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The World of St. Francis of Assisi

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fifteenth century, had clearly become a part of the Dominican imagination, requiring little extraneous detail or explanation. The antiphon, in concert with the images of St. Dominic glorified in heaven and embracing Francis during the early years of the Order, reminds the Dominican friar that he must remain in the heart of the Church, sowing harmony according to the example of both his founder and St. Francis.

Regarding images and stories of the meeting of Francis and Dominic in the Renaissance, many questions remain. Are there any examples of this moment painted from a distinctively Franciscan perspective? Was the depiction of this story in an idealized fashion an indication that it was mainly the Dominicans who needed to be kept in check? Were more Dominican images created to address the lack of written exemplars in the form of biographical and hagiographical accounts? Whatever the answer to such questions might be, the Renaissance images of the meeting of Francis and Dominic are indicative of the adoption of the story into the fabric of the Dominican Order's identity and group memory. The need and desire for friendship between the Franciscans and Dominicans is still evident in the perpetuation and visualization of the legend of the friendship of their founders.

The Saint and the City:
Giotto’s Franciscan Cycle
in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels

Filip Malesevic

The Florentine urban environment changed significantly after the third expansion of the city walls that was undertaken between 1284 and 1333. This expansion was stimulated by a territorial increase of nearly 430 hectares, which consequently included both churches of the two most important mendicant orders, the Dominican church of S. Maria Novella and the Franciscan church of S. Croce at the other peripheral end of the city. The commune itself then had administrative access to the newly added area that thus involved parishes, collegiate churches, and monasteries in the process of restructuring the new environment, as Szirmai and Spilker have already demonstrated. Another important contribution to this urban increase of space came from privately donated chapels by mercantile families, such as the Bardi and the Peruzzi, two of the most powerful and influential banking families of the time until their bankruptcies in the 1330s. The Franciscan church of S. Croce was itself built from stones that remained from the second wall expansion. This particular church thus stands in close relationship with the city’s outward, walled appearance. However, its impact on the communal life as well as on the evolution of the Franciscan order in Florence, which existed since St. Francis’s first arrival in 1206, has not been fully appreciated in the scholarship connected to two of Giotto’s most notably decorated chapels in S. Croce, the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels. This paper will therefore attempt at first to present crucial pictorial elements that indicate a high awareness of both the patrons—the banking families and the frares of the Order—and the artist, in this case Giotto, regarding the structural change the city of Florence underwent. After this, the principal argument will attempt to locate both iconographic programs within the liturgical setting the

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2. Regarding the architectural history of S. Croce, see: Antonio Paolucci, ed., Die Kirchen in Florenz (Munich, 2003), p. 154. Today’s “pantheon of Florentine culture” was significantly transformed through Giorgio Vasari’s interventions between 1565 and 1567 to refurbish the church interior to agree with the newly decreed norms at the Council of Trent, see: Marcia B. Hall, Revaluation of Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Dole Casaio de’ Medici in Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce, 1565-1577 (Oxford, 1979). According to Vasari, S. Croce was built in the late thirteenth century by Arnolfo di Cambio, who at the same time was occupied with the Duomo, the Palazzo Vecchio and other Florentine churches. For a contemporary statement regarding the Franciscan church in Florence, see also: Giovanni Villani, Cronica, a miglior lezione ristorta edito nel mio de’ temi a Firenze, I. Moutier and F. Gierrard, Dragonmanti, eds. (Florence, 1845), 2.
from the monastery to the choir without being seen.\(^2\) This elementary hierarchy will be discussed at a later stage, when both cycles are to be integrated within the liturgical celebrations in S. Croce.

Gardner first suggested that the insertion of four saints on the Bardi Chapel's window wall was a central indicator regarding the chronological decoration of both chapels.\(^3\) This is especially true of the figure of St. Louis of Toulouse, who was canonized by Pope John XXII on April 7, 1317, and has been taken so far as to provide a terminus post quem for the Bardi Chapel frescos.\(^4\) It is the main attempt of this paper to challenge this assertion by asking how the two chapels reflected the urban enlargement of Florence that integrated the Franciscan church of S. Croce within its walls and thus to propose a later dating of the Bardi Chapel decorations than those of the Peruzzi.

Above the chapel's portico and on the choir's façade, the Stigmatization of St. Francis flanks the main apse and is on the same level as the Assumption of the Virgin that is above the chapel on the other side of the choir area. This fresco remained majorly unnoticed regarding its prominent position within the church as well as its profound interplay with the theme of the Holy Cross and the Assumption of the Madonna. It presents St. Francis, who kneels on one knee while twisting his upper body toward a hovering crucified Christ surrounded by seraphim from whom he receives the Stigmata. He is presented outdoors between a chapel in the right lower corner and a cave. It presents the very moment the founder of the Order of Friars Minor is imprinted with the signs of Christ and becomes his true image—an alter Christus. As Eva Maria Waldmann has demonstrated, the transept of S. Croce was covered with a roof in 1317.\(^5\) The situation however changed in 1319/20, when a space for liturgical celebrations was found through the construction of the first bays in the nave as well as with the eastern portals in combination with the first chapels and the transept. Tino di Camaino constructed the first funerary chapel between 1316 and 1319/20 for the patriarch of Aquileia, Gastone della Torre, which indicates the transition of the church service from the older into the newer building.\(^6\) Michael Viktor Schwarz further argued that the decoration of the Bardi Chapel, together with the fresco of the Stigmatization above it, must have been executed between 1311 and 1320.\(^7\)

Yet, the Stigmatization of St. Francis repeats a common theme in the frescos of the Upper Church of Assisi as well as in the famous panel from Pisa that is now conserved

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4. Most recently, Michael Viktor Schwarz, Giotto's Peter, 2 vols. (Vienna, 2004-2008), vol. 2 (Giotto Held), 413.
in the Louvre Museum—and that the Bardi Chapel already took it for granted. While the comparison with the Louvre pala surely can be used to dispute Giotto's authorship over the Bardi Chapel frescos as Schwarz has already pointed out, no interpretation exists so far that tries to connect this fresco with the pictorial elements that the Peruzzi Chapel consciously repeats and that present a particularly Franciscan awareness of the Order's integration into Florence's urban structure after the third wall extension.10 Klaus Krüger basically put such a re-evaluation of the fresco forward in an essay dealing with the tension between St. Francis's life as a hermit and his integration into an urban community, whether it be that of Assisi or the one in Florence. He analyzed the Stigmatization as a form of pictorial devotion in its context as an instrument of a sancta imaginatio. Krüger further concluded that such a specific form of piety came from a new orientation in hagiographical treatises about the saint's life, which offered a psychological impact in the beholder's perception of this particular image. He linked the Stigmatization with the Miracle of the Crucifix at San Damiano and thus proposed a reading that connects the theme of Francesco alter Christus with Cimabue's crucifix above the altar in S. Croce.11 Krüger nevertheless misses to point out that the fresco of St. Francis's Stigmatization presents to the beholder a tension with which one Florentine could easily recognize when seeing it in this particular Franciscan setting, namely the aforementioned difference between eremitic and urban culture. The miraculous apparition of the stigmata emphasizes the Florentine growing urbanity in relation to its outcasts, the rural surrounding that the city walls separated and the environment in which the Order of Friars Minor would evolve. The Stigmatization on the transept's choir wall thus stresses this crucial transition the Franciscans underwent with the city's enlargement between 1288 and 1311 that integrated the church's S. Croce into the urban structure. This feature is even further supported by the fresco of the Assumption above the portico of the Tosinchi-Spinelli Chapel in his Legenda maior, St. Bonaventure mentions Mary's Ascension to be the model-like raising of the church itself as well as an exemplary completion of God's creation in the highest possible reconciliation with Christ.12

The first scene in the Peruzzi Chapel on the northern wall compartment presents St. John on Patmos where the Evangelist is shown having an apocalyptic dream. As Codell rightly mentioned, this scene lacks architectural richness as well as any indicators of a busy urban environment as found on the opposite wall.13 John in the desert presents the beholder therefore yet again with the same tension the Stigmatization of Saint Francis addressed when read in close relationship with the fresco beneath, showing the Raising of Darius taking place in front of a large architectural setting. It is thus very probable that the fresco of the

10. See for the comparison of the fresco with the Louvre pala most recently Schwarz, Giotto Pieter, 414. Regarding the iconographic forerunner in Assisi, see e.g. A. Graziani, “Alcunchi del Maestro di Figline,” Proporzioni, I (1943): 65-78. Ricca Gorlini was the first to interpret the figure of St. Francis in the Stigmatization fresco in S. Croce as being one, who conveyed a conventional attitude towards Francis. See Ricca Gorlini, Spiritualità in Giotto, Saint Francis and Giotto's Bardi Chapel (University Parks/London, 1988).
Such festivities were especially reserved between the 4th and 11th of October, the feast of the founder of the Order of Friars Minor and for which his flute was being read as a framework to the liturgical celebrations. It was highly probable that for such feast days the Bardi Dossal was installed permanently in the area of its clothed choir between the High Altar and the tecnozo. As mentioned earlier, the Bardi panel itself presented the community of friars in a collective gesture of devotion. The Franciscan frater are thus seen as one community, which St. Francis founded through the miracle of the stigmata, for the choir included Cimabue’s Crucifix, clearly to be seen in association with the Bardi Dossal’s figure of the saint with his wounds. A visual clarification of such celebratory friars can be found in the episode of the Crib at Greccio in the Upper Church of Assisi, where one can observe the roof screen dividing the laity and the frater. A group of friars is seen in front of the High Altar with their mouths opened in chant, clearly referring to a specific moment of liturgical celebration. It has often been argued that the later dating of the Peruzzi Chapel’s decoration can be based on an increase in architectural elements that supersede those in the Bardi Chapel.

However, so far it has never been questioned why Giotto presented a more elaborate architectural landscape in the Peruzzi Chapel than one encounters in the Bardi. The Raising of Drusiana can be taken as one primary example, although it needs to be pointed out that all the episodes on the southern wall compartment, which present scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist, include such elaborative architectural structures. One argument this paper is suggesting would be that the episodes from the life of the Baptist present themselves as containing particular moments in the celebration of the liturgy that the Franciscans in St. Croce also addressed. The first episode shows the Anunciation to Zacharias, followed by the Birth and Naming of the Baptist and finally ending with: Herode’s Feast. The Anunciation is taking place underneath a tabernacle, which stands next to a town house, thus linking the Florentine urbanity with the liturgical practice within the church. The Birth and Naming of the Baptist are themselves a crucial moment in biblical history that is paralleled to the Resurrection of Drusiana. This contrast is also emphasized by the interplay between the depiction of the family and kin of Zacharias and Elizabeth attending the event in the former, while the latter again stresses the wider community of Christian citizens. Finally, Herode’s Feast alludes to the financing of a friars’ meal by the donating family—in this case the Peruzzi—who themselves were allowed to attend. The earlier mentioned contrast between private and communal which the two facing episodes in the middle of both wall compartments present is further to be linked with the function of the tecnozo that separated the laity from the friars. The tecnozo also provided a way for the friars to move from the monastery to the choir without being seen. As Marcia Hall already derived from the late thirteenth-century authority on ritual and the Church, Durandus, the chancon was divided hierarchically: around the altar, the clergy occupied the immediate area, while the secondary area of the choir was reserved for the friars. During the mass, male Christians might be permitted to cross over the tecnozo, usually a two-storied roof screen, into the choir while women and those not baptized were relegated to the nave outside of the sacred area, although a definite exclusion of women cannot fully be assumed. The same example of the Crib at Greccio in the Upper Church of Assisi can be taken as a counter-example that this division between men and women was not rigidly applied. The Raising of Drusiana also indicates a partaking of women in this extraordinary miracle. It therefore can be affirmed that the elaborate architecture in the frescos within the Peruzzi Chapel present themselves in a strong interplay with Franciscan liturgical practices, which on the other hand also bear an allusion to a balanced relationship between conventional friars and spirituale within the Franciscan Order. This balance is central in ascribing the decoration of the Peruzzi Chapel to have taken place before the adjacent one of the Bardi family.

What the scholarship has so far contributed to the iconographic program in the Bardi Chapel carries an ominous earnestness with which these episodes from St. Francis’ life have been traced back to Giotto’s work in Padua as well as his contribution to the Upper Church of Assisi. Even though the alterations between the scenes in St. Croce and those in the Franciscans’ mother church in Assisi are narrow, they nevertheless bear the capability to transform this particular cycle into a completely different one with a modified statement: that namely this decoration, also in contrast with the one in the Peruzzi Chapel, asserts the definitive supremacy of the conventional convictions within the Franciscan Order over the spirituale. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the allegories on the vault of the chapel that clearly adopt the function of the se in the Lower Church of Assisi but with a significant alteration: here the four allegories that appear above the six episodes from St. Francis’ life are not extensive elaborations that emphasize the spiritual glorification of the saint, but instead are concentrated on one personification. Also the contrasts between virtues and vices, which in the Assisi se are summarized within the appropriate allegory, are missing. The Bardi allegories on the contrary do not present themselves to the beholder, which in this case they were specifically destined to address the donors of the chapel, as monumental allegories like the ones in the burial church of San Francesco in Assisi. What is thus the true function of the allegories in the Boyd of the Bardi Chapel? Hans Belting noted the disturbance of the balance between architectural setting and continuity of traditional narrative cycles in his writing about Simone Martini’s frescoes in the St. Martin Chapel in Assisi. Likewise, the frescos and allegories in the Bardi Chapel at St. Croce may be an instance where Giotto demonstrates Martini’s lost hold of the “law of the series” and thus minimizes the collocation of individual compositions.

The figure of St. Louis of Toulouse on the window wall is not a novelty, but a conscious adaptation of Simone Martini’s works in the St. Martin Chapel in Assisi and especially his crowning of King Robert of Anjou by the same Louis. Such an assimilation of Simone Martini’s works is apparent in the crown that lies before St. Louis’ feet and the bishop’s mitre. These particular pictorial elements, however, do not

15. See for this Blume, 1861.
16. That the Bardi dossal would have functioned as a companion panel on top of the roof screen to form beam images, as Cooper and Roslon suggested for the Upper Church of Assisi, is highly unlikely; for there does not exist another panel that would function as a companion to the Bardi dossal. Second, the position of the dossal would be highly irritating for the spectator, whose view of the Stigmata—on the Assumption—would largely be blocked. For the suggestions regarding the ensemble of beam images in the Upper Church of Assisi see esp. Donal Cooper and Janet Roslon, The Making of Assisi: The Poly, the Franciscans and the painting of the Basilica (New Haven: London, 2003), 72-74, as well as Donal Cooper, "In medio reclinato": Sotto, Crucifixion and Stresses in the Franciscan Church Interior in Italy c. 1250-c. 1400 (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2000).
suggest a renouncing of all worldly goods and material benefits as the spiritual Franciscans had imagined it, but on the contrary the importance of the canonization of Saint Louis in the relationship between the Florentine banking family of the Bardis and the Neapolitan dynasty of the Angevins, which the conventual faction of the Order must have shared to their advantage when the controversy over its usus pauper reached a climax in the years between 1322 and 1324. Pope John XXII’s bull from 8 December 1322, Ad conditionem communes, is significant in that it transferred the regulations over property from the church to the Order of Friars Minor. Nearly a year later, a second bull by the pope entitled Cum inter nonnullis condemned the claim made by the spirituals that neither Christ nor the apostles had possessed any property as hersies.20

The exclusion of any reference to the paupertas Chresti et Apostolorum is already given by the first fresco in the scene of the lunette on the southern wall compartment, which presents the Renunciation of Wealthy Gifts leaving out the hand coming from the sky as in its parallel in Assisi and thus instantly making the figure of the bishop stand out. This scene further confronts the Confirmation of Rule on the opposite wall, which consequently suggests the adaptation of the conventional claims within the order that supported papal influence over the Franciscans in Florence and from which the Bardis family profited as well. The theoretical controversy about the usus pauper arose from the persecution of spiritual Franciscans in the southern French provinces, who criticized the majority of their order for its lax conduct of life. However, this controversy over the problem of apostolic poverty was not settled with the papal dictum mentioned earlier. This was only achieved in 1329, when Pope John XXII officially declared the order’s general, Michele da Cesena, a heretic.21 Although the most prominent representatives of the theology over apostolic poverty were exiled, which came also with the isolation of the spirituals within the order, the Franciscans nevertheless did not revise their fundamental position. The Order of Friars Minor rather sought to enhance its ideals that lay far away from the reaches of jurisprudence and reason, using old Franciscan descriptions of St. Francis’s posthumous wonders and visions as a basis for new stirs such as the Speculum perfectionis from 1310. Dieter Blume argued that the Order’s pictorial propaganda functioned in the same way as such new textual compilations over St. Francis’s life began to flourish. He therefore takes the role of the Lower Church in Assisi to propose spiritual ideals of the order that the Pope as well as the Dominicans had questioned. The depicted allegories are to be seen as a reference to a divine origin within the foundation of the order itself.22 Such an emphasis on a divine origin is completely missing in the allegories of the Bardis Chapel’s vault. The concentration on the minimal expression in the personifications therefore suggests an adaptation of the function the decorations in the Lower Church of Assisi had liturgically regarding its status as the burial site of the Order’s founder, but in the same way transforms this very purpose into a formula which conformed to the ideals of the Florentine mercantile community.


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Franciscan Exegesis and Architecture: Paradigms of the Artistic Ideology of King Manuel I of Portugal

Nuno Villamariz Oliveira

If the importance of the Franciscan Order in the Portuguese art and culture of the late Middle Ages is undeniable today, its special influence upon the Avis Dynasty and its court has been pointed out by various authors. With special evidence upon the urban religiosity, the Franciscans proclaimed a new way of contemplating both the Holy Scripture and the Christian ascetic. Following Abbot Joachim of Fiore’s lead, its members had the conviction that they had been designated to prepare, on the perspective of a tripartite division of the Salvation history, the last Era: the Holy Spirit Era. In Portugal, the prophetic ideas of this Cistercian monk are subjacent to the Holy Spirit cult and to the hope of the coming of a new time. The political and religious options of the monarchs from an early stage favored the edification of the large convents of the order, as was the case in Santarém, Lisbon, Évora, Oporto, Alenquer, Leiria, Estremoz, Guimarães, and Tavira, among many other places. Despite a few similarities detected between Franciscan and royal speeches, the ideological foundations which defined such relations have not been fully examined. The first monarch to unequivocally adhere to a Franciscan spirituality appears to have been Ferdinand I (1345-1369), who had himself buried wearing the Franciscan habit, in the high choir of a church pertaining to this Order, that of Santarém.

The millenarianism and the Messianic environment, mostly propagated by the friars minor, found a relevant echo in the Avis Dynasty, which resulted in the Portuguese case both in the construction of a myth and in the belief in a utopian future. After the wars against Castile, a real founding myth was built around John I, the founder of the new lineage, whose accession to the throne was considered providential. In line with the sancto iure doctrine, this new sacrality was strongly inspired by the spirituality inherent in the Franciscans, mainly due to the faction of friars known as "spirituals," who were influenced by Joachim’s millenarianism, thus contributing to the creation of both the "Seventh Age"—following the model expressed by Venerable Bede—and of a new beginning for the history of Portugal.

Based upon eschatological narratives and traditions, the chronicler Fernão Lopes came to develop the idea of a "Portuguese Gospel," in which one could watch the ascension of a new world and of a new