

Today as history: Vasari's Naples *Resurrection* and visual memory

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Art is cherished, or it does not survive. A succession of value judgments, embodied in acts of neglect or preservation, largely determines what we receive from the past. And it is esthetic judgment that largely structures the world of artistic forms at their inception [...] To say it in other words, the record of past valuations is integrally part of art history, and that record is meaningless without present reevaluation.¹

Introduction

Art and the artists remembered and studied today are the ones who were selected to be remembered.² The very terms art and artist connote hierarchical valuations that are distinct from material and visual culture, craftsmen and individual attributions. One's knowledge and understanding of the past rely on surviving evidence and documentation, as well as the subsequent histories that follow in its retelling. Giorgio Vasari's (1511-74) *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (published in 1550 and 1568) is the most dissected and scrutinized piece of art historical literature of its time.³ Traditionally dubbed the father of art history, Vasari has left an indelible mark on art-historical frameworks, and his publications of artists' biographies have endured in both superficial and entrenched ways of conceiving the primacy of the artist and the myth of genius. One cannot discuss Renaissance art in Italy without also mentioning Vasari.

And yet, the larger part of history has ostracized and disregarded Vasari as a painter.⁴ Excessive copying, rapid execution, tackling numerous commissions, and

¹ Leo Steinberg, 'Objectivity and the Shrinking Self', in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972, 311.

² This article is part of a larger book project on which I am working that stems from my doctoral dissertation, entitled 'Vasari as Painter: Imitation, Invention, and Professional Identity.' I presented an early version of this paper at the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting in New Orleans in 2018.

³ For the Italian original I use Bettarini and Barocchi's edited version; for the English I use de Vere's translations of the 1568 edition. Unless otherwise cited, all translations are my own. See Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori: nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, eds. Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi, Florence: Sansoni, 6 vols, 1966; Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere, New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2 vols, 1996.

⁴ This is not to suggest that scholarly works on Vasari's painting career are non-existent. See Paola Barocchi, *Vasari, pittore*, Milan: Club del Libro, 1964; Umberto Baldini, *Giorgio Vasari pittore 'senza stento'*, Florence: Edizioni d'Arte il Forno, 1994; Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio*

leaning heavily on his assistants have all been used as reasons against Vasari as a serious painter worthy of consideration, most infamously tied to the Sala dei Cento Giorni (Room of the Hundred Days) in the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome. He and his writings have been the subject of consistent and major scholarly attention, and Vasari's roles as historian and writer of the *Lives* continue to overshadow his prolific career as a painter, leaving much of his paintings either unaddressed or insufficiently explored.⁵ This article concentrates on one of Vasari's mid-career paintings, his *Resurrection*, at present in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples, within the contexts of imitation, invention, and repetition. It is within these frameworks that I connect Vasari's artistic choices in his Naples *Resurrection* to subsequent *Resurrection* scenes, as well as to broader notions of visual preservation through individual value judgments and concerns for artistic memory in Renaissance Italy.

Vasari was a rare figure of his time who created and amassed sheer volume in almost all aspects of his personal and professional endeavours. He was a successful painter, architect, writer, courtier, and collector. He published not one, but two, editions of artists' biographies that still inform one's understanding of Renaissance Italy. He was a prolific draughtsman, and approximately five hundred of his drawings survive, making his extant production among the largest by a mid-sixteenth-century Florentine artist.⁶ He painted and oversaw the production of over a hundred paintings and monumental decorative projects during his lifetime.⁷ He designed and presided over important architectural commissions throughout Italy,

Vasari: Art and History, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995; Fredrika H. Jacobs, 'Vasari's Vision of the History of Painting: Frescoes in the Casa Vasari, Florence', *The Art Bulletin* 66: 3, 1984, 399-416; David Franklin, *Painting in Renaissance Florence 1500-1550*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001; Liana De Girolami Cheney, *The Homes of Giorgio Vasari*, New York: Peter Lang, 2006; Laura Corti, Margaret Daly Davis, Charles Davis, and Julian Kliemann, *Giorgio Vasari: principi, letterati e artisti nelle carte di Giorgio Vasari, Casa Vasari: pittura vasariana dal 1532 al 1554, sottochiesa di S. Francesco*, Florence: Edam, 1981.

⁵ It is near impossible to include a comprehensive list of secondary sources on Vasari's *Lives*. I provide only a sliver here. See Paul Barolsky, *Michelangelo's Nose: A Myth and Its Maker*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990; Andrew Ladis, *Victims & Villains in Vasari's Lives*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008; Robert Williams, *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; David Cast, *The Delight of Art: Giorgio Vasari and the Traditions of Humanist Discourse*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009; Alessandro Nova, "'Vasari' versus Vasari: la duplice attualità delle Vite', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 55: 1, 2013, 55-71; Douglas Biow, *Vasari's Words: The Lives of the Artists as a History of Ideas in the Italian Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018; Philip Sohm, 'Giving Vasari the Giorgio Treatment', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 18: 1, 2015, 61-111; Philip Jacks, ed., *Vasari's Florence: Artists and Literati at the Medicean Court*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Katja Burzer, Charles Davis, Sabine Feser, and Alessandro Nova, eds, *Le Vite del Vasari: genesi, topoi, ricezione*, Venice: Marsilio, 2008; Marco Ruffini, *Art Without an Author: Vasari's Lives and Michelangelo's Death*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

⁶ Florian Härb, *The Drawings of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)*, Rome: Ugo Bozzi, 2015, 15.

⁷ See Laura Corti, *Vasari: catalogo complete*, Florence: Cantini, 1989.

particularly in Florence.⁸ He wrote about his literary and artistic projects in his *Ragionamenti* (begun in 1558, and published posthumously in 1588) and his *Zibaldone*.⁹ He kept extensive records of professional correspondences, as well as his family papers over forty-five years in his *Ricordanze* (1527-73).¹⁰ He collected artwork and compiled hundreds of artists' drawings in his *Libro de' disegni*.¹¹ He owned two houses in Arezzo and Florence and frescoed their walls and ceilings with the help of his numerous assistants.¹² In essence, there is overwhelming visual and literary evidence of Vasari's existence, and to claim that he was concerned with his legacy would be an understatement. His paintings, as seen in the Naples *Resurrection* (1545), serve as visual records and consistently reveal that the works produced by his predecessors and contemporaries informed Vasari's painting production and compositional choices.

The Naples *Resurrection* is both unassuming and one of Vasari's smaller works, factors that, perhaps, have contributed to its lack of scholarly attention.¹³ I would argue that it is precisely because this painting reads like a common painting of sixteenth-century Italian *maniera*, with its sprawling figures, twisting forms, and exaggerated poses, that Vasari was an exceptional artist of his time. One cannot overstate the importance of *maniera*, or manner, to Vasari: it is the art-theoretical word most frequently used in his *Lives*.¹⁴ Vasari defined the complex term, *la bella maniera*, in relation to artists working in the Third Part of his *Lives*: 'Manner then attained to the greatest beauty from the practice which arose of constantly copying the most beautiful objects, and joining together these most beautiful things, hands, heads, bodies, and legs, so as to make a suture of the greatest possible beauty.'¹⁵ Vasari's Naples *Resurrection* is replete with visual borrowing and personal invention and establishes both his consciousness of other artists in his early career and an

⁸ See Leon Satkowski, *Giorgio Vasari: Architect and Courtier*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

⁹ See Giorgio Vasari, *Ragionamenti del signore Giorgio Vasari: sopra le invenzioni da lui dipinte in Firenze nel Palazzo Vecchio*, ed. Eugenio Giani, Florence: Barbès, 2011; Giorgio Vasari, *Lo 'Zibaldone'*, di Giorgio Vasari, ed. Alessandro Del Vita, Rome: Istituto d'archaeologia e storia dell'arte, 1938.

¹⁰ Giorgio Vasari, *Il libro delle ricordanze di Giorgio Vasari*, ed. Alessandro del Vita, Rome: Reale Istituto d'Archaeologia e Storia dell'Arte, 1938.

¹¹ See Licia Raghianti Collobi, *Il Libro de' disegni del Vasari*, Florence: Vallecchi, 2 vols, 1974.

¹² See Alessandro Cecchi, 'Le case del Vasari ad Arezzo e Firenze', in *Case di artisti in Toscana*, eds. Roberto Paolo Ciardi and Rossella Campana, Florence: Banca Toscana, 1998, 29-77.

¹³ In his *Ricordanze*, Vasari stated that he was commissioned to paint a Resurrection scene measuring two *braccia* in height and one-and-a-half *braccia* in length. See Karl Frey and Herman-Walther Frey, eds, *Der Literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1982, 2:863, no. 153. A *braccio*, which translates literally to an 'arm's length', equates to 58.36 cm. See Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl, ed. Hellmut Wohl, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976, 149.

¹⁴ Hans Aurenhammer, 'Manner, Mannerism, *maniera*', in *Maniera: Pontormo, Bronzino and Medici Florence*, ed. Bastian Eclercy, Munich: Prestel, 2016, 20.

¹⁵ 'La maniera venne poi la più bella dall'aver messo in uso il frequente ritrarre le cose più belle, e da quel più bello, o mani o teste o corpi o gambe, aggiugnerle insieme e fare una figura di tutte quelle bellezze che più si poteva.' Vasari, *Lives*, 1:617-18; Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:4.

attempt to ruthlessly self-promote his skills, decisions that were consistent throughout Vasari's artistic career and are visible in his later *Resurrection* paintings. The Naples *Resurrection* shows Vasari engaging with the classical techniques of memory and mnemonics, and Vasari, in keeping with the traditions of record keeping and memory preservation from antiquity, developed a unique visual method of preserving the inventions of the artists tied to them.

Vasari in Naples, 1544-1545

Between the fall season of 1544 and September 1545, Vasari travelled to and worked in Naples, a brief moment in his career that larger scholarly discussions of his artistic production often dilute or exclude.¹⁶ Vasari's attitude towards Naples was complicated. His journey to the port city, then ruled by the Spanish, was the furthest south to which he had been documented travelling at that point in his life. His writings recorded his unsavoury opinion of Naples, which he considered an artistic backwater that was largely irrelevant to his professional growth; concerning his commission to renovate the monastic refectory at Monteoliveto, he initially did not want to accept, because he 'doubted that [he] was like to win little honour.'¹⁷ Only after some convincing by Don Miniato Pitti and Don Ippolito da Milano did Vasari agree to update the space 'in the modern manner.'¹⁸

On 6 August 1545 Abbot Gerolamo Capoccio of the convent of Monteoliveto commissioned Vasari to paint a scene showing the resurrection of Christ (fig. 1).¹⁹ Raffaellino del Colle (1490-1566) aided Vasari in its completion. Collaboration and assistance played significant roles throughout Vasari's artistic career. It remains unclear how much Raffaellino contributed to the execution of the painting, but Vasari was consistently responsible for the designs of his works.²⁰ In his artistic production and embedded in his writings, Vasari prioritized the study of other artists over that of nature.²¹ It was essential to master the ability to copy from nature,

¹⁶ Of late there has been greater scholarly attention on Neapolitan artistic production. See Thomas Willette, 'Giorgio Vasari's Critique of Art and Patronage in Naples', in *Naples*, eds. Marcia B. Hall and Thomas Willette, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 34-45; Aislinn Loconte, 'The North Looks South: Giorgio Vasari and Early Modern Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Naples', in *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713*, eds. Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliott, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 16-37; Ida Maietti and Anna Pisani, eds, *Vasari a Napoli: i dipinti della sacrestia di San Giovanni a Carbonara: il restauro, gli studi, le indagini*, Naples: Paparo, 2011.

¹⁷ 'quando giunsi fui per non accettare l'opera [...] dubitando di non avere ad acquistarvi poco onore.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1037; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:384.

¹⁸ 'di maniera moderna.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1037; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:384.

¹⁹ Vasari revealed some of the contractual details of the commission in his *Ricordanze*, but it is unclear where and how the painting would have been displayed and who would have seen the painting at Monteoliveto apart from Capoccio. See Frey and Frey, eds, *Der Literarische Nachlass*, 2:863, no. 153.

²⁰ As Florian Härb concludes, Vasari was almost always behind the developing stages of a project and producing the early sketches and designs, even if he was not the one physically executing his paintings. Härb, *The Drawings*, 124.

²¹ Härb's extensive publications on Vasari as a draughtsman demonstrate that the majority of



Figure 1 Giorgio Vasari and Raffaellino del Colle, *Resurrection*, 1545. Oil on panel, 117 x 73 cm. Naples: Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte. Image: By kind permission of Ministero della Cultura – Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte.

but Vasari's paintings reveal that the artist's *invenzione*, or invention, was the groundwork from which Vasari worked. As noted by Anthony Blunt, for Vasari the 'study of nature is not therefore an end in itself, but a means to efficiency in drawing from memory.'²²

Vasari alluded to many artists in his *Resurrection*, but none more explicitly than Rosso Fiorentino (1494-1540), his mentor who had been involved in several of Vasari's early works. One of Vasari's earliest known works, a Resurrection scene from 1528 that no longer exists, was based on a drawing by Rosso who, according to the *Lives*, saw the potential and skill in Vasari and 'assisted [...] with designs and counsel.'²³ In the Naples version, the general composition and figures that comprise

his 550 extant drawings were based on the finished and preparatory works of other artists such as Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), and Jacopo Pontormo (1494-1556). Florian Härb, "'Dal vivo" or "Da se": Nature versus Art in Vasari's Figure Drawings', *Master Drawings* 43: 3, 2005, 326.

²² Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 90.

²³ 'm'aiutò di disegni e di consiglio.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1020; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:370.



Figure 2 Rosso Fiorentino, *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro*, c. 1523. Oil on canvas, 160 x 117 cm. Florence: Galleria degli Uffizi. Image: Gabinetto Fotografico, Gallerie degli Uffizi.

the lower half of Vasari's painting indisputably looked to Rosso's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* from twenty years earlier in 1523 (fig. 2). Specifically, Vasari quoted the two lower figures in the foreground of Rosso's painting, and he contorted others. In his *Resurrection*, Vasari's central figure with mouth agape and his cropped soldier on the right, whose exposed right palm stretches towards the picture plane, looks directly to Rosso's work. Apart from a few modifications, which include changing the rightmost figure's gender from female to male, the connection between Vasari's and Rosso's works is unmistakable. In the lower half of the work Vasari's composition brings order to Rosso's frenetic cluster of figures, controlling and balancing through a U-shaped arrangement; the central grotesque head, serving as a fulcrum, stabilizes and secures this undulating movement. Rosso's figure, draped in red, billowed cloth, intensifies the movement in the work; Vasari mimicked this motion through Christ's garment but increased the ripples and agitated folds. Sheer omnipotence, rather than violent action, moves the fabric in the *Resurrection*. Christ's presence is corporeal like the other figures, but resides in a distinct space, separated by emanating light and the small suggestion of the ground on which he places his right foot. Nonetheless, his foot rests on ethereal clouds, which hover above the physical ground where the soldiers lie. Vasari positioned the foreground figures in varying stages of uprightiness, decreasing their rigidity and strain the farther they are from Christ. Through their circuitous arrangement, these figures create more space for Christ's commanding presence.

Colour permeates Vasari's work in a way that is distinct from Rosso's. While Rosso prioritized flesh tones and relegated colours to the background, Vasari distributed colour throughout his work and presented them in saturated forms. Additionally, Vasari's figures are more visually harmonious through the use of compositional parallels, symmetry, and narrative clarity. There is a relationship between the open and closed forms of the bodies as they pair and complement one another. Figures look staged and choreographed, rather than appearing natural within the narrative. Through these artistic decisions, Vasari exercised the *giudizio*, or judgment, about which he wrote in his *Lives*. His references pay homage to the artist, as well as build on the foundations of his teacher and predecessor by pushing Rosso's composition further.²⁴ In doing so, Vasari as an artist used his *invenzione*, and his extensive quotations imply that he deemed Rosso's painting worthy of emulation.

Vasari's heavy borrowing from *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* was likely rooted in professional motives; the painting played an active role in Rosso's advancement as a professional artist and was a critical component in Francis I's (r. 1515-47) decision to hire Rosso as his court painter in 1530.²⁵ Rosso elected to render the Old Testament scene in an unconventional and innovative manner, stripping the male figures of their clothes and emphasizing the violence and sexuality, which were subsidiary to the biblical narrative.²⁶ Vasari capitalized on the artist's unique approach and his *invenzione* in a work that heavily factored into Rosso's promotion to court artist, likely in part because Vasari had failed to sustain court patronage under Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520-89) in Rome.²⁷ Vasari had painted an allegory of *Justice* in 1543 for the cardinal and detailed his inventions in a letter with all the obsequious flattery of one desperate for career security.²⁸ Regarding the *Resurrection*, his decision to clothe Rosso's figures was practical and normalized the work as one more befitting a monastic refectory and the religious narrative. Nevertheless, Vasari made bold artistic choices in the *Resurrection* that both attempted to highlight and celebrate Rosso's *invenzioni*, but also potentially profit from his contemporary's innovation and unconventionality.

Vasari's visual borrowings from Rosso are the most substantial in the *Resurrection*, but he alluded to other sixteenth-century artists, namely Raphael (1483-1520) and Michelangelo.²⁹ The activated muscles, formfitting clothing, and dramatic twisted forms of Vasari's figures recall Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling figures,

²⁴ Sharon Gregory voices similar conclusions in her analysis of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) and Rosso's influences on Vasari. See Sharon Gregory, 'Vasari, Prints, and Imitation', in *Drawing, 1400-1600: Invention and Innovation*, ed. Stuart Currie, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012, 134.

²⁵ Caroline Elam carefully considers the work's provenance to make this argument. Caroline Elam, 'Art in the Service of Liberty: Battista della Palla, Art Agent for Francis I', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 5, 1993, 78.

²⁶ Elam, 'Art in the Service', 67.

²⁷ This is noted in Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, 137-38.

²⁸ Frey and Frey, *Der Literarische Nachlass*, 1:121, no. 50.

²⁹ For more on Vasari's memorialization of artists, see Joan Stack, 'Artists into heroes: the commemoration of artists in the art of Giorgio Vasari', in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. Mary Rogers, Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 2000, 163-75.

such as Jonah and the *ignudi*. They also resemble ones found in Michelangelo's lost cartoon for the Salone dei Cinquecento of the Palazzo Vecchio depicting the Battle of Cascina (1504).³⁰ Michelangelo, I have found, is unique in that Vasari does not often quote directly from the artist, despite Vasari's significant and unparalleled praise for him in the *Lives*. Instead, the general manner of Michelangelo's art saturates Vasari's style and is entrenched in ways that distinguish him from others. Vasari, in the case of Michelangelo, borrowed an entire visual language, rather than isolating concrete motifs. In doing so, he wanted to stimulate the viewer into thinking about Michelangelo and his works as a whole. Vasari had worked in Rome under the patronage of Bindo Altoviti (1491-1557) between 1542 and his time in Naples from 1544-45, and he, like most artists at the time, was familiar with the Sistine ceiling fresco cycle. He and Francesco Salviati (1510-63) had studied the ceiling frescoes during their artistic training.³¹ Before his journey to Naples, Vasari had made three trips to Rome, once in January 1532 with Salviati, a second time in February 1538 for his studies, and again from 1542-44 under Altoviti's patronage.³² Vasari's figure in white, crouching and bearing the weight of the tomb door, is likely a reworking of Michelangelo's figure of a *dannato* in the centre-right side of the *Last Judgment*, completed a few years before the Naples *Resurrection*.³³ Michelangelo's male nude, who struggles to lift the base of a cumbersome column, is almost a flipped mirror image of Vasari's prostrated figure clad in pink whose distraught face is also shown in profile. In the *Resurrection*, the figures echo the oppositions of concealing and revealing and open and closed forms, dichotomies with which Michelangelo frequently experimented in his figural compositions, as seen in his *Last Judgment*.³⁴ Vasari understood this visual harmonization through the grouping of figures to be necessary in a trained artist's practice. In his Introduction to Painting Vasari noted,

Hence springs the invention which groups figures in fours, sixes, tens, twenties, in such a manner as to represent battles and other great subjects of art. This invention demands an innate propriety springing out of harmony and obedience; thus if a figure move to greet another, the figure saluted

³⁰ I thank William E. Wallace for connecting Vasari's figures, especially the one with mouth agape, to the *Battle of Cascina*. Some of Michelangelo's sketches of individual figures survive, but scholars often rely on Aristotele da Sangallo's copy in oil on panel (1542) of Michelangelo's cartoon for a complete sense of how the original would have looked. At present the copy is in Holkham Hall in Norfolk.

³¹ With the unveiling of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in 1541, there was renewed interest in and access to the Sistine ceiling frescoes in the 1540s and 1550s. See Bernardine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century*, Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010, 29-30.

³² Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, 137-38.

³³ Härb connects Michelangelo's figure to Vasari's Siena *Resurrection* from 1550. Härb, *The Drawings*, 303. Patricia Simons identifies Michelangelo's figure as a representation of Envy. See Patricia Simons, 'Envy and the Other Vices in Michelangelo's "Last Judgment"', *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 33: 2, 2014, 13-20.

³⁴ David Summers ties Michelangelo's use of oppositions to the context of contrapposto and traces its roots to classical rhetoric. See David Summers, 'Contrapposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art', *The Art Bulletin* 59: 3, 1977, 336-61.

having to respond should not turn away. [...] The subject may offer many varied motives different one from another, but the motives chosen must always bear relation to the work in hand, and to what the artist is in process of representing.³⁵

These composites of figures, for Vasari, needed to contribute to a unified whole; nothing could exist without something else responding to it, and everything related to something. This manifests in the compositional pairing of Vasari's figures in his *Resurrection*.

Besides borrowing from Michelangelo, Vasari alluded to Raphael in both concrete and oblique ways, specifically in his visual references to the *Liberation of St. Peter* (1511-14) in the Stanza di Eliodoro (fig. 3).³⁶ Both paintings share marked visual characteristics. Apart from also depicting a night scene that features a luminescent holy figure with radiating beams, Vasari seemed to copy two of Raphael's figures. The soldier on the far left in Raphael's fresco, whose left arm obscures his features, corresponds to the pose of Vasari's figure who resides in the background and to the left of Christ. On the right side in Raphael's work, the crouched and sleeping guard resembles Vasari's leftmost figure in white. Vasari had seen Raphael's fresco in person, but it is also worth noting that Vasari's close friend Paolo Giovio (1483-1552) had misidentified Raphael's *Liberation of St. Peter* as a Resurrection scene.³⁷ Moreover, Raphael himself had planned to complete an altarpiece showing the Resurrection for Agostino Chigi's (1466-1520) funerary chapel at Santa Maria della Pace, but died before it could be painted. Extant preparatory drawings allow one to glean details of Raphael's design plans.³⁸

Vasari knew of Raphael's fresco cycles in the Vatican Stanze, even if he made mistakes when describing them in his *Lives*.³⁹ Whether or not he embellished his account, Vasari claimed to have drawn both modern and ancient works in person, alongside Salviati during their artistic training. He asserted that they learned from

³⁵ 'E da ciò nasce l'invenzione, la quale fa mettere insieme in istoria le figure a quattro, a sei, a dieci, a venti, talmente ch'è si viene a formare le battaglie e l'altre cose grandi dell'arte. Questa invenzione vuol in sé una convenevolezza formata di concordanza e d'obediencia, che, s'una figura si muove per salutare un'altra, non si faccia la salutata voltarsi indietro avendo a rispondere [...] La istoria sia piena di cose variate e differenti l'una da l'altra, ma a proposito sempre di quello che si fa e che di mano in mano figura lo artefice.' Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, trans. Louisa S. Maclehorse, ed. G. Baldwin Brown, New York: Dutton, 1907, 210; Vasari, *Le vite*, 1:115.

³⁶ At least two versions showing the liberation of St. Peter comprise Vasari's later paintings, one in 1568 for S. Benedetto in Perugia and another from 1570-71 from the Vatican's Cappella di S. Michele. See Härb, *The Drawings*, 157, 592.

³⁷ See Costanza Barbieri, 'The Competition between Raphael and Michelangelo and Sebastiano's Role in It', in *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael*, ed. Marcia B. Hall, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 157.

³⁸ Drawings reproduced in Michael Hirst, 'The Chigi Chapel in S. Maria della Pace', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24: 3/4, 1961, 161-85.

³⁹ When writing the second edition of the *Lives* Vasari had relied on Marcantonio Raimondi's (c. 1470/82-1527/34) engravings of Raphael's frescoes. Vasari, *Lives*, 1:717-28; Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:166-84.



Figure 3 Raphael, *Liberation of St. Peter*, 1511-14. Fresco. Vatican City: Stanza di Eliodoro. Image: Direzione dei Musei e dei Beni Culturali Ufficio Immagini e Diritti, Governatorato dello Stato della Città del Vaticano.

studying the works of Raphael, Polidoro, and Baldassarre Peruzzi (1481-1536) in Rome, Florence, and surrounding areas.⁴⁰ His eleven extant drawings after Raphael's Vatican frescoes of the Stanza della Segnatura and Logge prove that he spent considerable time with these paintings.⁴¹ In his *Life of Raphael*, Vasari described the content of the *Liberation of St. Peter* at length and commended the artist's manipulation of light:

[the] dazzling splendour of the Angel, which, in the thick darkness of the night, reveals with its light every detail of the prison, and makes the arms of the soldiers shine resplendent, in such a way that their burnished lustre seems more lifelike than if they were real. [...] a sentinel with a torch in his hand rouses the others, and, as he gives them light with it, the blaze of the torch is reflected in all their armour; and all that its glow does not reach is illumined by the light of the moon.⁴²

⁴⁰ Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1022; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:371.

⁴¹ Reproduced in Härb, *The Drawings*, 149-54.

⁴² 'il lucidissimo splendor dell' Angelo nelle scure tenebre della notte luminosamente far discernere tutte le minuzie delle carcere e vivacissimamente risplendere l'armi di coloro, in modo che i lustri paiono bruniti più che se fussino verissimi e non dipinti. [...] una sentinella con una torcia in mano desta gli altri, e mentre con quella fa lor lume, riverberano i lumi della torcia in tutte le armi, e dove non percuote quella, serve un lume di luna.' Vasari, *Lives*, 1:725-26; Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:180.

Vasari also noted the intentional placement of the night scene above the window of the Stanza and stated that the rendered light sources blended convincingly with the natural light. The fresco left a clear impression on the artist, because he boldly stated that in terms of depictions of night scenes, 'among all those that painting has ever produced, this is the most real and most divine, and is held by all the world to be the rarest.'⁴³ Vasari did not spare praise or embellishment in his writings, but this passage and the rest of his *Life of Raphael* reveal Vasari's high regard for the artist's work.⁴⁴ His *Resurrection* reflects Raphael's handling of light and space, as well. Within the single narrative, as opposed to three discrete scenes partitioned in Raphael's fresco, Vasari's painting conveys these concordant relationships between figures through the delicate and careful arrangement of forms. These figures that stemmed from Rosso's *ingegno*, or intellect, were originally used in the context of action and rigor, and Vasari modified them to appear more weightless and evoke the *grazia*, or grace, of Raphael's figures that he consistently praised.⁴⁵ These figures achieve the 'delicacy, refinement, and supreme grace' that defined Vasari's developing *maniera*.⁴⁶

Even without noticing direct quotations of Raphael's works, the general sensibility and impact of Raphael's fresco emerge when reading Vasari's oil on panel. During Vasari's time, Resurrection scenes were common, but choosing to situate the event at night was not.⁴⁷ His choice to cloak his figures in darkness, save for the light radiating from Christ and the suggestions of a sun rising or setting in the distant background, is essentially without parallel in early-sixteenth-century art.⁴⁸ Nocturnal scenes, while uncommon, had become more fashionable with works by Sebastiano del Piombo (1485/6-1547) and Raphael; Sebastiano's Viterbo *Pietà* from around 1512-16 was likely the first nocturnal altarpiece of its time in Rome.⁴⁹ In his *Life of Sebastiano*, Vasari praised the 'dark landscape' that had subsequently led to Sebastiano gaining 'very great credit, and confirmed the opinions of those who favoured him.'⁵⁰ It is generally understood that Vasari had both a predilection for spotlighting Michelangelo's accomplishments and a tendency to undervalue Sebastiano's *invenzione* in the process; Vasari, in his praise of Sebastiano, contended that the ingenious designs for the Viterbo *Pietà* were actually by Michelangelo, but

⁴³ 'e per cosa che contrafaccia la notte, più simile di quante la pittura ne fece già mai, questa è la più divina e da tutti tenuta la più rara.' Vasari, *Lives*, 1:726; Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:181.

⁴⁴ Biow, *Vasari's Words*, 159.

⁴⁵ Vasari never provided a concrete definition of *grazia*, but scholars have parsed its connotative meaning. See Blunt, *Artistic Theory*, 93-95.

⁴⁶ 'la leggiadria et una pulitezza e somma grazia.' Vasari, *Lives*, 1:619; Vasari, *Le vite*, 4:6.

⁴⁷ For analyses of *notte* (night) and nocturnal scenes, see Biow, *Vasari's Words*, 141-75; Barbieri, 'The Competition', 156-57.

⁴⁸ Michael Hirst categorized Girolamo Genga's (1476-1551) representation of the Resurrection in S. Caterina da Siena in Rome as a nocturnal scene. See Hirst, 'The Chigi Chapel', 173n70. The painting has since been cleaned, revealing much brighter colours and illuminated spaces. I would not characterize Genga's painting as taking place at or near nightfall.

⁴⁹ Michael Hirst, *Sebastiano del Piombo*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, 48.

⁵⁰ 'un paese tenebroso [...] grandissimo credito e confermò il dire di color che lo favorivano.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:142; Vasari, *Le vite*, 5:89.

did not elaborate on who was responsible for the nocturnal setting. Nevertheless, Vasari must have noted the importance of the night scene as a popular artistic choice for his Naples *Resurrection*. Several of his other Neapolitan painting commissions are situated either at or approaching nightfall. These twilight scenes include the *Crucifixion*, commissioned in May 1545 by the general of the Augustinians, Giacomo Seripando, for San Giovanni a Carbonara, as well as the *Adoration of the Magi* for the Duke of Gravina, commissioned in April 1545.⁵¹ Raffaellino del Colle's earlier *Resurrection* (1525) for the cathedral at Borgo Sansepulcro likely served as an influence, not only with its scene approaching nightfall, but also its figures quoting Raphael's preparatory sketches.⁵² Vasari's *Saint Peter Saved from the Water* (1545), intended for the Monteolivetan convent in Naples and at present in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, appropriately followed the biblical verse from which the subject derived and situated the event at dusk.⁵³ The fact that patron Matteo d'Aversa explicitly requested Vasari to emulate Raphael's Sistine tapestries for his *Saint Peter Saved from the Water* should dispel any lingering doubts that Vasari looked to Raphael's works as source material.⁵⁴

Vasari's descriptions of Naples in his *Lives* indicate disapproval and condescension, but they belie a more complicated stance on the southern city.⁵⁵ He worked in Naples, in part, after failing to obtain a permanent position in Florence and likely saw this as an opportunity to curry favour with the viceroy Pedro de Toledo (r. 1532-53), whose daughter, Eleanora de Toledo (1522-62), had married Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-74) in 1539.⁵⁶ Vasari's autobiography outlines his various commissions in Naples and, in many ways, portrays himself as the arbiter of modernity, pulling the Parthenopean city out from the medieval style of Giotto (c. 1266-1337) to the vogue *maniera*.

Vasari's *Resurrection* is almost a blueprint, providing Neapolitan artists with samples of distinguished artists and the foundations of sixteenth-century *maniera*. Through these associations and direct references, the painting served as a visual record of artists and their inventions.⁵⁷ Vasari's paintings distil the works of his laudable contemporaries and immediate predecessors, visually legitimizing and

⁵¹ Corti, *Vasari*, 55-57.

⁵² Raffaellino's *Resurrection* was also the artist's first major work that still exists, and he looked to Raphael and Giulio Romano (c. 1499-1546). See David Franklin, 'Raffaellino del Colle: Painting and Patronage in Sepulcro during the First Half of the Sixteenth-Century', *Studi di storia dell'arte* 1, 1990, 145-70; Marco Droghini, *Raffaellino del Colle*, Fermignano: Centro Studi G. Mazzini, 2001, 49-50; Hirst, 'The Chigi Chapel', 172.

⁵³ The biblical narrative stems from Matthew 14:22-33.

⁵⁴ Miniato Pitti included the specifics of the commission on behalf of d'Aversa to Vasari in a letter. Frey and Frey, *Der Literarische Nachlass*, 1:159. For a close study of this work, see Marguerite Guillaume, 'Vasari au Musée de Dijon', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Dijon* 121, 1970-72, 277-84.

⁵⁵ Loconte, 'The North Looks South', 32.

⁵⁶ Loconte, 'The North Looks South', 30-31.

⁵⁷ Sally J. Cornelison proposes a similar argument in the context of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, exploring Vasari's homages to artists through portraiture like Michelangelo and Rosso. See "'Michelangelo's Panel': Content, Context, and Vasari's Buonarroti Altarpiece', *Art History* 42: 3, 2019, 417-49.

cementing those he deemed worthy of remembering for future generations, a kind of stylistic curating. Like his description of Michelangelo, as one who was meant to propagate his *maniera* to the people of Florence, Vasari saw himself as someone responsible for instilling, what he would consider, good art outside of Tuscany.

If Vasari had hopes that future generations would recognize his unambiguous homage to Rosso in the Naples *Resurrection*, he would be disappointed to discover that it took centuries for this connection to be made.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, it seems unlikely Vasari intended for his Neapolitan viewers to understand the oblique visual references to Raphael and Michelangelo, let alone Rosso. Most of Vasari's allusions were altered enough to have long gone unrecognized in literature. His *Resurrection*, along with his other paintings, captured a general familiarity and manner of the works produced by his select generation of artists. Through overt and subtle quotation and borrowing of sixteenth-century Central Italian art, Vasari's painting introduced a new visual language to the Neapolitan audience that would then grow into the familiar. Melinda Schlitt compellingly suggests that Vasari and Salviati valued their contemporaries, because they had yet to be imitated in art; they were active artists, and by quoting them, Vasari and Salviati demonstrated their progressiveness and awareness of contemporary trends.⁵⁹ A few years after Vasari's departure from Naples, artists like Pedro de Rubiales (1511-82), who apprenticed with Salviati and assisted Vasari with the Sala dei Cento Giorni fresco cycles in Rome, continued the Tuscan-Roman Mannerist tradition in Naples.⁶⁰

Vasari and memory

I would argue that Vasari, in keeping with the traditions from classical antiquity of record keeping and memory preservation, developed a unique visual method of preserving the *invenzioni* and the artists tied to them.⁶¹ I would also apply the

⁵⁸ Many scholars have isolated other instances where Rosso's previous works informed Vasari's artistic production. See David Franklin, *Rosso in Italy: The Italian Career of Rosso Fiorentino*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994; Eugene A. Carroll, 'Lappoli, Alfani, Vasari, and Rosso Fiorentino', *The Art Bulletin* 49: 4, 1967, 297-304; Gregory, 'Vasari, Prints, and Imitation'; Härb, *The Drawings*; Cornelison, "'Michelangelo's Panel.'"

⁵⁹ Melinda Schlitt, "'Anticamente Moderna et Modernamente Antica': Imitation and the Ideal in 16th-Century Italian Painting', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 10: 3/4, 2004, 386.

⁶⁰ Specifically, Rubiales's chapel frescoes of the Sommària for viceroy Pedro de Toledo are notably Michelangelesque and Vasarian in nature. For more on Pedro de Rubiales, see Roberto Middione, 'Pedro de Rubiales at the Sommària: Justice and the Viceroy', trans. Judith Landry, *FMR* 8, 2005, 27-52. For more on Rubiales and Vasari, see Anna Ariemma Capriglione, *Giorgio Vasari pittore e sua influenza sulla pittura napoletana*, Naples: Libreria Editrice Ferraro, 1970, 47-51.

⁶¹ The publications on memory are vast and span multiple disciplines. See Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin, eds, *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966; Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian, eds, *The Routledge Memory of Philosophy of Memory*, London and New York: Routledge, 2017.



Figure 4 Raffaellino del Garbo, Sandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and Giorgio Vasari, Page from *Libro de' disegni*, sheets c. 1480-1504, mounting and framework by Vasari after 1524. Pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash, on light buff paper, 56.7 x 45.7 cm. Washington DC: National Gallery of Art. Image: Woodner Collection, Patrons' Permanent Fund.

concept of memory to Vasari's collecting and artistic practices. His *Libro de' disegni* (Book of Drawings), a multi-volume scrapbook of artists' drawings to which Vasari began adding at an early age in 1528, reveals his approach to his predecessors' and contemporaries' preparatory works (fig. 4).⁶² Vasari cut down the sheets of original drawings and cropped them to fit within his hand-drawn frames and decorations. Through possession, manipulation, and recontextualization these drawings were absorbed into Vasari's *invenzione*, and the pages read almost as a sounding board for Vasari's creativity. At times Vasari even reworked the drawings. The blend of his mark and that of his predecessors demonstrates both Vasari's assimilation of their *disegni* and his attempts to recontextualize through the creation of these imaginary spaces. The artists' works became a part of his style and visual vocabulary. Through these actions, Vasari simultaneously respected and repossessed. Giovanni Battista Armenini's *On the True Precepts on the Art of Painting* (1586) revealed that other artists of the time like Perino del Vaga (1501-47) engaged in similar activities. He detailed Perino's process of modifying pre-existing works in his copies of them, specifically the nude figures in his *Last Judgment*, noting that Perino 'added to, removed from, enriched, and in sum adapted them in such a way with that graceful style of his that it was difficult even for knowledgeable men to identify his sources.'⁶³ Armenini's

⁶² Most of the *Libro* no longer exists. The pages of Vasari's *Libro* have been separated and are scattered in various collections. See Ragghianti Collobi, *Il Libro de' disegni*; Catherine Monbeig Goguel, 'Vasari's Attitude toward Collecting', in *Vasari's Florence: Artists and Literati at the Medicean Court*, ed. Philip Jacks, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 112-13; Otto Kurz, 'Giorgio Vasari's "Libro de' Disegni"', *Old Master Drawings* 12: 45, 1947, 1-15.

⁶³ 'a quelle ch'erano rotte o non molto gagliarde gli aggiungeva, li levava e le aricchiva, et

treatise, in part, responded to the *Lives*. While he diverged from Vasari concerning several matters, Armenini fundamentally agreed with Vasari's perspectives on art.⁶⁴ His discussions of honour, style, and *invenzione* mirrored Vasari's sentiments on the fine line between originality and triteness in regard to imitation.

Vasari's writings on art, imitation, invention, and nature often paralleled classical texts on rhetoric and memory, such as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero's (106 BCE-43 CE) *De oratore*, Quintilian's (35-100 CE) *Institutio oratoria*, and Aristotle's (c. 384-322 BCE) *De memoria et reminiscentia*.⁶⁵ Memory and invention were integral components to the departments of rhetoric, and Quintilian considered them inseparable from their other constituents, such as expression, matter, arrangement, delivery, and judgment.⁶⁶ Other ancient philosophers debated the nuances of the number of rhetorical departments and their order of primacy, but concurred that memory and invention were key elements.⁶⁷ Additionally, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* described invention as the 'guardian of all the parts of rhetoric, the Memory' and divided memory into the natural and artificial.⁶⁸

In sum, people inherit a natural memory upon birth, while they must strengthen their artificial memory through disciplined training. Individuals possess varying degrees of natural memory, some being more exceptional than others.⁶⁹ Vasari echoed these classical conceits of memory when discussing artistic talent. He divided an artist's skill into natural and learned. He praised Michelangelo as the artist born with the most divine-given abilities, which distinguished him from his predecessors and contemporaries. Vasari's writings also reveal that artistic ability could be taught through careful training and diligence.⁷⁰ Any successful artist required both learned and natural talents. These skills, according to Vasari, were inextricable from an artist's *invenzione*; classical writers, too, considered artificial and natural memory indivisible.

Classical texts on memory formed the foundations for the distilling of ideas into visual form, which could then be retrieved at will after generating a level of

insomma le riduceva in modo tale, con quella sua leggiadra maniera, ch'era cosa difficile da' ben prattichi a conoscere di dove egli cavate le avesse.' Giovanni Battista Armenini, *On the True Precepts on the Art of Painting*, ed. and trans. Edward J. Olszewski, Burt Franklin, 1977, 136; Giovan Battista Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura*, ed. Marina Gorreri, Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1988, 81-82.

⁶⁴ Angela Cerasuolo, *Literature and Artistic Practice in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, trans. Helen Glanville, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017, 72.

⁶⁵ Traditionally, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* has been attributed to Cicero, though there is no conclusive evidence that he wrote it.

⁶⁶ Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, 3.3.

⁶⁷ Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, 3.3.5-10.

⁶⁸ Cicero [Pseudo], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954, 3.16.28.

⁶⁹ Cicero [Pseudo], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3.16-24.28-40.

⁷⁰ Vasari retold how the young and 'divine' Michelangelo, during his apprenticeship with Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-94), copied the scaffolding involved in decorating the great chapel of Santa Maria Novella. Vasari, *Lives*, 2:645-46; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:8.

familiarity through repeated practice.⁷¹ This follows the classical technique of mnemonics. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* offers an example of memorizing complicated literary verses by condensing phrases into a single image. In doing so, no word would be excluded; however, the method would only be successful through repetition and the representation of words through images.⁷² Cicero's *De oratore* voiced similar thoughts on memory and specifically expressed the importance of generating familiarity with the subject to the point of habit.⁷³ Constant exposure and repetition beget familiarity.⁷⁴ Aristotle, in his discussion of habit in the *De memoria et reminiscentia*, stated with concision, 'frequency makes it nature.'⁷⁵ Consistency and reiteration not only build a visual language and become familiar; they allow the individual to remember more efficiently and effectively.

Aristotle, Plato, and other classical philosophers conceived of the visual form, which included the process of reading, as a useful means of aiding memory storage and retrieval. Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscentia* theorized that the memory-image is a copy of one's perception.⁷⁶ One's memory of something is not a facsimile of the particular image or scene; it is a subjective, mutable, and personal memory. I would apply this outlook to Vasari's theoretical concept of *invenzione*. Vasari did not present carbon copies of artists' inventions in his paintings. Instead, he used his *concetto* (idea) and *ingegno* to represent his imprecise interpretations in visual form.

Vasari became comfortable enough with the works of his predecessors and contemporaries to invent new figures that both recalled and evoked their artistic productions and modernized them. To return to the *Libro de' disegni*, it remains unclear how these volumes served Vasari; what survives today is only a fraction of the original, and there is still much that is unknown or unclear about the volumes.⁷⁷ Catherine Monbeig Goguel argues that it was only as time progressed that Vasari, in his collection of these drawings, took on 'the allure of documentation.'⁷⁸ One cannot ignore Vasari's reworking of the earlier drawing by Filippino Lippi (1475-1504) pasted onto the *Libro* page in the National Gallery in Washington DC; like his paintings and writings, Vasari's own voice emerged. He did not treat his

⁷¹ Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 11-12.

⁷² Cicero [Pseudo], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3.21.34.

⁷³ There are many passages where Cicero's discussions of memory and mnemonics parallel the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. See Cicero, *On the Orator [De Oratore]*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1942, 2.86-88.352-60.

⁷⁴ Cicero, *On the Orator*, 2.87.358.

⁷⁵ David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007, 45.

⁷⁶ Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory*, 34-35; Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, Worcester and London: Duckworth, 1972, 7.

⁷⁷ For instance, Andrew Morrogh argues that other artists, not Vasari, in the service of collector Niccolò Gaddi decorated the extant pages of the *Libro*. See Andrew Morrogh, 'Vasari's *Libro* and the Drawings Collection of Niccolò Gaddi: The Frames,' in *A Demand for Drawings: Five Centuries of Collectors and Collected Drawings*, ed. John Marciari, New York: Morgan Library and Museum, 2018, 31-43.

⁷⁸ Monbeig Goguel, 'Vasari's Attitude', 113.

predecessors' lives or their works as hermetic; rather, he inserted his own commentary, merging the modern with the past. By placing these figures within fictive spaces and providing new meanings and contexts to these isolated drawings, Vasari created a visual lexicon, and the *Libro* functioned in part as an image bank from which Vasari could draw at will.

This notion of familiarity feeds into Vasari's praise of not only *invenzione*, but also *facilità* (facility and virtuosity).⁷⁹ Vasari took pride in the speed at which he designed and completed works, sometimes at the expense of his reputation. However, if an artist recalled at will and with ease memories of other artist's designs and inventions, perhaps there is something praiseworthy rather than discreditable of his rate of executing works. Combined with his advocacy of *facilità* and *prestezza* (rapidity) for completing works, Vasari could quickly recall these motifs that stemmed from habitual practice and visual learning.⁸⁰ *Facilità* to Vasari was the result of years of diligent work to create something that appeared effortless.⁸¹ Seen from this perspective, Vasari followed the Aristotelian and classical traditions in becoming familiar with something to the point of habit and quick recall. In fact, Härb's study of Vasari's entire production of drawings reveals that the majority of Vasari's extant drawings were not drawn from life, but rather his own recollection.⁸²

Memory was not only a classical concern, but also a theological one. In his writings, St. Augustine (354-430) explored how his memory of God could help him and man to better understand the divine.⁸³ Hans Belting furthered this discussion through the context of the cult of the Virgin Mary: copies of Mary aided in propagating her veneration beyond the confines of physical church spaces, fusing both the image itself to the local history by which the image was acquired and accessed.⁸⁴ To couch Belting's deductions within the context of Vasari's paintings, memory functions in multiple modes. Vasari's figures and motifs recall more than the original sources from which he borrowed; they generate ties to the artists themselves like Rosso, Michelangelo, and Raphael. They represent Vasari's familiarity with the source material in the time in which he was working and evoke the *maniera* of the artists.

While it is impossible to know if Vasari stringently followed these models on memory or mnemonics, it would not be a stretch to imagine that Vasari was working from these precedents, considering his humanist education, fluency in Latin, consistent allusions to classical sources in his literary and artistic outputs, and

⁷⁹ Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1034. Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:381.

⁸⁰ For more on *prestezza*, see Cerasuolo, *Literature and Artistic Practice*, 100-14.

⁸¹ Cerasuolo, *Literature and Artistic Practice*, 107.

⁸² Härb, *The Drawings*, 14.

⁸³ Augustine concluded, 'I shall mount beyond this power of my nature, still rising by degrees towards Him who made me. And so I come to the fields and vast palaces of memory, where are stored the innumerable images of material things brought to it by the senses.' *Confessions*, 10.8.12. From Lilianne Manning, 'Augustine', in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, eds. Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian, London and New York: Routledge, 2017, 439.

⁸⁴ Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, 14.

the prevailing principles and interests of contemporary Florentine humanism. Moreover, in his *Life of Michelangelo*, Vasari celebrated the artist for the virtuous characteristic of possessing a strong memory. He described Michelangelo as, 'a man of tenacious and profound memory, so that, on seeing the works of others only once, he remembered them perfectly, and could avail himself of them in such a manner, that scarcely anyone has ever noticed it.'⁸⁵ While he was not innovative for working within these established traditions of imitation and memory in the sixteenth century, Vasari was unique in that his works added the elements of repetition, historicity, and time and, in effect, preserved the artist.⁸⁶ Half of the Naples *Resurrection* heavily pulled from Rosso's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro*, which demonstrates Vasari's deep understanding of Rosso's *invenzioni* to the point of familiarity. When considering these factors, Vasari created a mnemonic system, whereby his visual allusions function as reductions of entire artists and their inventions into concrete images for the purposes of recollection and memory.

Rosso's reputation during his lifetime was incongruous with recent receptions of the artist. Despite gaining traction and success as an artist in France, Rosso's paintings were not well-regarded in Florence at the time of their execution, and the artist never received a commission from the Medici family.⁸⁷ Rosso ceased working in Italy after 1530 when he gained greater success in Fontainebleau as court painter to King Francis I. Nonetheless, Vasari referenced Rosso's works consistently throughout his career as a painter.⁸⁸ When considering all of the aforementioned components, Vasari's constant allusions to and quotations from Rosso operate in myriad ways. The Naples *Resurrection* functions as a resurrection of an accomplished artist's motifs, a nod to Vasari's first resurrection with which Rosso aided, and a visual memory and means of preserving artists', particularly Rosso's, *invenzioni*. They suggest Vasari's concern with Rosso's preservation as an artist for generations to come. Rosso's reputation then was not as important as how he would be remembered by future artists.

Vasari's visual acknowledgments to artists like Rosso, Raphael, and Michelangelo exercised his memory and the conceit of these artists' inventions. He worked within the classical models on memory that continued through the Middle Ages.⁸⁹ In the context of Vasari, he was rather unremarkable in recollecting and

⁸⁵ 'È stato Michelagnolo di una tenace e profonda memoria, che nel vedere le cose altrui una sol volta l'ha ritenute sì fattamente e servitose in una maniera che nessuno se n'è mai quasi accorto.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:741; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:114-15.

⁸⁶ Fellow theorists like Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) devoted a section on exercising one's memory and practising forms to the point of habit. Leonardo da Vinci, *Treatise on Painting [Codex Urbinas Latinus 1270]*, trans. A. Philip McMahon, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956, 1:47.

⁸⁷ Carlo Falciani, 'Choosing Different Paths', in *Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino: Diverging Paths of Mannerism*, eds. Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali, Florence: Mandragora, 2014, 60.

⁸⁸ Eugene Carroll, Härb, and David Franklin are among art historians who have connected visual motifs in Vasari's paintings to Rosso's preparatory and finished works. See Härb, *The Drawings*; Carroll, 'Lappoli, Alfani'; Franklin, *Rosso in Italy*.

⁸⁹ For more on medieval memory, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*.

tapping into his memory, since this practice had been established in classical and medieval precedents. However, he was singular in his execution of these practices through visual and artistic forms. Vasari understood the importance of memory and went to great lengths to document and ensure that the succeeding generations of artists did not forget his legacy, in both literary and pictorial forms.

Remembering Vasari through self-referentiality

Since early in his career Vasari had been building artistic and professional relationships with three members of the Medici family, working primarily in Florence. Vasari's *Resurrection* is an artefact of his developing and promising, but still precarious, career. At this point he had received several commissions from high-profile patrons like Ippolito de' Medici (1511-35) and Duke Alessandro de' Medici (c. 1511-37).⁹⁰ As Patricia Lee Rubin describes it, 'Unlike Ippolito and Alessandro, he [Vasari] was not being prepared to rule, but he was being prepared to be with rulers.'⁹¹ Ippolito and Alessandro died within two years of one another. Their deaths reinforced the instability of Vasari's professional position, as well as the fragility and insecurity in systems of patronage. Vasari's autobiography briefly lamented Alessandro's death, but framed it as the artist's loss of a professional tie: 'Now, while I was going on winning for myself honour, name, and wealth under the protection of Duke Alessandro, that poor lord was cruelly murdered, and there was snatched away from me all hope of that which I was promising to myself from Fortune by means of his favour.'⁹² Vasari's indefatigable efforts to build a professional network by securing a range of commissions were not futile; by 1540 he had completed a respectable number of commissions primarily in Tuscan cities such as his hometown of Arezzo, Florence, Pisa, and Camaldoli, but also north and south in Bologna and Rome.⁹³ In September 1541 Vasari purchased a house in Arezzo from Jacopo Nanni de' Cavaceppi for 700 florins.⁹⁴ Since 1527 Vasari had been the sole support system for his large family; his writings record his family members' dependence on his success as an artist.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Vasari alluded to his education alongside Alessandro and Ippolito briefly in his autobiography but reveals more in his Life of Francesco Salviati. Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1020, 2:556; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:369, 5:512.

⁹¹ Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, 73.

⁹² 'Ora, mentre andava procacciandomi sotto la protezione del duca Alessandro onore, nome e facultà, fu il povero signore crudelmente ucciso, et a me levato ogni speranza di quello che io mi andava, mediante il suo favore, promettendo dalla fortuna.' Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1026; Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:375.

⁹³ For instance, outside Bologna in 1539, Vasari alongside Cristofano Gherardi, had completed a fresco cycle for the refectory of Olivetan monastery San Michele in Bosco. Ottaviano de' Medici (1482-1546), Francesco Rucellai in Florence, and Don Miniato Pitti in Bologna were some of Vasari's notable patrons.

⁹⁴ Cheney, *The Homes*, Appendix B.

⁹⁵ At times Vasari alluded to his family and his obligations. See Vasari, *Lives*, 2:1022. Vasari, *Le vite*, 6:371.



Figure 5 Giorgio Vasari, *Resurrection*, 1550. Oil on panel, 220 x 128 cm. Siena: Pinacoteca Nazionale. Image: *Su concessione del Ministero della cultura*. Direzione Regionale Musei della Toscana. Foto Archivio Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena.

Vasari was no martyr; his artistic borrowings and his attempts at memorializing other artists in visual form extended to his own memorialization through moments of self-quotation and reuse. In addition to the early *Resurrection* from 1528, which no longer survives, and the Naples painting, Vasari completed two more versions during his lifetime. In 1550 Florentine patron Filippo Salviati commissioned Vasari for a Resurrection scene, at present in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (fig. 5).⁹⁶ The visual likeness between the Siena and Naples works are incontestable, though the quotations from Rosso and Raphael that appeared in the Naples version are faint remnants in the Siena painting. The Siena *Resurrection* borrows visual motifs more from Vasari's own paintings than the works of others.⁹⁷ Most notably the Christ figures are almost identical, from the pose to the folds in the drapery. Vasari repeated, but displaced, the crouched and faceless guard, as well as the wailing figure; however, the latter is pushed to the shadowy periphery in the Siena work. The half-reclining soldier in the foreground derives from Michelangelo's *Noah* in his Sistine ceiling fresco, as well as one of the figures in

⁹⁶ According to Piero Torriti the inscription on the back of the painting reads, 'AVERARDO 1550 / DALAMAN / SALV / ATI.' Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: I dipinti dal XV al XVIII secolo*, Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1978, 208-9.

⁹⁷ Härb identifies many of these quotations. See Härb, *The Drawings*, 303.

his *Fall of Phaeton* chalk drawing from 1533.⁹⁸ The motif recurs in Vasari's paintings beginning as late as 1541 and is scattered throughout his later works.⁹⁹ Moreover, this recumbent pose connotes the pre-Resurrection Christ that Vasari often used in his depictions of the Deposition and Pietà. This figure also appears in the foreground of Vasari's design for the frontispiece to Cosimo Bartoli's (1503-72) Italian translation of Leon Battista Alberti's (1404-72) *De re aedificatoria*, or *On the Art of Building*.¹⁰⁰ In the Siena *Resurrection*, the astonished soldier on the right is ubiquitous in Vasari's works, even if the details and poses might vary. The motif dates back to his early artistic career and can be found in his *Deposition from the Cross* from 1533-44 for Sant'Agostino in Rome.

The Naples and Siena versions differ noticeably, reflecting the development of Vasari's thoughts about the subject and how it could be portrayed. In the Siena painting, Vasari compressed the space, nearly suffocating the figures. At times figures look disjointed in their relationship to one another, as if they have been cut and pasted. The Siena *Resurrection* ignores the demarcations of celestial and corporeal realms found in the Naples version and, instead, merges them by concretely placing the omnipotent Christ on stone and in the centre of figures that encircle the tomb. Additionally, the radiating light behind Christ's head, which blends seamlessly with the natural sunlight, only hints at celestial holiness. The scene no longer takes place at night. Everything feels more tangible and tactile, from the continued emphasis on muscular forms, but also more artificial, which is substantiated by the ornate and embellished helmets, trimmings, and sandals of the soldiers. Even the tomb lacks the austerity of the 1545 version.

In 1568 Cosimo I de Medici's friend and personal physician Andrea Pasquali commissioned Vasari for a Resurrection scene, the artist's fourth and final of the subject, to be displayed in Pasquali's family chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence (fig. 6).¹⁰¹ Vasari documented several iterations in drawing and literary forms.¹⁰² His friend and advisor Vincenzo Borghini (1515-80) scrutinized Vasari's earliest sketch that had been presented to Pasquali for approval; letters exchanged between Borghini, Vasari, and Vasari's assistant Giovanni Battista Naldini (1537-91)

⁹⁸ London, British Museum (Inv. 1895,0915.517).

⁹⁹ Härb recognises two iterations of this motif, namely in the vault of the Cappella del Monte in S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome and the ceiling fresco of the Cappella di Leone X in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. See Härb, *The Drawings*, 303. I also link the motif to Vasari's extant drawings of his now-lost decorations for Pietro Aretino's (1492-1556) play from 1542 in Venice, *La Talanta*. Vasari had collaborated with Aretino for the decorative program, called *Apparato dei Sempiterni*, but was responsible for the designs and execution in Venice. Reproduced in Härb, *The Drawings*, 198/201.

¹⁰⁰ Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi (Inv. 394 O). Lorenzo Torrentino published Bartoli's version in 1550 in Florence, which included woodcut illustrations. Alberti's text was considered the first Renaissance treatise on architecture and originally published in Latin in 1452. In 1546 Piero Lauro translated it to Italian in Venice.

¹⁰¹ For more on the Pasquali Chapel and Santa Maria Novella, see Marcia B. Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in Sta Maria Novella and Sta Croce 1565-1577*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, 111-14.

¹⁰² Härb links the drawing to one, and the location at present is unknown. Reproduced in Härb, *The Drawings*, 40.



Figure 6 Giorgio Vasari, *Resurrection*, 1568. Oil on panel. Florence: Santa Maria Novella. Image: Photo by author. Courtesy of the Prefettura-Ufficio Territoriale del Governo di Firenze.

noted the process, including Borghini's suggestions for modifying Vasari's composition. These involved inserting an angel emerging from the tomb.¹⁰³ One of the later drawings, now at the Cleveland Museum of Art, most resembles the final painted product, though in mirrored form.¹⁰⁴ The background shows several dramatically posed figures closest to the tomb, and there are vague similarities between the final composition and Michelangelo's drawing of the Resurrection scene from around 1532.¹⁰⁵ Some of Vasari's background figures resemble Agnolo Bronzino's (1503-72) *Resurrection* from 1552 in Santissima Annunziata in Florence, including the bottom left figure whose angled left arm shields his face. Marcia Hall links Vasari's Christ to Michelangelo's in his *Last Judgment*; I would expand that connection to include Bronzino's version.¹⁰⁶ Vasari's Christ looks to be an amalgam of Michelangelo's and Bronzino's Christ figures, though his Florence *Resurrection* most directly reacts to and borrows from his earlier Naples version. The background figures are not so much quotations of those found in Rosso's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* as they are transformations of Vasari's *Resurrection* from 1545. In many ways Vasari retooled and modernized the ancient tale of Zeuxis and the

¹⁰³ Frey and Frey, *Der Literarische Nachlass*, 2:291.

¹⁰⁴ Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art (Inv. 1991.43). For side-by-side comparisons of the three extant drawings associated with the final painting by Vasari, see Härb, *The Drawings*, 537-39.

¹⁰⁵ At present the drawing is with the Royal Collection Trust at Windsor Castle (Inv. RCIN 912767).

¹⁰⁶ Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation*, 113.

Maidens of Croton and Raphael's approach to *La Fornarina* (1518-19). Instead of selecting the best parts from female models to create the perfect figure, Vasari pulled from multiple artists' inventions and combined them to fit the aesthetic of *la bella maniera*. He also added an emerging head that peaks from the darkness cast over the figure from the tomb door, a small gesture and nod to his previous work and one that, as far as I am aware, is unique to Vasari in his representations of the scene.¹⁰⁷ Even with Borghini's extensive contributions regarding the final iconographic layout, Vasari included gestures and personal motifs that would ensure proper credit was given.

Conclusion

It would be reductive and misguided to solely view Vasari's paintings as his writings in visual form or his writings as literary counterparts to his artistic output. Nevertheless, it would be equally negligent to ignore the level that Vasari's paintings, collecting practice, and writings informed each other. They bled into one another and were not isolated productions.

Vasari followed the standard practice of his time of reviving classical antiquity in the visual and literary arts, and in doing so he preserved his predecessors and contemporaries in both his paintings and writings. In his Preface to the Lives, Vasari stated that he would 'not [be] touching on the ancients save in so far as it may concern our subject, seeing that no more can be said of them than those so many writers have said who have come down to our own age.'¹⁰⁸ To shift the perspective when reading this passage and to rephrase, classical antiquity was established in its preservation through various media, since its visual and literary languages were interwoven into the very fibres of Renaissance culture in Italy. Vasari, in his paintings and written works, aimed to preserve generations of artists who lacked that security, himself included.

The idea of resurrection in theoretical and theological frameworks also had ties to *rinascita*, or rebirth, and further still with memory.¹⁰⁹ Like many of Vasari's paintings, the Naples *Resurrection* can be read as a manifestation of this complex visual vocabulary and Vasari's mental compendium of artists. This parallels his *Libro*, where he inscribed, sometimes incorrectly, artists' names as attributions, thereby preserving the individual identities themselves.¹¹⁰ At times he even pasted

¹⁰⁷ For instance, Naldini's drawing omits the peaking head.

¹⁰⁸ 'non toccando altro degli antichi se non quanto facesse al proposito nostro, per non se ne poter dire più che se ne abbino detto quei tanti scrittori che sono pervenuti alla età nostra.' Vasari, *Lives*, 1:14; Vasari, *Le vite*, 1:10-11.

¹⁰⁹ Many thanks to Gerd Blum for connecting *resurrezione* to *rinascita*.

¹¹⁰ Vasari identified Filippino Lippi as the sole artist of the page in Washington DC. He inscribed 'Filippo Lippi Pitt: Fior' at the bottom. The National Gallery of Art reattributed some of the works to include Filippino Lippi, Sandro Botticelli, and Raffaellino del Garbo. A detailed and scientific analysis of the page is covered in Kimberly Schenck, Barbara H. Berrie, John K. Delaney, Paola Ricciardi, and John Witty III, 'A Page from Giorgio Vasari's *Libro de' Disegni* as Composite Object', *Fracture: conservation, science, art history* 1, 2013, 2-31.

woodcut portraits of the associated artist onto the *Libro* sheet.¹¹¹ The pages of the *Libro*, like the Naples *Resurrection*, become a palimpsest of both the past (the original artist) and present (Vasari), improving upon, but, above all, acknowledging the original artist and, consequently, the work's history. In a letter from 1546 to Lelio Torelli, Florentine writer Anton Francesco Doni (1513-74) gave rare praise to Vasari's fresco program for the Sala dei Cento Giorni as being 'modernly ancient and anciently modern that demonstrates the large intellect of the painter.'¹¹² The simultaneity of times, both past and present, emerge throughout Vasari's literary output, artistic production, and collecting practices. James Ackerman differentiated imitation from influence by stating, 'Imitation produced sustenance and security; influence, competition and anxiety. [...] Imitation stressed community, the feeling of solidarity that the maker of the present has with his ancestors and teachers – ancestors whom he engages in a contest of skill and imagination.'¹¹³ This bridge between imitation and security furthers the idea that Vasari used imitation as a means of self-promotion and professional development; imitation was not only a tool to advance his career as a painter, but also to create historical threads of visual languages of which Vasari was a part.

To document history is to be conscious of how others will remember the past. As one of the most scrupulous record keepers of his time, Vasari concerned himself with how he and those he admired would be remembered. His Naples *Resurrection* not only was an attempt to modernize a medieval city; through explicit and implicit allusions to Rosso, Raphael, Michelangelo, it also evoked and perpetuated the creative inventions of Vasari and his respected contemporaries, ensuring that they and he would never be forgotten.

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¹¹¹ Kurz, 'Giorgio Vasari's "Libro"', 3. Erwin Panofsky, 'The First Page of Giorgio Vasari's "Libro": A Study on the Gothic Style in the Judgment of the Italian Renaissance with an Excursus on Two Façade Designs by Domenico Beccafumi', in *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History*, Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1955, 169-225.

¹¹² Giovanni Gaetano Bottari and Stefano Ticozzi, eds, *Raccola di lettere sulla pittura, scultura, ed architettura*, Milan: G. Silvestri, 1822, 5:161; Schlitt, "'Anticamente Moderna et Modernamente Antica'", 402-3.

¹¹³ James Ackerman, 'Imitation', in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, eds. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 13-14.