

PORTRAITURE AND PATRONAGE  
IN QUATTROCENTO FLORENCE  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
THE TORNAQUINCI AND THEIR CHAPEL  
IN S. MARIA NOVELLA

PATRICIA SIMONS

VOLUME I

THESIS PRESENTED FOR  
THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Fine Arts  
University of Melbourne  
March, 1985.

VOLUME I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
Precis	ii
Chapter	
1. Introduction. Portraiture and Identity	1
2. Portraiture. The Context of Cultural History	30
3. A Patron. The Tornaquinci Consorteria	107
4. The Tornaquinci Consorteria. Aspects of Their Patronage	150
5. The Tornaquinci at S. Maria Novella	190
6. Iconography. Part I	234
7. Iconography. Part II. Portraiture and its Context	265
Conclusion	328

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The initial and broad topic of this thesis, an interpretation of Renaissance portraiture in relation to family and other social contexts, was suggested in 1975 by Bill Kent, whose support ever since has been generous, in his capacity as both a colleague and a friend. He is now an official supervisor, the topic has changed much, the years have been filled by teaching and distractions, the final months extended due to Repetition Strain Injury, but at last my debt to him and my other long-suffering friends will be paid.

In particular, I thank Mary Eagle, Harriet Edquist, Dale Kent, Brenda Marshall, Margaret Parnaby and Olwen Steel, for steadily offering their belief and encouragement. I must also thank Professor Margaret Manion for being my supervisor throughout and for having aided the beginning of my art historical career. The Department of Fine Arts, University of Melbourne, has granted me much patience and financial assistance over the years. I am also grateful to Professor Margaret Plant, who read an early draft of the first two chapters in 1979. The inter-library loans department of the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, especially Gail Schmidt, has always been most courteous and helpful. The architect Robert McGauran kindly and promptly produced the figures which appear here; Wendy Nicol and Adrian Featherstone many of the photographs. Gino Corti, with enthusiasm and dedication, introduced me to the art of paleography and aided my early archival searching.

My greatest and most sincere professional gratitude goes to Rab Hatfield, who not only suggested references but in early 1981 handed over an extraordinary number of transcripts which immeasurably increased the archival material available to me. Valuable criticism in letters since has also come from this scholar who has been always generous and meticulous.

To all those who have aided me in professional and personal ways, my warm and happy thanks: this work is theirs too, its shortcomings only mine.

Pat Simons

Melbourne, March 1985.

## PRECIS

Containing over forty portraits, the frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the cappella maggiore of S. Maria Novella provide the opportunity to investigate the function and context of Quattrocento portraiture. Burckhardt's famous notion of Renaissance "individualism," usually seen as a sufficient explanation for the rise of this genre, is rejected in favour of corporate, especially family, motivations and modes of address. This necessitates an examination of consorterial traditions and patterns of patronage which are registered in the Tornaquinci chapel and enabled the acquisition of patronage rights to the chapel by the entire consorteria in October 1486. A biography is also supplied of Giovanni Tornabuoni, the man who paid for the decoration of this, his family monument, and closely supervised its progress.

Both the apparently "realistic" style of Ghirlandaio's presentation of the family and its associates in "the most beautiful city" (praised in the chapel's dedication inscription of 1490) and the chapel's iconography are placed in a fundamentally religious context. Group portraiture, especially of donors, is seen as neither individualistic nor secular, nor as mere physiognomical reportage. Further levels of signification in the iconography are discussed, particularly references to the magnificence and generosity of the Tornaquinci as patrons and founders with a long tradition at the Dominican convent of S. Maria Novella. The family's salvation and fertility are also prayed for in a series of portraits which preserve the family in an arena of prayer and offering. They self-consciously address an audience both contemporary and future: seeking perpetual life through descendants and through eternal deliverance which is the reward for their good works, honourable reputation and patronage. The family's awareness of itself, its noble heritage and honour, is reflected in their dignified portrayal. Future descendants were shown exemplars; prayers for salvation and for fertile continuity were offered; sure access by the elect to paradise was visualised. Both Man and God were addressed: honour in the here and now, salvation in the eternal realm, each were granted to the worthy elect. Florence and the City of God were each embraced by naturalistic, recognisable form. The presence of portraits was necessary within a visual world reshaped, framed and ennobled.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: PORTRAITURE AND IDENTITY

A: INTRODUCTION

This thesis contributes to a current re-assessment of late Quattrocento culture in Medicean Florence. The ultimate focus is Ghirlandaio's frescoes in the cappella maggiore of S. Maria Novella, produced after May 1486 for the Tornaquinci consorteria and replete with their portraits (Pls 1-4). Giovanni Tornabuoni, a magnificent representative of that consorteria, was the man who both paid for and carefully oversaw the chapel's decoration, whence its usual appellation, the Tornabuoni chapel. Yet on 13 October 1486 it was to the entire consorteria that the chapel's patronage rights were granted and it is their arme and portraits which accompany those of the Tornabuoni, especially in the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pl. 2), where all extant branches of the consorteria are placed with fellow citizens in an extended "patron portrait." The consorteria's shared heritage, their joint actions and their residence in the same ancestral areas (fig. 3, Pl. 65), all help to explain their portrayal and their legal recognition as patrons at S. Maria Novella. They gather as honourable representatives celebrated for their noble traditions and beneficence; they are not portrayed as isolated individuals but as members of family and social networks.

To understand what motivated such all inclusive representation in the chapel, patronage by the Tornaquinci and especially by the Tornabuoni at other places and in other media, for instance in architecture and in other ways such as the provision of anniversary masses, needs to be considered. Whether it be in the patterns of Tornaquinci patronage which emerge, or in the chapel's iconography and in the choice of portraits there, or in Giovanni Tornabuoni's biography, it is civic and Christian "magnificence" and worthiness which is central to the production of this art. The patron, "both an efficient and a final cause of the work" according to Michael Baxandall's summation of Agricola's text written around 1480,<sup>1</sup> is as important an element of investigation as the artist, who absorbed the

heritage and desires of his patron when decorating a chapel which was a focus of corporate traditions and honour. The late Quattrocento will be presented as a more active, pious and perhaps complex period than was described in Gombrich's famous essay, published in 1960, on Medici patronage. His characterisation of Il Magnifico as a man of effete and abstract taste is being revised as we become aware of Lorenzo's spending, intervention and practicality.<sup>2</sup> Lesser citizens are also being studied not only as individuals but as patrons operating within late Quattrocento patterns.<sup>3</sup> The Tornaquinci and Giovanni Tornabuoni can also be placed in an interpretative framework which relies on the work of authors such as Richard Trexler, Dale Kent and F.W. Kent in the fields of cultural and social history.

Art historians too are becoming more interested in later Quattrocento style. Certain implications of this thesis could be used to see not only patrons but also artists like Ghirlandaio in a different light. Although, regrettably, space cannot allow an extended treatment of Ghirlandaio's supposed "realism," the critique of individualism as a sufficient explanation for portraiture, the examination of a patron who employed him often and the preliminary investigation of certain features in Ghirlandaio's milieu, will, I hope, suggest something of an alternative interpretation.

#### B: GHIRLANDAIO'S REPUTATION AND STYLE

Artists of the late Quattrocento like Domenico Ghirlandaio, Cosimo Rosselli, Alesso Baldovinetti or Pinturricchio, with their portrayal of people and topography, are usually poorly valued, since it is presumed that they are competent but illustrative masters existing in a pause between the early Renaissance and the advent of the High Renaissance. Too often considered mundane and literal, Ghirlandaio's work illustrates more compendia of costume than texts of art historians.<sup>4</sup> Frederick Hartt's influential survey of Renaissance art states that "Ghirlandaio's prose style suited the successful merchant perfectly," but the compliment was meant to be backhanded: Ghirlandaio was "beyond any competition the leading personality in the Florentine school, if measured by the standard of worldly success."<sup>5</sup> This demeans both artist and patron and downgrades the culture of a

period because it is not to one's own taste.

Precisely because Ghirlandaio was popular, working, like Botticelli, for such patrons as Sixtus IV, Lorenzo de' Medici and Giovanni Tornabuoni, his art tells us a great deal about the taste, patronage, assumptions and processes of late Quattrocento culture. His relationships with patrons were always cordial and he understood their requirements well. Here was no bohemian or genius, no grovelling artisan or unreliable deliverer; he was proud of his position, and his patrons were proud to obtain his "expeditious," "circumspect and discreet," "diligent" services.<sup>6</sup> The sheer normalcy and entrepreneurial competence of Ghirlandaio's production needs to be stressed, against the recalcitrance of a Filippino Lippi or Leonardo da Vinci, or the pious melancholy of Botticelli. His efficient confidence is more a sign of the emerging High Renaissance, than of the dying gasps of late medieval servile craftsmanship.

Nevertheless, Ghirlandaio's style has been regarded as "old-fashioned," the signing-off call of the Quattrocento proper, the end of "a blind alley."<sup>7</sup> Wölfflin instead observed several links "with the Cinquecento masters," as did S.J. Freedberg, while Jacob Burckhardt, von Einem and others have related particular works to later compositions by Raphael.<sup>8</sup> Recently Everett Fahy and Jean Cadogan have pointed out that some drawings which have been attributed to Leonardo or Michelangelo are in fact by Ghirlandaio.<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps time for us to consider more of the continuities between the centuries and, for example, to recognise Ghirlandaio's compositional grandeur and clarity and the idealising dignity of his figures as a contribution to a stream of visual culture which is never interrupted.

Accepted opinion is otherwise. John Ruskin was wonderfully scathing ("goldsmith's rubbish"), as was Bernard Berenson, who regarded Ghirlandaio's assistants as "house painters." For Fischel "Ghirlandaio does not rise above mere gossip" and indulges in "a cult of the trivial." More recent publications are little kinder, Hendy, for instance, crediting Ghirlandaio with "more charm than originality."<sup>10</sup> Thus, Ghirlandaio, who is too important to ignore totally, suffers from scholars' easy and patronising assumptions about

the prosaic and "domestic" quality of late Quattrocento art. Certainly he often was quite meticulous in his presentation of faces, "figures, buildings, castles, cities, villas, mountains, hills, plains, water, rocks, garments, animals, birds, and beasts", just as his contract with Giovanni Tornabuoni demanded in September 1485.<sup>11</sup> But the reasons for their inclusion and for their detailed, delighted observation have been accepted on face value.

There are many fine passages in the S. Maria Novella frescoes, despite the presence of assistant's hands and Ghirlandaio's own lapses into over-zealous observation (Pls 2-4, 8, 9, 13-15). His figures have a calm mass and stately rhythm. They move through bedrooms and archways and along streets laid out with a nice sense of space and proportion. The lakes, rivers and mountains add airiness and healthiness. Brocades, jewels, carafes and platters are the due accompaniments of worthy patricians, and given their proper regard. The vegetation and birds are always among the most sensitive and happy of Ghirlandaio's creations. Each figure, each building, each panorama, adds to a world of calm assurance. The artist, the patron and the people portrayed, are all in possession of their world, with Florence at its temporal centre but with the City of God equally actual and immanent.

Historical actuality is not some matter of "trivial" "gossip," but a statement of citizenship, family honour and Christian worth. Subject and style are inextricably linked: both are literal, yet more laden with meaning than is apparent at first glance. Form and content are motivated by the need for an honourable, exemplary and noble presentation of the family and its surrounds to its audience both contemporary and future; by a desire to be shown as pious witnesses of religious events whereby they are eternally present in the realm of salvation. A style both naturalistic and idealising portrays the actuality of the Incarnation and of salvation in this "the most beautiful city" lauded by the chapel's dedication inscription. What Trinkaus has termed "a tendency [in Renaissance thought] to secularize the sacred while simultaneously sacralizing the secular" could be applied to the Tornaquinci chapel.<sup>12</sup>

Since the mid 1970s, Ghirlandaio's contribution has begun to attract more particularised attention, mostly on such matters as drawings, attribution, classical sources or, occasionally, iconography. The Amsterdam doctoral dissertation of Johannes Offerhaus (1976) is perhaps the most important of these recent studies, in that it offers a theoretical, serious interpretation of style and content.<sup>13</sup> His examination of fifteenth century painted architectural backdrops includes an analysis of the S. Maria Novella frescoes, which, he suggests, contain "disguised symbolism," "a complicated theological programme," and have "the function of 'ekphrasis.'" My conclusions, reached independently and on the basis of a less literal or emblematic reading, somewhat reinforce his own, but place more emphasis on portraiture, patronage and social history.

The place of Ghirlandaio's works within later Quattrocento style and social culture are still little studied, however, and the pursuit of "realism" is still too often seen as the goal of his age and his own production. Published in 1981, James Beck's survey of Italian Renaissance Painting now grants to Ghirlandaio some stature, although he judges by criteria not those of the Quattrocento, saying that his pictures were

somewhat dry and humorless, serious and objective, but he consistently produced well-crafted works. He was a distinguished portrait painter, although the solid figures in his frescoes are psychologically opaque.

Nor did he study anatomy or the nude, and Beck regrets that the "elusive ... 'poetry'" of "a masterpiece" is "lacking" in the Sassetti altarpiece. On the other hand, there the "peasants maintain a restrained demeanour and have a physical dignity common to all his figures" and his "Florentine orientation did not permit the complete surrender to the heightened realism" of Flemish art.<sup>14</sup>

In this attention to dignity which restrains realism, Beck echoes Burckhardt's surprisingly sympathetic judgement that Ghirlandaio makes

realism ... [and] the charms of living beauty ... subordinate to the lofty serious character of the holy personages, and the higher meaning of the moment represented. ... The most striking thing here [at S. Maria Novella] is not any remarkable dramatic motive,

but the dignified, loftily impressive picture of life, which we know to be the glorification of actual life in Florence. These graceful, noble, and powerful creations elevate us the more in that they approach us so nearly.<sup>15</sup>

This honourable and accessible representation of the Tornaquinci and their world is a fine example of Clifford Geertz's characterisation of ritual as an action in which the audience sees a presentation of itself to itself.<sup>16</sup> Florence and her citizens are aggrandised and ennobled, members also of the elect in the City of God on earth celebrating their heritage and addressing themselves self-consciously to an audience both present and future in a serious and assured manner. The minority judgements of Burckhardt and Beck can form the basis of a fruitful reassessment of Ghirlandaio and the frescoes of his mature years in the Tornaquinci chapel; a task attempted, albeit in a preliminary fashion, here in Chapter 2.

#### C: "INDIVIDUALISM" AND RENAISSANCE PORTRAITURE

Surprising generalisations still pervade even specialised writings on portraiture, such as the unadventurous work on Florentine busts by Jane Schuyler which "ignores the obvious consideration of patronage as it affects character portrayal."<sup>17</sup> Vasari and Burckhardt have been so comprehensive and brilliant as to persuade us too thoroughly. Vasari's enthusiastic ekphrasis corresponds to Burckhardt's "discovery of the outward world," Vasari's championship of the artist's status and inviolate personality to Burckhardt's "discovery of man."<sup>18</sup> It is especially these two themes, "realism" and "individualism," which have become outworn cliches.

The popular and traditional view of the Renaissance still sees it as the birth of a modern, rational world where personal bonds, especially to family and community, were replaced by abstract principles. Some historians, particularly Richard Goldthwaite and Marvin Becker, also speak of a rise of the nuclear family at the time.<sup>19</sup> Personal boundaries were supposedly shrinking, becoming less corporate as self-consciousness rose on the other end of a see-saw. While universal histories, such as Agnus Heller's Renaissance Man, continue to focus on "individuality," more particular studies are

bringing new thoughts to the investigation of personal and collective behaviour during the Renaissance. Social historians such as Jacques Heers, David Herlihy, Diana Owen Hughes, D.V. Kent and F.W. Kent, for instance, argue that "'clans' were not disintegrating into nuclear families."<sup>20</sup> In part a polarity in the type of evidence employed accounts for varying interpretations: statistics and legal documents tend to allow the investigation of formal and static structures; letters, diaries and statements of opinion or advice tend, understandably, to reveal the emotional weight and complexity of social bonds and value systems. As Jack Goody points out, "the fact that the 'family' or 'household' is always small does not say anything about the importance attached to kinship ties in a more general sense."<sup>21</sup> Here, the evidence from acts of cultural patronage will reveal that Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose household in the strict sense contained only three offspring, was nevertheless buttressed by the traditions and stature of his entire consorteria. In turn he proclaimed and affirmed the strength of his corporate identity, surrounded by kin in his neighbourhood and by their portraits in the Tornaquinci chapel.

In the late 1960s, John Gage stressed that "the upholding of family values was the driving force of social endeavour" and Gene Brucker agreed: "The family constituted the basic nucleus of Florentine social life..." Yet Brucker tried to compromise: "the family bond was also weakening."<sup>22</sup> Since then, the work of Brucker himself and others has given greater substance and depth to our picture of collective behaviour in Renaissance Florence. Current reviews, even some general surveys, accept the approach of scholars like Heers, D.V. Kent, F.W. Kent and Weissman, who have investigated networks linked by such bonds as kinship, patronage and influence, neighbourhood and confraternity membership.<sup>23</sup> Weissman has suggested an appealing approach whereby poles are replaced by a spectrum of overlapping interactions. According to his definition of the "agonistic character" of social bonds in Renaissance Florence, these were both supportive and competitive.<sup>24</sup>

The import of such findings is relevant to the art historian, whose notions of patronage and brokerage can be enlivened by an

awareness of network dynamics. Projects like palaces and chapels, and even town planning, often have motivations in corporate realms. In particular, "individualism" and a celebration of personal glory through art, especially by portrayal, must be tempered by the awareness of a more complex background.<sup>25</sup> For writers like J. Alazard, Irving Lavin, J. Lipman, John Pope-Hennessy and Schuyler, each isolated bust or profile panel was an unmistakable, forthright statement of individual personality. Alazard, writing in 1924 about "the cult of personality," is not too different from Pope-Hennessy who used this phrase as a chapter heading in his The Portrait in the Renaissance published in 1966. To explain portraiture's impetus by reference to a widespread "craving for fame" and humanist virtù has seemed almost totally sufficient.<sup>26</sup>

Inadequate attention has been paid to the question of why a "craving for fame" was popular, since to answer with "individualism" only creates a circular argument. Certainly men like Ficino or Filippo Strozzi were anxious for contemporary fame and valued individual virtue. Lorenzo Valla wanted to be "master of myself" and the Tornabuoni family priest wished "to be a little out of the ordinary," yet both relied on and sought patronage, necessarily having to manipulate interlocking networks.<sup>27</sup> For these men, honour, prestige and decorum were not generated by a sense of truncated, isolated individualism. Strozzi, for instance, built his palace in the family stronghold and received proud letters from obscure and distant kinsmen in Ferrara and Avignon eagerly seeking news of this family monument. After a long exile Filippo was consciously and noticeably restoring his family's position in the fabric of Florentine society and geography. As Hatfield's pioneering study on "Five Early Renaissance Portraits" has argued, the "fame to which [the portraits] attest is that of the family."<sup>28</sup>

For such men our "modern" paradox between family and individual is anachronistic. Private honour and family honour, for instance, were not contradictory at all; rather, one augmented the other. Thus, when "nostro Filippo" died, Alessandra Strozzi wrote to her son that it brought damage "a noi prima, e poi a tutta la casa; che la virtù sua era tanta, che a tutti dava riputazione." Reputation, "honour,



status, and security," could be both lost or preserved according to the actions of one's children and relatives in the Florentine world, a world larger than an humanist circle where virtù was only a classicised expression of social honour and Christian virtue.<sup>29</sup> When Carlo di Salvestro Gondi heard in 1464 that he was to be one of the veduti in the next election for the Gonfaloniere, he commented "desideravo questo onore, che mi pareva dare principio grandissimo alla casa." Political definition and eligibility was primarily familial and not individual, as Dale Kent's studies have demonstrated: "Florentine society was a complex of interest groups ... bound together by ties of kinship, marriage, neighbourhood, friendship and custom."<sup>30</sup> Rinuccini was not unusual when in 1479 he adapted a Ciceronian precept

that we are born, not for our own sakes, but for our family, country, and friends, and that we are only in some small part our own. But a man who lives only for himself ... neglects his duty.<sup>31</sup>

Personal identity was supported by network alliances and stimulated by potential conflicts between such groupings: in both cases Weissman's "agonistic" model places an individual in a social setting. Historians like T.C. Price-Zimmermann, Becker, Thomas Kuehn, Lauro Martines and Trexler are also exploring the psychology of Renaissance man, and his "individualism" appears precarious and complex. Propaganda about a "golden age" was matched, if not caused, by an awareness of fleeting mortality and changing fortuna.<sup>32</sup> The period's sense of renovatio has seemed incompatible with a supposed recession, yet both economic and cultural innovation could have been stimulated by anxiety in "hard times" and indeed Goldthwaite's studies would now see later Quattrocento Florence as economically active, producing luxury goods and experiencing a building "boom." By the later Quattrocento some men were once more expecting an apocalypse, yet they and their fellows could also praise their city's exceptional status and continue to believe in eternal salvation. Giovanni Tornabuoni, at the time when the Tornaquinci chapel bore an inscription praising "the most beautiful city," had been consolidating his patrimony, arranging his childrens' marriages and caring for the souls of his ancestors. His diamond device and his motto, FIRMAVI (Pls 36, 42), both bespoke steadfast endurance in the face of any

assault.<sup>33</sup>

A sense of impermanence generated an introspective awareness and these same factors led to a self-conscious and rhetorical sense of those very ties Dale Kent identifies: "kinship, marriage, neighbourhood, friendship and custom." The social weight of these bonds was celebrated through art, and permanent monuments such as palaces or portraits declared the value and honour of the individual gained through his familial and social standing. Individualism did not necessarily increase during the Renaissance - when has man not been aware of himself? - but the manner in which identity was shaped and addressed was refined, in such forms as rhetoric, family ricordi and other manuals of advice and behavioural guidelines, treatises on education and nobility, gesture and costume, orders of precedence and all manner of ritual devices, and "magnificent" display. Weissman has spoken of "impression management" which employed such forms as cryptic speech and ambiguity to keep all audiences pleased.<sup>34</sup> Visual language, whether in ritual, theatre, public demeanour or artistic decoration, could also be examined with the aid of twentieth century ethnography and sociology. Renaissance texts and actions reveal an awareness of the visual image's efficacy and of the socialising, inspirational role of art and portraiture in establishing exemplary models. When Giovanni Dominici wrote on education, he stressed that parents should be exemplars and that the children should see certain religious subjects depicted in art, describing the impressionable infant as "like soft wax that takes whatever imprint is put upon it." A common reaction to portraiture was that of a man moved in 1490 by the plaster image of his predecessor to "emulation and imitation of such a father, wishing to be transformed into that same image..."<sup>35</sup>

The Tornaquinci were not neurotic men in a crisis-ridden age, but they did see acts of patronage and art, or rather visualisation, as potent, permanent and social monuments to themselves as religious, civic and family beings. The S. Maria Novella frescoes preserve their desire for order and prestige, and show us men moving through a piazza or women standing in a domestic setting (Pls 2, 8, 9, 14, 15), where they and their city are, and must be, idealised. The consorteria's nobility and magnificence were well-suited to Palmieri's model and the

consolation he offered:

Souls who are in this world intent upon public well-being and who live according to the precepts of life written by us, ... [will receive] their reward for this in having been taken up to the heavens by God to eternal pleasure in glory among his saints.<sup>36</sup>

Family honour preserved through the generations, and worthy Christian and civic behaviour rewarded by eternal salvation, each celebrated in the chapel, were the greatest antidotes to temporal inconstancy.

The Renaissance world was changing and impermanent; plague or bankruptcy, exile or war, could strike tomorrow; art too was changing and artists and viewers were aware of what Panofsky termed a "disjunction" with a previous era.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, a patron's generosity could bring security, as could visual monuments and an honourable reputation. In the Trecento Ser Lapo Mazzei spoke of business profits "here to-day, gone tomorrow," and in the late fifteenth century Francesco Sassetti wrote "I do not know where Fortuna will take us in these dangerous and upsetting affairs" while the Medici Bank crumbled around himself and his fellow manager Giovanni Tornabuoni. That Sassetti spoke in more rhetorical terms than Mazzei distinguishes the late Quattrocento from an earlier era's directness. Worry is present in both, but Sassetti's is more internalised and, indeed, visualised, according to the arguments offered by Borsook and Offerhaus on Ghirlandaio's frescoes in the Sassetti chapel (Pls 62, 63).<sup>38</sup>

We can be thankful to a battle against impermanence for motivating the pious and magnificent patrons of art and for stimulating Renaissance historians and family chroniclers. Their very aim of "rescuing the present from obscurity," in Ghiberti's phrase "so that they should not perish," has indeed preserved the Renaissance for present-day historians.<sup>39</sup> "Unable to find any stability or constancy in any human condition whatsoever," Matteo Palmieri wrote his treatise Della vita civile to propose exemplary, dignified and civic behaviour as the "least stained ... mortal life" possible in the circumstances.<sup>40</sup> "The gifts of Fortuna are mutable," wrote Ghiberti, and poets saw life as a sad cycle: "...the destiny of mankind alternates happiness and sorrow and, fickle, alters the

world." Lorenzo de' Medici emphasised changeable fortune with melancholic frequency.<sup>41</sup>

If Vitruvius and Petrarch were the models for such refrains, they are voiced with a strength of feeling and often occasioned by actual crises. A "crisis of conscience" led writers towards autobiography, using the precedent established by the practice of confession, but they transformed this genre because of a heightened self-awareness. Thus Giovanni di Ravenna was impelled to write when his children died in the plague.<sup>42</sup> Gregorio Dati's diary breaks into pious New Year resolutions and comments on "this wretched life" in his fortieth year. Giovanni Rucellai's Zibaldone, addressed to his children, was begun in 1457 when he was in San Gimignano with "mia famiglia, fuggito la pestilentia."<sup>43</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni's grief at the death of his wife and child in 1477 ("Son tanto oppresso da passione e dolore per l'acerbissimo e inopinato chaso della mia dolcissima sposa, che io medesimo non so dove mi sia") found expression in the frantic mourners carved by Verrocchio on her tomb. Giovanni is portrayed on one side, receiving the dead infant (Pl. 61). No wonder Filippo Strozzi wrote cautiously to his brother about plans for a family chapel in 1478: "ho anchora qualche altra fantasia se 'l mondo non va sottosopra."<sup>44</sup> Fortuna was indeed felt to be topsyturvy!

A conservative aristocracy, to which the Tornaquinci belonged, wished their world to be imaged in utopian, rhetorical terms and expressed their spirituality in grave and sober art. Thus Giovanni Tornabuoni stands passive and stoic on his wife's tomb, or Francesco Sassetti turned uncertainty into rhetoric: both men were internalising difficult emotions. Some of these motivations, especially a religious shift in the later Quattrocento, will be examined in Chapter 2, but it should be noted here that a desire for permanence, possible through monuments and descendants, lay behind the patronage of men like Francesco Sassetti and Giovanni Rucellai (both of whom took Fortuna as their personal emblem) and Filippo Strozzi after his return from a long exile. The portraits in S. Maria Novella similarly are among the most potent and obvious examples of a family ricordo stated in visual terms. Their dignity makes of them figures worthy of visual preservation; indeed they are presented as citizens of such decorous

demeanour that their portraits have a timeless, venerable quality. They address their descendants as exemplars and the chapel's iconography in part treats the hope for the plentiful continuation of their noble lineage. And, since "stability is the characteristic property of eternity" in Ficino's words, here their pious prayer for salvation also seeks a continuity beyond their own mortal flesh.<sup>45</sup>

Owing to the prevalence of competitiveness and anxiety during the Renaissance, Becker argues that perception of mutability led to a reliance on self-action in the here-and-now.<sup>46</sup> On the same evidence, however, one could argue that awareness of life's impermanence instead encouraged the utilisation of supportive networks and of forms of address both protective and mythologising. Various group alliances always help to shape one's world and there was an abundance of these available to the Florentine. Indeed, he had no choice, but to involve himself with political parties, guilds and confraternities, parish neighbours, his family far beyond the immediate nucleus of wife and children, fellow men of learning, trade partners, friends and so on. Such are the men who share civic and Christian space with the Tornaquinci in S.Maria Novella (Pls 2, 14). "One who walks with a few strangers or without company" did not attract the "fear," "trust," "prestige and authority" granted to "the father of a family followed by many of his kinsmen."<sup>47</sup>

Men were bonded not only by an horizontal interaction in place, but also by a vertical web through time. Consciousness of precedent and change (whether from "il buon tempo antico" or into a Vasarian rebirth) was keen. In Ficino's memorable and moving phrase "from moment to moment your past life is dying."<sup>48</sup> One could feel impermanence and a motivating sense of rivalry, but one had ambition for one's son or nephew or pupil as well as for oneself, and a strong sense of guardianship over family honour, a protective sense of heritage expressed in Ghirlandaio's Old Man with his Grandson (or Son) (Pl. 64). Those justifications for individualism, virtue and honourable fame, were also applied to families, and were part of a two-way continuum. According to the Pseudo-Pandolfini:

our consolation most [lies] in seeing you, father,  
surrounded by us all, a master loved and revered by

all, and [in seeing you] teach the youth, which is a very great joy, because virtuous sons bring their fathers much help, much honour, and praise.<sup>49</sup> In the father's care stands the virtue of the sons.

An awareness of just such an exemplary address and weighty responsibility lies behind the gravity of Ghirlandaio's presentation of elders, or sons, "surrounded by us all."

Lorenzo Tornabuoni stands in the chapel with other youths, opposite the portrayal of their elders, including Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose patronage was a model for them all (Pls 6, 16). In the words of Ficino, who is portrayed with the Tornaquinci in their chapel, one could be "the heir to his father's virtue."<sup>50</sup> This transmission was sometimes couched in terms that immediately bring portraiture to mind. In Poggio's discourse On Nobility, a defender of magnificent display (since it enhanced "our reputation") also noted that

if we want our own deeds to be praised and remembered by our posterity, the recollection and praise of parents must shine - as their portraits would - on sons.<sup>51</sup>

Addressing the lawyer Pier Filippo Perugino, Ficino wrote: "Pier Filippo, like a painter, is depicting himself in his pupil, Francesco Soderini, thus achieving the true likeness of the ideal itself." Just as the choice of a child's name could "remake" an elder, so too the offspring's resemblance to a relative "in every way," especially by "similar face and gestures," was often and proudly noted.<sup>52</sup> The mirroring of exemplary behaviour and physical resemblance each assured the permanence of a family inheritance through time.

Giovanni Morelli opened his ricordi with a prayer for the souls "de' nostri passati e di quelli che al presente sono e che per grazia verranno."<sup>53</sup> Renaissance man was acutely aware of the past, of the future, and of the continual reverberation of the past in the future. Ficino's "moment to moment" was everyone's existence. Constancy and stability lay across time, not in one moment. Niccolini, for instance, saw the example of his ancestors as an actual inheritance: when he matriculated in the "Arte di Porta Sancta Maria per intagliatore" in 1402 he noted proudly that this was 101 years after his uncle had done so. Palmieri dedicated his Della vita civile to

that "exemplar of all good," Alessandro degli Alessandri, whose adoption of virtuous precepts would make of him a worthy inheritor of "his family's glory" and a supreme embodiment "of Ugo your father and of your other renowned and glorious ancestors."<sup>54</sup> A sense of a continuum was a potent source of identity and significance.

Visual monuments, including portraiture, were often memorie which could preserve the exemplary past and transmit it to the future. The physical image commemorated an ancestor and provided an inspirational model to its audience. As even a Cardinal of the Counter Reformation allowed, relatives want to recognise the merits of their ancestors,

conservare nelle case onnorata memoria per essemio a'  
descendenti e sprone de' figlioli all' imitazione  
delle virtù.<sup>55</sup>

A man and wife diptych in the Lehman Collection neatly explains both the purpose of their portrayal and of their offspring (forseen in some depicted symbols), "So that our images may survive," while another portrait declares "el tempo consuma."<sup>56</sup> Artistic forms were frequently justified in connection with either past ancestors or future descendants. Alberti praised architecture for bringing "great Honour to yourself, your Family, your Descendants and your City." He was echoed by Giovanni Tornabuoni's contract with Ghirlandaio which explains his motives thus: "as an act of piety and love of God, to the exaltation of his house and family and the enhancement of the said church and chapel."<sup>57</sup> The frescoes in this chapel included the posthumous portrayal of family members and, in other cases too, ancestors were honoured and remembered. In 1455 a Pistoian confraternity wishing to commission an altarpiece was greatly aided by a perpetual bequest from one of their members "per l'anima ... di tutti i miei passati." In 1394, to give only one example of a common type, Alderotto Brunelleschi commissioned an altarpiece for his dead uncle Silvestro, and above their two donor portraits an inscription states the main purpose of so much Renaissance art, "for the redemption of his soul and the souls of his family."<sup>58</sup> This altarpiece was then placed in the family chapel, the place where, we know from numerous wills, masses were to be said for the dead family members "in perpetuo."

For humanists and portrayed alike, the particular audience they chose to inspire with "awe" was most usually their descendants, those indeed who most often commissioned such commemorative portraits. The "souls of the dead can influence us" and "physical likeness" can stir the memory wrote Ficino, who also produced a now lost treatise on physiognomy.<sup>59</sup> For Ficino and countless other writers the physical image was an especially potent means of preservation, publicity and inspiration. A Bardi will of 1488, for instance, directs that the family arme be placed in their Cestello chapel as an "exemplo" to other benefactors. A poem by Landino associated Bembo's physical appearance with his character, as though the one were an outer manifestation of the other: "there is virtue in your handsome frame."<sup>60</sup> Doubtless Landino and Ficino were proud and happy to see their portraits preserved in S.Maria Novella, along with other humanists and men associated with the ideal city (Pl. 6).

The physical element could be inherited, could preserve or inspire most effectively. Thus Ficino again: "whatever passes away leaves with that which comes after some sense of its own nature" and, more explicitly on this continuum as a familial and physical one, "the son is a mirror and image, in which the father after his death almost remains alive for a long time."<sup>61</sup> Burckhardt himself cited a sixteenth century Paduan whose consolation in old age lay with the visible existence of his eleven grandchildren: "I see before my eyes a sort of bodily immortality in the person of my descendants" (eg Pl. 64).<sup>62</sup> Alberti made a firm connection between such a continuation and portraiture: "Et così certo il viso di chi già sia morto, per la pittura vive lunga vita;" Giovanni Santi claimed that painting and sculpture "can preserve a mortal man present before us and true image of all noble family trees."<sup>63</sup> Portraiture was a permanent and potent memoria, whereby one's identity was joined with and passed on to one's family and the family's image was continuously "remade."

Classical writings, including Polybius, and especially Pliny's Natural History, which was well-known in the Renaissance, placed portraiture in the context of ancestor cults. They mention family trees, and series of ancestors' masks kept in the house and carried in



funeral processions.<sup>64</sup> Juvenal's Satires are quoted by a fourteenth century Tuscan pre-humanist: "what good are family trees, what profits it, Pontice, to be thought a descendant of a long line of blood, to display the prescribed visages of ancestors ... if they live wickedly ..."<sup>65</sup> The fact that he quotes the passage as though it describes a contemporary practice suggests that the situation was familiar, or at least plausible. The appeal this practice had for the Renaissance family was not simply due to an antiquarian curiosity.

Classical precedents, in surviving writings and busts, gave status and importance to visual records of the Renaissance family. One did not cause the other, but was an extra stimulant to a pre-existing disposition. The feeling and something of the visual tradition had existed before the classical revival. The family tree, for example, had a continuous history. Its origin was classical, for Pliny wrote that "the pedigrees too were traced in a spread of lines, running near the several painted portraits." But Renaissance usage was as much built on royal or religious survivals of this practice, such as the Tree of Jesse;<sup>66</sup> and is remarkable not for its rediscovery, but for its wider popularity. Thus the inventory taken in 1449 of the property of a Florentine silk merchant, Luca da Panzano, included "L'albero di nostra discendenza," just as a Trecento ricordo by a Tornaquinci man ended with a partial family genealogy which was continued by a descendant.<sup>67</sup> So, when Landino wrote of "a family tree of many branches ... many ancestors," his image was a particularly apt one for expressing a sense of continuity and family nobility. Placing the image in a moral and characteristically unified, almost mystical, context, Ficino wrote about duties:

The duty of the father is to cherish his sons as branches of his own life which have taken root, and to keep them upright by his own example as if they were parts of himself; ... of blood relatives, mutually to love each other as members of the same body.<sup>68</sup>

In his life of the Bellini, Vasari noted that "all the houses of Venice contain numerous portraits, and several nobles have those of their ancestors to the fourth generation, while some of the noblest go even further back. The custom is an admirable one, and was in use

among the ancients." Like Alberti, Vasari spoke of "the utmost satisfaction" given by these portraits "especially of those who have been distinguished,"<sup>69</sup> which suggests that even undistinguished ancestors found a place in a comprehensive "albero"-like collection. Their family membership allowed them a place within an embracing continuum. In his life of Verrocchio, Vasari does not mention classical or family motivations for portraiture, but the implications are clear.

Later on in his life men began to make at a slight cost death masks of those who died, so that a number of these life-like portraits may be seen in every house in Florence over chimney-pieces, doors, windows and cornices.

Obviously, the images of ancestors were being preserved, collected and displayed in family homes just as Pliny's "wax models of faces were set out each on a separate side-board" or "outside the houses and round the doorways."<sup>70</sup> But again the practice predates a classical revival in Italy. Death masks were used for royal tombs in the thirteenth century. Dante's death mask shows that the custom was used for very distinguished commoners by the early fourteenth century. Surviving examples of Tuscan death-masks from the Quattrocento further indicate that the custom was a development rather than a revival, and that this pre-dated Verrocchio. Masks survive of S. Bernardino (d.1444), Brunelleschi (d.1446), S. Antonino (d.1459) and Lorenzo de' Medici (d.1492).<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, the casting of life masks was a technique known to Cennini (c.1400) and to Ghiberti.<sup>72</sup>

Masks could be incorporated directly into terracotta sculpture; or used as models for busts and tomb portraiture;<sup>73</sup> or possibly adapted by painters. The panel by Domenico Ghirlandaio of an Old Man and his Grandson (Pl. 64), for example, may be based on a death mask, or on a surviving drawing which itself fulfilled the same function, recording the man's appearance after death for his family.<sup>74</sup> Especially in the case of popular "heroes" like Dante or S. Bernardino, the death mask became a kind of standard for all subsequent "icons" portraying them.<sup>75</sup> Thus, a portrait was often posthumous and even multiple, commissioned for reasons of a family or religious "cult." The individual was valued, but by others as well as the self, and for

social reasons. "Fame" was neither totally self-oriented nor individual. Nor was portraiture dependent only upon a classical revival or a narrow sense of individualism. A portrait preserved for the future and was set within corporate contexts.

#### D: THREE CASE STUDIES

The sculpted bust, with its classical precedents, is seen as an especially humanist and individualist form of portraiture. In the 1450s, according to Pope-Hennessy, a group of three learned "friends" gave humanist impetus to this type, but the chronology, personalities and concepts are all simplified by such a claim. To say that the sculptor of these busts, Antonio Rosellino, "was fortified by the humanist's determination that the whole man, and not merely the carapace, should be perpetuated," is to focus upon a sense of individualism, a motivation only in the world of learning, and a sequence of discrete acts of patronage, a focus which does not adequately encompass the social world addressed by the portraits (Pls 87-89).<sup>76</sup> An examination of these men, Matteo Palmieri, Neri Capponi and Giovanni Chellini, reveals attitudes about the family and the purpose of art which make of them the forerunners of those portrayed in the Tornabuoni chapel. All three were men of civic action, worldly trade, piety and family pride.

Matteo Palmieri is particularly revealing and deserves more attention from art historians as a figure less erudite than Alberti but equally enthusiastic. Matteo was an apothecary (speziale), but most of his time was spent as a civic official or ambassador, in which capacities he came into contact with the Tornabuoni. He came from a "bureaucratic family" and is best remembered as the theoretician of the active life and of magnificent patronage as presented in his Della vita civile.<sup>77</sup> His other main work, La città di vita, was a religious poem inspired by Dante but condemned as heretical after his death. Ficino addressed him as a "theological poet"<sup>78</sup> and all Palmieri's writings place a high moral stress on honesty and virtue. In Della vita civile (c.1439-44) he treats two crucial corporate supports available to Renaissance man: the family and the state. Book I discusses the education of a young man and the remaining books examine

justice, the virtues and other civic necessities such as "adornment." Above all, "quasi con domestico ragionamento" as he says, his treatise expounds a very common concept, that the household and the "fatherland" (patria) are virtually mirror images: anything that benefits one automatically and necessarily benefits the other.<sup>79</sup> Thus "come si governi bene la famiglia, come la repubblica"; and many times he sees the whole, like Ficino, as one interlocked web:

Da queste procede la pietà ne' padri, l'amore ne' figliuoli, la carità de' parenti, la difensione degli amici, et ultimamente il publico governo, e universale salute della civile unione e concordia.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, the family itself is an outward-spreading organism: he speaks of "i figliuoli" and then

i nipoti e qualunque altro nato di nostro sangue: comprendesi in questi prima tutta la casa, e poi moltiplicati e non attamente in una medesima casa ricevuti, si diffondono le schiatte, le consorterie e copiose famiglie, le quali ... comprendono buona parte della città ...<sup>81</sup>

Matteo's own "molte bocche" in 1457 included his wife, mother, niece and two nephews, these last living with him since the death of his brother in 1423 and supervising his business. Without children of his own, Matteo was nevertheless governor of a household, assiduous researcher of his genealogy, provider of anniversary masses for his father and uncle, patron of the family chapel at S.Pier Maggiore near their home.<sup>82</sup> To Matteo the family was large, yet close, and a civic entity. Ficino developed a more sacral sense of the "members of the same body," yet by describing man as "a citizen of heaven, but an inhabitant in earth" he was only developing the ideas depicted in the altarpiece of the Assumption commissioned by Palmieri and containing his donor portrait (Pl. 86).<sup>83</sup> It is this same organic and sacred unity that we see portrayed by Ghirlandaio later, when he paints Sassetti and his relations before the Piazza Signoria and Piazza S.Trinita, or the Tornaquinci consorteria standing in the piazzas, temples and rooms of an ideal and blessed city (Pls 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 62).

Matteo Palmieri resembles Alberti in his enthusiasm for the

civic utility of art, especially architecture, where all elements of society are integrated. Civic embellishment necessitates the "magnificenzia degli spaziosi edifici" for public magistrates, the "sublimità e nobile magnificenzia de' sacri templi" and "la conveniente composizione e attissima bellezza de' privati abituri, pe' quali la dignità dell'uomo appaia meritamente ornata."<sup>84</sup> Palmieri's own practice bears out his theory about the virtuous citizen embellishing his state and enhancing his family. He was the occupier of the Casa Palmieri, patron of a chapel in the Badia at Fiesole which he obtained through Cosimo de' Medici, owner of country properties in the Mugello and possible builder of a loggia at one of these. At S. Pier Maggiore, where his parents and uncle were buried and commemorated, he was the patron of his burial chapel in which his funeral oration was delivered by Alamanno Rinuccini in 1475.<sup>85</sup>

Either his now destroyed tomb, or the plan for one, is recorded in a drawing appropriately contained in the manuscript of his treatise on the "City of Life," and therein was placed his portrait in a roundel. For the same chapel Palmieri commissioned an unusually large altarpiece of the Assumption of the Virgin (Pl. 86), now in the National Gallery, London.<sup>86</sup> The panel's size alone suggests Palmieri's keen involvement, and Vasari said he even dictated the design, a notion accepted by Martin Davies because Botticini's painting depicts a central belief of Palmieri's Città di vita. This poem made what was later condemned as an heretical claim: that the souls of mankind are the angels who remained neutral at the Fall of Lucifer. The saints shown among the painting's hierarchy of angels are those neutral souls whose saintliness has readmitted them to heaven. But the conclusion of Della vita civile also comes close to this same heresy, and in a context which again explicitly recalls Dante, for Palmieri there wrote that "in cielo ritornare tutti i giusti governatori delle repubbliche" and "in queste divine sedie, come in loro proprio casa, eternamente con gli altri beati contenti viveranno."<sup>87</sup> That the painting's iconography is also deliberately civic is affirmed by the public costume worn by Palmieri and the topographical view of Florence in the background. Furthermore, the fullness of its summation of Palmieri's views is shown by its family references, since Matteo and his wife are portrayed as donors against

a backdrop which includes their villa, the Badia at Fiesole and even perhaps S.Pier Maggiore. Palmieri's donor portrait, then, places him in an eternal statement of his beliefs. He is supplicating for admission to the "cielo" where all virtuous citizens go, amidst a familial, civic and pious backdrop. All this has quite close parallels with the costumes, backgrounds, inscriptions and programme of Ghirlandaio's frescoes for the Tornabuoni.

The marble bust of Matteo by Antonio Rossellino (Pl. 87), signed and dated 1468, was also more than the portrait of a classicist keen to announce his own self-importance.<sup>88</sup> Pope-Hennessy and now Schuyler recognise that it was placed over the exterior doorway of the Casa Palmieri, precisely the position Pliny had described as the appropriate one for ancestors' busts. Vasari's discussion of their placement indicated a Renaissance awareness of this practice and this position for busts was also used for the family arme, in palaces and chapels. In 1489, for instance, the Strozzi arme were "sopra alla porta di detto oratorio" of S.Maria Lecceto, as were all the arme of the Tornabuoni consorteria in their chapel at S.Maria Novella. Visual representations of this practice include a "Sassetta" panel in the National Gallery Washington, showing arme in a lunette above a palace entrance.<sup>89</sup> In a sense a family likeness or the family arme were interchangeable, both symbolising the unique identity of the family and its members.

As Pope-Hennessy recognises with the following quotation, Palmieri's writings illuminate his "individualism":

How often do his family, his friends, his fellow citizens hasten to consult an eminent old man. No longer able to exercise his body, he exerts his mind, and his deeds and sayings are recorded for posterity. To his children and their descendants he leaves the glory of his virtue, whence through many generations his seed becomes honoured in its turn.<sup>90</sup>

Just as "sangue" spreads a family throughout a "buona parte della città" in the present, so the "seme" extends the family throughout time, in a continuum "to attain immortality in their seed."<sup>91</sup> The desire for preservation, for visual immortality, was so strong that Palmieri calls it

un desiderio quasi pronosticativo de' futuri secoli, il quale ci strigne a desiderare la nostra perpetua gloria, felicissimo stato della nostra patria, e continua salute di quegli che nasceranno di noi. Questi beni sempre desidereremmo essere perpetui e dopo la nostra morte eternalmente durare.<sup>92</sup>

The style, placement and even purpose of Matteo's portrait bust was undeniably inspired by classical precedent, but the patron's civic and family audiences were being addressed by this ennobling form and his one or two other portraits in his burial chapel also preserve him in a context of religious as well as familial eternity.

The portrait of Neri di Gino Capponi was also the visual preservation of a man keenly aware of his family and its future (Pl. 88). The portrait's position is again indicative: Neri's profile medallion adorns his tomb (d.1457) in a family chapel within S.Spirito and is related to his family's arme above.<sup>93</sup> Neri's concern for the entire Capponi consorteria has been demonstrated ably by F.W. Kent and Neri's elaborate concern about the family's future is especially pointed in his will of 1450, and its codicil of 1457. It spends much time "per ragione d'institutione" (a repeated phrase) on financial arrangements for the marriage of daughters and grandchildren. His son Gino was designated "herede universale," but detailed precautions ensure that Gino's descendants, or if they die out, Neri's brothers and their descendants, will always retain the family fortune.<sup>94</sup>

Even more space is given to the bequeathing of a silver helmet and visor.<sup>95</sup> In this we see the concern for a physical object as symbol, for the family continuum throughout time and the eternal preservation of family traditions and honour. The will exhaustively lists those elders of the family who are to be entrusted with the helmet and visor, given to Neri for his faithful and patriotic service. Firstly, they go to the son Gino and all his "discendenti maschi per linea masculina," or if this line fails, to Neri's brothers and their descendants. If this line also fails, they go to the "casa et consorteria de' Capponi, per onore di tucta la casa et consorteria de' Capponi, et in memoria della cose facte per decto Neri." The "onore et riputatione di tucta la casa et consorteria" will be served forever, and the extinction of the line is too horrible to be

envisaged.

The parallel with Palmieri's "desiderio quasi pronosticativo" to live on forever through the family is striking, as is the similarity between this visible immortality and portraiture. Neri's portrait occurs on a tomb which had also been spoken of in his will as a repository of the family through time: "una sepultura sopto nome di decto Gino, pel passato suo padre, et de' suoi descendenti." Again he addressed the future, entrusting its realisation to his two brothers and his son Gino and his trust was not misplaced. In all, four generations were buried in this chapel and its decoration was a continuing task through those generations.<sup>96</sup>

Naturally, to sustain his argument that Neri was one of the men who "determined ... to refine the sculpted portrait," Pope-Hennessy had to say the portrait "was made before Capponi's death in 1457." No other scholar agrees, and in fact Pope-Hennessy's edition of Italian Renaissance Sculpture revised in 1971 admits a "1458" or "after 1457" date. Stylistic arguments date the portrait to soon after 1457 and also point to the use of a death-mask. There is now universal agreement that Neri's portrait is posthumous and that his heirs commissioned it. To use Neri's own words about the helmet, his heirs probably saw the tomb as necessary "per onore di tucta la casa et consorteria de' Capponi, et in memoria delle cose facte per decto Neri."<sup>98</sup>

Schulz points out that the artificial, curved termination of Neri's bust within a tondo frame accentuates the portrait's symbolic nature. Lavin argues that the portrait busts of living men, with their "arbitrary amputation," were meant to suggest "totus homo."<sup>99</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find the deliberately enclosing frame around Neri, not only based on classical medals but also negating any sense of bodily continuation, as was appropriate for a dead man. This posthumous tomb portrait was an ancestor preserved forever. In this sense the apparent paradox of a realistic sculpture portraying a dead man, with tactile surface and staring eyes, can be resolved. The very style recalls Alberti's theory: "il viso di chi già sia morto, per la pittura vive lunga vita."<sup>100</sup>



Once again the parallels with the Tornaquinci are many: in their communal chapel, where masses were occasionally celebrated for the dead and prayers were continuously offered, the family gather "in perpetuo" through the medium of portraiture. Indeed, some of the portraits were also posthumous, including Giovanni Tornabuoni's wife and his daughter-in-law (Pls 10, 25). And the apparent realism in the portraits of men who soon will be dead was a necessary form, in harmony with the content. Their countenances will live on forever and be "mirrored" by their descendants. Matteo Palmieri's civic theory and Neri Capponi's pious milieu are both suggested by the Tornaquinci frescoes too, and all had a particular concern for the family's visual preservation.

Giovanni Chellini's bust, dated 1456 (Pl. 89), which is the earliest portrait in Pope-Hennessy's threesome, certainly upholds Lavin's argument about "totus homo."<sup>101</sup> Giovanni's wide shoulder-line extends down to mid-chest level, and the large body is an unbroken block, without a separate base or any interruption to its mass. Its very solidity and stability bespeaks Giovanni's dignity. The face is acutely palpable, the finest record of veins and creases and brittle flesh flowing over prominent cheek bones. Vasari's enthusiastic ekphrasis would have done justice to this sculpture but, instead, Pope-Hennessy resorts to a life-mask as an explanation for the tangible detail. Yet he also admits the "paradoxical" degree of interpretation given to the "mask" by Antonio Rossellino, who has attractively characterised what another author calls Chellini's "half-humorous, half-melancholy benignity."<sup>102</sup> However, could one smile throughout the mask-taking procedure, with the gesso covering one's face, adhering to hair and cloth, necessitating a breathing-tube until the mask set? Further, this information about life-masks is taken from Cennino Cennini's Handbook, written around 1400: although the procedure did not seem popular, it was certainly not invented by mid-century humanism.<sup>103</sup>

However, on this one supposed example, Pope-Hennessy deduces that the life-mask "was a manifestation of humanist art."<sup>104</sup> A better explanation of this "singular distinction" would be the fact that

Chellini was a renowned doctor. He was likely to be interested in the technique, which was usually employed for the face of someone who had just died, and his diagnostic skills would necessitate a special interest in physical appearance, an interest which would apply to any portraiture Chellini commissioned, whether or not a mask was employed. The bust's inscription proudly records Giovanni's medical status ("Doctor Artium et Medicine"), as does the inscription on his tomb. This reputable professional dedicated his burial chapel to the saints of medicine, SS. Cosmas and Damian, which was also done in another chapel he donated to a hospital, his charitable works were centred on hospitals and his eldest son was named Cosimo.<sup>105</sup>

This "medico reputatissimo"<sup>106</sup> was Donatello's doctor. Chellini recorded that on 27 August 1456

Donatello, the singular and principal master ... of his kindness and in consideration of the medical treatment which I had given and was giving for his illness, gave me a roundel the size of a trencher in which was sculpted the Virgin Mary with the Child at her neck and two angels on each side, all of bronze, and on the outer side hollowed out so that melted glass could be cast onto it and it would make the same figure as those on the other side.<sup>107</sup>

The "Chellini Madonna" was rediscovered recently and the Victoria and Albert Museum affirmed Chellini's technical description by producing silver casts from the roundel. His words are revealing, for their interest in the technique, for their detail, for their appreciation of a thoughtful and appropriate "kindness." Giovanni was also a moneylender who tried to avoid the sin of usury by lending silver plate rather than money,<sup>108</sup> so the possibility of the plate's mass production and even the religious subject seem to have suited Chellini.

It is precisely these years, 1455-56, which appear to be a turning point for Chellini, and his contact with Donatello may have been influential. He had shown no previous interest in art, but in 1455 he was one of the Consuls of his guild, which included artists as well as doctors. In June 1455 he began the construction of his burial chapel in the church of S. Domenico at S. Miniato al Tedesco, which was finished by 8 April 1456.<sup>109</sup> Chellini's contacts with artists and his

preparations for death are the immediate background to his bust, dated 1456, and produced when he was around 78 years old. Ever-present mutability is recorded but thereby overcome in his portrait.

Lightbown and Pope-Hennessy argue that Chellini was a humanist, but his learning seems fairly standard and unremarkable. He was only employed on a low salary by the University from 1401 to 1403, wrote no treatises and was not amongst the aristocratic, political or learned circles of Florence.<sup>110</sup> Pope-Hennessy does not connect Chellini with Palmieri at all, and the two contacts between Chellini and Neri Capponi involve the lending of money or silver plate and a marriage negotiation in 1452 in which Neri acted for the other family, to whom he was related. Lightbown admits that "his was essentially a private life." Chellini emerges, not as a humanist, but as a doctor, a man of wealth, religious and family concerns.

The death of "il mio Dilettissimo, Caro, e Buon Figlo Cosimo" in February 1452 moved him deeply and he buried his son "as honourably as I know how, and I was consoled by Citizenship [Cittadinanza] and in everything possible, so that I had more honour than I deserved."<sup>111</sup> Here speaks a humble man, supported at a time of family grief by civic pride and the normative pressure to preserve public honour and dignity. But he acted quickly to ensure the continuation of his line by marrying off his other son, Tommaso, within the month. When this son also died, in 1458, Chellini "prudently" made his nephew Bartolommeo heir, and engaged in a spate of charitable works (1459), increasingly aware of the fragile existence of himself and his line and perhaps also of his usurious sins.<sup>112</sup>

Soon thereafter, Chellini began final preparations for his death and family remembrance, making a will in February 1460 which planned his tomb for the family chapel in the church in his native city. As the tomb's inscription relates, Bartolommeo, the proud heir and nephew, completed the work, for Chellini died in February 1462:

IOHANNI CHELLINO FLORENTINO CIVI PRECLARO . ARTIUM  
MEDICINE Q3 EXIMO DOCTORI . SEPULCHRUM HOC  
BARTHOLOMEVS NEPOS ET GRATVS HERES . CONSTRV ENDVM  
CVRAVIT . VIXIT AVTEM HONORE DIGNVS ...

The "grateful" nephew not only supervised the placement of his uncle's full-length effigy on the tomb but also preserved his family's heritage by naming his two sons after Giovanni's.<sup>113</sup> The situation and epitaph recall an inscription on a Florentine painting of 1394:

Alderottus Brunelleschi had this altarpiece made with what his paternal uncle Silvester left for the redemption of his soul and the souls of his family.<sup>114</sup>

Donor portraits of the two men in the predella almost act as seals to the agreement and perhaps Bartolommeo was making a similar quasi-legal acknowledgement of a bequest fulfilled with the Chellini inscription.

Giovanni Chellini's tomb was begun whilst he was still alive and a thorough investigation by Schulz points out that this very old man commissioned an unusual and "old fashioned monument."<sup>115</sup> His charity and patronage therefore appear religious and sincere, without humanist glorification as its central motivation. Chellini's bust presents a respectable doctor and family man rather than an isolated individual "craving for fame," while his effigy was commissioned by his family rather than himself. The degree of remembrance is indicated by the fact that Giovanni's arthritic hands, as well as his face, were based on death casts, a fitting and precise preservation of an ancestor.<sup>116</sup>

#### E: CONCLUSION

Giovanni Chellini, Neri Capponi and Matteo Palmieri have been examined at length because assumptions have been made too readily about their portraits. Both their lives and their sculpted memoria in fact illuminate the social, especially patriotic and familial, background of Quattrocento man's identity. "Humanism" or a "craving for fame" are inadequate explanations for portraiture, particularly when the concepts are not further defined. A correspondence between the rise of the sculpted bust and increasingly sophisticated humanism around the mid-century is also a simplification. The quality of "individualism" has not been given substance, nor have painted and group portraits, or portraiture traditions, been accounted for by such a neat pattern.

Even sculpted busts, seemingly classical, isolated and proud portraits, were the products of a society which was still bonded by corporate ties. It is not surprising to learn of a Trecento bust or one of Bishop Salutati (d.1466) positioned in their chapels rather than in secular environments.<sup>117</sup> And Matteo Palmieri's bust displayed on the public facade of his casa nicely encapsulates his sense of the civic family. Ficino could refer to "this household of city ... this vast organism [animali]" in which individualism had to be subordinated<sup>118</sup> and his humanism gave weight not only to virtù but also to a family continuum which took physical form. Transience was felt in a transitional age, and was overcome by an earthly immortality as well as by eternal salvation. A man was preserved by his family's fertile regeneration, or by his portrait. The visual record was a potent example and memoria addressed to the future. Increasingly, a portrait's naturalism was a means of stating and enhancing this potency. Ghirlandaio, whose recognised speciality was portraiture and plausible backdrops, was exactly the right artist to portray the Tornaquinci consorteria within

the most beautiful city, graced by treasures,  
victories, arts, and buildings.<sup>119</sup>

CHAPTER TWO

PORTRAITURE: THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL HISTORY

A: INTRODUCTION

Old dichotomies die hard for the art historian, who can still be easily tricked by "realism" and "pagan" themes and can read the surface of a Renaissance work as conceptually two-dimensional. We tend to "use antiquated research in other fields" and need, for instance, to reconsider donors and artists, who in many ways could not have operated at some cynical, rational and learned remove from supposedly popular and lower class sentiments.<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici himself wrote a sacra rappresentazione and festival songs as well as melancholy Neoplatonist poetry. The Signoria, from the Trecento through to the Cinquecento, frequently called down Nostra Donna from Impruneta to alleviate flood or drought, with sincere, indeed certain, thoughts about her efficacy. Class distinctions, hierarchies within the oligarchy, varying degrees of sophistication in the educators, such differences undeniably existed, but to what extent they actually mattered and whether they neatly divided society into layers or ran as several of many threads through a society whose divisions were really multivalent, remains to be closely researched.

A difference in wealth, for instance, was viewed in another way by an age where charity also was given to "the shamed poor" who were not particularly deprived in our sense, but "shamed" because they could not maintain the lifestyle to which their family and social background had accustomed them.<sup>2</sup> Nor were families necessarily divided between wealthy and poor: wills, free rentals, easy loans, lobbying for positions and so on could all be utilised by more advantaged members for those who would otherwise draw shame on the family name, even if the actual blood relationship extended to a fifth cousinship.<sup>3</sup> A name and its "honour," a man and his "shame," a family and its "reputation," were operative social realities in the Renaissance. It is in this area of ethics and values, emotional

realities, social actions and everyday rituals that the historian and art historian can search and join forces, rather than continuing to stress individual fame.<sup>4</sup> The art historian can, on one level of operation, pull patrons and their artists (like the supposedly erudite Botticelli and his contemporary, the supposedly mundane Ghirlandaio), back into the historical complexity and unity that was the body of late Quattrocento Florence.

Precisely because so many motivations in cultural life were vague but understood and unremarkable, they were not clearly articulated in convenient programmes, treatises and statutes. We now need to read between the lines, recreating the non-verbal language of belief and form. In this regard, it may be that the late Quattrocento artist expressed a typical union of form with content, where "iconography" or signification is embodied by the form as much as by the content of his work. To consider but one example, of a workshop associated with Ghirlandaio's but not otherwise raised in this thesis, the sculptor Benedetto da Maiano has been disparaged for having a "fastidiousness" and "technical" accomplishment which lacked "adventurousness." He is granted a "more poetic sense of narrative" and "lyrical refinement that is seldom found in Ghirlandaio's work," which is small comfort given Ghirlandaio's current reputation.<sup>5</sup> Little if any research seems to have been done on the iconography of this sculptor's work, the assumption being that none exists. Yet an inventory compiled in 1498 of his library and that of his brother and fellow sculptor Giuliano, offers a rare insight into his "poetic ... narrative" and the source of his possible "iconographic" renderings. Along with a book of "laude" and another of "vitii et virtù" he owned "una storia fiorentina," a "vita d'Alessandro," "un Dante," "un libro di S.Bernardo" and "una Bibbia."<sup>6</sup>

This mixture of religious and secular, poetry and history, patriotism and morality, is best seen as unremarkable, typical, and therefore meaningful. It can be read too as unified, not broken into distinct categories, just as his art expresses these various threads in one (unconscious) whole. Ghirlandaio's frescoes in S.Maria Novella (Pls 3, 4), again considered devoid of "iconographic" significance, nevertheless are also an indivisible presentation of worldly and

divine themes. There, rhetorical dignity and sober solemnity describe both the meaning and the form, which cannot be separated into secular and religious strands.

Only a few specific matters, ultimately of relevance to the context of the Tornaquinci chapel and its portraiture, will be dealt with here. To comprehend the efficacious power granted to visual form is a vital first step for cultural historians and then we will turn to an instance, the motivations and developments in donor and group portraiture. Finally, trends in religion during the late Quattrocento will be surveyed in an attempt to link these with the function of portraiture. Even more speculatively, a brief section will conclude with some consideration of a contextualised approach to form in the late Quattrocento. This chapter then aims to be speculative rather than definitive, to offer an opening into alternative ways of viewing a certain culture and some of its manifestations which will not reduce it to an individualistic, materialist "modernity."

#### B: THE EFFICACY OF ALL ART FORMS

Trexler has attacked scholars' "unspoken assumption" that to the Renaissance devotee "God ... was in his heaven." Rather, Trexler claims the two spheres, the material and the spiritual, were undivided. Rudolf Wittkower long ago noted the pious significance of classical and geometric forms in Renaissance architecture, but the degree to which a supposedly "medieval" synthesis, forever seeing the divine in the particulars of this world, was a continuing tradition in a supposedly new Renaissance, has been underemphasised until recently.<sup>7</sup> Trexler, for example, suggests that to refer to "Our Lady" rather than "the altarpiece" at Impruneta was not "verbal shorthand" but one of those unconscious betrayals in language which "made no devotional distinction between image and representation."<sup>8</sup> She could quell rain but also offer greater succour: "Once she had arrived, fear and fright fled from the whole city" wrote Landucci in 1529. She could inspire political decisions or, in 1452, seal a pact with France.<sup>9</sup> The Signoria thus called on her respectfully as a vital element in political actions and it sought to protect her, from too



frequent exposure or from seeing murder in her presence. She could have her own wishes ("non volesse") but her power was indivisible from the wishes of her devotees: she acted "at the will of the supplicators" according to a law passed in 1417.<sup>10</sup> She was offered gifts and devotion which activated her power, and this reciprocal chain, each needing the other, image and man, was a further union which our assumptions have neglected but which will prove central to the idea of participation and access to be proferred later in this chapter.

Another example from the Quattrocento is again explicit about the power of man in this relationship with his art. An image of St. Sano was about to be destroyed because it was unused, when a pious woman testified to its power against the plague. Thus converted, the piovano said "If I hadn't bared my teeth to this Santo Sano, he would never have understood me." The mason, previously poised with his hammer, agreed that the "anger" had been "worthwhile," thereby giving us a rare glimpse of an artisan's opinion.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the danger of this man's profession encouraged his beliefs. Another mason, the Bolognese Gasparo Nadi, in 1474 narrowly escaped injury in a fall and he attributed this to an image of St. Jerome in his family chapel "who is praying for those who are buried there."<sup>12</sup>

Fresco painters like Ghirlandaio, high up on scaffolding in the vaults of S.Maria Novella, must have had near escapes too. In a Florentine woodcut of 1500 from the Miracoli della gloriosa Vergine Maria we see the rather haphazard scaffolding, paint pots, brushes and T-square of a painter who has just finished a picture of the Virgin enthroned; she reaches out and miraculously pulls him back from a precipitous fall.<sup>13</sup> These words and images are surely some of the most valuable indications we have from the Quattrocento artist about how he envisaged himself and his art. As in previous periods, his work was not mere craft or intellectual erudition, but at some level also a kind of indefinable participation in a divine mystery.

Capponi's concern for the helmet which he left to his descendants as an heirloom of family honour is another instance of the power granted to an image.<sup>14</sup> The helmet was a symbol of the honour of

Capponi himself as well as of the family, and they were all inextricable. Anyone seeing the votive photographs and reverent visitors touching St. Anthony's tomb in Padua today cannot doubt the continuation of this belief in the efficacy of the physically present object. Gentile da Fabriano's Miracle of St. Nicholas shows cripples and pilgrims streaming up to a tomb which they fervently touch in just the same way.<sup>15</sup> Other versions of the scene exist, though none equals the charming verism of Gentile's panel where the setting's detail enhances the miracle's actuality.

Capponi's helmet is a reminder that the "union of the cosmic and the particular" did not involve only the "sacred."<sup>16</sup> Documents published by Brucker, ranging from 1375 to 1427, show that sorcery was another extension of the belief in animated, efficacious images.<sup>17</sup> Every case mentions a physical repository of the "evil" powers, whether a "locket," a "silver image" or the more usual "wax figure of a man" or "a wax image in the form of a woman." The special significance accorded the human body and its imaging is another instance of rarely articulated sentiments which should receive all the more attention from the art historian precisely because they were unquestioningly accepted during the Quattrocento. Nor, it seems, were such "unspoken assumptions" confined to the "lower strata," despite Brucker's claim to the contrary. One sorcerer "was asked by many men (whose names shall not be revealed for the public good) to provide them with counsel" in 1404.<sup>18</sup> This public reticence suggests that good citizens, perhaps even members of the oligarchy, were being protected and certainly only such a member could have afforded the "silver image" noted above. Luca Landucci's diary, written by a neighbour of the Tornaquinci and a speziale, a member of the same major guild as Matteo Palmieri and Giovanni Chellini, frequently recorded the success of the Impruneta panel and believed in Holy Charms for cures and protection.<sup>19</sup>

Something of this belief in the efficacy of imagery imbued all art, and portraiture too must be seen against this backdrop. The portrait preserved family members in a very real sense and, in Alberti's terms, revived them. In 1396 a man stole the head of a corpse from a cemetery because he wanted "to foretell the future."

There are parallels with the instance of 1490 where a Camaldolesan general gazed on the plaster image of his predecessor: "I am aflame to be bound to emulate and imitate such a father, wishing to be transformed into that same image."<sup>20</sup> Both men saw the head as particularly potent and future-oriented. Humanists like Ficino believed in the survival of the image in the next generation and of its influence as an exemplum, indicative ideas to be returned to later. Antique rhetoric and practices were enlargements and conscious supports of a continuing attitude towards a man's image.

The fragmentation of the period, into rich and poor, "major" and "minor," "elite" and "lower," "rational" and "irrational," may partly reflect the times (and is a necessary risk taken by the historian seeking patterns), but ignores too much of the mingling in the streets and churches, the imbibing of common assumptions, the sharing of common fears and needs.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, most infants from the "higher" classes were socialised initially under the care of a "working class" balia or wet nurse, for a statutory period of at least 30 months. Michelangelo's comment that he became a sculptor because his balia was "the daughter of a stonemason and was also married to a stonemason" probably contains more than a germ of truth.<sup>22</sup> Certain social drives were bound to cross class borders.

By its very nature, nothing could be more vague than dreaming, yet its occasional recording is another valuable guide to the era's "unspoken" psychology. A classical and literary precedent was often employed: the Dream of Scipio by Cicero, with Macrobius' commentary.<sup>23</sup> Influential not only for its cosmology, but also for its personal appeal, it presents a grandfather who foretells the future and speaks about the soul's immortality; a story of consolation across the generations, of guidance from a heaven which was not disparate. Ficino's defence of dreams as a means of divination did not cite Scipio, but centred on examples from his own family, all of a visual and convincing nature. In 1426 Rinaldo Albizzi's "father appeared to me in a dream, and instructed me concerning the peace negotiations." In 1459 a poet was inspired in a dream by a personification of Florence, a topos no doubt but linked to actual practice or belief.<sup>24</sup> These examples all stress guidance, not from a disembodied voice, but

from a plausible, figurative "appearance." Contemporary art unconsciously affected the precise form of dreams and visions, as Meiss has shown in St. Catherine's case.<sup>25</sup> In turn, art could record this influence, portraying St. Dominic or Chancellor Rolin looking up at a vision, having just been engrossed in prayer and contemplation before an illuminated manuscript.<sup>26</sup> To be saved from a fall, to be converted, to be stigmatized, each before an artwork; to be comforted by a religious or family vision, all are part of the same process whereby the visual and the spiritual were concomitant.

Art could sharpen the clarity and intensity of family dreams. In the early Quattrocento, for instance, Giovanni Morelli, griefstricken by the death of his eldest son, prayed and wept before "la immagine e figura del divoto Crocifisso."<sup>27</sup> He then fell into a half-dream, half-vision state in which he saw St. Catherine with her attributes, and a strange bird-like creature reminiscent of bestiaries. But, above all, he saw the "faccia" or "la immagine del mio figliuolo," who talks with and consoles him. Even when not dreaming, but still mourning, Morelli continually had "la sua immagine" before him, remembering the ten-year old's words and deeds. Morelli is intensely visual in his account of the dream-vision, and his earlier remembrance of his son also speaks with lively, observant affection. The placement of the whole episode in a private family ricordo is revealing. Other ricordi, especially that of Donato Velluti, attempt character sketches of family members as an integral part of their preservation of the past and their passing on of traditions to posterity.<sup>28</sup> The matters worthy of note often include a visual outline of a person's stature, build, hair colouring and so on: they are verbal portraits to be handed on to future generations.

Naturally, Morelli recorded not only for himself and his descendants, but also for his own immediate consolation. Alberti referred to this function: "Painting contains a divine force which not only makes absent men present ... but moreover makes the dead almost alive," as did Leonardo in one of his prophecies: "Those dead a thousand years will give a living to many of the living."<sup>29</sup> Given the efficacy of imagery, a visual portrait was a potent record, which not only the family but the artist too appreciated. We know, for example,

that Signorelli painted his own dead, naked son, "per vedere sempre" his offspring.<sup>30</sup> Giuliano de' Medici's shocking death in 1478 generated several portrait commissions from his shaken brother and friends.<sup>31</sup>

Sigismondo della Stufa's fiancée died in 1473 on the eve of her wedding and the tragedy prompted much literary activity, including Ficino's letter, which probably refers to a portrait: "cease looking for your Albiera degli Albizzi in her dark shadow ... she is far more lovely in her Creator's form than in her own." As poems by Scala, Bracci and Poliziano mention a marble (bust), it seems a portrait was available when Sigismondo sought consolation in a visual remembrance. When Albiera's half-sister, Giovanna, died in 1488, Poliziano responded with an epitaph and her husband Lorenzo Tornabuoni commissioned a commemorative portrait from Ghirlandaio, which was then used as the model for a more publicly eternal commemoration in the family chapel at S.Maria Novella (Pls 10, 47).<sup>32</sup>

One's grief was often intense and could be expressed, and thereby assuaged, visually. A portrait by Botticelli of Giuliano de' Medici may mourn the death of his lover.<sup>33</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni's letter to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1477 acutely records his grief at the death of his wife Francesca and the sculpture for her tomb by Verrocchio is a violent reflection of such intense emotions, as may be, in part, the Massacre of the Innocents fresco in S.Maria Novella (Pls 21, 61).<sup>34</sup> In a century of plague and impermanence, even anonymous or narrative scenes of mourning can be highly charged. Domenico Veneziano's Miracle of St.Zenobius in the Fitzwilliam shows a taut woman shrieking over her dead son's body.<sup>35</sup> Some of the gestures in these works are classical in origin, but they have been filtered through medieval and Trecento precedents so they bespeak continuity not revival.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Veneziano's background refers to a recognisable Florentine street and letters or ricordi testify to the depth and actuality of grief felt in the Quattrocento. No one visual or verbal influence is paramount: the work of art is a moving summation of Renaissance emotions, assumptions and consciousness.

Morelli's words, in their alliance of the visual and the

emotional, and the very use of "immagine," recall the widespread use of votive images. This "minor" but popular art form is another case where Trexler's argument about the supplicant's active role applies. The physical object, when offered as a petition or in thanks, was thought to bring relief. Most votives were presented by a living or injured person or their family, and they were often bizzare, representing only that part which needed divine intervention: for instance an inventory made in 1422 of the main votive church, SS. Annunziata, records "una testa d'uomo con uno verrettone nel mento."<sup>37</sup> At other times the votives were offered up as a posthumous memoria: thus S. Antonino's funeral in 1459 contained "boti, con molte immagine," which would have included his death mask.<sup>38</sup>

Some votives were made in silver, but most were of wax or other inexpensive materials, and small. The inventory of 1422 lists "nove figuruzze picholine" and the language recalls a Medici inventory of 1503 which includes "2 figuruzze di terra cotta di ... [?]ardino [?] de Medici." Although the reading is difficult, John Shearman identifies these figures<sup>39</sup> as portraits, possibly of Lorenzo's son Averardo, born in 1488. The multiplication, diminution and medium of these Medici figures are reminiscent of votives. Similarly, "dua immagine di ciera d'Alfonso," the eleven year old son of Filippo Strozzi, ordered in 1478, sound like exvotos.<sup>40</sup> The age, family relationship and "immagine" also bring to mind Giovanni Morelli's vision at the beginning of the century.

All these things further suggest the many busts of little boys or of the Christ Child, especially the delicate, chubby boy by Desiderio in Washington that stands 26 cm. high.<sup>41</sup> Here again is an emotional and popular background, even to a "major" marble bust. The media and size of all such images have unfairly relegated these works to near oblivion. Recently, reliquaries have been discussed by Irving Lavin as an important source for the portrait bust and Shuyler, in passing, points out that Brunelleschi's death mask, with its inclusion of the shoulders, was another early influence on the bust form.<sup>42</sup> This influence did not cut out suddenly once "major" portraits began. Silver reliquaries of saints bear comparison with S. Antonino's "boti," a sorcerer's "silver image" or the countless silver votives.

Terracotta busts or figures and sorcerer's dolls were all figurative images with great efficacy. Wax "immagine" or "memoria" (candles?) at a family mass are really the same thing, a family preservation and remembrance.<sup>43</sup> A reliquary, death mask or votive were not secondary "influences": they were each expressions of the same impulse.

Votives increased in number at the same time as the education and language of the elite was becoming more sophisticated.<sup>44</sup> In 1472, Benedetto Dei, that indefatigable chronicler portrayed in S.Maria Novella (Pl. 6), counted "30 botteghe di battilori e d'argento filato e mastri solenni d'immagine di ciera."<sup>45</sup> Other churches contained votives,<sup>46</sup> but they especially filled the cloister in SS. Annunziata built by Michelozzo, where by 1630 there were 262,000 voti, including 600 of life size.<sup>47</sup> Already by 1448 "so many foreigners ... all want to visit the Annunziata" and the Gonzaga were special patrons, having constructed the Tribune there.<sup>48</sup> Many foreign kings and all the Popes were present in votive form.<sup>49</sup> Such patronage and the expense of the silver votives means that any description of these images as "minor" owes more to our taste and values than to those of the Renaissance.

Piero de' Medici paid for much of Michelozzo's expansions to SS. Annunziata, and in 1468 silver votives of his wife Lucrezia Tornabuoni and son Lorenzo il Magnifico were inventoried at the church.<sup>50</sup> Vasari relates that after the Pazzi conspiracy, in which Giuliano de' Medici was murdered and Lorenzo narrowly escaped, full length life-like votives of Lorenzo, ordered by "amici e parenti," were made by Verrocchio's workshop and one was placed in SS. Annunziata. According to Vasari this was "rendendo della sua salvezza grazie a Dio," a typical motivation for votives, but the offering was also the continuation of a family tradition, and a shrewd political move, associating Lorenzo's salvation with divine intervention. The votive's costume was, appropriately, a "lucco, abito civile e proprio de' Fiorentini" and it was seen in the very entrance of the church built by Piero.<sup>51</sup> Lorenzo's other two votives were in positions of potent supplication and votive thanksgiving, "dinanzi al Crucifisso che fa miracoli" at a nunnery in Via San Gallo and "dinanzi a quella Madonna" which also worked miracles at S. Maria degli Angeli, Assisi. Such locations recall the posture and placement

of donor portraits which were both preservations of the donor in eternal prayer and evocations to the viewer to share in that worship. The votive which showed Lorenzo, "quando, ferito nella gola e fasciato, si fece alle finestre di casa sua, per esser veduto dal popolo che la era corso per vedere se fusso vivo" not only followed the customary, explicit nature of many votives but displayed Lorenzo forever blessed by a miraculous Crucifix and "seen by the people," who thereby share his votive prayer.<sup>52</sup>

Medals commemorating the event of 1478 show Lorenzo on one side with the inscription SALUS PUBLICA. He reportedly said "that for the salvation of the state he had offered up his brother and almost lost his own life." The state's "salvation," the offerance of his brother, his own near-martyrdom and the use of votives to thank God: these all associated Lorenzo, the state and the divine presence in one action. After another attempt on his life in 1481 and his mother's death in March 1482, Lorenzo instituted masses for himself, his father (d.1469), his mother and his brother Giuliano. This "package deal" came when his family's hold on life appeared all the more tenuous. The masses "per remedio della anima sua e de' suo' antecessori...in perpetuo" were to commemorate past generations and ensure his own salvation. They may have had a votive overtone. Masses celebrating the Ten Thousand Martyrs seem again to have had the political and religious connotation that Lorenzo, and his family, were martyrs.<sup>53</sup> Civic, religious and family meanings were one, and expressed in visual terms.

Unfortunately by its popular and mutable nature, Quattrocento artwork in wood, wax, gesso or terracotta has rarely survived, but it needs to be reconstructed and placed beside the rows of "masterpieces" now in museums.<sup>54</sup> Architecture, no minor medium, was affected too, since many of the miracle working images of the Virgin resulted in the construction of new churches to house the image and commemorate the visionary event. Two instances, close in time and place to the Tornaquinci frescoes, are the chapel of the Madonna of Purity founded at S.Maria Novella after a vision seen there in 1474 and S.Maria delle Carceri built in Prato by Giuliano da Sangallo from 1485, for which Lorenzo de' Medici and Giovanni Tornabuoni were amongst the patrons



and to which Domenico Ghirlandaio offered candles in thanksgiving for his son's health.<sup>55</sup>

"Minor," "trivial," "mundane," have been damning and falsifying labels. Botticelli, for instance, not only painted mythologies but in 1496 coloured a gesso bust made by Benedetto da Maiano for the sons of the recently deceased Piero Capponi.<sup>56</sup> This is not to deny that more effort went into the Primavera or the Tornaquinci frescoes, but simply to insist that such "minor" art as a votive or a gesso bust was not seen in such a patronising way by the Renaissance artist or donor. Botticelli and Benedetto da Maiano were masters in their own right; Verrocchio and Ghirlandaio operated workshops which produced votives, portraits and large scale projects. They viewed art, its creation and function, in a whole and charged way and were aware of the power of visual materialisation.

#### C: ASPECTS OF PORTRAITURE RELATED TO DONOR AND GROUP TYPES

##### (i) Introduction: Religious motives

The votive's efficacy, purpose and form can illuminate another common portrait type, that of a donor. Within a sacred space the donor (or donors since they were often not singular) offered his or their "gift" which might be akin to the prayer, avowal or thanksgiving denoted in votive portrayal.<sup>57</sup> But donor and donation could be in a broader context, offering the artwork itself, or the church or chapel, within which resided the portrait, sometimes in turn shown holding a model or "portrait" of the donation. Or the offering was a signified action, of prayer, veneration, supplication and repentance, especially addressed to a future, such that both the soul's salvation and visual preservation were eternalising. Most donors kneel either side of the chief object being worshipped, addressing their gesture and gaze to the Virgin and Child, Crucifixion or whatever scene or saint is being offered. Such countless representations begin in Italian panel painting during the last quarter of the thirteenth century and include Alderottus and Silvester Brunelleschi (1394) or Alessandro Alessandri and his two sons (mid 1440s) in panels; or the Sassetti and Tornabuoni

man and wife pairs frescoed by Ghirlandaio either side of an altar (1480s) (Pls 24, 25, 62).<sup>58</sup> Many votives were also in a kneeling posture, supplicating before an altar, the focus of any sacred ritual, but by the time of Ghirlandaio's expanded patron portrait in S. Maria Novella (Pl. 2), donors stand in group portraits which people the entire sacred realm. As Martin Wackernagel discerned, after citing Aby Warburg's study of votives, portraiture was motivated by the patron's

desire to forge a sort of magical, blessing-bearing bond with the superterrestrial world through the insertion of his own likeness and those of friends into a religious composition and to make this bond as visible as possible.<sup>59</sup>

A poem described SS. Annunziata and its "beautiful" "imagini" in 1459, using words like "raccomandato," "grazia" and "Pietà e misericordia ... per noi peccatori" to enunciate the votives' purpose.<sup>60</sup> Such prayers for intercession, grace and mercy are also the motives behind other donations of a religious nature, with a similar certainty about their effectiveness in "the court of paradise." To be portrayed within the offered work was an extra sign of the donor's perpetual presence at the mass and its offertory rite, even after death, whereby promise would be fulfilled and the soul's salvation assured. As Hebrews 10:19 put it, "the blood of Jesus makes us free to enter boldly into the sanctuary": Christ's sacrifice, commemorated in the Mass, enabled the donor's bold entry into the earthly and visual "sanctuary which is only a copy and a shadow (exemplari et umbrae) of the heavenly" (8:5). The heavenly sanctuary was then accessible to the donor whose confidence was no matter of Renaissance individualism, but instead at the heart of the Church's promise held out to every repentant and purified Christian since Christ's advent and Passion. So a donor was portrayed presenting the donation as part of the offertory rite, on behalf of himself, the congregation, his dead ancestors and<sup>61</sup> so on, who thereby worthily enter the sanctuary and attain salvation.

Early Christian art, particularly in its funereal function, could place portraits in paradise and orant figures may actually be donors.<sup>62</sup> But the famous mosaics in S. Vitale, Ravenna, with Theodora and Justinian in the sanctuary and Bishop Ecclesius presenting a model

of the church to Christ in the apse, are definitely donor portraits. The emperor holds the golden paten and Theodora the wine vessel associated with the offertory rite. By visual means, the Emperor is present at every celebration of the Mass and guaranteed eternal salvation. Representations of the Emperor by classical and Byzantine artists especially established the notion that a portrait was a presence, visually and efficaciously enabling perpetual attendance at state or religious ceremonial arenas.<sup>63</sup> Later examples have been listed by Barbara Lane and placed in a context which revolved around the donor's eucharistic participation, perpetual devotion and eternal salvation. Since her thesis gives too little attention to Italian examples, particularly those in fresco, and because all writers neglect late Quattrocento donor portraits, the following discussion will concentrate on these two areas. This type of portrait deserves primary and concentrated attention, but only something of the overall texture of the tradition can be suggested here, with a view to stressing the religious and visual developments preceding Ghirlandaio's practice.

Liturgically and visually one of the most important factors affecting portraiture was the donor's plea for remembrance and intercession, whereby inscriptions such as "memento mei" and "Suscipe, Sancta Trinitas, hanc oblationem" and the compositional placement of portraits refer to the intercessory prayers offered during Mass. A donor's offering and his depiction as a worshipper are special signs of his faith, indicating that he deserves attention from those he addresses and will be "counted with the fold of thine elect." Increasingly, the Virgin was the chief mediatrix and protectress addressed, although patron saints are also "advocati," presenting the donor to the Virgin or Christ.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, St. Bernard prays to the Virgin on Dante's behalf in *Paradiso* XXXIII, or in Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*, St. George addresses St. Peter enthroned with one hand and touches Cardinal Stefaneschi's shoulder with the other, presenting the donor and his model of the altarpiece, to the Church and to the court of paradise. A Dominican bishop, whose special devotion to Mary Magdalene led to his daily celebration of her office and prayers to her, was shown, in

the early 1320s by Simone Martini, eternally praying under her protection as she presents him to the Virgin and Child. Both Marias also gaze outwards, not only calling future celebrants and supplicants to pray for the bishop, but also perhaps addressing the donor himself who could daily mirror his portrayed devotion and know that he would continue visually to do so even when not actually present at the altar. This early example of a donor portrait within a Dominican context is valuable also because documents indicate the practices of prayer and ritual which are closely linked with the inscriptions, composition and purpose of the art.<sup>65</sup>

A Florentine altarpiece of around 1402, from the Duomo and now in the Cloisters Collection, shows a double intercession, with the Virgin, Christ and eight kneeling donors (Pl. 74). The Virgin's gestures and words, the donors' gaze and gestures of prayer, plead with Christ, who shows his wounds to God the Father and asks "let those be saved for whom you wished me to suffer the passion." The eucharistic implication here is particularly strong, as is the stress on the Virgin's compassion, "because of the milk that I gave you have mercy on them." Furthermore, the textual source, wrongly attributed then to St. Bernard, saw this combined intercession as proof that "Man has now secure access to God" through the joint "office of piety" proffered by Christ and Mary. The impossibility that man would be "repulsed" and the certainty that "the Father pardons" is shown by His gestures and by the dove sent down to Christ.<sup>66</sup>

A surprising number of Italian derivations from this panel exist, nearly all from the late Quattrocento, including one by Filippino Lippi (possibly begun by Ghirlandaio) and two from Ghirlandaio's followers.<sup>67</sup> One of the latter, in Montreal (Pl. 75), has several variations which are illustrative particularly of late fifteenth century religious and visual interests. Firstly, the kneeling figure of St. Bernard occupies a new foreground platform beneath the Virgin and Christ, holding a scroll with words from the text it was believed he had written. Bernard's gaze outwards, while pointing back to the central scene, acting like a commentator as Alberti recommended, now demands an even greater participation by the spectator in the intercession depicted. A Flemish type of background,

with a walled city beside a lake, further stresses the material presence of the intercession, its religious actuality, as does the receding floor which engages the viewer's spatial network. Those offered for salvation are now a recognisable family group of a man, wife and two children.

The entrapment of the viewer, however, is nicely balanced by other elements which hold the eye on the surface, such as a scroll which, whilst more realistic than the earlier cartoon-strip utterances, is still a patterned unreality. The scroll's presence accentuates the historical and exemplary nature of the text's origin, that is, of Bernard, who kneels between viewer and viewed. The shelves on which kneel the protagonists are substantial yet partition the space into a series of hierarchical steps. Composition, gesture and glance insist on the viewer's eye as the first in a chain zig-zagging up the picture plane from Bernard to Mary to Christ and thence to the Father. All in all, there is a balanced tension between reality and what might be termed "invisible vision": the artist working in a visual medium was aware of the paradox and makes the viewer aware too, insisting on both naturalism and a self-conscious divide as a means whereby a divine event remains other, yet convincing.

A consummate artist, Filippino Lippi worked his version of c. 1495 (Pl. 76) within a subtler tension, producing a seemingly more naturalistic work with a continuous landscape and palpable modelling of flesh and draperies. Like those now in the Cloisters Collection, Lippi's figures are of a monumental scale within a large panel, but their very naturalism makes of them more awesome presences who loom before us, visionary but actual. Gesture, composition and iconography now operate to make the viewer even more essential, an element without which the gestures reaching outwards are meaningless. We, the activators, are now those pleaded for and we are just as small as those portrayed within the examples in New York and Montreal. "Sure access" is certain but our equality is not. Prayer within the sanctuary is necessary to attain intercessory aid, as we supplicate repentantly before the altar and partake visually of the eucharist, exposed to our gaze precisely at the predella level where we see

Christ show his wounds from the tomb. Outward address, directed at the gaze and ritual practised by the viewer, and depicted by a naturalism in tension with self-consciousness, are typical of the late Quattrocento and its religious interests, as is the resurgence of the subject with its significance as an "office" of "sure access."

Another common and larger group portrait asking for the Virgin's intercession and receiving her protection was the Misericordia type. The "Advocata Universitatis" could protect a medley of ranks who represent all of mankind, or a confraternity, as in Piero della Francesca's group at Borgo San Sepolcro, or a family.<sup>68</sup> Always the portrayed are sheltered as a group, sometimes to the point of anonymity when the members of a confraternity wear their masks like badges. Just as their very actions and institutional definition gave them identity within a society in flux, so their portraits are justifiable as representatives of a Christian community and not as individuals.

Creighton Gilbert's comments on a rare report made by a man portrayed "under the mantle" in 1458 need refinement since he sees the example as a "transformation" because the people are not generalised representatives of "different social groups" but "specific individuals" in which "reality goes further, including the committee's servants." This misreads the document and the tradition. Firstly, some earlier instances include faces which are differentiated sufficiently to earn their recognition as portraits and secondly the representative function of this type of the group portrait needs stressing. The document itself tells us that the men were chosen for portrayal because they were councillors of Viterbo and they were "painted from life, according to our functions." Hence each man is described, not by physiognomy or character, but by costume, residence and occupation so that once more, from servant to papal governor, each appears as a representative of his status and "function." Both an instance of the Madonna della Misericordia and a portrayal of a ruler-group, the panel came into being within a continuous stream and not at a point of disjunction.<sup>69</sup> The same is true of Ghirlandaio's Misericordia of c. 1472 in the Ognissanti (Pl. 77), which portrays the Vespucci, gathered all the way around the Virgin's bat-like wings,

protected utterly within her fold and, in a very real sense, by their own group and family identity.<sup>70</sup> An inscription reads MISERICORDIA DOMINI PLENA EST TERRA while under this lunette other portraits mourn Christ at his Deposition: redemption is offered, by the eucharist and by merciful intercession, to the whole world. Gestures, inscription, placement and subject all place portraiture in a context bound up with salvation and group identity.

Intercession and offering were, then, justifications for portrayal of the donor and those he chose to accompany him, petitioning for eternal salvation. A portrait depicts the donor in perpetual devotion, forever participating in the eucharist and being guaranteed acceptance into paradise. Indeed, a man may be a usurer or a worldly sinner, but believe he had obtained forgiveness, salvation and membership amongst the elect by the very visual depiction.<sup>71</sup> The painted portrait of a member of the Bardi family thus rises from a marble tomb in S.Croce to the call of angels' trumpets. Maso di Banco shows Christ above in a mandorla with the wound in his side, surrounded by instruments of his Passion, so a vision of the Last Judgement is combined with an image of salvation offered through Christ, repeated as the Man of Sorrows on the tomb below. Eve Borsook believes the work is "unique" because "the boundary between tomb and vision is dissolved" and she suggests tentatively that it might be connected with a Bull of 1336 which "stipulated that those who died in a state of grace might participate immediately in a vision of God." The banker's "resurrection" appears guaranteed and is an early example (c.1335-41) of a secular, untitled patron in such an explicit action.<sup>72</sup>

(ii) A few examples from the Tuscan Trecento, with later continuations

Devotional figures began to appear in Italian panel paintings in the last quarter of the Dugento and two examples originating from the Mendicant Orders deserve mention. The first of these, one of the earliest panels in Europe to include "donor" portraits, was produced for S.Domenico Maggiore, Naples, sometime after 1265 and probably by 1273 when tradition has it that Aquinas prayed before the Crucifixion

which showed two diminutive Dominicans at the foot of the Cross. Aquinas' mirroring the action of his portrayed colleagues was in fact only a mutual remembrance of their founder's devotional practice, in turn depicted later by Fra Angelico for the inspiration of his fellow Dominicans when he showed St. Dominic kneeling beneath the Cross at S.Marco. In general, it is possible to argue that the Dominican Order allowed portraiture within contexts which were exemplary and didactic in intent and that it held a less miraculous, more utilitarian attitude towards the image than did the Franciscans, for whom the art object was more fraught with problems of conscience. The tenor of the second example selected from the Dugento tends to support this hypothesis. Duccio's Virgin and Child enthroned with Three Franciscans, of the mid 1290s, shows the friars in more emotive poses of humble supplication before a more humanised image. Contact between earthly and divine flows with an "urgent, vibrant quality."<sup>73</sup>

Donor portraits become increasingly "secular" during the Trecento and establish many themes which are pursued throughout the Quattrocento as visual and religious traditions. Enrico Scrovegni, set in the appropriate context of a Last Judgement, both offers his model of the Arena Chapel and pleads for the Madonna of Charity's intercession. A large figure gesturing explicitly and actively, Enrico had his portrait placed amongst the saved and his offering accepted by the holy figures, whilst his "co-donor," a tonsured monk, is shown in a literally supportive role so that the portraits are also subtle visual propaganda directed at this world. In a family burial chapel, privately accessible from their palace next door, Scrovegni, who is portrayed a second time on his tomb, not only pleads for the expiation of his father's usurious sins but for the salvation of all his family.<sup>74</sup> Giotto's Stefaneschi Altarpiece also represents the act of donation on one side and the Cardinal's more humble entreaty to an enthroned Christ on the other, a division similar to Giovanni Tornabuoni's double portrayal in his chapel (Pls 6, 24), once as a humble supplicator but also standing as a donor and family representative with his peers, in each case present amongst the elect.<sup>75</sup>

Simone Martini was another innovator in donor portraiture during



the Trecento, introducing devotional figures into both Dominican and Franciscan works. Equal in size to the divine figure, Cardinal Gentile da Montefiore kneels before the titular saint of the St. Martin chapel in Assisi, offering his faith and being accepted by the saint's strong grasp and direct gaze, which places the men in the same eternal world. In particular the saint's firm grip around the Cardinal's hand and wrist recalls Christ's gesture as he saves the souls in Limbo, so it is a sign of salvation and mercy and not of "mere familiarity" or "intimacy." This portrait of a posthumous donor exists under a baldacchino, with a low tramezzo-type wall behind: the Cardinal is placed in an inner sanctum, "the realm of the saved."<sup>76</sup> Patrons of secular occupation also entered Assisi, the most interesting example of which is the framed bust of a man adoring the Virgin and Child in the "predella" of a frescoed altarpiece by Pietro Lorenzetti, adjacent to a fictive niche depicting eucharistic vessels and in the immediate context of Crucifixion, Pietà and altar.<sup>77</sup>

A later example of secular portrayal shows how far the Trecento could associate donors with eucharistic salvation. Rarely discussed, it is an early instance of donors inhabiting sacred space and almost sharing in the saints' action: a quite meticulous panel of the Pietà, probably by Giotto (c.1324-69). Despite the gold background, a sense of space is suggested by the recession and overlapping of figures, their modelled forms and even the shadowed foreshortened underside of the cross. On the left kneel two female donors: one is in more traditional profile, wears a religious habit and prays with her hands together, while the other is in a near frontal pose, wears a luxurious costume and prays with her arms crossed upon her chest. Behind each stands a saint whose hand is placed on the donor's head, indicating their concern for intercession and salvation, for the donors are present at a lamentation, worshipping Christ's body and witnessing His sacrifice. Their costume and slightly smaller stature set them apart, but at the same time their gestures are not far removed from those of three other figures who clasp their hands in prayer and one of whom kneels. Above all, they are set back from the picture plane, behind several saints and Christ's body itself, and the more secular figure is turned through space. They participate in the narrative as mourners, "on an ideal plane of mystical contemplation"

and they participate in the eucharist as donors. The significance established in such a work is continued later by more active portraiture, even self-portraiture, in the Pietà, by artists like Ghirlandaio or Michelangelo.<sup>78</sup>

The Trecento also saw donor portraiture utilised for consciously political ends by more lowly patrons, although Simone Martini's St. Louis of Toulouse crowning Robert of Anjou (c.1317), depicting a canonized brother crowning his temporal successor, still works within a courtly, hieratic tradition derived from Byzantium. An earthly rule is legitimised visually and one brother passes his worldly identity on to another. Yet the religious content is foremost: Robert is smaller than the frontal and enthroned saint, and both act out the ceremonial inheritance and blessing against a gold background with its floating angels.<sup>79</sup>

Another donor portrait which combines political and religious intent is Lorenzetti's depiction of the twenty four governors in a representation of Good Government in the Siense Palazzo Pubblico.<sup>80</sup> They are virtuous exemplars whose ritual procession connects Concordia with a personification of the Commune. These men are donors in a very real sense, for they are the government embodied, representing the political entity that commissioned the frescoes and that hopes to be guided by the virtue presented there. Their group solidarity and orderliness is part of the fresco's very meaning and they are portrayed as a group more than as individuals. A Florentine predella of 1391, beneath a Virgin enthroned, portraying that city's governors as a group attending to Christ as a teacher, is a similar combination of civic and religious virtue.<sup>81</sup>

Piero della Francesca's fresco of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta before St. Sigismund (1451) thus has a long history behind its joint dedication "to the Immortal God and to the City."<sup>82</sup> The Tornaquinci men in S.Maria Novella's Annunciation to Zacharias do not have the authority of election, inheritance or usurpation, but they are exemplary members of a "republican," ruling elite, standing in a public space, wearing civic costume, while an inscription praises "the most beautiful city" (Pls 2, 6, 7). The chief patron Giovanni

Tornabuoni is represented again on the window wall as a kneeling donor in simpler attire (Pl. 24) and there he recalls the "act of piety and love of God" he had cited as one of his motives in the contract of 1485 with Ghirlandaio. The other two justifications mentioned there were "the exaltation of his house and family and the enhancement of the said church and chapel."<sup>83</sup> A civic, religious and family impetus for portraiture and art cohered in S.Maria Novella as part of a long tradition.

A Trecento donor portrait in S.Maria Novella itself also illuminates the Tornaquinci chapel's context. A relief records the patronage of a chapel by Riccardo di Riccio Bardi, whose will enabled his sons to acquire their chapel in 1335. The sculpture posthumously portrays Riccardo kneeling and praying, with the same crossed arms gesture that Giovanni Tornabuoni makes on his window wall, before St. Gregory, the chapel's titular saint. Family arme are prominent above and an inscription below specifies the chapel's dedication to St. Gregory, in the name of "Ricardo de' Bardi e di figliuoli e de' suoi disceudenti." The familial nature of the donation is thus indicated, with the actual provider of the money portrayed as the posthumous founder, who in some sense remains head of the family after his death. Furthermore, the relief is probably "a public demonstration and guarantee that the Bardi family would continue the established dedication of the chapel to St. Gregory."<sup>84</sup> The inscription and the visual presentation of St. Gregory and Riccardo virtually have the status of a legal contract, by the donors with the saint and with the monks. Words and image also witness the enactment of Bardi's testament. This quasi-legal signification of both portrait and inscription recalls the Brunelleschi altarpiece of 1394 and Giovanni Chellini's tomb discussed in Chapter 1.

That this "legal" undercurrent was recognised and continuous is suggested by Filippo Strozzi's will of 1491 which blatantly provides masses not only "per remedio della anima" but also "in segno di ricognitione della fondatione della chiesa et convento et protectione et patronaggio di decti beni..."<sup>85</sup> The Strozzi chapel concerned included a donor portrait of Filippo in the predella of an altarpiece by Domenico Ghirlandaio's workshop. Portraiture and masses were dual,

even interchangeable, in more than one sense. Just as masses were offered before the altar for "antecessori" and self "in perpetuo," so donor portraits often included one's wife or family. In both cases perpetual devotion and eternal salvation are attained, by efficacious visual and religious acts. Similarly, both give extra weight or "ricognitione" to the family's legal patronage rights over a chapel or altar. Artists too could use self portraiture, arme or inscriptions to "sign" their work, since each were visual symbols connecting their skill to the patron's offering. Thus, Domenico Ghirlandaio's self portrait in the Expulsion of Joachim, with his own companions and opposite Tornaquinci donors, functions in a way similar to his several signatures in the adjacent Birth of Mary (Pls 15, 17).<sup>86</sup>

Arme and portraits, displayed in similar positions, were familial, quasi-legal and religious signs of ownership and honour, marking out the family's preserve. Thus, Lorenzo de' Medici placed small silver replicas of himself "beside each of his best patronised altars," a development of his kneeling childhood votive which was placed beside his mother's in SS. Annunziata.<sup>87</sup> Thereby he was participating in sacramental salvation, gathering prayers from the many visitors, proclaiming his ownership of rights, publicly displaying his honour and his embellishment of the church and city. The importance of legal ownership is attested to by Cosimo de' Medici's frustration in S. Marco, where families with ancient rights refused to surrender them. As Gombrich points out, this probably led to Cosimo's explicit stipulations for S. Lorenzo: "no other coats of arms or devices or tombs should be placed in the aforesaid choir and nave, except those of Cosimo and of members of the Chapter."<sup>88</sup> As Francesco Sassetti wrote to his sons in 1488 when he was complaining about his lack of patronage rights in S. Maria Novella, arme were symbols of "honour and a sign of our antiquity."<sup>89</sup>

Such sentiments are illustrated by Vasari's tale about the wrangling between Giovanni Tornabuoni and the Ricci over patronage rights for the cappella maggiore in S. Maria Novella.<sup>90</sup> The Ricci, supposedly original patrons of the chapel, could not afford much-needed repairs but nor would they "grant the task to others from fear of losing their rights and their armorial bearings left them by

their ancestors." Eventually Giovanni received permission to decorate the chapel, promising the Ricci he "would have their arms put up in the most prominent and honourable part of the chapel." The wily Giovanni placed large sculpted arms of his consorteria as well as their portraits throughout the chapel, for the entire consorteria was declared the legal patron in 1486. The contract also directed Ghirlandaio to "paint all the arms which the said Giovanni should require on any part according to his own wish and pleasure." Giovanni's "pleasure" manifested itself in a small shield, showing the Ricci arms, only about 14.5 cm. high, on the tabernacle of the Sacrament! Opening day is a nice comedy in Vasari's account: the Ricci search everywhere for their arms but, not seeing them, rush off to the lawyers. The luckless Ricci are defeated, for the magistrates decide that "if the Ricci could not see [the arms] it was their own fault, because they ought to be satisfied that their arms were placed near the Sacrament, than which no place was more holy."

The legal ruling stressed the proximity of the Ricci arme to the "holy" tabernacle, thereby indicating the central importance of the eucharist, its continuing association with donation and the arme as a sign of such an offering. Furthermore, associative position rather than size was vital. Lotte Brand Philip has astutely discussed the relationship between an altarpiece, the eucharist housed nearby and the "rite of the Eucharist ... celebrated over the very altar above which [the donor's] portrait appears." Hence, the donor portraits in van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece express not so much an "anticipation" of future deliverance, as an actual "participation," for "the praying mortal is also depicted as offering his devotion here and now in the present time and in the present sanctuary."<sup>91</sup> The same is true of Italian altarpieces and of donor portraits in family chapels. Trexler has noted the visual and spatial significance of proximity to "the host, the living God himself ... Nearness to the host in procession was a mark of signal prestige."<sup>92</sup> S. Maria Novella was the very centre of the Corpus Christi feast-day and procession in Florence, which fact would have galled the Ricci even more, and increased the participatory nature of the Tornaquinci arme and portraits. Paliotti, or in the Tornaquinci chapel, an altar cloth and liturgical vestments, also carried family arme in close proximity to the Resurrection (Pl. 39)

and "the living God."<sup>93</sup>

(iii) The Quattrocento

The Quattrocento saw the continuation of types and attitudes about the religious, political and legal use of the visual object. The positioning of portraits within a sacred space and for a religious, efficacious function is particularly important. Liturgical and ceremonial rituals often motivated and then activated portraits which gave eternal life to the portrayed both in this world and the next. Future research must consider the when, how and why, but it can be suggested now that the development of portraiture is marked by entrance, into both the sacred realm and the narrative. It will be argued here that the reasons for this include the devotee's desire to reshape his soul, participate in a eucharistic salvation, imitate exemplars and prove himself worthy of "sure access."

Ultimately the visual consequences of an inner life and imitation, which included a naturalistic attention to outward appearances as well as an internal reshaping, were made manifest by more and more self-consciousness on the part of artist, viewer and portrayed so that the metaphor of a mirror will be employed at times here. The mid to late Quattrocento is interpreted as a period during which artist and "narratee" (a shorthand term for viewer and viewed, often the same) were aware of a tension or ambiguity between "artifact" and "fact," the mirror being an insertion between the two. Self-conscious identity and visual manipulation, much more evident by the time of Mannerism and the courtly behaviour of the sixteenth century, are not to be confused with either individualism or naturalism. The categories offered by Burckhardt in the nineteenth century are replaced here by terms more appropriate to the late twentieth century.

The development of the donor portrait in fifteenth century Italy, for all its supposed individualism and "the context of belief" in which it occurred, has received surprisingly scant attention.<sup>94</sup> Masaccio's Trinity (Pl. 78) is an exception, for its donor portraits

and architectural setting, with their iconography of redemption through the eucharist in this life and salvation after death, can not be ignored.<sup>95</sup> The portrayed are communicants at Heavenly Mass and blessed with eternal life according to Rona Goffen's recent argument, which sits well with Eisler's suggestion that the architectural perspective has been affected deeply by the necessary focus upon the revealed eucharist. Indeed one could say that the fresco shows the communicants kneeling at the moment of the Host's Elevation in an unearthly chapel. Like the Tornaquinci men portrayed later in the same church but in a narrative, the donors are in one sense already inhabitants of the City of God, just as the Cavalli family, for instance, were shown, before 1370 in their chapel at Verona, presented to a receptive Virgin and Child who share their architectural space, scale and eternal time.

However, one of the differences in the Quattrocento works is, in a sense, the greater distance or more subtle tension operating between sacred and portrayed. The actuality of donors in this world attending to their ritual devotion before the altar, praying and viewing the Host, means that they are present at both sanctuaries, the earthly altar and the heavenly chapel. They are on the mirror's edge, at the portal, as it were, mediating between the portrayed inner vision and the viewer's eye. Both Masaccio and Ghirlandaio show their figures towards the edge, garbed ceremonially and looking without a fixed focus on the actual vision and/or narrative (unless, in the latter case, some figures further demand the viewer's engagement by looking outwards). Participation or bold entry is there but does not extend to a presumptuous, impossible equality. The Cavalli knights or Giotto's patrons kneel and must each be accompanied by patron saints, Masaccio's donors kneel and venerate alone, Ghirlandaio's stand but on the spectating sidelines: there may be a development towards greater "access" or entry in this series but it can not be read as an evolution to "mere familiarity."

To state that Masaccio's portraits "are placed in front of the architecture ... rather than within its sacred space" as Lane does, is to miss the point. Intimacy is not the criterion by which we should judge Masaccio's Trinity against van Eyck's Rolin Madonna. Further,

both artists, in ways characteristic of their traditions, subtly distinguish between heavenly vision and the world of the devotee, Masaccio resorting more to mathematical order, architectural structure and gesture for instance. Awareness of the viewing eye and of the paradoxical task whereby he must make manifest the invisible leads him to the creation of a balanced tension. The figures are not within the inner sanctum (possibly the Golgotha Chapel) but they are firmly within the columnar frame and kneel on a painted platform which would have seemed to be above the altar. Their size and spatial setting is continuous with that of the other world and with the viewer's. The Virgin's gesture and compelling glance not only intercedes for the donors but also presents Christ and his salvation to the viewer, exhorting us to bear witness just as an inscription below offers a timely warning. Those elements closest to our realm are lit by the actual illumination of that shared space, whereas the inner sanctum is lit by a divine source, an inconsistency employed by van Eyck too.

Perspective and gesture, in fact the entire credibility of Masaccio's observation, unites two worlds which can never meet except by means of visual artifice. Certainly the "holy figures seem to be truly present before us, and not merely visions" as Goffen argues, but her rejection of Ursula Schlegel's view that the fresco is an "expression of personal prayer" is not necessary. A restricted either/or reading would not have been made by a contemporary used to the tangible visions conjured up during contemplation. The narratee was a member of the church who, according to Augustine,

lives in hope as long as the city of God, which is begotten of faith in the resurrection, sojourns in this world.

The earthly city of God was certainly only a symbol or shadow which served the purpose of reminding man that such a city was to be, rather than of making it present; and this image was itself called the holy city, as a symbol of the future city, though not itself the reality.

But Masaccio's task was precisely to cast light on the umbrae and his conscious balance between the two "cities" encompassed both vision and actuality, engaging the narratee within the one yet complex world.

Another donor portrait by Masaccio is almost totally ignored,



despite its innovation. The Pisa polyptych's Adoration of the Magi (Pl. 79) in the predella includes the notary Giuliano di Colino degli Scarsi and probably his nephew, standing side by side as worshippers of the newborn Christ.<sup>96</sup> Unlike the practice of, say, Altichiero in Padua or Masaccio himself in the Brancacci chapel, we do not find in this narrative however a crowd of amici who introduce familiar and hence veristic faces amongst multitudes. Here we are considering the strict usage of donor portraiture which, unlike Giotto's donors in his Pietà, are now neither kneeling nor needing a mediator and, unlike those standing stiffly at the edge of the Bovi chapel, Padua, are foregrounded and integrated in a less symbolic, narrative scene.

The Magi were "personifications of devotion"<sup>97</sup> and as such no narrative was more appropriate for the donors' presence. Three years earlier, in 1423, Gentile da Fabriano possibly had portrayed Palla Strozzi and his son in the Magi's retinue for similar reasons.<sup>98</sup> But Masaccio has isolated his figures away from the pages and horses, making them stand out by way of position and simple costume. The donors gaze at the adoration and although they are in traditional profile, they are now standing, within the narrative space, lit by consistent illumination and within the action. The patrons are more "bourgeois" than ever before, as indicated by the costume: a notary rather than a knight or a chancellor donated this work. But most important, the donors are tangibly present in the act of devotion, participants in the narrative and witnesses of redemption. Colour, modelling and contemporary, non-courtly costume mark out their faces and bodies from those of the other participants, but the tension between sacred Incarnation and everyday time differs from that in the more timeless, ritual image of Masaccio's Trinity. Rarely does such boldness occur again in the Quattrocento, where even the late practice of artists like Ghirlandaio is to distance devotees on the edges or amongst crowds, albeit as participants.

The tension between sacred (ever concealed) and secular (ever present) in relation to a donor's possible entry into the sacred realm by visual but never literal means became finer in the course of the Quattrocento. Ghirlandaio still does not cross a final barrier, aware that a visual presence was metaphorical: to have been actual such

presence would have been perhaps heretical and certainly a stern Savonarola was to voice disapproval. On the other hand, some artists, doubtless upon their patron's urging or as a means of flattery, circumvented such barriers by using the donor's face as the model for the features of a saint, a type which will be called here the "guise." Vasari was not the only or earliest writer to see portrait features in a painted saint, since Savonarola attacked the use of models for the depiction of female saints.<sup>99</sup>

While the depiction of an Emperor or ruler as a saint, or even of a king's mistress as the Virgin, might be termed "allegorical portraiture,"<sup>100</sup> a more humble donor in "guise" would not seem to be claiming elaborate virtues, political legitimacy or literal saintliness. Rather, the donor's striving after identification with his patron saint or with his moral exemplum, and his consciousness of the art's purpose as an offering for salvation, allowed his imitative presence within paradise. Thus, a (Niccolò?) Pugliese is St. Nicholas offering his attribute, the golden balls, to the Virgin and Child in an altarpiece by Piero di Cosimo and this saint was particularly appropriate as a saint of charity and donation. Alfonso II is an anguish-wracked Joseph of Arimathea in a free standing sculpted group, mourning over Christ: the emotional intensity, three-dimensional verism and religious participation are indivisible.<sup>101</sup> Alfonso, with a ruler's privilege, has moved much closer to an emotional participation than was possible for Giotto's donors nearly a century earlier, but the full barriers are not perhaps dissolved until Loyola's method of contemplative participation allied with a Baroque sensibility brought divine and profane into a new co-existence. During the Renaissance any such "impersonation" as Millard Meiss calls it, was not, I believe, a matter of "intimacy" or familiarity, but of allegorical or metaphorical actuality only.<sup>102</sup>

Since facial features could be "disguised" in another context, it is not surprising that arme too were suggested subtly, by such means as Botticelli's animation of the Vespucci bees or Ghirlandajo's prominent use of a sasso in the Sassetti altarpiece.<sup>103</sup> An artist's awareness of visual means could extend to his use of his own visage, like signature or arme, affixed to the offering. Taddeo di Bartolo is

nimbed, Botticelli stands too with fellow witnesses and, by the time of a Giorgione or a Michelangelo, the self-portrait is "guised" as a single David.<sup>104</sup> However, our evidence for claiming that a self-portrait exists often comes from the give-away glance and angle of the head which suggests the use of a mirror and in many cases neither portraiture nor self-portraiture can be recognised with certainty. So even in the case of self-portraiture, the sense of distinguishable and characterised features only suggests the use of a model and we can not always make the additional assertion that a "portrait" was intended as such. Hence Masaccio may have played, again, an important role in Florence, for a lost St. Paul fresco may have been a portrait in "guise" of Bartolo Angiolini but, like Donatello's possible use of recognisable facial features for his statues on the Campanile, this equally may have been a witty in-joke or an extra device to assert the artist's veristic skill and to aid the viewer's acceptance of the religious figure as an historical actuality and exemplar.<sup>105</sup>

What these examples most insistently suggest is a subtle consciousness of the viewer in a relationship with the art and artist. The degree to which visual plausibility and efficacy were conscious, operative motivations, beyond "realistic" "face"-value, in the Renaissance is being treated by more art historians.<sup>106</sup> Colin Eisler has linked not only the rise of large, expensive monstrances and new altar constructions but also Brunelleschi's invention of one-point perspective (Pl. 78) with an increasing desire to display constantly the eucharist as "visual proof for Christ's existence on earth," or what I would rather call the redemptive presence of Christ. Metaphorical but visible presence was the point too of a devotee's rush to see the elevated Host and the same sense of visual and sacred potency, it can be argued, imbues the overall drive during the Renaissance towards naturalism. Whether Brunelleschi's perspective system was motivated by a need to bring new focus to the revelation centred on the Host or more generally to make redemption more visually actual, it has become possible to argue that naturalism was, if you will, "unworldly" and descriptive of supernatural truths. When Martin Kemp offers instead the explanation that Brunelleschi's "geometric spirit" can be associated with Leonardo Bruni's presentation of

Florence as an ideal city in ordered form, the same sense of naturalistic means being employed to ideal ends still applies. The two arguments need not be exclusive, particularly if the subconsciousness with which a period eye can develop is granted, alongside the necessarily conscious articulation of such drives by later historians.

At the other end of the century, we can briefly mention the possibilities raised by John O'Malley's study of sermons in the Papal court, possibilities greeted with enthusiasm by art historians, including Leo Steinberg, for their visual cues.<sup>107</sup> The latter's study of "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion" seizes on the preachers' festive celebration of the Incarnation, citing a late fifteenth century admonition

Whereas in earlier times men had to search for the truth and dispute about it, in the Christian era men are to enjoy it.

So the "marriage of godhead with human nature" is to be praised not proved and "Realism, the more penetrating the better, was consecrated a form of worship." Renaissance art then, in Steinberg's terms, was a paean to redemption:

Its world (to adapt Bonaventure's formula) is a world 'known, loved, and imitated,' a world restored to admirable perfection, a natural order of divine institution and redeemed carnality.

O'Malley adds that rhetoric's address lifted the

audience to lofty sentiments that would then animate behaviour worthy of a Christian. It is at this juncture that the rhetoric evokes and promotes the theme of the 'dignity of man.'

So naturalism and individualism, those two catchcries given us by Burckhardt as typifying the Renaissance, can be cast in a profoundly religious mould.

Further, the thrust of ekphrasis, praising and blaming in sermons, the admiration of varietà and decorum in art and language, can be associated with the particular choice made by Renaissance naturalism, a style increasingly "rhetorical" in its aggrandisement and realistic.

Portraiture and its presence in sacred contexts, especially narratives, was but another instance of this confident celebration of the restoration offered by the Incarnation. The audience was animated and the portrayed was shown as "worthy," both viewer and viewed being engaged in a participation and an imitation.

The donor portrait during the Quattrocento intensifies and continues modes utilised in the Trecento. "Real" and sacred, narrative and ritual, coincide at a point where now narratee and artist are more aware of the visual means available. Naturalism in portraiture and plausibility of spatial depth and backdrop can not be divorced from a religious plausibility: by appearing more actual, the donors and their world present a religious, metaphorical actuality. Donors participate in the eucharistic ritual eternally, receive the fulfilment of salvation and stand near the elect, witness the Incarnation, mirror an exemplum, present themselves to their audience (both current and future) with an identity predicated upon both public dignity and future grace.

Their consciousness or "individualism" was possible only within a continuum: religious, family and social networks, present and eternal, were being utilised and addressed. That awareness, for artist and donor, was almost like a mirror, since the patron could view himself and was burdened by an awareness of other viewers. The portrayed move with dignity and adopt a public persona during the Renaissance. Form is accessible in more forthright, naturalistic terms perhaps, but equally vital is the way it is tempered by a sense of ritual, decorum and aggrandisement or "rhetoric," including visual idealism. The city of God and its citizens sojourning in this world are portrayed by a kind of "rhetorical realism," a fine tension between possibility and promise.

By Ghirlandaio's time "sure access" has made of the narrative a public, well established ritual, but either "guise" or the bystanding crowd of portraits is still at some distance, engaged in necessary ritual which both accesses and reshapes ideally: the portrayed enter the sacred narrative under very special constraints. In the Sassetti chapel's Confirmation of the Rule (Pl. 62), the sacred and secular

worlds lie side by side, with figures and architecture in horizontal, divided layers. The ritual in one is mirrored on a parallel set of stairs in the other, yet both are a combination of historical occurrence with idealisation. Whatever the finer points of interpretation may be, and they suggest political, patriotic metaphor,<sup>108</sup> the two worlds are related but not united. In the fresco below we see instead a crowd of witnesses around an appropriate Resurrection and the union is greater in that an event which took place in Rome has been transferred to Florence's Piazza S.Trinita.

But in S.Maria Novella Ghirlandaio's topography more closely approximates an heavenly sanctuary, since architecture and landscape are now idealised, making of the city of God a plausible actuality or celebration. Within this unified, religious context the portraits, conscious of themselves and the viewer, indicate a public persona by conduct, contemporary costume and stately distance from the central narrative. A group portrait stands ceremoniously around an altar and in a public space in both the Zacharias and Joachim opening scenes (Pls 2, 14), closest to the viewer's entrance and towards whom some glance and gesture is directed. The chief male and (posthumous) female donors also kneel either side of where the real altar stood, as it would have appeared to the viewer at some distance (Pls 24, 25). In both Birth scenes and the Visitation an entourage of women visit as witnesses and devotees (Pls 8, 9, 15).

Pope-Hennessy mentions the Florentine "vogue for donor portraiture ... after 1476," linking it only to an interest in Flemish examples. Gilbert has identified the distinctive development in the late fifteenth century of

the 'intrusive' portraits of donors and their friends who appear in narrative frescoes and other large many-figured works with the excuse of being minor participants in the event.<sup>109</sup>

Yet neither author discusses what this "excuse" might be, other than to imply self-aggrandisement, which does not explain the presence of "friends" or family, nor the change in style and figurative action. As has been suggested already in this chapter, social and religious developments must be examined to understand a Scarsi or a Tornaquinci standing in the inner sanctum of a religious event. Two classes of

explanation are offered here. Firstly, earlier reasons for portraiture in a religious context were to be remembered and developed in the Quattrocento. Secondly, social and religious changes in the later Quattrocento allowed an expansion in full-scale, group and narrative portraiture.

(iv) Group Portraiture

"Friends" begin to enter a crowd in a narrative during the Trecento, when recognisable faces aid the legend's veracity. The celebration of the Incarnation and especially the urge to imitate both an exemplar's behaviour and his setting, so insistent by the late Quattrocento, also find their visual roots in the experimentation of the earlier period. The precise origins of the practice, whereby faces become distinctive, can never be determined, since characterisation only emerges gradually, but differentiation within crowds is certainly evident by the mid to late Trecento.<sup>110</sup> Of necessity the crowd is usually only required at a scene's edge, to verify, react and relate, but occasionally a crowd would fill a narrative's centre or edge towards prominence there. This was most likely if the portraits were placed in the lowest, most visible register but wherever they occur the portraits were either simply particularised in key with the narrative's overall detail, or were modelled deliberately on very public faces recognisable by a majority. These latter portraits tended to be what Philip has called "the honour portrait," of rulers and notables, usually included for reasons of a courtly, dynastic, political or diplomatic nature. Hence the Counts of Flanders ride as Judges in van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, though their prominence and positioning in a separate wing evidently signifies "the universal concept of the civilian power of Christendom."<sup>111</sup> Official status then does not preclude iconographic and religious significance as a further reason for the portrayal of dignitaries within a chapel.

In Italy, such "honour portraits" were an extension of naturalistic rendering but could carry evocative overtones, as Margaret Plant has drawn out from Altichiero's inclusion of many

signorial courtiers, including Petrarch, within a cycle of St. James in the Lupi Chapel, S. Antonio, Padua.<sup>112</sup> This example from the 1370s employs portraiture to extend references to contemporary politics and theories on the state, such that the Council of King Ramiro and the adjacent Battle of Clavigo in particular forms "a group portrait of rare range and meaning." Original in the degree of "participation in the drama" granted to these men depicted as warriors and councillors at the centre, the frescoes nevertheless allow this in a religious context. Soldiers, scholars, signors are there as exemplars of Christian virtue and it is not only "the patron [who] has relinquished his modest donor role [separately presented beneath the Virgin and Child within the same chapel] in order to participate in the symbolic narrative that will be the very proof of his fame."

On the other hand, group portraiture was a flourishing and increasingly secularised mode for both "donor" and "crowd" portraits in the North Italian cities and probably Naples, which were signorial and eventually ducal.<sup>113</sup> Such famous fresco ensembles from the Quattrocento as those in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara, the Camera degli Sposi, Mantua and Lombard instances, were replete with portraits in rooms with secular functions and programmes.<sup>114</sup> But here too portraits often are neither illustrative nor naturalistic for their own sake. Certainly the Ferrarese and Mantuan instances are known to contain idealised, even allegorical, displays more than everyday events. That flattery, diplomacy, virtù by association and propagandistic references to legitimacy and status were at least partly the motivation behind Mantegna's portraits in Mantua, is clearly indicated in a series of letters from 1474, and 1475.<sup>115</sup> The Duke of Milan was "not a bit pleased" at his portrait's exclusion from the Camera "about which furthermore everybody here is talking"; both personal and public dignity were offended and portraiture was the cause. The Marquis' reply was a rebuff: "the Emperor is my superior, and the King of Denmark is my brother-in-law, and since they have been seen by so many people ..., it would be too great an awkwardness to remove them." Again public knowledge is at the core of a portrait's existence; the portrayed were to be recognised and the implications understood; they were efficacious not superficial, even when secular.



Florentine group portraiture, however, remained in a religious setting. The closest parallel to Mantegna's Camera degli Sposi would be Gozzoli's Journey of the Magi, completed in the Palazzo Medici's chapel around 1459: both subject and context were religious, with overtones of the ceremonial and ambassadorial. The Magi, as typological donors and faithful, were often "guised" as or accompanied by portraits, so Medici use of them was astute but within traditional allowances.<sup>116</sup> During the Trecento group and donor portraits were gathered often within such subjects as a Last Judgement or Paradise scene, whether at Giotto's Arena Chapel, Padua, or in the chapel of the Podestà in Florence connected with Giotto.<sup>117</sup>

S.Maria Novella contains two of the chief examples from the Florentine Trecento, those frescoed with the blessed and the damned by Nardo di Cione in the Strozzi Chapel and, secondly, those representations of universal Christendom in Andrea da Firenze's Way to Paradise (Pl. 80). The Dominicans particularly encouraged the commemoration, not of their founder, which distinguishes them from the Franciscans, but of representative men, including their own beati, a tradition followed by Fra Angelico in the chapterhouse at S.Marco and available to the Tornabuoni as donors later in S.Maria Novella. The portraits in that chapel are truly representative of the family's past history, current glory and future hope. In 1486 the Dominican friars ceded the chapel's patronage rights not to Giovanni Tornabuoni alone, although he paid for its decoration, but to the entire consorteria "in perpetuo." In the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pl. 2) we see this family almost re-iterating the legal document in an explosion of the traditional donor portrait which could be called a "patron portrait."<sup>118</sup>

During the Trecento in general the scenes chosen by Florentines for group portraits were often not narratives but those depictions with overtones of ideology and salvation. This contrasts with the North Italian practice in that crowds required by any narrative were more often converted there into clusters of portraits by artists such as Altichiero, although something of the apparent contrast may be due to the less particularised interests of Florentine artists and patrons whereby portraits in such frescoes as Giovanni da Milano's Expulsion

of Joachim are harder to recognise. To some degree Gilbert and Pope-Hennessy are right to exclude from consideration "those that are only portraits in that they were drawn from the model, even when the model is a notable person," when veracity alone rather than honour was the intention.<sup>119</sup> But too little awareness of, say, Altichiero's practice, has marred the discussion of portraiture, orienting it too much only towards the Quattrocento and neglecting certain of its functions.

Even Plant's provocative and stimulating conclusion on North Italian fresco cycles of saints' lives, I would argue, tends to accept naturalism and worldliness for its own sake in relation to portraiture, although the leads offered by her discussion enable a religious contextualisation.<sup>120</sup> We are now discussing not so much the most visible "honour portraits" as those other narratives in which crowds of witnesses have characterised faces, some of which are still of notable persons like Petrarch and Francesco da Carrara. Plant proposes that such faces are one device to establish

the inclusion of a narratee. While the observer's entry into pictorial space may well be facilitated by a logically depicted space, this is secondary to a larger exercise of empathy evoked by likeness of bearing, continuity of surroundings and the very discursiveness of the presentation of events.

Her point has been to stress "the vital series of expansions in fourteenth century narratal language" begun at Assisi and the Arena Chapel, whereby a "Renaissance urge-to-involvement" and a "desire, to enter" was fulfilled.

The cycles of saints are undeniably dogma, even though of an extra-Biblical and still novel type, connecting the sermon, morality play to the restatement of the exemplum. But this is merely the overt message: important is the increasingly less compromised being-in-the-world.

However, to "enter" the portrayed world as either viewer or viewed, that is, as "narratee," was to reshape God's creation: to be in-the-world was to be with-God. "Compromise," or a tension between material world and spiritual reality, is fundamental to all Christianity and the visualised amalgamation of those two (indivisible) realms found an increasingly naturalistic voice during the Renaissance which did not need to deny either God or man.

Plant's thesis stands as a refreshing investigation of the visual means employed to ever-religious ends. The disagreement here is one of emphasis as to motivation and Plant's discussion itself offers the lead by mentioning the exemplary nature of a saint's life. For instance, portraits of Petrarch, Francesco da Carrara and others less notable in Altichiero's Baptism of King Sevio stand in a scene which stresses conversion and which uses contemporaneous architecture, costume and gesture as well as portraiture, of various ages and classes, to convey the story's reality and applicability to the viewed and the viewer. "Again verifiable witnesses are introduced into the martyr's story and thus they reaffirm the relevance of baptism and identify with the righteous life."<sup>121</sup> Both portrayed and observer are witnesses engaged in exemplary conduct and its dramatised presentation. Such "empathy portraits," as we might term them, are involved in a world and a narrative whose religious veracity and vivacity is uppermost.

Characterised faces are only one element of "genre incident" employed in the Trecento and Quattrocento to this end:

the narratee ... is indisputably inbuilt, not as embellishment, or as an Albertian demonstration of varietà, but as agent of the address, the very evidence of the narration.

However, Alberti too, following Baxandall's lead, can be read in a way which places him in a continuous tradition. Varietà is not only aesthetic demonstration but, like the range of representative ages and classes, a means whereby plausibility and engagement is increased and, especially by the mid to late Quattrocento, a visual celebration of the Incarnation.

North Italian writers, since at least Petrarch, also had praised varietas in painters like Pisanello since thereby was expressed "a variety of feelings and passions in keeping with the variety of the action," as Fazio said of Rogier van der Weyden. The functional value of expressio was adapted from Byzantine ekphrasis as well as Latin rhetoric. As George of Trebizond stated in 1429: "variety ... both strengthens one's case and gives delight to the spectator." The persuasive, expressive and celebratory nature of embellishment can be

forgotten by art historians at our cost. Fazio insisted that painting requires the representation not only of the face or countenance and the lineaments of the whole body, but also, and far more, of its interior feelings and emotions, so that the picture may seem to be alive and sentient and somehow move and have action.

Art as moving and "enlivened" was also Alberti's aim: "movements of the soul are made known by movements of the body."<sup>122</sup>

So northern writers and Alberti can be seen to support textually an argument about the inbuilt, or what I call necessary, narratee. Visual participation in a narrative was the aim also of meditation texts, to arouse piety through imitation and delight, and Alberti was typical of the Quattrocento by making of these religious and humanist modes of perception a more rhetorical, self-conscious and cogitated set of precepts. When he advocates the inclusion of "a figure who admonishes and instructs us about what is happening in the picture" (Pl. 78) he is, in part, developing the role of the "empathy portrait" and seeking another link between viewer and viewed. Yet Alberti may be here also an early indication of what Michelangelo most noticeably did to disrupt the narrative by repelling participation, stressing more the artist's intervention and lifting the narrative to a distant, ideological height. The Albertian festaiuolo was to organise our visual feast and to instruct us in the proper moral seriousness.<sup>123</sup>

In this sense the "genre incident" of the Trecento was to be replaced during the Quattrocento by a more self-conscious narratee and by the priority of the viewer. The "Renaissance urge-to-involvement" was now more imbued with an ethical and celebratory sense of the religious exemplum (what I call in a later section "imitative" behaviour) and by a sense that this involvement could be a matter of efficacious activation by sheer presence alone which is never reducible, however, to intimacy. Since the Host was viewed far more than it was imbibed, since human presence and prayer activated and brought into existence the sacred, and since portraits more often, by the late fifteenth century, stand as evident spectators rather than absorbed, particularised "actors," I will term this trend "inward."

Gilbert noted that a shift occurred around 1475, in that group portraits were no longer only in scenes which necessitated crowds and the figures became "bolder," more intrusive, and "acquire a single identity as spectators." He singled out all six scenes in the Christ cycle of the Sistine Chapel, done in the early 1480s by Perugino and Florentines including Botticelli and Ghirlandaio (Pl. 55). More research is needed on portraiture but it must be noted that such standing onlookers occur already, if less frequently, outside Florence and during the Trecento, in such examples as the Bovi chapel executed in Padua in 1397. However in that instance only four men, mostly "honour portraits," stand stiffly at the edge of the Death of the Virgin, "bold" in neither gesture nor integration with the composition, in a scene commemorating eternal life and seeking intercession, unlike, for instance, the Sistine frescoes where often the subject seems to have little to recommend it to a context of salvation and is populated by the Pope's "friends," following the dynastic mode of a Camera degli Sposi or of the "honour portrait."<sup>124</sup>

Losses and an imprecise chronology make too neat a watershed impossible to define<sup>125</sup> but Gilbert rightly stresses this new type, of which the portraits crowded into the Annunciation to Zacharias, Expulsion of Joachim and Visitation by Ghirlandaio are examples (Pls 2, 8, 14). They are foregrounded, distinctive, boldly entering the heavenly sanctuary, albeit at an edge, and sometimes reacting with the viewer. While Gilbert feels that the other frescoes in the Tornabuoni chapel "show portraits through secondary actors or not at all," following older procedures, the two women who lead the visiting retinues in each of the Birth scenes (Pls 11, 18) deserve attention as less intrusive than the male portraits but nevertheless marked out by placement, compositional focus, pose, separation from their followers and, in the more visible instance, profile and arme on one woman's costume. They are portrayed in "guise," not as members of a crowd, nor as saints, but as obligatory visitors required in any Birth scene (Pl. 83) and they become supplicants and witnesses of an exemplum nearly as singular and evident as the male portraits.

Gilbert criticises Pope-Hennessy for neglecting the importance of Ghirlandaio in the emergence of these "pure spectators" in crowded

numbers but neither attempts an explanation for this type or shift. Why was it possible for donors and non-donors to fill so thoroughly a religious scene that they seemed to care sacreligiously for themselves alone? A neo-Burckhardtian explanation in terms of individualism and a less religious age would be a case of anachronistic hindsight. At the time, a portrait's presence within the sacred narrative of Botticelli's Adoration of the Magi or Ghirlandaio's Annunciation to Zacharias (Pls 2, 6, 7), even when on the field's edge, was a development of the "honour portrait" and a more evident sign of supplication and inward participation: presence alone was honourable, activating, participatory and exemplary. Like Alberti's commentator, and his use of the frame and figural proportion to each aid perspective, these portraits on the "sidelines" are aware of the viewer and frame the narrative. From our point of view of hindsight, they might seem to signal the beginning of the end of the narratee's involvement. At the time, however, it was a development only from past traditions: the tension between sacred and secular, viewed and viewer, was transitional but not irreligious or unique.<sup>126</sup>

(v) The Conflation of Donor with Group Portraiture and other factors in the later Quattrocento

In a sense the spectators who look on are now a combination of the "empathy portrait" with the "honour" and "donor portrait" types. In S.Maria Novella especially the grouped spectators (Pls 2, 8, 9, 14) conflate such origins both in terms of visual effect and function. They are recognisable and within the bounds of a narrative space continuous with the viewer's but they are also clearly marked out, not by a difference of scale or by a kneeling posture, but by their role as standing onlookers, grave and dignified.<sup>127</sup> They are not narrative props but witnesses and worshippers, like the Lenzi adoring the Trinity (Pl. 78) or Chancellor Rolin praying at a vision which is now even more contiguous with the space, posture and scale of the portraits.

An instance in the Bentivoglio Chapel, S.Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna, of 1488, depicting the family near the Virgin and Child,

illustrates some of these points well (Pl. 81). It is a fresco which utilises the type of donor portrait allocated to an altarpiece: father and mother kneel either side of the sacred group but they are now angled towards the viewer, whilst below the throne stand the children in an open space, partly conversing or commenting but again more aware of the viewer than of the Virgin and Child. Partly signorial, partly donor portraits from an altarpiece, the portraits are also partly Albertian commentators framing the venerated image and engaging the viewing eye. They are self-conscious in their awareness of themselves as narratees and in their knowledge of that other narratee, the viewer, as though one is a mirror imitating the other. So too the Sasseti, the Tornaquinci, the men in the Sistine Chapel, all stand between viewer and viewed, like mirrors or staged commentators hovering, in tension between two worlds before the High Renaissance and Mannerism sunder the two in terms of visual artificiality or self-consciousness (Pls 3, 4, 55, 62).

A similar, ambiguous play was made verbally by Alessandro Bracci in 1473, precisely AD BUSTUM MARMOREUM of the dead Albiera Albizzi:

Albiera, whose noble form is to be admired, asks, o passerby,  
That you stop a little and consider  
Whether Polykleitos' or Praxiteles' deft hand  
Ever made such visages from Parian marble.  
But lest there be on earth any lovelier than the goddesses,  
Death, at the command of the deities, carried me off.

When discussing this text in relation to the totus homo represented by Renaissance sculpted busts (Pls 87, 89), Lavin concludes:

The verbal equivalent of the horizontal cut-off [of a bust] is the title: in an arbitrary way, since it is not part of the poem, it calls attention to the material and the incompleteness of the object. In the text, however, the words 'form' [forma] and 'visage' [vultus] are used, and these refer not to an object but to an image and a person. Thus, because the title addresses a marble bust and the text alludes to a human being, on reading the epigram we inevitably think of what can only be described as the whole individual.

I would take Lavin's insight differently, making of the marble vultus a reference to the visual efficacy of marble which can evoke real presence and eternal preservation, rather than linking the "independent portrait of a living, private individual" with "freedom of will." Nor is "the whole individual" an adequately inclusive term

for Renaissance consciousness, where by the later fifteenth century a sense of inwardness could lead Ficino to speak of "the eternal within himself." Wholeness seems a finely balanced awareness in the Renaissance, one in which the immanence of the spiritual and eternal was not disparate from material substance. A fullstop in the epigram, a metaphorical parapet or mirror in portraiture, lies between the reciprocal realms: the viewing commentator, then the portrait, each are narratees who address the viewer who is also a narratee.<sup>128</sup>

Another visual manifestation of the participatory but evident nature of the spectator portrait occurs, chiefly from the 1460s and 1470s, whether in Verona, Venice or Tuscany, when some donors are shown only by their busts, adoring the image from the bottom edge of a work. Sometimes even more truncated than the most foregrounded figures, who are devotees rather than donors, in Ghirlandaio's Confirmation of the Rule for the Sassetti chapel or Annunciation to Zacharias for the Tornaquinci (Pls 2, 62), these donors are physically still more than half of this world yet most visible to the officiating priest and fellow supplicators at the altar. In part, the half-length image of either Virgin or donor derives from imperial and funerary usage, where it already connoted eternal presence, even visionary apparition. Like the slightly earlier sculpted busts which cut off just above the elbows, often without a base, such a donor is the totus homo whose eternal presence within both the art and the chapel is implied precisely by the evident but inward, "invisible" means of partial and humble adoration at the frame's edge. By visually suggesting the continuation of a body in the viewer's space, these figures in abisso also act like commentators introducing the viewer to the depicted world.

Goffen has said of the ledge in half-length images of the Virgin that it establishes a "deliberately ambiguous spatial zone," partly "transitional," partly a "barrier." "In this paradoxical double function the parapet is the meeting-place of the two realms, sacred and worldly." Visual creation can make palpable and apprehensible the impossible and concealed. That Andre Chastel could read the "loi du seuil" as an hieratic separation between mortal and divine while Sixten Ringbom could speak of the "intimate quality of the half-length



icon ... well suited for the private devotion and profound empathy of the individual" is, in part, no more than a reflection of the "paradox." Certainly the diptychs originating from Fouquet and Rogier van der Weyden, or the usage made of windows or viewing boxes by artists like Filippo Lippi and Gianlorenzo Bernini, all suggest again that "sure access" was never a matter of merely literal visualisation or familiarity. The frame, the artist, intervene on the one hand, while on the other the visual and actual ritual practices make the heavenly accessible.<sup>129</sup>

Occasionally a more literal kind of framing within a painting marked out the line of tension in a noticeable way. Manuscripts often showed devotees in the margin or border but a few monumental examples in the Italian Trecento divided the worlds in more visually subtle ways. For instance, a frescoed predella by Pietro Lorenzetti at Assisi framed a donor's profile bust and a triptych by Bernardo Daddi in 1334 showed the Virgin reaching over a fictive frame to answer a donor's prayer.<sup>130</sup> By the early 1470s it was rare to find either fictive or actual frames which divided donor from sacred. But a Rucellai altarpiece did place a penitent St. Jerome within a separate gilded and arched frame, on either side of which were kneeling donors and standing saints larger than the portraits. Donors and saints are within the one space, but separated by scale and frame from St. Jerome, visually suggesting a sacred hierarchy. Like the dividing frame of a Flemish diptych, the construction of the Rucellai altarpiece showed the devotees venerating a vision of much greater status.<sup>131</sup>

More unusual is a panel by Macrino d'Alba (Pl. 82), once signed and dated 1506, in which St. Francis receives the stigmata and is venerated by a tonsured, white-robed Franciscan, Enrico Balistrero.<sup>132</sup> This donor is present in the scene by way of a totally painted, but illusionistically framed and separate, portrait of his head and shoulders held by St. Francis' companion. As though a mirror held up to reflect St. Francis' features, the framed portrait enacts Enrico's wish to imitate eternally his exemplum. By such means an eternal, more than bodily, presence and veneration is suggested. Perugino and his pupil Pinturicchio could utilise their awareness of separation yet

association less naively by displaying their self-portraits within a frame and accompanied by an inscribed tablet below, frescoed as though part of the settings' furnishing. Signature and eternal witness, such self-portraits more usually stood amongst a crowd of spectators, in Gozzoli's case carrying an inscription on his cap or in the later and more noticeable cases of Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, identified by outward glance when they stand at the side of a narrative, Ghirlandaio further indicating his pride and devout offering by gesture in his latest self-portrait at S.Maria Novella (Pl. 17).<sup>133</sup>

The degree to which the tension, between inward participation and visible segregation, could be developed was well understood by Mantegna, who probably planned the tableau vivant which accompanied his Madonna della Vittoria to its altar in July 1496.

The image of the glorious virgin ... was raised up on a great platform, very admirably framed, and above this image was a youth dressed as God the Father, and two prophets were on either side, and at the sides three little angels singing certain lauds, and opposite were the twelve apostles. When it was time, this platform was lifted up ... and so this image was carried in procession ... with such a quantity of people male and female...<sup>134</sup>

Actual actors extended the votive panel into a three dimensional altarpiece with lunette, side panels, musical angels at the Virgin's feet and apostles standing before her, like an enlargement of Mantegna's S.Zeno altarpiece, or its inspiration, Donatello's altarpiece in Padua's S.Antonio or, in turn, its possible inspiration, carved altarpieces related to panels or frescoes.

But the illusionistic mixture of media is now enacted by "real" actors who stand on the stage as though it were an altar, not only "extending [the painting's] own imagery beyond its frame" as Gilbert notes, but also in another sense, by vivifying the sacra conversazione, actually framing the work within new but evident barriers or layers. A painted votive portrait on an elevated platform was then accompanied and framed by real yet arranged actors and, finally, a necessary element, the "spectators" in the processing crowd. In such two dimensional works as the Tornaquinci crowd by Ghirlandaio we find that commentators and spectators have become one but are as necessary as the processional "quantity of people" to

activate the scene and make it meaningful. Both painted and actual spectators were ceremonial participants, central activators yet at a certain kind of remove, manipulated by artifice and framing devices as well as participating by efficacious presence.

Mantegna's votive panel, offered as thanksgiving after a battle, was intended to "comfort" the victorious Francesco Gonzaga "and the whole city" and also to show him before "your intercessor and sole hope" the Virgin, with Saints George and Michael who "will give victory" to him always. But Monsignore Sigismondo Gonzaga also "hoped to see a fine cult grow up" from the altar, something he surely engineered since he reported that within three hours of its installation "some wax images were presented to it, and torches and other ex votos."<sup>135</sup> On the other hand, artistic and political manipulation does not preclude genuine belief in the image's efficacy, not only on behalf of the populace but also by the Gonzaga themselves, who obviously thought that portrayal and votive cults had political as well as religious significance.

The votive or donor portrait of a kneeling figure or a family in armour was a signorial mode practised since at least the 1370s in Northern courts and adopted by Mantegna in this Madonna della Vittoria of 1496. Certainly the use of armour, like the popularity of battle scenes or of military saints like St. George, indicates the cavalleresco spirit of these courts where "signorial ambition" was strong. But it should be noted that portrayal in armour surely originated from tomb sculpture and that virtually all examples from the Trecento were within funereal chapels, kneel as devotees and are not in narratives.<sup>136</sup> No matter what the presumed impact of an imported "International Style" was in Florence, the chivalric, armoured mode for portraiture was not readily adaptable to a republican context, although the religious and something of the social implications of such portraiture were.

In Florence the Medici on the whole did not show themselves as donors, using arme, personal devices or patron saints instead. When they are portrayed in religious contexts, it is usually in works officially commissioned by others, whether Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi and

Francesco Sassetti (Pl. 63) at S.Trinita or Guasparre dal Lama in the altarpiece by Botticelli. Medici portraits by Gozzoli in the new palace chapel were accompanied by many Florentine and foreign dignitaries within a religiously and ceremonially apt narrative, the Journey of the Magi. Available to a restricted audience of other notables and ambassadors, Gozzoli's frescoes were almost a contemporaneous and more public version of the "uomini famosi" series in the "casa vecchia de' Medici" commissioned by Cosimo's father.<sup>137</sup>

During the Trecento popes, poets, emperors and such contemporary "famous men" were usually portrayed in large public cycles as representatives of humanity and its hierarchies in the Last Judgement or Court of Paradise.<sup>138</sup> With the brief residence of the papal court in Florence and the consequent consecrations of S. Maria Novella, the Carmine and S.Egidio, the latter two recorded by Masaccio and Bicci di Lorenzo, both in the early 1420s, Florence had first hand experience of papal ceremony and of the possibility that contemporary portraiture in crowds could be instead an historical, public record. Shortly thereafter Masaccio began the Brancacci chapel where some actors in crowds appear modelled on actual faces, although the degree to which they are intentionally recognisable as portraits is debatable.<sup>139</sup>

The "honour portrait" of more "ordinary" recognisable faces within a narrative perhaps really first entered Florence around the same time, when Niccolò da Uzzano, the "bulwark of anti-Medicean aristocratic conservatism," commissioned an unfortunately now lost fresco cycle from Lorenzo di Bicci for his family chapel, where Vasari saw the donor "insieme con alcuni altri cittadini." Niccolò was innovative also in the style of his family palace and he began a studio which Vasari judged "piuttosto da magnanimo principe che da privato cittadino."<sup>140</sup>

Not until 1439, some time after their return from exile, did the Medici dare such "princely" behaviour, and then only in a private Adoration of the Magi as well, perhaps, as through "proxy" patronage in the Portinari chapel at S.Egidio. In the tondo and possibly the chapel Domenico Veneziano, trained in more courtly surrounds, updated the nascent Florentine usage of the honour portrait.<sup>141</sup> Later

examples of the tradition include Gozzoli's frescoes, or the portraits of Lorenzo de' Medici and his male children who accompany Francesco Sassetti's family (Pl. 62), or the humanists who signify Florence's stature in the Tornaquinci chapel (Pl. 2). Like the Lupi in their Paduan chapel or the Gonzaga in their Camera degli Sposi, Florentines portrayed men of learning or political importance as companions of their family to elevate their own status as patriotic and noble, worthy of portrayal, family remembrance and "sure access."

What distinguishes the Florentine practice from that of courtly Italy is its slower development, its more rhetorical and austere tone, the wider range and number of patrons who employed the honour portrait and the subtle reticence of the chief family, the Medici. In the Tornaquinci case, the religious overtones of the idealised settings and the absence of the Medici are noticeable. This was partly a reversion to the universal mode encouraged by the Dominicans in the much earlier Strozzi and Spanish chapels (Pl. 80) and partly a sign of oligarchic assurance that the consorteria needed no such "honour" from above and would, rather, dispense it themselves to their associates. General social factors at work in Florence since the Trecento help to explain its use of such group portraiture. For one thing there was a shift towards more secular and "ordinary" involvement in church decoration: burial and chapel ownership became more available to the "average" oligarch in the Renaissance.<sup>142</sup> His family was a public and impressive identity support; his neighbours, friends and inlaws were politically and socially vital to his standing.

During the Quattrocento his civic pride reached rhetorical and established heights; his dignity and his family honour were more aristocratic and socially acceptable as late Laurenzian Florence drew to an unsuspecting close. Most of these social trends were earlier than any watershed in 1475 and the "aristocratic" sense of noble family lines only reached maturity in Ducal Florence. But group portraiture in the late fifteenth century seemed to flower as the fruition of such long-term trends. Just as palaces in Florence became bigger, more publicly impressive and grandiose ("più superba")<sup>143</sup> statements of family as well as private honour, in a weighty pseudo-classical style, so too group portraits showed family and

allies publicly participating in religious events with dignified solemnity and oligarchic confidence.

Signorial and individual ambition was tempered in Florence to the extent that republican and later Medicean rhetoric restrained too overt a display in the name of what Lorenzetti had labelled BEN COMUN. Francesco Sasseti and Giovanni Tornabuoni (Pls 6, 63) were portrayed as members of the elite, yet, particularly in the latter case, such signs as costume and gesture are civic and public in their restraint, perhaps akin to a confident yet "inward" sense of religion.<sup>144</sup> At the risk of making too sweeping a statement, it is provocative to note that such restraint may be connected with a Florentine penchant for monumentality and disegno, these having ideological, generalising and remote effects, when seen, say, in the cool design of profile portraits or Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling. The narrative genre and the honour portrait practised in the courtly north were restrained in Florence by a lesser interest in detail which resulted in what might be thought a less felicitous and certainly more morally rhetorical style. If it could be put crudely, Altichiero spins a yarn, Ghirlandaio or Masaccio deliver a public oration or sermon.

Allied with the utilisation of rhetoric, there grew a sense of history, throughout Italy. Florence was not the first or only city self-consciously to use history to its own propagandistic ends, both externally in the case of a Bruni or Dei or internally when the past was seen as an exemplar and model to be preserved for the future by the city's councillors.<sup>145</sup> Masaccio's Sagra at S.Maria del Carmine of c.1422, with the impetus of Bruni's fervour and Martin V's courtly presence in the city, was an early Florentine instance of visual history in monumental form, publicly recording contemporary portraiture engaged in ritual, public action. The subject was pure history and ceremony, without any narrative "excuse" as used by Altichiero or an allegorical one as given to Ambrogio Lorenzetti or Andrea da Firenze (Pl. 80).<sup>146</sup> Both history and rhetoric, together with religious and family motivations, are elements which develop during the Quattrocento to alter the relationship between narratee and art. Art could consciously reshape sacred narrative and contemporary history to make of them and their actors exempla of mythical

proportions and rhetorical address. Citizens in the Sagra, Medicean heroes at S.Egidio, Tornaquinci patrons and citizens at S.Maria Novella, were present in ceremonial re-enactments: the portraits necessarily enlivened, indeed embodied, the scene's propagandistic verity.

What a chronicler of Viterbo wrote in 1458 about his portrait would speak for others portrayed in other cities. As a member of the city's council he was portrayed with his fellows in a Madonna della Misericordia. Having described each person he concludes

I have made a record of the figures thus made, not out of pride or vainglory, but only in case any of my successors wishes to see me, he can remember me better thus, and my soul may be commended to him, and likewise the writer for those who will read this book, which has been copied out by me.

When he was portrayed again in 1469, no doubt as a representative scholar of the community, he asked that "those persons who will want to read my writings and know me, come to see that place." So an historian (would that there had been more of his ilk!) recorded portrayal, not necessarily out of "pride" but from a self-conscious sense that he was writing for a future. The book and his two portraits, each in a group context, were autobiographical or individualistic but also preservations by means of which the future would "know" and "remember" him. The facial memorie were addressed to his "successors" and, whether or not he was visited by those who "wish to see me," the Tornaquinci certainly were, as we know from a valuable record which catalogued each man's name in 1561. Not only would an heir have shared in a sense of preservation and history; he would have also prayed for his ancestors, just as the man from Viterbo wanted "my soul ... commended to" his successors. Portraits preserved and provoked, showing figures in eternal prayer or witness and also calling for such prayer and witness from every viewer.<sup>147</sup>

The "patron portrait" of the Tornaquinci in S.Maria Novella (Pl. 2) conflates several traditions and meanings into one admittedly, and perhaps inevitably, over-burdened scene. It develops the visual, religious and legal aspects of donor portraiture and combines these with the "honour portrait." Myth is created and affirmed, the family preserved, its members presented at a ritual of dignity and salvation.

The idealised backdrop similarly is conflated, being part temple, part apse, part triumphal arch, part civic piazza and street. The "friends" chosen to be honoured include humanists, bankers, churchmen, a musician and a Florentine chronicler, Benedetto Dei. Two inscriptions are liturgical and a third stresses the proud and generalised notion that Florence was a new Rome or a civic paradise, rhetorically proclaiming:

In the year 1490, when the most beautiful city,  
graced by treasures, victories, arts, and  
buildings, enjoyed wealth, health and peace. 148

The civic, legal, religious, familial and historical were all one and the same in this fresco and in the Florentine "world-view."

#### D: PORTRAITURE AND LATER QUATTROCENTO RELIGION

Three religious shifts in the second half of the Quattrocento are relevant to the patrician piety evinced in S.Maria Novella. Given the paucity of scholarship on Quattrocento religion these trends are neither exclusive nor adequately discussed, but are offered here as indications of the religious texture of the Quattrocento which must be further investigated. Each stresses personal participation as an outward and active sign of an inwardness. Shorthand terms might characterise the three trends as "eucharistic," "inward" and "imitative." No one-to-one chronological or iconographic link is meant to be drawn: instead, the religious shifts and the frescoes are part of the same experience. Cultural history is called upon here in its wider sense to illuminate partly unconscious statements in the frescoes at S.Maria Novella.

##### (i) The Eucharist

The mid fifteenth century saw a rise in the veneration of the eucharist, above all involving a visual and active manifestation, with plays, processions and confraternities dedicated to the Corpus Domini. With the chalice withdrawn from the laity in 1415 and participation in communion only occurring several times a year, the seeing of the Host,



especially at its Elevation, was a more common, even exciting, act than its actual reception.<sup>149</sup> Art's registration of this visual interest naturally was charged and partly manifest itself in the sheer format used to display the Host, leading to sculpted tabernacles, monstrances, new altar constructions, whole chapels and confraternities for them dedicated to the Sacrament.<sup>150</sup> Even lamps, candelabra and angels kneeling either side of the altar holding candlesticks, by such artists as Luca della Robbia, Verrocchio and later Bernini, were more necessary since "mentre che si leva il Signore alla messa grande" candles were lit, as a bequest to S. Maria Novella in 1462 stated. The same bequest also left money for a continuously lit lamp "avanti al santissimo sacramento dell'altare maggiore," that is, the Tornaquinci chapel.<sup>151</sup> Not only to see the Host, but see it well, in a celebratory light, was important, as was one's association with the Host's presence and proximity via such bequests.

Miracles of the Host formed art's subject matter, of which Sassetta's predella panel in the National Gallery of Victoria is but one example.<sup>152</sup> Form may have been influenced also, as Eisler argues when he links the vanishing point of Brunelleschi's perspective system to the required focus on the Host (Pl. 78). The stress O'Malley and Steinberg place on fifteenth century sermons and paintings of the Christ Child (eg Pl. 54) as more concerned with celebrating the Incarnation than the Passion may extend to another celebration of the Body of Christ. When Jungmann says that "the eucharistia had become an epiphania, an advent of God who appears among men and dispenses his graces," the bodily presence of both Eucharist and Incarnation would not have been too finely distinguished.<sup>153</sup> At the least, it would be plausible to link naturalism to the acute visual awareness provoked by the display and elevation of the Host.

With regard to portraiture specifically, it is notable how many works treating eucharistic themes have portrayed witnesses. Since the early development of donor portraiture, figures had knelt beneath the Crucifix, held eucharistic vessels as at S. Vitale, used gestures of prayer associated with the communion and elevation, or even been shown venerating at such an Elevation. The frequency of portrayal within

the Pietà is yet another instance where salvation and eternal life through the Corpus Domini was associated with the portrayed's eternal presence.<sup>154</sup> More fundamentally, all portraiture in religious subjects during the fifteenth century could have been affected by the ritual practice whereby man was in one sense a participant in the divine mystery but in another a spectator: seeing was the participation (as it was in meditation). Just such a tension or ambiguity lies behind the crowds of spectators on the edges of late fifteenth century narratives, it has been argued above. Further, the visual presence of the Host was all, and portrayal near the sacred was another sort of visual presence, enabling the portrayed eternal, efficacious access.

A few examples of eucharistic subject matter in the later Quattrocento have been studied in detail; in particular, a Cortona reliquary (1456) and Justus van Ghent's Communion of the Apostles (1473-74) with Uccello's predella illustrating "The Profanation of the Host" (1460s) in Urbino.<sup>155</sup> Many others await investigation, such as Fra Angelico's Temptation of Christ, in a cell at S.Marco, never discussed despite its artistic skill and unusual iconography. Below the Temptation a frontal and eternal Christ is offered the wine and bread of salvation by two angels and other frescoes at S.Marco, such as The Communion of the Apostles and a Man of Sorrows beneath the Magi's cavalcade, also treat the eucharist explicitly. Then in 1446-47 Fra Angelico frescoed the now lost Chapel of the Sacrament in the Vatican, which included "many portraits from life of noteworthy persons of the day."<sup>156</sup> Botticelli painted the Adoration of the Magi, from S.Maria Novella, and the Madonna of the Eucharist in the early 1470s, and both reflect a strong interest in the eucharist, the former containing many portraits.<sup>157</sup>

Another much neglected work, and one particularly relevant to Ghirlandaio's frescoes at S.Maria Novella, is Cosimo Rosselli's Miracle of the Sacrament, in the Cappella del Miracolo, S.Ambrogio (1486), where once again portraits are plentiful.<sup>158</sup> Citizens either stand or kneel in clusters, as actors in a play or procession, while the central religious event almost occurs on the sidelines. Like Ghirlandaio's Zacharias (Pl. 2), the portraits include humanists and

citizens of all ages who converse in a public piazza. Although the figures are dry and slender, many resemble Ghirlandaio's, especially the women and children at the lower right, with their pointed chins, curling hair, unproportioned diminution and bulkily embracing lower draperies. In the early 1480s these two artists worked together in the Sistine Chapel and Gilbert has suggested that Ghirlandaio influenced Rosselli there in his crowded inclusion of portraits.<sup>159</sup>

Both Rosselli's style and the presentation of a "civic religion" recall the frescoes at S.Maria Novella. The links may also be historical, and Vasari is accurate when he entitles Rosselli's fresco simply "a procession in the piazza," for the Office on the Octave of Corpus Christi at S.Ambrogio included a procession, in which the monks from S.Maria Novella seem to have participated: history and myth are indistinguishable, with portraiture strengthening the scene's veracity. Further, this office, it is claimed, was written by Fra Giovanni Caroli (1428-1503), one of the most important friars in S.Maria Novella during the latter half of the Quattrocento and, I suspect, one of the advisors for Ghirlandaio's iconography in that church. Caroli certainly wrote a commentary on the Corpus Christi hymns, and something of the Dominican Order's commitment to the Eucharist must be considered here.<sup>160</sup>

The Dominican Doctor par excellence, Aquinas, was thought to have written the feast day's universal Office, promulgated in 1264, and in 1304 his Order was declared the official propagator of the cult, a position evident already in Venice and Florence as early as 1295 and maintained in the fifteenth century. As Archbishop of Florence from 1446, having been Fra Angelico's Prior at S.Marco previously, the Dominican S.Antonino showed a particular concern for the housing of the Host and obliged every church to install tabernacles.<sup>161</sup> St. Dominic or his followers were often shown at the foot of the Cross, adoring the Body of Christ, an image used more than once by Fra Angelico at S.Marco and the position chosen for his one "donor portrait," that of the Dominican Cardinal Juan de Torquemada.<sup>162</sup> But in Florence it was the Dominican priory S.Maria Novella which most avidly encouraged the Corpus Christi cult, being the locus of its feast and procession. Mentioned as a "festa ... con

la processione" by the Order's General Chapter, meeting at S.Maria Novella, in 1321, the feast entered Florence's ecclesiastical calendar in 1346. The civic and universal combination, so central to the feast and to the Dominican Order, is at the heart of the programme devised for S.Maria Novella's chapterhouse (Pl. 80). Better known now as the Spanish Chapel, it was to the "cappella Corporis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi" that Mico Guidalotti left money in 1355. But such an important festival could suffer from heated rivalry and in 1392 the Corpus Christi confraternities at both the Cathedral and S.Maria Novella, churches long in conflict, were suppressed.<sup>163</sup>

Doubtlessly inspired by recent ceremonial use of the Corpus Christi made by Martin V on his Entry and departure, as well as by his celebration of the office at S.Maria Novella during his residence in Florence during 1419-20, the commune in 1425 declared the Corpus Christi day a civic festival.<sup>164</sup> Celebrated by a procession of many civic and religious groups, from the Palazzo della Signoria to S.Maria Novella, and probably commemorated in Masaccio's Trinity (Pl. 78), the feast again aroused jealousies. During the 1430s and 1440s bitter litigation ensued between the Cathedral and S.Maria Novella, each claiming the right to conduct this festival. Months before his own Entry into Florence accompanied by the Corpus Christi, Pius II decreed a compromise in January 1459, re-instating the festival. The Cathedral was now responsible for the procession, which would be joined by the Archbishop and the Corpus Christi at the Cathedral, before making its way solemnly to S.Maria Novella, where the Archbishop celebrated mass in the "Cappella Maggiore" (Pl. 1). A chronicle in the convent further recorded that the "Ponte" or choir screen in front of this, the Tornaquinci chapel, was decorated with "una Macchina" and "tele dipinte, con varie iscrizioni, e Misteri alludenti al SS.Sagramento," "con la gran quantità di luma" and so on.<sup>165</sup>

This "bridge" was often used for religious plays, as Luigi Pulci confirms in a letter of 1472 to Lorenzo de' Medici, when talking about another example: "certain vaults which make ... a bridge, as in S.Maria Novella where we make the balcony for our festivals." In the same year Benedetto Dei, ranking the Florentine festivals, placed the

Corpus Christi one second, after the all-important day of the city's patron saint, St. John the Baptist. From 1477 we have a rare and too-brief record of "a beautiful feast and processions and a representation" at S.Maria Novella for Corpus Christi day, while other brief reports from 1494(?), 1497, 1500, and later indicate its long life.<sup>166</sup> In general, for various festivals at S.Maria Novella, the convent's chronicle reported that "il Diacono con gli Accoliti, ed Incensieri saliva sul Ponte, e di lassù ad alta voce cantava al popolo medessimano il Vangelo." No particular feast is represented in the Zacharias (Pl. 2) perhaps, but there we see Zacharias swinging an incense burner while the "popolo" gather as though ending a procession, just as they do in Rosselli's fresco, or forming the chorus of what Warburg called "an ecclesiastical play."<sup>167</sup>

They stand as a united group of citizens and the Corpus Christi festival particularly focused on a sense of human solidarity. Just such a view of the Corpus Christi mysticum, the corpo of the faithful bound into one ecclesia through the mystical oneness of Christ's body, was celebrated by portrayal of the members of universal society in the Spanish Chapel, where Dominicans preside over the Via veritas (Pl. 80). Later more "historical" views of the procession by Cosimo Rosselli and Attavante degli Attavanti show the congregation as unified, dignified, ordered. A French chronicle described a similar scene in 1570: "the neighbours of each street and canton assemble, through their mutual friendship ... men on one side, women on the other..." The "harmonious congregation," as Nicholas of Cusa termed it, was a community necessary for both practical and mystical ends, united within a civic and ecclesiastical hierarchy as well as by fraternal ties.<sup>168</sup> And, like the spectators accompanying Mantegna's Madonna della Vittoria, the actors in ritual were also activating participants. The Tornaquinci men, and women in separate scenes, are such spectators, presenting themselves in public ritual as members of a family, a city and a Christian community.

The frescoes in S.Maria Novella were appropriate in style and content for such civic and religious theatre (Pls 3, 4). Their chief subject was the life of St. John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence and of Giovanni Tornabuoni, besides being significant as baptiser,

prophet and preacher, and the life of the Virgin, protectress of the Dominicans and every Christian's chief mediatrix (fig. 5). Christ explicitly enters the arena, planned by Giovanni Tornabuoni as a family burial chapel, in two key locations: as the Lamb of God in the vault's central roundel (Pl. 26) and in the Resurrection (Pl. 39) on the back of the altarpiece, facing the window. Hence addressed by the two donor portraits of Giovanni and his wife (Pls 24, 25), the Resurrection was particularly apt as a sign of everlasting life. "Sure access" to such salvation was made more potent and likely by the visual presence of the portrayed, as spectators and devotees, near the eucharist in a chapel at the very heart of its display and celebration.

(ii) Inwardness

This section is tentative since it stands somewhat against wide-ranging characterisations of the later fifteenth century, some of which are being questioned now, and have so far concentrated upon economic, political and intellectual trends. On religion, writers such as Rab Hatfield and Eugenio Garin have noted a late Quattrocento trend towards a more inner and spiritual preoccupation. (For many commentators this would co-incide with a more aristocratic, inbred patriciate, that was politically and economically cautious). Christianity since at least the twelfth century had begun to internalise as well as systematise devotional practices. To stress here an interior religious life during the fifteenth century is to insist not only upon the continuity of such a tradition but to highlight spiritual concerns in an age too often viewed as rational and (merely) overt by writers like Burckhardt.<sup>169</sup>

Yet within this long-term development, the later Quattrocento is marked by a shift, one still little investigated. From around 1470, claims Hatfield, the Compagnia de' Magi became "more strictly devotional," ingrown and disciplinarian. Sermons mainly concerned the eucharist and were "aimed at a more spiritually minded elite." Ficino wrote such orations and in a letter of 1476 he said

the only person to live in peace and certainty is the one who leads a life based, not upon the passing show

without, but upon the eternal within himself. 170

Factors such as a rise in literacy and the involvement of the laity in confraternities contributed to what Hay calls a "new spirituality" that arose in the course of the century.<sup>171</sup>

More frequent communion was recommended and confession manuals were more popular in the Quattrocento: "confession as systematic soul-searching was beginning to be a more regular feature of religion."<sup>172</sup> Papal commission had made of the Dominicans an order of confessors and, while it is too early to generalise on their attitudes and role in the later fifteenth century, it is notable that members of that Order could take an optimistic and comforting stance. A sermon on the efficacy of prayer, by the friar thereafter elected, in 1508, Master General of the Order, made of man "a cooperator with God and a co-cause with him, a 'friend.'" Fra Giovanni Caroli's commentary on the Corpus Christi stressed its consolation and its gift of "futura beatitudine," sermons by Fra Simone Berti at S.Maria Novella in the 1480s made great play of paradise as well as penitence.<sup>173</sup>

This inner contemplation, confidence and systematic spirituality gave rise to a more internalised sense of identity and dignity. Hence the changes in religious devotion and personal "individualism," each little studied, are harder to trace in the late fifteenth century, but an elite's confidence that they will be among the "elite" in Paradise, as stated by men like Matteo Palmieri and Ficino, was obviously still an utterly religious piety. That Berenson could implicitly label the Tornaquinci portraits irreligious is understandable but misguided: their religious confidence and sincerity was as conservative, established and systematic as their civic aristocracy.<sup>174</sup>

Trexler understands the donors' activation in more empathetic terms when he discusses the miraculous S.Impruneta panel: "They themselves were essential: without their devotion, there would be no transferral of power, and no miracle." Thus "one of the striking developments in this period is the ever greater attention given to the patron or possessor of a sacred article." It was the sacredness and not the possessor alone which made the possession vital. In commenting upon the Dominican sermon which addressed, precisely,

"cultus divini et orationis efficacia," O'Malley too has stressed action, dignity and participation, stating that "Burckhardt would be surprised ... to see these themes grounded in an orthodox Christian theology."<sup>175</sup> It was the spiritual and civic context in S.Maria Novella which made the presence of portraits possible, even necessary. They are a full sign of possession, of an inward participation in the grace of the eucharist, and a means to activate divine "power."

Like Burckhardt, many more recent writers would be surprised. Instead they cast the later fifteenth century in a passive, effete and implicitly indulgent, irreligious mould. Overall, such characterisations see Florence shrinking or collapsing in on itself, retreating behind palace facades, closing up shop(s) and loggias: the "birth of modern man" still lurks too crudely behind what are, nevertheless, brilliantly provocative syntheses. So we have individualism and the nuclear family, "hard times and investment in culture" not profit or industry, an intellectual "flight from reality to metaphysics, from civic humanism to Neoplatonism," a "return to the land, ... to the preoccupations of private life, ... to the pursuit of pleasure," "a life of reflection far removed from any action or politics," the arrival of the "courtier" and his obsequious, rhetorical, esoteric language. Historians like Martines or Brucker further link this with "the attenuated forms and melancholy" of painters like Botticelli and Filippino Lippi.<sup>176</sup> Much of this is tinged with hindsight's knowledge of later courtly and capitalist eras, let alone of the Reformation's accusations against the Church.

Giovanni Tornabuoni's biography, as we can reconstruct it from sparse documentation and his patronage, does not suit any one rigid category, neither rentier nor entrepreneur alone.<sup>177</sup> Banker and investor in land, his economic position was quite sound even when the Medici Bank was in difficulties and his spending on villas, palace and chapel had been high. Confident of his established economic position and his family's aristocratic heritage, he eventually adopted a more "courtly" address towards his nephew Lorenzo de' Medici, as was the fashion, but he continued to deliver advice to this "tyrant," he wore the supremely civic costume of the Gonfaloniere in the Zacharias fresco and, unlike Francesco Sassetti or the knighted Bongianni



Gianfigliuzzi, did not invite Lorenzo into his portrayed world (Pls 6, 63). A proud patron maintaining and furthering his family's eternity, as well as confirming his own noble and "magnificent" stature by his patronage, he instilled similar attitudes in his son (Pl. 16). Giovanni was again fashionable enough to encourage the education of the younger generation under Poliziano or at the University and to be often on the fringes of the intellectual world as a facilitator, yet never to commission a work of literature or of art as "metaphysical" as the Strozzi Chapel by Filippino Lippi.

Our clues as to his personal piety are oblique but not negative. Penitence may be suggested by images of St. Jerome inventoried in his estate; humility by his gesture in his donor portrait (Pl. 24); belief in the efficacy of ritual and the possibility of eternal life by the memorial masses he established assiduously for family members. His will, his contract with Ghirlandaio and other such legal documents voice what might be considered "traditional" or "average" religious values. He lived in villas and a palace surrounded not only by the latest in decoration but also by religious objects and he was portrayed in the chapel twice: his spaces were inhabited by the Lord. Rather than "old fashioned" he would best be seen as typical, an example of continuity in a transitional age.

Transition is the nature of every "moment to moment," of course, but Ficino and his peers were aware explicitly of both the "darker" and "golden" sides of their renovatio. However the "new spirituality" will be characterised by future investigators, its double-edged nature ought to be considered. Ficino believed not only in a "Golden Age," such as we see imaged in the city of "wealth, health and peace" by Ghirlandaio, but he also felt expectant of change, even before Savonarola's apocalyptic prophecies brought a new focus to the period's attesa. It may be that the Massacre of the Innocents (Pl. 21), showing souls fiercely baptised at martyrdom, reflects this side, but it also suggests hope in eternal salvation, and we must remember that "crisis" is a word much applied to the Renaissance by the twentieth century.<sup>178</sup>

Men like Tornabuoni, Ghirlandaio and Ficino were more conscious

perhaps of the rhetorical modes of praise and ekphrasis than of blame; and of process, the turns of Fortuna which could turn again. So then they idealised their Golden Age, which, like penitence and a sense of attesa, was a matter of renewal and future grace or election. Giovanni Tornabuoni, by his portrayal in the location and manner we see today (Pls 6, 24), was a member of the elect, joined to time by a visualisation both naturalistic and idealised, aware of exterior and interior. From "an interiorized religious sentiment" arose a rhetorical and admiring response to the "beautiful and loving" in the sermons studied by O'Malley for instance. This "desire to praise" and the exercise of contemplating, of looking at reality to "sustain the inner affections" then evoked an ekphrasis and, in visual terms, a naturalism, let alone action, in good works, patronage or the activation of divine power.<sup>179</sup> There was a necessary link between several apparent polarities. Once more it is tension or ambiguity which this thesis sees as lying at the heart of a period, a patron and painting. Spiritual inwardness was not necessarily a dreamy retreat or an individualistic introversion. Giovanni Tornabuoni (and his fellows) each appear aware of his audience and his God, of "the eternal within himself."

### (iii) Imitation

A traditional interest in "imitatio" seems to find both an inner confidence and visual manifestation by the late fifteenth century. The "eucharistic" and "inward" trends came together in the visualisation of personal "imitatio" and participation. Emulation of a virtuous model by means of deed and behaviour was practised in classical times and then transferred from rulers and ancestors to Christ and the apostles too.<sup>180</sup> Such imitation became more consciously visual and linked with a personal practice and responsibility by means of meditation. As the immanence of the Godhead in the earthly realm was proclaimed by the Franciscans particularly, then too a personal re-enactment and the indwellingness of Christ were available through meditation.

According to St. Bonaventure "the Word was made flesh; that He

might be known and loved and imitated by man who was flesh..."<sup>181</sup> A "worldly" and increasingly visual approach could be made to the Word in its Incarnate form. As the Franciscan Lignum Vitae put it

The true worshipper ... desiring to come to resemble Him perfectly ... must ... seek to carry Jesus Christ's cross in his mind and in his flesh, so that he may truly say and feel within himself ... [that] I am nailed to the cross with Christ.<sup>182</sup>

The method to be employed was personal, emotive and intense, "with such a vivid memory and recollection and such sharp understanding and willingness for love and kindness..." To ensure that this "love and feeling" be "firmly planted in our memory without being forgotten," the "tree of life" offered by this text itself utilised a visual mnemonic. The vividness, efficacy and degree of personal participation of the meditation was to become more inward and visual, less schematic and more naturalistic, in technique. Giovanni Morelli at the beginning of the Quattrocento had prayed before a Crucifix, pleading "make me a participant (partefice) in enough of your mercy that at this instant my request will be heard." And he began his prayer by "prima a immaginare e rguardare in me i miei peccati" and "a Lui pregare coll'occhio, col cuore e colla mente."<sup>183</sup> The visual object, a visual method and a participatory desire were inextricably part of the devotional process.

An inscription on an altarpiece dated 1365 had suggested a similar visual prayer and in this case eight donor portraits supplicate to the Virgin and Child: "I have lifted my eyes to you who dwell in Heaven ... our eyes deplore you, our Master, until you take pity on us."<sup>184</sup> Those "eyes" are meant in a two-fold sense: they are both the eyes of the portraits and the eyes of the portrayed as they kneel before the panel in daily re-enactment of their eternal visual prayer. The eye as the "window of the soul" was a commonplace that was to be connected increasingly with artistic visualisations, as well as with the method of contemplation and meditation. Indeed, in the 1430s Thomas à Kempis advised the devotee to

humbly bend the knee, as if you saw Mary present in the body ... and then lifting up your eyes with good hope of the salvation for which we look, most lovingly implore the help of mercy from the Mother of Mercy.

The same imperative to "look up" in contemplation of the divine was

later frequently voiced by preachers at the Papal Court, a method which those eight donors in the Trecento had begun to employ.<sup>185</sup>

The Pseudo-Bonaventura had recommended active meditation "feeling yourself present in those places as if the things were done in your presence" but by the mid fifteenth century this inner yet active participation reached an even more personal and particularised level. The Garden of Prayer of 1454 in fact recommended

it is helpful and necessary to fix the places and people in your mind ... taking for this purpose a city that is well known to you ... And then you must shape in your mind some people, people well-known to you, to represent for you the people involved in the Passion.

On this basis was built the portrait in "guise" and ultimately the enlarged group portrait of spectators against a recognisable landscape or civic backdrop, as the time and space of sacred narrative became more naturalistic yet idealised.<sup>186</sup>

Giovanni Dominici, around 1405, recommended such imitation for children:

let the child see himself mirrored in the Holy Baptist, [let him see paintings of holy children in which he] may delight, as being like himself, and may be seized upon by the like thing, with actions and signs attractive to infancy.

A metaphor emphasised the visual context of this emulation:

In the first mirror have your children be mirrored, when they open their eyes, in the second when they can speak, in the third when they are ready for writing.

Hence the family "house" too is a mirror, becoming "a sort of temple" filled with holy images and habits, just as the Tornabuoni Palace was to be.<sup>187</sup>

Other Dominicans, aware of the efficacy of preaching by deed as well as word too, had themselves kneel in emulation of their founder beneath a Crucifix, in either painted form, actual ritual or both.<sup>188</sup> Fra Angelico's visual consciousness took this further, extensively placing exemplary saints within the scenes of each cell in S.Marco. When, for instance, St. Dominic kneels and flagellates himself before Christ's Flagellation, the image acts as an index or sign to be

participated in and followed by the cell's occupant.<sup>189</sup> There is an hierarchy of exempla at work here, in a visual chain moving from actual space through foreground to midground, from real to divine, with the "mirror" inserted between.

No writer would presume to call Fra Angelico's practice irreligious, nor, now, "medieval."<sup>190</sup> It takes its place in the Renaissance's growing sense of man's dignity "derived from the divine exemplar" in O'Malley's phrase or, in the words of Genesis, of man made "in Our own image, after Our likeness" (1:26). Saints Francis and Bonaventure, for instance, already had celebrated God's creation on earth; but by the late fifteenth century the emphasis was on man's deification: "The Incarnation rendered holy all that was human."<sup>191</sup> Man was dignified, the Word was accessible, but the two were closer not equivalent: a parapet, an intercessor, a "mirror," a formal distance between courtier or spectator and the Lord, still existed.

The approach, the participation and imitation, was often visual, in epideictic oratory, meditation and art, since "our image and likeness" was cojoined in what Nicholas of Cusa termed one "loving connectedness."<sup>192</sup> The particularity of this world would serve as an image, a shadow, of the next. O'Malley has drawn pointed attention to the rhetorical presentation, by preachers in the later fifteenth century, of "works and deeds ... not for a metaphysical analysis but quite literally for viewing." Contemplari meant "to gaze upon" he insists, a linguistic comment which then connects well with the period's meditational practice and the artists' visualisation of this technique. In 1492 the Dominican procurator, general put it succinctly: "Look, for I cannot explain." The anecdotal and illustrative exempla used by a preacher have become, literally, visual.<sup>193</sup>

Portrayal within naturalistic religious settings operated rather like meditational participation or like Fra Angelico's exemplars. Philip recognised a "duality," or what I have called "tension," in the donor portraits of the Ghent Altarpiece: "The painting makes the invisible content of the donor's devotion visible." Carol Purtle now has gone further in her discussion of van Eyck's donor portraiture:

It is only the context of prayer ... that renders such

a representation [where heavenly and earthly figures share the same space and scale] both acceptable and appropriate,

even necessary I would add, especially for the later fifteenth century in Italy. Portraits kneel or stand "as if" before what is a "prayer vision," or manifestation of meditation. Their presence is necessary to authenticate and make manifest the meaning and actuality of the inner visitation: prie-dieu, prayerbook, gesture, posture, setting, are attributes or signs of prayer and so, in a sense, ultimately was the presence of "people well known to you" as well as of the instigating, active donor.

Participating, by sheer presence within the art's boundaries, the devotee is nevertheless distanced from the inner vision, by such subtle visual means as a frame, a difference in scale or by gesture and posture, often kneeling but by the late Quattrocento often in abisso or as a bystander. Whatever the means, the "distance and juxtaposition" is due to the visionary, imaginary and inner nature of the devotee's experience. Chancellor Rolin or Federigo da Montefeltro when kneeling, but even Giovanni Tornabuoni both kneeling and when standing in a narrative, do not directly gaze at the vision. By Bernini's time the Cornaro family, both living and dead, can react to a vision but only when placed in a "viewing box" which does not allow a literal view of St. Theresa's ecstasy.<sup>194</sup>

On the other hand, as a narratee in actual space either the devotee or the other viewer can see the "vision" actualised by the artist. In turn art could then "shape" or "fix," as the Garden of Prayer advised in 1454, future visions and become an "example" in itself to St. Catherine of Siena or the monks at S.Marco or to the donor who returned daily to his altar to offer further devotions. Each was guided by artistic presentations and was no doubt increasingly aware of this utility. Common, "unremarkable" practices of meditation allowed and even necessitated this "duality" in modes of perception.

The Trecento's immediacy of genre incident, including crowd portraiture, becomes more separated, foregrounded and conscious of "the priority of the viewer" who prays either in or before the art.

At the same time, and parallel with this, the Incarnation is celebrated more, the City of God approaches the earthly and the devotee's active power to call forth the vision and follow the exemplar is apprehended more. More aware of a "mirror," the portrayed can increasingly address the viewer (including himself and his successors), turning away from the profile towards us in Flemish diptychs or Italian frescoes and, in Italian works, exhorting and instructing us by glance, gesture or inscription. Not only the ruler or exemplar but any portrait of the "elite" is becoming a self-conscious "sitter" or actor on a stage, a "cynosure" who attracts what Frye calls the "centripetal gaze" characteristic of "the high mimetic mode." The eye is no longer a feudal servant "in the hands" of a master but an active, self-conscious agent.<sup>195</sup>

Sometimes the relationship between agent and exemplar extended to the work's content in that devotees were portrayed in scenes which signified their dedication to the exemplary life depicted.<sup>196</sup> Neither individualistic hubris nor mere intimacy are adequate descriptions of the evoked significance. The devotees were shown as worthy of inclusion amongst the "elect" since their prayer, penitence and offering were suggested precisely by their presence near the sacred. For the rest of their lives they could see themselves mirrored by the artist, who had visualised them eternally mirroring a model. In turn they would become visual examples and models to their successors, whether Giovanni Morelli, Federigo da Montefeltro's son or Delfin, who were inspired by the ancestral exemplar.

Through gazing at it, I am aflame to be bound to emulate and imitate such a father, wishing to be transformed into the same image, which this celestial image mirrored when he was alive

wrote the Camaldolese general Delfin in 1490 of his predecessor's death mask.<sup>197</sup> Medicean rhetoric knowingly used such imagery, to incite generous patronage towards the writer but also to idealise the past publicly. Cosimo's posthumous title as Pater Patriae, granted "that it may serve our sons as an example," is a wellworn instance, as is the portrait by Botticelli of a youth holding a medal with Cosimo's profile and title. Playing neatly with puns Ficino exhorted Lorenzo de' Medici:

just as God formed Cosimo [Cosmas] in the image of the world, so you should model yourself, as you have

begun, on the image of Cosimo [ad ideam Cosmi figura].<sup>198</sup>

By the later Quattrocento visual consciousness and practices have led also to a more frequent, explicit link with portraiture and "images," but the notion at least of visually efficacious emulation was not confined to an intellectual coterie or manipulative rhetoricians. The capitoli of one confraternity in 1485, for instance, prescribed public correction "that it may be seen [veduta] by everyone, if only to serve as an example to the others."<sup>199</sup> Earlier, Giovanni Dominici addressed his audience in quite simple, pastoral terms, as did Domenico Benivieni at the other end of the century, and it is worth raising the possibility that the surviving rhetoric which we are forced to interpret may not be removed from concerns shared by a large set. It is even more probable that such traditions as those of "good works," the good Christian life, the "imitation of Christ," basic preaching techniques, methods of prayer or contemplation and common "cliches" such as the "mirror" and the "example" were not only widespread but affective, for artist, patron and viewer alike.<sup>200</sup>

Hence, Alberti will be cited here with the suggestion that his is not a singular or new direction, simply a convenient and self-conscious voice explicitly and primarily treating visual art. Baxandall has associated the following passage from Alberti with the "choric figure, the festaiuolo" of a dramatic play:

I like there to be a figure who admonishes and instructs us about what is happening in the picture.<sup>201</sup>

But there is a further, less didactic association with portraiture, for Alberti later writes that it is

desirable ... when the figure of some well-known person is present in a 'historia,' for ... the face that is known draws the eyes of all spectators, so great is the power and attraction of something taken from Nature.<sup>202</sup>

Alberti is concerned with the same visual power that Dominici or the Garden of 1454 treated: participation and inspired imitation is heightened by an external naturalism which included actual portraiture



and plausible space.

Here is another realm to the "realism" of the Quattrocento style, which was not materialism for its own sake, but for its evocative power and efficacy. Even arme could inspire and actively attract, being called an "exemplo" to other benefactors in 1488. To "contemplate" visually was to be aroused and activated: "simply to behold these is to have one's mind drawn to higher things" or, in the early sixteenth century words of a Pistoian confraternity, "certainly example is more moving than speaking."<sup>203</sup> To be moved and attracted, delighted and inspired by god's creation and man's made imagery was not of itself an innovation in the Renaissance, perhaps, but art's overall degree of celebration, consciousness and emulation of the external in all its varietà did ultimately form some qualitatively different cluster.<sup>204</sup>

Alberti also advocated that "these movements of the soul are made known by movements of the body": inner states must be communicated and expressed visually. Again, in itself of ancient lineage,<sup>205</sup> the degree to which rhetorical gesture and external signs were not only didactic but employed both to express and inspire inner states, both to engage yet somewhat distance the audience, appears new in effect. Ficino was also concerned with both edification and the power of imitatio when he stated that observers will reflect the emotions of painted figures. Similarly, the perspectival structure of an ideal building was, to Ficino, a matter of both practical calculation and imaginative "contemplation": the depth of one inspired the depth of the other.<sup>206</sup> The link between visual practice and exemplary idealisation was to be intricate and to last into the Baroque era. At the same time visual wit and artifice, the awareness of active manipulation and reshaping, was making of the "mirror" an increasingly less passive, neutral surface. As Alberti recommended, "the things that are taken from Nature should be emended with the advice of the mirror."<sup>207</sup>

A telling document describing a Festa de' Magi of c.1468 connects drama, religious procession, civic ritual and portraiture in one visual entity. It was written by the same Dominican theologian,

Giovanni Caroli, who probably advised Ghirlandaio and wrote on the Corpus Christi. The description, from his Libri de temporibus suis (1480-2), is strongly pro-Medicean in tone and the procession was a very political event in his eyes, almost like an embassy, "as if to visit the highest magistracy."

... all involved convened in the square of the city. They had represented as well all the optimates and leaders of the city ... the conformity of which representation of the citizens to real citizens was so great that it hardly would seem believable. For they had so carved their faces and countenances in masks that they might scarcely be distinguishable from the real. And their very sons had put on their clothes, which they then used, and they had learned all of their gestures, copying each and every one of their actions and habits in an admirable way. It was truly lovely for the real citizens who had convened at the public buildings to look upon their very selves feigned, with as much beauty and processional pomp as the regal magnificence and the most ample senate of the city, which they would proudly conduct before them.<sup>208</sup>

Here the sons are "the very alter egos of their fathers" in language that recalls Ficino extraordinarily closely:

the son is a mirror and image, in which the father after his death almost remains alive for a long time.<sup>209</sup>

The sense of a continuum and of self-perpetuation is also given by two fathers who earlier grieved over their dead sons. In Giovanni Morelli's case it will be remembered that the "faccia" of "my sweet son" spoke to him and this boy promised to be his intercessor in heaven. "I will always be favourable to your needs and [to those] of my faithful and earthly mother." Similar terms are used in the Consolateria of the much more learned Giannozzo Manetti, whose son Antonino died in 1438. Manetti also beseeched his son to intercede continuously in heaven on his behalf, because "piety and filial love toward their fathers, living in the sons though they are dead, yet remains to the end."<sup>210</sup> Morelli's son, in dying, "divided himself ... from me" and Giovanni da Ravenna's autobiography showed a reaction to the death of two children: a loss of self, when "the mirror crack'd," resulted in visions, other reflections, new attempts to reshape one's self and re-order the world. "Self" only existed in a context, a

continuum.<sup>211</sup>

Caroli's account of a later civic pageant again presents fathers and sons as interchangeable and continuous images of each other, just as the "remaking" of an elder by giving the newborn child his name was practised. In a wider sense of relationship too, the teacher in Ficino's view, or a sage model in Morelli's, could act for their pupils like a father whose "immagine" is resembled.<sup>212</sup> And "quando fai una cosa, ispecchiati in lui" advises Morelli, just as the portrayed was an example to be followed by successors and other narratees including the self (eg Pl. 64), just as the portrait in a religious context was there as an imitator of the viewed exemplum. The mirrored self was not simply an individual reflected but an "alter ego" enlarged and given meaning only within a context. Furthermore, Caroli's reference to carved faces, "masks," "copying" or feigning, as though the imitators were "the real," is even more reminiscent of actual portraiture. Imagery and continuum, arranged by mirroring means, are now more explicit. No wonder the frescoes in S. Maria Novella portray several generations and stress heavily the scenes of birth and its foretelling: the particulars as well as the overall meaning reflect Quattrocento attitudes.

The Magi were especially appropriate for the imitation Caroli describes because they were the first Gentile witnesses before Christ, the exemplars and "personifications of devotion."<sup>213</sup> It is the possibility of their imitation that allows such explicit "feigning" of the self. In 1487 Alamanno Rinuccini's oration to the confraternity of the Magi was typically penitential yet optimistic, believing in "eterna beatitudine" as the comfort resulting from feigning or "participation" of a most active kind. Flagellation and "servitude" were not merely vividly remembered, as the Lignam Vitae had advised, but now literally and actively engaged in.<sup>214</sup>

A decade earlier (1476) Pier Filippo Pandolfini had addressed the same confraternity with an equal interest in imitation but with more peaceful results:

Let us humbly pray that he plant in our hearts so much compunction, so much love, that we may be worthy to participate in his highest and supreme good ... let us offer this evening to Jesus Christ, imitating the holy

Magi, the gold from the treasures of our minds ... let us give him our souls ... let us offer him the incense of our prayers ... begging him devoutly that by virtue of his most holy Body and precious Blood, of which this evening we make special mention, he may have mercy on all this family.<sup>215</sup>

The very phrase "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee" (Ps.141:2) is one of two liturgical inscriptions in the chief fresco containing portraits within the Tornaquinci chapel (Pl. 2). Part of the Offertory Rite, it was recited as the priest, like Zacharias, incensed the altar, before performing the same ritual over the gathered congregation who thereby participate in the sacrifice. No more appropriate an inscription could accompany this "patron portrait," where the offering of their donation (both the chapel's decoration and its very site) and their prayer for eternal mercy are forever visualised.<sup>216</sup> Pandolfini's text especially illustrates the three trends in late Quattrocento religion which can be brought to bear on the frescoes in S.Maria Novella and their portraits: eucharistic participation, introspective yet active spirituality and personal imitation.

#### E: LATE QUATTROCENTO FORM

What were once "unremarkable" attitudes must be diligently structured anew by the historian. Visual practices employed in meditation; the ordering of the private and public, inner and outer, through ritual; the words and patterns of the liturgy; a sense of civic and ceremonial as well as spiritual dignity; the efficacious engagement with the visual; were all matters of everyday experience. But the artist and patron had an eye to their future and made, with arte, their own reshaping. Ghirlandaio was not a facile illustrator, passively "reflecting" his times, nor was Giovanni Tornabuoni a dull banker. What resulted from their co-operation was a world "emended" by a mirror as Alberti had recommended, or ordered and framed as Trexler uses the word in its many senses. Trexler's work remains one of the most exciting attempts to reinvent that world, stressing a theme of urban theatre and manipulation.

Religious ritual, far from being 'unreasonable,' represents to this day a theatre of the merchant utopia: peaceful order proceeding predictably.<sup>217</sup>

This sentence characterises well the style and content in Ghirlandaio's frescoes (Pls 3, 4).

One of the few other scholars to capture their spirit referred directly to the works in S. Maria Novella and, like Trexler, was keenly aware of anthropology and the density of culture. The man was Aby Warburg, and in a sense this thesis is merely a pale confirmation of his brilliant insight, disagreeing most, however, with the division he drew between "die drei K, Kirche, Kaufmann, Künstler." He wrote of the portraits gathered in the cycle:

with calm dignity [they are] patrician churchgoers  
with innately impeccable manners [and] this theatre  
programme is more than a far-fetched jeu d'esprit;  
it is rather an essentially fitting metaphor.

How infuriating then to read Berenson's typically caustic, even snobbish remark: "all the ludicrous pomposity of people trying to adopt a grandeur of carriage to which they have not been reared."<sup>218</sup> In reply, one could point out that Quattrocento Florence was not a downtown I Tatti. Nor were the Tornaquinci anything but men of noble lineage, an elite boldly entering the sanctuary of the elect, individuals comprehensible only in a context.

Trexler's and Warburg's sense of theatre stresses the visual, the actual and the active. The entire city could be a religious locus (eg Pls 62, 86) and its public monuments stages for Christian drama: "The city hall had to be partly church," its raised platform "the main outdoor shrine of Florence." Her citizens, acting as the Signoria for two months, became "lay monks" or an "honourable, almost divine magistracy" in Averardo de' Medici's words, with others assembling "as if to visit the highest magistracy" in Caroli's description.<sup>219</sup> Hatfield has shown that during the Festa de' Magi Florence imaged Jerusalem and such a metaphorical transformation of civic and sacred arenas was a theatrical, visual union of several worlds. When the Tornaquinci appear in an idealised space, a "pulcherrima civitas" according to the inscription, it can be said that they and their painter work within this metaphorical mythology. They are an elect in Heavenly Jerusalem, worthy of a place because of their religious and civic worthiness in the earthly City of God.<sup>220</sup>

One of the men portrayed with the Tornaquinci, Benedetto Dei, patriotically catalogued the Florentine botteghe, its 365 "chasati e parentele," its "banchi," "pittori" and so on, seemingly ad infinitum, with a pride that was not dry for its own sake.<sup>221</sup> He was measuring, manipulating, his environment, believing it to be predictable and sacred. The progress of a religious procession in orderly fashion, the certainty of the Impruneta Virgin's actions, the "libertà" and legal processes of the republic, were all unions of the civic and the cosmic. Neoplatonism, which sought "to reconcile reason and faith, the classic and the Christian world" is another example better known to art historians.<sup>222</sup> Similarly, a paradox between obligations to family and to self was not recognised by the Florentine: one necessarily involved the other and each made the other complete. The cosmic and the particular were united. Hatfield images it rather nicely: "the worldliness and spirituality of the Compagnia de' Magi were, it seems, simply the different sides of the same coin."<sup>223</sup>

Ghirlandaio's style and subject reflected "an urge to orderliness" akin to Benedetto Dei's careful and loving catalogue of his Florence as "un' altra Roma novella."<sup>224</sup> But Ghirlandaio's measured view was less factual, closer to Caroli's "processional pomp," because his everyday images embodied spiritual, civic and family significances (Pls 3, 4). The burden of the visual was to unite visible and conceptual realms inside one frame. Within Ghirlandaio's framing, portraits exist, as it were, at the meeting point or parapet between these two worlds, a tactile metaphor of things unseen. Some portraits, by glance and gesture (eg Pls 2, 11, 14), seek to engage the viewing eye and invoke fellow prayer, reaching through the wall's "mirror," whilst other portraits seem to be impassive bystanders participating in a narrative or rather eternal realm which only the viewer can literally see (eg Pls 10, 19). Yet other portraits, on less visible registers, appear in crowds, as familiar, particularised faces which thereby accentuate the immanence of the divine in the everyday (Pl. 22).

Whatever their actions, sheer portrayal of the family and amici showed them "larger than life," present in visions or "perpetualised

prayer."<sup>225</sup> The Incarnate God both belonged to human flesh yet was Other; dignified man both belonged with the elect yet was other: this numinous duality was essential to late fifteenth century religion. I have used often the metaphor "mirror" to suggest this ambiguous, visual relationship between the divine and earthly when discussing portraiture. This matter of reciprocity and tension, of which the period's own language suggests an awareness, might also apply to style in general. Ghirlandaio's task was to amend a mirror so that the world appeared unified, ordered.

In that appearance, style and content too were one: both were "rhetorical realism." The Zacharias fresco in particular presents a family and its elitist friends at the centre of an urban paradise offering perpetual devotion and preserving their line for the future (Pl. 2). The ideal polis, the utopian sanctuary, was visualised ideally, meeting the contract's desire for "noble, worthy, exquisite and decorative paintings."<sup>226</sup> Late Quattrocento religion led to the more active participation, not so much of the body alone, as of the whole believer, including the inner eye of the totus homo. The Tornaquinci frescoes and their portraits are therefore narrative and solemn, and sacred space is plausible space, within which interior events are idealised. In a family chapel at the centre of rituals such as the celebration of Corpus Christi and masses for the family dead, the portraits preserve ancestors and traditions for the future, a future which is both temporal (memoria for continuing generations) and sacred (eternal salvation). The visual was a particularly efficacious religious, legal, public and family guarantee of eternal dignity.

"Realism," or rather its persuasive, celebratory and rhetorical accuracy, was a necessary externalisation of an inner and authentic reality, of both the Incarnation's presence and of man's dignified election or participatory seeking out of the divine. Meditation and "prayer ... as incense" required "well known" and recognisable imaginings; the exemplar and the world were each to be mirrored. Alberti's "movements of the soul" had to be manifested externally so that the inward was evoked, so that the viewer was involved in a reshaped, ordered and framed vision of exemplary conduct and eternal

salvation. S. Antonino, Dominican and friend of Lucrezia Tornabuoni's, had insisted also on an art that accorded with "the nature of things." When he wrote "Spiritual geometry works to measure temporal things," he was echoing Manetti's argument that "the truths of Christianity are as clear and indisputable as the axioms of mathematics," another aspect of which was treated by Ficino's connection between mathematical calculation and spiritual contemplation.<sup>227</sup> The literal and naturalistic was in a sense the spiritual, for all was God's creation.

S. Antonino went to great lengths to stipulate carefully the exact time of the Annunciation, "the year, month, day, and hour, and the place, that is, the country, city, and type of building in which it occurred." To catalogue precisely such details was but another example of the method used in Dei's description of his Florentine utopia: each world existed and could be encompassed by a descriptive ordering which nevertheless had motivations beyond the purely naturalistic. A similarly resounding sense of the visible world being presented to ends of a higher, more inward sort moved Ghirlandaio at S. Maria Novella. There he was responding to the catalogue supplied by Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose contract with him had stipulated the inclusion in those "noble, worthy, exquisite and decorative paintings" of

figures, buildings, castles, cities, villas,  
mountains, hills, plains, water, rocks, garments,  
animals, birds and beasts.<sup>228</sup>

Antonino's discussion of symbolism and space was an elaborate argument, for the real was an image, a "guise," a "feigning" or "shadow" of that other elusive Quattrocento object "the ideal." Naturalism and idealism are ultimately contradictory in our eyes but the Early and High Renaissance styles supremely managed to unify the two.<sup>229</sup> By means of such rhetorical devices as ekphrasis, varietas, amplificatio and the general tone of an orator, Ghirlandaio demonstrated and praised the ideal through the particular, aroused and istoriated the soul through the body, celebrated the substance of the Incarnation through the truthful depiction of its superficial appearance, idealised the "pulcherrima civitas" through the



presentation of the latest architectural fashions, portrayed his patrons in recognisable costumes moving in stately dignity through universal spaces, made of the invisible vision a tangible panorama.

In that Ghirlandaio's style is broad, idealised and rhetorical, he is the precursor of the High Renaissance's resolution. The clarity of his compositions and his figures enveloped in heavy draperies, moving with ponderous tread, are antecedents to Michelangelo, who trained in Ghirlandaio's workshop at exactly this time. Later artists like Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo also paid Ghirlandaio's compositions and their particulars some attention.<sup>230</sup> On the other hand, his world was not yet as sonorous, as remote a reflection, as Michelangelo's was to be, where the god within man has almost left man, especially in his mercantile measuring delight, behind. For Ghirlandaio the meeting place, "our image and likeness," was still in fine tension, not yet at the point of harmony and balance which in some ways was only possible when a divide or sundering was inserted and a classical ideal was appropriated to a more imperialistic, Papal or courtly, and Neoplatonic mode.

Rhetoric and grandeur allied to natural appearances is what distinguishes the Italian from the Northern Renaissance. Italian "disguised symbolism" was more harmonious, mathematical and idealised. The Italian artist reshaped, framed and manipulated the world, giving visual and communicative priority to the narratee, that is to the observer depicted within the narrative and the viewer without. Conscious of the viewer's eye and soul, the artist sought to engage both as one: amplification and exemplification were central to preacher, painter and patron. Italian "iconography" was perhaps more a matter of form, in its idealised, efficacious and generally charged state, than were the theological details of a Northern content.

Ghirlandaio's style is imbued with a seriousness and idealism which suited the rhetoric of a late Quattrocento oligarchy. His frescoes in S. Maria Novella appeared pompous to Berenson and, in that they were at times humourless in the High Renaissance sense of a superhumanity, Ghirlandaio's art is weighty and self-important. He does indeed depict "a theatre of the merchant utopia: peaceful order

proceeding predictably."<sup>231</sup> One last document will serve as an epitaph. It is a defence by Altoviti written against Savonarola in 1497, but could have been uttered by any of the men who were portrayed by Ghirlandaio.

God requests and desires from man the accustomed and triumphant ceremonies at every step and grade of the spiritual and temporal. Through both sacrifices and vows and solemn diversions and the adornments of his people, a delighted God becomes a placable friend and the benefactor of cities.<sup>232</sup>

## CHAPTER THREE

### A PATRON: THE TORNAQUINCI CONSORTERIA

#### A: INTRODUCTION

The Ghirlandaio workshop produced art for the satisfaction of its patrons. To examine the Tornaquinci family history will be to come closer to both specific and more subtle general forces at play in the decoration of their chapel. The family's sense of itself is very evident in this fresco cycle by Ghirlandaio, as is its involvement in civic, religious, learned, economic and neighbourhood activities. Their artistic patronage was "typical" in that they did not consider "art" the epitome of their culture. Hatfield has made the point that history comes first, and then culture, although the brilliance of the Renaissance beguiles historians into inverting the relationship.<sup>1</sup> The art patronised by the Tornaquinci, whether for their villas, palaces or chapels, was caused by and expressive of their familial, civic and religious identity rather than being an aesthetic production per se.

Despite the importance of this family, and its particular interest to social and art historians, very few studies have been published. Neither eighteenth and nineteenth century genealogists, nor later historians, have produced a monograph on this family. The only twentieth century instance of published investigation, by Pampaloni in 1968, is very brief, often secondary and simplified.<sup>2</sup> He misses virtually all points of interest related to their S.Maria Novella chapel and their artistic patronage. Archival sources could be richer, but documents do survive which fundamentally aid the art historian.<sup>3</sup>

A substantial degree of cohesion marked this varied and large consorteria throughout its existence. In general, the Tornaquinci were grand Guelf magnates in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They suffered in the late Trecento anti-magnate swing, especially from

political discrimination and property damage. The family was forced into forming various offshoots from the main branch, taking new names such as Popoleschi and Tornabuoni, in an attempt to hide their political heritage. During the Quattrocento this political strategy saw fruition as they rose to prominence again, in part through close marriage and economic ties with the Medici. By the mid to late sixteenth century they tended to revert to their earlier aristocratic image, which had never left their memory.

#### B: ORIGINS AND EARLY HISTORY

A late Trecento ricordo, probably of 1376, by an anonymous Tornaquinci male on the "chosa anticha della progenie overo schiatta de' tornaquinci" was written to preserve his family's history or "memoria." From "che io udi dagli antichi" and from scattered documents he was able to trace his and their origins back to 1050 when "uno tornaquinci d'alberto di tornaquinci" had lived outside the first walls of Florence near the S.Pancrazio gate. Sometimes called the Tornaquinci gate, this was the area where the Tornaquinci henceforward congregated.<sup>4</sup> By the time of its demise in the eighteenth century the Tornaquinci consorteria had numbered over 500 male members and had continually met the standard definition of such a consorteria: they were kinsmen all able to trace their descent in the male line from a common ancestor, "in infinitum" (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> This common origin was to be remembered after their various Trecento splinterings; thus the ceding of patronage rights over the cappella maggiore by the S.Maria Novella friars was made in 1486 to the "totam consorteriam ... in perpetuum."<sup>6</sup>

Fortunately, our proud yet anonymous Tornaquinci writer was able to record an ancient and crucial event. Emperor Otto granted to the Tornaquinci sole rights to fish and construct dams and buildings along the Arno, presumably in 962 when Otto I was crowned Emperor in Rome. In our chronicler's words, when speaking of the family holdings:

ghrande possisione ebono fuori della citta al lato  
alle mura, dove è oggi la chiesa e ll'ortora  
d'Ongnisanti e tutto 'l borgho, el prato d'Ongnissanti  
e lla mulina e lla peschia, e avevano privilegio da  
Otto inperadore di potere fare peschaia e edificare  
in alchuna parte dell'Arno disengniata in sul

privilegio, ch'era di lungheza presso ad uno miglio e non era lecito a niuna persona, salve che a'figliuoli de' tornaquinci, in su quella parte fare veruga chosa senza loro parola sechondo quel privilegio ...

Such control over the supply of fresh water and fish would have given the Tornaquinci early pre-eminence and wealth in Florence, and was to become more important as the milling of flour and especially the dying of wool grew economically vital to Florentine industry. Furthermore, this imperial grant covered land where the Ognissanti and S.Maria Novella churches now stand (Pls 66, 70). It was Tornaquinci approval which aided the establishment and growth of these two institutions and began that consorterìa's long association with what was to be a Dominican church, culminating in Ghirlandaio's decoration of the major chapel there.

The next dated notice given by our Tornaquinci writer concerns one of Tornaquinci's five sons, Figliocarò, who was a military consul in 1166. We know that another brother, Iacopo, was a communal elder in 1176 and these men set the family's civic and military pattern of behaviour for centuries.<sup>8</sup> Tornaquinci names feature continually in the Florentine ranks of ambassadors, governors and the militia. For instance, Ugolino di Gherardo di Tornaquinci was ambassador to Pope Boniface VIII in 1295; Giovanni di Francesco Tornabuoni to Pope Innocent VIII in 1484.<sup>9</sup> Ruggieri di Iacopo Tornaquinci was a prior representing the sesto or district of S.Pancrazio four times between 1284 and 1292; the Tornaquinci consorterìa as a whole held the position of Gonfaloniere 8 times and reached the priorate 25 times in the Quattrocento.<sup>10</sup> The family had a long and solid tradition of patriotic service to their patria.

Villani's chronicle mentions the Tornaquinci in various military exploits, such as Messer Gherardo Ventraia di Ugolino Tornaquinci who held the honourable post of standard bearer in the 1289 battle of Campaldino.<sup>11</sup> In the fifteenth century several Tornaquinci made their careers as soldiers or governors in the Florentine territory, such as Piero di Filippo Tornabuoni<sup>12</sup> or Niccolò di Francesco Tornabuoni.<sup>13</sup> Others such as Piero Popoleschi (portrayed in the Annunciation to Zacharias fresco)<sup>14</sup> or Filippo di Filippo Tornabuoni<sup>15</sup> could be

called on occasionally to uphold Florentine rule in her "empire". According to another source Tornaquinci also figured "nella Guerra di Gierusalemme, dove acquistò molta lode" and certainly several members were Knights, especially Messer Luigi di Filippo Tornabuoni who is also portrayed in the Zacharias scene (Pls 6, 41).<sup>16</sup> Overall, the costume and decorum of many men in this fresco suggests the patriotic, active life of the Tornaquinci males.

The Tornaquinci also distinguished themselves, or rather were infamous, as fiercely pro-Guelf supporters.<sup>17</sup> In 1281 their behaviour was quarrelsome and anti-social enough for them to be singled out as "magnates" by the government. Beginning with the strict Ordinances of Justice in 1293 the Tornaquinci were legally defined as a magnate consorteria disenfranchised from the highest communal offices.<sup>18</sup> Popular or rival family spleen was often vented on the Tornaquinci buildings, thereby providing several glimpses of their early wealth and architectural activities. According to the anonymous Tornaquinci chronicler "loro palagio vecchio" was "disfatto da ghibellini alla prima caccata de' guelfi" and when they rebuilt their tower and loggia they did so in common: "rifarlo a comune".<sup>19</sup>

A list of destruction compiled around 1269 gives further details of their buildings.<sup>20</sup> It refers to "Tornaquincii Palatii"; another "Domum muratam cum duabus voltis; aliam domum, domum ligneam destructam" owned by Iacopo Tornaquinci and bordered by other Tornaquinci buildings suffered over 700 lire damage; in the same district, S.Pancrazio, bounded in part by a piazza, the four sons of Gianni Tornaquinci had their house damaged; "Unam turrim in parte destructam" was held in eight parts by Cardinale di Iacopo Tornaquinci, his brothers, and their sons (especially Betto, Cipriano and Lapo); a "domus" immediately adjacent was owned by these same younger men. It is this complex with the tower and its eight parts (fig. 3, Pls 65, 67) which is very elaborately traced and described by the Tornaquinci chronicler up to his own time, weaving an amazingly complex web of distant relatives and their ancestors remembered and gathered in the one family fold.

Lastly the record of c.1269 includes one Tornaquinci country

holding: "Domum destructam in pop. S. Donnini Plebatus Brozzi" owned by Cipriano, his brothers and nephews, bounded mainly by a street and the Arno. Several villas or country places owned by the various Tornaquinci branches in the Quattrocento were still in this area. Further confirmation of their power and position is given in Dino Compagni's Cronica, where he described an incident of 1301 in which the "grandissimi mali" and "potente schiatta" of the Tornaquinci with their friends and "banditi" attacked men attempting to strengthen the S. Pancrazio gate.<sup>21</sup> Both Compagni and the Tornaquinci chronicler make special mention of an incident in which the Tornaquinci palace was again attacked by an angry populace in 1304. Compagni claims that two Tornaquinci left a popolano for dead in the market but the Tornaquinci version is very coy and loyal, speaking only of a "certo schandolo" and "false informazioni." He gives details of the damage: "fuoche nel sopradetto palagio e arso tuto e lla logia ella torre" and tells us that the repairs were "a spese di tutta la chasa de' tornaquinci."<sup>22</sup>

By the early Trecento, the Tornaquinci family profile is clear. They are men of action and some wealth, concerned most with political and military activity. They clustered together in the same area and houses and took joint action to preserve or rebuild their family enclaves.

#### C: THE "SPLIT" : ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Despite the Ordinances of 1293 and the family's very evident magnate status,<sup>23</sup> some Tornaquinci men were too skilled and powerful to be ignored by their government. They held several posts, especially military ones, and gained a brief respite during the Duke of Athens' rule.<sup>24</sup> But a basic exclusion from government found them suffering from political starvation and discrimination.<sup>25</sup> As the century progressed, chivalric and aristocratic status became less attractive.<sup>26</sup> Beginning in 1350, some magnates were able to petition for popolano status and in 1361 it became mandatory for such a change to be indicated by a new surname. Many magnates took advantage of this scheme "thus gaining political and juridical advantages while sacrificing their family heritage," according to Brucker.<sup>27</sup>

But this judgement is rather less subtle than the actuality suggests. As one priorista notes, the arms of every new Tornaquinci branch "in ogni modo ritenuti qualche segno dela prima", particularly maintaining their colours of green and gold while each added the red popolano cross in a silver shield (Pl. 32).<sup>28</sup> Each branch continued to live in the same districts with the same family neighbours, concentrating their patronage on S.Maria Novella. The first names they took were often those of their ancestors, a further indication of the desire to preserve the family's "memoria". No family undergoing such divisions seems to have been studied in detail and the example of the Tornaquinci consorteria indicates that political opportunism did not necessarily undermine fundamental family loyalties.

The timing of the various break-aways, from 1364 to 1393 (fig. 1),<sup>29</sup> further suggests much about family concerns. The first move was made on June 1364 by Niccolò di Ghino, who took the optimistically symbolic name Popoleschi.<sup>30</sup> This was several years after the first wave of such splitting and in general the Tornaquinci seem to have moved reluctantly and slowly, only after legislative and political realities were unavoidable.<sup>31</sup> The second break-away was made, significantly, by Niccolò's cousin, Tommaso di Piero, who in August 1371 also took the Popoleschi name.<sup>32</sup> In the same year all ex-magnates were excluded from the supreme executive offices for twenty years. This may have prompted one Tornaquinci man, Pagnozzo di Cardinale, to take the name Cardinali in March 1372, perhaps in the hope that after this twenty year delay his sons would at last and quickly enter those offices.<sup>33</sup> The fourth move did not come until 19 February 1380 when two Tornaquinci men acted on the same day: Sandro di Simone became a Iacopi and Zanobi di Marabottino a Marabottini. These men were from widely distant branches, sharing a common great-great-great grandfather in Messer Iacopo Tornaquinci.<sup>34</sup> The Iacopi surname doubtless sought to remember this founding ancestor.

Less than a month later, on 10 March 1380, two brothers Cipriano and Iacopo di Giachinotto, from another branch, who stood in the same relationship with the far distant Messer Iacopo, became Giachinotti.<sup>35</sup> The sixth split was undertaken in late 1385 when Zanobi's nephew Marabottino di Giovanni also took the surname of Marabottini.<sup>36</sup>



Zanobi himself died soon thereafter, leaving one daughter and one childless son, so it is possible that Marabottino acted to preserve the hopes of the sub-branch by carrying on his uncle's new name.<sup>37</sup> Not until late 1393 do we have a final wave of Tornaquinci splits, initiated by Simone di Tieri di Ruggiero who took the name Tornabuoni on 19 November. One day later Bernardo di Bernardo, another nephew of the now deceased Zanobi Marabottini, also tried to preserve this line into the next generation. A month later, on 18 December a similar situation arose when Iacopo di Niccolò, nephew of Pagnozzo Cardinali, took his uncle's surname after that man's own children had died or had no male issue. This flurry of activity came to a close on 25 December when Tieri Tornaquinci acted as procurator for a distant relative Arrigo di Neri who took the name Pellegrini.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile the Tornaquinci stem survived, with sufficient members to ensure its continuance through the fifteenth century and its revival in the Cinquecento. They were one of the magnate houses singled out by Brucker as concerned with "membership in the city's aristocracy" and tinged by nostalgia for their ancestry. For them, ancient privilege and honour enabled high status and their association with the various re-named sub-branches ensured a fair degree of prestige and influence. Indeed, Ugolino Verino's late Quattrocento verse on the Tornabuoni referred to "Tornaquincia mater."<sup>39</sup> In an important sense, these various splinterings were legal fictions, undertaken for reasons of political necessity but fooling no-one, least of all the family's own members.

Thus, some men from the new branches could still be referred to as Tornaquinci long after their supposed re-identification. Messer Gregorio or Ghirigoro di Pagnozzo Cardinali, for instance, was beheaded in December 1378 for magnate-like behaviour during the turbulent Ciompi period, but three contemporary chronicles and the necrologio listing his burial "cum habitu militari" in S.Maria Novella all refer to him as a Tornaquinci man, whereas another chronicle qualifies the name with "per nazione era di Tornaquinci, ma era stato di pochi anni fatto di popolo."<sup>40</sup> A tax record of 1404 referred to Neri di Cipriano Tornaquinci "et hodie de Jachinottis," 24 years after the name change. And in 1437 a slip of the pen first recorded

Francesco Tornabuoni as a Tornaquinci, over forty years after that branch's inception.<sup>41</sup>

In the case of the Giachinotti and Popoleschi branches, because of the nature of the separations, brothers, then cousins and their descendants within the same lineage, shared common ancestors yet different surnames (fig. 1). The sixteenth century still retained memories of such blood ties. Thus Donato di Filippo Tornabuoni died in 1502 "nella sua casa, de' Tornaquinci." Giorolamo di Marabotto Tornabuoni's will of 1524, with provisions for a monastery dedicated to his patron saint St. Jerome, especially considered arrangements for any "fanciulla de' Tornabuoni, o Tornaquinci, o Popoleschi o Giachinotti o altri consorti" who might enter the monastery; the same sweep across the eldest male members of the entire consorteria assured its patronage in the future.<sup>42</sup> Family records helped foster a consciousness of the past and their common ancestry. Like other Quattrocento families, they maintained a priorista, as a guide to the political standing of the city's families. Giovansimone di Filippo Tornabuoni, himself a prior in 1471, owned a "libro antico" which must once have belonged to a Tornaquinci ancestor, for a few Trecento comments are made about that family, especially the destruction in 1356 of their "gran torre" by the government.<sup>43</sup>

The anonymous Tornaquinci writer of c.1376 writes after the first three splinterings (1364, 1371, 1372) but makes no mention of these in his text, instead concerning himself with the entire consorteria's origins and history. Several pages of his slim text detail the common living arrangements whereby eight parts of a tower and palace are divided between distant lines of the family, according to much earlier ancestral claims, thereby naming virtually all men of the four generations after Tornaquinci d'Alberto de' Tornaquinci. Precisely at the time of their political divisions, this writer and his material show the consorteria to be closely interconnected and eager to preserve their common history.<sup>44</sup>

The pattern of clustered living was to continue throughout the Quattrocento, with the family gathered near the present day Via Tornabuoni (fig. 3, Pl. 65). Constant remembrance of common ancestry

and their frequent joint actions lie behind the portrayal of leading members from the entire consorteria in Ghirlandaio's S.Maria Novella cycle (Pl. 6). Granted patronage rights in 1486, these men from the consorteria stand in a patron portrait which recognises their heritage and proclaims their current unity. As in the document of 1486, Giovanni di Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni is accorded chief stature as the "magnificent and generous" patron who paid for the decoration, but he is surrounded by a family proudly aware of its history and of its joint status as patron.<sup>45</sup>

The last chapter in the saga of Tornaquinci splinterings is a petition submitted to the Signoria on 20 December 1487 asking that each of the four extant houses or branches be considered a separate house for purposes of the divieto.<sup>46</sup> The divieto was a constitutional regulation prohibiting members of the same family from serving in office simultaneously or too close one after another. That it applied to the Tornaquinci consorteria is further evidence supporting Dale Kent's assessment that "the consorteria in the fifteenth century was still considered as constituting the most fundamental interest group operating in political life."<sup>47</sup> Despite their Trecento efforts, the Tornaquinci branches were still seen to be one family in a very real political as well as social sense. The petition of 1487 repeats the Trecento pattern by attempting to separate their political status so that more members of the family would be eligible for more offices. It was political pressure again, the desire for office, rather than deep psychological differences, which necessitated this move. Until 1487 the divieto rules had recognized, even encouraged, the political, public closeness of the separate branches.

In their petition, the branches sought to be treated as though they were different houses because they had been "divided" amongst themselves for some years. Although most of the request was granted, it is significant that the family was still to be considered as one for the Tre Maggiori, or three top offices. Furthermore, just over 20% of the Council's members voted against the request and it was passed with more opposition than any other of that session's provisions.<sup>48</sup> It is also significant that the petition was a joint act, undertaken by the elders of the three branches together: Filippo

di Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni, Bartolomeo di Niccolò di Piero Popoleschi and Girolamo di Adovardo di Cipriano Giachinotti. This Girolamo is portrayed in the Annunciation to Zacharias, whereas the other two men, who had died recently, are replaced by younger brothers with younger children (Pl. 6).<sup>49</sup> The family acted and was portrayed in unison, with thoughts for the future status and continuance of the family utmost in their minds.

Naturally, such large families were not monolithic, but variety in their ranks does not indicate deep divisions. Brucker has noted that within the patrician class "and even within individual families, there were infinite gradations of wealth, status, and pre-eminence." In the tax assessment of 1378, for instance, before the completion or consolidation of the splits, the Tornaquinci were amongst both the wealthiest and poorest members of their district. "Those who engaged in banking and exchange activities were prosperous, but the majority were in modest economic circumstances."<sup>50</sup> This variety continued rather than arose after the splits, with the family's economic activity concentrated in banking, wool and cloth. Thus in 1429 Chirico and Niccolò di Piero Tornaquinci were tried for having failed to pay their taxes, but in 1427 Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni was the fourth wealthiest man in Florence.<sup>51</sup>

Economic factors seem to have played a part in the quick demise of several branches but more important was the fertility of each branch, a matter of great concern in the Renaissance and an issue addressed by several of Ghirlandaio's frescoes.<sup>52</sup> The Cardinali branch formed in 1372 was quite wealthy and active in the Cambio guild, but Girigoro di Pagnozzo's death in 1378 on account of magnate-like actions, and the absence of any male issue from Pagnozzo's other three sons, sealed the fate of this branch.<sup>53</sup> A second cousin Iacopo di Niccolò sought to revive this name in 1393 but his father and his son Nofri were not particularly wealthy, nor reproductive, so Iacopo's line only lasted for three meagre generations.<sup>54</sup> The Iacopi branch was especially fruitless, founded by Sandro di Simone who was a poor man with one son, Simone, an Augustinian theologian and another possible son, Domenico, producing no progeny.<sup>55</sup>

Zanobi di Marabottino became the first Marabottini in 1380 but he died in 1387, leaving only one son who had no children. Two nephews tried to pick up the threads, Marabottino di Giovanni becoming a Marabottini in 1386 and Bernardo di Bernardo doing likewise in 1393, but these men had few sons and no grandchildren. The Pellegrini were formed in the 1393 wave by Arrigo di Neri but he had no brothers or sons.<sup>56</sup> Survival quite literally depended on progeny.

The three sub-families, the Popoleschi, Giachinotti and Tornabuoni, which survived into the sixteenth century, did so because they had the numbers and wide familial support (fig. 1). Niccolò di Ghino initiated the Tornaquinci splinterings in 1364 when he became a Popoleschi. Two of his sons continued his political involvement, even reaching the chief goal of the priorate, and they generated sufficient offspring. Niccolò's cousin, Tommaso di Piero, added another line to the Popoleschi in 1371 and each of his three sons was politically active. Again these men were reasonably prolific and on the whole the economic activity of the Popoleschi, especially in the wool industry, further aided their Quattrocento consolidation.<sup>57</sup> In the case of the Giachinotti, their inception was undertaken by two brothers in 1380. Although only one son, Adovardo di Cipriano, produced grandchildren of the original founders, this man was economically sound and had five sons.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the Tornabuoni was the most prolific, although it was begun by only one man, Messer Simone di Tieri, in 1393 (fig. 2). He had two quite wealthy sons; Filippo had two male children and seven grandchildren while Francesco had seven male children and more than twenty grandchildren. It was to Francesco's line, the most economically sound one, that our Giovanni, patron of S. Maria Novella, belonged, and in 1428 he was born into a family of 15 other bocche, including two slavegirls and the joint households of his father and his uncle Niccolò.<sup>59</sup> Giovanni was surrounded by relatives, both near and distant, and the importance of a family's continuance and proliferation would have been obvious to him through family example. For both Giovanni and the wider consorteria portrayed around him, the sustaining of their name, memoria and honour was a vital concern. Not

only their own joint gathering in the Annunciation to Zacharias, but also the portrayal of their women in the Birth scenes and in the Visitation, were visual representations of a mutual concern affecting all members of their blood, seme and name (Pls 2, 8, 9, 15). Their visual preservation was a further example of the inheritance which they offered and of the hopes held for the family's future.

#### D: THE QUATTROCENTO, ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC TRENDS

In the Quattrocento, the surviving branches of the Tornaquinci consorteria consolidated and increased in numerical and political strength. The Tornabuoni rose highest, but this was dependant upon their social and economic ties with the Medici, an association which benefited the entire consorteria. Although economic and political variety continued within the family it was a typical and important member of the reggimento. Economically, the family was sound but not outstanding, except for Francesco and his son Giovanni Tornabuoni, who were among the richest Florentines.<sup>60</sup> The family's main activities ranged across wool, banking, shipping and rentals,<sup>61</sup> and they were regularly called upon to aid the city's financial administration, another result of their oligarchic position.<sup>62</sup>

Of all the family's economic activities, banking and exchange operations were the most lucrative, enabling the Tornabuoni especially to rise in wealth and power.<sup>63</sup> Their founder Simone di Trieri was a wealthy banker<sup>64</sup> and his sons increased this fortune, so that in 1427 Francesco di Simone was the fourth richest citizen in Florence. He, his brother Niccolò and their nephews jointly owned this wealth, valued at 46,320 florins in the catasto of that year.<sup>65</sup> A Tornaquinci or Popoleschi name occurs occasionally in this long report, but most dealings are with fellow Tornabuoni, as this youngest branch vigorously strove to establish its financial and numerical base. Just after this time, however, Francesco suffered heavy losses because of the Milanese war.<sup>66</sup>

Francesco died in 1437, but it was not until June 1460 that his five remaining sons by his second wife legally divided their inheritance, employing as arbitrator their brother-in-law Piero di

Cosimo de' Medici. Perhaps their uncle Niccolò had died recently or the pressure of a growing younger generation now necessitated a property division (see fig. 2).<sup>67</sup> Only land and houses are mentioned in the document, leaving all unnamed financial dealings still, presumably, in partially communal ownership, an assumption supported by the fact that the four brothers alive in 1470 then submitted a single tax report, which included 90 florins worth of Monte credits held jointly, as well as their individual shares, Giovanni claiming the staggering amount of 10060 (sic) florins worth. The listings included a family wool business ("uno trafficho d'arte di lana in San Martino") run by "Lionardo Tornabuoni e compagni," probably at the very same shop which from 1487 was set aside for the endowment of the Tornaquinci chapel.<sup>68</sup>

The bocche, although listed separately under each of the four brothers, amounted to twenty eight household members. The division of real estate in 1460 had soon been justified in terms of this expanding family's need for space. Indeed in 1470 it was reported that Giovanni was building a casa "tutta di nuovo e per sua abitazione e della famigla sua." In 1460 the family's land alone was valued at 5,500 florins, with each of the five brothers receiving an equal share, while the eldest brother Niccolò was similarly to apportion "più masseritie a lloro uso in diversi luoghi, e in Firenze et in villa."

The two oldest brothers, who both died in 1468, were excluded from the property division in 1460, probably because of their age and the fact that they had different mothers, Marabotto being born in 1403 to Francesco's first wife and Antonio being an illegitimate son born in 1408. Perhaps a previous property division had established these two sons independently.<sup>69</sup> Marabotto's rede (his wife and five children) submitted their own catasto in 1469 and his four sons were again a joint household in 1480, claiming that they owned a bottega with "pocha entrata." By 1498, despite certain property held "per non divisa," the widow and sons reported separately.<sup>70</sup> The gradual disintegration and poverty of this small line would have been an example of the benefits to be had from truly remaining united. Just such a unity was theirs in the Tornaquinci chapel, where two or three of Marabotto's sons are portrayed, including Girolamo, who was so keen

in his will of 1524 to establish a monastery patronised by the entire consorateria.<sup>71</sup>

Giovanni himself concentrated his wealth in the Medici Bank, perhaps because his father's fortune had declined somewhat and was inherited by so many nephews and sons. Dei lists two Tornabuoni banks amongst those "in Corte di Roma," one of which possibly belonged to our Giovanni. Certainly his grandsons Giovanni and Leonardo later conducted banking business with the curia, as did his nephew Nofri and some Tornaquinci.<sup>72</sup> On the whole the consorateria was one of those Florentine families which "continued to produce business men and business capital uninterruptedly from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century."<sup>73</sup>

Whether the Renaissance was a period caught in stagflation, crisis, recession or stabilisation is still a matter for debate amongst economic historians and the effect on the Tornaquinci consorateria needs detailed investigation.<sup>74</sup> Pampaloni's claim that the Tornabuoni underwent "un progressivo impoverimento" is too reliant on their own inevitably self-deprecating submissions to the tax official.<sup>75</sup> Nor does this generalisation take account of a wider historical perspective, whereby the consorateria probably shared in a general economic consolidation rather than expansion and yet did not necessarily suffer a lack of confidence. Economically and politically they remained at the heart of the Florentine oligarchy.

Francesco Tornabuoni may have suffered heavy losses due to war but his fortune had been substantial and did not collapse. Throughout the fifteenth century war placed a heavy burden on all Florentine patricians.<sup>76</sup> Occasional examples of poverty or non-payment of taxes in the Trecento and early Quattrocento amongst members of the consorateria do not indicate a decline over the century but simply a continuing variety.<sup>77</sup> In fact the case of men such as Chirico and Niccolo di Piero Tornaquinci in 1426-29 was probably caused by political considerations rather than genuine poverty, these tax evaders being singled out because they were relatively comfortable and politically known.<sup>78</sup> If anything, the Tornaquinci branch itself seems to have revived in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries,



for they owned several banks in these years.<sup>79</sup>

Our Giovanni di Francesco Tornabuoni increased his own inheritance, for the diminished wealth of Francesco, once it was divided between nephews and sons, could not have been outstanding.<sup>80</sup> The general Quattrocento pattern was for sons to build again on their father's fortunes and for the inner oligarchy rapidly to accumulate more wealth than the "lower orders." Yet this ruling group had borne the brunt of expensive wars and a rising public debt, until after 1488 when "the financial state of Florence settled down on a peacetime footing which was to last until 1494."<sup>81</sup> It is no coincidence that an inscription painted in the Tornaquinci chapel at this time linked wealth and peace: "when the most beautiful city, graced by treasures, victories, arts, and buildings, enjoyed wealth, health and peace."<sup>82</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni seems to have been one of the "optimists" discussed by Lopez, "those who had managed to settle down in sufficient comfort, [and] felt that they had definitely and finally arrived."<sup>83</sup>

Giovanni's optimism, expressed by his choice of the invincible diamond as his device and FIRMAVI as his motto (Pls 37, 42), had a sound basis in the continuous energy he devoted to business affairs. Of all his cousins and brothers, it is he who managed to amass the most considerable fortune and to do more than any other relative in enlarging his inheritance and hence his own patrimony left to his descendants. According to Benedetto Dei, who is portrayed in the Zacharias scene, Giovanni Tornabuoni was one of the richest men in Florence. Documents suggest his wealth and public standing by referring to him as "Magnifis", "Spectabilis" and "Generatus" "civis et mercator Florentinus." Such again is his title in the contract and grant of patronage rights concerning the S.Maria Novella chapel. Biliotti's sixteenth century chronicle of that church calls him "civis admodum opulentus," whilst the more prosaic Quattrocento writer Giovanni Cambi referred to his profession as "Mercatante e Banchiere."<sup>84</sup>

He and his family of merchants and bankers were intensely and typically patriotic, believing their economic activities and COPIA to

be a fundamental contribution to the greatness of their city. One citizen called such men "the cream of our citizenry, the foundation of our power". In Cavalcanti's words "just as the wet nurse nourishes babies, so the merchants feed the people, and keep the commonwealth fat." Ficino, another man portrayed in the Zacharias fresco (Pl. 6), wrote that "the duty of the citizen .. is to care as greatly for the public interest as he greatly cherishes his own ..., of the merchant .. to nourish both the state and himself" and "of blood relatives, mutually to love each other as members of the same body."<sup>85</sup> The Tornaquinci chapel is almost a visual illustration to Ficino's text.

A famous thesis by Lopez proposes that "hard times" led to an "investment in culture," and that an increasingly aristocratic, if economically restricted, oligarchy turned to the patronage of the arts rather than to financial expansion.<sup>86</sup> Whether this, or the "great concentrations of wealth," or calculated measures such as tax relief for new building in 1489,<sup>87</sup> was responsible, the late fifteenth century saw a renewed spate of artistic and architectural patronage in Florence. Although scholars are only beginning to recognise this resurgence - Goldthwaite has written of a building "boom" - the examples are numerous, such as the Strozzi and Gondi palaces, Lorenzo's villas at Poggio, Spedaletto and elsewhere, the Sassetti, Tornaquinci and Strozzi chapels, or the entire church of Cestello.<sup>88</sup> Just as Lorenzo de' Medici had the model and "the methods of his grandfather" in mind,<sup>89</sup> so too other members of the oligarchy, such as Lorenzo's uncle Giovanni Tornabuoni, now imitated Cosimo's magnificence. A 1490s treatise, De magnificentia by Pontano, spoke of Cosimo thus: "he was the first to revive the custom of changing private wealth into public benefit and into an ornament of the fatherland. Not a few men, although less advantaged than he, now seek to follow this custom."<sup>90</sup>

By the late fifteenth century, the family's feudal origins and relatively confident, solid economic position led this ex-magnate family back towards a more ostentatious, noble position. Giovanni's brother, Filippo Tornabuoni, aged 62, complained in 1480 about the younger generation, for his sons "non `anno exercitio niuno et ò gli a calzare et vestire et fare loro la spesa."<sup>91</sup> For most of his life

Giovanni's own son Lorenzo (Pls 16, 43) was more interested in humanism and genteel living than in economic matters. However, the Quattrocento pattern was that the older men "gambled on their offspring" and the young had to "repair the family fortune in each new generation."<sup>92</sup> As Giovanni aged, Lorenzo began his financial involvement, eventually trying to extricate his funds from the failing Medici Bank. His execution in 1497 brought to a close the chief economic nexus between the Tornabuoni and the Medici Bank.<sup>93</sup>

#### E: GIOVANNI TORNABUONI (1428-1497) AND HIS CHILDREN

Giovanni di Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni was the youngest of ten children, born on 22 December 1428 (fig. 2).<sup>94</sup> His mother, Francesco's second wife, was Nanna di Niccolò di Messer Luigi Guicciardini, who would have brought a substantial dowry to the marriage and who died when Giovanni was eighteen.<sup>95</sup> Giovanni remembered his parentado with the Guicciardini, inviting the oldest surviving relative of his long dead mother, her cousin Luigi Guicciardini, to the wedding of his son Lorenzo Tornabuoni in 1486.<sup>96</sup> By a nice and surely recognised touch, Lorenzo was marrying an Albizzi girl, Giovanna. His grandfather's first wife, Selvaggia Alessandri, had been from the popolano branch of the Albizzi; furthermore, Giovanna was the granddaughter of Lorenzo's aunt (fig. 2). Portrayed in the S.Maria Novella Visitation in a commemorative capacity, for she died in 1488, Giovanna's presence in the chapel would seem to be a public statement of far deeper familial ties and memories (Pls 10, 44, 47).<sup>97</sup>

Unfortunately nothing is known of Giovanni's early life in his large household, nor of his education, although it must have stressed the usual arithmetical training and probably a strong simple piety, perhaps on the model of Giovanni Dominici's Regola.<sup>98</sup> His youngest companions certainly became firmly committed to religion later in life: his illegitimate half-brother Antonio was a canon, his sister Selvaggia possibly a nun, while his other two sisters, Dianora and Lucrezia, were close to S.Antonino, who wrote his Opera a ben vivere for them.<sup>99</sup> The famed Lucrezia (Pl. 46), Lorenzo il Magnifico's mother, wrote religious poetry, songs and plays throughout her life

and was renowned for her piety and charity. She married Piero di Cosimo de' Medici by 1444<sup>100</sup> and in the previous year the young Giovanni, now fatherless and with a reduced patrimony, had entered the service of the Medici Bank.<sup>101</sup> These two events linked the two families inextricably throughout the Quattrocento.

What de Roover calls Giovanni's "impatient and irascible" nature, his ambition and his willingness to use his family relationship with the Medici, appear at an early stage. On 31 October 1465 he signed a retrospective contract with Piero de' Medici whereby he became Rome manager, "come ministro et compagno nel traffico della raxone nostra di corte di Roma," with wide ranging responsibilities. He held this official position until 1494 and throughout this time, in de Roover's judgement, "he managed to retain the trust of Piero, his brother-in-law, and later of Lorenzo, his nephew."<sup>102</sup> Indeed, it was largely to Giovanni that Lorenzo de' Medici's inadequate and belated business education was entrusted. In March 1466 Piero sent his son to Rome, counselling him to discuss confidential foreign policy with Giovanni, to observe business affairs under his guidance and to accept an alum monopoly in Piero's name: "Consult about this with Giovanni Tornabuoni and settle this and other matters as you both think best." The alum contract was soon signed and for several years Medici control of the alum market, largely conducted at the Bruges branch, was an irritation to Giovanni.<sup>103</sup>

Into the 1470s Giovanni complained "probably with reason" that the Bruges branch under Tommaso Portinari was depleting his own resources and liquid funds. Lorenzo de' Medici himself later noted that he had been duped by Portinari and it is known that Francesco Sasseti had encouraged Portinari's schemes. Later Sasseti and Tornabuoni also disagreed over the troublesome Lyons branch, Giovanni accusing him of poor management and Francesco responding eventually to his troubles by portraying himself and his sons (who managed the Lyons branch) as closely associated with Lorenzo de' Medici and his children in the Sasseti chapel (Pls 62, 63).<sup>104</sup> Possibly Giovanni's animosity towards Sasseti and Portinari found artistic expression, for Ghirlandaio's frescoes in S.Maria Novella make veiled references and attempted improvements on art commissioned by these men. Donor

portraits and rather Flemish landscape backgrounds in particular occur in Hugo van der Goes' Portinari altarpiece, which arrived in Florence in 1483, the Sassetti chapel by Ghirlandaio himself, finished in 1486/7, and lastly the Tornaquinci chapel. Giovanni's character and his patronage give the impression of a proud and competitive man, eager to assert his own family's eminence.

Giovanni's parentado with the Medici was used by that family in September 1466 for their own political purposes, since Luca Pitti's defection from an anti-Medicean plot was secured when he was promised that his daughter would marry a man Piero de' Medici held dear. Expecting an alliance with Lorenzo di Piero, Luca was outwitted cleverly when in fact his daughter Francesca (Pl. 25) was married to Giovanni Tornabuoni in 1467. Nevertheless, in Landucci's words, "lui [Luca] rimase amico e con buona pace," a striking instance of the political importance attached to marriage and of Giovanni's public association with the Medici.<sup>105</sup> At the same time Lorenzo's marriage with an Orsini was being arranged, its resultant political tie with Rome being even more important to the Medici. Giovanni Tornabuoni first suggested the alliance and was a central figure in the negotiations.<sup>106</sup> Letters in 1468 and 1469 confirm that Giovanni was a central agent in the affair, procuring Cardinal Orsini's signature to the contract in November 1468, and they indicate that Clarice's fondness for him already existed.<sup>107</sup> Two letters to Lorenzo by Francesco di Filippo Tornabuoni, Giovanni's nephew, reveal that another member of the family was also affectionately attendant upon Clarice in Rome.<sup>108</sup>

Before the finalisation of this affair, Giovanni's own marriage had on 10 August 1468 produced a son, fittingly called Lorenzo.<sup>109</sup> Not long thereafter Giovanni reported in the catasto of 1470 that he had bought a villa (Villa Lemmi) and had begun a family palace, a typically optimistic and familial action. The urban land was shared with his brothers, who now had at least nine sons, so the family's fortunes seemed assured.<sup>110</sup> Most of his time was still spent in Rome where his responsibilities increased after the election of Sixtus IV in 1471, who appointed him Depositary General, a prestigious position Giovanni did not want particularly because the Pope was spending too

freely and further draining Giovanni's resources.<sup>111</sup>

Lorenzo de' Medici's collection of precious objects largely began at this time: "In the month of September 1471 I was elected to go as ambassador for the coronation of Pope Sixtus ... I brought back the two antique marble heads ... given to me by the said Pope Sixtus, and also our cup of chalcedony incised, and many other cameos which I then bought." Most of these objects, including the famed Gemma Augustea, were from the defunct Pope Paul II's collection. Valori's informed biography of Lorenzo places Giovanni, one of his ambassadorial retinue, in a central role:

Nam et eum statim Apostolicae Camerae thesauris praefecit, et rationum eius socios ita tractavit, ut brevi omnes, et maxime Ionnes Tornabonus eius avunculus maximus sint divitias consequenti. Gemmas quippe, et margaritas, quibus comparandis Paulus Pontifex unice studuerat, pierasque illius aut nullo, aut parro admodum pretio concessit...<sup>112</sup>

From this point on, Giovanni occasionally aided Lorenzo in his collector's zeal, but his role was not necessarily much more important than that of his nephew Antonio di Filippo Tornabuoni: both acted as trusted agents fulfilling Lorenzo's desire rather than as independently interested men.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, Giovanni spent much of his life in Rome and he often met humanists in a political or personal capacity. Donato Acciaiuoli, for example, was one of the retinue in 1471 and it was during this sojourn in Rome that Lorenzo, Bernardo Rucellai and others, perhaps including Giovanni, toured the ruins with Alberti.<sup>114</sup> As early as January 1456 Giovanni had begun his buying missions, going with the humanist Giannozzo Manetti to a Roman bookseller to purchase books for Piero de' Medici.<sup>115</sup>

Giovanni necessarily was in contact with the Florentine ambassadors in Rome who were often humanists. Thus, in 1473 Matteo Palmieri (Pl. 87) was an associate of Giovanni's,<sup>116</sup> while in 1477-78 and 1483 the contact was with Francesco Gaddi, the original owner of Giuliano da Sangallo's Codex Barberini, a collection of drawings recording Rome's antiquities, much associated with Ghirlandaio's similar codex. Some of the former perhaps, and certainly the latter sketches, were employed in the S.Maria Novella frescoes.<sup>117</sup> Warburg

claimed that Luigi Lotti and Giovanni Tornabuoni were the chief seekers after antiquities for the Medici in Rome, but the evidence he cites, a letter from 1486, in fact concerns another Giovanni.<sup>118</sup> Only one reference in the Protocolli of Lorenzo's letters, to "due corniuole," connects Giovanni with Lorenzo's gem collection after 1471,<sup>119</sup> although in Florence in 1488 he played some part in Lorenzo's acquisition of Cardinal Gonzaga's collection.<sup>120</sup>

In Rome, Giovanni personally paid Platina in 1474 for his recent Vita pontificum, in 1483 visited a "messer Christofano" to deliver Lorenzo's thanks for a "libro donato," in 1480 and 1483 dispatched Argyropoulos' books, probably all translations of Aristotle.<sup>121</sup> Some men may have felt obliged to Giovanni for his part in obtaining their benefices, on Lorenzo's instructions. Gentile Becchi in 1473 and Poliziano in 1477 and 1481 were aided in this way. Gentile must have consulted with Giovanni in the early seventies when they were the chief agents in Lorenzo's ecclesiastical plans for his brother Giuliano.<sup>122</sup> Both Becchi and Poliziano are portrayed in the group of four humanists in the Zacharias fresco (Pl. 6), having been tutors of the Medici and in Poliziano's case also involved in the education of Giovanni's sons, as well as Lucrezia's personal friends and staunch allies throughout their lives. All these contacts, however peripheral, help to explain the plethora of grotesche, triumphal arches and classicising sculpture which forms a constant backdrop in the chapel's frescoes (eg Pls 2, 15, 21, 36). Visually, Giovanni Tornabuoni was encouraging Ghirlandaio's skills, uniting his patria with his former business address and idealising Florence partly into what Dei had called "un' altra Roma novella" and partly into a modern City of God.

In 1472 Giovanni took on another Medicean task, hopes for Giuliano's cardinalate, being named chief negotiator: "accord him," wrote Lorenzo to Sixtus, "the same confidence as though I was speaking with your Holiness."<sup>123</sup> But relations between Sixtus and the Medici deteriorated and Lorenzo's ambitions for his brother were curtailed tragically when Giuliano was murdered in the Pazzi plot of April 1478.<sup>124</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni was an eye-witness to this event and the bloody violence which shocked everyone undoubtedly affected him, who

had only recently lost his wife when she was in anguished labour. The sincere grief he felt when she died in September 1477 is attested to by the very personal and emotional letter he wrote to Lorenzo and by his nephew's rare reply, "consolateria per la morte della moglie."<sup>125</sup> In Giovanni's words

Son tanto oppresso da passione e dolore per l'acerbissimo e inopinato chaso della mia dolcissima sposa, che io medesimo non so dove mi sia. La quale, chome avrai inteso ieri, chome piacque a Dio a hore xxij sopra parto passò di questa presente vita, e la creatura, sparata lei, gli chavamo di chorpo morta, che m'è stato anchora doppio dolore. Son certissimo che per la tua solita pietà avendomi chompassione marai per ischusato s'io non ti scrivo a longho ... non posso scriverti altrimenti.

Giovanni expressed a dazed and painful "doppio dolore" since a daughter was still-born too, further decreasing the possible continuation of his blood, albeit by female descent.

His wife's tomb, now known only through Heemskerck's early sixteenth century drawing (Pl. 60), contained an effigy of the daughter lying with Francesca, a presentation unique until a small group of English tombs in the seventeenth century also chose to refer thus to the reality of dangerous childbirth. A surviving relief for the tomb by Verrocchio (Pl. 61) graphically depicts the horror and family suffering: an exhausted Francesca is surrounded by wailing, shrieking women, whose extreme gestures, flying hair and grieving poses recall classical sarcophagi, while on the other side an anxious Giovanni clasps his hands and furrows his brow as the dead child is presented to him by shocked servants.<sup>126</sup> To the far left stand two young boys, undoubtedly Giovanni's sons who will offer consolation and future hope. But for the moment Giovanni is overwhelmed and in fact he never remarried,<sup>127</sup> choosing to concentrate on his children and consorteria as a means of perpetuating his family's name and honour. Francesca was buried in S.Maria sopra Minerva, the Dominican church which was the focal point for the Florentine community in Rome. For the same chapel, presumably in the early eighties when the Sistine chapel was underway too, Giovanni commissioned from Ghirlandaio narratives of the same two saints who reappear later in S.Maria Novella.<sup>128</sup> Anniversary masses were instigated for his wife and



around 1480-81 Giovanni's young nephew Francesco di Filippo Tornabuoni was buried there, in a tomb carved by Mino da Fiesole (Pl. 59). In 1509 the man's brother Alessandro di Filippo was also buried in what had become the family's Roman burial chapel.<sup>129</sup>

The Massacre of the Innocents fresco in S.Maria Novella (Pl. 21) may have particular family and emotive connotations related to Francesca's death. The only violent, disturbed and over-active scene there, in contrast to the chief inscription's PACE, its classical sources recall the mood and influences of the Verrocchio relief. Rare in Florentine art, the Massacre was surely chosen in part for its personal implications relevant to the Tornaquinci. Other frescoes treat the continuation and regeneration of the lineage whereas this one scene depicts the awful alternative, at the same time remembering the ultimate consolation of eternal life.<sup>130</sup>

Meanwhile, the Pazzi conspiracy and its consequent war brought financial troubles to a head. Giovanni was expelled from Rome and he did not return, except as an ambassador, until December 1481. In these Florentine years he again came into contact with Clarice and with her children's tutor, Poliziano, who, in August 1478 wrote to Lorenzo: "If you have not absolute need of Giovanni Tornabuoni Madonna Clarice wishes you would send him [back] here, she is lonely without him, and for many reasons she thinks it would be well if he came." Less than a fortnight later Giovanni had joined this family group at Pistoia. Clarice was advanced in pregnancy and Poliziano says in another letter that she "has not been feeling very well.. she fears she may have a miscarriage, or else may suffer in the same way as Giovanni Tornabuoni's wife..."<sup>131</sup> One wonders how much comfort either Clarice or Giovanni did receive from each other's presence at this anxious time.

Next year, when Poliziano and Clarice quarrelled, the vulnerable humanist began to entice Giovanni's patronage. His letter of July to Lucrezia reveals much about the education of the Tornabuoni children and, given the rhetoric and ulterior motive, something of Poliziano's feelings towards Giovanni and Lucrezia.

... I send back your lauds, sonnets, and poems in terza

rima, which you lent me when I was with you the other day. All these women were delighted with them and Madonna Lucrezia, or rather Lucrezia, [Lorenzo de' Medici's daughter, named after his mother] has learnt all the lauds and many sonnets of the Lucrezia by heart. There is also a little white book in manuscript which I beg you to give to your and my good Giovanni Tornabuoni, it contains certain rules his children asked me to give them. I am also writing to Giovanni, to the children, and to their master. I pray you to give him the letters and to commend me to him, for I set great store and count much on the affection he shows me. I have been to see Lorenzo several times and cannot describe how well he received me. Do try and discover what are his intentions with regard to me; ... I shall always be at the beck and call of Lorenzo as I am sure he knows better than I ... I am working hard. Till now I have not been able to send you the promised book ... As soon as I have it I will send it.<sup>132</sup>

Lucrezia, a poet of some merit, frequently listened to Poliziano's literary advice and supported his own efforts, as a friend and colleague. The praise and attention paid to Giovanni in Poliziano's letter was not motivated solely by immediate self-interest, since his hopes were for eventual reconciliation, which did occur. The Tornabuoni children had their own "master," but they obviously know Poliziano well enough to ask for his book of "rules." Later Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornabuoni became Poliziano's keen pupil, studying Greek, and Poliziano wrote some of the inscriptions for the Tornaquinci chapel, where his presence in the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pl. 6) recalls family associations as well as acknowledging the "revival of learning" which was part of what Ficino, another portrayed companion, called in 1492 Florence's "golden age."<sup>133</sup>

An interesting detail from Poliziano's letter is its reference to the Tornabuoni "children" in the plural. Perhaps the second child was Lodovica, born in 1476, but girls were not then given an equal education and she was also too young.<sup>134</sup> Thus this letter confirms the occasional vague claim that Giovanni had another son whom Litta calls Antonio.<sup>135</sup> More concrete evidence for his existence comes from another letter of 1479, from a young Piero de' Medici to his father about the Tornabuoni tutor, "my Martino," whom he is trying to aid in a quest to achieve a chaplaincy in S.Lorenzo, in which he mentions the

man's "patrons, Antonio and Lorenzo Tornabuoni."<sup>136</sup> Finally, Giovanni Tornabuoni's will confirms the existence of his illegitimate son Antonio, whom "reliquit sub protectione, regimine et gubernatione dicti Laurenti, eius filij, eos eidem recommendens etc." Antonio Tornabuoni is probably the elder of the two boys standing in Francesca's tomb relief (Pl. 61), for Lorenzo was only nine when his mother died. It is probable that this Antonio was born in Rome before 1467, and named after Giovanni's illegitimate brother Antonio, who was in the curia till he died in 1468.<sup>137</sup>

For several years Giovanni Tornabuoni, now in his fifties and a widower with three children, had lived continuously in his homeland surrounded by "parenti, amici e vicini."<sup>138</sup> Perhaps his desire for a final family monument, greater than the one on foreign soil in S.Maria sopra Minerva, celebrating the stature of his family, preserving its honour and presenting it in eternal prayer, was stirred at this time. From 1480 we have records of various masses for his family which he instituted at S.Maria Novella.<sup>139</sup> In the same year that he returned to Rome, in 1481, his letters to Lorenzo de' Medici shift from the familiar tu address to a more formal voi, indicating the impact made on him by the magnificence and aristocratic etiquette which was strengthening in Florence. In 1487 his sincere Medicean devotion was expressed to Lorenzo in grandiloquent terms: "I have God in heaven and Your Magnificence on earth."<sup>140</sup> By 1489 the courtly devotion of this powerful man had gone so far that he could refer to himself and fellow Medici Bank supporters as "omaccini" or "little ones" when he wrote a letter otherwise full of business advice to Lorenzo.<sup>141</sup> The eighties were Giovanni's most active and public decade and the Tornaquinci chapel (1485-91) is an appropriate visualisation of oligarchic, religious and familial feelings current at the time.

Lorenzo's trip to Naples in the winter of 1479-80 finally secured an end to the Pazzi wars, but it was not until November 1480 that a Florentine delegation was received by the Pope. Giovanni Tornabuoni was one of the twelve ambassadors, at least five of whom were or would be directly related to him through marriage.<sup>142</sup> Giovanni was now in the centre of the Medicean and oligarchic network, an assured and recognised member. The embassy successfully obtained

Papal re-benediction for Florence and whilst in Rome Giovanni also acted on Lorenzo's behalf in the matter of "i libri di Messer Giovanni Argiropolo," as he did again in 1483.<sup>143</sup> Giovanni and this Byzantine humanist Argyropoulos are portrayed in Ghirlandaio's Calling of the First Apostles (Pl. 55), frescoed in the Sistine Chapel for Sixtus IV by October 1481 or at the latest May 1482.<sup>144</sup> His young son Lorenzo stands proudly in front of him: their place amidst the Florentine community in Rome, Giovanni's patronage in S. Maria sopra Minerva and his role in the Papal court assured his family a leading position in this scene.

From late 1481 Giovanni was again regularly resident in Rome.<sup>145</sup> On 25 March 1482 Lorenzo de' Medici's "most beloved mother" Lucrezia Tornabuoni (Pl. 46) died and in a letter Lorenzo called this a "terrible and disastrous blow ... for I have lost, not only a mother, but the only person I could turn to in many vexations and who aided me in many troubles."<sup>146</sup> Giovanni and his family, undoubtedly grief-stricken, were nevertheless permanently established oligarchs now in their own right and their various ties with the Medici were never forgotten. That the Duke of Urbino stayed in Giovanni's house on a state visit in April 1482 further suggests Giovanni's status within the patriciate by this time, as well as indicating that his "palatio" must indeed have been adequately palatial for such purposes, as the later inventory confirms.<sup>147</sup> In November-December 1482 Giovanni at last became Gonfaloniere, thereby achieving prestigious recognition of his political stature. He proudly wears the costume of this office in the Zacharias scene, surrounded by other men dressed in sober, dignified costumes (Pl. 2).<sup>148</sup>

September 1484 saw Giovanni in Florence again, taking what was undoubtedly a pivotal role in Tornaquinci land sales to Filippo Strozzi.<sup>149</sup> On his return to Rome later that year he was one of six ambassadors to the newly elected Innocent VIII, with important men such as Guidantonio Vespucci and the Florentine chancellor Bartolomeo Scala, while Poliziano and Gentile Becchi formed part of the entourage. Young Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici also accompanied them and his father's letter to him recalls the one of 1466 to young Lorenzo from his father, for Giovanni Tornabuoni is again given the

task of chief counsel. "I send thee with Giovanni Tornabuoni, whom thou art to obey in all things and not to presume to do aught without him. Be modest and kindly in manner towards him and every one, and strive to bear thyself with sedateness..." However, the language is now more formal and courtly, Lorenzo's aspirations higher and his policy more ambitious.<sup>150</sup>

In particular, Lorenzo was now seeking a cardinalate for another son, Giovanni, although Tornabuoni's role in this second attempt was not as central as it had been for Giuliano de' Medici, his nephew Nofri having largely supplanted him.<sup>151</sup> A letter of 1 December 1484 from Lorenzo to Giovanni mentions several of the important tasks expected from him at this time: "ricordandoli le due corniuole, le cose di Carlo Martelli, et il priorato di Francia, per messer Giovanni [de' Medici]; di che tante volte ha scripto Lionetto, come lui sa," so Giovanni was pursuing Lorenzo's interests in the collection of precious objects and the ecclesiastical career of his son. But a hint of impatience arises when Lorenzo discusses the affairs of the Lyons branch, mismanaged by Lionetto de' Rossi, and of Carlo Martelli, long since a supporter of the Bruges branch in the alum controversy.<sup>152</sup>

Age and the problems of economic management were probably behind Giovanni's request in December 1484 to return to Florence with his fellow ambassadors who had been visiting Innocent VIII. Having recently become acquainted with the extent of Filippo Strozzi's plans for his palace opposite Tornabuoni's own (fig. 3), and presumably having heard about the Sassetti chapel nearing completion, perhaps Giovanni also was anxious to begin, at the age of 56, his own family memorial in S.Maria Novella. But Lorenzo delayed the move: "parendoli le cose del bancho habbino bisogno della presentia sua per qualche tempo, resti a Roma, ma non passi marzo."<sup>153</sup> Giovanni left the affairs of Rome increasingly in the hands of his nephew Nofri and was able to remain in Florence from March 1485 to July 1487.<sup>154</sup> These were the crucial years in which the contract with Ghirlandaio was signed (September 1485), Lorenzo Tornabuoni married (July 1486), patronage rights obtained over the chapel (October 1486), the dowry for anniversary masses established (February 1487), and the actual frescoes begun (May 1486). Even after 1487 Giovanni was more in

Florence than Rome,<sup>155</sup> continuing to oversee the decoration of his family chapel which was unveiled on his sixty-second birthday, 22 December 1490, as his neighbour Luca Landucci recorded:

si scoprì la capella di Santa Maria Novella, cioè la capella maggiore. L'aveva dipinta Domenico Grillandaio; e fecela dipigniere Giovanni Tornabuoni. E fece il coro di legname intorno alla capella. Che costò solo la pittura fiorini 1000 d'oro.<sup>156</sup>

In the 1490s Giovanni suffered ill health and, according to de Roover, interfered in a "constant and tempestuous" way in the Bank's affairs, "becoming more and more set in his ways."<sup>157</sup> When the Medici were expelled in 1494, Giovanni and his son Lorenzo were empowered to take over the Bank's ailing affairs, but soon bankruptcy may have seemed inevitable.<sup>158</sup> To what degree Giovanni's own wealth was depleted in these last years, or disappeared in complex arrangements with the exiled Medici, is impossible to ascertain. As a crisis was looming, Giovanni died in April 1497 and within months his son was beheaded for his part in a Medicean conspiracy.<sup>159</sup> Yet several new documents enable us to reconstruct a more optimistic and vigorous picture of the family's finances and attitudes, so that they emerge as members of the period's "boom" patron class. Deterministic hindsight and a romantic preoccupation with a fin de siècle fade-out to the Quattrocento, on the part of historians like Gombrich and de Roover, have warped our image of the last decades of that century.<sup>160</sup> In the late 1480s, as his family chapel neared completion, Giovanni Tornabuoni remained hopeful about the overall health of the Medici Bank. When he heard about the impending fall of the Martelli and Spannocchi banks in Rome he wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici on 12 April 1489:

sia una gran' ruina. E a noi bisogna per conservare la riputatione el honore vostro faciano quello siano costumati. E che sendo usciti di tanta fortuna non anneghiano in uno bichiero d'acqua.<sup>161</sup>

He advised precautionary measures, but was warning against a situation that would have been a mere "glass of water" compared to previous perils overcome. "Reputation and honour" were vital and active concepts for a banker and oligarch like Giovanni, whose patronage was

a visual expression of the "wealth, health and peace" his class idealised and an inscription in his chapel immortalised.

Despite apparent financial troubles, on which Gombrich set too great a store, Lorenzo de' Medici was a conspicuous patron, especially of architecture, in the last years of his life, at the very time of the Tornabuoni chapel's decoration, and when Giovanni Tornabuoni was beginning or planning extensions to his buildings in the town and country.<sup>162</sup> The bank's difficulties even after the Medici were expelled in 1494 did not necessarily erode the private Tornabuoni estate. A previously unknown but brief summation of Giovanni's "eredità" lists possessions valued at 40,424 florins, including "La chasa di Firenze" at 5000 florins, the villa "Le Brache" at 3000 florins, the villa later known as Villa Lemmi ("El Chiasso cho' 3 poderi") at 4000 florins and "una gioia impendentata" worth 400 florins. On the opposite page, the ragione of his business in Rome and Florence totalled 22,849 florins.<sup>163</sup> Little idea of his wealth, other than increased land holdings, can be gained from his tax reports.<sup>164</sup>

Before his death, but after his chapel was finished, Giovanni engineered a complicated series of legal manouevres to pass most of his estate and the inheritance from his wife onto his very young grandsons, thereby insuring against creditors' claims on the bank and businesses owned by himself and his legitimate son.<sup>165</sup> Perhaps Giovanni also wished to protect the patrimony against possible confiscation by the then anti-Medicean regime. Events in 1497 justified Giovanni's concern all too well, for Lorenzo's execution on 21 August did lead to confiscation of his property.<sup>166</sup> Lorenzo's four children were made pupilli and a detailed inventory was drawn up of the Tornabuoni houses and furnishings, which are revealed as palatial and rich holdings.<sup>167</sup> Such new information puts a somewhat different light on Guicciardini's assessment of Lorenzo's motives for his part in the pro-Medici conspiracy:

Other considerations had moved Lorenzo Tornabuoni, a noble and gracious youth more beloved by the entire people than anyone his age. For one thing, Piero was his blood cousin [first cousin once removed], and under his rule he had enjoyed great power. For another, he was a very generous man and had spent a great deal of money. Since his involvement in the

Medici business had put his finances in such disorder that he would soon have gone bankrupt, he sought this revolution so that he might get back on his feet. Then, he thought, his arch enemies Lorenzo and Giovanni di Pierfrancesco [Medici], whom he feared deeply, would become leaders of the city - and that was what he was trying to prevent.<sup>168</sup>

Financial, family and political motives are each carefully examined by Guicciardini. De Roover astutely noted the suggestion of bankruptcy, but had taken it at face value and did not distinguish between private wealth and business capital.<sup>169</sup> Nor has Lorenzo's political involvement been considered deeply, for he died young and Piero de' Medici's regime lasted only two years before Lorenzo had to turn to more surreptitious power games. The two men, only four years apart in age, had shared an education, particularly under Poliziano, and continued into the younger generation the personal and political ties established between their fathers and grandfathers.<sup>170</sup>

Guicciardini's assessment of Lorenzo (Pls 16, 43) as "noble and gracious ... a very generous man [who] had spent a great deal of money" speaks of a patron, who had established a chapel, and partially funded the new cloister, at Cestello (Pls 56-58).<sup>171</sup> The chapel commemorated Giovanna Albizzi's death, although she and her husband were both buried in the family church of S.Maria Novella. The parallels with the larger chapel initiated and paid for by Lorenzo's father are striking. Both chapels were generously endowed for the purpose of commemorative masses; both were lavishly decorated, with an altarpiece by Ghirlandaio's shop, "panche cholle spalliere," sculpted arme in the entrance archway, stained glass windows produced by Sandro Agolanti on Ghirlandaio's designs, several embroidered vestments and candlesticks.<sup>172</sup> A document describing Lorenzo's patronage at Cestello praises him highly and echoes Guicciardini's language, calling him "nobile" and "magnifico et generoso ... principuo nostro benefattore." Such is the very rhetoric constantly applied to his father and it seems that Lorenzo consciously sought to model himself on his father's example, to be a "mirror" of the previous generation in the terms of writers like Ficino or Fra Giovanni Caroli. Later Lorenzo and his wife Giovanna were referred to as "the exempld pair and mirror of their kind."<sup>173</sup> In an Aritmetica given to him by



Giovanni Banchegli, he is addressed as "La magnificentia vostra." In the verbal equivalent of Ghirlandaio's idealising rhetoric, the arithmetician went on to ask for recognition of his "scientia" because Lorenzo,

essendo nato in una patria ornatissima d'ogni felicità: nato di nobilissimi parenti cum (sic) copiosissime ricchezze nutrito cum optimi costumi et sempre da tenera età educato nelle lettere: le quale amando voi sopra ogni lera cosa come singulare ornamento del'animo humano.<sup>174</sup>

Patriotism, parenti, "wealth," decorum, learning and the soul's ornamentation are all celebrated here, as they are in the Tornaquinci chapel.

Little else is known of Lorenzo's patronage. The inventory of his property lists numerous Virgins in gesso, carved benches and the like, but we cannot know which family member commissioned any individual piece. On another level of "generosity" we have a documented instance of Lorenzo's almsgiving, when in July 1495 Fra Domenico Ricci, from S.Maria Novella, gave a poor woman the enormous sum of 20 florins on Lorenzo's behalf, "exonerare eius conscientiam."<sup>175</sup> Almsgiving was an act of patronage, a manifestation of "magnificence," for which Lorenzo had several family models to follow, including his cousin Lorenzo il Magnifico and above all his aunt Lucrezia.<sup>176</sup> Perhaps his patron saint was also an inspiration, since S.Lorenzo was renowned for having distributed church goods to the poor and is commemorated in stained glass at both Cestello and S. Maria Novella as well as in intarsia, embroidery and on the altarpiece in the latter chapel (Pls 33, 35, 56).<sup>177</sup>

The supportive relationship between father and son would have been influential too in forming Lorenzo's "generosity" and responsibility. His education had been carefully guided, entailing University attendance after private tutelage. That Giovanni Tornabuoni considered such a full education important is indicated by the fact that he also supported his nephew Messer Giuliano di Filippo through University.<sup>178</sup> It would seem no accident that one of the early masses Giovanni ordered in S.Maria Novella for his wife was paid for by his son.<sup>179</sup> Nearly seven years later, Giovanni's will is a

clear statement of his paternal trust and growing reliance on his son. As is usual, the son and heir is entrusted with the task of fulfilling the testator's burial wishes, with regard to both the tombs and the masses; but Giovanni also details how the family chapel is to be completed by Lorenzo "secundum modum per dictum testatorem ordinatum et statutum." To the last Giovanni desires firm control, yet delegates to Lorenzo the furnishing of a window and the provision of "spallerias ligneas de tarsia." Only Ludovica's dowry is given similar, though briefer, attention than the chapel. Finally Lorenzo is implicitly urged to follow his father's model of care and protection when the illegitimate son is placed under Lorenzo's "gubernatione."<sup>180</sup>

Giovanni made his will as Ghirlandaio's frescoes were nearing completion, in order that all the other projected decorations such as a possible altarpiece (fig. 5) were guaranteed and carefully itemised. In the event, he lived to see all the work completed and so was able to retain personal control over the "modum." His self-awareness as the generous patron of all that splendour may explain the unusual inclusion of the Founding of S.Maria Maggiore in the window (Pl. 31), since it aptly celebrates not only the establishment of the Church, central to the Dominican Order's purpose, but also the role of individual patronage and generosity. In fresco, the addition of the Expulsion of Joachim (fig. 5, Pl. 14) to the programme after the contract was signed may be another reference to donation. No wonder then that when the friars transferred all patronage rights over the chapel to the Tornaquinci consorteria in 1486, they singled out the "magnificum et generosum virum" Giovanni Tornabuoni.<sup>181</sup>

Giovanni's self-perception as a patron led to his very meticulous control over the chapel's progress. That this sense of responsibility and attention to detail seems to have been a character trait can be demonstrated, first, by reference to his handling of his children's affairs in the years following his permanent residence in Florence and the inception of Ghirlandaio's frescoes. Both careful administration and paternal solicitude characterise his actions. The youngest child, Lodovica (Pls 19, 45), was born in 1476 and the fact that she was named after St.Louis seems both to commemorate the

family's Guelf allegiance and to proclaim its attachment to the French court.<sup>182</sup> From 1480, Giovanni regularly in August took the unusual step of paying for masses for someone still alive: "per la messa fece chantare per la Lodovica suo figliuola" or "per la festa di Santo Lodovico."<sup>183</sup>

Given its monetary value, Giovanni's attention to Lodovica's dowry is not surprising, although its worth is exceptional. His will itemised each jewel and these, with 3000 florins, were to be handed over to Alessandro Nasi "quando matrimonium legitime consumaverit." The husband formally acknowledged his receipt of the total 4000 florins in early 1493 and two of the jewels, which are to return to Giovanni's estate upon her decease, are therein described in even greater detail.<sup>184</sup> Giovanni's will also provided Lodovica with certain living expenses and stipulated that she could live out her days in the town "domo" or the "chiasso Macerelli" villa, all of which indicates his solicitous attention to the possible plight of widowhood. Her two "sociis," Caterina and Dianora, were each provided with a dowry of 100 florins. Probably these two women were honoured further by being portrayed as the more simply dressed attendants standing behind Lodovica in the chapel's Birth of Mary (Pl. 18). Lodovica herself wears a dress richly brocaded with the triangular Tornabuoni emblem and a cross surrounded by pearls hangs from her neck (Pl. 19), probably the "crocettina" mentioned in Giovanni's will, so that she is dressed it seems in her future wedding garments.<sup>185</sup> Her fiancé, Alessandro Nasi, probably stands with her brother Lorenzo and two other relatives in the adjacent fresco (Pl. 16): as with Giovanna Albizzi in the Visitation, the relatives through marriage are also visually caught within the family network, welcomed, proclaimed and possessed for all time. Earlier, her father had had medals made of himself and his two legitimate children (Pls 42, 43, 45), probably in the very year Ghirlandaio signed his contract for the family chapel.<sup>186</sup> The commemoration of such a young, let alone female, child bespeaks Giovanni's fatherly concern for his family's preservation and pride in his stock. Finally, a now lost fresco in the Chiasso Macerelli villa (fig. 4) portrayed a man in a Gonfaloniere's costume holding a little girl, and the writers who note this work suggest that this must have represented Giovanni with Lodovica.<sup>187</sup> Giovanni quite

assiduously used art to visually express his emotional and social values.

For Lorenzo the surviving documents are necessarily more of a legal and formal nature. Not emancipated until 1495, he was legally under his father's responsibility until the age of twenty six.<sup>188</sup> So, for instance, his father's will provided for Lorenzo's dead wife and in October 1490 he had to be given formal permission from his father to withdraw the Monte credits received from that now dead Albizzi wife. The action may indicate that another marriage was in the offing and indeed one year later he picked up the dowry of his second wife, Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi, who had been portrayed already in the chapel in happy anticipation (Pl. 10).<sup>189</sup> Giovanni's procurator for the act in 1490 was Tieri di Francesco Tornaquinci, long since his neighbour and one of the men standing in the Zacharias fresco. Tieri was able to condition 2000 florins of the Monte credits as security for the sale of a farm by himself and others to Niccolò di Piero Tornaquinci. In other words, we find the Tornabuoni and Tornaquinci legally and financially connected at the very time when their portrayal together in S.Maria Novella was about to be unveiled.

Lorenzo was emancipated in March 1495, immediately after his eldest son aged seven was emancipated, so that Giovanni Tornabuoni retained control over both generations. Presumably this unusual course was adopted for legal reasons, to protect against creditors' claims, but one senses that Giovanni also wished to keep the privilege and elder's responsibility till the last. He had taken great care to insure that the patrimony and the estates of the Pitti and Albizzi wives were handed on intact and untouchable to the youngest generation. As with the family chapel and its portraits, Giovanni at the end of his life was providing for his family's future and preserving its inheritance in both visual and financial ways.

Even earlier, his undertakings for the family's dead, especially enacted in S.Maria Novella, further attest to the affection and care he dedicated to his family and that site. Vasari's testimony to Giovanni's love for his wife Francesca and his desire to honour her was an attempted explanation for a very unusual tomb, the one carved

by Verrocchio and placed in S.Maria sopra Minerva (Pls 60, 61), but it was an accurate supposition. The letter describing Francesca's death and Giovanni's grief is only one of many documents bespeaking his devotion. Thus, with his new family chapel well underway, his will of March 1490 made precise provisions for four tombs "in dicta cappelle, et iuxta dictum altare," to the memory of his father "et etiam memorie dicti testatoris et aliorum premortuorum," including a separate one to honour his wife. A more appropriate and eternal resting place than the Rome location, amongst her Tornabuoni parenti and next to her husband, was to be provided. However, for whatever reason, Francesca was not buried in S.Maria Novella and in 1540 her grandson Bishop Leonardo di Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornabuoni, who had never met her, made new provisions for her Rome chapel in his will. He left 300 scudi

In dote Cappelle seu altaris sancti Johannis site in dicta ecclesia [S.Maria sopra Minerva], ubi est sepultura domine Francisce, avie ipsius Testatoris. In quo altarj voluit quod fiat una cappella ad iustar aliarum cappellarum fiendarum in navi ubi est dictum Altare sanctj Johannis, et hoc quatenus jn dicta navj fieri contingat alie cappelle; et si dicta cappella fierj contingat, voluit quod in ea reponantur ossa dicte domine Francisce cum ornamentis et sepultura marmorea prout nunc iusta dictum altare sanctj Iohannis.<sup>190</sup>

Giovanni's descendant tried to fulfill his wishes, repaying the trust and affection shown towards his family.

From 1480 at least Giovanni also regularly paid for a yearly office to be said at S.Maria Novella to commemorate his wife's death in September. Then in February 1487 he gave a shop to the confraternity of St. Peter Martyr at S.Maria Novella for the purpose of establishing several anniversary masses for his wife and other relatives, "ad pias causas et pro remedio anime sue et suorum." Further, two masses every single day "in perpetuum" were to commemorate "omnium defunctorum dictj Iohannis, donatoris." A sixteenth century record of that convent's obligations concerning anniversary masses noted the fulfilment of his bequest, for instance listing under September, "A di 24 per mona Francesca Tornabuoni un' rinovato con cera."<sup>191</sup> Giovanni had also made sufficient provisions

in his will for such masses to be carried on after his death, bequeathing the novices money for their vestments if

dicti fratres orent Deum et fundant preces ad Deum pro eidem testatore et anima sua et animabus defunctorum suorum et supranominatorum, videlicet: patris et matris et uxoris et nuris dicti testatoris.

Further, the entire chapter

teneantur et obligati sint ... facere quatuor anniversarie in anno, videlicet, unum pro vice pro animabus dicti testatoris et aliorum supramemoratorum defunctorum.<sup>192</sup>

The will also provided for Francesca's arme to be placed on an embroidered pallio, while the sixteenth century Dominican chronicler Biliotti recorded "et tribus illis choralium librorum substentaculis sericea ornamenta appendit, in quibus omnibus sua et Franchischae Pittae uxoris fulgent insignia." Giovanni's concern for his wife's soul also led him to free two female slaves, "amore et intuitu pietatis et misericordie ... pro redemptione et salute anime egregie et nobilis mulieris, domine Francisce..." Typically, he stipulated an obligation: "qualibet die pro anima et redemptione et salute anime dicte domine Francisce ... dicere coram maiestate Verginis et cuiuslibet alterius sancti, tres 'Pater Noster' et tres 'Ave Marja'."<sup>193</sup> Francesca's portrayal as a kneeling donor, forever offering supplication and paired with her husband in the family chapel, was one more expression of Giovanni's affection and care for her soul (Pls 24, 25).

Nanna Guicciardini, Giovanni's mother, was also accorded regular masses on the November anniversary of her death and in the sixteenth century the friars noted their obligation in this month to observe her death "con cera e un' rinovalle," just as the dowry and Giovanni's will had stipulated. Similar honour was shown to his father.<sup>194</sup> But another woman, Giovanna Albizzi (Pl. 44), stands out as having been remembered especially by Giovanni, her father-in-law, as well as by his son. In many ways she was treated as was his own wife: in the will she too is provided with burial in the chapel, anniversary masses

and the placement of her arme on the vestments.

Dying young and less than two years after her marriage, Giovanna was buried in S.Maria Novella and given both a mortorio and a "messa cantata."<sup>195</sup> On the first anniversary of her death Lorenzo Tornabuoni paid "per la cera s'apichò nella cappella per la messa face cantare per la Giovanna, suo donna" and again, in 1491, "per chalo della cero della cappella."<sup>196</sup> These entries are rare in that they name a location, which may be none other than the Tornaquinci chapel, sufficiently finished, or clear enough of scaffolding, in October 1489 for services to be conducted there, probably under her just completed portrait in the Visitation (Pl. 10). Other masses for her are not recorded in the convent's sacristy books, because from Christmas 1490 or 1491 masses began for her in the Cestello chapel "per spatio d'anni cento ogni settimana una volta una messa."<sup>197</sup> In other words, in this chapel founded by her husband as a memorial chapel to Giovanna, replete with her arme (Pl. 56), 5,200 masses for her soul were to be offered.

Albizzi arme also figured in the inventory of 1498, resting alongside those of her successor Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi, but Lorenzo's room in the palace contained a special memento:

uno quadro chon chornicione messo d'oro chon testo e busto della Giovanna degli Albizi.

This new documentation must refer to the profile panel by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Thyssen collection (Pl. 47), always claimed to be a portrait of Giovanna.<sup>198</sup> Inscribed with the date 1488, it is a commemorative panel which speaks in an idealising, timeless way:

Ars utinam mores animumque effingere posses pulchrior  
in terris nulla tabella foret. MCCCCLXXXVIII.

Taken from an epigram by Martial, this inscription may have been supplied by Lorenzo's teacher Poliziano, who also wrote an epigram for her tomb.<sup>199</sup>

Stirpe fui, forma, natoque, opibusque, viroque  
Felix, ingenio, moribus atque animo.  
Sed cum alter partus jam nuptae ageretur et annus,  
Heu! nondum nata cum sobole interii.

Tristius ut caderem, tantum mihi Parca bonorum  
Ostendit potius perfida quam tribuit.

JOANNAE ALBIERAE UXORI INCOMPARABILI  
LAVRENTIVS TORNABONVS  
POS. B.M.

Two medals of the UXOR.LAVRENTII.DE TORNABONIS.IOANNA.ALBIZIA, done by the same artist who executed other Tornabuoni medals, Niccolò Fiorentino, also celebrate her moral qualities.<sup>200</sup> The Three Graces are on the reverse of one (Pl. 44), inscribed CASTITAS.PVLCHRITVDO.AMOR, while the other reverse contains an armed huntress, Venus/Diana, with an inscription from Virgil's Aeneid: VIRGINIS.OS.HABITVM.QVE.GERENSE VIRGINIS.ARMA. Without having to accept all details of Wind's analysis, it is clear that these medals, like the epigrams, are further evidence of Tornabuoni contacts with humanism during the years of the chapel's decoration.

The Tornabuoni were celebrating, through visual and rhetorical means, Giovanna's physical and moral beauty, using artists and writers closely associated with their family and with late Quattrocento culture. In marriage and in death, special ceremonial display and aristocratic commemoration were employed.<sup>201</sup> In itself, the young woman's personality would not explain the special affection and public rhetoric generated by the Tornabuoni. On a political and social level, the marriage between the Albizzi and Medici parenti may have been "part of Lorenzo de' Medici's programme of reconciliation,"<sup>202</sup> drawing the Albizzi back into the central regime after their struggle with the Medici faction in the 1420s and early 1430s. But more immediate family reasons added extra lustre to the marriage, for Giovanna was Giovanni's great-niece and hence Lorenzo's first cousin once removed, by female descent (fig. 2).<sup>203</sup> By means of this marriage the Tornabuoni were being united and their blood strengthened. Her death when a young, recently married woman, a new mother and pregnant again, would have further enhanced her memory to the Tornabuoni, especially given Francesca Pitti's own death at parturition.

With such family and personal feelings involved, it is not surprising to see her prominent portrait at the head of a group of



women in S.Maria Novella's Visitation, and perhaps leading the visitors in the Birth of John the Baptist above where she is portrayed before her death and after the birth of that other John, the son Giovanni (Pls 10, 11). At the lowest fresco tier, directly opposite the Birth of Mary featuring Lodovica Tornabuoni, she is given pride of place as one of their parenti and as an indication of the prestigious marriage alliances they could form. Ghirlandaio, or an assistant, used the profile panel inscribed 1488 (Pl. 47) as their model for the portrayal of this now dead woman, who wears the same costume, including the Tornabuoni device of a triangular diamond shape and an "L" brocaded on her shoulder.<sup>204</sup> The Cestello chapel, a memorial to Giovanna, was dedicated to the Visitation (Pl. 58) at this time and that very narrative was chosen as her portrait's location in S.Maria Novella. Careful thought was given to the use and distribution of portraiture in the Tornaquinci chapel.

Giovanni's will provided for four "sepulchra marmorea ... ante altare maius (et super pavimento)," one for his father and mother, one for his own wife, another for Giovanna Albizzi (and probably his son when he died), and the last for himself. Masses were arranged for them, following the usual testamentary custom of attending to one's immediate lineage, although his concern for females not of his pure blood or seme is rare, as is the separation and high honour given to his wife.<sup>205</sup> Other actions by Giovanni indicate the special regard which he accorded women of his family and the overall responsibility he felt towards that network. Whilst alive he also regularly paid for masses on the November feast day of All Souls, the total family morti being commemorated, just as they were to be in the future by means of their everlasting portraits in the consorteria's chapel, and by two masses every day.<sup>206</sup>

On 20 May 1493 he purchased "libre 25 di cera tra falchole e chandele," worth 15 lire, and a separate record notes that on this very day he paid for a mass for "a woman who died in Rome." With no further evidence, it is a reasonable speculation that this may have been the mother of his illegitimate son, Antonio.<sup>207</sup> It is also interesting to note that in June 1497, shortly after his death and just before his son's execution, sung masses were provided in S.Maria

Novella by an unnamed donor for Lucrezia Tornabuoni and on the next day for her son Giuliano de' Medici.<sup>208</sup> The only other portrait listed in the Tornabuoni inventory was, like Giovanna's, in the Tornabuoni palace:

1<sup>o</sup> quadretto d'una testa e busto di Mona Luchrezia de' Medicj.

This is probably Domenico Ghirlandaio's panel, now in the National Gallery Washington (Pl. 46), inscribed on the back, according to Pieraccini, LV...TIA TORNABUONI MEDICI.<sup>209</sup> Depicting a mature, soberly dressed woman, it is likely that this matches Giovanni's image of his sister as a pious, able and upright family member. The two or three portraits usually identified as Lucrezia in the S.Maria Novella cycle (Pls 10, 11, 18) each show not only similar facial characteristics, but also depict a woman again dressed in plain and simple garb, standing in an entourage as a support or model for the younger, leading lady.<sup>210</sup> The idea of a "mirror" or exemplar is being applied here to the female sex too.

In the Sassetti chapel's scene of St.Francis Raising the Dead Child (Pl. 62), Ghirlandaio gave some prominence to women, who stand on the left edge of the Piazza S.Trinita. Probably Francesco Sassetti's daughters, they mingle with their husbands and fiances, while a solid group of male elders stands on the other side.<sup>211</sup> Nera Corsi kneels in the frescoed tier below these girls, adoring the Christ Child in the Nativity altarpiece, along with the Virgin near her, just as her husband's donor portrait on the other side follows the model of the kneeling shepherds. But Giovanni Tornabuoni's family chapel allowed Ghirlandaio to extend much further his portrayal of women. In the two Birth scenes and the Visitation, women are the only bystanders, and one leading portrait is given special prominence in each (Pls 8, 9, 15). Francesca Pitti kneels as a posthumous donor portrait (Pl. 25), in a niche larger than Nera Corsi's, with a more elaborate paradisaal background. Giovanni Tornabuoni's affection for the female members of his family found visual expression through Ghirlandaio's apt skills.

Giovanni exercised precise care and control, not only over his

family's affairs, but also over the entire decoration of the chapel. The detailed listing in the contract of every scene, its concern with even the decorative framing elements and the background contents of each fresco, reveal the thought and planning Giovanni expended on the project. He insisted too that he saw drawings (eg Pls 5, 27) of each narrative before approval would be granted and he made many alterations to the programme (fig. 5) and some to the drawings, at times probably with Dominican advice.<sup>212</sup>

In March 1490 his will envisaged vestments, stained glass, choir stalls, an altarpiece, tombs for himself and his ancestors, and so on, to complete the thorough re-decoration and enrichment of the chapel. He maintained his pressure on the Ghirlandaio workshop, taking the unusual step in April 1489 of extending the time limit for completion of the frescoes by less than one year. Patrons usually suffered prolongation with frustration or resignation, but rarely took steps to force completion, unless, as in the later case of the Strozzi chapel adjacent to Giovanni's, they finally took the matter to court years after an original deadline had expired. Instead, Giovanni and the Ghirlandaio brothers took the contracted time seriously and formally extended the time before the expiry date. The artists had a reputation to maintain, the patron had an approaching appointment with eternity, and both were anxious to see the magnificent chapel unveiled for the public as soon as possible.<sup>213</sup>

Giovanni's character has suffered the negative assessment of de Roover, whose study in the narrow context of the Medici Bank is the only published one we have. Commenting on the donor portrait in S.Maria Novella (Pl. 24), de Roover claims that it "does not convey the impression of a forceful personality but of a man who conformed to conventions and was a follower rather than a leader. This was the great shortcoming of Giovanni Tornabuoni as a business man."<sup>214</sup> To some extent, this may be correct, for Giovanni was indeed concerned with creating a prestigious and impressive chapel, following the lead of other oligarchs such as Lorenzo de' Medici, Bongiani Gianfigliuzzi and Francesco Sassetti. But in so doing, he was engaging in competitive, aristocratic and pious patronage, the embellishment of his own consorteria's eternal monument. Typically, he gave a precise

catalogue of his motives in the contract of 1485:

ac intuitu pietatis et amore Dei, decorare ac nobilibus et egregiis et exquisitis et ornatis pitturis ornare proposuerit, in exaltationem sue domus ac familie, et ornatum ac decorem dicte ecclesie et cappelle prefate.<sup>215</sup>

Giovanni Tornabuoni provides a case study in patronage typical of the late Quattrocento.

De Roover's assessment is rather inconsistent, for Giovanni appears as a cantankerous, unco-operative and short-sightedly selfish man, hardly a meek, colourless follower.<sup>216</sup> Occasionally he reluctantly admits or implies that Giovanni's complaints were often justified. The man's honesty and Medicean devotion were "unquestionable," and he was "dragged willy-nilly into new ventures," which he tried to advise against or to improve or ameliorate upon.<sup>217</sup> Rather paternally, Giovanni could also proffer political advice to his nephew Lorenzo de' Medici, writing in 1477: "tu t'abbi d'avere chura a la persona e a lo stato havendo tanta gente vicina e guidata da chi si dice publico non t'ama più che si bisogni." He was a cautious and loyal man who never deserted his Medici parenti and constantly gave them well-meaning advice from a position of assurance. Later in 1477 he again wrote: "Ti chonforto anchora avere l'occhio al fatto dello stato tuo, che si sente assai disegni strani, e forse che io ho più paura non bisogna."<sup>218</sup> Unlike "outsiders" or "foreigners" such as Tommaso Portinari or Lionetto de' Rossi, Giovanni never lost the close trust of his Medici relatives and employees, as de Roover admits.<sup>219</sup> For this very reason Giovanni did not need, as did Francesco Sasseti at a vulnerable and anxious time, to include il Magnifico's portrait in the family chapel (Pl. 63). The Tornabuoni's place in the Medici court was assured, as was their status as an ancient and proud lineage.

With the aid of hindsight, de Roover concludes that Giovanni

was not a man of outstanding abilities or of great vision. His horizon was limited by the narrow confines of the counting-house and he could not see the broader aspects of economic problems. Moreover, he was impulsive and inclined to overlook difficulties ... He meant well, but he .. swayed constantly between

moods of gloom and fits of unwarranted optimism.<sup>220</sup>

Something of this last trait can be found in the art that Giovanni commissioned. He stands silent, suffering, in the horror-ridden sculpture of his wife's tomb (Pl. 61); he kneels humbly, calmly, with an introspective half-smile on his face in the S.Maria Novella donor portrait (Pl. 24); and he stands, older and heavier, proud and grumpy, in the Zacharias scene (Pl. 6). The chapel's cycle contains one incongruous and hence shockingly violent scene, the Massacre of the Innocents (Pl.21). But the other frescoes (Pls 3, 4), particularly those with portraits, are tranquil and composed, depicting an assured oligarchy with feudal origins: aristocratic and patriotic, mercantile and hard-headed, pious and dignified.

Ultimately, Giovanni did not have "great vision" and did not commission revolutionary art. Yet the personal details of his life tend to confirm only something of de Roover's judgement. Giovanni was probably rather like his friend Clarice Orsini, a little stodgy and complaining. His control over Ghirlandaio would have been constant to the point of interference, and was the act of an astute man concerned about this visual and splendid monument to his family. Numerically, it was his father's branch on the family tree which flowered most during the Quattrocento (fig. 2) and in this sense alone Giovanni could see himself as the legitimate leader and guardian of his consorteria. Despite, or more probably because of, his own meagre offspring, Giovanni's own childhood in a large household was recaptured by him in his later years by means of religious, economic and artistic patronage. When he "settled" in Florence again, during the 1480s, he returned to a neighbourhood closely inhabited by all branches of the consorteria (fig. 3, Pl. 65). Furthermore, he metaphorically gathered his family, both living and dead, around him through memorial masses and visual commemoration. Giovanni emerges from his biography as a proud and pious oligarch, deeply committed to his children, his womenfolk, his aristocratic Medici parenti and his consorteria's future.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE TORNAQUINCI CONSORTERIA

#### ASPECTS OF THEIR PATRONAGE

##### A: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine features of the consorteria which have further bearing on their patronage and chapel. Their land holdings will be investigated first, because it is in the possession and transfer of real estate that we can perhaps best see a fifteenth century family acting according to fundamental economic and social values. Like many ottimati families, the Tornaquinci lived close together and sometimes acted jointly in the acquisition or sale of land. It gave the family a tradition, a physical basis to their group identity and sites for their architectural patronage.

Classicism and religion imbue Ghirlandaio's frescoes, but it is religion which is most at the root of a family chapel within a Dominican church. Religious belief and patronage were far more outstanding traditions of the consorteria than was an interest in humanism, classicism or avant-garde art. The attitude of certain family members towards art can be approached obliquely, by a consideration of their other patronage. The investigation is worthwhile precisely because it does not uncover a pace-setting patron group, but rather reveals a more typical and hence more informative set of actions and tastes. Finally, certain assessments can be made of the family's sense of itself. The chapel in S.Maria Novella declares them to be proud of their traditions and their assured place in a solid world.

##### B: URBAN LAND AND BUILDINGS

From at least the eleventh century the Tornaquinci were associated with the S.Pancrazio gate in the city's first walls, in which position the family would have held power over commercial and military entrance to the city. As Florence expanded the family was

absorbed within and from then on the power of city and family rose concomitantly. By 1350 "the greatest magnate house in the district" of the White Lion was the Tornaquinci.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the centuries, they clustered around the area now aptly marked by the Via Tornabuoni (fig. 3, Pl. 65). On one side of what was then known as the Via dei Belli Sporti, in the Lion Rosso district, lived most of the Popoleschi who, by inhabiting a separate district, did not need to compete with the consorteria's other branches for neighbourhood offices and tax relief. Gaining the priorate in 1396 and the Gonfalonierate in 1405, the Popoleschi were the first branch of the Tornaquinci to win political acceptance and they benefited from an astute cultivation of a neighbourhood base.<sup>2</sup>

Along the Cathedral side of the street, in Lion Bianco, gathered most of the other family members. At the corner presently formed by the intersection of Via Tornabuoni with Via Strozzi lay the near-sacred family sites, the Tornaquinci tower, loggia, canto and piazza, all more or less at the point where the Porta S. Pancrazio once stood. Indeed, the Tornaquinci tower was probably the remnant of that former gateway which "si chiamò la porta tornaquinci" as the anonymous Trecento chronicler related.<sup>3</sup> This tower is not to be confused with another owned by the Tornaquinci which was situated in the Mercato Vecchio and destroyed in 1356-57 "per allargare la via ch'entra in sul merchato vecchio" according to the same chronicler.<sup>4</sup> Instead, the formerly defensive gateway became a Tornaquinci landmark which survived into the eighteenth century (Pls 66, 67).

For most of its existence, the tower and the loggia fashioned into it at ground floor level was a joint family possession. The property list compiled in the 1260s described it as "Unam turrim in parte destructam in dicto pop. [S. Pancrazio] cuius turris octava pars est." Those eight parts of possession spread across three generations, from Messer Cipriano and his brothers to their great nephews, while the Tornaquinci house next door was owned by all these men from the two younger generations. More than one hundred years later the anonymous Tornaquinci chronicler gave exhaustive attention to the tower's ownership and ancestry, as though the tower was a family talisman.<sup>5</sup> He traced its possession from earliest times,

particularly when "otto chugini chomincarono a rifare e' l'loro palagio vecchio che s'`a disfatto da ghibellini." The side running along Via dei Belli Sporti was divided between the four families descending from Iacopo and this half included "una torre nel mezo sopra la loggia alta cento venti bracca." The other half, including "la torre in tre palchi," ran down the present Via Strozzi, then called Via dei Ferravecchi, and was divided amongst the other four families descending from Iacopo's brother Gherardo. Both branches decided "rifarlo a comune perch`e caschuno rifarebbe meglio la parte sua a suo senno e chosì fecono e chome eglino erano dicessi di due frategli chosì erano allora due lati della detta chasa che chaschuno lato aveva quatro famiglie e però fecono dua partj che l'una parte fecono 'l palagio rifatto dalla torre e loggia loro chomune tra tutti..." The descendants of Iacopo and Gherardo thus divided the large corner block, for "better" rebuilding, but kept their sense of community.

One of Iacopo's four descendants made a corridor or "androne largho ... alla chorte chomune il quale si potessi sempre usare per tutti quegli di messer iachopo l'anticho ad andare eglino alle lore famiglie nella chorte chomune alle lore chase poste dallato di drento in sulla detta chorte e dove alloro piacesse."<sup>6</sup> Both the courtyard (Pl. 68) and its common access remain today, albeit much altered by renovations undertaken by Giovanni Tornabuoni and even more by others later. A "charta della divisa" laid down certain conditions concerning the "due lati e otto principali famiglie." The "chorte, la loggia, rimasono a chomune tra tutti e della torre fecono certi patti fra quali fu che sempre illato." When the palace and loggia were again destroyed by Ghibellines in 1304, "si rifece la loggia e fecesi una volta sopra l' terreno della torre a spese di tutta la chasa de' tornaquinci," while other floors were repaired by particular branches. By the late Trecento, ownership was still traced back to the two brothers Iacopo and Gherardo, with both sides agreeing that their halves were held "per non diviso a discendenti maschi per linea maschulina."

Documents from the Quattrocento do not mention the tower because the loggia at its base became the important landmark. The tower, supposed symbol of warring magnates and introspective clans, was



replaced by a more communal and commercial architectural unit, the loggia. The tower's lesser status was not only symbolic, but also physical, as it was integrated somewhat into a new Tornabuoni palace (Pl. 70). Francesco Tornabuoni's descendants infiltrated across the street into Lion Bianco,<sup>7</sup> the traditional heartland of their ancestors, and the concerted efforts of his son Giovanni in particular saw the tower metaphorically shadowed by a massive palace. By January 1495 his "domum magnam" covered about two-thirds of the block now bound by Via Tornabuoni, Via Strozzi, Via del Pescioni and the Via dei Corsi alongside S.Michele Berteldi (fig. 3).<sup>8</sup>

Actually this was a conglomeration of several units gradually bought up and renovated in Giovanni's persistent campaign to own and embellish his consorteria's "seat". One such unit was consistently described as "una chasa ... sopra la loggia de' Tornaquinci".<sup>9</sup> Only in 1470, when the palace was new, is the "sopra" explained, for the second boundary is described as the "loggia e torre de' Tornaquinci," thereby giving us the only documentary reference to the tower I know from the Quattrocento. By 1480 the borders of this house "sopra" are always simply the street, the loggia and Giovanni's other holdings. For centuries the tower escaped documentation until at the beginning of the seventeenth century Borghini referred to the loggia "novellamente modernata." Still then in its original location opposite the Palazzo Strozzi, the loggia was topped by its tower: "dove appunto, è situata l'antica Torre."<sup>10</sup>

The earliest irrefutable and clear visual record of the tower is supplied by Bonsignori's map of 1584 (Pl. 66), which offers an aerial view from a steep angle. Seemingly a third as high again as the palace facade along Via Tornabuoni, it sits flush with that street's edge but is stepped back from Via Strozzi, to enlarge the Piazza de' Tornaquinci. A street-level view is provided by a painting from the seventeenth century where the tower now seems no higher than the palace eaves and bears understated rustication (Pl. 67). The newly modernised loggia at its base has two openings either side of an arched and higher central opening which probably derives from the original doorway and above this three simple arched windows mark each floor, also reminiscent of the openings in city gates.<sup>11</sup> An ancient

monument gathered into Giovanni's redesigned family stronghold, it is still a proud and distinctive sign of the consorteria's ancient and noble origins.

The Tornaquinci loggia with the piazza before it was to be more of a family and civic landmark. Perhaps created as early as 1200, the loggia may be referred to in the description of a Tornaquinci "Domum muratam cum duabus voltis" adjacent to a Tornaquinci palace in the 1260s.<sup>12</sup> The chronicler from the consorteria noted later that the loggia with the courtyard "rimasono a chomune tra tutti". Then, after a fire in 1304, the loggia and "una volta" on the tower's second floor were repaired "a spese di tutta la chasa de' Tornaquinci." Other documentation only refers to the more public usage of the loggia but even that was of a communal nature: groups gathered here and no one individual or family branch is associated with the loggia. In 1376 both districts containing the Tornaquinci consorteria used the loggia for a political meeting. Two writers who observed the everyday habits of the Florentines, Sacchetti in the fourteenth century and Arlotto in the Quattrocento, mention the loggia as a focus for gathering and refreshment, Arlotto writing of "alcuni nobili cittadini radunati sull'ora del vespro alla loggia dei Tornaquinci per prendere un po' d'aria fresca."<sup>13</sup> As a well-known landmark, it figured in lists of loggie and non-Tornaquinci buildings were sometimes located with reference to the loggia.<sup>14</sup>

Its nature as one of the "loggie pubbliche" and its particular form may derive from its resemblance to a shopping arcade, extending down Via dei Ferravecchi past the tower. When Alberti recommended "porticoes which enclosed the whole square" he was perhaps remembering the arcaded shops running alongside Ferrara's Cathedral or the ubiquitous arcades in Bologna, as well as the Vitruvian description of fora surrounded by two-storied loggias.<sup>15</sup> The Tornaquinci loggia was probably similar to such commercial thoroughfares. That it was an extended construction of more than three bays directly under the tower is indicated by citations in the catasti by many Tornaquinci concerning their properties which are either "presso alla loggia de' tornaquinci" or "posta alla loggia de' tornaquinci" (fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> Most of these properties are shops, and they are both too numerous, and

extend too far down the street, for them all to have been within the confines of the tower. In fact, that small area itself was owned by all the consortereria and was free of shops, so it is the extrapolation down the street which concerns us here. Other shops and houses are located at the "luogho detto da tornaquinci" which may often refer to the piazza and corner (canto) also named after the Tornaquinci. In all, the area was a thriving commercial centre and busy thoroughfare.

Admittedly the evidence is not conclusive, for the language is often imprecise, but the possibility is strong enough for the suggestion to be made that the status, functions and forms of the Renaissance loggia deserve re-examination.<sup>17</sup> Visual evidence lends some support to the notion that Via dei Ferravecchi was lined with a series of punctuated shop openings which formed a sort of continuous loggia or arcade. Bonsignori's map published in 1584 (Pl. 66) shows the tower stepped back from the rest of the street facade. The loggia underneath is not clearly visible, but appears more fully enclosed than our current preconceptions would expect. The wall, at right angles to the tower, which begins the run of shops, has an opening marked in it, which is the initial entrance to the "shopping arcade" or series of separate shops. The large archway leading into the Volte delle Stelle, which ran along the back of this Tornaquinci enclave or block, is also topped by one or more houses. At least here our usual image of the loggia as an arched passageway seems to appear and yet is surmounted precisely by living space rather than an open roof, akin to the work undertaken at Vigevano around 1490 by either Leonardo or Bramante, where dwellings above loggie may be not only an economic "departure from the ancient precept," but also an adaptation of a tradition.<sup>18</sup>

The free standing, classically proportioned structure which we imagine from the examples of the Rucellai loggia and the Loggia de' Lanzi may be the exception rather than the rule. Zocchi's later view of the modernised loggia (Pl. 69), now flush with the rest of the facade and with open space replacing the tower above, may also support the notion of a "shopping arcade" for the ground floor of a now visually integrated palace still contained a continuous row of shops. Perhaps these openings were wider during the Quattrocento, or were

fronted by a portico, but certainly the simple, probably vaulted, spaces inside the shops would once have formed a continuous set of open spaces which could have been called a loggia.<sup>19</sup>

The loggia seems to have been undergoing a transformation in function and form during the Renaissance. Hyman claims that the palace courtyard took over most of the loggia's family functions in the fifteenth century, citing the wedding of Lorenzo de' Medici in 1469 as an example. Yet that event, the Rucellai wedding of 1466 and the depiction of such a ceremony in the Adimari cassone, each used the loggia in association with other spaces nearby.<sup>20</sup> Alberti, Palmieri and others all idealised the loggia at a time when more consciously planned villas, such as Lorenzo's at Poggio a Caiano, were making elaborate use of loggias for the air circulation, cooling and panoramic views they provided.<sup>21</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni's two villas both included "loggia e portichi," although perhaps of an older type.<sup>22</sup>

It is not surprising that Lorenzo Tornabuoni's wedding in 1486 was not celebrated in the Tornaquinci loggia, since that structure would have been too unrefined and poorly proportioned, in the heart of too commercial and busy a thoroughfare.<sup>23</sup> Cigoli's total modernisation in 1608 finally saw this ancient family monument suit the prevailing architectural taste.<sup>24</sup> The surrounding palace itself had been sold in 1607 but the Tornaquinci consorteria kept the tower and loggia resolutely in their hands until 1699.<sup>25</sup> Hence the seven arme carved into the new loggia's entablature are those of the consorteria and all its branches. Similarly, Giovanni Tornabuoni had placed the consorteria's various arme in the entrance arch of their chapel, like the loggia including those of lines by then extinct.<sup>26</sup> In the loggia, this most venerable of family monuments, a consorteria on the decline sought to commemorate its total self by means of arme and artistic renovation, just as was done in their family chapel at a more optimistic moment in their history.

Like their arme, the consorteria's members gathered together in one charged and ancestral location. Legally, close bonds were reinforced by the frequent holding of properties per non diviso.<sup>27</sup> The most interesting example concerns the site of another Tornaquinci

tower, situated in the Mercato Vecchio and destroyed in the Trecento when the street was enlarged. In the 1260s the Tornaquinci property next to this tower was owned by the Tornabuoni ancestor Messer Iacopo and was described as a "domus indiviso."<sup>28</sup> The family's chronicler wrote "d'una torre ed i chase dallato della detta torre posta in sul canto della Piazza di Merchato Vechio dirinpetto a San Piero Bonchonsiglio" which, despite much destruction in 1356, "delle chase vene rimase parte e certi di loro." The property was owned by the Tornaquinci consorteria in 1427, but by 1469 the shop at least had begun to shift from the Tornaquinci to a holding non diviso amongst several branches of the Tornabuoni. In the decima of 1498 the three living sons and one grandson of Filippo di Filippo Tornabuoni each declared one quarter "d'una bottega nel popolo di Sam Piero Buonconsiglio ... per non divisa ... perchẽ di decta bottega colj heredj di Marabotto Tornabuonj et altrj che tocha l'anno ali heredj di Filippo Tornabuonj di pigione ... habbiano consegnatj a fratj di Santa Maria Novella per uficij de' mie antecessori."<sup>29</sup>

This is only one of several instances of the consorteria's leaving land or its proceeds to a religious institution, in order to guarantee masses for themselves and their family. The Popoleschi, for example, were "ubrichato di dare o grano a fratj di Santa Maria Novella co' lungho tempo per fare la festa di san Iacopo e di san Filippo alla chappelle di Popoleschi."<sup>30</sup> The confraternity of St. Peter Martyr at that church was given a wool shop by Giovanni Tornabuoni in February 1487 and a house near the villa at Le Bracche by Leonardo Tornabuoni in 1492, both for anniversary masses although Giovanni's gift also endowed the chapel.<sup>31</sup> SS. Annunziata was the site of Giovanfrancesco Tornabuoni's endowment, for he and his brothers were "obrigatj a fare un' ofizio de' mortj`e Una festa di san guliano a fratj de' servj dei nostrj passatj." Neither the church nor the saint had any associations with the Tornabuoni and one suspects this obligation of 1480 was sparked by Giuliano de' Medici's assassination in 1478.<sup>32</sup>

On at least two occasions the family acted in concert with regard to Filippo Strozzi's land acquisitions for his palace project. The first instance occurred on 17 September 1484 when both Giovanni

Tornabuoni and his half-nephews, the sons of Marabotto, sold adjacent holdings to Filippo Strozzi on the same day.<sup>33</sup> A Giachinotti property was sold to Filippo in 1486, but the Tornaquinci consorteria had tended to leave this precise area, like Giovanni Tornabuoni preferring to cluster in their enclave around the Tornaquinci loggia and courtyard opposite the Strozzi (fig. 3, Pl. 65).<sup>34</sup> They did, however, continue to own the Tornaquinci "piazzuola" opposite their loggia, and Filippo Strozzi needed that corner to complete the regular, square plan desired for his new palace. Having obtained official permission to occupy a certain area of land in March 1489,<sup>35</sup> Filippo could then finalise arrangements with the Tornaquinci. Already in February, Lorenzo de' Medici had been appointed as their agent in the matter and on 10 April 1489 the Tornaquinci consorteria as a whole granted Filippo the land. In Filippo's record "Lorenzo ... come procuratore delle Famiglie de' Tornabuoni, Popoleschi, Giachinotti e Tornaquinci, mi donò inter vivos quella parte della Piazzuola de' Tornaquinci ..."<sup>36</sup> The surviving branches of the consorteria could act jointly and land was one of the most charged signifiers of such a union.

#### C: THE PALACE

The most important architectural activity in the Tornaquinci enclave during the Quattrocento was the construction of a Tornabuoni palace. Earlier family palaces had been built by this magnate clan: the list from the 1260s mentioned "Tornaquinci Palatii," Dino Compagni wrote of the Tornaquinci "palagio" burnt down in 1304 and the anonymous Tornaquinci chronicler wrote of "lloro palagio vechio."<sup>37</sup> But since the mid fifteenth century, all documents and discussions focus on what Benedetto Dei listed as "La famosa muraglia ch'anno fatto la gran chasa de' Tornabuoni in Firenze."<sup>38</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni was its assiduous builder, having amassed a large amount of land for its construction.

Perhaps because Giovanni already displayed a keen interest in architecture, the division of property in 1460 between Francesco Tornabuoni's sons had granted the youngest, but probably wealthiest, brother "Unam domum quae olim fuit Nicholi domini Simonis de Tornabuonis [Giovanni's uncle], Cum terreno, volta, puteo, stabulo,

cameris, salis et aliis hedificijs." Valued at 1100 florins, it was bounded by Via dei Belli Sporti, Giovanni's "domus magna," Giovanni di Salvestro Popoleschi and the "curia de Tornaquincis" (fig. 3).<sup>39</sup> The pattern of Giovanni's city holdings has been established in this deed: he concentrates on the Lion Bianco side of the street; he is surrounded by other members of his consortereria; and he is attracted to the idea of the "casa grande."

By 1470 his plans have come to fruition, for in the catasto of that year, submitted jointly by himself and three brothers, there are several

chase ... tutte rigittate in terra e fatt'una chasa di nuovo chom'apresso dirò che l'è rifatto Govannj sopradetto tutta di nuovo e per sua abitazione e della famigla sua.

His brothers were also amalgamating their properties: Niccolò owned a "chasa" and a "chasetta" nearby "che ogi murata in detta mia chasa ... per mia abitazione e della famiglia mia," while Filippo had joined two houses with "2 chasette." Yet Giovanni united more properties and constructed a totally "new" home for himself and his family, extending the core property he received in 1460, purchasing one addition from Maddalena, Chirico Tornaquinci's wife.<sup>40</sup>

The new house stretched from the street to the Tornaquinci courtyard, yet in 1477 he acquired two more properties which doubled his holdings (fig. 3). In April his brother Leonardo bought, on Giovanni's behalf, a house from Salvestro di Giovanni di Salvestro Popoleschi, with "terreno, volta, stabulo, puteo, palchis, salis, cameris, tecto et parietibus et aliis habitieris." Leonardo acted again in October to buy the adjoining property from Giovanni di Francesco Tornaquinci.<sup>41</sup> With the house "sopra alla loggia" declared as the fourth of his city properties in 1480-81, Giovanni now owned the entire facade along Via dei Belli Sporti up to the Giacomini house at the extreme edge of the block near S. Michele Berteldi.<sup>42</sup> He continued to expand his real estate, buying a house and warehouse from Girolamo Giachinotti in December 1478. Situated in Via Salicciuola, this "fondachetto" soon functioned as a stable for his family and guests. It is not surprising that a notarial document of 1481 was

enacted in what was termed the "palatio magnifici Viri Iohannis."<sup>43</sup>

By the 1480s his family's housing needs had been met and Giovanni turned his attention to investment properties. His decima return of 1495 declared the new house, the one bought in 1477 from a Popoleschi and the stable as "per mio habitare." All other five city properties had been acquired from members of his consorteria too and virtually all were rented to other family men (fig. 3). The house bought from Giovanni di Francesco Tornaquinci in 1477 was now rented to his brother Tieri Tornaquinci, while, ironically, that same Giovanni Tornaquinci rented the adjacent property, the house above the loggia. Another house in the area was said to be that "la quale mi contai da filippo mio fratello," two of whose boundaries were formed by Nofri Tornabuoni, but it was rented to a non-family man. There were also "due case posto dal canto de' Tornaquinci l'una allato all'altra con una bottega sottovi a uso di calzolaio." One of these houses was rented to Girolamo di Marabotto Tornabuoni, the other to his brother Luigi, and the shop rented to an artisan. When first rented to Girolamo in 1490, the boundaries of that house were given as the street, Girolamo Giachinotti and Giovanni Tornabuoni.<sup>44</sup> This last complete list of Giovanni's holdings clearly demonstrates the way in which he and his consorteria clung to their ancestral site, living shoulder to shoulder with their most distant cousins and eager to do so.

Giovanni's non-banking financial interests were allied intimately with patronage of and by his consorteria. Much of his extensive "wheeling and dealing" in real estate was directed at the preservation of the patrimony and he ensured that virtually his entire estate was transferred to his grandsons before he died. This deed in January 1495 described the vast city estate as "unam domum magnam...cum palcis, salis, cameris, antechameris, voltis et orto et stabulis retro dictum ortum, ... apotecis et fundachettis" and so on. Implicitly, all the rental properties, their incomes and tenants, within this block were handed over to the grandsons, with a single and intriguing exception, for the house rented to Girolamo Tornabuoni legally remained Giovanni's. When Giovanni rented out the property in 1490 he inserted a clause agreeing to six months notice if he wished



"pro edificando et anpliorem faciendo domum in qua habitat."<sup>45</sup> Possibly he had plans for this site and had not totally forsaken his architectural interests. Indeed, they may have been re-awoken by the current construction of the Palazzo Strozzi opposite the very house rented to Girolamo.

That Giovanni was keenly and energetically interested in his buildings is evinced by the elaborate decoration and numerous furnishings itemised in his estate's inventory. Given the fact that his palace often housed foreign visitors, for this reason alone its internal display can not be read, as Goldthwaite would have it, as a purely introspective and luxury-loving withdrawal from the world or the wider consorteria. In fact, the Tornabuoni residence was one of the select group of private houses which "became settings for public ritual." Another palace builder who was not to be the recipient of such ceremonial attention, despite his interest in the matter, was Giovanni Rucellai who in 1457 paraphrased Cicero to the effect that "nella casa d'un uomo ricco sono da essere ricevuti molti forestieri e debbono essere honorati con largità."<sup>46</sup>

The Dukes of Urbino and Calabria and the Cardinal of Mantua each stayed at the Tornabuoni house in 1482-83 and all three dignitaries were afforded public ceremonies at Giovanni's "casa ... dove fu del publico fatta la spesa mentre ci stette. El seguente dì fu visitato da nostra magnifica Signoria, co' Dieci insieme, e molti altri cittadini." In between these visits, Giovanni was elected Gonfaloniere for November-December 1482 and when recording the guest of January 1483 one chronicler referred to the "Signori Tornabuoni": much public honour accrued to the family, of both a political and cultural nature.<sup>47</sup> Giovanni must have been well pleased with the effect of his expenditure on architecture and decoration. This precedent would have been remembered by him when he set out to control the entire decoration of the chapel in S.Maria Novella and to create another publicly impressive work of art.

The inventory of the Tornabuoni estate drawn up in 1498 pictures the palace interior as an often luxurious arena.<sup>48</sup> Most ground floor rooms were taken up with storage, of such items as riding gear and

"arme", and an irresistible rocking-horse: "uno chavallucchio di legnio con sella in s'un uno charruccio." But the "chamera terrena insul androne," as the main entrance hall, contained musical instruments, accoutrements for jousts and masques, Flemish tapestries and Lucrezia Tornabuoni's portrait (Pl. 46), a visible sign of the family's political and social eminence.

The first floor housed Lorenzo's living quarters, including a room "dove dorme Giovannino," perhaps Giovanna Albizzi's bedroom where her son now slept, the other pupilli presumably having moved with their mother Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi to their maternal relations. On this floor were three splendid rooms, no doubt the chief areas consciously decorated with the reception of foreigners and visitors in mind. Lorenzo's "beautiful" room was "in palco" and other woodwork there included a "prospettiva" in intarsia, along with a bed finished in gold and silver, gilded frames containing maps and Ghirlandaio's tondo with the Adoration of the Magi (Pl. 54). The adjacent room, "del palcho d'oro", had probably been Giovanna's reception room and her portrait still hung there (Pl. 47), surrounded by spalliere and musical instruments with their pennants. The third room was decorated in cypress wood and may have been the guest bedroom. Another "sala grande chon panche e spalliere intorno" existed on the top floor, next to the bedroom of "Giovannj vecchia," which was particularly filled with works of art as was his ante-room. On this level were also the dining area, chapel, two studies and, possibly, an "audienza dello spenditore." Servants' rooms, kitchen, bakery, stable, gardening shed, well and so on were at the back, so that the noise, smell and sight of practical life were removed from the areas of formality and genteel living.

The palace's construction would have fulfilled a sense of civic duty. Bruni, Palmeri, Alberti, Dei and others all stressed that a rich man's magnificence ought to be manifest in architecture, particularly a palace and a loggia. Rucellai's comment on the reception of foreigners also implies this moral office and Florentines were eager to see their city impress outsiders "as though it were a paradise." For a palace builder like Giovanni Rucellai, Giovanni Tornabuoni or Alberti, honour redounded not only on the city, but also

on the family and the particular patron. The same could be thought of a family chapel.<sup>49</sup>

Both chapels and palaces, like much other patronage, could also be motivated by a competitive spirit. By not even building, but simply re-acquiring an adjacent property, Alessandra Strozzi in 1448 believed that her family residence "sarebbe la più bella casa di questo quartiere." No doubt the Tornabuoni palace fulfilled such a desire in the district of Lion Bianco, until the advent precisely of a new palace built by Alessandra's son Filippo at the end of the century. In the meanwhile the "new" Boni had begun their palace, in an "archaic" style, just across the street from Giovanni and the construction, begun in 1464, may have been an immediate stimulus for his modern, much larger palace.<sup>50</sup> A persistent, sometimes gentle, sometimes fierce, competitiveness led patrons to strive for more magnificent and honourable statements of their prestige, whether in elections, architecture, artistic patronage, marriage alliances or any of the other indicators of prestige in Quattrocento society.

Furthermore, Giovanni, like the patron saint of his birthday, S. Tommaso, and like his sister Lucrezia, may have had a developed interest in architecture and he could have known Alberti.<sup>51</sup> He built the town palace and extended his villas, while his son Lorenzo contributed to Cestello's new cloister. Both the Chiasso Macerelli villa and the Florentine palace contained a "chatena da misurare," and there were two chests with work in "prospettiva" on them in the palace. Several architectural backgrounds in the chapel are replete with the latest, idealised trends of such architects as Giuliano da Sangallo (eg Pls 14, 15). Ghirlandaio's contract had stipulated the images to be painted, including "hedifitiā, cāstra, civitates, villes," all four of which are a marginal addition, as though extra consideration had led to an even more explicit desire for just such advanced and detailed architecture as we see in the final frescoes.<sup>52</sup>

Giovanni Tornabuoni was interested in monuments and conveniences for his family; burial chapels in Rome and Florence, villas, portraits, a palace and houses. He commissioned two tombs for his wife and tombs for other family members to lie beside his own in the

chapel owned by his consorteria. The two or three portraits of him are each paired with others of his family: a wife, a daughter, his entire consorteria.<sup>53</sup> The houses he purchased in Florence from his consorteria were, in turn, usually rented to other members of the consorteria, so that the large block under his supervision was an enclave of parenti who were also vicini and amici. He chose to live in and develop that area of land most traditionally associated with the Tornaquinci, containing their courtyard and its androne, the Porta Tornaquinci or tower, the canto, loggia and piazza all named after them (fig. 3, Pls 65, 66). The area was an emotionally charged one and, like his ancestors remembered in the Trecento ricordo, he set out to remake their architectural heritage. The courtyard, for instance, had been his boundary since at least 1460 when it was called the "curia de Tornaquincis" and here one can imagine his consorteria gathering often or passing to the stables and homes. It is precisely the courtyard, with its ten columns underneath a regular progression of simple, clear arches, which is the sole remnant today of Giovanni's "nuovo" palace (Pl. 68).<sup>54</sup>

Built by 1470, the palace may have been occasioned also by the sense that Giovanni's family was expanding in a rapid and healthy way. Just as the property division between the four brothers occurred at a time when those men were becoming independent and heads of their own nuclear families, so too the palace may have been spurred on by the feeling that the family was needing more space and was deserving of a new public statement about its prosperity and prestige. Giovanni's generation increased by over one-third the consorteria's male numbers, roughly in the period 1440-70. This amazing increase was also evident within his own immediate line (fig. 2), for the catasto in 1470 of only three of his brothers, with himself, listed a total of 27 bocche. The two older brothers, with seven and nine children respectively, had enlarged their homes. Giovanni himself had only recently married, in 1466, and had one legitimate son, born in 1468. At the moment in 1470 when the "new" house is announced, "per sua abitazione e della famiglia sua," it must have seemed to Giovanni that he too was about to father a large family who would need a spacious palace.<sup>55</sup>

By 1477 the birth rate had slowed down, the four brothers having

had at least four more children, including Lodovica di Giovanni born in 1476. Yet, with the advent of a daughter and the existence of a large, healthy consorteria around him, Giovanni chose the year of 1477 to double his palace size by expanding down the street towards the loggia. The first purchase was made in April, when his wife was still alive and again pregnant. Although she and the child died in September, he bought the Tornaquinci property in October, which now completed the solid run of his holdings along Via dei Belli Sporti (fig. 3). In the following year the first of his foreign guests arrived. From now on he remained a widower and concentrated on the internal decoration of that property and, around the time that he returned to Florence permanently, he turned to rentals, sales and preparation for the future by increasing his patrimony and undertaking the family chapel.

On the face of it, such a grand space and decorated impressiveness housed only a small, motherless family of two or three children with a father often absent in Rome. We can select other examples of palaces built by men with small immediate families, conveniently from each end of the century, to compare with Giovanni's actions.<sup>56</sup> Filippo Strozzi's enormous palace was begun in 1489 by a man only recently blessed with a third son and Alberto di Zanobi's "large house" was built around 1400 by "an ambitious but surprisingly minor figure, who ... was hampered in achieving prominence by the small size of his family." It can be argued that in these two cases the palace was, foremost, a monument to state or to attract public prestige. In Filippo's instance at least, since we can document it, this was augmented by the palace's function as a metaphor for additional progeny, preserving him for all time, just as his son and his neighbour Landucci noted. Filippo's own words and actions as well as those of other Strozzi also make it clear that, like portraiture, such eternal preservation was on behalf of the whole family and not for one man alone.

In Alberto's case he had a less established or numerous family to commemorate and precisely in this way his "chasa overo palagio" too could be seen as a physical substitute for progeny and for prestige. In fact, his descendants became so crowded that by September 1469 they

petitioned to remove his testamentary prohibitions against sale "because ... they number at least sixteen persons, of different families, and because they cannot live in the house comfortably and without scandal." Perhaps some builders, more than twentieth century historians, were aware that their family's development cycle might lead to the space being filled. It might also be that such frequent prohibitions against sale were not only imposed so that the family's physical monument remained unified and eternal but also so that the economic problems which arose from a divided inheritance after the operation of primogeniture would be overcome. Sheer size then could have signified neither private, luxurious withdrawal nor even the invasion of public pompe alone, as Goldthwaite presumes it does in Rome and Bologna. Alberto was too minor to hope for foreign guests but Giovanni Tornabuoni could envisage his palace as an hospitable arena and a solid investment. In all three cases the palace was a public monument to the family's hopeful or actual prestige but Giovanni's was the most secure statement of this, neither based on over-ambitious hope as in Alberto's case nor, as in Filippo Strozzi's, on a lineage of great stature but largely scattered beyond the city's walls and not as accepted by the Medicean oligarchy.

Very little can now be adduced about the style of the Tornabuoni palace, as it has undergone extensive remodelling. Vasari attributed it to Michelozzo: "fece al canto de' Tornaquinci la casa di Giovanni Tornabuoni, quasi in tutto simile al palazzo che aveva fatto a Cosimo; eccetto che la facciata non è di bozzi nè con cornici sopra, ma ordinaria."<sup>57</sup> The attribution has been accepted universally and it is likely that Michelozzo was well known to Giovanni. Lucrezia Tornabuoni could have added personal recommendation to the common knowledge that Michelozzo was the chief Medici architect. Piero, and then his son Chirico, Tornaquinci were neighbours of Michelozzo in the country. However, a date for the palace later, by up to twenty years, than that usually given may affect the attribution, granting it instead to one of Michelozzo's followers.<sup>58</sup>

It would seem that the palace was well accepted by Giovanni's peers, who could call it a "palatio" and see foreign dignitaries housed there. Its status may also be suggested by the fact that it is

the only palace, other than the Medici one, which Vasari specifically gives to Michelozzo, Cosimo's "much loved" architect. Another comment from the Cinquecento is even more illuminating on its status and again links it closely with the Medici palace: "due fra gl'infiniti che ornano la Città di Firenze, passano i termini della Magnificenza civile; sono eglino, la casa de Tornabuoni, e la casa de Medici, l'una edificata da Cosimo il Vecchio padre della patria, e l'altra edificata da Giovanni capo di quella famiglia ..."<sup>59</sup> Here, both the motive of magnificence and Giovanni's family leadership are also clearly recognised. Finally, a more contemporary witness, the "chain map" of c.1472, displays the newly completed "P[alazzo] M[agnifico?] G[iovanni] Tornabuoni" as one of the most visible, clear and ordered structures in Florence (Pl. 70).

Whether the political and prestigious link between the Tornabuoni and Medici palaces extended to stylistic resemblance is impossible to assess. Vasari's claim that the Tornabuoni palace was "quasi in tutto simile" to the Medici predecessor is probably only a general comment which would apply to other three-storey palaces with regular arched windows, for the Medici palace type was influential in Florence, although a loggia at a corner was common to both. The differences from the Medici palace discerned by Vasari are more interesting: rustication and the large cornice were two of the most notable landmarks of the Medici palace, popular then for later palaces, but both are eschewed by Giovanni. The Tornabuoni palace was a less awesome or imposing structure, unable and unwilling to use a corner site for greater effect, as the Tornaquinci loggia remained unhindered. "The impression of dignity, simplicity and restraint" which Caplow sees as characterising Michelozzo's architecture certainly applied to the Tornabuoni palace, no matter who was the architect.<sup>60</sup>

Visual evidence confirms Vasari's observations and offers a little more detail. The "chain map" (Pl. 70) shows an unadorned house, idealised as a free-standing, tall palace of 7 bays on the top floor, but with a cramped eighth window evident at the floor below, adjacent to where the tower should stand. A somewhat later view, derived from the map, nevertheless gives us a slightly different

angle, so that we see also a shorter house of 3 window bays standing next to the palace. This may be one of the houses acquired in 1477, but no tower stands between it and the fancifully complete Strozzi palace. Although these two views are rather jumbled and cursory, they give the impression of a palace which does not extend back very far, but is facade architecture along the street. The Tornabuoni palace was probably like Giovanni Rucellai's: a new facade placed over a conglomeration of family holdings, with a modernised courtyard inside and a loggia nearby. In the Tornabuoni case, certain of the consorteria's traditional features, such as the courtyard with its androne, the loggia and the tower, were all preserved. Bonsignori's map of 1584 is the most detailed and reliable view available (Pl. 66). The roof is again a simple flat structure without cornice, the windows are arched and without columnar divisions, the facade surface appears smooth, the street block is not deep and opens in part to an off-centre courtyard behind. A five-bay Giacomini palace stands nearest S.Michele Berteldi while at the other end, between tower and palace, stands a less regular, older house. The Tornabuoni palace itself is shown as nine bays in length, with a large central door and a smaller one symmetrically placed at either side.<sup>61</sup>

Not until the nineteenth century do we have another and oblique view, at street level, of the facade. One of the smaller entrances has disappeared and each storey has an implausible number of roughly twenty windows. What with artistic licence and changes made after Giovanni's time, this view is unreliable, but invariably cited as the only illustration of the palace, basic to Fanelli's aggrandised and cursory reconstruction.<sup>62</sup> A similar but more interesting tone of generalised grandeur is presented by Ghirlandaio in his Presentation in the Temple (Pl. 3). There in the background we see a Florentine street of palaces, which, in their three stories, plain arched windows, simple eaved roofs and smooth facades, reflect the basic form of the Tornabuoni palace.

Ghirlandaio's style aptly expresses the sense of prestige and decorum which the Tornaquinci would wish to associate with themselves and their city. The palace and the whole site similarly brought honour to the family, especially at times of public ceremonies and



festivals. In particular the street, canto and piazza were often witness to ritual and theatre because Via dei Belli Sporti, flanked by the Porta Tornaquinci, ran along the route of the city's first walls (Pl. 67). Entering dignitaries, important funerals, the Corpus Christi, the Madonna del Impruneta and the St. John the Baptist's day procession, all passed this way. The canto also marked two important transitions: here the palio entered the city's inner sanctum and here too the Corpus Christi procession from S.Maria Novella joined the major processional route.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps the Zacharias fresco (Pl. 2), in its depiction of the family gathered in a piazza before a triumphal arch, makes generalised reference to the Tornaquinci elders assembled at their canto in front of their loggia, waiting to join the Corpus Christi procession or some other public ritual. At the other end of the Tornaquinci block, the spacious Piazza S.Michele Berteldi could be the site of frivolity or happenings of less civic importance. In 1408 a snowman of Hercules was made here, while in 1486 Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornabuoni's wedding was celebrated there in great style.<sup>64</sup> As with the hospitality offered to certain foreigners, the Tornabuoni palace and its surrounds attracted public attention and honour by a variety of means.

#### D: RURAL HOLDINGS, ESPECIALLY VILLAS

Country holdings of the Tornaquinci also clustered in a traditional area, extending to the northwest of Florence, fanning out from S.Maria Novella. To the north they occupied areas along the Terzolle river, including S.Stefano in Pane under Careggi, and then west around Cestello. Further west they held land around Signa and Peretola, including the Brozzi area.<sup>65</sup> In the 1260s there was a Tornaquinci "domum destructam in pop. S.Donnini Plebatus Brozzi" and a Tornaquinci tower still exists at Brozzi.<sup>66</sup> At the church of S.Stefano in Pane, not far from Rifredi, we can see also remains of the consorteria's attachment to the area, for the facade still contains the coloured terracotta arms of the Tornabuoni.<sup>67</sup> By 1490 the Tornabuoni were patrons of the parish, Messer Giuliano di Filippo di Francesco Tornabuoni becoming its plebanus in September and two of his nephews inheriting the post in the Cinquecento.<sup>68</sup> Not only did

the Tornaquinci concentrate on this area of the contado, but even when they sold properties there it was often to another member or branch of that consortereria.

As investors in productive rural land, Giovanni Tornabuoni's brothers, and then more extensively Giovanni himself, began to move further afield.<sup>69</sup> But he focused his family and artistic interests upon two villas which stood in the consortereria's stronghold, one at Chiasso Macerelli in the parish of S.Stefano in Pane and the other, called Le Bracche, near Castello.<sup>70</sup>

The property since known as Villa Lemmi has long been famous as the original site of several frescoes by Botticelli (Pls 50-53, fig. 4), but it has also been the subject of much misconception and controversy. Giovanni Tornabuoni's catasto of 1470 makes it clear that no other member of the consortereria had owned it before and that he was its owner by that date:

Un podere posto nel piviere e popolo di Santto Stefano in Pane luogho detto Chiasso Macuregli chon chasa da signore e da lavoratore il quale nel primo chatasto del 1427 era di Giuliano ... [sic: di Francesco] Ginorj e dipoi si trasseij per Domenicho suo figliuolo da Piero da Ghaglano ... e dipoi dopo la morte di detto Piero la sua donna e rede e prochuratore si ll à venduta a Giovannj Tornabuonj sopradetto...

All subsequent documentation confirms his ownership.<sup>71</sup> He purchased more land in the area and improved the building so that in 1495 it was described as a "casa da hoste e da lavoratore" or as a "domum magnam sive palatium" with garden, dove-cote and other farms. His great grandson Lionello was forced to sell "una possessione nominata el Chiasso" in 1541 for financial reasons.<sup>72</sup>

Activities enjoyed at Chiasso Macerelli can be discerned from its inventory drawn up on 4 January 1498, at which date it contained a "viola da sonare," many books including "30 volumi di libri latini e volghari" in the "schrittoio," cassoni, paintings and tabernacles. According to Cardini the villa still has wooden beams intarsiated with waterlilies, marble and maiolica pavements and at lease one notable fireplace. Reading, learned discussion, music, roaming through the gardens to the dove-cote, taking the air in the loggia, praying before

a tabernacle or administering the farm's production, were all possible here.<sup>73</sup> Religious practice of a sincere and ubiquitous nature is suggested not only by the presence of numerous tabernacles, but also by the mention of religious furniture such as a "paliotto da altare di brochatello." Two rooms were named after Christian saints, while an adjacent podere contained "una chappelletta dipinta di nuovo," which can be none other than the "cappella" at Giovanni's villa painted by Domenico Ghirlandaio according to Vasari's testimony.<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately the frescoes were already suffering exposure when Vasari mentioned them, but this new documentation confirms that Giovanni was embellishing his villa, that Ghirlandaio was an artist much approved of by Giovanni and that the Ghirlandaio shop did indeed operate at the villa.

It is the frescoes by Botticelli (Pls 50-53), now in the Louvre, which have attracted most confusion and discussion, centering on the identification of the portraits rather than the meaning or purpose of the paintings. It may be that both portrait identification and iconographical analysis can be aided by the villa's inventory. We know that the frescoes were re-discovered in 1873, under whitewash in a top-storey room, one either side of a window overlooking the countryside.<sup>75</sup> Given its position and its newly painted status, akin to the chapel "dipinta di nuovo," this frescoed room may well be the "chamera nuova di sopra" examined in the inventory. The only other room quite specifically placed on the upper floor was the "chamera di Lorenzo di sopra," which adjoined this "new" room by means of an "antichamera." All three rooms were furnished as bedrooms and the "new" room must be for Lorenzo's wife, perhaps built in time for Giovanna Albizzi's arrival in 1486, but certainly ready for Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi, whom he married in 1491. This additional evidence reconfirms the traditional but much maligned association of the frescoes with Lorenzo Tornabuoni and his wife. The stumbling block and source of dissent has been that, as early as 1882, it was recognized that the woman portrayed by Botticelli was not identical with Giovanna Albizzi as portrayed by Ghirlandaio in S.Maria Novella, but was instead the woman immediately following her in the Visitation fresco (Pls 10, 52).<sup>76</sup>

That the woman frescoed by Botticelli was in fact Lorenzo's second wife only occurred to Thieme in 1897-98. No evidence or argumentation was then offered for the proposal, but the deficiency can now be rectified. Firstly, the traditional identification of the leading woman in the Visitation fresco as Giovanna Albizzi needs to be reconfirmed. Her visual prominence is concomitant with the documents which stress the affection felt towards her by the Tornabuoni in-laws. She was commemorated in that very chapel by both funerary masses and a planned burial there. Further, Ghirlandaio's panel in the Thyssen collection, which is identical with this portrait in the chapel (both of which accord with her medal), now has a documentary basis to its title as Giovanna (Pls 10, 44, 47).<sup>77</sup> Hence the woman in the villa fresco is not Giovanna Albizzi. The presence of Albizzi arms in the villa's room, on the male's fresco furthest from the woman's portrait (fig. 4), does not necessitate an Albizzi portrait there, for these probably commemorate the dead Giovanna, just as, for instance, the Albizzi arms do in Lorenzo's chapel at the Cestello decorated after Giovanna's death (Pl. 56):

But the woman portrayed in the villa definitely had some connection with the Tornabuoni because she occurs in both their chapel and their villa. That the association is more specifically related to Lorenzo Tornabuoni can be deduced from the villa's ownership and the frescoed room's location next to his bedroom. The only candidate for such visual intimacy with both Lorenzo, in the villa, and Giovanna in the chapel, is Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi. By means of arme at the villa and portraiture in the chapel, Giovanna is visually suggested as approving of her successor and being respected as a virtuous model.<sup>78</sup> The recently discovered evidence that Lorenzo's second marriage was sealed in 1491 and not 1494 further increases the plausibility that Ginevra is the woman portrayed. This now dates the frescoes c.1490-91, just at the time of the chapel's completion in the city.<sup>79</sup>

This accumulated evidence gives further weight to the identification of the male portrait from the villa as Lorenzo Tornabuoni, which agrees well enough with his more youthful medal (Pls 43, 53).<sup>80</sup> When Ghirlandaio portrays him prominently in a more public and narrative setting on the left of the chapel's Expulsion of Joachim

(Pl. 16), the luxuriant hair, large flared nose, cleft in the chin and finely arched eyebrows are similar to the medal and Botticelli's fresco, although the face and body now turn outwards.<sup>81</sup> Chief carrier of Giovanni's hopes for the continuation of the line at the time of both frescoes, Lorenzo was a widower about to remarry and already the father of a Giovanni born in 1487. Close to the chapel's entrance and at a cycle's inauguration, his is a place of honour, highlight and visibility, positioned appropriately in a scene where youthful offering and future promise of fertility are paramount, just as Zacharias receives the wondrous news opposite in the only other gathering there of male portraits. As in the earlier Sistine fresco by Ghirlandaio (Pl. 55), Lorenzo is dressed handsomely and confidently holds hand on hip, engaging the spectator with a direct gaze. His leadership of a brigata and his refined elegance are evident now in a more expansive and assertive manner. Exemplar, heir, self-assured narratee, this "magnificent" patron faces his future and his viewer with an almost nonchalant optimism.

Marriage and ideal union has long been recognised as the point of the villa frescoes, which should be seen as a more monumental and personalised development of the didactic role performed by cassoni and decorations on furniture.<sup>82</sup> Ginevra is bestowed with the gifts of the Three Graces while Lorenzo is entering the realm of the Liberal Arts: the young couple are represented as acquiring the ideal virtues for marriage and a decorous, moral life.<sup>83</sup> So too the family chapel combines portraiture with a moralising tone: these citizens are shown as dignified Christians in an ideal State, adopting a model decorum, addressing the future with prayer and certitude.

Giovanni's other villa was not as elaborately decorated or well-endowed, but deserves brief consideration because of new documentation. Since Carocci's account in 1906 the accepted provenance for Le Bracche runs thus: Jacopo di Giovanni Aldobrandini owned it in 1427 but Francesco Tornabuoni purchased it soon thereafter, before being forced to sell the "palazzo" there to the Monte in July 1432. Jacopo's son Napoleone must have once more bought it, because he then sold it to Giovanni di Francesco Tornabuoni on 8 November 1488.<sup>84</sup> The interchange between fathers and sons indicates

intense interest in the property and possible collusion between two families.

Further evidence now makes it clear that more important property at Le Bracche remained more consistently in Tornabuoni hands and that Giovanni Tornabuoni consolidated the holdings in the 1480s.<sup>85</sup> Niccolò di Francesco Tornabuoni's catasto return of 1480-81 states that "uno podere posto nel popolo di Santo Michele a Chastello luogho detto La Brancha chon chasa da singniore e 2 da lavoratore chon più pezzi di terra ..." was owned already by his father and uncle in 1427 while it was declared in the heir's catasto of 1470. The decima return of his brother Giovanni in 1495 makes it clear that this property had been divided later. Giovanni had bought the two podere with the three houses from his nephew Nofri di Niccolò Tornabuoni in August 1484 for 2000 florins. It was only the "casetta da hoste la quale tengo per mio uso" which Giovanni retrieved from Napoleone Aldobrandini in November 1488, for 120 florins, and which is listed in the inventory of 1498 as a "chasa vecchia di Napoleone Aldobrandini" with a stable attached.

Like the villa at Chiasso Macerelli, Giovanni described the entire property in grand terms when he ceded it to his grandsons in 1495: "unam domum magnum sive palatium cum suis habitaris et pertinentiis et columbariis, orto, stabulo, curia et lodiis." The inventory reveals it to be more like a working farm than the one at Chiasso, yet it contained a "chamera nuova del terrazzo" and a "chamera grande nuovo" next to an "antichamera nuovo", as well as several tabernacles or works of art. The villa was scattered with building materials, including 1000 new tiles in the courtyard, beams, three "lettuccj d'albero nuovj non finitj," 700 new tiles or bricks in one of the new rooms along with planks "da fare pontj" or scaffolding. The "chappella" simply contained "4 pezzi di choncj [stone blocks] da finestre e più pezzi di choncj e asse," which suggests remodelling was underway there too. Certainly the sgraffito work at the villa was from the late fifteenth century.<sup>86</sup>

In summary, the consorteria's joint identity was remembered and enforced by its clustering in the same areas of the city and country.

Even the buying, selling and renting of land often took place within that group, so that outsiders did not move into their enclaves. The Tornaquinci undertook joint action over land or owned it jointly, always attracted to certain symbols of their antiquity and common origin, such as the towers, loggia, courtyard and piazza. It is the Tornabuoni who most consciously and energetically picked up their consorteria's threads, cementing family traditions and ownership over such sites as the old tower in the Mercato Vecchio. The most successful and concerted campaign was waged by Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose wealth and dedication enabled him to extend his father's attention to those areas which saw the rise of two villas and a palace. The interest he evinced in developing and embellishing family sites was identical with the concern which led him to the patronage of a family chapel towards the end of his life.

E: "HUMANISM" AND RELIGION

No treatment of humanism and learning in Quattrocento Florence can claim a prominent role for the Tornaquinci, nor is their chapel replete with obscure classical allusions. Nonetheless, four learned men are portrayed in the Zacharias fresco (Pl. 6) and several scenes present a picture of an oligarchic world at the centre of a sober and dignified universe, much influenced by a self-conscious pride about the classical revival. Ghirlandaio obviously shared such sympathies but he was encouraged by a patron class eager to present their city-state as "un' altra Roma novella" at the peak of a "golden age".<sup>87</sup> Hence the relatively oblique contacts between humanism and the Tornaquinci deserve investigation.

The consorteria was not totally bereft of learned men, being able to claim a scholarly or literary distinction for certain members from the Trecento through to the Cinquecento. Yet the earlier examples were all friars and the late Quattrocento saw this trend continue, with Luigi and his cousin Giuliano Tornabuoni being learned men who held religious benefices.<sup>88</sup> Both men, with their educated fellows Lorenzo and his aunt Lucrezia Tornabuoni, were portrayed in the family chapel. Only a few scattered references to the Tornaquinci

receiving or writing minor literature are discoverable, such as Antonio di Piero Popoleschi's poetic exchange with Bernardo Pulci around the mid-Quattrocento.<sup>89</sup>

Lucrezia, writer of religious poetry, provided her family with a special entree into Medici circles and particularly to Poliziano. He it was who tutored Lorenzo, especially in Greek, praising his abilities and dedicating Ambra to him. Poliziano was not only portrayed in the chapel (Pl. 6), but probably wrote the inscriptions on every known artwork commissioned by the Tornabuoni, including the frescoes and altarpiece in that chapel.<sup>90</sup> Several Tornaquinci played some role at the university, re-established in Pisa by Lorenzo de' Medici, mainly as procurators, although a few were students there.<sup>91</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni paid for the tertiary education of his son Lorenzo and his nephew Giuliano, also playing some part in the University's acquisition of lecturers in law from Rome.<sup>92</sup>

Giovanni and his relatives could buy or consign books on behalf of the Medici,<sup>93</sup> but the consorteria's own book collecting was not notable. Yet at some stage the Tornabuoni did attempt a more grandiose collection than the inevitable Villani, Dante and private family records.<sup>94</sup> By 1498 the villa at Chiasso Macerelli contained "la vita di putarcho e uno morgante," "2 libri in charta pecora in forma de che di putarcho," "uno messale in forma," "uno libro de' trionfi del petrarcho" and "30 volumini di libri latinj e volcharj." That villa may have been the site of humanist gatherings similar to those at the Careggi villa of the Medici down the road, while le Bracche only contained "2 librij ... di Ovido e trionfi del petrarcha".<sup>95</sup>

In town, relaxed reading and learned discussion perhaps were less important, the palace containing one missal and business papers, although "50 volumi di libri in latino e Grecj" and "uno plinio in forma e uno reale di francia" also survived there.<sup>96</sup> Perhaps the impetus for this collection of classical texts came from Lucrezia Tornabuoni's example,<sup>97</sup> but further encouragement may have come from Poliziano who in 1479 sent "a little white book in manuscript ... to your and my good Giovanni Tornabuoni, it contains certain rules his



children asked me to give them" and a copy of his Ambra, dedicated to Lorenzo in 1485, doubtless entered the family's collection. In 1482 Lorenzo Tornabuoni borrowed from the Medici library "de' libri del Filelfo, uno Homero, La Iliade et Odissea" when he was entering a more advanced area of study, particularly of Greek, under Poliziano's guidance.<sup>98</sup> No doubt he developed the Tornabuoni library during the very years of the chapel's decoration.

The overwhelming bulk of evidence for Tornaquinci contact with "humanism" is of an indirect nature. Within the small and privileged circles of upper class Florence, the consorteria was associated with learned men by means of such social contacts as marriage,<sup>99</sup> or through the Medicean habit of mixing writers with Medici agents and supporters,<sup>100</sup> or when the consorteria shared civic offices with them.<sup>101</sup> On the whole, the men portrayed in the Tornaquinci chapel were not humanists but patriots, who shared Dei's pride in the "new Rome" rather than Ficino's erudition. However, both Dei and Ficino were depicted with the consorteria in the Zacharias scene (Pl. 6) and the Tornabuoni at least had begun to appreciate a more cultivated and learned taste. Lucrezia's own activities and the education of her son Lorenzo de' Medici may have instilled in her brother Giovanni Tornabuoni the concern for a full and tertiary education, such as his own son enjoyed. Men like Matteo Palmieri, Giannozzo Manetti and especially Poliziano touched his family circle and himself often enough for them to have had some influence on Giovanni.

In Rome, Giovanni was constantly in touch with learned individuals and could on occasion champion their cause without first receiving Medici instructions to do so. Something of the excitement and prestige about classical architecture and the discovery or acquisition of classical texts must have been obvious to him, who stands next to Argyropoulos in the Sistine Chapel (Pl. 55).<sup>102</sup> It is not only Ghirlandaio's style, and certain features such as grottesche or triumphal arches (Pls 2, 8, 14, 15, 21), in the S. Maria Novella chapel which indicate the patron's enthusiasm for fashionable classicism and learning. The contract with Ghirlandaio, for example, specifies the kinds of details to be frescoed, in a way reminiscent of ekphrasis: "pingere et figuras, hedifitia, castra, civitates, viles,

montes, colles, planities, aquas, lapides, vestes, animalia, aves, bestias quascumque, et cuiuscunque generis..." And the presentation drawing for the Zacharias scene (Pl. 5) suggests that the original plan was for a more spacious arena, before a classical arch, in which animated discussion takes place rather as it did later in Raphael's School of Athens. The portraits proposed for inclusion at that stage also confirmed the stylistic atmosphere, since the four most prominent characters were to have been the most leaned members of the Tornabuoni.<sup>103</sup> This theme was later somewhat disguised when others from the consorteria and learned Florentines beyond the family were also crowded into a finally over-burdened narrative.

As a whole the Tornaquinci, like Lucrezia, were associated with humanism, but themselves concentrated on its moral dignity rather than erudition and upon religious practice. Their learning occurred within a religious framework, so that men like Ambrogio Traversari or S. Antonino were also their familiars.<sup>104</sup> This numerous clan produced a Cardinal in the Trecento,<sup>105</sup> a few friars of whom some were perhaps Dominicans,<sup>106</sup> numerous canons, two of whom became apostolic protonotaries,<sup>107</sup> several Knights of Malta and at least five bishops.<sup>108</sup> Giovanni Tornabuoni furthered the religious career of his nephew Giuliano not only by supporting him through University but also by seeking benefices for him. In 1477 he was forced to obtain S. Paolo for Poliziano rather than for Giuliano, but he warned Lorenzo de' Medici that "ristorerai messer Giuliano quanto ti parrà tempo, e che non abbi a esser prete di contado." Lorenzo noted Giovanni's stern determination and obtained a benefice, albeit a country one, for Giuliano in 1481, while a family hand would have been behind Giuliano's acquisition of the benefice of S. Stefano in Pane in 1490. So too Giuliano's appointment as an apostolic protonotary and Luigi di Filippo's position at S. Jacopo in Campo Corbolini were perhaps aided and certainly welcomed by Giovanni.<sup>109</sup> Joint action by members of the Tornaquinci and Giachinotti, who shared patronage rights with certain Rinieri men, one of whom was married to a Tornabuoni woman, ensured that Messer Antonio Tornabuoni held a benefice at S. Christophano at Nuovoli: marriage and ancestral ties led to mutual and real advantages.<sup>110</sup>

Giovanni's own grandson Leonardo later became a bishop, having renounced a dubious marriage and an illegitimate son to go to Rome because "voleva farsi Cardinale."<sup>111</sup> Such an ambition was never achieved, but it is captivating as a sign that family precedent and Lorenzo de' Medici's plans for his own son were being remembered. Giovanni Tornabuoni's energies were supported by his family's ability to preserve the offices at S.Stefano in Pane, the Bishoprics at Borgo San Sepolcro and Saluzzo, and a canonship at the Cathedral in Florence as virtually hereditary offices for some time. Religious office was another means to prestige and economic gain as well as a sign of family power and piety.

Other Tornaquinci men expressed their religion and gained its benefits without forsaking the world, by joining a confraternity.<sup>112</sup> At S.Maria Novella the Popoleschi chapel was the home of the Compagnia degli Innocenti from 1415 to 1467,<sup>113</sup> and it was at this church that the Tornaquinci were most active in fraternal religion. Of the seven Tornaquinci men we know by name who were active in confraternities there after 1467, four are portrayed in the Zacharias fresco. Giovanfrancesco di Filippo di Filippo Tornabuoni was captain of the confraternity of S. Domenico when its new capitoli were approved in 1477, as well as one of the operai for its new oratory at S.Maria Novella.<sup>114</sup> The confraternity of St. Peter Martyr, which may have had a special role in relation to the high altar, was endowed by Leonardo Tornabuoni in 1492, to provide for annual masses. For the same reason, in 1487 his brother Giovanni transferred a wool shop to this confraternity, thereby establishing the cappella maggiore's dowry, and he held governing offices in the confraternity during the opportune years 1486-87.<sup>115</sup>

Certain Tornaquinci received sermons from Lorenzo Gherucci, Girolamo Giachinotti's collection of St. Augustine's sermons still survives,<sup>116</sup> while two Tornabuoni inventories preserve for us an image of the religious books and furnishings they possessed. In 1531 Francesco di Nofri Tornabuoni's estate included two missals, "uno libriccino da donna fornita d'ariento," "uno libriccino da donna coperto di brochatello et fornite d'ariento" (both probably Books of Hours), "uno paio dj paternostri" and "uno libro della bibia." The

works of art were also religious: "uno quadretto dove è il volto santo," "Uno quadretto da Virgina maria di rilievo," "uno crocifixo picholo di rilievo," "uno crocifixo picholo di gesso," were all in the Florentine house. The "camera Nuova" of his villa contained "una vergine maria di gesso" and "una pietra sagrata," while the "camera della colombaia" had what sounds like a charming arbour: "una cupolina da virgine maria di saia gialle et rosa."<sup>117</sup>

Only two "messale" and a "messaletto picholo" are specified, one in each dwelling, in all the books owned by Lorenzo Tornabuoni in 1498, as well as a Book of Hours bound in silver and brocade, but numerous furnishings and artworks of a religious nature are detailed. Each villa had its own chapel, while the Florentine palace contained many depictions of the Virgin, tabernacles and certain religious ware such as "uno Secchiolina d'ottone da acqua benedette," "una tovaglia di seta d'altare richamata d'oro e seta," "uno fregio d'altare di bisso e panno lino richamato tutto d'oro e seta e perle a figure" and "uno tovaglinolo da chomunione di taffetta di levante listrata d'oro." In fact, one "salotto" contained several tables, benches and a "descho ... per uso d'altare" near "uno telaio chon una pieta e altrj santj dipinta fiandresca," along with a missal, two bronze candellieri, a "pietra sagrata d'altare," two altarcloths and "una pacie d'ariento in uno tabernacoleto di nuovo di valuta di fiorini ... [sic]." The only item for which a specific valuation was attempted, but not given, this silver "pacie" was a repository for the eucharist perhaps in the form of S. Bernadino's Pax.<sup>118</sup> It seems then that the town house included a special area for private religious services and in 1473 at any rate, and possibly 1479, there was a Dominican chaplain in attendance who alternated between "the house of the Tornabuoni" and the Medici "every day." Giovanni Dominici had advised parents to set up "a little altar or two," a "chapel" or "a sort of temple" where children could "play at saying Mass," and such perhaps was developed in the Tornabuoni household.<sup>119</sup>

The Tornaquinci also embellished several arenas for their more public pursuit of religion. They were patrons of chapels in Cestello, S. Stefano in Pane and the two Dominican churches S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome and S. Maria Novella, where they held rights over four chapels

at various times. Lucrezia personally established at least three chapels of her own in separate locations.<sup>120</sup> When Giovanni Tornabuoni claimed in his contract with the Ghirlandaio that one of his motives was to decorate the chapel "ac intuitu pietatis et amore Dei," his sincerity need not be doubted.<sup>121</sup>

#### F: OTHER PATRONAGE

Appropriately, much of the art commissioned by the Tornaquinci has appeared in this study already, interwoven with certain themes and family traditions. Lucrezia Tornabuoni, with her Medicean resources, and then her brother Giovanni, were the two most evident patrons to emerge from the family in the Quattrocento, yet the former's association with the star-studded Medici firmament has blinded us to the latter's assiduous patronage. Giovanni seems to have taken upon himself, as no woman married into an alien name could do, the task of leading his family, especially his own and recent Tornabuoni offshoot, to a position of strong, proud and visible establishment.

His patronage was occasioned by family events and needs: birth, death, religious salvation, housing and comfort. Portraits were commissioned as mementos and celebrations of the individual only because the portrayed was, foremost, a family member. Sometime in the sixteenth century this attitude led to another group portrait of the Tornabuoni family, on a smaller, more intimate scale than the Zacharias fresco, but imbued with the same feeling about time as a continuum across the generations and about the face as a record of family resemblance and worthy conduct. Santi di Tito painted three panels, which obviously were viewed as a series, one portraying Simone di Filippo di Francesco Tornabuoni (1472-1543), the next his son Donato (b. 1505) and the last that man's offspring, Niccolò.<sup>122</sup> At least one portrait by Pontormo, hitherto anonymous, can now be recognised as a Tornabuoni woman (Ludovica?), since her costume bears their distinctive triangular device (Pl. 37), first worn by Lodovica Tornabuoni and Giovanna Albizzi in the Tornaquinci chapel.<sup>123</sup>

Lucrezia Tornabuoni wrote a poetic life of St. John the Baptist,

Giovanni commissioned works depicting that saint's life for his chapels in Rome and Florence and then, around 1500-1510, another Tornabuoni asked Ghirlandaio's pupil Francesco Granacci to paint a series of panels on the saint's life for a private room, while in the 1520s a Tornaquinci commission resulted in Pontormo's Birth and Naming of the Baptist.<sup>124</sup> Other family traditions or practices were often remembered in artistic form, whether it was Giovanni's modernisation of an ancient family chapel, a later rebuilding of the family loggia or the frescoed commemoration in the sixteenth century of their part in the foundation of S. Maria Novella. So too general fashions were followed and accepted artistic modes adopted: medals,<sup>125</sup> palaces, villas, loggie, chapels, della Robbia ware, illuminated books including their binding,<sup>126</sup> tombs and tomb slabs (Pls 41, 59-61, 71-73),<sup>127</sup> cassoni and the desco di parto were all commissioned or collected by the consorteria.<sup>128</sup> They owned numerous Virgin and Child groupings and tabernacles in gesso and other media, some of which must have been della Robbia ware, as was an altar in S. Stefano in Pane probably under their patronage. Decorative work in crystal or bone, silver and bronze, embroidery and brocade, tapestry, maiolica and intarsia seem almost to litter the Tornabuoni homes as inventoried in 1498 and 1531, and like examples were also plentiful in some of their chapels.

Yet Giovanni Tornabuoni's estate stands out, not only for its sheer quantity and richness. Just as he was the family's exceptional patron in their public monuments, so too at home he and his son acquired certain unusual objects. In general, their living quarters suggest a luxurious atmosphere, bespeaking prosperity and pride. Many items, particularly cloths, were imported or worked in foreign styling and sheets were sometimes made of leather or hide "dipintj e doratj."<sup>129</sup> Objects which ring a note of the latest taste included a "tabernacolo dipinto in charta," which may have been a Flemish painting on canvas since at least six "telaj chon figure fjandreschj" were listed in the palace; "2 banbini dorati abbracciati insieme," which was probably a gilded statuette in the classical mode reminiscent of the putti gamboling in Ghirlandaio's Birth of the Virgin (Pl. 15); "uno chavello dorazzo" in Giovanni's ante-room; "uno bronchone dorato in una basetta," perhaps a reference to the

Laurentian symbol of a sprouting branch;<sup>130</sup> "una chassone a sepoltura di prospettiva," perhaps similar to the ideal cityscapes which survive from the later Quattrocento in either intarsia or paint and whose architectural clarity and sobriety are associated sometimes with the Ghirlandaio circle;<sup>131</sup> and "uno quadro grande dov'è dipinto più donne in tela lana," presumably a tapestry with life-size figures, possibly in some mythology, akin to Botticelli's famous works. Lorenzo's room contained two maps in gilded frames and a similar one depicting "spagnia borghogna e francia" in his ante-room.<sup>132</sup> Three Tornabuoni villas contained dove-cotes, signs of a leisured and cultured approach to their country retreats.<sup>133</sup>

Another striking trend in Tornabuoni patronage is the degree to which they almost exclusively employed Ghirlandaio's workshop. They first became aware of him when he worked in the Sistine Chapel, painting the portraits of Giovanni and his son in the Calling of the Apostles (Pl. 55). At this time he decorated their chapel at S. Maria sopra Minerva, as he was to do for their S. Maria Novella and Chiasso Macerelli chapels later. The cartoons for the stained glass in the Cestello and S. Maria Novella were also by his shop, as were the altarpieces (Pls 30-33, 38, 39, 56-58). In addition, that shop designed the four stained glass windows donated by Giovanni Tornabuoni to S. Maria delle Carceri by 1491, and the glass for all three locations was executed by Sandro Agolanti. Other panel paintings by Domenico Ghirlandaio which the inventory now firmly places within a Tornabuoni provenance were the portraits of Giovanna Albizzi and Lucrezia, and the Adoration of the Magi tondo, dated 1487, now in the Uffizi, but seen by Vasari in the family palace (Pls 46, 47, 54).<sup>134</sup>

Only two other major artists were employed definitely by Giovanni Tornabuoni, and both were also favoured by the Medici, as well as having acquired some reputation in Rome. Verrocchio produced Francesca Pitti's tomb in Rome (Pls 60, 61), while Botticelli executed the Chiasso Macerelli frescoes (Pls 50-53) and designed embroideries for the high altar chapel in S. Maria Novella.<sup>135</sup> All the works commissioned by Giovanni and his son which can now be identified were occasioned by his wife's death in 1477, or date from 1485 and later when he began the family chapel and soon thereafter settled back in

Florence. The 1480s and 1490s were also the decades when his son Lorenzo was more mature, able to act as a patron in his own right and to influence his father's patronage and taste. Presumably heirlooms and works commissioned for the new palace, which may have included Lucrezia's portrait (Pl. 46), had furnished the Tornabuoni domain earlier, but it is nevertheless striking that the family chapel coincided with an energetic and apparently concerted spate of patronage. Like Giovanni Rucellai, the Tornabuoni banker seems to have turned to patronage when his fortune was made, believing "che m'abbi facto più honore l'averli bene spesi ch'averli guadagnati e più chontentamento nel mio animo."<sup>136</sup>

The Tornabuoni's satisfaction with Ghirlandaio's style, attitude and punctuality was known to Vasari, who wrote that they considered "l'avesse servito bene in quell'opera," that is, the work at S.Maria sopra Minerva. Vasari further records that when Ghirlandaio lay dying "gli mandarono que' dei Tornabuoni a donare cento ducati d'oro, mostrando l'amicizia e la familiarità sua, a la servitù che Domenico a Giovanni ed a quella casa aveva sempre portata."<sup>137</sup> Ghirlandaio's relationship with the Tornabuoni was then an example of that interesting but uninvestigated phenomenon whereby certain families became regular patrons of artists in the wider sense, protecting, praising and recommending them as well as employing them regularly. The Tornabuoni preference for Ghirlandaio, and his willingness to produce fine work for them, makes it certain that the consorteria's chapel was produced by an artist who understood, and was in sympathy with, his patron's wishes.

Brief mention must be made of Giovanfrancesco di Filippo di Filippo Tornabuoni, not only because he has been confused often with his second cousin Giovanni di Francesco, but also because he is the other main figure to emerge from the documents as a man interested in learning and architecture. He twice married women related to humanists, received a letter in Latin from Francesco della Torre when aged fourteen, was appointed Cristoforo Landino's procurator in 1494 and perhaps was honoured with inclusion in the preparatory drawing for the Zacharias fresco (Pls 2, 5).<sup>138</sup>



In 1488 he was one of five operai for overall work at S.Maria Novella and in 1466-67 he had been one of seven operai for the new oratory built there by the confraternity of S.Domenico. Two of his fellows on that committee were present with him at a meeting held to discuss plans for the Cathedral facade in 1491. At least two other men present in 1491 had their children portrayed in the Tornaquinci chapel and two more men were later executed with Lorenzo Tornabuoni. Lorenzo de' Medici, Bartolomeo Scala and two Popoleschi were other councillors at the meeting in 1491 and the artists represented included Ghirlandaio, Botticelli and Verrocchio, all employed by the Tornabuoni.<sup>139</sup> Giovanfrancesco's membership in this council is a sign of his patriotic, Medicean and architectural interests.

Medicean loyalty and employment enjoyed by the Tornaquinci also brought them into indirect contact with artworks and artists on other occasions. Several men aided the acquisition or dispatch of gems, vases, medals, books, even a carved doorway, and such for the Medici.<sup>140</sup> In 1491 Nofri Tornabuoni had to undertake a task regarding the architect "Zanobi del maestro Luca," while on 28 November 1489 Lorenzo de' Medici's chancery wrote "Al cardinale di Napoli, a Spoleto, a Nofri Tornabuoni, per Filippo dipintore." This unnoticed document provides further evidence for Lorenzo's involvement in Filippino Lippi's shift from the Strozzi chapel to Cardinal Carafa's one in Rome. It also confirms Vasari's information that Filippino, on his way to Rome, "passando da Spoleti, per commissione di Lorenzo fece fargli una sepoltura di marmo" of his father Filippo Lippi, "dove spese cento ducati d'oro, i quali pagò Nofri Tornabuoni, maestro del banco de' Medici."<sup>141</sup>

While many Tornaquinci merely acted as onlookers and intermediaries, several members took a more active, but rarely outstanding, role in the artistic embellishment of their city and family. Giovanni and Lorenzo were partial exceptions, especially in terms of decoration and architecture, but they too do not leap out of the documents as formative, previously unrecognised, patrons. By having seen an interested and fashionable aesthetic judgement at work, we have a more balanced and representative example of patronage in late Quattrocento Florence.

G: TORNAQUINCI PRIDE AND NOBILITY

The Tornaquinci were citizens from an ottimati family, if not all wealthy nevertheless all from an ancient lineage. By the later part of the century, certain members were behaving virtually like untitled aristocrats, with all the decorative and prestigious trappings of a nobility which were seen as their traditional right. In a real sense they were returning to their magnate status, without the political disadvantages and with a more energetic involvement in business affairs.

It must be stressed that such a trend was not viewed then as effete escapism: the "arcane and esoteric" philosophy of Neoplatonism, as supposedly epitomised in Botticelli's Primavera, did not separate at least this section of Lorenzo de' Medici's so-called "intellectual coterie from the rest of Florentine society." Nor were the Tornaquinci retreating to some sort of imported feudalism because they felt shamed by their bourgeois money-making and "tarnished burger image," as Trexler would have it. One Florentine contemporary spoke of international merchants and bankers as "the cream of our citizenry, the foundation of our power," while Dei proudly proved his city's pre-eminence by reference to the number of shops and modern architecture she could display to foreign visitors.<sup>142</sup> The Tornaquinci, or their most energetic standard-bearers, Giovanni and Lorenzo Tornabuoni, were "magnificent" patrons, whose liberality thereby lent their status further legitimacy and honour.

Rather than being a "feudal" throwback, the family's involvement in ceremonial and festive life, for instance, was a continuation of long-standing traditions. The position of the Tornaquinci piazza and Tornabuoni palace at a key point on the processional route redounded to the family's prestige and the palace's housing of foreign dignitaries led one contemporary to refer to the "Signori Tornabuoni." Early in the century Francesco and his nephew Filippo excelled at jousting, and although such events were rare at the end of the century, Francesco's descendants still owned much jousting equipment

and elaborate riding gear which was used on at least one occasion by Lorenzo Tornabuoni. The inventory of 1498 also listed "uno cimiere da elmetto chon melagrane d'orpello" and "2 Elmi da giostra cho' loro fornimenti," one of which was surely the "elmetto tutto fornito d'ariento dorato, sue penne rosse, bianche e verde" won by Francesco in 1406.<sup>143</sup> A luxuriousness at the end of the century was partly the result of family traditions and heirlooms.

When Luigi Tornabuoni became a knight of Rhodes, he was probably seen as continuing the run of family knighthoods, a tradition emblazoned in stone on the facade of S. Maria Novella, where a Tornaquinci avello was surmounted by a Golden Spur.<sup>144</sup> Another lasting tradition was the family's militaristic energy and skill, at times expressed in street battles and civic disturbances, during the Quattrocento more usually put to the service of civic duty. But when the Medici fell in 1494, old habits were re-asserted and many Tornaquinci rode or ran through the streets in a futile attempt to save their relatives. Despite Trexler, the Tornaquinci at least did not need to import their sense of "virile gentility."<sup>145</sup> Imports from the Middle East and Flanders in the Tornabuoni palace were signs of a cosmopolitan taste and a trading empire, not of a native lack or inferiority complex.<sup>146</sup>

This is not to deny that a more courtly atmosphere had developed in the late Quattrocento, within which "magnificent" patrons moved, but they did so comfortably and proudly. Lorenzo's marriage alliance with the Albizzi in 1486 was a splendid affair, celebrated in the presence of ambassadors and knights. Jousts may have declined, but other festivities were indulged in: the inventory listed "9 chapelliere e 2 barbe da fare maschere," "10 maschere e una lanterna," and a "Sopravesta piena di sonaglj d'orpello" as well as various musical instruments.<sup>147</sup> Old habits of an aristocratic consciousness remained, so that Giovansimone Tornabuoni complained about people from the contado holding office and Giovanni Tornabuoni insisted that his nephew would be no mere country priest.<sup>148</sup> By the late fifteenth century the Tornabuoni coat of arms began to appear, daringly, without the red popolano cross at its centre, so that this branch was both reasserting its magnate or noble status and its visual association

with its Tornaquinci roots.<sup>149</sup>

In the Trecento the chronicler of the Tornaquinci proudly insisted on his consorteria's ancient origins, even linking them with the far-off and legendary time of Charlemagne when "Firenze si chominçò a rifare."<sup>150</sup> As a more grandiose and Roman ancestry for Florence was engineered by humanists like Poliziano, so too here individual families claimed beginnings which were both immemorial and classical. The arithmetician Banchegli flattered Lorenzo Tornabuoni by associating both his country and his family with a seat for "nobiliximi" birth.<sup>151</sup>

Niccolò Valori praised the Tornabuoni as "antiquissima" and Ugolino Verino was well aware of the consorteria's history:

Tornabone tuos nimbose Sebenna parentes  
huc misit, generisque tui Populesca propago est.  
Principium ex uno permixtum stemmate sumpsit,  
divitiis ambo insignes, opibusque potentes,  
permixta est ipsis et Tornaquincia mater.<sup>152</sup>

Later writers were explicit on the Tornaquinci's "descendenza Romana," although the earliest documentation available today enables us to trace them back only to the early eleventh century.<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, the rhetoric of the Quattrocento expressed a genuine belief, and did so in a tone which Ghirlandaio transferred to visual grandeur in the Tornaquinci chapel. There a "pulcherrima civitas," or in Banchegli's words, "una patria ornatissima d'ogni felicità," was allied with the "nobiliximi parenti" of the Tornaquinci consorteria.

No Medici portraits share the consorteria's space in the chapel, for the Tornaquinci stood as independent and noble in their own right, unaware that subsequent historians would set them into a Laurentian era full of fawning courtiers. Giovanni Tornabuoni knew how best to flatter the Medici, but he could also freely offer Lorenzo de' Medici political and business advice. His tone was one of anger when he told Lorenzo that, despite a setback, his nephew would reach a dignified ecclesiastical post. In the next generation Lorenzo Tornabuoni was a Medicean ally but was not seen as a lackey without initiative or popular support.<sup>154</sup> Throughout its history, the consorteria was aware of its nobility, taking steps to investigate and preserve its own

history. The Trecento chronicler, the Quattrocento keeper of a priorista, the sixteenth century record on the chapel's portraits and the visual celebration then of their generous patronage at S. Maria Novella, the commission in 1619 of a family tree, were each manifestations of self-consciousness and pride.<sup>155</sup> The Tornaquinci chapel survives as yet another example of that family's wish to record and preserve its nobility and dignity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE TORNAQUINCI AT S.MARIA NOVELLA

The redecoration of the Tornaquinci chapel at S. Maria Novella in the late Quattrocento was the culmination of a family tradition both ancient and active. Their generosity as patrons was restated by their member most attentive to family spaces and public impact, Giovanni Tornabuoni. After his palace was established then enlarged, he spent more time from the 1480s in Florence, attending to the embellishment of that palace, the decoration and possible extension of his villas, the marriage of his children, the provision of masses for his ancestors and the consolidation of the patrimony. Present comfort and prestige stated in visible terms on the one hand and a careful regard for the future (both temporal and eternal) on the other mark his actions in just that decade from the mid 1480s when he was patron of the Tornaquinci chapel and when his son began to follow his model as a magnificent patron.

The religious habits, social traditions and patronage patterns of their consorteria were brought to a focus in the refurbishment of their most sacred site. The Dominican convent was always the consorteria's chief arena for religious practice, whether burial or confraternal membership or commemorative masses; their locus for offering, whether land donations, bequests or the patronage of chapels. While at least three other chapels at S. Maria Novella found patrons from the consorteria, the cappella maggiore (Pl. 1) was the most prestigious site and attracted energetic competition for its patronage, until it was ceded totally to the Tornaquinci in 1486. In a sense much of this chapter is dedicated to an understanding of that one legal document.

#### A: LAND

Of the many confusions surrounding Tornaquinci patronage at S. Maria Novella, one of the oldest and most fundamental centres upon their donation of land for the church's construction. Although the building history of S. Maria Novella remains unclear, certain unknown documents support the consorteria's title to primacy as patrons of the

church in its oldest, pre-Dominican, form. The most explicit statement regarding this is also the earliest and it comes from the proud pen of an anonymous Tornaquinci man writing around 1376 on his family's land holdings:

ebono anche una grande possisione allato alle mura di fuori della porta dove è oggi la bella chiesa di santa maria novella e lla piazza el chonvento ell'ortora ... El fatto di santa maria novella fù in questo modo secondo che io udi dagli antichi, che avevano anche udito eglino e laici, e fratj, e fù una pichola chiesa, che uno iachopo tornaquinci aveva fatta edificare, che fù dove è oggi la sagrestia de frati, e stavavi un prete; e naque quistione che e tornaquinci volevano chiamare el prete chome padroni, el veschovo di firenze anzi voleva chiamarlo e meterlo lui, e diceva che non erano osservate le solennità che ssi richiedeva a esser padroni, e durò la quistione assai, e chon piu Veschovi l'uno dretro all'altro. Alia fine essendo san domenico, a bolongnia cimando un frate a provvedere luogho per sito di suoi frati. ... E dal veschovo ricevettono, e richonobono per charta, e da tornaquinci chon l'animo, e chonobono l'amer che gli antichi frati chomincarono, e poi gli altri frati che sono venuti gli 'anno seghuitato in fare a tornaquinci a dettj, tutte le grazie che gli 'anno volute dal loro, e veramente gli antichi huomini de tornaquinci 'anno senpre av(u)to singular reveremzia a quella chiesa, e quelli frati, e chosi debono fare quegli che sono, e che saranno della detta schiatta per li tempi avvenire.

The detail and clarity of this account supports its claim that the sources were reliable: "antichi" citizens who had the information from "laici e fratj." Later sources may neglect to mention the Tornaquinci's role, but otherwise they verify this man's record. The Tornaquinci for instance paid a "singular reveremzia" to the church and they did indeed extensively own land in this area, extending out to the site of Giovanni Tornabuoni's villas. When a Tornaquinci role in the donation of land is commented upon, vaguely and for a later period, it is always attributed to the sons or heirs of a Iacopo, surely the descendants of "uno iacopo" who built this first "pichola chiesa." Without naming the Tornaquinci, other sources also confirm that the church long found itself in the midst of conflicts over jurisdiction, particularly between the canons of Florence and the Dominicans.<sup>1</sup>

The next of only three documents to specify the early prominence of the Tornaquinci has been known, although only in isolation, since its publication in 1955 and was written by Fra Giovanni Caroli perhaps up to a decade before the Tornaquinci received rights over the chapel in 1486, an act witnessed by this friar. Caroli described the benefactors of the first Dominicans who arrived in 1221:

Solem autem huius ecclesie construende: a filiis jacobi, equitis prestantissimi tornaquinciorum clara familia procreati, altera ex parte; emptum a fratribus constat reliquum vero a plerisque aliis. Cuius fortasse rei gratia, primum altare tornaquinciorum familie attributum est.<sup>2</sup>

The generous sons of Iacopo would have included the "Lotterio [di Iacopo] Tornaquinci" who was one of seven witnesses "in Choro" of S.Maria Novella when the Dominicans were given the church in November 1221 by the Bishop and canons of Florence (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup>

Not until 1617 do we find a third document which again attributes the first church to the Tornaquinci, a sepultuario of S.Maria Novella written by its Dominican prior, Fra Niccolò Sermartelli, who also begins with the Dominican occupation of 1221:

Era vicino alle mura di Firenze una picciola Chiesetta tra' le vigne, per esser posta in mezzo a molto vigne; la quale era a' cura di un semplice sacerdote.

He then gives details of the ceremony whereby the bishop and canons handed over the church to the Dominicans in November 1221, mentioning that the rector had been a "Messer Forese da Campi"

la qual Carta si conserva appresso de' Canonici per appartenere in quel tempo detto luogo al Capitolo, il quale per molto tempo l'haveva litigato con la nobil famiglia de Tornaquinci, da cui essa stata eretto sino dalla prima pietra, ma per non gli haver questa famiglia osservato quanto de Iacopo loro consorte era stato lasciato, circa agli obblighi di questo luogo, fu loro tolto il Padronato, e concesso a' sopranominati Canonici, come apparisce per una sentenza data a' favore de Canonici.<sup>4</sup>

The matter of litigation and its documentary verification in "le scritture presso il Capitolo Fiorentino" is confirmed by Richa in



1755, whose source may have been Sermartelli. Yet he goes on to contradict his previous information by quoting Manni, who claimed in 1749 that a "Forese Tornaquinci" granted the land to the Dominicans in 1222, an obvious confusion with the church's "semplice" rector.<sup>5</sup> Numerous secondary sources later claim too but only in a vague manner that the Tornaquinci had been the original patrons of the "little church."<sup>6</sup> According to Sermartelli and the family ricordo, their control of the "chiesetta" had waned by 1221, but their ownership of much land nearby suggests that they were benefactors and neighbours of the church both before and after that date.

The first two church buildings there were in farm land and vineyards near the right bank of the Mugnone river which ran originally along the present course of Via Tornabuoni, past the Porta de' Tornaquinci through the very area, outside the walls, in the countryside and in the parish of S.Pancrazio, where the Tornaquinci clustered in their houses and farms (Pls 66, 70).<sup>7</sup> After discussing S. Maria Novella, the anonymous Tornaquinci chronicler described his family's "altra ghrande possisione" along the Arno where now stood the church of Ognissanti. An "Otto inperadore" had granted the Tornaquinci sole rights to fishing, building and leasing over an area "di lungheza presso ad uno miglio" from the Arno.<sup>8</sup> During the 1250s in particular the Tornaquinci, including Iacopo di Manetto and Lottieri di Iacopo, ceded or sold much land to Ognissanti,<sup>9</sup> but it was the Dominican church, not far inland and alongside one of the Arno's tributaries, which was to be the focus of Tornaquinci attention (fig. 1). Land sales to S. Maria Novella in the 1250s and early Trecento, for instance, indicate that the family continued to own much land on the borders of the church.<sup>10</sup>

The rebuilding campaign which resulted in the enlarged church we know today was marked by a dedication stone in 1279,<sup>11</sup> but it is not until the sixteenth century that the Tornaquinci were attributed with vital land donations for this new edifice. Vasari began the story for which we have no further or definite substantiation: "La maggior parte del sito di detta chiesa e convento fu donato ai Frati dagli eredi di messer Iacopo cavaliere de' Tornaquinci."<sup>12</sup> Later a Dominican chronicler of the convent, Fra Modesti Biliotti, recognised these same

sons of Iacopo, but gave much greater prominence, for the first time, to the Ricci, crediting them with the donation of the "still-standing choir and major chapel." Unfortunately his source is not clear, but the information may have come from those Ricci who were his fellow friars.<sup>13</sup> All subsequent writers on land donations to the new church need have no other source than Vasari and Biliotti, who may well have confused the situation up to and including 1221 with later donations closer to 1279. Nearly all their successors give greater credit to the Tornaquinci, but few neglect the Ricci, whose donation of the Trecento oculus was well known and whose famous ancestor Messer Rosso de' Ricci was prominently buried before the high altar (Pl. 71).<sup>14</sup>

Given the lack of substantiation for all the claims about the Trecento building and their origins only in the mid Cinquecento, the more interesting and solid claim concerns the older "chiesetta." The anonymous Tornaquinci and the two Dominican chroniclers, Caroli and Sermartelli, are each close enough in location and/or time to the situation they describe to deserve credibility. What is more important, the Tornaquinci themselves seem to have actively remembered and propagated their traditional status as founding patrons. Within their domestic precincts, their anonymous historian preserved on paper the proof of their antiquity and generosity. In the sixteenth century Bishop Niccolò di Donato Tornabuoni chose to commemorate his family's honour by depicting their donation of 1221 in a lunette within S.Maria Novella's Great Cloister, where one saw Niccolò's portrait and "nell'architettura della Chiesa vi si osservano le armi de' Tornaquinci, Tornabuoni, e della Consorteria."<sup>15</sup> By using portraiture and the branches' arme, Niccolò was resorting to other family traditions, previously employed in their cappella maggiore. And when a family tree was prepared for Matteo Tornaquinci in 1619-20, it was only able to delve as far back into the family's origins as had the anonymous Trecento chronicler, giving a Messer Iacopo di Tornaquinci di Alberto di Tornaquinci as the first major ancestor, who had "edifica la chiesa di S.Maria Novella" (fig. 1).<sup>16</sup>

Above all, the legal acquisition of patronage rights by the entire consorteria in October 1486 indicates that the family and their representative Giovanni Tornabuoni at this time made a strong and

successful re-assertion of the privileges due to the original "padroni." Rights over the chapel would also have been granted because Tornaquinci arms were displayed there by 1348 but no reference to any previous holder of rights is made by the document of 1486, which instead cites the "plura benemerita, obsequia, beneficia et gratitudines prestita" towards the convent by the consorteria. To them were translated and donated the "Jura indubitati et perpetui patronatus eiusdem cappelle et altaris."<sup>17</sup>

In the previous decade Caroli had recognised that "the altar was first assigned to the family of the Tornaquinci" and perhaps such an attribution was reinforced by the presentation to the friars of the Tornaquinci ricordo as incontrovertible proof that the consorteria had ancient rights to such an honourable site. Certainly by the early seventeenth century a vellum copy of it was inserted into one of the convent's memorie.<sup>18</sup> In 1470 Francesco Sasseti had been granted patronage rights over the altar but more venerable, generous and, one suspects, more assertively made, claims seem to have led to his demise, such that the consorteria was granted rights over both the "major chapel with the major altar" in 1486. When, less than a decade later the chapel's new window depicted the Founding of S.Maria Maggiore (Pl. 31), its reference to the selection of land for the construction of a major church dedicated to the Virgin was most apposite. Original donation and now magnificent re-decoration of the church were linked expressions of those motives named by Giovanni Tornabuoni in his contract of September 1485 with the Ghirlandaio brothers:

as an act of piety and love of God, to the exaltation of his house and family and the enhancement of the said church and chapel.<sup>19</sup>

#### B: PATRONAGE RIGHTS

In itself the donation of land could not guarantee a family patronage rights over a chapel and in the period before the Tornaquinci triumphed in 1486, both the Ricci perhaps and the Sasseti more certainly made claims to patronage of the high altar area. Quite what "rights" were entailed in patronage of this most elevated sanctuary are never specified, although status was the most obvious

and enviable benefit for the patron family. The consequent disputation and competition over this area in S. Maria Novella indicates much about the religious and social values of its Renaissance patrons, as Warburg perceived in 1907, although his specific proposals can no longer be accepted readily.<sup>20</sup> A clear juridical distinction between patronage of the altar and of the chapel was not recognised in his study, nor was the complication made by Vasari who granted a particular role to the Ricci. Nor did Warburg perceive the special nature of the site which seems never to have slipped totally beyond Dominican control and which never became the sole preserve of a single patron. Even after 1486, the friars paid for certain maintenance in the area, used it as their semi-cloistered choir and, with two exceptions, did not allow lay burial there.

(i) Patronage of the Walls

Our first definite information on the chapel's decoration already indicates some conflict over patronage, with the friars refusing to concede burial rights to the Tornaquinci who had frescoed the walls recently. In the 1360s, on folio 26r of Fra Zanobi Guasconi's Liber Novus, was copied an older record book of S. Maria Novella:

Notum sit fratribus universis de conventu florentino quod licet fr. Jacobus Passavante operarius ecclesie fecit pingi cappellam maiorem istius ecclesie ad expensas quorundam de tornaquincis, nullum tamen ius habent quod in dicta cappella possint facere sepulturam, nec ipsi petiverunt, nec eis fuit concessum a conventu, sed solum quod arma eorum ibi ponerentur sicut sunt. Et hoc fuit declaratum tempore quo reverendus pater Magister petrus de strozzis erat provincialis istius provincie. Et ipse tenuit consilium super hoc in cappella sancti niccholai ubi fuerunt circa XXV fratres de maioribus conventus, anno illo quo magna mortalitas est secuta, Et ista continentur in supradicto libro car. 30.<sup>21</sup>

The council is presumed to have been held in 1348, the year of a "magna mortalitas", but the date and patronage of these paintings is shifted to the Ricci by the Cinquecento writers Vasari and Biliotti, the latter being the very same commentator who first introduced the Ricci as important donors of land in the choir area and who had been involved with Vasari in structural alterations to the upper half of

the church during the 1560s. Following Ghiberti, Vasari attributed to Orcagna the Trecento frescoes "nella cappella maggiore, [adding] che allora era della famiglia de' Ricci."<sup>22</sup> Biliotti is more detailed, combining his knowledge of Vasari and the convent's Liber Novus, to claim that the Ricci became patrons of Orcagna's frescoes in the "sacellum maximum" in 1350 and remained so for 140 years. Later writers like Baldinucci, Carlo Strozzi, Richa and Follini add nothing further to the tradition except ill-founded certainty.<sup>23</sup>

Once again Sermartelli is a partial exception, for he not only neglects the Tornaquinci at this time completely, despite his very citation of folio 26 of the Liber Novus, but he goes on to name a particular Ricci and to mention "un Contratto" made by that family.

La Cappella maggiore di questa Chiesa fù anticamente della Famiglia de Ricci la quale fu da Fra Jacopo Passavanti fatta dipingere per essere uno dell'Operai del' allhora con consenso de frati di quel convento, che poi per le ragioni cho' sopra à quella havevano, la donarono a Messer Rosso di Ricciardo de' Ricci, con obbligo di pagie il costo della dipintura, e dell' altre spese fatte intorno alla Tribuna per abbellimento della Chiesa sicome si vede ne' libri antichi del Convento dell'anno 1348 a 26...

The council in the S. Niccolo chapel

consultato se era bene à concederla o' riserbarla per se per essere tal sito de Padri e non d'altri; dove per partito fù vinto che sì, e dal Padre fra Piero Strozzi ... sentenziato che detta Cappella si dovesse dare a detto Messer Rosso con certi obblighi convenienti essere formasse scrittura, e perciò ne apparisse un Contratto fatto fra detti Ricci, e Padri l'anno come sopra.<sup>24</sup>

The Dominican seems to have misread at least one text, and no other source cites any contract for the situation in the Trecento. Although no writer ever mentions the patronage of the chapel's first window, it may be that the Ricci's "altre spese" were to this effect paid around 1350, but neither Guasconi in the 1360s nor Caroli in the 1470s made any mention of the Ricci as patrons of the chapel in the Trecento.

Vasari and then Biliotti's chronicle were the influential texts

for all later discussions, probably even affecting Sermartelli's misreading. Vasari's colourful story about a dispute in the 1490s between the Ricci and the Tornabuoni over the placement of arme in an honourable part of the chapel was reported by Biliotti and then others and may have been applied retrospectively by Sermartelli to the council of 1348. Any fuss in the late Quattrocento and more certainly the Ricci arme visible on the tabernacle of the altarpiece (Pl. 40) required explanation. So too did the presence of Messer Rosso de' Ricci's tomb slab, dated 1383, close to the cappella maggiore (Pl. 71). But with Tornaquinci arms placed there by Giovanni Tornabuoni, who thereby obliterated the earlier arms of his consorteria which had been permitted by the council in 1348, and with Giovanni's tomb somewhere nearby (Pl. 73), to claim the Ricci as the first patrons of the chapel's frescoes seemed an obvious but erroneous solution.<sup>25</sup>

During the second half of the fourteenth century the Ricci were patrons with a high profile in S.Maria Novella, mainly due to Tebalдино de' Ricci who contributed to the facade and provided its large stained glass oculus around 1365.<sup>26</sup> Hence after 1380 the Ricci were, according to Fineschi, the first family, as distinct from an individual, to be "conceduta la sepoltura dentro la Chiesa ... per essere una delle più benaffette all'Ordine di S.Domenico, e specialmente al Convento di S.Maria Novella."<sup>27</sup> Biliotti had made a similar but still incorrect proposal for an adjacent tomb slab and both writers specified tombs that lay below the stairs which marked off the tramezzo and choir area from the main body of the nave.<sup>28</sup> A third Ricci tomb filled a similar position in the opposite aisle, while three other Ricci slabs filled more privileged positions in the upper section of the church (Pl. 71).<sup>29</sup> The greatest honour paid any Ricci was reserved for Messer Rosso di Riccardo, "honorabilis miles et honorifice sepultus in habitu militari et fratrum" in July 1383. All the later sepoltuari agree that his tomb was, by their time, "in sul piano delli Scaglioni dell' Altar Maggiore appiè della predella di detto Altare" at the right edge of five slabs, the central one being "S[epulcrum] Militum ... De Tornaquincis" (Pl. 71).<sup>30</sup> Today Rosso's is the only survivor of these five tombs, transferred in 1807 to the back of the new and monstrous altar.<sup>31</sup>

All the Ricci tomb slabs inside the church were of men with a high civic or financial status, but Messer Rosso was granted the most venerable location, originally somewhere contiguous to the high altar, and it is to him that later writers understandably attributed the Trecento patronage of the cappella maggiore.<sup>32</sup> New clarity can now be brought to the question with the discovery of a seventeenth century summary, originating from S.Maria Novella, headed "Articolo del' Testamento di Messer Rosso di Ricciardo de Ricci fatto l'Anno 1383."

Appresso voglio esser Seppellito al Luogo de Frati di S. Domenico de Frati de S.Maria Novella à piè della Altar Maggiore in quel luogo che fù deliberato per lo Maestro Agnolo degl' Adimari con deliberazione di tutto il Comune, quando io ebbi male nel Braccio. E la mia Sepoltura voglio stia in questa forma come qui appo Sarà scritto, e non in niuno altro modo, e così comando, e prego a cui apparterrà.

Voglio esser vestito dell'Abito de Frati di S. Domenico, e non di niuno altro vestimento nè di sopra ne di sotto.<sup>33</sup>

Rosso does not refer to the high altar as his family's domain. Instead, burial before it had been negotiated as a special favour to an individual, presumably in 1370-01 or 1374-76 when the doctor of theology Agnolo Adimari was the convent's prior.<sup>34</sup> In 1348 the Tornaquinci had been explicitly forbidden burial within the precincts of the friar's chapel, although their arme were allowed to remain there. Yet the anonymous Tornaquinci, writing c.1376, also does not refer to the chapel as his consorteria's, only speaking of their "singular reveremzia a quella chiesa."

We have then three Trecento statements on the chapel: the friar's decision in 1348, the Tornaquinci ricordo of about 1376 and Rosso de' Ricci's will of 1383. Each gives no indication of sole possession over the site, although the presence of Tornaquinci arms there conceded most stature to them. The overall impression is that, as Sermartelli described it, the "consenso de frati" was required for every secular action within this "sito de Padri e non d'altri." The Dominican friars controlled this sanctuary, parcelling out different rights to different patrons, following the precepts laid down in the Order's constitution. Fra Piero Strozzi, who "in gestibus suis apparebat actus minimus vanitatis seu ostentationis," refused burial

rights to the Tornaquinci because the chapel was too sacred a place for seculars to be given hereditary claims to such ostentation.<sup>35</sup> Fra Agnolo Adimari and the entire convent had to deliberate carefully to make an exception for one wealthy knight over twenty years later.

Fra Jacopo Passavanti, cited in the document of 1348 and whose mother was a Tornaquinci, energetically obtained patrons for his church from the ranks of his relatives and trusting congregation, seeming to take the initiative in his direction of the decoration. When prior in 1355-56 he brought to completion a programme centering on the upper end of the church, around the cappella maggiore and, in front of it, the monk's freestanding choir enclosure which was then separated from the rest of the nave by a tramezzo.<sup>36</sup> The main chapel was probably already a choir as well, where "cantandovi le Messe conventuali,"<sup>37</sup> so the friars retained ultimate possession and occupation of the area. Indeed, many, if not all, the expenses for their constructions here were paid by the convent itself. Individual burials or the placement of arme might be allowed at the cappella maggiore, but no document specifically mentioned masses or sole patronage rights for seculars. No one family had secure and total rights over the area until the Tornaquinci obtained them in 1486, and even then they were not granted burial privileges within the chapel.

When Giovanni Tornabuoni signed his contract with Ghirlandaio in September 1485 he was referred to as the "civis ac mercator ..., ad presens, ut asseritur, patronus et jura indubitati patronatis tenens maioris cappelle." No doubt his "jura indubitati" over the chapel if not the altar was accepted by the friars because the Tornaquinci arme, that most recognised "sign of patronage," had remained in the chapel since 1348. Many writers explain this new activity in the chapel by reference to its sad state of disrepair, already evident after a lightning bolt struck in 1358 and requiring the friars' own expenditure on roof repairs in 1424. Then in 1462 and 1466 the commune contributed to repairs at the church, particularly "pro reparatione tecti et campanilis."<sup>38</sup> Earlier, Ghiberti, Donatello and others had embellished the state apartments, situated at S.Maria Novella but housing distinguished visitors to the commune.<sup>39</sup> The status of the church may help explain an apparent increase in



patronage there by families and confraternities from the mid-century onwards. The facade paid for by Giovanni Rucellai was the most visible example of such a renewed interest in the Dominican headquarters, rising slowly from around 1458 to after 1471.<sup>40</sup> During the 1460s and 1470s many confraternities which included members from the Tornaquinci were founded, built new premises or embellished their surroundings here.<sup>41</sup>

Honour would redound on both the church and on any family associated with the "enhancement of the said church and chapel" as the Tornabuoni contract stated. Old frescoes suffering water damage and the walls behind them could be restored, fulfilling the Dominican precept that restoration was humbler and more virtuous than totally new "vanagloria."<sup>42</sup> By the mid 1480s however a more financial reason may have encouraged the friars to accept Giovanni Tornabuoni's offer. Francesco Sasseti had moved his patronage to S. Trinita, Giovanni Rucellai ultimately had chosen his parish church, S. Pancrazio, for the construction of his family's burial chapel, Filippo Strozzi had not yet materialised on the Dominican scene and embellishment at S. Maria Novella was far less intense from the later 1470s. The friars could not maintain the decorating impulse at their own expense, Fra Giovanni Caroli making them aware in May 1486 of the convent's over-extended credit. Through that year and the next they sold small parcels of land, but in 1489 and again in 1495 the Dominican Master General visited the convent and "assistette alla ragione dei conti." Whatever the reason for his visits in 1486 and 1487, the Master General was cited when the Tornaquinci were granted patronage rights over the chapel and altar.<sup>43</sup>

In 1486 no mention was made of the chapel's previous patronage, probably because only now with the Master General's approval were the Dominicans allowing such explicit rights to pass to secular patrons. The Ricci may feature in Cinquecento accounts, but by the late fifteenth century they were less numerous or financially sound and no longer politically potent,<sup>44</sup> so that any rights and obligations they might have had over the chapel could not be pursued vigorously. Indeed Sermartelli later said that the Ricci

concederono à Tornabuoni con ... condizioni per esser  
mancato in tutto ed estinto il ramo di Messer Rosso, e

però fù facile ai Tornabuoni l'impadroni esene per non a' havere molto che fare i Consorti, salvo che per l'essere della famiglia e però basto' loro solamente di patteggiare che vi si mettesse l'Arme dei Ricci in segno di recognizione dell'antico loro Padronato ...<sup>45</sup>

This Dominican added information on the line's near extinction and made of Rosso, the man buried near the high altar, the chief earlier patron. Otherwise he follows Vasari and Biliotti, Vasari having written on the ruined chapel:

Per il che già molti cittadini l'avevano voluta rassettare, ovvero dipignerla di nuovo; ma i padroni, che erano quelli della famiglia de' Ricci, non se n'erano mai contentati, non potendo essi far tanta spesa, nè volendosi risolvere a concederla ad altrui che la facesse, per non perdere la jurisdizione del patronato ed il segno dell'arme loro, lasciatagli dai loro antichi.

Giovanni Tornabuoni promised that

farebbe metter l'arme loro nel più evidente ed oranto luogo che fusse in quella cappella. E così rimasi d'accordo, e fattone contratto e instrumento molto stretto ...

At the chapel's unveiling the Ricci discovered their minute arme on the frontispiece of the tabernacle (Pl. 40) and a "gran romore" resulted in unsuccessful litigation against the Tornabuoni.<sup>46</sup> Independent evidence testifies to Vasari's accuracy on such matters as competition for patronage of prestigious sites, close attention to the placement of arms, the chapel's damaged state and the Ricci's relative poverty.

Now the existence of an "instrumento," precisely "very strict," can be confirmed also, because Rab Hatfield has discovered an incomplete and tantalising notarial document of 15 February 1494/95, in the margin of which its purpose is described as "Licentia data illis de Riccjs posse aponere arma in et super tabernaculo corporis Christi." The main body of the document only tells us that, typically, Giovanni Tornabuoni had entered the negotiations with "pactis, condictionibus et limitationibus, et ... reservationibus,"

before it breaks off.<sup>47</sup> Its date also confirms Vasari's account that the Ricci discovered their small arms "quando poi Domenico fece la tavola dell'altare ... allo scoprire della cappella." That altarpiece was completed after Domenico Ghirlandaio's death in January 1493/94, according to Vasari, a dating agreed to by scholars for stylistic reasons. A few months later on 14 May 1494 the convent's sacristy book referred to the "tavolla nuova," so we can deduce that from May 1494 the Ricci and Tornabuoni negotiated, trying to come to a final legal agreement on the arme and the tabernacle in February 1495.<sup>48</sup>

Yet a more informal agreement may have been decided earlier. It is possible that the original intention had been for the Ricci arms to appear in the window and perhaps they first became upset at the time of its unveiling after 1491. Giovanni Tornabuoni's contract with the Ghirlandaio brothers had stipulated that arms were to be painted wherever and however Giovanni desired, while his will of 1490 is much clearer on the sorts of arms he desired, including "quad in dictis fenestris novis de novo faciendis apponantur arma antiqua eorum qui dictas fenestras veteres fecerunt, et seu fieri fecerunt, in uno loco dictarum fenestrarum inter arma dicti testatoris." But when the window was signed in the following year, it only contained the Tornabuoni arms at the base of each of its three lancets (Pl. 32).<sup>49</sup> If the "ancient arms" mentioned in the will were those of the Ricci, then the failure to fulfil this intention may have resulted in the Ricci's first protestations and the subsequent placement of their arme on the tabernacle.

The fragmentary Licence of 1495 suggests that the Ricci had some claim to being recognised as one-time patrons, although not for the chapel's walls. Probably they once provided the tabernacle, or perhaps the window or stalls or an altarpiece for the chapel; in 1418 a Ricci widow had certainly left a small amount towards the construction and decoration of the high altar. Or Rosso de' Ricci's prominent tomb may have been mistaken for a sign of that family's right to burial in the area, in which case the Licence was seeking the transferal of those rights to the Tornabuoni from this near extinct line, or the tomb may simply have been taken as a sign of some previous Ricci right.<sup>50</sup> Whatever claims Giovanni Tornabuoni was

appeasing, he was engineering the acquisition of complete and unconditional rights over the entire domain.

The Ricci may have had one vigorous mezzano in the convent's halls who held a sort of watching brief on their behalf, Fra Domenico di Gherardo Ricci (Pl. 49). Librarian and novice master at S.Maria Novella, he paid a poor woman the large sum of 20 florins in July 1495 "to exonerate the conscience" of Lorenzo Tornabuoni.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps these alms were a conscience payment to ease Ricci injury, or to seal further a pact between the two families who had recently attempted a Licence. Nevertheless, Fra Domenico Ricci was amongst the friars who witnessed the ceding of patronage to the Tornaquinci in October 1486, so he had long known and agreed to Giovanni Tornabuoni's action: the precise placement of arme was under dispute rather than conflicting claims to current patronage rights. But Vasari, Biliotti and later chroniclers like Borghigiani did not know the document of 1486, thereby being unaware of the consorteria's rights to the chapel and altar and granting to the Ricci an unjustifiably high profile.<sup>52</sup> The better known contract of 1485 between Giovanni Tornabuoni and the Ghirlandaio was only the patron's first step towards the total, magnificent refurbishment of his family's chapel.

(ii) Patronage of the Altar

The Ricci and Tornaquinci both appear regularly in the convent's lists of friars, burials and tombs, while the Sassetti have far less prominence, yet Francesco Sassetti was legally recognised as patron of the altar in 1470.<sup>53</sup> Sixteen years later however it is the Tornaquinci who are granted emphatically the "major chapel with the major altar," the witnesses including Fra Giovanni Caroli who had already attributed to the Tornaquinci the convent's first altar.<sup>54</sup> By 1494 Giovanni Tornabuoni had installed an altarpiece and Sassetti rights had been supplanted amidst much bitterness.

The earliest evidence cited with regard to the Sassetti and the high altar in fact is imprecise on the connection. It is the convent's death notice for a Sassetti friar who died in 1324:

Fr. Baro de parentela sasetorum. Confessor magnus et predicator. Totam sacristiam munivit paramentis de serico duplicatis, ac etiam tabulam altaris sua

procuratione fieri fecit...

All quotations of this document add one word to change the meaning (from an altarpiece for the sacristy?) to "tabulam maioris altaris"; here Biliotti once more seems to have set the trend.<sup>55</sup> Vasari did not name the Sassetti at all when he briefly mentioned "una tavola ... che stette molti anni all'altar maggiore di Santa Maria Novella, e che oggi è nel Capitolo,"<sup>56</sup> but later writers conflate Vasari with the altered Necrologio to hypothesise a Sassetti altarpiece of 1320-23 depicting a variety of subjects.<sup>57</sup> One of the most important writers was Francesco Sassetti's great grandson Francesco di Giambattista who said the altarpiece was moved in "1485, o vel circa" to the Capitolo.

The three crucial documents from the Quattrocento which deal with the high altar never name Fra Baro. The first of these is Fiondina di Pellaio Sassetti's will, drawn up in January 1429/30, which stipulated burial "in sepulcro matris sue et aliorum suorum antecessorum de Sassetis" at S.Maria Novella.<sup>58</sup> For the "salute anime sue et suorum parentum" she then left 200 gold florins to be spent on

Unam tabulam magnam et pulcram ponendam in et super altare maius dicte ecclesie Sancte Marie Novelle; non tamen elevandam aliam tabulam que ibidem ad presens est, Sed super dicto altare remanendo pro copertorio dicte tabule de novo fiende.

This strange request implies that a frame or altar table ("pro copertorio")<sup>59</sup> was to supplement an older altarpiece which was to remain at the altar, probably because it contained Sassetti arme or those of another patron, but the testament's language is vague. No matter what was desired, the altarpiece or table or cover was not executed.<sup>60</sup>

Not until 1468 do we have further mention of Fiondina's bequest, when the altarpiece or "tabulam" is said to be currently under construction and Francesco himself will pay for its "remade and ordained" state.

Et quod etiam ad presens quandam tabulam ad altare maius dicte ecclesie per alios de domo et familia sua

de Sassectis constructam [or constructum] et que exinde fuit relictum per dictam dominam Fiondinam quod reficeretur et ornaretur, prout in testamento dicte domine Fiondine fit mentio, ipse Franciscus de suis proprijs pecunijs et propia liberalitate et devotione reficj et ornarj facit, etc.<sup>61</sup>

Here Francesco might imply that the altarpiece being rebuilt was of an ancestry before Fiondina, although such beneficence did not amount to patronage rights over a high altar.

Francesco's proclaimed liberal spending was still an intention on 22 February 1469/70 when he was formally granted patronage of the high altar:

Nobilis vir Franciscus Tommasii de Sassectis de Florentia fuit et est unus de benefactoribus conventus et monasterii sancte Marie Novelle predicte, ordinis [Predicatorum], et pretendit habere jus jn altari et hedificio maioris altaris ecclesie sancte Marie Novelle respectu suorum antecessorum, et quod etiam intendit dictum altare et hedificium altaris ornare, etc; Et quod esset bonum pro dicto monasterio, jn casu qho aliquid jus non haberet jn dicto altari et hedificio altaris, jllud sibj ex gratia et mera liberalitate concedere; Et ex titulo pure, mere et gratuite liberalitatis donare dicto Francisco dictum hedificium dictj altaris, cum juribus et pertinentijs eiusdem, cum potestate ornandj ipsum hedificium et faciendj ea que de jure permictuntur patronibus similium altarum, etc....<sup>62</sup>

The convent's "unqualified, complete and gratuitous liberality" omitted to grant him irrevocable rights and the mention of "any instance in which he did not possess any right" suggests that Francesco was creating a right which his ancestors had not held in any formal or renowned sense.<sup>63</sup> No text before Biliotti's suggests that Fra Baro acquired a family claim over his convent's most significant and communal site, as distinct from providing its altarpiece, which he did more perhaps as a Dominican and a sacristan than as a family representative.<sup>64</sup> Nor did Fiondina's testament specify that her family made or could make any such claim, her bequest also being a gift rather than a sign of patronage rights.

In effect owing the Sassetti money from Fiondina's unfulfilled bequest,<sup>65</sup> the friars may have been responding to financial duress and

granted rights liberally to avoid mention of any outstanding obligation on their part. Sassetti claims to patronage seem to have developed gradually, by default and more by promise than execution, and then to have been assertively shaped into a legal right by Francesco in 1470. His beneficence is recognised, but not as generously and warmly as are those gifts of Giovanni Tornabuoni and the Tornaquinci in 1486. At some stage Francesco did donate embroidered vestments to the convent, but little else is known of his patronage there, other than the purchase of wax for masses.<sup>66</sup> Instead, Giovanni gave embroidered work, participated in a confraternity, was a more lavish commissioner of family masses and by 1486 had begun the frescoes and restoration of the chapel walls. What seemed most important to the friars was Francesco's intention to rectify past neglect of the area, but both Francesco and the friars appear to have ignored this document of 1470, Francesco acting little upon it and the convent implicitly revoking it when they granted the altar to the Tornaquinci in 1486, probably having by then removed Sassetti arms from the altar.

By that time Francesco's promise as a patron had not amounted to much, with little income or realised activity eventuating from any Sassetti obligation in the Quattrocento. Then in April 1488 Francesco's memorandum to his sons attacked the Dominicans:

per la aspreza et straneza de' frati di decto luogho, che, come sapete, ci `anno facto villania et levate via l'arme nostre dell'altare maggiore, et la tavola, amoniscovi di non ve lo gittare drieto alle spalle et di tenerlo a mente, perché è l'onore di casa nostra et il segno della nostra antichità; et se mai voi tornate in altorità et in buono stato, fate corriggiere et riporre tutto al luogo suo ...<sup>67</sup>

Keen competition to be connected with the place, disappointment when such was not to be, and the friars' ultimate control over the area are all indicated by Francesco's angry words. No matter on what sure or invented ancestral grounds, Francesco Sassetti believed eighteen years after he was given legal rights to the altar that he did have a legitimate claim. The friars were not necessarily so convinced, of either his claim's provenance and accuracy, or of his commitment to his obligations.

When the friars removed the altarpiece and the Sassetti arme from their high altar (affixed there only after 1470 by Francesco himself when he held legal rights?) around 1486,<sup>68</sup> they may have done so with a sense more of resignation than disappointment. We have no evidence that Francesco Sassetti actually engaged in any new work on the altar which was old-fashioned and had needed "rebuilding" in 1468 or "ornamentation" in 1470 and may have been dilapidated in the 1480s.<sup>69</sup> Instead we are most aware of the famous row between Francesco and the friars, made much of by Warburg. Even before that final conflict however, Francesco had planned to move from S.Maria Novella. In May 1476 he revoked his will which, as early as 1446, had stipulated burial at S.Maria Novella "in sepultura suorum adscendentium."<sup>70</sup> At the time of the revocation it may already have become clear to Francesco that a new burial site for himself and his descendants was not possible inside the Dominican chapel. By at least April 1478 he had begun negotiations to acquire, as cheaply as possible, his S.Trinita chapel (Pl. 62) and it seems that Ghirlandaio had begun initial drawings for it before May 1479.<sup>71</sup> When one of Francesco's daughters died in December 1479 he had no option but to bury her at S.Maria Novella,<sup>72</sup> but by early 1480 at the latest he had officially acquired his chapel at S.Trinita.<sup>73</sup>

Later that year his catasto reported a "bottegha a uso di chiavaiulo" purchased in 1472, "per dotare una chappella in Santa Trinita," whereas in October 1485 that shop was earmarked for S.Maria Novella and farm land was set aside for the endowment of the S.Trinita chapel.<sup>74</sup> From early 1486 perhaps, and certainly by January 1487 all Francesco's activities concerned only the endowment of and masses in the S.Trinita chapel.<sup>75</sup> He told his sons in April 1488 "el mio corpo sia portato et soppellito in Santa Trinita nella nostra cappella et sepoltura nuova."<sup>76</sup> His move was complete and to be quite literally eternal.

So by April 1478 Francesco intended to move to S.Trinita, but as late as 1485 he continued to give some attention to the Dominican church. In October he was planning to grant a locksmith's shop to the church and in November he again bought 2 libbre of wax from the



Dominicans for the feast day "de' morti," as he had done regularly since at least 1480.<sup>77</sup> It would therefore seem that "la aspreza et straneza de' fratj" of S.Maria Novella only occurred after November 1485 and before April 1488 when Francesco voiced his complaint and told his sons to turn the locksmith's shop over to S. Trinita. He removed his father's "sepultura di marmo ... drieto alla sepoltura nostra anticha" from S.Maria Novella and stored it in the family's stable.<sup>78</sup> The "dissension" probably occurred by February 1486, not long before the Tornaquinci were granted rights to the chapel and altar in October 1486, near the time that the S.Trinita chapel was totally operational and ready for tombs.<sup>79</sup> Now publically committed to another and splendid place, and disappointing as a patron at the Dominican high altar, Francesco perhaps was rejected by the friars as a "bad bet" when Giovanni Tornabuoni was appearing so much more assiduous and fast working.

Warburg discerned the strength of feeling shown by Francesco and his great grandson over the issue, both of whom desired a future reconciliation with the friars. What then produced this crisis, over which Francesco is strangely imprecise?<sup>80</sup> I believe nothing could generate such heated emotions more than a frustrated desire for a family burial site. To demonstrate this possibility, we first need to know where the Sassetti tombs were located at S.Maria Novella.<sup>81</sup> All five were outside the church, two in avelli against the church's east wall and three along the western corridor leading from the Chiostro Verde to the vaults under the transept (Pl. 72). Because it was removed, we can not be sure where Francesco planned to place what he described in 1488 as the "capella d'altare o vero sepultura di marmo per Thomaso ... la quale ... avevo disegnato in Santa Maria drieto alla sepoltura nostra anticha." Probably intended for installation in an avello,<sup>82</sup> it was certainly not within the prestigious church proper, and no-where near the high altar. Francesco may have planned a tomb of his own and "suorum adscendentium" with a more magnificent location at the high altar, but if so the monks would have refused permission to that family, as they did to the Tornaquinci around 1348. Instead Francesco's "ultima volunta" of 1488 was to be buried "nella nostra cappella et sepoltura nuova" located at S. Trinita. An "epitaffio" was already carved "nel vaso della sepoltura" there,

perhaps for his son Teodoro, and a new one was to be written by "qualche huomo docto" for his father, now removed from S. Maria Novella.<sup>83</sup>

Francesco probably wanted to decorate a fitting monument to his family which would encompass an entire complex, more than was possible at the Dominican church. He described the S. Trinita locale (Pl. 62) as "cappella et altare et sepultura."<sup>84</sup> In the end he commissioned black porphyry sarcophagi for himself and his wife, murals and an altarpiece by Ghirlandaio and possibly "paramenti e d'altri ornametj necessarij."<sup>85</sup> His rather quibbling insistence that the whole chapel be dusted and cleaned from top to bottom every year before the annual mass to St. Francis indicates how pleased he was with the decorated ensemble. Above all, he ordered a lamp, "torchi e cera" for every mass there, of which there were to be a high number: "dissiderando [sic] che perpetualmente vi sia celebrato ognj mactina l'ufitio divino della messa, ... per merito et memoria dell' anima sua et de sua antecessori e posterj."<sup>86</sup>

This deeply religious commitment to his family's past was not possible in such lavish surrounds at S. Maria Novella. Of all the masses he ordered there until 1485, the location of only one is specified, that of a special mass commemorating the dead friars in 1481, candles being placed "in sull' altare e dua alla sipoltura di Francescho Sasse[tt]i." That same mass was more generously aided by Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose candellieri were placed precisely "all' altar maggiore e dua alla sipoltura di Giovanni Tornabuoni."<sup>87</sup> Despite his legal acquisition of rights over the high altar in 1470, Francesco did not receive ritual access to it often enough or for his own commemorative purposes and while his rights of recognition were met, as were Giovanni's, at the yearly Candlemas, his more particular prestige in relation to the high altar was not visibly proclaimed.

Changes to the fresco cycle's programme, as originally described in the detailed contract, occurred after November 1487 and some of those changes foresaw the transfer of certain saints to the as yet unexecuted altarpiece and/or window (fig. 5). Francesco Sassetti's recorded anger in April 1488 may well have been aroused by this

further intended encroachment upon his legal preserve. Well before Giovanni's testament in 1490, the enlargement of the chapel's decorative programme had prefigured his family's triumph. Yet Giovanni Tornabuoni's will of 26 March 1490 instructs his heirs to provide, at the high cost of 500 gold florins, "una tabula picta pulchra" for the chapel, if and when the friars handed over the rights to the major altar without any "contradictione vel molestia."<sup>88</sup> So despite the grant of 1486 Giovanni could not presume automatic patronage over the altar, Francesco Sassetti's legal right of 1470 being still an obstacle even if the visible sign, his arms, were no longer in place (Pls 38-40). Giovanni probably refers to memories of anger and disputation, remembering no doubt Francesco's public ire when his arme were removed and being still a wellknown rival of this fellow executive in the Medici Bank. The will shows an awareness of the lingering ill-feeling and the need to thread through legal niceties which Francesco could well have called upon.

Although Giovanni seems optimistic and certainly determined that he will acquire that right before his own death, he carefully inserted such plans in his will so that every detail of his desire regarding the chapel would be fulfilled. There is almost a single minded purpose in the will with its very full and controlled instructions on the chapel's completion, organising the window, altarpiece, choirstalls, embroideries, tombs, candlesticks for the altar and masses therein. Past and future "molestation" or what Francesco called "villainy" were to be overcome by careful planning and determination such that the act of 1486 was to become totally and visually confirmed. Only five days after the will's formulation Francesco Sassetti died (Giovanni surely would have known of the man's stroke which occurred on 21 March) and by 1494 the altarpiece was in place. Assiduous cultivation of the friars, proclamation of a family heritage, control over all aspects of the chapel and its future, the utilisation of certain networks available at the convent which connected secular and religious actions, meticulous instructions to his heirs, all were designed to ensure Giovanni's most eternal monument to his family.

Francesco's family did not have an adequately ancient or

renowned association with the Dominican convent, nor was he willing or able to provide sufficient gifts, nor does he appear in any known records of confraternities meeting there. Carlo Strozzi commented in the seventeenth century on the removal of the Sassetti arms, "alla quale per la potenza de' frati, e del Tornabuoni, [the Sassetti] bisognò havere pazienza."<sup>89</sup> Ultimately Francesco did not and could not live up to expectations until he was able to declare his honour at S.Trinita. Defeated at S. Maria Novella by those with more "potenza," he lost what he called "altorit " and the removal of those arme meant not only a loss of power but the loss specifically of the patronage rights he had gained with some zeal in 1470. A comparable situation was the ability of the friars to negate Baldesi rights over the facade when Giovanni Rucellai entered the convent's ken as a much richer and determined patron. By 1458 the "frati levorono l'arme nostra" reported a Baldesi. Similarly in 1448 Archbishop Antonino and three other arbitrators had judged Minerbetti claims against the Rucellai regarding the pulpit at S. Maria Novella as too weak and had given greatest priority to the "utility and ornamentation" of the Church.<sup>90</sup> After centuries in which patronage rights over the chapel were separated and lacked legal clarity, October 1486 saw them combined and clarified and they were achieved in reality thereafter by Giovanni's determination. We are now in a better position to understand why this became possible and why the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pl. 2) is a patron portrait with Giovanni surrounded by his consorteria.

#### C: THE TORNAQUINCI AS PATRONS WITH 'POTENZA' AT S. MARIA NOVELLA

Legal authority was not the only avenue of "potenza," for the effective manifestations and instruments of power were manipulable in the hands of self-assured patrons. Active proof, family tradition, generous bequests, the holding of office, and the creation of visual mythology were all sources of power employed by Giovanni Tornabuoni towards his end, the proclamation of his and his family's honourable place in the world present and future. Above all his consorteria triumphed as legal patrons in 1486 because of their immemorial foundation of the first church, their possible donation of land later and the undeniable presence of their ancestral arme at the chapel. Compared to Francesco Sassetti their tradition as patrons was more

incontrovertible and venerable. Secondly the entire consorteria through the centuries were prominent as friars, patrons and members of the congregation (eg fig. 1). In particular, Giovanni Tornabuoni spent amounts there exceeding Sassetti payments and his profile was consistently that of a more magnificent, quick acting and committed patron. His sheer determined encroachment over-shadowed all other claimants to the chapel.

Sassetti's plans for his family's burial can be compared to the consorteria's heritage. Del Migliore's eighteenth century copy of the Tornaquinci ricordo describing the first "pichola chiesa" contains an interesting addition, of unknown date, which is underlined to signify its importance. In return for the Tornaquinci's land donation to S. Maria Novella, it is claimed that the friars granted them certain privileges "liberamente, e fra l'altre cose si obbligorno rationally portare a seppellire tutti quelli che moranno di detta consorteria come anno fatto e fanno." At least four commentaries from the eighteenth century also claim that because of the Tornaquinci land gift they were granted burial rights.<sup>91</sup>

While these sources do not specify the cappella maggiore and ignore the explicit denial of burial rights within that sanctuary decreed in 1348, other evidence suggests that sometime after 1486 burial in the chapel was permissible, not for the Tornaquinci as a whole but at least for Giovanni and his immediate ancestors, an extension of the privilege granted to one individual alone in Rosso de' Ricci's case earlier. When Giovanni Tornabuoni made his will on 26 March 1490, in the presence of nine leading friars from S. Maria Novella including "magistro Ioanne Caroli" and the convent's Prior, he took elaborate pains to detail the tombs he envisaged for the cappella maggiore. His own tomb was to be "in et ad et apud ecclesiam sancte Marie Novelle" and a later clause was more precise:

Item voluit, reliquit et disposuit et mandavit quod in dicta cappella maiori dicte ecclesie, ante altare maius (et super pavimento), de bonis dicti testatoris fiant <sup>or</sup> iij sepulchra marmorea ...; que sepulchra (voluit ita construi et fieri quod de uno ingrediatur in alio, et que) fieri voluit in dicta cappella, et iuxta dictam altare...

None of the Dominican witnesses objected to Giovanni's plans for the

marble tombs to be above the steps, in front of and very near to the high altar, in a more exalted position than the tombs of many revered friars.<sup>92</sup> His grandson's testament of September 1540 desired a similar arrangement, probably for Giovanni's tomb: "una sepultura In ecclesia sancte Marie Novelle ...; que fiat ad instar sepulture Cosmi de Medicis..." The purpose of this tomb is not mentioned, but the grandson's own tomb was to be in the same place, "Iusta dictum altare sanctj Iohannis ... in dicta cappella fienda In ecclesia sancte Marie Novelle ..." <sup>93</sup> Other tombs at the church had been placed adjacent to a lesser altar,<sup>94</sup> but Cosimo's in front of the high altar at S. Lorenzo was one of the most renowned and prestigious precedents for what was a more unusual plan for a mendicant church, although it was common precisely for the founders of a church, as the Medici and the Tornaquinci were.<sup>95</sup>

Evidence that at least one Tornabuoni was buried within the chapel was discovered during a restoration campaign undertaken after World War II (Pl. 73). Directly under Giovanna Albizzi's portrait and behind the choir stalls, a roughly bricked-in area bore the following words incised onto a crude plaster surface:

1566  
IOANNES TORNABON' HIC IACET  
HIC MEMBRA JOHANNIS DE TORNABONIS TRANSLATIO SUA

There would have been no need to transfer the body of the chapel's chief patron to this long-hidden and crude site unless proximity to the altar in any form was considered prestigious and appropriate. That the body had to be shifted is explained by Vasari's remodelling of the church in 1565, at which time he was instructed

Tirar l'Altare [maggiore] innanzi, et alzarlo con le sue appartenenze. Fare il Coro doppio per i Frati, assettarlo, non levando le Spalliere, nè alterando la Cappella, nè dipinture, come sarà giudicato dal' Ingegnere, col far l'entrata dietro alle Cappelle, che si possa di dormitorio venire in coro, servirà, che i Frati non siano visti ... L'Ingegnere abbia autorità, bisognando, di levare o tramutare Sepulture, Sepolcri, o porte per comodità di questo Opera, dando a quei tali simile, o più degno luogo.<sup>96</sup>

Armed with this authority, Vasari's workmen had raised and moved the high altar forward, being able to relocate the tombs thus disturbed.

In fact Giovanni may never have had a marble tomb slab and may have been temporarily buried, as was Filippo Strozzi, until a noble monument could be erected by his heirs who instead became unwealthy pupilli soon thereafter.<sup>97</sup> His grandson may have been planning the "sepultura ... ad instar sepulture Cosmi de Medicis" for Giovanni, just as he went on to order a tomb for his grandmother at S. Maria sopra Minerva. Quite how else Vasari disrupted the old arrangement of tomb slabs can not be known precisely, since all the sepoltuari date after his advent (Pl. 71). Only needing to move those adjacent to the tramezzo, choir and altar, Vasari probably remained faithful to the overall distribution because of the expense and family honour involved.

The sepoltuari offer a reasonably accurate picture of the tombs as they lay in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by which time the consorteria had four tombs remaining inside the church, all but a Cardinali one resting in the upper privileged area beyond the tramezzo (Pl. 71). One Tornaquinci slab was positioned between the nave choir and the doorway leading to the Chiostro Verde.<sup>98</sup> The sole Tornabuoni tomb rested in the transept to our left of the cappella maggiore and is still inscribed SEP. PHILIPPI DE TORNABUONIS ET DESCENDENTIVM.<sup>99</sup> Lastly a SEP. MILITUM DE TORNAQVINCIS rested above the steps directly in front of the high altar; it was accorded the highest honour and presumably considered by Vasari a sufficient monument to Giovanni Tornabuoni and his consorteria.<sup>100</sup> Both before and after Francesco Sasseti's appearance at S. Maria Novella, the Tornaquinci consorteria obtained more honourable burial sites.

The strength of other traditional associations at S. Maria Novella also weighed more heavily in the consorteria's favour (fig. 1). Their overall number of recorded burials at the convent for instance was always higher than those of the Ricci and Sasseti, with the Tornabuoni and Popoleschi outstripping the other families quite dramatically after 1460.<sup>101</sup> One of the most notable distinctions of the Tornaquinci was their foundation of two chapels in the early Trecento at S. Maria Novella and their association for a time with a third.

Unfortunately the oldest of these chapels no longer survives; it was demolished at the time of the railway station's construction. Dedicated to St. Benedict, it stood at a corner of the vaulted ambulatory leading from the Chiostro Verde to the area under the cappella maggiore. For centuries the tomb slab of its founder's family remained here, flanked on either side by the tombs of two Dominican friars. Established before 1310 by Ruggieri di Iacopo Tornaquinci, his son Fra Giovanni was buried here in 1313 but the name of the other Tornaquinci friar is not recorded.<sup>102</sup> One of the earliest family burial chapels known at S. Maria Novella, it may be connected with land donations by the sons of Iacopo Tornaquinci. Hence it is interesting to note that a confraternity of St. Benedict, which met in this chapel at some stage, celebrated the feast day of the Assumption, the church's original dedication, at the high altar during the Trecento.<sup>103</sup> As late as the Cinquecento the chapel was used as a burial site by none other than the Tornabuoni and it may have been the "sipoltura di Giovanni Tornabuoni" mentioned in 1481 by the sacristy's account book.<sup>104</sup> Family memories lived long and actively.

The second chapel under Tornaquinci patronage was the convent's until the friars ceded it to a female line of the Tornaquinci in 1325 (fig. 1).<sup>105</sup> Guardina Guardi, best remembered in all the documents as the wife of Cardinale Tornaquinci and the maternal grandmother of Fra Jacopo Passavanti, left 200 florins in her will of 1303/04 for the foundation of a chapel. By 1325 this money had been spent on the facade's construction instead so in recompense and recognition the friars granted her daughter Margarita Tornaquinci the transept chapel named after St. Luke. According to one source the chapel was dedicated to Guardina and her daughter in 1348, the very year in which Fra Passavanti, arguably, tried to obtain burial rights for the Tornaquinci in the adjacent cappella maggiore.<sup>106</sup> Although in 1419 it passed to the Scali, the family into which Margarita married, and thence to the della Luna and finally the Gondi in 1503, the convent still remembered its obligation in the sixteenth century, noting that "La cappella di san Luca e obligata a Mona Guardina Tornaquinci e suoi ... a dire una messa perpetua ... o fare un' altra cappella o rendi fiorini 200."<sup>107</sup>



So the friars paid special honour to Passavanti's grandmother, perhaps also remembering her Tornaquinci connection, for she was awarded posthumously this chapel in the transept immediately adjacent to the high altar (Pl. 71). The chapel's dedication may have been significant too, because the foundation stone of the enlarged church had been laid on St. Luke's feast day in 1279.<sup>108</sup> For whatever reason, a Tornabuoni tomb slab later lay at the entrance to this chapel, probably placed there before the Tornaquinci lost rights over that space (Pl. 71). When Tornaquinci generosity was remembered by the friars in 1486 their unusual citation of both men and "feminas" from the consorteria probably refers to Guardina and their obligation to her bequest.<sup>109</sup>

The third Tornaquinci chapel was built by them around 1349, presumably after their hopes for burial in the cappella maggiore were dashed, but it passed to the Popoleschi when they took that name in the 1360s (fig. 1). Lying in the ambulatory near the Tornaquinci chapel of St. Benedict, it was recorded by the Liber Novus:

Cappella sanctorum Philippi et Jacobi fuit edificata post magnam mortalitatem, que fuit anno Domini 1348, a filiis domini Marabottini, a Nicholao Ghini et Thomaso Pieri de Tornaquincis: qui omni anno in festo dictorum apostolorum faciunt pictantiam conventui, et missa cantatur post missam conventus et predicationem in dicta cappella ...<sup>110</sup>

All those founders and their brothers were buried here and its dedication was determined no doubt by the death of the brothers Filippo and Neri in 1348 probably of the plague.<sup>111</sup> S. Iacopo may well have been chosen as a commemoration of their ancestors who had done so much for S. Maria Novella though Fra Iacopo Passavanti may have influenced the choice too.

Later on separate occasions the founders took the Popoleschi or Marabottini names but they and their descendants chose to gather once more, in death, under the shelter of their consorteria. Most often called the Popoleschi chapel, those arme only adorned the window, while Tornaquinci arms appeared on the marble tomb, doorway, Gothic vaults and capitals of the pilasters.<sup>112</sup> The regular masses noted by the Liber Novus included one on S. Iacopo's day funded by Fra Iacopo

Passavanti who sold his mother's house "alla piazza del Tornaquinci" in order to establish two masses in her honour, giving the 100 florins to his maternal cousin Matteo di Ghino Tornaquinci in 1360 for this purpose.<sup>113</sup> That same Matteo with his brother Niccolò also ordained a mass to SS. Filippo and Iacopo.<sup>114</sup> In 1430 Sandra di Zanobi Marabottini, the daughter of another founder, left money for a mass of the dead on S. Filippo's day and in the sixteenth century this family commemoration was still being celebrated "nella cappella di Tornaquinci, sotto le volte." Catasto reports of 1469 and 1480 reveal that the Popoleschi were also providing an annual mass at their chapel to SS. Filippo and Iacopo.<sup>115</sup>

This regular provision of bequests and masses was another tradition of the Tornaquinci at S. Maria Novella.<sup>116</sup> When Leonardo Tornabuoni left the confraternity of St. Peter Martyr 200 lire and a house for an annual mass of the dead in 1492 he was adopting his consorteria's common procedure. The convent later noted its obligation from an unnamed confraternity to provide "cera e andar' alla sepoltura" for Leonardo.<sup>117</sup> Earlier his wife Bartolomea was given a sizeable funeral when she died on 1 September 1484, for which his nephew Cosimo di Filippo actually paid over the money. She was then given commemorative masses from at least 1485 to 1487, some also being for "altri suoij morti."<sup>118</sup>

Other religious activities engaged in by the Tornaquinci also centred on the Dominican headquarters. Some were friars, many were prominent members of confraternities meeting there and occasionally they acted in a more official or administrative capacity on the convent's behalf.<sup>119</sup> Ugolino di Cardinale Tornaquinci, "Giudice," was one of the convent's representatives in a dispute of 1311 with parish churches, Giovanni Tornabuoni's father Francesco was one of its operai in 1422, and his second cousin Giovanfrancesco was one of the operai during the chapel's decoration in 1488. Giovanni's own household was attached to the Order; he buried his wife in the Dominican church in Rome and his family had a Dominican as their chaplain.<sup>120</sup>

The ultimate reason for the Tornaquinci triumph in 1486 was that all opponents were shrewdly out-manoeuvred by Giovanni Tornabuoni.

From at least 1480 he was a regular client of S. Maria Novella, paying assiduous attention to masses for his wife, father, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, morti in general and perhaps even for the mother of his illegitimate son. Then in 1487 the chapel's dowry provided plentiful masses for himself, his grandfather, father, mother, two brothers, wife and morti.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, when we can compare Giovanni's purchases of wax with Francesco Sasseti's for the anniversary of morti each November Giovanni consistently appears as a more generous patron, usually buying at least double the weight.<sup>122</sup>

The sacristy books occasionally mention the placement of candles and not once is Francesco Sasseti associated with the high altar whereas the Tornabuoni achieve this distinction several times. Giovanni's purchase of wax burnt in honour of the convent's dead friars in 1481 was specifically associated with the "altar maggiore" while Francesco's smaller purchase was not. From the fragmentary evidence available, a tentative conclusion would be that it was the friar's commemoration which allowed Giovanni's presence at the high altar in 1481 before he had gained official patronage of the chapel.<sup>123</sup> He was permitted to enter metaphorically the friar's sanctum where his consorteria's arms resided, as the convent's pious and generous client, just as his consorteria was able to do legally and symbolically after October 1486.

In 1491, the year following the unveiling of the frescoes and when the design of the new window was nearing completion Giovanni's payment towards the morti was again singled out for special mention, having come "from the high altar and sepulchre of Giovanni Tornabuoni."<sup>124</sup> A rare specification also figures twice in the sacristy's records of masses for Giovanna Albizzi, where they occur "nella cappella" in 1489 and 1491.<sup>125</sup> Understandably Giovanni's own funeral and onoranza in the days of April 1497 are given more precise recognition and the friars may have contributed to the cost; on two occasions wax was placed "sopra all' altare maggiore" for him.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps it was just as well Francesco Sasseti did not live to see those candles!

Giovanni further asserted his "potenza" by holding offices in

one of the convent's oldest and wealthiest confraternities, originally called dei Laudesi and from the early fifteenth century named after its founder St. Peter Martyr, but always dedicated to the Virgin. Elected by the friars themselves he became one of the confraternity's four captains along with two friars and the politically active Lorenzo Carducci on the anniversary of the church's latest consecration, 1 September 1486.<sup>127</sup> Whether to celebrate his inauguration or the convent's own feast day he marked himself out in a blaze of light by burning on that day the enormous amount of 203 libbre of "torchi alla cortigiana."<sup>128</sup>

Neither his administration nor his wealth and generosity went unnoticed, for on the very day that he also became the confraternity's provost, 13 October 1486, the friars singled out the "magnificent and generous man Giovanni" and granted his consorteria patronage rights over the "major chapel with the major altar." It is unlikely that the timing was fortuitous or that "chance and fortune" ("sorte et fortuna extractus fuit") really determined his provostship in October and his election to that post again on 17 February 1487. His fellow captain Lorenzo Carducci was a witness at the consorteria's acquisition in October and on 18 February 1487 Giovanni donated to the confraternity a wool shop which provided his commemorative masses and was the chapel's dowry.<sup>129</sup> He became captain again for the March to September term in 1490, appointed just before he drew up his will with its optimism, detail and determination about the chapel's entire decoration and its designation as a burial site. As his contract with Ghirlandaio had specified, St. Peter Martyr was frescoed on the window wall of that chapel and he was later shown on the altarpiece.<sup>130</sup>

Formed before its commission of Duccio's so-called Rucellai Madonna in 1285, the confraternity was dedicated to the singing of laudi in praise of the Virgin. Like other such bodies, since at least 1299 it had administered bequests, especially of land, for masses or pietanze, Tommaso di Sandro Tornaquinci in 1362, Giovanni Tornabuoni and his brother Leonardo all being benefactors in this mode.<sup>131</sup> Yet the confraternity played an even more special role at S. Maria Novella, being one of its "secular arms," even administering certain bequests left not specifically to it but to the convent.<sup>132</sup>

Throughout its history friars took an active part in the confraternity's religious and financial affairs and by Giovanni's time the friars elected the officers and appointed its captains, a practice perhaps deriving from the 1440s when several Bulls had regulated the confraternity.<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore the confraternity may have had special associations with the high altar and choir area, not only because of its own prestige and musical function in that place, but also because "la immagine miracolosa di San Pier Martire, da cui parlossi all' anno 1263" was situated near the old choir.<sup>134</sup> In 1312 the confraternity was obliged by a bequest "pro tenedo continuo illuminata lampade crucifixi existentis in eadem ecclesia sancte Marie Novelle picti per egregium pictorem nomine Giottum Bondonis," a crucifix probably suspended above the high altar.<sup>135</sup> The saint's feast day, 29 April, was one of the special celebrations conducted each year at the high altar, for which a large indulgence was available.

Masses for the dead were occasionally conducted at the high altar, provision for some of which probably were left via this confraternity. A Bartolo Cini Benvenuti left it a draper's shop in 1462 with the obligation that

tenessino ogni mattina Im perpetuo dua cerj accesj  
mentre che si leva il Signore alla messa grande; Item  
che del continuo di et notte stia una lampana accessa  
avanti al santissimo sacramento del altare maggiore;  
Item che la notte di Natale si mettino intorno al coro  
falcole accese per fare lume alla chiesa.<sup>136</sup>

The confraternity's prestige and power may have granted it certain links with the high altar. Both Giovanni's "potenza" recognised by his elections in the confraternity and the further access these gave him to the convent would have aided his success with the friars, who held ultimate control over both the confraternity and the altar.

#### D: THE CHAPEL, ITS ACCOUTREMENTS, AND THE FRIARS

The friars could protect and state their authority over the cappella maggiore and other chapels in many ways. As did other religious, they often acted cautiously and waited for proof of a

patron's intentions before granting patronage rights. Even Cosimo de' Medici submitted to the appearance if not the actuality of certain such formalities in the process whereby he and his party engineered acceptance of his patronage of S. Lorenzo. He obtained formal recognition of his commitment from the parish and canons only after his actions had proven his definite intention.<sup>137</sup> So too Giovanni Tornabuoni began his chapel's frescoes months before his consorteria was granted legal rights over the chapel and altar.<sup>138</sup> The Dominican chapter required pledges of a tangible sort from patrons like Guasparre Lami before giving them the go-ahead.<sup>139</sup> Francesco Sassetti was granted rights over the altar in 1470 after dealings in 1468 had cited Fiondina's bequest, land exchanged with the convent by Francesco and embroideries he had donated, worth 300 florins according to a later Sassetti, and in 1470 it was his intention to ornament the altar which is specified.<sup>140</sup> So too some of the details of Giovanni Tornabuoni's previous "magnificence" were cited in 1486 including "plures vestes et ornamenta in dicta ecclesia ... et ad quam plura alia cotidiana servitia et obsequia consequuta a dicto Johanne et domo predict [Tornaquinci]." The murals were even generously described as "pro maiori parte perfectum," when they would have been begun only about five months previously, but at least they were underway. In recognition and "remuneratio," the Tornaquinci were granted rights over the chapel and altar.<sup>141</sup>

A few months earlier Filippo Strozzi had finally acquired his transept chapel adjacent to the cappella maggiore, a Bull having been passed to this effect in June 1485 but he had to wait until 3 July 1486 for the matter to be finalised, and then only after five meetings, the establishment of the chapel's dowry on 27 June and a concluding document of nearly fifty folios.<sup>142</sup> Legally the chapel had to revert to the friars who then re-assigned it to Filippo: vacant chapels were theirs alone to dispose of as they saw fit. In the case of the cappella maggiore they never lost all their own privileges and obligations over the space.<sup>143</sup> As the Golden Legend described the architectural hierarchy, "the sanctuary is holier than the choir, and the choir than the body of the church;" to S. Antonino the high altar was "il piu degno luogo della chiesa."<sup>144</sup> Besides occasional masses there for the defunct from other families, and for important feast

days, the Tornaquinci also had to share their chapel's function and even decoration with the community. Their ritual access was allowed occasionally for such special events as Giovanni Tornabuoni's own funeral but the cappella maggiore as a very communal and sacred arena did not function as a private chapel. Patronage of this holiest of sites was prestigious in the eyes of this world and a most estimable offering in the eyes of the Lord. Not only the consorteria's own commemorations but in a sense all the convent's daily celebrations and observances there redounded to the eternal glory of the Tornaquinci.

At a site forever outside the private domain, minor expenses for it were steadily incurred in the sacristy books, both before and after the Tornaquinci acquired rights in 1486, especially for repairs which Fra Giovanni Dominici had earlier recommended as the best and "sofficiente" patronage.<sup>145</sup> As the Tornaquinci altarpiece neared completion in 1494, some of the convent's expenses may have been occasioned by disruptions in the chapel (Pl. 40). Just before the first mention of the new altarpiece on 10 May 1494 1 lire 4 soldi were paid "per 2 tope e j<sup>a</sup> chiave per la tavola dove a [ha a] stare el sacramento," so the Corpus Christi had been moved for long enough for new locks to be required. Four days later there was a payment of only 14 soldi to a "lantarnaio ... per 4 podeluzza di fero istagniotto pe' chandellierj della tavolla nuova e ... per 4 felrj [ferri] per detti chandellierj."<sup>146</sup>

In general most payments were for important areas within the friars' responsibility such as the housing of the eucharist,<sup>147</sup> the provision of lighting and various minor draperies or furnishings. The credenziera needed repairs through the years,<sup>148</sup> while the "residentia" was repaired in December 1490 but replaced in the next year, wood being paid for on 30 December 1491. Two days later the friars paid Bartolomeo (Baccio) d'Agnolo "legnaluuolo ... per manifattura della residentia dell' altar maggiore," which probably marks the commencement of the frame for the altarpiece to be painted by Ghirlandaio (Pl. 40).<sup>149</sup>

Lighting made one of the most regular and necessary demands on the convent's purse since not all the expensive wax or oil let alone

equipment for the illumination was provided by the congregation.<sup>150</sup> Certain private bequests nevertheless did attend to the matter, Giovanni's dowry in 1487 for instance providing "duo candellaria supra altare" and "duo candellaria magna super sepulcrum dicti Iohannis, donatoris, et suorum," while his will of 1490 provided for "'candellieri' ... pro altare et retinendos super altare," which may be the four "chandellierj della tavola nuova" affixed in 1494 (Pl. 40).<sup>151</sup>

The practicality and aesthetic value of such equipment must not be under-estimated by an age so used to electricity. When Alberti pondered the "Question which is the most beautiful Sight," one of five alternatives he gave was "a Temple illuminated with a great Number of chearful Lights." On feast days, or when the tramezzo became a stage, when a Papal or special mass was held, at the elevation of the host, during Christmas eve when the whole choir was lit "per fare lume alla chiesa" by the beneficence of Bartolo Benvenuti, when the representatives of the congregation processed with their candles on the day of Purification, then the "Temple of Heaven" must have seemed an awesome, splendid possibility to the souls gathered together as brothers in Christ (Pl. 1).<sup>152</sup>

At quieter times lamps and candles would have seemed like comforting beacons in the dark and immense interior. Art historians must imaginatively re-combine all those lights which once illuminated, say, the Tornaquinci chapel, both as Ghirlandaio's shop worked away on the wet plaster and as a contented consorteria gazed on their offering to the almighty. The chapel then would have been seen in a special warmth, lit by candles burning through a slight haze of heat and smoke, by reflections from the gilded altarpiece frame, tabernacle, candellieri and embroideries, by coloured patches dappling the walls from the stained glass windows, or by the sun at times streaming through the two high round windows of the transept. Much gilding, either flat or raised from the wall surface, still survives in Ghirlandaio's work and at a good moment natural lighting today gives the viewer a small sense of the chapel's original brilliance and Christian glory.<sup>153</sup>



In a similar way the original variety, even clutter, of furnishings and accoutrements should alter our sense of the pristine altarpiece and ample space which we now view in museums or near-empty churches. Marcia Hall's work on the tramezzo has widespread implications for our ideas of Brunelleschi's space in S. Spirito, of the crowds gathered to hear sermons inside S. Maria Novella or see a play at the Carmine, of the clarity and quantity of space seen by the Quattrocento eye.<sup>154</sup> For those who passed through the arched portals under the encrusted tramezzo at S. Maria Novella, past the semi-enclosed friars' choir, over the marble tomb slabs, to the transept chapels of the Strozzi or Tornaquinci, found themselves in a quiet, more intimate space than the lower nave offered. Here Papal or high masses were celebrated on special days such as Easter and Corpus Christi, visiting Cardinals and Popes would be the communicants, vespers and other choral offices were sung and the gospel read.<sup>155</sup>

As Corazza's vivid descriptions indicate, the elaborate Offices were sometimes visible to the populace but at other times the church doors were locked. The tramezzo or "ponte" divided the church, being the ceremonial platform for sermons, readings, plays or occasional Papal benedictions, keeping most of the congregation packed in the lower half of the church.<sup>156</sup> There or in the piazza they would await benediction, smelling the incense, glimpsing the candles and fabulous vestments, hearing the murmurings of the celebrants and waiting for the bell signalling the elevation of the host.<sup>157</sup> The Tornaquinci chapel was at the heart of some of the greatest ritual mysteries and those portrayed therein were eternally representing their family's participation in the acts of witness, prayer and offering.

Such splendid and frequent ritual required many aids, some of a quite mundane kind. Storage boxes and locks supplemented the sacristy cupboards, long poles were needed to light the candles and lamps,<sup>158</sup> and steps to reach high points. Thus on 18 July 1508 the sacristan was given money "per dua chiave con achoncinij di toppe, una al sacramento e una alla scala per micterre [nectarre? mittere?] sopra l'altare maggiore."<sup>159</sup> As with an altarpiece of 1492 for a Venetian cappella maggiore, Ghirlandaio's altarpiece of about the same date was a high structure beyond normal reach for cleaning. It too may have

been placed to be seen through the central arch of the tramezzo, so that the Virgin in Glory would be framed by that arch as well as the arch originally framing the altarpiece (Pl. 40).<sup>160</sup>

When Vasari destroyed the tramezzo, he also raised the altarpiece still further, but he preserved the painting intact "nell' ornamento dorato, sotto un arco."<sup>161</sup> The triumphal arches frescoed throughout the chapel were supplemented then by the Virgin's triumph in the setting of such an arch and we know that the altarpiece was also divided by classical columns and capitals to further this impression (Pls 38, 40). Within the format of arches, or more properly lunettes, her final glory was again depicted on two walls, her death and Assumption completing her cycle on one and on another her Coronation fittingly above the window where it was also above both her Assumption in that window and her Glory on the altarpiece (Pls 22, 23, 30, 38). Furthermore in the chapel central to the celebration of the Corpus Christi, the eucharist was stored at the very summit of the altarpiece's frame under that "arco" (Pl. 40) and no more fitting place could be found for the sacramental means of salvation, means further stressed by the Resurrection depicted on the reverse of the altarpiece where it could be adored by the nearby donor portraits of Giovanni and his wife (Pls 24, 25, 39, fig. 5). In a chapel planned by Giovanni as a burial site such imagery was appropriate and accorded with his recommendation of his soul in his will "ac beate Marie semper virgini et universe curie triumphanti paradisi."<sup>162</sup>

Certain payments by the friars catered for other sorts of rituals taking place in the chapel. Their largest expense was just over 62 lire paid in 1498 "Alla tavola dell' altare maggiore, cioè, per lla giuntea di dietro, per più spese facte in essa." This is related probably to the small payment of 2 lire on 13 October 1498 to "Francesco di Agnolo, legnaiolo ... per una panchetta da'nginocchiare alla comunione di braccia sette per dietro all' altare." Given the size, medium and position, this would be a kneeling platform added to the choir stalls provided earlier by the Tornabuoni: certain furnishings for the convent's use, especially of a sacred nature, were provided by the community itself. The same Francesco was paid on 29 April 1501 "per racconciare el telaio grande della cappelle maggiore"

and the Bartolomeo (Baccio) di Agnolo who made the wooden residentialia in 1491 was surely his brother.<sup>163</sup> The friars favoured this workshop of brother carpenters, Baccio also producing the wooden choir stalls for the Tornabuoni in 1490 (Pls 34-37) and later a marble cantoria for the church.<sup>164</sup>

The friars' choir remained between the tramezzo and cappella maggiore until Vasari's renovations, but the location of the choir for the lesser religious or lay brethren, the conversi, is not clear, although it was probably already in the chapel before the Tornabuoni provided them with wooden stalls in intarsia work.<sup>165</sup> The stalls now run "detro all' altare" in two tiers, but the lower, heavier set is an addition made at Vasari's time.<sup>166</sup>

One of Baccio's early works, the choir stalls are "lavorate a grottesco" (Pl. 36) rather than filled with figurative and architectural representations.<sup>167</sup> Vasari claims that Baccio later went to Rome and studied architecture, then returned to Florence where his shop was constantly filled with "dispute d'importanza" amongst artists like Filippino Lippi, Cronaca, Antonio and Giuliano da Sangallo, Granacci and Michelangelo. These last two men had been Ghirlandaio's pupils, while Giuliano was also associated with Ghirlandaio, especially through sketchbooks depicting classical features for workshop use.<sup>168</sup> These friendships and the mutual interest in antiquity may have had their origins before Baccio visited Rome and his choir stalls at S. Maria Novella are delicate and complex manifestations of a mature comprehension of classical decoration. Even earlier, it was Ghirlandaio himself in this very chapel who introduced sophisticated grottesche to the Florentine public, giving them an authentic, lightly touched rendition of the recent discoveries in the Golden House of Nero, by portraying fictive intarsia in the Birth of the Virgin (Pl. 15).<sup>169</sup>

Evidence from Landucci's diary, Giovanni's will and the four Tornabuoni arme mingled with the putti and foliage of the intarsia (Pl. 36), all confirm that the stalls were commissioned before 1490 and paid for by Giovanni Tornabuoni, although several later payments by the friar suggest that at times they purchased materials for their

additional comfort or for practical purposes. Thus on 29 June 1494 they paid "A Baccio, legniauollo ... per una chassa pella banda della + [embroidery donated by Giovanni] e per sete fondj di sette segiolle del choro." It seems that here the friars were providing an essential convenience, wooden pieces on which to sit against the splendid backings which had been installed previously, in time for the chapel's unveiling in December 1490.<sup>170</sup> In the frequent instances where the Tornabuoni patron is not named in the sacristy books it may be that the friars were acting as mediators and administrators of a patron's donation or inheritance after his death. Yet when such practical details as a box for the banda, a small payment for the altarpiece frame or seats for the choir are being provided and when very few entries are for major payments or items, they seem quite often to be the friars' own expenses incurred for less prestigious, more practical everyday matters and maintenance.

The stained glass for instance was given by Giovanni Tornabuoni as his will and the window's arme testify (Pl. 32), yet when the new glass had been designed according to the now-lost inscription at its base which read "Opus Alexandri Fiorentinj 1491," the friars themselves on 7 December 1491 paid two men "per portatura della finestra vecchia di vetro della cappella maggiore da chasa Giovanni Tornabuoni al chonvento in fasci 12 tra e' vetri e ferramenti."<sup>171</sup> Then from the early sixteenth century they had to outlay money for repairs to both the "ochio grande di sopra la porta" on the facade donated in 1365 by Tebaldino de' Ricci and to "la finestra della capella grande." Several times they made small payments to "Sandro d'Iohannj d'Andrea Agholandj, maestro di finestre di vetro," the very man who first executed the window and who now repaired pieces or in 1504 was paid "per factura de' ferri delle finestre della cappella maggiore."<sup>172</sup>

A clearer instance of costs seemingly shared by convent and patron are the two copes, one "facto a stelle," made by Lorenzo di Bartolomeo "banderaio" and "mona Alexandra di sancto Pagholo" who were paid over 50 lire by the friars for labour and materials between 10 January and 5 October 1485. A partial payment to Lorenzo on 19 May was 9 lire which "sono per factura di dua piviali, l'uno in dua tanti

e ll'altro di domaschino paghonazzo e bianco con pine d'oro; el quale drappo ci donò Giovanni Tornabuoni." Further details of cloths were then given, valued at over 20 lire more, "Che monta in tutto la sopradetta spese, facta di consentimento di maestro Stefano, priore."<sup>173</sup> Here then money at least partly donated by Giovanni Tornabuoni was administered by the convent under the auspices and regulation of the prior.

The Dominican chronicler Biliotti later credited Giovanni with the donation of many vestments and embroideries including two sets comprising a cope, a chasuble and dalmatics. At least some of that donation, the piviali documented here, had been given before the contract with Ghirlandaio was signed in September 1485, a confirmation of the man's generosity, of the "plures vestes" cited in the ceding of patronage rights on 13 October 1486. Biliotti also credited Giovanni Tornabuoni with a "pulcherrimum ac ditissimum illud oblongum Pallium (quod 'Bandam' vulgo dicunt), quod, hastae cruci[s] appensum, in maximis festivitibus ad Evengelium maioris missae proferimus." Designed by Botticelli, "egregii pictoris," it included the Baptism, the Assumption and S. Lorenzo distributing alms, "quas omnes historias phugio opere, mult intexto auro et argento, exactissime elaboratas videmus." In a chapel dedicated to the Assumption and containing fresco cycles on the lives of the Virgin and the Baptist, the choice of two of these narratives with their promise of eternal salvation is not surprising. S. Lorenzo's generosity is unusual but explicable, stressing offering and patronage, enacted by the name saint of that Lorenzo Tornabuoni who did pay alms via Fra Domenico Ricci in 1495. Biliotti also recognised in the pallium the Tornabuoni device, "trini adamantes, inter flammis triangulariter uniti" (Pl. 37).<sup>174</sup>

When Giovanni drew up his will on 26 March 1490 he spoke of this "pallium crucis jam incohatum... in quo quidam frater sive sacerdos, ut asseruit, obtulit et promisit solvere florenos centum auri largos, et donavit dicto testatori facultatem a[p]ponendi in eo arma dicti testatoris et eius domus." Upon his death he further wanted not only "arma sua et domus sue" but also the arme of the Albizzi, Francesca Pitti and Giovanna Albizzi to be placed on its edges "una contra aliam."<sup>175</sup> Quite who the intriguing "frater" was we cannot be

certain, but his promise and donation to Giovanni of the "faculty" to affix arme on the embroidery suggests that the Dominicans watched the programme carefully and administered some of its finances from money originally pledged by Giovanni.

Not until the completion of the "tavolla nuova" do we find this unfinished embroidery in the sacristy books. In June 1494 a box was made for it by Baccio and keys and locks were provided for the "chasa dove sta la banda della croce richamata." A porter carried the box to "santa Verdiana," these "monache" being paid a year later on 22 June 1495 "per fornimento della banda della croce e per loro a frate Domenico Riccj."<sup>176</sup> That a Ricci friar conveyed the payment may suggest it was he who "donated" to Giovanni the right to affix his arme to the cloth and that he was making a personal inspection of the nun's completion of this task. February 1495 had seen Giovanni frame the "licentia" to place Ricci arms on the tabernacle and less than a month after the S. Verdiana nuns were paid Fra Domenico Ricci also paid a poor woman the high sum of 20 florins in alms "to exonerate the conscience" of Lorenzo Tornabuoni.<sup>177</sup> It may be that the nuns had completed the embroidery, including the addition of the arms on its edges, only after it had been agreed that the tabernacle of the new altarpiece would contain the Ricci arms. The agreement or promise mentioned in Giovanni's will perhaps was only enacted once his part of the bargain was formally met, just as the convent gave his consortereria full "altorità" over the chapel only after he had made sufficient proof of his intentions.<sup>178</sup>

The complex way in which financial payments were arranged is suggested by an entry of 1498: "A Lorenzo di Benintendj e compagni al bancho di Francesco Scharfi, e per loro a maestro Giovanni Caroli" who accepted 67 lire "per pagare e per ogni resto dellanda [della banda] nuova della Croce." Not once do the sacristy books mention Giovanni Tornabuoni's patronage of the banda and this final payment made after Giovanni's death instead appears to involve one of the convent's favourite bankers, made by the same friar Fra Giovanni Caroli who as "chamarlingho" in October 1485 had carried one of the payments to a seamstress for the "piviale facto a stella" donated earlier by Giovanni Tornabuoni.<sup>179</sup> Possibly the Tornabuoni had paid monies to

this bank, which were then withdrawn when needed by the convent.

The idea for such a donation and its precise management, as well as the iconography of individual objects, may have been arranged by mutual consultation between convent and patron. In particular the friars Domenico Ricci and Giovanni Caroli, learned men active in the convent's administration and decoration and who are amongst the very few Dominicans named in the sacristy book entries for the chapel in these years, may have involved themselves in matters both practical and iconographical there. It may even be their portraits which figure in the Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin (Pl. 22), where three tonsured, clean shaven men with individualised faces share space with generalised apostles. Closest to the bier and standing in profile to the right is a man who bears some resemblance to Domenico Ricci's medal (Pl. 49).<sup>180</sup> Nearby a plump man turning to an apostle is very like Caroli's dedication portrait in the manuscript which had credited the Tornaquinci with the convent's first altar.<sup>181</sup> In the foreground a third figure kneels in an honourable position, distinguished again by a less hirsute state and less classicized draperies. Given his prominence and representative gesture of devotion, he might be a high ranking Dominican such as the Master General or Fra Gabriele Narucci, both of whom approved the Tornaquinci triumph in 1486.<sup>182</sup>

No matter who these men are, their tonsure suggests a Dominican presence in a scene showing devotion to their protectress and to the Assumption which was the chapel's probable dedication, chosen for depiction too in the window's highest section (Pl. 30) and in the Tornabuoni banda.<sup>183</sup> Not visible or distinctive enough from below for a charge of hubris to apply and close to the heavenly vaults, adoring the Virgin who was also a symbol of Ecclesia which the Order was founded to defend, and acting as intermediaries with this supreme intercessor, these "honour portraits" transmit a prayer and a presence on behalf of all mankind and the Tornaquinci. They exist in one of the earliest scenes executed, one of the few which could have been finished by October 1486 and visited by means of scaffolding days before the frescoes were optimistically described as well underway, when a commitment to the chapel's decoration was accepted by the convent and the Tornaquinci granted patronage rights. The portrayal of

several distinguished and engaged members of the Dominican community would have been a well-calculated and diplomatic gesture on Giovanni Tornabuoni's part.<sup>184</sup>

Ghirlandaio's drawings, the banda's design and other such matters were probably supervised by the Tornabuoni father and son,<sup>185</sup> while the convent oversaw the actual execution of the embroideries and probably also the more practical details of woodwork on the stalls, altar frame, tabernacle and so on. The friars seem to have established friendly, regular custom with many of their labourers and suppliers, just as the Tornabuoni happily employed Ghirlandaio on many occasions. The woodworker's shop of Agnolo's sons was one instance of this more lowly rung of regular patronage by the friars, whose recommendation could have influenced Giovanni's selection for the choir stalls.<sup>186</sup> The benefits for the convent may have been more than reliable service and good price. The "Alessandro fiorentino" who made the Tornabuoni window for example in turn acted as patron of S. Maria Novella, burying his wife there on 1 April 1495.<sup>187</sup> Morti of the Ghirlandaio family were also buried or honoured by anniversary masses at S. Maria Novella,<sup>188</sup> beginning with Domenico's wife in January 1486<sup>189</sup> and including his own funeral there on 11 January 1494. He was later buried in an avello, due to the intervention of his son Ridolfo and the consent of the convent's operai.<sup>190</sup> Domenico's death did not sever all his family's employment or masses at S. Maria Novella, his brother David for example painting a St. Lucy with the donor Fra Tommaso Cortesi kneeling below in abisso in 1494.<sup>191</sup> By the cultivation and reciprocity of such ties the friars ensured that their patronage gained satisfactory results.

No doubt the friars were most involved in projects most under their sacerdotal charge, such as the housing of the Corpus Christi, and many of the payments for a variety of matters seem to be on their volition alone, as they were in the 1350s during Fra Passavanti's campaign on the choir area.<sup>192</sup> At times the responsibility to maintain and equip the cappella maggiore with its altar may have been not only a general conventual one, but also a charge laid upon them by the complex interplay of patronage rights and obligations. The Vallombrosan monks at S. Trinita had to clean the Sassetti chapel



thoroughly in return for Francesco Sasseti's donations and a similar obligation of maintenance may have been the friars' part of an agreement with the Tornabuoni.<sup>193</sup> Petty cash payments and labour devoted to the work of God were exchanged with massive outlays of money and effort by the secular patrons. The friars controlled their sacred space, the patrons produced their prayer offerings for eternal salvation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ICONOGRAPHY: PART I

#### A: INTRODUCTION

To turn to certain iconographic themes in the most eminent chapel of the Tornaquinci at S.Maria Novella is to set their social and family contexts in a relationship with the chapel's function and meaning. The involvement of Giovanni's entire consorteria at S.Maria Novella is a necessary backdrop to this culmination of their patronage. Their pride as a collective entity, their patriotism and their dedication to the church resulted in a project which lauded their role as noble, generous donors and their consequent election to paradise. Their portraits and arme represented every member of the consorteria, past, present and future, offering prayers for salvation in this holy space.

The chapel's function is of more fundamental importance to an understanding of its iconography than is an isolated reading of exegetical texts. A prestigious focus in the church, its patrons could declare their honourable traditions and Giovanni Tornabuoni could proclaim his magnificence as a worthy benefactor. A site for the liturgical celebration of notable feast days and a choir for the daily cycle of offices, the chapel contains subjects and inscriptions mostly drawn from the missal. Classicism and portraits of humanists form part of the decorative vocabulary, as they were part of the consorteria's milieu, but their traditional and sincere association with religious practice is more integrated and notable in a chapel which does not contain the erudite, classical splendour of the Sassetti chapel. Ordinary habits, rituals and religious interpretations are most in evidence, such that both artist and patron, as well as those they address, could comprehend readily the references they chose to make.

Giovanni's testament envisaged the chapel as a burial domain for himself and his immediate ancestors; his consistent attention to

anniversary masses also cared for his kin's souls. Although these offices on the whole were celebrated elsewhere in the church, through portraits, arme and anticipated burial, the patron and his consorteria were to be forever present in the cappella maggiore, offering their prayers and patronage, close to the sacrament and the locus of Corpus Christi day and all other prestigious celebrations. The promise of salvation and paradise to a family worthy of such recognition is another theme treated by the chapel's decoration.

Careful detail in both the contract of 1485 and the will of 1490 establishes Giovanni's concern and desired control over the chapel's decoration, function and magnificence. To his judgement Ghirlandaio's drawings would be submitted, his was the final decision as to the inclusion of embellishments, additions and arme. His sense of propriety was to determine which "figures, buildings, castles, cities, villas, mountains, hills, plains, water, rocks, garments, animals, birds, and beasts, of whatever kind" would be depicted; he had decided that four Evangelists in the vault was the "right and proper" subject for that location, possibly as a critique of Sassetti's unusual choice of sibyls for his chapel. It was Giovanni's taste, religious sincerity and experience which most determined the chapel's significance, meaning and splendour.

But Giovanni was a man reasonably typical of his time, steeped in religious traditions, exposed to fashionable classicism, caring about his family's honour and heritage, a man whose vocal demands and whole make-up would have been comprehensible and clear to the artist. Ghirlandaio's close association with the Tornabuoni as well as his superb visualisation of Giovanni's desires suggest that he understood well his patron's plans. The Dominicans - with their civic and patriotic tradition, their acceptance of portraiture, their wish to encourage patronage "as an act of piety and love of God" and for "the enhancement of the said church and chapel" in the words of the contract, with their care for their own cappella maggiore - would have shown an interest in the chapel and would have been pleased with the ornate but solidly respectable product. When Warburg wrote of "die drei K, Kirche, Kaufmann, Künstler" as divided entities which only meet in S. Maria Novella as "an arbitrary mixture," he was positing an

alienation, a psychology of tension, more applicable to his surroundings than to those of Giovanni Tornabuoni.<sup>1</sup>

In these two chapters only certain iconographic themes will be selected and related to the history of the Tornaquinci, in particular to their piety and to the celebration of the family's honour, patronage and continuation. The chapel's total refurbishment after May 1486 into the 1490s entailed many media and subjects (fig. 5); this chapter will examine aspects of the lesser known works, the next will investigate the chapel's numerous portraits. By the time of Giovanni's death in 1497, splendid work in intarsia and embroidery was accompanied by scenes in fresco, stained glass and tempera, products in the last three media all coming from Ghirlandaio's workshop. Initially the Ghirlandaio brothers were engaged in September 1485 to fresco the chapel's walls only, painting the Virgin's cycle to our left, the Baptist's cycle to the right and Dominican saints on the window wall beneath the Virgin's Coronation.

By December 1490 when these frescoes were unveiled, the subjects precisely specified in the contract had altered somewhat because, by the winter of 1487/88, it had become possible to take advantage of the increased opportunities provided by the foreseen replacement of the existing altarpiece and/or stained glass (fig. 5).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Baptist's cycle changed little, introducing his Naming and consequently transferring his Entry into the Desert onto the window wall. As seen today from bottom right to the lunette, his cycle contains the Annunciation to Zacharias, the Visitation, his Birth, his Naming, his Preaching, the Baptism of Christ and the Feast of Herod (Pl. 4). The wall framing the window eventually also took the relocated Annunciation (difficult to depict in the large rectangular format originally allocated to it), as well as two Dominican narratives and the kneeling donor portraits of Giovanni and his dead wife. The Dominican saints once intended for this wall were instead placed on the altarpiece and in the stained glass.

It was the Virgin's cycle (Pl. 3) which underwent most reconsideration, perhaps in part due to Dominican interest in their

chief protectress and to Giovanni's interest in mankind's principal intercessor. From bottom left to the wall's apogee, the final cycle depicted the Expulsion of Joachim, not named in the contract, the Virgin's Birth, her Presentation in the Temple, also new, her Marriage, the Nativity with the Magi, the Massacre of the Innocents, again new and quite a rare inclusion in a cycle of Mary and lastly her Death. The contract had also stipulated the depiction of Christ disputing with the doctors in the temple, destined for exclusion, and the Virgin's Purification, which became the window's central scene (Pl. 30). The observation of Candlemas and the very theme of purification are important aspects of the chapel's function and significance.

#### B: PURIFICATION

The high altar is not connected explicitly with the feast day of Purification by the contemporaneous sacristy books, but this day deserves consideration because Giovanni Tornabuoni is given prominence, the festival was the friars' special recognition of outstanding patronage, and its iconography, which links much of the chapel's imagery, is also arguably related to the three "religious trends" treated in Chapter 2: an interest in the eucharist and Incarnation, the practice of an inward self-assessment, and an awareness of exemplary action. Rab Hatfield's transcriptions of the sacristy books have revealed its unexpected importance, yet this feast day has never been discussed by histories of the convent. Its appearance in the contract of 1485, its realisation in the chapel's window and the inclusion of a text from the day's Office in the Expulsion of Joachim (Pls 14, 30), further ensure that the Purification must be given a place in the chapel and convent.<sup>3</sup>

Every year from at least 1480 to 1498, and again in 1501, it was the convent which gave its leading patrons wax candles on February 2, seemingly as a sort of tithe, a sign of recognition, encouragement or gratitude.<sup>4</sup> On that day in 1480 the friars recorded

Alla festa della Purificatione ... consumamo la infraschritta  
cera, cioè;  
a frati libbre ventisei  
a tre dottori libbre nove

a due medici libbre quattro<sup>5</sup>  
a Giovanni Tornabuoni e a Francesco Sasseti libbre sei  
al chapitano de' fanti, a' chomendatori, a' donzelli,  
a' mazierì, a' famigli della Parte Guelfa, a' famigli,  
cioè tavolaccini di palagio, libbre dodici ...

The Cambio and Mercanzia also received wax and the total amount given, probably often for services rendered, totalled the high sum of 92 libbre 2 oncie. Giovanni and Francesco were granted the same amount of 6 libbre in 1481 and 1482, when the total came to just over 100 libbre. Both men again appear in 1483 while in 1484 they are joined by Filippo Strozzi, soon to be the legal patron of a transept chapel. The same three were given wax in the following year, but from 1486 Francesco Sasseti no longer appears, having transferred angrily to S. Trinita. The feast days of 1487 and 1488 honoured Giovanni and Filippo Strozzi again, while in 1489 they are joined by Lorenzo de' Medici, Leonardo Tornabuoni and Domenico Bartoli.<sup>6</sup>

From 1490 to 1494 the recipients are stated to be "as before," but the deaths of Lorenzo de' Medici, Leonardo Tornabuoni and Filippo Strozzi in these years required a more specific list in 1495. It appears that the honour was an hereditary one, for wax was given in that year to Giovanni Tornabuoni, Leonardo's son Piero Tornabuoni and the wife and son of Filippo Strozzi, Selvaggia and Alfonso. While the Strozzi and Giovanni were patrons of new and splendidly decorated chapels, Leonardo Tornabuoni and his heirs were part of the consorteria which held sway over the cappella maggiore. Leonardo was portrayed in the Zacharias fresco and his masses and bequests to the convent seemingly were sufficient to deserve the friars' recognition of these other Tornabuoni in the Purification ceremony too.<sup>7</sup> The situation is again "as before" in 1496 but in the Savonarolan years 1497 and 1498 no recipients are specified although the festival still took place. At least twice the spetiali who sold the friars their wax for the Corpus Christi fešta were also those from whom the Purification candles were purchased, the "candele bianche" supplied in 1501 being "per dare a' ciptadini per la candellaia, cioè a' Tornabuoni, agli Strozzi, a Agnolo de' Bardi e Domenico Bartholi."<sup>8</sup>

These records of the Purification fešta are amongst the very few which note its observance in Florence at the end of the Quattrocento.

We do know of the "chandelesse che ssi dettono pella purifichazione a' popolani di San Pancratio" recorded by that church's abbot in 1489, where Giovanni Tornabuoni topped the list of parishioners, surprisingly ahead of Bernardo di Giovanni Rucellai. A similar list at Cestello for 1492 included that church's more genuinely active patron, Lorenzo Tornabuoni. S. Pancrazio's hopeful flattery of Giovanni seems to indicate that he had made his mark as a magnificent patron very successfully. Lorenzo's recognition by the Cestello friars also appears within the context of the wooing of other potential patrons.<sup>9</sup>

Earlier in the century we have descriptions of the more public event which was one of the Virgin's four liturgical feasts celebrated by the Universal Church, indeed named by S. Antonino as one of the four "great and principal solemnities" along with Pentecost, the Assumption and Christmas.<sup>10</sup> Papal ceremonial conducted at S. Maria Novella early in the Quattrocento had recognised the feast day's importance. During the residence of Pope Martin V at S. Maria Novella in 1420, this important religious and political figure was at the centre of the day's celebration:

A' dì 2 di febraio, la mattina di Santa Maria candelaiia, disse Messa il detto Papa in detta chiesa [S. Maria Novella], e benedisse le candele nel Capitolo, e poi andò a processione per il chiostro e su per la piazza e in chiesa. Poi detta la Messa, andò in sulla piazza nel luogo deputato, e ivi gittò molte candele benedette al popolo, e poi diè la benedizione, e molta cera diè a' Cardinali e a' vescovi e prelati; e tutti parati insieme col Papa davano loro cierotti grossi secondo il beneficio: erano quasi tutti di cera bianca, e così ne teneva uno in mano il Papa grossissimo, e così li Cardinali.

Only Papal masses during Easter at the convent rivalled the public and ceremonial nature of this feast day.<sup>11</sup> As at the end of the century, it is the Church, in the form of its head in 1420, who gives candles to the populace and the Cardinals, before all the wax is then offered to the Lord. Eugenius IV's residence in 1435 saw a similar celebration at S. Maria Novella, although he gave candles not only to the "popolo" and Cardinals:

Venuto alla Messa diè le candele alli Signori,

cerotti di cera bianca d'una libra l'uno. [The Cardinals' "cerotti" were each 2 libbre]. Quando si disse la Messe ognuno accese i suoi torcetti, così al levare del Santissimo Sacramento.<sup>12</sup>

Earlier the city's government had decided that from 1416 the Signoria, Parte Guelfa and other chief institutions were to make an offering at the Cathedral on Purification day and that this was to be one of the city's chief festivals. A previous decision in 1412 had proposed that the festival "ad honorem et reverentiam beate Marie Virginis" was to occur on March 25, Annunciation day and beginning of the city's New Year, but the Servite church SS. Annunziata had objected to the competition, causing the change to the "die qua et suam virginitatem in templo representavit," February 2.<sup>13</sup> As late as the eighteenth century a singular and public celebration of the day occurred at the Cathedral, where a "festa solenne" for Purification on February 2 was held "in memoria che in tal giorno principio ad uftiziarsi detta Chiesa fabbricate di nuovo."<sup>14</sup>

The only other special observance of the Purification during the Quattrocento, of which we have notice, took place at the Cathedral in 1452 when "la celebratione delle Candele" was part of the welcome accorded Emperor Frederick III. The Cathedral's operai paid for the wax while Archbishop Antonino presented the candles to the foreigners and city officials. That the emperor was ceremonially escorted from S. Maria Novella for this occasion, along the very route taken by the Corpus Christi seven years later when the Cathedral also won from S. Maria Novella a chief share in that festival, must have been galling to the Dominicans, who were less successful than the Servites in their assertion of pre-eminence with regard to a particular feast day.<sup>15</sup> Although the convent received a notable offering from the Signoria for a festa" in 1477.<sup>16</sup> the friars may have determined to continue the Papal precedent established in 1420 and 1435 at S. Maria Novella, making their mark on the day of Purification, granting candles to the Mercanzia and other officials from at least 1480.

However the Order also had a long term commitment to the Virgin, who was its official protectress, particularly in her role as Ecclesia and Wisdom, because the Order was dedicated to the defence of the



Church and the pursuit of learning.<sup>17</sup> Hence her feast days, including the Purification, had long been given special observance at Dominican churches, where high indulgences for those days were also available.<sup>18</sup> Confraternities dedicated to the Virgin also paid particular attention to her four liturgical feasts, Annunciation, Birth, Purification and Assumption.<sup>19</sup> Precisely those four feasts form the subjects carved on the marble pulpit set up in S.Maria Novella by the Rucellai in the mid Quattrocento.<sup>20</sup> Vasari's remodelling of the nave chapels there did not follow any such programme, but the Annunciation and Purification were given a chapel each.<sup>21</sup> Within the Tornaquinci chapel itself the Annunciation, in fresco, and the Purification, in glass, appear on the window wall; the Virgin's Birth and Assumption are within her fresco cycle and a different moment of her Assumption marks the window's summit and was also depicted in Tornabuoni embroidery (fig. 5).

At S.Maria Novella at least three confraternities observed the Purification feast day in special ways. One of two annual elections in the Laudesi dedicated to her was meant to take place on the day "della Candelora", the other on St.Dominic's day.<sup>22</sup> These statutes of 1300 suggest that already this day was given a special place amongst the Virgin's feasts at S.Maria Novella. The statutes of the confraternity of the Innocenti, as approved by the friars in July 1487, denoted one of its duties as the offering of "una candela di cera bianca benedetta col segno fu dello innocentino" on the day of "sancta maria candelaria."<sup>23</sup> Ten years earlier the new capitoli of the S.Domenico confraternity, captained at the time by Giovanfrancesco Tornabuoni, contained several provisions about the Purification festa.<sup>24</sup> One of the privileges which could be withdrawn, if members were absent for six months or had not paid their dues, was "candele per la purificatione," while the honour "avere la candela per la purificatione e ogni altra preminentia" was granted to its office-holders. For the day itself the "proveditore abbia facto fare quel numero di candele crede abbino a bastare per quegli frategli verranno a pigliarle." Officials and members were given these after a mass "con ornata cerimonia" and furthermore, the "governatori" were to "dare le candele a chi venissi alla compagnia." The friars' celebration was an enlarged version of such a ceremony, with men like Giovanni Tornabuoni receiving the white wax as representatives of the

congregation. In turn, the candles were then burnt on the church's altars as offerings to the Virgin and her purified Church.

Giovanni, Francesco Sasseti, Filippo Strozzi and other notable patrons at S. Maria Novella received candles as an "altra preminencia" in the words of the S. Domenico confraternity in 1477. As exemplary benefactors, either actual or potential, they were being recognised and encouraged by the friars, just as were Giovanni in 1489 at S. Pancrazio and his son Lorenzo at Cestello in 1492. When a dispute over the Falconieri's patronage rights to SS. Annunziata's cappella maggiore were settled by Antonino in 1456, he ruled that the family's continued recognition was to include their receipt from the friars of a candle on the feast day of Purification. Other churches honoured their past benefactors with anniversary masses, sometimes, as at S. Croce, coupled with the donation of candles to the family's house on the day of the office.<sup>25</sup> But instead the Purification festival was chosen at times as the occasion for such recognition, presumably for its appropriate reference to donation and candles.

Political and financial motives for churches wishing to attract and/or recognise patronage were also joined with religious justifications. As put by Archbishop Visconti in Pisa in the thirteenth century, "we are morally instructed to take part today in the procession" and "we deserve to carry Christ [the candles] as Simeon did."<sup>26</sup> So participation not only recognised Giovanni Tornabuoni's benefaction but was also a moral obligation on his part to go to the temple, as did the Lord and Mary. Inner penitence or purification, we shall see in the writings of such men as S. Antonino, was as central to the ritual's meaning as was outward recognition. Religious life in the later Quattrocento could integrate spiritual practice with visual splendour, often in a way which was more pastoral and ordinary than exegetical or erudite.

For the Purification, Luke 2:22-38 is the only Biblical source, whence comes the Canticle of Simeon, "...mine eyes have seen thy salvation..., a light for revelation to the Gentiles...", sung as the antiphon in the day's liturgy.<sup>27</sup> The narrative relates how Christ was recognised as saviour by Simeon and Anna when presented to the temple

and His mother purified according to Jewish law. "Since her childbearing was not due to human contact," the Virgin's needless purification was often underplayed in visual and exegetical treatments in favour of Christ's presentation, though in a Florentine play of the Purification, written c 1465, Mary's submission to an inapplicable law was used to point to her humility and obedience.<sup>28</sup>

When Christ's Presentation is stressed, often being visually conflated with His circumcision of January 1, more emphasis is placed on the event as being, with the Adoration of the Magi, his first theophany and the first public recognition of his advent. This coming brought a new law, "the beginning of the Christian purification, which is the work of faith and purifies the heart."<sup>29</sup> That new law of salvation and mercy is explicitly stated by the Pseudo-Bonaventura when he and his illustrator placed Christ upon the temple's altar, thereby foreshadowing his role as sacrificial lamb. The Bible itself could be read as making the parallel, for Simeon "took him [Christ] up in his arms and blessed God" (Luke 2:28), just as the officiating priest later elevated the Host. The candles at the altar, lit "as at the elevation of the Sacred Sacrament" according to Corazza, also drew a visual, liturgical parallel between the two events. When Visconti said "we deserve to carry Christ as Simeon did," his congregation could have interpreted those words as a reference to their taking of the eucharist. Certainly the Florentine play presented Christ as a "new example and enlarged law," a "new sacrifice," recognised by John the Baptist with his famous "Ecco l'Agnel di Dio." Christ was the "incarnation of the divine Word," the King of Kings or "Saint of Saints in human condition."<sup>30</sup> The eucharistic Body of Christ, incarnated in human form, was one of the feast day's themes.

Christ brought the light of grace, being "like a refining fire" of purification, as the liturgy's epistle for that day, from Malachi 3, stated. The individual Christian's refinement and prayer to be deserving of God's eternal grace and mercy are themes which occur in the Missal, the Florentine play and the Golden Legend, the latter explaining the Virgin's submission to the old law as "an example of humility ... to teach us to purify ourselves." Antonino too stressed "preparation" for the Christian way in a pastoral letter on the

Purification. Charity and justice were to be practised with discretion or prudence, including the "frequent examination of your conscience, with contrition," employing "internal judgement" and "sacerdotal judgement by confession." "True penitence" would then cancel all sins, the eternal Emperor would reign supreme and "eternal glory" would be one's reward. Here both a Dominican stress on penitence, and a turning towards a more "internal" sense of religion in the later Quattrocento are evident in the theme of the Purification.<sup>31</sup> The offering of candles given by Christ's parents when they processed "around the altar"<sup>32</sup> were models for what Malachi 3:3 referred to as "right offerings to the Lord" to be made by the Jewish nation.

It is this degree of personal involvement - "You go with them", said the Pseudo-Bonaventura, "I am one of the sinners" said the introducing Angel in the Florentine play - this desire for salvation and purification, which was also expressed by the Christian congregation joining the offertory procession where they would pray that they too would "be presented to the Lord in the temple of glory."<sup>33</sup> They would follow the example set by Mary and Christ, Mary in her humility, obedience and giftgiving, Christ in the "singular example" of his "purgation" in the words of the Florentine play. That play and Antonino, both stressed the exemplary nature of the event which showed us the correct way, the choric angel concluding with the exhortation:

Divoti auditori, inteso avete  
il magno don della Madre di Dio,  
del quale per esempio portarete  
dover rimuovere ogni vizio rio.<sup>34</sup>

God's gift, in the form of light-giving and pure, spotless candles distributed by the Church, like those Mary had offered in the Temple, signified the share everyone had in the "light of Thy grace."<sup>35</sup> Other than the priest's bearded assistant whose gesture of prayer explicitly adores the revealed saviour, only one attendant in Ghirlandai's window at S.Maria Novella has no halo (Pl. 30). This youth, standing at the extreme left foreground, is richly dressed in purple, wearing the violet vestments used in the Purification procession which referred to its original expiatory character. This

allusion to the actual ritual is combined with an exhortatory gesture, for he points across to the Child rather like an Albertian commentator or choric Angel who mediates between viewer and viewed. He is an idealised model to be followed by the congregation.<sup>36</sup>

Two further themes of the Purification have particular bearing on the Tornaquinci chapel. The first emphasises the Temple of Jerusalem as a figure for both the Universal Church and the Virgin. In the Purification Mary is both an exemplar and a means, not only humble in her obedience but also great in her role as tabernacle of the Lord who presents the saviour to mankind. Her voluntary entry and giftgiving may well be paralleled by the Church's gift of candles during the Purification ritual: certainly the candles could be viewed as a symbol of Christ<sup>37</sup> and Mary was regarded universally as a symbol for Ecclesia. After the procession, the mass began with the Psalm's words "O God, we have received your mercy in the midst of your temple:"<sup>38</sup> the Church was the means of salvation and purification, the site of communal brotherhood in Christ. During the actual procession the congregation sang "Prepare thy sacred chamber [thalamum tuum], Zion, and suffer Mary, who is the gate of heaven, to receive Christ the King." Appearing also as an inscription in an Annunciation by Raffaellino del Garbo, these words combine much symbolism, referring to the Virgin's womb and to her role as the tabernacle or Ecclesia receiving Christ and the congregation's offering.<sup>39</sup>

A patron's prayer will be rewarded with mercy, the advent of the new law assured "that all will enter into the Temple of Heaven."<sup>40</sup> Like an anniversary mass or any prayers offered up, the Tornaquinci chapel was an "enhancement" of the temple which would act as a perpetual offering to seek salvation. "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee" (Ps 141:2), an inscription in the Zacharias fresco derived from the Offertory Rite, is particularly explicit as to the patron's donation and hopes.<sup>41</sup> Not only that narrative but the Expulsion of Joachim opposite, each initiating a cycle and closest to the viewer, were set in temples (Pls 2, 14). Mary's entrance into the Temple as a young virgin to lead a pure and holy life, a sort of prefiguration of her later Purification, is above Joachim's Expulsion. Her Marriage occurs in the Temple; the Magi witness Christ's advent

before the ruined, supplanted temple of the old law (Pls 3, 20).<sup>42</sup> Indeed her entire cycle in a Dominican church dedicated to S. Maria Novella in itself would be seen readily by the Quattrocento viewer as an expected but resonant reference to Ecclesia. The Founding of S. Maria Maggiore in glass below the Purification (Pl. 31) also refers to the establishment and patronage of the Church. Throughout the chapel, the temple is a reference to S. Maria Novella and Tornaquinci patronage of it; to the Church universal on earth; and to the "temple of glory" where eternal mercy will be a patron's reward.<sup>43</sup>

The Virgin's cycle in the chapel is opened by the Expulsion of Joachim (Pl. 14), for which event there was no office or feast day, and the inscription chosen for the temple's entablature comes precisely from the mass for Purification, a further indication of its importance to the chapel's iconography. From Malachi 3:1, it refers not to an expulsion, but to its future annulment in a prophecy of grace: "The Lord will suddenly come to his temple." Joachim's rejected sacrifice is compared implicitly with Malachi's "right offerings" which will be accepted soon from a purified nation. Antonino chose just this passage to set his theme for a letter on Purification where the "imperial seat" of eternal judgement and justice will be occupied by the "King of Kings" who will receive the purified into "eternal glory."<sup>44</sup> It is as the Universal Church and thalamum tuum, bearer of salvation, that the temple appears in the Tornabuoni window, above a scene showing the foundation of a church and beneath the Virgin's Assumption into the "Temple of Heaven" (Pl. 30). Above the window the fresco of the Virgin's Coronation in the Court of Paradise is the culmination of her cycle, while the altarpiece shows her triumphant in a state of "eternal glory" (Pls 23, 38).

Another theme of the Purification is what Simeon's canticle called "the light of revelation." The Pseudo-Bonaventura said of Simeon that "he immediately recognised Him by the spirit of prophecy and hurriedly knelt to adore Him ... and he prophesied His Passion. Anna the prophetess came and also adored Him and spoke of Him in the same manner." The Florentine play on the Purification included 21 prophets and 3 sibyls who proclaim the fulfilment of the Old

Testament's promise and the advent of the new law.<sup>45</sup> This theme of prophecy and revelation entered the liturgy, for its epistle from Malachi 3 begins "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple..." Inscriptions in paintings of the Purification by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Fra Angelico cite this passage, although neither artist carried the obvious reference to St. John the Baptist into their visualisation.<sup>46</sup>

Only the designer of the Tornabuoni window, Domenico Ghirlandaio, it could be argued, refers to the Baptist's fulfilled prophecy by including a young haloed boy, dressed in red, who stands between the Virgin and the Christ Child (Pl. 30). Virtually unique in the iconography of the Purification, this additional saint can only be the young Baptist, supposed cousin of Christ, just a little older than "he who is coming after me ... mightier than I."<sup>47</sup> Occasionally a representation of the subject had shown one or more boys in attendance upon the priest and Mantegna's Presentation and Circumcision contains a very young boy, in red but without a halo, who has been identified sometimes as the Baptist.<sup>48</sup> But I know of only two depictions of the Purification before Ghirlandaio's which include extraneous saints, one by Fra Angelico in a friar's cell at S. Marco where St. Peter Martyr acts as a witness guiding the Dominican viewer in contemplation. Interestingly, the other example comes from Filippo Lippi's shop, the very bottega recently suggested as Ghirlandaio's first training ground. While no Baptist appears in that painting either, the presence of other saints makes these the only sure precedents for Ghirlandaio's innovation.<sup>49</sup>

The Baptist's inclusion in the Purification of the Tornabuoni window could be explained by reference to Malachi's text in the liturgy for that feast day and perhaps too by the tradition of religious drama. As prophet John, like Simeon and Anna, was amongst the first to recognise the Saviour and see His divinity revealed. These figures also foretold the Passion which heralded the eucharistic salvation and life everlasting for all mankind. But St. John was not only the last of the prophets: he was also a key harbinger of the new law sub gratia, being the man who instituted the sacrament of baptism

and the first born of the Christian saints. Indeed, Gregorio Dati said that St. John the Baptist was the patron saint of Florence because he had been born sanctified and the Golden Legend agreed, for John was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb," witnessing Christ's advent before birth by leaping "for joy" in the womb when the pregnant Virgin visited Elizabeth (Pl. 8). After death he was to continue his mission, being the one who "announced the coming of Christ to the souls in Limbo."<sup>50</sup>

Only the Virgin had also been born purified and this may further explain his presence by her side in the window. John was a mere six months old when Christ was born, so his age has been considerably inflated in the window's design. Nevertheless, a literary tradition came close to placing St. John at Christ's birth, in that an influential text from the early Trecento, and the Pseudo-Bonaventura, both state that Christ in his crib was visited by John.<sup>51</sup> While only one Greek manuscript visually associated the Baptist with Simeon and Anna, as the earliest prophets to recognise Christ, textually the Ordo Prophetarum, from which derives the Florentine play on the Purification, always included John and Simeon in the ranks of the prophets who foretold the Incarnation.<sup>52</sup> A poem written by Lucrezia Tornabuoni had placed the Baptist and Simeon in the same "eterno coro." Lucrezia, and before her the Dominican Giovanni Dominici, gave textual impetus to a Florentine interest in the youthful Baptist, which came to visual fruition in the work of Lippi and the artists of the later Quattrocento who frequently represented a young John adoring the newborn babe.<sup>53</sup> In these literary and visual representations, as in Ghirlandaio's portrayal of the Baptist throughout the Tornabuoni chapel, patriotism or civic idealisation was likely to play a part in the heroicization of Florence's patron saint.

One of the most common legends chosen by the Florentines was a meeting between Christ and John in the desert, the very scene which illuminates the opening initial of Lucrezia's poem on the Baptist.<sup>54</sup> Another manifestation of the interest in John's legendary youth was the popular scene of The Baptist entering the Desert, stipulated in Giovanni Tornabuoni's contract with Ghirlandaio in 1485 and finally frescoed on the window wall (fig. 5). Although at right angles to the



main cycle of his life, the window wall shows the Baptist dressed in red and appropriately rushing away from his Birth and Naming in fresco to enter the next, mystical stage of his life, represented here in glass where he again wears red. His eagerness is leading him precisely towards a meeting with Christ and the Virgin in the Temple of Jerusalem, since the Purification is also on the same level, if in a different medium, as this Desert scene. That the union is in the immediate future for the young saint in the fresco, rather than the timeless present, is suggested visually by his angled posture, the path's perspective and the fall of his shadow, all of which imply that the window scene is ahead and in front of his journey rather than parallel to it.

Two other narratives in the chapel are also especially relevant to the themes stated by the Purification. Firstly, John's special pre-natal recognition of the new grace to come at the Visitation is shown (Pl. 8), and on the wall treating his life rather than in its more usual place as part of the Virgin's cycle. Secondly, the Massacre of the Innocents (Pl. 21) combines purification with John's special sacrament of baptism, because, according to the Golden Legend, "their martyrdom conferred baptismal innocence upon them; in other words, it purified them of original sin."<sup>55</sup> Just such a naked babe, like a new-born soul, sits under the Baptist's plinth as he preaches on the opposite wall, while unclothed, adult neophytes await their baptism in the adjacent scene (Pl. 4). The Innocenti were the first martyrs, and two of their fellows appear in the window on either side of the Purification (Pl. 33). St. John the Baptist holds his cruciform staff and proclaims on the left, while the proto-martyr S. Lorenzo on the window's right holds his grill implacably and wears green robes, signifying hope and purity, rather than the usual blood-red clothes of martyrdom.<sup>56</sup> The first Dominican martyr, St. Peter Martyr, is also shown in one of the frescoes flanking the window and, lastly, the altarpiece contains the two early deacons and proto-martyrs, S. Lorenzo and S. Stefano, as well as, again, St. Peter Martyr and St. John the Baptist. As an "exemplar" and "the crown of the martyrs," S. Stefano was linked explicitly with the Innocents by Voragine, while his inscription on the altarpiece stressed his triumph over death.<sup>57</sup>

The spilling of blood at the Crucifixion, or through martyrdom, washed away sins and led to purification and redemption. So too baptism cleansed and instituted a spiritual rebirth. The altarpiece presents the final purification most succinctly, with St. Michael, guardian of souls and of the Heavenly host, sword over his shoulder, gazing up at the glorified Virgin, ready to conduct the souls of the elect to the Beatific Vision and the Heavenly Jerusalem (Pl. 38).<sup>58</sup> Its reverse, opposite the window's light, shows the ultimate salvation, Christ's resurrection to eternal life (Pl. 39), re-enacted at this very altar at every mass and dear to the Dominicans who played a special part in the Corpus Christi feast day. The babes who were the first martyrs, St. John the baptiser, last prophet and first saint, Mary the first born purified, Christ the only saviour, all present the special state sub gratia in the chapel of a family which thought it would be granted representative burial there, and knew most certainly that they would be visually and eternally commemorated there. For them eternal salvation was attainable by means of such glorious patronage and prayer offerings.

C: THE 'FOUNDING OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE'

The snowfall depicted in the lowest section of the window, where we see the Founding of S. Maria Maggiore or the Madonna del Neve (Pl. 31), also picks up the idea of purification, in that the "dealbando nive candidissima," which miraculously marked the site of the church, had inevitable connotations of innocence and purity. Furthermore, the Papal procession for the Purification ended at S. Maria Maggiore.<sup>59</sup> But the story's main thrust reinforces another theme of the chapel more strongly, that is, the establishment of the Church, shown here in its temporal and physical aspect. That the Florentine Cathedral had begun its long construction on the feast day of Purification was no accident. A church dedicated to the Virgin would begin to be built on the day she entered the Temple, with all their mutual associations as a sacred chamber and Ecclesia. As the early donors of land to the first Dominican church in Florence, the Tornaquinci no doubt saw the Madonna del Neve as an especially appropriate scene for their chapel.

S. Maria Maggiore was not only one of the earliest churches

dedicated to the Virgin, but its site in Rome had been chosen by her, for, according to a very ancient legend, a snowfall on 5 August 352 had fulfilled a dream of the patriarch Giovanni, causing him to build a church on the very spot after its plan had been delineated in the snow by the Pope who shared his dream.<sup>60</sup> An unusual subject, with more currency in Rome and Siena, only three or four examples seem to survive from Florentine artists of the Quattrocento.<sup>61</sup> Of these, one was an altarpiece painted by Masolino and Masaccio for the Colonna chapel dedicated to the Baptist in S. Maria Maggiore itself. According to Vasari, Emperor Sigismund was represented near Pope Martin V in that work, but no sure identification of the secular leader has yet been made because attributes are lacking.<sup>62</sup>

Of all the examples from any region or period, Ghirlandaio's design for the window is the only one that has an explicit portrayal of an Emperor, as well as the Pope, at the event. No doubt the same meaning lay behind both Masolino's work and Ghirlandaio's, the foundation of the Universal Church, although if a sense of the Church restored physically and morally after the Schism informed the earlier painting, at the end of the century any sense of restoration suggested by Ghirlandaio's design presumably referred instead to the reconciliation between Florence and the Papacy after the Pazzi wars.<sup>63</sup> The more contemporaneous triumph of that policy by way of Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici's achieving a Cardinalate may also find its place behind the window's design. Since the role given to Emperor Sigismund in restoring the post-Schism Church has been seen as the reason for his possible inclusion in Masolino's work, Ghirlandaio's depiction, at a quite different historical moment, of a prominent Emperor wearing his imperial crown needs explanation. In part, it may be a reference to the Virgin's regal glory, such that the Florentine confraternity dedicated to the Madonna del Neve called her their "imperadrice."<sup>64</sup> More probably, the bearded, venerable and generalised portrayal of an Emperor stands for the secular world's collaboration with the Church to build an era of peace and purity, similar to the significance of Emperor and Pope being depicted together in S. Maria Novella's capitolo (Pl. 80).<sup>65</sup>

Ghirlandaio also innovated with the backdrop, showing a solid

palace on one side, more closed in than the usual architectural setting, but still secular and in the latest style (Pl. 31).<sup>66</sup> The background of the Emperor's retinue is unique, however, in showing what can only be another church dedicated to the Virgin: Brunelleschi's cupola, covered in terracotta tiles and topped by its lantern with gilded sphere. So the confluence of religious and secular is also emphasised by the architectural motifs, as it is by the presence of the two rulers. In March 1492 Lorenzo de' Medici put this idea in its political context, from his point of view, advising his Cardinal son "to aid the city and our house, for the city being united to the Church you will represent the solid chain, and our house is part of the city." That letter also called Rome a "sink of all iniquities" since Ghirlandaio and his contemporaries regarded their city as the "altra Roma novella."<sup>67</sup> Even Christian events of history, such as the snowfall on the Esquiline hill, could be transferred visually to the more honourable soil of the Florentine patria, just as was done by Ghirlandaio with the Confirmation of the Rule and the Resurrection of a Child by St. Francis in the Sassetti chapel (Pl. 62). Local legend dating at least from Villani's time encouraged such a transferral since it claimed that Florence's own S.Maria Maggiore was built, "come a Roma," during the city's reconstruction and it was also believed to have been constructed by a Pope. The Baptist's presence at the Purification may also have intended a patriotic reference, for there the city was present in the Temple of Jerusalem through her chief "advocato." In both cases any Florentine reference is making of that city a remaking of another city, the exemplary site of a new Temple or New Jerusalem.<sup>68</sup>

Ghirlandaio depicted the Emperor as a confident sage-like figure who points imperiously to the church's outline in the snow (Pl. 31). An index finger clearly indicating the ordained site was a common motif in other depictions of the legend, usually a statement made by the Pope or his followers, though sometimes made by the patriarch Giovanni.<sup>69</sup> The "wealth, health and peace" of an ideal city, proclaimed in the chapel's dedication inscription, is thus further highlighted by the manner in which even a Pope appears to agree with the perfectly Christian and powerful wishes of a secular ruler who probably represents the Florentine link in the "chain." It is

possible too that the emperor symbolises Charlemagne, supposed rebuilder of Florence according to the old tradition voiced by Villani, the Dominican poet Fra Domenico Corella and the Tornaquinci recorder of the Trecento, and which still found advocates in such later humanists as Landino or in Bartolomeo Scala's Historia Florentinorum written in the 1490s.<sup>70</sup> Ghirlandaio knew the new "evidence" discovered by Poliziano for Florence having been built by Augustus, because this joyous idea affected his work in the Sassetti chapel.<sup>71</sup> No matter whom this Emperor represented, his presence as the builder of Florence gives further point to the idea of the "altra Roma" meaning of the design and to the notion that Florence was an ideal polis, a New Jerusalem or City of God in its earthly form.

This rare scene, which in liturgical terms celebrates the consecration of a major Mariological church, may also allude to the donation of the original "chiesetta" and land to the Dominicans by the Tornaquinci, a generous act of patronage already assuming vague but aggrandised dimensions at this time when Giovanni Tornabuoni had successfully asserted the claims of his consorteria to the chapel. The sixteenth century representation in the convent's cloister of that donation seems to have followed a visual pattern similar to that of the Neve scene: the Dominican prior and the Tornabuoni bishop who was the fresco's patron were depicted against an architectural backdrop.<sup>72</sup> But it may be that Giovanni Tornabuoni also chose the Neve scene as a Roman miracle involving another Giovanni, familiar to him after his years in that city and applicable in a remade form to his own Florentine magnificence. Whether referring to an ancient family action or to Giovanni's beneficent re-modelling of that heritage, or more probably to both, the scene makes an explicit and appropriate reference to patronage and to an harmony between secular and religious worlds guided by the Virgin's intercession.

We are in a sense presented with the founding of S.Maria Novella and the Dominicans had some reason too for associating themselves with the legend of the snow. Until the late Cinquecento, the feast day of the Madonna del Neve fell on the same day in August as St.Dominic's. The miracle's association with the Assumption was also pertinent to this Florentine chapel dedicated to that event in the city's chief

Mariological church.<sup>73</sup> More particularly, the same Pope who commissioned Masolino's altarpiece, Martin V, had consecrated "la chiesa e l'altare maggiore" of S.Maria Novella on 1 September 1420.<sup>74</sup> It was this date, rather than the day of St.Luke that had seen the foundation stone laid for the new church on 18 October 1279, which thereafter was celebrated annually by the Florentine friars, whose sacristy books record a small but regular income from offerings at the high altar for this anniversary. The 203 libbre of "torchi" bought by Giovanni Tornabuoni on 1 September 1486 probably commemorated the consecration on the very day which also witnessed his inauguration as captain of the confraternity of St. Peter Martyr.<sup>75</sup> Because the Madonna del Neve was honoured on the same day as their founder, and since they too commemorated the "founding" or consecration and re-making of their church, the friars could have been pleased to have this scene commemorating Ecclesia and a miracle of the Virgin's near the very altar where they celebrated both days.

The Dominicans probably had a hand in devising the window's programme, since it carries many inter-leaved significances dear to a preacher's rhetorical style and makes many references to saints or subjects they venerated.<sup>76</sup> The Purification, for instance, not only illuminates the Neve scene, but in turn is amplified by it. The dedication ritual for any church treated the building as an image of the Celestial City and writers such as St. Augustine and Abbot Suger had long since associated manual labour and patronage with the "spiritual process of edification." God's "reward" for "those who build for Him" would be to "build them, as living stones, into his spiritual edifice," the united corpo of the Church. The Dominican writer of the Golden Legend had described the procedure for a consecration of a church such as was to be closely adopted by Martin V at S.Maria Novella in 1420. Among the "molte cerimonie" he performed, an eye witness reported that the Pope was always throwing "acqua benedetta intorno nelle mura." The Golden Legend explained the purpose of this as "to drive out the Devil ... to purify the Church ... to remove every malediction."<sup>77</sup>

Jacopo Voragine then echoed St. Augustine, turning to "the consecration or dedication of the spiritual temple, which is

ourselves, namely the congregation of all the faithful, built up of living and polished stones."<sup>78</sup> In 1477 the confraternity of St. Dominic, which had recently built its new oratory at S. Maria Novella and whose captain then was Giovanfrancesco Tornabuoni, referred in its capitoli to this same idea. Chapter 3 on the "governatori" begins with the Biblical quotation "Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." Having set up a parallel between the government of the city, the confraternity and the Church, the statutes go on to say that if the "divoti fratelli" did not follow God "invano abbiamo ... murato questo nostro divoto luogo." Ostensibly referring to their new oratory, the passage in fact is a volgare rendition of the preceding passage in the cited psalm: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain."<sup>79</sup>

Giovanni Nesi's Easter sermon of 1476 to another confraternity, significantly after their washing ritual, also applied the temple metaphor to personal purification. He exhorts his young brothers to practice humility, confession, contrition and flagellation in a manner even more explicit and penitential than Antonino's earlier letter on the Purification. Nesi urges the listeners "to humiliate yourselves and to follow His example," to "search your conscience" so that "you shall be a temple of God, which, through His grace together with your good works you shall keep clean and purged."<sup>80</sup> The Neve scene bears echoes of the purification of the entire edifice, while above in the actual Purification we have a reference to the "consecration" of the individual building blocks: on both a personal and general level the City of God can be made manifest.

#### D: THE VIRGIN'S TRIUMPH

In the top register of the window's central lancet Mary is assumed into "the Temple of Heaven," as will be any other purified soul (Pl. 30). Above this, the frescoed lunette depicts her Coronation (Pl. 23), worshipped by a host of saints "cum gloria et seu representatione glorie Paradisi" as the contract stipulated, or reflecting Giovanni's testamentary sentiment when he recommended "animam suam humiliter et devote" to "Deo ac beate Marie semper

virgini et universe curie triumphanti paradisi."<sup>81</sup> Again she is shown in eternal, venerated triumph at the other extremity of the chapel's space under an "arco" on the front panel of the altarpiece, inaccurately called an Assumption by Biliotti (Pls 38, 40). Furthermore, the early church building on the Florentine site was dedicated to the Virgin's Assumption and regular offerings were made at the high altar on this feast day.<sup>82</sup> The legend of doubting Thomas, who received her girdle as tangible proof of her purity, is also depicted in the window's Assumption (Pl. 30).<sup>83</sup> In fact the Assumption is the only narrative to be repeated more than once in the chapel, being also on embroidery and frescoed in the lunette at the conclusion of the Virgin's cycle as the glorious aftermath of her obsequies (Pl. 22). Bodily assumed into eternal glory, the Virgin signifies the promised resurrection of the flesh available to all mankind.<sup>84</sup>

Triumph, over death and as a celebration of eternal glory, is visually referred to throughout the chapel by the repetition of the Triumphal Arch form, most noticeable in the Massacre of the Innocents, the Annunciation to Zacharias and with a side view of another Arch joining that narrative to the adjacent Visitation (Pls 2, 8, 21). The one recurring compositional pattern in most scenes is for a centralised narrative to occur under a triple arch, whereas in the off-centre Birth of Mary and Presentation of the Virgin a barrel vaulted corridor or a classicised arcade appear on the left (Pls 3, 4). The Virgin's role as the Porta Coeli was appropriately signified by gateways and arches, while the Triumphal Arch also suggests the glory of martyrdom and the triumph of Christianity over paganism at the advent of the new law. In the Zacharias arch the inscription's celebration of "victories" and "peace" further commemorates any Triumphal Arch's proclamation of victory and peace after battle. It is the Arch of Constantine, first Christian Emperor, which is chosen as the source for the Zacharias and Innocents arches, while the relief scenes are also derived from Roman remains to make a programmatic reference to imperial might and Militis Dei.<sup>85</sup>

E: SAINTS



The two glass bays either side of the Neve scene contain the chief Dominican saints who form the literal base to the Church and her mission: St. Dominic and St. Thomas Aquinas (Pls 32, 33). The Order's founder holds his usual attribute, the lily of purity, particularly apposite in the context of this window. Aquinas was praised by the friar from S. Maria Novella, Fra Giovanni Caroli (who translated his Corpus Christi mass), as "l'angelico doctore e lume della chiesa di dio."<sup>86</sup> This "lume," the burning light of suprahuman wisdom, is very much the key note of his portrayal in the window, just as it is in the stained glass of the old Strozzi chapel down one end of the transept. Stars of wisdom are liberally scattered all over his cloak, just like the cope "facto a stelle" donated by Giovanni Tornabuoni, and Aquinas holds a sun, whose rays fiercely illuminate the model of a church held in his other hand, which may well represent S. Maria Novella itself.<sup>87</sup>

It was by learning that the Dominicans sought to defend and protect their Church, so the mural adjacent to but above St. Dominic depicts heathens being converted by him when he most aptly threw books into a fire, where they did not burn.<sup>88</sup> In the corresponding position on the wall's other side, next to the stained glass representation of the converted soldier St. Paul, we see another instance of the early Dominicans' zeal and crusading spirit (fig. 5). St. Peter Martyr, fiery preacher and fighter of heresy, is being killed by an assassin's sword, faithful to the last because he writes the Credo with his blood as he falls. A rare triple crown of martyrdom instantly rises above him, an honour awarded to this first martyr of the Order by his fellow friars from a convent where he had done so much to establish their popularity and strength.<sup>89</sup> St. Peter Martyr re-appears on the altarpiece with an apt address: "Propagande fidei desiderio vulnera ista gero" while in the central panel of the altarpiece (Pl. 38), facing the nave, St. Dominic kneels before the Virgin in Glory and points to his exhortative text: "Disciplinam et sapientiam docuit bos [vos] Beatus Dominicus."<sup>90</sup>

St. John the Baptist and S. Lorenzo stand in the next side registers of the glass while at the summit we have Sts. Peter and Paul, each in a domed and pedimented niche (Pls 1, 33). The architectural framework of these two side lancets, whereby each register appears as

a building block of the column, begun at the base by Dominicans and culminating in miniature temples or tabernacles, reinforces the image of the Church supported by her individual "polished stones." Peter and Paul are the original defenders and disciples of the Church, appearing here with their traditional attributes, Peter's keys to the Church and to the Gate of Heaven, Paul with his sword and one of his epistles open to the congregation. These two had appeared to St. Dominic in a dream, heartening him with a vision of how his Order would expand throughout the world, militantly establishing and supporting the Church with the aid of the book and staff.<sup>91</sup> Dominican saints also figure prominently on the altarpiece, being, besides St. Dominic and St. Peter Martyr, their fellows St. Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent Ferrer and S. Antonino, all five of whom were originally planned for the window wall, along with Aquinas, according to the contract of 1485 (fig. 5). Antonino was not yet canonised, but he had been a revered Archbishop of Florence and friend of the Tornabuoni, so that these associations as well as his scholarly writings and pastoral care grant him a place on the altarpiece. His inscription reads "Splendor vite et doctrine prestantia Antonino inter sanctos contulere sortem" and the book he holds has a reading from the breviary which refers to charitable works and mercy.<sup>92</sup>

#### F: A PATRON'S PRAYER

The care with which Giovanni Tornabuoni laid out his plans for the chapel in his will of March 1490 suggests that he paid personal attention to the window which once bore the date 1491. It may not be a co-incidence that he signed his contract with the Ghirlandaio brothers on September 1, the sixty-fifth anniversary of S. Maria Novella's consecration. Giovanni may have been aware too that the builder of S. Maria Maggiore was another John and that one of his city's rare Neve scenes was presented in the medium of stained glass, at Or San Michele (Pl. 84). Furthermore, that glass, and a fresco at Pistoia, both from the Trecento, show a middle-aged married couple kneeling below the patriarch Giovanni, adoring the miracle.<sup>93</sup> In the Tornaquinci chapel Giovanni and his dead wife kneel eternally either side of the window (Pls 24, 25), using the same variation in prayer gestures as occurs at Or San Michele, the male with arms crossed on

his chest, the woman to the right with her hands folded together. The Tornabuoni couple kneel in paradisaical settings on the Neve level, once opposite the reverse of the altarpiece where the Resurrection showed mankind's eucharistic and eternal salvation (Pl. 39). They adore the whole miracle of Christianity and pray that they, as representatives of the consorteria, will be accepted as purified souls who have greatly contributed to the church's "foundation" and decoration.

The name saints of Giovanni and his son, the Baptist and S.Lorenzo, are present in the altarpiece, embroidery, window and choir stalls (fig. 5). In the last two cases the Baptist stands on the side opposite his fresco cycle, so that his presence permeates the entire sacred space. In the altarpiece both St.John the Baptist, and a saint always identified as St.John the Evangelist, are below the Virgin in Glory (Pl. 38) and S.Lorenzo stands in a side niche. The heraldic colours of the Tornaquinci consorteria (and hence of all its branches) were green and gold, the two colours most evident in the glass pictures of the patron saints of the father and son (Pl. 33). In the border of each of the window's central scenes (Pl. 31), in the intarsia version of S.Lorenzo (Pl. 35), all along the stalls' frieze (Pls 36, 37), throughout the fresco borders (Pls 3, 4), in the apse and priest's garment in the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pl. 2) and on the dresses of Giovanna in the Visitation and Lodovica (Pls 10, 18), the particular Tornabuoni device of a triangle or triple diamond surrounded by flames also appears. The arme of the consorteria and its branches were affixed to the entrance arch, while on the interior the Tornabuoni arme filled the window's base (Pl. 32), were affixed to the altarpiece's predella and were shown, in the only use of tinted wood, on the choir stalls several times (Pl. 36).<sup>94</sup> The consorteria's arme and portraits recognised their legal patronage rights and it is the history and tradition of Giovanni's entire family network which enabled his total possession and redecoration of the space, as well as inspiring the chapel's reference to donation. The consorteria, and Giovanni as its magnificent representative, the only man portrayed more than once there, are eternally present as founders and benefactors, purified members of the congregation and worthy of election to paradise.

Giovanni had another patron saint, St. Thomas the apostle, because he was born the day after that feast day which fell on December 21; notably December 22 was the day chosen for the frescoes' unveiling in 1490.<sup>95</sup> Hence the apocryphal but popular legend of doubting Thomas' receiving the girdle during the Virgin's Assumption is presented at the window's peak (Pl. 30), an episode which might also be included for its promise of fertility to married couples.<sup>96</sup> Thomas is perhaps the young saint in green, gold and blue kneeling again below the Virgin on the altarpiece (Pl. 38).<sup>97</sup> After Giovanni Tornabuoni signed his contract with Ghirlandaio on 1 September 1485, the usual masses for his wife, morti and mother were offered by him, but on 21 December that year he also paid for a mass on St. Thomas' day, as he did again when the frescoes were completed, in 1491 and 1493-95. Giovanni's personal anniversary mass after his death in April was celebrated on Thomas' feast day instead, as had been arranged by Giovanni in 1487 when he established the chapel's dowry.<sup>98</sup> The liturgy for St. Thomas' festa would have been a further comfort to Giovanni, especially at the unveiling ceremony. Both the antiphon at vespers and the gospel on the day delivered Christ's words to Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29), similar to Simeon's canticle "mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:30), after which he was able to "depart in peace" and "see death."

The Epistle for St. Thomas's feast day, from Ephesians 2:19-22, included words dear to any builder of villas and palaces, let alone to the descendants of a family which had donated land to the Church. The words also praise beliefs which recur throughout the chapel, the responsibility of each member of the congregation, the Corpus Christi mysticum, to examine and purify his or her inner life as a contribution to Ecclesia:

you are fellow citizens with the saints and members  
of the household of God, built upon the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself  
being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure  
is joined together and grows into a holy temple  
in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it  
for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Nor was Giovanni's devotion idiosyncratic, since by the eighteenth century at least the Assumption day saw a special devotion

"all'Oratorio de' Tornaquinci." The Assumption also appeared in the embroidered banda designed by Botticelli for Giovanni, along with the purifying ritual of Baptism and another scene which, like the Neve miracle or S. Antonino's book, stressed glorious patronage, S. Lorenzo distributing alms.<sup>99</sup> In sum, the chapel's window combined civic, Dominican and theological themes, often echoed by other media, to present a Church and an era sub gratia founded with the aid of the Tornaquinci who hoped for their purification and eternal salvation.

The entire chapel can be read as a prayer by its patrons for everlasting salvation. This and other interlocking, recurring, themes can be discerned also in the choir stalls. As Vasari noted, the intarsia backs included "un San Giovanni Battista ed un San Lorenzo bellissimi" (Pls 34, 35).<sup>100</sup> These name saints of Giovanni Tornabuoni and his son are close to Botticelli's style and one wonders whether this painter of the Tornabuoni villa (Pls 50-53) not only designed the chapel's embroideries but also these two figures. S. Lorenzo (Pl. 35) has the familiar sinuous sway, forward knee, contrapposto hips and protruding stomach of a Botticelli figure. This saint and martyr stands comfortably in a solid space capped by a barrel-vault, looking towards the nave, drawing in the congregation's spiritual devotion since he is placed at the right hand entrance to the chapel.

In the same placement on the chapel's other side, and again directed towards the nave, is a very ascetic Baptist (Pl. 34), whose harrowed face, contorted pose and thoughtful introspection give a superb rendition of deep spirituality, captured also by Donatello's Magdalen or Botticelli's Baptist in the St. Barnabas altarpiece. His body arches towards the fountain of life, a baptismal font found in the stony desert, while behind him cut trees sprout again, one in particular full of fresh foliage. The panel illustrates John as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," proclaiming "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When baptising in the desert he preached "Bear fruit that befits repentance ...; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Earlier, in fresco, John entered the desert along a stony path,

perhaps of righteousness or of those future children of God, and much vegetation there grows in a paradise. Later, as he preached in the fresco cycle (Pl. 4), a naked child sat in front of the Baptist's "monticello," a reborn, regenerated soul raised up "from these stones."<sup>101</sup>

The re-sprouting branch recurs in the Visitation fresco, where a budding fig tree grows from the stony ground of city walls (Pl. 8). The theme of rebirth is pertinent to the presence of Lorenzo's second wife and the family's hopes for its further "remaking." But both here and in the intarsia the re-invigorated tree has the implication of a Christian soul re-born, through the sacrament of baptism, and then finally re-born again in the eternal "temple of heaven" and "glorie Paradisi."<sup>102</sup> Similarly, the fire or flame which burnt "every tree ... that does not bear good fruit" has significance in the chapel's imagery. It was "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" that Christ would baptise, with "a refiner's fire" that the soul would be purified.<sup>103</sup>

With fire was S.Lorenzo's martyrdom enacted. Flames burn in each spandrel of the intarsia depiction of this saint, his dalmatic is decorated with the Tornabuoni device of invincible diamonds surrounded by flames which recurs throughout the chapel (Pl. 35). The inscription above S.Lorenzo in the altarpiece reads "I did not fear the pressure of the flame and in the midst of the fire I was not burned."<sup>104</sup> This comes in part from the Missal and the gospel reading for S.Lorenzo's feast day includes "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit ... he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (John 12:24-25). This text recalls the branch growing from the "earth" wall or from the stony desert and makes explicit the idea of re-birth and eternal salvation, through fire. S.Lorenzo was the appropriate intercessor for souls in Purgatory and was not harmed by the fires of a hell, but reborn into the kingdom of heaven, purified and saved. So too St. Dominic's holy books escaped the fire intact.

Typically, Voragine discerned "that Saint Lawrence had three inward fires, whereby he conquered the lesser fires without," a fiery

faith, a "burning love" and the searing "rays of truth". The flames or "lume" of "truth" are held by Aquinas in the window (Pl. 32), where his wisdom illuminates the Church and in Fra Caroli's words, "the mind is most forcibly set afire by its most holy meaning, to fervour of devotion." In this sense the flames throughout the chapel refer to "truth" and to Simeon's "light of revelation" and prophecy.<sup>105</sup> In the window the golden rays which inspire the church held by Aquinas are visually akin in colour and form to those which shine forth from the Madonna del Neve (Pl. 33), for the Virgin was "a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty ..., a reflection of eternal light."<sup>106</sup> Again this flaming light occurs in four roundels occupying the borders between the window's narratives, centrally aligned with the Virgin rising into eternal glory, the purification and revelation in the Temple and her apparition to the patriarch Giovanni.

Light emanates from the vault (Pl. 26), where the Evangelists are depicted just as the contract stipulated, in a blue heaven, "ornate, as is right and proper [decens et conveniens], in fine gold." The thin golden rays which stream forth send the light of the revealed and incarnate word to be proclaimed by the Baptist, who "came for testimony, to bear witness to the light" (John 1:7), and which was later expounded and explicated by the Dominicans below. The "Word was God" and at the very centre of the vault stands a core emblem in coloured terracotta, the Agnus Dei, the "lamp" and "Light of the world," from whom "the light of life" and eternal salvation springs.<sup>107</sup> The Evangelist who most often spoke of Christ as the bringer of light, St. John, is portrayed above the window in the Coronation of the Virgin (Pl. 23), where he writes his Gospel or Revelations, and he may appear again on the altarpiece (Pl. 38).<sup>108</sup> Throughout the chapel, gold adorns various decorative details, creating a surface originally rich in false mosaic, glimmering costumes, furnishings and architecture. Light and shadow are directed carefully as though they fall in relation to real light from the window, although each Birth or advent scene (Pls 9, 15), for example, also has revealed light flooding in from a recessed window. Style and iconography combine in the Tornaquinci chapel to present a fabulous play on golden, pure, divine light.

It is to the end of seeing this revelation and achieving eternal re-birth that the chapel's prayer is sent up. The liturgy for the feast day of Purification, indeed the whole creed of Christianity, encompasses a personal desire to be cleansed and is an endless prayer for this purity and salvation to come about. The offertory on S.Lorenzo's feast day is a reading from Job, "my prayer is pure ... he that vouches for me is on high."<sup>109</sup> One of the inscriptions in the Annunciation to Zacharias is a specific plea for salvation and for the recognition of a donor's offering: "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee."<sup>110</sup> The donor portraits either side of the window (Pls 24, 25) or those in the other scenes, particularly clustered in the Zacharias narrative (Pl. 2), are all offering these "pure" prayers for the re-birth and eternity of their souls and their consorteria. Waiting "in the wings" of the Joachim scene (Pl. 14) are the younger men of the network who, like their counterparts in the background, will have their offerings accepted when the Lord has "come to his temple" and the new grace of purification has been instituted.<sup>111</sup>

Aptly, at the chapel's highest point St.Matthew in the vault (Pl. 26) holds a text speaking of "the fame of Jesus" that Herod explained as the work of the Baptist "raised from the dead" (14:1-2). Although this last phrase occurs immediately after the Latin actually visible on the vault, the faithful would have read it to its conclusion, knowing that the salvation of Giovanni and his consorteria was thereby referred to. By recognising "This is John the Baptist" and the message of repentance and re-birth through fire and water which he brought as Christ's precursor, all the Tornaquinci were to see the revelation and reach the ranks of paradise.<sup>112</sup>



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ICONOGRAPHY: PART II

#### PORTRAITURE AND ITS CONTEXT

##### A: INTRODUCTION

No conscious or clear separation between various levels of signification or meaning can be discerned in the Tornaquinci chapel, where the consorteria's social and civic honour and its pious prayer are visually proclaimed in indivisible images. To focus on portraiture and on the iconography or selection of certain scenes, as this chapter will do, is only one approach which can be taken when investigating the significance the chapel held for "Kirche, Kaufmann, Künstler." To ask who is portrayed, where and why, will go beyond the usual game of "spot the portrait" played by those who have previously examined the chapel's portraiture.<sup>1</sup> The family is here commemorated as a series of exemplary members who address their audience both present and future; it is an institution rather than a mere collection of "individuals."

When attempting to identify the chapel's portraits, the employment of Pieraccini's "metodo morfologico-iconografico" to pursue family likeness is unlikely to achieve much success, despite Renaissance man's desire for the child to "remake" the father's image.<sup>2</sup> As the scholarly efforts of Borsook, Hatfield and Warburg have made clear, documentary evidence must be consulted when one seeks to identify portraits by Ghirlandaio and arguments must be constructed according to their plausibility, coherence and context. The eyes of a Tornaquinci audience, and of their associates, once had no such uncertainty as to who represented them in fresco; now the identification of portraits in the Tornaquinci chapel is sometimes straightforward, but often unresolvable. Nevertheless, keeping in mind Warburg's dissatisfaction with his attempt, and the warnings of

Alazard and Hatfield that portrait appearances can be "deceptive," we can proceed with a cautious investigation of "certain cultural and social ideals" suggested by portraits and their context in the chapel.<sup>3</sup> To do so necessitates an examination of the two narrative cycles, of the Virgin and the Baptist, in particular of the two lowest registers where portraits are clustered closest to the viewer's gaze and where male members of the consorteria gather in the two opening scenes (Pls 3, 4).

#### B: THE 'ANNUNCIATION TO ZACHARIAS'

Probably the last fresco to be produced, in late 1490, the Annunciation to Zacharias (Pls 2, 6, 7) is inscribed with a dedication praising "the most beautiful city" and two further inscriptions drawn from liturgical sources. The importance of this late, opening scene is also attested to by its inclusion of twenty one portraits which proclaim the dignity and worth of a city of God inhabited by members of the consorteria and their noble associates. Both civic and religious meanings are inextricable.

##### (a) Identifications

For the Zacharias scene we are exceptionally fortunate in having a list, compiled by Benedetto di Luca Landucci with the aid of Vincenzo di Piero Tornaquinci in 1561, which exhaustively names all twenty one portraits. The identification of only two Tornabuoni and two humanists can be definitely confirmed by comparison with independent portraits, but the names, costumes and ages of all portraits on the whole comply with what we know about the family and confirm the accuracy of Landucci's list.<sup>4</sup>

The first evidence for the list's accuracy is the scene's preparatory drawing (Pl. 5), where the attention given to the architecture and the presence of Ghirlandaio's signature in particular, indicate that it was a carefully considered presentation drawing for this highly visible scene, which was intended to carry many family portraits. The explosion in portraiture which resulted after the patron's contractual examination of the drawing now makes

for an overcrowded scene, but even the drawing indicates, by name, four portraits and, by style and placement, a probable further ten. Only two of the four names have been noticed previously: "M[esser] Giuliano" and "Giovannifrancesco" clearly stand full length to the right, but it is equally clear that a "M[esser] Luigi" is the outer left figure on the other side while next to him and nearest to the angel is a very unclear label which I tentatively read as "Lorenzo." Landucci's list precisely includes Messers Luigi and Giuliano and Giovanfrancesco. If the fourth figure is Lorenzo, his absence from the list is explained by a decision to grant him a position of greater honour and prominence in the opening scene on the wall opposite.<sup>5</sup>

The Landucci list can also be examined in relation to the fresco.

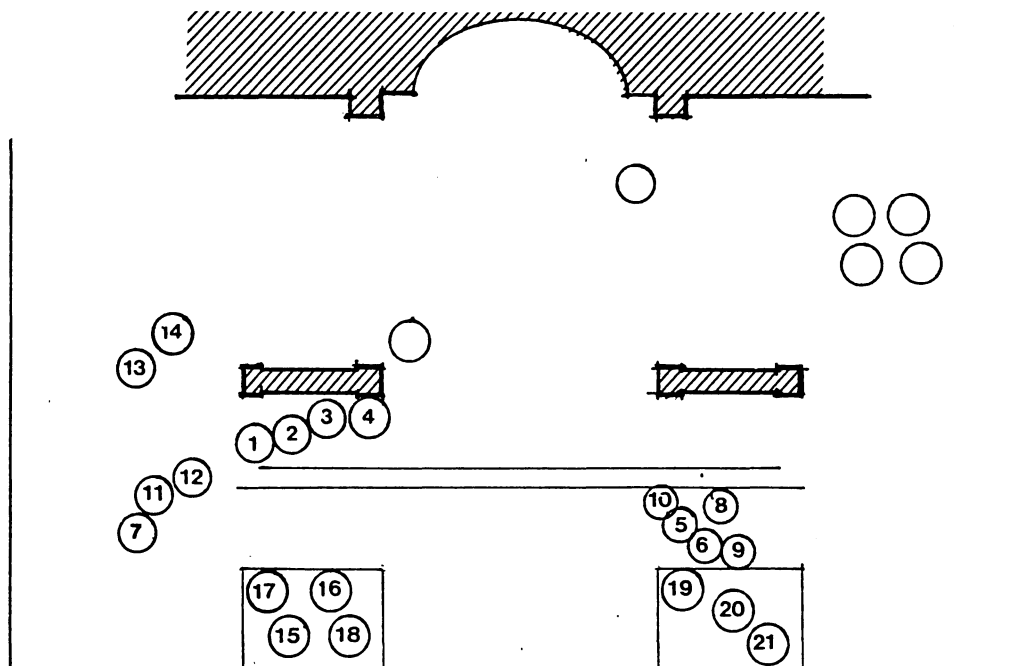


FIG. 6. GROUND PLAN OF THE ANNUNCIATION TO ZACHARIAS SHOWING POSITION OF PORTRAITS (with numbers used by Milanesi.).

1. "Giovanni [di Francesco di Messer Simone] Tornabuoni che fece dipingere la cappella" (1428-1497).

Aged sixty two in 1490, Giovanni's appearance can be visually confirmed by comparison with his donor portrait in the chapel's window wall and his medal (Pls 24, 42), although in the narrative he is at his oldest and least idealised. Dressed in a unique combination of

crimson robe and scarlet cappuccio, seemingly the costume of the Gonfaloniere, an office he attained in 1482, he is not closest to the angel and the inner sanctum, but of the four elders in this group he is closest to the viewer and fully visible (Pl. 6).<sup>6</sup>

2. "Piero [di Niccolò di Piero] Popoleschi" (1427-1507).

Prior in 1485 and successor to his brother Bartolommeo as head of the Popoleschi in 1489, Piero stands with his peers as both a public and family figure.<sup>7</sup>

3. "Girolamo [d'Adovardo di Cipriano] Giachinotti" (1426-1497?).

A prior many years previously, in 1474, Girolamo's violet costume and gesture of computation may refer instead to his active role as a property dealer. The eldest male member of the Giachinotti, with the most children, he had been their representative in the petition of 1487 which sought exemption from the divieto.<sup>8</sup>

4. "Leonardo di Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni, fratello di Giovanni" (1422 or 1425-1492).

Patron of some note at S.Maria Novella, prior in 1470 and dressed in the ubiquitous Florentine red, Leonardo was Giovanni's older brother, and his only surviving one by 1490, having succeeded their brother Filippo (d. 1488) who had been their representative in 1487.<sup>9</sup>

In the petition of 1487 the Tornabuoni, Giachinotti and Popoleschi, wishing to break the divieto, had publicly claimed to be "divided." That the social and cultural reality was otherwise is suggested by this group of representative elders who stand united and dignified, wearing sober and public gowns in a space which is both communal piazza and religious sanctum, surrounded by their clan and associates. Past political unity is commemorated and its future proclaimed; continuum not change is the assured note struck. Hopes for yet more political offices required one kind of rhetoric; hopes for the family's future and dignity required another.

5. "Messer Giuliano [di Filippo di Francesco] Tornabuoni" (1454-post 1516).

Age, skull cap, prominence and even the somewhat arrogant and

ambitious demeanour of this figure (Pl. 7), all accord with the thirty six year old nephew of Giovanni who was a canon and then an apostolic protonotary by September 1490. His uncle had paid for his University education, urged the advancement of his career and nominated his presence in the fresco at the time of the drawing.<sup>10</sup>

6. "Giovanni di Francesco di Tieri Tornaquinci" (1437-post 1498).

Called "Messer" in 1493, Giovanni may have been an arts graduate and certainly was an associate of University men, including Landino. His distinctive black and grey costume might be the ceremonial dress denoting his degree, or it might simply be a self-conscious choice to suggest his simple, modest condition in keeping with his humble sandals.<sup>11</sup>

7. "Gianfrancesco [di Filippo di Filippo] Tornabuoni" (1436-post 1498).

Wearing only Florentine red, this man held civic posts as a vicario and was much involved in the St. Dominic confraternity at S. Maria Novella. His costume, prominence in the fresco as in life, and his facial likeness to the adjacent man, whose identification as his brother Luigi is certain (no 11), all argue for this man being Landucci's no 7, "Gianfrancesco."<sup>12</sup>

8. "Girolamo [di Marabotto di Francesco] Tornabuoni, alias Scarabotto" (1449-post 1524).

A prior in 1489 and a tenant of Giovanni Tornabuoni in the 1490s, Girolamo and his brother Giovanbatista (no 10), were the two eldest half-nephews of Giovanni's.<sup>13</sup>

9. "Messer Simone di Piero [sic: must mean Filippo] di Francesco Tornabuoni" (1472-1543).

The youngest man in this group of five is also the youngest portrait. Later, he was to be Filippo's only son who bore children and was violently opposed to Savonarola. He became a senator, Gonfaloniere and cavalier, described as having a "bella presenza." The confident pose of the youth holding a thick leather belt would accord with Simone's later history and his face has a certain likeness to that of his brother (no 5).<sup>14</sup>

10. "Giovambatista [di Marabotto di Francesco] Tornabuoni" (1452-1501).

Brother of Girolamo (no 8), after whom he was the eldest surviving son of Marabotto, he was to be the only fruitful continuer of his line, witnessing the arrival of their first descendant, Alfonso, on 28 December 1490. The same figure, with the same face, enquiring expression and pose, had appeared, second in on the left, in the Tornabuoni tondo of the Magi by Ghirlandaio and inscribed 1487 (Pl. 54).<sup>15</sup>

11. "Messer Luigi [di Filippo di Filippo] Tornabuoni" (1443-1519).

Brother of Giovanfrancesco (no 7), Luigi was placed opposite him in the drawing (Pl. 5), deserving a place as an honourable Knight of Rhodes who commanded S.Iacopo in Campo Corbolini, where lies his tomb slab (Pl. 41), and a comparison with which allows the secure identification of this portrait. Costume, cap and face are all very similar in both portraits.<sup>16</sup>

12. "Tierì di Francesco di Tierì Tornaquinci, in capelli" (1439-post 1498).

Brother of the only other Tornaquinci portrayed here (no 6), and with whom he shares a likeness, Tierì seems to have been a pious man and was a tenant and neighbour of Giovanni Tornabuoni's.<sup>17</sup>

The Tornaquinci were not represented in the petition of 1487, nor did they hold office in the Signoria, so they do not appear amongst the frescoed group of elder statesmen. Yet, unlike the Giachinotti or Popoleschi, they are granted two representatives in the fresco, although by 1490 the Tornaquinci was quite a small family. The two brothers chosen were not from that Tornaquinci line which enjoyed some economic favour, but instead were men with some slight distinction in the worlds of religion or learning. Furthermore, they were Giovanni's close neighbours, in Tierì's case even acting in 1490 as his procurator for a family matter. With little of public significance marking out the present members of the Tornaquinci, such ties as neighbourhood and trust seem to have affected Giovanni's choice.

The family profile chosen by Giovanni Tornabuoni concentrated upon his own branch since eight of the twelve representatives of the consorteria were Tornabuoni men, present by virtue of their quality and status as well as for their relationship with Giovanni, which can be best indicated by an abbreviated family tree (fig. 2). In the patrilineal society of Renaissance Florence, Giovanni represented the descendants of both his father and his uncle, Filippo, the only two male descendants of Messer Simone to bear male children. Portraits of sons replaced dead fathers and these nephews of Giovanni were chosen probably for their notability or fertility or status as representatives of their own lines, as well as for their ties of friendship. In Giuliano's case, surviving documents indicate his uncle's paternal care for his education and career, and such a supervisory concern may have characterised Giovanni's relationship with other nephews. The family's honour and continuation were paramount; elders of the consorteria and representatives of the younger generation, selected carefully and across a wide range, gather in their chapel.<sup>18</sup>

The three elders of the popolano branches are honoured most, in a position of prominence shared with the paying patron Giovanni, but the two Tornaquinci men stand amidst their Tornabuoni peers. Just as the arme on the chapel's entrance vault commemorated every branch of the consorteria which jointly held patronage rights over the chapel, so too the portraits encompassed all of Giovanni's parenti and were a visual summation of the family's cohesion and stature. Their ancestral nobility and contemporary virtù is proclaimed by each man's dignified bearing and the choice of sober costume, extravagant in neither color, style nor type (Pl. 2). Dress follows the rules of decorous behaviour as advised by Leonardo ("l vecchio sia togato") and Alberti ("your clothes should bring you respect ... they do us honour ... without a belt your dress appears fuller and more dignified"). Their solid volumes and the unity of colour, "a symphony of scarlet and purple" said Warburg, suggest the consorteria's gravitas on a public occasion.<sup>19</sup> Men of stature and men with successors, they represent the family's present at a moment of "wealth, health and peace" and its honourable future. Elect on this earth, they offer their prayers in one expanded donor portrait that

they might also be elect in the next life.

The other nine portraits in the Zacharias narrative (Pls 2, 6, 7) are presented in a more peripheral and partial manner but everyone gathers in one arena where honour by association makes of every man a dignitary. According to Landucci's list these nine men were the following.

13. "Un prete di San Lorenzo, musico."

The black skull-cap and greyish/purplish costume of this plump man would seem appropriate to his office, but his identity is as unfathomable now as it was already in 1561.<sup>20</sup> Possibly it was the man's musical prowess which earned him a place here, as a representative of a noble art much lauded by humanists, suitable as one of the "Arts" praised by the scene's inscription and as a ceremonial and moral activity proper to the conduct of an ideal city.<sup>21</sup>

14. "Benedetto Dei, buffone" (1418-1492).

Dei was far more than a raconteur, describing himself in 1473 as a "buono ischrittore e buono abachisto e buono ragionieri" and being a chronicler, assiduous collector of facts, inveterate list maker, traveller, merchant, spy and fierce patriot. As a commercial agent and information gatherer who metaphorically mapped his beloved Florence ("un'altra Roma novella") upon a grid of statistics, he was also at the heart of an enormous epistolary network. A contemporary praised him as "the father and splendour not only of Italian news, but of the whole world's ... the light and celestial ray by whom we reach the truth about all the activities and works of men." As a man interested in raw history or "verità" and at the centre of a vernacular stream of propaganda, he stands as a counterpart to the humanists below, an observer of "realism" perhaps akin to Ghirlandaio's eye. Long since aware of the Tornabuoni and their palace, Dei was not however a close associate. Perhaps he was portrayed with them as an act of flattery on behalf of the young Lorenzo Tornabuoni, who wrote to "mio Benedetto," then 68 years old, in November 1486 when only eighteen himself. "Vester" Lorenzo addressed him as "compare," partner and accomplice, in hopeful



flattery or "chummy obsequiousness" as Trexler has termed the tone of letters written by older men to a young Lorenzo de' Medici in the 1460s and 1470s. Sending news from Naples and Portugal, the young Tornabuoni was entering, or wishing to enter, Dei's network and thereby to gain international prestige or contacts. Civic publicist, "tromba della verità" and a man of international repute, Dei was a worthy and desired colleague.<sup>22</sup>

15. "Messo Cristoforo Landini" (1424-1504).

Vasari and other Cinquecento observers also noted Landino, dressed in a red mantle with a black collar, and no one has doubted his identification.<sup>23</sup> Documented contacts between Landino and the Tornaquinci are almost non-existent, but his renown, interest in art, frequent association with the Medici and hence Lucrezia Tornabuoni, friendship with Fra Giovanni Caroli at S. Maria Novella and frequent comment on the interests which pervade the Tornaquinci chapel together justify him a place with his learned fellows there.<sup>24</sup>

16. "Messer Angnolo Poliziano" (1454-1494).

Vasari and others identify the youngest man who raises his hand as Poliziano, easily confirmed by comparison with his medal and Ghirlandaio's earlier portrayal of him in the Sassetti chapel. His close association with the Tornabuoni, particularly with Lucrezia and with his pupil Lorenzo, and his possible authorship of the fresco's dedication inscription, also make his presence in the chapel certain.<sup>25</sup>

17. "Marsilio Ficini" (1433-1499).

Once more other visual and verbal reports securely place Ficino at the far left, appearing just as he described himself in 1477. "I am a little man, thin and short ... yet ... I have seen myself ... the first among men and not a dwarf." Unlike his three fellows, he wears the red biretum of a secular cleric, appropriate to his appointments attained through Lorenzo de' Medici's manipulation of patronage networks. Indeed Ficino's first such benefice, which began his more financially secure life in 1473, was engineered by Lorenzo but needed the consent of the Giachinotti.<sup>26</sup>

18. "Messer Gentile vescovo d'Arezzo" de' Becchi (1430s-1497).

Vasari and Petrei identified the man who turns inward as the Greek scholar, Demetrio Chalcondilas, but his purple costume and Becchi's renown and contacts with the Tornabuoni suggest that the more usually accepted identification by Landucci is indeed accurate.<sup>27</sup>

The inclusion of humanists as "honour portraits," particularly in such a distinct grouping, is rather unusual for Florence, although more common in the 1480s after the experience of artists like Ghirlandaio and Rosselli in the Sistine Chapel, Rome (Pl. 55). Probably a reworking of the innovation in the Sassetti chapel (Pl. 62), humanists are now included as iconographical attributes, not of the Medici or their circle, but of the PULCHERRIMA CIVITAS praised by the fresco's inscription, bringing latter-day glory to Florence equivalent to the honour attached to the legendary laureates Petrarch, Dante and Boccaccio. The

whole glory and magnificence of the city consists in having wise, well-lettered and worthy citizens who lead to an increase in the glory and standing of the city

stated the Commune in 1455 when appointing a professor. Shortly thereafter the Greek thinking of men such as Argyropoulos, known to the Tornabuoni, turned such Florentine beliefs onto a more Aristotlian and moral plane, praising the philosopher-ruler whom "that divine Plato wished to govern cities and public affairs." The rhetoric and ideas of Ficino and Landino, amongst many others, was to be affected profoundly by the injection of such Greek ideas into native traditions. Florence could be not only "un' altra Roma novella" but also a "new Athens."<sup>28</sup> The learning of its ruling citizens could make of it a rejuvenated and perfect state on earth.

In the Zacharias fresco the four learned men stand, in abisso and in a full circle, while all the other men form flanks in a semi-circle either side of a deep rounded apse (Pls 2, 6). Gesture and gaze make some attempt to connect every figure with his immediate fellows, or across to another grouping. Within the learned circle, Poliziano's right hand is the only one visible, making a gesture of comment "in piazza a cerchio con molti nobili cittadini," as Lorenzo Tornabuoni in 1486 described to Dei the way in which he had received interesting

news. The impression created by Ghirlandaio is one of a convivio, perhaps on Greek thought, or perhaps reflecting upon Landino's recent De vera nobilitate, a literary dialogue at which his three companions were present, along with such figures as Argyropoulos and Alberti.<sup>29</sup> Certainly the breadth of Landino's gown, his distinctive black collar and his turning to address and include the viewer tend to distinguish him.

A letter of September 1489 by Ficino specifically referred to sermons, disputes and conferences "nei ginnasi pubblici, nel foro e nelle chiese di Firenze,"<sup>30</sup> and Ghirlandaio's architectural backdrop, with a triumphal arch flanking an apse and altar, conflates foro with chiese (Pl. 2). Not only the four scholars but the entire assembly engage in measured discussion or witness, standing in a forum or piazza. Certain Florentine frescoes, particularly Masaccio's Sagra and Ghirlandaio's usage of that in his St. Francis Raising the Dead Child for the Sassetti chapel (Pl. 62), had set crowds in an actual church piazza, but at S.Maria Novella Ghirlandaio now idealises and aggrandises public space and his figures spread through it in a more possessive, even active, manner. No longer ranked at the front edge only, the portraits cluster in smaller groups so that each face is a clearly visible record, each body a larger mass, each witness closer to the central action which indeed they overshadow. The preparatory drawing (Pl. 5), although allowing more attention to the narrative, had already broken the portraits into smaller gatherings between which space moved in a more fluid airy way than was seen in the Sassetti chapel. In that earlier work Ghirlandaio had used a secular foro in the Confirmation of the Rule (Pl. 62), but now he amalgamates all piazzas into one classicised arena, bringing it right to the foreground and distributing his figures throughout that space just as Italians congregate still in piazzas.

Opposite these venerable scholars are placed three mere youths.

19. "Federico [di Francesco] Sassetti" (1472-December 1491).

Son of Francesco who in March 1490 still held legal rights over patronage of the high altar at S.Maria Novella, Federico might be portrayed here as part of a campaign to flatter and persuade the

Sassetti heirs who seem to have soon allowed Giovanni Tornabuoni's commission of a new altarpiece for his chapel, after Francesco's death in March 1490. Drably dressed and wearing a skull cap of the same colour as Giuliano's (no 5; Pl. 7), Federico was also a protonotary and by 1488 he was prior of S.Michele Berteldi, the church very close to the Tornabuoni palace (Pl. 65). His blond hair and rather pursed lips recall his portrayal in the Sassetti chapel about six year earlier (Pl. 63), although the formative adolescent years have intervened. Now older, thinner, and with rather tired or sick eyes, Federico died a year later.<sup>31</sup>

20. "Andrea de' Medici."

He is called the "ugly bodyguard of Lorenzo il Magnifico" by Warburg, in which capacity he had served with Francesco di Niccolò Tornabuoni after the Pazzi conspiracy. "Andrea di Bernardo de' Medici detto il Butta" was later involved with Lorenzo Tornabuoni, Giovanni di Bartolommeo Popoleschi and others in a secret group which worked to preserve the Medici estate and to reinstate that family in Florence.<sup>32</sup>

21. "Gianfrancesco [di Ridolfo] Ridolfi" (1475 - ?).

The Ridolfi were a Medicean family and Gianfrancesco was related to the Tornabuoni by female descent. His purse might either confirm the identification of him as a staff member of the Medici Bank or explain why such a suggestion was made.<sup>33</sup>

According to either Landucci or the editor Delle Valle, "questi tre ultimi erano nel banco de' Medici," and if so they are Giovanni Tornabuoni's future successors in what had been his life-long career and a further notation of the ideal city's COPIA. These youths may also or instead be colleagues of his son and members of some Medicean brigata, in which case again they refer to the city's future progress.

All in all, there is no reason to deny categorically any of Landucci's identifications, although the reasons for the inclusion of several men, especially numbers 13, 19-21, is no longer readily apparent. In terms of choice, the absence of Lorenzo de' Medici's portrait from the chapel is notable and contrary to Francesco Sassetti's practice (Pl. 63). Unlike Francesco, Giovanni Tornabuoni

was more assured in his public carriage, surrounded by a consorteria of noble ancestry with a long tradition of public service and civic recognition. Nor need the Tornaquinci stand in a piazza making blatant reference to the Piazza della Signoria in order that their civic worth be made evident: costume, bearing and sheer common knowledge were sufficient. Similarly, Giovanni's parentado with Lorenzo de' Medici was too well known to require visual comment. Borsook and Offerhaus conclude that the Sassetti chapel's

programme expresses hope and optimism at a time of uncertainty for both Sassetti and Florence. It is surely no accident that the central axis of the altar wall [Pl. 62 here] is occupied by children ... Sassetti through his chapel wanted to be remembered as a pious Christian and a patriotic Florentine confidently awaiting the return of a golden age.

The Tornaquinci chapel is less tinged with "uncertainty" and more triumphant, the times having improved and the consorteria's nobility being a secure, continuing tradition.<sup>34</sup>

(b) Significations

The many threads woven by the histories of the men portrayed are amalgamated, visually into one public arena and verbally by the longest inscription, set in a tablet above an arch close to the chapel's entrance:

AN.MCCCCLXXXX QUO PULCHERRIMA CIVITAS OPIBUS  
VICTORIIS ARTIBUS AEDIFICIISQUE NOBILIS COPIA  
SALUBRITATE PACE PERFRUEBATUR

In the year 1490, when the most beautiful city, graced by treasures, victories, arts, and buildings, enjoyed wealth, health and peace.

The concepts and the very language are typical of late Quattrocento rhetoric, in particular of Landino's De vera nobilitate, written around 1487.<sup>35</sup>

SALUS became a word of particular Florentine reverberation after the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, in which Giuliano de' Medici was assassinated and his brother Lorenzo narrowly escaped death. From then on the "health" or "salvation of the state" and of Lorenzo were

inseparable, although his father may have used "Salus Publica," on the pedestal of Donatello's Judith and Holofernes after Piero's victory over the conspirators of 1466. Lorenzo transferred the motto to a more public arena, when the rhetoric of rule was able to be more imperial and idealising. Francesco Sasseti used it in an ostensibly Christian context, but when the portrayal of Lorenzo and his children with the Piazza della Signoria behind them are taken into account, it is quite possible that the SALUTI PATRIAE ET CHRISTIANAE GLORIAE E.S.S.P. inscription under a David frescoed on the chapel's entrance wall also refers to a Medicean "Fatherland."<sup>36</sup>

"Safety" or "health" becomes, in the Tornaquinci chapel, an attribute of the ideal CIVITAS, less specifically Medicean but very much a development of idealising civic rhetoric.<sup>37</sup> Inevitably it is linked with PACE, a theme inherent in the Sasseti chapel where reference is made to the troubles between Florence and the Papacy in the aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy. Again, however, the Tornaquinci chapel is a more timeless imprecise presentation of such a notion, visually making far fewer references to Florence and more to a generalised imperial world. In part this more cosmopolitan, high minded tenor may indicate the interests of the Tornaquinci and Giovanni's exposure to Rome, but its execution after the Sasseti chapel puts it in a time frame of greater political optimism.

Pax was one of the supreme characteristics of any ideal Christian polis, the confraternity of St. Dominic at S. Maria Novella praying "per buono stato et pacie di questa città." Linked with justice and prudence in a Christian context, peace and tranquility or "concordia civium" was a civic virtue. By the late Quattrocento, even before Savonarola, writers like Landino and Ficino awaited an age of gold or universal peace, a renovatio already underway or arriving imminently. The Sasseti chapel was produced at a time when recent tensions were still memorable; the Tornaquinci chapel and its dedication inscription were completed at a time of greater optimism. In the late 1480s Poliziano and Landino remembered "public disturbances" throughout Italy as affairs of the past, now "succeeded by an universal calm,"<sup>38</sup> especially because of a closer alliance between Medicean Florence and the Papacy and an apparently more stable Laurentian ethos within the

walls of "the most beautiful city."

COPIA also appeared more secure at this time, Marks commenting that "after 1488 the financial state of Florence settled down on a peacetime footing which was to last until 1494." Actuality and rhetorical traditions once more combined to form the backdrop to the chapel's dedication inscription of 1490. However buoyant the economy really was, COPIA was also a term associated with abundance in the ideal state and would have been a virtue dear to Giovanni Tornabuoni. OPIBUS ARTIBUS and AEDIFICIIS were all signs of wealth and peace, "restored" by the advent of PACE and thriving in a Golden Age. Here too actuality and verbal tradition combined, with both a "building boom" and the virtuous practice of liberalitas and magnificence being registered by the inscription and features of the Zacharias fresco. Giovanni Tornabuoni's interest in architecture, which affected his contractual specifications with the Ghirlandaio brothers, may have encouraged the artists to excel at the depiction of idealised and "copious" architecture, particularly in the triumphal arch and domestic palace facades visible in the Zacharias fresco or in the sumptuous bedroom interiors where each Birth occurs (Pls 2, 9, 15).<sup>39</sup>

"Victories" are the particular subject of the Triumphal Arch reliefs and are reflected throughout the chapel's iconography, where the Virgin's Triumph is especially declared on the altarpiece and in her Coronation (Pls 23, 38), where joyous putti celebrate her Birth (Pl. 15), where martyrs overcome the mortality of the flesh especially when the Innocents are massacred before another Triumphal Arch (Pl. 21), where the Baptist fulfills prophecy and brings the renewing sacrament of baptism and proclaims the new era sub gratia (Pls 4, 34). In strictly civic terms, what Landino praised in 1487 as "military discipline" and imperial might coupled with clemency, could be viewed as a Florentine virtue, especially since the advent of peace with the papacy.<sup>40</sup>

A Triumphal Arch, erected to commemorate the victory of peace, stands in the Zacharias narrative as a visual equivalent to the adjacent inscription (Pl. 2). Soldiers feature in every relief scene on the arch, stressing what Thomas calls "the theme of power and

might" and glorifying both Florence and the family's active, glorious heritage. Compared to the drawing (Pl. 5), a more varied range of topic is covered by the four reliefs as executed, now including an adventus and adlocutio as well as a battle and sacrifice scene. Further consideration at the design stage resulted in a fuller range of civic and militaristic subject matter, commemorating the two things Francesco Guicciardini was to desire most, "the perpetual triumph of this city and her liberty" and "the glory of our house ... forever."<sup>41</sup> The triumph of the City is proudly declared by a rhetorical inscription, by the presence of learned and renowned men wearing honourable costume, by classical allusions, an air of ceremonial dignity and by the gathering of a tranquil citizenry in stately discourse or witness within a public space before a triumphal arch.

The fresco however, is also at the inception of a religious cycle in a chapel where the family's "perpetual triumph" was most a matter of redemption and eternal salvation. Just as the inscriptions within the fresco address both civic and pious concerns, so too the Arch is a multivalent image. Thomas precluded such a reading, rejecting "another possible interpretation ... which is dramatically opposed" to his stress on "military power."<sup>42</sup> In fact the two approaches are easily made compatible since texts relevant to the narrative clearly place imperial and military images in a Christian context. Thomas himself cites Zacharias' prophecy uttered after John's Naming, that is in the Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79):

(The Lord) has raised up a horn of salvation  
for us ... that we should be saved from our  
enemies ... that we being delivered out of the  
hand of our enemies might serve him without  
fear...

The text goes on to foretell John's role as a precursor before a "light" which will "guide our feet into the way of peace."

The Annunciation to Zacharias itself, as the announcement of John's advent, similarly promises the Messianic messenger, the angel foretold by Malachi (3:1) in the text used in the Purification liturgy:

"Behold I send my messenger to prepare the way



before me ..."

St Augustine recalled this passage when he wrote that the

true Eternal King ... sends, not Victoria who is without substance, but His angel, and causes [through it] whom he pleases to conquer.<sup>43</sup>

Kantorowicz has demonstrated the relevance of Malachi and Augustine to ceremonial Entries whereby the emperor became the "Anointed of God" walking behind the celestial cursor. In Ghirlandaio's fresco portrayed citizens and idealised maidens (Pl. 7) await the advent of the King of Kings, gathering before an altar (the gate of an Heavenly Jerusalem) and before the portal of an earthly city. They are the welcoming citizens who will receive the "new Constantine" before an arch whose structure and scenes recall the actual Arch of Constantine, first Christian emperor. The ruler's advent made of any earthly city a "timeless Zion" and brought the dawn of a Golden Age and of peace. The Tornaquinci and their civic associates are numbered among the celestial or saved elect.

Thomas, working with a binary model of "positive" and "negative" reactions to antiquity, can only read the relief scenes as pagan and civic although he recognises that in the Sassetti chapel Ghirlandaio stressed the "positive syncretistic role" of paganism "in relation to Christianity." Offerhaus on the other hand has read the militaristic reliefs as purely religious in their reference to the Militis Dei, implicitly denying that active and virtuous citizens who were also magnificent patrons could be, as Palmieri saw them, members of the paradisaical ranks (Pl. 86).<sup>44</sup> The "victories" of the "secular" inscription could refer to the soul's deliverance and "peace" to the eternal "way of peace" possible in the City of God. Ghirlandaio's usage of the Arch of Constantine could have been stimulated by its employment by another artist who also worked with him in the Sistine Chapel. There Botticelli's arch in the Punishment of Korah expressed both potestas ecclesiae and primatus papae and Ghirlandaio transferred such a multivalency to a Florentine, republican context.<sup>45</sup>

Ghirlandaio's individual reliefs (Pl. 2) can also carry particular Christian meanings. The sacrifice scene, for instance, could be an allusion to the new ritual which will replace the old: the

incarnation and sacrifice of the corpus christi ushered in the era sub gratia, as Zacharias prophesied and as the Baptist announced. The battle scene could depict the soldiers of God in action, emerging victorious into pax christiana.<sup>46</sup> The adventus augusti, in which the victor is greeted by youths and maidens at the city gate, was traditionally paralleled to the triumphal entry of the Christian soul into the Heavenly Jerusalem as well as to the welcome accorded the "new Constantine" on earth. So too the four welcoming maidens on the right (Pl. 7), beneath the city gate, may be the angels which escort the soul to paradise. Two of these figures look towards the adventus relief and the leading woman gestures a greeting. The adlocutio could be an exhortation to be virtuous and victorious in the vita activa, as it is in the Sassetti chapel, but S. Antonino's reference to the Virgin's Annunciation as "allocuto(n)em" suggests that such classical announcements were readily transferred to a Christian context. The gesture of proclamation, used also by a Nike in the adventus relief and by Gabriel bearing good tidings to Zacharias, suggests a deliberate transformation whereby messages of salvation and prophecy are building towards the ultimate "messenger" or precursor, John the Baptist.<sup>47</sup>

The portrayed are engaged in both civic commemoration and virtuous prayer, just as Paolo da Certaldo advised:

go to church every morning and see our Lord and ...  
recommend yourself to Him ... and similarly, all of  
your relatives, friends and neighbours [are to do  
so with you].<sup>48</sup>

One of the liturgical inscriptions, the central one placed along the entablature of the apse, voices their prayer:

ORATIO MEA SICUT INCENSUM IN CONSPECTU TVO

Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee (Ps 141:2).

Chosen from the Offertory Rite, when the priest incensed the altar, just as Zacharias was visited by the angel "at the hour of incense" (Luke 1:10), the text offers a donor's prayer from the gathered Tornaquinci.<sup>49</sup>

The second inscription runs along the entablature on either side of the apse:

DOMINVS AB VTERO VOCAVIT ME DE VENT[RE]

The Lord called me from the womb (Isaiah 49:1).<sup>50</sup>

Occurring several times during the celebration of John's Nativity (June 24), the text proclaims John's mission, his fulfilment of prophecy and his sanctification even before birth. It neatly dovetails with the fresco's gestural language of announcement and with the other Biblical inscription, for the verse immediately preceding the ORATIO inscription reads "I call upon Thee O Lord; make haste to me! Give ear to my voice, when I call to Thee!" (Ps 141:1) In one case the Lord summons, as he begins the path towards the Incarnation; in the other, the humble petitioner calls for salvation: the donor's prayer to be recognised is indeed answered. John's coming is announced here and his birth will bring COPIA to his aged parents and prepare the way for a spiritual richness granted to all Christians. Possibly the blessing given to Zacharias is another gift in which the Tornaquinci wished to share, the continual propagation of their line. "Triumph" or victory is in many ways the fresco's central meaning, incorporating the triumph of the family, of Florence, of John's advent and the promise he brings, and the triumph of the Christian soul over death.<sup>51</sup>

Ghirlandaio's representation of the architecture is also multivalent, embodying both Triumphal Arch and apse, to make of it an enriched sign. All other quotations of the Arch of Constantine by Quattrocento artists, including Ghirlandaio's own here in the Massacre of the Innocents (Pl. 21), are backdrops where the arch stands for itself and none is transformed by the central apse. Ghirlandaio's innovation draws on the form of late fifteenth century Florentine chapels, such as the one commissioned by Filippo Strozzi at Leceto, or especially Alberti's apse in his own prebend at S. Martino a Gangalandi (c1472), a benefice thereafter held by Messer Giuliano Tornabuoni.<sup>52</sup> The combination of temple and Arch had been used by Alberti in Rimini and Mantua but Ghirlandaio's drawing (Pl. 5), with a pointed Gothic vault above the apsidal dome, suggests that he was also aware of the two-dimensional Temple of Jerusalem in Ghiberti's Visit of the Queen Sheba to Solomon.<sup>53</sup> In both that relief and

Ghirlandaio's composition, a centralised two-storied structure is punctured by an apse, with arcaded perspectives on either side and, in front of this, figures encircle the central action of two figures who are raised on a stepped platform. Both works treat contemporaneous issues within the folds of a religious narrative, but Ghirlandaio uses a more homogenous classical vocabulary for both architecture and figures.

Since the fresco moves the whole structure closer to the viewer, the drawing (Pl. 5) shows more clearly that the apse was flanked immediately by two side chapels so that the piazza in front of the altar replaces the fourth chapel of a centralised Greek-cross church. Hence the Tornaquinci and their associates stand figuratively as well as literally within the confines of a family chapel. Yet the space simultaneously acts as a piazza and the fresco is a much more integrated and idealised layering of meanings than the Confirmation of the Rule in the Sassetti chapel (Pl. 62). Architectural and figurative form now more fully carry significance. The figures, especially their faces, costumes and bearing, are "attributes" or signs in themselves. Witnesses, performers, donors, they are "signatories" in a "religious foundation charter" as Warburg perceived. Like the portraits in the Sassetti chapel, they are present "not as gratuitous bystanders, but as persons involved in one way or another with the locale and its significance."<sup>54</sup>

In itself the Annunciation to Zacharias was not dramatic or rich enough for a large rectangular format, but the story's iconographic tradition allowed, even expected, its fleshing out by means of witnessing crowds which represented the corpo of the Church. The Bible placed

the whole multitude of the people ... praying outside ... waiting for Zacharias, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple (Luke 1:10, 21-22).

The Golden Legend followed this scenario, while an influential life of the Baptist from the Trecento preferred to stress the domestic celebration of "parenti" and "amici" when they heard of the "grande

beneficio." Lucrezia Tornabuoni's poetic Vita stayed with the Biblical account:

et tutto 'l popol con gran devozione  
di fuori stava a far suo orazione...<sup>55</sup>

Artists nearly always included a crowd of onlookers who invariably show some reaction to or awareness of the visitation.<sup>56</sup> Restrained gestures by the portraits in S. Maria Novella suggest some awareness of the vision but their role, on the edge of the "mirror" in this world and "praying outside at the hour of incense" (Luke 1:10), is to address the viewer and to render more plausible the actuality of the Lord's descent. Their sheer and numerous presence at the event, and in a visible position at the cycle's initiation, are sufficient signs of their participation in witness and prayer. As far as it is possible to judge, standard facial types, rather than portraits, seem present in every other example known to me, with one illuminating exception. A Riminese Annunciation to Zacharias executed c 1330/40 contains a typical crowd but also six kneeling figures, three male, who appear to be portraits. The presence of a deacon, the contemporary garb (Dominican?) of Zacharias, the depiction of church furniture, including an altar and tramezzo or choir structure, in a longitudinal nave, all suggest that we see a multiple donor portrait praying at a mass. An early choir book at Lucca has another and rare variation on portraiture by showing St. Dominic present at the scene, thereby emphasising his devotion to the mass.<sup>57</sup> The Christian nature of the sacrifice offered by Zacharias and the inclusion of "portrayed" witnesses is common to all three works.

Dominicans had long been amenable to portraiture. St. Dominic himself and later friars were positive towards the persuasive, efficacious and useful nature of art, an attitude expanded by Quattrocento members in Florence, like Friars Giovanni Dominici, Antonino, Giovanni Corella and Giovanni Caroli.<sup>58</sup> Receptivity to secular patronage, too, was a feature of the Order, characterised by the urban nature of its foundations and by a sense of "compromise" and practicality. Its writers could be pragmatic and flexible on economic matters, recognising that without trade "l'humana specie non potria vivere."<sup>59</sup> Splendour was increasingly allowed within their domain;

the "theory of magnificence" was developed from the ideas of their theologian Aquinas and was accepted in practice by such men as the prior of S.Marco, Antonino, who allowed extensive decoration and refurbishment of the convent by the Medici. Patriotism and civic involvement also distinguishes the Order, Hay concluding that "maybe the Dominicans were more wrapped up in politics than other orders," surely due to their urban focus.<sup>60</sup> That the Papal Apartments at S.Maria Novella were often used for the housing of State visitors was as fitting as the depiction of Emperor and Pope together in the convent's chapterhouse (Pl. 80).

A Dominican ease with the intermingling of "secular" and "sacred" adapted well to "the attribution of holiness, both potential and actual, to the city itself," which developed in later Quattrocento Florence. For Weinstein, this was part of a "secularization" which also meant

the transfer of the scene of religious ritual from reserved monastic or ecclesiastical space to public, civic space [and secondly] the religious legitimation of formerly worldly and temporal activities and institutions. The idea of the holiness of family life is an excellent example.<sup>61</sup>

The Zacharias fresco, with its dedication inscription, and the setting in an amalgamation of "public" and "ecclesiastical space" which is an ideal city, is an instance of this "secularization" and civic mythology so suited to a Dominican, civic and family context. Patriotic tradition had long made of Florence a "paradiso" and its rulers began to assume divine guise, the patriciate becoming a worthy elite inhabiting a heaven on earth which enjoyed "wealth, health and peace."<sup>62</sup> Augustine's De Civitate Dei could be set in a Florence dominated by the Cathedral dome, in a manuscript illumination, thereby showing Florence as "simultaneously city of man and city of God."<sup>63</sup>

By the 1470s a Medicean circle of humanists like Poliziano and Ficino was adept at the transfer of civic idealisation to specifically Medicean ends. After the Pazzi conspiracy, Lorenzo's SALUS was identical to the state's, but even earlier Ficino, for instance, had urged Bernardo del Nero

vivi felicie nella gratia di Dio conservatore dal mondo, et nella benivolentia del magnanimo Lorenzo de' Medici, conservatore della patria.

In 1476 a carpenter's son wrote to Lorenzo in terms which indicate that men of all classes were aware of the Medicean imagery:

I shall enjoy that true assurance of which the Evangelist speaks when he says that "many are called and few are chosen" ... considering myself indeed elected your faithful servant.

From Republican to Medicean to Savonarolan imagery, Florentine rulership developed, but within a continuous tradition. Her rulers were divine philosophers or prophets, her space that of a New Rome, a New Athens, a New Jerusalem. When Florentines "embraced the model of the Elect Nation" under Savonarola, they had been "prepared ... by a long-standing civic tradition."<sup>64</sup> The Tornaquinci stand as noble members of the elect in their chapel, in a blessed city which does not need the portrayed presence of the Medici to legitimate their city or their family tradition.

Backdrops in the Tornaquinci chapel have often been called Florentine, but they are imprecise, ennobled and idealised vistas of neither Florence nor Rome. The Founding of S.Maria Maggiore in the window (Pl. 31), with its typological reference to the Cathedral dome, is the most explicit visualisation of a Florence which is the City of God. That scene acts almost like the architectural models held by patrons like Enrico Scrovegni, signifying the donor's offering towards "the purchase of paradise."<sup>65</sup> In fresco, the presence of the elect Tornaquinci and their associates activates the locale as sacred and at the same time the setting idealises the Tornaquinci. Golden Age and City of God, time and space, are simultaneously and mutually blessed. The sober costume and stance of the portraits in the Zacharias fresco, coupled with the dedication inscription, Triumphal Arch, learned and active men, all make of the sacred narrative a civic image, but one in which the piazza is simultaneously a chapel. Amongst parenti the Tornaquinci figure a family gathering, amongst amici a friendly passeggiata or convivio, amongst vicini a civic ceremonial occasion. As donors to a Dominican church and as the corpo of the Church they stand as observers of, or participants in, what Warburg called "a miracle play."<sup>66</sup>

That such a multivalent but consistent reading is possible, even

necessary, is supported by a Florentine tendency to justify action in terms which include not only the commemoration of self, but also the glorification of the family and its future, patriotism and pious veneration. Such was Lorenzo de' Medici's impulse when he addressed his son on his way to a clerical career in Rome:

the city being united to the Church, you will represent the solid chain, and our house is part of the city.

When Giovanni Tornabuoni described his motives in the contract of 1485, he selected certain but several links from this "solid chain":

to decorate the said chapel with noble, worthy, exquisite and decorative paintings ... as an act of piety and love of God, to the exaltation of his house and family and the enhancement of the said church and chapel.<sup>67</sup>

City and self, often "links" in such descriptions, are somewhat subsumed in the chapel, the former under its guise as a City of God, the latter under a corporate identity and a religious humility. Giovanni's two portraits present him in a multivalent and subsumed manner: in the Zacharias scene he stands in civic gown proudly amidst his peers and parenti (Pl. 6), in the window wall fresco (Pl. 24) he kneels in simpler garb opposite a posthumous portrait of his wife, making the prayer gesture connoting supplication and humility.

Less than one hundred years after its execution, Vasari could read the Zacharias fresco quite well, with his invariable eye for portraiture, and within a framework more courtly in its usage of rhetoric and ruler mythology, but still aware of religious and family motives:

nella quale storia, mostrando che a' sacrificij de' tempi concorrono sempre le persone più notabili, per farla più onorata ritrasse un buon numero di cittadini fiorentini che governavano allora quello Stato; e particolarmente tutti quelli di casa Tornabuoni, i giovani ed i vecchi. Oltre a questo, per mostrare che quella età fioriva in ogni sorte di virtù e massimamente nelle lettere ...<sup>68</sup>

The most notable citizens gather "always" to offer their sacrifice or prayer in a family portrait not only of the Tornabuoni but of the Tornaquinci "young and old." The "virtue" of all those present, especially in government and in learning, was even more a Christian and corporate worthiness than Vasari discerned.



C: THE 'EXPULSION OF JOACHIM'

Not envisaged at the time of the contract, the Expulsion of Joachim seems to have been a more popular subject in the Trecento, although it was not included then in either Orcagna's tabernacle at Or San Michele or a large paliotto from S. Maria Novella.<sup>69</sup> When the chapel's programme was adjusted (fig. 5), the Expulsion became a fitting partner to the possibility of female portraiture in the adjacent Birth of the Virgin (Pls 3, 14) and it was also an appropriate counterpart to the Zacharias scene opposite, portraying younger male patrons and the artists in a scene of offering.

(a) Identifications

At the innermost edge of the youthful brigata on the left (Pl. 16) stands a confident twenty-two year old Lorenzo Tornabuoni, Giovanni's heir who had already begun to perpetuate their lineage, becoming a father in 1487 and soon to remarry when he was portrayed in 1490.<sup>70</sup> A magnificent patron mirroring the example of his father, Lorenzo's position of honour and prominence is appropriately placed near the chapel's entrance in the inauguration of a cycle and on the side of a fresco where offerings by youths are accepted in the Temple.

Identification of his three associates is troubled by unclear commentaries and the absence of visual comparisons. Manni's reference in 1746 to the Landucci list gives neither the position nor the sequence of portraits, although he seems to suggest that Lorenzo Tornabuoni and a "Piero" are in the Joachim scene. Startling precision was given instead by Follini in 1795:

Gli altri Ritratti sono: Piero Tornabuoni, Cosimo di Leonardo Bartolini Salimbeni, Alessandro di Francesco di Lutozzo Nasi, e Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornabuoni.<sup>71</sup>

No other plausible suggestions have been offered and Follini's list, notable for its detail, has been accepted by several writers.

Alessandro Nasi, often mentioned as present, would indeed be a

logical inclusion since in 1491 he was to marry Lodovica Tornabuoni who is portrayed in the adjoining scene, having already been named as her fiancé in her father's will of March 1490. Further, because in April 1489 he was one of the witnesses to the legal extension of Ghirlandaio's deadline for the chapel, Alessandro was associated with the family and their chapel in the very years which saw the Joachim scene executed.<sup>72</sup> The second most prominent figure is the man standing behind Lorenzo and mirroring his costume, red calze and cap, a red mantle lined with blue over a green shirt with a white vest showing at the elbows and neck. Such a position and dress would be appropriate to Nasi, future brother-in-law of Lorenzo and successor as the youthful guardian of Lodovica.

No "Cosimo di Leonardo Bartolini Salimbeni" seems to have existed at this time, but another Bartolini was a friend and relative of the Tornabuoni. Leonardo di Zanobi di Zanobi Bartolini (father of a Cosimo?) was the partner of Nofri di Niccolò Tornabuoni in the Medici Bank in Rome by at least 1492, was implicated with Nofri in the Medicean plot that led to Lorenzo's execution in 1497 and was probably the husband of Nofri's daughter Francesca. In 1495 he witnessed Giovanni Tornabuoni's deed to his grandsons and in 1495-96 he became patron of a chapel at Cestello, having explicitly asked for a location near Lorenzo's chapel.<sup>73</sup> Apparently a close friend of Lorenzo's, Leonardo could be the leftmost figure in this brigata or, if he was an older man, he might be the one who stands directly behind Lorenzo.

Both Manni and Follini suggest a "Piero," for whom there are three possibilities (fig. 2), Piero di Filippo di Filippo (1440-1527), Piero di Marabottino di Francesco (c 1454-1498) and Piero di Leonardo di Francesco (1471-post 1515). Either figure in the second rank, behind Lorenzo and "Nasi," might be possible, depending on the age of whichever Piero was chosen. Whilst an argument based on physiognomy alone must remain dubious, the facial type and age of the man immediately behind Lorenzo would suit Piero di Marabottino who, like Nasi and Lorenzo, was soon to be married. On the other hand, the nineteen year old Piero di Leonardo could be the leftmost figure. Patronage at S.Maria Novella by his father, no 4 in the Zacharias fresco, was adequate enough later to merit Piero's own recognition in

the Purification celebrated there in 1495.<sup>74</sup>

As to the four men gathered at the right (Pl. 17), Vasari identified them, from left to right, as David Ghirlandaio, Alesso Baldovinetti, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Sebastiano Mainardi. Other commentators, including those who also refer vaguely to Landucci's identifications, confirm Vasari for three of the four portraits, listing David (simply a "mico" [sic] of Domenico's according to some), then his father Tommaso rather than Baldovinetti, then the self-portrait, and finally Mainardi, "un Garzone" of Domenico's.<sup>75</sup>

Domenico makes the typical glance of all such self-portraits, of necessity executed with the aid of a mirror, and it is a visage easily recognised in other works by him dating from the 1480s (Pls 62, 85).<sup>76</sup> But body language is developed most in S. Maria Novella, possibly the largest fresco cycle completed in Florence during the Quattrocento, where an artist at the peak of his skill and prestige could display himself proudly and visibly to the forefront. His right hand moves towards his chest, half in a gesture of indication to himself as the artist responsible, half in a gesture which echoes that of a faithful female in the midground who brings her offerings to the altar. Domenico too is offering, both to the viewer and their shared God, a work of art in which portraiture enables so many to live in eternal worship and salvation. Here he donates his artistic skill, in a church which was the site of his family's burials and under the aegis of an Order whose founder was Domenico's name saint.<sup>77</sup>

Domenico's other hand rests securely and confidently on his hip. In the Sassetti chapel his self-portrait had also employed hand on hip, gaze outwards and robe draped over the shoulder, but five or so years of development clearly shows in the much more energetic mass occupying more space, with arms and legs further spread, and in the more mature, determined face and elegant dress. Over a blue pleated costume, a red robe is gathered in animated folds across the legs and over the left shoulder. The leading figure in profile wears a purple cloth over a brocaded blue costume, in a similar bravado manner. Whether such body language reflects the Florentine habit of "throwing the tails of their coats up over their shoulders" when at work, as a

Venetian described in 1527, the impression is certainly one of "an expeditious man and one who gets through much work," which is how Domenico was praised by an anonymous Milanese in the 1480s.<sup>78</sup>

Domenico shows himself in an active, assured posture like that of Lorenzo Tornabuoni and similarly engages the viewer's eye. Both men are accompanied by three members of a clan or brigata. In the Sassetti chapel Domenico and one assistant were squeezed into the extreme right of a fresco (Pl. 62); now he and his associates are recognised in a far less marginal manner, honoured by inclusion and by their relationship to the patron's son. Domenico's companion in the Sassetti chapel now stands behind him, still looking to Domenico as the head of the bottega but with his lips apart as though about to speak, and his position is one of greater plausibility and comfort. Vasari is the source used by all writers to identify the man as Sebastiano Mainardi (c 1460-1513), one-time apprentice and now Domenico's collaborator and brother-in-law, whose age and status are appropriate to this rightmost figure.<sup>79</sup>

The leftmost figure, wearing a sweeping violet expanse of drapery over blue velvet, has an active stance, legs akimbo, reacting to Joachim's propulsion with his hand and twisted pose away from his fellows, opening his mouth and apparently looking across to Lorenzo. Identified as "Davitte Ghirlandaio" by Vasari, the portrait's prominence would also suggest that he is Domenico's brother and partner, who signed the contract too and here joins the workshop's physiognomical "signature," just as the BIGHORDI and GRILLANDAI inscriptions in the adjacent fresco are in the plural (Pl. 15). Although three years younger than Domenico, he has a less idealised face and a more weather beaten and practical air than is suggested by the elegance of his brother's pose and costume.<sup>80</sup>

David, Domenico and Sebastiano were each members of the same workshop and family. Neither Baldovinetti nor Tommaso Ghirlandaio (a "sensale" in 1480) fit both categories at once.<sup>81</sup> Since Domenico's self-portrait bespeaks his professional pride, it is possible that the principle of selection here was weighted more towards profession than family membership, in which case Vasari's identification of the old

man as Baldovinetti is correct. Benedetto Landucci's list, as far as it can be reconstructed from its vague and fragmentary publication, seems to have named Domenico and his father. Consequently, Vasari's identification of the old man has been universally replaced by Tommaso, a man of almost the same age as Baldovinetti. Yet Vasari was often well informed about the Ghirlandaio shop, whereas Landucci was called in as an expert witness for the identification of Tornaquinci neighbours and could have simply deduced that an older man next to Domenico was his father, whom he could not identify by name. Furthermore, a fresco fragment of a full-face portrait (Pl. 48), from the Gianfigliuzzi chapel in S.Trinita by Baldovinetti and now in Bergamo, is a younger representation of the "Baldovinetti" face in S. Maria Novella and is concordant with that artist's style. There would have been no reason for any artist, besides Domenico, to portray Tommaso Bighordi; indeed the few writers who notice this fragment call it Baldovinetti's self-portrait.<sup>82</sup>

Vasari's life of Baldovinetti mentions the portrait at S. Maria Novella in association with Ghirlandaio's training ("Insegnò Alesso il magisterio de' mosaici a Domenico Ghirlandaio"), whereas in the latter's Vita Baldovinetti is referred to as "maestro di Domenico nella pittura e nel mosaico." An independent and early source, a Memoriale written by Francesco Baldovinetti in 1514, also states that "quello del Ghrillandaia" was Alesso's disciple in mosaic, without noting at what time.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, art historians favour other masters for Ghirlandaio, particularly mentioning Verrocchio, although it is still posited that Baldovinetti played some earlier but minor role.<sup>84</sup> I would suggest that any previous association between Baldovinetti and Domenico was resurrected during the late 1480s, when the prestigious revival of mosaic work was being undertaken by Lorenzo de' Medici. Documents on the involvement of these two men, and of David Ghirlandaio, in the rebirth of mosaic are plentiful, supporting Vasari's repeated mention of mosaic as the art taught by Baldovinetti to Domenico.<sup>85</sup> Indeed one of only two documented contacts between the men concerns mosaic (1487), while the other is also late (1491), and both suggest Domenico's equality with Alesso.<sup>86</sup> This exciting revival of an ancient medium could be the reason for Baldovinetti's commemoration in the chapel, where he stands as a venerable, almost

ancestral, maestro, one more example of many such group portraits of artists.<sup>87</sup>

Whether Domenico painted his maestro Baldovinetti or his padre Tommaso, he has surrounded himself with honourable associates and taken the tradition of such professional groupings to a new level of pride and activation. In the adjoining scene he placed elaborate signatures of a verbal sort, BIGHORDI and GRILLANDAI clearly visible amidst the innovative and fictive gilt intarsia panels in St. Anne's bedroom (Pl. 15). The workshop's visual signature in the Joachim fresco places them on an equal footing with a group of "donors" and presents them in active, engaged postures. Their gestures register narrative actions; David's right heel, Domenico's gaze and elbow, each obtrude into the viewer's space; both groups of four portraits are aware of themselves and their counterparts opposite. If, as van Os says, self-portraiture earlier in the century was showing the artist in "a subjective relationship with his art," it can be added that here an assured relationship with the patron is also evident.<sup>88</sup> Visual consciousness, religious sensibility and family commemoration were each understood by Ghirlandaio in his own portrayal, as well as in that of his patrons.

#### (b) Significations

Ghirlandaio modelled much of his scene (Pl. 14) on Giovanni da Milano's depiction, begun at the Rinuccini chapel, S.Croce, in 1365, such as the predominant, arched temple, Joachim's placement on the foreground plane, a contrasted acceptance of offerings from younger men and particularly the figure groups at each edge. But neither da Milano's stern rejection, which Meiss read as "institutional," nor Giotto's personal intensity, are shown by Ghirlandaio.<sup>89</sup> Joachim moves, not towards an isolating void, but in the direction of the adjacent Birth, his momentum picked up by the continuous witnesses and following on from the priest, who stands close behind rather than at the usual expelling distance. The group of witnesses nearby, common to most scenes, is more integrated with Joachim's movement and spatial location. He is no longer so alienated or forlorn and he holds the lamb in a protective but not desperate state, soon to be assured and

childless no more.

Joachim's rejection is contrasted with the receipt of offerings from now very young supplicants who approach the altar in the midground. This traditional acceptance from "men who bore sons"<sup>90</sup> is now quite a separate moment, emphasised by an unprecedented spatial tunnel and architectural centralisation, so that it is a clearly visible yet seemingly everyday occurrence. The young men of the foreground brigata (Pl. 16), particularly Lorenzo, are aptly positioned on the side of acceptance where fertility is promised, dressed in the same red and green as their fellow supplicant. Both the Zacharias narrative opposite and this Joachim story treated the fertility and continuation of a family, the narrative of offering and prayer before an altar in an Old Testament temple, and allowed the presence of many witnesses (Pl. 2). While the Protoevangelium referred to "the children of Israel" at the welcoming altar, the Golden Legend placed "his kinsmen" there.<sup>91</sup> More important for a link with the "patron portrait" opposite was the theme of offering, since Joachim was an ideal model for a donor, renowned for his liberality and ultimately blessed by the Lord.<sup>92</sup> The Tornabuoni men and in-laws supplicate not only for their family's continuation but also as religious donors.

Any Expulsion of Joachim treated offerings rejected and accepted but Ghirlandaio stressed donation in a variety of ways. The centralisation and clarity of the offering at the altar was one, a relief therein depicting a sacrificial ritual another. Donor portraits stand near the oblation on the left, Domenico Ghirlandaio's own gesture of donation mirrors that of a female carrying offerings to the altar in the background near him. Women had been shown very rarely in an Expulsion, the chief exception being Ghirlandaio's main model, where Giovanni da Milano ranked many women on the right side of a temple to accompany the male members of the temple's corpo on the left. But there every "kinsman" carries a lamb, so the doves placed by Ghirlandaio in the women's basket are unusual. They refer to the offerings carried by a woman to the temple after childbirth, just as did the Virgin at her Purification, offering "a pair of turtle doves, which was the offering of the poor, a yearling lamb being the offering

of the rich."<sup>93</sup>

The same basket and doves are held by Joseph in the window's Purification (Pl. 30), a visual reference reinforced in the fresco by an inscription from the liturgy for that feast day which runs along the temple's frieze:

VENIET AD TE(M)PLVM SA(N)CTV(M) SVV(M) D(OMI)NATOR.

This prophecy of imminent grace (Malachi 3:1) refers to Christ's advent, borne by Mary who was the tabernacle of the Church, after which "right offerings [offerentes sacrificia] to the Lord" (v.3) will be acceptable from a purified nation. Joachim need show little perturbation since "presently the Lord, whom you seek, ... shall come to His temple." The sacrificial lamb at the altar will soon be supplanted by the Agnus Dei, which forms the vault's central roundel (Pl. 26).<sup>94</sup> So the donors can also be confident that their prayers will be accepted and salvation assured.

Ghirlandaio's sturdy Temple of Jerusalem is a traditional and necessary attribute for the narrative, but he makes of it a modern and open structure, with more urban, exterior surrounds than ever before. Flanking palaces and background loggia all harmonise with the Temple's neo-classicism, leaving only a polygonal altar, decorated with mosaic inlay and an International Style warrior kneeling in one relief, to signify the old order. The subjects depicted on all the reliefs are also consonant with their Old Testament setting. Ghirlandaio makes a rare and deliberate choice of Old Testament heroes rather than his more usual classical infills.<sup>95</sup> The two central reliefs appropriately show supplication and sacrifice, the two flanking ones celebrate victory. The two winged victories on the Temple's foremost spandrels further stress the entrance or advent of the Lord and divine succour; certainly the Temple's modern guise and Greek cross plan suggest the Christian era sub gratia. The Virgin's cycle has begun, the supplicant's offering has been accepted.

All the fresco's other reliefs allude to a classicised era, and Thomas concludes that "the very fact that these reliefs defy



identification tells us that the master could rely on a personal vision of the antique." Offerhaus draws the same conclusion about the architecture calling it "een fantasiegebouw" in which the foreground features were influenced by Giuliano da Sangallo, Cronaca and Ghiberti.<sup>96</sup> Inventive awareness of the Sangallesque style is also indicated by the two palaces at either edge which most closely resemble examples by Giuliano or his school built later than the fresco. The temples built on a Greek cross plan here and in the Zacharias scene may refer to da Sangallo's current revival of the form at S. Maria delle Carceri, Prato.<sup>97</sup> Another edifice already well underway and designed by Giuliano da Sangallo influenced the basic architectural scheme of Ghirlandaio's Massacre of the Innocents (Pl. 21), where the open balustrade above an arch either side of a central block recurs at Lorenzo de' Medici's villa at Poggio a Caiano. The villa's first reflection in a painting and directly below a representation of an earlier Medici villa at Fiesole (Pl. 22), this structure shows Domenico capable of a "personal vision" in architecture too.<sup>98</sup>

He could rework an idea so much that its inspiration is difficult to recognise. On the other hand, the loggia behind the Temple in the Expulsion has been related to the facade of S. Paolo which stands in the piazza opposite S. Maria Novella's facade but was not completed until 1496. The recent investigation of its building history by Goldthwaite and Rearick now grants due credit to Ghirlandaio's imagination:

The organisation of Ghirlandaio's loggia is clearly not a direct representation of Michelozzo's facade, but the compilation of elements found there strongly suggests that the painter had the still abuilding loggia in mind when he invented his design.

A thoughtful invention more than a "vrije kopie," the loggia places the younger donors in the idealised piazza of the church the Tornaquinci consorteria "founded."<sup>99</sup> Their elders and exemplars in the Zacharias scene are patrons also standing in or near an idealised piazza-cum-temple which is also based on a Greek cross plan. Their milieu, however, is not represented as a topographically accurate view of Florence. Instead they are present on an idealised stage, and depicted in the most up to date Sangallesque idiom, amidst airy

portals and classicised features which represent the *TEMPLVM SANCTVM*. The Lord's advent and Incarnation in "the most beautiful city" is ever imminent.

D: NARRATIVES WITH FEMALE PORTRAITS

In the Tornaquinci chapel portraiture is distributed carefully according to the narrative's import. Stories oriented towards the blessing of males and the acknowledgement of their offering in temple settings open each cycle in scenes closest to the entrance and containing male portraits. The next two stories in each cycle, and then the Birth of John, are populated by female saints and portraits (Pls 8, 9, 15); in all, five scenes lead up to and culminate in births, just those five containing portraits. All family portraits are in the lowest two registers, closest to the viewer, near the officiating priest, choral arena and tabernacle; an audience engaged in ritual action is addressed and joined by the portraits of their fellows.

Women seek and offer thanks for a blessing upon their fertility. Warburg, incorrectly believing that Giovanni Tornabuoni died in 1488 and that changes to the programme brought the Zacharias and Visitation scenes closer to the spectator (fig. 5), divined what still appears a probable interpretation, that the frescoes are

a pictorial thank-offering for family blessings and  
a prayer in effigy for intercession in favour of  
continued prosperous fertility.<sup>100</sup>

Yet the portraits also carry other meanings of a family and religious nature. All portraits are dignified and sober, aware of their exemplary role before their audience and within their visual context. The family's elders are models to be mirrored; the younger members are following an honourable example. The women in particular also observe social prescriptions as to their domestic, demure and chaste behaviour.

(a) The 'Birth of the Virgin'

Like Lorenzo, his sister Lodovica stands at the head of a group of companions, in the adjacent Birth of the Virgin (Pls 15, 18, 19).

Ghirlandaio portrays her older and more refined of feature than in her medal (Pl. 45), which was executed in 1485 when the chapel's decoration commenced as another form of family commemoration. Giovanni Tornabuoni's only female offspring, she was fourteen in 1490, married to Alessandro Nasi in 1491 but affianced by March 1490. The reverse of her earlier medal depicted a bird on a leafy branch with flying scroll above, and a unicorn whose virginal reference was an appropriate one for a young girl in a society which emphasised female honour and chastity.<sup>101</sup> Her placement in the Birth of the Virgin then is iconographically acute, suiting her socially ideal image as a perfect bride-to-be.

Lodovica's young and virginal state is also declared in medal and fresco by her falling length of unbraided hair, since married women did not let their hair hang loose.<sup>102</sup> Her jewellery and costume are also significant, for their decorative richness marks her out from her chaperons as a woman of status and substance. Ghirlandaio's placement of her, the convincing portrayal of a decorous and demure carriage, and his silhouetting of her gold brocade against blue and dark recessed colours accentuate Lodovica's importance and exemplary character. Both Lorenzo and Lodovica are depicted by Ghirlandaio in ways which suggest a subtle understanding of ideals, of individual character and of a child's value to his patron, Giovanni.

Lodovica may well be displaying her bridal gown and some of the jewellery which was part of her dowry (Pls 18, 19), meticulously described by her father in his will of March 1490. Whether bridal or best gown, the heavy brocade hangs to the fresco's very edge, forming a swelling stable pyramidal base for her stately mass, particularly evident when the viewer gazes up at the necessary oblique angle. Her costume identifies her as Giovanni's daughter by bearing his diamond device.<sup>103</sup> Such heraldic decorations were often displayed on clothing, especially in female portraiture, since their individual name was less important than their family identity. Her visage and her family device, each prominent, act as signs of honour and group identity. She is shown as an exemplary and chaste girl, about to become a child-bearing woman.

Each Birth narrative in the chapel (Pls 9, 15) contains the centralised figure of a leading lady who is a representative praying for salvation and fertility. Lodovica is distinguished more than the woman visiting St. Elizabeth, having a larger entourage, richer dress with legible arme, standing in a more sumptuous interior and in a position closer to the viewer. The unusual absence of servants behind the bed, still placed there in the preparatory drawing (Pl. 27), enables the clear display of the grotesche and emphasises Lodovica at the head of a frieze-like procession in the foreground. In the drawing Lodovica's own gesture and turned body drew attention to herself, but now more subtle and decorous means are employed to focus upon her modest profile. Movement and glance either side of her golden pyramid accentuates Lodovica's central position; a midwife and the newborn babe address her as though she is about to receive the child in her arms. Lodovica seeks the blessing granted to Joachim and Anna. Present in the antechamber or, in Lodovica's case fully admitted to the inner chamber, the women are part of the "universal world" cited in the room's inscription, joyfully witnessing the birth celebrated in the feast day's liturgy, praying for salvation and the Virgin's advocacy ("pro nobis intercedat").

All the portrayed women seek to follow the Virgin's example and merit God's mercy, to be received daily in the Lord's temple, through the Virgin's intercession and blessing, as the Dominican Archbishop Antonino had recently written:

Et sic per exempla vitae ejus 'suscepimus  
misericordiam' regulae et directionis bene vivendi,  
et per merita et preces ejus misericordiam ...  
'Suscepimus' ergo, O Deus, et suscipimus quotidie  
'misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui,' id est per  
Mariam, et laus tibi in saecula.

Women were commonly advised "vivere ad assempro de la Vergine Madonna Santa Maria" and all five portraits in her Birth (Pl. 18) would have warranted inclusion as upright representatives.<sup>104</sup> For the costume or face of three of these women, a meticulous drawing survives (eg Pl. 28), indicating the importance attached to their depiction.<sup>105</sup>

Behind Lodovica they are dignified and soberly dressed, befitting a public appearance by older women. Here and in the Baptist's Birth, the entourage shows a variety of age but all wear white mantles.

Lodovica's oldest companion is dressed in black with a white wimple as well as mantle, the costume many venerable matrons wear at depictions of both secular and sacred Births where the ritual of visitation was portrayed.<sup>106</sup> She and no doubt some of the companions are examples of Antonino's description of the ideal widow, "mater et virgo" like the Virgin Mary herself. Properly attired, without cosmetics and staying indoors, just as required by S. Bernardino or Savonarola, they venerate a "bedroom image" of the Virgin.<sup>107</sup> Worshippers, imitators and visitors, their portraits place them eternally in a visible and pious realm where they supplicate and imitate on behalf of themselves and their family for all time. To strengthen the efficacy of their prayers all portraits in the chapel pray in groups.

Let us gather together for our virtù is small.  
United it has great force.<sup>108</sup>

They are present in a cappella maggiore but within another fictive world the women in both Birth narratives appear in domestic environments where religious ritual was practiced and sacred images displayed, where "private" space in "the most beautiful city" was to be holy too.

The signature of the Ghirlandaio family workshop adorns the delicately gilded grotesche which simulate intarsia work on the birth chamber's panelling. The first painted reflection of recent discoveries in the Domus Aurea, this signed work is below another proud display of fashionable classicism, the frieze of putti who frolic and perform music around the sacred chamber.<sup>109</sup> Fully modelled against a plain dark background, these lithe figures deny their fictional marble medium and are almost too insistently present. Nearly as bereft of precise classical precedent as Donatello's dancing and musical angels on the Prato pulpit and the Florence cantoria, they are also equally readable in a Christian context, as signs of "Christian jubilation ... in the celestial sphere." Offerhaus has rightly linked them with the inscription under their feet:<sup>110</sup>

NATIVITAS TVA DEI GENITRIX VIRGO GAUDIVM  
ANNVNTIAVIT UNIVERSO MVNDO.

From the antiphon at the Magnificat during second vespers for the feast day of the Virgin's Nativity, it finishes the feast as it begins, "cum jucunditate."

The antiphon ends with Sol Justitiae bringing the reward of "life everlasting," another theme which may be reflected by the joy and source of the putti, since these creatures, usually winged, often appeared on tombs to personify the soul, or as angels musically accompanying the soul to paradise and celebrating resurrection. Derived from Dionysiac sarcophagi, Ghirlandaio's amorini or Christian psychopomps hold a common assemblage of lyres or harps, fruitbowl, rhyton, cymbals and Pan pipes. They are also appropriate embellishments of a noble interior, similar perhaps to the

2 banbinj doratj abbracciatj insieme

owned by the Tornabuoni. Four of the frescoed putti also embrace, in a gesture eloquent of joy, sensuality and fertility. In Lorenzo de' Medici's words, Pan was "the lord of death and of birth" and the Pan pipes in Ghirlandaio's frieze are one of many musical instruments which celebrate both the new birth and the accompaniment of a soul on its heavenly progress.<sup>111</sup> As with the artist's treatment of a triumphal arch and its reliefs in the Zacharias fresco, here too classical forms are not exclusively pagan.

Donatello and Filippino Lippi, the latter in the very chapel adjacent to that of the Tornaquinci, could associate dancing winged putti or piping amorini with the celebration of the Virgin's purity and glory.<sup>112</sup> Ghirlandaio's musical joy is akin to the cause of the feast's introduction into the liturgical calendar, when "a certain holy man" was annually visited by "the voices of the most joyous company of the angels, raised in solemn song" which urged him to have the "Holy Church ... join with the heavenly court in celebrating her nativity." One of the four chief Mariological feasts, it was celebrated regularly at S. Maria Novella's high altar and a Tornaquinci bequest obligated the convent to say "un' rinovale" on the Octave. Not only the frescoed inscription but the festal liturgy's whole tone treated gaudium at the inauguration of the new covenant, as do both Old Testament parallels and writings by the Church Fathers.<sup>113</sup> The joyful tenor of the liturgy for the Virgin's Assumption, to which the chapel was probably dedicated, also affects the overall note of hope and salvation in the chapel's decoration.

A second frieze, running above Elizabeth's bed, is less noticeable, being unlit by the rays of Sol Justitiae streaming in from the fenestra coeli nearby.<sup>114</sup> Two semi-clothed figures stagger in a drunken stupor and none of the six amarini engage in music or dance, one only being active enough to pour, from a narrow amphora into a crater, what is surely wine. In comparison, the well lit putti, exuberantly dancing or embracing, seem to illustrate the Song of Songs passage, "we will extol your love more than wine" (1:4, 4:10). Unaware of the cause of their fellows' joy, debased by lustful pursuits, these drunken pagans are not purified by music and are of the Old era, contrasting also with the other depicted act of pouring which occurs diagonally below them. A servant in rustic costume arrives and in one continuous, fluid motion pours water into a gilt bowl which will be used for the ritual purification of infant and mother.

Such a conspicuous and energetic emphasis on the pouring was rare in previous representations of the Birth of the Virgin and Ghirlandaio's preparatory drawing (Pl. 27) had not included any element of the babe's first bath. Nor had one of his chief inspirations, Filippo Lippi's tondo of the Virgin and Child with the Birth of the Virgin (Pl. 83), which source is more evident in the drawing than the fresco.<sup>115</sup> Lippi's tondo and the drawing have more visitors in the background and the usual servants behind the bed, as well as the architectural division beyond which Joachim and Anna meet at the head of a flight of stairs. The angles of the receding architecture, the different distribution of figures and the direction of Lodovica's gesture in the drawing indicate that it was envisaged for the opening position in the cycle, to be viewed more from the chapel's centre.

It seems that a rethinking of the Birth was instigated when the contract's programme was altered (fig. 5); this scene was shifted to second place and Lorenzo Tornabuoni's gaze and gesture directly engaged the viewer instead. Lodovica now stands in grave, modest profile and it is a midwife who turns in a movement parallel to the wall surface, drawing the eye back towards Lodovica. A standing, stretching midwife in the drawing became the fleet water-bearer and

her changed compositional and iconographic role requires a second, careful drawing (Pl. 29) where draperies are meticulously hatched and furled to suggest the impetus and importance of her action. She now forms a pair with the "nymph" in the Birth of John (Pl. 12), similarly dressed in a rustic costume, energised in a neo-classical manner, carrying a significant burden and forming a directional focus on the right-hand border.

The presence, activity and energy of the water carrier bring a focus to the bath which was a motif frequently adopted by Italian artists, especially the Sieneese, from an originally Byzantine type. The prominence sometimes accorded the bath and its paraphernalia argues against Lafontaine-Dosogne's dismissal of the Italian usage as mere "genre." The Birth designed by Jacopo Bellini is the most evident instance of a bathing scene where the liturgical, almost sacramental, elements of blessing and purification are paramount.<sup>116</sup> Over a large wooden tub in the foreground two midwives hold a chalice-like ewer by its stem, into the narrow neck of which one dips her hand as though about to sprinkle holy water over the naked babe. One of three visitors bends forward and prays in humble adoration. At the panel's other edge St. Anne sits upright from her bed and gestures in prayer toward a servant who holds a bowl and appears to bless the mother with the other hand. Many Sieneese artists, when depicting the Birth of their city's patron saint, also chose to focus on the acts of washing or purification and often a servant poured water into a bowl, preparatory to Anne's lavation. That Ghirlandaio's servant pours into a bowl too small to accomodate an infant and that no servants appear behind Anne's bed, contrary to the invariable custom, suggests that both rituals have been conflated. One prominent servant and one bowl signify that the cleansed purity of a new order is beginning and that the "fountains of (living) water" will flow.<sup>117</sup>

The water pours past another small element which appears genre-like because of its realistic clarity in a well furnished environment. But two keys in the cupboard beneath Anne's bed cast a distinctive shadow and are isolated legibly in the foreground. No doubt they refer to the Virgin's sealed and intact nature, just as elements like a hortus conculus could refer to her virginity in other



Births. Such a small, seemingly insignificant detail as the keys is treated with a care for surface appearance which has allowed observers to read the fresco's ensemble as secular in decor and purpose. The room may be "typical of a lavishly appointed Florentine Renaissance palace" designed by Giuliano da Sangallo, in which wood panelling, decorative motifs "all 'antica," bed stand, vaulted hallway and so on recall the most public features of the Tornabuoni palace itself. However, too often the conclusion is then drawn that

The central theme of mother and holy infant is almost overshadowed in both [Births] by subsidiary motifs: visiting relatives and friends, servants, furniture, and decor. <sup>118</sup>

On the contrary, it can be argued that both Births conflate secular and religious rituals, clothe Christian and social meanings in classical and contemporary guise, depict signs with a genre-like realism and treat the visual and spiritual world as parts of one holistic continuum. Many of the architectural features can be read as references to the Virgin as the thalamus or tabernacle of the Lord; the gilt entablature which girds the scene for instance suggests "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat" in the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:5).<sup>119</sup> Other details remember the Virgin as window, gate and stairway to heaven, the mediatrix and way to paradise celebrated in the liturgy for the feast day. To place the Virgin's birth in "una camera molto ornata," as Vasari described Domenico Veneziano's setting, was an established tradition (eg Pl. 83), so neither the contemporaneity nor the nobility of Ghirlandaio's choice was unusual.<sup>120</sup> His eye for the latest fashions operates here, as in the adjacent Joachim scene, towards the creation of a dignified and idealised religious istoria, where the advent of the new order in the ideal city is celebrated.

#### (b) The 'Visitation'

The young women standing on the right side of the Visitation (Pls 8, 10) have been identified here as Giovanna Albizzi followed by her temporal and functional successor, Lorenzo Tornabuoni's second wife, Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi.<sup>121</sup> As someone who has not left her father's house, the Gianfigliuzzi girl is given no heraldic attribute,

anonymous rather than a member of an alien clan. The exemplary Giovanna, dead but mother of a Tornabuoni son, has been appropriated to the Tornabuoni in a commemorative and restrained way, for the diamond emblem on her dress is singular rather than grouped into the cluster of three which forms a larger diamond on Lodovica's gown in the fresco opposite (Pl. 18). The older woman behind them might be Lucrezia Tornabuoni, who was patron of a chapel dedicated to the Visitation in S. Lorenzo; her physiognomical type and costume certainly mark her as a venerable Tornabuoni widow.<sup>122</sup>

Early in the narrative of John's life but late in execution, the Visitation brings the lives of Christ, the Virgin and the Baptist together in one scene, even more appropriately than was done in the Purification. When

Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe [John] leaped in her womb; ... for joy. (Luke 1:41, 44).

In turn, John was sanctified by Christ, his mission of prophecy begun and the Advent proclaimed. But the Virgin as recipient of "John's joyous greeting,"<sup>123</sup> dedicatee of the chapel and intercessor for mankind, is the focus of the fresco as she is in the festal liturgy. Sources including the Bulls which instituted and confirmed the feast day, the missal and Lucrezia Tornabuoni's poetry each praised the Virgin as had Elizabeth:

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1: 42-43)

In her capacity as merciful mediatrix, the Virgin brought succour to Elizabeth and assistance to mankind, bearing the Salvator Mundi. The universal feast, composed by a Dominican, was instituted by Urban VI in 1389 and confirmed several times, Sixtus IV doing so in 1475.<sup>124</sup> These bulls solicited Mary's visitation to the Church to deliver it from the schismatics and later the Turks, although the plea was also a universal one for protection, peace and unity. Several notable features in Ghirlandaio's fresco could refer to the Virgin's role as protector and as the means whereby man could enter paradise, a

paradise shown in the panorama of city and landscape behind. The wooden bridge, for instance, connecting an arch of the old order to the City of God and enabling a view of a large church with a tall campanile, could refer to the Virgin as the "pons sublimis," the means whereby Christ descended to earth and man could ascend to heaven. So too the stepped street may be the earliest visual reference in a Visitation to the Virgin as what the pseudo-Augustine called "scala coelestis," which had much the same meaning as the bridge.<sup>125</sup>

The steps lead to an open city gate, or Porta Coeli, just as the Virgin was praised in the litanies as the "open gate of heaven" and the "entrance of paradise," through whom also could occur the advent of the King of Glory, a theme treated in the adjacent Zacharias scene which is visually linked to the Visitation by the continuation of a Triumphal Arch (Pls 2, 4). While the sea-thiasos on this secondary arch may have sepulchral connotations apt for a scene containing the posthumous portrait of Giovanna Albizzi, the theme of battle and victory set on the Arch of the Temple of Jerusalem in the Zacharias fresco is carried on in this subsidiary one which acts as the traditional portal to Zacharias' house. Both "gates of victory" (Psalm 118:19) promise deliverance and make of their urban backdrop a house of the Lord or Heavenly Jerusalem, a "Temple of the Living God."<sup>126</sup>

Possibly the Visitation reliefs remember Miriam's song, praising God's help in the crossing of the Red Sea:

Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.  
(Exodus 15:21)

Miriam was an Old Testament prototype for the Virgin and this song of deliverance was a precursor to Mary's Magnificat, pronounced at the Visitation (Luke 1: 46-55). She praised the Lord's "mercy" and "strength" for He had "scattered the proud" and "put down the mighty." The second Lucan canticle, Zacharias' Benedictus (Luke 1: 68-79), again celebrated "a horn of salvation" and can be associated with the imagery of the triumphal arch in the Zacharias fresco. One of the sources for Zacharias' song had welcomed deliverance and "a city to dwell in" (Psalm 107:7) and the backdrops in each fresco are vistas of that urban world sub gratia.<sup>127</sup> The figures standing at the beginning

of the bridge in the Visitation look up at "the day" which shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:78-79).

A Triumphal Arch signified victory and eternal peace, the PACE celebrated in the chapel's dedication inscription. Another noticeable architectural feature, the obliquely foreshortened wall running along the stepped street, could suggest unity and salvation, themes also central to the Visitation's liturgy. Despite its bulk and spatial sharpness, the wall unites the composition, pulling background into foreground, linking arch and bridge with city gate, Old with New, garden with cityscape and the Virgin with her metaphor, the Porta Coeli. The city of peace and salvation is particularly noted in the Bible by the presence of gates, towers and sturdy walls.<sup>128</sup> Another Old Testament song of victory which prefigured the Magnificat, for instance, described the city of righteousness and peace:

We have a strong city; he sets up  
Salvation as walls and bulwarks.  
Open the gates, that the righteous  
nation which keeps faith may enter in  
(Isaiah 26: 1-2).

The "house of the Lord" was described in the Psalms as "Jerusalem, built as a city which is bound firmly together" wherein "peace" dwelt "within your walls, and security within your towers" (Psalm 122).

Christ, as the cornerstone of the Church's repaired walls, and as our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14),

was the bringer of peace and the builder of one body, a united Church.<sup>129</sup> Both the Church on earth and the Civitas Dei were marked by the peace, unity and unassailable protection sought by the Visitation feast day. Such a prayer was answered by John's prophetic message, Christ's Incarnation and the Virgin's mercy. The visited city was a "Paradiso pieno di Dio" in the words of an anonymous, possibly Dominican, text from the Trecento which influenced many artists.<sup>130</sup> More particularised than the architecture in the Zacharias scene, the city has been identified as Rome or Florence, but

it is an imprecise, allegorical topography. A large round temple there for instance, which looked more like the Florentine Cathedral in the sketch, may be a fanciful portrayal of the Pantheon which was then better known as a temple dedicated to the Virgin. Simply a domed, circular building, a "Templum Domini" which was a symbol of the Virgin, this construction by Ghirlandaio, like the other churches and towers in his backdrop, was a generic reference to Mary, Ecclesia and Paradise.<sup>131</sup>

The gestural language of the two saints meeting relates to another Old Testament prefiguration:

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
righteousness and peace will kiss each other (Psalm  
85:10).

The central action was sometimes shown as an active embrace and Ghirlandaio's preparatory sketch had given more energy to the figures than we see in the final, stately and nearly equal gesture, their arms and wrists forming an unbreakable bridge between Old and New. A Giottesque feel for the dignity of monumental figures swathed in flowing drapes here presents two saintly mothers who embody the Church and its members. Elizabeth, dressed in the colours reserved for her son when he is depicted in the stained glass niche (Pl. 33), acts as his vessel, greeting Christ and uttering the Credo.<sup>132</sup>

For Mary, the incredible news of the Annunciation is confirmed and she is truly the tabernacle of the Lord.<sup>133</sup> Ghirlandaio's Visitation for Lorenzo Tornabuoni's chapel at Cestello (Pl. 58), which commemorated Giovanna Albizzi, developed this motif of the Virgin as the bearer of the sacrament by placing Elizabeth in a kneeling position of worship, touching the sacred place in awe and wearing a maniple over her left shoulder as a further sign of humility and veneration.<sup>134</sup> In the rectangular format of the fresco, Ghirlandaio instead preferred two standing figures within a continuous isocephalic frieze and he figuratively refers to the Kiss of Peace made by the Magi on the journey and henceforward common in liturgical rituals.<sup>135</sup> Here, in a prefiguration of that Epiphany, the embrace and future Kiss emphasise "steadfast" unity and reconciliation.

The Visitation was a subject "rich in symbolic allusion," able to

encompass themes

of humility and joyful praise, of homage, of the recognition of Christ, and of the complex workings of the Holy Spirit... [as well as] allusions to divine assistance.<sup>136</sup>

More usually in cycles of the Virgin's life, the Visitation nevertheless also suits the special nature of John the Baptist who was the last of the prophets but also, because of the salutations exchanged at the Visitation, a babe born sanctified. Filled with the Holy Spirit and blessed by Christ, John leaped in the womb, recognising Christ and thereby beginning "his mission as precursor."<sup>137</sup> The Theophany or appearance of the Trinity that occurred at Christ's Baptism (Pl. 4) is here prefigured and the sacrament foretold.<sup>138</sup> Similarly Elizabeth also prefigures the Epiphany by recognising the advent of Christ the Saviour. The Baptist, like the Virgin, was a special bridge between the Old law and the new grace.

John's joyful leap when, in Elizabeth's words, "the voice of your greeting came to my ears" (Luke 1:44) was difficult to visualise and the imagery of the feast day's beautiful epistle was chosen by Ghirlandaio to evoke the joy and promise of the meeting.

The voice of my beloved ... comes leaping upon the mountains ... behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice, ... the winter is past ... and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its [green] figs ... O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the [wall], let me see your face, let me hear your voice ... (Song of Songs 2: 8-14).

Wall, green figs shooting from the wall and from behind Giovanna (Pl. 10), mountains, birds, rock clefts and five faceless figures gazing over the wall are all present in Ghirlandaio's paradise.<sup>139</sup> The fruitful regeneration and Elizabeth's greeting,

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! (Luke 1:42)

are apt for the portrayal of women who here stand in a scene without the usual male companions Zacharias or Joseph. Lorenzo's past and future wives, probably accompanied by the older Lucrezia, show the continuation of marriage through time, mirror exemplary family models

and pray for the blessing of fertility. Standing behind Elizabeth, they too seek Mary's divine assistance and witness the forthcoming advent, as did the liturgy. They pray for PACE, for the fruitfulness of a paradise, for eternal salvation, which will be theirs through the mercy of the Virgin's intercession, their recognition of the sanctification of their city's patron saint and their welcoming of the Incarnation.

(c) The 'Birth of John'

Both Birth stories contain a female entourage led by a more richly dressed, younger woman who stands slightly apart. In the Birth of John (Pls 9, 11), the haunting rather wistful face of the older but patrician equivalent to Lodovica eludes certain identification. Recently Anrep-Bjurling and Offerhaus have noted that the woman's necklace is identical to that worn by the leading portrait in the Visitation (Pl. 10), although only the latter then deduces that the woman in the Birth is also Giovanna Albizzi.<sup>140</sup> The pendant, which appears nowhere else in the chapel, does recur in Giovanna's commemorative panel and medal (Pls 44, 47). The face itself in the Birth is presented in three-quarter view and must be compared with three profile portraits of Giovanna, and it can only be said to be a possible likeness. The chin, jawline, forehead, eyebrows, hair, long neck and rather meditative eye with a puffed socket above and deep hollows below, as seen in the medal, are compatible with the features of the woman in the Birth of John. No other young female seems likely to have been chosen for portrayal in the chapel. Masses established by Giovanni Tornabuoni commemorated his daughter Lodovica, daughter-in-law Giovanna and dead wife Francesca, who are the only women, together with Ginevra Gianfigliuzzi and Lucrezia, for whom we have other portraits with a Tornabuoni provenance.<sup>141</sup>

A plausible explanation can be offered for Giovanna's portrayal twice in the chapel: her presence in the Visitation, dependent upon her posthumous panel executed after her death on 7 October, 1488, similarly commemorates her; the earlier portrayal in the register above celebrates the birth of her son on 11 October 1487. Giovanni di Lorenzo di Giovanni Tornabuoni was the only Giovanni born to any

Tornabuoni during the period of the chapel's decoration and, significantly, he was the first (and only) child of Giovanna and Lorenzo. The proud grandfather Giovanni Tornabuoni was likely to have seized the opportunity, created by the joyous birth, for apt celebration of his personal "remaking" in the first and eponymous grandson. Portrayal of the mother in the ideally suited Birth of John and the insertion of the Naming of John on this register would both have done so.<sup>142</sup>

A date after the birth in October 1487 is probable for this register, immediately above the Visitation and Zacharias frescoes executed in 1489 or probably 1490 (Pl. 4, fig. 5). Indeed the Birth and Naming were probably not executed until after the necessary seasonal break during winter's cold and damp, that is, after March, in the spring or summer of 1488. "Giovanna" wears a giornea, which is a summer garment, and rings on her fingers (Pl. 11); her pose and puffy appearance suggest that she is pregnant, as Giovanna certainly was when she died in October 1488, according to Poliziano's commemorative epigram.<sup>143</sup> The disaster which was soon to strike would explain her second portrayal in the lower, later register: mother and possibly pregnant again in the Birth, she features as dead, commemorated wife in the Visitation. There she is portrayed as she had been in Ghirlandaio's panel, in profile, wearing her husband's emblem and the Tornabuoni device, and idealised of feature (Pls 10, 47). Death brought her more fully into the Tornabuoni fold and now commemoration rather than celebration honoured her with emblems, epigram, masses, a chapel at Cestello and a portrait memento for the Tornabuoni palace. Contextual plausibility and physiognomic possibility together suggest that the leading visitor in the Birth of John is Giovanna Albizzi, accompanied by members of the Tornabuoni household, one of whom may be a typecast portrait of her maternal grandmother Dianora Tornabuoni.<sup>144</sup>

The visitors to the new mother abed are, like those on so-called deschi da parto, transferred to a religious arena where they are the Biblical "vicini" and "cognati" congratulating Elizabeth, recipient of the Lord's "misericordia" (Luke 1:58). Servants and visitors had long been present in depictions of a saint's Birth, but Ghirlandaio makes the very rare inclusion of actual portraits in both Births at the



Tornaquinci chapel. Portraits are rare also in the few deschi surviving which depict visits to a secular birth. One in the Fogg Museum shows an ideal bride present; another from the New York Historical Society depicts a kneeling, aged couple with generalised faces, with the old woman wearing a black mantle and white wimple. The desco now in Berlin and attributed to Masaccio includes two old women in the same costume and again no face appears particularised. Such mantled women are venerable parenti, widows or matrons, paying their respects as do the mantled visitors in both of Ghirlandaio's Births.<sup>145</sup>

Watson writes of the portrait types in the deschi:

These figures are witnesses at a scene of birth that can now be seen as ideal and exemplary. They are surrogates for the men and women who once owned the panels. The owner was to observe the birthing chamber, and then follow suit - to be fruitful and multiply, in the words of the homily read during the wedding ceremony. The scenes of birth are ... prescriptive.

Given the reverses of some salvers, it has been concluded that they treat "an augury of fortune and fecundity." Ghirlandaio has applied such sentiments to a religious narrative, combining secular and sacred into one indivisible image. In the Birth of the Virgin Lodovica is present at an augury of her future fertility; in the Birth of John Giovanna Albizzi, if it is she, is present at the act of thanksgiving and prayer for future safety and fertility, as though the scene is a votive in fresco. The portrait, no matter of whom, in the Birth of John, stands in a scene like those on the salvers, "that were probably used in congratulatory ceremonies after baptism,"<sup>146</sup> and it might be that the unidentified portraits are of the younger Giovanni Tornabuoni's godparents. The sacrament of baptism might be conflated with its enactment or commemoration in a particular instance here, just as the adjacent Naming was inserted as a reference to the patron's "remaking." Ritual of a secular, particular and universally religious nature, could be depicted in the Birth of the Baptist in all its categories at once; the scene is neither pure genre nor merely traditional Birth with the casual addition of a few extraneous portraits.

The leading portrait is too integral and centralised a figure to be an observer on the metaphorical sidelines. She stands almost directly under the room's central beam and nearly every other figure looks toward her, including the midwives and Elizabeth, who sits as though enthroned for a stately reception. The two servants at either edge move towards her and bracket the focus back on the portrait. Pollaiuolo's two Births of John, one in relief for a silver dossale, the other in embroidery, and both for the Baptistery, between them share many of Ghirlandaio's features, such as the coffered ceiling and a servant holding wine flasks. In turn, some of these shared details derive from Lippi's Virgin and Child with the Birth of the Virgin (Pl. 83) and, according to Ettlenger, in both Lippi's tondo and Pollaiuolo's relief,

a religious episode is made into something approaching a genre scene by the presence of visitors.<sup>147</sup>

Yet Orcagna's relief depicting the Virgin's Birth in the tabernacle at Or San Michele and other works also included visitors at a sacred birth. It is precisely Ghirlandaio's transformation of these visitors by the specification of actual and rare portraiture, a supposedly genre element, which makes of the Birth a particular kind of religious votive. Compared to the active surfaces and domestic bustle of the works by Lippi and Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio's fresco is a more cohesive composition, monumental and sober, befitting a solemn act of pious witness and votive prayer.

The fourth visitor however is not a portrait but an energetic, newly arrived servant (Pl. 12), which Warburg judged a discordantly active and pagan element, a "charming nightmare."<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, she is a figure who appears in simple rustic costume carrying a covered basket upon her head in other scenes of birth (eg Pl. 83).<sup>149</sup> Certainly the windswept veil and clothing of Ghirlandaio's classical "nymph" adds a greater sense of urgency and purpose to her entrance, and her rush may be a portent of the Baptist's mission proclaimed in the Benedictus: "to prepare [the Lord's] ways; ... to give light ..., to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76, 79-80). Her noticeable blue garment, shot with white as it is cast in the full light falling from the window at the opposite end of the room, picks up the colour of Elizabeth's costume. The maid's movement also very

forcefully acts to bring the edges of the scene back towards a central focus, so giving the figure a compositional function. Like the mobile servant pouring water in the Birth of Mary (Pl. 15), she too may be arriving in haste because she is filled with celebratory "gaudium" and her burden could also be iconographically significant.

She carries two flasks like those of a predecessor in Pollaiuolo's relief but now a simple basket has become a unique, large gilded platter, overflowing with fruit, comprising black and white grapes, pomegranates and, possibly, peaches, with grape and pomegranate leaves scattered around. This attribute transforms her into a symbol of Abundance, derived from Donatello's now-lost column statue of Dovizia then in the Mercato Vecchio.<sup>150</sup> Other reflections of Donatello's sculpture have a similar hitched skirt, windswept movement, clinging "wet" draperies and striding gait. Dovizia's fruit laden basket referred to civic wealth or COPIA, as did the dedication inscription in the chapel, but Donatello's cornucopia and its reference to civic charity is not present in Ghirlandaio's re-invested image, probably because it would appear too emblematic and classical, disrupting the figure's narrative guise.

Around 1500, the della Robbia shop produced statuettes of the Dovizia, also without the cornucopia, and Wilkins plausibly suggests that these focus on more domestic concerns, needing only the plentiful basket or plate and sometimes the addition of small boys, to function as "a sort of Renaissance fertility idol." Some statuettes bear the inscription GLORIA ET DIVITIE IN DOMO TUA, clearly addressing a wish for "domestic abundance, or fecundity."<sup>151</sup> Ghirlandaio's seems to be the first such re-use of Donatello's statue, inventively combining it with a traditional servant-girl, to produce a visual prayer for the "honour and wealth" and continued fertility of the family. Whether or not the leading woman portrayed is Giovanna, the fresco is partly a prayer for the birth of other sons so that the family will be blessed with COPIA and a long life in perpetuo.

Joy, mission and fertility are all suggested by the one figure, which nicely amalgamated aesthetic display, donor's prayer and religious significance: Kirche, Kaufmann, Künstler, are not alienated.

The co-incidence of Midsummer with the feast day on June 24 of the Baptist, patron saint of Florence, also suggests a multiple reading of the figure, since abundance in both crops and families was the subject of folk rites at this time, as was ritualistic bathing.<sup>152</sup> Her unusual gilded plate, like the golden plate and jug and green (verdigris?) ewer at the left near the midwife, may have baptismal significance as may the alternate bunches of black and white grapes. The blood and water of baptism, connoting purification and sacramental salvation, would also seem to be signified by the red and white carafes offered to Elizabeth by another servant.<sup>153</sup> The other fruit on the platter may connote resurrection and salvation,<sup>154</sup> as may the sunlit lemons above Elizabeth's bed. Placed with box and maiolica jar or pharmaceutical albarello signifying sacramental "medicine," the fruit seems to be the citrus medica, or restorative alluding to salvation.<sup>155</sup> A reading which imparts a symbolic intent to all the apparent genre elements and even to the "nymph" is possible. Rebirth or salvation, especially through baptism, and a family prayer for fertility, another kind of "remaking," are the basic and complementary themes.

The fresco's most notable feature, especially from a distance, is the large richly red cover upon Elizabeth's bed, set off against its complementary colour, a green wall hanging. The consequent projection of the red, let alone its sheer mass, is a forceful statement of the Baptist's presence. In the Birth of the Virgin (Pl. 15) a blue cover, set off against a complementary orange/brown wall, is an obvious reference to the Virgin, and here red is the colour of Florence, John's special city. Red as the colour of the eucharistic wine, of baptism by blood and of the blood of John's martyrdom would all be further connotations of the colour, which acts as a distinctive emblem for the Baptist both in his Birth and Entry into the Desert and for his probable presence in the Purification (Pl. 30).<sup>156</sup> An interior, on a higher register and less lavish than the Virgin's birth chamber but nevertheless of patrician comfort and refinement, marks the stature of a saint who was Christ's precursor and the man who brought the sacrament of baptism.

John's Nativity, one of only three birth days to be honoured by a

feast, the others being those of Christ and Mary, was a "magna festa" in the liturgical calendar and a turning point in the seasonal cycle.<sup>157</sup> The antiphons allude precisely to his preaching, naming, birth, blessing at the Visitation and announced conception to Zacharias, the first five scenes of the executed cycle. The sixth scene, the Baptism, is celebrated at Epiphany on January 6 and is a significant theophany, placed opposite the register with the Magi fresco in the Virgin's cycle (fig. 5). John's martyrdom after the Feast of Herod is granted a separate feast day, August 29. The cycle's composition is fundamentally liturgical, as is the selection of inscriptions, one in the Zacharias fresco from John's Nativity particularly announcing a key theme:

DOMINVS AB VTERO VOCAVIT ME DE VETRI.

The liturgy centres on John's mission or calling as a precursor of Christ's advent and as a prophet blessed in the womb and born sanctified. Just these themes, together with his institution of the sacrament of Baptism, are celebrated in the Tornaquinci chapel where the immanence of the divine in John's special city is portrayed.

E: TWO NARRATIVES WITHOUT PORTRAITS

At least two scenes are again primarily religious in signification and contain no portraits, but do refer to family themes.

(a) The 'Naming of John'

Not placed in the cycle at the time of the contract, and very rarely separated from the representation of John's Birth, his Naming was very probably inserted as a response to the birth of Giovanni di Lorenzo Tornabuoni in 1487 (Pl. 13, fig. 5). Having to devise possibly the largest ever presentation of the narrative, Ghirlandaio included the traditional "parenti, e amici e vicini" reacting to the event, but now they frame and surround a centralised action.<sup>158</sup> Zacharias moves from his invariable position on one side and the swaddled infant is positioned at the centre, held by a patrician maiden in a noticeable blue gown shot with white. The usual

architectural interior is developed into a spacious, harmonious courtyard permeated by the light and air from a background vista of river, hills and walled city, accentuated by golden highlights dappled throughout the portico. Zacharias sits in his traditional pose, with pen and paper on his knee: still unable to speak since his visitation by an angel, he had

asked for a writing tablet, and wrote [saying (DICENS)] 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled (Luke 1:63).

An inscription running along the arcade's entablature,

DICENS JOHANNES EST NOMEN EIVS. ET MIR[ATI] SUNT  
UNIVERSI,

cites this very passage, occurring only once in the liturgy for John's Nativity, as its Gospel reading.<sup>159</sup> Zacharias chose a name never used by his family because of instructions he had received from the angel (Luke 1:13): John's identity is godgiven and chosen.<sup>160</sup> An inscription in the Zacharias fresco - "The Lord called me from the womb" (Isaiah 49:1) - is here reinforced and a play made on the words VOCAVIT and NOMEN: John is called, or called by name, even before his birth. This is a constant refrain in the festal liturgy and confirmed at the Visitation when his mission was sanctified ("from the body of my mother he named my name": Isaiah 49:1 again). And the name itself revealed many things:

He is called a prophet, a friend of the Bridegroom, a lamp, an angel, a voice, Elias, baptizer of the Saviour, herald of the Judge, precursor of the King.<sup>161</sup>

The meaning and rarity of the name was cause for universal wonderment and this "testimony ... from those beneath the heavens" was, according to the Golden Legend, the third sign of John's sanctity, the Son, Holy Ghost and angels also testifying at the Annunciation to Zacharias, the Visitation and later the Baptism. Just as the UNIVERSO MUNDO greeted the Virgin's Birth, so John's divine name was "universally" recognised as a sign of the Advent. The gestural language chosen by Ghirlandaio shows his understanding of this testimony: the maiden kneeling with the babe, another folding her hands in prayer, a third dancing joyfully, are all rare in a Naming scene but are meaningful expressions of the "movements of the

soul."<sup>162</sup> A sense of marvel was also evoked by Zacharias' verbal announcement after the Naming but here conflated with it by the use of DICENS:

And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours ... (Luke 1: 64-65).

Zacharias then began his son's mission, announcing in his Benedictus (Luke 1: 68-79) the Advent, or "visitation" of the Lord in Lucrezia Tornabuoni's poetic paraphrase. That the occasions of the three beautiful Lucan canticles were represented in the chapel (the Magnificat at the Visitation, the Benedictus at the Naming and Simeon's Nunc dimittis at the Purification) was particularly appropriate in a Dominican chapel which functioned as a choir.<sup>163</sup>

To Giovanni Tornabuoni, a John heralded the regeneration of his family; to the Dominicans and every member of the faithful who attended the yearly feast day of Florence's patron saint, John's birth and naming heralded the advent of Christ and hence the "regeneration" of the Church, as was recognised in the Postcommunion prayer. Through the sacrament of Baptism, the occasion on which each child is named in the sight of God, the universal Church was also reborn or augmented by the reception of a new soul.<sup>164</sup> But in 1485 the contract had instead envisaged a later scene, John Entering the Desert, which also accentuated the commencement of John's mission, if in a more public mode which did not stress revelation (fig. 5). With the introduction of the Naming came the first inscription in John's cycle, later reinforced by one in the Zacharias fresco, so its significance was thereafter kept in mind when the lowest registers were executed.

If the programme's alteration was not caused by the theological advice of the Dominicans alone, the only other possible cause would seem to be the birth of "Giovannino." This first and eponymous grandson was clearly the grandfather's favourite still in 1498, when the estate's inventory noted his own rooms and plentiful belongings.<sup>165</sup> But neither family nor religious readings have been popular for the Naming, which has only been noted for a supposed political and Medicean reference, as first proposed by Davies in 1905. He saw in the green robed male on the left the features of Lorenzo il

Magnifico, "but carried back to a much earlier date" shown at his "best and slightly idealised," present at "the naming (baptism in his case) of Giovanni dei Medici ... third son of Lorenzo" born in 1475. Succinct refutation of this "highly improbable" idea was made by van Marle in 1931:

After all the Medici had very little to do with the decoration of this chapel; further, even taking into consideration the fact that the subject was much younger in 1475, I find no trace of resemblance. Moreover, would the painter have thought of the difference of age after having portrayed him so successfully in 1483-85 in the Sassetti chapel?<sup>166</sup>

Why too would an event occurring more than ten years ago stimulate a change to the contract after it was sealed in 1485?

Barfucci many years later cited Davies, only disagreeing to the extent that he saw Lorenzo as the inner, purple robed figure "per autorità, posizione, affinità somatiche," whereas both faces are rather generalised and typecast ones of remonstrating Jews. As late as 1977 Susan Behrends also tried to apply notions derived from Warburg's view of the Sassetti chapel to the later chapel, which had

a Medici-affiliated program that yields a Florentine political document of dynastic and papal aspirations.<sup>167</sup>

Yet she only repeated Davies' view, claiming moreover that it is not what he called the "second signification," but the "primary level" of meaning. To find Medicean references, and dated ones at that, in a scene halfway through the cycle, amongst generalised faces, where the workshop had been executing most of the less visible work, is to employ dubious assumptions and legendary history. The inscription and the chapel's location alone argue for a religious meaning first and foremost. "Dynastic" considerations there may be, but for the Tornabuoni, and in a way which nicely complements the story's religious significance.

#### (b) The 'Massacre of the Innocents'

Ghirlandaio's execution of all changes to the contract can be dated to after October and November 1487. The insertion of the Naming is the only change in the Baptist's cycle; but for the other two walls



changes occur on the previous register (fig. 5). Above the window the Virgin's Coronation was executed as planned, but instead of Dominican saints the rest of the wall depicts two Dominican narratives, then two narratives which overflow from the altered cycles and two donor portraits. In Mary's cycle, her Death and Assumption, possibly executed by October 1486, was envisaged in the contract, but beneath this lunette, instead of the Purification and Christ disputing in the Temple, Ghirlandaio depicted the Adoration of the Magi and the Massacre of the Innocents. The accurate rendition of a giraffe in the Magi fresco (Pl. 20) dates that scene to November 1487 at the earliest, when just such an exotic creature arrived in Florence from the East and was lodged at S. Maria Novella, "nele istale del Papa."<sup>168</sup>

The Massacre too (Pl. 21) may have been influenced by a contemporaneous event, the approval by the friars at S. Maria Novella of the revised capitoli of the Innocenti confraternity on 4 July 1487.<sup>169</sup> Convening in the Popoleschi chapel until 1467, the confraternity then shifted to another chapel long associated with the Magi, but Tornaquinci associations may have lived on. The reorganisation in 1487 could have revived their interest, as may a possible procession with a relic "nei Chiostri" on 28 December 1487 or, associated with a fešta of the Magi, on 6 January 1488. It was in 1487 that Domenico Ghirlandaio finished his altarpiece for the Ospedale degli Innocenti which included a Massacre in the background (Pl. 85). The interests of Kirche, Kaufmann and Künstler could have coalesced in the choice of this image for the chapel, a rare one in cycles of the Virgin although it is more often paired with an Adoration of the Magi or Nativity.<sup>170</sup>

At the same time as the Massacre, John fled with Elizabeth and Christ with his parents went into Egypt; but for the Innocents their escape from death was only metaphorical. The first martyrs, they were baptised in blood and thereby attained eternal life, "redeemed" and "spotless" as the epistle for their feast day celebrated (Rev 14: 1-5).<sup>171</sup> The Massacre not only fulfilled prophecy - Rachel's lament, "weeping for her children," being heard through the land (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:18) - but also promised her consolation since they

were granted salvation.<sup>172</sup> Ghirlandaio's fresco presents the traditional violence, with "wailing and loud lamentation" (Matthew 2:18) by the mothers, and the parental agony is highlighted by the unusual removal of Herod to such a distant balcony that he and his cohorts are literally faceless.<sup>173</sup> Yet this foregrounded frieze of grief is offset by the apparently unique inclusion of a Triumphal Arch which opens away from the claustrophobic frenzy and offers the promised triumph over death. Perhaps "a symbol of Roman supremacy" as Offerhaus asserts, this derivation from the Arch of Constantine can be read instead as the Porta Coeli, appropriate in a cycle of the Virgin's life. The Gate of Paradise, which also refers to baptismal rebirth and the advent of Christ, is a triumphal image used elsewhere in the Tornaquinci chapel.<sup>174</sup>

"Giovannino" was born in October 1487, before the arrival of the giraffe in November and hence before the execution of the Magi and Massacre frescoes in the revised programme. Perhaps the approaching birth and even its happy outcome revived memories of his grandfather's "doppio dolore" when he had written to Lorenzo de' Medici, just a decade ago, mourning the loss of both his wife and (probably unbaptised) child in childbirth. Not aware of the grandson's birth or of its chronological relationship with the fresco, Warburg believed that in the Massacre of the Innocents Giovanni Tornabuoni

has left us the petrified expression of passionate mourning, unrestrained wailing, a pagan-Etruscan elemental sprite, not only in his temperament, but actually in imitation of a classical Alcestis sarcophagus, and together with this stylized agony we can still hear his own words ...

written to Lorenzo.<sup>175</sup> However Warburg also seemed unaware of the story's iconography, of Rachel's lament and of the ultimate consolation associated with the Massacre. In terms of Warburg's desired psychological profile of Giovanni, the man's diamond device and motto, FIRMAVI, connoting strength and victory in adversity, are appropriate to the fresco's combination of grief with salvation. Giovanni may have been instituting his own family's martyr cult, as his nephew Lorenzo de' Medici had done, finding consolation for the deaths of his wife and ancestors by externalising, ritualising and thereby defusing grief.<sup>176</sup>

F: THE DONOR PORTRAITS OF GIOVANNI AND HIS WIFE

Vasari and others have always identified the two kneeling portraits either side of the window (Pls 24, 25) as those of Giovanni Tornabuoni and his wife, Francesca Pitti. There is no reason to doubt this common pairing of husband and wife, positioned on the usual left and right sides of the viewer, although we have no other portrait of Francesca for comparison.<sup>177</sup> Giovanni's face is a leaner, healthier, more idealised one than we see in his medal or in the Zacharias fresco (Pls 6, 42), just as his setting and costume are now especially timeless. Previous double depictions of a donor usually showed him as a sculpted gisant and as a kneeling priant, often being recommended by the Virgin and Child or before the Beatific Vision. Here a similar duality operates even within the one figure, as it could in van Eyck's donor portraiture: Giovanni is presented as eternally living, in a realm where he is both risen soul and praying donor, resident in the Heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>178</sup> Like Francesco Sassetti in his chapel (Pl. 62), Giovanni stands as a public figure, surrounded by parenti and amici witnessing a narrative, and then kneels as a donor in a separate arena, offering and perpetually adoring. A. M. Schulz has suggested that double portrayal can present the patron's religious and secular lives, and certainly the Sassetti and Tornabuoni examples make this sort of distinction, although both aspects of one's life, the "active" and the "contemplative," were ultimately pious. As a Dominican advised,

Man must do everything he can in this world to obtain the honor, glory and fame that make him worthy of heaven and that thus lead him to enjoy eternal peace.

Giovanni and the Tornaquinci are presented throughout the chapel as "worthy of heaven," a noble elect on earth who will be and indeed are "counted with the fold of thine elect" as they sought in the Offertory rite. Their "individual" "fame" was celebrated as part of the family's virtue and as a necessary condition for their "sure access" to salvation.<sup>179</sup>

The consecration of the Sassetti chapel soon after Giovanni

signed the contract with the Ghirlandaio brothers may have influenced the insertion of portraits in his own chapel, for no donor portraits on the window wall had been listed in that contract (fig. 5). But in the Tornaquinci chapel the donor portraits flank an altarpiece in the centre of the chapel and not only the portraits' direction of address but also their setting, costume and gesture, are varied in meaningful ways. Both Nera Corsi (Pl. 62) and Francesca Pitti (Pl. 25) are dressed very simply, in plain black gowns and white mantles; Francesca, dead since 1477, is "effigiata." Giovanni's costume was once black too, presumably overpainted when he died, but cleaning has revealed a pale pink with strong white highlights, quite different to the public red gown with maroon cappuccio worn by Sasseti.<sup>180</sup> All four portraits are restrained and monumental. Only Giovanni offers a different prayer, thereby enriching the gestural language, just as the chapel's inscriptions increase the depth of reference. His gesture is one of humble supplication and recommendation, possibly with eucharistic overtones, in keeping with his turn towards the altar and specifically towards the Resurrection on the rear of the altarpiece.<sup>181</sup> With his humble costume, his gesture is an appropriate and rare one for a donor who here seeks salvation for his wife, self and ancestors.

The Sasseti portraits kneel in strict profile in illusionistic marble niches either side of the framed altarpiece (Pl. 62), whereas the Tornabuoni couple, especially Giovanni, turn towards the altar, and this movement, combined with the landscape and receding architecture behind them, means that the later portraits are in a more three-dimensional and extended relationship with their surrounding sacred space. The "virtuoso pictorial illusion anticipating Baroque formulas" which relates the Sasseti portraits to the altarpiece is here even more three-dimensional and proto-Baroque. Like Chancellor Rolin, Giovanni addresses an altar through real space and conjures up a meditational vision which is the whole chapel.<sup>182</sup> From a distance, Giovanni and Francesca flanked the freestanding altarpiece with its "arco" above and Virgin in Glory within (Pls 38, 40). Donor portraits of couples once within an altarpiece, or moved to the wings of a triptych, are now outside the frame, the development of a tradition forgotten by Blunt when he examines the precedents for the Cornaro

family's portrayal by Bernini.<sup>183</sup> The Tornabuoni portraits are an especially pertinent precedent for the examples Blunt cites of donor portraits flanking an altarpiece and set against an architectural backdrop of receding columns such that they exist in "oratories or watching-chambers," surely the settings for perpetual adoration in the heavenly temple or celestial city.

The Doric colonnades in the example from the Poggi chapel, Bologna, by Tibaldi in the 1550s, are closest to Ghirlandaio's first presentation of donors against just such a colonnade which forms a ceremonial, slow recession towards eternity.<sup>184</sup> Ghirlandaio's unique combination of the architecture with a landscape recalls descriptions of "this most perfect space of paradise" on earth where a loggia or cloister in a garden was a paradiso terrestri, or the Church according to the Dominican Cardinal Torquemada.<sup>185</sup> In the foreground, the donors kneel in an atrium or portal, at the Gates of Paradise before the via veritas which leads to eternal peace. Referring to the "gates of victory" in Psalm 118:9 and Isaiah 26:2, Jerome had said that through "the gates of justice, all works of virtue, one arrives at the gate of the Lord, which the just will enter."<sup>186</sup> Giovanni, still alive, will continue his worthy "works of virtue" and the city in the distance behind him is in a modern, classicised idiom (Pl. 24). But Francesca, long dead, is accompanied by older, still largely sacred, architecture and exists in the "locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis" referred to in the prayer for souls of the dead (Pl. 25).<sup>187</sup> Pilgrims on the road depict her soul's journey to the mountain of paradise, topped by cypress trees which connote death and the elect souls in heaven.<sup>188</sup> Commemorated ancestors, portrayed exemplars and future successors of the Tornaquinci consorteria all join in one timeless realm within their chapel: elect on earth, elect in heaven.

#### G: THE 'CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN'

Souls enter paradise through a triumphal arch in the Allegory of the Church as Corpus Christi Mysticum (Pl. 80) in the convent's chapterhouse, but the Tornabuoni kneel either side of the "arco" of an altarpiece, praying as did Abbot Suger to "obtain a share of Paradise" and to have the interceding saint "open the door of Paradise."<sup>189</sup>

Intercession here will be enacted by the Virgin, Porta Coeli, already in glory on the altarpiece and in her supreme Triumph in the Coronation of the Virgin (Pls 23, 38). Exalted as in her Assumption, to which the chapel was dedicated, the crowned Virgin is the Church Triumphant and

the representative of humanity whose elevation to glory symbolized the nuptial crown of glory awaiting the souls of the faithful.

Echols' investigation of the Virgin's Coronation in Quattrocento art, which frequently cites S. Antonino, demonstrates that the Coronation signified the union of heaven and earth, of human nature joining with divinity. "Christ's union with humanity in His Incarnation, Sacrifice, and Second Coming" was associated with the Virgin's meaning as "the representative of humanity in general, the spiritual mother of all Christians and the historical Mother of God." As the Church and bride she was united with Christ in one flesh.<sup>190</sup>

In following the Virgin's example, as S. Antonino advised and as Giovanni's gesture does in mirroring that of the Virgin at her Coronation (Pls 23, 24), mankind will attain the "vision of peace" in the City of God according to S. Antonino.<sup>191</sup> Like Palmieri, Antonino also believed that the "praelati et domini gubernatores ecclesiae et saeculi" who rule well, would be rewarded by their ultimate union with the Community of the Saints. Augustine had written of the

City of God, the true Jerusalem, eternal in heaven, whose sons are the men who live according to God's will in their pilgrimage on earth.<sup>192</sup>

The Tornaquinci were such worthy pilgrims; honourable citizens, donors and witnesses in the Zacharias and Joachim frescoes, exemplary women in the Visitation and Births, humble priant figures on the window wall. In his will too Giovanni had recommended "his soul humbly and devoutly" to "God and to Holy Mary ever Virgin and to the universal court of triumphant paradise." His contract with the Ghirlandaio brothers requested "the Coronation of the Virgin Mary in Glory, with a representation of the Glory of Paradise." The Virgin's role as mediatrix only began after her Assumption according to Antonino, so her entrance into the court of heaven was most appropriate as a subject addressed by donors seeking mercy and salvation.<sup>193</sup>

A Coronation by Fra Angelico, influenced by Antonino's thoughts on the union of heaven and earth in paradise, showed, according to Echols' summation,

The descent of God's love through Christ and the Virgin and the ascent of the human soul to Him through acts of love and knowledge.<sup>194</sup>

Mercy descended through Christ's Incarnation and the Virgin's intercession, while Man ascended by means of exemplary actions and contemplation. A similar union of the visible with the eternal meant that "the most beautiful city" depicted in the Tornaquinci chapel could be both Florentine and Celestial. To Renaissance man, the Heavenly Jerusalem "signified the ultimate meaning of the present state."<sup>195</sup> As Chapter Two especially has argued, late Quattrocento man believed in the entire duality of nature and time, in the incarnational presence of God in man, and in the continuous resonance of time, both eternal and earthly, through the generations. Such a union represented by the Coronation of the Virgin was a fitting, highly visible conclusion to the Tornaquinci chapel. The meaning and form of Renaissance religious art is imbued with a vision that this world and the next, one ascending, the other descending, meet either side of a "mirror." The Tornaquinci portraits stand just this side of a mirror in their chapel. They will Triumph and enter the City of God as the elect, after their worthy and exemplary pilgrimage on earth.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted a broad investigation of one monument, tracing the history of the cappella maggiore in S. Maria Novella and of the patron's family, the Tornaquinci consortereria, in order to place the individual Giovanni Tornabuoni, and the portraiture he commissioned, within the context of social history. Family heritage, reputation and cohesion are central to an understanding of the function of portraiture, of the chapel's place within other actions undertaken by the patron, of the manner in which the chapel's patronage was enabled and then enacted, of the idealising and naturalistic style, and of the iconography of certain works therein. The "public face" of a man and his kin is presented to us as one in which honour and heritage, donation and magnificence, rather than individual virtù, is uppermost.

It was the consortereria's history and its contemporary honour which made the chapel's form and content possible. Other works of cultural patronage, such as the palace and its interior decoration, villas, medals, tombs, were also commissioned to both celebrate and enhance social standing and corporate values. The Tornaquinci chapel was another component of a patrimony, its status and decoration contributing to the "remaking" of an inheritance which proudly preserved the past and addressed the future, placed in a continuum across time and generations.

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.<sup>1</sup>

In the Tornaquinci chapel, future descendants were shown exemplars; prayers for salvation and for fertile continuity were offered; sure access by the elect to paradise was visualised. Both Man and God were addressed: honour in the here and now, salvation in the eternal realm, each were granted to the worthy elect. Florence and the City of God were each embraced by naturalistic, recognisable form. The presence of portraits was necessary within a visual world reshaped, framed and



ennobled. The Incarnation, salvation, honour and Christian worth, were proclaimed by Ghirlandaio's art. "The things of the world not merely are, but mean": everyday detail was neither secular nor mundane, but imbued with epideictic glory and promise in "the most beautiful city."<sup>2</sup>

In a chapel where the Virgin's cycle and the Baptist's cycle stood either side of the eucharist, a kind of Deesis was presented, whereby intercession for the collective donors would ensure their salvation. As two other Doctoral dissertations on the chapel apparently have also suggested, the iconography of the chapel's programme was not secular,<sup>3</sup> and, it is argued here, the formal visualisation of utterly religious needs and beliefs was at one with the content. The sheer act of patronage itself, let alone the choice of particular subjects and of their form, was occasioned especially by (a) a general sense of family tradition and pride; (b) exceptional moments of commemoration such as birth, death and marriage; (c) a proclamation of the Christian magnificence and worth of the consorteria and its representative patron. Past and generous patronage at the convent, as well as current magnificence, were good works deserving of recognition from fellow oligarchs and from the God addressed.

Giovanni Tornabuoni was the chapel's determined overseer throughout, working in harmony with friars and artist, but also ensuring that his demands were met. Pursuing the goal of a magnificently refurbished chapel, he attained enlarged patronage rights which enabled the commission of works in media other than fresco. The plans laid down in the contract with the Ghirlandaio brothers in September 1485 were supplemented by careful arrangements regarding the future; with the endowment, planned tombs and all decoration outlined in detailed documents of 1487 and 1490. Drawings were submitted for his approval, the programme was expanded and, when the deadline for Ghirlandaio's workshop was extended in 1489, Giovanni still demanded "the best possible" work.<sup>4</sup> Numerous discussions would have given Ghirlandaio the opportunity to liaise with the patron and understand his needs. Domenico Ghirlandaio too "exercised a meticulous care" over his shop's execution and was a religious man who

could have both come to his own conclusions and easily discussed matters with his patron and the Dominicans.<sup>5</sup> Often employed by Giovanni, Domenico surely enjoyed a close rapport with his patron and the nexus between Kaufmann and Künstler resulted in a fine integration of form and content in the chapel.

If Neri Capponi (Pl. 88) was "an enthusiastic if reasonably moderate patron" and Filippo Strozzi was a "delightful," "cultured" patron careful in his "attention to detail,"<sup>6</sup> then Giovanni Tornabuoni was a fellow oligarch, both attentive and enthusiastic, but far more magnificent than Neri and less learned than Filippo. Giovanni's piety and sense of his family's nobility appear at least as typical of the period as do the actions of these other two patrons. It may also be that the place of such men within Medicean Florence was more independent than is usually granted; certainly, in Giovanni's case, his parentado with the Medici was not as important in his consorteria's chapel as was a sense of the family's own civic honour and noble heritage.<sup>7</sup>

So too the extent to which friars and other religious were the passive recipients of patronage from a discrete, secular world, might appear less evident if we paid more attention to the possible ways in which they could guide their congregation.<sup>8</sup> In terms of the iconography of religious works, their "source" usually lay in the missal, common exegesis and well-worn "truths," absorbed daily and since childhood in the practice of ritual, attendance at sermons and submission to pastoral care. Significations then self-evident and multivalent now need to be read and then verbally presented in ways which may seem complex and compartmentalised. The degree to which expectations about art in the Renaissance were erudite and elite needs careful assessment, as Gilbert and Hope have suggested recently.<sup>9</sup> How art historical interpretation recovers meaning and gives voice and order to the mute past, however, might still require complex elucidation and need not deny the role of "programme" advisors.

The manner in which an audience was addressed and public impression managed by Renaissance patrons and artists has been an implicit pursuit in this thesis. The impact ritual had upon the

"period eye" also deserves further consideration, with Baxandall and Trexler offering many fruitful and exciting avenues for our exploration. The function and motivation of naturalism in Renaissance art could be examined as less literal and unidealised than has often been assumed. We could more actively approach the Renaissance by believing in the integration of layers of meaning, in the interwoven unity of form and content and in the synthesis of secular with sacred.