



Staging and Painting Musical Heavens Performance and Visual Culture in Fifteenth-Century Florence

By:

Laura Cristina Ștefănescu

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of Music

January 2020



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Staging and Painting Musical Heavens Performance and Visual Culture in Fifteenth-Century Florence

By:

Laura Cristina Ștefănescu

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
Department of Music

January 2020

Abstract

Music-making angels change their appearance in fifteenth-century Florentine art, transitioning from silent adoration in Nativity of Christ scenes from the Trecento to exclusively vocal performances, as well as from orchestras of soft instruments in Coronation of the Virgin images from the fourteenth century to ensembles playing both soft and loud instruments. This thesis aims to understand what prompted and influenced changes in the iconography of heaven in Quattrocento Florence, by analysing the visual culture of the period from the perspective of the new developments in confraternal life, particularly in the realm of musical and theatrical activities promoted by the laity.

The insertion of angelic choirs performing vocal music into images of the Nativity are analysed in connection to the creation of youth confraternities in which young boys dressed up as angels sang hymns and *laude* during processions. The Magi chapel choir of angels painted by Benozzo Gozzoli in 1459 is reinterpreted from the perspective of Cosimo de' Medici's patronage of the youth confraternity of the Purification, given the close resemblance between the external appearance of these figures and the angelic costumes worn by the young boys of the confraternity during theatrical representations.

Florentine adult confraternities also increased their numbers in the fifteenth century, focusing their activities on theatrical performances in which heavenly spaces were materialised in front of devotees. Images of the *Coronation* painted by Neri di Bicci, an artist closely involved in the confraternal life of the Oltrarno, are analysed in order to demonstrate the insertion of scenographical elements relating to the representation of heaven as a space, and the depiction of music-making angels.

Through a visual comparative analysis of works of art, as well as through the study of the theatrical and musical activities of confraternities—as they appear in *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni* texts, and in company records and inventories and eye-witness accounts—this thesis aims to demonstrate that the painted heavens and musical angels of fifteenth-century Florence were a visual representation born from the heavens staged by the laity in confraternities, and from their music-making child-angels.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction	
1. Argument	2
2. Geographical and Chronological Delimitations	5
3. Primary Sources	6
4. Methodology	9
5. Literature Review and Contribution to Scholarship	11
6. Structure of the Thesis	15
1. Contextual Framework	
1.1 Confraternities in the City	20
1.2 Confraternal Activities	
1.2.1 The <i>Lauda</i> Tradition	24
1.2.2 Florentine Sacred Theatre	28
1.2.3 The <i>Edifizi</i> of San Giovanni	35
1.2.4 <i>Sacre Rappresentazioni</i>	37
1.3 Secular and Sacred Interactions	
1.3.1 Confraternities	39
1.3.2 <i>Laude</i> and the <i>cantasi come</i> Tradition	41
1.3.3 Sacred Plays and the Secular	44
1.3.4 The Critique of Secular Interferences in Sacred Spaces and Art	48
1.3.5 The Critique of Polyphony	51

1.4 Focus on the Senses	52
1.5 Devotional Practices in Renaissance Florence	57
1.6 Visual Culture and Transfers from Religious Practice	60
2. <i>Nativities of Christ</i> and the Angel of Florentine Youth Confraternities	
2.1 The <i>Nativity</i> in Florentine Art between Trecento and Quattrocento	66
2.2 Devotions at Christmastime	72
2.3 Florentine Youth Confraternities	75
2.4 Youths as Angels of the <i>Nativity</i>	
2.4.1 <i>Fanciulli</i> as Angels and Angels as <i>Fanciulli</i>	80
2.4.2 <i>Nativity</i> Angelic Choirs	88
2.5 Confraternal Choirs as Angels in the Medici Magi Chapel	
2.5.1 The Chapel and Questions of Patronage	95
2.5.2 The Medici and Music	98
2.5.3 The Medici and Confraternities	102
2.5.4 Reading and Praying with Cosimo de' Medici	109
2.5.5 The Contemplative Angels in the Chapel	115
2.5.6 The Magi and the Afterlife	122
2.5.7 The Material Angels in the Chapel	127
3. <i>Coronations of the Virgin</i> and the Heaven of Florentine Adult Confraternities	
3.1 The <i>Coronation of the Virgin</i> in Florentine Art between the Trecento and Quattrocento	134
3.2 Florentine Adult Confraternities of the Oltrarno and their Sacred Plays	140
3.3 Painters of the Oltrarno between Devotion and Profession	
3.3.1 Painters, Confraternities, and Theatre	146

3.3.2 The Workshop and Commissions	149
3.4 Scenographical Insertions in Neri di Bicci's <i>Coronations of the Virgin</i>	151
3.5 Reconfiguring Angelic Musical Ensembles	159
3.6 Reordering Heavenly Space	
3.6.1 Heaven in the City	166
3.6.2 Heaven in the Church	171
Conclusion	178
Figures	182
Bibliography	284

Word count, excluding footnotes, figures, and bibliography: 64564

Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor, Tim Shephard, for all his precious guidance and support during these years, as well as for all his comments, suggestions, and edits that have improved my work considerably. I am very grateful for all the opportunities that he so generously offered along the way, especially that of publishing alongside him, and, perhaps most importantly, that of allowing me to enter into the world of Italian Renaissance art in the first place. A special thanks goes to my second supervisor James Shaw, for having read my work and for his advice during the early stages of my research, and to Beth Williamson, Laurie Stras, and Jeffrey Dean, for their ideas and stimulating discussions. I would also like to thank Prof. Giulio Busi for his inspiring words.

My doctoral studies would have not been possible without the financial support of the Leverhulme Trust, which has funded Tim Shephard's three-year project on "Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy, c.1420-1540." The Music and Letters Trust, as well as the Learned Society Fund of the University of Sheffield have sponsored my attendance to several international conferences, at which I was able to present my findings. The Gilchrist Educational Trust has financed a research trip to Italy, organised for collecting visual material for the project and my thesis. The Royal Historical Society has given me the opportunity to consult materials from several Florentine archives. For their kind help and availability, I would like to thank the archivists of the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Ughetta Sorelli at the Biblioteca Domenicana di Santa Maria Novella "Jacopo Passavanti," and Elena Gurrieri at the Archivio del Seminario Arcivescovile di Firenze.

I would like to thank Serenella Sessini with whom I shared this doctoral journey. I have enjoyed our discussions, our trips around the world, and am grateful to have found a wonderful friend. Thank you as well to Sanna Raninen, who was an essential and stimulating presence in our project, and also to my friend Arda Antonescu for having kindly read through parts of my thesis.

My strongest gratitude is directed to my family, and particularly to my mother.

Introduction

1. *Argument*

This PhD thesis investigates the representation of angels as musicians of heavenly *feste* in the art of fifteenth-century Florence, in the context of the rising popularity of confraternities and their devotional practices. It argues that the musical and theatrical performances for which youths were dressed up as angels influenced contemporary depictions of angelic figures. Heaven was constructed as a physical space in the theatrical *feste* organised by adult confraternities, and its materialisation brought innovations to its traditional image in art. Elements of the rituals of *lauda* singing, of angelic processions, and of religious plays were appropriated like new words progressively entering the visual language of Renaissance Florence. The city began to visualise a particular type of heaven and angelic music-making, which in turn found its expression in works of art. This thesis aims to identify these elements and trace their origin in order to offer an interpretation of Florentine angelic musicians embedded in the interplay between devotional performance and the visual arts.

From the large number of contexts in which angels are thought to perform music, I chose to focus on specific moments that allow for intense celebrations as much in heaven as on earth, in order to better confront the relationship between depictions of angelic music-making in heaven and earthly devotional practices. Christ's birth, his Ascension, the Virgin's Assumption to heaven and ultimately her Coronation there, all represent moments of joy and celebration associated with a heavenly *fešta*. Specifically, I have delimited my research through a focus on the iconography of the Nativity of Christ and that of the Coronation of the Virgin, both very popular subjects in Renaissance Florentine art.

My first step in the investigation of angelic music in Nativity and Coronation scenes was to compare from a visual perspective artworks from the fifteenth century with those of the fourteenth century, arranging them by decade and by musical choice. Through this comparative exercise, I was able to trace a series of differences in the type of music depicted and also in the spatial arrangement of the heavenly scene. During the first decades of the fifteenth century, angels in Nativity scenes no longer remain in quiet adoration or play instrumental music, but rather the

repertoire shifts to vocal performances in the majority of examples. The Coronation scene also changes its music, from the predominant use of soft instruments (such as vielles and portative organs) to a mixture of both soft and loud instruments (including trumpets and cymbals) together with vocal music. From the second half of the fifteenth century the Coronation scene, which once occupied a central position in the compositional space, being rooted almost to the bottom of the pictorial field, was increasingly elevated in the picture space until images were cut in half, the upper part displaying the moment of the Coronation and the lower a crowd of saintly figures gazing upwards at the events happening above the clouds.

Having observed these modifications in the representation of the heavenly *feste* of the Nativity and Coronation in fifteenth-century Florence, I was interested in understanding the factors which had influenced these changes. By analysing the religious context of the period, I came across several developments that might have had an impact on the visual representation of heavenly music. In Florence, the fifteenth century saw an unprecedented rise in the popularity of confraternities, which tripled their numbers and even extended to new social groups, such as those of young boys. The entire city was immersed in this network of communities organising and expressing lay piety, whose activities became important not only for their contribution to the salvation of one's soul, but also for turning Florence on special days of celebration into a "heavenly" *festa*.

Laude, mostly vernacular religious songs that had gained success in *laudesi* companies, began to be sung by Florentine young boys organised in youth confraternities during meetings, processions, or in the course of the performance of religious plays, for which these children would dress up as angels. The popularity of the *compagnie di fanciulli* and their performances of vocal music, coupled with the relationship of mutual identification between angels and children, can be linked to the sudden insertion of angelic vocal music into Florentine Nativity scenes from the early fifteenth century onward, the period when these youth confraternities were created.

Florentine adult confraternities developed and perfected during the Quattrocento more complex stagings of heaven and its music. These consisted in the elaborate parade of the *edifizi* (pageant wagons) that performed short religious plays during the celebration of Florence's patron saint, the *festa di San Giovanni*, and also in the spectacular theatrical performances organised in certain churches for the main *feste* of the liturgical calendar. If the plays of youth confraternities were more simple, adult confraternities created complex sets, focusing the scenography on heavenly

scenes and mechanical *ingegni* that materialised descents from and elevations into heaven. Being often publicly funded, their *feste* presented a different kind of angelic music, as rich in sound as the settings were visually rich. These consisted of a mix of vocal and loud and soft instrumental music. The iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin reflects these musical and scenographical choices, sometimes even including elements that can be linked directly to particular contraptions used to decorate the heaven of Florentine religious plays.

During the Renaissance, confraternities were a creative power in the Florentine religious system, and their devotional practices informed the visual representation of heavenly angelic music in the art of the period. This thesis aims to demonstrate this connection through a thorough analysis of the products of Florentine confraternal life, whether visual or textual, in order to fully grasp how heaven and its angelic music were interpreted, from the perspective of lay piety and ultimately of the larger visual and devotional culture that had permeated Florentine society. If we often cannot have visual access to the theatrical performances of such distant events, or to other contemporary devotional rituals, several documents provide clues to what they might have looked like and why. The texts of Florentine *laude*, as well as those of the religious plays known as *sacre rappresentazioni*, contain the textual support that would have accompanied the visual performances. Eye-witness accounts give first hand descriptions of what spectators saw and heard. Confraternal accounts, inventories, and *capitoli* offer information about the lost material fabric from which these earthly heavens were constructed: from ropes greased with soap and light effects, to angelic costumes and musical instruments. All of these sources have extensively informed my analysis of the connection between musical angels in Florentine Renaissance art and the confraternal devotional activities popular in the city.

This thesis aims to contribute to scholarship on the musical iconography of angels in the art of fifteenth-century Florence, by demonstrating the insertion of new musical elements into Nativity and Coronation scenes of the period, and by studying them in relation to the musical and theatrical practices of confraternities. At the same time, it aims to add to the vast literature on Florentine theatre and confraternal life a study that is focused primarily on the image of the musical angel as conceived in these contexts, and ultimately to demonstrate its influence on the works of art of the time. By showing how a particular iconographical element was shaped by religious performances put on by confraternal groups, the thesis proposes the overarching argument that the prevalent and

proactive role of the laity in the religious life of fifteenth-century Florence had a considerable impact on the religious art of the time.

2. *Geographical and Chronological Delimitations*

The spatial coordinates of this thesis revolve around the city of Florence. On the one hand, this is due to the extensive religious activities that were particularly developed here, such as the rich festive life, innovations in the theatrical apparatus of religious plays, the creation and flourishing of the genre of *sacre rappresentazioni*, the emphasis on the figure of the child that led to the phenomenon of youth confraternities, and an overall strong involvement of the laity in religious life. On the other hand, plenty of documentary sources regarding these matters have survived from fifteenth-century Florence, from the vast textual tradition of *laude* copied by contemporaries, to the records of confraternities, in some cases unbroken for the entire period.¹ The artworks discussed throughout the thesis are considered of Florentine origin not on the basis of the commissioner's provenance, but primarily according to whether the artist had resided in Florence for an extensive period of time, allowing him to become familiarised with the confraternal musical and theatrical activities of the period. Often, the examples mentioned in the thesis will have been purchased from Florentine artists by those residing outside Florence, which was in fact a common practice.

Regarding the chosen time frame, the thesis focuses on artworks from the fifteenth century. This is explained on the one hand by the fact that iconographical changes in the representation of musical angels customary in the Trecento start to be observed in the early decades of the Quattrocento. It is also in this period that Florence experienced an increase in the popularity of confraternities and their theatrical activities. The thesis will be particularly focused on examples from the second half of the century, when the transformations mentioned earlier had already sedimented into the visual culture of Florentines. For comparative purposes reference will be made to several Trecento works of art.

¹ On the preservation of confraternal documents see Gazzini 2009a.

3. *Primary Sources*

The thesis is supported by extensive information and evidence gathered from visual and textual sources, the majority of which are from fifteenth-century Florence, with the exception of a few earlier texts still in circulation and of examples from other cities such as Ferrara and Siena that serve a comparative purpose.

Regarding visual sources, the argument of this study was the result of scrutinising a large corpus of images representing the Nativity of Christ and the Coronation of the Virgin from Trecento and Quattrocento Florence which included music-making angels. These have been chosen on the basis of the artist's residence in Florence for an extensive period of time, and have been collected from 1300 to 1510. The majority of artworks are paintings on panel and frescoes, but given the variety of techniques that an artist from fifteenth-century Florence might use, I have also included in the timeline examples of illuminated manuscripts and sculptural works. The painted or sculpted altarpieces, as well as the frescoes, are of large scale and were viewed within the public space of the church, whether in connection to the main altar, or to those of private chapels. The smaller paintings on panel, excluding those that were once part of a polyptych and are now separated from their original context, were destined for a more private use within the home. Examples of these do appear, but they do not form the majority in my timeline, given the fact that, for example, the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin was a popular scene for large altarpieces. Illuminations provide the smallest depictions and were included in my research sparingly, given that a proper analysis of this material would have been too extensive for the confines of this thesis. For the initial stage of research represented by the collation of this corpus of artworks, matters such as the commissioner, the popularity of the artist, or the destination of the image for a private or public space were of secondary importance. The images were gathered on the basis of their Florentine provenance and their dating to the Trecento or Quattrocento.

In order to better observe the choices made by artists in representing musical angels and the spatial arrangement of heavenly scenes, I organised my material in several ways, studying the Nativity and Coronation images separately. A general timeline was created in Microsoft OneNote for each of the two iconographies, with the images organised horizontally by decade. The Nativity iconography was afterwards divided into timelines dedicated to images with angels playing only vocal music, only instrumental music, and a mix of both. The same was applied to images of the

Coronation, with the addition of a timeline for artworks in which the Coronation was presented at the centre of the composition, as if viewed frontally, and one for those showing the scene in an elevated position, as if seen from below. I also organised the images chronologically for each artist in order to identify workshop patterns. This system has helped me observe clearly whether any change had or had not taken place regarding these matters in the two chosen iconographies. Throughout this process I have been aware of the limitations imposed by disputed artist attributions and imprecise dating. However, even with these issues at hand, general trends were evident.

The other primary sources on which this thesis is based are of a textual nature and are mainly related to the activities of Florentine confraternities. A lot of information can be gathered from studying not only the practice of *lauda* singing, but also the texts of these sung prayers, which often hint at devotional rituals and particularly at manners of representation of the heavenly realm and of angelic music. The extent to which *laude* were performed in a variety of contexts, from confraternal meetings, processions, and *sacre rappresentazioni* in the public sphere to the realm of private devotion, make them an important source in understanding how the laity of fifteenth-century Florence imagined the heavenly *feste*. I have therefore studied a very large corpus both of Florentine *laude* and of *laude* in circulation in the city during the fifteenth century, starting with the compilations printed in Florence in 1485-1486 by Francesco Bonaccorsi and in 1500 by Bartolomeo de' Libri, and continuing with several collections of unedited *laude* preserved in manuscript form, such as those in MS Chig. L.VII.266 of the Biblioteca Vaticana, copied in the 1450s, those in MS Magl. VII 30 and MS Magl. XXXV 119 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, as well as in several other fifteenth-century manuscripts in the Biblioteca Riccardiana (1501, 1502, 2871, 2896, 2929), and Francesco d'Albizo's *laudario* in the Biblioteca Laurenziana (MS Ashb. 424).²

The texts of *sacre rappresentazioni* also formed a large part of my documentation, important for similar reasons as the texts of *laude*, with the addition of the useful information that can be gathered from the stage directions included in them—references to music being of particular relevance to the present study. These have been studied mainly from the many collections published by Italian scholars starting with Alessandro D'Ancona, but also from Nerida Newbiggin's *Nuovo Corpus di*

² *Laude* 1485-86; *Laude* 1500.

Sacre Rappresentazioni Fiorentine, and also from collections printed in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century and in the early decades of the sixteenth.³

The activities of several confraternities have been taken into account by the present study, but the main focus has been on the Compagnia della Purificazione della Vergine Maria e di San Zanobi for youth confraternities, and on the Compagnia di Santa Maria delle Laude e di Sant'Agnese among the adult ones. In order to better understand youth confraternities, I have consulted several unedited *capitoli*, such as those of the Compagnia del'Arcangelo Raffaello in the Archivio di Stato (MS Capitoli, CRS, 882), and those of the Compagnia della Purificazione in the Biblioteca Laurenziana (MS Acquisti e doni 336), as well as those of the Compagnia di San Niccolò del Ceppo, of the Compagnia di S. Bernardino e S. Caterina, and of the Compagnia di S. Antonio. For information on costumes and scenography, I have consulted the inventory of the Compagnia della Purificazione from 1501-25 in its partial publication by Ann Matchette, that of the Compagnia del'Arcangelo Raffaello from 1583 (MS CRS 155 in the Archivio di Stato) and that compiled in 1466/7 by Neri di Bicci for the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese, which has been published by Nerida Newbigin.⁴

To these must be added several confraternal accounts that record payments to and from the companies, known as *Entrata e Uscita* or *Debitori e Creditori*. I have consulted in manuscript form those of the Compagnia della Purificazione and those of the Compagnia del'Arcangelo Raffaello, and also the records of the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese published by Nerida Newbigin.⁵

The last main component of my primary material consists in the numerous eye-witness descriptions of the annual *festa di San Giovanni* or of different performances of religious plays, contained in chronicles, letters, celebratory poems, but also in the popular genre known as *ricordanze* or that of the *diario*.⁶ These offer precious details about the location, time, and duration of the performance, but most importantly about the viewpoint of the spectator and his or her response to what is seen and heard.

³ D'Ancona 1872; Banfi 1963; Ponte 1974; Newbigin 1983.

⁴ Newbigin 1996a; Matchette 2000.

⁵ Newbigin 1996a.

⁶ On *ricordanze* see Pezzarossa 1980; Ciappelli 2000; Ciappelli 2014.

4. *Methodology*

From a methodological point of view my approach to the question of how angels were represented as musicians in fifteenth-century Florentine art is two-fold. It began with a comparative observation of the visual sources in order to assess whether anything had or had not changed during the course of the Quattrocento in particular iconographies. Having established that indeed there were several modifications in the painted “repertoire” of angelic music, I aimed to confront these with changes that were happening in the religious life of the period, with particular emphasis on confraternal musical and theatrical performances.

My point of departure lies in the idea that these changes, as demonstrated by the works of art themselves, were not particular to one artist or one commissioner alone, but that they could have belonged to a widely disseminated taste, to a new visual interpretation of heaven and heavenly music. Given their widespread appearance in works of art commissioned by members of different social groups, as well as their appearance in serialised works of art produced by popular workshops, such as that of Neri di Bicci, the changes seem to point out to the existence of a concept of heaven easily accessible to Florentines from diverse backgrounds. Confraternities were an environment in which the rich and the poor were not segregated and which offered a more homogenous religious culture, as well as many contexts in which heaven was materialised, such as different rituals, processions and religious plays. Heaven was the highlight of sacred *feste* because it allowed the exhibition of ingenious special effects that were highly appreciated by spectators. These heavens opened in front of a large public in several different churches throughout the liturgical year, with a particular highlight during the festival of St John the Baptist, when the entire area surrounding the cathedral was transformed into a heavenly space, with a permanent *edificio* of heaven used during the festivities for several short plays. This theatrical heaven contained in *feste* that were the source of civic pride and to the creation of which painters themselves contributed would have remained engraved in the visual memory of Florentines. The image of a tangible, materialised heaven with living musical angels, constructed by Florentines and seen repeatedly, could have strongly influenced the visual representations of heavenly *feste* in contemporary art.

This thesis therefore focuses on an existing visual culture of Quattrocento Florentines in relation to heavenly musicians as the generator of iconographical change and which can be understood as

operating in the minds of both commissioner and artist, informed by the performance of heaven in churches and in the city. The two case studies presented in this thesis aim to cover both scenarios. The first contains an analysis of the singing angels in the Magi Chapel of the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, in which the commissioner's patronage of music, youth confraternities, and religious theatre, as well as his personal devotion are at the centre of the investigation. However, given that contracts between patrons and artists never contain specific information on what music the angels should actually play and that details were often left to the artist to decide, the second case study flips the perspective over by placing at the centre of the investigation the artist and his workshop. The focus of this part of the thesis is on the production of altarpieces of the Coronation of the Virgin by Neri di Bicci, a lesser known artist, but perhaps the most successful one in fifteenth-century Florence. His paintings were commissioned by confraternities, private individuals and monastic communities, yet for the most part they remained the same, demonstrating the serialised production of Neri's workshop. What does change are the saintly figures to be included in the scene, which would have been the commissioner's choice. Neri di Bicci's close involvement in the *Compania di Sant'Agnese* that staged the yearly *fiesta* of the Ascension of Christ, and later that of the Assumption of the Virgin, provides an interesting context for the analysis of the influences of theatre on art.

At the same time, each case study is focused on particular iconographies, that of the Nativity and Coronation respectively. Therefore, several other relevant artworks are included in the discussion as supporting examples of products influenced by the visual culture of theatrical production. Throughout the thesis I also reference artistic, musical, and theatrical practices in Siena and Ferrara and their connection to Quattrocento Florence, with the aim of offering elements of comparison.

The musical angel of confraternal plays from Quattrocento Florence changed his musical repertoire according to the context of the performance. In youth confraternities the vocal music found in Nativity scenes predominated, while in adult ones instrumental music was added during the more complex religious plays, as reflected in Coronation scenes. In order to take into account these differences the two case studies also follow the rationale of distinguishing between practices in youth and adult confraternities.

The two main case studies of this thesis are, therefore, methodologically organised in order to offer a complete picture in terms of the different iconographies that contain musical angels (Nativity/

Coronation), in terms of those responsible of creating the images (commissioner/ artist), and in terms of the confraternal practices that would have influenced how they were represented (youth confraternities/ adult confraternities).

5. *Literature Review and Contribution to Scholarship*

This thesis has been conceived as an interdisciplinary research project informed by and benefitting from scholarship from different disciplines, from art history and musicology to theatre and social studies, in order to provide new perspectives on the representation of musical angels in Florentine Renaissance art by demonstrating the existence of unnoticed iconographical changes and by connecting these to the activities of adult and youth confraternities.

The subject matter is concerned with religious art and visual and musical performances, as well as with the interaction between viewer and object of contemplation for devotional purposes, filtered through the mechanisms of sensory perception. The literature around these topics is both vast and rich in interpretation and has informed my research throughout the thesis. I will therefore refer only to the most important studies in what follows here. Questions regarding the process of viewing and the interaction between devotee and artworks have been at the core of several edited volumes such as Timothy Verdon and John Henderson's *Christianity and the Renaissance*, the volumes *Visions of Holiness*, *The Mind's Eye*, and the recent *Voir l'au-delà: L'expérience visionnaire*, to which can be added Sixten Ringbom's monograph *Icon to Narrative* and Henk van Os' *The Art of Devotion*.⁷ Donal Cooper's essay on devotion in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, as well as the recently published monograph *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* and the two volumes of collected essays (*Madonnas & Miracles* and *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*) that have been published by the interdisciplinary project "Domestic Devotions" at Cambridge University offer an extensive analysis regarding interactions with images for devotional purposes within the Italian Renaissance home.⁸ Millard Meiss' *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* has proposed an interpretation of iconographical elements in connection to changes in society,

⁷ Ringbom 1965; Verdon and Henderson 1990; Os 1994; Ladis and Zuraw 2001; Hamburger and Bouché 2006; Beyer, Morel, Nova, and Gerbron 2017.

⁸ Cooper 2006; Corry, Howard, and Laven 2017; Brundin, Howard, and Laven 2018; Corry, Faini, and Meneghin 2019.

while David Freedberg's *The Power of Images* has been one of the key studies in the theory of response to works of art, and Caroline Walker Bynum has brought into focus the idea of materiality in relation to religious works of art.⁹ Other important contributions in these directions that must be mentioned are those of Richard Trexler, John Shearman, Herbert Kessler, and more recently Beth Williamson and the edited volume of Fiona Griffiths and Kathryn Starkey.¹⁰ The thesis sets out to connect these ideas regarding devotional experience and manners of viewing to a different visual stimulus from the religious realm, namely that of the performative, in which the animation of the sacred is even further enhanced than in paintings or moving sculptures, by creating living images of heaven and saintly figures.

The interpretation of artworks is connected in the present thesis to Florentine confraternal life, a topic that has been extensively studied by scholars.¹¹ The foundation was laid by Richard Trexler's *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, followed by Ronald Weissman's *Ritual Brotherhood*, and John Henderson's *Piety and Charity*.¹² Several edited volumes have enlarged the spectrum of perspectives upon the confraternal world of the Italian Renaissance, such as *The Pursuit of Holiness*, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, and *Faith's Boundaries*, as well as Marina Gazzini's *Studi confraternali*.¹³ Konrad Eisenbichler has recently edited *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*.¹⁴ The study of Florentine confraternities has benefited greatly from the two monographs dedicated to the youth confraternity of Archangel Raphael and that of the Purification, by Konrad Eisenbichler and Lorenzo Polizzotto respectively, which brought into focus the rituals within these religious groups of young boys.¹⁵

The musical activities of lay confraternities have been at the centre of several articles and monographs, reconstructing the sound of *sacre rappresentazioni*, and discussing the *lauda* tradition and performance practice. To the articles of Bianca Becherini, Frank D'Accone, and Giulio Cattin, must be added the important contributions by Cyrilla Barr and Blake Wilson, as well as the more recent work of Jonathan Glixon.¹⁶ The commissioning of art by confraternities, as well

⁹ Meiss 1951; Freedberg 1989; Walker Bynum 2011.

¹⁰ Trexler 1972; Shearman 1992; Kessler 2000; Williamson 2013; Promey 2014; Griffiths and Starkey 2018.

¹¹ For an in-depth account of historiographical developments in the field until 2000 see Eisenbichler 1997; Black 2000.

¹² Trexler 1980b; Weissman 1982; Henderson 1994.

¹³ Trinkhaus and Oberman 1974; Terpstra 2000; Gazzini 2009b; Terpstra, Prospero, and Pastore 2012.

¹⁴ Eisenbichler 2019a.

¹⁵ Eisenbichler 1998; Polizzotto 2004.

¹⁶ Becherini 1951; D'Accone 1975; Barr 1983; Barr 1988; Wilson 1992; Cattin 1993; Wilson 2009; Glixon 2019.

as the devotional practices revolving around these images, have also sparked considerable interest among scholars. The two main contributions are the *Crossing the Boundaries* volume, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, and *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, to which are added the articles by Cyrilla Barr and Ludovica Sebregondi, as well as the recent monograph of Andrew Chen on art in flagellant confraternities.¹⁷ My contribution to the field of confraternal studies lies in demonstrating the impact that confraternal activities had on the art of fifteenth-century Florence, and how they contributed to iconographical changes.

Musical activities in Renaissance Italy have been studied from many perspectives, such as that of confraternal performances, or of music-making at court, or in the home. Recent studies have also shifted the attention towards the experience of sound within the city and the acoustics of major performance venues for religious music, discussions that have informed my understanding of how the music of theatrical performances in churches or in the piazza, as well as that of processions, might have been experienced. I mention here the research of Flora Dennis, Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, as well as publications by Giovanni Zanovello, Niall Atkinson and the edited volume of Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson.¹⁸

Musical performance has also been studied in its connection to and depiction in art. Scholarship on the topic has been attentive to all sorts of different musical insertions, from musical instruments and notation, to singing figures and ensembles. For my argument, the work of Emanuel Winternitz, Andrew Ladis, and Tim Shephard, as well as the edited volume of Susan Boynton and Diane Reilly were of great value.¹⁹ The article and monograph that form the output of the “Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy c. 1420-1540” interdisciplinary project at the University of Sheffield have also contributed in shaping my ideas about musical iconography.²⁰ Regarding the very specific aspect of the representation of musical angels, the research of Emanuel Winternitz, Meredith Gill, and Katherine Powers has been a stimulating point of departure for my inquiries.²¹ This thesis aims to take the ideas found in these publications further by providing an interpretation of the

¹⁷ Barr 1989; Eisenbichler 1991; Sebregondi 1991; Wisch and Ahl 2000; Sebregondi 2009; Chen 2018.

¹⁸ Moretti 2004; Dennis 2008-2009; Howard and Moretti 2009; Howard and Moretti 2012; Zanovello 2014; Howard 2015; Atkinson 2016; Biddle and Gibson 2017.

¹⁹ Winternitz 1975; Ladis 2003; Shephard 2014b; Boynton and Reilly 2015.

²⁰ Shephard, Ștefănescu, and Sessini 2017; Shephard, Raninen, Sessini, and Ștefănescu 2020.

²¹ Winternitz 1963; Powers 2004; Gill 2014.

representation of music-making angels in Florentine Renaissance art through the performance practice popularised by contemporary confraternities, and demonstrating the existence of a change in this musical iconography which finds its explanation in the sacred musical and theatrical activities of the time.

If art historical scholarship, social studies, and musicology, as well as the hybrid musical iconography have been discussed, the other disciplinary element that remains to be explored is that of the study of Renaissance theatre. Italian scholarship, starting with the studies of Alessandro D'Ancona and Paolo Toschi, has produced a great deal of literature in this field, among which I will only mention the studies by Ludovico Zorzi, Giovanni Attolini, the exhibition catalogue *Il luogo teatrale*, and the edited volume by Raimondo Guarino, as well as that by Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio.²² Important monographs on the festival of San Giovanni and on theatrical performances during the time of Lorenzo de' Medici and Girolamo Savonarola have been written by Heidi Chrétien, Nicole Carew-Reid, and Michel Plaisance.²³ The most prolific among theatre scholars have been Nerida Newbigin and Paola Ventrone, whose many articles and monographs have provided invaluable information to the present thesis.²⁴ Nerida Newbigin's monograph *Feste d'Oltrarno* is important not only for the study of the three main Florentine *feste*, but also for the publication of a plethora of unedited material regarding Oltrarno confraternities. I would also like to mention Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington's edited volume, and Elissa Weaver's study on female monastic theatre in early modern Italy.²⁵

The idea that art and theatre were influencing and borrowing elements from each other was first pointed out by George Kernodle regarding art's influence on theatre, and by Pierre Francastel regarding theatre's influence on art.²⁶ Since then, several scholars have pursued the debate, such as Ludovico Zorzi and Paola Ventrone, some, for example Roberta Olson and Charles Burroughs, starting to connect Sandro Botticelli's paintings with theatrical heavens.²⁷ The monographs of Kristin Phillips-Court and Alessandra Buccheri are particularly important contributions in this

²² D'Ancona 1891; Toschi 1955; Fabbri, Garbero Zorzi, and Petrioli Tofani 1975; Zorzi 1977; Attolini 1988; Guarino 1988; Chiabò and Doglio 1993.

²³ Chrétien 1994; Carew-Reid 1995; Plaisance 2008.

²⁴ I quote here only their monographs: Newbigin 1996a; Ventrone 2016.

²⁵ Weaver 2002; Butterworth and Normington 2017.

²⁶ Kernodle 1945; Francastel 1967.

²⁷ Zorzi 1979; Olson 1981; Ventrone 1991; Burroughs 2014.

direction, which offer solid evidence of the borrowing of theatrical elements into the visual arts.²⁸ My thesis aims to expand this discussion, which has already covered aspects of scenography such as the *nuvole* or the spinning heavens of Filippo Brunelleschi, to embrace the yet unexplored theme of how the staged music of angels might have influenced their representation in art. It also demonstrates the existence of changes in the choice of heavenly musical depictions, as well as that of the elevation of heavenly space, changes that coincide with the theatrical practices developed in Florentine confraternities.

By gathering documentation as well as interpretative theories from the above mentioned disciplines, my research brings a different perspective on the representation of angelic musicians and the heavenly realm, through new visual and textual evidence that support the idea that the musical heavenly *feste* in Nativity and Coronation scenes in Renaissance Florence were in fact images of the *feste* in confraternal heavens.

6. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three chapters, the first providing a contextual framework for the second and third, which contain a focused discussion of the changes in the representation of music-making angels from two different perspectives. The first chapter is dedicated to several aspects that define religious life in Quattrocento Florence pertinent to the research area of the thesis. As confraternities are at the centre of my discussion, the chapter begins with an analysis of their origin and of several particular characteristics, such as their rise in popularity and their membership. A large section is concerned with confraternal activities relevant to the argument of the thesis, such as the performance of *laude*, the sacred plays performed during festivities of the liturgical year, the festival of San Giovanni, and the textual tradition of *sacre rappresentazioni*. Because confraternities are representative of lay piety, secular elements become more and more intertwined with their activities, an aspect which had sparked critique from several contemporary clergymen. In the first chapter I include a discussion of these issues, which emphasise the role of the laity in shaping the religious life of Quattrocento Florence.

²⁸ Phillips-Court 2011; Buccheri 2014.

The chapter proceeds with a section on sensory perception as a mechanism that facilitates devotion and which is essential to the understanding of acts of viewing and listening. The devotional practices of Florentines are then scrutinised in order to offer a general overview of how fifteenth-century devotees interacted with divinity through images and the rituals associated with them, both in the public and private spheres. The chapter ends with an in-depth analysis of the theoretical framework at the centre of the thesis: the relationship between religious practice and visual culture and how musical and theatrical performances influenced artistic representation.

The second chapter consists of a case study that analyses the insertion of singing angels into scenes of the Nativity in relation to devotional practices in Florentine youth confraternities. Firstly, I present the several elements that change in the iconography of the Nativity between the Trecento and Quattrocento, as observed through my visual comparative analysis. Secondly, I reconstruct the devotions around Christmas both inside churches and in domestic spaces, which were centred on the *presepio* and the baby dolls representing Christ. Afterwards, a discussion of Florentine youth confraternities follows, explaining their creation, their focus on the education of young boys, as well as presenting their activities with a particular focus on their participation in processions and theatrical performances. The next section connects the angels of the Nativity with the youths of confraternities dressed up as angels. Firstly, the symbolic connection between the figure of the child and that of the angel is explored, both in relation to the emulation of angelic models by children for educational purposes, and in relation to the role of children as actors embodying angelic figures in processions and plays. Secondly, the singing of the angels in Nativity works of art will be connected to the practice of *lauda* singing, with particular emphasis on stage directions in Nativity *sacre rappresentazioni*, Nativity plays performed by youth confraternities, and other rituals involving angelic children around Christmastime.

The second part of this chapter is dedicated to a case study of the singing angels in the Medici Magi Chapel. The chapter will begin with a detailed description of the chapel and a discussion of the figure of the commissioner, identified as Cosimo de' Medici. The Medici's patronage of music in the Baptistery, as well as in connection to the tradition of sung poetry in the piazza San Martino, and the creation of *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, will be analysed. The Medici's and particularly Cosimo de' Medici's support of confraternities will be the focus of the following section, especially his involvement in the Ascension *fiesta* in Santa Maria del Carmine, his

patronage of the youth confraternity of the Purification, and the 1459 celebrations in the city. Following these preliminary remarks, the discussion will turn to the visibility of the singing angels in the chapel, as well as to matters of liturgical and devotional ritual within the space, which, in connection with the silent music hidden in the halos of the angels, reveal a focus on adoration and contemplation, in which Cosimo was demonstrably interested. Then the painted angels will be studied in relation to the angel costumes of confraternity youths, from their wings to their robes and halos, as well as the floral arrangements connected to their figures and religious festivities, in order to argue that they represent the youths of Florentine confraternities, dressed up as angels, under the patronage of Cosimo.

The third chapter presents a case study focusing on the music-making angels and heavenly space in Coronations of the Virgin, in connection with the theatrical activities of adult confraternities from the Oltrarno. I will once again proceed from a presentation of iconographical differences between Trecento and Quattrocento Coronations as observed in my visual research. Afterwards, a brief presentation of the three main *feste* performed in confraternities of the Oltrarno will follow, namely the Annunciation *festa* in San Felice in Piazza, the Pentecost *festa* in Santo Spirito, and the Ascension and Assumption *feste* in Santa Maria del Carmine. The chapter will continue with an analysis of the involvement of painters in confraternal life and theatrical performances, accompanied by a short excursus on workshop practices.

The second part of the chapter will be dedicated to three different changes in Coronation scenes and their connection to theatrical developments. The first will be centred on the case study of Neri di Bicci's *Coronations* and the insertion of scenographical machinery into his altarpieces which can be connected to the theatrical devices used by the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese, a confraternity in which he was actively involved. These consist in the *nuvole*, the *stelle*, the *Sole*, as well as the relationship between gilding and theatrical light effects. Afterwards, the focus will shift towards the changing musical ensembles of heaven, which reflect the employment of musicians in the Oltrarno *feste*. The last section will be a thorough discussion of the creation of heavenly space in theatre and how that shapes the iconography of the Coronation. Firstly, the concept of heaven will be discussed both from the perspective of the terms used to define heaven in *laude*, as well as the idea of imagining heaven as a space. The creation of heaven in civic festivities and the transformation of the city into the heavenly Jerusalem will be analysed, followed by the creation

of heavenly space in religious plays performed within the space of the church. The stage settings, the dome-like heavens, and the elevation above the rood screen will be considered, in order to reflect the new viewing practices of heavenly scenes, appearing also in metaphors of elevation and descent in the texts of *laude*, and ultimately leading to the elevation of the Coronation scene in the composition of Quattrocento altarpieces.

1. Contextual Framework

1.1 *Confraternities in the City*

My interpretation of the changes in the musical iconography of Nativity and Coronation scenes from Renaissance Florence is connected to the religious phenomenon of confraternal life, which during the fifteenth century increased considerably in popularity and intensity.

Canon law defines confraternities in the following way: “The associations of faithful created for the exercise of certain pious and charitable works are called pious unions; these, if organised as an organic body, are called associations; the associations created also to increase the public cult are called with the particular name of confraternities.”¹ They are, therefore, lay groups organised for religious purposes, among which are those of communal prayer and participation in other devotional rituals, such as processions or sacred performances, the offer of spiritual and material support to its members, both while living and after their death, and also charitable activities. Central to these organisations is the idea of social kinship, which as Nicholas Terpstra has explained, goes beyond political power, and more importantly represents a social and spiritual connection.² Confraternal life emulates certain rituals and activities to which only clergymen would have had access.³ In this context, laypeople were able to be actively engaged in liturgical performances, the writing and reading of sermons, religious processions, burial rituals, and charitable works.

Confraternities have existed in Italy since the tenth century, with a particular surge during the thirteenth, when the laity began to feel a more pressing desire to become an active component of religious life. In fifteenth-century Italy, several different terms were used to refer to these organisations.⁴ The one that I will use mainly is “confraternity” which derives from the Latin “confraternitas,” although at times I will also use “compagnia” which was specific to Renaissance Florence. Confraternities were also called “sodalities” from the Latin “sodalitas,” or “scuole,” a term more common to Venice, although also used in Florence in reference to youth confraternities.

¹ Angelozzi 1978, 7.

² Terpstra 2012, xii.

³ Verdon 1990, 4.

⁴ See Eisenbichler 2019b, 3-4.

John Henderson has observed the existence of five main types of confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence: those of *laudesi* (the best known being the *laudesi* of Orsanmichele), whose main function is the singing of *laude*; the *compagnie di disciplina* (for example, the Compagnia di San Paolo), to which the practice of flagellation is central; charitable societies (for example, the Buonomini di San Martino), whose mission was to protect the poor; youth confraternities or *compagnie di fanciulli* (for example, the Confraternity of the Archangel Raphael), which were dedicated to the education of young boys; and artisan companies (for example, the Compagnia di San Luca, to which painters and sculptors belonged), which were similar to guilds in that their members belonged to the same craft, but different because their purpose was essentially religious.⁵ Sometimes, certain confraternities, especially those of *laudesi*, were deeply involved in the festive life of the city, by reason of which they were also called *compagnie di stendardo*.

The rise in popularity of Florentine confraternities during the fifteenth century, although not an isolated phenomenon on the peninsula, is of great importance for our research and for understanding the religious life of the period. According to Konrad Eisenbichler, Florence had 56 confraternities by 1400, which by 1500 tripled to 156.⁶ John Henderson provides a graph of this rise, explaining that given the decline of the population of Florence by over two-thirds between 1340 and 1440, an increased number of Florentines had actually joined these companies.⁷ To this, we should add as well the fact that sometimes an individual was a member of more than one confraternity, which demonstrates the intensity with which contemporaries experienced confraternal life in fifteenth-century Florence. The causes for this rise in popularity have been located by scholars in several different phenomena, which probably all played a part: from the Black Death and the recurrent epidemics, to the influence of Franciscans and Dominicans on urban societies.⁸ What is certain is that during the fifteenth century the entire city was involved in confraternal organisations that were promoting lay piety and actively shaping Florentine religious life.

The members of these confraternities were usually a mix of persons coming from different social levels, without there being any marked polarisation between the rich and the poor. Certain

⁵ Henderson 1994, 34-37. On artisan companies see Henderson 1994, 426-30.

⁶ Eisenbichler 1998, 12.

⁷ Henderson 1994, 39 and fig. 2.1.

⁸ Rusconi 1986a, 471; Henderson 1994, 48.

confraternities were under the patronage of the Medici, such as the Compagnia de' Magi and the youth confraternity of the Purificazione, and within these some particularities do exist. Many humanists were members of the Compagnia de' Magi, and sermons were delivered to the company in Latin, while the confraternity of the Purificazione saw an increase in noble members after entering Medici patronage.⁹ Although neighbourhoods did influence participation, there was no division of membership according to the quarters of the city. Ronald Weissman has emphasised the characteristic of Florentine confraternities of being citywide rather than parish or neighbourhood orientated.¹⁰

Another important aspect concerns the participation of women, which has been the focus of a great deal of recent scholarship. In theory, confraternities did not exclude women from their membership, but in practice their involvement was very limited and mediated through male relatives belonging to these organisations. Public culture was based on the sociability of men, to which the corporate realm belonged, making confraternal life a model that did not correspond to the female dimension.¹¹

Laudesi companies were more open to the participation of women. For example, the statutes of the Compagnia de' laudesi d'Orsanmichele written in 1329, when listing the duties of its members, specifies that "all people of this company, male and female, must confess often and receive communion at least once a year."¹² The rise of flagellant confraternities led to a decrease in women's involvement. In Bologna in the sixteenth century only 12 of the 80 confraternities accepted women members.¹³ As explained by Sharon Strocchia, it was not the act of flagellation itself which caused this, given that women often practiced it, but rather the issue of women and men collectively engaging in it.¹⁴

Even when they were accepted, the role of women was very limited and they could not hold any administrative positions, nor could they participate in public ceremonies. They intervened, however, in rituals around death. Their contribution is more prominent also in charitable

⁹ On the political dimension of confraternities see Henderson 1985.

¹⁰ Weissman 1982, 90.

¹¹ Strocchia 1998, 48. See also Esposito 2009.

¹² "ogni persona di questa compagnia maschio et femina si debbia confessare spesso et comunicare almeno una volta l'anno." Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 391, fol. 5v. On women and confraternity statutes see also Casagrande 2000, 49-51.

¹³ On women in Bolognese confraternities see Terpstra 1990. For Rome see Esposito 2000.

¹⁴ Strocchia 1998, 49.

associations, such as the *hospitalia*, where they provided care especially to women and children.¹⁵ In the fifteenth century, female branches of confraternities began to appear, under the subordination of the male branch, but governed by women guardians, following the model of convents of nuns, which had an abbess, but were also linked to a supervising male house. For example, the Compagnia di Santa Caterina da Siena was a sorority to which mostly noblewomen belonged.¹⁶ Women also made their voices heard by sometimes writing the *sacre rappresentazioni* which would have been performed in confraternities, many texts revolving around the figures of women saints, as is the case with the plays written by Lucrezia Tornabuoni and Antonia Pulci.¹⁷

Confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence were particularly restrictive regarding the membership of clergymen, as well as of state officials. The *capitoli* of the Compagnia di Sant'Antonio, one of the youth confraternities, state explicitly that “no priest, friar, notary or state officer will be able to be one of our company or one of our brothers.”¹⁸ An essential characteristic of confraternities is the fact that they are autonomous lay institutions, with a loose supervision from bishops. Ronald Weissman has pointed out that the sometimes hostile attitude of confraternities towards priests during the fifteenth century contrasts with the more friendly relations observable during the following centuries.¹⁹

However, friars, particularly from the mendicant orders, had a strong influence on the devotional life of confraternities. They were invited particularly in order to deliver sermons or to act as confessors.²⁰ John Henderson has discussed how many confraternal ceremonies were in fact emulating those of the church. For example, the entire ritual surrounding the initiation of new members had parallels in the way in which friars were received into convents, with a symbolic meaning attached to confraternal robes.²¹

¹⁵ Barone 1994, 88-89. See also Howe 2000.

¹⁶ Rusconi 1992, 309; Black 2000, 15.

¹⁷ Among the *sacre rappresentazioni* focusing on women saints written by Lucrezia Tornabuoni are *La ystoria di Judith vedova hebrea*, *La storia di Hester regina*, *La ystoria della devota Susanna*. For information regarding their manuscript transmission and editions see Tornabuoni 2001, 52-53, which also provides an English translation of these plays. See also Milligan 2011. Among Antonia Pulci's *sacre rappresentazioni* are *La rappresentazione di Santa Guglielma* and *La rappresentazione di Santa Domitilla*. See Pulci 2007. For a discussion on plays focusing on female martyrs see Newbigin 1998.

¹⁸ “nessuno prete, frate, notaio, o statuale possa essere di nostra compagnia o de' nostri frategli.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1748, fol. 21v.

¹⁹ Weissman 1991, 206. See also Brucker 1969, 180. On the role of the bishop see Rossi 2009.

²⁰ Rusconi 1986a, 473.

²¹ Henderson 1986, 73.

1.2 Confraternal Activities

1.2.1 The Lauda Tradition

The members of confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence were engaged in many diverse activities, among which, in what follows, I would like to discuss in more detail the ones that have a direct relevance to the topic of my research. These include both musical and theatrical performances.²² Among the first, one of the most important practices is that of the singing of vernacular, and sometimes Latin, religious poems known as *laude*, which appeared during the thirteenth century, originating from hymns and liturgical sequences called *laudes*, sung in church or during processions, and in connection to the companies of *laudesi*.²³

Initially these were performed in front of the confraternity's image of the Virgin illuminated by candles, to monophonic melodies; but from the fifteenth century onwards polyphonic *laude* for several voices are recorded, with the inclusion of accompaniment by soft instruments such as the rebec, lute, vielle, harp, or organ.²⁴ For the singing of *laude* confraternities often hired professional singers. Among these an example of a successful freelance *laudesi* is that of Antonio di Pietro, hired by several of the city's confraternities, whose activity contributed to the circulation of *lauda* repertoires.²⁵

Each confraternity owned its own *laudari*, many written during the fourteenth century and richly illuminated, prized possessions which continued to be used during the fifteenth century. Only three of these early, fourteenth-century examples survive from Florence. One is the *laudario* of the Compagnia di Santa Maria delle Laude e di Sant'Agnese which met in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine. The manuscript, illuminated by Pacino da Bonaguida and by the Master of the Dominican Effigies, survives in fragmented form and is now dispersed.²⁶ The other two belonged to the church of Santo Spirito—the only *laudario* containing musical notation that survives from

²² More on confraternities and their activities in Rusconi 1986b; Sebergondi 1992.

²³ Toschi 1955, 674-84; Coppola 1963, 7-11. On *laudesi* companies see D'Accone 1975. For fourteenth-century *laudesi* see D'Accone 1970.

²⁴ Becherini 1954; Macey 1992, 441. On the practice of *lauda* singing see Barr 1983; Barr 1988; Wilson 1992.

²⁵ Wilson and Barbieri 1995, xv.

²⁶ Betka 2009, 163. On the *laudario* see also Boehm 1994; Zimei 2011; Sciacca 2012; Brilliant 2016b.

the period—and to the church of Sant’Egidio (MSS Banco Rari 18 and 19 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale).²⁷

The popularity of *lauda* singing during the fifteenth century is demonstrated by the numerous examples of *laudari* that transmit only the text of the songs and which were used for private devotion.²⁸ The manuscript Ashb. 424 from the Biblioteca Laurenziana represents the *laudario* of Francesco d’Albizo, himself a composer of *laude*, a manuscript which comes from his personal collection. The *laude* in the manuscript were composed between 1475 and 1483 and the names of the recipients of these texts were also specified for each.²⁹ To give an example, one of the *laude* for Epiphany is marked as having been sent “to Lorenzo priest of San Tommaso;” this identification has then been crossed out and replaced with “to the magnificent Lorenzo de’ Medici.”³⁰

Three more manuscripts belonging to fifteenth-century Florentines and containing a large number of *laude* are of particular importance to our discussion. The first is manuscript Chig. L.VII.266 of the Biblioteca Vaticana in which an impressive number of over 700 *laude* have been copied, together with the text of three *sacre rappresentazioni*, as well as certain hymns, and Latin sermons, between 1448 and 1464, by Filippo di Lorenzo Benci.³¹ According to Bernard Toscani, Filippo Benci probably transcribed during these years his favourite *laude*, some composed at the end of the fourteenth century and others during the first half of the fifteenth.³² This is supported by the fact that the *laude* are not arranged according to their correspondence to festivities in the liturgical calendar, like in the case of confraternal *laudari*. The collection has been extensively used for the documentation of this thesis.

The history of the collection of *laude* in manuscript Ricc. 2929 of the Biblioteca Riccardiana is a complex one. On the first folio, we read in red ink that “this book is mine, Mariano di Nicholò, presently living in Pisa and I finished writing it in the year of Christ 1448. Those who wrote this

²⁷ For an edition of the *laudario* of Santo Spirito see Wilson and Barbieri 1995. For that of the Sant’Egidio *laudario* see Popolo 1990.

²⁸ Cattin 1981, 35.

²⁹ See Wilson 2009, 95-107.

³⁰ “a ser Lorenzo prete di San Tommaso;” “al magnificho Lorenzo de’ Medici.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashb. 424, fol. 49v.

³¹ Newbigin 1983, lii.

³² Toscani 1979, 35-37.

book always served God so that at their end they go to paradise.”³³ It is interesting to note that Mariano alludes to the copying of this book of *laude* as a devotional exercise meant to contribute to the salvation of one’s soul. Such practices of copying religious texts were a widespread form of devotion in which people from diverse backgrounds were engaged. The first folio continues to tell the story of the manuscript’s owners and we find out that after having been copied by the Pisan Mariano, the collection of *laude* entered in the possession of two Florentine devotees, a woman and a man:

This book is of Marciello di Lazaro di Naldo di Giovanni di Naldo di Baldo Baldi, Florentine citizen living in the borough of San Lorenzo. And because above it is said to belong to Mariano di Nicholò di Pisa, it is through an inheritance from Madonna Alesandra da Cieperello that this book came in the possession of the said Marciello.³⁴

At the end of the collection, starting from fol. 205v, after the Pisan *laude* copied in Mariano’s hand, we find several popular Florentine *laude* that have been added by Marciello from San Lorenzo, in order to update his inheritance with some of his favourite local sung prayers.

Another Florentine manuscript gives us an insight into how these private owners might have used their *laude* collections. Manuscript Magl. XXXV 119 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, was copied by Bruno di Nicholaio di Matteo Lachi, as he himself records on the first folio, and was bound on 15 October 1481. Bruno explains that:

Let it be known to any person, whatever their rank, who has any kind of need, here he will be taught to remedy all, and further, if he wishes to lighten his cares, or if he would like to wonder at the Resurrection, or the Nativity, or if he would like to be sorrowful for his sins, all of these can be achieved through the *laude* contained in the manuscript.³⁵ Bruno considers that it is better to read the *laude* than to sing them, for delight in song might lead to sin. He also adds towards the end of his entry an expression of gratitude: “may Jesus Christ be thanked a thousand

³³ “Questo libro è di me Mariano di Nicholò abitate al presete im Pisa e finillo di scrivere negli anni di Cristo 1448. Quegli che questo libro iscrisse sempre a Iddio servisse c’a lla sua fine im paradiso ne gisse.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2929, fol. 1r.

³⁴ “Questo libro è di Marciello di Lazaro di Naldo di Giovanni di Naldo di Baldo Baldi cittadino fiorentino abitante in borgo San Lorenzo. E perchè sopra dicha di Mariano di Nicholò di Pisa, per via di eredità da Madonna Alesandra da Cieperello è pervenuto detto libro a detto Marciello.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2929, fol. 1r.

³⁵ “E ssia noto a qualunque persona sia di che chondizion si sia e avessi alchuna neccesità qui gl’insegnerà a riparare a ttutte e più se si vuole ralegiare, o se volessi chomoso per la Resuressione, per la Natività, se si volessi dolere de suo’ pecchati.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 1r.

times, for whose love one of the following *laude* has brought me help.”³⁶ The reciting of *laude* could be understood almost as a cure, each for a different and precise ailment. Bruno marks certain *laude* as “very useful” (molto utile). When he particularly recommends a *lauda*, as is the case with number 111 on fol. 116r, he writes “excellent” (ottima) and accompanies it with a pointing hand for annotation (manicule) reinforced by the addition of a “note well” (nota bene). He marks *lauda* 131 on fol. 129v with another manicule under which he writes: “take it with you” (portala techo). From the very interesting guidelines that Bruno provides for the use of *laude* by private individuals, we notice an employment of these prayers focused on their powerful effects and almost talismanic nature.

Several printed collections of *laude* from the fifteenth century, among them those printed by Francesco Bonaccorsi and Bartolomeo de’ Libri to which I refer throughout the thesis, but also others dating from 1480 and 1489, further demonstrate the genre’s success during the Quattrocento.³⁷ The 1489 collection begins with the *laude* written by Lorenzo de’ Medici, showing, as argued by Patrick Macey, the sponsorship of this tradition by those at the top of Florentine society.³⁸

From the richly illuminated *laudari* of confraternities, to the printed editions and the many collections of *laude* copied by Florentines for their private devotions, transmitted from one person to another and used in a variety of situations and in a variety of ways, all of these surviving documents demonstrate the circulation of vernacular religious poetry and its high popularity in Quattrocento Florence, a period in which the religious ideas of the laity spread through these widely disseminated texts, which form a large part of the documentation regarding confraternal piety on which this thesis is based.

³⁶ “ringraziato sia Giesu Christo mille volte per amor di chi m’a portò aiuto d’alchuna delle infrascritte lalde.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 1r.

³⁷ *Laude* 1485-86; *Laude* 1500.

³⁸ Macey 1992, 441.

1.2.2 Florentine Sacred Theatre

The confraternities of Renaissance Florence were not important only for the religious life of the period, but, through their theatrical performances, they also contributed to the civic dimension of the city.³⁹ To use Richard Trexler's words, the fifteenth century was characterised by "an explosion of festival activity."⁴⁰ The increase in public rituals, which were representative of the city's identity, and the growth in musical and theatrical activities, performed by confraternities, have been amply demonstrated by scholars.⁴¹

The staging of religious plays represented a very important aspect of Florentine lay religious communities, requiring a great deal of preparation, financial resources, and often involving many different people in the city, in order to provide a spectacular show. Regarding financial matters, the plays put on by adult confraternities in order to celebrate festivities of the liturgical calendar were usually publicly funded, because they were considered to represent a delight for the entire city, staged sometimes even on dates that did not correspond to the actual religious festival, but connected to the passage of important visitors through the city. Public support was also required because the lay confraternities, as groups that were independent from the church, could not cover all the expenses for these lavish performances only from the fees paid by their members.⁴²

The Compagnia di Sant' Agnese that put on the Ascension play in Santa Maria del Carmine relied heavily on official subsidies, for which they often applied. Their requests to the Commune offer a good deal of information regarding the role of these plays in relation to civic life. On 28 August 1435, they applied for funding for the Ascension *fiesta*, explaining how the members of the confraternity:

in recent years they try to do it [the *fiesta*] more fittingly and expensively than in other times, to increase devotion and the honour of the city, and they are constantly seeking to create new inventions for the greater veneration of the feastday. But since the expense is very heavy, on account of the small number and the condition of the said men, and is judged to be greater every day, they cannot meet it unless some public assistance is granted to

³⁹ Becker 1974, 195.

⁴⁰ Trexler 1980b, 406.

⁴¹ Weissman 1991, 210; Chrétien 1994, 9; Henderson 1994, 101; Emerson, Tudor and Longtin 2010. For a general discussion on theatre in confraternities see Ventrone 2009.

⁴² See Newbiggin 1990, 368; Muir 1999, 4, 15.

them. And since the embellishment of the said *festa* is seen to be inseparable from public honour, it seems meet and right that the Commune should extend its helping hand.⁴³

The document emphasises the difficulty encountered by members of the confraternity in supporting the theatrical innovations required, and it also states the public character of this sacred play, meant not only for devotional purposes, but also for the “honour of the city.” Another document from October 1445, in which the company applies for a renewal of the 1435 subsidy, uses similar terms. The *festa* is both dedicated to “the honour of God and the magnificence of this city.” Moreover, the text mentions the success of the play among the citizens of Florence, but also the fact that even without this success, “the men of the said Company would be constrained to perform it [the play] because it brings more fame to your city.”⁴⁴ In the years in which financial support was granted, all the costumes and sets were refurbished and decorations were very lavish. Confraternity accounts show a striking difference in the performance during the years when no money was received from the state.

Cyrilla Barr has termed these public plays supported by government finances “sacred entertainment,” meant to inspire devotion, but also to provide spectacular effects.⁴⁵ The importance of the “show” can be demonstrated also by the fact that the texts of the *sacre rappresentazioni* corresponding to some of the most famous plays, such as the Ascension and Pentecost *feste*, both written by Feo Belcari, are surprisingly short in the form that they have come down to us. *La Rappresentazione dello avvenimento dello Spirito Santo il dì della Pentecoste* is one page long (24 lines), while *La Rappresentazione dell’Ascensione* occupies less than five pages (64 lines).⁴⁶ The spectacular fireworks and light effects, the moments of ascent and descent to and from heaven, as well as the music of the heavenly *feste*, were at the core of these plays.

⁴³ “in aliquibus ultimo decursis annis magis proprie sumptuosius ve temporibus ceteris illud egere pro augenda devotione et civitatis honore atque continuo student circa novas inventiones faciendum pro maiori veneratione solemnitatis eiusdem, sed cum sumptus ob paucitatem et impossibilitatem hominum predictorum gravissimus sit, et in dies maior arbitretur, supplere nequirent nisi aliquod eisdem de publico subsidium impendatur. Et cum ornamentum dicte festivitatis non possit sine honore publico esse, dignum ac honestum videtur esse ut Commune suas manus porrigat adiutrice.” Translation and original from Newbiggin 1996a, 2:330-32.

⁴⁴ “a honore di Dio e a magnificentia di questa città, ... gli uomini di detta Compagnia ne sarebbero costretti di farla perché dà più fama alla vostra città.” Original from Newbiggin 1996a, 2:420.

⁴⁵ Barr 1990, 378.

⁴⁶ Belcari 1833, 113-14. (*La Rappresentazione dello avvenimento dello Spirito Santo il dì della Pentecoste*); Belcari 1833, 109-12 (*La Rappresentazione dell’Ascensione*). See the remarks in Ventrone 1990, 407.

Alongside the idea of public performance lies the participation of an entire community in the preparation of these events.⁴⁷ Sometimes the community was extended to involve the whole city. In April 1459, Florence welcomed important visitors on their way to the Council of Mantua, among whom were Pope Pius II, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, and Sigismondo Malatesta. For the occasion a series of festivities were prepared throughout the city, among which were a hunting event in the piazza della Signoria, a *giostra*, a *ballo*, an *armeggeria*, and an elaborate theatrical procession similar to that performed yearly during the festival of San Giovanni. An anonymous Florentine poem known as the *Terze rime* was written in honour of the festivities, which, even taking into account the obvious poetic exaggerations, gives an idea of the events and of their importance in the public life of the city. A section of the *Terze rime* is dedicated to the preparations for the celebrations, and the poet emphasises that the entire city had both contributed to their realisation and also afterwards delighted in them: “And everybody toiled both day and night/ on practising and getting things arranged,/ from little folk right up to great patricians./ Florence seemed topsyturvy in this glory,/ even the stones seemed ready to cry ‘Festa!’,/ and everybody laboured to adorn her.”⁴⁸ The concept of the *fiesta* is presented as an idea strongly embedded in the fabric of the city, an element of great importance to each and every one, from all social categories, and one that becomes synonymous with Florence itself.

Everybody’s toil was also equally rewarded by the splendour of the spectacle, for the poet writes that “every creature that can see or hear/ or feel or make things must be full of joy:/ this celebration benefits all men!” The *fiesta* was a delight that stimulated the senses, especially through sights, sounds, and emotional perception, to which the author adds the interesting idea that pleasure was also gained from the creative effort, from the manual labour and craftsmanship that was necessary. He continues by writing about the artisans who contributed to the *fiesta*: “I can’t let you believe or let you think/ that all the craftsmen of the manual arts/ were not included in this preparation/ because the plans were all so grand and regal/ that if they were to be brought to fruition/ then everybody had to do his bit.”⁴⁹ He enumerates afterwards all possible artisans, from silk workers,

⁴⁷ Kablitz 2008, 201.

⁴⁸ “Ed a questi essercizi e questi ofizi/ sempre la notte e ‘l giorno se n’adopra/ el minore e mezzano e ‘ gran’ patrizi./ Parea Firenze di gloria sozzopra/ e che ‘nfino alle priete gridin ‘Festa!’,/ e ciascun s’affaticchi all’ornat’opra.” Newbiggin 2015, 46 (verses 2002-07); Newbiggin 2011, 62 (verses 2002-07).

⁴⁹ “Adunque gode ognun che senta o ode/ o vide o fè delle cose che fensi./ O magna desta ch’a ciascun fa prode!/ E non vo’ che ttu creda o che ttu pensi/ che gli artefici d’arte manüale/ dal preparar di quest’ordine stiènsi:/ ché l’ordin

grocers and armourers, to painters, goldsmiths, embroiderers, shoemakers and many more. The records of confraternities, mentioning payments made to a series of artisans who each provide different services—for the creation of costumes, for decorations, music, food, and the scenographical apparatus—support a similar picture of an existing communal effort as do these passages from the *Terze rime*.

We arrive now at the question of the locations at which religious plays were performed in Renaissance Florence. The major religious theatrical festival of the year, the *festa* of San Giovanni, was an outdoor performance based in the piazza surrounding the cathedral and the Baptistery, during which the plays were mounted on processional wagons that followed a route through the city. The liturgical festivities of the year were usually celebrated by theatrical plays performed by adult confraternities within the space of a church, such as those in Santa Maria del Carmine, Santo Spirito, or San Felice in Piazza.

Youth confraternities had limited financial resources and no proper access to the monumental space of churches; therefore, their plays were staged in oratories, cloisters, and gardens.⁵⁰ Bartolomeo Masi, member of the youth confraternity of San Giovanni Evangelista, describes in his *Diario* how in 1491 the company performed the *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo* written by Lorenzo de' Medici: “in the garden of the said company with a stage that occupied the entire *loggia*.”⁵¹ The inventory of the youth confraternity of the Purificazione also confirms that the plays staged by this company were performed in the outdoor spaces of their premises. In the courtyard and on the terrace, the document records “16 pieces of boards of beech, each around 12 *braccia* long, to build a stage,” as well as several other items that would have been used in constructing the sets for the plays.⁵² The company also performed in outdoor locations outside their headquarters. For example, the play of Sant'Eustachio was performed in 1476/7 in the garden of piazza San Marco.⁵³

fu sì magno e sì reale/ ch'a volerlo condurre in prefezzione/ bisogna che ciascun vi metta sale.” Newbigin 2015, 47 (verses 2020-28); Newbigin 2011, 62 (verses 2020-28).

⁵⁰ Newbigin 2017, 104-105. See also Galante Garrone 1935, 69-70.

⁵¹ “nell'orto di detta compagnia con un palco che teneva tutta la loggia.” Masi 1906, 16 (*Ricordanze* 66).

⁵² “xvj pezzj d'asse di faggio di braccia 12 l'uno in circha per fare uno palcho.” Matchette 2000, 99 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 191).

⁵³ Newbigin 2019, 357.

An interesting location in which these religious plays were also sometimes performed is mentioned by Vasari in his life of Il Cecca, in a passage in which he remembers the old practices of performing “feste e rappresentazioni.” He writes that “they were performed not only in companies or confraternities, but even in the private houses of gentlemen.”⁵⁴ If this statement is accurate, it is an expression of how the influence of the laity was becoming stronger and stronger upon the sacred realm, so that what was meant to honour God, at times was also performed for private or public entertainment.

An aspect central to the discussion in the second chapter of the thesis is that regarding the identity of the actors. Two elements are of interest here, one regarding the age of the performers, and the other regarding their gender. In the case of youth confraternities, the actors were the young boys of the companies, while in adult confraternities both adults and youths were employed, especially when musical performances were polyphonic. As shall be demonstrated in the second chapter, angelic figures were always played by young boys.

If some scholars have advanced the possibility that the singing angels might have been both male and female, even daughters of important families, I strongly believe that female participation in religious theatre outside all-women spaces would have been very unlikely.⁵⁵ First of all, Florentine youth confraternities were exclusively formed for the religious and moral education of young men. Female education was even restricted in regard to the city’s schools and was usually undertaken within the family or within convents.⁵⁶ Noble ladies did perform music, but within the confines of their home, and not publicly. Visible women musicians, such as the English Anna employed at several Italian courts, whose case has been analysed by Bonnie Blackburn, did exist; but the connection between courtesans and music made singing in public by respectable girls a behaviour considered inappropriate.⁵⁷ The first printed guidebook on young women’s conduct, the *Decor puellarum* of 1471, cautioned parents against allowing their daughters to acquire a reputation for “singing and playing like a whore” (cantar et sonar come meretrice).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ “se ne faceva non pure nelle compagnie ovvero fraternite, ma ancora nelle case private de’ gentiluomini.” Vasari 1878-85, 3:197. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:64.

⁵⁵ Newbigin 1996b, 66.

⁵⁶ Klapisch-Zuber 1985a, 108.

⁵⁷ Dennis 2006a, 235; Blackburn 2015.

⁵⁸ *Decor puellarum* 1471, fol. 57r.

Women were still involved in theatrical productions, by performing different tasks that did not involve the public exposure of acting. The records concerning the 1438 Ascension *fiesta* include payments: “To Mona Piera washerwoman, 2 *soldi*, for washing Christ’s shirts,” as well as “to several peasant women for irises and other domestic flowers for garlands.”⁵⁹ The only context in which women were allowed to perform on stage, moreover, was as nuns in productions staged within female convents, before an audience comprising other women.⁶⁰

The strongest argument in the debate around women’s participation in Florentine public religious theatre remains the fact that female character roles were played by young men. A testimony to this is the eye-witness account of the Russian bishop Abraham of Suzdal, who in 1439 had seen two of the famed Florentine plays. For the Annunciation *fiesta* he remarks that in the Virgin’s chair “a beautiful young man sat, dressed in sumptuous and wondrous maiden’s garb... From all this it is deduced that he represented the most pure Virgin Mary.”⁶¹ He observes the same during the Ascension *fiesta*, in which he sees “the Holy Virgin and Mary Magdalene, represented by young men dressed as women.”⁶²

These sacred plays were usually performed after dark, so as to better emphasise the light effects and indoor fireworks, which were one of the highlights of the performances, a practice at one point forbidden by one of the Episcopal Constitutions of St Antoninus, Florence’s archbishop, which will be discussed later on. Regarding their duration, we are offered information by another eye-witness, this time Isabella d’Este, writing in a letter about a representation of the Annunciation that she saw in Ferrara, and which, according to her description, seems identical to that performed in Florence in San Felice in Piazza. The play was performed on 24 April 1503, on the occasion of Alfonso d’Este’s marriage to Lucrezia Borgia. Isabella writes: “and the spectacle ended. It took

⁵⁹ “A mona Piera lavandaia soldi 2 per lavare i chamici di Cristo;” “A più forese 2 per fioralisi e altri fiori dimestichi per le grilande.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:358 and 360.

⁶⁰ Weaver 2002. See also Angiolillo 1996, 39.

⁶¹ Newbiggin 1996a, 1:4. The English translation used is that of Nerida Newbiggin. The original document comes from a seventeenth-century Russian manuscript, edited in the nineteenth century by N. S. Tichonravov (Tichonravov 1874-76). Tichonravov has also translated it into French. Newbiggin’s translation into English is based on this French translation. There have been other translations of the document in German and Italian. For a detailed discussion on this see Newbiggin 1996a, 1:60n40.

⁶² Newbiggin 1996a, 1:61.

about two-and-a-half hours and was delightful, due to the wonderful machinery I have described and also some others I have omitted.”⁶³

When the plays were performed in outdoor spaces the number of spectators that came to watch the show was very high. Giusto d’Anghiari records in his diary the performance of the *Decapitazione di San Giovanni Batista*, which took place on 29 August 1451 “in the garden of the Porta alla Giustizia” (in sul prato della Porta alla Giustizia). He remembers that “there were many people. It was estimated that more than fifty thousand souls were there.”⁶⁴ When plays were staged indoors, they were “sold out” events, highlights that attracted many spectators. Abraham of Suzdal, who went to see the Annunciation *fiesta* in 1439, remembers how “many people gathered from everywhere for the great and wonderful event, in the hope of seeing the *rappresentazione*, so that a great multitude of people fill the church.”⁶⁵ This situation ended up as material for slightly ironic recommendations in the texts of *sacre rappresentazioni*. Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de’ Medici wrote a sacred play entitled the *Invenzione della Croce*, in which the angel that announces the *fiesta* addresses the audience in the following manner:

Silence: everyone listen to me: those who can, sit down,
and if there is anyone who sees others in distress,
squeeze together, and make room for them...
It is impossible now to give a seat to all.
The women and the other children, do not laugh,
do not chat or drink or cough
so loud that the others cannot hear.⁶⁶

When performed in churches, the indoor space no longer admitted so many viewers, but, due to a continuing increase in popularity, the plays ended up being staged multiple times in order to accommodate the public’s demand. In April 1533, the famous Annunciation *fiesta* in San Felice in Piazza was performed in honour of Margaret of Austria, wife of Alessandro de’ Medici. An

⁶³ “fo dato fine a la festa. La quale duroe circa due hore e meza, assai dilectevole per quelli belli artificj ch’io ho dicto, e alchuni altri ch’io pretermetto.” D’Este 2017, 221. Original from D’Ancona 1872, 1:168-69.

⁶⁴ “Fuvi molta gente. Stimossi vi fussino più di cinquanta migliaia d’anime.” D’Anghiari 2002, 105.

⁶⁵ Newbiggin 1996a, 1:5.

⁶⁶ “Silenzio: ognun m’ascolti: chi può segga:/ e s’alcuno è che vegga – altri in disagio/ stringasi, e faciali agio – e farà bene/ ... Gli è impossibile ora – dar loco a tutti./ Le donne e gli altri putti – non sghignazzino/ non ciarlino o sbevizino – o non tossino/ sì forte, che non possono – gli altri udire.” Original in D’Ancona 1891, 2:381.

account of this event records that the *festa* “was performed three times on the 19th, 20th, 21st ... so that more people could see it.”⁶⁷ By the sixteenth century, Florentine sacred theatre had become a popular form of celebrating both feast days and important visitors, combining devotion with entertainment in a product shaped and promoted by lay piety.

1.2.3 *The Edifizi of San Giovanni*

The highlight of Florentine festive life was the festival of San Giovanni, which celebrated the patron saint of Florence.⁶⁸ Another important festive moment, concentrated around the Santa Maria Novella quarter, was the feast of Corpus Domini.⁶⁹ Festivities had been organised since the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, when they were, however, limited mostly to private celebrations.⁷⁰ Confraternities did not participate in public festivities until 1377, and then only sporadically. The confraternal *edifizi* (pageant wagons or floats) began to parade through the city in the early fifteenth century.⁷¹ The theatrical procession was doubled by a procession of members of the clergy and members of confraternities, which took place on a different day, although processional religious groups were also involved in parading the *edifizi*. The starting and ending points for these itineraries were usually the Baptistery and the cathedral, Florence’s spiritual centres.⁷² The routes of these processions followed the city’s symbolic geography, which, according to Edward Muir and Ronald Weissman, was constructed on the basis of the fact that Florentines conceived of the city and its locations more through their symbolic meaning rather than as architectural or institutional entities.⁷³

The most detailed description of the procession of the *edifizi* is given by Matteo Palmieri in his *Historia Fiorentina*, in the form in which it was organised in 1454. He describes the floats in the order of their appearance, and among them also parade groups of young boys dressed as angels

⁶⁷ “si è fatta tre volte addì 19, 20, 21. ... acciò che più persone la possino vedere.” The text is reproduced in Newbigin 1983, xxviii²⁵ and is the *Ragionamento di Niccolò di Stefano Fabbrini dove si tratta delle Feste e Magnificenze fatte alla duchessa del mese d’Aprile 1533*.

⁶⁸ On the cult of San Giovanni in Florence see Chrétien 1994, 15-30.

⁶⁹ On it see Newbigin 2010.

⁷⁰ For this period see Ventrone 2016, 24-56.

⁷¹ Trexler 1980b, 253-54.

⁷² On the procession of the clergy see Trexler 1980b, 249-51.

⁷³ See their entire discussion in Muir and Weissman 1989, 93-99.

from the Florentine youth confraternities. Each *edificio* was dedicated to a particular biblical episode and was presented by the confraternity that usually staged the corresponding *fiesta* or which was somehow connected to the subject. Among these I mention the floats of the Annunciation, of the Nativity, of Paradise, of the Ascension of Christ, and that of the Last Judgement.

Nerida Newbigin considers that on these floats actual *sacre rappresentazioni* were performed, shorter than the usual ones, perhaps half an hour long, almost like miniature plays which included gestural and verbal actions. She has also pointed to the possibility that the floats representing heaven and hell might have been a permanent fixture in the piazza for the duration of the festivities, because these spaces play a role in all the *rappresentazioni* that were performed.⁷⁴

The entire procession had a narrative and cyclical character demonstrated by the order in which the episodes were presented, starting with the *edificio* of the fall of the rebel angels and the *edificio* of Adam and ending with the *edificio* of the Last Judgement, a passage through all the main biblical episodes, all condensed into short plays performed during a single day. I consider that the theatrical cycle of the *edifici* is likely to have been performed in sequence rather than at the same time, upon the float's arrival in the piazza, which would have given the audience the possibility to follow the entire narrative from the creation of the world to the Last Judgement. Matteo Palmieri writes that: "All the above-mentioned floats performed their plays in the square before the Signoria, and these lasted until the sixteenth hour," which seems to support this idea.⁷⁵ In 1473, the event was witnessed by Eleanor of Naples, who describes how everything proceeded in one of her letters: "Wednesday morning we went to see the triumphs that these Florentines perform on that day, and, having arrived at the spot prepared for us in the piazza, first four giants came, ... Afterwards came seven *Representationi*."⁷⁶ From the description it is clear that a special area had been reserved for the spectators in the piazza and that the performances were continuous, allowing the possibility of seeing the entire sequence of plays. The same can be deduced from a fifteenth-century document probably intended for Giuliano or Lorenzo de' Medici, entitled "Ordine e modo da tenersi nella

⁷⁴ Newbigin 1983, xxxi-xxxiii, xxxviii.

⁷⁵ "Tutti sopra detti edifici ferono sua rapresentationi in Piazza inanzi a Signori e durorono infino alle sedici hore." Palmieri 1906, 173. Translation taken from Meredith and Tailby 1983, 242.

⁷⁶ "Mercurdi matina andammo ad vedere li triumphi faceano questi fiorentini in tal dì, et arrivata al talamo preparato per nuy in piazza, vennero primo quactro giganti, ... Ad presso vennero sette Representationi." Original taken from D'Ancona 1891, 1:273.

solennità di San Giovanni,” which specifies that during the morning of 22 June “ten *edifizi* and no more, so as not to tire those present,” should be performed.⁷⁷

During the 1470s, the festival of San Giovanni was no longer supported by the Medici in the same manner. On 6 May 1472, Luigi Pulci wrote a letter to Lorenzo de’ Medici, admonishing him for the decay of the celebrations: “I am a little amazed that you have diminished this *festa* as much as you have. You are after all a citizen and fond of the *patria*, of which the Baptist is protector, and we ought to honour him.”⁷⁸ The *edifizi* of this period were less skilfully created, and when Lorenzo de’ Medici resumed his involvement in the *festa* during the 1480s, secular elements were introduced among the religious floats, such as the triumphs of Paulus Aemilius, invented by Lorenzo himself.⁷⁹

1.2.4 Sacre Rappresentazioni

The intensification of religious theatrical life in fifteenth-century Florence led to the creation of a specific genre of texts, known as *sacre rappresentazioni*, which would have been recited especially by members of the youth confraternities in their plays. *Sacre rappresentazioni* were religious dramas recognisable on the basis of several characteristics, such as the fact that they were usually written in the *ottava endecasillaba*, and began and ended respectively with an “Annunzio” and “Licenza” delivered by an angelic figure.⁸⁰

The traditional view has been that *sacre rappresentazioni* were an offshoot of the sacred dramas performed in Umbria during the fourteenth century by the *disciplinati* and that, in Florence, a gradual process had transformed the early liturgical dramas that were performed by *laudesi* since the twelfth century into this more elaborate form. The dramatic aspects that started to be incorporated into processions, as well as the influence of lay narrative poetry (*cantastorie*), have also been invoked.⁸¹ However, Paola Ventrone has argued that the genre did not evolve from other

⁷⁷ “dieci edifizii e non più, per non tediare e circostanti.” Guasti 1884, 26 (*Ordine et modo da tenersi*). On the document see “Le Carte Stroziane” 1891, 799.

⁷⁸ “Et maravigliomi un poco di te che tu la sfornissi tanto quanto hai fatta la detta festa, sendo pure ciptadino affectionato alla patria, della quale è pure proteptore il Batista, e noi dobbiamo farli honore.” Pulci 1886, 111 (Letter XXV); Translation from Trexler 1980b, 409.

⁷⁹ See Chrétien 1994, 51-60; Newbiggin 1994, 23-24; Carew-Reid 1995, 89-92.

⁸⁰ On the angel that announces and gives leave to the crowd see Lacroix 1993.

⁸¹ See Toschi 1955, 692; Lucchesini 1991, 9-12.

theatrical forms, but that it corresponded directly with the creation of youth confraternities, being especially devised as a mechanism which would contribute to the moral and religious education of young Florentines. The first information regarding the texts of *sacre rappresentazioni* comes from the 1440s, when Pope Eugenius IV officially sanctioned youth confraternities.⁸² The entourage of Cosimo de' Medici and the influence of St Antoninus, who was a strong supporter of the *compagnie di fanciulli*, seem to have been the nucleus from which *sacre rappresentazioni* were developed, Feo Belcari being considered the creator of the genre in literary terms.

Several terms were in fact used to designate sacred plays in the fifteenth century. The term “rappresentazione” makes reference to the idea of visualising a spectacle, and to that of materialising images of the invisible. The term “storia” is also employed when the subject concerns the legend surrounding a particular saintly figure, while “festa” is used in relation to a performance that honours a patron saint or feast, originating in the Latin “festum,” which means feast day. Contemporary English religious plays were called “mysteries,” a term only used in Italy when the subject had a particularly strong symbolic meaning.⁸³

Newbigin has published several previously unedited texts of fifteenth-century Florentine plays in her *Nuovo Corpus*, and has noticed a distinction based on length among texts labelled as *feste* and texts labelled as *rappresentazioni*.⁸⁴ The first are shorter and might have been suitable for performance both on the *edifizi* of the festival of San Giovanni and in the sacred plays staged by adult confraternities, in which more emphasis was placed on the spectacle itself. The texts of *rappresentazioni* were longer and it was by youth confraternities, with limited budgets, that they were most likely to be performed.

Copies of the texts of sacred plays can be found in several manuscripts from the fifteenth century, the oldest surviving being the MS Conv. Soppr. F.3.488 of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, which contains twelve *sacre rappresentazioni* and was copied by Lorenzo di Ser Niccolao Diedi during a period of several years in the early 1460s.⁸⁵ The texts also begin to circulate in printed

⁸² Ventrone 1993, 68-69, 75. See also Galante Garrone 1935, 66-69; Ventrone 1990. On *sacre rappresentazioni* see also the early study of Lumini 1877, as well as Ventrone 1988.

⁸³ D'Ancona 1891, 1:370-74; Newbigin 2017, 94.

⁸⁴ Newbigin 2017, 104-05.

⁸⁵ For a detailed analysis of the manuscript see Newbigin 1983, xi-xviii.

form in 1485, sometimes being independently presented with the addition of woodcut illustrations.⁸⁶

Private devotion in the home was supported by religious books, which were an indispensable component of Florentine libraries. The studies of Christian Bec have shown how, during the first half of the fifteenth century, the religious content of libraries was mainly in the vernacular, comprising a few essential texts, prayer books, hagiographic collections, as well as the writings of mystic authors, such as St Augustin, St Gregory the Great, or St Jerome. During the second half of the century, Bec noticed the addition of contemporary writings to the libraries of Florentines, such as those by St Antoninus, as well as collections of *laude*, and *sacre rappresentazioni*.⁸⁷ Sabrina Corbellini has connected the “lay emancipation” that began in the thirteenth century with the appearance of mendicant orders, to the noticeable increase in vernacular religious texts, particularly Bibles, and particularly in urban areas.⁸⁸ The Florentine laity was reading religious manuscripts more fervently, often viewing the copying of the texts as in itself a devotional exercise, as we learn from *ricordi* and letters. These demonstrate that private devotion was now informed not only by the more traditional theological texts, but also very much by products of lay piety popularised by confraternities.

1.3 *Secular and Sacred Interactions*

1.3.1 *Confraternities*

One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate how lay piety, through its more active role in the religious sphere, shaped the sacred visual realm of fifteenth-century Florence, influencing the manner in which musical angels were represented in art. The following section is intended to demonstrate in general terms the increased influence which laypeople, through confraternal organisations, began to exert over the sacred realm during the Quattrocento. However, I do not mean to imply that the secular and the sacred were disjointed in Florentine society, or that a clear demarcation existed between church and laity. An interaction between the two had always existed

⁸⁶ For a discussion on these printed editions see Schutte 1983, 313; Newbiggin 1988; Newbiggin 2006, 17.

⁸⁷ Bec 1984, 25, 42. See also Bec 1967, 407-08.

⁸⁸ Corbellini 2012, 87-88, 94-96.

and was inevitable. Donald Weinstein has pointed out that the spiritual and temporal intersected to such an extent that it was difficult to distinguish the two as separate entities.⁸⁹ What is specific to fifteenth-century Florence is the fact that the secular became an increasingly important presence in religious life, and that laypeople began to acquire prerogatives in areas that previously were more strictly under the authority of the church.

This change can best be deduced from the reactions of the clergy, whose members were the first to respond, launching critiques, and taking what measures they could against this “invasion of their territory.” The first of the Episcopal Constitutions written by the archbishop of Florence, St Antoninus, refers exactly to this problem.⁹⁰ Facing the rising popularity of confraternities and their autonomous behaviour, he declared that “no layman in no company or meeting of people [may] presume to dispute the articles of the faith or sacraments of the Church.”⁹¹ This measure would have responded to an existing practice, and Antoninus was interested to maintain a certain barrier between the clergy and the secular world, which had begun to become increasingly blurred.

The independence that confraternities had in relation to the church made it difficult for the clergy to exercise control over the practices and ideas promoted within what were, in the end, religious organisations. In Constitution 43, Antoninus complains about these companies, “which usurp the rules of those churches or of priests ... and are not accountable to anyone regarding their administration ... And having been several times admonished by us, they did not want to obey.”⁹² Confraternities often trespassed across the borders traced by ecclesiastical authorities, but as explained by Nicholas Terpstra, they never defined themselves in opposition to these institutions, but rather found themselves often intersecting with them.⁹³ However, their success was making some of their “unorthodox” practices popular, turning them into the acceptable norm, which was unacceptable to the church.

⁸⁹ Weinstein 1974, 269.

⁹⁰ On St Antoninus see Peterson 1985; Paoli 2008. The Episcopal Constitutions were printed and discussed in Trexler 1979.

⁹¹ “commandiamo che nessuno layco in nessuna compagnia overo adunanza di persone presuma disputare dell’articoli della fede overo sacramenti della chiesa.” Translation and original in Trexler 1979, 81, 256 (*Constituzioni dell’arcivescovado di Firenze*, 1).

⁹² “le quali si usurpano le ragioni de quelle chiese overo di sacerdoti, ... e non rendono ragione ad persona di sua amministrazione ... E essendo stati ammoniti più volte da noi, non hanno voluto ubidire.” Original in Trexler 1979, 256 (*Constituzioni dell’arcivescovado di Firenze*, 1).

⁹³ Terpstra 2012, xxxi.

Paraliturgical ceremonies, like for example the re-enacting of the Last Supper and the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday which were performed in the oratories of confraternities, allowed the laity to be involved in rituals that were for the church to regulate.⁹⁴ One of the most dangerous practices, the one to which St Antoninus might be referring in his first Constitution, was the delivery of sermons written by laypeople during confraternal meetings.⁹⁵ These gave men the opportunity to practice their oratorical skills, or in the case of youths, to learn them. However, it also gave them the power to interpret theological content without the scrutiny of the church, and the capacity to spread ideas and concepts that might not have been in line with the official position.

1.3.2 *Laude and the cantasi come Tradition*

The religious sung prayers that were popularised by confraternities were also intertwined with the secular realm. *Laude* were often sung to the melodies of profane songs, sometimes to melodies that had originally set licentious verses. This was known as the *cantasi come* (to be sung like) tradition, which refers to the indications provided in manuscripts, at the end of the text of a *lauda*, regarding the tune to which it could be sung, given that no musical notation was provided.⁹⁶ *Laude* mimicked profane genres in many ways, from metre, to the paralleling of sacred figures to secular ones, and even to the borrowing of verses and the construction of the prayer in reference to the content of the profane song with which it shared a melody.⁹⁷ David Rothenberg has discussed this in relation to the transformation of love songs into *laude* addressing the Virgin.⁹⁸

The Virgin was not a special case in this respect. The same happened in *laude* expressing love for Christ, an idea of love which, much like that disseminated in profane poetry, could be expressed through the image of a ray or arrow which wounded the heart of the lover by entering through his eyes. In the *lauda* “Ben mi credea Iesù,” sacred love is described as follows: “Jesus passes through my eyes to the heart, flying,/ a ray, a fire, an immense splendour/ which melts me more than wax.”⁹⁹ The same situation is repeated in several other *laude* in which either “a dart comes from

⁹⁴ On this see Corbellini 2012, 105-06.

⁹⁵ See Kristeller 1956; Weinstein 1974, 265; Peter Howard 2012.

⁹⁶ On the *cantasi come* tradition see Wilson 2009.

⁹⁷ See the discussion in Cattin 1958, 53.

⁹⁸ Rothenberg 2011.

⁹⁹ “Passa per gli ochi al cor Iesù volando/ un razo un foco uno splendore immenso/ che più che cera e mi distilla et strugge.” *Laude* 1500, 95v-96r.

the eyes to the heart/ which makes me die languishing./ And I languish of sweetness./ Alas, Jesus, how I die;” or “the heart melts like ice in front of fire/ when within I embrace with my Lord,” and also “Jesus, love, you have pierced my heart/ with a golden arrow kindled by fire.”¹⁰⁰ These ideas are also connected to representations of St Augustine during a vision of the Trinity, when he has his heart pierced by three arrows, as seen in a *predella* panel by Fra Filippo Lippi (fig. 1). Barbara Newman has discussed the connection between Christ and Cupid as related to these ideas of divine love.¹⁰¹

Dance as an expression of love is another element which *laude* borrow from profane poetry and courtly love. These sung prayers present the invitation that: “Each lover who loves the Lord/ come to the dance singing of love.”¹⁰² The *lauda* beginning “Who wants to dance the *rigoletto*/ move their step to the organ” (Chi vuole ballare a rigolecto/ Muova’l passo all’organecto) presents the image of a carefully choreographed dance symbolising a virtuous life, which must be danced with care, for any wrong step might make the lover fall. The music is provided by angels playing on different instruments: “Michael is playing that harp/ so that the sound guides the shoe/... Raphael touches the lute/ so that I dance with your help.”¹⁰³ Another example transforms the saints in heaven into dancers: “Saint Peter and Saint Paul/ in that dance go together./ Never were seen/ such beautiful dancers.”¹⁰⁴ This *lauda* concludes with the devotees expressing a desire to join the dancing in heaven: “We, who are here pilgrims,/ God make us citizens/ so that we may become dancers/ of that dance full of love.”¹⁰⁵ Heaven is often presented symbolically in the *lauda* tradition through images that evoke the courtly tradition, as a garden with flowers and dancing lovers, or as a splendid court for which the soul must be properly dressed in order to be allowed to enter: “O,

¹⁰⁰ “vien da gli’ochi al core un dardo/ che mi fa morir languendo/ I languischo di dolceza/ oimè Giesù chi moro.” *Laude* 1500, 85v. “Lo cor si strugga com’al foco il ghiaccio/ quan col mio Signor dentro m’abbraccio.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashb. 480, fol. 50v; “Tu m’ai amor Giesù el chor passato/ d’una saetta d’oro di fuocho accesa.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2896, fol. 117r.

¹⁰¹ Newman 2006.

¹⁰² “Ciascuno amante che ama il Signore/ veng’a la danza cantando d’amore.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashb. 480, fol. 50r.

¹⁰³ “Michael suona quell’ arpa/ si che’l suono guidi la scarpa/ ... Raphael toccha il liuto/ si ch’io balli col tuo adiuto.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashb. 480, fols. 175r-v. There are several versions of this *lauda* in which the instruments played by the angels are different, contained in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1473, fols. 101r-102r and in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 28r. This *lauda* is discussed in Zimei 2010.

¹⁰⁴ “San Piero et San Paulo/ in quel ballo vanno pari/ non furon veduti mai/ osi begli ballatori.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1413, fol. 265r.

¹⁰⁵ “Noi che siam qui peregrini/ Dio ci faccia ciptadini/ che diventian ballerini/ di quel ballo pien d’amore.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1413, fol. 265v.

soul who desires/ to go to the high court,/ arrange your hair, adorn yourself/ so that God will open the gates for you.”¹⁰⁶ Barbara Newman has discussed the crossover between sacred and secular in the written tradition, explaining how symbols and images migrated from one realm to the other.¹⁰⁷

One of the most striking examples of the invasion of secular themes into the sacred realm of prayer is the *lauda* “All the divine lovers” (*Tutti e divini amanti*), which juxtaposes the image of Christ suffering on the cross to the festivities of the month of May and of the *armeggeria*. The “divine lovers” must prepare a *maio* (a flowered branch), “beautiful and full of flowers/ so that you make him fall in love with you/ ... and offer it to God/ while sitting at the foot of the cross/ ... Then one should do an *armeggeria*/ like true lovers.”¹⁰⁸ During the celebrations of *calendimaggio*, the *maio* was offered by lovers to young girls.¹⁰⁹ The *armeggeria*, a simulated encounter between groups of young knights, which was usually organised in the city during Carnival, would represent a manifestation of courtly love.¹¹⁰ A popular *ballata* on the subject is Poliziano’s “Ben venga Maggio,” to the melody of which a large number of *laude* were in fact sung, as demonstrated by the *cantasi come* indications recorded in manuscripts.¹¹¹ “*Tutti e divini amanti*” goes beyond the musical borrowing and imitates its secular model even in terms of the images and practices that it evokes, making it almost impossible to distinguish it from a profane song, if not for the presence of Christ on the cross. This association between a biblical episode that should inspire sorrow and contrition expressed by the suffering Christ, and the joyous love celebrations that unfold at the foot of the cross, might have not been entirely approved by members of the clergy. Rejoicing in the salvation obtained through Christ’s sacrifice was transformed in the interpretation of lay piety into a celebration of love in earthly fashion.

¹⁰⁶ “O alma che desidero/ andare all’alta corte/ acchonciati adornati/ che Idio t’apra le porte.” *Laude* 1500, 68v-69r.

¹⁰⁷ Newman 2016, 55.

¹⁰⁸ “bello et pien di fiori/ tanto che gl’innamori/ ... E offeriallo a Dio/ stando appie della croce/ ... Po si vuole armeggiare/ si chome e veri amanti.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2896, fols. 109r-110r.

¹⁰⁹ On these rituals see Carew-Reid 1995, 26-28.

¹¹⁰ See Ciappelli 1997, 37-47; Balestracci 2001, 64-69.

¹¹¹ See Luisi 1993.

1.3.3 *Sacred Plays and the Secular*

The archbishop of Florence also had other reasons for discontent regarding confraternal activities. Because confraternities were increasingly involved in processions, public religious expression began to acquire a stronger secular imprint.¹¹² The festival of San Giovanni was particularly problematic because, as Antoninus writes in his Constitutions, “for a while, were added many vain things and worldly spectacles, which would be bad during carnival, not to mention during a procession.”¹¹³ He points to the close involvement of laymen in the organisation of the *fiesta* of San Giovanni, resulting in the disturbing interference of profane manifestations amidst the sacred. His complaint testifies to the fact that contemporaries were very much aware of the existence of such changes in the devotional life of Florence. Further on, Antoninus proposes specific measures, intended to allow clerics to regain control over the San Giovanni festivities:

We order under punishment of excommunication, that among the clerics and the religious none go in the company either of other people with certain artifices, or orders, or representations, or other spectacles with people, on foot or on horseback, so that the said procession may be done more devoutly, and continuously, and for the salvation of souls and not the perdition of these. Otherwise, the procession will not be allowed to proceed. And whoever wants to perform representations, they may do them in another place and time.¹¹⁴

Antoninus also took other measures against confraternal theatre, banning religious plays after sunset in his thirtieth Constitution:

Given that it is known that Satan transforms himself in the angel of light, under the appearance of devotion inducing to great dissolution and iniquity ... we order under punishment of excommunication and of 10 *lire*, which should be paid to our court, that no company or other persons may perform during the night any representation, however pious it might seem.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Trexler 1974, 221.

¹¹³ “E da certo tempo in qua vi siano stato mescolato molte cose di vanità e mondani spettacoli che starebbono male per carnasciale, non che nella processione.” Original in Trexler 1979, 265 (*Constituzioni dell’arcivescovado di Firenze*, 32).

¹¹⁴ “Pertanto comandiamo sotto pena di scomunica, che fra i cherici e religiosi non vadino alcuno di compagnia o d’altra gente con alchuni artificii, o ordingni, o rapresentationi, o altri spettacoli con gente, ad pie o ad cavallo, acciò che la detta processione si possa fare più divotamente, e continuamente, e per la salute dell’anime e non perditione d’esse. Altrimenti la processione non si permetterà che vadai. E chi pur vuole fare rapresentatione, la faccia in altro luogo e tempo.” Original in Trexler 1979, 265 (*Constituzioni dell’arcivescovado di Firenze*, 32).

¹¹⁵ “con ciò sia cosa che Satanasso si trasfigura nell’ angelo della luce, sotto specie di divotione inducendo ad grande dissolutione e iniquità, ... comandiamo sotto pena di scomunica e di lire X che si debbano pagare alla corte nostra, che nessuna compagnia o altre persone faccia di notte alchuna rapresentatione, quantunche paresse pia.” Original in Trexler 1979, 264 (*Constituzioni dell’arcivescovado di Firenze*, 30).

Confraternities responded to this demand, as we can deduce from the records of the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese, which on 3 June 1451 paid the archbishop's notary eight *soldi* in order to write in their *capitoli* "the order made by the archbishop that the *festa* should not be performed in the evening during the night."¹¹⁶ Paradoxically, the *festa* of the Ascension was sometimes financially supported even by the Pope himself, as happened in 1442, when Pope Eugenius IV and some of his cardinals made a contribution to the play.¹¹⁷

Another matter of discontent was related to the disturbance that the intense festive life of Florence brought to the period of *Quaresima*. Sometimes sacred plays were performed, or as is the case of the Annunciation *festa*, staged in San Felice in Piazza, which always fell after Easter, it was the preparations for setting up the stage and decorations that interfered with the Easter celebrations inside the church. Again, St Antoninus tried to take measures against this practice by writing a Constitution to restore order, so that:

the most sacred period of the *Quaresima* be greatly devoted to penitence and to hearing sacred sermons and the divine offices assiduously, we order to all and everyone, that no representations should be done from the beginning of the *Quaresima* until Easter of the Resurrection, and particularly worldly spectacles of jousts and similar vanities.¹¹⁸

But this did not have the desired effect, and the practice continued. The visit of Galeazzo Maria Sforza in 1470/1 coincided with the period of *Quaresima*, but, regardless, in order to honour the guest, all three of the best plays in Florence were performed, although the events they commemorated had nothing to do with what was happening at the time in the liturgical calendar. The Annunciation, the Ascension, and the Pentecost were all staged before Easter. The *Diario di Firenze fino al 1532* records the events:

To honour him, more *feste* were performed than allowed during the time of *Quaresima*: that is on 20 March in San Felice in Piazza, the representation when Our Lady was announced, on the 21st in the Carmine, how Christ went to heaven, on the 22nd in Santo Spirito, when God sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ "il chomandamento fatto da l'arciveschovo che la festa non si facci la sera di notte." Newbiggin 1996a, 2:466.

¹¹⁷ See Newbiggin 1996a, 2:381.

¹¹⁸ "I tempo sacratissimo della quaraesima sia maximamente disputato ad penitentia e udire le sancte prediche e officii divini assiduamente, commandiamo ad tutti e ciaschuno, che non si facci alchuna rapresentatione dal principio della quaraesima per insino alla età di Pasqua di resurexo, e molto maggiormente spettacoli mondani di giostre e simili vanitadi." Original in Trexler 1979, 265 (*Constituzioni dell'arcivescovado di Firenze*, 31).

¹¹⁹ "Fecesi per onorarlo più festa che non richiedeva il tempo della quaresima, cioè a dì 20 di marzo in San Felice in Piazza la rappresentazione di Nostra Donna quando fu annunciata, a dì 21 detto nel Carmine quando Cristo andò in

The author stresses the bending of the rules for the special visitor. Another writer describing the same event also makes mention of this aspect. In his *Storie Fiorentine*, Scipione Ammirato writes that “they had three sacred plays represented though it was the period of the *Quaresima*.”¹²⁰

In fifteenth-century Florence, religious theatre was utilised like a form of entertainment for guests, and also served as a pretext to demonstrate the city’s advancement in special effects and elaborate sets, demonstrating that festive life was a source of civic pride. Throughout the period, several visitors were entertained in this way. In 1478, as recorded by Giusto d’Anghiari in his diary, the festival of San Giovanni was less splendidly celebrated on the actual feast day, because it was re-enacted for important guests: “certain *feste* of representations of certain saints, which are called *nuvole*, as they used to be done for the festival of San Giovanni were made, because it was insisted that they were performed, so that the ambassador of the French King, who had come, might see them.”¹²¹

The popularity of these sacred plays led to their influence over the performative sphere of convents as well, introducing elements that were inappropriate for monks to replicate, even for devotional purposes. In 1491, a scandal followed the performance of a play of the Judgement of Solomon in the Camaldolese convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli. In the audience were the future Medici Pope, Leo X, as well as Petrus Delphinus, the superior of the order. The prior of the convent presented the play in Latin, recited by a group of monks, who unfortunately had to dress up as courtesans for certain parts. The performance sparked the harsh critique of Petrus Delphinus, who recounted this event to another cardinal in a letter, and also wrote an extensive admonishing message to the Florentine prior.¹²²

In what follows, I will present how sacred and secular theatre were in constant dialogue, borrowing from each other the most spectacular scenes or characters, all for the entertainment of the spectator. An example emerging from the later period of Florentine religious theatre, *La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*, shows the extent to which this symbiosis between the sacred and the profane had been

cielo, a dì 22 detto in Santo Spirito quando Iddio mandò lo Spirito santo agli apostoli.” Original from Newbiggin 1983, xliv.

¹²⁰ “fecero rappresentare tre spettacoli sacri per trovarsi in tempo di quaresima.” Ammirato 1848, 189 (Book 23).

¹²¹ “si feciono certe feste di rappresentazioni di’alcuni santi che le chiamano ‘le nuvole,’ come si solevano fare per la festa di San Giovanni che s’era sopratenuto a farle perché le vedesse l’ambasciadore del re di Francia che era venuto.” D’Anghiari 2002, 202.

¹²² The letters can be found in Petrus Delphinus 1524 (Book II, Letters LXXIII and LXXVII). More on this in Trexler 1980b, 75.

taken during the sixteenth century.¹²³ It contains very ample descriptions of the stage directions, and in particular of the *intermezzi*, during which music would have been played and which are now transformed into actual allegorical scenes inserted within the religious narrative. In the case of this *sacra rappresentazione*, the number of profane themes present is remarkable. During the *intermezzi*, allegorical figures dressed in floral costumes appear holding flowers in their hands. The directions specify that “*You will dress similarly a Cupid in the usual way, which should go and mix variously and lightly among the above mentioned persons.*”¹²⁴ Even sirens make their appearance with their tempting songs from a specially constructed sea: “*make appear in the sea, from the middle up, four naked women, that is dressed with fabric the colour of the skin, with scattered braids, which sing as sweetly as they can.*”¹²⁵ The *sacra rappresentazione* seems almost to have merged with the festivities of carnival, making the border separating the two almost invisible.

Given the large number of various scenes included in this play, its duration is extraordinary: “*The festa having finished, and you wanting to perform it all on the same day, you will bring out like this the things written below; if not, do it during the beginning of the next morning, the following day.*”¹²⁶ The anonymous author even thinks about a meal for the audience during one of the *intermezzi* that stages a wedding: “*and if you would like that the fatigue of the listeners, caused by the length of the festa, passes ... you should do so that, while witnessing this wedding, you provide a universal meal; but if your expenses are increased, do it only for the actors.*”¹²⁷ Such an *intermezzo* would have almost included the audience in the dramatic story itself. The *Rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*, through its detailed descriptions of costumes, stage sets, and action, is a remarkable example of how elements of secular festivities and theatre were further incorporated into religious celebrations in the aftermath of the Quattrocento.

¹²³ The first Florentine printed edition dates from 1568: *La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva nuovamente mandata in luce*. The specification “newly brought to light” makes it very probable that the actual date of the original composition of this *sacra rappresentazione* is earlier than this edition.

¹²⁴ “*Vestirete medesimamente un Cupido al modo ordinario, il qual si vada mescolando variamente tra le sopradette persone leggiemente.*” Banfi 1963, 787 (*La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*).

¹²⁵ “*fate apparire nel mare, da mezzo in su, quattro donne ignude o vero vestite con tela di color della carne, con trecce sparse, le quali cantino, quanto più dolce possano.*” Banfi 1963, 824 (*La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*).

¹²⁶ “*Finita la festa, e volendola voi in un medesimo giorno fare tutta, farete uscire in questo mezzo le sottoscritte cose: se no, fatele nel principio dell'altra giornata il dì di poi.*” Banfi 1963, 809 (*La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*).

¹²⁷ “*e se voi volessi che il fastidio della lunghezza della festa agli ascoltanti passassi, ... aresti a fare che sentissimo queste nozze, con dargli una universale colazione; ma se v'increscessi lo spendere, fatela solamente a' recitanti.*” Banfi 1963, 838 (*La rappresentazione di Santa Uliva*).

During the fifteenth century, sacred theatre exerted its influence on secular plays, an example of such an instance coming from the Ferrarese stage. In 1487, a performance of Plautus' *Amphitryon* was recorded by the Ferrarese chronicler Bernardino Zambotti. He recounts that the setting of the play was a "heaven ... with lanterns that shone against the background of black curtains and glistened like stars, and with little boys dressed in white to represent the planets."¹²⁸ During a second performance, on 5 February 1487, the scene remains the same, but a combination of vocal and instrumental music is added in heaven: "there was heard enchanting singing and playing, by marvellous singers, and they had Jove come down from heaven."¹²⁹ This heaven, with its light effects, music, and descending actions is taken from sacred performances and adapted to the secular milieu, the Christian God replaced with his pagan counterpart Jove, and the music meant to symbolise the music of the spheres. It is possible that even the sets were borrowed from religious plays. The descent of Jove would put into use the mechanisms used by angels or other saintly figures in their journey from heaven to earth and back during *sacre rappresentazioni*. Spectators enjoyed the opening up of heaven during religious theatrical performances, which represented one of the highlights of such events, worth emulating even in secular plays for the visual and aural delight of the audience.

1.3.4 *The Critique of Secular Interferences in Sacred Spaces and Art*

It was not only through theatre that the laity was increasingly intruding into the spiritual realm. Sacred art and sacred spaces were also changing their appearance due to these developments manifested in fifteenth-century Florence. In religious artworks ecclesiastical dogma was not a restrictive factor, allowing secular commissions to imagine religious episodes freely, without the concern that they may be theologically inappropriate.¹³⁰ For the purpose of contemplative exercises the surrounding environment of fifteenth-century Florentines was also included in religious art, in order to create familiar settings that would help the viewer memorise the scene. In

¹²⁸ "l'era costruito uno celo ... con lampade che ardevano a li lochi debiti de drio de tele negre subtile e radiavano in modo de stelle; e ge herano fanzuli piccoli vestiti di bianco in forma de li planeti." Zambotti 1934-37, 179. Translation from Lockwood 1984, 281.

¹²⁹ "nel quale si senti cantare e sonare suavemente da cantori perfectissimi, e feceno venire Jove da cello." Zambotti 1934-37, 180. Translation from Lockwood 1984, 281.

¹³⁰ See Husband and Hayward 1975a, 11, as well as the essays contained in the edited volume Husband and Hayward 1975b; Blum 2015, 19.

this way, events that belonged to a remote past would have acquired relevance, resonating with contemporaries, and helping them visualise sacred episodes according to their everyday life.¹³¹

These factors provoked considerable discontent among the clergy, two of the most vehement attacks coming from St Antoninus and Girolamo Savonarola. The former dedicated an entire chapter in his *Summa Theologica* to painters, in which he writes:

They are to be condemned who paint things that are against the faith, when they make as an image of the Trinity one Person with three heads, which is monstrous in the nature of things, ... But neither are they to be praised when they paint apocrypha, such as the midwives at the Virgin's delivery, or her girdle being sent down by the Virgin Mary in her Assumption to the Apostle Thomas on account of his doubt, and the like. It seems superfluous and vain in the stories of saints or in churches to paint oddities, which do not serve to excite devotion, but laughter and vanity, such as monkeys and dogs chasing hares, and the like, or vain adornments of clothing.¹³²

Monumental scenes representing episodes of birth, such as Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco in the Cappella Tornabuoni (fig. 2), did indeed emphasise the presence of midwives, for reasons that Jacqueline Musacchio has connected to the desire of representing birth to anxious women in a reassuring manner.¹³³

Girolamo Savonarola, writing at the end of the century, was equally scandalised by these practices. In his *Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria*, he admonishes artists:

You painters do an ill thing; if you knew what I know and the scandal it produces you would not paint them. You put all the vanities in the churches. Do you believe the Virgin Mary went dressed this way, as you paint her? I tell you she went dressed as a poor woman. You make the Virgin seem dressed like a whore.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Dennis 2006b, 24; Syson 2006, 100; Kemp 1990, 7.

¹³² "Reprehensibiles etiam sunt cum pingunt ea, quae sunt contra fidem, cum faciunt Trinitatis imaginem unam Personam cum tribus capitibus, quod monstrum est in rerum natura; ... Sed nec etiam laudandi sunt, quum apocrypha pingunt, ut obstetrices in partu Virginis, Thomae apostolo cingulum suum a Virgine Maria in Assuntione sua propter dubitationem ejus dimissum, ac hujusmodi. In historiis etiam sanctorum seu in ecclesiis pingere curiosa, quae non valent ad devotionem excitandum, sed risum et vanitatem, ut simias et canes insequentes lepores, et hujusmodi, vel vanos ornatus vestimentorum, superfluum videtur et vanum." Translation and original from Gilbert 1959, 76-77. See the discussion in Gilbert 1959.

¹³³ Musacchio 1999, 125.

¹³⁴ "Voi dipintori fate male, ché se voi sapessi lo scandalo che ne segue e quello che so io, voi nolle dipingeresti. Voi mettete tutte le vanità nelle chiese. Credete voi che la Vergine Maria andassi vestita a questo modo come voi la dipignete? Io vi dico ch'ella andava vestita come poverella. Voi fate parere la Vergine Maria vestita come meretrice." Savonarola 1971-72, 2:25-26 (Predica XVIII). Translation from Gilbert 1980, 157-58.

Not only religious artworks were affected by the laity, but also the space of the church. Savonarola continues his discourse by recounting his dismay at encountering only the sight of coats of arms there where he was expecting to find sacred images:

Look at all the convents. You will find them all filled with the coats of arms of those who have built them. I lift my head to look above that door, I think there is a crucifix, but there is a coat of arms: further on, lift your head, another coat of arms. I put on a vestment, I think there is a painted crucifix on it, it is a coat of arms, and you know they have put coats of arms on the back of vestments, so that when the priest stands at the altar, the arms can be seen well by all the people.¹³⁵

During the late medieval period, private patronage of chapels within the space of the church intensified, changing the appearance of churches. Even the works of art that adorned the interiors of what should be public spaces were not commissioned by church officials, but were mostly made for private individuals.¹³⁶ This phenomenon was favoured by the fact that the wealth of Italy grew during the Renaissance, allowing the rich to afford more numerous, elaborate, and luxurious decorations for their chapels. Sacred spaces in churches were even translocated to the private realm by the construction of private chapels in palaces, of which the first example is that of Cosimo de' Medici's Magi Chapel. The religious art market was, therefore, filled with products that addressed lay piety, because laypeople, privately or through confraternities, represented the main consumers.¹³⁷

When confraternities were connected to a particular church, such as the Compagnia di Sant'Agnesa to Santa Maria del Carmine, they also modified the appearance of the interior, particularly because that is where they would stage their plays. The Sant'Agnesa Company constructed a spiral staircase in order to gain access to the rood screen, which represented their stage, and also opened up a small chamber above the high altar in order to construct a second heaven. Some of the sets, such as the *monte* and the *castello*, were left in place on the rood screen

¹³⁵ “Guarda per tutti li luoghi de’ conventi: tutti gli troverai pieni d’arme di chi gli ha murati. Io alzo el capo là sopra quello uscio: io credo che vi sia un crucifisso, ed el v’è una arme; va’ più là, alza el capo: el v’è un’altra arme. Ogni cosa è pieno d’arme. Io mi metto un paramento; io credo che gli sia un crucifisso dipinto: ella è un’arme; e sai che egli hanno poste l’arme dietro a’ paramenti, perché quando el prete sta allo altare si vegga bene l’arme da tutto il popolo.” Savonarola 1971-72, 2:26 (Predica XVIII). Translation from Gilbert 1980, 158.

¹³⁶ Nelson 2006, 353, 374. See also Goldthwaite 1993, 121-29; Gaston 2006; Davies 2009, 194-99; Terpstra 2012, xi-xii.

¹³⁷ Goldthwaite 1993, 82, 114, 119.

all year long, and a *stella* was left hanging from the ceiling, often used by the friars on other occasions.¹³⁸

1.3.5 *The Critique of Polyphony*

Given that music represents an important element in the present thesis, I would like to present a short excursus on one of the major developments of the period, the inclusion of polyphony in musical performance, which also represents a gateway for the secular to make its way into the sacred realm. Just as art commissioned by the laity increased in quantity within the spaces of the church, so did polyphonic performances, which were sometimes connected to services in side chapels.¹³⁹ During Mass polyphony was also heard, sometimes because of the accompaniment of the organ, but mostly created vocally. The *cantus firmus* Mass was also a context in which secular music would have been heard, given that, much like the *cantasi come* tradition of *laude*, profane melodies, sometimes including their original texts, provided the musical support for religious polyphonic music.¹⁴⁰

Polyphony was also criticised by several members of the clergy, although some embraced it.¹⁴¹ One of the critics was Giovanni Caroli, a Dominican friar from Santa Maria Novella, author of the *Vitae fratrum Beatae Mariae Novellae* (1480) in which he attaches to the biographies of important friars dedicatory letters addressed to contemporary Florentines, with harsh comments about the decadence of his time.¹⁴² In one of these, the subject of polyphonic singing in confraternities is discussed:

I shall say, however, and shall say it with the good leave of all, in what outward shows of [musical] skills we nowadays abound, in the assemblies of men which we call confraternities, ... I do not fully approve of that which can be abundantly observed in many men of our city at the enormous gatherings of the crowds, where they are accustomed to

¹³⁸ Newbiggin 2017, 99.

¹³⁹ Brown 1990, 766.

¹⁴⁰ See Kirkman 2010, 137-64.

¹⁴¹ For a thorough discussion see Macey 1992, 442-43; Wegman 2005, 17-48.

¹⁴² See Camporeale 1981; Camporeale 1989.

sing the prophetic psalms or the divine hymns with figured (as they say) harmonies and consonances, flattering the ears of men, and alluring the multitude with empty fodder.¹⁴³

Caroli's critique is also a source of information on the musical practice within confraternities, confirming the performance of polyphony, as well as the fact that music, especially in its elaborate form, had become one of the highlights of religious rituals.

Another figure who, like Caroli, condemned polyphony, was Girolamo Savonarola. One of his *Prediche sopra Aggeo* laments how "today we have converted these divine praises into something secular, with music and song that delight our sense and ear but not our spirit; and this is not to the honour of God."¹⁴⁴ His critique was similarly focused on the transfer of secular practices and functions of music into the spiritual sphere, with delight and entertainment as the real effects of sacred music.

1.4 *Focus on the Senses*

The activities of fifteenth-century Florentine confraternities are anchored in the realm of the sensory. The rich stagings of the heavens accompanied by spectacular light effects, the singing of *laude*, and the instrumental music of religious plays, as well as the complex floral arrangements, or the touching and kissing of holy dolls, and the communal meals that ended theatrical performances, all place the senses at the centre of confraternal life.¹⁴⁵

The study of religious experience has taken notice of this prevalent role of the sensory in devotional practice, turning it into a focal point of scholarship, particularly in recent years, transforming the study of "sensual culture" almost into a discipline of its own.¹⁴⁶ As Richard Newhauser has remarked, the senses are not just another scholarly topic, but they represent an essential component

¹⁴³ "Dicam tamen, et salva omnium pace dicam, quibus per haec tempora virtutum coloribus abundamus: coetibus profecto hominum, quas confraternitates vocamus, ... in re non satis etiam probo id quod in nonnullis nostrae civitatis hominibus abunde observari ingenti multorum concursu videmus, ubi figuratis (ut aiunt) melodiis et consonantiis vel propheticos psalmos vel divinos hymnos decantare consuescunt: auribus hominum blandientes et multitudinem inani illo allicientes cibo." Translation and original from Wegman 2005, 26.

¹⁴⁴ "noi oggidì abbiamo convertite queste laude divine in cose seculari e in musiche e canti che delettino el senso e l'orechio e non lo spirito; e questo non è onore di Dio." Savonarola 1965, 115 (Predica VII). Translation from Macey 1988, 93. More on Savonarola's critique of polyphonic music in Macey 1988, 91-97; Pietschmann 2013.

¹⁴⁵ For the subject of festive meals see Newbiggin 1991.

¹⁴⁶ Sanger and Kulbrandstad Walker 2012a, 1; Boer and Göttler 2013, 2.

when studying medieval and Renaissance culture, because of the centrality of the sensory at the time.¹⁴⁷ Theories of the five senses as well as their representation in art have been the focal point of many studies.¹⁴⁸ Central to a comprehensive understanding of the role of the senses in medieval and Renaissance society are the two volumes edited by Richard Newhauser for the former, and by Herman Roodenburg for the latter.¹⁴⁹ The intrusion of the other senses in the realm of the visual and the representation of sensory experience in works of art has also been extensively scrutinised, for example in the collection of essays edited by Francesca Bacci and David Melcher, or in the catalogue for the exhibition *A Feast for the Senses* at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.¹⁵⁰

Whether we speak of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, two opposing perspectives upon the role of the senses seem to coexist, which, as pointed out by Hans Gumbrecht in the introduction to *Rethinking the Medieval Senses*, express on the one hand “a culture of high sensual intensity (das sinnenfrohe Mittelalter),” or the “Multimiddelalder,” and on the other, “a time of extreme sensual starvation (das asketische Mittelalter).”¹⁵¹ The senses were the gateway towards understanding and contemplating the divine, while at the same time, paradoxically, representing a path to temptation, a dichotomy that led to many conflicting views upon sensorial experience.

Our interest lies more in the first perspective on the senses, which, in practice, was in fact generally embraced by the church. Liturgy and devotion were very dependent on the many sensorial experiences from which they were constructed.¹⁵² Perception through the senses offered devotees the bodily apparatus with which to access spiritual imagination. This is due to the power of sensations, which lies in the fact that they are lived experiences and not intellectual abstractions.¹⁵³ The sight of images, musical stimuli, perfumes, and even the touching of objects were all meant to elevate the mind through bodily emotions to those of the spirit, expressing these in an intelligible

¹⁴⁷ Newhauser 2010, 6. See also Newhauser 2014b.

¹⁴⁸ Vinge 1975; Nordenfalk 1985; Chidester 1992; Jütte 2005; Nichols, Kablitz, and Calhoun 2008; Smith 2008; Quiviger 2010; Palazzo 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Newhauser 2014a; Roodenburg 2014.

¹⁵⁰ Bacci and Melcher 2012; Bagnoli 2016a. See also Sanger and Kulbrandstad Walker 2012b; Quiviger 2014.

¹⁵¹ Gumbrecht 2008, 2. The “Multimiddelalder” is a concept adopted in Jørgensen 2015a, 9. See also Jørgensen 2015b.

¹⁵² On multisensoriality in the liturgy see Verdon 1990; Caseau 2014, 92-103; Palazzo 2014a; Palazzo 2014b.

¹⁵³ Howes and Classen 2014, 7.

manner.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the senses of the body were thought to have a parallel in a superior set of mechanisms of perception, known as the spiritual senses.¹⁵⁵

In religious texts from fifteenth-century Florence, the condemnation of the bodily senses coexists with the glorification of the spiritual senses, through which delight will be enjoyed in the afterlife. *Laude* texts, which constitute the repository of ideas that circulated throughout confraternal piety, recommend much care in relation to the bodily senses. Feo Belcari, whose *laude* were widely disseminated in the period, makes many references to the senses in his religious poetry. The *lauda* “I am the Archangel Raphael of God” (I’ son l’archangel Rephael di Dio), possibly written for the youth confraternity of the Archangel Raphael, presents the angelic figure counselling on the best remedies against temptation. In its verses the senses are represented as deceiving and treacherous: “Be vigilant and guard your senses,/ which are a cause of death./ If the eyes chase their pleasures/ you are going the wrong way./ Close your ears because they are the gates/ through which the thieves enter/ with sweet songs and music./ Restrain the sense and all its desires.”¹⁵⁶

Francesco D’Albizo, another fifteenth-century Florentine writer of religious poetry, concludes his *lauda* “Who wants to go by the holy and righteous path” (Chi vuol’ andar per sancta e recta via) with the technique which brings victory in the battle against the senses, namely that “reason will always triumph over sense” (sempre la ragione vincerà ’l senso), an idea that many other authors also embrace.¹⁵⁷

If sensorial delight is seen in a negative light when experienced in this world and must be contained, all is overturned in the spiritual realm, which is presented as the actual moment of sensorial fulfilment. The tradition of the spiritual senses was echoed in the ideas of Italian Renaissance clergymen, who wrote about the permitted and enhanced sensorial experience of paradise.¹⁵⁸ Bartolomeo de’ Rimbertyni, a Florentine who started his spiritual journey in Santa Maria Novella, becoming bishop of Cortona in 1439, and afterwards returning to Florence, where he died in 1466, wrote a *Treatise on the Glorification of the Senses in Paradise* (*Tractatus de*

¹⁵⁴ See the discussions in Bagnoli 2016b and Bagnoli 2016d. For a study on touch see Randolph 2014.

¹⁵⁵ On the spiritual senses see Canévet 1990; Rudy 2002; Gavriilyuk and Coakley 2011.

¹⁵⁶ “Sia vigilante et guarda sensi tuoi/ che son cagion di morte./ Se gli occhi vanno dietro a’ piacer suoi,/ tu vai per le vie torte./ Chiudi l’orecchie perchè son le porte/ ond’ entrano e’ ladroni/ con dolci canti et suoni./ Rafrena el senso et ogni suo desio.” Belcari 1490, 45v.

¹⁵⁷ *Laude* 1485-86, 132r.

¹⁵⁸ On the glorification of the senses in the hereafter see Pietschmann 2015.

glorificatione sensuum in paradiso).¹⁵⁹ The treatise circulated among the friars of San Marco, being copied for the library by Leonardo di Ser Uberti, and afterwards also printed in Venice and Paris.¹⁶⁰

These ideas were recirculated by Celso Maffei, a celibate monk connected to the intellectual sphere of the Medici, who dedicated the treatise *Delitiosam explicationem de sensibilibus deliciis paradisi* to Pope Julius II in 1504.¹⁶¹ Maffei describes the experience of the blessed in heaven, with sections of his work dedicated to each of the spiritual senses, described as far superior to their earthly counterparts. “The sense of hearing in heaven will have its accomplishment better than it was in the present life,” Maffei explains, and the same phrase is repeated for each of the other senses in turn.¹⁶² Not only is auditory perception described as enhanced, but also the musical skill of heavenly performers is presented as surpassing that attainable by the living: “For this reason it has to be believed that the saints in the future state will know the proportions of voices and sounds according to the art of music better than any in this world. ... The sweetness of voices and sounds which will be in glory will exceed according to a rough estimation by at least fifty times all the sweetness of the song of this life.”¹⁶³ For some, Maffei continues, the sweetness will be one hundred times greater; for some, one thousand; and for some, more than one thousand – an interesting scale for the measure of sensory delight.

This representation of experience in heaven as superior to that on earth allows for the unrepresentable afterlife to be imagined according to human perception in a quantified manner, and justifies the extensive use of the *sensorium* in liturgical and devotional practice. The sights and sounds of the church, of religious processions, theatrical performances, or earthly *feste* are meant to evoke the “more than one thousand times greater” sights and sounds of the heavenly *feste*. Another *lauda* by Feo Belcari, “If I were to think about the pleasures of paradise” (*Si pensassi a’ piacer’ del paradiso*), resumes the sensory promise of such rituals and demonstrates the importance of perception in fifteenth-century Florentine devotion. Sensory delights are here represented

¹⁵⁹ On Rimbartini see Kaeppli 1939. For a discussion on the treatise see Pietschmann 2013, 282-85.

¹⁶⁰ Pietschmann 2013, 283.

¹⁶¹ On Maffei and his treatise see Widloecher 1929, 335-39; McDannell and Lang 1988, 134-36.

¹⁶² “sensus auditus in patria habebit actum suum meliorem quam fuerit in presenti vita.” Maffei 1504, A.IV.v.

¹⁶³ “Quare tenendum est quod sancti in futuro statu melius scient proportiones vocum et sonorum secundum artem musicae quam aliquis in hoc mundo. ... Suavitas vocum et sonorum quae erit in gloria excedet secundum grossam estimationem saltem quinquagesies omnem suavitatem cantus huius vitae.” Maffei 1504, B.II.v.

almost as a stimulus for devotion: “If I were to think about the pleasures of paradise/ and of the eternal sufferings/ I would never be/ divided from the good Jesus.”¹⁶⁴ Further on, Belcari’s *lauda* directs the devotees’ mind: “So, my soul, look with the mind / at that joyous glory./ In heaven all that is desired is fulfilled./ There, all benefits abound.”¹⁶⁵ The version of this *lauda* which appears in the manuscript Magl. XXXV 119 presents an interesting change to one of the verses, which emphasises the construction of the experience of heaven according to that on Earth by specifying that “in heaven all that man desires is fulfilled.”¹⁶⁶ The manner of seeing artworks changed in the later period of the Middle Ages, shifting towards a preference for images that sustain contemplative and interactive experiences.¹⁶⁷ Contemplating the sensory experience of heaven, coupled with the fears incited by hell, are in fact devotional exercises meant to be provoked by images of heaven, provocations which contemporary theatrical performances in which such scenes were suggestively materialised in front of viewers would have amply provided.

The practices of viewing and hearing in the context of public shared experiences have been interpreted by David Morgan as actual social senses, which contribute to the process of embodiment, bringing people together in “communities of feeling.”¹⁶⁸ Morgan explains how within social bodies, an individual does not actually see on his own, but rather according to what the entire group sees, unconsciously sharing a manner of perceiving. The texts of the *laude* quoted above unfold and theorise exactly such a widely-diffused way of seeing, just as the theatrical performances discussed throughout this thesis are the contexts in which confraternal groups experienced these shared sights. As David Howes and Constance Classen write, “The ways we use our senses and the ways we create and understand the sensory world are shaped by culture.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ “Si pensassi a’ piacer’ del paradiso/ et agli eterni guai/ non sare’ mai/ dal buon Giesù diviso.” Belcari 1490, 3r.

¹⁶⁵ “De’ sguarda colla mente anima mia/ quella gloria gioconda./ Nel ciel s’adempie cio che si desia./ Quivi ogni bene abbonda.” Belcari 1490, 3r.

¹⁶⁶ “nel cielo s’adenpie cio che ’l uom disia.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 78v.

¹⁶⁷ Hahn 2000, 169. See also Camille 2000; Nelson 2000; Biernoff 2002; Quiviger 2003.

¹⁶⁸ Morgan 2012, xiii, xvii-xviii, 3, 6.

¹⁶⁹ Howes and Classen 2014, 1. See also Classen 1993; Howes 2006; Howes 2010.

1.5 *Devotional Practices in Renaissance Florence*

The present thesis is very much concerned with matters of visual perception, ways of seeing, and ultimately remembering sights, and transposing them onto other objects that in their turn are meant to be seen, all in a religious context. I consider that the musical and theatrical performances of Florentine confraternities which represent heavenly *feste* function similarly to actual images, moreover with an amplified force, given that they appear animated, providing a convincing representation of an imagined heavenly realm. Therefore, in order to better understand how Renaissance viewers perceived and interacted with these “images,” in what follows I will provide a short excursus on devotional practices in relation to works of art.

On Good Friday in Italy, as well as in Northern Europe, the statue of Christ riding a donkey set on wheels, known as a Palmesel (fig. 3), would have been brought in procession to the church. Herbert Kessler has discussed the interesting effect that this apparently moving statue had on the eleventh-century faithful in Fruttuaria, who believed that Christ was actually present before their eyes.¹⁷⁰ This is an example of the process of transforming the sign into the living embodiment of what it signifies, as explained by David Freedberg in his *The Power of Images* through the example of Western African masks and their capacity of metamorphosing the performer wearing them into what he aims to represent.¹⁷¹

This phenomenon was not foreign to Florentines, as we learn from Coluccio Salutati in his *De fato et fortuna* when writing about religious images: “we perceive these not as Saints and as Gods but rather as images of God and the Saints. It may be indeed that the ignorant vulgar think more and otherwise of them than they should.”¹⁷² Such effects of images upon their viewers were thought possible in the fifteenth century because of what Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise on painting termed the “divine power” (*forza divina*) of painting, “which makes absent people seem present and, moreover, the dead after many centuries seem alive.” He continues his discussion by

¹⁷⁰ Kessler 2006, 413. On the Palmesel see Harris 2017.

¹⁷¹ Freedberg 1989, 28-39.

¹⁷² “ut hec non sanctos, non deos, sed dei sanctorumque simulacra sentimus. Licet vulgus indoctum plus de ipsis forte et aliter quam oporteat opinetur.” Translation and original from Baxandall 1988, 42. On the blurring of identities between the image and what it represents see also Shepherd 2000, 70.

expressing the invaluable role played by painting in representing also the invisible gods and in “keeping our souls filled with the religious.”¹⁷³

Religious imagination needs support, which it finds best in works of art. Sixten Ringbom has discussed the connection between mental images and works of art, explaining how prayers were accompanied by visual focal points, be they in the miniatures of books of hours, in the decoration of music manuscripts used during sacred musical performances, or in independent sacred images to which prayers were directed.¹⁷⁴

Prayer can also be contained in the act of seeing itself. Thomas Lentes has analysed the function of the “devotional gaze,” stressing its importance in late medieval piety.¹⁷⁵ He distinguishes between three forms of gazing. The first is the “salvatory gaze” which acts like an automatic salvation. Eye contact with images possessed of such power, from the host, to relics and icons, would have been sufficient for securing the mercy of divinity. This gaze was particularly used during pilgrimages and accompanied by emotional gestures.

The second manner of viewing sacred images was by means of the “gaze of devotion,” which represented a private form of prayer and implied the bodily position of kneeling with folded hands and the mental exercises of adoration and contemplation, a standard mode of prayer in front of images in the late Middle Ages, particularly those used inside the home. This takes us into the realm of private domestic space and the ways in which devotion was performed within it, although, as remarked by Donal Cooper, the borders between the private and public ritual spaces were blurred.¹⁷⁶ There was an exchange of devotional practice between these two spaces. Private prayer books with images would have been used during liturgy, while at home images would have been used as altars, leading to “the liturgisation of privacy.”¹⁷⁷ The effect of sacred images within the

¹⁷³ “quale fa li huomini assenti essere presenti ma più i morti dopo molti secoli essere quasi vivi, ... a tenere li animi nostri pieni di religione.” Alberti 1950, 76 (Libro II).

¹⁷⁴ Ringbom 1969, 162-64. On the interaction between image and prayer in books of hours see Shephard, Ștefănescu, and Sessini 2017. On the interaction between image and musical performance from a decorated manuscript see Shephard 2014b.

¹⁷⁵ Lentes 2006, 360-66.

¹⁷⁶ Cooper 2006, 190.

¹⁷⁷ Lentes 2006, 366-67.

home was three-fold: protecting the space of the house, becoming the focus of shared worship, or that of personal devotion.¹⁷⁸

Sacred images for domestic spaces were usually hung in the bedroom and were known as *colmi da camera*.¹⁷⁹ They were mostly of a small size, with *tondi* being particularly prized possessions, the first to be listed in the inventory of the bed chamber.¹⁸⁰ In comparison to altarpieces, sacred artworks for the home had a formal and limited language that corresponded to their often serialised nature when produced for the market.¹⁸¹ The purchase of such images was “an investment in eternal life,” as written by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber.¹⁸² The most popular subjects of private images were in particular representations of the Virgin and Child, followed by scenes of Christ’s Nativity and infancy, as well as crucifixes, and devotional images such as these often entered the home through a woman’s dowry.¹⁸³

The third way of looking at images is represented by the “inner gaze,” in which imagination plays a crucial role. The contemplation of artworks was in fact an exercise through which internal images were created that allowed the devotee to perpetually carry inside his mind the visual support needed for his prayers and salvation. A popular devotional manual from fifteenth-century Italy, known as the *Giardino de oratione fructuoso*, possibly related to the figure of Niccolò da Osimo, gives very detailed indications regarding the process through which sacred mental images should be created for prayer purposes. Regarding the life of Christ it recommends that the reader: “have his life like a mirror in front of your mind’s eyes. And particularly to have in the mind the form and garment of his most sacred body.”¹⁸⁴ The entire context of each event had to be carefully reconstructed, from the locations, to the people who surrounded Christ: “and like this, having represented those people and those places, through this spatial memory you memorise more easily all the deeds and actions which Jesus Christ did in this life.”¹⁸⁵ This exercise was rendered less

¹⁷⁸ Corry 2017, 67. More on domestic devotion in Musacchio 2008, 190-228; Davies 2009; Baldissin Molli, Guarnieri, and Murat 2018; Brundin, Howard, and Laven 2018; Corry, Faini, and Meneghin 2019.

¹⁷⁹ For a discussion on devotional practices within the *camera* see Cooper 2006; Syson 2006; Howard 2017.

¹⁸⁰ More in Thornton 1991, 261-68; Olson 2000. See also Burke 1972, 114.

¹⁸¹ Kubersky-Piredda 2003, 115.

¹⁸² Klapisch-Zuber 2013, 230.

¹⁸³ Musacchio 2000, 149-51; Kubersky-Piredda 2003, 122.

¹⁸⁴ “E cossì habbi chome uno specchio davanti da li occhi de la mente tua la vita sua. E singularmente havere nela mente la forma e l’habito del suo corpo sacratissimo.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 130 (Chapter 16).

¹⁸⁵ “E cossì essendoti representate quelle persone e quelli lochi per questa memoria locale più facilmente reduchi a memoria tutti li facti e le operatione che fece in questa vita esso Misser Jesu Christo.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 131 (Chapter 16).

difficult by the viewing of images, which contained all the necessary details that would have afterwards been embedded in the mind and committed to memory.

Alongside the act of looking at an image, devotion often involved interacting with its materiality for similar purposes.¹⁸⁶ These interactions would strengthen the images of the mind by rooting them in tangible sensory and emotional experiences. For example holding dolls of the infant Christ would transform the inner image of the scene of the Nativity into a vivid memory connected to a real event that involved active participation. At the same time, these practices led to the material modification of the images themselves. Geraldine Johnson has remarked upon the capacity of sculptural figures to reduce the distance between viewer and image. The popularity of Madonna and Child reliefs used for devotion in the home in fifteenth-century Florence can be connected not only to the strong Marian devotion of the period, but also to the increased illusion of reality which this medium offered and which suited the desire to interact with the sacred. Johnson has shown how the necks and torsos of the figures of the Virgin and of Christ in a relief panel at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (fig. 4) appear elongated when viewed head-on and that this effect disappears once the relief is viewed from below.¹⁸⁷ Sacred images were, therefore, created to respond to particular viewing practices and devotional interactions with the divine figures contained within.¹⁸⁸

1.6 *Visual Culture and Transfers from Religious Practice*

The present thesis is based on the idea that images of a certain figure, or event, or space are represented in a specific form and, by appearing thus consistently in the visual experience of a person or group of people, become embedded in their imaginary, replacing or changing pre-existing ways of visualising mentally that figure, event, or space. During the fourteenth century, Florentines could have seen images of heaven only in works of art, and these would have informed their mental picture of this space. Artists would also have relied on this visual tradition, to which they would have added the sights of rituals and ceremonies performed in the church. Artists

¹⁸⁶ See Kessler 2006, 432-34; Walker Bynum 2011; Williamson 2011, 121-23. On the role of the body in devotion see Skinnebach 2015. See also Robert Maniura's discussion of touching shrine images for healing purposes: Maniura 2009.

¹⁸⁷ Johnson 1997, 3-5.

¹⁸⁸ See also Shearman 1992, 60.

continued to do the same in the following century, with these rituals and ceremonies changing their appearance; but what really brought a novelty in their manner of representing heaven was the visual materialisation that took place through the mediation of theatre. Angels were no longer seen only in paintings, they were walking on the streets of the city in processions. Heaven was present as an actual tangible space in churches, its lights simulated through candles and oil lamps, its heights suggested through elevation systems, and its music penetrating the physical ears of spectators. Although when creating these sets, and when dressing the actors, the “designers” of the plays—often the painters themselves—were inspired by previously available images of heaven, the result of their theatrical explorations was not a reproduction of iconographical depictions, but a new visual product. The limitations of the medium led to creative constructions that shaped a new image of the heavenly realm, which became more and more present in the visual culture of the time, infiltrating into works of art and bringing changes to the mental images of heaven held in the devotional imaginary of fifteenth-century Florentines.¹⁸⁹

The world of the fifteenth century was a world densely populated with images; as Richard Goldthwaite has remarked, life was “completely wrapped up in art.” In Italy the walls of churches were entirely covered in images, and even dishes at the table could have a visual story to impart. This sharpened Italians’ sensibility to images, which in turn affected religious experience.¹⁹⁰ Michael Baxandall has brought to scholarly attention the concept of the “period eye,” or that of the “Quattrocento cognitive style,” which equipped the viewer with visual experiences, visual skills, and different conceptual structures that led to a manner of seeing that belonged particularly to fifteenth-century Florentines. Although viewing would not have been uniform for the entire society, and differences existed from individual to individual, Baxandall argued that being part of a culture meant an involuntary training in perception. He likened culture to a language that a child learns without knowing.¹⁹¹ If visual culture is to be understood as a language, then images can be paralleled to words. When we hear new words, sometimes they involuntarily remain in our vocabulary, becoming part of our personal use of language. Equally, when new images enter our visual culture, they are internalised, becoming part of our imaginary, changing how we see, without us ever being conscious of it. Perhaps the manner in which angels were painted, the

¹⁸⁹ On the relationship between mental and physical images see Mitchell 1984, 507-11.

¹⁹⁰ See Goldthwaite 1993, 139-43.

¹⁹¹ Baxandall 1985, 106-09. See also Baxandall 1988, 30-38, 45, 71-72. Similar ideas were proposed by Clifford Geertz: Geertz 1976, 1478-88.

musical instruments that they played, and the way in which heaven was conceived spatially in art was not a product of conscious choice, but of a visual automatism determined by a long-trained habit of seeing heaven in a particular way.

Quattrocento artists were encouraged to be consciously inventive, but in some contexts at least this innovation was linked specifically to an engagement with literary and poetic tradition. The *invenzione* promoted by Leon Battista Alberti in his *Della Pittura* was represented by the introduction of new subject matters, new allegories, which were brought to artists' attention through contact with poets; it was less concerned with matters of form and composition as such.¹⁹² Artists were also engaged in the study of nature, recommended by Alberti, given that art was thought to be an imitation of nature.¹⁹³ However, as remarked by Ernst Gombrich, "works of art are not mirrors."¹⁹⁴ Artworks representing heaven that demonstrate the influence of the theatrical image of heaven are not faithful copies of the sacred plays and their sets. They were not created in order to commit to memory these designs, but rather they represent a new creation in which the theatrical heaven was distilled into a new visual output. If certain elements of the heavens in artworks are inspired by elements from plays, as for example the *nuvole*, they do not show the exact image of these *nuvole*, but a reinterpretation of clouds through the influence of the theatrical machineries. As explained by Pierre Francastel, the *nuvola* and the image of the *nuvola* are two different things, and both exist both materially and in the imaginary.¹⁹⁵ For him the religious art of the Quattrocento was not informed by sacred texts, but by liturgical and paraliturgical ceremonies.¹⁹⁶

Early studies regarding theatre and art did not recognise the possibility that works of art could borrow from stage performance, because the focus was on how art had influenced the development of theatrical sets, ideas that changed after Francastel's study.¹⁹⁷ Art historians have since demonstrated how the cloud represented an obvious element of scenography, with its shifting form and consistency.¹⁹⁸ Kristin Phillips-Court has discussed the influence of theatre on art from the

¹⁹² On the *invenzione* see Kemp 1997, 186-88, 348, 356-57. See also Kemp 1977.

¹⁹³ See the discussion in Stowell 2015, 71-73. On the intellectual life of the artist and all the different facets that influence his practice see Wackernagel 1981; Ames-Lewis 2000.

¹⁹⁴ Gombrich 1986, 5. See further Gombrich 1986, 55-78.

¹⁹⁵ Francastel 1967, 68.

¹⁹⁶ Francastel 1967, 82.

¹⁹⁷ See Galante Garrone 1935, 80 and Kernodle 1945.

¹⁹⁸ See Damisch 1972; Buccheri 2014.

perspective of literary history and criticism, and the influence of the texts of the plays themselves on visual culture.¹⁹⁹ Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi has shown how the staging of Feo Belcari's *sacra rappresentazione* representing a dialogue between the young Christ and St John the Baptist in the desert, performed by young children, led to a widespread demand for sculptures representing the infant Christ and St John together.²⁰⁰ Scholars of theatre, too, have recognised the influences between art and drama, pointing out the importance of contextualisation.²⁰¹

Musical iconography also represents a visual element with important links to performance practice. The question whether or not the manner of singing, the musical instruments, and ensembles depicted in works of art were a reflection of how contemporaries made music is still continuously debated. Emanuel Winternitz was one of the first to pose it, and also to recognise the borrowings which artists took from their familiar everyday environments in relation to music. He connected the appearance of large angel choirs and orchestras to the evolution of polyphony, and observed the use of secular music-making in sacred art. He even interpreted the Assumption and Coronation musical instruments as a collection of all that was available in real secular practice, remarking that the ensemble groupings in themselves did not correspond to reality.²⁰² My interpretation of the changing repertoire of musical angels in Nativity and Coronation scenes is quite similar, to the extent that it is based on the idea that painters were depicting musical performances from their environment and that changes in practice were reflected in an iconographical shift, although the conclusions that I reach from similar premises are quite different.

Ernst Gombrich has demonstrated how changes in style do not represent an improvement of skill, but rather a new manner of seeing the world. And the same can be said about taste and fashion, all of which respond to the context in which they take place and to social change. Works of art are created in relation to the visual conventions of the society from which they are born, revealing in turn their reflection of cultural modifications.²⁰³

The rapid growth of confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence, and the piety that they promoted through musical and theatrical performances, left their imprint on the visual culture of the period

¹⁹⁹ Phillips-Court 2011.

²⁰⁰ Paolozzi Strozzi 2013, 123. On the presence of these images in Renaissance palaces see also Musacchio 2008, 47, 208-09. More shall be said on the subject in the following chapter.

²⁰¹ Ventrone 1991; Newbiggin 2007b, 13.

²⁰² Winternitz 1975, 225-30.

²⁰³ Gombrich 1986, 10, 18. See also Burke 2004, 3, 9, 23.

and shaped sacred art. The sights of animated musical angels, young boys with peacock wings singing *laude*, as well as the presence of soft and loud instruments in heavenly spaces elevated above spectators' heads, with circles of spinning lights, were the new "words" that had entered the visual language of Quattrocento Florentines. In the following chapters I will analyse the traces of this new lexicon in works of art from the period in order to reconstruct the imaginary heaven through the practice of festive and devotional life.

2. *Nativities of Christ* and the Angel of Florentine Youth Confraternities

2.1 *The Nativity in Florentine Art between Trecento and Quattrocento*

One of the religious episodes that represents a moment of festivity celebrated by the music of the angels is that of the Nativity of Christ, which was announced to the shepherds through the song of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. In Florentine medieval and Renaissance art, the birth of Christ is fragmented into various iconographies representing different narrative moments, such as the annunciation to the shepherds, the adoration of Christ by the Virgin and Joseph, and the adoration of the Magi; certain artworks combine all of these together.

For the purpose of the present research, I consider an image to represent a Nativity scene more generally if it includes a series of elements which can indicate with certainty the context of Christ's birth. These are baby Jesus, the Virgin, and the stable, which usually comes inhabited by the ox and the donkey. The figures of Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi, and even of the angels, do not appear consistently. I make these specifications because some Florentine works of art represent only the Virgin kneeling in front of the infant Christ in a landscape, sometimes surrounded by angels and even Joseph, but without the stable setting, and I consider images such as these to represent more a symbolic moment of adoration, rather than a Nativity as such.

My analysis of the musical angels of the *Nativity* in fifteenth-century Florentine art will begin with a discussion of the visual comparison which constituted the point of departure for this thesis. In order to see whether Quattrocento *Nativities* were particular in any way, I compared them with images from the Trecento, according to the methodology outlined in the introduction. The categories around which I have conducted my inquiry represented the following scenarios: angels that are only singing; angels that are only playing musical instruments; and angels that are both singing and playing musical instruments. I have also taken note of *Nativities* without any musical performance.

When comparing Trecento examples systematically with those of the Quattrocento, I observed several differences between the manner in which *Nativities* were represented in the two centuries. My first observation concerned the number of examples and their typology. During the Trecento,

the iconography of the *Nativity* was seen most often in the context of a polyptych, usually located on the *predella*, included among the scenes of the life of Christ, as in Bernardo Daddi's San Pancrazio Altarpiece (fig. 5). Sometimes the *Nativity* was given more prominence by appearing on the outer shutters of triptychs, best exemplified by those of Taddeo Gaddi (figs. 6-7).¹ In the Trecento, the *Nativity* is treated as a secondary iconography, which is never the focal point of polyptychs, demonstrating that the episode was not central to the devotional life of Florentines.

In the first few decades of the Quattrocento, the scene starts to be depicted as the main panel of altarpieces, as well as an independent iconography for private devotion. Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 8), painted in 1423 for Palla Strozzi's chapel in Santa Trinità, marks the transition of *Nativity* subjects from *predellas* and outer shutters to the space dedicated to the main composition. The high altar of the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti was adorned with an altarpiece depicting the same theme, by Domenico Ghirlandaio (fig. 9). Images of the *Nativity* became very popular in the private sphere as well, Florentines bringing the subject inside their homes, for example, through polychrome reliefs such as those made popular by Donatello's workshop (see fig. 10). From the many surviving examples of *Nativities* from Quattrocento Florence, as well as from the prominent role given to the iconography in altarpieces, we can observe that the episode had become popular in the religious art of the period.

Regarding the presence of music in *Nativity* scenes, I have observed an overall tendency to omit references to the song of the angels, both during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The majority of works of art do not have any musical reference, although a considerable increase in examples with music can be noticed during the Quattrocento, and particularly from the 1470s onwards, when there is a visible flourishing of musical angels, a period that coincides with an intensification in the composition and performance of *sacre rappresentazioni*.²

According to my analysis, almost all Florentine *Nativities* of the Trecento did not represent angels singing or making music. The angels were present, sometimes in great numbers, inside or above the stable, but they were always presented praying and adoring Christ in silence, as in Taddeo Gaddi's *Nativity* in Berlin (fig. 7). I have found only an extremely small number of musical

¹ For the Portland Art Museum wing, which was once part of a triptych similar to the one in Berlin see Ladis 1982, 210; Keene 2012.

² Newbigin 2007b, 13.

examples from the entire century, among which the three reproduced in the appendix constitute almost half. When the angels of Trecento *Nativities* are musical, they perform exclusively instrumental music. In Bernardo Daddi's *Nativity* of the San Pancrazio Altarpiece (fig. 5), the angels are playing both soft instruments, such as the lute, psaltery, viella, and portative organ, and, in two cases, on loud trumpets. Taddeo Gaddi's triptych wing from the Portland Art Museum (fig. 6) presents a similar soundscape, but with fewer instruments: just one trumpet and one psaltery. At the border between the centuries, we find also examples featuring exclusively loud instruments, such as a *Nativity* by Mariotto di Nardo di Cione from the Pinacoteca Vaticana (fig. 11), in which the angels are playing shawms and cornetts. These musical elements seem to be a somewhat random collection of instruments, in practice used mainly for secular performance.

From the 1430s onwards this type of instrumental music disappears almost completely and the angels of the Nativity begin to be represented as performing vocal music. In a fresco depicting the *Nativity* by Masolino da Panicale (fig. 12), dated around 1434-1440, the angels are holding in their hands a large scroll, on which the words of the *Gloria* might have once been inscribed, no longer visible due to the damaged condition of the fresco. The period in which the music of *Nativity* angels shifts to vocal performance coincides with the moment at which youth confraternities gained official recognition in Florence.

Until the 1470s, examples of musical *Nativities* continue to be rare; among the surviving examples are Fra Filippo Lippi's *Adoration of the Child with Saints* (fig. 13) and the musical angels in the Medici chapel painted by Benozzo Gozzoli (figs. 14-15), both from the 1450s.³ During the Quattrocento the vocal music of this episode is indicated in different ways. The presence of the words of the *Gloria* represents a musical reference to the song with which the angels announced Christ's birth to the shepherds, but also to the hymn performed during the liturgy. In the case of the Medici chapel, the words are unusually inscribed in the halos of the angels, while the musical performance is also indicated by the gestures and open mouths of some of the angels, as shall be discussed in the second part of this chapter. The text of the *Gloria* is more commonly painted on a scroll held by the angels, as in Fra Filippo Lippi's *Adoration* (fig. 13). The angels in two examples by Sandro Botticelli (figs. 16-17) sing from a codex, which could be understood as a Gradual or equally as a book of polyphonic music in choirbook format. In the last three decades

³ On the first see Ruda 1993, 441-42; Holmes 1999, 180-82.

of the century, plainchant notation starts to be added to the scrolls containing the words of the *Gloria*, from about 1470 in terracotta panels from the Della Robbia workshop, and a little later exemplified in the products of Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop (figs. 9 and 18).

This change in the representation of the angels of Florentine *Nativities* during the Quattrocento is also evidently visible in manuscript illuminations. In Trecento initials, such as that from a Gradual illuminated by Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci (fig. 19), angels appear in silent adoration, while in Quattrocento examples, such as that from a Benedictine Antiphonary at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 20), they are represented in connection to the music of the *Gloria*, which they symbolically display upon scrolls.⁴

My argument is that the shift from a preference for no musical performance or instrumental performance during the Trecento, to an increase in musical associations with a majority of examples displaying vocal ensembles during the Quattrocento, can be linked with changes that occur contemporaneously in lay religious practice in Florence. These consist especially in the creation of youth confraternities during the 1430s and their musical practices of *lauda* singing, correlated with the association of young boys with the image of angels, which they represented in theatrical performances and processions. The period starting with the late 1460s and early 1470s when *Nativities* with singing angels start to become very popular coincides with the peak of the *sacra rappresentazione* tradition, as well as with an expansion of the *compagnie di fanciulli*.

These changes were not the only ones that occurred in the iconography of the *Nativity* under the influence of the musical and theatrical life of fifteenth-century Florence. In what follows, I would like to discuss briefly the insertion of an element that was popularised by the texts of *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, as well as by theatrical performances of the *Nativity*, namely the Temple of Peace or the Ara Coeli. If during the fourteenth century the setting in which the *Nativity* is depicted in art is characterised by the hut or stable, during the Quattrocento the hut starts to be invaded by classical columns and half-collapsed arches meant to symbolise the Ara Coeli of the Roman Emperor Augustus ("Ottaviano" in Florentine fifteenth-century texts), which according to several sources, the most popular among them being the *Golden Legend*, was prophesied to collapse when a virgin gave birth, and was therefore demolished by the birth of Christ.⁵

⁴ On the first example see Boehm 2008, 20. See also Freuler 1994. On the illumination of choirbooks see Boehm 2008.

⁵ On the legend see Rauch and Savorelli 2001, 73. For the sources see Newbiggin 1983, 60.

This episode is emphasised in three examples by Domenico Ghirlandaio commissioned by the Sassetti and Tornabuoni families. The first was painted as the altarpiece of Francesco Sassetti's chapel in Santa Trinità (fig. 21) and is dated to 1485 by the inscription on one of the two columns of Augustus' temple, now supporting the hut's roof. The other two are connected to another Florentine banker, Giovanni Tornabuoni and his family. One is a *tondo* of the *Adoration of the Magi* (fig. 22), which, according to the 1498 inventory of the Palazzo Tornabuoni, was located in the room of his son, Lorenzo, who is known to have composed several *laude*. The last example is one of the frescoes painted by Ghirlandaio for Giovanni Tornabuoni's chapel in Santa Maria Novella (fig. 23), in which the hut is barely visible behind the massive structure of the temple ruins. The antiquarian interests of the two patrons, as well as their competition with each other, are certainly factors that determine the prominent role played by the temple in the composition, as well as the presence of other classical references.⁶ However, the Ara Coeli is referenced by many other Quattrocento *Nativities*, although in less spectacular fashion, seen for example as a brick wall in a painting by Sandro Botticelli (fig. 16), as well as in Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Magi* for the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (fig. 9).

Therefore, what interests me in these images is connected less to the taste of the patron, and more to the reason why a commissioner passionate about classical antiquity was able to have the structure of a Roman temple painted in a *Nativity* scene, something that could only be palatable if the subject's popularity were more widespread in fifteenth-century Florence. In fact, the image of the temple also appears in several *laude* of the Nativity from the period. In Francesco d'Albizo's "Let us praise with celebration and with joy and song" (*Laudiam con festa e con letitia e canto*), at Christ's birth, "the trees of Bethlehem all blossomed;/ the great temple of Apollo was ruined/ with the idols destroyed."⁷ One of the Nativity *laude* in the collection of Filippo di Lorenzo Benci, referring to Christ mentions how: "You showed yourself to Ottaviano in the arch/ in Mary's womb./ The temple of peace fell to the ground/ when she gave birth to you."⁸

⁶ See Marchand 2012. For the commissions see Borsook and Offerhaus 1981; Cadogan 2000; Salucci 2012; DePrano 2018.

⁷ "Gli arbori di Bethalem fioriron tutti/ rovino'l tempio grande/ d'Appolline co' gl' idoli distructi." *Laude* 1485-86, 100r.

⁸ "Nell'archo ti mostrasti a Ottaviano/ nel gremio di Maria./ El templo della pacie chadde 'n piano/ quando ti partoria." Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 106v.

This episode was popularised in fifteenth-century Florence through theatrical representations that were in fact centred on this particular aspect of the Nativity. A *sacra rappresentazione* text survives which is dedicated, as its title suggests, to *Ottaviano Imperadore: La rappresentazione della Natività del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*, and has been edited by Nerida Newbiggin, who has pointed to its presence in several manuscripts and printed editions.⁹ At the beginning of the drama, Octavian builds the temple and gives it its name: “Therefore, this high and true temple/ let it be called eternally ‘Temple of Peace.’”¹⁰ Soon after, as Octavian contemplates the possibility that his temple will remain standing for eternity, a Sybil prophesises its destruction through a virgin giving birth. The stage directions describe the dramatic moment in which the temple is ruined: “*And, the Wise Men having spoken to the Emperor, suddenly the temple is ruined and the Nativity of Our Lord appears, and afterwards, the Angel goes to the Shepherds and speaks to them in this way: Let there be glory in heaven to the eternal God.*”¹¹ The scene of the Nativity is probably hidden from view by the temple, and, upon its ruin, it appears miraculously before the viewers.

The only information regarding actual theatrical performances related to this episode of the Nativity comes from Matteo Palmieri’s description of the 1454 festival of San Giovanni, during which one of the *edifizi* was that of “the Temple of Peace with the float of the Nativity to perform its play,” preceded by “the Emperor Octavian with many horsemen and the sibyl, to perform the play in which the sibyl foretold that Christ was to be born.”¹² In what follows, Palmieri digresses from his subject to describe an event that occurred in connection with this *edificio* and which coincidentally offers us more information regarding the sets. This episode involved a violent spectator who wanted to attack Octavian, as Palmieri describes:

And it happened that when the float was before the Signoria, and Octavian had dismounted and stepped onto the lower level of the float – that is, into the temple – to start his performance, a German came upon them ... First of all he seized the idol which was in the said temple and threw it into the square; then, turning to Octavian, who was dressed in purple velvet worked in costly gold, he seized him, threw him headlong onto the people in

⁹ Newbiggin 1983, 62.

¹⁰ “Adunque questo tempio alto e verace/ chiamato eterno sia ‘Tempio di Pace.’” Newbiggin 1983, 66 (*La rappresentazione della Natività del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*, verses 47-48).

¹¹ “E parlato i Savi allo Imperadore, di subito roina il tempio e la Natività del Nostro Signore apparisce, e di poi va l’Angelo a’ Pastori e parla loro così: Gloria sia in cielo al sempiterno Iddio.” Newbiggin 1983, 75 (*La rappresentazione della Natività del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*, verse 305).

¹² “Templum pacis coll’edificio della natività per fare la sua rappresentazione;” “Optaviano inperadore con molta cavalleria e colla Sibilla, per fare rapresentazione, quando la Sibilla gli predisse dovea nascere Xristo.” Palmieri 1906, 173. Translation taken from Meredith and Tailby 1983, 241.

the square, and then seized a pillar to climb up to some children who were standing above the said temple as little angels.¹³

From the description it seems that the temple and the hut were in fact one and the same structure, given that on top of the temple were children dressed as the angels who would soon announce the Nativity to the shepherds, already stationed there at the beginning of the play. In artworks, the temple always appears structurally connected to the hut, although it could equally have been presented by the artist as an element in the background or perhaps to one side. The hybrid hut-temple could therefore arise due to ways in which the temple and the hut were visualised as an ensemble in theatrical performances, such as those seen during the festival of San Giovanni. The scene of the Nativity was probably hidden from view inside the temple, perhaps divided by a curtain from the space in which the pagan idol was located, which, once the temple “collapsed,” would have revealed a miraculous change of scenery.

The episode of Octavian’s temple was popularised through its constant representation during the festival of San Giovanni, seen yearly by Florentines, and perhaps also in plays performed around Christmas. The insertion of the Temple of Peace into the iconography of the *Nativity* demonstrates the influence of new elements visualised in religious plays upon Quattrocento Florentine art.

2.2 *Devotions at Christmastime*

In fifteenth-century Florence, the Nativity of Christ was a moment celebrated through several devotional practices that were related to specific works of art. Inside the church, religious rituals at Christmastime were constructed around a sculptural ensemble representing the Nativity, known as the *presepio*. It was popularised by the manger assembled by St Francis in the cave at Greccio, which consisted of a straw-lined crib in which he had placed a doll of the infant Christ, which eventually came to life. In commemoration of this miracle, Pope Nicholas IV commissioned the *presepio* in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Other churches followed suit, some setting up

¹³ “E avene che, essendo l’edificio inanzi a Signori e scavalcato Ottaviano e salito in su l’edificio sotto, overo nel tempio, per cominciare la sua rapresentazione, sopragiunse un Tedesco pazo, ... Lui prima prese l’idolo era in dicto tempio e scagliollo in piazza, e rivolto a Ottaviano, ch’era vestito d’un velluto paonazzo broccato d’oro, ricchissimo vestire, el prese et fello capolevare sopra ‘l popolo in piazza, poi s’appiccò supra una colonna del tempio per salire a certi fanciulli soprastavano dicto tempio in forma d’agnoletti.” Palmieri 1906, 173. Translation taken from Meredith and Tailby 1983, 241.

permanent mangers, while others displayed them only at Christmas. Initially, the structure of the altar had been used to symbolise Christ's crib.¹⁴

In the second half of the fifteenth-century, mangers were disseminated in and around Florence through the successful workshop of the Della Robbia. An *in situ* example of a permanent *presepio* can be found in the Duomo in Volterra, where a sculptural ensemble by Andrea della Robbia was displayed against the background of a *Procession of the Magi* painted by Benozzo Gozzoli (fig. 24). Another similar example can be found in the monastery of Santa Maria alle Caldine in Fiesole (fig. 25), the background of which shows two painted angels holding a scroll inscribed with the words of the *Gloria*.¹⁵ These permanent polychrome groups attracted continuous devotion throughout the year, while during Christmas they became a focal point of religious rituals.

The cult surrounding the Nativity led also to the creation of other artworks permanently on display in the church which made reference to the birth of Christ. An image of the infant Jesus emerging from a chalice was sculpted in the second half of the century by Desiderio da Settignano (fig. 26) and placed on top of the tabernacle in the church of San Lorenzo. This image connecting Christ's Nativity with his sacrifice started to become very popular and many copies were made after it.¹⁶

During the fifteenth century, the *presepio* was also part of the domestic sphere, perhaps because of the growing popularity of terracottas, and also in connection with the desire to animate the sacred and make it seem alive, which, as Caroline Walker Bynum has pointed out, was a later medieval phenomenon.¹⁷ Miniature cradles and dolls of the infant Christ were at the centre of Christmas rituals. The earliest preserved examples were very popular objects at the end of the Middle Ages, but very few have actually survived, and those that have come mainly from Northern Europe. One Flemish example dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century (fig. 27) shows how the crib was suspended so that it could be rocked, sounding the bells that were attached to its sides and which have been interpreted as a symbol of the singing Nativity angels or as a protection against evil.¹⁸ The most precious and complete crib to have survived, equipped with a doll

¹⁴ Doglio 1984, 12; Blum 2015, 193.

¹⁵ See Mampieri 1991, 53; Scudieri 1998; Rauch and Savorelli 2001, 51. A discussion on the techniques of making the *presepio* can be found in Lorenzetti 1991.

¹⁶ See Klapisch-Zuber 1985b, 314; Butterfield and Elam 1999.

¹⁷ Walker Bynum 2011, 20-21; Sarnecka 2019, 164. On the introduction of sculptures in the domestic space see also Klapisch-Zuber 2013, 229. On dressing up sculptures of holy figures see Trexler 1991.

¹⁸ Ippel 2014, 331; Brilliant 2016a, 175.

representing Christ, is that now preserved in Namur (fig. 28).¹⁹ Only one example of an Italian medieval crib is currently known to have survived.²⁰

Florentine inventories from the fifteenth century, from both public and private spheres, record many statues of the infant Christ. The Medici, for example, had five in their possession by 1492, as the inventory from that year specifies: “three statues of the Christ child, of which one has a gown of crimson satin with pearls and gold all over,” as well as “a box within which are two dolls fully carved and painted in the form of Our Lord God.”²¹ Dolls of the infant Christ were of two types: those that were able to stand in an upright position, much like Desiderio da Settignano’s statue (fig. 26), and those that reclined and would have rested in a crib.²² A Christ child doll (fig. 29), now in a private collection, has been preserved with the original cushion on which it would have been displayed; other examples of similar reclining statues are in the collections of the Santa Maria Novella museum and the Museo Bardini.²³ In Florentine confraternities, at Christmas, these dolls of the infant Christ were displayed often lying in a crib, and the faithful were able to adore, but also to interact with the statue. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber has pointed out that the statue in the Museo Bardini exhibits wear on its right foot from frequent kissing.²⁴ Fra Pacifico Burlamacchi, in his life of the friar of San Marco, Girolamo Savonarola, gives details regarding the Nativity rituals of 1498:

some angels went to the *presepio*, and having taken the Child, they put him on an altar that was placed in the middle of the church... Afterwards, one of the three Magi took the Child, and starting from one side, that of the friars who were standing along the wall of the church, and continuing on the other, he presented it to all to kiss his feet... the second of the Magi ... presented it to everyone to kiss his little hands ... the third of the Magi took the Child again and he presented it to all to kiss his sacred mouth.²⁵

¹⁹ Os 1994, 102.

²⁰ Schlegel 1970, 9. It is reproduced in figures 15 and 16. Its current location is unknown.

²¹ “tre bambini di tutto rilievo, che ve n’ è uno cholla vesta di raso chermisi chom perle e oro atorno;” “una schatola, dentrovi dua bambini di legno di tutto rilievo dipinti a uso di messer Domenedii.” Stapleford 2013, 85 and 131; Spallanzani and Bertelà 1992, 24 and 69.

²² On the evolution of the first type see Kurz 1955; Previtali 1970; Schlegel 1970.

²³ See Lunardi 1983, 107-08.

²⁴ Klapisch-Zuber 1985b, 323.

²⁵ “alcuni Angeli andorno al Presepio, e preso il Bambino lo posorno sopra un altare posto nel mezzo della Chiesa ... Dipoi uno de’ tre magi prese il Bambino, e cominciando da una parte de’ Frati che stavano lungo il muro della Chiesa, e seguitando dall’altra, a tutti lo porse a baciare i piedi ... il secondo de’ Magi ... a tutti dava a baciare le sue manine. ... il terzo de’ Magi riprese il Bambino, & lo porse a tutti a baciare la sua santa bocca.” Burlamacchi 1761, 112.

At home, these dolls of the infant Christ were stored in caskets throughout the year, to be displayed inside the home for forty days starting on Christmas day, perhaps placed on a dresser or even on an actual altar in a private chapel. These devotions brought the ceremonies of the church inside the home.²⁶ They were also particularly connected with female devotion, whether within the home or within monasteries. One such doll appears in the 1466 wedding trousseau of Nannina de' Medici, Lorenzo's sister. The statues and their garments were part of a woman's dowry, and they were cared for as if real children, both for devotional purposes and, during pregnancy, in connection with the desire to give birth to a healthy baby.²⁷ These holy dolls were dressed, cradled, kissed, and spoken to, being manipulated to give material support to spiritual visions, and they served to transform the birth of Christ into an interactive scene, to which mothers could be easily transported.

Other works of art that were destined for the home and which might have had a function in connection to Christmas devotions were the popular relief panels of the *Madonna del presepio* that were initially produced by Donatello's workshop (fig. 10), and subsequently intensely copied, as well as *maiolica* inkstands (fig. 30).²⁸ All of these devotional props were connected with an intense desire to experience the birth of Christ in an evocative and interactive manner that would bring the sacred event closer to reality. A step further was taken by the enactment of Nativity scenes in sacred plays, in which the celebrating angels were represented by young Florentine boys, transformed through the youth confraternities to which they belonged into angelic figures, both in spirit and in appearance.

2.3 Florentine Youth Confraternities

As emphasised by several scholars who have studied the phenomenon of youth confraternities, these were a Florentine creation, specific to the city, and remarkably popular, whilst only very rarely present in other parts of Italy.²⁹ Richard Trexler, in his introduction to his collection of essays on Florentine children, pointed to a "re-discovery" of children and youth in Renaissance

²⁶ Ippel 2014, 337.

²⁷ See the discussions in Klapisch-Zuber 1985b, 311-13; Os 1994, 98-99; Musacchio 2006, 130; Klapisch-Zuber 2013, 230-31.

²⁸ See Comanducci 2003, 106; Gentilini 2007; Sarchi 2007. On the inkstands see Sarnecka 2019.

²⁹ Henderson 1994, 72; Taddei 2001, 2; Polizzotto 2004, 13.

Florence, marked by an increased interest in their education and in the protection of orphans.³⁰ This interest would have seemed particularly compelling in a context in which young Florentines under the age of 24 represented over half of the city's population, as revealed by the tax census of 1427-1430.³¹ This situation was reflected in the many terms used to distinguish between the several phases of youth. "Infanzia" referred to children under 7, described as "fanciullini," "putti," or "bambolini." The next stage, between the ages of 7 and 14, was that of "puerizia," to which the category of "fanciulli" belonged. "Gioinezza," youth, was a looser category that generally included those under 24, the "giovani."³²

Youth confraternities, also called *societates puerorum, adulescentium et iuvenum*, appeared at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Initially, young boys were taken by their fathers to the meetings of adult confraternities, and gradually they began to meet in separate organisations, which during the 1430s multiplied, requiring official recognition.³³ In 1430, Pope Eugene IV saw a *sacra rappresentazione* of the Nativity in the church of San Pancrazio, which was staged by the youth confraternity of the Natività del Signore or della Scala, the initial name of the Company of the Archangel Raphael.³⁴ Through the mediation of Ambrogio Traversari, and with the support of the Medici and of the archbishop of Florence, St Antoninus, on 24 June 1442 the Pope issued a bull officially recognising the existence of these organisations and setting down the rules according to which they were to function.³⁵

The reasons for which youth confraternities were created were several; among them the most important was the desire to educate the young in order that they became good citizens, which will be discussed later on, and that of acquiring salvation through the intercession of children. This latter reason has been emphasised by Richard Trexler, who interpreted Florentine youths as the saviours of society, their transformation into angelic figures a symbol of their use as ritual objects,

³⁰ Trexler 1993, 1.

³¹ See the evidence in Klapisch-Zuber 1985a, 97-98.

³² For an in depth discussion of these terms see Klapisch-Zuber 1985a, 96; Eisenbichler 1998, 18-21; Taddei 2002, 13-63.

³³ Trexler 1980b, 372.

³⁴ Eisenbichler 1988, 520; Eisenbichler 1994, 826; Taddei 2001, 141, 271-72. This information comes from Ferdinando Leopoldo del Migliore who writes it among his notes on Florentine confraternities in the seventeenth century. See Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXV 418, fol. 111r.

³⁵ Ventrone 1993, 70-71. For the papal bull see Aranci 1992. On the role of Ambrogio Traversari see Trexler 1974, 209-10.

which were meant to contribute to the wellbeing of the city both in this life and in the next.³⁶ The statutes of the Compagnia di San Niccolò del Ceppo mention the fact that the confraternity with all its members was “required” (obligata) to go on procession for the festival of San Giovanni, but also “every time that our city and domain would be oppressed ... whether by reason of wars, earthquakes, floods, pestilence, or others.”³⁷ The prayers of children in times of necessity were an essential element in the process of invoking divine help, and, because of this, youths acquired almost a civic duty of contributing to the protection of the city through their spiritual “power.”

The first youth confraternity to be created was that of the Archangel Raphael, founded in 1411 by a gold-leaf worker.³⁸ As its *capitoli* state, it was initially known as the “school and company entitled The Company of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”³⁹ In 1427, having become too large, the Compagnia della Purificazione emerged from it.⁴⁰ These two confraternities, unlike those created later in the century, existed independently from any other lay organisations, being overseen only by two adults: a layman guardian father, and a priest as father corrector.⁴¹ The statutes of the Compagnia della Purificazione have an entire chapter dedicated to the “freedom of the school” (libertà della squola), which specify that “never, under any circumstance, will this school be subordinated to any person or to any other school or company, which gathers either by day or by night, nor to members of the clergy, nor to secular authorities.”⁴² Unlike these two companies, the youth confraternity of San Giovanni Evangelista, of which the children of Lorenzo de’ Medici were members, was under the protection of the adult Compagnia di San Paolo.

The bull of Pope Eugene IV recognised the existence of four confraternities: those of the Archangel Raphael, the Purification, San Niccolò del Ceppo, and San Giovanni Evangelista or dell’Aquila.⁴³ During the fifteenth century, five more were added to these: the Companies of Sant’Antonio da

³⁶ Trexler 1974, 201, 245-46; Trexler 1993, 4.

³⁷ “tutte le volte che la città nostra o dominio fusse oppressato ... o per cagione di guerre, di terremoti, d’innondationi, pestilenza, o altro.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. D.3.270, fol. 28r.

³⁸ It has been studied by Konrad Eisenbichler: Eisenbichler 1998; Eisenbichler 2000.

³⁹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Capitoli, Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 882, fol. 2r. The manuscript is for the most part badly damaged and difficult to read. However, it appears that the *capitoli* are very similar to those of other *compagnie di fanciulli*.

⁴⁰ The study on the confraternity of the Purificazione is Polizzotto 2004.

⁴¹ See Eisenbichler 1998, 17.

⁴² “Vogliamo et determiniamo che mai per alchun tempo questa scuola non si sottometta a alchuna persona o ad alchun altra squola o compagnia che di dì o di nocte si raunasse ne a’ religiosi ne a’ secolari.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fol. 21r.

⁴³ More details on their origins in Taddei 2001, 121-40.

Padova, San Bernardino, and Santa Brigida, all approved in 1453-1454, and those of Sant'Alberto and San Bastiano, created at the end of the century.⁴⁴

The main role of these confraternities was to prevent antisocial behaviour among youths and to educate them so that they could become models of good behaviour.⁴⁵ As stated in their statutes, one of the terms applied to the *compagnie di fanciulli* was that of “school” (scuola), referring to their primary function as centres of instruction for young Florentines. This was achieved through several of the activities in which they participated, including the recitation of and listening to sermons, and the performance of *sacre rappresentazioni*. Ronald Weissman considers that few of the sermons were in fact written by the young boys themselves and that they were probably mostly delivered by adults.⁴⁶ The genre of the *sacra rappresentazione* was born from the desire to offer a better moral and religious instruction to youths through the confraternal system. Reciting and performance were meant to shape the children’s gestures and oratorical skills, teaching them to be in control of both body and soul, so that in the future they would be well-prepared to participate in the governance of Florence. The principle on which this method was based is that of mimesis: by following good examples young boys would be able to become just like their models.⁴⁷

A good education also implied the possibility of obtaining salvation through exemplary behaviour. The important role of youth confraternities in achieving this was emphasised in the text of the *Rappresentazione del dì del giudizio*. Although this *sacra rappresentazione* was originally composed by Antonio Araldo, several stanzas were inserted later, as explained in the text itself, by Feo Belcari, composer of *laude* and religious plays from the Medici circle. These are of particular interest because they represent a direct witness of the concerns of Florentines for educating the young and their view of the *compagnie di fanciulli*. Belcari’s insertions constitute several dialogues between different characters among the blessed and the damned. A large section revolves around a discussion between two *fanciulli* and their fathers. The youth who is on the side of the damned blames his parent, who is also in hell, for not having properly educated him and punished his mistakes promptly, instead letting him sin and suffer the consequences.

⁴⁴ Eisenbichler 1998, 30-31.

⁴⁵ On violence among youths see Niccoli 1989.

⁴⁶ Weissman 1990, 254-55. More on sermons in youth confraternities in Taddei 2000, 79-80.

⁴⁷ Ventrone 1993, 69, 71-75; Taddei 2000, 82-83; Ventrone 2016, 140-92; Newbiggin 2019. See also Cantoni 1980.

Afterwards, a discussion follows between a father and son on the right-hand side of the blessed. We learn from the young boy how “that holy company/ was a large reason for my salvation.” His father also emphasises that “the good company/ will give you in heaven a greater crown.”⁴⁸ Here, Belcari uses word-play, referring both to “compagnia” as good companionship, and “compagnia” as youth confraternity. In fact, this passage emphasises the educational system put in place by youth confraternities as the true provider of “buona compagnia” and of salvation for fifteenth-century Florentine youths. The expression “sante e devote compagnie” is actually used later on by Belcari in order to refer specifically to the “compagnie della disciplina,” members of which end up in hell in spite of their *lauda* singing, because of having used confraternities for political reasons. It is certain, therefore, that by “compagnia” Belcari means “confraternity” and that in the previous passage he is speaking about the role of youth confraternities in ensuring the salvation of the young. The dialogue between the sons and their fathers is very long in comparison to the lines spoken by the other inhabitants of heaven and hell, which testifies to the importance that youth confraternities had both to the author and to the Florentine audience of this *sacra rappresentazione*, which would have included the youths themselves.

The statutes of the Compagnia della Purificazione explain clearly that the goals of its young members are those of:

persevering on the path of God, in the state of innocence and purity and that we ban our feet from the path of sinners, ... living morally and moderately and living in the flowers of virginity and chastity which bear fruit in eternal life, ... in order to lead us to the eternal and incorruptible possessions, and to the conversation of angels, and to the sight of God, and to eternal joy.⁴⁹

Laude had a similar educational purpose for the youths of Quattrocento Florence as did *sacre rappresentazioni*, aiming to offer advice on how best to achieve salvation and live according to moral and religious precepts. In one of the manuscripts that contain the *lauda* “O soul who desires/ to go to paradise” (O alma che desidera/ d’andare al paradiso), the utility of the prayer is indicated

⁴⁸ “quella santa compagnia/ fu gran cagion della salute mia;” “la compagnia buona/ ti farà in cielo aver maggior corona.” Banfi 1963, 119-20 (Feo Belcari and Antonio Araldo, *La rappresentazione del dì del giudizio*, stanzas 22-23).

⁴⁹ “perseverando nella via di Dio, nello stato della inocencia et purità et che vietiamo e’ piedi nostri dalla via de’ peccatori, ... vivendo moralmente et continentemente e vivere in fiori di virginità et di chastità i quali partoriscono frutto a vita eterna, ... per condurci alle possessione etterne et inchorruttibile et alla chonversatione angelica et alla visione di Dio e al gaudio eterno.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fols. 4v-5r.

next to it as follows: “this *lauda* discusses and teaches how to go to paradise; it is good for anyone, particularly for youths.”⁵⁰ Some *laude* were specifically composed for young boys and were probably sung during confraternal meetings. One example is the *lauda* “Youths, with fervour” (*Giovanetti con fervore*) written by Francesco d’Albizo, which gives a long list of practical advice to its young audience, such as “stay always in prayer/ and you will live in heaven/ ... dedicate yourselves to devotions,/ frequent the holy places/ where they sing about Jesus.”⁵¹ Florentine youths were being taught to live a life that would prepare them both for their future role in society, and for an afterlife in heaven.

2.4 *Youths as Angels of the Nativity*

2.4.1 *Fanciulli as Angels and Angels as Fanciulli*

In Quattrocento Florence, angels and children were very strongly connected, their images almost superimposed. From the desire to have youths emulate angelic figures, several ideas and practices were born, which influenced in turn the way in which angels were visualised and imagined in the period. Education at home and education in confraternities were not separated from one another. Inside the home, youths were encouraged to continue their emulation of saintly models by surrounding them with images of the young Christ and St John the Baptist, given that what one saw around oneself would influence what one would become.⁵² This practice was recommended from infancy by Giovanni Dominici in his *Regola del governo di cura familiare*:

Have pictures of saintly children or young virgins in the home, in which your child, still in swaddling clothes, may take delight and thereby may be gladdened by acts and signs pleasing to childhood. And what I say of pictures applies also to statues. It is well to have the Virgin Mary with the Child in her arms ... So let the child see himself mirrored in the Holy Baptist clothed in camel’s skin ... It will not be amiss if he should see Jesus and the Baptist, Jesus and the boy Evangelist pictured together.⁵³

⁵⁰ “questa lalda tratta e ’nsegna andare a paradiso; e buona a ognuno specialmente a’ giovani.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 108v.

⁵¹ “state sempre in oratione/ et habiterete in cielo/ ... datevi alle divotione/ habitate e’ luoghi sancti/ dovè di Giesù si chanti.” *Laude* 1485-86, 45v.

⁵² See Miller 2013; Corry 2019.

⁵³ “La prima si è d’ avere dipinture in casa di santi fanciulli o vergine giovanette, nelle quali il tuo figliuolo, ancor nelle fascie, si diletta come simile e dal simile rapito, con atti e segni grati alla infanzia. E come dico di pinture, così dico di sculture. Bene sta la Vergine Maria col fanciullo in braccio... Così si specchi nel Battista santo, vestito di pelle di

Jacqueline Musacchio has discussed the difficulty of determining the actual impact of Dominici's text, given that it did not circulate widely in the Renaissance; however, she concludes that it was probably grounded in contemporary practice.⁵⁴

In fifteenth-century Florence, there was a proliferation of sculpted busts of young children, often portraying Christ and St John the Baptist, a genre unique to the Renaissance, with examples coming from the workshops of Desiderio da Settignano, Antonio Rossellino, and Mino da Fiesole (figs. 31-32).⁵⁵ The figure of St John the Baptist was particularly popular given his role as patron saint of the city. Feo Belcari's *sacra rappresentazione* centred on a dialogue between young Jesus and St John the Baptist in the desert, most likely addressed to young boys in youth confraternities, might have been one of the factors promoting this iconography, as shown by Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi.⁵⁶ That sacred figures were meant to inspire youths is directly expressed in the *lauda* "O vain youth" (O vana gioventute), again written with a young audience in mind, which is given the following advice: "O youths, follow the Baptist John/ ... in order to gain heaven,/ true eternal salvation."⁵⁷ The *lauda* continues by presenting several other saints as examples to be emulated in order to achieve benefits in the afterlife.

The members of mendicant orders had a preference for names derived from the biblical angels, which was a symbolic representation of the fact that a monk's life was based on the imitation of angelic life, a precept especially followed by Franciscans.⁵⁸ The *capitoli* of the Compagnia della Purificazione contain a similar guideline for members: "that in a secular state we live a spiritual life and in a human condition we live an angelic life."⁵⁹ In their mortal life, young boys had to emulate not only the saints, but in particular angels. When preaching about the creation of the angels and their connection to humans, Bernardino da Siena chose in particular to draw the attention of children to the subject: "O children who are learning at the abacus, learn this morning

cammello, ... Non nocerebbe se vedessi dipinti Iesu e il Battista, Iesu e il Vangelista piccinini insieme coniuanti." Dominici 1860, 131. Translation from Klapisch-Zuber 1985a, 115.

⁵⁴ Musacchio 2000, 147-48.

⁵⁵ See Coonin 1995.

⁵⁶ Paolozzi Strozzi 2013.

⁵⁷ "Seghuite o giovanetti il Batista Giovanni/ ... per aquistare il cielo/ vera eterna salute." Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1502, fol. 127r.

⁵⁸ Leclerq 1967, 128; Keck 1998, 115.

⁵⁹ "in stato secolare facciamo vita spirituale et in chonditione humana fare vita angelica." Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fol. 5r.

and be attentive to the service that angels make to God.”⁶⁰ To learn the behaviour of angels was seen by St Bernadino as benefitting principally the young.

In the collection of *Laude vecchie e nuove* printed in Florence by Bartolomeo de' Libri in 1500, there is a *lauda* written by Francesco Marzocchini for the confraternity of *fanciulli* of the Archangel Raphael. The patron of the confraternity is presented as “our guide ... in our actions” (*nostra guida ... nelle nostre operatione*), an expression of the angelic example that youths should follow. In the text of the *lauda*, the figure of Tobias, the boy guided by the Archangel Raphael, becomes a symbol for the youths who belong to the confraternity. Similarly, the numerous images representing the Archangel Raphael holding the hand of Tobias and leading him on his way, which gained popularity in the fifteenth century (fig. 33), represent a visual reminder for young Florentines to imitate their angelic models.⁶¹ Marzocchini's *lauda* ends with another reinforcement of these ideas for its young performers: “the one who wishes to follow you, angel,/ you will lead him to salvation.”⁶²

The association between angels and *fanciulli*, according to which the latter, as repositories of innocence and purity, were meant to copy their angelic guides and models, and ultimately lead an angelic life and become like these heavenly figures, was taken a step further by the practice of dressing these youths as angels, and making them imitate angelic song in order to have these precepts embodied.

One of the activities in which youths were engaged through confraternal life was that of participating in processions, particularly during the festival of San Giovanni. Members of youth confraternities would always wear the white robes in which they were dressed upon acceptance into the confraternity, as symbols of purity, on the sleeves of which the emblem of their *compagnia* would be sewn.⁶³ These were bought by the members of the confraternity, as can be deduced from

⁶⁰ “O fanciulli che state a l'abaco a imparare, imparate stamane e atendete de la ministracione che gli angioi fanno a Dio.” Bernardino da Siena 1989, 2:1294 (Predica XLIII.104).

⁶¹ On this iconography see Gill 2014, 171-91.

⁶² “chi ti vuole angel seguire/ tu il conduci a salvatione.” *Laude* 1500, 63v-64r.

⁶³ Ashley 2001, 19-21; Frick 2002, 173. For the making of confraternal insignias see Wackernagel 1981, 138-39. On *fanciulli* and processions see also Sardi 1993, 161-64.

their accounts. For example, Piero di Ser Matteo Mazotti, a member of the Compagnia della Purificazione, had to pay “one *lira* and two *soldi* for a robe which he bought from our school.”⁶⁴

The fact that the members of youth confraternities would also take part in processions dressed up as angels is confirmed in Matteo Palmieri’s description of the 1454 *fiesta di San Giovanni*. The second in his list of *edifizi* participating in the procession represents: “the company of Jacopo the tailor’s cutter and Nofri the cobbler with about thirty boys dressed in white, and little angels;” and the fourth: “the company of ser Antonio and Piero di Mariano with about thirty boys dressed in white and little angels.”⁶⁵ The youth confraternities to which Palmieri is referring are those of San Giovanni Evangelista (guided by Jacopo di Biagio), of Sant’Antonio da Padova (guided by Onofrio di Filippo di Bartolommeo), of the Archangel Raphael (guided by Ser Antonio di Mariano), and of the Purification (guided by Piero di Mariano).⁶⁶ The fifteenth-century document of the *Ordine e modo da tenersi nella solennità di San Giovanni* also informs us of the participation of youth confraternities in the solemn procession organised on 23 June for the yearly festival. It recommends: “Arrange to have all the *compagnie di fanciuli*, and each of these with various fantasies: which will be implemented with little bother, and will do a great honour.”⁶⁷

Young boys from confraternities were also engaged in theatrical activities. For the *fieste* celebrated in their own company, they performed in the *sacre rappresentazioni* staged by their confraternity. Lorenzo de’ Medici’s *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo* was written for and performed by the Compagnia di San Giovanni Evangelista, of which his sons were members. The angel who announces the *fiesta* asks forgiveness from the audience: “The Company of our San Giovanni/ does this *fiesta*, and we are still young./ Therefore please excuse our tender years,/ if the verses are not right or recited well,/ or if these young boys don’t know how to wear the clothes of men/ or act old

⁶⁴ “lira una soldi due per una vesta chonperò della nostra scuola.” Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose sopresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654, no. 29, fol. 67v.

⁶⁵ “Le compagnie di Iacopo cimatore e Nofri calzaiuolo con circa 30 fanciulli vestiti di bianco e agnoletti. ... Le compagnie di ser Antonio e Piero di Mariano con circa a 30 fanciulli vestiti di bianco e agnoletti.” Palmieri 1906, 172. Translation taken from Meredith and Tailby 1983, 241.

⁶⁶ For the identifications see Trexler 1974, 208, 214-15.

⁶⁷ “Fare di avere tutte le Compagnie de’ fanciulli, e ciascuna di quelle con varie fantasie: che con piccola cosa si metteranno in opera, e faranno onore grande.” Guasti 1884, 27 (*Ordine et modo da tenersi*).

men or women.”⁶⁸ All the characters were played by the young boys, members of the confraternity, who also acted in plays performed in other contexts.

During the *fiesta* of San Giovanni, youths appeared as angels not only during the procession, but also as actors for the different *edifici*. Matteo Palmieri’s account of the episode that disturbed the *edificio* of Octavian and the Temple of Peace mentions the “children who were standing above the said temple as little angels.”⁶⁹ Sometime between 1451 and 1454, Agostino di Porto, a Camaldolese monk, witnessed the festival of San Giovanni, of which he also left a description. A relic was carried on “a wonderful *edificio* ... full of living children who looked like angels.” The *edificio* of the Annunciation was “carried by seventy or more men. And this *edificio* was very high, and there were lots of little angels who sang and played and danced.” Agostino concludes by explaining the effect upon him of the sight of these *edifici*, in which the Virgin “was so beautiful and so well dressed that she seemed real, and the angel too was real with wings,” saying that “this was so devout that it brought tears to the eyes and made me weep.”⁷⁰ The festival of San Giovanni was a yearly performance that seems to have abounded with children dressed up as angels, either for processions, or to participate in the sacred plays of almost all of the *edifici*, making the figure of the child-angel a very visible and memorable presence in fifteenth-century Florentine festive life.

Children were also associated with angels through their musical and theatrical activities, and their singing was a constant reminder of the singing in heaven. Religious music performed during Mass was associated, especially since the development of polyphony, with heavenly music. In the description of a Mass celebrated during the 1459 Florentine celebrations in honour of the Pope and Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the author of the *Terze rime* describes how: “The Mass was celebrated by the best,/ most perfect singers, and most solemn rites,/ and with the music of angelic organs.”⁷¹ In

⁶⁸ “La Compagnia del nostro san Giovanni/ fa questa festa, e siam pur giovanetti:/ però scusate e nostri teneri anni,/ s’e versi non son buoni o ver ben detti;/ né sanno de’ signor’ vestire i panni,/ o vecchi o donne esprimer, fanciulletti.” Medici 1992, 2:985-86 (*Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo*, 3). On the text of the play see Carew-Reid 1995, 234-50; Plaisance 2008, 47-51.

⁶⁹ “certi fanciulli soprastavano dicto tempio in forma d’agnoletti.” Palmieri 1906, 173. Translation taken from Meredith and Tailby 1983, 241.

⁷⁰ “uno mirabile edifitio ... pieno di fanciulli vivi che parevano angeletti ... portato da huomini settanta o più. E questo edifitio era altissimo, dove erano molti angeletti che cantavano e sonavano e ballavano, ... era tanto bella e sì ben vestita che pareva essa, e l’angelo similmente era vivo co l’ali... Questa cosa fu tanto devota che extorse lagrime da gli occhi e fece me lagrimare.” Delcorno Branca 2003, 10. Translation taken from Newbigin 2007c, 22-23n12.

⁷¹ “Celebrossi la messa da’ prefetti/ e buon’ cantor’ con cirimonie molte/ e melodia d’angelici organetti.” Newbigin 2015, 65 (2932-34); Newbigin 2011, 80 (2932-34).

1436, for the consecration of the cathedral, which was performed by Pope Eugene IV on 25 March, Guillaume Du Fay composed his famous motet *Nuper rosarum flores*. Its performance made a profound impression upon Gianozzo Manetti, an attendee at the event, who praised it by comparing it to heavenly music: “it seemed not without reason that the angels and the sounds and singing of divine paradise had been sent from heaven to us on earth to insinuate in our ears a certain incredible divine sweetness.”⁷²

The practice of imagining angelic music when listening to Mass was similar to the devotional exercise of contemplating sacred images, and was in fact encouraged by members of the clergy. St Antoninus wrote a spiritual guidebook entitled *Opera a ben vivere* for an elite Florentine woman, presumed to be Dianora Tornabuoni, around 1454. In it, he recommends that during the feasts of the liturgical calendar: “you should sing during the entire office of Mass... Sit in a respectable place, and be attentive to what is being said, and consider those songs not as earthly, but celestial ones, not of humans, but of angels.”⁷³ He even proposes that this contemplative exercise, in order to avoid temptation and sin, should also be performed when women are invited to weddings, or dances, or any secular festivity that involves music and dance:

And when you see those vanities, of music, or of dances, or other vanities ... consider yourself to be in Paradise, and hear the song of the angels, and those dances and songs, consider that they are those of the choirs of the holy Virgins, who dance in front of the throne of the immaculate Lamb.⁷⁴

By performing sacred music, the singing of Florentine youths was also interpreted as the singing of the angels, and even more so when they were costumed as such. When the Russian bishop Abraham of Suzdal saw the Annunciation play in 1439 he witnessed angelic music in the form of music performed by youths. He describes the performance in heaven: “Little boys in white robes surrounded him [God], representing heavenly virtues. Some of them were singing, another played the cymbals, others played the lute and pipes.”⁷⁵ But children need not be in angelic costume for

⁷² “ut angelici ac prorsus divini paradisi sonitus cantusque demissi caelitus ad nos in terris divinum nescio quid ob incredibilem suavitatem quandam in aures nostras insursum non immerito viderentur.” Translation and original in Pietschmann 2013, 276, 277n7. On the consecration see D’Accone 1973, 116.

⁷³ “voi dovessi stare a tutto l’uffizio della messa cantando. ... Ponetevi in qualche onesto luogo, e state attenta a quello si dice, e reputeate quelli canti non terreni, ma celestiali, non di uomini, ma di angeli.” Pierozzi 1858, 175 (III.XII).

⁷⁴ “E quando vedete quelle vanità, di suoni, o di balli, o d’altre vanità, ... Reputatevi di essere in Paradiso, e di udire i suoni delli angeli, e quei balli e canti reputeate siano quelli cori delle sante Vergini, le quali ballino e danzano dinanzi al trono dell’Agnello immacolato.” Pierozzi 1858, 177-78 (III.XIII).

⁷⁵ Newbigin 1996a, 1:6.

their music to be associated with the angels, because their emulation of angelic life and the imagined heavenly quality of sacred music also contributed to the effect. On 15 August 1496, the Florentine Luca Landucci wrote in his diary the following regarding the singing of the children in Santa Maria del Fiore:

And observe that there was such a feeling of grace in this church, and such sweet consolation in hearing these boys sing ... it seemed impossible that it was done by boys. I write this because I was present, and saw and heard it many times, and felt much spiritual comfort. Truly the church was full of angels.⁷⁶

Landucci wrote this during a period in which the role of children in the religious life of the city had reached its peak. The friar Girolamo Savonarola, using the status quo put in place by the system of Florentine youth confraternities, turned children into the driving force of his reform program. They filled the streets of Florence during processions, all dressed in white and singing *laude*, taking spiritual control of the city. It is these children that Luca Landucci heard singing and of which Savonarola himself wrote in his 1496 sermon for Palm Sunday:

Tell me, who governs the *fanciulli* in this work if not Christ? ... Yesterday, Florence, your *fanciulli* were gathered to make garlands of olive branches in order to have them today for the feast, and they were lined up chorus by chorus, and made garlands and sang *laude*, so that it looked like a paradise.⁷⁷

Both through their education based on the imitation of angelic models, and through their theatrical and musical activities, the children of Florence were thought of as angels.

This in turn influenced the representation of angels in art as young boys from confraternities. The youths of Florence were dressed up in a specific manner in the *compagnie di fanciulli*. The first version of the *capitoli* of the Compagnia della Purificazione gives us information regarding the ceremony in which novices were received:

The governor orders that a garland of flowers or of something else, according to the time, is made, and when the child answers that he is happy, then the governor goes to the altar and takes the robe and the garland. The child being at the altar, he asks him and says: ... 'And in testimony of this I put on you this dress,' and then he ties up his girdle and then

⁷⁶ "E nota, che in quel tempo era tanto spirito in quella chiesa, e tanta dolceza a udire que' figliuoli cantare ... che non pareva cosa da fanciugli. Io lo scrivo perchè mi trovai presente e vidi molte volte, e sentii tale dolceza spirituale. Veramente era piena la chiesa d'angioli." Landucci 1927, 110-11; Landucci 1883, 136-37.

⁷⁷ "Dimmi: chi governa li fanciulli in questa opera se non Cristo? ieri, Firenze, che li tuoi fanciulli erano insieme a far grillande d'ulivo per averle oggi alla festa ed erano distesi a coro per coro e facevano grillande e cantavano laude, che pareva un paradiso." Savonarola 1971-72, 3:152. Translation in Macey 1992, 444-45. See also Macey 2001.

takes the garland and says: ‘And if thusly you will observe, you will be among the citizens of eternal life and in resemblance of those I put this garland on your head.’⁷⁸

Not only do these lines inform us that young boys in confraternities were dressed in a white robe with a girdle around their waist, wearing garlands of flowers on their head during important ceremonial moments, but also that this attire was meant to symbolise the costume worn by the elect in heaven. Through it, the youths were symbolically transformed into the inhabitants of the heavenly city. The same can be said about the robes worn during procession, which were kept in the oratory of the confraternity, as their inventory records: “220 white robes of different sizes to go in procession, of linen cloth.”⁷⁹ The same inventory describes the sign which preceded the members of the confraternity during processions and which had been painted by Fra Angelico, depicting “the figure of the glorious Virgin Mary with two white doves on the shoulders and the Child in her arms and, at her feet, kneeling, a *fanciullo* dressed in white, and she places a garland on his head.”⁸⁰

This image corresponds to angelic dress in several works of art from the period, although the attire of the angels is usually multi-coloured, perhaps in relation to the general notion that the success of a painting depended also on the *varietas* of its figures, a concept present in the second book of Leon Battista Alberti’s treatise on painting. In Fra Filippo Lippi’s *Maringhi Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 34), all the angels are wearing garlands of flowers on their heads, robes tied with girdles, and they are all represented as youths. The same holds true for the angels holding the *Gloria* scrolls in his *Adoration of the Child with Saints* in the Galleria degli Uffizi (fig. 13).

In 1461, the confraternity of the Purification commissioned Benozzo Gozzoli to paint their altarpiece. The surviving contract stipulates that Gozzoli was to paint on the frame, “on the shield where it is customary to put the arms of whoever orders the picture, two children in white with olive wreaths on their heads, holding in their hands the shield bearing the letters P. S. M. in good

⁷⁸ “Facia el governatore provedere che sia fata una girlanda de fiori o de altro secondo el tempo, e quando el puto risponde essere contento, allora el governatore vada a lo altare, tola la vesta e la girlanda. Essendo el puto a lo altare lo dimanda e dica ... ‘E in testimonianza de questo io ti metto questa vesta,’ e poy lo cinga de la cintura e poy pilia la girlanda e dica: ‘E se cossi observarai sarai enumerato cum cittadini de vita eterna e in figura de ciò io si te metto questa girlanda in capo.’” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni 336, fols. 21r-v.

⁷⁹ “220 veste bianche di più grandezze per ire a procissione, di panno lino.” Matchette 2000, 96 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 109).

⁸⁰ “la figura della Gloriosa Vergine Maria chon due cholonbe bianche sulle spalle e il Bambino in braccio e à piè ginocchionj un fanciullo vestito di bianco e gli mette una grillanda in chapo.” Matchette 2000, 96-97 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 120).

form.”⁸¹ The company was identified through the initials of its name and through the image of its members. The frame does not survive, but the panel, now in the National Gallery of London (fig. 35), depicts two angelic figures around the Virgin dressed as the young boys of the confraternity. The angels painted by Gozzoli on the walls of the Medici chapel (figs. 14-15), although not wearing garlands, are dressed in a similar fashion. The confraternal dress of the young boys of Florence was surely, in the first instance, inspired by angelic fashion as depicted in art. However, through the ever increasing importance and presence of children in the religious life of the city, young boys in confraternal dress became themselves emblematic of the angels. Through their confraternal costumes and their musical and theatrical activities, the *fanciulli* of Florence, setting out to emulate their angelic models, had become themselves the image of the angels in heaven.

2.4.2 Nativity *Angelic Choirs*

The Nativity musical angels in fifteenth-century Florentine art are represented not only dressed as confraternity boys, but also engaged in the vocal musical performances that they would have taken part in. The most popular sacred songs of the period were the *laude*, which were usually sung by the *laudesi* companies, but which were also transferred to the repertoire of youth confraternities once these were created. Young boys, sometimes in their angelic costumes, sang *laude* during their meetings, during processions, and during the performance of *sacre rappresentazioni*, a genre specifically created with the education of youths in mind.⁸² They also sang Latin Church hymns and psalms. The *capitoli* of the Compagnia della Purificazione specify that “when we go in procession, we go in order, two by two, singing psalms, and hymns, or *laude*, according to the wish of the said guardian.”⁸³ In order to perform the *laude*, the young boys would learn a set of melodies and then apply them to the different texts. The music was transmitted orally, and only at the end of the century does musical notation begin to appear in connection with *laude* texts.⁸⁴

⁸¹ “nello schudo dove è consueto di porre l’arme di chi fa la tavola si debba dipignere due fanciulli vestiti di bianco cholle grillande dello ulivo in chapo, che tenghino in mano lo schudo drentovi queste lettere, cioè P.S.M in buona forma.” Chambers 1970, 54-55. Ahl 1996, 278. See also Schiferl 1991; Ahl 2000; Matchette 2000; O’Malley 2005a; Nethersole 2011, 85-89.

⁸² On the singing of *laude* in youth confraternities see Prizer 1993, 172; Eisenbichler 1998, 18, 235-55.

⁸³ “quando andiamo a processione andiamo hordinatamente a due a due chantando psalmi et himni o laude secondo parrà a detto guardiano.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fol. 18v.

⁸⁴ Macey 2014, 65.

Laude and hymns constitute the soundtrack of *sacre rappresentazioni*, in which music played a very important part.⁸⁵ The angel who announces the *festa* in the *Rappresentazione della Purificazione*, most probably corresponding to the play performed by the homonymous youth confraternity, asks the audience to “contemplate the saintly mysteries/ that are in the acts which here you will see performed,/ all of you elevating the minds;/ and this you will best do/ by not paying attention only to the songs.”⁸⁶ This *sacra rappresentazione* was particularly musical, given that, according to the text and stage directions, each of the prophets and Sibyls who announced the coming birth of Christ delivered their message through songs. Religious plays also ended in song on almost every occasion.⁸⁷ The *Rappresentazione di San Bernardo d’uno Signore facea rubare le strade*, which may have been performed by a youth confraternity given that the text makes reference to the audience as young boys, ends with all the actors joining in the singing of a Latin hymn: “to these young boys .../ who all stayed to listen devoutly,/ *Te Deum laudam* will be sung at last. ... *Now all of those who have performed this representation start singing Te Deum laudamus and it is finished.*”⁸⁸ The *Rappresentazione di Abram e Isaac*, composed by Feo Belcari, ends with singing and dancing: “*all together dance singing this lauda*”—the *lauda* in question is Belcari’s “Who serves God with a pure heart” (Chi serve a Dio con purità di core).⁸⁹

The angels in *sacre rappresentazioni* also sing a similar repertoire of *laude* and hymns, and were played by children even when the performance is staged by an adult confraternity, as is the case with the Annunciation in San Felice in Piazza. The text associated with this play, written by Feo Belcari, specifies in the stage directions that: “*This lauda is sung by the Angels which accompany Gabriel... Now the Angels turn to heaven and continue singing this psalm.*”⁹⁰ Often, large portions of the texts of these plays were in fact not recited, but sung. The stage directions of the

⁸⁵ On singing in *sacre rappresentazioni* see D’Ancona 1891, 1:395-400; Becherini 1951; Cattin 1993; Prizer 1993, 172.

⁸⁶ “E contemplate i misteri santi/ che son negli atti che qui far vedrete,/ elevando le menti tutti quanti;/ e questo ottimamente far potrete/ non risguardando solamente a’ canti.” Newbiggin 1983, 89 (*La rappresentazione della Purificazione*, verses 1-16).

⁸⁷ McGee 1985, 142.

⁸⁸ “a questi giovinetti .../ stando a udir divoti tutti quanti,/ *Te Deum laudam* per ultimo si canti. ... *Ora tutti quelli c’hanno fatto questa rappresentazione cominciano a cantare Te Deum laudamus ed è finita.*” Newbiggin 1983, 290 (*La rappresentazione di San Bernardo d’uno Signore facea rubare le strade*, verses 508-20).

⁸⁹ “*tutti insieme fanno un ballo cantando questa Laude.*” Ponte 1974, 45 (Feo Belcari, *La rappresentazione di Abram e Issac*, stanza 61).

⁹⁰ “*Questa lauda si canta dagli ANGIOLI che vanno in compagnia di Gabbriello ... Ora gli ANGIOLI se ne tornano in cielo e seguono a cantare questo salmo.*” Banfi 1963, 80 and 82 (Feo Belcari, *La rappresentazione della Annunziazione*).

Rappresentazione della resurrezione di Gesù Cristo are very precise in indicating which parts should be sung and which recited. For example: “Christ joins as a pilgrim, and says without singing, but reciting, thirteen stanzas ... Luke says, singing, and all the rest follows sung.”⁹¹ It appears that the majority of this play was actually a musical performance.

Between 1431 and 1438 Luca della Robbia carved several panels for the *cantoria* of the cathedral, among which one represents a group of boys singing from a choirbook or service book, and another a group singing from a scroll (figs. 36-37). Robert Mode and Gary Radke have argued that the details represented by Luca della Robbia were taken from actual musical practice, such as the tapping of feet, the wide-opened mouths, the *tactus* gesture tapping the meter on the shoulder. Although these scenes do not represent musical performances in the cathedral, and are meant to be understood as idealised representations of biblical music-making, Mode and Radke argue that the singing boys in youth confraternities might have been studied by the artist.⁹² Patrick Macey has interpreted the use of a music book in one of the panels as an expression of a polyphonic performance in the French tradition, while the scroll might have corresponded to a performance of *laude*, which did not require musical notation, and which could have been sung by confraternity boys.⁹³

The angels who perform vocal music in *Nativity* scenes from fifteenth-century Florence are represented engaged in similar practices to those of the youths depicted in Luca della Robbia's panels. The angels painted by Sandro Botticelli in his *Nativity* from the 1470s (fig. 16) and in his *Mystic Nativity* (fig. 17) are grouped around a music book, suggesting the performance of liturgical chant or polyphonic music. In the majority of cases, however, angels of the Nativity are depicted holding scrolls in their hands, mostly with the words of the *Gloria*, and later in the century with added notation. These suggest the idea of a vocal performance, in line with the singing of psalms and hymns practiced by youth confraternities.

This type of vocal music would have been part of the devotions attached to Christ's Nativity, which often involved performative elements and interaction with the viewers. The tradition of theatrical

⁹¹ “*Giugne CRISTO in forma di peregrino, e dice senza canto a parole; e così seguiton a parole, tredici stanze seguente ... LUCA dice cantando, e seguitasi tutto il resto in canto.*” Banfi 1963, 407 and 411 (*La rappresentazione della resurrezione di Gesù Cristo*).

⁹² Mode 1986; Radke 2014.

⁹³ Macey 2014, 66.

representations around Christmas began with the liturgical dramas of the twelfth century, the *Officium pastorum* and the *Officium Stellae*, one of the earliest Nativity plays being documented in Siena.⁹⁴ The texts of *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni* of the Nativity contain information that is useful in reconstructing devotional practices during Christmas, particularly how the scene of the Nativity would have been viewed by fifteenth-century Florentines, and what it would have sounded like. The visitors who come to adore Christ in these texts, be they the shepherds or the Magi, represent symbolically the devotees coming to adore the scene of the *presepio*, which would have been represented as a sculptural ensemble, but which could also be symbolised by paintings or reliefs of the *Nativity* scene.

In the *sacra rappresentazione* of Octavian, Joseph tells the shepherds: “You, righteous shepherds, be welcome/ to visit the King of nature/ and you are known to be devout/ by the good Jesus and the pure Virgin/ from whom you will always have holy aid/ ... and at your end there will be songs and laughter;/ you will go to him, to paradise.”⁹⁵ Joseph seems to be addressing not only the shepherds with these words, but, moreover, the audience who is watching the performance. The reception into paradise in the afterlife is more a reflection of their preoccupations, perhaps, than those of the shepherds themselves. The shepherds in this *sacra rappresentazione* symbolically represent all those engaged in devotion around the *presepio* at Christmas, who are praying for their salvation.

A short dramatic text of the Nativity, thought to belong to the earlier phases of *sacre rappresentazioni*, might also have been recited in churches around the *presepio*. The text addresses the listeners and prompts their eyes to note several elements that would have been in front of them. A learned man explains the scene to the viewers, perhaps inviting the devotees to a contemplative exercise in front of the *presepio*: “See the dear Mother looking at him/ ... See the sheep standing around him/ ... See the night become clear day,/ the angels present around [Christ], and the sacred song/ resounding on this side and on that, and/ the sacred star shining.”⁹⁶ He addresses the crowd

⁹⁴ Rauch and Savorelli 2001, 38-40. See also Bartholomaeis 1952, 121-24; Toschi 1955, 664-65. For the text of liturgical dramas connected to the Nativity see Toschi 1926-27, 1:7-8 and 75-87.

⁹⁵ “Vo’ siate, pastor giusti, e ben venuti/ a vicitare il Re della natura,/ e siete per divoti conosciuti/ del buon Gesù e della Vergin pura,/ da cui arete sempre e santi aiuti/ ... e alle fin vostre fien canto e riso,/ a Lui n’andrete in santo Paradiso.” Newbigini 1983, 76 (*La rappresentazione della natività del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*).

⁹⁶ “Vedi la cara Madre Lui guardare/ ... Vedi le pecorette intorno stare./ ... Vedi la notte indi chiaro mutare,/ gli angeli intorno stare, e l’ sacro canto/ risonar quinci e quindi, e illuminare/ la sacra stella.” Newbigini 1983, 217 (*La festa della natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*).

and asks them that before departing to their homes they should “observe all the gestures, all the words/ of this night, and many of the sacraments/ you already recognise, and begin to praise/ with sweet songs, with high and devout voices” the new-born Christ.⁹⁷

All of these indications sought to create an inner gaze through the entire spectacle of the *presepio* and the theatrical performance, which could serve for further future meditation. Several *laude* seem to refer to this devotional practice of “visiting” Christ’s crib and employing contemplative exercises while beholding it, while praying and singing in front of it. The devotee is invited to come and adore the infant Christ, and his gaze is directed to all the details that would have been represented in the *presepio*, among which are the angels singing the *Gloria*. The *lauda* “A l’amor che venuto” launches the following invitation: “Who wants to enjoy Jesus with all their heart/ let them come to the *presepio* of eternal love.”⁹⁸ Another says: “Each lover should come/ to visit the Virgin... / Look at the Virgin mother honest and pure/ how she beholds the baby.”

The singing of the angels is also highlighted: “Open the ears to the angelic song/ of the sweet *Gloria*.”⁹⁹ In the *lauda* “This is the Messiah and his mother Mary” (*Ecco el Messia e la madre Maria*), composed by Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the prayer invokes the angelic hierarchies: “Come you souls from heaven,/ Rise up from eternal choirs,/ Come now and give welcome/ To the lord of lords; .../ Come, you holy angels,/ Come while making music;/ Come everyone in heaven,/ Praising Jesus Christ/ And singing out his glory/ With sweet harmonies.”¹⁰⁰ The many *laude* on the subject of the Nativity were destined for performance during Christmas, accompanied by hymns and psalms, in front of a visual support representing the scene of Christ’s birth. MS Magl. XXXV 119 specifies next to Feo Belcari’s *lauda* “Facciam festa e giulleria” that “it is good to say this *lauda* on Christmas night because it speaks of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ “Osserva adunque ogni atto, ogni parlare/ di questa notte, e’ tanti sacramenti/ già riconosci, e comincia a laldare/ con dolci canti, voci alte e ferventi.” Newbigin 1983, 218 (*La festa della natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*).

⁹⁸ “Chi vuol Giesù fruir con tucto’l core/ venghi al presepio dello eterno amore.” *Laude* 1500, 88r.

⁹⁹ “Ciaschuno amante vengnia/ a visitare la vergine di Dio/ ... Mira la vergin madre honesta e pura/ come al fantin risghuarda/ ... Apri li orecchi all angielicho canto/ della soave gloria.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fols. 270r-v.

¹⁰⁰ “Venite, alme celeste,/ Su dagli eterni cori,/ Venite e fate feste/ Al signor de’ signori;/ ... Venite, angioi santi,/ E venite sonando;/ Venite tutti quanti,/ Gesù Cristo lodando/ E la gloria cantando/ Con dolce melodia.” Tornabuoni 2001, 267 (*Lauda 1, This is the Messiah, and his mother Mary*); Tornabuoni 1900, 1 (*Lauda 1, Ecco el Messia e la madre Maria*).

¹⁰¹ “questa lalda e buona a dire la notte di Natale perchè parla della natività di Giesù Christo.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 26v.

A description of how Christ's birth would have been celebrated in youth confraternities has survived only from a century later, from 1586, concerning the confraternity of the Archangel Raphael:

Since it was the eve of the nativity of our Lord, we gathered at the fourth hour in order to unveil the most sacred *presepio*. We sang matins. Because the church of Santa Maria Novella was not yet open, many women came and stayed until it opened, continually singing psalms and hymns. And we went to kiss the Child since our *Sottoproveditore* had set up a very beautiful *presepio* with a great number of angels so that it looked like Paradise, with many lights.¹⁰²

The 1583 inventory of the confraternity mentions "a baby of the Nativity made of gesso with a golden base."¹⁰³ Very likely the ritual was similar in the fifteenth century, and we know that in 1473 the company had recorded a payment "for the painting of the basket inside which the baby is placed."¹⁰⁴ All of this information describes the same ritual around the static scene of the *presepio* or other artworks. However, during the fifteenth century animated *presepi* were also present in the devotional practices of youth confraternities through the performance of sacred plays. The Nativity plays listed by Richard Trexler were all staged during the *fiesta* of San Giovanni and none are recorded during Christmas. As Konrad Eisenbichler has explained, this may be due to the fact that these plays represented the rule and not the exception, a common practice that would have been less worthy of being recorded.¹⁰⁵ The *edifizi* of the Nativity for the festival of San Giovanni are mentioned in several sources, among which the best known is the account of Matteo Palmieri, but none describe them in detail. These *edifizi* were probably assembled by the confraternity of the Archangel Raphael, which in 1430 had performed a sacred play of the Nativity before Pope Eugene IV, and was in fact initially known as the *Compania della Natività*, giving it the responsibility of organising the theatrical performances related to the feast under whose

¹⁰² "Essendo la vigilia della natività del n(ost)ro S(igno)re ci raghunamo a hore quattro per schoprire il santissimo presepio et si cantò il matutino et ci concorse di molte donne non sendo anchora aperta la chiesa di Santa Maria Novella et si tratterno sino si aprissi sempre cantando salmi et laude, et si andò a baciare il bambino havendo il n(ost)ro sottoproveditore accomodato un bellissimo presepio con gran quantità di Angeli che rasembrava il Paradiso con di molti lumi." Translation and original from Eisenbichler 1988, 521, 531n15.

¹⁰³ "Un bambino della natività di gesso con basa d'oro." Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 155, No. 1.B, fol. 2v of *Inventario*.

¹⁰⁴ "per dipintura della schatola che vi sta dreto il bambino." Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 149, No. 25, fol. 65r.

¹⁰⁵ Trexler 1980a; Eisenbichler 1995, 319. On *sacre rappresentazioni* of the Nativity see Musumarra 1957.

patronage the confraternity was placed. Therefore, the plays of the Nativity in fifteenth-century Florence were directly connected to a youth company.

The texts of *sacre rappresentazioni* which are connected to Nativity plays staged during the Quattrocento help us to reconstruct the performance and the role of the musical angels. In one of these examples, the angels in the play are sitting “on the hut” (*alla capanna*) in which Christ was born, a position in which several of the angels in contemporary works of art are placed, such as those in paintings by Domenico Ghirlandaio (fig. 9) and Sandro Botticelli (figs. 16-17). The choir of angels in this *sacra rappresentazione*, which would have been played by young boys, performs something that would have been found in the repertoire of the *compagnie di fanciulli*, a *lauda*, namely “Con giubilante core” by Antonio da Siena.¹⁰⁶

Given that the *Gloria* was the song performed by the biblical angels, its words are those inscribed on their scrolls in visual art. The scrolls held by the angels usually do not use the text of the Vulgate, but rather the liturgical version of the *Gloria*, which was more familiar to the audience.¹⁰⁷ In the altarpiece commissioned from Domenico Ghirlandaio for the high altar of the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (fig. 9) the scroll of the *Gloria* contains musical notation alongside the words of the hymn.¹⁰⁸ The presence of notation in art might signify an expression of an interactive performance, as remarked by Emma Dillon. As she also points out, scrolls with or without words are graphic signs for the voice, and might even prompt interaction from the viewer by joining in the song.¹⁰⁹ A connection between the hymn and the devotions around the *presepio*, and perhaps around paintings and reliefs of the *Nativity* is possible, given that it is constantly mentioned in the texts of *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, and that these regularly invite the viewers adoring Christ to join in with the angelic performance: “Let us all give thanks/ to our creator;/ with the angels let us sing/ the glory of the Lord.”¹¹⁰

In sum, several elements that were part of artworks representing the *Nativity* scene were taken from devotional practice—in which, in turn, such images themselves played a role. The angelic figures were connected both in form and through their musical performance to the children of

¹⁰⁶ Banfi 1963, 155 (*La rappresentazione della Natività di Cristo*).

¹⁰⁷ See Covi 1958, 94-97; Rastall 1994, 167. For an analysis of the *Gloria* see Iversen 2001, 105-43.

¹⁰⁸ For aspects related to the commission see Venturini 1992a; Cadogan 2000, 259-61; O'Malley 2013, 161-62.

¹⁰⁹ Dillon 2016, 99, 101-02.

¹¹⁰ “Grazia tutti rendiamo/ al nostro chreatore/ co’ li anglioli [sic] cantiamo/ la gloria del Signore.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 260v.

youth confraternities, for whom singing played an important part in their activities. Just like them, they sang vocal music, particularly *laude* and hymns. During Christmas, the young boys of Florence would perform sacred plays of the Nativity in which they would be seen yet again singing, dressed up as angels. The repeated visualising of these practices influenced the representation of angels in the iconography of the Nativity. If in the fourteenth century they were engaged in silent adoration or instrumental performances, with the creation of youth confraternities at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the angels began to sing, adapting their repertoire to the sounds and sights of contemporary Florentine devotions.

2.5 *Confraternal Choirs as Angels in the Medici Magi Chapel*

2.5.1 *The Chapel and Questions of Patronage*

In what follows, I would like to explore these matters further by focusing on a case study concerning the choirs of musical angels depicted by Benozzo Gozzoli for the Medici family chapel in their palazzo in Florence (figs. 14-15), and to discuss how these particular elements, just like the cycle of frescoes as a whole, reflect the festive and devotional life of the city, in which their patron was involved. A great deal of literature has been dedicated to this private devotional space, the main reference point remaining the volume edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat in 1994.¹¹¹ The procession of the Magi which decorates the walls of the chapel in the family palace has often been interpreted in relation to Cosimo de' Medici's political ambitions, and understood as a means to celebrate the 1439 Council of Florence, which brought to the city the oriental costumes that parade in the fresco.¹¹²

In the year 2000, Dale Kent opened a new perspective upon the artistic patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, by formulating the concept of the "patron's oeuvre," and by analysing his commissions as a unitary ensemble reflecting the ideas of the man who had made their creation possible.¹¹³ She scrutinised Cosimo's education, interests, and surrounding environment, from what he read to what he wrote, and what he saw in the festivities on the streets of Florence. For her understanding of the

¹¹¹ Acidini Luchinat 1994a. For the restoration works see Acidini Luchinat 1992.

¹¹² Crum 1996. On the Council of Florence see Gill 1959.

¹¹³ Kent 2000. Ernst Gombrich's study on Medici patronage was also an important early contribution to the debate which, though sometimes contested, has remained a reference point: Gombrich 1960.

frescoes in the Magi chapel, Dale Kent brought back into focus Cosimo's devotion, which offers the possibility to interpret the iconography of the chapel not only as a political statement, but also as an expression of its patron's piety.

The chapel was built in the family palace on the Via Larga.¹¹⁴ Having a chapel in an urban family residence was unusual for Florence, given the proximity of many churches where the family could attend Mass. However, on 16 March 1422 Cosimo de' Medici and Contessina de' Bardi received a special concession from Pope Martin V to have a portable altar inside their house, and to be allowed to have Mass and all the divine offices celebrated in their private chapel.¹¹⁵ The actual painting of the frescoes, commissioned from Benozzo Gozzoli, was begun in the summer of 1459 and completed by the end of the year.¹¹⁶

To enter the chapel, the visitor would have to climb up the stairs of the palace to the first floor, where, according to Phillip Mattox, the corridor leading to the chapel was decorated with a tapestry thought to have been designed by Fra Angelico and representing the three Magi offering their gifts to Christ. The tapestry was on the right-hand wall, while on the other there were windows illuminating the corridor.¹¹⁷ In fifteenth-century Italy, the walls of rooms that had great importance were either painted all over or decorated with tapestries.¹¹⁸

In the chapel, the Magi procession progresses on three of the walls, with Caspar advancing on the East wall (fig. 38), Balthazar on the South wall (fig. 39), and Melchior on the West wall (fig. 40).¹¹⁹ The South-West corner of the chapel has been severely damaged by the construction of a large staircase in the seventeenth century.¹²⁰ In this area, the Western side has been preserved showing some of Melchior's attendants (fig. 41), while little remains of the South wall, now depicting a landscape with no figures, where once two pages from Balthazar's suite must have been (fig. 42). Many of the figures following the Magi in their journey have been identified as members of the Medici family, and their allies and friends, from Galeazzo Maria Sforza to

¹¹⁴ On the palace see Cherubini and Fanelli 1990; Merendoni and Uliveri 2009. On the building boom of private palaces in the second half of the fifteenth century see Goldthwaite 1972. See also Thornton 1991, 11, 13; Lindow 2007, 43-56.

¹¹⁵ For the concession document see Saalman and Mattox 1985, 343. See also Mattox 1996, 102.

¹¹⁶ Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 10-11.

¹¹⁷ Mattox 1996, 107.

¹¹⁸ Thornton 1991, 44, 48.

¹¹⁹ On the procession see Acidini Luchinat 1994e.

¹²⁰ On the alterations in the Palazzo Medici Riccardi see Büttner 1970.

Sigismondo Malatesta and Gemistus Pletho. The only clearly identified figure is that of the artist, Benozzo Gozzoli, who wrote his name across his hat.¹²¹

The altarpiece placed in the elevated altar apse, known as a *scarsella*, was an *Adoration of Christ* by Fra Filippo Lippi (fig. 43), now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, which has been replaced on site by a copy from Lippi's workshop (fig. 44), probably created for the Benedictine nuns of the convent of Sant' Apollonia.¹²² The altarpiece has been connected to the works of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, present in the background, and in particular to his *Steps of Humility*, as well as to the 1439 Council of Florence, because of its Trinitarian theme.¹²³ It is thought to be a commission of Cosimo de' Medici himself and it is dated between 1449 and 1457. The painting may in fact have been intended initially as a gift from Cosimo to Pope Eugenius IV.¹²⁴ Stefanie Solum has connected the altarpiece to Lucrezia Tornabuoni and her devotional experience, in particular her contemplative and meditative practices.¹²⁵ The ceiling is adorned with the Monogram of the Name of Jesus, which was transformed by Bernardino da Siena into a tangible material devotional object, encouraging devotees to keep it in their home as a protective device.¹²⁶

The question of the identity of the commissioner is a complex one, and is disputed between Cosimo de' Medici and his son Piero, with input from his wife, Lucrezia Tornabuoni. It is known that Piero de' Medici was responsible for interacting with Benozzo Gozzoli while he was at work on the frescoes in the chapel, given the existence of several letters between them that attest to this.¹²⁷ Cosimo seems to have delegated the responsibility of negotiating with painters to his son, which does not imply that he was disinterested in painting or that he was never involved in commissions.¹²⁸ Several letters have survived recording the correspondence between Piero and different artists.¹²⁹ The painting of the chapel frescoes was certainly supervised by him, given that

¹²¹ See Acidini Luchinat 1994d. For inscriptions that indicate identity see Welch 1998.

¹²² On the altarpiece see Zughuib 1989; Hatfield 1992, 229-30; Paolozzi Strozzi 1993; Paolozzi Strozzi 1994; Kent 2000, 322-28; Acidini Luchinat 2009, 90-92. For the *scarsella* see Acidini Luchinat 2009, 89.

¹²³ Paolozzi Strozzi 1993, 86; Kent 2000, 325.

¹²⁴ Paolozzi Strozzi 1993, 84-87. See also Hatfield 1992, 241-42.

¹²⁵ Solum 2015.

¹²⁶ Tycz 2017, 104.

¹²⁷ For the letters written by Benozzo Gozzoli to Piero de' Medici see Gaye 1839, 191-94 (letters 75-77). On the letters see also Kent 2000, 339-41.

¹²⁸ See Gutkind 1940, 310-17. For his art patronage with his brother Lorenzo see Paoletti 1992. See also Bullard 1994.

¹²⁹ For the letters see Chambers 1970, 91-95. More on Piero and art in Hale 1977, 44; Gnocchi 1988; Ames-Lewis 1993; Lowe 1993; Paoletti 1993; Kemp 1997, 74-75.

it contains references to luxurious decoration, which corresponds to Piero's tastes.¹³⁰ However, it remains an open question as to whether or not he had actually been involved in devising the program of the chapel.

From an architectural perspective, we can certainly consider his father Cosimo as the commissioner of the chapel, because he was very much interested in architecture and sculpture.¹³¹ Further, as Rab Hatfield has argued, the cavalcade of the Magi, rich in meaning and symbolism, and a visual testimony to the importance of the Medici family, could have only been devised and commissioned by Cosimo himself.¹³² Gentile Becchi, tutor of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici and a resident in the Medici palace since 1454, wrote in his poem dedicated to the chapel that the *sacellum* was Cosimo's, without mentioning anything about Piero, the very title of the verse referring "To Cosimo's *sacellum*" (*Ad Cosmianum sacellum*).¹³³ In the following sections, by discussing Cosimo de' Medici's musical patronage, his involvement in confraternal life, and sponsorship of *feste* and youth confraternities, as well as some of his reading interests and his use of the chapel space, I would like to offer new evidence in support of the idea that Cosimo was in fact the figure behind the programmatic choices for the chapel's iconography, while also bringing into focus a discussion of the choirs of angels, an element of the frescoes which has been neglected by scholarship.

2.5.2 *The Medici and Music*

The Medici family played an important part in several areas of the city's life, among which is that of sacred musical performance. During the 1430s, the *Arte di Calimala* and the *Arte della Lana* began to finance a choir, known as the *Cantori di San Giovanni*, which was to perform in the Baptistery, in the cathedral, and in the church of SS. Annunziata. Several elements had determined its creation, among them the influence of Pope Eugene IV's choir, which had sojourned for a lengthy period in Florence. Competition with the musical chapels at the Italian courts, among them

¹³⁰ Pernis and Schneider Adams 2006, 42.

¹³¹ Hale 1977, 29-31.

¹³² Hatfield 1992, 222 and 242-44.

¹³³ Grayson 1973, 298 (Gentile Becchi, poem 45); Marcelli 2015, 158 (Gentile Becchi, poem 45).

Ferrara, was also a factor.¹³⁴ Another decisive aspect might have been the 1439 council, for which the presence of a polyphonic chapel in the city was important, in order to ensure that Florence was perceived to equal other contemporary musical centres.¹³⁵

As several musicologists have suggested, we can assume that *de facto* Cosimo de' Medici was behind this initiative, although he never appears in any of the documents. Other members of the Medici family were actively engaged in employing Ferrarese singers among the Cantori di San Giovanni, the Medici having exclusive authority in selecting the musicians throughout the choir's existence. The Baptistery singers were also used by the Medici in private, probably for both secular and sacred music. Timothy McGee has discussed a letter addressed to Giovanni di Cosimo by Ginevra, the wife of Cosimo's brother, in which she writes that they had gone outside of Florence for a *fiesta* with "Piero, Lucrezia, Angniolo della Stufa, and the Singers of San Giovanni."¹³⁶

The Cantori of San Giovanni also performed polyphony in the cathedral of Florence, singing Vespers each Sunday and during major feasts, with interruptions from 1478, when an independent chapel was established at the cathedral.¹³⁷ Pope Eugenius IV's choir had performed polyphony in the cathedral during the 1430s, and on 23 March 1435 a papal bull established there a school of chant and grammar, which taught polyphonic performance from 1479, the boys' choir performing in the cathedral until 1494.¹³⁸

An important role in the musical life of Florence's cathedral was played by its organist, Antonio Squarcialupi, appointed in 1432 and performing there until his death in 1480.¹³⁹ Squarcialupi developed a very strong connection with the Medici from the 1440s, particularly with Giovanni, Cosimo's son, and later on with Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom he probably taught the keyboard. He also performed at times for the Medici in their villas, contributing to the formation of their

¹³⁴ On the Cantori di San Giovanni see D'Accone 1961; Haar and Nádas 2011; Pietschmann 2013, 276-77. For Ferrara's musical developments see Lockwood 1984. For the competition between Florence and Ferrara see Lockwood 1993. On music at the Sforza court see Welch 1993; Merkley and Merkley 1999. On the chapel in Naples see Atlas 1985.

¹³⁵ Wilson 2015b, 268-69.

¹³⁶ "Piero et la Lucrezia e Angniolo della Stufa e chantori di San Giovanni." Translation from McGee 2009b, 175 and original in Giacomelli 1993, 267n31. See the discussion in Seay 1958; D'Accone 1961; Macey 2014. On the choirbooks in the cathedral see Tacconi 2005 and Tacconi 2014.

¹³⁷ D'Accone, 1961, 327; Haar and Nádas 2008, 26. See also D'Accone 1973. For singing practices in another nearby cathedral, namely that of Siena, see D'Accone 1997, 15-275.

¹³⁸ D'Accone 1961, 330-31; Trexler 1974, 216-18; Cattin 1981, 23, 29; D'Accone 1994, 280; Macey 2014, 64. For the bull see Seay 1958, 46-49.

¹³⁹ On Squarcialupi see Giacomelli 1992 and Giacomelli 1993. For organ music at the cathedral see Giacomelli 2014.

musical taste.¹⁴⁰ In 1467, at the age of 18, Lorenzo de' Medici, through Squarcialupi's mediation, invited Guillaume Du Fay to write polyphonic music setting a poem that he had composed.¹⁴¹ Lorenzo was a promoter of both polyphonic music, bringing the Northern composer Heinrich Isaac to the cathedral, and of the singing poets known as *improvvisatori*, among whom he is associated particularly with Antonio di Guido.¹⁴²

Music was an important presence in the private life of the Medici, as attested by the numerous accounts of family members performing music, as well as by the number of music books and instruments present in the palace. The 1456 inventory of Piero de' Medici records the presence of "a small book of music," "a book of music in parchment," and "a large book of music in paper."¹⁴³ His inventory from 1463 mentions a series of musical instruments which would have been used in private performances, among which are three organs, a rotta, two harps, two lutes, and ten woodwind instruments.¹⁴⁴ To these, the 1492 inventory of the Medici household also adds "a harpsichord that functions also as an organ, missing the pipes, ... a simple harpsichord, ... a double harpsichord, ... two simple harpsichords, ... three bass drones, ... a viola with keys, ... three large violas."¹⁴⁵ The family possessed a large and varied collection of instruments, a witness to the rich soundscape of their home.

The Medici were also involved in Florence's popular culture, in which musical performances played an important part. A hub for such events was the piazza San Martino, where the *canterini*, or *cantimpanca*, or *improvvisatori*, performed their vernacular sung poetry, from carnival songs to *laude*, three or four times a week, to a crowd that included Florentines from all over the city and from diverse and mixed backgrounds. The performance took place on an improvised stage, perhaps a stone bench at the entrance of the church of San Martino (*panca*), on top of which the poet-singer

¹⁴⁰ See D'Accone 1994; Haar and Nádas 2006; McGee 2009b, 177.

¹⁴¹ Fallows 1993, 47-48.

¹⁴² See Gargiulo 1993; D'Accone 1994; McGee 2009b, 178-89; Macey 2014, 70; Wilson 2015b, 275-78.

¹⁴³ "uno libro di musicha piccholo," "uno libro di musicha moda in menbrane," and "uno libro di musicha grande in papiro." Spallanzani 1996, 115 (1456 Inventory, fol. 16r). The translation is taken from McGee 2009b, 176. On Medici music books see also Pasquini 2000, 73-80; Wilson 2015b, 271-72.

¹⁴⁴ Spallanzani 1996, 128-29 (1463 Inventory, fol. 37r). On musical instruments in Renaissance Italian inventories see Thornton 1991, 272-74. For the locations in which instruments were kept inside the house see the discussion in Dennis 2006a, 232-33.

¹⁴⁵ "uno gravicembolo ch' à servire anche a orghano, mancavi le channe, ... uno gravicembolo scempio, ... uno gravicembolo doppio, ... dua gravicembali scempi, ... tre gravicordi, ... una vivuola cho tasti, ... tre vivuole grandi." Stapleford 2013, 80-81 (1492 Inventory, fols. 10v-11r). Spallanzani and Bertelà 1992, 20-21 (1492 Inventario, fols. 10v-11r).

climbed to perform before an audience who stood or sat on benches, the space of the piazza allowing for a crowd of almost two hundred people.¹⁴⁶ In 1442, Cosimo de' Medici together with archbishop Antoninus founded the confraternity of the Buonomini di San Martino, a charitable organisation, which was located in the same area where the poet-singers of Florence gave their recitals.¹⁴⁷

One of the major musical figures in the piazza was Michele del Giongante, himself a poet, but also something of a manager of the venue in San Martino. He was strongly connected to Piero de' Medici, to whom he wrote in order to ask for support for some of the poets performing in the piazza, and for whom he compiled several *zibaldoni* containing some of their verses.¹⁴⁸ Sometimes the singers in San Martino performed privately for the Medici family, as is the case with Antonio di Guido, who sang in 1459 at the Careggi villa for Galeazzo Maria Sforza.¹⁴⁹

Part of the repertoire performed by the San Martino poets included sacred rhymes, and several of the composers in the piazza also wrote *laude*. Francesco Luisi has discussed the so called “cantimpanca spirituali.” The singing tradition developed in San Martino influenced confraternal musical performances, as attested by the *cantasi come* practice of singing *laude* according to the tunes of secular songs popularised by the *cantimpanche*.¹⁵⁰ The Medici were involved not only in matters of secular verse and song, but were also very active in the realm of religious sung poetry, one of the most popular composers of *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, Feo Belcari, being closely connected to the family, as proven by the many sonnets which he wrote in honour of Cosimo and his two sons, Piero and Giovanni. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Piero's wife, was also an active patron of poets, among them Luigi Pulci, and was a writer of *laude* herself, of which nine have come down to us. In the 1485 Florentine printed collection of *laude*, the first to be published in print, her compositions were included among those of the most renowned authors. Her nephew, Lorenzo Tornabuoni, also wrote *laude*, and her son Lorenzo de' Medici as well, particularly during the

¹⁴⁶ See Abramov-van Rijk 2009; Aubrey 2009; McGee 2009b, 80-90; Wilson 2013; Wilson 2015a; Atkinson 2016, 158-64; Wilson 2019. On the location of the performance see Strocchia 2006, 72-76; Wilson 2013, 274-75.

¹⁴⁷ See Zorzi Pugliese 1991; Kent 1992; Kent 2000, 47-50.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson 2015b, 273. On one of Michele's *zibaldoni* see Kent 2005. On Michele del Giongante see Flamini 1977, 238-44; Kent 2002.

¹⁴⁹ For the letter in which Galeazzo Maria Sforza mentions the performance see McGee 2009b, 87. On Antonio di Guido see Flamini 1977, 162-78.

¹⁵⁰ Flamini 1977, 477-84; Luisi 1996, 83-84, 91-94.

1490s.¹⁵¹ From their involvement in the polyphonic scene of Florentine sacred music to the musical performances in their palazzo, and their connections to popular culture through poet-singers and *lauda* composers, the Medici were deeply connected to the musical life of their city, partly supported by their finances and encouraged by their interests.

2.5.3 *The Medici and Confraternities*

Another aspect of fifteenth-century Florence in which the Medici were actively involved, because it ensured political control in this life and salvation in the next, was that of confraternal organisations. Cosimo de' Medici's patronage at San Marco extended over the confraternities that met there, among them the adult Compagnia de' Magi and the youth confraternity of the Purification.¹⁵² Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo all supported the Ascension *fiesta* performed in Santa Maria del Carmine by the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese. They also sponsored the yearly festival of San Giovanni and were themselves members of several confraternities, including the Compagnia di San Paolo, and the youth confraternity under its protection, that of San Giovanni Evangelista.

The Compagnia de' Magi was one of the confraternities that met regularly in the convent of San Marco, and was responsible for organising the yearly *fiesta de' Magi*, on the day of the Epiphany. The convent of San Marco seems to have been associated with the Magi because the church preserved some "simulacra" of the manger. We do not know exactly when the Compagnia de' Magi was created, but it probably already existed in 1390, because their *fiesta* is known to have been organised in that year. However, the first actual mention of the confraternity dates from 1417.¹⁵³

After 1436, when Cosimo became the most important benefactor at San Marco, the involvement of the Medici in the Compagnia de' Magi grew stronger. He subsequently adopted the cult around the three Magi, as well as the *compagnia* dedicated to them, and the family began its association with the Oriental kings. As attested by the many works of art representing the Magi commissioned by the Medici, and by Magi paintings commissioned by others in which portraits of the Medici

¹⁵¹ On Lucrezia's patronage of poets see Tomas 2003, 93-95; Pernis and Schneider Adams 2006, 86-90. On the *laude* of the Medici see Coppola 1963, 63-69, 71-100; Toscani 1993.

¹⁵² On Cosimo's patronage of San Marco see Kent 2000, 171-78.

¹⁵³ Hatfield 1970a, 108-09.

would appear as a proof of the commissioner's allegiance to the family, it is clear that towards the later decades of the Quattrocento an indissoluble link existed between the rich bankers on the Via Larga and the rich kings from the East.¹⁵⁴ The Compagnia de' Magi became almost a confraternity of Medici allies, and we know that members of the family were always at the forefront of its affairs. One of the ten elected *festaiuoli* responsible for organising the *fiesta de' Magi* in 1447 was Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici. Giuliano de' Medici, Cosimo's grandson, is also known to have served as the governor of the *compagnia*.¹⁵⁵

The Medici took part in the procession that was organised for the *fiesta de' Magi*, although they never actually played the part of the three kings. From a letter written by Contessina de' Bardi, Cosimo's wife, to Giovanni de' Medici on 18 December 1450, we have proof of the preparations undertaken for Cosimo's participation in the celebrations, which he probably attended during Epiphany of the following year. In the letter, she writes that Messer Rosello Roselli d'Arezzo "has procured for Cosimo a beautiful marten fur cloak, and sable furs, and a pair of gloves ... given that the *fiesta de' Magi* will have to be celebrated."¹⁵⁶

The procession of the Magi was also included in the festival of San Giovanni. Paolo di Matteo Pietrobuoni's *Priorista* describes what the confraternity had prepared during the 1428 celebrations on 23 June:

And among the other handsome and marvellous things, the Compagnia de' Magi of San Marco did many rich and imposing presentations in (St John's) honour. And among the other lovely, notable, and pleasing things there were decked out eight horses, covered with silk, with eight pages dressed in silk and with pearls and heraldic ornaments and with shields, their faces angelic, riding one after the other with their livery. And after them, on a great and beautiful horse, came an old man with a white beard, dressed in a gold brocade of crimson and a peaked cap of crimson full of large pearls and with other ornaments of greatest value, like a king such as those among the Christians. For it may be believed that one wishing to be worthily got up could not surpass this ornateness in clothing.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ See Hatfield 1976; Davisson 2001. On the iconography of the Magi see Davisson 1971; Trexler 1987; Trexler 1990; Trexler 1997.

¹⁵⁵ Hatfield 1970a, 114, 126, 135-36, 138.

¹⁵⁶ "ha arrecato a Cosimo una bella ciopa a la polacca di martore e zibellini e uno pajo di guanti ... che abiendosi a fare più la fiesta de' Magi." Pieraccini 1924, 34 (Letter of Contessina de Bardi to Giovanni de' Medici, 18 December 1450). See also Kent 2000, 65-66.

¹⁵⁷ "E in fra ll'altre cose belle et maravigliose la compagnia de' Magi di Sam Marcho feciono molte ricche et grandi onoranze. E in fra ll'altre belle, notabile et piacevole chose fu[rono] ornato otto cavagli covertj di seta con otto paggi di seta vestitj et con perle e ornamentj di divise et con ischudi, e visi loro angelichi, l'uno dietro all' altro col livrea cavalchando. E dietro a lloro in su bello e grande cavallo uno anticho con barba bianca vestito di broccato d'oro di chermusi et uno capelletto di chermusi aghuzzato pieno di grosse perle et con altrj ornamentj di grandissima valuta, a

The account also describes the *festa de' Magi* of 1429, “an honourable and handsome celebration,” and the procession of the Magi which took place during the afternoon:

And after lunch there were about seven hundred costumed men on horseback, among whom were the three Magi and their retinue, honourably dressed. And of the striking things they had with them, there were three giants and a wild man and, upon a car, a man impersonating David, who killed the giant with the sling.¹⁵⁸

According to Pietrobuoni's description, the festivities during Epiphany, with their seven hundred men on horseback, resemble more a secular parade than a religious celebration, emphasising the civic character that was taking an ever higher priority in the realm of religious ceremonies.

The Medici connected themselves to the symbolism of the Magi also by commissioning many works of art in which the three kings were the protagonists. Some have been identified with extant images, but of others we have only written information that attests to their existence, found mostly in family inventories. The 1492 Medici inventory shows a dramatic increase in works of art representing the three Magi. To give one example, in Lorenzo de' Medici's ground-floor bedchamber, the 1492 inventory lists an *Adoration of the Magi* now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington (fig. 45): “a large tondo with a gilt frame, depicting Our Lady and Our Lord and the Magi who come to make an offering, by the hand of fra' Giovanni.”¹⁵⁹ It is actually the most valuable painting in the entire inventory, estimated at one hundred florins.¹⁶⁰ The inventory ascribes the painting to Fra Angelico, but it is now thought to have been the work of both Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi, dating to the 1440s or 1450s.

Cosimo also had images of the Magi painted for him outside the walls of his home. In the convent of San Marco he had two rooms reserved for his personal use, situated very near the library that he had furnished, and known as the *cella di Cosimo* (cells 38 and 39). It was particularly unusual

ghuisa d'uno re chuomo tra' Christianj. Volendosi ornare per dignità che tengha nollo può avanzare d'ornamento nel vestire.” Translation and original in Hatfield 1970a, 111 and 146. On the festivities described by Pietrobuoni see also Duclos-Grenet 2014, 2-8.

¹⁵⁸ “Et dopo mangiare circha a settecento vestitj a chavallo furono, in tra' qualj fu[r]ono] i tre Magi e i loro compagni vestitj orrevolemente. Et delle belle cose che vi fu[r]ono] i loro, furono tre giughantj et uno huom salvaticho, e in su uno carro il significhato di Davittj, che uccise il giughante colla fronbola.” Translation and original in Hatfield 1970a, 112 and 146.

¹⁵⁹ “Uno tondo grande cholle chornicie atorno messe d'oro, dipintovi la Nostra Donna e el Nostro Signore e e' Magi che vanno a offerire, di mano di fra' Giovanni.” Stapleford 2013, 71 (*Book of the Inventory of the Goods of Lorenzo il Magnifico, The Medici Palace*, fol. 6r); Spallanzani and Bertelà 1992, 12 (*Libro d'inventario*, fol. 6r). On the painting see Ruda 1975; Kent 2000, 245 and 252-55.

¹⁶⁰ Stapleford 2013, 21.

for a layman to have his own cell within a convent, which meant that Cosimo was given great precedence at San Marco and privileges which broke several rules. Fra Angelico together with his assistants decorated the dormitories of the convent, Benozzo Gozzoli being the one who painted the fresco representing the *Adoration of the Magi*, dating from 1446-1447 and decorating Cosimo's cell 39 (fig. 46). It was probably painted in commemoration of the moment in which Pope Eugenius IV stayed in the rooms, upon his visit in 1443, during which he consecrated San Marco to the Saints Mark, Cosmas, and Damian.¹⁶¹

Another confraternity of which Cosimo de' Medici was a patron was the Compagnia della Purificazione, a *compagnia di fanciulli*. It was born from the first youth confraternity, that of the Archangel Raphael, which had begun to acquire too many members. On 8 September 1427, some of them moved to a different location, founding the second Florentine company of young boys. The new organisation became very popular, particularly when Cosimo, after his return to Florence, began to show an interest in it. The numbers grew from 12 initial members to 600 in 1450. Lorenzo Polizzotto has analysed the provenance of its members, concluding that for every four coming from the *popolo minuto*, one member could be found from a powerful family.¹⁶²

In 1444, Cosimo became the official patron of the confraternity by translocating it to San Marco, where the members were given a new oratory in a location which was already under his influence. They adopted a new set of statutes and acquired new titular saints, San Zanobi and Saints Cosmas and Damian, Cosimo's patrons. Lorenzo Polizzotto has showed how this changed the ratio between members from the *popolo minuto* and those from the rich and influent families, from a ratio of four to one, to a ratio of two to one.¹⁶³ No immediate member of the Medici family ever joined the confraternity, their children being part of the San Giovanni Evangelista company, and none related to them ever held official positions.¹⁶⁴ However, the newly written statutes of the Purificazione dating from 1444 mention all of the benefices that the company had received from Cosimo, namely that it resided:

in a place which Cosimo di Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici built or better had built... and the said Cosimo gave us an altarpiece with the figures of the said saints depicted, namely

¹⁶¹ On the fresco of Benozzo Gozzoli see Bonsanti 1990, 168; Hood 1993, 239-40, 248-53; Kent 2000, 153-55; Scudieri 2005; Gerbron 2012, 35-41. See also Hood 1990.

¹⁶² Polizzotto 2000, 102-03.

¹⁶³ Polizzotto 2000, 109-11.

¹⁶⁴ Polizzotto 2004, 54.

Saints Cosmas and Damian, to use for the altar of the said chapel ... The said Cosimo made us proprietors in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1444, on the 28th of June, that is the day of St Peter and St Paul, and he made a solemn procession with all the brothers of the said school dressed in white.¹⁶⁵

In return for Cosimo's support, the *capitoli* specify that "we intend that always during our meetings God be praised and prayed to for the abovementioned Cosimo, so that he may give him grace for this good which he did for us; may it grant him eternal life and so be it."¹⁶⁶ Cosimo's extensive patronage of the youth confraternity of the Purification demonstrates his interest in extending his influence also over the younger members of Florentine society, in order to prepare future generations both for governing the city and for supporting the Medici.

From 1449-1450 the confraternity began to be more actively involved in sacred festive life, given their newly acquired financial assistance, and they started to perform the sacred play of the Purification. They also performed the *Festa del vitello sagginato*, which had been written by Piero di Mariano Muzi, the leader of the company. Nerida Newbigin has concluded from studying the confraternity's records that if for the earlier celebrations they were spending only for the decoration of the oratory, after 1449 they start spending on costumes and stage sets.¹⁶⁷ Among these they had a Jonah's whale all covered in leaves to give the impression of fish scales, as mentioned by a payment of six *soldi* to Mariotto di Giovanni recorded in their account books in 1448, "to buy real leaves in order to cover the fish of Jonah."¹⁶⁸ For the other play they even used an actual calf, paying two *soldi* in 1449 "for the licence of the calf of the *Festa del vitello sagginato*."¹⁶⁹

In 1464, the Purificazione annexed a pre-existing *laudesi* company that used to meet in San Marco. The manuscript Chig. L.VII.266 of the Biblioteca Vaticana was a collection of *laude* compiled by Filippo di Lorenzo Benci, whose relatives belonged to the Purificazione, and who was himself

¹⁶⁵ "in un luogo che ci murò o vero fecie murare Chosimo di Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici ... e dettoci il detto Cosimo una tavola d'altare con le figure di detti sancti dipinti cioè sancto Chosimo et Damiano che servissi al altare di detta capella ... E detto Chosimo ci misse in tenuta negli anni del nostro Signore Giesù Christo MCCCCXLIII addi XXVIII di giugno cioè el dì di sancto Piero e sancto Paulo e fece una solemne processione con tutti e' frategli di detta schuola vestiti di bianco." Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fols. 3r-v. On the company's premises see Matchette 2000.

¹⁶⁶ "intendiamo sempre si laudi Iddio nelle nostre tornate e prieghisi Iddio pel sopra detto Chosimo che gli conceda gratia di questo bene che ci ha facto che gl'el meriti in vita eterna e chosi sia." Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. VIII 1500, doc. no. 11, fol. 3v.

¹⁶⁷ Newbigin 1990, 363-66. For the company's theatrical activity see also Polizzotto 2004, 78-92.

¹⁶⁸ "per chonperare fogli reali per choprire e' petccie di Giona." Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654, no. 30, fol. 90v.

¹⁶⁹ "per la licenza della vitella della festa del vitel saginato." Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654, no. 30, fol. 91v.

connected to the confraternity's members. The *laude* in this source may have been sung by the youth confraternity in San Marco.¹⁷⁰

The Medici were also very closely connected to the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese in Santa Maria del Carmine, an adult confraternity from the Oltrarno, which performed the play of the Ascension yearly, a spectacle in which different members of the family were involved at some point, sponsoring the play in order to show their munificence.¹⁷¹ The concept of *magnificenzia* discussed by Matteo Palmieri in his *De vita civile* was the ethical and ideological foundation of these expenses, and it was a virtue that only the rich could exercise for public benefit.¹⁷²

In 1442, Cosimo was *festaiuolo* for the Ascension play—that is, he was responsible for its organisation. That year the expenditure for the *festa* was very high and even Pope Eugenius IV and some cardinals offered financial support.¹⁷³ In honour of this event, Feo Belcari wrote a sonnet to Cosimo praising his contribution to the Ascension *festa*. At the end, his generosity demands a reward and Belcari concludes his sonnet by saying that: “when Christ will go to Paradise,/ all of us will pray him with great love,/ saying: Do this last favour,/ that Cosimo may live in joy, celebration and laughter,/ giving him what his good heart desires,/ always fulfilling any of his wishes.”¹⁷⁴

Piero de' Medici also sometimes financed the Ascension *festa*, and he continued the tradition recorded in the accounts of the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese of bringing wine to those participating in the play. In 1443 the account book mentions a payment of 3 *soldi* “to the porter for one barrel of wine given to us by [*cancelled*: Cos] Piero di Cosimo.”¹⁷⁵ The same “barrel of wine from the house of Piero di Cosimo who gave it to the boys of the *festa*” is mentioned in 1467 and 1468.¹⁷⁶

The Medici also promoted and were actively engaged in the writing of *sacre rappresentazioni*, some of them connected to the important religious plays performed throughout the city. Feo

¹⁷⁰ Polizzotto 2004, 95-96.

¹⁷¹ Barr 1990, 387. On the concept of magnificence see also Howard 2008. For a discussion focused on the Medici see Rubin 1995.

¹⁷² Rubin 2007, 38.

¹⁷³ Newbiggin 1996a, 2:381; Kent 2000, 47.

¹⁷⁴ “quando Cristo anderà in Paradiso,/ tutti lo pregherem con grande amore,/ dicendo: Facci quest'ultima grazia,/ che Cosmo viva in gaudio, festa e riso,/ dandoli quel che brama el suo bon core,/ facendo sempre ogni sua voglia sazia.” Belcari 1833, 156 (Sonnet to Cosimo de' Medici).

¹⁷⁵ “Al portatore per 1 barile di vino ci de' [*cancelled*: Chos] Piero di Chosimo.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:403.

¹⁷⁶ “barile di vino da chasa Piero di Chosimo el quale donò a' gharzoni della festa.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:553.

Belcari, composer of both *sacre rappresentazioni* and *laude*, dedicated some of his plays to members of the family, as the sonnets which accompany them demonstrate. The *Rappresentazione di Abram e Isaac* was sent to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici, while his *Annunciation* was composed for Piero, as Belcari himself declares: "Wherefore, seeing how much you are inclined/ to honour the saint Annunciate,/ ... such a mystery as sung by the Church,/ I send to you recited in verses."¹⁷⁷ The Medici themselves wrote *sacre rappresentazioni*. Lorenzo de' Medici wrote the *Rappresentazione di San Giovanni e Paolo* for the youth confraternity of San Giovanni Evangelista, of which his children were members, while Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici wrote the *Invenzione della Croce*. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Piero's wife, wrote not only *laude*, but also sacred plays, particularly regarding female saints and martyrs.¹⁷⁸

These spectacles were an important mechanism through which the Medici could demonstrate their involvement in performances that provided to the city not only entertainment, but also salvation through their devotional dimension. The plays, and even the *edifici* of the San Giovanni festival, were also staged during the visits of important figures in order to increase the *fama* of the city, for example during the 1439 Council of Florence, in 1459 for the passage of Pope Pius II and Galeazzo Maria Sforza through the city, and in 1471 for another visit of Galeazzo Maria Sforza.¹⁷⁹

The extensive participation of the Medici in the sacred performances that took place throughout Florence and throughout the liturgical year, from the *festi de' Magi* on the day of the Epiphany, to the Ascension of Christ theatrical celebrations after Easter, followed by the festival of San Giovanni in June and the plays performed by youth confraternities, all find an echo on the family chapel's walls, where the procession of the Magi and the choirs of angels recall the performative elements in the city's devotional life. At the same time, they are related to the commissioner's devotional practices and spiritual interests, which were shaped by what he read, as well as by the popular religious culture surrounding him.

¹⁷⁷ The sonnet to Giovanni can be found in D'Ancona 1872, 1:43. "Ond'io vedendo te molto esser volto/ Ad onorar l'Annunziata santa,/ ... tal mister come la Chiesa canta,/ Io te le mando recitato in versi." Belcari 1833, 47 (Sonnet to Piero de' Medici).

¹⁷⁸ Pernis and Schneider Adams 2006, 121-36; Orvieto 2015, 190.

¹⁷⁹ For Medicean sponsorship of religious theatre see Mamone 1981, 17-30; Kent 2000, 62-67 and 314; Ventrone 2015, 253-56. See also Testaverde 1988.

2.5.4 Reading and Praying with Cosimo de' Medici

Cosimo de' Medici's devotion was primarily reflected in his extensive patronage of churches, from their buildings, to the decoration of their chapels and the furnishings of their libraries. The anonymous poet who wrote of the Florentine celebrations of 1459 in the *Terze rime* mentions Cosimo's great expenses in honour of God: "A sum of ducats almost infinite/ or, better put, a fortune without end/ Cosimo has spent on building in his day,/ *ad laudem Dei*, to glorify the world."¹⁸⁰ He has also "erected excellent buildings here/ and several hundred times a thousand florins/ he's spent on churches, chapels and on convents."¹⁸¹ The poet continues with a description of all the churches and monasteries that have benefitted from Cosimo's beneficence, with particular emphasis on his contributions to San Lorenzo and San Marco.¹⁸²

Cosimo's great expenses for religious buildings are also mentioned by Filarete in his treatise on architecture:

The visible signs of his spending will be a testimony to [his liberality] for a long time and for eternity. These are the churches and religious foundations restored and built anew by him. They were established by him at no little expense. These can be seen, and no one can say that I speak loosely here.¹⁸³

Vespasiano da Bisticci, in his life of Cosimo, also had something to say regarding his liberal expenses when it came to religious endowments, and the reasons behind them:

Many marvelled at such liberality and such diligence as Cosimo showed to these friars. He used to say to many who asked him that he had received so many graces from God that he remained in debt to him ... and was only sorry about one thing, that he had not started to spend ten years earlier.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ "Un numero infinito di ducati/ o, a mme' dir, ricchezza senza fondo/ ha ne' suoi giorni Cosimo murati/ a *llaudem Dei* ed a gloria del mondo." Newbiggin 2015, 26 (1024-27); Newbiggin 2011, 42 (1024-27).

¹⁸¹ "Fatte ha muraglie e difici [sic] eccellenti;/ cento fiorin' più volte sotto un emme/ ha speso in chiese e cappelle e conventi." Newbiggin 2015, 26 (1036-38); Newbiggin 2011, 42 (1036-38).

¹⁸² See Newbiggin 2015, 26-28 (1039-1140); Newbiggin 2011, 42-44 (1039-1140). On Cosimo's religious commissions see Rubinstein 1990; Kent 2000, 131-214.

¹⁸³ "Ma di quello che si vede lui avere speso, il quale in grandissimo tempo e diotturnità sarà testimonio di questo, si sono le chiese e' luoghi de' religiosi per lui recuperate e di nuovo fatte; le quali con non piccolo spesa si vegono essere per lui istituite. E questo si vede, e non è che dire si possa che qui si parli a volontà." Filarete 1965, 318 (Book 25); Filarete 1972, 2:684 (Libro 25).

¹⁸⁴ "Molti si maravigliavano di tanta liberalità et tanta diligentia quanta Cosimo usava a questi religiosi. Diceva a molti ne lo domandavano che aveva ricevute tante gratie da Dio ch'egli restava debitore ... et solo si doleva d'una cosa ch'egli non aveva cominciato a spendere prima dieci anni." Vespasiano da Bisticci 1976, 180 (*Vita di Cosimo de' Medici fiorentino*).

These spiritual offerings, much like those of the three Magi, could, therefore, be considered as the repayment of a debt that Cosimo felt he owed to God. The guilt that his riches imposed on him was probably washed away through these considerable expenditures in God's honour.¹⁸⁵ As discussed by Dale Kent, the words written by Giovanni Rucellai in his *Zibaldone* bring together the main reasons for which the elite commissioned works of art in the Quattrocento: "for the honour of God and the honour of the city and the memory of me."¹⁸⁶

Towards the end of his life, Cosimo was very much preoccupied by thoughts concerning the afterlife, and he began to use the chapel in the Medici palace as a space in which to retreat, as attested by several contemporary sources. Vespasiano da Bisticci recounts an anecdote set during this period:

In this last part of his life, Cosimo was much absent and sometimes would remain for hours without speaking, only thinking. When his wife asked him one day what was the reason for his taciturnity, he told her: "When you have to go to the villa, you are uneasy for fifteen days to organise this trip. Now that I must leave this life and go to another, don't you think that there is much to think about?"¹⁸⁷

In his account, Vespasiano does not give the exact location at which Cosimo spent his time in meditation, when in Florence, but he does reveal what occupied his thoughts, namely preparation for the afterlife. A letter from Giacomo Becchetti, a humanist from Milan, attached to a manuscript of the *De vita contemplativa* of Julianus Pomerius, falsely attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. J. VII 40, previously Naz. C. S. I. VII 40), which he sends to Cosimo as a gift, gives us more information:

When I was in Florence and I visited a lot of magnificent and splendid monasteries that you have built, with great expense, in honor of God and of our religion, I saw the cell that once you had built for yourself in the monastery of San Marco, where now and then you

¹⁸⁵ Gombrich 1960, 283-85. For this and other motives, such as one's own fame, or the city's, in conjunction with the concept of magnificence see Fraser Jenkins 1970; Kent 2000, 131-32. For another interpretation, connected to the discourse of liberality see Shephard 2017.

¹⁸⁶ "all' onore di Dio e all'onore della città e a memoria di me." Kent 2000, 8 and also 5; Perosa 1960, 121 (Giovanni Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, Part 3, 3.2: *Ricordo del 1473*).

¹⁸⁷ "Istava Cosimo in questo ultimo della vita sua molto sospeso, et stave alle volte parechi ore senza parlare, solo pensando. Domandandolo un di la donna la cagione della sua taciturnità di non parlare, le disse: quando tu hai a andare in villa tu istai quindeci di impacciata per ordinare questa andata, avendo io a partirmi di questa vita et andare all'altra, non ti pare egli che si sia assai da pensare?" Vespasiano da Bisticci 1976, 210 (*Vita di Cosimo de' Medici fiorentino*). On this passage see Brown 1992, 97; Hatfield 1992, 240-41; Kent 2000, 138-41.

used to find peace away from other mundane worries, and attend to the contemplation of God, and think over your years and your life, in the bitterness of your soul.¹⁸⁸

Cosimo used the cell in San Marco as a space for meditation and contemplation, as demonstrated by Becchetti's letter. However, the chapel in the Medici palace would also have been a convenient and suitable location, particularly later in life, when travelling to his cell in San Marco proved difficult because of ill health. This is in fact where Galeazzo Maria Sforza found him during his visit to Florence in 1459, a meeting recorded in a letter from one of Galeazzo Maria's counsellors, Niccolò de' Carissimi da Parma, to Francesco Sforza, dated 17 April 1459: "Then the aforesaid Count went immediately into the little chapel of the aforesaid Cosmo. He was waiting for him there, even though suffering all over from the gout." He quickly had to leave, "because of the multitude that was arriving that wanted to visit the aforesaid magnificent Cosmo."¹⁸⁹ In a letter to his father, dated on the same day, Galeazzo Maria gave his own account of the events: "I visited the magnificent Cosimo, whom I found in one of his chapels." When he returned to see him again after a while, he found him still "in the said chapel, from which he couldn't move."¹⁹⁰

This is also confirmed by the poet of the *Terze rime* who writes in honour of the 1459 festivities. In the poem, as Galeazzo Maria enters the Medici palace, after embracing Piero de' Medici, he asks him about the whereabouts of Cosimo. "He's in the chapel,' Piero said to him,/ and straight away, the great count, fleet of foot,/ took himself to the chapel and went in."¹⁹¹ The habit of receiving guests in the *sacrarium* of the house is mentioned by Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise *De re aedificatoria*, written between 1443 and 1452. After entering the vestibule of the house, the first thing that one encounters is "a chapel dedicated to the divine cult, with an altar, in which guests will be introduced to the cult of friendship," and in which the head of the family "will

¹⁸⁸ "Vidi enim, cum essem Florentie et multa magnifica ac splendida monasteria, que in honorem Dei et religionis nostre magna cum impensa extruxisti, lustrarem, te cellulam quondam in monasterio Sancti Marci tibi extruxisse ubi interdum ab aliis mundanis curis semotus quiesceres et Deo ac contemplationi vacares recogitaresque annos tuos et superiorem vitam in amaritudine anime tue." Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. J. VII 40, fol. 65r. On the manuscript see De la Mare 1992, 148-49.

¹⁸⁹ "Poi immediate andò el prefato conte nela capelleta del predefcto Cosmo. Lo aspectava li, pur tuto ingotato. ... per la multitude che sopragiungeva che voleva visitare el prefato magnifico Cosmo." Translation and original from Hatfield 1992, 225 and 225n20 (Letter of Niccolò de' Carissimi da Parma to Francesco Sforza, 17 April 1459).

¹⁹⁰ "Visitay el magnifico Cosmo, quale attrovay in una sua capella ... quale pur anche ne la dicta capella, da la quale non si poteva movere." Translation and original from Hatfield 1992, 225 and 225-26n21 (Letter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza to Francesco Sforza, 17 April 1459).

¹⁹¹ "E Pier gli disse: 'Egli è nella cappella;'/ dentro alla qual di subito n'andava/ del magno conte la persona snella." Newbiggin 2015, 50 (2209-11); Newbiggin 2011, 66 (2209-11). For the letters and the *Terze rime* in connection to the Medici palace see Hatfield 1970b.

embrace those who came to visit him, and will consult with friends if there are decisions to be taken and other similar things.”¹⁹² This corresponds to the *all’antica* ceremony in which the *pater familias* would greet his guests in this area of his house.¹⁹³ That Cosimo actually used his chapel for such a purpose is demonstrated by the accounts of Galeazzo Maria Sforza’s visit.

All of these sources strongly imply that Cosimo was often present in the chapel. During the 1459 festivities, when he used the chapel to receive his visitors, the frescoes were not yet begun. His preference for this location is however evident, and he may have decided to have it embellished after his guests had left for Mantua. It is interesting to note that the painting was completed very fast, in just a few months, from July to December. Perhaps the haste was necessary because Cosimo wanted to use it again as soon as possible.

Apart from functioning as a space for receiving guests and for private contemplation and prayer, the chapel was also used for the celebration of Mass, as several sources inform us, among them Filarete’s description: “then, leaving this hall, there is a chapel on the right as fine as it is suitable for the other parts of the palace and for the dignity that religion deserves since the sacraments are celebrated here with the true blood and body of Christ.”¹⁹⁴ During his stay in the palace, Galeazzo Maria Sforza reports having heard Mass on six out of fifteen days.¹⁹⁵ Also, according to the 1492 inventory of the palace, several objects that had liturgical functions were present in the chapel.¹⁹⁶ Whether a choir would have performed during Mass in the Medici chapel is not clear. However, as mentioned above, it is known that the Cantori di San Giovanni, who sang polyphony in the Baptistery and in the cathedral, were also employed privately by the Medici, and it is possible that they could have accompanied the liturgical celebration on special occasions.

It is certain, however, that the space had been conceived with the idea of contemplation and attentive prayer in mind. The only sources of natural illumination were two *oculi* that mirrored

¹⁹² “religioni dicatum sacrarium cum ara propalam, quo loci ingressus hospes religionem ineat amicitiae, et ... pater familias ... istoc salutantes amplexabitur; si qua erunt arbitria, de consilio pensitabit amicorum, et istiusmodi.” Alberti 1966, 1:418-19 (Book 5.7).

¹⁹³ See Hatfield 1992, 226-27; Mattox 1996, 107.

¹⁹⁴ “Poi, uscito della sala, a mano destra è una cappella, tanto degna quanto a lui è stato conveniente, secondo l’altre parti del palazzo sono, e ancora quanto alla dignità della religione merita essere, massime dove si celebra tanto sacramento, quanto è el vero corpo e sangue di Cristo.” Filarete 1965, 325 (Book 25); Filarete 1972, 2:697 (Libro 25).

¹⁹⁵ See Hatfield 1992, 228.

¹⁹⁶ See Davisson 2001.

each other on the entrance and altar walls.¹⁹⁷ The chapel was so poorly lit that later generations decided to remedy its darkness by opening a window in the altar wall.¹⁹⁸ This characteristic of the chapel might be explained by a passage from Leon Battista Alberti's treatise on architecture, in which he gives indications on how a temple is best lit.¹⁹⁹ He specifies that "the windows of temples should be of modest size and placed very high," exactly as in the case of the Magi Chapel, "so that through them nothing but the sky can be seen, and those celebrating and praying might not be in any way distracted from their thought on divinity." Alberti continues by explaining that "the sense of fear rising from the darkness contributes through its own nature to prepare the mind to veneration."²⁰⁰ These ideas are inspired by the ancient *cella*, or cult centre of a temple, which was meant to be illuminated by candle light.²⁰¹ The *oculi* of the Medici chapel correspond perfectly to Alberti's description of high and small windows. If we are to consider the passage as relevant to the choice of poor illumination, then we can trace in this architectural choice an emphasis on devotion, which was best practiced in these ideal conditions.

The choirs of angels are depicted in the chapel on the two chancel walls (figs. 14-15), flanking the altarpiece. The entrance to the chapel was originally in line with the altar, offering a direct view of Fra Filippo Lippi's painting (fig. 47).²⁰² From this perspective, the angels are barely visible. However, when kneeling in front of the altarpiece for prayer, the devotee would have been surrounded on each side by the figures of the angelic musicians. The effect of the enclosed space created by the two closely aligned walls, would have given the illusion of a window onto the heavenly garden, whose space the devotee kneeling in prayer would almost seem to share. Moreover, the figures of angels closest to the altarpiece, which are adoring Christ in the same position as the devotee, would be very easily visible, creating the illusion of a shared praying experience. It is not certain if in 1459 the choir-stalls would have been arranged as we see them

¹⁹⁷ On these round windows see Thornton 1991, 27-28.

¹⁹⁸ Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 18-19.

¹⁹⁹ The ideas of the treatise were circulating in Florence while the Medici palace was being built. See Kent 2000, 28, also for Alberti's connection to the Medici.

²⁰⁰ "Apertiones fenestrarum in templis esse oportet modicas et sublimes, unde nihil praeter caelum spectes, unde et qui sacrum faciunt quive supplicat, nequicquam a re divina mentibus distrahantur. Horror, qui ex umbra excitatur, natura sui auget in animis venerationem." Alberti 1966, 2:616-17 (Book 7.12).

²⁰¹ Mattox 1996, 112. See also Mattox 2006.

²⁰² On the angels see Acidini Luchinat 1994c; Acidini Luchinat 2009, 107-10. A drawing of praying figures by Benozzo Gozzoli, now in Harewood Hall, London, in the possession of the Earl of Harewood, may be associated to the angels in the Magi Chapel. See Padoa Rizzo 1994, 360; Ahl 1996, 106-08. For more connections between Benozzo Gozzoli's sketches and the frescoes in the Magi chapel see Ames-Lewis 1995. Regarding the entrance see Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 11-12. The present door is a creation from 1875-1876: Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 17-18.

today. The current wooden choir-stalls (fig. 48), attributed to Giuliano da Sangallo, were made around 1470-1475 and occupy the three remaining walls of the chapel (fig. 49).²⁰³ When seated on the two walls that are in line with those on which the angels are painted, the devotees, if turned towards the altar, would actually have a direct view of the heavenly choirs, even more so than of the altarpiece itself. Therefore, the angels in the chapel, although at first not particularly noticeable, are very visible from two of the main viewing points, namely while praying kneeling in front of the altar, and while sitting in the choir-stalls.

In order to better understand what it was that Cosimo would have seen when looking at these angels, and if they played any role in his devotions, we must look at Cosimo's library and at what he read. Albinia De la Mare identified 76 manuscripts which can be attributed to his personal collection, either because they are marked with his ex-libris, or because they were specifically copied for or dedicated to him, or have other indications of ownership.²⁰⁴ Sometimes Cosimo marked his manuscripts with an ex-libris either in the middle of the text, so that it would not be cut or erased, a trick learnt from Coluccio Salutati (figs. 50-51), and sometimes he wrote it on the last folio.²⁰⁵ Cosimo, and later on Piero, possessed several different Bibles, as attested by the family inventories, to which other religious texts can be added.²⁰⁶ Apart from his own library, Cosimo contributed together with his friend the humanist Niccolò Niccoli to the formation of the library of San Marco, to which he donated some of his personal books, and also funded special acquisitions from Siena and Lucca.²⁰⁷ Before his death and even earlier, Cosimo handed down some of his books to his son Piero. It is clear that Piero was particularly interested in history, given the fact that the largest part of his library is dedicated to historical texts, and that other topics are not given the same attention.²⁰⁸

Cosimo had studied Latin poetry in his youth with the grammarian Niccolò di Duccio of Arezzo. James Hankins has concluded that although he would not have been able to compose his own letters in good Latin, he was able to read Latin texts excellently.²⁰⁹ Albinia De la Mare has

²⁰³ On the choir-stalls see Acidini Luchinat 1990, 89-90; Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 10-11.

²⁰⁴ De la Mare 1992, 116.

²⁰⁵ See Pintor 1960, 193-94; Hale 1977, 27-29; De la Mare 1992, 117.

²⁰⁶ Spallanzani 1996, 22 (1417 Inventory, fol. 61v). Spallanzani 1996, 107 (1456 Inventory, fol. 11v). Spallanzani 1996, 151 (1464 Inventory, fol. 65r). On the use of the Bible in domestic settings see Brundin 2018.

²⁰⁷ See Ullman and Stadter 1972.

²⁰⁸ Ames-Lewis 1984, 7. See also Ames-Lewis 1982.

²⁰⁹ Hankins 1992, 71-76.

concluded that he did read his books, and some of them in more than just a superficial manner. Several “Nota” signs demonstrate that Cosimo marked passages in the manuscripts that he read, which can be identified by the black ink he used and by the bent last stroke of the “N” (figs. 52-53).²¹⁰ The most annotated of Cosimo’s manuscripts seems to be John Cassian’s *Collationes*, which is MS Plut. 16.31 of the Biblioteca Laurenziana. Both this manuscript and others seem to indicate that Cosimo had an interest in monastic life, as well as in contemplative practices. As shall be further discussed below, Cosimo possessed and read St Gregory’s *Moralia in Job* and he was closely connected to the Dominicans in San Marco, having obtained the privilege to have a cell of his own in the convent in imitation of the friars. He had also received from Giacomo Becchetti the manuscript of the *De vita contemplativa* previously mentioned, as a gift after building his cell in San Marco.²¹¹

2.5.5 *The Contemplative Angels in the Chapel*

In what follows, I will argue that the manner in which the choirs of angels were represented in the Magi Chapel was influenced by Cosimo’s interest in contemplation. The angels are singing the *Gloria*, but are not holding in their hands any musical scrolls bearing notation or words. Some have their mouths open, and one makes a gesture indicating that a musical performance is taking place. One of the angels on the left-hand wall is pointing to the ring finger of another angel (fig. 14), in a gesture that recalls the use of the Guidonian hand for indicating to the choir the notes that they should sing.²¹² The Guidonian hand was particularly used in plainchant, but also to elaborate on it in improvised polyphony, with a part of the choir singing the chant from memory while the others followed the choirmaster who indicated a counterpoint on his hand, a practice that remained current in the Renaissance. Therefore, the choir in the chapel could be interpreted as singing both monophonic chant and polyphony. The song itself is revealed through the inscriptions inserted in the halos of the angels. The text is clearly that of the hymn of the *Gloria* as sung in church, given that it contains not only the words sung by the angels in the gospel of Saint Luke, but also the verses “Adoramus te/ Glorificamus te,” which are part of the hymn sung during Mass, and which

²¹⁰ De la Mare 1992, 118, 138. See also Kent 2000, 37.

²¹¹ On the manuscript see De la Mare 1992, 148-49.

²¹² See Acidini Luchinat 1994c, 265.

mark the halos of the kneeling angels at the front. These angels, unlike those standing, are completely silent. There is no external sign of them being engaged in song, their mouths are closed, and yet the melody still hovers above their heads, clearly implied by the inscriptions.

Before 1916 Garibaldo Cepparelli restored Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in the Magi Chapel, particularly the halos and wings of the angels. He is thought to have renewed the gilding on the halos, added the eyes on the feathers, and also rewritten the inscriptions, which would explain the numerous errors in the Latin text, although it is assumed that in all other respects he copied faithfully.²¹³ For one of the standing angels painted in profile (fig. 14), given that the words of the *Gloria* would not have fitted into his halo, Gozzoli had them inscribed on the angel's garment.

The use of inscriptions within the halos seems to be specific to Benozzo Gozzoli and they appear in a large number of his works. It is possible that this habit of using inscriptions in his paintings, with beautiful classical letters, derives from an interest in ancient epigraphy, cultivated by Gozzoli during his sojourn in Rome.²¹⁴ However, I have found only three other instances in which he uses inscriptions in the halos of angelic figures. In a panel dated 1450 depicting Saint Ursula (fig. 54), now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Gozzoli writes in the halos of the angels the word "ANGELVS," using it as a means of strengthening the identification of the figures.²¹⁵ Another example is the *Virgin in Glory* (fig. 55), painted one year earlier than the Magi chapel frescoes, in which the halos of angelic figures contain inscriptions naming the order to which they belong.²¹⁶ The third is a panel of *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saints Bartholomew, Francis, and Lucy, and Angels* (fig. 56), dated 1466, which is considered to have been the altarpiece of the Cappella Rustici in Santa Maria dell'Oro, Terni.²¹⁷ The two angels are identified by their halo inscriptions as "ANGELUS GHABRIEL" and "ANGELUS RAPHAEL." However, in all of these cases the inscriptions have a clear function of identifying the figures, and they do not contain any musical references. This is in line with the tradition of using the halos as a support for writing the names of saintly figures, a tradition which Benozzo Gozzoli appears to have been among the last to preserve.²¹⁸

²¹³ Acidini Luchinat 1994b, 19. On the restoration works see Acidini Luchinat 1992.

²¹⁴ Padoa Rizzo 1992, 8; Padoa Rizzo 1994, 358.

²¹⁵ On the panel see Padoa Rizzo 1992, 44; Ahl 1996, 266.

²¹⁶ On the panel see Padoa Rizzo 1992, 60.

²¹⁷ On the altarpiece see Ahl 1996, 262-63.

²¹⁸ Covi 1958, 26 and 205. See also Covi 1963.

The painting of angels with musical halos is thus a feature that is certainly rare and quite possibly unique to the Magi chapel. I would like to argue that this pictorial device could have been used or understood to symbolise an internal type of adoration of Christ through an internal song, which corresponded to a contemplative manner of praying. Moreover, I would like to suggest that given the use of the *Gloria* during Mass, the form of inner devotion portrayed by the angels could also have been a stimulus to emulation for those praying in front of the altarpiece.

The gestures of the angels in the chapel are indicative of a state of adoration and contemplation. The Dominican prayer manual *De modo orandi*, in use during the fifteenth century, describes the nine manners in which it was thought that St Dominic would have prayed, each of them corresponding to nine different inner states. These were represented in the frescoes painted by Fra Angelico in the cells of San Marco, in which different figures from the Dominican order witness biblical episodes and react to them according to these nine manners of praying. All these gestures were meant to inform the viewer of the best way to pray in front of that particular image, inviting imitation.²¹⁹ Arms folded in front of the chest represented the fifth mode of prayer (fig. 57), which corresponds to meditation, and which can be seen in the prayer position of St Dominic in front of Christ on the Cross (fig. 58). The kneeling angels that appear in silent adoration in front of Christ on the walls of the Medici chapel are painted in exactly the same position, another indicator that they are represented specifically in a meditative and contemplative state.

St Gregory discussed matters of inner contemplation connected to angelic prayer in his *Moralia in Job*. This text is known to have been studied by Cosimo de' Medici himself. Vespasiano da Bisticci recalls how during a stay at Careggi, "Cosimo, having returned in the morning from pruning, started to read the *Moralia* of Saint Gregory, a worthy work, which has thirty-seven books, and he said that he read them all in six months."²²⁰ St Gregory's *Moralia* also appears in the 1418 Medici inventory, which lists the books "in Cosimo's study" (nello scriptorio di Cosimo).²²¹

²¹⁹ Schmitt 1984; Hood 1986, 195-200; Gerbron 2017.

²²⁰ "Ritornato Cosimo la matina da potare, aveva cominciato a leggere i Morali di sancto Gregorio, opera degna, che sono libri trentasette, et dissi avergli letti tutti in mesi sei." Vespasiano da Bisticci 1976, 195 (*Vita di Cosimo de' Medici fiorentino*).

²²¹ "The *Moralia* of Saint Gregory in three volumes." "Morali di san Ghirigoro in III volumi." Pintor 1960, 198 (*Inventario di tutte cose trovate in casa di Giovanni de' Medici*, item 52). See also De la Mare 1992, 119 and 126. The manuscripts have not been identified.

Of the inaudible language of the angels, St Gregory states the following: “but when an incomprehensible nature speaks to an invisible nature, it is fitting that our minds should be lifted up from the ways of bodily speech to consider the sublime and unknown modes of inner speech.”²²² He continues by summarising his belief that “the voice of the angels in praise of their creator is nothing more than the wonderment of inner contemplation,” the expression of which can be seen in the angels of the chapel contemplating inwardly the new-born Christ.²²³

Another advocate of inner prayer whose writings could be found in Cosimo’s library is St John Chrysostom, who writes a passage on this topic in his *Homily XIX on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (6:1).²²⁴ He begins by saying:

Let us not then make our prayer by the gesture of our body, nor by the loudness of our voice, but by the earnestness of our mind: neither with noise and clamour and for display, so as even to disturb those that are near us, but with all modesty, and with contrition in the mind, and with inward tears.²²⁵

He continues further on:

From beneath, out of the heart, draw forth a voice, make thy prayer a mystery. ... Do thou also therefore, entering as into a palace, not that on the earth, but ... that which is in heaven ... for thou art joined to the choirs of the angels, and art in communion with the archangels, and art singing with the seraphim ... With these then mingle thyself, when thou art praying, and emulate their mystical order. For not unto men art thou praying, but to God, who is everywhere present, who hears even before the voice, who knows the secrets of the mind. If thou so pray, great is the reward thou shalt receive.²²⁶

²²² “Sed dum naturae invisibili natura incomprehensibilis loquitur, dignum est ut mens nostra qualitatem corporeae locutionis excedens, ad sublimes atque incognitos modos locutionis intimae suspendatur.” Joseph 2018, 76 (Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 2.1.7.8); Gregory the Great 1845, 559 (*In expositionem Beati Job Moralia* 2.1.7.8).

²²³ “Vox namque angelorum est in laude conditoris, ipsa admiratio intimae contemplationis.” Joseph 2018, 77 (Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 2.1.7.10); Gregory the Great 1845, 559-60 (*In expositionem Beati Job Moralia* 2.1.7.10).

²²⁴ Cosimo de’ Medici was in possession of translations of John Chrysostom’s homilies. See De la Mare 1992, 148 (MS 48); Hankins 1992, 75. A copy of Chrysostom’s *Commentary on the Epistle to Hebrews* has his ex-libris: see De la Mare 1992, 143 (MS 23). Chrysostom’s *Adversus vituperatores monasticae vitae* was translated for Cosimo by Ambrogio Traversari: see De la Mare 1992, 146 (MS 39). Several manuscripts containing the works of Saint John Chrysostom were donated by Cosimo de’ Medici to the San Marco library: see Ullman and Stadter 1972, 312-13. The library of San Marco contained his *Homily on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*: see Ullman and Stadter 1972, 142-43.

²²⁵ “Ne itaque habitu corporis, neque vocis clamore, sed voluntatis studio orationes emittamus; neque cum strepitu et sonitu, vel ad ostentationem, ne proximos nobis expellamus, sed cum modestia omni, animi contritione, et lacrymis interioribus.” John Chrysostom 1852, 290 (Homily 19.4); John Chrysostom 1862, 277 (Homilia 19).

²²⁶ “ex intimo cordis tui vocem attrahe, fac orationem tuam esse mysterium ... Et tu itaque quasi in regiam ingrediens non terrenam, sed ... nempe caelestem, ... Nam et cum angelis choreas agis, et archangelorum es socius, et cum Seraphim canis. ... Illis itaque te admisceas in precando, mysticumque ipsorum ornatum imitare. Neque enim hominibus precaris; sed Deo ubique praesenti, antequam vocem emittas audienti, qui novit arcana mentis. Si sic

He concludes by saying that the prayer must match the nature of God to whom it is directed: “For because He Himself is invisible, He would have thy prayer be so likewise.”²²⁷ St John Chrysostom here advocates the imitation of the angels, encouraging the reader to pray with their choirs and in their manner.

Prayer treatises from the fifteenth century also discussed the idea of inner and mental prayer, among them the *Giardino de oratione*, which mentions that “the second manner of praying is called mental prayer: which is done with the mind and with the spirit.”²²⁸ When singing the psalms, this manual promotes the idea that the mind must also be engaged and not only the voice:

Therefore, the mind should be recollected with all diligence during psalmody by those who wish to feel its sweetness and to do as the Apostle Paul says: I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind. I shall sing the Psalms with the spirit, and I shall sing the Psalms with the mind.²²⁹

The author of the *Giardino de oratione* explains further on that in heaven nothing else is done “but always singing praise and glorifying God. So do the angels and the other blessed spirits; which praises are mental and done with the spirit.”²³⁰ Here, therefore, the angels’ manner of praying in heaven is recommended as a model for singing the Psalms on earth.

A manuscript from c. 1450 containing, among other texts, the twelfth-century treatise *On the Six Wings of the Cherubim*, which circulated in manuscript form as a work of Alain de Lille, displays on fol. 65r a miniature of a seraph with six wings (fig. 59), behind which is hidden the face of God, represented by the figure of Christ.²³¹ The wings are inscribed with all the indications of their symbolism, to which have been added the four steps of the *Lectio Divina*. These have been superimposed in different locations on the seraph’s body and it is the placement of the fourth step,

oraveris, multam recipies mercedem.” John Chrysostom 1852, 291 (Homily 19.4); John Chrysostom 1862, 277 (Homilia 19).

²²⁷ “Quia enim ipse invisibilis est, ideo vult orationem tuam hujusmodi esse.” John Chrysostom 1852, 291 (Homily 19.4); John Chrysostom 1862, 277 (Homilia 19).

²²⁸ “La seconda maniera de oratione e chiamata mentale: la quale si fa con la mente e con lo spirito.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 7 (Chapter 2).

²²⁹ “Volessi dunque con ogni diligentia ricogliere la mente al tempo de la psalmodia: chi vuole sentire la sua dolceza: e fare chome dice lo apostolo Paulo il quale dice. Io ororo con lo spirito e ororo con la mente: psalmigiario con lo spirito: e psalmigiario con la mente.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 14 (Chapter 3).

²³⁰ “ma sempre laudare e magnificare Dio. Così de li angeli de li altri spiriti beati. Le quale laude sono mentale e con lo spirito facte.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 205 (Chapter 23).

²³¹ Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. Lat. 430. On fol. 100v we are given information regarding the scribe, a Venetian named Giovanni de Luxia, chancellor of Cattaro, who had completed the manuscript in 1450. In the fifteenth century the manuscript was in the possession of the Buzzacarini family in Padua. See Pellegrin 1978, 77. On earlier similar images of seraphim see Carruthers 2009.

representing contemplation, within the halo of the angel that offers an interesting parallel with the musical halos of the angels in the Magi chapel. Although the manuscript was copied in the Veneto area, the miniature of the six-winged seraph, to whose halo a state of contemplation is attributed, represents a witness to what a Quattrocento viewer might have thought about when confronted with the display of angelic song within halos. The area around the angel's head may have been associated with a specific kind of inner devotion, that of contemplation and adoration, in which the angels in the Magi chapel can be understood to be engaged, setting an example for their viewers, just as the seraph in the manuscript was meant to do.

The fact that the viewer was invited to join in the song of the *Gloria* by the image of these angelic singers is demonstrated by the practice of singing the *Gloria* during Mass. Francesco Palermo published a selection of “orazioni antiche toscane” together with the *Opera a ben vivere* and the *Ammaestramenti* of St Antoninus, among which the fourth gives advice regarding devotion during Mass: “The *Gloria in excelsis Deo* starts to be sung, which song was first said by the angels when Christ was born from the Virgin Mary. And we must then say it with them, given that we must be their companions in praising God.”²³² Taken together with those already discussed, this source clearly indicates that the “gaze of devotion” upon the musical angels in the chapel would have triggered in the viewer a desire to emulate the manner of praying and the song performed by the angelic figures.

Cosimo would have been able to understand these mechanisms and respond to them, not only from theological texts and from models of praying promoted in the monastic environment, but also because similar ideas were commonplace in popular devotional culture. The concepts of the inner eyes and the inner voice were widespread in the period, as the texts of *laude* demonstrate.²³³ A *lauda* on the Annunciation by Feo Belcari presents the figure of the Virgin in her mother's womb, already in contemplation of God, singing in her mind: “There was never a saint so contemplative/ as you sitting in the body of St Anne/ ... often your mind sang Osanna.”²³⁴ Another *lauda*, “Let us go to Jesus Christ” (*Andiamo a Iesù Christo*), repeats the same image of the mind that sings: “Who

²³² “si comincia a cantare *Gloria in excelsis Deo*: il quale canto fu prima detto dagli Angeli, quando Cristo nacque della Vergine Maria. E noi dobbiamo allora dire con loro, imperò che noi dobbiamo essere loro compagni a lodare Iddio.” Pierozzi 1858, 269 (*Orazioni antiche toscane* IV).

²³³ On these concepts see also Gumbrecht 2008, 5.

²³⁴ “Non fu mai sancto si contemplativo/ come tu stando in corpo di Sanct'Anna/ ... spesso la mente tua cantava Osanna.” Belcari 1490, 14v.

tastes Jesus, manna/ of all sweet tastes/ immediately sings Osanna/ with the mind and with the heart.”²³⁵ Another asks: “O, Mary, allow that I may sing/ with all my heart, my mouth, and my mind.”²³⁶ In many *laude*, for different occasions, the praise of God is achieved through the mind and not through the voice, even when it is sung. A *lauda* that, according to the indications in MS Magl. XXXV 119, “is good to say for Easter and encourages the person to celebrate and sing,” invites the devotee to use the same inner methods of prayer: “Let us celebrate with the mind/ that Christ is resurrected.”²³⁷

The song of the adoring angels in the Magi chapel is represented in line with all of these very current ideas, described by theologians, prayer manuals, and the *lauda* tradition, which recommended an inner form of vocal prayer, in imitation of the angels, in order to properly praise God. The devotee kneeling in prayer in front of the altar, or perhaps sitting in the choir-stalls, would have been reminded by the angelic figures of the importance of focusing the mind during their devotions and of engaging in contemplation. Cosimo was particularly interested in these matters, as his annotated manuscripts demonstrate; we can, therefore, consider that he might have influenced their representation, and with even greater likelihood that as a viewer he would have understood them to reflect and express these ideas.

It is also because of Cosimo that such a large choir of angels was chosen to fill out two of the chapel’s walls. As a patron of youth confraternities, Cosimo was concerned not only with communicating his magnificence and fulfilling his desire to control the political life of Florence, but also with actively supporting the education of Florentine young men. In some of his manuscripts, Cosimo has marked passages that refer to the education of children. For example, he marked with a “nota” sign the beginning of Chapter 13 in Cassian’s *Collationes* (fig. 53), which reads: “Just as all young men are not alike in fervour of spirit nor equally instructed in learning and good morals, so too we cannot find that all old men are equally perfect and excellent.”²³⁸ The Compagnia della Purificazione, the youth confraternity under Cosimo’s patronage in San Marco,

²³⁵ “Chi ghusta Iesù manna/ d’ogni dolce sapore/ subito canta Osanna/ con la mente et col core.” *Laude* 1500, 63r.

²³⁶ “O Maria concedi che io canti/ con tucto il core la bocha e la mente.” Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 1502, fol. 23r.

²³⁷ “Ialda e buona a dire per la Pasqua de resuessi e chonforta l’uomo a ffar festa e chanto;” “Colla mente facciam festa/ che Christo è risucitato.” Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XXXV 119, fol. 29r.

²³⁸ “Sicut non sunt omnes juvenes pari modo vel ferventes spiritu, vel disciplinis ac moribus optimis instituti, ita ne senes quidem cuncti uno modo vel perfecti possunt, vel probatissimi reperiri.” Cassian 1722, 146 (II.XIII). Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 16.31, fol. 78v.

educated children in many different directions, teaching them among other things how to pray. Its statutes mention as the first level of the ideal life of its young members, “the contemplative life, which consists in elevating the mind to God with devout prayer and sacred meditation.”²³⁹ As the last section of this chapter will demonstrate, the angels of Cosimo’s chapel were constructed on the model of the youths of Florence, resembling them in both appearance and behaviour. Their inner song and state of “silent” adoration was meant to symbolise the *vita contemplativa* of these young boys as a model of prayer.

2.5.6 *The Magi and the Afterlife*

Before concluding with an analysis of the angels’ external appearance, I would like to provide a short excursus considering how the choirs of angels, represented in the heavenly garden, were connected to the overarching devotional message of the Magi Chapel, represented by the journey of the three kings to Christ. The example of the Magi was meant to be emulated by their followers by offering their own spiritual gifts in order to obtain an afterlife spent in angelic adoration in heaven. The heavenly musicians singing the *Gloria* also represented a prefiguration of the afterlife attained in imitation of the Magi, ideas which can be found in contemporary *sacre rappresentazioni*, as well as in sermons recited at meetings of the Compagnia de’ Magi.

The texts of the Florentine *sacre rappresentazioni* of the Magi, performed either during the *festa di San Giovanni* or during the celebration of Epiphany, have survived in second-hand formats. A text of “the devout representation and *festa de’ Magi*” (la divota rappresentazione e festa de’ Magi) is preserved in a *laudario* from Siena belonging to the Compagnia di Santa Caterina della Notte. It describes the procession of the Magi towards Herod and their discourse with him, which was present in the same format in Florentine *feste*, as attested by several *ricordi*.²⁴⁰ In the text of the *sacra rappresentazione*, the figure of Joseph thanks the three kings for their gifts, for which Christ “will be the one who during your journey,/ although he is very young,/ will rescue you from evil

²³⁹ “vita contemplativa la qual consiste in elevare la mente a Dio cum devote oratione e sanctissime meditatione.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Acquisti e Doni 336, fol. 2v.

²⁴⁰ Another version is preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2893. See Bartholomaeis 1952, 384-85 and 391. The text has been partially published in Bartholomaeis 1967, 2:203-08. A complete version appears in Newbigin 1983, 190-203. Nerida Newbigin considers that the *sacra rappresentazione*, regardless of its origin, reflects the Florentine theatrical performances, given the importance of the *festa de’ Magi* in the city: Newbigin 1983, 185.

and difficulty.”²⁴¹ Although referring to the Magi’s return home, this journey could also symbolise the devotee’s life and ultimately the soul’s acceptance into heaven, all made possible by the sacrifice of Christ and deserved because of the spiritual gifts offered by the faithful, in imitation of those of the Magi.

The text of a surviving Florentine Nativity sacred play offers a parallel with the Sienese example, from which the similarities between the two are revealed. Nerida Newbiggin considers that there are elements in the play which link it to the Medici family, namely the six apples offered by one of the shepherds, laid at Christ’s feet, which could have been displayed as the Medici *palle*.²⁴² By looking at the equivalent answer given by Joseph to the three Magi, we uncover more details regarding the nature of the help offered by Christ to his Oriental worshippers: “and may he give you peace, love, force, and virtue/ in this world, and in the end, in heaven, blessings.”²⁴³ The ultimate goal of these Quattrocento Magi is the afterlife, and in this *sacra rappresentazione*, as each of them offers their gifts to Christ, they each demand the same favour from their Saviour. Balthazar confesses: “O supernal creator, how I esteem you,/ I have come here to revere you./ Do not punish me according to my sin,/ but through your mercy ensure that I am saved.”²⁴⁴ Melchior asks: “do not look, Lord, at my failings,/ ... I ask from you peace in this short life,/ and rest with you in heaven once departed.”²⁴⁵ Caspar pleads: “ask the Lord for us, if it is his will,/ to give us grace that we may serve his wishes.”²⁴⁶ The requests of the three Magi correspond more to the prayers and desires of those viewing the play, the oriental kings giving voice to their concerns, as much as offering an example for imitation.

The devotional ideas that were circulating in the Compagnia de’ Magi only a few decades after Cosimo de’ Medici’s death were similar to those expressed in these *sacre rappresentazioni*. Unfortunately, we have no tangible first-hand account of the devotional practices in the

²⁴¹ “sarà Colui che nel vostro cammino,/ benché sia piccolino,/ vi scamperà di male e di fatica.” Newbiggin 1983, 202 (*La rappresentazione della Festa de’ Magi*).

²⁴² On this *sacra rappresentazione* see D’Ancona 1872, 1:191-92; Bartholomaeis 1952, 400-01 and 405; Newbiggin 1996b, 126-27.

²⁴³ “e dievi pace, amor, forza e virtute/ in questo mondo, e in cielo alfin salute.” Banfi 1963, 171 (*La rappresentazione della Natività di Cristo*).

²⁴⁴ “O creator superno, come io stimo,/ io ti son qui venuto a riverire./ Non mi punir secondo el mio peccato,/ ma fa per tua pietà ch’i’ sia salvato.” Banfi 1963, 169-70 (*La rappresentazione della Natività di Cristo*).

²⁴⁵ “non guardar, Signore, al fallar mio,/ ... pace ti chieggo in questa breve vita,/ e teco in ciel riposo alla partita.” Banfi 1963, 170 (*La rappresentazione della Natività di Cristo*).

²⁴⁶ “priega per noi il Signor, se gli è in piacere, che ci dia grazia a server suo volere.” Banfi 1963, 170 (*La rappresentazione della Natività di Cristo*).

Compagnia de' Magi during Cosimo's lifetime, and they are only revealed to us by sources dating from after his death. Nevertheless, these sources express ideas that existed already in the texts of sacred plays on the same theme, and are, therefore, worth analysing in relation to Cosimo's period. If no records of the *compagnia* have survived, several sermons have been transmitted, recited by some of the brothers to the members of the confraternity, among whom were important figures in the cultural context of the time, such as Cristoforo Landino, Alamanno Rinuccini, and Donato Acciaiuoli.²⁴⁷ The earliest of the sermons dates from 1468, only four years after Cosimo's death. There seems to be a common thread that appears time and again in these sermons, though some are embellished with the philosophical ideas of Marsilio Ficino. This is represented by the journey of the devotee, as imitator of the Magi, to the glory and happiness of the angelic paradise, obtained through the mediation of the special gifts that they offer to Christ.

The brothers in the confraternity congregated on Tuesday evenings in San Marco, and at one point were almost seven hundred in number.²⁴⁸ Upon entering the *compagnia*, the initiate was thought to become a *magus* symbolically, as Luigi Pulci confessed in a letter from 1472 written to Lorenzo de' Medici, in which he mentions the moment "when I was elected to the rank of the Magi."²⁴⁹

Rab Hatfield, discussing a letter sent by the Compagnia de' Magi to the Compagnia di San Bartolommeo around 1466-1468, remarked upon the "substitute reality" which seems to have been created around the *compagnia*'s activities, in which the members impersonated the biblical kings even when writing a letter about the organisation of festivities. The letter is written by the three Magi, who excuse themselves for their absence from an upcoming *fiesta*:

It would have been very pleasing to be able to be personally present at such a solemnity, but because we are busy transforming our kingdoms – and especially Egypt, Ethiopia, and Nubia, Arabia, Sabea, India, Media, both of them, and Armenia – for now it is impossible to leave.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ On the practice of lay preaching in confraternities see Kristeller 1956a, 103-06; Weissman 1990. See also Becker 1974. On the rituals which took place during their meetings see Weissman 1982, 90-105.

²⁴⁸ Hatfield 1970a, 122.

²⁴⁹ "quando fui eletto al grado de' Magi." Pulci 1886, 119 (Letter 28: from Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de' Medici, 8 December 1472).

²⁵⁰ "Sarebbe suto gratjssimo personalmente poterj presentare a tanta solenjtà, ma perché noj ej trovjamo ochupatj a transformare i nostrj regnj – et maximamente Egjptto, Ethiopja e Nubja, Arabja, Sabea, Jndja, Madja e ll'una e ll'altra, e 'rmenja – per tanto è jmpossjbjle assentarcj." Hatfield 1970a, 148. Richard Trexler (1980b, 401-03) discusses the letter and its evidence of the existence of a festive geography of Florence, symbolically divided into kingdoms.

The masks were not only put on for the processions, but seemed to be part of a double persona maintained by the members, which they incarnated in this symbolic devotional life within the *compagnia*, in which they were thinking about themselves as imitators of the Magi.

A few sermons are of great importance to the understanding of the devotional practices within the Compagnia de' Magi after Cosimo de' Medici's death. Several ideas emerge from them, such as that of a brotherhood between men and angels, particularly in the afterlife, as well as the importance of imitating the Magi, by offering spiritual gifts to Christ. Most of these sermons exemplify how the journey of the Magi is in fact the journey from this life unto the next, and they express the hope of reaching heaven and rejoicing with the choirs of angels. These ideas also appeared in certain works of art depicting the three kings, which had a funerary function, and in which the Magi seem to play the role of spiritual guides both during life and after death.²⁵¹

Bernardo d'Alamanno de' Medici gave a sermon on the Crucifixion in which he explains to all those congregated the devotional model offered by the three kings:

Wherefore, dear and beloved brothers, in order to imitate, summoning all our powers, the venerable examples of our protecting fathers and advocates, the holy Magi; ... thus let us, their spiritual sons, do ... Let us offer him myrrh, incense, and gold: the myrrh of bitter tears, the incense of heartfelt sighs, and the purest gold of a clean conscience.²⁵²

He concludes his sermon in verse, and at the very end expresses his hope, shared with all those congregated, that “in the end we may find ourselves in heaven with the Magi/ where we will see you [Christ] again face to face.”²⁵³

The star that guided the Magi also showed their followers symbolically the way towards heaven. In a sermon delivered in 1476 on Holy Thursday, Pier Filippo Pandolfini addresses the brothers of the *compagnia* thus:

May the splendour of that star which from Orient led the three Magi to adore and contemplate the divine majesty, light up our minds and lead us all to the true glory and supreme happiness. And in order that better and more deservedly we be hearkened to, let us offer this evening to Jesus Christ, imitating the holy Magi, the gold from the treasure of

²⁵¹ Trexler 1990, 39, 56.

²⁵² “Per la qual cosa, cari e dilette fratelli, per imitar, iuxta la nostra possa, i venerandi vestigij de' nostri padri protectorj et advocatj sancti Magi; ... così [facciamo] noj, loro spiritualj figliuolj, ... Offeriamogli mjrra, incenso et oro: mjrra d'amare lachrime, incenso di cordialissimj sospirj, et oro purissimo di monda conscientia.” Hatfield 1970a, 132 and 157 (Bernardo d'Alamanno de' Medici, Sermon on the Crucifixion).

²⁵³ “alfin co' Magi ci troviamo in cielo,/ Ove ti riveggiamo a faccia a faccia.” The fragment has been published in Del Lungo 1897, 193 (Bernardo d'Alamanno de' Medici, Sermon on the Crucifixion).

our minds ... let us give him our souls . . . let us offer him the incense of our prayers ... begging him devoutly that by virtue of his most holy body and precious blood, of which this evening we make special mention, he may have mercy on all this family.²⁵⁴

The members of the Compagnia de' Magi did not only dress up as their patrons during the *feste* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, but they also imitated the three kings in their devotions. These ideas according to which the gifts of the Magi were turned into prayers, tears, and clean souls, were probably repeated time and again during the meetings of the confraternity, given that in the few sermons that have survived they are mentioned twice. It is possible that this devotional discourse around the three kings was present even earlier in the Compagnia de' Magi, of which the Medici had long been patrons, given that the frescoes in the Magi chapel appear to correspond with it, these ideas probably continuing to circulate for several decades, expressing the devotees' desire of attaining heaven in the afterlife.

The Sermon on Charity delivered by Giovanni Nesi to the followers of the Magi on 23 March 1486 encapsulates a message that seems also to be expressed in the frescoes of the Medici chapel:

Arise, then, my elect ones! Arise, come with the light of the eastern star! Come with me, O sons of the holy Magi, to the heavenly manger, to which not faith, not hope, but only love will lead you... Fly with the wings of seraphs to the sphere of the ardent sun... Come to your kingdom, to the empyrean, that is, the luminous heavens, in which has been assigned *ab eterno* the happiest of dwelling places to whomever will follow my banner. Come with me, O all of you that are inflamed by the divine love! Enter into the fiery gates of the heavenly Jerusalem ... Enter all with lighted flame and nuptial dress to the celestial wedding, where together with the angelic choirs, filled with ambrosia and nectar, that is, cognition and divine fruition, you shall live happy in eternity.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ “Lo splendor di quella stella, la quale d’oriente condusse e tre Magi ad adorar e contemplar la maestà divjna, allumjni le mente nostre, e noj tuttj perduca alla vera gloria e felicità suprema. E a occio ché più degnamente e meglio siamo exauditi, offeriamo in questa sera a Yhesù Christo, imitando e santi Magi, l’oro del tesoro dell’animo nostro come a vero re di tutto l’universo; ... offeria[mo]gli lo ‘ncenso delle nostre orationj, adorandolo e venerandolo come vero creatore del cielo e della terra, coeterno e coequale al Padre, pregandolo divotamente che per la vjrtù del suo sacratissimo corpo e pretioso sangue, di che stasera facciamo precipua mentione, abbi misericordia di tutta questa famjglia.” Hatfield 1970a, 131 and 156 (Pier Filippo Pandolfini, Sermon on the Last Supper).

²⁵⁵ “Orsù adunque, electi mia, orsù uenite colla luce dell’orientale stella. Venite meco, o figliuoli de’ sancti magi al celeste presepe. Doue non fede, non speranza ui coduce, ma solo amore. ... uolate con le seraphiche ale ad la spera del ardente sole. ... Venite al uostro regno, ad l’empyreo, cioè, luminoso cielo; nel quale a chiunque seguirà el mio uexillo è ab eterno deputato felicissimo luogo. Venite meco tutti, o infiammati del diuino amore. Entrate dentro alle focose porte della celeste Hyerusalem, ... Entrate tutti coll’accesa fiamma et colla ueste nuptiale alle celeste noze! doue insieme con gli angelici chori ripieni d’ambrosia et nectare, cioè cognitione et fruitione diuina, in sempiterno beati uiuerete.” Hatfield 1970a, 134-35 (Giovanni Nesi, Sermon on Charity); Vasoli 1973, 160 (Giovanni Nesi, Oratio de charitate). On Giovanni Nesi and his sermons see Zorzi Pugliese 1980; Garfagnini 2007.

In Giovanni Nesi's sermon, this call to heaven is made by Charity, which seems to metaphorically embody the elusive star that guides not only the Magi, but all other souls on their way to God. It calls forth the devotee to proceed on a spiritual itinerary which might come close to the thoughts on the afterlife that had preoccupied Cosimo in the last years of his life, when, as he explained to his wife in Vespasiano's account, he was preparing for the most difficult journey of all.

2.5.7 *The Material Angels in the Chapel*

The angels in the chapel are, however, more than just a symbolic expression of heaven. Their material appearance reveals their connection to the visual culture of fifteenth-century Florentine festive life, in which young boys would dress up as angels for processions and religious plays. These young boys, members of the youth confraternities which Cosimo de' Medici supported, had specific costumes designed for their "metamorphosis" into angels, traces of which we can find in the figures of the choir painted by Benozzo Gozzoli.

Although scholars have much discussed how the Magi chapel was a representation of the 1439 Council, several have brought into focus the events of 1459, taking into account the fact that work on the frescoes began right after the festivities ended, so they would have been fresh both in the mind of the commissioner and in the eyes of the painter. These celebrations were still seen in connection to the 1439 Council, given that all the visitors, among whom were Pope Pius II, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Sigismondo Malatesta, and Otaviano Ubaldini della Carda, the brother of the duke of Urbino, were in fact headed to another Council, this time held in Mantua, and that this moment commemorated twenty years since the pact of unification had been sealed.²⁵⁶

The idea that the frescoes reflected the more immediate and vivid festivities that had just delighted Florence in 1459 is also plausible because of the importance of the events for the entire city, which had been actively involved from the lowest to the highest of its citizens in the preparation of the celebrations, as recounted by the extensive commemorative poem known as the *Terze rime*, written especially in honour of this *fiesta*.²⁵⁷ A large pictorial cycle, begun right after the festivities had

²⁵⁶ The participants are mentioned in the anonymous *Ricordi di Firenze dell'anno 1459*: "Ricordi" 1907, 3-15. See Crum 1996, 410; Acidini Luchinat 2009, 96-100; Despotakis 2009, 102. See also Hatfield 1992, 233-36 and Hatfield 1970b, 236.

²⁵⁷ On the manuscript of the *Terze rime* see Ceccarelli 1987.

ended, could also have been a means to preserve the memory of the Medici's contribution to the *fama* of the city.

The elaborate costumes parading on the walls of the Medici chapel offer important clues linking the frescoes to the 1459 events. Each group is distinguished by specific colours: white for Caspar, green for Balthazar, and red for Melchior.²⁵⁸ The Oriental costumes of several protagonists in the cavalcade could have been inspired by the costumes of the Greeks who came to the Council in 1439, but they are less vivid than those in earlier Magi representations, the memory of these events having faded.²⁵⁹ After 1439, these exotic hats and costumes began to appear in works of art, as much as in processions and *sacre rappresentazioni*, in order to represent the Orientals who came with the Magi to adore the new-born Christ.²⁶⁰ Other details confirm the influence of the 1459 festivities. Maria Sframeli has pointed out the similarity between the costumes of some of the figures in the frescoes and the descriptions of the clothes worn by some of the participants in the 1459 parades, as recorded by the *Terze rime*: "Each joustier had a garland on a wreath/ of lovely silver scales, each one adorned/ with golden feathers that all stood erect,/ to decorate the helmet on his head."²⁶¹ The three young pages that form the avant-garde of Caspar's suite (fig. 60) have their heads adorned with headdresses in the form of a garland, from which rise feathers, very similar to the helmets worn by the 1459 joustiers.²⁶²

Both the 1459 festivities and the musical and theatrical activities of youth confraternities, of which Cosimo was a supporter, also influenced the external appearance of the choir of angels. As I shall demonstrate, their dress, their wings, halos, and even some of their activities in the painted heavenly scene can all be connected to the costumes of child-angels that were seen on the streets and in the churches of fifteenth-century Florence during the many sacred celebrations, which were often prepared under Medici patronage.

The majority of sources which provide accounts of the 1459 celebrations do not offer information regarding the sacred performances that took place, focusing more on the other events, the *giostra*,

²⁵⁸ Acidini Luchinat 1994e, 40.

²⁵⁹ See Kent 2000, 258 and 313. Dale Kent considers that the festivities of 1459 are more likely to have influenced Gozzoli's frescoes.

²⁶⁰ Ceccarelli 1984, 95-100.

²⁶¹ "A guisa di mazzocchio una ghirlanda/ di scaglie d'ariento addorna e bella/ con penne d'oro che ssù dritte manda/ avea ciascun dintorno alla pianella." Newbigin 2011, 97 (4444-47); Newbigin 2015, 110-11 (4444-47).

²⁶² Acidini Luchinat and Sframeli 1994, 126.

the *armeggeria*, or the hunt in the piazza della Signoria. Benedetto Dei, in his *Cronica*, mentions the “*festa* for the Pope” (*festa pe’ ‘l papa*), which, according to his description, seems to have been similar to the yearly festival of San Giovanni, including the *edifizi* and the performance of *sacre rappresentazioni*: “and afterwards another *festa* was ordered for the Pope; and this was a solemn and worthy procession, with many *edifici* and representations and devotions, with forty-six processions of flagellants, so that 2518 citizens were there.”²⁶³ He then provides a list of some of the confraternities that took part, a list in which those that were part of the procession and those that must have been responsible for the *edifizi* and the performance of the sacred plays are mixed together. Among these, Dei mentions “the Magi” (*i Magi*) and “the Archangel Raphael” (*l’ Agniolo Raffaello*), meaning that the scene of Christ’s Nativity would have been one of the *edifizi* presented to the Pope, alongside the procession of the Magi. The singing angels of the Nativity, which Benozzo Gozzoli painted just a few months later on the walls of the Medici chapel, had been present in the 1459 festivities in the theatrical representation of Christ’s birth. Benedetto Dei concludes that “never in Florence has there ever been made a similar *festa*, nor similar processions, nor similar representations.”²⁶⁴

The following discussion is based on several elements that would have informed both the eye of the painter and the desire of the commissioner of the Magi chapel angels. Both Benozzo Gozzoli and Cosimo de’ Medici would have seen the celebrations of 1459, and both were accustomed to all the yearly performances throughout Florence. Cosimo de’ Medici, being the patron of the youth confraternity of the Purificazione, might have wanted to have its young “angelic” members represented as the choir celebrating Christ’s Nativity in heaven. And Benozzo Gozzoli would have been very well equipped to perform the task, given his own connection to the theatrical life of Florence. It is known that Benozzo had been involved in painting sets for the Ascension *festa* sponsored by the Medici in Santa Maria del Carmine. In 1441, the company mentions a payment for “15 pieces of gold which were missing from one *chonpasso* made by Benozzo, in the name of

²⁶³ “E ordinòssi dappoi un’altra *festa pe’ ‘l papa*; e questa fu una solenne e degna *prociessione*, *edifici* e *rapresentazioni* e *divozioni* assai, *chon* *quaranzei* *prociessioni* di *battuti*, che *ffurono* *cittadini* 2518.” Dei 1984, 68.

²⁶⁴ “in Firenze non si fe’ mai simile *festa*, nè simile *prociessioni*, nè simile *rapresentazioni* quanto fu questa.” Dei 1984, 68.

Giovanni del Puglese, that is he painted it.”²⁶⁵ In 1443, they record payment to several painters, among them Benozzo Gozzoli, “to have 5 shields painted that is to pay the colours and varnish.”²⁶⁶

In what follows, I would like to take each item of the angels’ costumes in turn, from the halos and wings, to their robes and the floral arrangements, in order to analyse them through the documents that describe angelic costumes from fifteenth-century Florence. Firstly, I will turn to the eye-witnesses that had seen these angels in plays or in processions during the festival of San Giovanni. Abraham of Suzdal described the angel Gabriel that he saw in 1439 during the Annunciation *fiesta* as follows: “The Angel was played by a beautiful, curly-haired boy: his gown was snow-white and decorated all over with gold, as was the Angel’s stole over his shoulders. He had golden wings, and in everything his appearance expressed perfectly the picture of one of God’s angels.”²⁶⁷ Several of Gozzoli’s angels are represented with curly hair and many of their robes are decorated with gold. Some of them also have golden wings (fig. 14).

In a letter to Pirrino Amerino, Piero Cennini described the *fiesta di San Giovanni* organised in 1475 and all the different costumes parading the streets, among which were the figures of child-angels, costumed in the following way: “another, dressed up as an angel, covered the head with a shining wig and extended wings on both sides, hanging from the shoulders.”²⁶⁸ In fifteenth-century Florence, the wings of angels could be made from different materials. The most expensive, used by confraternities in prosperous years, were those made out of peacock feathers. The inventory of Cosimo’s Compagnia della Purificazione mentions in 1501-1502: “four pairs of angel wings with peacock feathers and tinsel, sad.”²⁶⁹ The wings were certainly worn out at the time. In the Ascension play, too, the angels wore peacock-feather wings, although these were also made from different materials. In 1437, Francesco di Rosso was paid 3 *lire* and 2 *soldi* “for borrowing 30 white and coloured feathers to make the wings of the angels.”²⁷⁰ In the following year the wings were mended with “twenty coloured ostrich feathers that were missing from the wings of the

²⁶⁵ “per xv pezzi d’oro manchorono a 1 chonpasso che fe’ Benozo per nome di Giovanni del Puglese, cioè lo dipinse.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:376.

²⁶⁶ “Per fare dipingere 5 schudi, cioè paghare cholori e vernice.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:403.

²⁶⁷ Newbigin 1996a, 1:6.

²⁶⁸ “Alius amictus ad angeli speciem caput candenti galero tegit atque alas ab utroque pendentibus humero pandit.” Mancini 1909, 224 (Letter of Piero Cennini to Pirrino Amerino).

²⁶⁹ “‘iij’o paia d’alie da angnoij chon penne di paghone e orpello, triste.” Matchette 2000, 95 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 55).

²⁷⁰ “per prestatura di 30 penne bianche e cholorate per fare l’alie degli Agnoli.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:347.

angels.”²⁷¹ Neri di Bicci’s inventory of the Compagnia di Sant’Agnese from 1466/7, also mentions “four pairs of wings for the said Angels decorated with tinsel.”²⁷² The wings of the angels in the Magi chapel all refer to the materials that were used for constructing the wings worn by children during theatrical performances. They are multi-coloured, and several of them are made of peacock feathers just like the wings of the angels in the Compagnia della Purificazione. The children of the confraternity would have also worn halos, kept in a *cassone* in the company’s oratory, as recorded in the inventory: “four brass diadems and two of gilded paper.”²⁷³

The robes worn by the child-angels of youth confraternities were multi-coloured. The inventory of the Compagnia della Purificazione mentions: “four robes of changing taffeta ... to dress up the angels.”²⁷⁴ Their account books also mention payments for these materials, as for example in 1448, when 3 *lire* and 6 *danari* were spent “for 4 *braccia* of taffeta of many colours in order to make the robes of the angels.”²⁷⁵ The same multi-coloured vestments are worn by the angels in Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes. Moreover, the account books of the Purificazione also mention payments made in 1449 in order “to make the stars that are fastened on the robes of the angels.”²⁷⁶ The robes of the child-angels of the confraternity of the Purification would have been decorated with stars, and one such robe, light-coloured and covered in golden stars, is also worn by an angel on the right-side wall in the Medici chapel (fig. 61). Given that the frescoes have been thoroughly restored, particularly the gilding, it is very likely that originally all of the angels had their robes similarly decorated. The material appearance of the Magi chapel angels invokes the angelic costumes worn by the youths of the Compagnia della Purificazione, which was under Cosimo de’ Medici’s patronage, demonstrating both the insertion of elements from theatrical representations that were part of the visual culture of fifteenth-century Florence, and also perhaps the patron’s express desire to have the young boys of his confraternity included somehow on the walls of his chapel.

²⁷¹ “venti penni di struzolo cholorate, manchavano a l’alie degli Angnoli.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:358.

²⁷² “4 paia d’alie pe’ detti Agnioli ornate d’orpello.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:536; Newbigin 1996a, 1:75.

²⁷³ “iiiij^o diademe d’ottone e due di charte dorate.” Matchette 2000, 95 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 59).

²⁷⁴ “iiiij^o chamicj di taffetà changiante ... per vestire angnoj.” Matchette 2000, 95 (Appendix Doc. I: Inventory item 54).

²⁷⁵ “sono per braccia 4 di ttaffeta di più cholori per fare e’ chamicci per gli agnioli.” Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654, no. 30, fol. 90v.

²⁷⁶ “per fare le stelle per rapicchare in su chamisci del gl’angnoli.” Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654, no. 30, fol. 91r.

Floral arrangements were also a very important element in confraternity *feste* and sacred plays. Flower festoons, like those prepared by the angels in the background of Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes, were a recurrent presence in festivities both sacred and profane in fifteenth-century Florence.²⁷⁷ The Compagnia della Purificazione records payments for lilies for use in its *feste*, and so does the adult confraternity of Sant' Agnese for its Ascension *fiesta*—for example: “for lilies and other domestic flowers for the garlands, and for the Star, and for the *Nuvola*, and for other.”²⁷⁸

Even the arrangement of the angels around both sides of Christ might evoke sacred theatrical representations. One of the details to which “the learned man” (*dottore*) draws the attention of the audience at the end of a *sacra rappresentazione* of the Nativity is particularly interesting: “See .../ the angels present around [Christ], and the sacred song/ resounding on this side and on that.”²⁷⁹ From the words of the *dottore* we get a glimpse of what might have been seen by those present at the performance. In the Magi chapel, the disposition of the angelic choir is similar to that described by the learned man: the angelic song comes precisely from “this side and that,” that is, from either side of the infant Christ. The representation of the choirs of angels on the two walls that flank the altarpiece in which the infant Christ is adored might also be indebted to the staging of *sacre rappresentazioni* of the Nativity, in which one of the possible arrangements of the angels performing music was to be located on either side of Christ.

The angels of the Magi chapel frescoes represent an interesting example of how both symbolic elements meant to be used in devotional practice, and material aspects taken from the festive life of confraternities, were intertwined in Quattrocento Florentine art. Their costumes evoke the young boys dressed as angels in Cosimo de' Medici's Compagnia della Purificazione, and their manner of musical prayer suggests not only the *vita contemplativa* pursued by these youths, but also a model for the devotions of those who used the chapel. The impact of youth confraternities and their musical and theatrical activities on the visual arts of fifteenth-century Florence can be

²⁷⁷ Acidini Luchinat 2010, 47, 49, 56. For a description of how these festoons were constructed see Thornton 1991, 260.

²⁷⁸ “per fioralisi e altri fiori dimestichi per le grilande e per la Istella e per la Nughola e per altro.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:360.

²⁷⁹ “Vedi .../ gli angioli intorno stare, e l' sacro canto/ risonar quinci e quindi.” Newbiggin 1983, 217 (*La festa della natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*).

seen at its peak in the large angelic choir which Cosimo de' Medici had commissioned for the walls of his family's private chapel.

3. *Coronations of the Virgin and the Heaven of Florentine* **Adult Confraternities**

3.1 *The Coronation of the Virgin in Florentine Art between Trecento and Quattrocento*

Another popular religious episode marked by musical festivities in heaven is represented by the Coronation of the Virgin, an iconography which shares a lot of similarities with those of the Ascension of Christ and the Virgin's Assumption. In a sermon on the topic of "how our glorious Mother went to heaven, and of the joyful celebration that was done in paradise for her," Bernardino da Siena describes to his audience this festive moment: "all are around her, jubilating, singing, dancing ... ever since she ascended up there, never was anything else done than celebrating: ever since she went up there, never was anything else done but dancing, rejoicing, singing with sweet jubilations, which will never end for eternity."¹

The Coronation of the Virgin had been a popular subject in Florentine art during the Trecento, a situation which continued during the Quattrocento, increasing particularly towards the end of the century. It was a preferred subject for altarpieces, both for the main altar of the church and also for private chapels within it, and, as the demand for altarpieces grew due to the rise of private patronage and individual devotion, so the number of *Coronations* multiplied.² Initially, it served as the main scene in polyptychs of the fourteenth century, one of the most famous examples being the *Baroncelli Polyptych* by Giotto (fig. 62); and as the *pala d'altare* became the dominant type of altarpiece in the fifteenth century, the subject was transferred to its single-field, unified pictorial space, as can be seen in Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Coronation* from 1483 (fig. 63).³

In Florence, as Martin Wackernagel has observed, altarpieces did not depict subjects related to the dedicatee of the church or of the chapel, but were rather focused on particular iconographies,

¹ "come la nostra gloriosa Madre andò in cielo, e de l'allegrezza che fece il paradiso di lei;" "tutti le stanno dattorno giubilando, cantando, danzando ... sempre da poi che ella salse lassù, mai non s'è fatto altro che far festa: sempre da poi ch'ella andò lassù, non vi s'è fatto altro che danzare, giocondare, cantare con suavi giubili, nè mai aranno fine in eterno." Bernardino da Siena 1989, 1:106, 109. On the iconography of the Assumption of the Virgin see Schmitt 2006. On early Italian *Coronations* see Verdier 1980, 153-62. For the iconography during the fifteenth century in Italian art see Echolls 1976; Wright 2006, 81-115.

² Kemp 1990, 14. More on altarpieces in Gardner von Teuffel 1983; Baxandall 1985, 106; Hills 1990; Hope 1990; Borsook and Superbi Gioffredi 1994; O'Malley 2003; Williamson 2004; Nethersole 2011.

³ On the *pala d'altare* see Gardner von Teuffel 1983, 324-27; Kemp 1990, 5; Nethersole 2011, 13, 51, 53.

among which the enthroned Madonna with saints was especially popular. Wackernagel notes that, beginning in the late Quattrocento, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin became even more numerous among altarpiece subjects.⁴ The popularity of the theme was so widespread that not only were altars decorated with it, but so also were other elements of the church, including the walls of private chapels, for example the Tornabuoni chapel in Santa Maria Novella (fig. 64), and stained glass windows (fig. 65), such as that designed by Andrea Bonaiuti for Santa Maria Novella, sometimes leading to a repetition of the Coronation scene many times within the space of the church. The iconography migrated into the private sphere as well, being transferred from monumental contexts into the bedchamber, as exemplified by Ventura di Moro's *Coronation* from the Loyola University Museum of Art in Chicago (fig. 66). Scholars have explained its success in several different ways, from its regal connotations which, together with other courtly subjects, became fashionable during the second half of the fourteenth century, to its function as a pictorial space in which heaven could be represented to devotees.⁵

To these reasons must be added the popularity of the Virgin in fifteenth-century Italy. Peter Burke has analysed dated religious pictures from the period and concluded that those representing Mary surpassed half of the total, with only 25% showing Christ, and 23% other different saintly figures.⁶ In Florence, the Virgin was at the centre of devotional life, as intercessor for humanity, and her miraculous images were important aids in moments of crisis, being brought out in processions in order to protect the city. For example, the image of Our Lady of Impruneta, in honour of which many *laude* can be found in fifteenth-century collections, at various times offered Florentines protection from drought, military assaults, and political troubles.⁷

The episodes of the Virgin's Assumption and Coronation as well as that of Christ's Ascension are all moments in which festivities were celebrated by the angels, and which were also marked by the elevation of a saintly figure into heaven. However, I have chosen to focus only on the Virgin's Coronation in order to analyse how the representation of musical angels in heaven changes in fifteenth-century Florentine art, because of the subject's particular popularity. Examples depicting Christ's Ascension were not as numerous, and the Virgin's Assumption did not usually include a

⁴ Wackernagel 1981, 133.

⁵ Davidson 1994a, 8; Rubin 2007, 31.

⁶ Burke 1972, 147.

⁷ On the cult of Our Lady of Impruneta see Trexler 1972, 11-24; Trexler 1980b, 63-70. See also Trexler 1980b, 354-61; Holmes 2013.

representation of musical celebrations. Because of the cult around the relic of the Virgin's girdle that was kept in Prato, in Quattrocento Florence the Assumption of the Virgin is mainly focused on the offering of the girdle to St Thomas, creating the iconography of the *Madonna della cintola*. There are examples in which the Virgin of *Madonna della cintola* images is surrounded by music-making angels, such as Benozzo Gozzoli's altarpiece from 1450-1452 (fig. 67); however, the majority of images of this type are without musical references.⁸

Therefore, images of the Coronation of the Virgin represented the best candidates for my research. In order to determine whether any change had taken place in the representation of musical angels celebrating the Virgin's Coronation, I have compared Trecento and Quattrocento images as explained in the methodology section of the introduction and, in what follows, I will discuss my findings. Unlike the Nativity case study, this one was organised around categories representing the following scenarios: the angels are playing only soft instruments (stringed instruments and keyboard); the angels are playing only loud instruments (wind instruments and percussion); the angels are playing a mix of loud and soft instruments. I have also made note of *Coronations* without any musical performance.

To these musical aspects I have also added an inquiry concerning matters of composition and how or where the Coronation in heaven was positioned in the pictorial space. I followed two possible options: that in which a frontal depiction of the Coronation was presented, from the perspective of the viewer, in front of his eyes; and that in which the Coronation was seen from below, above eye level, and which, therefore, split the picture space almost into halves. In the first case, the saintly figures surround the scene of the Coronation, witnessing it from the sides, while in the second, they see it from below with their heads tilted upwards towards the sky. I have not measured these viewpoints according to the viewer of the work of art, for whom the perspective never really changes, given that the altarpiece would always be elevated for the devotee when kneeling in prayer in front of it. Also, whether at eye level or not, this shift within the pictorial space does not drastically affect the way the viewer sees the Virgin's Coronation, but rather how he imagines it. Therefore, only when considering the viewpoint of the Coronation scene from the perspective of the saintly figures within the painting do the two compositional choices actually make a difference.

⁸ On the Assumption of the Virgin and the *Madonna della cintola* iconography in Italian Renaissance art see Tulanowski 1986.

The saints either look straight on at the Virgin, or they have to lift their heads upwards in order to see her. This, in turn, affects the viewer's perspective upon the scene in regards to his emulation of the saintly figures in the image before him. Their upturned gaze suggests the idea of elevation, impressing it on the viewers themselves and transmitting the concept of a heaven situated above eye level, as well as recalling the devotee's experience of visualising the heavenly realm in theatrical contexts, in which vertical elevation was a core aspect of scenography. Some artworks present a very marked difference, separating the pictorial space in half, while others offer in-between solutions.

To begin with the musical aspects, from my analysis I have observed that during the fourteenth century the most popular manner of representing the music of the angels in Florentine *Coronations* is as a musical ensemble of soft instruments. The choice of instruments varies, from the predominant portative organ, accompanied by stringed instruments, such as vielles in Bernardo Daddi's 1340 *Coronation* (fig. 68), to the use of the lute in Agnolo Gaddi's 1390 *Coronation* (fig. 69), or of the harp and psaltery in an example by Lorenzo Monaco (fig. 70). Examples of a mixture of soft and loud instruments do exist, but in smaller numbers, as, for example, in Giotto's *Baroncelli Coronation* (fig. 62), or in Jacopo del Casentino's *Coronation* from 1320 (fig. 71), in which trumpets and recorders are depicted together with stringed instruments.

During the Quattrocento, the representation of *Coronations* with soft instruments continues to be popular during the first three decades of the century, as exemplified by a *Coronation of the Virgin* by Lorenzo Monaco from 1414 (fig. 72), and one by Bicci di Lorenzo from 1430 (fig. 73). However, from the 1440s onwards the soft ensembles almost disappear. A few artworks depict only loud instruments, among which is Fra Filippo Lippi's *Marsuppini Coronation* (fig. 74), in which the angels are playing several wind instruments, including a bagpipe, as well as percussion instruments: a tambourine and cymbals. Not many musical examples survive from the 1440s. However, especially from the following decade onwards, a preference for musical ensembles that mix soft and loud instruments together can be observed, a reversal of the tendencies remarked in the previous century. From Fra Angelico's *Louvre Coronation* (fig. 75) to the many produced by Neri di Bicci's workshop (for example, fig. 76), and those painted by Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio, or by both of them together (fig. 77), fifteenth-century Florentine musical ensembles in *Coronation* scenes become more and more complex, representing a larger number

and a wider variety of instruments in each image, as well as including vocal performance. During the 1480s, the number of artworks with musical references that depict the *Coronation* also increases. In Piero del Pollaiuolo's 1483 altarpiece (fig. 63), the angels play on all sorts of different instruments: lutes, wind instruments, a vielle, a psaltery, a harp, and a portative organ.

As shall be discussed later on, such ensembles were not common in Florentine musical practice, and the only moment at which these instruments actually performed together was in order to represent heavenly music during the religious plays staged by adult confraternities. In the second half of the century, the accounts of the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese, responsible for the Ascension *fiesta* in Santa Maria del Carmine, record the use of both types of instruments for the heavenly sounds in their yearly play. During the 1470s, the Ascension of Christ play was performed alongside the new addition of the Assumption of the Virgin *fiesta*, which in the 1480s completely replaces the staging of Christ's Ascension. My central argument here is that these popular theatrical representations, in which the spectacle of heaven played an important role, being accompanied by the sound of soft and loud music, were the key factor influencing the change in musical preferences in the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin in Quattrocento Florence.

Several scholars have pointed to another set of changes that occurs in this iconography in the fifteenth century, but from a spatial perspective. If Giotto's altarpiece for the Baroncelli chapel in Santa Croce (fig. 62), representing the moment of the Virgin's Coronation witnessed by the saints in heaven who surround her throne, had become the standard manner of depicting the Coronation during the Trecento, the scene starts to be gradually elevated at the end of the century. Millard Meiss has remarked how Christ and the Virgin were gradually suspended above the ground, connecting these developments with the period following the Black Death, and interpreting them as a desire to emphasise the supernatural character of the scene.⁹ As remarked by Patricia Lee Rubin and Alison Wright, it is in particular with Fra Angelico's Louvre *Coronation* (fig. 75), painted during the first years of the 1430s, that the spatial dimension of *Coronations* is decisively reordered, through the increased elevation of the Virgin and Christ. In this way, the scene is represented as a contemplative vision, in which the saints become models which viewers are encouraged to imitate in their devotions.¹⁰

⁹ Meiss 1951, 43-44.

¹⁰ Rubin 2004, 143-49; Rubin 2007, 203, 206; Wright 2019, 105-11. On the painting see also Ahl 2008, 47-49.

Fra Angelico's composition, in which kneeling figures looking upwards at the Virgin coexist with standing figures with a more direct view, was emulated by artists for a few decades; all the while, however, the scene became more and more highly elevated, so that even the standing saints were no longer positioned as high as those in Fra Angelico's altarpiece. This can particularly be observed in Neri di Bicci's *Coronations*, in which the standing saints also have to lift up their eyes in order to see the Virgin (figs. 76, 78-79), sometimes being placed altogether beneath the *nuvola* on which the Virgin and Christ are sitting (fig. 80). Although Neri di Bicci's *Coronations* followed a specific pattern from the 1460s onwards, sometimes he returned to previous compositional fashions and depicted the scene in a lower position (fig. 81), perhaps due to particular requirements from the commissioner.

From the 1460s, the frontal perspective on the Coronation of the Virgin, as seen in Giotto's polyptych, disappears almost entirely, an initial peak in its elevation being reached in the 1470s, with the scene effectively cut in half, and intensified in the 1480s and 1490s. Piero del Pollaiuolo's 1483 *Coronation* (fig. 63), Domenico Ghirlandaio's from 1484-1486 (fig. 82), Sandro Botticelli's *San Marco Coronation* (fig. 83), as well as that produced by his workshop, now in the Villa la Quiete in Florence (fig. 84), as well as many others, all present the composition cut in half, with the saintly spectators in the lower section gazing with upturned faces at the Coronation above. In some examples, the effect is exaggerated by the uninterrupted clouds that form a continuous platform, sharply separating the two parts of the image (figs. 82, 84). Such compositions are far from Giotto's *Baroncelli Polyptych*, and they represent a testimony to the increased popularity of the idea of the elevation of the heavenly realm, which found its expression in theatrical representations in which the highlights of the show were the lowering and raising of figures from and to heaven. In the sacred plays popularised by adult confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence, discussed in more detail below, the heavenly scene was elevated above the eye level of the spectators, so that they would have had to contemplate its spectacle in much the same manner as the saints beneath the *nuvole* in the previously mentioned examples. The manners of viewing and hearing heaven popularised by the performative activities of Florentine confraternities influenced the iconography of the Virgin's Coronation by elevating its main scene and by changing its soundscape.

3.2 Florentine Adult Confraternities of the Oltrarno and their Sacred Plays

Vasari, recounting the festive life of Florence during the fifteenth century in his life of Il Cecca, writes that:

there were four solemn public *feste* that were done almost every year, one, that is, for each Quarter except San Giovanni (and for his *festa*, as we shall see, they had a solemn procession). ... In Santa Maria Novella they did Sant'Ignazio; in Santa Croce, San Bartolomeo (called San Baccio); in Santo Spirito, the *festa* of the Holy Ghost, and in the Carmine, the *feste* of the Ascension of the Lord and of the Assumption of the Virgin.¹¹

Florence's theatrical representations were connected to several layers of the city's social existence, among which was that of the neighbourhood, and within it that of confraternities. The society was held together by different groups and bonds, starting with the family, and continuing with friendship, brotherhood, vicinity, and ultimately citizenship. Within these structures Florentines circulated freely and loosely, bringing together the different social categories. Neighbourhoods and confraternities were not segregated between the rich and the poor.¹² Nor were confraternities created exclusively from members who lived in the neighbourhood. The *festa* of a particular company would mobilise those in its vicinity first and foremost, and contribute primarily to the *fama* of the neighbourhood, but many of those involved in its preparation came from other parts of the city, frequently including those offering financial support, and often the *festa* was performed for the delight of all Florentines and for official visits, doing service for the entire city.

However, apart from the festival of San Giovanni, the religious theatrical life of Florence was concentrated on the other side of the Arno, where intense performative activities took place yearly around the triangle formed by the churches of Santa Maria del Carmine, Santo Spirito, and San Felice in Piazza, whose confraternities created the best sacred productions in the city, with the latest machineries and inventions for representing heaven, the primary choice for the entertainment of foreign visitors. When Galeazzo Maria Sforza visited Florence in 1470/1, according to Scipione Ammirato's *Storie Fiorentine*:

¹¹ "quattro solennissime e pubbliche si facevano quasi ogni anno: cioè una per ciascun Quartiere, eccetto San Giovanni; per la festa del quale si faceva una solennissima processione ... Santa Maria Novella, quella di Santo Ignazio; Santa Croce, quella di San Bartolommeo detto San Baccio; San Spirito, quella dello Spirito Santo; ed il Carmine, quella dell' Ascensione del Signore e quella dell' Assunzione di Nostra Donna." Vasari 1878-85, 3:97. The translation is from Newbigin 1996a, 1:64.

¹² More on these matters in Brucker 1969, 23-24; Kent and Kent 1982; Kent 1987; Kent 1995, 178-82; Black 2001, 150-54; Eckstein 2006.

they had three sacred plays represented though it was the period of the *Quaresima*, which given the ingenious artifices of the things that took place filled with great admiration the souls of the Lombards: in San Felice, the Annunciation of the Virgin, in the Carmine, the Ascension of Christ in heaven, in Santo Spirito, when he sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles.¹³

All these plays were performed in the Santo Spirito quarter, known also as the Oltrarno, or as that of the Green Dragon after the heraldic device of its *gonfalone*. The confraternities of the Oltrarno were at the heart of social matters, not focused only on spiritual duties, but very much involved in its members' day-to-day lives, for example providing them with housing when needed. For the preparations of these three festivities all the population of the Green Dragon was mobilised in a group effort to put on spectacular performances.¹⁴

The *feste* in these three Oltrarno churches will be the focus of this section, concerned both with their musical accompaniment and with their spatial construction, because all three presented one or more complex heavenly scenes to the spectators, which, due to the popularity of these plays in fifteenth-century Florence and their constant presence in the visual culture of the time, could have informed the representation of heaven in contemporary works of art. The Ascension *festa* will be considered in more detail given the fact that its confraternity's records are available to us and offer extensive information, as well as because of its connection to Neri di Bicci, one of the most successful Florentine artists of the fifteenth century, whose workshop produced many *Coronations of the Virgin*. In what follows, I would like to offer a general outline of the three *feste* of the Green Dragon quarter.

The Annunciation *festa* was performed in the church of San Felice in Piazza (fig. 85) from 1435 until 1565, staged by the members of the Compagnia di Santa Maria Annunziata e laudesi della Nostra Donna, also known as the Compagnia del Orciuolo, which had met in the church since 1277.¹⁵ The account of the 1439 play by the Russian bishop Abraham of Suzdal has led some scholars to believe that the play was performed in the church of SS. Annunziata, because Suzdal writes about “a large church dedicated to our purest Mother of God.”¹⁶ However, Nerida Newbigin

¹³ “fecero rappresentare tre spettacoli sacri per trovarsi in tempo di quaresima, che per l'artificio ingegnossissimo delle cose che v'intervennero riempiono di somma ammirazione gli animi de' Lombardi. In S. Felice l'annunziata della Vergine, nel Carmine l'ascensione di Cristo in cielo; in S. Spirito quando egli manda lo Spirito Santo a gli apostoli.” Ammirato 1848, 189-90 (Book 23).

¹⁴ See the discussions in Eckstein 1995.

¹⁵ More on this *festa* in Newbigin 1996a, 1:1-43. On the church see Meoni 1993.

¹⁶ Newbigin 1996a, 1:3.

has demonstrated that the location must have been San Felice in Piazza, where the play was usually performed, because Suzdal identifies the churches not by their patron, but by their principal devotion, namely the sacred play. Thus, the church of Santa Maria del Carmine is for him the “Church of the Ascension,” and San Felice in Piazza is the “Church of the Virgin Annunciate.”¹⁷

Apart from Abraham of Suzdal’s description, we have further information in Vasari’s life of Brunelleschi, who is considered to be the creator of several of the machineries used in the staging of the Annunciation *fiesta*.¹⁸ Vasari describes the main attraction of the play: “Up on high you could see a Heaven, full of living figures, that moved, and an infinite number of lights which could be revealed and concealed again almost in a flash,” explaining that this heaven was in fact a dome, suspended from the roof of the church, with living angels attached to it, who would appear to be dancing because the dome was constantly rotating.¹⁹ Vasari also describes the appearance of the inside of the dome, filled with lamps on ledges covered in cotton-wool to look like stars among the clouds. Apart from this construction, another scene with God the Father surrounded by angels could be seen “next to the outer shell of the dome” (*accanto al guscio della palla*), and underneath all of this the archangel Gabriel was suspended in a *mandorla* (figs. 86-87).²⁰

Abraham of Suzdal describes the heaven as constructed on a platform to which several steps lead:

This platform is supposed to represent the heavenly spheres from which the Archangel Gabriel is sent by God the Father to the Virgin. On this elevated platform is set a throne, on which a man of majestic appearance sits, in magnificent robes and with a crown on his head. ... Around him and by his foot-stool are arranged a multitude of little boys in due order, representing heavenly virtues. Around the throne and amid the children around the Father there are five hundred little oil lamps.²¹

Heaven was constructed on a high platform above the entrance door, while at the other end of the church the prophets and the Virgin sat on the rood screen. The two zones of staging were connected by ropes which ran down the whole length of the church and on which, at the moment of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel in his *mandorla* descended from the higher platform to the rood

¹⁷ See Newbigin 1996a, 1:8.

¹⁸ For a discussion on Vasari and theatre see Pallen 1999. See also Biow 2018.

¹⁹ “Perciocchè si vedeva in alto un cielo pieno di figure vive moversi, ed una infinità di lumi quasi in un baleno scoprirsi e ricoprirsi.” Vasari 1878-85, 2:375. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:22.

²⁰ Vasari 1878-85, 2:378. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:24.

²¹ Newbigin 1996a, 1:4.

screen, afterwards ascending back up again (fig. 88). The play ends in an explosion of light achieved through the ropes connecting the platform with the rood screen:

Flames came down from the upper platform and exploded all over the church with terrifying thunder, and lights all over the church which had been extinguished were lit by the flash, but it did not scorch the clothes of the spectators nor harm them in any way, for it is a spectacle that is both marvellous and terrifying.²²

The textual support for the play may have been provided by Feo Belcari's *sacra rappresentazione* of the Annunciation.

It appears that this successful performance influenced plays on similar subjects in other Italian cities. In Ferrara, on 24 April 1503, Isabella d'Este witnessed an Annunciation *fiesta*, and from its description it seems to have been very similar to that represented in San Felice in Piazza. The prophets make their appearance again, and the action unfolds in a similar manner. God the Father is "surrounded by angels who circled him slowly" (*cum angeli intorno, in uno zirare piano*). She describes how "they held white torches in their hands and swayed, rocking on their foot supports in a way that was almost frightening to watch." The descent of the archangel is also accompanied by a light spectacle: "Gabriel descended with marvellous artifice to a height just above the organ, and as he hovered there, suddenly an infinite number of lights ignited that shot from the angels' feet and formed a ray that covered them all in light. This was truly something worthy to see."²³ Both Abraham of Suzdal and Isabella d'Este seem to be most amazed by the light effects in the play.

The light effects described by Isabella in Ferrara, as well as the angels rotating around God the Father, correspond entirely to the *fiesta* in San Felice in Piazza. Florentine *festaiuoli* had already been invited to Ferrara in 1473 to perform a series of plays in a piazza for the entertainment of Eleonora of Naples.²⁴ Thus, we can conclude that the Florentine plays had become so famous for their ingenious stagings that they would sometimes be performed in other cities as well.

²² Newbigin 1996a, 1:7.

²³ "li quali tenendo torce bianche in mano, se inclinavano in quello aubstengo di piedi, che quasi facevano timore a vederli;" "descese cum mirabile arteficio fino ala alteza de la sumita del organo: li quali fermati, se vedete in uno subito acendere infiniti lumi, che ge cadetero da li pedi, e che erano congegnati in un razo che li copriva: che in vero fo una cosa digna da vedere." D'Ancona 1872, 1:168-69. D'Este 2017, 221.

²⁴ Newbigin 2006, 17.

In the church of Santo Spirito (fig. 89), the Pentecost *fiesta* was staged by the Compagnia di Santa Maria delle Laude o dello Santo Spirito, also known as the Compagnia del Piccione, which had met in the church since 1329.²⁵ Heaven was also present in this play, high to the left of the high altar, the staging accessed from the bell tower. It consisted of a God the Father and Son surrounded by child-angels. Just as in the Annunciation *fiesta*, there was a rotating dome housing living angels. The highlight of the performance was the descent of a dove, which would come down on a set of ropes, igniting the halos of the Virgin and of the Apostles as it passed by, which were represented by wooden statues full of fireworks. A *stella* decorated with 24 gold angels around 1m tall, with 24 seraphim, 48 doves, and 528 lanterns was also part of the spectacle.²⁶ As already mentioned, the text of the *sacra rappresentazione* by Feo Belcari which would have corresponded to the Pentecost *fiesta* was very short, meaning that the emphasis in this play was on the visual and musical performance and special effects.

The Ascension *fiesta* was staged in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine (fig. 90) by the Compagnia di Santa Maria delle Laude e di Sant' Agnese, which had existed since 1248, and whose records survive for the entire duration of the fifteenth century, accompanied by a thorough inventory of its possessions compiled in 1466/7 by the painter Neri di Bicci, a member of the confraternity.²⁷ The performance was supported by official subsidies, and, although these were granted yearly, there are no records of its performance in certain years.²⁸ The play was staged from the 1390s until 1497, and it is mentioned in several accounts, among them one reporting a 1422 performance in Paolo di Matteo Pietribuoni's *Priorista*, that of Abraham of Suzdal for 1439, and also Vasari who discusses it in the life of Il Cecca, writing that it:

was very beautiful. In it, Christ was raised up from a mountain, ... by means of a nuvola full of Angels, and carried into a Heaven ... It was so well done that people marvelled, and especially since this Heaven was somewhat larger than the one in San Felice in Piazza, but with almost the same mechanisms. And because the church of the Carmine, where this representation was done, is much wider and higher than San Felice, in addition to the part

²⁵ On the *fiesta* see Newbigin 1996a, 1:157-208.

²⁶ Newbigin 1990, 370; Newbigin 2017, 102.

²⁷ On the *fiesta* see Newbigin 1996a, 1:45-155. On the meeting place of the confraternity see Tartuferi 1992, 145; Newbigin 1996a, 1:53-56. See also Newbigin 1996c.

²⁸ Barr 1990, 380.

that received Christ they sometimes, as they saw fit, constructed a second Heaven above the main altar.²⁹

The space of the church allowed for the construction of two heavens, one above the mountain from which angels descended vertically to give consolation to the Virgin and the Apostles, and another on the other side, above the *castello*, to which Christ ascended diagonally from the mountain (fig. 91).³⁰ This last heaven is described by Abraham of Suzdal as:

a wooden structure about 4 sagenes square and 8 sagenes high, beautifully painted underneath and on the sides. In the middle of the upper part of this structure is a large round opening, 2 sagenes in diameter, draped with a blue curtain, on which the sun, the moon and the surrounding stars are painted: a representation of the first celestial sphere. At the appointed time this drape is lifted, that is, the doors of Heaven are opened, and above is seen a man, with a crown on his head, just like God the Father.³¹

He mentions another machinery located beneath this, a spinning paper disc painted with angels. The *nuvola* that takes Christ from the mountain into the heaven in the wooden structure is round, with more turning discs. Suzdal continues his description of the play:

When he [Christ] approaches the *nuvola*, this envelops him from head to foot, the two Angels bow before him on the left and the right, and in the same instant the *nuvola* is lit up by a multitude of lights which shed their splendour everywhere. But Jesus goes higher and higher, accompanied by the two Angels, and soon he steps out next to God the Father, the music ceases and it grows dark.³²

This *nuvola* which takes Christ into heaven seems to have remained in the imagination of Florentines, because the device appears to be described in several *laude* that focus on Christ's Ascension. In the *lauda* "Everyone thank our creator" (Ciaschun ringrazi il nostro creatore), "all the angelic orders/ descended from heaven/ and a *nuvoletta* covered him/ and he returned to his father."³³ In another example from the same collection, "a *nuvola* in such amazement/ removed

²⁹ "era bellissima; conciofussechè Cristo era levato di sopra un monte, ... da una nuvola piena d'Angeli, e portato in un cielo, ... tanto ben fatto, che era una meraviglia; e massimamente essendo alquanto maggiore il detto cielo che quello di San Felice in Piazza, ma quai con i medesimi ingegni. E perchè la detta chiesa del Carmine, dove questa rappresentazione si faceva, è più larga assai e più alta che quella di San Felice; oltre quella parte che riceveva il Cristo, si accomodava alcuna volta, secondo che pareva, un altro cielo sopra la tribuna maggiore." Vasari 1878-85, 3:197-98. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:64-65.

³⁰ On the *monte* as a theatrical set see Galante Garrone 1935, 19-21; Zorzi 1979, 429-31. Specifically for *sacre rappresentazioni* see Galante Garrone 1935, 80-83.

³¹ Newbigin 1996a, 1:60-61.

³² Newbigin 1996a, 1:63.

³³ "tutti li ordini de li angioli/ del ciel discieson/ e una nuvoletta il copri poi/ e ritornò al suo padre." Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 263r.

from their eyes their joyful master.”³⁴ The fact that Christ is imagined ascending to heaven specifically with the support of a *nuvola* is a testimony of the imprint of this *festa* on the imaginary of fifteenth-century Florentines. Just as in the case of the Pentecost play, the text of the *sacra rappresentazione* corresponding to the Ascension of Christ, again written by Feo Belcari, is very short, because the focus is once again upon the visual special effects.

The Assumption of the Virgin *festa* was not performed in Florence until 1471. It was, however, one of the religious plays staged in Siena.³⁵ From 1471, both the Ascension and the Assumption *festa* were performed in Santa Maria del Carmine, a change supported by an influx of patricians among the confraternity’s members. From 1472 onwards, the Assumption replaced the Ascension play.³⁶ In 1480, Giusto d’Anghiari recorded in his diary: “a representation of the Virgin Mary when she went up to heaven and gave her belt to St. Thomas.”³⁷ No text or account of this performance has survived, but we can imagine that many of the elements were taken from the Ascension performance, being based more or less on the same dramatic action, with the addition of the episode of the Virgin’s girdle.

3.3 *Painters of the Oltrarno between Devotion and Profession*

3.3.1 *Painters, Confraternities, and Theatre*

The Oltrarno quarter, in which all the major religious plays of the fifteenth century were performed, was home to Florence’s community of painters. The majority of artists lived there, while their workshops were set up on the other side of the river, particularly in the corso degli Adimari and in the borgo Santi Apostoli. As pointed out by Cécile Maisonneuve, the activities and events that animated the Santo Spirito quarter should be taken into consideration when thinking about the works of art produced by these painters.³⁸ The theatrical performances that were staged in their neighbourhood three times a year, of which heaven was an essential element, and which

³⁴ “una nuvola in tal ammirare/ da gli occhi tolse il lor maestro giocondo.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 184r.

³⁵ Glenisson 1993.

³⁶ Newbigin 1991, 100; Newbigin 1996a, 1:134-35.

³⁷ “una rappresentazione della Vergine Maria quando ella n’andò in paradiso e diede la sua cintola a san Tomaso.” Newbigin 1991, 100; D’Anghiari 2002, 215.

³⁸ Maisonneuve 2012, 13.

amazed so many spectators with their special effects, could hardly have left no impression upon those for whom the visual realm was an essential aspect of their life and profession. These visual experiences would have been observed even more carefully by those with an increased sensitivity to images, and would have represented a source of inspiration for their artistic pursuits.

The artists of Florence were themselves engaged in devotional activities, and were part of the confraternal life that had seized the city. On one level they were organised in guilds for professional reasons, the painters and illuminators belonging to the *Arte dei medici e degli speziali*, while sculptors and architects belonged to the *Arte dei maestri di pietre e legnami*. However, to these guilds corresponded also a confraternal organisation of artisans, which brought together members of the same trade for devotional purposes. This was the *Compagnia di San Luca* which had met in the church of Sant'Egidio since 1339. From it the *Accademia fiorentina del disegno* was born, in 1562, and the writers of the first statutes began with a short history of previous organisations of painters, in which they cited not the Florentine guilds, but rather the *Compagnia di San Luca*, in which painters “met twice a month to praise God and to do many pious deeds, and discuss together all the matters of their art.”³⁹

The fourteenth-century chapters of the confraternity mention that members, “men or women” (*huomini o donne*) “must recite every day five *Pater Nostri* with five *Ave Maria* ... must often confess and receive communion at least once a year.”⁴⁰ According to the company’s account books, they registered payments for the *festa* of St Luke (*festa di santo Lucha*), as can be seen in 1472, which means that in their confraternity, much like in others, the painters met to celebrate their patron saint.⁴¹ They also attended Mass twice a month and had to pay a yearly membership fee of 10 *soldi*. Their chapel was decorated with an altarpiece representing St Luke painting the Virgin, now lost, and showing the members of the confraternity in the *predella*.⁴²

At the same time, painters were also members of other confraternities in the city. For example, Domenico Ghirlandaio’s family, and also Filippino Lippi, were part of the *Compagnia di San Paolo*, to which the Medici also belonged, and which was a *compagnia di disciplina*, in which the

³⁹ “si raunassero due volte il mese per lodare Iddio e per fare molte opere pie e confabulare insieme tutte le cose dell’arte loro.” Rossi 1984, 368-69.

⁴⁰ “sia tenuto di dire ogni di cinque *Patre Nostri* cum cinque *Ave Maria* ... si debbia spessamente confessare et chomunicare almeno una volta l’anno.” Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Accademia del Disegno 1, fol. 1v.

⁴¹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Accademia del Disegno 2, fol. 143v.

⁴² Nethersole 2019, 70-72.

members practiced flagellation.⁴³ Other painters, such as Stefano di Francesco and Francesco Botticini, were members of youth confraternities, namely that of the Archangel Raphael, for which Botticini painted an altarpiece (fig. 33).⁴⁴ And, of course, given that they lived in the Oltrarno quarter, many were members of neighbourhood confraternities. A large number belonged to the Compagnia di Sant' Agnese in Santa Maria del Carmine: Stefano di Lorenzo, Jacopo di Cristofano, Giovanni di Berto, Bicci di Lorenzo, Stefano d'Antonio, Bonaiuto di Giovanni, Piero di Chellino Chellini, Piero del Massaio, Apollonio di Giovanni, Neri di Bicci, and Fra Filippo Lippi, to quote only the well-known artists.⁴⁵ Bicci di Lorenzo, Neri's father, was one of the captains of the confraternity in 1448. Neri was also captain in 1445 and kept the records of the company for several years, starting in 1466/7, when he prepared the confraternity's inventory, not just listing the objects in their possession, but also describing their function.⁴⁶

The painters involved in the Oltrarno confraternities also sometimes provided their services as artisans, as is the case with Lo Scheggia, il Pesello, Neri di Bicci, Benozzo Gozzoli, Piero del Massaio, Sandro Botticelli, Jacopo del Sellaio, and Masolino da Panicale. Masolino painted the Ascension *nuvola* and its angels in 1425.⁴⁷ In his life of Filippino Lippi, Vasari recounted the important part that the artist had played in the festive life of Florence, explaining how at his funeral he “was wept by all those who had known him, and particularly by the youth of this noble city, which in the public festivities, masquerades, and other spectacles always used, with great satisfaction, the ingenuity and creativity of Filippo, who had no match in such things.”⁴⁸

Nerida Newbigin has explained that it is indisputable that painters were closely involved in the three sacred plays from the Oltrarno. It is interesting to note how the most intensive theatrical activity was concentrated exactly in the area where the Florentine artists resided, and that, moreover, the majority of them lived around Santa Maria del Carmine, where the Ascension *fiesta* was performed.⁴⁹ It is, therefore, most likely that their creations and the spectacles they would so

⁴³ Cadogan 2000, 18-20.

⁴⁴ Wackernagel 1981, 137; Maisonneuve 2012, 220-21; Gill 2014, 179-80.

⁴⁵ Maisonneuve 2012, 217-18, 222.

⁴⁶ Barr 1989, 108; Newbigin 1996a, 1:67.

⁴⁷ Eckstein 1995, 50; Newbigin 2007b, 16; Buccheri 2014, 22. See also Wackernagel 1981, 193-204.

⁴⁸ “fu pianto da tutti coloro che l’avevano conosciuto, e particolarmente dalla gioventù di questa sua nobile città, che nelle feste pubbliche, mascherate e altri spettacoli si servì sempre, con molta sodisfazione, dell’ingegno ed invenzione di Filippo, che in così fatte cose non ha avuto pari.” Vasari 1878-85, 3:476.

⁴⁹ Newbigin 2007b, 15-16.

often have witnessed, would have been reflected in their own paintings. Having participated in the decoration of *nuvole* and *stelle*, having heard and seen the music of child-angels in heaven, having designed the heavenly realm with its spinning circles and dazzling lights, all these elements would become part of these artists' visual lexicon, shaping their depiction of heaven in altarpieces.

3.3.2 *The Workshop and Commissions*

The discussion that follows in this chapter is focused on compositional changes in *Coronation* altarpieces, as well as on modifications in the music played by the angels in heaven, aspects which were decided less by the commissioners of the works of art and more by the artists themselves. On this basis, I shall focus on the painters and their workshop practice, as well as on those elements that might have influenced how they imagined heavenly scenes. I will analyse in detail the *Coronations* produced in Neri di Bicci's workshop, given his close association with the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese in Santa Maria del Carmine, as well as the thorough records of his workshop, known as *Ricordanze*, kept between 1453 and 1475, and which have been analysed by scholars in order to better understand how he ran his business.⁵⁰

Neri di Bicci's manner evolved from a starting point in the late Gothic style inherited from his father Bicci di Lorenzo towards the novelties proposed by Fra Angelico, Domenico Veneziano, Filippo Lippi, and Andrea del Castagno.⁵¹ He inherited the family's workshop in 1452 and decided to modify its specialisation, excluding fresco commissions, and focusing on altarpieces and domestic devotional artworks. This strategy contributed to his success: in 1480 Neri became the richest Florentine painter. He had a very large spectrum of clients, the majority of them from the middle ranks of society, both laymen, clerics, and confraternities. He often worked for patrons outside the city, who commissioned their art through intermediaries. The majority of his commissions were altarpieces and liturgical objects, but he was also very popular for his private devotional images, such as the *colmi da camera*. Fifteenth-century artists were very versatile when it came to their products, offering not only works of art in one particular technique or material, but

⁵⁰ On workshops see Gregori, Paolucci, and Acidini Luchinat 1992; Thomas 1995; O'Malley 2013, 160-71. For the workshop of the Pollaiuolo see Wright 2003. For the Ghirlandaio workshop see Cadogan 1996; Cadogan 2000, 153-71. On Neri di Bicci's *Ricordanze* see Santi 1976. On Neri di Bicci see also Darrow and Dorman 2004.

⁵¹ Bernacchioni 1992, 171.

also objects combining painting and sculpture, according to demand. Neri also decorated his artworks with expensive materials, gilding being one of his specialisations, which enabled him to ask for a higher price.⁵²

As Jill Burke has pointed out, it is impossible to provide a universal model for the relationship between artist and patron.⁵³ Sometimes, the patron would play an important part in the commission, particularly when asking the artist to use an existing design as a model for the artwork.⁵⁴ However, according to Michelle O'Malley, 60% of contracts refer to subject matter without describing it, while the rest usually only name the figures and specify where they should be placed, and in very few cases details about attributes and dress are added—although it is also possible that information was sometimes imparted verbally. Overall, O'Malley's evidence leads to the conclusion that painters were usually responsible for the way in which the figures in their images were presented. Whether the angels in an altarpiece should be playing music or not, and what kind of music that should be, might, therefore, have lain most often within the purview of the painter. For patrons, what was in fact most important, and what usually changes in paintings with similar subjects, were the figures of saints, which were usually added according to the devotional interests of the commissioner.⁵⁵ For example, in the case of Neri di Bicci's *Coronations*, the main changes occur in the number of saints depicted and their identity, while other elements remain the same.

When looking at Neri di Bicci's *Coronations*, although these are commissioned, their similarity in style makes them part of an almost serialised production. Being based on a successful model, they are then copied to satisfy public taste. Neri, just like other artists, for example Pietro Perugino, reused designs and cartoons, cutting out the production phase and ensuring his workshop's economic success and the possibility to meet the growing demand for devotional artworks. Jenifer Diorio has analysed Neri di Bicci's entries in the *Ricordanze* and has overlaid images of his paintings to discover that many of his figures and architectural designs were in fact identical. Although today such works of art are regarded as derivative, particularly when they copy models borrowed from other artists, in the fifteenth century they were very popular, responding to the

⁵² Santi 1976, xxi-xxii; Frosini 1981; Thomas 1995, 96-97, 265; Holmes 2003, 214-18.

⁵³ Burke 2004, 7. See also Burke 1972, 75-98; Kent and Simons 1987; Rubin 1994; Kemp 1997, 32-78; Welch 1997, 83-129.

⁵⁴ Thomas 1995, 137.

⁵⁵ O'Malley 2004, 20; O'Malley 2005b, 164-65. See also Hope 1990, 554.

general taste of Florentines.⁵⁶ In this sense, they offer us a glimpse of what fashionable altarpieces of the period would have looked like, making serialised productions extremely important for the analysis of the visual culture of the time.

For religious works of art, Richard Goldthwaite has argued that what determined whether or not something became fashionable and inspired copies was the “demonstration effect:” when something new appeared on the market, which caught the attention of other consumers because of its striking difference, this incited others to commission artworks that resembled it.⁵⁷ The scenographical insertions that made Neri di Bicci’s *Coronations* easily recognisable, the detailed depiction of the instrumental music played by the angels in heaven, as well as the elevation of the Coronation scene above a crowd of amazed saintly spectators, were all novelties introduced by painters from religious theatre, in which they were involved, and which they witnessed extensively every year in their neighbourhood, offering them inspiration for innovations that would contribute to the success of their business, and at the same time popularising new ways of seeing heaven in fifteenth-century Florentine art.

3.4 *Scenographical Insertions in Neri di Bicci’s Coronations of the Virgin*

Several *Coronations of the Virgin* from Neri di Bicci’s workshop have been identified, and I will begin my analysis of their theatrical references by providing an overview of those that I was able to see. Some of these can be connected to entries in Neri’s workshop *Ricordanze*, which provide details regarding the period in which they were produced and the identity of their commissioners. If some can be accurately dated, for others the dating is quite imprecise. All are altarpieces destined for church altars, some having survived in their complete form, and one being still in situ.

Only two of the twelve examples that I was able to see were constructed on the model of the frontal view of the Coronation, in which the Virgin is kneeling in front of Christ sitting on an elevated throne, surrounded by saints and musical angels. One of these is a painting dated 1440-1460, now in Pisa (fig. 92); the other is an example from the later part of Neri’s career, dated 1476-1481 (fig.

⁵⁶ Venturini 1992b; Thomas 1995, 243-44; Comanducci 2003, 106; Diorio 2013; Holmes 2013, 213; O’Malley 2013, 174-86.

⁵⁷ Goldthwaite 1993, 134-37.

81), in which the angels are not playing music. This last example seems unusual for Neri's production at that time, and it has been considered to derive from Fra Filippo Lippi's *Maringhi Coronation* (fig. 34).⁵⁸

The earliest known documented *Coronation* by Neri di Bicci (fig. 80), now housed in the Galleria dell'Accademia, was painted between 1459 and 1460 for the high altar of the church of San Felice in Piazza. On 24 November 1459, Neri recorded in his *Ricordanze* a commission for "a Coronation of Our Lady sitting in a *nuvola* with 4 Saints on each side and with some angels and in the *predella* 4 stories."⁵⁹ It was delivered on 22 December 1460 "to Filippo, the abbot of San Felice in Piazza of Florence and to Bernardo of meser Lorenzo Ridolfi, members of the *Opera* of the said church of San Felice and to their companions."⁶⁰ In the previous *ricordanza* he mentions all the members of the *Opera* of San Felice in Piazza by name, several of whom are connected to some of the saints that appear in the painting.⁶¹ Two angels underneath the *nuvola* are playing a portative organ and a lute, while above, three angels on each side of the Coronation scene play on a mix of loud and soft instruments, among which are a trumpet, cymbals, a tambourine, and a psaltery. The Virgin and Christ are no longer represented sitting on a throne, but rather on two sets of *nuvole*, enclosed in a blue circle decorated around the edge of its upper half with blue cherubim.

In 1460-1461 Neri painted another *Coronation* (fig. 78), this time for the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, commissioned by the merchant Bartolomeo Lenzi: "a Coronation of Our Lady with angels and cherubim and four figures, two on each side, and all gilded with fine gold."⁶² The two angels at the front reappear, one playing the portative organ, while the angels in the upper corners are presented in silent adoration. The blue circle is now entirely gilded, with the sun at its centre. In 1461, Neri also painted a *Coronation* now in the Musée Jacquemart-André (fig. 76), for the high altar of the church of San Leonardo in Arcetri, south of Florence, through the mediation of Bernardo Salviati: "a Coronation with certain Saints inside and the angels that belong to the said story... Which panel ... will sit in the church of San Leonardo in Arcetri on the high altar of

⁵⁸ Bernacchioni 1992, 173.

⁵⁹ "una Choronzione di Nostra Donna a sedere in nughola cho 4 Santi da ogni parte e chon certi anceli e nella predella 4 istorie." Neri di Bicci 1976, 131 (*ricordanza* 254).

⁶⁰ "all' abate Filipo di San Filice in Piazza di Firenze e Bernardo di meser Lorenzo Ridolfi operai detta chiesa di San Filice e loro chonpagni." Neri di Bicci 1976, 155-56 (*ricordanza* 306).

⁶¹ See the discussion in Meoni 1993, 89-90.

⁶² "1^a Choronzione di Nostra Donna cho ang[i]oli e cherubini e quatro figure, dua da ogni parte, e messa tutta d'oro fine." Neri di Bicci 1976, 145 (*ricordanza* 285).

the said church.”⁶³ The commission was recorded on 23 May 1461 and Neri delivered the painting on 4 September the same year. The figures of the musical angels are very similar to those in the *Coronation* now at the Accademia, with slight changes in the musical instruments, a recorder replacing the cymbals. The golden disc is now marked by a set of rays emerging from its centre.

Another altarpiece (fig. 93), almost identical save for the varying figures of saints and the slight shuffling of musical instruments, was painted in 1463 for the church of Sant’Agostino in Certaldo, near Florence, commissioned through intermediaries who “say that they are having it made for Piero d’Antonio Lippi da Certaldo, made and shaped in the particular manner and shape as the one that I made for Bastiano da Certaldo, except that they want it lower.”⁶⁴ In the preceding few years, Neri’s *Coronations* had become very popular, reaching the surroundings of Florence and also becoming a model for other commissions, given that the 1463 *Coronation* was specifically required to resemble another by the same artist.

The only *Coronation* by Neri di Bicci still preserved in its original location (fig. 94) is that commissioned on 7 May 1471 “by the abbot Bartolomeo, abbot of San Piero a Ruoti di Valdanbra of the order of Saint Benedict” and delivered in the following year.⁶⁵ The *Ricordanze* specify “the Coronation of Our Lady with angels around,” and in the image the angels are no longer placed in groups on either side of the Virgin playing their musical instruments, but are in fact encircling her, defining the edges of the golden disc, which otherwise would not be visible given that Neri also gilded the background.⁶⁶ In 1473, he painted another *Coronation* (fig. 95), delivering on 17 July “to the nuns of Santa Apollonia an altarpiece for their church, within which a Coronation with several figures” is depicted.⁶⁷ The motif of the angels that surround the golden disc is preserved, even though the dark background would not require any additional line of demarcation, and the angels at the bottom are once again represented playing instruments of different families. In the middle of the golden disc, the Holy Spirit appears in the shape of a dove. This golden circle

⁶³ “una Choronazione chon certi Santi drentovi e angeli achadenti alla detta istoria ... La quale tavola ... à ‘ stare nella chiesa di Sa[n] Lionardo in Arcetri all’a[l]tare mag[i]ore di detta chiesa.” Neri di Bicci 1976, 162 (*ricordanza* 321).

⁶⁴ “dichono fanno fare per Piero d’Ant[oni]o Lippi da Certaldo, fatta e formata in quello proprio modo e forma che una n’ò fatta a Bastiano da Certaldo, ecetto che lla vogliono più bassa.” Neri di Bicci 1976, 203 (*ricordanza* 403).

⁶⁵ “dall’abate Bartolomeo abate di San Piero a Ru[o]ti di Valdanbra dell’Ordine di Santo Benedetto.” Neri di Bicci 1976, 371 (*ricordanza* 696).

⁶⁶ “la ‘Nchoronazione di Nostra Donna chon ang[i]oli d’atorno.” Neri di Bicci 1976, 371 (*ricordanza* 696).

⁶⁷ “alle monache di Santa Apollonia 1^a tavola d’altare per lla loro chiesa, drentovi 1^a Choronazione cho più figure.” Neri di Bicci 1976, 414 (*ricordanza* 771). See Thomas 1995, 294-95.

surrounded by angels on a dark background also appears in the *Coronation* from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (fig. 96), dated after 1475 because it has not been recorded in Neri's *Ricordanze*, which survive up to that year.

A *Coronation* dated also after 1475 for the same reason (fig. 97), now in Pescia, was originally destined for another one of the Oltrarno churches, namely Santo Spirito. The angels at the bottom are playing the lute and portative organ, while those in the corners are not engaged in any musical performance. The golden disc is no longer encircled by angelic figures. Two other *Coronations* painted after 1475, one in San Giovanni Valdarno (fig. 79) and the other in the church of San Giovannino dei Cavalieri in Florence (fig. 98), present once again the groups of angelic musicians, and both have the golden disc, which is surrounded by blue cherubim and red seraphim respectively.⁶⁸ Another *Coronation* recorded by the *Ricordanze*, which I have not been able to see, was commissioned in 1466 for the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria dei Candelieri.⁶⁹

Neri di Bicci's *Coronations of the Virgin* are an interesting group of images given that their painter is documented as a member of the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, which was responsible for the yearly Ascension sacred play, and kept the company's records during the 1460s. He was simultaneously connected to the other two churches in the Oltrarno quarter, where he lived, Santo Spirito and San Felice in Piazza, both of which had an image of the *Coronation* painted by Neri. The artist came from a long tradition of painters, his father Bicci di Lorenzo and his grandfather Lorenzo di Bicci both being important figures in the profession. However, although we can trace elements of this legacy in his style of painting, Neri adapts his artworks to the changes that were taking place in the visual culture of the fifteenth century. Deeply immersed in the theatrical life of the Oltrarno confraternities, Neri included references to the heavenly decorations in the Ascension play, to which he himself contributed, consequently creating a specific type of Coronation scene in his altarpieces.

One of the first developments in Neri di Bicci's account of the *Coronation* is that the Virgin and Christ are no longer represented sitting on a throne, as they are in his early depictions (fig. 92), but rather on two *nuvole*, one beneath their feet and one for them to sit on, which are decorated with blue cherubim in the case of the first known *Coronation* to make this transition (fig. 80). These

⁶⁸ On the first see Santi 1992.

⁶⁹ Neri di Bicci 1976, 274 (*ricordanza* 523).

elements express a material understanding of the figures of the Virgin and Christ, in which their bodies cannot just float in mid-air, but require support, a concept that would have been inspired by theatrical performances, the only context in which the elevation of holy figures was achieved by means of platforms. Moreover, these platforms, used for suspending people and objects in the heavens of sacred plays, were always disguised with “cotton” (*bambagia*), to which figures of cherubim and seraphim were added. For example, Filippo Brunelleschi’s spinning heavenly dome, described by Vasari, contained inside “three rows of garlands of lights made up of little lamps which could not overturn, and from below these lamps looked like stars, and their ledges, which were covered with cotton-wool, looked like clouds.”⁷⁰ Also, in his life of Il Cecca, discussing his invention of the *nuvole* that paraded during the festival of San Giovanni, Vasari explains that all the wooden or metal supports of these constructions which might have given away the theatrical illusion were covered “with cotton, and, as said before, with cherubim, seraphim, golden stars, and other ornaments.”⁷¹ Therefore, it is possible that Neri represented Christ and the Virgin sitting on clouds adorned with cherubim in his *Coronations* because they represented the disguised ledges familiar to him from theatrical performances.

Neri also represents the *mandorla* in which the Virgin and Christ are placed in the shape of a circle, unlike the eye-shaped oval more commonly used by painters (fig. 99); this too was a theatrical device.⁷² Abraham of Suzdal describes the *nuvola* which descends to take Christ back into heaven as a “beautiful and cleverly constructed *nuvola*: it is round and surrounded by swiftly turning discs. To the right and to the left are two children dressed as angels, with golden wings.”⁷³ The golden disc of Neri’s *Coronations* is always flanked by angelic figures. The machinery with which Christ ascended into heaven during the Ascension *fiesta* in Santa Maria del Carmine became increasingly complex. It included the *nuvola* itself which supported Christ, to which the *seste* was attached on which sat two accompanying angels. Behind the *nuvola* was the device called the *Sole*, another *stella*, and above the *nuvola*, the *stella nuova* with more lights and fireworks.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ “tre giri ovvero ghirlande di lumi, accomodati con certe piccole lucernine che non potevano versare, i quali lumi da terra parevano stelle, e le mensole, essendo coperte da bambagia, parevano nuvole.” Vasari 1878-85, 2:376. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:22.

⁷¹ “di bambagia e, come si è detto, di Cherubini, Serafini, stelle d’oro, ed altri ornamenti.” Vasari 1878-85, 3:201.

⁷² See Buccheri 2014, 16-25.

⁷³ Newbigin 1996a, 1:62.

⁷⁴ Newbigin 2007a, 207-08.

One of the variations to the golden circle *mandorla* used by Neri in *Coronations* of the 1470s is the addition of angelic figures around the rim of the radiance (figs. 94-96). Abraham of Suzdal describes having seen in the Ascension *fiesta* of 1439, underneath the opening of heaven: “a paper disc, whose lower edge touches that of the opening: on it are painted life-size angels.” When describing the disc in action, he writes: “the big painted angels on the discs move in the shape of a circle so that they seem to be alive.”⁷⁵

This account could reflect the initial *nuvola* from 1425, which turned and was decorated with angels made of papier mâché. The confraternity’s account books mention a payment to Masolino da Panicale in 1425 “for painting the angels of the *nuvola* that turn.”⁷⁶ This assemblage was remade in 1429 by Simone di Bartolo, the blacksmith, and the angels were painted red.⁷⁷ Payments are recorded to Antonio di Matteo, who received 5 *soldi* “for painting the Angels inside the circles.”⁷⁸ The “circle of the angels” (Cerchio degli Angnoli) is also mentioned in connection to the *nuvola* in 1434, as well as in 1446, when timber was bought “to make the angels above the *nuvola* turn,” and in 1466, when the “angels of the circle” (agnoli del cerchio) were once again repainted.⁷⁹ We know that in 1466 Neri di Bicci himself repainted the sets that made up the heaven of the Ascension *fiesta*. He records in the company’s account books a payment: “To the lads who painted Heaven who worked with me, one florin for their labour and expertise in painting the Heaven and the curtains and other things on 20 May 1466.”⁸⁰ The angels that surround the golden disc in some of Neri di Bicci’s *Coronations*, and which sometimes look as if they were attached to its rim, are surely related to this circle of painted angels that accompanied the *nuvola* of the Ascension.

Neri di Bicci described in great detail all of the elements attached to the complex mechanism of the ascending cloud for the play in Santa Maria del Carmine. On the one hand, the Compagnia di Sant’Agnese possessed a *stella* which decorated the church during feast days, and which might possibly have been used in theatrical performances. He describes it in the following manner:

⁷⁵ Newbigin 1996a, 1:61-62.

⁷⁶ “per dipingere gli Agnioli che girano de la Nuchola.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:291.

⁷⁷ Newbigin 1996a, 1:84-85.

⁷⁸ “per dipingere li Angnioli drento a’ cieri.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:309.

⁷⁹ Newbigin 1996a, 2:326. “per fare girare gl’Angnoli di sopra alla Nughola.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:422. Newbigin 1996a, 2:519.

⁸⁰ “A’ gharzoni che dipinsono el Cielo che stavano mecho fiorini 1 largho per loro faticha e magistero a dipigniere el Cielo e lle vele e altre chose a dì 20 di magio 1466.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:525-26. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:121.

A big *Stella* with wooden spokes with these fittings which we shall write below, namely: 24 Angels of papier mâché, large and richly painted all around with fine gold and fine colours, which are attached to the spokes of the *Stella*, 23 Seraphim on one side and on the other Cherubim, which are attached to the spokes of the *Stella*.⁸¹

This *stella* would also have given the illusion of a circle surrounded by painted angels, and cherubim and seraphim. Neri di Bicci at times also uses cherubim or seraphim to encircle his golden discs (figs. 79, 98). Even though we cannot say with certainty that Neri intended to immortalise precisely this *stella* or the circle of angels in his *Coronations*, it is clear that he wanted to suggest their visual impact through the golden disc surrounded by angelic figures.

Neri also records in the confraternity's inventory, as part of the heaven of the Ascension play: "Twelve parchment planets on circular wooden frames which are attached to the house of Heaven below the live Angels that stand in Heaven when we do the *festa*."⁸² These rotating discs began to be included in works of art from the period, as is the case with a *Coronation* from Ghirlandaio's workshop (fig. 100). Vasari describes these concentric spinning circles when evoking the Ascension play:

In it [heaven] were several great wheels, constructed like wool-winders. From the centre to the circumference, ten circles, for the ten heavens, moved in perfect order. They were all full of little lamps that represented stars, and were fitted into copper lanterns and nailed in such a way that even as the wheel turned they remained upright, just like lanterns that are commonly used these days.⁸³

Another theatrical element which this device also echoes is the *Sole* of the Ascension *festa*, which would have appeared right behind Christ as he stood on the *nuvola*, in the same position as the disc in the paintings. In the 1466/7 inventory of the company's assets, Neri describes it as follows: "A wooden *Stella*, called rather *Sole* ('Sun') which goes behind Christ when he goes up which is attached to the iron piece called the *Seste* with a planet of parchment dyed red with a lamp behind it." Behind it another *stella* seems to have been placed which offered even more light because it

⁸¹ "Una Istella cho razo di legniamie grande chon questi fornimenti che qui apresso diremmo, cioè: 24 agnioli di charta inpastata grandi e dipinti richamente da ogni parte d'oro fine e di fini cholori e quali s'apichano a' razi di detta Istella, 23 serafini da uno lato e da l'altro cherubini, e quali s'apichano a' razi di detta Istella." Newbigin 1996a, 2:533. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:71-72.

⁸² "12 pianeti di charta pechora in su cerchi di legname e quali istanno apichati nella chapanna del Cielo sotto gli Agnioli vivi che stanno in Cielo quando si fa la festa." Newbigin 1996a, 2:536. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:75.

⁸³ "nel quale, alcune ruote grandi fatte a guisa d'arcolai, che dal centro alla superficie movevano con bellissimo ordine dieci giri per i dieci cieli, erano tutti pieni di lumicini rappresentanti le stelle; accomodati in lucernine di rame con una schiodatura, che sempre che la ruota girava restavano in piombo, nella maniera che certe lanterne fanno, che oggi si usano comunemente da ognuno." Vasari 1878-85, 3:198. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:65.

had “wooden spokes with many devices behind, and on every spoke a round copper lamp with an iron lever that pushes the lamp out.”⁸⁴ This *Sole*, as its name suggests, would have been intended to give the illusion of a blaze of light behind Christ, and the *stella* with lamps on each spoke behind it would have enhanced this effect and might even have created the effect of rays of light. I consider that this round radiance is what Neri di Bicci is depicting when choosing to place behind the Virgin and Christ in his *Coronations* the golden circles that are almost like a signature of his workshop. Moreover, by placing a sun right in the centre of this golden disc (fig. 78), he is clearly alluding to the theatrical equipment called the *Sole*. The golden rays that emerge from its centre (fig. 93) can be connected to the spokes of the *stella*, each holding a lamp and creating the effect of a cartwheel of light.

Neri di Bicci was closely connected to another Florentine painter who had once been part of the community of friars in Santa Maria del Carmine himself, namely Fra Filippo Lippi. In one of his *ricordanze*, Neri mentions returning gold to Lippi, who had lent it to him for gilding one of Lippi’s own paintings. Gilding, as we can see from Neri’s extensive use of gold in his paintings, was one of the artist’s specialisations.⁸⁵ Fra Filippo Lippi’s *Coronations* from the 1440s (figs. 34, 74) are all constructed around the traditional throne, anchored in an architectural setting. However, during the 1460s, the same period in which Neri’s *Coronations* became very popular, Lippi painted a different type of scene for the cathedral of Spoleto (fig. 101). The Virgin and God the Father are suspended on clouds and behind them, the artist paints a large *Sole*, whose appearance could be more connected to the theatrical representation of the Ascension than to theological references.⁸⁶

These *feste* were usually performed during the night, and light was both a necessary equipment for the visibility of the scene and of the actors, and a special effect to amaze the audience. In 1450, the accounts of the Compagnia di Sant’ Agnese record “five torches which are carried in their hands by the angel and Christ in the evening, when the *festa* is performed.”⁸⁷ The actors had to carry torches in order to be seen by the spectators. Abraham of Suzdal described the light show in heaven

⁸⁴ “Una Istella di legniamè overo chiamato *Sole* che va dirieto a Christo quando va sù el quale è apichato al fero chiamato le *seste* chon uno pianeto di charta pechora tinto di rosso chon una lucernuza dirieto ... legniamè cholti difici dirieto e a ogni razo una lucernuza di rame tonda chon una istanghetta di fero che manda fuori dette lucernuze.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:535-36. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:74-75.

⁸⁵ Santi 1976, xix, xxv.

⁸⁶ For the *festa*’s influence on Fra Filippo Lippi’s style see Holmes 1999, 164-68.

⁸⁷ “5 torchietti che portorono i’ mano gli Agnioli e Cristo la sera quando si facieva la festa.” Newbigin 1996a, 2:465.

during the Annunciation play: “There on the upper platform, the venerable Father can be seen; around him, as we described above, burned more than five hundred lights. These lights moved endlessly to and fro, weaving in and out very fast, some going up and others going down.”⁸⁸ The most spectacular of these light effects were created by means of the ropes that passed above the spectators of the church, used in the Pentecost *fiesta* for the dove of the Holy Spirit to come and ignite not only the lights in the church, but also the fireworks hidden in the halos of the wooden Virgin and Apostles. As mentioned above, these moments were the ones that attracted the most admiration from the spectators. They also brought disaster when in 1471, after the halos of the wooden Apostles were not properly extinguished, the church of Santo Spirito was destroyed overnight by a fire, with only a crucifix being recovered from the ashes.⁸⁹

The golden discs of Neri di Bicci’s *Coronations*, with their turning angels and cherubim, are a transformed visual expression of these theatrical experiences. The dazzling light of the *Sole* accompanying Christ in his ascent, and the painted angels of the circle that decorated heaven and the *stella* in the church—theatrical equipment seen and sometimes even made by Neri—found their way into the artist’s imaginary, becoming an instinctive manner of visualising and representing heaven, indebted to its material creation in the sacred festivities of fifteenth-century Florence.

3.5 Reconfiguring Angelic Musical Ensembles

The central function of angels in heaven – and indeed of all those in the celestial realm – is to worship God through music.⁹⁰ The first images of angels were based on their description in the Scriptures. Artists portrayed them in the shape of humans, an angelic iconography that was based on how these heavenly figures were thought to have showed themselves to men on earth. The angelic image was a challenge and a paradox, as it aimed to represent the immaterial.⁹¹ By the end of the fourth century, the addition of wings allowed the insubstantial properties of angels to be

⁸⁸ The text is from Newbiggin 1996a, 1:6. See also Barr 1990, 383.

⁸⁹ On the fire see Newbiggin 2017, 102-03.

⁹⁰ See Hammerstein 1962, 17; Rastall 1994; Huck 2003-2008; Filippi 2017, 200.

⁹¹ The beginnings of angelic iconography are analysed in Peers 2001, 13 and 16-17. On the representation of angels as immaterial winds see Nova 2007, 45-49.

visually expressed. The controversy over angelic figuration was settled by the Council of Nicaea in 787, which approved their visual representation.⁹²

As observed by Emanuel Winternitz, from the middle of the thirteenth century, because of the popularity of the cult of the Virgin, “there is an enormous invasion of musical angels into Christian imagery.”⁹³ In fifteenth-century Florence, the orchestras depicted in the Coronation of the Virgin iconography change their sound, from a predominantly soft musical experience, to one including a variety of both soft and loud instruments. In what follows I would like to argue that, just as other elements of this iconography had been borrowed from theatrical performances, so this musical shift was connected to the music played by angels in religious plays staged by adult confraternities.

During the Middle Ages, musical instruments were categorised according to volume, as well as robustness of tone, into loud (*haut*; *grosso*) and soft (*bas*; *sottile*). To the first category belonged wind instruments (trumpets, shawms, cornetts, bagpipes), as well as percussion instruments (drums, cymbals, tambourines). Soft instruments were mainly stringed instruments, either plucked or bowed, but included also the organ, flutes, and recorders.⁹⁴ Usually the categories were used separately: for some events, only loud instruments were heard, and for others only soft ones; although around the middle of the fifteenth century the barriers between the two began to weaken. As the terminology of the categories implies, the choice of musical instruments depended to a great extent on the locations in which music was to be performed, whether inside churches, or domestic spaces, or in the open air, all of these spaces having different acoustic properties.⁹⁵

Loud ensembles were often used in large spaces and outdoors, for example in civic events, during tournaments, and also during courtly celebrations. In Florence, the civic ensemble of *trombadori* formed in the thirteenth century consisted of six trumpeters, a cymbals player, and a woodwind player, and drums were also used alongside these wind instruments. Although as a rule of thumb loud instruments were not considered appropriate for religious services, in Siena trumpeters

⁹² Peers 2001, 21 and 23-24; Marshall and Walsham 2006, 5. On the origin of the motif of the winged angels see Berefelt 1968. On the attribution of gender to angelic figures see Ashton 2002.

⁹³ Winternitz 1975, 229. See also Delumeau 2000b, 222. On the importance of the sense of hearing in religious teachings see Bagnoli 2016c, 38.

⁹⁴ McGee 1985, 63; Deborah Howard 2012, 6; Coelho and Polk 2016, 5-7. More on medieval instruments in McGee 2009a.

⁹⁵ See Bowles 1954; Polk 2015, 748.

actually participated in Mass when it was celebrated outdoors on particular feast days.⁹⁶ In the religious sphere, loud instruments were also used in ecclesiastical processions, in order to provide a rhythmical accompaniment.⁹⁷

Niall Atkinson has labelled churches as “machines for making noise,” given the intense aural experience that revolved around them.⁹⁸ Music played an important role in church services, and among the soft instruments used during liturgical celebrations, the organ was the most common, being played either for instrumental solos during service, or sometimes in conjunction with vocal performance.⁹⁹

The choice to represent loud and soft instruments combined in angelic ensembles, which became increasingly common in Florentine art during the fifteenth century, has been much discussed by scholars. Emanuel Winternitz considered that the groups of loud and soft instruments in angelic orchestras should be understood as actual ensembles that function separately. According to his view, only taken individually can they reflect actual musical practice.¹⁰⁰ Timothy McGee has demonstrated that during the Renaissance there was indeed a preference for ensembles composed of instruments with similar tonalities, which could mean that, as Katherine Powers has argued, these combinations derived not from actual musical performance, but perhaps from the incentive of Psalm 150 to praise God with a variety of instruments, from lutes and harps to cymbals and pipes.¹⁰¹ However, the combined use of a variety of loud and soft instruments did in fact take place during the theatrical performances of fifteenth-century Florence, in sacred plays in which angelic music was performed both on trumpets and on lutes. Regarding the musical practices in these religious events, we have information both from the stage directions in the texts of *sacre rappresentazioni* and from the account books of the confraternities that were responsible for organising these *feste*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in *sacre rappresentazioni* vocal music played an important role: parts of the text were delivered as song, and the plays ended with the singing of hymns and

⁹⁶ D’Accone 1997, 465-68; McGee 2009b, 44-45. On the Medici and civic music see McGee 2009b, 158-98. On the repertoire of Florentine *pifferi* see McGee 2009b, 212-29. For music at the Signoria during mealtimes see McGee 1999.

⁹⁷ Bowles 1961, 160.

⁹⁸ Atkinson 2016, 7.

⁹⁹ McGee 1985, 133. See also Bowles 1962.

¹⁰⁰ Winternitz 1963, 458-59.

¹⁰¹ McGee 1985, 75-76; Powers 2004, 54.

laude. In Ferrara, even the singers of the court chapel participated in theatrical performances, both secular and sacred. The play representing Christ's descent into Limbo, staged in 1481, involved the *cantori* of Ercole I d'Este dressed up as the souls redeemed by Christ. The chronicler Bernardino Zambotti recounts the episode: "And in this way the mouth of the said serpent opened and out of it came fourteen souls all singing and thanking their Creator with sweet melodies, because they were the duke's *cantori*, dressed in white."¹⁰² Instruments were also important in *sacre rappresentazioni*, mostly in association with secular scenes, dances, and the performance of profane music.¹⁰³

However, it was specifically during the three most important *feste* of fifteenth-century Florence, performed in the churches of the Oltrarno, that the mixing of loud and soft instruments took place in the context of the representation of heaven. This musical choice, in this particular context, may be the impetus behind the shift in the contemporary iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin from soft angelic ensembles to angels that combine the segregated categories of Renaissance instruments. Although the reconstruction of musical performances in these *feste* is partial and imprecise, given the lack of consistent documentation, in what follows I would like to gather several of the most relevant sources that provide information on the heavenly music of these Florentine plays.

Eye-witness accounts usually do not describe the *feste* in detail, mentioning only the fact of their performance. Further, when they do provide more detail, the musical performance is never precisely described, but rather defined in very general terms. For example, Agostino di Porto, when writing about the *edificio* of the Annunciation for the festival of San Giovanni celebrated sometime between 1451 and 1454, mentions "lots of little angels who sang and played and danced."¹⁰⁴ The *lauda* tradition also describes in very vague terms the heavenly music performed by the angels either for the Assumption of the Virgin or for Christ's Ascension. For example, one *lauda* reports that the angels in heaven "with sweet singing and music are always in celebration and laughter."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² "E cùsì se aperse la bocha del dicto serpente e per lie uscì fora XIII anime cantando tute e rengratiando il suo Creatore con dolce melodie, perchè herano li cantori del duca vestiti de biancho." Zambotti 1934-37, 88. Moretti 2012, 220. On theatrical performances at the Este court see Coppo 1968.

¹⁰³ Becherini 1951, 197-98; McGee 1985, 141-43; Stallini 2011, 79.

¹⁰⁴ "molti angeletti che cantavano e sonavano e ballavano." Delcorno Branca 2003, 10. Translation from Newbigin 2007c, 22-23n12.

¹⁰⁵ "chon dolze canto et suono son sempre in festa et riso." Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS Ricc. 2896, fol. 142v.

Other *laude* describe “the sweet harmony/ of music and delightful songs;”¹⁰⁶ and Feo Belcari invites us to “taste the music and songs/ that are in paradise.”¹⁰⁷ The music of heaven is described more generally as composed of both “instrumental music” (*suoni*) and “vocal music” (*canti*). Some *laude*, however, emphasise the variety evident in heavenly performance: “music, dances, and songs/ full of all kinds of melodies.”¹⁰⁸ One of the *laude* in the Florentine collection of MS Chig. L.VII.266, which explains (as an annotation records) “how Christ ascended into heaven accompanied by all the choirs of angels and saints,” offers more details of the musical welcome prepared for him: “all rejoicing with so many and beautiful music,/ that many and many sounds/ you would never have heard in such a manner,/ the blessed spirits came to greet him,/ making a celebration with their instruments.”¹⁰⁹ The *lauda* specifically refers to instrumental music, and the “*suoni*” of the heavenly performers produce sounds in varied profusion, which could be read as an indication that they are playing both loud and soft instruments.

One of the most useful descriptions of the musical performances in the Florentine plays of the Oltrarno is that of Abraham of Suzdal. The Russian bishop’s eye-witness description of the 1439 Annunciation *fiesta* in San Felice in Piazza is very precise in identifying the instruments of the angelic orchestra surrounding God the Father in heaven: “Little boys in white robes surrounded him, representing heavenly virtues. Some of them were singing, another played the cymbals, others played the lute and pipes. In every respect it is a wonderfully joyous spectacle that no man can describe.”¹¹⁰ He witnessed the same combination of soft and loud instruments around God the Father in the Ascension play in Santa Maria del Carmine: “Around him is a throng of little children who represent angels with pipes and lutes and lots of tiny bells, and in their midst numerous tiny candles.” The bishop also describes the effect of this musical performance, writing that “the little boys, who represent the heavenly Powers, move around him to the sounds of deafening music and sweet singing.”¹¹¹ The presence of loud instruments, their combination with soft ones, as well as the variety of instruments played by the angels all contribute to the “deafening” effect of their

¹⁰⁶ “la dolce armonia/ de’ suoni e dilettoni canti.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 192v.

¹⁰⁷ “Gustate e’ suoni e canti/ che sono in paradiso.” *Laude* 1485-86, 21r-v.

¹⁰⁸ “suoni, balli, et canti/ pien d’ogni melodia.” *Laude* 1485-86, 22r.

¹⁰⁹ “come Christo ascese in cielo acompagniato da tutti chori deli angeli e santi;” “tutti gaudenti con tanti e begli suoni/ che molti e molti tuoni/ non si sarien sentiti in tale stato,/ vennian incontro gli spiriti beati,/ facciendo con stormenti festa.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 184r.

¹¹⁰ Newbiggin 1996a, 1:6.

¹¹¹ Newbiggin 1996a, 1:61-62.

music. Similar instruments are depicted by the painters of the Oltrarno, who both lived around the churches where these plays were performed, and were also involved in their creation. Neri di Bicci's *Coronations of the Virgin*, for example, display angels performing on lutes, cymbals, and wind instruments (figs. 76, 79, 80, 93, 98), among other instruments.

To support this Florentine evidence, we can also look at the practice of representing heavenly music in sacred plays performed in other cities at the same time, which were influenced by the development of the genre in Florence. Ferrarese religious theatre was much indebted to that in Florence: for example, in 1476 an entrepreneur from Florence staged in Ferrara the legend of St Jacob of Compostela.¹¹² However, Isabella d'Este's description of the Annunciation play performed in 1503, which as mentioned above would have been almost identical to that performed by Florentines in San Felice in Piazza, offers only the usual vague information regarding music, mentioning: "the other angels in heaven, where songs and music could be heard."¹¹³

More can be glimpsed from Sienese examples. Two important performances from the fifteenth century had the representation of heaven as a focal point, being connected to the canonisation of San Bernardino da Siena and of St Catherine of Siena, the first in 1450, and the second in 1461. The first was recorded by the chronicler Tommaso Fecini, who describes the event as follows: "a paradise was made out of wood, decorated with cloths and a wheel of lights and an artifice with which someone resembling St Bernardino went to heaven, with all the instruments that could be had, and St Bernardino was led to the feet of God."¹¹⁴ The Assumption of the Virgin was the sacred play specific to Siena, sumptuously celebrated every year. Therefore, the heaven of the San Bernardino celebration was very likely devised on the model of the heaven of the Assumption performance. A decorated initial from a Sienese manuscript dated to 1468 (fig. 102) presents the Virgin's Assumption surrounded by a variety of musical practices, including vocal performance indicated by the scrolls held by one of the groups of angels, as well as plucked and bowed stringed instruments, and loud instruments.¹¹⁵ Heavenly music was imagined and constructed as a lavish performance including all possible instruments.

¹¹² Coppo 1968, 35; Lockwood 1984, 284-85. See also Lockwood 1980; Vecchi Calore 1980.

¹¹³ "li altri angeli al celo, cum canti et soni che se audivano." D'Ancona 1872, 1:168-69. D'Este 2017, 221.

¹¹⁴ "si fe' di legniamme uno paradiso ornato di panni e una ruota di lumi e uno artificio dove Santo Bernardino in similitudine andò in cielo, con tutti li stromenti che si potè avere e fu condoto Sancto Bernardino a' piè di Dio." Fecini 1931-39, 861. See also D'Accone 1997, 679-81.

¹¹⁵ See Blackburn 1967.

The final type of source which can help us understand the instruments used by angels in the sacred plays of the Santo Spirito quarter in Florence is the accounts of the confraternities that staged these performances. Although payments to musicians are not always systematically recorded, they do offer an overview of the kinds of performers that were employed for these theatrical events. During the second half of the fifteenth century, Florentine confraternities became financially successful, and were able to afford greater expense in order to increase the splendour of their services. If beforehand the *laude* were sung by the members of the confraternity themselves, as the rituals became more complex, professional singers as well as instrumentalists were hired for this purpose.¹¹⁶

For the Ascension *festa* performed in Santa Maria del Carmine, the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese recorded different types of musicians during the fifteenth century. In 1426, 2 *lire* and 15 *soldi* were paid to the “*piferi* of Montughi” (*piferi* da Montug[h]i), and in 1429 they recorded a payment “to Vinci *pifero* and companions, 7 *lire* and 10 *soldi* ... to play during the *festa*.”¹¹⁷ In 1441, eight trumpeters (*tronbetti*) were paid to announce the performance of the *festa* throughout the city.¹¹⁸ The records of 1454 mention only the “*sonatori*,” without specifying what kind of instruments they played.¹¹⁹

Once Neri di Bicci began to keep the records of the company, given the meticulous care with which he registered all the details, we finally have more information regarding the type of instruments that were played in heaven during the Ascension *festa*. In 1466, Ghualberto di Marcho and his company were paid 3 *lire* and 6 *soldi* “for the loud instruments that are played in paradise when the *festa* is done.”¹²⁰ The following year, Ghualberto and his company were paid once more, and the records also register a payment “to Palaghallo player of [*cancelled*: loud] soft instruments and his company, 2 *lire* and 15 *soldi* cash, which were for the price and for their labour playing when

¹¹⁶ D'Accone 1994, 261.

¹¹⁷ Newbiggin 1996a, 2:297. “Al Vinci pifero e chompagni lire sette soldi dieci ... per sonare a la festa.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:310.

¹¹⁸ Newbiggin 1996a, 2:378.

¹¹⁹ Newbiggin 1996a, 2:485.

¹²⁰ “A' suoni grossi che sonano nel Paradiso quando si fa la festa.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:523.

the *festa* shall be done.”¹²¹ The same payments for both *suoni grossi* and *suoni sotili* were recorded in 1468 and 1470.¹²²

It is clear from these confraternal records, as well as from the descriptions of eye-witnesses such as that of Abraham of Suzdal, that during the fifteenth century, the sacred plays staged by the adult confraternities of the Santo Spirito quarter used both loud and soft instruments to represent the angelic music performed in heaven. It is precisely during this period that Florentine artists began to represent the heavenly celebrations of the Virgin’s Coronation, not with the soft instruments usually used to accompany the performance of *laude*, but with a combination of soft and loud sounds produced by a variety of instruments. In *Coronations* by Domenico Ghirlandaio, Sandro Botticelli, or Piero del Pollaiuolo (figs. 63, 64, 77, 82, 84, 100), as well as in several examples from the successful workshop of Neri di Bicci, artists depict angelic music in the same manner in which it was represented in the theatrical performances with which both they, their commissioners, and in fact the entire city of Florence, would have been very familiar.

3.6 *Reordering Heavenly Space*

3.6.1 *Heaven in the City*

One of the most visible changes in artworks representing the Coronation of the Virgin from fifteenth-century Florence takes place in the spatial arrangement of the scene, the composition shifting from a frontal perspective upon the heavenly celebrations to a view from below, which presents the saintly figures almost as if they were contemplating heaven while on earth, although it is not their location in the image that has changed. In what follows, I would like to discuss these matters in connection with ideas regarding the spatial construction of heaven, both conceptually and also materially, in theatrical performances, in order to analyse this shift in perspective.

According to W. J. T. Mitchell, a place represents a specific location, while space can be understood as a “practiced place,” namely a place in which actions, narratives, and signs create an

¹²¹ “A Palaghallo sonatore di suoni [*cancelled: grossi*] sotili e a sua chonpagnia lire dua soldi quindici chontanti, furono per prezo e loro faticha a sonare quando si farà la festa.” Newbiggin 1996a, 2:550.

¹²² Newbiggin 1996a, 2:564. On musical performances in the Ascension *festa* see Barr 1989, 113-15; Barr 1990, 387-89; Newbiggin 1996a, 1:82-84, 114, 122-28, 131.

experience, or an imaginary concept of this location.¹²³ As discussed by Tim Shephard, music or visual culture can give meaning to places, therefore, contributing to the creation of spaces.¹²⁴ Spaces can exist in the physical realm, but they have also an imaginative dimension, and the two can be very intricately bound and hard to distinguish from one another.¹²⁵ Heaven is such a space in fifteenth-century Florence, in which the material and the imaginary are intertwined. Although heaven was never a tangible location, it has always been imagined in connection to the surrounding world, and in some sense located. By thinking about heaven as a place above, somewhere in the sky, or by pinpointing its whereabouts on maps, creative efforts were made to simulate its presence.¹²⁶ It was imagined in art, poetry and theological thought, but in the fifteenth century, a new dimension was created. The representation of heaven in a theatrical setting was not only an imaginative exercise, but it was an embodied, interactive experience of what heaven might be like, which in turn influenced the way in which this space was imagined and visualised.

Heaven represented an important element of devotional life, because the afterlife was the focal point of religious imagination.¹²⁷ The majority of *laude* from fifteenth-century Florence are constructed around the idea of returning to heaven, under the guidance and protection of Christ or the Virgin. It is also the idea of the afterlife that is usually evoked in the final verses of these sung prayers, as a constant reminder of the ultimate goal of the devotee. For example, a *lauda* addressed to the Virgin Mary, “Always be praised and blessed” (*Sempre laudata e benedetta sia*), ends with the following lines: “in order to lead us to glory and sweet singing/ where everyone may always be content.”¹²⁸ Another, written by Francesco d’Albizo, asks: “give us grace that we may ascend/ in your lofty kingdom and enjoy your presence.”¹²⁹

Heaven’s constant presence is also reflected in the vocabulary of the period, leading to a very large number of terms used to refer to it in fifteenth-century Florence, which can be traced in the texts of *laude*. “Paradiso” is often employed, a term which through its Hebrew roots in the word

¹²³ Mitchell 2002, x.

¹²⁴ Shephard 2014a, 275.

¹²⁵ Crum and Paoletti 2006, 9.

¹²⁶ See Delumeau 2000a, 39-70; Scafi 2006; Scafi 2013.

¹²⁷ Muessig and Putter 2007, 11.

¹²⁸ “per menarci in gloria e dolcie canto/ dove ciaschun contento sempre fia.” Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chig. L.VII.266, fol. 210v.

¹²⁹ “donaci gratia che possiam salire/ nel tuo excelso regno e te fruire.” *Laude* 1485-86, 99r.

“*pardēs*” recalls the idea of the garden.¹³⁰ Another common name is “*cielo*,” which refers to the concept that heaven was above, in the sky. The idea of height is also echoed by the expression “greatest height” (*somma altezza*). There are countless denominations that refer to heaven as an actual location, taking on different shapes: “eternal kingdom” (*eterno regno*), “blessed country” (*patria beata*), “supernal city” (*città superna*), “celestial court” (*corte celeste*), “divine quarter” (*borgo divino*), castle, garden, “blessed port” (*benedetto porto*), “eternal abode” (*eterna mansione*), “supernal cell” (*superna cella*), or “eternal room” (*eterna stanza*). Visual metaphors are also used to refer to heaven, for example “sacred visions” (*sancti lumi*), as well as musical ones: “high melody” (*alta melodia*), “eternal psalmody” (*eterna psalmodia*), and “greatest song” (*sommo canto*). These terms seem to be derived from the activities and experiences that the blessed were thought to enjoy in the afterlife. Therefore, additional terms such as “eternal good” (*ben eterno*), “supernal sweetness” (*superno dolzore*), “immense richness” (*immensa ricchezza*), or “eternal laughter” (*eterno riso*), are also used as expressions synonymous with heaven. Two other very popular denominations are “supernal glory” (*gloria superna*) and “eternal life” (*vita eterna*).

All of these terms demonstrate the wide spectrum of images, both mental and physical, associated with heaven and its varied manners of representation.¹³¹ The majority of metaphorical references place heaven up, but it can also be down, or out, or ahead, or in. It is connected, therefore, primarily to the sky, and symbolised by church vaults, or represented as a starry sky, and at the same time imagined as some sort of place, given the presence of bodies within it.¹³² The metaphors of the garden and the city were two of the most common images expressing the nature of heaven as a place.¹³³

The popular fifteenth-century Italian prayer manual *Giardino di oratione*, in order to offer support for the contemplative exercise of devotees when thinking about the invisible heaven, leads the reader through a process of materialising paradise according to familiar concepts: “We shall, therefore, make and form a city: which shall be placed and built on a high mountain.” This city is then given form by imagining its height, width, and other properties chosen by the author. The

¹³⁰ On the etymology of “paradise” see Giamatti 1966, 11; Scafi 2013, 9-11.

¹³¹ On the representation of heaven and its inhabitants see also McDannell and Lang 1988; Delumeau 1995; Bruderer Eichberg 1998; Cattin and Faure 1999; Davidson 1994b; Lightbown 1999; Delumeau 2000a; Delumeau 2000b; Kessler 2000; Rees 2013; Gill 2014, 65-83.

¹³² Russell 1997, 12-15; Emerson and Feiss 2000, xvi; Gill 2014, 60.

¹³³ Giamatti 1966; Comito 1979; Lang 1996; Lightbown 1999, 89; Delumeau 2000a, 121-27.

height of the heavenly city is measured as follows: “the height of heaven, who could measure it? Some say that this height is so big that if a grindstone of lead were to depart from that empyrean heaven, before it would arrive on earth, five hundred years would pass. This is, therefore, its height.” The city of heaven is imagined by the author of the *Giardino di oratione* as made up of twelve neighbourhoods which are inhabited by the elect.¹³⁴ This particular image is also recurrent in fifteenth-century Florentine *laude*. In one regarding the Virgin’s Assumption, the news of her ascent provokes great agitation in heaven, where everyone prepares for the celebration. In this context, “through the large piazzas of that shining heaven/ Gabriel was running all fiery.”¹³⁵ Heaven was constructed in the imaginary of Florentines as a city, its properties recognisable in relation to their own urban experience. Indeed, their pervasive concern with the afterlife extended this image to that of Florence itself, mirroring it to the heavenly Jerusalem, particularly in times of celebration.

Henri Lefebvre, in his analysis of the concept of space, has explained how social space, mental space, and physical space are indistinguishable from one another.¹³⁶ The image of heaven as a city with piazzas and neighbourhoods, much like Florence itself, overlapped with that of Florence as the heavenly Jerusalem. This was more than just a poetic trope, as we can see in the poem praising the celebrations in Florence in 1459, known as the *Terze rime*, in which Florence is described as the earthly paradise: “And you who want to see Heaven on earth,/ look at the houses, look at the great gardens/ filled with laughter mingled with sweet song./ They look like choirs with rows of seraphim.”¹³⁷ During the fifteenth century, this parallel was extended to the symbolic transformation of the city into heaven, through the rituals that seized Florence during important religious celebrations.¹³⁸

One of the key moments at which this occurred was during the yearly festival of San Giovanni. Vasari describes the manner in which the piazza di San Giovanni was decorated for the occasion:

¹³⁴ “Fabricaremo adunque e formaremo una citade: la quale fia posta e edificata sopra uno monte alto;” “L’ altecia del cielo chi la potrà misurare. Questo dicono alcuni che tanta e questa altecia che se una mola di piombo si partisse da quel cielo empyreo nanti che ella arivasse in fino in terra starebbe per spacio di cinque cento anni: ecco adunque la sua altecia.” Niccolò da Osimo 1494, 190-91 (Chapter 22).

¹³⁵ “Per le piazze larghe di quel splendente celo/ tucto focoso correa el Gabriello.” *Laude* 1500, 60r-v.

¹³⁶ Lefebvre 2009, 27.

¹³⁷ “Chi vuol vedere in terra il paradiso/ guardi l’abitazion’, guardi i giardini, ch’è un mesuglio di canto e di riso:/ paiano scanni e cor’ di serafini.” Newbigini 2015, 22 (829-35). Newbigini 2011, 38 (829-35).

¹³⁸ See the discussion in Filippi 2017, 195-97 and Weinstein 1974, 268.

it was all covered with blue canvases, full of big lilies, made out of yellow canvas, and sewn above; and in the middle there were, in some medallions, always of canvas and 10 *braccia* large, the arms of the people and commune of Florence ... and all around, at the extremes of the said sky, which covered the entire piazza although large, hung banners, always of canvas, painted with several *imprese* of the arms of the magistrates and of the guilds, and with many lions, which are one of the insignias of the city.¹³⁹

He explains the methods used by Florentines to secure everything in place, even on windy days. The lengths of blue canvas, all united into one large piece, were attached to many iron hooks on the buildings around the piazza, including the Baptistery and the cathedral, which were still visible in Vasari's time.¹⁴⁰ The false sky that covered the location in which all the *edifizi* performed their sacred plays would have functioned much like the domes or vaults of churches painted to resemble the night sky, transforming the piazza di San Giovanni—standing in for the city as a whole—into a heavenly space.

Heaven probably also remained as a constant presence in the piazza throughout the festival, given that its *edificio* was most likely a permanent fixture, used also in all the other short sacred plays. As Newbigin has argued, given the complexity of devising a heavenly scene—and a heavenly scene was required in every episode that was performed—it seems unlikely that multiple heavens were constructed; thus it is possible that heaven dominated the piazza throughout the festival in the form of this fixed *edificio*.¹⁴¹ It would also have represented the highlight of the cycle of *sacre rappresentazioni* staged on floats, one by one: that of the Last Judgement was the last to be performed, ending the entire theatrical procession, just as most fifteenth-century *laude* end, with an image of the afterlife.

¹³⁹ “si copriva tutta di tele azzurre, piene di gigli grandi fatti di tela gialla e cucitivi sopra; e nel mezzo erano in alcuni tondi, pur di tela e grandi braccia dieci, l'arme del popolo e comune di Firenze ... ed intorno intorno negli estremi del detto cielo, che tutta la piazza, comechè grandissima sia, ricopriva, pendevano drapelloni pur di tela, dipinti di varie imprese, d'armi di magistrati e d'Arti, e di molti leoni, che sono una delle insegna della città.” Vasari 1878-85, 3:199.

¹⁴⁰ See Pallen 1999, 10.

¹⁴¹ Newbigin 1983, xxxviii.

3.6.2 Heaven in the Church

The church building, the place in which heaven and earth congregate, was identified from the early Middle Ages with the heavenly Jerusalem.¹⁴² The hymn *Urbs Hierusalem beata* had been sung during the feast of the dedication of a church since the end of the eighth century.¹⁴³ In its verses the building of the earthly church was compared with that of its heavenly counterpart – “that entire city sacred and beloved by God/ full of songs, praise, and sonorous jubilation/ celebrates with goodwill the God one and three.”¹⁴⁴ Through this ritual of consecration, the church was transformed into an earthly copy of the heavenly Jerusalem. In the symbolic journey through the space of the church, vaults, roofs, and particularly domes, all represented heaven because of their elevated position, and began to be decorated accordingly.¹⁴⁵

The description of the ceiling of the nave of San Lorenzo in the fifteenth-century poem known as the *Terze rime* testifies to this association: “The central nave is ceilinged in fine gold,/ and ultramarine blue, and full of roses/ that glisten like the brightest stars of morning/... Truly the starry vault of heaven does/ not shine with light more bright nor more serene/ than these fair things in San Lorenzo do.”¹⁴⁶ The identification of church ceilings with heaven was so strong that it left its traces in the Italian language – in the Quattrocento, domes were also known by the term “cielo.”¹⁴⁷

The concept also operated in reverse, as heaven itself was constructed in the shape of a dome for the sets used in fifteenth-century Florentine sacred plays. Vasari described Filippo Brunelleschi’s designs for the annual representation of the Annunciation *fiesta* in San Felice in Piazza, which had been staged in this format on several occasions during the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The heaven that

¹⁴² On the idea of the church as replica of the heavenly Jerusalem see Simson 1988, 8-11 and 227; Sedlmayer 2001, 95-164. For an analysis of the liturgical and theological sources on which this association is based see Stookey 1969; Rossi and Rovetta 1983, 90.

¹⁴³ McDannell and Lang 1988, 78.

¹⁴⁴ “Omnis illa Deo sacra et dilecta civitas/ Plena modulis in laude et canoro iubilo/ Trinum Deum unicumque cum favore praedicat.” Clemens 1908, 111 (*Urbs Hierusalem beata* 102.6).

¹⁴⁵ For the symbolism of the space of the church see Crossley 1998; Gill 2014, 61. On the origins of heavenly representations on domes see Lehman 1945.

¹⁴⁶ “La maggior nave ha ‘l palco d’oro fine,/ d’azzurro oltrammarino e pien di rose/ lustranti come stelle mattutine./ ... Veramente la volta delle stelle/ non mostra più lucente o più serena/ che ‘n San Lorenzo queste cose belle.” Newbiggin 2015, 27 (1078-80, 1084-86). Newbiggin 2011, 43 (1078-80, 1084-86).

¹⁴⁷ Shearman 1992, 151-53. For more on domes as heaven see *ibid.*, 149-91.

¹⁴⁸ Buccheri 2014, 38-39. On Brunelleschi and sacred theatre see Raghianti 1977, 446-57; Pochat 1978; Zorzi 1980; Battisti 1989.

Brunelleschi created was in the shape of a dome: “Filippo had set, between two of the trusses that supported the roof of the church, a dome like an empty bowl or a barber’s basin turned upside-down.”¹⁴⁹ For the viewers of the *fiesta*, the shape of Brunelleschi’s heaven would have brought to mind the familiar church domes, decorated with frescoes representing heaven and its orchestras of angels.

The image of the dome-like heaven was transferred to the representation of heaven in works of art from the period. One of the most vivid evocations is that of Francesco Botticini’s *Assumption of the Virgin* (fig. 103), in which the sky opens up in order to reveal a golden dome in which the heavenly court is seated.¹⁵⁰ Sandro Botticelli’s *Coronation* in the Uffizi (fig. 83), as well as his *Mystic Nativity* (fig. 17), present the same image of the heavenly dome, associated by scholars with Brunelleschi’s machinery also because of the presence of the dancing and spinning circle of angels.¹⁵¹ On 13 January 1490, a similar paradise, “shaped like half an egg,” was also seen in a theatrical performance devised for the marriage of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and Isabella of Aragon by Leonardo da Vinci, who had seen the spectacle of Florentine *cieli* in his youth.¹⁵²

These theatrical heavens were for the most part constructed within the spaces of churches, including San Felice in Piazza, Santa Maria del Carmine, and Santo Spirito. If the heavens on domes and vaults provided their viewers with a symbolic elevated heaven, they did not represent a focal point of devotion in the same manner as did altarpieces, placed at a more accessible distance for daily prayer. The heaven of the church ceiling was more an implied presence, with whose heights viewers did not interact in a systematic manner. However, when heaven was materially constructed in theatrical performances, animated by moving and singing angels, spectacles of lights, and by rising and descending saintly figures, sometimes flying above the audience, it became a focal point for the devotee’s gaze. It was no longer something that he might or might not contemplate, but a dazzling performance which he had come especially to view. Looking at the heavens staged in fifteenth-century Florentine churches several times a year was an activity that

¹⁴⁹ “Aveva adunque Filippo per questo effetto, fra due legni di que’ che reggevano il tetto della chiesa, accomodata una mezza palla tonda a uso di scodella vota, ovvero di bacino da barbiere.” Vasari 1878-85, 2:375. Translation in Newbigin 1996a, 1:22.

¹⁵⁰ On the painting see Rubin 2000 and Gill 2014, 85-91.

¹⁵¹ See Olson 1981; Burroughs 2014. See also Lightbown 1978, 2:71-73.

¹⁵² Angiolillo 1979, 30-47; Povoledo 1982, 292-94; Strong 1984, 36-37.

became embedded in the devotional life of the time, shaping how this space was imagined and represented in art.

The idea of heaven's height was central to the way in which it was constructed in these sacred plays, and this required that the churches in which the performances took place had sufficient room for recreating this particular property of the realm above. If the church of San Felice in Piazza has a reasonably high nave (fig. 85), that of Santo Spirito (fig. 89) and particularly that of Santa Maria del Carmine (fig. 90) are exceptionally high, providing ample space for showcasing ascents and descents from heaven. During the fifteenth century, these churches also had a *tramezzo* or rood screen, which was used as the stage on which sacred plays were performed. In Santa Maria del Carmine, the *castello* and the *monte* from which Christ was lifted into heaven were placed on the rood screen (fig. 91), and they remained there all year round, a permanent fixture to the body of the church. In order to have permanent access to the rood screen, the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese also constructed a spiral staircase up the eastern side of the church, modifying the church interior to suit its theatrical role.¹⁵³

In Santa Maria del Carmine, because of the size of the nave, the company of Sant'Agnese was able to construct not one, but two heavens. Vasari writes that "because the church of the Carmine, where this representation was done, is much wider and higher than San Felice, in addition to the part that received Christ they sometimes, as they saw fit, constructed a second Heaven above the main altar."¹⁵⁴ The inventory of Neri di Bicci from 1466/7 differentiates between the *cielo* and *paradiso*, which in this case should not be taken as synonyms, but rather as terms designating two different locations. In 1430, the confraternity began modifying the structure of the church even further in order to accommodate their ever-increasing scenographical requirements, by opening up a small chamber in the wall above the high altar to fit this second heaven. The newly constructed *cielo* was the more complex of the two, and it is to this heaven that Christ ascended from the mountain, diagonally. The *paradiso* was placed above the *monte*, and although it was equipped

¹⁵³ Barr 1989, 106; Barr 1990, 379; Pallen 1999, 4; Newbigin 2017, 95, 99.

¹⁵⁴ "perchè la detta chiesa del Carmine, dove questa rappresentazione si faceva, è più larga assai e più alta che quella di San Felice; oltre quella parte che riceveva il Cristo, si accomodava alcuna volta, secondo che pareva, un altro cielo sopra la tribuna maggiore." Vasari 1878-85, 3:197-98. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:64-65.

with its own God the Father and set of angels, which descended vertically to the mountain, it was less impressive than the other.¹⁵⁵

In the church of Santa Maria del Carmine heaven was constructed before the spectators, whose eyes would have been lifted not only to the heights of the rood screen, but all the way up almost to the ceiling, where heaven was located. During the Annunciation *festa* in San Felice in Piazza, however, the audience was much more involved in the dramatic action, which took place both in front and behind them (fig. 88). The Virgin's chamber was placed on top of the rood screen, where the prophets also recited their parts, while above the entrance of the church, heaven with God the Father had been constructed. The two areas were connected by ropes on which the angel Gabriel would descend and ascend back into heaven, flying above the heads of the audience, while the ropes also ignited fireworks, which appeared as rays of light coming upon the Virgin from God the Father.¹⁵⁶

A very interesting process in these theatrical experiences, meant to increase the amazement of the audience, is represented by the sudden appearance and disappearance of heavens, hidden from view by curtains or even doors, which once pulled aside would reveal the sight of hundreds of candles, singing angels, and rotating heavenly spheres. The *cielo* in Santa Maria del Carmine was concealed by curtains. Neri di Bicci's inventory records: "the flat curtains that open and close Heaven and two stone counterweights with iron shanks and pulleys and ropes to open them."¹⁵⁷ These curtains, and the moment of the unveiling of heaven, were described by Abraham of Suzdal:

In the middle of the upper part of this structure is a large round opening, 2 sages in diameter, draped with a blue curtain, on which the sun, the moon and the surrounding stars are painted: a representation of the first celestial sphere. At the appointed time this drape is lifted, that is, the doors of Heaven are opened, and above is seen a man, with a crown on his head, just like God the Father.¹⁵⁸

In San Felice in Piazza, for the Annunciation play, Suzdal witnessed an even more impressive revealing of heaven: "the curtains covering the upper platform are swept back with the sound of

¹⁵⁵ Newbiggin 1996b; Newbiggin 2017, 97.

¹⁵⁶ Attolini 1988, 19; Angiolillo 1996, 49; Phillips-Court 2011, 38. On the illusions created by mechanical ascensions and descents see also the discussion in Meredith 2007.

¹⁵⁷ "Le vele che aprono e serano el Cielo e dua chontrapesi di pietra con picuoli di fero e charucholuze e funi d'aprille." Newbiggin 1996a, 2:536. Translation from Newbiggin 1996a, 1:75.

¹⁵⁸ Newbiggin 1996a, 1:60-61. On the representation of the figure of God see Boespflug 2008, 243-89; Boespflug 2010, 18-21 and 106-14; Boespflug 2012.

cannon fire, in imitation of heavenly thunder.”¹⁵⁹ The reason for the added sound effect is explained in Vasari’s account of the technical aspects of the Annunciation set:

And in addition to this, in order to open and close Heaven, Filippo had had made two big doors, each five *braccia* square. ... And being constructed in this fashion the doors had two effects: firstly, when they were pulled open, they made a noise like thunder because they were heavy.¹⁶⁰

The stage directions of the *sacra rappresentazione* of the Annunciation, written by Feo Belcari, also mention the appearance of heaven at a specific moment in the progress of the play, by having it opened: “*Now heaven is opened, and God the Father tells Gabriel to go and announce the Virgin.*”¹⁶¹

Indeed the opening and closing of heaven consistently punctuate eye-witness descriptions of the Annunciation play. Describing the Florentine Annunciation *fiesta* performed in 1503 in Ferrara, Isabella d’Este mentions how: “and with her [the Virgin’s] words, the sky [heaven] suddenly opened, revealing one dressed as God the Father.” Afterwards: “heaven closed up, and several scenes were played from the visitation of Saint Elizabeth and Joseph, on earth. Heaven opened up again.”¹⁶² Margaret of Austria, witnessing the Annunciation play in San Felice in Piazza in 1533, describes it in the same way: “Heaven opened with dances, and music, and celebrations; ... the angels ... with more music and songs return to heaven; heaven is closed and the play is finished.”¹⁶³

The spectator’s perspective when viewing these sacred plays is vividly described by Abraham of Suzdal. For the Annunciation play: “a great multitude of people fill the church. For a while they stood in silence, looking up at the scene prepared on the rood screen in the middle of the church.” The same atmosphere is described for the Ascension *fiesta*: “When the church is full and silence reigns, all eyes are raised to the rood screen and what is arranged there.”¹⁶⁴ For the entire duration

¹⁵⁹ Newbigin 1996a, 1:5-6.

¹⁶⁰ “A che si aggiugnueva che, per potere quel cielo aprire e serrare, aveva fatto fare Filippo due gran porte di braccia cinque l’una per ogni verso; ... E queste così fatte porte facevano duoi effetti; l’uno, che quando erano tirate, per esser gravi, facevano romore a guisa di tuono.” Vasari 1878-85, 2:378. Translation from Newbigin 1996a, 1:24.

¹⁶¹ “*Ora s’apre il cielo, e DIO PADRE dice a Gabbriello che vada ad annunziare la Vergine.*” Belcari 1920, 71 (*La rappresentazione dell’Annunziazione di Nostra Donna*).

¹⁶² “et in quello dire fo aperto in un istante il celo, dove se demonstroe uno in similitudine de Dio padre, ... serato il celo, fo facti alcuni acti de la visitatione de Sancta Elysabetha et de Joseph, qual vuolse per terra: in lo qual acto se aperse un altro celo.” D’Ancona 1872, 1:168-69. D’Este 2017, 221.

¹⁶³ “s’apre il Cielo con balli, e suoni e feste;... li angeli ... con altri suoni e canti tornati in cielo si chiude el cielo ed è finita.” Newbigin 1983, xxviii25.

¹⁶⁴ The texts are from Newbigin 1996a, 1:5 and Newbigin 1996a, 1:61.

of the play, devotees would gaze upwards at the rood screen, and even higher at the heavens that opened and closed, as well as at the angels flying above their heads.

If the elevation of the Virgin in Fra Angelico's Uffizi *Coronation* (fig. 75) symbolises more a contemplative and mental experience, the increased height of the Coronation scene in the latter part of the fifteenth century might actually reflect this embodied experience of viewing heaven during theatrical performances.¹⁶⁵ Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 63), dated 1483, depicts the saints in heaven no longer surrounding the Virgin and Christ, but gazing upwards at their elevated position.¹⁶⁶ Between 1484 and 1486, Ghirlandaio painted a *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 82) for the high altar of the church of San Gerolamo ai Frati Francescani outside Narni, in which he separated the gazing saints at the bottom of the painting from the Coronation scene suspended above their heads with a thick line of clouds acting as a platform. The Narni *Coronation* enjoyed popular success, serving as a model for several other commissions.¹⁶⁷ Sandro Botticelli's workshop also took on this new manner of depicting the Coronation of the Virgin, in the painting now housed by the Villa la Quiete (fig. 84), in which heaven, with its spectacle of lights symbolised by the golden background, and with its "suoni e canti," opens up above the eyes of a captivated audience.¹⁶⁸ The habit of viewing heaven in the sacred plays of the Oltrarno had changed the manner in which it was represented in *Coronations of the Virgin*. Through the saints that lift their eyes to the scene on top of the *nuvola*, the experience of these theatrical performances is recalled, inviting the viewer to share contemplative practices between the two contexts.

These attitudes of viewing were also contained in the texts of *laude* which circulated during the period and which are filled with metaphors of elevation in connection with the heavenly realm. Feo Belcari asks devotees to: "Lift the eye of your mind,/ may your heart be all fixed on heaven," or: "Thusly the eyes always lifted to God/ follow your celestial vocation," and: "Lift those eyes towards the sky/ and contemplate paradise."¹⁶⁹ The connection between the Virgin and devotees is also expressed in terms that evoke elevation. On the one hand, the Virgin needs to lower her

¹⁶⁵ For Fra Angelico's *Coronation* see Wright 2019, 112.

¹⁶⁶ On the painting see Wright 2005, 313-21 and 526.

¹⁶⁷ Cadogan 2000, 255-56; O'Malley 2005b, 236-39.

¹⁶⁸ On the painting see Lightbown 1978, 2:147-48; Ciatti 1990; Giometti 2016.

¹⁶⁹ "Alzate l'occhio della vostra mente,/ el vostro cor sie tutto nel ciel fixo." *Laude* 1485-86, 122v. "Et così gli'occhi sempre a Dio levati/ segui la tua celeste vocatione." Belcari 1490, 7v. "Alza quelli occhi in verso'l cielo/ e contempla il paradiso." *Laude* 1485-86, 115r.

gaze to those praying, while on the other, they must lift their eyes towards her: “you too turn your eyes, Mother, downwards/ ... the brows are lifted towards you,” or “turn your pious eyes downwards,/ Oh, elevated Mother of Jesus.”¹⁷⁰ The intensification of the use of these metaphors of elevation, as well as the lifting of Coronation scenes to higher areas of the pictorial space, reflected an embodied experience of visualising heaven materialised above the spectators of the popular sacred plays staged in fifteenth-century Florence in the Santo Spirito quarter.

¹⁷⁰ “tu pure rivolti gli occhi Madre in giù .../ alzate a te le fronte.” *Laude* 1500, 86v. “De volgi gli occhi tuoi pietosi in giù/ alta regina o madre di Yhesù.” Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashb. 480, fol. 94r.

Conclusion

A series of changes can be observed in the iconography of heaven and its angelic musical celebrations in Florentine art during the fifteenth century. In scenes of the Nativity of Christ, the angels are no longer represented in silent adoration or playing instrumental music as in the Trecento. Over the first few decades of the Quattrocento, they begin to be depicted engaged in an exclusively vocal musical performance. The iconography of the Virgin's Coronation is also modified. The repertoire of the painted angels shifts from music performed on soft instruments, such as organs and lutes, to a combination of soft and loud sounds, with the addition of wind and percussion instruments. The scene of the Coronation is also presented in a different manner, being considerably elevated in the picture space in comparison with its position during the Trecento, to the point that the image is cut in half, separating the figures of the Virgin and Christ from the multitude of saints gazing up at them from below.

The aim of the present thesis has been to understand what influenced these changes in the iconography of heaven in fifteenth-century Florence, by analysing the visual culture of the period from the perspective of the new developments in confraternal life, particularly in the realm of the musical and theatrical activities promoted by the laity. During the Quattrocento, youth confraternities were created, in which young boys costumed as angels sang hymns and *laude* during processions and the performance of Nativity *sacre rappresentazioni*. The insertion of angelic choirs performing vocal music into images of the Nativity can be connected to the new importance of youth confraternities and their rituals for contemporary Florentines. The numerous angelic figures singing the *Gloria* on the walls of the Medici Magi chapel can be connected, through their material appearance and contemplative state, to the young boys of the Compagnia della Purificazione under Cosimo de' Medici's patronage.

Florentine adult confraternities also increased their numbers in the fifteenth century, focusing their activities on theatrical performances that took place both on the streets of the city and throughout the churches, across the entire liturgical year. Three sacred plays became the highlight of these performative devotions, and their most spectacular creations were the heavenly scenes constructed above the audience, which left their imprint on Florentines through their light effects, music, and elevation of sacred figures in the air. Painters were involved in the creation of these sets, and they

also lived in proximity to these churches; furthermore, they were active members of the confraternities that staged the plays. Scenographical elements, therefore, began to be imported into their artworks, as exemplified by the *Coronations* produced in Neri di Bicci's workshop. Although ensembles including mixed loud and soft instruments were not a common performance practice in the Renaissance, in these religious plays heavenly music was represented precisely through the mixing of both types of instruments. This in turn would have influenced the angelic performances in scenes of the Coronation of the Virgin. The practice of visualising heaven in an elevated position, and in particular experiences in which this space was materialised in front of the devotee by means of sophisticated scenography, informed the way in which the Coronation scene was represented in art, by emphasising the idea of gazing upwards at heaven through an increased gap between the viewer and the figures of the Virgin and Christ.

These arguments have been supported by documentary evidence from fifteenth-century Florence, of both a visual and a textual nature. The thesis is based on a preliminary visual comparison between iconographies of the Nativity of Christ and the Coronation of the Virgin from Trecento and Quattrocento Florence, which yielded interesting results regarding the changes that took place in the representation of the music performed by angelic figures in heaven. In order to reconstruct the devotional and performative life of Florentine confraternities on which this study is focused, I have analysed an extensive corpus of *lauda* texts from the period, which were a distinctive creation of lay devotion, as well as a large number of *sacre rappresentazioni* texts, which provided the actors' lines for the theatrical performances staged by the lay companies of the time. In order to understand how heaven was staged during these plays, I have used many eye-witness accounts from the period, comparing them also with sources from other Italian cities describing similar events. These descriptions provide useful information, particularly in respect of the experience of the contemporary spectator, offering details otherwise impossible to reconstruct. For a more thorough reconstruction of costumes and stage designs, I have also used the records of Florentine confraternities, which are especially informative regarding materials and techniques used to dress up angels or suspend heavens.

My overall aim has been to demonstrate the creative function of Michael Baxandall's "period eye" in relation to a specific aspect of musical iconography. The "period eye" not only influenced how Florentines saw works of art, but also determined how these works of art were created in the first

place. It is on this second aspect that this thesis has been focused, aiming to reconstruct aspects of Florentine visual culture that might have informed the representation of musical heavens. Once young boys dressed up as angels and sang their music, and heavens constructed on cloud platforms began to appear on the streets of Florence and in the city's churches, they immediately entered the visual language of those witnessing the scenes. Their constant repetition throughout the year for several festive occasions led to a sedimentation of these images in the minds of Florentines. Incrementally, the face of heaven was modified in the imaginary of contemporaries, adapting to the changes that had occurred in the realm of their visual experience. The shift in the heavenly musical performances depicted in contemporary art has its source in the musical practices attributed to angels in the sacred plays and processions of the period.

This thesis has aimed to demonstrate the influence of musical practice and theatrical performances on the visual culture of Florentines, and implicitly on the works of art created in the period, with a particular focus on the representation of music-making angels in heaven. Festive life played a very important role in fifteenth-century Florence, not only in the secular world, but also in the sacred realm. The desire to represent the gods, biblical episodes, sacred stories, and the afterlife as material experiences, in which one could symbolically incarnate the holy figures, and spectators could witness the events with their own eyes, was particularly prominent in this period. Metaphors, imagined spaces, and invisible figures, were brought to life from a desire to create contemplative experiences in which devotees would be able to approach and represent divinity in a more tangible manner. This intensive theatrical life, which brought the entire city together both during the process of preparation for the *feste* and in the moment of their performance, represents a strong visual stimulus in a culture in which images were at the centre of daily life. This thesis contributes to previous studies dedicated to exploring the influence of performative experiences upon art, by demonstrating how changes in sacred musical iconography are informed by such practices.

By taking as a case study the *Coronations of the Virgin* painted by Neri di Bicci in his workshop during the fifteenth century, I have offered evidence of several additional scenographic insertions in works of art, beyond the well-studied cloud platforms and the rotating heavenly dome of Filippo Brunelleschi. Neri di Bicci's artworks have been neglected by scholars due to his image as a derivative, second-hand painter. Although many have focused on his workshop practice, because of the meticulous documentation that Neri has left behind, his paintings have never been properly

studied for their visual content. No complete catalogue of his paintings exists, and the actual images of his artworks rarely make their way into art-historical monographs. By analysing the iconography of his *Coronations* for the first time, from the perspective of Neri di Bicci's close involvement with the theatrical activities of the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese, I have demonstrated Neri's creative innovations, which reflected his visual experience of heaven through the realm of the performative, even when he was producing serialised images. At the same time, his corpus of works represents a very important reflection of the taste of Florentines in altarpieces and devotional objects, given that in business terms he was one of the most successful painters of his time. Therefore, the visual analysis of his works can be very valuable to the understanding of religious art in Quattrocento Florence.

At the same time, my research is also intended to offer new perspectives upon the analysis of the music-making angel in fifteenth-century Florentine art, by showing how its image was transformed in response to a new kind of angelic figure that appeared in this period, inspired by confraternity youths dressed up as angels. The Magi chapel case study is a reinterpretation of the choir of angels painted by Benozzo Gozzoli from the perspective of Cosimo de' Medici's patronage of the youth confraternity of the Purification. The resemblance between the external appearance of these figures and the angelic costumes worn by the young boys during theatrical representations or processions is striking, and their contemplative appearance reflects both the devotional pursuits of the commissioner and the model of life which these children were educated to lead.

The impact of confraternities in fifteenth-century Florence has been extensively studied from different perspectives. My contribution consists in demonstrating how the musical and theatrical devotional activities popularised by the laity during this period changed the look of religious works of art. Contemporary clerics complained about these matters. They criticised both the transformation of the spaces of churches, and of saintly figures in images, as well as sometimes the increased involvement of the laity in discussing theological topics. Laypeople had begun to take a more active and increased role in the religious life of the period, and this influence can also be seen in the musical iconography of heaven. The painted heavens and musical angels of fifteenth-century Florence were a visual representation born from the heavens of confraternities and their music-making child-angels, which had taken over the city's piazzas, streets, and churches.

Figures

1: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Saint Augustine's Vision of the Trinity* (*predella* of the Barbadori Altarpiece), 1438, tempera on panel, 40 x 235 cm (all three panels). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

2: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *The Birth of the Virgin*, c. 1490, fresco. Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

3: Unknown, *Christ Riding on the Ass (Palmesel)*, c. 1480, limewood and pine, painted and gilded, 147.4 x 47.8 x 133.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

4: Unknown, *Virgin and Child*, c. 1425-1450, painted stucco relief, 92.7 x 72.4 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

5: Bernardo Daddi, *Nativity* (*predella* of the San Pancrazio Altarpiece), 1335-1340, tempera on wood, 50 x 38 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

6: Taddeo Gaddi, *The Nativity*, c. 1335, paint and gold leaf on panel, 35 x 17 cm. Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon.

7: Taddeo Gaddi, *The Nativity* and *The Crucifixion*, outer shutters of a triptych with the Virgin and Child, 1334, 62.3 x 20.7 cm each. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

8: Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1423, tempera on wood, 300 x 282 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

9: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1486-1489, oil and tempera on panel, 285 x 240 cm. Museo degli Innocenti, Florence.

10: Donatello, Circle of, *The Nativity*, c. 1465, stucco and polychrome, 72.4 × 78.7 × 12.1 cm.
The Art Institute of Chicago.

11: Mariotto di Nardo di Cione, *Nativity*, 1390-1410, 34 x 28.6 cm. Rome, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

12: Masolino da Panicale, *Nativity*, 1434-1440, fresco. Collegiata, Castiglione Olona.

13: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Adoration of the Child with Saints*, c. 1455, tempera on wood, 140 x 130 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

14: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Choirs of Adoring Angels*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, West wall of the chancel, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

15: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Choirs of Adoring Angels*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, East wall of the chancel, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

16: Sandro Botticelli, *Nativity*, c. 1473-1475. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina.

17: Sandro Botticelli, *The Mystic Nativity*, 1501, oil on canvas, 108.6 x 74.9 cm. National Gallery, London.

18: Domenico Ghirlandaio and workshop, *Nativity*, c. 1492, tempera on panel, 45 x 42 cm.
Pinacoteca Vaticana.

19: Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci, Leaf from a Gradual with *The Nativity and the Annunciation to the Shepherds in an Initial P*, 1392-1399, tempera, gold, and ink on parchment, 59 x 40 cm.
MS M.653.1, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

20: Master of the Riccardiana Lactantius, Leaf from a Benedictine Antiphonary with *The Nativity in an Initial H*, second half of the fifteenth century, tempera, gold, and ink on parchment, 55.5 x 40.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

21: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1485, tempera and oil on panel, 167 x 167 cm. Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinità, Florence.

22: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1487, tempera on panel, 171.5 cm diameter.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

23: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1490, fresco. Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

24: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Procession of the Magi*, 1479, fresco; Andrea della Robbia, *Presepio*, c. 1474, polychrome terracotta. Oratory of the Virgin, Santa Maria Assunta, Volterra.

25: Andrea della Robbia, *Presepio*, 1515, polychrome terracotta. Santa Maria Maddalena alle
Caldine, Fiesole.

26: Desiderio da Settignano, Tabernacle of the Sacrament (detail), 1461, marble. San Lorenzo, Florence.

27: Circle of Jan Borman II, *Crib of the Christ Child*, c. 1500-1510, gilded wood, 63 x 35 x 16.5 cm. Musée de Cluny – Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris.

28: Anonymous, *Crib of the Christ Child*, early fifteenth century, silver and silver gilt, 12.5 x 11.5 x 8 cm. Musée provincial des Arts anciens du Namurois, Namur.

29: After a model by Desiderio da Settignano, *Christ Child Reclining*, third quarter of the fifteenth century, polychromed stucco on a velvet embroidered cushion, 53 cm and cushion 73 x 46 cm. Private collection.

30: Unknown, Inkstand, c. 1510, painted and glazed earthenware, 24.4 x 23.4 x 22.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

31: Mino da Fiesole, *Young Saint John the Baptist*, c. 1466, marble, 36.8 cm height. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

32: Follower of Mino da Fiesole, *Saint John the Baptist*, last quarter of the fifteenth century, polychromed stucco, 49.5 × 40 × 18.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

33: Francesco Botticini, *The Three Archangels with Tobias*, c. 1470, tempera on wood, 135 x 154 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

34: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin (Maringhi Coronation)*, 1441-1447, tempera on wood, 220 x 287 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

35: Benozzo Gozzoli, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned among Angels and Saints*, 1461-1462, tempera on wood, 161.9 x 170.2 cm. National Gallery, London.

36: Luca della Robbia, *Cantoria (Youths Singing from a Book)*, marble. Museo del Opera del Duomo, Florence.

37: Luca della Robbia, *Cantoria (Youths Singing from a Scroll)*, marble. Museo del Opera del Duomo, Florence.

38: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Procession of the Magi (Caspar)*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, East and South wall, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

39: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Procession of the Magi (Balthazar)*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, South wall, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

40: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Procession of the Magi (Melchior)*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, West wall,
Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

41: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Procession of the Magi (Melchior)*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, South-West corner, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

42: *Landscape*, fresco. Magi Chapel, South-West corner, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

43: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Adoration of Christ*, 1449-1457, tempera on panel, 129.4 x 118.6 cm.
Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

44: Pseudo Pier Francesco Fiorentino, *Adoration of Christ*, 1460-1499, panel, 132 x 132 cm.
Magi Chapel, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

45: Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi, *Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1440-1450, tempera on panel, 137.3 cm diameter. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

46: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1446-1447, fresco. Cell 39, Convent of San Marco, Florence.

47: Magi Chapel (view from the entrance), Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

48: Giuliano da Sangallo, Wooden choir stalls, 1470-1475. Magi Chapel, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

49: Magi Chapel (view of the entrance), Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

50: Ex-libris of Cosimo de' Medici. MS Plut.16.31, fol. 269v, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,
Florence.

51: Ex-libris of Cosimo de' Medici. MS Plut.30.21, fol. 39r, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,
Florence.

52: “Nota” sign of Cosimo de’ Medici. MS San Marco 626, fol. 196r, Biblioteca Medicea
Laurenziana, Florence.

53: “Nota” sign of Cosimo de’ Medici. MS Plut.16.31, fol. 78v, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence.

54: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Saint Ursula with Two Angels and Donor*, c. 1455-1460, tempera on panel, 44.5 x 28.5 cm. Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

55: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Madonna in Glory*, 1458, painting on panel transposed on canvas, 208 x 93 cm. Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Sermoneta.

56: Benozzo Gozzoli, *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saints Bartholomew, Francis, and Lucy, and Angels*, 1466, tempera on panel, 95 x 50 cm. Pinacoteca Comunale, Terni.

57: *De modo orandi* (Fifth mode: Meditation). MS Ross. 3, fol. 9r, Biblioteca Apostolica
Vaticana, Rome.

58: Fra Angelico, *Crucifixion with St Dominic*, c. 1422, fresco. Cell 17, San Marco, Florence.

59: *Seraph.* MS Reg. Lat. 430, fol. 65r, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.

60: Benozzo Gozzoli, Detail of the *Procession of the Magi (Caspar)*, 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, South Wall, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

61: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Choirs of Adoring Angels* (detail), 1459, fresco. Magi Chapel, East wall of the chancel, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence.

62: Giotto di Bondone, *Coronation of the Virgin (Baroncelli Polyptych)*, c. 1334, tempera on wood, 185 x 323 cm. Baroncelli Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.

63: Piero del Pollaiolo, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1483, oil and tempera on panel, 300 x 250 cm.
Sant' Agostino, San Gimignano.

64: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1485-1490, fresco. Cappella Tornabuoni,
Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

65: Andrea Bonaiuti, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1360-1370, stained glass. Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

66: Ventura di Moro, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1430, tempera and gold on panel. Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago.

67: Benozzo Gozzoli, *Madonna della cintola*, 1450-1452, tempera on panel, 133 x 164 cm.
Pinacoteca Vaticana.

68: Bernardo Daddi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1340, tempera on wood, 53 x 30 cm. Lindenau Museum, Altenburg.

69: Agnolo Gaddi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1390, tempera on panel, 161 x 79 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

70: Lorenzo Monaco, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1388-1390, tempera on panel, 195 x 154.7 cm.
Courtauld Art Gallery, London.

71: Jacopo del Casentino, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1320, tempera on panel, 31 x 24.4 x 2.5 cm. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

72: Lorenzo Monaco, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1414, tempera and gold on panel, 450 x 350 cm.
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

73: Bicci di Lorenzo, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1430. Cappella Davanzati, Santa Trinità,
Florence.

74: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin (Marsuppini Coronation)*, after 1444, tempera on panel, 172 x 251 cm. Pinacoteca Vaticana.

75: Fra Angelico, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1430-1432, tempera on panel, 209 x 206 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

76: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1461, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel. Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris.

77: Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1492, canvas transferred from panel, 270 x 176 cm. Bass Museum of Art, Miami.

78: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1460-1461, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel.
Museo degli Innocenti, Florence.

79: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1472-1475, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel,
147 x 62 cm. San Francesco a Montecarlo, San Giovanni Valdarno (Arezzo).

80: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin with Angels and Saints*, 1459-1460, tempera on panel.
Galleria dell'Accademia (Depositi n. 13), Florence.

81: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1476-1481. Chiesa del Suffragio, San Casciano in Val di Pesa.

82: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1484-1486, tempera and oil on panel, 330 x 230 cm (main panel). Palazzo Comunale, Narni.

83: Sandro Botticelli, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (San Marco Altarpiece), 1488-1490, tempera on panel, 378 x 258 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

84: Workshop of Sandro Botticelli, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1480-1520. Villa la Quiete alle Montalve, Florence.

85: San Felice in Piazza (interior), Florence.

86: *Ingegno* for the Annunciation play of 1439 constructed by Cesare Lisi.

87: *Ingegno* for the Annunciation play of 1439 constructed by Cesare Lisi.

88: Model for the Annunciation play of 1439 constructed by Cesare Lisi.

89: Santo Spirito (interior), Florence.

90: Santa Maria del Carmine (interior), Florence.

91: Model for the Ascension play of 1439 in Santa Maria del Carmine constructed by Ludovico Zorzi and Cesare Lisi, 1975.

92: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1440-1460. Museo Nazionale di S. Matteo, Pisa.

93: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1463, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel, 158 x 169 cm. Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon.

94: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1472, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel. San Pietro, Badia a Ruoti.

95: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin with Angels and Two Saints*, 1473, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel. Cenacolo di Sant' Apollonia, Florence.

96: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin with Angels and Four Saints*, after 1475, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel, 205.7 x 201.6 x 3.2 cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

97: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin*, after 1475, tempera on panel. Museo Civico, Pescia.

98: Neri di Bicci, *Coronation of the Virgin with Angels and Eight Saints*, c. 1488, tempera and gold leaf on wood panel. San Giovannino dei Cavalieri, Florence.

99: Masolino da Panicale, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1428, tempera and gold on panel, 144 x 76 cm. Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.

100: Workshop of Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1490-1494, tempera and oil on panel, 240 x 183 cm. Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello.

101: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1467-1469, fresco. Duomo di Spoleto.

102: Gerolamo of Cremona, *Assumption of the Virgin in an Initial 'G'* from a Gradual, 1468, tempera, gold, and ink on parchment. MS 28-12, fol. 49v, Piccolomini Library, Siena.

103: Francesco Botticini, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, c. 1475-1476, tempera on wood, 228.6 x 377.2 cm. National Gallery, London.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

FLORENCE

Archivio di Stato

MS Accademia del Disegno 1: Capitoli e Ordinamenti della Compagnia di S. Luca e dell'Arte dei Pittori (1340-1550).

MS Accademia del Disegno 2: Compagnia di S. Luca, Debitori e Creditori e Ricordi, Libro segnato A (1472-1520).

MS Capitoli, Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 882: Capitoli della Compagnia della Natività (1468-1554).

MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 149: Compagnia del'Arcangelo Raffaello:

No. 25: Entrata e Uscita (1472-1487).

MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 155: Compagnia del'Arcangelo Raffaello:

No. 1.B: Interesi diversi (1489-1757).

MS Compagnie religiose soppresse da Pietro Leopoldo, 1654: Compagnia della Purificazione:

No. 29: Entrata e Uscita (1434-1444).

No. 30: Entrata e Uscita (1444-1483).

Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana

MS Acquisti e Doni 336: Statuti e ordinatione de la compagnia over fraternitade de la purificatione de la virgine Maria (15th century).

MS Ashb. 424: Francesco d' Albizo, Laudi spirituali (1450-1500).

MS Ashb. 480: Laudi spirituali (1480-1499), from SS. Annunziata.

MS Plut. 16.31: Cassian, *De institutione coenobiorum*; *Collationes* (mid-14th century).

MS Plut. 30.21: Pomponius Mela, *Ac praeterea Vibius Sequester* (14th century).

MS San Marco 626: sermons of St Augustine and Ambrose, *De Trinitate* (12th century).

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale

- MS Banco Rari 18: Laudario di Santo Spirito (c. 1340).
- MS Banco Rari 19: Laudario di Sant'Egidio (c. 1380).
- MS Conv. Soppr. D.3.270: Capitoli della compagnia di San Niccolò del Ceppo (16th century).
- MS Conv. Soppr. F.3.488: Sacre rappresentazioni (1463-1465).
- MS Conv. Soppr. J. VII 40 (previously Naz. C. S. I. VII 40): Prosper, *De vita contemplativa* (mid-15th century).
- MS Magl. VII 30: Laude (15th century).
- MS Magl. VIII 1500: Collection of documents related to Florentine confraternities (various periods).
- MS Magl. XXV 418: Ferdinando Leopoldo del Migliore, Registro delle compagnie di Firenze (17th century).
- MS Magl. XXXV 119: Laude (15th century).

Biblioteca Riccardiana

- MS Ricc. 391: Capitoli della Compagnia d'Orsanmichele (14th century).
- MS Ricc. 1413: Sacre rappresentazioni e laudi (16th century until fol. 267, 15th century afterwards).
- MS Ricc. 1473: Leggende di sante, laudi, formula di confessione per monaca (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 1501: Laudi varie (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 1502: Canzonette e laudi spirituali (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 1748: Capitoli della Compagnia di S. Antonio (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 2871: Rime sacre (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 2893: Rappresentazioni diverse (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 2896: Rime morali e sacre (15th century).
- MS Ricc. 2929: Poesie spirituali (15th century).

NEW YORK

Pierpont Morgan Library

MS M.653.1: Gradual (1392-1399).

<http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/1/113014>

ROME

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

MS Chig. L.VII.266: Laude (1450s).

https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Chig.L.VII.266

MS Reg. Lat. 430: fols. 65r-68v: Alain de Lille, *De sex alis cherubim* (1450).

https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.430

MS Ross. 3: *De modo orandi* (15th century).

https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Ross.3

SIENA

Piccolomini Library

MS 28-12: Gradual (1468).

Primary Sources

- Alberti, Leon Battista. *Della pittura*. Edited by Luigi Mallé. Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1950.
- . *L'architettura*. Edited and translated by Giovanni Orlandi. 2 vols. Milan: Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1966.
- Ammirato, Scipione. *Istorie fiorentine: Parte seconda. Tomo quinto*. Florence: V. Batteli e Compagni, 1848.
- Banfi, Luigi, ed. *Sacre rappresentazioni del Quattrocento*. Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1963.
- Bartholomaeis, Vincenzo de, ed. *Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre*. 3 vols. Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1967.
- Belcari, Feo. *Laude di Feo Belcari*. Florence: Bartolomeo de' Libri, 1490.
- . *Le rappresentazioni di Feo Belcari ed altre di lui poesie edite et inedite citate come testo di lingua nel vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*. Florence: Ignazio Moutier, 1833.
- . *Sacre rappresentazioni e laude*. With an introduction and notes by Onorato Allocco-Castellino. Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1920.
- Bernardino da Siena. *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena: 1427*. Edited by Carlo Delcorno. 2 vols. Milan: Rusconi, 1989.
- Burlamacchi, Pacifico. *Vita del P. F. Girolamo Savonarola dell'ordine de' Predicatori*. Lucca: Vincenzo Giuntini, 1761.
- Cassian, John. *Opera Omnia*. Edited by Alard Gazet. Frankfurt: Thomas Fritsch, 1722.
- Clemens, Blume. *Die Hymnen des Thesaurus Hymnologicus H. A. Daniels und anderer Hymnen-Ausgaben*, vol. 1. Leipzig: Reiland, 1908.
- D'Ancona, Alessandro, ed. *Sacre rappresentazioni dei secoli XIV, XV e XVI*. 3 vols. Florence: Le Monnier, 1872.
- D'Anghiari, Giusto. "I *Giornali* di Ser Giusto Giusti d'Anghiari (1437-1482)." Edited by Nerida Newbigin. *Letteratura Italiana Antica* 3 (2002): 41-246.
- D'Este, Isabella. *Selected Letters*. Edited and translated by Deanna Shemek. Toronto: Iter Press, 2017.
- Decor puellarum*. Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1471.
- Dei, Benedetto. *La Cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500*. Edited by Roberto Barducci. Florence: Francesco Papafava, 1984.
- Delcorno Branca, Daniela. "Un camaldolese alla festa di San Giovanni: la processione del Battista descritta da Agostino di Porto." *Lettere italiane* 55 (2003): 1-25.

- Dominici, Giovanni. *Regola del governo di cura familiare*. With notes by Donato Salvi. Florence: Angiolo Garinei, 1860.
- Fecini, Tommaso. "Cronaca Senese di Tommaso Fecini 1431-1479." In *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores: Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento*, edited by Lodovico Antonio Muratori, vol. 15.6b, 841-74. Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1931-39.
- Filarete. *Filarete's Treatise on Architecture: Being the Treatise by Antonio di Piero Averlino, Known as Filarete. Vol. 1: The Translation*. Translated by John R. Spencer. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.
- . *Trattato di architettura*. Edited by Anna Maria Finoli and Liliana Grassi. 2 vols. Milan: Il Polifilo, 1972.
- Gaye, Giovanni. *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI*, vol. 1. Florence: Giuseppe Molini, 1839.
- Gilbert, Creighton. *Italian Art 1400-1500: Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980.
- Grayson, Cecil. "Poesie latine di Gentile Becchi in un codice Bodleiano." In *Studi offerti a Roberto Ridolfi*, edited by Berta Maracchi Biagiarelli and Dennis E. Rhodes, 285-303. Florence: Olschki, 1973.
- Gregory the Great. *Opera Omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 75. Paris: Migne, 1845.
- Guasti, Cesare. *Le feste di S. Giovanni Batista in Firenze descritte in prosa e in rima da contemporanei*. Florence: Giovanni Cirri, 1884.
- John Chrysostom. *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom Bishop of Constantinople on the Gospel of St. Matthew. Part I. Hom. I.-XXV*. Translated by Sir George Prevost. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852.
- . *Opera Omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 57. Paris: Migne, 1862.
- Landucci, Luca. *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 di Luca Landucci: continuato da un anonimo fino al 1542*. Edited by Iodoco del Badia. Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1883.
- . *A Florentine Diary from 1450 to 1516: Continued by an Anonymous Writer till 1542*. Translated by Alice de Rosen Jervis. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1927.
- Laude facte e composte da più persone spirituali*. Edited by Jacopo di Maestro Luigi de' Morsi. Florence: Francesco Bonaccorsi, 1485-86.
- Laude vecchie e nuove*. Florence: Bartolomeo de' Libri, 1500.
- Maffei, Celso. *Delitiosam explicationem de sensibilibus deliciis paradisi*. Verona: Lucas Antonius Florentinus, 1504.

- Mancini, Girolamo. "Il bel San Giovanni e le feste patronali di Firenze descritte nel 1475 da Piero Cennini." *Rivista d'arte* 6.3 (1909): 185-227.
- Masi, Bartolomeo. *Ricordanze di Bartolomeo Masi calderaio fiorentino dal 1478 al 1526*. Edited by Giuseppe Odoardo Corazzini. Florence: Sansoni, 1906.
- Medici, Lorenzo de'. *Tutte le opere*. Edited by Paolo Orvieto. 2 vols. Rome: Salerno, 1992.
- Meredith, Peter, and John Tailby, eds. *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1983.
- Neri di Bicci. *Le Ricordanze (10 marzo 1453 – 24 aprile 1475)*. Edited by Bruno Santi. Pisa: Edizioni Marlin, 1976.
- Newbiggin, Nerida, ed. *Nuovo Corpus di Sacre Rappresentazioni fiorentine del Quattrocento edite e inedite tratte da manoscritti coevi o ricontrollate su di essi*. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1983.
- , ed. "Le Onoranze Fiorentine Del 1459." *Letteratura Italiana Antica* 12 (2011): 17-81.
- , transl. "The Florentine Celebrations of 1459." 2015.
- http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~nnew4107/Texts/Fifteenth-century_Florence_files/Florentine_Celebrations_of_1459_Newbiggin.pdf
- Niccolò da Osimo. *Giardino de oratione fructuoso*. Venice: Bernardino Benali, 1494.
- Palmieri, Matteo. "Matthei Palmierii Annales conosciuti sotto il nome di *Historia Florentina*." Edited by Gino Scaramella. In *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores: Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento*, edited by Lodovico Antonio Muratori, vol. 26.1, 131-94. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1906.
- Perosa, Alessandro, ed. *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: Vol. 1: "Il Zibaldone quaresimale"*. London: The Warburg Institute, 1960.
- Petrus Delphinus. *Epistolarum Volumen*. Venice: Bernardino Benali, 1524.
- Pierozzi, Antonino. *Opera a ben vivere di Santo Antonino arcivescovo di Firenze*. Edited by Francesco Palermo. Florence: M. Cellini, 1858.
- Ponte, Giovanni, ed. *Sacre rappresentazioni fiorentine del Quattrocento*. Milan: Marzorati, 1974.
- Popolo, Concetto del, ed. *Laude fiorentine. Il laudario della Compagnia di San Gilio*. 2 vols. Florence: Olschki, 1990.
- Pulci, Antonia. *Florentine Drama for Convent and Festival: Seven Sacred Plays*. Edited and translated by James Wyatt Cook and Barbara Collier Cook. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

- Pulci, Luigi. *Lettere di Luigi Pulci a Lorenzo il Magnifico e ad altri*. Edited by Salvatore Bongi. Lucca: Giusti, 1886.
- “Ricordi di Firenze dell’anno 1459 di autore anonimo.” Edited by Guglielmo Volpi. In *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores: Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento*, edited by Lodovico Antonio Muratori, vol. 27.1, 3-38. Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1907.
- Savonarola, Girolamo. *Prediche sopra Aggeo*. Edited by Luigi Firpo. Rome: Angelo Belardetti, 1965.
- , *Prediche sopra Amos e Zaccaria*. 3 vols. Edited by Paolo Ghiglieri. Rome: Angelo Belardetti, 1971-72.
- Spallanzani, Marco, ed. *Inventari Medicei 1417-1465: Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo e Lorenzo di Giovanni, Piero di Cosimo*. Florence: Associazione “Amici del Bargello,” 1996.
- Spallanzani, Marco, and Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, eds. *Libro d’inventario dei beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*. Florence: Associazione “Amici del Bargello,” 1992.
- Stapleford, Richard. *Lorenzo de’ Medici at Home: The Inventory of the Palazzo Medici in 1492*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.
- Tornabuoni, Lucrezia. *Sacred Narratives*. Edited and translated by Jane Tylus. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- , *Le laudi di Lucrezia de’ Medici*. Edited by Guglielmo Volpi. Pistoia: Lito-Tipografia Flori, 1900.
- Toscani, Bernard, ed. *Le laude dei Bianchi contenute nel Codice Vaticano Chigiano L.VII 266: Edizione critica*. Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1979.
- Toschi, Paolo. *L’antico dramma sacro italiano*. 2 vols. Florence: Libreria editrice fiorentina, 1926-27.
- Trexler, Richard. “The Episcopal Constitutions of Antoninus of Florence.” *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Bibliotheken und Archiven* 59 (1979): 244-72.
- Vasari, Giorgio. *Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*. Edited by Gaetano Milanesi. 9 vols. Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1878-85.
- Vespasiano da Bisticci. *Le vite*, vol. 2. Edited by Aulo Greco. Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1976.
- Wilson, Blake, and Nello Barbieri, eds. *The Florence Laudario. An Edition of Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 18*. Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1995.
- Zambotti, Bernardino. “Diario ferrarese dall’anno 1476 sino al 1504.” Edited by Giuseppe Pardi. In *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores: Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento*, edited by Lodovico Antonio Muratori, vol. 24.7. Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1934-37.

Secondary Sources

- Abramov-van Rijk, Elena. *Parlar cantando: The Practice of Reciting Verses in Italy from 1300 to 1600*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Acidini Luchinat, Cristina. "La Cappella Medicea attraverso cinque secoli." In *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi di Firenze*, edited by Giovanni Cherubini and Giovanni Fanelli, 82-97. Florence: Giunti, 1990.
- , ed. *I restauri nel palazzo Medici Riccardi: Rinascimento e barocco*. Milan: Silvana, 1992.
- , ed. *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*. Translated by Eleanor Daunt. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994a.
- , "The Chapel of the Magi." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 7-24. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994b.
- , "The Choirs of Angels." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 264-67. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994c.
- , "The Medici and the Citizens in The Procession of the Magi: A Portrait of a Society." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 363-70. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994d.
- , "The Procession of the Magi." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 39-41. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994e.
- , "La cappella dei Magi: architettura e breve storia. The Magi Chapel: Architecture and a Brief History." In *Il Palazzo magnifico: Palazzo Medici Riccardi a Firenze*, edited by Simonetta Merendoni and Luigi Uliveri, 89-112. Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 2009.
- , *La primavera perfetta: Storia dei fiori a Firenze tra arte e scienza*. Florence: Le Lettere, 2010.
- Acidini Luchinat, Cristina, and Maria Sframeli. "The South Wall." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 118-63. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994.
- Ahl, Diane Cole. *Benozzo Gozzoli*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996.
- , "'In corpo di compagnia:' Art and Devotion in the Compagnia della Purificazione e di San Zanobi of Florence." In *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, 46-73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

- . *Fra Angelico*. London: Phaidon, 2008.
- Ames-Lewis, Francis. "The Inventories of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici's Library." *La Bibliofilia* 84 (1982): 103-42.
- . *The Library and Manuscripts of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici*. New York: Garland, 1984.
- . "Art in the Service of the Family: The Taste and Patronage of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici." In *Piero de' Medici 'il Gottoso' (1416 - 1469): Art in the Service of the Medici*, edited by Andreas Beyer and Bruce Boucher, 207-20. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993.
- . "Benozzo Gozzoli's Rotterdam Sketchbook Revisited." *Master Drawings* 33.4 (Winter 1995): 388-404.
- . *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Angelozzi, Giancarlo. *Le confraternite laicali: Un'esperienza cristiana tra medioevo e età moderna*. Brescia: Queriniana, 1978.
- Angiolillo, Marialuisa. *Leonardo: Feste e teatri*. Naples: Società editrice napoletana, 1979.
- . *Feste di corte e di popolo nell'Italia del primo Rinascimento*. Rome: Edizioni Seam, 1996.
- Aranci, Gilberto. "Bolla di Eugenio IV." In *La chiesa e la città a Firenze nel XV secolo*, edited by Gianfranco Rolfi, Ludovica Sebregondi, and Paolo Viti, 82-84. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992.
- Ashley, Kathleen. "Introduction: The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance." In *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken, 7-34. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001.
- Ashton, Gail. "Bridging the Difference: Reconceptualising the Angel in Medieval Hagiography." *Literature and Theology* 16.3 (September 2002): 235-47.
- Atkinson, Niall. *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016.
- Atlas, Allan. *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Attolini, Giovanni. *Teatro e spettacolo nel Rinascimento*. Rome: Laterza, 1988.
- Aubrey, Elizabeth, ed. *Poets and Singers: On Latin and Vernacular Monophonic Song*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009.
- Bacci, Francesca, and David Melcher, eds. *Art & the Senses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Bagnoli, Martina, ed. *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016a.

- , "Introduction: Sensual Awakenings." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 13-15. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016b.
- , "Longing to Experience." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 33-45. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016c.
- , "Making Sense." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 17-30. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016d.
- Baldissin Molli, Giovanna, Cristina Guarnieri, and Zuleika Murat, eds. *Pregare in casa: Oggetti e documenti della pratica religiosa tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Rome: Viella, 2018.
- Balestracci, Duccio. *La festa in armi: Giostre, tornei e giochi del Medioevo*. Rome: Laterza, 2001.
- Barone, Giulia. "Società e religiosità femminile (750-1450)." In *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, edited by Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri, 61-113. Rome: Laterza, 1994.
- Barr, Cyrilla. "Musical Activities of the Pious Lay Confraternities of Quattrocento Italy: A Chronicle of Change." *Fifteenth Century Studies* 8 (1983): 15-36.
- , *The Monophonic Lauda and the Lay Religious Confraternities of Tuscany and Umbria in the Late Middle Ages*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1988.
- , "A Renaissance Artist in the Service of a Singing Confraternity." In *Life and Death in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, edited by Marcel Tetel, Ronald G. Witt, and Rona Goffen, 105-19. Durham: Duke University Press, 1989.
- , "Music and Spectacle in the Confraternity Drama of Fifteenth-Century Florence: The Reconstruction of a Theatrical Event." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 376-404. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Bartholomaeis, Vincenzo de. *Origini della poesia drammatica italiana*. Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1952.
- Battisti, Eugenio. *Filippo Brunelleschi*. Milan: Electa, 1989.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1985.
- , *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Bec, Christian. *Les marchands écrivains: affaires et humanisme à Florence 1375-1434*. Paris: Mouton, 1967.
- , *Les livres des florentins (1413-1608)*. Florence: Olschki, 1984.

- Becherini, Bianca. "La musica nelle 'Sacre rappresentazioni' Fiorentine." *Rivista musicale italiana* 53 (1951): 193-241.
- . "Musica italiana a Firenze nel XV secolo." *Revue belge de Musicologie* 8.2/4 (1954): 109-21.
- Becker, Marvin. "Aspects of Lay Piety in Early Renaissance Florence." In *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, edited by Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman, 177-99. Leiden: Brill, 1974.
- Berefelt, Gunnar. *A Study on the Winged Angel: The Origin of a Motif*. Translated by Patrick Hort. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968.
- Bernacchioni, Annamaria. "Le forme della tradizione: Pittori fra continuità e innovazioni." In *Maestri e botteghe: Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento*, edited by Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci, and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, 171-79. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992.
- Betka, Ursula. "The Laudario of Sant'Agnes in Florence: Compagnia, Carmelites and the Community of Saints." In *Imagination, Books & Community in Medieval Europe*, edited by Gregory Kratzmann, 162-71. South Yarra, Vic.: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2009.
- Beyer, Andreas, Philippe Morel, Alessandro Nova, and Cyril Gerbron, eds. *Voir l'au-delà: L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Biddle, Ian, and Kirsten Gibson, eds. *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300-1918*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Biernoff, Suzannah. *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Biow, Douglas. *Vasari's Words: The Lives of the Artists as a History of Ideas in the Italian Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Black, Christopher. "The Development of Confraternity Studies over the Past Thirty Years." In *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, 9-29. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . *Early Modern Italy: A Social History*. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Blackburn, Bonnie. "Te Matrem dei Laudamus: A Study in the Musical Veneration of Mary." *The Musical Quarterly* 53.1 (1967): 53-76.
- . "Professional Women Singers in the Fifteenth Century: A Tale of Two Annas." In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 476-85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Blum, Shirley Nielsen. *The New Art of the Fifteenth Century: Faith and Art in Florence and the Netherlands*. New York; London: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2015.

- Boehm, Barbara Drake. "The Laudario of the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese: Catalogue Number 4a-1." In *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450*, edited by Laurence Kanter, Barbara Drake Boehm, Carl Brandon Strehlke, Gaudenz Freuler, Christa Mayer Thurman, and Pia Palladino, 58-80. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994.
- . *Choirs of Angels: Painting in Italian Choir Books, 1300-1500*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008.
- Boer, Wietse de, and Christine Göttler. "Introduction: The Sacred and the Senses in an Age of Reform." In *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler, 1-13. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Boespflug, François. *Dieu et ses images: Une histoire de l'Éternel dans l'art*. Montrouge: Bayard, 2008.
- . *Le Dieu des peintres et des sculpteurs: L'invisible incarné*. Paris: Hazan, Musée du Louvre éditions, 2010.
- . *Dieu dans l'art à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012.
- Bonsanti, Giorgio. "Gli affreschi del Beato Angelico." In *La chiesa e il convento di San Marco a Firenze*, vol. 2, 115-72. Florence: Giunti, 1990.
- Borsook, Eve, and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, eds. *Italian Altarpieces 1250-1550: Function and Design*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Borsook, Eve, and Johannes Offerhaus. *Francesco Sassetti and Ghirlandaio at Santa Trinità, Florence: History and Legend in a Renaissance Chapel*. Doornspijk: Davaco Publishing, 1981.
- Bowles, Edmund. "Haut and Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages." *Musica Disciplina* 8 (1954): 115-40.
- . "Musical Instruments in Civic Processions during the Middle Ages." *Acta Musicologica* 33.2/4 (1961): 147-61.
- . "The Organ in the Medieval Liturgical Service." *Revue belge de Musicologie* 16.1/4 (1962): 13-29.
- Boynton, Susan, and Diane Reilly, eds. *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music, and Sound*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.
- Brilliant, Virginia. "40: Crib of the Christ Child." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 175-77. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016a.
- . "50: Laudario di Sant'Agnese." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 189. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016b.

- Brown, Alison. "Cosimo de' Medici's Wit and Wisdom." In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Frances Ames-Lewis, 95-113. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Brown, Howard Mayer, "The Mirror of Man's Salvation: Music in Devotional Life about 1500." *Renaissance Quarterly* 43.4 (Winter 1990): 744-73.
- Brucker, Gene. *Renaissance Florence*. New York: Wiley, 1969.
- Bruderer Eichberg, Barbara. *Les neuf choeurs angéliques: Origine et évolution du thème dans l'art du Moyen Âge*. Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 1998.
- Brundin, Abigail. "La lettura domestica della Bibbia nell'Italia rinascimentale." In *Gli Italiani e la Bibbia nella prima età moderna: Leggere, interpretare, riscrivere*, edited by Erminia Ardissino and Élise Boillet, 125-42. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018.
- Brundin, Abigail, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven. *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Buccheri, Alessandra. *The Spectacle of Clouds, 1439–1650: Italian Art and Theatre*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.
- Bullard, Melissa Meriam. "Heroes and Their Workshops: Medici patronage and the Problem of Shared Agency." *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994): 179-98.
- Burke, Jill. *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- Burke, Peter. *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy 1420-1540*. London: Batsford, 1972.
- Burroughs, Charles. "Indicating Heaven: Botticelli's 'Coronation of the Virgin' and Mediated Imagery." *Artibus et Historiae* 35.69 (2014): 9-34.
- Butterfield, Andrew, and Caroline Elam. "Desiderio da Settignano's Tabernacle of the Sacrament." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 43.2/3 (1999): 333-57.
- Butterworth, Philip, and Katie Normington, eds. *Medieval Theatre Performance: Actors, Dancers, Automata and their Audiences*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017.
- Büttner, Frank. "Der Umbau des Palazzo Medici-Riccardi zu Florenz." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 14.4 (December 1970): 393-414.
- Cadogan, Jean. "Sulla bottega del Ghirlandaio." Translated by Maurizio Rebaudengo. In *Domenico Ghirlandaio 1449-1494: Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Firenze, 16 – 18 ottobre 1994*, edited by Wolfram Prinz and Max Seidel, 89-96. Florence: Centro Di, 1996.
- . *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Artist and Artisan*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Camille, Michael. "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing." In *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, edited by Robert Nelson, 197-223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

- Camporeale, Salvatore. "Giovanni Caroli e le *Vite Fratrum S.M. Novellae*: Umanesimo e crisi religiosa (1460-1480)." *Memorie Domenicane* 12 (1981): 141-267.
- . "Giovanni Caroli, 1460-1480: Death, Memory, and Transformation." In *Life and Death in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, edited by Marcel Tetel, Ronald Witt, and Rona Goffen, 16-27. Durham: Duke University Press, 1989.
- Canévet, Mariette. "Sens spirituel." In *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique: doctrine et histoire*, edited by Marcel Viller et al., vol. 14, 598-617. Paris: Beauchesne, 1990.
- Cantoni, Angiola Maria. *Le sacre rappresentazioni e l'educazione pubblica nel Medio Evo*. Bologna: Forni, 1980.
- Carew-Reid, Nicole. *Les fêtes florentines au temps de Lorenzo il Magnifico*. Florence: Olschki, 1995.
- Carruthers, Mary J. "Ars oblivionalis, ars inveniendi: The Cherub Figure and the Arts of Memory." *Gesta* 48.2 (2009): 99-117.
- Casagrande, Giovanna. "Confraternities and Lay Female Religiosity in Late Medieval and Renaissance Umbria." In *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, 48-66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Caseau, Béatrice. "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, edited by Richard Newhauser, 89-110. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Cattin, Giulio. "Contributi alla storia della lauda spirituale: Sulla evoluzione musicale e letteraria della lauda nei secoli XIV e XV." *Quadrivium* 2 (1958): 45-78.
- . "Church Patronage of Music in Fifteenth-Century Italy." In *Music in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Patronage, Sources and Texts*, edited by Iain Fenlon, 21-36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- . "La musica nelle sacre rappresentazioni fiorentine: Il caso della Rappresentazione di S. Onofrio." In *Esperienze dello spettacolo religioso nell'Europa del Quattrocento*, edited by Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio, 131-43. Viterbo: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1993.
- Cattin, Yves, and Philippe Faure. *Les anges et leur image au Moyen Age*. Saint-Léger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 1999.
- Ceccarelli, Patrizia. "Le feste fiorentine orientali e neoplatoniche." In *Il lume del sole: Marsilio Ficino medico dell'anima*, 95-133. Florence: Opus Libri, 1984.
- . "Le 'Terze rime' in lode di Cosimo de' Medici: ipotesi su un manoscritto." *Notizie da Palazzo Albani* 16.2 (1987): 24-50.

- Chambers, David, transl. *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*. London: Macmillan, 1970.
- Chen, Andrew. *Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260-1610: Ritual and Experience*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.
- Cherubini, Giovanni, and Giovanni Fanelli, eds. *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi di Firenze*. Florence: Giunti, 1990.
- Chiabò, Maria, and Federico Doglio, eds. *Esperienze dello spettacolo religioso nell'Europa del Quattrocento*. Viterbo: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1993.
- Chidester, David. *Word and Light: Seeing, Hearing, and Religious Discourse*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- Chrétien, Heidi L. *The Festival of San Giovanni: Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*. New York: Peter Lang, 1994.
- Ciappelli, Giovanni. *Carnevale e Quaresima: Comportamenti sociali e cultura a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1997.
- . "Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences." In *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin, 26-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . *Memory, Family, and Self: Tuscan Family Books and Other European Egodocuments (14th-18th Century)*. Translated by Susan Amanda George. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
- Ciatti, Marco, ed. *L'Incoronazione della Vergine del Botticelli: restauro e ricerche*. Florence: Edifir, 1990.
- Classen, Constance. *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Coelho, Victor, and Keith Polk. *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2016.
- Comanducci, Rita. "Produzione seriale e mercato dell'arte a Firenze tra Quattro e Cinquecento." In *The Art Market in Italy 15th-17th Centuries*, edited by Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 105-13. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003.
- Comito, Terry. *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance*. Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979.
- Coonin, Arnold Victor. "Portrait Busts of Children in Quattrocento Florence." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 30 (1995): 61-71.
- Cooper, Donal. "Devotion." In *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 190-203. London: V&A Publications, 2006.

- Coppo, Anna Maria. "Spettacoli alla corte di Ercole I." In *Contributi dell'Istituto di Filologia moderna dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Serie: Storia del teatro*, vol. 1, 30-59. Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1968.
- Coppola, Domenico. *La poesia religiosa del secolo XV*. Florence: Olschki, 1963.
- Corbellini, Sabrina. "The Plea for Lay Bibles in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Tuscany: The Role of Confraternities." In *Faith's Boundaries: Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prosperi, and Stefania Pastore, 87-112. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Corry, Maya. "Religious Images in the Eye of the Beholder." In *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, 66-73. Cambridge: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017.
- , "Delight in Painted Companion: Shaping the Soul from Birth in Early Modern Italy." In *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin, 310-41. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Corry, Maya, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, eds. *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017.
- Corry, Maya, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin, eds. *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Covi, Dario Alessandro. "The Inscription in Fifteenth Century Florentine Painting." PhD thesis, New York University, 1958.
- , "Lettering in Fifteenth Century Florentine Painting." *The Art Bulletin* 45. 1 (March 1963): 1-17.
- Crossley, Paul. "The Man From Inner Space: Architecture and Meditation in the Choir of St Laurence in Nuremberg." In *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives: A Memorial Tribute to C. R. Dodwell*, edited by Gale Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham, 165-82. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Crum, Roger. "Roberto Martelli, the Council of Florence, and the Medici Palace Chapel." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59.3 (1996): 403-17.
- Crum, Roger, and John Paoletti. "Introduction: Florence – The Dynamic of a Space in a Renaissance City." In *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, edited by Roger Crum and John Paoletti, 1-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- D'Accone, Frank A. "The Singers of San Giovanni in Florence During the 15th Century." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 14 (1961): 307-58.
- , "Le Compagnie dei Laudesi in Firenze durante l'Ars Nova." In *L'Ars Nova Italiana del Trecento*, vol. 3, edited by F. Alberto Gallo, 253-80. Certaldo: Centro di studi sull'ars nova italiana del Trecento, 1970.

- , "Music and Musicians at Santa Maria del Fiore in the Early Quattrocento." In *Scritti in onore di Luigi Ronga*, 99-126. Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1973.
- , "Alcune note sulle compagnie fiorentine dei laudesi durante il Quattrocento." *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 10 (1975): 86-114.
- , "Lorenzo the Magnificent and Music." In *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo*, edited by Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 259-90. Florence: Olschki, 1994.
- , *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- D'Ancona, Alessandro. *Origini del teatro italiano*. 2 vols. Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1891.
- Damisch, Hubert. *Théorie du nuage: pour une histoire de la peinture*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972.
- Darrow, Elizabeth, and Nicholas Dorman. *Renaissance Art in Focus: Neri di Bicci and Devotional Painting in Italy*. Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 2004.
- Davidson, Clifford. "Of Saints and Angels." In *The Iconography of Heaven*, edited by Clifford Davidson, 1-39. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1994a.
- , ed. *The Iconography of Heaven*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1994b.
- Davies, Glyn. "Devotion and Display." In *Medieval and Renaissance Art: People and Possessions*, edited by Glyn Davies and Kirstin Kennedy, 193-219. London: V&A Publishing, 2009.
- Davison, Darrell D. "The Advent of the Magi: A Study of the Transformations in Religious Images in Italian Art 1260-1425." PhD thesis, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971.
- , "Magian 'Ars Medica,' Liturgical Devices, and Eastern Influences in the Medici Palace Chapel." *Studies in Iconography* 22 (2001): 111-62.
- De la Mare, Albinia C. "Cosimo and his Books." In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Frances Ames-Lewis, 115-56. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Del Lungo, Isidoro. *Florentia: Uomini e cose del Quattrocento*. Florence: G. Barbèra, 1897.
- Delumeau, Jean. *Une histoire du paradis. Vol. 2: Mille ans de bonheur*. Paris: Fayard, 1995.
- , *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition*. Translated by Matthew O'Connell. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000a.
- , *Une histoire du paradis. Vol. 3: Que reste-t-il du paradis?* Paris: Fayard, 2000b.
- Dennis, Flora. "Music." In *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 228-43. London: V&A Publications, 2006a.

- . “Representing the Domestic Interior in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy: From the Birth of the Virgin to Palaces of Cheese.” In *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance*, edited by Jeremy Aynsley, Charlotte Grant, and Harriet McKay, 22-45. London: V&A Publications, 2006b.
- . “Sound and Domestic Space in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy.” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 16.1 (Fall-Winter 2008-2009): 7-19.
- DePrano, Maria. *Art, Patronage, Family, and Gender in Renaissance Florence: The Tornabuoni*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Despotakis, Eleftherios. “Il corteo dei Magi di Benozzo nel contesto politico del 1459.” In *La stella e la porpora: Il corteo di Benozzo e l'enigma del Virgilio Riccardiano: Atti del Convegno di Studi – Firenze, 17 maggio 2007*, edited by Giovanna Lazzi and Gerhard Wolf, 101-07. Florence: Polistampa, 2009.
- Dillon, Emma. “Sensing Sound.” In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 95-114. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016.
- Diorio, Jennifer Adrienne. “The Production Methods of Neri di Bicci and the Prevalence of Cartoon Usage in Fifteenth-Century Florence.” PhD thesis, Queen’s University, Kingston, 2013.
- Doglio, Federico. “Il francescanesimo e il teatro medioevale.” In *Il francescanesimo e il teatro medioevale: Atti del convegno nazionale di studi, San Miniato, 8-9-10 ottobre 1982*, 9-19. Castelfiorentino: Società storica della Valdelsa, 1984.
- Duclos-Grenet, Pauline. “Des mages à Florence au Quattrocento. Autour de la fête de l’Épiphanie de 1443.” *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre* 18.2 (2014): 2-25.
- Echolls, M. T. “The Coronation of the Virgin in Italian Quattrocento Painting.” PhD thesis, University of Virginia, 1976.
- Eckstein, Nicholas. *The District of the Green Dragon: Neighbourhood Life and Social Change in Renaissance Florence*. Florence: Olschki, 1995.
- . “Neighborhood as Microcosm.” In *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, edited by Roger Crum and John Paoletti, 219-39. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Eisenbichler, Konrad. “Plays at the Archangel Raphael’s.” *Fifteenth Century Studies* 13 (1988): 519-34.
- , ed. *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.
- . “‘Cosa degna’: Il teatro nelle confraterite di fanciulli a Firenze nel Rinascimento.” In *Confraternite, chiese e società: Aspetti e problemi dell'associazionismo laicale europeo in età moderna e contemporanea*, edited by Liana Bertoldi Lenoci, 823-36. Fasano: Schena, 1994.

- , "Nativity and Magi Plays in Renaissance Florence." *Comparative Drama* 29.3 (Fall 1995): 319-33.
- , "Italian Scholarship on Pre-Modern Confraternities in Italy." *Renaissance Quarterly* 50.2 (Summer 1997): 567-80.
- , *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael: A Youth Confraternity in Florence, 1411-1785*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
- , "The Acquisition of Art by a Florentine Youth Confraternity: The Case of the Arcangelo Raffaello." In *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, 102-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- , ed. *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*. Leiden: Brill, 2019a.
- , "Introduction: A World of Confraternities." In *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 1-19. Leiden: Brill, 2019b.
- Emerson, Catherine, Adrian Tudor, and Mario Longtin. "Performance, Drama, Spectacle and the Medieval City." In *Performance, Drama and Spectacle in the Medieval City: Essays in Honour of Alan Hindley*, edited by Catherine Emerson, Adrian Tudor, and Mario Longtin, xxiii-xxxix. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.
- Emerson, Jan Swango, and Hugh Feiss O.S.B., "Introduction." In *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, edited by Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss O.S.B., xiii-xxii. New York: Garland, 2000.
- Esposito, Anna. "Men and Women in Roman Confraternities in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Roles, Functions, Expectations." In *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, 82-97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- , "Donne e confraternite." In *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*, edited by Marina Gazzini, 53-78. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009.
- Fabbri, Mario, Elvira Garbero Zorzi, and Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani, eds. *Il luogo teatrale a Firenze: Brunelleschi, Vasari, Buontalenti, Parigi*. Milan: Electa, 1975.
- Fallows, David. "Polyphonic Song in the Florence of Lorenzo's Youth ossia: The Provenance of the Manuscript Berlin 78.C.28: Naples or Florence?" In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 47-61. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- Filippi, Daniele. "Sonic Afterworld: Mapping the Soundscape of Heaven and Hell in Early Modern Cities." In *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300-1918*, edited by Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson, 186-204. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Flamini, Francesco. *La lirica toscana del Rinascimento anteriore ai tempi del Magnifico*. Florence: Le Lettere, 1977.

- Francastel, Pierre. *La Figure et le Lieu: L'ordre visuel du Quattrocento*. Paris: Gallimard, 1967.
- Fraser Jenkins, Anthony David. "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 162-70.
- Freedberg, David. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Freuler, Gaudenz. "17c. The Nativity and the Annunciation to the Shepherd in an Initial P." In *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450*, edited by Laurence Kanter, Barbara Drake Boehm, Carl Brandon Strehlke, Gaudenz Freuler, Christa Mayer Thurman, and Pia Palladino, 168-69. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994.
- Frick, Carole Collier. *Dressing Renaissance Florence: Families, Fortunes, & Fine Clothing*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- Frosini, Cecilia. "Il passaggio di gestione in una bottega pittorica Fiorentina del primo '400: Bicci di Lorenzo e Neri di Bicci." *Antichità viva* 26.1 (1981): 5-14.
- Galante Garrone, Virginia. *L'apparato scenico del dramma sacro in Italia*. Turin: Vincenzo Bona, 1935.
- Gardner von Teuffel, Christa. "From Polyptych to Pala: Some Structural Considerations." In *La pittura nel XIV e XV secolo: Il contributo dell'analisi tecnica alla storia dell'arte*, edited by Henk van Os and J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, 323-44. Bologna: Editrice CLUEB, 1983.
- Garfagnini, Gian Carlo. "Neoplatonismo e spiritualismo nella Firenze di fine Quattrocento: Giovanni Nesi." *Annali del Dipartimento di Filosofia (Nuova Serie)* 13 (2007): 59-73.
- Gargiulo, Piero, ed. *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- Gaston, Robert. "Sacred Place and Liturgical Space: Florence's Renaissance Churches." In *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, edited by Roger Crum and John Paoletti, 331-52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Gavrilyuk, Paul, and Sarah Coakley, eds. *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Gazzini, Marina. "Gli archivi delle confraternite: Documentazione, prassi conservative, memoria comunitaria." In *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*, edited by Marina Gazzini, 369-89. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009a.
- , ed. *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009b.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Art as a Cultural System." *Modern Language Notes* 91.6 (1976): 1473-99.
- Gentilini, Giancarlo. "La Madonna del Presepe ed altre immagini mariane tra Donatello e compagni." In *La Madonna del Presepe da Donatello a Guercino: Una devozione antica*

- e nuova nella terra di Cento*, edited by Giuseppe Adani, Giancarlo Gentilini, and Cristina Grimaldi Fava, 108-41. Bologna: Minerva, 2007.
- Gerbron, Cyril. "Fra Angelico, les Médicis, les Mages et le concile de Florence. Une histoire de temps entrecroisés." *Artibus et Historiae* 33.66 (2012): 29-47.
- , "Voir ou ne pas voir? Expériences de vision au couvent San Marco de Florence." In *Voir l'au-delà: L'expérience visionnaire et sa représentation dans l'art italien de la Renaissance*, edited by Andreas Beyer, Philippe Morel, Alessandro Nova, and Cyril Gerbron, 341-67. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Giacomelli, Gabriele. *Antonio Squarcialupi e la tradizione organaria in Toscana: Testimonianze documentarie iconografiche ed organologiche dal Quattrocento all'Ottocento*. Rome: Torre d'Orfeo, 1992.
- , "Nuove giunte alla biografia di Antonio Squarcialupi: I viaggi, l'impiego, le esecuzioni." In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 257-73. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- , "Fifteenth-Century Pipe Organs and Organists at Florence Cathedral." In *Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral*, edited by Gary Radke and translated by Rosanna Giammanco, 53-61. Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2014.
- Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Gilbert, Creighton. "The Archbishop on the Painters of Florence, 1450." *The Art Bulletin* 41.1 (1959): 75-87.
- Gill, Joseph. *The Council of Florence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- Gill, Meredith. *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Giometti, Cristiano. "Breve ma veridica storia di una tavola di Sandro Botticelli e bottega: L'incoronazione della Vergine di Villa la Quiete." In *Capolavori a Villa la Quiete: Botticelli e Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio in mostra*, edited by Cristiano Giometti and Donatella Pegazzano, 61-75. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2016.
- Glenisson, Françoise. "Fête et société: L'Assomption à Sienne et son évolution au cours du XVI^e siècle." In *Les fêtes urbaines en Italie à l'époque de la Renaissance: Vérone, Florence, Sienne, Naples*, edited by Françoise Decroisette and Michel Plaisance. 65-129. Paris: Klincksieck, 1993.
- Glixon, Jonathan. "Singing Praises to God: Confraternities and Music." In *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 329-44. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

- Gnocchi, Lorenzo. "Le preferenze artistiche di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici." *Artibus et Historiae* 9.18 (1988): 41-78.
- Goldthwaite, Richard. "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture." *The American Historical Review* 77.4 (October 1972): 977-1012.
- . *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy: 1300-1600*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- Gombrich, Ernst. "The Early Medici as Patrons of Art: A Survey of Primary Sources." In *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, edited by Ernest Fraser Jacobs, 279-311. London: Faber and Faber, 1960.
- . *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon Press, 1986.
- Gregori, Mina, Antonio Paolucci, and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, eds. *Maestri e botteghe: Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento*. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992.
- Griffiths, Fiona, and Kathryn Starkey, eds. *Sensory Reflections: Traces of Experience in Medieval Artefacts*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018.
- Guarino, Raimondo, ed. *Teatro e culture della rappresentazione: Lo spettacolo in Italia nel Quattrocento*. Bologna: il Mulino, 1988.
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. "Introduction: Erudite Fascinations and Cultural Energies: How Much Can We Know about the Medieval Senses?" In *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames*, edited by Stephen Nichols, Andreas Kablitz, and Alison Calhoun, 1-10. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Gutkind, Curt. *Cosimo de' Medici il Vecchio*. Florence: Casa editrice Marzocco, 1940.
- Haar, James, and John Nádas. "Antonio Squarcialupi: Man and Myth." *Early Music History* 25 (2006): 105-68.
- . "The Medici, the Signoria, the Pope: Sacred Polyphony in Florence, 1432-1448." *Recercare* 20.1/2 (2008): 25-93.
- . "I cantori di San Giovanni a Firenze negli anni 1448-1469." Translated by Francesco Zimei. *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* 46 (2011): 78-103.
- Hahn, Cynthia. "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality." In *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, edited by Robert Nelson, 169-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Hale, J. R. *Florence and the Medici: The Pattern of Control*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.
- Hamburger, Jeffrey, and Anne-Marie Bouché, eds. *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

- Hammerstein, Reinhold. *Die Musik der Engel: Untersuchungen zur Musikanschauung des Mittelalters*. Bern and Munich: Francke, 1962.
- Hankins, James. "Cosimo de' Medici as a Patron of Humanistic Literature." In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Frances Ames-Lewis, 69-94. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Harris, Max. "Inanimate Performers: The Animation and Interpretive Versatility of the Palmesel." In *Medieval Theatre Performance: Actors, Dancers, Automata and their Audiences*, edited by Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington, 179-96. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017.
- Hatfield, Rab. "The Compagnia de' Magi." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970a): 107-61.
- , "Some Unknown Descriptions of the Medici Palace in 1459." *The Art Bulletin* 52.3 (September 1970b): 232-49.
- , *Botticelli's Uffizi "Adoration: A Study in Pictorial Context*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- , "Cosimo de' Medici and the Chapel of his Palace." In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Frances Ames-Lewis, 221-44. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Henderson, John. "Le confraternite religiose nella Firenze del tardo medioevo: Patroni spirituali e anche politici?" *Ricerche storiche* 15 (1985): 77-94.
- , "Confraternities and the Church in Late Medieval Florence." In *Voluntary Religion: Papers Read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, edited by W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, 69-83. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
- , *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- Hills, Paul. "The Renaissance Altarpiece: A Valid Category?" In *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, edited by Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp, 34-48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Holmes, Megan. *Fra Filippo Lippi: The Carmelite Painter*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- , "Neri di Bicci and the Commodification of Artistic Values in Florentine Painting (1450-1500)." In *The Art Market in Italy 15th-17th Centuries*, edited by Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 213-23. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003.
- , *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Hood, William. "Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying: Gestures in Fra Angelico's Cell Frescoes at S. Marco." *The Art Bulletin* 68.2 (1986): 195-206.

- . “Fra Angelico at San Marco: Art and the Liturgy of Cloistered Life.” In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 108-31. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- . *Fra Angelico at San Marco*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Hope, Charles. “Altarpieces and the Requirements of Patrons.” In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 535-71. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Howard, Deborah. “Introduction: Music-Making in Domestic Space.” In *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*, edited by Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, 1-15. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . “Architecture and Music in Fifteenth-Century Italy.” In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 333-60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- . “Devotional Space in the Home.” In *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, 9-11. Cambridge: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017.
- Howard, Deborah, and Laura Moretti. *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- , eds. *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Howard, Peter. “Preaching Magnificence in Renaissance Florence.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 61.2 (Summer 2008): 325-69.
- . “Preaching Brotherhoods, and Biblical Literacy: The Case of Pietro Bernardo of Florence.” In *Faith’s Boundaries: Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prospero, and Stefania Pastore, 113-29. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Howe, Eunice. “Appropriating Space: Woman’s Place in Confraternal Life at Santo Spirito in Sassia, Rome.” In *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, 235-58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Howes, David, ed. *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg, 2006.
- . *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- Howes, David, and Constance Classen. *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society*. London: Routledge, 2014.

- Huck, Oliver. "The Music of the Angels in Fourteenth- and Early Fifteenth-Century Music." *Musica Disciplina* 53 (2003-2008): 99-119.
- Husband, Timothy, and Jane Hayward. "Introduction." In *The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages*, edited by Timothy Husband and Jane Hayward, 11-13. New York: Dutton, in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975a.
- , eds. *The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages*. New York: Dutton, in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975b.
- Ippel, Iris. "A Christmas Crib as a Meek Heart of the Late Medieval Christian." *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 62.4 (2014): 331-47.
- Iversen, Gunilla. *Chanter avec les anges: poésie dans la messe médiévale: interprétations et commentaires*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2001.
- Johnson, Geraldine. "Art or Artefact? Madonna and Child Reliefs in the Early Renaissance." In *The Sculpted Object, 1400-1700*, edited by Stuart Currie and Peta Motture, 1-24. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997.
- Jørgensen, Hans Hendrik Lohfert. "Into the Saturated Sensorium: Introducing the Principles of Perception and Mediation in the Middle Ages." In *The Saturated Sensorium: Principles of Perception and Mediation in the Middle Ages*, edited by Hans Hendrik Lohfert Jørgensen, Henning Laugerud, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach, 9-24. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2015a.
- , "Sensorium: A Model for Medieval Perception." In *The Saturated Sensorium: Principles of Perception and Mediation in the Middle Ages*, edited by Hans Hendrik Lohfert Jørgensen, Henning Laugerud, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach, 25-70. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2015b.
- Joseph, John E. *Language, Mind and Body: A Conceptual History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Jütte, Robert. *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*. Translated by James Lynn. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.
- Kablitz, Andreas. "Representation and Participation: Some Remarks on Medieval French Drama." In *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames*, edited by Stephen Nichols, Andreas Kablitz, and Alison Calhoun, 194-205. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Kaeppli, Thomas. "Bartholomaeus Lapaccius de Rimbertainis 1404-1466." *Archivum Fratrum Predicatorum* 9 (1939): 86-127.
- Keck, David. *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Keene, Brian. "13. Taddeo Gaddi and Assistants, *The Nativity*." In *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination 1300-1350*, edited by Christine Sciacca, 63-64. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012.

- Kemp, Martin. "From 'Mimesis' to 'Fantasia': The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts." *Viator* 8 (1977): 347-98.
- . "Introduction: The Altarpiece in the Renaissance: A Taxonomic Approach." In *The Altarpiece in the Renaissance*, edited by Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp, 1-20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- . *Behind the Picture: Art and Evidence in the Italian Renaissance*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Kent, Dale. "The Buonomini di San Martino: Charity for 'the glory of God, the honour of the city, and the commemoration of myself.'" In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Francis Ames-Lewis, 49-67. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- . *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- . "Michele del Giogante's House of Memory." In *Society & Individual in Renaissance Florence*, edited by William Connell, 110-36. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- . "Personal Literary Anthologies in Renaissance Florence: Re-Presenting Current Events to Conform to Christian, Classical and Civic Ideals." In *Rituals, Images, and Words: Varieties of Cultural Expression in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by F. W. Kent and Charles Zika, 277-95. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.
- Kent, Dale, and F. W. Kent. *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century*. Locust Valley, N.Y.: J.J. Augustin, 1982.
- Kent, F. W. "Ties of Neighbourhood and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence." In *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, edited by F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons with J. C. Eade, 79-98. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- . "Individuals and Families as Patrons of Culture in Quattrocento Florence." In *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy*, edited by Alison Brown, 171-92. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Kent, F. W., and Patricia Simons. "Renaissance Patronage: An Introductory Essay." In *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, edited by F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons with J. C. Eade, 1-21. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Kernodle, George. *From Art to Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945.
- Kessler, Herbert. *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art*. Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- . "Turning a Blind Eye: Medieval Art and the Dynamics of Contemplation." In *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, 413-39. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

- Kirkman, Andrew. *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass: Medieval Context to Modern Revival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane. "Childhood in Tuscany at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century." In *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, translated by Lydia Cochrane, 94-116. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985a.
- . "Holly Dolls: Play and Piety in Florence in the Quattrocento." In *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, translated by Lydia Cochrane, 310-29. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985b.
- . "Worship, Admiration, Display: Domestic Sculptures." In *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60*, edited by Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Marc Bomand, 229-35. Florence: Mandragora, 2013.
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. "Lay Religious Traditions and Florentine Platonism." In Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, vol. 1, 99-122. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1956.
- Kubersky-Piredda, Susanne. "Immagini devozionali nel Rinascimento fiorentino: produzione, commercio, prezzi." In *The Art Market in Italy 15th-17th Centuries*, edited by Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 115-25. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003.
- Kurz, Otto. "A Group of Florentine Drawings for an Altar." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 18 (1955): 35-53.
- Lacroix, Jean. "L'angelo regista nella sacra rappresentazione." In *Esperienze dello spettacolo religioso nell'Europa del Quattrocento*, edited by Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio, 145-69. Viterbo: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1993.
- Ladis, Andrew. *Taddeo Gaddi: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982.
- . "The Music of Devotion: Image, Voice and the Imagination in a *Madonna of Humility* by Domenico di Bartolo." In *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period: Essays in Honor of Franca Trinchieri Camiz*, edited by Katherine McIver, 3-26. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.
- Ladis, Andrew, and Shelley Zuraw, eds. *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*. Athens, GA: Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 2001.
- Lang, Bernhard. "Les délices du ciel dans la pensée de la Renaissance: Un chapitre peu connu de l'histoire du christianisme." *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 213.2 (1996): 191-212.
- "Le Carte Stroziane del R. Archivio di Stato in Firenze. Inventario pubblicato dalla R. Soprintendenza degli Archivi Toscani." *Archivio Storico Italiano* V.7.182 (1891): 785-800.
- Leclerq, Jean. "Monasticism and Angelism." *The Downside Review* 85 (1967): 127-37.

- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.
- Lehmann, Karl. "The Dome of Heaven." *The Art Bulletin* 27 (1945): 1-27.
- Lentes, Thomas. "'As Far as the Eye Can See...': Rituals of Gazing in the Late Middle Ages." In *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, 360-73. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Lightbown, Ronald W. *Sandro Botticelli*. 2 vols. London: Elek, 1978.
- . "Heaven Depicted in 15th Century Italian Painting and Sculpture." In *Mosaic of Friendship: Studies in Art and History for Eve Borsook*, edited by Ornella Francisci Osti, 81-95. Florence: Centro Di, 1999.
- Lindow, James R. *The Renaissance Palace in Florence: Magnificence and Splendour in Fifteenth-Century Italy*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.
- Lockwood, Lewis. "Music and Popular Religious Spectacle at Ferrara under Ercole I d'Este." In *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, edited by Maristella de Panizza Lorch, 571-82. Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1980.
- . *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- . "Music at Florence and Ferrara in the Late Fifteenth Century: Rivalry and Interdependence." In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 1-9. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- Lorenzetti, Carmen. "Techniche e materiali." In *Presepi e terrecotte nei musei civici di Bologna*, edited by Renzo Grandi, Massimo Medica, Stefano Tumidei, Antonella Mampieri, and Carmen Lorenzetti, 65-78. Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1991.
- Lowe, Katherine. "A Matter of Piety or of Family Tradition and Custom? The Religious Patronage of Piero de' Medici and Lucrezia Tornabuoni." In *Piero de' Medici "il Gottoso" (1416-1469): Art in the Service of the Medici*, edited by Andreas Beyer and Bruce Boucher, 55-69. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993.
- Lucchesini, Paolo. *I teatri di Firenze: origini, storia, spettacoli, aneddoti e curiosità dei teatri, esistenti o scomparsi, che dall'epoca romana fino ad oggi hanno animato la vita della città*. Rome: Newton Compton, 1991.
- Luisi, Francesco. "Ben venga maggio. Dalla canzone a ballo alla *Commedia* di Maggio." In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 195-218. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- . "Minima Fiorentina: Sonetti a mente, canzoni a ballo e cantimpanca nel Quattrocento." In *Musica Franca: Essays in Honor of Frank A. D'Accone*, edited by Irene Alm, Alyson McLamore, and Colleen Reardon, 79-95. Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1996.

- Lumini, Apollo. *Le sacre rappresentazioni italiane dei secoli XIV, XV e XVI*. Palermo: Tipografia di Pietro Montaina & comp., 1877.
- Lunardi, Roberto. *Arte e storia in Santa Maria Novella*. Florence: Salani, 1983.
- Macey, Patrick. *Bonfire Songs: Savonarola's Musical Legacy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- . "The Lauda and the Cult of Savonarola." *Renaissance Quarterly* 45.3 (1992): 439-83.
- . "The Singing *fanciulli*: The Performance of Laude in the Duomo during the Time of Savonarola." In "*Cantate Domino*:" *Musica nei secoli per il Duomo di Firenze: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Firenze, 23-25 maggio 1997)*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, Gabriele Giacomelli, and Carolyn Gianturco, 69-87. Florence: Edifir, 2001.
- . "Singing in and around Florence Cathedral: Oral & Written, Local & Imported Traditions." In *Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral*, edited by Gary Radke and translated by Rosanna Giammanco, 63-71. Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2014.
- Maisonneuve, Cécile. *Florence au XV^e siècle: Un quartier et ses peintres*. Paris: CTHS, Institut national d'histoire de l'art, 2012.
- Mamone, Sara. *Il teatro nella Firenze medicea*. Milan: Mursia, 1981.
- Mampieri, Antonella. "Presepi a Bologna." In *Presepi e terrecotte nei musei civici di Bologna*, edited by Renzo Grandi, Massimo Medica, Stefano Tumidei, Antonella Mampieri, and Carmen Lorenzetti, 53-64. Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1991.
- Maniura, Robert. "Persuading the Absent Saint: Image and Performance in Marian Devotion." *Critical Inquiry* 35.3 (Spring 2009): 629-54.
- Marcelli, Nicoletta. *Gentile Becchi: Il poeta, il vescovo, l'uomo*. Florence: Le lettere, 2015.
- Marchand, Eckart. "His Masters Voice: Painted Inscriptions in the Works of Domenico Ghirlandaio." *Artibus et Historiae* 33.66 (2012): 99-120.
- Marshall, Peter, and Alexandra Walsham. "Migrations of Angels in the Early Modern World." In *Angels in the Early Modern World*, edited by Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, 1-40. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Matchette, Ann. "The Compagnia della Purificazione e di San Zanobi in Florence: A Reconstruction of Its Residence at San Marco, 1440-1506." In *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, 74-101. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Mattox, Philip. "The Domestic Chapel in Renaissance Florence, 1400-1550." PhD thesis, Yale University, 1996.
- . "Domestic Sacral Space in the Florentine Renaissance Palace." *Renaissance Studies* 20.5 (November 2006): 658-73.

- McDannell, Colleen, and Bernhard Lang. *Heaven: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- McGee, Timothy J. *Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Performer's Guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- , "Dinner Music for the Florentine Signoria, 1350-1450." *Speculum* 74.1 (January 1999): 95-114.
- , ed. *Instruments and their Music in the Middle Ages*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009a.
- , *The Ceremonial Musicians of Late Medieval Florence*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009b.
- Meiss, Millard. *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.
- Meoni, Lucia. *San Felice in Piazza a Firenze*. Florence: Edizioni Firenze, 1993.
- Meredith, Peter. "'Some high place' Actualizing Heaven in the Middle Ages." In *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, edited by Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter, 141-54. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Merendoni, Simonetta, and Luigi Uliveri, eds. *Il Palazzo magnifico: Palazzo Medici Riccardi a Firenze*. Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 2009.
- Merkley, Paul, and Lora Merkley. *Music and Patronage in the Sforza Court*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.
- Miller, Stephanie. "Parenting in the Palazzo: Images and Artifacts of Children in the Italian Renaissance Home." In *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities*, edited by Erin Campbell, Stephanie Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari, 67-88. Aldershot: Ashgate: 2013.
- Milligan, Gerry. "Unlikely Heroines in Lucrezia Tornabuoni's *Judith* and *Ester*." *Italica* 88.4 (2011): 538-64.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. "What Is an Image?" *New Literary History* 15.3 (1984): 503-37.
- , "Preface to the Second Edition of *Landscape and Power: Space, Place, and Landscape*." In *Landscape and Power*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell, vii-xiv. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Mode, Robert. "Adolescent Confratelli and the Cantoria of Luca della Robbia." *The Art Bulletin* 68.1 (March 1986): 67-71.
- Moretti, Laura. "Architectural Spaces for Music: Jacopo Sansovino and Adrian Willaert at St Mark's." *Early Music History* 23 (2004): 153-84.

- . “Spaces for Musical Performance in the Este Court in Ferrara (c. 1440-1540).” In *The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy: Sound, Space, and Object*, edited by Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti, 213-36. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Morgan, David. *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Muessig, Carolyn, and Ad Putter. “Envisaging Heaven: An Introduction.” In *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, edited by Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter, 3-12. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Muir, Edward, and Ronald Weissman. “Social and Symbolic Places in Renaissance Venice and Florence.” In *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations*, edited by John Agnew and James Duncan, 81-103. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Muir, Lynette. “European Communities and Medieval Drama.” In *Drama and Community: People and Plays in Medieval Europe*, edited by Alan Hindley, 1-17. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999.
- Musacchio, Jacqueline Marie. *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- . “The Madonna and Child, a Host of Saints, and Domestic Devotion in Renaissance Florence.” In *Revaluing Renaissance Art*, edited by Gabriele Neher and Rupert Shepherd, 147-59. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- . “Conception and Birth.” In *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 124-35. London: V&A Publications, 2006.
- . *Art, Marriage, & Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Musumarra, Carmelo. *La sacra rappresentazione della Natività nella tradizione italiana*. Florence: Olschki, 1957.
- Nelson, Jonathan. “Memorial Chapels in Churches: The Privatization and Transformation of Sacred Space.” In *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, edited by Roger Crum and John Paoletti, 353-75. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Nelson, Robert, ed. *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Nethersole, Scott. *Devotion by Design: Italian Altarpieces Before 1500*. London: National Gallery Company, 2011.
- . *Art of Renaissance Florence: A City and Its Legacy*. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2019.
- Newbiggin, Nerida. “Plays, Printing and Publishing, 1485-1500: Florentine *sacre rappresentazioni*.” *La Bibliofilia* XC (1988): 269-96.

- , “‘The Word Made Flesh:’ The *Rappresentazioni* of Mysteries and Miracles in Fifteenth-Century Florence.” In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 361-75. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- , “Cene and Cenacoli in the Ascension and Pentecost Companies of Fifteenth-Century Florence.” In *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 90-107. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.
- , “Piety and Politics in the *feste* of Lorenzo’s Florence.” In *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo*, edited by Gian Carlo Garfagnini, 17-41. Florence: Olschki, 1994.
- , *Feste d’Oltrarno: Plays in Churches in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. 2 vols. Florence: Olschki, 1996a.
- , “Politics in the *Sacre rappresentazioni* of Lorenzo’s Florence.” In *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, edited by Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann, 117-30. London: The Warburg Institute, The University of London, 1996b.
- , “The Ascension Plays of Fifteenth-Century Florence: Some Problems of Terminology and Reconstruction.” In *Altro Polo: Italian Studies in Memory of Frederick May*, edited by Suzanne Kiernan, 53-82. Sydney: The Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, University of Sydney, 1996c.
- , “Agata, Apollonia, and Other Martyred Virgins: Did Florentines Really See These Plays Performed?” In *European Medieval Drama 1997: Papers from the Second International Conference on “Aspects of European Medieval Drama,” Camerino, 4-6 July 1997*, edited by Sydney Higgins, 175-97. Camerino: Centro Audio-visivi e Stampa Università di Camerino, 1998.
- , “Secular and Religious Drama in the Middle Ages.” In *A History of Italian Theatre*, edited by Joseph Farrell and Paolo Puppa, 9-27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- , “Greasing the Wheels of Heaven: Recycling, Innovation and the Question of ‘Brunelleschi’s’ Stage Machinery.” *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 11 (2007a): 201-41.
- , “L’occhio si dice ch’è la prima porta: Seeing with Words in the Florentine Sacra Rappresentazione.” *Mediaevalia* 28.1 (2007b): 1-22.
- , “Rewriting John the Baptist: Building a History of the San Giovanni *Edifici*.” *Spunti e ricerche* 22 (2007c): 5-27.
- , “Imposing Presence: The Celebration of Corpus Domini in Fifteenth-Century Florence.” In *Performance, Drama and Spectacle in the Medieval City: Essays in Honour of Alan Hindley*, edited by Catherine Emerson, Adrian Tudor, and Mario Longtin, 87-109. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

- , "Pavilioned in Splendour: Performing Heaven in Fifteenth-Century Florence." In *Medieval Theatre Performance: Actors, Dancers, Automata and their Audiences*, edited by Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington, 93-106. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017.
- , "Serio Ludere: Confraternities and Drama in Central Italy, 1400-1600." In *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 345-64. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Newhauser, Richard. "The Senses in Medieval and Renaissance Intellectual History." *The Senses and Society* 5.1 (2010): 5-9.
- , ed. *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014a.
- , "Introduction: The Sensual Middle Ages." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, edited by Richard Newhauser, 1-22. London: Bloomsbury, 2014b.
- Newman, Barbara. "Love's Arrows: Christ as Cupid in Late Medieval Art and Devotion." In *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, 262-86. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- , "Sacred, Secular, and Sensual: Three Case Studies in Late Medieval Crossover." In *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, 55-73. Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016.
- Niccoli, Ottavia. "Compagnie di bambini nell'Italia del Rinascimento." *Rivista Storica Italiana* 101 (1989): 346-74.
- Nichols, Stephen, Andreas Kablitz, and Alison Calhoun, eds. *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- Nordenfalk, Carl. "The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 48 (1985): 1-22.
- Nova, Alessandro. *Il libro del vento: rappresentare l'invisibile*. Genoa: Marietti, 2007.
- O'Malley, Michelle. "Commissioning Bodies, Allocation Decisions and Price Structures for Altarpieces in Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century Italy." In *The Art Market in Italy 15th-17th Centuries*, edited by Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 115-25. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003.
- , "Subject Matters: Contracts, Designs, and the Exchange of Ideas between Painters and Clients in Renaissance Italy." In *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City*, edited by Stephen Campbell and Stephen Milner, 17-37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- , "Altarpieces and Agency: The Altarpiece of the Society of Purification and Its 'Invisible Skein of Relations.'" *Art History* 28.4 (2005a): 416-41.
- , *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005b.

- , *Painting under Pressure: Fame, Reputation and Demand in Renaissance Florence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Olson, Roberta J. M. "Brunelleschi's Machines of Paradise and Botticelli's Mystic Nativity." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 97 (1981): 183-88.
- , *The Florentine Tondo*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Orvieto, Paolo. "Religion and Literature in Oligarchic, Medicean, and Savonarolan Florence." In *The Medici: Citizens and Masters*, edited by Robert Black and John Law, 189-203. Florence: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2015.
- Os, Henk van. *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*. With essays by Eugène Honée, Hans Nieuwdorp, and Bernhard Ridderbos, and translated by Michael Hoyle. London: Holberton, 1994.
- Padoa Rizzo, Anna. *Benozzo Gozzoli: Catalogo completo dei dipinti*. Florence: Cantini, 1992.
- , "The Chapel of the Magi in Benozzo Gozzoli's Oeuvre." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 357-62. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994.
- Palazzo, Éric. "Art and the Senses: Art and Liturgy in the Middle Ages." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, edited by Richard Newhauser, 175-94. London: Bloomsbury, 2014a.
- , *L'invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2014b.
- , ed. *Les cinq sens au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2016.
- Pallen, Thomas. *Vasari on Theatre*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999.
- Paoletti, John. "Fraternal Piety and Family Power: The Artistic Patronage of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici." In *Cosimo 'il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389-1464*, edited by Frances Ames-Lewis, 195-219. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- , "'...ha fatto Piero con volontà del padre...' Piero de' Medici and Corporate Commissions of Art." In *Piero de' Medici 'il Gottoso' (1416 - 1469): Art in the Service of the Medici*, edited by Andreas Beyer and Bruce Boucher, 221-50. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993.
- Paoli, Maria Pia. "Antonino da Firenze O.P. e la direzione dei laici." In *Storia della direzione spirituale: Vol. 3: L'età moderna*, edited by Gabriella Zarri, 85-130. Brescia: Morcelliana, 2008.
- Paolozzi Strozzi, Beatrice. "Sull' 'Adorazione' di Filippo Lippi, nella cappella di palazzo Medici." *Artista* 5 (1993): 82-95.

- . "The Adoration of the Child by the Workshop of Filippo Lippi." In *The Chapel of the Magi: Benozzo Gozzoli's Frescoes in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi Florence*, edited by Cristina Acidini Luchinat and translated by Eleanor Daunt, 29-32. London: Thames & Hudson, 1994.
- . "Saints and Infants." In *The Springtime of the Renaissance: Sculpture and the Arts in Florence 1400-60*, edited by Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Marc Bomand, 119-29. Florence: Mandragora, 2013.
- Pasquini, Elisabetta. *Libri di musica a Firenze nel Tre-Quattrocento*. Florence: Olschki, 2000.
- Peers, Glenn. *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Pellegrin, Elisabeth. *Les manuscrits classiques latins de la Bibliothèque Vaticane: Tome 2: Fonds Patetta et Fonds de la Reine*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978.
- Pernis, Maria Grazia, and Laurie Schneider Adams. *Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici and the Medici Family in the Fifteenth Century*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006.
- Peterson, David Spencer. "Archbishop Antoninus: Florence and the Church in the Earlier Fifteenth Century." PhD thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 1985.
- Pezzarossa, Fulvio. "La tradizione fiorentina della memorialistica." In *La "memoria" dei mercatores: Tendenze ideologiche, ricordanze, artigianato in versi nella Firenze del Quattrocento*, edited by Gian-Mario Anselmi, Fulvio Pezzarossa, and Luisa Avellini, 41-91. Bologna: Pàtron, 1980.
- Phillips-Court, Kristin. *The Perfect Genre: Drama and Painting in Renaissance Italy*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.
- Pieraccini, Gaetano. *La stirpe de' Medici di Cafaggiolo*, vol. 1. Florence: Valecchi, 1924.
- Pietschmann, Klaus. "The Sense of Hearing Politicized: Liturgical Polyphony and Political Ambition in Fifteenth-Century Florence." In *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler, 273-86. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- . "Religion and the Senses in Fifteenth-Century Europe." Translated by James Steichen. In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 40-51. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Pintor, Fortunato. "Per la storia della Libreria Medicea nel Rinascimento." *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 3 (1960): 189-210.
- Plaisance, Michel. *Florence: Fêtes, spectacles et politique à l'époque de la Renaissance*. Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2008.
- Pochat, Götz. "Brunelleschi and the 'Ascension' of 1422." *The Art Bulletin* 60.2 (1978): 232-34.

- Polizzotto, Lorenzo. "The Medici and the Youth Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin, 1434-1506." In *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, 98-113. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . *Children of the Promise: The Confraternity of the Purification and the Socialization of Youths in Florence, 1427-1785*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Polk, Keith. "Instrumental Music in the Fifteenth-Century." In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 745-54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Povoledo, Elena. "Origins and Aspects of Italian Scenography." In *Music and Theatre from Poliziano to Monteverdi*, by Nino Pirrotta and Elena Povoledo and translated by Karen Eales, 281-383. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Powers, Katherine. "Music-Making Angels in Italian Renaissance Painting: Symbolism and Reality." *Music in Art* 29.1 (2004): 52-63.
- Previtali, Giovanni. "Il Bambin Gesù come immagine devozionale nella scultura italiana del Trecento." *Paragone* 21.249 (1970): 31-40.
- Prizer, William. "Laude di popolo, laude di corte: Some Thoughts on the Style and Function of the Renaissance Lauda." In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 167-94. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- Promey, Sally, ed. *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Quiviger, François. "Seeing and Looking in the Renaissance." In *La vista y la visión*, edited by Pedro Azara, 68-81. Valencia: Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, 2003.
- . *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art*. London: Reaktion Books, 2010.
- . "Art and the Senses: Representation and Reception of Renaissance Sensations." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*, edited by Herman Roodenburg, 169-202. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Radke, Gary. "Luca della Robbia's *Cantoria*: Good Better and Best." In *Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral*, edited by Gary Radke, 11-51. Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2014.
- Ragghianti, Carlo. *Filippo Brunelleschi: Un uomo, un universo*. Florence: Vallecchi, 1977.
- Randolph, Adrian. *Touching Objects: Intimate Experiences of Italian Fifteenth-Century Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

- Rastall, Richard. "The Musical Repertory." In *The Iconography of Heaven*, edited by Clifford Davidson, 162-98. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1994.
- Rauch, Andrea, and Alessandro Savorelli, *Storia di Natale: Iconografia della Natività e sacra rappresentazione alle origini del Presepio popolare toscano*. Siena: Protagon, Editori Toscani per Santa Maria della Scala, 2001.
- Rees, Valery. *From Gabriel to Lucifer: A Cultural History of Angels*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.
- Ringbom, Sixten. *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-Up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting*. Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1965.
- . "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6.73 (1969): 159-70.
- Roodenburg, Herman, ed. *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Rossi, Marco, and Alessandro Rovetta. "Indagini sullo spazio ecclesiale immagine della Gerusalemme celeste." In "*La dimora di Dio con gli uomini*" (*Ap 21,3*): *immagini della Gerusalemme celeste dal III al XIV secolo*, edited by Maria Luisa Gatti Perer, 77-118. Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1983.
- Rossi, Maria Clara. "Vescovi e confraternite (secoli XIII-XVI)." In *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*, edited by Marina Gazzini, 125-65. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009.
- Rossi, Sergio. "La Compagnia di San Luca nel Cinquecento e la sua evoluzione in accademia." *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma* 5 (1984): 367-94.
- Rothenberg, David. *The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Rubin, Patricia Lee. "Commission and Design in Central Italian Altarpieces c.1450-1550." In *Italian Altarpieces 1250-1550: Function and Design*, edited by Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi, 201-29. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- . "Magnificence and the Medici." In *The Early Medici and their Artists*, edited by Francis Ames-Lewis, 37-49. London: Birkbeck College, University of London, Department of History of Art, 1995.
- . "Art and the Imagery of Memory." In *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, edited by Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin, 26-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . "Hierarchies of Vision: Fra Angelico's *Coronation of the Virgin* from San Domenico, Fiesole." *Oxford Art Journal* 27.2 (2004): 139-53.

- , *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Rubinstein, Nicolai. "Lay Patronage and Observant Reform in Fifteenth-Century Florence." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 63-82. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Ruda, Jeffrey. "The National Gallery Tondo of the 'Adoration of the Magi' and the Early Style of Filippo Lippi." *Studies in the History of Art* 7 (1975): 6-39.
- , *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work with a Complete Catalogue*. London: Phaidon, 1993.
- Rudy, Gordon. *Mystical Language of Sensation in the Later Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Rusconi, Roberto. "Confraternite, compagnie e devozioni." In *Storia d'Italia: La chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*, edited by Giorgio Chittolini and Giovanni Miccoli, 469-506. Turin: Einaudi, 1986a.
- , "La religione dei cittadini: riti, credenze, devozioni." In *Convegno di studi 'Ceti sociali ed ambienti urbani nel teatro religioso europeo del '300 e del '400': Viterbo, 30 maggio - 2 giugno 1985*, edited by Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio, 17-40. Viterbo: Centro di studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1986b.
- , "Afterword: Women Religious in Late Medieval Italy: New Sources and Direction." In *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, edited by Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi, 305-26. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Saalman, Howard, and Philip Mattox. "The First Medici Palace." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 44.4 (December 1985): 329-45.
- Salucci, Alessandro. *Il Ghirlandaio a Santa Maria Novella: la Cappella Tornabuoni: un percorso tra storia e teologia*. Florence: Edifir, 2012.
- Sanger, Alice, and Siv Tove Kulbrandstad Walker. "Introduction: Making Sense of the Senses." In *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice*, edited by Alice Sanger and Siv Tove Kulbrandstad Walker, 1-16. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012a.
- , eds. *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012b.
- Santi, Bruno. "Introduzione." In Neri di Bicci, *Le Ricordanze (10 marzo 1453 – 24 aprile 1475)*, edited by Bruno Santi, xi-xxx. Pisa: Edizioni Marlin, 1976.
- , "Neri di Bicci, Incoronazione della Vergine con angeli musicanti e Santi Caterina d'Alessandria, Giovanni Battista, Chiara, Bernardino da Siena, Francesco, Antonio da

- Padova, Ludovico da Tolosa, Giovanni Gaulberto (?), Lorenzo e Maria Maddalena.” In *Maestri e botteghe: Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento*, edited by Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci, and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, 119-20. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992.
- Sarchi, Alessandra. “Da Donatello all’ allievo: Bartolomeo Bellano e la terracotta.” In *La Madonna del Presepe da Donatello a Guercino: Una devozione antica e nuova nella terra di Cento*, edited by Giuseppe Adani, Giancarlo Gentilini, and Cristina Grimaldi Fava, 143-61. Bologna: Minerva, 2007.
- Sardi, Deanna. “Fanciulli e angeli fanciulli.” In *Infanzie: Funzioni di un gruppo liminale dal mondo classico all’età moderna*, edited by Ottavia Niccoli, 159-84. Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1993.
- Sarnecka, Zuzanna. “‘And the Word Dwelt Among Us:’ Experiencing the Nativity in the Italian Renaissance Home.” In *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Marco Faini, and Alessia Meneghin, 163-83. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Scafi, Alessandro. *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth*. London: The British Library, 2006.
- . *Maps of Paradise*. London: The British Library, 2013.
- Schiferl, Ellen. “Italian Confraternity Art Contracts: Group Consciousness and Corporate Patronage, 1400-1525.” In *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 121-40. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.
- Schlegel, Ursula. “The Christchild as Devotional Image in Medieval Italian Sculpture: A Contribution to Ambrogio Lorenzetti Studies.” *The Art Bulletin* 52.1 (1970): 1-10.
- Schmitt, Jean-Claude. “Between Text and Image: The Prayer Gestures of St Dominic.” *History and Anthropology* 1 (1984): 127-62.
- . “L’Exception corporelle: à propos de l’ Assomption de Marie.” In *The Mind’s Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, 151-85. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Schutte, Anne Jacobson. *Printed Italian Vernacular Religious Books 1465-1550: A Finding List*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1983.
- Sciacca, Christine. “Reconstructing the Laudario of Sant’ Agnese.” In *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination 1300-1350*, edited by Christine Sciacca, 218-35. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012.
- Scudieri, Magnolia. “Andrea della Robbia, *Prespe (Madonna, San Giuseppe e Gesù Bambino, 1515)*.” In *I Della Robbia e l’arte nuova della scultura invetriata*, edited by Giancarlo Gentilini, 232-33. Florence: Giunti, 1998.

- . “The Frescoes by Fra Angelico at San Marco.” In Laurence Kanter and Pia Palladino, *Fra Angelico, 177-89*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Seay, Albert. “The 15th-Century Cappella at Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 11.1 (1958): 45-55.
- Sedlmayer, Hans. *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale*. Wiesbaden: VMA-Verlag, 2001.
- Sebregondi, Ludovica. “Religious Furnishings and Devotional Objects in Renaissance Florentine Confraternities.” In *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 141-60. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.
- . “La chiesa e i laici: le confraternite.” In *La chiesa e la città a Firenze nel XV secolo*, edited by Gianfranco Rolfi, Ludovica Sebregondi, and Paolo Viti, 87-92. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992.
- . “Arte confraternale.” In *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*, edited by Marina Gazzini, 337-67. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009.
- Shearman, John. *Only Connect ... : Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Shephard, Tim. “Musical Spaces: The Politics of Space in Renaissance Italy.” In *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture*, edited by Tim Shephard and Anne Leonard, 274-80. London: Routledge, 2014a.
- . “Seeing and Singing: Interpreting Decoration in Italian Music Manuscripts c. 1500.” *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 6.2 (2014b): 153-66.
- . “*Liberalitas* in Musical Exchanges in Florence and Ferrara.” In *Sources of Identity: Makers, Owners, and Users of Music Sources Before 1600*, edited by Lisa Colton and Tim Shephard, 209-26. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Shephard, Tim, Laura Ștefănescu, and Serenella Sessini. “Music, Silence and the Senses in a Late Fifteenth-Century Book of Hours.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 70.2 (2017): 474-512.
- Shephard, Tim, Sanna Raninen, Serenella Sessini, and Laura Ștefănescu. *Music in the Art of Renaissance Italy c. 1420-1540*. London: Harvey Miller, forthcoming 2020.
- Shepherd, Rupert. “Art and Life in Renaissance Italy: A Blurring of Identities?” In *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, edited by Mary Rogers, 63-72. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Simson, Otto von. *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Skinnebach, Laura Katrine. “Devotion: Perception as Practice and Body as Devotion in Late Medieval Piety.” In *The Saturated Sensorium: Principles of Perception and Mediation in*

- the Middle Ages*, edited by Hans Hendrik Lohfert Jørgensen, Henning Laugerud, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach, 153-79. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2015.
- Smith, Mark. *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- Solum, Stefanie. *Women, Patronage, and Salvation in Renaissance Florence: Lucrezia Tornabuoni and the Chapel of the Medici Palace*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015.
- Stallini, Sophie. *Le théâtre sacré à Florence au XV^e siècle: Une histoire sociale des formes*. Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2011.
- Stookey, Laurence Hull. "The Gothic Cathedral as the Heavenly Jerusalem: Liturgical and Theological Sources." *Gesta* 8.1 (1969): 35-41.
- Stowell, Steven. *The Spiritual Language of Art: Medieval Christian Themes in Writings on Art of the Italian Renaissance*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Strocchia, Sharon. "Gender and the Rites of Honour in Italian Renaissance Cities." In *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Judith Brown and Robert Davis, 39-60. London: Longman, 1998.
- , "Theaters of Everyday Life." In *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, edited by Roger Crum and John Paoletti, 55-80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Strong, Roy. *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1984.
- Syson, Luke. "Representing Domestic Interiors." In *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis, 86-101. London: V&A Publications, 2006.
- Tacconi, Marica. *Cathedral and Civic Ritual in Late Medieval and Renaissance Florence: The Service Books of Santa Maria del Fiore*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- , "The Choirbooks of Florence Cathedral: Liturgy, Music, and Art." In *Make a Joyful Noise: Renaissance Art and Music at Florence Cathedral*, edited by Gary Radke and translated by Rosanna Giammanco, 73-87. Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2014.
- Taddei, Ilaria. "Attività spettacolari delle confraternite giovanili nel Quattrocento fiorentino." In *Teatro, Scena, Rappresentazione dal Quattrocento al Settecento: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Lecce, 15-17 maggio 1997)*, edited by Paola Andrioli, Giuseppe Antonio Camerino, Gino Rizzo, and Paolo Viti, 73-84. Galatina: Congedo, 2000.
- , *Fanciulli e giovani: crescere a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Florence: Olschki, 2001.
- , "Puerizia, adolescenza and giovinezza: Images and Conceptions of Youth in Florentine Society During the Renaissance." In *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150-1650*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 15-26. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2002.

- Tartuferi, Angelo. "Le testimonianze superstiti (e le perdite) della decorazione primitiva (secoli XIII-XV)." In *La chiesa di Santa Maria del Carmine a Firenze*, edited by Luciano Berti, 143-71. Florence: Giunti, 1992.
- Terpstra, Nicholas. "Women in the Brotherhood: Gender, Class, and Politics in Renaissance Bolognese Confraternities." *Renaissance and Reformation* 14.3 (Summer 1990): 193-212.
- , ed. *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- , "Boundaries of Brotherhood: Laity and Clergy in the Social Spaces of Religion." In *Faith's Boundaries: Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities*, edited by Nicholas Terpstra, Adriano Prospero, and Stefania Pastore, xi-xxxii. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Terpstra, Nicholas, Adriano Prospero, and Stefania Pastore, eds. *Faith's Boundaries: Laity and Clergy in Early Modern Confraternities*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.
- Testaverde, Anna Maria. "La decorazione festiva e l'itinerario di 'rifondazione' della città negli ingressi trionfali a Firenze tra XV e XVI secolo." *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 32.3 (1988): 323-52.
- Thomas, Anabel. *The Painter's Practice in Renaissance Tuscany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Thornton, Peter. *The Italian Renaissance Interior 1400-1600*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991.
- Tichonravov, N. S. "Novyj otryvok iz putevych zapisok Suzdal'skago episkopa Avraamija (1439 g.)." *Vestnik obschestva dreve-russkago iskusstva pri Moskovskom publicnom muzee* 1-12.3 (1874-76): 37-42.
- Tomas, Natalie. *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.
- Toscani, Bernard. "I canti carnascialeschi e le laude di Lorenzo: elementi di cronologia." In *La musica a Firenze al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico: Congresso internazionale di studi, Firenze, 15-17 giugno 1992*, edited by Piero Gargiulo, 131-42. Florence: Olschki, 1993.
- Toschi, Paolo. *Le origini del teatro italiano*. Turin: Einaudi, 1955.
- Trexler, Richard. "Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image." *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (1972): 7-41.
- , "Ritual in Florence: Adolescence and Salvation in the Renaissance." In *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, edited by Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman, 200-64. Leiden: Brill, 1974.
- , "Florentine Theatre, 1280-1500: A Checklist of Performances and Institutions." *Forum Italicum* 14 (1980a): 454-75.
- , *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*. New York; London: Academic Press, 1980b.

- , "The Magi Enter Florence: The Ubriachi of Florence and Venice." In Richard C. Trexler, *Church and Community 1200-1600: Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain*, 75-167. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1987.
- , "Triumph and Mourning in North Italian Magi Art." In *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy: 1250-1500*, edited by Charles M. Rosenberg, 38-66. Notre Dame, Indiana; London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.
- , "Habiller et déshabiller les images: esquisse d'une analyse." In *L'image et la production du sacré*, edited by Françoise Dunand, Jean-Michel Spieser, and Jean Wirth, 195-31. Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1991.
- , *Power and Dependence in Renaissance Florence. Vol.1: The Children of Renaissance Florence*. Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993.
- , *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Trinkhaus, Charles, and Heiko A. Oberman, eds. *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*. Leiden: Brill, 1974.
- Tulanowski, Elaine. "The Iconography of the Assumption of the Virgin in Italian Paintings: 1480-1580." PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 1986.
- Tycz, Katherine. "Devotion to the Sacred Monogram of the Name of Jesus." In *Madonnas & Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy*, edited by Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, 104-07. Cambridge: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017.
- Ullman, Berthold L., and Philip A. Stadter. *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence: Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo de' Medici and the Library of San Marco*. Padua: Antenore, 1972.
- Vasoli, Cesare. "Giovanni Nesi tra Donato Acciaiuoli e Girolamo Savonarola: Testi editi e inediti." *Memorie Domenicane* 4 (1973): 103-79.
- Vecchi Calore, Marina. "Rappresentazioni sacre rinascimentali negli stati estensi: Espressione di una collettività o manifestazione di potere." In *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, edited by Maristella de Panizza Lorch, 507-19. Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1980.
- Ventrone, Paola. "Per una morfologia della sacra rappresentazione fiorentina." In *Teatro e culture della rappresentazione: Lo spettacolo in Italia nel Quattrocento*, edited by Raimondo Guarino, 195-225. Bologna: il Mulino, 1988.
- , "Thoughts on Florentine Fifteenth-Century Religious Spectacle." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 405-12. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- , "On the Use of Figurative Art as a Source for the Study of Medieval Spectacles." *Comparative Drama* 25.1 (Spring 1991): 4-16.

- , "La sacra rappresentazione fiorentina: aspetti e problemi." In *Esperienze dello spettacolo religioso nell'Europa del Quattrocento*, edited by Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio, 67-99. Viterbo: Centro studi sul teatro medioevale e rinascimentale, 1993.
- , "I teatri delle confraternite in Italia fra XIV e XVI secolo." In *Studi confraternali: Orientamenti, problemi, testimonianze*, edited by Marina Gazzini, 293-316. Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009.
- , "Medicean Theater: Image and Message." In *The Medici: Citizens and Masters*, edited by Robert Black and John Law, 253-65. Florence: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2015.
- , *Teatro civile e sacra rappresentazione a Firenze nel Rinascimento*. Florence: Le Lettere, 2016.
- Venturini, Lisa. "Domenico Ghirlandaio e bottega, Natività e angeli." In *Maestri e botteghe: Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento*, edited by Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci, and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, 195. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992a.
- , "Modelli fortunati e produzione di serie." In *Maestri e botteghe: Pittura a Firenze alla fine del Quattrocento*, edited by Mina Gregori, Antonio Paolucci, and Cristina Acidini Luchinat, 147-57. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1992b.
- Verdier, Philippe. *Le Couronnement de la Vierge: Les origines et les premiers développements d'un thème iconographique*. Montréal: Institut d'Études Médiévales Albert-le-Grand, 1980.
- Verdon, Timothy. "Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Study of History: Environments of Experience and Imagination." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 1-37. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Verdon, Timothy, and John Henderson, eds. *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- Vinge, Louise. *The Five Senses: Studies in a Literary Tradition*. Lund: Gleerup, 1975.
- Wackernagel, Martin. *The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist: Projects and Patrons, Workshop and Art Market*. Translated by Alison Luchs. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Walker Bynum, Caroline. *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*. New York: Zone Books, 2011.
- Weaver, Elissa. *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Wegman, Rob. *The Crisis of Music in Early Modern Europe: 1470-1530*. London: Routledge, 2005.

- Weinstein, Donald. "Critical Issues in the Study of Civic Religion in Renaissance Florence." In *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, edited by Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman, 265-70. Leiden: Brill, 1974.
- Weissman, Ronald F. E. *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*. New York; London: Academic Press, 1982.
- . "Sacred Eloquence: Humanist Preaching and Lay Piety in Renaissance Florence." In *Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento*, edited by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, 250-71. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.
- . "Cults and Contexts: In Search of the Renaissance Confraternity." In *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 201-20. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.
- Welch, Evelyn S. "Sight, Sound and Ceremony in the Chapel of Galeazzo Maria Sforza." *Early Music History* 12 (1993): 151-90.
- . *Art in Renaissance Italy: 1350-1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . "Naming Names: The Transience of Individual Identity in Fifteenth-Century Italian Portraiture." In *The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance*, edited by Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson, 91-104. London: British Museum Press, 1998.
- Widloecher, Nicola. *La Congregazione dei Canonici regolari lateranensi: periodo di formazione (1402-1483)*. Gubbio: Scuola tipografica "Oderisi," 1929.
- Williamson, Beth. "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion." *Speculum* 79.2 (2004): 341-406.
- . "'The Ordered Exercise of Intellection': The Manipulation of Devotional Technologies." In *Image, Memory and Devotion: Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley*, edited by Zoë Opačić and Achim Timmermann, 121-28. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.
- . "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence." *Speculum* 88.1 (2013): 1-43.
- Wilson, Blake. *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- . *Singing Poetry in Renaissance Florence: The cantasi come Tradition (1375-1550)*. Florence: Olschki, 2009.
- . "Dominion of the Ear: Singing the Vernacular in Piazza San Martino." *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16.1/2 (September 2013): 273-87.
- . "Canterino and improvvisatore: Oral Poetry and Performance." In *The Cambridge History of Fifteenth-Century Music*, edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Jesse Rodin, 292-310. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015a.

- . "Sound Patrons: The Medici and Florentine Musical Life." In *The Medici: Citizens and Masters*, edited by Robert Black and John Law, 267-80. Florence: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2015b.
- . *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy: Memory, Performance, and Oral Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Winternitz, Emanuel. "On Angel Concerts in the 15th Century: A Critical Approach to Realism and Symbolism in Sacred Painting." *The Musical Quarterly* 49.4 (1963): 450-63.
- . "Secular Music Practice in Sacred Art." In *The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages*, edited by Timothy Husband and Jane Hayward, 225-30. New York: Dutton, in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.
- Wisch, Barbara, and Diane Cole Ahl, eds. *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Wright, Alison. "Between the Patron and the Market: Production Strategies in the Pollaiuolo Workshop." In *The Art Market in Italy 15th-17th Centuries*, edited by Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, 225-36. Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003.
- . *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- . *Frame Work: Honour and Ornament in Italian Renaissance Art*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.
- Wright, Rosemary Muir. *Sacred Distance: Representing the Virgin*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Zanovello, Giovanni. "'In the Church and in the Chapel': Music and Devotional Spaces in the Florentine Church of Santissima Annunziata." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67.2 (Summer 2014): 379-428.
- Zimei, Francesco. "'Tucti vanno ad una danza per amor del Salvatore:' Riflessioni pratiche sul rapporto fra lauda e ballata." *Studi Musicali* 1.2 (2010): 313-43.
- . "New Light on the So-Called *Laudario di Sant'Agnese*." *Musica Disciplina* 56 (2011): 463-90.
- Zorzi, Ludovico. *Il teatro e la città: Saggi sulla scena italiana*. Turin: Einaudi, 1977.
- . "Figurazione pittorica e figurazione teatrale." In *Storia dell'arte italiana. Parte prima: Materiali e problemi. Volume primo: Questioni e metodi*, 419-63. Turin: Einaudi, 1979.
- . "La scenotecnica brunelleschiana: Problemi filologici e interpretativi." In *Filippo Brunelleschi: La sua opera e il suo tempo. Vol. 1*, 161-71. Florence: Centro Di, 1980.

Zorzi Pugliese, Olga. "Two Sermons by Giovanni Nesi and the Language of Spirituality in Late Fifteenth-Century Florence." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 42.3 (1980): 641-65.

-----, "The Good Work of the Florentine 'Buonomini di San Martino:' An Example of Renaissance Pragmatism." In *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, 108-20. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1991.

Zughaib, Nancy L. "The Steps of Humility, the Steps to Sovereignty: Fra Filippo Lippi's Nativity Altarpiece for the Chapel of Palazzo Medici." *Syracuse University Graduate Studies* (1989): 92-102.