More Catholic than Rome: Art and Lay Spirituality at Venice's Scuola di S. Fantin, 1562-1605

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More Catholic than Rome:
Art and Lay Spirituality at Venice's Scuola di S. Fantin, 1562-1605

By

Meryl Faith Bailey

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History of Art

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:
Professor Loren Partridge, Chair
Professor Elizabeth Honig
Professor Todd Olson
Professor Randolph Starn

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in History of Art

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Professor Loren Partridge, Chair

This dissertation explores the art patronage of a small group of devout Venetian laymen across five decades up to the papal Interdict of Venice in 1606-1607. It takes a new approach to, and offers new perspectives on, this crucial but largely neglected moment in the city's cultural history. Authorized by the state to provide spiritual comfort and assistance to prisoners condemned to death, the Scuola di S. Fantin played a pivotal role in both the city's religious life and its criminal justice system. Public execution was a highly choreographed rite with profound political and theological meaning. By repositioning the brutal rite of punishment within the context of Christian forgiveness, charity, and salvation, the Scuola sought to turn this spectacle of violence into an opportunity for spiritual transformation for its members, the condemned, and the broader community. The confraternity's meeting house was built and decorated between 1562 and 1605, a period marked by increasing antagonism between the Venetian Republic and the Papacy, and by the ongoing struggle between Catholic orthodoxy and Protestant theology.

This study of the building and its decoration employs the methodologies of art history, ritual studies, anthropology, and cultural history to offer a multi-faceted case study on Venetian art, ritual, and devotion. The themes and issues analyzed include: the interplay between local visual traditions, lay devotional practices, and the new aesthetic and doctrinal demands of the Catholic Reformation; the artistic expression of Catholic orthodoxy in a city at odds with the Roman Church; the defense of contested religious doctrines (especially Purgatory and Indulgences) in treatises and in the visual arts; and the use of images to ease the tension between state-sanctioned violence and the moral imperatives of Christianity. Ultimately, this dissertation shows how the members of one confraternity used art and ritual to present themselves and their city as embodiments of orthodox Catholicism, civic piety, and patriotism in a period fraught with religious and political conflict.
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Introduction

[The Venetians] have always taken, take, and will always take care never to do the slightest thing against Religion, which they want to protect even at risk to their own lives... and they believe themselves to be Catholics as good as those in Rome, if not more so, and they know well how people there live...

Address by Doge Leonardo Donà to the Jesuits, 1606

In 1548, a goldsmith named Iseppo and another man named Antonio delle Celade were identified as participants in an evangelical conventicle operating in the parish of S. Moisè in Venice; the conventicle was described by one witness as practically a "scuola dei luterani" (a school of Lutherans). According to Iseppo’s testimony, both he and Antonio had been officers in a Venetian confraternity commonly known as the Scuola di San Fantin. Among his suspicious behaviors, Iseppo refused to say the Ave Maria (preferring instead the Lord’s Prayer). He also criticized the spending of the Venetian scuole on "themselves and for religious feasts", and he argued in favor of iconoclasm against crosses and images of the saints.

Given these inclinations, Iseppo’s membership in the Scuola di San Fantin is curious. While his testimony suggests that at least two officers in the Scuola espoused evangelical beliefs, there is no evidence that it was a hotbed for heresy. Rather, the institution was devoted to the Virgin, who, along with St. Jerome, was one of its patron saints. Like other confraternities with the means to do so, the Scuola regularly spent money on religious feasts and on art commemorating the Virgin and St. Jerome; by the 1540s, it had also used substantial financial resources to build and then rebuild an independent meeting site. Perhaps Iseppo and Antonio experienced a change of heart and rejected confraternal practices only after joining the Scuola; or perhaps they participated in a confraternity to mask their heterodox religious views. Subterfuge of this type was known among some individuals who felt endangered by the increasing religious repression of the period; and while by 1548 Iseppo appears to have been open about his beliefs, he had been accused of "simulating" his faith by the sacristan of his church.

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1 As related by the Jesuit Bernardino Castorio, transcribed in Pietro Pirri, L’interdetto di Venezia del
3 The Scuola's archives for this period were lost in a fire in 1562, so Iseppo’s role in the confraternity cannot be verified by its own membership rolls.
4 Martin, Venice’s Hidden Enemies, 92-94
5 On the Scuola's building history, see Chapter 2 herein.
A lay person who wished to feign Catholic orthodoxy in Venice would be hard pressed to find a better smokescreen than membership in a confraternity. Confraternities were religious brotherhoods run by and for laymen. Sincere participation in confraternal life embodied the Roman Church’s position on Justification, since the foundational belief driving confraternal activity was the conviction that the performance of good works could improve one’s chances of salvation and minimize one’s time in Purgatory. A powerful motivation for confraternities’ communal (as opposed to individual) practice of charity was the idea that the spiritual merit accrued through good works could be pooled and shared among members of the pious community. In addition to helping the souls of confraternity members who did them, the good works of Venetian confraternities contributed to the city’s famed stability, providing a social safety net and necessary services for the poor and the sick. Members of confraternities prayed together and helped one another in times of need. In addition to their role in alleviating the public burden for caring for the city’s poor, confraternities promoted morality and enforced standards of behavior for their members and the recipients of their charity. Venetian confraternities were closely regulated by the state. The most prestigious among them, the scuole grandi, were overseen directly by the Council of Ten, a powerful governing body of the Republic. The scuole grandi also served as a mechanism for conscription, providing a specified number of men each year to serve on the galleys. And the processions, celebrations, and art patronage of confraternities, all monitored by the state, contributed to the city’s magnificence and its reputation as a deeply pious community.

Many confraternities devoted a large percentage of their funds to building and ornamenting their chapter halls. At least in part, confraternal halls were sacred buildings, and their construction was an act of amor dei - a physical manifestation of a confraternity’s love of God - as well as a patriotic service that beautified and honored the city. As discussed above, the goldsmith Iseppo appears to have found this attitude deplorable. In 1541, another goldsmith, Alessandro Caravia, famously published a scathing poetic denouncement of the wasteful building practices among the scuole grandi:

What’s due to the poor is splashed out in vast oceans
On building, but certainly not on devotions.
With sideshows in squares they make such commotions,
And every year brings a fresh influx of notions.
On trivial projects they’ve money to burn,

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7 Christopher Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10-17
8 In other cities, confraternities provoked concern from the government as potential breeding grounds for sedition. The Venetian state alleviated such concerns by maintaining tight control over all aspects of confraternal life, and by promoting competition among the various sodalities. Brian S. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 44; Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 58-78.
9 Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, 145-156
10 Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 108-111
When their care and affection to Christ they should turn,
And for love of him use all their badly spent money
on clothes for the naked, on bread for the hungry.11

Despite such critiques, confraternal art patronage was regularly justified as a work of charity. For its part, Iseppo’s confraternity, the Scuola di San Fantin, always positioned its art patronage as an important aspect of its charity and as a sign of its members’ religious devotion.12 Another component of the Scuola’s charity, which distinguished it from the city’s other confraternities, was its members’ provision of spiritual consolation to individuals condemned to death. San Fantin was Venice’s “comforting” confraternity, the only lay Christian brotherhood authorized by the government to comfort condemned prisoners in the days and hours immediately before their executions.

This dissertation focuses on the art and architecture commissioned by the Scuola di San Fantin between 1562, when its original meeting house was destroyed, and 1605, when the decoration of its primary rooms was largely completed. While multiple artists and sculptors contributed to the building’s sumptuous decoration, two artists are of particular importance to this study. The first is the architect and sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608). Vittoria designed the building’s gracious façade, produced two monumental altars for its Oratory, and acted as the Scuola’s advisor on matters architectural and artistic. The second, the painter Jacopo Negretti (known as Jacopo Palma il Giovane, 1548-1628), produced three important commissions for the building between approximately 1582 and 1605.13

The art patronage of some of Venice’s wealthier confraternities was substantial, and adherence to artistic convention among confraternities was strong, motivated in part by a sense of competition among these institutions.14 By the 1560s, ambitious confraternities could look to a well-developed building type and a common pattern of interior decoration to inspire and constrain their own endeavors. Because the last meeting house of the Scuola di San Fantin was built after 1562, the surviving works it commissioned postdate much of the best-known Venetian confraternal architecture and art. It should also be emphasized that the


12 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, fol. 3 r and ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 61 r-v.

13 Jacopo Palma il Giovane (the nephew of the artist known as Jacopo Palma il Vecchio), is referred to herein as Palma Giovane or simply as Palma.

period in question was bracketed by two defining events in Venetian religious life: the close of the final session of the Council of Trent in 1563 and the Interdict of 1606-1607, during which Pope Paul V censured the Republic and suspended the administration of the sacraments. The decades between Trent and the Interdict were punctuated by moments of internecine conflict, political defiance, and religious tension that exerted strong (and sometimes contradictory) pressures on religious art. The art of the Scuola di San Fantin offers a revealing case study through which to consider the interplay between tradition and innovation, and between Roman Catholic dogma and local devotional practice, in a highly charged political and religious environment. The next section of this Introduction discusses the major works of scholarship on the Scuola and outlines the structure of the dissertation. The remaining sections offer a brief overview of the religious climate, political events, and aesthetic developments that characterized the period in which the Scuola di San Fantin was built and decorated.

**Historiography and Structure of the Dissertation**

The earliest study of the confraternity, Giuseppe Pavanello’s *La Scuola di S. Fantin ora Ateneo Veneto*, was published in 1914 by the Ateneo Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti (hereafter the Ateneo Veneto), the institution which has occupied the building for almost two centuries. Pavanello’s brief text, which considers the archival sources on the Scuola’s history and its art, is invaluable in that it records the appearance of the building in the early twentieth century and discusses several sources which are now lost, including an illumination from the Scuola’s *mariegola*. In 1962, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary, the Ateneo Veneto dedicated a special volume of its journal to the architecture and art of the building it now occupies, with informative essays by Rodolfo Gallo, Nicola Ivanoff, and others. Pietro Zampetti’s *Guida alle opere d’arte della Scuola di San Fantin*, first published in 1973 and updated in 2003, is the most in-depth study of the art housed in the Scuola’s former meeting house. Zampetti’s text considers all the artworks currently in the building, many of which were moved there after the Scuola was suppressed and disbanded. Zampetti also published a series of articles and essays on various works commissioned by the Scuola; these focus largely on questions of attribution, since little contemporary documentation exists to confirm the identities

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16 The lost illumination, discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, is illustrated in Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, Tav. V.

17 Ateneo Veneto, fascicolo speciale per il 150° anniversario (1962)

of the artists employed there.\textsuperscript{19} Chiara Traverso’s \textit{Scuola di San Fantin o dei Picai} provides a detailed account of the archival sources on the Scuola and discusses its history and administrative structure.\textsuperscript{20} Traverso includes a chapter on art and architecture; like Zampetti, she also covers works not associated with the Scuola itself. Individual works commissioned by the Scuola have also been considered in various monographs on the artists that it employed.\textsuperscript{21} The present dissertation focuses narrowly on a subset of the works commissioned by the Scuola di San Fantin and excludes those moved into the building after its suppression in the nineteenth century.

No single theory or methodology underlies this study. Rather, I draw upon the methodologies of art history, ritual studies, anthropology, and cultural history to fully contextualize the Scuola’s art patronage and to develop a multi-faceted case study on Venetian art, ritual, and devotion in the fifty years the preceded the Interdict. Connoisseurship, the evaluation of individual and period styles, and iconography each play a role in my analysis, but these methods contribute to a broader social, religious, and historical account. With the notable exception of the building’s façade, questions of attribution are not a focus here. I rely in many cases on the attributions suggested by Zampetti and others, but the questions I ask of the material differ significantly from those posed in previous studies. Ultimately, my goals are to deeply explore the interrelationship between a small number of artworks, the artists who created them, and the institution that commissioned them, and to consider their significance in light of contemporary trends, beliefs, and historical events.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Scuola and its history, focusing in particular on its role as a comforting confraternity dedicated to assisting the condemned. Because Traverso has already analyzed the archival records of the Scuola in great detail, my own account focuses on those aspects which bear on the Scuola’s art patronage or which help us to better grasp the forces underlying its artistic commissions and aesthetic choices. I also discuss several early modern treatises on the theory and practice of consoling the condemned that contribute to our understanding of the Scuola and its goals. Chapter 2 focuses on the architecture


\textsuperscript{20} Chiara Traverso, \textit{La Scuola di San Fantin o dei <<Picai>>. Carità e giustizia a Venezia} (Venice: Marsilio editori, 2000)

\textsuperscript{21} See, for instance, Terisio Pignatti, \textit{Veronese}, 2 vols. (Venice: Alfieri, 1976), Cat. nos. 300, A321-A327 on Veronese; Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, \textit{Tintoretto, Le opere sacre e profane}, 2 vols. (Venice: Alfieri, 1982), Cat. nos. 234, 235, 425, A102 on Tintoretto; and Stefania Mason Rinaldi, \textit{Palma il Giovane: L’opera completa} (Milan: Alfieri, Gruppo Editoriale Electa, 1984), Cat. nos. 145, 269-272, 403-406, 558, 573, 586 on Palma Giovane. This list is not exhaustive, and other important discussions of objects in the Scuola’s collection are cited throughout this dissertation. Note that multiple books and articles by the art historian Stefania Mason Rinaldi, who sometimes uses her maiden name (Stefania Mason), are cited herein. In the footnotes and bibliography, the author’s name is listed as it is on the individual work of scholarship; in the text, she is referred to herein as "Mason" or "Stefania Mason".
of the Scuola’s meeting house; I reconsider the evidence for attributing the building to Alessandro Vittoria, and discuss the iconography of the façade and its significance in the history of Venetian architecture. The time frame covered here extends past 1605, for the building’s early history cannot be understood without reference to the major renovations and changes made during and after the late seventeenth century. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the decorative programs of the Scuola’s two main rooms up to the period of the Interdict. Both rooms are reconstructed based on a variety of sources, including contemporary descriptions, the existing architectural setting, and comparison with similar rooms at other confraternities. The first part of Chapter 3 provides an overview of the decorative program of the building’s upper hall, the Albergo Grande. The second part focuses in detail on one component of that program, Palma Giovane’s St. Jerome Cycle, in light of the Venetian confraternal tradition and Counter-Reformation art theory. The structure of Chapter 4 follows the same pattern; Part I discusses the decorative history of the Oratory, while Part II is a case study of Palma’s Purgatory Cycle and its relationship to Venetian confraternal piety at the turn of the century.

Supplementing this information are multiple appendices. In Appendix A, key events and documentation are set forth in a timeline format for the reader’s convenience. Appendix B briefly discusses the Life of the Virgin Cycle, a commission from the late sixteenth century that once decorated the Old Sacristy, a room destroyed in the 1660s. Appendix C reviews the key works commissioned by the Scuola to decorate the two rooms built in the final phase of construction in the 1660s, the Albergo Piccolo and the New Sacristy. In Appendix D, the inscriptions and sources of the Purgatory Cycle, commissioned for the ceiling of the Scuola’s Oratory, are presented in a tabular format. Appendix E provides translations of the two surviving inventories of the Scuola’s paintings.

The Religious and Political Context: Venice, the Church, and Catholic Reform

Venice is often categorized as a city at the forefront of religious reform, but (as the case of the goldsmith Iseppo indicates) the reformist spirit there did not always play out in ways that were pleasing to the leaders of the Catholic Church. In the 1540s and 1550s, a growing evangelical movement offered followers a more direct personal connection with God, akin to what was promised by Protestant theology.22 Evangelical ideas circulated through Venice in formal and informal social gatherings, in sermons, and in publications. Among the most important of the reform texts was the Beneficio di Cristo, a treatise on the benefits offered to humanity through Christ’s death, that was first published anonymously in Venice in 1543. On the issue of justification, the author of the Beneficio argued that to believe in the necessity of good works was an insult to God:

What great ingratitude, and what an abominable thing it is, if we who profess to be Christians, and who understand that the Son of God has

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taken all our sins upon himself, and has cancelled them all with his most precious blood by allowing himself to be chastised for us on the cross, still claim that we want to justify ourselves and to seek the remission of our sins with our own works! As if the merits, the justice, and the blood of Christ are not sufficient to accomplish this, if we do not add our own foul justice, marred by self-love, interest, and a thousand vanities, for which we should ask God’s pardon rather than a reward!  

Some reformist writings that circulated in Venice took a less severe approach towards good works, acknowledging their importance but underscoring that they are meaningless unless accompanied by true and sincere faith. The Catholic Church suppressed evangelical writings like the Beneficio as heretical, and called for the reestablishment of the Inquisition in Venice. Reluctant to give the Church total oversight even in questions of heresy, Doge Francesco Donà (r. 1545-1553) created a new lay magistracy, the Tre savi all’eresia, in 1547. Its purpose was to assist the Church’s inquisitor, but also to retain supervision over the doings of the Holy Office. By the early 1580s, heresy trials and executions had largely stamped the evangelical movement out, or at least forced it out of the public eye.

The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, which met between 1545 and 1563, communicated the Church’s official response to the crisis of the Reformation. Abuses were to be corrected, and greater oversight was to be exercised by the clergy in an effort to homogenize religious practices and establish control over the Catholic community. But on divisive issues such as the efficacy of good works, the power of Indulgences, the role of the clergy, the veneration of

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23 "The Beneficio di Cristo (1543)," in Reform Thought in Sixteenth-Century Italy, edited and translated by Elizabeth G. Gleason (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1981), 113. The Beneficio was suppressed just six years after its initial publication, as it became ever clearer that the rift in western Christianity could not be repaired. On the publication history of the Beneficio, see Gleason’s introduction at pp. 103-106. On its diffusion in Venice and its influence on those tried for heresy, see Martin, Venice’s Hidden Enemies, 81-87.

24 For instance, this sentiment is expressed in the 1538 sermons of Bernardino Ochino, published in Venice in 1551, and in the vernacular poem "Il sogno di Caravia" by the Venetian goldsmith Alessandro Caravia (1541). Clementi, Alessandro Caravia, 43-45.

25 For the Venetians, the new magistracy was probably intended as much to maintain its own control over prosecutions, religious or otherwise, within the Republic, as it was to help the inquisitors, but in any event prosecutions for heresy began in earnest soon after its establishment. On the Tre savi and the Inquisition in Venice, see Martin, Venice’s Hidden Enemies, 51-70.

26 Unlike thieves and murderers, convicted heretics in Venice were rarely publically executed. Rather, heresy executions were held in secret, often by drowning, without word to the families of those sentenced. Ibid., 69-70. Judging by the infrequency with which heretics are mentioned in the records of those executed and accompanied by the Scuola di San Fantin, many heretics also appear to have died without recourse to spiritual comforters. Given the nature of their convictions, it is likely that many convicted heretics would have rejected the involvement of confratelli in their final moments.
saints, and the use of religious imagery, the Church’s position largely reaffirmed preexisting practices and beliefs.  

Venice was slow to promulgate and adopt some changes in the liturgy called for by the Canons and Decrees, and reluctant to increase the oversight and influence of outsiders in its religious institutions.  

The Republic accepted and implemented those decrees and other reforms that suited Venetian economic and political interests, but ignored or rejected them outright when it did not. And where the Church’s demands extended beyond issues the Republic deemed spiritual or where Venetian authority was threatened, Venice and the Papacy came increasingly into conflict.

Disagreements between the Venetian Republic and the Pope were not unique to the post-Tridentine era, but in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, tensions began to escalate dramatically.  

In 1578 Nicolò da Ponte (r. 1578-1585), an advocate of Venetian autonomy, was elected Doge. Da Ponte’s election heralded the declining influence of some pro-papal patrician families (sometimes called the vecchi) who had long benefited from ecclesiastical careers, and ushered in a period of increasing power among the giovani, a political faction less tolerant of Papal influence in Venetian temporal affairs.

In 1580, soon after da Ponte’s election, Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572-1585) provoked a crisis when he ordered an apostolic visit to Venice at the urging of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan. Since the apostolic visit occurred in 1581 and immediately preceded several major art commissions by the Scuola di San Fantin, and because it had important implications for the production and display of religious art in Venice, the causes and outcome of the dispute are worth reviewing in some detail here. Although such visits had already been carried out in major cities in other independent states (including Florence, Siena, and Milan), in Venice both the government and local Church officials resisted the idea of an inspection and assessment by papal emissaries. Arguing that he opposed the apostolic visit "for honor of this city", the Venetian Patriarch Giovanni Trevisan noted that the papal

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29 For one interesting example of a dispute regarding authority over the clergy within Venetian territory, see the account of events surrounding the trial of Bartolo di Maran in 1514 in Marin Sanudo, I diarii di Marino Sanuto, 1496 - 1536, 58 vols. (Venice: Visentini, 1879-1903), XVIII:45.


31 The classic article on the apostolic visit is Silvio Tramontin, "La visita apostolica del 1581 a Venezia," Studi Veneziani IX (1967): 253-254.
nuncio and inquisitor "don't know what else to say other than that they did it in Milan. . . and I respond that Venice is more religious than ten Milans." According to the papal nuncio Alberto Bolognetti, the ostensible reason for Venetian resistance was concern about the inspection of convents. Bolognetti noted in another dispatch that such objections might be a pretense for the real reasons behind the government's refusal to authorize the apostolic visit: namely, the concern that it might encompass an inspection of the city's hospitals, its procuratie, and its confraternities, over which Venice traditionally maintained control. Doge da Ponte, steadfast in his insistence on the exceptional nature of the Venetian Republic, suggested that the inspection might be acceptable if carried out by the city's own Patriarch Trevisan or Bishop Agostino Valier of Verona, rather than the papal nuncio. Meanwhile, the Pope's representatives alluded to the possibility of spiritual punishments for continued resistance; and the Venetian Senate, already rent by differences among the factions of vecchi and giovani, began its own deliberations on the matter. In May 1581, Bolognetti left the post of nuncio of Venice without having resolved the matter. His replacement, Lorenzo Campeggi, was promptly advised by Doge da Ponte that Venice was perhaps more meticulous in its religious observations than any other city. Campeggi promised that the visit would encompass only the priests and monks of the religious orders, but insisted that he, as nuncio, should perform the visit along with Patriarch Valier. Having sharply limited the scope of the visit and ensured that at least one inspector was favorable to them, the Venetians finally agreed. Despite some further concerns expressed by the Senate, the inspections went forward. The outcome of this abbreviated inspection of Venetian holy places was, broadly speaking, positive. The visitors noted some measure of ignorance, particularly among the older priests, regarding their ecclesiastical responsibilities. In keeping with the demands of the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, they ordered the removal of indecorous altars, relics whose documentation was suspect, and artworks that might cause confusion among the faithful. They encouraged the further diffusion of Schools of Christian Doctrine, and required that the Eucharist be appropriately displayed on a church's high altar (or, in parish churches, on a dignified Sacrament altar).

32 These remarks were made in a letter to the secretary of the Council of Ten, Antonio Milledone; the letter is transcribed at Tramontin, "La visita apostolica", 458 n. 421.

33 The nuncio informed the Pope that since an apostolic visit might result in a call for increasing strictness in convents, it would make more difficult the already challenging process of convincing patrician women to enter the religious life. Moreover, uncovering defects might bring shame on Venice's noble families. Ibid.: 465-466.

34 Ibid.: 466 and 475, n. 479. On the deep concern among members of the Senate regarding the potential for papal interference in the operation of Venetian institutions traditionally run by laymen, including confraternities and hospitals, as well as parish churches and convents, see the letter transcribed at pp. 478-481.

35 Ibid.: 470-471, 475-489

36 The visitors debated the wisdom of renewed insistence on the inspection of convents but ultimately set it aside; at the urging of Valier, Campeggi also refrained from inspecting the basilica of S. Marco. Ibid.: 490-492, 495

37 Details of the visitors' findings are summarized at Ibid.: 518-525.

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Over the 1580s, as the giovani consolidated control of the government, Venice began to take a harsher stance against certain Papal demands. Among the most important points of difference was Venice’s traditional right of nomination of the upper clergy within its borders, a privilege that allowed the Republic some measure of control over who was eligible for Church offices. The Church’s demand that it have approval over the confirmation of bishops was perceived as a violation of Venice’s traditional autonomy and an attempt to undermine the loyalty of Venetian citizens. An updated Index of Prohibited Books and new rules regarding booksellers, issued by Pope Clement VIII and published in 1596, provoked protest for similar reasons: the oath it required of booksellers was perceived as an attempt to undermine the political allegiance of Venetians to their own government. In a brutally direct response to the papal court, Leonardo Donà, a Venetian patrician and a frequent ambassador to Rome, remarked that "Venice was a more religious and Catholic city than Rome" and claimed that the rules put forth by the Papacy were intended to benefit Roman booksellers at the expense of the Venetian printing industry. In light of the city’s ongoing defiance and its reputation for relative tolerance of religious diversity, Clement VIII accused the city of being a secret breeding ground for unauthorized reform movements and Protestant heresy.

The conflicts that immediately precipitated the imposition of the Interdict in 1606 were consistent with these points of difference. At issue were ecclesiastical autonomy over lands owned by the Church in Venetian territories and Venice’s jurisdictional authority over clergy accused of crimes. In December 1605, Doge Marino Grimani (r. 1595-1606) died just as tensions between the papacy and the Republic were coming to a head. Two weeks later, on January 10, 1606, Leonardo Donà became Doge. Neither the fierce new Doge nor Pope Paul V, a staunch

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39 Bouwsma, Venice, 252-253.


41 The controversy is discussed in Grendler, The Roman Inquisition, 261-280, esp. 278. On Donà’s career as an ambassador to Rome, see Seneca, Il doge Leonardo Donà, la sua vita e la sua preparazione politica prima del dogado (Padua: Antenore, 1959), 126-195, 206-216. On his attitudes towards secular autonomy, see Bouwsma, Venice, 249-253.

42 For instance, in 1596 Pope Clement VIII complained that the city wished "to declare itself a breeding ground for heresy." Grendler, The Roman Inquisition, 278, citing a letter to the Venetian Senate from Ambassador Dolfin.

43 Bouwsma, Venice, 343-347.

44 Ibid., 355. Donà ruled from 1606 to 1612.
promoter of expanded papal authority, were in a conciliatory mood. In April 1606, the Pope placed Venice and its territories under Interdict.\textsuperscript{45}

Even during the Interdict, Venice never broke with the Catholic tradition. Rather, it drew a distinction between commitment to the one true faith and submission to an unjust and overreaching Pope with worldly ambitions. The Senate declared the Interdict invalid, and ordered local priests to continue administering the sacrament.\textsuperscript{46} The city expelled the Jesuits, along with the Theatines and the Cappuchins, all religious orders deemed overly loyal to the Papacy and insufficiently committed to Venetian political autonomy.\textsuperscript{47} Because priests who remained within the city were required to ignore the Interdict, religious life among the Venetian laity continued much as it did before. "Even though the Pope has excommunicated us," the Senate told the papal ambassador on June 1, 1606, "we live as Catholics [cattolicamente], and we will continue to do so by the grace of the lord God."\textsuperscript{48}

In the immediate sense, the disputes that preceded the apostolic visit or that led to the Interdict directly involved only the patricians who composed the government and the upper ranks of the clergy, both groups excluded from governance in confraternities. But the impact and implications of these events were broadly felt among the general populace, including the class of cittadini (citizens) who typically ran the city’s scuole. For instance, while the apostolic visitors did not inspect confraternities, the completion of the inspection indicated the Church’s determination to impose new controls on the form and practices of Venetian religious devotion, and pastoral visits to confraternities in subsequent years expanded the impact of the apostolic visitors’ recommendations. During the crisis of the Interdict, the Venetian government proactively waged a campaign in support of its position, disseminating its point of view and stirring the patriotism of the populace through pamphlets and other means.

During the crisis, the city’s already sumptuous celebration of religious festivals was particularly lavish.\textsuperscript{49} These religious displays undoubtedly served an immediate political end, but Venice had long been noted for its elaborate processions. Public celebration in typical Venetian style, and the renewal of ancient forms of ritual, played into one of the main rhetorical positions taken by the government during the Interdict, namely that Venice’s rejection of the Church’s new demands was an effort to maintain long-standing traditions.\textsuperscript{50} The rhetoric of

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 372
\textsuperscript{46} On the orders, see Ibid., 386-391.
\textsuperscript{47} Pirri, L’interdetto, 1-60 provides a useful summary of events surrounding the expulsion of the religious orders from the city.
\textsuperscript{50} See Gaetano Cozzi, "Politica, cultura e religione," in Cultura e società nel rinascimento tra riforme e manierismi, ed. Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1986), 30-31, on
permanence crops up over and over again in exchanges between the Republic, its subjects, and the Papal court. In a record of the Senate from the summer of 1606, Fra Paolo Sarpi, the Servite monk chosen to defend and counsel the Republic during the Interdict, began his analysis of the crisis with the observation that the "Venetian Republic has always held that the primary foundation of every empire and dominion should be true religion and piety."51 Reiterating a frequent theme in his attitude towards Rome, Doge Donà remarked angrily to the Jesuits that the Venetians had always protected the true religion, would give their lives for it, and were more Catholic than the people of Rome itself.52 In an address to the papal nuncio, Doge Donà disingenuously accused the Pope of treating the Republic "almost as if she were apostate or alienated from the Holy See" and noted that although Venice would not relinquish its God-given freedom, "we would never betray the Catholic Religion in which we have always been constant."53 In a communication to one of its ambassadors in 1606, the Senate remarked that Venetians were consoled by the knowledge that we have not tormented Christianity, knowing well that one must lift her from the afflictions in which she finds herself, rather than inflict new pains upon her. Therefore, we will continue to live for the years to come with that true Catholic Religion, in which our Republic was born and has continued for more than 1200 years without change...54 From the Venetian point of view, it was the Pope who was inflicting new pains upon Catholicism; the Republic, meanwhile, was its most steadfast defender.

Venetian Art in an Age of "Decline"

The art produced in Counter-Reformation Venice has long been subject to critical censure. In 1771, the engraver and art theorist Anton Maria Zanetti claimed that Venetian artists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries favored rapidity of production over good taste. Their styles became standardized at the expense of individual creativity, and they neglected the study of nature.55 He added that it is

the Venetian position that while Rome was modifying the Catholic rite for its own political ends, while Venice maintained its adherence to the true Word of God.

51 "Considerazioni sopra le censure della santità di Papa Paolo V contra la serenissima repubblica di Venezia del P.M. Paolo da Venezia dell'ordine de' Servi", in Paolo Sarpi, Opere di F. Paolo Sarpi Servita Teologo e Consultore della Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia, Tomo Terzo (Helmstat: Jacopo Mulleri, 1763), 187 ["Stimò sempre la Repubblica di Venezia, che il fondamento principale d'ogn'Impero, e Dominio fosse la vera religione, e pietà. . "]. On Sarpi's role during the Interdict, see Bouwsma, Venice, 358-370.

52 Donà's diatribe came during an angry address to the Jesuits, who were hesitating over whether to observe the Interdict. See Introduction note 1 above.

53 Record of April 28, 1606, transcribed in Cornet, ed. Paolo V e la republica Veneta, 67

54 Record of May 12, 1606, transcribed in Ibid., 83


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a great sign of the decline of an art when there is no one who knows how to escape from a certain path defined by fashion; and those intellects who believe they have accomplished everything when they are able to do nothing more than what everyone else does, demonstrate much weakness.56

Luigi Lanzi, archaeologist and author of the Storia pittorica dell’Italia, similarly claimed that the painters of the seventeenth century "ruined" Venetian art.57

According to Lanzi, Tintoretto was the unknowing agent of this tragedy, for younger artists copied his rapid working style (and its attendant defects) without first acquiring the depth of knowledge he had possessed.58 The claim that the art of this age was imitative and derivative rather than innovative and inspired would be frequently repeated in later scholarship and in evaluations of the careers of Palma Giovane and Leonardo Corona (1561-1605), who also produced a major painted cycle of the Scuola di San Fantin. For instance, Jakob Burckhardt described Palma as the primary representative of "the decay of the Venetian school", an "unconscientious painter of great talent" whose works are filled with "contemptible mannerisms" in poor imitation of Tintoretto.59 More recently, Rodolfo Pallucchini issued a scathing judgment of the final years of the Cinquecento:

[In this period] the production of Venetian painting was growing, but unfortunately its level of quality fell inexorably, to become an art of imitation and of reflex, in other words often lacking in creative originality.60

In Pallucchini’s estimation, the stagnancy in Venetian art continued into the early Seicento, in part because the political and religious conflicts with the papacy cut Venice off from the new flowering of Baroque style in Rome.61 So too Camillo Semenzato argued that the conservatism of Venetian Seicento art was a reaction to the lagoon city’s ongoing disputes with Rome. Rejecting central Italian cultural influence along with political influence, Venetian artists fell back on tired formulas

56 Ibid., 299-302

57 In Vasarian fashion, Lanzi presents this period of “decay” as inevitable, with the decline of quality in Venice running counter to a new brilliance in other artistic centers, such as Bologna. Although Venetian artists studied the same masters (Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, and Tintoretto) as their contemporaries in Bologna, the former fell into a period of “mannerism”. By this, Lanzi means that they neglected the study of nature and lacked individual inspiration, preferring instead to acquire basic skills in coloring and design and then to paint massive cycles using borrowed motifs. Moreover, he adds ominously, the faster they painted, the better it seemed to them. Luigi Lanzi, Storia pittorica dell’Italia dal risorgimento delle belle arti fin presso al fine del XVIII secolo, vol. III (Milan: Società tipografica de’ classici italiani, 1825), 208-209

58 Ibid., 209


60 Rodolfo Pallucchini, La pittura veneziana del Seicento, 2 vols. (Venice: Alfieri, 1981), 19. [“... la produzione pittorica veneziana è in aumento, ma purtroppo il suo livello qualitativo scade inesorabilmente, per essere una pittura d’imitazione e di riflesso, cioè molto spesso priva di originalità creativa.”]

61 Ibid., I: 15-16
of glory, patriotism, and religious devotion rather than opening themselves to the "rinnovamento barocco".\textsuperscript{62}

As Burckhardt's evaluation suggests, the critical attitude towards Palma's career in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was ambivalent at best.\textsuperscript{63} Most interestingly for our purposes, Luigi Lanzi argued that Palma's work suffered in particular after the end of the Cinquecento, when all the competitors who had spurred him to greater achievements had died.\textsuperscript{64} Palma's work at the Scuola di San Fantin runs counter to these assessments. In the 1580s, he executed the first of two major painted cycles that he would produce for the Scuola, eight scenes depicting events in the life of St. Jerome. Though stylistically responsive to post-Tridentine attitudes towards religious art, this group of paintings is uneven in quality and traditional in its iconography. Instead, the Purgatory Cycle that Palma produced in the first decade of the seventeenth century is beautifully executed, compositionally innovative, and theologically sophisticated. Still \textit{in situ} on the ceiling of the Scuola's former Oratory, this latter cycle remains one of the most intriguing examples of Counter-Reformation art in Venice.

While Palma's Purgatory Cycle merits praise for its aesthetic achievements, evaluations of quality are not a major concern here; nor is it my goal to rehabilitate the aesthetic reputation of the period. My objective is to consider how confraternal traditions, the Catholic Reformation, and Venice's tense relationship with Rome influenced (or failed to influence) the art commissioned by one confraternity in the years leading up to the Interdict. When we characterize this period as stagnant, we imply that the artworks it produced raise no important questions. But the relationship between art and its broader cultural context is rarely stagnant, and the populace of early modern Venice was particularly attuned to the rhetorical power of the visual arts. If we conclude that Venetian artists and patrons responded to a challenging and uncertain environment by doing nothing of interest, then we are asking the wrong questions.

\textsuperscript{62} Camillo Semenzato, "Venezia religiosa nell'arte del Seicento," \textit{Studi Veneziani XIV} (1972): 187

\textsuperscript{63} Lanzi, for instance, described Palma as both the last artist of the great period of Venetian art and the first of its decline. In a backhanded compliment that implicitly blamed Palma for the defects of the entire era, he expressed amazement that the man "who opened the door to the worst century in Venice, as they say of Vasari in Florence and of Zuccaro in Rome", still produced work that could satisfy both the eye and the heart of the viewer. Lanzi, \textit{Storia pittorica}, 210-212. Although Zanetti censured the painter for privileging quantity over quality, he expressed mixed feelings as to whether Palma truly merited classification as a \textit{manierista}. Zanetti, \textit{Della pittura veneziana}, 302.

\textsuperscript{64} Lanzi, \textit{Storia pittorica}, 210-212
**Chapter 1. Charity, Justice, and the Scuola di San Fantin**

*With admirable exemplarity, [our founders] dedicated themselves to the most religious cause of accompanying and helping those who had been condemned for their misdeeds, and with an increasingly devout spirit, burying their cadavers, first inducting them as brothers of the Scuola and celebrating Masses for the sake of their souls, for which [the Scuola] was called "deputized to Justice".*

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**Public Execution in Early Modern Venice**

In 1513, a young Venetian named Alexandro Navajer was convicted, along with four companions, of thievery and murder. According to the diarist Marin Sanudo,

> ... [the] execution of the gentlemen was dispatched at the usual time. Then the bell [rang]. There were a lot of people in the piazza. First many guards and captains came out, and the Scuola di San Fantin, and the five [condemned men]... all in shirtsleeves, with only the usual black mantle, barefoot, and with hoods on their heads. They went through the piazza among the brothers who comforted them, kissing groups of friends who knew them, saying "go with God, pray to God for us". Navajer walked steadily... Then Navajer said a few words, asking everyone to forgive him and to pray to God for him. It seemed that he died willingly [*ben disposto*]; and he was hung and placed underneath a mat.

Other witness accounts reveal that the ritual of capital punishment in early modern Venice did not always run as smoothly as it did in Navajer’s case. For instance, in 1514, Sanudo witnessed the execution of a priest, Bartolo da Maran, who had been convicted of treason. Concerned that the Pope might try to commute the sentence, the Council of Ten had expedited the process. Late in the night, members of the Scuola di San Fantin accompanied the prisoner to the scaffold in front of a crowd of onlookers. The *confratelli* placed their own mantle, known as the *patienza*, across the condemned man’s shoulders, and stayed with him as the executioner delivered several hatchet blows to the nape of his neck. But after the corpse was suspended by one foot from the scaffold, the dangling body began to move. Realizing that the prisoner was still alive, the frenzied crowd stoned him until he died.

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1 *ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche,* fol. 3r
2 Sanudo, *Diarii,* XVII: 77. The execution is also recorded in the *Libro dei giustiziati* of the Scuola di S. Fantin. BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 43v.
3 Sanudo, *Diarii,* XVIII: 45, 47-48
4 A similar fate befell one of Navajer’s companions: the executioner failed to kill him with the first strike of the blade, and then tried to suspend his body before he was dead. Ibid., XVII: 77.
Various Venetian *libri dei giustiziati* record that a man named Pietro Fasciol was condemned for murder around 1507 and hanged despite his vigorous protestations of innocence. According to one report, Fasciol was indeed proven innocent a few years later.\(^5\) Another account claimed that every condemned person thereafter until the fall of the Republic prayed to Fasciol’s blameless soul, treating him like a sort of intercessory saint.\(^6\) One scholar suggests that the story of Fasciol is apocryphal.\(^7\) If so, the persistence of unconfirmed memories of an innocent man’s execution suggests a measure of doubt and unease regarding the reliability of the justice system. A more concretely historical example of an uncooperative prisoner occurred in Florence in 1389, when Fra Michele Berti da Calci was executed for heresy.\(^8\) The condemned man seemed willing to die, but the throngs of onlookers who lined the streets to watch his death march were disturbed by his absolute refusal to recant his beliefs, which threatened the fate of his immortal soul. Ultimately, Michele’s corpse was not exposed because of fears that he might be viewed as a saint, and that his body might be harvested for relics.

Set against this backdrop of problematic executions, Sanudo’s response to Navajer’s death tells us much about the complex set of beliefs and practices that surrounded the ritual of capital punishment in early modern Venice. Public execution was a process in which the state, the populace, and the condemned were bound together in strange and unsettling ways. From the government’s point of view, a successful execution was one in which it demonstrated its own power over the individual malefactor without upsetting the social order. Therefore, it was in the state’s interest that the condemned submit and willingly accept the decreed punishment. For its part, the broader community also had an interest in public submission of the criminal and the smooth operation of executions, for fear and superstition abounded when prisoners protested their innocence, made a show of resistance, or simply failed to die expediently.\(^9\)

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\(^5\) BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 43r

\(^6\) BCMC Codice Cicogna 2806, Mariegola 108, fols. 47v-48v

\(^7\) Eugenio Musatti, *Leggende popolari* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1904), 66-68. The inclusion of an apocryphal early sixteenth-century account in multiple sources can be explained by the fact that *libri dei giustiziati* were not consistently maintained. Rather, the records of executions between the ninth and the sixteenth centuries in extant Venetian *libri dei giustiziati* were compiled from a wide variety of sources, including governmental records, living memories, and legends. Because the *libro dei giustiziati* maintained by the Scuola di S. Fantin was lost in the 1562 fire, they too reconstructed their records from memory and from other copies of the *libro*. In the presentation copy compiled in 1806 by Angelo Maria Bianchi, one of the Scuola’s last officers, executions known only through tradition (including that of Fasciol) are recorded in red ink, while confirmed events are recorded in black. BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 43r

\(^8\) This case and other instances of refusal to confess are discussed in Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), Chapter 7 and Filippo Fineschi, *Cristo e Giuda: Riti di giustizia a Firenze in età moderna* (Florence: Bruschi, 1995), 188-192.

To serve the needs of the state and the community, the objectives of the condemned had to be brought into alignment. In large part, this was accomplished through the efforts of comforting confraternalities. Found in many urban centers in early modern Italy, comforting confraternities were groups of devout laymen entrusted with the task of preparing the condemned spiritually before an impending execution. The most ancient comforting confraternity was the Bolognese Confraternita di Santa Maria della Morte, founded in 1335 to continue the charitable prison work begun by the Dominican friar Venturino da Bergamo during his years in the city. Less than ten years later, the Confraternity of S. Maria della Croce al Tempio (also known as the Compagnia dei Neri) was founded in Florence. The


11 The seminal study is Adriano Prosperi, "Il sangue e l’anima, ricerche sulle Compagnie di Giustizia in Italia," *Quaderni Storici* 51 (1981). In cities without a lay *confraternita*, such work was often done by Dominican friars, and in many cities, including Venice, the Dominicans continued to play an active role in comforting the condemned alongside the designated confraternity.


influential Roman comforting confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato was established much later, in 1490, by Florentines who had been involved in the Compagnia dei Neri. And in Venice, the work of comforting was performed by the confraternity mentioned by Sanudo in the passage quoted at the outset of this chapter: the Scuola di S. Girolamo e S. Maria della Giustizia, more commonly known as the Scuola di S. Fantin.

Early modern Venice housed hundreds of confraternities of varying sizes. These institutions were founded to nurture the spiritual lives of members, and to give focus and inspiration to their practice of charity. In a Christian context, caritas, or charity, also refers to Christian love. One of the three theological virtues (along with faith and hope), charity had two main components: amor dei, or love of God, and amor proximi, love of one’s fellow man. In addition to comforting the condemned, the Scuola di S. Fantin practiced charity by celebrating masses to liberate souls in Purgatory; dowering poor girls who wished to marry or enter the convent; and building and decorating a sumptuous meeting house.

The key scriptural source for confraternal charity was the enumeration of the Corporal Works of Mercy in the Gospel of Matthew. There, Christ describes the Last Judgment, and sets out six acts of amor proximi on which individuals will be judged:

Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.

In addition to these six acts of amor proximi, confratelli were expected to attend the funerals of fellow members, and to provide them with a “good” Christian death. Over time, the obligation to provide a decent burial came to be considered one of seven Corporal Works of Mercy. The Scuola’s members and associates were also


14 Rolf E. Keller, Das Oratorium von San Giovanni Decollato in Rom: eine Studie seiner Fresken (Rome: Institut suisse, 1976); Paglia, La morte confortata, 31-42; and Jean S. Weisz, Pittura e misericordia: The Oratory of S. Giovanni Decollato in Rome (UMI Research Press, 1984), 2-10

15 On the confraternity’s name, see “History and Organizational Structure of the Scuola” in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. In archival records, the confraternity is also sometimes referred to as the Scuola di S. Maria e S. Girolamo deputata alla giustizia (deputized to justice).

16 Pullan, Rich and Poor, 34

17 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, fol. 3r

18 Matthew 25:34-36. All Bible quotations herein are from the Douay Rheims Bible, an English translation of the Latin Bible.

19 See, for instance, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino’s articulation of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy in the long version of his treatise on Christian Doctrine: Roberto Bellarmine, Copiosa dichiaratione della dottrina christiania, composta per ordine di N.S. papa Clemente VIII. Dall’ Illustriss. & Reverendiss. Roberto Bellarmino, Cardinale d S. Chiesa Della Compagnia di Giesù (Venice: li Prodotti, 1670), 189. On
supposed to comport themselves well and to live in accordance with Christian precepts. Receipt of charitable assistance from confraternities was typically conditioned on good moral character, for encouraging others to live a pious life was itself an act of spiritual mercy and *amor dei*.

*Amor dei*, love of God, was also codified into seven Spiritual Works of Mercy. These were to teach the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, console the afflicted, correct sinners, forgive offenses, bear wrongs, and pray to God for the living and the dead.\(^{20}\) Thus, *confratelli* were expected to attend mass, participate in communal prayer and religious processions, and pray for the souls of departed members in order to reduce the time those souls would spend in Purgatory. In flagellant confraternities, including the prestigious Venetian *scuole grandi*, members scourged themselves to atone for their own sins and those of the community.\(^{21}\) However, to strictly separate the performance of *amor dei* and *amor proximi* would not accurately reflect the interconnection between the two aspects of Christian love.\(^{22}\) In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ’s words of praise for those who offered him aid are followed by confusion on the part of the blessed, who ask:

> Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee; thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and covered thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison, and came to thee? And the king answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.\(^{23}\)

In a manual on consoling the sick and dying, Vincenzo Auruccio also makes explicit the idea that the enactment of *amor proximi* is the equivalent of an act of *amor dei*. Auruccio extends the implications of the idea that man is made in God’s image:

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\(^{20}\) One Gospel source for the Spiritual Works was the General Epistle of James, in which the faithful are counselled to forgive wrongs without holding a grudge, to exercise patience, and to pray fervently for one another (James 5:7-10, 16-20). However, the fourteen spiritual and corporal works are more clearly laid out in Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* (2.2 q.32 a.2). For the corporal and spiritual works enumerated in texts contemporary with the period considered in this dissertation, see Lodovico Gabrielli, *Metodo di confessione, cioè arte, over ragione, & una certa breve via di confessarsi, nella quale pienamente si contengono i peccati; & i loro rimedi, con una pia, et dotta dichiaratione de’ XII. Articoli della fede, & al fine un picciolo, & bel trattato dell’arte del ben morire, con una epistola di S. Girolamo del modo del conservare la Virginità, Tradotto dal Latino, Per M. Lodovico Gabrielli da Ogobbia. (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de’ Ferrari, 1562), 336; Bellarmine, *Copiosa dichiaratione*, 189-190; and Paolo de Angelis, *Della limosina o vero opere che ci assicurano nel giorno del final giudizio. Autore L’Abbate Paolo de Angelis Libri X* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardi, 1611), 29.


\(^{22}\) See Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 12-13 on *elemosina*, or almsgiving, and good works, and the application of these terms to both spiritual and physical assistance to the needy.

\(^{23}\) Matthew 25: 37-40
... it follows that the honest love for one's neighbor is closely joined with the love of God, that with the same charity and love, we love God, and we also love our neighbor in God, and for God. So says the sainted Apostle: He who loves his neighbor fulfills the law. Therefore, where the need of the neighbor is greatest, there with the greatest charity one must fill it.  

The Scuola's efforts on behalf of the condemned were a key component of their practice of charity. Such work, emotionally and physically taxing, was considered admirable and publically beneficial. In part, the respect given to comforters stemmed from the priority given to the saving of souls among the Spiritual Works of Mercy. Visiting the imprisoned was also among the seven Corporal Works of Mercy, and some confraternities adopted this as their primary expression of amor proximi. Many prison confraternities addressed both the spiritual and physical needs of prisoners, for the prisons themselves gave inmates (many of whom were impoverished debtors) little in the way of creature comforts or even basic sustenance. In Venice, various confraternities were involved in

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24 Vincenzo Auruccio, *Ritario per quelli, che havendo cura d'Anime, desiderano come buoni Pastori, vegliare sopra il grege à loro commesso da Dio: Nel comunicare gl'Infermi, Amministrare il Santissimo Sacramento della estrema Vntione, e di Raccomandar l'Anima. Con l'Aggiunta d'vn Compendio d'Orationi, Salmi, Versetti, & Preci; Per quelli, che si trovano nell'Angonia della Morte. Opera utilissima ad ogni fedele, e caritativo Christiano.* Del R. Vincentio Auruccio da Todi, Dottle, e Preposto di Corneto (Rome: Zannetti, 1611), 5-6: ["... E perché quest'huomo fù creato da Dio à simiglianza sua, e per se stesso, sequita, che è tanto congiunto l'amore honesto del prossimo all'amore di Dio, che con l'istessa Carità, & amore amiamo Dio, amiamo anco il prossimo in Dio, e per Dio. E però disse l'Apostolo santo. Chi ama il prossimo, adempisce la legge. Dove dunque è maggiore il bisogno del prossimo, iui con maggior carità supplire si deve."] First published in 1586, Auruccio’s *Ritario* was condemned in 1671. Jesús Martínez de Bujanda and Marcella Richter, eds., *Index librorum prohibitorum: 1600-1966* (Montréal: Médiaspau, 2002), 92. However, the book was still in use in Venice in the eighteenth century; the exemplar in the collection of the Biblioteca Marciana is inscribed with the name of its owner, “Reverendo D. Josephi Lazzeroni Eclesie S. Fantini Venetiarum”. Lazzeroni was a priest from the Church of S. Fantin who frequently participated in execution processions between 1724 and 1744. Records of his participation can be found in the Scuola’s Registro dei Giusticiati (ASV, Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 36).

25 In the General Epistle of James (5:19-20): "My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him. He must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." In a treatise on comforting the condemned, Marcello Mansio wrote that "among the works of piety, tending diligently to the health of souls out of love for Christ exceeds all the others, both in terms of dignity and in pleasing God.” Marcello Mansio, *Documenti per confortare i condannati a morte. Di Marcello Mansio Prete della Religione de’ Padri Ministri de g'l'Infermi, detti del Ben morire. Opera utilissima per ogni tribolato.* (Rome: L’Herede di Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1625), 1. ["Fra tutte le opere di pietà, quella dell'attendere con studio per amor di Cristo alla salute dell'Anime, avanza, e nella dignità, e nell’essere grato à Dio, tutte l’altr... ”]

26 For a brief but useful summary of Italian prison confraternities, see Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 221-223. In Bologna, the prison confraternity (the Opera dei Poveri Prigionieri) and the comforting confraternity were parts of the same organization, the confraternity of S. Maria della Morte. On the Opera dei Poveri Prigionieri, see Nicholas Terpstra, "Confraternal Prison Charity and Political Consolidation in Sixteenth-Century Bologna," *Journal of Modern History* 66, no. 2 (1994).
helping prisoners, providing them with food, fresh water, clothing, and in some cases money to pay the debts for which they were imprisoned.  

The Scuola di S. Fantin had no involvement in working with the imprisoned or with satisfying the physical needs of men about to die. Their work with the condemned was directed strictly towards spiritual healing: by following the advice of comforters, submitting to execution, forgiving their accusers, and begging forgiveness for their crimes, sinners could be reinstated within both the temporal and celestial Christian community. Members of the Scuola di S. Fantin walked with the condemned on the long march to the execution site, and after 1613, gave him a decent Christian burial. The first representative of the Scuola di S. Fantin to comfort the condemned was its priest, who went to the prison chapel (where the Scuola maintained an altar) the night before the execution. The next day the confratelli of the Scuola would convene, put on their cappe, (ceremonial robes), and celebrate mass at the altar in the Albergo Grande on the upper floor of the meeting house. After an officer read aloud the rules governing participation in the execution process, the confratelli would process to the prison, sometimes accompanied by other pious devotees, including patricians, members of the clergy, and women. The names of all participants were recorded prior to departure. Black candles and torches were dispensed to members. Members of the group were reminded to remain hooded and garbed in the confraternity’s ceremonial robe, known as the cappa, at all times. Officers carried a small bronze crucifix, a tavolletta (a panel painted with images of Christ or the saints), and the Holy Water, all to be consigned to the professional clergy at the prison. Another officer carried the Scuola’s standard, the wooden crucifix (Fig. 1.1) that was displayed at all other times on an

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28 Witness accounts and confraternal records provide a fairly clear account of the role of the conforteria in capital punishment in early modern Venice. See primarily ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni di Giustitiati. The comforting rite in Venice is described in greater detail in Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 39-98.

29 The vast majority of executed prisoners were men, although women were also sometimes executed. For simplicity, the masculine pronoun is often used herein when speaking generally.

30 Before the construction of the Prigioni Nuovi in the late sixteenth century, the city’s primary prison was inside the Palazzo Ducale. There were simple chapels in both the old prison and the Prigioni Nuovi. Domenico Martinelli, Il ritratto di Venezia (Venice: Gio. Giacomo Hertz, 1684), 597-598; and Franzoi, Prigioni di Venezia.

31 To my knowledge, no surviving tavollette from Venice have been identified. On the tavolletta and its use in the execution ritual in other cities, see Edgerton, Pictures and Punishment, 165-192; Larry J. Feinberg, "Imagination all compact: Tavollette and confraternity rituals for the condemned in Renaissance Italy," Apollo, no. 519 (2005); Ferretti, "Pitture per condannati," 85-152; and Massimo Ferretti, "In Your Face: Paintings for the Condemned in Renaissance Italy," in The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008).
altar in the Oratory. Along the way, the group would stop in the Piazza San Marco to adore the crucifix at the church of S. Geminiano and the basilica of S. Marco.

At the prison, the guardian grande would choose an appropriately worthy member to make a speech and to place a mantle, known as the patienza or patienta, on the shoulders of the condemned person. At the appointed time, the procession departed from the prison. Typically the prisoner was led through the city, accompanied by the confraternity as well as an official who announced his crime at various points along the way. The first leg of this passage was by boat, from S. Marco to the former Chiesa della Croce near the city’s northwestern edge. There, in front of an ancient column known as the "column of infamy", mutilations ordered as part of the death sentence were often carried out. This ritual may have been understood a symbolic reenactment of the Stations of the Cross, in which the condemned prisoner was subjected to degradations similar to those suffered by Christ in his Passion. The group returned to the execution site by land, with the condemned either on foot or pulled behind a horse (Fig. 1.2).

In the Necrologi preserved in the Archivio di Stato, records of death by execution are occasionally accompanied by tiny, crude drawings showing a scaffold, sometimes flanked by the two columns known as the Columns of Justice at the water’s edge in the Piazzetta San Marco (Figs. 1.3, 1.4) By the middle of the sixteenth century, most public executions were carried out at this location, and illustrations of executions in Venetian chronicles and other records typically include the columns (Fig. 1.5). Hanging was deemed a less dignified way to die, and executions by hanging were usually ordered for members of the lower classes; nobles were more typically decapitated. The confratelli of S. Fantin literally accompanied the condemned man onto the scaffold, offering spiritual comfort even in the last seconds of the prisoner’s life. For particularly severe crimes, the sentence included some means of further destroying the body of the offender after

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32 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Robbe diverse, In Chiesa

33 Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 54. In other instances, mutilations occurred at the scene of the crime. For such an instance, see Sanudo, Diarii, VI: 289 and Muir, Civic Ritual, 246-247. In the event of pre-mortem amputation, a surgeon from the Barbers’ Guild marked the point on the prisoner’s body at which the amputation should occur, but the actual act was performed by the executioner. Efforts were made to stem the flow of blood so that the prisoner would not die prior to the appointed time. Piero Camporesi, Il sugo della vita. Simbolismo e magia del sangue (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), 14-15.

34 Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 54-55

35 See, for instance, ASV, Necrologi Reg. 992, January 31, 1804.

36 The preference for decapitation over hanging was fairly standard across Italy. See my own discussion of this phenomenon in Bologna, where two upper-class lovers who committed patricide were decapitated while their accomplice, a servant, was hung. Meryl Bailey, "Public Execution in Popular Verse: The Poems of Giulio Cesare Croce," in The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008).

37 ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni de Giustitiati
death; some bodies were burned, while others were quartered and the parts displayed at various points across the city (Fig. 1.6).38

Execution and Venetian Charity

For members of the confrateria, comforting work was an act of amor proximi that offered great spiritual merit, but the performance of charity was also encouraged from other players in the execution ritual.39 Comforters suggested that the condemned should conceive of his punishment as an act of amor proximi towards the community, for the sight of repentant evildoers being punished might convince others to mend their ways.40 Like Christ himself, the comforted prisoner should also publicly forgive his executioner, the officials who had condemned him, and the community that witnessed his violent death. In doing so, the prisoner would perform a work of spiritual mercy. Like Navajer, whose execution was discussed at the outset of this chapter, the prisoner should also ask the community for its love and should beg the public to pray for him.41 The crowd would be further exhorted to pray for the paziente by a member of the confraternity.42 Thus, when successful, comforting engaged the confraternity, the community, and the condemned in the practice of amor proximi and amor dei, as the process encouraged demonstrations of Christian love which would benefit the souls of all involved in the process.

The Venetian government’s self-image was closely intertwined with the Catholic ideal of charity and good works. Doges ritually distributed alms at many

38 Figure 1.6 is one of a series of engravings based on a cycle of martyrdom frescoes by the artist Niccolò Circignani, known as Pomerancio, in the English College in Rome (Ecclesiae Anglicanae trophaea siue Sanctorum martyrum qui pro Christo catholicae[ue] fidei veritate asserenda, antiquo recentiori[ue] persecutionum tempore, mortem in Anglia subierunt passiones Romae in collegio Anglico per Nicolaum Circinianum depictae: nuper autem per Io. Bap. de Cauallerijs aeneis typis repraesentatae, Rome: Bartholomaei Grassi, 1584, Plate 33). The engravings depict the brutal deaths of Catholic martyrs, and the detail illustrated herein is included solely to help the reader to envision the spectacle of public torture and execution. At the same time, it should be noted that the artists of many sixteenth-century martyrdom images were also spectators at the public executions of criminals, and their experiences undoubtedly influenced their representation of contemporary martyrs.


40 Medici, Trattato del conforto, 12-13

41 Sanudo, Diarii, Tomo XVII, col. 77, September 1513

42 In Venice, this was an obligation of the confraternity’s cercante, who was to loudly and repeatedly beseech the crowd to offer an Ave Maria and a Pater Noster for the their brother who was to die. ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Oblighi del Cercante della Città
religious feasts and civic celebrations. Although the personal generosity of doges was circumscribed by rules that sought to curtail the excessive political influence of any single individual, many doges associated themselves with the virtue of charity on their tombs and other public monuments. For instance, on the tombs of Doge Nicolò Tron (r. 1471-73) in the Frari and Doge Francesco Venier (r. 1554-56) in S. Salvador, an effigy of the doge is flanked by personifications of amor proximi and amor dei, associating the ruler with this "mother of all virtues" in the eyes of the public and of God. But as a practical matter, direct poor relief was shouldered largely by religious institutions and private associations like confraternities and hospitals. The themes of amor dei and amor proximi are regularly evoked in artworks commissioned by such institutions. In Titian’s famed Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple at the Scuola Grande della Carità, a confratello enacts amor proximi by giving alms to a woman holding a child, a type regularly associated with the personification of charity itself, while his brethren demonstrate amor dei by watching the Virgin’s ascent up the steps of the temple (Fig. 1.7). Even more explicitly, two statues by Giovanni Maria Morlaiter (d. 1781) on the lower landings of the double-ramp staircase of the Carità represent amor dei and amor proximi (Fig. 1.8). The statues still stand in niches in what is now the entrance vestibule of the Gallerie dell’Accademia. On one side, amor dei points one finger towards heaven, looking upward towards the light streaming in from the window above her. In case there was any doubt that this is amor dei (who is sometimes mistaken for the virtue of faith), the base of the statue is inscribed "DILIGES DOMINUM DEUM TUUM" ("Love the Lord thy God"). Across from her, the personification of amor proximi reaches down towards a child playing at her skirts; her base bears the words "DILIGES PROXIMUM" ("Love thy neighbor"). Morlaiter brilliantly captures the singularity of the two aspects of charity by incorporating elements of each one into the other. Amor dei bares a breast, an action associated with nursing and with the maternal tenderness traditionally attributed to amor proximi. For her part, amor proximi holds a flaming heart, a typical attribute of amor dei.

Amor dei and amor proximi were also frequently invoked in the art commissioned by the Scuola di S. Fantin. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, love of God and neighbor is a major theme in the decorative program of the Oratory; but in minor commissions, in the figurative sculpture on its meeting house, and even in the emblems on its processional robes, the Scuola declared its members’ commitment to Christian charity on behalf of the condemned. The interconnection between the two aspects of charity is made explicit in a now-missing illumination once included in a presentation copy of the mariegola (Mother Rules) of the Scuola di S. Fantin. In that image -- a scene of the penitent St. Jerome experiencing a vision of the Virgin --

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43 Muir, Civic Ritual, 239, 254-256
46 The missing illumination is reproduced in Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, Tav. V.
the surrounding frame is inscribed with the first line of a hymn traditionally sung at vespers during the ceremonial washing of the feet on Holy Thursday: "VBI CARITAS ET AMOR IBI DEVS EST".47 The phrase captures the notion that God is present in every act of Christian love; the same ideal is underscored later in the first verse of the hymn, where the faithful are exhorted to fear and love their God and to love one another sincerely.

Another illuminated page in the same manuscript also visually expressed the Scuola’s amor dei (Fig. 1.9).48 In that illumination, four men stand reverently beneath a crucifix. Billowing clouds part the sky, forming a mandorla around the body of Christ. Atop the cross sits a pelican in a nest. She cranes her neck to pierce her own breast, and her blood spills downward to nourish her young. Below, one of the onlookers holds the base of the Cross, and another puts his hands together in prayer as he gazes up at Christ. The entire grouping is surrounded by an elaborate gilded frame which separates the viewer’s space from the realm beyond the picture plane. An inscription names the onlookers and identifies them as the four primary officers of the Scuola.49 The nubs of branches that sprout from the arms of the crucifix and the bleeding pelican in a nest above Christ identify the object as a representation of the actual crucifix that served as both the Scuola’s processional standard and an altarpiece in the Oratory (Fig. 1.1).

Unlike the real crucifix, which is monochrome and covered with darkened silver ex votos, the crucifix in the illuminated page is presented in vivid color. Christ is golden-haired, and his body is the color of flesh. The nest above him is the hue of straw, and red blood stains the stark white feathers of the pelican’s body. The curtain-like frame and the billowing clouds suggest that the scene is a revelation, a vision experienced by the confraternity members who hold the crucifix. The realism with which Christ’s body is rendered evokes the doctrine of transubstantiation, implying the Real Presence of Christ on the altar where the object was usually displayed. The presence of the crucifix in the illumination suggests the presence of the confratelli of the Scuola as witnesses at Christ’s execution, and puts these men at

47 "Where there are love and charity, there is God." On the ceremony of the foot washing, see The office of the holy week; according to the Roman missal and breviary. Containing, the morning and evening service from Palm-Sunday to Tuesday in Easter-Week in Latin and English, (London?): Catholic Church, 1723), 212-217. The phrase, so well-suited to the ideology of Venetian confraternal life, was also inscribed on the processional paraphernalia used by the Scuola Grande della Carità in a procession celebrating the League of Cognac on July 8, 1526 (Sanudo, Diarii, XLII: 66), and on the entrance to the Scuola Grande di S. Marco, as noted in Brian S. Pullan, "Poveri, mendicanti e vagabondi (secoli XIV-XVII)," in Poverty and Charity: Europe, Italy, Venice, 1400-1700 (Aldershot, UK and Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1994; reprint, originally published in Storia d’Italia. Annali 1. Dal feudalismo al capitalismo, ed. Corrado Vivanti and Ruggiero Romano, Turin: Einaudi, 1978, 981-1047), 1043-1044.
48 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 2v
49 The inscription reads: "IN TEMPO DI M. ZANPIERO DI MICHEL GUARDIAN ET DE M. ZANPIERO DI MARCHIO AVICARIO, IN TEMPO DI M. ZUANE MAGETER GUARDIAN DA MATIN ET DE M. BATTISTA ZIGNONI SCRIVAN."
the foot of the Cross, the position traditionally assigned to the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist.  

History and Organizational Structure of the Scuola  

The Scuola di S. Fantin resulted from the 1458 merger of two smaller confraternities, the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia and the Scuola di S. Girolamo. The earliest secure documentation of S. Maria della Giustizia dates from 1440, when the Council of Ten authorized its members to provide spiritual assistance and comfort to the condemned, but it likely came into existence earlier in the fifteenth century. The 1440 decree was followed, in 1443 and 1445, by similar decisions allowing the Scuola to visit the condemned and to bury their bodies. Early documents indicate that the confratelli of the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia had taken note of comforting confraternities elsewhere in Italy, and sought to emulate their practices as well as their ceremonial attire.  

Like most small Venetian confraternities, the Scuola initially had no independent meeting house. Instead, its meetings and religious services were held at an altar in the church of S. Fantin. An ancient church in the sestiere of S. Marco.  

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50 John 19:26-27  
51 Flaminio (Flaminio Corner) Cornellio, Ecclesiae venetae et torcellaneae antiquis monumentis nunc etiam primum editis illustratae ac in decades distributaes, 13 vols., vol. 12 (Decas decima quarta, & decima quinta, & decadis decimae sestae pars prior) (Venice: Jo. Baptistae Pasquali, 1749), 332, transcription of Council of Ten decree dated November 21, 1458  
52 Ibid. See also Flaminio Corner, Notizie storiche delle chiese e monasteri di Venezia, e di Torcello tratte dalle chiese veneziane, e torcellane (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1758), 219; Vio, Le scuole piccole, 376; and Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 4 n. 3. In the decree of 1440, the Scuola is referred to as "quae associat condemnatos ad mortem" (those who accompany the condemned to death), suggesting that members of the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia were working with condemned prisoners in some capacity prior to 1440. In a late eighteenth century record, the founding date of the Scuola is given as December 15, 1411. BSR, AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 5v. Likewise, in Flaminio Corner’s vernacular summary of conclusions drawn from his archival research on Venetian ecclesiastical institutions, he states that the Scuola di Santa Maria della Giustizia existed in 1411. Corner, Notizie storiche, 218. Paololetti, without noting an archival source, states that the "Scuola di S. Maria di Giustizia" was authorized to accompany the condemned by 1401, but that the confraternity applied anew to the Council of Ten in the 1440s because its members had let their responsibilities lapse in the intervening years. Ermolao Paololetti, Il Fiore di Venezia, 4 vols. (Venice: Tommaso Fontana, 1837-40), vol. 2, 153.  
53 ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, Reg. 12, fol. 140, October 23, 1443, and ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, Reg. 13, fol. 4, May 25, 1445  
54 ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, Reg. 13, fol. 4, May 25, 1445. The 1445 decree holds that twelve members would be permitted to dress in a "most humble habit of black cloth, as they do in the other places..."  
55 Ibid. Reg. 12, fol. 140, October 123, 1443. On the early history of the Church of San Fantin, see Corner, Notizie storiche, 217-218; Umberto Franzoi and Dina Di Stefano, Le chiese di Venezia (Venice: Alfieri, 1976), 322-325; and the documentation published by Corner at Cornellio, Ecclesiae venetae, 318-337. The church housed a miraculous image of the Virgin brought from the east, and by the end
and the parish of S. Angelo, the Church of S. Fantin was also the meeting site for the Scuola di S. Girolamo. Almost no documentation on the Scuola di S. Girolamo has survived, but a record of a fourteenth-century bequest suggests that it was an ancient confraternity established before 1369. There is no record of its original charitable activities, nor is there any indication that it was involved in providing comfort to the condemned prior to the 1458 merger with the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia. Although the merged confraternity was usually called the Scuola di S. Fantin, it does not appear that either of the two original confraternities venerated St. Fantino, a tenth-century Calabrian saint. Rather, the name is simply a shorthand for what is otherwise a rather unwieldy title, and refers to the the Campo S. Fantin in which the Scuola eventually built its own independent meeting house.

The administrative structure of the Scuola di San Fantin resembled those of other Venetian confraternities. Its major office holders included a guardian grande, the primary officer of the group; a guardian da matin, responsible for ceremonial functions and for the monitoring of the Scuola’s candles and wax, which was a precious commodity; a vicario, the guardian grande’s deputy, who had the authority to carry the Scuola’s wooden crucifix in processions; a scrivan, or secretary; and three sindaci (syndics). Together, these officers formed the Sette della Scuola, or the Seven, which had day-to-day authority over members and salaried

of the fifteenth century, the church’s name was amended to reflect its dual dedication to San Fantin and Santa Maria delle Grazie. Since the ancient church was destroyed in 1506 and rebuilt, there is no way to determine where either of the original confraternities met. However, the rebuilt church housed altars dedicated to St. Jerome and the Virgin as well as those dedicated to the Crucifix, S. Fantino, and the Holy Sacrament. See the list of altars at S. Fantin recorded during the Apostolic visit in 1581 at Tramontin, “La visita apostolica,” 507.

Cornello, Ecclesiae venetae, 335

In that year, it was one of several confraternities benefiting from a bequest by Nicoletto Rosso de San Greguol. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 20, fol. 2r, March 7, 1369; and ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 37, reg. Libro di tanze e decime, Inventario di carte, March 7, 1369 (see also Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 3-4). Note that the Scuola di S. Girolamo that merged with the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia should not be confused with the Scuola di S. Gerolamo a Cannaregio, another small confraternity which venerated St. Jerome. On the Scuola di S. Gerolamo a Cannaregio, see Peter Humfrey, “The Life of St. Jerome Cycle from the Scuola di San Gerolamo in Cannaregio,” Arte Veneta 39 (1985); Patricia Fortini Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 49-50; and Fiorella Spadavecchia, Lazzaro Bastiani, teleri della Scuola di San Girolamo, vol. 4, Dai depositi delle Gallerie dell’Accademia (Venice: Tara s.r.l., 1996).

Franzoi and Di Stefano, Le chiese di Venezia, 322

The church of S. Fantin also housed a sacrament confraternity which is also sometimes referred to as the Scuola di San Fantin. This sacrament confraternity was unrelated to the confraternity which is the subject of the present study. For a discussion of the art patronage of this and other sacrament confraternities, see Thomas Wornen, ”Tintoretto’s Paintings for the Banco del Sacramento in S. Margherita,” Art Bulletin 78, no. 4 (1996).

60 On the administrative structure of the scuole grandi, see Pullan, Rich and Poor, 67-70. On the scuole piccole, see Francesca Ortalli, ‘Per salute delle anime e delle corpi’: Scuole Piccole a Venezia nel tardo Medioevo (Venice: Marsilio, 2001), 17-56. For a more detailed explanation of the organizational structure and offices of the Scuola di S. Fantin, see Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 3-38.
employees. The Seven, together with five other elected members, made up the *banca*, the Scuola’s primary governing body. An additional twelve-member *zonta* was introduced by decree of the Council of Ten in 1521 to increase the number of individuals involved in decision-making. Officers served for short periods, typically one year, and then had to wait for three years prior to serving another term.

Other non-salaried roles included *dehani* (deacons) who assisted the primary officers; *dehani di mezz’anno*, who monitored the alms left at the Scuola’s altars; and overseers of the building (*proti sopra le fabbriche*) who worked with the *guardian grande* on decisions regarding construction and maintenance of the Scuola’s properties. A few references to female members suggest that the membership included women, at least in the early years. Women do not appear to have held office at any point in the Scuola’s history, and their role was probably limited to following the robed and hooded male members in processions.

In the 1598 edition of Cesare Vecellio’s costume book, the *guardian grande* of the Scuola di S. Fantin, dressed in processional attire, is the sole member of a Venetian confraternity depicted (Fig. 1.10). By contrast, Giovanni Grevembroch’s eighteenth-century watercolors of Venetian costume include numerous depictions of *confratelli* and members of other religious sodalities (Fig. 1.11). Grevembroch’s illustrations indicate that in form, the *cappe* of confraternities varied little from one to the next; onlookers could identify the different institutions largely by the color of their robes, the emblems emblazoned on them (typically on the chest and the hood), and the standards they carried. Both Grevembroch and Vecellio depict the habit of S. Fantin as a long black cloak with a hood that completely obscured the face of the wearer. In both illustrations, the *confratello* holds in his right hand a chain, the

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61 The roles and obligations of officers, as well as terms and eligibility are laid out in detail in the confraternity’s book of *Obblighi*: ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, fols. 3v ff. See also Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 9-18 on elections and terms of office, as well as the responsibilities of officers, members, clerics and salaried employees.


63 The term *zonta* is Venetian dialect for *aggiunta*, or adjunct body. On the Council of Ten’s concern over corruption in the decision-making process and attempts to correct it through the *zonta*, see Ibid., 69-70.

64 For instance, in the Scuola’s account of their aggregation with San Giovanni Decollato in Rome, they note that both brothers and sisters of the Scuola were entitled to partake of the Indulgences granted to the Roman confraternity. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 158v-160v. A 1566 notation states that the initiation fee for both men and women was fixed at thirty-six soldi. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 130v. Among the *scuole grandi*, female members were not allowed. Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, 49.


rattling of which was noted by Vecellio.\textsuperscript{67} In his left he holds a \emph{tavoletta}. The Scuola’s
dual emblem, perhaps derived from the wooden crucifix that its members carried as
its processional standard, is repeated on the \emph{cappa}: a crucifix is emblazoned on
the figure’s cloak, and embroidered on his hood, covering his mouth, is a pelican. The
comforter’s costume, Vecellio says, is both "dreadful" (\emph{horrendo}) and "charitable"
(\emph{caritevole}), simultaneously lugubrious and full of love, for those who wear it
accompany the condemned in order to "obtain Indulgences and concessions" for
themselves and their brethren.\textsuperscript{68}

The \emph{cappa} was important to confraternal corporate identity, and misdeeds
committed by someone dressed in the confraternity’s robes reflected badly on the
group as a whole. Thus, the Scuola frequently issued restrictions and reminders in
response to scandalous behavior of various kinds by \emph{cappa}-wearing members. In
1566, the Scuola decreed that anyone who carried weapons underneath his \emph{cappa}
would be expelled from the brotherhood.\textsuperscript{69} Another document relates complaints
that some members were removing their \emph{cappe} outside the Scuola’s meeting house
and comporting themselves irreverently in boats along the route of the execution
procession; in at least one instance, a member had removed his hood to eat and
drink "in the gondola and in another place" as the boat carrying the prisoner made
its way up the Grand Canal. Such behavior, the Scuola determined, would result in
expulsion.\textsuperscript{70} Irate statements of shock and admonition in 1651 and 1661 again
threaten members with expulsion for uncivilized behavior in processions, and for
adorning their \emph{cappe} with gaudy gems and ornaments.\textsuperscript{71} In part, the insistence on
covered heads and \emph{cappe} during the execution ritual stemmed from the Christian
ideal that true charity is anonymous. According to the Gospel of Matthew, in the
Sermon on the Mount, Christ declared:

\begin{quote}
Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by
them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in
heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet
before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,
that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have
received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand
know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and
thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

Drawing on these admonishments, Cesare Ripa described the allegory of \emph{Elemosina}
(Almsgiving) as a beautiful woman whose face is covered by a veil, because "he who
gives alms must see the person to whom he gives them, and he who receives alms

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67} Cesare Vecellio, \textit{Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo} (Venice: I Sessa, 1598), 174
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{69} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 1r, 1566
\item \textsuperscript{70} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 35v, September 36, 1592
\item \textsuperscript{71} Ibid. fol. 55r, February 25, 1651; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 58v, March 13, 1661
\item \textsuperscript{72} Matthew 6:14
\end{itemize}
must not see the person from whom he receives them. . .” The ideal of anonymous charity seems to inform the Scuola's declaration in 1651 against inappropriate behavior on the part of members wearing the *cappa*:

With much emotion and displeasure, the recent abuses, improprieties, and inappropriate doings [of various uncivilized members] are brought before the magnificent Chapter General. . . [These members], who hardly respect the honor of the Lord God, and the veneration of that Holy Image, the standard of this confraternity [i.e. the wooden crucifix], commit such indecencies with no regard for the habit [of the confraternity]; they clothe themselves - it is unpleasant to say - in pious and very religious Charity, while they assist at executions, or in burial of the pitiful condemned. By now the disorder and scandals are so familiar, and even reckless, that not only are they becoming detested by the whole city, but with such universal scandal . . . that one must rightly wonder (God forbid) about the destruction of this Confraternity.

Thus, for those offended by such behavior, dressing in the confraternal robe was akin to cloaking oneself in charity itself, and impropriety on the part of robed members threatened not only the group's reputation, but its very existence.

While the *cappa* obscured the individual wearer, it also imparted to him a measure of authority invested in the group as a whole. Therefore, by order of the Council of Ten, *cappe* could not be loaned out to others. In one instance, the *cappa* even offered its wearer protection from the authority of the state. In 1660, a

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73 Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, overo descrittione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi da Cesare Ripa Perugino, opera non meno utile, che necessaria à Poeti, Pittori, Scultori, per rappresentare le virtù, vitij, affetti, et passioni humane* (Rome: Heredi di Gio. Gigliotti, 1593), 66. ["Elemosina. Donna, di carnagione bianca di bello aspetto, con fronte quadrata, occhi grassi, & naso alquanto aquilino, con habitu lungo, & grave con la faccia coperta d'un velo, perchè quello, che fà elemosina, deve vedere à chi la fà, & quello, che la riceve non deve spiar da chi venga, ò donde. Habbia ambe le mani nascoste sotto alla veste, porgendo così danari à due fanciulli, che stiano aspettando dalle bande. Haverà in capo una Lucerna accesa circondata da una ghirlanda d'Oliva, con le sue foglie, & frutti. Le mani frà i panni nascose significano quel, che dice S. Matteo al 6. cap. Nesciat sinistra tua, quid faciat dextera, & quell'altro precetto, che dice Ut sit elemosina tua in abscondito, & Pater tuus, qui videt in abscondito, reddat tibi. La lucerna accesa dimostra, che come da un lume s'accende l'altro, senza diminuzione di luce, così nell'esserictio dell'elemosina Iddio non pate, che alcuno resti con le sue facoltà diminuite, anzi, che gli promette, & dona realmente centuplicato guadagno. L'Oliva per corona del capo dimostra quella misericordia, che muove l'huomo à fare elemosina quando vede, che un povero ne habbia bisogno, però disse David nel Salmo L. Oliva fructifera est in domo Domini. Et Hesichio Gierosolimitano, interpretando nel Levitico: Super fusum oleum, dice, significare l'elemosina, si come l'Incenso è simbolico dell'oratione, & de' pregheri, che si fanno al sommo Dio. La fisonomia della faccia è descritta così da Aristotele al 6. Et 9. cap.ne gli huomini, che hanno magnanimità, & misericordia, che sono ambe due virtù dalle quali come da fonti, l'elemosina nasce, & deriva."] See also Black, *Italian Confraternities*, 12-13

74 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 55r, February 25, 1651 [m.v.]

75 Ibid. 56v-57r, June 8, 1660
confratello named Luccio di Marchi was arrested by the Guardia Civile for debts. The guardian grande and other confratelli went before the Council of Ten with their lawyer to protest the arrest on the grounds that di Marchi had been participating in an execution procession, and wearing his cappa, at the time of the arrest. For their part, the Guardia Civile maintained that the arrestee had been carrying the cappa under his arm. Di Marchi was released.

The patienta, the black mantle placed on the prisoner’s shoulders by a worthy officer of the Scuola, served as an abbreviated version of the cappa and a symbol of inclusion in the brotherhood. According to the Scuola’s own explanation, the mantle
denotes the habit of our confraternity, so that the paciente [condemned man] can take advantage of the spiritual treasures... and in putting the patienta on the paciente to accept him as a brother [of our Scuola], the Guardian will make a very brief speech full of love and charity.

The ritual induction of the prisoner into the brotherhood was powerfully symbolic. Through the Scuola's efforts, a soul had been saved and a sinner redeemed such that the repentant condemned was now spiritually fit to join a brotherhood normally reserved for men of good reputation and admirable piety. Most importantly, all masses celebrated on behalf of the souls of confratelli would now benefit the soul of the condemned as well.

By the mid-sixteenth century, many officers of S. Fantin were occupied in the gold and textile trades; members in surviving chapter rolls are also listed as artisans such as shoemakers and carpenters; civil servants; and businessmen. Cesare Vecelio described the comforters of S. Fantin as men of considerable financial means who joined the confraternity in order to take advantage of the spiritual treasures it offered. His testimony accords with trends in other Italian cities, for by the sixteenth century the work of comforting was increasingly performed by men of education, rank, and privilege. The Scuola's governing officers received no

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76 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 2r, September 17, 1660; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), 57v-58r, September 16, 1660

77 ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni della Scuola, Fontioni de Giustitiati. See also Sanudo's account of the execution of Bortolo di Maran, in which Sanudo notes that the priest was dressed on the scaffold in the Scuola's habit. Sanudo, Diarrii, Tomo XVIII, col. 47-48, March 14, 1518.

78 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620); see also Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 19-23. Among the Venetian scuole grandi, by order of the Council of Ten, offices could be held only by citizens, a legally defined class of families who had lived in Venice for multiple generations. While citizens ranked below the governing patrician class and could have no direct role in government, many were educated and wealthy professionals. Pullan, Rich and Poor, 22, 99-112

79 Vecelio, Habiti antichi, 173

80 Terpstra notes that in Bologna this shift occurred across all confraternities, and the "practice of ennobling radically altered the composition and aims of all confraternities dedicated to social charity, turning them from independent institutions into quasi-governmental agencies." Terpstra, "Piety and
monetary compensation for their work. Rather, they were expected to give generously from their own pockets for the charitable causes (including construction and art patronage) undertaken by the group.

Certain other members of the confraternity received a stipend in exchange for the performance of a variety of tasks.\(^{81}\) The Scuola employed a chaplain, or capellan, and his assistant, or sacerdote, to hold masses and to perform ritual functions at funerals and executions; in addition to a stipend and lodging, the capellan received a portion of anything left to the Scuola by the condemned.\(^{82}\) A part of the capellan’s job, therefore, was to encourage the condemned to make a will that included a bequest to the brotherhood itself. A quadernier was paid to perform secretarial and record-keeping functions as the assistant to the scrivan. The Scuola’s masser (also called the nonzolo della Chiesa), was responsible for maintaining a regular schedule of opening and closing times, notifying members in the event of an execution, and collecting alms at Masses held in the Oratory; he was also required to attend members’ burials. A cercante della città served as the Scuola’s alms collector and town cryer, going through the city to beg for donations for the Scuola’s miraculous crucifix. At executions, the cercante would loudly beseech the crowd to pray for the condemned. For these services, he received one third of any alms he collected. At the request of the Arte de’ Barberi, the guild of barbers as well as surgeons, the Scuola also admitted a surgeon to membership. In the case of a sentence which called for bodily mutilation prior to death, the surgeon, or "Chirurgo della Scola", was responsible for marking the point on the prisoner’s body at which the cut was to be made. Like other members, he was required to process in ceremonial robes.\(^{83}\) Twelve fadighenti were paid to carry the Scuola’s aste, or poles with processional banners, and candlesticks during processions.

The small sums that the Scuola paid to salaried members were, on the one hand, a form of charity; those who sought such jobs were often poor, and payment for the performance of these tasks was a way to transfer the Scuola’s funds to needy members.\(^{84}\) At the same time, many of the jobs given to salaried members were considered distasteful, and it was necessary to offer payment to ensure that the work was accomplished. For instance, the collection, rather than the distribution, of alms was a low-status task. The carrying of processional paraphernalia such as heavy candlesticks and candles was hard manual labor, and hence unappealing to members who came from higher social classes. Indeed, the word fadighente is the

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\(^{81}\) ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Oblighi del Reverendo Signor Capellan; and ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 31r-32r.

\(^{82}\) ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 31r-32r

\(^{83}\) Ibid. fol. 140v, March 19, 1621

\(^{84}\) See Pullan, Rich and Poor, 72-81 regarding similar sixteenth-century trends among the scuole grandi, as the confraternities increasingly distinguished between rich and poor members and began to pay poor members for tasks such as attendance at funerals and scourging themselves in procession.
Venetian variant of *faticante*, a term that refers to someone who performs heavy labor or tiring work. In a painting of a procession of the Scuola del Cristo, which buried the bodies of the drowned, such *fadighenti* can be seen bearing huge wooden gilded candlesticks set into heavy straps around their waists (Fig. 1.12). A similar candle carrier from the Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Misericordia is illustrated in Grevembroch’s *Gli abiti de’ Veneziani* (Fig. 1.13).

The socioeconomic distinctions within the Scuola di S. Fantin influenced the roles and privileges allotted to individual members during execution processions. Access to the condemned before and during the execution was reserved for a select group of officers. The *guardiano grande* designated the speech-maker who would attend the condemned at the prison, and only the *guardiano da matin* (or his designate), a *masser* with holy water, and the *capellan* and his assistants were officially allowed to accompany the prisoner onto the scaffold; all others were relegated to the area surrounding it.85 Physical proximity to the proceedings appear to have been desirable, for the Scuola repeatedly admonished unauthorized members who caused a scandal by crowding the scaffold.86 Still, even at a distance, participation in execution processions was considered to be an important pious work which earned substantial spiritual merit. Therefore, such processions were also attended by honorary members from the city’s upper classes. Patricians and *cittadini* who wished to participate were allowed to process with the confraternity and wear its robes in exchange for a monetary donation.87 Many well-known patrician surnames are included on the lists of “*devoti*” walking in death procession; members of the Mocenigo, Corner, Giustiniani, Badoer, and Cicogna families, to mention only a few, participated in these events.88

The Scuola derived income from various sources, including membership dues, charitable donations, and payments authorized by the government.89 Like most Venetian confraternities, it received regular payments from its members, including a *benintrada*, or initiation fee, and a *luminaria*, or annual dues.90 Officers were also called upon to give additional donations on special feast days, such as the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, when the confraternity held a special service at the

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85 See, for instance, ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 9v; and ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni della Scuola, Fontioni de Giustitiati

86 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 9v. See also ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 141v

87 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 80v-81r, February 25, 1651 m.v.

88 Lists of those accompanying the *paziente* from 1727 onward are preserved at ASV, Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 36, Registro de Giustitiati (1727-1804).


90 The Scuola’s records of 1566 refer to a *benintrada* of 36 soldi whether for men or for women. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 130v. Interestingly, this is one of the only references to female members of the *Scuola*. Both the *luminaria* and the *benintrada* were eliminated in 1655, to match the practices of the Archconfraternity of San Giovanni Decollato in Rome, with whom the *Scuola* had aggregated in 1613. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 2r.
burial site of the condemned on the Isola delle Grazie in the Venetian lagoon. A second source of revenue was the receipt of donations and bequests of money and property from members and devout non-members alike. The Scuola’s Oratory, open to the public on Fridays, contained two altars where alms could be left. The altar on which the Scuola kept its processional crucifix was particularly popular among pious visitors, so much so that the Oratory’s opening hours were an ongoing source of conflict between the confraternity and the church of S. Fantin. During the comforting process, bequests from the condemned were encouraged as well. The Scuola owned various properties, some purchased and some acquired through bequests, and derived income from rents on these properties. It also received a revenue stream directly from the state. The government authorized a variety of payments and reimbursements specifically in return for its service to the condemned. In 1489, the Council first assigned to the Scuola five percent of the bando, or bounty, normally given to whoever captured or turned in escaped convicts in capital cases; such bounty was paid out of the convict’s own property. Thus, the Scuola was in the curious position of earning revenue from the capture and execution of the criminals whom it comforted.

Over the years, the prestige and status of the Scuola di S. Fantin grew. In 1533, the brotherhood was placed under the direct oversight and protection of the Council of Ten, a status normally reserved only for the city’s scuole grandi. In 1611, the Scuola requested and received permission to process after the scuole grandi on the night of Holy Thursday to San Marco to visit the relic of the Holy Blood. This procession would have been important to the Scuola both for its devotional significance and because it would have associated the confraternity with the scuole grandi in the eyes of the large crowds of spectators the procession attracted. One commentator, describing a fatal accident that occurred during the Holy Thursday procession of 1655, noted that spectators came as much to admire the procession of the scuole grandi as to adore the holy relic.

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91 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni della Scuola, Giorno di S. Maria Maddalena. The Scuola’s use of the Isola delle Grazie for burial is discussed further below.
92 Bequests beginning in 1369 are recorded in ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 20, Testamenti.
93 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 29v-31v. The conflict between the confraternity and the parish priest of the Church of S. Fantin is discussed further in Chapter 2 herein.
94 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Stabili.
95 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 26r, February 27, 1489. This grant of a percentage of the bounty was periodically renewed at the Scuola’s request. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), 27v-29r
96 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 26v
97 Ibid. fol. 38v, March 16, 1611
98 Cronica veneta sacra e profana, o sia Un Compendio di tutte le cose più illustri ed antiche della Città di Venezia, (Venice: Francesco Pitteri, 1736), 100; see also Pietro Antonio Pacífico, Cronica veneta overo Succinto racconto di tutte le cose più cospicue, & antiche della Città di Venezia (Venice: Domenico Lovisa, 1697), 125.
The "treasury of merit" amassed by a confraternity could also be shared with religious orders or with other confraternities through a contractual arrangement in which each group could benefit from the spiritual treasures of the other.\textsuperscript{99} In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the desire to pool spiritual treasures, combined with the Church’s desire to consolidate oversight of religious sodalities, led to a trend towards aggregation of small confraternities with larger archconfraternities. Many archconfraternities were in Rome, and had already received papal recognition as well as Indulgences that might benefit smaller sodalities.\textsuperscript{100} In 1613, the Scuola requested the Council of Ten’s permission to aggregate with the Roman comforting confraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato.\textsuperscript{101} The Scuola was successful in its campaign to aggregate, and therefore benefitted from the papal Indulgences which had been granted to S. Giovanni Decollato. But it seems to have kept its Roman brethren at arms’ length, rejecting at least two invitations to come to Rome, and it always remained under the governing jurisdiction of Venetian magistracies.\textsuperscript{102}

The desire to join its Roman counterpart appears to have motivated a significant change in the Scuola’s obligations towards the condemned. Burial of the corpses of the executed had long been a standard responsibility among comforting confraternities in other cities, including Rome, and the Venetians’ lack of involvement in this stage of the process was something of an anomaly. In 1614, the Chapter noted that

\begin{quote}
... we accompany those unhappy ones until this last step, and we accept them as our brothers, and then, at the execution platform, we abandon them, leaving the work imperfect.\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

Therefore, the Scuola requested and received permission to bury the bodies of the condemned.\textsuperscript{104} It should be remembered that the Council of Ten had authorized the Scuola to bury the condemned in 1440, but dealing directly with the corpses of the executed was particularly unpopular work. As Adriano Prosperi noted in his groundbreaking article on comforting practices in Italy, superstitions persisted regarding the ongoing power of the corpse to seek vengeance in the world of the living.\textsuperscript{105} The privileges and Indulgences granted to confraternities that buried the condemned served in part to counteract the general unwillingness to associate with...
an executed body. In 1614, when the Scuola decided to take responsibility for burial of the condemned, its officers noted that this work would earn great spiritual merit for those who participated, and that in Rome it was customarily done by "people of quality". But despite the confraternity’s insistence that this was a laudable undertaking, it instituted eight new paid positions specifically to fulfill the tasks associated with burial of the condemned. These new members would carry the corpse and torches at burial; in exchange, they were paid two lire for each event. The salaries paid to these new members suggest that they were among the city’s poor, people who relied upon this sort of work for their survival. And although the Scuola encouraged other devout members of the community who wished to earn spiritual treasures to accompany burial processions, the number of people attending burials was always relatively small when compared with execution processions.

In addition to the fees paid to members responsible for burial, the Scuola also paid for the services of professional clerics and made arrangements for the burials to occur in holy ground. In 1613, it gave ten scudi to the Hermits of St. Jerome of Fiesole in exchange for the right to build a chapel on the Isole delle Grazie (Fig. 1.14) in which "to place the intestines and heads of the condemned"; a further thirty scudi were allotted for the construction of the chapel. Intact corpses of executed prisoners were buried within the city, at a small burial ground behind the Basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo; the Scuola also paid the Dominican monks there for the funeral and burial services they provided. For burial processions to SS. Giovanni e Paolo, four confratelli were designated to carry the cadaver, and four would carry torches, accompanied by a priest and zago (a cleric, also paid by the Scuola) from the Church of S. Marco. All confraternity members who participated in burial processions were to wear the Scuola’s robes, and all were to hold white candles.

The Scuola di S. Fantin periodically sought various types of recognition that increased its standing among Venetian confraternities. In 1671, the Council of Ten recognized the Scuola’s special status when it granted it precedence in the funerals

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106 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 40v-41r, July 13, 1614

107 The names of those who accompanied the condemned in execution and burial processions are recorded, along with the Council of Ten decrees, in the Scuola’s Registro de Giusticiati. Records exist from 1727 onward. ASV, Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 36, Registro de Giusticiati (1727-1804)

108 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 83r-v, March 3, 1613 [m.v.] While the record refers to burial of "l’interiora e teste de giustiziat" ["the intestines and heads of the executed"], the Isole delle Grazie was likely used for burial of whatever remained of those subject to bodily fragmentation such as decapitation, disembowelment, quartering or amputation. The practice of burying such bodies in a remote location reflects the infamy associated with the sorts of crimes which merited this particular brand of punishment and the widespread superstition that such corpses presented a continuing danger to the living. Prosperi, "Il sangue e l’anima," 962. The monastery of the Hermits of St. Jerome of Fiesole was established in 1412 on the Isola della Grazia; the order was suppressed in 1668, after which date the island became a Cappuchin convent, but burials of disemboweled prisoners continued. The history of the Isola della Grazia is briefly recounted in Paoletti, Fiore di Venezia, Vol. 1, 178-181 and Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 66-70.

109 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 82r,v
of members who were also members of other small confraternities.\footnote{ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 63v-r, February 25, 1670 [m.v.]} In 1689, the Council of Ten finally affirmed that the Scuola di S. Fantin was a scuola grande.\footnote{Ibid. fol. 72v, August 19, 1689; Pacifico, Cronica veneta, 489-490. It is not clear whether, as a scuola grande, the Scuola di S. Fantin was subject to the higher ceiling on membership numbers allowed the existing scuole grandi. Nor does it seem that the confraternity made any changes in its practice of allowing women to participate as sister members, although women generally were excluded from membership in the scuole grandi. At S. Fantin, women never played a role in governing the organization. Both before and after 1689, in the few instances where sorelle are mentioned in the archival records, their involvement always seems to have been limited to participating in processions and attending Masses in the Oratory.} Even so, the brotherhood’s status seems to have been somewhat nebulous. As a comforting confraternity it was neither a typical scuola grande nor one of the city’s many scuole di devozione; it was granted many of the privileges of a scuola grande, but it was secondary to them in processions. Still, the Scuola di San Fantin remained vigilant in its rejection of classification as a scuola piccola or a scuola di devozione, always referring to itself as a scuola deputata alla giustizia, a designation that indicated its unique role in the enactment of justice.\footnote{In 1751, the Scuola successfully sought to avoid the application of a decree of 1700 asserting the authority of a lesser tribunal over the scuole di devozione. The confratelli of S. Fantin articulated the Scuola’s stance on the exact nature of the difference between itself and other confraternities: the legislation, it argued, cannot have been intended to apply to the Scuola in question, which is not included in the category Scuola di Devozione, but rather is actually called "Scuola Deputized to Justice". ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), 79v-80r, June 78, 1751.}

Transformation, Salvation, and the Ideology of Comfort

Texts on comforting and accounts of its processes suggest a high degree of continuity among practitioners from cities across the Italian peninsula. The most extensive and multifaceted textual records on the practice of comforting the condemned are from Bologna, the city where the practice began. The Confraternity of S. Maria della Morte compiled a detailed manual intended to guide comforters through the demanding process of assisting the condemned.\footnote{The Bolognese manual has recently been published in both Italian and English. Both editions are based on the manuscript copy at the Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. 188. Alfredo Troiano, "Il Manuale quattrocentesco della Confraternita di Bologna. Il ms. Morgan 188 della Pierpont Morgan Library (New York)," in Misericordie. Conversioni sotto il patibolo tra Medioevo ed età moderna, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 2007) and "The Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Books 1-4," in The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008).} While the Bolognese Comforters’ Manual circulated only in manuscript form, more than twenty texts on the topic were printed in Italian cities from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries,
sometimes in multiple editions.114 One example is the guide written by the Florentine Fra Zanobio de’ Medici, first published in 1545 and dedicated to the Roman confraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato.115 A three-volume guide to comforting by Giovan Battista Gargiaria, a member of the conforteria in Bologna, was published in 1650 in Piacenza.116 Fewer published records derive from Venice, but the Discorsi morali of the physician Fabio Glissenti includes sections that discuss the process of consoling a young man and an elderly one who are about to be executed.117

The consistency among comforting texts indicates that over time, comforting in early modern Italy had (at least in theory) developed into a methodical and organized system with clearly-defined objectives for all the parties involved. The fact that such texts were published widely suggests that they addressed an audience

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114 These texts borrow heavily from one another and many repeat the same information; therefore, the discussion here focuses on a handful of examples of the genre.

115 Fra Zanobio was a Dominican friar and Piagnone, and parts of his treatise on comforting are derived from Girolamo Savonarola’s 1496 sermon on the art of dying well. Fra Zanobio’s text was republished multiple times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Citations here are from the 1565 edition: Zanobi de’ Medici, Trattato utilissimo in conforto de condannati a morte per via di giustizia. Composto dal venerabile religioso frate Zanobi de Medici fiorentino, dell’Ordine de Predicatori (Rome: Valerio Dorico, 1565).


117 Fabio Glissenti, Discorsi morali dell’eccelente S. Fabio Glissenti. Contra il dispiacere del morire, detto Athanatophilia. Divisi in cinque Dialoghi, occorsi in cinque giornate. Ne’ quali si discorre quanto ragionevolmente si dovrebbe desiderar la Morte; E come naturalmente la si vada fuggendo. (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1596), 185-190. Glissenti, born in Brescia, worked as a physician in Venice. On Glissenti and the Discorsi morali, including its publication history in Venice, see George W. McClure, ”The Ars and the Ars moriendi in Late Renaissance Venice: The Professions in Fabio Glissenti’s Discorsi morali contra il dispiacere del morire, detto Athanatophilia (1596),” Renaissance Quarterly 51, no. 1 (1988) and George W. McClure, The Culture of Profession in Late Renaissance Italy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 177-202.
which was not strictly limited to practitioners of the art of comfort. Many diaries, chronicles, short pamphlets, and other literary sources also describe the practice of comforting; in some cases, these sources provide a window into the public’s response to the practice of public execution. For instance, the Bolognese poet Giulio Cesare Croce wrote, published, and sold ballads memorializing a wide variety of public events, including public executions which occurred in Bologna and elsewhere; Croce’s pamphlets are an intriguing source regarding the popular response to the ritual of public capital punishment.\footnote{118}{See my own analysis and translation of two of Croce’s poems on public executions in Bologna and Ferrara. Bailey, “Giulio Cesare Croce,” 327-339. Another poem, published in Venice in 1597, is Giulio Cesare Croce, Il lacrimoso lamento che fece la signora Prudentia anconitana, innanzi che fusse condotta alla Giustizia, per haver avenenato il suo Marito (Venice: Marco Claferi, 1597). While the earliest edition does not bear Croce’s name, the poem is attributed to Croce by the Biblioteca Comunale del Archiginnasio di Bologna.}

Texts on comforting the condemned derive from the \textit{ars moriendi} tradition, a genre of literature on the "art of dying well" meant to help the moribund to win the spiritual combat believed to occur immediately before death.\footnote{119}{On the \textit{ars moriendi}, see Alberto Tenenti, \textit{Il senso della morte e l’amore della vita nel Rinascimento} (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1957), 62-120; Philippe Ariès, \textit{Western Attitudes towards Death} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), 36-37; Paglia, \textit{La morte confortata} ; and Mary Catharine O’Connor, \textit{The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi} (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 21-24, 48-60. O’Connor concludes that the long version of the \textit{ars moriendi} borrowed heavily from the early fifteenth-century treatise \textit{De arte moriendi} of Jean Gerson (1363-1429), and that the actual author was a Dominican who cannot be identified with certainty. On the relationship between the \textit{ars moriendi} tradition and the use of the \textit{tavoletta} in executions, see Edgerton, \textit{Pictures and Punishment}, 172-192.}
The \textit{ars moriendi} envisioned a battle between the forces of God and Satan for the soul of the dying person, the \textit{moriens}. For the condemned as for all Christians who ascribed to this tradition, the final moments of earthly life were all-important. A lifetime of piety could be wasted if an individual was weak and unprepared for the deathbed battle. But at the same time, with sincere repentance, even the most sinful life could be salvaged and the sinner redeemed. Illustrated versions of the \textit{ars moriendi} in the Italian vernacular, often attributed to Domenico Capranica, Cardinal of Fermo (1400-1458), were published in many cities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.\footnote{120}{The two editions studied for this dissertation are \textit{Incomincia el prohemio della arte del ben morire cioe in gratia di dio compilato & composto per lo reuereando in christo padre monsignor cardinale di fermo negli anni del nostro Signore 1452}, (Florence: Bartolomeo dei Libri, after 1500) and \textit{Questa operetta tracta dell arte del ben morire cioe in gratia di Dio composto per el reuereando padre monsignore Cardinale di Fermo}, (Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1503). O’Connor notes that although many Italian vernacular editions are attributed to Capranica, he is more likely the translator of the work from Latin rather than its author. O’Connor, \textit{The Art of Dying Well}, 49.}

In 1496, the Dominican preacher Fra Girolamo Savonarola gave a famous and influential sermon on the art of dying well, which was frequently reprinted thereafter.\footnote{121}{On Savonarola’s sermon and its influence, see Lorenzo Polizzotto, "Dell’Arte del ben morire: The Piagnone Way of Death 1494-1545," \textit{I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance} 3 (1989).} Other versions of the \textit{ars moriendi} included the treatise by...
Vincenzo Auruccio, directed towards clergy in attendance at deathbeds, and a later treatise by Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine.\(^{122}\)

Comforting was widely understood as an intellectually demanding task as well as a spiritually and physically demanding one, and the comforter needed to be well-educated to combat the various arguments and heresies put forth by the wily and desperate prisoner. Specifically, Giovan Battista Gargaria (discussed earlier in this section) indicates that the comforter was to be versed in criminal law, as well as theology and the sciences.\(^{123}\) For the comforter himself, this work was understood as a heavy burden, but since it was an act of *amor proximi*, it offered the sincere comforter great spiritual merit.\(^{124}\) Indeed, comforting the condemned was more important work than simply comforting the afflicted, for to persuade a prisoner "such that he acquieses to the will of God, and suffers the ignominy of the world and his punishment patiently and quietly", is to be the agent of recovery of a lost soul.\(^{125}\) However, if this work was performed in hopes of earning public esteem or worldly glory, or if it was done with trepidation or doubt, it would offer no spiritual benefit to the comforter.\(^{126}\)

The comforter needed to be in good health, strong, and robust, because the work was physically exhausting.\(^{127}\) He should be devoted, pious, and God-fearing, and enjoy a clean reputation in the community; otherwise the condemned might find his advice hypocritical.\(^{128}\) He should be courageous, upbeat, and jovial, but not effeminate, delicate, or given over easily to nausea, for the *paziente* often smelled or was in an otherwise repulsive condition. Finally, he should be brave enough to go onto the scaffold, with all its instruments of death and torture, with crowds of people watching, amidst sighs, cries, and other heart-stopping noises, and he should remain strong next to the man who dies. It is a great thing, Gargiaria writes, to see that universal horror, and the shaking of the onlookers - oh, what obscurity, what darkness - and therefore the Maestro [i.e., the chief comforter] at that point should be prudent, steady, strong, and constant with his *tavoletta* or crucifix in hand, consoling and encouraging the *patiente*, urging him to invoke the salvific and holy names of Jesus and Mary. Or for those who are tortured with pincers and carried through the city on a cart, to see the executioner

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\(^{123}\) Gargiaria, *Conforto Part I*, 5-7, 18

\(^{124}\) "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 2," 247

\(^{125}\) Medici, *Trattato del conforto*, 1


\(^{127}\) Gargiaria, *Conforto Part I*, 5-7, 18

\(^{128}\) Ibid., 6; "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 2," 247
continuously lacerate and burn the flesh of the miserable condemned man with hot irons, and to see the great amount of blood pouring out of those wounds, giving off smoke and the smell of burning human flesh; and here one does not hear anything but screams, and extraordinary shrieks calling for compassion, pity, mercy... which would break even the hardest heart.  

Through all of these horrors, while others cry or faint, the comforter must remain strong as well as alert and practical. For instance, in the moments prior to a decapitation, he should remember to encourage the condemned to bend to kiss the tavoletta. In this position the first blow is more likely to be a clean cut and the prisoner will avoid unnecessary suffering.

Comforting guides tailored the advice of the *ars moriendi* specifically to the circumstances of death by execution, and often added suggestions for the lay or religious comforter dealing with specific scenarios. A major theme underlying these texts is transformation: through the efforts of comforters, the condemned is transformed from a protesting savage to a compliant subject, from an outsider to a member of the brotherhood, from a sinner to something more akin to a saint. For instance, Gargiaria describes the condemned person at the start of the process as typically more like a wild beast than a man. The second and third volumes of Gargiaria's treatise focus on particular tricks played by crafty prisoners hoping to avoid or delay the death sentence. These include pretending to be an "Arab" (i.e. a Muslim), and hence refusing to confess, a source of enormous distress for comforters intent on ensuring the prisoner's salvation; and blaming celestial forces rather than his own sinful acts for bringing him to this point. At the end of the process, thanks to the skill of the comforter, all of these types - the dumb animal, the trickster, and the heretical lunatic - should undergo a stunning change. Instead of raging, protesting, or dragging his feet, the condemned man would welcome the release from earthly misery offered by execution. He would accept death with joy and gladness; and he would be so thoroughly at one with divine will that he would wish to die a thousand times to please God and atone for the ingratitude shown in his sinful life.

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129 Gargiaria, *Conforto Part I*, 6
130 "Bologna Comforters' Manual, Book 2," 275
131 Gargiaria, *Conforto Part I*, 10. A similar metaphor is used in Croce, *Lacrimoso lamento*, in which the voice of the *patiente*, in this case a woman, describes herself as like an animal at the butcher.
132 Gargiaria, *Conforto Part II*
134 Gargiaria, *Conforto Part I*, 10, 90. According to Giulio Cesare Croce's poetic description of one successful execution in Bologna, the young noblewoman Ippolita, who was to be decapitated for patricide, went to her death joyfully "as if she were going to her wedding." Giulio Cesare Croce, *Caso compasioneuole e lacrimoso lamento di due infelici amanti condannati alla giustizia in Bologna, alli 3. Genaro 1587. Composta da Giulio Cesare Croce* (Bologna: Gli Heredi del Cocchi. Al Pozzo Rosso, da San Damiano, 1623), 6. For an English translation see Bailey, "Giulio Cesare Croce," 332.
According to Fra Zanobio de’ Medici, the benefits of execution were many, both for the community and for the condemned. First, the community benefitted from justice enforced, for without justice thieves would go unpunished. Justice, he explains, is like a star before the sun, bright and clear, and without it there is no peace. Yet another benefit of execution is that it removes the possibility that the person will continue to do harm, both to others and to his own soul. In fact, in his view capital punishment could save the sinner from eternal damnation, because potential sins are avoided by execution. Fra Zanobio favorably compares the benefits of dying via execution to those of dying naturally in bed. The condemned man is surrounded by comforters -- good, pious people who are experts in the art of dying, who offer only spiritual comfort, and who have no other aim beyond saving his soul. By contrast, the friends and family surrounding the man who dies in bed distract him from thoughts of God. The sick and bedridden moriens always hopes to elude death and recover, thoughts that detract from the health of the soul. While the sick are too disoriented or in pain to think of God, the condemned are often strong of body and can focus on their souls. Furthermore, a natural death does not lend itself to remedying the sins for which one will suffer in Purgatory. One who fully accepts public punishment dies a martyr’s death, and goes to heaven immediately, like the thief on the Cross "who, devoutly receiving that horrible punishment with a contrite heart, deserved to hear those great words from the Savior: "Today you will be with me in Paradise.” Another benefit for the community is the deterrent effect of public execution: the sight of evildoers being punished convinces others to mend their ways. In fact, Fra Zanobio suggests that, like a preacher whose sermons help to save the souls of listeners, the condemned person should advise other potential criminals to learn from his example. Moreover, it was generally understood that those who died on the scaffold shared with their free brethren the burden of sin; the difference between the paziente and other members of the community was only one of degree. Therefore, although the condemned had been convicted of serious crimes, in their final moments they could serve as a model for all the dying. In this sense, Fra Zanobio presents a good death on the scaffold as a form of amor proximi performed by the condemned for the benefit of those who have come to watch him die. In the ideal, the comforted prisoner would also publically forgive his executioner, the officials who had condemned him, and the community that witnessed his violent death. Therefore, the prisoner would

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135 Medici, Trattato del conforto, 12-17
136 Ibid., 16
137 Ibid., 12-13. On the good thief as a model, see also Gargiaria, Conforto Part I, 64-65.
138 Mansi, Documenti per confortare i condannati a morte, 91-126 on strategies for comforting prisoners who feel hate for those who contributed to the death sentence. See also Medici, Trattato del conforto, 13, exhorting the condemned to imitate Christ in forgiving his tormentors. See also "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 2," 271. So too, in Luca della Robbia’s account of the execution of Pietro Paulo Boscoli, the executioner asked the forgiveness of the condemned and offered to pray for him. Luca della Robbia, "Narrative of the Death of Pietro Paolo Boscoli and of Agostino Capponi (1513),” in The Art of Executing Well: Rituals of Execution in Renaissance Italy, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 321.
perform a work of spiritual mercy, enacting charity much like his newfound confrateral brothers did.\textsuperscript{139}

Ultimately, comforters focused on convincing the prisoner to accept a simple but powerful assertion: the prisoner’s public execution was God’s will. Whether innocent or guilty, young or old, the condemned should bear in mind that resistance to God’s will would result in eternal damnation. In counterpoint to eternal damnation, comforters offered malefactors the hope of salvation through transformation: by submitting to the process, the condemned might be transformed from a protesting savage to a compliant subject, from a transgressive outsider to a member of a pious brotherhood, from a sinner to something more akin to a saint. Instead of raging, protesting, or dragging his feet, the condemned man would welcome the release from earthly misery offered by execution; and through his willing submission and love of God, he might engage those around him in a demonstration of Christian charity which would benefit the community. Under the right circumstances the paziente’s passage from life to death could be reconceived as a joyous transition from the oppressive darkness of earthly life to a place of spiritual illumination and eternal salvation. The paraphernalia used by the Scuola di S. Fantin in the execution ritual symbolized this transition. When accompanying a prisoner to the scaffold, confratelli dressed in black robes and hoods, and they carried candles made of black wax as well as the dark wooden crucifix.\textsuperscript{140} But after an execution, when the Scuola collected the body and processed to burial, these items were exchanged for corresponding white ones.\textsuperscript{141} The change to white robes, candles, and crucifix symbolized the hope that the Scuola’s efforts had been successful and that the soul of the departed had passed from the darkness to a place of spiritual light.

\textsuperscript{139} The Bologna Comforter’s Manual also positions the prisoner’s willingness to participate in his salvation as an act of charity towards his own soul. “Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 2,” 241.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid. Fontioni de Giustitiati. The black candles are also noted by Vecellio, Habiti antichi, 173-174.
\textsuperscript{141} ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni de Giustitiati. The obligation to bury the condemned was fulfilled starting in the seventeenth century.
Chapter 2. The Meeting House of the Scuola di San Fantin

Our Confraternity was founded by people of the greatest zeal and Christian piety who march under the standard of Christ Crucified, and it is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Jerome, Doctor of the Church. [Our founders] based their principles on meritorious works, and with no little study and the same dedication they collected alms with which they built a Temple and Scuola no less sumptuous in structure than it is devout, wherein the souls of the dead might be liberated from the pains of Purgatory through the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, and where they might dower poor maidens who were about to become Brides of Christ or embrace the Sacrament of Matrimony.¹

The former meeting house of the Scuola di San Girolamo e Santa Maria della Giustizia stands in the Campo San Fantin, in the parish of San Angelo and the sestiere of San Marco (Fig. 2.1). The building’s white marble façade faces south, directly onto the Campo San Fantin (Fig. 2.2, details at Figs. 2.3-2.13). Its western flank and secondary façade run along the present-day Calle della Verona. To the east and the north, the meeting house borders the walls and interior courtyards of adjacent properties. The building was given over to the Veneta Società di Medicina in 1806, and then to the Ateneo Veneto in 1812.² The Ateneo Veneto has occupied the meeting house of the Scuola ever since, and the building’s rooms currently serve as its administrative offices, conference rooms, and library.³ With one exception discussed below, the Ateneo Veneto has largely preserved the exterior of the building as it existed in the eighteenth century.

The meeting house of the Scuola was built in three major campaigns between 1562 and the 1670s. The building consists of two stories connected by a barrel-vaulted single-ramp staircase (Fig. 2.14). On the ground-floor, the piano terra, are two rooms: a large, ornately decorated hall, now called the Aula Magna, that originally served as the Oratory, and a smaller room, now the Sala del Consiglio, that was originally the Scuola's New Sacristy (Diagram 1). The second floor, which corresponds to the piano nobile in residential architecture, includes another large room, the former chapter hall or Albergo Grande, which is now the Sala di Lettura of the Ateneo, and a second room, now the Sala Tommaseo, that was once the Albergo Piccolo (Diagram 2).⁴ This chapter relates the construction history of the building

¹ ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, fol. 3r
² Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, 66
³ Zampetti, Guida, 17. For a history of the building’s travails after the Scuola’s suppression and an account of remodeling and repairs performed by the Ateneo during the nineteenth century, see Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, 66-100.
⁴ For the sake of clarity, the rooms of the meeting house are distinguished herein with capital letters (i.e., Albergo rather than albergo) and are referred to by the names typically assigned to them by the confraternity. Therefore, the rooms of the building are: the Oratory, the New Sacristy (or the room which preceded it, the Old Sacristy), the Albergo Grande, and the Albergo Piccolo. The Albergo Piccolo is also sometimes called the Albergo Nuovo in the Scuola’s own records.
and discusses both the layout and architectural ornamentation in light of the Scuola’s ideology and the broader tradition of confraternal and ecclesiastical architecture in Venice.

**The Original Site**

While the lavish meeting houses built by the city’s prestigious *scuole grandi* were significant architectural landmarks, the vast majority of Venetian confraternities possessed no independent site. Rather, small *scuole* usually met in an affiliated church where they would maintain an altar at which they could celebrate the Mass together. In the early years of their existence, both the Scuola di Santa Maria della Giustizia and the Scuola di San Girolamo, the two confraternities that merged to become the Scuola di San Fantin, appear to have met at altars in the Church of San Fantin.⁵

In 1471, the *confratelli* of the merged confraternity received permission to build an independent site and chapel to be ornamented with “a beautiful decorated altarpiece in honor of the glorious Virgin St. Mary”, an undertaking that suggests the increasing wealth and prestige of the organization.⁶ Presumably a meeting house was constructed soon after permission was granted, but no record of the original building’s appearance has survived. In Jacopo dei Barbari’s map of Venice of 1500, its probable location is obscured by the bell tower of the church of San Fantin. ⁷ The structure must have been relatively small, since many of the properties demolished

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⁵ In 1443, when the Council of Ten granted the *confratelli* of the Scuola di Santa Maria della Giustizia the right to assist the condemned, they noted that the Scuola was located in the church of San Fantin. Cornellio, *Ecclesiae venetae*, 333, October 23, 1443, and Vio, *Le scuole piccole*, 376. In the request for permission to consolidate into a single group, the Scuola di San Girolamo is also described as "apud Ecclesiam S. Fantini". Cornellio, *Ecclesiae venetae*, 335, November 21, 1458. In his discussion of the origins of confraternal meeting houses within monastic complexes, Phillip Sohm states that the "Scuola di Sta. Maria delle Grazie", which later "merged with the Scuola di S. Gerolamo... to form the Scuola di S. Fantin", was originally located above the entrance to the monastery of S. Girolamo di Fiesole on the Isola delle Grazie, a small island in the lagoon. Phillip L. Sohm, "The Scuola Grande di San Marco, 1437-1550: The Architecture of a Venetian Lay Confraternity" (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University, 1978), 66-67 and n. 21. The Scuola did indeed build and maintain a small chapel on the Isola delle Grazie; early sources indicate that this chapel was outside the entrance to the monastic complex. However, there is no evidence that it was ever used as a meeting site for the confraternity. Indeed, since the island is accessible only by boat, it would have been an inconvenient location. Rather, the chapel on the Isola delle Grazie was used by the confraternity as a burial site for the condemned, and this practice started only in the early seventeenth century. The earliest record of such usage, and of the confraternity's association with the island and monastery, dates from the seventeenth century. According to records conserved in the Biblioteca del Museo Correr, an plaque inscribed "Anno Domini M.D.C.XIII" (1613) on the wall near the altar of the chapel stated that the confraternity used the site to bury disemboweled and decapitated corpses. BCMC Codice Gradenigo 96, Isola e chiesa delle Grazie, fol. 29v, 33v. On the Scuola's use of the Isola delle Grazie, see Paoletti, *Fiore di Venezia*, vol. I, 181; Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 9-13; Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia scomparsa*, 2 vols. (Milan: Electa editrice, 1972), 406-407; Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 66-70; and Chapter 1 herein.

⁶ ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, fol. 140v, October 20, 1471

⁷ A detail of the map is reproduced in Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, Tav. II.
and incorporated into the later meeting house were acquired only in the second half of the sixteenth century. Whatever its form, the building was completed and already deteriorating by 1531; in that year, Marin Sanudo noted that the Scuola was raising money for the construction of a new site since the existing one was "old and ruined". In 1560, the Scuola acquired additional property on the Campo San Fantin from one Lorenzo Loredan, perhaps with the intention of expanding and rebuilding the existing structure. But two years later, the entire meeting house and most of its contents were destroyed by fire. This disaster necessitated complete reconstruction, and the building in its present form began to take shape.

Construction History After 1562

After the 1562 fire, the new meeting house was constructed and gradually enlarged in three distinct phases. By 1569, an Oratory on the ground floor was complete and public masses were being held there. In that year, an ongoing dispute between the Scuola and the parish priest of the neighboring church of San Fantin regarding public access to the room erupted once again. The church sought to enforce a ruling regarding the opening times and the number of masses which could be held in the Oratory, whose altar was attracting a growing number of devotees (and thus diverting traffic and alms from the church’s own altars). Three years later, a notation in the Scuola’s records mentions another altar, dedicated to St. Jerome, “upstairs in our albergo”. Thus, by 1572, the building comprised two levels, an Oratory below and another large room, referred to at this point simply as the albergo but later called the Albergo Grande, on the piano nobile.

The second phase of construction occurred in the 1580s, when the Scuola acquired two parcels that together comprised four stories adjacent to its existing site. On January 11, 1580, the Scuola recorded the purchase of a two-story structure facing the Campo San Fantin from Andrea Malipiero, at the price of 600 ducats. Two days later, on January 13, the Scuola concluded the purchase of a second property above the one purchased from Malipiero; the second acquisition, also two

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8 Sanudo, Diarii, Vol. 24, col. 618
9 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 34, Acquisti, fol. 1, November 23, 1560. This property may be one of the parcels incorporated into the building in the 1580 phase of construction.
10 The dispute between the parish church and the confraternity is recorded as early as 1542. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 27v, August 28, 1542. According to the Scuola’s notes on the renewed controversy in 1569, an image of “that blessed Christ of this Scuola” stood on the altar. This most likely refers to the Scuola’s portable fifteenth-century wooden crucifix, one of the only items to be salvaged from the 1562 fire. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 25r, May 28, 1569.
11 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 13r, April 27, 1572
12 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 87v, January 11, 1579 [m.v.]. A related record is found in ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 1r-2r.
stories, was sold by Paula Donati for 1,450 ducats. The parcel purchased from Donati faced the Campo and Church of S. Fantin; it was bounded on the east by a property owned by the Church of S. Fantin that faced the Calle Minelli (formerly known as the Calle Grondal), on the west by the existing property of the Scuola, and on the north by a “corte” owned by Malipiero. Both properties were promptly demolished in order to expand the meeting house. It seems likely that the Oratory and Albergo Grande - the two rooms immediately behind the façade on Campo San Fantin - were enlarged to their present dimensions during this phase of construction. By 1582 Jacopo Palma il Giovane was already working on his vast scene of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin for the ceiling of the upper hall, so that room must have been nearing completion.

After the sale of his portion of the building to the confratelli of S. Fantin, Malipiero retained property next to the Scuola; the Scuola agreed to include a window in the wall of the Oratory that faced onto Malipiero’s property to allow him to see Masses being celebrated therein. The record of this transaction refers to a "corte" whose wall was shared by the Scuola and Malipiero. The term "corte" may refer to a courtyard. But in Venetian usage, it may also refer to a group of houses surrounded a shared courtyard.

13 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 87v, January 13, 1579 [m.v.] and ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fol. 1.
14 See below for the definition of the word "corte", which may refer to a courtyard (cortile) or a group of houses surrounded a shared courtyard.
15 The confraternity's intentions for the property are made clear in a record from July 2, 1580. Discussing the need to rebuild a crumbling wall which threatened the house of the Piovan of the Church of San Fantin, the Scuola confirmed that the purchased buildings were immediately destroyed in order to build the Scuola. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 93v-94r, July 2, 1580. See also the affirmation by Guardian Grande Antonio Simon on the 1580 demolition of the purchased properties and plans for reconstruction. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 34, Processo B, Scola c.o N.H. s. Alvise Bon, fols. 36-37v, April 7, 1600. This record is also transcribed in Victoria J. Avery, "Documenti sulla vita e le opere di Alessandro Vittoria (c. 1525-1608)." Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche Sezione Prima, LXXVIII, Supplemento, no. 1 (1999): 131. Simon’s declaration was affirmed by the X Savi. ASV, Magistrato X Savi, Reg. 784, fols. 108v, April 14, 1600.
16 Raffaello Borghini, Il Riposo di Raffaello Borghini (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1584; reprint, Facsimile edition, Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildesheim, 1969), 560-561. Schulz argues that Palma’s painting must have been in progress by 1582, for Borghini’s notes were assembled by then. Jurgen Schulz, Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 81.
17 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 87v, January 11, 1579 [m.v.]. A related record is found in ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 1r-2r. ["Che fabricando la Scuola Nostra dalla parte della Corte, sia commun trà essa Scola, ed esso M. Andrea senz’altro pagamento ne essendo sufficiente, possa esso M. Andrea farlo a sue spese. In esso muro faccia la Scola una finestra a sue spese di pietra viva con sua ferriada di denaro, e sia lunga p.2 e più, se la potrà, e alta p.2 per la qual esso M. Andrea sabbia libertà di guarzar in Scola, ogni tempo si dirà Messa, & altri Divini uffici. ."]
18 The term is used in this sense in ground plans of the small apartments constructed by the Scuola in the early seventeenth century. The plans are published in Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, Plates 8, 9.
residences, often built for the poor, set around a central courtyard.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, it is uncertain whether the Scuola's property abutted an open space or a building owned by Malipiero. If this window was ever built, it no longer exists, and its precise location is difficult to ascertain. Two courtyards bound the main fabric of the Scuola; these are marked "E" and "F" in Fig. 2.1. If the wall shared with Malipiero ran along one side of the property purchased in 1580, then the area in question is most likely to be Courtyard "F" or the buildings on either side of it to the east of the Scuola. Therefore, the viewing window was probably located on the east wall of the Oratory. Such a vantage point would offer a reasonably clear view of the Oratory's north wall, the eventual location of Alessandro Vittoria's Assumption Altar.

The sites selected for the meeting houses of the scuole grandi generally included direct access to a canal to facilitate travel by boat. For instance, the Rio della Frascada runs behind the Scuola Grande di San Rocco; the Scuola Grande di San Marco is flanked by the Rio dei Mendicanti; and the back of the Scuola Grande di San Teodoro runs along the Rio di San Salvador-Lovo. At some confraternities, a water gate provided direct access between the canal and the building.\textsuperscript{20} At the Scuola di San Fantin, travel by boat for confraternal business was complicated by the fact that the site was not directly adjacent to any waterway. Therefore, in 1585 the Scuola made arrangements with ser Nicolò Balbi, the owner of neighboring property which had access to the Rio della Verona, to allow passage through his property to reach the water. The passage would be secured by two locked wooden gates.\textsuperscript{21}

No published descriptions of the meeting house in these years mention the room known as the Old Sacristy, but there is reason to believe that it also existed by

\textsuperscript{19} See, for instance, the discussion of housing for the working poor, such as the complex known as the Corte San Marco, in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture, and the Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 201-205. Also on housing for the poor, see Brian S. Pullan, "Abitazione al servizio dei poveri nella Repubblica di Venezia," in *Dietro i palazzi. Tre secoli di architettura minore a Venezia 1492-1803*, ed. Giorgio Gianighian and Paola Pavanini (Venice: 1984).

\textsuperscript{20} Sohm suggests that the 1437 request to the Magistrato del Piovego by Scuola Grande di S. Marco to dredge the waters to the north of newly acquired land was made "to provide a navigable approach to the Scuola's rear, water entrance." Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 80. The double-ramp staircase designed in 1498 by Mauro Codussi for the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista included a water entrance at the base of one of the ramps, in imitation of the water entrance on the ground floor of the Scuola Grande di S. Marco. Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 202; and Ralph Lieberman, *Renaissance Architecture in Venice 1450-1540* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982), 25. The Scuola Grande della Carità (now part of the complex that houses the Gallerie dell'Accademia) also had a rear water entrance, but the canal onto which it opened has since been filled in.

\textsuperscript{21} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Scola Nostra, fol. 85r, February 23, 1584 [m.v.]. Nicolò Balbi is identified by Pavanello as the son of Vincenzo Balbi and Paola Donà (i.e. Paola Donati), who had sold one of the previously purchased parcels to the Scuola. Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 43-44. The Rio della Verona was once known as the Rio Menuo or the Rio di San Cristoforo. Pavanello provides an illustration of a map of 1808 in which this name is used (*Scuola di S. Fantin*, Tav. II).
this time.\textsuperscript{22} The Old Sacristy is first described in the 1664 edition of Le Minere della Pittura, in which Boschini noted that the room’s decoration included six scenes from the life of the Virgin attributed to Alvise dal Friso (an assistant to and follower of Paolo Veronese) and a painting of an unspecified miracle of St. Jerome by Tintoretto.\textsuperscript{23} The six scenes of the life of the Virgin most likely refer to the group of paintings currently on display on the east wall of the reading room of the Ateneo Veneto.\textsuperscript{24}

By 1604, the two large rooms and their decorative programs were largely completed.\textsuperscript{25} According to Giovanni Stringa’s description in his updated and expanded edition of Sansovino’s Venetia città nobilissima, the two stories were connected by a "long and ample" staircase.\textsuperscript{26} This is likely the same single-ramp staircase that today runs along the north side of the fabric (Fig. 2.14).\textsuperscript{27} Here again the confraternity seems to have been deeply influenced by the architectural legacy of the scuole grandi; although the stairway has only a single ramp, its form is modelled on the celebrated double-ramp stair constructed by Mauro Codussi for the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista.\textsuperscript{28}

An additional room at the upper level appears to have been planned by 1616. In that year, the Scuola referred to a model by Tomaso Contin for an “albergo” in the "corte della Scola nostra" in a record concerning a property dispute regarding the construction of houses.\textsuperscript{29} Embroiled in a lawsuit over water access with the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Traverso argues, without noting her source, that the Old Sacristy occupied a parcel later sold by the Scuola to the left of the entrance on the Calle della Verona. Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 101 n. 108
\item \textsuperscript{23} Marco Boschini, Le Minere della Pittura. Compendiosa informazione di Marco Boschini non solo delle Piture publiche di Venezia: ma dell’Isole ancora circonvicine (Venice: Francesco Nicolini, 1664), 127-128.
\item \textsuperscript{24} The issues surrounding this cycle’s attribution and early history are discussed in Appendix B. For the images, see Figs. A1-A8.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Francesco Sansovino and Giovanni Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima et singolare, descritta già in XIII libri da M. Francesco Sansovino et hora con molta diligenza corretta, emendata, e più d’un terzo di cose nuove ampliata dal M.R.D. Giovanni Stringa, Canonico della Chiesa Ducale di S. Marco (Venice: Altobello Salicato, 1604), 91-92
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{27} The stair mentioned by Stringa must have been modified slightly in the last phase of construction in the 1660s in order to grant access to the newly constructed secondary corpus of rooms.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Among the unusual features of the double-ramp staircase at S. Giovanni Evangelista is the fact that the width of the ramps is greater at the top, reducing the perspectival narrowing effect that one experiences when looking up the stair at S. Fantin, whose ramp is of a constant width. The stair at S. Fantin is less ornate than the one at S. Giovanni Evangelista. However, both are covered by barrel-vaults, and both are well illuminated by windows on each landing. On the stair at S. Giovanni Evangelista, see Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 199-208.
\item \textsuperscript{29} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 94v-95r; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), Parte III fol. 52, record of September 25, 1616. Contin is described therein as "Proto della scuola nostra". As mentioned above, the term "corte" here likely refers to the houses (often given to the poor at very low rents) owned by the Scuola near the meeting house. Therefore, the Scuola may have planned to build the new albergo
\end{itemize}
nobleman Alvise Bon, the Scuola voted to halt work on the houses until the dispute was resolved. Presumably work was also halted on the albergo, since the Albergo Piccolo was not completed until the next major phase of construction in the 1660s.

In the 1620s, more property was acquired. In May 1622, the Scuola paid 3000 ducats to acquire three mezadi with two storage areas below, along with canal access, from Nicolò Balbi. In the following year, another 3,580 ducats were spent to purchase the house above these mezadi from Vincenzo Bragadin. The parcel acquired from Bragadin is described as sharing the riva, or shoreline, with a property referred to as the Ca’ Civran. Once again, the exact location of these properties is difficult to determine with precision, although it seems likely that both were purchased to ensure access to the canal.

In 1660s, the last major phase of building began. In July 1660, the Chapter agreed to dedicate 1000 ducats to the construction of a sacristy to replace the existing one, and to clean one of the building's altars. Six months later, another 1000 ducats were allotted to complete the New Sacristy as well as a second, smaller albergo (the Albergo Piccolo) directly above it. In 1665, 500 more ducats were dedicated to the construction. In the following years, wooden benches, shutters, and other items were ordered for both new rooms. The parcels used to construct the new wing may have been part of the property acquired from Paola Donati and Andrea Malipiero in 1580, although the acquisitions made in 1622 and 1623 may have been incorporated into the new project as well. In any event, there is no indication that more properties were purchased immediately before construction began, so the land on which the new wing was built must have already been in the Scuola’s possession.

In the 1808 inventory made after the Scuola’s suppression, an "upper room adjacent to the roof" is mentioned. The roofline of this room, above the Albergo

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30 On the dispute with Bon, see also Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 58 n. 52, where the record of September 25, 1616 is transcribed, and Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 119. Bon had blocked the access point that the Scuola had been awarded by Nicolò Balbi. The dispute was resolved in the Scuola’s favor in 1621.

31 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 40-41, May 9, 1622; see also Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 57-58. The term mezado, typically defined as a mezzanine, may also refer to an office or room. As discussed above, Balbi had originally granted access to the canal across his property.

32 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 43-45, record of April 19, 1623; Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 58; Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 120.

33 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 95r, July 13, 1664

34 Ibid. fol. 95r, January 23, 1664 [m.v.]

35 Ibid. fol. 95r, March 1, 1665 and July 12, 1665

36 Ibid. fol. 95v, March 21, 1666, July 10, 1667, and Feb. 27, 1669 [m.v.]

37 The original document containing the 1808 inventory, ASV, Regio Demanio Fascicolo IV b. 315, is now lost, but a legible photograph of the document is in the archive of the Ateneo Veneto. According to Pavanello (Scuola di S. Fantin, 56), in the early twentieth century, the third-floor room contained
Grande, is barely visible beyond the volutes of the façade (Fig. 2.2). The date of construction of the third floor is uncertain. It is visible and accurately represented in an engraving from 1720 by Domenico Lovisa (Fig. 2.18). While it does not appear in a 1703 print by Luca Carlevaris (Fig. 2.17), it is possible that the room existed prior to 1703, and that Carlevaris simply omitted it. The attic room is not depicted in at least two other prints of the façade produced long after the room must have been built (Figs. 2.19, 2.20).  

The Scuola di S. Fantin and the Tradition of Confraternal Architecture

The distribution and use of space at the meeting house of the Scuola di San Fantin followed a well-established tradition in Venetian confraternal architecture, and many of the building’s characteristics suggest that its planners were emulating specific precedents among the city’s scuole grandi. The scuole grandi occupied two-story meeting houses with one spacious room on each floor. At the ground level was a large hall, sometimes referred to as an androne or "assembly room", that served a variety of functions, including preparation for processions and the distribution of charity. The lower assembly room of some scuole grandi housed an altar. A second large room on the piano nobile invariably housed an altar, and the space was used for Masses as well as meetings of the confraternity’s membership. This upper room is often referred to as the salone or chapter hall. Also on the second

bones believed by some to be the remains of the condemned, but which were more likely left there by the Veneta Società di Medicina, whose occupancy predated the Ateneo.

38 These two prints were published by Giambatista Albrizzi (1740) and Jacopo Crescini (1832). Since Lovisa’s 1720 print accurately depicts its roofline, it must have been constructed by that date.

39 For a detailed history of the architectural development of the scuole grandi, see Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 52-110; Deborah Howard, The Architectural History of Venice (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 112 - 115; and Black, Italian Confraternities, 239ff. On the building type which came to be associated with the scuole, see Deborah Howard, Jacopo Sansovino: Architecture and Patronage in Renaissance Italy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 98; and Cooper, Palladio’s Venice, 264.

40 Sohm takes issue with the assumption that the lower hall at San Marco was used for the distribution of charity, proposing instead that typically the room "was of peripheral importance to the operation of the confraternity" and that its main purpose was "purely structural, that is, a means to elevate the chapter hall above the ground level, thereby creating a piano nobile suitable for the dignified governing of the confraternity and the worship of God." Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 62-63. He argues that charity was typically dispensed in the building’s albergo, where the banca sat behind a tribunal facing the entrance. Sohm, "Scuola Grande di San Marco", 57-58

floor, a smaller room called an albergo was used for meetings of the confraternity’s officers, the banca and zonta. This room, too, often contained an altar.42

According to Tracy Cooper, the persistence of the layout established by the scuole grandi resulted from the Venetian system of confraternal governance, in which officers served only for short periods of time.43 She argues that the frequent turnover in decision-making led to a tendency towards conservatism in the artistic and architectural patronage of the scuole. This conservatism, however, was tempered by a competitive desire to outdo one another in architectural grandeur. Therefore, buildings became increasingly lavish even as the basic layout of rooms was left unchanged. Adherence to architectural tradition also reflects the fact that this form served the ritual, social, and administrative needs of confraternities admirably, and that the functions performed within confraternal buildings remained largely constant throughout the early modern period.44

Among those scuole piccole who maintained an independent site, there was more variability in the size and number of rooms of a meeting hall. In his vast survey of the archives relating to the scuole piccole, Gastone Vio suggests that the halls of many scuole piccole consisted of a single room, often on the piano terra, with an altar and an altarpiece dedicated to the confraternity’s patron saint.45 Such was the case, for instance, at the Scuola Piccola di S. Gerolamo, a confraternity of about thirty members associated with the Church of S. Gerolamo in the sestiere of Cannaregio. According to a seventeenth-century plan of the Church of S. Gerolamo, the Scuola occupied a room next to the sacristy; the confraternity’s room could be accessed through its own exterior door, and an altar was placed against the wall opposite the entrance.46 The Scuola di S. Teodoro, which was founded in the thirteenth century and became a scuola grande in 1551, initially met in the Church of S. Salvador. However they also possessed a separate ground-floor room of uncertain location where they prepared food for the poor; in 1430, this ground-floor room was remodeled to serve as an albergo for the Scuola, and an altar dedicated to S. Teodoro was placed there.47

Despite these often humble beginnings, some ambitious small confraternities aspired to imitate the structure established by the scuole grandi more exactly, and built two-story structures with an assembly room below and a chapter hall above.48

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42 For instance, this was the case at the Scuole Grandi di S. Giovanni Evangelista and S. Maria della Carità.
43 Cooper, Palladio’s Venice, 263
44 On this point, see also Deborah Howard’s observation that the “architectural configuration of all these types of scuole was similar, for they fulfilled a broadly comparable function as meeting places and as centres for distributing charity….” Howard, Architectural History of Venice, 112.
45 Vio, Le scuole piccole, 24
46 The wall decoration and altarpiece of this scuola piccola are discussed further in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. See also Humfrey, "The Life of St. Jerome Cycle," 41-46; and Spadavecchia, Lazzaro Bastiani, both of whom also reproduce the ground plan.
47 Gallo, “Scuola Grande di San Teodoro,” 464-466
48 When a scuola possessed a second room on the piano nobile, both rooms might contain an altar. Vio, Le scuole piccole, 24. The lavish meeting hall built in the seventeenth century by the Scuola di S.
Surviving examples of two-story meeting halls used by small confraternities include the sixteenth-century meeting house of the Scuola Piccola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Fig. 2.15); and the building occupied by the Scuola dei Mercanti near the church of Madonna dell’Orto, which was rebuilt in the early 1570s based on designs by Andrea Palladio (Fig. 2.16). In 1570 the Scuola dei Mercanti, originally known as the Scuola di S. Maria e S. Cristoforo dei Mercanti, merged with another small, ancient, and prestigious confraternity, the Scuola S. Maria della Misericordia e S. Francesco dei Mercanti e Naviganti (housed at the Frari); the renovation of its meeting house provided a site suitable for its expanded membership. For smaller confraternities, undertaking the construction of additional small rooms demonstrated the wealth of these institutions and served as a sign of their growing stature within the community. For instance, Cooper convincingly interprets the campaign undertaken by the Scuola di Mercanti to add an albergo to its existing site as a competitive display that underscored its "image of prestige in relation to the other scuole of Venice." The addition of a separate, private space reserved for a confraternity's officers also reflected the increasingly strict hierarchy among the socio-economic groups present in the scuole.

At the Scuola di San Fantin, the addition of a richly decorated secondary corpus comprising the New Sacristy and Albergo Piccolo should be understood as an imitation of the scuole grandi, and as an architectural expression of the Scuola's determination to officially achieve that exalted designation for itself. This ambition, and the related desire to separate itself from the city's many scuole piccole or scuole di devozione, is reflected in its ongoing efforts to improve its standing and to clarify its official status. In 1611, the Scuola asked the Council of Ten for permission to process directly behind the confratelli of the scuole grandi on Holy Thursday to visit the Holy Blood in the Basilica of San Marco. Participation in this procession was important to the Scuola for its devotional significance, but it also offered an

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49 On Palladio's involvement in the rebuilding of the Scuola dei Mercanti, see Cooper, Palladio's Venice, 263-271.  
50 There is some confusion in the scholarly literature regarding the identity of the Scuola della Misericordia which merged with the Scuola dei Mercanti. Howard (Jacopo Sansovino, 96-112), who first fully analyzed the documents relating to the merger, suggested that it involved the Scuola Grande della Misericordia della Valverde, by then in a dire financial situation due to its investment in the construction of an enormous new meeting house. In a more recent publication, she confirms her original conclusion, although with considerable caution. Deborah Howard, "La Scuola Grande della Misericordia di Venezia," in La Scuola Grande della Misericordia di Venezia. Storia e progetto, ed. Gianni Fabbri (Milan: Skira, 1999), 33-35, with transcription of relevant documents at 66ff. More recently, Tracy Cooper (Palladio's Venice, 345 n. 10) persuasively argues that the Scuola in question was not the Scuola Grande but rather a small confraternity with a similar name, the Scuola S. Maria della Misericordia. Cooper's argument offers a convincing explanation of why both the Scuola dei Mercanti and the Scuola Grande della Misericordia della Valverde continued to exist long after 1570. 
51 Cooper, Palladio's Venice, 265 
52 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 38v, March 16, 1611
opportunity to associate itself with the *scuole grandi* in the eyes of the large crowds of spectators that the procession attracted.\(^{53}\) In 1671, soon after the secondary corpus was built, the Scuola asked the Council of Ten to grant it precedence at the funerals of members who were also members of other small *scuole*.\(^{54}\) The Scuola’s aspirations were largely realized in 1689 when the Council of Ten finally affirmed that it was a *scuola grande*.\(^{55}\)

While the basic form of the Scuola di S. Fantin followed the confraternal pattern, in some cases the terminology applied to its rooms varied from the norm. In the archival records, the ground-floor room of S. Fantin is typically called the "*oratorio*" or the "*chiesa*", while the upper hall is referred to as either the *albergo* or (after the Albergo Piccolo was added) the *albergo grande*. In the former case, the terminology indicates the function served by the room, which contained an altar and served as a chapel from the first years of the independent site.\(^{56}\) As in other small confraternities, in this early period the Scuola di S. Fantin may have been comprised of only one room, in which case the space would have served both administrative and religious functions. More unusual is the fact that the ground-floor room of the Scuola di S. Fantin also served as a *public* oratory (rather than a private chapel for Masses attended solely by the group’s own members). Public openings of the Oratory had certainly begun by 1542, when disputes with the *piovan* of the Church of S. Fantin regarding the opening times are first mentioned, but the practice may have been instituted long before.\(^{57}\) Prior to the construction of the New Sacristy and the Albergo Piccolo, the building’s upper hall probably served as both a chapter room (used for meetings of the general chapter as well as Masses) and an *albergo* (used for smaller meetings of the *banca*). After the new, smaller corpus of rooms was built, the Albergo Piccolo was used for meetings of the *banca*. But even so, the larger room continued to be called the Albergo (or the Albergo Grande to distinguish it from the smaller addition) despite the fact that it no longer served the usual purpose of a confraternal *albergo*.

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53 One commentator, describing an accident during the Holy Thursday procession of 1655 that took the lives of many people, noted that the crowds attended "... both to adore the precious Blood and to watch the *scuole grandi*, who go to adore it with a great number of lit torches." *Cronica veneta sacra e profana, o sia Un Compendio di tutte le cose più illustri ed antiche della Città di Venezia*, 100; see also Pacifico, *Cronica veneta*, 125.
54 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 63v-r, February 25, 1670 [m.v.]
55 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 72v, August 19, 1689
56 The 1471 authorization from the Council of Ten contemplated the construction of a chapel with an altar dedicated to the Virgin, and in 1531 Marin Sanudo referred to the Scuola’s building as a "*chiesia*". ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, fol. 140v, October 20, 1471; Sanudo, *Diarii*, Vol. 24, col. 618.
57 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 27v, August 28, 1542
The Façade and its Attribution

The façade of the Scuola di San Fantin, like those of many other buildings in Venice, is a thin screen of marble with no structural relationship to the building it ornaments. No surviving records from the Scuola definitively attest to the identity of its architect. However, stylistic evidence and documentation regarding the façade’s ornamentation point strongly towards the conclusion that the building should be attributed to Alessandro Vittoria.\(^{58}\) Primarily known as a sculptor, Vittoria had been a collaborator of both Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea Palladio.\(^{59}\) He was also a close friend of Francesco Tedaldo, one of the confraternity’s prominent members who had also served as its Guardian Grande.\(^{60}\)

By the 1580s, Vittoria and his assistants were working on the marble and bronze figural sculptures which crown the façade (Figs. 2.11-2.13). In 1583 and 1584, he made a series of payments to several assistants who contributed to the

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\(^{58}\) The stylistic affinity between the façade and other works by Alessandro Vittoria is discussed below. Although this point is rarely articulated clearly, the reader should note that most scholars discussing the identity of the building’s architect are really speaking more narrowly about the attribution of its façade. The building complex as a whole grew in several phases over the course of a century. While Alessandro Vittoria probably oversaw the construction of the primary rooms of the meeting house, the secondary corpus (built in the late seventeenth century) are not attributed to him.


\(^{60}\) Ridolfi describes Francesco Tedaldo as the "amorevolissimo compare" of Alessandro Vittoria. Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell’arte; ovvero Le vite degli illustri pittori veneti e dello stato* (1648), ed. Detlev Freiherrn von Hadeln, Fonti per la storia dell’arte (Roma: Societa multigrafica editrice SOMU, 1965), Parte Seconda, 177. In a will of 1584, Vittoria bequeathed a bronze statue to Tedaldo, his "amico benevolo” (ASV, Notarile-Testamenti (Vettor Maffei), Busta 657 No. 13, also transcribed in Avery, "Documenti,” no. 121). Tedaldo is named as an executor in Vittoria’s sixth will, and was bequeathed a portrait as a "segno d’amore" (ASV, Notarile-Testamenti (Giulio Figolino), Busta 402 No. 11, also transcribed in Avery, "Documenti,” no. 138). On the friendship between Tedaldo and Vittoria, see also Thomas Martin, "Vittoria e la committenza,” in "La bellissima maniera”. *Alessandro Vittoria e la scultura veneta del Cinquecento*, ed. Andrea Bacchi, Lia Camerlengo, and Manfred Leithe-Jasper (Trent: Provincia autonoma di Trento, Servizio beni culturali, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Monumenti e collezioni provinciali, 1999), 66.
During renovations in 1961, Vittoria’s signature was found on the bases of two of the crowning sculptures, further confirming his authorship. While this evidence proves Vittoria’s responsibility only for the sculptures, there is no reason to doubt that he conceived the design as a whole. In all probability, it was completed around 1584, when the last payments to his assistants were recorded.

The first writer to associate Vittoria with the meeting house’s design was Tommaso Temanza, an architect in the neo-Classical mode as well as a critic, whose influential Vite dei più celebri architetti, e scultori veneziani was published in 1778. In the nineteenth century, Ermolao Paoletti, Pietro Selvatico, and Tommaso Gar followed Temanza’s attribution, as do many recent scholars. Despite these indications that Vittoria designed the façade, its attribution has been the subject of dispute, with some scholars suggesting that the brothers Antonio and Tommaso Contin were its architects. In 1881, R. Fulin and P.G. Molmenti published a description of the building (which by that time housed the Ateneo Veneto), describing it as the work of "Francesco Contin, sec. XVII"; however, they attributed the large relief on the façade’s attic register to Alessandro Vittoria. In his early and important study of the Scuola’s history, Giuseppe Pavanello also attributed the building to the Contin family, adding that it was a curious coincidence that Antonio Contin, the builder of the Prigioni Nuove where the condemned were incarcerated, also constructed the meeting house of the confraternity assigned to comfort them. The attribution to the Contin brothers was followed by Francesco Cessi in a monograph on Vittoria published in 1961; by Douglas Lewis in his 1967 doctoral

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61ASV, S. Zaccaria, Reg. 18, Commissaria Vittoria Vol. 1, fol. 89v, May 21, 1583 to May 6, 1584. The assistants named are: Jacopo da Bassano, Piero da Santa Lucia, Andrea dall’Aquila, and Agostino Rubino. This record is also transcribed in Avery, "Documenti," 132-133.

62The signatures, found at the bases of the figures of the Virgin and one of the angels, read: “Alex Vict. F”. G. Mariacher, "La facciata dell'Ateneo e un'opera ritrovata di Andrea dell’Aquila," Ateneo Veneto 137, no. 1-2 (1953). See also Zampetti, Guida, 19 and Zampetti, "Restauri dell’Ateneo," 3-5.


64Paoletti, Fiore di Venezia, 153; Pietro Selvatico, Sulla architettura e sulla scultura in Venezia: dal medio evo sino ai nostri giorni (Venice: Paolo Ripamonte Carpano, 1857), 386-387; and Tommaso Gar, Vita di Alessandro Vittoria, scultore trentino, composta dal conte Benedetto dei Giovanelli e rifusa e accresciuta da Tommaso Gar (Trent: Tipografia Monuini, 1858), 84-86. The building is also attributed to Vittoria in C.F. Wiebeking, Architecture civile théorique et pratique (Munich: Imprimerie de M. Lindauer, 1828), 171. For more recent attributions, see Lorenzo Finocchi Gherisi, Alessandro Vittoria: architettura, scultura e decorazione nella Venezia del tardo Rinascimento (Udine: Forum, 1998), 170-173. Martin, “Vittoria e la committenza,” 64-66; Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 121-123; and Zampetti, Guida, 18-19.

65R. Fulin and P.G. Molmenti, Guida artistica storica di Venezia e delle isole circonvicine (Venice: Tipografia di G. Antonelli, 1881), 158.

66Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, 44-50. On Contin and the building of the Ponte dei Sospiri (Bridge of Sighs), see Franzoi, Prigioni di Venezia, 47-48.
dissertation on Venetian baroque architecture; and by many other, more recent scholars.\textsuperscript{67} Although few of these attributions cite an archival source, records of the Scuola di San Fantin itself seem to lie at the heart of the confusion.\textsuperscript{68} Like many confraternities, the Scuola had acquired a significant amount of real estate, and some of its properties were rented out as a source of income or given to the poor as a form of charity.\textsuperscript{69} In 1599, the Scuola noted that certain of its rental properties in the Campo San Fantin were in a state of ruin. Being in possession of a "bona quantita di denari", they determined to demolish them and solicited proposed models for rebuilding.\textsuperscript{70} Three models were submitted, by Francesco Fracado, Bortolo di San Rocco, and Antonio Contin.\textsuperscript{71} In early modern Venice, respected architects were frequently invited to weigh in on proposals for new construction, as well as to assess completed works.\textsuperscript{72} In keeping with this practice, Alessandro Vittoria acted as judge of the competition at the Scuola di S. Fantin, suggesting that by this time he was a trusted advisor to the confraternity. Vittoria selected Contin’s model, a choice confirmed by a vote of the chapter. A year later, after Antonio Contin’s death, the Scuola decided that his brother Tommaso would take over as proto of the construction of the houses.\textsuperscript{73}


\textsuperscript{68} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Fabbriche, fol. 94r, April 18, 1599 and February 15, 1599 [m.v.]. Related records are found at ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), fol. 4r, August 29, 1599.

\textsuperscript{69} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Acquisti stabili, & affittarli, 87v-91v. See also Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 28-29. For information on real estate rentals as a source of income for the scuole grandi, see Pullan, Rich and Poor, 170-172.

\textsuperscript{70} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), Parte, 1r, April 18, 1599. In August of the same year, the Scuola records payments to Antonio Contin for three models. See also Avery, "Documenti," docs. 143(i-ii), Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 120-121, and Martin, "Vittoria e la committenza," 66.

\textsuperscript{71} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), fol. 4r, August 29, 1599.

\textsuperscript{72} See, for instance, Cooper (Palladio's Venice, 49) on Palladio’s role as advisor on Venetian building projects as an acknowledgement of his expertise.

\textsuperscript{73} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Parti, fol. 6r, 8 September 1600. Both Antonio and Tommaso Contin were members of the confraternity, and they appear on lists of members eligible for office. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), fol. 1r - 15v. The Contin family was of Swiss origin. In 1608, Tommaso became proto
In a 1962 article published to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Ateneo Veneto, Rodolfo Gallo argued that these records refer not to the construction of the meeting house, but rather to the building of rental houses on property owned by the Scuola. Gallo concluded that the façade of the meeting house should be given to Vittoria.\footnote{Rodolfo Gallo, "La scuola di S. Fantin e il suo architetto," \textit{Ateneo Veneto} (fascicolo speciale per il 150° anniversario) (1962): 26-29. Gallo noted that his findings had already been suggested in a correction to Riccardo Predelli’s 1908 text on Vittoria (\textit{Le memorie e le carte di Alessandro Vittoria} (Trent: G. Zippel, 1908), 221). However, Predelli’s addendum seems to have escaped the notice of many scholars who followed him.} His analysis is thorough and persuasive. Nonetheless, some scholars continue to assign the building to the Contin family. Therefore, it is worth emphasizing that the archival records regarding the Contin brothers refer to a building campaign that occurred in 1599 and 1600. Both the figural decoration which crowns the façade of the meeting house and the painted ceiling of the Albergo Grande on the upper floor were in the final stages of production in the 1580s, at least fifteen years before the \textit{concorso} to which Antonio Contin submitted his architectural model. No significant modifications to the building are recorded between the 1580s and 1664.\footnote{Jacopo Palma il Giovane was working on the ceiling painting of the Assumption for the \textit{albergo grande} by 1584. Raffaello Borghini, \textit{Il Riposo di Raffaello Borghini} (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1548; reprint, Facsimile edition, Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, Hildesheim, 1969), Libro Qvarto, 560-561.} The harmony between the crowning figures and the façade as a whole suggests that they were planned together, and it is implausible that Vittoria, an eminent and sought-after sculptor, was commissioned to sculpt the crowning ornamentation of a façade whose design had not yet been planned. The stylistic evidence for Vittoria's authorship is discussed further below.

The Façade within the Venetian Architectural Tradition

A preliminary question in any discussion of the significance of the Scuola’s façade is the extent to which the building today accurately reflects its original appearance. Early prints of the Campo San Fantin reveal that two small turrets, probably bell towers, once stood on bases at either side of the attic level. These appear in several seventeenth-century prints of the façade (Figs. 2.17-2.19), but they are not present in the 1832 edition of Jacopo Crescini’s \textit{Itinerario interno e delle isole della citta di Venezia} (Fig. 2.20).\footnote{Jacopo Crescini, \textit{Itinerario interno e delle isole della citta di Venezia: inciso e descritto in IV parti, Seconda Edizione} (Venice: Tipografia Antonelli, 1832)} Otherwise, the façade appears to have been left largely intact during later cleanings and restoration campaigns.
Many scholars have noted that the façades of meeting houses of the Venetian *scuole grandi* borrow from both private and ecclesiastical architectural traditions, an outward expression of their existence as religious institutions run by and for the laity.\(^7\) The *scuole piccole*, in turn, emulated the *scuole grandi* in terms of both layout and exterior ornamentation. The Scuola di San Fantin is no exception to this trend, for in many respects it closely follows the confraternal tradition. However, Vittoria also drew heavily on specific ecclesiastical models and made reference to key civic monuments to express the Scuola’s piety and its unique identity as the city’s comforting confraternity.

The main façade of the Scuola is structured according to a symmetrical three-bay design. The central bay is slightly wider than the two outer bays which flank it. On the ground-floor register, each bay is articulated by pairs of attached Ionic columns framing small shell niches. One scholar has argued that the niches were intended to hold figural sculptures.\(^8\) While there are no surviving drawings to offer evidence of the original project, we should note that no textual description of the façade mentions niche sculptures. In Albrizzi’s 1740 print of the façade (Fig. 2.19), the niches in the lower register do seem to contain the shadowy representation of sculptures. However, this print is inaccurate in other details; for instance, the crowning sculpture of the Virgin is represented by what appears to be a winged angel, and the pediments over the windows on the piano nobile are depicted as triangular rather than curvilinear. In the much finer and more precise prints of Domenico Lovisa and Luca Carlevarijs, these details are accurate and the niches are empty (Figs. 2.17, 2.18).

The central bay of the ground-floor register is occupied by a massive door, which served as the ceremonial entrance and exit for confraternity members when they gathered for processions (Fig. 2.3). The door is flanked by a pair of small Ionic columns and topped by a simple triangular pediment, a classicizing form that was extremely popular in Renaissance religious architecture and that was derived from ancient temple fronts. Smaller attached Ionic columns framing the windows in the outer bays also carry a triangular pediment, but in this case the horizontal cornices of the pediments are interrupted by the rounded arches of the window frames. The second register of the façade echoes the first in its symmetry, but it is more heavily embellished with Corinthian columns and curvilinear pediments over the windows. The columns and colonettes of the second register are thinner, lighter, and topped by Corinthian capitals. On both levels, the capitals are beautifully and intricately carved with stylized vegetal motifs (Figs. 2.4, 2.5). These orders are repeated in lower relief on the pilasters adorning the building’s secondary façade on the narrow Calle della Verona (Fig. 2.6).

Zampetti argues that the building does not reflect "a rigorous conceptual unity", and that differences between the two registers indicate that the lower level


\(^8\)Ghersi, *Alessandro Vittoria*, 172
of the façade was constructed at least a decade prior to the upper level.\textsuperscript{79} He suggests that the lower register was completed in the 1560s, or at the latest by 1576, when "the whole ground floor was completed, since at that date the altar of St. Jerome in the Oratory was finished", while the upper register was executed in 1583 or 1584.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, for Zampetti, the differences between the two levels of the façade reflect a shift in architectural tastes from the late Renaissance style of the 1560s to a more Baroque aesthetic in the 1580s.

While Zampetti is correct that the façade was constructed at a pivotal moment, the difference in ornamentation between the two registers does not necessarily indicate that they were designed at different times. To this observer, the façade appears as a harmonious and unified whole, and was probably planned and executed in its entirety in the 1580s. As for the difference in ornamentation between the two registers, while the pediments above and below do differ from one another, they are variations on a theme; and the simple triangular pediments of the lower level are repeated on the attic level, which must have been constructed last. Moreover, well-established principles of architectural decorum suggested that the lower register of buildings should be based on a more heavy and solid order while the upper levels should be articulated with increasingly lighter and more delicate ornamentation. According to Sebastiano Serlio (who, in turn, based many of his principles on the writings of Vitruvius), some orders were more appropriate to certain types of sacred monuments than others, due to their derivation and appearance. In his Regole generali di architettura, published in Venice in 1537, Serlio wrote the following about the Ionic order:

But if we Christians need to build some sacred temple using this order, we would dedicate it to those saints who lived a life between the vigorous and the gentle… And if we have to build some public or private building [dedicated to] men of letters and men of a quiet life [that was] neither vigorous nor gentle, this Ionic order is appropriate for them.\textsuperscript{81} Following Serlio’s logic, the Ionic order - meant for saints who were neither militaristic nor soft - is perfectly suited to the commemoration of someone like St. Jerome, a man of letters who was also a hermit and a monk, and who lived a difficult but restrained life. The capitals of ground-floor pilasters are visible in two of the six

\textsuperscript{79} Zampetti, "Restauri dell’Ateneo," 6

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.: 5-6. However, later archival discoveries have thrown the date of Vittoria’s statue of St. Jerome into question. See Chapter 4, Part I of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{81} Sebastiano Serlio, Regole generali di architettura sopra le cinque maniere de gli edifici, cioe, Toscano, Dorico, Ioniaco, Corinthio, et Composito, con gli essemi dell’antiquita, che per la magior parte concordano con la dottrina di Vitruvio. (Venice: Francesco Marcolini, 1537), 36v. ["Ma noi Christiani, se haveremo a far alcun Tempio sacro, di quest’ordine; lo dedicaremos a quei santi la vita de i quali sia stata fra’l Robusto & il tenero… & se alcun edificio, o publico o privato si haverà da fare, ad huomini letterati, & di vita quieta no rubusti ne ancho teneri, si converrà a lor quest’ordine Ioniaco: & ancho se per Matrone si haverà da fare cosa alcuna, questa maniera sarà convenevole.”] On the principle of architectural decorum in Serlio’s writings, see Vaughan Hart, "Decorum and the Five Orders of Architecture: Sebastiano Serlio’s Military City," RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics, no. 34 (1998).
surviving canvases from Jacopo Palma il Giovane’s *St. Jerome Cycle*, painted for the building’s Albergo Grande (Figs. 3.8, 3.11). In both cases, the order depicted is Ionic.\(^{82}\) By contrast, Serlio suggests that the Corinthian order should be used on buildings dedicated to the Madonna:

> The derivation of the Corinthian capital was from a Corinthian virgin. I would take the time to explain its origins, but for the fact that Vitruvius describes it in his fourth book in the first chapter. I will say, however, that if one needs to build a sacred temple of this order, it should be dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, who was not only a virgin, but a virgin during the birth and afterwards. And so, for all the saints who led a virginal life, this order is also appropriate.\(^{83}\)

Bearing these principles in mind, the differences between the two registers of the façade of the Scuola may reflect Vittoria’s sense of architectural decorum, and the ornamentation is particularly well-suited to the dual dedication of the building’s patrons to both St. Jerome and the Virgin.

The two-register, three-bay form was also commonly found at the halls of confraternities built both before and after the Scuola di San Fantin. For instance, this layout governs Sansovino’s unfinished brick façade for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia (Fig. 2.21), as well as the later seventeenth-century façade of the Scuola Grande di San Teodoro (Fig. 2.22).\(^{84}\) The three left-hand bays of both the Scuola Grande di San Marco and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco can also be considered within this tradition.\(^{85}\) Small *scuole* which adhere to this design include the Scuola Piccola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Fig. 2.15) and Baldassare Longhena’s seventeenth-century façade for the Scuola di San Nicolò dei Greci (Fig. 2.23).\(^{86}\) In the case of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, the brick façade (left

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\(^{82}\) The paintings are *St. Jerome and the Lion* and *Death of St. Jerome*. The cycle as a whole is discussed in Chapter 3.

\(^{83}\) Serlio, *Regole generali di architettura*, 47r. [“La derivation del capitello Corinthio, fu da una vergine Corinthia, ne altramente mi faticherò di narrare la sua origine, perché Vitruvio lo descrive nel quarto libro al primo capitolo. Dirò ben che havendosi da far un tempio sacro di questo ordine; ei se debbia dedicar alla vergine Maria madre di Giesu Christo redentor nostro; La qual non pur fu vergine innanzi; ma fu vergine nel parto, & doppo’l parto anchora; & cosi a tutti quei santi & quelle sante che hanno tenuto vita verginale; questo tal ordine si conviene ancho.”]


\(^{85}\) In these cases, an albergo on the upper level is located at a right angle to the chapter hall; the ornamentation of the additional bays at the right serves to differentiate this interior space from the main body of the building.

\(^{86}\) An oval staircase leading to a second-floor chapter hall is located immediately behind the left-most bay of the façade of Longhena’s Scuola di S. Nicolò. On the construction history of the complex, which also included a college and the Church of S. Giorgio dei Greci, see Giuseppe Cristinelli, *Baldassare Longhena* (Padua: Marsilio, 1972), 145-154, 167-172 and Susanna Biadene, "Catalogo delle opere," in Longhena, ed. Lionello Puppi, Giandomenico Romanelli, and Susanna Biadene (Milan: Electa, 1982), 147.
unfinished and without its marble overlay) indicates that Sansovino planned pairs of engaged columns and niches flanking each bay; these appear on the interior wall of the building as well. The façade of the Scuola di S. Fantin imitates Sansovino’s planned design, for each bay is similarly articulated by paired engaged columns and niches. It would have been natural for Vittoria to look for inspiration to Sansovino, whose work was held in high esteem. However, S. Fantin may have been attempting to outdo the Misericordia explicitly by commissioning a façade that closely resembled the extravagant, hulking Misericordia Nuova. The Scuola di S. Fantin is, of course, on a much smaller scale, but perhaps pointedly so, for the confraternity successfully and efficiently completed the elegant façade of its meeting house while the Misericordia Nuova became a symbol the perils of wasteful spending.

An equally important inspiration for Vittoria’s façade at the Scuola di San Fantin is not a confraternity but the Church of S. Geminiano, whose façade was remodeled by Jacopo Sansovino in 1557. S. Geminiano stood at the west end of the Piazza San Marco until it was destroyed in the Napoleonic era, but its appearance is known from prints, paintings, and textual descriptions (Figs. 2.24, 2.25). Its original interior decoration, described by Francesco Sansovino as "perhaps the most ornate" of any church in the city, included two portrait busts by Alessandro Vittoria. The façade features two primary registers, each divided into three bays, with the ground-floor register slightly taller than the second level. Each register is topped by a full entablature that breaks out over the central bay and at the corners. The heavy horizontal bands created by the entablatures are offset by the vertical thrust of paired columns that articulate each bay. The central bay, with a large, pedimented doorway at the lower level, is wider than the two lateral bays. On the lower register, the columns are set atop a high plinth course. Above the upper register is an attic of the same width as the central bay. This attic level is ornamented with a relief of the Doge kneeling before the Lion of St. Mark; this is set between paired pilasters which carry a triangular pediment. The pilasters continue the vertical momentum of the paired columns that flank each bay below. At the sides, scrolled volutes ease the transition from the second register to the attic. Engravings indicate that crosses were placed at each of the three corners of the crowning pediment. Small spires at

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87 A perceptive analysis of the relationship between the Scuola di San Fantin and San Geminiano can be found in Lewis, _Late Baroque Churches_, 115-118. As mentioned above, following Pavanello, Lewis attributes the façade of the Scuola di San Fantin to the Contin brothers, and dates it to 1599. For a seventeenth-century description of the Church of San Geminiano, see Francesco Sansovino and Giustiniano Martinioni, _Venetia città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XLI Libri da M. Francesco Sansovino. . . Con aggiunta Di tutte le Cose Notabili della stessa Città, fatte, & occorse dall’Anno 1580 fino al presente 1663. Da D. Giustiniano Martinioni Primo Prete Titolato in SS. Apostoli. Dove vi sono poste quelle del Stringa; servato però l’ordine del med: Sansovino. Con tavole copiosissime_ (Venice: Steffano Curti, 1663), 109-112, On the construction history of and contemporary response to San Geminiano, see Rodolfo Gallo, "Contributi su Jacopo Sansovino," _Saggi e memoria di storia dell’arte_ 1 (1957): 96-100 and Howard, _Jacopo Sansovino_, 81-84.

88 A marble bust of Benedetto Manzino and a bronze bust of Tommaso Rangone were in the church. Sansovino and Martinioni, _Venetia città nobilissima_ (1663), 109-110. Vittoria’s bust of Rangone is now in the Aula Magna (formerly the Oratory) of the Scuola di San Fantin.
the corners, each crowned with a cross, are carried by four colonnettes as tall as the top of the pediment.

In most details, this description of S. Geminiano can be applied to the façade of the Scuola di S. Fantin. As at S. Geminiano, the ground floor register is taller than the upper register, but here this difference in height also corresponds to the division of interior space.\(^89\) The relationship between the two buildings would have been even closer before the small bell towers at the corners of the crowning pediment of the Scuola were removed. Vittoria worked closely with Sansovino for much of his early career, and was heavily influenced by the latter’s interest in the revival of classical forms.\(^90\) It is no surprise, therefore, that the Church of S. Geminiano - one of Sansovino’s most visible and lauded commissions, at the heart of the city’s ceremonial center - served as a key inspiration for the façade of S. Fantin. It should also be pointed out that the typical processional route of the Scuola di S. Fantin on an execution day included a visit to S. Geminiano (as well as the Basilica of San Marco) to adore that church’s relic of the Holy Cross.\(^91\) The affinity between the façades of S. Fantin and S. Geminiano may have been intended as an architectural reminder of the ceremonial relationship between the confraternity and the church; at the same time, the relationship between S. Fantin and the Misericordia Nuova also suggests the former’s ongoing ambition to become a *scuola grande*.

Vittoria made several adaptations and innovations that accord with his particular aesthetic habits and that reflect the building’s use as a confraternal meeting house. The façade of S. Fantin is proportionately somewhat wider than S. Geminiano. The latter (excluding the attic level) is closer to a square. All three bays of the second register at the Scuola di S. Fantin are fenestrated, a change that adapts Sansovino’s design to the two-story division of interior space and that more closely emulates the façades of other confraternities, such as the Scuola Grande della Misericordia and the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco. The windows on both levels are large and round-headed. On a clear day, their size in relation to the dimensions of the Albergo Grande results in a brightly lit space suitable for meetings and for viewing the room’s eventual painted decoration; perhaps for that reason, the room serves today as the library and reading room of the Ateneo. The Oratory is somewhat darker given its ground-floor position, and light is further obscured by the solid portal in the central bay. In both large rooms, two additional windows pierce the secondary façade on the Calle della Verona. The paired columns on the main façade are proportionally further apart than those at S. Geminiano, and between each pair of shell niches is set below panels articulated with tiny broken

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\(^89\) At San Geminiano, the two registers of the façade did not correspond to the interior, which was the vaulted nave of the preexisting church. The groundplan and section of San Geminiano are published in Gallo, "Contributi su Jacopo Sansovino," figs. 15, 16.

\(^90\) On Vittoria’s professional involvement with Sansovino and Palladio, see Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust*, 22-29.

\(^91\) ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni de Giustitati. On the relic, Francesco Sansovino notes a 1552 inscription stating that it was donated by Melchior Michiel, procurator of San Marco. Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XIII libri da M. Francesco Sansovino* (Venice: Iacomo Sansovino, 1581), 43-44.
pediments. All the windows are flanked by attached colonnettes of the same order as the larger columns, and on the second register, the windows are fronted by a low balustrade above a plinth course that spans the full width of the façade (Figs. 2.2, 2.7). In these last details, the façade once again looks to a confraternal model, namely Sansovino’s unfinished Scuola Grande della Misericordia and the unexecuted project for its façade that is memorialized in a drawing attributed by some scholars to Andrea Palladio.\(^{92}\)

At the Scuola di S. Fantin, the colonnettes carry pediments whose horizontal cornice is interrupted by the window arches, a device particularly favored by Vittoria (Figs. 2.2, 2.7). For instance, this arrangement of a rounded void intersecting the broken base of a triangular pediment appears on the central portal of the façade of the Palazzo Balbi (1582-after 1590) (Fig. 2.26) and on the Crucifix Altar that Vittoria sculpted for the Oratory of the Scuola di San Fantin (Fig. 4.2).\(^{93}\)

Indeed, Thomas Martin argues that the broken pediment is a feature that distinguishes Vittoria’s authorship from that of Sansovino.\(^{94}\) Works such as the altar of the Scuola dei Marzeri in the Church of S. Zulian (1578-84), the altar of the Scuola dei Luganegheri in S. Salvador (c. 1600), and the sculptor’s own funeral monument in S. Zaccaria (c. 1601-1605) indicate the extent to which Vittoria treated the broken pediment in an inventive, sculptural, and decidedly non-canonical manner.\(^{95}\)

In contrast with the most famous Venetian confraternal halls, such as the embellished and richly colored marble façades of the Scuola Grande di S. Marco or the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco, the façade of the Scuola di S. Fantin seems sober, and perhaps even austere. Its scale, though impressive, is also considerably smaller than the meeting houses of the scuole grandi. And yet, compared to the halls of the scuole piccole, the façade and fabric of S. Fantin are grand indeed, reflecting the intense ambitions of its confratelli. The façade of S. Fantin was built during what is generally considered to be an aesthetically transitional period. Its ornamental details are derived largely from the forms of Venetian Renaissance classicism established and

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\(^{92}\) On the drawing and its authorship, see Howard, Jacopo Sansovino, 109-110 and Cooper, Palladio’s Venice, 269. A similar balustrade and plinth course also appear on the facade of Sansovino’s Palazzo Corner della Ca’ Grande.


\(^{94}\) Martin, Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust, 117. Palazzo Balbi was commissioned by Nicolò Balbi (d. 1591), a captain of Mestre who shared a name with the gentleman who granted the Scuola water access in 1584 (see the archival record cites in footnote 21 above). Both the Balbi and the Donà were among the great patrician families of Venice. In the case of Palazzo Balbi, Nicolò was the son of Girolamo Balbi and Anzola Donà, and was likely a cousin of the individual who contracted for water access with the Scuola.

\(^{95}\) A brief history of these three monuments is provided in Gheris, Alessandro Vittoria, 165-170, 176-179, and 180-188.
popularized in the work of Sansovino and Palladio. At the same time, Vittoria’s creative use of an essentially Renaissance architectural vocabulary also sows the seeds of what would become the exuberant and ornate Venetian Baroque. Indeed, the façade’s subtle foreshadowing of two hallmarks of Baroque architecture - namely, a sense of theatricality and deviation from the rules of classical ornamentation - led to criticism among treatise-writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The harshest criticism was leveled by Pietro Selvatico, who argued that

\[ \ldots \] the excessive width of the major intercolumniations, the execrably shaped windows with broken frontispieces (and even worse, with heavy tablets and cartouches that take the place of a frontispiece), and the swollen attic crowned with a pediment which is likewise broken, prove that our craftsman thought of the front of a building like a theatrical scene. For him, it was enough that it was rich and ornate, so that it would make a lively impression at a glance; as for the rest, he gave it no thought.96

According to Tommaso Temanza,

Vittoria’s principle genius was sculpture. To this he dedicated his first and most fervid efforts. He also dedicated himself to architecture, but perhaps without the same fervor and high degree of success as he gave to sculpture.97

More forgiving than Selvatico, Temanza praised the overall composition of the S. Fantin façade as well as the masterful execution of the Corinthian and Ionic orders. However, he disliked the ornamentation of the windows, which he found to be full of errors and an example of "the extent to which good architecture is misunderstood [in the work of] Vittoria."98 The windows on the second register must have particularly irked Temanza, a major proponent of anti-Baroque sentiment in the late eighteenth century. Their inventiveness exemplifies Vittoria’s sculptural approach to architectural form (Fig. 2.7). In contrast with the simple triangular pediments of the lower register, the windows of the upper register are ornamented with scroll pediments whose raking cornices feature a slight curve. The scrolls themselves terminate above the keystones, carved in the form of animal crania, at the apex of the arched windows. These elements are juxtaposed such that the scrolls of the pediment seem to be the curving horns of the carved skulls beneath them (Fig. 2.8).

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96Pietro Selvatico, *Sulla architettura e sulla scultura in Venezia dal medio evo sino ai nostri giorni; studi di P. Selvatico, per servire di guida estetica, con settanta vignette in legno ed una tavola in rame* (Venice: Paolo Ripamonti Carpano, 1847), 386-387. Notably, Selvatico also criticized the façade of San Geminiano in similarly disparaging terms: "If Sansovino needed excuses for anything, it is for the façade [of San Geminiano], which, to tell the truth, is anything but a beautiful invention..." Selvatico, *Architettura e scultura* (1847), 295-297.

97Temanza, *Vite*, 475. ["Il principale genio del Vittoria si fu quello della Scultura. A questa diede le sue prime, e più fervide applicazioni: le diede anche all’Architettura, ma non forse con quel fervore, e quel buon successo, che le diede a quella."]

98Ibid., 491-492
The façade of S. Fantin is executed entirely in Istrian stone, a durable white limestone with properties similar to marble, the same building material used in the S. Geminiano façade and countless other Venetian buildings. The aesthetic characteristics and advantages of this material were spelled out by Francesco Sansovino, who wrote that

the material of the bright stones that are brought from Rovigno and Brioni, castles on the Dalmatian coast, is beautiful and wonderful. They are white in color, and similar to marble, but firm and strong in such a way that they last for a long time in the ice and the sun. Therefore, they make statues of it that are polished with felt like marble, and then with pumice, such that they resemble marble. And with these stones, they encrust the whole façades of churches and palaces, with tall columns from a single piece as wide and as long you like, because this sort of stone (called Istrian or Liburnian by writers) is abundant in the the quarries of Rovigno.  

A large part of the visual interest of the Scuola's façade - and an important difference from the much flatter façade of S. Geminiano - derives from the "chiaroscuro" effect generated by interplay between the bright white stone and the darker voids of the windows and doors, and by the shadows cast by the variable depth of the architectural ornament. Projecting attached columns alternate with recessed niches and dark window openings; jutting cornices cast a long horizontal shadow on the friezes below them; and ornamental details, such as capitals, volutes, and the Crucifixion relief in the attic register are deeply carved. Adding to the play of light and dark are the crowning sculptures, whose bronze attributes contrast sharply with the white stone of the figures themselves.

The variable projection of the façade and its resulting bold "chiaroscuro" effects are among the characteristics of Vittoria's work that prefigure later developments in Venetian Baroque architecture. Others include his use of dynamic and dramatic crowning sculptures, his inventive play with the motif of the broken pediment, and, more generally, his willingness to bend the rules of classicism in imaginative ways to create visual excitement and sculptural effects. In the seventeenth century, architects like Giuseppe Sardi took these principles to an entirely new level. For instance, at Sardi's church of Santa Maria del Giglio (1678-81) (Figs. 2.27, 2.28), paired columns project strongly on shared bases from the façade and every surface is covered in deeply carved ornamental detail, creating a constant staccato play of light and dark. The three bays corresponding to the nave are crowned by a broken pediment overlain with a second, taller segmental pediment spanning the central bay. In contrast with Vittoria's joyous but gentle...
Virgin, the crowning sculpture of Mary at Santa Maria del Giglio strikes a self-consciously dramatic pose as she addresses passers-by, and the angels, gazing curiously downward towards the street below, look like they are about to tumble off the façade (Fig. 2.28). Even later buildings, such as the monumental doorway of Domenico Rossi’s otherwise neo-Classical design for the façade of San Stae (Sant’Eustachio, 1709) (Figs. 2.29, 2.30) indicate the extent to which the broken pediment motif continued to be a locus for the expression of architectural whimsy in the eighteenth century.100

The building that most clearly derives from the Scuola di S. Fantin is Sardi’s Scuola Grande di S. Teodoro (c. 1654-57) (Fig. 2.22).101 The façade of S. Teodoro is taller and narrower in its proportions, so all its components - the intercolumniations, the widths of the windows and doors, etc. - appear compressed compared to those at S. Fantin. The attic level of S. Fantin is eliminated at S. Teodoro, perhaps because the building was already rather awkwardly tall for its location, so the crowning pediment sits directly above the entablature of the second register. But the two-story, three-bay design, the layout of doors and windows, the Ionic and Corinthian orders, and the tall plinth course which runs across the building’s base, are borrowed without significant changes from S. Fantin. So too are the ornamental details employed by Vittoria, such as colonnettes, triangular pediments interrupted by round-headed windows, and crowning figural sculptures of the Scuola’s patron saint flanked by winged angels. Here again, the relationship between the buildings may have been meant as an architectural reminder of the affinity between the two institutions. The Scuola Grande di S. Teodoro had a particularly close association with the Scuola di S. Fantin; it was the only confraternity allowed to borrow the renowned silver collection of S. Fantin, and its confratelli visited S. Fantin annually on the Scuola’s feast day.102

The Iconography of the Façade

A stone base in the Campo San Fantin once identified the meeting house as the seat of the city’s comforting confraternity. The inscription read as follows: "Most pious association dedicated to the Virgin, Mother of God, that accompanies condemned criminals to [their final] supplication."103 The belief system and

100 Howard, Architectural History of Venice, 237-238; and Lewis, Late Baroque Churches, 125-130. On later attitudes towards the façade of San Stae and the various designs considered by its patrons, see Selvatico, Architettura e scultura (1847), 433.
101 Dian, “San Teodoro dalle origini alla caduta della Repubblica,” 24; Lewis, Late Baroque Churches, 113-119; Howard, Architectural History of Venice, 228; Piffaretti, Giuseppe Sardi, architetto ticinese nella Venezia del Seicento, 55. Howard suggests that the façade was the result of a collaboration between Giuseppe Sardi and his father, Antonio, who died in 1661.
102 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 87r and 113v-115r, March 16, 1609
103 The inscription, recorded in BCMC m.s. Cicogna 3051, Inscriptioni della città di Venezia o scolpite o progettate o temporaneamente sparse, reg. 1, read: "DEIPARE VIRGINI/PIENTISSIMUM
function of the Scuola were also proclaimed by the figural ornamentation of the façade. On the ground-floor level, the keystones of each of the round-headed windows is a so-called "pelican in her piety", a pelican which rends its own breast with its beak as its offspring clamor below for nourishment (Fig. 2.9). The pelican also appears above the Crucifix in the large relief on the attic level of the façade (Fig. 2.10). The symbolic significance of the bird is underscored by its posture; with wings spread and head bowed, its body echoes the figure of Christ on the Cross. Since the early Christian period, moralized bestiaries such as the Physiologus had disseminated the belief that the pelican pierced its own breast in order to feed its offspring with its blood. This idea was taken up by Christian theologians who likened this self-sacrificing behavior to that of the crucified Christ. Moralized bestiaries were published in Latin and in the vernacular across medieval Europe, but the symbolic implications of animals like the pelican were also widely known due to their use in prayers, sermons, and texts on Christian life. For instance, in Vincenzo Carafa’s Fascetto di Mirra, a set of meditations on the five wounds of Christ first published in Rome in 1635, the pelican is described as follows:

Just as this bird, with its own beak, wounds its breast so that its blood can revive and resuscitate its dead chicks, so too Christ wants to open his five bloody wounds so that the blood might bring life to those of us who have already died from sin. The pelican not only revives its own offspring, but also kills them with the same beak. And so, according to Augustine, it is right that Christ does the same. . . He kills what belongs to sin, and revives what concerns the spirit and grace.

For preachers and theologians, the animal world provided a rich and fluid set of metaphors through which to communicate and explicate the mysteries of Christianity. One of the more vivid and evocative Italian preachers of the sixteenth century was the Franciscan Cornelio Musso, Bishop of Bitonto, whose sermons were
published frequently. In one sermon, Musso relates the symbol of the pelican to Christ’s establishment of the Eucharist at the Last Supper:

Eat my flesh, drink my blood, I am made flesh for you, here is the flesh I give to you, the seat of the soul is blood, here with my hands I give you my beloved soul; giving you my own blood, revive yourselves... I am that Pelican, who with my own blood nourish my offspring.

The pelican was also a symbol of that fundamental confraternal virtue of charity. In Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia, amor proximi* is described as

a man dressed nobly, and beside him a Pelican with its offspring who are in the act of taking with their beaks the blood that comes out of a wound that the Pelican makes in the middle of its breast with its own beak; and with one hand the man indicates to a pauper to rise from the ground, and with the other he offers him money, according to the words of Christ our Lord to the Evangelist.

In some Italian tarot decks, the virtue of Charity was also accompanied by a pelican in its piety. In such cases, a female personification enacts both aspects of charity, pulling back her robe to reveal a flaming heart and pouring coins from a purse over the pelican at her feet. On the Scuola’s façade, the location of the pelican keystones above the windows of the public Oratory where the Mass was regularly celebrated is particularly appropriate given the bird’s association with charity and the Eucharist. Within the Oratory itself, the pelican also appeared on the wooden Crucifix which served as an altarpiece on one of the room’s altars (Fig. 1.1). The same symbol appeared on the hoods of the Scuola’s processional robes (*cappe*) (Fig. 1.10). Thus, the pelican was among the most recognizable of the Scuola’s emblems, signaling the identity and purpose of the building’s occupants to passersby.

In the second register of the façade, the keystones of the arched windows are carved in the shape of animal skulls set beneath scrolled broken pediments (Figs. 2.8). Such skulls are a fairly common motif in sixteenth-century architecture, deriving from the ancient Roman *bucrania* (bull crania) sometimes found on Doric friezes. Heavily worn, the skulls are difficult to identify with certainty. Lorenzo

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108 Cornelio Musso (also known as Cornelius Mussus, 1511-1574), was a renowned orator and contributor to the Council of Trent. On the significance and influence of his sermons, see Corrie E. Norman, *Humanist Taste and Franciscan Values: Cornelio Musso and Catholic Preaching in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

109 Cornelio Musso, *Prediche del Reverendissimo Monsignor F. Cornelio Musso Vescovo di Bitonto Fatte In Diversi Tempi, Et In Diversi Luoghi* (Venice: I Gioliti, 1585), 850. [“Mangiate le mie carni, bevete il mio sangue, mi sono incarnato per voi, ecco che queste mie carni le rendo a voi, la sedia dell’anima è il sangue, ecco che nelle mani vi dò la diletta anima mia, dandovi il proprio sangue, vivificatevi... Io son quel Pellicano, che del proprio sangue nutrico i miei figliuoli. O che amore, O che gratia.”]

110 Ripa, *Iconologia*, 100; Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, overo descrittione dell’imagini universali cavate dall’antichita, & di propria invenzione; Trovate, & dichiarate da Cesare Ripa Perugino, Cavaliere de Santi Maurizio, & Lazaro. Di nuovo revista, & dal medesimo ampliata di 400 & più Imagini, Et di Figure d’intaglio adornata.* (Rome: Lepido Faey, 1603), 18

Finocchi Ghersi, one of the few scholars to comment on their unusual form, describes the keystones as resembling "la testa di un capro con due cartocci ai lati" (the head of a goat with two scrolls at the sides).\(^\text{112}\) The goat was a symbol of Old Testament sacrifice, a ritual replaced in Christian theology by Christ's own sacrifice reenacted in the Mass; and the zodiacal sign of Capricorn was also associated with Christ's birth.\(^\text{113}\) Whether or not the skulls are goats, they served as a 
\ \textit{memento mori}, a reminder of the inevitability of death.

At the attic level of the façade, a triangular pediment spans the width of the entire central bay. The base of this pediment is broken by a rounded arch inset with a large relief of the Crucifix adored by the Virgin, St. Jerome, and kneeling \textit{confratelli} (Fig. 2.10).\(^\text{114}\) For Pietro Selvatico, the relief was the façade's saving grace:

It is good that, in the attic level, [Vittoria] put a well-made relief representing Christ on the cross, flanked by the Virgin and St. John [sic]! That way even those who would have wished to denounce the corrupt architect give their anger a rest when admiring the power of the skillful statuary.\(^\text{115}\)

The figure identified by Selvatico as St. John is actually St. Jerome, haloed and holding a model of a church. A wide-brimmed cardinal's hat is suspended on his back. He stands below the Crucifix at Christ's left, the lion partially concealed behind his robes. Confraternity members, who thought of themselves as builders of a pious community for the glory of God, would have understood the attribute of the church as a reference to their patron saint’s role as founder and builder of the monastery at Bethlehem which he founded and built. At Christ's right stands the Virgin, hands together in prayer. Kneeling on the ground beside the Scuola's two patron saints are four \textit{confratelli} dressed in ceremonial robes. While the keystones of the windows suggest that it is through Christ's sacrifice that humankind will be redeemed, the pyramidal arrangement on the relief underscores the intercessory role of the Virgin and St. Jerome, a principle that was reemphasized ever more strongly in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent.\(^\text{116}\)

At the apex of the attic pediment is another representation of the Virgin, this time as a sculpture in the round (Figs. 2.11, 2.12). Her body forms a graceful \textit{figura serpentinata} as she steps forward with her left leg, rotates her shoulders and outstretched arms rightward, and looks upwards towards the sky towards God’s divine light. When seen from the side, her cloak and hood billow out behind her. Her

\(^{112}\) Ghersi, \textit{Alessandro Vittoria}, 172


\(^{114}\) The relief has been attributed to Andrea dell’Aquila, an assistant to and follower of Vittoria, on stylistic grounds. Mariacher, "La facciata dell’Ateneo," 49-52. See also Traverso, \textit{La Scuola di San Fantin}, 122.

\(^{115}\) Selvatico, \textit{Architettura e scultura (1857)}, 386-387

\(^{116}\) \textit{Canons and Decrees}, 215
dynamism is given a dramatic flourish by the bronze starburst halo silhouetted against the sky. The Virgin is flanked by a pair of lively angels with bronze outstretched wings (Figs. 2.11, 2.13). The angel to the Virgin’s left raises a scepter, while the one on her right bears a crown. Together, they participate in the miraculous drama of the expectant Mary about to be crowned as the heavenly queen. The crowning figures enact the meeting house’s dedication to the Assumption of the Virgin, traditionally represented by angels lifting or accompanying Mary as she rises heavenward. However, the crowning sculptures also evoke the Virgin’s association with the cardinal virtue of Justice and with the city of Venice itself. Mary was one of the major patron saints of Venice, and the city was believed to have been founded on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25) in 421 AD. Images of the Virgin were often conflated with representations of Justice, just as images of Justice were often stand-ins for the city of Venice. In 1579, Alessandro Vittoria executed sculptures of the crowned personifications of Venice (accompanied by a lion and holding a scepter) (Fig. 2.31) and Justice (holding a sword and scales) on the west and south façades of the Ducal Palace. The close stylistic and iconographical similarity between Vittoria’s Virgin Mary for the façade of the Scuola di S. Fantin and these earlier sculptures for the Ducal Palace could not make the essential equivalence of the Virgin, Venice, and Justice any more forcefully or underscore more strongly the piety and patriotism of the confraternity dedicated to the Virgin and deputized to justice.

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117 See the transcription of documents from May 21, 1583 to May 12, 1584 relating to payments by Alessandro Vittoria to his assistants for work on the façade sculptures. His assistants included Giacomo da Bassano, Piero di S. Lucia, Andrea dell’Aquila e Agostino Rubino. Avery, "Documenti," doc. 115(iv). The signature “Alex Vict. F.” is at the base of the Madonna and beneath one of the angels. Pietro Zampetti, Guida alle opere d’arte della Scuola di S. Fantin (Venice: Edizioni dell’Ateneo Veneto, 1973), 11.


119 Two of the columns of the portico below the figure of Venice on the Piazza (west) side of the façade are made from a coral-colored stone that contrasts with the white Istrian stone of all the others. Here, executions of noblemen were occasionally carried out. See, for instance, the records of the execution of N.H. Bortolo Memo in 1470, and the execution of N.H. Lorenzo Baffo in 1472. BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 42r. This practice was also explained to the German knight and pilgrim Arnold Von Harff, who noted that "in the courtyard of this palace on St. Mark’s Square are two marble columns. Between them are [sic] hanged any gentleman who has done evil." Arnold Von Harff, The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, Knight, from Cologne through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine, Turkey, France, and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496 to 1499, ed. Malcolm Letts, trans. Malcolm Letts (London, 1946), 56.
Chapter 3: The Albergo Grande

[In keeping with ancient custom, we display the images of distinguished men, we describe their deeds, and we recall their service in order that men of succeeding generations zealously strive to emulate the virtue and follow the path of those they esteem. Today, however, we have before us an exemplar who stands out from the crowd whether he is ranked on the basis of learning or piety or virtue or holiness. I refer to the holy doctor Jerome, whose learning was extraordinary, whose piety holy and blameless, whose virtue truly outstanding throughout his life... Who could possibly claim that in such a case it is easy to find a topic from which he could begin his speech and feel a sense of satisfaction?

Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder

The present interior of the Albergo Grande of the Scuola di S. Fantin, which now serves as the Sala di Lettura of the Ateneo Veneto, bears little resemblance to the room as it appeared when occupied by the confraternity. In 1826, the collapse of an altana on the roof allowed rainwater to enter the room, damaging its ceiling; further destruction was caused by a fire in 1841. With the exception of two paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto, the artworks and furniture now in the room were moved there after the Scuola’s suppression, and even Tintoretto’s paintings are no longer situated as they were in the late sixteenth century. Despite these obstacles, the appearance of the Albergo Grande in the late Cinquecento can be reconstructed with some certainty, for the room is described in detail in inventories and published accounts of its contents. The earliest description of the room can be found in Stringa’s 1604 edition of Venetia città nobilissima:

Above the ceiling of the Oratory, there is another room of the same dimensions where the brothers of the Scuola meet. One ascends there by means of a long and spacious stairway. Inside, on the walls above the wooden wainscoting, one sees the whole life of St. Jerome, protector of this place, divided into many pictures painted by Palma. [Palma also painted] the singular and rare ceiling, which represents the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven. The altarpiece displayed here is much admired by everyone, being by the hand of Tintoretto, that most excellent painter of his day.

This account confirms that the room served as a chapter hall and contained an altar. It also identifies the three major decorative projects produced for the room in the

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2 Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, 73-76
3 Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 92
sixteenth century: Tintoretto’s previously mentioned altarpiece, Palma Giovane’s St. Jerome Cycle, and Palma’s ceiling painting of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin. According to an inventory produced in 1786, the room’s furnishings also included a wooden table with benches on a raised platform. The location of this platform is not identified. However, a *palco* (platform) is mentioned somewhat ambiguously by Ridolfi, who seems to suggest that it was located under that portion of the painting where the Virgin appears. Therefore, the platform was likely near the east end of the room (Diagram 3). This platform is likely the dias where the *banca* would have been seated when presiding over meetings of the confraternity, and the benches would have faced the altar at the opposite side of the room.

While some of the paintings and all of the furnishings have been lost, ample data exists to model the room’s interior as it appeared at the end of the 1580s, when the major components of the decorative program were completed. The first part of this chapter sets forth a hypothesis regarding the layout of the paintings and discusses their relationship to the room’s liturgical and administrative functions. Palma’s St. Jerome Cycle is the focus of Part II.

**Part I: The Decorative Program of the Albergo Grande**

Tintoretto’s altarpiece, *The Virgin and St. Jerome* (Fig. 3.1), can be found today on the west wall of the reading room of the Ateneo Veneto. As we shall see, that location approximates its original position in the room, but its altar has been lost. Although the commission is not documented, the altarpiece was likely executed in the early 1580s, when the room itself was completed. In the late 1570s and 1580s, Tintoretto was working on scenes from the lives of the Virgin and Christ for the ground-floor assembly room and the upper chapter room of another

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4 The 1786 inventory also mentions various other artworks, furniture, and ritual objects in the room. These included “twelve sibyls and other paintings” by Antonio Zanchi; a painting of the Madonna by an unnamed artist; reliquaries; and candelabras. Walnut benches against the surrounding walls provided seating for *confratelli*. Books and papers of the Scuola were kept in a locked wooden cabinet. The inventory also refers to a painting in a gilded frame of a “miracle of St. Jerome”; its location is not specified, but painting is described as “levabile”, or portable. ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Pitture diverse. Boschini also mentions a “painting by Tintoretto with a miracle of St. Jerome” over a bench in the Old Sacristy. Boschini, *Minere* (1664), 127–128. Both references to the “miracle of St. Jerome” are probably to Tintoretto’s *St. Jerome Receiving Gifts from the Merchants*, discussed further in Chapter 3, Part II.

5 Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell’arte*, 177

6 The painting was moved twice within the building in the mid-nineteenth century, and in 1913 it was taken to the Gallerie dell’Accademia; it was returned to the Ateneo Veneto in 1973 and replaced in its approximate original location. Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, 222–223, Cat. No. 425.

confraternity, the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco. The backlighting, the deep, dramatic chiaroscuro effects, and rustic wooden architecture in the S. Fantin altarpiece also appear in some of the scenes from S. Rocco, such as *The Temptation of Christ* and *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, both on the walls of the chapter hall and both painted between 1578 and 1581.

Although it is seen today only by visitors to the Ateneo, Tintoretto’s altarpiece was widely known and admired in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Rosand attributes a drawing after the altarpiece in the collection of the Louvre to Palma Giovane, who may have sketched it when he was working on other parts of the room’s decorative program. The *Virgin and St. Jerome* was also reproduced as an engraving at least four times, first by Agostino Carracci in 1587 or 1588 (Fig. 3.2). The appearance of the altar is not mentioned in the earliest sources, but the 1786 inventory describes it as made of gilded wood; in addition to the altarpiece, the altar’s decoration included wooden statues of the Virgin, St. Jerome, and angels, and a large white crucifix used in funeral processions for the condemned.

The subject of the altarpiece is sometimes described as St. Jerome’s vision of the Virgin or his vision of the Assumption. Although several of Jerome’s writings contributed to Catholic arguments in favor of Mary’s Assumption and sanctity, the scene in the painting is not based on any known textual accounts of St. Jerome’s life and miracles. However, the iconography is quite typical for the Scuola. The combination appears, for instance, in the sculpture and relief once located on Vittoria’s Assumption Altar in the Oratory, discussed further in Chapter 4 (Figs. 4.3, 4.4); in a ceiling painting by Francesco Fontebasso produced in the eighteenth century for the ceiling of the New Sacristy, discussed in Appendix C; on the recto and verso of a confraternity medal produced for the Scuola; in a lost illuminated page.

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11 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Piture diverse; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni de Giustitiati.

in the Scuola's *mariegola*;\textsuperscript{13} and in a series of small devotional paintings probably commissioned for domestic use by *confratelli*.\textsuperscript{14} Of course, St. Jerome does appear with the Virgin in many *sacre conversazioni* produced for a wide variety of patrons. Venetian examples include Palma Giovane’s *Virgin and Child in Glory with Saints Jerome, John the Baptist, Benedict, Francis, and Sebastian* (c. 1603) in the Church of S. Zaccaria, and his *Virgin and Child in Glory with Saints Jerome and Carlo Borromeo* (c. 1620) in the Church of S. Sebastiano.\textsuperscript{15} As is typical of *sacre conversazioni*, in both of these altarpieces the Virgin and the infant Christ are enthroned and flanked by saints from various times and places. The iconography of paintings produced for S. Fantin is distinguished from such images by the appearance of the ascendant Virgin as a vision experienced by the penitent Jerome. A closer parallel to the S. Fantin altarpiece can be found in Parmigianino’s *Vision of St. Jerome*, painted around 1526 for the Caccialupi Chapel in the Roman Church of S. Salvatore in Lauro (Fig. 3.3).\textsuperscript{16} Unusually for this period, in Parmigianino’s painting Jerome is reclining and seemingly asleep in the background beyond the serpentine figure of John the Baptist, who gestures towards the enthroned Virgin and the infant Christ. Jerome’s slumber sets the scene apart from an ordinary *sacra conversazione*, and suggests the visionary nature of his experience.

In contrast with Parmigianino’s *Vision of St. Jerome*, in Tintoretto’s altarpiece the saint is awake, alert, and kneeling in penitence when he experiences his vision (Fig. 3.1). Tintoretto represents the encounter between the Scuola’s two patron saints in a dimly lit landscape either at dawn or dusk. The sky, blue-green near a burst of light from the sun in the far right background, grows darker overhead, and the foliage of the trees is bathed in shadow. Under the roof of a dilapidated wooden structure, Jerome kneels before a makeshift altar formed by two stone steps leading to a cloth-draped table. He tightly grips a crucifix in his left hand as he turns his head

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\textsuperscript{13} A photograph of the illumination is published in Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, Tav. V.

\textsuperscript{14} On these paintings, see Marina Magrini, *Francesco Fontebasso (1707-1769)* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1988), 43 and Cat. Nos. 18, 28, 39, 75, 76, 92, 99, 118, 123, 160, and 222; and Pietro Zampetti, *Dal Ricci al Tiepolo. I pittori di figura del settecento a Venezia. Catalogo della mostra. Venezia, Palazzo ducale, 7 giugno-15 ottobre 1969* (Venice: Alfieri, 1969), Cat. Nos. 153, 154. Given the unusual subject matter, it is reasonable to suppose that these were domestic devotional works owned by confraternity members; the word "degani" is written on the back of an exemplar in the Museo Civico in Padua (Cat. No. 118 in Magrini’s text), suggesting that some of them may have been intended for the Scuola’s *degani*. Members of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco are also known to have similarly commissioned small devotional works honoring their patron saint, St. Roch, from various artists.

\textsuperscript{15} On these two paintings, see Mason Rinaldi, *Palma il Giovane*, 133-134, Cat. No. 491, and 132, Cat. No. 635.

to stare in wonder at the Virgin who hovers, supported by four angelic companions in a tangle of limbs and billowing drapery, in upper right corner. The Virgin and one of the angels look diagonally across the canvas, from upper right to lower left, to meet Jerome's gaze; their line of sight is accentuated by the diagonal of the Virgin's outstretched arms. The other three angels look downwards towards a lion, Jerome's constant companion but also a symbol of Christ, who gazes soulfully back at them.

On the ground at Jerome's feet are his cardinal's hat and an open book, presumably his Vulgate. Perched on a ledge beyond him is a skull, reminding the saint of his own impending death. In the far distance, the fiery golden light of the sun is partially obscured by trees and by a church-like building set on a cliff and accessed by a bridge. A second mystical light source from the upper right illuminates Jerome's torso and the Virgin's face, but leaves most of the scene in dark shadow.

Even though Tintoretto produced the altarpiece for the Albergo Grande and the earliest ceiling paintings in the Oratory on the ground floor, the Scuola turned to Palma Giovane to execute the paintings for the walls and ceiling of the Albergo Grande. This choice was striking enough to elicit comment from Ridolfi, who argued that Palma had prevailed thanks to the intervention of Alessandro Vittoria and Vittoria's friend Francesco Tedaldo, the Scuola's Guardian Grande.17 At many confraternities, artistic commissions were initiated by a confraternity's banca and degani before moving to a vote of the General Chapter. The latter consisted of a group of former officers with experience in and responsibility for managing the Scuola's finances. Once the General Chapter's approval for an expenditure had been obtained, however, the banca could often select an artist at its own discretion.18 There is no record of a chapter vote regarding expenditures for any of the artworks commissioned for the Albergo Grande in this period. However, Ridolfi's account suggests that office holders like Tedaldo had considerable influence over the selection of the artist.

By 1582, Palma was at work on the room's ceiling canvas, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.19 After the 1825 collapse of the altana on the roof, entering rainwater caused severe damage to the painting; the immense canvas was placed in storage at the Deposito Demanio, where it continued to deteriorate.20 Parts of the canvas were eventually salvaged; a fragment representing Adam and

17 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell'arte, 177. Palma's friendship with Vittoria, and Vittoria's interest in Palma's career, were also noted by other writers. According to Temanza, Vittoria "loved Palma, he held his work in esteem, and he promoted him before his competitors. Therefore this Jacopo constantly paid him court, asking his advice on his works, and holding him close like a father." Temanza, Vite, 489-490. Temanza also claimed that Tintoretto and Veronese cared little for Vittoria, perhaps because he had become "like a despot over the best works in the city" and influenced patrons to award commissions only to his favorites, including Palma and Leonardo Corona. On Corona and Alessandro Vittoria, see also Lanzi, Storia pittorica, 216.

18 Wurthmann, "Scuole Grandi", 195-203


20 Pavanello, Scuola di S. Fantin, 73-74
Eve survives in a private collection in Milan, and a large fragment of the lower section can be found in the collection of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (Fig. 3.4). An oil sketch, or bozzetto, of the overall design of the ceiling is preserved in the museum of the Fondazione Querini Stampalia (Fig. 3.5). Mason, who dates the bozzetto to 1582, proposes that the submission of a detailed oil sketch rather than a drawing indicates that the Scuola may have held a concorso (competition) for the commission. However, there is no evidence of such a competition in the Scuola's records, and Ridolfi's account is inconclusive on this point. Some details seen in the Hermitage fragment (such as the intricate decorative pattern on the steps where the Apostles gather, the writing on the books at the bottom of the canvas, and the inscription and illusionistic relief carved into the face of the sarcophagus) are not visible in the oil sketch. More striking is the difference in color between the bozzetto and the final work. In the bottom half of the bozzetto, the figures of the apostles are silhouetted against a dark sky and rendered in muted tones. The Hermitage fragment indicates that in the final work, this part of the composition was brighter and infused with intense color. But despite these differences, a comparison of the fragment and the bozzetto suggests that the structure of the final composition remained true to Palma's original model.

In the oil sketch, the artist clearly distinguishes the upper heavenly realm and the lower terrestrial realm in the vertical composition through light, color, and scale (Fig. 3.5). At the bottom corners, gathered around the Virgin's tomb, the earthbound figures are larger than those above. Saints Augustine and Jerome sit on the steps below them. In the Hermitage fragment (Fig. 3.4), it is clear that both saints hold books, and an additional book rests on the steps next to St. Augustine. St. Augustine holds a quill in one hand, indicating that he is engaged in the process of writing. On the open pages of the book resting beside him is a partially legible passage from the De assumptione beatae mariae virginis, an aptly chosen but misattributed writing on the Virgin’s Assumption. The text was included in

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23 Pseudo-Augustine, De assumptione beatae mariae virginis, PL 40:1146 - 1147. The inscription reads: "Si ergo merito mariae viventi prae omnibus donata est gratia mortuae erit minuenda absit. Quia si omnium sanctorum mors est preciosa mariae sane est preciosissima. quam tanta comitata est gratia ut mater dei dicatur, et sit . . . Cap. VIII . . . Consideratis igitur his universis vera ratione confidendum censeo Mariam benignitate Christi honoratus suscepam caeteris, quam hic gratia honoravit prae caeteris." The passage can be translated as follows (portions in brackets are not included in the inscription but are included in the complete passage as written in the Patrologia Latina and in sixteenth-century editions of the treatise): "Therefore, if grace was justly granted to Mary above all while she was was living, must it be diminished by death? Hardly! For if the death of every saint is precious, it follows from reason that Mary's is the most precious. So much grace attended her that she is called the mother of God, and may it be so. Chapter VIII. Having considered, then, all these things, as well as the true reason for them, I assert that we should avow [that Mary is within Christ, and in the company of Christ, in whom we live and exist, and by whom we are moved,] that she was
Venetian editions of Augustine’s collected works as early as 1483. Although questions about St. Augustine’s authorship of the text were being raised even in the sixteenth century, the De assumptione continued to appear in editions of his collected works and was still cited as an important piece of evidence in favor of the Virgin’s Assumption, her immaculacy, and her primacy among the intercessory saints. The text inscribed on the tome behind St. Jerome derives from a letter to Pammachium wherein Jerome enumerates various Old Testament foreshadowings of Mary’s virginity; Mary is described as an enclosed garden, a sepulcher hewn from rock, and a locked gate, eternally closed but shining. Thus, the two inscriptions offer support for Mary’s paradoxical virginity and her relevance as the primary intercessor on behalf of humanity, two points that were heavily disputed by Protestants but essential to the Scuola’s Marian devotion.

In the relief on the Virgin’s sarcophagus, a group of robed figures engage in fierce debate with a nude man of Herculean musculature. Since he is seated upon a rock, he is probably St. Peter. He gestures behind him to a sarcophagus on which a human skeleton rests. Below the skeleton, another inscription, derived from Job 19:25-26, that translates: "And in my flesh I shall see my Savior". Juxtaposition of the skeleton and the inscription (a phrase also used in the Office of the Dead) confirms that at the Second Coming, the faithful will be newly unfleshed and saved.

The bozzetto (Fig. 3.5) is small enough that the individuals seated on the clouds in the heavenly realm cannot be readily identified. However, early sources indicate that the figures among the clouds included Adam and Eve, the twenty-four ancients mentioned in St. John’s vision of the Apocalypse, and various saints and patriarchs. These figures, in a variety of energetic and twisting poses, are described by Ridolfi as the fruit of Palma’s study of both antiquity and the work of Michelangelo, "from which he learned good form, which one does not learn from nature alone, if it is not regulated by Art." Beyond the seated saints, ethereal monochrome figures fade into the background. At the next level, a foreshortened figure of the Virgin reaches up to take the hand of Christ as an angel hovering above

assumed in glory through Christ to the joys of eternity and received by Christ’s mercy more honorably than others, Mary whom Christ honors with his grace above all others."

25 Ibid., 398-410
26 The inscription reads: “Haec est porta orientalis ut ait Ezechiel semper clausa et lucida et operiens in se, vel ex se preferens...” ["She is like that eastern gate which Ezekiel said is always closed and bright, covering itself, or bringing forth from itself [the Holy of holies]." See Hieronymus Stridonensis, Epistola XLVIII seu liber apologeticus, ad Pammachium, pro libris contra Jovinianum, PL 22:5 10-511.
27 The inscription reads: “ET IN CARNE MEA VIDEO DEUM SALVATOREM MEUM” [Job 19:25-26: “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I will see my God.” Emphasis added.]
28 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II: 177-178; Sansovino and Martinioni, Venetia città nobilissima (1663), 137; Boschini, Minere (1664), 128; and Zanetti, Della pittura veneziana, 305. See Chapter 3 Note 21 regarding a fragment that preserves the figures of Adam and Eve.
29 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II: 177
her holds out her crown. On the other side of Christ, a second angel raises an open book, presumably the text in which the names of the saved are inscribed. Above them, God the Father, with a triangular nimbus, sits on a cloudbank, silhouetted against a rainbow-like burst of light.

Palma’s Roman training, which resulted in his reputation as an excellent practitioner of the central-Italian skill of disegno, is in evidence here. Each figure is clearly articulated through color and shading, but each is also defined by a dark outline that suggests an underdrawing below. Every cloud is also given distinct form and a sense of solidity. In these respects, the oil sketch resembles a model Palma submitted in the concorso for the Paradise on the tribune wall of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doge’s Palace (Fig. 3.6). The dynamic angels and the range of twisting postures in Palma’s bozzetto for the Paradise attest to his careful study of the work of Tintoretto, but compared to the other models prepared for the competition, his proposed design stakes an independent claim chromatically and compositionally. His model has a reductive and open character. Cottony clouds, each infused with gray and white undertones, are lit with a range of pastel hues ranging from blue to a golden orange to a rosy pink. Shimmering concentric circles of light emanate from Christ, and the entire image is bathed in a warm glow. Its vivid coloring and clarity, the greater variation in the sizes of the figures, a more dramatic sense of recession into space, and fewer figures crowded at the surface of the

30 A sheet of figure sketches associated with the S. Fantin Assumption is in the collection of the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Rosand, "Palma Giovane," 24-26; and Mason Rinaldi, Palma il Giovane, Cat. No. D1.

31 The concorso for the Paradise was the subject of a recent exhibition at the Louvre, and its accompanying catalog includes all known models and drawings for the design, including those by Paolo Veronese, Jacopo Palma il Giovane, Francesco Bassano, Jacopo Tintoretto, and Federico Zuccaro. See Jean Habert, "Venezia e il Paradiso. Un concorso a Palazzo Ducale," in Il Paradiso di Tintoretto. Un concorso per Palazzo Ducale (Parigi, Musée du Louvre, dal 9 febbraio all’8 maggio 2006), ed. Jean Habert (Milano: 5 Continents, 2006), 35-59. Also on Palma’s oil sketch for the concorso, see Nicola Ivanoff and Pietro Zampetti, Jacopo Negretti detto Palma il Giovane. Estratto da <<i pittori bergamaschi>> Il cinquecento - Volume III (Bergamo: Poligrafiche Bolis, 1980), 543, cat. no. 109; Mason Rinaldi, Palma il Giovane, 92, Cat. No. 146; and Mason, "Il Paradiso di Palma," 74-89. The scholars in the Louvre exhibition catalog assign the completed Paradise to Domenico Tintoretto on the basis that he largely executed the work, as do other scholars such as Frederick Ilchman, "Venetian Painting in an Age of Rivals," in Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice, ed. Frederick Ilchman (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2009), 36. However, others maintain the traditional attribution to Jacopo. For instance, while Tom Nichols (Tintoretto, 105-106, 111-113) describes the Paradise as a notable example of the freedom with which Domenico was allowed to generate his own compositions "only loosely based on his father’s ideas", he assigns the work to Jacopo Tintoretto.

32 Instead, Veronese (the original winner of the commission) put forth a model with a sharply restricted chromatic range; his foreground figures are backlit by an orange glow, leaving them in darkness. Francesco Bassano’s model is also somberly colored; the distant figures of Christ and the Virgin at the upper edge are intensely illuminated, but below them, rows of shadowy saints and martyrs radiate outward like the spokes of a dark celestial wheel. The colors of Tintoretto’s design of 1588, produced after Veronese’s death, are heavier and more saturated, creating sharp contrasts against a yellow-gold background.
picture plane, result in a less tumultuous and more easily legible work.\textsuperscript{33} These characteristics, as well as the incorporation of the iconography of the coronation of the Virgin, are also shared by the bozzetto for the S. Fantin Assumption. The stylistic affinities between the two bozzetti are unsurprising given that Palma produced both in the first years of the 1580s. Palma failed to win the concorso for the Paradise, and the Assumption received mixed reviews from seventeenth century sources. While Stringa called it "singular and rare", Ridolfi offered a critique of the painting’s effect within the room, commenting that given the ceiling height, its vast dimensions made it impossible to take in the entirety of the image.\textsuperscript{34} According to Ridolfi, Palma "deceived himself" that the diminishing size of the figures would be adequate to create the desired effect.

Several early sources indicate that the Assumption included a variety of identifiable portraits of contemporary individuals. Specifically, Ridolfi reported that among the saints and patriarchs in the heavenly realm, Palma portrayed

... Titian; [Alessandro] Vittoria; the aforementioned [Francesco] Tedaldo; Claudio da Correggio, the organist of S. Marco [i.e. Claudio Merulo]; the musician Giovanni da Udine; other friends of Palma; and Palma himself with his wife.\textsuperscript{35}

Since this part of the painting is lost, Ridolfi’s claims cannot be confirmed, but a grey-bearded man on the left edge of the Hermitage fragment does indeed appear to be a portrait (Fig. 3.4). This figure is distinguished by his somber black dress, more akin to contemporary Venetian attire than the bright robes worn by the twelve Apostles, and by the direction of his gaze. While he looks outwards from the picture plane, Saints Augustine and Jerome and the twelve Apostles all gaze towards the heavens where the celestial court is gathered to witness the Virgin’s coronation as the queen of heaven. But despite Ridolfi’s claim that portraits appeared in the heavens, this black-robed figure stands on the ground beyond the Apostles.

Also in the 1580s, Palma executed eight canvases on the life of St. Jerome for the walls of the Albergo Grande (Figs. 3.7 - 3.12). The whereabouts of only six of the eight scenes of St. Jerome are known.\textsuperscript{36} The Scuola’s records are silent as to the date of the commission. However, Pavanello notes an "affrancazione" dated March 10, 1588 signed by Palma "quondam Antonii", among the Scuola’s records, suggesting

\textsuperscript{33} By contrast, the press of bodies against the picture plane in the Last Judgment that Palma produced in the mid-1590s for the Sala dello Scrutinio is clearly influenced by Tintoretto’s final composition for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio.

\textsuperscript{34} Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 92; Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II:177-178

\textsuperscript{35} Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II:177-178

\textsuperscript{36} Four of them (St. Jerome and the Lion, The Construction of the Monastery at Bethlehem, St. Jerome Receiving Gifts from the Merchants, and The Funeral of St. Jerome) are now in the Church of S. Giovanni delle Pertiche outside of Padua. Two more (St. Jerome in his Study and St. Augustine’s Vision of St. Jerome) are in storage at the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice. The remaining two scenes (St. Jerome Flagellated for Reading the Works of Cicero and St. Jerome Ordained a Cardinal) could not be located.
that Palma was still working there in the late 1580s.\textsuperscript{37} The St. Jerome Cycle is the subject of Part II of this chapter.

According to the Scuola’s 1786 inventory, the Albergo Grande contained paintings of four sibyls and two "\textit{chiaro scuri}" (grisaille paintings), "one portraying St. Jerome, and the other with another figure."\textsuperscript{38} Scholars have associated this reference with two \textit{Prophets} and two \textit{Sibyls} that are housed in the Ateneo (Figs. 3.13, 3.14), and two other \textit{Sibyls} transferred to the Gallerie dell’Accademia in the late nineteenth century (Fig. 3.15).\textsuperscript{39} The earliest description of the room to include the \textit{Prophets} and \textit{Sibyls} dates from 1815, when Gianantonio Moschini visited the newly formed Ateneo Veneto.\textsuperscript{40} According to Moschini’s account, which is confirmed by the visual evidence, the four \textit{Sibyls} flanked the windows on the altar wall, while the \textit{Prophets} were displayed between the narrative scenes on the north and east walls (Diagram 3, a-f).

The pattern of wear along the left edge of one of the \textit{Sibyls} (Fig. 3.15b) may have been caused by the presence of the wooden altar, suggesting that this figure flanked the altar to the right (Diagram 3, d). This provides a useful starting point to

\textsuperscript{37} Pavanello, \textit{Scuola di S. Fantin}, 42 n. 41, citing ASV Scuola di S. Maria della Consolazione, B. 21, fol. 11. This archival source appears to be lost, and could not be located in the archives.

\textsuperscript{38} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Albergo Grande. In the inventory of 1808, made after the Scuola’s suppression and in anticipation of further despoliation of the building, seventeen paintings are recorded on the walls of the Albergo Grande: Tintoretto’s altarpiece and “the other sixteen concerning the life of St. Jerome all by Giacomo Palma, including two paintings in \textit{chiaroscuro}.” ASV, Reg. Demanio Fascicolo IV b. 315, Fasc. IV, fol. 9 (lost archival document recorded in a photograph owned by the Ateneo Veneto). The sixteen paintings are almost certainly comprised of the eight scenes in the St. Jerome Cycle, the four sibyls, the two grisaille "\textit{prophets}," and two additional paintings of scenes from the life of St. Jerome by Antonio Zanchi. On the latter, see Appendix C.

\textsuperscript{39} None of these is mentioned in early published sources describing the room. In most modern scholarship, all six are attributed to Palma Giovane, considered as a part of the St. Jerome Cycle, and referred to as "\textit{prophets}" and "\textit{sibyls}". Ivanoff and Zampetti, \textit{Jacopo Negretti}, 390 and 589-590; Traverso, \textit{La Scuola di San Fantin}, 137, 145-146, and 154-155; and Zampetti, \textit{Guida}, 69-70, 120, and 155. While Mason accepts this attribution for the two sibyls in the Accademia, she argues that the four paintings still in the Ateneo are not by Palma. Mason Rinaldi, \textit{Palma il Giovane}, 125, 175-176. But with the exception of the \textit{Sibyl} shown in Fig. 3.14a, the attribution of the \textit{Prophets} and \textit{Sibyls} to Palma seems secure. The \textit{Sibyls} in Figs. 3.14b, 3.15a and 3.15b are united by the loose quality of the brushstrokes and by the heavy shadows which leave each figure’s facial features in shadow, as well as the coloring and style of their attire. The facial features of the fourth Sibyl, in Fig. 3.14a, are handled in an entirely different manner. With her rosebud mouth and heavy-lidded eyes, she lacks the impressionistic and introspective quality found in the other figures. The distinctive pattern on her pearl-colored robes contrasts with the solid reds and golden browns of the clothes worn by her counterparts. Also unlike the other three, who display rounded and graceful forearms beneath rolled-up sleeves, her arms are covered. It may be that the Sibyl in Fig. 3.14a was a later replacement for a painting that was damaged, or that a workshop assistant was more heavily involved in the production of this canvas.

\textsuperscript{40} Gianantonio Moschini, \textit{Guida per la città di Venezia all’amico delle belle arti}, Venice: Tipografia di Alvisopoli, 1815, 629. In the later edition of Moschini’s guide to Venice (\textit{Nuova guida di Venezia di Mons. G. A. Moschini Canonico della Cattedrale di S. Marco Cavaliere della corona di ferro ecc.}, Venice: Vincenzo Mainsner, 1847, 44-45), the Albergo Grande is not described; by 1847, the paintings in the room had been removed.

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determine their arrangement across the altar wall (Fig. 3.17 and Diagram 6). In this position, the Sibyl in Fig. 13.15b leans forward and looks towards the altar, stepping forward with her left leg. She wears a red tunic over a creamy white blouse, and her lower body is draped with a heavy golden-brown cloth. The colors are reversed in the attire of the Sybil in Fig. 13.15a, and she steps forward with her right leg and turns her face to the right. This Sibyl would likely have stood to the left of the altar, from which vantage point she, too, looks towards the altar. The posture and position of the Sibyl in Fig. 13.14b is very similar to Fig. 13.15b; from the far right side of the wall, she too would have looked towards the altar, although the red drapery that forms a veil over her head would obscure her view. The fourth Sibyl (Fig. 13.14a), perhaps not original to the cycle, would occupy the position on the far left side of the wall. Thus arranged, the two Sibyls on the right hold scrolls and step forward with their left legs, while the two on the left hold books and step forward with their right legs.

For Christian writers, the Old Testament prophets predicted Christ’s coming and offered evidence for the idea that Christianity had always been meant to supplant Judaism. Sibyls were the female seers of antiquity, and their prophecies too were incorporated as evidence in favor of Christian theology. Lactantius, writing in the third century, argued that the prophecies of these pagan oracles foretold the monotheistic Christian God.\(^{41}\) St. Augustine interprets the prophecies of the Erythraean Sibyl as references to Christ.\(^{42}\) In his treatise Against Jovinian, St. Jerome asserted that the sibyls’ skill in divination was their reward for virginity; given the sibyls’ gender and virginity, they came to be closely associated with the Virgin.\(^{43}\) In the fifteenth century, the humanist interest in antiquity sparked a trend of representing the sibyls in the visual arts, often in chapels and churches dedicated to the Virgin.\(^{44}\)

After the Council of Trent, the inclusion of Old Testament prophets and sibyls in religious cycles became increasingly popular; these figures are sometimes represented holding scrolls displaying inscriptions that expanded upon or clarified the implications of narrative scenes. Five sibyls and prophets appear in Michelangelo’s ceiling for the Sistine Chapel. Twenty-four such figures, many displaying legible inscriptions, appear in the fresco cycle decorating the Oratory of

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\(^{42}\) Augustine, *City of God* XVIII:23 (PL 41:579-581)


\(^{44}\) For instance, four sibyls appear in the vault of Filippino Lippi’s Carafa Chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, and ten are represented in the mosaic floor of S. Maria Assunta in Siena. On the former, including a useful account of the use of sibyls in Renaissance art, see Geiger, *Carafa Chapel*, Chapter 3.
the Gonfalone in Rome.\textsuperscript{45} The Albergo of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco also includes two prophets, painted by Tintoretto, standing in shell niches on the side walls; their presence reminds the viewer that the events of the Passion, pictured in the narrative scenes on the entrance wall and over the \textit{banca}, were foretold in the Old Testament. Tintoretto’s prophets do not display any inscriptions, nor do any of the six paintings from the Albergo Grande of S. Fantin. However, two of the four female figures hold scrolls, and two hold books.

Unlike the room’s other painted decoration, the two prophets are executed in grisaille (Fig. 3.13). Their grace and dynamic torsion are consistent with Palma’s work in this period, and the monumentality of their bodies underscores the continuing influence of his Roman training and his study of the muscular figures found in the work of Michelangelo and his followers.\textsuperscript{46} Like Tintoretto’s prophets at S. Rocco, each stands in an illusionistic niche, and each is strongly lit from one side; but since those at S. Fantin are rendered in a monochrome palette, they give a stronger impression of unpainted statuary set into recessed niches. The play of light and shadow provides evidence for their original configuration. The curly-haired figure (Fig. 3.13a) appears to be illuminated from the left, for the right side of the niche in which he stands is bathed in light. If this figure was located on the north wall (Diagram 3a, Fig. 3.18), the illusionistic light in the painting would correspond to the flow of light from the windows on the west side of the room and, more importantly, to the flow of divine light from the altar. The figure with the covered head (Fig. 3.13b) is illuminated from the right. Therefore, he was probably placed on the east wall; in this position, the direction of light in the painting corresponds to the flow of natural light from the windows on the south wall (Diagram 3b; Fig. 3.19). Flanking each man are naked angels, \textit{genii} of divine inspiration, who seem to protrude into the viewer’s space as they play in the folds of the prophets’ robes or hoist heavy tomes.


As mentioned above, the 1786 inventory refers to one of these figures as a St. Jerome, although neither bears the usual attributes of that saint; the second figure is not named. Moschini refers to both simply as "prophets." As a pair, the figures are studies in the use of counterpoint. One is curly-haired and youthful; his face is brightly lit and the palm of his outstretched hand faces up (Fig. 3.13a). Standing upright, he looks and gestures towards the altar where Christ’s sacrifice was reenacted, and turns his face towards the light. The other figure, with his flowing beard and slightly stooped posture, appears older (Fig. 3.13b). Unlike his counterpart, his head is covered, and his face is obscured by shadow. Although he is directly opposite the altar, he casts his gaze downward towards the tome held by the putto on his right and raises his hand with the palm facing downward. While he prophecies Christ’s coming, he does not seem to fully see the truth.

Reconstructing the Albergo Grande, c. 1600

Textual sources and other evidence confirm that the arrangement of the major commissions for the Albergo Grande conformed to common principles in the decoration and layout of chapels and confraternal halls. First, a room’s main altar was typically located at the end of the central longitudinal axis, on the wall furthest from the primary entrance. Second, the painted narrative cycles on walls of confraternal chapter rooms and other chapels often began to the right of the altar and unfolded chronologically as the viewer moved clockwise around the room. Paintings were typically placed high on the walls and close together, covering almost the entire breadth of a given wall with canvases and their frames. Descriptions of the Albergo Grande of S. Fantin confirm that the eight scenes of the St. Jerome Cycle were located above the wainscoting on three of the room’s four walls, and that the narrative of Jerome’s life unfolded chronologically starting on the north wall, near the corner to the right of the altar. The dimensions of the known paintings and those of the room itself confirm this arrangement. The chronological layout of the scenes allowed the viewer to "read" the scenes from left to right, as he would a text. It also highlighted the altar by positioning it at both the beginning and the end of the narrative cycle.

Drawing on these principles, along with the evidence of textual sources and the architectural setting itself, we can reconstruct the appearance of the Albergo Grande at the end of the sixteenth century with some confidence. The entrance to the room is located on the north wall in the northeast corner (Diagram 3; Figs. 3.18, 47 There are, of course, many exceptions to this general principle. Examples in which it is followed include Patricia Fortini Brown’s reconstruction of Carpaccio’s cycle on the life of St. Ursula at the Scuola di S. Orsola and her suggested arrangement for the cycle on the life of St. Stephen for the Scuola di Santo Stefano. Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting, 280-281, 296-298. 48 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II: 177-178; Sansovino and Martinioni, Venetia città nobilissima (1663), 136-137; Moschini, Guida di Venezia (1815), 625-631; and Paoletti, Fiore di Veneze, II:154. In Paoletti’s and Moschini’s descriptions, the narrative scenes are not listed in chronological order.
The altar stood at the opposite end of the room, between the two windows on the far west wall (Fig. 3.17). The Sibyls flanked the windows on the altar wall. The scenes from the St. Jerome Cycle followed roughly chronological order. To the right of the altar, on the north wall, were the first two scenes (now missing) of Palma’s St. Jerome Cycle, St. Jerome Flagellated for Reading the Works of Cicero and St. Jerome Ordained a Cardinal; between them was a grisaille Prophet (Fig. 3.18 and Diagram 7). On the east wall, facing the altar, were the next two scenes, The Construction of the Monastery at Bethlehem, followed by the second Prophet, and then St. Jerome and the Lion (Fig. 3.19 and Diagram 8). The south wall of the room is punctuated by three windows, leaving four spaces for the remaining four paintings (Fig. 3.20 and Diagram 9). These were, in order: St. Jerome in His Study, St. Jerome Receiving Gifts from the Merchants, The Funeral of St. Jerome, and St. Augustine’s Vision of St. Jerome. The scene of the scholarly St. Jerome at his desk could have been placed at multiple points in the cycle; the arrangement proposed here allows for a symmetrical correspondence with the scene of St. Augustine’s Vision of St. Jerome at the other end of the south wall, and accords with the dimensions of the available wall space.

Palma’s Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin (Fig. 3.5), probably in a heavy frame, occupied the entire ceiling. The oil sketch provides clear evidence of the orientation of the painting in the room. While the canvas is rectangular in shape, a long, thin triangle of black wash obscures a portion of the right side of the canvas. Thus, the bozzetto reflects the fact that the dimensions of the room were irregular, with the east wall significantly wider than the altar wall. Therefore, the Virgin’s tomb at the bottom of the Assumption was near the altar wall at the room’s west end (Fig. 3.17). The play of light and shadow in the painting confirms this orientation, for the illumination of the bodies follows the flow of natural light from the three windows on the south wall. This arrangement conformed to other sixteenth-century conventions. Ceiling paintings in chapels were typically positioned so that they would be seen right side up when entering the room, and were often oriented to be read in conjunction with the altar and its altarpiece. In this case, the massive rectangular stone tomb of the Virgin represented in the painting would have echoed the altar table below it. The slab and skeleton in the illusionistic relief on the face of the sarcophagus would have further underscored the connection between the Mass, the Virgin’s intercession, and the promise of salvation after death.

49 Those scenes that are included in the account of St. Jerome’s life in Jacopo da Voragine’s Golden Legend are presented chronologically. One scene, that of St. Augustine’s Vision, derives from a textual source other than the Golden Legend, as will be discussed further in Part II. However, since the event at issue occurred after the saint’s death, it too is placed in its appropriate chronological location.

50 Because we know the locations of the two missing scenes, their size can be estimated as approximately 16’ x 8 ½’ (4.87 m x 2.6 m).

51 Rosand usefully refers to this practice as “structural decorum, that is, the proper adaptation of a picture to its architectural setting”. Rosand, Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice, 53. For a discussion of the relationship between painted decoration and architecture in Venetian confraternal halls, see Grabski on Tintoretto’s paintings for the lower hall of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco. Józef Grabski, “The Group of Paintings by Tintoretto in the 'Sala Terrena' in the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice and Their Relationship to the Architectural Structure,” Artibus et Historiae 1, no. 1 (1980).
Part II. The St. Jerome Cycle

The Scuola di S. Fantin was the third Venetian confraternity to commission an important painted cycle commemorating the life, death, and miracles of St. Jerome of Stridon (c. 347-420). The earliest, the Scuola Piccola di S. Gerolamo, was a small confraternity affiliated with the Augustinian convent and Church of S. Gerolamo in the *sestiere* of Cannaregio. Beginning in the 1460s, the Scuola di S. Gerolamo commissioned five canvases honoring St. Jerome to decorate the walls of its one-room meeting hall. The scenes included Alvise Vivarini’s *St. Jerome and the Lion* (Fig. 3.21); *St. Jerome Discoursing Outside the Monastery* and *St. Jerome in his Study*, both by Giovanni Bellini; and the *Last Communion of St. Jerome* and *Funeral of St. Jerome*, which are now attributed to Lazzaro Bastiani (Figs. 3.22, 3.23). Only Bastiani’s canvases survive. Neither is dated or documented, but they certainly predate the second cycle, commissioned by the Scuola Piccola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni, by at least a decade.

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53 Vivarini’s painting of *St. Jerome and the Lion* is lost, but the composition is known from a nineteenth-century engraving: Jean Baptiste Louis Georges Seroux D’Agincourt, *History of art by its monuments from its decline in the fourth century to its restoration in the sixteenth; translated from the French of Seroux d’Agincourt*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1847), Pl. CLXI, fig. 4.

54 Bellini’s paintings are lost. Ricordi states that both were signed, and that one bore the date of 1464. Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell’arte*, i:64. If the date reported by Ridolfi is correct, then the decorative program at S. Girolamo constitutes the earliest known example of a multi-scene painted cycle in a Venetian *scuola piccola*, predating Carpaccio’s better-known commissions for the confraternities of S. Ursula and S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni; it also places the cycle’s inception in the same period as the decorative program for the chapter room in the Scuola Grande di S. Marco. Humfrey, "The Life of St. Jerome Cycle," 41.

55 These two paintings were long attributed to Carpaccio; see Sansovino and Martinioni, *Venetia città nobilissima* (1663), 176; Boschini, *Minere (1664)*, 462, and Paoletti, *Fiore di Veneza*, III:35. Engravings of the two surviving paintings are also included in Seroux D’Agincourt, *History of art*, II, Plate CLXII, nos. 13 and 14, where they are also attributed to Carpaccio. The images were first reattributed to Lazzaro Bastiani by Pietro Paoletti and Gustav Ludwig, "Neue archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der venezianischen Malerei," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 23, no. 3 (1900): 185. Most modern scholars follow Paoletti and Ludwig’s conclusions. The reattribution is given further support by fact that the same scene of Jerome’s funeral was included, albeit in simplified form, on the right side of Bastiani’s predella for an altarpiece of *St. Jerome Enthroned* in the Duomo of Asolo. The altarpiece, still on view in the Duomo of Asolo, is dated to 1485 on stylistic grounds. The predella (now in the Brera in Milan) includes three scenes, from left to right: *St. Jerome and the Lion*; *St. Jerome in Penitence*; and *The Funeral of St. Jerome*. Laura Baini, ed. *Brera. Guide to the Pinacoteca* (Milan: Mondadori Electa s.p.A., 2004), 50, Cat. no. 63.

56 Humfrey suggests that the paintings were produced in the 1480s, although in an earlier publication he presented a plausible argument for the previous decade. Peter Humfrey, "Bastian Lazaro," in *La
The second Venetian confraternal cycle was produced by Vittore Carpaccio for the Scuola degli Schiavoni, the confraternity of Dalmatian immigrants in Venice; the paintings commemorated the Scuola's three patron saints (George, Jerome, and Tryphon) and were executed between 1502 and 1507. The scenes include two episodes from the life of Christ (The Calling of Matthew and The Agony in the Garden); three from the life of St. Jerome (St. Jerome and the Lion, The Funeral of St. Jerome, and St. Augustine's Vision of St. Jerome, Figs. 3.24-3.26); two from the life of St. George (St. George Fighting the Dragon, The Triumph of St. George, and St. George Baptizing the Pagans); and one scene of a miracle of St. Tryphon. All the paintings remain in the confraternity's meeting house, where they are displayed in the ground-floor room.

When Palma Giovane produced his own St. Jerome Cycle for the Scuola di S. Fantin, he would have been well aware of these confraternal precedents, as well as many other representations of St. Jerome that existed in Venetian churches. But between the beginning of the sixteenth century and the 1580s, attitudes towards the pictorial representation of the saints radically changed. The crisis of the Reformation had sparked a reevaluation of both sacred images and sacred history. A comparison of the three Venetian confraternal cycles on St. Jerome's life demonstrates the impact of Catholic reform ideals imposed from above as well as their limitations in an environment with a beloved local visual tradition that celebrated and reinforced popular devotional practices and beliefs.

Religious Imagery and the Cult of Saints in the Sixteenth Century

In the first half of the Cinquecento, Catholic theologians and writers had vigorously debated the nature of images, the veneration owed to them, and their form. Thus, the ideas promulgated at and after the Council of Trent had already

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58 On this point, see Ragne Bugge's classic essay on the debate over religious art in the four decades prior to Trent, in which he sets forth the various positions taken by writers regarding the nature of images and the charges leveled by Luther and Calvin against the display of images in churches. Ragne Bugge, "Il dibattito intorno alle immagini sacre in Italia prima del decreto tridentino del 1563," in Sodalizio tra studiosi dell'arte, Colloqui (1975-1976), 73-80. Bugge argues in favor of the assertion put forth by Federico Zeri (Federico Zeri, Pittura e controriforma. L'arte senza tempo di Scipione Pulzone
started to influence Italian religious imagery long before the issuance of the Tridentine decree on art. Published in 1563, the Council’s official statement on sacred imagery was more broadly concerned with the cult of saints and the veneration of relics. The decree responded to Protestant claims of Roman Catholic idolatry and polytheism by reasserting its long-held position that the invocation of the saints was a valid means of obtaining divine favor. As part of a hierarchical structure that limited the direct access of the faithful to the divine, the intercessory saints offered a parallel to the hierarchy of the Church, which was itself under attack for filtering the individual believer’s access to God through the clergy.

In the realm of images, the decree was concerned primarily with refuting charges of idolatry in Catholic practice and in reexerting centralized control over local parishes. The Council clarified that religious images are to be given due honor and veneration...; not, however, that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them by reason of which they are to be venerated, or that something is to be asked of them, or that trust is to be placed in images, as was done of old by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which they represent, so that by means of the images we kiss and before which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose likeness they bear. Religious images, the Council insisted, are meant to instruct the faithful and confirm the Church’s teachings. They offer "salutary examples" to inspire and guide devotees in their own lives, and artists should closely follow the sacred texts whose stories are portrayed rather than introducing elements that might cause confusion, provoke disrespect, or promote erroneous beliefs or doctrines.

Following the publication of the decree, other writers stepped in to clarify and expand upon these principles and to offer their own judgments on sacred art and architecture. Giovanni Andrea Gilio’s Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de’ pittori circa l’istoria, published only a year after the close of the Council of Trent, called for greater humility and fidelity to authorized textual

du Gaeta (Turin: Einaudi, 1957), 23-33) that the Tridentine decree, rather than inaugurating a new style, reflected trends that had long been circulating in theological writings and in art. The nature of these discussions was in large part a response to St. Thomas Aquinas’ discussion of images in the Summa theologica (see esp. III.25.3 on the adoration owed to images of Christ). The criticisms leveled by Protestants regarding idolatry and wasteful spending also shaped much of the debate. In the Venetian context, other scholars have also presented evidence that "Tridentine thinking" manifested itself in Venetian art before the publication of the Tridentine decree. See, for instance, Peter Humfrey, "Veronese’s High Altarpiece for San Sebastiano: A Patrician Commission for a Counter Reformation Church," in Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797, ed. John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 369; and Maurice E. Cope, The Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979), 262.

59 "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images", Twenty-Fifth Session (1563), Canons and Decrees, 215-217

60 Ibid., 215-216
sources on the part of artists. The primary target of Gilio’s contempt was the style that developed among followers of Michelangelo in the middle of the sixteenth century. According to one of Gilio’s interlocuters, the cleric Ruggiero Coradini, "modern" artists erred in their rejection of "consuetudine" (tradition or practice), which he defined as "the painting of honest and devout sacred images, with those signs that were bestowed by the ancients as a privilege of sanctity." This dignified antique tradition, he charged,

seemed to the moderns base, awkward, plebian, old, humble, and lacking in ingenuity and art. Putting art before honesty and abandoning the habit of depicting figures clothed, they made them (and make them) nude; abandoning the habit of making figures devout, they make them in a forced manner, thinking it a great thing to twist their heads, arms, and legs, so that those in contemplation seem to dance and make gestures. And they have so lowered that holy tradition with these new inventions of theirs, that they could scarcely paint more dishonest figures in kitchens and taverns.

Another important commentary was Cardinal Carlo Borromeo’s De fabrica ecclesiae, first published in 1577. This text focused primarily on the construction of decorous churches and chapels and the form and location of altars, but it also briefly addressed the question of images. Borromeo emphasized the need for orthodoxy and called for the removal of images that promote false dogmas, noting the danger of such images particularly among the uneducated. Artists might draw inspiration and ideas from four sources, including Scripture, tradition, ecclesiastical history, and the common usage of the Holy Church, but should avoid anything apochryphal, superstitious, or curious that might disturb the viewer or distract from devotion. He suggested a set of standardized symbols that would be easily understood and widely recognizable, including the palm frond for martyrs, the mitre for Bishops, and a distinct cruciform halo for Christ. Moreover, he called for penalties not only for artists who violated the prescriptions of Trent, but also for church rectors who permitted objectionable imagery in their churches.


62 Gilio, Dialogo, 111. See also pp. 77-80 for the well-known discussion of Michelangelo’s Last Judgment, in which Gilio’s interlocutors debate the acceptability of portraying the bodies of the saints unclothed and without the wounds of their martyrdom.

63 The edition used here is Saint Carlo Borromeo, Arte sacra (De fabrica ecclesiae), trans. Carlo Castiglioni and Don Carlo Marcora (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 1952). Images are discussed primarily in Chapter XVII, pp. 54-57.
Gabriele Paleotti’s *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, published in 1582, provided a far more extensive treatment of images.\(^{64}\) Suspecting that many errors in religious art stemmed from a lack of theological education on the part of artists, Paleotti sought to guide them on how to create images that promoted orthodoxy and moved viewers to piety and devotion.\(^{65}\) Ponderous and repetitive, Paleotti’s treatise attempts to anticipate and illustrate every conceivable infraction, and he proposes solutions to a wide variety of iconographic and compositional problems that could potentially cause confusion. Indeed, clarity and the avoidance of confusion are primary among the themes of those two of the five planned books which were completed and published.\(^{66}\)

While the points of view espoused by such treatises are not always in agreement, they do provide insight into the aesthetic and religious ideas that were circulating in important ecclesiastical circles in the second half of the sixteenth century.\(^{67}\) Since Palma received training in Rome from 1567 to the early 1570s, he may have been directly exposed to the debate over images and to the immediate impact of the Tridentine decree on his Roman contemporaries.\(^{68}\) Palma’s Roman training distinguished him from his Venetian competitors; his familiarity with the central Italian practice of drawing and his direct exposure to antiquities were unusual and considered desirable. But his tremendous success in Venice also depended on his sensitivity to the desires of his patrons and to his respect for the local traditions of the city of his birth; both of these characteristics of Palma’s art are demonstrated in the St. Jerome Cycle.

\(^{64}\) The first Italian edition of Paleotti’s text (Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (Bologna: Alessandro Benacci, 1582)) is cited herein. Three major modern editions of this text were also consulted: Gabriele Paleotti, "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane," in *Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960-62) (transcription based on the original Italian edition, along with scholarly notes); Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (Bologna, 1582), ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editori, 1990) (anastatic reprint of the original Italian edition with an introductory essay by Prodi); and Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* (1582), ed. Stefano della Torre, trans. Gian Franco Freguglia (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002). The reader should note that in the latter edition, Paleotti’s text has been altered to reflect modern Italian usage.

\(^{65}\) Paleotti, *Discorso*, Proemio

\(^{66}\) Indices for the remaining three books were published in the first edition. These indicate that Paleotti envisioned an even more expansive guide that covered other aspects of church and chapel decoration, explicated the iconography of well-known saints and Gospel stories, and proposed further limitations on artistic decorum.

\(^{67}\) Maurice Cope (*Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament*, 262) correctly points out that in many cases, the changes called for in such treatises actually began to appear in art before their publication, and that many Counter-Reformation art treatises "seem to follow the practice of artists rather than to determine it."

\(^{68}\) On the dates of Palma’s Roman sojourn, see David Rosand, "Palma Giovane and Venetian Mannerism" (Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, 1965), 139-142; and Mason Rinaldi, *Palma il Giovane*, 10-11.
Interest in the cult of St. Jerome of Stridon had grown exponentially in Italy in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Details of his life, death, and miracles were well-known to the general public thanks to the broad dissemination of popular hagiographies translated into the vernacular, the best-known of which was Jacopo da Voragine’s thirteenth-century *Golden Legend*. In the early fourteenth century, the Bolognese canon lawyer Giovanni d’Andrea, who was personally devoted to Jerome and determined to renew interest in his cult, completed his own extensive compendium on the saint’s life and works, the *De laudibus sancti hieronymi* or the *Hieronymianus*. The *Hieronymianus* circulated in manuscript form and was drawn upon by later hagiographers. Another influential early devotee was Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370-1440), whose annual sermons in honor of St. Jerome fulfilled a personal pledge of devotion to the saint. Ten of Vergerio’s sermons survive, often because they were incorporated into codices used for humanist teaching. Detailed descriptions of St. Jerome’s last communion, death, and miraculous visitations were also promulgated in manuscript copies of three apocryphal letters purportedly written by Saints Augustine, Cyril, and Eusebius but

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actually penned in the late thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{73} By 1472, a vernacular edition of the three letters was published, along with information drawn from D'Andrea's \textit{Hieronymianus}, the \textit{Golden Legend}, and other sources, in a single volume known as the \textit{Vita et transitus Sancti Hieronymi} (referred to hereafter as the \textit{Vita et transitus}).\textsuperscript{74} Thus, by the late fifteenth century, "eye-witness" accounts of St. Jerome's life and death, encomia written by his devotees, and a growing body of visual representations promulgated an impressive set of claims about his status and achievements.\textsuperscript{75} Jerome was widely recognized as a saint and a scholar, a Doctor of


\textsuperscript{74}On the textual history of the compilation, see the introduction in Costanzo Di Girolamo, ed. \textit{Libro di lu transitu et vita di misser Sanctu Iheronimu} (Palermo: Centro di studi filologici e linguistici siciliani, 1982), VII-XXVI. Di Girolamo also provides a transcription of a Sicilian version of the compilation dated 1473. The earliest printed edition known to me was published in Venice in 1472 by Bartolomeo da Cremona. This text is recorded, along with other early editions, in Giuseppe Valentinelli, \textit{Supplementi al saggio bibliografico della Dalmazia e del Montenegro} (Zagabria: Cofip, 1863), 37-39. On other early editions, see Francesco Zamboni, \textit{Le opere volgari a stampa dei secoli XIII e XIV} (Bologna: presso Nicola Zanichelli 1878), col. 1065-1068. The text was translated into other languages as well; an English edition appeared by 1499, translated by Simon Winter and published in Westminster. In Venice alone, the \textit{Vita et transitus} was reprinted more than twenty times between 1472 and 1500. However, the miracles described in the letters were known there at least a century before their publication; one of the miraculous appearances described in the letter \textit{De magnificentiis beati Hieronymi} of the Pseudo-Augustine is recounted in the prologue of the fourteenth-century \textit{mariegola} of the Scuola di S. Gerolamo. The prologue of the \textit{mariegola} is transcribed in Ortalli, \textit{Scuole Piccole a Venezia}, 193, and discussed further below. The early editions consulted for the present chapter were \textit{Transitus Vita et Miracoli di S. Hieronymus}, (Venice: Per Gabriellm Petri, 1475), \textit{Transitus Vita et Miracoli di S. Hieronymus}, (Venice: Annibale da Foxia da Parma, 1487), \textit{Vita et transitus Sancti Hieronymi}, (Venice: Giovanni Maria de Occimiano, 1491), and \textit{Transito vita miracoli et morte del Glorioso Santo Hieronimo}, (Venice: Bernardino de Bindoni Milanese, 1543) which are substantially similar in content but which differ in spelling and grammar. The 1491 edition is cited herein and is referred to as the \textit{Vita et transitus}.

the Church, translator of the Vulgate, founder of a monastery at Bethlehem, a humble imitator of Christ, an exemplary penitent and ascetic, the scourge of heretics, a lifelong virgin, a Cardinal Priest, and a worker of miracles.

Some of the writings attributed to St. Jerome in the Hieronymianus were already considered suspect in the Middle Ages. In the early sixteenth century, the historical accuracy of the medieval accounts came under new scrutiny with Erasmus' critical edition of St. Jerome's works, first published in 1516. Erasmus' goal was to purge the record of corruption and inaccuracy and to recover the brilliance of the purely historical Jerome, to whom he was devoted. He raised significant doubts about the letters included in the Vita et transitus, but his text was controversial. In 1554, his edition of St. Jerome's works was placed on a Venetian Catalogue of Heretical Books.

In the tense religious climate of the later sixteenth century, Catholic reformers sought increasingly to unify and regulate the liturgy and to purge historia sacra of falsehoods and errors. Simon Ditchfield articulately summarizes three guiding principles of Tridentine sacred history: "the importance of using trustworthy, where possible, contemporary sources; the significance of continuity as a testimony to institutional legitimacy; and, above all, the importance of using chronological presentation both to emphasize this continuity and as an aid to clarity of presentation." To be sure, the first two of these principles were not always easily reconciled. Records of the involvement of Gabriele Paleotti, then archbishop of Bologna, with the proposed revision of the Office of San Petronio, the city's patron saint, indicate the complications which might arise when the sources underlying ancient traditions were called into question. Eager to finalize the new Office but also to preserve the city's "ancient customs", Paleotti had entrusted the humanist and scholar Carlo Sigonio with replying to the concerns of Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto regarding the proposed Office. In a letter to Sirleto regarding a suspect twelfth-century manuscript on San Petronio's life, Sigonio pointed out that "[i]n as much as it is said that the life of S. Petronio, copied in 1180, seems to be false, I

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76 Rice, Saint Jerome, 118-119
77 Ibid., 116-136; Pabel, Herculean Labours, 175-248. For earlier efforts to distinguish between Jerome's apocryphal and authentic writings, see Rice, Saint Jerome, 121-124.
78 Among other problems, Saint Cyril, purported author of the letter recounting several of Jerome's posthumous miracles, had died thirty-four years before Jerome's own death. On Erasmus' edition of Jerome's works and other early (fifteenth century) indications that the letters were false, see Rice, Saint Jerome, 116-136; Di Girolamo, ed., Transitu et vita, IX; and Pabel, Herculean Labours, 198-199.
79 Pabel, Herculean Labours, 88-89
80 Simon Ditchfield, Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 45. More broadly, see Ditchfield's account of the revision of the breviary and new attitudes towards local observances and hagiography, at pp. 17-114.
81 The revision of the Office of S. Petronio is discussed in Ibid., 63-66.
agree, but since it agrees with other writings in its dates and people and with the fame of the city [i.e. Bologna], it is better to believe it to be true. . ."82

In the case of St. Jerome, despite the prohibition on Erasmus' text, Catholic theologians and writers took up many of his findings in their own reevaluations of the saint's life.83 One important new account was the Vita that prefaced the first three volumes of a nine-volume edition of Jerome's complete works, authorized by the Church and edited by Mariano Vittori.84 Vittori, later Bishop of Rieti, attacked Erasmus but similarly streamlined both the writings declared authentic and the body of data regarded as historically accurate. Absent from Vittori’s collection of Jerome’s works are the apocryphal letters; his biography of the saint also excludes the legendary miracles (such as the healing of the lion) and the more bizarre episodes (such as the incident in which Jerome was said to have been tricked into dressing in women’s clothing) that had come down from the medieval hagiographies.

Despite these interventions, popular literature continued to disseminate the traditional account of St. Jerome's life and miracles. The Golden Legend was reissued throughout the sixteenth century, and an edition of the Vita et transitus that included the apocryphal letters was published in Venice as late as 1543.85 But as we have seen, the Tridentine decree on art had charged bishops with ensuring that images in sacred spaces were purged of superstitious or erroneous accounts. In light of the new historical and philological research on St. Jerome’s life, and given the ubiquity of images of him, it is difficult to imagine a saint whose representation in the visual arts was in more dire need of revision by the 1580s. To a great extent, the St. Jerome Cycle of S. Fantin embraced the stylistic imperatives of contemporary Catholic writings on art, but at the same time, it largely ignored the new scholarship on St. Jerome's life and works. The reasons for this divergence are considered below.

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82 Quoted and translated in Ditchfield, Liturgy, Sanctity and History, 64, citing Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, Reg. lat. 2023, f. 246r-v.
84 Mariano Vittori, "Vita D. Hieronymi," in Epistolae D. Hieronymi Stridonensis et libri contra haereticos (Rome: Paulum Manutium Aldi F., 1565), cited in Rice, Saint Jerome, 154-155. The edition of Vittori’s works consulted here is Mariano Vittori, Divi Hieronymi Stridoniensis Opera omnia quae reperiri potuerunt (Paris: Sebastianum Nivellium, sub Ciconiis, via Jacobae, 1579). The prefatory pages are unnumbered, but Vittori’s account of St. Jerome’s life and his arguments against Erasmus can be found therein under the heading "Vita Divi Hieronymi Stridoniensis Falso Antea ab Erasmo". Also influential on later scholarship and images of St. Jerome were the evaluation of the saint's legend by Cardinal Cesare Baronius in the Annales Ecclasiastici (published between 1588 and 1607), and Fray José de Sigüenza's biography of St. Jerome, issued beginning in 1595 in Madrid. On these treatises, which postdate the images under discussion here, see Rice, Saint Jerome, 156-159 and Cropper, Domenichino Affair, 53-54.
85 For St. Jerome’s legend in late Venetian editions of the Golden Legend, see Voragine, Legendario (1565), 278-280; and Voragine, Legendario (1588), 692-695. Both of these editions include the traditional account of St. Jerome's miracles, and both include woodcuts of St. Jerome with the lion, one of the miracles discarded by the new scholarship on the saint's life.
St. Jerome as Cardinal Priest

In the fifteenth century, Venetian artists occasionally represented St. Jerome in scarlet robes and a hat or cap; the vivid red color of these garments denoted his legendary status as a Cardinal Priest. But other fifteenth-century Venetian images do not represent St. Jerome as a Cardinal. In Bastiani's canvases for the Scuola di S. Gerolamo, the saint wears the thin white shift of a penitent (Figs. 3.22, 3.23). In Carpaccio's early sixteenth-century St. Jerome and the Lion for the Scuola degli Schiavoni, he wears a white robe and dark blue scapular similar to those of his brethren (Fig. 3.25). But in the sixteenth-century decoration of the Scuola di S. Fantin, St. Jerome is usually represented in cardinalitial red. In Tintoretto's altarpiece for the Albergo Grande (Fig. 3.1), a wide-brimmed scarlet hat is propped in the foreground in front of St. Jerome. In his St. Jerome Receiving Gifts from the Merchants (Fig. 3.16) and in Palma's Assumption of the Virgin (Figs. 3.4, 3.5), St. Jerome wears a scarlet mantle. In all the surviving paintings of Palma's St. Jerome Cycle, St. Jerome wears cardinalitial red. Even in the Funeral of St. Jerome (Fig. 3.11), in which the saint is dressed in a short white tunic, a swath of scarlet cloth is extended over his body.

The historical veracity of St. Jerome's status as a Cardinal had been called into question by Erasmus, who noted that the status of Cardinal Priest did not exist in Jerome's lifetime. In his own biography of St. Jerome, Mariano Vittori made no reference to St. Jerome's status as a Cardinal, effectively implying that this aspect of the legend was false. For Giovanni Andrea Gilio, an advocate of returning to traditional iconography, the representation of St. Jerome in anachronistic cardinalitial dress was a recent enough phenomenon to warrant rejection. In his Dialogo, the lawyer Troilo Matioli accepts St. Jerome's status as a Cardinal but questions those artists who depict him in cardinalitial red. Is it not an error, he asks, to depict Jerome in the red hat of contemporary cardinals, since the red hat and robe were instituted seven hundred years after the saint's lifetime? Rather than displaying worldly pomp and arrogance in the depiction of saints who rejected those very vices, sacred art should display the contrary.

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86 For instance, Antonio Vivarini painted several altarpieces in which the saint is represented in a wide-brimmed red hat, holding a model of a church in one hand and an open book in the other. These attributes may refer specifically to his establishment of the monastery at Bethlehem and his translation of the Latin Bible, or, more broadly, to his role as a Father of the early Church and an eminent religious scholar.

87 On Erasmus' arguments against calling St. Jerome a cardinal, see Rice, Saint Jerome, 131 and Pabel, Herculaneum Labours, 204-205.

88 Vittori, Divi Hieronymi Stridoniensis, unnumbered preface. See also Pabel, Herculaneum Labours, 241.

89 Gilio, Dialogo, 3.3. The youthful trader Francesco Santi responds to Troilo that such errors stem from the ignorance of uneducated painters interested only in depicting tortuous poses.
But even as representations of the saints came under scrutiny in an effort to bring them in line with historical evidence, the representation of St. Jerome as a Cardinal was supported by some writers who sought to retain the traditional, and easily recognizable, formula for denoting the saint in pictorial imagery. For instance, in a treatise on sacred images first published in 1570, the theologian Johannes Molanus admitted that Mariano Vittori did not consider St. Jerome a Cardinal, nor did Vittori mention the miracle of the lion. Nonetheless, Molanus declared these to be minor errors, best rectified by repositioning the significance of these attributes rather than eliminating them. In other words, the interpretation (rather than the iconography) needed revision. Thus, although Molanus recognized that the office of Cardinal Priest did not exist in Jerome’s lifetime, he suggested that the red hat should be retained since it indicated that he was effectively equivalent to a Cardinal in his duties and the honors bestowed upon him.

Federico Borromeo’s *De pictura sacra*, first published in 1624, provides another telling perspective on how Catholic artists might address conflicts between traditional iconography and new scholarship. Retrospective in its consideration of the art produced in the decades immediately following the Council of Trent, Borromeo’s judgments are noticeably tempered by practical concerns. Throughout the treatise, he emphasizes the need for historical truth in image-making, since unlike the fleeting impact of ephemeral words or behaviors, “[w]hen decorum is violated in the realm of painting and sculpture, the consequences are on-going and everlasting.” But his analysis draws a distinction between historical truth and historical accuracy. Truth, as he sees it, may stem from Scripture or from other texts, or from longstanding Christian tradition. Borromeo’s examples demonstrate that sometimes anachronistic details or deviations from historical accuracy can be justified based on tradition, or because such details help to elucidate broader themes or truths. On the problem of representing St. Jerome in cardinalial dress, Borromeo takes a stance similar to that of Molanus. Admitting that the office of Cardinal was instituted long after Jerome’s death, he argues that the saint was nonetheless akin to a Cardinal because he was summoned to Rome and bestowed

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90 Paleotti planned a discussion of the iconography of St. Jerome, along with recommendations on other saints and key events in Christian history, for his fourth book of the *Discorso*. However, only the first two books were completed and published. See Prodi’s Introduction in Paleotti, *Discorso* (1990), xi-xiii, and Ilaria Bianchi, *La politica delle immagini nell’età della Controriforma: Gabriele Paleotti teorico e committente* (Bologna: Compositore, 2008), 213-230.


92 Molanus, *De picturis et imaginibus sacris*, 52-53, 127-128


94 Ibid., DPS I.2.4
with the authority of the office; but more importantly, the Cardinal’s hat was an easily recognizable and accepted means of identifying St. Jerome.95 The need for clarity and the weight of tradition prevail over historical accuracy here.

But the St. Jerome Cycle of the Scuola di S. Fantin goes beyond the recommendations of those writers who argued in favor of retaining these attributes in the interest of clarity. In one of the two lost scenes, the textual sources tell us that Palma represented St. Jerome’s ordination as Cardinal by Pope Damasus.96 The retention of this and other apocryphal episodes in the cycle underscores that the influence of the new scholarship on saints’ lives may have been limited among the Catholic laity. If the programmers of the San Fantin cycle were aware of the historical inaccuracy, then they chose to disregard it, promulgating the myth of Jerome’s ordination by Pope Damasus by fixing it in the minds of the cycle’s viewers.

The Death of St. Jerome

The letter De morte Hieronymi of the Pseudo-Eusebius provided a long and vivid account of St. Jerome’s last Communion, death, and funeral.97 Doubted by Erasmus, the letter and its contents are conspicuously absent from Mariano Vittori’s 1565 edition of St. Jerome’s life and works. But even after Vittori’s pointed exclusion of the apocryphal letters, they exerted an influence on Italian art, including works commissioned by major ecclesiastical patrons. For instance, St. Jerome’s last Communion is the subject of altarpieces produced by Agostino Carracci for the Bolognese Church of S. Girolamo in 1592, and by Domenichino for the Oratory of S. Girolamo della Carità in Rome in 1614 (Figs. 3.27, 3.28).98 While St. Jerome’s last Communion was not portrayed at S. Fantin, Palma’s Funeral of St. Jerome does draw upon the account of the saint’s death in the same discredited letter that describes the Communion. Elizabeth Cropper argues that the persistent influence of the apocryphal letters on art commissions such as Agostino’s Last Communion and Palma’s Funeral should be understood as a defense of monasticism in the wake of Protestant challenges and as a support for the Catholic belief in the Real Presence; Jerome’s lengthy address to the Host in the De morte hieronymi offered evidence that Christ was indeed present in the consecrated Eucharist. The Carthusian patrons of Agostino’s altarpiece

must have determined that the author of the letter did have some authentic text [by Eusebius] at hand, considering the account too vital

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95 Ibid., DPS II.11
96 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II:177-178; Sansovino and Martinioni, Venetia città nobilissima (1663), 136-137; Paoletti, Fiore di Veneza, II:136-137
97 Vita et transitus (1491), 6ff
98 Cropper notes that Domenichino’s altarpiece was produced seven years after the death of Cesare Baronio, who had launched a vigorous attack on the three apocryphal letters in the Annales ecclesiastici. Cropper, Domenichino Affair, 78-79
to their interests, and the source of the attacks upon it too dangerous, for it to be abandoned.99

Both Agostino’s and Domenichino’s paintings of the last Communion were meant for monastic churches.100 But the Scuola di S. Fantin was neither a monastic order nor closely associated with a monastic church.101 While a desire to defend the Church may have played a role in the confraternity’s decision to commission a painting on a subject derived from the De morte Hieronymi, other factors were also at play. In particular, the confraternal tradition established at the Scuole di S. Gerolamo and the Schiavoni seems to have weighed heavily on the minds of the confratelli of S. Fantin, for Palma’s version of the Funeral clearly references the earlier scenes of the same subject (Figs. 3.23, 3.25). By commissioning a new version of a well-known subject, the Scuola could simultaneously adhere to tradition and demonstrate its own cognizance of contemporary aesthetic trends.

According to the De morte Hieronymi, Jerome’s self-denial was so great that when his monks were preparing him for death, his body was emaciated to the point that his bones could be counted; and when he died, he laid down on ground and crossed his hands over his breast. At his request, his brothers removed his clothes and laid him to rest covered only by a piece of sack cloth.102 Both of the surviving paintings from the Scuola di S. Gerolamo -- Bastiani’s Last Communion and Funeral of St. Jerome -- are deeply influenced by this account of St. Jerome’s final moments and death.103 In Bastiani’s Funeral (Fig. 3.23), the ground plane is tilted up slightly, allowing a clear view of the saint’s frail body extended on the floor before an altar. His arms are crossed at the wrist over the base of a simple wooden cross, and his head is slightly raised. He wears only a plain white tunic that leaves his arms exposed. The scene unfolds in an interior, before the altar of a church or chapel. The space is simple and understated, in keeping with the emphasis on humility among early confraternities and befitting the funeral of a saint who disparaged the material world. The far wall is pierced by two graceful biforal windows and an archway that leads to a porticoed courtyard. The linear perspective system, established by the orthogonals of the altar table and steps and the portico that recedes into the distance, focuses on a point between the two windows, just below a fresco of the Virgin and John the Evangelist at the foot of the Cross. In the altarpiece, seen at an oblique angle, are the Virgin and Child; a half-length figure of God the Father with cherubim decorates the lunette. Attending Jerome are two distinct groups of mourners. Ten men wearing wide-sleeved black robes and tight-fitting black caps stand along the far wall of the chapel, facing the picture plane. One holds an open

99 Ibid., 54-55
100 S. Girolamo in Bologna was a Carthusian church, while S. Girolamo della Carità in Rome was a Hieronymite oratory.
101 As discussed in Chapter 1, the Scuola did have ties with the Dominicans at SS. Giovanni e Paolo, but unlike the Scuola Piccola di S. Gerolamo, whose meeting house was a part of the complex of the Augustinian Church S. Gerolamo, S. Fantin was not affiliated with a specific order.
102 Vita et transitus (1491), 7, 22
103 The confraternity’s decision to commission these particular scenes may have been influenced by the publication of the letters in the vernacular in 1473.
book; most of the others hold thin candles. At Jerome’s head, facing the altar, stands a tonsured and bearded figure wearing a cope with a figurated border. The second group of mourners are gathered behind him; these men are also tonsured, and wear white robes and black scapulars. One holds a censer and an incense boat; another holds a processional cross. Two more carry tall gilded processional candlesticks with red handles. Certainly, both groups of mourners represent Jerome’s monastic brothers in Bethlehem; but the attire of the black-robed figures suggests that they are also meant as contemporary members of the confraternity, who bore candles in religious processions and funerals for their own dead members. Two of the figures in black robes dry their eyes, recalling the grief of the Jerome’s brethren recounted by the Pseudo-Eusebius.¹⁰⁴

Carpaccio’s version of the Funeral builds on Bastiani’s in many respects (Fig. 3.25). The saint is laid out parallel to the picture plane with his head elevated, and he is surrounded by tonsured mourners. A thin white garment covers his frail body. But Carpaccio sets the scene outdoors, on the covered porch of the church in Bethlehem. Details of the landscape -- the expanse of parched earth, a tall palm tree - - evoke the harsh desert location of the monastery. Other components of the scene further enliven the viewer’s curiosity. A well in the distance suggests the sacrament of baptism, while the green plants bursting from the dry ground near the church evoke the spiritual fertility that comes from a life of penitence and piety. Like Bastiani before him, Carpaccio carefully delineates each object, but he goes further in his use of resonant symbols to complicate and enrich the viewer’s interpretive experience.

The full import of Carpaccio’s Funeral in a confraternal setting cannot be understood without reference to the final scene in the cycle, St. Augustine’s Vision of St. Jerome (Fig. 3.26). As demonstrated by Helen I. Roberts, that painting depicts one of the posthumous visions of St. Jerome described in the letter De magnificentiis beati Hieronymi.¹⁰⁵ According to the letter, St. Augustine was engaged in writing to St. Jerome regarding the joys of Heaven when he was struck dumb by a stupendous light and a fragrant odor. Then the voice of the newly dead Jerome called out to him, chastising him for attempting to measure the immeasurable and understand eternal joy before he has experienced it. The embodied St. Jerome does not appear in Carpaccio’s scene; rather, consistent with the letter, the saint is represented by the warm glow of light that spreads across the room from a window near St. Augustine’s writing desk. Unlike the dessicated landscape in which he sets the contemporaneous episode of St. Jerome’s funeral, St. Augustine’s Vision takes place in a richly appointed interior. Together, the two paintings contrast the benefits of a comfortable life spent in solitary contemplation to those offered by a humble but active life spent amongst one’s religious brethren -- a particularly meaningful example for confratelli.

The subjects of both Jerome’s funeral and St. Augustine’s vision are reprised at S. Fantin. In Palma’s St. Augustine’s Vision of St. Jerome (Fig. 3.12), St. Augustine

¹⁰⁴ Vita et transitus (1491), 7, 20
¹⁰⁵ Roberts, "St. Augustine in 'St. Jerome's Study'," 291-295
sits on a balcony, writing at a low table covered with an Oriental carpet. On the balustrade are an open book and a vessel of vaguely antique appearance. These objects suggest an environment of worldly luxury similar to that presented by Carpaccio’s much more detailed and exacting description of St. Augustine’s study, which is strewn with objects that might interest a wealthy humanist and collector. The vessel, juxtaposed with Augustine’s open left hand, also alludes to St. Jerome’s words in the letter De magnificentiis beati Hieronymi.106 The voice of the dead Jerome, emanating from the light, scolds his friend Augustine and reminds him that the object of his inquiry is elusive: "Do you believe that you can put the entire sea into a small vessel? Do you believe that you can enclose the world in your fist?"

Like Carpaccio, Palma relies upon attributes to evoke the textual source of the story and to create an ambiance recognizable to contemporary Venetians, but his rendering of the vision itself demonstrates the extent to which Carpaccio’s more subtle significative mode lost popularity in the later sixteenth century. The disembodied burst of light and fragrance described in the De magnificentiis beati Hieronymi and artfully evoked in Carpaccio’s Vision are abandoned here. Instead, St. Augustine and the viewer are presented with an explicit vision of Jerome. Naked to the waist and draped in red, he hovers with a group of cherubim just beyond the balcony. The embodiment of a vision described as invisible reflects the priority given to clarity after the Council of Trent. Palma’s painting is complicated by the fact that the figure of Jerome is wearing a triangular halo which is typically the attribute of God the Father. Moreover, the identification of the painting as "il Padre Eterno appare a S. Agostino" (The Eternal Father appearing to St. Augustine) appears in a record from 1845 of items in storage from the Gallerie dell’Accademia.107 However, because early textual sources confirm that the subject of the painting is indeed St. Augustine’s vision of St. Jerome, there can be little doubt that the triangular halo was added to the work at some later date.108

Palma’s Funeral also emphasizes clarity over interpretive inquiry (Fig. 3.11). Like Carpaccio and Bastiani, Palma portrays St. Jerome on the ground clad in a simple white habit. A shimmering halo offers the viewer an unmistakable assertion of Jerome’s sanctity, a typical post-Tridentine effort at legibility and a confirmation of the cult of saints. A priest wearing a splendid white and gold cope celebrates the rite. Jerome is lean here but not emaciated; his musculature suggests his spiritual vigor even in death. The monumental setting and the rich robes of the priest emphasize the power of the Catholic faith. The tonsured mourners who surround the body bear ritual implements familiar to contemporary viewers - a candle, a cross, and an aspersgillum. But the perspectival system of Palma’s Funeral departs

106 Vita et transitus (1491), 27v-28v
107 Ivanoff and Zampetti, Jacopo Negretti, 575
108 Most likely, St. Jerome was "transformed" into God the Father to adapt it to a new location after the Scuola’s suppression. However, the figure’s resemblance to other representations of God the Father by Palma, and to Michelangelo’s own foreshortened variations on God the Father on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, may have led a restorer astray once the work was removed from its original setting.
dramatically from the earlier examples. While Bastiani and Carpaccio position Jerome’s corpse parallel to the picture plane, Palma rotates the viewpoint so that the foreshortened body of the saint is seen at a diagonal. This change results in a powerful sense of three-dimensionality and recession into space when the painting is seen from the front, an effect multiplied by the orthogonals of the tile floor and the row of monumental columns that runs from the middleground to the background. But the composition also takes into account the direction from which viewers were intended to first approach the painting. When following the original counter-clockwise arrangement of the cycle, one would see it from below and to its left. From such a position, the painting offers up the illusion of space opening up through the wall of the Albergo Grande, and the viewer has the sense of approaching Jerome’s body directly (Fig. 3.29). The illusion of continuity between the actual sacred space and the fictive space beyond the picture plane would have encouraged the confratelli of S. Fantin to imagine themselves mourning, alongside Jerome’s brethren, at his funeral.

This sort of illusionism appears in other works in the cycle as well. For instance, in Palma’s St. Jerome in His Study (Fig. 3.9), the artist has once again employed the key attributes that traditionally appear in paintings of this very popular subject - a Cardinal’s hat is suspended on a nail behind the saint, the lion sleeps below his bench, and an hourglass and a skull on a shelf on the far wall urgently remind the viewer of impending death. With the position of his arms, his leftward and downward gaze, and his red mantle, the saint unmistakably evokes Titian’s S. Giovanni Elemosinario (Fig. 4.28). But the perspective of the room in which he sits is oriented to present the illusion of continuity with the architectural setting. The wall and bookcases that recede into depth to the left of the saint would have seemed like an extension of the east wall of the Albergo Grande when the painting was seen in its original location in the southeast corner of the room (Fig. 3.20). The flow of light from the right side of the painting is consistent with both the window in the painting and the actual window to the painting’s right, another indication of Palma’s effort to consider the broader environment in which his works appeared.

In his attention to structural decorum, Palma seems to have been inspired by his study of the work of Titian. Particularly in the Funeral, the assymetry of the composition and the device of the receding columns recall Titian’s famed Madonna di Ca’ Pesaro in S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. In its innovative composition and the quality of its execution, the Funeral is the finest surviving work in Palma’s St. Jerome Cycle and a vivid demonstration of the virtuosity that led to Palma’s tremendous success in Venice. It is no surprise, therefore, that Ridolfi singled out the Funeral for

109 The vanishing point of the perspectival system, established by the columns and the lines on the tile floor, is skewed to the left, confirming that the ideal viewpoint is to the painting’s left. The effect of this compositional device is not often observed in the painting’s current location in the Church of S. Giorgio delle Pertiche, for most people approach it head-on from the right aisle of the church.

110 On the composition and theological implications of the Madonna di Ca’ Pesaro, see Rosand, Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice, 45-51.
particular praise, describing it as "one of the best paintings of its type." With its dramatic play of light and dark, assymetrical and dynamic composition, and monumental architectural setting, Palma's *Funeral* incorporated many of the aesthetic innovations popularized by the great masters of the Venetian Renaissance. In its communicative approach, the painting also reflected the new stylistic demands on religious painting; iconographically clear and immediately legible, the image emphatically directs the viewer's interpretive path. It leaves little opportunity for theological speculation or interpretive debate over a textual account that many important Catholic theologians no longer believed.

The St. Jerome Cycle and Confraternal Ideology

The funeral of St. Jerome is one of only two subjects that appear in all three confraternal cycles considered here. Its persistence reflects the fact that the burial of one's brethren remained an essential component of Venetian confraternal life from the Middle Ages onward. Providing one's fellow members with a "good" Christian death and decorous burial was an essential component of a confraternity's practice of *amor proximi*, and the account of St. Jerome's death in the *De morte Hieronymi* offered a compelling model for a good death attended by one's religious community. In other ways as well, the portrayal of St. Jerome's life in the S. Fantin cycle was tailored to the concerns of the lay Christian brotherhood that commissioned it. For instance, even though the Scuola di S. Fantin was not a monastic order, St. Jerome's founding of a religious brotherhood at Bethlehem offered a compelling model for confraternal life and communal spirituality. The actual process of constructing the monastery is depicted in the first surviving scene in the St. Jerome Cycle (Fig. 3.7). Palma's attention to the work and the tools of construction suggest his study of the work of Tintoretto, and in particular that artist's *Crucifixion* for the *albergo* of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco, in which woodworkers labor realistically to erect and employ the crosses of Christ and the thieves. In his description of the painting, Ridolfi notes the specificity with which the artist has described the tasks involved in building:

In the third picture the saint oversees the construction of his convent at Bethlehem, where many craftsmen are working, those who cut the

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111 Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell'arte*, II:178
112 The other is *St. Jerome and the Lion*.
113 As other scholars have noted, Erasmus' critique of the apocryphal letters included the argument that the so-called monastery at Bethlehem was not a monastery in the Renaissance sense; participants did not take vows or wear a uniform habit, but rather were linked to one another through their free choice to live a communal and Christian life. Rice, *Saint Jerome*, 133; Cropper, *Domenichino Affair*, 53.
stones, others who spread the cement, some who erect the walls, and others who carry away the waste.\textsuperscript{114}

A man carrying wooden boards ascends a plank that leads diagonally from the right foreground into the background, a device that establishes a sense of depth and draws the eye to the center of the painting. There, three laborers struggle to carry a beam, moving leftwards towards St. Jerome. In the foreground, two men with nude torsos raises their hammers to pound chisels into stone blocks. Another man peers out rather awkwardly from behind a vertical beam. His attire is not consistent with the blue, white, and red robes of the other figures in the scene, and his distinctive facial features suggest that this is a portrait. His pronounced nose, receding hairline, and dark moustache and beard resemble portraits of Alessandro Vittoria, an appropriate reference for a painting on the subject of building. He gestures with his left hand towards a blue-robed man who kneels on the ground, making measurements with a compass.\textsuperscript{115}

In the realm of architecture, the compass was an attribute that indicated the mathematical expertise and learning necessary to succeed in the art of building; these intellectual skills, it was argued, set the architect apart from those involved in more menial crafts.\textsuperscript{116} The distinction drawn during this period between physical and intellectual labor is made clear in the personifications of Theory and Practice in the 1618 edition of Cesare Ripa’s \textit{Iconologia}; the youthful Theory bears a compass on her forehead, signalling her intellectual skills and leaving her hands free to make a gesture of prayer, while the elderly Practice "uses her compass as if a walker."\textsuperscript{117} If the portrait in Palma’s \textit{Construction of the Monastery} is indeed Vittoria, it is notable that he does not operate the compass; rather, he gestures to the person to whom he has delegated the physical aspects of his art. This scene, which does not appear in either of the early cycles, must have been particularly meaningful to the Scuola whose members had so recently devoted themselves to rebuilding a site to house their organization. A portrait of Vittoria in a painting of the construction of St. Jerome’s monastery would further confirm that the confraternity associated its own building projects with those of its patron saint. Moreover, one can see through the wooden scaffolding erected in front of the building in the background that it is fronted by a classicizing façade made of white marble or Istrian stone in the contemporary Venetian mode.

The subject of the second surviving scene from the S. Fantin cycle is \textit{St. Jerome and the Lion} (Fig. 3.8). One of the miracles ignored by Vittori and criticized by Erasmus, the story is among the best known episodes in the medieval

\textsuperscript{114} Ridolfi, \textit{Maraviglie dell’arte}, 177-178. ["Indi nel terzo il Santo assiste all’edicar il suo Convento in Bethelemme, ove lavorano molti Artefici; chi nello scarpellar le pietre; altri nel compor la calcina, altri nell’ergere le mura, e che nel portar lo schifo."]

\textsuperscript{115} As Loren Partridge pointed out to me, this figure may have been inspired by the figure of Euclid in Raphael’s \textit{School of Athens} (1509-1511) in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican.


\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 56-57
hagiographies. According to these accounts, one day at vespers a lion limped into the monastery at Bethlehem. While Jerome’s companions fled in terror, the saint himself greeted the beast “as if he were a guest”. Jerome ordered his brothers to wash the lion’s injured paw and to find the source of the pain. A thorn was located and removed, and the lion remained at the monastery as a domesticated animal. The subject was a popular one in narrative paintings honoring the saint, and it appeared in all three Venetian confraternal cycles (Figs. 3.8, 3.21, 3.24).

The story of Jerome and the lion was the fourth scene in Palma’s cycle for San Fantin. Compared with his predecessors, Palma imbued the scene with more intense dynamism and high drama. The lion, teeth bared, enters from the left and raises a paw towards Jerome. The saint, monumental in a glowing white robe with a red mozzetta, reaches towards him but turns his body towards the right. His outstretched arms, emphasized by the background portico, form a diagonal that underscores the scene’s rightward momentum. Palma’s brushwork is loose and painterly. His monks are rendered in vigorous motion as they stumble over one another in panic. In the tangle of bodies on the right of the scene, it is difficult to distinguish which robes and flailing limbs belong to which individual. This chaos contrasts with Carpaccio’s fleeing monks, who are orderly even in their terror, their neat blue scapulars marking the various directions of their flight (Fig. 3.24). While the encounter between Jerome and the lion occurs in the foreground of all three versions of the scene, Palma once again manipulates the perspective to create a deeper sense of recession into space. The speed with which the brothers flee into the background at the left side of the painting is accentuated by the sharply receding row of piers which extends from just beyond the lion to the church entrance in the left background.

In keeping with precepts issued after the Council of Trent, esoteric or unusual symbols are discarded in Palma’s St. Jerome and the Lion. The painting is easily legible and each primary figure is readily identifiable. Still, the basic iconography of the scene remains constant. This continuity reflects the fact that the story was an apt expression of the importance of charity in confraternal life. In his analysis of the sources and meaning of the legend of St. Jerome, Eugene F. Rice explains the significance of the episode of the healing and taming of the lion as follows:

Taming a lion is a metaphor for taming the bestial in man, for the triumph of law over unregimented nature, of morality over passion and instinct, of civilization over savagery. In a Christian perspective, it represents the victory of love, holiness and grace over the sinfulness of unredeemed and fallen nature. The thorn is sin, whether in the paw of the lion or in the crown that bloodied the head of Christ; the holy man

118 Giovanni d’Andrea, Hieronymianus diui Hieronymi vite mortis prodigoru dictor ac scriptor exfiorationes p stringens (vt seques indicat prolog’ pncipalr qttuar in ptes diuisus (Basil: Sumptu Leonhardi Alentsei e Luce fratru, 1514), XXIIr; Vita et transitus (1491), 3v-4v; and Voragine, Legendario (1565), 279.
119 Vita et transitus (1491), 3
who tames a lion by removing the thorn from its paw possesses divine powers and is a type of Christ, who conquers sin and death.\textsuperscript{120} St. Jerome’s lion would have had particular resonance in the Venetian context. St. Mark, Venice’s patron saint, was also accompanied and symbolized by a winged lion whose sculptural form appears on many of the city’s monuments.\textsuperscript{121} In the context of a confraternity, St. Jerome and his lion would have also been significant for the simple reason that the act which drew them together was one of charity. In drawing the thorn from the lion’s paw, the saint alleviates the beast’s physical suffering and thus performs an act of \textit{amor proximi}. It must also be recalled that the lion was commonly used as a symbol of the resurrected Christ, and to this extent Jerome’s act of love towards the lion could also have been understood as a direct manifestation of \textit{amor dei}.\textsuperscript{122}

Symbolic and Narrative Strategies

The scene referred to here as \textit{St. Jerome Receiving Gifts from the Merchants} also illustrates an event recounted in the \textit{Golden Legend} and the \textit{Vita et transitus} (Fig. 3.10).\textsuperscript{123} According to those sources, Jerome’s lion was assigned the task of accompanying the monastery’s donkey to collect wood. One day, when the lion fell asleep during their outing, the donkey was stolen by a group of passing merchants. The lion, at first suspected of having consumed his companion, was punished by being sent out every day to do the job himself. However, the merchants eventually passed by again. Spying the donkey, the lion frightened the merchants and drove their camels and the donkey back to the monastery, whereupon:

they fell to their knees and asked pardon for their crime and he [Jerome], kindly making them stand up, commanded them to keep what was theirs, and not to steal the things of others. And they begged St. Jerome to take half of their oil for benediction, which he refused, but at last he agreed to take it. And they promised to give to those monks the same amount of oil every year, and to give the same amount to their successors.\textsuperscript{124}

Given its popular textual sources, this episode in Jerome’s life was widely known, but it is represented in Venetian art only occasionally. It is the primary

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[120] Rice, \textit{Saint Jerome}, 39-40
\item[121] The iconography of St. Mark within the Venetian context and his visual association with the winged lion are discussed in David Rosand, \textit{Myths of Venice} (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Ch. 2.
\item[122] For the lion’s symbolic connection with the resurrected Christ, derived from Medieval bestiaries, see James Hall, \textit{Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art} (London: John Murray, Ltd., 1979), 193.
\item[123] Voragine, \textit{Legendario} (1565), 279-280; \textit{Vita et transitus} (1491), 3-4. For the development of the legend regarding the merchants, see Rice, \textit{Saint Jerome}, 41-44.
\item[124] Voragine, \textit{Legendario} (1565), 279-280
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
subject of one of the three reliefs portraying the life of St. Jerome that form the predella of the marble altar at the Cappella Badoer Giustiniani in the Church of S. Francesco della Vigna (Figs. 3.30 - 3.32). Indeed, the story of the thieving merchants is actually told across the backgrounds of all three reliefs. The merchants and their camels wander over the hills in the right background of the first panel; in the background of the second, they steal the donkey while the lion helps the monks to collect wood; and in third, the lion terrifies the merchants and drives them, along with the donkey, back to the monastery, where they are greeted by St. Jerome in the foreground. Humfrey has suggested that one of the episodes depicted in Bastiani’s Last Communion (Fig. 3.22) is an allusion to the story of the thieving merchants.

There, the foreground is divided into two areas, each framed by an arch and unified by the continuity of the illusionistic architectural setting. An elegant Corinthian column punctuates the division between the two sides of the canvas, underscoring that although the two scenes take place in the same geographic location, they represent different moments in time. Humfrey’s suggestion refers to the right foreground, where St. Jerome greets (or perhaps confronts) a bearded man wearing a turban. He proposes that this enigmatic scene depicts the final moments of the episode, when the malefactors return to the monastery to seek forgiveness. However, this interpretation is not convincing, for most of the iconographic elements generally associated with the story, including camels, the donkey, loads of wood, and barrels of oil, are missing. Adding to the confusion is the fact that St. Jerome appears three times in Bastiani’s canvas. In the left foreground, the dying saint kneels before the Host to take his last Communion. In the right background, past the portico, Jerome appears again, this time strolling past a well and a tree with another figure in eastern dress.

Bastiani’s narrative strategy of compressing several episodes into one scene was common in the early Renaissance. For instance, this approach is employed in the aforementioned reliefs of St. Jerome’s life in the Cappella Badoer Giustiniani, each of which represents at least two chronological moments (Figs. 3.30-3.32). All three of the Badoer Giustiniani reliefs are peppered with curious and delightful details, many of which deepen the symbolic import of the narrative. For instance, in the first relief, reptilian-looking sheep graze on the hills, overseen by a watchful

125 In the most recent study of the chapel and its complicated decorative history, Anne Markham Schulz plausibly dates the altar to between 1501 and 1509. She dismisses attributions to Giovanni Buora or Pietro Lombardo on stylistic grounds, arguing instead that an unknown sculptor created both the altar and several of the other narrative reliefs in the chapel. Anne Markham Schulz, "Rethinking the Badoer-Giustiniani Chapel in San Francesco della Vigna," in The Badoer-Giustiniani Chapel in San Francesco della Vigna, Venice, ed. Anne Markham Schulz (Florence: Centro Di, 2003), 69-73.

126 Humfrey, "The Life of St. Jerome Cycle," 42

127 Instead, Spadavecchia argues that the turbaned figure represents Pelagius, against whose heresy Jerome fought vehemently in his final years, while in the background the saint converses with Origen of Alexandria. Again, the evidence for this theory is insufficient, and the meaning of the scene remains uncertain. Spadavecchia, Lazzaro Bastiani, n.p.

128 This figure is likely the saint’s disciple Eusebius, who ostensibly narrates the description of Jerome’s final moments. Vita et transitus (1491), 6v-22v.
shepherd. The shepherd and his dog stand to the immediate left of a Crucifix, before which St. Jerome kneels in penitence. Another shepherd and his dog play a bagpipe. A roe buck reclines on the hillside; and a lioness gives the sheep a predatory backwards glance as she darts out of the scene. All of these symbols have Christian connotations -- the sheep symbolize Christ’s flock, threatened by the forces of evil but protected by the good shepherd, while the roe deer (believed to be an exceptionally monogamous deer species) perhaps served as a reminder of Jerome’s insistence on abstinence.129

A similar symbolic approach is taken in Carpaccio’s paintings for the Scuola degli Schiavoni. Each scene focuses on a single episode of Jerome’s life, drawn from the Vita et transitus. However, by incorporating well-known iconographical elements from other stories, the artist expands the significance of the narrative. For instance, in the scene of St. Jerome’s funeral, a donkey grazes in the middle ground, to the left of a tall palm tree (Fig. 3.25). While the donkey is not essential to the subject of the funeral, it is a vital part of the iconography of the story of the thieving merchants, and the viewer familiar with St. Jerome’s legend would recognize and remember this additional episode even though the culmination of the story -- Jerome’s forgiveness of the thieves and their act of penitence -- is not represented. Thus, in the context of a scene from Jerome’s life, the donkey is at once a charming detail and a synecdoche that prompts the viewer’s memory of the full episode. Other details similarly engage the viewer in a process of interpretive inquiry. For instance, the palm tree, most typically a symbol of martyrdom, seems out of place in a painting of Jerome’s natural death. But in the De morte Hieronymus, the Psuedo-Eusebius argues that St. Jerome and John the Baptist are effectively equal for their lives of self-denial.130 Although Jerome was not martyred, he still enjoyed the martyrs’ prize, for there are two possible paths to martyrdom. The first is to die violently for the faith, but "the other is to have patience in one’s soul, and to willingly accept every infirmity, every corporal and mental punishment, for love of justice."131 In this second sense, the Pseudo-Eusebius declares, St. Jerome can indeed by considered a martyr.

The rich tapestry of symbols in these early Renaissance narrative paintings functioned in part as mnemonic devices, details that added visual interest and also stimulated the mind to consider a broader narrative. Certainly, they would have invited discussion and debate among confratelli devoted to recognizing and celebrating St. Jerome’s many achievements. But the elusive meaning of some of these scenes, and the sort of inquiry and discussion this symbolic strategy invited, were troublesome to post-Tridentine writers. For Paleotti, fear of the spread of confused or heretical ideas far outweighed the benefit of theological discussion and debate among the laity. Symbols, he declared, should be universally understood;

130Vita et transitus (1491), 5v
131Ibid.,
while they should not be trivial, nor should they be "so obscure or difficult that they always require a subtle interpreter."\textsuperscript{132} Paleotti also explicitly condemned the narrative strategy of compressing multiple episodes into a single canvas, which could likewise provoke uncertainty and doubt.\textsuperscript{133} Obscurity and confusion might stem from the active choice of artist or patron, from the artist’s vain desire to portray things he deems sublime or unusual, or from simple ignorance. Paleotti argued that painters should be judged by the same standards as writers, who were lauded for the clarity with which they explicate their subject. But the premium on clarity was heightened in the visual arts, for images "serve principally as a book for idiots, to whom it is always necessary to speak openly and clearly." Instead of sowing confusion and debate, religious art should "illuminate the intellect, excite devotion, and prick the heart," for faith suffered when viewers were distracted by their efforts to figure out complex images.

Paleotti’s suggestions demanded nothing less than a fundamental rethinking of the viewer’s relationship to religious painting. The spectator was no longer allowed to engage in a fluid process of discovering meaning. Rather, Paleotti called for an art that eliminated the potential for misreading and that set the viewer upon a singular, unmistakeable, and orthodox interpretive path. Problems arose particularly when the artist did not take into account the size of the work and mixed multiple scenes together. Among Paleotti’s recommendations, he suggested that the painters of sacred narratives should compartmentalize episodes in an orderly fashion and divide them into multiple scenes. The concern for clarity accounts in part for the popularity in the later sixteenth century of vast cycles that individually articulate each key moment in a sacred narrative. Palma’s St. Jerome Cycle exemplifies this trend. With its eight large canvases, it is the most extensive cycle on St. Jerome’s life produced in early modern Italy. Each scene focuses on a single episode, and each streamlines the symbols and harnesses the action to focus the viewer’s attention strictly and unmistakeably on the story at hand. For instance, while the story of the thieving merchants is only alluded to in Carpaccio’s *Funeral*, in Palma’s cycle the story is told explicitly and with close attention to the textual source (Fig. 3.10). As in Jacopo da Voragine’s account, the scene is set at the entrance to the monastery, represented here by a building with a pedimented doorway and part of an arch in the left background. In the left foreground, one of the merchants drops to his knees, and another crosses his arms over his chest in a gesture of piety. To the right, the camels loom over a third merchant who leans towards a cask of oil. The lion at Jerome’s feet cocks his head towards the saint, seemingly rubbing against him with satisfaction. Although Jerome stands slightly to the left of the composition, he is clearly the object of focus. His holiness is suggested not only by his glowing halo but also by the fact that his head is placed directly beneath the temple-like pediment on the building in the background.

The same subject appears in the small painting attributed to Tintoretto that seems to have been originally displayed in the Scuola’s Old Sacristy (Fig. 3.16). The

\textsuperscript{132} Paleotti, *Discorso*, II.45.250-251

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., II.33.209-213
reprisal of the subject in Palma’s cycle indicates that there was a meaningful confluence of interests between the story and the confraternity’s particular charitable role in dealing with the condemned. First, the event at issue deals with a serious crime, a wantonly committed theft that harms a pious community. Yet, the response of Jerome when the thieves come to the monastery is the ideal of Christian charity: he instructs his brothers to “wash their feet, and give them something to eat, and above all await the will of the Lord.” Jerome’s compassion and forgiveness for the wrong done to him would have served as a model for confratelli whose charitable mission brought them into contact with men who had committed the most deplorable of crimes. Yet, like the forgiveness expected of the confratelli, Jerome’s compassion is tempered with words of chastisement for the harm the thieves have wrought, and with the expectation that they will admit their sin and accept appropriate punishment. Indeed, the merchants ultimately do penance for their crime, as the condemned were expected and encouraged to do before execution. On Jerome’s orders the wrongdoers atone by making a sort of bequest, not only to the current monks but also to their successors. For confratelli who visited the prisoner’s cell to provide comfort, the scene may have served as a reminder of their duty to encourage the malefactor to make a will, remembering and repaying the charity of the confraternity with a pious gift.

The figure of the lion in this episode would have also held significance for those visiting the condemned. The Golden Legend relates that the lion, punishments with the task of doing the donkey’s job, accepts his fate with great forbearance. When he is finally proved innocent, the beast is overjoyed:

Then the lion began to run through the monastery, as it used to, and throwing itself to its knees in front of each brother, and enticing him with his tail, it seemed almost to ask forgiveness for the crime, which it had not committed.

The story’s language, which brings out both the lion’s innocence and his acceptance of punishment for the crime, might have reminded the confratelli of ars moriendi literature. For those condemned to death, advice included the suggestion that, even if one is innocent of the specific crime at issue, the punishment might be best viewed as penance for other sins. According to Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine’s version of the ars moriendi, innocent men condemned to death should consider themselves fortunate, and should pray for their accusers in imitation of Christ, “who prayed to his Father for those who crucified him”. Similar sentiments are expressed in the instruction manual from Santa Maria della Morte. Nicholas Terpstra summarizes the manual’s advice for those who continued to protest their innocence as follows:

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134 Voragine, Legendario (1565), 279
135 Ibid., 280
136 See Edgerton, Pictures and Punishment, 184, citing a 1589 edition of Bartolomeo d’Angelo’s Ricordo del ben morire.
“Unjust death brought greater merit since it put the falsely accused victim at one with Christ and saints. If you are innocent but bear the punishment patiently, you will surely be counted among the martyrs in paradise, since God knows his own. On the other hand, even if innocent of the particular crime which has brought sentence of execution, God also knows that you have enough other sins on your account, and some are likely worse than the ones you were found guilty of.”

Thus, contemporary guides to dying well suggested that the innocent and wrongly convicted man, like Jerome’s lion and like Christ himself, should accept his punishment and forgive his tormenters.

As a whole, the St. Jerome Cycle of S. Fantin reflects the period’s evolving ideas about style and the didactic effectiveness of images. Palma’s cycle is a more expansive, dramatic, and readily legible account of St. Jerome’s life, one that confirms commonly-held knowledge and that demands agreement and acceptance rather than dialogue or inquiry from the viewer. But the cycle’s celebration of legends that had been discredited attests to the importance of the Venetian tradition of confraternity painting and to the limited effectiveness of the Church’s efforts to impose its new strictures on the popular cult of saints.

But it should also be noted that the Albergo Grande in which the cycle was displayed was not open to the public; rather, the room was used for masses and meetings attended only by S. Fantin’s own confratelli. By contrast, the ground-floor Oratory was open to the public on a weekly basis, and contained an altar that was popular with devotees who were not members of the confraternity. Even though the Oratory had been decorated by Tintoretto, this decorative program was destroyed at the end of the century to make way for a new cycle commissioned from Palma Giovane. While the wall cycle of the Albergo Grande portrayed a popular legend whose validity was questionable, the more public nature of the lower hall seems to have driven a renovation that produced one of the most innovative and theologically sophisticated painted cycles in Venice. The transformation of the lower hall is the focus of the chapter that follows.

138 Terpstra, "Piety and Punishment," 683
Chapter 4: The Oratory

... it is not necessary to argue about whether one should offer any prayers for the souls of the dead, because it is too much to persuade with reason and authority that Purgatory exists, and that it is necessary that the souls of the faithful who leave this life in grace without having yet made satisfaction for their sins go to Purgatory, where they make satisfaction with the punishment of fire. All the faithful Christians confess this, the holy Roman Church holds this, and all the Doctors preach this.¹

Part I: The Decorative Program of the Oratory

In the 1581 edition of Venetia Città Nobilissima, Francesco Sansovino recorded that the Oratory on the ground floor of the Scuola di S. Fantin housed a painted altarpiece portraying St. Jerome by Marco del Moro; the ceiling, he said, was the work of Jacopo Tintoretto.² There is no documentation of either commission, and both have been lost.³ However, two small fragments mentioned in the Scuola's 1786 inventory, St. John the Evangelist and St. Mark, are associated with Tintoretto's ceiling.⁴ According to the inventory, these fragments, along with a third painting of an angel, were displayed on the ceiling in the hallway outside the New Sacristy; all three were attributed to Palma Giovane.⁵

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¹ Bartolomeo D'Angelo, Ricordo del ben morire, dove s'insegna a' ben vivere, & ben morire, et il modo d'aiutare a ben morire gli infermi, & di consolare, e confortare gli condannati à morte. Del R.F. Bartolomeo d'Angelo Napolitano dell'Ordine de'Predicatori, Baciliero della Sacra Teologia. (Vincenzo Sabbio, ad instantia di Thomaso Bozzola: Brescia, 1574), 325-326. ['... non è necessario disputare se si deve farsi alcun suffragio per l'anime delle defunti, perché è soverchio persuadere con ragioni, & autorità, che il purgatorio si ritrova, & che l'anime de fedeli che da questa vita si partono in gratia, senza haver anco satisfeito per loro peccati, gli è necessario, che vadano al purgatorio, acciò ivi satisfacciano con la pena del fuoco. Questo confessano tutti i fidi Christiani, questo tiene la santissima Romana Chiesa, questo predicano tutti i dottori."

² Sansovino, Venetia città nobilissima (1581), 51a

³ The exact date of Tintoretto's ceiling is uncertain; Zampetti and Traverso each suggest an early date of 1562. Zampetti, Guida, 105; Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 139. This seems unlikely, since it would suggest that the room was both reconstructed and decorated in the same year as the fire that destroyed the old building.

⁴ Zampetti, Guida, 105-106; Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, 1:182 and no. 234-135

⁵ ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Pitture diverse. The angel is believed to be a badly deteriorated fragment of the Angel Annunciate, holding a book and saluting an unseen Virgin, that is still found in the building. In contrast with the two small fragments of the Evangelists, the Angel Annunciate is still attributed to Palma by some scholars. However, it does not appear in Stefania Mason Rinaldi's 1994 catalog of the artist's works. The figure cannot be a piece of Palma's Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, for that painting was still in place on the ceiling of the Albergo Grande when the 1786 inventory was produced. The painting is in such dismal condition that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding its authorship. However,
It is likely that Marco del Moro's altarpiece, perhaps displayed on a wooden altar, was removed from the room when the Scuola commissioned two massive stone altars from Alessandro Vittoria. As the designer of the building itself and the confraternity's trusted advisor, Vittoria was the logical choice for the commission. Both altars respond decisively to the increasingly strict requirements on the form of altars in confraternal meeting halls. Influential ideas regarding altars include the exacting recommendations made by Cardinal Carlo Borromeo in *De fabrica ecclesiae*. Borromeo takes into account the theological and symbolic implications of the altar as the site of the Mass and the practical needs of clergy and parishioners; thus, his discussion includes recommendations that enhance the altar's beauty, dignity, and permanence as well as requirements that ensured that the priest would have enough room to perform the liturgy according to the Tridentine prescriptions. Thus, when space allows it, Borromeo suggests that there should be three steps leading to a church's high altar and that the altar should be positioned to leave ample room for clergy (I:XI). The aesthetic qualities of the tabernacle should reflect the dignity and grandeur of the Church, and it should be displayed on the high altar (I:XIII). And ideally, altars should be made of stone rather than wood (I:XV). Likewise, the altar table should be made of marble or hard stone, should be as long as the altar itself, and should never be less than one and a half cubits in width (I:XV).

Venetian resistance to the Apostolic visit of 1581 resulted in the exclusion of confraternities during that particular inspection, but confraternities were subject to pastoral visits. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, the form and usage of some confraternal altars came under closer scrutiny. For instance, in 1590 the Scuola di S. Bernardino in the parish of S. Geremia decided to replace its wooden altar table with a marble one because the clergy refused to celebrate the Mass there in its existing condition. In 1591, Patriarch Lorenzo Priuli ordered the Scuola di Sant'Aniano (better known as the Scuola dell'arte dei calegheri, the shoemakers' guild) in S. Tomà to stop celebrating mass at the wooden altar in its ground floor room; the altar in the upper room where the Mass could still be celebrated was made of marble.

While the altar in the Albergo Grande on the second floor of the Scuola di San Fantin was made of gilded wood, we should bear in mind that that room was rarely seen by outsiders. The Oratory was more visible because it was open weekly for

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6 Borromeo, *De fabrica ecclesiae*, Part I, Ch, XI-XV, 35-49

7 On the deep concern among members of the Senate regarding the potential for papal interference in the operation of Venetian institutions traditionally run by laymen, including confraternities and hospitals, see the letter transcribed at Tramontin, "La visita apostolica," 478-481.

8 Vio, *Le scuole piccole*, 470

9 Ibid., 617. Lorenzo Priuli was elected patriarch of Venice in 1590, and died in 1600. An avid reformer and enforcer of the Tridentine decrees, he was created cardinal by Pope Clement VIII in 1596. Antonio Niero, *I Patriarchi di Venezia da Lorenzo Giustiniani ai nostri giorni* (Venice: Studium Cattolico Veneziano, 1961), 99-106
public masses; this difference accounts in part for the fact that both altars in the Oratory were monumental in size, beautifully sculpted, and made of stone. On the east wall of the room, opposite the side entrance, stood the Crucifix Altar (Diagram 4 and Fig. 4.2). A massive and imposing structure made of black pietra parangone (a hard stone with properties similar to marble), it housed the Scuola’s processional crucifix (Fig. 1.1). The crucifix was flanked by bronze statuettes of the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist, also by Alessandro Vittoria (Fig. 4.1). The frame and flanking sculptures are now reassembled in the Cappella dei Morti in the right transept of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (Fig. 4.2), while the crucifix is in the Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Codroipo, near Udine. Stringa provided a detailed description of the Crucifix Altar, noting that the marble structure, the bronze statues of the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist, and the four angels atop the pediment, were all executed by Alessandro Vittoria. He also observed that the crucifix was the same one the confratelli carried in execution processions.

The sculptor of the Scuola’s processional crucifix has rendered the figure of Christ on the cross with poignant realism (Fig. 1.1). As his body sags, his outstretched arms strain against the nails piercing his hands. His skin is pulled so taut that his ribs and muscles are clearly visible, and his bowed head and slightly parted lips eloquently communicate his suffering. The horizontal plank of the cross to which he is nailed curves gently to suggest a yoke, a reference to Christ’s words in the Gospel of Matthew: “Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.” Christ is represented here as a man tormented and physically destroyed, but at the same time the sculptor suggests his divinity and ultimate triumph. His face, though expressive of the agony he has suffered, is also delicately beautiful and almost sensual, its smooth brow and closed eyes suggesting

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10 This altar is also described and attributed to Vittoria in ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Robbe diverse.


12 Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 91 [“Quivi si veggono due altari in assai bella, & ricca forma novamente fabricati; il primo dei quali, che giace in capo di questo luogo, è tutto di bellissima pietra negra da paragone edificato, con colonne grandi, e grosse, fregi, e lavori, che formano la prospettiva di quello in bella, & vaga maniera, dell’istessa pietra; anzi della medesima vi sono anco i scalini, il parapetto, il suolo, con due mani di colonnelle, che lo chiudono dalla parte d’avanti. Ivi sopra vi giace il Salvatore nostro in croce, & quello istesso, che dalli sopradetti fratelli vien portato, quando accompagnano detti rei al luogo della giustitia. Ai piedi di questo crocifisso vi sono due figure, quella a man diritta è della Beata Vergine in atto mesto, & lagrimevole, & l’altra a man manca di S. Giovanni, amedeue di bronzo dell’altezza poco men d’un’huomo, gettate da Alessandro Vittoria, di cui anco sono del medesimo metale i quattro Angioli, che si veggono nella cima di detto altare, con alcuni misterij della passione in mano.”]

13 In the Cappella dei Morti where the altar now stands, the original crucifix has been replaced by a white marble crucifix that creates a stark contrast with the panel of black stone behind it. The original crucifix, made of wood and considerably smaller in scale than the present one, would have created a very different visual effect. The instruments of the Passion which, according to Stringa, were once held by the four angels, are missing.

14 Matthew 11:29-30.
an innocent and peaceful slumber rather than a brutal death. The wood of the cross sprouts new growth, a reminder of Christ’s impending resurrection and the regenerative potential offered to mankind by his sacrifice.\(^{15}\) Atop the crucifix sits the pelican in its piety, its wings spread and its neck curving gracefully as it bends down to pierce its own flesh. Below, three of its young clamor for nourishment. The bird’s symbolic import is underscored by its pose, which mirrors Christ’s outstretched arms and drooping head below. At the same time, the imminent flight indicated by the pelican’s spread wings again suggests Christ’s eventual triumph over death, his resurrection and the heavenly rewards awaiting him and all those who will be saved through his sacrifice.

The bronze figures of the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist flanking the crucifix offer two eloquent responses to Christ’s sacrifice. The Virgin, her bowed head covered with a long veil, seems to accept and internalize her pain. With her body twisted in a graceful \textit{figura serpentinata}, she inclines towards Christ, her eyes cast downwards and her hands clasped in prayer. St. John, youthful and vigorous, lifts his eyes towards the crucifix. His beardless face is raised as if to the sun, his expression rapt. While his body twists in a mirror image of the Virgin’s pose, his arms are spread open in an expansive gesture which suggests both supplication and wonder. His posture is closely related to the figure of the Virgin that crowns the façade (Fig. 2.12). Together, the bronze figures on the altar eloquently communicate the horror of Christ’s bodily sacrifice and the hope for salvation it offers for mankind. The wings of the two large angels who recline on the raking cornices of the pediment overlap above Christ’s head. At the sides, standing on a cornice, are two putti who appear to have just alit gracefully from above. All four angels gaze downwards, in the direction of Christ and the altar table. Together, they vividly recall Pope St. Gregory the Great’s eloquent description of the culminating moment of the Mass, when the heavens and the earth unite and a chorus of angels descends to witness the mystery of Transubstantiation.\(^{16}\)

The second altar, referred to hereafter as the Assumption Altar, stood on the north wall of the room, across from the main ceremonial entrance.\(^{17}\) Decorated with a relief of the Assumption of the Virgin and a large-scale figure of St. Jerome, this altar honored both of the Scuola’s patron saints (Figs. 4.3, 4.4).\(^{18}\) The arrangement

\(^{15}\) For the development of the \textit{arbor crucis}, or tree-cross, symbol and its usage in the Middle Ages, see Schiller, \textit{Iconography of Christian Art}, 135-136.

\(^{16}\) Gregory the Great, \textit{Sancti Gregorii Papae Dialogorum Libri IV}, Liber Quartus, Caput LVIII [\textit{Dialogues in Four Books}, Book 4 Ch. 58], PL 77: 4:425D-428A: "Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit, in ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis vocem coelos aperiri, in illo Jesu Christi mysterio angelorum choros adesse, summis ima sociari, terrena coelestibus jungi, unumque ex visibilibus atque invisibilibus fieri?" (Trans.: "Who among the faithful could have any doubt that, in this moment of the offering, as the priest speaks, the heavens open and a chorus of angels attends the mystery of Jesus Christ, the highest is joined with the lowest, the earth unites with the heavens, the visible and invisible are made one?")

\(^{17}\) The altar is described and attributed to Vittoria in \textit{ASV}, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Robbe diverse.

\(^{18}\) Early descriptions include Sansovino and Stringa, \textit{Venetia città nobilissima} (1604), 92; Sansovino and Martinioni, \textit{Venetia città nobilissima} (1663), 136-137; and Temanza, \textit{Vite}, 491.
of these would have recalled Tintoretto’s celebrated altarpiece in the Albergo Grande upstairs (Fig. 3.1). Both the relief and the statue are now in the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, on the first altar on the left side of the nave.19 Their original architectural frame has been lost.

While the statue of St. Jerome and both bronze statuettes from the Crucifix Altar bear the artist’s signature, no documents exist to confirm the date of either altar. In the 1570s, Vittoria executed a similar large-scale statue of St. Jerome for the altar of the Zane chapel in the Frari, a fact which has led to some confusion over the date of the S. Fantin commission. Vittoria mentioned that he was working on a statue of St. Jerome in his 1576 will.20 In the 1568 edition of the Lives, Vasari describes a St. Jerome as one of five large-scale figures in the Zane family’s chapel.21 Therefore, some scholars have concluded that the reference in Vittoria’s 1576 testament must be to the St. Jerome commissioned by San Fantin.22 However, a 1566 letter from Cosimo Bartoli to Vasari indicates that Vasari had seen the Zane chapel prior to the completion of the St. Jerome, and that he based his description in part on Bartoli’s report of Vittoria’s models for the figure. Moreover, in a testament of 1570, the chapel’s patron Gerolamo Zane notes that Vittoria had still not completed the St. Jerome despite having had the marble for several years.23 Thus, the reference to St. Jerome in Vittoria’s will of 1576 is ambiguous and might refer to either statue. However, in his 1604 edition of Sansovino, Stringa commented that the Oratory had been newly renovated to achieve a perfect result and described the two altars as having been "novamente fabricati”.24 His remarks imply that the altars were part of the larger project of renovation that the Scuola undertook towards the end of the century, and which included new paintings for the ceiling and walls of the room. The harmony between the room’s sculpted altars and the new program of painted

19 When parts of the altar were first moved to SS. Giovanni e Paolo, the Assumption relief was displayed along with the statue of St. Jerome. At some point, however, the relief was covered by a painted altarpiece and then removed from the altar and placed in the room behind the apse of the Rosary chapel. Eventually, the relief’s origins were recognized and it was replaced on the altar with Vittoria’s statue of St. Jerome. S. Sponza, “Una scultura del Vittoria ritrovata: il ‘bassorilievo con Nostra Donna trasportata dagli Angioli’, già all’Ateneo,” Ateneo Veneto XIX, no. 1-2 (1981).
20 ASV, Notarile-Testamenti (Marco Aleandro), Busta 13, Fascicolo Marco Aleandro No. 8, fol. 2r, transcribed in Avery, "Documenti," doc. 96, 280-281.
23 The relevant parts of Bartoli’s letter and Zane’s will are transcribed in Avery, "Documenti," doc. 59(i-ii), 229-230.
24 Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 91
decorations suggests that the room's entire decorative program may have been conceived as a unified whole. Indeed, its planning may have been overseen by Vittoria himself. As discussed in Chapter 2, he is documented as an advisor to the Scuola in 1600, when he helped to judge the concorso for the construction of new rental houses, and he and Palma Giovane collaborated on other projects, including the sculpted altar and painted altarpiece of the Scuola dei Merciai in the Church of S. Zulian.\(^{25}\) If we take Stringa's account seriously, then a date in the late 1580s or early 1590s seems reasonable for both altars.\(^{26}\) This date also corresponds to the period of increasingly strict enforcement of formal requirements for confraternal altars.

On August 10, 1600, the Chapter General of the Scuola met to discuss the allocation of six hundred ducats towards the decoration of the Oratory; half of the money would be donated by the Banca.\(^{27}\) The total sum authorized by the Banca probably included expenses associated with the elaborate gilded wooden coffers that cover the ceiling as well as the painted decorations. It is surely no accident that the two painted components of the room's program went to two of Vittoria's own favorites, Jacopo Palma il Giovane and Leonardo Corona.\(^{28}\) Corona produced nine canvases portraying scenes from Christ's Passion, along with two scroll-bearing prophets, for the walls of the room (Figs. 4.5-4.13, Diagram 4). In 1648, Ridolfi suggested that some of the paintings in the cycle were completed by Corona's assistants after the master's death, which occurred in early 1605.\(^{29}\) If Ridolfi is correct, then Stringa could not have seen the entire cycle when he visited the Scuola (circa 1603) as he was preparing his updated edition of Sansovino's Venezia città nobilissima. Over the years, other scholars have also challenged Corona's direct authorship of some of the scenes. Boschini argued that the sixth painting in the cycle, the Ecce Homo, was the work of Corona's assistant Baldessare d'Anna (Fig. 4.10).\(^{30}\) More recently, Nicola Ivanoff confirmed Boschini's attribution to d'Anna on stylistic grounds, and further assigns to him The Fall on the Way to Calvary (Fig. 4.11).\(^{31}\) Zampetti gives d'Anna a third painting, the Deposition (Fig. 4.13).\(^{32}\) Finally,
Traverso adds to d'Anna's list the scene of *Christ Nailed to the Cross*, even though the painting bears the inscription "LEONARDUS CORONA" (Fig. 4.12).33

Complicating these reattributions is the fact that Stringa's update to Sansovino's *Venetia citta nobilissima*, published in 1604, does not mention assistants.34 As we shall see when we discuss the date of the Purgatory Cycle, it is probable that Stringa saw the room while the painted decoration was still in progress, but at no point does he mention its incomplete state. The entire Passion Cycle is here attributed to Corona, but certainly, in accordance with typical sixteenth-century practices, members of his workshop contributed to the paintings.35

The Passion Cycle begins with the *Agony in the Garden* on the south wall in the southeast corner of the room (Fig. 4.5); it then proceeds chronologically, moving rightwards, ending in the southeast corner of the room (Diagram 4). The last two scenes in the cycle, *Christ Nailed to the Cross* and the *Deposition*, originally flanked the Crucifixion Altar (Fig. 4.2, Fig. 4.14). Thus, the wooden Crucifix that stood on that altar, and that accompanied the condemned in execution processions, took the place of a painted scene of the culminating moment of the Passion, the Crucifixion itself. By literally incorporating the altar into the cycle on the Passion, this arrangement would have reinforced the Tridentine reaffirmation of the unity between the Mass and the Crucifixion. In both,

... the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different. The fruits of that bloody sacrifice, it is well understood, are received most abundantly through this unbloody one, so far is the latter from derogating in any way from the former. Wherefore, according to the tradition of the Apostles, it is rightly offered not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those departed in Christ but not yet fully purified.36

In the Oratory, the cycle's focus on Christ's Passion (as opposed to a cycle on the life of one of the Scuola's patron saints) accords with the increasingly Christocentric spirit of religious art in the decades after the Council of Trent. Multi-scene cycles on the Passion became increasingly popular in Italian art in the later sixteenth century.37 In Venice, scenes of the Passion became particularly popular in

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33 Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 126-127
34 Sansovino and Stringa, *Venetia citta nobilissima* (1604), 91-92.
35 Corona's Passion Cycle was put in storage during renovations in 1854, but the paintings were returned to their original locations in 1914. Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 81-82, 96-100
36 *Canons and Decrees*, 146 (Twenty-Second Session, 1562)
37 See Wollesen-Wisch, "The Archiconfraternita del Gonfalone", 96-106, on the development of Italian Passion imagery and the related codification of the Stations of the Cross, particularly in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. She links the Passion Cycle of the Oratory of the Gonfalone in Rome (an early and extensive example of a major confraternal cycle on the Passion) to the post-Tridentine preference for intensely Christocentric imagery, the growing interest in Eucharistic devotion, and the rituals and performances surrounding its patron's celebration of Holy Week observances. More
sacrament chapels, although they also appeared in the decorative programs of churches and other types of chapels. In sacrament chapels, the episodes chosen often included the Last Supper, underscoring the doctrine of Transubstantiation by making visible Christ’s establishment of the Eucharist. With nine canvases, the Passion Cycle at S. Fantin is among the most extensive examples of Passion imagery produced in early modern Venice. It omits the Last Supper, starting instead with Christ’s human anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Fig. 4.5). In that scene, Christ, his arms spread wide as if to confirm that he is open to his fate, looks towards the chalice-bearing angel at his right; below him, the apostles slumber as soldiers creep forward, anticipating the arrest which occurs in the next scene (Fig. 4.6). In the Arrest, Christ is led away by a crowd of helmeted soldiers whose lances and torches are silhouetted against the sky. While they try to push him leftwards down the slope on which they stand, Christ himself appears immovable and upright. He looks towards the right foreground of the painting, where Peter (in a configuration reminiscent of Titian’s Death of St. Peter Martyr that once decorated an altar in SS. Giovanni e Paolo) cuts the ear off of Malchus. With the palm of his left hand open, Jesus seems to enact the subsequent Gospel verse: “Jesus therefore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” With these words, Christ instructs Peter to desist and indicates that he shall not resist the coming torments. The next six scenes focus on Christ’s suffering prior to the Crucifixion. Led before Caiafas, Christ once again stands calmly amidst the writhing bodies of his captors (Fig. 4.7). Caiafas’s earthly status, signaled by his elevated throne and the red canopy over his head, is contrasted here with Christ’s divinity, indicated by the arch and sky against which he is silhouetted. A hint of Christ’s fear and physical suffering is given in the next scene, the Flagellation (Fig. 4.8), where he shrinks away from a scourge-wielding man who bends over him menacingly, blocking out the light. In the Mocking of Christ, his tormenters attack him with sticks; on the left, a man climbs up the raking cornice of the pediment over the side entrance to the room to better access his defenseless victim (Fig. 4.9). The tumult continues in the Ecce Homo (Fig. 4.10), where Christ, nude to the waist and with his hands bound, is mockingly presented in front of a red cloth of honor. Elevated atop a flight of steps and flanked by two dark columns, he looks downwards to the lower right foreground, where an angry mob has gathered; one man holds a large wooden cross, indicating that the crowd demands his execution.

recently, the decoration of the Oratory of the Gonfalone is discussed in the collection of essays in Maria Grazia Bernardini, ed. L’Oratorio del Gonfalone a Roma: Il ciclo cinquecentesco della Passione di Cristo (Cinisello Balsamo Milano: 2002).

38 Cope, Chapel of the Sacrament, 144-175; and Worthen, ”Tintoretto’s Paintings,”
39 John 18:10
40 John 18:11
41 In many respects (including the stage-like setting raised above steps and flanked by balustrades, and the figures arranged on the steps and leaning over the railing), the composition resembles the tapestry of The Death of Ananias, designed by Raphael for the Sistine Chapel. I am grateful to Loren Partridge for sharing this observation with me. The influence of Roman art on Corona has been little explored by scholars. He may have been familiar with The Death of Ananias from prints which began
The following scene, the *Fall on the Road to Calvary* (Fig. 4.11), would have recognizably evoked the chaos surrounding contemporary execution processions. As Christ stumbles under the weight of the cross, soldiers beat away those in the crowd who might pity him. Mary, who has collapsed in distress, is comforted in the foreground. The base of the Cross runs from lower left to upper right, creating a rightward momentum that is accentuated by the diagonals of Christ’s legs, draped in red, and the slope of the hill in the right background. Thus, the composition moves the viewer’s eye inevitably towards the Crucifixion on the altar wall (Fig. 4.14).

The choice of subjects and their representation here stress Christ’s acceptance of his fate and his submission to the degradation and physical suffering inflicted upon him prior to his death. For a confraternity dedicated to comforting the condemned, these moments in Christ’s life must have been particularly meaningful. As we have already seen, comforters encouraged the condemned to imitate the Christian martyrs, and the Venetian ritual of execution itself (which sometimes included the enactment of sentences at the same hour as Christ’s death, a forced march through the city reminiscent of a *via crucis* prior to the final punishment, and intermediary flogging or torture before a column at the city’s edge) also inevitably evoked associations between Christ and the condemned. The condemned man’s acceptance of the physical suffering of the execution ritual was a primary objective of the art of comforting. Spelling out each step in the *via crucis*, the Passion Cycle would have reminded the members of the confraternity of their own experiences in accompanying the condemned, likewise forced to march through the city on the way to the scaffold; and Christ, passive and accepting, throughout his torments, is the model of a good death.

Ridolfi described Corona’s artistic formation as influenced primarily by the study and emulation of Tintoretto, a judgment confirmed by the Passion Cycle. To take just one example, the eighth scene in the cycle, *Christ Nailed to the Cross* (Fig. 4.12), is inspired by Tintoretto’s famous *Crucifixion* in the albergo of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco. In the position of his body and the turn of his head, Corona’s Christ resembles Tintoretto’s good thief, and other figures, such as the man drilling a hole into the cross, are derived from corresponding figures in the *Crucifixion*. But Corona’s compositions are more tightly compressed, and an overabundance of figures, sometimes in elaborate and interlocking poses, is packed into each scene. The teeming crowds, combined with Corona’s dark palette, result in a sense of panicked chaos and oppressive gloom. But despite the confusion, the composition focuses the viewer’s attention on Christ’s naked torso, brightly illuminated and inclined rightwards towards the altar, following the direction of his gaze. On the


42 Prosperi, "Il sangue e l’anima," 972-973; Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 45

43 Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell’arte*, II:101. Ridolfi also relates an anecdote regarding Corona’s painting of St. Onofrio for the altar of the dyers’ guild (the Tintori) in the Church of the Servi in which Alessandro Vittoria remarked that he might have mistaken it for a work by Tintoretto due to its resemblance to that artist’s "San Girolamo della Compagnia della Giustizia" (i.e., *The Virgin and St. Jerome* in the Albergo Grande of the Scuola di S. Fantin). Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell’arte*, II:101.
opposite side, in the *Deposition*, Christ’s limp corpse is displayed along a diagonal from the lower right to the upper left, and his head faces left (Fig. 4.13). Thus, Christ’s body in the two scenes that frame the altar focus attention on the Crucifix that stood there. The display of his body would have also underscored the significance of the Eucharist, understood by Catholics as the real body and blood of Christ.

Ridolfi aptly described the Passion Cycle as having the power to induce in the viewer a potent sense of commiseration. The intensity of emotion and activity in the scenes vividly remind the viewer of Christ’s sacrifice, made visible in the wooden Crucifix and reenacted on the altar with every celebration of the Mass. As Stringa’s description of the altar indicates, members of the Scuola carried the wooden Crucifix through the streets of Venice during execution processions. Like other symbolic aspects of the execution ritual in Venice, the Crucifix would have encouraged spectators to draw a connection between the violent death of the condemned man and that most famous of public executions, the Crucifixion of Christ. In doing so, the members of the Scuola hoped to encourage the crowd of spectators to give the condemned man their pity and their prayers, commiseration similar to that evoked by Corona’s Passion Cycle. For the condemned man himself, the Crucifix would remind him of the ultimate benefit of his genuine repentance: the hope of salvation offered through Christ. Back on the Crucifix Altar in the Oratory, the Crucifix would have linked the scenes of Christ’s Passion with the suffering witnessed by the crowds who attended executions, reminding devotees that their love for the condemned, the least of Christ’s brethren, was also a demonstration of their love of God.

The other major component of the Oratory’s decorative program is the ceiling. In total, the cycle Jacopo Palma il Giovane produced for the ceiling consists of thirteen paintings, set into irregularly-sized gilded coffers, on the theme of Purgatory (Figs. 4.15-4.26). A painted inscription above the door leading to the Calle della Verona on the west side of the building reads "MDC/MENs/DEC.s", or "December 1600". This inscription has been taken by some scholars as an indication that the ceiling paintings were completed by that date. However, it is more likely that the inscription refers only to the date of completion of the coffers. For reasons discussed further in the final section of this chapter, I propose that the

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44 Ridolfi, *Maraviglie dell’arte*, 106-107

45 Other painted inscriptions on the coffers record the dates of restorations in 1752 and 1913. An earlier restoration occurred in 1695, when the Scuola allocated a payment of 50 scudi on September 25 for work to "rin frescar le piture del soffitto della chiesa con suoi cornisone". ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 127v-128r. The nature of this work is not certain.

46 See primarily Mason Rinaldi, *Palma il Giovane*, 147, cat. 574-186; Stefania Mason Rinaldi, "Convenzioni della <<maniera>> e istanze di rinnovamento in Jacopo Palma il Giovane," in *Cultura e società nel rinascimento tra riforme e manierismi*, ed. Vittore Branca and Carlo Ossola (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1986), 226; Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 106; and Zampetti, *Guida*, 37. Instead, Pavanello argued that the inscription refers to the year in which the building was completed. Pavanello, *Scuola di S. Fantin*, 50. His argument was based on a misreading of certain records pertaining to the construction of houses owned by the confraternity. On this point, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
Purgatory Cycle was actually completed after 1603. Part II discusses the iconography of the cycle in light of contemporary attitudes towards the doctrine of Purgatory and offers an explanation for why the Scuola replaced Tintoretto's ceiling with Palma's within such a short period of time.

**Part II: Purgatory, Charity, and the Oratory Ceiling**

As a comforting confraternity, the Scuola's responsibility for the souls of the condemned extended into the afterlife. Some literature on comforting the condemned suggested that under certain circumstances, the executed (like the Good Thief at the Crucifixion) might be able to bypass Purgatory and take a direct route to Heaven. Nonetheless, in most cities the condemned who died in a state of grace were ritually inducted into the brotherhood prior to the enactment of the death sentence. This act, based in part on the belief that collective prayers on behalf of dead brethren in Purgatory would also benefit the condemned, suggested that additional cleansing in the purgatorial fire was required even for the souls of those who proceeded willingly to their death and who died in a state of grace. But more generally, Purgatory was a major preoccupation of life for all faithful Christians in early modern Italy. Even among pious individuals who died well, few people atoned so fully for their earthly sins that they qualified for immediate access to Heaven. Therefore, getting to the transitory zone of Purgatory was the focus of the ritual surrounding impending death described in the *ars moriendi* tradition. It was also the objective that motivated many Christians to participate in confraternities and other forms of group devotion. The charity encouraged by confraternities was

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47 The date of the cycle is discussed later in this chapter.
48 For instance, in his guide for comforters, Fra Zanobia de' Medici suggested that the condemned might avoid Purgatory entirely. Medici, *Trattato del conforto*, 16. In the *ars moriendi* texts of Fra Bartolomeo d'Angelo, Fabio Glissenti, and Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, a more moderate view is taken, but execution (if accepted willingly) was still deemed salutary and helpful for the soul. See D'Angelo, *Ricordo del ben morire*, 281-282; Glissenti, *Discorsi morali*, 191r; and Bellarmino, "Art of Dying," 368.
49 In Venice, this ritual is documented in the Scuola’s records in ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni de Giustitiati.
51 Ariès, *Western Attitudes*, 36-37
intended to collectively accrue spiritual treasures in order to reduce the debt of its members and to assist the souls of departed brethren and family members who were already suffering in the purgatorial fires.

This section considers the Purgatory Cycle of S. Fantin in light of the concerns of its confraternal patrons in the first years of the seventeenth century. The interpretation offered here focuses on the set of meanings that the confraternity wished to communicate to its own members and to the devotees who attended religious services held in the Oratory. For both groups, the Purgatory Cycle was meant to be devotional, in that it enhanced the experience of the liturgy of the Mass performed at the room’s altars, and didactic, meant to instruct the faithful in orthodox doctrine and to illustrate the behaviors that the confraternity hoped to encourage. At the same time, the Cycle is highly polemical, refuting Protestant claims and reinforcing the orthodoxy promulgated by the Roman Church at and after the Council of Trent. But beyond the influence of Trent, I argue that the commission resulted from a convergence of factors, including the Scuola's devotion to the Virgin and its interest in accruing Indulgences to benefit the souls of its members and devotees. Most importantly, I hope to demonstrate that the Oratory ceiling is defined and distinguished from the few comparable programs produced in Counter-Reformation Italy by the nature of its corporate patron, a confraternity which emphasized the virtue of charity and the importance of active lay spirituality. A second objective is to explore how the programmers and the artist took into account the room’s liturgical and administrative functions and its audience when planning the ceiling’s form and content. Reconstructing the room as it appeared in the first decade of the seventeenth century allows us to explore relationships between the Purgatory Cycle and other parts of the decorative program. The reconstruction suggests that the programmers considered not only the ceiling program, but also the sculptural decoration and the wall paintings that were executed contemporaneously or soon after the completion of the Purgatory Cycle, and planned the room’s layout such that these elements reinforced one another both formally and theologically.

Purgatory after the Council of Trent

According to Jacques Le Goff, Purgatory as it was understood in the early modern period was a construction of the Middle Ages. Le Goff argues that in the twelfth century, confronted with a series of crises, scholastic writers began to codify the main aspects of the doctrine. Drawing on and reinterpreting the writings of the early Church Fathers, medieval theologians assembled a more-or-less consistent set of beliefs in favor of Purgatory’s existence. Early Protestant reformers would likely have agreed with Le Goff that Purgatory was a relatively recent development. As the

sixteenth century progressed, reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin had waged an increasingly staunch battle against the doctrine; among their arguments was the claim that Purgatory could not be found in Scripture. The official response of the Catholic Church to the Protestant attack was laid out in the Canons and Decrees promulgated after the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Council of Trent in 1563. The Council defended the doctrine, reaffirmed that prayers for the dead helped "those departed in Christ but not yet fully purified", and reminded the clergy that the doctrine had been "transmitted by the Fathers and sacred councils".

Instruction to the faithful, the decree explained, should be limited to the basics: first, Purgatory existed; second, souls could be helped by Masses, good works, and prayers offered by the living; and third, testamentary bequests made to benefit the soul of the testator would be strictly executed by the clergy. But the Trinitene Decree on Purgatory left many long-standing questions unanswered. For instance, there was no explanation offered for the nature or location of purgation, nor any means to reconcile individual judgment at the moment of death with the Last Judgment. The Council seemed to implicitly acknowledge these problems in the following instruction to preachers:

The more difficult and subtle questions, however, and those that do not make for edification and from which there is for the most part no increase in piety, are to be excluded from popular instructions to uneducated people. Likewise, things that are uncertain or that have the appearance of falsehood they shall not permit to be made known publicly and discussed.

The Tridentine position on Purgatory was reinforced through a variety of textual sources. For instance, Cardinal Luigi Lippomano's Confirmatione et stabilimento di tutti li dogmi catholici was among the early treatises intended to refute Protestant heresy. Writing in the vernacular, Lippomano explained that

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54 On Martin Luther's evolving position on (and eventual rejection of) the doctrine of Purgatory, see Richard Marius, Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 141-147. See also, for instance, John Calvin's statement on Purgatory (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1536 Edition, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company, 1995), 156 and Article 22 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, issued in 1563 and published in English soon after, in which the doctrine of Purgatory was declared "repugnant to the worde of God". Church of England, Articles, whereupon it was agreed by the archbishoppes and bishoppes of both provinces, and the whole cleargie, in the Convocation holden at London in the yere of our Lorde God 1562 according to the computation of the Churche of Englande for the avoiding of the diversities of opinions, and for the stablishynge of consent touching true religion. Put forth by the Queenes aucthoritie (London: Richarde lugge and John Cawood, printers to the Queenes Maiestie, 1571), 14.

55 Canons and Decrees, Twenty-second Session, Chapter 1, 144-145 and Twenty-fifth Session, Decree on Purgatory, 214

56 Ibid., Twenty-fifth Session, Decree on Purgatory, 214

57 Ibid.

58 Luigi Lippomano, Confirmatione et stabilimento di tutti li dogmi catholici, con la subversione di tutti i fondamenti, motivi, & ragioni dell Moderni Heretici sino al numero. 482. (Venice: Contra de Santa Maria Formosa, 1553), 129r
those who go to Purgatory are those who have sinned but repented, confessed, and taken communion before death; thus, while they died in a state of grace, they left sins to be satisfied before Heaven would accept them:

Now their souls go to Purgatory to satisfy the justice of God, who wants no bad act to remain unpunished, and they stay there for as long as the Lord God wishes and for as long as is necessary to atone for the sins they committed.\(^{59}\)

Perhaps the most influential treatise was the *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei adversus hujus temporis Haereticos* [hereafter, the *Disputationes*], written by Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine and published in three volumes in the last two decades of the century.\(^{60}\) The second volume of the *Disputationes* included a long exposition on Purgatory (hereafter, *De purgatorio*).\(^{61}\) The scholarly and detailed *De purgatorio*, published in Latin, offered a wealth of sources and arguments to support the Church’s position on Purgatory, Papal supremacy, the necessity of both good works and faith for Justification, and other disputed points. The evidence presented in treatises like those of Cardinals Lippomano and Bellarmine was drawn upon in many subsequent works, some of which were written in or translated into the vernacular and directed towards a broader swath of the laity as well as clergy involved in pastoral work. One example is Mattia Bellintani’s *Prattica dell’Oratione Mentale* (hereafter, the *Prattica*) a four-volume guide intended to help the faithful in their daily practice of prayer and to direct their contemplation of spiritual matters.\(^{62}\) The Catholic position on Purgatory could also

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59 Those in Purgatory are those who “hanno commessi molti peccati mortali, & inanzi che moiano si sono pentite di tutti i loro errori, si sono confesse, & comunicate devotamente, o pure se non si hanno potuto confessare & comunicare, hanno havuto desiderio di farlo, quando havessero potuto, & hanno cominciato a fare penitenzia per detti peccati, nientedimeno sopravenuti dalla morte non l’hanno potuta finire. Hora le anime di costoro per sodisfare alla giustitia di Dio, il qual vole che niun male rimanga impunito, vanno al Purgatorio, & li stanno tanto, sin che piace al Signor Dio, & quanto basti a sodisfare per li peccati commessi.” Ibid.


be found in a variety of other types of vernacular texts, such as published sermons; updated versions of *ars moriendi* literature; superseded editions of popular collections of saints’ lives; and treatises devoted to specific religious questions, such as almsgiving and prayers for the dead. Many of these works were printed in Venice, which was home to a burgeoning publishing industry.

The Church’s stance on Purgatory was also buttressed by the official promotion of confraternities dedicated to helping the souls of the dead through prayer. For instance, the Roman confraternity of S. Maria del Suffragio, founded in 1592, became an archconfraternity after a papal bull of 1594, and over time similar

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63 See, for instance, the *ars moriendi* texts of Fra Bartolomeo d’Angelo and Fabio Gissenti, both previously cited in Chapter 1 above. D’Angelo, a Dominican born in Naples, died in 1584. His treatise on dying well was enormously popular. The text printed in Brescia in 1574 was also published in Venice in 1576, and republished (in whole or in part) frequently thereafter. In particular, the fifth book, which focuses on comforting the condemned, was republished in Venice at least six times between 1582 and 1600.

64 References to Purgatory can be found throughout the *Golden Legend*, but see particularly the section on All Souls’ Day: Voragine, *Legendario* (1565), 308-312; and Voragine, *Legendario* (1588), 754-762. Other texts offered theological advice, examples, and legends culled from various sources but were organized by theme or subject (such as Death, Purgatory, Christ’s Passion, or Avarice) rather than by saint or feast day. See, for example, the chapters on the punishments of Purgatory and the utility of prayers for souls therein in Valerio Venetiano, *Prato fiorito di vari essemi, Parte Prima, Divisa in cinque Libri* (Venice: Francesco Prato, 1621), 238-262; and Serafino Razzi, *Giardino d’essemi, overo Fiori delle Vite de i Santi; Dal R.P.M. Serafino Razzi, Teologo Dominicano. Ristampato con aggiunta di Cento cinquanta Essempi, scritti dal medesimo Autorie* (Venice: Daniel Zanetti, 1599), 175ff.

confraternities across Europe aggregated with the Roman organization.\textsuperscript{66} Attention to Purgatory also intensified as the end of the sixteenth century drew near, for in Jubilee years, the pope traditionally granted special plenary Indulgences for those making a pilgrimage to Rome.\textsuperscript{67}

Religious painting complemented the oral instruction offered by preachers, and was understood to be a particularly effective means to educate the laity in the mysteries of the faith. This principle, as well as the desired characteristics and acceptable uses of imagery, was presented in the decree on sacred images issued after the Twenty-fifth Session of the Council of Trent. Bishops were reminded that great profit is derived from all holy images, not only because the people are thereby reminded of the benefits and gifts bestowed on them by Christ, but also through the saints the miracles of God and salutary examples are set before the eyes of the faithful, so that they may give God thanks for those things, may fashion their own life and conduct in imitation of the saints and be moved to adore and love God and cultivate piety.\textsuperscript{68}

And yet, with a few important exceptions, Purgatory was not represented with particular frequency in Italian art in the fifty years following the Council of Trent.\textsuperscript{69} In this regard the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin is exceptional, for it not only addresses the theme of Purgatory, but it devotes an entire major cycle to the topic.

The Purgatory Cycle is unusual in other ways as well. Painted ceilings in Venice typically included narrative scenes drawn from writings on the lives of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints (or depictions of Old Testament stories understood to prefigure them); through such stories, doctrinal points could be deduced. Thus, in the upper hall of S. Fantin, the viewer would understand that the scene of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin also incorporated evidence of her immaculacy and her status as the Queen of Heaven. Likewise, the three main Old


\textsuperscript{67} For a contemporary publication of the benefits of pilgrimage to Rome in 1600 and the usefulness of Indulgences for both the living and the dead, see Fabrini, \textit{Giubileo dell'Anno Santo}, 99-113. See also Male, \textit{L'art religieux}, 60-61; and Golda Balass, "Five Hierarchies of Intercessors for Salvation: The Decoration of the Angels' Chapel in the Gesu," \textit{Artibus et Historiae} 24, no. 47 (2003).

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Canons and Decrees}, 215-217

\textsuperscript{69} As will be discussed further below, visual representations of Purgatory are most frequently found in images honoring the Virgin Mary, who was believed to be the most effective intercessor for purged souls, and St. Gregory the Great, whose writings were an important source in support of the doctrine.
Testament scenes painted by Tintoretto for the ceiling of the upper hall at the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco, namely The Gathering of Manna, The Brazen Serpent, and Moses Striking Water from the Rock, prefigure the Eucharist, the Crucifixion, and Baptism respectively, but the doctrinal point is made indirectly. Scenes from the lives of Christ, the Virgin, or the saints are absent on the ceiling of the Oratory of S. Fantin, for the strongest evidence in favor of the doctrine of Purgatory did not stem from Gospel stories. Its three central "narrative" scenes emphasize actions in the here-and-now rather than making visible events from the past or aspirations for the future. And just as theologians arguing in favor of Purgatory relied largely on references to purgation in the writings of the early Church Fathers, the Purgatory Cycle is, in large part, a visual record of the textual sources in support of the doctrine. In this sense, the cycle is a unique expression of a broader post-Tridentine tendency to use the visual arts to make manifest the Catholic position on disputed doctrinal points.  

The Purgatory Cycle: Saints and Sources

The twelve saints and Church Doctors of the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin lived between the fourth and the eleventh centuries (Figs. 4.20-4.25). They are arranged to reflect their place of origin as well as their standing within the hierarchy of Church Fathers. The four eastern Fathers are placed on the east side of the room, the western Fathers on the west side, and the four Latin Doctors of the Church in the center (Diagram 5). Presented in pairs, the twelve figures occupy six canvases along the north and south edges of the ceiling. Their identities can be recognized by the books they hold, for every text is inscribed with the individual's name and the title, in Latin, of one of his works. But as will be discussed further later in this chapter, despite the ease of identification, Giovanni Stringa’s 1604 description of the ceiling is the only early text in which their names are specified.

In response to the Protestant claim that Purgatory was not mentioned in Scripture, its defenders repeatedly employed the strategy of citing writings of the Church Fathers to demonstrate that the doctrine had always existed. Hence the Council of Trent’s explicit insistence that its teaching on Purgatory was based on the “ancient tradition of the Fathers”, a claim expanded upon at length in Bellarmine’s

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70 Mason makes a similar point regarding changes in Eucharist imagery in late-Renaissance Venice. Mason Rinaldi, “Convenzioni,” 216-217. For a discussion of changes in attitudes towards the physical appearance of the Virgin in theological writings and imagery, see Jessica Winston, "Describing the Virgin," Art History 25, no. 3 (2002): 276, who notes that after Trent Catholic theologians were increasingly preoccupied with "the role of the visual in providing evidence of the sacred."

71 Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 92r. All subsequent seventeenth-century writers alluded to the figures simply as saints and Doctors of the Church who had written on the subject of Purgatory. See, for instance, Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell'arte, 188; and Sansovino and Martinioni, Venetia città nobilissima (1663), 136. In the nineteenth century, Ermalao Paoletti similarly described the canvases as representing "Doctors and others who wrote about Purgatory." Paoletti, Fiore di Veneza, V. II, 153.
De purgatorio. The inclusion of the Church Fathers on the Oratory ceiling served as a visual parallel to the citation of their works in written defenses of Purgatory, and their selection and arrangement underscored the temporal and geographical breadth of support for the Church’s teachings on Purgatory.

Each Church Doctor is represented in vestments appropriate to his station or religious order. All are positioned against vaguely described architecture (perhaps pillars or arched doorways), and clouds billow in the voids between them. The supernal setting and the anachronistic nature of many of the pairings suggest that the figures are in Heaven, where they form part of the celestial court through which the elect will pass when they leave Purgatory. The Bologna Comforters’ Manual describes in detail how souls will ultimately experience this heavenly court. After the orders of angels, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the saints, and the holy martyrs, "you will see shining like the sun the company of the noble college of holy doctors of the church with the holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit..." According to the Manual, first among them are Saints Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Ambrose, the four great Latin Doctors of the Church who are represented in the central register of the Oratory ceiling, flanking the Grant of Indulgences. The Manual specifies that these are followed by St. John Chrysostom, Pope St. Leo, St. Bernard, St. Hilary, St. Isidore of Seville, the Venerable Bede, and St. Thomas Aquinas, all of whom

... have illuminated people with their writing. Thus they may benefit from it, growing in virtue and bearing its fruit in holy deeds. It has enlightened souls to enable them to understand the hidden mysteries of God, counseling, teaching, and guiding the way of God, so we can receive the reward of blessed glory. And you will see all of these, by the grace of God, crowned with stars, inflamed with the intensity that proceeds from the first light.

Oh my brother, how beautiful it is to see such a noble company, their works and teaching! If we could always study, hear, and listen and thus observe their sayings, we could reach and arrive at their happy glory.

The inscriptions on the tomes held by the Doctors of the Church on the Oratory ceiling include the individual's name and the title of a work written by or attributed to him. These inscriptions have been largely ignored by scholars, and the reasons for their inclusion are rarely discussed more than cursorily. Of the twelve

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72 See, for instance, Bellarmine, De purgatorio, cols. 593-598 and elsewhere.
73 "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 1," 226
74 Ibid.
75 In his 1962 article on the Scuola’s decorative program, Nicola Ivanoff noted that the tome held by St. Augustine was De cura pro mortuis; he suggested that the representations of the Blessed Bede, St. Bernard, St. Hilary, and St. Anselm around the The Giving of Alms served to counterbalance “for reasons of symmetry” the inclusion of the four eastern Doctors of the Church which surrounded The Celebration of the Mass. Ivanoff, "Il ciclo pittorico," 73. In her monograph on Palma il Giovane, Rinaldi mentions that Book IV of the Dialogues, the text held by Pope St. Gregory the Great, was a well-known source of support for the belief that masses could help the dead in Purgatory. Mason Rinaldi, Palma il
tomes, nine can be associated with particular surviving texts solely on the basis of the inscriptions they bear. In the spirit of clarity, Carlo Borromeo recommended that the names of saints be inscribed on their representations in churches.\footnote{Part I Chapter XVII, Borromeo, \textit{De fabrica ecclesiae}, 56. By contrast, his cousin Federico felt that written inscriptions lacked elegance, preferring instead to rely on “clothing, gestures, or actions” to identify participants in religious narratives. Borromeo, \textit{De pictura sacra}, 131} Paleotti goes further. In his zeal to avoid confusion and obscurity, he recommends several strategies. When it is not obvious, the name of the mystery or saint might be displayed on the image. Alternatively, the artist might indicate the source of the sacred story, or even include "some brief and significant words, quoted from the book of the author".\footnote{Giovane, 147. More recently, Chiara Traverso provides a brief biographical account of each saint. However, she does not relate these biographies to the cycle, nor does she identify or discuss the importance of the texts held by each saint. Traverso, \textit{La Scuola di San Fantin}, 133-135. Note also that in three cases, Traverso misidentifies the saints represented. Pope Saint Gregory the Great is misidentified as St. Ambrose and vice versa, repeating an error found in Zampetti, \textit{Guida}, 34, 45; and St. Athanasius (Bishop of Alexandria, d. 373) is misidentified as St. Anastasius (Patriarch of Antioch, d. 599).}

Paleotti’s suggestions notwithstanding, the attention devoted to specifying the titles of texts in the Purgatory Cycle is unusual in Venetian art in this period. More often, when saints, prophets, or philosophers are depicted with texts, the purpose is to denote the authority of their written works through the act of writing itself rather than by reference to a specific textual source. For instance, in the Cappella Grimani at S. Nicolò dei Tolentini, decorated by Palma with a series of paintings closely related to the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin, two Church Fathers are represented along the edge of the vault; as at S. Fantin, the three main canvases represent \textit{The Giving of Alms}, \textit{The Grant of Indulgences}, and \textit{The Celebration of the Mass} (Figs. 4.31-4.35).\footnote{The three main canvases in the vault of the Cappella Grimani are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. For an overview of the chapel’s decorative program, see Mason Rinaldi, \textit{Palma il Giovane}, 130-131. Rinaldi dates the paintings to around 1615 on stylistic grounds. Ivanoff and Zampetti, who describe the Grimani chapel program as a “tired” reprisal of the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin, suggest a slightly earlier date, sometime towards the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century. Ivanoff and Zampetti, \textit{Jacopo Negretti}, 582. The building itself was completed and consecrated only in 1602. Ivanoff and Zampetti, \textit{Jacopo Negretti}, 582.} The figures at the Tolentini are dressed in red cardinalitial robes and hold texts (4.32), but no inscriptions can be seen on them. Moreover, given how the texts are positioned, we can be certain that no inscriptions were intended. An earlier example, also by Palma, can be found in the ceiling decoration of the sacristy of the Venetian Church of the Gesuiti (S. Maria Assunta).\footnote{On this ceiling, completed in 1590, see Mason Rinaldi, \textit{Palma il Giovane}, 126.} There, four Church Doctors are represented in \textit{grisaille}, along with the four Evangelists, in triangular canvases set around three larger Old Testament scenes understood as prefigurations of Christ’s establishment of the Eucharist (Fig. 4.27).\footnote{The subjects of the three large scenes are \textit{The Fall of Manna from Heaven} (Exodus 16), \textit{David Receiving Bread from Achimelech} (1 Kings 21-22), and \textit{The Prophet Elias Nourished by the Angel} (3 Kings 19).} While all eight
of these figures hold books, none of the texts is inscribed. One can assume that the Evangelists hold the Gospels attributed to them, but the viewer is left with only a vague presumption that the books held by the Doctors somehow shed light on how the bread of these Old Testament scenes prefigures the Host.

Looking at the wealth of inscriptions on the ceiling of the Oratory at S. Fantin, one might conclude that its unknown programmer was a learned professional cleric, someone well-versed in the scholastic tradition, literate in Greek as well as Latin, and deeply familiar with the writings of the Church Fathers. In fact, this is not necessarily the case, for in choosing these particular figures and texts, the programmer of the Purgatory Cycle appears to have relied upon a single source: Book I, Chapter X of Cardinal Bellarmine's *De purgatorio* (hereafter, *De purgatorio* I.X). In that chapter Bellarmine tackles the Protestant refutation of Purgatory by briefly reviewing references to the purgatorial fires in early Christian and Medieval writings. In most cases, he provides a quotation drawn from the text at issue. The chapter includes supporting evidence from works written by each of the twelve theologians represented in the Oratory, along with those of other important Church Fathers.

In Appendix D, the ceiling inscriptions and their probable source texts are set forth alongside the relevant quotations from Bellarmine's chapter. As will be discussed more fully below, eleven of the inscriptions refer to texts that are quoted or cited in *De purgatorio* I.X. The inscription on the sole remaining text, held by St. Jerome, is only partially legible and cannot be identified with confidence, but this book too is likely cited in Bellarmine's chapter. Reliance on *De purgatorio* I.X indicates that the confraternity would not have needed the involvement of an outside theologian in planning the ceiling. Rather, the program would have been well within the capabilities of a confratello able to read Latin, as undoubtedly many of the officers were. At the same time, literate members of the confraternity are likely to have been directly familiar with several of the texts represented on the ceiling. For instance, the tomes held by three of the four great Latin Doctors (Saints Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great) were available in multiple printed editions and were frequently cited in writings on Purgatory. Thus, while the ceiling program relies upon *De purgatorio* I.X, for some viewers the inscriptions would have evoked connections and conclusions that go beyond the quotations excerpted in Bellarmine's brief chapter.

**The Central Register: The Latin Doctors**

The four Latin Doctors flank the painting of the *Grant of Indulgences* in the central register of the ceiling (Figs. 4.24-4.25). For a viewer looking up at the *Grant of Indulgences* while facing the Crucifix Altar, the image of Saints Augustine and

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81 Bellarmine, *De purgatorio*, cols. 593-598. The title of Book I Chapter X can be translated as "Purgatory is asserted by the testimony of the Greek and Latin Fathers".
Ambrose is to the right; thus, it is placed above the room’s main ceremonial portal leading to the Campo S. Fantin. Both St. Augustine and his text are brightly illuminated by a golden glow that signals his special place among the great theologians of the Church. The Bologna Comforting Manual describes Augustine as follows:

He was a resplendent sun in the temple of God, and like a morning star full of all the rays of knowledge. In comparison with the other doctors, he was like the light of the sun, and just as that light obtains its primacy over all other corporeal things, so Augustine obtained his primacy over all other doctors of the church. Consider the fruit that all day long was born from this tree: doctors, teachers, students, disciples, and in every generation, people who came to listen to the preaching, sermons, counsel, and teaching.

In the subsequent lines, the comforter reminds the condemned that, had he heard Augustine’s teachings, he might not find himself in his present situation.

In the painting, St. Augustine holds his text open such that the inscription, "AVG: DE CVRA PRO MORTVIS", is easily legible. Along with Augustine’s better-known works, the Enchiridion and the City of God, De cura pro mortuis is repeatedly invoked in De purgatorio I.X. Written around A.D. 421, the treatise takes up the question of whether and how the actions of the living can aid the souls of the dead. The saint argues that we should not think that any aid comes to the dead for whom we are providing care, except what we solemnly pray for on their behalf at the altars, either by sacrifices of prayers or of alms. Even this does not benefit all for whom it is done, but only those who while they lived made preparation that they might be so aided.

In other words, the suffrages represented in the central canvases of the Purgatory Cycle are the means by which souls in Purgatory can be helped, but those souls relegated to Hell are beyond the assistance of the living. Thus, an underlying theme of Augustine’s argument is the importance of ensuring in one’s lifetime that Purgatory, and not hell, will be the immediate destination after death. Another relevant point of the treatise relates to burial practices, for burial of the dead was a major obligation of Venetian confraternal life. In one of the passages quoted in De

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82 Le Goff refers to Augustine as "the true father of Purgatory"; although Augustine’s thoughts on the fate of the soul evolved over time, his writings and the terminology he employed were fundamental to the later development of the doctrine. Le Goff, The Birth of Purgatory, 61-85. Augustine is a central authority cited in popular accounts of All Souls' Day, the feast dedicated to souls in Purgatory. See, for instance, Voragine, Legendario (1565), 308-312; and Voragine, Legendario (1588), 754-762.

83 "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 1," 226


85 Ibid., Chapter 18, 383

86 Ibid., Chapter 4, 359
Augustine argues that lavish funeral rites do not offer any benefit to the person being buried. However, if a loved one is buried near the body of a martyr, the living will remember to commend that person’s soul to the martyr, an act which does indeed benefit the loved one’s soul. Moreover, participation in funeral rights may help the souls of the living.

As discussed in Chapter 1, provision of a decent burial had become so closely integrated with the idea of amor proximi that it was typically included as one of the Corporal Works of Mercy. The Scuola di San Fantin expected confratelli to participate in funeral processions and attend the burials of fellow members. While the provision of a good death to fellow members was an important expression of devotion and an act of charity, the confratelli of S. Fantin did not seem particularly eager to participate in the funerals of the condemned without encouragement. They took on the obligation to bury the corpses of the executed only in 1614, probably as a requirement of aggregation with the Archconfraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato in Rome. All confratelli were invited to participate voluntarily in this work of "great merit for our souls". Even so, eight new salaried members were admitted specifically to fulfill this obligation. Augustine’s De cura pro mortuis might have served as a reminder that these tasks are an act of charity whose merit would assist the souls of all the brethren.

Augustine also argues that good Christians whose bodies are mutilated or who remain unburied will nonetheless be resurrected whole and complete. He describes the desecration inflicted upon the bodies of martyrs who were fed to dogs, after which the bodies of the dogs themselves were burned and scattered. According to the saint, even these atrocities had no impact on the fate of their souls:

What was done to the bodies of the martyrs with an intense ferocity, if anything could have harmed them so that their most valiant souls would not find blessed repose, otherwise would not have been permitted.

The assertion that the physical condition of one’s corpse played no role in ultimate salvation was an important argument in the comforting process.

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., Chapter 2, 355
89 The Scuola’s aggregation with S. Giovanni Decollato is discussed further in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
90 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 40v-41r, July 13, 1614
91 Augustine, "Care for the Dead," 355
92 Ibid., Chapters 2, 6, and 8
93 Ibid., Chapter 6, 361-362
94 The Bologna Comforting Manual argues that the manner of death, whether violent or otherwise, does not determine whether a death is good or bad, and then notes Augustine’s gloss on Psalm 116:15 ("Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius") as a further reminder that brutal death does not condemn the soul. "Bologna Comforters’ Manual, Book 1," 238. The same Psalm is cited, and the same point made, in De cura pro mortuis. Augustine, "Care for the Dead," Ch. 2, 354. Andrea Carlino (Books of the Body: Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning (Chicago: University of
The manner of death in a public execution and the extent of bodily mutilation depended largely on two factors – social status and the nature of the crime. People of lower status were generally hung on scaffolding erected between the massive columns at the end of the Piazzetta San Marco, and then left there on display for a specified period of time. Patricians were usually decapitated, which was deemed a more noble manner of death. Certain types of crimes were also punished with ritualized dismemberment (Fig. 1.6). For instance, criminals might have a hand cut off or an eye gouged out prior to the execution itself. In other cases, the corpse was fragmented through quartering, or reduced to ash.95 The total destruction of the body denied the transgressor a decent burial. Bodily fragmentation troubled the condemned, who feared both the pain of physical mutilation and the humiliation associated with public execution.96 The belief that the fate of the body was irrelevant to the fate of the soul was reassuring to those condemned to physical mutilation; it provided both consolation and motivation to work towards the good and salvific death which was the confraternity’s ultimate objective.

In De purgatorio I.X, Bellarmine also quotes the following passage from Chapter 2 of De cura pro mortuis:

We read in the books of the Maccabees that sacrifice is offered for the dead. Yet, even if it were read nowhere in the Old Testament, the authority of the universal Church which clearly favors this practice is of great weight, where in the prayers of the priest which are poured forth to the Lord God at His altar the commemoration of the dead has its place.97

This remark concisely captures the essentials of the official response to the Protestant claim that there was no scriptural source for Purgatory. First, theologians offered multiple references interpreted as proofs of Purgatory in the Bible;98 and

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95 See, for instance, the multiple amputations inflicted on one Piero Maccagna, convicted of murder in 1631. BNM cod. It. VII 1596 (=7712), Registro di Giustitiati (820-1792), September 24, 1631; and the punishment ordered for Teodoro Spesie da Bittecco, Genevra and Betta, all convicted of witchcraft and burned after decapitation. BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 63v, December 65, 1617.

96 Shame regarding bodily fragmentation extended to instances in which a given body was dissected after death; hence the preference for using the cadavers of the condemned who were also low-born and foreign for public dissections and anatomy lessons. In Rome, such cadavers were often supplied by the confratelli of S. Giovanni Decollato, who were required to relinquish the body and then collect it for burial after dissection when ordered to do so by the judicial authorities. However, as Andrea Carlino explains, the condemned were not informed that they had been selected for dissection, for it would further distress them and interfere with the process of comforting. Carlino, Books of the Body, 104. See also Katherine Park, "The Criminal and the Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy," Renaissance Quarterly 47, no. 1 (1994): 12-13.

97 PL 40: 593; Augustine, "Care for the Dead," Chapter 1, 353. The chapter numbers in the English translation differ here from the numbering in the Patrologia Latina and in the source text used by Bellarmine.

98 See, for instance, Lippomano’s lament that “because these days many presumptuous people have the impudence to say, like Martin Luther, that Purgatory cannot be found in the Scriptures, I would
second, pleading in the alternative, the Church argued that even if Purgatory could not be found in scripture, the weight of tradition and longstanding practice were adequate proof.

Seated next to Augustine, St. Ambrose holds his commentary on Psalm 36 (Fig. 4.24). This text, too, was fundamental to the development of the doctrine of Purgatory. Referencing 1 Corinthians 3:15, Ambrose argues that everyone will ultimately be tried by fire. In the passage quoted by Bellarmine, Ambrose writes of the fate of the saved: "If it pleases the Lord that we be saved, we shall be saved through our faith; yet, too, we shall be saved through fire. And though we shall not be consumed by fire, nonetheless we shall burn." No doubt Bellarmine chose this passage not only because it promised ultimate salvation to the faithful, but also because Ambrose's prophecy that "sacriligious people will be hurled into the lake of burning fire" could be interpreted as a warning of the dire consequences awaiting those who subscribed to the Protestant heresy.

The inscription on the text held by Pope St. Gregory the Great refers to the fourth book of his Dialogues (Fig. 4.25). Like Augustine's De cura pro mortuis, Book IV of the Dialogues is one of the most frequently cited texts in post-Tridentine defenses of Purgatory. Indeed, the influence of the Dialogues on Catholic thought was so great that paintings associating Gregory with charity towards souls in Purgatory became increasingly common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Book IV, Gregory responds to the questions of the Deacon Peter regarding the fate of the soul after death. He illustrates his remarks with vivid

like to show you all that this too is false, citing the Scriptural authorities which, soundly understood and explained by the Orthodox Fathers, are enough to persuade us that there is a Purgatory in the next life." Lippomano, Confessione di tutti li dogmi cattolici, 129v. ["Et per che molti presuntuosi al di d’hoggi hanno ardir di dire, come anche Martin luthero, che il purgatorio non si puo provare per le scritture, voglio mostravi quest’ancho essere falso, adducendovi le authorita delle scritture, le quali sanamente intese, & esposte secondo la interpretation de Padri Orthodossi, bastano a persuaderci, che ci sia il purgatorio nell’altra vita."


100 Ibid., 71


102 On the importance of Book IV of the Dialogues as a support for the existence of Purgatory, see Le Goff, The Birth of Purgatory, 90-95. Multiple editions were published in the vernacular in Venice during the sixteenth century, by Christoforo Sanetti (1575), Heredi di Pietro Dehuchino (1586), Antonio Ferrari (1582), Giuannii Fiorina (1591), and Gio. Battista Bonfadino (1599). A Latin edition was published in Venice as early as 1514 (Pope St. Gregory the Great, Dyalogus sancti Gregorii papae (Venice: Ioannem Rubeum Vercellensem, 1514)). English translations provided here are my own. Book IV of the Dialogues is also cited in support of Purgatory in popular texts like the Golden Legend. See, for instance, Voragine, Legendario (1565), 308-312; and Voragine, Legendario (1588), 754-762.

103 See Male, L’art religieux, 63-64. Male’s text includes an illustration of a well-known seventeenth-century example of this subject, Guercino’s St. Gregory Interceding on Behalf of Souls in Purgatory in the Church of S. Paolo in Bologna.
anecdotes, some drawn from his own experience and others heard second-hand, which affirm their validity. These range from stories of the saintly who appear after death to attest to the glories of heaven, to cautionary tales of insincere repentance that is amply punished in the afterlife.

The quotation Bellarmine draws from the Dialogues, taken from Book IV Chapter 39, gives an assurance that Purgatory offers a means of redemption for small sins. In the original text, the passage continues on to remind the reader that "our Savior says that one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this world or in the afterlife."104 Other passages from the Dialogues quoted in De purgatorio I.X affirm that celebration of the Mass helps the souls of the dead, and that church burials are of greater assistance to the living than to the dead.105 In the latter case, like Augustine, Gregory argues that church burial helps souls in Purgatory because loved ones visiting the church will be reminded to pray for them; on the other hand, burial in a consecrated space will do nothing for those who die in a state of mortal sin (and who are therefore relegated to the eternal torments of hell). Indeed, such souls will endure even worse suffering, since this hypocrisy is offensive to God.

The sole inscription which cannot be identified with confidence is found on the text held by St. Jerome (Fig. 4.25). Seated next to Pope St. Gregory the Great in the canvas to the left of the Grant of Indulgences, Jerome is particularly vivid in his red cardinalial robes; his lion lies at his feet. Jerome’s centrality to the confraternity was underscored by the presence of Alessandro Vittoria’s life-sized sculpture of the saint which stood on the altar directly below the canvas (Fig. 4.3).

Only partially legible, the inscription on the tome held by Jerome includes the saint’s name and the words "IN CAP VII". This fragmentary title seems to refer to a commentary on Chapter 7 of some unidentifiable work. Since the other eleven inscriptions refer to texts cited in De purgatorio I.X, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Jerome’s text might also be found therein. De purgatorio I.X includes three citations of Jerome’s works; these are drawn from the last paragraph of Jerome’s Commentary on Isaiah;106 Book I of Against the Pelagians;107 and a letter to Pammachius on the death of his son Paul.108 It seems most likely that the inscription on the ceiling of the Oratory refers to the first of these, the Commentary on Isaiah. The quotation employed by Bellarmine - the last sentence of the Commentary - is preceded in the same paragraph by the following passage drawn from the seventh

104 "But yet, for some small sins, we must believe that before judgment there is a purgatorial fire, for our Savior says that one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this world or in the afterlife." ["Sed tamen de quibusdam levibus culpis esse ante judicium purgatorius ignis credendus est, pro eo quod Veritas dicit, quia si quis in sancto Spiritu blasphemiam dixerit, neque in hoc saeculo remittetur ei, neque in futuro." PL 149:396]
105 PL 77:412, 416-417; Bellarmine, De purgatorio, col. 595
106 S. Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Presbyteri, Commentariorum in Isaiam Prophetam Libri Duodeviginti. PL 24:17-678
107 S. Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Presbyteri, Dialogus Adversus Pelegianos Sub Persona Attici Catholici et Crito buli Haeretici, PL 23: 491-590
chapter of the Old Testament Book of Micheas: "I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; until he judge my cause and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth into the light, I shall behold his justice." I suggest that that the inscription refers to Jerome’s gloss on 7 Mich. 9 as a Biblical source in support of the need for repentant sinners to endure the punishment of Purgatory before they can be admitted to Heaven.

The Western Doctors

In the western register, flanking the Giving of Alms, St. Bernard holds his sermon on the death of the abbot Humbert (Fig. 4.20). In this sermon, the saint discusses the transitory nature of mortal life and the immortality of the soul. Recounting Humbert’s dedication to the imitation of Christ, he exhorts listeners to do the same and to focus on the afterlife. The urgency of this advice is underscored in the closing paragraph, the very passage quoted by Bellarmine:

> Time is slipping away irrevocably; and while you believe that you have escaped these trivial punishments, you are incurring even greater punishments. Know this, that duties you neglect in this life will be multiplied a hundredfold... in the place of purgation. I know that it is hard for a dissolute person to understand discipline, for a talkative man to keep silent, for a habitual wanderer to stay in one place; but it will be harder - much harder - to endure the coming pain of Purgatory.

Just opposite, St. Hilary holds his commentary on Psalm 118 (Fig. 4.21). The passage included in De purgatorio I.X alludes to the inescapability of eventual punishment by fire, but offers hope that sins can be cleansed therein.

No surviving text associated with the inscriptions on the tomes held by the two remaining western Doctors, the Venerable Bede and St. Anselm, could be located. However, in both cases Bellarmine’s De purgatorio I.X provides a quotation from a text whose title corresponds to the inscription in the Oratory. The fact that both the ceiling inscriptions and De purgatorio I.X refer to the same, seemingly obscure source offers strong support for the theory that the programmer of the Purgatory Cycle relied on Bellarmine’s chapter. In Anselm’s case, the inscription

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110 In Obitu Domini Humberti, Monachi Claraevallensis Sermo [Sermon on the Death of Humbert], PL 183:513-518

111 PL 183:518

112 PL 9:522-523

113 Bellarmine, De purgatorio, 598
refers to a commentary on Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. Bellarmine's quotation refers more specifically to 1 Corinthians 3, and explains that Purgatory is the means of redemption for lesser sins.

The tome held by Bede is inscribed "BEDA IN PSAL XXXVII". Likewise, in De purgatorio I.X, Bellarmine quotes a passage attributed to "Beda in Psalm. 37" which emphasizes that those who commit venial sins must suffer in the purgatorial fire. If Bede authored a commentary on Psalm 37, it has not survived, and to my knowledge, the quotation employed by Bellarmine does not appear in any of Bede's existing works. But while the reference may have been obscure, visitors to the Oratory would have been familiar with this Psalm and its use in the deathbed ritual. One of the seven Penitential Psalms, Psalm 37 begs the Lord's help in the face of the temptations of evil. In many *ars moriendi* texts, reading or recitation of the Penitential Psalms was prescribed in the final moments of life in imitation of St. Augustine.114 As Benedicta Ward explains in her study of Bede's abbreviated Psalter, the Psalms were used to console the dying in part because, according to the Gospels, the dying words of Christ on the Cross were derived from them.115 According to the famous account by Luca della Robbia of his experience consoling his friend Pietro Paolo Boscoli prior to the latter's execution in Florence, the Compagnia dei Neri customarily sang or read the Penitential Psalms when visiting the condemned.116

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114 For instance, the *Dottrina del ben morire* of Pietro da Luca instructs the *moriens* as follows: "The second rule observed by our Lord on the Cross was that he prayed for himself, and for his enemies. Thus we read that, praying, he said that Psalm which begins 'God, God, look upon me, why have you forsaken me?' etc. And the eight following Psalms until that verse that says 'Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit' etc. And so we must pray for ourselves, and also for our enemies." Pietro da Luca, *Dottrina del ben morire, composta per il R. P. Don Pietro da Luca, Canonico Regolare, Theologo, & Predicatore clarissimo.* (Venice: Domenico Imborti, 1585), 36. ["La seconda regola osservata del nostro Sign. in Croce fu, ch'esso fece orazione per se, & per li suoi nimici: onde si legge, che orando disse quel Salmo, che comincia, Deus Deus meus respice in me, quare me dereliquisti? &c. Et gli otto sequenti Salmi per infino à quel versicolo, che dice. In manus tuas Domine comendo spiritum meum &c. Così debbiamo orar prima per noi medesimi, & poi ancora per li nostri inimici."] For other examples, see D'Angelo, *Ricordo del ben morire*, 192, 226; and Giovanni di Giesu Maria, *Arte di ben morire del R.P. F. Giovanni di Giesu Maria Carmelitano Scalzo. Scribe: Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur. Apoc. 14. Aggiuntovi di nuovo un modo d'aggiutare a ben morire, Da un padre dell'istesso Ordine.* (Rome: Guglielmo Facciotto, 1618), 233.


116 In this particular case, Boscoli was annoyed by the confraternity's involvement and asked them to be quiet. Robbia, "Pietro Paolo Boscoli," 316. On the execution of Boscoli in 1513, see also Trexler, *Public Life*, 198-205.
In the easternmost register, next to the *Celebration of the Mass*, are Saints Athanasius and Basil (Fig. 4.22). The inscription on Athanasius' tome, though only partially legible, appears to be a passage ending with the number "4" drawn from the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem*.117 For his part, Bellarmine provides a paraphrase rather than a quotation, drawn from Question 34 of the *Quaestiones*:

"Athenasius, in question 34 to Antioch, asks whether souls feel the benefit of the prayers of the living. He answers that they feel them completely."118 St. Basil holds Chapter 9 of his commentary on the Book of Isaiah from the Septuagint Bible.119 The opening verse of Isaiah, interpreted by the saint as an expression of the urgency of salvation, is also appropriate to the Eucharistic theme of the painting it flanks. It reads: "Drink this first; do it quickly... O people walking in darkness, behold a great light: you that dwell in the country and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you."120 In the quotations excerpted in *De purgatorio* I.X, Basil argues that Isaiah's prophecy of the earth in flames is in fact an offer of salvation through purification: "earthly things", he says, "are given over to the purifying fire for the benefit of the soul... The prophecy does not threaten with obliteration, but indicates purification."121

On the other side of the same register, St. John Chrysostom holds his *Homilies on Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians* (Fig. 4.23).122 The specific homily referred to is not clear from the inscription, but Homily 41, quoted in *De purgatorio* I.X, is certainly appropriate to the main themes of the Oratory ceiling. On 1 Corinthians

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117 PG 28: 597-709. This text, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem*, though once attributed to Athanasius, is now attributed to the seventh-century monk Anastasius of Sinai. See Gilbert Dagron, "Holy Images and Likeness," Dumbarton Oaks Papers 45 (1991): 32. However, in early Italian printed sources, the author of the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem* is considered to be Athanasius (see, for instance, the Latin edition of the text included in Athanasius' collected works published in Atanasio, "Liber Sancti Athanasi Alexandinae ecclesiae archiepiscopi, de variis questionibus ad Antiochum principem de Graeco in latinum nuper traductus a Iohanne Reuchlin, que & Capnion dicitur," in D. Athanasii episcopi Alexandrini facundissimi illius ecclesiae propugnatoris omnia opera, quae in hunc usq: diem e Graeco in Latinam linguam versa sunt: nunc recens quam exactissima diligentia regonita & excusa, quorum catalogum sequens pagella indicabit. (Coloniae (Cologne): Eucharij Cervicorni, 1532)). In this dissertation, the saint is identified as Athanasius because the inscription on the Oratory ceiling identifies him as such. Note, however, that Traverso (La Scuola di San Fantin, 135) identifies the figure on the ceiling as Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch (d. 599).

118 Bellarmine, *De purgatorio*, 593

119 PG 30:505-524


121 Basil the Great, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 282; PG 30:521-522

122 PG 61:9-382
3:15, the primary Scriptural basis of arguments in favor of an intermediate zone of fiery punishment, Bellarmine’s quotations from Homily 41 read: "Help [the dead] as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings... Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed... by offering on their behalf."¹²³ Next to John Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen holds his oration *In sancta lumina,* or *On the Holy Lights.*¹²⁴ This text contrasts baptism, which cleanses the faithful of original sin, with the bloody initiation rituals of pagan religions. The saint draws a parallel between the purification of baptism and the flames of Purgatory and hell. In the passage quoted by Bellarmine, the saint notes that those who do not follow the way of Christ “will be baptized with fire, that final baptism, greater and more severe, which will consume matter like straw, and annihilate the insubstantiality of all that is evil.”¹²⁵

Bellarmine’s *De purgatorio* was the official defense of the doctrine of Purgatory as well as the best known, most thorough, and most scholarly argument in its favor published in sixteenth-century Italy. By constructing the cycle on Bellarmine’s scaffolding, the Scuola asserted its own piety and displayed its knowledge of and adherence to the Church's teachings. The embedded texts assert the truth of the doctrine, deriving authority from their specificity as well as from their overwhelming profusion. The inclusion of abundant “supporting evidence” in artworks that concerned disputed doctrinal points is consistent with a broader trend in Venetian religious art, particularly after the Apostolic Visit in 1581.¹²⁶ Thus, Counter-Reformation cycles regularly include Old Testament scenes that prefigure the events in the New Testament; and the prophets and Evangelists who predicted or recounted the events appear directly as eyewitnesses to the events of the Passion.

But aside from the desire to demonstrate the Scuola’s orthodoxy and refute heretical points of view, we might also consider whether the Scuola’s staunch promotion of the Church’s position on these issues was also a part of a campaign to obtain Indulgences for the Scuola’s altars. If so, these efforts were rewarded less than a decade after the ceiling was completed. For confraternities and other religious institutions, Indulgences were a powerful motivator. Their spiritual benefits were many, and altars privileged with Indulgences drew in the faithful. An


¹²⁴ PG 36:335-360


¹²⁶ See, for instance, Mason’s analysis of Palma’s Eucharist Cycle for the old sacristy in the Church of S. Giacomo dall'Orio, in which she observes that during this period the "visual apparatus” in support of the Tridentine definition of the Eucharist as both sacrament and sacrifice became “more detailed in its 'bibliography’”. Mason Rinaldi, "Convenzioni,” 216-217
interest in acquiring the benefit of Indulgences must have been a key factor in the
decision of the Scuola di S. Fantin to join the Roman archconfraternity of S. Giovanni
Decollato, with whom it aggregated in 1613.\textsuperscript{127} Aggregation allowed a confraternity
to share in the spiritual treasures of the archconfraternity, including the
Indulgences granted to the umbrella organization. It was encouraged in the \textit{Bull
Quaecumque} of 1604, promulgated by Clement VIII with the intention of
strengthening episcopal oversight of confraternities and more closely regulating the
foundation of new sodalities.\textsuperscript{128} When the Scuola merged with the Archconfraternity
of S. Giovanni Decollato, its members were able to take advantage of the Indulgences
that had been granted to the Roman confraternity in 1608 by Pope Paul V.\textsuperscript{129} These
included, for instance, a plenary Indulgence for confraternity members and
associated clergy who prayed at the Oratory’s altars on the Feast of All Souls. A
plenary Indulgence was also granted to confratelli (including the condemned) who
invoked the name of Christ with devotion at the moment of death. Partial
Indulgences were granted for praying at the Scuola’s altars on specific feast days
(including the Feasts of the Nativity, the Resurrection, Pentecost, and the
Assumption of the Virgin); for performing various acts of \textit{amor proximi} towards the
poor, the sick, and religious pilgrims; for accompanying the condemned to the
scaffold; and for participating in burial of the condemned. In 1618, the Scuola’s own
Crucifix Altar was directly privileged with a plenary Indulgence that benefitted souls
for whom masses were offered on specified feast days.\textsuperscript{130} This was the first of many
Indulgences directly attached to worship and almsgiving at the altars of the Scuola
di S. Fantin, a welcome ease for the purgatorial sufferings of its members, devotees,
and the pazienti entrusted to the Scuola’s care.

\textbf{The Souls in Purgatory}

Separating the ceiling’s three main registers are four large paintings of souls
in Purgatory itself (Fig. 4.26). In the \textit{Divine Comedy}, Dante had described Purgatory
as a seven-tiered mountain at the top of which is the Garden of Eden. The seventh
tier, immediately below the terrestrial paradise, is the terrace of the lustful; here he
encounters and passes through a wall of flame, assured by his guide Virgil that
however painful it might be, it will not harm him.\textsuperscript{131} Among theologians, it was

\textsuperscript{127} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 158v; see also Chapter 1
above.
\textsuperscript{128} Black, \textit{Italian Confraternities}, 72-74
\textsuperscript{129} ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Indulgenze e Privileggi
Spirituali 158v-160v
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. Indulgenze e Privileggi Spirituali, fols. 158v-160v. The original Indulgence, valid for three
years, was regularly renewed.
\textsuperscript{131} Dante Alighieri, \textit{La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri. II. Purgatorio}, ed. Giuseppe Campi (Turin:
Unione Tipografico Editrice, 1891), Canto XXVII, 569ff
widely believed that the entirety of Purgatory consisted of some sort of fire. This understanding was based on 1 Corinthians 3:13-15:

Every man’s work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work burn, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.\(^{132}\)

The pain endured in Purgatory was generally understood to be horrific and excruciating beyond any earthly suffering.\(^{133}\) At the same time, souls there were joyful and untroubled because they found themselves deeply enveloped by divine love and because their will was in complete conformity with the will of God.\(^{134}\) Thus, St. Catherine described the joy experienced by souls in Purgatory as second only to the joy of the saints in Heaven. In Purgatory, she wrote, souls "feel the greatest happiness and the greatest pain; one does not impede the other."\(^{135}\) It is this paradoxical combination of joy and torment that Cardinal Federico Borromeo singles out as the defining characteristic of Purgatory in worthy representations. Purgatory, he writes, should express "the simultaneous feelings of distress and relief experienced by souls who, although being tortured, anticipate escape."\(^{136}\) Indeed, hope, or the anticipation of escape, is the element that most clearly distinguishes Purgatory from Hell in Borromeo’s treatise as well as in religious texts.

In the four canvases of Souls in Purgatory on the ceiling of the Oratory, the bodies writhing in the purgatorial fire are whole and perfect. Unlike the kneeling beggar of The Giving of Alms, they display no physical wounds. Their untroubled

\(^{132}\) 1 Corinthians 3: 13-15

\(^{133}\) See, for instance, Bellintani, "Prattica dell’orazione mentale III, 332 ["...con molte lagrime, & con intenso dolore, & anco con pene & fatiche esteriori si cancella il peccato commesso con poco piacere..."]


\(^{136}\) Borromeo, De pictura sacra, 2.123. De pictura sacra was first published in 1624, and was available only in Latin until the nineteenth century. p. x.
expressions indicate their spiritual joy, while their robust musculature and physical beauty suggest that the suffrages of the faithful have been effective. These souls have almost completed the process of purification, at the end of which they will be ready for the sight of God.

Venetian Charity and Suffrages for the Dead

In its decision to allocate funds to decorate the room, the confraternity noted that completion of the ceiling was necessary to sufficiently complement the "most miraculous Christ [i.e. the wooden Crucifix] for which the devotion of the faithful grows daily". The desire to enhance the devotional experience before the Scuola's altar offers at least a partial explanation for the decision to focus the ceiling program on Purgatory. The helplessness of souls in Purgatory stimulated the process of salvation, allowing the living to assist the dead and to accrue spiritual merit on their own behalf; but all of these benefits were ultimately understood to stem from the power of Christ's own sacrifice. In Bellintani's Pratica, Christ explains that the existence of Purgatory offers the living a means to create spiritual benefits both for themselves and for the dead:

There are many reasons why you can pray for those souls [in Purgatory], and one is my mercy. Since justice is exercised by means of fire so severely against my elect in that place, and since all their ability to help themselves has ceased, I wanted to leave space for clemency, such that you the living can pray for them. And this in turn benefits you... Since you perform charity, you increase your own celestial reward, because although the prayer is for them, the merit is surely yours... .

Bellintani's Christ goes on to present the three ways in which the living can help the dead, namely "with your works, with my sacrifice, and with Indulgences." These are, of course, the subjects of the three main canvases of the Purgatory Cycle.

Closest to the western door is the scene of Elemosina, or The Giving of Alms (Fig. 4.16). On the left side of the canvas, a woman turns gracefully to place a coin into the outstretched hand of a bearded man. The gender and idealized beauty of the almsgiver suggest that she is the personification of Charity in its guise as amor.
proximi, love of neighbor. She is clothed in the colors of the Theological Virtues: green representing hope, white for faith, and red for love, or caritas. On the right, two angels lift souls heavenward. One, grabbing the wrist of a soul, pointedly gestures with his free hand towards the act of charity being performed on the other side of the canvas. Below, the nude torso of a female figure rises from the purgatorial flames and looks upwards, waiting for her own release.

The dal sotto in su perspective of the scene makes the most visual sense when the viewer enters the room from the Calle della Verona through the western door. We should reiterate here that although most rooms in the meeting house on the Campo S. Fantin were reserved for the Scuola’s members, the Oratory was regularly open to the public. On Friday afternoons, visitors were encouraged to attend the Mass, pray for the dead, and leave alms in the collection boxes available at the two magnificent altars housed in the room. This practice was particularly popular among women “who, due to their devotion, have many Masses said to attain the grace they are seeking.” The scene’s orientation towards the western door suggests that this was the entrance used by the public when they visited the Scuola to celebrate the Mass.

On a direct and literal level, the painting pointedly reminds the room’s visitor of the importance of amor proximi in the form of alms for the poor. The salutary effect of almsgiving is made immediate and visible: as Charity drops coins into the beggar’s hand, souls are instantaneously liberated from the purgatorial fire. The term elemosina, often translated simply as "almsgiving", was also used to convey the concept of charity in a broader sense. As Jerome Gratian explained in his treatise on Purgatory:

> All the works of mercy, both corporal as well as spiritual, are encompassed by the word elemosina, and therefore there is no one who cannot give great alms, because if one has neither money nor ability to perform corporal acts of mercy, one can perform spiritual acts, which are no less accepted or pleasing to God.

Charity was understood as a transaction effected between two parties, each with something precious to offer the other. As Gratian makes clear, the currency of the

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141 Sansovino and Stringa, *Venetia città nobilissima* (1604), 92r

142 Gratiani, *Suffragio dell’anime*, 82: ["Sotto il nome d’elemosina si comprendono tutte l’opere di misericordia tanto corporali, quanto spirituali, & in questo modo non vi è huomo, che non possa fare grandi elemosine, perché se non hà danari, né facolta da fare opere corporali, può far opere di misericordia spirituali, che non sono meno accette, e grate à Dio."] Gratian also argued that “[A]lmsgiving is what redeems the soul from servitude... To free souls in Purgatory, one cannot give a greater ransom than alms.” Gratiani, *Suffragio dell’anime*, 78. On Gratian, see note 65 in the present chapter.
Poor was prayer; recipients of material charity were expected to pray on behalf of the souls of those who helped them, and these prayers were known to be highly salubrious. Acts of charity drove the economy of salvation, and the rich needed the spiritual benefits offered by the poor as much as the poor needed the material benefits provided by the rich.\(^{143}\) Thus, in a treatise on charity dedicated to Pope Paul V, the Abbot Paolo de Angelis advised the faithful as follows:

> Put alms in the fist of the poor, and he will pray for you such that you will not incur any ills... When you feast, call the poor, the weak, the blind, and the lame, and you will be blessed; because men like these have nothing to give you in return, but you will be reimbursed well at the resurrection of the elect...\(^{144}\)

However, it was incumbent on the bestower of alms to determine that the recipient was truly worthy of assistance. Giving to a beggar who lacked need was wasteful, while feigning need was a grievous sin.\(^{145}\)

A recent study by Tom Nichols explores the theological, cultural, and political trends that shaped the representation of the beggar in sixteenth century art.\(^{146}\) Concerns regarding the fraudulent beggar were on the rise, as periods of famine increasingly pushed the poor into urban settings and made street poverty ever more visible. Particularly in northern Europe, texts often included images that helped the reader to identify the crafty con artist and distinguish him from the truly deserving pauper.\(^{147}\) In Venice as elsewhere, sixteenth-century legislation encouraged discrimination among the ranks of the poor; those unable to work due to age or physical handicap were favored over the able-bodied, who were expected to earn their keep.\(^{148}\) But while treatises and legislation helped the would-be giver to separate the deserving poor from deceivers, in Italy the worthy beggar (rather than the false one) was more frequently represented in the visual arts.\(^{149}\) In light of these trends and attitudes, the physical characteristics of the beggar represented in the scene of almsgiving merit closer attention (Fig. 4.17).

Palma’s beggar relies upon the viewer’s recognition of well-known iconographical markers to signal that his poverty is genuine and his character meritorious. The figure is most immediately derived from the bearded man seated

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\(^{143}\) Romano, "L’assistenza," 357

\(^{144}\) de Angelis, Della limosina, 37. ["Chiudi la limosina nel grembo del povero, & questa pregarà per te acciò non incorri in male alcuno... Quando fai convito, chiama i poveri, i deboli, i ciechi, & i zoppi, & sarai beato; perché non hanno questi tali, che renderti, ma ben ti sarà reso il contracambio nella resurrettione de giusti..."] For another example, see the anecdote in which the prayers of a poor man save his rich benefactor from damnation, recounted in Venetiano, Prato fiorito, 164-165.

\(^{145}\) de Angelis, Della limosina, 40

\(^{146}\) Tom Nichols, The Art of Poverty: Irony and Ideal in the Sixteenth-Century Beggar Image (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007)

\(^{147}\) Ibid., 32-44

\(^{148}\) See Pullan, Rich and Poor, Chapters 3 and 4, esp. pp. 239-240, and Romano, "L’assistenza," 355-358 on Venetian poor laws and attitudes towards the deserving and undeserving poor.

\(^{149}\) Nichols, Art of Poverty, 123-127 and 136-183
on the foreground steps, receiving coins from St. John the Almsgiver in Titian’s altarpiece for the church of S. Giovanni Elemosinario (Figs. 4.28, 4.29). Both Titian and Palma use posture, attire, and attributes to broaden the resonance of the beggar’s meaning beyond financial poverty to suggest other categories of need favored by Venetian poor laws. Both beggars are scantily clothed in garments which leave much of their bodies exposed. Their nakedness signifies their abject poverty and physical suffering, directly evoking the imperative set out in Matthew 25:36 to clothe the naked. So, too, the bandaged ankles of both men indicate their infirmity and physical sickness. As Nichols explains, the correlation between illness and poverty was close, and "the idea that the 'true' poor were also sick helped contemporaries make the required definition against the fraudulent claims of able-bodied 'idle' beggars."

In contrast to the more vigorous dark-haired pauper of Titian’s painting, the white hair and beard of Palma’s figure indicate that he is elderly. He also holds a staff. This attribute indicates a physical handicap and associates the figure with religious pilgrims. For the contemporary viewer, the visual tradition evoked by the staff would have affirmed the beggar’s piety, assuring that he would play his expected role in the charitable transaction.

In Nichols’ discussion of Italian beggar images, he notes the frequency with which the poor are situated on steps in the foreground of a holy scene. In Titian’s S. Giovanni Elemosinario, for instance, this device serves to separate the distinct realms of the earthly and the divine; while the beggar is projected out towards the viewer’s space, St. John the Almsgiver sits three steps above him, enthroned, elevated, and closer to God. Nichols observes that the beggar serves in such images as a sort of "spiritual conduit" through which the elect can ascend heavenwards. At the same time,

The beggar’s position in a supplementary forward spatial plane indicates his identity with those looking in from beyond. And his twisting posture reinforces the point, distinguishing him from the iconic outwardly turned sacred figures, and allowing him to gaze into the painting and thus to take up a viewpoint mirroring that of the onlooker himself. If the beggar is the attribute of the sacred in these paintings, he is also our representative, a type of universalised fallen humanity, whose abjection before God offers a model attitude for the pious Christian in his approach to the offer of redemption.

No steps appear in The Giving of Alms in the Oratory of S. Fantin. Instead, the beggar is seated in a dark and nebulous foreground, possibly upon a rock signifying the earthly church. However, the artist takes advantage of the image’s location on

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150 An earlier related example is the pitiful beggar holding a bowl in Bonifacio de’ Pitati’s altarpiece known as The Madonna of the Tailors (1533). On Titian’s and Bonifacio’s paintings, see Alkema, "Carità Veneziana," 88. On the familial connection between Palma and Bonifacio de’ Pitati, see Philip Cottrell, "The Artistic Parentage of Palma Giovane," The Burlington Magazine 144, no. 1190 (2002).

151 Nichols, Art of Poverty, 145

152 Ibid., 141-144

153 Ibid., 144-145
the ceiling to evoke a similar set of meanings. As the beggar gazes at his benefactor, he looks upwards. Standing below, the viewer must imitate the direction of his gaze in order to see the image. While visitors to the Oratory would have been expected to identify with the giver of alms, the image also demanded that they recognize themselves in the beggar. In the writings of the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic Diego de Estella, the physical markers of abject poverty served as a metaphor for the spiritual humility one must show when seeking divine favor:

Someone asking for alms from a rich man would be crazy to dress himself in rich and expensive clothes, with rings, and gold chains, carrying coins in his hand. The poor, when they ask for alms, show their wounds, and their vile rags, and their poverty, so that charity will be given to them. If you want to receive alms from the hand of God, and if you want him to enrich and embellish you with true riches, humble yourself, and show him your sins, and the wounds of your soul, for God enriches and exalts the humble.¹⁵⁴

The viewers of the Purgatory Ceiling could find in the pauper’s suffering body a reflection of their own lame and diseased souls, whose imperfections were fully visible to God.

In the corresponding scene in the Grimani Chapel at the Church of S. Nicolò dei Tolentini, the giver of alms is accompanied by two assistants, one holding a basket of bread, the other a tray of coins (Fig. 4.35).¹⁵⁵ The almsgiver extends one hand to give a coin to a woman in the foreground, and with the other dispenses bread to a man in the background. As in the scene at S. Fantin, both recipients of charity in the painting at the Tolentini are marked by clearly legible signs of their worthiness. The woman is kneeling and modestly clothed, pious and decorous; the inclusion of a child pulling at her skirts makes an unmistakable connection with the traditional representation of *amor proximi*.¹⁵⁶ Notably, the kneeling female beggar is clothed in the colors of the theological virtues, red, white, and green, as is the personification of Charity in the scene at S. Fantin. However, their roles are pointedly reversed. The figure of Charity in the Oratory painting is the embodiment of divine love as well as an active dispenser of aid, an exemplary benefactress of the poor and of the souls in Purgatory.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Estella, *Dispregio della vanità*, 171. ["Pazzo sarebbe chi per chiedere elemosina al ricco, si vestisse di ricche, e preziose vesti, & con anelli, & catene d’oro, & portasse della scudi in mano. I poveri quando chiedono limosina, mostrano le lor piaghe, & vili panni, & la lor povertà, accioche gli sia data la limosina. Se vuoi ricever elemosina dalla mano di Dio, & che ti arriccischis, & ingrandidisca con vere ricchezze, humiliati, & mostrali i tuoi peccati, e le piaghe dell’anima tua, poiche lddio arriccichisce, & essalta gli humili."]

¹⁵⁵ On the decorative program of the Grimani Chapel, see Chapter 4, note 78 herein.

¹⁵⁶ For multiple examples of Italian images of women with children as personifications of *amor proximi*, see Wind, "Charity," 322-330. On gender differences in the representation of beggars, see Nichols, *Art of Poverty*, 144-145. He notes that while men are frequently depicted in an impoverished state of undress (as is the male beggar in the Purgatory Cycle), the bodies of female beggars are always clothed.

¹⁵⁷ Mason Rinaldi, *Palma il Giovane*, 130-131, cat. nos. 451-460
The Celebration of the Mass is the subject of the canvas at the opposite end of the ceiling on the east side of the room (Fig. 4.19). Here, a tonsured priest stands at a white altar table. Illuminated from the upper right, his raised arms, crimson mantle, and outstretched left leg create a strong diagonal leading the eye towards a Crucifix on the altar before him. A second diagonal, formed by the arms of the red-cloaked angel to the right, reinforces the upward and leftward momentum; to the right, another angel does the same. Those familiar with the rite would have recognized that the moment represented is the elevation of the consecrated wine at the culmination of the Mass, after the Host and the wine have been miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ and his Real Presence floods the altar. As the angel and his companions reach down to retrieve souls from the flickering orange flames, the priest lifts the chalice, juxtaposing it with the Crucifix before him. In the lower left corner, kneeling on the steps, an acolyte holding a candle rings a bell as he gazes at the chalice, his body tense with wonder.

The Tridentine Decree on Purgatory reiterated that souls could be aided by “the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar”. It thus reaffirmed the efficacy of the Mass, a ritual which reenacts Christ’s offering of “Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross” and which is “rightly offered not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those departed in Christ but not yet fully purified.” In the Pratrica, Mattia Bellintani vividly evokes the celebration of the Mass as the means to release souls, and compares prayers for the dead with Christ’s own sacrificial Charity:

I wanted and ordered my sacrifice, which is continuously celebrated in my Church through the Mass, so that it might be especially directed towards and offered for those poor souls, and thereby to augment my mercy. And because [those souls] are joined to me through living faith, it is not necessary for them to be exempt from the efficacy of my blood and my spirit. Rather, how much more permanently they are tied to me, how much more tightly and intimately do they feel the heat of my Charity and the effect of my virtue. And this is a sure suffrage, since surely it is always valid. Therefore, I teach you to be liberal with your prayers for these poor needy souls, just as I am with mine.

As with The Giving of Alms, the location of the scene of the Mass at the far end of the room relates to the functions performed below. In this case, the canvas is

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158 Canons and Decrees, 214
159 Ibid., 146
160 Bellintani, Pratica dell’oratione mentale III, 348-349 [“Il sacrificio mio, il quale nella Messa continuo si fa nella mia Chiesa, ho voluto & ho ordinato, che specialmente s’indirizzi & offerisca per quelle povere anime, per ampliar così la misericordia mia: & perche esende elle à me conguinte per viva fede, non è il dovere, che della efficacia del mio sangue, & del mio spirito siano esenti: anzi quanto più indissolubilmente meco legate sono, tanto più strettamente & intimamente sentano il caldo della mia carità, & l’effetto della mia virtù. Et questo è un sicuro suffragio, imperoche sicuramente sempre vale. Dalche insegno a voi ad essere liberali a quei poveri bisognosi del suffragio vostro, posciache tanto gliene son anch’io del mio.”]
located above the room’s Crucifix Altar, where the faithful would come to adore the wooden Crucifix. The Crucifix was one of the Scuola’s most recognizable emblems. It could be removed from its location on the altar and was carried by members of the Scuola in execution processions. This practice visually linked prayers offered at the Crucifix Altar with prayers for the executed, drawing on a wealth of interrelated beliefs about the salutary effects of capital punishment for both the condemned and the community. The illusionistic altar represented in the painting echoes the actual altar below, and devotees attending the Mass could look up and see the salvific effect of their devotions made visible and immediate in the canvas above. The relationship between the Mass and Christ’s sacrifice was further underscored by the presence of Corona’s *Agony in the Garden* on the wall in the southeast corner of the room, to the right of the altar (Fig. 4.5). In this scene, the first of Corona’s Passion Cycle, the angel offers Christ the chalice which symbolizes his sacrifice and foreshadows the Eucharistic wine.\(^{161}\) Thus, the paintings on both the ceiling and the wall directed the viewer’s focus towards the altar, thematically underscoring the interrelationship between the Crucifixion, the Mass, and the plight of souls in Purgatory.

The central image of the Purgatory Cycle focuses on papal authority to grant Indulgences, again a major point of contention between Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church. In its Decree on Indulgences, promulgated in 1563, the Council of Trent acknowledged the abuse of Indulgences which had so aggravated Protestant leaders, but also reiterated their efficacy for the faithful.\(^{162}\) This message was simply and directly summarized for the laity in texts like Bellintani’s *Prattica*, in which Christ explains:

> And to amplify my clemency I also wanted the potent virtue of my Passion to get to Purgatory by way of Indulgences. To this effect, I have gathered a very rich treasure, and given the keys to my Vicar on the earth, who can dispense it to the living and the dead.\(^{163}\)

In Palma’s scene, a bearded pope is seated on a stepped dais covered with a red canopy; he wears a triregnum, the three-tiered crown that symbolizes his temporal power (Fig. 4.18).\(^{164}\) Behind him stands a Cardinal, suggesting the authority of the

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161 In some comforting texts, this moment in the Garden of Gethsemane is offered as an exemplar for the condemned who continue to struggle against his fate. See, for instance, Tullio Crispoldi, “Alcune ragioni da confortar coloro, che per la giustizia publica si trovano condannati alla morte, raccolte per M. Tullio Crispoldo da Riete. Alla devota Compagnia di Santo Giovanni Decollato di Roma, et à qualunque persona, che per sua charità si diletterà d’andare à confortare color, che sono dalla giustizia condannati alla morte.,” in *Trattato utilissimo in conforto de condennati a morte per via di giustizia* (Rome: Valerio Dorico, 1565), 82.

162 *Canons and Decrees*, 253-254

163 Bellintani, *Prattica dell’orazione mentale III*, 348. [“Et per maggior ampiezza della clemenza mio ho voluto, che etiando per mezo delle Indulgenze arrivi al Purgatorio la potente virtù della Passion mia, havendo io a questo effetto raccoltone un ricchissimo thesoro, & datone le chiavi al mio Vicario in terra, il quale possalo dispensare a vivi, & a morti.”]

164 Several scholars have suggested that the pope bears the likeness of Pius V. Ivanoff, "Il ciclo pittorico," 73. This identification is followed by Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 132 and Zampetti, *Guida*, 36. The reign of Pius V, born Antonio Ghislieri (1504-1572, reigned 1566-72), postdated the
church hierarchy. The pope extends one hand towards angels and souls rising at the left side of the canvas. In his other hand, he holds out several strings of rosary beads and a decree of Indulgence towards two kneeling supplicants. The rosary beads suggest that the Indulgence has been earned through the supplicants’ prayers. The kneeling supplicants are, perhaps, intended as confratelli in an act of devotion, similar to those represented in the relief on the building’s façade (Fig. 2.10). Dressed in dark robes, one crosses his arms over his chest, a gesture of piety, while the other reaches out towards the Indulgence-granting Pope. A third cloaked man kneels on the other side of the dais and clasps his hands together in prayer, a traditional gesture representing faith. The connection between Indulgences and the release of souls from Purgatory is made explicit by the presence of angels pulling souls upwards on the painting’s left side. As in The Giving of Alms and The Celebration of the Mass, the perspective scheme here is directed primarily towards a viewer walking along the room’s central axis from west to east. In this case, however, the scene is also oriented towards the building’s primary ceremonial entrance at the room’s south side. The enthroned Pope and the Cardinal seem to turn towards the main entrance from which confratelli would depart for processions, and the Indulgences in the Pope’s hand are extended towards to those entering through this door.

Purgatory in Italian Art

The Virgin Mary was widely believed to be the most effective intercessor for souls in Purgatory. Thus, when Purgatory is represented in sixteenth and

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end of the Council of Trent, and in 1567 he sought to addressing continuing abuse in the practice of Indulgences by outlawing those granted as a part of financial exchange (Bullarium Romanum 7:536). To the extent that it is based on likeness, the identification is unconvincing, for Palma’s pope does not particularly resemble known portraits of Pius V. However, his attribute of the Rosary would be consistent with Pius’s Marian devotion and his institution of the Feast of the Rosary to commemorate the victory of the Holy League at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. On Pius V, see Nicole Lemaître, “Pius V,” in The Papacy: An Encyclopedia, ed. Philippe Levillain (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), and Michael A. Mullett, The Catholic Reformation (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 113-119. On Pius V’s position on Indulgences, see P.F. Palmer and G.A. Tavard, "Indulgences," in New Catholic Encyclopedia (Detroit and Washington, DC: Thomson/Gale and the Catholic University of America, 2003), 439.

165 According to Book I of the Bologna Comforter’s Manual, upon arrival in the heavenly court, the soul will encounter the Virgin Mary enveloped in divine light. "And crowned by the twelfth star, she is so close to God that no one can distinguish between her and God... She is the advocate of us all before her only begotten son, and every grace she asks from him she gladly obtains. She is so full of pity and clemency for us children of sad Eve, driven out of the heavenly kingdom and trapped in this valley of tears and wretchedness. She is the one who brings deep compassion to all the troubled and unfortunate. He who goes to her, devoutly invoking her, she does not let perish or go to perdition."

seventeenth-century art, it often appears in altarpieces produced for churches and chapels dedicated to the Virgin.\footnote{After Trent, and particularly in the seventeenth century, images of Purgatory became more common in the visual arts of Catholic countries, especially with the spread of confraternities specifically dedicated to helping the souls of the dead through prayer. See Male, \textit{L'art religieux}, 58-65.} Especially in the later sixteenth century, such altarpieces tend to emphasize the Virgin’s intercessory role as she appeals to a judging Christ.\footnote{The development of the iconography of the Madonna of Purgatory in southern Italian altarpieces is explored at length in Pierroberto Scaramella’s \textit{Le Madonne del Purgatorio: Iconografia e religione in Campania tra rinascimento e controriforma} (Genoa: Marietti, 1991). Scaramella shows that initially the \textit{Madonna lactans} was particularly associated with the concept of Mary’s love and charity towards those in Purgatory; later, the iconography shifted to emphasize Mary’s role as intercessor to Christ.} One image in this mode is the altarpiece of the Cappella Grimini at the Church of S. Nicolò dei Tolentini (Fig. 4.30).\footnote{On the date of the paintings in the Cappella Grimani, see note 78 above. A closely related altarpiece, attributed to Palma Giovane, is now in the Museo di S. Francesco a Folloni in the southern Italian town of Montella (Campania). See Antonia D’Aniello, \textit{S. Francesco a Folloni, il Convento e il Museo} (Salerno: Pietro Laveglia Editore, 1983), 98-101; Pietro Amato, ed. \textit{Imago Mariae: tesori d’arte della civiltà cristiana} (Roma (Rome): Mondadori, 1988), 138; and Scaramella, \textit{Le Madonne del Purgatorio}, 219 and Fig. 290. Little research has been done on this work, and its date and provenance are uncertain. It is not listed in Stefania Mason’s 1984 monograph on the artist. While it came to the Museo di S. Francesco a Folloni from the Church of S. Nicola in Volturara, no documents relating to the commission are known. Based on stylistic affinities with Palma’s Venetian works, d’Aniello dates the altarpiece to the late sixteenth century, and in any event to the period after Palma had left Rome for Venice; she suggests that it may have been donated by Mons. Giovanni Acquaviva, Bishop of Nusco, who was responsible for renovations to the church and who made other donations of art from his family’s collection in the late nineteenth century. D’Aniello, \textit{S. Francesco a Folloni}, 99, 101. Instead, Scaramella notes that the theme of the Virgin as intercessor for souls in Purgatory was widespread in religious painting in Campania, and implicitly suggests that the altarpiece was commissioned for the church in Volturara; he dates the painting to 1573. Scaramella, \textit{Le Madonne del Purgatorio}, 219 and Fig. 290. However, the only source he cites is d’Aniello’s catalogue entry.} At the bottom of the picture plane, souls are carried out of the purgatorial fire by angels. Above them, a group of cherubim peer curiously through a break in the clouds at the goings-on below. To the viewer’s left, the Virgin crosses her arms over her chest and looks upwards towards Christ. Opposite her, St. Peter holds in his right hand the keys that symbolize his authority as Christ’s earthly representative and that give him and all subsequent popes the power to save and to damn.\footnote{Matthew 16:19: “And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.”} With his left hand, he gestures towards the souls below. Holding the Cross, Christ looks down past the keys to the souls, as if heeding the calls of Mary and Peter to help ease their suffering. Thus, the figures in Palma’s painting are engaged in a complex exchange of glances and gestures that eloquently communicate contemporary beliefs about Purgatory, the roles of the saints, and Papal authority in the wake of Protestant challenges. While the themes of almsgiving, Indulgences, and the Mass are reprised in the coffered barrel vault of the Cappella Grimani (Figs. 4.31), the altarpiece alerts us to an important shift in emphasis between this cycle and the Purgatory Cycle of the Scuola di S. Fantin. Most notably, while released souls dominate half of each canvas in the
axial scenes at S. Fantin, they are not present in any of the Tolentini vault paintings. Instead, Purgatory and its sufferers appear only in the altarpiece (Fig. 4.30).\textsuperscript{170} The inclusion of St. Peter inflects the cycle’s meaning more firmly towards a celebration of papal authority. Ridolfi’s description of the Cappella Grimini altarpiece confirms that the emphasis here is on the power granted by Christ to the Pope through the Petrine Succession:

In the Tolentini, in the Chapel of the House of Grimani, we admire the Savior, with his mother and St. Peter with the keys in hand that denote the power conceded by the Savior, and below [we see] the souls in Purgatory, who are liberated by virtue of his authority. And also represented in the vault is the Pontiff who gives briefs of Indulgence for masses and for other pious works that one does for the souls of the dead that are represented in the other two spaces.\textsuperscript{171}

Papal power is, of course, acknowledged in the S. Fantin cycle, most explicitly in the Grant of Indulgences, but at the Scuola the direct connection in each canvas between individual charity and the release of souls underscores the importance of good works on the part of the living.

Among the remarkable events in the life of St. Nicholas of Tolentino is an account of his vision of souls in Purgatory, in which he celebrates the Office of the Dead and succeeds in liberating them.\textsuperscript{172} The reprisal of the themes of S. Fantin’s Purgatory Cycle in the Cappella Grimani probably stems from the desire to recognize Saint Nicholas’ mercy towards souls in Purgatory in the church dedicated to him. But the Grimani Chapel itself is dedicated to the Virgin, and two large scenes of her life occupy the chapel’s side walls. The Virgin does not appear in the ceiling decoration of the Oratory at S. Fantin.\textsuperscript{173} Still, the Scuola’s devotion to the Virgin Mary was surely a motivating factor in selecting Purgatory as the theme for the program of the Oratory’s ceiling. The Feast of the Virgin’s Assumption, celebrated on August 15, was an important feast day for the confraternity.\textsuperscript{174} Moreover, the Feast of the Assumption was a celebration of particular relevance to Purgatory, for many souls were believed to be liberated on that day.\textsuperscript{175} The dedication of the Scuola di S.

\textsuperscript{170}The altarpiece is flanked by paintings of Sibyls, and scenes from the life of the Virgin - the Annunciation and the Visitation - grace the walls on either side of the chapel.

\textsuperscript{171}Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, II: 185. [”Ammiriamo appresso ne’ Tolentini nella Cappella di Casa Grimana il Salvatore, con la Madre sa, e S. Pietro con le chiavi in mano, per dinotare la potestà concedutagli dallo stesso Salvatore, e sotto le anime del Purgatorio, che vengono liberate in virtù della di lui autorità.”]

\textsuperscript{172}Razzi, Giardino d’esempi, overo Fiori delle Vite de i Santi; Dal R.P.M. Serafino Razzi, Teologo Dominicano. Ristampato con aggiunta di Cento cinquanta Essempi, scritti dal medesimo Autorie., 110-111; Venetano, Prato fiorito, 255-256.

\textsuperscript{173}However, two small statuettes of Mary and John the Evangelist stood at the foot of the Cross on the Crucifix altar. See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{174}ASV, Scuola Grande di S, Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Obblighi e incombi delle cariche, Fontioni, Giorno dell’Assunta della B.V.M.

\textsuperscript{175}Gelsomini, Tesoro celeste, 153-154. See also Warner, Alone of All Her Sex, 315-331; and Balass, "Angels’ Chapel ",: 182-186.
Fantin to the Virgin is commemorated in multiple artworks in the meeting house. The grandest of these was, of course, Palma's own Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin on the ceiling of the Albergo Grande, the room directly above the Oratory. As Ivanoff accurately observes, together the ceilings of the Oratory and the Albergo Grande would have formed a compelling visualization of the path of the blessed from Purgatory below to Heaven above. The arrangement of the two ceilings, and their thematic connection, suggests that the confraternity conceived of the building's decorative program holistically as well as by individual room.

The Date of the Cycle

Parts of the Purgatory Cycle were finished and in place no later than 1603, when Giovanni Stringa completed the text of his 1604 edition of Sansovino’s Venetia Città Nobilissima. Stringa describes the ceiling as follows:

The ceiling, then, is also very gracefully worked. It is faux ebony, and almost all of it is gilded. It is formed in a lovely manner of various coffers, large and small. In the large ones, one sees the punishments which the souls of faithful Christians suffer in the place of Purgatory, painted in various poses by the hand of Palma. In the small ones are twelve doctors of the Holy Church. These are the four principal ones, St. Gregory, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine in the middle; and on one end, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. John Chrysostom, and on the other St. Bernard, St. Bede, St. Hilary, and St. Anselm, all of whom wrote optimally on these punishments.

In this passage - the earliest known textual description of the ceiling - Stringa does not mention the three large axial canvases, The Giving of Alms, The Celebration of the Mass, and The Grant of Indulgences. However, he does take care to identify individually each of the twelve Doctors of the Church. The opposite is true in the 1663 edition of Sansovino’s text, this time edited and expanded by Giustiniano Martinioni:

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176 Ivanoff, "Il ciclo pittorico," 69. Ivanoff suggests that the plan to represent the theme of Purgatory on the ceiling of the Oratory existed by 1584, when Palma’s ceiling painting of The Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin was completed. However, there is no documentary evidence to support this.

177 As noted by Schulz, the publication date of the Stringa edition of Sansovino is 1604, but the dedication is dated 1603. Schulz, Venetian Painted Ceilings, 62. Therefore, he assigns a date of between 1600 and 1603 for the Purgatory Cycle on the basis that it was completed when Stringa saw it in 1603. Schulz, Venetian Painted Ceilings, 82-83 and n. 84.

178 Sansovino and Stringa, Venetia città nobilissima (1604), 92r. ["Il soffitto passia è anch'egli vaghissimamente lavorato; egli è finto d'ebano, & è quasi tutto in bella maniera indorato; forma egli diversi vani, e grandi, e piccoli in bel modo; ne i grandi dipinte in varie maniere si veggono di mano del Palma le pene, che patiscono nel luogo del Purgatorio le anime dei i fedeli Christiani; & nei piccoli dodici Dottori di Santa Chiesa; cioè I Quattro principali S. Gregorio, S. Girolamo, Sant’Ambrogio, e S. Agostino nel mezzo; & da un de I capi, Sant’Atanagio, S. Basilio, S. Gregorio Nazianzeno, & S. Giovanni Grisostomo; e dall’altro S. Bernardo, S. Beda, S. Hilario, e Sant’Anselmo, i quail hanno di queste penne scritto ottimamente."]
In the very well-designed scaffolding, coffered with faux ebony and gold, Palma painted three types of suffrages that work primarily to relieve souls in Purgatory: the celebration of the Mass, Indulgences granted by the sovereign pontiff, and almsgiving, that one does for the souls of the defunct, by virtue of which they are liberated; and many souls being purged in the flames. In the smaller spaces he portrayed twelve Doctors of the Church, the four principal ones and the other Greek and Latin ones, all of whom wrote on that subject.179

Martinioni’s approach - specifying the subjects of the three axial canvases but leaving the saints’ names unmentioned - is taken by all other seventeenth century commentators, including Carlo Ridolfi in 1648180 and Marco Boschini in 1674.181 The absence of any mention of the three central images in Stringa’s 1604 publication is a noteworthy anomaly. In contrast with other scholars, I propose that these canvases may have been unfinished when the text was written.182 If so, then the cycle was begun around August 1600, when the funds were allocated, and completed only after Stringa’s text was prepared sometime around 1603. The six canvases representing the saints and the four large scenes of souls in Purgatory were completed before the three central scenes. According to this hypothesis, the cycle was completed within three years of the imposition of the Interdict of 1606-1607, the culminating event in the tensions between Venice and the Papacy that had been building over the previous two decades.

179 Sansovino and Martinioni, Venetia città nobilissima (1663), 136. ["Nel palco benissimo disegnato, e compartito finto di Ebano con Oro, fece il Palma tre sorti di Suffragi, che apportano principalmente sollievo alle Anime del purgatorio: Il celebrar delle Messe; l’Indulgenze concedute dal Sommo Pontefice alle Corone; & l’Elemosine, che si fanno per l’anime di Defonti, in virtù di che vengono liberate; con molte anime purganti nelle fiamme. Entro i spatii minori ritrasse dodici Dottori della Chiesa, i quattro principali, e gli altri Greci, e Latini, quali tutti scrissero sopra tale materia.”]

180 Ridolfi, Maraviglie dell’arte, 188: “Let us also consider in the [meeting house of] the Compagnia della Giustizia on the ceiling at the ground floor three kinds of suffrages for the relief of souls in Purgatory: the celebration of the Mass, Indulgences granted by the crown of the highest Pontiff, and almsgiving, which one does for the souls of these dead people, by virtue of which they are liberated. [There are also] Doctors of the Church and other Holy Fathers situated in the surrounding spaces who wrote on this subject, and many souls being purged in the flames.” ["Consideriamo parimente nella Compagnia della Giustitia nel soffitto della parte terrena tre sorte di suffragi, per sollievo delle anime del Purgatorio: Il celebrar delle Messe; l’indulgenze concedute alle corone dal sommo Pontefice, e l’elemosine, che si fanno per le anime de i medesimi defonti, in virtù di che vengono liberate. I Dottori della Chiesa & altri Santi Padri situati ne’ spati intorno, che scrissero sopra tale materia, e molti purganti nelle fiamme...”].

181 Boschini, Minere (1674), 97-98: “On the ceiling, there are thirteen pictures by Palma, which represent suffrages for souls in Purgatory, which are the celebration of the mass, almsgiving, and Indulgences granted by the Crown; by virtue of which they are freed from these punishments. And in others of the said coffers, there are other holy Fathers, and Doctors, who have written on this matter.” ["Nel soffitto, vi sono quadri tredici del Palma, ne quali si contengono i suffragi dell’anime del Purgatorio, cioè il celebrar delle Messe, l’Elemosine, e l’Indulgenze concedute alle Corone; in virtù di che si liberano di quelle pene: e più ne’ detti comparti, vi sono altri Santi Padri, e Dottori, che in tal materia hanno scritto.”]

182 See, for instance, Ivanoff and Zampetti, Jacopo Negretti, 590-591, suggesting that they were completed around 1600, and that Stringa saw the cycle soon after its completion.
Conclusion: Orthodoxy and Confraternal Ideology in the Oratory of S. Fantin

The confraternity’s decision to destroy the existing ceiling cycle by Tintoretto only a few decades after its creation has been the subject of some scholarly speculation. It has been argued, for instance, that the room’s decorative program was damaged during the expansion of the building of the 1580s, or that the dimensions of the room were changed significantly, rendering the existing ceiling paintings unsuitable. Neither hypothesis seems plausible, since they would require that the Scuola waited over fifteen years after the renovations to replace an ill-fitting or damaged ceiling in its most visible room.

If we consider the style and content of the decorative program commissioned in the first decade of the 1600s, it seems more likely that the driving force behind the change was spiritual rather than structural. In other words, the devout members of the Scuola wanted a chapel that was more modern and up-to-date, both aesthetically and theologically. As we have already seen, the effects of the Tridentine decrees, especially after the Apostolic visit in 1581 and subsequent pastoral inspections of confraternities, included a renewed artistic focus on the grandeur of altars and a growing preference for Christocentric and Eucharistic themes in chapels; and images which helped to subvert the Protestant attacks on Catholic doctrines were growing in popularity. With its two grand stone altars, Palma’s Purgatory Cycle on the ceiling, and Corona’s Passion Cycle on the walls, the Oratory was transformed. Its new program was a cohesive celebration of post-Tridentine orthodoxy.

But at the same time, Palma’s ceiling program celebrated a mode of active and externally-focused devotion that was particularly meaningful in the Venetian confraternal setting. These two themes - the meticulous support of Tridentine theology and the celebration of active Venetian confraternal spirituality - are brilliantly merged in Palma’s ceiling. The venezianità of the Purgatory Cycle is perhaps best illustrated when the program is considered in light of a major Roman commission from the previous decade that deals with similar themes: the Angels’ Chapel in the Church of the Gesù in Rome. The Angels’ Chapel was decorated between 1594 and 1600 by Federico Zuccaro. The key message of the program, which unites the wall and dome frescoes as well as the chapel’s altarpiece, is the intercessory role of angels in the salvation of humankind, a concept that was extremely important to the chapel’s Jesuit programmers. On the wall to the left of the altar is a scene of Angels Freeing Souls from Purgatory (Fig. 4.36). In the fresco, Christ is seated on a cloud with his arms outstretched to display the wounds on his

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183 Traverso, *La Scuola di San Fantin*, 106

palms. To his right, Mary gestures downwards towards souls in the purgatorial fire. Two angels look to Christ, while others reach down to grasp at the liberated souls and pull them upwards to Heaven. On the opposite wall, in thematic counterpoint, is a scene of the rebel angels falling towards the flames of hell, vanquished by the Archangel Michael. The dome above is decorated with a scene of The Assumption of the Virgin (Fig. 4.37). Mary, seated on a cloud and silhouetted against a starburst, is lifted towards the Trinity. In anticipation of her coronation as the Queen of Heaven, Christ and God the Father hold a crown between them, and angels celebrate joyfully around them. In a recent article on the Angels’ Chapel, Golda Balass argues persuasively that the impending Jubilee of 1600 was a key factor in the commission.\textsuperscript{185}

Palma Giovane spent the better part of eight years, from 1567 to 1573 or 1574, in Rome, where he was heavily influenced by the work of Taddeo and Federico Zuccaro.\textsuperscript{186} While he departed from Rome long before the Angels’ Chapel was commissioned, one wonders whether he or his patrons at S. Fantin were inspired in their choice of the Purgatory theme by Zuccaro’s frescoes in the Gesù. But the emphasis of the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin differs in important ways from the theme of the Angels’ Chapel. The program at the Gesù, as in Palma’s altarpiece for the Grimani Chapel at the Tolentini, focuses on divine intercession; the images emphasize the ability of the Virgin, the saints, and the ranks of angels to alleviate the suffering of souls in Purgatory. By contrast, in the Purgatory Cycle at S. Fantin, the emphasis of the dynamic narrative paintings is on human intervention rather than divine intercession. In other words, the program of the Oratory ceiling focuses on what the living can do to alleviate the suffering of their own souls and the souls of the dead. This is not to say that the Purgatory Cycle undermined or negated the belief in divine intercession; on the contrary, the prayers of the living were meant to stimulate and encourage divine intervention on behalf of souls. But more so than the frescoes of the Angels’ Chapel or the decorative program of the Grimani Chapel, the Purgatory Cycle emphasizes and makes visible the salutary effects of human actions. This focus was perfectly tailored to Palma’s confraternal patron, an institution founded on the principle that the laity should take direct part in ensuring their own salvation.

I have suggested here that the room’s program was conceived and executed in the years leading up to the Venetian Interdict of 1606-1607. During the Interdict, Venice observed religious holidays with particular diligence, restricted more raucous celebrations, and gave exceptionally lavish form to traditional festivals commemorating Venice’s divine authority and power.\textsuperscript{187} Cardinal Roberto Bellarino suspected that this show of piety was insincere, and complained to one correspondent that “many Venetians who before had rarely attended mass now went daily, merely to show their contempt for the pope.”\textsuperscript{188} From the Venetian point

\textsuperscript{185} Balass, “Angels’ Chapel”, 182
\textsuperscript{186} Mason Rinaldi, Palma il Giovane, 10-11
\textsuperscript{187} On the Corpus Cristi procession of 1606, see Muir, Civic Ritual, 227-230.
\textsuperscript{188} Bouwsma, Venice, 388-389
of view, the religious devotion expressed during the Interdict was neither false nor new, but rather, consistent with its constant devotion to the Catholic faith. So close in time to the Interdict, the Purgatory Cycle demonstrates that on religious matters, the concerns of the lay confratelli of the Scuola di S. Fantin were very much in line with the Church’s position on important doctrinal points, including the Pope’s authority to grant Indulgences that might alleviate the suffering of the souls of the dead. Built and decorated in an age punctuated by outbreaks of intense conflict between Venice and the Papacy, the Oratory of S. Fantin proved that its Venetian patrons were indeed as Catholic as Rome. The intense focus on the body of Christ as the path to salvation, the explicit rendering of each step on the road to Calvary, and the extreme didacticism of the cycle on the contested doctrine of Purgatory, all contributed to the creation of a sacred space that was perfectly in tune with contemporary spiritual and political concerns.
Appendix A. Timeline of Key Events in the History of the Scuola di S. Fantin

1369 The Scuola di S. Girolamo receives a bequest from Nicoletto Rosso de San Greguol. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 20, fol. 2r; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 37, reg. Libro di tanse e decime, Inventario di carte)

1411 According to the copy of the Libro dei giustiziati produced by the Scuola di S. Fantin in 1806, the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia is authorized to accompany the condemned by the Council of Ten on December 15, 1411. (BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 5v)

1440 The Council of Ten authorizes the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia to provide spiritual assistance and comfort to men and women condemned to public execution. (Record transcribed in Cornellio, 1749, Ecclesiae venetae, 332).

1443 The Council of Ten authorizes the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia "apud ecclesiam Sancti Fantini de Venetis" to accompany and bury the condemned who are executed in Piazza S. Marco. (ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, Reg. 12, fol. 140; also transcribed in Cornellio, 1749, Ecclesiae venetae, 333)

1445 The Council of Ten renews its authorization for the Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia to provide comfort to the condemned. (ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, Reg. 13, fol. 4; also transcribed in Cornellio, 1749, Ecclesiae venetae, 333-34)

1458 The Scuola di S. Maria della Giustizia and the Scuola di S. Girolamo are authorized to merge into a single confraternity. (Transcribed in Cornellio, 1749, Ecclesiae venetae, 332)

1471 The confratelli of the merged confraternity receive permission to build an independent site and chapel ornamented with an altarpiece "in honor of the glorious Virgin St. Mary". (ASV, Cons. X, Misti, 1466-1472, fol. 140v)

1489 For the first time, the Council of Ten assigns to the Scuola five percent of the bando, or bounty, normally given to whoever captures or turns in escaped convicts in capital cases. This decree is to be periodically renewed throughout the Scuola’s existence. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 26r)

1531 Marin Sanudo notes that the Scuola is raising money for the construction of a new site since the existing one was "old and ruined". (Sanudo, 1879-1903, Diarii, 24: 618)

1533 The Scuola is placed under the direct oversight and protection of the Council of Ten. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 26v; also transcribed in Cornellio, 1749, Ecclesiae venetae, 337)
1542 The Council of Ten intervenes in a dispute between the Piovan of the church of S. Fantin and the Scuola regarding the ringing of bells and celebration of Mass in the Oratory. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 26v-27r)

1560 The Scuola acquires property on the Campo San Fantin from Lorenzo Loredan. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 34, Acquisti, fol. 1)

1562 On February 15, 1562 [m.v.], a fire destroys the meeting house of the Scuola. (BSR AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati, fol. 6r)

1569 The Scuola and the parish priest of the Church of S. Fantin engage in a dispute regarding public access to the Oratory, whose altar houses an image of "that blessed Christ of this Scuola"; this is most likely a reference to the Scuola's portable fifteenth-century wooden crucifix. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 25r)

1580 The Scuola records the purchase of two properties from Andrea Malipiero and another from Paola Donati. The properties are leveled in anticipation of new construction. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 87v and 93v-94r; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Catastico, fols. 1r-2r)

1583 - 1584 Alessandro Vittoria makes a series of payments to several assistants for work on the crowning sculptures of the Scuola’s facade. (ASV, S. Zaccaria, Reg. 18, Commissaria Vittoria Vol. 1, fol. 89v; also transcribed in Avery, 1999, Documenti, 132-33)

1584 Publication of Raffaello Borghini’s Il Riposo (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1584) which records that Palma il Giovane was working on a scene of the Assumption of the Virgin for the Scuola.

1585 The Scuola makes arrangements with Ser Nicolò Balbi, owner of neighboring property, for passage across his property to reach the Rio della Verona. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Scola Nostra, fol. 85r)

1588 A receipt dated March 10, 1588 is signed by Palma "quondam Antonii", among the Scuola’s records. (Pavanello, Scuola, 42 n. 1, citing ASV Scuola di S. Maria della Consolazione, B. 21, fol. 11.; original record could not be located).

1592 Members of the Scuola are admonished and threatened with expulsion for removing their cappe outside the Scuola’s meeting house and comporting themselves irreverently in boats along the route of the execution procession. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 35v)
1598 Cesare Vecellio mentions the Scuola and includes a print of the Guardian Grande in processional attire in his *Habiti antichi et moderni* (Venice: I Sessa, 1598).

1599 Noting that certain of its rental properties in the Campo S. Fantin are in poor condition, the Scuola decides to demolish them and rebuild. Antonio Contin wins the commission; Alessandro Vittoria assists the Scuola in choosing the model. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), Parte, fols. 1r, 4r)

1600 After Antonio Contin's death, his brother Tommaso is appointed *proto* of the construction of its rental houses on the Campo S. Fantin. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Parti, fol. 6r). The date "MDC" is also inscribed on the coffers of the Oratory ceiling.

1604 Giovanni Stringa publishes his updated edition of Sansovino's *Venetia città nobilissima* (Venice: Altobello Salicato, 1604), describing the Oratory in detail. In his remarks on the ceiling, he does not mention the three large axial canvases.

1611 The Scuola requests and receives permission to process after the *scuole grandi* to San Marco on the night of Holy Thursday to visit the relic of the Holy Blood. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 38v)

1613 The Scuola aggregates with the Roman comforting confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, 168v-170v)

1614 The Scuola deems its charity towards the condemned "imperfect" and decides to take on the responsibility for burial of their corpses; it institutes eight new paid positions specifically to fulfill the tasks associated with burial of the condemned. The Scuola pays ten *scudi* to the Hermits of St. Jerome of Fiesole on the Isola di S. Maria della Grazie in exchange for the right to build a chapel in which "to place the intestines and heads of the condemned"; a further thirty *scudi* are allotted for the construction of the chapel. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Compendio, fols. 83r-v; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 40v-41r)

1616 The Scuola votes to halt the construction of rental houses until its dispute with Alvise Bon over water access on the Rio della Verona is resolved. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 3, Capitolare A (1599-1620), Parte III fol. 52)

1622 The Scuola records the purchase of three "mezadi" and two "magazeni sotto con corte descoperta et il comodo della riva" from Nicolò Balbi. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 40-41)
The Scuola records the purchase of the house above the property acquired from Balbi in the previous year. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Catastico, fols. 43-45)

A description of the Scuola is published in Carlo Ridolfi’s *Meraviglie d’Arte* (Venice: Sgava, 1648, facsimile edition 1965). The Scuola determines that it should no longer lend out its venerable collection of silver. ([ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 59r])

The Scuola admonishes members for unseemly behavior in processions. ([ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 55r])

The Chapter dedicates two thousand ducats to the construction of the New Sacristy and the Albergo Piccolo. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 95r, July 13, 1664 and January 23, 1664 [m.v.])

Five hundred more ducats are dedicated to the construction of the new rooms of the Scuola’s meeting house. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 95r)

Wooden benches, shutters, and other items are ordered for the new rooms of the Scuola’s meeting house. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 95v)

Members of the banca commission an *Expulsion of the Moneychangers from the Temple* from Antonio Zanchi. They subsequently petition the Council of Ten to decree that the painting can never be removed from the New Sacristy. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 61r-61v; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Quadri, 127v-128r)

Antonio Zanchi is commissioned to execute two scenes of parables to be placed above the doors of the Oratory. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 127v)

The Council of Ten grants the Scuola precedence in the funerals of members who are also members of other small scuole. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 63v-r)

Antonio Zanchi is commissioned to paint a *Last Judgment* for the ceiling of the Albergo Piccolo. The Scuola authorizes six hundred ducats to be spent to complete the decoration of that room. The Scuola also authorizes the commissioning of two more paintings, scenes of St. Jerome, by a "celebrated painter" (Zanchi), to be placed above the doors of the Albergo Grande. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 95v, 96r, and 127v)
1674 Antonio Zanchi is paid an additional three hundred ducats for work in the Albergo Piccolo. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 127v)

1689 The Council of Ten affirms that the Scuola di S. Fantin is a scuola grande. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fol. 72v. Note, however, that the Scuola’s status appears to be ambiguous in later records.)

1695 The Scuola acquires paintings of the prophets David and Isaiah, to be placed in the New Sacristy flanking Zanchi’s Expulsion from the Temple. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Pitture diverse; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione. Capitolar D (1690-1738), fol. 7 (previously filed as ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Teodoro, b. 11))

1699 The Scuola declines an invitation from the Archconfraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato to come to Rome to celebrate the Jubilee Year, citing its obligations to the Council of X. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), 72v-73r)

1724 The Scuola again declines an invitation from the Archconfraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato to come to Rome, citing its obligations to assist the condemned. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), 74r-75r)

1731 Pope Clement XII issues a plenary indulgence for contrition in front of the Scuola’s wooden processional crucifix. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 76v-78r)

1749 - 1758 Records of the Scuola’s early history are transcribed in Flaminio Corner’s Ecclesiae venetae (Cornellio, Venice: Jo. Baptistae Pasquali, 1749). The records are summarized in the vernacular in his Notizie storiche delle chiese e monasteri di Venezia (Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1758).

1778 Publication of Tommaso Temanza’s Vite dei più celebri architetti, e scultori veneziani (Venice: C. Palese, 1778). Temanza is the first writer to associate Vittoria with the meeting house’s design.

1786 The Scuola produces an inventory of the contents of the meeting house. (ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786))

1806 The Scuola’s degano Angelo Maria Bianchi produces an updated copy of the Scuola's Libro dei giustiziati, also recording some of the important dates in the Scuola’s history. (BSR, AM Bianchi ms. 8, Registro di Giustiziati)

1808 After the Scuola’s suppression, a new inventory is compiled to record those items still remaining in the building. (ASV, R. Demanio, fasc. IV, b. 315. This record is missing from the Archivio di Stato, but the
Ateneo Veneto possesses a legible photograph of the document. See Appendix E herein.)

1812 The building is given over to the Veneta Società di Medicina, and then to the Ateneo Veneto. (Pavanello, La Scuola di S. Fantin, 66)

1826 The ceiling of the upper hall of the Scuola is damaged by the collapse of an altana on the roof, and rainwater badly damages Palma's *Assumption of the Virgin*, leading to its removal. (Pavanello, La Scuola di S. Fantin, 73-74)

1841 A fire started by a lighting strike damages the former Albergo Grande, necessitating the removal of the remaining paintings from that room. (Pavanello, La Scuola di S. Fantin, 73-74; Moschini, "Dipinti restaurati", 83)
The Scuola di S. Fantin left few contemporary records regarding its artistic commissions in the second half of sixteenth century; most of our evidence comes from the testimony provided in early texts, supported by the methods of connoisseurship. In the case of Tintoretto, Palma, and Leonardo Corona, the attributions and data provided in the earliest texts - Sansovino and his later editors, Ridolfo, and Boschini - are generally supported by stylistic evidence. But the set of paintings on the life of the Virgin are more problematic (Figs. A.1-A.8). The subjects of the paintings are the Visitation, the Adoration of the Magi (dated 1576), the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Flight to Egypt, Christ among the Doctors (dated 1576), the Baptism of Christ, the Death of the Virgin (dated 1576), and the Assumption (dated 1576). Today, all eight paintings are displayed in the reading room of the Ateneo Veneto.

Zampetti considers the Adoration of the Magi, the Flight to Egypt, and the Death of the Virgin to be works by Veronese’s own hand; the Visitation and the Baptism of Christ are deemed workshop productions. Both Zampetti and Traverso argue that the Baptism of Christ differs stylistically from the rest of the cycle. Traverso suggests that the landscape and coloring are not consistent with Veronese’s oeuvre, and argues that the primary artist of this particular canvas was a northerner, perhaps Paolo Fiammingo. Pointing to similarities with other works of Veronese, Zampetti denies that the Antwerp-born Paolo Fiammingo, a follower of Tintoretto who has never been documented in Veronese’s workshop, was involved. However, the canvases are in poor condition, and in the case of the Circumcision the painting has darkened such that it is difficult even to distinguish the figures in the lower left. In 1674 Antonio Zanchi restored and adapted the paintings in anticipation of the move; the extent of his intervention is unclear, and further complicates certain attribution. The display of three episodes (the Circumcision, the Flight to Egypt, and Christ among the Doctors) in a single frame is probably the result of Zanchi’s intervention. In the nineteenth century, the cycle was spread across various rooms in the building. It was reassembled on a single wall of the former Albergo Grande in the 1970s under the direction of Zampetti. Zampetti had objected to the dispersion of the cycle, arguing that it prevented a clear reading of the work as a unified whole. While this is undoubtedly true, it is unlikely that the current display of the paintings bears resemblance to their configuration at any point during the life of the Scuola.

1 Zampetti, “Restauri dell’Ateneo,” 7-8; and Zampetti, Guida, 88-96. The contributions of Veronese’s workshop are also discussed in Pignatti, Veronese, 1: 211-213.
2 Zampetti, Guida, 94; Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 143
3 Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 143
4 Zampetti, Guida, 94
5 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 96r, May 27, 1674
6 Zampetti, “Restauri dell’Ateneo,” 11
7 Zampetti, “Restauri dell’Ateneo,” 7-8
The paintings are not mentioned in any of the earliest accounts of the building. Four of the scenes are noted and described as the work of Veronese in Giacomo Barri's *Viaggio Pittoresco*, first published in 1671 and inartfully translated into English in an edition of 1679. Three of the four paintings mentioned in the *Painter's Voyage* (the English translation of Barri’s 1671 text) correspond to works that bear an inscribed date of 1576. His account does not specify the subject of the fourth scene, but it seems likely that it was the fourth dated painting, the *Death of the Virgin*. Boschini mentions six, rather than four, scenes, and attributes them all to a follower of Veronese, Alvise dal Friso. In his 1664 edition, the canvases were located in the Old Sacristy, but in 1674 he noted that they were to be moved to the newly constructed Albergo Piccolo, an observation which accords with the Scuola’s own records. According to the 1808 inventory made after the Scuola’s suppression, the cycle consisted of eight canvases displayed above the wainscoting in the Albergo Piccolo.

It is not surprising that the Scuola would have commissioned a cycle commemorating events in the life of the Virgin in the years in which it was reconstructing its meeting house, but it is curious that the earliest descriptions of the room mention only four or six canvases rather than the eight displayed today. Since the Old Sacristy (the room that was destroyed when the New Sacristy was built) was probably of smaller dimensions than the new corpus of rooms, the paintings in the Life of the Virgin Cycle was probably meant to be arranged chronologically along the walls of that room, as was the St. Jerome Cycle in the Albergo Grande. The displacement of the cycle through multiple rooms in the building, the lack of attention paid to them by commentators, and the eventual display of only parts of the cycle suggest that neither the Scuola nor contemporary critics considered them to be of great aesthetic interest. Nonetheless, the paintings were servicable as devotional objects and remained important as a commemoration of one of the confraternity’s patron saints.

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8 Giacomo Barri, *Viaggio pittoresco, in cui si notano distintamente tutte le pitture famose de’ più celebri pittori, che si conservano in qualsivoglia citta dell'Italia. Descritto da Giacomo Barri, pittore in Venezia* (Venice: Gio. Giacomo Herz, 1671), 46; and Giacomo Barri, *The painters voyage of Italy in which all the famous paintings of the most eminent masters are particularised, as they are preserved in the several cities of Italy*, trans. Gent W.L. of Lincolns-Inne (London: Tho. Flesher, 1679), 55 ["The School of S. Girolamo, near to the Church of S. Fantino. Look down upon a Bench, and you will see a Square of Tintoret’s, with the miracle of S. Girolamo. You also see four Squares of Paolo Veronese. One is the coming of the Wise men. Another is the Disputation with the Doctors. The third is the Assumption of the B. Virgin. And a fourth follows. There is above, a most beautiful Picture of the B. Virgin, and S. Girolamo, by the hand of Tintoret."


10 The inventory’s compiler, Giuseppe Baldassini, attributes the canvases to various artists. See Appendix E for a translation of the inventory.
Appendix C. Decoration after 1605

The Scuola di S. Fantin continued to commission artworks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The completion of the minor corpus of rooms, the New Sacristy and the Albergo Piccolo, spurred a decorative campaign that resulted in some of most innovative works commissioned by the confraternity. This Appendix briefly discusses the major commissions undertaken in the last two centuries of the Scuola’s existence.

In 1667, the Scuola’s Guardian Grande, Pietro Crescenzi, and other members of the banca commissioned a large painting at their own expense from Antonio Zanchi. Zanchi, born in Este in 1631, had been working in Venice since his early teens, and was described in the 1663 edition of Venetia Città Nobilissima as a painter who was rising rapidly in Venice’s artistic milieu. In 1666, he had completed his best-known works, two huge canvases depicting the 1630 plague which had ravaged the city, for the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco. The subject chosen for the S. Fantin commission, drawn from the Gospels, was Christ’s expulsion of the moneychangers from the Temple, and the painting was to hang in the New Sacristy. The resultant painting is a little-seen masterpiece and an extraordinary example of the brilliant color, dramatic lighting, and dynamism which characterize Venetian painting in the seventeenth century (Fig. A.9). In the foreground, an energetic Christ leaps into the midst of the profaners who have desecrated the house of God. As he leans forward, his body forms a powerful diagonal and his head is positioned on the central vertical axis of the canvas. Around him, sinners are captured mid-flight amidst the implements of their iniquity, arranged along the temple floor as if in a tableau vivant staged for the viewer’s inspection. As is recounted in John 2:14, Christ holds a "scourge of little cords" in his raised right hand. Although he touches no one, the terrified crowd falls away from him as if propelled by an invisible wave of divine power and wrath. Layers of monumental architecture, distinguished from one another by the artist’s careful handling of light and by atmospheric perspective, contribute to the stage-like quality of the setting. In the foreground, a strong raking light from the left side of the canvas accentuates the scene’s powerful rightward momentum and selectively illuminates details from the deep surrounding shadows. This dramatic lighting singles out the determined expression on Christ’s face and the shock and terror of those around him, and highlights the bright hues of the clothes worn by the various figures. The sinners on the left are silhouetted against a

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2 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 61r-61v, May 25, 1667; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Quadri, 127v-128r, July 20, 1667

3 See Augusto Gentili et al., Paintings in Venice (Boston, New York, and London: Bulfinch Press, 2002), 366, 378-369. Zampetti (”Restauri dell’Ateneo,” 13) considers the painting to be Zanchi’s most important work.
shadowy wall, and on the right against the bases of massive columns. Christ is set against a background illuminated by a soft, diffuse radiance. The misty light of this zone picks out a pale marble wall, punctuated by two arches, which defines the temple’s boundary, and partially reveals the capital of a Corinthian column. Through the arches, a glimpse of the city is visible against a cloudy sky. Against the muted, fading tones of the middle and background, the stark lighting and precision of the foreground lend it an immediacy and a three-dimensional quality as the scrambling sinners and their wares threaten to spill out of the canvas and into the viewer’s space.

Zanchi goes to great lengths to represent each of the elements described in the Gospel accounts, underscoring the range of sins occurring in the temple. A table for moneychangers is overturned, and the items it bore - a balance, gold and silver coins, papers recording commercial transactions - are scattered across the ground. A group of moneychangers at the right of the painting is the particular focus of Christ’s furious onslaught. A man in a chartreuse vest flings his arms overhead as he is knocked backwards over his companions. Below him, a youth in an embroidered yellow jacket leans over a wooden chest filled with sacks of money; he turns his face back towards Christ, his mouth open in a silent scream. Another moneychanger in an orange tunic tumbles helplessly over a table, his legs flailing, while below him a greedy companion reaches through the broken furniture to grasp a few of the spilled coins. Beyond the moneychangers, silhouetted against the bases of a group of massive columns, a prostitute with bared breasts flees rightward while casting an anguished glance back at Christ. At the left are the merchants, described in the Gospel of John as sellers of doves, oxen, and sheep. A muscular man in a purple loincloth strides leftward, hoisting a basket of birds onto his shoulder as he tries to escape, treading over the yolks of broken eggs oozing across the ground. Further left, other purveyors of livestock attempt to pull their wares - sheep, poultry, a cow - out of harm’s way.

The circumstances surrounding the commission are as extraordinary as the painting itself. When the Expulsion was completed, members of the Banca went before the Council of Ten. They noted that the Scuola had been placed by special privilege under the protection and command of the Council for its meritorious work with the condemned, and called attention to the recent construction of the New Sacristy and Albergo Piccolo. They then proceeded to issue the following request:

Now, most excellent gentlemen, moved by the pure zeal of devotion, I Pietro Crescenti... current Guardian of the Scuola, with my Banca,

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4 According to Matthew 21:12-13: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And he saith to them: It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves." John 2: 13-16: "And the pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew. And to them that sold doves he said: Take these things hence, and make not the house of my Father a house of traffic." See also Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45f.
using only private monies and without any imaginable burden to the Confraternity, have commissioned a painting by the hand of a famous painter of the present time, with a sacred story of our Lord Jesus Christ, [namely] the flagellation of the sacrilegious profaners of the Temple, which should cover the entire wall opposite the door of the aforementioned sacristy. We wish that it remain there in perpetuity for public decorum, not only to stimulate other private individuals to devotion, but also to encourage other such zealous displays. Only devotion has inspired us in this [endeavor], and not the stimulus of vain ambition; indeed, we do not intend that any name or sign of any of us should appear on the painting. But because with time we might worry, given the variety of opinions or through the vicissitudes of human accident, that it could be removed from that site despite our expense, we ask [the Council . . .] to command that once the aforementioned painting is displayed in this site, it can never be removed from there at any time by anyone, and that it must remain in the same place perpetually in honor of the Lord God, and for the decoration and ornament of this Venerable sacristy.  

The Council agreed, and the decision was recorded in the Compendio on July 20, 1667.  

This petition to permanently fix the painting’s location, to my knowledge unprecedented in Venetian art, suggests that Zanchi’s painting must have had enormous personal significance for the officers who had paid for it. The petitioners’ anxiety about contrary opinions recalls those verses of Alessandro Caravia’s scathing poem, Il sogno (1541) in which he laments the infighting and changes of mind that necessitate constant wasteful spending by the scuole grandi:

To tell you the truth, each new board’s intention’s  
To show itself ever so full of inventions:  
By moving the stairs and changing dimensions,  
They make the doors useless; and so interventions  
Breed more interventions, with quarrels incontinent:  
‘So-and-so’s schemes are all highly incompetent,  
And as for old what’s-his-name’ – huffing and puffing,  
They claim to know all, when in fact they know nothing.  

The officers’ insistence that the commission would be "without any name or sign" of the donors on the painting itself indicates a significant shift in attitudes regarding the recognition of donors; in comparison with sixteenth-century commissions like Palma’s Assumption and the St. Jerome Cycle, which included portraits of the

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5 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, Reg. 2, Mariegola (1562-1756), fols. 61r-61v, May 25, 1667  
6 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, Quadri, 127v-128r, July 20, 1667  
7 Il Sogno di Caravia (Venice, 1541), translated in Chambers and Pullan, eds., Venice, 213-216
guardian who had supported the artist, here the donors seem genuinely interested in living the post-Tridentine ideal of selfless and anonymous charity. In accordance with the Council’s decree, the painting does appear to have remained in the New Sacristy at least until the Scuola’s suppression; today it can be seen on the south wall of Sala Tommaseo, formerly the Albergo Piccolo.

Zanchi’s painting must have been deemed satisfactory, for he became the Scuola’s favored painter. In 1671, he executed two scenes to be placed above the doors of the Oratory; these paintings, The Good Samaritan and The Prodigal Son, remain in situ (Figs. A.10, A.11, Diagram 4, a and b). In 1672, the Scuola made a number of requests of Zanchi. He executed two more scenes, now lost, from St. Jerome’s life; these were placed above the room’s two doors (Diagram 3, X and Y). In 1672 and 1673, the Scuola allotted 1,600 ducats to the adornment of the Albergo Piccolo; some portion of this was likely payment for the Last Judgment that Zanchi was producing for the ceiling (Fig. A.12). Zanchi was paid an additional three hundred ducats for work in the Albergo Piccolo a few months later, in May 1674.

Like Palma’s Assumption for the ceiling of the Albergo Grande, Zanchi’s ceiling for the Albergo Piccolo is a single canvas in a heavy gilt frame. As in the Assumption, Zanchi uses dal sotto in su perspective to suggest that the recession of space into an ethereal distance, as if the room opens onto heaven where Christ, the Sun of Justice, awaits. But the effect here is more dramatic and more innovative than it appears to have been in Palma’s Assumption. The figure of the enthroned Christ is oriented so that a viewer who enters from the hall and turns left into the room is facing him. While traditionally scenes of the Last Judgment position the souls of the saved on Christ’s right and those of the damned on Christ’s left, Zanchi has adapted the action to accommodate multiple viewing angles. Most importantly, the action surrounding Christ has been arranged so that the painting can be read meaningfully both by those entering the room and by the banca which presumably sat along the north wall facing south. The gaze of the members of the banca would have been directed towards the large-scale figures who teem in the foreground closest to the door. Falling downwards as if propelled by the trumpet blasts of two angels in the central foreground, these despairing figures will not be saved. Thus, as they presided over the Scuola, the officers would have been reminded of the ultimate consequences of sin. As in the Expulsion of the Moneychangers, Zanchi’s flair for the dramatic is on full display here. The damned are a chaotic mass, lit only by a raking light that picks out individual body parts from an otherwise dark and tangled

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8 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 127v, February 22, 1670 [m.v.]; Boschini, Minere (1674), 99
9 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 127v, March 113, 1672; ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Piture diverse, Nell'albergo grande. The paintings are mentioned in Boschini, Minere (1674), 100; Paoletti, Fiore di Venezia, II: 154, and Zanetti, Della pittura veneziana, 406.
10 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fol. 95v, records of July 10, 1672; Feb. 3, 1673 [m.v.]; and Feb 18, 1673 [m.v.]
11 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 2, Compendio, fols. 96r and 127v, May 27, 1674
confusion. Scattered in the midst of the damned souls are hints of the horrors that await them in hell. A snake-like coil curls around a sprawling leg; a black trident and a monstrous face also emerge from the chaos. The damned cling to one another, but their physical connection suggests their sin rather than their brotherly love. In one case, two men sink their fingers into the thighs and groin of a bare-breasted woman (Fig. A.13); these are the lustful, now grabbing at one another in a futile attempt at self-preservation. The zone of the damned is policed by the personification of Justice (Fig. A.14). She actively monitors the proceedings, stalking the edge of a dark and jagged cloudbank and towering menacingly over the damned.

Opposite her, Christ is seated on the edge of a glowing spherical mass of cherubim; their radiant faces rise above him, forming a dome of golden light. His hand is raised, his fingertips almost grazing the dove of the Holy Spirit at the center of the canvas. Below Christ to his right, Mary kneels on a cloud, her arms outstretched, pleading on behalf of the souls of the faithful. On Christ's left, slightly below Mary, St. Jerome likewise looks up beseeching. In the foreground below Christ and the saints, the blessed wait patiently for their reward as winged angels lift them, one by one, into heaven. Here, too, trumpeting angels announce Christ’s verdict. In the corner, a skeleton sits up in its open coffin; just beyond these earthly remains, a leafy tree sprouts upwards, a sign of the spiritual fertility of the Christian faith. Against the chaos of the edges, closer to the earth, the zone of heaven rises in an increasingly ordered and luminous swirl, culminating in the bright halo of light that surrounds Christ’s head. As the eye moves towards the center of the composition, figures become smaller and seem to fall into place. The entire composition is transversed by criss-crossing diagonals of light that selectively illuminate human and celestial bodies, leading the eye from the zone of the saved, along the bodies of Christ, St. Jerome, and Justice, and into the zone of the damned. While in Ridolfi’s judgment Palma miscalculated the effects of the perspective in the Assumption, Zanchi’s composition overcomes the constraint of the room’s small size with an extreme sense of foreshortening; space recedes sharply towards the center of the ceiling, and the central figure of Christ is tiny in contrast with the souls on whom he passes judgment at the painting’s edges.

In 1695, the Scuola acquired paintings of the prophets David and Isaiah, to be placed in the New Sacristy flanking Zanchi’s Expulsion from the Temple (Fig. A.15). The 1786 inventory describes these as the work of "Armano Stroiffi", disciple of the "Genovese Priest", e.g. Bernardo Strozzi. Based on the quality of execution, Zampetti argues in favor of an attribution to Strozzi rather than his less adept follower Ermanno Stroiffi. He hypothesizes that after Strozzi’s death, Stroiffi may have acquired the paintings from the master’s workshop, from which members of the Scuola purchased them. In any event, both Stroiffi and Strozzi were already dead by 1695. Thus, the paintings are a documented instance of the purchase of works already completed, rather than made specifically for the building.

12 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Pitture diverse
13 Zampetti, Guida, 121-122
By the late Settecento, the New Sacristy also contained a Resurrection of Lazarus by "a Fleming, Armano Zerest" (Fig. A.16); a scene of Christ "liberating a wildman by the hand of Zuanne Segala" (e.g., Giovanni Segala) (Fig. A.17); and above the door, a Feast in the House of Simon Pharisee by "Antonio Fontebasso". This last reference is presumably to Francesco Fontebasso's luxurious Feast that now hangs on the north wall of the Sala Tommaseo, formerly the Albergo Piccolo (Fig. A.18). Veronesesque in its rich coloring, the details of the sumptuous banquet scene (the sideboard loaded with serving ware, the page pouring wine) are inspired by Paolo Veronese's Marriage at Cana for the refectory of the Church of S. Giorgio Maggiore.

The other late major commission for the Scuola, also by Fontabasso, was a ceiling painting of St. Jerome and the Virgin for the ceiling of the New Sacristy (Fig. A.19). Magrini dates both this painting and the Feast in the House of Simon Pharisee to 1745-50. The artist left Venice in 1761; therefore, both paintings must predate that period. At least ten small paintings of the same subject, also attributed to Fontebasso and almost certainly associated with the confraternity, are scattered throughout museums and collections around the world. Like Tintoretto's altarpiece for the Albergo Grande, Fontebasso's St. Jerome and the Virgin envisions an encounter between the Scuola's two patron saints that is not based on textual sources. In contrast with Tintoretto's nocturne, the luminosity and pastel colors of the sky in the ceiling painting are more akin to the heavenly radiance of Palma's Assumption fragment. Although St. Jerome is gray-haired, his body can be described as Herculean in its musculature. Standing on a rocky outcropping, he holds a book in one hand and a rock in the other. His torso is covered only by a drape of cardinalial red, the only reference here to his legendary status as a cardinal. In contrast with Tintoretto's altarpiece St. Jerome and the Virgin (Fig. 3.1), Fontebasso's St. Jerome turns to look not at the heavenly vision above him, but at the crucifix on a rocky outcropping in the distance. Moreover, in all the small devotional paintings associated with this work, the same is true - the saint either gazes at a crucifix, reads from an open book, or is lost in meditative prayer, while the Virgin rises above him; in these latter cases, as in Palma's Assumption for the Albergo Grande ceiling, here we can reasonably speculate that he is reading a passage on the Virgin's ascent to heaven. The saint's focus on reading, praying, or adoring the crucifix suggests the

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14 ASV, Scuola Grande di S. Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventari oggetti della Scuola (1786), Pitture diverse
15 Zampetti, Guida, 70; Traverso, La Scuola di San Fantin, 112. The most recent monograph on Fontebasso's life and career is Marina Magrini, Francesco Fontebasso (1707-1769) (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1988).
16 Magrini, Fontebasso, 187, Cat. Nos. 167, 168
17 Zampetti, Guida, 70
18 On these paintings, see Magrini, Fontebasso, 43 and Cat. Nos. 18, 28, 39, 75, 76, 92, 99, 118, 123, 160, and 222; and Zampetti, Pittori di figura del settecento, Cat. Nos. 153, 154. Given the unusual subject matter, it is reasonable to suppose that these were domestic devotional works owned by confraternity members; the word "degani" is written on the back of an exemplar in the Museo Civico in Padua, raising the possibility that some of them may have been intended for the Scuola's deacons.
intensely personal nature of his visionary experience; fully absorbed in devotion, he seems to be seeing the Virgin in his mind’s eye. This effect is enhanced by the differentiated palette used in the upper and lower zones of the painting. While St. Jerome is sharply defined and executed in rich, saturated colors, the Virgin above him seems muted, as if seen through a layer of atmospheric fog. Dressed in coral-pink and blue, she reaches heavenward and lifts her face to the sky.

The *dal sotto in su* perspective, the posture of the saint’s body, and the upward gaze of the animal companion in the lower right, also evoke the famous ceiling painting of *St. John the Evangelist on the Isle of Patmos* that Titian produced for the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista (Fig. A.20). The reference is highly appropriate, for there too a saint witnessed a heavenly vision. Fontebasso’s painting demonstrates that even in the mid-eighteenth century, the Scuola valued the great Cinquecento tradition in confraternal art, emulating a scene produced for a prestigious *scuola grande* by the most famous of Venetian artists.

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Magrini notes that members of the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco are known to have similarly commissioned small devotional works honoring their patron saint, St. Roch from various artists.
## Appendix D. The Purgatory Cycle: Inscriptions and Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctor of the Church</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Source Text</th>
<th>Quotation or reference in Bellarmine, <em>De purgatorio</em>, Lib. I Cap. X*</th>
<th>Source of Bellarmine’s quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Anselm of Canturbury</td>
<td>ANS._ AD/</td>
<td>Unknown text on Corinthians.</td>
<td>&quot;Anselmus in 1. Corin. 3. Nam de quibusdam levibus culpa esse ante</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1033-1109)</td>
<td>CHORINT</td>
<td></td>
<td>corporum resurrectionem, purgatorius ignis credendum est. Et ibidem</td>
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<td>afferit esse gravissimam pennam.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Hilary of Poitiers</td>
<td>HILAR: IN/</td>
<td>*SANCTI HILARII PICTAVIENSIS EPISCOPI TRACTATUS SUPER PSALMOS. TRACT. PSALMI</td>
<td>&quot;Hilarius in Psalm. 118. in illud: Concupivit anima desiderare iudicia</td>
<td>PL 9:522-523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c. 300 – 368)</td>
<td>PSAL.CXVII</td>
<td>CXVIII. [On Psalm 118] PL 9:500-645.</td>
<td>iustitiae tuae: Nobis, inquit, est ille indefessus ignis obeundus, in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>quo subeunda sunt gravia illa expiendae a peccatis anima supplicia.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Bernard of Clairvaux</td>
<td>BERN:5/</td>
<td><em>IN OBITU DOMNI HUMBERTI, MONACHI CLARAE-VALLensis SERMO</em> [Sermon on the</td>
<td>&quot;Bernardus serm. de obitu Humberti: Volat fratres irrevocabile tempus, &amp;</td>
<td>PL 183:518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1090-1153)</td>
<td>SERMO DE/</td>
<td>Death of Humbert], PL 183:513-518.</td>
<td>dum creditis vos cavere ista pennam minimam, incuritis ampliorem: illud</td>
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<td>OBITV/</td>
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<td>enim scitote, quia post hanc vitam in purgatoris locis centupliciter,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HVMBERTI</td>
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<td>qua fuerint hic neglecta, reddentur usque ad novissimum quadrantem. Scio</td>
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<td>ego quam durum est homini dissoluto apprehendere disciplinam, verboso</td>
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<td>silentium pati, vagari solito stabilem permanere, sed durius, &amp; multo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>durius erit futures molestias tolerare.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venerable Bede</td>
<td>BEDA IN/</td>
<td>Unknown text on Psalm 37.</td>
<td>&quot;Beda in Psalm. 37. Quidam, inquit, committunt quadam peccata venialia</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>(672-735)</td>
<td>PSAL/</td>
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<td>graviara &amp; leviara, &amp; ideo necesse est, ut hi tales in ira corripiantur,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>XXXVII</td>
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<td>id est, in purgatorio igne: nunc interim ante diem iudicii ponantur, ut</td>
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<td>qua in eis immunda sunt, perillum exurantur, &amp; sie tandem idonei esse</td>
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<td>cum his, qui in dextra coronandi sunt, inveniantur.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor of the Church</td>
<td>Inscription</td>
<td>Source Text</td>
<td>Quotation or reference in Bellarmine, <em>De purgatorio</em>, Lib. I Cap. X*</td>
<td>Source of Bellarmine's quotation</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Jerome (c. 347-420)</td>
<td>HIER. IN/ CAP VII/ ______</td>
<td>Unknown commentary or gloss on Chapter 7 of unidentifiable text. Possibly a reference to Jerome's comment on 7 Mich. 9 in his Commentary on Isaiah, Book 18, Ch. 66, Vers. 24, PL 24:676-678</td>
<td>&quot;B. Hieronymus in fine commentarii in Isaiaz: sicut, inquit, Diaboli, &amp; omnium negatorum, atque impiorum, qui dixerint in corde suo, Non est Deus, credimus aeterna tormenta sit peccatorum atque impiorum, &amp; tamen Christianorum, quorum opera in igne probanda sunt, atque purganda, moderatam arbitramur &amp; mixtam clementia sententiam iudiciis.&quot;</td>
<td>PL 24:676-678</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Ambrose (c. 338-397)</td>
<td>AMB_/ IN PS/ XXXVI</td>
<td><em>SANCTI AMBROSII MEDIOLANENSIS EPISCOPE ENARRATIONES IN XII PSALMOS DAVIDICOS. IN PSALMUM XXXVI ENARRATIO.</em> [Commentary on the Twelve Psalms of David, <em>On Psalm 36</em>, PL 14:965-1010]</td>
<td>&quot;Etsi salvos faciet, inquit, Dominus servos suos salvi erimus per fidem, sic tamen salvi quasi per ignem. Etsi non exuremur, tamen uremur: quomodo tamen alii remaneant in igne, alii pertranseant, alio loco nos doceat Scriptura divina, nempe in mare rubrum demersus populus est Aegyptiorum, transivit autem populus Hebræorum, Moyses pertransivit, praecipitatus est Pharao, quoniam gravior eum peccata mserunt, eo modo praecipitabuntur sacrilegi in lacum ignis ardentis.&quot;</td>
<td>PL 14:981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of the Church</td>
<td>Inscription</td>
<td>Source Text</td>
<td>Quotation or reference in Bellarmine, <em>De purgatorio</em>, Lib. I Cap. X*</td>
<td>Source of Bellarmine’s quotation</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407)</td>
<td>GHRYSTIN/IN P AM AD CHORIN</td>
<td><em>Argumentum epistolæ primæ ad Corinthios</em> [Homilies on First Corinthians], PG 61:9-382</td>
<td>&quot;Chrysostomus hom. 41. in priorem ad Corinthis: luvetur, inquit, mortuus non lacrymis, sed precibus, supplicationibus, elemosynit. Et infra: Ne fatigemur mortuis auxilium ferre, preces pro illus offerentes.”</td>
<td>PG 61:355-362, esp. 361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix E
Inventories of Paintings in the Scuola di S. Fantin

E1. 1786 Inventory

**Document:** ASV, Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Consolazione, b. 5, Inventario Effetti, et altro della Veneranda Scola di S. Maria e S. Girolamo deputata alla Giustizia in S. Fantin (1786)

**Description:** An inventory of items in the Scuola's meeting house and other properties, compiled under the guardianship of Gregorio Bortolotti on March 12, 1786. The inventory is divided into the following categories: real estate; silver and other precious objects; various paintings; sacred furnishings; various items; chapels at the Grazia and the Prisons; wax, robes, and other items in the care of the Guardian da Matin; and books and records regarding the Scuola. The section on paintings is translated here. The spelling of artists' names has been left as written in the original document.

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Various paintings

**Paintings in the lower church**
- Two prophets by Lunardo Corona
- Eight paintings around the aforesaid Church by the hand of Lunardo Corona
- A painting of Christ, who is shown to the people by Pilate, by the hand of Baldissera d'Anna
- Thirteen paintings in the ceiling, portraying the suffrages for Souls in Purgatory, and the doctors of the Church, by the hand of Giacomo Palma
- Two paintings about the doors, by the hand of Antonio Zanchi

**In the Sacristy**
- A large painting portraying Christ, who expels the Profaners from the Temple, by the hand of Antonio Zanchi
- Two Prophets by the hand of D. Armano Stroffij disciple of the "Prete Genovese", aquired in the year 1695
- A painting of the Resurrection of Lazarus by the hand of a Fleming Armano Zerest

**In the Albergo Novo**
- A ceiling painting portraying the Last Judgment by Antonio Zanchi
- A painting portraying the Adoration of the Magi, by Paulo Veronese
- A painting with the Assumption of the Holy Virgin by the same
- A painting in three parts, the Disputation with the Doctors in the Temple, the Flight to Egypt, and the Presentation in the Temple, by the same
- A painting with the Death of the Virgin, by the same
A painting [of] Our Lord, and Saint John the Baptist at the Jordan, by Aless. del Friso [i.e., Alvise del Friso]
A painting of the Visitation of St. Mary [and] Elizabeth, by Marco Tescina
The aforementioned all have gilded frames.

In the Albergo Grande
An altarpiece portraying the Holy Virgin, and Saint Jerome, by the hand of Giacomo Tentoretto
A ceiling painting portraying Paradise, with portraits of Tiziano, Alessandro Vittoria, someone from the house of Tebaldo who was Guardian in those times, famous musicians, and Palma, who made it, with his wife
Eight paintings by the aforementioned Giacomo Palma, portraying the life of Saint Jerome, an effort that suffices for a lifetime
Four paintings of four Sybils
Two Chiari Scuri [grisaille paintings], one portraying Saint Jerome, and the other with another figure
Five [paintings] above the balconies
Two paintings above the doors, portraying two stories of Saint Jerome, by the hand of Antonio Zanchi, and all with gilded frames
A painting with a miracle of St. Jerome, with a gilded frame by the hand of Giacomo Tentoretto, which is portable

In the hallway that leads to the Sacristy
A ceiling with three paintings, which are an angel, Saint John, and Saint Mark Evangelist by Giacomo Palma
Two paintings with souls in purgatory, for the Altar of Christ [e.g. the Crucifix Altar], above which is written Privileged Altar

A Madonna on canvas above the door to the Albergo Novo

Decoration of twelve sybils and other paintings on panel by the hand of Antonio Zanchi, which are in the Albergo Novo

A painting portraying Our Lord, who liberates the wild man by the hand of Zuanne Segala painter with its gilded frame and a cloth to cover it in the Sacristy

A painting above the door to the Sacristy that portrays the dinner of Jesus Christ in the house of the Pharisee by the hand of Antonio Fontebasso.
E.2 1808 Inventory

Document: ASV, Regio Demanio Fascicolo IV b. 315, Fasc. IV (N.B.: The original inventory could not be located at the Archivio di Stato di Venezia during the course of my research. This transcription is based on a photograph of the inventory made available by the Ateneo Veneto.)

Description: An inventory of paintings remaining in the Scuola di S. Fantin after its suppression, compiled on October 14, 1808, by Giuseppe Baldassini at the behest of the Inspector General of Finance. The numbering of the items is presented here as it is in the original document.

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On the 14th of October, 1808, Venice

Paintings inventoried and in part numbered by the undersigned in the Scuola di S. Girolamo on the order of the Signor Cavaliere Inspector General of Finance, and having found here the paintings below:

Paintings in the Sacristy, including walls, and ceiling, 9 in number
1. Christ who expels the profaners from the Temple. . . by Antonio Zanchi
2. The Prophet David. . . by the same author
3. Another prophet. . . by the same author
4. Christ who liberates a possessed man. . . by Segala
5. Another prophet. . . by the school of Tiepolo
6. Christ in the house of the Levite. . . Copy of Paolo made by the Scuola ---
7. Another prophet. . . Scuola del Tiepolo
8. Christ who resuscitates Lazarus. . . uncertain
9. On the ceiling, the representation of St. Jerome . . . uncertain

In the ground floor room, walls and ceiling, 26 in number
13 items on the walls, nine concerning the Passion of Christ
First, Christ in the Garden. . . by Leonardo Corona
Second, the arrest of Christ. . . by the same
Third, Christ before Caiafas. . . by the same
Fourth, Christ stripped and flagellated at the Column. . . by the same
Fifth, Christ crowned with thorns. . . by the same
Sixth, Pilate who shows Christ to the people. . . by Baldissera d'Anna
Seventh, Christ who carries the Cross to Mount Calvary. . . by Leonardo Corona
Eighth, Christ dead on the Cross. . . by the same
Ninth, Christ deposed from the Cross. . . by the same
4 paintings between the balconies so blackened that nothing can be seen.
13 paintings on the ceiling. . . all by Giacomo Palma
Which paintings contain the suffrages for souls in Purgatory, which are the celebration of the Mass, Almsgiving, and Indulgences conceded to prayers, by virtue of which the souls are liberated from this punishment, and furthermore, in the aforementioned coffers there are other Fathers and Doctors who in this manner have written. In this room there are: an altar of marble with a statue of St. Jerome by Alessandro Vittoria, and above the two angels of white stucco. The other altar of black stone with two statues of cast bronze by the same author that represent the Blessed Virgin and another saint [santa], and at the top two angels of cast bronze and two small angels of marble, painted black.

In the upper room including walls and ceiling, 19 paintings in number
No. 17 Wall paintings including the altarpiece that represents St. Jerome by Giacomo Tintoretto, engraved by Agostino Caracci, and the other sixteen concerning the life of St. Jerome all by Giacomo Palma, including two paintings in “Chiaro Scuro”.
No. 1 Painting above the wainscotting that represents a Miracle of St. Jerome.
... by Giacomo Tintoretto
1. A great ceiling where the Virgin Mary ascends to heaven, with the Apostles and St. Jerome with many portraits, and in particular the author, with his wife, a respectable work by Palma.

Room of the Albergo, Paintings on the walls and the ceiling in total 9 in number.
1. Above the wainscotting there are the painting that represents the adoration of the Magi - work of Paulo
2. Christ who receives Baptism by St. John the Baptist and two angels in a landscape, by Paolo Fiamengo
3. Death of the Madonna, by Carletto Caliari
4. The flight to Egypt, by the same
5. Painting on the life of the Blessed Virgin, by the same
6. Presentation of the child, by the same
7. The assumption into heaven, by the same
8. The visitation of St. Elizabeth, by Alvise dal Frso
9. Large ceiling that represents the Last Judgment by Antonio Zanchi.

[Signed,] Giuseppe Baldassini Professore.
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Abbreviations of Archival Sources
ASV = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice
BCMC = Biblioteca Civica del Museo Correr, Venice
BNM = Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice
BSR = Biblioteca del Senato di Roma, Rome


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