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The Fearsome Femme: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Lorenzo Sabatini's Giuditta con la testa di Oloferne

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THE FEARSOME FEMME: A PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF

LORENZO SABATINI'S GIUDITTA CON LA TESTA DI OLOFERNE

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
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The University of Texas at Tyler
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The University of Texas at Tyler

Tyler, Texas

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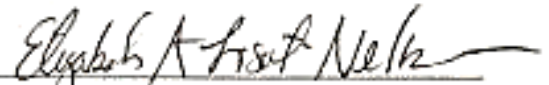has been approved for the thesis

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

THE FEARSOME FEMME: A PSYCHOANALYTIC INTERPRETATION OF
LORENZO SABATINI'S GIUDITTA CON LA TESTA DI OLOFERNE

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The University of Texas at Tyler
Fall 2019

Lorenzo Sabatini (c. 1530-1576), an Italian artist working in the Mannerist period of art, created a revolutionary bloody rendering of the biblical story of Judith decapitating Holofernes. The Bolognese artist, and his painting *Giuditta con la testa di Oloferne* (*Judith with the head of Holofernes*), has not been extensively written on by scholars, therefore, this study suggests an original interpretation of the artwork. Lorenzo Sabatini would likely have borne witness to a number of decapitations in Bologna, because they were typically executed in public urban courtyards. Maturing in this sort of environment can impact an artist's life. Through Lorenzo Sabatini's visual representation, as well as psychoanalytic writings by Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud and Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, the painting *Giuditta con la testa di Oloferne,* and its shocking composition will support the claim that it alludes to the male fear of strong women and castration anxiety. The Jungian archetypes are common themes that can be found within each period of art history, just as Freud's theory of castration anxiety has become a timeless archetypal threat. Both of the psychoanalysts' theories are present within this one sixteenth-century painting. Trepidation of the *femme fatale* can be found in Lorenzo Sabatini's gruesome rendering as well as the story found in the Book of Judith.

Chapter 1:
Introduction

The portrayal of decapitations was a very popular subject in art from the late *quattrocento* through the *seicento* in Italy. One of the most recognizable representations of a beheading in literature is the story of Judith of Bethulia and the Assyrian general or chief captain, Holofernes, which is found in the Catholic Bible, but is considered apocryphal by Protestants. The narrative ends with Judith, a rich widow turned heroine, beheading the highly intoxicated Assyrian general. Variations lie within the Book of Judith as they are found in the Septuagint, a translation of the Greek Old Testament and the Douay-Rheims Bible, a much later English translation of the Latin *Vulgate*. Jan Joosten, Biblical scholar and Professor of Hebrew explains that Jerome, the translator of the *Vulgate*, used Chaldee, an ancient Semitic language, to help guide his translation.[1] Lorenzo Sabatini (c.1530-1576) depicted the impactful story of Judith two dimensionally. Sabatini was born in Bologna, Italy and painted during the Italian Mannerist era of art. The Mannerist movement, derived from the *Maniera* style, was a transitional stage following the High Renaissance and preceding the Baroque. His version, *Giuditta con la testa di Oloferne*, translated as *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* (Figure 1) was executed in oil on canvas around 1562 and has not been extensively written about by scholars, despite having one of the most violent representations of this subject. The thesis argued here is that Lorenzo Sabatini's bloody rendering of a decapitation alludes to male fear of castration as well as the anxiety surrounding the *femme fatale*.

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[1] Jan Joosten and יוסטן יאן, "The Original Language and Historical Milieu of the Book of Judith" in *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls /* מגילות מוגשים לדבורה דימנט, *מחקרים במגילות מחקרים: מגילות* / *Dimant* יהודה מדבר במגילות / *Devorah for Festschrift A,* כרך ה/ו ח"ת (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, N.D.), 159.

The ferocity does not solely lie within the act of decapitation, but with the inclusion and location of the blood in addition to the iconography. Although the historiography is scarce on both Lorenzo Sabatini and his painting, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes,* both are relevant to the art historical canon, because the revolutionary portrayal of a gruesome decapitation differed from the typical Renaissance style. The posed but graceful elements of the Renaissance were found in the revival of Classical antiquity and portrayed beauty. Sabatini's painting was created a few decades after the end of the High Renaissance, and even though it has subtle references to Classical antiquity, it does not display an idealized, beautiful scene. However, according to scripture, Judith, the Jewish heroine was not only an exceptionally beautiful woman, she was also very cunning as she strategically planned the demise of Holofernes. At the time of Judith plotting her attack on the Assyrian conqueror, her husband, Manasses, was already deceased.[2] Judith was a widow surviving on her own, and rather than request a meeting with the men in charge, her female agency blossomed, and she summoned the elders of Bethulia to hear her plan to defeat the Assyrians.[3] Holofernes and the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, planned to lead the Assyrian army in an attack to destroy the Israelites. It was the Jewish heroine, Judith, who planned an attack on the opposing General. Jewish folklore explains how Holofernes quickly transitioned from sober to exceedingly drunk. After three days of staying in the Assyrian camp, Holofernes hosted a dinner for Judith and himself, during which she convinced him to try cheese she

[2] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 8:2-3) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 530.
[3] *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 8:10-11) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 336.

brought from Bethulia, a meal that would then make him very thirsty.[4] The Jewess

would have been aware that her salty cheese would have caused the general to quench his

thirst with wine, and thus, with each bite came a subsequent sip of alcohol.

The story of Judith is considered apocryphal, because it is a part of certain texts

that were excluded from the Old Testament Hebrew Bible. The Book of Judith was

believed by scholars to have been created in the second century, during the Maccabean

period, a time of Jewish revolt.[5] This story can be found within the Book of Judith and is

a part of Jewish folklore and legends. Deborah Levine Gera, Associate Professor of

Classics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, writes that Judith's Hebrew name is

Yehudit, which translates to Jewess.[6] Although the text can be found within Catholicism,

Judith is clearly a symbol for Judaism. The author of this sacred text was thought by

Biblical scholars to have been a high priest by the name of Eliachim, also called Joachim

(1st century BCE).[7] It is primarily believed that the Book of Judith originated in the

Hebrew vernacular, but more recently an argument has been made that the Septuagint,

the Greek translation, was the original source for this text.[8] Artists working on the Italian

peninsula would have known the story in the Latin *Vulgate*, but also from traditional

artistic depictions, which developed over time.

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[4] Nathan Ausubel, "Fighters and Strong Men" in *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore: The Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, Wisdom and Folk Songs of The Jewish People* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1948), 232.

[5] Jan Joosten and יאן יוסטן, "The Original Language and Historical Milieu of the Book of Judith" in *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls /* מגילות מוגשים לדבורה דימנט, *מחקרים במגילות* יהודה מדבר / Dimant Devorah for Festschrift A, כרך ה/ו ח"ת (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, N.D.), 168, 172.

[6] Deborah Levine Gera, "The Jewish Textual Tradition" in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 23.

[7] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (The Book of Judith Introduction) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 524.

[8] Jan Joosten and יאן יוסטן, "The Original Language and Historical Milieu of the Book of Judith" in *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls /* מגילות מוגשים לדבורה דימנט, *מחקרים במגילות* יהודה מדבר / Dimant Devorah for Festschrift A, כרך ה/ו ח"ת (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, N.D.), 160.

Lorenzo Sabatini's predecessors favored an idealized, bloodless, almost sterile, representation that did not alter until the end of Mannerism and the beginning of the Baroque period. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) and Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653), both from the Italian Baroque era, were two painters who gained notoriety by displaying the actual act of decapitation in two-dimensions. These two artists, both younger than Sabatini, created pictorial scenes that challenged Early Modern views of the story of Judith. Caravaggio's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (c. 1598) (Figure 2) and Artemisia Gentileschi's *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (c.1611) (Figure 3) display the figure of Judith in the midst of beheading Holofernes, a depiction that seemed to thrive during the dramatic era of Baroque art. Since Lorenzo Sabatini was working in the previous style, Mannerism, his rendering can be viewed as ahead of its time. Judith is fearsome in literary ideologies as she is the executioner of a male's decapitation, but Sabatini's muscular pictorial depiction also adds to the overall ferocity of Judith by instilling the panic of a strong woman and castration. According to the Catholic Bible, when it was decided that Judith was to visit the enemy camp, she shed the clothing of her widowhood, and adorned herself with her nicest *accoutrement*.[9] These accessories were meant to enhance Judith's beauty, and they did not hinder her in the severance of Holofernes' head.

The act of decapitation or beheading was a common form of execution in the Early Modern Era, and these public displays of capital punishment had multiple

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[9] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 10:2-3) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 532.

purposes.[10] Executions were not only about ending a life; they were also meant to educate. Nicholas Terpstra, Renaissance scholar and author of *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy*, writes that these executions were "…theatrical lessons in public retribution and social order, and like any staged presentation, the drama had to be didactic, cathartic, and compensatory- it had to teach lessons, release tensions, and pay the debt created by the crime."[11] Therefore, if someone was convicted of theft, assault, or murder, the public death was meant to display the effects of breaking the law. Since Lorenzo Sabatini was living and working in Bologna, it is likely that he would have been aware of these parameters when creating his painting of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*. The composition of this painting is presented, with the setting and participants, very much like an actual communal decapitation would have been, with an executioner, the convicted, and the crowd of onlookers.[12] The executioner is Judith, the convicted is the tyrannical Holofernes, and the spectators of the decapitation are the individuals viewing the artwork. Judith's direct gaze emphasizes the notion that individuals who view the painting are also the observers of a decapitation, just like Sabatini was. Regardless of Judith's gaze, many of the academic publications only briefly mention Sabatini, but no one expansively references his gory image of Judith and the Assyrian general.

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[10] Nicholas Terpstra, "Theory into Practice: Executions, Comforting, and Comforters in Renaissance Italy" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 125.

[11] Nicholas Terpstra, "Theory into Practice: Executions, Comforting, and Comforters in Renaissance Italy" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 125, 127.

[12] Adriano Prosperi, "Consolation or Condemnation: The Debates of Withholding Sacraments from Prisoners" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 100.

In this thesis, comparisons will be made between Lorenzo Sabatini's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and other renditions of the same subject matter. Theoretical writings will be used when comparing theological texts of Judith as well as artistic representations of Judith and Holofernes. This interpretation will be applied to Sabatini's painting in relation to the writings of Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961). Sabatini's Judith embodies the *femme fatale* that fuels Freud's castration anxiety and Jung's archetypes. Castration anxiety refers to the terror of a man losing or damaging his testicles and/or penis, specifically by a female force. The Jungian archetypes specific to Sabatini's painting are the anima and animus. The anima is the inner woman within the male psyche, and the animus is the inner man within the female psyche. Each theory supports and aligns with the other in Sabatini's work of art. Human psychology is not an exact science, meaning there is not absolute accuracy; therefore, both Jung and Freud have some truth and legitimacy to their ideas. The comparison of Sabatini's rendering versus those of his contemporaries will verify that these psychoanalytic theories are far more evident in the Sabatini version.

Chapter 2:
The Life of Lorenzo Sabatini and *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*

Lorenzo Sabatini can be classified as an Italian Mannerist painter within the art historical canon; however, his painting can be viewed as an early example of the Proto-Baroque style. Lorenzo Sabatini's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* is housed in the Palazzo Magnani, a Bolognese palace once belonging to Lorenzo Magnani (d.1604).[13] The Magnani family name was derived from *magnano*, meaning smith, blacksmith or trader of iron tool.[14] Lorenzo Magnani was a clear lover of the arts. He descended from a family of artisans, and the palace houses an entire room decorated by the famed Carracci family. This room was completed by Agostino, Annibale, and Ludovico Carracci, and decoration of the *stanza* presents the founding moments of Rome by twin brothers Romulus and Remus.[15] The Palazzo Magnani facilitates an in-depth connection between Lorenzo Magnani and the Bolognese artists, the Carracci family members and Lorenzo Sabatini, showing that Bolognese nobles and aristocrats were supportive of local artists. The frescoed room was created by three artists who, at the time, were not yet considered masters. These novice artists would have been aware of Lorenzo Sabatini and his paintings. Sabatini was twenty-five years older than Ludovico, eldest of the Carracci, which would make him a believable local mentor or influencer. At least two of the three Carracci, Agostino and Annibale, created engraved copies of Sabatini's work, now housed in two separate European locations. Agostino Carracci (1557-1602), not only

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[13] I traveled to Bologna, Italy where I visited the Palazzo Magnani and personally examined two paintings by Lorenzo Sabatini, *Judith with the head of Holofernes* and *Mary Magdalene*, July 18, 2018.
[14] "Palazzo Magnani" *Quadreria di Palazzo Magnani*, Accessed on December 3, 2018. http://quadreriapalazzomagnani.it/palazzo-magnani/?lang=en.
[15] "The Carracci" *Quadreria di Palazzo Magnani*, Accessed on October 1, 2019. http://quadreriapalazzomagnani.it/i-carracci/?lang=en.

painted this common biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, but also created at least two engravings of Lorenzo Sabatini's original painting of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (c.1579) (1577-1583) (Figures 4&5). Both artists, Carracci and Sabatini, were born in Bologna, Italy, though Sabatini was much older. Agostino Carracci was one of three family members, all from Bologna, to become well recognized artists. He was the older brother to Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), and the younger cousin to Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619). Lorenzo Sabatini apprenticed under well-known biographer and artist, Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) and even collaborated with him on certain artworks.[16] These interactions would have had a direct influence on Lorenzo Sabatini and may have affected his overall artistic style.

The collection of art found within Bologna's Palazzo Magnani features another painting executed by Lorenzo Sabatini. The first being his bloody rendition of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, and the second painting, displayed across from the prior, is *Mary Magdalene* (Figure 6). This work of art also features a sole female figure with a brawny stature. Mary Magdalene is clearly identified as a biblical figure; not only is her iconic ointment or perfume jar present in the background, but she also has a faint golden halo fashioned right above her head. Judith would also have been considered a saint by Catholics; however, the standard iconography is not present. Mary Magdalene was a woman whom Jesus held in high regard. She was the first individual to recognize the newly resurrected Christ, and she, rather than his ale disciples, was appointed messenger of his resurrection. She is mentioned in the gospels of Saint Mark and Saint Luke as being the woman who had seven demons cast out of her, and with this reputation, men

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[16] Jürgen Winklemann, "Lorenzo Sabatini detto Lorenzino da Bologna" in *Pittura Bolognese del '500* volume secondo, 595.

would have feared her.[17] Through the comparison of both Sabatini's female figures, it is

evident that not only was he knowledgeable about these female messengers of God, but

he also appreciated them. It was through the guidance of God, that Judith was able to

decapitate Holofernes and end any further destruction the Assyrians would have done to

God's chosen people, the Israelites.

Lorenzo Sabatini did not paint any obvious religious identifiers in his painting of

Judith, aside from her typical iconography. Many artistic representations feature Abra,

Judith's trusty maidservant, which was quite common in typical renderings of Judith

beheading Holofernes. One of the most distinguishable facets of Sabatini's scene is the

inclusion of the general's armor. In the foreground, Sabatini's painted a decorative

helmet, resembling a shell, and in Judith's right hand, she holds the bloody weapon she

used to end his life. Through the heroine's valiant act, she became a figure representing

strength and bravery.

Nathan Ausubel, historian and Jewish folklore specialist, explains that the tale of

Judith of Bethulia was a favorite of the Jewish people throughout many centuries, and has

primarily been regarded as a folktale but can also be understood as a means of

regenerating heroism among the Jews during the time of their oppression and decline.[18]

The Book of Judith is found within the Catholic Old Testament, but is still considered

lore to the Jews. Judith might not have been an actual living person; however, she can be

identified as a symbol of strength and heroism for the Hebrew people. It was the valiant

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[17] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Mark 16:9) (Luke 8:2) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 63, 76.

[18] Nathan Ausubel, "Fighters and Strong Men" in *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore: The Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, Wisdom and Folk Songs of The Jewish People* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1948), 224.

Judith who used cunning and physical strength to end any further torment done by the enemies of the Israelites. Therefore, Judith is a symbol for perseverance and justice for both Jews and Catholics. Holofernes may have been enamored with Judith's beauty, but it was her intelligence and astuteness that allowed her to be victorious over the Assyrian general. Both the Septuagint's Book of Judith and the Douay-Rheims Bible, specify that Judith calls Holofernes "my lord," which can be viewed as a clear attempt at flattering his ego as well as ensuring her own personal safety.[19] Judith was devoutly religious, therefore her calling of the Assyrian general the respectful term, "my lord" shows that she was obviously clever. Holofernes' depiction by Sabatini, however, is anything but dignified.

Lorenzo Sabatini's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* is a compositionally awkward painting. It displays a foreshortened, headless Holofernes lying on a bed with a green canopy hanging above him. The composition uses dramatic foreshortening, similar to Sabatini's rendering of Mary Magdalene. The painting does not feature a full-length Judith and Holofernes, but rather a three-quarter length Judith and a half-length Holofernes. Only a table with an ornate bordering separates the standing heroine and the horizontal general. The table not only acts as a place holder for the severed head and helmet, but it also becomes a metaphorical anchor for the artwork, making it lack any true movement. The skin tone of the Assyrian general's severed head does not match that of his headless torso. The pallor of his head is gray, suggesting a lack of blood flow. Since the general's pigment is lighter than expected, it is possible that he may have spent

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[19] *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 12:18) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 339; *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 12:18) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 534.

more time commanding his army from a tent than on the actual battlefield. In comparison to Judith's pigmentation, Holofernes' is only a shade or two darker. Judith was a widow and believed to stay indoors for prayer. The despotic general's skin tone was not drastically different than that of a woman who spent most of her time praying and devoted to God. If a viewer were to erase or block out the headless body, the painting would only feature Judith, the head of Holofernes, and the table displaying the helmet and severed head. This composition, without the foreshortened body of Holofernes, is reminiscent of the Renaissance style, which was posed and static. The inclusion of the table, a sturdy, motionless object, contributes to the lack of movement primarily found within the Renaissance style of art. The detached head of Holofernes and his military helmet rest on the table which emphasizes the stationary nature. Judith stands under the green canopy that drapes over Holofernes' bed, she displays her trophy in one hand and the bloody weapon in the other.

The pose of the Jewish heroine, one arm raised holding the sword while the other fondles the beard of the enemy, suggests a staged pose with an artist's model. A triumphant Judith holds her sword erect while staring into the eyes of the viewer. An artist who worked in the Italian Renaissance style was the Venetian, Giorgio da Castlefranco, better known as Giorgione (1478-1510). His painting, *Judith* (1504) (Figure 7) displays a beautiful rendering of the Jewish heroine with her left leg resting on the severed head of Holofernes. The pose of Giorgione's Judith and her tender grasp of the sword match the posed ideals of the Renaissance style. Giorgione paints Judith with a leg resting on the general's head, coinciding with the stable, motionless table that is found within Sabatini's composition.

It is conceivable that Lorenzo Sabatini may have added the bloody, foreshortened body of Holofernes as an afterthought, because it is somewhat awkward. Another questionable facet of the painting is the musculature of Holofernes compared to that of Judith's. The decapitated general has defined shoulder muscles, but lacks any definition in his pectoral area, and his chest seems concave; this makes the warrior appear far less formidable. If it were not for the inclusion of Holofernes' left hand, it would be difficult to determine which way his body is facing. Holofernes' scapula, or shoulder blade, protrudes out farther than his would-be pectoral muscles. Judith's forearms and biceps are also bulging in comparison to the general's. This unimpressive physique contrasts with his savage ruthlessness portrayed in the beginning of the Book of Judith. Although the vicious general brutally conquered vast territories, his tent was described as a very plush and comfortable dwelling.[20] This is not displayed in Sabatini's rendering of Judith, but Holofernes' canopy is described in both the Septuagint and Douay-Rheims as woven with purple and gold and decorated with emeralds and other precious stones.[21] Given Lorenzo Sabatini's probable knowledge of the Old Testament, it is possible that he disregarded Holofernes' famed reputation as a conqueror. Therefore, Judith, the decapitator, must have a larger musculature than Holofernes, the decapitated. This size disparity between these two figures furthers the notion that this painting, as well as the story of Judith, coincide with the idea of castration anxiety and fearing the *femme fatale*, who is willing and able to chop off body parts.

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[20] *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 3:8) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 333.

[21] The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 10:19) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000, 532; *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 10:21) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 338.

Judith's ensanguined hand holds a bloodstained sword erect, while her other hand is entangled in the beard of the Assyrian general. Judith is not only garbed in red, amplifying the bloodshed, but she is also dressed in a type of battle regalia. The flushed expression on the heroine's face is presumably due to overexertion and deep anxiety. The biblical text states that "…Judith stood before the bed praying with tears, and the motion of her lips in silence."[22] This biblical quote allows the viewers to understand Lorenzo Sabatini's rendering of Judith's expression. She was determined to find the strength to complete her task.

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[22] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 13:6) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 535.

Chapter 3:
Iconography

The hidden symbols or iconography of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* hold high importance in the overall argument of displaying fear of a strong woman. In Lorenzo Sabatini's painting, Judith wears a golden aegis with a woman's head projecting outwards from the breastplate. This is presumably the mythological beauty turned beast, Medusa, and is ultimately a direct reference to the Roman warrior goddess, Minerva or her Greek counterpart, Athena. Minerva was not only the goddess of wisdom, war, and battle strategy, but she was also one of the few goddesses who was a virgin. Therefore, Sabatini placed a reference to a goddess honored for her virginity in a scene that, throughout time, has been viewed as salacious. Judith was a widowed woman and, according to Jewish custom, would have abstained from sex after the death of her husband. In addition to the inclusion of the golden aegis, Sabatini also painted epaulets, the ornamental shoulder pieces found on a military uniform. The adornment of the aegis or breastplate, in addition to the epaulets, insinuates that Judith was prepared for battle, channeling two of the fiercest female warriors from antiquity. Minerva was a goddess, a much higher status than any mortal man, but she was also very strategic in her actions. Medusa was one of the most feared monsters found in classical antiquity and is viewed as a symbol of the male fear of a strong woman.

Sabatini's painting *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* may be pictorially jarring, but it can be categorized as an accurate historical and theological portrayal of what would have transpired between the Jewess and the Assyrian, according to the literary account. The inanimate objects present in this painting would have been deliberately picked by Sabatini, because they are far too detailed and relevant to the story to be selected at

random. The placement of Medusa on armor or weapons was very prevalent in the

Italian Renaissance, because of its reference to classical antiquity, defined as *all'antica*,

or in the manner of the ancients. Medusa, in her Gorgon form, became a good luck

symbol in battle. Carolyn Springer, Italian language and literature scholar, states that in

typical parade armor, Medusa was "…a political apotropaion, a symbol of the power of

the state…and a construction of masculinity."[23] Since her appearance was so feared, the

inclusion of her head was meant to stun the opponent or protect the wearer from

oncoming attacks. This is a shift in gender play, because Medusa's face is being used on

a very masculine object. It was in the best interest of men to capitalize on the apotropaic

image of Medusa when creating armor in the Italian Renaissance. The monstrous female

face became the most common motif found on parade armor in the *cinquecento*.[24] She

was highly feared in Roman and Greek mythos, so including her portrait on armor would

hopefully continue instilling fear in men without her actually being present. She is one of

the ultimate symbols of the *femme fatale*, because she claimed so many male victims.

Aligning Medusa with Judith furthers the connection of the Jewish heroine with the

femme fatale mythos and an emblem of castration anxiety in the male viewers. Another

example of fear being imparted through one's armor is found within Homer's *The Iliad*,

when Hektor's son, Astyanax, was terrified of his father's animalistic helmet.[25] Even

though Astyanax was just a child, the same reaction would have been intended during

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[23] Carolyn Springer, "The Grotesque Body: Tropes and Apotropes" in *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 56.
[24] Ibid., 55.
[25] Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 165.

battle. Armor was meant to disguise the imperfect with the perfect as a way of protecting

humanity due to its lack of primal defenses.[26]

Similar to the aegis, another subtle reference executed by Sabatini is his detailed

rendering of the sword. The Septuagint names the sword as being a *fauchion*, sometimes

referred as falchion.[27] The rendering of the sword in the painting is highly detailed and

may have been loosely based on an actual weapon that Sabatini observed during his

lifetime. The arrival of the *fauchion* in Europe is believed to have occurred during the

Crusades.[28] The sword features a lion on the pommel, or bottom part of the sword's

handle. There are also lions located on either side of the swords' quillon. In the story of

Judith, it is understood that she used the sword of Holofernes to decapitate him.

According to Josephine Massyngbaerde Ford, emerita professor of theology at the

University of Notre Dame, lions were symbols for the Assyrians.[29] Including these

felines on the sword accentuates the fact that Holofernes was decapitated by his own

weapon. Since Judith used the sword of Holofernes to sever his head, and lions were

symbolically tied with Assyrians, this points to Sabatini being a very well-educated man.

A different connotation for the inclusion of lions on the sword is a reference to

Judith's religion suggesting the Lion of Judah.[30] Regardless, lions can be symbols of

strength and superiority, and the inclusion of this specific animal is relevant in both

instances. A separate work of art attributed to Sabatini is part of the University of

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[26] Carolyn Springer, "The Grotesque Body: Tropes and Apotropes" in *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 30.
[27] *LXX Septuagint*, Edited by Lancelot Brenton, 339 (Judith 13:6)
[28] D. H. Gordon, "Scimitars, Sabres and Falchions" in *Man*, Vol. 58 (United Kingdom: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1958), 25.
[29] Josephine Massyngbaerde Ford, "Jewish Law and Animal Symbolism" in *Journal for Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1979), 207.
[30] "Jewish Concepts: The Lion," *Jewish Virtual Library: A Project of Aice*, accessed on January 8, 2019. https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-lion-in-judaism.

Bologna's foundation, *Fondazione Federico Zeri*, titled *San Lorenzo, San Michele Arcangelo* (Figure 8).[31] It features a similar feline to Judith's located on the pommel of Saint Michael's sword. Sabatini had clearly taken a liking to portraying exotic cats on swords, which adds to the overall violence that the weapon exudes.

Lorenzo Sabatini's representation of Judith is even more fearsome with the inclusion of Medusa, the mythological *femme fatale*. The painting is bloodier and fiercer than many of its predecessors, but the golden aegis aligns with Judith's battle apparel and the virgin goddess of wisdom and war. Judith can be seen as both a sword wielding heroine and a wise woman who planned to end any further attacks on the Israelites by the Assyrians. Sabatini must have been quite familiar with both mythology and Renaissance armor. Whether he viewed armor in person or through other artistic visual renderings is unclear, but by his own artistic interpretation, it is certain that these objects are too detailed and specific to be generalized.

Another highly detailed object in Sabatini's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* is the shell-like helmet found lying on the table next to the Assyrian generals severed head. The helmet of Holofernes resembles a type of mollusk shell, similar to that of a snail or conch. The circular detail of the helmet is far too prominent to be overlooked. Unlike typical representations of Judith beheading Holofernes, the sword in Sabatini's painting is not the only sharp object present. The helmet features two cheek plates with each side resembling that of a sharp blade. Holofernes' severed head, ironically, lies next to his helmet, a tool created to protect one's head from oncoming attacks. Lorenzo Sabatini has

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[31] Sabatini Lorenzo, "San Lorenzo, San Michele Arcangelo" *Fondazione Federico Zeri Università Di Bologna*. Accessed on October 1, 2019.
http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/scheda.v2.jsp?id=40361&apply=true&decorator=layout_resp&titolo =Sabatini+Lorenzo%2C+San+Lorenzo%2C+San+Michele+Arcangelo&tipo_scheda=OA&locale=en.

created a scene displaying the aftermath of Judith and Holofernes' struggle. The inclusion of Holofernes' armor within this painting would have been evocative of a bloody battle scene, even though it was more a battle of wits, rather than a battle featuring physical combat.

An aspect of Sabatini's painting that is beneficial to the theory of castration anxiety is the large presence of blood. This work is far more gruesome than a number of Lorenzo Sabatini's predecessors. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), scientist from Pisa, Italy, and his "theory of projectile motion" was not known until the seventeenth century.[32] The arterial spurt of blood is far more dramatic in later renderings, because these paintings featured the actual action of decapitation. Two famous Baroque painters, Caravaggio (c.1571-1610) and Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653), were known for their representations of decapitations in process. It was the talented Artemisia Gentileschi, daughter of painter Orazio Gentileschi and follower of Caravaggio, who captured Galileo Galilei's parabolic motion in her 1620 painting, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. (Figure 9) The theory states that "…when an object or a particle-called a projectile- is thrown near the earth's surface, it moves along a curved path (a parabola) under the action of gravity."[33] It is very possible that Artemisia Gentileschi knew of this theory from her friendship with Galileo Galilei, because there are surviving letters between the two.[34]

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[32] A. Perciaccante, P. Charlier, A. Coralli, R. Bianucci. "'There will be blood'. Differences in the pictorial representation of the arterial spurt of blood in Caravaggio and followers" in *European Journal of Internal Medicine*. Accessed February 23, 2019. https://www.ejinme.com/article/S0953-6205(16)30179-0/pdf.
[33] Ibid.
[34] This journal, found in the *European Journal of Internal Medicine*, was executed by medical professionals; therefore, they would have most likely not been aware of Mary Garrard's monograph on Artemisia Gentileschi, detailing the relationship between Artemisia Gentileschi and Galileo Galilei through a written letter. See Mary Garrard, "Appendix A: The Letters of Artemisia Gentileschi" in *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 383.

The arterial blood spurt in Sabatini's painting appears to fall downward; however, the parabolic motion appears subtle because Holofernes' body is viewed straight on and is, thus, foreshortened. The likeliness of the artist witnessing public decapitations is very high, and his view of this beheading may have influenced his use of extreme foreshortening. The anatomical inaccuracies in the bisected neck may have been a result of a poor viewing of the decapitation. Thus, Lorenzo Sabatini and his bloody depiction can be viewed as an early attempt in capturing the blood spewing from the arteries after the head has been severed. The inconsistencies of the spurt of blood are found within other pictorial depictions in the act of a beheading. Oddly, the violence was often paired together with erotic overture.

It was not uncommon for artistic representations of Holofernes' decapitation to display the heroine as oversexualized, but the Bible does not state that she removed her clothes or bared her breasts while the beheading was happening. The Book of Judith loosely alludes to the fact that Judith seduced the Assyrian general; however, male artists still created their own artistic depictions based on personal interpretations. Giorgio Vasari, introduced earlier as one of the most well-known artists and biographers, created his representation of Judith as a warrior, titled *Judith and Holofernes* (Figure 10), located in the Saint Louis Art Museum. This painting, dated 1554, around eight years prior to Sabatini's, also features subtle references to classical antiquity. The first is the reclining figures situated right around her waistline. This decorative, yet practical accessory acts as a sort of belt keeping her clothes tight and on her body. Along the ornamentation located on Judith's left shoulder, an elliptical shape displays a woman with what is presumably a shield resting along her right leg. This is most likely another representation

of the warrior goddess, Minerva. This reference pairs easily with his depiction of

Judith's elaborate combination of battle regalia and gown. This furthers the evidence that

it was common for artists to blend religious stories and iconography with pagan or

mythological ones.

Giorgio Vasari's Judith is wearing a skin-tight garment over her midriff. Similar

to Sabatini's Judith, her musculature is prominent and even though she may appear

topless, she wears a tight-fitting bodice. Regardless, Holofernes would still have found

her revealing tunic tantalizing. Lorenzo Sabatini's representation features a fully clothed

Judith; however, she has firm nipples. This may easily be interpreted as evidence of

sexual stimulation, but this also could have happened as a result from overexertion during

the decapitation. The heroine is employing a tremendous amount of energy, not only to

restrain the fierce general, but also to end his life via decapitation. Many scholars have

argued that Judith seduced Holofernes, and that can be validated through Biblical

interpretation, but Holofernes is hardly ever referred to as a seducer as well, yet many of

the renderings feature a muscular and shirtless Holofernes. The absence of Holofernes'

top, as well as the question of what, if anything, is he wearing under the white cloth,

suggests he aimed to use his physicality as an act of seduction, or even planned to take

Judith by force.

Many scholars have suggested that Baroque artists such as Caravaggio and

Artemisia Gentileschi may have been present at the public decapitation of Beatrice Cenci

(1577-1599) in Rome, a woman charged with patricide.[35] This easily could have been

inspiration for their bloody and gruesome renderings of Judith beheading Holofernes.

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[35] Andrew Graham-Dixon, "Rome, 1599-1606" in *Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 253-254.

Nicholas Terpstra published a table that displayed the numerical amount of public executions in Bologna.[36] (Table 1) This table allows inference of Lorenzo Sabatini's exposure to public decapitations in Bologna.

Lorenzo Sabatini did not die in Bologna; his life ended in Rome, but the majority of his early life was spent in his home city. Since he was born around the year 1530, the table shows that during the first nine or so years of his life there was only one decapitation; however, between 1540-1549, there were thirty-three decapitations.[37] It is difficult to suppose that Sabatini would have been present at the sole decapitation before the age of ten, but it is likely the artist was exposed to at least some of the thirty-three public decapitations performed in those later nine years. Sabatini was also born during a very crucial time in Bologna. In the early months of 1540, Bologna began to suffer from a famine that eventually tripled food prices in a year, as well as an epidemic that affected the city's population.[38] With the increase of food prices and the fear of dying from the plague, it is easy to believe that crime and violence arose among Bolognese natives. With the rise of capital offences came abundant public executions.

Massimo Ferretti, conservation expert and art historian with a special focus on Bologna, concluded that Annibale Carracci would have witnessed criminals hanging from two prime locations in Bologna: Palazzo del Podestà on Piazza Maggiore and Mercato del Monte, a market square.[39] Carracci's viewing of the public executions in

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[36] Nicholas Terpstra, "Theory into Practice: Executions, Comforting, and Comforters in Renaissance Italy" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 127.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 119.
[39] Massimo Ferretti, "In Your Face: Paintings for the Condemned in Renaissance Italy" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 81.

comparison to Sabatini's only differ in terms of the execution style. Similar to the claim that Sabatini possibly created *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* after viewing multiple public decapitations, Annibale Carracci supposedly created his pen and ink drawing, *The Hanging* (Figure 11) after his viewing of publicly hanged criminals in his home city of Bologna. A differing aspect of these executions is how they were rendered two-dimensionally. Based on Carracci's representation, his drawing likely depicts an actual hanging that he witnessed, whereas Sabatini displays his knowledge of decapitations in relation to the story with the Jewish heroine decapitating the Assyrian general. In Carracci's favor, hangings were the most common form of execution, because those condemned were charged with minor crimes, like theft or assault whereas gruesome decapitations were carried out on political convicts of a certain social standing, heads of society, who committed treason or an assassination of a peer.[40]

In addition to the visible bloodshed, Judith is garbed in red which intensifies the overall sanguine tonality of the artwork. The painting features multiple shades of red throughout. Judith's dress, as well as the blood coming from Holofernes' neck, are partially cast in shadow darkening the primary red pigment. It is believed that before embarking on her trip to the Assyrian camp, Judith dressed herself in her finest clothing and jewels.[41] However, at first glance, Sabatini's Judith does not quite match the biblical text or the images of his predecessors. Michel Pastoureau, historian and specialist in the history of color writes that beautiful reds were called scarlet, and the term *escarlate*

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[40] Nicholas Terpstra, "Theory into Practice: Executions, Comforting, and Comforters in Renaissance Italy" in *The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 125.
[41] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 10:2-3) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 532.

originally described all expensive fabrics of any color; however, these luxurious fabrics were typically found in red.[42] Since this sixteenth-century painting does not feature any jewels or ornamentation on Judith's person, aside from the solid gold, decorative aegis, it is possible that her red frock would have been one of her nicest possessions. As a viewer of this painting, it is difficult to decipher the quality of her clothing, but Pastoureau's research on the history of the color red suggests that this article of clothing would have been of high value. The gristly nature of Sabatini's artwork displays the ferocity of Judith, and if she were to accidently get splashes of Holofernes' blood on her dress, it would be unnoticeable. This subtle aspect displays Judith's cunning awareness of what will eventually transpire, adding to her overall fearsomeness and furthering the argument that she would cause men to fear such a strong woman and possibly suffer from castration anxiety.

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[42] Michel Pastoureau, "The Favorite Color: Love, Glory, and Beauty" in *Red: The History of a Color*, translated by Jody Gladding (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 90.

Chapter 4:
To Decapitate is To Castrate

Decapitation can be viewed as a gruesome act of punishment or execution. This form of death would have instilled fear into men and women, but the story of Judith and Holofernes would have affected each gender differently. It is possible that women would have viewed Judith's triumph over the Assyrian general as a victory against the patriarchal society that dominated their lives. Men, seeing a combat-trained general decapitated by a woman, might have become fearful of being the next to fall victim to feminine wiles. In the mindset of Sigmund Freud, these men would have suffered from castration anxiety. Freud introduces the act of decapitation as a symbol representative of castration in his *Interpretation of Dreams*, published in English in 1913.[43] Lorenzo Sabatini was a sixteenth-century man, and Freud lived during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but Freud's theory on castration anxiety is archetypal and can be traced back to different civilizations.

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, a term he first used in 1896.[44] Freud was an active medical professional, who wrote based upon his own research. His use of castration anxiety in regard to different symbols or acts, specifically decapitation, can be applied to Lorenzo Sabatini and his painting of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*. Once a man has been beheaded, he is no longer, in Early Modern views, the dominant sex; nor is he able to procreate and produce the perfect male heir. Sabatini's painting is compositionally different from many of those by

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[43] Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams" in *Freud-Complete Works*, Edited by Ivan Smith from James Strachey translation (2010), 821.
[44] "Vita Sigmund Freud" Sigmund Freud Museum. Accessed on March 9, 2019. https://www.freud-museum.at/en/sigmund-and-anna-freud/vita-sigmund-freud.html.

his contemporaries; the bloodshed and the location of the blood would have caused a different reaction than the idealized renderings found in the Renaissance. In Italian Renaissance ideologies, a man's masculinity gained importance in contrast to femininity.[45] Gender roles were very prominent during this era, making women subservient to their male counterparts. According to Androniki Dialeti, historian with an interest in Early Modern Italian gender history, the majority of Early Modern Italian men believed that women were helpless victims.[46] In line with these sexist views, it would be quite surprising for a man to come in contact with a fearsome woman who did not align with the social norm.

Lorenzo Sabatini strategically placed blood within this artwork, creating an overall terrifying composition. Both of Judith's hands are stained with the blood of the Assyrian enemy. Blood also gushes from the recently severed head, staining the table. The foreshortened body of Holofernes displays a bloody hole where his head would have attached to the rest of his body. The gaping hole could be compared with an actual castrated or fully dismembered man with Holofernes' arms mimicking two legs. Sabatini has painted this hole in a manner that even conveys sexual penetration, furthering the question of Holofernes masculinity. The placement of blood would have reinforced Judith's fierceness in comparison to Holofernes' lack thereof. The helmet of Holofernes is also placed in the forefront of the painting, contrasting the severed head with what was ultimately meant to protect his head. The helmet, as a shell-like object, matches Freud's

[45] Androniki Dialeti, "Defending Women, Negotiating Masculinity in Early Modern Italy" in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.
[46] Ibid., 5.

idea of a snail acting as a symbol for genitalia.[47] Freud does not specify a gender for the

genitalia, but it is most likely a reference to the vagina. It is unknown as to whether or

not Sabatini purposefully referenced genitalia, but if so, this would be a subtle allusion to

Holofernes' lack of masculinity, especially compared to the rendering of Judith. In

addition to Holofernes' armor and his depiction as the helpless victim of a woman, the

monstrous Medusa was a mythological character that instilled fear into men, furthering

the question of men's masculinity.

According to Mythology, anyone who makes eye contact with Medusa will be

turned into stone. Since the majority of individuals who sought out to kill Medusa were

men, and they were turned to stone, Freud associates the stiffness of stone with that of an

erection.[48] Sadly for Medusa's male victims, the transformation into stone was their final

erection. With the inclusion of Medusa in Sabatini's painting, the fear of being castrated,

literally and figuratively, is now translated into the rendering of the fearsome Judith. The

inclusion of Medusa on Judith's breastplate was also a reference to Minerva. Freud

writes that Athena, Minerva's Greek counterpart, would cause fear in men, because she

was not only a virgin goddess, but also unapproachable and repellant to sexual desires.[49]

Judith, who lost her husband years before, had no intention of actually having sexual

relations with Holofernes, but she was aware that this seductive approach would be

successful in disarming a man. Since Judith was a widow, and had refrained from sexual

intercourse, she would not have broken her vow of celibacy with the enemy's general.

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[47] Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams" in *Freud-Complete Works*, Edited by Ivan Smith from James Strachey translation (2010), 821.
[48] Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head" in *Freud-Complete Works*, Edited by Ivan Smith from James Strachey translation (2010), 3,943.
[49] Ibid.

Lorenzo Sabatini's reference to Medusa pairs with Freud's study of the mythological monster. Similar to the shell's comparison to genitalia, Freud aligns snakes or serpents with a man's penis.[50]

Medusa has been regarded as having serpents for hair. Since Freud likened a snake to a penis, Medusa, in Freudian psychoanalysis, is decorated with male organs, making her the ultimate phallic symbol or destroyer of male virility. Since men were immediately turned to stone, she, with her bouquet of penises, was the ultimate power wielder. Medusa, after her transformation into a monstrous femme, became one of the most feared individuals of all time. Men, other than Perseus, would have had to accept that they could not control or defeat this woman. When Medusa was eventually executed, Perseus, a fearsome warrior himself, continued using her abilities in combat. Minerva, Medusa, and Judith have different modes of fearsomeness, but each would have instilled the same threat of being castrated by a powerful woman.

Sigmund Freud's first instance of the threat of castration was in his study of a young male subject, Herbert, called Hans. The adolescent boy references his penis as a "widdler," and even questions his mother by asking "…have you got a widdler too?"[51] Not only does his mother state that she indeed has a widdler, but she tells Hans that if he does not cease to play with his penis, she will summon a doctor to cut it off.[52] Although Hans was young and might not have known any better, this began Freud's interest in the fear or threat of being castrated. The castration complex was primarily used during the

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[50] Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams" in *Freud-Complete Works*, Edited by Ivan Smith from James Strachey translation (2010) 821.
[51] Sigmund Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy" in *Freud-Complete Works*, Edited by Ivan Smith from James Strachey translation (2010), 2,003.
[52] Ibid.

infantile stages of a child, but it is possible that this fear, which began in a man's youth, would then manifest into his adulthood. In Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* of 1939, he argues that male circumcision is the symbolic equal to being castrated, which is similar to his pairing of decapitation and castration.[53] Removing a man's foreskin does not render most men sterile or impotent, but, in Freudian ideologies, it removes a man's manhood. In the Book of Ezekiel, it is stated that one of the many civilizations that were uncircumcised were the Assurs, or the Assyrians.[54] Thus, Holofernes would have been uncircumcised and, in accordance with Freud's thinking, he would have been a man possessing all of his manhood. It is likely that circumcision would have been viewed as a type of mutilation, because of the removal of a portion of the penis. Hans was obviously threatened with the severing of his widdler, but it is likely that men would have feared any modification to their genitalia, including the removal of their foreskin and their testicles.

In accordance with Lorenzo Sabatini's rendering of Judith and Holofernes, it would be Judith causing the fear that Hans' mother instilled into him. Lorenzo Sabatini and his contemporaries would not have been cognizant of the actual "complex" of castration anxiety, but they would be familiar with the fear of losing one's manhood to a fierce woman. In the Early Modern era, male members of the court and those trained in Humanism were more likely to have a pro-women outlook.[55] Educated women were more likely to be found among the elite. In addition to being of a high social status and

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[53] Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Translated by Katherine Jones (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1939), 147.
[54] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Ezekiel 32:17-32) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 927-928.
[55] Androniki Dialeti, "Defending Women, Negotiating Masculinity in Early Modern Italy" in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

class, elite females were also more intellectual than the average woman. With the demeaning views of the average male, it is possible that from this viewpoint emerged the fear of a physically and mentally strong woman.

It can be inferred that there is not enough bloodshed present to be comparable to an actual decapitation; however, the actual amount of blood would make this painting off-putting to the Renaissance male viewer. Another strikingly terrifying aspect of Lorenzo Sabatini's painting is the inclusion of Judith's left hand intertwined within the beard of Holofernes. She has not only executed the very masculine act of decapitation, but she is also fondling her trophy. The Jewish heroine is no longer the meek and frail widow; she has become a warrior striking fear into anyone who threatens her and her people. With the location and action of Judith's hand, she is subtly showing the consequences of facing a fearsome woman.

The final instance of Judith of Bethulia's relationship to Freud's castration anxiety is with the biblical character, Achior, general or captain of the Ammonites.[56] In the biblical story, when Judith returned to Bethulia with the head of Holofernes, Achior, stunned by the work of Judith and her God, circumcised himself and converted to Judaism.[57] As stated earlier, Freud equated circumcision with castration; therefore, Judith, with the decapitation of Holofernes and circumcision of Achior, has become the ultimate representation of Freud's castration anxiety. The removal of any part of a man's genitalia by non-Jews would have mostly been viewed as a type of disfigurement;

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[56] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 5:5) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 527.

[57] *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 14:10) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 340; *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 14:6) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 536.

however, Achior, through Judith's actions, immediately removed his foreskin to align with the Jewish faith. A Gentile was so moved by Judith's act, he left his own religion and believed in God. The feared Assyrian general also had a loyal follower who would further the questioning of his masculinity, a eunuch.

A eunuch was a castrated man who has lost his testicles, leading to his sterility. Although this was typically viewed as a punishment, it was not uncommon for a eunuch to be an official or commander.[58] Supposedly, if a man was castrated before puberty, he would cease to have impure thoughts and sexual urges. Piotr O. Scholz, author of *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History*, writes that "Eunuchs were not simply 'bedchamber attendants,' as the Greek term suggests. Nor were they always slaves, as some authors stress. They could just as well be ascetics, priests, magicians, scholars, physicians, military commanders, admirals, or senior officials at the courts of both eastern and western rulers."[59] Unfortunately for Holofernes' eunuch, Bagoas, sometimes referred to as Vagoas, he was not considered an official or commander in the Assyrian army. Holofernes was a loyal supporter of the King of Babylon and leader of the Assyrian army, so it is unlikely that he would have wanted someone who, at the time, was not considered a full man to be of an equal ranking. Bagoas was likely seen as the literal translation of the word eunuch, a bedchamber attendant or as a slave, rather than a high-ranking individual. Certain verses found in the biblical narrative hint at Holofernes' unfair treatment of his eunuch. Ironically, after Judith and Abra escaped, it was the eunuch who entered the tent and found the headless body of the Assyrian general. The

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[58] Francois P. Retief, Louis Cilliers, "Introduction" in *Eunuchs in the Bible* (University of the Free State Bloemfontein: Acta Theologica Supplementum 7, 2005), 247.
[59] Piotr O. Scholz, "Preface" in *Eunuchs and Castrati: A Cultural History*, Translated by John A. Broadwin and Shelley L. Frisch (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), ix.

decapitation of Holofernes furthers the argument of pairing it with castration and circumcision.

Circumcision was a very popular theme in the Bible, specifically for the Israelites. The contrast between the circumcised and uncircumcised became a way for the Jews to set themselves apart from the Gentiles. Another biblical character who executed a decapitation and was linked with the act of circumcision was David, the slayer of Goliath. In the Book of Samuel, sometimes referred to as the First Book of Kings, David brought back two-hundred foreskins of the Philistines.[60] To the Israelites and all Jews, circumcision was executed for cultural and religious purposes, whereas to anyone outside of the Jewish faith, it was viewed as maiming a man's genitalia. Judith's act of decapitation was not meant to convert anyone to her faith, that was simply the effect of her actions. David, prior to his decapitation of Goliath, was seen as an adolescent, untrained boy. However, he still would have been viewed as a much greater threat than Judith prior to her decapitation of Holofernes. Regardless of David's stature, he was of the superior sex, and a naïve boy would have been viewed as more fearsome than a widow. The pairing of both Israelites, David and Judith, furthers the alignment of circumcision, castration, and decapitation. Sigmund Freud's theory of castration anxiety corresponds with his former colleague, Carl Gustav Jung, and his archetypal pairing of the anima and animus.

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[60] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Samuel/First Book of Kings 18:27) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 304.

Chapter Five:
The Hidden Gender Within

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who received his M.D. from the University of Zürich in 1902.[61] Jung created the idea of the archetype and asserted that it is a reoccurring symbol or characteristic within an individual; he called it a "common psychic substrate."[62] The different archetypes discussed by Jung are found within the collective unconscious, which collectively refers to individuals of all time periods. The archetypes found in Lorenzo Sabatini's painting would be considered by Jung to be the opposite gender repressed within someone. The inner female of a man is called the *anima*, and the inner male within a female is called the *animus*. These terms are archetypes that Carl Jung defines as "…representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern."[63] The combination of the anima and animus results in the "The Syzygy," which describes these contrasting forces of having an opposite yet corresponding connection. Jung and Sabatini lived at different times, but Jung was looking at archetypes found in other cultures and other periods. The conception of Jung's anima and animus partially finds its roots in the Chinese Philosophy, Taoism, specifically in relation to its *Yin* and *Yang*. Jung writes that "…*tao* is divided into a fundamental pair of opposites…*Yang* signifies warmth, light, maleness; *yin* is cold, darkness, femaleness."[64] This description is clearly visible in the well-known black and white symbol of *yin* and *yang*. It is similar to Jung's anima and animus in that men and

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[61] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, edited and introduction by Violet Staub De Laszlo (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), vii-viii.

[62] Carl Gustav Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, translated by R. F. C. Hull (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1959), 4.

[63] Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1968), 58.

[64] Carl Gustav Jung, "The Type of Problem in Poetry" in *Psychological Types,* revised translation of H. G. Baynes by R. F. C Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 216.

woman have a suppressed gender opposite of their own. Jung's description of *yin* as a

symbol of darkness parallels Judith, because the Jewess used her feminine wiles to gain

the trust of Holofernes before beheading him, and it is possible that men would have

sympathized with the Assyrian general in seeing the heroine as the agitator. Through his

study of Taoism, it is evident that Jung researched outside of his home continent of

Europe, making his archetypal pairing of anima and animus relevant to multiple

civilizations.

      The Jungian concept of the animus can be applied to Sabatini's painting, with

Judith's animus making an outward appearance, because she is far more muscular than

the average woman would have been. Judith's physique may have been off-putting to the

average man and could have caused a type of anxiety surrounding strong women with

both physical and mental strength. Jung states that "…even in a woman who is

outwardly very feminine the animus can be an equally hard, inexorable power."[65] Judith

fits this description, because she was known for her beauty, and was believed to have

adorned herself with all her finest jewelry before facing the Assyrian general. No matter

how beautiful or effeminate a woman is, her animus would be the opposite or suppressed

side. Initially, Judith may be viewed as a meek and docile woman; however, the more

compliant she seems, her animus then represents the complete opposite. Jung describes

the anima and animus as having four stages of development. He begins by stating that

the first stage is the personification of physical power, an athlete of sorts. The second

stage consists of initiative and planned action, while the third phase resembles that of a

clergyman. The final phase is the incarnation of meaning and spiritual firmness.[66] These

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[65] Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1968), 198.
[66] Ibid., 206-207.

different phases can be used when analyzing Judith in literary terms as well as Lorenzo

Sabatini's painting, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*.

In accordance with Jung's first few stages, the widowed heroine showed initiative

by nominating herself to defeat the Assyrians, and she could easily be considered a wise

individual with her outwitting of Holofernes. The third and fourth stages can essentially

be combined, because Judith was a very devout Jewess and there should be no doubt of

her animus being both a clergyman and the incarnation of meaning. Her devout love for

God is evident in the Old Testament. Judith was known by all as a woman who feared

her God, and because of this, no one could speak negatively about her.[67] Sabatini's

rendering of Judith fits the personification of physical power, because her large forearms

and biceps are very reminiscent of Michelangelo Buonarroti's (1475-1564) style of

depicting women with defined musculature. During the period in which this painting was

created, Lorenzo Sabatini would likely have believed that decapitating a man could only

be done by someone with a stature similar to that of a man. This idea also explains the

inclusion of the head of Medusa on Judith's golden aegis. Including Medusa's head

references the warrior goddess, Minerva, who was able to decapitate or kill a mortal man

at any moment. The Assyrian general, Holofernes, would have had extensive knowledge

about physical combat, but he was not prepared for the cerebral cunning of the Jewish

heroine.

The collective image of a woman in Holofernes' psyche, the anima, should also

be questioned. Jung continues describing the archetypal pairing by writing that "No man

is so entirely masculine that he has nothing feminine in him. The fact is, rather, that very

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[67] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 8:8) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000), 530.

masculine men have-carefully guarded and hidden-a very soft emotional life…"[68]

Holofernes, the feared Assyrian General, would have been trained in combat, furthering

his visible masculinity, but, according to Jungian ideologies, as Holofernes became

outwardly aggressive, he would have suppressed his effeminate side. On the contrary,

Judith, who had been widowed for a few years, oversaw menservants and maidservants,

making her an anomaly for her time.[69] It is possible that with Judith's sudden thrust into

a leadership position, she also embraced her inherited image of a man within her psyche.

However, it is difficult to suspect that Holofernes, a conqueror in King Nebuchadnezzar's

army, ever embraced his effeminate side. As previously stated, Sabatini rendered

Holofernes with little pronounced musculature, furthering the notion that the Assyrian

general may not have been as formidable as he has often been portrayed.

In *quattrocento* through *seicento* Italy, men and women were not considered to be

equals. The physique of Sabatini's Judith was much larger than the average woman.

Biblically, Judith is described as a very frail widow, because she was known to fast every

day of her life except for special occasions.[70] In *cinquecento* Italy, women were meant to

be subservient to men, and their two choices were typically limited to joining a convent

and becoming a nun or marrying and conceiving children. These narrow-minded views

from Early Modern Europe altered by the time of Carl Jung's life; however, sexism was

still found in his lifetime.

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[68] Carl Jung, *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, Edited by Violet Staub de Laszlo (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), 201.

[69] *LXX The Septuagint*, (Judith 8:7) Edited by Lancelot Brenton (Pickerington: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 336.

[70] Ibid., (Judith 8:6)

Carl Jung writes about both the animus and anima, but his interests clearly lie within the anima and the inner female hidden within every man. Jung writes extensively about how men are affected by the internal feminine character, but he does not fully explore the female experience of having an animus. If he had studied them equally, there would have been some similarities between the anima and animus; however, a man who is "anima-ridden" would not have the same experience as a woman who is "animus-ridden." Since there is not a definite study of the female experience, Jung simply applies the studies of the anima to that of the animus, and even states that he sympathizes more with the anima.[71] It is possible that Jung believed the concept of "The Syzygy" too literally and believes that the results coming from the anima would also be found in the animus. These archetypes, or reoccurring representations, can be found in numerous individuals from different periods of time, but they cannot easily be used when cross examining different genders. The idea of the internal archetype can be found in both males and females, but the female experience is not the same as the male. There are definite misogynistic undertones in Jung's writings, because he did not even attempt to investigate the experiences of women.

However, the relationship between Judith and Holofernes is perfectly described in Carl Jung's quote stating "…when animus and anima meet, the animus draws his sword of power and the anima ejects her poison of illusion and seduction."[72] Judith's animus not only figuratively draws his sword of power, but Judith also literally draws the sword. Furthermore, Holofernes is lying shirtless on his canopied bed, which suggests his effort

[71] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, edited and introduction by Violet Staub De Laszlo (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), 615.
[72] Carl Gustav Jung, "Aspects of the Feminine" in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 172.

to seduce Judith. With the help of Jung's quote, it can be deduced that both Judith and

her unconscious animus are aware of the threat that was Holofernes, but he and his anima

were unaware of the threat posed by Judith. It is almost as if she and her animus have

become synchronized in the endeavor of defeating the Assyrian general. In Jung's

studies, as a man outwardly becomes the idealized representation of a man, he is inwardly

compensated with feminine characteristics.[73] Since Holofernes was not only a skilled

soldier but also a general, it is possible that he would have had a highly feminine anima.

As stated earlier, Jung was living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but since he

was studying archetypes found in earlier centuries, his studies can be applied to these

biblical characters.

A common reoccurring motif throughout history is a man attempting to pressure a

woman into having sexual relations with him. The Book of Judith explains that on the

night he was beheaded, Holofernes was drinking more alcohol then he ever had before,

and his heavy consumption might have been an attempt to coerce Judith into having

relations with him.[74] The biblical account states that Judith brought her own Kosher food

and wine into the Assyrian camp, but Jewish folklore explains how Judith was able to

persuade Holofernes into trying her salty cheese and then drinking so much wine.

Sabatini's painting displays a headless Holofernes lying under his canopied bed, which

can insinuate that he would have been attempting to entice Judith, ultimately ending with

him having sexual relations with her. Judith would have been aware of her radiant beauty

and would have used it for her benefit to catch her prey off guard.

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[73] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Basic Writings of C.G. Jung*, edited and introduction by Violet Staub de Laszlo (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), 208.

[74] *The Holy Bible*, Douay-Rheims English Version, (Judith 12:20) (Rockford: Tan Publishers, reprint in 2000, 534.

Judith is not the only woman who is responsible for the beheading of a man, but she does deserve the credit for instilling the fear of a strong woman. The other biblical character, this time in the New Testament, culpable for the decapitation of a man is Salome. She was responsible for the death of Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. Unlike the fierce heroine, Judith, Salome did not actually sever the head of Saint John; however, she was responsible for facilitating his demise. There are specific iconographic symbols that differentiate the beheading of Holofernes by Judith and the beheading of Saint John the Baptist facilitated by Salome. One main signifier for Salome is the inclusion of a charger, or platter. If a detached head is placed on a charger, or in the process of being placed on one, it is understood to be the story involving Salome. The two biblical women are often comparable in regard to the *femme-fatale* archetype, but one is actually far more fatal than the other. Salome did, however, use her feminine wiles to gain the trust of Herod, and asked him for the head of the Baptist. John was actually decapitated by an executioner and not by Salome herself. Judith not only used her femininity and attractiveness to her benefit, but she also put her own life in danger when cutting off the head of Holofernes. Salome was not threatened with immediate danger, because she had the protection of King Herod as well as Herodias who prompted her to ask for John's head. She did not have to wield a sword and decapitate a man herself. It was Judith's wisdom that kept her safe from the Assyrians, not the protection of a tyrannical king. Though these two biblical figures are occasionally confused pictorially, because they are both female and the protagonists of biblical decapitations, even representing a similar archetype of the *femme fatale*. The premise of the *femme fatale* coincides with Jung's archetypes, as well as Freud's theory of castration anxiety.

38

Jung extensively wrote about a common mental image that has been known to be present in different societies and different periods in time, called an archetype. As stated earlier, Jung's archetypes mostly consisted of the animus and the anima, but the common, non-Jungian archetype of the *femme fatale* is also of interest. The idea of the *femme fatale,* like the animus and anima, is a modern term used to describe women who cause male fear. Julia Kristeva is a Bulgarian born French psychoanalyst who has written expansively about the dichotomy between the feminine and masculine. She writes that prehistoric humans believed that going after one's head was a way to appropriate and steal one's power.[75] Holofernes himself would likely not have been aware or fearful of the female threat, as he was accustomed to battling men, but the biblical story featuring him and Judith would cause major anxiety for men years after. Judith not only outwitted a military general who was well versed in battle strategy, but she also physically outperformed him.

After analyzing other artistic representations of Judith and Holofernes, it can be inferred that there was an unspoken style from the Renaissance through the culmination of the Mannerist period and through the Baroque. The works of art that were created during the end of the Renaissance were highly idealized images, and Sabatini's large amount of bloodshed from the decapitation did not match the earlier style that was. It was very rare for there to be an image of Judith in the act of decapitating Holofernes, because that would have been too grotesque for the standard. The specific time that was usually portrayed was post-decapitation, and compositions usually featured Judith and her maidservant, Abra, attempting to hide the head of Holofernes, or the two walking

[75] Julia Kristeva, "The Skull: Cult in Art" in *The Severed Head: Capital Visions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1892), 19.

back to their people, the Israelites. By portraying the scene directly after the decapitation, Lorenzo Sabatini's gruesome painting can be interpreted using Freud's writings on the threat of castration as well as Jung's archetypal pairing, anima and animus.

Chapter 6:
Conclusion

Sigmund Freud's theory of castration anxiety and Carl Jung's archetypal pair, the anima and animus, each correlate with one another regarding Lorenzo Sabatini's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*. Through Jung's study of Taoism and its symbol of *yin* and *yang,* he created the anima and animus. Within each female lies an inner man, animus, and in each male, anima. In relation to the Book of Judith, her animus made an outward appearance while decapitating Holofernes. The Jewish heroine's hidden gender was no longer present solely within her psyche, as it also had an external presence through her bloody act and musculature. Sabatini's representation of Judith, as well as the physical manifestation of her male psyche, would cause male fear of falling victim to a strong woman. Therefore, Jung's anima and animus would then activate and correspond with Freud's notion of castration anxiety. Similar to the archetypal pairing being found throughout history, castration anxiety is also a paradigm that can be seen in different generations.

Although the scholarly sources on Sabatini are scarce, especially pertaining to his oil on canvas painting of Judith and Holofernes, both he and his rendering are important to art historical discourse. The representation of Judith beheading Holofernes was a common motif found during the Renaissance and after; however, Sabatini's painting contains attributes found in two movements of art. The Italian Renaissance, a resurgence of classical ideologies, favored a controlled, unsoiled rendering of Judith and Holofernes. Italian Baroque masters, such as Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi, aimed to display the actuality of a decapitation. Lorenzo Sabatini's painting is a gruesome, bloody composition featuring posed figures. It was the blending of the Bible and Jewish stories

41

and folklore that helped define a number of Sabatini's artistic choices for his painting of a decapitation. Judith was a popular subject in both literature and pictorial representations. Sabatini's representation is fearsome enough, but with the inclusion of the psychoanalytical writings, it furthers the argument that the story of Judith and Holofernes is a prime example of a shift in stereotypical gender roles. These roles popularly played out during a period of patriarchal authority, but when noble women were given an education, they could intellectually challenge a man. Judith's sudden shift into a leadership role after the death of her husband was beneficial to the syncing of her animus. Holofernes, no matter how outwardly masculine he portrayed himself, was not accepting of his inner effeminate side which ultimately led to his death. Both theories correspond with and activate one another. Judith's outward beauty, as well as her inner male psyche, would cultivate the ultimate male fear of a strong woman and castration anxiety. Judith of Bethulia has been a symbol of Jewish strength and heroism and eventually evolved into a symbol of female power and agency over the dominating patriarchal society. Lorenzo Sabatini's gory rendering has expanded his importance within the art historical canon and furthered the argument that the *femme fatale* causes male fear of a powerful woman and the threat of castration.

Table 6.2. Forms of Punishment and Execution in Bologna, 1507–1600

	Punishment							Total Executed	Multiple Punishments
	Not stated	Burning	Decapitation	Hanging	Mutilation	Other	Quartering		
1507–09	52	1	—	—	—	—	—	53	—
1510–19	—	1	19	69	—	—	3	92	—
1520–29	—	—	3	21	—	—	1	25	—
1530–39	—	—	1	17	—	—	4	22	—
Total	52	2	23	107	—	—	8	192	—

Source: BCB Fondo Gozzadini 280

1540–49	—	4	33	95	1	2	12	147	5
1550–59	0	13	10	90	0	3	12	128	16
1560–69	2	10	7	118	2	3	2	144	9
1570–79	1	8	5	103	0	1	5	123	7
1580–89	0	3	14	211	1	1	18	248	17
1590–99	5	5	9	152	1	0	8	180	9
1600	—	—	—	8	—	—	5	13	3
Total	8	43	78	777	5	10	62	983	66

Source: BAB Aula 2a C.VII.3

Table 1. Forms of Punishment and Execution in Bologna, 1507-1600,
Biblioteca Comunale Bologna, Biblioteca Arcivescovile Bologna

Figure 1. Lorenzo Sabatini, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes (Giuditta con La Testa di Oloferne)*, c. 1562, oil on canvas, 43.3 x 33.46 in (110 x 85 cm); Palazzo Magnani, Bologna

Figure 2. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c. 1598, oil on canvas, 57.08 x 76.77 in (145 x 195 cm); Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome

Figure 3. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, 1610, oil on canvas, 78.33 x 64.13 in (158.8 x 125.5 cm); Museo di Capodimonte, Naples

Figure 4. Agostino Carracci (After Lorenzo Sabatini), *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c.1579, engraving, 11.97 x 9.02 in (30.4 x 22.9 cm); Vienna

Figure 5. Agostino Carracci (After Lorenzo Sabatini), *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1577-1583, engraving, 13.19 x 9.45 in (33.5 x 24 cm), The British Museum, London

Figure 6. Lorenzo Sabatini, *Mary Magdalene*, Oil on canvas, N.D., 16 x 14 in
(41 x 35 cm), Palazzo Magnani, Bologna

Figure 7. Giorgione, *Judith*, c. 1504, Oil on canvas (transferred from panel), 56.69 x 26.77 in (144 x 68 cm), The Hermitage, Saint Petersburg

Figure 8. Attributed to Lorenzo Sabatini, *San Lorenzo, San Michele Arcangelo*, 9.5 x 6.1 in (24.1 x 15.6 cm), Fondazione Federico Zeri, Università di Bologna, Bologna

Figure 9. Lorenzo Sabatini, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, c.1620, Oil on canvas, 57.68 x 42.52 in (146.5 x 108 cm), Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy
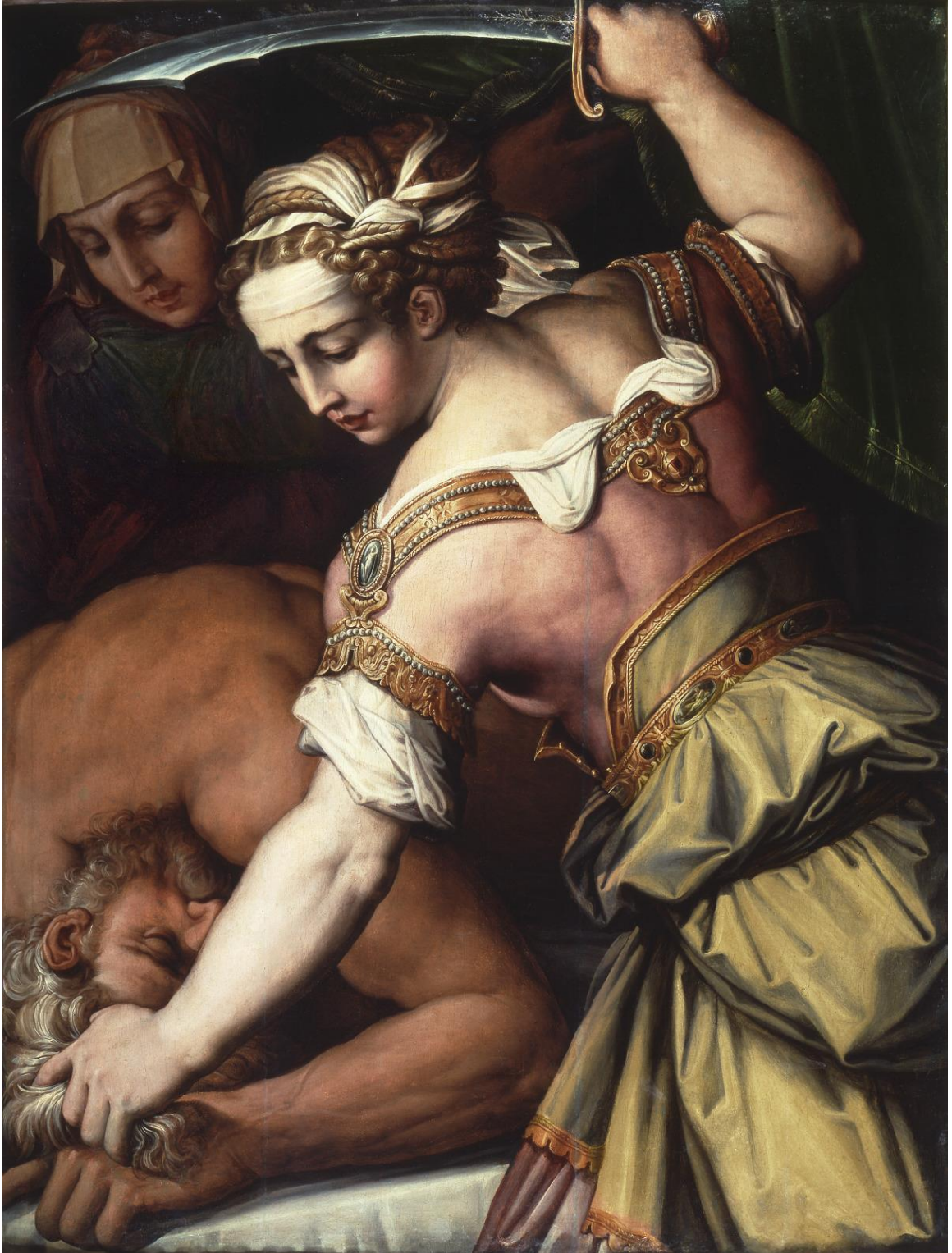
Figure 10. Giorgio Vasari, *Judith and Holofernes*, c. 1554, oil on panel, 42.4 x 31.38 in (108 x 79.7 cm); Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri
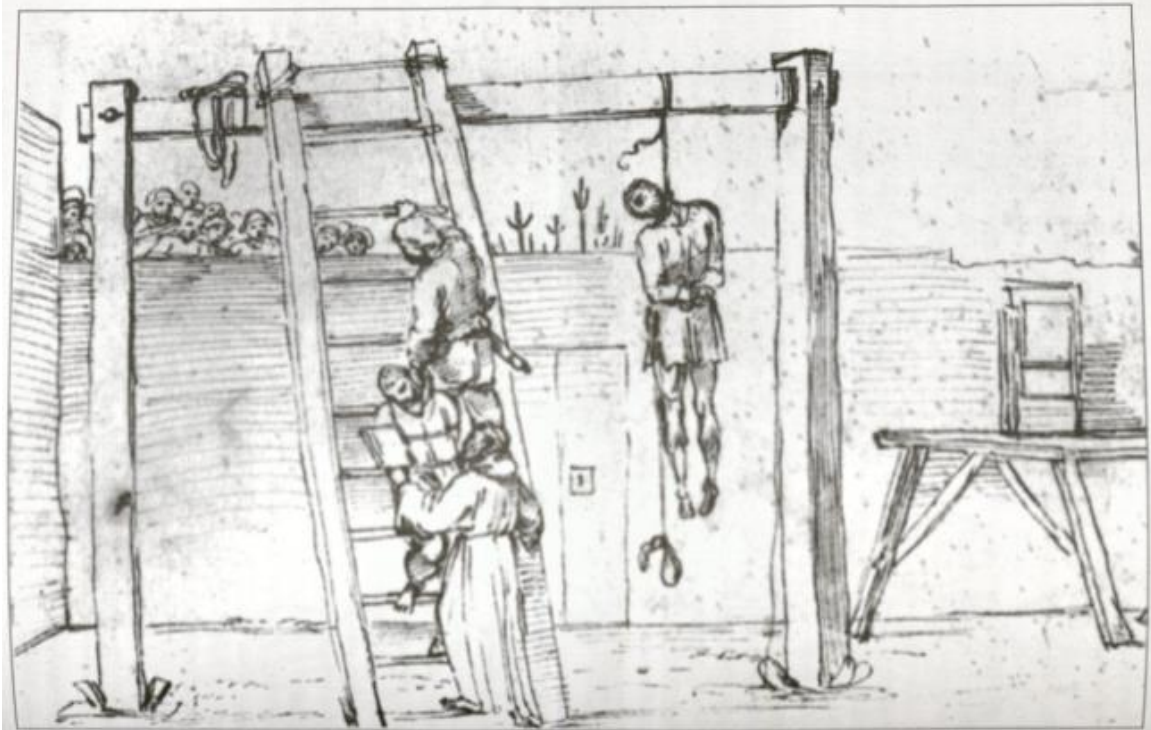
Figure 11. Annibale Carracci, *The Hanging*, late sixteenth century, pen and ink drawing, 7.48 x 11.50 in (19 x 29.2 cm), The Royal Collection, Windsor, London

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