Mantegna as the artist's means of laying claim to mastery, and to professional domination,

- through advertising the normative and near-mechanical perfection of his hand. Mantegna's laying claim to *ingenium* is hence through a form of manual virtuosity which conspicuously avoids the capricious linear deformations and variations of Tura.
- 56 Baxandall, 'Dialogue on Art', op. cit., pp. 324, 325.
- 57 *ibid.*, p. 325: 'eruditionis et cognoscendi cupiditatis incitamentum pictura scripturaque quam idcirco graeci latinique pariter uno saepe vocabulo scripturam appellaverunt . . . cum de poetarum et pictorum ingeniis eandem fere rationem demonstraret'.
- 58 For instance, George of Trebizond was referred to by a Guarino partisan as a 'graeculus' and 'former scribe': see J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, Leiden, 1976, p. 30. Guarino himself blasted Uberto Decembrio, the father of Angelo, for claiming co-authorship of Manuel Chrysoloras's translations of Plato's *Republic*, 'for Manuel dictated it, and he wrote down what was said, like a professional scribe (*librarius*)'. See J. Hankins, 'A Manuscript of Plato's Republic in the Translation of Chrysoloras and Uberto Decembrio with Annotations of Guarino Veronese', in Hankins, Monfasani and F. Purnell Jr (eds.), *Supplementum Festivum: Studies in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, Binghamton, New York, 1987, pp. 149–84.
- 59 M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 196.
- 60 The classic account of the evolution of *litterae antiquae* is B. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanist Script*, Rome, 1960. For more revisionist and deconstructive accounts of handwriting, subjectivity and the ideology of humanism, see S.H. Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1989; and, on post-*quattrocento* developments, J. Goldberg, *Writing Matter From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, Stanford, California, 1990.
- 61 'non vaga quidem ac luxurianti litera, qualis est scriptorum seu verius pictorum nostri temporis, longe oculos mulcens, prope autem afficiens ac fatigans, quasi ad aliud quam ad legendum sit inventa, et non, ut grammaticorum princeps ait, litera "quasi legitima" dicta sit – sed alia quadam castigata et clara seque ultro oculis ingerante, in qua nichil orthographam, nichil omnino grammaticae artis omisum dicas': Petrarch, *Epistolae ad Familiares*, vol. 23, 19.8, discussed by Ullman, *Humanist Script*, op. cit., pp. 12–13, and by Jed, *Chaste Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 66–7.
- 62 P.O. Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts', in *Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and the Arts*, New York, 1965, p. 172.
- 63 Quoted from Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, op. cit., 1971, p. 125. Between 1442 and 1445 the scribe Biagio Bosoni of Cremona is recorded as making a copy of this text, *De ingenuis moribus*, for Leonello d'Este. See Bertoni, 'Notizie sugli amanuensi', op. cit., p. 32.
- 64 The most daring exploitation of this ambiguity is by the abbot Trithemius of Sponheim in his 1490s treatise in defence of the work of the scribe against the inroads of printing. Trithemius draws on the notion that 'writers' are remembered by posterity through their works, and extends this to include scribes: 'Qui autem scribere negligent, mox ut fuerint, in oblivionem omnium, tanquam non fuissent, cito deveniunt; vestra autem memoria ex libris quos scribitis cum gloria transibit ad posterum.' Johannes Trithemius, *De laude scriptorum*, Cap. xvi, ed. K. Arnold, Lawrence, Kansas, 1974, p. 96.
- 65 On Carlo, see Capelli, 'La congiura', op. cit., and Bertoni, 'Notizie sugli amanuensi', op. cit., pp. 37–41 (with remarks also on Landi).
- 66 Guarinus Veronensis Jacobo Lando librario politissimo  
 Ut sileam priscos animi probitate nitentes  
 Et quis dedaleas fata dedere manus,  
 Quanta Macro et Cosmo nostri pictoribus aevi  
 Tanta tibi ex calamo gloria, Lande, venit.  
 Text in L. Capra and C. Colombo, 'Giunte all'epistolario di Guarino Veronese', *Italia Medioevale e umanistica*, vol. 10, 1967, p. 214. Having followed the identification of 'Cosmo' as Cosmè Tura, *La tonsura clericale di Cosmè Tura*, p. 164, Enrico Peverada has since expressed reservations, pointing out that the court account books from 1458 to 1475 feature a number of payments to a miniaturist known as 'Choxeme' or 'Cosmo Baronio'. However, it is not at all evident that Baronio might have enjoyed a fame so comparable with Tura's as to cause contemporary readers to recall the miniaturist rather than the leading court painter. Unlike Baronio, both Tura and Giraldi were celebrated by other contemporary poets (Tribaco in Giraldi's case; Strozzi, Giovanni Santi and – possibly – Bigo Pittorio in Tura's. See the latter's *Tumultuaria Carmina*, Modena, 1492, vols 1 and 4 for two poems 'Ad Cosmum').
- 67 'You have set painting among the manual arts . . . if you call it mechanical because it is by manual work that the hands represent what the imagination creates, your writers are setting down by pen by manual work what originates in the mind': J.P. Richter (ed.), *Leonardo da Vinci: Literary Works*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1957, p. 57.
- 68 Bertoni, 'Notizie sugli amanuensi', op. cit., mentions in both capacities Carlo di San Giorgio, Don Francesco di Codigoro (active 1437–45), Simone di Pavia (1446), a Franceschino 'scrittore e miniatore' (1451), Filippo di San Giorgio (1451), and Andrea della Vieze, the head of a team of scribes and miniaturists during the reign of Ercole d'Este, on whom see also H.J. Hermann, 'Zur Geschichte der Miniaturmalerei zum Hofe der Este in Ferrara', *Jahrbuch der*

- Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 21, 1900, pp. 266–8, and Lockwood, *Music*, op. cit., pp. 214–16. The Olivetan monastery of San Giorgio seems to have been an important centre for scribe-miniaturists who worked on occasion for the court, among them the prior Alessandro da Sesto in 1460: see P. Lugano, *Memorie dei piu antichi minatori e calligrafi olivetani*, Florence, 1903, p. 43. The court librarian Pellegrino Prisciani illustrated his own works; for illustrations, see Papagano and Quondam, *La corte e lo spazio*, op. cit., vol. 3, plates 114–21. Other scribes of the Po valley working in an ever-expanding technical competence were Felice Feliciano and Damianus de Moyllis of Parma, on whom see C. Bühler, *The Fifteenth-Century Book*, Philadelphia, 1960, p. 49, and S. Edmunds, 'From Schoeffer to Vêrard: Concerning the Scribes who Became Printers', in S. Hindman (ed.), *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books circa 1450–1520*, Cornell, 1991, pp. 21–40.
- 69 Under the Este, however, the jurisdiction of the *Arti* had been curtailed from the mid-fourteenth century, and it is not known which professional organizations, if any, regulated the practice of painters, scribes and miniaturists. In other centres, such as Florence, there appears to have been a clear division of labour: see A.M. Brown and A.C. de la Mare, 'Bartolomeo Scala's Dealings with Booksellers, Scribes and Illuminators, 1459–63', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 39, 1976, pp. 237–46.
- 70 Carlo 'gothicized' his humanist hand for his transcription and translation of Michele Savonarola's *Confessionale*; see the frontispiece reproduced in Bertoni, 'Notizie sugli amanuensi', op. cit., p. 39.
- 71 On Felice, see C. Mitchell, 'Felice Feliciano Antiquarius', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 47, 1961, pp. 197–223.
- 72 Modena, Archivio di Stato, Libri camerali diversi 15, fol. 139; 'Domenico Gatto da Bagnacavallo di x a marzo L cinque D quarto LM che sono La valure di L4 di boni moniti li quali se gli sono facti pagare in argento per havere exemplato arte scripture per facti di lo illu.mo Nro. S. como appare al capo suso nostro registro a Lorenzo a la camera ....'
- 73 Tura himself may have painted the dedication miniature for the presentation of Antonio Cornazzano's *Del modo di regere e di regnare* to the Duchess Eleanora d'Aragona between 1476 and 1484. The various attributions to Tura are reviewed and accepted by J. Manca, 'A Note on Cosmè Tura as Portraitist', *Antichità Viva*, vol. 30, 1991, pp. 17–20.
- 74 On the miniature, see *From Borso to Cesare d'Este*, op. cit., pp. 116–17, and *Le Muse e il Principe*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 186–9.
- 75 Perry, 'A Fifteenth-Century Dialogue', op. cit., p. 631.
- 76 R. Sabbadini, *Classicisti e umanisti negli codici Ambrosiani*, Florence, 1933, p. 96.
- 77 Perry, 'A Fifteenth-Century Dialogue', op. cit., pp. 632–3.
- 78 Tura's own epistolary hand, illustrated in Venturi, 'Cosma Tura', op. cit., p. 31, is in an elegantly flourished style typical of court communications, and features an assertive graphic and linguistic stylization of his signature: 'Cosmus Pictor'.
- 79 As could the career of the polymath Damianus de Moyllis of Parma, the calligrapher–miniaturist who set himself up as a printer and as a ceramist. See Bühler, *Fifteenth-Century Book*, op. cit., p. 49, and S. Edmunds, 'From Schoeffer to Vêrard', op. cit., *passim*.
- 80 An Italian example is preserved in the Lilly Library at Indiana University, made by the scribe Guinoforto di Vicomerchato in Milan, c. 1450: see J.J.G. Alexander (ed.), *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination*, New York and London, 1994, p. 213.
- 81 S.H. Steinberg, 'Medieval Writing Masters', *The Library*, 4th series, no. 22, 1941–2, p. 203.
- 82 The relation of the writing manuals to humanist pedagogy to the internalization of 'courtliness' and various capacities of royal service is discussed by Goldberg, op. cit., pp. 146–55 and 257–72. A.S. Osley, *Scribes and Sources*, Boston, 1980, p. 19, points out that many writing masters and humanists regarded 'flourishing', the extreme demonstration of calligraphic skill, as 'a confidence trick played on a gullible public'; he cites Erasmus praising fine writing as akin to painting, but at the same time denouncing common scribes with their 'curves, joins, tails and similar frivolous strokes in which they revel out of a kind of pride' (p. 29).
- 83 For a survey of attributions up until 1974, see Molajoli, *Cosmè Tura*, op. cit., pp. 84–91. On problems in the connoisseurship of Ferrarese art, especially with regard to the communal manner of the court artist, see K. Lippincott, 'Gli affreschi del Salone dei Mesi e la problema dell'attribuzione', in R. Varese (ed.), *Atlante di Schifanoia*, Modena, 1989, pp. 111–41.
- 84 B. Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, Oxford, 1932, p. 580; Roberto Longhi's decision to follow the evidence of the inscription and regard the painting as a simulation of Tura undertaken by Costa 'per capriccio di committente' was proclaimed by R. Varese, *Lorenzo Costa*, Milan, 1967, p. 69, to be 'antistorico, arzigogolato e specioso'. Varese assigned the work to an anonymous follower of Tura.
- 85 For a discussion of these paintings, see *From Borso to Cesare d'Este*, op. cit., pp. 70–1; also V. Sgarbi, *Antonio del Cravelcore e la pittura ferrarese del quattrocento a Bologna*, Milan, 1985.