Christopher S. Wood, “A Message from Raphael”


In the middle of the second decade of the sixteenth century, two very famous artists exchanged gifts.1 The gifts were works of art by their own hand, and therefore objects of value even outside the context of the exchange. Inside the context of the gift, the works took on additional value, for they carried information. The gifts were messages; the exchange of artworks was also a kind of correspondence, laconic but eloquent.

The only primary source for this correspondence, apart from the works of art themselves, is Giorgio Vasari's Life of Raphael:

Per queste e molte altre opere essendo passata la fama di questo nobilissimo artefice insino in Francia ed in Fiandra, Alberto Durero tedesco, pittore mirabilissimo ed intagliatore di rame di bellissime stampe, divenne tributario delle sue opere a Raffaello, e gli mandò la testa d'un suo ritratto condotta da lui a guazzo su una tela di bisso, che da ogni banda mostrava parimente, e senza biacca, i lumi trasparenti, se non che con acquerelli di colori era tinta e macchiata, e de' lumi del panno aveva campato i chiari: la quale cosa parve maravigliosa a Raffaello; perchè egli gli mandò molte arte disegnate di man sua, le quali furono carissime ad Alberto.

(This and his other work spread his fame as far as France and Flanders, and he influenced the work of Albrecht Dürer, the marvellous German painter and master of fine copper engravings, who sent his own self-portrait. This was a head executed in gouache on transparent cambric, so that the design appeared the same on both sides; he used water-colours for the ground and colours, and the white of the cloth to provide the lights. Raphael considered this a wonderful work, and in return he sent several of his own drawings which Dürer kept and treasured.)

Vasari must have learned about Raphael's enthusiasm for Dürer's self-portrait from Giulio Romano, who inherited the painting. Unclear is the basis for his statement about Dürer's admiration for the drawings by Raphael that he received in exchange. As it happens, we know that Dürer did treasure the gift, for one of these drawings (if indeed there were more than one, as Vasari says) has survived and it bears an inscription in Dürer's own hand (Abb. 1):

1515 Raphahill de Urbin, der so hoch peim Pobst geacht ist gewest hat der hat dyse nackette Bild gemacht und hat sy dem Albrecht Dürer gen Nornberg geschickt, Im sein hand zu weisen.

What was the content of Dürer's message to Raphael? He may have learned about Raphael from the prints made after his designs by Marcantonio Raimondi and other engravers. These prints did not predate Marcantonio's arrival in Rome around 1510, however, and the earliest of them probably date from a few years later. Possibly Dürer

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learned of Raphael's rising reputation through word of mouth. Even if he had seen prints, these too must have been accompanied by verbal explanations. When Dürer himself was in Venice (and perhaps Bologna and Rome as well) between 1505 and 1507, Raphael was still in Florence and Dürer may well have heard nothing about him. By the time he sent his self-portrait to Raphael, probably in 1514 or 1515, he knew of the younger artist's achievements in Rome and, significantly, he could be confident that Raphael had heard of him. For Dürer's prints, starting with the Apocalypse woodcuts of 1498, had crossed the Alps and made an immediate sensation. Many Italian artists cited and copied his compositions and landscape backgrounds and strove to equal his technical achievements. The prints prepared Dürer's arrival in Venice, where he found himself to be well-known to the local artists.

The "content" of Dürer's message to Raphael would seem to be as follows: You know my distinctive graphic style and technique (they are one and the same) and the equally distinctive monogram or signature associated with them. You may own some of my prints. I would like to offer you a sample of my work that is not so easily acquired, and is certainly not replicable by any mechanical process.

Dürer wanted to cut through the twin reputations and make direct, artist-to-artist contact. How do we imagine Dürer managing this? He must have sent his gift in the care of a Nuremberg merchant, ambassador, perhaps even an artist, someone he trusted who was on his way to Rome; and presumably accompanied the painting with a letter of

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5 Immediately before this passage Vasari had mentioned a palace with cast stucco columns that Raphael that had built for himself in the Borgo Nuovo (the Palazzo Caprini, which Raphael in fact purchased, in 1517) and implied that the fame of this and other works had spread abroad.
greetings and explanation. The self-portrait he sent delivered the essence of what the prints had advertised, namely, Dürer himself, the artist as author.

Raphael reciprocated by sending several drawings to Dürer. The one that survives represents two men, or rather one man two times; the face appears a third time. The man on the right later appeared clothed and inserted into the fresco of the Battle of Ostia in the Stanza dell’ Incendio in the papal apartments. In retrospect, the drawing registers a moment in the process of preparation of a mural painting, although it is not strictly clear that Raphael had any intention of using these figures in the Battle of Ostia when he drew them.\(^6\) At any rate, once entered into the context of the gift exchange, the principal referent of the drawing became "Raphael." The reference was ratified by no signature. Unlike Dürer, Raphael did not customarily sign his drawings. Raphael's work was provisional and open-ended, pointing forward to a still unexecuted painting, whereas Dürer's veil-like self-portrait was a self-contained image with a fixed reference and no function outside of itself. Its reference to Dürer was doubled: once on the level of content (the image of Dürer's face), once on the level of facture (the index of Dürer's hand). Probably, although one cannot be certain, Dürer made it expressly for Raphael. Dürer's gift belonged to a tradition of communicational portraits, for example portraits sent as pledges or tokens, like the self-portrait, now in the Louvre, that the twenty-two year old Dürer had sent to his bride. Raphael, by contrast, simply pulled a drawing out of his workshop stock. Like Dürer's gift, his offering perpetuates an older model of pictorial

\(^6\) On the relation of the drawing to the fresco, which was not begun until 1517, see Nesselrath: Raphael's Gift (Anm. 4), S. 376-389. Alice M. Kaplan: Dürer's 'Raphael' Drawing Reconsidered. In: Art Bulletin 56 (1974) S. 50-58, argues with some plausibility that the drawing sent to Dürer was actually a study for the tapestry cartoon of the Blinding of Elymas.
communication, in this case the transfer of drawings from shop to shop. The workshop
drawing of the fifteenth century was a container to which information about form,
especially contour, could be consigned. Drawings frequently moved from hand to hand,
table to table, even shop to shop, transmitting that quantum of information. Although the
addressee or destination of that message was not specified in advance, such a message
was not meant to disseminate beyond a restricted circle of professional artists.
Historically, such messages were relayed from artist to artist. Non-artists were only
occasionally permitted to read the messages.

But although it resembled such a message, Raphael's gift was nothing of the kind.
Raphael's aim was neither to provide a sample of his recent work at the Vatican, nor to
propagate a particular idea of human form, but rather instead to indicate by the mere fact
of the gift—not its content—that Raphael considered Dürer a peer. The Italian artist
understood what Dürer really wanted from the exchange. Or nearly did, for Dürer may
have wanted a little more than this. His phrase "Im sein hand zu weisen" suggests that he
took the chalk drawing to be a demonstration of Raphael's inalienable and inimitable
skill, the craft that made him "Raphael." His own gift, a magically translucent image,
was such a show-piece. Erwin Panofsky on the famous final page of his monograph on
Dürer remarked on the special meaning that the "hand" held for the German artist.
Whereas Raphael thought of a drawing as an approach to an objective ideal—so
Panofsky—Dürer understood a drawing as a trace of the artist's hand and eye, and
therefore a sample of his particular way of seeing and making. The exchange of works

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Panofsky read the episode as an ironical cross-cultural misunderstanding, for he believed
counted for Dürer as the equivalent of an epistolary exchange between gentleman scholars, in the Petrarchan, and ultimately classical, tradition.

We should not rule out the possibility that Dürer, in a letter accompanying his gift, actually requested a drawing from Raphael. He owned drawings by the German artists Martin Schongauer and Wolfgang Pewrer which he similarly inscribed with names and dates. The former drawings were apparently gifts of Schongauer's brothers upon Dürer's arrival in Colmar in 1492, a year after Martin's death. The drawing by Pewrer is a relic of an otherwise little known and presumably older artist, used by the young Dürer as the basis for an engraving. In such a case, Raphael may simply have been complying graciously with the German artist's request. This would take away some of its character as a gift. There is no way of knowing whether Raphael would have independently, without Dürer's prodding, understood a chalk drawing extracted at random from a workshop stash to have been an appropriate gift.

Probably Raphael did understand a drawing to be a gift more valuable than an engraving. Now that engravings were making artists' ideas, especially Raphael's ideas, accessible to a wide public beyond the artist-to-artist network, the meaning and value of the handmade drawing was rapidly changing. The medium of engraving was part of the content of Raphael's drawing, as it was of Dürer's initial gift, in the sense that both works were, in the first instance, not prints. Raphael's drawing did not carry the same meaning

the chalk study to be not by Raphael at all but by one of his pupils. Most scholars now accept Raphael's authorship of the drawing.

8 One is inscribed "Das hat hubsch martin gemacht Im 1469 Jor"; the other two are monogrammed and dated 1469 by another hand. Le Beau Martin. Gravures et dessins de Martin Schongauer. Colmar 1991, Nr. D3-D5.
that a gift of a drawing would have carried only a few years earlier, before Marcantonio's activity.

The thesis of this paper is that beginning in the 1510s the new rhythm and pace of the print trade is inscribed within Raphael’s drawings.

Vasari in 1550 did not grasp this, for in his Life of Raphael he describes Raphael's attentiveness to the medium of engraving immediately after the passage about the exchange of gifts with Dürer, whereas in reality Raphael's awareness of Dürer's engravings preceded the gifts. Raphael knew Dürer's prints well before he received the gift of the self-portrait painting. Vasari, in the passage quoted above, goes on as follows:

Avendo dunque veduto Raffaello lo andare nelle stampe d' Albrecht Dürero, volenteroso ancor egli di mostrare quel che in tale arte poteva, fece studiare Marco Antonio Bolognese in questa pratica infinitamente; il quale riuscì tanto eccellente, che gli fece stampare le prime cose sue….

(Meanwhile, after he had seen Albrecht Dürer's method of engraving, Raphael became anxious to discover what could be done for his own work with this craft, and so he caused Marcantonio of Bologna to undertake a very thorough study. Marcantonio became so proficient that Raphael commissioned him to make prints of his first works…) 10

Again, the earliest prints by Marcantonio after Raphael date from around 1513 and may have found a quick route to Nuremberg, thus forming the basis for Dürer's awareness of Raphael. This would imply that the German artist succeeded in separating his admiration for Raphael from his resentment of Marcantonio Raimondi, whom he had supposedly sued for plagiarism, or unlawfully stealing his compositions. 11

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10 Vasari: Le vite (Anm. 2), IV, 354. Lives of the Artists (Anm. 2), S. 306
11 Lisa Pon: Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi. Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print. New Haven 2004, S. 139-140, points out that on the same page Vasari also says that Dürer entered into a cooperative agreement with Marcantonio.
What exactly did Raphael notice about Dürer's prints? The early, experimental phase of the reproductive print is hard to reconstruct, because Vasari was writing from a vantage point forty years later when the functions of prints had stabilized, and in any case thought little of the printmaker's art. Vasari is unfortunately the only primary textual source for Dürer's complaint against Marcantonio in Venice; for the beginning of the partnership between Marcantonio and Raphael; and for the exchange of gifts between Dürer and Raphael. Vasari says it was "lo andare," the manner or technique of the engravings, which caught Raphael's attention. In fact, Marcantonio had by this date already absorbed some of Dürer's technique and did not require Raphael's guidance in order to appreciate Dürer. When he wrote his account of Raphael's relations with Marcantonio and Dürer, Vasari was apparently unaware of Marcantonio's earlier engagement with Dürer; his Life of Marcantonio, with the account of the Venice incident, enters only into the 1568 edition of the Lives.

But it was not purely the technique of Dürer's engravings that impressed Raphael, and he obviously had no ambition of wielding the burin himself. What struck him was the capacity of the engravings to advertise or broadcast Dürer's art. Raphael saw that the medium of engraving was potentially a means of reproducing compositions, figural ideas, designs, or personal style. He grasped as well as the concept of an edition of engravings as a broadcasting device spanning considerable intervals of space and time.  

Vasari’s contradictory account suggests to Pon that the story about the complaint to the Senate may not be true.  

12 In his discussion of the early reproductive engraving, David Landau perhaps too strictly limits his definition of the category to deliberate reproductions of finished, self-contained works of art, on the model of the reproductive print of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. David Landau and Peter Parshall: The Renaissance Print, 1470-
disseminating power was really new in Rome, for Italian artists, although they made beautiful prints, did not yet share Dürer's precocious sense of the telecommunicational force of the print medium.

The newly accelerated and agitated movement of artistic ideas, a medial revolution within the art-scene, was the key break in the history of art. Yet even Vasari with the benefit of several decades hindsight could not recognize this. Prints play almost no role in his overall account, and because of the discipline's heavy reliance on Vasari, who is in other ways so insightful, the print has never been written back into the story.

The new traffic in images did more than just accelerate the pace of exchange. The temporalities of mechanical replication and the sale and dissemination of multiples was also inscribed qualitatively into the works, not just the prints themselves—that much is obvious—but also handmade works, drawings and paintings. The reproductive print initiated a new dialectical relationship between the handmade and the mechanically made.

It is almost impossible to see this in the partnership between Marcantonio and Raphael, which is so unclear to us, perhaps because it was unstable over time.13 In some cases, such as the Judgment of Paris, Marcantonio copied drawings by Raphael that were apparently never executed as paintings.14 In other cases, he reproduced well-known murals by Raphael. Such engravings sometimes diverged from the paintings, suggesting

1550. New Haven 1994, S. 162-168. Although few Renaissance prints conform fully to this model, many prints of the period have at least some reproductive aims.
13 On the puzzles and paradoxes of this arrangement, see most recently Pon: Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anm. 11), S. 25-31. Many of the issues in this paper are discussed with great sensitivity in Pon's important study as well as Landau and Parshall: Renaissance Print (Anm. 12).
14 Vasari: Le vite (Anm. 2), V, 411.
that Marcantonio was working from preliminary drawings. For example, Marcantonio published several engravings reproducing figures on the spandrels in Raphael’s Loggia of Amor and Psyche in the house of Agostino Chigi on the Via della Lungara (today's Villa Farnesina) (Abb. 2, 3).

Marcantonio’s rendering of the group of Amor together with three of Venus’s handmaidens does not quite match the painting: the figure at right of the print is slenderer and set slightly further back from the picture plane than her counterpart in the painting; more strands of hair escape from the heads of the printed maidens; the engraved group is not crowded from above by a vegetal border; nor are the sides of the printed spandrel festooned with leaves and fruit as they are in the Loggia. Marcantonio did not mean to hide the architectural setting of the composition, for he set the scene in an apparently three-dimensional spandrel, different but similar to the real one. But the real aim of the print was to bring across the fundamental conception of figures and composition that served as the basis for the mural. Marcantonio, in effect, performed the score that Raphael had written, just as the hands of other painters (principally Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni) executed the murals in the Loggia.

Why do the engravings after the Loggia of Amor and Psyche bear no signature, neither of painter nor engraver? No artist could be inattentive to such matters, not after Dürer's alleged complaint against Marcantonio. The Bolognese artist had published several engravings after Dürer's woodcuts, close copies of scenes from the Life of the Virgin, and went so far as to preserve the already famous AD monogram together with

15 B. 344. 304 x 204 mm. Roma e lo stile classico di Raffaello (Anm. 4), Nr. 77. The engraving dates probably from 1517-1519, the time of the painting of the ceiling.
16 Vasari reports that Raphael made all the cartoons for the work and did some of the painting himself. Le vite (Anm. 2), IV, 367. On the prints after the Loggia spandrels in relation to Marcantonio's engraving of Raphael's Parnassus, see Pon: Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anm. 11), S. 92.
his own MAF (Marcantonio fecit).\textsuperscript{17} The double signature departed from ordinary practice in northern Europe, where copying of engravings was extremely common. The copyists of Master ES or Martin Schongauer replaced the ES or MS with their own monograms or marks.\textsuperscript{18} When Dürer learned of the situation, according to Vasari, he was so incensed by Marcantonio's breach of custom that he travelled to Venice and protested to the Senate. It was ruled that Marcantonio could copy Dürer's prints but not his monogram. The key point that Dürer won was that if Dürer's name or trademark was to appear on the print, then he should share in the profits. Marcantonio might have responded: first, that the monogram was actually a way of crediting Dürer with the invention, and second, that even if Dürer were not accruing direct profits from the sale of the prints, his reputation and potential future profits were nevertheless enhanced by the presence of the monogram.\textsuperscript{19}

The engravings after the Loggia of Amor and Psyche spandrels register a compromise whereby the name of neither artist appears in the print. Raphael may have provided drawings, or Marcantonio may have worked from the frescoes but altered them in order to give the impression that he had access to drawings. Either way, Raphael seems to have understood that there was no way to control the traffic in prints based on his drawings but that his reputation and career would nevertheless benefit from the

\textsuperscript{17} On Marcantonio's copies of Dürer and the alleged complaint, see Vasari: Le vite (Anm. 2), V, 405-406, and Pon: Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anm. 11), S. 39-41, 139-142.

\textsuperscript{18} A rare exception is the engraving of the Lion of St. Mark by Israhel van Meckenem (Lehrs 430), copied from the Master ES (Lehrs 187), with the monogram ES in reverse.

exposure of his figural ideas. Marcantonio, meanwhile, was apparently content to
suppress his identity because he was not so concerned with anything so lofty as a place in
art history, but rather was satisfied to earn money from sales and to have a reputation
among other artists and among publishers, printsellers, and other professionals. In this
respect he was still thinking like Schongauer, who monogrammed every one of his
engravings but probably (at least at first) did not expect many people outside the circle of
professional painters, printmakers, and goldsmiths to recognize the initials MS. The
emblem of this delicate compromise was the blank tablet resting on the cornice of
Marcantonio's engraving. Such a tablet offered itself as a possible location of an artist's
signature or monogram. Why would an engraver include a tablet but leave it blank?
Marcantonio did this not only here but in several other prints, including another
engraving after one of the spandrels in Chigi's villa. The blank tablet must have
symbolized, especially in the wake of Dürer's suit in Venice, Marcantonio's compliance
with the strictly literal conception of the connection between authorship and profits that
the Venetian decision offered. Many prints were published without metadata, that is,
without any textual or numerical information that would help the beholder to locate the
print or the design within a larger reality beyond the frame. A print by Marcantonio with
a blank tablet inside it was not only a print devoid of metadata, it was more especially a
print that was renouncing the opportunity to provide metadata. For a restricted public,
the blank tablet came to signify that the print was a copy of a work by an artist whose
name was probably known to all but could not legally be inscribed on the plate.\textsuperscript{20}
The

\textsuperscript{20} Landau and Parshall: Renaissance Print (Anm. 12), S. 142-146. Pon: Raphael, Dürer,
and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anm. 11), S. 70-73. Note that there is a blank tablet in
Andrea Mantegna's Bacchanal with Wine Vat (1470s); that Dürer frequently inscribed his
small community that recognized the blank tablet as the trademark of Marcantonio must have overlapped to a great extent with the (relatively) small community that recognized the engravings as reproductions of Raphael's Loggia of Amor and Psyche in Chigi's villa, which was after all not a public space. The prerequisite, in other words, for the new dispensation—no signatures at all, but shared glory and (eventual) profits for printmaker and designer alike—was that the designer and the printmaker could be confident that a substantial portion of owners and beholders of the prints knew exactly what they had in their hands. And for this the traffic in prints had to be supplemented by the spoken word. That is to say, the new system of fame- and profit-sharing initiated by the partnership of Raphael and Marcantonio functioned best within a limited spatial range. They must have been content to win name recognition in Rome, Florence, Venice, Bologna, and several other cities and courts in constant communication. The prints after Raphael, addressed in principle (obviously not always in practice) to those already in the know, were actually creating a public of art-insiders as much as they were seeking it. This self-limitation to a relatively contained geographical area is just the luxury that Dürer could not afford. Raphael, by limiting the space of his career, was able to control its timing, its rhythm, whereas Dürer, aiming with his prints to work long-distance effects on unseen audiences, found it difficult to synchronize his production with his reception.

The two artists exchanged works on one more occasion, five years later, this time by proxy because Raphael was dead. In the diary of his journey to the Netherlands Dürer wrote:

monogram on such tablets; and that the blank tablet also appears on twenty-eight prints by Agostino Veneziano.
Ich hab dem Thomas Polonius ein ganzen Druck geben, der mir durch ihn ein' andern Maler gen Rom geschickt wurde, der mir des Raphaels Ding dargegen schicken soll, am Montag nach Michaelis [October 1] 1520.21

On Monday after Michaelmas 1520 I gave Thomas of Bologna (Vincidor) a whole set of my prints to send to Rome to another painter in exchange for Raphael's work.

Vincidor was a pupil of Raphael sent to the Netherlands to arrange for the weaving of Raphael's Sistine tapestries. Dürer's trade for Raphael's "work" was the impersonal, non-communicational version of the earlier exchange. Presumably Dürer received prints after Raphael in exchange for the prints he entrusted to Vincidor, although we do not know.

Raphael entered into arrangements with several printmakers besides Marcantonio, including Marco Dente da Ravenna (who also made prints after one of the Loggia spandrels), Agostino Veneziano, and (possibly) Ugo da Carpi.22 In 1518 Ugo da Carpi, who had recently come to Rome from Venice, began publishing chiaroscuro woodcuts based on Raphael’s ideas. A woodcut dated to that year loosely cites Raphael’s mural painting in the papal apartments, the Fire in the Borgo, on the wall next to the Battle of Ostia (Abb. 4, 5).23 Ugo da Carpi’s woodcut performs a transfiguring antonomasia, or “naming instead,” on Raphael’s painting, bestowing proper names on the figure group at the lower left of the composition. The painting represents a fire that broke out near the Vatican in 847; Pope Leo IV, prefiguration of the current Pope, Leo X, Raphael’s patron, extinguished the blaze with a blessing, just visible in the background at the window of a kind of tower standing before Old St. Peter’s. Meanwhile, Borgo-dwellers in the

23 B. 12. Chiaroscuro woodcut in four blocks. 532 x 386 mm. Roma e lo stile classico di Raffaello (Anm. 4), Nr. 2. On the painting, see Vasari: Le vite (Anm. 2), IV, 359.
foreground flee their temple-like homes. The violent political work of anachronism, of suturing the present back onto the past, is done by the ideal bodies in the foreground. The beauty and nudity of the figures, their vitality, activates the medieval event and makes the sensuous, mystical argument that the power of popes to bless and heal runs like a living thread through history. The young man carrying the older man at the lower left of the painting quotes a pictorial tradition of Aeneas carrying his father Anchises out of burning Troy. Through citation the painting condenses Roman history, pressing the medieval fire together with the destruction of Troy that propelled Aeneas westward to Italy, and—it may be argued—on the right, with the fire of 64 AD under Nero.

Ugo da Carpi in his woodcut did not reproduce Raphael’s painting, but rather dismembered it, revealing its provisional, still unstable, status as an integral work, an untouchable "text." The printmaker's isolation of the intertextual pair and clear identification of them as Aeneas and Anchises undoes the painter's papal argument. The link between picture and power is now handled by the 11-line inscription in Roman majuscules in the lower right corner, which gives Raphael’s name and then a warning:

RAFAEL VRBINAS
QVISQVIS HAS TABELLAS INVITO AVTORE INPRIMET EX DIVI LEONIS X. AC ILL. PRI[N]CIPIS VENETIARVM DECRETIS EXCOMINICATIONIS SENT[N]TIA[M] ET ALIAS PENAS INCVRRET.
ROME APVD VGVM DE CARPI. IM[PRESA[M] MDXVIII.

(Raphael of Urbino. Whoever publishes these tablets against the wishes of the author will by decree of Pope Leo X and the Doge of Venice incur a sentence of excommunication and other penalties. Printed in Rome by Ugo da Carpi, 1518.)

24 On allegory as a "suturing" operation, see Gordon Teskey: Allegory and Violence. Ithaca 1996.
In point of fact, the protected “author” named in the inscription was Ugo da Carpi himself, although a potential pirate might easily have understood this a threat emanating from Raphael himself. Ugo had obtained protection for his chiaroscuro technique from the Venetian Senate in 1516 and from the Pope in 1518. Ugo worked not from the painting but from a drawing, if not the red chalk drawing by Raphael now in the Albertina, then one like it, perhaps preceding it (Abb. 6). What was the function of this drawing? Like the drawing Raphael sent to Dürer, it belonged to the prehistory of a fresco. The drawing opened up to any non-professional eyes that fell on it the real scene of the artists' workshop, where a man actually lifted another man on his shoulders and held the position. But that real act lies far behind this drawing, which is the result of many redactions and corrections subsequent to the initial record of the eye-to-body encounter in the shop. The posing revealed the basic statics and dynamics of the lift, the rigging of the limbs, still intuitively convincing in this drawing. But the men cannot have maintained the pose long, so the adjustment of their physique in the direction of thick and segmented musculature happened later. Raphael created the fleshy volumes by modulations of a single variable, lighter and darker strokes, tiny and barely visible strokes, of the chalk. The strokes are blended by the eye into a mass of red dust that flows like a blot over the page, in the end settling magically in all the right places to create two thick bodies. Contour is never violated; contour is crucial because it preserves

25 On the meaning of the inscription, see Pon: Raphael, Dürrer, and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anm. 11), S. 73-82.
26 Red chalk, 300 x 173 mm. Vienna, Albertina, inv. 4881. Roma e lo stile classico di Raffaello (Anm. 4), Nr. 1. Vasari: Le Vite (Anm. 2), V, 412-413, mentions an engraving by Marcantonio based on a drawing of Aeneas carrying Anchises made by Raphael as the basis for a small panel painting (quadretto); presumably this is Bartsch 186, by an unknown engraver.
the integrity of the individuals, it prevents the red smudge from flowing together and
creating a formless two-headed beast. The drawing is basically about the interplay
between "delimiting and flowing" (Grenzen und Fliessen). Through the staging of that
interplay the workshop study works its way toward a new identity as a work of art. That
staging is the form that the dialectic of Grenzen und Fliessen described by Friedrich Teja
Bach took at this moment in the history of art.

The drawing reflexively meditates on two other older identities still inhabiting it,
one corresponding to contour, the other to flow. In contour, the drawing remembers its
function as transmitter of useful, applicable information. The contour is the aspect of the
fifteenth-century workshop drawing that was mechanically transferable, either by
pouncing or by tracing with a stylus. Contour was built in to graphic thinking by the
technologies of copying: pouncing, which reproduced contours by punching small holes
along the lines and pushing chalk dust through the holes; and tracing with a stylus along
the contours. Pouncing and tracing were the basic transfer techniques of the fifteenth-
century workshop, and Raphael’s shop continued to use them. No less than 61 drawings
by Raphael, 15 percent of all his surviving drawings, either have contours pricked for
transfer, or are drawn on top of transferred contours. Internal modelling of the three-
dimensional forms was therefore temporally posterior and structurally supplementary to
contour. The workshop itself, a place of pedagogy as much as of production, created a
hierarchy of contour and modelling that European art could not escape for five centuries.

27 Carmen C. Bambach: Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop.
Theory and Practice, 1300-1600. Cambridge (UK) 1999, S. 296. See also Christopher
36-72.
Information about contour travelled from sheet to sheet. The late medieval model-book, or the stock of re-useable workshop drawings was a collection of contours, putting a premium on recognition and communication.

The second sub-identity of this drawing is its status as the record of a perception. Whereas contour attempted to fix form so that it could be communicated, the chalk medium tried to register experience, almost in real time. The drawing collects a momentum that travelled from eye to mind to hand to page. This registration of perception does not point anywhere beyond itself, but it is simply the residue of a pedagogical exercise, an induction of the body into a cycle of self-knowledge. That direct trace-quality is lost in this drawing, which is the result of several stages of emendation, but the drawing remembers that state. The perception is still legible in the accumulated optical blot of the fine chalk marks.

The drawing finally transcends both of its remembered states, information-carrier and trace-registration, by staging a conflict between the two. In this way the drawing finds a new temporality, neither forward-looking nor retrospective, symbolized by the stasis of the figure group; their stalled progress, their gazes plunging straight down to the ground. The ingeniously interlocking limbs of the two figures are an image of the closed circuit, a crisscrossing of forces that is unable to find its way out of the frame.

The chiaroscuro woodcut is printed from multiple blocks, in this case four: a line-block which stamps the design on the paper, and three tone-blocks which overlay grey-brown tone in three degrees of saturation. Like the etching, the chiaroscuro woodcut reproduced the look of a drawing. These two techniques, which both emerged at the end of the fifteenth century, are examples of an ongoing analysis of the medium that has had a lasting impact on Western art history.

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of the first decade of the sixteenth century, broke with the entire previous history of
printmaking. Neither the traditional woodcut nor the engraving was conceived as the
reproduction of a pen drawing. ¹⁹ The iron etching did reproduce the appearance of a pen
drawing, and the chiaroscuro woodcut was the facsimile of a wash drawing, that is, a
drawing done in pen and ink and supplemented by layers of translucent wash (often
simply diluted ink) applied with a brush.

Until the development of the mezzotint in the seventeenth century and the soft-
ground etching in the eighteenth, there was no technology for reproducing chalk
drawings. Ugo da Carpi did not have the option of making a print that delivered a red
chalk workshop drawing like Raphael's. Instead, Ugo's chiaroscuro woodcut claims to
reproduce either a lost wash drawing by Raphael, or a wash drawing made by Ugo
himself after a model acquired from Raphael's shop. A more likely possibility is that the
woodcut posits a plausible but non-existent source drawing, a "virtual" wash drawing that
could serve as the notional origin-point of the print. Many chiaroscuro woodcuts,
including Ugo da Carpi's, actually deploy colors and effects foreign to real drawings.
Crucial is that the medium of chiaroscuro woodcut announces itself as standing in some
dependent relation to the medium of drawing, whereas Marcantonio's engraving medium
says nothing of the sort. The medium of Marcantonio's engravings was not supposed to
be part of their content. The engravings were simply communicating some quality of art
(more or less equivalent to what Vasari called disegno) which persisted from medium to
medium, from drawing to paint to engraving.

¹⁹ Exceptions to this rule are the drypoint engravings of the Housebook Master, which
simulate the appearance of pen drawings, and certain woodcuts of Albrecht Altdorfer, for
example the St. Christopher, 1513, Bartsch 53.
Ugo da Carpi's print, because it cannot simulate the effect of chalk, does not deliver any of the experiential quality that the Albertina drawing did. It bears no trace of the workshop. Ugo disrespects the closed quality of the Albertina drawing and instead reactivates the pair, setting them back on their path out of Troy and towards Rome. The strong man, now semi-clothed in his public identity as Aeneas, straightens up and strides and gazes forward. His father Anchises, now perched less persuasively, raises his head and looks at the new world around him. Now he too has something to carry, for he clutches the *penates*, the household gods of Troy. The child Ascanius, who according to Virgil held Aeneas’s hand, here cannot find a free hand and so must clutch his father’s skirt (Aeneid, II, 707-729). The chiaroscuro woodcut is here still connected to the old disseminating institutions of the model-book and the professional, information-bearing engraving. Unable to repeat the drawing, the print instead tries to extract whatever it is in the drawing that makes it an artwork. But it misunderstands the drawing and in the end rescues from it little more than the name “Raphael.” It thematizes transmission, whereas the drawing had thematized paralyzed, pointless stasis. The drawing had dramatized a conflict between graphic order and graphic process. The chiaroscuro woodcut does not see that conflict, and instead lets it slip away in the translation to the tone-blocks, the devices that simulate the flow of ink wash. Because it misrecognizes the art-character of the drawing, its capacity to model a conflict between two modes of drawing, the print itself fails as an artwork. The print is simply carrying a message whose content is: “Raphael of Urbino.” Every impression of it carried the same message.

The prints that emerged in the 1510s out of Raphael’s collaborative work with Marcantonio and Ugo da Carpi were like editions of an authoritative author. Ugo da
Carpi was like a humanist printer, combining editing and entrepreneurial skills. Like books, such prints submitted themselves to an infinite, unknowable dissemination.

These prints reproduced virtual, not necessarily real, drawings, and delivered figural and compositional ideas. Once prints of this sort were available, the value of a drawing like the two red chalk studies by Raphael were enhanced precisely by not being prints. The print created the drawing-as-artwork. By failing—perhaps not even trying—to extract and publish the art-character of the drawing, the print brought into being that artwork, an entity that it had even less chance of simulating. The print is an imaginary facsimile of a finished drawing that Raphael in fact never made, and did not have to make, because for his purposes the chalk drawings were already artworks enough. They were understood by at least some beholders right away as artworks, that is, a self-sufficient and self-justifying things, and it were preserved like several hundred other Raphael drawings from the normal processes of the destruction of paper by a chain of collectors that included (in the case of the drawing related to the Fire in the Borgo) Fulvio Orsini, the mid-sixteenth century antiquarian and iconographer. But such drawings were almost surely protected already by Raphael himself.

No layman or non-artist collected drawings in the fifteenth century; at least there is no evidence of such a practice. Patrons received gifts of independent drawings, but not until the print introduced the concept of eavesdropping on the artists’ conversation did any ordinary viewer want to go behind the print and find the drawing it reproduced. There was in reality no such drawing. The copper engraving, as noted, was not a facsimile of a drawing. Its lines were made by manipulating a sharp tool not held like a pen but gripped by the whole hand. But once the engraving had drawn the attention of a
public to the art-making process and so created that public, then the publicly available
drawing had to be invented. The collectible drawing was born around 1500. The non-
professional beholder began to intercept messages sent from artist to artist, rerouting
them it into private circuits that were ultimately more public than the workshop circuits.

Since the mid-fifteenth century, the circulation of engravings had functioned
alongside the handmade modelbooks and drawings as a rough technology of
communication among artists. Some engravings, given from hand to hand, were direct
and semi-private messages, epistolae; others worked more like books, alienated at once
from their maker, scribe or printer, the moment they were sold. Still other engravings
were from the start addressed to a wider, non-professional public. They were something
like works of art. The most ambitious engravers, such as the Master ES, Martin
Schongauer, and Andrea Mantegna, experimented with the distinction between the
privately and publicly addressed message. Some public engravings pretended to be
private notations extracted from somewhere deep within the production process, offering
an emerging public a glimpse behind the scenes into the making of art. Mechanical
reproduction obscured the work's literal, material origin-point by putting up screens of
technology and obscure intervals of translation between artist's hand and viewer's eye,
between drawing and painting. Yet at the same time the print firmly posited the artist's
hand and even his mind as the stable origin of the work of art by publishing an authorial
signature. The engraving could signal its authoredness precisely by making the function
"author" virtual rather than merely physical.

30 See the analysis of Marcantonio's Judgment of Paris by Hubert Damisch: Le jugement
As prints opened up and publicized the work-process, beholders’ expectations from art began to shift. This created a feedback effect as artists realized that beholders were no longer content to wait for the finished product, the painting. The collectible drawing emerged as a form of “open letter” that spatialized the creative process and temporalized the public work. That is, the print transformed the drawing into a private communication that was however expecting to be read by people it was not addressed to. Any reader of this letter could occupy the position of addressee, and the drawing “knows” this. It thus becomes an "open letter," in the sense familiar to everyone from the open letters of the Bible, the books of the New Testament. Such a letter had a notional destination—another artist—and yet it was fully aware that strangers might read its contents.

The collectible drawing gives no precise return address, no stable information about its own origins. Instead it plays with two possible origins. The first possibility is that the graphic mode may be recognizable to at least a fraction of the recipients as a mode peculiar to an individual, as a style, in other words. The second possibility is that the treatment of the human body will strike other recipients as ideally impossible and perfect, therefore originating in an abstract, universal idea. The drawing by Raphael has two return addresses, then: the individual Raphael of Urbino, and the divine mind itself. But the key to the drawing, the essence of the collectible drawing, is that no return address is actually specified and that therefore its origin remains finally indeterminate. Because such an indeterminacy of origins was one of the fundamental criteria that came to define the artwork in later European culture, the collectible drawing of the sixteenth century played a significant early role as a conceptual framework for thinking about what
art might be or mean. The concept that the artist might be a kind of author created more problems than it solved. The printed signature opened up the deep background behind the artwork.

Ugo da Carpi's woodcut, meanwhile, which as noted was not quite grasping the emerging new nature of the artwork, painfully overelaborated the epistolary concept of the return address. For this print did name its origin, in fact a triple origin. The most distant origin was the fall of Troy itself, the event connected to the present by a long, unknowable chain of figurations. The most proximate origin was Ugo da Carpi, who presented himself as the last link in the transmission chain. And in the middle, emerging out of the anonymous sequence of transmissions, is the name “Raphael Urbinas,” a name that designated a person but also a place, a workshop; but a name that anyway designated a single moment, the literal fabrication of the very drawing that notionally stood behind this print, but also the collectivity of moments that were archived in it.

Under the growing shadow of the print in the 1510s, the return address of the collectible drawing had to be conceived differently. The drawing’s character as an epistola was constantly changing. It began to recoil from the model offered by the print. The drawing started to look for a place it could rest, a place somewhere between absolute publicity and absolute privacy. Drawing in these years was being asked to do the work of working out what an artwork is, while painting went on mostly fulfilling political and ecclesiastical functions. The drawing discovered what its “inside” was, its identity, by defending itself from invasions from two outsides. First, the collectible drawing, by internalizing the temporal rhythms of the print traffic, found itself invaded by a real, public, outside world of non-artists eager for contact with the inside surfaces of art. That
outside world came to the drawing looking for stable contour, for recognizable pattern, for the repeatable infrastructure of the concept “Raphael.” The drawing found itself asked to remain stable, structural, and replicable.

And at the same time, the hypothetical interior world of the drawing, the virtual or art-character of the drawing, was being invaded by yet another reality on yet another frontier. Its second “outside” was the reality of the workshop and the real body-to-body collisions that happened there. This intrusion of the real from the opposite side is registered by the near-smudged interior of the body, the soft optically blended lines that signify flesh but are always being betrayed and subverted by the aggressive contour, and which remind the beholder tantalizingly of the real scene behind-the-scenes. It is true that the interior modelling in this particular drawing is no longer an indexical trace of that body-to-body encounter, but it remembers that encounter. And the beholding subject, the eye for art, discovers itself in the desire to mimic and repeat and share in the new perceptual basis of art, worked out in the practice of drawing from the life, a novelty of the fifteenth century. The notional centering of the pictorial field around a seeing eye, implied by perspective and life-drawing, recast artmaking as the subjective transfiguration of ordinary experience. The perceptual field of the artist served as a preformation (Vorgestalt), in the phrase of Dieter Henrich, into which the subject could enter and find itself.31 Print created the desire to see the drawing; the drawing created the desire to imaginatively witness the goings-on inside the workshop. The artwork is

nothing more than the suspension and fixing of this backwards movement of desiring.
The positions that the fifteenth-century master forced his apprentices to occupy were often uncomfortable, arbitrary, even sexually charged. Only later in the making process would such poses be justified by narrative. In the acrobatic and difficult pose of the not-yet-Aeneas and not-yet-Anchises, the eroticism is signalled by the leg over the arm, the motif of the “slung leg” identified by Leo Steinberg as the hieroglyph of the sexual act in European art. The motif reminds us that Anchises was the lover of Venus—compare the painting by Annibale Carracci on the ceiling of the Palazzo Farnese, where leg overlaps leg—and that even here still masters his own son.

The drawing becomes the principal target of the collector's desire, while the print slowly dies, trapped in the coils of subject matter, the particular fabula. The drawing still inhabits an open-ended mythos. The print only narrates the fall of Troy, whereas the drawing opens onto the deep story of the body itself.

Is this interior sensuousness, the chalk modelling pointing backwards into desire, what Friedrich Teja Bach means by the transgressive or unclean flowing mode of drawing? The line of Raphael, tightly compressed, is not a free-flowing doodle. But the carnal modelling in the study for the Fire in the Borgo is nevertheless a “writerly” mode of drawing in the sense that it corrupts all pretensions to reference or communication. This writerly mode of drawing is perhaps equivalent to Bach’s "transgressive" mode of drawing. It is a kind of body-language that is non-coded and non-iterable. In Raphael that mode has to happen entirely inside the literal contour of the body, which must remain inviolate. As a contrast, one might look to drawings by contemporary German artists, for

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example Albrecht Altdorfer, where drawing symbolizes its own transgressivity by radically breaking open the body to the surrounding space.

The line that figures the arbitrariness of the imagination cannot be found in Raphael. Such a line is present only in its historical absence, in the sense that Raphael trimmed and tamed the Quattrocento supplements to contour, the supplementary flourish of hair or cloth (bewegtes Beiwerk) that, in Aby Warburg's account, had converted the human figure into a dense storage device for cultural memory.33 By comparison with the figures of Botticelli or Ghirlandaio or his own teacher Perugino, the figures of Raphael's mature style are gathered back into themselves, self-contained, reduced to essentials. Raphael gathered the beautiful supplement back into the interior of his nude figures and instead created out of the figure, or small group of figures, a cryptogram; a mysterious, monstrous, double-backed silhouette that is more powerful and more legible in a drawing, where it reads directly against blank background, than in a painting, whose rhetoric of completeness renders the condensed, potent character of Raphael’s figuration harder to read.

Ugo da Carpi’s print breaks up this density by restoring the Beiwerk, in the flowing drapery, and allowing the figure group to clarify itself and at the same time blend back into the background. The drawing by Raphael, under pressure from prints, becomes a letter that increasingly wants to deny its own message-character, openly accepting the condition of alienation from both sender and receiver. The drawing refuses to inscribe a return address into its surface; the Italian artist, unlike, say, the German artist, does not

sign his drawings. And it makes, or appears to make, no concessions to any potential recipient.

The drawing by Raphael has no destination and no return address. It is what is called in English a dead letter, a letter marooned at the post office, alienated on both ends. Such a work complies with excessive literalness to the "postal principle" that governs all textuality, according to which messages never arrive at their destinations but can also never be sent back. Aesthetic texts dramatize this condition. The drawing is a message that is asking to be intercepted and re-routed into another time-frame, hoping to lose its way and forget its own content. The print, by contrast, fears exactly that double alienation from sender and recipient, which would leave it painfully isolated, risking profitability, accountability, and legal protection.

The drawing, with its openness on its future-facing frontier, towards the print or the painting, predicts a literary-historical subject matter that is still not actually present in the drawing. This predicting vector lends the drawing a melancholy sense of incompleteness. Seen in the light of the fresco and perhaps the print as well, the drawing is lacking. The child Ascanius is absent, not to mention the wife Creusa, left behind in Virgil's narrative and abandoned as well by the woodcut.

In Greek art and in Ugo da Carpi's happy print, Aeneas and Anchises are emblems of piety. The figures of Raphael's drawing, by contrast, are pulled heavily to earth. Here the father was never a greater burden to the son. The drawing critiques the topos of piety.

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34 Jacques Derrida: The Post Card. Chicago 1987, S. 54; see also S. 124 on the "dead letter."
The drawing seems to ask: what was Aeneas really trying to rescue? For in Virgil, Aeneas’s motives are unclear. He takes up his father on his shoulders at the very last moment, and says to him: it is right that you are holding the *penates*, for my hands are contaminated by blood and I cannot touch them (II, 717-720). In the text, it is as if Aeneas saved his father only because he could function as a transport medium for the *penates*. For Aeneas, the *penates* are the real prize because they promise to guarantee a magical continuity of culture across the trauma of destruction and emigration. The magical sculptures, like a moralistic patriarchal prescription, govern Aeneas's sequence of priorities: he saves first the aged father, then the son, and leaves the wife to her own resources. The *penates* are idols that in the print stand for some bodily, non-alienated art, before it is submitted to the operations of reproduction, citation, dismemberment, and dispersal. The *penates* symbolize art before the wandering begins; art still connected to place, art that takes place with it when it moves, art that creates place. They symbolize art that is still produced collectively and anonymously, art that still belongs to stable communities.

Raphael’s mobile drawing, by contrast, against the *penates*, signals instead that all art has now become graphic art, in the sense that both subject and structure of art has become an unpacking, a temporal staggering, a permanent transitioning. Graphic or writerly art is cut off from place and goes on "repeating without knowing." Now the graphic institution known as "Raphael" carries the household gods. This was the original function of graphic art, after all, in the sense that the earliest woodcuts were exclusively devotional images.

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Art, according to Niklas Luhmann, is nothing other than an artificial slowing down of perception and communication, a disengagement from real time. The painting or drawing intercepts and fixes the percept on the page or canvas, submitting it instead to a new temporality, the rhythms of the relay process, that has nothing to do with the time of perception.

Dürer with prideful memory of the exchange inscribed his prize, providing the signature that the drawing lacked. In fixing forever both the sender and addressee, he was trying to cancel the postal principle: 1515 Raphahill de Urbin, der so hoch peim Pobst geacht ist gewest hat der hat dyse nackette Bild gemacht und hat sy dem Albrecht Dürer gen Nornberg geschickt, Im sein hand zu weisen. The conceptual distinction between painting and drawing in the 1510s maps onto the contrast Dürer drew in this sentence between two political spaces, on the one side the univocal “papal” space into which Raphael must fit his frescoes, and on the other side the dialogical, chaotic secular space of consumer culture, the space where artworks become mobile commodities ready to change hands and change meaning at any moment. In these private circuits of exchange and shifting meaning, one has to look sharply and well to perceive the "hand" and gauge its significance. A drawing released into this subculture of relays and interceptions will never achieve the suturing of ideal nude form onto the political body, the cauterizing of present onto prestigious past, that papal power insists on. Instead, the drawing finds its function in disrupting the integration that public painting is expected to strive for and which most prints—at least most Italian prints—were complicit with.

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chalk drawing such as the one Raphael sent to Dürer, drifting between origin and destination, makes that public suturing seem impossible.

Dürer describes the drawing as a "nackette bild," a "nude." This instantly identifies it as a workshop drawing from the live model, one of the few acceptable situations justifying public display and recording of the nude body. Dürer was fascinated by nudity, as his drawings and prints of bath houses attest, as well as his self-portrait in the nude made with the help of a mirror. Raphael's decision to send a drawing of two male nudes is perfectly natural, because this was the sort of drawing he had lying about. But the nudity of the figures must also have struck Dürer as part of the rhetoric of intimacy and privacy that he wanted to read into his lapidary correspondence with the great Roman master. With the nudes, Dürer was penetrating deep into the heart of Raphael's practice, far from the finished product, where the figures were clothed. In fact, Raphael was capable of leaving some figures nude in his finished products with somewhat weak motivation, notably some of the escaping figures in the Fire in the Borgo, a licence that Dürer could never have permitted himself. But Dürer was surely unaware of this. In his eyes, Raphael had sent him a semi-open letter, but with alluringly private contents. It is as if both the models and the artist are naked, exposed. Painting, by contrast, is art's clothing, demanded by propriety but in reality a mere supplement to the essential work that the workshop drawing accomplishes.

Raphael's production, in Dürer's eyes but not his own, was radically split between the paintings, supremely public, and the drawings, which were made available to a much smaller public and always signified a private, closed, professional activity. For Raphael, the prints by Marcantonio and others participated in an infinity of overlapping phases of
reproduction and translation linking these two spaces. For Raphael, workshop drawings were already reproducible; a print was just a mechanical elaboration of one phase selected out of a long process stretching from first idea to finished painting. Dürer may not have been able to grasp the concept of this delicate, phased passage from private to public because he was too impressed—his inscription reveals it—by Raphael’s standing in the papal court. He saw the private and the public spaces as thrillingly incompatible.

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38 Damisch: Le jugement de Paris (Anm. 30), S. 72.