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Joseph of Nazareth as Man and Father in Jerónimo Gracián's Summary of the
Excellencies of St Joseph (1597)

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CHAPTER FOUR: ANGELIC MAN

The *Summary* continues with an exploration of Joseph's role as "angelic man" or "angel on earth". In the text of Book IV, Gracián successfully demonstrates how Joseph fulfils and even surpasses the offices of the nine choirs of angels, writing:

Poiche quello i quale ci da licenza di poter chiamare Iddio uomo, e è soggetto ad un legnaiuolo, ci da animo ancora di chiamare questo uomo, falegname Angelo terrestre, ò vero uomo angelico.

[The fact we are able to call God man, and subject to a woodworker, gives us courage yet to call this man, a carpenter, an angel on earth or in truth an angelic man.]¹

Blancus visualises this role in a depiction of the Holy Family's return from Egypt (Plate 4), an event which, although not detailed in Scripture, has grown in significance as an iconographic subject.² From the sixteenth century, iconography of the Holy Family included more prominent references to Joseph's collaboration with the angels, with domestic scenes of the Holy Family showing angels, comparable in age to Jesus, assisting Joseph in his everyday tasks.³ The *Summary*'s interpretation of Joseph as an "angelic man" is distinctly expressed in Morale's epigram, which bestows upon Joseph three titles, *atlas*, *dux*, and *custos* (Atlas, leader and guardian). Although these titles are not traditionally associated with the angels, they work in conjunction with Gracián's text and Blancus' engraving to communicate Joseph's role as an "angel on earth".

Taking these three titles as its main focus, this chapter will consider the relationship between Book IV's text, epigram, and image, and will expose the connections this image holds with Scriptural accounts of the Holy Family's return from Egypt and with writings of the Church Fathers and devotional authors on the subject. Although perhaps not as popular an artistic scene as the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, depictions of Joseph, Mary and Jesus returning to Israel nonetheless provided the compositional formula for the "Two Trinities", which show the Holy Family walking or posed in a landscape with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in the heavens. This chapter will consider, as part of its comparative analysis, particular links between Blancus's etching and artworks depicting the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and their

¹ These choirs are: Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim. Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 200.

² Bolger Foster, *The Iconography of St Joseph*, 1978: 175.

³ Barbagallo, *St Joseph in Art*, 2014: 73.

subsequent return to Israel. It will ultimately be demonstrated here that the text of Book IV, and its preceding image and epigram, work in an emblematic way to present Joseph as supporting Christ (Atlas), as a guide (Dux), and as a guardian (Custos), qualities which strongly unite him with the angels. This representation also casts Joseph as the champion of the Church Militant⁴ and as a role model for the brethren of the Archconfraternity.

Book IV of the *Summary* is preceded by an engraving of the Holy Family travelling. Mary is seated astride a donkey, while Joseph carries Jesus on his shoulders. The age and size of the boy Jesus, and the movement of the Holy Family from right to left, likely indicates that this is a depiction of the Holy Family's return to Israel.⁵

In accordance with his previous engravings, Blancus has composed this image in a pyramidal construction. Although the prior works have featured God the Father, Joseph and Jesus at the apex, in this instance Mary is placed at the top of the compositional pyramid. As in his previous portrayals of Mary, in this image she is veiled and dressed in flowing garments, with a nimbus symbolising her sanctity. From her position upon the donkey's back she looks down at Joseph, which helps to draw the eye to Joseph and Jesus. Her gaze towards Joseph may be interpreted as one of submission and deference, yet the fact that she gestures forward and out of the image, perhaps to the route they will follow, indicates her leadership and directs visual focus to the background landscape and beyond the visual field. The donkey, which is laden with bags, turns its head to gaze directly at the viewer, and thus conceivably acts as a means by which the audience can participate in the scene. Its forward stride emphasises a sense of movement and draw the viewer's eye to the rocky terrain at the base of the image which indicates the Holy Family's humility and trials and indeed their arduous voyage.⁶ By the image's left border, as if carved into the rock, the artist's initials are found.

Joseph walks alongside the donkey, carrying the Child Jesus who, in a touching gesture, wipes sweat from Joseph's brow. Behind Joseph and Jesus is a palm tree; its proximity to Joseph

⁴ The state of the Christian Church which embodies believers on earth who, as written in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, struggle against sin, Satan, and all wickedness, darkness and evil (Eph 6:12). Tradition generally notes two other states: the Church Penitent, or those souls who are in purgatory, and the Church Triumphant, who have experienced the beatific vision and entered into the company of the saints.

⁵ These scenes are usually identifiable through their portrayal of the Holy Family travelling from right to left, and of Jesus as a grown child often shown walking beside one or both of his parents or being led by the hand. An early visualisation of this scene is found in the Northern French or Flemish *Biblia pauperum* (Plate 4.1), in which Joseph, who carries supplies over his shoulder, leads Jesus by the hand while behind them Mary follows on a donkey. Chorpenning, "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2011: 115.

⁶ Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 69-70.

reflects arguments made by Wilson and Chorpenning that the inclusion of palm trees in artistic depictions of the Holy Family evokes a metaphorical link with the saint.⁷ Blancus presents Joseph as visibly ageing, as compared to the previous three engravings his beard appears longer and his face more shadowed. Despite this difference, however, Blancus still portrays him a powerful and virile man. Joseph wears a simple tunic, the contours of which show his muscular arms which firmly support Jesus upon his back and expose his solid calves. He also carries a bag, from which a hammer protrudes. The depiction of Joseph carrying a bag, usually held at the waist, is identified by Sandra de Arriba as a sign of the responsibilities he held for the family's finances as effectively the family breadwinner, or may allude to his role as *nutritor Domini* or even refer to traditional Jewish iconography.⁸ Furthermore, the depiction of Joseph carrying tools recalls the description offered by Gracián in Book II of the *Summary*, in which he writes that Joseph accompanied Mary and Jesus on all journeys, carrying with him a saw on his shoulders, an axe at his belt, a level, a compass, and a chisel in his pocket.⁹ He is also shown speaking, perhaps to reassure Mary and Jesus or simply even to direct Mary on their journey. The epigram accompanying the image reads *Athlas, dux, custos, gestat, regit, atque tuetor Coelum humeris, matrem uoce, et utrumque fide* ("Atlas, leader, guardian carries, rules, and protects Heaven (God) on his shoulders, His mother by his voice, and both by his faith").

The basis for Blancus' depiction of the Return of the Holy Family from Egypt is found in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. These Scriptures detail that after Jesus' birth, Joseph is warned in a dream of Herod's wish to kill Jesus, whom he perceives as a threat to his power. Matthew's Gospel reads:

Now after they [the Magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son" (Matt 2:13-15).

⁷ Wilson references the 1622 sermon on St Joseph of Francis de Sales, who describes Joseph's marriage with the Virgin as strengthening her with "incorruptible wood" and allowing her to grow "like a glorious palm by the side of its beloved palm tree." See Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 95. For specific discussion on the significance of the palm in iconography of Joseph, and particularly as expressed in Francis de Sales's writings, see Chorpenning, "Francis de Sales and the Emblematic Tradition: The Palm Tree as an Allegory of St Joseph's Virtues", *Emblemata Sacra: The Rhetoric and Hermeneutics of Illustrated Sacred Discourse*, 2007: 333-347.

⁸ Sandra de Arriba Cantero, "San José", *Rivista Digital de Iconografia Medieval* 5 (10) 2013: 58.

⁹ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 110.

Later, Matthew indicates that on Herod's death Joseph is told to return to Israel, in accordance with prophecy.

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean" (Matt 2: 19-23).¹⁰

Joseph's response to the angel's command is the same in both instances. He offers no words in reply, yet great power and meaning is conveyed through what he chooses to do. The words of the angel correspond perfectly with the actions of Joseph. Matthew presents Joseph obeying without question, without saying a single word, without protesting that it is night, without stopping to think of having to leave his work and support network.¹¹ He is presented as a man of action, yet also as obedient to and confident in the directives of God the Father, a quality which, as noted previously, makes him a "just man".

Joseph the *Atlas*

Blancus' depiction of a physically burdened Joseph, carrying Christ on his shoulders and his hammer on his belt, communicates his role as *Atlas*. This title evokes the mythical tale of the Titan Atlas who was forced to support the heavens on his shoulders.¹² The visualisation of Joseph in this way corresponds with Gracián's description of the Holy Family's journeys, and particularly of their return from Egypt, during which Joseph led the donkey on which the Virgin sat with "greatest diligence", while leading the Child Jesus by the hand:

Non lo pativa però conoscendo che egli cominciassse a stancarsi, ma se lo poneva in spalla, fatto un divino Atlante, e così con travaglio grandissimo caminava, carico di colui...e così su chiamaro Christoforo...O chi potesse vederi glorioso santo andar carico di ferti dell'arte sua sudando, con il bambino sopra delle spalle, il quale andava asciugando il sudore del santo vecchiarello, e veder anco la gloriosa Vergine, e il medesimo bambino aggradir nei I cuori loro quelle fat che,

¹⁰ It is important to note that while Matthew makes the claim that the Holy Family's dwelling in Nazareth is a fulfilment of prophecy, nowhere in the Old Testament is there a direct reference to Nazareth. Several theories have been proposed, some of which centre on wordplay. Matthew may have sought to align "Nazorean" with "netzer", or *branch*, which features in the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 11:1. Additionally, the title of "Nazorean" may call to mind "nazir" or "Nazarite" (one set apart or consecrated to God) which features in the stories of Joseph (Gen 49:26) and Samson (Jdg 13:7).

¹¹ Zuffetti, *L'uomo dei sette silenzi*, 2012: 95.

¹² Chorpenning, "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2011: 117.

che sopportava per loro amore? E chi potrà mai contrapesar' i beni, che egli riceve poi per questo? Che altro è questo a dunque, se non far' officio d'Angelo custode, portando nelle sua braccia Gesù acciò non inciampasse e percuotesse il piede in alcuna pietra?

Chi su sua guardia? Chi lo portò quando andò in Egitto, e quando tornò, e quando da Nazareth andavano al tempio in Gerusalemme... e nella strada di Gerusalemme, ne quella dell'Egitto, è tutta ageuole, e piana, ma in ciascuna di esse sono passi pericolosi, e cattivissimi, altri per esser pietrosi, altri sangosi, altri finalmente per fossi, fiumi e torrenti.

[When Joseph saw that Jesus was tired, he would carry Him on his shoulders, making him a divine Atlas, and so with great travail he carried him... so he can be called "Christophorus", "Christ-bearer". ... Who saw Joseph sweating, loaded with the tools of his trade and on his shoulders the Child, who would wipe the sweat from the saint's brow, and the Virgin and God Himself thanking Joseph in their hearts for the labour that he undertook for them? And who can ponder the graces that on this account Joseph received? What else is all this but the ministry of Guardian Angel: Joseph carrying Jesus in his arms so that He does not stumble or hurt His foot on a stone?¹³

If this were not so [if Joseph is not Jesus' guardian angel], who was his guardian? Who carried him when they went to Egypt, and when they returned, and when from Nazareth they went to the temple in Jerusalem? And neither the road to Jerusalem nor the road to Egypt was smooth or flat, but on each they did pass dangers, troublemakers, rough terrain, rocky ground, ditches, holes and streams.]¹⁴

These words echo the description Gracián gives in Book I, where he writes that in carrying Jesus in his arms, Joseph receives great blessings.

E, quando il nostro Giosef arrivasse anch'egli nell'Egitto con il suo bambino nelle braccia, il Cielo si apirebbe di modo, come se fosse tutto divenuto, una finestra, meravigliandosi gl'Angeli, e quasi restando stupefatti e attoniti, vedendo con tanta humilità il lor Iddio, e Creatore nelle braccia d'un povero legnaiuolo, e conoscendo merito si grande in una creatura.

[When St Joseph would enter a place with the Christ Child in his arms, all heaven would become a window, with the angels in awe at God being carried in the arms of a carpenter and at such great humility on the part of the Creator and so great a favour bestowed upon a creature!]¹⁵

In the *Summary*, Gracián makes a direct comparison between Joseph's labours as *Atlas* and the offices of the angelic choirs of the Thrones, Virtues and Seraphim. The Thrones are described

¹³ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 206.

¹⁴ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 205-206.

¹⁵ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 23. English translation taken from Chorpennig, *Just Man*, 1993: 46.

by Gracián as “the chairs and seats where God reposes, the tribunals where God is seated to judge, chairs whence God teaches the world”.¹⁶ The *Summary* explicitly refers to Joseph as exercising the ministry of the Thrones, as “countless times he had seated in his arms, on his shoulders, in his lap and on his knees God Himself as a young child, to whom, according to the Prophet Daniel, the Ancient One, who is the Eternal Father, gave power, glory, and everlasting dominion to judge the living and the dead (Dan 7:14).”¹⁷ In its depiction of Jesus seated on the shoulders of Joseph, Blancus’ engraving presents the saint as an earthly Throne for the Son of God.¹⁸

Through his role as Atlas, Joseph is shown to minister to Jesus in a way which matches, and even surpasses, the angelic office of Virtues. Gracián describes the Virtues as “the ministers of supernatural occurrences”, and indicates that Joseph, who ministered to the greatest miracle of the childhood, rearing and life of Jesus, can be seen to exercise the same role.¹⁹ The *Summary*’s description of Joseph carrying the tired Child Jesus on his shoulders, coupled with Blancus’ depiction of the scene, casts Joseph as the minister to Jesus and thus sharing in the role of the Virtues.

As a “divine Atlas”, Joseph also communicates the ministry of the Seraphim. Gracián describes the role of the Seraphim as to “reveal the infinite goodness of God and love Him without ever ceasing this divine act of charity.”²⁰ Blancus clearly conveys Joseph’s charity, as even though he is tired and burdened by the bags he carries, he still supports and cares for Jesus. This visualisation reflects Gracián’s description of the care, affection and comfort Joseph offered to Jesus through his role as father and in his fulfilment of the angelic office of the Seraphim.

Although the title of *Atlas* is used only once by Gracián to describe Joseph it grew in popularity among Golden-Age Spanish authors. A prominent example is found in the first “Christmas Ballad” of Sor Marcela de San Félix, a Trinitarian nun, who gives explicit reference to Joseph’s chastity and divine fatherhood in the words: *divino Atlante / pues puede sustentar / dos cielos*

¹⁶ *Á i Troni attribuisce l’esser sede, che si posa Dio, e tribunali, ne i quali sta’assentato á giudicare, e catedre donde esso Dio insegna al mondo.* Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 207-208. English translation taken from Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 192-194.

¹⁷ *...poi che innumerabili volte l’istesso Dio mentre su di erá tenera, e fanciullesca stette assentato ora sopra delle sua braccia, ora sopra delle spalle, or nel grembo, e hor sopra le ginocchia, al quale come dice Daniela Profeta (il vecchio di giorni), che é il Padre eterno (diede potere, e virtù, e regno) per giudicar’ i vivi e I morti.* Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 208. English translation taken from Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 195.

¹⁸ Chorpenning, “St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative”, 2011: 116.

¹⁹ *...Virtudi, che cosi si chiamano quelli Angioli, che sono ministri delle opere soprannaturali.* Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 208.

²⁰ Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 196.

los más grandes (“the divine giant Atlas / he can support on his shoulders / two heavens so great”).²¹ While an unusual artistic subject, representations of Joseph as “the new Atlas” who carries Christ on his shoulders were not completely unfamiliar. Such representations, according to Erika Langmuir, may have been indirectly influenced by scenes of familial intimacy depicted on Roman sarcophagi. She draws particular attention to the life-cycle sarcophagus (Plate 4.2.) dedicated to Marcus Cornelius Statius, and possibly from Ostia, which depicts on its front panel the father carrying his son on his shoulder, gazing at the child and holding him securely in his arms.²² Such a depiction presents a scene of paternal affection, with the father’s carrying of his son on his shoulders emphasising his role as protector and supporter of his children.

It is thus clear that for Joseph to truly be titled as *Atlas*, he must possess physical strength and virility. Both are conveyed by Blancus in his depiction of Joseph’s strong physique and in Gracián’s description of Joseph’s ability to carry the boy Jesus for long distances, allowing the Child to rest on his shoulders. While Gracián emphasises the great joy that carrying God in his arms and on his shoulders would have brought to Joseph, he also details the sufferings Joseph experienced, caused by the trials, dangers, and burdens he experiences as he guides, governs, and protects his family. This dichotomy of sorrow and joy communicates the essence of the fourth chapter of Book IV, in which Gracián writes:

E perche so, che i devote di San Giosef sono per ordinario soliti di esser soggetti ad afflitioni, e travagli, e anco di riuscirne con vittoria, per conseguenza avranno caro, che io gli discuopra, e dichiari alcuno de’ travagli interiori, e però in questo capitolo voglio trattare di’ essi, e anco degli esteriori sopportati di san Giosef, e della pazienza, e longanimità, con che gli soffcì.

Because I know that St Joseph’s devotees are often afflicted and burdened with an abundance of troubles, that suffering abounds in the world, and that all will thank me if I explain something about St Joseph’s interior trials, I want to discuss both his interior and exterior trials and the patience and forbearance with which he endured them...²³

Blancus clearly visualises Joseph, the divine Atlas, in the midst of trial. He is visibly burdened and sweating, his downturned head and lowered eyes further emphasising his weariness and labour. Although he is struggling, he does not pause but moves forward as the *Atlas* who is

²¹ Georgina Sabat Rivers, “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Sor Marcela de San Félix: Their Devotion to St Joseph as the Antithesis of Patriarchal Authoritarianism”, *Joseph of Nazareth Through the Centuries*, ed. Joseph F. Chorprenning (Pennsylvania: St Joseph’s University Press, 2011): 270.

²² Erika Langmuir, *Imagining Childhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006): 76.

²³ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 231. English translation taken from Chorprenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 213.

determined to carry and protect the charges entrusted into his care by God. In return, both Jesus and Mary are shown to clearly recognise Joseph's labours. On his shoulders, the boy Jesus wipes the sweat from Joseph's brow in a gesture of affection and consolation, while Mary, who is seated on the donkey, looks back to Joseph perhaps in an expression of encouragement.

The *Summary's* representation of Joseph as *Atlas* bore relevance for the Early Modern family. Joseph offers to the audience, and particularly to men, a model for respecting and successfully fulfilling the needs of family members, even in times of great trial and burden. As the wise, dedicated head of the Holy Family, Joseph had thus become an even greater model for the working men of the Archconfraternity who, as heads of their households, would quite possibly have been facing a very real threat of poverty. For these men, the confraternity offered both religious and social protection. While wages increased in the 1590s, with a 10.5 percent increase for a carpenter, or *falegname*, the price index rose 79 percent and food prices had risen drastically.²⁴ These circumstances placed respectable and hardworking families on the brink of destitution, while the poor faced disaster and death.²⁵ Although membership of the confraternity would have offered the brethren some security, we cannot assume that this made them immune from social and economic pressures. The Joseph of the *Summary*, who endures his trials with patience and confidence, therefore becomes a tangible and relatable inspiration and intercessor in times of need.

The *Summary's* depiction of the Holy Family as a family experiencing hardship would have conceivably been a relatable image for the contemporary Roman family, who largely found themselves isolated and harassed by social upheaval, invasion, plague and famine. While the sack of Rome in 1527 was perhaps part of the distant past, it marked a key transition in the political and social climates, and in the institution of the papacy.²⁶ War and invasion, particularly by the French and Spanish powers, was a real threat. The struggle of the papacy to maintain power during the Reformation was likely not an issue for families, yet the tense climate of the Reformation would certainly have been worrying. Plagues, which were recurrent throughout Italy until 1630, caused generalised anxiety.²⁷ Famine and social hardship, such as

²⁴ In Rome in early 1583, a *rubbio* of wheat cost 13.14 *scudi*, compared to just 5.30 a year earlier. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, 1989: 155, 56.

²⁵ Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, 1989: 156.

²⁶ Judith Hook, *The Sack of Rome, 1527, second edition*, ed. Andrew Hook (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): ix.

²⁷ Most of the cities of northern Italy saw an end to the plague pandemic in the 1630s. J. N. Hays, *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004): 105.

being unlawfully imprisoned or intimidated by authorities, would have been a concern for the lower rung of society and may indeed have impacted the members of the Archconfraternity. By depicting the Holy Family as surviving in hostile times and in an unpredictable environment, the *Summary* presents them as a model for familial and social behaviour, a symbol of hope and a promise of help.²⁸

Francisco Pacheco, in his *Art of Painting*, writes that on the Holy Family's return from Egypt Joseph would occasionally walk with the Christ Child, holding his hand, or at other times would carry him in his arms.²⁹ Such depictions, though more prevalent after Pacheco's writing, deviate from the traditional representation of Mary carrying Jesus in her arms.³⁰ Gertrud Schiller, in her landmark study on Christian iconography, describes such scenes as "exceptions...unimportant as far as the sense of the image is concerned".³¹

Chorpenning challenges this view with the statement that while such representations are exceptions, "they give a prominence to St Joseph that is uncommon at this period".³² He also emphasises a distinction between paintings which show Joseph carrying Jesus on his shoulders and those which show Jesus being led by the hand. Byzantine depictions of the Holy Family's journey into Egypt and return to Israel are more notable in their featuring of Joseph carrying Jesus on his back. For example, the Cappella Palatina of the Norman Palace in Palermo features a twelfth-century mosaic depiction of the Flight into Egypt (Plate 4.3.).³³ Joseph is depicted as leading the group, carrying Christ firmly on his shoulders. His head is tilted forward, his back hunched under his burden as he strides forward purposefully. Mary sits³⁴ astride a donkey and a youth follows behind. Similarities can be noted between this mosaic and Blancus' engraving. Joseph holds Jesus securely on his shoulders, his gaze fixed ahead. The charming inclusion, at the base of the image, of a river full of fish represents the varied and rough terrain over which the Family travels.

²⁸ Herlihy, "The Making of the Medieval Family", 1995: 130.

²⁹ Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 55.

³⁰ Chorpenning, "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2011: 116.

³¹ Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. Janet Seligman, vol. 1 (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1971-72): 121.

³² Chorpenning, "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2011: 116.

³³ John Beckwith and Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, 261-262. Chorpenning also cites this work in "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2011: 116, 118, fig. 14.

³⁴ Mary's direct gaze upon the viewer, and her frontal position seated upon the donkey calls to mind regal imagery; it is almost as if she is seated upon a throne. This can perhaps be viewed as a reference to the *Maria/Ecclesia* typology.

The *Summary*'s characterisation of Joseph as *Atlas* is contemporaneous with El Greco's *St Joseph and the Christ Child* (Plate 4.4.) which was commissioned in 1597 for the main altar of the Chapel of St Joseph in Toledo.³⁵ Similar to Blancus' depiction, El Greco conveys a virile Joseph. He is beardless and youthful. The artist's use of dramatic *chiaroscuro*, especially to highlight the rippling folds of Joseph's garments, display his muscular physique and strong, powerful limbs. *Putti* are depicted above Joseph and Jesus, bearing two floral garlands in their outstretched hands. As in the *Summary*, this representation works to communicate Joseph's partnership with the angels.

Artists depicting Joseph carrying Jesus over rough terrain at times chose to connect him with St Christopher, thus visualising his title as "Christophorus". In 1515, Giovanni Antonio De'Sacchi, commonly known as Pordenone, completed his *Mater Misericordiae with Saints Joseph and Christopher* (Plate 4.5.), which was commissioned by Giovanni Francesco da Tiezzo, called Carneglutto, for the Cathedral of San Marco in Pordenone, where it remains.³⁶ It shows the Virgin standing between the two saints and donors kneeling at her feet. Both Saints Christopher and Joseph hold Christ. Christopher looks up to Christ, who sits upon his shoulder, while Joseph holds the twisting infant in his arms. Worthy of note is Joseph's gaze and expression: the only figure within the composition to look at the spectator, he greets the viewer with a protective gaze, and thus acts as a clear means by which audiences can enter the scene. By the time of Gracián's writing, the cult of St Christopher had dwindled significantly due to a lack of evidence for the saint's existence, and in describing Joseph as the "new Atlas", the new bearer of heaven, Gracián establishes him as a suitable replacement for Christopher.³⁷

The representation of a virile Joseph able to support and defend his family as a "divine Atlas" marks a break from medieval tradition in that it presents one of the first glorifications of the saint in art. Wilson writes that Joseph's artistic veneration is the unquestionable result of Pope Gregory XV's promulgation of Joseph's feast in 1621, but prior to this time the glorification of the saint was likely strengthened by Sixtus IV's incorporation of Joseph's feast into the Roman calendar and by the proceedings of the Council of Trent.³⁸ The Council, in its decree

³⁵ Michael Scholz-Hänsel, *El Greco, Domenikos Theotokopoulos, 1541-1614* (Köln: Taschen, 2004): 62.

³⁶ Brown and Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 2006: 86-87.

³⁷ Humanist scholars and Christian reformers alike had strongly criticised the veneration of Christopher due to the lack of historical evidence regarding his life. See Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 3rd vol (Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1988): part 1, 307; Chorpenning, "St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative", 2001: 117.

³⁸ Carolyn C. Wilson, "St Joseph as Mary's Champion: Examining the Distinctive Connection between the *Madonna del Giglio*, the *Compagnia di San Giuseppe*, and the Church of San Giuseppe in Florence", *Joseph of*

on sacred images, stressed that the saints enjoy eternal glory in heaven and are to be invoked by the faithful, even in requesting individual prayer.³⁹ The Council urged that images of the saints be given due honour “because through the saints the miracles of God and salutary examples are set before the eyes of the faithful”.⁴⁰ Such developments appear to have encouraged particular developments in the cults of Joseph and of the Holy Family.⁴¹ Almost twenty years prior to the depictions of Joseph by El Greco and in the *Summary*, the Flemish theologian Johannus Molanus cast Joseph as a man of youth and strength, and by the time El Greco’s painting was commissioned and the *Summary* was written this concept of the saint had gained momentum, particularly in Spanish and Mexican Colonial art.⁴² Further, and perhaps most importantly, the Council’s emphasis on the intercessory power of the saints, who offer examples of imitation for the faithful, may act in some way as a basis for the developing characterisation of Joseph as patron of the Church Militant.

The *Summary* presents Joseph the *Atlas* not only as the protector of his family, but also, in accordance with Gerson’s argument, as a “shield against adversity”, someone who could, through his intercessory power and patronage, protect the faithful from physical, spiritual and social calamity.⁴³ Joseph’s weaknesses and trials are thus seen to become strengths and a strong focus of his protection. His difficulties arguably made him relevant to the Church Militant. Particularly in this post-Reformation period, during which the Christian Church as a whole was undergoing stages of redefinition, the identification of an intercessor and protector in Joseph would likely have offered the faithful a stronghold of reassurance and comfort.

The representation of Joseph as patron of the Church Militant is also conveyed in Isidoro Isolano’s *Summa de donis Sancti Ioseph*. The *Summa* includes almost prophetic statements on the future glory and veneration of the saint, offering a notable characterisation of Joseph as

Nazareth through the Centuries, ed. Joseph F. Chorpenning (Philadelphia: St Joseph’s University Press, 2001): 78.

³⁹ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 1978: 215.

⁴⁰ *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 1978: 216.

⁴¹ Émile Mâle, *L’art religieux de la fin du XVIIe siècle, du XVII siècle e du XVIII siècle: Etude sur l’iconographie après le Concile de Trente*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1951): 301-325.

⁴² Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 115. It could be argued that this view of Joseph directly impacted Gracián, himself a Spaniard.

⁴³ A saint’s patronage became a means by which they could be joined to the faithful, interceding or pleading for individual causes to God. Saints acted as personal patrons, as patrons of confraternities and associations, and, perhaps most importantly, as patrons of villages and cities which they would be implored to defend. Stephen Wilson, “Introduction”, *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. Stephen Wilson, trans. Jane Hodgkin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 24; Herlihy, “The Making of the Medieval Family”, 1995: 153; Chorpenning, “St Joseph as Guardian Angel, Artisan, and Contemplative”, 2001: 104.

champion of the Church Militant.⁴⁴ This characterisation is reflective of the increase in devotion to Joseph, through the particular efforts of the Franciscan order, of the Dominicans, who began to observe the feast of Joseph between 1508 and 1517, and of the Society of Jesus, which on its foundation in 1534 made veneration of Joseph almost “an inborn characteristic” and presented the Holy Family as an exemplar of paternal authority and filial piety.⁴⁵

Isidoro Isolano’s presentation of Joseph as protector of the Church was also likely influenced by his social context. During the seven-year period in which Isolano wrote his work (1514-21), the Italian peninsula was in the grips of war, as the French, Spanish, and the Holy Roman Emperor struggled for control over independent Italian states.⁴⁶ Further, Isolano’s own writing was interrupted by his efforts to address the great theological and doctrinal challenge and crisis resulting from the posting of Martin Luther’s theses of reform in 1517.⁴⁷

With great concern for the spread of heresy, corruption and the horrors of war and natural disaster, Isolano expresses “that peace may be restored to Italy through most holy prayers to St Joseph”, “divine (or “godly”) Joseph”, “the lofty Spouse of the Queen of Heaven”, the head and patron of the Church Militant, and a stronghold against heresy.⁴⁸ These impassioned words acknowledge the immediate situation of distress which was present in northern and central Italy at the time, but perhaps even more significantly, they present Joseph as the one to free Italy from its suffering, just as he guides, governs and protects the Holy Family in Gracián’s *Summary*.

This representation of Joseph, *Atlas* and defender of the Church, operates in harmony with the parallel established between the Virgin Mary and *Ecclesia*, the abstract personification of the Church.⁴⁹ This personification is seen to have Scriptural basis, with the regal and bridal imagery contained in Psalm 45 viewed as the foundation of this typology. The Mary/*Ecclesia* model also extended to art, with artists choosing to present her in sumptuous regal garments, and at times a crown and bejewelled robes.⁵⁰ While *Ecclesia* is often united with Christ in

⁴⁴ Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 9; Thompson, *The Life and Glories of Saint Joseph*, 2013: 438; Carolyn C. Wilson, “St Joseph as *Custos*”, 2002: 89.

⁴⁵ Richardson, “St Joseph, St Peter, Jean Gerson and the Guelphs”, 2012: 246; Filas, *Joseph Most Just*, c. 1956: 109; Ignatius of Loyola, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and selected works*, ed. George E. Ganss, S.J. (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991): 184, 186.

⁴⁶ Wilson, “St Joseph as *Custos*”, 2002: 90-91; Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 9.

⁴⁷ Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 9.

⁴⁸ Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 9.

⁴⁹ Wilson, *St Joseph in Italian Renaissance Society and Art*, 2001: 5.

⁵⁰ Timothy Verdon & Filippo Rossi, *Mary in Western Art* (Vermont: Hadson Hills Press, 2005): 35.

visual narratives, such as in the apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere, it is not unreasonable to align her with Joseph, patron of the Church who, as shown in the *Summary*, defends the Virgin – and thus *Ecclesia* – from a variety of dangers.⁵¹

Joseph as *dux*

Building on the title of *Atlas*, Blancus' depiction aligns Joseph to the epigram's title of *dux*, or leader, who "rules" the Virgin by his voice. This title is linked with Gracián's text, where Joseph is paralleled with the Archangels, Principalities, and Dominions. Gracián indicates that the role of the Archangels is to convey divine responses and messages, and draws particular attention to Gabriel, Raphael, Michael and Uriel, who were all sent on behalf of God to important individuals.⁵² He notes that Joseph, in giving messages to Mary and Jesus on God's behalf, and in warning the Magi that they should not return to Herod (Matt 2:12), directly exercises this office.⁵³ Blancus' depiction of Joseph with mouth open in the act of speaking is thus given greater importance. When read in connection with the office of the Archangels it is clear that in this moment, Joseph is communicating a divine message to Mary and Jesus.

Gracián identifies Principalities as the angels who guide and govern. He states that this office is fulfilled in Joseph in that Jesus, who is "the angel" or "the messenger" of the covenant (Malachi 3:1), and Mary, the queen of the angels, are both subject to him.⁵⁴ Again, Blancus' depiction of Joseph speaking conveys this office. Although Joseph is physically burdened and struggling, he is by no means portrayed as an ineffective or incapable leader. His determined stride and strong physique communicate this, but his action of speaking is perhaps an even more powerful communication of his role as *dux*. Joseph may be weary, but he is still able to exercise the authority befitting him as head of the family and is still able to offer to Mary and Jesus guidance and reassurance through his words. As a response to this Blancus depicts Mary

⁵¹ A particularly relevant example is found in the apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere, where we find an enthroned Christ embracing a crowned woman, who hold a scroll bearing a passage from the Song of Songs (2:6). This woman is identified as *Ecclesia* by virtue of the fact that she is holding this scroll, yet at the same time she is readily identified as Mary through the scroll Christ holds, which contain the words with which he greets Mary as she is assumed into heaven in de Voragine's *Golden Legend*: "Come, my chosen one, and I shall put you on my throne".

⁵² Gabriel was sent to the Virgin (Luke 1:26), Raphael to Tobias (Tob 5:4-22), Michael to Daniel (Dan 10:21) and Uriel to Esdra (2 Esd 4:1).

⁵³ Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 192.

⁵⁴ *Christo Gesù (Angelo nel Testamento), e la Vergine Maria Regina e Imperatrice de gli Angeli, e il governare, e il commandar' a queste due persone su comesso a Giosef*. Gracián, *Sumario*, 1597: 158.

and Jesus both focusing their attention on Joseph, which further indicates their acceptance of his authority and leadership.

Continuing in his description of the Dominions, Gracián stresses that God and the Queen of Heaven both willingly submitted and were obedient to Joseph.⁵⁵ Although Mary is placed at the apex of Blancus' composition, and gestures forward perhaps authoritatively, her gaze back to Joseph indicates submission and deference. It is important to note that her gaze and expression is calm which, coupled with the representation of Joseph speaking, further emphasises his role as *dux*. Joseph is here shown able to safely lead and guide his family in a manner reflective of and even surpassing that of the angels.

Joseph's role as *dux* has a Scriptural basis. His unquestioning fulfilment of the angel's command (Matt 2:13-15) is indicative of his fulfilment of this role. He is charged to guide and govern Mary and Jesus, who are in turn subject to him.⁵⁶ It also demonstrates his quality of justice which, as described in the previous chapter, Gracián identified as indicative of the deep virtue which inspires Joseph to seek the protection and wellbeing of Mary and Jesus at all costs.⁵⁷ The revelation of an angelic message to Joseph rather than to Mary ostensibly indicates his authoritative role as leader within the family unit, and Mary's apparent submission to Joseph's instruction illustrates that she recognises and accepts this authority. The revelation of this divine message to Joseph also indicates the special relationship he holds with God.

Joseph's role as *custos*

Blancus' depiction of Joseph striding forward in determination over rocky ground communicates visually the epigram's title of *custos*, or "guardian". Joseph is the guardian who protects Mary and Jesus by his faith, a faith which is clearly demonstrated in Scripture and by his communication with God. As noted, Joseph's actions of taking the child and his mother out of Israel in the night, and again in returning to Israel when the threat of Herod's wrath had passed, directly parallel the angel's commands. He acts with complete trust in and dependence

⁵⁵ Gracián, *Sumario*, 1597: 158.

⁵⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux writes that to Joseph was given "not only to see and to hear what many kings and prophets had longed to see and did not see, to hear and did not hear, but even to carry Him, to take Him by the hand, to hug and kiss Him, to feed Him and to keep Him safe. " Further, Jean Gerson describes Joseph as Mary's "witness and guardian", and marvels that "he who carved out the dawn and the soul was subject to a carpenter". For Bernard, see *In laudibus Virginis Matris*, II.16 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1966): 34. For Gerson, see *Jean Gerson, Euvres completes*, 8:61, ed. Palemon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée, 1960-73). English translation for both taken from McGuire, "Becoming a Father and a Husband", 2011: 52, 54.

⁵⁷ McGuire, "Becoming a Father and a Husband", 2011: 50.

on God, and it is through this dependence and faith, and in his co-operation with the angel, that Jesus and Mary are kept safe.

Gracián aligns Joseph's role as *custos*, or guardian, with the offices of the Angels, the lowest choir, and the Cherubim. In his description, Gracián indicates the Angels are the "custodians and guardians of humankind", and that Joseph, in his protection of Jesus and Mary, clearly exercises this role.⁵⁸ With regards to the Cherubim, to whom are revealed "the ineffable secrets of eternal wisdom", Gracián draws a parallel with Joseph in his emphasis that the mysteries of the Incarnation were revealed to him and that he received, from the mouth of Jesus, secrets which many of the angels did not know.⁵⁹

Joseph is therefore presented as both protector of Mary and Jesus and as protector of the divine Mystery, further emphasising his role as champion of the Church Militant. The previous chapter considered the Holy Family as the nascent Church,⁶⁰ noting the description of Jesus as the "cornerstone" of the Church, resting upon the foundations of Mary (*Ecclesia*) and Joseph. Several Franciscan writers, including Peter John Olivi, Ubertine of Casale and Bartholomew, emphasise Joseph's protection of the Church through his role as guardian both of Mary and of the Christian faithful.⁶¹ This is indicated in the words of Peter John Olivi, who writes in his *Postilla super Matthaëum* that:

Joseph represents God the Father or Christ because he is the spouse of the Church; he is also the type of the bishops, spouses of the Church...And in the Christian religion which, like Mary, conceived the evangelical Word through the spirit of Christ, Joseph is also the image of the Roman pontiffs, instilled as guardians of the Church.⁶²

Joseph's protective role is given Scriptural basis in Matthew's emphasis that both the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt and their return to Israel work as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. In his conclusion to the account of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, Matthew writes:

⁵⁸ Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 205.

⁵⁹ *Cherubini sono essi chiamati con questo nome attribuendogli la considerazione de gli ineffabili misteri e segreti della divina Sapienza*. Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 205. English translation taken from Chorpenning, *Just Man*, 1993: 195.

⁶⁰ The Holy Family, in this light, is cast as the origin of the Church.

⁶¹ Wilson, *St Joseph in Renaissance Society and Art*, 5; W.R. Albury & G. M. Weisz. "St Joseph's Foot Deformity in Italian Renaissance Art", *Parergon* 28 (1), 2011: 99.

⁶² Peter John Olivi, *Postilla super Matthaëum*, chapter 1, question 1, 12. English translation taken from Richardson, "St Joseph, St Peter, Jean Gerson and the Guelphs", 2012: 262.

This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son” (Matt 2:15).

The flight of the Holy Family calls to mind three Old Testament “flights” which prefigure the flight of Jesus from Herod: Jacob’s flight from Esau (Gen 27:42-45); the Midianites’ selling of Joseph to Potiphar, counsellor to Pharaoh and commander of the Egyptian guard (Gen 37:36); and David’s escape from Saul (1 Sam 19:11-12).⁶³ These precedents substantiate Joseph’s role as guardian. Just as Israel had brought about the ancient covenant through exodus from its “state of slavery”, so too Joseph, whom Barbagallo describes as the “repository of and collaborator with the providential mystery of God”, guards even in exile him who brings the new covenant into being.⁶⁴ Joseph protects and fosters his family, the origin of the Church, and also offers protection to the body of believers to whom the new covenant has been revealed.

It is clear that Joseph’s guardianship of Jesus and Mary is only successful through his obedience to and trust in God. The subject of Joseph’s obedient and faithful guardianship features particularly in the writing of St John Chrysostom. In his eighth homily on the Gospel of Matthew, he writes:

Joseph, when he heard these things, was not offended, neither did he say, “This thing is hard to understand. Didst thou not say just now, that He should *save His people*? And now He saves not even Himself: but we must fly, and go far from home, and be a long time away: the facts are contrary to the promise.” Nay, none of these things doth He say, (for the man was faithful) neither is he curious about the time of his return; and this though the angel had put it indefinitely thus: *Be thou there until I tell thee*. But nevertheless, not even at this did He shudder, but submits and obeys, undergoing all the trials with joy.⁶⁵

Further, Chrysostom expresses the obedience of Joseph to the will of God even in the midst of trial:

And this because God, who is full of love to man, did with these hardships mingle things pleasant also; which indeed is His way with regard to all the saints, making neither their dangers nor their refreshments continual, but weaving the life of all righteous men, out of both the one and the other. This very thing He did here also.⁶⁶

⁶³ Barbagallo, *St Joseph in Art*, 2014: 59.

⁶⁴ This theme of going to Egypt in order to achieve salvation again parallels the story of Joseph of Egypt, who saves Israel. Barbagallo, *St Joseph in Art*, 2014: 61.

⁶⁵ Chrysostom, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, 1843: 111.

⁶⁶ Chrysostom, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, 1843: 111.

Additionally, in the Scriptural account of the Holy Family's return to Israel and eventual settlement in Nazareth, the life of Jesus is conducted according to the designs which are made manifest through the words of the angels to Joseph; therefore, Joseph's roles as father and husband were significant, as through them he ensured the protection of mother and child.⁶⁷

The image of Joseph as *custos*, or as a protector and guide in times of suffering, was significantly developed by Isidoro Isolano in his *Summa de Donis Sancti Ioseph*. Isolano completed his work in 1521, and in the following year dedicated it to the newly installed Pope Hadrian VI.⁶⁸ In his address to the Holy Father, Isolano describes the extent of Italy's suffering; it is a nation which is shaken by the turbulence of faction and flooded with the blood of the faithful, which weeps for its exiled citizens, moans at the sight of despoiled monastic houses, and is afflicted by the sight of clerics forced to beg.⁶⁹ Isolano, who describes himself as "an earthworm" and "not a man", writes that he offers at the foot of the papal throne his *Summa*, which contains the merits of him who was privileged to bear the name of "father of God."⁷⁰ Joseph is presented, in the *Summa*, as a powerful intercessor for and patron of the struggling Italy. Isolano urges Hadrian, by the faith of Abraham, by the direction of Moses, by the anointing of David, and by Peter's authority, to decree that the Church hold an annual feast in honour of Joseph which is solemn, joyful, and celebrated with proper observance, deep respect, and apostolic veneration.⁷¹ Isolano's desire for a universal, annual Josephine feast was eventually fulfilled in 1621.⁷²

The characterisation of Joseph the *custos* is seen in Giovanni Battista Paggi's altarpiece of the Holy Family's return from Egypt, completed ca. 1586 for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence (Plate 4.6.). Mary and the child Jesus walk hand-in-hand down a sloping hill, bathed in light, while behind them Joseph carries a haversack. He is surrounded by angels and *putti*; one gestures forward, indicating guidance, while another leads the donkey. While Joseph is here relegated to the background of the composition, he is still afforded the qualities

⁶⁷ Zuffetti, *L'uomo dei sette silenzi*, 2012: 113.

⁶⁸ Wilson, "St Joseph as *Custos*", 2002: 91.

⁶⁹ Isidoro Isolano, *Summa*, vol. 1, 1861: 4.

⁷⁰ Isidoro Isolano, *Summa*, vol. 1, 1861: 4.

⁷¹ Isidoro Isolano, *Summa*, vol. 1, 1861: 4, 6.

⁷² Wilson, "St Joseph as *Custos*", 2002: 91. Wilson notes here that Isolano's appeal to the Pope "richly merits attention", with consideration first of its immediate context (political and social), and second, in regard to the status of St Joseph as already established in central and northern Italy.

of guardian and protector through his forward movement, physical labour, and close interaction with the angels which, perhaps, communicates his virtue as “angelic man”.

Also salient is Caravaggio’s *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (Plate 4.7.), which was painted in 1594 and is housed in the Galleria Doria Pamphili in Rome.⁷³ This work shows the Holy Family set against a landscape. Mary sleeps, with the infant Jesus in her arms, while on the left of the composition Joseph, who is seated, holds a book of music from which an angel plays. Caravaggio has retained the depiction of Joseph as elderly, and the representation of the saint has been termed by Howard Hibbard as “simple”, particularly through his unshod feet and the juxtaposition of his head with that of the donkey.⁷⁴ It is, however, important to note that here, as with Galle’s engraving, Joseph is not a mere observer of the scene, or distanced from Mary and Jesus. Rather, he is an integral element of the composition, with the depiction of his cooperation with the angel, particularly in the playing of music, again conveying his virtue as an “angelic man” and emphasising his cooperation and harmony with the divine.

Gracián’s concluding doctrine to the Archconfraternity is centred on the brethren’s protection of their chastity and honesty. The author begins by presenting the Holy Family as unified by the virtues of chastity, virginity, and purity, and stresses the importance of cultivating these virtues with “every care and diligence” among the brethren.⁷⁵ He urges the brethren particularly to live in the image and spirit of the Virgin Mary who, like them, had been entrusted into the protection of Joseph, whom the epigram describes as her guardian by voice and by faith. Furthermore, Gracián writes that in times of temptation, the brethren should invoke with their lips and on their hearts the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, asking for their help in trial and believing without any doubt that the temptation will cease and they will soon reach “a state of perfect peace, and tranquillity, with greatest profit.”⁷⁶ This particular point of Gracián’s doctrine to the brethren bears a close link with the Book’s accompanying engraving and epigram, which shows Joseph himself experiencing trial, laden with tools and bearing Jesus on

⁷³ Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, *Caravaggio: The Artist and His Work* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2012): 69.

⁷⁴ Howard Hibbard, *Caravaggio* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983): 54-55.

⁷⁵ *Poi che dunque in questa compagnia di questa tre il tutto è castità, verginità, e purità, nella vostra compagnia di san Giosef è neccessario che queste cose con ogni cura, e diligenza, sieno tra i fratelli.* Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 279.

⁷⁶ *...e con la perseveranza in questa invocazione arriverete ad un perfetissimo stato di pace, e tranquillità, con profitto grandissimo.* Gracián, *Sommario*, 1597: 280.

his back, yet still carrying within himself the joy of guiding the Madonna and Child to their home in Israel.

Gracián's text cooperates harmoniously with Blancus' engraving and with the epigram in presenting Joseph as a relatable figure worthy of emulation by the brethren of the Archconfraternity. Gracián emphasises that while Joseph experienced great joys as husband of Mary and father of Jesus, he also experienced significant trial and tribulation, and this co-existence of joy and sorrow is depicted visually by Blancus. Furthermore, the representation of Joseph as perfectly fulfilling within himself the offices of the choirs of angels, and thus identifiable as an "angelic man", emphasises the greatness of his paternal responsibility and offers him as a suitable patron and intercessor for the *Summary*'s audience. This representation of the saint casts him as a figure with whom the brethren, some of whom would themselves have been married or heads of households, could identify. In depicting the saint in this way, the *Summary* ultimately works to stress that the Holy Family itself experienced the sufferings and trials of an ordinary family and presents them as a model of action, faith and perseverance for the Archconfraternity.