

**THE MERCHANT'S MORAL EYE: MONEY, MERCHANTS, AND
THE VISUALIZATION OF MORALITY IN TRECENTO ITALY**

By

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**B.A., York University, 1967
Dip. Ed., University of Victoria, 1972
M.A., University of Victoria, 2011**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Art History & Visual Studies

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University of Victoria**

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**We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose
traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees,
Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships
with the land continue to this day.**

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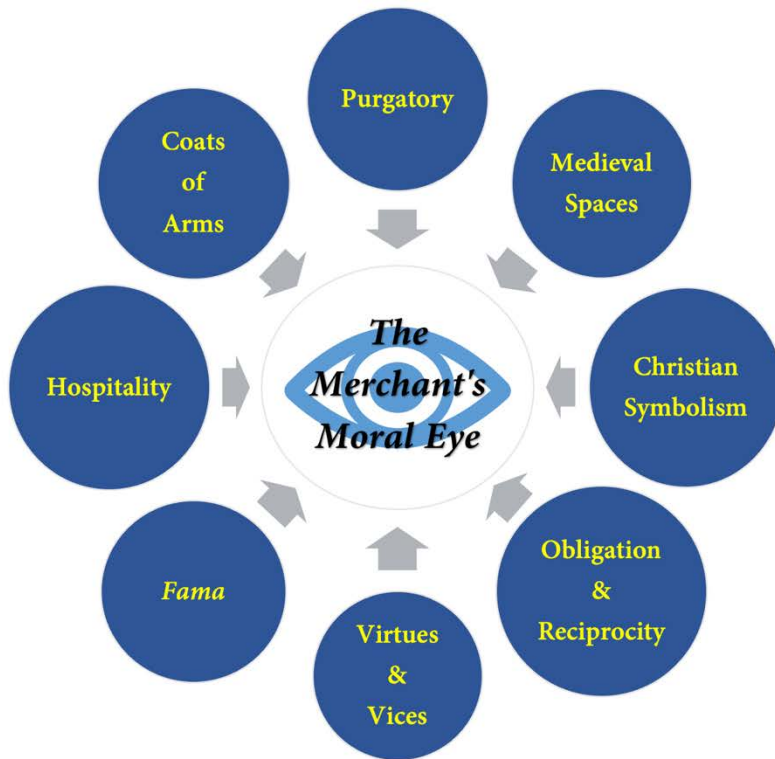
ABSTRACT

THE MERCHANT’S MORAL EYE: MONEY, MERCHANTS, AND THE VISUALIZATION OF MORALITY IN TRECENTO ITALY

My dissertation is a study of how merchants in Trecento Italy used the imagery they commissioned as a form of moral self-representation and as a practical tool in their pursuit of eternal life in heaven. The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Michael Baxandall’s concept of the “period eye,” that is, the belief that “social facts lead to the development of distinctive visual skills and habits.” (Baxandall, 1988) A primary social fact affecting medieval merchants was their long association in Christian culture with the individual and societal evils related to the pursuit of money and wealth—the sin of avarice. This linkage was expressed across the entire range of medieval cultural expression, in texts, sermons, and imagery. The challenge for merchants, therefore, was to publicly demonstrate that they earned their money ethically and legally, that they led a morally sound life, and that they used a portion of their money for the common good, especially in caring for the poor.

The commissioning and public/semi-public display of imagery thus became a way of portraying a merchant’s moral identity as a worthy civic and Christian citizen, with all of the temporal and spiritual benefits that might produce. In order to better understand how such imagery served these objectives, I have developed an analytical framework I call the *Merchant’s Moral Eye*.

This framework consists of eight primary dimensions that I believe were fundamental to the formation of merchants’ moral beliefs and behaviours during this period. These dimensions are represented in the following diagram:



The Merchant's Moral Eye Analytical Framework

Each dimension encompasses a set of contemporary understandings about the nature of Christian and civic society and behavioural expectations that would have fundamentally affected merchant attitudes and actions. These dimensions profoundly influenced the content, meanings, and uses of imagery.

Collectively, these interlaced, multidisciplinary dimensions provide a systematic approach to produce the robust contextualisation needed to explore why, and how, merchants used imagery to achieve their objectives. However, while this study's focus is solely on the moral and salvific functions of this imagery, it needs to be remembered that the same imagery also served other more worldly objectives, be they social, economic, or political.

As an analytical tool this framework enables three fundamental functions with respect to the underlying motives, meanings, and uses of merchant-commissioned art in Trecento Italy:

- ❖ an assessment of the feasibility of existing interpretations
- ❖ the enhancement or nuancing of existing interpretations
- ❖ the identification and explication of wholly new interpretations

To demonstrate the effectiveness of the framework in achieving the above, I have selected, as case studies, three merchants in three different locations, whose artistic commissions spanned the entire Trecento.

These individuals and their imaged artifacts are:

1. Enrico Scrovegni of Padua and the Arena Chapel, decorated by Giotto 1303-5.
2. Domenico Lenzi of Florence and his illuminated manuscript, *Lo Specchio umano* (The Mirror of Humanity), produced c. 1340;
3. Francesco Datini of Prato and the Palazzo Datini, decorated in the 1390s. These individuals represent a cross-section of Trecento Italian merchants in terms of status, wealth, and public profile.

These merchants and their commissioned artworks are discussed in detail using the framework dimensions as modes of enquiry to show how this imagery supported their self-representation as honest merchants and dutiful Christians, and generated the prayers and other suffrages they assumed they needed to eventually get to Heaven. In all three case studies there were significant findings that fulfilled each of the analytical functions noted above, thereby confirming the utility of the Merchant's Moral Eye Analytical Framework as an effective methodological approach.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATIONS

This Dissertation owes so much to the many people whose contributions as professors, scholars, family, friends, and colleagues, gave me the support and tools that enabled me to complete this study.

I especially want to thank my Supervisory Committee—Dr. Catherine Harding (Supervisor), Dr. Erin Campbell (Departmental Member), and Dr. Iain Higgins (External Member)—for their wisdom, guidance, and patience over the course of ten years. I have learned much from each of them as scholars, teachers, and generous and warm mentors. I also want to thank the academic, technical, and support staff of my own Department, and those of the entire University, whose skills, services, and graciousness have made my time here so productive, memorable, and enjoyable.

I also want to thank Dr. Jill Caskey who took on the substantial workload of being my outside reader and examiner. Her detailed observations and suggestions are greatly appreciated as I look ahead to following up on my research and writing.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Palazzo Datini (Prato) and Palazzo Davizzi-Davanzati (Florence) for their permission and assistance in photographing the frescoes of these two fourteenth-century merchant residences.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the University of Victoria Department of Art History & Visual Studies, and the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society gave me generous financial support, for which I am truly grateful. This funding enabled me to conduct on-site research and present some of my findings to numerous scholarly organizations. I particularly want to acknowledge The Canadian Conference of Medieval Art

Historians and the University Arts Association of Canada for the forums they provided for scholarly growth and networking.

As a 75 year old fledgling scholar, I am keenly aware of my enormous debt to the many scholars whose exemplary work and lifelong dedication to their craft gave me the information, perspectives, and inspiration needed to complete this study. My own scholarly contributions are only possible because, to paraphrase Sir Isaac Newton, I have stood on the shoulders of giants. This Dissertation is dedicated to two people. The first is the late Dr. John Brückmann of York University (Toronto), whose medieval history classes instilled in me a lifelong interest and fascination with medieval history and culture. His untimely death in 1982, at age 52, was a real loss to Canadian medieval scholarship.

But the person I owe the most to, in every possible way, is my wife, Heather Jeanne Lindstedt. Without her support, perception, and enormous interest and enthusiasm for my research and writing, this study would have been impossible. Thank you, my dearest Heather.

**THE MERCHANT'S MORAL
EYE: MONEY, MERCHANTS,
AND THE VISUALIZATION
OF MORALITY IN
TRECENTO ITALY**

Volume 1: Text

June 16, 2021

THE MERCHANT'S MORAL EYE: MONEY, MERCHANTS AND THE VISUALIZATION OF MORALITY IN TRECENTO ITALY

INTRODUCTION

What Every True and Honest Merchant Must Have Within Himself

*Integrity always suits him
Long foresight keeps him well,
And what he promises doesn't come lacking;
And he should be, if able, of beautiful and honest behaviour
According to what need or reason he intends.
And to buy cheap he sells dear,
Beyond rebuke with a beautiful welcome,
He avails himself of the church and gives for God,
He grows in merit and sells with a word.
Usury and the game of dice are forbidden
And take away everything.
He writes his calculations well and does not err.
Amen.*

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, Merchant. (1290-1347)¹

Background

When Francesco Pegolotti wrote the above words, he was asserting the behaviours that he and his merchant contemporaries believed would lead them to prosperity and honour in this life and heavenly reward in the next. It was as much a statement about Christian moral behaviour as it was about effective trade practices at a pivotal time when merchants tried to reconcile their traditional Christian ethos with the new realities of money and wealth. In effect, it was a statement about the understanding of commerce within context of a Christian moral economy. One of the ways in which these conflicting impulses were conveyed and resolved was through the production and use of visual imagery. It was, in fact, merchants who commissioned and paid for

¹ Quoted by John Dotson, "Fourteenth Century Merchant Manuals and Merchant Culture", in *Merchant's Books and Mercantile Pratiche from the Late Middle Ages to the Beginning of the 20th Century*, ed. Markus A. Denzel, Jean Claude Hocquet and Harald Witthöft (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 86-87. His verse was a reformulation of an earlier one by the Florentine merchant Dino Compagni (1255-1324).

much of the imagery produced in Trecento Italy that appeared on virtually every type of building and object, and in every possible medium. This imagery, whether as paint, stained glass, or statuary, embedded a host of meanings that nuanced traditional Christian meanings and forms to incorporate the new realities and concerns of money and personal wealth earned through commerce.

I believe, as Michael Baxandall suggested with his concept of the “period eye”, that the particular experiences, attitudes, skills, and sensitivities of merchants profoundly affected their visual culture—that is, how they understood the role and use of images as a way to represent themselves as honest merchants who lived up to their Christian obligations and who were worthy of salvation.² This understanding transcended any particular individual merchant’s degree of piety or religious practice. As persons immersed in a coherent Christian view of the universe, they would have accepted that there was an afterlife which was wholly connected to how they conducted themselves while alive. It has long been recognized by art historians that a primary motive for merchant commissions was related to their salvific aspirations. Yet very few scholars have explored in detail just how the specific imagery created might be used to support this objective. In this study I will explore how some of this imagery was used by their commissioners as a way of demonstrating their Christian moral identity in order to benefit themselves and their viewers alike both in life and after death.

Why is this topic important?

In 2016, Lawrin Armstrong published an English translation of the work by the Augustinian scholastic theologian and moral philosopher, Gerard of Siena, composed in 1330, to address the

² Michael Baxandall, *Painting & Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-108.

great moral issue of his day—usury.³ In explaining why he undertook this laborious task,

Armstrong referred to the 2008 global financial crisis and its aftermath:

But the study of the tradition of moral economy that descends from the scholastics can help us call into question the notion of an economy based fundamentally on debt and speculation, and the whole idea of an economic order that subordinates humanity and nature to the profit of a tiny minority. The stakes are very high: they are nothing less than the possibility of a truly democratic polity, the dignity of human labour, and the integrity of the environment on which we all depend for our existence.⁴

This statement reminds us that the theory *and* the practice of medieval trade and commerce are not irrelevant abstractions some 700 years later. Rather, they are potent *exempla* demonstrating how and why a morally driven approach to economic activity is in the best interest of post-millennial society, just as it mattered to people in late-medieval times.

Dr. Armstrong's work joins a general trend over the past twenty years to revisit medieval economics from a more inclusive perspective than that of the classic medieval economic historians, such as Robert Lopez and Raymond de Roover. Their interests were almost exclusively centered on issues such as the development of financial administration, credit instruments, and banking.⁵ More recent scholarship has examined late-medieval commercial activity in context of an integrated society in which economics was understood to be part of the moral perspective of a society that believed in an overarching Christian, theocentric universe. My research has consistently supported what Diana Wood emphasized about the nature of medieval

³ Lawrin Armstrong, *The Idea of a Moral Economy: Gerard of Siena on Usury, Restitution, and Prescription* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26; 30-31.

⁵ See, for example: Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages 950-1350* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971); Julius Kirshner, ed., *Business, Banking, and Economic Thought in Late-Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Selected Studies of Raymond de Roover* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

economics—“...medieval economic ideas are heavily imbued with questions of ethics and morality, with the motives rather than the mechanics of economic life.”⁶

Much of the interest of the classic medieval economic historians focused on the late-medieval Italian merchant as a proto-capitalist and independent-minded figure. Recent scholarship, however, has provided a more balanced and contextualized view of the merchant. This scholarship has emphasized that the late-medieval Italian merchant was far from being a rugged individualist chafing under the restraints of a dogmatic Church. These men and women were, in fact, wholly accepting of the prevailing Christian ethos, and as much concerned about their society and their souls as about making money.⁷

The challenge for art historians is to understand how the plethora of merchant-commissioned imagery in Trecento Italy fits into this more socio-historical and moralized picture of the merchant, and particularly how the commissioning and use of imagery related to their underlying intentions and concerns. I believe that to fully understand Trecento merchants' underlying motivations and expectations, we have to look at the imagery they produced in the context of the primary factors that shaped their beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours. In order to provide this comprehensive context, I have designed a multi-dimensional analytical framework that I call the Merchant's Moral Eye. This framework, or matrix, consists of eight dimensions which act as interconnected interpretive lenses to help establish a rich backdrop for the case studies.

⁶ Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

⁷ While many women were involved in trade at the lower levels, such as shopkeepers, the social and legal barriers made it difficult for women to be involved in substantial commercial enterprises independently in their own right. However, as Margherita Datini's documentary evidence reveals, the wives and other female family members of merchants played substantial roles in the day to day transactions and strategic management of these enterprises. See Ann Crabb, *The Merchant of Prato's Wife: Margherita Datini & Her World, 1360-1423* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2015).

Who is a merchant for the purposes of this study?

The term “merchant” could, of course, be applied to anyone who was active in some form of trade or commerce, thus covering the whole gamut of economic activity, from single-person local operations, to large family-owned companies doing business on a regional or international scale. The persons who fall within the scope of this study, however, are only those whose commercial activities were of a scale to cause them concern about how the money they made might affect their public image and their souls. The case studies in this dissertation span the entire Trecento and deal with three men who, while all involved in trade and commerce, differed enormously in activities, wealth, and status. The imagery that they commissioned is also substantially different, and yet, as I will show, served a similar purpose for each commissioner. I have chosen to discuss each case study in its chronological order primarily to demonstrate that the Merchant’s Moral Eye framework is an effective approach across the entire long Trecento in three different Italian cities.

Right at the beginning of the Trecento is Enrico Scrovegni (c.1260-1336) of Padua (**Fig. 1**). Enrico was the son of Rainaldo Scrovegni, the archetype for Dante’s portrayal of usurers in the *Inferno*.⁸ Enrico was a substantial money lender/banker, and producer, distributor, and wholesale seller of agricultural products at the local and regional levels. He built the Arena Chapel and commissioned Giotto to decorate it c.1303-05. In the mid-Trecento we have Domenico Lenzi (c.1305-c.1348) of Florence (**Fig. 2**). Lenzi was a small-time grain merchant who regionally acquired non-wheat grains and sold them at a stall in the Florentine grain market at Orsanmichele. He wrote a large manuscript, which he called *Lo Specchio umano*, and had it

⁸ Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XVII, lines 43-78.

professionally scribed and illuminated around 1340. Other than the little he tells us about himself in this codex, we have no other direct information about him. Finally, and arguably the best known from a popular perspective, at the end of the Trecento is Francesco di Marco Datini (c.1335-1410) (**Fig. 3**), Iris Origo's famous merchant of Prato.⁹ Datini was a large-scale entrepreneur whose extensive commercial activities included manufacturing, distribution, and selling of a wide range of goods and financial services at the international, regional and local levels. He built a luxurious palazzo in Prato and had it lavishly decorated by numerous artists in the late 1380's and early 1390's.

Collectively, these three merchants were representative of those especially singled out by theologians, preachers, jurists, and moralists, because their commercial activities raised fundamental legal, social, and moral issues around how they made and used their money. They all faced the challenge of trying to ensure that their commercial practices did not unduly rend the fabric of the moral economic framework they were part of. For merchants such as Scrovegni and Datini, who were heavily involved in the acquisition and use of capital as a form of profitable financial operations, there was always the concern of being accused of usury with all of the earthly and eschatological consequences. For merchants such as Lenzi, who dealt in the basic necessities of life, there was the deeply disturbing moral dilemma of earning significant profits in a time of severe dearth.

Trecento merchants have left us a wealth of records and writings that reveal how they understood themselves as merchants in contemporary civic and Christian culture. Such documents make it clear they were keenly aware of the particular pressures and concerns their

⁹ Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957).

society held about the making and use of money, and the social and spiritual impacts of being involved in trade and commerce. Paolo da Certaldo (1320-1370) wrote a treatise for his son containing three hundred and eighty-eight separate pieces of advice he called *Best Practices for a Christian Merchant*. Paolo da Certaldo recognized the myriad of problems that could lead to a merchant's social, financial, and especially moral and spiritual ruin. He carefully counselled his heir how to avoid them through one's own prudent and morally-driven behaviour. The following precept is typical of his approach:

If you wish to save your soul, take great care not to take anything from anyone, neither by lending money at interest, nor by stealing, nor through deceit. . . . And know that of all the other sins that you can confess, and having repented be forgiven for them by doing penance, you will not be forgiven for stealing if you do not return what you have taken.¹⁰

None of the three merchants who comprise the case studies would have disagreed with Paolo da Certaldo's advice, for they shared the same basic values, beliefs, and concerns, even though they differed greatly in the scale and type of their commercial activities. In this study, I will highlight how these merchants used the visual as a fundamental strategy in publicly declaring their Christian moral obligation to make their money honestly and to use some of it for the common good, thereby also earning the earthly and heavenly credits so necessary to achieving the salvation of their souls.

The Late-Medieval Italian Merchant: A Brief Historiography

In 1978, the esteemed medieval economic historian, Robert Lopez, delivered an address titled *The Culture of the Medieval Merchant*. It was especially noteworthy because the author tried to

¹⁰ Paolo da Certaldo, "Book of Good Practices," in *Merchant Writers: Florentine Memoirs from the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Vittore Branca, trans. Murtha Baca (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), Good Practice #128, 54.

summarize the attributes that distinguished the late-medieval Italian merchant, stating that “...the culture of the merchant was one of the major components of the medieval intellectual stream.”¹¹ In many ways this was Lopez’s historiographic victory lap for several generations of medieval history, literature, and economics scholars who saw in the medieval Italian merchant an heroic figure, pitted against the restrictions of the feudal system and the Church. Armando Sapori’s comment was not atypical:

The Italian medieval merchants brought civilization everywhere and opened the way to future progress without resorting to the use of violence and warfare. They prevailed through their audacity, sustained by a subtle intuition and by high moral values: love of their country, religious faith, and culture. ... Thanks to this teaching, the Italian merchant of the Middle Ages traced for individuals and peoples of all times to come the only way that leads to a full realization of humanity.¹²

Sapori’s summary reflected the prevailing belief that there was such a thing as a distinct merchant culture, and that it was a product of a unique set of factors that differentiated the Italian merchant from other classes and cultures.¹³ The works of other scholars, including Armando Petrucci, Raymond de Roover, Christian Bec, and Vittore Branca, saw in the Italian

¹¹ Robert Lopez, “The Culture of the Medieval Merchant,” *Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval & Renaissance Studies*, volume 8, (1979), 52.

¹² Armando Sapori, *The Italian Merchant in the Middle Ages*, trans. Patricia Ann Kennen (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1970), 38. Sapori was not only reminding his fellow Italians of the greatness of their heritage, he was also attacking those that denigrated the Trecento merchant as an important historical figure. In particular, he was refuting the work of Werner Sombart (1863-1941), a German economist and sociologist. What infuriated Sapori was Sombart’s dismissal of the Italian merchants as a primary economic force in the foundation of capitalism, or, indeed, in the development of Western civilization. Most of Sapori’s book is an itemized rebuttal of Sombart’s reasons for dismissing the medieval Italian merchant as an historically negligible figure.

¹³ While Sapori’s Italian successors were not nearly so polemical, it is still possible to see their emotional investment, as Italians, in the ‘greatness’ of the Trecento and early Quattrocento merchants. In his Introduction to the 1999 translation of his work titled *Merchant Writers of the Italian Renaissance* (all of whom were Florentine merchants), Vittore Branca wrote the following: “The finest books of memoirs, the richest in humanity and narrative spirit, from those of Velluti, Morelli, and Pitti to those of Bernardo Machiavelli, reflect this tempestuous political and social background, rhetorically dominated by the values and myths (justice, peace, civic unity) of the *libertas* of the Florentine city-state.” Branca, 2015, xi-xii.

merchants' economic and cultural activities a distinctive merchant *mentalité*.¹⁴ This new mental attitude, they suggested, set the stage for a radically different conception of self. Lopez called the merchant "...a rugged individualist within his own profession."¹⁵ Indeed, the Italian merchant was, for Lopez, no longer bound by the economic moral shackles or superstitious religious fears of the rest of society, for in making money with little regard for conventional attitudes or morals, "...Italian merchants had found gimmicks to eat their cake and have it, too, and since they paid the piper, they called the tune."¹⁶

Aron Ja. Gurevich tried to capture the place of the merchant in medieval society, introducing the topic as follows:

... our interests lie not so much in the merchants' economic activity per se as in the merchant as a human type. The merchants' mentality was in many ways substantially different from that of knights, the clergy, or the peasantry. The worldview that formed gradually in the consciousness of the developing merchant class conflicted with the vision of the world in other strata and levels of feudal society. The profession and the way of life of men of affairs favored the formation of new ethical orientations and a different sort of conduct.¹⁷

Not all scholars at this time accepted the notion that there was a distinctive Italian merchant culture or *mentalité*. In the same year Lopez published his paper on Italian merchant culture, J. K. Hyde explicitly rejected this notion:

In the past, the growth of a distinctive 'merchant mentality' has attracted a good deal of attention from historians. Whatever its validity for other parts of Europe, for Italy this would seem to be too narrow an approach. In view of

¹⁴ See the following works: Christian Bec, *Les marchands écrivains: Affaires et humanisme à Florence 1375-1473* (Paris: Mouton, 1967); Raymond de Roover, *Business, Banking, and Economic Thought in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Selected Studies of Raymond de Roover* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, translated by Charles M. Radding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Branca, 2015.

¹⁵ Lopez, 1979, 64.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 54.

¹⁷ Aron Ja. Gurevich, "The Merchant," in *Medieval Callings*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 243.

the integration of the sedentary merchant into the society of his city of residence, it would be unrealistic to expect anything like a distinct merchant culture, especially in the major trading cities of Italy where merchants blended with rentiers and lawyers to form the dominant citizen class.¹⁸

What Hyde was suggesting was that merchants were part of a distinctive civic culture that provided the dominant attitudinal and behavioural framework, rather than their involvement with money, the world of commerce, and Christian ethics. As my dissertation will show, such a view is both too narrow and seriously misleading.

Scholars such as Lopez and Branca saw the constant exercise of literacy and numeracy as two of the particular attributes that defined merchant culture, but Hyde argued that other groups, such as lawyers and public officials, also produced documents and accounts.¹⁹ However, what Hyde lost sight of was the fact that these other professions existed in the Italian communes primarily to serve the needs of the merchant community. Moreover, these professional practitioners were usually from the same families and had received their initial education in the same *abacus* schools as the merchants they served. Indeed, these individuals invariably had some degree of direct involvement with trade and commerce, so attitudinally were largely indistinguishable from their clients.

Since the time that Lopez wrote his panegyric to the Trecento Italian merchant, two generations of scholars across multiple disciplines have given us a much more detailed, nuanced and balanced image of the values, attitudes, and activities of the Trecento Italian merchant. The works of economic historians such as David Herlihy, Richard Goldthwaite, and Peter Spufford have given us a strong understanding of the economic issues, values, and responses of these

¹⁸ J. K. Hyde, "Some Uses of Literacy in Venice and Florence in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 29 (1979): 116.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

merchants within their civic contexts.²⁰ The work of social historians such as Jacques Le Goff, Richard Trexler, Ronald Weissman, Dale Kent, Gunnar Dahl, and Paul McLean has emphasized the extent to which Trecento merchants were part of highly ritualized social networks in which issues of trust and *fama* were critical components in defining all forms of interactions.²¹ Far from being rugged, independent-minded individualists, Trecento merchants were deeply embedded in webs of familial, social, and religious relationships that greatly affected how they thought and behaved. In the words of Ronald Weissman, they suffered “...from too much community, rather than from individualism or anomie.”²²

Studies by scholars such as Giacomo Todeschini, Odd Langholm, Juliann Vitullo and Diane Wolfthal, James Davis, and Dennis Romano have better placed the Trecento merchant within his Christian cultural context and have underscored the particular moral and ethical issues that affected merchants’ attitudes and behaviours.²³ Todeschini, who has closely examined

²⁰ See, for example, the following works: David Herlihy, *Cities and Society in Medieval Italy* (London, Variorum Reprints, 1980); Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002).

²¹ Gunnar Dahl, *Trade, Trust and Networks: Commercial Culture in Late Medieval Italy* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 1998); Dale Vivienne Kent, *Friendship, Love and Trust in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York: Zone Books, 1988); Paul D. McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Ronald F. E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).

²² Ronald F.E. Weissman, “Reconstructing Renaissance Sociology: The ‘Chicago School’ and the Study of Renaissance Society,” in *Persons in Groups: Social Behaviour as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. Richard Trexler (Binghamton: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1985), 45.

²³ See the following works: Giacomo Todeschini, “Investigating the Origins of the Late Medieval Entrepreneur’s Self-Representation,” in *Imprese e Storia: Archivi, Documenti, Ricerche*, 35, (2007): 13-38; Odd Langholm, *The Merchant in the Confessional* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Juliann Vitullo and Diane Wolfthal, *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); James Davis, *Medieval Market Morality: Life, Law and Ethics in the English Marketplace, 1200-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Dennis Romano, *Markets and Marketplaces in Medieval Italy c.1100 – c.1440* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

the relationships between the Franciscans and the merchant community, noted how important it was for the merchant to protect his good name and reputation within a Christian context:

...the late-medieval merchants' obsessive assertion of the need to have and to protect a good reputation would have to do with the merchants' need to be recognized as trustworthy subjects by a market context whose intellectual grammar was Christian.²⁴

There has also been considerable recent scholarship about merchants from maritime historians such as John Dotson and Alan M. Stahl who have examined the genre of merchant produced practical manuals and self-produced books.²⁵ These scholars have also concluded that the moral and ethical dimensions were an important part of merchant culture. In his study of four fourteenth-century merchant manuals, John Dotson noted that "...ethics and a merchant's good name were also assets to be protected."²⁶

What the scholarship of the last thirty years has given us is based on a particular understanding of the late-medieval Italian merchant's identity, attitudes, and behaviours within a common civic and Christian culture. What bound these individuals together in a particular type of culture we can call 'mercantile' was partly the exercise of a certain set of skills, obtained through similar education and experiences. But, more importantly, merchant culture was also a set of attitudes towards the making and use of money within a Christian ethical and moral framework that was ultimately eschatological in nature.

²⁴ Todeschini, 2007, 22. The relationship between merchants and the mendicant orders was also discussed in a recent article: Taryn E. L. Chubb and Emily Kelley, "Mendicants and Merchants in the Medieval Mediterranean", *Medieval Encounters* 18 (2012): 149-173.

²⁵ See, for example: John E. Dotson, *Merchant Culture in Fourteenth Century Venice: The Zibaldone da Canal* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1994); Pamela O. Long, David McGee and Alan M. Stahl eds, *The Book of Michael of Rhodes: A Fifteenth-Century Maritime Manuscript* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009).

²⁶ Dotson, 2002, 84.

While these attitudes might themselves be nuanced, based on other factors such as civic identity and local customs, the cultural and religious attitudes towards how money could be legitimately earned, and how it should be used to benefit Christian society were largely intact across time and place in Trecento Italy. The three case studies, in their chronological sequence, emphasize the continuity of these issues. The beliefs and concerns around the righteous ways to earn and use money largely held up throughout, and indeed well beyond, the fourteenth century. The basic concern was always centered around how the greed for money—the cardinal sin of Avarice—led to such practices as usury, simony, a plethora of market frauds, and the failure to provide charity or consider the ‘common good’.²⁷ Even while the theological and legal specifications of what constituted usurious practice were refined over the course of the Trecento to reflect evolving business practices, usury still remained a real issue and was still heartily condemned. But, as Dennis Romano accurately observed, for most people in Italian Trecento society it was the merchant’s honest and ethical dealings in the acquisition, transportation, and selling of goods that mattered on a quotidian level.²⁸

The Impact of Patronage Studies

Since the issue under discussion involves the widespread commissioning of imagery by Trecento Italian merchants, it is helpful to understand how art historians, and others, have understood these persons as ‘patrons.’ Art historical scholarship has tended to examine merchant commissioned imagery within its social or political context, seeing its creation and use as a

²⁷ See Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 19-41.

²⁸ Romano, 159.

display of familial wealth, status, or civic power.²⁹ This approach was deeply rooted in the nature of what was termed ‘patronage studies’, the framework art historians used for exploring the processes and relationships that led to the commissioning of art. In early patronage studies, the dominant paradigm was that great art was the product of a few elite and aesthetically sensitive men who recognized and supported great, or potentially great, artists. Since such individuals were the powerful elite within their own cities or states, this inevitably skewed the analysis of motivation and reception towards politics and power.³⁰ This model of patronage studies was one that developed out of the study of Renaissance art and was heavily influenced by Florentine patterns of artistic creation. Colum Hourihane recently expressed his concern about using the Renaissance tripartite art production model of a patron, an intellectual advisor, and an artist, as necessarily applicable to an earlier period.³¹

Michael Baxandall, in particular, recognized the dilemma art historians faced with respect to the issue of patronage. In reviewing *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* by

²⁹ This type of assumption is clearly discernable in Bruce Cole’s writing about the Palazzo Datini’s decorations. See Bruce Cole, “The Interior Decoration of the Palazzo Datini in Prato,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, 13. Bd., H. ½ (Dec. 1967): 61-82. As late as 2009, Anne Dunlop was still using the same interpretation. “The decoration of the Palazzo Datini was a kind of imagined ideal extension of Francesco di Marco Datini, and the unfinished and unsuccessful attempt to have his palace reflect his place in the world caused him to suffer as foolishly and acutely as any *novella* patron.” Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 41.

³⁰ Dale Kent acknowledged this in her work on Cosimo de’ Medici. In a 1987 essay on Medici, Kent suggested that his patronage activities were part of a calculated strategy to increase his political influence generally and to sustain his magnificence with those whom he considered members of his own faction. However, as Kent continued to examine the patronage of Medici, she concluded that her previous conclusion was far too narrow, and that, in fact, “...the religious and civic impulses of Cosimo de’ Medici and the society he represented may have been more important than political ones in shaping his patronage of art and its reception.” Dale Kent, *Cosimo De’Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron’s Oeuvre* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000), xi.

³¹ Colum Hourihane, ed., *Patronage: Power and Agency in Medieval Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013), xix.

F.W. Kent and Patricia Simons, he criticized art historians for their overly narrow focus, observing that their perspective was, unlike that of social historians, “reductive and contractive”.³²

The current understanding of patronage studies, particularly as it applies to the pre-Renaissance period, is far less restrictive and prescriptive. Overall, there has been a general alignment of patronage studies with the other major developments in the field of art history—that is, a general tendency towards rigorous historicization and contextualization, inclusiveness, the use of concepts and tools from other disciplines, and the avoidance of broad generalizations in favour of a more nuanced approach. Jill Caskey noted that there has been increasing work to “... identify a greater variety of patron groups and reconstruct more specific connections between works of art and the intentions, ideologies, demands, and desires of the individuals who paid for them or were their primary users.”³³ The analytical framework that is presented in this dissertation does indeed seek to do this and in this sense fits within the context of current late-medieval patronage studies.

Merchant Visual Culture

Unlike the concept of ‘merchant culture’, there has been very little scholarship around the concept of merchant visual culture. In discussing merchant culture, scholars certainly have noted that merchants were serious patrons and commissioners of art. Robert Lopez stated that “...the merchant was an active and discriminating art patron.”³⁴ The problem is that this is not really a

³² Michael Baxandall, “Review of F.W. Kent and Patricia Simons with J.C. Eade, eds. ‘Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy,’” *The English Historical Review*, 105, no. 415 (1990): 456.

³³ Jill Caskey, “Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon, and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art,” in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Rudolph Conrad (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 193.

³⁴ Lopez, 1979, 54.

comment about merchant visual culture for it does not discuss the motives, meanings, or functions of artworks commissioned by merchants. Indeed, some art or cultural historians have seen Trecento merchants generally as cultural philistines who had no taste or aesthetic sensibilities, and who reduced artworks (and artists) to the status of commodities. This view was exemplified by the cultural historian, John Larner, who called the wealthy merchant Francesco Datini "...the hero of the most depressing rags to riches story of the late middle ages. ...who was insensitive to any of the claims of art."³⁵ This judgement was based on the fact that Datini engaged in the buying and selling of panel paintings as profit-earning commodities, and had disputes with some of the artists he hired to decorate his house in Prato. In a model of art production that highlighted taste and aesthetic sensibility, Trecento merchants were indeed found lacking by such cultural historians as Mikolos Boskovits and Georges Duby. As Duby put it, "Art had to lower itself to their taste."³⁶

The work that has provided much of the theoretical and methodological foundation for merchant visual culture is Michael Baxandall's seminal study, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. In his original Preface to this work (1972), Baxandall was explicit about his underlying thesis:

Social facts, I argued, lead to the development of distinctive visual skills and habits: and these visual skills and habits become identifiable elements in the painter's style. ... The book ends by pointing out that social history and art history are continuous, each offering necessary insights into the other.³⁷

³⁵ John Larner, *Culture and Society in Italy, 1290-1420* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 314.

³⁶ Quoted in Joseph Patrick Byrne, "Francesco Datini, Father of Many: Piety, Charity and Patronage in Early Modern Tuscany" (PhD diss., University of Indiana, 1989), 270.

³⁷ Baxandall, 1988, Preface.

The issue of visuality—the cultural formation of perception—is at the very heart of Baxandall’s study. The whole concept of visuality, and how we understand what we see as socially formed, was in its infancy when *Painting and Experience* was first published. Baxandall started his chapter on the period eye by briefly and elegantly describing the physiology of sight, and moved immediately into the cultural nature of perception:

It is at this point that human equipment for visual perception ceases to be uniform, from one man to the next. The brain must interpret the raw data about light and colour that it receives from the cones and it does this with innate skills and those developed out of experience.³⁸

Baxandall argued that visual perception was a culturally determined entity reflecting the collective visual, cognitive, and cultural experiences of a particular group of people. What people see and do in their everyday lives helps determine how they will visually approach an object such as a painting. Baxandall maintained that “Much of what we call ‘taste’ lies in this, the conformity between discriminations demanded by a painting and skills of discrimination possessed by the beholder.”³⁹

Baxandall focused particularly on what he calls the ‘patronizing classes’—merchants, princes, courtiers, and professionals—whose particular cognitive experiences shaped what they expected to see and therefore what they actually perceived in a painting. These might be experiences that were unique to a particular group within those classes, or ones that were commonly shared. Thus, the merchant brought a wealth of mathematical and proportional/spatial relationship skills to his visual perception through his abacus-school education, his practical experience in applied mathematics, and the fitting of goods into

³⁸ Ibid, 29.

³⁹ Ibid, 34.

containers and spaces.⁴⁰ Those in courtly settings engaged in complex dances that Baxandall argued helped them to develop a sense of figural position, gesture, and spatial relationships between figures.⁴¹ Common experiences such as listening to sermons—a major form of religious expression and public entertainment at this time—as well as the many religious processions and dramas that took place within Italian cities, helped attune participants to the visualization of narrative stories, figural movement, and spatial relationships.⁴² Baxandall established that it was precisely the perceptual skills that were developed through these types of experiences that influenced artistic style in a symbiotic relationship between artists and patrons. Baxandall summed up this relationship in this way:

The beholder must use on the painting such visual skills as he has, very few of which are normally special to painting, and he is likely to use those skills his society esteems highly. The painter responds to this; his public's visual capacity must be his medium. Whatever his own specialized professional skills, he is himself a member of the society he works for and shares its visual experience and habit.⁴³

The impact of Baxandall's work in this regard is not so much that it provided a template for the use of visibility in art history research, but rather that it legitimized the use of social and cultural experience as an analytical tool in exploring the relationship between patrons/commissioners, artists, and viewers.⁴⁴ It is his concept of a period eye that is so critical to understanding the concept of visual culture.⁴⁵ Adrian Randolph, writing thirty-two years later,

⁴⁰ Ibid, 86-102.

⁴¹ Ibid, 77-81.

⁴² Ibid, 40-76.

⁴³ Ibid, 40.

⁴⁴ Allan Langdale did an assessment of the impact of the Period Eye concept, and its fundamental importance for art historical research methodology. Allen Langdale, "Aspects of the Critical Reception and Intellectual History of Baxandall's Concept of the Period Eye," *Art History*, 21 (1998): 479-497.

⁴⁵ Svetlana Alpers credited the very term 'visual culture' to Michael Baxandall. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), xxv.

said of the period eye concept that it “...possesses an inherent depth, as if its temporal span and the panoramic opticality that it invokes can capture the essentials of a particular period’s visual culture.”⁴⁶ In using the period eye as the foundation for the Merchant’s Moral Eye, I have also drawn on two other studies that have adapted and extended the concept: Adrian Randolph’s work on what he termed the ‘gendered eye’, and Elizabeth L’Estrange’s development of what she called the ‘situational eye’.⁴⁷

In his study Baxandall also clearly articulated the historical reality of the relationship between commissioner and artist, particularly noting that the resulting artwork had a specific functional purpose(s) for the commissioner, who “after he had made it, reckoned on using it in some way or other.”⁴⁸ Baxandall also understood that part of what constituted the period eye was very much oriented towards the moral, becoming in the process what Baxandall termed “the moral eye.”⁴⁹ This moral eye enabled viewers “...to interpret various kinds of visual interest in moral and spiritual terms.”⁵⁰

In summation, Baxandall’s study provides both a theoretical and methodological framework for the concept of a merchant visual culture generally, and it is therefore the

⁴⁶ Adrian W. B. Randolph, “Gendering the Period Eye: *Deschi Da Parto* and Renaissance Visual Culture,” *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004): 540.

⁴⁷ Randolph, 542-548, noted that while Baxandall explicitly limited his analysis to stylistic developments, what he wanted to do was to challenge the “apparent gender neutrality (and default masculinity of the period eye)” by focusing on a different set of social facts and experiences than those Baxandall used. Randolph did this by examining a class of painted objects—birth trays (*deschi da parto*)— which he saw “as the only genre of painting explicitly addressed to a female spectatorship,” in order to show how their shape, function and iconography responded specifically to the issues and visual perceptions of women. L’Estrange suggests that the experience of young aristocratic women, brought up to see their primary role as producing healthy offspring to perpetuate their family’s position, perceptually rendered them “...sensitive to the domestic, post-partum images of childbirth found in their Books of Hours.” Elizabeth L’Estrange, *Holy Motherhood: Gender, Dynasty and Visual Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 16.

⁴⁸ Baxandall, 1988, 1.

⁴⁹ Baxandall, 1988, 103.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

foundational underpinning for this study. The dominant ‘social fact’ for Trecento merchants was their immersion in the world of trade, commerce, and money, and all the ambiguities and tensions that accompanied such activity in a Christian ethos that linked belief, behaviour, and eternal salvation. While Baxandall noted how merchants’ gauging experience might have affected their visual perception, he never talked directly about a larger merchant visual culture. But he was quite clear that particular professions developed particular visual habits, that is, ways of seeing and interpreting imagery.

Yet among the patronizing classes there were variations, not just the inevitable variation from man to man, but variation by groups. So, a certain profession, for instance, leads a man to discriminate particularly efficiently in identifiable areas.⁵¹

While Baxandall’s work undergirds this dissertation, there is one other study I particularly want to mention here because it is so important in exploring the linkage between merchant culture and the imagery merchants commissioned. Jill Caskey’s *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean: Merchant Culture in the Region of Amalfi* (2004) has been especially influential for my study in how it constructs a paradigm of merchant culture in relation to artistic output.⁵² Caskey does this by establishing a framework based on a conceptual model she calls *mercatantia*, which represents “...the broad cultural framework of a commercial society and a variety of activities that take place within it.”⁵³ She maintains that “As an interpretive tool, *mercatantia* reveals Amalfitan art as a coherent, meaningful expression of Mediterranean or commercial culture.”⁵⁴ Moreover, as a conceptual framework *mercatantia* enables us to discern

⁵¹ Ibid, 39.

⁵² Jill Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean: Merchant Culture in the Region of Amalfi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁵³ Caskey, 2004, 5.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 23.

what is distinctly Amalfitan about the art in this region during this time, and to differentiate it from the patronage and art of the court and the *ecclesia*. It is Caskey's construction and use of such a framework that has helped me to understand how merchant culture, and its constituent elements, can be a lens to explore the complexities of motives, expectations, and uses of the imagery commissioned by merchants in late-medieval Italy.

There are, of course, many other studies on which I have drawn and which are cited throughout the course of this dissertation, and I want to acknowledge my deep gratitude and scholarly debt to these scholars for their painstaking research, insights, and interpretations.

The Dissertation: Structural Outline

The dissertation consists of this **Introduction** and the following components. Every section contains references to specific images which are sequentially numbered and contained in a separate volume.

Chapter 1: The Merchant Moral Eye: An Analytical Framework

This Chapter describes the Merchant's Moral Eye framework and the eight particular analytical dimensions that comprise it. The purpose of the Chapter is to provide a clear understanding of how each dimension contributed to the formulation of the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and expectations of Trecento merchants. The framework as a whole provides a very broad context within which to explore the imagery our merchants commissioned. It thus enables a variety of analytical functions such as assessing or modifying existing interpretations, identifying whole new areas of interpretations, and generally filling in gaps and adding incrementally to our understanding of the roles of this imagery.

Chapter 2: The Moneylender's Moral Eye: Enrico Scrovegni and the Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel (Padua c.1303-06)

This chapter uses the framework for an analysis of the frescoes of the Arena Chapel, decorated by Giotto for its owner, Enrico Scrovegni, c.1303-6. I have chosen the Arena Chapel because it is one of the most exhaustively studied monuments in Western art and therefore a fitting test to see if the framework can provide us with new or altered insights or interpretations about some of the frescoes, in relation to their commissioner.

Chapter 3: The Grain Merchant's Moral Eye: Domenico Lenzi and his illuminated manuscript *Lo Specchio umano* (Florence c.1340)

This chapter uses the framework to examine a unique illuminated manuscript, *Lo Specchio umano*, produced by a minor Florentine grain merchant, Domenico Lenzi. This work has very little English-language scholarship and no comprehensive art historical scholarship since the one German-language study forty years ago—a gap this study attempts to fill. Unlike the merchants in the other two case studies, we know almost nothing about Domenico Lenzi since the manuscript is the only surviving documentary evidence of him. Again, this is a worthy test for the framework to see what it can additionally reveal about the author and his motives, aspirations, and expectations for his manuscript, and how it might have been used to realize these.

Chapter 4: The Entrepreneur's Moral Eye: Francesco di Marco Datini and the Palazzo Datini (Prato, c.1385-1392)

This chapter draws on the framework to provide a detailed study of the frescoes of the Palazzo Datini as an integrated coherent program throughout the semi-public space of the ground floor. While there is considerable scholarship around the palazzo's decorations, this imagery has not generally been closely contextualized to Datini's personal beliefs, values, and eschatological concerns, so clearly revealed in the massive amount of correspondence that has survived.

The Merchant's Moral Eye: Conclusions

This final chapter summarizes how the Merchant's Moral Eye matrix has enriched our understanding of the imagery commissioned by merchants in Trecento Italy, and how it was used to highlight their moral identity as they tried to ensure that their earthly activities, as persons involved with money and commerce would not jeopardize their hopes for salvation. This section of the dissertation draws the three diverse case studies together on the basis of the continuous and interwoven historical threads of connection as outlined in the framework. I conclude by suggesting how the Merchant's Moral Eye analytical framework contributes to late-medieval patronage studies.

The Appendices

This study includes three appendices which explore specific issues related to the case studies. While not critical to my analysis of the imagery, they provide additional background and perspective that readers might find beneficial. The three appendices are:

Appendix 1: *Usury and The Scrovegni Family: The Dante Factor*

Appendix 2: *The Problem of the Visualization of Purgatory in the Early-Fourteenth Century*

Appendix 3: *The Grain Traders and the Confraternity at Orsanmichele*

CHAPTER ONE

THE MERCHANT’S MORAL EYE–AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Just as the body has two corporeal eyes, so the soul must have two spiritual eyes, one open to the glory of Heaven and the other to the sufferings of Hell. If you do this, you will never offend the blessed Jesus Christ and aspire to the riches of eternal life. **Paolo da Certaldo, Merchant, (1320-1370)**¹

Introduction

Paolo da Certaldo’s seemingly straightforward epigraph was, in fact, a complex statement reflecting contemporary understandings about optics, vision, and the discernment of moral truth. Paolo da Certaldo intended his work as a comprehensive guide on commercial, social, moral, and religious behaviour for his merchant family, friends, and neighbours.² His work therefore embedded the particular “social facts” for merchants that Baxandall said “...lead to the development of distinctive visual skills and habits, ” what I call the *Merchant’s Moral Eye*.³

In this, the foundational chapter, I will start by examining how the late-medieval understanding of sight underpinned merchants’ use of the visual towards achieving their moral and spiritual objectives. I will then describe in detail the eight interlaced conceptual dimensions that collectively enable a comprehensive contextualization within which to explore how Trecento merchants used imagery for moral self-representation and to further their salvific aspirations.

Each dimension of this framework encompasses a set of contemporary understandings about the nature of Christian and civic society, behaviour, and interactions that would have

¹ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #33, Branca, 2015, 44. This was such an important part of his message that he repeated it again in Good Practice #388, *ibid*, 97.

² *Ibid*, 41.

³ Baxandall, 1988, Preface to the First Edition.

affected merchant attitudes, behaviours, and responses. The eight dimensions that make up the analytical framework are: Purgatory; Medieval Spaces; Christian Symbolism; Obligation & Reciprocity; Virtues & Vices; *Fama*; Hospitality; and Coats of Arms. In my discussion of each dimension I try to capture its meaning and importance in late-medieval Italian culture, explain how it affected merchants in particular, and how it might have influenced the visual content of, expectations for, and viewer responses to, the imagery merchants commissioned.

Sight and Vision in Late-Medieval Italy

Paolo da Certaldo's reference to corporeal and spiritual sight was rooted in the late-medieval understanding of sight as explained by the intromission theory of optics.⁴ In the intromission theory, what is being seen transmits its likeness to the human eye—a likeness that was not just its external form, but also its embodied essences and truths.⁵ As C. M. Woolgar expressed it,

There was at the same time a close link between cognition and moral and ethical qualities: direct sensory contact, including vision, allowed qualities to pass between the object perceived and the perceiver.⁶

There was, therefore, a firm belief that Christians could use the physical, symbolic, and allegorical dimensions of sight to differentiate between beneficent and sinful behaviour—what Peter of Limoges called the 'moral eye'. This notion of a 'moral eye' was popularized through Peter's 1389 treatise, the *Tractatus moralis de oculo*, written as a handbook of *exempla* for

⁴ The 'intromission' theory gradually displaced the 'extramission' theory that postulated that "... the eye emits a visual ray. This ray, strengthened by the presence of light, goes out to encounter its visual object, is shaped by that object, and finally returns to the eye." Cynthia Hahn, "Vision," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 74.

⁵ There has been a considerable volume of scholarship around medieval optics and its relationship to perception, devotion, and artistic production. See the following: Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, eds., *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006); David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1976); Robert S. Nelson, ed. *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶ C. M. Woolgar, "Review of Stuart Clark, 'Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture'", *The Journal of British Studies* 47, no.3 (2008): 671.

preachers using the understanding of optics as a means of articulating moral behaviour. The impact of this moral eye on the popular imagination was significant. Laura Jacobus observed that the moral eye “...was understood by the painter and audience alike as underpinning their every choice.”⁷

The great achievement of Peter’s work was, according to Herbert Kessler and Richard Newhauser, that it

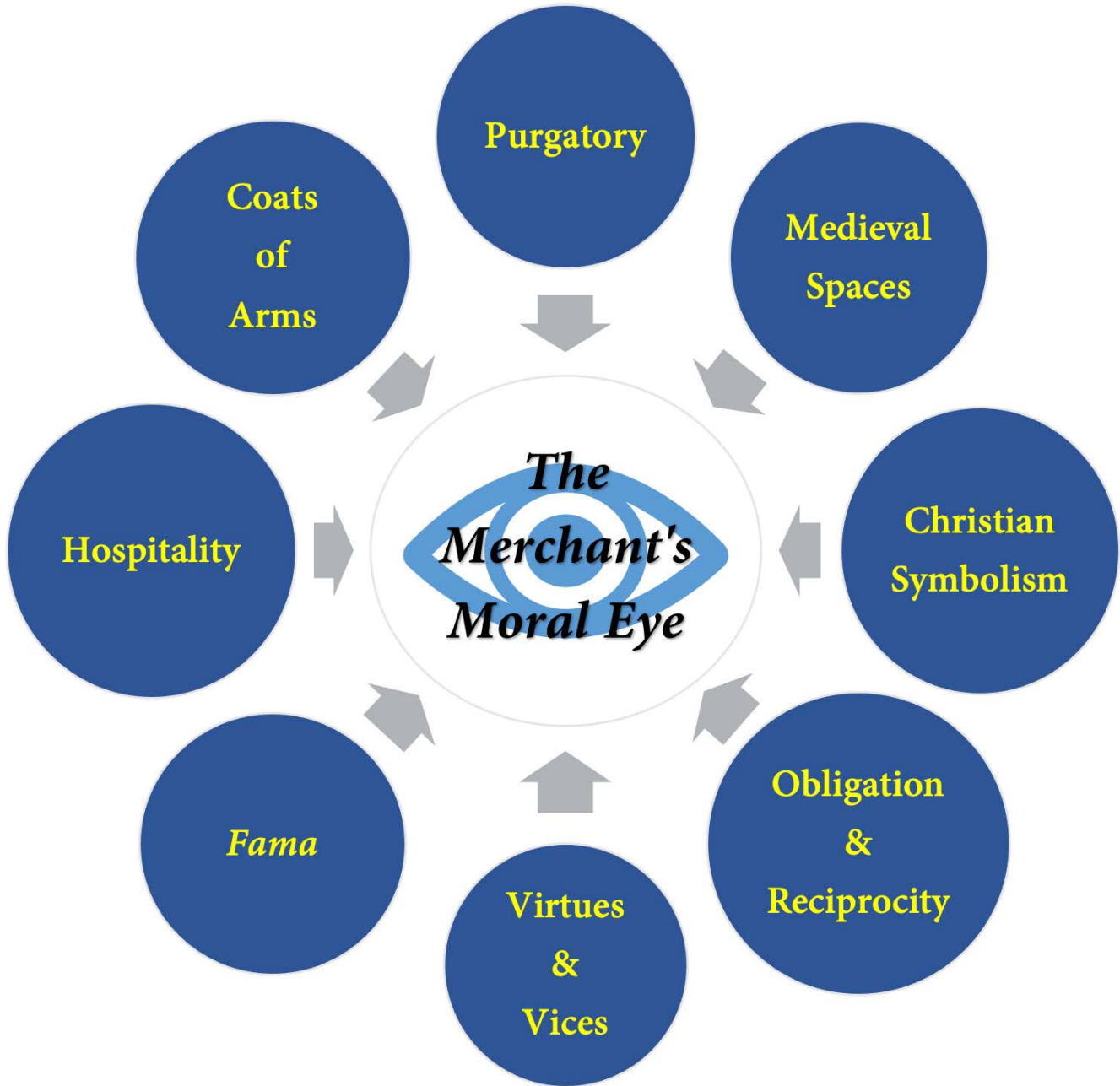
...successfully introduced the element of moral theology into the mix of cultural factors that conditioned the way the visual was understood and judged. The treatise used the science of optics to draw moral lessons, and it glosses the physiology of the eye and theories of perception in terms of Christian ethics and moralization, thereby making esoteric learning accessible to the public (including artists) through preaching.⁸

I believe that such a conceptualization of the visual provided Trecento Italian merchants with a foundational understanding for how imagery could convey deliberate messages about their own and others’ moral choices and their souls’ welfare. This imagery could then be structured in such a way as to become a practical mechanism in helping them realize their hope for salvation. I maintain that their use of such imagery was, therefore, deliberate, strategic, and predicated on an understanding of the complex social and cultural dynamics that shaped viewer responses and behaviours.

⁷ Laura Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture & Experience* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2008), 335.

⁸ Herbert G. Kessler and Richard G. Newhauser eds., *Optics, Ethics and Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Looking into Peter of Limoges’s Moral Treatise on the Eye*, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2018), 5.

THE MERCHANT'S MORAL EYE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



The above diagram is a visual representation of the eight dimensions that make up the analytical framework. They will be discussed in the same order as they appear here, starting with Purgatory and proceeding counter-clockwise. These particular analytical dimensions have been selected and combined because I believe that, collectively, they provide an effective and comprehensive way of contextualizing these attitudes and responses as generally normative for merchants in the mercantile cities of late-medieval Italy. I have also tried to restrict the dimensions to those that can be considered as generally primary constructs. This is why, for example, I have not included civic culture, because I see it generally as an outcome of the other dimensions, rather than a primary one in its own right. In detailing these particular dimensions, I do not wish to suggest that they have not been used, in varying degrees, by art historians to inform their analyses and interpretations of images, patrons, and artists. Nor do I want to leave the impression that the framework is a fixed or prescriptive structural entity. What differentiates my approach is that I have explored each one of these dimensions in depth, drawing on the multi-disciplinary scholarship around them, and then trying to discern how they might have related to merchants and the visual. These eight themes provide the type of information and understandings that I think best suits the objectives and scope of this dissertation.

Finally, it is important to note that these dimensions are interlaced and often overlap. Also, their utility varies significantly depending on the specific case study. Hospitality, for example, is an absolutely critical factor in understanding the content, placement, and function of some of the frescoes in the Arena Chapel and Palazzo Datini, but of less significance with respect to Lenzi's codex. This is why I have not chosen a parallel format for each case study where I articulate how each dimension might have influenced the merchant or the imagery. This enables the flexibility required to ensure the best possible analytical approach to each case study.

The Contributing Dimensions

1. Purgatory

In August 1395, Lapo Mazzei, the Florentine notary and close friend of the Pratese merchant Francesco di Marco Datini, urged him to build a little shrine to the Virgin at a crossroads near his country villa at Palco:

A million persons might pass your house after you die; only a few will pray God for you from noticing your house. But if you have that figure [of the Virgin] placed at that corner [outside the walls], someone will kneel there daily for centuries without end, and there won't be one day when a prayer is not said for you. This is not to mention the fact that you will have honour from those who love you, and you confuse those who hate you.⁹

This piece of spiritual encouragement encapsulates much of the motivation of Trecento merchants for commissioning imagery. The point of such a commission, as Joseph Byrne noted, was that "... it was to be a clear prayer magnet for Datini."¹⁰ This need for prayers was rooted in the contemporary belief system around Purgatory. Art historians have long acknowledged that one of the functions of Trecento imagery was to solicit prayers for the soul of the donor, but few have gone into any detail as to how such imagery was supposed to achieve that outcome.

Sin and The Theology of Purgatory

While Purgatory has long been studied by theologians and religious historians, interest in it as a social, economic, and literary force is relatively recent.¹¹ As a religious concept, Purgatory had an

⁹ Quoted in Richard C. Trexler, 1980, 97.

¹⁰ Byrne, Francesco Datini, 1989, 98.

¹¹ See, for example the following works: Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Le Goff, 1988; Juliann Vitullo and Diane Wolfthal, eds., *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010); Robert B. Ekelund, Jr., Robert F. Hébert, Robert D. Tollison, Gary M. Anderson, and Audrey B. Davidson, *Sacred Trust: The Medieval Church as an Economic Firm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). On the literary front see: Takami Matsuda, *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Cambridge: D, S. Brewer, 1997); Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

official doctrine, but the popular understanding of Purgatory and its processes was somewhat inexact and varied. This led, as Manuele Gragnolati observed, to “...many possible interpretations open to the sensibility, spirituality, and imagination of individuals.”¹²

Although the doctrine wasn't fully formulated until the thirteenth century, the conceptual elements already had a strong hold on the attitudes of clerics and laypersons alike.¹³ The doctrine of Purgatory, as proclaimed in 1274, was quite straightforward:

If those truly penitent depart in the love of God before they have made satisfaction by worthy fruits of penance for sins of commission or omission, the souls of these are cleansed after death by purgatorial punishments; and so that they may be released from punishments of this kind, the suffrages of the living faithful are of advantage to them, namely the sacrifices of masses, prayers, and almsgiving, and other works of piety.¹⁴

Purgatory was thus a place of hope for eventual salvation, though tempered by fear of the pain that awaited one there.¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas emphasized that Purgatory was a place of torment, asserting that “...the place of Purgatory is an infernal region joined to Hell, such that the same fire which torments the damned also cleanses the just in Purgatory.”¹⁶ The pains of such punishments

¹² Manuele Gragnolati, *Experiencing the Afterlife: Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 110.

¹³ Jerry Walls commented on this phenomenon in his discussion of the influence of Albertus Magnus (1205-1280) on the development of the doctrine of Purgatory: “What made his work so powerful and distinctive was his ability to synthesize the popular, empirical accounts of purgatory, which accounted so much for its broad appeal, with the rational academic arguments of the theologians.” Jerry L. Walls, *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22.

¹⁴ Demetrios Bathrellos, “Love, Purification, and Forgiveness Versus Justice, and Satisfaction: The Debates on Purgatory and the Forgiveness of Sins at the Council of Ferrara-Florence”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 65, no. 1 (2014): 83.

¹⁵ “Precisely these two aspects of Christian piety—hopeful expectation on the one hand, and fearful anticipation on the other hand—are decisive factors in shaping religious life, the proclamation of the word of God, and practical care in the Middle Ages and early modern period.” Thom Mertens, “Introduction: The Last Judgement in Medieval Sermons”, in *The Last Judgement in Medieval Preaching*, eds. Thom Mertens, Maria Sherwood-Smith, Michael Mecklenburg, and Hans-Jochen Schiewer (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), xxvi.

¹⁶ Quoted in Robert W. Shaffern, *The Penitent's Treasury: Indulgences in Latin Christendom, 1175-1350* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2007), 120. See also Marta Powell Harley, *A Revelation of Purgatory by an Unknown, Fifteenth-Century Woman Visionary: Introduction, Critical Text and Translation* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 6.

were continuously transmitted through preachers' vivid descriptions and by popular vernacular literary works such as the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* (Treatise of St. Patrick's Purgatory).¹⁷ It was this fear and dread that was part of the motivation for people to behave morally, remain in a state of grace, and to take measures to shorten their time and alleviate the severity of their punishments there.¹⁸

The most socially significant aspect of Purgatory was the ability of the living to affect the length of time the dead had to spend there, and, in popular imagination at least, the severity of the punishments meted out. An example of this is evident in Marie da France's vision of *St. Patrick's Purgatory* in which she wrote about the effect of suffrages (the forms of mitigating intervention) on the horrible torments of those in Purgatory:

When we pray for them,
Or offer masses, donations and gifts,
Their suffering is diminished:
Either they are relieved of all their suffering,
Or are alleviated of some of their pain,
Or are placed in lesser pain.¹⁹

¹⁷ In the *Fasciculus Morum*, a widespread preaching aid, the author notes the severity of purgatorial punishments: "This pain, namely of purgatory, according to blessed Augustine, surpasses all natural sufferings a hundredfold." Siegfried Wenzel, editor and translator, *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 415. *St. Patrick's Purgatory* was composed by a Cistercian monk, Henry of Saltrey c. 1380.

¹⁸ The conceptual understanding of Purgatory as a place of Hell-like torments was not universal in visions such as *St. Patrick's Purgatory*. Some saw Purgatory as not so hellish, more in line with Dante than Aquinas. In another very popular tale in the fourteenth century, *De spiritu Guidonis* (On the spirit of Guy), the ghost of Guy laments to a group of Dominicans that he is languishing in Purgatory because his wife had not undertaken any suffrages. However, he also told them that "...demons torment none of the souls in Purgatory, since nothing infernal could touch something destined for Heaven." Shaffern, 2007, 119. However, Shaffern observed, this was the minority view of Purgatory: "While one depiction suggests essentially a place of purification, the other indicates an abode of punishment. To be sure, the more dreadful visions, which may well have been entertained by the majority of medieval Catholics, must at least have caused some misgivings, if not terror." Shaffern, 2007, 123.

¹⁹ Quoted in Robert Mills, "God's Time? Purgatory and Temporality in Late Medieval Art" in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, edited by Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 479-480.

Suffrages involved actions by the living at the liturgical, ecclesiastical, and private devotional levels. Liturgical forms included memorial masses and specific prayers for the departed within Church services. At the ecclesiastic level, people could help the dead through the purchase or earning of indulgences or the formal enactment of donations and other tangible memorial good deeds. At the devotional level, the deceased could be helped by prayers said for his or her soul's benefit, or by other personal acts of denial, such as fasting. Jacobus de Voragine (1228-1298), in his *Legenda Aurea*, outlined four specific types of suffrages whereby the living could help the dead: prayers for their souls by 'the faithful and friends'; the giving of alms in their memory; the 'sacrifice of the mass' said for their souls; and 'fasting by [their] kinsmen'.²⁰ He added that penances done by the friends of the dead were also helpful, as were indulgences earned for the dead soul.²¹ For the family and friends of the deceased, such actions were regarded as absolutely obligatory.²² But the obligation was, of course, reciprocated by the dead who, according to Jacobus di Voragine, could be aware of the specific actions of the living made on their behalf.²³ The dead could reciprocally pray for those who engaged in suffrages for them, praying for these persons while still in Purgatory and especially once they were in Heaven.²⁴

The provision for these suffrages therefore became a major strategic concern for the living. It underscored many of their charitable actions while alive, but also featured significantly

²⁰ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), Volume II, 284-286.

²¹ *Ibid*, 287.

²² John Bossy wrote: "The devotion, theology, liturgy, architecture, social structure and institutions of late medieval Christianity are inconceivable without the assumption that the friends and relations of the souls in Purgatory had an absolute obligation to procure their release, above all by having masses said for them." John Bossy, "The Mass as a Social Institution", *Past & Present*, 100 (1983): 42. See also Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise: The Social Function of Aristocratic Benevolence, 1307-1485* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

²³ Jacobus di Voragine said that the dead could become aware of the sacrifices made for them in three ways: divine revelation; advised by good angels; and through being informed by other souls coming into Purgatory after them. Jacobus di Voragine, 289.

²⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (London: Viking, 2003), 13.

in the disposition of their estates upon death, in the form of bequests to charitable and religious institutions. This ensured that masses would be said for their souls, and that they would be prayed for by others, particularly the poor and humble, whose prayers were thought to carry special weight with God.²⁵ Virtually every merchant's will contained such provisions to ensure these suffrages.

Purgatory and Indulgences

No discussion of the understanding of late-medieval Purgatory would be complete without exploring indulgences, since they were so intricately connected to one's time in Purgatory, and featured significantly in the motivations and actions of wealthy merchants such as Enrico Scrovegni and Francesco Datini.²⁶

An indulgence could be granted by episcopal authority to Christians who were truly penitent for their sins, who had been to confession and received absolution, and who undertook and completed some form of pious undertaking, good work, or contribution of money or time to a project understood to be for the common good (e.g. construction of a Cathedral).²⁷ The

²⁵ In his discussion of Purgatory, Stephen Greenblatt observed that "Masses lovingly paid for and performed in memory of the dead were particularly efficacious, as were the prayers of the poor and sick offered in grateful memory of their benefactor." Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 19.

²⁶ See Robert W. Shaffern, "Images, Jurisdiction, and the Treasury of Merit," *Journal of Medieval History*, 22, no. 3 (1996): 237-247. In this article Shaffern notes that the evolution of indulgences owed much to the contractual and arithmetic mentality that was associated with the merchant class from the twelfth century on (240-243). Kathryn Rudy, in her study on indulgences and images uses "... the term 'indulgence' to mean the reduction of a purgatorial sentence as a reward for prayer. As such, indulgences came to dictate much of the functional culture in the century before the reformation. Late mediaeval believers obtained the indulgences in myriad manners that did not cost anything but time, contrition, and prayer, although the quantification of those devotional goods began to resemble a mechanistic, even worldly, economy. At their most basic level, indulgences eased the anxiety of facing the judgement of wrathful God, since they could 'buy' clemency and forgiveness." Kathryn M. Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 33.

²⁷ For a detailed history of late-medieval indulgences see Robert W. Shaffern, "The Medieval Theology of Indulgences" in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Boston: Brill, 2006), 11-36.

indulgence reduced or eliminated the punishments for one's sins not already completely exonerated while alive. It is important to note that indulgences were not unconditional—they were not a “Get-Out-of-Jail-Free” card. The penitent not only had to complete the good work for which the indulgence was exchanged but had to thereafter “...live in charity and contrition.”²⁸ In Trecento Italy, indulgences were a legitimate component of pastoral care and part of an overall penitential system, as opposed to being an easily-obtained bypass mechanism.²⁹

Imagery became an integral part of the indulgence system because praying before certain images, such as the *Vera Icon* (Head of Christ) or the *Man of Sorrows*, might carry an automatic indulgence if the viewer was truly contrite and penitent.³⁰ The obtaining of indulgences was thus a strategic part of reducing one's time in Purgatory.

Merchants and Purgatory

The particular mindset and activities of Trecento merchants made them especially sensitive to the claims of Purgatory. George Dameron, in his study on the early Trecento Florentine Church, wrote about merchants that:

Purgatory gave them permission—if not actually an incentive—to create wealth without the certainty of inescapable damnation. ... Making money could imperil one's soul, but monetary legacies channeled into masses, prayers, and good works could hasten one's journey into paradise.³¹

²⁸ Shaffern, 1996, 242-243. R. N. Swanson emphasized “But there were no guarantees: indulgences always carried small print.” R. N. Swanson, *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17.

²⁹ Shaffern, 1996, 237.

³⁰ Lauren Jacobi noted that “By the fourteenth century, those who said seven *Pater nosters*, seven *Ave Marias*, and an equal number of prayers dedicated to St. Gregory in front of the Man of Sorrows could receive an indulgence of 6,000 years ...” Lauren Jacobi, *The Architecture of Banking in Renaissance Italy: Constructing the Spaces of Money* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 145.

³¹ George W. Dameron, *Florence and Its Church in the Age of Dante* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 6.

Although the days were past of believing that being a merchant was absolutely incompatible with salvation, as expounded by Honorius Augustodunensis (1080-c.1154), the concerns around honest and fair business practices never disappeared.³² Certainly, by the start of the fourteenth century, it was recognized that honest trade and business practices, and even wealth, when used to benefit the common good, were compatible with Christian theology and ethics.³³ The underlying danger for the merchant, even the honest one, however, was that he would love his material possessions and wealth more than was seemly, thereby making him guilty of the deadly sin of avarice.

In addition to outright avarice, a merchant's soul could be imperiled by usury, even unwittingly, and in general Trecento merchants seemed to have done their best to avoid practices they knew to be usurious.³⁴ But there was often the dilemma about knowing whether a particular practice was in fact legitimate or usurious because of substantive disagreements among clerics.³⁵

The other moral dilemma facing merchants in particular was that their access to money could enable a ruinous and immoral lifestyle—such as one given over to gluttony or lust—which is

³² Honorius wrote that merchants had only a slight chance of salvation "...since they acquire almost all that they own by fraud, perfidy and other dishonest methods." Quoted by Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 154.

³³ Joel Kaye provides a detailed discussion of *aequalitas* as an operant principle in defining the common good and what this meant for merchants. "The (slow) realization within scholastic culture, over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the merchant had a right to profit by doing what he habitually does – buying a good for one price and reselling it later for more than it had originally cost – occurred only as thinkers came to appreciate the merchant's role in serving and benefiting the Common Good and common profit of all, not simply his own personal good and profit." Joel Kaye, *A History of Balance, 1250-1375: The Emergence of a New Framework of Equilibrium and its Impact on Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 107.

³⁴ Elaine Tan, a legal scholar who assessed the effectiveness of usury laws, observed that most merchants did their best to adhere to contracts that they knew to be legal. She concluded her article noting: "...historian's arguments that there was a very high incidence of usury do not stand up in the light of evidence from the contemporary legal context." Elaine S. Tan, "An Empty Shell? Rethinking the Usury Laws in Medieval Europe," *The Journal of Legal History*, 23, no. 3, (2002): 193.

³⁵ This was particularly true of the issue of whether the interest earned by those who were required to loan money to the city constituted usury or not. See Julius Kirshner, " 'Ubi est ille?' Franco Sacchetti on the Monte Commune of Florence," *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (1984): 556-584.

why fourteenth century merchant moralists were constantly espousing moderation, the cardinal virtue of Temperance.³⁶

All medieval people had to live with the possibility of sudden death, but this was especially true for merchants in Trecento Italy. Much of their commerce was based on regional and international trade which often involved travel by land or sea, with all of its attendant natural and human dangers. The prospect of sudden death while travelling meant the merchant might not have access to a priest to hear his final confession or administer last rites, thus imperiling his soul.³⁷ Clearly then, the merchant, especially, had to ensure that he would be prayed for, and that meant having his will in order, which included provisions for masses and charitable bequests that would result in ongoing remembrance and prayers.³⁸

The Visualization of Purgatory

The importance of Purgatory and its place in the popular imagination concerning the afterlife would strongly suggest that it would be represented visually fairly early. Yet, in fact, most art historians looking at the issue of the visual representation of Purgatory have assumed that it was exclusively a post-Dante phenomenon.³⁹ This is a rather complex issue and is discussed in detail in Appendix 2.

³⁶ Bruno Latini (1220-1294) expressed its importance in his Book of the Treasure: “Temperance is the control we have over luxuriousness and the other evil inclinations. It is the noble virtue which restrains carnal pleasures and which makes us moderate and temperate when we are prosperous, so that we not increase in pride or follow our inclinations, for when inclinations triumph over sense, a man is on a bad path.” Bruno Latini, *The Book of the Treasure (Li Livres dou Tresor)*, translated by Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), 216.

³⁷ Jean Verdon, *Travel in the Middle Ages*, trans. George Holoch (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 71.

³⁸ Paolo da Certaldo strongly advised in Good Practice # 118 to “Always have your last will and testament ready...” Paolo da Certaldo, *Branca*, 2015, 53.

³⁹ Mills, 477-478.

In conclusion, the Trecento understanding of Purgatory, and its particular importance to merchants because of their deep involvement with money, is probably the single most significant motivating factor for their commissioning of imagery during this period. Of course the imagery had other functions and served a host of these merchants' temporal needs that underscored their civic identity and social position. But however significant such imagery might have been for their temporal affairs, it was also of critical importance in helping to represent them as dutiful Christians, worthy of being admitted to Heaven, and in gaining the suffrages that would help them get there.

2. Medieval Spaces

The publication of Henri Lefebvre's seminal work, *The Production of Space*, marked a sea-change in our intellectual understanding of space and spatial dynamics as a social force.⁴⁰ Lefebvre's work provided a set of analytical concepts that prompted a new appreciation, across many academic disciplines, of the multiple ways in which defined spaces—be they natural or constructed—impacted individual, social, and institutional relations.⁴¹

All of the imagery in my case studies was site-specific. That is, the images' meanings to the commissioners and the anticipated responses from viewers were predicated on the spaces in which they were placed and viewed—fixed frescoes in the case of the built environments of Scrovegni and Datini, and a manuscript which could be displayed in various places in the case of Lenzi.⁴² These spaces were the sites of activities that dictated who the viewers were and why they

⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).

⁴¹ Nicholas Eckstein, in a recent article, maintained that "One of the author's [Lefebvre] principal concerns was to reject an earlier scholarly tendency to conceive of urban space in purely geometric terms, as a 'passive receptacle' for social behaviour." Nicholas A. Eckstein, "Propositional City: Spatial Practice and Micro-Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence", *Renaissance Quarterly*, LXXI, no. 4 (2018): 1239.

⁴² In the case study of Lenzi's manuscript I will argue that it was meant to be displayed because of its size and that it would likely have been displayed in several different settings.

were there. Equally important, these spaces defined certain attitudes and behaviours that influenced the content and placement of images and the anticipated viewer responses. This is why it is so important to discuss the medieval understanding of space and spatial dynamics.

In an introductory essay about space in medieval contexts, Megan Cassidy-Welch concluded:

...medieval understandings of space were not only very diverse, but were integral in the expression of wider cultural understandings of identity, identification, and purpose. Historicizing space, therefore, provides you an important means of discovering just how medieval people sought to locate themselves in community and cosmos.⁴³

Art historians have certainly recognized that spatial contexts affected what imagery was placed where, and how that space might affect viewer response.⁴⁴ Numerous works have captured the essence of these spaces as complex sites of economic, social, political, and moral interactions and exchanges. I would argue, however, that the multifaceted dynamics of the merchants' residential complexes, and how those dynamics related to the commissioning and reception of imagery, have tended to be underestimated, as we shall see in the case studies.

⁴³ Megan Cassidy-Welch, "Space and Place in Medieval Contexts," *Parergon* 27, no. 2 (2010): 12.

⁴⁴ See, for example, the following: Tim Pestell, "Using Material Culture to Define Holy Space: the Bronholm Project", in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 161-186; Sarah Rees Jones, "Public and Private Space and Gender in Medieval Europe," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, eds. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 246-261; Erin Campbell, "Prophets, Saints and Matriarchs: Portraits of Old Women in Early Modern Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63, no. 3 (2010): 807-849; Bronwen Wilson wrote two articles on the *Chastelaine di Vergi* cycle in the Palazzo Davizzi/Davanzati: Bronwen Wilson, "Bedroom Politics: The Vexed Spaces of Late Medieval Public Making," *History Compass* 10, no. 9 (2012): 608-621; Bronwen Wilson, "La Dama del Vergiù: Secrecy, Vendetta and Sexual Blackmail in a Late Medieval Bedroom," in *Firenze alla vigilia del Rinascimento*, ed. M. Predelli (Turin, Italy: Cadmo, 2006), 379-98; George R. Bent, *Public Painting and Visual Culture in Early Republican Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 135-183; Susan Mosher Stuard, *Gilding the Market* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 146-219; Denis Romano, *Markets and Marketplaces in Medieval Italy c.1100-c.1440* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Jacobi, 2019.

The spaces of the urban communes of late-medieval Italy were part of a society whose attitudes were predominantly Christian and mercantile.⁴⁵ What we currently recognize as fundamental divisions or orderings of spatial domains—public and private, domestic and work, general and specialized, personal and institutional, and especially secular and religious—did not conceptually exist in medieval thought or practice. Medieval spaces were highly fluid, and the activities that took place in those spaces were understood in context of a Christian worldview. The understanding of space was intrinsically connected to the Christian moral vision of the constant struggle between the forces of right and wrong, good and evil. All space, therefore, had a moral dimension that influenced those who interacted within it.⁴⁶

Medieval Conceptions of Ownership and Private Property

There is very little art historical scholarship around the concept of ownership in the Middle Ages and how understandings of ownership affected both the production and reception of imagery. In fourteenth century Italy, ownership was not just a legal and civic citizenship issue but also a religious and moral one, arising from the long history of Christian debate around the legitimacy and obligations of private ownership.⁴⁷

While Pope John XXII (1316-1334) made the acceptance of private property rights a matter of doctrine, these scripturally-sanctioned rights were not absolute. They were still very

⁴⁵ Classen, Albrecht, “Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age: Historical, Mental, Cultural, and Social-Economic Investigations” in *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 129.

⁴⁶ See Jennifer Fisk Rondeau, “Conducting Gender,” in *Medieval Conduct*, edited by Kathleen Ashley and Robert L.A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 188.

⁴⁷ The Church fathers, particularly Tertullian, Ambrose of Milan and John Chrysostom, reluctantly conceded that there needed to be private property rights but emphasized that those rights existed because of the Christian obligation to use the personal benefits accruing from ownership for providing for the poor. See Benedikt Koehler, “The Economics of Property Rights in Early and Medieval Christianity,” *Economic Affairs*, 37, no. 1 (2017): 112-124. See also See John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 29.

much tied to the notion that the possession of private property carried with it an obligation to support the poor.⁴⁸ Such moral obligation was unquestioningly accepted by Trecento merchants, and the activities that occurred within the precincts of the house included service to the needy in the form of foodstuffs, clothing, and money. In return, the owner and his family were the recipients of the prayers and the fervent gratitude and blessings of those whom they assisted.

Ownership of a space automatically meant that the owners could expect certain behaviours from others who were in their space, just as owners themselves were bound by a set of expected behaviours. This is why Paolo da Certaldo advised his son, “When you need a favour from anyone, go to his home, for he will not refuse you in his own home as he would outside of it.”⁴⁹ The conventions of behaviour between owners and visitors were, therefore, a key element in determining the content and placement of imagery within the residential complexes of Trecento merchants. Art historians have not explored this fact as deeply as they might have, which is a gap that this study attempts to fill.

Public vs Private Space

Our current understanding of the differences between private and public spaces is very clear both legally and socially, but it was not nearly so distinct in Trecento Italy.⁵⁰ The medieval urban built environment often carried active memories of previous uses that might limit or modify what we think of today as normal property rights.⁵¹ Previous usages of a space, especially if it was

⁴⁸ Koehler, 121.

⁴⁹ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #98, Branca, 2015, 49.

⁵⁰ Vanessa Harding, “Space, Property and Propriety in Urban England”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 32, no. 4 (2002): 549.

⁵¹ Ibid, 550. Richard Goldthwaite observed in his discussion of Florentine *palazzi* that “...there was a constant penetration of street life into the palace, so that the private and public worlds were not so clearly demarcated.” Richard A. Goldthwaite, “The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture”, *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (1972): 985.

perceived as being public in nature, such as a procession route, might continue even though a space had been transferred, and might sometimes prevent a space's alteration or transformation by the current owner. This was certainly true of the Arena space acquired by Enrico Scrovegni, a site with a long history of civic religious use, and partially explains some of the fierce resistance from a long-standing community of monks adjacent to that site.⁵²

The residences of wealthy merchants throughout the Trecento mirrored the complexities of the owner's various familial, social, economic, political, and religious networks, and the values and behaviours associated with those networks.⁵³ Virtually every Trecento merchant palazzo had areas that functioned as semi-public space.⁵⁴ What this meant, in practice, was that certain areas were specifically designed and decorated to accommodate and manage the host of visitors that would gather there.⁵⁵ What makes this semi-public nature of late-medieval merchant *palazzi* so important is that its wall frescoes, panel paintings, and other objects were seen by numerous individuals over the course of time, and their likely responses to this imagery were known and anticipated, and therefore part of the design and placement process.

Secular vs Religious Space

It is almost impossible to label medieval spaces as being either secular or religious. In a culture that believed in the omnipresence of the divine and supernatural, Christian religious values,

⁵² Jacobus, 2008, 33-34; 346-349, 356-358.

⁵³ Felicity Riddy, in writing about late-medieval households, wrote: "In the bourgeois ethos the household seems to have represented a distinctive complex of values—stability, piety, hierarchy, diligence, ambition, and respectability—all of which were crucial to the success of those craft and trade groups who were in place in the towns by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries." Felicity Riddy, "Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text", *Speculum* 71, no. 1 (1996): 67.

⁵⁴ Simonetta Cavaciocchi, "The Merchant and Building" in *Francesco di Marco Datini: The Man the Merchant*, ed. Giampiero Nigro (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2010), 134.

⁵⁵ James Lindow, *The Renaissance Palace in Florence: Magnificence and Splendour in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 123.

rituals, and symbols suffused every aspect of every-day life, and all the spaces within which people lived and interacted. This was particularly true of the domestic interior.⁵⁶ Increasingly, medieval scholars of Christian Europe have recognized that even when certain spaces were associated with what seemed like wholly secular activities, such as marketplaces, they were thoroughly permeated with Christian moral values and rituals.⁵⁷ Moreover, contemporary imagery that depicted such spaces reflected this fact, as we shall discuss in detail in the chapter on Domenico Lenzi's manuscript. Even spaces that we associate solely with religious activity, such as churches or monasteries, were also sites of social and commercial activities that had little to do with formal religious practices. Indeed, such uses generated laments from clerics that people behaved in church in ways that would never be tolerated in a private residence.⁵⁸

If the spaces themselves could not be categorized as sacred or secular as we understand these notions today, the same is true of the imagery that filled them. Virtually no representative image was devoid of some kind of Christian meaning, as we shall see in the dimension of Christian Symbolism, even when the content appears to be of non-religious activities.

⁵⁶ Jennifer Deane, in her study of religious activities within the home observed that "Medieval households were never entirely secular, nor were they private in the modern sense of the word." Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, "Pious Domesticities", in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, eds. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 262-263.

⁵⁷ Romano wrote that "Today, scholars are not so willing to view the medieval market economy as a self-regulating and morally neutral sphere of activity in the medieval merchant as a precursor of the modern commercial capitalist. Instead, they have come to understand that the medieval marketplace was a highly moralized space—one profoundly influenced by the ethics of the Christian church and by such societal values as honour, esteem, and reputation." Romano, 4.

⁵⁸ St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) was constantly exhorting people to behave respectfully in Church. In preaching to the Florentines, he used the following *exempla*: "For example, if you went to the pope or to the Emperor, would you take off your hat? I think so. And if you didn't take it off, wouldn't he ridicule you, and not listen to you nor grace you? Now think what you ought to do before the Corpus Christi, if you behave without manners." Quoted in Trexler, 1980, 102.

Spatial Behaviour: Conventions and Manners

All interactions within a particular space were governed by a strong sense of what constituted the appropriate and correct behaviours within it. How one behaved there was part of the general formality of social relations that permeated the whole of Trecento persons' interactions. The defining principle that determined how one should behave was relative rank and status, but a host of other variables were at play: who owned the space in which the interaction occurred; the type of relationship between the individuals; the circumstances of the particular interaction; and the prior history of relations between the individuals and their families. Knowing how to behave appropriately in public and private spaces was an important part of one's social education, including how one should respond to images in those spaces.⁵⁹ This education would have been achieved through direct instruction and modeling, supplemented by sermons, conduct manuals, literature, and moral treatises.⁶⁰ Paolo da Certaldo succinctly advised "...you must know how to behave with all manner of people as necessary, and in the proper way."⁶¹

Using the correct and proper behaviours was an integral part of one's social performance, and therefore made a statement about one's overall character, including one's moral character.⁶² There was an intimate linkage between space and social performance, particularly when one was in control of the space in which the performance was enacted. Such control enabled the careful

⁵⁹ Richard Trexler observed that "The Florentine young person entered a society that had behavioural rigidity of impressive dimensions. There was a right way to do everything, a set of images before which to do it, and a right frame encompassing these images..." Trexler, 1980, 90.

⁶⁰ For example, Francesco da Barberino (1264-1348), a Florentine poet and moralist, equated knowing how to behave appropriately with godliness. "He [God] nevertheless desires that all His servants live morally and customarily, if not because it is right to do so, at least for the reasons that [a person] does not want to displease others, horrified by his bad manners." Ibid, 91.

⁶¹ Paolo da Certaldo, *Good Practice* #65, Branca, 2015, 46.

⁶² Erving Goffman's pivotal study on social performance looked at human interaction and social identity as a series of performances. Goffman maintained that a "... 'performance' may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants." Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 15.

placement of objects and images which, as we shall see with the Palazzo Datini, was intended to make specific statements about the owners, including their moral identity.

In general, the correct behaviour in someone's space was dictated by the relative hierarchical position of the owner in relation to other residents or guests, and involved principles of deference, obligation, reciprocity and gratitude. Similarly, interactions within public spaces, such as markets, were subject to legally and socially prescribed conventions of behaviour that also incorporated the same dynamics.⁶³

The Domestic Interior: Spaces, Objects and People

One of the things that defines virtually all medieval spaces was how multi-purpose they were, and therefore the range of activities that might occur within them covered a wide spectrum of relations, interactions, and transactions.⁶⁴ This was particularly true of fourteenth-century merchant palazzi which might include commercial, social, devotional, diplomatic, and familial activities taking place in a single room. Such rooms were the sites for the satisfaction of physiological, social, economic, emotional, and spiritual needs, and therefore the individual and collective responses to the interactions in such spaces was, at least in part, deliberate and planned.

The domestic interior has quite recently become a rich area of study by art historians, and this work has given us a detailed picture of the dynamics between people, spaces, and things in late-medieval and Renaissance Italy.⁶⁵ In their Introduction to a recent study on the early modern domestic interior, the authors argued:

⁶³ Romano, 111.

⁶⁴ Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 22.

⁶⁵ See, for example, the following works: Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991); Elizabeth Currie, *Inside the Renaissance House* (London: V & A Publications, 2006); Marta Ajmar-

...that to interrogate the nature of the early modern domestic sphere, we must approach domestic interiors as multi-layered, fluid, and contingent environments in which constantly shifting configurations of people, spaces, and things, over time and space, constitute and reconstitute, moment by moment, variable domesticities.⁶⁶

Whilst the fourteenth century did not, in general, have as developed an ideological understanding of the home as a microcosm of the civic and divine cosmos as we see in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the domestic interior was nonetheless the site for the sophisticated enactment of multi-layered interactions and relationships. Merchant homes in particular had access to a multitude of objects because of merchants' relative wealth and continuous exposure to material culture. These objects and images could invoke ethical behaviours and rituals. For example, a small statue of the Virgin and Child strategically placed in view of the merchant and a business associate could remind both of them of the obligation to behave ethically and fairly. Even the most seemingly utilitarian object, such as a storage chest, would often have carved or painted designs or images that had symbolic or allegorical meaning that might overtly or subliminally influence the nature of interactions around it.⁶⁷ These objects, in relation to the people observing them, created what Eric Jacobsen termed 'enacted space'.⁶⁸

Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 2006; Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari, eds., *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400–1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities* (Farnham; Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013); Eva Oledzka, *Medieval & Renaissance Interiors* (London: The British Library, 2016)

⁶⁶ Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari, "Introduction–Early Modern Domesticities: Integrating People, Spaces, Objects," in *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400–1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*, eds. Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 3.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Cristelle Louise Baskins, Adrian W. B. Randolph, Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, Alan Chong, and Virginia Brilliant *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2008).

⁶⁸ Jacobsen defined enacted space as follows: "Enacted space refers to the dynamic interaction of people and props in a particular place through time." Eric O. Jacobsen, *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 17.

3. Christian Symbolism

In his 1995 work on medieval palace ‘secular’ decoration, Andrew Martindale claimed of such imagery that “Its serious moral content was negligible.”⁶⁹ This highly problematic statement exemplifies the challenges for any medieval art historian wishing to discuss painting or imagery in terms of its ‘secular’ content or location—the fact that neither sacred nor secular was a distinct category of meaning in this period. As has been noted, medieval spaces were multi-functional and the imagery within these spaces was also multi-dimensional in its meanings. Virtually every shape, representation, material, and colour was imbued with Christian symbolism based on a Christian cosmological interpretation of the natural world.⁷⁰ So medieval viewers thoroughly understood that imagery was charged with Christian meaning, whatever else it might also represent, and this meant that all imagery could be scanned for its didactic or moral purpose.

The Natural World

As God’s creation, the natural world was a manifestation of the divine presence and divine will. Every part of the environment in which humans interacted was, in principle, infused with symbolism to help them experience and understand the divine; every living creature, plant, and inanimate substance was ascribed meaning to serve as a moral and didactic *exemplum*.⁷¹ These meanings were not abstract scholastic notions but were commonly understood symbols that were

⁶⁹ Andrew Martindale, *Painting the Palace: Studies in the History of Medieval Secular Painting* (London: The Pindar Press, 1995), 1.

⁷⁰ See Gerhart B. Ladner, “Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism: A Comparison,” *Speculum* LIV, no. 2 (1979): 224.

⁷¹ In her discussion of medieval animal symbolism, Sophie Page wrote: “On a symbolic level animals could be found on either side of the spiritual struggle that constituted man’s existence on earth and they could help or hinder his chances of salvation.” Sophie Page, “Good Creation and Demonic Illusions: The Medieval Universe of Creatures,” in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*, ed. Brigitte Resl (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 37.

a fundamental component of preaching manuals. Thomas of Chobham (c.1160-c.1236), an English theologian, advised his fellow preachers as follows:

For there is no creature which may not preach that the God who created it is powerful, and that the God who gave it its order and form is wise, and that the God who conserved it in being is merciful. . . .there is no creature in which we may not contemplate some property belonging to it which may lead us to imitate God, or some property which may move us to flee from the Devil.⁷²

It was not just flora and fauna that embodied Christian moral symbolism, but also the inanimate. Treatises on stones, known as lapidaries, by such authors as Marbodius of Rennes (c.1035-1123) and Albertus Magnus (c.1200-1280), blended scientific, medical, theological, and magical knowledge to provide an authoritative catalogue of the properties and powers of all known gemstones, real and fictitious.⁷³ Almost every gemstone had specific religious symbolism—the ruby represented the blood of martyrs; the pearl, purity; and the amethyst, contrition and penitence.⁷⁴ Some stones even had divinely infused powers. As a preventative, the diamond could detect poison, red coral could ward off blood disease, and amethysts could ensure sobriety. But such powers might also be dependent on the moral behaviour of the possessor. The author of *The Book of John Mandeville* (c.1350) reported, that for the diamond to be effective in protecting its wearer, the possessor must behave justly and morally, otherwise “good diamonds do lose their power through the incontinence of those who carry them. . . .”⁷⁵

The Symbolism of Materials and Colours

⁷² Quoted in Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xv.

⁷³ Joan Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance Particularly in England* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), 51-139.

⁷⁴ Doug Gray, *Christian Symbolology: A Collection of Symbol Definitions, Liturgical Terms, Images and Illustrations* (Collierville: Instant Publisher, 2007), 258.

⁷⁵ John Mandeville, *The Book of John Mandeville*, edited and translated by Iain Macleod Higgins (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011), 101.

In her 2011 study, *Christian Materiality*, Caroline Walker Bynum argued that the materials used to create an image carried their own meaning in addition to what they were being used to represent. She wrote:

The materials of medieval art were, of course, pregnant with significance. They often (although not always) called attention to themselves, not as mere stuff but as significant stuff, and the significance lay in the specificity of that stuff. Like was supposed to signal like—red to signal blood, gold heavenly light. ... The point was the power of the materials to evoke, to conjure up—to represent not so much in the sense of ‘looking like’ as in the sense of ‘manifesting the significance of.’⁷⁶

Thus, the actual materials that merchant commissioners specified in creating the imagery also carried symbolic and moral meanings. The best example of how the material might embody the moral was the extensive use of gold in panel painting and manuscript illumination. Gold was an archetypal metaphor for the relationship between devout righteous humans and God. Saints in particular were seen as possessing the same qualities of perfection and incorruptibility as this precious metal, which is why Jacobus de Voragine (1230-1298) titled his incredibly popular description of saints’ lives, *The Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)*.

In addition to the substance of the material, its colour was also a transmitter of qualities and values. I will say more about the meaning of colours in the section on Coats of Arms and in the case studies themselves, but the important thing to note here is that every colour had Christian symbolic value. Moreover, colours were hierarchical in relation to one another so that their uses might reflect such notions of hierarchy. Robert Blanch, in his discussion of medieval colour symbolism, wrote:

With the establishment of a symbolic underpinning for the medieval view of the cosmos, the symbolic mode of thought permeated all phases of medieval

⁷⁶ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 28;58-59.

life. ... In such a symbolic ethos, the language of colour crystallized into a fully developed code of symbolism.⁷⁷

The colours which merchant commissioners chose when presenting themselves as donors or supplicants were, therefore, highly significant as a form of moral self-representation.

In summary, the imagery that was commissioned by merchant commissioners was, like all imagery in this period, full of Christian symbolism in its content, forms, colours, and materials. This symbolism articulated many kinds of messages about Christian beliefs and moral behaviour and thus was an integral part of the imagery chosen by merchants to represent their own moral awareness.

4. Obligation and Reciprocity

It has already been apparent, in the discussion of Purgatory and Spaces, that obligation and reciprocity were the principal operational dynamics in the enactment of all forms of relations in Trecento Italian society. They influenced every type of transaction—social, economic, political, and religious—and created a complex web of relationships that had a profound effect on how all people thought and behaved.⁷⁸ The understanding of this cycle of obligation and reciprocity set expectations and established predictability in one's relationships and interactions, and it was precisely this predictability that merchants relied on in determining the content and placement of the imagery they commissioned.

⁷⁷ Robert J. Blanch, "The Origins and Use of Medieval Colour Symbolism," *International Journal of Symbolology*, 3:3 (1972), 1-2.

⁷⁸ Ronald Weissman sees the cycles of obligation as key to understanding urban life at this time. "I would argue that central to the problem of urban life in the Renaissance was the interpretive and interactive process of untangling the complex web of obligations engendered by overlapping, conflicting, simultaneous commitments to family, neighbours, political allies, competitors, friends, associates, clients and patrons." Weissman, 1985, 45.

Obligation was established through two distinct mechanisms. Firstly, it was determined by who one *was*—that is, one’s perceived place, status, and overall identity within a particular society. As a Christian, one inherited well-defined religious obligations that set behavioural patterns for the entire range of daily life. These obligations included personal acts of devotion or sacramental participation, such as taking communion or going to confession, as well as contributing to the common good through behaving morally in one’s dealings with others and helping those in need. But every aspect of one’s identity—city, family, profession or trade, social standing, and membership in communal associations (such as guilds or confraternities)—carried with it well-understood notions of obligation that provided direction on how to behave in relation to others.⁷⁹ Thus, one owed to the city, loyalty; to the head of the family, obedience; to the trade guild, conformity in quality and price; to employees, payment of wages and concern for their physical and moral well-being.

Secondly, obligation was established by how one was treated by someone else. The receiving of something of benefit—a ‘gift’ in effect—from individuals or organizations, whether it be material or other, created a reciprocal obligation, a form of response. This is what the cycle was all about—obligation imposed reciprocity and reciprocity imposed obligation. The two were inseparable. For merchants, the meeting of their commercial and Christian moral obligations was essential to their professional and social wellbeing. The acceptance of commitments around

⁷⁹ Gene Brucker quotes the following from the charter of a fourteenth-century Guelf association: “If any one of us is offended or outraged by any person, each and every one is obligated to help, defend and avenge him with his life and property.” Gene Brucker, *The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 15.

credit, quality, and delivery necessitated a network of trust to which Trecento merchants were extremely sensitive.⁸⁰

The social dynamics around ‘gift-giving’ and ‘reciprocity’ have been well explored, particularly by anthropologists and sociologists, and much of our knowledge about the forms and functions of reciprocity has stemmed from their work.⁸¹ What has emerged from this scholarship is an understanding of how fundamentally important reciprocal exchange was as a social dynamic, especially in medieval society. Reciprocity, as an operant principle in the communes of Trecento Italy, was as much a form of moral exchange as it was a material one. Shaowen Bardzell expressed the relationship this way: “In sum, reciprocity is a vehicle by which people achieve mutual solidarity through a sense of moral obligation in a community.”⁸² This sense of reciprocal exchange permeated every type of relationship between individuals, establishing a general set of mutually expected responses in relation to what was given.⁸³ The cycle of reciprocity was a reflexive principle that extended even into the afterlife. As Diarmaid MacCulloch observed: “...to pray for the souls of the dead was mutually beneficial, because the dead in purgatory, with a good deal of time on their hands, could be expected to reciprocate with their own prayers.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Craig Muldrew, in his work on the economics of obligation wrote: “The stress on trust as a necessary social bond meant that increasingly a good reputation for honesty and reliability and obligations was of great social importance. As credit networks became more complicated, and more obligations broken, it became important before entering into a contract to be able to make judgements about other people's honesty.” Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998), 148.

⁸¹ In particular, the work of Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) has shaped much of the scholarship in this area. See: Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, translated by Ian Cunnison (London: Coehn & West, 1954); Claude Lévi-Strauss, “The Principle of Reciprocity” in Aafke E. Komter, editor, *The Gift: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 18-25.

⁸² Shaowen Bardzell, “Hospitality and Gift Exchange: Reciprocity and Its Roles in Two Medieval Romance Narratives” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2004), 5.

⁸³ Ronald Weissman expressed it this way: “...all social exchanges had to be reciprocated, and such reciprocation had to be weighed and balanced on the scales of honour and shame.” Weissman, 1982, 40.

⁸⁴ Diarmaid MacCulloch, 13.

It was this expansive understanding of the cycles of obligation and reciprocity that guided merchants in the content and placement of the imagery they commissioned as a strategic objective in transmitting their moral identity and as a tool in their salvific planning.

5. The Vices and Virtues

By the start of the Trecento, much of the common Christian understanding of moral and immoral behaviour was conceptualized through the seven virtues and seven vices.⁸⁵ Although these were not the only forms of Christian moral representation and instruction, the vices and virtues were the primary frameworks for defining righteous and sinful behaviours until the Early Modern period.⁸⁶ As Shawn Tucker observed, the virtues and vices set “public norms” and “expectations for social interaction.”⁸⁷ This understanding of the vices and virtues was present in all forms of medieval cultural expression to continuously remind late-medieval Christians that the specific behaviours encapsulated by the virtues and vices affected their entire well-being, both in life and after death.⁸⁸

There has been considerable scholarship on the vices and virtues, but with considerably more focus on the vices than the virtues.⁸⁹ Art historians have been particularly interested in the

⁸⁵ Richard Newhauser, “Introduction,” in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard Newhauser, ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2005), xi.

⁸⁶ See John Bossy, “Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments,” in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Edmund Leites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 214-234.

⁸⁷ Shawn R. Tucker, *The Virtues and Vices in the Arts: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2015), 9.

⁸⁸ István Bejczy wrote the following of the Virtues’ significance: “Enabling Christians to achieve moral acts and thereby to gain merit, the virtues serve as divine instruments, which secure morality in the here and now and salvation in the hereafter.” István P. Bejczy, “Virtue and Vice,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 1,366.

⁸⁹ See the following works dealing primarily with the vices: Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1952); Richard Newhauser, *The Treatises on Vices and Virtues in Latin and in the Vernacular* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Richard Newhauser, 2005; Richard Newhauser, *Sin: Essays on the Moral Tradition in the Western Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007); Richard Newhauser, ed., *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Peter of Limoges, *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, trans. Richard Newhauser (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2012). In writing about the appearance

medieval representations of the vices and virtues, and this is discussed in a separate section below.

The Development of the Vices and Virtues in Christian Culture

The idea of describing specific behaviours in terms of named vices and virtues had a long history and reached back to antiquity.⁹⁰ Christian culture adopted the notion of the cardinal virtues and added to them in the form of theological virtues. Although they had fluctuated considerably, by the twelfth century the seven virtues were fixed in number and type.⁹¹ These were the four Cardinal Virtues,—prudence/wisdom; justice; fortitude/courage; temperance; and three Theological Virtues (that is virtues only obtainable through divine grace): faith, hope, and charity.

The Vices were much more fluid than the Virtues, but they too were gradually stabilized, at least in number and generally by type, so that by the fourteenth century there were seven Capital Vices or Deadly Sins. These were the behaviours that, unless one fully repented and was absolved, would result in eternal damnation in Hell. Dante's schema—Pride; Envy; Anger; Sloth;

of treatises in the vernacular, Newhauser wrote that “Here, too, the genre can be seen as providing a moral foundation for the developing self-awareness of the bourgeoisie in the city, something which makes itself felt especially in those treatises which characterize the appearances of the vices and virtues in terms of the various ‘estates’.” Newhauser, 1993, 136-137. For a recent work on the virtues see István P. Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). An earlier and narrower work is István P. Bejczy and Richard G. Newhauser, eds., *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁹⁰ Francis T. Marchese, “Virtues and Vices: Examples of Medieval Knowledge Visualization,” *17th International Conference on Information Visualization* (2013), 360.

⁹¹ In the *Index of Christian Art* there are actually 109 named personifications for the Virtues, although most of these capture the same behaviours noted in the seven Cardinal and Theological Virtues, but use different names for them. Colum Hourihane, ed., *Virtue & Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 153-154.

Avarice; Gluttony; Lust—was generally the norm by the late Middle Ages, although as we will see, Giotto used a unique, one-off set of vices in the Arena Chapel.⁹²

The Vices and Virtues in Religious and Popular Culture

The vices and virtues were serious categories for the practical maintenance of personal and societal moral order.⁹³ But the vices always received more attention because of the pastoral requirements for clerics arising out of the Lateran IV Council (1215). This council made normative the preaching about the vices in sermons, and priests were expected to use the seven deadly vices as a template for examining those who were confessing and seeking absolution.⁹⁴

It was the use of the vices in pastoral care that prompted so many texts on the vices and virtues as preaching guides.⁹⁵ The cultural importance of these preaching manuals cannot be overstated. They articulated all behaviours and their consequences within a Christian context, drawing on scripture, patristics, and scholastic theology, and were the primary vehicle for the moral education of all late-medieval Christians.

⁹² Shawn Tucker argues that Giotto's rather unusual list of the Vices was to provide direct opposites for representational purposes to the more fixed seven virtues. Tucker, 5.

⁹³ Siegfried Wenzel noted that "By the early thirteenth century, the seven vices had, in moral theology as well as in its practical applications, become the standard topic of discussing the major inclinations to evil in human behaviour." Siegfried Wenzel, "The Continuing Life of Peraldus's *Summa Vitiorum*," in *Of Sins and Sermons*, Siegfried Wenzel (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 37.

⁹⁴ One such preacher urged his congregation in the fourteenth century as follows: "Let us think beforehand how we have spent our life (which is worth so much more than money) after our last confession, ... And how often we have done evil, either by falling into the Seven Deadly Sins or by misusing our five senses and not carrying out the seven works of mercy as well as we could. Let each bring these single sins to his memory and write them in his heart before he comes to confession to render an account of his life." Quoted in Siegfried Wenzel, "Preaching the Seven Deadly Sins," in *Of Sins and Sermons*, Siegfried Wenzel (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 89. Silvana Vecchio, in commenting on the production of preaching manuals in the thirteenth century, emphasized that "Indeed, the need to carefully evaluate the gravity of misdeeds with reference to the sacrament of penance requires a detailed knowledge of the possible kinds of sin that can occur, which generally uses the traditional schema of the capital vices..." Silvana Vecchio, "The Seven Deadly Sins between Pastoral Care and Scholastic Theology: The *Summa de vitiis* by John of Rupella," in *In the Garden of Evil*, ed. Richard Newhauser, 2005, 107. See also Marchese, 360.

⁹⁵ For example, there are over 500 surviving copies of William Peraldus's *Summa vitiorum*, made between 1250 and 1400. Wenzel, 2015, 36.

This formal pastoral use of the vices and virtues schema was given additional weight through the appearance of similar treatises in the vernacular.⁹⁶ The vices and virtues were therefore a source of powerful cultural formation that had a profound effect on how people's moral behaviours were assessed and judged, thereby providing a general social framework for determining whom to avoid or with whom to associate.⁹⁷ Paolo da Certaldo wrote this to his son:

I am talking about when you consort with other merchants or tradesmen. ... for whoever deals or consorts with good men, it rubs off on them, and whoever deals or consorts with evil and false men can do nothing other than lose along with them.⁹⁸

Preaching the Vices and Virtues

The vices and virtues, and their impact on individuals, institutions, and Christian society generally, underscored much of the preaching of the later middle ages. What makes the relationship between the virtues and vices and preaching so important is that sermons were the primary mode of transmission of the Christian worldview, especially its values, morals and behaviours. The Franciscan author of the fourteenth-century handbook for preachers, *Fasciculus Morum*, wrote: "...we are held to show and preach to the people, in short words, the vices and virtues, punishment and glory. Hence we must begin with a description of the vices and end with

⁹⁶ One of the most popular such treatises was the *Fioré di virtù*, an Italian work written by a Bolognese notary in the early fourteenth century that was a 'bestseller' and translated into virtually every other European language. See Newhauser, 1993, 136-137.

⁹⁷ Eva Kimminich saw the vices and virtues as a fundamental driver of medieval psychology "...in which he [the person] was forced to realize that his own weaknesses were his enemies. Furthermore, he was shown how to recognize his failures—failures which are commonly denied through various mental processes of rationalization." Eva Kimminich, "The Way of Vice and Virtue: A Medieval Psychology," *Comparative Drama*, 25, No.1 (1991): 84.

⁹⁸ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #372, Branca, 2015, 91.

the virtues”⁹⁹ Beverly Kienzle asserted that “The sermon, through its role as a moral and didactic bridge between the preacher and manifold audiences, constitutes a mirror of medieval society.”¹⁰⁰

It was especially through the use of *exempla* that the preacher was able to make the moral behaviours and consequences associated with the vices and virtues dramatically and personally real to ordinary people and their everyday lives.¹⁰¹ It was precisely because *exempla* were designed to highlight the behaviours of real people that they tended to draw on commonly understood stereotypes, such as merchants or knights, thereby reinforcing the negative perceptions that were generally associated with these individuals.¹⁰² In the commercial towns of Trecento Italy it was the merchant who was often front and centre in such denunciations.

Merchants and the Vices and Virtues

As noted continuously throughout this study, issues concerning the making and use of money were the dominant topics of moral discourse in Trecento Italy, and beyond. While these issues were not only directed at those involved in trade and commerce—the selling of church offices or the holding of multiple benefices were other serious issues concerning money—merchants were used as a general archetype for much of what was seen as potentially threatening to fundamental

⁹⁹ Wenzel, 1989, 33.

¹⁰⁰ Beverly Mayne Kienzle, “Conclusion,” in *The Sermon*, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, ed. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 978.

¹⁰¹ In a mid-thirteenth century collection of *exempla* for preachers, *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilis*, its author, the Dominican Étienne de Bourbon, introduced the work exclaiming that: “*Exempla* are especially valuable for furnishing, bestowing, and imprinting these things [the things necessary for human salvation] on human hearts. And they instruct the ignorance of simple people, and they heap up and imprint more easily, longer and tenaciously in memory.” Quoted in Kimberly A. Rivers, *Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 194.

¹⁰² For example, Nicolaus de Aquaevilla (d. c. 1317), a Franciscan cleric, preached about the sins associated with having or obtaining wealth, naming specific groups: “Secondly obtaining them badly like those robber bailiffs and knights, and those usurers and covetous unfaithful merchants who want to become rich by evil and faithless commercial transactions and by bad acquisitions. All of these make with their own hands the rope with which they will be hanged in the hell.” Quoted in Jussi Hanska, “*And the Rich Man also died and He was Buried in Hell*”: *The Social Ethos in Mendicant Sermons* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1997), 45.

Christian values and societal order.¹⁰³ Although the blanket condemning of all merchants as persons only destined for Hell had significantly moderated by the fourteenth century, the merchant was still a deeply suspect figure and harshly criticized for a variety of trade practices considered as fraudulent.¹⁰⁴ It was the deadly sin of Avarice that was seen as the root sin of merchants, which led them to commit all manner of frauds and illegal and immoral practices such as usury. And the merchant's avariciousness led directly to other deadly sins as its proceeds provided the money and the dissolute mindset that could lead to the satisfaction of bodily pleasures such as Lust and Gluttony. As an insatiable behaviour, Avarice also led directly to Envy and Wrath, and the smug self-satisfaction of having money was a path to Pride. Finally, with such total immersion in sinful behaviour, the avaricious merchant could never orient himself to loving God and pursuing good, thereby also being guilty of Sloth, as it was then understood.¹⁰⁵ Such assumptions meant the merchant was often framed in texts and sermons as the archetype for the totally corrupting power of money and greed.

If the negative view of merchants predominated, there were also increasing attempts to validate the virtuous behaviour of merchants and the positive contribution of their profession, thereby counterbalancing some of the most vituperative denunciations against them. Gilbert of

¹⁰³ Richard Newhauser, "Sin, the Business of Pleasure, and the Pleasure of Reading: Exemplary Narratives and Other Forms of Sinful Pleasures in William Peraldus's *Summa de Vitiis*," in *Pleasure in the Middle Ages*, eds. Naama Cohen-Hanegbi and Piroška Nagy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 193-194.

¹⁰⁴ William Peraldus (1190-1271) included a section in his *Summa* titled *Avarice of Merchants* which listed the common eight frauds of merchant. These were: buying cheap and selling dear; lying; false oaths; false weights and measures; hidden usury; bait and switch; false representations about goods; manipulation of the environment to hide defects. Hanska, 88-89.

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted that Sloth (*Acedia*), meant far more than mere laziness, but rather, as Dante would have understood it, a soul-threatening malaise. "Sloth causes its bearer to lack the motivation and energy to embrace the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and to lack the passion and understanding to celebrate the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. At the core of sloth is self-absorption, self-pity, sorrow, alienation, and estrangement." Raymond Angelo Belliotti, *Dante's Deadly Sins: Moral Philosophy in Hell* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 137.

Tournai (d.1284), a high-ranking Franciscan, when preaching to an audience of merchants, affirmed that “...riches are a hindrance to virtue in bad men, but a help to it in good men.”¹⁰⁶ Gilbert went on to note that “the good merchant is Christ and just men, the bad merchant is the Devil and unjust men.”¹⁰⁷ Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419), a Florentine Dominican who became a cardinal, was an influential preacher who encouraged merchants to be financially successful, provided their profits were made “with grace, with charity, with direct and sincere intention, with reverence, peace, and love for his neighbour.”¹⁰⁸ And increasingly, “good” merchants were featured in text and image, helping the poor and supporting the common good. In one such mid-Trecento illuminated manuscript, a merchant is depicted sitting at his money-lending table (Fig.4), with the inscription praising him as one who “spends his money on the poor for the love of Christ.”¹⁰⁹ In these cultural expressions, merchants were clearly being shown how they could reconcile their profession and the acquisition of money with Christian values, even in the midst of an often negative and stereotypical portrayal of themselves. It is no wonder, therefore, that most merchants felt compelled to represent themselves as honest businessmen and dutiful Christians.

Imaging the Vices and Virtues

As primary concepts of good and evil behaviours, the virtues and vices were early rendered into visual form. This necessitated the development of a visual language for their representation, and

¹⁰⁶ D. L. D’Avray, “Sermons to the Upper Bourgeoisie by a Thirteenth Century Franciscan,” in *The Church in Town and Country*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979), 196.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 197.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 162.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Federico Botana, *The Works of Mercy in Italian Medieval Art (c.1050-c.1400)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 66. The inscription goes on to say that the holy counsel the angels provided to this merchant “...roots out and eradicates from the heart the sin of avarice and plants the tree of the virtue of mercy, that is to have sorrow and compassion for the misfortunes and needs of others.”

three such forms developed. The earliest is rooted in Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348-413 CE) work, the *Psychomachia*, written during the Christianization of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁰ What made the *Psychomachia* so culturally significant was that it used personification to represent the virtues and vices, creating a visual framework for future depictions of stereotypical elements that viewers would immediately recognize and understand (**Fig. 5**). The use of personifications for the virtues and vices became the dominant form for their depiction throughout the Middle Ages in every visual medium and every type of space—religious, civic, guild, confraternity, and private chapels and residences. As we shall see, both the Arena Chapel and the Palazzo Datini included a Virtues and Vices cycle based on the *psychomachia* framework, in which a particular Virtue is paired directly with an opposing Vice.¹¹¹

While personification might have been the dominant mode of representing the virtues and vices, another major way of representing them was to show humans engaged in the moral or immoral behaviours each encapsulated. Thus, there was a recognizable iconography that most medieval viewers would have understood as representing a particular virtue or vice. For example, the depiction of Avarice, which was a vice associated with merchants, used symbols of the merchant's trade—scales, coins, and money bags—as standard iconographical elements (**Fig. 6**). The virtues and vices in pictorial form also appeared in devotional texts, using complex metaphorical representations to symbolize the Christian's mystical journey towards God.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ For an overview of the importance of the *Psychomachia* tradition to the imaging of the Virtues and Vices see Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages* (London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988). This is a reprint of her 1972 PhD Dissertation, University of Nottingham.

¹¹¹ Such direct battling pairings, however, are quite rare and were never standardized because the generally accepted seven Virtues and seven Vices did not easily align as one-on-one opposites. On this problem of alignment of the Virtues and Vices see Bejczy, 2011, 223-251.

¹¹² One such work was the *Speculum virginum*, a devotional work composed for nuns in the twelfth century. It featured a Tree of Virtue and a Tree of Vice as a way of enabling the sisters to achieve their aspirations to come close to God and the path to salvation (**Fig. 8**).

As noted earlier, animals were used metaphorically and allegorically to depict a particular virtue or vice as part of an instructive moral message. This tradition also went back to antiquity, and was then Christianized in the second or third century in the Greek text *Physiologus* (Fig. 7).¹¹³ The *Physiologus* did not directly attribute specific virtues or vices to the creatures it discussed, but was a didactic text "...dealing with one or more characteristics (*naturae*) of either a creature or a stone, which the text then interprets as a Christian lesson or moralization."¹¹⁴ The *Physiologus* was the foundation for the Bestiary genre, and the copious production of illuminated bestiaries reflected a widespread understanding of the ways in which real and mythological creatures symbolized specific vices and virtues.¹¹⁵ As we shall see, such symbolism could be used within late-medieval merchant *palazzo* decoration as a form of moral self-representation.

6. Fama

In his *Book of Good Practices*, Paolo da Certaldo speaks to the need for a merchant to develop, enhance, and protect his reputation and good name, his '*buona fama*':

It is better for a man to have a good name [*buona fama*] in this world than to have a great treasure. Therefore strive to live honestly in this world so that you may gain a good name [*buona fama*] for he who dies with a good name [*buona fama*] lives on forever. You can gain a good name [*buona fama*] in this world by practising virtues and shunning vices.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ron Baxter, "Learning from Nature: Lessons in Virtue and Vice in the *Physiologus* and Bestiaries," in *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 29.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Michael Curley noted the importance of this work for Christian symbolism, noting that the author infused "...pagan tales with the spirit of Christian moral and mystical teaching, and thereafter they occupied a place of special symbolism of the Christian world." ¹¹⁴ Michael J. Curley, *Physiologus* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), ix.

¹¹⁵ In his Introduction to the *Physiologus*, Curley discussed the significance of this work in the Middle Ages, noting that "The anonymous author of *Physiologus* infused these venerable pagan tales with the spirit of Christian moral and mystical teaching, and thereafter occupied a place of special importance in the symbolism of the Christian world. Both directly and through numerous intermediaries, *Physiologus* became an established source of Medieval sacred iconography and didactic poetry and was used in the preaching manuals and religious textbooks of the later Middle Ages." Ibid, ix.

¹¹⁶ Paolo da Certaldo, *Buoni costumi* #83, Branca, 1986, 13.

The letters and *ricordanze* of Trecento merchants are full of such references to one's *buona fama* or, in the negative, to other merchants' *infama*.¹¹⁷

The Concept of *Fama*

The word *fama* carried considerable significance in all contexts of life during the Trecento, socially, economically, legally, and morally.¹¹⁸ While the understanding of just what was meant might well depend on the situation in which the term was being applied, *fama* spoke to the entire person. Albertus Gandinus (1245-1310), who was a judge in the podestarial court of Florence, wrote that "*Fama* is truly the status of dignity without stain, according to the established customs and laws, undiminished in any way."¹¹⁹ *Fama* could thus refer to an overall description of character, as well as pointing to a particular aspect. It was a term of judgement and worthiness based on how others experienced a person's attitudes and behaviours. Implicit in the concept of being of good *fama* was that one was honourable, which meant acting as one ought, within the ethics, customs, and practices understood to be normative for someone of their occupation and status. Giacomo Todeschini summed it up for the late-medieval Italian merchant this way:

To put it simply, the notion of "good reputation" (*fama*) was deeply embedded in the theological and judicial discourse that laid emphasis upon the importance that Christian individuals display in protecting carefully the

¹¹⁷ In a 1397 letter, Francesco Datini complained about fellow merchants saying "From now on I won't send anything to those of Deo du Brugia, who, you should know are not well regarded..." . Quoted in Giampiero Nigro, "Francesco and the Datini Company of Florence" in *Francesco di Marco Datini: The Man the Merchant*, ed. Giampiero Nigro, (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2010), 240.

¹¹⁸ The term *fama* is a complex one and has a wide variety of meanings. Hans-Joachim Neubauer defined it this way: "In Latin the word has a host of meanings, such as fame, public opinion, reputation, idle talk and rumour. A good name as much as a bad reputation is called *fama*. The word's meaning is double-edged: for while meaning 'information', in the sense of news, *fama* also means the image that is formed of a person on account of this information." Hans-Joachim Neubauer, *The Rumour: A Cultural History*, trans. Christian Braun (London: Free Association Books), 37.

¹¹⁹ Samuel Y. Edgerton Jr., *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution During the Florentine Renaissance*. Ithaca (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 60.

purity of their civic and religious name. Through it they would be accepted as true citizens.¹²⁰

Without a good reputation, a merchant found himself isolated from the commercial and civic mainstream. Such untrustworthiness was a “moral taint” and “...was a powerful deterrent to businessmen of every rank and condition”.¹²¹ But the merchant was judged on more than his trustworthiness and probity in business transactions. Being of *buona fama* also meant that his behaviour was generally perceived as correct and upright in terms of civic, social, and religious norms and expectations. A merchant’s own *fama* was also dependent on those with whom he associated, for he was expected to be able to discern and assess another’s moral behaviour. Paolo da Certaldo repeatedly advises his son not to associate with those of bad reputation, especially the person “... who does not care about his own soul... . . . And this happens with all usurers and avaricious people more than with other people.”¹²²

The same concern for protecting one’s own *fama* from damaging talk was something that was extended to others, at least in principle. In another piece of advice, Paolo da Certaldo cautioned, “Also take care not to defame [*infamare*] your fellow man, for giving another man a bad name [*mala fama*] is one of the greatest sins.”¹²³ Finally, one’s *fama* had serious legal implications. The key point about a person’s *publica fama* was that “It was what everybody knew, so it was socially accepted as reliable.”¹²⁴ This translated into reliability as a defendant or a

¹²⁰ Giacomo Todeschini, “Theological Roots of the Medieval/Modern Merchant’s Self-Representation,” in *The Self-Perception of Early Modern “Capitalists”*, eds. Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008), 26.

¹²¹ Gene Brucker, “Fede and Fiducia: The Problem of Trust in Italian History, 1300-1500”, in Gene Brucker, *Living on the Edge in Leonardo’s Florence: Selected Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 90.

¹²² Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #92, Branca, 2015, 48. See also Good numbers 30, 51, 54, 85, 112.

¹²³ Paolo da Certaldo, *Buoni costumi* #129, Branca, 1986, 54.

¹²⁴ Chris Wickham, “Fama and the Law in Twelfth-Century Tuscany,” in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, eds. Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 17.

witness in legal proceedings, and *fama* became a formal legal principle that was embedded in civic statutes and legal handbooks.¹²⁵

Fama and the Visual

Fama was such an important aspect of one's social relations and salvific aspirations that merchants such as Enrico Scrovegni, Domenico Lenzi, and Francesco Datini used portraits to further their reputation as pious, moral Christians (**Figs. 1,2,9**). Similarly, one's *infama* could be represented visually, as previously noted, using *pittura infamante* (defaming portraits) which were public depictions of individuals guilty of commercial crimes (**Fig. 10**).¹²⁶ These visual aspects of *fama* will be discussed in detail in each case study.

7. Hospitality

Raymond Boisvert, in examining the ethics of hospitality, noted that “The medieval period considered hospitality as an absolutely central Christian practice.”¹²⁷ Hospitality was deeply embedded in Christian thought and practice, with strong scriptural and Christological roots.¹²⁸

The extension of hospitality, particularly to strangers, was a kind of moral litmus test in numerous scriptural passages, such as Abraham and Sarah hosting what turned out to be three angels (Genesis 18: 1–15). Both in its provision and withholding, hospitality was a popular moral theme that found expression in texts, sermons, and visual culture. All these forms emphasized the virtue and rewards of providing generous and heartfelt hospitality, and the damnation that awaited those who stunted in its provision through avarice or misanthropy (**Fig. 11**).

¹²⁵ Ibid, 18. See also Claire Walker and Heather Kerr, “Introduction,” in Claire Walker and Heather Kerr, eds., *Fama and Her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 1-7.

¹²⁶ Edgerton, 62.

¹²⁷ Raymond D. Boisvert, “Ethics Is Hospitality”, *Proceedings of the ACPA*, 78 (2005): 291.

¹²⁸ See particularly Genesis 18: 1-15; Matthew 25:34-46; Luke 16: 19-31.

The Latin word for hospitality was *hospitium*, which was derived from the word *hospes*, which meant a host or hostess, as well as a guest and also a stranger.¹²⁹ *Hospitium* describes the relation between the host and his or her guest, and thus carries with it an understanding of mutual obligation that ensured both parties benefitted. For the host, these benefits might sometimes be temporal (social, political, or economic) but were also spiritual in terms of moral reputation, well-wishes, and prayers received for themselves and their families, both in life and after death.¹³⁰

It was not just what was provided that reflected on the moral stature of the provider—and what was provided included spiritual as well as physical comforts—but also the spirit in which it was given.¹³¹ The attitudes and practices which constituted hospitality in this period had their roots in the long tradition of monastic hospitality, particularly as set down and practiced by the Benedictines.¹³² Rule 53 of Saint Benedict specified treating the guest with “warm-hearted courtesy, respect and deference.”¹³³

Merchants and Hospitality

The concept of hospitality as understood and practiced by merchants in Trecento Italy is of fundamental importance to this study. It was a primary mechanism through which they exercised their social, economic and religious relations, and one which contributed significantly

¹²⁹ D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's New Latin-English Dictionary* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd., 1966), 279.

¹³⁰ In her doctoral dissertation Bardzell emphasized that although hospitality involved some material exchange, what was really valuable was that it was an exchange of services between host and guest, and that exchange created a social relationship. Bardzell, 26.

¹³¹ John Chrysostom (349-407), in a homily on First Timothy, counseled that “Observe, the hospitality here spoken of is not merely a friendly reception, but one given with zeal and alacrity, with readiness, and going about it as if one were receiving Christ Himself.” John Chrysostom, Homily 14 on First Timothy. <https://sites.google.com/site/aquinasstudybible/home/1-timothy/st-john-chrysostom-on-1-timothy/chapter-1/chapter-2/chapter-3/chapter-4/chapter-5>.

¹³² See especially Rule 53: The Reception of Guests. Benedict, Abbot of Monte Cassino, *St. Benedict's Rule*, trans. Patrick Barry (Mahwah, N.J.: HiddenSpring, 2004), 123-125.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 123.

to their overall reputation. The recipients of hospitality within and around a merchant's palazzo were many and varied, and included family and familial allies, clients, friends, business associates and their families, church and civic officials, employees and their families, diplomats and prelates, and also the poor and needy. If the merchant was someone of note, he and his family were constantly receiving guests who were fed and housed along with their accompanying family members, retainers, and servants. What we know about merchant palazzi is that they were complex sites of social, economic, political and religious interactions, and thus the provision of adequate hospitality was essential to the merchant's varied interests and to his *buona fama*.

The provision of food, drink, shelter, clothing, and money to the poor was one of the ways in which a householder could meet his Christian obligations to help the needy. This was a standard activity of every merchant household, although as Paolo da Certaldo noted "Giving money or food or lodging in God's name is not the only way to give alms."¹³⁴ Helping the needy did not attract the attention of contemporaries in the way that hosting important persons did, as revealed by the sometimes detailed descriptions of sumptuous banquets and feasts in period literature and chronicles. Yet the provision of hospitality to the poor in and around the house was both normative and expected, and was a fundamental indicator of one's moral stature.

The dispensing of hospitality not only supported the householder's moral reputation but was also the primary means by which so many people got to view the imagery that the merchants had commissioned. This is why much of the merchant *palazzo's* imagery program tended to be centered around the ground floor, the semi-public area of the residence.¹³⁵ Hospitality was,

¹³⁴ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice # 281, Branca, 2015, 69.

¹³⁵ Lindow, 123.

therefore, a strategic dimension in determining some of the content, the placement, and the function of imagery, a fact that has generally been under-explored by art historians.

8. Family Shields/Coats of Arms

The walls and contents of merchant-owned *palazzi*, and the other spaces they controlled in Trecento Italy, were copiously adorned with the shields (also called crests or escutcheons) containing the coats of arms of the owner, and often those of his wife's family, kinfolk or even his close associates. Whether as wall frescoes, painted panels, manuscript illuminations, wood or stone carved reliefs, metalwork, stained glass or ceramic ware, these family shields were omnipresent throughout the merchant-controlled spaces—domestic, civic, and religious—in the commercial cities of Trecento Italy.

Art historians have tended to see the profusion of these crests as passive visual symbols of ownership, familial identity, wealth, and status within the competitive political and commercial environments of Trecento Italian cities. It is not that such interpretations are inaccurate, but rather that they are too narrow and restrictive, as Osvaldo Cavallar noted:

Viewing coats of arms and insignia as a semiotic map of the social, corporate and political universe, some scholars legitimately admonish against reducing coats of arms to aggressive social climbing, private ostentation, or the savage mind imagined by C. J. Jung and Lévi-Strauss.¹³⁶

What art historians, in particular, have missed are the ways in which these coats of arms were also markers of *moral* identity and *active* agents in the unfolding of the various relationships that were enacted in their presence. All three case studies in this dissertation involve the visual reproduction of coats of arms as part of their imagery, and these will be

¹³⁶ Osvaldo Cavallar, Susanne Degenring, and Julius Kirshner, *A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferrato's Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms* (Berkeley: Robbins Collection Publications, 1994), 56-57.

discussed in detail in each study. But here, some contextual information about these heraldic devices is in order.

Coats of arms have generally been studied as components of late-medieval heraldry in its military, aristocratic, and especially genealogical roles, particularly with respect to England and France.¹³⁷ Yet in late-medieval Italy there was no empowered central authority to control who could adopt and display an escutcheon. As Christoph Weber observed in his study on fourteenth-century Italian heraldry, “The dynamic quality of both communal and family coats of arms makes Italian heraldry special.”¹³⁸

What is critically important to understand is that, by the fourteenth century, heraldry already constituted a commonly understood visual language which communicated clear messages to its viewers.¹³⁹ The commercial orientation of many of the Italian cities meant that wealthy merchants, rather than a hereditary aristocracy, were politically and socially dominant. Thus, the primary functions of coats of arms were civic and social rather than military. Indeed, individual merchants started to adopt their own shields by the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁴⁰

The combination of materials, colours, designs, and devices merchants used to create their coats of arms would have been carefully chosen to make some personal, recognizable

¹³⁷ John Gage, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1993), 81.

¹³⁸ Christoph F. Weber, “Heraldry,” in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (New York: Routledge, 2004), 497.

¹³⁹ See Torsten Hiltmann, “Arms and Art in the Middle Ages,” in Torsten Hiltmann and Laurant Hablot, eds., *Heraldic Artists and Painters in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2018), 12.

¹⁴⁰ In their Introduction to Bartolo di Sassoferrato’s treatise on heraldry, the authors noted that there was “...a continuous extension of coats of arms across the social spectrum... . The use of arms extended to cities in the twelfth century, to merchants and ministerials in the thirteenth, and finally to Jews and peasants in the fourteenth.” Cavallar et al., 54.

statement about the arms holder that was part of his public self-representation.¹⁴¹ This meant that the details of the coat of arms had both practical and symbolic meaning. The device chosen might relate directly to the arms holder's occupation or place in society. But the symbolism would be even more important. As discussed earlier, by the late-medieval period virtually every colour, shape, plant, and animal (real or mythical) had acquired moral meaning through its symbolism within a Christian cosmos. John Gage, whose studies of colour have been foundational, observed the following with respect to the symbolism of heraldry:

In the essentially secular context of heraldry, the urge to symbolize was accommodated on the one hand by an eclectic borrowing from religious ideas, a solution which proved in the long run to be very popular, and on the other hand by a more scholarly attempt to extract colour-meanings from the material characteristic of the colours themselves.¹⁴²

Thus, any family shield had real moral meaning to the owner and viewers and was "...a symbolic means of communication... which had already associated itself in an earlier time with ecclesiastical, animal, and colour symbolism."¹⁴³ The *Tractatus de Armis* of John de Bado Aureo (c.1395) advised "...that it is important to study the characteristics of heraldic charges, because these should recall the qualities of the original possessor of the arms."¹⁴⁴ As an example he observed that "A dog borne in arms represents a loyal man who will not desert his lord and master in life or death, but will willingly die for his master."¹⁴⁵

The ultimate function of a coat of arms was that it was a perceived proxy for the individual arms holder in person. In representing that person's character and *fama* within the

¹⁴¹ Torsten Hiltmann insists that "...basic heraldic awareness and heraldic knowledge appears to have been available to large parts of medieval society including, for example, women and townspeople." Hiltmann and Hablot, 17.

¹⁴² Gage, 1993, 83.

¹⁴³ Christoph F. Weber, "Heraldry," in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (New York: Routledge, 2004), 496.

¹⁴⁴ Rodney Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Limited, 1975), 68.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 69.

spaces where the shield was displayed, it denoted the presence of the arms holder and all that this meant in terms of conduct and response, even if he or she wasn't physically there. This is what underlay the Florentine practice of publicly defacing or destroying a person's insignia in the Italian communes if they were found guilty of a serious crime but had fled to avoid punishment.¹⁴⁶

The Structure of Coats of Arms: A Brief Overview

Heraldry has its own language, blazon, which provides a standardized, formal way of describing any coat of arms which, when depicted on a shield, is called an escutcheon. The language of heraldry is incredibly detailed and brutally complex, but the only terms that will be referenced in this study are the *field* and the *charges*. The field is simply the background colour of the shield on which any other shapes, divisions, or representative images (the charges) appear. The field colour was either yellow, representing the metal gold, or white, representing the metal silver.¹⁴⁷

In interpreting anything painted over the field, it is important to remember that the direction things on the shield faced was always that of the person behind the shield, not that of the viewer in front of it. The positions and directions of what was on the escutcheon was part of its overall meaning. Sassoferrato, for example, noted that "...the right and top are nobler than the left and bottom."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Edgerton, 69.

¹⁴⁷ Sassoferrato wrote about gold that "...the colour gold is the noblest, since light is represented by gold. ...it is agreed that nothing is nobler than light. And so in scripture the sun stands for the most outstanding object...". Cavallar et al., 153. In his 1420 treatise on heraldry, Jean Courtois (d.1436) wrote that in denoting silver (argent) through the colour white, this field "...represents purity and innocence. The scripture says the garments of Jesus Christ looked white as snow to the apostles; and since it is metal I put it second after gold..." Jean Courtois, "Le Blason toutes des armes et éscutz", in *Renaissance Colour Symbolism*, trans. Roy Osborne (Morrisville: Thylesius Books, 2019), 17.

¹⁴⁸ Cavallar et al., 152.

Heraldry and the Medieval Understanding of Colour

The colours used for everything on the shield, other than the field, were known as tinctures. The tinctures were hierarchical and by the late-fourteenth century generally accepted as red, blue, black, green, and purple, although the rank order of the last three might differ.¹⁴⁹ The colours used on a family shield were of particular importance in communicating the moral identity of the arms holder. As Robert Blanch put it:

With the establishment of a symbolic underpinning for the medieval view of the cosmos, the symbolic mode of thought permeated all phases of medieval life. ... In such a symbolic ethos, the language of color crystallized into a fully developed code of symbolism.¹⁵⁰

Medieval writers on heraldry were keenly interested in the ways in which the colours used on a shield expressed the character of the arms holder.¹⁵¹ Late-medieval heraldic theorists particularly drew on sources such as lapidaries to articulate the symbolic qualities of particular colours because of the moral qualities gemstones represented.¹⁵² It is this kind of interrelatedness that made medieval colour symbolism so sophisticated and complex.

By the end of the Trecento, however, the colour hierarchy was generally accepted as the order shown in the chart below, and while the meanings of colour were not prescriptively precise, there was general agreement about their broad interpretation in terms of the human qualities

¹⁴⁹ John de Bado Aureo, for example, placed black as the second most important tincture after red, whereas Bartolo da Sassoferrato placed it last. See Dennys, 47.

¹⁵⁰ Blanch, 1-2. See also Michel Pastoureau, *Blue: The History of a Color*, trans. Markus I. Cruse (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2017), 55.

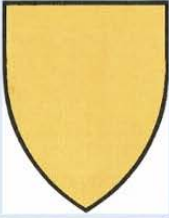






¹⁵¹ In his study on heraldry Rodney Dennys reported that “Thomas of Lancaster, Duke of Clarence, who was Constable of the army in 1417, with authority over the heralds, is said to have ordained that the officers of arms were to apply themselves, *inter alia*, to the study of the properties of colours, herbs, and precious stones, so that they might be able properly and suitably to assign to each person the arms that should appropriately belong to him.” Dennys, 44.

¹⁵² John Gage noted that “Another symbolizing development in late heraldic usage was the association of the tinctures with precious stones, whose tradition of moral interpretation was well established.” Gage, 1993, 83.

they symbolized.¹⁵³ It is also important to note that colour symbolism included not only positive traits but also negative ones, representing the fact that humans still had to make the right moral choice.¹⁵⁴ The qualities noted in the chart below, as positive or negative, are a general compilation from the period treatises.

¹⁵³ The rank of colours in the Chart is in accordance with the order in the treatises of John Courtois (aka The Sicily Herald) and Gilles Corozet. This chart is based on one in Stefan Oliver and Guy Croton, *Understanding Signs and Symbols: Heraldry* (London: Quantum Publishing, 2012), 53.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Blanch noted that the concept of opposite meanings was an essential part of medieval colour symbolism. because it would have spurred the arms holders to publicly behave in a manner consistent with the positive meanings of their colours and devices. Blanch 4.

COLOUR	BLAZON TERM	METAL	GEM STONE	BODY	SIGN	SYMBOLIC MEANING
	Or	Gold	Topaz	Sun	Leo	+ virtuousness; nobility; richness; faith; worthiness; constancy. – worldliness; greed;
	Argent	Silver	Pearl	Moon	Cancer	+ purity; innocence; justice; devoutness. – lust for money; betrayal
	Gules	Iron	Ruby	Mars	Aries	+ high status; nobleness; boldness; virility; magnanimity – anger; hatred
	Azure	Tin	Sapphire	Jupiter	Taurus	+ loyalty; integrity; clarity; durability. – self-righteousness
	Sable	Lead	Diamond	Saturn	Capricorn	+ humility; dignity; patient suffering. – melancholy; decrepitude
	Vert	Copper	Emerald	Venus	Gemini	+ beauty; cheerfulness; youthfulness; hopefulness. – jealousy; possessiveness
	Purpure	Quick-silver	Amethyst	Mercury	Sagittarius	+ majesty; penitence; humility. – arrogance; immaturity

Materiality and Meaning in Family Shields

The materiality of coats of arms, and the ways in which such materiality conveyed meaning, are areas that have received little attention from art historians. However, I would argue that the materiality of family shields is fundamentally important to their intended and perceived functions. The unknown author of the *Ancrene Rule* (c.1200), for example, wrote:

In a shield there are three things, the wood, the leather, and the painting. So too in this shield (of Christ's Body): the wood of the cross, the leather which was God's Body, and the painting, the red blood which coloured it so fair.¹⁵⁵

In such an understanding, the materials used to construct and decorate the shield were an integral part of the overall Christian symbolism of the shield as an object of physical and spiritual protection. The importance of the materials used to create imagery has already been addressed in the earlier section on Christian Symbolism, but it is worthwhile repeating Bynum's assertion that "The materials of medieval art were pregnant with significance."¹⁵⁶ These materials would be recognized as carrying with them other connections and associations that placed them within a much wider cultural context than that just of heraldry. If colours were hierarchical, so too, as Cennini makes clear, were the materials that made the best pigments.¹⁵⁷ The pigments used to create the painted shields in wealthy merchant homes would have been composed from the precious metals of gold and silver, gemstones such as lapis lazuli for ultramarine blue, and kermes for the reds. These materials would have been recognized by viewers for they were the

¹⁵⁵ *The Ancrene Riwe*, trans. M.B. Salu (London: Burns and Oats, 1955), 173-4.

¹⁵⁶ Bynum, 2011, 58.

¹⁵⁷ Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, *The Craftsman's Handbook: The Italian "Il Libro dell'Arte"*, trans. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), 28-39.

same ones used to paint the finest religious and civic scenes in churches and town halls. As Bynum expressed it, the presence of these materials was about manifesting their significance.¹⁵⁸

Merchants and Their Coats of Arms

The issue of who might legitimately adopt a coat of arms was addressed in the mid-fourteenth century by the prestigious Italian jurist, Bartolo di Sassoferrato (1313-1357), in one of the earliest treatises on heraldry, *De insigniis et armis*. Sassoferrato confirmed that anyone had the right to adopt a coat of arms on their own accord.¹⁵⁹ While some cities tried to control the adoption and use of coats of arms, such regulation was not particularly effective.¹⁶⁰ The more effective means of restricting the use of a coat of arms, though not its adoption in the first place, was through social pressure against individuals considered as unworthy upstarts.¹⁶¹ Such attitudes provided a form of control against what was considered the inappropriate display of a family shield.

Any merchant of standing and substance, such as Scrovegni and Datini, would have ensured that he had a family crest and that it was prominently displayed on walls, in paintings, and on a multitude of other types of objects. The elements that made up their escutcheons were statements about moral character that related to merchants' need to show that they were trustworthy civic and Christian citizens. The designs they chose also had a practical function

¹⁵⁸ "The point was the power of the materials to evoke, to conjure up—to represent not so much in the sense of 'looking like' as in the sense of 'manifesting the significance of.'" Bynum, 2011, 58-59.

¹⁵⁹ Sassoferrato wrote: "Some assume coats of arms and insignia on their own initiative, and we should consider whether they are permitted to do it. I think that they are permitted. Just as names are created to identify persons, so insignia and coats of arms are devised for this purpose. Anyone is permitted to use such names for himself, and thus anyone can bear these insignia and depict them on his own belongings, but not on another's." Cavallar et al., 145.

¹⁶⁰ Pisa was one city that passed such legislation in 1313. Ibid, 58.

¹⁶¹ See for example Franco Sacchetti's (1335-1400) story about an 'artificer' of no particular public standing who went to the famed painter Giotto to have his newly assumed arms painted on a physical shield. Giotto's indignant response was to paint a suit of armor and weapons upon the shield, rather than the heraldic device he had been instructed to paint. When the outraged client berated Giotto for this disrespectful act, Giotto contemptuously replied that he had indeed painted the man's 'arms' and went on to chastise the tradesman for being a nobody and an upstart. Franco Sacchetti, *Tales from Sacchetti*, trans. Mary G. Steegmann (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1908), 40.

because they were often replicated on their seals, which were used as unique identifiers to authenticate letters, agreements, and other documents (Fig. 12). These seals were an absolute commercial necessity.¹⁶² Coats of arms, as we shall see, played a particularly complex role within the merchant's domestic interior because of the diverse nature of the numerous relationships enacted in the spaces where these escutcheons were situated. The shields might speak to all manner of connections, associations, and allegiances—marital, political, and economic. The messages understood by the viewers of these escutcheons, and the responses that they solicited, were therefore highly contextualized by who the viewers were, where in the house they encountered the shields, their reason for being in the house, and the nature of their relationship with the owner.

The Merchant Moral Eye Framework: Summary and Usage

The eight dimensions described above establish a comprehensive analytical framework within which to explore the morally-driven motivations, expectations, and uses of imagery commissioned by merchants in Trecento Italy. In my three case studies, each dimension references belief and behavioural systems of late-medieval life and its particular application and nuancing to the Trecento Italian merchant. These dimensions therefore serve as lenses (in the sense of a compound eye that allows the viewer to see different facets) to inquire about why merchants commissioned specific types of imagery, and how they used such imagery as part of their moral representation and furthering of their salvific hopes. By systematically using each

¹⁶² Christoph Weber observed that “Above all, the spread of the use of seals, and the increased use of coats of arms on seals, made the system of seals a catalyst for the development of systems of coats of arms. The rules for these systems were governed by new social norms and the assignment of symbolic meanings to the elements found therein.” Weber, 496.

dimension as a mode of enquiry and analysis ,we are positioned to get a much more contextualized, multi-perspectival understanding of the imagery in relation to its merchant commissioner and its potential viewers.

In each case study, a slightly different constellation of some of the dimensions will come to the foreground, but all eight have been used to ensure the most comprehensive contextualization possible. As the case studies will demonstrate, the framework as an analytical tool helps to identify and articulate new or considerably enhanced and nuanced interpretations about such imagery, even those that have already been exhaustively studied. Additionally, the framework can function as a kind of tool to undertake a ‘reality check’ to determine the viability of existing interpretations of such imagery. This can be particularly important as we shall see when reviewing the scholarship in my three case studies.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MONEYLENDER’S MORAL EYE: ENRICO SCROVEGNI AND THE ARENA (SCROVEGNI) CHAPEL (PADUA, c.1303-1306)

Introduction

Giotto’s fresco program in the Arena Chapel in Padua, Italy, painted sometime between 1303 and 1305 for the chapel’s merchant owner, Enrico Scrovegni, is one of the great monuments of Western art and one of the most studied artworks of the European late Middle Ages (Figs. 13, 14). Recent scholarship, in particular, has focused on Enrico Scrovegni’s motives and expectations for building and decorating the chapel and how its imagery program reflected and supported these objectives. It is in this context that the Merchant’s Moral Eye analytical framework will be used to both assess existing interpretations and to suggest and validate new understandings of this monument.

A controversial figure in his own time, Scrovegni conceived the brilliant strategy of building and decorating a privately owned chapel as a way of emphasizing his identity as an honest merchant and upright Christian. In this dissertation I offer new evidence that he was also determined to generate the suffrages he needed to ease his time and suffering in Purgatory.

The Merchant’s Moral Eye framework provides the comprehensive context needed to fully understand Scrovegni’s objectives and strategies, and the unique adaptation of the visual by Giotto to realize them. In this chapter I will use the analytical framework to substantiate the following claims:

1. An assessment of the “usury thesis” (the belief that Enrico built and decorated the chapel to atone for his and his father’s sin of usury) suggests it is far too constrictive an interpretation that

obscures Scrovegni's wider activities as a substantial trader in agricultural goods, and therefore his need to demonstrate his Christian identity within the context of the quotidian moral economy.

2. The importance of the period understanding of Purgatory and its suffrages has not been adequately explored as the underlying *raison d'être* for the chapel and its decoration. In this regard, I will be the first scholar to show how Giotto has inserted a visual representation of souls undergoing the purgatorial process in his *Last Judgement*, and to explain its function with respect to Enrico Scrovegni.

3. The analytical framework's dimension of Hospitality provides a substantive new area of interpretation for the content and function of some of Giotto's frescoes. I will discuss how Giotto's embedding of hospitality in four of the narrative frescoes would have enhanced Scrovegni's Christian moral stature by underscoring value-laden interactions between the chapel and the adjoining residence.

4. The framework enables an enhanced and nuanced interpretation of some of the imagery's functions as part of Enrico's self-representation and salvific strategy. These include Enrico's statue in relation to its placement by the north door, and the personification of the Virtue Justice.

5. Lastly, I will be the first scholar to analyze the Scrovegni coat of arms—a pregnant blue sow on a gold background—from the perspective of Enrico Scrovegni's moral self-representation.

The range of scholarly interest in the Arena Chapel has been extensive and will doubtless continue. My dissertation deals with the issue of Enrico Scrovegni's motives as they relate to his own moral self-representation and how the chapel's imagery might have furthered his goal of achieving salvation in the afterlife. This, however, is only one aspect of the chapel and its owner. Given that Enrico Scrovegni was an elite member of Paduan society and a leading figure

economically, politically, diplomatically, and socially, it is important to reiterate that his motives and expectations for his chapel's imagery were multi-layered and likely served other more worldly interests than the ones I am exploring here. Similarly, the frescoes themselves supported these objectives and therefore had a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations to those who viewed them. Thus, I suggest there is no single “right” interpretation of this monument. Rather, we must factor in a polysemous visual environment that would be read diversely, depending on who the viewers were, the circumstances by which they came to view the frescoes, and their relationship with Enrico Scrovegni and his family.

Part 1: Using the Moral Eye Framework as an Assessment Tool

The “Usury Thesis”: A Brief Historiography

Enrico Scrovegni’s motives and objectives for building and decorating the Arena Chapel have generated extensive commentary. Much of the recent scholarship by art historians has focused on the issue of whether, and to what degree, the Scrovegni family’s extensive money-lending activities were the primary motivating factor, and therefore the context in which Giotto’s fresco program should be analyzed and interpreted.¹ This issue has been a particularly controversial one with a broad range of arguments and opinions, supporting or opposing the so-called “usury thesis.”

¹ Rainaldo Scrovegni, Enrico’s father, was Dante’s archetype for the late-medieval usurer. The encounter between Dante and the usurers in Hell, including the interchange with Rainaldo Scrovegni, is in *Inferno*, Canto XVII, lines 43-78. Some sources use the name Reginaldo rather than Rainaldo. For consistency I use Rainaldo exclusively, except if I am directly quoting a source that refers to him as Reginaldo.

The first art historian to suggest that usury was a major motif reflected in Giotto's program was Ursula Schlegel.² In her analysis of the fresco program she asserted, "...that the over-all program of the Arena Chapel must be interpreted with the personality of the donor in mind," and concluded that, "Atonement, death and judgement determine the whole program of the interior painted by Giotto."³ Schlegel's thesis, that the iconography of the artistic program of the chapel was directly related to the Scrovegni family's supposed usury, has been accepted, developed, or resisted by art historians since it first appeared, and is still an accepted theme in art historical scholarship on the chapel. The scholarship of Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona has proven to be seminal for this approach.⁴ Derbes and Sandona have meticulously presented their case to argue that:

... the traditional assumption that the chapel is tied to the family's financial practices is well-founded. Enrico's business dealings, and his father's, seem to have weighed heavily on him, and the chapel - both its very existence and its iconographic program - was one important response to these anxieties.⁵

Their work has received significant acceptance from many other art historians familiar with the Arena Chapel, including Andrew Ladis. Ladis also produced a monograph in 2008 on the

² Ursula Schlegel, "Zum bilderprogramm der Arena Kapella," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 20 (1957): 125-46. The English version is Ursula Schlegel, "On the Picture Program of the Arena Chapel," in *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, ed. James Stubblebine (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), 182-202.

³ *Ibid.*, 202; 191. Schlegel's interpretation was given added weight by an earlier article by Dorothy Shorr which looked at the role of the Virgin in the fresco program. See Dorothy Shorr, "The Role of the Virgin in Giotto's Last Judgement," *The Art Bulletin* 38 (1956): 207-214. Robert Rough also supported these arguments noting that the Cavalieri Gaudenti, who were supposedly partnered with Enrico Scrovegni in building and decorating the chapel, were known for their anti-usury stance. See Robert H. Rough, "Enrico Scrovegni, the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, and the Arena Chapel in Padua," *The Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 24-35.

⁴ The works by Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona include the following: "Barren Metal and the Fruitful Womb: The Program of Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua," *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998): 274-291; "'Ave charite plena': Variations on the Theme of Charity in the Arena Chapel," *Speculum* 76, No. 3 (2001): 599-637; "Reading the Arena Chapel" in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197-220; *The Usurer's Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); "Triplex Periculum': The Moral Topography of Giotto's Hell in the Arena Chapel, Padua," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LXXVIII (2015), 41-70.

⁵ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 36.

chapel's program and while his approach was very different, he too accepted the influence of the family's usurious past as a motivating factor and thematic motif. Ladis wrote that the artistic program "...therefore allows and even encourages one to read the whole as guided by ideas consistent with reconciling the sin of usury with God's judgement."⁶

The assumption that the chapel's decorative program was intimately connected to the theme of atonement for the Scrovegni's dealings as moneylenders has been challenged almost from the beginning. For example, as early as 1966, Selma Pfeiffenberger rejected the notion that the chapel had anything to do with Rainaldo's usurious past, as Schlegel had maintained.⁷ The art historian, Bruce Cole, in commenting on such things as money bags and scenes of commerce in Giotto's program, maintained that such images were "simply parts of the canonical sequence of the Christian drama without, as far as one can see, any specific reference to contemporary usury."⁸ Derbes and Sandona's work has been especially contested by a series of Italian scholars, including Silvana Collodo, and Chiara Frugoni. They have argued instead that the Scrovegni were an honoured family in Paduan society and that their condemnation as notorious usurers was without substance, stemming mainly from Dante's portrayal of Rainaldo in the *Inferno* (see Appendix 1). Moreover, they maintain that Giotto's iconography can be interpreted as a validation of Enrico Scrovegni's right use of money to benefit the common good rather than a commentary on his family's supposed usury.⁹ In one dramatic case of the impact of this

⁶ Andrew Ladis, *Giotto's O: Narrative, Figuration and Pictorial Ingenuity in the Arena Chapel* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 5.

⁷ See Selma Pfeiffenberger, "The Iconology of Giotto's Virtues and Vices at Padua (PhD Diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1966), III:2:4.

⁸ Bruce Cole, *Giotto: The Scrovegni Chapel, Padua* (New York: George Braziller, 1993), 35, n.1.

⁹ See the following studies: Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: The Frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua* (Milano: Skira Editore S.p.A., 2002); Silvana Collodo, "Enrico Scrovegni," in *La Cappella degli Scrovegni a Padova*, eds. Davide Banzato et al. (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2005), Volume 1, 9-18; Chiara Frugoni, *L'affare migliore di Enrico: Giotto e la capella Scrovegni* (Torino: Einaudi, 2008).

alternative interpretation, Giuseppe Basile reversed his previously stated support for the usury thesis (1993) study, stating that rather than an atonement for usury, Scrovegni was motivated primarily by “...a desire to demonstrate the solid status that one of the most powerful men of the city had by then achieved... .”¹⁰

Laura Jacobus, another long-time scholar of the Arena Chapel, has especially challenged the usury thesis. In her 2008 monograph, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel*, Jacobus maintained, in line with some of her Italian contemporaries, that “...claims for the existence of a program of confession, atonement, renunciation or restitution of usury in the frescoes have no basis in evidence.”¹¹

Jacobus concludes, similarly to Frugoni, that the chapel and its decoration was “... a work commissioned by the son of a self-made man as part of a strategy to legitimise his place in relation to an established aristocracy.”¹² What Jacobus and Frugoni do not specifically address in this interpretation, however, is how the chapel might fuse Scrovegni’s Paduan social identity with his Christian moral identity, and how that would also serve his salvific aspirations.

¹⁰ See Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes* (Thames & Hudson, 1993), 13. Giuseppe Basile, *Giotto: The Frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua* (Milano: Skira Editore S.p.A., 2002), 21.

¹¹ Jacobus, 2008, 194. Jacobus was not nearly so emphatic in an earlier essay on Enrico Scrovegni, in which she asserted: ... "Enrico Scrovegni had an 'image problem'. The greatest poet of the age, Dante, singled out Enrico's father Rainaldo as one of the usurers in the seventh circle of the *Inferno*. Giovanni da Nono poured scorn on the family's plebeian origins and their ill-gotten wealth. Enrico Scrovegni would've wished to put the taint of usury and of his obscure origins behind him, and he chose religious and artistic patronage as the potentially efficacious means of so doing." Laura Jacobus, "A knight in the Arena: Enrico Scrovegni and his 'true image', " in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, Mary Rogers, ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), 20. See also Benjamin G. Kohl, "Giotto and his Lay Patrons" in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 178-179. Kohl argues that, at least as far as their loans to the commune of Vicenza are concerned, "That the Scrovegni should be viewed as bankers, not usurious moneylenders..." Kohl, 2003, 179.

¹² Jacobus, 2008, 202. Jacobus expanded on this noting that all of Scrovegni’s significant actions, such as obtaining a knighthood and marrying into an aristocratic family, “...were intended to secure his and his family’s acceptance as fully-fledged members of the Paduan oligarchy.” Ibid, 333.

The debate over the usury thesis is not one that is likely to ever be definitively resolved, and unlike Basile, neither Derbes and Sandona nor Jacobus have shifted their positions.¹³ I believe, however, that the use of the Merchant's Moral Eye framework can make a significant contribution to this debate.

Assessing the Usury Thesis

Most of what has been written about Rainaldo and Enrico Scrovegni virtually ignores the fact that they were merchants whose commercial activities went far beyond moneylending. This is far too narrow an interpretation. We know that Rainaldo acquired a large number of properties in both the Paduan *contado* and Vicenza.¹⁴ Some of these were inherited by Enrico and then were added to, so that they became the source of much of his wealth. The value of these properties lay in their production of foodstuffs and raw materials—grains, produce, dairy products, fruit, wine, and wool—which were sold for cash in Padua and beyond. Enrico was definitely involved in regional trade as there is an extant Venetian customs document from 1312 noting the impounding of a "barge-load of wool, cotton and cheese... " belonging to Enrico.¹⁵

Economic historians such as Dennis Romano have emphasized the importance of the discourse around avoiding any form of fraud in the trade of goods as a sign of a merchant's civic

¹³ In 2015 Derbes and Sandona wrote "We have argued elsewhere that sin, repentance and expiation play an important role in the programme... ." Derbes and Mark Sandona, 2015, 42. Also in 2015, Jacobus observed that "Until very recently, the scholarship on the Arena Chapel has concentrated overwhelmingly on the idea that Enrico's career as a money-lender led him to commission the church in repentance for his sinful profession. Recently I and others have disputed these arguments on numerous grounds, not least the absence of evidence and the existence of evidence to the contrary." Laura Jacobus, " 'In Remission of Sins': Putting a Price on a Money-Lender's Piety." Text for the conference paper delivered at 'Transforming Male Devotional Practices: from the Medieval to the Early Modern', University of Huddersfield, September 16th-17th 2015.

¹⁴ J. K. Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 87.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 38.

and Christian moral identity.¹⁶ Indeed, while usury might feature significantly in moralists' denunciations of the misuse of money, their strictures on the range of frauds which merchants might engage in were far more likely to hit home with civic populations. Romano, in particular, has shown how the deep concerns around trade practices were reflected in civic statutes and guild regulations.¹⁷ The Scrovegnis' status as persons involved in a wide range of trade and commerce meant they were subject to *all* of the related contemporary moral and ethical issues, not just those around moneylending. The need for Enrico to demonstrate his status as an everyday honest merchant in the trade of agricultural produce would have been far more important within his community than his activities as a moneylender, most of which appear to have been loans to civic governments, such as Vicenza.¹⁸ Thus, to interpret Enrico's instructions in his will to restore any "ill-gotten gains" (*omnia mea maleablata*) as proof of his usury is both misleading and too narrow. Such illicit proceeds might well have been the result of unscrupulous, unethical, or even illegal trade practices, which would need to be made right through restitution.¹⁹ Moreover, such restorative clauses were standard language in merchants' wills as an insurance clause against any unknown or inadvertent illicit commercial transactions, and were regarded as proof of the deceased's repentance and contrition.

¹⁶ Romano wrote: "The discourse of fraud in medieval Italy located it squarely in the marketplace and framed its practitioners as enemies of their fellow men and of God and as threats to the community as a whole." Romano, 171.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 191–220.

¹⁸ Hyde, 1966, 187–188. Hyde noted that in fourteenth-century Padua, lending money was widespread and that "Paduans of all classes made loans at interests...". Hyde, 1966, 40. The Scrovegni were, therefore, hardly unique in a civic culture that seems to have regarded money lending as normal and acceptable, in spite of what moralists such as Da Nono had to say about it.

¹⁹ Canon law specified retributive penalties such as restitution for offenses that produced "ill-gotten gains". James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1995), 152. Servasanto of Faenza (c.1225–c.1300) remarked that "... the avarice of merchants and usurers may cause them to avoid confession or to confess badly because of reluctance to make restitution of ill-gotten gains." Langholm, 2003, 111.

The point here is that there is nothing to suggest that Rainaldo and Enrico were atypical as Trecento merchants, either in their attitudes and commercial practices or their need to be seen as ethical merchants. They were, therefore, as subject as any other merchant to the concerns for their souls because of their overall involvement with trade and commerce. Their concerns would be expressed in a totally conventional way, by ensuring that the meeting of their Christian obligations was publicly recognized to bolster their *fama* and garner as many prayers as possible to speed their passage through Purgatory. Rainaldo, for example, endowed a funerary chapel in the Padua Cathedral for himself and his wife, something that would not have been permitted if he was regarded as an unrepentant, manifest usurer, as Dante portrayed him.²⁰ Enrico, of course, chose to build and decorate the Arena Chapel.

Schlegel argued that if Enrico Scrovegni had built the chapel specifically to atone or expiate for his father's or his own sin of usury, any such undertaking would have been part of a formal absolution within the scope of contemporary penitential practice. She assumed that he had received such an absolution from Pope Benedict XI (October 1303-July 1304) in a visit to Rome and concluded: "We do not know the conditions of Enrico's absolution. The erection of the church, however, and its particularly resplendent decoration must have been one of them."²¹

Schlegel's assertion was not only reasonable, but it was, in fact, the *only* way in which proper atonement could have been made and validated in Enrico's time. But there is no other evidence to suggest that Schlegel's interpretation is what actually happened. Neither Giovanni da Nono (1275-1347), nor Bernardino Scardeone (1478-1574), nor any other surviving source

²⁰ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 29. Laura Jacobus suggests that Rainaldo's will, which has not survived, likely contained a restitution clause. Jacobus, 2008, 7-8.

²¹ Schlegel, 45.

mentioned such a connection.²² Nor does Zambono de Favasochi (d. 1315/16) link the chapel to the absolution supposedly granted Enrico for his unspecified sins.²³ It would be highly unlikely that such a fact would not have been formally inscribed or documented, particularly as Enrico could only have benefitted by such a penitent action being known. Moreover, even though Enrico was actively involved in various forms of moneylending, da Nono never accused him of being a usurer, just his father, Rainaldo.²⁴ The only contemporary or near contemporary reference we have to Enrico being a usurer is a rather ambiguous phrase in the *Chronica Patavina* which says that Enrico "practised his father's trade."²⁵ Thus, the surviving documentary evidence does not support any contention that Enrico was seen by his contemporaries as a "notorious usurer," whatever else he might have been accused of. As Jacobus and others have convincingly demonstrated, this is a notion that needs to be dispensed with.

Indeed, the single greatest problem in trying to make the case for the usury thesis is the lack of any such official mention in period documents. Building the Arena Chapel simply wouldn't have been recognized as a valid atonement, given the religious beliefs and formal practices around penitence and absolution at this time, especially for a mortal sin such as usury. Furthermore, if Enrico had wanted to make amends for inheriting his father's wealth, some of which would certainly have been the proceeds of his moneylending, it was not an act such as building a private chapel that was required, but some form of restitution. As Jacobus convincingly argues, this act of restitution was formally made through the founding and

²² Jacobus (2008) provided an extract from Giovanni da Nono's *De Generatione* concerning the Scrovegni family as Appendix 13, 377-378. Scardeone's entire text about the Scrovegni from his 1560 work *De Antiquitate Urbis Patavii & claris civibus Patavinis* was also included as Appendix 16, 383-385.

²³ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 14, 381.

²⁴ Jacobus, (2008), Appendix 13, 378.

²⁵ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 14, 381. The author presumably meant that Enrico was also a moneylender like his father, but it could also be referring to his other mercantile activities.

endowment of a new monastery, St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, through petition to the Bishop of Padua in 1294.²⁶ This was a form of what was known as *incerta* restitution, which meant that the specific victims were not identifiable or could not be practically reimbursed, so a payment of restitution to the "poor" was substituted.²⁷ Perhaps the part of this petition that is most damaging to the idea that the Arena Chapel was part of a formal restitution was Enrico's request that, in granting the petition, the Bishop would grant him "a patrimony that is free".²⁸ In other words, Enrico's inheritance from his father would not be subject to any further restitution process from the ecclesiastical authority. As all of the above suggests, it is therefore hard to support the interpretation that in building the chapel, Enrico Scrovegni was first and foremost trying to atone or make reparations for his father's sin of usury, his inheritance of Rainaldo's wealth, or even his own dealings as a moneylender.

Avarice vs. Usury

Scholars who have argued strongly for the usury thesis have interpreted the depictions of money or moneybags that appear in some of Giotto's frescoes as highlighting the evils of usury. These include several scenes in the Hell portion of *The Last Judgement* (**Fig. 15**), the Virtue *Charity* (**Fig. 16**), and the *Pact of Judas* (**Fig. 17**). For example, Derbes and Sandona wrote that "...numerous images echo and restate the preoccupation with avarice in general and usury in particular."²⁹ It is this automatic equating of avarice with usury that is particularly problematic.

²⁶ Jacobus, 2008, 8; 192-3. The timing (within five years of Rainaldo's death) and the unusual circumstances of the endowment—the size of the gift (4,000 lire), the waiving of *ius patronatus* or any other rights over the monastery, and an ongoing support obligation that devolved onto Enrico's heirs—strongly suggest that Jacobus is correct.

²⁷ Benjamin N. Nelson, "The Usurer and the Merchant Prince: Italian Businessmen and the Ecclesiastical Law of Restitution, 1100-1500," *Journal of Economic History* 7 (1947), 110. Nelson explained that the "poor" were defined by the Bishop and "...came gradually to be identified as ecclesiastical, especially monastic foundations."

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 48.

In her review of the 2008 monographs by Ladis, Jacobus, and Derbes and Sandona, Beth Williamson observed that "...avarice and usury were in many ways interchangeable."³⁰ She noted that although Derbes and Sandona's analysis of the frescoes was focused on usury, "...much of what they argue would still stand if one were to construct a narrative around the idea that the frescoes seek to make amends for the sin of avarice, rather than usury."³¹ I believe that Williamson's observation is correct, in that avarice provides a more contextually accurate understanding of what the many references to money signify throughout Giotto's pictorial program.³² The chapel's images, like almost all medieval art, were infused with Christian and moral symbolism in which the correct moral choices were highlighted.³³ For example, Charity standing on the moneybags (**Fig. 16**) would likely have been seen as a statement not about the evil of money, or of a particularly technical practice such as usury, but rather about the sin of not using it for the common good, of withholding it due to greed—that is, avarice.

While the practice of usury might well lead to one's damnation, it was a specific and generally definable financial behaviour for which there were clear remedial actions. Avarice, however, was far more comprehensive and dangerous—it was a state of mind, a flaw in one's moral character that drove one to endlessly seek greater wealth at the expense of others. Avarice was the overarching sin that was seen not just as the force behind such practices as usury or

³⁰ Beth Williamson, "Approaches to Giotto," *Art History* 34:5 (2011), 1064.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Salvatore Settis maintained that "...in fact, avarice generally (and its retribution) has a special place in the iconographic programme of the chapel." Salvatore Settis, "The Iconography of Italian Art 1100-1500: An Approach," in *History of Italian Art*, editors and translators Peter Burke, Ellen Bianchini, and Claire Dorey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), Volume II, 219.

³³ Jacobus wrote that the viewers of the Arena Chapel "...could engage intellectually with the frescoes' allegorical exhortations to lead a moral life." Jacobus, 2008, 337.

simony, but the root of *all* of the evils associated with money, and which led to a multitude of attitudes and behaviours that might stain one's soul.³⁴

In the fourteenth century avarice was still seen as the probable motivator for the accumulation of wealth through trade and commerce, and it was thus important to merchants to convince themselves, their confessors, and their civic compatriots that they were not avaricious. This meant, at the very least, being religiously observant—attending mass, receiving communion, and making confession—and especially paying tithes, giving alms to support the poor, and generously supporting religious and charitable institutions. But in spite of all such actions, merchants such as Scrovegni would never have forgotten that only God knew for sure whether they had been motivated by avarice or whether they had been genuinely repentant or contrite. This is where Purgatory enters the picture as per my earlier discussion, and I suggest that we need to read some of the iconography of the *Last Judgement* in light of contemporary understandings about the role and meaning of Purgatory as a stage of the afterlife.

Like most late-medieval Christians, Enrico had to assume that a spell in Purgatory was the most likely scenario he could hope for after death.³⁵ The Arena Chapel was a key component in his long-term goal for demonstrating he was a pious and moral Christian, thereby avoiding Hell, and in securing the masses and prayers he needed to reduce his time in Purgatory. A major purpose of the fresco program was, therefore, to demonstrate Enrico's understanding of the

³⁴ Peter Damian (c.1007-c.1073) wrote that "Avarice is the root of all evil." Quoted in Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 36.

³⁵ In his discussion on the Doctrine of Purgatory, Takami Matsuda asserted the "...practically all ordinary Christians are in turn expected to spend some time in Purgatory after death. ... it became practically impossible for ordinary Christians to avoid Purgatory completely." Matsuda, 23.

spiritual and social dangers around money, and to highlight his own righteous Christian moral behaviour rather than as a repudiation of his past moneylending practices.

As scholars such as J. K. Hyde have emphasized, Enrico Scrovegni was an ambitious man who used his wealth to further his social and political status in Padua and the Veneto.³⁶ There is no question that the chapel was intended to further that agenda, as well as to serve his spiritual needs and aspirations. Scrovegni's late-medieval worldview did not separate his values and beliefs into sacred and secular spheres. While power, status, and prestige (*fama*) might have served his earthly ambitions, they also benefitted his spiritual aspirations. His reputation and good works proclaimed his moral standing, which would be taken into account by God and by the holy figures whom he asked to intercede for him. And just in case this was not enough, his actions were strategically designed to attract the widest possible degree of prayers and other suffrages for his soul that would speed his way out of Purgatory. It is precisely in exploring the role of Purgatory that we get an enriched understanding of the Arena Chapel, its founder's intentions and actions, and how the imagery supports them.

PART 2: Purgatory and the Arena Chapel

Introduction

I would argue that it is impossible to fully grasp Enrico Scrovegni's motives and expectations for the chapel, and for much of the content of the frescoes, without comprehending how he and his contemporaries understood Purgatory and its operational dynamics. While most studies on the chapel have noted that the salvation of its founder was an important, even fundamental objective,

³⁶ Hyde, 1966.

virtually none have analyzed Scrovegni's actions in creating and promoting the chapel in specific context of the contemporary beliefs around Purgatory.

In order to establish a more complete sense of Enrico's moral identity, it is important to look at his own words in the three extant documents—a sixteenth-century transcription of the now lost 1303 inscription of the dedication of the chapel; and two legal documents, Enrico's endowment of the chapel in 1317, and his Will of 1336.

The chapel's dedication inscription, now lost and which was probably on the plinth of Scrovegni's 1305 statue, was recorded by Bernardino Scardeone in his 1560 work, *De Antiquitate urbis Patavii & claris civibus Patavinis*.³⁷ What this inscription highlighted was Enrico's "honesty of soul," that is an affirmation of his commitment to Christian morality and ethics, and therefore of the behaviours that would stand him in good stead with his fellow Paduans and God.³⁸

When Enrico endowed the chapel in January 1317, the notarized document he had drawn up stated, in the third person, that Scrovegni had erected it

... in honour and reverence of the said inviolate Virgin Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to the honour and good estate of the city and commune of Padua, and as an aid to salvation for his soul and that of his predecessors.³⁹

This could not be said more explicitly: salvation was his primary objective. Accordingly, in his will, drafted shortly before his death in 1336, Enrico enjoined all those religious houses and institutions to which he had left bequests, including the Arena Chapel, to pray for his soul:

³⁷ See Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 16, 385.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ See Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 10, 368. The dedication inscription mentioned only Scrovegni's own soul. Selma Pfeiffenberger suggests that the addition of "his predecessors" might be as a result of the notoriety associated with his father and the family because Dante's treatment of Rainaldo in the *Inferno* was now in circulation. Pfeiffenberger, III:2:4-5. However, Pfeiffenberger seemed to be unaware that an earlier endowment by Enrico in 1294 to establish a monastery (St. Ursula and Eleven Thousand Virgins) specifically noted that it was for the salvation of himself, his ancestors and his descendants. See Jacobus, Appendix 1, 343.

And I ask all brothers, chaplains, priests and ministers of said places, monasteries, and churches that they will commend my soul and the souls of my kinsmen in their prayers and masses.⁴⁰

The commendation was for his passage out of Purgatory into Heaven. The Arena Chapel was the largest beneficiary of Enrico's bequests and its strategic importance to Enrico Scrovegni's salvific aspirations was made clear when he instructed that "...the pastors and ministers of the said church will never allow divine services to cease to be held."⁴¹ Enrico thus tried to ensure that at least one church, his own, would pray for his release from Purgatory into Heaven in perpetuity.

The Issue of Control

In looking at how Enrico strategically used the chapel to further his salvific agenda, it is first necessary to understand that much of this was only possible because of the legal and practical control he had over his chapel.

The building of a family chapel as part of an urban private residence owned by a wealthy merchant was highly unusual, if not in fact unique, in early fourteenth-century Padua.⁴² The usual route for having a family chapel was to purchase the rights to one in an existing church, which is what Enrico's father, Rainaldo, had done. But such chapels were small and only one of many within the larger space of the hosting church. Not only was the space for imagery in these chapels restrictive, but the purchaser had a limited say in what imagery could be inserted. In this kind of chapel Enrico might have been able to realize some of his objectives for suffrages, but on a much smaller scale, and without the personal presence his ambitious nature required. The Arena Chapel, however, was authorized as a privately owned oratory within the Scrovegni

⁴⁰ Benjamin G. Kohl, "The Scrovegni in Carrara Padua and Enrico's Will," *Apollo* 142, (Dec.1995), 47.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 28.

palazzo complex, and this gave him almost exclusive control over the space of the building, its decorations, and its access.⁴³

In 1317 Enrico Scrovegni legally endowed the Arena Chapel with property to support the establishment of clergy and other staff, so that "appropriate divine office could and should be said and celebrated there from this point on in perpetuity."⁴⁴ This was an astute act, taken as a precautionary measure (a necessary one as it turned out) because it established a legal identity for the chapel, independent of the palazzo complex, and ensured Scrovegni and his heirs had formal and inalienable *ius patronatus* rights.⁴⁵ These rights gave Enrico and his heirs practical control over the personnel and management of the chapel, and pragmatically ensured there would always be prayers for his soul.⁴⁶

Enrico's control over the chapel secured his authoritative input into the pictorial program and its intended messages.⁴⁷ Given what we know about Enrico's intelligence, adroitness,

⁴³ The Chapel was authorized under a license, as an oratorio, from the Bishop of Padua. Some scholars have assumed that the Arena Chapel immediately conferred *ius patronatus* rights on the Scrovegni, but this is in question because the chapel was not yet formally endowed or had any identity apart from being part of the Scrovegni household. Susan Wood, in her book on proprietary churches noted that: "...if a rich man maintained an oratory in his town house or country villa, this was likely enough structurally part of the house and subject to the same property-right as the rest of the house. It would not itself have property; its owner would repair, decorate, and equip it, and feed and pay any chaplain, out of his own purse." Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11-12. What makes this issue important is that it helps explain why Enrico endowed the Chapel when he did.

⁴⁴ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 10, 368.

⁴⁵ By 1317 Padua was already locked in internal political turmoil and external conflict with Vicenza and Verona. The rise of the Carrara family, who although allied to Scrovegni by marriage, probably saw him as a threatening rival for signorial power, and Scrovegni had good reason to fear for his possessions and even his life. It is this situation that ultimately prompted his flight to Venice in 1320. For a summary of the political situation and its effect on Enrico Scrovegni see Jacobus, 2008, 11-12 and Hyde, 1966, 252-282. On Scrovegni's *ius patronatus* rights see Jacobus, 2015, 3.

⁴⁶ The Palazzo was sold to Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan in 1451, but the rights to the Chapel remained with the Scrovegni family. When the Scrovegni compound was later sold to the Foscari in 1475, they had to buy the *ius patronatus* rights to the Chapel in addition to the other components of the Palazzo. It is not known whether the continuation of prayers for Enrico's soul was a condition of the transfer of rights, but likely it was. Jacobus, 2005, 15.

⁴⁷ The degree of input or control that Scrovegni, or Giotto had over the actual content of the Chapel's pictorial program has been the subject of a diverse range of opinion. For example, Cole seems to rule out either Scrovegni or Giotto having much say. Cole, 1993, 28. Settis observed that "It was certainly the patron's idea to insert references to himself and his family into this wide network which links across the walls from one frame to the next." Settis, 223.

ambition, and obsession with the Arena Chapel, we therefore have to assume he was deeply involved in decisions around content, iconography, and overall messaging. It is not that Scrovegni's 'slant' was intended to displace the traditional Christian messaging of such imagery, but rather that these same images were subtly nuanced towards his own moral self-representation.⁴⁸

Maximizing the Suffrages for Enrico's Passage Through Purgatory

The acquisition of suffrages to reduce purgatorial time with its horrific punishments was a major goal for wealthy merchants such as Enrico. This is why merchant wills, such as Enrico's, always included endowments to churches, monasteries, confraternities etc. to provide the perpetual saying of masses for the soul of the benefactor. The other major source of suffrages for one's purgatorial release was prayer. One's family and kinfolk could normally be counted on as a source of such prayers, but a primary objective was to have as many people as possible, especially the poor and humble, praying for one's soul. In looking at the ways in which Enrico used the chapel to generate this form of suffrage, much of the dynamic is found in the contemporary social fabric of obligation and reciprocity. It was, in many ways, a numbers game. The more benefits that Enrico could bestow on the greatest number of people possible, especially those whose prayers were assumed to carry more weight, the greater the number of thanksgivings, prayers and blessings that would accrue to him as a reciprocal response.

Laura Jacobus has been critical of suggestions that the messages primarily assert "...the private and personal 'programme' usually associated with Enrico Scrovegni." Jacobus, 2008, 202.

⁴⁸ We do not have any first-hand details about Enrico's education and intellectual standing, but he seems to have been literate in Latin. According to Jacobus, "Enrico's broader awareness of classical ideas about art and letters can be strongly inferred from his connections to some of the major intellectual figures of his day." Jacobus, 2017, 86. In particular, Enrico seems to have been well acquainted with Albertino Mussato (1261-1329), an early Paduan humanist, writer and diplomat, who wrote glowingly about the architecture of the Palazzo Scrovegni and was on at least one diplomatic mission with Enrico. Hyde, 1966, 105-106; 252. Jacobus, 2017, 88. Jacobus thinks Mussato may well have written the dedication inscription for the Chapel. Jacobus, 2017, 88.

The choice of the Arena property was itself highly strategic. It was a site with a long and formal association of civic religious celebration through the Ascension Day procession from the Cathedral to the Arena site.⁴⁹ This gave Scrovegni the opportunity to host an important event in his own chapel and to obtain the prayers of gratitude from the many Paduan citizens who would have participated. Not only did he provide the site for the Ascension Day mass; he also contributed to the cost of the procession and performances, and provided or contributed to the serving of food and drink for the citizens of Padua.⁵⁰ Enrico's hopes for the decoration of the chapel to enhance his prestige could not have been better met by Giotto's frescoes. Quite beyond their spiritual content, the pictorial program elicited a sense of civic pride that was forever associated with its founder. In this respect, even though his *fama* might be celebrated in a civic and social context, it still rebounded to his spiritual credit as one who merited goodwill and prayers for his wellbeing. The convergence of the social and spiritual through one's moral reputation was of vital importance to fourteenth-century merchants like Scrovegni; it brought them honour in this world and the reasonable assurance of eventual passage from Purgatory into Heaven.

Very shortly after the chapel was constructed, Enrico made a highly judicious move. He used his personal and familial connection with Pope Benedict XI (Niccolò Boccasino, 1240-1304) to secure an ongoing indulgence for attendees at the chapel's service on the Marian feast days.⁵¹

⁴⁹ The details of these processions were outlined in civic statutes in 1278 and 1298. See Jacobus, 2008, Appendices 2 & 3, 346-349.

⁵⁰ There is an entry in the Cathedral's expense register for 1309 noting that Enrico agreed to pay half the costs of the Ascension Day event normally borne by the Cathedral Chapter. Michael Viktor Schwarz, "Padua, its Arena and the Arena Chapel: A Liturgical Ensemble," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 73 (2010): 45.

⁵¹ Robert Smith argued that prior to his Papacy, Boccasino was instrumental in securing permission for Enrico to build the Chapel, although no documentary evidence is cited for this claim. Robert Smith, "Giotto: Artistic Realism, Political Realism," *Journal of Medieval History* 4, no. 3 (1978): 272-274.

This friendly association led to a speedy approval of Enrico's request in the form of a Papal Bull issued on March 1, 1304:

...we mercifully grant an indulgence of one year and forty days for the penances imposed on all those who are truly penitent and confessed who may visit the said church [the Arena Chapel] on the feasts of the Nativity, Annunciation, Purification and Assumption of the same Virgin in the course of a year, and indeed for those who shall have visited reverently during the eight days immediately following the same feasts, (an indulgence of) one hundred days.⁵²

There was yet another source of an indulgence for some attendees, which no art historian has commented on. Over the Sacristy doorway was a *Man of Sorrows* (**Fig. 18**) painted around 1317.⁵³ The *Man of Sorrows* was one of those images that carried an automatic indulgence for the viewer who prayed before it, and this would have applied to any of the chapel's attendees who had access to it.⁵⁴

Enrico benefitted personally from these indulgences in two ways. He would, of course, have earned his own indulgence credits through attending the chapel on the requisite days and praying before the Man of Sorrows. But these same indulgences were direct benefits to the chapel's visitors, a tangible spiritual gift for which Enrico was directly responsible. The need to reciprocate for this gift imposed an obligation upon its recipients that was absolutely predictable; the appropriate response would be prayers for his wellbeing in life, and for a speedy passage from Purgatory into Heaven after death.

⁵² Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 6, 355. 'Visiting' the chapel most likely meant attending mass there, as opposed to just being physically present. It is uncertain whether the credit for attending the chapel in the eight days following the Feast Day was a one-time award only, or whether it applied to each day a visit was made. My reading is that it was the former.

⁵³ Robin Simon, "Giotto and After: Altars and Alterations at the Arena Chapel, Padua," *Apollo* 142 (Dec.,1995), 33.

⁵⁴ Jacobi noted that "Through granting indulgences, the Church made the *Man of Sorrows* one of the most efficacious of all images in Western Christendom as penitents who prayed before it received indulgences." Jacobi, 144.

The Role of the Images of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel

I would now like to examine the two representations of Enrico Scrovegni that appeared in the chapel during his lifetime, as I believe they were an integral part of Enrico's strategy of self-representation to highlight his moral worthiness and to secure prayers for his soul.⁵⁵ The first is Giotto's fresco of Enrico presenting the chapel to the Virgin in *The Last Judgement* (**Fig. 19**). The second is a life-size polychromatic statue and stone frame with Scrovegni's coat of arms (**Fig. 20**).⁵⁶ This statue was originally housed in an exterior niche on the north side, most likely with the dedication inscription referred to above, but was moved to the sacristy round 1360. The fresco and sculpture were both created around 1305; they were thus a feature of the chapel almost from its inception and an important expression of Enrico's earthly identity. Each of these depictions was a deliberate act of self-representation in which he is shown as a serious, pious, and moral Christian—this was wholly in line with what Jacobus noted about such portraits in this period, that they “... could be expected to convey their subject's real or imagined moral character.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ There is also an effigy of Enrico on his tomb but that is outside of the scope of this study and therefore has not been included in this discussion. There has been considerable scholarship with differing opinions about this artifact. See the following works: Catherine King, "Effigies: Human and Divine," in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400*, ed. Diana Norman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), Volume 2, 105-128; Jacobus, 2000, 17-26; Volker Herzner, "Zut Statue des Enrico Scrovegni," *Kunstchronik: Herausgegeben vom Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2010), 172-175; Laura Jacobus, "'Propria Figura': The Advent of Facsimile Portraiture in Italian Art," *The Art Bulletin* 99, no. 2 (2017): 73-101. The details of when all of the components of the tomb were constructed are rather convoluted. See Laura Jacobus, "The tomb of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel, Padua," *The Burlington Magazine* CLIV (June 2012), 403-409. Also, Robin Simon, "The monument constructed for me.' Evidence for the first tomb monument of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel, Padua," in *Venice and the Veneto during the Renaissance: The Legacy of Benjamin Kohl*, eds. Michael Knapton, John E. Law, Alison A. Smith (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2014), 385-404.

⁵⁶ Jacobus, 2017, fn. 12, 97.

⁵⁷ Jacobus, 2017, 73. Jacobus made reference to a ground-breaking article in 1996, in which Hubert Steinke looked at seven medieval texts that discussed the relationship between human physical features and the moral characteristics they suggested. He then took these 'types' (which he compiled in a table) to show how Giotto used them in specific characters in the frescoes, such as Judas, Caiaphas, St. Luke, and most of the Vices. Steinke did not extend this analysis to Giotto's portrait of Enrico. See Hubert Steinke, "Giotto und die Physiognomic," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59, no. 4 (1996): 523-547.

i) Enrico's Presentation of the Chapel in the Last Judgement (Fig. 19)

As with so much else of the chapel, scholars have had different interpretations or emphases about the intended messaging of Enrico's depiction of himself in this fresco. Derbes and Sandona, and also Ladis, agreed that Enrico's posture and dress portrayed him as a humble and contrite penitent.⁵⁸ Jacobus, however, argued that the scale of his representation, in comparison with the holy figures to whom he is presenting the chapel, and the fact that the Virgin herself is engaging directly with him in accepting his offering, speak more to "the man and his ambition", that is, someone who was totally conscious of his wealth and social status, rather than as a contrite penitent anxious to be absolved of his usurious past.⁵⁹

Whatever else Enrico's presence was intended to signify, there is no question that the dominant theme in this scene is Enrico presenting himself as a pious and worthy Christian who has built and decorated the chapel to benefit not only himself and his family, but the souls of all those who visited and worshipped there. Enrico's physical representation in this painting created a strong, material association between himself and the attendees at the chapel. Again, it provided a direct focus for the reciprocal response of prayers of gratitude for his gift as worshippers exited the chapel through the main west door.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 41. Ladis, 2008, 45.

⁵⁹ Jacobus, 2008, 197.

⁶⁰ Corine Schleif, in an essay on donor portraits, highlighted this theme of reciprocity. "Both historians and art historians have looked at function, motivation and strategy, particularly with respect to donor images as established visual signs within practices of gift-giving, that is, expectations of reciprocity, especially in connection with eternal salvation, within cultures of remembrance, or both." Corine Schleif, "Kneeling on the Threshold: Donors Negotiating Realms Betwixt and Between" in *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces*, eds., Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 196.

In spite of the exhaustive analyses and interpretations of the *Last Judgement* and Enrico's place in it, no scholar, to my knowledge, has suggested that the fresco makes any visual reference to Purgatory. I want to suggest, however, that Giotto has incorporated the purgatorial process into his *Last Judgement*, which is an absolutely unique representation in late-medieval Western art.⁶¹

At the time Giotto painted the Arena Chapel frescoes, there was neither a set spatial understanding of Purgatory (this was pre-Dante), nor had any significant Western iconographic tradition been created for representing it. What Giotto did have, however, was access to a strong textual tradition that repeatedly used certain motifs in descriptions of Purgatory and the purgatorial processes. The most common of these were mountains, fire, and bridges.⁶² All three are featured, for example, in the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* (Treatise of St. Patrick's Purgatory), a highly popular and influential work during this time.⁶³ Giotto would almost certainly have been familiar with this legend as it was included in considerable detail in Jacobus de Voragine's passage on St. Patrick, in which all three motifs were mentioned.⁶⁴

The mountain suggested a hostile environment and place of struggle, but also the opportunity for the righteous and stalwart, with the help of the heavenly hosts, to experience "spiritual rebirth" and ultimately ascend to heaven and salvation.⁶⁵ The bridge was used to denote

⁶¹ See Appendix 2 for my research on the problem of the representation of Purgatory in medieval visual culture.

⁶² Jacques Le Goff discusses the emergence of these three motifs as features of Purgatory extensively in his work *The Birth of Purgatory*, op. cit.

⁶³ See Noel Mac Tréinfhir, "The Todi Fresco and St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough derg," *Clogher Record*, 12, no. 2 (1986): 141-158.

⁶⁴ Voragine, Vol. 1, 194-196. Scholars are in virtual agreement that Voragine's Golden Legend was a major source for the content of many of the narrative frescoes. Paul Hills, for example, wrote that "Giotto's consecutive narrative [was] based on the Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine." Paul Hills, *The Light of Early Italian Painting*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1987), 41.

⁶⁵ Tréinfhir, 153.

a place of trial and testing, of perilous passages, but ultimately the opportunity to move from one realm of the afterlife to the other.⁶⁶ Fire was the most common of all symbols associated with Purgatory. Julian of Vézelay (1080-1165) preached that those who were penitent and confessed their sins "...shall be allowed to complete in purgatorial fire the penitential satisfaction that they neglected to give in this world."⁶⁷ All three of these elements—mountain, bridge, and fire—are included in that part of Giotto's *Last Judgement* in the area between the main cavern of Hell and the Cross, just to the right of Enrico presenting the chapel to the Virgin (**Fig. 21**). Visually, the fire is unmistakable, but the bridge and mountain are not so readily distinct. Indeed, one might question whether the rocky ledge above the cavern is, in fact, meant to be or function as a bridge, but the art historian Brendan Cassidy certainly saw it as such.⁶⁸ The bridge leads to the sheer, fire-covered side of a mountain, that leads upward.⁶⁹

My primary lens for interpreting the meaning of the relevant elements involves the contemporary understanding of Purgatory, the theology that surrounds it, and the messages that Trecento persons would likely have discerned in these images.⁷⁰ Additionally, my analysis is premised on the fact that each aspect of the scene has a serious meaning and is not an irrelevant

⁶⁶ Tréinfir, 154; Matsuda, 46; 96-97.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Le Goff, 1984, 203.

⁶⁸ He described the position of the man on the extreme left of Hell (**Fig. 22**), with exposed genitalia as "Close by on hell's bridge... ." Brendan Cassidy, "Laughing with Giotto at Sinners in Hell," *Viator* 35 (2004): 359.

⁶⁹ It is tempting to see the mound on which the angel holding the right side of the cross seems to be standing (**Fig. 23**) as a mountain, but it is impossible to tell whether this is a drawn outline representing such or merely a fading of the paint.

⁷⁰ Jeffrey Ruda commented that "Giotto's fresco is central to the questions of religious belief and representation, although it is atypical in its specific forms." Jeffrey Ruda, "Satan's Body: Religion and Gender Parody in Late Medieval Italy," *Viator*, 37 (2006): 320-321.

diversion, as some have suggested.⁷¹ The fact that some images might be darkly humorous does not detract from what those messages conveyed, and might even reinforce them.⁷²

It is important to remember that the period understanding of Purgatory was as the realm where one was punished for one's unrequited sins through horrible torments inflicted by demons. The torments and the demons who administered them were the same ones meted out to those souls eternally damned to Hell. Thus, the demons did not distinguish between the two states of afterlife and fought any powers of goodness to release the souls from their torment. It was God's grace alone, influenced by the active intervention of holy figures such as angels, the Virgin, and the saints, helped by earthly suffrages, that ultimately released the soul. Giotto's rendition of the boundary between Hell and the other parts of the *Last Judgement* is absolutely unique in comparison to previous or near contemporary depictions of the Last Judgement.⁷³ Other renditions of the *Last Judgement*, all of which are in churches or monasteries (Figs. 24, 25), show a sharply delineated Hell with none of the 'spill-over' ambiguities we can see in Giotto's version (Fig. 26).⁷⁴

These 'spill-overs' are four figures who are outside the main cavern of Hell, three of whom are on the bridge and a fourth who is almost completely hidden behind the cross (Fig. 27). Art historians who have commented on these figures have all assumed that they are post-judgement

⁷¹ Schlegel, for example, took great exception to the classification of the individual hiding behind the cross as Giotto's "ironical joke" or "stylistic blasphemy" as was suggested by a German art historian, R. Oetel. She noted that this would be totally out of context of the visual use and meaning of the cross. Schlegel, fn.16, 187-188.

⁷² Andrew Ladis, "The Legend of Giotto's Wit and the Arena Chapel," *The Art Bulletin*, 68, no. 4 (1986): 585.

⁷³ Alison Morgan wrote that "All previous representations had divided the Last Judgement up into a number of compartmentalized scenes, each of which was separated from the others. Here Giotto for the first time shows the *Last Judgement* as one event, with every part of the fresco relating spatially to the focal point which is Christ." Alison Morgan, "The Last Judgement in Christian Iconography." A public lecture given in the University of Cambridge, 1987, as part of her doctoral research. Updated, September 2019. www.alisonmorgan.co.uk.

⁷⁴ Shorr, noted that Giotto's version "...discarded the separate compartments in which various episodes of the Last Judgement are usually represented." Shorr, 207.

souls eternally damned to reside in Hell. Schlegel suggested that this area was the actual site of judgement and these souls were being forced into Hell by the demons for eternity.⁷⁵ But I would suggest that this is implausible from both a visual and a theological perspective. Visually, the assignment of souls to the cavern of Hell in Giotto's *Last Judgement* is made by Christ, at the top of the fresco, with the damned souls falling downwards from his judgement to their perpetual place in the cavern. Theologically, only God, and Christ as His Son, can make this judgement. The fact that the four figures are not shown as descending into Hell this way suggests something else is taking place.

Ladis referred to the three figures on the bridge as souls judged and heading into Hell. As he notes, these figures "... perhaps aware that the time for striking bargains is past, put up wild resistance, but to no avail: they are now and forever the playthings of demons."⁷⁶ Derbes and Sandona also counted the figures on the bridge as judged and damned, but not yet in their final spot in Hell. The role of the demons was "...not only in tormenting the damned but also in arranging them, dragging them, pushing them, prodding them..."⁷⁷ But none of these comments provides a plausible or contextually appropriate explanation as to why Giotto showed and placed them as he did, or how they might fit in with Enrico's messaging through his presence in this *Last Judgement*. I maintain that this particular depiction by Giotto of the four souls on the bridge was totally in keeping with the prevailing understanding of Purgatory as a place which was

⁷⁵ Schlegel, 183.

⁷⁶ Ladis, 1986, 586.

⁷⁷ Derbes and Sandona, 2015, 57.

inhabited by demons inflicting temporary purgative punishments in what Aquinas called "...the vestibule of Hell."⁷⁸ Let us now look at how Giotto has achieved this.⁷⁹

The souls on the bridge (**Figs. 28, 29**) are the only ones in the whole of Hell being scorched by flames, a fact no one else has commented on, and the sure sign of a purgatorial process.⁸⁰ The upper figure, a naked woman, has fire clearly flowing over her naked torso, while the soul beneath her, possibly a cleric guilty of simony, is lying face up with the fire streaming underneath his back.⁸¹ Both of these souls are being actively tormented by demons who are trying to move them, without success, into the cavern of Hell. This vain exertion is particularly noticeable with the female figure and suggests that while the demons have the capacity to torment these souls, their power is temporary as they cannot move them into Hell proper, which only the eternally damned can inhabit.

The next figure on the bridge (**Fig. 22**) is seemingly humorous ("sin justifies ridicule"⁸²) but is, I contend, a serious allegory about moral courage. This is a man with his clothes pulled over his head by two demons, rendering him blind and with his prominent genitals exposed. He

⁷⁸ Shaffern, 2007, 120.

⁷⁹ There is also the issue of the cavern right below the bridge. Do these souls fit into a purgatorial framework? They are certainly problematic, but I think that they just might, given that they are not entering the cavern as the rest of the damned, swept down by Christ's judgement, and are not yet undergoing active punishment. The clue might lie in the demon who is leading a fully dressed man holding a sack. This demon has been identified as "Lucifer's accountant Tutivillus, the recording devil (**Fig. 30**)."⁸⁰ Cassidy, 359. I suggest that these four figures might be the newly arrived in Purgatory, and that the role of Tutivillus is to determine what their appropriate purgatorial punishments should be and for how long, based on God's judgement. This is an issue that requires more research, but I want to reiterate that there has been no other comprehensive explanation attempting to explain why the four souls outside of the cavern are there, and what their situations might indicate, in an accurate historical, theological and iconographical context.

⁸⁰ Le Goff, 1984, 7-10.

⁸¹ Not one of the sources I have read has even mentioned the female figure. Her position and nakedness suggest she has been guilty of sins of the flesh. Derbes and Sandona thought the soul below her was a cleric because of his black robes and that the fact that one of his tormenting demons was wearing a money bag pointed to his having been engaged in simony. Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 48.

⁸² Ladis, 1986, 586.

is actively resisting the two demons (the only one in the whole fresco who does), being pulled from behind by one and pulled ahead by another, thus going nowhere. Except for Ladis' remarks, very little has been said about this figure in recent scholarship.⁸³

It is this figure's active resistance that is at the heart of its allegorical impact. If one were to draw horizontal lines from his head and feet, towards the right, they would closely frame the hanging, disemboweled Judas in Hell proper (**Fig. 31**). The allegory is clear. Judas did not believe and did not fight. As Saint Augustine put it: "Judas aggravated rather than expiated his guilt...since, by despairing of God's mercy, he left no place for a healing penitence."⁸⁴ Yet the ridiculous figure on the bridge somehow found the faith to be penitent and fight, sure in the eventual prospect of his ascension to Heaven. Thus, this resisting soul relates directly to the Virtue of *Hope* (**Fig. 32**), while Judas gives in to the Vice of *Despair* (**Fig. 33**), the opposite of *Hope* in Giotto's cycle.

The last figure (**Fig. 34**), the man hiding and peeking out from behind the cross, is so strange and seemingly out of place that it cannot help but have prompted considerable speculation about its meaning. This includes everything from outright puzzlement (Schlegel), an "ironical joke" (Oertel), to assurance that this is a doomed sinner hiding from God to avoid judgement (Derbes & Sandona, and Ladis).⁸⁵ However, Schlegel's observation about this episode that "...it is not an event of the realm of Hell but of the cross, which in the whole of medieval art only saints were permitted to touch," is absolutely correct.⁸⁶ This man cannot be a condemned

⁸³ Only Andrew Ladis seems to have speculated on the meaning of this image. He described it as "...two devils subduing a man blinded long before this pull of clothes over his head to expose the enormity of his sin." Ladis, 1986, 586. The enormity is presumably the man's penis and suggests sin of a sexual nature.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Ladis, 2008, 48-49.

⁸⁵ See the following: Schlegel, fn.16, 47-48; Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 142; Ladis, 1986, 586.

⁸⁶ Schlegel, fn.16, 48.

inhabitant trying to avoid Hell as he would not be permitted to touch the cross. This is most likely a soul whose time in Purgatory (he is still standing on the stream of fire) has just expired and he is hiding from the demons in close proximity to the Virgin, who traditionally could lead souls out of Purgatory.⁸⁷ This figure, like the ridiculous one beside him, can only be understood as part of an allegory. The cross is meant to emphasize the merciful justice of God for those who have seen the error of their ways and who know its power to protect them, even to the point of making them invisible to the forces of Hell.⁸⁸ This mercy, which is represented both by the cross and the purgatorial process being enacted adjacent to it, is visually and theologically connected to Enrico's offering of the chapel, so graciously accepted by the Virgin and her attending saints. The tight visual proximity of these elements is, I believe, a statement that Enrico's "real-time" gift of the chapel will lead ultimately to salvation, even after a period in Purgatory, not only for him but for all those who visit the chapel and heed its moral messages.⁸⁹ In this sense, the inclusion of Purgatory within the iconography of the *Last Judgement* reflects the contemporary understandings of the purgatorial process and is very much about Enrico's own moral representation as one who is worthy of the prayers that will move him through Purgatory.

ii) The c.1305 Statue of Enrico Scrovegni (Fig. 20)

This statue of Enrico has been examined primarily for its technical, iconographic, and placement issues.⁹⁰ I want, however, to focus on the statue's intended functions and viewer response,

⁸⁷ This was a theme explored by Shorr in her 1956 article about the role of the Virgin in Giotto's *Last Judgement*, in which she made reference to the well-known legend of the Virgin herself descending into Purgatory and interceding for the souls there with Christ. Shorr, 212-213.

⁸⁸ John Munn discussed the apotropaic powers of the cross in his study. See John Munn, *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Norman England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), 103-110.

⁸⁹ Robert Mills, in his study on representation of Purgatory in late-medieval art, noted that "Temporality is crucial to theological and visionary accounts of purgatory..." Mills, 479.

⁹⁰ See the following works: Catherine King, 1995, Volume 2, 105-128; Laura Jacobus, 2000; Herzner, 172-175; Laura Jacobus, 2017.

particularly in relation to its original position in an external niche next to the north wall door leading from the residence to the chapel.⁹¹ This meant that the statue was starkly visible to anyone entering the chapel from the house via the north door (**Figs. 35, 36**). Its importance was highlighted by the probability that the chapel's dedication inscription was also attached to the niche.⁹² The most important part of this inscription greeted viewers with the words:

Those who led a life of luxury in fat times, having lost their wealth, are no longer spoken of, but Enrico Scrovegni, knight, saving his honest soul, here celebrates the venerable feast day.⁹³

The Scrovegni family and their relations and important guests would have used this access to the chapel as it led directly into that portion of the church that was set aside for the family, friends, and those of rank. Who used this entrance is important because it was only these individuals who would have seen the statue, and the messages it conveyed would have been quite different, based on the viewers' social status and their relationship with Enrico and his family. This representation of Enrico projected both a real and symbolic presence of the man. It reinforced his temporal and moral identity and authority and was an agent in establishing social connection and reciprocity with the viewers.⁹⁴

The statue would have been regularly viewed by members of the household, including the chapel's clergy, and all of these would have responded within the normal boundaries of patron-

⁹¹ The conclusion that this is where the statue was originally situated is largely dependent on architectural evidence and is not universally accepted. See Jacobus, 2000, 18-20. Also, Jacobus, 2017, fn.10, 98; Simon, 2014, fn.26, 394. I have accepted Jacobus' argument.

⁹² Jacobus, 2012

⁹³ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 16, 385. "*Qui luxum vitae per tempora laeta secuti dimissis opibus remanent sine nomine muti sed de Scrovegnis Henricus miles honestum conservans animum facit hic venerabile festum.*" Ibid, 384.

⁹⁴ Jacobus in comparing this statue's role to that of seals as personal identifiers, wrote of it: "However the personal individuality or personhood residing in Enrico's particular body, and in his actions is more directly and forcefully communicated by facsimile portraiture." Jacobus, 2017, fn. 74, 101.

dependent relations. This would have involved expressions of gratitude and prayers for Enrico's physical and spiritual well-being as he was so important to their own day to day welfare.⁹⁵

For visitors and associates of equal or superior social status, the statue would have also conveyed appropriately nuanced messages. His pose and demeanor were ones of reverent welcoming which proclaimed his fundamental social and Christian identity and piety. The attached dedication inscription affirmed his noble status as a knight, his concern for his "honest soul" through his reverence for the Virgin, and his unconcern for a "life of luxury."⁹⁶ The statue was his material proxy in inviting these guests into *his* chapel, so devoutly dedicated to the Virgin in her *Carità* role as representative of the provision of charity in its widest sense. Thus, he expressed not only his own honesty and trustworthiness in spiritual and temporal matters, but also his generosity and concern for the spiritual wellbeing of his guests. This was a gift that added to his *fama* and demanded some form of reciprocal response.

Together, these two very different portraits of Enrico Scrovegni were part of a temporal and spiritual continuum that linked the present with the future, in which one's behaviours now might be turned away from sin in anticipation of the heavenly life to come. Enrico himself was inseparable from what happened for those who worshipped at his chapel. The chapel existed because of him. Through his agency worshippers and viewers of the frescoes benefitted from

⁹⁵ No separate provision for the housing of the clergy was made until the endowment of 1317, and Enrico's Will of 1336 seems to make it clear that such a residence had not yet been constructed. We don't know how many clerical and chapel support staff there actually were, but it must have been the same or close to the number stipulated in the 1317 endowment document—four priests (one of whom would be the Provost in charge of the others), four clerics, and four servants. See Jacobus, 2008, 48; Appendix 10, 370. The establishment is not as clear as it might be in the endowment document. The problem is that the term priest and cleric may be used interchangeably, in which case the establishment would only be eight rather than twelve.

⁹⁶ Enrico had been made a knight by the Venetian state in 1301. Jacobus, 2000, 21-22.

their experience; and they, in turn, became potential spiritual agents in the achievement of his own salvation.

Part 3: The Theme of Hospitality in the Chapel's Fresco Program

The Palazzo Scrovegni

The expectation that the well-to-do merchant's house in late-medieval Italy would be the site of hospitality, freely and generously given, was embedded in the very structure of economic relations in Christian medieval society and "...was seen as one of the foundations of the moral economy."⁹⁷ In light of the period importance of hospitality, and the specific references to the Scrovegni as great hosts, it is surprising that no one before now has applied hospitality as an interpretive theme in the chapel's fresco program.

Most persons visiting the Palazzo Scrovegni could be reasonably certain of receiving Enrico's hospitality in some appropriate form. The residence therefore became the locus of a multifaceted moral exchange between host and hosted that was part of the fundamental understanding of Christian obligation and social relations.⁹⁸ With respect to the Arena Chapel, the Merchant's Moral Eye framework's dimension of hospitality provides a whole new avenue of analysis that enhances our understanding of how Scrovegni expected the chapel to represent his Christian moral identity, in this instance as an exemplary Christian host.

Art historians have generally underplayed how the fact that the chapel was an integral part of a privately-owned residential complex might have influenced both the content and

⁹⁷ Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 2.

⁹⁸ Felicity Heal, "Reciprocity and Exchange in the Late Medieval Household," in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, edited by Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace, 179-198. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 180.

placement of its pictorial program. In a 1998 article Jacobus observed that, “The fact that the Chapel was originally intended to serve as a household chapel has been ignored in the literature on the frescoes...⁹⁹ Given that the chapel has been a stand-alone building since the Palazzo was demolished in 1827, it is understandable that so little consideration has been given to how it being part of a residential complex might have affected the meanings and functions of the chapel's frescoes.¹⁰⁰

We don't know exactly how the house was originally adjoined to the chapel since we have no primary documentary or visual records of the original Palazzo Scrovegni. The only surviving visual records of the house are from the eighteenth century, long after the palazzo was redesigned by the Foscari (**Figs. 37, 38**), and which depict the house and chapel as seamlessly connected. Whether this was so originally is unknown for certain. Jacobus thinks they were adjacent, connected by a short, two-storey gallery (**Fig. 39**).¹⁰¹ However they were connected doesn't affect the fact that the chapel was built and decorated as an integral part of the Palazzo Scrovegni. The intentions and expectations of Enrico Scrovegni around the role of the chapel, built simultaneously with the house, were therefore intricately connected with the functions and activities of the residence.

Enrico's new house was modern and imposing enough that it was immediately celebrated as "a place of *'mire pulcitudinis'*, wondrous beauty."¹⁰² The varied extent and nature of Enrico's

⁹⁹ Jacobus, "Piety and Propriety in the Arena Chapel," *Renaissance Studies* 12, no. 2 (1998): 179. In that article she went on to explore how the placement of some of the frescoes within the line of sight of the women viewing the interior of the chapel from the squint (**Fig. 32**) contained messages of idealized womanly behaviour specifically addressed to the household's female residents and visitors.

¹⁰⁰ Simon, 1995, 26.

¹⁰¹ See Jacobus, 2008, Diagrams 4 & 5, 90-91.

¹⁰² This quote was from Enrico's contemporary, the noted humanist Albertino Mussato. Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 28. A hundred and fifty years later Michele Savonarola would write of the house that: "...no building may be found in Italy that is more magnificently appointed for a citizen; for its entrance is exceptionally superb, with a superb portal

involvements, and that of his wife, Jacopina, of the aristocratic d'Este family, would have ensured that the splendid house was continuously bustling with numerous houseguests and visitors. Enrico was the host of all these individuals and attendance at the chapel would have been just one of the ways in which he displayed his generosity and concern for their physical and spiritual well-being. Even for those who were not his personal guests and only attended the chapel as part of the Marian feast day celebrations, Enrico "effectively positioned himself as their host."¹⁰³ There would also have been a steady stream of the worthy poor to the house seeking Scrovegni's hospitality in the form of food, drink, clothing and alms. Enrico would presumably have responded compassionately to those deemed worthy of such help. Such provision of sustenance for the needy would further accrue to Enrico's reputation as a moral, dutiful Christian and result in prayers for him, particularly welcomed since the intercessions of the poor were believed to carry special weight with God.¹⁰⁴ As John Mirk (1380-1420) expressed so well, "Thus he who does deeds of alms prudently shall have his food in heaven perpetually."¹⁰⁵

In all these aspects of providing hospitality, Enrico's actions as a dutiful Christian host brought into play the social dynamics around proper conduct, respectful behaviour, and the appropriate gestures of reciprocity that were the hallmarks of social relations in this time and place.¹⁰⁶ The effect, as Shaowen Bardzell observed, is that in this cycle of hospitality and

decorated with squared marbles, and above it is built a tower, not of great height. There is a courtyard before the palace that is round, very spacious and surrounded by crenellated walls. ... For these reasons I believe that many lords in Italy do not rejoice in dwellings of such magnificence." Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 16, 382.

¹⁰³ Jacobus, 2000, 20.

¹⁰⁴ John Chrysostom preached that by providing hospitality to those in need "...you are indebted to the poor for receiving your kindness. For if there were no poor, the greater part of your sins would not be removed. They are the healers of your wounds, their hands are medicinal to you." John Chrysostom, "Homily 14 on 1 Timothy," in *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity*, ed. Amy G. Oden (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 105.

¹⁰⁵ John Mirk, *John Mirk's Festial*, ed. Susan Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), vol.1, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Bardzell, 26-27.

reciprocity, "...those who participate in it become morally indebted to one another."¹⁰⁷ This is precisely what Enrico set out to achieve, both for his temporal reputation and his spiritual benefit. The house and chapel were spaces for the practice of the moral and spiritual economy, "... spaces where mercy was exercised prefigured the place reserved for practitioners in heaven."¹⁰⁸

Both Rainaldo and Enrico were renowned for their lavish hospitality. Bernardino Scardeone wrote glowingly of Rainaldo, in contrast to Dante, saying:

He is praised by all writers as having been an extremely hospitable man, and because the men to whom he offered his frequent and generous hospitality were most eminent, his reputation was said to have gone before him throughout the whole of Italy and his name to have been greatly celebrated everywhere.¹⁰⁹

The author of the *Cronica*, Zambono de Favasochi (d. 1315/16), who harshly criticized Enrico, referred to Enrico's relationship to the future Pope Benedict XI, "...whom he hosted often and had received in his house before his pontificate."¹¹⁰ Furthermore, according to Favasochi, Pope Benedict absolved Enrico of "all baseness" because the Pontiff "... was grateful for the hospitality shown him...".¹¹¹

The Impact of the North Door

In looking at the house and the chapel as an integrated unit, the portal that I wish to focus on is the north door, as this was the access point from the house to the chapel for most of those who

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 208.

¹⁰⁸ Botana, 197. 'Mercy' refers to the giving of charity and alms as per the Gospel of Matthew 25:35-36.

¹⁰⁹ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 16, 384.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Appendix 14, 381.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Favasochi doesn't say what the sins were but the implication is that money was part of this "baseness." As noted earlier, this is the only contemporary source that suggests Enrico was a usurer in that "He followed his father's trade."

would have experienced Enrico's hospitality personally.¹¹² Art historians have certainly recognized that the content and placement of some of the narrative frescoes or Virtues and Vices were significant in terms of viewers' movements in and out of the chapel through its various portals.¹¹³

Eva Frojmovič in particular has recognized the importance of the north door entrance as a transition point between the chapel and the house in her discussion of the two enigmatic figures on the chapel side of the north door (**Fig. 40**). Although Frojmovič only referenced these two particular images, I think her fundamental and wonderfully articulate conclusion applies to all viewers, especially those who interacted with both the house and the chapel in relation to its owner:

It was Giotto who orchestrated a dialogue with the viewer and developed a composition that employed physiognomy and rhetoric to mediate between the space of the Chapel and the space of the palazzo, between the sacred and profane, between ambition and devotion, between Enrico Scrovegni's circumspection in secular matters and his need for salvation.¹¹⁴

I will now explore how the theme of hospitality might be detected in some of Giotto's narrative frescoes and how their content and placement specifically related to Enrico Scrovegni's moral and spiritual objectives, particularly with respect to those privileged guests using the north door. I maintain that it was these visitors especially, who, because of their status or special relationship with Enrico, became part of a moral exchange that was mirrored by the relationship between the viewer and the frescoes.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Derbes and Sandona observed that "The narrative cycle is oriented to this entrance." Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 148.

¹¹³ See, for example, Jacobus, 2008, 167-189.

¹¹⁴ Eva Frojmovič, "Giotto's Circumspection," *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 2 (2007): 206.

¹¹⁵ Frojmovič emphasized this interaction in relation to the door and house this way: "The exchange between painted figures and viewer is about what is expected morally and mentally of the privileged person who approaches this

The Theme of Hospitality and Giotto's Frescoes

Given that providing Christian hospitality and being considered a good host were important attributes for a man of substance at this time, it would be wholly consistent with Enrico's use of the chapel's imagery as a form of self-representation for the theme of hospitality to be evident in the content of some of the narrative panels. Here, I will show how the following four narrative frescoes have visually incorporated the Christian understanding of hospitality as part of their messaging: *The Wedding Feast at Cana*; *The Raising of Lazarus*; *The Last Supper*; and *Pentecost* (Fig. 41). Collectively these visual references reinforced the meaning of hospitality as a core Christian value and served to remind the viewers that the forms of hospitality they were experiencing, both temporal and spiritual, were largely attributable to Enrico Scrovegni. In this calculated presentation of himself as a host who graciously and generously provides such sustenance to his guests, Enrico accrued both earthly and heavenly credit.

i) *The Wedding Feast at Cana* (Fig. 42)

The Wedding Feast at Cana records Jesus' first public miracle.¹¹⁶ Jesus was attending a wedding feast, accompanied by the Virgin, who appeals to him to intervene because the wine has run out. He then orders the servants to fill the six empty wine jars with water and to take them to the chief steward who, on tasting each one, discovers that the water has become wine.¹¹⁷

The recent scholarly emphasis on how some of the meanings of Giotto's panels might refer directly to the patron, or his family, has been applied to this fresco, although not in the

door- a person whose privilege is confirmed each time she or he uses the door to enter the Palazzo Scrovegni." Ibid, 204.

¹¹⁶ This panel is one of only two depictions of miracles of Jesus, the other being *The Raising of Lazarus* on its immediate right. Andrew Ladis noted that these two scenes were deliberately paired and "...occupy key positions in Giotto's drama as well as in the viewer's response to it." Ladis, 2008, 110.

¹¹⁷ The Gospel According to St. John, 2:1-11.

context of hospitality. Jacobus, for example, sees in Mary's role in the painting the ideal model of an effective wife and household manager, perhaps directed towards Enrico's wife, Jacopina d'Este.¹¹⁸

No one, however, seems to have applied this scene more literally to Enrico and his household—after all, the setting is that of the wedding of ordinary people sharing a post-marriage feast with food and drink. Beyond its deeply rich biblical and allegorical meaning, the *Wedding Feast at Cana* is also the representation of a real, quotidian event, the holding and hosting of a feast. Formal feasts were events that virtually everyone viewing the panel would have experienced, and many of these individuals would have enjoyed, or been about to enjoy, such an event in the adjoining Scrovegni house as Enrico's guests.

Viewers of the *Wedding of Cana*, for all its sacred meaning, would have at once recognized the social setting, and also the fact that the host in this instance was not Jesus, but rather the bridegroom, who is shown in magnificent contemporary dress, as Scrovegni himself might have appeared in his role as host.¹¹⁹ For viewers there was thus a real-life parallel between what transpires in the painting and what takes place in the Palazzo Scrovegni. Enrico is the host responsible for the provision of the painting as an episode in the life of Jesus, and the opportunity to reflect on its spiritual meaning. In juxtaposition, Enrico is also the host responsible for the food and drink provided to his guests.¹²⁰ He is thus twice blessed by their gratitude.

¹¹⁸ Jacobus, 2008, 235-236.

¹¹⁹ Jacobus observed that the significant male figures Giotto presents us with would be representative of the upper classes and that their "...nobility is indicated by fine costume and decorous manners;..." Ibid, 214. Although the figures of the two persons identified as the bride and bridegroom (*Fig. 42*) seem androgenous, all recent scholarship sees the person in the centre of the table dressed in red as the bride, and the person on her right as the groom. See Jacobus, 2008, 141-142; Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 202, fn. 70. Ladis, 2008, 123.

ii) The Raising of Lazarus (Fig. 43)

This panel seems a highly improbable statement about hospitality but is one of the strongest affirmations that the theme of hospitality was a deliberate inclusion in the overall messaging of the chapel. Like the miracle at Cana, the story of Jesus' raising of his friend Lazarus from death is only related in the Gospel of John 11:1-44.¹²¹ This miracle is such an important part of the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, invested with holy powers as the Son of God, it is not surprising that it was often included in painted cycles recounting the life of Jesus. There was a strong iconographical tradition for representing certain aspects of the story, such as Lazarus enclosed in a winding sheet, and the relative positions of his sisters, Mary of Bethany, and Martha. In every other depiction of this scene, more or less contemporary to that of Giotto's in the Arena Chapel, Mary, who is always shown in a red cloak or robe, is placed in front of her sister Martha, who is always shown in lighter coloured dress, usually pale green or white (Figs. 44, 45).¹²²

There was good reason, however, for giving Mary precedence over her sister due to the fact that she was mistakenly believed to also be Mary Magdalen.¹²³ This confusion persisted

¹²¹ Jesus' other interactions with Lazarus, and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, are recorded in the Gospel of Luke, 10:38-42, and again in John 12:1-8.

¹²² The only other example I have been able to find of Martha preceding Mary is in the Rinuccini Chapel of Santa Croce, Florence (Fig. 46), painted by Giovanni da Milano c. 1365. And as one can see, even though Martha is in front of Mary, Mary still dominates over her both in size and her closeness to Christ who is in the background of this fresco.

¹²³ Early in the medieval period, Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, was assumed to also be Mary Magdalen, the woman named in the Gospel of Mark who was freed of seven devils by Jesus (Mark 16:9). Additionally, these two named Marys were also supposed to be the unnamed sinful woman (code for prostitute) who, in Luke 7:36-50, bathed Jesus' feet with her tears of repentance and dried them with her hair. This conflation of the three women seems to have originated with St. Ambrose (340-397) and was solidified by Pope Gregory the Great in a sermon in 591, in which he said: "She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary [of Bethany], we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark." Quoted in David Van Biema, "Mary Magdalene: Saint or Sinner," *Time*, August 05, 2003. For a wider discussion of how the two sisters were

throughout the Middle Ages.¹²⁴ This conflated Mary Magdalen was highly important theologically as an early believer in Jesus and the archetype of the penitent sinner who found redemption through him. Moreover, in Luke 10: 38-42, the story about Jesus' first visit to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, Martha is gently chided by Jesus when she complains to him about her sister not helping her with the workload involved in hosting him and his disciples. Jesus' response is "Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her," thereby seeming to place Mary above Martha.¹²⁵

It is not surprising, therefore, that Mary was always given visual precedence over Martha even though, when Lazarus had died, it was Martha who went to meet Jesus to express her faith that he could, as "the Messiah, the Son of God," resurrect her brother.¹²⁶ The theological weight of the conflated Mary ensured that she was placed before Martha in every late-medieval depiction of the *Raising*, with one exception—Giotto's rendition in the Arena Chapel. But why did Giotto deliberately reverse the standard position of the two sisters? What was it about the Arena Chapel that prompted this change? Indeed, almost exactly the same representation of this scene in the Magdalen Chapel in the Lower Church of the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, also attributed to Giotto (or to his workshop), switched the sisters back to their customary positions (**Fig.47**).¹²⁷

viewed in the Middle Ages, in both texts and art works, see Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought: The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, the Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, the Orders of Society* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1-142.

¹²⁴ Jacobus de Voragine continued this conflation of the three women in *The Golden Legend*, quoting St. Ambrose. Voragine, Vol. 1, 374-376. Susan Haskins, in her monumental study on the Magdalen, noted that "Her identification with Luke's 'sinner' and Mary of Bethany was so pervasive that for the greater part of the Christian era the persona created for her by exegetes has overshadowed her biblical role as disciple of Christ and herald of the 'New Life'." Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*, (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 16.

¹²⁵ "The Gospel According to Luke, 10: 42" in *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, New Testament, 74.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, John, 11: 1-27, 108.

¹²⁷ Sarah Wilkins states that both *The Raising of Lazarus* and *Noli me tangere* in the Magdalen Chapel (dated between 1307 & 1315) "...are incontrovertibly based on the frescoes at the Scrovegni Chapel, completed only a few years earlier, probably by 1305." Sarah Wilkins, "Adopting and Adapting Formulas: The Raising of Lazarus and Noli me

Few art historians seem to have even noticed that the placement of Martha before Mary in the Arena Chapel's *Raising of Lazarus* marks a change in the normal iconography. If there has been any comment at all about the role of the sisters in this panel it has usually been centered around Mary, not Martha.¹²⁸ Ladis, for example, believes that Mary's being obscured by her sister is to highlight Mary's shameful past and stress her repentance.¹²⁹ Derbes and Sandona don't even mention the sisters in their analysis of this panel, focusing all their attention on Lazarus as a penitent figure.¹³⁰ Sarah Wilkins, who did notice the position of the sisters had been reversed in Giotto's Padua and Assisi versions, could only surmise that Martha's position in the Arena Chapel was to reflect the fact that it was she who first went out to meet Christ.¹³¹ This explanation doesn't, however, address the fact that this was a complete reversal of the usual iconography or why it might be significant in terms of the Arena Chapel fresco program.

I want to propose a new explanation for Giotto's treatment of the sisters that I think fits well within the larger context of the Scrovegni complex and the Arena Chapel's pictorial program. I believe that the placement of Martha in front of Mary is based on Martha's high-profile reputation as the hostess who welcomed and looked after Jesus in her home, on two recorded occasions.¹³² The placement of Martha before Mary drew on her well-understood

tangere in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua and the Magdalen Chapel in Assisi," in *La Formule au Moyen Âge*, ed. E. Louvriot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 252.

¹²⁸ Frugoni's analysis of *The Raising of Lazarus* is an example of merely mentioning the sisters as per the gospel story rather than attaching any particular meaning to their role in this fresco. Chiara Frugoni, 2008, 177-181. Sarah Wilkins did, in fact, comment on Martha's position in front of Mary but only said "I believe it is probably due to the fact that according to John, Martha first encounters Christ upon his arrival in Bethany." Wilkins, 257.

¹²⁹ Ladis, 2008, 121.

¹³⁰ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 132-134.

¹³¹ Wilkins, 257. "I believe it is probably due to the fact that according to John, Martha first encounters Christ upon his arrival in Bethany."

¹³² In addition to the account in Luke's gospel, John 12:1-8 recounts a subsequent visit just prior to Christ's entry into Jerusalem, in which Jesus was given supper at which "Martha served." John 12:2, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, New Testament, 1129.

stature as the person who exemplified the importance of hospitality as a Christian obligation and virtue in contemporary society. Martha's role as the "holy hostess" was well publicized through scriptural exegesis and popular legend in text and sermons.¹³³

Jacobus de Voragine, whose *Golden Legend* was a sourcebook for much of Giotto's imagery, wrote passionately about Martha as "Christ's hostess."¹³⁴ His description of Martha contains no reference to her rebuke by Jesus, or in any way suggests she played second fiddle to her sister Mary. Indeed, he ascribes only praiseworthy motives to Martha's wanting her sister to help her: "This noble hostess waited on the Lord and wanted her sister to do likewise, as she saw it, the whole world would not be enough to serve so great a guest."¹³⁵ Voragine relates that at the time of Martha's death, she had a vision in which Christ appeared to her, saying:

Come, beloved hostess, and where I am, there you will be with me! You welcomed me into your house, I shall welcome you into my heaven, and for love of you I shall listen favourably to those who invoke you!¹³⁶

With her last breath she prayed "My dear Guest, take care of your poor little servant, and, as you deigned to accept my hospitality, receive me now into your heavenly dwelling."¹³⁷ Voragine thus captured the popular essence of Martha as the patroness of all hospitality providers in the late Middle Ages. Martha's presence would have been well understood by viewers of this panel who would have recognized the virtue and eternal rewards of their being hospitable to all, especially to

¹³³ St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), in his commentary on the Gospel of John, wrote "Martha was always serving and was solicitous as the prudent woman... . So we are right to understand the active life through her, which is anxiously burdened with cares." St. Bonaventure, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, translation and notes by Robert J. Karris (Saint Bonaventure NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2007), 638.

¹³⁴ Jacobus de Voragine, Vol. 2, 23.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 25.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 25.

the poor and humble. They would also have been prompted to be thankful to the one who was their host, Enrico Scrovegni.

iii) The Last Supper (Fig. 48)

This panel has not received much attention in recent studies about the chapel, and no scholar has related its content and position directly back to the patron's spiritual agenda, although Jacobus has related it to the feasting, fasting, and fellowship activities of the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, of which Enrico was a sometime member.¹³⁸ Ladis doesn't single out this panel but rather discusses its role, in conjunction with other panels, on mystical themes around life, death and temporality.¹³⁹ Derbes and Sandona remark that *The Last Supper* is "... appropriately placed closest to the altar, where the sacrament of the Eucharist was celebrated..." even though the actual Eucharist is not included in the depiction.¹⁴⁰ Frugoni simply describes the scene but makes no analysis of it with respect to viewer response or in reference to Enrico Scrovegni.¹⁴¹ In her brief mention of this panel, Jacobus comments on its position, which is right opposite the north door and therefore marks its importance as part of the transition from worldly to sacred space for those coming from the house.¹⁴² But in fact this panel is very much related to the theme of hospitality and in that regard makes a statement that singles out the patron.

The scriptural passage which *The Last Supper* portrays is absolutely central to Christianity. Among its many layers of meaning, the theme of hospitality is particularly rich. The

¹³⁸ Jacobus, 2008, 295-6. The involvement of the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, a type of socio/religious confraternal organization, with the chapel is rather complex and somewhat controversial in terms of their impact on the frescoes content and placement. I have not included this issue in my discussion of the Arena Chapel because while their participation may have had some impact, this does not negate the type of observations I am making about the frescoes messages about Enrico Scrovegni himself. Ibid, 26-30.

¹³⁹ Ladis, 2008, 48; 154.

¹⁴⁰ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 11.

¹⁴¹ Frugoni, 2008, 209-211.

¹⁴² Jacobus, 2008, 169

setting was the feast of the Passover for which Jesus established himself as organizer, host, server, and provider of the salvation meal (himself) at the ritual Passover Seder.¹⁴³ The very language of the body of Christ, as it was celebrated in Latin in the sacrament of communion, was *hostia* (sacrificial victim) which shared a common root with *hospes* (host, stranger), and *hospitalitas* (hospitality). As a symbol of divine hospitality, "The Last Supper is the supreme instance of God as host in the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus Christ."¹⁴⁴

Given the theological and liturgical importance of what transpired at the Last Supper, it is to be expected that the event was a standard item in Western religious art.¹⁴⁵ Depictions of the Last Supper tended to highlight the event as either the institution of the eucharist, or Judas' impending betrayal of Christ, and sometimes both, as for example in the *Last Supper* mosaic in the Florence Baptistery (**Fig. 49**).¹⁴⁶ Giotto's Arena Chapel fresco depiction has a more restrictive narrative focus and uses very different iconography with respect to Judas and the volume of food on the table. Giotto's sparse use of food, which emphasizes the feast as a spiritual meal, is particularly noticeable in contrast to a contemporary depiction by Duccio (**Fig.50**).¹⁴⁷ Giotto's

¹⁴³ Katy Drage Lines, "Re-Imagining the Lord's Supper as a Place of Belonging in the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ" (PhD diss., George Fox University, 2019), 46.

¹⁴⁴ John Navone, "Divine and Human Hospitality," *New Blackfriars* 85, no. 997 (May 2004): 336.

¹⁴⁵ The earliest surviving representation is the sixth century mosaic at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.

¹⁴⁶ Diana Hiller, *Gendered Perceptions of Florentine Last Supper Frescoes, c.1350-1490* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 7. This mosaic captures both the betrayal narrative and sacramental parts of the passages in the synoptic gospels. Virtually every Florentine artist, and any who had visited Florence, would have been familiar with this mosaic.

¹⁴⁷ Jacobus, 2008, 296, sees this sparseness as a didactic reminder to the *Cavalieri Gaudenti* to behave with moderation in matters of the table. It may also be that this seemingly new approach of presenting a relatively sparse meal was related to the influence of *The Meditations on the Life of Christ*, a version of which Joseph Polzer argues was indeed in existence by the time Giotto painted the Chapel. Polzer argues that this supports some art historians' contentions that the *Meditations* is reflected in some of the Chapel's frescoes. One of the continuous themes of the *Meditations* is that Jesus is both real and spiritual food and nourishment, and that this should turn our attention away from anything but the most basic earthly food. This, however, is a topic for another study. See Joseph Polzer, "Concerning the Origin of the Meditations of the Life of Christ and its early influence on art," *Franciscan Studies* 74 (2016), 307-351. On the *Meditations* see Francis X. Taney Sr., Anne Miller and C. Mary Stallings-Taney, *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (Asheville: Pegasus Press, 2000).

version, however, which focuses on the betrayal of Jesus, is the approach then replicated in every near-contemporary rendition of *The Last Supper* thereafter (**Figs. 51**).¹⁴⁸ As with the *Wedding Feast of Cana*, many of the same dynamics that connect the viewer with hospitality and Enrico's specific role as host are also present in *The Last Supper*, but with additional layers of meaning because of its sacramental associations and its placement opposite the north door entrance from the palazzo.

Any viewer entering the chapel from the north door was immediately confronted by *The Last Supper*. For those about to attend mass, this was a reminder that they were about to receive a holy meal, a gift from God, the Supreme Host.¹⁴⁹ The purpose of this holy food was to go back into the world, sustained by the nourishment of Christ's body, to live as righteous and dutiful Christians. There was thus a dual anticipation of hospitality for those persons coming in and going out through the north door, with Enrico Scrovegni as their host both for their spiritual and physical food.

Giotto's *Last Supper* was also a display of fraternal fellowship of a shared meal by a group of emotionally connected and engaged men.¹⁵⁰ This was one of the great aspects of hosting and being hosted, a belief entrenched in centuries of Judeo-Christian thought. Experiencing hospitality together affirmed and reinstated social and religious connection. This too was something that Enrico's guests could anticipate and give thanks to their host for.

¹⁴⁸ Hiller notes that this was the most common approach in Florentine, and presumably Florentine-influenced depiction of *The Last Supper* in the Trecento. Hiller, 12.

¹⁴⁹ Navone, 336.

¹⁵⁰ Ladis, 2008, 133.

iv) Pentecost (Fig. 52)

This panel has received some significant attention from art historians, mainly with reference to its particular position, narratively and physically.¹⁵¹ *The Pentecost* is the last of the chapel's narrative panels about the life and ministry of Christ and so completes the messages about faith and revelation in the cycle as a whole. Ladis commented on this aspect, observing the parallels between this panel and the *Last Supper*, directly opposite it on the south wall.¹⁵² *The Pentecost* is also the panel closest to the north door, and prominent in the line of sight of anyone leaving the chapel through that portal.¹⁵³

Derbes and Sandona also recognize the thematic and architectural importance of this panel in relation to its position.¹⁵⁴ They note that the architecture of the room in *Pentecost* is part of a larger motif around imagery of the old versus the new temple, and they interpret this in terms of Enrico Scrovegni's whole enterprise around the chapel that uses temple imagery for his "personal edification."¹⁵⁵ Jacobus comments briefly on the position of *The Pentecost* by the north door, noting that "This is not inappropriate to its position, since it evokes the apostle's mission to take the word of God out into the world... "¹⁵⁶

In fact, the feast of the Pentecost, celebrated 50 days after Easter, was rich in hospitality symbolism. Pentecost was an appropriation of the Jewish festival of Shavuot (also called the Feast of Weeks), which celebrated the first harvest of the spring; scripture commanded that this occasion be joyously celebrated, and the produce shared with "...the strangers, the orphans, and

¹⁵¹ Unlike its contemporary counterparts of *Pentecost* such as in the nave of the Upper Church at San Francesco or in Duccio's *Maestà* (c.1308-11), Giotto's does not include the Virgin as part of the gathering in the Upper Room.

¹⁵² Ladis, 2008, 48; 85; 143; 146.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 149.

¹⁵⁴ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 4; 148.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 115.

¹⁵⁶ Jacobus, 2008, 181.

the widows who are among you."¹⁵⁷ It was the celebration of this Jewish feast that caused the apostles to gather together where they were suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jewish roots of Pentecost were certainly recognized by Christian exegetes, such as Walahfrid Strabo, and whilst few laypeople would have made this association, the commandment to share and give alms was inherited and became an important part of the Christian Pentecost celebration.¹⁵⁸ For St. Bonaventure, one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit's presence in the world was through charity. In a Pentecost sermon he wrote that, "...because the highest charity is in the Holy Spirit, thus from him proceeds a love of benevolent usefulness that rectifies the affective power."¹⁵⁹ An integral part of this charitable disposition was its communal association through its fraternal nature.¹⁶⁰

Thus, the privileged viewer, having partaken of heavenly food and about to head from the chapel to the house to partake of more earthly refreshments, experienced yet another reminder of the fundamental importance of fellowship around the table, of sharing and gratitude.¹⁶¹ And once again, Enrico Scrovegni as host and benefactor would be honoured and remembered in the prayers of his guests.

¹⁵⁷ Deuteronomy 16:11, in *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, Old Testament, 192.

¹⁵⁸ Walahfrid Strabo, *Glossa in Deuteronomium*, Stegmüller, 8321, 29-30.

¹⁵⁹ St. Bonaventure, "Sermon 27: On Pentecost," in *Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, ed. Timothy Johnson (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008), 311-312.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 313-314.

¹⁶¹ Jacobus, 2008, 296-7, included this panel with *The Last Supper*, in her discussion of its relationship to the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*.

Part 4: The Virtues and Vices Cycle as Tools of Self-Representation

Introduction

However interesting this cycle might be within the overall medieval tradition of such representations, Giotto's Virtues and Vices have to be understood within context of Enrico Scrovegni's motivations and expectations for the Arena Chapel. As Jacobus rightfully observed, the "...Virtues and Vices are explicitly concerned with moral choices."¹⁶² While one of their functions is "...to prompt reflection on the viewer's ethical behaviour in the profane world...", another, and a primary one for Enrico, would have been to communicate that he had already made the right moral choices.¹⁶³ The Vices and Virtues presented an opportunity for a more explicit moral self-representation than the narrative frescoes, and in this sense they are particularly appropriate for our consideration of Enrico's attempts to situate himself within the late-medieval moral economy.

Contextualizing Giotto's Virtues and Vices Cycle

The Arena Chapel's Virtues and Vices cycle is absolutely unique in a number of ways. It is the only cycle to be combined with a *Last Judgement* scene and the only one where the viewer is placed between the opposing pairs.¹⁶⁴ Most importantly, while the virtue cycle is standard, the seven vices Giotto chose to oppose them are absolutely atypical and appear as a collective group in no other cycle before or since.¹⁶⁵ The commonly accepted list of the seven deadly sins/vices by

¹⁶² Jacobus, 2008, 186.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Douglas P. Lackey, "Giotto in Padua: A New Geography of the Human Soul," *The Journal of Ethics* 9, no. 3/4 (2005): 572.

¹⁶⁵ Selma Pfeiffenberger concluded in her monumental study of the cycles iconography, "Giotto's list of Vices is without precedent and remains unique." Pfeiffenberger, IV: 3: 19.

the fourteenth century consisted of *Pride, Avarice, Envy, Anger, Lust, Gluttony* and *Sloth*.¹⁶⁶ But Giotto drops four of these traditional vices, *Pride, Avarice, Lust, and Gluttony*, and replaces them with *Folly* (**Fig. 53**), *Inconstancy* (**Fig. 54**), *Infidelity* (**Fig. 55**), and *Injustice* (**Fig. 56**).¹⁶⁷ This would certainly have been done with Enrico's full agreement and participation. What we have, therefore, is a one-off cycle, intrinsically designed as part of the chapel's imagery program, and providing possible clues to help us understand Enrico Scrovegni's moral self-representation and spiritual agenda.¹⁶⁸

It has become commonplace for some art historians who are discussing this cycle to cite Enrico Scrovegni's supposed vulnerability around usury as the underlying reason for the replacement of *Avarice* by *Envy* (**Fig. 57**). Thus, we get such comments as this one by Douglas Lackey:

And Giotto omits *Avarice*, discreetly avoiding embarrassment for his employer, whose father Reginaldo was a notorious usurer consigned by Dante to the seventh circle of Hell.¹⁶⁹

By the time they wrote their monograph on the chapel, *The Usurer's Heart*, Derbes and Sandona had changed their earlier viewpoint on this issue. Rather than seeing the substitution of *Envy* for *Avarice* as Enrico's not wanting to draw any attention to himself this way, they see *Envy* as a more inclusive and contextually appropriate Vice, given Enrico Scrovegni's contentious

¹⁶⁶ Tucker, 4.

¹⁶⁷ Lackey, 2005, 561. Lackey notes that *Sloth*, which is a poor English translation of this vice's Latin name, *acedia*, actually means the same as *Despair*, so there is not an actual change here.

¹⁶⁸ Ladis recognized the uniqueness of the cycle and wrote "Unlike cycles of Virtues and Vices elsewhere, Giotto's are closely integrated into the narrative program and lend their moral value to the human action." Ladis, 2008, 28.

¹⁶⁹ Douglas P. Lackey, "Giotto's Mirror," *Studi Danteschi* 66 (2001): 245. Similar statements can be found in Ladis (2008), 45; Jacobus, 2008, 200; and Derbes & Sandona, 2001, 636-637.

position as a significant power broker in Paduan society.¹⁷⁰ This is, I think, a reasonable interpretation. Certainly, envy of his wealth, status, and political power might have been a real threat to Scrovegni, as Giovanni da Nono's censure indicates. The pairing of *Envy* with *Charity* was not an unusual association in medieval thought. Matthew Shoaf discusses the long relationship between charity and envy in moralist texts, so their pairing in the Arena Chapel drew on that tradition.¹⁷¹ For example, John Chrysostom preached that "...charity is opposed to and suppressed by envy", and Guillaume Peraldus asserted that "envy is a worm ruining charity."¹⁷² In choosing to pair *Envy* with *Charity*, the moral lessons inherent in this pairing were carried over and would have been understood by viewers who would know of this linkage through sermons based on such texts.¹⁷³

Enrico Scrovegni's Self-Representation Through the Virtues and Vices

Enrico himself lets us know explicitly that he has chosen the way of virtue over vice. This is achieved visually through his offering of the chapel in the *Last Judgement* and his statue by the north door, and textually through the chapel's aforementioned dedicatory inscription. Jacobus convincingly argues that this inscription was written for the dedication ceremony of the chapel in 1303 and affixed to the outer side of the north wall which led to the house.¹⁷⁴ Thus, the inscription predates the completion (and perhaps even the design) of the virtues and vices cycle,

¹⁷⁰ They wrote: "The chapel's images thus implicate both the avaricious and the envious. *Invidia* [Envy] encompasses both vices, tacitly acknowledging the family's usurious past but pointing a finger, too, at the enemies of the Scrovegni." Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 80.

¹⁷¹ Matthew Shoaf, "Image, Envy, Power: Art and Communal Life in the Age of Giotto" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003), 145-146. There was also at least one precedent of a visual pairing as Selma Pfeiffenberger pointed out in referring to a thirteenth century enamel crozier that shows Charity treading on Envy. Pfeiffenberger, IV:3:3.

¹⁷² Shoaf, 145.

¹⁷³ It is out of the scope of this study to analyse the possible reasons for the substitution of *Injustice, Inconstancy and Foolishness* for *Pride, Lust and Gluttony*, but this would be a worthwhile endeavour for a future study.

¹⁷⁴ Jacobus, 2000, 20-21. Also Jacobus, 2017, 73-74.

which has been demonstrated to have been painted last, and therefore not likely before 1305 or even 1306.¹⁷⁵

The inscription was in Latin rhyming dactylic hexameter couplets, and this translation is by Derbes and Sandona.¹⁷⁶ I have only cited that part of the inscription relevant to this discussion.

*Those who lead a life of luxury in happy times, their wealth
now lost, remain nameless and mute,
but Enrico Scrovegni, the knight, saves his honest soul; he
offers a revered festival here.
And indeed he had this temple solemnly dedicated to the
Mother of God, so that he would be blessed with eternal mercy.
Divine virtue replaced profane vices; heavenly joys, which
are superior to earthly vanities, [replace them].¹⁷⁷*

This inscription, especially when attached to Enrico's statue (**Fig. 20**), created a framework within which the knight and merchant has carefully aligned himself with all seven virtues. The three theological virtues are captured this way: his *Faith* (*Fides*, **Fig. 58**) in the Virgin to whom he had dedicated the chapel; the *Hope* (*Spes*, **Fig. 32**) for his redemption through her eternal mercy; and *Charity* (*Karitas*, **Fig. 16**) through his offering of the temple for himself and others. And the four cardinal virtues are encapsulated in this manner: his honest soul, with Justice (*Justicia*, **Fig. 59**) and Fortitude (*Fortitudo*, **Fig. 60**); and his rejection of luxury (unlike those who are no longer remembered) with both Temperance (*Temperantia*, **Fig. 61**) and Prudence (*Prudentia*, **Fig. 62**). By aligning himself with the virtues so directly, there is no need to qualify or downplay their opposite vices. In choosing the path of virtues so emphatically, Enrico has displayed his

¹⁷⁵ On this issue of the order of painting and timing see the following: Matthew Shoaf, 6-7; Lackey, 2001, 248.

¹⁷⁶ There are some small differences between this translation and the one Laura Jacobus included in her 2008 monograph. I chose this one because it is in the same form visually as the inscription was written.

¹⁷⁷ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 12-13.

rejection of *all* the vices portrayed. As St. Bonaventure maintained, "everything seems to assert its identity more forcibly when juxtaposed with its opposite."¹⁷⁸

The virtue that best exemplifies Enrico's Christian moral identity and understanding of the moral economy is that of *Justice*. *Justice* (**Fig. 59**) and her opposing vice, *Injustice* (**Fig. 56**), anchor the entire Virtues and Vices cycle through their central position and augmented design.¹⁷⁹ They are the only personifications to include frieze scenes beneath them, scenes that visually articulate some of the consequences of just and unjust behaviour on society. Art historians have long recognized that *Justice* and *Injustice* were intended to play a pivotal role in the chapel's virtues and vices cycle, and there has been a considerable range of scholarly interest in trying to explain their function within the cycle, the chapel's overall artistic program, and contemporary society.¹⁸⁰

I want to emphasize, however, that the combination of the personification's imagery, the predella frieze, and inscription beneath it points to Enrico in a much more direct sense than has previously been suggested. The actual position of the personification is significant in this regard. *Justice*'s gaze is slightly to the right, in direct line with the antechoir area, where Enrico would have sat. Similarly, her right arm also points in that direction. It is in this right arm that she is holding an angel who is rewarding a person (most of the body has been obliterated), whom Eva Frojmovič identified as "a merchant seated behind his *banco* [bench]."¹⁸¹ Although the fingers on

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 13. Derbes and Sandona also make use of the inscription, and note that "The images of antithesis in the chapel—the Virtues and Vices, Judas and Mary, and more—thus can be related to the rhetoric of the inscription." Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Andrew Ladis also noted that their niches were wider and deeper than the other virtues and vices. Ladis, 2008, 127.

¹⁸⁰ See for example the following: Jacobus, 2008, 198-202; Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 91.

¹⁸¹ Eva Frojmovič, "Giotto's Allegories of Justice and the Commune in the Palazzo della Regione in Padua; a Reconstruction", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996): 38-39.

the left hand also point in that direction, the left arm projects straight out to the viewer, and it is on this 'sinister' side that another angel is beheading some undecipherable person.

The frieze (*Fig. 63*) depicts three groups of individuals with the ones on either end named in the accompanying inscription: on the left, a knight and his lady are out hunting; in the centre, three persons, probably peasants, are celebrating; and on the right, two merchants are riding in safety plying their trade. The entire inscription is as follows:

*Perfect Justice weighs everything with balanced scales
And it being her duty to crown goodness, she wields her sword against vices
All things rejoice in freedom if she herself reigns
Whoever acts with consideration acts with delight.
On account of Justice, the knight goes hunting, riding out in company,
And merchants now [missing words] is brought forth.¹⁸²*

What is particularly significant about this inscription is that it only identifies two types of persons—knights and merchants—and any contemporary of Enrico Scrovegni knew that he was both.¹⁸³ Visually, the inference is that the group in the centre, which represents the common people, is enabled by the knight and merchant, who together secure peace, order, safety, and prosperity through their adherence to just behaviours. The inscription makes it clear that *Justice* is the commanding virtue here, the one who "wields her sword against vices."¹⁸⁴ Thus, in aligning himself directly to *Justice* as the dominant virtue in this cycle, Enrico presents himself as a champion of *Justice* and in so doing portrays himself as the enemy of *all* the seven vices facing her.¹⁸⁵ As Derbes and Sandona have highlighted, monetary related crimes and frauds were a sin

¹⁸² Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 9, 362.

¹⁸³ Derbes and Sandona rather hesitatingly ask if the knight in the predella underneath Justice might refer to Enrico. Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 91.

¹⁸⁴ Shoaf, 2003, 191.

¹⁸⁵ Jonathan Reiss observed that no other virtues and vices cycle elevated Justice above the other virtues, and indeed, in no other cycle is one virtue given a dominant position in relation to the other virtues. Jonathan B. Reiss, "Justice and Common Good in Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes," *Arte cristiana* 72 (1984), 72-73.

against justice, so in this respect Enrico assures his viewers he is an honest merchant and therefore an adherent of the moral economy.¹⁸⁶ This is a strong statement about Enrico's commitment to a temporal virtue that has profound implication for his soul's fate. As Jonathan Reiss observed, in commenting on the importance of the theme of justice in Paduan society and politics in Scrovegni's time, and in the chapel's program:

The rationale for the intrusion of public references in a chapel dedicated ostensibly to the salvation of the donor is based on the belief that devotion to earthly justice assures salvation.¹⁸⁷

Part 5: Self-Representation and the Scrovegni Family Coat of Arms (Fig. 64)

Virtually none of the scholarship around the chapel has discussed the Scrovegni family's coat of arms, other than to mention that it was the means through which Rainaldo Scrovegni was identified as the usurer's spokesperson in Dante's *Inferno* (Fig. 65). According to Dante, Rainaldo was wearing a purse which "...had an azure pregnant sow inscribed as an emblem on his white pouch...".¹⁸⁸ This description did not agree with that in Pseudo-Favasochi which reported "As their arms, the sons of Rainaldo bear a shield with a blue sow {depicted} on a gold field."¹⁸⁹ It is not likely that Favasochi (d. 1315/16), the author of this chronicle, a Paduan contemporary who seemed to know Enrico personally, would have gotten Enrico's crest wrong. In fact, it is possible that both Dante and Favasochi were correct because Enrico might have changed the family crest's field from silver to gold to better reflect his newly acquired noble status.¹⁹⁰ I am going to assume

¹⁸⁶ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 71.

¹⁸⁷ Reiss, 75.

¹⁸⁸ Dante, *Inferno*, lines 64-65, Mandelbaum, 153.

¹⁸⁹ Jacobus, Appendix 14, 381.

¹⁹⁰ According to Bartolo da Sassoferrato, an Italian jurist who wrote one of the earliest treatises on coats of arms, "...the colour gold is said to be the noblest." Cavallar, 153. Family shields were continuously being modified, especially by successive generations who wanted to make a more personal statement about themselves through their

in my analysis of Enrico Scrovegni's coat of arms that the field colour was yellow, to indicate gold.

The Scrovegni coat of arms would probably originally have been self-selected, since there is no mention that it was granted by any authority. The original combination of materials, colours, designs, and devices would have been carefully chosen, probably by Rainaldo, using the silver rather than gold field, to make some personal, recognizable statement about the arms holder that was part of his public self-representation.¹⁹¹ This meant that the escutcheon would have both quotidian and symbolic meaning. The device chosen to go on top of the field, in this case a pregnant sow, might have related directly to the arms holder's occupation or place in society. But the symbolism of this image as a device on a family shield would have been even more important as a form of moral self-representation. Christopher Weber emphasized this aspect of family shields in late-medieval Italy, noting that they were "...a symbolic means of communication... which had already associated itself in an earlier time with ecclesiastical, animal, and colour symbolism."¹⁹² Indeed, the moral symbolism of the shield was likely why Dante used it to depict the usurers in *Inferno*, Canto 17—the family crest was the only means of identification of these archetypal usurers, of whom Dante made Rainaldo Scrovegni the spokesperson (see Appendix 1).

As noted earlier, many animals had both positive and negative moral meanings which by the late-medieval period were well-understood cultural tropes, conveyed through preaching and

crest. Enrico was an exceptionally status conscious person. One of the ways in which he might have chosen to mark his being made a knight by Venice in 1301, would have been to change the field background to reflect his now noble status. There is also the possibility that Enrico changed the family crest later than this in response to the notoriety caused by Dante's use of the Scrovegni silver-fielded crest as a symbol of usury.

¹⁹¹ Hiltmann insists that "...basic heraldic awareness and heraldic knowledge appears to have been available to large parts of medieval society including, for example, women and townspeople." Hiltmann and Hablot, 17.

¹⁹² Weber, 496.

texts such as bestiaries.¹⁹³ Also noted earlier, the presence of charges on an escutcheon, particularly animals, was supposed to directly represent the character and moral qualities of the arms holder. The challenge for the arms holder was to present himself in such a way that the positive characteristics not only outweighed the negative ones but, like colour, invoked the *rule of opposites*, to proclaim their total absence.¹⁹⁴ This was particularly important when using certain animals, such as the pig, because pigs had strong negative associations in moralizing texts and natural histories.

The pig in its various forms was a highly charged and contradictory symbol in Christian culture. From a practical perspective as a domestic animal, it was a prolific and important part of the agricultural economy and a staple in the diet of Western European Christians. Culturally, the medieval view of the pig was part of an inherited tradition through classical and Judaic culture. The Romans prized the pig, both in wild and domestic form, and it was a symbol of fertility that was often referred to in pagan rites.¹⁹⁵ Judaic culture, and subsequently Islamic culture, abhorred the pig for both practical and symbolic reasons.¹⁹⁶ Early Christianity rejected the entire slate of Judaic dietary restrictions, so there was no ethical bar to the raising and eating of pig meat. But the Jewish cultural tradition was full of objections to the pig on moral grounds based on its reputed behavioural characteristics of uncleanness, laziness, and unchecked sensuality, and this attitude carried over into Christian culture. The pig thus became a symbol of surrender to one's

¹⁹³ Thomas Woodcock and John Martin Robinson, *The Oxford Guide to Heraldry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 64. Also Page, 41-42.

¹⁹⁴ Blanch, 4, wrote: "An integral part of the medieval code of colour symbolism was...the rule of opposites. According to this principle, a color was invested with meanings contrary to its ordinary meanings because every color had both good and bad connotations."

¹⁹⁵ Milo Kearney, *The Role of Swine Symbolism in Medieval Culture* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 131-158.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 163-168.

base desires—gluttony, drunkenness, unbridled sexuality.¹⁹⁷ Three of the seven deadly sins were directly linked to 'piggish' behaviour—*Sloth, Lust and Gluttony*—and featured prominently in sermons and *exempla*.¹⁹⁸

Some men pass their lives in eating and drinking, as swine, which foul themselves and root up and sniff ever foully, and much enjoy foul things; ... and when he is full defiles himself in the foul mire of drunkenness and of whoredom, and therefore they are called swinish men, and in them the devil dwelleth.¹⁹⁹

Yet contradictorily, in spite of this heavy negative moral burden, the pig was also invested with certain virtues, particularly in its wild state as boar and sow.²⁰⁰ Bartholomeus Anglicus (1203-1272) wrote that "The boar is so fierce a beast, and also so cruel, that for his fierceness and his cruelty, he despiseth and setteth nought by death..."²⁰¹ The wild boar was often used as a heraldic symbol, particularly by warriors, because it symbolized ferocity, courage, and single-mindedness even to the point of death. The sow seems to have had a more positive image than the boar and was particularly appreciated for her fecundity and her maternal instincts.²⁰²

The sow, however, was an extremely rare symbol as a heraldic charge, and I have been unable to find a single other example. What might have prompted Rainaldo and Enrico to use a shield with such a potentially controversial symbol as the sow on its silver or gold field, given that their escutcheon was intended to relay certain messages about their personal qualities?

¹⁹⁷ Christian Heck and Rémy Cordonnier, *The Grand Medieval Bestiary: Animals in Illuminated Manuscripts* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2012), 132.

¹⁹⁸ Kearney, 176-177.

¹⁹⁹ Deborah J. McFarland, "Animal Lore and Medieval English Sermon Style" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1980), 206.

²⁰⁰ Sophie Page in commenting on the often-contradictory symbolism of medieval animals noted that "It was important to be open to the multiple significations of a single animal. ... Medieval animal imagery was vibrant and flexible." Page, 35-37.

²⁰¹ Robert Steele, *Medieval Lore from Bartholomew Anglicus* (London: Alexander Moring, 1905), 141.

²⁰² "Medieval authors also stress the devotion of sows to their offspring. Thus the depictions of sows giving suck in the margins of certain manuscripts are intended as positive images of maternal love." Heck and Cordonnier, 135.

Let us start with the field colour. By Enrico's time, the field of the Scrovegni coat of arms represented gold, indicating earthly and heavenly value. Gold, because of its tarnish-proof quality and reflective radiance of light, was seen as a bridge between the earthly and the divine, "from the material to the immaterial."²⁰³ Its use as the field of an escutcheon suggested that the arms holder was noble in character, morally virtuous, blessed with understanding, and like the material itself, incorruptible.²⁰⁴ It spoke about a person who, as a merchant, wanted others to see him as one who was honest and reliable in business dealings, conscientious around his Christian and civic obligations, and committed to the common good.

The presence of a sow might well have been intended to allude to the Scrovegni's large agricultural holdings and significant involvement in the trade of agricultural produce, which would almost certainly have included pigs. The pig represented fertility and fecundity, traits which also seemed to speak to the Scrovegni's economic and social success through their money-lending and other commercial activities. Of course, their ill-wishers and enemies might interpret this as greed, a trait that was also associated with the pig, so the positive moral symbolism of this device was of fundamental importance in negating such a view.

The clue here is the colour Scrovegni chose for the pig—azure (blue)—a totally unnatural colour of a real pig, but a colour with deep material and spiritual meaning.²⁰⁵ The azure colour would likely have been painted using ultramarine, the most precious and expensive of all pigments. It was made from ground up and treated lapis lazuli, which gave it a bright, lustrous

²⁰³ Gage, 1993, 64.

²⁰⁴ Ottfried Neubecker, *Heraldry: Sources, Symbols and Meaning* (London: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1976), 86.

²⁰⁵ The azure colour may also have been connected symbolically to the Guelf party, which was the dominant group in Paduan politics at this time. See Diane Finiello Zervas, *The Parte Guelfa, Brunelleschi & Donatello* (Locust Valley: J. Augustin, 1987).

hue (which unfortunately darkens over time).²⁰⁶ In his handbook for painters, Cennino Cennini wrote glowingly of this material: "Ultramarine blue is a color illustrious, beautiful, and most perfect, beyond all other colours."²⁰⁷ In the hierarchy of medieval colour theory, blue was usually ranked the fourth most important (behind gold, silver and red) because of its association with the sky and heaven.²⁰⁸ The character traits associated with blue were purity, a love of justice, truthfulness, fidelity and steadfastness.²⁰⁹ These again were all personal qualities that would be valued and self-promoted by Rainaldo and Enrico, given their particular economic and social position in Paduan society.²¹⁰ But what made the blue so important as a symbol of familial moral identity was its association through its colour with the Virgin Mary, the ultimate symbol of mothering and nurturing in Christian Society. From the twelfth century on, the Virgin was most frequently depicted wearing a blue gown, robe or cloak and "...in the early thirteenth-century, largely due to its association with the Virgin, blue became a royal colour...".²¹¹ Although there were cheaper forms of producing the colour blue, using azurite for example, the Virgin's outer blue garment would almost always be painted using ultramarine.²¹² This frequent use created a visual association between the substance-colour, lapis lazuli, and the qualities of the Virgin. It was not that the viewer would make a direct association between the Scrovegni and the Virgin,

²⁰⁶ Deirdre Jackson stressed how important brightness and intensity were in colours, given that "When night fell, medieval Europe was enveloped in an inky blackness..." Deirdre Jackson, "Colour and Meaning", in *Colour-The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ed. Stella Panayotova (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2016), 348.

²⁰⁷ Cennini, 36.

²⁰⁸ John Gage, *Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 73.

²⁰⁹ Dennys, 47. Neubecker, 86.

²¹⁰ Deirdre Jackson emphasized that "Context was critical; a specific hue could carry multiple meanings." Jackson, 345. In fact, a blue boar became a common heraldic device of English aristocracy, such as John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford (1442-1513).

²¹¹ Ibid. Jackson also noted that the negative associations with blue were "the unusual, potentially dangerous and foreign."

²¹² Most of the Virgin's many depictions in the Arena Chapel narrative frescoes have used ultramarine for her outer garment.

but rather that the positive moral and spiritual associations of the colour would frame their response to seeing it on the coat of arms.

Therefore, the messages that were embedded in the Scrovegni coat of arms were ones of fruitfulness, service, trustworthiness, and loyalty in both temporal and spiritual matters. In this way Enrico communicated his worthiness to be honoured as both a Paduan and a Christian citizen. That the only place Enrico's shield appears in the Arena Chapel is on the frame of his statue and on his tomb underscores its use as a personal symbol of the man and his moral identity.²¹³

Summary of the Arena Chapel Case Study

This chapter offers a new reading of some of the imagery of the Arena Chapel in relation to its use as a tool of self-representation by its commissioner, and in revealing his Christian identity within the context of the late-medieval moral economy. In particular, I have tried to show that Enrico's anxieties around money need to be contextualized within the larger framework of merchant concerns that the money they earned through trade and commerce might jeopardize their very souls—concerns that fed their assumptions that they would have to spend time in Purgatory. As I have demonstrated, Scrovegni's intentions and aspirations for the chapel and its decoration very much involved the

²¹³ Although family chapels in churches would always include the family's crest to mark ownership, this wasn't necessary in the Arena Chapel as it was wholly owned by the Scrovegni and was attached to their house, where their crest would certainly have appeared. It is also likely that their crest was on some of the vestments and liturgical tools as this was common practice at this time. See Louise Bourdua, "Friars, Patrons, and Workshops at the Basilica Del Santo, Padua", in *The Church and the Arts: Papers Read at the 1990 Summer Meeting and the 1991 Winter Meeting of The Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992). The Scrovegni sponsored St. Catherine chapel in the Padua Basilica did include Enrico's crest. See Laura Lombardi, "Giotto e la Cappella Scrovegni bis: Le nuove di Giacomo Guazzini dentro la Basilica di Sant'Antonio," *Il Giornale dell'Arte.com* 398 (2019).

dynamics of obligation and reciprocity to help garner the prayers he needed to help speed his passage through Purgatory.

I have been the first scholar to show how Giotto has visually embedded the purgatorial process in his *Last Judgement*, drawing on the contemporary understandings of Purgatory to carve out a space where judgement and hope offset the perpetual terrors of Hell, and to situate Scrovegni himself both spatially and thematically within that dynamic.

I have also provided the whole new interpretive theme of hospitality for some of the frescoes to show how interactions between the activities of the chapel and the adjacent Scrovegni residence were a significant factor in determining content and placement, and how these served Enrico's objectives. I have also demonstrated how the analytical framework can enhance or nuance existing interpretations, particularly with respect to some of the self-representation in the Virtues and Vices cycle. Finally, I have offered the very first scholarly analysis of the meaning and functions of the Scrovegni coat of arms as a tool of demonstrating Enrico Scrovegni's nobility of character and moral identity within the framework of early Trecento visual culture.

CHAPTER 3

THE GRAIN MERCHANT'S MORAL EYE: DOMENICO LENZI & HIS ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, *LO SPECCHIO UMANO* (FLORENCE, c.1340)

Introduction

Sometime around 1340, Domenico Lenzi (c. 1305-c.1348), a Florentine seller of secondary grains (i.e. not wheat) (**Fig. 2**), had a professional scribe create a codex from Lenzi's own draft. The text consisted of lists of grain prices, events related to grain shortages, and moralizing verses (including some written by Lenzi) and aphorisms. This manuscript was then handed over to a professional illuminator who, following detailed instructions by Lenzi, produced nine illuminations.¹ The final product also included a *Proemio* (Prologue) in which Lenzi briefly outlined what he was doing and why:

But who today or in the future would be reproached for leaving for those who will come after us a written record, as poorly as an uneducated man like me might put it down, of these vicissitudes, these catastrophes that continuously crash down upon us?²

¹ Instructions to the illuminator regarding the historiated initial in folio 3r and the depiction of God in the full-page scene showing the grain market in times of plenty on folio 7r are still readable. Susanna Partsch concludes that "...Lenzi played a decisive role in the construction of the image program." Susanna Partsch, *Profane Buchmalerei der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft im spätmittelalterlichen Florenz. Der Specchio Umano des Getreidehändlers Domenico Lenzi* (Worms: Werner, 1981), 47.

The illuminator is now thought to be the anonymous master of the Dominican Effigies, active c.1325-55. See Christine Sciacca, ed., *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination 1300-1350* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 52. See also The Metropolitan Museum entry on this artist at <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/459041>.

² "Ma chi oggi sarà, o per inanzi, ripreso di lasciare di questi temporali che a nnoi occorrono del continuo, a chi dopo noi verrà, scrittura, pognamo che no'molto ordinata, ché non ci è il sapere?" Giuliano Pinto, *Il libro del biadaio: carestie e annona a Firenze dalla metà del '200 al 1348* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1978), 157.

The result was a unique illuminated codex that its author titled *Lo Specchio umano* (The Mirror of Humanity) which has fascinated scholars since a compendium of it was first published by Vincenzo Fineschi in 1767.³

The importance of the manuscript as a primary textual and visual record of the grain trade, and its related social and civic impacts in times of shortage, has resulted in its use by economic, social, literary, and art historians alike. Yet in spite of this wide range of interest, very little has been written about Lenzi's possible motivations for producing the manuscript, who its intended audiences were, or how the codex might have been used as a tool for Lenzi's own moral self-representation and demonstration of salvific worthiness.⁴ This is probably the result of our knowing virtually nothing for certain about Domenico Lenzi, other than what he reveals in his manuscript.⁵ This limited knowledge about Lenzi is what makes *Lo Specchio umano* such a fitting case study for the Merchant's Moral Eye analytical framework. The framework establishes the context within which to make reasonable assumptions about Lenzi's motives and uses of his manuscript.

³ Pinto, 3. The manuscript found its way into the collection of the Tempi family, who had owned it at least since 1670, and donated it in 1829 to the Medici-Laurenziana library. See Luisa Miglio, "Per una datazione del Biadaiolo fiorentino (Ms. Laur. Tempi 3)," *La Bibliofilia* 77 (1975): 8-10. Miglio's article analyzes the codicological and illumination information, to suggest an accurate date for the production of the manuscript.

⁴ In her 1998 Doctoral Dissertation, Jennifer Heindl wrote of Lenzi's manuscript, that "... no one has satisfactorily addressed what Domenico Lenzi, a '*grosso e ydiota componitore*,' had in mind in creating this singular and costly manuscript." Jennifer Heindl, "Bodies, Cities and Texts: Representations of Violence in Late Medieval Italy", (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989), 145. This was Lenzi's own description of himself, "a crude and ignorant author."

⁵ Pinto observed that no trace of Lenzi could be found in contemporary civic records because of their destruction in 1343 during riots following the expulsion of the Duke of Athens as ruler of Florence. Pinto, 10-11. Vincenzo Fineschi claimed to have identified other family members, and Branca accepts that a certain grain merchant, Lenzo Figli, who died in 1363, might be Domenico Lenzi's father. See Branca, 1986, xxii-xxiii, fn.1. Pinto also thinks this connection between Domenico Lenzi and Lenzo Figli might be true. See Pinto, 13. However, this will always remain speculative as there is no concrete evidence, just an association based on name and trade.

In this chapter I will address the above-noted gaps to demonstrate that Lenzi's text and images support a clear intention to represent himself as a knowledgeable and honest grain merchant, a compassionate Christian who is particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor, and a Christian moralist who is deeply concerned about the temporal and eschatological fate of his city, its citizens, and himself. I will specifically examine how the codex would have been used to achieve these objectives within the context of Florentine merchant book culture and the web of networks typical for a Florentine merchant such as Lenzi. I will then analyze the texts and images to show how Lenzi's self-representational and salvific objectives were revealed to his audiences.

Part 1: The Manuscript And Its Scholarship

The Manuscript: A Descriptive Overview

The manuscript consists of 138 parchment leaves, with most of the text written in two lower case columns (**Fig. 66**).⁶ Each parchment leaf is approximately 38.5cm high by 27cm wide, making this a large and heavy volume.⁷ The codex is ordered as follows: a prologue (folios 2ra-3ra); a list of grain prices June 1320 to April 1329 (folios 3rb-48rb); a detailed description of the grain shortage lasting from April 8, 1329 to April 17, 1330, which highlights its social effects and civic responses (folios 46rb-89ra). The remainder of the codex is mainly a list of grain prices with the odd comment about supply levels and actions of the grain authorities, covering the period from April, 1330 to November, 1335 (folios 89rb-136vb).⁸

⁶ Pinto provides a thorough codicological description, pages 153-156. His page reference convention uses *a* or *b* to note which column the text being cited is located in. In addition to the text and images there are several blank pages and guarding pages of lesser quality parchment.

⁷ Luisa Miglio argues that the parchment is sheepskin, not goat or calf. Miglio, 1975, 3.

⁸ At the time Lenzi wrote his manuscript, which was organized by day, or month and year, the new year started on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th. Thus 1329 started on March 25th and ended March 24th, when 1330 started. There was a later added folio, 1v, which is a list of grain prices Lenzi tells us he took from other merchants' notebooks for the period 1309-1319. This page is probably in Lenzi's own handwriting as it is markedly different from the other two hands that cover folios 2r-36r, and folios 36v-136v. See Miglio, 1975, 153-154. Folio 1r was

There are nine illuminations spread throughout the manuscript, seven of which are full-page illuminations of the general situation or specific events described in the text:

- a) Folio 2r: a two-panel miniature at the start of the manuscript showing Lenzi trading grain and writing in his ledger (**Fig. 67**);
- b) Folio 3r: an historiated initial depicting a female figure (very likely a personification of one or more values) surrounded by and holding grain (**Fig. 68**);
- c) Folio 6v: a harvest scene in times of plenty (**Fig. 69, 69a**);
- d) Folio 7r: a depiction of the Orsanmichele grain market in times of plenty (**Fig. 70, 70a**);
- e) Folios 57v & 58r: two full-page adjacent scenes, showing the expulsion of the poor from Siena because of the grain shortage in May 1329, and then their compassionate reception and feeding by Florence (**Figs. 71, 72**);
- f) Folio 70r: an illustration of the event described by Lenzi during June 1329, wherein the town of Colle di Val d'Elsa sold grain, previously promised to Florence, to Pisa instead (**Fig. 73**);
- g) Folio 78v: a scene showing a poor harvest due to divine intervention (**Fig. 74, 74a**);
- h) Folio 79r: a visual description of the effects of the grain shortage on the supply and selling of grain in the market at Orsanmichele (**Fig. 75, 75a**).

The full-page illuminations that feature heavenly or demonic figures (folios 6v, 7r, 78v, and 79r) also include text banners from those figures that provide explanatory and moralizing messages for the viewers. These have been translated and included as **Figs. 69a, 70a, 74a, 75a**.

There are 38 metered verses, proverbs, and moral sayings that are interspersed throughout the manuscript. These are all found between folios 6r and 136v. The full-page illuminations that are not directly linked to events described in the text (folios 6v, 7r, 78v, 79r) all have verses on the reverse side (folios 6r, 7v, 78r, 79v).

Lo Specchio Umano: A Brief Overview of the Relevant Scholarship

The *Lo specchio umano* manuscript has been of interest to scholars for over 250 years.⁹ The most significant study of the manuscript is by the economic historian Giuliano Pinto whose 1978

obviously originally blank but later readers, a Pier Guglielmo and Vincenzo Fineschi, added comments about the manuscript in modern script. Ibid.

⁹ Pinto provides an excellent summary of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship on the codex in his first chapter. See Pinto, 3-8. Guido Pampaloni adds to Pinto's information about the early scholarship

monograph provided a transcription of the text into contemporary Italian and four lengthy essays, three of which were about the grain trade in Lenzi's time. Pinto's first chapter included the manuscript's scholarly historiography, its historical and literary context, and known or suggested facts about Lenzi and his family. Pinto provided a limited amount of codicological information, based on Luisa Miglio's 1975 intensive examination of the physical manuscript.¹⁰

Virtually all the scholarship on the manuscript since then has relied on Pinto's transcription and much of his commentary about it. Lenzi's book has never been fully translated into any other language, although some limited sections are available in English as they appear in the translation of Vittore Branca's book, *Mercanti Scrittori*.¹¹

Pinto does not discuss the manuscript's illuminations although he repeats Frederick Antal's quotation that these miniatures are "The most important document of secular bourgeois painting in Florence."¹² Pinto attributes Lenzi's primary motive to his desire to make his fellow citizens understand that problems around the food supply, or other catastrophic events such as the disastrous 1333 flood, were a reflection of divine displeasure with the moral behaviours of Florentines.¹³ Pinto concludes that "The whole book, therefore, takes on the character of an *exemplum* in which the verses and miniatures further underline the text."¹⁴ Pinto does not

around the manuscript. See Guido Pampaloni, "A proposito dell'edizione «Libro del Biadaiole», *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 137, no. 3 (1979): 315-317.

¹⁰ See Miglio, 1975, 1-20.

¹¹ Branca, 2015, 344-357.

¹² Pinto, 9. This comment of Antal's was first published in his 1948 work on Florentine painting which was subsequently translated into Italian in 1960. See Frederick Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (London: K. Paul, 1948).

¹³ Pinto, 14; 23-24.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 25. "Tutto il libro, dunque, assume il carattere di un *exemplum* che i versi e le miniature concorrono a sottolineare."

speculate about any personal interest or benefit that might have prompted Lenzi to produce his codex.

The only comprehensive study of the codex's imagery to date is in German by the art historian, Susanna Partsch.¹⁵ Partsch's goal was to broaden the analysis of the illuminations beyond brief "iconographic details and historical aspects" and to examine the miniatures "...for their connection with the text, for their iconographic peculiarities or for their position within profane [non-religious] illumination in Florence."¹⁶

Partsch accepts Lenzi's stated purpose for the manuscript, that it was intended to encourage people to behave more morally in order to "avert the starvation sent by God".¹⁷ Yet she also recognizes that it is a work that includes a degree of self-representation.¹⁸ In particular, she writes that Lenzi is concerned about how "to present himself to posterity" as a grain merchant and an author who desires "not to be forgotten."¹⁹ Partsch also ascribes a material motive for his production of his codex, that of expanding his customer base.²⁰ She does not, however, explain how the manuscript's use would accomplish this, or why expanding his customer base might be a realistic objective at the time he produced it. The strength of Partsch's work lies in her description and analysis of the images, and their position within the iconographic traditions and production issues of contemporary illuminated Florentine manuscripts.²¹ Although Partsch

¹⁵ There is another monograph in Italian, published the same year as Partsch's work, which contains all of the imagery but only seventeen pages of limited commentary. See Carlo Bertelli, ed. *Domenico Lenzi, Il Biadaio: Lo Specchio Umano* (Milano: Libri Scheiwiller, 1981).

¹⁶ Partsch, 2.

¹⁷ Ibid, 2.

¹⁸ Partsch notes that in the portraits of Lenzi in the two panels that start the manuscript, "The wish not to be forgotten can most clearly be seen in the self-portrayal on folio 2." "*Der Wunsch, nicht in Vergessenheit zu geraten, kann am deutlichsten in der Selbstdarstellung auf fol. 2r (Abb. I) abgelesen werden.*" Ibid, 3.

¹⁹ Ibid, 3-4.

²⁰ "*Ferner wollte er diese Prachthandschrift zur Repräsentation benutzen und mit ihrer Hilfe seinen Kundenkreis erweitern.*" Ibid, 3.

²¹ These aspects account for all but seventeen pages of her book.

repeatedly mentions Lenzi's concern for his future reputation, she doesn't say why this might have mattered to him, and certainly doesn't relate his concern to the use of his manuscript for moral self-representation or to generate prayers for his soul.

A more recent work by the art historian Véronique Mouilleron's explores the role of the image of the Madonna of Orsanmichele that Lenzi had placed within the scene of violence and disorder at the grain market in folio 79r (**Fig. 76**).²² She believes this image is part of a complex allegory in which the various visual components and the inscriptions “ ... give the painting a theological-moral significance too often overlooked, while it nurtures the thoughts expressed by Domenico Lenzi in each page of his work.”²³ Mouilleron sees in Lenzi's work a determination to drive home to his audience the Virgin's compassion, mercy, and power. The Virgin's votive presence in the marketplace during these times of troubles, therefore, can “...reconfigure a revival of piety and devotional practices.”²⁴

Lenzi's manuscript has also generated several articles and essays from literary and codicological historians, such as Vittore Branca and H. Wayne Storey. Branca is especially interested in *Lo Specchio umano* within the genre of late-medieval Italian merchant writings.²⁵ Branca characterized Lenzi as “...a Christian who was well aware of the danger of considering financial gain to be a *raison d'être*” and who “was highly sensitive to the needs of ‘God's poor.’”²⁶

²² Véronique Rouchon Mouilleron, "Miracle et charité: autour d'une image du Livre du biadaiole (Florence, Bibliothèque Laurentienne, ms Tempi 3)", *Revue Mabillon, revue internationale d'histoire et de littérature religieuses, Abbaye Saint-Martin*; A. Picard et fils; Brepols, 2008, 19 (80) : 157-189.

²³ "...confèrent à la peinture une portée théologico-morale-trop souvent passée sous silence, alors qu'elle nourrit la pensée de Domenico Lenzi dans chaucunes des pages de son ouvrage. L'exactitude du marchand est pénétrée des aspirations du chrétien, dans une écriture relevant de l'éthique de l'économie, qu'on pourrait qualifier d'économico-religieuse." Mouilleron, 17.

²⁴ "...reconfigurer une relance de la piété et des pratiques dévotionnelles." Ibid, 5.

²⁵ See Vittore Branca, "Un biadaiuolo lettore di Dante nei primi decenni del Trecento," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, 7 (1965): 200-215; Branca, *Mercanti Scrittori*, 1986.

²⁶ Branca, 2015, 12.

While much of Storey's study is codicological, he does place Lenzi and *Lo specchio* clearly into the context of merchant ethical concerns, concluding that “Lenzi's *Specchio umano* extends ... to the literary and artistic depiction of the ethical fabric of civic and mercantile society.”²⁷

As one would expect, Lenzi's work has been of special interest to social and economic historians. These include studies by Jennifer Heindl on civic violence; John Henderson on Florentine charity and confraternities; George Dameron on the management of civic grain supplies; and Marie Ito and Dennis Romano on the Florentine grain market at Orsanmichele.²⁸ Each of these works has contributed facts and interpretations that have been of assistance in developing my own perspectives and understandings of this complex codex, and will be cited as required in my analysis.

Part 2: Domenico Lenzi and Florentine Book Culture

Domenico Lenzi: Florentine Grain Merchant (c.1305 - c. 1348)

Domenico Lenzi was a *biadaio*, a procurer and seller of cereal grains (*biade*) other than wheat (*frumento* or *grano*), and a minor figure in the overall Florentine grain trade.²⁹ But his business was a particularly profitable one, especially in times of wheat shortages. Paolo da Certaldo, himself a grain merchant, underscored this fact in advising others:

If you have money that you want to invest in grain, buy small grains before you buy wheat, if you don't have much money; for you will make two soldi

²⁷ H. Wayne Storey, "Cultural Crisis and Material Innovation: the Italian Manuscript in the XIVth Century," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*. Tome 83 fasc. 3, (2005): 882.

²⁸ See: Heindl; John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); George Dameron, "Feeding the Medieval Italian City-State: Grain, War, and Political Legitimacy in Tuscany, c. 1150–c. 1350", *Speculum* 92, no. 4 (2017): 976-1019; Marie D'Aguanno Ito, "Orsanmichele–The Florentine Grain Market: Trade and Worship in the Later Middle Ages" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2014); Dennis Romano, op. cit. Because Orsanmichele is such an important site in the history of Florentine art and architecture it has been the focus of several major studies, which are cited in Appendix 3.

²⁹ Ito, 377.

on every bushel of grain and only one on every bushel of wheat; and the grain will cost you a third of what the wheat would. Also, during times of shortage you'll find more buyers.³⁰

Lenzi traded in a stall in the central grain market exchange at Orsanmichele, in what was probably a family business.³¹ As a *biadaiolo* working in Orsanmichele, he would have been subject to the stringent regulations of both his guild (Oil Merchants and General Provision Providers) and the grain market magistracy of the city.³²

Lenzi was educated as part of the regular, non-elite merchant class and would have been thoroughly immersed in the ethos of a young Florentine merchant.³³ There is, therefore, no reason to believe that his values, attitudes, activities, and moral concerns were in any way atypical. This meant he would have had the usual concerns of merchants about money, its usages, and his own fate in the afterlife. As the framework emphasizes, this translated into a need to publicly demonstrate that he was a sincere and ethical Christian businessperson of good *fama*, one who was worthy of the prayers that would speed him through Purgatory.³⁴ And, as we shall see, this manuscript and its narrative, verses, moral aphorisms, and illuminations constituted just such a demonstration.

³⁰ Certaldo, Good Practice #270, Branca, 2015, 68. Lenzi's stock consisted of the following non-wheat grains: panic grass (*panico*), millets (*saggina* and *miglio*), rye (*segale*), barley (*orzo*), beans (*fave*), vetches (pea family) (*vecce*, *mochi* and *cicerchie*), and spelt (*spelta*). See Dameron, 2017, 985.

³¹ Pinto, 13.

³² Biadaiuoli were specifically mentioned as being part of the guild in records in 1191 and 1328. See Edgumbe Staley, *The Guilds of Florence* (London: Methuen and Co., 1906), 394. See also Ito, 2014, 396-404. On the strict enforcement by the guild's leadership see Ito, 2014, 386.

³³ See: Robert Black. *Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany. Vol. 1, Teachers, pupils and schools, c. 1250-1500*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007; Richard A. Goldthwaite, "Schools and Teachers of Commercial Arithmetic in Renaissance Florence," *The Journal of European Economic History*, 1, no. 2 (1973): 418-433. Lenzi himself comments on his inability to write in Latin in his preface. See Lenzi, 2v^b in Pinto, 159.

³⁴ Walter Gibson observed that the overarching belief at this time was that "...only the most saintly souls, always few in number, would be immediately admitted to the joys of Paradise." Walter S. Gibson, "Prayers and Promises: The Interactive Indulgence Print," in *Push Me Pull Me: Physical and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, eds. Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand (Leiden: Brill, 2011), Volume One, 281.

Lenzi had good reason to be concerned about how he had made his money. His lists of grain prices demonstrate the dramatic increase in the price of wheat, the staple ingredient of most Florentines' diet. But some of the types of grains Lenzi sold, such as rye, proportionately rose even higher. The table below gives the average annual prices of wheat and the chief other cereals over the six year period that included the crisis years of 1329/30.

COMPARATIVE ANNUAL AVERAGE GRAIN PRICES 1326 - 1331

GRAIN TYPE	YEAR (% + or - over 1326 as the base year)										
	1326	1327 % +/-		1328 % +/-		1329 % +/-		1330 % +/-		1331 % +/-	
Wheat (Grano)	10.4	13	25%	17	63%	30.2	190%	26	150%	13.7	32%
Rye (Segale)	7	9.2	31%	13.6	94%	23.9	241%	21.1	201%	9.11	30%
Barley (Orzo)	6	7.8	30%	8.7	45%	14.5	142%	12.1	102%	7.4	23%
Spelt (Spelta)	4.5	5.4	20%	6.1	36%	9.5	111%	8.1	80%	4.8	7%
Beans (Fave)	5.9	7.1	20%	10.11	71%	20.1	241%	18.2	208%	9.7	64%
Millet (Miglio)	6.4	8.4	31%	11.5	80%	21.6	238%	17.8	178%	9	41%
Panie Grass (Panico)	5.5	7	27%	9.5	73%	19.6	256%	15.4	180%	8	45%
Vetch (Cicerchie)	6.2	8.1	31%	12.7	105%	22.8	268%	19.5	215%	9.8	58%

Data Source: Giuliano Pinto, *Il Libro Del Biadaio*, 66-68.

What these figures tell us is that the yearly average price of at least five grains other than wheat—the ones that Lenzi sold— rose proportionately even more than wheat. This huge and prolonged jump in the prices of these grains meant that his cash income increased significantly.³⁵ The shortage of wheat forced the populace to buy other grains, and the increased demand was reflected in the retail prices. The city administration would have helped to increase these volumes by ordering the mixing of wheat with lesser grains such as barley and spelt.³⁶ Even though Lenzi's acquisition costs probably also rose, he would, by normal practice, have pre-bought significant

³⁵ According to Ito, 2014, 238, Orsanmichele was a cash, not an in-kind market.

³⁶ Ibid, 259.

supplies or even futures, at a significantly lower price.³⁷ Even if Lenzi's wholesale prices did rise proportionately, his profit margin over the wholesale cost probably remained the same, so this increased his net income. Thus, the same Lenzi whose genuine compassion for the hungry poor prompted his outburst in October 1329, "Oh Lord, provide for the poor," was also a grain merchant who seriously profited from the very events that he was decrying.³⁸ Indeed, this situation led Branca to declare that "Lenzi unscrupulously profited from the ups and downs of the basic products necessary for human subsistence," although he did not clarify why he thought this.³⁹ That such profiteering might later cause Lenzi to be concerned about his soul's fate would be totally in line with contemporary merchant angst around how they made their money. Indeed, this may well underscore why, a decade later, he expended so much effort and money to produce his "human mirror." The young man who might have maximized his profit-taking in 1328 was not the same sober, mature person who composed the manuscript in 1340—a man whose aging and experiences provided a more sensitive moral perspective and concern for his own soul.

This is not to suggest that Lenzi's concerns or aspirations around his own moral well-being and soul's fate obscured his mission to his city or his fellow Florentines. Lenzi proclaims himself wholly and completely a proud Florentine citizen who was loyal and chauvinistic. He echoes Dante when he says in his Prologue that St John the Baptist is "...the excellent defender of the most beautiful and most famous daughter of Rome—Florence in whose bosom I was born and raised."⁴⁰ Yet however proud Lenzi is of his Florentine heritage, particularly when he is

³⁷ Lenzi might also have profited from the *statuto del podesta's* provision that "... offered bounties to anyone who brought grain to the city during a dearth... ." Dameron, 2017, 1008.

³⁸ "*Idio provedi i poveri!*" Lenzi, 81r, Pinto, 377.

³⁹ Branca, 2015, 11.

⁴⁰ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 344. The language referencing Florence as "the most beautiful and most famous daughter of Rome" is identical to Dante's wording in his *Convivio*, Chapter III, verse 4. See Richard Lansing's translation, <https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/the-convivio/book-01/#03>.

contrasting his city's moral behaviour to that of Siena or Colle di Val D'Elsa, he is painfully aware of his fellow citizens' moral failures, and thus inevitably of his own.

Like his contemporary, Giovanni Villani, Lenzi would have been deeply concerned by the events between 1329 and 1340 that seemed to suggest divine displeasure with Florence and its citizens. Although Lenzi focuses primarily on the grain crisis of 1329/30, Florence underwent further serious wheat shortages, with consequent high prices, in 1333-35.⁴¹ There was also the disastrous flood of the Arno, in November 1333, which Lenzi described as "...water that seemed to pour out of heaven," creating "...the cruel deluge that flooded the whole city and surrounding plain, which killed many people and animals, and did enormous and irreparable damage...".⁴² These repeated calamities would have urgently propelled Lenzi to ensure his own life was in moral order, and to warn others of the impending consequences of divine displeasure. His fear of impending catastrophe was justified. Domenico Lenzi probably died in the first Black Death outbreak that ravaged Florence in 1348, a man around 43 years old and still in the prime of his life. *Lo Specchio* remains the only known documentary record of his existence.

Florentine Literacy and Book Culture: Domenico Lenzi as Reader and Writer

Virtually every study on Lenzi's manuscript addresses the issue of its genre within the spectrum of late-medieval Italian merchant writings. What has emerged from this discussion is a general agreement that *Lo specchio* did not represent a new or even unique genre but rather was a "hybrid" or a "fusion" of other types.⁴³ Yet such discussions have not adequately delved into why

⁴¹ Dameron, 2017, 1015. Pinto, Table 1, 54.

⁴² "... fue il crudelissimo diluvio che allaghò tutta la città e 'l piano di Firenze con uccisione di multi cristiani e bestiame, e con cadimento grande senza numero di palagi e di torri e case, e guastamento di terre e luogora e poderi infinitamente sanz'alcuno rimedio." Pinto, 491.

⁴³ Romano, 27. Storey, 876.

Lenzi wrote it, who he wrote it for, and how he expected to share it with others. In answering these questions, I think it is important to try to situate Lenzi's manuscript within the context of contemporary Florentine 'book culture'—that is the attitudes, practices, and meanings around reading, writing, and self-produced books.

There is nothing in Lenzi's profile as either a reader or a writer that made him singular or unique in early fourteenth-century Florence. By that time, Florence had developed a strong tradition of vernacular literacy that had its roots in the need for effective commercial record-keeping, correspondence, and documentation.⁴⁴ Lenzi grew up in a tradition in which the ability to read and write was an essential tool in the negotiation of one's professional, social, and religious life. That Lenzi should have been someone whom Pinto termed an avid reader is neither surprising nor unusual, given the cultural milieu in which he lived.⁴⁵ Lenzi tells us firsthand, in his *Proemio*, of his familiarity with antique writers and the works "...the ancients bequeathed to us for our virtuous living examples of their true behaviour...".⁴⁶

Lenzi, like so many of his fellow Florentines, had access to Dante's *Commedia* and had considerable familiarity with it. Not only is Dante quoted directly (e.g. folio 56v), but, as Branca has documented, there are numerous other echoes of Dante's language and sentiments.⁴⁷ Lenzi apologized to his readers for not knowing Latin: "And let this little book not be despised because

⁴⁴ Lisa Kaborycha noted that "Tuscans in general, and Florentines in particular, did business from a very early date in the vernacular, preferring to write their transactions out in Italian, rather than trust their affairs to the professional Latin skills of a notary." Lisa Kaborycha, "Copying Culture: Fifteenth-Century Florentines and Their Zibaldoni" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006), 40. Alison Cornish observed that this vernacular literacy prompted a translation of antique and medieval Latin writings that appealed greatly to the "...well-off citizens of the city-states for whom written and oral eloquence in the vernacular had practical political, commercial and ethical purposes." Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.

⁴⁵ Pinto, 26.

⁴⁶ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 344.

⁴⁷ Branca, 1965, 206-207.

it is written in the vernacular mother tongue, for I never learned the Latin language."⁴⁸ However, this was almost certainly more formulaic rectitude than genuine regret. Lenzi's networks, as we shall see, included primarily non-elite lay persons for whom Latin would have been largely incomprehensible. What was good enough for Dante was certainly good enough for Domenico Lenzi.

Lenzi's writing and narrative skills, like reading, were common for a young merchant. As J.K. Hyde has pointed out, merchant correspondence was broad in nature and often read like catalogues of current events "...as almost anything—a war, a shipwreck, a political revolution or an outbreak of the plague might have a decisive influence on the market."⁴⁹ This was the tradition in which Lenzi was steeped, and it is not surprising, therefore, that he should have written and kept accurate notes pertaining to situations that might affect his livelihood.⁵⁰ Lenzi was also part of a phenomenon whereby, as Allison Cornish expressed it, echoing Armando Petrucci, "As with the Internet today, Italians' sudden and wide access to reading and writing in this period had the effect of turning readers into writers."⁵¹ Thus, Lenzi responded to the same impulses that caused contemporaries such as Dino Campagni to write his eyewitness account of events, Giovanni Villani to chronicle what he considered the noteworthy facts and occurrences affecting his beloved Florence over a fifty year period, and Paolo da Certaldo to pass on practical and moral advice. The creation of a book, whether by random copying from other sources, or recording

⁴⁸ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 345.

⁴⁹ Hyde, 1979, 114.

⁵⁰ Teresa Pogi-Salani pointed out that the recording of personal observations and narrative of events appeared in the book on accounting by the Florentine Bene Bencivenni (c.1296). Teresa Pogi-Salani, "La Toscana," in *L'Italiano nelle regioni*, ed. Francesco Bruni (Torino: UTET, 1992), 409.

⁵¹ Cornish, 1. See also Petrucci, 169-235.

one's own thoughts and experiences, became part of its creator's patrimony to pass on to heirs, and a material object for his memory, honour, and prayers.⁵²

In his manuscript, Lenzi never describes himself as an *autore* (author). He reserves the use of *auctori* (authors) only to describe the great writers of the past.⁵³ He calls himself a *componitore*, in the often-quoted phrase he used to describe himself as the writer of *Lo Specchio umano*: "...Domenico Lenzi, biadaiuolo, grosso e ydiota componitore...".⁵⁴ Virtually every scholar has assumed the word *componitore* to only mean 'author' and there has been absolutely no discussion about Lenzi's use of the word *componitore* to describe himself as the writer of the manuscript. The word *componitore*, however, had multiple and more complex meanings than *auctore*. It certainly could be used as a synonym for author, but according to *TLIO: Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle originale*, a dictionary of medieval Italian, *componitore* had all the following meanings: 1. Those who neatly arrange various parts to form an organic complex [a compiler]; who gives shape to inorganic matter, creator; 1.1 Author of written texts; 1.2 Builder of buildings or urban centers, builder; 2. Anyone who puts or tries to put several people or parts in harmony with each other; who mediates conflicts.⁵⁵ This last meaning of *componitore* is particularly significant and seems much more in context of Lenzi's stated purpose for writing his book—to restore the natural harmony that comes when humans are reconciled to God through their righteous moral behaviour, which would ensure that his beloved Florence be spared future famine. If this is how Lenzi understood himself, then so too would his contemporary readers and

⁵² Kaborycha, 103.

⁵³ Folio 2r, Pinto, 157.

⁵⁴ Folio 2v, Pinto, 159.

⁵⁵ *TLIO: Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle originale, Lista definizioni 'componitore'*. <http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it/TLIO/>. The dictionary does include Lenzi as an example of definition 1.1 as an author of written texts.

listeners, and this would have influenced their reception of the work and their responses to him as the composer/compiler/reconciler.

To be a reader and a writer in Florence at this time therefore meant participating in a set of socio-cultural practices that were enacted within the web of one's networks and their normal patterns of interpersonal interactions. The transmission of any manuscript's textual and visual content took place within this profoundly social framework, creating what Joyce Coleman termed "viewing communities".⁵⁶ The individuals who read, heard, and viewed *Lo specchio* became part of a social experience in which Lenzi was the facilitator, and therefore an integral part of that experience. How Lenzi was understood, however, was very much mediated by the dynamics that structured interactions within each network— such things as status, hierarchy, and the normative conventions governing inter-personal relations.⁵⁷

Because Lenzi's contemporary viewers shared a common Florentine and Christian culture, he, his scribes, and the illuminator could reasonably anticipate the responses to the codex's content and images. Lenzi's own emphasis on the importance of his images in depicting the distressing events he is writing about, and the moral messages they conveyed, indicates he saw the illuminations as active agents in his mission of moral renewal.⁵⁸ This, then, is the book culture within which we will further explore issues of audience and reception.

⁵⁶ Joyce Coleman, Mark Cruse, Kathryn A. Smith, "Introduction: The Social Life of Illumination," in *The Social Life of Illumination: Manuscripts, Images, and Communities in the Late Middle Ages*, eds. Joyce Coleman, Mark Cruse, and Kathryn A. Smith (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 2.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Lenzi wrote "Because some people cannot read, a picture can help them to understand something, so these pictures have been created to show the truth." ("*Ma perciò che talora avviene che chi sa cognoscere per sé con figura non sa forse leggere...*") Lenzi, folio 59r, Pinto, 323.

Part 3: Domenico Lenzi's Networks and Audiences

The Dynamics of Audience and Reception

Ultimately, we cannot adequately reconstruct Lenzi's motives, expectations, and uses of *Lo specchio* without knowing who his likely audiences were, and this requires that we situate Lenzi within his various networks.⁵⁹ By analyzing the nature of these types of relationships, I believe that we can discern how Lenzi likely used his book to fulfill his moral mission as well as to represent himself as an aware, dutiful, and compassionate Florentine and Christian.

Although Lenzi does not identify a specific audience, we do know that the expected readership for such a self-produced book might be extensive. Paolo da Certaldo, who was also a grain merchant, twice addressed his *Libro di Buoni Costumi* to "... my son, brother, my good friend, neighbour or comrade, or whoever you may be who read this book... ." ⁶⁰ Lenzi clearly intended that his work would be both read and listened to, for he talks about both modes of reception, a fact that has gone largely unnoticed.⁶¹ In folio 59r, Lenzi uses the phrase "*signori che leggete*" (you men who are reading) and earlier, in folio 3r, he addresses his audience as "*uditore*" (listeners).⁶² This not only tells us how Lenzi expected the manuscript might be accessed, but also that the audiences would be varied and would experience *Lo Specchio* in different kinds of settings.⁶³ Indeed, Lenzi can be seen as part of the same tradition as his older contemporary, Francesco da Barberino (1264-1348), in which writers blended oral and written culture to

⁵⁹ This approach involves what Ronald Weissman described as exploring "...the pattern of bonds linking Florentines to one another." Weissman, 1982, x.

⁶⁰ Certaldo, Good Practice #1 and #378, Branca, 2015, 41 and 94.

⁶¹ Wayne Storey was the only scholar whose work I have read who mentioned the fact that Lenzi referred to his audience as 'listeners', but he doesn't say anything about what the significance of this might have been. Storey, 877.

⁶² Pinto, 317 & 159.

⁶³ Lenzi's explanation of some of his terms and measures clearly indicates he expected his book would be read or heard by those not familiar with the technical details of the grain trade. Folio 3r, Pinto 159.

produce works that “...increasingly visualized examples of good and bad conduct, against which readers might measure their adherence to specific moral dilemmas.”⁶⁴

As an intelligent and successful Florentine grain merchant, Domenico Lenzi would have been quite aware that the response to his work, and to himself as its creator, would be nuanced by the dynamics of *how* and *where* his various audiences experienced the work. We need to remember that as a bound codex, *Lo Specchio umano* was, in spite of its size and weight, ultimately a portable object that could have been experienced in different settings and spaces—home, guildhall, grain market, and confraternity at Orsanmichele, etc.—where Lenzi himself would likely be present as reader or commentator.

The issue of the size and weight of the manuscript, and how this might relate to its intended uses and audiences, has been largely ignored. At 138 parchment folios of 38.5 x 27 cm. (15.2 x 10.6 in), bound in wooden covers, *Lo Specchio* was a large and heavy object, and clearly not designed for casual individual use, as was a Book of Hours.⁶⁵ This indicates that the manuscript was intended to be viewed by a number of people simultaneously, although its size also conferred a special prestige on its creator. As George Greenia observed, “The bigger the book the more scripted or marked the identity of the rightful user.”⁶⁶ And Lenzi was always going to be, at least in his lifetime, the rightful user. While the book was technically portable, its size and weight meant that its use outside of its usual resting place, almost certainly Lenzi's house, would

⁶⁴ Catherine Harding, “Speaking in Pictures: Reading, Memory and Interpretation in Francesco da Barberino’s Advice to Women in his *Reggimento e costumi di donna*,” *RACAR* 36, no. 1 (2011): 29.

⁶⁵ The size Lenzi specified was an expensive one for each of his bifolia would have measured 77cm x 54 cm, taking up a significant portion of a single skin and requiring that the skin be thicker than for a smaller volume, thereby adding to the weight. George D. Greenia, “The Bigger the Book: On Oversize Medieval Manuscripts,” *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83, no. 3 (2005): 725. See Storey, 879-881, for a structural analysis of the physical construction of Lenzi's codex.

⁶⁶ Greenia, 733.

have been carefully planned. This involved such considerations as when and where it would be placed, how it would be supported while being read, how it would be lit, who would have access to it, and how the manuscript would be protected from damage. Lenzi's objective would likely have been to enable as many people as possible within a certain space to clearly view the manuscript without putting it at risk.⁶⁷

Lenzi in his Networks

Late-medieval and Renaissance Florentine networks, and their impact on all forms of civic, social and religious relationships, have been well-studied across a range of academic disciplines. These studies have revealed just how fundamental these networks were in the lives of Florentines at all levels of society. The realities of Florentine networks produced a web of relationships that required great skill to navigate because of overlapping and conflicting interests between individuals, families, and institutions. The same dense networks that enabled "social and psychic survival" were also a constant strain on relationships because of competition and slights, real or imagined.⁶⁸ The overlapping nature of these networks meant that one was continuously encountering the same people, but in different contexts. One's fellow guild member, for example, might also be a business associate or competitor, a relative or friend, a member of the same confraternity, and so on.

In the following discussion of each of Lenzi's primary networks, my focus is on how Lenzi's participation in these networks might have influenced why and how he produced his book, how he used it, and how he expected it to be received and related back to himself.

⁶⁷ Greenia, 728, noted, "... books exercise their maximum cultic function when they are large enough to be visible to a crowd.

⁶⁸ Weissman, 1982, 29.

The Lenzi Family

In his discussion of Lenzi's codex, Wayne Storey noted that it fit within the "...rapidly developing custom of the family book of morally sententious and professionally useful information, a form of the *ricordanza*."⁶⁹ The enshrinement of commercial, moral, social, and political facts, by the writer, for the benefit of future generations was, I maintain, one of *Lo specchio's* intended functions.⁷⁰ All of its content had practical, symbolic and evidentiary value in terms of generational knowledge transfer, civic and familial history, identity, and memory.⁷¹ Lenzi's family, both current and future generations, would always be the primary audience and users of his book, so long as it remained with his line.

Pinto observed that it was most probable that Lenzi was part of a family business in which his father, brothers, and other degrees of kinfolk might be involved.⁷² It was also likely that Lenzi was married sometime in the 1330's, given the normal patterns of marriage in Trecento Florence, and that he had children by the time he wrote *Lo Specchio*.⁷³ Lenzi would therefore have had good reason for leaving a book for his family that provided practical information on the grain trade (his price lists and market mechanics) and strong moral advice on being a trustworthy merchant and dutiful Christian. The keeping and passing on of detailed lists of prices as an aid to

⁶⁹ Storey, 876.

⁷⁰ Giovanni Ciappelli wrote of the various forms of *ricordanze*: "The development of this form of writing was obviously shaped by the personality traits of its authors. Nonetheless, it is clear that the intended audience of these texts—the authors' descendants—was a key element, providing a clear focus that shaped their form." Giovanni Ciappelli, "Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences," in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, eds. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28. See also Bec, 1967, 20-30.

⁷¹ Ciappelli stressed that such writings "...rapidly became props for memory, defining what was worth remembering in relation to what could be forgotten." Ibid, 27.

⁷² Pinto, 12.

⁷³ This assumes that Lenzi was born around 1305, as estimated by Pinto, 14. According to David Herlihy, the average age of marriage for Florentine men in the late-middle ages was nearly 30. David Herlihy, *Women Family and Society in Medieval Europe: Historical Essays 1978-1991* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), 181.

conducting business was perfectly normal and would have been considered a valuable family resource for future business decisions.⁷⁴ Additionally, the codex documented many of Lenzi's own transactions and relationships and these provided a permanent record of family history that could be called upon to validate its members' status as honourable Florentine citizens, grain market merchants, and active Christians. Lenzi's book would have been of benefit to other members of the Lenzi family and contributed to the family's reputation.

Within this family setting, both in Lenzi's lifetime and after his death, the codex would have been a prized and valued object, not just for its considerable material value but also for its practical and moral content, and as a container of familial memory. In this capacity it became a morally infused material object that had the potential agency to confer status, guide family self-image and behaviour, and assist in the family's negotiation of relationships across the spectrum of Florentine society. At least within the family setting, Domenico Lenzi would have achieved his objective, as Susanna Partsch expressed, of "...not to be forgotten by creating a lasting work."⁷⁵ *Lo Specchio umano* was thus a conscious act of familial patrimony by its commissioner.

Lenzi's Neighbours and Friends

When Paolo da Certaldo included his neighbours (*vicinanza*) as part of the audience for his book, he was not only indicating that his book would be shared with them, but was also demonstrating the fundamental importance of the concepts of neighbour and neighbourhood as

⁷⁴ A folio containing grain prices for the years 1309-1319, taken from other grain merchant's notebooks, was added at some point as folio lv. Pinto wrote about this that: "As for the author, it may have been Lenzi himself who derived these prices from the books of other merchants, in order to broaden the chronological limits of his work, but perhaps the most probable hypothesis is that it was someone else, into whose hands the manuscript passed after Lenzi's death." ("Quanto all'autore, può darsi che sia stato lo stesso Lenzi a trarre questi prezzi dai libri di altri mercanti, allo scopo di allargare i limiti cronologici della sua opera, ma forse l'ipotesi più probabile è che sia stato qualcun altro, nelle cui mani era passato il codice alla morte del Lenzi.") Pinto fn.1, 541.

⁷⁵ "SchlieBlich war er offenbar vom Wunsch beseelt, durch Schaffung eines bleibenden Werkes nicht in Vergessenheit zu geraten." Partsch, 3.

an important source of identity and association.⁷⁶ In a society whose principal social dynamic was rooted in the cycle of obligation and reciprocity, there were strong reasons to develop close bonds with one's neighbours to secure one's social, political, economic, and even physical well-being. Paolo da Certaldo advised, "Always be on good terms with your neighbours, for they are always asked about your affairs before you yourself are asked, and they can hurt or help you...".⁷⁷ In Lenzi's time the neighbourhood was spatially organized around its designated parish, so one's relationships with neighbours were also enacted within their local church, where one's piety and Christian moral behaviour would be observed and remembered.⁷⁸ This is the culture which would have defined Domenico Lenzi's attitudes, relationships, and behaviours with his significant neighbours.

Lenzi's strongest neighbourly relations were likely to be with men of the same class as himself—reasonably well-off, but non-elite commodity merchants, some of whom would probably have also been grain traders. The probable context in which Lenzi would have shared his manuscript with his neighbours would have been in formal entertaining and the provision of hospitality.⁷⁹ At such events, Lenzi, or someone of his choosing, would have read certain passages from *Lo Specchio*, and the guests would have looked at the images and talked about their

⁷⁶ F. W. Kent observed that "Belonging to a particular area of the city conferred identity on a man, as did his trade." F.W. Kent, "Ties of Neighbourhood and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence," in *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Kent, F.W. and Patricia Simons with J.C. Eade. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 80. For a more detailed discussion on the meaning and effects of neighbours and neighbourhoods in Renaissance Florence see D.V. Kent and F. W. Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The Districts of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century*, (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin Publisher, 1982).

⁷⁷ Certaldo, Good Practice #267, Branca, 2015, 67-68

⁷⁸ Dale Kent, in her work on friendship in Florence noted that "The many activities centered on local churches offered myriad opportunities for the formation of friendships among parishioners and other near neighbors." Dale Kent, *Friendship, Love, and Trust in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 121.

⁷⁹ Certaldo pointed out the importance of getting together to feast with one's neighbours and friends, advising, "Therefore, according to your means, invite them to dine with you, and you do them honour, and they shall do the same for you. Thus the love between you and them will grow." Certaldo, Good Practice # 141, Branca, 2015, 57.

meanings in light of current state of affairs of their city. In this context, Lenzi would have revealed himself as a morally concerned Florentine and Christian who was a neighbour worthy of honour and association. Some of Lenzi's neighbours would have also been his friends, along with other grain merchants.

The issue of friendship in late-medieval and Renaissance Florence has been comprehensively studied in recent years, and scholars such as Richard Trexler, Paul McLean, Dale Kent, and Carolyn James have demonstrated just how intricate and complex friendship relations were in Florence.⁸⁰ So what role might Lenzi's friendships have played with respect to his book?

The creation of *Lo Specchio umano* was a carefully thought out, lengthy, and costly project. It is therefore highly probable that Lenzi's closest friends would have been aware of the project and asked for their advice and support throughout the course of the book's development. If so, they would have been acutely aware of Lenzi's own moral concerns and objectives, including how he himself was represented in the work. Thus, his close friends would have been more intimately connected with the book than most other of his audiences. As with his neighbours, Lenzi's friends would have seen, heard, and discussed his codex while being entertained in his home.⁸¹ Similarly Lenzi would have been invited regularly to dine at his friends' houses and might well have been asked to bring the book with him, for the pleasure and edification of his host and other guests, though, as previously noted, the physical dimensions of

⁸⁰ Trexler, 1980, 131-158; Paul D. McLean; Dale Kent, 2009; Carolyn James, "Mercantile and Other Friendships in Early Renaissance Tuscany", in *Studies on Florence and the Italian Renaissance in Honour of F.W. Kent*, eds. Peter Howard and Cecilia Hewlett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 151-167.

⁸¹ One such gathering was described by Giovanni da Prato about a gathering in 1389 in which he "...describes the social and literary gatherings of the wealthy commercial middle class and contemporary intellectuals." Tanya Bastianich, "An Illustrious Man and His Uomini Illustri: Francesco di Marco Datini and the Decoration of his Palace in Prato" (PhD diss., Oxford University, Keble College, 2000), 91.

the work would have necessitated some advance planning.⁸² The sharing of manuscripts was a common feature of Florentine book culture although the nature and value of *Lo Specchio* might well have left Lenzi reluctant to part with it.⁸³ But if he did lend it out, it would most likely be to this group of individuals, his trusted friends.

Lenzi's Guild

Guild membership was an essential component of activity and identity for any Florentine artisan or merchant.⁸⁴ As a seller of non-wheat grains, a *biadaiuolo*, Lenzi would have been a member of the Guild of Oil Merchants and General Provision Dealers, the *Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*.⁸⁵ The guild in Trecento Florence was a legal entity with profound influence over the economic, social, political, and even religious lives of its members. In particular, the economic and moral behaviour of members of the guild reflected on the membership as a whole. In a 1318 statute, the *Oliandoli* guild instituted a rigorous investigative process around those suspected of the fraudulent use of standard measures to maintain "*il comune bene de l'universita*" (the common good of the guild).⁸⁶ And because this guild included all those involved in the daily business of provisions, its role with respect to provisioning the poor, who were the most vulnerable to any form of fraud, was closely watched by guild authorities and the city.

⁸² Dale Kent wrote that "Dining together was an acknowledged sign of friendship... ." Dale Kent, 2009, 126. See also Simonetta Cavaciocchi, "A Taste for Living," in *Francesco di Marco Datini: The Man the Merchant*, ed. Giampiero Nigro (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2010), 206-7

⁸³ Kaborycha 87, concluded that in Florence the "Loaning books was considered a kind of civic obligation."

⁸⁴ Jill Harrison, "Being Florentine: A Question of Identity in the Arte Della Lana, Florence," in *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Sandra Cardarelli, Emily Jane Anderson and John Richards (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 128.

⁸⁵ This was one of the minor guilds but it was also one of the wealthiest of all guilds, so belonging to it likely carried a status beyond its position in the formal guild hierarchy. See Ito, 2014, 394-400. See also Edgcumbe Staley, *The Guilds of Florence* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1906), 42, 47, 393.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Romano, 164.

Of all the various traders of the many foodstuffs represented in this rather wide-ranging guild, the *biadaiuoli* were in a particularly sensitive position, especially in times of reduced supplies of grains. They were the targets both of the populace at large and of Florence officialdom who automatically attributed shortages and rising prices to the hoarding actions of the grain traders. Lenzi quoted the angry crowd at Orsanmichele, deprived of their grain:

This is a poorly run city where we cannot get any wheat! We should hasten to the homes of these robbers who are keeping the grain and set fire to their homes, and burn them inside, because they are keeping us starving.⁸⁷

Such outbursts alarmed the Florentine government who, fearing civil disorder, came down heavily on the grain traders. In September 1329, as Lenzi described, officials interrogated sixty of them and then arrested, tortured, and punished thirty-six of them.⁸⁸ There was thus great pressure on the *biadaiuoli* to publicly demonstrate their individual and collective honesty and adherence to civic laws and administrative requirements. Lenzi's book could be seen as just such an affirmation of honesty and loyalty, and it would certainly have been attractive to most of his fellow guild members as such a statement. Lenzi's book also spoke to the non-commercial activities of his guild, especially its role in public piety and provision of charity.⁸⁹

For all these reasons, it is inconceivable that Lenzi would not have formally shared his work with his fellow *biadaiuoli* guild members, and likely the guild as a whole, as this would have

⁸⁷ "Ecco città mal guidata, ké non possiamo avere del grano! E si vorebbe andare alle chase di questi ladroni che n'anno, e mettervi fuocho e ardeglivi entro perché e' ci tenghono in questa fame." Pinto, 302.

⁸⁸ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 356-357.

⁸⁹ "All guilds participated in the celebration of communal saints as well as the feast days of their respective saintly protectors: events that saw the guilds donate alms to religious and pious foundations." Joseph Fahey Stanley, "From Medieval Corporatism to Civic Humanism: Merchant and Guild Culture in Fourteenth and Fifteenth-Century Florence" (PhD diss., Binghamton University, 2011), 87. The *Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli* guild had its public procession to Orsanmichele on the feast day of its patron saint, St. Bartholomew, which was August 24th. In the five-year period from 1360-1365, this guild donated an average of 56.4 lire per year for distribution to the poor by the Orsanmichele Confraternity, which exceeded the average givings of all of the major guilds (53.6 livres) and ranked them 8th in givings overall. Ibid, Tables 1-3, 142-144.

been totally in line with his stated moral mission. Any sharing of Lenzi's manuscript with his guild would have been in the audience hall of the headquarters of the *Oliandoli* guild which was in the basement of the *Palazzo Lamberti*, right on the edge of Orsanmichele.⁹⁰ Lenzi would have been a regular visitor to his guild hall, a space decorated with an image of the guild's patron saint, St. Bartholomew, and doubtless other imagery that related to the projection of their identity as good Florentines, merchants, and Christians.⁹¹ It would have been against this backdrop that Lenzi would have read and showed *Lo Specchio umano* to his fellow guild members.

One of the primary responsibilities of the guild towards its members was to care for their physical and spiritual needs.⁹² This was exercised through worshipping together on important guild occasions and celebrations, caring for sick members and their families, and especially in honouring their members in death and praying for their souls. Thus, for Lenzi to be held in high esteem by his fellow *Oliandoli* guild members would not only add to his *fama* in life as an honourable merchant, but also guarantee another stream of prayers to help him through Purgatory.

Lenzi's Confraternity

If belonging to a guild was a legal and economic necessity in Lenzi's Florence, then belonging to a confraternity was a religious and social one.⁹³ The confraternity was a socio-

⁹⁰ Marcie Freedman Slepian, "Merchant Ideology in the Renaissance: Guild Hall Decoration in Florence, Siena, and Perugia" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1987), 149. See also Staley, 395.

⁹¹ Gregorio Dati (1362-1435) noted that "every guild had its own headquarters and that these spaces are highly honoured and ornately decorated. "...e ciascuna Arte ha sua casa, e residenza molto onorata, e ornata..." Goro Dati, *Istoria di Firenze di Goro Dati, dall'anno 1380 all'anno 1405*, ed. Guiseppe Bianchini (Firenze: Giuseppe Manni, 1735), 141. We know that there was an image of St. Bartholomew in the guild hall as it was listed as one of the works of art that was transferred when the guild was amalgamated into the *Arte dei Fabricanti* in 1583.

⁹² Henderson noted that the Florentine *Arti* "...were infused with the same commitment to Christian brotherhood as confraternities. Henderson, 19.

⁹³ In fact, the structures of confraternities in Florence were patterned in a similar form to the guilds, which is hardly surprising given that most of the members of a confraternity would also be members of one of the guilds. Blake Wilson, "Music and Merchants: The *Laudesi* Companies in Early Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance and*

religious organization deeply imbedded in Florentine culture as an expression of civic and religious identity. For merchants in particular, these associations allowed them to “..unburden themselves of some of their anxiety about new wealth by regulating not only moral, but also commercial behaviour.”⁹⁴ The social role of the confraternity was also significant, enabling members “...to widen their social and professional networks to include people whom they might not have met as a result of their normal contacts through work or in the neighbourhood.”⁹⁵ Belonging to a confraternity was a vehicle for publicly declaring one's adherence to Christian moral principles and behaviours, and every confraternity had serious rules about the moral conduct of its members.⁹⁶ In addition to its devotional and social roles, the confraternity was a primary vehicle for the dispensing of alms and the support of charitable works in Florentine society.

These activities of the confraternity earned credit for one's soul, for not only would God look favourably on a member's good works, but devotions were often accompanied by issued indulgences that reduced the participant's purgatorial time.⁹⁷ Of especial importance to confraternity members was the certainty that it would care for their souls after death, and help

Reformation 13, no. 1 (1989): 156. Henderson recorded that between 1240 and 1349 Florence had over 45 active confraternities (also called companies) and that their membership ranged from a few hundred for most but up to as many as three thousand for the largest, the confraternity that shared the space of the grain market at Orsanmichele (*la campagna de la beata Vergine pura Madonna Santa Maria di San Michele in Orto*). Henderson, 40 & 198.

⁹⁴ Jennifer Fisk Rondeau, "Lay Piety and Spirituality in the Late Middle Ages: The Confraternities of North-Central Italy, ca. 1250-1348" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1988), 300.

⁹⁵ Henderson, 110.

⁹⁶ For example, the confraternity of Gesù Pellegrino, founded at Santa Maria Novella in Florence in 1334, in addition to its prescribed worship and devotional requirements, also stipulated that its members must "dress ... honestly and to deal truthfully in all things, and in their work and business with all men deal honestly and peaceably, and at home with their families. Ibid, 103

⁹⁷ The Florentine *laudesi* confraternity at Santa Maria Novella granted indulgences to members for singing and processing in 1288 and 1304. And a prayer to the Virgin at the end of a *laude* in a book of the *Company of Sant'Egidio* in Florence carried an indulgence of 40 days. Rondeau, 55-56; 210.

them move from Purgatory to Paradise.⁹⁸ The confraternity, as a totally trustworthy institution for such ritual and remembrance, provided a sense of assurance that even one's family did not.⁹⁹

The confraternity, therefore, was an absolutely fundamental part of one's life as a fourteenth-century Florentine, Christian male merchant, and so, even in the absence of documented proof, I assert that Domenico Lenzi must have belonged to a confraternity. Moreover, I think that circumstantial evidence strongly suggests he belonged to the one that shared space with the grain market at the Orsanmichele, *la campagna de la beata Vergine pura Madonna Santa Maria di San Michele in Orto* (See Appendix 3).¹⁰⁰

If Lenzi was a member of the Orsanmichele confraternity, then its history, prestige, devotional and charitable activities, and especially its access to a large number of people, including the most important people in Florence, would have ideally served his mission of public moral transformation and recognition of his own moral stature.¹⁰¹ His manuscript could have been read or shown at the confraternity's usual devotional gatherings, or perhaps been displayed and read to an audience at other types of meetings or at a special event, even outside.¹⁰² The confraternity would certainly have been able to provide the necessary infrastructure to use this

⁹⁸ Henderson wrote that the Confraternity "...could be relied on to guarantee a decent funeral and to provide the apparatus for the commemoration of members' souls." Henderson, 155. For the funeral alone, the confraternity "...provided money, extra services, larger number of mourners, and more elaborate ceremonial than the average member could have afforded..." Ibid, 156.

⁹⁹ One's worst fear was, as Rondeau put it, that "Not only did family and friends represent worldly ties that meant nothing in the next world, but theirs was also a highly suspicious allegiance even in this one. Worse, their inadequacy threatened to impinge on performance of such obligations as proper burial and, we may surmise, provision of masses and prayers for the dead." Rondeau, 1988, 244.

¹⁰⁰See Appendix 3.

¹⁰¹ Giovanni Villani (c.1276-1348), who was also involved with the grain trade and its magistracy, wrote in his *Chronica* that the membership of the Orsanmichele confraternity included "a good part of the better people of Florence" (*buona parte della migliore gente di Firenze*). Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, Electronic Edition: <https://www.liberliber.it/online/autori/autori-v/giovanni-villani/nuova-cronica/>, Book VIII, CLV, 227.

¹⁰² Such meetings of a confraternity were quite normal. See Botana, 203.

large codex, as we know from the inventories of other Florentine confraternities that they often possessed very large books and the lecterns and lamps necessary to support and light them.¹⁰³

Lenzi and the Church

Lenzi continuously displays himself through his codex as a thoughtful, concerned, and committed Christian. In his Prologue, he emphasizes that he has not intended to say anything that might suggest he had "...failed in my Catholic faith or strayed from the holy Christian religion."¹⁰⁴ As a dutiful Christian who went to mass, took communion, and made confession, Lenzi would have had a relationship with the priests in his own parish church and perhaps also with those of a large mendicant church, such as Santa Maria Novella.¹⁰⁵ The actual range of activities that parish priests performed for their parishioners suggests Lenzi would have been quite comfortable in discussing his project with his parish clergy and soliciting their advice or assistance.¹⁰⁶ It is hard to imagine that he would not have talked about his intention to write *Lo Specchio* with at least one of these clergy. Such an activity would likely have been affirmed and encouraged, given the project's objective of religious and moral renewal. Indeed, the production of *Lo Specchio* might have been understood as a form of repentance and restitution for having

¹⁰³ A mid-fourteenth century inventory for the Florentine company of Santa Reparata included three lecterns, candle holders and lamps. This same confraternity commissioned a book of *laude* which "was to be large, in order to sing from it better." See Rondeau, 1988, 186-187

¹⁰⁴ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 345.

¹⁰⁵ There is some ambiguity here. Ronald Weissman observed that "Although the parish was a basic unit of social life, the parish church was less so. The Florentine was more apt to attend mass at one of the major mendicant churches of the quarter." Weissman, 1982, 20. Richard Trexler noted that the friars of the regular orders were generally more educated than the secular clergy who provided the sacramental and curative care, so that may have been a factor in any of Lenzi's consultations with clergy. Trexler, 1980, 34. George Dameron, however, takes exception to the kind of historiography that Trexler and Weissman represented, which he says overplays the role and status of the regular clergy and underplays that of the secular clergy. Dameron, 2004, 9.

¹⁰⁶ "Parish clergy also witnessed important notarized transactions, served as guarantors (*fideiussores*) of testaments of their parishioners, represented their communities in urban courts, and subsidized the economic resources of their parishioners. They witnessed sales, dowry contracts, and loans. ... Priests regularly served as witnesses when parishioners notarized the repayment of loans, sales of property, and dowry agreements." Dameron, 2004, 33.

profited so significantly from the grain crisis through the rise in grain prices, to the detriment of the poor, though this is pure speculation.

Any such consultation with clergy would have assured that Lenzi's text and imagery was theologically correct. The consequences of having his expensive labour of love amended or even burned by the Church, with perhaps a charge of heresy against himself, were simply too great for him not to have taken adequate measures to confirm that the book was acceptable. It would also follow that such consultations would have included discussions about how the manuscript was going to be shared which was, after all, its *raison d'etre*. Again, it is reasonable to conclude that Lenzi would have shown the completed manuscript to the clergy at his church, either there, or in his own home.

While it is theoretically possible that Lenzi would have been invited to display or speak about his book to other lay people in the church itself, this is far less certain, given the general separation between clergy and the laity. But even if Lenzi's work was not shared directly within the church setting, it might well have been alluded to in a sermon, and certainly, as earlier noted, it would have been shared with some people who were members of Lenzi's parish and were also part of his other networks.

No matter what the degree of involvement or approval that Lenzi obtained for *Lo Specchio* through his clerical relationships, the fact that it was not theologically controversial must have been a source of reassurance for him personally, and of others' perception of him as a faithful, orthodox Christian.

Lenzi and Civic Officials

The continuous availability of grain for the Florentine republican government "...was absolutely essential for growth, stability, survivability, and political legitimacy."¹⁰⁷ The establishment of a strong administrative arm to oversee every aspect of the acquisition, availability, and distribution of grain was therefore a principal concern of the government. Practically, this meant that numerous officials, elected, appointed, or hired, had a significant presence in the grain market at Orsanmichele. In Lenzi's time as a trader, the chief magistracy for the overall grain trade was the *Sei della biada* which had a sizeable staff of administrative officials to see that the plethora of regulations were strictly followed.¹⁰⁸ To help keep order in the grain market, the *Sei* could call upon armed assistance from the chief magistrate, the podestà, who could draw on a number of resources to provide the men necessary, including the retainers of leading citizens.¹⁰⁹ It was in such an environment that Domenico Lenzi had to ply his trade, and earning and maintaining the goodwill of the principal officials would have been essential and strategically important. So where might *Lo Specchio umano* have fit in with this objective?

Lenzi's narrative is strongly supportive of the actions of the city and its officials to manage the situation at the grain market during the 1329/30 shortages, even to the point of approving of questionable actions involving interrogation and torture against his fellow traders.¹¹⁰ Thus, he would have had nothing to fear from civic authorities with respect to his description of events, as his book became known.

¹⁰⁷ Dameron, 2017, 985.

¹⁰⁸ The *Sei* officials had a station in the loggia of the market. They inspected the trading area first thing before it opened in the morning and then monitored it throughout the trading day. Marie D. Ito, "Orsanmichele—The Florentine Grain Market: Feeding an Urban Population in the Early Trecento." *Presentation to the Renaissance Society of America*, Berlin, 2015, 7.

¹⁰⁹ Ito, 2014, 500-502.

¹¹⁰ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 356-357.

One of the curious features of Lenzi's manuscript is that the names and dates of tenure of certain civic officials are scattered throughout the lists of grain prices, even though they do not feature as part of the narrative, and were obviously inserted retroactively.¹¹¹ Pinto surmises that the reason for this was "to break the monotony of the series of prices and, in a certain sense, to give greater dignity to the work...".¹¹² I would suggest, however, that a more plausible explanation for these additions, which would have added to the overall cost of production, is related to socio-political considerations around the function and reception of the manuscript.

Lenzi's mission for his book necessitated a wide audience and good reception if it were to be successful. Well into the project he probably concluded that the inclusion of the names of influential persons and families in Florentine society would widen and enhance such reception, as well as add to his own status and credibility. This alteration would therefore have been a deliberate move by Lenzi to maximize support for his book and mission, rather than any attempt at historical accuracy. It is likely that many of these eminent individuals and families would have heard of Lenzi's book, particularly its splendid illuminations, and would have wanted to see it, thereby adding to Lenzi's prestige as well as advancing his stated objectives for his book.

Summary

As we can see from the discussions above, Lenzi's networks, and therefore his potential audiences, included a range of individuals, spaces, and institutions. While receptivity and response to *Lo Specchio umano* might be varied across this range, its key messages about the need

¹¹¹ These included the positions of *vicari* (authorized representatives of a governing person or body), *podestà* (chief magistrate responsible for law and order), and the *Sei*. On the retroactive insertion see Pinto, fn. 1, 162.

¹¹² "La quasi totalità di queste brevi notizie relative ai vicari e ai podestà, come pure altre, assai rare, di contenuto storico-politico, furono inserite in un secondo tempo per rompere la monotonia delle serie di prezzi, e un certo senso per dare maggiore dignità all'opera secondo quello che era il modello di una certa tradizione storiografica." Ibid. In this same footnote. Pinto also noted that the date given by Lenzi was incorrect. Partsch, 6, repeats Pinto's conclusion without adding anything to it.

for gratitude to God and heed of God's sacred counsel would have been both understood and welcomed. As *Lo Specchio*'s creator, reader and commentator, Lenzi suffused the work with his own moral character and fervent Christian belief in being thankful to God and showing compassion to the needy, so as to influence its audience's reception to the benefit of his reputation and own salvific hopes.

Part 4: The Representation of Domenico Lenzi in *Lo Specchio umano*

If the discussion of the Merchant's Moral Eye framework so far has emphasized anything, it is how essential it was for late-medieval Italian merchants to demonstrate their commercial trustworthiness, civic loyalty, and active involvement in Christian worship and almsgiving.¹¹³ This meant they were continuously performing those values in public by what they said and did through their affiliations and interactions.¹¹⁴ There was, therefore, *always* an element of conscious self-representation in how one presented oneself to others. Lenzi's book expressed his Florentine and Christian identity, beliefs, and values viewed through the lens of his experience as a grain trader at Orsanmichele in good and bad times. The very existence of his sumptuous manuscript, with its stated moral-didactic purpose, was a representation of Lenzi's own moral self and would have been regarded as an extension of its author. As Alexa Sand observed, "...books, with the totality of their texts and images, served as idealized and corrective reflections of their owners."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Todeschini, 2008, 26-27.

¹¹⁴ Writing of Trecento and Quattrocento Florence, Richard Trexler observed "...that no period of Western history was more preoccupied with correct behaviour than this one..." Trexler, 1980, xxvi.

¹¹⁵ Alexa Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-representation in Late Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

Lenzi's personal presence in his book is often obscured by the dryness of the grain price lists and his generally matter-of-fact descriptions of harsh events. But his personality is sometimes forcibly evident through his passionate observations, outbursts, and wrathful indignation. These are not spontaneous, off-the cuff remarks. They were written long after the events took place and deliberately crafted to reflect and support Lenzi's beliefs, motivations, and expected receptions of *Lo Specchio umano* at the time he wrote it.¹¹⁶ The mature Lenzi being presented to his audiences around 1340 was not the same young grain merchant who lived through the events he so movingly describes. It is Lenzi's personal revelations throughout the codex's narratives, verses, aphorisms, and illuminations that speak to who he is as a Florentine and Christian—an ordinary grain trader deeply concerned about his fellow citizens' ingratitude to God and lack of compassion for the poor.¹¹⁷ And whatever else Lenzi might have gained from such a representation, he established himself with his audiences as someone who was entitled to their good opinion, and worthy of the expressions of their gratitude and prayers for his own well-being.

It is important to remember that, except for three of the poems, all of the text is Lenzi's own, as were the decisions about the content and placement of the illuminations.¹¹⁸ In the

¹¹⁶ Because Lenzi's recounting of the events of 1328/30 was written a decade later than they occurred, it is not surprising that there were some inaccuracies, as Partsch has pointed out. For example, in Lenzi's text, the discussion around Siena's expulsion of the poor situates it in May, but it actually happened in February. Partsch, 9. We simply don't know whether Lenzi had kept notes of all these events when they happened, as he must have for his grain price lists, or whether he depended on his own and others' memories or other written accounts, such as Villani's. Pinto thinks it is likely that he would have kept notes on anything that affected the grain market although he concludes Lenzi must have used other sources and other's memories of events and individual officials. See Pinto, 14-17.

¹¹⁷ Pinto's study did not examine the illuminations in any detail but he noted that: "The whole text, therefore takes on the character of an *exemplum* which the verses and miniatures also emphasize and support." ("*Tutto il libro, dunque, assume il carattere di un exemplum che i versi e le miniature concorrono a sottolineare.*") Pinto, 25.

¹¹⁸ See Partsch, 21 & 47. Pinto thinks that the surviving instructions to the illuminator in folios 3r & 7r might be in Lenzi's own hand. "*È probabile che sia stato lo stesso Domenico Lenzi a scrivere queste indicazioni.*" Pinto, fn.51, 18. Partsch observed that the subject matter of the 4 full-page folios 57v, 58r, 70r, and 79r, (*Figs. 71, 72, 73, 75*) is so

remainder of this chapter I will analyze how the manuscript's text and images support Lenzi's self-representation.

Component 1: The Title-Lo Specchio umano

It is somewhat surprising that Lenzi's title has not received more attention from scholars. Certainly most have alluded to the title as indicating the religious, moralistic, and didactic intent of the work, and some, such as Susanna Partsch, have briefly noted that it built on a long tradition of medieval mirror allegory.¹¹⁹ Yet no one has looked at how the title might relate to Lenzi, personally, as the author of this work.

Medieval mirror imagery was widespread and was almost always used in context of "moral edification or spiritual purification."¹²⁰ The mirror as a spiritual and didactic allegory was a cultural motif that Lenzi and his contemporaries would have experienced in many forms—scripture, sermons, and every type of text. The *Book of Wisdom* described wisdom as "a spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness."¹²¹ Jacobus de Voragine, in his work for preachers on the Virgin, the *Liber Marialis*, said of Mary that:

highly integrated into the events being described in the text that this suggests Lenzi's active involvement, either directly to the illuminator or through either the scribe or manuscript supervisor (if there was one). Partsch, 47.
¹¹⁹ Branca called the title "highly religious and moralistic." Branca, 2015, 11. Partsch simply noted, without further discussion, that: "The term mirror has been used in the Middle Ages since Augustin, especially in didactic and moral treatises such as Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Maius* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*." ("Der Begriff >Spiegel< bzw. >Speculum< war im Mittelalter seit AUGUSTINUS gebräuchlich, und zwar vor allem bei didaktischen und moralischen Abhandlungen wie VINCENT VON BEAUVAIS *Speculum Maius* und dem *Speculum humanae salvationis*"). Partsch, 5. Heindl says that Lenzi's title recalls "...the 'mirrors' of magistrates, practical guides to ruling that circulated in Italy at this time. Heindl, 152. The following articles are helpful for understanding the extensive use and meanings of mirror metaphor and allegory in medieval writing and art: Ritamary Bradley, "Backgrounds of the Title *Speculum* in Medieval Literature," *Speculum* 29, no.1 (1954): 100-115. Alexa Sand, "The Fairest of them All: Reflections on Some Fourteenth-Century Mirrors," in *Push Me Pull Me: Physical and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, eds. Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 529-559.

¹²⁰ Nancy M. Frelick, "Introduction," in *The Mirror in Medieval and Early Modern Culture: Specular Reflections*, ed. Nancy M. Frelick (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 1. Alexa Sand commented on the profusion of late-medieval works calling themselves mirrors: "This was an era of texts that proclaimed themselves mirrors: mirrors of princes, mirrors of the world, mirrors of the Church, and mirrors of the soul." Sand, 2014, 4.

¹²¹ The Wisdom of Solomon, 7:26 in The Holy Bible, 52.

She is called a mirror because of her representation of things, for as all things are reflected from a mirror, so in the Blessed Virgin, as in the mirror of God, ought all to see their impurities and spots, and purify them and correct them.¹²²

And Lenzi himself addresses the Virgin in one of his verses as "*sommo specchio*" (supreme mirror).¹²³ In his Prologue, Lenzi directly links his title to both the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, saying that "I ...devoutly entreat them in their mercy and compassion to give me aid and courage in the writing of this little book entitled "Mirror of Humanity."¹²⁴

The ultimate purpose of *speculum* imagery was that it was a practical metaphor that functioned "...as an aid to self-examination, self-knowledge, and self-fashioning."¹²⁵ In presenting his work to its Florentine audiences Lenzi was providing them with a mirror as a tool for moral reflection and regeneration—and in the process he was using the mirror as a reflective device to show them his own moral awareness and righteousness.

Component 2: The Proemio (Prologue)

The Text (Folios 2r-3r)

The text of Lenzi's *Proemio* establishes his basic identity as a Florentine, Christian grain merchant, and reveals his beliefs, biases, and hopes for his 'little book' (*libretto*).¹²⁶ In spite of his disclaimer about being a "*grosso e ydiota componitore*" (the crude and ignorant compiler), his prologue establishes him as a well-read, serious man who has the temporal and spiritual

¹²² Quoted in the Fitzwilliam Museum's entry on Mirrors in its Signs and Symbols section. See https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos/collection_pages/northern_pages/PD_32_1968/TXT_BR_SS-PD_32_1968.html.

¹²³ This verse followed the list of grain prices for July 26, 1324, which was the Feast Day of Mary's mother, St. Anne. Folio, 22v, Pinto, 215.

¹²⁴ Lenzi, folio 2v, Branca, 2015, 344.

¹²⁵ Frelick, 1.

¹²⁶ Lenzi, folio 2r^a -3r^a, Pinto, 157-160.

knowledge, and the moral courage, to urge his audiences to change their ways.¹²⁷ What makes this Prologue so effective is that he is absolutely present to his audiences in the here and now, functioning as a prophet, foretelling of "the delights of abundance", retelling the "heinous, ultra-diabolical acts" of less moral cities and people, and warning of God's sure punishment of Florence for their "perverse way of living."¹²⁸

There is one component of Lenzi's *Proemio* that has been neglected in the scholarship, but which is especially revealing about him. At the end of the Prologue, Lenzi inserted the following caveat about his work:

And if it should appear anywhere in this book that I have failed in my Catholic faith or strayed from the holy Christian religion, the book should be subjected to correction by the militant Church of God, or destroyed by fire without respect of memory.¹²⁹

While this statement might seem formulaic, in fact it is without precedent in any near-contemporary merchant writing that I have looked at, and seems absolutely unique within the various genres of merchant writings, whether public or private. In making such a statement Lenzi is proclaiming that his faith, beliefs, and actions are in conformity with Church doctrine and practice, even to the point of his prized book being burnt, should he be found in error.

By the end of the *Proemio* Lenzi's audiences have therefore been presented with a man who has revealed his key identities: a skilled and observant grain merchant, a Florentine Christian who understood that moral neglect was the root cause of the calamities that had beset their beloved city, and a stern moralist committed to their individual and collective wellbeing in

¹²⁷ Lenzi, folio 2v, Pinto, 159.

¹²⁸ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 344-345.

¹²⁹ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 345.

the future. This early representation of Lenzi is a precis of the ways in which he will present himself throughout the rest of his codex.

The Image (Folio 2r) (Fig. 67)

This complex and multi-faceted illumination is of critical importance in understanding how Domenico Lenzi uses the visual to represent himself as a highly credible and moral grain merchant. It is generally accepted that this two-frame image is a depiction of Lenzi himself, in both the upper and lower panels, in what Susanna Partsch calls a "self-portrayal".¹³⁰

This image, at the very start of the codex, is the viewer's entry point into the book and to its author. Lenzi is presented to us through the two fundamental actions of any grain merchant at Orsanmichele—the wholesale buying (upper register) and retail selling (lower register) of grain. But it is the fine details of these scenes—the clothes, the gestures, the expressions, and the objects—in their real and symbolic meanings, that establish Domenico Lenzi as an authoritative commentator on grain, and as our qualified moral guide.

i) The upper register (Fig. 77)

This panel features Lenzi, prosperously and formally dressed in a red undertunic and mauve cloak, likely negotiating the purchase of grain from a wholesaler.¹³¹ Standing behind Lenzi is a well-dressed young man who is placing his hand on Lenzi's shoulder. Partsch wrote of this person: "One can assume that this is a younger partner or his son who accompanies him in this shopping trip in order to learn this task and possibly be able to carry it out later."¹³² Partsch is

¹³⁰ "Selbstdarstellung". Partsch, 18.

¹³¹ This is Partsch's interpretation of the scene (p.20), but not Carlo Bertelli's. Bertelli wrote that "... the author[Lenzi] seems to give instructions to an aide that has grabbed the handle of a bushel measure." (...l'autore sembra data disposizioni a un aiuto che ha afferrato il manico d'uno staio.) Bertelli, 7. Partsch's is clearly the more accurate and contextually appropriate interpretation.

¹³² Partsch, 20.

certainly correct in interpreting the relationship between this young man and Lenzi as one of dependence and training. I would argue that this young man must be either Lenzi's son, or at the very least a close family member, such as a younger brother. The gesture of the young man's hand placed on Lenzi's shoulder, coupled with his expression, is one of unusual intimacy and affection that would not be appropriate in a non-familial relationship. In fact, contemporary representations of such a gesture in non-religious settings are extremely rare, especially when it involves a younger man touching an older one.¹³³ This lends credence to the fact that the codex was intended as a familial statement as well as a personal one by Lenzi.

Domenico is elaborately and expensively dressed, much more than would be likely in the real-life situation, and certainly more so than any other figure in the manuscript, although his son is also elaborately dressed, but more colourfully and fashionably.¹³⁴ Such clothing signifies the family as being of reasonably high-status and of comparatively greater rank than the other three figures who appear in the two registers, whose dress is simpler and less expensive.¹³⁵

The colours of Lenzi's outfit conveyed the same moral qualities as in the colour symbolism of heraldry (see Chapter 1, Coats of Arms).¹³⁶ The purple, red, and blue garments that comprised Domenico's outfit suggested a range of positive qualities that spoke to both temporal success and moral qualities such as magnanimity, humility, and penitence (see the colour chart

¹³³ Partsch argues that this was a common gesture, citing representations from the *Inferno* of Dante touching the older Virgil. While she correctly observed these were usually a fear reaction, she failed to say that such depictions were extremely few in relation to the number of times that Virgil touched Dante. Moreover, she did not analyze the exact placement of the young man's hand in the Lenzi illumination, nor comment on his expression, which are not analagous to how Dante touches Virgil. See Partsch, fn. 108, p.108. **Fig. 78** is an example of Dante touching Virgil, from *Inferno*, Canto XXV.

¹³⁴ Lenzi's purple gown would have been especially expensive cloth because it had to be dyed twice, first in blue (indigo) and then in red, which could be a very expensive dye. See Spike Bucklow, *The Riddle of the Image: The Secret Science of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 239.

¹³⁵ Susan Stuard, 15, stated that "...costume everywhere is a persistent reminder of social position."

¹³⁶ John Gage related the colours of heraldry and clothing, noting that "Certainly we might expect the moral values of heraldry to be expressed first of all in clothing." Gage, 1993, 84.

on page 71). Thus, Domenico's overall costume, which reflected a general Florentine preference for reds and blues, and their combination as violet/purple, marked him as a man of substance and social and moral stature.¹³⁷

The artist has given the young man a highly fashionable, almost foppish appearance, showing him in a light, varied-coloured robe and very high red neckcloth topped by a blue necklace.¹³⁸ By contrast, Domenico's dress is sober in colour and cut, more neat than fashionable. It emphasizes his role as a wiser, more restrained, and presumably more morally aware man than the younger family member. This adds visual credentials to his ability to be a conscientious advisor and guide, not just to his family, but to all Florentines.

The upper panel is more than just a passive depiction of one of Lenzi's major activities, the purchase of grain for resale. Rather, it is an active moment of teaching to some of his audiences, particularly those unfamiliar with his trade, about the work of a grain trader. The different colours of the grain would be recognized by his audiences through their experience of buying grain at Orsanmichele. This lends verisimilitude to the panel, and further represents Lenzi as an authoritative commentator on the grain trade.¹³⁹ He is clearly and confidently in charge here, and is giving instructions to the wholesaler about what grain he wants, and probably about how it is to be measured. Paolo da Certaldo noted how important measurement was in the buying and selling of grain, both as a practical and ethical consideration:

When you buy grain, take care that they don't fill up the measure all at once, for two or three percent will always spill out. When you sell grain, fill the measure all at once and you will get more grain out of it. But the middle

¹³⁷ Michel Pastoureau noted that these were the most popular colours in late-medieval Florence. Michel Pastoureau, *Red: The History of a Colour*, trans. Jody Gladding (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 92.

¹³⁸ The blue necklace was an example of the foppish fashion that Dante lamented in *Paradisio*, XV: 100-102, Mandelbaum, *Paradisio*, 133. Stuard emphasized that "With the possible exception of coronals, the fashions Dante singled out were all elements of men's wardrobes." Stuard, 45.

¹³⁹ Partsch, 19.

course, the course of reason, is always the best; stick to that in all your dealings, and you shall end well.¹⁴⁰

Cautions about such measurement practices were presumably common knowledge, implicit in Lenzi's act of purchase, and therefore part of his self-representation as a savvy grain merchant. But also, like Paolo da Certaldo's ideal merchant, there is a sense being portrayed through his whole demeanor that Lenzi is also an ethical one who follows the 'middle course'—being honest when buying or selling grain.

ii) *The lower register (Fig. 79)*

In this scene Lenzi is sitting in his shop, surrounded by vats of grain and the measuring and sorting tools of his trade, involved in the act of selling some grain and recording it in his ledger.¹⁴¹ We can actually read what he has just written which is "*Grano grosso, soldi xi*". Susanna Partsch interprets the writing as representative of his composing his *Lo Specchio* manuscript, thereby providing a self-representation as both author and businessman.¹⁴² I would go much further than this, however, in interpreting the role of the book and Lenzi's writing in it. I suggest, given the context of selling grain that we are being shown Lenzi's actual account book, in which all of his transactions would be carefully recorded. By scrupulously recording the transaction of selling grain to the customer in front of him, Lenzi lives up to Pegolotti's description of the honest merchant: "He writes his calculations well and does not err."¹⁴³ The merchant's account book also had significant moral symbolism. The pages would usually contain a heading inscription such as

¹⁴⁰ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #152, Branca, 2015, 58.

¹⁴¹ Partsch, 119.

¹⁴² "...doch er läßt sich mit der Miniatur am Anfang seines Werkes ein Denkmal setzen, welches ihn als Autor und während der Tätigkeiten in seinem Beruf abbildet." Partsch, 22. See also Heindl, 147.

¹⁴³ From Pegolotti's preface "What Every True and Honest Merchant Must Have Within Himself." Quoted in Dotson, 2002, 86-87.

"in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" and sometimes the "Lord God" would be listed as a profit-sharing partner, with the Lord's proceeds to be given to the poor.¹⁴⁴

There is an overall openness about this scene that suggests everything is above board and in accordance with civic and guild regulations. It is also a reminder of stable, good times—the four visible vats in his shop are full to the brim with grain and the price of wheat is only 11 soldi per *staio* (about 17.5 kilograms), a price it hadn't actually been for many years at the time the illumination was done.¹⁴⁵ Again, this fits in with Lenzi's mission of urging his fellow citizens to behave morally so that God's bounty will flow unabated and benefit all Florentines.

So in this lower scene, as in the one above, Lenzi is represented not only as an experienced and competent merchant, whose advice can be relied on for the purchase of grain (as he notes in folio 19r), but also as an honest and knowing one.¹⁴⁶ The net effect of this opening illumination therefore firmly establishes Domenico Lenzi as an idealized visual model of a merchant and moralist who can not only serve as a capable and reliable guide through the business of grain trading, but is also someone whose ethical stature makes him a serious moral commentator.

Component 3: The Narrative Text and Related Images

The narrative text comprises most of the manuscript and includes the grain prices and descriptions of events related to the grain trade, periodic shortages, and other relevant events. In this section I discuss Lenzi's self-presentation from three aspects: a knowledgeable and

¹⁴⁴ The Bardi company's account books contained such references. See Diana Wood, 119-120.

¹⁴⁵ The weight of a *staio* is provided by Pinto, 160, fn.2.

¹⁴⁶ Partsch makes this linkage but only in the context of Lenzi as a knowledgeable grain merchant, not as an ethical merchant who is qualified to be a moral guide to his readers. Partsch, 20.

trustworthy grain merchant; a compassionate Christian; and a stern Christian moralist. I then examine how the remaining eight illuminations support and highlight such self-representation.

The Text

i) Domenico Lenzi: Skilled and Honest Grain Merchant

After the *Proemio*, Lenzi rarely speaks to his audience in the first person, but on two occasions when he does so, it is to emphasize that he is a skilled and trustworthy grain merchant. On folio 19r, he tells us "I will tell the truth, without lying, to anyone who wants to know about the prices of wheat and other grains, both the cheap and the expensive."¹⁴⁷ And a few pages later, on folio 23v, he further reassures his readers or listeners: "I'll clarify any errors that your tenants or anyone else might have about the prices of wheat or other grains by giving you the correct figures."¹⁴⁸ In these two short verses, Lenzi presents himself as an honest, reliable, and knowledgeable grain merchant who, above all else, is trustworthy. It is this trustworthiness that qualifies Lenzi to lead his audience through the events around the wheat shortages of 1329/30, and his interpretation of why it happened, and therefore to be their moral guide in ensuring that God will not again visit such punishment on their city.

Even more powerful, as a statement of his own honest and ethical stance as a grain merchant in times of dearth, was his personal response to the dramatic events he described between Monday, September 18, and Friday, September 22, 1329. The Florentine grain authorities were convinced that the shortage, and resulting high prices, were at least in part the

¹⁴⁷ "Sanza menzogna, chi vuole esser chiaro di valuta di grano o biada certo, lo gli dirò del vilio e ver del charo." Lenzi, folio 19r, Pinto, 204.

¹⁴⁸ "Io son per farvi chiaro s'alchuno errore voi fictaiuoli o altrui occupasse; di grano o biada e' vi dirò il valore." Lenzi, folio 23v, Pinto, 219.

result of hoarding by the sellers of both wheat and other grains.¹⁴⁹ They called in sixty grain merchants, supposedly to ask their advice, but interrogated them individually, and arrested and imprisoned thirty-six of them, who were also required to post a bond to provide 500 pounds of grain. At this point in the narrative Lenzi proclaims the words "*E questa fu ottima cosa.*" (This was a perfectly good thing.)¹⁵⁰ Lenzi went on to detail the interrogation, under torture, of at least 8 of those arrested to obtain information about who had grain stored away outside of the grain market, and the quantities and storage locations. The obvious question here is why would Lenzi applaud the rightness of the arrest of 36 of his colleagues, which would undoubtedly have included some men with whom he had business dealings and possibly some friends? Pinto's explanation, quoted verbatim by Branca, was that Lenzi's approval "...is merely a particularly forceful example of the exaltation of the officials of the Florentine state (and hence of Florence herself) that is one of Lenzi's main themes."¹⁵¹ Partsch wrote of Lenzi's statement that "Lenzi understands this step of the grain magistracy, which seems quite incomprehensible, since people of his own class were affected."¹⁵² Partsch concludes, in a vein similar to Pinto, that "Lenzi's behaviour can also be explained by his confidence in the authorities."¹⁵³ It is true Lenzi would be highly reluctant to openly criticize the actions of the grain market officials, on whose good will his livelihood depended, even if he did not really agree with their actions.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Lenzi had previously praised strong action by the grain officials to prevent disorder in the grain market,

¹⁴⁹ Ito, 15.

¹⁵⁰ Lenzi, folio 77v. Pinto, 372.

¹⁵¹ Branca, 2015, fn. 23, 356.

¹⁵² "*LENZI begrüßt diesen Schritt der Sei del biada, was reichlich unverstandlich scheint, da ja Leute seines Standes betroffen waren.*" Partsch, 11.

¹⁵³ "*Das Verhalten Lenzi kann auch mitt seinem Glauben an die Obrigkeit erklärt werden.*" Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Paolo da Certaldo, for example, cautioned: "Wherever you go or wherever you stay, always speak well of those who govern the city; and don't speak ill of those who are not in power, because they could come to power later and they won't consider you a friend of theirs nor of their rank." Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #99, Branca, 2015, 49.

and that certainly rang true as civic disorder would be anathema to him for both business and ideological reasons.¹⁵⁵ But Lenzi could simply have remained silent about his own feelings on this matter without in any way criticizing the authorities if he had thought they had acted unjustly. Instead, his statement of support would have confirmed for his audience that Lenzi knew that some of his colleagues were indeed guilty of hoarding or concealing grain, and were therefore deserving of the treatment they received.¹⁵⁶ The real impact of this statement, however, is that in condemning such dishonest and harmful behaviours in some of his colleagues, Lenzi is also declaring that he had not, and would not, engage in such unjust activities himself. This assertion is particularly important for his own *fama*, because on at least two occasions Lenzi reports the crowd of the poor and hungry screaming abuse at the grain merchants at Orsanmichele. On April 8th, 1329 Lenzi quoted the angry crowd shouting, "These merchants are the ones who are causing the famine—they should all be killed, and their goods taken away."¹⁵⁷ And then later that year, in October, when there was again a real shortage of available wheat and other grains, they cried "So these robbers will cause us to die of starvation."¹⁵⁸

In this context it is crucial that Lenzi can represent himself to his readers and listeners as an honest, ethical, and law-abiding grain merchant. Additionally, while he may appear to be condemning the behaviour of a significant proportion of his fellow grain merchants, he is also

¹⁵⁵ "...il buono provvedimento e lla buona guardia..." Lenzi, folio 48r, Pinto, 297.

¹⁵⁶ Lenzi never actually states that any of those interrogated under torture were either guilty or innocent. I think Branca's contention that Lenzi's phrase *con tutto che accesso niuno non aveano messo* means that the merchants about to be tortured were innocent of any wrongdoing because they hadn't put excess prices in place, is incorrect. Branca has not only replaced the word *accessa* (access) with *excessa* (excess), for which there is no offered explanation or justification (Pinto never suggested this), but his meaning just doesn't fit within the sequence of events described in the passage. The merchants were not being interrogated about their prices, but about who had grain in their shop or house, how much of it they had, and who had they been consorting with. See Branca, 1986, fn. 10, 528. Murtha Baca, in her English translation of this passage, accepted Branca's argument and used the words "even though they had committed no irregularity" as part of the passage. Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 357.

¹⁵⁷ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 346.

¹⁵⁸ "Così ci faranno questi ladroni morire di fame." Lenzi, folio 81r, Pinto 377.

suggesting that a sizeable proportion, like himself, were blameless of such market manipulation.¹⁵⁹

ii) Domenico Lenzi: Compassionate Christian

In his description of the events around the grain shortage of 1329/30 Lenzi usually describes the emotionally fraught situations with a detached narrative eye. But sometimes he reveals his own deep feelings about the suffering of the poor and the need for compassion and caring. This particularly comes across in certain passages where he includes supposed verbatim quotes to emphasize the plight of those who were suffering because of the grain crisis. An example is his description of the events at the grain market for April 22, 1329, the Saturday before Easter Sunday, when there was a particularly acute shortage of wheat. Lenzi described the scene as follows:

And the wretches who were in the market square and couldn't get any grain [wheat] were sobbing their hearts out and shouting at the Six [the Grain Magistrates]: "Mercy! Have pity on us so that we shall not die of hunger on this holy Easter! Console us, help us for the love of Jesus Christ." This incited compassion in the Six, who quickly had it proclaimed that these buyers should wait a little and they would each be allowed to buy a basket of grain [wheat].¹⁶⁰

Lenzi's quotes are likely a reconstruction, based on his memory of events, since *Lo specchio* was not written until a decade later. What comes through so clearly, though, is Lenzi's own sense of compassion that sensitizes him to such suffering, as well as the compassion of the *Sei* who, as officials of the Florentine state, make more wheat available to alleviate this suffering.

¹⁵⁹ These would be at least the 24 men who were interviewed by Messer Gubbio Villano and not arrested. Of the 36 traders who were arrested, Lenzi says that 8 were interrogated under torture, but that all were released upon agreeing to place a 500 livre surety bond and were prohibited from acquiring or selling wheat or other grains between their release date of September 23rd until October 15th. In his description of this entire event he never says if the arrested merchants had actually been found to have hoarded grain.

¹⁶⁰ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 350. Murtha has translated the Italian word *grana* as grain, but it is actually just wheat. Lenzi is quite meticulous in specifying whether the product was *grana* (wheat) or *biada* (other grains).

Lenzi's description is as much about the ability to hear and feel the suffering of the poor as it is about the response to a potentially dangerous situation for the city.¹⁶¹

Lenzi's audiences would thus be recalling these events through Lenzi's words and feelings. In his choice of expressive emotional language, Lenzi's own self would have been unmistakable, especially given the added weight of several passionate outbursts that clearly revealed his belief in Christian obligation to help the poor and suffering. This was particularly evident in his description of the actions of the city of Siena whose behaviour in ejecting the starving poor from the city forced Lenzi to declare that:

... I cannot suffer that such cruel insolence and miscarriage of mercy as that which the decadent, perverse, cruel, insane city of Siena showed during this famine should go untold.¹⁶²

And just in case his own words might not be sufficient to convey the depth of his abhorrence at such a crime against Christian charity, Lenzi quotes Dante's *Inferno* passage about the exclamation uttered by the Pisan Count Ugolino as he and his family were being starved to death: "*A! dura terra, perché non t'apristi?* (O hard/cruel earth, why did you not open up?)"¹⁶³ Lenzi, in choosing this particular line, was reiterating his belief that the deliberate starvation of those such as the poor in Siena was a crime against God that would result in eternal damnation for the

¹⁶¹ Villani also wrote about the grain crisis but his tone is emotionally neutral and more about feeding the poor to avoid civil disorder than out of human compassion. See Villani, 475.

¹⁶² Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 353. It would be a mistake to interpret Lenzi's outburst only as an expression of Florentine chauvanism against its traditional enemy Siena. In fact, Lenzi praises the actions of some of the Sieneese for wanting to feed and care for the poor, such as the Hospice of Santa Maria. This righteous action caused him to exclaim: "'Oh! God on high, you should bless that house with your divine grace!' *Ai! Sommo dio, quanto tu dèi a quella casa la tua grazie degnamente concedere senza interporre alchuno mezzo!*" Lenzi, folio 55v, Pinto, 319.

¹⁶³ Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XXXIII, 66. Mandelbaum, *Inferno*, 303. John Ciardi said that Ugolino's account of his story was "...the most pathetic and dramatic passage of the *Inferno*." Dante Allighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: Signet Classics, 2001), Introduction to Canto XXXIII, 269.

perpetrators. Although this was quoted by Lenzi as a moral judgement against Siena, it could also, as Heindl noted, "...still represent the same moral decay he sees in Florence..."¹⁶⁴

Another of Lenzi's noteworthy outbursts around the need for Christian charity was his response to a renewed shortage in October 1329, when the crowd, some of whom had been hurt or robbed, complained bitterly and heartrendingly. Their plight moved him to plead, "O Lord, provide for these poor people."¹⁶⁵ It was through such personal exclamations that Lenzi continuously and sincerely revealed himself as a committed Christian who took seriously the need to care for the poor, assured that by such actions the city and its inhabitants would be blessed by God, both in this world and the next.¹⁶⁶

iii) Domenico Lenzi: Stern Christian Moralist

Lenzi's *Proemio* introduces us to his prophetic voice, but one particular passage in 1331 reveals his deep sense of impending doom if people don't learn from the past and behave as moral Christians. His Old Testament-like diatribe comes without warning or any precipitating event, at a time when wheat supplies were strong and at their lowest price in years. Suddenly, after listing the wheat prices for July 27, Lenzi unexpectedly berates his fellow Florentines:

It is not from you, O vicious and proud man, that comes abundance or any other earthly or heavenly good, but rather from the most-high God, who as the primary mover of the universe is your master and provider, and the just punisher of your sins. Are you so besotted with the current abundance that you have forgotten the past famine? Miserable people, have you put from your minds the evils so recently experienced that they do not prompt you to return to God and worthily earn his pity, mercy and justice, rather than his

¹⁶⁴ Heindl, 163.

¹⁶⁵ "*Idio provedi i poveri!*" Lenzi, folio 81r, Pinto 377.

¹⁶⁶ Villani too saw the solution expressly in terms of almsgiving which he said "...because of these generous alms I'm sure that God spared our town from any misfortune, and will in the years to come too." (...*ond'io senza fallo stimo e credo che per le dette limosine e provedenza fatta per lo povero popolo, Idio abbia guardata e guarderà la nostra città di grandi aversitadi.*) Villani, XI, 119, 474-475.

perpetual condemnation? If you accept God's ways, he will use his power to provide you with abundance.¹⁶⁷

In terms of Lenzi's self-presentation, this passage emphasizes his own awareness and belief in God's mercy and grace, and the causal linkage between just, charitable, and moral behaviour, and the actions of Divine Providence in providing the grain humans need to stay alive.¹⁶⁸ For Lenzi, alerting Florentines to the need for moral renewal is an urgent and critical task; it is precisely because of the ways in which he has represented himself as an honest merchant, compassionate Christian, and stern moralist, that he is able to be a credible messenger and guide.

The Images

The one historiated initial and the seven full-page illuminations support, in varying ways and degrees, Lenzi's presentation of himself in the three aspects just discussed. It is from this perspective that I will analyze each of these images, in the order in which they appear.

1. The Historiated Initial 'N': A Personification, Folio 3r (Fig. 68)

This figure is obviously a personification related to wheat, but there is nothing in the text that indicates who she is or what she represents. Partsch rejected earlier interpretations that this was a personification of *Abundance*, and said it was a personification of *Grain*, and by implication, also

¹⁶⁷ "Nonne da te, o vano malizioso e superbia huomo, abondanza od alchuno altro bene temporale o spirituale, ma più tosto da 'altissimo Idio procede e viene, chome fattore principale, governatore e proveditore di te, e punitore giusto di tuoi mali. Chi sa non che dire ma fare e rachontare la ragione e 'l modo come a tanta passata charestia chosi abondatamente con ordine dovizioso tanto bene sopragiugne? E non certo perché i mali passati ti sienno usciti di mente none aoperandoli come fare solevi, gente misera, ma più tosto per sua pietà e misericordia, volliendo anzi dare a tte tempo di tornare a llui co' suoi rimedii che usando giustizia, che condannarti in perpetuo degnamente. Questa adunque dire si può dovizi<a> da Dio data a riconoscimento di chi la dà e di sua potenza, forse per dire maggiore scoppio se non ti avedi." Lenzi, folio 102v, Pinto, 436.

¹⁶⁸ Giovanni Villani wrote in a similar, but milder vein, in 1341 lamenting that the Florentines have displeased God by having neither faith nor charity. Villani, XII, 135, 608-609. Like Lenzi, Villani expressed his belief that all "... calamities, whether natural or human, take place as God pleases." (*e quando per corso di natura, e quando sopra natura, come piace e dispone la divina potenza.*) Villani, XII, 2, 528.

Summer and the *Harvest*.¹⁶⁹ Heindl, in noting that the personification had been called *Abundance*, *Grain* and *Summer*, stated that "...it seems to me that all three could be true at once."¹⁷⁰

I want to suggest, however, that this figure is rather a version of the Virtue *Justice*, contextually stylized by the addition of wheat sheaves, as per Lenzi's instructions to the illuminator.¹⁷¹ Romano, while not contesting that this personification was *Abundance*, also correctly observed that "Seated and with outstretched arms that seem to mimic the pans of a balance—a justice motif—she echoes the moral intention of the book's author."¹⁷² Lenzi, his illuminator, and the manuscript's viewers were well familiar with the Virtue of *Justice* through texts, sermons, and images. Depictions of *Justice*, such as Giotto's in the Arena Chapel, Padua (*Fig. 59*), or Ambrogio Lorenzetti's in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico (*Fig. 80*), provided well-known models which emphasized Justice's even-handedness. What is original here is the addition of grain to an otherwise conventional figure of *Justice*, creating a representation that is fully compatible with the messages of *Lo Specchio*, in effect a depiction of the moral economy.

The virtue *Justice* represented transparent, even-handed treatment to ensure that no one benefited at the expense of another, and everyone received their fair share. Paolo da Certaldo

¹⁶⁹ "Von daher kann die Figur in der Initiale auf fol. 3r als eine Personifikation des Getreides bezeichnet werden. Dabei sind natürlich der Sommer, der die Erntezeit versinnbildlicht, und der Überfluß an Getreide, der von Gott als Belohnung gesandt wird, wenn die Menschen sich dementsprechend verhalten haben, mit gemeint. Sommer und Abundantia wiederum sind Ideen, die in der Personifikation der Ceres enthalten sind. Wir haben es somit mit einer sehr komplexen Personifikation zu tun, in welcher jedoch die Idee des Getreides in den Vordergrund gestellt ist." Partsch, 20.

¹⁷⁰ Heindl, 147.

¹⁷¹ There is nothing in the *Index of Christian Art* referencing any medieval personification of *Abundance*. As noted earlier, the instructions to the illuminator to add the wheat are still visible, clearly indicating that this was a stock image being adapted for Lenzi's purposes.

¹⁷² Romano, 32.

wrote that the cardinal virtue of justice was "...doing what was right."¹⁷³ As discussed in both the analytical framework and in the Arena Chapel case study, the concept of justice was of fundamental importance to merchants. *Justice* was the opposite of *Avarice*, the vice that was the root cause of all the frauds and unethical practices committed by merchants. It is this specific understanding of justice that underpins Lenzi's applauding of the harsh means used by civic officials to investigate and repress the hoarding of grain by some of his fellow merchants. These colleagues simply have not done the right thing, in his view, and justice demands that they be punished in a way that is restorative and preventative—to reveal their holdings of grain and to make them available to the authorities and population, to pay a surety against future behaviour, and to have temporarily restricted access to the grain market.¹⁷⁴ By implication, therefore, this personification of *Justice* reinforces Lenzi's own representation of himself as someone who does not hoard grain, and who knows and does the right thing as an honest and morally upstanding grain merchant. Lenzi would have been governed by a notion of justice that was, as phrased in Justinian's *Institutes*, "...the constant and perpetual desire to give to each one that to which he is entitled."¹⁷⁵

In fact, there is a direct visual linkage between this personification, and the representation of Lenzi himself in the previous miniature, that no scholar seems to have noticed. Lenzi and *Justice* are both clothed in identically coloured garments, red and purple, a colour combination that no other figure in the entire illumination cycle is wearing.¹⁷⁶ It is reasonable, therefore, to

¹⁷³ Paolo da Certaldo, *Good Practice* #386. Branca, 2015, 96.

¹⁷⁴ This are the punishments described by Lenzi in folios 77v-80r. Pinto, 371-374.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted by Noonan, 31.

¹⁷⁶ Partsch's only comment about the personification's clothing was that such two-tone dresses were highly fashionable in Trecento Italy. Partsch, 22.

assume that this must be an intended association, and that the moral symbolism attached to Lenzi through the red/purple combination of his dress in the previous illumination is therefore given added weight and meaning because of *Justice* being clad in the same colours.¹⁷⁷

In conclusion, I think the overall role of this figure in *Lo Specchio umano* has been seriously underplayed. It is far more than a visual metaphor for an abundant grain supply. Rather, this unique 'grained' personification of *Justice* provides an active moral framework within which Lenzi, as an honest merchant and discerning Christian, can help his audiences to understand his key messages: God has inflicted these shortages as just retribution for their selfishness, lack of gratitude, and compassion for others—but overarching this is God's mercy and the assurance that he will respond if, as Lenzi put it, they "observe his sacred counsel".¹⁷⁸

2) *The Good Harvest, Folio 6v (Fig. 69, 69a)*¹⁷⁹

This scene visually supports Lenzi's stature as an aware, morally concerned Florentine citizen who recognizes that the availability of grain is a conditional gift from God. God's bounty is represented by the abundant harvest, the result of an angel seeding the fields. But God also expressly declares that such plenitude is dependent on his remaining satisfied with his people's behaviour, for he sounds the ominous warning through the trumpet he holds in his right hand (**Fig. 81**): "I can take it all away, so be thankful to me."¹⁸⁰ This illumination thus provides a visual support to Lenzi's text in the *Proemio* and his stature as a stern Christian moralist whose mission

¹⁷⁷ It is simply unclear whether any additional symbolism was attached to the mi-parti style of *Justice's* gown, a style that was often depicted in period painting, including one person (**Fig. 82**) in the final illumination of this codex.

¹⁷⁸ "...i sacri suoi consigli." This is part of Lenzi's sonnet on folio 6r. Pinto, 169,

¹⁷⁹ Much of the interest in this illumination has been because of its rare realistic depiction of a grain harvest during this period. See Partsch, 35-36.

¹⁸⁰ "*Posso rimuover tucto me ringrazia*". Italian inscription provided in Partsch, fn.208, 111.

is to convince his fellow citizens to express their gratitude to God so that good harvests will continue.

3). *The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in Times of Plenty, Folio 7r. (Fig. 70, 70a)*

This illumination is the logical counterpart to the one above in that it shows the effects of a good harvest on the availability of grain at the Orsanmichele market. It also sets up a stark visual contrast with the last illumination (**Fig. 75**), which shows the market emptied of grain and in utter chaos and disorder.

The scene highlights Lenzi's acute awareness of the association between plentiful grain, thankfulness to God, and moral behaviour, and reinforces the perception of him as a grain expert and someone who is an integral part of this same grain market. The illumination visually translates Lenzi's warnings that gratitude for such plenty is demanded by God if such bounty is to continue, as this image portrays some people 'complaining, grumbling and muttering', displaying their ingratitude to God even in the midst of plenty.¹⁸¹ The angel's middle message is a clear warning about how to behave: "In times of plenty do good that evil times not follow."¹⁸²

These messages certainly point to Lenzi's role as a stern moralist but there is possibly an even more direct form of representation, that no one has previously suggested. There is only one person in the miniature who is shown to be conscious of the heavenly intervention that has led to such an abundance of grain. This is the man in the upper right, situated immediately behind the guard who admits people to the market (**Fig. 83**). He is looking upwards at the angel, with his hands outstretched.¹⁸³ I would suggest that this could be an inclusion of Lenzi himself. This figure

¹⁸¹ This aspect of the miniature has been well noted by both Bertelli and Partsch. Bertelli, 8; Partsch, 39-40.

¹⁸² "*In dovizia fa ben che mal non segua.*" Italian inscription provided in Romano, 28.

¹⁸³ Partsch's commented on this figure as follows: "...a man in a simple brown-violet robe raises his hands up to the sky and gazes at the angel floating above the scene, as if thanking God for the abundance he has received." "...hebt ein

is well and soberly dressed in a long purple robe that marks him as a person of substance. The lack of a servant standing by suggests he is a grain merchant rather than a customer. While he is not as elaborately dressed as Lenzi was in the first illumination, the robe colour is the same, and this less formal dress was probably a more accurate representation of the everyday outfits worn in carrying out business in the market. What makes this person stand out from all others is his clear recognition and appreciation of the divine forces that have been so beneficent. Moreover, it is this individual alone who is the direct recipient of the angel's warning—her words cross his outfit and touch no other person. This awareness and response are wholly in line with Lenzi's overall message, and a model of the behaviours Lenzi says are required to ensure continued abundance. I can only conclude, therefore, that if this is not actually Lenzi personally modelling the behaviours he advocates in this illumination, it is surely someone of a similar position and background who shares the same beliefs and concerns. Either way, this figure focuses attention back on Lenzi, and is thus a form of self-representation.

4) *The Poor Are Expelled From Siena, Folio 57v (Fig. 71)* &

5) *Siena's Expelled Are Welcomed in Florence, Folio 58r (Fig. 72)*

These two illuminations are part of the same narrative episode and appear opposite each other on adjacent folios. Since both were viewed together, it makes sense to discuss them at the same time. These two miniatures are visual representations of fundamental episodes of evil and righteous behaviour around the grain dearth that are considered so important by Lenzi that he characterizes them as moralized visual stories for the illiterate: "Because some people cannot

Mann in einem schlichten braun-violetten Gewand die Hände zum Himmel empor und richtet dabei seinen Blick auf den über der Szene schwebenden Engel, so als danke er Gott für den erhaltenen Überfluß." Partsch, 39.

read, a picture can help them to understand something, so these pictures have been created to show the truth."¹⁸⁴

The first image shows the city of Siena forcibly expelling the poor so they wouldn't have to be fed or become a threat to public order. This is Lenzi, the stern Christian moralist, at work. The second image shows these same people being welcomed and generously treated when they arrived at Florence, thus depicting Christian compassion. Certainly these pictures reflect the long-standing enmity between the two cities, but there is much more in them than mere civic chauvinism. While illustrating the events Lenzi has described in his narrative, they also have a metaphorical function in supporting Lenzi's passionate belief that God will only provide his bounty if people are compassionate and help the poor. This is Lenzi in his role as compassionate Christian. While Florence did the right thing, in contrast to Siena, the implication is clear for Lenzi's audience: no matter how much they might enjoy the disgrace of their traditional rival and enemy, they need to continue to help the poor within their own city if they hope to benefit from God's bountiful grace.

The importance of individual action to accomplish this is highlighted and contrasted in the two illuminations. The uniformed guards expelling the poor from Siena are a jumbled mass, with little individuality. But when the poor arrive at Florence, they are warmly welcomed by four persons who do not appear to be civic officials, but rather private citizens dressed very much as Lenzi would have been. Their specific acts of compassion—one is welcoming the persons seeking refuge, two are distributing food, and one is giving money to a disabled man—are personal works

¹⁸⁴ "Ma perciò che talora avviene che chi sa conoscere per sé con figura non sa forse leggere, e per più d'infamia a tanto male rapportare e gloria e honore perpetuo a la mia Firenze sopraporre e agiugnere, nella presente pittura si dimostra più proprio che su può le già schritte cose di Siena e lla verace benivolienza verso i poveri della detta nobile città fiorentina." Lenzi, folio 59r, Pinto, 323.

of kindness and mercy, thereby being visual role models for viewers.¹⁸⁵ Lenzi has thus lent a personal dimension of hospitality and charity through this illumination that serves as a moral *exemplum* of how to help the poor.

Lenzi's *fama* and credibility with his audiences would have demanded that he have had a good personal reputation around the giving of alms, and the compassionate behaviour he has had the illuminator depict would also represent his own behaviour. In these two illuminations there is a strong element of self-representation—on the one hand the rejection of "such godless behaviour," as Siena's, and on the other, "heeding God who gave himself to so much goodness."¹⁸⁶

6) *The Betrayal by Colle Val d'Elsa, Folio 70r (Fig. 73)*

This image illustrates Lenzi's narrative description (folios 69r-71v) of how the town of Colle Val d'Elsa agreed to sell grain to Florence, but then diverted the shipment to Pisa because they got more money for it.¹⁸⁷ I believe this image is a significant commentary on the issue of justice, and therefore is related to the personification in folio 3r. While the illumination illustrates this particular incident, it speaks to the larger issues of trust and truthfulness, and therefore justice. Brunetto Latini, in his discussion of trust, wrote that "...trust is the foundation of justice, truth in speaking, and the keeping of promises... ." ¹⁸⁸ By breaking faith with Florence, Colle Val d'Elsa was guilty of an injustice that was not simply an economic wrongdoing, but a moral crime. As a merchant, Lenzi would have been particularly sensitive to this issue of trustworthiness and the

¹⁸⁵ The actions shown in the welcoming of the poor expand significantly on the text which only says of these expelled poor that "...they were well received and well treated there." Lenzi, folio 59r. Translated in Branca, 2015, 322.

¹⁸⁶ This entire passage, which is part of Lenzi's description of Siena's coldhearted action is "*Ma, o signori, correte allo presente 'Specchio' initolato 'umano', raccontatore di di fatta inpietà, udendo Dio che ora si diè a tanto bene.*" Lenzi, folio 56r, Pinto 319.

¹⁸⁷ Partsch's interest in this illumination is primarily around whether it was a copy of the *pittura infama* that was publicly displayed at the offices of the grain magistrates visually condemning Colle's 'treacherous' act. Partsch, 31-32.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Romano, 175.

need to honour one's obligations. Colle was denounced for not providing the grain it had contracted to deliver, but for Lenzi, our Christian moralist, this could also serve as a warning to its viewers that gratitude and compassion were their part of any bargain with God to receive his bounty.

7) *The Poor Harvest, Folio 78v (Fig. 74, 74a)*

In this illumination the warnings of God pronounced in the illumination on the good harvest have come true. God has shown his displeasure, recalled his angel, and let loose demonic forces to ruin the grain harvest.¹⁸⁹ In this image Lenzi visually articulates that the dearth of grain is a direct act of God, the consequences of failing to heed God's sacred counsel and do good. But other than reinforcing Lenzi's role as a moral guide, can this image be said to have provided a more direct form of self-representation of Domenico? According to Giuliano Pinto, it did. In the right-hand corner there is a man standing in the field looking up at the bat-like demon and holding his hands together in prayer (**Fig. 84**). Written well above this figure is the word "*domenicho*", suggesting that this is Lenzi himself. Pinto argued that

... there is no doubt that the man depicted in the form of a praying man in the miniature describing the wheat harvest in times of famine (c. 78v) is our writer, as the indication «Domenicho», written next to the figure of the man attests.¹⁹⁰

Partsch, however, disagrees, insisting that this cannot be Lenzi because this man is dressed in a short tunic, the garb of a simple farm worker. She added that Lenzi, as a Florentine citizen, would not have been allowed to do farm work. Even more conclusive is her repeating of Luisa Miglio's

¹⁸⁹ The angel's response to God's command was "I am returning and leaving them in the rocky field." Romano, 30.

¹⁹⁰ "...non c'è dubbio che l'uomo raffigurato in forma di orante nella miniatura che descrive il raccolto del grano in tempo di carestia (c. 78v) è proprio il nostro scrittore, come attesta l'indicazione « Domenicho », scritta accanto alla figura dell'uomo." Pinto, fn. 52, 18.

research, that the hand in which "*domenicho*" was written is from a later period, and was not an instruction to the illuminator.¹⁹¹ I think Partsch and Miglio are absolutely right, and that someone at a later time assumed this man was Lenzi and added his name as a kind of gloss.

But from the perspective of my study, this is an incredibly important addition because it indicates that a future reader/viewer assumed it *must* be Lenzi because of the awareness and response of this figure to the distressing divinely ordered events taking place above him. The viewer/glosser obviously had seen in the text Lenzi's profound moral presence, so assumed this man must have been him. If this book was indeed intended to be Domenico Lenzi's legacy, then no more fitting tribute could be made to him than the assumption by some future reader that the pious soul praying to God for relief from the shortage was Lenzi himself.

8) *The Grain market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Famine, Folio 79r (Fig. 75, 75a)*

This highly-detailed illumination has received considerable scholarly attention not only from art historians but also from scholars concerned with economic and social issues in Florence during this period. Interest has been centered around such issues as how the illumination supports the text, and especially which version of the actual painting of the Madonna of Orsanmichele is being represented (Fig. 76).¹⁹² A more recent issue has been Mouilleron's examination of the role of the Madonna's tabernacle within this illumination, which she believes was to serve as a

¹⁹¹ Partsch, fn. 223, 42.

¹⁹² See Partsch, 48, 56; Miglio, 1975, 29-36; Francesco Caglioti, "Giovanni di Balduccio at Orsanmichele: The Tabernacle of the Virgin before Andrea Orcagna," in *Orsanmichele and the History and Preservation of the Civic Monument*, ed. Carl Brandon Strehlke (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 89; Ito, 2014, 433-440. This particular image has also been of interest to art historians as an evidentiary issue in identifying the likely date of production of the manuscript. See, for example: Miglio, 1975, 18-26; Bertelli, 10; Partsch, 47; Nancy Rash Fabbri and Nina Ruttenburg, "The Tabernacle of Orsanmichele in Context," *The Art Bulletin* 63, no. 3 (1981): 385-405; Laurie Taylor-Mitchell, "Guild Commissions at Orsanmichele: Some Relationships Between Interior and Exterior Imagery in the Trecento and Quattrocento," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 20, no. 1 (1994): 61-88; Caglioti, 75-110.

counterweight to the distressful actions going on beside her, and a reminder of the Virgin's presence as a beacon of hope and divine mercy.¹⁹³

I agree that the role of the Virgin's tabernacle was both allegorical, as Romano has suggested, and devotional, as Mouilleron argues.¹⁹⁴ I believe that the inclusion of the Madonna, a figure totally representative of the charitable activities of her confraternity at Orsanmichele, is the climax of Lenzi's message about the power of gratitude, compassion, and charity to invoke God's forgiveness and prevent future grain shortages. This image within an image stands out with its own agency as the means to achieve what Lenzi so passionately wants for his city and his people. This is Lenzi's *raison d'être* for *Lo Specchio umano* and while he does not appear to be physically depicted, his presence is none the less there. The scenes of human distress visually emphasize his humanity and the compassion that caused him to cry out in his text, "O Lord, provide for these poor people."¹⁹⁵

There are some subtle touches that visually reinforce Lenzi's message about Florence's immoral behaviour, such as the money bag being clutched by the demon (**Fig. 85**), which symbolizes avarice as the root cause of ingratitude and selfishness. Lenzi makes sure we understand that this demon is God's obedient agent in visiting misery on Florence by having it proclaim for both heaven and earth to hear: "And I will do as you [God] commissioned me. Cry with good reason that afterwards goodness shall return. In hunger and deprivation, I will make

¹⁹³ Mouilleron 19, concluded that "The painter [on Lenzi's explicit directions] therefore laid out situations likely to stir Marian affection in the face of the painting's anguished humanity, to set in motion the image's miraculous powers, and even to make her a nourishing Virgin which she had not, strictly speaking, ever been."

¹⁹⁴ Romano, 30. Mouilleron wrote that the inclusion of the Madonna could "...reconfigure a revival of piety and devotional practices." Mouilleron, 5.

¹⁹⁵ "*Idio provedi i poveri!*" Folio 81r, Pinto 377.

you grieve."¹⁹⁶ Lenzi also discreetly reminds his audience that his role as an understanding advocate is required, for in the miniature all the people can do is to bemoan their fate, not engage in active repentance: "Sorrow upon sorrow that God abandons us to the worst."¹⁹⁷

There is one last point I want to make about this illumination, and that concerns its use of heraldry. Heraldry has not been a particularly present theme in my discussion of Lenzi and his manuscript, even though it plays a prominent role, for example, in identifying the cities of Siena, Florence, and Colle Val d'Elsa. It is almost certain that Lenzi did not have a personal coat-of-arms or it would have been included in the first illumination as an identifying and status motif. But different aspects of his identity are clearly brought out through the contextualized use of other coats of arms. Firstly, there is the coat of arms of Florence, Lenzi's proud place of birth, featured so prominently in the illumination of the poor being received at the city in folio 58r (**Fig. 86**). Then, in each of the two illuminations depicting the grain market at Orsanmichele (folios 7r & 79r), there is a single guard whose shield bears the design of the *popolo*, a red cross on a white background. This is the social class Lenzi belonged to and would have identified with (**Figs. 87 & 88**).¹⁹⁸ The third coat of arms that I think is relevant to Lenzi is that of his guild, the *Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli*, which I believe is present on two shields on the left side (**Fig. 89**). Whether this representation was, in fact, the coat of arms of the *Oliandoli* guild has been somewhat controversial but I believe, on balance, that it was.¹⁹⁹ I suggest that Lenzi asked for his

¹⁹⁶ "E io faro come tu m'ai largito. Piangi ch'ai donde, ch'addietro il ben torna. In fame e 'n charo vi farò dolere." Bertelli, 68.

¹⁹⁷ "Duol sopra duol che Dio ci lascia al peggio." Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ The *popolo* consisted of the artisans and merchants who were from non-noble families, but did not include the poor, unskilled workers or day labourers or brand new immigrants. In general, a member of the *popolo* was almost always also a member of a guild. See Joseph Patrick Byrne, "Popolo," in *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Christopher Kleinhenz (Abington: Routledge, 2004), 925.

¹⁹⁹ Miglio argue it was their shield and Partch insists it was not. Miglio, 1975, fn. 52, 29. Partsch, fn.239, 113-114. Partsch thinks the device over the lion is a cleric's hat, which was not a common symbol, and I have been unable to

guild's emblem to be included as a symbolic way of representing its commitment to an orderly, well-functioning market in which fairness and compassion ruled. And in such a representation, Domenico Lenzi would be included.

Component 4: The Verses and Aphorisms

These components, particularly the verses, have received attention from literary historians such as Vittore Branca and Luisa Miglio.²⁰⁰ Branca was unimpressed by Lenzi's verses, calling his language "often tiring, laboured, and heavily idiosyncratic."²⁰¹ Miglio, while agreeing with Branca's poetic assessment, correctly noted the importance of all of the metered components in revealing "...those proverbs, mottos and judgements so widespread at the time..." that "...interpret events from a moralizing and Christian perspective."²⁰² In this section I will discuss how these poetic and verse components reinforce how Lenzi represents himself elsewhere in the text and the images.²⁰³

The thirty-eight metered components are scattered throughout the manuscript. Some directly support the text and/or images, while others are general statements of wisdom, piety, or

determine if the two Florentine families, for which it was a symbol, displayed it in the same manner. See Wills, 197. The problem with both their arguments is that they were using the later version of the guild's emblem, in which the lion was holding an olive branch in its paw (**Fig. 90**). According to Edgumbe Staley, however, the emblem of the Oliandoli guild at this time consisted of "a red lion gardant under a green tree." Staley, 393. Admittedly, the image above the lion is not easy to interpret as a tree but it could be.

²⁰⁰ Branca, 1965; Miglio, 1978.

²⁰¹ Branca, 1965, 205.

²⁰² "...quei proverbi, motti, sentenze cosi diffusi..." "... interpreta gli avvenimenti secondo un'ottica moralizzatrice e cristiana..." Miglio, 1978, 111-112.

²⁰³ I have not included the three verses that were taken from Domenico Cavalca's Treatise on the Thirty Follies, as they are not associated directly with the adjacent text or any images. These verses are on folios 111v, 113r, and 119r. They are inserted after lists of grain prices and are not associated with any events. Their position strongly suggests they were added as fillers, as they were all inserted at the end of the page they appear on. Cavalca's poems and treatises in the vernacular were highly popular during Lenzi's time. See Carlo Delcorno, "Cavalca, Domenico," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (1979). <https://www.treccani.it/biografico/>

morality. Two of them (19r & 23v), as previously discussed, are direct and personal statements of Lenzi's own skill and honesty as a grain merchant. All of these components, however, support Lenzi's themes and therefore reinforce his overall self-presentation. Additionally, the verses that appear on the reverse side of some of the illuminations relate directly to the primary messages in those illuminations. For example, the very first verse on folio 6v functions as commentary to the first full-page illumination, which shows the grain market at Orsanmichele in a time of plenty (Fig. 70).

The celestial messenger carries to earth
news full of happiness and joy
moved by the power of the great place
whose righteous will never errs,
shouting: Enjoy life, stay, avoid war,
give thanks to Him who gives you so much.
Do not await the disdainful, weak horn that pours out cruelty.
Every true fruit comes from God.
Yet you, man, take the light from that evil horn,
scorning the poor man, and bitterly resenting the rich man.
Your heart is always hardened against praising God,
And the fact that you don't observe his sacred counsel
shall cause you to fall precipitously from a threshold you never imagined.
The first story seen here below
shows the good that comes in times of abundance.²⁰⁴

The sentiments Lenzi expresses here concerning the lack of charity and the ignoring of God's demands for moral behaviour are very much in line with similar statements, such as that noted earlier in folio 102r. This verse is the first appearance of Domenico Lenzi as the stern Christian moralist who foretells that his fellow citizens' attitudes and actions will lead them to Hell.²⁰⁵ The next miniature, on folio 7r (Fig. 69), is a depiction of an abundant grain harvest, and also has a verse on the rear. In a vein similar to the previous verse, Lenzi chastises humankind for not

²⁰⁴ Lenzi, Branca, 2015, 345-346.

²⁰⁵ Branca, 2015, fn. 3, 346.

appreciating how well they are looked after by God, and for complaining and blaming Him even in times of abundance. Again, Lenzi the stern moralist concludes his verse with another dire warning: "But God's vengeance will come without prior notice." ("*ma fia vendetta, e non saprà il quando*").²⁰⁶ The verses associated with the other two miniatures on folios 78v and 79r have a very similar type of tone. On the reverse of the illumination on 78v, which depicts a poor harvest, the verse announces that God's punishment for "your filthy acts" is at hand in the form of famine (**Fig. 74**).²⁰⁷ And on the reverse of the last full-page illumination on folio 79r (**Fig. 75**), the famous scene of disorder at Orsanmichele, Lenzi continues in the same vein: "You miserable people, run and hide yourself in that odious valley with your villainous disgraces."²⁰⁸

Apart from the poems associated with miniatures, there are other substantive verses (four lines or more) that also address the themes of human ingratitude, immoral behaviour, and the reckoning to come. These are inserted amidst Lenzi's lists of grain prices, and are unrelated to any description of events. This category includes the verses in folio's 14v, 26r, 28v, 31r. There are also some shorter, pithy aphorisms that have the same tone. For example, in folio 24r Lenzi writes

Praise the Lord you unjust and foolish people,
so that we may be granted abundance and have famine extinguished.²⁰⁹

If the aforementioned verses represent Lenzi as a stern Christian moralist, several other of his verses and aphorisms reveal his belief in divine grace, mercy, and charity. Some of these

²⁰⁶ Pinto, folio 7v, 169-170.

²⁰⁷ Pinto, Folio 78r, 373.

²⁰⁸ "A! gente dura e al ben far pur torti! Via tosto corri e nella valle, feda t'inchiodi cho' tuo falli pravi e corti." Pinto, folio 79v, 373.

²⁰⁹ "Lodate Iddio, iniqua gente stolta, che eccho divizia e charestia ci è tolta." Pinto, folio 24r, 221.

verses are personal appeals for help with his book and his mission. In folio 16v, Lenzi appeals to the Virgin:

Mother of God, sovereign being,
Advise me so I can be reassured.²¹⁰

Two folios later he makes a similar entreaty to God himself:

Holy and righteous God, supreme judge of all
Enlighten my mind in the making of this work.²¹¹

And there is one more such personal appeal to the Virgin, in folio 22v, right after he has noted that the day, August 15th, 1324, is the Feast of the Assumption:

Grant me grace and merit,
in order to always serve you with a pure heart.²¹²

Quite apart from what Pinto sees as their codicological function, such verses are a fundamental part of Lenzi's self-representation. Through them, he links his enterprise directly to God and the Virgin, whose holy grace and wisdom can be understood as a source of inspiration for Lenzi himself and a reminder to his audience that Lenzi's is a holy mission that has been divinely blessed.

These are the verses that I think can be said to particularly reinforce the ways in which Lenzi portrays himself throughout *Lo Specchio umano*. There are numerous other verses and sayings that are generally conventional statements of faith and moral wisdom, and while they might contribute to the overall impression of Lenzi as a wise and moral man, they do not make the kind of particular statements of self-representation as the ones noted above.

²¹⁰ "*Madre di Dio, sovrana creatura, dammi consiglio e nel far m'assicura.*" Pinto, folio 16v, 198. Pinto's only comment about this passage, and similar short verses, is that they were inserted to break up the monotony of the lists of grain prices and to fill in the empty spaces at the bottom of the column. Pinto, fn.1, 198.

²¹¹ "*Alta di Dio giustizia sacra e retta, la mente alluma a ffar questa operetta.*" Pinto, folio 18v, 203.

²¹² "*Ea me gratia concedi e valore, che sempre serva te chon puro chore.*" Pinto, folio 22v, 216.

Conclusion to the Case Study

In this case study I have used all of the dimensions of the Merchant's Moral Eye framework to fully contextualize Domenico Lenzi as a Christian, Florentine grain merchant living in a time of change and anxiety. This contextualization has provided a broader understanding of Lenzi's motives for producing his magnificent manuscript, how it would have been used in fulfillment of his mission, and how it would be a vehicle for his own salvation.

The *fama* that he worked so hard to enhance as a Florentine grain merchant and moralist, entwined with the dynamics of *obligation and reciprocity*, would help earn him the suffrages he needed to move from *Purgatory* to Paradise. Justice as the supreme *virtue* provided an overarching moral framework that underlined Lenzi's presentation of what was right and what needed to be done. His linkage of the *vices* of greed and ingratitude as the behaviours that resulted in God's punishment created an urgent message for moral renewal. The effective visual use of God, the Madonna, angels and demons used *Christian symbolism* to explain why Florence was suffering and to reveal how she could remain well fed by God. Lenzi's emphasis on *hospitality* as a corporate and individual way of looking after the needy would ensure that Florence was honoured by both earth and heaven. The use of *heraldry* provided an additional layer of effective visual communication to symbolize identity and righteous or dishonourable behaviours. And finally, the various private and institutional *spaces* within which Lenzi's manuscript would be read or seen, made it possible for Domenico Lenzi to disseminate his moral messages and, in this process, broadcast his own moral identity. All these dimensions working through text and image together give a rich testimony to the man, his manuscript, and the probable audiences for this codex. The omission of any one of these dimensions would reduce

the effective analysis of one of the most significant imaged products ever produced by a Trecento Italian merchant. In commissioning *Lo Specchio umano*, Domenico Lenzi's moral eye was at the core of his mission and his very understanding of himself, his life as a Florentine merchant, and his soul's salvation.

CHAPTER 4

THE ENTREPRENEUR'S MORAL EYE: FRANCESCO DI MARCO DATINI AND THE *PALAZZO DATINI*, PRATO, 1383-1410

Introduction

With the imagery of the Palazzo Datini we arrive not only at the end of the Trecento and the last of the case studies, but also at the place where the Merchant's Moral Eye framework started to emerge for me as a possible analytical methodology. The framework is a direct outcome of my 2011 Master's research project, *The Decorations of the Palazzo Datini: Moral Exempla and Social Performance in Late-Medieval Prato*. In examining the substantial existing scholarship on the palazzo's decoration program, I realized that the predominant interpretation of Datini's motivations and use of the imagery of the ground floor was that it was intended to exhibit his wealth, status and fashionable taste in support of his worldly activities.¹ Simonetta Cavaciocchi expressed this viewpoint thusly:

¹ The major studies, to date, consist of the following works:

Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato* (London: The Folio Society, 1984). Bruce Cole, "The Interior Decoration of the Palazzo Datini in Prato," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 13. Bd., H. ½ (Dec. 1967): 61-82. Joseph Patrick Byrne, *Francesco Datini, Father of Many: Piety, Charity and Patronage in Early Modern Tuscany* (PhD diss., University of Indiana, 1989). Tanya Bastianich, *An Illustrious Man and His Uomini Illustri: Francesco di Marco Datini and the Decoration of His Palace in Prato* (DPhil, diss., Oxford University, 2000). Bastianich differs from the other scholars in that she recognizes that the decoration of the Palazzo Datini is "... a mixture of religious and secular subject matter." Bastianich, 221. Margherita Romagnoli, "La dimora di un Mercanti Pratese nel XIV seculo. Palazzo Datini attraverso un'analisi dei documenti d'archivio (Parte I)," *Arte Cristiana*, XCVI, (2008): 413-422. Margherita Romagnoli, "La dimora di un mercante pratese nel XIV seculo. Palazzo Datini attraverso un'analisi dei documenti d'archivio (Parte II)," *Arte Cristiana*, XCVII, (2009): 19-30. Anne Dunlop, *Painted Palaces: The Rise of Secular Art in Early Renaissance Italy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009). Giampiero Nigro, ed. *Francesco di Marco Datini: The Man and the Merchant* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2010); in this work Simonetta Cavaciocchi discusses the house and the decorations, as well as Datini's relations with the painters, in four chapters titled: "The Merchant and Building," 131-164. "The Economics of Building," 165-200. "A Taste for Living," 201-212. "Francesco Datini and the Painters," 213-226. Sara Catherine Ellis, *The Late Trecento Fresco Decoration of the Palazzo Datini in Prato* (MA Thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, October 2010). Jérôme Hayez, Diana Toccafondi, and Maria Rafaella de Gramatica, eds., *Palazzo Datini a Prato: Una casa fatta per durare mille anni* (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2012); this two-volume work features six essays on the decorations, internal and external in a section titled "La Casa Dipinta", 93-165.

The decoration of residential houses was certainly the sphere in which personal taste, the dictates of fashion and the demands of social status came into play. ... frescoed houses ... were intended to demonstrate the social status and personal prestige of those who built them.²

I concur with the notion that the decorations of merchant palazzi did indeed constitute a display of status and social standing, but that was only part of their function. In my 2011 study, my stated thesis then was that

... these decorations were intended to function as moral *exempla* for Datini, his household and his visitors, and that they served not only to project a desired image of its owner but also to emphasize certain moral and ethical choices that would benefit the viewer, society and Datini himself. These frescoes thus embedded a primary understanding of the moral and ethical nature of social, civic and religious relations in late-medieval Prato. As I will show, it is this function as moral *exempla* that provides the unifying theme of the entire decorative program.³

What previous studies of the palazzo's decorations had done well was to reveal details of style, production, artistic attribution, iconographic precedents, and the often-stormy relationships between Datini and the artists he hired. The studies by Tanya Bastianich, Anne Dunlop, Margherita Romagnoli, Simonetta Cavaciocchi, Sara Ellis, and Marco Masseti are particularly noteworthy, and collectively they address the above issues thoroughly and eruditely.⁴ With the exception of a new iconographic interpretation about the *Blessing Christ* fresco in the hallway, there is little I could add to what these scholars have already explored. However, what became evident to me was that, in general, there had not been an adequate attempt to comprehensively explore the palazzo's overall fresco

² Cavaciocchi, *Francesco Datini and the Painters*, 218.

³ Brian A. Pollick, "The Decorations of the Palazzo Datini: Moral Exempla and Social Performance in Late-Medieval Prato" (MA Research Paper, University of Victoria, 2011), 1-2.

⁴ See Marco Masseti, "I 'boschetti con animali' e la raffigurazioni zoomorfiche," in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 145-153.

program within the wider context of how Datini's motives and expectations for his imagery were related to contemporary religious and social culture, relationships, and practices. Nor was there any discussion of how this imagery functioned to support Datini's own understanding and representation of his Christian moral identity.

I am now able to expand significantly on my earlier study using the more comprehensive, nuanced, and systematic analytical framework of the Merchant's Moral Eye. The focus of this study is to demonstrate the imagery in the ground-floor spaces functioned as a unified program of moral *exempla* which performed the following functions:

- To highlight the Christian moral identity of Francesco and Margherita Datini;
- To act as moral 'agents' that influenced the myriad interactions and transactions that took place in their presence;
- To prompt prayers for Datini's well-being in life and after death, as part of the cultural responses to the notion of Purgatory;
- To remind viewers of their own Christian moral obligations.

In Part 1 of this chapter, I provide some important background and historiographical information about Datini and his palazzo. Part 2 examines how the abundant documentation concerning Datini lets us directly apply each of the framework's dimensions to the man himself to reveal relevant aspects of his motivations, intentions, and uses of parts of his fresco program. Part 3 serves as a preface to an analysis of the ground-floor frescoes by articulating who Datini's various audiences of his frescoes were, and how their particular relationship with him nuanced their reception of the imagery. Part 4 explores in detail how certain elements of the ground-floor frescoes functioned as containers of moral messages and served to highlight Datini's own moral identity, to demonstrate his worthiness of eventual salvation, and to produce prayers for his welfare in life and after death.

Part 1: Francesco di Marco Datini (1335-1410): A Brief Biography

Francesco Datini (*Fig. 3*) was the son of Marco di Datino, a small-time merchant in Prato who belonged to the taverners' guild.⁵ Datino and his wife, Vermiglia, and two of their four children died in the great plague of 1348, leaving Francesco and brother, Stefano, as the only survivors of the family.⁶ Datini was intelligent, driven, and extremely ambitious to succeed as a merchant. In 1350, he sold a small piece of land he had inherited and used the money to set himself up in his own business in Avignon. Avignon was an open and highly profitable city because of its status as the site of the Papal See from 1309-1376. Datini prospered as a trader in all kinds of goods, including arms, armor, salt, textiles, and panel paintings, often in partnership with other merchants.⁷ By 1370, he was a wealthy man and in 1376 he made a marriage alliance with the Bandini, a noble and well-connected Florentine family, but impoverished due to their exile to Avignon after the head of the family, Domenico Bandini, had been executed for treason and his possessions confiscated.⁸ The sixteen-year-old Margherita Bandini became Francesco's wife and over the course of their thirty-four years together she transformed herself from a sheltered, barely literate girl into a strong and highly competent domestic manager, administrator, politically savvy tactician, and caregiver to the difficult and often irascible Francesco.⁹

⁵ Michele Cassandro, "Aspects of the Life and Character of Francesco di Marco Datini," in Nigro ed., 2010, 5.

⁶ We know Stefano, like Francesco, was apprenticed to a merchant in Florence and joined him in Avignon in 1353, but after that we lose total track of him, so we have to assume he died very young. Cassandro, 6.

⁷ Origo, 26-34.

⁸ Cassandro, 10.

⁹ Margherita has come into her own in Datini scholarship with the publication of her letters to Francesco and a recent biography. See Margherita Datini, *Letters to Francesco Datini*, trans. Carolyn James and Antonio Pagliaro (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012); Ann Crabb, *The Merchant of Prato's Wife: Margherita Datini & Her World, 1360-1423* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

Datini moved back to Prato in 1382 and continued to develop a highly effective group of associated but independent companies throughout Italy and Spain that over the next twenty years made him one of the wealthiest merchants in Tuscany. His administrative and management skills, coupled with his drive, innovation, and prudence ensured that his enterprises generally flourished. He continued to combine a mixture of employees and partners to broaden his commercial scope, but he insisted on being kept informed of even the smallest transaction and thus remained in firm control of his commercial activities.¹⁰

Datini's ambitious projects included the building, equipping, and decorating of a modern, luxurious townhouse in central Prato (**Fig. 91**) and a smaller, but also splendidly decorated country villa, in nearby Palco, now completely gone. In addition to extensively frescoing his own properties, he also hired artists to decorate several churches, especially his nearby Franciscan church, San Francesco, and also San Piero Forelli.¹¹ What makes the Palazzo Datini so important is that it is virtually the only merchant-owned residence in fourteenth-century Tuscany in which a substantial portion of the original wall frescoes has survived.¹²

¹⁰ See Giampiero Nigro, "Francesco and the Datini Company of Florence in the Trading System" in Nigro, ed., 2010, 229

¹¹ See Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 332-338.

¹² The one other example of a fourteenth-century decorated *palazzo*, often cited by art historians, is the *Palazzo Davizzi-Davanzati* in Florence. Indeed, virtually every art historian who has written about the imagery of the Palazzo Datini has used the Palazzo Davizzi-Davanzati as a comparison. I have researched this palazzo extensively and have concluded that the 'restored' decorative program, executed between 1905 and 1910 by the owner, Elia Volpi, an artist, antiquarian and antiques dealer, cannot be authenticated as the original program. This is primarily a result of there being virtually no traceable pre-restoration prints or photographs that would substantiate the program. There are numerous other indicators, not the least being the way the heraldic associations of both the Davizzi and Davanzati families have been made to fit seamlessly into a single band in the camera dei pavoni. The so-called 'restoration' was really a 're-imagining' of what such a palazzo might have ideally looked like, based on surviving elements of other late-medieval and early-Renaissance decorative programs. Anne Dunlop also raised this issue about this palazzo noting that "Its frescoes were heavily repainted, and the first observers to see the rooms were unsure whether they should be called Trecento or Novecento creations." Dunlop, 34.

Unfortunately, Margherita was unable to bear any children and the lack of even an illegitimate male heir (there was an illegitimate daughter, Ginevra) meant that Datini decided to leave most of his enormous wealth and holdings to a civic charity he established, called "*The Institute (Ceppo) for the Poor of Francesco di Marco*."¹³ His bequest included the house which became the headquarters of the Ceppo until the twentieth century (**Fig. 92**). In his will, Datini stipulated that all his account books, correspondence, and other documents be brought to his house and kept there.¹⁴ This repository, now the *Datini Archive*, amounted to over 143,000 documents (including 11,000 private and familial letters) and over 500 account books, thus providing the greatest single body of primary information about a fourteenth-century merchant, his personal and business affairs, and period commerce.¹⁵ Amongst the most important of these documents are the sets of letters between Datini and Margherita, and between Datini and his notary, friend, and spiritual mentor, Lapo Mazzei. Such correspondence gives us unprecedented insight into the mindset, activities, relationships, and temporal and spiritual concerns of a late Trecento Tuscan merchant.

The Historiographic Problem

The letters between Datini and his wife and his notary, coupled with the huge volume of correspondence between Datini and his business associates and employees, give us a picture over half a century of a real flesh-and-blood person in almost every aspect of his life stages, activities, and relationships. The letters reveal a person with all of the changes, inconsistencies,

¹³ Cassandro, 39.

¹⁴ Robert Brun, "A fourteenth century merchant of Italy: Francesco Datini of Prato," *Journal of Economic and Business History*, II (1930): 454-455. This action was not likely because of any desire of Datini's to be known to posterity, but rather to ensure the *ceppo* could make sure it was paid what it was owed by both individuals and companies.

¹⁵ Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 9.

contradictions, strengths, and faults that are part of the human condition through the course of many years. The challenges of inferring a complete personality from these documents has resulted in a range of opinion about Datini that has been heavily judgemental and which, as Byrne put it, has resulted in:

... a series of relatively unbalanced efforts to make Datini fit some prescribed historiographical niche, rather than to explore the complexities of the man in relation to his times.¹⁶

For Iris Origo, he was an irascible miser; John Larner and Marvin Becker castigated him as a cultural philistine; and Federigo Melis saw him as an economic genius and a generous member of society.¹⁷ All such assessments, whether laudatory or condemnatory, have not adequately considered Datini within a full contextualization of the attitudes, values, and behaviours of his own time.

Part 2: The Moral Eye Dimensions: Francesco Datini and his Palazzo

In this section I will discuss each of the Merchant's Moral Eye dimensions in relation to Datini and his palazzo in order to provide a fully contextualized framework within which to analyze the specific content and functions of the fresco program.

a) Purgatory

The issue of Purgatory has been completely absent in any studies to date about the fresco program of the Palazzo Datini, although some scholars have certainly noted that salvation was an important theme in Datini's life, and even that some of the imagery was related to the notion of

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Origo, 240. Larner said that Datini "...was insensitive to any claims of art." John Larner, *Culture and Society in Italy 1290-1420* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1971), 314. Marvin Becker, *Florence in Transition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), II, 6.; Federigo Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Siena: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1962), 80, 88-89.

salvation.¹⁸ But how the imagery functioned, within the parameters of the contemporary understanding of the mechanics of salvation, has not been adequately explored. The primary reason for scholars not discussing Datini in the context of Purgatory is probably that the documents in the Datini archive rarely refer to it.¹⁹ I would argue, however, that such an absence does not suggest that Purgatory was not significant, but rather it indicates that Purgatory was one of those things everyone knew about and assumed, so it didn't need to be talked about.

There is, however, one particularly important reference to Purgatory in the correspondence between Datini and Mazzei. In a letter dated December 6, 1408, Mazzei wrote to Datini urging him to endow a small oratory so that it could, in perpetuity, support a resident priest who would constantly pray for Datini's soul:

... I don't know how so many prayers, which would last as long as the whole world, could fail to dig you out of any purgatory, in the depths of which I expect you will be with the shepherd [Lapo himself]...for ingratitude and for (having) so little knowledge of God.²⁰

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this letter is not so much that it conveys the expectation of both men that Datini was going to go to Purgatory, but that someone like Lapo Mazzei, who was much more diligent than Datini in his Christian reflections and observances, was also going to have to spend time there. Datini understood how the purgatorial 'system' operated, and it was therefore very likely part of his motivation for living and behaving as an observant Christian.

¹⁸ Bastianich, 223-224, for example, in writing about the cortile program, observed that "The Christian figures set forth moralizing messages about man, his way of life, and the road to salvation characteristic to contemporary Christian thought."

¹⁹ This is not unique because there is this same lack of direct reference to Purgatory in most contemporary merchant writings. I have found no direct mention of Purgatory, for example, in Lenzi's *Lo Specchio umano*, nor in Paolo da Certaldo's *Libro di buoni costumi*.

²⁰ This letter was in the transcribed edition of correspondence between Mazzei and Datini by Cesare Guasti. See Cesare Guasti, ed., *Lettere di un notaro ad un mercante del secolo XIV* (Florence: Monnier, 1880), II, 135-136. Quoted and translated by Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 100.

This understanding is particularly revealed through his support of religious institutions and the poor. Datini's charitable acts were extensive and included aid to both individuals and institutions in the form of consumable foodstuffs and products, material goods, liturgical objects, decorations, and money.²¹ His charitable actions even included the housing in his palazzo of one poor, blind woman, a Mona Tinga, to whom he was not related, "*per l'amor di Dio*".²² Such actions not only earned him direct credit with God, but also the prayers and memorial good deeds he needed to help reduce his time and suffering in Purgatory.

Indulgences, as an effective means of reducing one's time in Purgatory, were part of Francesco's and Margherita's spiritual thinking. In January 1372, Datini purchased indulgences for his surrogate mother in Prato and her deceased relations.²³ In April 1386, Margherita wrote him saying "...at the moment there are so many good indulgences for those who can take advantage of them, that you could sleepwalk into heaven."²⁴ And a year later she asked him to pray for her "When you go to seek those indulgences and attend those sermons...".²⁵ Datini would certainly have benefited from indulgences given for supporting religious and charitable institutions, especially hospitals.²⁶ For example, he donated 1,000 florins to the *Ospedali di Santa*

²¹ See Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, Chapters 4 and 5 for a detailed description of Datini's gifts. Quoted in Romagnoli, 2008, 417.

²² Quoted in Romagnoli, 2008, 417.

²³ Quoted and translated by Cassandro, 34.

²⁴ Margherita seems to have thought Francesco was not quick enough to seize this opportunity, for she followed up this remark by saying: "I believe, however, that you will miss out. All the almsgiving in the world will do you no good if you don't capitalize on it." Margherita Datini, Letter 15, 57.

²⁵ Ibid, Letter 107, 195.

²⁶ Robert Shaffern noted, "Of all the buildings devoted to public welfare, none profited from indulgences as did hospitals." Shaffern, 2007, 61.

Maria Nuova e degli Innocenti in Florence for the construction of a separate facility for the feeding and care of orphans.²⁷

While direct assistance to known individuals could produce a stream of the prayers Datini needed for his soul, indirect mechanisms that involved many people over an infinitely long timespan were especially effective as prayer generators. Consider again Mazzei's words to Datini in 1395, as an encouragement to build a small shrine with a statue or painting of the Virgin at a crossroads near his country villa:

A million persons might pass your house after you die; only a few will pray God for you from noticing your house. But if you have that figure [of the Virgin] placed at that corner [outside the walls], someone will kneel there daily for centuries without end, and there won't be one day when a prayer is not said for you.²⁸

The statue or icon of the Virgin would have been a beneficial gift from Datini to all passers-by because it provided them the opportunity to once again ask for the Virgin's mercy and intercession for their own souls. Datini, in turn, would then be the recipient of prayers for his soul. Indeed, he did construct such a tabernacle right outside his Prato house in 1391 which contained a painting of the virgin and Child by Niccolò di Pietro Gerini (**Fig. 93**). As we shall see, this same understanding of imagery as a prayer generator was embedded in much of the fresco program of the Palazzo Datini.

b) Obligation and Reciprocity

As discussed earlier, it was the contemporary understanding of obligation and reciprocity as a fundamental principle of human relations that underlay social behaviour and made it possible to

²⁷ Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 153. See also Stefano Filipponi, Eleonora Mazzocchi, & Ludovica Sebgondi, eds., *Il Mercante L'Ospedale I Fanciulli: La donazione di Francesco Datini, Santa Maria Nuova e la fondazione degli Innocenti* (Firenze: Nardini Editore, 2010).

²⁸ Quoted in Trexler, 1980, 97.

predict other's responses. Datini might act as a benefactor to individuals in many different ways, but it was absolutely understood by those he assisted, whether of low or high degree, that they were bound to reciprocate in some fashion. Although Datini ingratiated himself with important personages, such as King Louis of Anjou, most of his acts of assistance involved individuals of modest status and good reputation, both lay and cleric.²⁹ These worthy recipients' side of the bargain was, therefore, to sing Datini's praises as a Christian benefactor and to pray for his well-being in life and after death, as an ongoing obligation. For example, in September 1390, Datini received a request from a priest, Fra Francesco Pucci, for assistance to rebuild a nunnery which had collapsed, killing one of the sisters. Pucci included the following statement of the benefit Datini could expect for his aid: "Afterwards these venerable women will always be, out of love, *obligated* to pray for you before the eyes of God both in life and after."³⁰

Familial relationships were of fundamental importance in establishing obligations in life and after death, especially from a spouse or children. It is in this context that the practice of fictive kinship language must be understood. In some cases this was a real surrogate relationship, such as that between Datini and Lorenzo Sassoli, a young man whom Datini helped through university.³¹ But there were others, such as Barzalone di Spedaliere, who referred to him as their father even though there was no such formal relationship.³² Paul McLean noted that this was a

²⁹ This linkage between being poor and yet of good reputation was an essential component in the effectiveness of the reciprocal exchange. Byrne expressed it this way: "Charity, like many other social relationships of the time, was based upon reciprocity. The giver also received, theoretically from the prayers of the presumably worthy poor... . Because the virtue of the recipients was a necessary ingredient in the salvational formula of charity, concerns for their *onestà* were often set to rest in letters seeking help, or attested to in accounts of donations." Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 336.

³⁰ Ibid, 187. The italics are mine.

³¹ In his letters Lorenzo addressed Datini as "Dearest Father" and signed them as "Your son." Cassandro, 21.

³² Barzalone di Spedaliere, one of Datini's employees and then partners, wrote Datini in October 1399, to express his concern at the way Datini was neglecting his health, saying that his friends needed him and "...especially I, who have no other father in this world than you." ("*...che in questo mondo non [h]o altro padre che tu.*") Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 38

widespread practice in Florence whereby persons used “the language of fatherhood... to impose fatherly obligations.”³³ Such expressions actually created a father/son-like relationship that invested Datini with both the authority and responsibility of a true father, and imposed an obligation of obedience and familial responsibilities on the person who stood as a son.

Finally, as I shall discuss in greater detail in the section on the imagery of the palazzo, the imagery itself imposed an obligation on its viewers to respond to Datini in some way because he had given them a multifaceted gift that might benefit them physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

c) Fama

Datini, like his merchant contemporaries, was exceptionally conscious of his *fama*, and in spite of his irascibility and history of conflicts with numerous people, including a long list of former business associates, there is no suggestion in any surviving documents that he was seen as other than an honest and trustworthy merchant and dutiful Christian. Indeed, in some of these conflicts, Datini seems to have been motivated by a desire not to be associated with others whose questionable reputations might taint him by association.³⁴ Every indication is that Datini chose his friends carefully as people whose moral stature would add to his own reputation through their association.³⁵ This was certainly true of his friendship with Lapo Mazzei and also with Guido del Palagio (1335-1399), a highly respected Florentine esteemed for his learning and good

³³ Paul McLean, 15.

³⁴ The famous Franciscan preacher, Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444) believed that “...one of the most relevant features apt to qualify the merchant as a virtuous and Christian man, together with the abstaining from usury, liberality and economic cleverness, is his skillfulness to distinguish among his own partners the good and religious merchants from the dishonest and wicked ones.” Todeschini, 2007, 29.

³⁵ Mazzei, who had made the introduction and encouraged the friendship, reminded Datini that “... God had given him Guido as a friend and counselor and how much the merchant’s status had risen through his friendship with Del Palagio... .” Trexler, 1980, 140.

works.³⁶ That these persons chose to openly associate with Datini confirms he was regarded as a reputable individual. Even so harsh a critic as Iris Origo concluded that Datini was not

...by the standards of his time a dishonest trader. He repeatedly boasted—even in his private letters to his wife—that he had always kept his word, had indulged in no sharp practices, had never made illicit profits.”³⁷

The closest he seems to have come to having his reputation undermined was in relation to his opening a bank in 1398. Domenico di Cambio, upon learning that his friend was going to open a bank, wrote forthrightly:

I feel obliged to tell you what I've heard said. Several people have said to me 'Francesco di Marco wants to ruin his reputation as the greatest merchant of Florence in order to become a money changer ...' And the others say: 'Don't think that he will continue to be thought of as the great merchant that he was or that he will keep the same good reputation'; and they add that on this question you have been ill advised;³⁸

This short-lived enterprise did not, however, appear to have unduly damaged Datini's reputation and, in fact, he seems to have been extremely punctilious around financial practices that could be seen as illegal or immoral.³⁹

One's *fama*, in late-medieval Italy, was determined not just by rank and wealth, but also by how one was perceived as reputable and honourable within the larger context of expected civic and Christian behaviour. For a merchant, as emphasized throughout this dissertation, this meant being seen as honest, trustworthy, and actively involved in supporting the less fortunate. Datini certainly appears to have been regarded by his contemporaries as someone who could be

³⁶ Cassandro, 35, noted that Datini's "...close friendships were based in particular on moral values and deep spirituality."

³⁷ Origo, 151.

³⁸ Giampiero Nigro, "The Banking Company," in Nigro, ed., 2010, 519.

³⁹ Even while his short-lived bank (1398-1401) was in operation, Datini blasted his Barcelona agent, Simone d'Andrea, in 1400, as follows: "I have told you before that for no man on earth will I agree to the company's exchange dealings. Once for all, I wish you to be a merchant and not a banker [i.e. usurer]. If you do not wish to do so, you will see how swiftly any agreement between us can be brought to an end." Origo, 150.

approached and counted on to help those in need.⁴⁰ He may have been close-fisted and complaining about extravagant household and business expenses at times, but there is certainly nothing in contemporary records to suggest that Datini was seen as a miser who would only grudgingly help those in need.⁴¹ Indeed, the opposite is true, given the number of requests and thanks he received over a period of many years.

In addition to his dutiful exercise of Christian charity, Datini's own public acts of patronage and assistance to numerous religious houses and hospitals were part of his reputation as an observant Christian, as was his participation in public displays of piety. This included such activities as his involvement with the Bianchi pilgrimage movement in 1399.⁴² Datini publicly supported the movement through providing participants with food and drink, and took part in one of the nine-day pilgrimages between Florence and Arezzo that August. Domenico di Cambio wrote of Datini's group that "in truth your Pratesi returned home with more honor than any company that left here."⁴³

The point of this discussion around Datini's *fama* is to emphasize that he was a person who was regarded as an honest merchant and committed Christian, and therefore worthy of association and honour. Within his own home, this would predispose some of his guests to look

⁴⁰ Byrne, who studied Datini's charitable activities in great detail, ultimately concluded that while he might not have been as generous with his charitable givings as his friend Lapo Mazzei might have liked, Datini's help to the poor and support of religious and charitable organizations "...was probably much closer to the societal norm than otherwise..." Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 329. As Byrne noted we really don't have the same kind of documentation for any other person to be able to assess how Datini's givings compared to others.

⁴¹ Such an example is seen in Margherita's response to Francesco's accusations that she wasn't keeping a close enough eye on the household goods (January, 1384). "I have looked after them better than you could have wished. ... If you are worried, I would advise you to come back and watch them yourself." Margherita Datini, Letter 1, 31.

⁴² For an overall picture of the Bianchi phenomenon see Daniel E. Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). For Datini's specific involvement in the movement see Joseph P. Byrne, "The Merchant as Penitent: Francesco di Marco and the Bianchi Movement of 1399," *Viator* 20 (1989), 219-231.

⁴³ Byrne, 1989, *The Merchant as Penitent*, 229. Nothing would appear to justify Origo's assessment that Datini's participation was a "gigantic nine days picnic." Origo, 326.

to him as a role model, and to see in his palazzo imagery a reflection of his own moral identity and his concern for other's.

d) Space

With the possible exception of the kitchen, all of the areas of the ground floor were multifunctional (**Fig. 94**). Even when a room, such as the *camera uno letto*, might be referred to in one document as Datini's office, this does not mean that it wouldn't have also served as a bedroom or an area for entertaining at times. It is therefore difficult to assign a single function to any of the frescoes; rather, we need to appreciate that viewer responses could be significantly nuanced by such factors as relative hierarchical status, the types of relationship between the parties, and the specifics of the interactions or transactions taking place.⁴⁴

We have six surviving inventories from the Palazzo Datini, three of them taken while Datini was still alive, in 1394, 1399, and 1405, and one immediately after his death in August 1410.⁴⁵ Because the contents listed in these inventories were catalogued by the room they were in, we are able to get a sense of some of the functions that these rooms played in the overall life of the owner and the household.⁴⁶ This, in turn, enables us to speculate on the possible roles of the frescoes, and how they, along with some of the portable imaged objects, supported Datini's self-representation. What is important from the perspective of this study is that this combination of imagery would function as 'moral placemakers'. That is, spaces were invested with a visual

⁴⁴ The classic example of such a misunderstanding was Cole's contention that the Blessing Christ's (**Fig. 100**) function, outside the *camera delle due letta*, which he mistakenly thought was Datini's office, was that "...it blessed Francesco and, we hope, his clients every time they passed into the office." Cole, 1967, 71.

⁴⁵ These inventories have all been transcribed and published in Hayez et al., *Tomo II*, 581-611.

⁴⁶ Romagnoli described the contents and functions of the ground-floor rooms in some detail, using the inventories. Romagnoli, 2008, 414.

framework that served as moral *exempla* and also emphasized Datini's own moral stature and worthiness.

The overarching dynamic of space with respect to the Palazzo Datini was the fact that the house, its contents, and its imagery, were controlled by its owner. People were in that space primarily because of some form of relationship with Francesco, and his presence and character suffused the space even when he might not be physically present. We know it was always Datini's intention that the ground-floor area would function as semi-public space.⁴⁷ While other more private parts of the palazzo were also painted, the documentation reveals that most of the attention and cost went to the ground-floor decorations. The placement of the morally-infused decorative elements was therefore not haphazard, but part of the attempt to direct and mediate the relationships and interactions that took place in those spaces.

e) Hospitality

The Palazzo Datini was at its very core a house designed and built to provide continuous and generous hospitality across the entire range of Datini's associations and relationships. The household management burden of such constant and demanding hospitality fell largely on Margherita who complained to her husband in August 1398, that "It is fifteen blessed years since I came here, and I have lived as if at an inn."⁴⁸ The guests might bring their families and they would always have had their own servants in tow. When Cardinal Pietro d'Ailly visited in June 1409, he had 50 people in his train.⁴⁹ Lapo Mazzei was only partially joking when he wrote in September 1392, that Datini had built his house for "...the town of Florence and its people when

⁴⁷ Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and Building*, 134.

⁴⁸ Margherita Datini, 283. Datini occasionally felt, as he wrote to Domenico di Cambio in 1393, that the endless hospitality was becoming a burden even for him. Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and the Building*, 134.

⁴⁹ Giampiero Nigro, "The Merchant and His Wealth", in Nigro, ed., 2010, 89.

they come to Prato, both for friends and for complete strangers who he [Datini] goes in search of in hotels and holes like a fisherman.”⁵⁰ Datini himself wrote Mazzei in 1400 that “I built a house in Prato...where powerful people and worthy Florentines are received, ...and for them I keep plenty of honourable beds.”⁵¹

Virtually every study on Datini has noted his lavish hospitality and interpreted this as part of his efforts to display his wealth and status, and to build up his network to protect his financial interests. Yet as previously discussed, the provision of open-hearted hospitality was a core Christian value, and Datini’s hospitality, therefore, also needs to be understood in this context. To focus only on his documented feasts and banquets for the rich and powerful obscures the fact that Datini regularly provided food, clothing, wine, and alms for the less fortunate, some of which was distributed directly in or from the house.⁵² Datini’s dispensing of this form of hospitality was memorialized in the exterior frescoes, commissioned by Mazzei right after Datini’s death (**Fig. 95**). While Datini may or may not have personally performed these actions, we certainly have numerous examples of his ordering that such be given out.⁵³

Thus, Datini’s overall activities in the provision of hospitality not only enhanced his social status but added to his moral reputation. Moreover, it was also the context in which most of the

⁵⁰ Quoted and translated by Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and the Building*, 134.

⁵¹ “...*ho fatto una casa a Prato, di costo più che non vale il mio, ove è ordinato dai miei di là che tutti podestadi, tutt’I Fiorentini da bene vi siano ricevuti, ben ch’io non vi sia, e per loro vi tengo parecchie onorate letta.*” Quoted by Maria Pia Mannini, “La costruzione del mito: Il primato del rosso”, in *Palazzo Datini a Prato: Una casa fatta per durare mille anni*, in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 100.

⁵² Paola Pinelli, “The Diet of the Rest,” in Nigro, ed., 2010, 116-117.

⁵³ And if Datini ever forgot that it was his duty to provide hospitality to the poor, his friend and conscience Lapo Mazzei was there to remind him: “I often hear of your great banquets for rich men and women of the highest classes, and this is all very well. ... Don't forget that the poor also might come sometimes to see so beautiful a house, and to be filled up and refreshed by your feeding them.” “*Sento spesso di vostri grandi conviti, a uomini e donne ricchi delle pompe del mondo. ... Ma non vi iscordi ch’ e poveri venghino anche a vedere alcuna volta sì bella casa, ripieni e ristorati da ’ vostri cibi.*” Letter from Mazzei to Datini dated January 26, 1392. Guasti, 43.

visitors to the palazzo would have viewed the fresco program, and that itself would have influenced their response to the imagery.

f) Christian Symbolism

In Cole's 1967 study of the decorations of the palazzo, he observed that, except for the icons in the hallway, the palazzo "...was a home full of secular decoration".⁵⁴ This is the viewpoint that has continued to dominate every study of the Palazzo Datini's decorations since then.⁵⁵ Yet as already discussed, it is almost impossible to speak of any medieval representational image as wholly secular because every part and aspect of the natural world was imbued with some form of Christian symbolism that could serve as moral expression and *exempla*. Datini and his viewers would have been used to extracting the moral messages embedded in such imagery, without any sense of conflict with the other more earthly types of messages they might also convey. This failure to recognize the omnipresence of Christian moral symbolism in the Palazzo Datini's imagery has not only led to a succession of incomplete interpretations about particular fresco elements, such as the flora and fauna or the coats of arms; it has also obscured the fact that the decorative elements collectively represented a unified program to their period viewers.⁵⁶ Filling this gap is a primary purpose of this case study, and each element of the fresco program will be discussed from this perspective.

⁵⁴ Cole, 1967, 81.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Ellis, 7-8.

⁵⁶ This aspect was totally absent from the studies by Cole, Dunlop, Romagnoli, and Masseti. Bastianich was certainly aware of the role of Christian symbolism in imagery but she did not discuss any part of the palazzo's decorations except those in the loggia and courtyard. Sara Ellis also understood that some of the animal imagery had symbolic meaning, stemming from such sources as bestiaries. However, except for the owl, she doesn't detail what this symbolism was or why it was significant in this context. See Ellis, 114; 143-144.

g) The Virtues and Vices

As discussed at length in Chapter 1, the virtues and vices provided a psychologically profound schema for understanding and assessing one's own and other's behaviour within a Christian cosmological and eschatological framework. By Datini's time, they were deeply embedded in Christian culture and featured in every form and medium of expression, whether text, speech, or image. While the names, and resulting personifications, of individual virtues or vices might differ over time and place, their function never changed—to highlight the character traits and behaviours that were beneficial or harmful and which ultimately led to heaven or hell. For Datini and his contemporaries, the vices and virtues were a way of categorizing human behaviour, in a simple binary of good or bad.⁵⁷ As a well-understood cultural trope, they were a tool for assessing and representing both oneself and others, and it is within this framework that Datini would have characterized human behaviour and its societal and eschatological consequences. Throughout his life he would have been familiar with the use of the virtues and vices as tools of moral representation and the behavioural choices that led to salvation or damnation.

Datini would have been familiar with visual personifications of the virtues and vices which he would have routinely seen in churches, townhalls, and other civic buildings such as guildhalls.⁵⁸ In deciding to include a complete virtues and vices cycle (**Fig. 96**), something that is

⁵⁷ In a letter to Boninsegna di Matteo, Datini concludes by saying: "I buy many books in *volgare*, to read them when I am not satisfied with mercantilism...they are all books which speak of virtuous things: ... *that praise the virtues and condemn vices...*"⁵⁷ (my italics). Quoted and translated by Bastianich, 87.

⁵⁸ In Florence alone he would have seen them in paint, relief, and sculpture, in such places as the *Loggia della Signoria*, the *Duomo* Baptistery, *Santa Croce*, *Santa Maria Novella*, the *Palazzo Vecchio*, the *Palazzo della Mercanzia*, and in many of the guildhalls, such as the *Arte della lana*. To understand just how ubiquitous depictions of the Virtues and Vices were across every possible medium, consult Colum Hourihane, *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For the use of the Virtues and Vices in guildhall decoration see Marcie Slepian, op. cit.

unknown in any other fourteenth-century merchant's residence, Datini was, as we shall see, building on this visual tradition to benefit his viewers and himself.

h) Coats of Arms/Family Shields

In commenting on the presence of Datini's coat of arms (**Fig. 97**) throughout the decorations, Cole wrote in 1967 that they "must have impressed his customers," and called them "pure show."⁵⁹ He concluded that "These shields, and the golden lilies that surrounded them, must have delighted Francesco, because they represented two things very dear to him - wealth and family."⁶⁰ This is not a view that has been substantially altered or added to in subsequent scholarship, and it continues to frame the *stemme* in the palazzo within traditional interpretations of coats of arms as symbols of wealth, status, and family.⁶¹ But as the discussion about coats of arms/family shields in Chapter 1 has demonstrated, such interpretations are quite limited in that they ignore the broader meanings and complexities of heraldry as a form of communication about the arms holder's character and moral identity. The shields of Francesco and Margherita (**Fig. 98**), so profusely represented on surfaces and objects throughout the palazzo, were not just *passive* markers of wealth or status, but *active* agents in influencing perceptions about the arms holders and interactions between them and their viewers. I maintain that this function of coats of arms was well understood and that their placement in virtually every part of the ground floor was deliberate and strategic in representing the continuous presence and moral character of the arms holder.

⁵⁹ Cole, 1967, 65; 81.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 81.

⁶¹ Ellis, 162 wrote: "This heraldry fulfills a number of roles: to perpetuate ancestral memory and celebrate family lineage, whether or not it pertains to aristocratic bloodlines; to represent the immediate occupants of the household; and to project notions of power using symbols related to positions of status and office."

The degree to which the colours on a coat of arms were understood to represent one's moral character traits was strongly exemplified late in Datini's life through his relationship with the Angevin King of Naples, Louis II. Datini hosted Louis on at least two occasions, in November 1409 and again in July 1410, and had given Louis a huge gift of 1,000 gold florins. In reciprocating such hospitality and financial assistance, Louis rewarded Datini with a charter granting him the right to place two components of Louis' own arms, a golden fleur-de-lis on a blue background, on Datini's coat of arms.⁶² The patent document specifically referred to the appropriateness of this award to Datini because the colour gold indicated his upright moral principles (*probitas*) and the colour blue signified his purity of soul (*sinceritas*).⁶³ This grant was made only twenty-five days before Datini died so he never had a chance to have his escutcheon amended to reflect Louis' gracious gift (**Fig. 99**). The addition of Louis' royal Angevin elements would not only immeasurably have enhanced Datini's social status and prestige, but also have added greatly to his moral reputation as one whom a royal personage had deemed worthy and honourable enough to carry elements of his own coat of arms.

The above discussion about the Merchant's Moral Eye dimensions, in specific relation to Datini and his palazzo, provides the comprehensive context needed to examine how the frescoes' imagery supported Francesco Datini's moral self-representation and elicited the kinds of beneficial responses he would have expected.

⁶² Cassandro, 38.

⁶³ Ibid. The Latin phrase in the charter was: "...per colorem aureum Probitas, et per colorem azzurum mentis sue Sinceritas designetur."

Part 3: A Preface to the Ground-Floor Frescoes

Datini, like Enrico Scrovegni and Domenico Lenzi before him, was very much in charge of his artistic program. We need to remember that one of Datini's lines of business was the production of religious paintings, and he very much understood the power of the visual as a devotional and didactic tool. Domenico Cambio, responding to instructions from Datini about commissioning a panel, wrote:

On your panel I understand what you say about it, that it should be painted with pious figures in spiritual devotion so that men's souls turn to God more quickly.⁶⁴

We have plentiful evidence for Datini's directive behaviour with respect to the commissioning of imagery. In 1384, for example, he wrote to his agent in Prato about a panel painting he wanted for his house, instructing him to

...tell the painter that St. Catherine needs to be in the painting where I said [and] St. Margaret and Margherita must be at her feet in whatever form is best, in gown or cloak. If she's in a gown it should be of purple cloth and if she's in a cloak, let it be scarlet cloth.⁶⁵

Datini's personal concern about ensuring that the palazzo's fresco program was done to his satisfaction is reflected in a letter from Domenico di Cambio in late 1389, advising that work on the paintings had stopped "because Francesco went to Florence that day and didn't want them to work in his absence."⁶⁶ If we can be certain of anything about the ground-floor imagery, it is that it was a deliberate reflection of Datini's own motivations, intentions, and aspirations.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Cavaciocchi, *Francesco Datini and the Painters*, fn. 9, 224.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶⁶ Quoted and translated by Cavaciocchi, "The Merchant and the Building", fn. 116, p.162.

⁶⁷ Cole noted that the fresco program "...illustrates Francesco di Marco Datini's personal preferences." Cole, 1967, 82.

Any detailed discussion about the function, meaning, and use of the current fresco program in the Palazzo Datini needs to take into account that few of the frescoes are absolutely complete, and for some we have only fragments. In the courtyard, for example, most of the original program has eroded, and we can only piece the whole together because of the documentation that refers to its commissioning. Nor can we assume that in all cases what we see today was exactly what was painted in Datini's time. We know, for instance, that the courtyard program was extended by Filippo Lippi (1406-1469) in 1453 and then completely restored in 1510.⁶⁸ There is also evidence that there were some misinterpretations or errors made in the restoration work done in the 1950's after the frescoes were uncovered from their whitewash layer. Such evidence includes the unnatural length of the fingers in the *Blessing Christ* (Fig. 100) or the changing of the field colour of Margherita Bandini's shield from silver to green (about which more will be said later). While this might impact on such aspects of the frescoes as style and iconography, the remains, coupled with the period documentation, still give us a reasonable view of what was in the original program.

In considering the ways in which the viewers understood and responded to the Palazzo Datini's imagery, we need to remember that most viewers had a lifetime of exposure to message-charged imagery. Whether on the interiors or exteriors of churches, town halls and public buildings, marketplaces, confraternities, or guild halls, viewers were bombarded with images that spoke to their civic and Christian beliefs, values and aspirations.⁶⁹ This imagery was not art for

⁶⁸ Bastianich, 189.

⁶⁹ As George Bent, 15, observed about the profusion of painted imagery in Florence: "The general public had access to hundreds of paintings during the 'long Trecento' and their placement in plain view, often in positions that gave common people no other choice but to see them, suggests they were inspected each and every day ..."

aesthetic purposes, although its visual beauty might be appreciated; rather, these images were visual exhortations on what to believe, how to behave, and what to expect.⁷⁰

Given the current state of the frescoes, it is hard to grasp what they must have looked like to their original viewers when they were bright and vividly coloured images that totally framed their spaces. They could not easily have been ignored, and therefore they almost certainly infused the interactions that took place in those areas, sensually as well as symbolically. The palazzo's fresco program, as we shall see, was rich in symbolic and allegorical meaning within contemporary religious and moral culture, and one of its primary functions was to serve as a didactic and meditative tool by calling upon the viewer's memory and experience. Viewers would have been able to recall some of the moral symbolism of what they saw through the many references they would have heard in the *exempla* used by preachers "...whose words mediated the way the general public looked at images."⁷¹

The range of people who would have seen the ground-floor frescoes, in addition to those who lived in the *palazzo*, was spread across the entire spectrum of classes, occupations, and types of relationships. The *palazzo*'s visitors included family, diplomats, friends, non-related dependants, business associates, employees, neighbours, public officials, professionals, artisans, suppliers, and a constant stream of other acquaintances or even, as noted earlier, unknown visitors just wanting to see the house and be hosted by Datini.⁷² These relationships would have ranged from warmly intimate, to politely civil, to actively hostile, which provided the context for

⁷⁰ Caroline van Eck elegantly concluded that art in this period "...was made to move viewers and incite them to virtuous action on the basis of emotional identification with what was depicted." Caroline van Eck, "Groaning Paintings and Weeping Viewers," in *Speaking to the Eye: Sight and Insight Through Text and Image (1150-1650)*, eds. Thérèse de Hemptinne, Veerle Fraeters, and María Eugenia Góngora (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 260.

⁷¹ Lina Bolzoni, *The Web of Images: Vernacular Preaching from its Origins to St Bernardino da Siena* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 2.

⁷² Nigro, *The Merchant and His Wealth*, 93.

how viewers might relate this imagery to Datini himself. Some of these relationships were by their very nature deeply infused with a moral dimension, such as business partners, employees, and other dependents whose financial wellbeing depended on satisfying Datini not only with their technical skills, but their good reputation and character.⁷³ These individuals must have been especially alert to the moral content of the frescoes as a reminder of their patron's moral stature and of their own need to heed the didactic messages the frescoes conveyed.⁷⁴

Another group that would be particularly sensitive and well-disposed to anything that pointed to Datini's moral representation would have been those individuals, such as the aforementioned Lorenzo Sassoli and Barzalone di Spedalieri, who related to Datini as sons to their father. These are the persons who especially looked to Datini as a source of "... the good lessons that he would have received constantly from his father on every occasion. His father would have counseled him to avoid vices and would have taught him virtues."⁷⁵ When they visited him in the palazzo, they would have been particularly receptive to any of the imagery that might suggest moral instruction to themselves, as well as affirm their surrogate father's own morality. And these would be the persons who could be relied on to pray for Datini's health and prosperity while alive, then dutifully pray for his soul, and perhaps perform other suffrages in his memory after death.

⁷³ Nigro made the following observation about Datini's approach to his employees: "...Datini watched over even the private lives of his employers and their relationships with each other.... His paternalistic manner comes out clearly from his letters as does his undisputed authority and the lack of clear boundaries between the private and company spheres." Nigro, Francesco and the Datini Company, 243.

⁷⁴ Datini's spiritual mentor, Giovanni da Dominici, preached that "...the first obligation of leaders was to set a moral example for the common people; they were also responsible for their subject's behaviour and should correct and punish them." Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici, 1400-1406," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55:1 (2002), 37.

⁷⁵ Morelli, Branca, 2015, 157.

Some of Datini's close personal friendships were, as Michele Cassandro observed, "... based in particular on moral values and deep spirituality."⁷⁶ These included his notary, Lapo Mazzei, and especially Guido del Palagio, a highly respected and influential Florentine intellectual, noted for such values. Someone like Guido, whom we know stayed at the Palazzo Datini on occasion, would have recognized the moral symbolism of some of the frescoes at a particularly high intellectual level, and would have applauded their inclusion as a measure of Datini's own intellect and moral awareness. They would doubtless have conversed about the imagery as containers of Christian truths and moral *exempla*, as discussions on moral and spiritual matters were a foundation of their relationship.⁷⁷

The above types of relationships tell us that such dynamics likely had profound impact in shaping how these viewers perceived the moral and spiritual messages of the decorations in relation to Datini himself.

The Frescoes: Moral Symbolism, Meaning and Viewer Response

The traditional approach to analyzing the ground-floor frescoes has been to discuss them in association with the distinct areas in which they appear (**Fig. 94**).⁷⁸ These are: the hallway; the *camera uno letto*; the *camera delle due letta*; the loggia and courtyard. I am going to use a different approach, grouping those components throughout the fresco program that I think functioned as moral *exempla* and prayer magnets. This approach, I think, is effective because many of these components, such as the ceiling fleur-de-lis, the flora and fauna imagery, and the

⁷⁶ Cassandro, 35.

⁷⁷ Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 64, notes that in the correspondence between Datini and Lapo Mazzei about 'matters of the soul' there are frequent references to their getting face to face to discuss them further.

⁷⁸ This is the approach used by Cole, Romagnoli, and Ellis.

family shields are common throughout the ground-floor spaces. I will, however, consider how the functions and activities of the different spaces might have influenced viewer responses.

1. The Religious Icons

There are only two fresco icons in the program, and both are located in the hallway: a representation of *St. Christopher*, and what has been traditionally called a *Blessing Christ*. They were seen by every single visitor who entered or left by the front door and their location was absolutely germane to their functions. These icons helped to represent Datini as a pious Christian who cared for the spiritual wellbeing of his guests, and through that process generated prayers to benefit his life and soul.

St. Christopher (Fig. 101)

This fresco, the largest and most detailed in the entire house, is located on the interior wall adjacent to the main door. It is at the foot of the staircase and therefore highly visible to anyone exiting the palazzo or descending the staircase. It was not uncommon to have an image of Saint Christopher in a residence, and its location was usually close to an egress point.

It needs to be remembered that visual representations of religious figures such as St. Christopher had three primary functions—didactic, meditative, and thaumaturgic. Yet almost all the commentary about this image has focused on its thaumaturgic power to physically protect its viewers.⁷⁹ There is no question that the icon's ability to protect, cure, and intercede for those who eyed it was fundamentally important. But this does not mean that Christopher's image did not fulfill other roles. Sara Ellis alone has ascribed a moral function to this icon, observing it was “to

⁷⁹ See Origo, 228; Cole, 1967, 80; Bastianich, 145; Romagnoli, 2009, 24; Ellis, 85-103.

remind Datini that if he conducted himself morally in the marketplace, and in the home, he might be rewarded both spiritually and financially.”⁸⁰

The late-medieval understanding of St. Christopher was considerably broader and more complex than just his ability to protect travellers. Jacobus de Voragine’s account of Christopher in the *Golden Legend* presents him as a person who came to recognize Christ as the true source of power in the world, only after first seeking such power in earthly rulers and then in the Devil. Christopher found his true calling in service to Christ through bearing people across a raging river. One of these turned out to be the Christ child whose weight on Christopher’s shoulder steadily increased, representing his bearing the whole of humanity. Subsequently, Christopher devoted the rest of his life to glorifying Christ and converting others to serve Him, ultimately being martyred for refusing to renounce his faith.⁸¹ While the Christ-bearing episode was definitely the most frequent visual depiction, his martyrdom was also portrayed (**Fig. 102**).

Christopher’s story was rich with Christian meaning on many different levels, and he would have regularly been held up in sermons and texts as a role model of discernment, service, faithfulness, and fortitude, even in the face of death. Jacobus noted the symbolic importance of Christopher bearing Christ as a metaphor for a complete carrying of Christ in one’s heart, mind, speech, and actions.⁸² This is the Christopher that Datini and his contemporaries would have heard preachers proclaim as an ideal Christian *exemplum*, and these qualities might be brought to mind by viewers encountering him at Datini’s doorway. Christopher was a role model, “... a

⁸⁰ Ellis, 93.

⁸¹ See Jacobus de Voragine, St. Christopher, Granger Vol. II, 10-14. We know that Datini had a copy of a large book referred to in his documents as a vernacular Lives of the Saints, so it was most likely Jacobus’s *Golden Legend*. See Simona Brambilla, “Libri e letture in casa Datini,” in Hayez et al., 2012, 257.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 10.

figure to be imitated and emulated.”⁸³ It was in this capacity, for example, that an English painter from Cambridgeshire, John Warde, created “*a devout interpretacion of St. Christopher’s life...very lyvely in a table,*” and placed it in his pew so he could ‘*learne to be a right Christopher.*’”⁸⁴

While simply looking at the icon was supposedly enough to invoke its powers to protect or heal, most people would have engaged with the image to ask for a particular protection or other intervention, especially as many would be about to embark on a journey, even if only a short one back to Florence. For some, the journey might be long and potentially hazardous, so prayers to this icon would have been regarded as essential. Datini would be included in many of these prayers because he had demonstrated his concern for his guests and their physical and spiritual welfare by placing the St. Christopher there to aid them.

The Blessing Christ (Salvator Mundi) (Fig. 100)

This fresco, in the lunette above the entrance into the *camera della due letta*, has been referred to as *The Blessing Christ (Cristo Benedicente)* by every art historian who has commented on it, and their primary interest has been in who painted it.⁸⁵ What is most surprising about the discussion of this image is that no one seems to have observed that it is, in fact, a *Christ as Saviour of the World (Salvator mundi)*, not a traditional *Blessing Christ*. Datini’s fresco is an early example of

⁸³ Eleanor Elizabeth Pridgeon, “Saint Christopher Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches c.1250-c.1500” (PhD diss., University of Leicester, 2008), 99. Margherita Datini, who was responsible for the many children and female servants living in the Palazzo Datini, might well have used this image as an instructional aid as advocated by Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419). See: Joseph P. Byrne and Eleanor A. Congdon, “Mothering in the Casa Datini,” *Journal of Medieval History* 25, no. 1 (1999): 35-56; Arthur Basil Coté, “Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare, parte quarta*: ‘On the Education of Children’ Translation and Introduction” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1927), 34; Debby, 2001, 144.

⁸⁴ Pridgeon, 99.

⁸⁵ The most recent scholarship seems to have accepted that it was painted by Tommaso del Mazza, based on stylistic evidence, but there is no documentation around this fresco, so we don’t know for sure who painted it, or when. See Cavaciocchi, “Francesco Datini and the Painters”, 2010, 218; Margherita Romagnoli, “La decorazione pittorica di Palazzo Datini,” in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 118.

this motif, in which Christ is holding an orb in his left hand, representing the world. This inclusion of the orb adds an additional layer of meaning to the more traditional *Blessing Christ*.

The *Salvador mundi* iconography is based on the scriptural references to Christ as Saviour of the world. In John 4:42 the Samaritans are cited as saying "...for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world."⁸⁶ This passage is about absolute knowledge, determined faith, and universal rather than parochial salvation, and was the subject of virtually every medieval commentary on the Gospel of John.⁸⁷ Consequently, it would have been a common theme in late-medieval sermons and Datini would certainly have known about Christ as *Salvator mundi*, even though the depiction of Christ in this role might be unfamiliar. The more familiar *Blessing Christ* iconography, which was based on the *Christ Pantocrator* model, was still common, as we can see in the panel by Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, who later painted Datini's loggia and courtyard (**Fig. 103**) Both types of image show Christ blessing the viewer, but the difference in the *Salvator mundi* form is that viewers are being asked to remember that Christ's benediction is not just for themselves but for the whole world. Whether this was the reason Datini chose this representation is doubtful, although this can't be ruled out given his association with intellectuals such as Giovanni Dominici, Guido del Palagio (c.1335-1399) and Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406).⁸⁸ What is not in doubt, however, is that the selection of

⁸⁶ The Holy Bible, The Gospel According to John, 4:42, 1118.

⁸⁷ Aquinas stated about this passage: "Here, they are affirming that Christ is the unique, true and universal saviour." Thomas Aquinas, "Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapter 4, Lecture 5." <https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/John4.htm>.

⁸⁸ The Italian Biographical Dictionary reports that Guido "...frequently engaged in conversations on philosophical, theological and literary topics, along with Coluccio Salutati and Giovanni Gherardi da Prato,..." *Fu infatti assiduo frequentatore, insieme con Coluccio Salutati e con Giovanni Gherardi da Prato, delle conversazioni su argomenti filosofici, teologici e letterari...* [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-del-palagio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guido-del-palagio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

this representation of Christ was at least approved by Datini, and perhaps even initiated by him. So how might Datini be aware of the *Salvator mundi* pose? A possible explanation lies in Datini's Avignon background.

While the *Salvator mundi* motif became very popular in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in northern Europe, it was quite rare in fourteenth-century Italy. One of the few examples we know of was a rendition in the *Palais des Papes* in Avignon, painted by Simone Martini, or a follower, c.1335-1340 (**Fig. 104**).⁸⁹ Art historians have long thought that some of Datini's choices of imagery were probably influenced by the program at the Avignon Papal Palace.⁹⁰ It is thus possible that Datini saw Martini's *Salvator mundi* and decided it was something appealing and went on to have it painted in his palazzo.⁹¹

The fact that this icon was centered in the hallway and would be seen by anyone coming into the house or using the stairs suggests that its purpose was generally applicable to everyone who saw it, rather than a specialized function with respect to the room beyond it. That said, this particular room was the principal area for the indoor hosting of guests, so those people would be face to face with this image, and would have engaged directly with it. But so too would most others upon first catching sight of the icon as they traversed the Hall or descended the staircase. Every viewer would have been duty-bound to respond to this image through some form of ritual

⁸⁹ Simone Martini was in Avignon working alongside numerous artists from Northern Europe who painted in the International Gothic style, and thus might have influenced Martini with respect to the *Salvator mundi*. See Bastianich, 98. All that is left of the original is the sinopia (the under-drawing outline).

⁹⁰ Bruce Cole, for example, thought that the frescoes in the Tour de la Garde-Robe of the Papal Palace were a "possible prototype" for those in the two *camere* of the ground floor. Cole, 1967, 70. Tanya Bastianich wrote "There were certainly enough examples of decoration for Datini to observe and absorb while in Avignon, only later to transpose such decoration to his own home in Prato." Bastianich, 101.

⁹¹ The one missing feature is that the orb in Christ's hand in the Palazzo Datini does not appear to be sub-divided into continents, as was the Martini and most subsequent renditions. Moreover, the continents are marked on the world being held by Christ in the St. Christopher icon. This may have been a fault of memory by Datini when he instructed the artist, who probably was not familiar with this iconography. Or, the orb may have originally contained the continents but had faded so they weren't included when the icon was restored.

response.⁹² First and foremost, this representation of Christ conveyed a holy blessing, a divine gift manifesting the love and mercy of God, and the popular response would probably have included a sense that, in exchange for his blessing, Christ expected the viewer to try and live according to God's precepts.

The ritual response by the viewer, on both arrival and departure, would have been a genuflection and/or crossing oneself, likely followed by a quick prayer of supplication or thanks.⁹³ The viewer's prayers might also involve a thanks to Datini in recognition for his providing the icon as an opportunity for the viewer to be blessed, and perhaps for granting his or her petition. We have enough evidence of Francesco's difficult personality to assume that some of the interactions with people in the ground-floor area would not be positive or pleasant.⁹⁴ In these cases the *Salvator Mundi* might be called on to soften Datini's heart or to change his mind, with little gratitude expressed towards their host. It is even possible that the person might call on Christ to punish Datini in some way, although given that they were in Datini's home this type of response would have meant "...being shamed by bad form."⁹⁵

Finally, it is important to consider the significance of the fact that both icons in the hallway featured Christ holding the world in his hand, the *Salvator mundi* image speaking to people coming into the palazzo from the outside world, and the St. Christopher to those going back into it. For Datini and many of his visitors, the "world" had serious meaning in both real

⁹² Richard Trexler discussed at some length how preachers such as Giordano da Rivalto (1255-1311) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1344) related behaviour in private residences and in a church. Giordano preached that "But in one way you can injure him [God], and in one way alone: That is not to do him honor." Trexler, 1980, 103.

⁹³ William Wilson noted that "...the popular, petitionary understanding of prayer was by far the most widespread among theologians and ordinary believers alike... . William Wilson, "Prayer," in Richard Lansing, ed. *The Dante Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge, 2000, 707.

⁹⁴ Margherita wrote to Francesco in a letter January 20, 1386 urging him to keep his anger in check when dealing with his associates. "I beg you not to behave the same way you have at other times. ...I beg you to behave calmly... ." Margherita Datini, Letter 11, 48.

⁹⁵ Trexler, 1980, 102.

and allegorical terms. These were people who travelled, who bought and sold goods from many places, near and far, and who were worldly not only in goods but also in behaviour and outlook. There was, therefore, in such materialism and cosmopolitanism the moral danger of giving in to the temptations of the body, loving money excessively, or ignoring their Christian obligations. These two images were therefore a reminder that the world was borne by Christ and only through him did salvation lie. Christ's blessing and St. Christopher's protection were divine gifts, given with the expectation that it would prompt the recipient to give thanks, to be charitable, and to try and live according to Christian principles. From this perspective, the two icons served as didactic reminders for their viewers, and spiritual gifts from their host, Francesco Datini.

2. The Ceiling Fleurs-de-lis (Fig. 105)

Every ceiling in the ground floor, including the loggia, features red or white fleurs-de-lis (lilies) against a white or blue background. In the hallway (**Fig. 106**) and the lunettes of the loggia (**Fig. 107**), the fleurs-de-lis are red, set against a white background. In the two camere (**Figs. 108, 109**) and the loggia vaults (**Fig. 107**), the lilies are white (representing silver) on a blue background. There is some evidence these fleurs-de-lis were originally yellow, representing gold, as we have a document from the painters who did the *camera due letta* ceiling stating that they painted it “*a gigli gialli nel campo azuro*” (with yellow lilies on a blue background).⁹⁶ If this documentation is correct, at some point the yellow had faded so badly that it was unrecognizable, and the undercoat suggested it was white at the time it was repainted or restored.

Cole thought that the ceiling design generally was to cater to Datini's pride and impress his visitors, and Anne Dunlop simply concluded that “...similar kinds of decoration could be

⁹⁶ Romagnoli, 2009, 24.

found in any painted house in Italy.”⁹⁷ Yet this motif was far more than merely decorative and carried with it a long tradition of religious and moral symbolism. Within the late-medieval Italian social sphere, fleurs-de-lis were symbols of identity, including rank, family, affiliations, and nationality. The fleur-de-lis also featured symbolically in biblical history, theology, and hagiography. Its three-part design symbolized the Trinity, the three-fold nature of God. The lily was thought to be the product of Eve’s tears as she left the Garden of Eden, symbolizing the fall of humankind, but it also came to symbolize the Virgin whose purity in God’s eyes made her an agent in the redemption of humanity.⁹⁸ As a powerful symbol of purity, the fleur-de-lis also came to be associated with numerous saints, including St. Zenobius, the Bishop of Florence.⁹⁹ Since those saints were held up as exemplars of moral purity and courage, the fleur-de-lis, as one of their symbols, became emblematic of their moral rectitude.

Red lilies had their own distinct meaning that drew on both religious and heraldic colour symbolism. The red lily was considered a sign of divine love, and the colour red was used to depict a wide range of religious personages and events. This included the blood of Christ and martyrs, the Virgin’s and Mary Magdalene’s clothing, and the garments of the pope and cardinals.¹⁰⁰ The heraldic associations also contributed to the interpretation of the colour red within Datini’s Palazzo, linking him with such personal qualities, noted in the colour chart, as high status, passion, faithfulness, and magnanimity. That Datini would choose a red motif also reflects his choice of the colour red as a personal ‘brand’ in how he was portrayed.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Cole, 1967, 65. Dunlop, 22.

⁹⁸ George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1958, 17.

⁹⁹ Ferguson, 61-88. Hall, 124.

¹⁰⁰ See Pastoureau, 2017, 54-85.

¹⁰¹ Maria Mannini, in an essay titled *La costruzione del mito: Il primato del rosso* (The construction of the myth: the primacy of red) argues that Datini’s insistence on being represented in red while alive became part of a fixed, self-

Datini's use of the red fleurs-de-lis set against a silver background mimicked the Florentine coat-of-arms (**Fig. 110**) which would have been recognized immediately by every visitor. It might well have been a way of highlighting Margherita's heritage, Datini's recent Florentine citizenship, and the fact that Florence was sovereign over Prato. It thus incorporated the moral virtues that Florence itself represented, as well as those of the Virgin, Florence's special protector. Moreover, this same colour combination of red and silver was also that of Datini's personal coat of arms, and so carried a personal association with Datini that drew on the aforementioned moral and spiritual dimensions of this particular ceiling design.

One of the intended visual affects of the silver or gold fleurs-de-lis on a blue background might have been to mimic looking into the heavens, which was not an uncommon feature in churches and chapels (**Fig. 111**).¹⁰² The viewer would not only be moved by the beauty of the design, but also feel closer to heaven, an effect enhanced by the way at least some of the lilies were constructed to reflect light.¹⁰³ This evoked a sense of awe that was associated with the cosmos itself and therefore provided an opportunity to give thanks to God for His creation. Moreover, as noted earlier, the colour blue had strong associations with the Virgin, and we know there was at least one image of her on a tabernacle in the *camera uno letto*.¹⁰⁴

initiated iconography of how he should be presented, and that he was fully cognizant to the symbolic value of being so depicted. Mannini, 92-109.

¹⁰² Giotto seems to have been particularly interested in suggesting the night sky as he also painted astronomical imagery in the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua c.1309. See Darrelyn Gunzburg, "Giotto's Sky: The Fresco Paintings of the First Floor Salone of the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, Italy," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 7:4 (2013), 407-433.

¹⁰³ Dunlop, 35, noted that the ceiling fleur-de-lis originally included "...lilies made of tin attached with small balls of wax, which would have caught and reflected any ambient light in areas with limited illumination, but they also have long since disappeared."

¹⁰⁴ This was "a table of Our lady with a tabernacle (covered and protected with a blue cloth painted with the *Agnus Deo* and with the four Evangelists and with stars.)" Romagnoli, 2008, 416.

3. The Scenes of Flora and Fauna

The walls of the two *camere* featured elaborate scenes in which a variety of trees, bushes, animals and birds appeared. In the *camera uno letto*, these were part of a continuous round of forest and hunting scenes set in the eight upper-wall lunettes (**Fig. 112**). In the *camera delle due letta*, these scenes are set in four large vaults running about a third way up from the floor towards the ceiling, encircling the room with images of trees, bushes and flowers, numerous depictions of birds, and a single animal, a large tabby cat (**Fig. 113**).

The scholars who have studied these forest scenes have tended to see them as having purely a secular and decorative function, and there has been little interest in exploring them more deeply.¹⁰⁵ Even Sarah Ellis, who did recognize that the various animals and birds had symbolic meanings, did not discuss how such symbolic meanings might have been related to Datini or affected viewer response.¹⁰⁶

It is not my intention to identify all the symbolism attached to each animal, bird, tree, or plant, but rather to provide some examples to demonstrate how pervasive such symbolism was. Datini and those who viewed these frescoes would have been familiar with this symbolism, having been exposed to it in sermons and images throughout their lives.¹⁰⁷ This does not mean, of course, that the symbolic meaning was automatically the primary focus of each viewer. Nor do

¹⁰⁵ The typical type of comment is about their common appearance as fashionable and trendy motifs. See Dunlop, 22; Romagnoli, 2009, 25-26 ; Cavaciocchi, Francesco Datini and the Painters, 218. In the most recent book on the Palazzo Datini, there was an essay by Marco Masseti focusing solely on the flora and fauna of the two principal rooms, in which not a single thing is said about the symbolism of any of the plants, animals or birds. See Masseti, 145-153.

¹⁰⁶ Ellis, 114; 143-144. Ellis' only comment was that the owl might be being mobbed by other birds in the fresco because "...the owl, among other traits, was traditionally associated with an ignoble reputation."

¹⁰⁷ Simona Cohen writing about animals noted: "Animal fables and bestiary stories were among the most popular forms of exempla incorporated into preacher's sermons from the first half of the thirteenth century. Exempla were didactic aids, geared to illustrate doctrinal or moral issues in a popular and concrete manner, which would be comprehensible and captivating for both clerical and lay audiences as well as diverse levels of society." Simona Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 8.

I want to suggest that Datini's choices as to what animals and plants should be represented (if indeed he went to that level of detail) were solely because of their religious or moral symbolism. The inclusion of the tabby cat, for example, was probably just a whimsical desire to insert one of his and Margherita's own cherished cats, even though the cat had significant negative moral symbolism.¹⁰⁸ But I would argue that the moral symbolism of the individual animals and plants was an overall sub-text that might take on different levels and intensity of meaning depending on who the viewers were, their relationship with Datini, and the specific circumstances for being in the room.

Consider the representation of the wolf in the hunting scene in the *camera uno letto*. In one of the lunette scenes a wolf is being stalked by two hunters (**Fig. 114**). The wolf was a symbol of ferocity, evil intentions, and a danger to humankind, not just physically but also spiritually and morally.¹⁰⁹ In the fourteenth century the wolf was specifically associated with a host of deadly sins, including avarice and usury, and was depicted as such in sermons, literary texts, and imagery.¹¹⁰ Thus, a scene of humans hunting down a wolf, as in Datini's lunette, was not merely a real activity with courtly and aristocratic overtones; it was also an allegory for stamping out evil generally, and avarice in particular. In this guise, the hunters might represent upright Christians eradicating evil, or even be a metaphor for the Church itself. In another lunette, the wolf is

¹⁰⁸ This was probably one of Francesco's cats. Both the Datinis were fond of cats and had several around the house. See Romagnoli, 2008, 415. Crabb, 45.

¹⁰⁹ Gray, 53-54. The *Fasciculus Morum*, a fourteenth century preachers manual, referred to "that rapacious wolf, the devil." Wenzel, 199.

¹¹⁰ Giovanni di Dominici, for example, once asked a listener, "...don't you see that the wolf of avarice sends you to hell?" Debby, 2001, 55.

attacking a deer, which was also an allegory for the forces of evil trying to defeat the forces of good (**Fig. 115**).¹¹¹

The scenes in both camera are especially rich in the depiction of birds flying, or perched in trees, or on the ground (**Fig. 116**). Birds in general were symbols representing human souls, and their positions or actions could denote specific meanings—for example, a bird perched on a vine indicated the soul abided with Christ.¹¹² Some of the birds are identifiable, such as an owl (**Fig. 117**) whose qualities were mixed, representing such things as sinners who chose to live in darkness, but also righteous persons who hide in the darkness of humility.¹¹³ Other species are recognizable, such as a hawk, dove, magpie, and peacock, all rich in Christological and moral symbolism, (**Fig. 118**) but most are generic forms and are difficult to distinguish as a definite species.¹¹⁴ This too, according to George Ferguson, was part of a long tradition that used the non-specific depiction of birds “...to suggest the spiritual, as opposed to the material.”¹¹⁵

The particular profusion of birds, especially with so many of them having open beaks (**Fig. 116**), might have recalled for their viewers St. Francis’ Sermon to the Birds, whereby “...the birds began all of them to open their bills...and by their song they showed the joy their Father gave them.”¹¹⁶ This might remind them to emulate the birds and give thanks to God.

¹¹¹ Other identifiable animals in these scenes include boar, dogs, ermine, and hare. See Gray 18, 21-22. Ferguson, 5, 7. Cohen observed that “medieval images of boar hunting also signified the destruction of sin.” Cohen, 221. Giovanni Dominici called dishonest merchants “pigs drowned in their earthly desires.” Debby, 2001, 44.

¹¹² Lucia Impelluso, *Nature and Its Symbols*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), 288. Doug Gray, *Christian Symbolology: A Collection of Symbol Definitions, Liturgical Terms, Images, & Illustrations* (Collierville, Tennessee: Instant Publisher, 2007), 18.

¹¹³ Gray, 40-41.

¹¹⁴ The hawk could symbolize watchfulness or death, the dove peace and innocence, the peacock eternal life. See Gray, 18, 28, 39, 42. Ferguson, 5-6.

¹¹⁵ Ferguson, 2, said that “Long before any attempt was made by the artist to identify birds according to species, the bird form was employed to suggest the spiritual, as opposed to the material.”

¹¹⁶ Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 442.

The flora in these two rooms was very similar, although the *camera uno letto* seems to be a forest (**Fig. 119**), whereas the scenes in the *camera due letta* are more gardenlike because of the lack of animals (**Fig. 120**)—this room was actually adjacent and led onto Datini’s real, much prized garden.¹¹⁷ Trees were used as part of complex allegories, such as the *Tree of Life* or the *Tree of Virtues and Vices* and, like their faunal counterparts, featured regularly in medieval sermons, texts and visual media (**Fig. 8**).¹¹⁸ In the preacher’s manual, *Fasciculus Morum*, the author often used trees to illustrate a moral point, such as this one:

For the more heavily trees are laden with fruit, the more they bend down; thus, the more a perfect, humble person grows in good works, the more humble he becomes and is comforted in tribulation.¹¹⁹

The trees in the *camera uno letto* are generic arbors showing some sort of orange flowering blossoms (**Fig. 121**). These may well have been orange trees, as this tree featured prominently in Datini’s garden and seemed to have particular significance for him.¹²⁰ The orange tree was rich in symbolism and Lucia Ricci noted that in this period oranges and orange trees “...usually fulfill a manifestly symbolic function in garden literature as genuine connotations of a paradisiacal reality... .”¹²¹

While the trees in the *camera due letta* are indistinguishable from those in the *camera uno letto*, the upper register in the arches contains a profusion of red rose bushes, a flower that Datini

¹¹⁷ Ellis, 116

¹¹⁸ For a detailed overview of the symbolism of trees see Pippa Salonijs and Andrea Worm, “Introduction,” in *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought*, eds. Pippa Salonijs and Andrea Worm (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 1-9. Also, Bolzoni, Chapter 3, 83-114.

¹¹⁹ Wenzel, 115.

¹²⁰ Orange trees (*melaranci*) were bought for the garden in Prato and Valdinevole in March 1390, and Datini wrote to Stoldo di Lorenzo, his agent in Pisa, to buy “an orange tree, the largest you can find.” Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and Building*, 149. The instructions to Stoldo were quoted and translated in Origo, 226.

¹²¹ Lucia Battaglia Ricci, “Gardens in Italian Literature During the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” trans. Lucinda Byatt, in *The Italian Garden: Art, Design and Culture*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21-22.

boasted about in his garden (**Fig. 122**).¹²² Roses had enormous Christian and moral symbolism because of their connection with the Virgin, the ‘rose without thorns’, so called because of her purity which rendered her totally free from sin.¹²³ The rose therefore came to represent a standard moral behaviour for women based on the Virgin as a role model. Roses were also a visual eschatological symbol because “Wreaths of roses worn by angels, saints, or by human souls who have entered into heavenly bliss, are indicative of heavenly joy.”¹²⁴ Red roses had an additional layer of meaning in that they might symbolize deep faithfulness even to the point of martyrdom.¹²⁵ The rose was a frequent symbol in moral *exempla*. In the *Fasciculus Morum*, for example, the rose is used to deflate overweening pride in one’s noble blood: “Do not the pricking thorn and the rose grow out of the same root?”¹²⁶

As a representation of a garden, the imagery in this room had great symbolism, even more so as it existed side by side with Datini’s real garden, a place that his long-time associate Domenico di Cambio said “...you have made a garden the like of which is paradise.”¹²⁷ The Garden was the elemental setting for the creation, fall, and redemption of humankind, and featured significantly in the theology and eschatology that most late-medieval persons would be exposed to through texts, sermons, and visual media. Thus, the moral behaviours that would lead one to Heaven, and its paradisiacal garden, were embedded in the late-medieval Italian imagination. As G. Leoni phrased this, “...the garden is the ideal setting in which to conform the

¹²² Dunlop, 22. Romagnoli, 2008, 415.

¹²³ Ferguson, 20.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Hall 268. The overall symbolism of the rose in medieval Europe is summarized by Mia Touw, “Roses in the Middle Ages,” *Economic Botany* 36, no.1 (1982): 71-83.

¹²⁶ Wenzel, 57.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and Building*, 149.

human spirit to celestial things.”¹²⁸ The garden, both real and fictitious, always had a sense that it was sacred space and therefore a site of potential moral transformation.¹²⁹

Viewer reception of all of the above flora and fauna imagery would have been nuanced by the space itself and the types of activities that took place there. The *camera uno letto* was the space most closely associated with Datini himself as it was both his writing room and often the room he slept in.¹³⁰ While he would have conducted some of his business meetings here, such encounters would probably only have been with his more important employees, partners, and other business associates, as he also had a fully equipped and functional office in a storeroom next to the garden.¹³¹ As Datini’s own room, it would have been the most likely place where he met privately with male friends (e.g. Guido di Palagio), high-ranking guests (e.g. Louis of Anjou), and public officials (e.g. the appointed Florentine *Podestà* in Prato). This room was, therefore, very much a masculine oriented space and some of the decorations, notably the hunting scenes with their overtones of ferocious beasts, weapons, and violent acts, reflect this masculinity more than the imagery in other rooms of the ground floor.

All of the above symbolism, once again, directed viewers to Datini’s own moral awareness as well as his concern to provide others with imagery that might be a didactically beneficial gift. And gratitude in the form of appreciative comments and prayers for Datini’s wellbeing would be in order. Moreover, because this room was particularly Datini’s personal space, these scenes might have played a role as active moral agents in specific types of interactions. For example, if

¹²⁸ G. Leoni, “Christ the Gardener and the Chain of Symbols,” in *The Italian Garden: Art, Design and Culture*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73.

¹²⁹ Matilde Battistini, *Symbols and Allegories in Art* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 244.

¹³⁰ Romagnoli, 2008, 414.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 415.

Datini were dressing down an employee or business associate there for what he considered illicit use of bills of exchange, then he might directly reference the wolf in the hunting scene of the *camera uno letto* for its symbolism of avarice or usury.¹³²

The *camera della due letta* was the principal space for hosting visitors and probably the housing of honoured guests. Margherita especially would have used this room for the reception and hosting of all guests in the frequent absences of Francesco, but this was also the space where she would provide formal hospitality to female visitors. This included presiding over feasts for the women who attended the palazzo with their men-folk, who would dine separately with Francesco in the loggia.¹³³ Not surprisingly, therefore, the decorations in this room had feminine touches absent in the other rooms. The Marian symbolism was especially strong through the profusion of rose bushes, and the sense of peace and gentleness was reinforced by the total absence of ferocious beasts or armed humans as found in the *camera uno letto*. Thus, these garden scenes served up numerous lessons in faith, deportment, and behaviour to their viewers, and framed Margherita as a dutiful and morally aware Christian wife who, as mistress of the household, had particular responsibility for the moral instruction and oversight of the many female residents. In this regard, these decorations may have been directly referenced for their female viewers as active didactic agents in the instruction of appropriate, Christian womanly attitudes, behaviour and piety.

¹³² Datini certainly did this in writing, as he did in 1402 to his Barcelona agent Simone d'Andrea: "...these *cambi* [Bills of Exchange] please me not at any price...and for several reasons. The first and chief is that they are not licit, and the second, I do not wish to run into such dangers." Quoted in Origo, 151.

¹³³ Jérôme Hayez, "Il migrante e il padrone. Il palazzo nella vita di Francesco Datini," in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 190.

4. The Coats of Arms

The coats of arms in the Palazzo Datini have been seriously neglected in the scholarship on the palazzo and, as noted earlier, have been regarded primarily as markers of social status, with little attention paid to how they functioned as instruments of moral self-representation. The family shields of Francesco and Margherita (Figs. 97, 98) appear individually and in conjoined patterns throughout the ground floor. The following is a description of each of their shields and their symbolic meanings.

Francesco created his shield at some point prior to building his *palazzo*, most likely while he still lived in Avignon. This was perfectly normal for a wealthy merchant, and formed part of his “brand” in presenting himself as someone who was reliable, honest, and trustworthy.¹³⁴ Datini chose a design of a silver base with three red diagonal bands running from the top of the shield and right side to left side (Fig. 97).¹³⁵ This conformed to Bartolo da Sassoferrato’s dictum that “...nobler things should be preferred and placed in a privileged position, and also that the right and top are nobler than the left and bottom.”¹³⁶ The silver field represented Datini as someone who was pure, devout and just. In opting for red as the only other colour, Datini was choosing the highest ranked tincture, one that spoke to his prestigious social status, nobility of spirit, boldness, and magnanimity.¹³⁷ The diagonal stripes, called ‘bends’, denoted those who had distinguished themselves, were honourable, and zealous in protecting or defending their lord, whether temporal or heavenly.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Cavallar, et al., 68. Bartolo da Sassoferrato supported this practice noting that he believed persons were permitted to “...assume coats of arms and insignia on their own initiative.” Ibid, 145.

¹³⁵ It needs to be remembered that the position of anything on the shield was defined as being from the perspective of the person behind the shield not the person viewing it.

¹³⁶ Cavallar, et al., 152.

¹³⁷ Bartolo actually placed red ahead of silver, ranking it second only to gold. Ibid, 153.

¹³⁸ <http://monasticorderofknights.org/media/kunena/attachments/449/OrdinariesofHeraldry.pdf>

Margherita's family shield probably went back several generations because the Bandini were of aristocratic lineage. It featured a single broad red band (a *fesse*) across the centre of the silver field (**Fig. 98**).¹³⁹ There is a major problem with the way the Bandini shields were restored in the 1950's since the restorers thought the shield colour was dark green or black, most likely because real silver or tin had been used originally and had tarnished.¹⁴⁰ The *fesse* design signified that the arms holder "...must always be in readiness to act for the wellbeing of the people."¹⁴¹ The red colour of the band and the silver of the field had the same symbolic meanings as for Datini.

In fact, there are two versions of Margherita's shield in the palazzo. The one in the *camera due letta* has been altered by the addition of a band of gold fleur-de-lis across the top (**Fig. 123**). No one has tried to explain this, but I think the answer lies in a common Florentine practice of adding what was called a *lambello* to one's family shield.¹⁴² We have already encountered this feature in some of the shields depicted in Lenzi's illumination of the grain market in crisis (**Fig. 89**). As Partsch noted, the *lambello* was "...a symbol which the King of Naples allowed families to bear in their coat of arms; it also acted as a party badge for the Guelphs."¹⁴³ This Guelph association was a particularly significant one for both Margherita and Francesco. Margherita's

¹³⁹ Howel Wills, *Florentine Heraldry: A Supplement to the Guide Books* (London: Dean and Son, 1900), 127.

¹⁴⁰ Ellis, 11-13. This raises the question of why the same mistake wasn't made with Datini's shield since it too had a silver background that would presumably have also been done in real silver or tin. I suspect that the answer lies in the fact that Datini's shield was far better known than Margherita's and there were lots of other examples of it in panel paintings.

¹⁴¹ <http://monasticorderofknights.org/media/kunena/attachments/449/OrdinariesofHeraldry.pdf>

¹⁴² Svitlana Hluvko, the supervising restorer of the frescoes, noticed the alteration but was puzzled as to why it was done. She wrote: "The king of France, Louis of Anjou, conceded to Datini the right to use the lily of France in his crest during his second visit to Prato in the summer of 1410. However, it seems inexplicable that they are present on the crest of his Bandini wife but absent from Datini's own shield." "Il re francese, Luigi d'Angiò, concede a Datini il diritto di utilizzare il giglio di Francia nel suo stemma durante la sua seconda visita a Prato nell'estate del 1410[...]. Sembra però inspiegabile la presenza dei gigli nello stemma della moglie Bandini e l'assenza di questi nello stemma del Datini." Romagnoli, 2009, fn.53, 29.

¹⁴³ "...ein Zeichen, welches der König von Neapel ihm genehmen Familien im Wappen zu tragen erlaubte; außerdem fungierte es als Parteiabzeichen der Guelphen." Partsch, 45.

father, along with some of his wife's Gherardini kinfolk, had been Ghibelline sympathizers and became involved in a plot to overthrow the Guelphic government, which is why he was decapitated in 1360.¹⁴⁴ For Margherita to visually affirm her loyalty to the Florentine government was a highly prudent act, and in the best interests of Datini himself. Datini also, it would seem, was very conscious of the Guelphic orientation of the Florence elite, even having the Guelphic lion painted in the hallway. Domenico di Cambio wrote him in May 1389 saying: "And I like the fact that you've put the lion on the house, and that these Guelphs will come to see it...".¹⁴⁵ The addition of gold fleur-de-lis would, of course, add symbolic meaning to the overall crest. These fleur-de-lis, in addition to all of the qualities previously noted, spoke to the history and honour of being Florentine and the gold, as mentioned earlier, was a colour associated with high status, nobility, and virtuousness in manner and soul. However much this enhanced the perception of Margherita by viewers of her *stemma* design in this room, Francesco too benefited by the association with her and her family, and this expression of loyalty to the Florentine state, to which Prato belonged.

In addition to Francesco and Margherita's shields being featured individually, they also appear in combination in the ceilings of both *camere* (Figs. 124, 125). In interweaving these two coats of arms, a public statement was being made about the honour being done to both families through the marriage alliance. The Bandini were of noble Florentine rank and Margherita's mother, Dianora, was of another noble Florentine family, the Gherardini. The huge difference in social status between the Bandini family and Datini would normally have ruled out such an

¹⁴⁴ Ann Crabb, 6, noted that "The Bandini and Gherardini conspirators' goal to create a more aristocratic government fit in with Ghibelline ideas."

¹⁴⁵ Cavaciocchi, *The Merchant and Building*, fn. 114, 161-162. This lion image has not survived.

alliance, but Datini's wealth, plus the fact that the young Margherita was dowryless, made him an attractive prospect.¹⁴⁶ While poor, the Bandini were still very well connected and Datini's expectations would reasonably be, in addition to acquiring a young and fertile wife, that this Florentine connection would benefit him socially and commercially. In fact it did, and even though Datini's relations with his in-laws were sometimes fractious, both sides benefited from the relationship.¹⁴⁷ Thus, Datini had every reason to proudly display the Bandini family's crest alongside his own as a public statement and affirmation of mutual esteem. Moreover, such a display reminded both parties of their obligation to provide assistance, support, and loyalty.¹⁴⁸

The design of Francesco's and Margherita's interwoven shields, supplemented by small renditions of their individual shields around the room, was a strong visual statement of their alliance, and of the two of them as a couple. Finally, because the shields also made a firm statement to viewers about the moral identity of husband and wife, the household as a whole was represented as a site of moral rectitude.

5. The Fictive Tapestry in the Camera Uno Letto

Underneath the lunettes, stretching down to the floor across all four walls of the room, is a fictive tapestry, hanging on a painted rod (**Fig. 126**). The main part of the fictive tapestry (**Fig. 127**) features a white lattice frame that forms squares on the diagonal with three alternating patterns: a gold crown on a red background; four silver fleur-de-lis on a deep blue background; and a third pattern almost completely faded but what Margherita Romagnoli says are "lions' heads on a

¹⁴⁶ Sergio Tognetti in his study on merchants and social mobility in places such as Florence concluded "In sum, the established aristocratic identity of the elites did not prevent co-option of wealthy parvenus..." Sergio Tognetti, "Businessmen and Social Mobility in Late Medieval Italy," trans. Beatrice Priest, in *Social Mobility in Medieval Italy (1100-1500)*, eds. Sandro Carocci and Isabella Lazzarini (Rome: Viella libreria editrice, 2018) 203.

¹⁴⁷ Crabb, 89-134.

¹⁴⁸ Brucker, 1977, 21.

light-coloured background.”¹⁴⁹ These are all images with strong symbolism in both the temporal and spiritual realms, but here I will focus only on their religious and moral symbolism.

The fleurs-de-lis have already been discussed, but the fact that these were silver on a blue background would have changed those aspects that related to colour and materiality. The blue was ultramarine, the costly blue pigment made from lapis lazuli, a substance we know Datini purchased for use in his fresco program.¹⁵⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, ultramarine blue was especially associated with depictions of the Virgin and her multiple functions in late-medieval Christianity as a role model for charity, mercy, humility, and compassion.¹⁵¹ It was also customary to use blue to depict the Cherubim, who represented Divine Wisdom.¹⁵² The silver of the fleur-de-lis not only suggested religious moral qualities of purity and devoutness, but also referenced the word of God as in Psalm 12:6: “The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”¹⁵³

The gold crown was also exceptionally rich in Christian symbolism. The crown was a general symbol of God’s authority and power, no matter who wore it, a temporal ruler or a heavenly figure. In its spiritual and allegorical use the crown had multiple applications and meanings. Christ, in his kingly role, was sometimes shown wearing a ruler’s crown, in addition to the more common crown of thorns.¹⁵⁴ So too were the Virgin, as Queen of Heaven, the archangel Gabriel, and the virtues, particularly *Justice* (**Fig. 59**).¹⁵⁵ Moreover, to depict the crown in gold

¹⁴⁹ “...teste di leone su fondo chiaro” Romagnoli, 2009, 19.

¹⁵⁰ In September 1391 Datini instructed an associate in Florence to secure him a large quantity of ultramarine. The Datini archive also contained a document on how to prepare ultramarine from lapis. See Cavaciocchi, Datini and the Painters, 217 and fn.23, 225.

¹⁵¹ Pastoureau, 2001, 80.

¹⁵² Ferguson 57.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 24.

¹⁵⁴ Gray, 147.

¹⁵⁵ Ferguson, 59, 101

(the crowns in this schema may well have been originally gilded) was to add the highest meaning of status and prestige, infused by the presence of God as heavenly light.¹⁵⁶

The last representative element in the fictive tapestry is the lion's head, probably in blue, on a light background, probably originally white, representing silver. The colour and material symbolism would be the same as for the blue fleur-de-lis. The lion was a ubiquitous religious, moral, and allegorical symbol in Datini's time, with plentiful visualizations through its use as a heraldic charge, and its presence in virtually every bestiary (**Figs. 128, 129**). Its majesty, strength, courage, and fortitude gave it the regal status of "King of Beasts", although the lion also had some negative traits attached to it.¹⁵⁷ Every viewer of Datini's lion heads would therefore have been familiar with the lion as a multifaceted symbol with earthly, spiritual and moral meaning.

There has been some debate over these three elements concerning whether or not they were painted specifically for Louis of Anjou when he visited Datini in 1409 and again in 1410. Bruce Cole argues that they were, and Margherita Romagnoli insists they were not.¹⁵⁸ Anne Dunlop, although leaning towards Romagnoli's interpretation, added the caveat "It is still possible that the room was painted for the visit..."¹⁵⁹

I think that the difficulty in coming to a definitive answer to this issue is related to a generalized over-expectation for the documentation concerning the palazzo's fresco program, as well as underestimating the impacts of the fluid nature of individual rooms. The reason that Cole suggested this imagery was painted for Louis in the first place was because he assumed a document, referencing a repainting of a bedroom in 1409, was about the *camera uno letto*. But

¹⁵⁶ Ferguson, 23.

¹⁵⁷ Cohen noted that the lion could represent the negative moral traits of Pride and Wrath. Cohen, 213-14.

¹⁵⁸ Cole, 1967, 80. Romagnoli, 2012, *La decorazione pittorica*, 114-116.

¹⁵⁹ Dunlop, fn.36, 227.

Romagnoli, however, convincingly shows that this record was for a bedroom on the next level up.¹⁶⁰ She then argues that the components of the fictive tapestry in the *camera uno letto* were a standard type of decoration in late-medieval palazzi, and since there is no document to specifically show that this room was repainted for Louis' visit, that it therefore wasn't.¹⁶¹ Additionally she notes that the *camera uno letto* "was to be used as an office and not as a guest room for Datini's guests."¹⁶²

I would point out that we don't have every part of the ground-floor decorative program documented, and specifically, we don't have the fictive tapestry in the *camera uno letto* described in any document, either at the time the room was first painted in 1390/91 or of any subsequent repainting. Moreover, to argue that this design couldn't have been done to honour King Louis because this was not the room he would have occupied, is not substantive. In the first place, we don't actually know what room would have been assigned to him, and the fluid nature of the rooms' uses certainly means he could have stayed in the *camera uno letto*. And even if it wasn't the room assigned to him, it was still the most likely space where Louis would have met privately with Datini, so these decorations might well have been painted in anticipation of such meetings.

Knowing what we do about the appropriate use of heraldic charges and colours, and Datini's own character, it seems highly unlikely that he would have selected these particular symbols as the default decoration in 1390/91, which in their combination, bespoke of very high noble status. This would have been highly inappropriate and damaging to his *fama*, and would have opened him up to serious criticism of misrepresenting his actual rank. This is something he

¹⁶⁰ Romagnoli, 2009, 21-22.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² "...doveva svolgere la funzione di ufficio e non di camera destinata ad accogliere gli ospiti del mercante." Romagnoli, 2009, 22.

seems to have carefully avoided, given the total absence of any such suggestion in any of the correspondence, especially that between Datini and Mazzei. These images then served no good purpose except in context of honouring Datini's royal, distinguished visitor and friend. In this instance Datini's reputation, his *fama*, would be enhanced as one deemed worthy of association with such an exalted personage, and there could be no suspicion of puffed-up vainglory. So, all things considered, I believe it is not improbable that these elements were painted in anticipation and honour of King Louis' visit in 1409.

It is true, as Romagnoli points out, that there are similar elements, crown and lion, in the *Sala dei Pavoni* of the Palazzo Davizzi-Davanzati (**Fig. 147**). But as noted earlier, it is doubtful that this is the original fourteenth century design, and so it cannot be convincingly used to mark such elements as a standard form of decoration. Romagnoli also provided another example, a fragment from the Palazzo Lamberti which showed lilies and crowns.¹⁶³ However, there was no detail provided about the family or the time period so there may well have been a context-specific explanation for these decorations also.

In conclusion, these three symbols in the fictive tapestry—the fleur-de-lis, the crowns, and the lion heads—spoke powerfully not only to elite earthly status but also to the highest moral qualities. If this imagery was originally painted as a direct way of honouring Louis of Anjou, King of Naples, it also pointed to Datini's moral identity by association. Whether or not it was related to Louis, its symbolism stood in its own right as further commentary on Datini's own Christian moral identity and his desire to help others to be aware of theirs.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

6. The Loggia & Courtyard (*Cortile*)

Introduction

The imagery in the *cortile* represents a strong, unified program in which every component had significant moral meaning and didactic function (**Fig. 96**). I have, therefore, chosen to discuss this imagery collectively within the context of this space, the area where most of the public functions and entertainments were held. This would certainly explain why the area featured so prominently in the overall fresco program.¹⁶⁴

Little remains of the once elaborate imagery program of the loggia and courtyard (which I call the *cortile* as the combined spaces) due to their centuries of exposure (**Figs. 130, 131**). Fortunately, we have a detailed record of what was originally painted, some of the relative positioning of the various imagery cycles, and the cost of various components, thanks to a surviving invoice from the painter, Niccolò di Pietro Gerini (1340-1414). The part of the document that relates to the *cortile* is as follows:

for Charlemagne, with Niccolò's colors, except for the gold and blue, five gold florins;
for Judith and Camilla, with Niccolò's colors, four gold florins, except for the gold and blue;
for the figures which are on the wall of the courtyard, that is 14 figures in all, with colors at Francesco's expense; [done] only by hand, net of expenses, with the decorations around them and marble beneath, 14 gold florins;
for the seven virtues, with the vices at their feet, in the loggia, and the decorations that belong to the said virtues, net of expenses; only for Niccolò's labor, seven gold florins;
for the seven sciences, with philosophers beneath them and with the decorations that belong to them, that are in the said loggia, in all, net of labor, seven gold florins;
for four philosophers which are in the said loggia, on the surface of the vault, and under, for his labor, two gold florins;¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Lindow, 123.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted and translated by Byrne, Francesco Datini, 297.

According to this document there were several fresco cycles: personifications of the seven cardinal Virtues and their opposite Vices underneath; personifications of the Seven Sciences, likely split into the *Quadrivium* and *Trivium*, with associated philosophers under them; seventeen illustrious historical/biblical/legendary figures, probably in three groupings on the two walls of the courtyard; and four philosophers arranged with three on the loggia walls and one on the ceiling vault.¹⁶⁶

All that remains today of this program, other than mainly indecipherable fragments *in situ*, are the following frescoes in various conditions of repair, that were moved off the open walls into the room off the courtyard, which was originally the ground-floor kitchen: the three Virtues *Caritas* (Charity) (**Fig. 132**), *Speranza* (Hope) (**Fig. 133**), and *Prudenzia* (Prudence) (**Fig. 134**), and a panel that includes a she-wolf and five human figures (**Fig. 135**).

Given the fragmentary remains and lack of definitive information about the relative placement of each of the *cortile* cycles, it is not surprising that this area has generally received far less attention than the other spaces of the ground floor.¹⁶⁷ Anne Dunlop discussed what the program might have looked like as a whole, and some of the contemporary examples of such images in residential settings. She did not, however, engage in any interpretive discussion of the significance of the *cortile* program.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Dunlop did allude to the issue of gender in

¹⁶⁶ Romagnoli suggested there might only have been nine figures painted based on a spatial layout of three people in each of the three courtyard lunettes, but this seems unlikely given that we have one surviving panel with five figures on it. See Margherita Romagnoli, “Gli ambienti esterni: Proposte per una lettura iconografica,” in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 128.

¹⁶⁷ Cole, 1967, 73-75, commented briefly on what was in the original program of the *cortile*, based on the documentary record, but made no attempt to situate any of the program within an artistic or social context. Cavaciocchi, Francesco Datini and the Painters, 219, briefly mentions the overall *cortile* program, noting that: “In keeping with the humanist vision, the frescoes represented an ideal integration of the values of the Christian tradition with those of the rediscovered Classics;”

¹⁶⁸ In a footnote, Dunlop referenced Bastianich’s study noting that “...I do not always accept the author’s conclusions.” Dunlop, fn. 3, 221. Since she doesn’t say what it is she disagrees with I am unable to take her concerns into consideration.

relation to the figures of Judith and Camilla, but still concluded that the courtyard "...was ringed with men of virtue ...[who] pointed to a masculine world of government and lineage..."¹⁶⁹ Sara Ellis did not discuss the function or meaning of this program other than to say it was possible Datini chose it because he "...was determined to validate the social and financial standing he had acquired without a noble background."¹⁷⁰

There have been two studies that have specifically focused on the imagery of the courtyard and loggia. The first was Tanya Bastianich's DPhil. Oxford dissertation (2000), *An Illustrious Man and His Uomini Illustri: Francesco di Marco Datini and the Decoration of His Palace in Prato*. Her study focuses primarily on the *uomini illustri* component, so the Virtues and Vices and the *Quadrivium/Trivium* cycles were not analyzed in the same level of detail. Bastianich's objective was to show that this illustrious figures cycle distinguished Datini as a cultured man who was aware of the major intellectual currents of his time.¹⁷¹ She rightly concluded that "The decoration would certainly have reflected on Datini, portraying him in a particular way to those who visited the palazzo."¹⁷² Bastianich also tried to interpret the symbolic meaning of some of the historical figures, such as Judith, Camilla, and Charlemagne within their contemporary socio-cultural context, and even made some effort to relate that specifically to Datini.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Dunlop, 39, suggested they might be examples of what the Florentine architect and sculptor Filarete (1400-1469) later described as scenes appropriate for the mistress of the palace, that is "feminine virtue."

¹⁷⁰ Ellis, 158.

¹⁷¹ Bastianich 50, concluded that: "He may have wished to appear cultured and sophisticated, not simply as a merchant who dealt with banal issues of finance."

¹⁷² Bastianich, 223.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 212-218.

The more recent and much less detailed study on the *cortile* is an essay by Margherita Romagnoli in 2012.¹⁷⁴ As with her previous studies on the palazzo's decoration, Romagnoli's focus is not so much their function or symbolism as it is the details of their iconography and production. Like Bastianich, Romagnoli's interest is primarily in the *Illustrious Men* cycle rather than the *Virtues and Vices*, the *Liberal Arts*, or the *Philosophers*, noting that "the use of an exemplum figure was functional for ideological-propagandistic purposes."¹⁷⁵ Romagnoli does not comment on the specific religious or moral meaning of any of the cycles, the viewer responses, or how that might have related to Datini's intentions and objectives.

The Fresco Cycles

I believe that the various fresco components of the *cortile* constitute an integrated program whose primary theme emphasizes the moral behaviours necessary to be a worthy civic and Christian citizen. However, I want to emphasize, as Bastianich cautioned, that "As a whole, there can be no singular, linear interpretation of these cycles."¹⁷⁶ The viewers would have seen multiple meanings in these cycles, although their role as moral *exempla* would be prominent.

For analysis purposes I am using the layout proposed by Tanya Bastianich (**Fig. 96**), which she constructed based on the physical remains and documentary evidence, such as Gerini's invoice.¹⁷⁷ There is obviously a certain element of speculation in her reconstruction but no one has proposed an alternative layout. The following is an analysis of each of the cycles in the *cortile* from the perspective of how they supported Datini's moral self-representation.

¹⁷⁴ Margherita Romagnoli, 2012, *Gli ambienti*, 124-139.

¹⁷⁵ "L'utilizzo dell'exemplum figurato risulta funzionale alle diverse esigenze ideologico-propagandistiche." Ibid, 126.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 21-22.

¹⁷⁷ Bastianich, Figure 90.

i) The Virtues and Vices Cycle

The palazzo's surviving virtues of *Charity, Faith, and Prudence* (Figs. 132-134) strongly suggest that Datini's Virtue cycle conformed to the generally set schema of the four Cardinal Virtues (*Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice*) and the three Theological Virtues (*Faith, Hope, and Charity*).¹⁷⁸ Each one of these virtues articulated a set of specific religious beliefs, moral attitudes, and behaviours that served as didactic reminders of how one was expected to think and act as a Christian desirous of salvation.

According to Gerini's document, the vices were painted underneath the feet of the virtues, thereby using the *psychomachia* model of the virtues being at war with, and defeating their counterpart vices (Fig. 136). But no one has attempted before now to pair a named contrasting vice to each of these above virtues. As noted in Chapter 1, the Vices in any set schema, such as Dante's, do not easily align one-to-one with the accepted canon of the Virtues, and thus any direct one-to-one contrasting pairings in visual media were extremely varied, and rarely used the same set of vices (and sometimes not even the same virtues).¹⁷⁹ There is, therefore, no way to accurately state what the pairings in Datini's cycle actually were. All we can do is to make an educated guess for at least some of the pairings, based on other such cycles, and the kind of connections set out in preaching and penitential manuals.¹⁸⁰

The purpose of any Virtues and Vices Cycle was to "...teach the viewer how to avoid vice and embrace virtue."¹⁸¹ One of the ways it did this was by using the principle that 'contraries cure

¹⁷⁸ Tucker, 5.

¹⁷⁹ See Bejczy, 2011, 228-229.

¹⁸⁰ But even then problems remain, because some vices could be in opposition to more than one virtue based on the theological or philosophical interpretation at any given time. Consider *Avarice*, for example. It could oppose *Charity* but it was also seen as an opposite of *Justice*.

¹⁸¹ Tucker, 110.

contraries’ –thus the remedy for any particular deadly vice was to show its opposite virtue.¹⁸²

Whatever vices were selected for Datini’s cycle, they would have to have been ones that viewers recognized as contrary to the specific virtues under whose feet they lay. Since I maintain that one of the primary functions of this imagery was to affirm Datini’s own moral identity, I would suggest that the vices chosen tended to be ones that best asserted his own rejection of those behaviours not fitting for an honest merchant and moral Christian. Therefore, while we might not be able to precisely name one specific vice, we can reasonably project the attributes and behaviours that the depicted vices were intended to convey to viewers, and therefore propose what the possibilities for the vice personifications could have been.¹⁸³ The following chart suggests the most likely pairings of personified vices with the standardized seven virtues, based on other visual cycles across the entire range of late-medieval media. This representation does not rule out the possibility of some new and unique Vice personification, but such novelty seems unlikely given the overall pattern of imagery in the palazzo, and Datini’s own conservative attitudes.

The Possible Personifications Of The Vices In The Datini Cycle

Virtue	Possible Vice Personifications*
CHARITY	<i>Avarice; Envy; Cupidity; Slander.</i>
FAITH	<i>Sloth/Idleness; Infidelity; Discord; Falsehood; Idolatry; Lust; Pride.</i>
HOPE	<i>Despair; Pride; Luxury.</i>
FORTITUDE	<i>Inconstancy; Envy; Pride.</i>
JUSTICE	<i>Avarice; Injustice; Deceit; Division; Fury; Vainglory.</i>
PRUDENCE	<i>Avarice; Folly; Lust; Pride; Discord; Fraud; Luxury</i>
TEMPERANCE	<i>Anger/Wrath; Gluttony; Intemperance; Luxury; Fear; Pleasure; Pomp</i>
	* the most probable have been italicized

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ I have selected these with reference to other Virtue and Vice cycles and those in Colum Hourihane, ed., 2000, *Virtue & Vice*. I have only used those Vices in the Index that were fairly common and had examples in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

Whatever vices Datini ended up selecting or approving, we have to assume he chose the ones that might be the most damaging for someone of his occupation and status, such as *Avarice*, in order to show his symbolic rejection of them and his embracing of their opposite virtues.

The location of the Virtues and Vices cycle in the loggia was particularly significant in terms of focusing the attention of viewers directly on Datini. The loggia was where Francesco hosted his male guests at banquets and feasts in warm weather, and he would be seated in the centre of a long table that stretched across the loggia and which had both backed chairs and benches.¹⁸⁴ Datini's place, as owner and host, meant he would have been seated in the centre of the *loggia* table facing towards the courtyard. If Bastianich's reconstruction is correct, Datini would therefore be framed on his right side by the three Virtues, *Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude* (**Fig. 96**), with their respective vices underneath them.¹⁸⁵ These Virtues were particularly resonant for merchants because of the specific moral behaviours they exemplified. *Justice* meant treating others fairly and honestly, and especially the avoidance of usury.¹⁸⁶ *Temperance* signified the ability to control one's passions, moderation in the pursuit of needed things, and abstinence from the harmful things to which money could give unbridled access. *Fortitude* meant the determination to follow through on one's commitments, to keep one's word and maintain one's resolve. The other four Virtues, which would have been on the loggia wall adjacent to the house, would also carry special meaning for merchants. This would be especially true of *Prudence* (**Fig. 134**), but knowing what we do about Datini, we can be sure that he would

¹⁸⁴ Romagnoli, 2008, 417.

¹⁸⁵ The Vices might not have been particularly visible to those facing the loggia wall when seated at such events.

¹⁸⁶ Noonan, 30-31.

have had the final say in what virtues were placed where, and so his choice of what would be behind him would have been deliberate. While we cannot be certain about which vice was trampled by its opposite virtue, it would definitely have articulated the opposite moral behaviours, the ones that would bring dishonour and damnation. Thus, as a privately-commissioned cycle within Francesco's own home, the sequence in its virtue/vice pairings also spoke strongly to its viewers about Datini's own moral awareness and choices.

Indeed, I believe that this Virtues and Vices Cycle anchored the entire *cortile* program, visually, intellectually, and emotionally. It created a context for viewing and interpreting the other fresco components and ensured that the moral messages inherent in the other cycles would be seen as embodying some of the particular attributes associated with the personified virtues.

ii) The Sciences or Liberal Arts Cycle: Quadrivium and Trivium

If it was rare to have a full Virtues and Vices cycle in the home of a private citizen such as Datini, the presence of a Liberal Arts cycle in such a house was even more unusual. Presumably, because only a few fragments of this cycle remain, it has barely been mentioned in any of the studies on the *palazzo*, and no attempt has been previously made to explain its placement, meaning, and role in the overall *cortile* program.

What Gerini termed the Seven Sciences followed on from the Virtues and Vices cycle and occupied the second half of the back loggia wall and the adjacent side wall (**Fig. 96**). These Sciences, also known as the Liberal Arts, were personifications of the four subjects of the *Quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music), and the three subjects of the *Trivium* (Logic, Rhetoric, and Grammar). The *Quadrivium* represented those aspects of the Sciences that were associated with matter and number, and the *Trivium*, those that pertained to

the mind and the word.¹⁸⁷ According to Gerini's invoice, each of these personified arts had an image of a representative 'philosopher' underneath. Referring to a similar cycle by Andrea di Bonaiuto da Firenze (c.1343-1377) in the Spanish chapel of Santa Maria Novella (**Fig. 137**), Bastianich suggests that these 'philosophers' might have been as follows: *Pythagoras* for Arithmetic; *Euclid* for Geometry; *Ptolemy* for Astronomy; *Tubalcain* for Music; *Pietrus Ispanus* for Logic; *Cicero* for Rhetoric; *Donatus* or *Priscian* for Grammar.¹⁸⁸ The stories and personal qualities associated with each of these exemplary classical practitioners added another layer of meaning to what each Art itself represented to its viewers.

While the *Quadrivium* and *Trivium* might seem like intellectual concepts far removed from the commercial world of Datini and many of his guests, they were actually practical constructs that were understood to affect the human condition through their "...correspondences with the physical and moral order."¹⁸⁹ The association of each Art with a specific heavenly body, whose celestial influences on human personality and behaviour were accepted as part of Christian cosmology, directly linked the Liberal Arts with the Virtues, Purgatory, and salvation.¹⁹⁰

Arithmetic, which by Datini's time had come to incorporate computational and practical mathematics in addition to number theory, was the one Art in which Datini was accomplished

¹⁸⁷ Sister Miriam Joseph, *The Trivium: The Liberal Arts of Logic, Grammar, and Rhetoric* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2002), 3.

¹⁸⁸ Bastianich, 208.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas L. Cooksey, "Quadrivium", in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed, Richard Lansing (London: Routledge, 2000), 735-736.

¹⁹⁰See the description of medieval cosmology in Dante's time in: <http://abyss.uoregon.edu/~js/ast123/lectures/lec02.html>

and would have practiced daily as a practical tool of his trade.¹⁹¹ Arithmetic was the Liberal Art governed by the Sun, and the religious and moral symbolism of the Sun was enormous.¹⁹²

It is possible that Datini would have read about the meaning of the *Quadrivium* as a path for true understanding of a spiritually oriented life because of his keen interest in Boethius. It was Boethius who first coined the term *Quadrivium* as a way of describing the specific branches of knowledge that would lead one from the lower to the higher planes of understanding and perception of the divine. Michel Fournier argues that the work of Boethius (477-524) with respect to the *Quadrivium*, as described in Boethius' *Institutio Arithmetica*, underpins the movement from false understanding and doubt to true consolation in the *Consolation of Philosophy*.¹⁹³ "The *Consolation*, in order to console, must move from the lower mode of sense to the higher mode of reason. This movement is characteristic of the progression of the quadrivium."¹⁹⁴ The *Consolation of Philosophy* was one of Francesco Datini's favourite books, and there are several references to his special appreciation of Boethius in correspondence between him and Lapo Mazzei. In August 1394, Lapo wrote the following to Francesco:

... I will tell you more things... about the wheel of the world, how it turns shamelessly, about which your Boethius spoke pointedly... .Comfort yourself and rest in God, and you will approach that which you will find he promises and wills.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Leonardo Fibonacci's early thirteenth works were particularly important in raising the status of computational arithmetic and formed the basis of the mathematical curriculum in the Abacus schools. See Michel Masi, "Arithmetic," in *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, ed. David L. Warner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 162-165.

¹⁹² Rebecca S. Beal, "Sun", in Richard Lansing, ed., 2000, 802-803.

¹⁹³ Michael Fournier, "Boethius and the Consolation of the Quadrivium," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 34 (2009): 1-21.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted and Translated by Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 66.

As Byrne noted, the reference to *your Boethius* "...suggests that Datini had read and absorbed the ancient philosopher's ideas."¹⁹⁶ It is, therefore, quite possible that Datini himself might have suggested the Liberal Arts as a possible addition to the *cortile* decorations. Bastianich concluded such when she wrote:

The choice for avant-garde decoration in the Palazzo Datini reflects Francesco Datini's intellectual development, from the strictly business oriented medieval merchant to the first inklings of intellectual pursuits of a man not practicing an erudite profession, but rather reading for leisure.¹⁹⁷

The point here is that the inclusion of the Liberal Arts personifications, adjacent to the Virtues and Vices cycle, was not a random, unrelated piece of decoration; rather, it was a carefully planned and executed schema that blended the two cycles into an integrated and extended visual allegory, combining practical and cosmological knowledge with moral behaviour to direct its viewers towards the awareness and actions that would lead them to eventual salvation. And just as Datini was flanked on his right side by three of the virtues and vices when seated at meals in the loggia, so he would be flanked on his left side by the *Quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music) (**Fig. 96**). As branches of knowledge, each of these disciplines helped to reveal the natural and moral order that would lead humans to a higher plane of understanding God's presence and will. Being framed by these Arts thus marked Datini to his viewers as a man of culture and discernment, someone who sought God's truth as part of his life.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Bastianich, 22. Such a view of Datini, as noted earlier, is not shared by Romagnoli who argues that just because Datini read authors such as Boethius this does "not give any guarantee with respect to the actual reading - much less understanding - of the cited texts." (*non danno alcuna garanzia rispetto all'effettiva lettura-né tanto meno comprensione-dei testi citati*). Romagnoli, *Gli ambienti*, 128.

The two cycles in the loggia, side by side, therefore reinforced one another as statements of moral understanding and performance. Although Bastianich did not discuss these two cycles in any detail, her primary interest being the *Illustrious Men*, she astutely observed that: “The virtues, vices and sciences comprise a complex theological iconography of the sins and salvation of mankind.”¹⁹⁸

iii) The Illustri uomini (Illustrious Personages)

Niccolò Gerini’s invoice included three named historical figures—Charlemagne, Judith and Camilla—and fourteen other figures. These figures would have likely been set in the three adjacent lunettes of the back wall of the courtyard and the wall opposite the *loggia* (**Fig. 96**). All that has survived is one panel with six figures, a she-wolf and five humans, three of whom have been plausibly identified as Romulus, Joshua, and either Julius Caesar/Caesar Augustus or Alexander the Great (**Fig. 138**). The other two at the far right are a bearded man trampling on two bodies, who, Romagnoli suggests, might be the Roman Consul Mario Curio Dentato (321-270 BCE), and to his right what appears to be a woman, in the very last small pane.¹⁹⁹

As noted in the introduction, it is the imagery of this cycle that has received most of the scholarly attention on the *cortile* program. Bastianich’s study is the most comprehensive and in her analysis of the figures she has contextualized them within contemporary civic and religious culture, as has Romagnoli. Both authors noted the political role of such imagery based on other examples and contemporary events in Florence and Prato.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Bastianich, 221.

¹⁹⁹ Bastianich, 247. Romagnoli, *Gli ambienti*, 130.

²⁰⁰ Bastianich, 222-223. Romagnoli, *Gli ambienti*, 132.

The symbolic meaning of each of the illustrious men and women as role models was their whole *raison d'être*. The fact that only three of the figures in Gerini's account were named, and that they cost four or five times as much as the other figures, obviously suggests there was something special about those particular personages as Datini understood them. This special status certainly would have translated into some form of visual differentiation from the other illustrious figures, such as size, materials, and form of placement.²⁰¹ The various symbolic meanings of Charlemagne, Judith, and Camilla have been explored in the scholarship on this cycle. Bastianich briefly mentions some of the symbolic attributes of all three persons, as does Romagnoli for the two women. Judith represented courage, defence of faith, humility, and the power of the weak over the strong, and appears to have had special meaning in Florentine and Pratese politics.²⁰² Camilla was a figure of chastity, love of country, and general virtuousness.²⁰³ Charlemagne symbolized the Holy Roman Empire as the embodiment of Church and State unified in the cause of the fight for Christianity.²⁰⁴ Bastianich recognizes that these three figures "...are also partially religious in meaning."²⁰⁵ Her statement that "They are the only figures in the cycle, of the historical figures identified, that have a Christian connotation" is inaccurate in that it ignores the fact that all the other identifiable figures—Romulus, Joshua, and Alexander the Great—also had Christian symbolism and meaning.²⁰⁶ Romulus, for example, was the founder of Rome, and Rome was foundational in the development of Christianity and symbolized the universal Church.²⁰⁷ Joshua was a type of lesser Christ figure in medieval thought, whose destruction of the

²⁰¹ Bastianich, 218.

²⁰² Bastianich, 215-16. Romagnoli, *Gli ambienti*, 131.

²⁰³ Romagnoli, *Gli ambienti*, 131.

²⁰⁴ Bastianich, 217.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 221.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 219.

²⁰⁷ Charles T. Davis, "Rome," in Richard Lansing, ed., 2000, 750.

evil city of Jericho opened up the way to Jerusalem, the earthly metaphor for the heavenly city.²⁰⁸

Alexander the Great had a huge presence in medieval culture as a symbol of great munificence, an important Christian value.²⁰⁹ As exemplars, these figures all had meaning within the Christian conception of history as the unfolding story of a Christian universe.

We can assume, therefore, that every figure included in the cycle had some form of symbolic meaning within a Christian context and functioned as an *exemplum* for its viewers through its positive or negative moral symbolism, as understood in Datini's time. The issue of whether Judith and Camilla were deliberately included as female role models has not received much attention, other than a vague allusion from Anne Dunlop, and a more direct footnote from Bastianich in which she noted: "A figure of great chastity, Camilla may have been depicted as a message to women of the day, possibly in particular to Margherita Datini."²¹⁰ Given that the whole function of *Uomini Illustri* cycles was "embodying historical lessons and moral worth," it is not unreasonable that these two figures might have been intended to serve as exemplary role models for their female viewers. In particular, they would likely have been used by Margherita as models of womanly Christian virtue in instructing her female charges.

In conclusion, the role of the *Uomini Illustri* cycle within the scope of the *cortile* program was indeed, as Tanya Bastianich suggested, to provide a practical illustration of the behaviours articulated in the other two cycles in the loggia.²¹¹ This largest of the three cycles helped to knit together the entire *cortile* as a place of moral representation and instruction to its viewers, and

²⁰⁸ Mark Balfour, "Joshua," in Richard Lansing, ed., 2000, 15.

²⁰⁹ R. A. Malagi, "Alexander the Great," in Richard Lansing, ed., 2000, 15.

²¹⁰ Dunlop, 39. Bastianich, 463.

²¹¹ Bastianich 218, wrote: "The fourteen figures not specifically named in the account could have been persons that exemplified the seven virtues and the seven vices or possibly the seven sciences and philosophers. Although any further discussion would be conjecture, it is significant that the number of figures was fourteen, excluding the three more important and costly figures of Charlemagne, Judith and Camilla."

once again functioned as an offering from Datini to his guests, as well as emphasizing his own moral identity. Here, also, there would be expressions of delight and gratitude for such a vivid and comprehensive moral tableau.

iv) The Four Philosophers (Fig. 139)

Gerini's invoice mentioned four philosophers in the loggia—these were different philosophers than the ones at the feet of the Sciences—with one of them being placed on the ceiling vault and the other three in roundels on the walls just below the vault. All that remains today are the roundels with a few faint traces of the half-bust figures that were inserted. In the roundel separating the two vaults we can barely make out some of the design in which, according to Bastianich, "...a female figure holds a shield or crest divided into three sections."²¹² What we don't know is whether these were personifications of representative individuals or the branches of learning associated with the philosophies. The only scholar who has made any suggestion as to who the depicted philosophers might have been is Dunlop, who postulated that they were most likely personifications of *Poetry, Jurisprudence, Theology, and Philosophy*.²¹³ These figures would certainly support the Philosophers' role in further enunciating the themes of knowledge and morality as essential components of human understanding and behaviour in pursuit of an honourable earthly existence and eventual salvation. Except for *Philosophy* and *Poetry*, however, there does not appear to be any significant iconographic tradition for personifications of *Theology* or *Jurisprudence*, so it is difficult to assess whether these were the Philosophers represented. It is highly likely, however, that *Philosophy* was one of the personifications given her

²¹² Ibid, 203.

²¹³ Dunlop, 26. She gives no reason why she thinks these are the Philosophers represented.

importance to Datini himself through her central role in Boethius.²¹⁴ Representations of *Philosophy* were quite common in various media (**Fig. 140**), and Datini's viewers would likely have immediately recognized her, further contextualizing Datini as a learned, morally aware man.

Ultimately, however, this part of the *cortile* program, unless new documentation emerges from the Datini archive, will remain unidentified in detail, although its function seems clear.

v) *Datini's Coat of Arms* (Fig. 141)

Datini's crest is strategically located on the inside pillars at either end of the *loggia*. This placement plays a number of roles. As in other parts of the house, it marks the space as belonging to Datini and therefore his omnipresence. But these two crests, by framing all of the imagery in the *loggia*, also associate the entire imagery program and its meaning directly with Datini. The qualities of the design, colours, and materials of his shield were given particular resonance by the presence of the Virtues and Liberal Arts.

7. The Exterior Façade: Frescoes of Datini Enacting the Works of Mercy (Figs. 95, 142)

Although these images were not present in Datini's lifetime, I have included them because I think they embody the same motivations, functions, and themes as the ground-floor fresco program. Immediately upon Datini's death, Lapo Mazzei commissioned sixteen panels for the outside of Datini's Palazzo, which was now the headquarters of Datini's charity for the poor. These scenes show Francesco personally engaged in helping the poor of Prato, essentially following the Works of Mercy formula. There is nothing in Datini's will that referred to this action, or any other document that suggests he was part of its planning, but given everything we know about Datini

²¹⁴ Hall, 246.

and Mazzei, I think it is highly probable that Mazzei would have discussed this project with Datini and assured him that these images would be an immediate priority to help his friend gain additional suffrages to move his soul from Purgatory.

Only sinopia fragments from ten of these external frescoes have survived and are now housed in the palazzo. In 1910, reconstruction drawings were done by Giuseppe Catani with the intention that they would be recreated, and art historians have been using his drawings in discussions about these frescoes. However, as Philine Helas recently concluded, Catani's drawings were seriously flawed in that they "modify the original inspiration of the rectors of the Ceppo, by placing the overall emphasis on the economic and social rise of the merchant rather than on his charitable works."²¹⁵ One of the best surviving of these frescoes, and the one most accurately recreated by Catani (**Fig. 95**), shows Datini in front of his house, dispensing wine to the poor, something he actually had done during the plague outbreak of 1400, though not personally as he and Margherita were sheltering in Bologna.²¹⁶

These external frescoes were supposed to be a perpetual reminder to the citizens of Prato as they passed by what had been his prized palazzo, that all Pratese citizens were his beneficiaries. In exchange for his great acts of charity they would have responded with prayers for the journey of Datini's soul. Additionally the images served as *exempla* to encourage viewers to be similarly charitable, thus benefiting their own souls. These images, on what had been Datini's residence but now housed his charity for the poor, thus emphasized Datini's own pursuit of salvation and that of those who practiced the Works of Mercy:

²¹⁵ "...*modificare l'ispirazione originaria dei rettori del Ceppo, ponendo l'accento soprattutto sull'ascesa economica e sociale del mercante piuttosto che sulle sue opere caritative.*" Philine Helas, "Il ciclo pittorico sulle facciate di palazzo Datini," in Hayez et al., 2012, Tomo 1, 155.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 157.

The spaces where mercy was exercised prefigured the place reserved for practitioners in heaven. The headquarters of confraternities—or the ecclesiastical spaces in which their members gathered—were thus the places of those who would potentially attain salvation.²¹⁷

While the fresco imagery of the palazzo, conceived and painted under Datini's direct supervision, did not feature a representation of Datini, many of its components played a similar function—highlighting Francesco's own moral identity, conferring real spiritual benefits upon the viewers, and reminding them of the Christian acts that would lead to their own salvation.²¹⁸ In this process, Datini was, and would continue to be, honoured, remembered, and prayed for to this very day.

Summary

Francesco Datini would have agreed with what the Florentine wool merchant, Giovanni Rucellai (1403-1481), wrote about his own palazzo and architectural projects some seventy years later: that they had given him “the greatest contentment and greatest satisfaction, as they serve in part the honour of God, the honour of the city and the memory of me.”²¹⁹ The decorations of the Palazzo Datini's *piano terrena*, so carefully and deliberately crafted, fulfilled all three of these functions for Francesco. In his lifetime, his palazzo, ‘the most beautiful castle in the world’, was the pride of Prato for its magnificence and fame. The high-ranking and exalted persons who visited Datini there, admiring his frescoes, conferred honour on the entire city. And after Datini's death, the house stood as a memorial to his love of God, Christian charity, and his longed-for

²¹⁷ Ibid, 197.

²¹⁸ We know of at least one panel painting that was housed in the palazzo during Datini's lifetime that featured an image of him praying. See Figure 9.

²¹⁹ Quoted by Lindow, 186.

hope of salvation through its role as the seat of the charity he created to look after the poor of Prato in perpetuity.

Collectively, the decorations served Datini well. They marked him as a man of substance, intellect, and principle, and they prompted the kind of responses that would help him negotiate the vicissitudes of life and the uncertainty of death. Datini's great soul-friend, Lapo Mazzei, understood the importance of this marvellously decorated palazzo to Datini, but felt compelled to remind him to keep it in its proper perspective:

...true Christians, by fasting and alms ought to make incense and sacrifice to God, in spirit and to build their houses in Heaven, which will be everlasting. May it please Jesus that yours up there may be nearly as beautiful as the palace you have built down here, which you will have to leave.²²⁰

Lapo's concern for the soul of his friend and patron is a touching and potent reminder of the culture of reciprocity, moral obligation, and the hope of salvation that bound people together as they navigated their earthly journey.

²²⁰ Quoted and translated by Byrne, 1989, *Francesco Datini*, 91.

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of using the Merchant's Moral Eye Analytical Framework as a lens of inquiry we have come to understand more about the three men of the case studies as individuals whose use of imagery manifested many of the fundamental attitudes and concerns of merchants in Trecento Italy around money, reputation, and salvation.

The lives of Enrico Scrovegni (c.1265-1336), Domenico Lenzi (c.1305-c.1348), and Francesco di Marco Datini (1335-1410) stretched across the long Trecento, intersecting for only a brief period in 1335-36. On the surface, these three merchants had little in common in terms of their commercial activities and social status. Enrico was an ennobled member of the Paduan elite who inherited and extended a fortune from the proceeds of moneylending and agricultural production. He was a power broker in Paduan and Veneto politics, and served on several diplomatic missions. Domenico Lenzi was an obscure, small-time Florentine grain trader who was likely part of a family business, and had profited significantly from the grain crises of the late 1320s and 30s. He was likely well-to-do rather than rich, and there are no extant records indicating that he ever held any office in Florence's governmental structures. Francesco Datini, from a humble Pratese background, was a self-made man who became one of the wealthiest men in Tuscany through his wide range of entrepreneurial enterprises. Fueled by his obsessive drive and business acumen in making money, he was also astute in avoiding the cesspool of Florentine and Pratese politics.

It is not surprising that these three men have never been studied together, so separated are they by time, status, and location. Yet, as both Christians and merchants, they had all been relentlessly exposed to the societal and religious concerns about the making and use of money.

They all faced the challenges of not only being honest in their business practices and meeting their Christian duty to care for the needy, but also—in a world where public judgement was a notable force—of ensuring that this is how they were perceived by their fellow citizens. Failure to attend to their *buona fama*, as Todeschini expressed it, “...was the gate leading to an abyss of infamy and bad reputation, to a desperate civic anonymity.”¹

Enrico, Domenico, and Francesco all seemed to understand that the strategic use of imagery was one way of negotiating these challenges. Each of them commissioned and displayed imagery which, among its other functions, enabled them to project themselves as honest merchants and upright Christians. This imagery was chosen according to their *moral eye*, and was a way of understanding and presenting themselves to others as morally aware and responsive persons. Whatever their individual depth of religious belief and piety might have been, Scrovegni, Lenzi, and Datini each shared the same ultimate concern—achieving salvation and avoiding eternal torment in Hell.

They would have totally understood what their fellow merchant, Paolo da Certaldo, meant when he wrote: “Just as the body has two corporeal eyes, so the soul must have two spiritual eyes, one open to the glory of Heaven and the other to the sufferings of Hell.”² This was more than a metaphor about sight—it was a reflection of the understanding that the visual was a form of transmission and cognition about what really mattered. This belief in the visual, as a bridge from the material to the spiritual, underscored their use of imagery as a way of showing

¹ Giacomo Todeschini, “The Incivility of Judas: ‘Manifest’ Usury as a Metaphor for the ‘Infamy of Fact,’” in Vitullo and Wolfthal, 44.

² Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #32, Branca, 2015, 44.

that they were worthy of a good reputation and of the prayers and other suffrages they needed. This is what 'merchant visual culture' was ultimately about during this period.

The analytical framework has revealed a number of common features about the three merchants' motivations and expectations around the imagery they commissioned. First and foremost was their understanding of Purgatory and its processes. They assumed, indeed hoped, that this is where they would go upon their death (rather than Hell), and it was this expectation that determined some of the content, placement and use of their imagery. Much of the imagery they commissioned highlighted them as morally-driven, dutiful Christians. Much of it also provided their viewers with didactic and thaumaturgic opportunities for their own hopes of salvation, thus invoking the dynamics of obligation and reciprocity to produce the blessings and prayers our merchants desired for their own souls.

What is so striking about the imagery in chapel, book, and residence—imagery deriving from a shared cultural inheritance that is at once Christian, classical, and contemporary—is the extent to which its production and presentation was determined by each man. In realizing their individual artistic programs they were obviously helped by others, notably their artists and other types of advisors, but ultimately what was produced came from them and reflected their individual, societal, and eschatological concerns.

Another common feature was just how large the likely audiences were for this imagery. While Lenzi's manuscript would probably not have been seen by the same range of high status individuals who visited Scrovegni's Arena Chapel or the Palazzo Datini, in all three cases most of the viewers were the people who constituted these men's personal, business, civic, and religious networks. Such broad access was intentional and strategic.

The comprehensive contextualization provided by the analytical framework facilitates several distinct scholarly functions: assessing existing interpretations; identifying and articulating new or substantively modified ones; and filling gaps and fleshing out issues related to the commissioner, the imagery, and the viewers. The following are examples of some of the key findings of this study in each of these categories.

The use of the framework as an assessment tool for existing interpretations produced important results in all three case studies. With respect to the Arena Chapel, it suggested that the “usury thesis” is a too narrow and restrictive explanation for Scrovegni’s motives in building and decorating the chapel. Rather, his actions have to be seen more in the context of representing himself as an honest merchant and dutiful Christian than as a repentant usurer. In the case of Domenico Lenzi, the framework provided a far more cogent explanation of his motives than Susanna Partsch’s suggestion that the manuscript was intended to increase his client base. For the Palazzo Datini, the framework highlighted that the traditional interpretations of his fresco program, as primarily intended to display his wealth and bolster his status, are far too restrictive and even misleading.

In terms of providing new interpretations, it is not surprising that the most dramatic were in relation to the Arena Chapel, given how exhaustive the scholarship on this monument has been. The framework’s detailed examination of how Purgatory was understood and represented, in text and sermons, led to my showing how Giotto has represented the purgatorial process in the *Last Judgement* fresco, and related it to Scrovegni himself. Similarly, I used the dimension of Hospitality as a fundamental Christian moral value and practice, to show how this theme was embedded in some of Giotto’s narrative panels and was used to represent Enrico as an exemplary Christian host. For Lenzi I reconstructed, for the first time, who his audiences likely would have

been and how they would have experienced the book. I then demonstrated how the text and images were key forms of his self-representation as a trustworthy grain merchant, compassionate Christian, and stern moralist. With Datini, I have shown that the decorations he commissioned need to be understood as a tightly-knit integrated program in which the frescoes as a whole functioned as didactic *exempla* that spoke to Datini's own moral identity and as prayer magnets for his well-being in life and his soul after death.

While providing new interpretations were clearly the most significant outcomes, the framework also enabled me to clarify or add incrementally to understandings of the three merchants, their imagery, and their viewers; in particular, the framework allowed me to bring into consideration overlooked or underexamined elements of the imagery and to do so in a holistic and nuanced way. This included small but important details such as explaining the difference in the depiction of Margherita's family shield in the *camera della due letta* through the addition of a *lambello*. Other examples were relating the Virtues cycle in the Arena Chapel to Scrovegni's dedication inscription, and highlighting Lenzi's description of himself as a *componitore* to better understand how he saw himself in relation to his book. While such details might not be as dramatic as my suggestion that the *Last Judgement* included a visual depiction of the purgatorial process, these small points cumulatively demonstrate how effective the framework can be in enhancing our overall understanding of the meanings and functions of merchant-commissioned imagery in Trecento Italy.

In my Introduction to this dissertation, I tried to place the Merchant's Moral Eye methodology within the context of recent medieval patronage studies. It is the role of patronage studies to help us understand why and how imaged products, that we now think of as art, came to be produced. In this sense it is perfectly legitimate to think of Scrovegni, Lenzi, and Datini as

particular types of late-medieval ‘patrons’; that is, as private persons who commissioned specific imagery, designed and created with their direct input to the artists they hired to do the work.

Within the totality of Trecento art production these three individuals were not unique but common types, and what the analytical framework contributes is a way of examining the agency of the artworks with respect to the patron and the viewers. Jill Caskey, in looking at the issue of medieval patronage studies, observed the following:

If the study of medieval art is on the cusp of resurgence, then it is in part because of the applicability of a number of frames of reference to the dynamics of patronage. No single theory holds the key, but it is up to us to play with them to see what doors might open.³

I believe that the Merchant’s Moral Eye framework does indeed present an appropriate set of ‘frames of reference’ through its unique combination of eight dimensions that function as interpretive lenses. The framework therefore opens up such an additional ‘door’ for understanding the motivations and functions of much of the art commissioned by merchants in Trecento Italy.

To conclude, Scrovegni, Lenzi, and Datini were all part of a moral economy and never questioned that how they made and used their money was governed by ethical considerations essential to their social and spiritual well-being. This was their world view, and while accumulating wealth might have been a primary objective, they were not prepared to pursue this aim in a way that would imperil their civic reputations and hopes of salvation. Our merchants used the imagery they commissioned not just for themselves, but to give real benefits to their viewers. In this they were enacting what Paolo da Certaldo urged in his concluding good practice:

³ Jill Caskey, “Medieval Patronage and Its Potentialities,” in Hourihane, ed., 2013, 30.

Surely, if you ever hope to go to Heaven, it will do you no good not to do evil, if you don't do good deeds as well. ... With good works, the soul acquires merit; and by acquiring merit in this life, in the next life the soul shall bask in the glory for which it had hoped. With hope alone, and no good works, our souls would not attain that glory, and would be disappointed in the end.⁴

The frescoes of the Arena Chapel provided their viewers with spiritual food, a stark vision of the torments of Hell, and a reduction of purgatorial time through indulgences. *Lo Specchio umano's* text and illuminations manifested its author's mission to save his city from starvation and spiritual ruin through rekindling gratitude to God and caring for the poor. Datini's courtyard cycles drew on well understood cultural forms to provide clear moral instruction, and the icons in the Hall dispensed holy blessing and divine protection. All of these benefits were part of the moral economy—the use of money to promote the common good through the saving of bodies and souls.

How Enrico, Domenico, and Francesco made and used their money so long ago still matters today. No matter how imperfect they might have been, every indication is they accepted that the accumulation of wealth was, and should be, constrained by a notion of the greater good. They never doubted that they would pay a dreadful price for succumbing to the avaricious impulses that lead to dishonest business practices and the withholding of charity—shame in this life and eternal damnation in the afterlife.

In developed economies like ours, the forces of restraint against greed and fraud have generally become legal rather than social, moral, or eschatological. And yet, our three Trecento Italian merchants have provided a message through one of their images that still applies powerfully to us today. In all the imagery of the chapel, codex, and palazzo, there is one

⁴ Paolo da Certaldo, Good Practice #388, Branca, 2015, 97.

particular image that was common to all three—the personification of the Virtue *Justice*.⁵ For commissioners and viewers alike, this image symbolized even-handedness and the belief that no individual should unduly profit at the expense of others. We too generally still believe in the concept of justice as one that demands fairness, balance and, if appropriate, retribution. It was then, as now, a case as Paolo da Certaldo so simply put it, of “doing what is right.”⁶ In this idea and image of justice, we are still receiving a gift from Enrico Scrovegni, Domenico Lenzi, and Francesco Datini. May their souls be residing in the Heaven they so passionately believed in and hoped for.

⁵ The personification of *Justice* has not survived in the Palazzo Datini, but it was undoubtedly one of the Cardinal virtues included.

⁶ Paolo da Certaldo, *Good Practice* #386, Branca, 2015, 96.

APPENDIX 1

USURY AND THE SCROVEGNI FAMILY: THE DANTE FACTOR

Underlying the whole linkage of the Arena Chapel with the theme of usury is Rainaldo Scrovegni's reputation as a usurer. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona refer to him as "The most notorious usurer of his day."¹ But the reason that Rainaldo Scrovegni became the medieval archetype for a notorious and unrepentant usurer, rather than remaining a relatively obscure thirteenth-century Paduan merchant and moneylender, was solely because of Dante. Any study that mentions Rainaldo's name notes his placement in Hell, by Dante, in the *Inferno* (Canto XVII, lines 43-78). Laura Jacobus, for example, wrote as follows:

...the poet Dante had consigned Rainaldo to a fiery torment in the seventh circle of the *Inferno*, identifying him among a group of usurers by the heraldic devices presumptuously decorated on their money-bags. Within a few years of its completion (c.1314), Dante's text was in circulation. Thereafter the Scrovegni family name became irretrievably linked to usury, as it has remained down to our own day.²

Although Jacobus noted that there was no actual evidence that Rainaldo was 'a manifest usurer', and cited Benjamin Kohl's argument, she did not pursue the question of why Rainaldo had the reputation he did.³ Indeed, the issue of *why* Dante chose to cast the Paduan, Rainaldo Scrovegni, as the archetype and spokesperson for all usurers has not been adequately explored. Since this is absolutely central to so much of the interpretation in the scholarship on the chapel, I am going to address the issue here.

¹ Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 1.

² Jacobus, 2008, 6

³ Kohl argues that, at least as far as their loans to the commune of Vicenza are concerned, "That the Scrovegni should be viewed as bankers, not usurious moneylenders..." Kohl, 2003, 179.

In order to explain Dante's treatment of Rainaldo, it is necessary to recognize that whatever his merits were as a poet, Dante was as prone as any other early fourteenth-century Italian to passionate hatreds and vendettas. Dante was extremely bitter and vindictive about his expulsion from Florence. Consequently, he used his *Inferno* as an instrument of denunciation, not just of those whom he felt injured Christian society, but also against those whom he felt had wronged him personally. In a 2016 Master's thesis, Michael Rupers catalogued every contemporary of Dante who appeared in the *Commedia*.⁴ He noted that of the ninety-five identifiable individuals (including Rainaldo Scrovegni) placed somewhere in the three realms of the afterlife, eight ended up in Paradise, nineteen in Purgatory, and sixty-eight in Hell.⁵ Rupers' conclusion was that Dante

...vindictively used his masterpiece to lash out at his contemporary enemies, exacting retribution against many who angered him in his lifetime or otherwise offended his religious, political, civic or personal sensibilities...⁶

One of the cases that Rupers discusses is that of Filippo Argenti. Rupers argues that the only reason Dante placed the deceased Filippo in Hell was because his brother, Boccacino Argenti, a Black Guelph, had seized Dante's house in Florence, expelling Dante's wife, Gemma, and his three children, so he could take possession.⁷ Since Boccacino was still alive when the *Inferno* was written (likely between 1304 and 1309), he couldn't be placed in Hell, so his brother Filippo became the victim of Dante's vengeance. In his encounter with Filippo in Hell, Dante exalts in his punishment whereby Filippo is continuously torn to pieces in the slime, and Dante

⁴ Michael J. Rupers, "Dante's Hidden Sin-Wrath: How Dante Used the *Inferno* Against Contemporaries" (Master's Thesis, Dominican University of California, 2016).

⁵ Ibid, 64-68.

⁶ Ibid, v. Similarly, Brendan Cassidy observed that "And Dante's *Inferno* includes people whose main crime seems to have been that the poet took issue with their views." Cassidy, 355.

⁷ Ibid, 22. This episode takes place in *Inferno*, Canto VIII, lines 58-63.

wishes him more of the same. In his commentary on this interaction, the Dante scholar Allan Mandelbaum noted that “In fact, many commentators have condemned the pilgrim’s [Dante] reaction to Argenti as an instance of savagery unbecoming a man on the road to salvation.”⁸

Barbara Reynolds, in trying to understand Dante’s similar treatment of Bocca degli Abati, a Florentine nobleman whose reputed traitorous behaviour cost Florence the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, wrote:

Dante’s behaviour towards Bocca, as towards Filippo Argenti, reveals a ferocious side of his character. No amount of allegorical interpretation can explain away his savage cruelty... Here are no tears, no fainting spells at the sight of suffering of the damned. He rejoices in it and relishes the prospect of keeping their black fame alive on earth.⁹

Few works have had the immediate impact that the *Commedia* had throughout Trecento Italy, and for those placed in Hell, such as Rainaldo Scrovegni, their *fama* was seriously blackened and disgraced. Given that the *Inferno* was in circulation by 1314,¹⁰ and that Giovanni da Nono's *De Generatione* was composed about 1318, it is certainly possible that da Nono could have been influenced by Dante's treatment of Rainaldo.¹¹ This might explain why da Nono chose to place the Scrovegni at the beginning of his fourth book, in the section on ignoble, upstart families.¹² But might, in fact, the opposite possibly be true, that da Nono could have influenced Dante? Certainly not through da Nono's writings, as they came after the *Inferno*, but it is not

⁸ Allen Mandelbaum, Anthony Oldcorn, Charles Ross, eds., *Lectura Dantis: Inferno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 113. Mandelbaum also talks about the general tendency of Dante commentators, throughout history, to try and justify Dante’s inclusions of some of his contemporaries in Hell by emphasizing their failings. See Mandelbaum et al, 113-117.

⁹ Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man* (Emeryville: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2006), 220.

¹⁰ Zygmunt G. Barański, "Textual Transmission," in *Dante in Context*, eds. Zygmunt G. Barański and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 512.

¹¹ Hyde, 1966, 6. A later date is quite possible given the length of the work and reworking by da Nono. See Marino Zabbia, "Giovanni da Nono," in *Dizionario-Biografico*, Vol.56 (2001).

¹² Hyde comments that for Da Nono the Scrovegni were "...the very epitome of ignobility." Hyde, 1966, 87.

beyond the realm of possibility that the two men actually met when Dante was in Padua in March, 1306.¹³ Their shared opinions about the impact of the newly wealthy on the state of society might have meant that da Nono's circles included the same individuals with whom Dante would have stayed and interacted during his visit. What is certain, however, is that even if da Nono and Dante never met, Dante would have heard similar views about the Scrovegni, particularly Enrico, as he was then one of the most powerful and influential citizens of Padua.

Da Nono wrote that Rainaldo was said to have "...made 5000,000 lire through usury", but that is the worst he says of him.¹⁴ Da Nono's real contempt and personal vitriol is heaped upon Enrico, not Rainaldo. He calls Enrico a hypocrite, liar, and manipulator, but not, interestingly enough, a usurer.¹⁵ It does not appear therefore that contemporary accounts of Rainaldo suggest he had the kind of reputation that would justify Dante's portrait of him. Benjamin Kohl's explanation was that

Dante's judgement on Rinaldo Scrovegni, found among the Tuscan usurers in the Seventh Circle of Hell, was clearly negative. But it was probably not based on any specific, individual usurious acts. Rather it attaches to a livelihood, a condemnation of a reputation for easily acquired wealth.¹⁶

¹³ Benvenuto da Imola (c.1320-1388), an early commentator on the *Commedia*, wrote that Dante and Giotto were friends and Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) claimed Dante visited Giotto while he was working on the Arena Chapel. There is no way to verify whether these claims were true, though Dante certainly knew Giotto by reputation and has Oderisi da Gubbio (c.1240-1299) make a reference to Giotto's exceptional talent in *Purgatorio* XI, lines 94-95. See Caron Cioffi, "Giotto," in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Lansing (London: Routledge), 446-447. Stephen Bemrose thinks that da Imola's account of Dante meeting Giotto in Padua is likely true, as da Imola was "...among the most reliable of all Dante's medieval commentators..." Stephen Bemrose, *A New Life of Dante* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 85.

¹⁴ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 13, 378. In *De Generatione*, Da Nono identifies many other families as ignoble usurers. J. K. Hyde wrote: "Fourteenth-century Padua had an unsavory reputation for usury. Not only did Da Nono and Mussato accuse their fellow-citizens of this vice, but Dante chose the Paduan Renaldo Scrovegni to speak on behalf of the usurers in Hell." Hyde, 1966, 40.

¹⁵ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 13, 378.

¹⁶ Kohl, 2004, 180.

Kohl's argument still presupposes that Rainaldo had enough of a bad reputation that it would make sense for Dante to use him as the archetype of all usurers. I would suggest, however, that the real target of Dante was not Rainaldo, but rather Enrico. This is a similar situation to that described above where Filippo Argenti was proxy for his still alive brother, Boccacino. Dante could not place Enrico in Hell because he was still alive, so Enrico's father, Rainaldo, who died in 1288 and who was certainly a money-lender on a significant scale, had to suffice. There is certainly nothing in any other source to suggest Rainaldo was the type of boorish, ungracious, and unrepentant sinner depicted in the *Inferno*. Quite the contrary, if one looks at what Scardeone wrote about him almost 300 years later:

He is praised by all writers as having been an extremely hospitable man, and because the men to whom he offered his frequent and generous hospitality were most eminent, his reputation was said to have gone before him throughout the whole of Italy and his name to have been greatly celebrated everywhere.¹⁷

Enrico, however, would have stood for everything that Dante despised in early fourteenth-century Italy—an upstart wealthy merchant of non-noble lineage, who inherited a fortune based on money-lending, made more money through trade and commerce, and who was socially and politically presumptuous.¹⁸ Enrico had purchased his knighthood, and therefore had become a nobleman with no pretensions to traditional knightly military duties or adherence to an honourable code. To make matters even worse, Enrico was a staunch Guelph, and therefore a contributor, in Dante's eyes, to the general moral decay of Italy and Christendom.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 16, 384.

¹⁸ Dante was not alone in such an assessment of Enrico. Giovanni da Nono despised him for the same reasons, although he does not accuse Enrico of usury. See Hyde, 1966, 64-67. See also Jacobus, 2008, Appendix 13, 377-378.

¹⁹ Hyde, 1966, 101-102; As a greatly simplified rule of thumb, the Guelphs supported the Pope and the Ghibellines supported the Holy Roman Emperor. The rivalries between these two political factions were at the heart of much of the conflict in the Italian cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See: Carol Lansing, "Guelphs," in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, Richard Lansing, ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 456-459; Carol Lansing, "Ghibellines," in *The*

There was also likely a personal motive to be considered here, as Chiara Frugoni intimated in her 2008 monograph.²⁰ Dante had been warmly welcomed in his exile from Florence by the Della Scala family, the rulers of Verona, first by Bartolomeo in 1303/04, and then by his famous younger brother, Cangrande I. Cangrande housed and hosted Dante in Verona from 1312 to 1318.²¹ Much of the *Commedia* was written while Dante lived in Verona, and Boccaccio noted that “Dante would not let anyone see installments of the *Commedia* until he had shared them with Cangrande.”²² Dante’s esteem for Cangrande was expressed not only in an Epistle (in which Dante declares himself Cangrande’s servant and friend and dedicates the whole of *Paradiso* to him), but also in *Paradiso*, Canto XVII, lines 70-93.²³ Dante’s regard for Cangrande was not just gratitude for his hospitality and friendship, but also for his Ghibelline political beliefs, nobility of character, and appreciation of culture. Since Cangrande was locked in a deadly power struggle with Padua for supremacy in the Veneto, it is not surprising that Dante enthusiastically and openly supported Cangrande’s Ghibelline allegiances and his mission of conquest in the Veneto, especially because it would eliminate Guelphic Padua as a regional power.²⁴

Dante Encyclopedia, Richard Lansing, ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 437-441. Dante never identified himself as a Ghibelline (he had been a white Guelph) but he became a staunch imperialist and an unwavering Ghibelline sympathiser. See Stephen Bemrose, *A New Life of Dante* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 214.

²⁰ “Dante, amico di Cangrande della Scala, nemico della guelfa Padova, desiderava evidentemente sottolineare attraverso due personaggi di spicco, per de più parenti, il suo astio verso la città per le politica che conduceva, antiscagliera ed antimperiale.” Chiara Frugoni, 2008, 17.

²¹ Todd Boli, “Cangrande della Scala,” in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, Richard Lansing, ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 136-137.

²² Ibid.

²³ The Epistle to Cangrande has been hotly debated as to its authenticity, with many Dante scholars convinced it was added in the fifteenth century. See Albert Russell Ascoli, “Epistle to Cangrande,” in *The Dante Encyclopedia*, Richard Lansing, ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 348-352.

²⁴ Dante’s Epistles V, VI, and VII were written in support of Henry VII’s campaigns in Italy against the Guelphs, of which Cangrande was an important part.

Enrico, as a powerful and influential Paduan, and supporter of Padua's Guelphic allegiance, was an obvious enemy of Cangrande.²⁵ Indeed, it was the struggle between Cangrande and Padua, and its effect on Paduan internal politics, that precipitated Enrico's flight to Venice in 1318, and permanent exile from Padua until his death in 1336.²⁶ Cangrande must have felt significant satisfaction on briefly moving into the Palazzo Scrovegni when he finally conquered Padua in 1328.²⁷

Dante probably learned about Enrico in his first visit to Verona in 1303/04, particularly as the Scrovegni were significantly involved with loans and properties in Vicenza, the initial focus of conflict between Verona and Padua.²⁸ He would have learned more about the Scrovegni family when he visited Padua in March, 1306. The only Paduans mentioned in the *Commedia* are both usurers— Rainaldo Scrovegni who is in Hell already, and his son-in-law, Vitaliano del Dente Lemici, whom Rainaldo predicts will sit beside him on his left side after death, thereby identifying him as a usurer also.²⁹ Thus, Dante defamed the Scrovegni, directly through Rainaldo and indirectly through Vitaliano (Enrico's brother-in-law), but also Padua generally.

²⁵ There is some controversy about whether Enrico's considered himself a Guelph. In the end, however, as Hyde noted, Enrico "... remained a constant if rather weak-kneed supporter of the Guelph cause to the end." Hyde, 1966, 258.

²⁶ The struggle for supremacy in the Veneto was complex and full of intrigues, shifting alliances and interfamily struggles. For a more detailed description from the Paduan perspective see Hyde, 1966, 220-282. For the Verona perspective see A. M. Allen, *A History of Verona*, ed. Edward Armstrong (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1910), 145-185.

²⁷ Simon, 1995, 24.

²⁸ Hyde, 1966, 188. Rainaldo had extensive holdings in Vicenza and had married a Vicentine noblewoman, Cappellina di Enrico di Malacapella di Maltraversi. Enrico was also involved deeply in financial affairs in Vicenza and Rainaldo had made him administrator of his holdings there in 1287. Derbes and Sandona, 2008, 24. One of the sources of Vicentine bitterness towards Padua was the taxation burden imposed on them in order to repay loans made by the Scrovegni and other families. Kohl, 2003, 178.

²⁹ The Lemici family of Padua were a powerful and wealthy family who were also named by da Nono as serious usurers. Hyde says that Vitaliano, who was married to Enrico's sister Beatrice, "...inherited a reputation for wealth and usury [and] was the fourth most powerful man in Padua in his day." Hyde, 1966, 86. The other two usurers alongside Rainaldo in the encounter with Dante were both Florentines of the Gianfigliuzzi and Obriachi families.

It is extremely curious to me that in all of the literature on Dante's *Commedia*, there appears to have been absolutely no attempt to explain why Dante uses coats of arms as identifiers, rather than their names, for the three usurers in Hell. This, I suggest, was related to the nature of the sin of usury, for it is the only time in the whole of the *Commedia* that Dante uses heraldic devices as identifiers. The most significant thing to note here is that a coat of arms didn't just identify a single individual in time and place; it identified the whole family, past, present, and future. The context in which the family coat of arms was used, for good or ill, extended to other family members.³⁰ Dante probably selected this method of identification of the usurers precisely because it would be making a statement about these families as inheritors of the proceeds of usury. And Enrico gets particularly singled out because it was his father who was the arch-usurer in Dante's Hell. (**Fig. 59**).³¹

³⁰ In their commentary on Bartolo da Sassoferrato's tract on coats of arms, the authors noted that "...the degrading of familial arms was taken as a degradation of the *casa* itself." Cavallar et al., 55

³¹ Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XVII, lines 64-75.

APPENDIX 2

THE PROBLEM OF THE VISUALIZATION OF PURGATORY IN THE EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY

By the start of the Trecento, Purgatory had a powerful grip on the understanding of the afterlife as the realm where most Christians would have expected to be immediately after their death. And yet, as Paul Binski, in his analysis of medieval death, asked:

... why is it that so central a doctrine as that of Purgatory should not have been accompanied by a fundamental rethinking of the way the afterlife was itself represented in medieval art?"¹

Binski observed that apart from illustrations of Dante's *Purgatorio*, "...it is singularly difficult to identify a widespread visual culture of Purgatory-illustration."² In trying to explain why this was so, Binski argued it was a combination of factors: that the nature of Purgatory was a state of being rather than a place; that late-medieval thinking was still binary rather than tertiary; and that "the representational silence about Purgatory touches most upon the very function, purpose, and character of medieval image-making."³ Binski maintained Purgatory was a process, not a place, and thus was understood in all representations of sinful and virtuous behaviours, and served no end in itself but was implied in all imagery of the afterlife.⁴

Binski was scarcely alone in thinking that there were relatively few representations of Purgatory.⁵ Thomas Boase, in his work on the visual representations of death in the Middle Ages, declared:

¹ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (British Museum Press, 1996), 188.

² Ibid

³ Ibid, 188-199.

⁴ Ibid, 198-199.

⁵ Derbes and Sandona also noted that such visualizations prior to Dante were "very rare." Derbes and Sandona, 2015, 44.

Outside Italy, where Dante's *Divina Commedia* found some visual representations, there was little attempt to represent Purgatory in painting or sculpture. Imagination seemed to have been exhausted by the effort of embodying Hell.⁶

It is tempting for art historians to think that the representation of Purgatory starts with illuminations of Dante's text.⁷ It was Dante, after all, who seems to have spatially defined Purgatory in relation to Earth, Hell, and Heaven, and to see it as a specific place within a Ptolemaic, concentric model of the universe.⁸ Rachel Owen argued that "Dante was the first to offer a fully coherent scheme for Purgatory", but she also noted that he assimilated earlier motifs, such as the mountain and fire.⁹ She added that the traditional understandings of Purgatory gave it a somewhat confused nature in terms of where and what it was—a post-chamber of Hell or an ante-chamber of Heaven—and that this confused understanding resulted in generally inaccurate representations by artists of what Dante actually described, particularly in making it its own, distinct region.¹⁰ Stephen Greenblatt pointed out that the lack of strong iconographical traditions for representing Purgatory led many artists to simply depict accustomed scenes of Hell, but to add something that suggested rescue, such as the nearby presence of an angel.¹¹ And yet it is

⁶ Thomas S. R. Boase, *Death in the Middle Ages: Mortality, Judgement and Remembrance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 49.

⁷ Jerry Walls emphasizes how important Dante's *Purgatorio* was in shaping the conception of Purgatory. "It is hard to exaggerate the long-term significance of this poem for the fortunes of the doctrine of purgatory. Not only did Dante enshrine purgatory with cultural immortality by presenting it with unforgettable imagery and sheer brilliance, he also did so with compelling theological sophistication. Walls, 25.

⁸ *Ibid*, 192.

⁹ Rachel M. Owen, "Illuminated Manuscripts of Dante's *Commedia* (1330-1490) in their Cultural and Artistic Context" (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000), 72-73.

¹⁰ Owen, 74. According to Shaffern, 2007, 120, Thomas Aquinas, for example, thought that Purgatory "...formed the vestibule of Hell, rather than the antechamber of Heaven" and thus emphasized the Hellish nature of purgatorial fire and punishment. Jacques Le Goff, 1984, 6, wrote that "Spatially, Purgatory is also in an in-between position, between Hell and Paradise. Yet for a long time it tended to be confused with one or the other pole."

¹¹ Greenblatt, 53-54.

precisely this confused tradition that suggests that Dante's schema of Purgatory was not the start of Purgatorial iconography.

In 2003, Robert Mills attacked the notion that there weren't late-medieval representations of Purgatory, apart from the illuminations of Dante's text. He wrote:

... art historians have simply not understood the representational strategies by which an artist familiar with the prevailing traditions of literature or pulpit might have differentiated purgatory from hell. ...I would like to suggest that visualizations of purgatory in the later Middle Ages will only be understood and recognized once art historians grasp the language with which medieval artists communicated purgatorial space, and more importantly the ways in which that language of space was conceived in relation to a particular perception of time.¹²

Mills was suggesting that we can indeed find artistic representations of Purgatory if we know what to look for. In particular, we have to let go of a mental model of Purgatory that is sharply defined spatially and temporally, or structured in accordance with Dante's schema. It was relatively straightforward to represent Purgatory if one were illustrating or visually translating a specific text such as the *Commedia* (**Fig. 143**) or St. Patrick's Purgatory (**Fig. 144**). But to portray Purgatory within traditional visual imagery of the afterlife, such as the *Last Judgement*, was very difficult as artists did not yet have a spatial model of Purgatory or standardized iconographic traditions to draw on. This only started to occur in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in Books of Hours (**Fig. 145**).¹³ Giotto's inclusion of the purgatorial process in a *Last Judgement* scene seems to be absolutely unique, although I have not exhaustively studied near contemporary depictions to be sure about this.

¹² Mills, 478-479.

¹³ Mills 482-494, noted that by the fifteenth century depictions of souls in Purgatory were quite common either as representational or metaphorical images. These included such things as souls being relieved through suffrages, the intervention of the Virgin or good angels, or imprisonment motifs.

The visual depictions of Purgatory fulfilled several functions. Such imagery was always didactic, reminding viewers that Purgatory ultimately led to salvation, emphasizing both Christ's justice and mercy, thereby prompting them to remain in a state of grace while on earth to ensure adequate suffrages for their souls after death. Representations of Purgatory were also used to honour a particular saint whom viewers could call upon to intercede and mediate for them. An example of this is the famous fresco of Saint Patrick's Purgatory in Todi, Italy (1346) which featured a local Saint, Filippo Benizi (1233-1285), between the Virgin and St. Peter, aiding souls to move from Purgatory to Heaven (**Fig. 144**).¹⁴ Additionally, this fresco includes an image of a man, under St. Patrick's outstretched arm, who was almost certainly the person who paid for the fresco (**Fig. 146**). This individual might well have been a merchant, given the highly commercial nature of Todi at this time. Viewers of the fresco would have offered prayers for his soul's release from Purgatory since his name was inscribed underneath, though it is now indecipherable.¹⁵

What all of this tells us is that Giotto had few, if any, other visual references to depict Purgatory. Thus, what we see in the *Last Judgement* fresco of the Arena Chapel is not about trying to depict Purgatory as a self-contained eschatological space, but rather as a process of cleansing, reflecting the understanding that it was different from Hell only in the fact that the torments suffered were time-limited.

¹⁴ Filippo Benizi was General of the mendicant Order of the Servants of Blessed Mary, commonly known as the Servites. This order was founded in 1245 by seven merchants from Florence. The fresco was probably commissioned by a later General of the Order, Matteo da Città della Pieve (tenure 1344-48), with the financial help of a donor who is portrayed in the fresco. The foundational scholarship of this fresco is Noel Mac Tréinfhir's, "The Todi Fresco and St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough derg", *Clogher Record*, 12, no. 2 (1986): 141-158. A more recent article is Carla de Petris, "Saint Patrick's Purgatory—a fresco in Todi, Italy", *Studi irlandesi*, 2 (2012): 255-274

¹⁵ Tréinfhir, 150.

APPENDIX 3

THE GRAIN TRADERS AND THE CONFRATERNITY AT ORSANMICHELE

This appendix expands on my argument as to why I think Lenzi was probably a member of this particular confraternity. The social, economic, religious, and artistic importance of Orsanmichele in late-medieval and Renaissance Florence, and the integral role of its confraternity in all of those aspects, have meant that the Confraternity (also called a Company) of Orsanmichele, as previously noted, has been intensively studied.¹ Scholars are generally agreed that this was the most prominent and popular confraternity in Trecento Florence. Its dual roles, as a vibrant centre of lay-led (not episcopal or mendicant) Marian devotion and semi-official distributor of charitable assistance to Florence's poor, gave it a pre-eminence that attracted members and donations beyond the scale of any other confraternity.²

Giovanni Villani's description of the establishment of the confraternity, which he wrote in the 1320's or 30's, is revealing:³

In that year [1292], on the third day of July great, open miracles began to be worked in the city of Florence by a figure of Saint Mary painted on a pillar in the loggia of Orto san Michele where grain is sold, healing the sick, attracting great crowds, and visibly resolving disputes in great numbers. But the friars

¹ Because Orsanmichele is such an important site in the history of Florentine art and architecture it has been the focus of several major studies. In addition to the works cited in Chapter 3, the following are also important works on the Orsanmichele site. See Diane Finiello Zervas, *Orsanmichele a Firenze/Orsanmichele Florence*, 2 vols. (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1996). Another major study on the Orsanmichele is a collection of essays on the site's art and architecture. See Carl Brandon Strehlke, ed. *Orsanmichele and the History and Preservation of the Civic Monument* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). On the relationship between the grain market and the confraternity see Marie D'Aguanno Ito, 2014. On the religious history of the confraternity see Jennifer Fisk Rondeau, 1988. On the charitable activities of the confraternity see John Henderson. On the social importance of the confraternity see Ronald F.E. Weissman, 1982.

² "By virtue of its physical and apparently spiritual independence from any church or religious order, it was viewed by secular and ecclesiastical authorities alike as a phenomenon apart from other religious companies." Rondeau, 64.

³ Louis Green points out that Villani could not have started to set down his chronicle before that time. Louis Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth Century Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 9.

preachers [Dominicans] and also the friars minor [Franciscans] out of envy or for some other reason, did not believe in them, and so they fell into great disrepute with the Florentine populace. ... through custom and devotion to the said figure [the Virgin], every evening [in the piazza] *laude* were sung by the laypeople; and the fame of the said miracles and deeds of Our Lady grew so much that from all over Tuscany people came in pilgrimage for the feasts of Saint Mary ... , and the condition of this company, to which belonged a good part of the better people of Florence, grew so much that many gifts and alms to the poor resulted, made through offerings and bequests, of more than six thousand pounds a year; and so it continues down to our own day, without acquiring any possessions with such great income, distributing all to the poor.⁴

Villani tells us several things that are of particular importance to understanding the impact of this confraternity. The first is that it arose spontaneously out of the miraculous workings of the image of the Virgin in the grain market, which was located on a pillar in the new loggia built in 1284.⁵ According to John Henderson, the cultic response to the image was cultivated by the grain merchants themselves and led to the formal founding of a *laudesi* confraternity there in 1291. Its statutes were recognized by the Bishop three years later.⁶ Thus, from the very beginning, the grain traders and the confraternity were intimately and inseparably connected, sharing not only a common space but also common Christian values and practices. In fact, even though the ostensible purpose of the confraternity was to sing lauds to the Virgin, there

⁴ "Nel detto anno, a dì III del mese di luglio, si cominciarono a mostrare grandi e aperti miracoli nella città di Firenze per una figura dipinta di santa Maria in uno pilastro della loggia d'Orto Sannicchiele, ove si vende il grano, sanando infermi, e rizzando attratti, e isgombrare imperversati visibilmente in grande quantità. Ma i frati predicatori e ancora i minori per invidia o per altra cagione non vi davano fede, onde caddono in grande infamia de' Fiorentini. ... ma per usanza e devozione alla detta figura ogni sera per laici si cantavano laude; e crebbe tanto la fama de' detti miracoli e meriti di nostra Donna, che di tutta Toscana vi veniva la gente in peregrinaggio per le feste di santa Maria,... e crebbe tanto lo stato di quella compagnia, ov'erano buona parte della migliore gente di Firenze, che molti beneficii e limosine, per offerere e lasci fatti, ne seguirono a' poveri, l'anno più di libbre VIIm; e seguissi a' dì nostri, senza aquistare nulla possessione, con troppa maggiore entrata, distribuendosi tutta a' poveri." Villani, Book VIII, CLV, 227.

⁵ We don't know if the original image, which was destroyed by fire in 1304, was painted, either as a fresco or a panel, or if it was a statue. See Henderson, 196.

⁶ Ibid. The Bishop would likely have been more than happy to sanction the new Orsanmichele Confraternity, thereby taking a swipe at the mendicant orders who lay outside of his jurisdiction, and whom Villani reported as being upset by the gathering of crowds there to sing lauds to the Virgin.

was no mention of this in the 1294 statutes.⁷ These statutes listed the activities of the Company as the saying of masses for the dead, the holding of vigils on major feast days, and the giving of alms to the poor.⁸ Villani informs us that the giving of alms to the poor was, right from the start, a major focus of the new confraternity. It would seem, therefore, that there was a convergence of interests between the grain traders and the confraternity around caring for the poor. In part this was also self-interest, since the poor were given money or vouchers for the purchase of grain from the grain market. But providing for the poor was such a basic manifestation of one's Christian duty as "the work of God" that the impulse to assist in such endeavours would have been real, and for someone like Lenzi, truly heartfelt.⁹

Villani noted that the new confraternity membership included "a good part of the better people of Florence", which happened to include himself.¹⁰ Many notable citizens active in communal affairs, such as Dino Compagni, served in senior positions of the confraternity as either captains or treasurers, and at least one of Lenzi's fellow *biadaiuoli*, a certain *Riccius* (last name unknown), was treasurer in 1328.¹¹ To belong to the Orsanmichele Confraternity, therefore, meant access and association with some of the most powerful families in Florence whose assistance or patronage would be extremely valuable both in practical terms and in raising one's *fama* among one's networks.

⁷ Rondeau, 65. Rondeau notes that the singing of lauds did not appear in the confraternity's statutes until 1333.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁰ Villani was a captain of the Confraternity in 1327 and 1328, and he was no stranger to the grain trade having been involved in large-scale grain importing as a partner in both the Peruzzi and Buonaccorsi companies between 1300 and 1346. See Edwin S. Hunt and James M. Murray, *A History of Business in Medieval Europe 1200-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 119. His expertise in the grain market was certainly recognized by the Florentine government who appointed him as a magistrate with responsibility for provisioning during the grain crisis of 1329/30. See Ito, 2014, 495.

¹¹ Ito, 2014, 471; 791.

Orsanmichele, like other confraternities, not only prescribed rules for participating in worship and devotional activities, which would have included regular communion and confession, but also had moral behavioural requirements, including almsgiving, and such regulations were actively enforced through punishments and expulsions.¹² Thus, in belonging to this confraternity one was publicly demonstrating one's piety, adherence to a high standard of personal moral behaviour, and an especial commitment to enacting the works of mercy.

Finally, as a *laudesi* community, the Orsanmichele Confraternity was building on the increasingly special role of the Virgin as a merciful intercessor, an emphasis that is reflected in Lenzi's narrative and verses. This suggests that Domenico Lenzi would have felt particularly comfortable within a *laudesi* environment.

¹² Henderson, 135.

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**THE MERCHANT'S MORAL
EYE: MONEY, MERCHANTS,
AND THE VISUALIZATION
OF MORALITY IN
TRECENTO ITALY**

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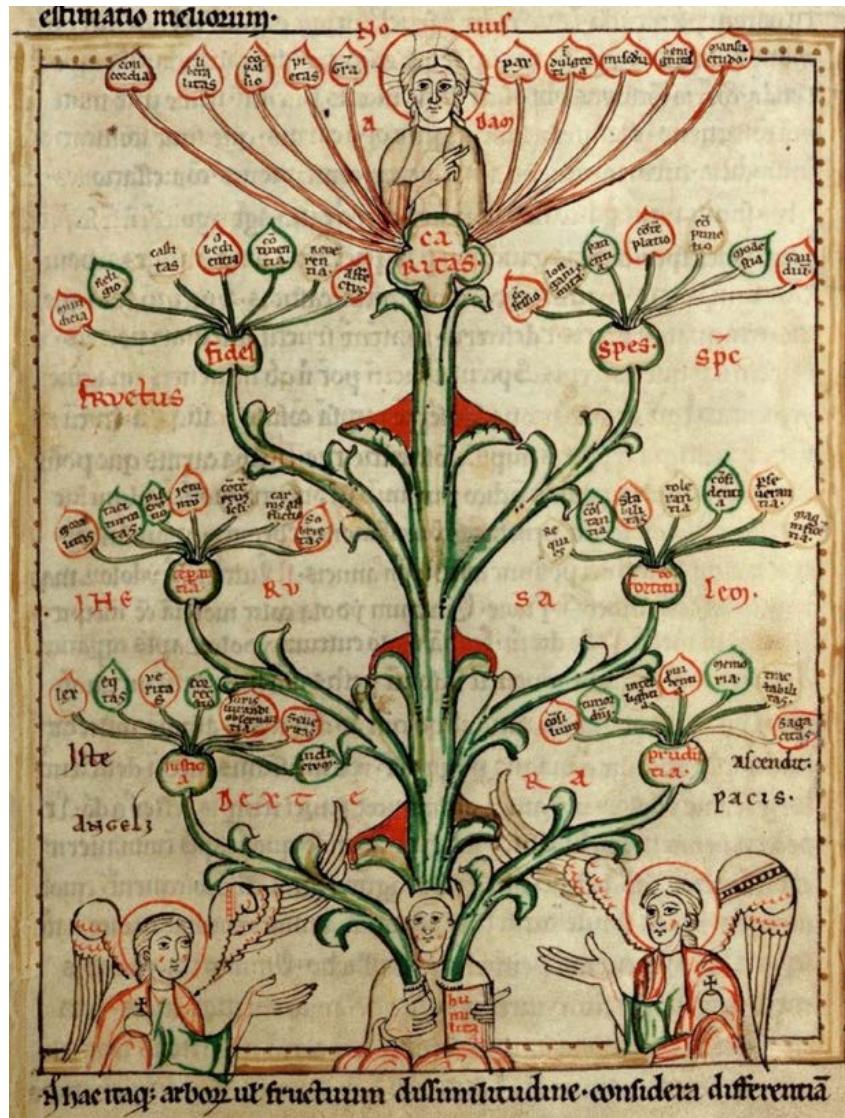


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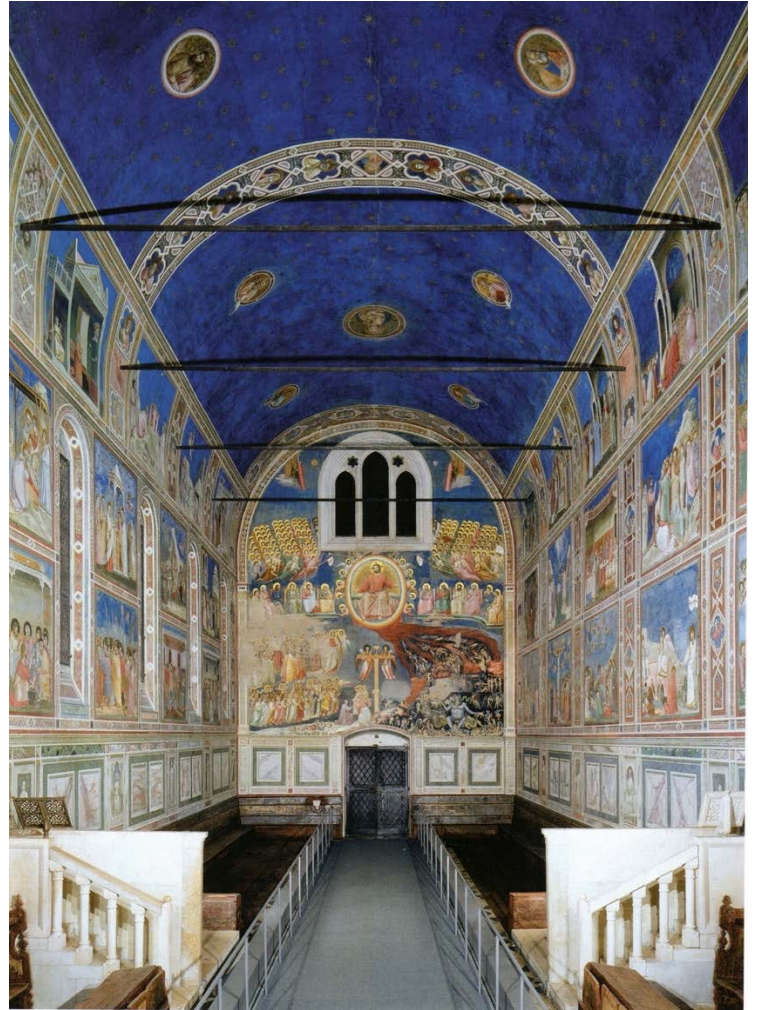


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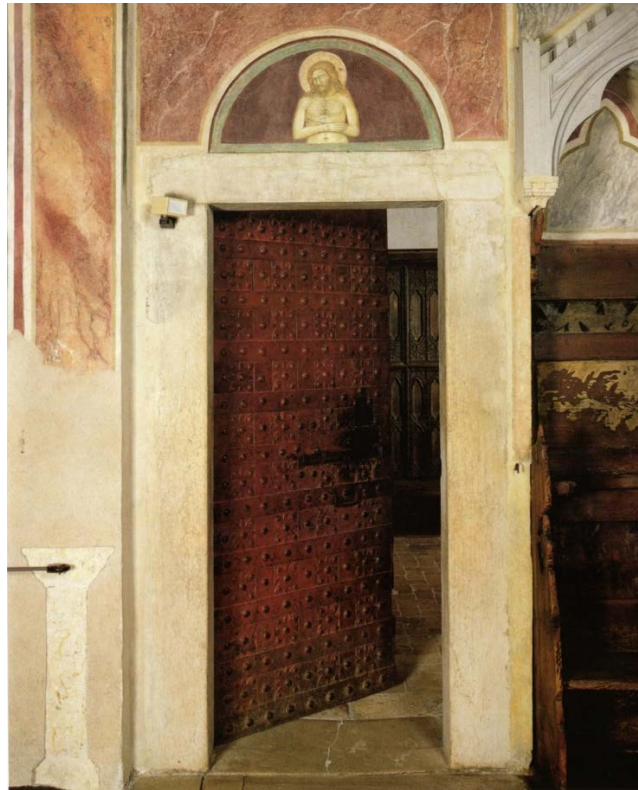


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The bridge over Hell

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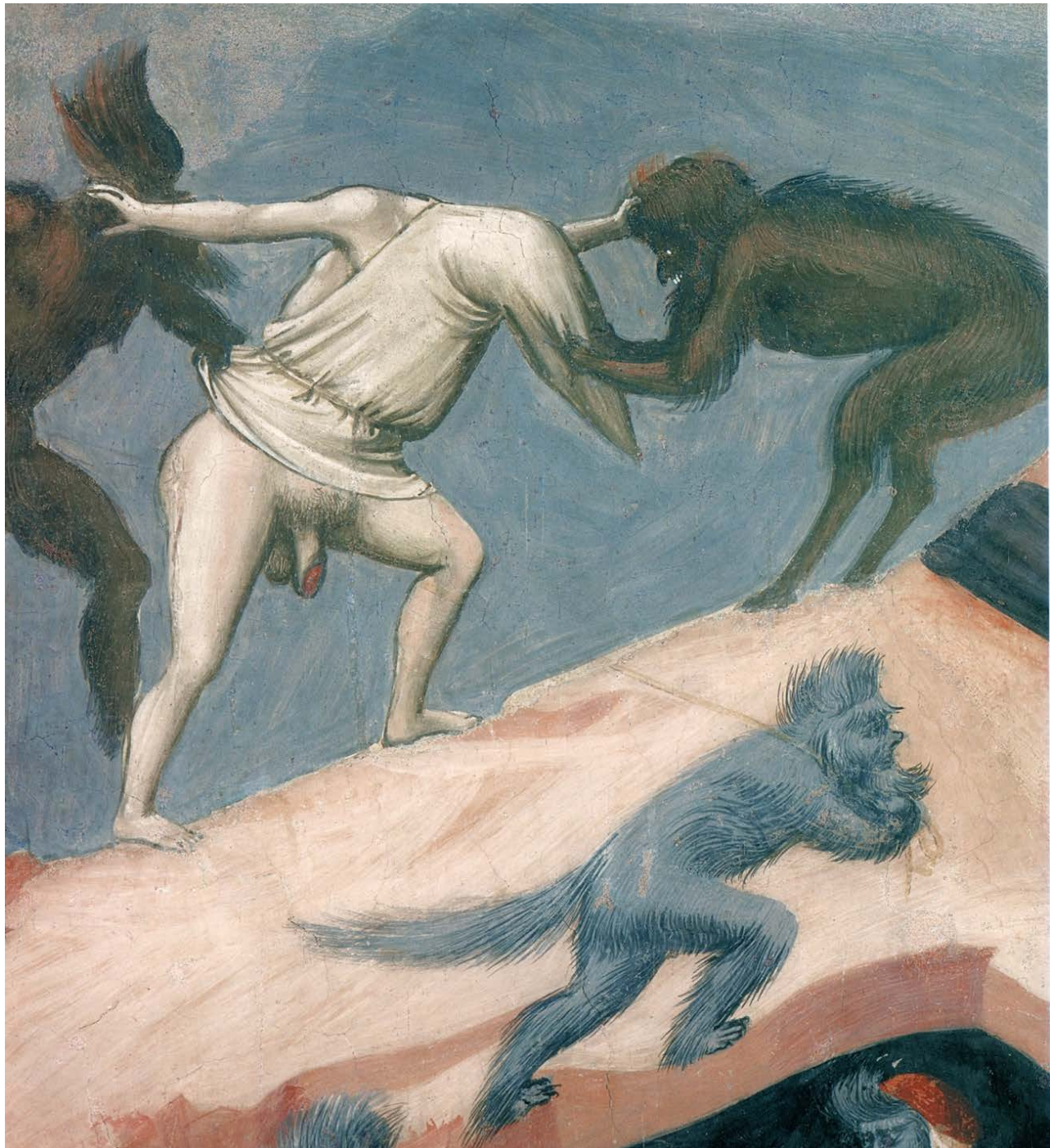


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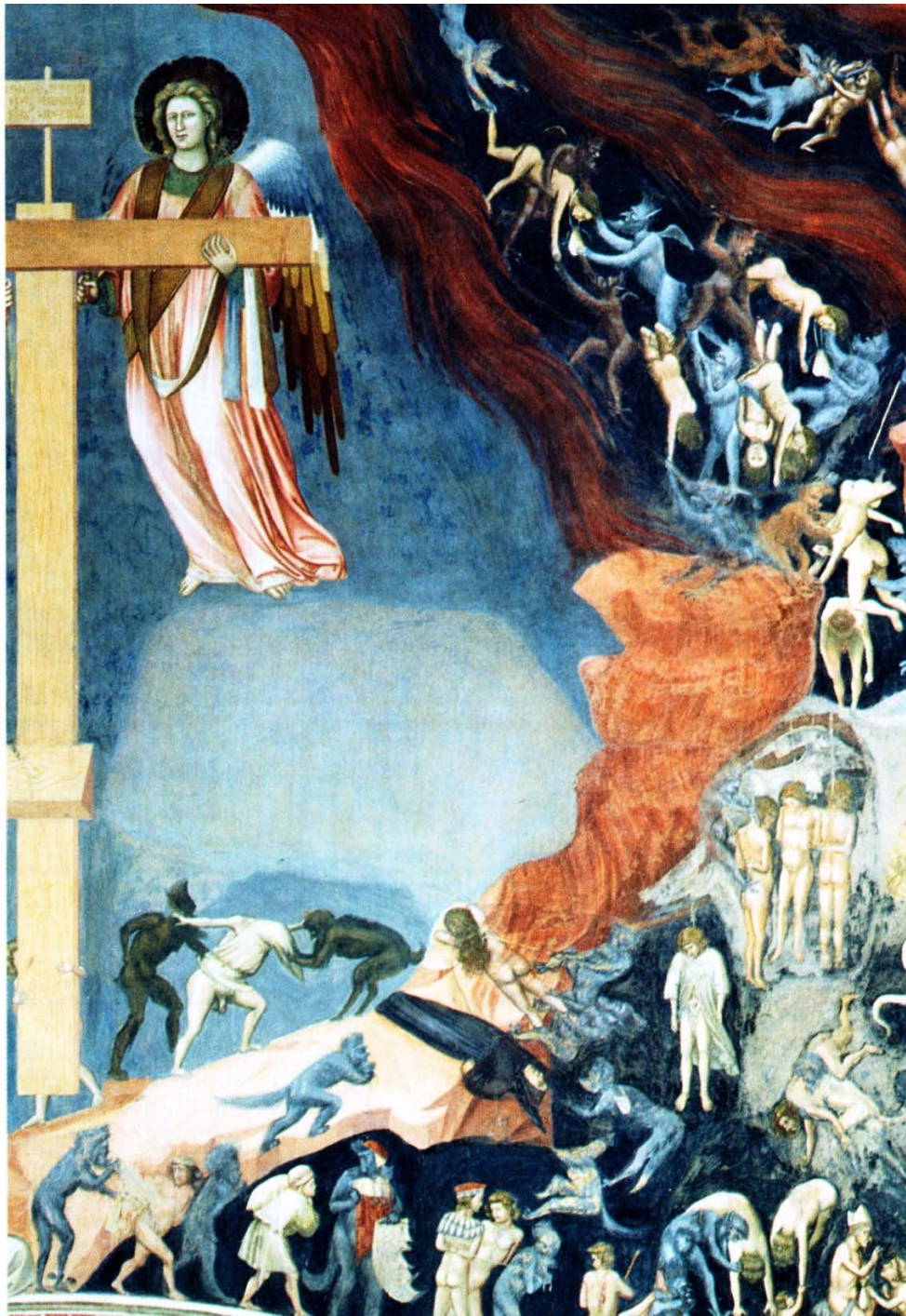


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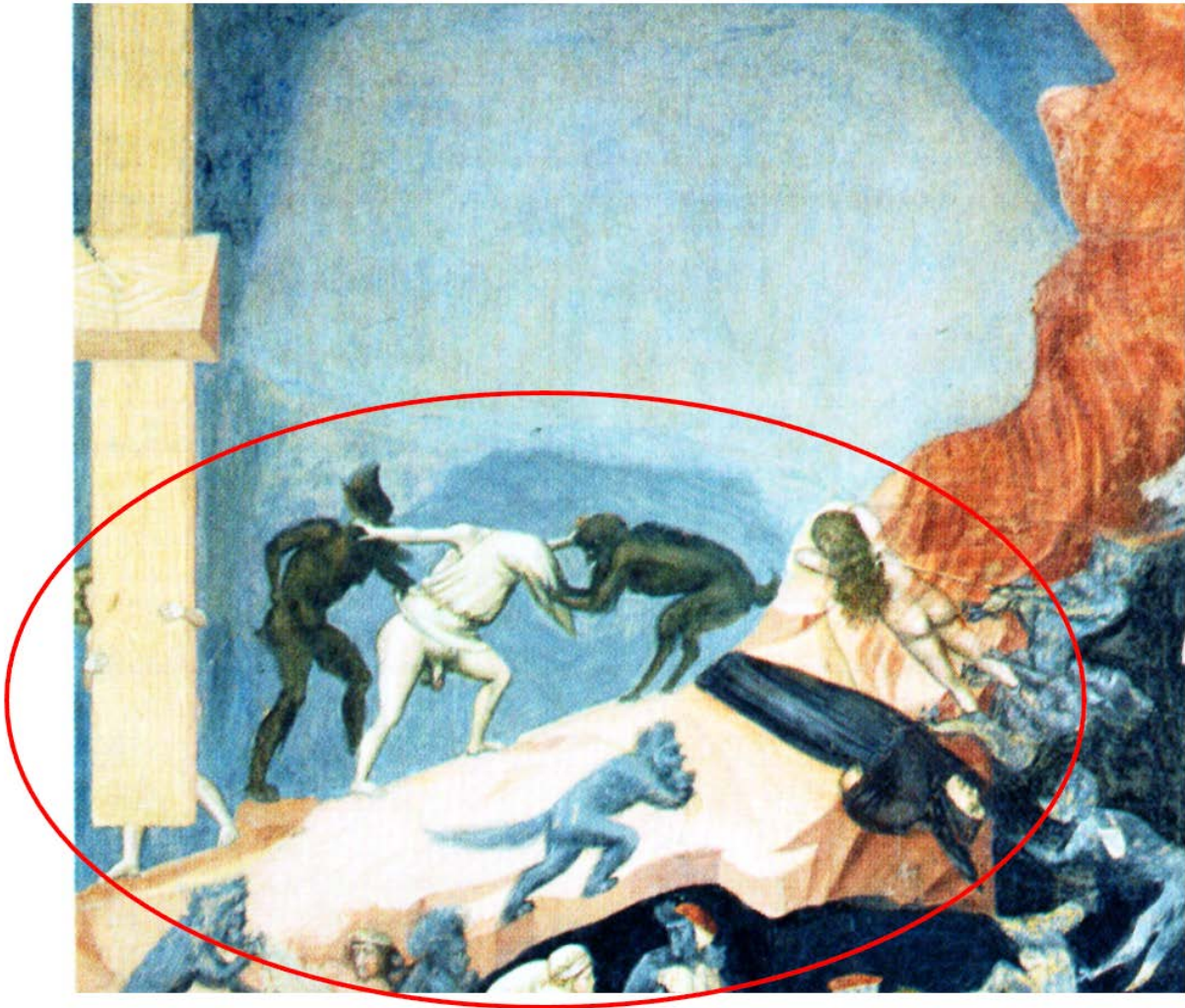


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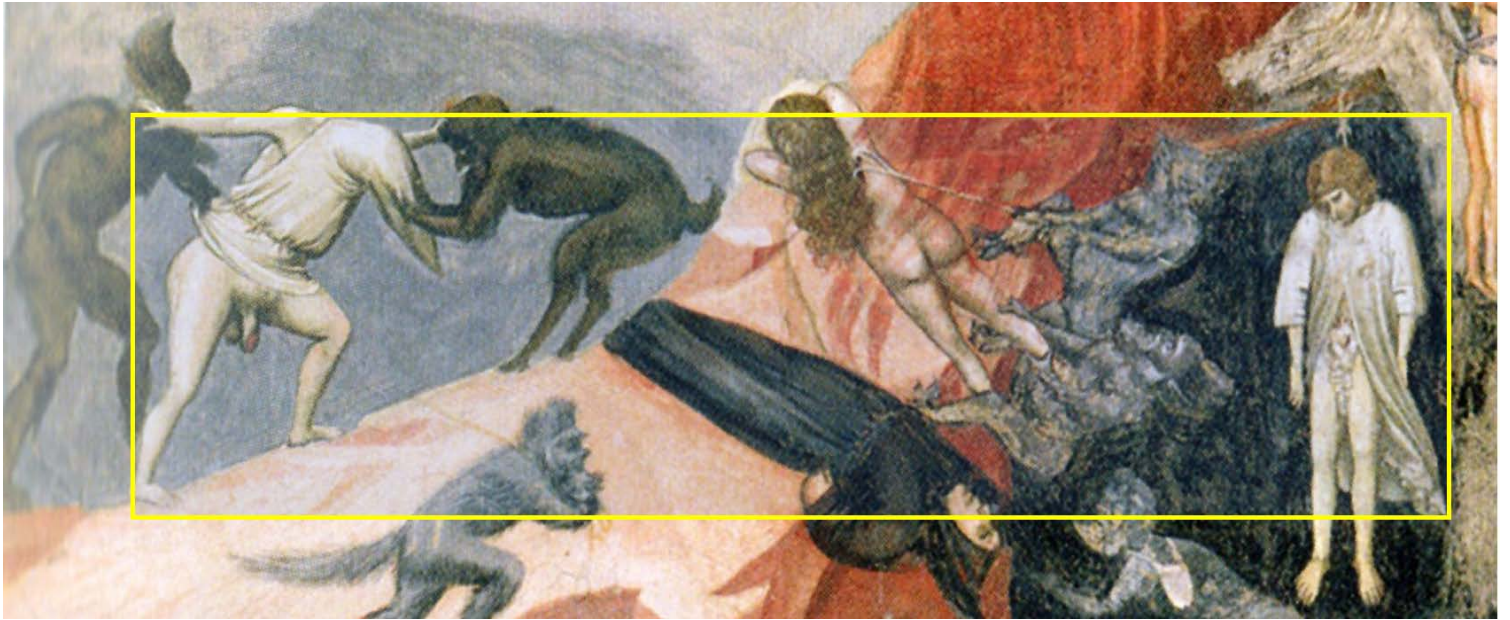


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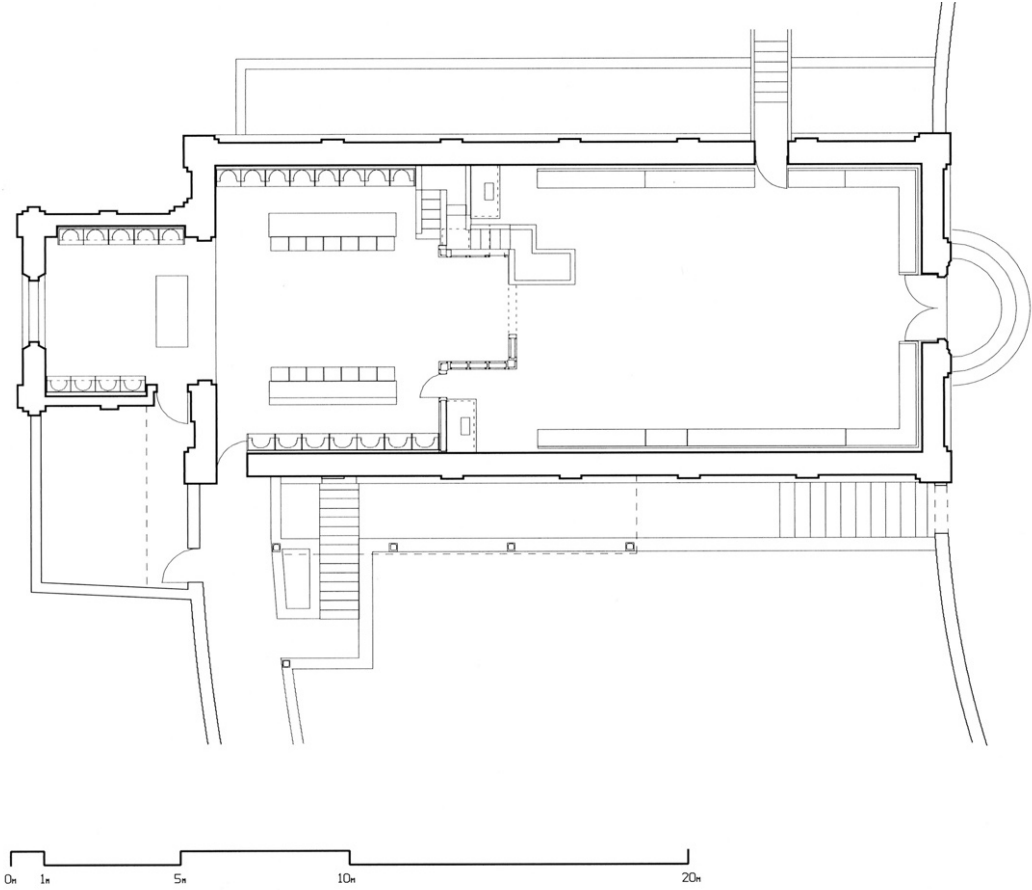


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Bricked up
viewing squint

Bricked up North
Door Portal

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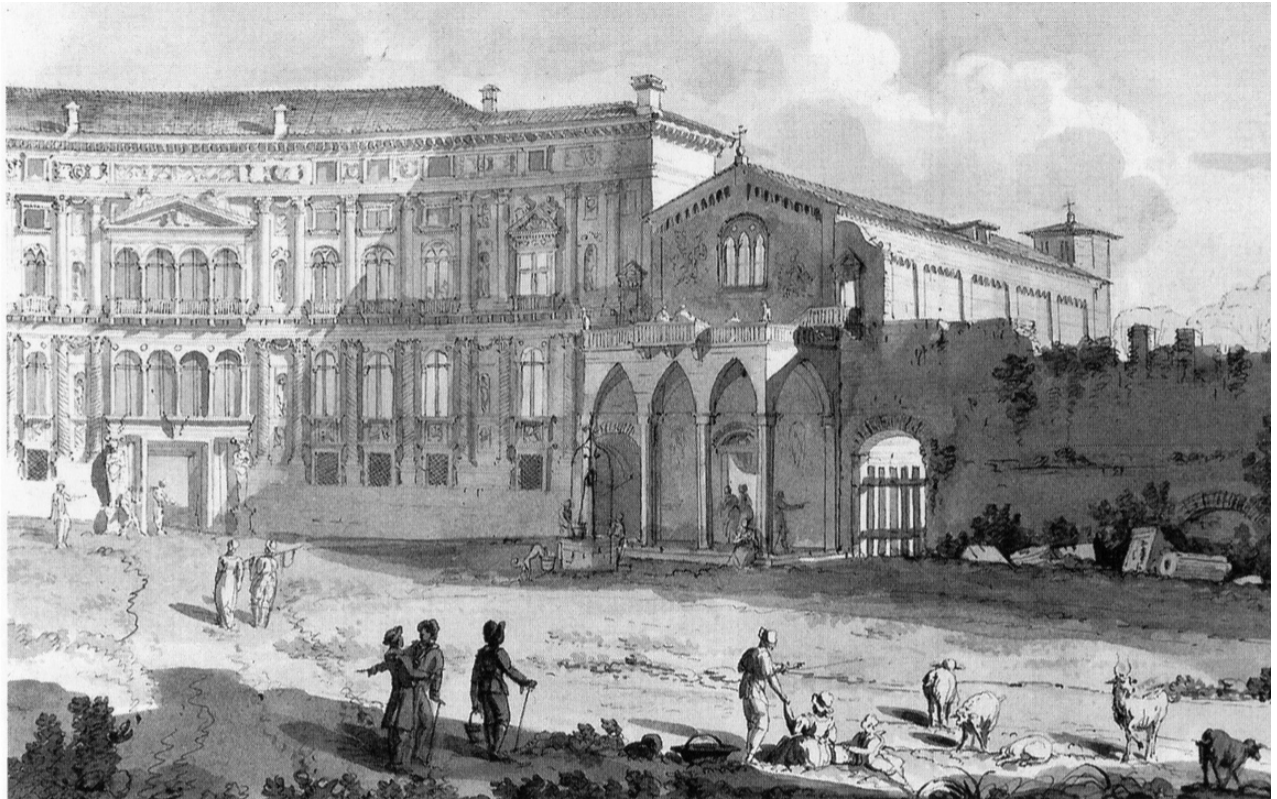


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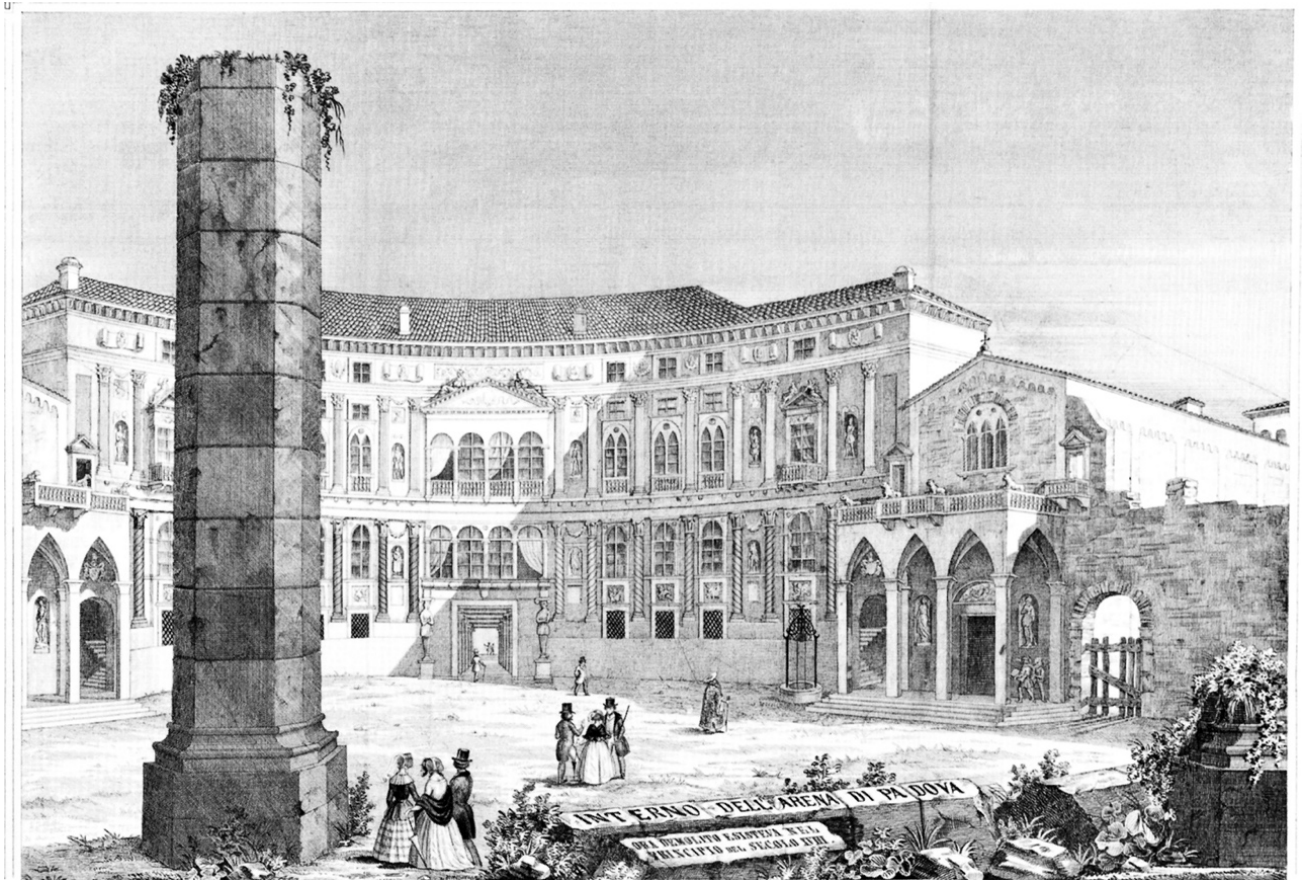


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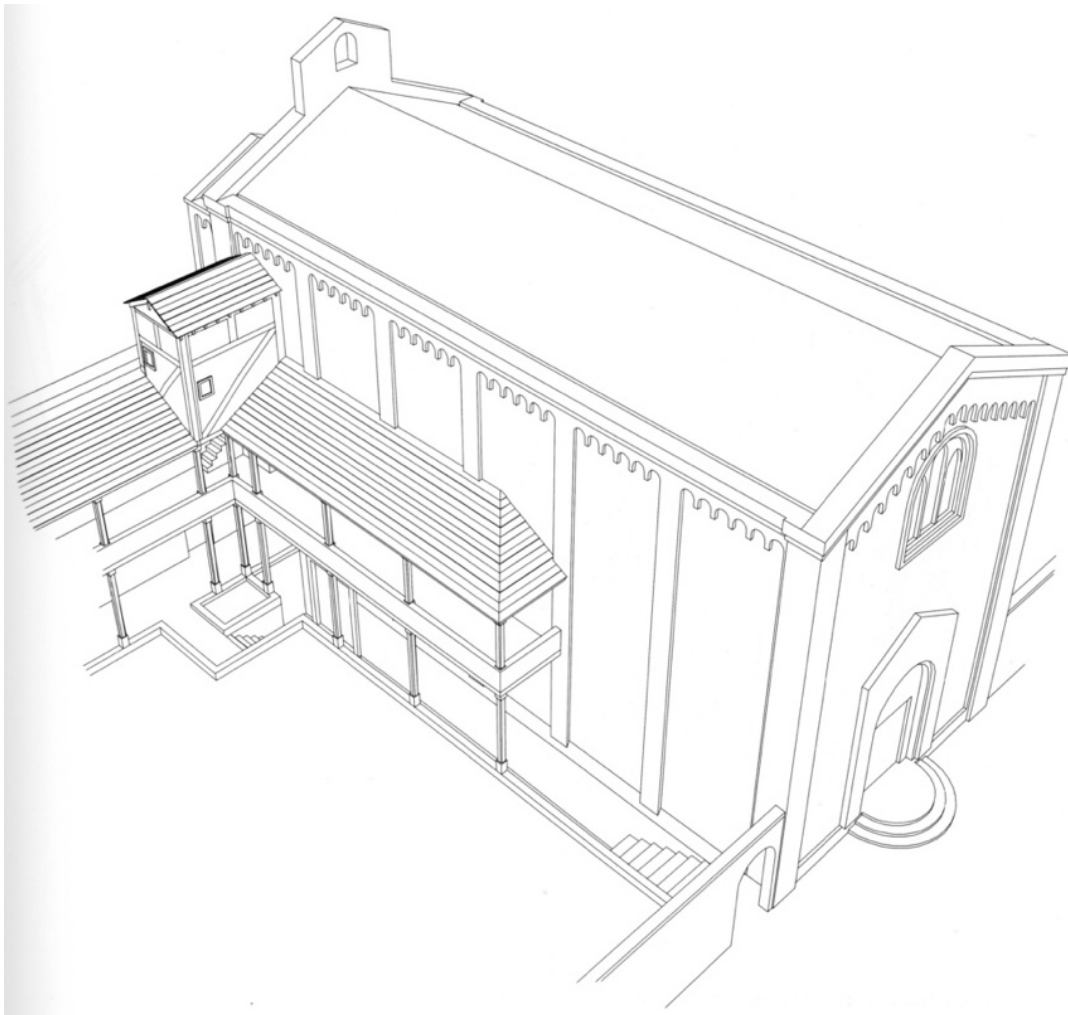


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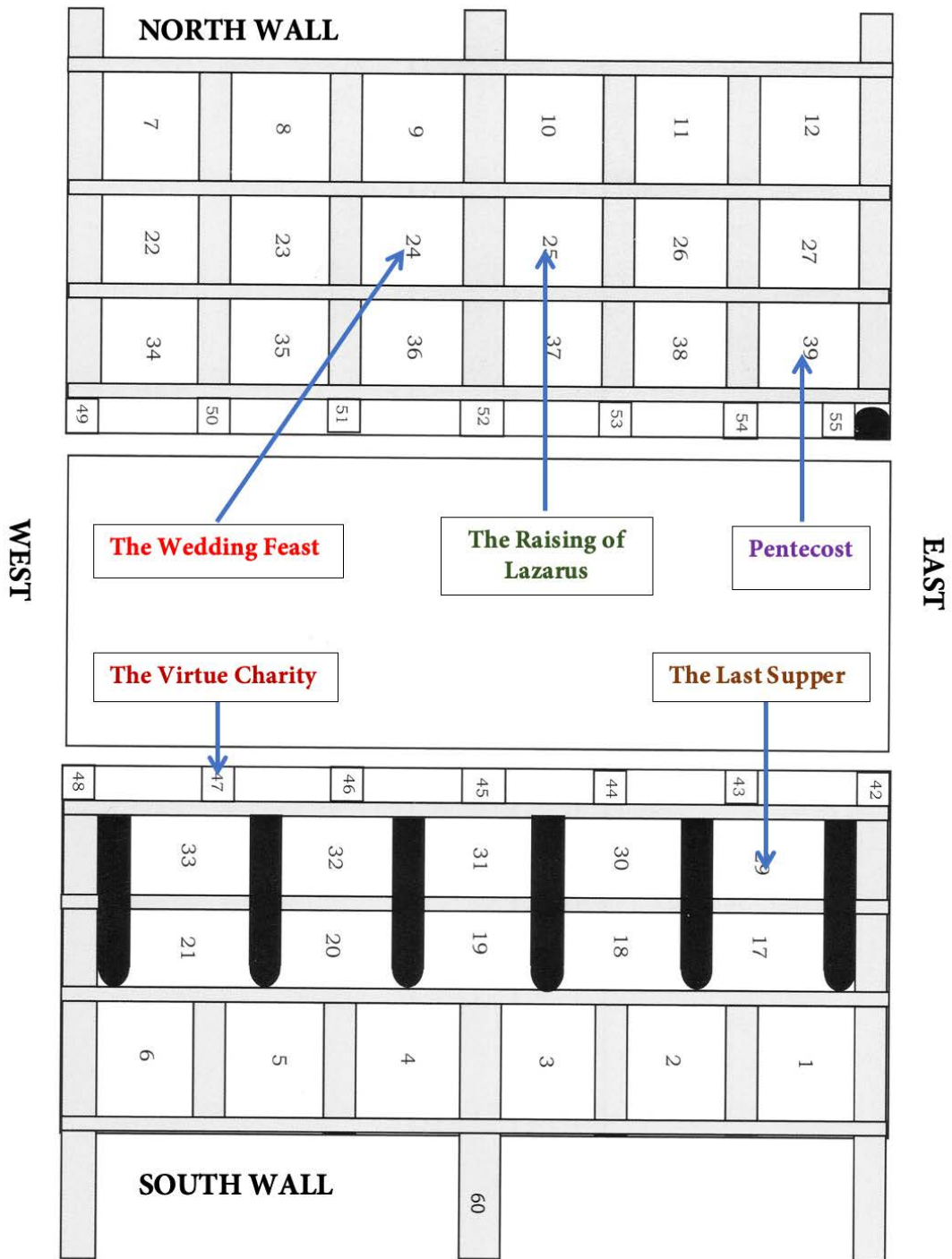
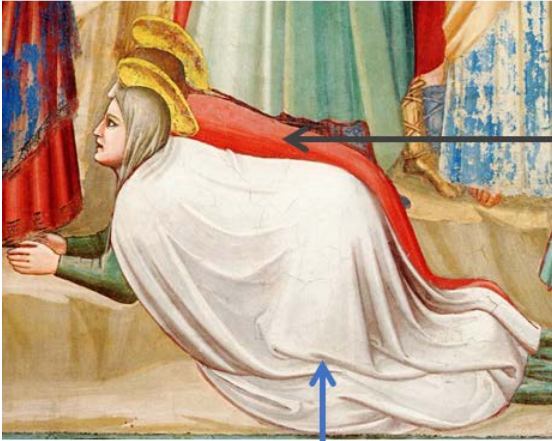
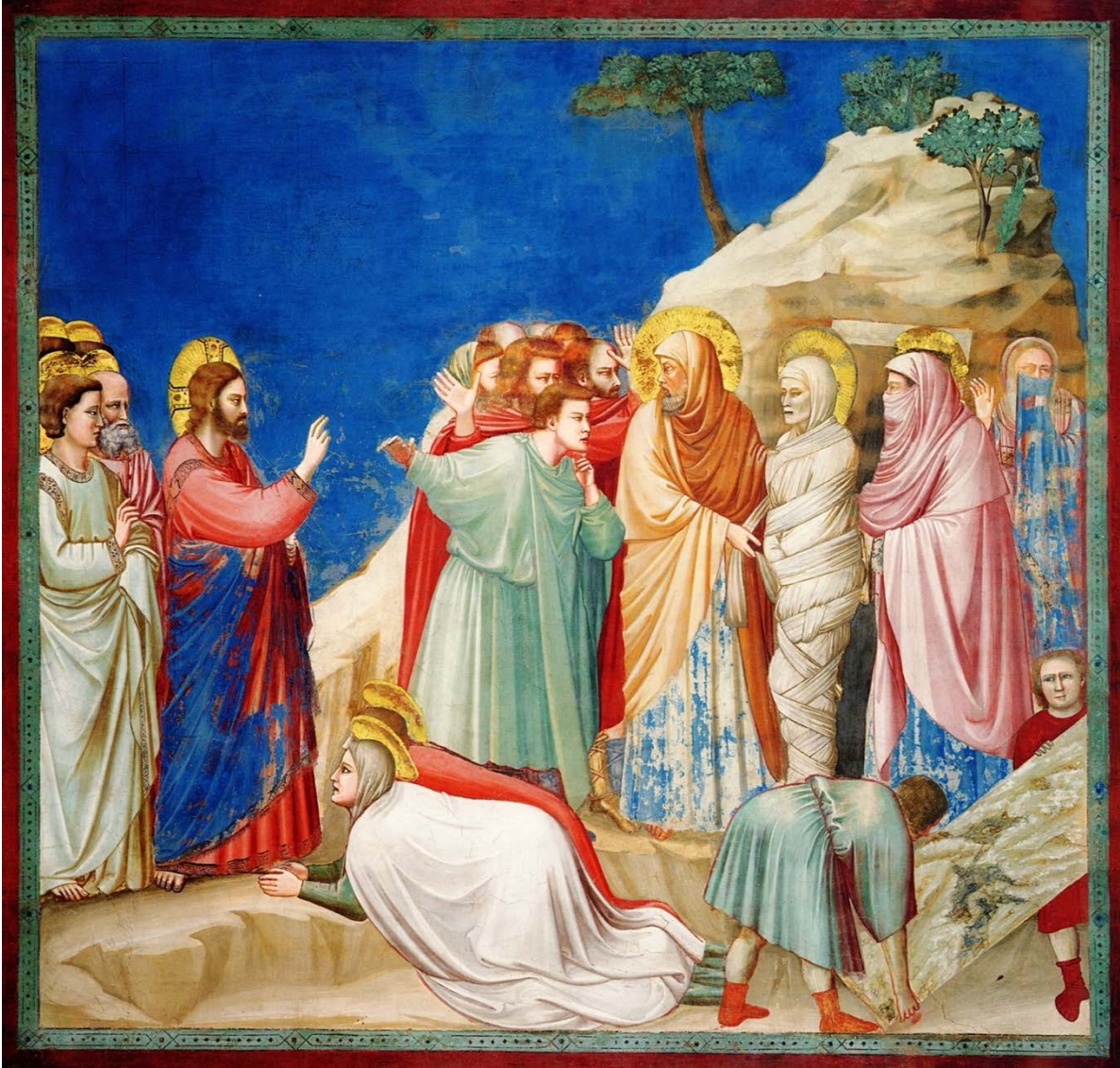


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Mary of Bethany

Martha of Bethany

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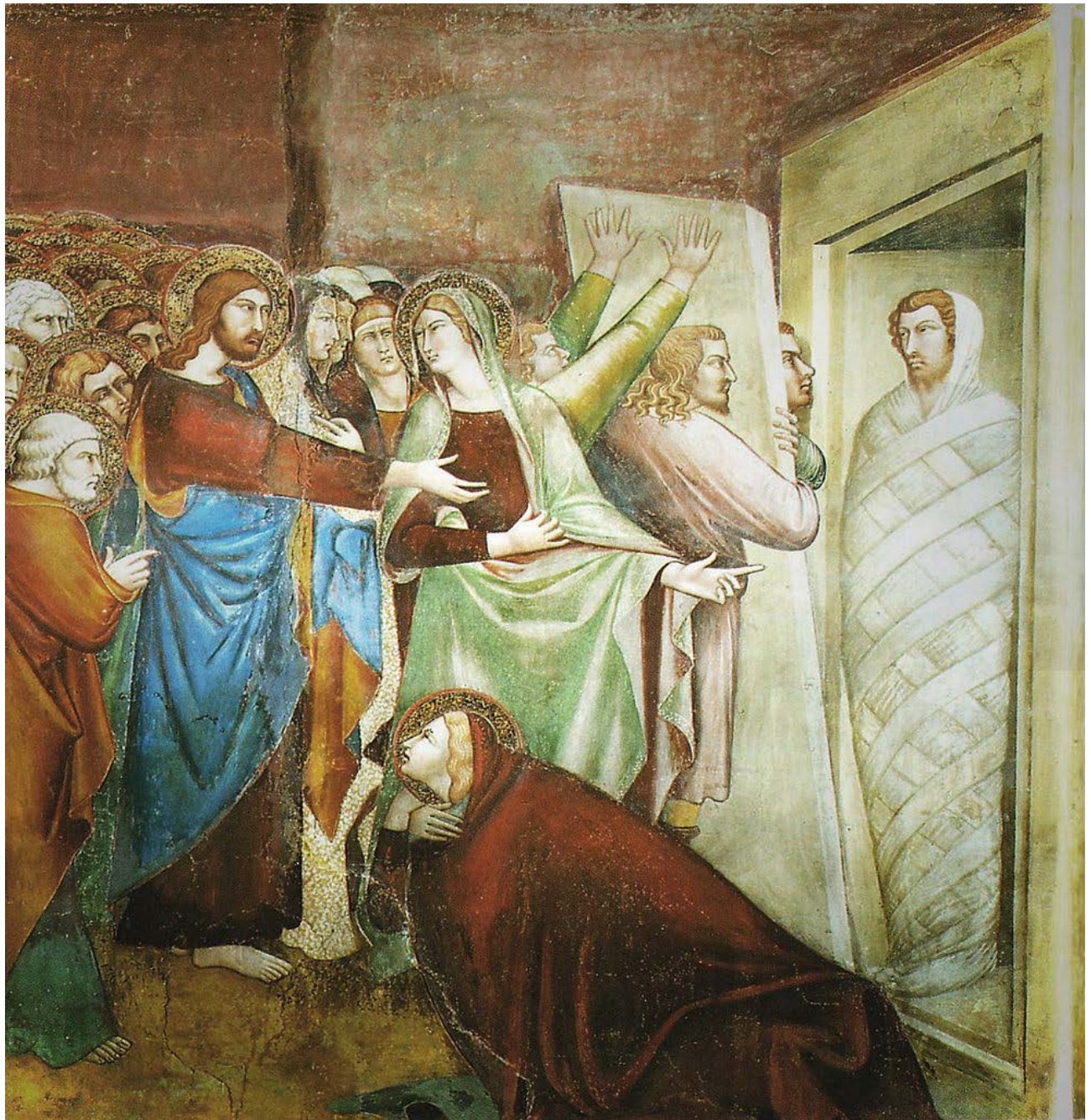


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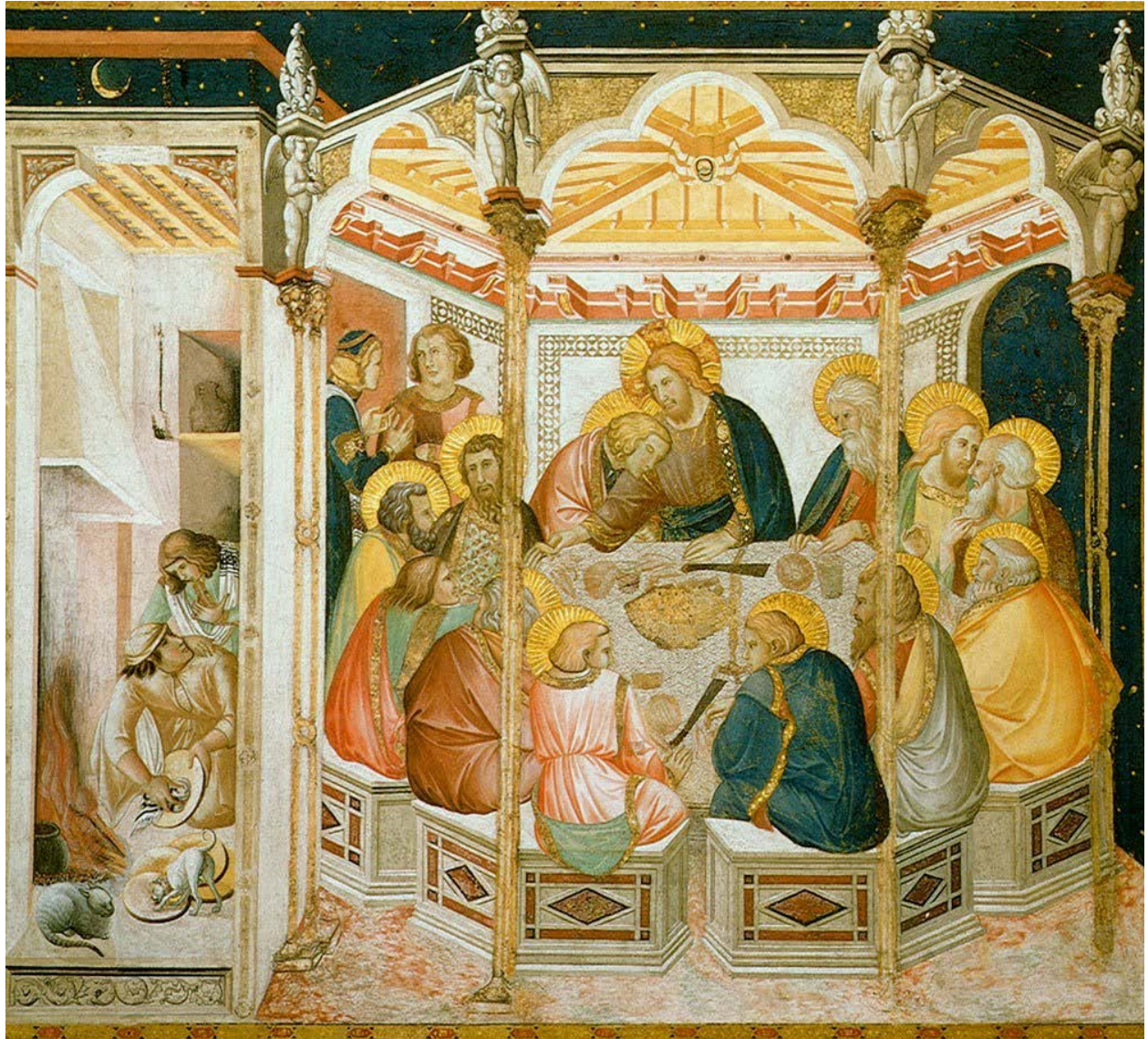


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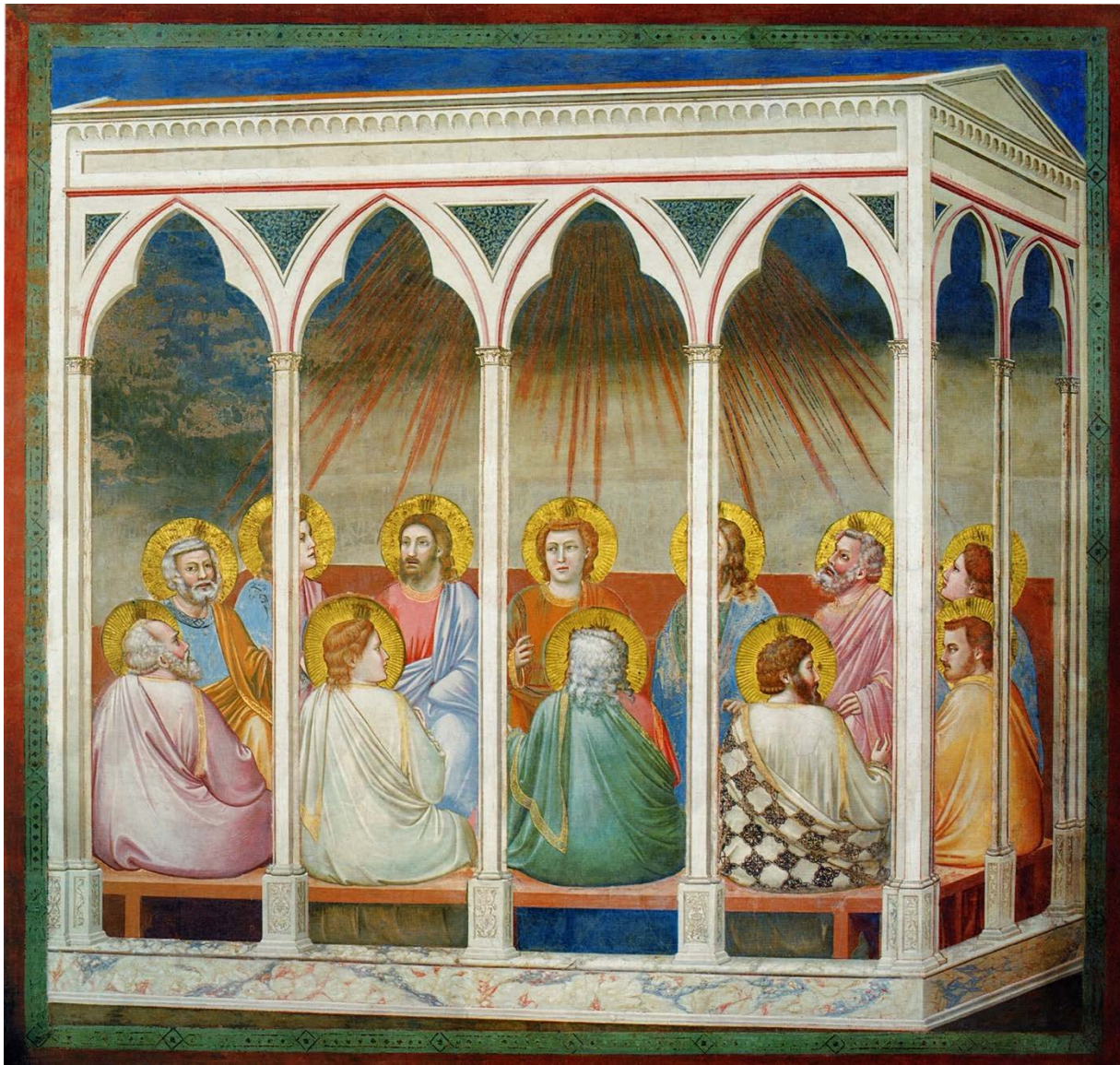


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Rinaldo
Scrovegni

Note: The citation for all images of the illuminations from *Lo Specchio umano* is as follows: Master of the Dominican Effigies, Domenico Lenzi, *Lo Specchio umano*, Florence, c.1340. Tempura and gold leaf on parchment, 38.5 x 27.2 cm. Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Tempi 3. Source: Carlo Bertelli, ed. *Domenico Lenzi, Il Biadaioolo: Lo Specchio Umano* (Milano: Libri Scheiwiller, 1981).

Figure 66: *Lo Specchio Umano*: Full page showing historiated initial and columned text. Folio 3r.



Figure 67: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Domenico Lenzi—*The Grain Merchant at Work*. Folio 2r.



Figure 68: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Historiated Initial 'N'. A Personification of Justice.* Folio 3r.



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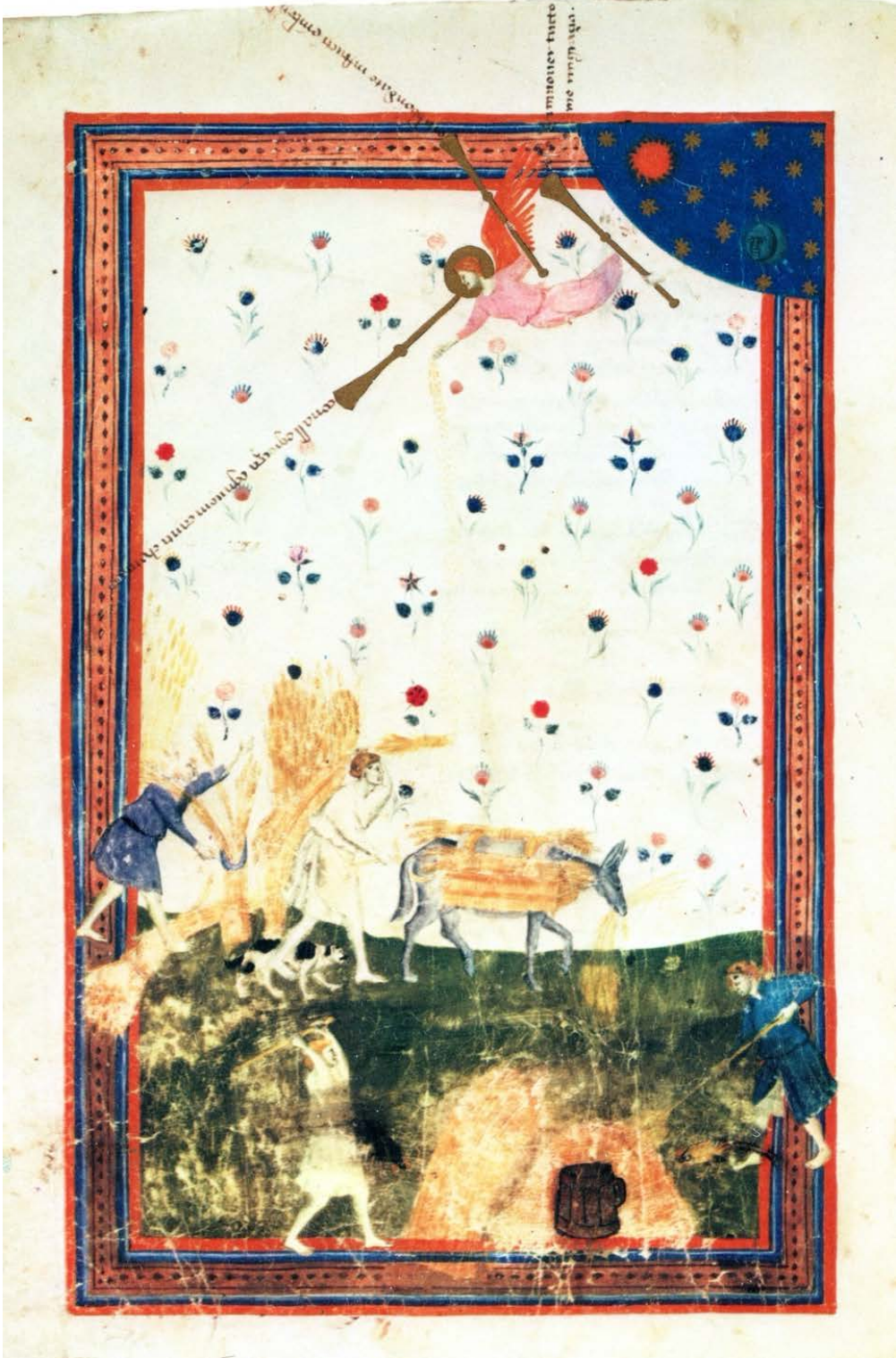


Figure 69a: *Lo Specchio Umano—A Bounteous Harvest*, with translation of inscriptions. Folio 6v.



Angel:

*1) With happiness
sing everyman with
me.*

*2) Now in the
abundance of the
earth and in
goodness.*

God:

*I can take it all
away, so thank me.*

Figure 70: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Plenty*. Folio 7r.



Figure 70a: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Plenty, with translation of inscriptions. Folio 7r.*



Angel:

1) Too much abundance shouldn't make you worse.

2) In times of riches do good that bad times not follow.

3) With happiness sing every man with me.

Figure 71: *Lo Specchio Umano—Siena Expels Its Poor*. Folio 57v.



Figure 72: *Lo Specchio Umano—Florence Welcomes Siena's Poor*. Folio 58r.



Figure 73: *Lo Specchio Umano—Colle di Val d'Elsa Sells Grain Promised to Florence to Pisa.* Folio 70r.



Figure 74: *Lo Specchio Umano—A Bad Harvest. Folio 78v*



Figure 74a: *Lo Specchio Umano—A Bad Harvest, with translation of inscriptions. Folio 78v.*



God:
*Come back,
return to heaven
more clean and
pure.*

Angel:
*I am returning
and leaving
them in the
rocky field.*

Figure 75: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Shortage*. Folio 79r.



Figure 75a: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Shortage, with translation of inscriptions.* Folio 79r.



God:

Save the soul but punish the body.

Angel:

I am happy and cheerful to go to heaven.

Demon:

1) And I will do as you commissioned me.

2) Cry with good reason, that afterwards goodness returns.

3) In hunger and in dearth, I will make you grieve.

Crowd:

Sorrow upon sorrow that God abandons us to the worst.

Figure 76: *Lo Specchio Umano—The Madonna of Orsanmichele. Detail from The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Shortage. Folio 79r.*



Figure 77: *Lo Specchio Umano*—*Domenico Lenzi Buying Grain from Wholesaler*. Upper Register, Folio 2r.



Figure 78: Buonamico Buffalmacco (?), *Dante Touching Virgil's Back*. Canto XXV, Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* with Commentary by Guido da Pisa, Pisa c.1335. Tempura and gold leaf on parchment, 33 x 24.5 cm. Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 597, folio 163r. Source: Art l'enluminure, Sept.-Nov., 2005, 61.



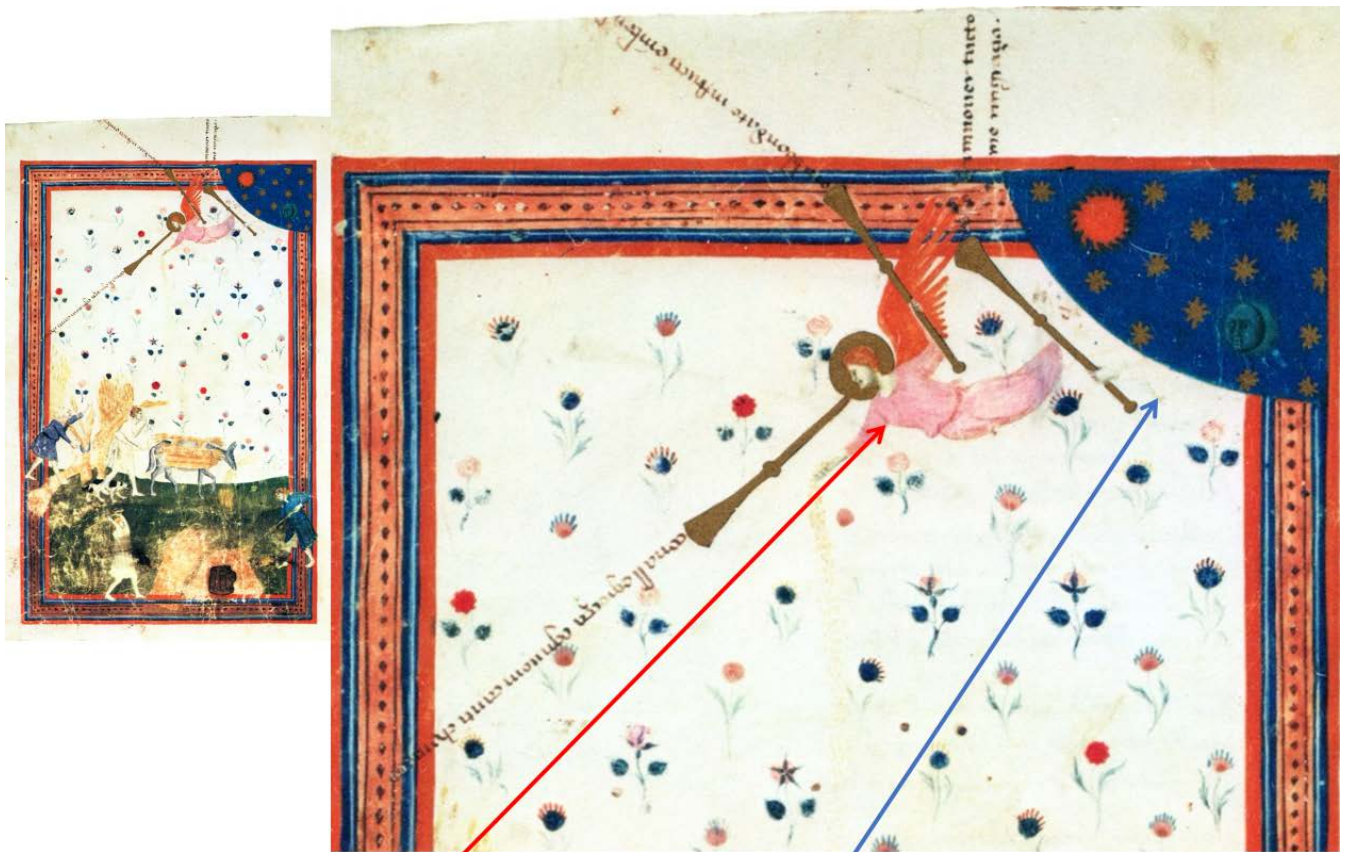
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Figure 80: Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Personification of Justice in Allegory of Good and Bad Government*. Wall fresco, 1338/39, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 81: *Lo Specchio Umano—A Bounteous Harvest. Detail of God’s and Angel’s Messages with translation. Folio 6v.*



Angel:

- 1) *With happiness sing everyman with me.*
- 2) *Now in the abundance of the earth and in goodness.*

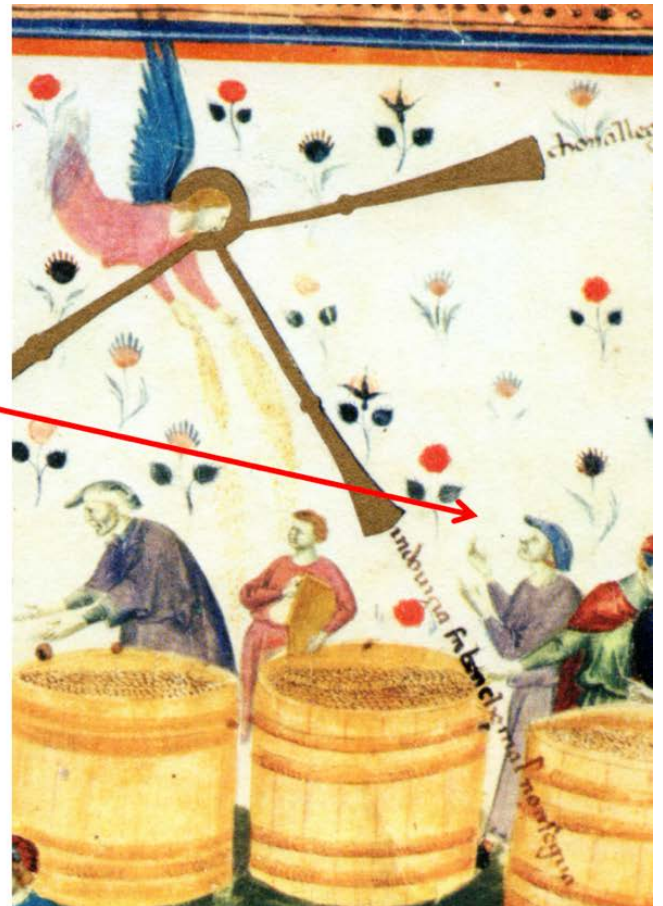
God:

I can take it all away, so thank me.

Figure 82: *Lo Specchio Umano. Detail of Man in mi-parti dress in scene of Grain Market in Time of Shortage. Folio 79r.*



Figure 83: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Detail of Man giving thanks to God's for providing abundant grain. Detail from the Grain Market in a Time of Plenty. Folio 7r.



Angel's message from middle trumpet which is aimed directly at man giving thanks: "*In times of riches do good that bad times not follow.*"

Figure 84: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Man in grain field praying to God for relief and who is identified above as 'domenicho'. Detail from *A Bad Harvest*. Folio 78v.

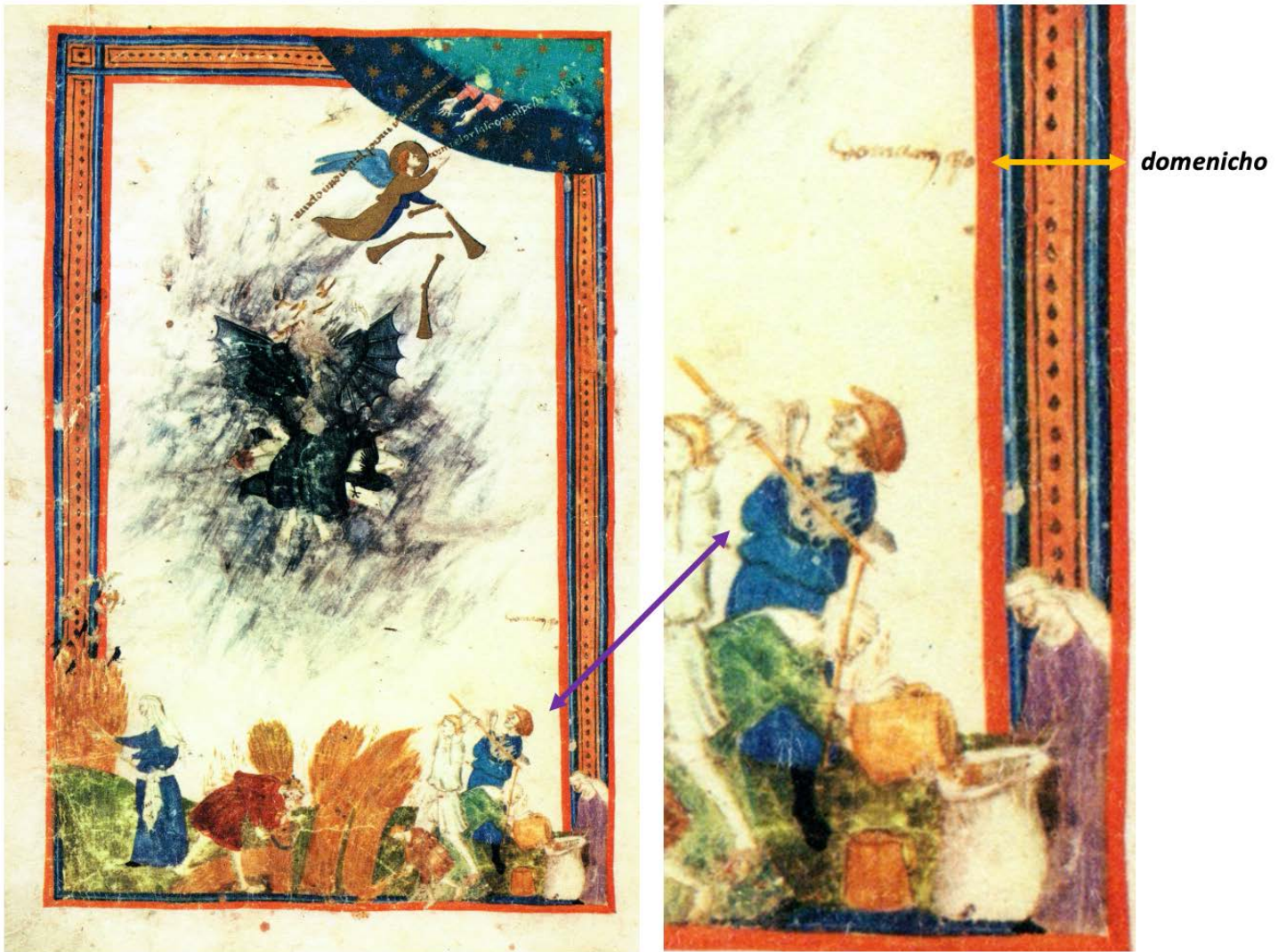


Figure 85: *Lo Specchio Umano. The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Shortage. Detail of demon with moneybag. Folio 79r.*

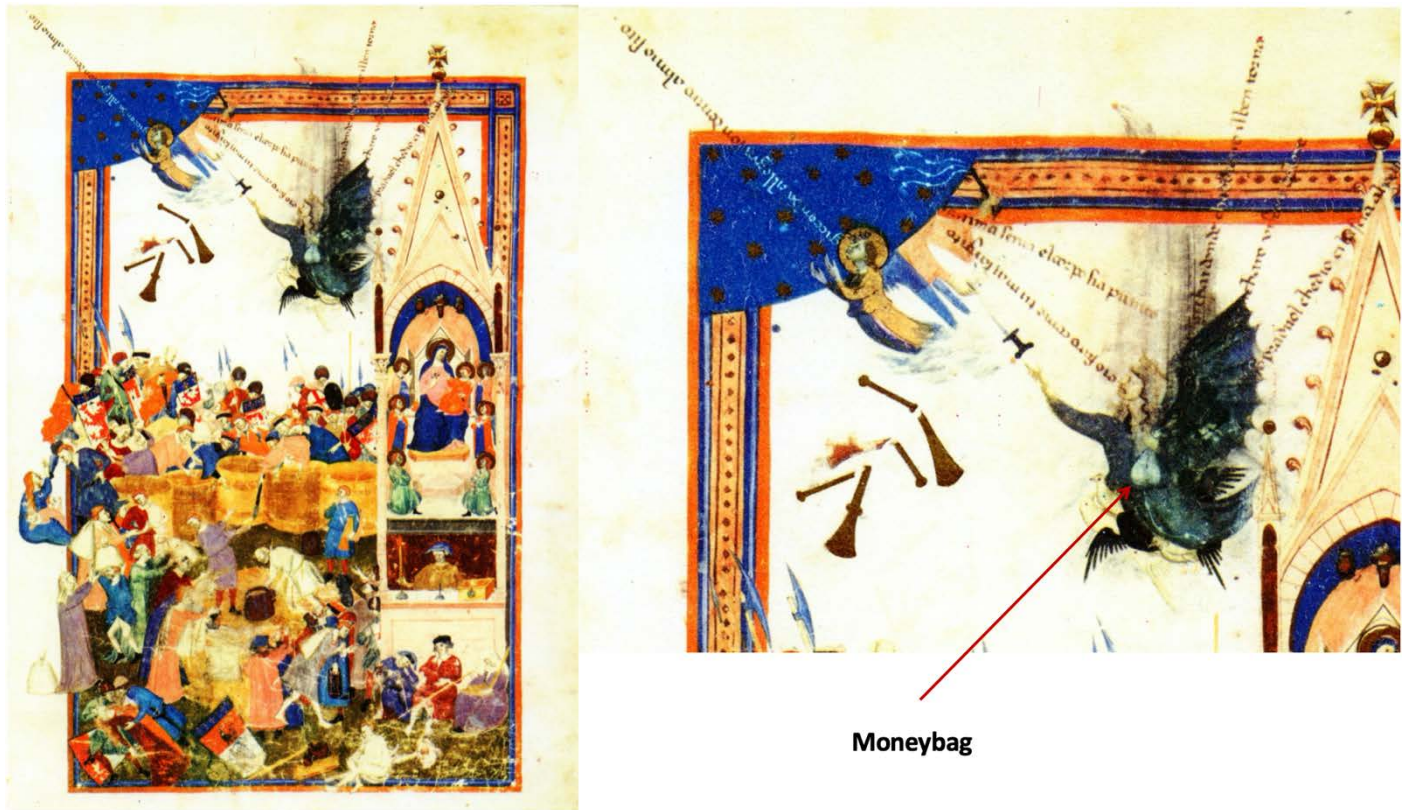
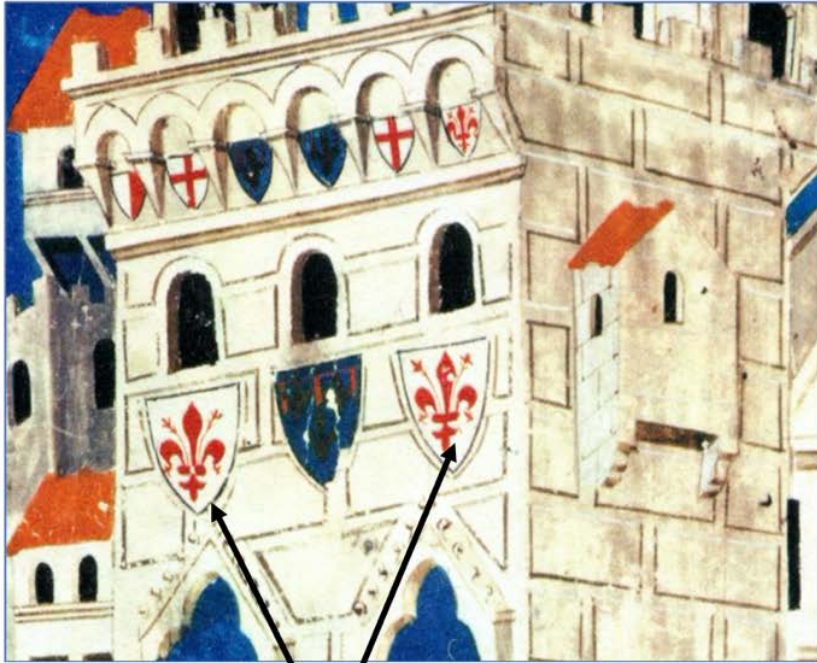


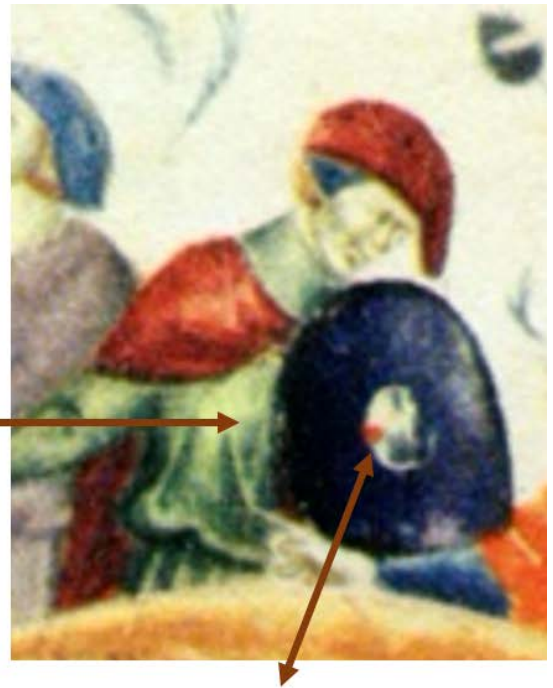
Figure 86: *Lo Specchio Umano. Coat-of-Arms of Florence. Detail from Florence Welcomes Siena's Poor. Folio 58r.*



Coat-of Arms of Florence



Figure 87: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Guard's shield showing symbol of the Popolo. Detail from *The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Plenty*. Folio 7r.



**Emblem of Florence
Popolo: A red cross of a
white background.**

Figure 88: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Guard's shield showing symbol of the Popolo. Detail from *The Grain Market at Orsanmichele in a Time of Shortage*. Folio 79r.



**Emblem of Florence
Popolo: A red cross on a
white background.**

Figure 89: *Lo Specchio Umano*. Detail of guards with coat-of-arms of the Oliandoli Guild and lambellos on their shields in the Grain Market at Orsanmichele in the time of grain shortage. Folio 79r.

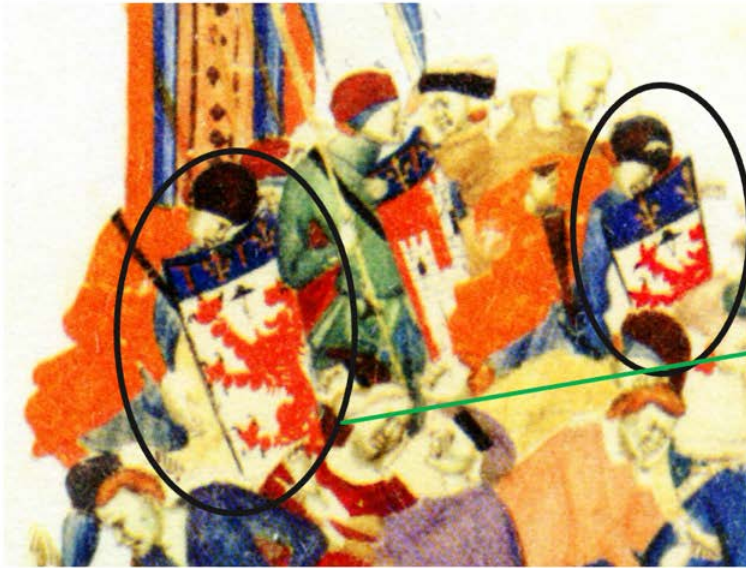


Figure 90: *Coat-of-arms of the Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli Guild (Oil Sellers and General Provisions Dealers) from 15th or 16th Century. Source: Luciano Artusi, Firenze araldica, Firenze, Polistampa, 2006.*

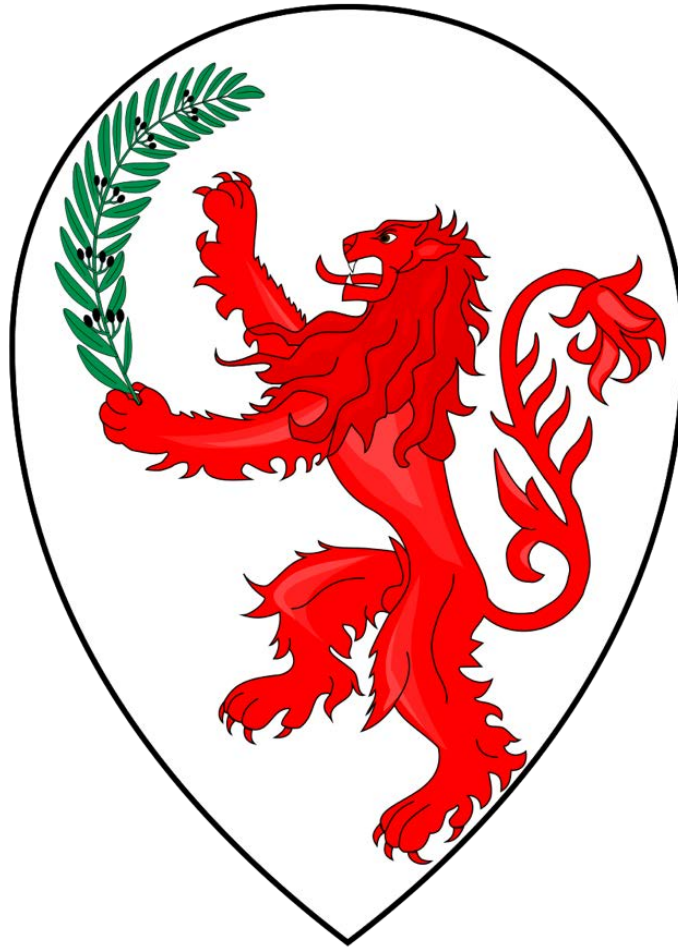


Figure 91: *The Palazzo Datini, Prato*. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 92: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Madonna of the Ceppo*, Prato, 1453. Oil on wood. Museo di Palazzo Pretorio, Prato. Source: Wikimedia Commons. The figure in red presenting the trustees is Francesco Datini.



Figure 93: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Madonna of the Tabernacle*, 1391, Prato (originally outside the Palazzo Datini). Tempera on wood. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

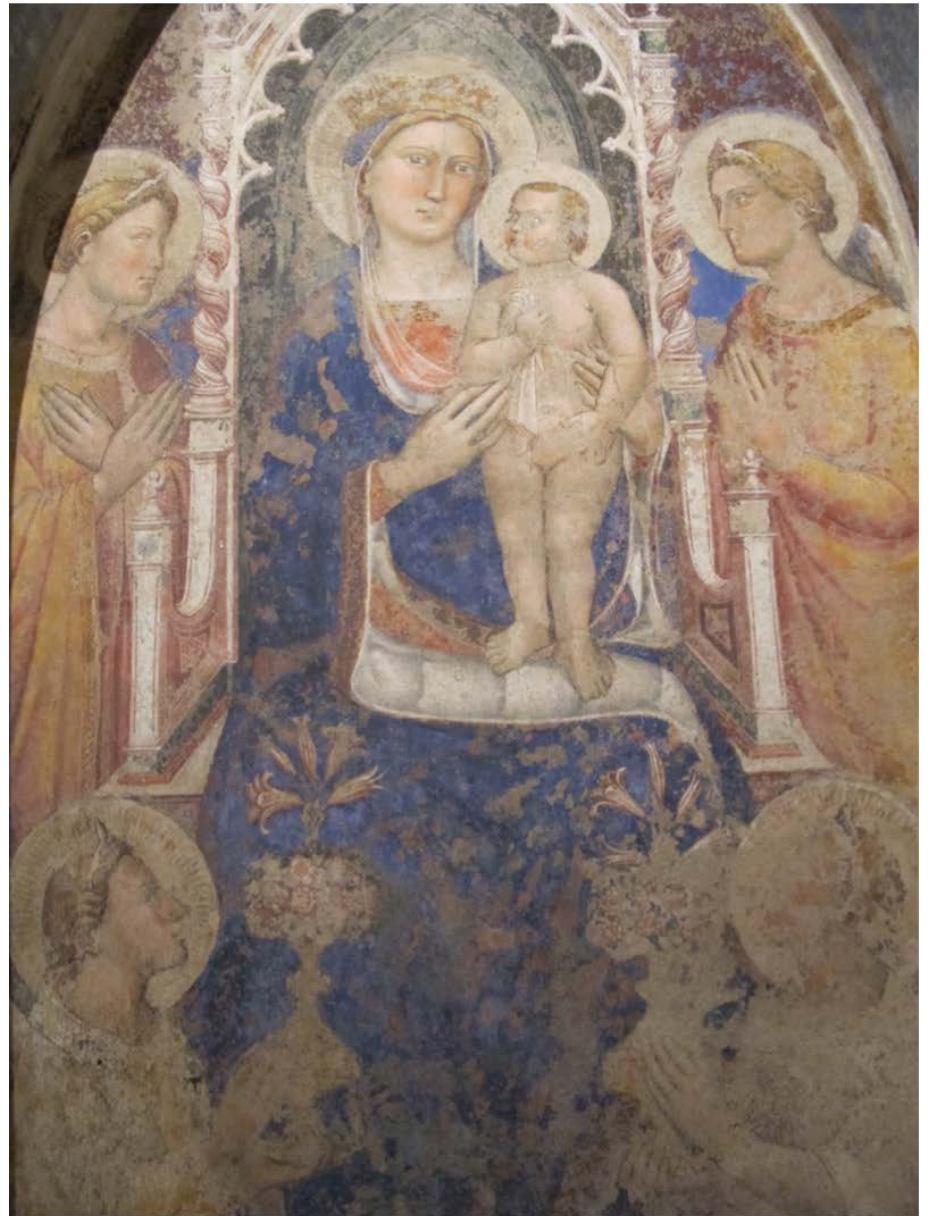
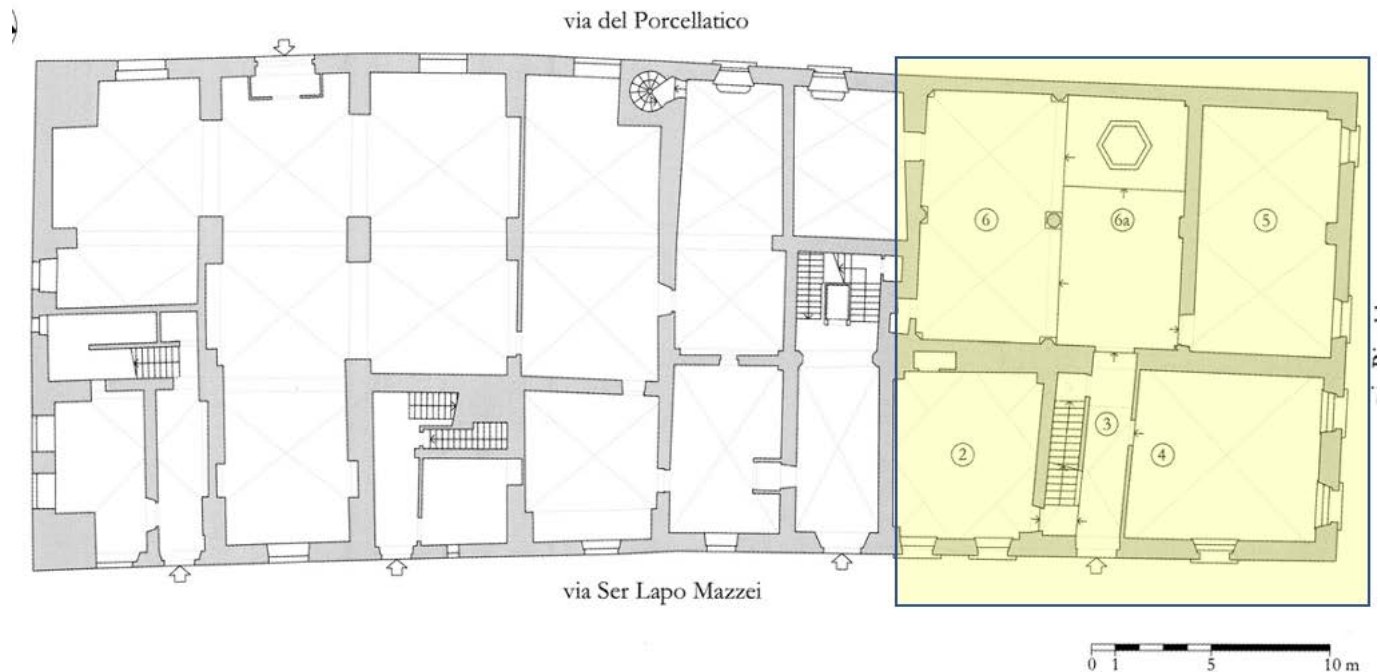


Figure 94: *Floorplan of the entire Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1400.* Source: Jérôme Hayez, Diana Toccafondi, and Maria Rafaella de Gramatica, eds., *Palazzo Datini a Prato: Una casa fatta per durare mille anni* (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2012), 49.



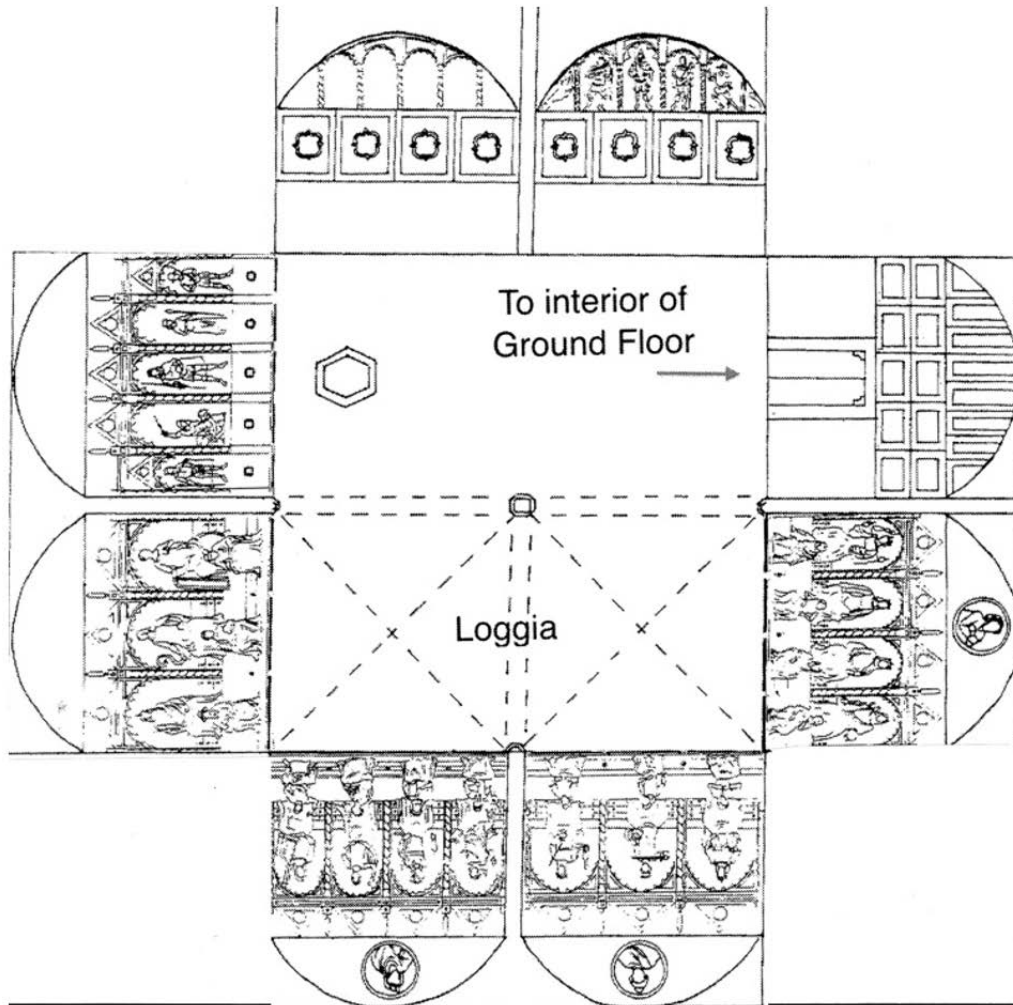
The area in yellow shading is that part of the ground floor that was frescoed and used as a semi-public area.

- 2 = Camera uno letto**
- 3 = Hallway**
- 4 = Camera della due letta**
- 5 = Ground floor kitchen**
- 6 = Loggia**
- 6a = Courtyard**

Figure 95: (Top) *Sinopia* of external fresco panel showing Francesco Datini giving wine to the poor of Prato outside his Palazzo. Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1410. (Bottom) Reconstruction drawing of same scene by Giuseppe Catani in 1910. Source: Philene Helas, “Il ciclo pittorico sulle facciate di palazzo Datini,” in Hayez et al, 2012, 158.



Figure 96: Reconstruction by Tanya Bastianich of layout of known wall frescos in the loggia and courtyard. Source: Tanya Bastianich, *An Illustrious Man and His Uomini Illustri: Francesco di Marco Datini and the Decoration of His Palace in Prato* (D.Phil., Oxford University, 2000), Figure 90.



Side A (Top)	Side B (Right)	Side C (Bottom)	Side D (Left)
1. Wolf, Romulus and Remus	1. Charity	1. Temperance	1. Logic
2. Romulus & Rome	2. Faith	2. Justice	2. Rhetoric
3. Alexander the Great	3. Hope	3. Fortitude	3. Grammar
4. Joshua	4. Prudence	4. Arithmetic	4. Historical Figure
5. Bearded Warrior		5. Geometry	5. Judith
6. Female Figure		6. Astronomy	6. Charlemagne
		7. Music	7. Camilla
			8. Historical Figure

Figure 97: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo & Agnolo, *Escutcheon of Francesco Datini*, *camera della due letta ceiling*, Palazzo Datini, Prato 1391. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 98: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Shields of the Bandini family of Florence*. Top: in the *camera uno letto*. Bottom: in the *camera della due letta* with addition of a *lambello*. Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1392. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 99: Reconstruction of how Datini's shield would likely have looked when altered by charter of Louis II of Anjou. Source: Author.



Figure 100: Tommaso del Mazza, *Blessing Christ/Salvator Mundi* in lunette above entrance into the *camera della due letta* from the hallway, Palazzo Datini, Prato, late 1380's(?). Fresco. Source: Photographs by author.

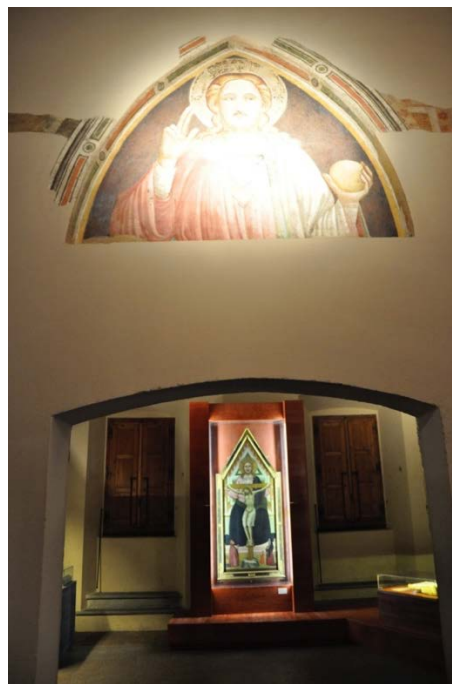


Figure 101: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *St. Christopher*, Entry Hall, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391-94. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 102: Andrea Mantegna, *The Martyrdom of St. Christopher*, Padua, c.1448. Original was fresco but copies were made shortly after the originals using tempera on wood. Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris. Source: Web Gallery of Art.

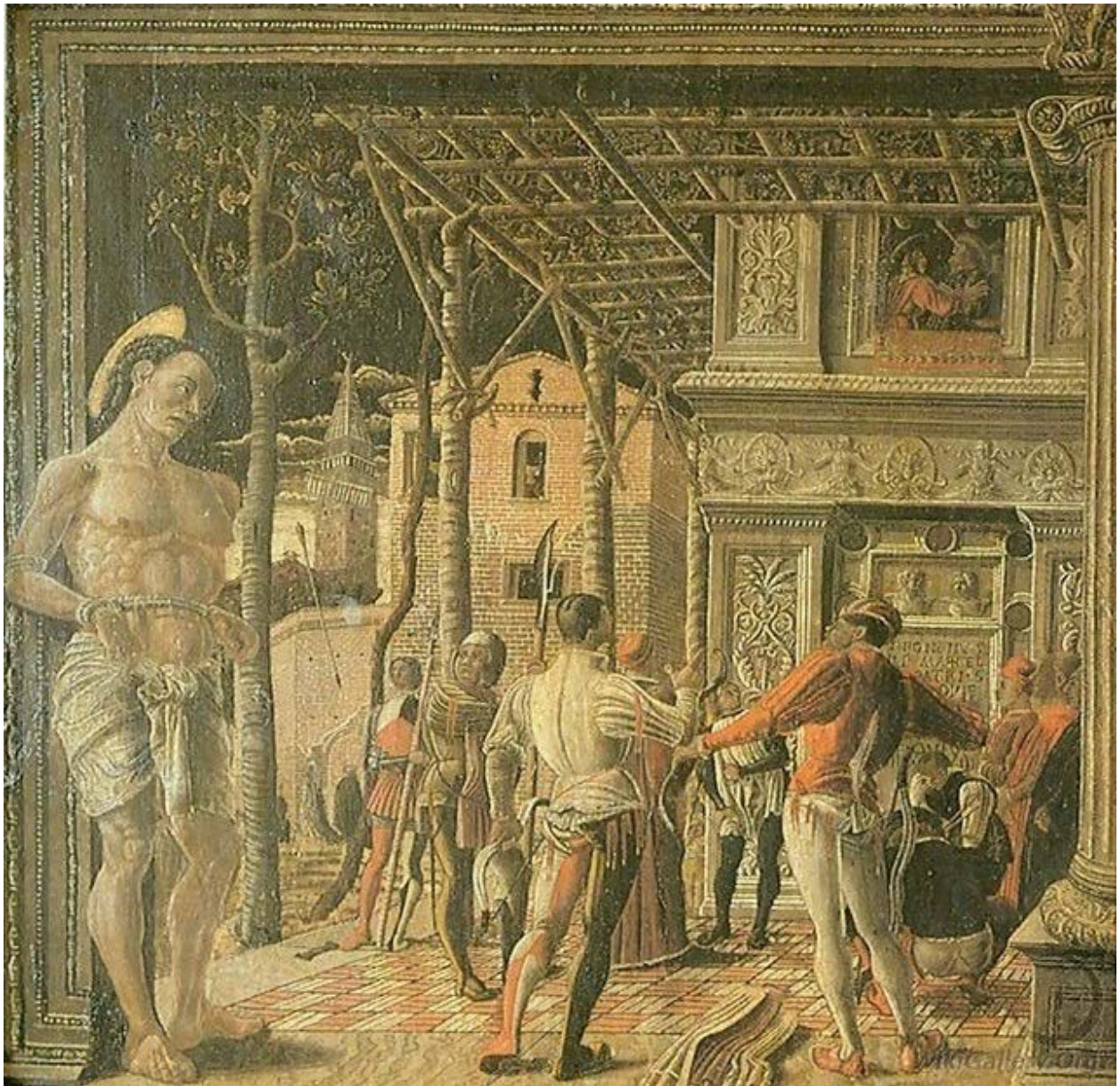


Figure 103: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Redeeming Christ*, Prato, c.1387. Oil and gold on wood. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 104: Simone Martini, *Sinopia of Salvator Mundi*, Papal Palace, Avignon, c. 1341. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 105: *Fleurs-de-lis* on the ceilings of the ground floor of the Palazzo Datini, c.1391. Top left: Hallway. Bottom Left: *Camera uno letto*. Top right: *Camera della due letta*. Bottom right: *Loggia*.



Figure 106: Arrigo di Niccolò, Bartolomeo di Bertozzo, Agnolo, *Hallway ceiling*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 107: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Loggia*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 108: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Ceiling of the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1392. Source: Photograph by author.

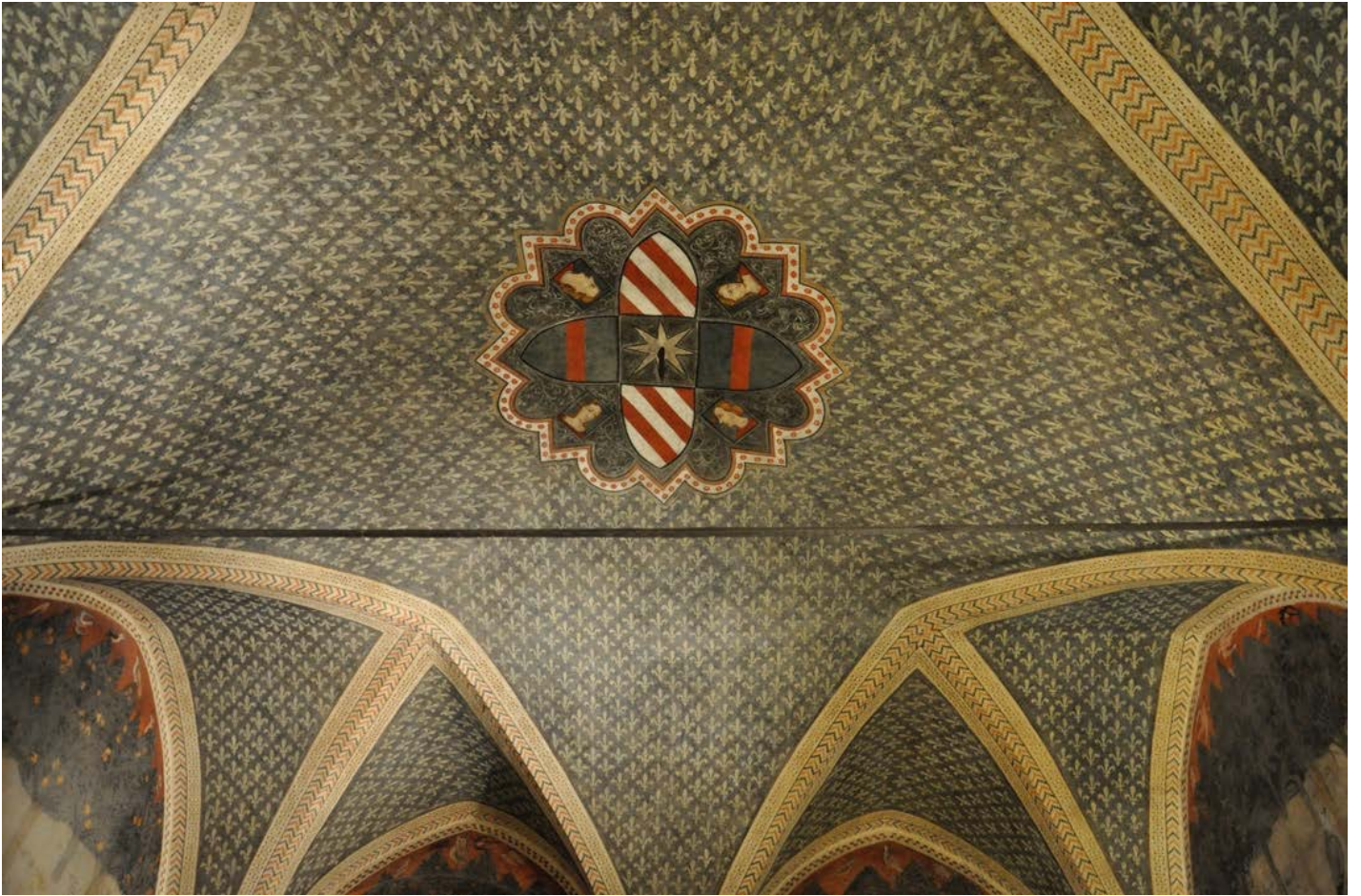


Figure 109: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Ceiling in the camera delle due letta*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Source: Photograph by author.



**Figure 110: *Coat of Arms of Florence after 1251*. Red fleur-de-lis on silver field.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.**

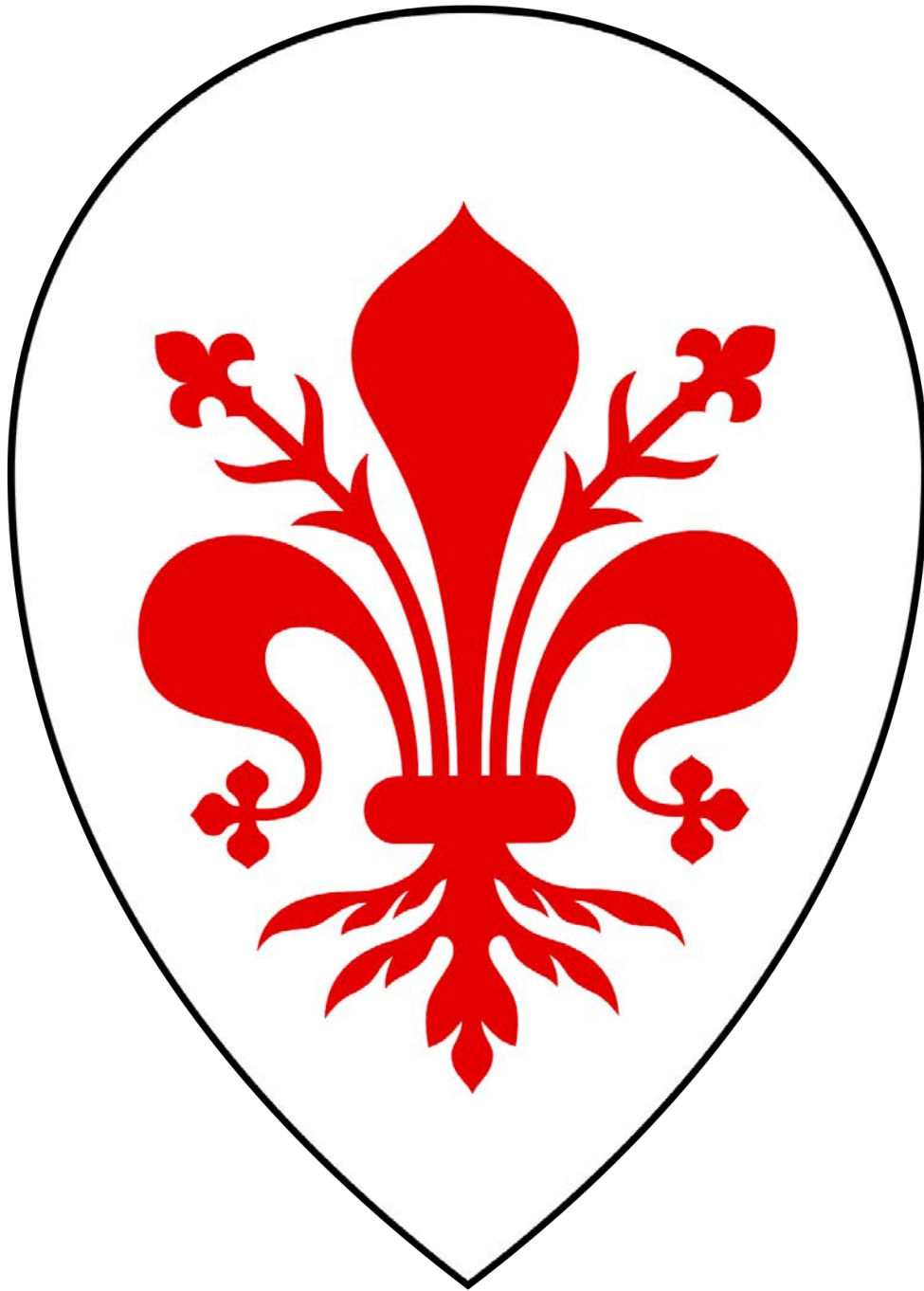


Figure 111: Giotto, *Starry Ceiling of the Arena Chapel, Padua*, c. 1303-1305. Fresco. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 112: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Forest and hunting scenes in lunettes of the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photographs by author.



Figure 113: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Garden scenes in the camera delle due letta*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Fresco. Source: Photographs by author.



Figure 114: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Two hunters stalking a wolf*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 115: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Scene of wolf attacking a deer in lunette of camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 116. *Some of the birds in the frescoes of the two camere of the Palazzo Datini.* Source: Photographs by author.



Figure 117: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Owl and open beaked birds in lunettes of camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 118: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Detail of a falcon in the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 119: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Detail of forest scene in lunettes of the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 120: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Garden scenes in the camera delle due letta*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Source: Photographs by author.



Figure 121: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Trees with blossoms in lunettes of camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 122: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Rose bushes in the camera delle due letta*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 123: Bandini family shields in the *camera uno letto* (left) and *camera della due letta* (right), Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Fresco. The one on the right has the addition of a *lambello*. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 124: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Interweaving of Datini and Bandini family crests, camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1392. Fresco and painted paper. Source: Photograph by author.

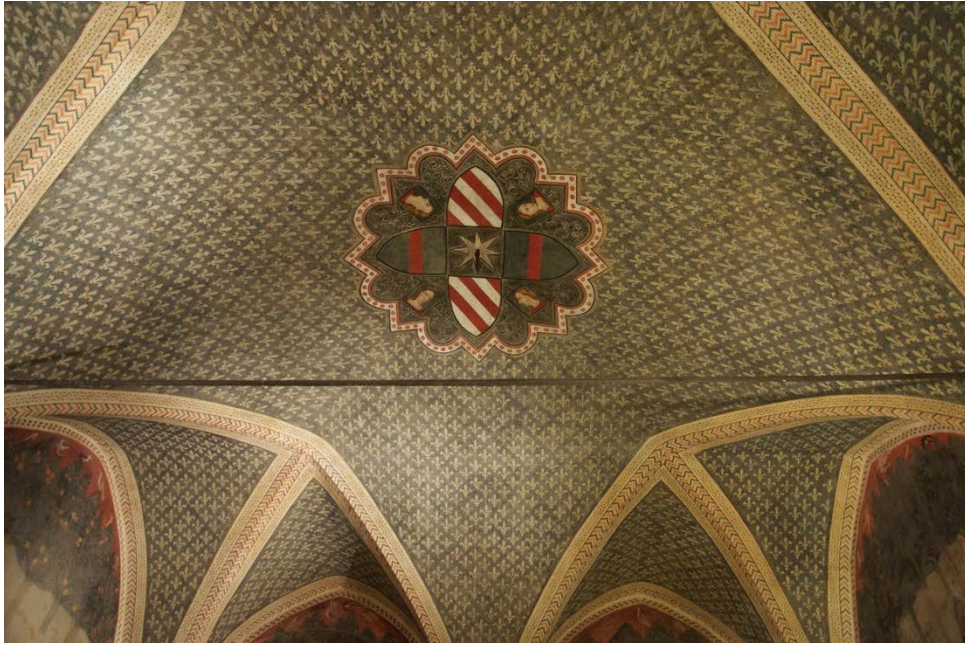


Figure 125: Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Agnolo, *Ceiling in the camera delle due letta showing Datini and Bandini crests*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1391. Fresco.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 126: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *The fictive tapestry in the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 127: Dino di Puccio, Jacopo d'Agnolo, Paganino d'Ugolino, *Detail of upper and lower parts of fictive tapestry of the camera uno letto*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, c. 1389-91. Fresco. Source: Photographs by author.



Figure 128: *The shield of Conrad of Thuringia (c.1230) displaying the Ludovingian lion.* Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 129: *Lions (detail) in the Northumberland Bestiary*, England, c. 1250–60,. Pen-and-ink drawing tinted with body color and translucent washes on parchment, 8 1/4 × 6 3/16 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 100, fol. 8. Source: Getty Open Content Program.



Figure 130: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Loggia*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2.
Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 131: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Courtyard*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 132: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Virtue Charity*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 133: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Virtue Hope*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 134: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *The Virtue Prudence*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



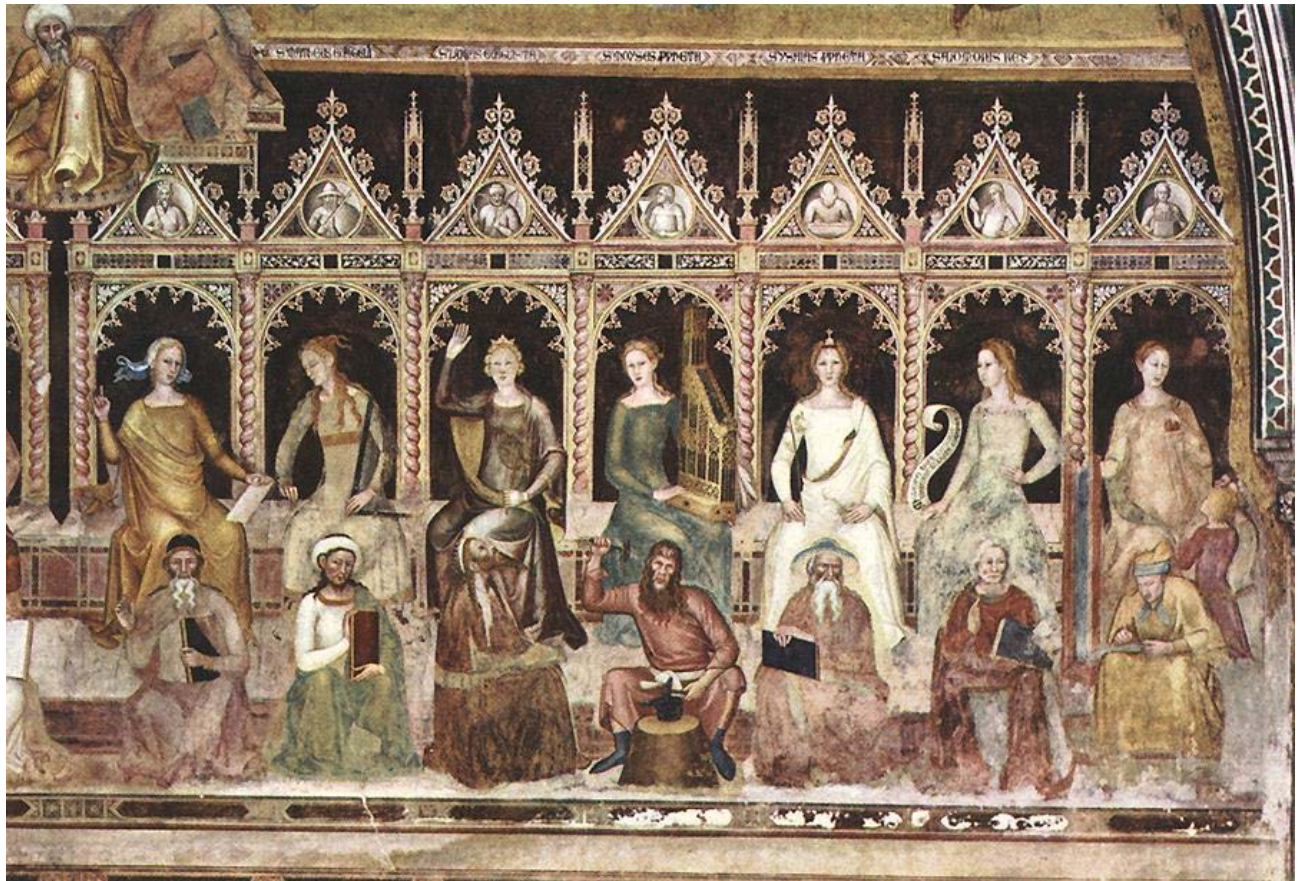
Figure 135: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Uomini Illustri* cycle panel from the *cortile*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 136: *The Virtue Patience defeats the Vice Wrath*, Psychomachia. England, late 10th century. Ink on parchment. British library, Cotton MS Cleopatra C VIII, folio 12v.



Figure 137: Andrea di Bonaiuto, *Quadrivium and Trivium Cycle* (Allegory of the Secular Sciences), Spanish Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence c. 1365-68. Fresco. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Upper (left to right): Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music. Logic, Rhetoric, Grammar.

Lower (left to right): Pythagoras, Euclid, Ptolemy, Tubal-cain, Pietro Hispano (?), Cicero, Priscian (?).

Figure 138: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Detail of Uomini Illustri cycle panel from the cortile, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.*



Figure 139: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Remains of the four philosophers in the lunettes and ceiling of the loggia*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.



Figure 140: Pacino di Bonaguida(?), *Philosophy crowned*, Carmina Regia, Prato, c.1335. British Library, Royal MS 6 E IX, folio 27r. Source: British Library Digitized Manuscripts.



Figure 141: Niccolò di Pietro Gerini(?), *Coat of arms of Francesco Datini on loggia pillars*, Palazzo Datini, Prato, 1391-2. Source: Photograph by author.

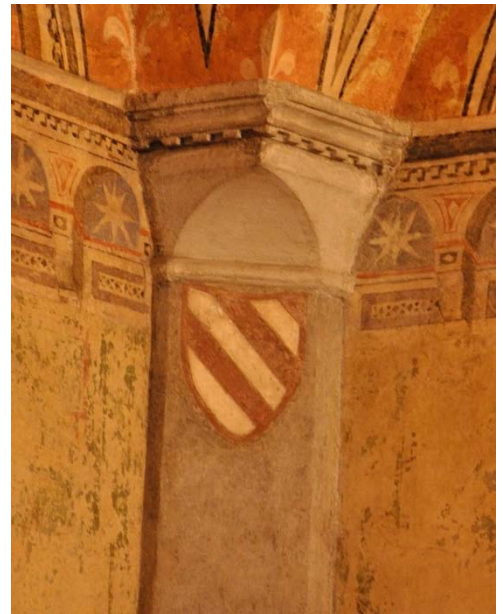


Figure 142: Giuseppe Catani, *Part of detailed coloured drawing for proposed reconstruction of the exterior frescos, Prato, 1910*. Source: Helas, 164. (Note: Catani's version of Datini's coat-of-arms shows the inclusion of King Louis grant of a gold fleur-de-lis on a blue background).



Figure 144: Jacopo di Mino del Pellicciaio, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, Convent of San Francisco, Todi, c. 1345. Fresco. Source: <http://creatureandcreator.ca/?p=2677>



Figure 145: Limbourg Brothers, *Sinners being purged by fire in a scene of Purgatory*, Très Riche Heures du Duc de Berry, France, c. 1414-16. Paint and gold on parchment. Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS 65, folio 113v.

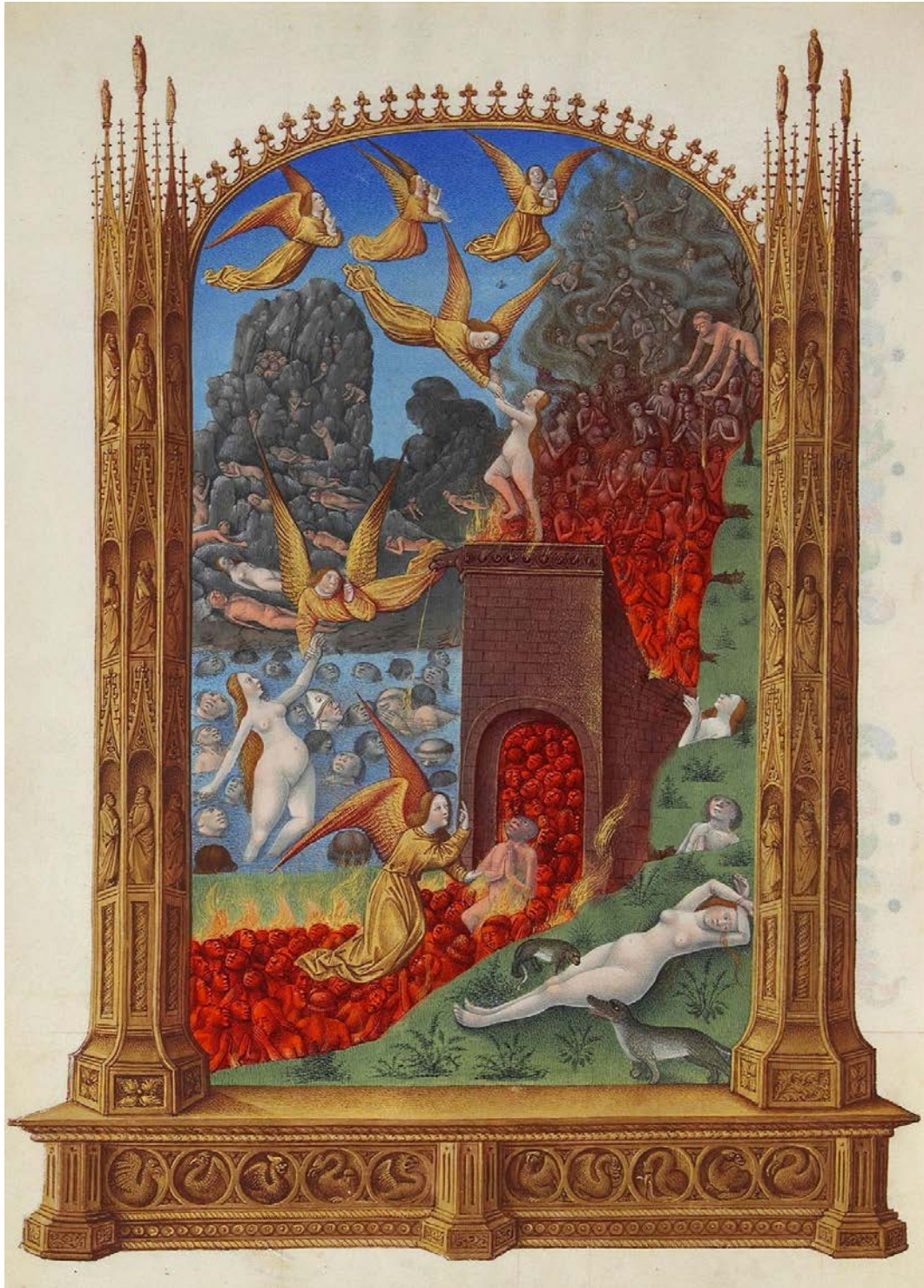


Figure 146: Jacopo di Mino del Pellicciaio, *St. Patrick's Purgatory, Detail of Patron*, Convent of San Francisco, Todi, c. 1345. Fresco. Source: <http://creatureandcreator.ca/?p=2677>

The patron of the fresco.

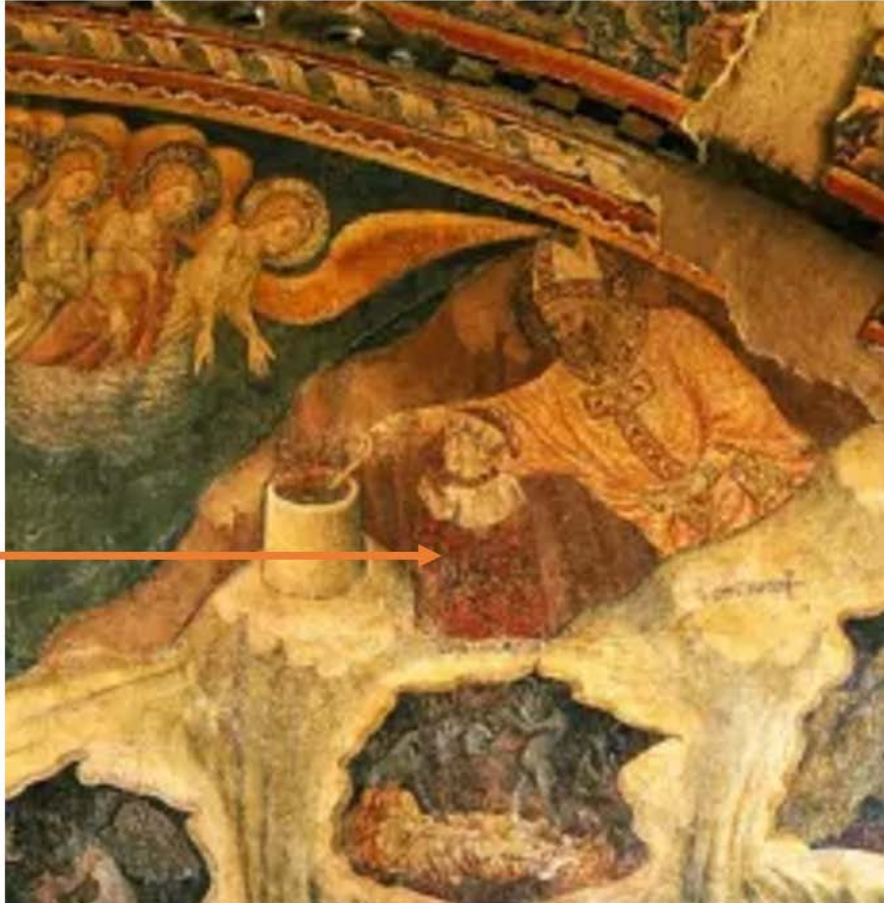


Figure 147: *Crown and lion motif in the Sala dei Pavoni, Palazzo Davizzi-Davanzati, c. 1350?* (not verifiable as the original decorative component).
Source: Photograph by Natalie Massong.

