

# The dome painting of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma: The relationship between Correggio's form and content, depending on the viewer and the viewer's position

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Antonio Allegri da Correggio (c. 1489-1534), a High Renaissance Italian painter, frescoed the dome in the monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma in Italy from 1520 to 1521 (fig. 1). At the time of his work, the monastery belonged to a Benedictine monastic reform group, the Cassinese Congregation, and it was this Congregation that commissioned the work. Built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the monastery originally belonged to the Order of St. Benedict, which in 1477 merged with the Cassinese Congregation (until 1505 called "the Congregation of Santa Giustina") [1]. As for the church, its present-day structure was built between 1490 and 1519 under the supervision of Cassinese monks, while Correggio frescoed the dome, the apse, the lunette, and the choir and nave frieze from 1520 to 1524.

In this paper, I would like to reconsider the interpretation of the subject of the dome painting given in previous studies, while seeking evidence from an iconographic tradition and the breviary used in this monastery. Then, based on my new interpretation, I will examine the relationship between Correggio's form and content, considering the viewer's locations in the church. It will be revealed that Correggio put a great consideration to the religious context of the Cassinese Congregation, with which he had a special relationship [2].

## 1. Overview of the artwork and problems of previous research

An isolated figure of Christ hovers in the center of the crossing dome, ringed by eleven of the Apostles, among whom only St. Peter with the keys is identifiable. At the base of the western side of the dome, just above the cornice near the nave, aged St. John, the patron of the monastery, is placed below all the other Apostles (fig. 2). This figure of St. John is tucked under the front rim of the dome, and completely invisible from the nave (fig. 3). Because of the placement, St. John is concealed from the eyes of the praying faithful and visible only to the monks.

This painting has been attracting the interest of scholars for many years. However, there has been some disagreement regarding what exactly it depicts. There are two mainstream theories explaining the theme.

According to the first theory, the painting represents *the Assumption of St. John*, as narrated in the Golden Legend [3]. According to St. Isidore of Seville, at the age of 99, St. John was visited by Christ and the other Apostles and invited to their feast in heaven. Even before Correggio, this episode of St. John's Assumption had not been an uncommon subject in art [4]. Two of the most celebrated examples are Giotto's fresco in the Peruzzi Chapel in Santa Croce (fig. 4), and Donatello's relief in the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo, both in Florence.



Fig. 1 Correggio, Dome and Pendentives, 1520-21. Fresco. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista.



Fig. 2 Saint John the Evangelist (detail of fig. 1).

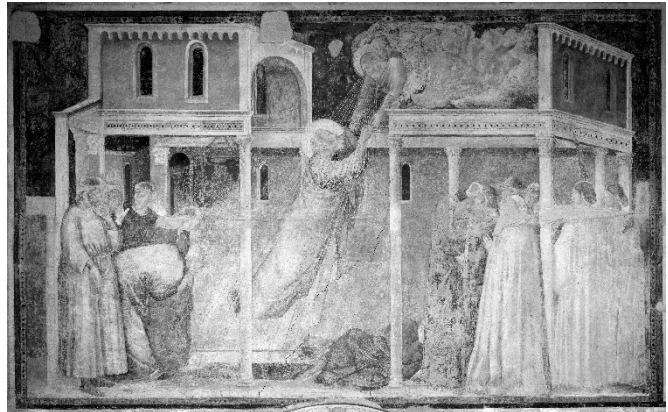


Fig. 4 Giotto. *Assumption of Saint John the Evangelist*. c. 1315. Fresco. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce. Florence. Raffaello Bencini/Alinari Archives, Florence / distributed by AMF.



Fig. 3 View of the dome of San Giovanni Evangelista from the west (the figure of Saint John is invisible).

The second theory, on the other hand, claims that the fresco represents the apocalyptic vision St. John had on Patmos, namely, not *The Assumption of St. John*, but rather the representation of *The Second Coming*, as it is described in the Book of Revelation 1:7 [5]. The scholars who support this interpretation compare Correggio's fresco with the iconographical tradition of dome painting. According to their view, just like in the 9th century center dome of Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki, Correggio adhered in a formal sense to the ancient traditions of the dome-painting with a representation of Christ's Ascension as the Second Coming [6]. However, the scene of the ceiling painting where Jesus is accompanied by His disciples does not coincide with the description of Apocalypse, and there is no other example of an art work with the same theme.

From this it can be seen that the previous studies offer two different interpretations of the frescoed ceiling: The generally accepted is *The Assumption of St. John*, and the alternative is *The Second Coming*.

However, Shearman, a modern British art historian has put out a third theory. Focusing his attention on the viewer's position, he offered an interpretation suggesting that general visitors in the nave were presented with *The Second Coming*, while *The Vision of St. John on Patmos* is shown to the monks in the choir [7]. Although Eskerdjian suggests the possibility that the image is synthesizing both the themes of *The Assumption of St. John* and *The Second Coming*, he only briefly mentions it and does not develop this idea further [8]. As it follows, in this paper I would like to demonstrate that, in fact, in that fresco Correggio actually combined both events: *The Assumption of St. John* and *The Second Coming*.

## 2. The liturgy on the feast day of St. John Evangelist

Following Büttner's research [9], I focused on the liturgy on the feast day of St. John Evangelist for the 27<sup>th</sup> December, as prescribed in Cassinese breviary of 1506 [10].

Büttner, who first focused on the breviary texts, pointed out that John's gestures and gaze in Correggio's representation are based on the liturgy of the Matins on the feast day of St. John. Through careful examination of this breviary including some parts that Büttner had overlooked, it can be seen that according to the liturgical context of this holiday, the Christ who received Saint John just before his death had been explicitly linked to the Christ in the Second Coming at the Last Judgment [11].

Let us observe the readings. In the liturgy of the Matins, monks praised St. John using following antiphons [12]:

“Jesus appeared to him with his disciples and said: ‘come to me, my well-beloved, for the time has come when thou shalt sit at table with me and with thy brethren!’”

And then,

“St. John rose his hands to Heaven, and said: ‘I thank Thee for having invited me, for Thou knowest that I have desired it with all my heart’.”

Next,

“My Lord is by my side and he came and invited me, with my brothers, open to me the door of life, and lead me to the banquet of meat.”

Between these antiphons, psalms 75, 96 and 97 are recited. However, Büttner, who pointed out that the liturgy and the ceiling painting are closely related, does not look in details at the psalms sung with together with the antiphons. It must be pointed out, though, that the Psalms chosen here are concerned with the Judgment or the Advent of Christ. For example, after Christ appeared and talked to St. John, they read Ps. 75: “At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity.” (Psalm 75: 2). [13] Then, after Christ appeared and talked to St. John, they read Ps. 96: “O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.” (Psalm 96: 1). Finally, they prayed with the words of Ps. 97: “The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!” (Psalm 97: 1) Thus, a series of Psalms concerning the judgment shows that the antiphons related to the depiction of the ceiling were used in the eschatological meaning.

Furthermore, as described in St. John’s Gospel, Jesus said the following words about St. John, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” (John 21: 22) These ambiguous words seem to imply that he might remain alive until the eschatological coming of Jesus [14]. In fact, according to some traditions, St. John did not die, but remains alive at an unknown place like Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-12) [15]. With this in mind, let us observe the breviary again.

In Lauds, the following texts taken from the Gospel of St. John and St. Matthew were read [16]:

“This is my disciple. What is it to you, if I want him to live until I return?

This disciple is the one who told all of this. He wrote it, and we know he is telling the truth.

I promise you that some of those standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom.

What is it to you, if I want him to live until I return. Follow me!”

In this context, we can understand that the words, “there are some standing here who will not taste death”, quoted from the Matthew 16:28, point specifically to St. John.

On the basis of this fact, regarding his ultimate fate, it is assumed that Cassinese Congregation adapted the interpretation that just like with Enoch and Elijah, St. John would not die until the day of Apocalypse. In this connection, along with St. John and St. Augustine, represented together on the northeast pendentive in this church, also Enoch and Elijah are included in the arches next to them (fig. 5).

In addition, from the point of iconography, there is another piece of artwork where the Assumption of St. John was interpreted as the eschatological event. The main panel of the altarpiece by a Florentine painter, Giovanni dal Ponte, while concentrating on *The Assumption of St. John* also includes the theme of *The Descent into Limbo* (fig. 6) [17]. Here, Christ with the banner of the Resurrection is in a roundel in the center. In the spandrels, Adam and Eve, followed

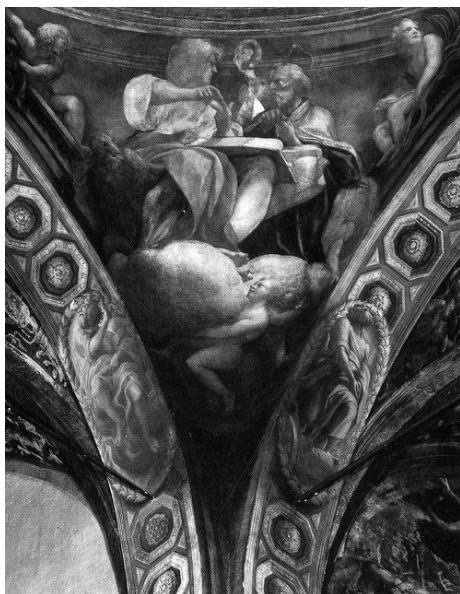


Fig. 5 Correggio, Pendentive with *Saints Augustine and John with Enoch and Elijah*. c. 1522. Fresco. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista.



Fig. 6 Giovanni dal Ponte. *Assumption of Saint John and Descent into Limbo* (detail of *Assumption of Saint John the Evangelist*. c. 1420-24. Egg tempera on wood. 277.5×257.0 cm. The National Gallery, London - distributed by AMF.



Fig. 7 Cesare Aretusi after Correggio. *Coronation of the Virgin*. 1587. Fresco. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista.

by John the Baptist, are being lead into heaven. This theme, drawn from apocrypha, anticipates the salvation at the end of time. In the iconographic program of this altarpiece, by being associated with *The Descent into Limbo*, *The Assumption of St. John* alludes to Christ's Advent at the Last Judgment, and emphasizes its soteriological and eschatological significance [18].

The connection between *The Assumption of St. John* and *The Second Coming* on the ceiling painting is not contradictory to the theme of the apsis. In the apsis we can see *The Coronation of Virgin* (fig. 7), which is related to Virgin Mary's intercession at the Last Judgement [19]. Keeping in mind that the Assumption of John was often discussed in the analogy with the Assumption of Mary [20], the dome and the apsis also are connected with the resurrection of the body of John and Mary [21].

Following these considerations, the meaning of the eschatological phase of the frescoed ceiling in San Giovanni Evangelista became clear as the monks in the choir celebrated the liturgy.

### 3. The experience of the viewers

#### (1) The view from the nave

In this chapter, I will examine how the experience of the viewers of this integrated image, namely, *The Assumption of St. John* and *The Second Coming*, changes depending on the location

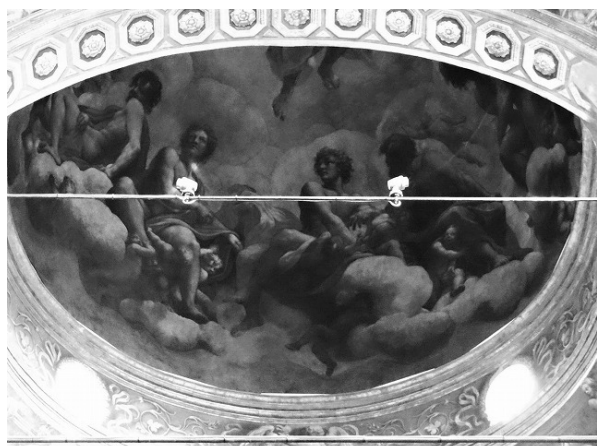


Fig. 8 View of the dome (The viewer can see only Christ's feet).

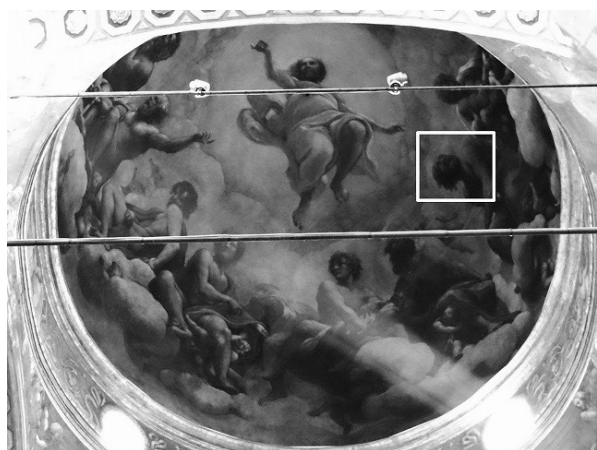


Fig. 9 View of the dome (Christ's figure appears at full-length).

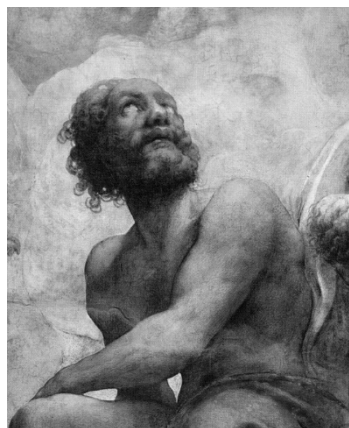


Fig. 10 One apostle raising his face (detail of fig. 9).

of the viewer. Shearman has already discussed the different experiences the viewer might receive, depending on the position of the observation [22], but my interpretation differs from his. His interpretation claims that the ceiling painting merges *The Second Coming* with *The vision of St. John on Patmos*. Furthermore, he compares the sights the viewers can have from only two standing points: that of the faithful in the nave, and that of monks in the choir. That means he did not take into account many other possible positions of viewing. In light of the new interpretation, that the theme of the ceiling painting is not the vision of St. John on Patmos but the vision of St. John being assumed into heaven, I would like to review Shearman's analysis.

Let us now look at the view from the nave. While looking up in the front of the church, facing the altar, the figure of St. John is occluded (fig. 3). As Shearman has already pointed out, we may find ourselves in the psychological and physical positions of St. John on the western side of the cupola. In other words, when we look from the nave, we look up at Christ's Second Coming

just like St. John does. However, what we cannot overlook here is that this view is not given to everyone in the nave. The actual view changes as the viewer changes the viewing point.

As the viewer enters the church, the cupola is almost invisible. The first details can be seen after coming to about one third of the church's length. From this point, in the dimly lit church the viewer can see only silhouetted Christ's feet, and neither the viewer nor the Apostles can feel or notice the Divine presence (fig. 8). Only as we advance some more, does Christ's figure appear at full-length (fig. 9), and at the same time, we can notice one of the Apostles looking up at him (fig. 10). It becomes clear that since Correggio determined the expression or the posture of the figures taking into

account several viewpoints, the viewers in the nave can share together with the Apostles the experience of Christ's Second Coming.

In the previous studies, it has been demonstrated that, comparing with the view that partially conceals Christ, the view that affords the whole figure of Christ is regarded as a complete one. However, it is my opinion that in this case the view that conceals Christ's upper body is not an incomplete view, but rather the exact one that Correggio prepared for the viewers to aid them in their meditation. For example, right after entering the church, we see nothing but Jesus' feet (fig. 8). This view reminds us of a traditional type of Ascension iconography where Christ is represented at the very moment he vanishes into heaven, his upper body hidden in clouds, leaving only his feet visible (fig. 11) [23]. According to the tradition of this iconography, Christ's head symbolized his Divinity and his feet symbolized his humanity [24]. So, the veiling of his upper body in heaven while his lower limbs remained visible illustrates the

point that corporeal vision could see the flesh Christ assumed on earth but not his Divinity. This figure type asked the viewer to contemplate Christ's invisible Divinity through his visible lower half of the body. Based on the historical use of this image, it is possible to assume that the same effect was also employed in this monastery. In the Acts of the Apostles it is described: "(A)s they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven." (Acts 1: 9-10) Therefore, it is shown that Jesus did not disappear in an instant, but gradually ascended into Heaven. Then, the following line proclaims, "This Jesus, (...) will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11). This shows that Christ should reappear exactly in the same manner in which he disappeared at the Ascension, which means not instantly, but gradually. Just like in the Second Coming, Correggio also wants to show Jesus gradually appearing from the lower body.

Therefore, the viewer, as approaching to the picture, will have a different view of Christ, depending on the distance. It can be concluded that Correggio, by exploiting the architectural space, succeeded in inviting the viewer to enter into the image, and allowing him to internalize the eschatological event as his own experience.

## (2) The view in the choir

The following is the view of the painting from the choir (fig. 12). There, we can observe two persons, "Christ" and "St. John, gazing directly at Christ". Shearman regards this view as a "self-sufficient" view in which both the visionary and his vision appear [25]. It can be said that it is self-contained in that he will look at John and Christ from below with some distance. Certainly, unlike from the nave, the viewer in the choir does not get involved in the subject. However, when analyzing this view while correlating Correggio's artistic technique in the early 1520s, rather than just completing the relationship between Christ and John, it becomes apparent that he also



Fig. 11 Tiberius Psalter, *Ascension of Christ*. 11<sup>th</sup> century. © British Library Board Cotton Tiberius B. VI f15r.



Fig. 12 View of the dome from the east.



Fig. 14 Correggio, *Martyrdom of Four Saints*. c. 1524-26. Oil on canvas. 157×182 cm. Parma, Galleria Nazionale. Archivi Alinari, Firenze / distributed by AMF.



Fig. 13 Correggio, *Madonna and Child with St. Sebastian*. c. 1524-26. Oil on panel. 265×161 cm. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie. bpk | Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden | Elke Estel | Hans-Peter Klut / distributed by AMF.

attempted to integrate the viewer in the choir using a technique different from the one in the nave.

First of all, it is worth noting that John was pushed out to the foreground and positioned at the lower edge of the dome (fig. 12). In order to establish a direct relationship with the viewer, the composition of placing a figure on the foreground or the peripheral position, which is closest to the real space, had been frequently used by Correggio since 1520s. For example, in *Madonna and Child with St. Sebastian* (fig. 13), St. Sebastian, standing on the left side of the foreground, with his posture and eyes encourages viewers to adore the Virgin and Child. Also in the *Martyrdom of Four Saints* (fig. 14), set on the right wall of Del Bono chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista, St. Flavia located at the right end of the composition nearest to the real space is facing the same direction as the viewer. Through this posture she introduces the viewer into the



picture. Similarly to these works, St. John, painted in the ceiling, is located at the lowest position of the dome and is looking up at Christ, just like the viewer is watching him. Through this technique the viewer can easily put him/herself into the position of St. John and identify with him.

In addition, the close-up of St. John's face showed a complete surprise that Jesus suddenly appeared (fig. 15). In the 1520s, Correggio depicted a series of works that focused on the internal emotions of the figure [26]. For example, in *Lamentation* (fig. 17) the deep sorrow of those who received the Body of Christ is contrasted with the gentle light, or in *Ecce Homo* (fig. 18) we can see the face of sorrowful Christ looking ahead of him. A close-up of a face had been a common technique since the Middle Ages [27]. First, the viewer is made to empathize with the feelings or emotions of the painted figure, and then, the empathy strengthens the personal devotion of the viewer. Here, St. John's expression makes us think how we would react if we were in his place, and through the reflection it makes us experience what he did, namely, seeing God face to face (fig. 15-16).

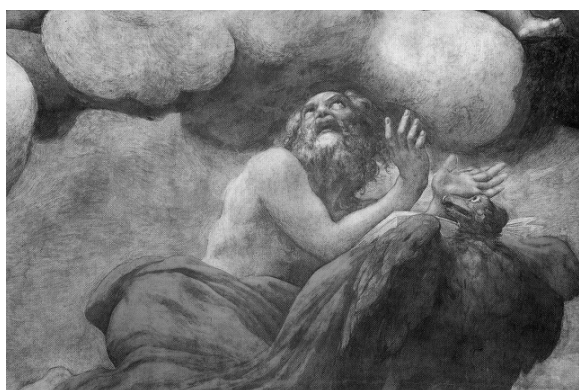


Fig. 15 Saint John who gazes at Christ (detail of fig. 12).

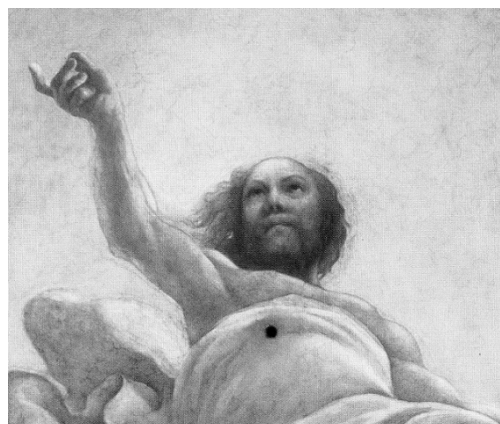


Fig. 16 Christ descending towards Saint John (detail of fig. 12).



Fig. 17 Correggio, *Lamentation*. c. 1524-26. Oil on canvas. 157×182 cm. Parma, Galleria Nazionale. Archivi Alinari, Firenze / distributed by AMF.

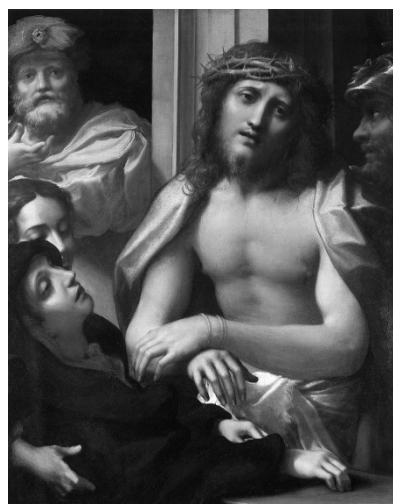


Fig. 18 Correggio, *Ecce Homo*. Oil on panel. 99×80cm. The National Gallery, London - distributed by AMF.

#### 4. St. John Evangelist and the contemplative life

Finally, I will examine why the view of the encounter between St. John and Christ was revealed only in the choir. When we consider that there used to be a rood screen, now removed [28], we will notice the significance of this view, especially for the monks. In San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma, nobody but monks could enter the enclosed choir, and so in this context it is clear that only the monks were privileged to see the figure of St. John.

Let us turn again to the liturgy of the hours for the feast of St. John. In the recitation of this day, first is given the passage from the Gospel of John 21:20-23 where John's fate is implied [29]. Upon further examination of the Breviary, we can realize that it includes the reading on the fate of not only St. John, but also of St. Peter. It is a reading from the sermon of Beda Venerabilis, and it contains the words of Christ that suggest St. Peter's martyrdom: "But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18) [30]. The choice of these texts contrasting the fates of St. Peter and St. John relates to the traditional interpretation that this pair symbolizes the "active life" and "contemplative life" [31]. St. Augustine interpreted St. John as an exemplar of the contemplative life. In his 124<sup>th</sup> Tractate, he contrasts the roles of perfect action and perfect contemplation, as he talks about the order Peter received, "Follow me":

"You follow me by imitating me in the endurance of temporal evils; let him remain till I come to restore everlasting good? And this may be expressed more clearly in this way: Let perfected action, informed by the example of my passion, follow me; but let contemplation only begun remain [so] till I come, to be perfected when I come. For the godly plenitude of patience, reaching forward even unto death, follows Christ; but the fullness of knowledge tarries till Christ come, to be manifested then."

(Augustine, "124th Tractate on the Gospel of John 21:19-25")

There, the encounter of John and Christ is realized at the end of the time by "looking face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). In other words, the death of John means "the perfection of the contemplative life" after the Last Judgment.

Traditionally, because he "leaned against the Lord's breast at the last Supper" (John 21:20) [32], and "absorbed the gospel from the holy spring of the Lord" [33], and then received revelation on Patmos, John is understood to have been given a position to gain an intellectual insight to the truth over other apostles [34]. Also in Cassinese's liturgy of the feast of St. John, he is considered to have received special Wisdom of God, and praised using appropriate texts, such as "She (Wisdom) will feed him with the bread of learning, and give him the water of wisdom to drink." (Sirach 15:3) [35] or "She (Wisdom) will exalt him above his neighbors, and will open his mouth in the midst of the assembly." (Sirach 15:5) [36]. In the lunette in this church (fig. 19), as if visualizing such idea, John is looking upwards in a state of ecstasy with the inscription: "He gains insight into the mystery of God more deeply than others" [37]. Thus, John who deeply recognizes the mystery of deep in God in the liturgy and lunetta, is also presented as a symbol of "contemplative" in the dome. Therefore, the representation that St. John stares at



Fig. 19 Correggio, *Saint John the Evangelist*. Fresco. 79×160 cm. Parma, San Giovanni Evangelista.

Christ directly may be interpreted as the embodiment of beatific vision. *The Assumption of St. John* that is concealed from the nave is revealed in the choir because it is an image that represents the goal of monastic life, a direct vision of God.

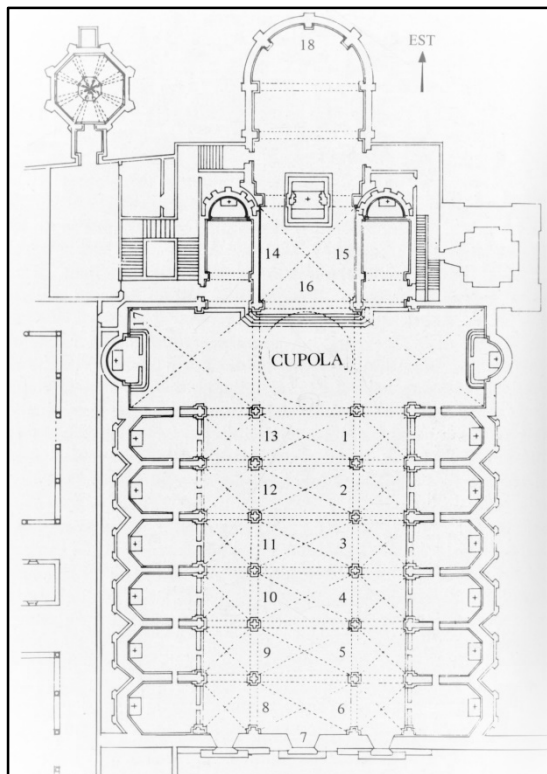
## 5. Conclusion: Correggio and Cassinese Congregation

As discussed above, the dome painting, depicting St. John who is looking directly at Christ, is closely related to the theme of beatific vision. There, in order to allow the viewer to feel empathy as his own experience, Correggio elaborated on the expression and pose of St. John, who is gazing at Christ with surprise. The abbot of the Santa Giustina in Padua, Ludovico Barbo (1381-1443), who founded Cassinese Congregation in the fifteenth century, is known for introducing a subjective and emotional meditation practice derived from the “*devotio moderna*” which was prevalent in areas north of the Alps at that time [38]. Correggio’s artistic attempt to stimulate the senses of the viewer through images, so as to be an opportunity to raise the spirit, is closely following the emotional practice of this monastery.

It is evident from the records of 15 May 1521, which were written immediately after the work was completed, that his such attempts gave Cassinese monks sufficient satisfaction. The document states that Correggio and his relatives were given a special permission to participate not only in major celebrations, but also in the daily Cassinese’s liturgy such as Mass or Liturgy of the Hours [39]. This special acceptance of Correggio by Cassinese is not only a remuneration for superior work production, but also a sign of appreciation of the depth of Correggio’s devotion to this Congregation. This frescoed ceiling is a work that could be realized only because he had a deep understanding of the spirituality of the Cassinese monks.

For a long time, the studies on Correggio’s art have been mainly considered exclusively from the artistic style. On the other hand, in recent years, his style is being considered as combining the theological content of the subject with the function of the work [40]. However, such research methods are still adopted mainly just for the research of the altarpieces. As I clarified in this paper, Correggio, in the ceiling painting, developed the image while using the whole space of the building. The image itself had a religious context different for a different audience, from the particular function for the liturgy and the meditation of the monks, to the developing of the

religious spirit for the lay congregation. From now on, until his culmination piece, the dome painting of Parma Cathedral, we will need to consider Correggio's art from the perspective of the reasons for his choice of a particular style and form.



Layout of San Giovanni Evangelista (in G. M. Toscano, *Nuovi studi sul Correggio*, Parma, 1974, p. 94).

no.1-13 Nave friezes (painted by Correggio, 1522-24)

no.14-16 Ceiling of former choir (painted by Correggio's workshop)

no.17 Lunette with *Saint John Evangelist* (fig. 19)

no.18 Apsis with *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 7)

## Notes

- [1] B. Adorni, *L'abbazia benedettina di San Giovanni Evangelista a Parma*, Parma, 1979; B. Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation: The Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua*, Oxford, 1985; M. Zaggia, *Tra Mantova e la Sicilia nel Cinquecento. La Congregazione Benedettina Cassinese nel Cinquecento*, Firenze, 2003; C. Steinhardt-Hirsch, *Correggios >Notte<: Ein Meisterwerk der italienischen Renaissance*, München, 2008, pp. 146-152.
- [2] For the relationship between Correggio and the Cassinese, see below: G. M. Toscano, *Nuovi studi sul Correggio*, Parma, 1974, pp. 25-26; A. Muzzi, *Il Correggio e la Congregazione Cassinese*, Firenze, 1982.
- [3] V. Pignoli, "La cupola di S. Giovanni Evangelista in Parma", in *Arte Cristiana*, 15, 1913, pp. 116-122; A. G. Quintavalle, *Gli affreschi del Correggio in San Giovanni Evangelista a Parma*, Milano, 1962, pp.13-14; Toscano, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp.55-61; E. Battisti, in B. Adorni, *op. cit.*, 1979, pp. 119-124; G. Ercoli, *Arte e fortuna del Correggio*, Modena, 1982, pp. 19-20; P. Mendogni, *Il Correggio a Parma*, Parma, 1989, pp. 57-60.
- [4] L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, tome III, Paris, 1958, pp. 718-719; G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting*, Firenze, 1986, pp. 559-568.
- [5] P. Bianconi, *Tutta la pittura del Correggio*, Milano, 1953, p.16; S. Bottari, *Correggio*, 1961, Milano, p. 22; A. C. Quintavalle, *Tout l'œuvre peint de Correggio*, Milan, 1970, pp. 97-98, n.49; C. Gould, *The Paintings of Correggio*, London, 1976, p.67-76; J. Shearman, "Correggio's illusionism",

- in *La prospettiva rinascimentale: codificazioni e trasgressioni*, 1980, pp. 281-294; *id.*, *Only Connect...*, *Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, Princeton, 1992, pp. 181-186.
- [6] Shearman, *op. cit.*, 1992, pp. 158, 183.
- [7] Shearman, *art. cit.*, 1980, pp. 282-284; *id.*, *op. cit.*, 1992, pp. 183-184.
- [8] D. Ekserdjian, *Correggio*, New Haven and London, 1997, p. 100.
- [9] F. Büttner, "Correggios "Marienkrönung" in San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma", in *Opere e giorni. Studi su mille anni di arte europea dedicati a Max Seidel*, Venedig, 2001, pp. 485-498.
- [10] *Breviarium monasticum secundum ritum et morem monachorum ordinis sancti benedicti de observantia cassinensis congregationis alius sancte iustine*, Venetiis, 1506.  
V. Alberici ("Gli affreschi del Correggio nella chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista alla luce della liturgia medievale", in *Aurea Parma*, 93, 2009, pp. 65-78.) also finds the same liturgy in the Dominican Order from the beginning of the 14th century and considers the relations of Correggio's works with the liturgy, but she does not refer to Büttner's paper. I follow Büttner's consideration, in which he noticed the relationship of the dome painting with the Cassinese Breviary used at the time of Correggio's work.
- [11] Regarding the Cassinese liturgy of the Feast of St. John, there are some points in common with the Benedictine order, such as lectio and responsorium, but there are also many changes. For example, the selected Psalms in Matins are common with the Benedictine liturgy, but the Antiphon, which Büttner associated with the Correggio's painting, is not found in the text of the Benedictine Order. The original Benedictine breviary can be found on the following web site: Divinum Officium; <http://divinumofficium.com/>
- [12] *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 29v: "Apparuit caro suo ioanni dominus iesus Christus cum discipulis suis et ait illi: veni dilecte meus ad me: quia tempus est ut epuleris in conuiuio meo cum fratribus tuis. Ps.74(75) Expandens manus suas ad deum dixit: gratias tibi ago: veniens inuitasti me: sciens quod ex toto corde meo desideram te. Ps.95(96) Domine suscipe me: ut cum fratribus meis sim: cum quibus veniens inuitasti me: aperi mihi ianuam vite et perduc me ad conuiuium epularum tuarum. Ps.96(97)."
- [13] All Biblical quotes are from New Revised Standard Version.
- [14] J. F. Hamburger, *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelista in Medieval Art and Theology*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2002, pp. 152-158.
- [15] M. Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge*, Studi e Testi (114), Città del Vaticano, 1944, pp.716-719; J. D. Kaestli, "Le rôle des textes bibliques dans la genèse e le développement des legends apocryphes," in *Augustinianum*, 23, 1983, pp. 328-332.
- [16] *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 31r; "Hic est discipulum meus: Sic eum volo manere donec veniam. Hic est discipulus qui testimonium perhibet de his et scripsit haec et scimus quia verum est testimonium eius. Sunt de hic stantibus, qui non gustabunt mortem: donec videant filium hominis in regno suo. Sic eum volo manere, donec veniam tu me sequere."
- [17] This scene was depicted as the high altarpiece of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista, Pratovecchio, a Camaldolese nunnery. See, D. Gordon, *National Gallery Catalogues, The Fifteenth Century Italian Paintings*, vol.1, London, 2003, pp. 104-117.
- [18] For the close relationship between *The Descent into Limbo* and *The Last Judgement*, see, A. D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: The Making of an Image*, Princeton, 1986.
- [19] P. Verdier, *Le couronnement de la Vierge: Les origines et les premiers développements d'un thème iconographique*, Paris, 1980, pp. 9-16.
- [20] Jugie, *op. cit.*, 1944, pp. 710-726; Kaestli, *art. cit.*, 1983, pp. 328-332; Hamburger, *op. cit.*, 2002, pp. 147-158.
- [21] Büttner, *art. cit.*, 2001, p. 490.
- [22] Shearman, *art. cit.*, 1980, pp. 282-284; *id.*, *op. cit.*, 1992, pp. 183-184.
- [23] M. Schapiro, "The Image of the Disappearing Christ: The Ascension in English Art Around the Year

- 1000”, in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser. 6, 23, 1943, pp. 135-152; R. Deshman, “Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 79(3), 1997, pp. 518-546.
- [24] E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton, 1957.
- [25] Shearman, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 184.
- [26] A. Muzzi, “L’espressione del dolore in alcune opere del Correggio degli anni venti”, in *Dialoghi di Storia dell’Arte*, 1, 1995, pp. 134-145; G. Periti, “Correggio, Prati e l’Ecce Homo: nuovi intrecci intorno a problemi di devozione nella Parma rinascimentale”, in *Emilia e Marche nel Rinascimento: L’Identità visiva della ‘Periferia’*, (a cura di) G. Periti, Bergamo, 2005, pp. 181-214.
- [27] S. Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-century Devotional Painting*, Netherlands, 1984, pp. 11-71.
- [28] J. Shearman, “Correggio and the Connoisseurs”, in *the Times Literary Supplement*, 1977, pp. 302-304, especially, p. 303. Regarding the rood screens in Renaissance, see, M. B. Hall, “The Ponte in S. Maria Novella: The Problem of the Roods Screen in Italy” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 37, 1974, pp. 157-173; *id.*, “The Tramezzo in Santa Croce, Florence, Reconstructed”, in *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 56(3), 1974, pp. 325-341; *id.*, “The Tramezzo in the Italian Renaissance, Revisited”, in *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical, and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, ed. S. E. J. Gerstel, 2006, pp. 215-232.
- [29] *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 31r.
- [30] Beda’s Sermons are designated for the Breviary readings for the feast of St. John as follows: J.-P. Migne ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, tome 94, 1861-62, 0044D-0045A. In the Responsorium, after reciting Beda’s sermon, Jesus’ words “What is it to you, if I want him to live until I return?” (John 21:22) and the contrast between the fates of Peter and John are further emphasized. See, *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 30v.
- [31] Hamburger, *op. cit.*, 2002, pp.100, 153.
- [32] *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 29r, 30r, 31r: “Valde honorandus est beatus Joannes, qui supra pectus Domini in cena recubuit.”
- [33] *ibid.*, fol. 30r: “Fluenta evangelii de ipso sacro Dominici pectoris fonte potavit.”
- [34] Hamburger, *op. cit.*, 2002, pp. 1-20, 95-164.
- [35] *Breviarium*, 1506, fol. 29r, 30r: “Cibabit illum pane vitae et intellectus, et aqua sapientiae salutaris potabit illum.”
- [36] *ibid.*, fol.30r, 31r, 31v: “In medio ecclesiae aperuit os eius et implevit eum Dominus spiritu sapientiae et intellectus, stolamque gloriae induit eum.”
- [37] “ALTIUS CAETERIS DEI PATEFECIT ARCANA”
- [38] Regarding the spirituality of the Cassinese Congregation, see, G. Picasso, “L’imitazione di Cristo nell’epoca della ‘devotio moderna’ e nella spiritualità monastica del sec. XV in Italia”, in *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 4 (1968), pp. 11-32; G. Lunardi, “L’ideali monastic di Ludovico Barbo”, in *Riforma della chiesa, cultura e spiritualita nel Quattrocento Veneto, Atti del convegno per il VI. Centenario della nascita di Ludovico Barbo*, Cesena, 1984, pp. 59-71; Collett, *op. cit.*, 1985; G. Picasso, *Tra umanesimo e ‘devotio’*, *Studi di storia monastica*, Milano, 1999, pp. 3-113.
- [39] Archivio di Stato di Parma, chiesa e conventi soppressi: San Giovanni Evangelista, capsula 29. 1. 5. Here I refer to the following document: C. Steinhardt-Hirsch, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 355.
- [40] G. Periti, *Antonio Allegri of Correggio: Private Art, Reception and Theories of Invention in Early Sixteenth-Century Emilian Painting*, Baltimore, 2003; C. Steinhardt-Hirsch, *op. cit.*, 2008; S. E. Switzer, *Correggio and the Sacred Image*, Columbia, 2012.

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\* Fig. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19: Photograph by author.