Recovering the lost context
of the Roverella altarpiece by Cosmè Tura.
The Olivetan church of San Giorgio fuori le mura
in Ferrara

Volume 1. Text

A dissertation submitted for the degree of
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by
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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.
Recovering the lost context of the Roverella altarpiece by Cosmè Tura.
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by Giorgia Mancini

Abstract

This thesis aims to recover the original context of the Pala Roverella by Cosmè Tura, rightly considered the apex of the Ferrarese figurative culture of the late Quattrocento. The Olivetan conventual church of San Giorgio fuori le mura in Ferrara, the ancient cathedral of Ferrara, has been so far overlooked by Renaissance scholars. By piecing together elements derived from various sources (the church fabric itself, notarial acts, local chronicles and church descriptions, as well as sixteenth century visual records) we formulate here a hypothesis on the late-Gothic San Giorgio. Chapter One offers a survey of art patronage in Ferrarese churches in the second half of the fifteenth century. Chapter Two focuses on San Giorgio in the Quattrocento. New documents shed light on the history of the church and its benefactors, including the Lucchese businessman Aliprando Guidiccioni and members of the Savonarola family. Unpublished sources are used to recreate the broader context of the Pala Roverella, including liturgical items and illuminated manuscripts. Chapter Three is devoted to the Roverella family and their important role as patrons in San Giorgio in the 1470s and 1480s. By reconsidering the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella, still in the cappella maggiore of San Giorgio, we provide new elements about one of its two authors, Ambrogio da Milano. Chapter Four focuses on the surviving paintings from the Roverella altarpiece. Their reassessment provides new elements about its iconography, dating and location. Chapter Five is devoted to the renovations of San Giorgio from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. By following the history of the fabric we gather useful clues for our reconstruction of the fifteenth-century church. The Appendix contains transcriptions of relevant documents, most of them unpublished.
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I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Don Giacomo Maria Ferrari (†), prior of San Giorgio until 2015, for allowing me to access the archive (held in San Giorgio until 2108) and examine the funerary monument of Lorenzo Roverella and the choir stalls in the cappella maggiore in 2013. In more recent years, following the departure of the Olivetans from San Giorgio, Mons. Danillo Bisarello, Don Onesimo Venansio and Maurizio Giovannini have facilitated my visits to the church and provided useful information.

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**Abbreviations**

AMOM Archivio dell’Abbazia di Monte Oliveto Maggiore, Asciano (Siena)

ASDFe Archivio Storico della Diocesi, Ferrara

ASFe Archivio di Stato, Ferrara

ASFi Archivio di Stato, Firenze

ASL Archivio di Stato, Lucca

ASMo Archivio di Stato, Modena

ASVe Archivio di Stato, Venezia

BCAFe Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, Ferrara

BCABo Biblioteca Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, Bologna

BEMo Biblioteca Estense, Modena
Introduction

The history of the *Pala Roverella* by Cosmè Tura is similar to that of many major Italian Renaissance altarpieces which were dismembered, sold and dispersed across various collections all over the world. For its poignant expressivity and superb technique the Roverella polyptych was a real masterpiece of Tura. Its four extant fragments are scattered in four different collections through Europe and America. The *Virgin and Child with musician angels* is on display with other important Quattrocento works from Northern Italy in the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery, London (fig. 1). The dramatic lunette of the *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* is hung on the upper tier in the Grande Galerie in the Louvre, Paris, too high to allow the viewer a full appreciation of its extraordinary realism (fig. 2). On the other hand, the panel with the *Saints Maurelius and Paul with a donor of the Roverella family*, conveniently displayed on an easel, can be admired close up by the visitors to the apartament of Princess Isabelle in the Palazzo Colonna in Rome, in the beautiful Hall of the Fountain (a former loggia), under ceiling frescoes by Pinturicchio and his workshop (fig. 3). Finally, a fragment with the head of Saint George ended up in the San Diego Museum of Art. The modern viewer’s experience of the above-mentioned paintings, dislocated from the setting for which they were made, could not be more different from the way the altarpiece to which they belonged was viewed at the time it was painted. This thesis aims to fill this large gap by recovering the original context for which the *Pala Roverella* was designed, the Olivetan conventual church San Giorgio fuori le mura, also the primitive cathedral of Ferrara.

Recent years have seen an increased number of studies on Late Medieval and Renaissance sacred architecture in North-eastern Italy, especially in Venice and other cities of the Veneto. But for other regions, such as Emilia-Romagna, there are still lacunae in the literature. In the case of Ferrara, for instance, no relevant studies have been published since Tuohy’s survey of urban architecture under Ercole I d’Este.\(^1\) The monographic study on the church of Santa Maria in Vado edited by Carla di Francesco is a rare exception.\(^2\) The church, founded in the twelfth century, was famous for a Eucharistic miracle which took place in 1171, and was rebuilt in the late fifteenth century, perhaps on the project of Biagio Rossetti.\(^3\) This volume is a precious addition to the literature on Ferrarese art and architecture. Nevertheless, while dealing with the history of the church in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the authors didn’t investigate in equal way its earlier period.

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\(^1\) Tuohy 1996.
\(^2\) Di Francesco 2001.
\(^3\) See Marcolini 2001.
A monographic study on the cathedral of Ferrara in the Middle Ages was published in 2016. Marta Boscolo Marchi traces the complex building history of the church drawing from an accurate analysis of the extant medieval parts of the fabric and from a meticulous study of the relevant primary sources. Some old texts describing the cathedral and its interior in the late medieval period published by the author are particularly valuable. In recent years, a team of scholars has published parts of a manuscript by Cesare Barotti recording sepulchral inscriptions in Ferrarese churches in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The three volumes published so far, covering just six churches, are a welcome contribution to the studies of Ferrarese art and architecture. The sections containing the entries on the single inscriptions recorded by Barotti are introduced by texts on the relevant churches, in which the authors have gathered the available information sifting through the local literature. However, one feels that this was a missed opportunity, as no archival research was carried out.

If the Ferrarese architectural and artistic heritage has suffered from several causes (earthquakes, devotion to the Papal States, invasion of French troops, expoliations), there is nevertheless considerable scope for “reconstructing” some of these lost treasures. The Olivetan church of San Giorgio fuori le mura has been so far overlooked by Renaissance scholars, perhaps because of its history of renovations (the most important ones dating from the early 1580s, 1680s and the first decade of the eighteenth century) and its outwardly Baroque appearance (fig. 27). This lack of interest is even more striking if we consider that in the late fifteenth century this church was chosen by the powerful Roverella family, second only to the Este in Ferrara, as their mausoleum.

Ada F. Marcianò, in her volume of 1991 on the Ferrarese architect Biagio Rossetti, has devoted some pages to the church, the bell tower of which was most likely designed by him. While this text does not go into great detail about the history of the church, the author provides an accurate plan and elevation of the building. The first and only monographic work on San Giorgio was published by four graduate students of the Faculty of Architecture in Ferrara in 2000. Their volume traces the history of the building, bringing together the information available in the literature and adding some new pieces of information found in the documents from the archive of the monastery. However, the level of their study remains superficial: while tracing an outline of the history of the building and listing the surviving artworks, the authors do not consider the wider context of Olivetan artistic patronage nor the spiritual ideals of the

5 Boscolo Marchi 2016.
6 Chiappini et al. 2003; Cazzola et al. 2005; Mezzetti 2015.
8 The proceedings of the conference on Biagio Rossetti (Ippoliti 2018) which took place in Ferrara in 2016 do not include any study on the campanile of San Giorgio.
congregation. Another shortcoming of this book, especially evident if one considers the authors’ research field, is the complete lack of a technical examination of the church fabric.

Two articles by Don Antonio Samaritani and by Don Enrico Peverada, local ecclesiastic scholars who have significantly contributed to the study of Ferrarese religious institutions, are of special importance for the Olivetans of San Giorgio. The comprehensive article from 1981 in which Samaritani delineates the history of the Olivetan community in Ferrara in the fifteenth century remains unsurpassed. Nineteen years later, in a festschrift volume in honour of Samaritani, Peverada published an essay on the monks at San Giorgio in the fifteenth century, referring to the published research of his colleague, but also adding some new documents, the most important of which is the 1434 contract for the construction of the new apse of the church.

The popularity of mendicant and other spiritual groups has left the Benedictines overlooked by historians and art historians. This is also true for the reformed branch of the Olivetans, born on the initiative of Bernardo Tolomei of Siena (1272-1348). The art commissioned for the churches and monasteries of the Olivetan congregation seems to have attracted less attention from scholars, if compared to the mendicant orders. No studies have so far been carried out on regions or areas of Italy, as it has been done for Dominicans and Franciscans, for instance. However, the mobility of the monks (the majority of them changed monastery on a yearly basis) and the tight connections between the Olivetan foundations across Italy carry a significant potential for research, which could provide useful elements to delineate the history of Olivetan art and patronage. It is not surprising that art historians have mainly focussed their attention on the abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, the spiritual centre of the congregation, at Asciano (Siena), with its artworks by Signorelli and Sodoma, and on the Romanesque San Miniato al Monte in Florence, for its important artistic history dating before the arrival of the Olivetans in 1373 as well as for the chapel of the cardinal of Portugal (with sculptures by Antonio Rossellino).

As far as Olivetan foundations in other regions are concerned, we should mention the monographic study on San Nicola in Rodengo and the exhaustive volume on the choir stalls by Giovanni da Verona in Santa Maria in Organo in Verona, in which the author also outlines the history of the church, highlighting the input given to artistic commissions by the various priors. San Michele in Bosco in Bologna, one of the most important Olivetan churches in Northern Italy, has received particular attention, with the studies by Malaguzzi Valeri, Zucchini, and the volume edited by Renzo Renzi in 1971. If the first two books provide an outline of the

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9 Samaritani 1981.
11 Spinelli et al. 2002; Bugini 2014.
12 Malaguzzi Valeri 1895; Zucchini 1944; Renzi 1971.
history of the church and a short description of its artworks, the 1971 publication has a broader scope, presenting a multifaceted history of the monastery and church. In more recent years some interesting articles have shed light on choir books and choir stalls made for San Michele in Bosco in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These are valuable contributions to the history of this church, which has been studied especially for its art from the sixteenth century (Vasari and Carracci in particular). However, there would be scope for an in-depth investigation on this foundation in the fifteenth century, starting from the considerable amount of documents of the monastic archive (now held in the Archivio di Stato, Bologna). Moving to Southern Italy, the works of art by famous Renaissance painters and sculptors made for the Neapolitan church of Sant’Anna dei Lombardi have been the object of essays and articles.

After the monographic studies on Cosmé Tura by Mario Salmi (1957) and Eberhard Ruhmer (1958), three books on this artist appeared in the late 1990s. The volume by Stephen Campbell is not a “traditional” monograph, as the author chooses a different approach, trying to understand Tura’s art by exploring the historical context in which his works were created. For instance, in the chapter on Tura’s religious paintings, Campbell investigates fifteenth-century attitudes towards human physiognomy. Considering contemporary ideas about religious asceticism, the author questions the extent to which the artist’s manipulation of the human body reflects these ideas. If the original perspective adopted by the author brings new insights, some of his arguments seem to us far-fetched. In particular, as will be explained below, we disagree with Campbell’s reading of the Roverella altarpiece as an anti-Jewish manifesto. A shortcoming of the chapter on this altarpiece is the fact that Campbell overlooked its original location within the church of San Giorgio.

Another monographic volume on Tura was published by Monica Molteni in 1999. Gathering the new information that emerged in the previous decades (especially the documents published by Adriano Franceschini), the author attempted to deal with Tura’s work chronologically (unlike Campbell), providing a useful synthesis of the available primary and secondary sources. The standard context of catalogue entries is absorbed into the body of the text. A different format was chosen by Joseph Manca for his book on Cosmé Tura, which adopts the tradition format of a catalogue raisonné. Four introductory chapters investigate the Ferrarese context in which the artist worked and present a definition of his style. Aiming at

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13 See for instance the comprehensive essay by Giancarlo Roversi investigating San Michele in Bosco as a strategic place within the city, targeted on wars, but also as a venue of feasts, and a monastery favoured by Popes, kings and writers throughout the centuries; Roversi in Renzi 1971, pp. 85-167.
16 Campbell 1997.
17 Molteni 1999.
18 Manca 2000.
reassessing an artist who was considered “demonic”, “nervous” and “deformed”, the author convincingly argues that Tura’s style was not perceived as neurotic or agitated by his patrons, but rather as novel and diverting, satisfying the desire of the court for sumptuous art. The comprehensive catalogue of accepted works is very well written and the entries include a very useful discussion of the previous literature. The appendix containing documents on Tura, some of which unpublished, is a valuable addition to this volume.

These three monographic volumes on Tura have certainly contributed to the study of Ferrarese Renaissance, with new documents (Manca) and interpretations (Campbell), or simply by providing a good synthesis of the primary and secondary sources (Molteni). However, all three authors don’t seem to have given much attention to the original context of Tura’s religious paintings, and this is true in particular for the Roverella altarpiece. In more recent years the latter work has been the focus of two important articles by Don Enrico Peverada, who examined the iconography of the polyptych, offering a plausible identification of the main characters, and revealing the date of its installation on the high altar of San Giorgio.\textsuperscript{19}

While the literature mentioned above is essential for the study of Ferrarese sacred architecture, of the history of the Olivetans of Ferrara and of the work of Cosmè Tura, there is a more complex methodological approach which we have tried to adopt while researching this thesis. The last few decades have seen an increased interest for the reconstruction of the lost context of Renaissance altarpieces, considered in its entirety. An impressive work was done on Sassetta’s high altarpiece for the church of San Francesco in Borgo San Sepolcro.\textsuperscript{20} Not only the polyptych was thoroughly investigated by a team of specialists in painting technique, conservation and woodwork, but the history of the church and its interior, the liturgy which was performed in it, were recovered by historians and art historians. The two volumes on Sassetta’s altarpiece for Borgo San Sepolcro provide a useful model for collaborative studies with a more holistic approach to a work of art.

As seen above, the church of San Giorgio fuori le mura has not been the object of in-depth studies. Scholars have mainly focussed their attention on the campanile from the 1480s, attributed to Biagio Rossetti, to the Baroque church interior and to its history after reconstruction in the early eighteenth century. One of the principal aims of this thesis is to recover as much information as possible on the fifteenth-century San Giorgio, on its fabric as well as on the individuals who shaped its history. We will draw information from examination of the current fabric and from extant Late Gothic churches in Ferrara, as well as from a range of archival material and sixteenth-century visual sources. Moreover, unpublished documents and other primary sources will provide details on the church interior (altars, liturgical furnishings,

\textsuperscript{19} Peverada 2008 and 2009.

\textsuperscript{20} Israëls 2009.
etc.) that will help to recreate the original setting of the Roverella altarpiece. A thorough research in the archives will reveal the identities of the benefactors who contributed to the renovation of the church, bequeathing money for the erection of new chapels, but also for the purchase of the necessary liturgical furnishings. Light will be shed on the historical context of San Giorgio and the Olivetan community housed there from the 1410s, as well as on the Ferrarese laypeople who were granted burial rights in the church.

The choir stalls now filling the apse built in the 1580s have received some scholarly attention, although no decisive conclusion has been reached. We will address questions about their dating and authorship, but also the overlooked issue of their original place within the church. We will also explore the history of the scriptorium at San Giorgio, looking at some manuscript volumes produced in this cloister, including some choir books which were used in the daily liturgy by the monks.

This thesis seeks to assess the importance of the Roverella patronage, with a particular focus on the church of San Giorgio in Ferrara. Through an analysis of documentary material as well as of the surviving artworks commissioned by this family we will try to address some crucial questions. Why where the Roverella attracted to this particular church, located outside the city walls and housing a cloistered order? What was the aim of the Roverella’s art patronage in San Giorgio?

We will also look closely at the funerary monument to Lorenzo Roverella, still in situ, examining all of its components and trying to add new elements to the interpretations so far proposed by scholars. Furthermore, we will discuss the authorship of the parts executed in Istrian stone, which is still a matter of scholarly debate. Was Ambrogio Riva from Milan the sculptor who provided the frame to the marble sculptures commissioned from Antonio Rossellino? How should we read this collaboration between one of the chief Florentine sculptors and a less talented artist from Lombardy? What does the funerary monument reveal about the artistic preferences of the Roverella?

Although the Pala Roverella by Cosmé Tura has received scholarly attention in recent years, some crucial questions remain unanswered. Firstly, the authors of the latest three monographic studies on the Ferrarese artist overlooked the importance of the original context of the altarpiece once in San Giorgio. They took for granted the information provided in the eighteenth century by Baruffaldi, who saw Tura’s polyptych on a side altar. Some important information concerning the patronage of the Roverella in San Giorgio (concerning in particular the high altar chapel) had emerged some time before these monographies were published, but none of the three authors seemed to be aware of it. The key implications of this document,

21 Campbell 1997; Molteni 1999; Manca 2000.
found by Adriano Franceschini, were highlighted in a handful of publications by Ferrarese scholars.22

One of the main aims of this thesis is to investigate the setting for which the *Pala Roverella* was conceived, so that we can understand its function correctly. How did Tura respond to the spatial context of the altarpiece he was to deliver to the Olivetan church of Ferrara? Did the church interior affect somehow the design of the *Pala Roverella*? What sort of frame completed this imposing polyptych? In what way can recovering the chapel for which the latter was conceived improve our understanding of this masterpiece of the Ferrarese Renaissance?

Due to the lack of evidence, trying to give a chronological order to the surviving paintings by Cosmè Tura has always proven to be a hard task. Campbell, Molteni and Manca have proposed a date to the second half of the 1470s for the *Pala Roverella*, although this dating was not supported by documents, at the time of their publications. In 2006 an important Ferrarese source was published by Primo Griguolo and only three years later one relevant piece of information contained in this text, revealing the date of installation of the altarpiece, was picked up in an article by Enrico Peverada. In this thesis we will gather all the available documents and review the datings so far proposed for Tura’s polyptych. Was this work really painted in the 1470s as argued by most scholars?

Another issue which remains to be addressed is the correct identification of the donors in the *Pala Roverella*. Which of the three Roverella ecclesiastics are represented by Tura in the altarpiece for San Giorgio? We will discuss the various interpretations provided by scholars, and suggest a plausible answer to this question. Furthermore, we will reassess the iconography of the main panel of the altarpiece. How does the iconography of the polyptych respond to the Olivetan context? Can we really consider this work as an anti-Jewish manifesto as claimed by Stephen Campbell?

Chapter 1

Ideals and artistic traditions of the Olivetan order

The congregation of the Olivetans was founded in 1319 by the Sienese nobleman Giovanni Tolomei (1272-1348). He is said to have vowed himself to religion in gratitude for the recovery of his eyesight through the intercession of the Virgin. In fulfilment of this vow, he left his home in 1313 and went into the wilderness accompanied by Ambrogio Piccolomini and Patrizio Patrizi. They retired to a remote place to the South-east of Siena, known as the Desert of Accona (in the Ombrone Valley), where they lived an eremitical lifestyle in the caves of the hillside. They gradually evolved into a more organised community. At this period Giovanni was granted a heavenly revelation. He had a vision of a silver ladder by which a great number of brothers, clad in a white habit, and guided by angels, were going up to heaven towards Christ and his Mother, who were also clad in sparkling white. This mystical experience may be considered an invitation to the companions of Accona to submit to the directives of the Church by adopting the ladder of monastic life or of humility (Rule of Saint Benedict, 7), with the Benedictine Rule as norm.

Giovanni took the name of Bernard, with the clear intention of taking Saint Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, as a model of monastic life and Marian devotion.\textsuperscript{23} The olive-clothed mountain hermitage was renamed Monte Oliveto, in memory of Christ’s agony and as a perpetual reminder of the life of sacrifice and expiatory penance. The choice of the name of the first monastery, Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto, reflects how Marian devotion was intimately linked to the cult of the humanity of the Saviour. The Marian and Christocentric programme of the monastic life of the new congregation could not have been more clearly defined: with Mary, union to the Saviour in his passion in order to share in his glory, by humility, obedience and poverty to climb with him and in him the ladder which his glorious cross had erected between earth and heaven.

In 1319 Bernard Tolomei and his followers received the Benedictine habit. Showing their awareness of their liberty in the depths of the Benedictine tradition, the founders of the Olivetan congregation chose white garments, a sign of their devotion to the Virgin, which distinguished them obviously from the black friars. The first constitutions of the Olivetans reveal that the spirituality of the new congregation was inspired by the main themes of Saint Benedict’s Rule: the search for God, the liturgical prayer, the practice of great virtues, such as

humility, obedience and silence. However, the Benedictine Rule also implied some institutional aspects that concerned the officers managing the conventual life, relations with the outside world, guests and pilgrims, and a careful administration of the properties of the monasteries, entrusted to the cellarius. Nevertheless two important features of the Benedictine organisation underwent significant changes: the office of the prior general and the stabilitas loci. Olivetan prior generals were first appointed on a yearly basis, then on a three-year basis. In general, monks belonging to the order of Monte Oliveto were required to change monastery on a yearly basis. As we will see, the mobility of the monks across Italy explains some patterns of patronage that can be traced for the Olivetan communities (a good example is that of the Florentine sculptor Antonio Rossellino, who was commissioned works for Olivetan churches in Florence, Naples and Ferrara).

The Abbreviatio observantiae ordinis Montis Oliveti (late XVth century) established the obligation of manual labour (exercitium) for all the members of the monastic community, exception made for those who were charged with weekly tasks, such as those in the kitchen and in the refectory. Work became a path of asceticism against temptations, a means of sustenance for the monks, as well as an exercise of charity. Work was considered as a serious and productive activity to be carried out with the consent of the abbot and for the usefulness and necessity of the monastery. A special category of manual labours in which the Olivetans were particularly skilled were crafts such as calligraphy, wooden intarsia and embroidery.

The three above mentioned activities are strictly connected with the Divine Office, which was fundamental for the Olivetan congregation. Chapter 64 of the first constitutions of the Olivetans (1445) concerns the spiritual and manual activities to be practiced by the monks (Qualiter fratres debeant se exercitare spiritualiter et corporaliter). The key exercises prescribed to them are closely related to the prayer: calligraphy, manuscript illumination and sewing. These activities were at the core of the artistic development in Olivetan monasteries. If Olivetan art reached its height in the late fifteenth century, with the production of choir books and fine choir stalls, the earlier period of the history of the congregation was marked by artistic activities of lesser proportions, but strictly connected to the prayer. The works of the oldest Olivetan miniaturists and calligraphers undoubtedly confirm the devotion and the sacredness of their activity.

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24 Lugano 1911.
26 Giordano 2008, p. 262.
27 Lugano 1903; idem 1905; Brizzi 1994; Lugano 1919.
28 Lugano 1911, pp. 290-91.
29 On the most prominent Olivetan artists and craftsmen see Lugano 1903, idem 1905 and idem 1919.
The choir books made for the mother-house of Monte Oliveto Maggiore at Asciano (Siena), among the most important artworks commissioned for the congregation, were written by Fra Alessandro da Sesto Milanese between 1456 and 1460 under the priorate of the Bolognese Francesco Ringhieri. The illuminations of this series of twenty-two books (now in the cathedral of Chiusi) were contracted to lay artists including Sano di Pietro of Siena (1459-63), Liberale da Verona, Girolamo Bembo da Cremona and the Lombard Venturino Mercati. It was most likely Ringhieri who recommended Sano di Pietro for the illuminations of an antiphonary for the Olivetan church of San Michele in Bosco in Bologna (now in the local Museo Civico Medievale, ms. 562).  

Every day of the year, Olivetan monks gathered eight times a day in their church to observe their prayers and readings with Gregorian chant, beginning with Matins at midnight and Lauds at three in the morning, ending with Vespers at six in the evening and Compline at nine. The active engagement of the monks in the Liturgy of the Hours was to be served by the design of the worship space. Choir stalls were an essential piece of furnishing, designed to accommodate the various postures that monks adopted when celebrating the hours: standing, sitting, kneeling, processing. Each stall contained one movable seat, a shelf for Divine Office and other books, a slanted stand on which to place the Office books and a movable kneller.

As the Olivetans devoted a significant amount of time to the prayer, gathered in choir, we can understand the special attention dedicated to the decoration of the stalls. Indeed, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the art of wooden intarsia flourished within the Olivetan congregation, with the work of talented craftsmen who moved around the monasteries to execute choir stalls and other ecclesiastical furnishings, also training new generations of intarsiatori. Among the masters who excelled in this art we must recall the lay brother Fra Sebastiano da Rovigno, who taught Fra Giovanni da Verona and Fra Damiano (Domenico Zambello of Bergamo). Fra Giovanni da Verona, who had spent his first years of monastic life illuminating choir books, left intarsia works in many places in Italy and trained Vincenzo dalle Vacche and Raffaello da Brescia. A rare example of Olivetan choir stalls still in situ are those made by Giovanni da Verona and his collaborators for the church of Santa Maria in Organo between 1494 and 1499.  

As far as painting and fresco decoration in Olivetan church interiors are concerned, it is difficult to trace a general pattern, as most churches underwent changes over the centuries and very few fifteenth-century or earlier works of art survive. It is useful to list some of the major extant paintings made for Olivetan foundations between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, in order to try to understand the artistic ideals of the congregation.

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31 See the comprehensive study by Bugini 2014.
The imposing and well-orchestrated polyptych by Cecco di Pietro once on the high altar of San Girolamo at Agnano (Pisa), most likely executed in the late 1360s, is among the earliest surviving Olivetan altarpieces (now in the collection of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pisa, Palazzo Blu, Pisa; the predella panels are scattered between the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, and a private collection in London). This is a work of exquisite refinement, for the precious punchwork, the richness and variety of the palette and the accurate details. The iconography reflects the destination of this work of art: the dedication of the church to Saint Jerome explains the saint’s prominent position on the Virgin’s right in the altarpiece. The remaining three panels depict the Saints Nicholas, Benedict and Margaret. It is significant that Jerome is represented with the white habit of the Olivetans, and the same is true for Saint Benedict. The disciples of the latter, Placidus and Maurus, are among the saints appearing in the second tier. The central panel with the Virgin and Child enthroned is crowned with the Annunciation, with the Blessing Christ above it.

Another painter employed by the Olivetans in Tuscany, on at least two occasions, was Spinello Aretino. In 1384 he delivered a polyptych for their church of San Ponziano in Lucca, the principal components of which are generally identified as a central Virgin and Child with Angels (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts), two flanking panels of Saint Pontinianus and Saint Benedict (both in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg) and three predella scenes (in the Galleria Nazionale, Parma). In 1388 Spinello worked in the sacristy of San Miniato al Monte, painting in fresco episodes from the Life of Saint Benedict, undoubtedly one of the highlights of the artist’s maturity.

Among the few extant fifteenth-century altarpieces made for Olivetan churches we can recall the polyptych of the Virgin and Child with the Saints Bartholomeu, John the Baptist, Taddens and Benedict (and the Blessing Redemptor, the Angel and the Virgin Annunciante in the crowning compartments) made by Lorenzo Monaco in 1410 for the church of San Bartolomeo in Monteoliveto fuori porta San Frediano, Florence (now in the local Galleria dell’Accademia). Around 1427 the Bolognese artist Michele di Matteo painted a polyptych (now in the local

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32 Pisani 2010. The abbey of San Girolamo at Agnano was founded by Giovanni Scarlatti, archbishop of Pisa, in 1360.
33 The polyptych (overall dimensions 300x 260 cm) is completed by pinnacles with the four Evangelists in the second tier and by predella scenes. These include the Crucifixion and stories of the saints represented in the main tier.
34 The same year Spinello stipulated a contract with Fra Nicola da Pisa, prior of the Olivetan church of Santa Maria Nuova in Rome, for the high altarpiece made upon the model on the painting he had just executed for the Olivetans in Lucca. Some elements of the altarpiece once in Rome survive in the museums of Siena, Budapest and Cambridge (MA), see Weppelmann, 2011, pp. 143-53.
35 Loughman 2003.
Gallerie dell’Accademia) for Sant’Elena in Venice. It depicts the *Virgin and Child with Saints*, the *Crucifixion* and the *Evangelists* in the upper tier and *Stories of Saint Helena* in the predella.\(^{36}\)

The well-known *Coronation of the Virgin* by Filippo Lippi now in the Vatican, was painted after 1444 for the chapel of Saint Bernard in the eponymous church at Arezzo, upon commission of Carlo Marsuppini, the chancellor of the Florentine Republic. Another painting of the same subject was commissioned from the Sienese architect and painter Francesco di Giorgio Martini by the Olivetan mother-house at Asciano. Martini’s impressive *Coronation of the Virgin* (now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena), dating from 1472, adorned the chapel of Saints Catherine of Siena and Sebastian (built in 1470-72). These two saints are represented kneeling in the foreground, looking up at the scene above. Three years later Francesco executed the altarpiece of the *Nativity with the Saints Bernardino and Thomas Aquinas and two angels* (also in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena) for the church of the Olivetan monastery of San Benedetto fuori Porta Tufi in his hometown.

Another painter and illuminator who was favoured by the Olivetans was Liberale da Verona. In 1487 the monks of Sant’Elena in Venice, commissioned from him an altarpiece with the *Assumption of the Virgin* (“l’assontione della nostra donna con li chori de angeli”), a work probably destined to the high altar and maybe never delivered.\(^{37}\) Pinturicchio painted two altarpieces for the Olivetans: the *Assumption of the Virgin* (about 1508) for the chapel of the Catalan banker Paolo Tolosa in the church of Monteoliveto in Naples (now in the Museo Nazionale di Campodimonte) and the *Virgin in Glory with the Saints Gregory the Great and Benedict* (about 1510-12) for Santa Maria Assunta at Barbiano, near San Gimignano (now in the local Pinacoteca).\(^{38}\) It is significant that the above mentioned Olivetan intarsia master Fra Giovanni da Verona is recorded in the monastery of Naples in 1508 (at the same time Pinturicchio was working on the *Assumption*) and was also involved in the commission of the Umbrian’s altarpiece for the church of Barbiano in 1510. Moving to Lombardy, the dedication of the Olivetan church to Santa Maria Incoronata at Nerviano (about fifteen kilometers northwest of Milan), motivated the particular iconographic choice for the large altarpiece commissioned from Ambrogio Bergognone. In this work, dating from 1522, the *Assumption of the Virgin with the Saints*

\(^{36}\) Zuleika Murat is studying this polyptych in relation with the patronage of the Borromeo family, who financed the building of the chapel of Saint Helena in the homonymous church.

\(^{37}\) Tagliaferro 1999, p. 184. The *Virgin and Child enthroned with the Saints Benedict and Francesca Romana* in the Olivetan church of Santa Maria Nova, Rome is generally assigned to Liberale (see Tagliaferro 2005, who dates it to 1474-75). The iconography of Liberale da Verona’s only signed painting, the *Virgin and Child with the Saints Lawrence, Cristopher, Bernard and a blessed Olivetan* (now in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin) from 1489 suggests that it was painted for an Olivetan church. Liberale was also employed by the Olivetan monks in his native town: he is likely to have illuminated some pages of a Gradual (now in the Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona) and in 1498-6 he received some payments for paintings in the cells of the monastery and in some chapels of the church; Tagliaferro 2005.

Ambrose, Augustine, Gervasius and Protasius is crowned by a lunette with the Coronation of the Virgin (now in the Brera, Milan).

Another theme which was favoured by the Olivetan congregation was the Adoration of the Magi. This subject was chosen for the high altarpiece of the church of Saint Elena in Venice. This large canvas (470 by 260 cm, now in the Brera, Milan) was painted by Palma il Vecchio in 1525-26, upon commission of Orsa, widow of Simone di Domenico Malipiero. An interesting iconographic detail is the inclusion of Saint Elena (titular saint of the church) in the scene of the adoration. We should also recall that the Adoration of the Magi by Garofalo now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, was painted for an altar in San Giorgio in 1537.

From this brief survey it appears that Olivetans favoured Marian themes, sometimes combined with Passion scenes, and that the altarpieces they commissioned might also include saints who were relevant to specific churches. Saint Benedict, whose Rule the Olivetans followed, was included in some altarpieces, but he is also the protagonist of more extensive decorations, such as the fresco cycle with episodes from his life painted by Spinello Aretino (in the sacristy at San Miniato) and by Luca Signorelli (1497-98) and Sodoma (after 1505) in the great cloister at Monte Oliveto Maggiore (Asciano).

Coming now to consider the Olivetan monastery and church, we can say that the secluded places of the cities were the favourites, because the monks could avoid the contact with the locals. According to the Benedictine Rule, the foundation had to be autonomous from the rest of the world, equipped with all the necessities for material life and the buildings that housed them: almost a small city, self-sufficient, and like the city, enclosed by walls that also included the mill, the source of water and the land needed for cultivation.41

As our thesis deals with a fifteenth-century church, it is interesting to see how it compared to other churches belonging to the same congregation. Is it possible to define the features of a typical Olivetan church in the fifteenth century? This task might prove rather difficult, considering that during this period in most cases Olivetan communities settled in pre-existing buildings, belonging to other congregations or administered by canons, like San Giorgio in Ferrara. As a result, Olivetan monks arriving in a new location had to adapt to the churches they found. However, if we look carefully, it is possible to find common elements in some monasteries, including the mother house, Monte Oliveto Maggiore (1400-17, transformed in the

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40 This is well exemplified by The Virgin and Child enthroned with the Crucifixion and the Saints Peter, Andrew and Paul, with the insignia of Monte Oliveto Maggiore (89.5 x 62.8 cm, tempera on gold ground) attributed to Pietro del Buono, a painter active in Naples between 1492 and 1512. The panel, formerly in the collection of Richard Offner was sold in 2010 (Sotheby’s, New York, 28 January 2010, lot 239).
41 The Rule of Saint Benedict envisioned a self-supporting monastery: “If it can be done, the monastery should be so established that all the necessary things, such as water, mill, garden and various workshops, may be within enclosure, so that there is no necessity for the monks to go about outside of it” (ch. 66).
eighteenth century), San Bartolomeo in Florence (1334), Santa Maria Nuova (later Santa Francesca Romana) in Rome (1351) and San Michele in Bosco in Bologna (1353). All of these churches have a clearly Benedictine imprint, with a large single nave appropriate for prayer and choral singing. With their simple layout of a single space ending with an apse embracing its entire width, these churches can be considered almost as large choirs intended for the exclusive use of the monastic community rather than for the assembly of the faithful. This is especially evident at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, in spite of the later renovations: the choir stalls of the monks occupy the nave.

Interestingly, the single-nave layout is found in some Lombard churches which were built by the Olivetans, such as Santa Maria di Monzoro near Milan (1400), Santi Angelo e Niccolò in Villanova del Sillaro near Lodi (1426) and San Nicolò in Rodengo near Brescia (1446). Among these foundations we should highlight the one at Villanova del Sillaro, a particularly important example of Olivetan patronage in the early fifteenth century. In his will dictated in 1401 Niccolò Sommariva, a nobleman and jurisconsult from Lodi, nominated his brother Angelo, a cardinal, as his universal heir, leaving precise instructions to erect a church dedicated to their eponymous saints with annexed monastery (large enough to house ten monks) on the land belonging to their family. The building works started in 1424 and three years later cardinal Angelo donated all his properties to the Olivetans, who took possession of the monastery. We might argue that the choice of this Benedictine congregation was dictated by Angelo, who was a Camaldolese monk at San Michele in Isola in Venice before being appointed cardinal in 1384. The church was completed in 1480 (its design is attributed to the local architects Ambrogio and Giovanni Fugazza), while works on the monastery continued into the sixteenth century. Although the Late Gothic façade survives (with some later interventions), the interior was totally transformed in the eighteenth century.

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43 According to the Rule of Saint Benedict the church was intended for the sole use of the monks: “Oratorium hoc sit quod dicitur, nec ibi quidquum aliud geratur aut condatur” (Regola, n. LII).
44 Vismara 1907. We can also recall the church of Nostra Signora delle Grazie at Portovenere (Liguria), where the nave is flanked by three chapels on either side, see Rossini 1986.
45 Angelo’s close connections with the Olivetan congregation are revealed, for instance, by the fact that the general vicar of the Olivetan order, Fra Francesco da Piacenza, and Fra Benedetto di Spagna of the monastery of Santa Maria nuova in Campo Vaccino in Rome are among the witnesses of his will dictated in Rome in 1427. It is also significant that Angelo was first buried in the latter Olivetan monastery in Rome. See Strnad 1986.
Chapter 2

The church of San Giorgio fuori le mura in the fifteenth century

2.1 The Olivetans in San Giorgio

The ancient cathedral of San Giorgio stood once on the right-side bank of the Po di Volano, a branch of the river Po flowing just a few kilometres from the city of Ferrara (fig. 16).\footnote{After the barbarian invasions in Vico Aventino or Vicohabentia (the primitive settlement of the future Ferrara) in the VII century, its inhabitants moved to the Byzantine castrum on the island between the two branches of the river Po, the Volano and the Primaro. In this area, later called Borgo of San Giorgio, they also moved the seat of the bishop.} It had been built around the middle of the seventh century in the first settlement of the city, called Massa Babilonia or Ferrariola.\footnote{Guarini 1621, p. 387.} After a few centuries the inhabitants moved to the other side of the Po, around the Byzantine castrum, and in 1146 the new cathedral (in the current city centre), was consecrated by Bishop Landolfo.\footnote{Scalabrini 1773, pp. 14-15.} San Giorgio transpadano (beyond the Po) became then a college of Canons Regular. In the fourteenth century the church became a commendam, and was entrusted in 1372 to Cardinal Pietro Stagno and later to Carlo di Andrea Tomacelli.

In 1405 the benefices of San Giorgio were assigned to the Ferrarese cleric Baldassarre Dalla Sale.\footnote{For the document recording the assignation of the benefices to Dalla Sale, an apostolic protonotary closely connected to the Este, and the related ceremony, see Appendix, no. 1.} This commendam did not last long, as in 1407 the monastery was entrusted to Cardinals Giordano Orsini, Antonio Calvi and Pietro Stefaneschi. But the church and monastery were falling into ruin and it was for this reason that Niccolò III d'Este initiated negotiations for the installation of the Olivetans in Ferrara.\footnote{The Este marquis had close connections with Cardinal Baldassarre Cossa, who was elected pope in 1410 and took the name of John XXIII. Cossa was a great supporter of the Olivetan congregation. See Fiori 1983, p. 11.} In 1409 Niccolò sent his right-hand man, Ugguccione Contrari (1379-1448) and Alberto Della Sala, a trusted minister of his state, to discuss this matter with the Olivetans at San Michele in Bosco in Bologna.\footnote{Samaritani 1981, pp. 89-90. On Uggeccione Contrari see DBI, 28, 1983 (entry by Tiziano Ascari).} However, it was not until 1414 that the marquis of Ferrara made a formal petition: a bull dated 5 September of that same year by pope John XXIII assigned the monastery of San Giorgio to the Benedictine Congregation of Monte Oliveto.\footnote{“Sane petition dilecti filli nobilis viri Nicolai marchionis Estensis nobis nuper exhibita continebat quod ipse ob singularem fervorem ac dilectam tionem quos ipse gerit ad eundem ordinem sancti Benedicti Montisoliveti… ad eundum ordinem sancti Benedicti Montisoliveti nuncupatum et eius professores desiderat ut monasterium sancti Georgii extra muros Ferrariaenses per priorem soliti gubernari ordinis sancti Augustini…” the papal bull is in ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, C 1, and is published by Peverada 2001, pp. 69-71. On 19 June 1414 Pietro di Sardegna, prior of San Michele in Bosco in Bologna, as Procurator of...}
In spite of his initial interest to save San Giorgio from ruin, Niccolò d'Este does not seem to have spent any money on this church and monastery, which were in great need of repair. Instead, it was the above mentioned Uguccione Contrari who committed himself to pay the total sum of 828 lire, 29 soldi and 15 denari to the entrepreneurs Gugliemo Beccari and “magister” Cossa, and to Bernardino da Cavana for the material needed for renovation works to the bell tower and the monastery (recorded from mid-August 1414 to June 1417). Eventually Contrari paid only a small amount of this, and in 1418 the Officio dei Poveri di Cristo had to pay his creditors nearly 800 lire. The Olivetan monk Fra Ugolino of Bologna is recorded directing the renovation works in San Giorgio in the autumn of 1414.

A document drafted by the notary Lancillotto Villa marks the installation of the Olivetans in the monastery on Sunday 26 May 1415. The two monks who attended the ceremony were Andrea Bettini of Bologna, prior of San Michele in Bosco, and Francesco Ricci of Padua, procurator general of the order. As the document does not specify the identity of the “quampluribus aliis fratribus et monachis” (“many other friars and monks”) who participated to the mass and divine office, we cannot be sure that any of them were members of the new community at San Giorgio. It has therefore been suggested that this document did not coincide with the settling of the monks in the monastery. Indeed, two years later this had not yet happened and it was only in September 1417 that the name of the prior of San Giorgio, Fra Antonio of the late master Salvi of Bologna, was first mentioned.

The first famiglia who gathered in May 1418 included the prior Andrea Bettini of Bologna, the vicar and cellarius (steward) Antonio of Crevalcore, Giovanni de Pelacani of Crevalcore and Bartolomeo Gasperini of Bologna. On 20 April 1419, shortly before the feast of St George, Pietro Boiardi, Bishop of Ferrara, ordered that at least five monks were to live in the monastery of San Giorgio (there were only three at that time), for the “bonum comodum et utilitatem dicti beatii Giorgi monasterii in spiritualibus et temporalibus”. Some Ferrarese noblemen, including Uguccione Contrari and Antonio Costabili, acted as guarantors for the three Olivetans.

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the Olivetan congregation, took possession of the church and house of Sant’Alessio, in the contrada of San Salvatore in Ferrara, see Samaritani 1981, p. 90.

8 Ibidem, pp. 90-1.
9 The expenses for the renovation works are recorded in a booklet held in BCAF, Collezione Antonelli, 928, mentioned by Samaritani 1981, pp. 90-1. One of the payments dated 23 October 1414 reads: “per III fenestre de fero che … fra Ugolino da Bologna disse per meterne doe alla chuxina e l’altra in testa al dormetorio de sotto… per III fenestre de fero redonde … el ditto fra Ugolino disse per meterne doe ala spenderia e l’altra alla cella del portonazo…”, f. 36r. (transcription by the present writer).

10 ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Lancillotto Villa, matr. 32, 30.05.1415, published by Peverada 2001, pp. 74-5.
11 Peverada 2001, p. 76.
12 Ibidem, p. 77-79.
13 Samaritani 1981, pp. 94-95.
14 Ibidem, p. 79-80.
While the new cathedral, dedicated to Saint George - the patron saint of Ferrara - housed the relic of the arm of the homonymous saint, San Giorgio transpadano housed the relics of the city’s other patron saint, Maurelius, who was thought to have been the bishop of Vicohabentia (nowadays Voghenza, the first seat of the diocese of the modern Ferrara) in the second half of the seventh century. The church also housed the remains of Blessed Alberto Pandoni, Bishop of Ferrara from 1258 to 1274.

In order to revive the cult of Saint Maurelius, a special and solemn ceremony was organised in San Giorgio by Bishop Boiardi, no doubt with the participation of Niccolò III d’Este, who attended the event with Uguccione Contrari. On 7 May 1419, the feast day of Saint Maurelius, the two caskets (“cassette”) containing his relics and those of Blessed Alberto Pandoni (d. 1274) were removed from the vault (“scurolo”) underneath the high altar, which was full of mud due to flooding of the river Po. An interesting account of this ceremony is provided by Antonio Libanori in his life of Blessed Alberto Pandoni (printed in 1667). Libanori reports that, according to documents kept in the archive of San Giorgio, some very clear water flew out of the urns, which healed several ill people. After the retrieval of the ancient casket, the relics of Saint Maurelius were placed into a silver casket, while those of Blessed Alberto Pandoni were put in a marble sarcophagus (today this supports the altar in the chapel of Saint Benedict). The casket and the sarcophagus were later placed into their dedicated chapels on either sides of the high altar. Judging by the account provided by Libanori, in which some canons, including Obizzo Costabili, are mentioned, but no members of the Olivetan congregation, it would seem that the *inventio* and the *translato* of the relics were purely the initiative of the bishop.

A document dated 8 October 1420 attests that six monks were dwelling in the monastery. By 1426 the number had increased to nine. A document of 13 December 1428 registers that the sacristy was being rebuilt. The monks congregated in the “foresteria” of the monastery, “propter fabricationem seu edificationem sacristie nunquam destructive et que ad presens construitur et de novo edificatur”. In 1440 and 1441 other building works were carried out in the monastery, as indicated by a payment received on 19 May 1440 by the bricklayer Antonio di Giovanni del Cossa, who was employed there with Antonio Brasavola, and by an

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15 Libanori 1667, II, p. 70 (Appendix, no. 2). See also Guarini 1621, p. 392 and Scalabrini 1773, p. 27. This event is narrated by an anonymous Ferrarese chronicler under the date 25 April 1419: “fu aperto l’archa de Saneto Maurelio et de Sancto Alberto a Sancto Zorzo… perché li corpi erano in l’acqua. Et furo posti in una capseta de piombo dal vescovo de Ferrara con tuta la chierexia. El magnifico Uguutione et messer Obizo di Costabili, che era arciprete, guberno no dicti corpi et li meseno sotto uno altane”, Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502, pp. 15-16.
17 Ibidem, pp. 87-8.
18 ADF, Fondo San Giorgio, 3/2, Catastro 1393-1522, f. 11r, mentioned by Peverada, note 39, p. 382.
agreement stipulated on 11 April 1441 between the bricklayer Cristoforo of the late Jacopo Baldini and the *cellarius* of San Giorgio.  

The records of the pastoral visitations by Giovanni da Tossignano on 30 May 1434, 11 September 1435 and 28 April 1443 do not provide any useful information on San Giorgio, as the bishop simply found “everything in place”.  

The same can be said of the visit of his successor, Francesco Dal Legname (bishop from 1446 to 1460), which took place on 25 August 1448, and found the church “optime stare”.  

In the first three decades of their presence in Ferrara the Olivetans had been able to rebuild the convent’s economy inherited by the canons regular with their own means. It appears that in the period from 1440 to 1470 they did not receive any substantial donations from members of the Este court, nor from other eminent Ferrarese citizens.  

Research carried out by Don Antonio Samaritani showed that only forty Ferrarese wills mention San Giorgio in the years 1425-1465, only sixteen of which included specific bequests, and these were worth very little (thirty-three lire to the church, four lire to the friars, three lire for the “apparati”, a set of masses and one anniversary).  

It seems that the Ferrarese had little interest in the new monastic community at San Giorgio and favoured more established ecclesiastic foundations belonging to mendicant orders, such as San Francesco, San Domenico and Santo Spirito, churches in which chapels and tombs of the local elite were to be found.

Turning now our attention to the social composition of the *famiglia* in San Giorgio, it is interesting to see that it was only from the middle of the century that members from the most prominent local families, some of them affiliated to the Este, started entering the monastery. From 1447 to 1455 the community rose from seventeen to twenty-five members and was up to thirty by 1485.  

In the decades from the 1460s to 1490s about half of the monks were Ferrarese and from 1464 until the end of the century the priors were mostly Ferrarese. From the beginning of the Olivetan tenure to 1572 about two thirds of the priors covered this role for one year (sometimes they were re-appointed after a good lapse of time), while one third were in charge for two or three years. Sometimes priors remained for four years, as it happened to Fra Nicolò Roverella from May 1464 to May 1468, Fra Niccolò da Ferrara from 1470 to 1474, Fra

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21 ASDFe, 1447 usque 1449 *Visitaciones civilitatis et dioecesis ferrariensis*, fol. 37r. See also Peverada 1982, p. 217.  
23 Ibidem, p. 114.  
24 Samaritani 1981, p. 120. The numbers went down in the early sixteenth century and then rose up to forty around 1525. During the year of the Council of Trent there were about thirty monks in San Giorgio falling down to twenty by the end of the century. It needs to be kept in mind that in the second half of the sixteenth century the other two monasteries of the Natio Ferraricensis, Santa Maria di Baura and Santa Francesca Romana were in need not only of financial resources but also of monks; Cattana 1981, p. 170.

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Girolamo Bendidio from 1524 to 1528 and Fra Benedetto Tombesi from 1563 to 1567, all of them Ferrarese. Amongst these figures, Nicolò Roverella in particular seems to have monopolized the office, as he was the longest serving prior at San Giorgio (1464-68, 1478-80). Three other priors served four-year terms but most only served for one year. This attests to the great prominence of the Roverella in fifteenth century Ferrara.

If the role of Niccolò III d’Este had been crucial for the installation of the Olivetans in Ferrara, his illegitimate son Borso, who ruled from 1450 to 1471, was too focused on other ecclesiastical foundations to show any interest in San Giorgio. In the late 1430s Niccolò had built Santa Maria degli Angeli (assigned in 1440 to the Dominican observants), which he wanted to be the pantheon of his dynasty; work on this church was continued by his son Leonello. Borso’s own project, the foundation of the Certosa, started at the beginning of his rule and was consecrated in 1461. It was no doubt the lack of ducal interest in the Olivetan monastery and church that left space for a very powerful family, the Roverella, who, as we will see, played a prominent role in the refurbishment of the church in the final decades of the century.

Bishop Francesco Dal Legname is known to have had a special devotion to the Olivetan order. It was indeed in San Giorgio, and more precisely in the chapel of Saint Maurelius, that he administered sacred ordinations on 11 June 1457. It is also noteworthy that a few years earlier Dal Legname had given new impetus to the cult of Saint Maurelius by commissioning a precious reliquary (now in the local Museo della Cattedrale) from Simone d’Alemagna to contain the arm bone of the saint. The solemn translation of the relic from San Giorgio to the cathedral took place in April 1456. From then on this reliquary together with the arm reliquary of San Giorgio, were to be displayed on the high altar of the cathedral on major feast days.

2.2 Aliprando Guidicciioni (d. 1431), a key patron of San Giorgio

The church of San Giorgio must have fallen into a poor state of repair if in the 1430s a new high altar chapel and a smaller chapel flanking it to the north were built. The donor who provided the funds for the new cappella maggiore in the mid-1430s has so far been completely overlooked in the literature on Renaissance Ferrara. Before examining closely the contract for the building works it is worth drawing our attention to this important figure.

26 Folin 2015.
27 Antonio da Barga 1901, I, p. 58.
28 “Ad quatuor minores ordines. Petrum domini Andree de Bertonis de Cherio... egregium Ludovicum de Ariostis... ad diaconatum. Venerabilem... Nicolaum de Bardelis... Ad sacerdocium. Dominum Andrea filium quondam Zanini de Papa... dominum Batholameum de Characinis...dominum Matheum filius Iohannis de Zenasiis...”, ASFÉ, Archivio Notarile, Ludovico Milani, matr. 100, III, 11.06.1457, published by Peverada 2001, p. 91, note 52.
Aliprando (or Aldebrando) Guidiccioni (d. Ferrara 1431) was a member of a wealthy family of merchants and bankers from Lucca who were particularly active in Venice and in Northern Europe. His father Francesco is documented in Venice in the 1350s and ’60s. Aliprando and his brother Marco settled in Venice in 1388 and six years later they were granted, together with their siblings Conte and Nicolò, citizenship “de intus” by grace of the Venetian Republic, provided that they lived in Venice with their families. They promised to practise the “ars sete et de panni velutis et alii laboreriis sete de qua sunt multum instructi”. However, Marco was by then living in Bruges, where his business was flourishing. He had very good connections at the court of Burgundy and he was appointed counsellor and maître d’hôtel by Duke Philip the Good.

Aliprando’s other brother Nicolao ran a company with his Lucchese compatriot Nicolao Arnolfini, and when Nicolao died it was at first Marco and then Aliprando who replaced him. Aliprando also set up a business partnership with his fellow citizens Paolo Miliani and Lorenzo Poggio, who was resident in London. Furthermore, Aliprando ran an important part of his commercial business in Italy, and towards the end of his life he is documented as living in Ferrara (in the parish of Santa Maria di Bocca), where he was the merchant-supplier to the Este court (with his business partner and son-in-law Antonio Diodati, also of Lucca). In 1429, not being able to travel to Northern Europe, most likely due to his weak health, Aliprando charged Paolo Miliani with the task of recovering all his credits, his properties and his property rights still to be collected in England, Flanders, in “Arthesia e Piccardia” as well as in other places. In 1434 the executors of Guidiccioni received from the Este four houses in Ferrara in settlement of outstanding debts of 3,430 ducats. Connections between the Guidiccioni family and the Este continued well into the end of the fifteenth century as a person called Aliprando Guidiccioni is recorded amongst the courtiers of Eleonora of Aragon from 1478 to 1484 and

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30 The company of the Guidiccioni in Venice made, first through Nicolao and then Aliprando, large investments for Paolo Guinigi, ruler of Lucca, see Mueller 1996 and Molà 1994, pp. 71-72.
31 Molà 1994, pp. 47 and 70.
32 Galoppini 2008, p. 124. On Marco Guidiccioni see Mirot 1930, pp. 30-31, 58-72. On 16 February 1417 Marco Guidiccioni, “coopman van Luke”, had bought the chapel of Our Lady, in the southern part of the choir of the church of the Clarissan nuns in Bruges. This chapel, renamed “capelle van Sinte Cruus”, was to house the tomb of his late wife Giovanna, daughter of Andrea Raponi. The chapel was later bought from Marco’s son Marco by Giovanna Cerami, to house the tomb of her late husband Giovanni (d. 1472), the son of Arrigo Arnolfini, see Galoppini 2008, note 18, pp. 119-120.
34 Ibidem, p. 123.
35 The parish church of Santa Maria di Bocca (or di Bocche) stood on via di Boccacanale, close to the church of San Giuseppe. It was demolished in 1816, see Brisighella 1991, pp. 328-9.
37 ASMo, Notai Camerali, D. Dulcini, A, fol. 103 and C, fol. 44, mentioned by Dean 1988, note 109, p. 61.
amongst those of her husband Ercole I d’Este in 1485, while a certain Girolamo Guidiccioni served Ercole in 1499.\textsuperscript{38}

To explain Aliprando’s particular devotion to the Olivetan congregation and his generous bequest of one thousand lire for the erection of San Giorgio’s cappella maggiore we must travel back in time to Venice, to the year 1418. There the Olivetans had taken possession of the church and monastery of Sant’Elena in 1407, but the buildings were run down and in need of repair, and there were almost no furnishings.\textsuperscript{39} On 27 November 1418 Aliprando Guidiccioni was in Sant’Elena, attending the solemn ceremony of the foundation of the chapel dedicated to the titular saint (fig. 17), and indeed playing an important role. The donation of one thousand and five hundred scudi for the erection of this chapel was made by Aliprando’s friend Alessandro Borromeo (d. Venice 1431), a successful banker from Florence whose company is documented in Venice from 1395.\textsuperscript{40} The account of the ceremony is found in a parchment codex now in the Archivio di Stato of Venice, which was transcribed by Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna in his Delle inscrizioni veneziane (1830).\textsuperscript{41}

The archbishop of Split Fra Pietro da Pago O.F.M. (d. 1426) blessed “a couple of liturgical vestments of white silk decorated with wheels and garlands that were made and offered to the monastery by Aliprando Guidiccioni to be used in this ceremony”. The mass was said by the visitor (visitatore) Fra Andrea (Bettini) of Bologna, who blessed a sculpted stone with an image of Monte Oliveto, and led a procession to the place where it was to be laid. After having “chanted responses and said prayers, and made all due ceremonies, incensed and blessed”, the archbishop of Split and Aliprando Guidiccioni laid the stone to the right side of the foundations of the chapel of Saint Helena (the chapel was built next to the south side of the nave, with its west wall aligned with the façade). Fra Andrea put above the stone one ducat, twenty soldi and “a large wheel of cheese”. The stonemasons Rigo, Cristofano and Ambrogio of Milan started erecting the first wall of the chapel. It seems likely that Guidiccioni was acting on behalf of Alessandro Borromeo, who could not be present for reasons which are unclear.

In his will dictated in 1427 Alessandro expressed his wish to be buried in the “chapel which the testator had had built, in the vault of Saint Helena, in the ground before the altar of the said chapel, underneath the wooden crucifix which stands there” (“capella quam ipse

\textsuperscript{38} Guido Guerzoni, Este Courtiers 1457-1628, ad vocem.
\textsuperscript{39} Corner 1758, p. 66. The site of the church of Sant’Elena, today in the east end of Venice, was once the island of Sant’Elena, which was not accessible on foot from the city. The first chapel was built by Augustinian monks in 1028 and dedicated to Empress Saint Helena. For this church see Gallo 1926.
\textsuperscript{40} In the Florentine Catasto of 1427 Alessandro was the fourth richest man in the city, being assessed at 57,000 florins, 50 of them in luoghi of the Monte Comune (shares of the public debit) and the rest in houses, shops and lands; see Guidi Bruscoli and Bolton 2007, p. 464. On the patronage of Alessandro Borromeo at Sant’Elena see D’Antiga 2013, pp. 92-4.
\textsuperscript{41} Cicogna 1830, pp. 358-9, note 1. The codex is in ASV, Monastero di S. Elena di Venezia, busta I, Pergamene, Memorie del Monastero di S. Elena.
testator fabricari fecit in dicta arca sancta helene in terra ante altare ipsius capelle sub crucifixo ligneo ibidem posito”). He also stipulated that the renovation works in the cells and in the “hortus” should be supervised by his friend, the Venetian patrician and diplomat Bartolomeo, the son of Maffio Donato (Donà) (d. 1431). In case Bartolomeo would not be able to attend to this task, Aliprando Guidiccioni was to do it in his place.\(^42\)

The above mentioned codex also refers to the will dictated by Guidiccioni (referred to as “our benefactor”) on 8 January 1430, compiled by the Ferrarese notary Urbano Rossi (Rossetti). Guidiccioni arranged the bequest of three golden ducats in perpetuity to pay for a “pietanza” (meal) for the feast of Saint Helena. The manuscript also records that Guidiccioni was buried in the monastery of San Giorgio in Ferrara and mentions the names of his executors: his wife, Madonna Lena del Pozzo, his son-in-law Antonio di Dati (Diodati) and his nephew Piero Guidiccioni.\(^43\)

The relationship of Aliprando with the Olivetans in Ferrara, which must have been facilitated by the Olivetans of Sant’Elena in Venice, dates to at least 1420. On 8 October of that year the monks of San Giorgio met in their sacristy, in the presence of the abbot general of the Olivetan order Giovanni Mattei, to nominate Andrea Bettini, at that time prior of Sant’Elena in Venice, as their attorney (“procuratore”). Bettini was to notify Aliprando Guidiccioni, “merchant from Lucca resident in Venice”, that the Olivetans of Ferrara owed him three hundred and thirty-two golden ducati, a sum that had been lent to them to pay a debt they had with cardinal Giordano Orsini and other creditors.\(^44\) It seems more than likely that Bettini, who in 1415 had attended the above mentioned ceremony of the installation of the Olivetans in San Giorgio (he was prior of San Michele in Bosco at that time) and had been prior of San Giorgio in 1418-19, must have been the one who introduced the wealthy Lucchese businessman to the

\(^42\) Cicogna 1830, p. 359, note 1.

\(^43\) “1430 adi 8 de zener questo si e il punto del testamento de s. Alibrando Guidizoni n.ro benefactor. Nota chomo s. Alibrando Guidizoni da Lucha n.ro benefactor si lasa al monestier di s.ta Helena ogni ano per la festa de s.ta lena che se fa el terzo di de pasqua roxada al dito monestier e frati per far una pitanza duc. Tre d’oro ogni ano in perpetuum, e fo sepelido el so corpo in lo monestier n.ro de san zorzi de ferara. I commessari si sono questi madona Lena de Pozo fo so dona s. Antonio di Dati fo so zenero s. Piero Guiddizzioni so nievo. El testamento si fe a ferara perche abitava la el nodaro si fo s. Urbano Rosso”; ibid., p. 358. Only one filza of the notary Urbano Rossetti survives in the Archivo di Stato of Ferrara, but unfortunately it does not contain the will of Aliprando Guidiccioni.\(^44\)

\(^44\) ASFe, Archivio notarile, Lancillotto Villa, matr. 32, 8 October 1420, mentioned by Peverada 2001, p. 85, who also suggests that some works were being carried out in the monastery as the blacksmith Antonio di Berteco and the stonemason Giovanni, son of Ser Pietro Brasonite witnessed this act. The friars of San Giorgio “fecerunt contituierunt et ordinaverunt Venerabilis frater Andrea Bitini de Bononia ad presens priore Venetiae ordinis Andream presentem acceptatem dicti monasteri S. Georgii… ad dicendum et confitendum ad omnes instancias et requisiciones Aliprandi de Guidisonibus de Luca mercatoris civic et habitatoris Venetiae predictum monasterium ac fratres ac conventus eius sunt debitores dicti Aliprandi in ducatis trecentis trigintaduobus auri habitis ab eo … pro solvendo domino Cardinale Ursino…”. (transcription by the present writer).
Olivetan community in Ferrara. This important connection between Andrea Bettini and Aliprando Guiccioni has so far been ignored by scholars.

2.3 The 1434 contract for the east end of San Giorgio

On 26 January 1434 Benastruto Ippocrati, camerario (chamberlain) of Niccolò III d’Este and executor of the will of Aliprando Guiccioni, met in Benastruto’s exchange office and warehouse in the contrada of San Romano to stipulate a contract with the mason Domenico of Padova for the erection of the cappella maggiore and two smaller apsidal chapels in San Giorgio (fig. 18). This important document was published by Peverada in 2001, but so far it has not been studied in relation to the history of the church. The contract, which goes into great detail about the works to be executed, is indeed the most useful document to reconstruct how the east end of San Giorgio would have looked after the rebuilding.

The first part of the agreement is stipulated between the above mentioned Benastruto and the mason Domenico. The latter agreed to build the high altar chapel in the church of San Giorgio on the model (“ad similitudinem”) of San Domenico in Ferrara, of the height of thirty Ferrarese feet (12 metres, the Ferrarese foot is equivalent to 40 cm) up to the keystone (“chochonum”) of the chapel, starting measuring thirty feet from the old paving (“batuto”).

The new cappella maggiore was to be twenty feet (8 metres) wide, with marble slabs (“lapidibus marmoreis”) set onto the wider wall, as in San Domenico. The apse was to be made on the model of that of San Domenico. The roof was to be built with a sufficient quantity of good timber and was to be covered with terracotta tiles of good quality. Furthermore Domenico, who was to pay his workers, was to build good foundations and to apply mortar and whitewash the chapel’s walls at his own expense. He was also to provide the stones (“lapides”), the lime and all necessary materials to erect the chapel, as well as to put the needed “arpices” (clamps or iron ties). He was to build the altar with steps without marble slabs, to put the centring (“cintanos”) needed to build the chapel and to pave the floor with large stone slabs.

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45 Bettini was a prominent figure of the Olivetan Congregation. From 1426 to 1429 he was abbot general of the congregation. From 1438 to 1442, and in 1443-44 he was again prior of San Michele in Bosco, Bologna. See Medica 2007, p. 150, note 11.

46 Benastruto Ippocrati was a member of the Este court and he is named amongst the companions of Niccolò III d’Este on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1413. Benastruto was married to Antonia Sacrati, from one of the most notable families of Ferrara. He is mentioned in chapter 1 above, with reference to a chapel in the Ferrara cathedral.

47 Appendix, no. 5.

48 According to Galvani the Latin word conconus derives from conus o conius, that is conical. The word conone or conione indicates a truncated cylindrical stopper to seal a barrel. In Vulgar Latin this stopper can also be referred to as cuchonum, echionum, or cononum, see Galvani 1868, p. 247. Therefore in this context, referred to the building of a vault and its height it seems likely that the word “chochonum” indicates an element at its top, that is the keystone.
polished with silica. The chapel was to have two large windows with iron grilles and an oculus framed by a terracotta frieze (“laboratum de lapide cocto”) in between them.49

Domenico promised to complete the building works of the high altar chapel by the end of January of the following year. He was allowed to take the marble slabs which were inside and outside the church, according to the wishes of the prior and the cellerarius of the monastery of San Giorgio. As pointed out by Tuohy, in Ferrara the practice of conserving and reusing materials in secular buildings was common, and the same applied to churches, for which he mentions a few examples.50 Benastruto Ippocrati, on behalf of the other executors of Aliprando Guidiccioni, promised to pay Domenico one thousand lire in marchesini, twenty-five mastelli of Bragantino wine (this was held by Aliprando’s heirs) and forty stara of good quality wheat.51 Benastruto gave five hundred and fifty-one lire and fourteen soldi to Domenico, and promised to give him one hundred lire before June 1435 and the rest of the agreed sum upon completion of the works. The wine and the wheat were to be given to the stonemason within fifteen days from the stipulation of the contract.

This interesting document also reveals that Benastruto had already made arrangements with the kiln owner Andrea Nasello and with the blacksmith Viviano Miliarino about the materials to be supplied for the high altar chapel, as recorded in the first agreement drawn up by the same notary, Ludovico Miliani.52

Once Benastruto and Domenico stipulated the contract for the cappella maggiore, it was the turn of Fra Nicolò da Reggio Emilia and Fra Lorenzo, cellerarius of San Giorgio, to make an agreement with Domenico. The mason promised them to build at his own expense two chapels on either sides of the high altar chapel, twenty feet (8 metres) long and fifteen feet (6 metres) high up to the height of the keystone starting measuring from the old paving of the sacristy and twelve feet (4.8 metres) wide. Domenico was to demolish all that was necessary, and to build good foundations. He was to get the existing stone slabs from the church. The two chapels were to be paved with large slabs, and were to have altars with steps and without marble slabs. Furthermore they were to have one window each, with grillwork made of tubular iron (“feris rotundis”), and groin vaults (“crosarias”) made with large stones with well carved marble capitals.

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49 For an example of a polygonal chapel with an oculus and two windows (dating from the second half of the 1420s) see fig. 17 here.
50 For the church of Santa Maria della Consolazione Antenore da Bondeno had to clean 450,000 bricks from the dismantled city walls. On certain occasions entire walls were moved intact: at Santa Maria in Vado the apse of the original wall was moved into the south transept, Tuohy 1996, p. 182.
51 One mastello was equivalent to about 57 litres. One staio was equivalent to about 31 litres. The so-called lira di marchesini was established by Nicolò III d’Este in 1381 as the currency of account.
52 Unfortunately this document does not survive amongst the acts of the notary Ludovico Miliani, matr. 100, ASFe.
As requested for the high altar chapel, Domenico was to apply mortar and whitewash at his own expense and to build a good roof with solid timber, covered with good terracotta tiles. The prior and cellerarius promised to pay Domenico two hundred lire, of which one hundred in stones and lime by the end of the coming month of March, and forty stara of wheat, twenty mastelli of good wine, twenty stara of corn and six stara of barley (all of this of the value of one hundred lire). Upon stipulation of the contract Domenico received twelve lire and he was to receive any remainder of the agreed sum on completion of the work.

The agreement also includes a clause stipulating that in case any of the chapels that collapsed (“destrueretur seu devastatur in toto vel in parte”) through the fault of the builder, he was to rebuild or repair them at his own expense. Domenico also committed himself not to work in any other place before completing the building works in San Giorgio, otherwise he was to pay a penalty. No deadline is specified for the completion of the two outer chapels.

As it clearly appears from the contract, the reconstruction of the east end of the church would have been impossible without the financial support of a private donor. The fact that the Olivetans were to supply the mason with stones from the existing building and pay for the lime, as well as giving him about one hundred lire worth in goods as payment in kind, testifies to their unprosperous condition. The two hundred lire agreed as payment for the two outer chapels seem too little in comparison with the agreed sum for the high altar chapel. Therefore we might wonder if the money bequeathed by Guidiccioni was also intended to cover part of the expense for the two flanking chapels. However, as will be explained below, another donor stepped in to finance the construction of the chapel of Saint Maurelius.

2.4 The chapels of Saint Maurelius and of Saint Benedict

On 15 December 1435, about eleven months after the stipulation of the contract for the erection of the new east end of the church, with the cappella maggiore perhaps near to completion, Lorenza di ser Graziadeo Montolini, the widow of master Francesco Gabella (a callogarius, that is a shoemaker) arranged the bequest of five hundred lire for the chapel of Saint Maurelius.53 According to Samaritani, in a subsequent will of 14 December 1436 Lorenza specified that the chapel was to be erected between the high altar chapel and the campanile and confirms the bequest of five hundred lire, three hundred of which were for the building and two hundred for

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53 Samaritani 1981, p. 103. Lorenza’s father Graziadeo was a notary. Her brother Antonio was also a notary, while her other brother, Franceschino, was an Imperial notary in Ferrara and documented in Venice in 1371 (file in the archivio notarile, Notai della Cancelleria Inferiore, ASVe). See the “arbitrato di Giovanni di Bertazzo Montolini” (undated document from the late XIVth century published on http://dante.di.unipi.it/ricerca/html/Arbitrato1.html, consulted on 25 January 2018), where the late Franceschino is referred to as the son of the late Graziadeo Montolini.
maintenance. She also wanted to be buried in the chapel.\textsuperscript{54} The chapel is also mentioned in an unpublished will dictated by Lorenza on 31 December 1436.\textsuperscript{55} She confirmed her wish to be buried in her chapel, in an area the erection of which was to be commissioned by the monks (“in archa quam fratres dicti monasterii facere debant in capella ipsius domine”). Lorenza nominated her brother Antonio as her universal heir. Through him the patronage and care of the chapel passed to his daughter Elisabetta (referred to in the documents as Isabetta).

In the unpublished will of 21 January 1463 Isabetta, the widow of notary Andrea de Santo (or Santi), living in the contrada Boccacaneale, bequeathed to the chapel of Saint Maurelius a house in the contrada of San Gugliemo worth one hundred and eighty lire, with an annual income of eighteen lire.\textsuperscript{56} She also nominated the chapel as her universal heir.\textsuperscript{57} She wanted to be buried in the church of San Giorgio in the tomb of her relatives (“in sepulcro aliorum parentum ipse testatricis”).

In a codicil drafted on 8 July 1466 Isabetta modified her will, specifying that the bequest of the house to the chapel of Saint Maurelius (with its yearly income of eighteen lire) was for its fabric and lighting (“fabrice et luminaribus”), and that the three hundred lire previously assigned to Fra Bartolomeo Cattaneo, member of the Olivetan community, for acts of charity, were to be spent for the fabric and lighting of the church.\textsuperscript{58} It is plausible that Isabetta was prompted to change this testamentary disposition by the Olivetans, who needed funds for the fabric and its maintenance (for instance wax or oil). It is worth mentioning that Nicolò Roverella and Nicolò Marinetti, respectively prior and subprior of San Giorgio are listed amongst the witnesses, along

\textsuperscript{54} Samaritani (1981, p. 103) does not provide a reference for this will. The present writer has not found it among the documents in the filza 56 (Testamenti) of the fondo San Giorgio (ADSFe).

\textsuperscript{55} Appendix, no. 6. Lorenza refers to her niece Isabetta (“Isabeta eius testatrici nepotis et uxor Andree de Sancto notarii”). Amongst Lorenza’s executors there were her brother Antonio, the Olivetan monk Benedetto Botti, the prior of San Giorgio and the prior of the monastery of Sant’Anna in Ferrara. The notary Ludovico Miliani, who drafted several acts for the Olivetans, was present at the publication of the will. On the same day, the 31 December 1436 another document was drafted in Lorenza’s house. Benedetto Botti, subprior of San Giorgio, and Simone da Pavia, syndic of the same monastery, gave ninety ducats (“venetos auri boni et iusti ponderis”) and twenty-six soldi to Lorenza as repayment of a debt; the act was drafted by Andrea Santi, ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, E 14, Confesio conventus fratrum S. Georgii a domina Laurentia de Montolinis, unpublished.

\textsuperscript{56} Appendix, no. 10. Isabeta was the niece, and not the daughter of Lorenza Montolini, as stated by Samaritani 1981, p. 104. In Isabeta’s will her sister Lorenza is mentioned and referred to as the wife of Sperandio of Mantua (“uxor Sperandei de Mantua”), most probably the medallist active at the Este court.

\textsuperscript{57} Andrea de Santo drafted several notarial acts for the Olivetans (ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Andrea Santi, Matr. 61, Pacco 1 [1422-40] and 2 [1419-54]). In his will of 2 April 1460 Andrea requested to be interred in the cloister of San Domenico (“in chiostro minori”), wearing the Dominican habit. The above mentioned Simone Ruffini, the merchant of Milanese origin who was the patron of a cappella cantorum of the church of San Domenico, is listed among the witnesses; ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, 56, Testamenti, notary Giacomo Zambotti, unnumbered folios, unpublished.

\textsuperscript{58} “... jure legati reliquit fabrice et luminaribus capelle ipsa codicillantis sita in ecclesia supradicta sancti Georgii sub vocabulo Sancti Maurelii directum dominum supradictie domus... in contrata Sancti Gulielmi ... item eodem jure legati ipsa codicillans reliquit fabrice et luminaribus ecclesie predicit sancti Georgii ... libras trecentas marchesinorum quale deductis massariciis ipsius codicillantis et aliis legatis per eam factis in supradicto suo ultimo testamento...”; ASDFe, 56, Testamenti, Testamento et codicillo Domine Isabethe de Sancto, 8 July 1466, unnumbered folios, unpublished.
with Fra Vitale of Brescia, from the same monastery. As Isabetta died without heirs, it is most likely that the *jus patronatus* of the chapel of Saint Maurelius returned to the Olivetans.

An unpublished document discovered by the present writer among the parchments of the monastery of San Giorgio (now in the Archivio Diocesano, Ferrara), throws light on the other chapel flanking the *cappella maggiore*. On 7 September 1474 Francesca, widow of the furrier Boldrino (or Baldrino) and daughter of the late Giovanni, living in the *contrada* of Santa Maria in Vado, dictated her will (fig. 19).59 After having recommended her soul to the Virgin Mary, to the saints George and Benedict and all the saints, she requested burial in a sarcophagus (“archam”) in the chapel of Saint Maurelius.

Francesca left instructions that the monks should spend six hundred *lire* from her estate to build two chapels in San Giorgio, with altars and necessary furnishings (stands for crosses, candlesticks and linens; “fulcimentis and preparamentis”).60 Furthermore the donor requested that her executors provided the metal chalice, the chasuble and other paraphernalia, to be purchased with her money. One of the two chapels was to be dedicated to Saint Benedict and Francesca left the Olivetans free to assign its *jus patronatus* to whoever they wished.

The bequest of two hundred *lire* to the monastery of Monte Oliveto of Siena (“monasterio Monte Oliveti de Senis dicti ordinis Sancti Benedicti montis Oliveti”), that is the Olivetan mother-house, is perhaps to be explained with a specific request made to Francesca by one of the monks at San Giorgio, or through unknown personal connections. The donor also left to Fra Bartolomeo of Padua one hundred and fifty *lire* to be taken from the three hundred due to her by a certain Nicolò de Casali. Fra Bartolomeo and the prior of San Giorgio could spend this sum of money as they wished, for the soul of Francesca. Furthermore, the monks were to keep a lamp (*cesendello*) burning at all times in the chapel of Saint Maurelius, the place of the donor’s burial. Francesca nominated the prior of San Giorgio, whoever he would be at the time of her death, and the notary Alessandro Trotti, son of Nicolò, as her executors. She designated the monastery of San Giorgio as her universal heir and requested that the monks pray for her soul (“fratres dicti monasterii rogent deum pro anima ipsius testatricis”). She annulled her previous will drafted by the notary Benascuto de Benasuto (Benasciutto Benasciutti) and the codicils written by the notary Giovanni Mezzaprile.61 Alessandro Trotti, Antonio Sandei

59 Boldrino varotaro is recorded among the members of the Este household in 1457; Guido Guerzoni, *Este Courtiers 1457-1628*, ad vocem. The world varotaro derives from the Latin *varius*, that is vair (squirrel fur). The fact that Boldrino was employed by the Este and that he is referred to as master in the 1474 document suggests that he was a fur maker, but it is plausible that he was also a merchant of furs.

60 For the definition of *fulcimentum* see Borromeo 1843, I, p. 686.

61 Unfortunately Francesca’s will drafted by Benasciutto Benasciutti does not survive. The only document of interest is an act dating from 31 January 1472: Francesca, widow of the varotaro Boldrino and heir of Nicolò Ciciliani received a house in the *contrada* Boccacanale, the rent of which was to pay for the maintenance of the chapel of Saint John the Baptist in Ferrara cathedral; AsFe, Archivio notarile, Benasciutto Benasciutti, matr. 196,
(giudice dei Savi, who died of plague in 1482 and was buried in San Domenico), a painter called Niccolò Coltellini, son of Antonio, and two monks from San Giorgio, Fra Filippo of Ferrara and Fra Gregorio of Padua, were among the witnesses to the will, which was drafted in Francesca’s house in the parish of Santa Maria in Vado.

One crucial element that emerges from this will is that the chapel to the south of the cappella maggiore which was included in the building project of the 1430s seems not to have been erected at that time. We can speculate that one of the reasons for this might have been the lack of funding. The new document clearly indicates the year 1474 as a terminus post quem, since it is stated that the chapel was yet to be built. The generous bequest made by Francesca in 1474 is surely to be placed within the context of a programme of refurbishment of the church, in which the Roverella seem to have played a major role. Francesca dictated her will about two months after the death of Lorenzo Roverella, at a time when his heirs were considering his burial in the cappella maggiore. In 1470-74 the prior of San Giorgio was Fra Marco of Ferrara, who was followed by Fra Giovanni (Brachi?) in 1474-75 and 1476-77, while in 1475-76 this role was covered by Girolamo Bendedei. It was during the priorate of these three individuals, all of them Ferrarese, that decisions were made and actions were taken to refurbish the east end of the church.

We do not know when Francesca died and when the money became available to build the two chapels, the first of which was to be erected next to the chancel, the other probably on the south side of the nave (as we will see below other chapels were built on the opposite side of the nave before 1455 and around 1472). The two chapels paid for by Francesca were surely part of a larger plan, which included the altarpiece by Tura for the chapel of Saint Maurelius, the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella and probably also the high altarpiece.

As far as the chapel of Saint Maurelius is concerned, the first recorded painted decoration dates from 1452, the year when a painter called Giovanni received a payment for “dipinture”, most probably wall paintings.62 In the early sixteenth century this chapel, housing the shrine of one of the two patron saints of the city, attracted the attention of Alfonso I d’Este. The duke commissioned from Domenico Panetti a cycle of frescoes representing stories of Saint Maurelius, which according to the chronicler Mario Equicola was completed on 12 July 1509.63 It is possible that Alfonso I himself was represented in the frescoes, if he is to be

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62 This information is provided by Bellini (1761, p. 124), who consulted an account book of the monastery, now unfortunately lost. “1452, adi 19 di Lugio dei a Zoha ne dipinctore uno Ducato Ferrarese per parte di pagamento di le dipinture ch’esso lavora alla Capella di S. Maurelio Lire II. Sold.VIII”

63 Baruffaldi 1844-46, I, p. 187. Guarini (1621, p. 394) wrongly reports that the painter was Ortolano. According to Samaritani (1981, p. 130) the local erudite Antenore Scalabrini reported that Panetti was paid with money derived
identified with the Este marquis recorded by an eighteenth century source.\textsuperscript{64} Around 1512-13 the duke (perhaps with his wife Lucrezia Borgia) was to show his renewed devotion to Maurelius by commissioning from the goldsmith Giovan Antonio Leli da Foligno three silver niello plaques to decorate the bronze casket containing the relics of the saint (fig. 20).\textsuperscript{65}

The frescoes by Panetti were the backdrop of an altarpiece painted by Cosmè Tura. This was described by Baruffaldi as being divided into various compartments with images of saints, and with the stories and the martyrdom of Saint Maurelius in roundels. In the eighteenth century Baruffaldi saw the elements from this polyptych hanging in the sacristy of San Giorgio.\textsuperscript{68}

Sadly only two roundels survive from this work by Tura in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara. They represent \textit{Saint Maurelius brought to justice and the Martyrdom of Saint Maurelius} (figs 21 and 22).\textsuperscript{69} Writing in the nineteenth century, Cittadella argued that the main panel of the polyptych is possibly reflected in a woodcut of 1489 representing \textit{Saint Maurelius and two Olivetan monks} (fig. 23), which appears at the beginning of a book on the life and miracles of the homonymous saint.\textsuperscript{70} As first noticed by Jadranka Bentini, the foreshortened architecture in which the saint is represented recalls the backgrounds of the central panel of the \textit{Pala Roverella} and of the \textit{Annunciation} in the organ shutters for Ferrara cathedral.\textsuperscript{71} Even if the episodes depicted in the two extant roundels would have suited the predella of an altarpiece with Saint Maurelius in its central panel, their diameter of 48 centimeters seems too large for a common predella element.\textsuperscript{72} Considering the little information available it is difficult to speculate about the layout of this polyptych. Scholars have generally considered the year 1479, marked by the re-

\textsuperscript{64} Fourteen fragments from this lost fresco cycle, were detached by the bricklayer Giulio Panizza shortly before 1690, upon demand of the scholar and collector Niccolò Baruffaldi. They included the “heads of Saint Maurelius, that of a blind woman healed by him, that of an Este marquis, that of a poor, that of a cleric and many others”, Brisighella 1991, p. 565, note 25.

\textsuperscript{65} For the niello plaques (15 x 26.5 cm each) see \textit{Lucrezia Borgia} 2002, pp. 200-2 (entry by Maria Teresa Gulinelli) and Burgess Williams pp. 87-90. According to tradition, the duke and his wife Lucrezia Borgia, prominently represented in the plaques, commissioned them as a votive offering after Alfonso’s victory over the Venetian and Papal armies at the battle of Ravenna, fought on 11\textsuperscript{th} April 1512. As suggested by Samaritani (1981, p. 100), the inscription “Divi Maurelii martiris et episcopi veneranda ossa cuius divinitatem frequens votorum … testator in dies” on the casket seems to date from around the same time the plaques were inserted in it. For the dating of the casket, which was made in 1514 to replace the old one, see \textit{Lucrezia Borgia} 2002, p. 200.

\textsuperscript{66} “...era divisa in vari compartimenti secondo l’uso di que’ giorni, con dentro dipinte varie immagini di santi, ma gli atti e il martirio di San Maurelio era tutto distinto in tanti tondini, li quali poi nel levarsi la detta tavola, ruinata in gran parte... furono posti in diverse separate cornici e appesi nella sagristia di detta chiesa”, Baruffaldi 1844-46, I, p. 77.

\textsuperscript{67} For the surviving roundels (diameter 48 cm) see Manca 2000, pp. 107-10 (with previous literature), Campbell 2002, pp. 237-9 and \textit{Cosmè Tura} 2007, pp. 510-2 (entry by Marcello Toffanello).

\textsuperscript{68} Cittadella 1868, I, p. 698. This hypothesis was accepted by Campbell 1997, pp. 90 and 92. The possible derivation of the woodcut from a model by Tura is also considered by Bentini in \textit{San Giorgio} 1985, p. 170. The book printed by Lorenzo de’ Rossi (Laurentius de Rubei) was the \textit{Legendario et vita et miracoli de Sancto Maurelio episcopo et patron de Ferrara} (Ferrara, 1489).

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{San Giorgio} 1985, p. 170 (entry by Jadranka Bentini). In the same contribution (p. 176) the author proposes to identify the two donors with the Blessed Alberto Pandoni, to whom some miracles were attributed, and Girolamo Benedecli senior.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibidem, p. 169.
dedication of the church to the Saints George, Maurelius and Lawrence, as a terminus ante quem for this altarpiece. As in 1478-80 the prior of San Giorgio was Nicolò Roverella, it is possible that he was involved with the commission of the polyptych.\textsuperscript{73}

If the chapel to the right of the cappella maggiore was built before the re-dedication of the church in 1479, we can assume that the marble relief decorating the sarcophagus containing the remains of the Blessed Alberto Pandoni was already in place by the time this ceremony took place. The relief represents the blessing Pandoni circled by a laurel wreath supported by two kneeling angels, and the Saints George and Maurelius framed by ovals (fig. 24).\textsuperscript{74} The symbol of the Olivetan congregation is sculpted on the shield of Saint George as well as on both sides of the sarcophagus. The fact that the latter underwent some interventions over the centuries is clear if we consider the central part of its base, which is a later addition (perhaps from the eighteenth century). The two lions at the far ends (fig. 24a) are different in style from the relief of the Blessed Alberto Pandoni, which might suggest that the latter (made in the late 1470s) was an addition to an old sarcophagus. The gilding of the relief does not seem to be original. Writing in 1621 Guarini described the sarcophagus as being of sculpted white marble with touches of gold ("tocco d’oro"), that is partially gilt.\textsuperscript{75} The rather heavy intervention that altered the original state of the relief, now entirely gilded, probably dates from the late seventeenth century, when the Saint Benedict by Domenico Maria Canuti enclosed in an elaborate monumental baroque frame was installed in the chapel (fig. 25). A new altar of coloured marble intarsia was placed in front of the altarpiece, with the sarcophagus before it.

So far the relief, the full appreciation of which is hindered by the gilding, has not received much scholarly attention and it is assigned to an anonymous Ferrarese artist. The comparison with the two putti and the Saint George of the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella suggest that the relief of the Blessed Alberto Pandoni was made by a different hand. The angels bear some resemblance to analogous figures in Ferrarese painting, such as the angel of the Annunciation on the shutters of the organ of the Ferrara cathedral by Tura, dating from 1468 (fig. 96). A possibile candidate might be Sperandio Savelli, a medallist and sculptor who is documented in Ferrara in the 1470s as working for the ducal court and for members of the local elite.\textsuperscript{76} However, a comparison of the relief in San Giorgio with Sperandio’s medals and with the terracotta base of the tomb of Pope Alexander V in San Francesco, Bologna, which he made in 1482, proves inconclusive. Until new elements emerge, the identity of the author of the frontal of the sarcophagus remains elusive.

\textsuperscript{73} Scalabrini (1773, II, p. 29) stated that the latter was a Roverella commission, but there is no evidence for this.
\textsuperscript{74} The relief measures 60 x 210 cm.
\textsuperscript{75} Guarini 1621, p. 392.
\textsuperscript{76} For this artist see Toffanello 2010, pp. 315-7.
2.5 Chapels, altars and burials in San Giorgio

The visitor entering San Giorgio today finds on his right the baptismal font, followed by the altar of the Madonna del Salice and the altar of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei (figs. 26-28). At the easternmost end of the south aisle stands the chapel of Saint Benedict. On the opposite side, past the cappella maggiore, is the chapel of Saint Maurelius, while the north aisle is graced by the altars of Saint Francesca Romana and of the Holy Crucifix. Over the centuries, with the various renovation campaigns, the fabric of the church has changed, but also the devotional necessities of the Olivetans (and to some extent of the laypeople) evolved, so that new altars were built and new dedications introduced, or altar titles moved within the church.

As noted above, a chapel dedicated to Saint Maurelius, located between the cappella maggiore and the campanile, was built after 1434. It would seem that the third apsidal chapel, dedicated to Saint Benedict, was erected after 1474. Useful information on other chapels in San Giorgio can be gathered from the Catastro 1393-1522 kept in the Archivio Storico Diocesano, Ferrara. According to one of the unpublished documents contained in this volume, a chapel dedicated to the Annunciation already existed in 1452, and was under the patronage of the jurispritus Domenico de Chilo who paid for its erection. The wording used in another document from 1455 concerning its endowment (“construi et hedificari fecerit certam capellam in ecclesiam S. Georgii ... pro anima sua et defunctorum suorum”) suggests that this was a substantial architectonic structure. Even if the surviving documents make no mention of a vault, it is highly likely that De Chilo and members of his family were buried there.

In 1472 the adjacent chapel, then described as newly built, was assigned to Giovanni and Niccolò Savonarola (the father of the Dominican reformer Girolamo). Their father Michele Savonarola (perhaps 1384-1468) was a pre-eminent philosopher and physician from Padua, author of several writings on medicine, but also tracts on ethics, politics and history. He taught and practised in Padua for twenty-five years, before moving to Ferrara in 1440 to serve as the Este court physician, first under Niccolò III, and later under Leonello and Borso. Michele’s heirs were allowed to transfer his remains, which were already in San Giorgio, to the new...

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77 The painting of the Madonna del Salice came from the homonymous oratory in the Borgo della Misericordia. The original picture was stolen in 1984 and what we see in San Giorgio today is a copy.
78 Appendix, no. 8. On 4 January 1445 Domenico de Chilo of the late Bartolomeo received from don Giacomo Roberti, chaplain of San Giorgio, executor of Bartolomeo and Cristoforo of the late Pietro Brasone, one hundred and fifty lire for “opere di galafaseria e legnaria prestate”, see Samaritani 1981, p. 107. A certain Damiano de Chilo, probably Domenico’s brother, was among the five parishioners of San Giorgio who gave their testimony during the pastoral visitation of Francesco dal Legname on 25 August 1448, see Peverada 1982, p. 217.
79 Appendix, no. 9.
80 Crisciani and Zuccolin 2011; Simonetti 2018.
chapel, which was dedicated to Saint Michael, plausibly upon their request. The unpublished document specifies that the chapel stood between the chapel under the patronage of the heirs of Domenico and Damiano de Chilo and the “sacratum” of the church on its external side. The word “sacratum” (sagrato in modern Italian), defines the consecrated space in front of a church. Writing about the church of San Paolo, the Ferrarese author Carlo Brisighella (d. 1710) referred to “sacrato” as the “cemetery”. Therefore it seems likely that the two chapels of Saint Michael and of the Annunciation were the first and the second on the north side (the south side of the church was contiguous to the cloister) of the ecclesia laicorum. The location of these chapels and of the altars on the north and south sides of the nave is further discussed below.

As the cult of the Virgin Mary was very significant to the Olivetans, we might assume that, apart from the altar of the Annunciation, another altar dedicated to the Virgin existed in San Giorgio. Unfortunately there is no documented evidence of this for the fifteenth century, but the record of the apostolic visitation of Monsignor Maremonti from 30 September 1574 does list an altar of the Holy Virgin Mary, together with the high altar and that of the Holy Sacrament. Other altars, not listed individually, described as abandoned and unadorned, are said to be on the left-hand side, and another altar was by the entrance.

The altar dedicated to the Virgin was still in place in 1584, a few years after the renovation of San Giorgio, as recorded by the inventory of the liturgical equipment kept in the sacristy. Indeed this unpublished document provides some useful information on the altars as well as giving some indication about the saints venerated in the church. Among the listed items we find three altar frontals of gilded leather for the high altar, the altar of the Virgin and the altar of the Rosary (this is the first time that an altar with such title is mentioned). It is plausible that the latter altar was erected after the renovation of the church in the early 1580s, as only in 1569 the Dominican Pope Pius V officially established the devotion to the rosary in the Catholic Church. Other altars added in the seventeenth century are discussed below (chapter 5).

As far as burials are concerned, the first available record of a parishioner who requested to be buried in San Giorgio dates from 1429. It is difficult to tell if Antonio da Caretta was interred in the ecclesia laicorum. The discovery of vaults between the first and the second bay of the old church while excavating to build the foundations of the new façade in the early

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81 It appears that he had first been buried in Santa Maria in Vado and later his remains were moved to San Giorgio. See Simonetti 2018. This author wrongly reports that this happened because Santa Maria in Vado was destroyed. In fact this church was renovated in 1495.  
82 “…capellam unam novam sitam in dicta ecclesia sancti Georgii sub vocabulo Sancti Michaelis iuxta quandam capellam heredum d. Dominici et Damiani de Chilo ex a parte exteriori juxta sacratum dicte ecclesie…”, see Appendix, no. 8.  
83 Brisighella 1991, p. 197. See also Scalabrini (1773, p. 198), who mentions the “cimitero, o sia sacrato” of the oratory of San Sebastiano.  
84 Appendix, no. 19.  
85 ASDFe, 40.6, G. Inventari diversi, Inventario della sacrestia 1584.  
86 Will of 28 September 1429, Appendix, no. 3.
eighteenth century confirms this was a burial area. In the fourth decade of the fifteenth century some members of the Brasone family requested burial in San Giorgio, starting with Pietro, who, as we will see below, in 1431 made a generous bequest towards the purchase of liturgical objects and vestments for the high altar. As the documents do not provide information about the location of the sepulchres of the Brasone, we might assume that they were interred somewhere in the ecclesia laicorum, probably not in the proximity of altars or chapels.

It is interesting to consider the will of Bartolomeo, the son of Pietro Brasone, which was drafted in the refectory of San Giorgio on 3 March 1440. Bartolomeo requested burial in San Giorgio (presumably in the same vault containing the remains of his father) and that masses should be celebrated for his soul in the same church. Furthermore his executors (among them his brother Giovanni and Don Giacomo Roberti, the chaplain of San Giorgio) were to pay for solemn masses “in cantu et offitio mortuorum” to be celebrated annually in San Giorgio on the day of his death.

There was another category of laypeople, surely wealthier than Antonio da Caretta and the Brasone, who enjoyed more privileges and were granted permission to be buried in the ecclesia fratrnum. It is highly plausible that Aliprando Guidiccioni was interred in the high altar chapel which was built after 1434 thanks to his generous bequest. Even if his will is lost and no documentation survives in Ferrara to prove it, as noted above, a codex from the Olivetan monastery of Saint Elena in Venice records that Aliprando was buried in San Giorgio. We can assume that the Lucchese donor followed the example of his friend Alessandro Borromeo, who had requested to be buried in a vault before the altar of the chapel of Saint Helena in the Olivetan church dedicated to the homonymous saint in Venice, a chapel that was built with money provided by Alessandro.

The cappella maggiore was the focus of the liturgy and, as mentioned above, a vault underneath the high altar housed the relics of Saint Maurelius and of the Blessed Alberto Pandoni until 1419. We know that this vault was also used as a burial place by the monks, as at the time of its renovation in the early 1580s it was referred to as the area of the fathers. Even if

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87 “Nel fare i fondamenti della facciata trovarono sotto terra i Vestigi dell’antica chiesa con altari, e sepolture”, Appendix, no. 23 (Baruffaldi 1710).
88 Connections between the Brasone family and the Olivetans are attested at least since 1420. In October of that year the stonemason Giovanni was probably working at San Giorgio, as he appears among the witnesses for the above mentioned notarial act drafted in the sacristy of the church, registering a loan made to the Olivetans by Aliprando Guidiccioni.
89 Appendix, no. 7. In this will and in that of his brother Giovanni, dictated on the same day, as well as in the codicils from 1443 the two brothers stipulated that their house was to be used “ad hospicium pauperum” under the title of Saint Maurelius and was to be administered by the prior of San Giorgio, see Franceschini 1981, pp. 24-25. See also Samaritani 1981, pp. 106-7. An excerpt of Giovanni’s will is partially published by Peverada 2001, pp. 86-87, note 34. On the hospital of Saint Maurelius, which stood on the Strada Romana and was demolished in 1708, see Guarini 1621, p. 397 and Scalabrini 1773, p. 38.
Lorenzo Roverella, Bishop of Ferrara, was not a member of the Olivetan congregation, he was granted the rare privilege of having his tomb in the high altar chapel.

As seen above, another donor, Lorenza Montolini, daughter of a prominent notary, was buried not too far from the high altar, in the chapel of Saint Maurelius which was built thanks to her donation in the mid-1430s. It is significant that some forty years later another laywoman, the above mentioned Francesca, widow of the furrier Boldrino, was buried in a marble ara in the same chapel, which was a prominent site within the ecclesia fratrum. The reason for such a rare privilege is explicitly mentioned in a passage from Francesca’s will: the prior and the monks of San Giorgio had agreed to her burial in the chapel of Saint Maurelius because of her generosity towards their monastery.

A different and rather peculiar case is that of Philibert de Clermont, lord of Montoison, nicknamed “le brave” (the brave), lieutenant-general of the French army in Italy during the War of the League of Cambrai. While he was in Ferrara he caught a fever and after a few days he died, on 20 March 1511, in the house of Aldobrandino Sacrati. His dead body was taken back to France, not before having his organs removed and put into a casket, which was then placed (probably interred) in the chapel of Saint Maurelius. It can be assumed that Alfonso I, who had fought next to Philibert, was responsible for this decision. As we have seen, the duke had a particular veneration for Saint Maurelius, to the point of commissioning three silver niello plaques from the goldsmith Giovan Antonio Leli to decorate the casket containing the relics of the saint (fig. 20). Later burials in San Giorgio are discussed in chapter 5.

2.6 The lost San Giorgio: a hypothesis for the church in the fifteenth century

Entering San Giorgio today’s visitor is confronted with a Baroque interior (fig. 27), the result of major renovations the building underwent from the early 1580s to the first decades of the eighteenth century (discussed in chapter 5). The transformed church, adorned by elaborate ceiling decorations executed by Francesco Ferrari in the early 1690s, could not be more different from its late Gothic appearance. It would take the visitor a giant leap of the imagination to picture the original setting of Tura’s Pala Roverella. However, the study of various elements makes it possible to reconstruct the fifteenth-century San Giorgio, a task that no scholar has attempted so far. By assessing evidence provided by close examination of the church fabric, by taking into account the 1434 contract and other written sources, as well as some visual

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\(^{90}\) “Alla sinistra dentro della Capella di San Maurelio vennero sepelite [1511] le viscere di Monsignor Filiberto Montesono valorso Capitano di tutte le militie del Re di Francia in Ferrara in aiuto del Duca Alfonso Primo con la qui sotto notata memoria in un lapida di marmo incisa.”, Guarini 1621, p. 394. The epigraph, which was transcribed by Barotti in the eighteenth century, and is still in place on the right wall of the chapel of Saint Maurelius, reads “Philiberti Moti/sonis Galli / Gallicique exerci/tu p(re)feci exen(teria)”, see Cazzola et al. 2005, p. 171. On Philibert de Clermont in Ferrara see Bargellesi Severi 1968, pp. 28-30 and Zerbinati 1989, p. 112.
sources and by considering some examples of late medieval and early Renaissance churches in Ferrara, we can advance for the first time a hypothesis for the lost San Giorgio.

Very little information is available on the church and monastery of San Giorgio before the building works carried out in the 1430s. In his account on Giotto’s disciples Vasari wrote that Ottaviano da Faenza painted in San Giorgio in Ferrara, but unfortunately it is hard to verify this information.\(^9\) The first description of a ceremony taking place in the church appears in the act recording the assignation of its benefices to Baldassarre dalla Sale in 1405.\(^9\) While this document does not provide much information on the church (only the “altare maius” is mentioned), a booklet kept in the Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea is a rare source for San Giorgio’s early history. The booklet registers the expenses for renovation works to the monastery and bell tower between mid-August 1414 and June 1417.\(^9\) These works, supervised at least at the beginning by Fra Ugolino of Bologna, started one year before the official installation of the Olivetans in San Giorgio. This was marked by a ceremony that was celebrated on 26 May 1415. The ceremony is described in a notarial act, which, like the one dating from 1405, only mentions the high altar.\(^9\)

More details on the church are provided by Libanori (1667) in his account of the discovery and translation of the relics of Saint Maurelius and the Blessed Alberto Pandoni, an event which took place on 7 May 1419.\(^9\) According to Libanori the Blessed Alberto Pandoni had been buried in the “underground chapel, that we call crypt, underneath the high altar” (“cappella sotterranea, che diciamo scurolo, sotto dell’altar maggiore”), where Saint Maurelius was also buried.\(^9\) The crypt is not mentioned in later sources, but as we will explain later, a new crypt to serve as a burial place for the Olivetans was built in 1580.

In 1428 the church interior was refurbished with new marble (possibly for the floor or for the walls), as recorded by documents from the Archivio del Memoriale, now lost but seen by Zaccarini.\(^9\) As we have seen above, the construction of the new east end of the church started in the mid-1430s. The contract from 1434 stipulated that the high altar chapel was to be built on the model of that of San Domenico. The latter church was rebuilt in the eighteenth century, changing its orientation (with the new façade facing the east; figs. 8 and 29).\(^9\) One of the former eastern end chapels, now called the Canani chapel (it houses the tomb of the physician and

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\(^{9}\) Appendix, no. 1.  
\(^{9}\) BCAFe, Collezione Antonelli, 928. This booklet is mentioned by Samaritani 1981, pp. 90-91.  
\(^{9}\) The act is published by Peverada 2001, pp. 74-5.  
\(^{9}\) Libanori refers to the account provided by Matteo Ronto (d.1442) in his *De inventione ac translatione Corporum aut Reliquiarum Sanctorum Maurelii Episcopi Ferrariensis …*, for which see Tagliabue 1981.  
\(^{9}\) Libanori 1667, II, p. 70. Guarini (1621, p. 392), refers to the crypt as to a “caverna sotterranea” (underground cave).  
\(^{9}\) Zaccarini 1919, p. 28.  
\(^{9}\) An account of this, taken from the diary of Nicoló Baruffaldi, is given by Stemp 1999.
anatomist Giovan Battista Canani [1515-79]), and the bell tower to its left are the only elements surviving from the earlier building (fig. 30). It is important to point out that the Canani chapel is not the former *cappella maggiore*, as is often repeated in the literature, but instead the former north apsidal chapel. It has been suggested that the plan of the gothic San Domenico included three apses (the outer apses smaller than the one at the centre) with two bell towers between them, as one can see in the city plan by Bartolino da Novara, dating from 1385.

San Domenico’s extant apse is built of red brick and has four faces (fig. 30). Two tall lancet windows pierce the face closest to the new façade and the third face. Three angular buttresses reinforce the structure, the first to the left standing against the side of the bell tower, while the fourth and larger one joins the apse to the north side of the church. A continuous terracotta frieze with simple geometric motifs runs along the top. The apse is covered by a semi-domed roof. As no signs of alteration can be seen, we assume that what we see today is the original apse. To the left of the apse stands the original bell tower. If we consider examples of churches with triple apse plans, such as Sant’Agostino in Massa Marittima (dating from the first half of the fourteenth century, fig. 31), we can have an idea of how the east end of San Domenico may have looked, with its three apses all visible upon the outside, the central apse having most probably five faces, the outer apses four. The presence of two bell towers in the apsidal area is rather unusual in Italy. Among the rare examples we can recall the Santo in Padua.

It seems likely that the old central apse in San Domenico had the same structure as the surviving one. Therefore the latter is an example to take into consideration when trying to formulate a hypothesis on how the fifteenth-century apses in San Giorgio would have looked (assuming that the instructions given in the 1434 contract were followed and that the new *cappella maggiore* was built on the model of the one of San Domenico). We have no information about the windows in San Domenico’s old central apse, but the contract for San Giorgio required that the high altar chapel had two large windows with iron grilles and an oculus framed by a terracotta frieze in between them.

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99 Brisighella 1991, pp. 109. San Domenico is the Ferrarese church that most suffered from earthquake of May 2012. One of the bell tower’s crowning tympani broke down onto the church roof, falling into the Canani chapel.
100 Scafuri 2000, p. 19. See also Vancini 2000, p. 64.
102 In 1496 Ercole I d’Este decided to rebuild San Domenico’s high altar chapel and made an agreement with its patrons, the Sacrati, to finance this project jointly, both parties contributing to one thousand ducati each. *Diario Ferrarese* 1409-1502, 1496 March 16, p. 172. The enclosed choir of the friars which stood in the nave was dismantled, but the choir stalls dating to the 1380s (they had been the gift of Tommasina Gruamonti) and still surviving, were reused and the new choir was used by Christmas Day 1496. For the choir stalls in San Domenico see Allen 2009, pp. 20 and 167. The dimensions of the new apsidal wall are given in a payment for bricks, made in 1497, in the duke’s building account books: 72 ½ feet long by 48 ¼ feet high (29 x 19.5 m). Tuohy 1996, note 79, p. 375.
It can be useful to consider a couple of examples of Ferrarese churches with polygonal apses. Sant’Antonio Abate (fig. 32), was built in the fourteenth century, and renovated and modified in 1584. The church interior, with a single nave, preserves the original Gothic style with rib vaults. This rare example of a polygonal five-sided apse in Ferrara was damaged by the 2012 earthquake, but is still standing. It has five faces and two tall lancet windows (fig. 33). A rectangular window was opened in the central face, probably during the late sixteenth century renovation, and was bricked up at some later point. Its lintel is clearly visible. The apsidal walls are supported by half-hexagonal buttresses. Santo Stefano (fig. 34), one of the oldest churches of Ferrara, was built in the eleventh century and was given to the Cathedral Chapter in 1083. Very little is known about the original building, which was damaged, like San Giorgio and other Ferrarese churches, by the 1570 earthquake. Following the earthquake Santo Stefano was restored and enlarged by adding two aisles to the original single nave. The polygonal apse we see today has five faces with blind arcades, one of which (to the right of the central one) has a blocked-out window (fig. 35). The apse of Santo Stefano was probably rebuilt in the sixteenth century, without altering the original polygonal plan. The brick work and the style of the moulded terracotta frieze running at the top do suggest a later date than the apses of San Domenico or Sant’Antonio Abate. In 1905 a renovation campaign was carried out to restore the late Gothic appearance, and this is especially visible in the exterior walls, including the apse. Because of its history of reconstruction and restoration, Santo Stefano’s apse is not as useful as those of San Domenico and Sant’Antonio Abate when trying to picture San Giorgio’s *cappella maggiore*.

A different course of events took place in San Giorgio after the damages caused by the 1570 earthquake. The main apse was demolished in the early 1580s. The new apse was pushed back and enlarged, with a semi-circular plan. As will be explained below, it seems that the north chapel dedicated to Saint Maurelius was spared from reconstruction until the second half of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately there is no evidence about the south chapel dedicated to Saint Benedict.

Close examination of the eastern end of the church north side provides valuable clues for the old fabric. The wall running from the north apse to the bell tower (fig. 36) is about six metres high. Its early dating is suggested by the presence of the moulded terracotta frieze running at the top, with three bands of simple patterns, egg and dart moulding, sawtooth and dots (a frieze with comparable elements is found on the campanile attributed to Biagio Rossetti, fig. 37). Furthermore, the possibility that this wall is part of the fifteenth-century fabric is

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106 Dioli 2006.
supported by the presence of a window with a slightly pointed arch in the first blind arcade (fig. 38), now bricked up. Another blocked-up opening in the second blind arcade was probably a door. Traces of a third arcade are clearly visible on the wall of the north apse. These three arcades seem to match those appearing in the fresco representing San Giorgio (seen from the north side) painted by Cristofano Gherardi in 1539 in the frieze decorating the refectory of the Olivetan monastery of San Michele in Bosco in Bologna (fig. 39). This is the only visual source documenting the east end of San Giorgio before it was damaged by the 1570 earthquake. The frieze by Gherardi represents views of Italian Olivetan monasteries and considering the close connection between the Bolognese and the Ferrarese communities, it seems likely that the artist worked on the base of a faithful model (presumably a drawing). Other elements clearly visible in this fresco are the buttresses of the central apse and its half-dome. The proportion of the two apses visible in the fresco seems to match the instructions of the 1434 contract, according to which the height of the high altar chapel (twelve metres) was to be the double of that of the outer chapels (six metres).

The bell tower we see today, annexed to the first bay of the north aisle (the bay adjacent to the chapel of Saint Maurelius), was begun in the early 1480s and works were completed by 1485. It is possible that it was erected in the same area occupied by the previous campanile. This is implied by the instructions given by Lorenza Montolini in her act of donation for the chapel of Saint Maurelius (1435), which she wished to be built between the high altar and the bell tower.

More information about the north-eastern area of the fifteenth-century church can be gathered by considering the tomb of Cosmè Tura. In his will dictated on 18 April 1491 the painter expressed his wish to be buried in a chapel next to the campanile. A chronicle recording Tura’s death in April 1495 registers that he was buried ‘in an arca by the door of the campanile’ (‘in una Archa presso all’uscio del campanile’). The original tomb slab was replaced by a new one in 1592, which can be seen today in the vestibule connecting the first bay of the north aisle to the bell tower (fig. 40). From the seventeenth century onwards local historians have reported this location for the tomb of the artist. This space existed at least from 1491, when it is first mentioned and referred to as a chapel, if not earlier. This is also suggested by two

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107 On Cristofano Gherardi’s intervention at San Michele in Bosco and his collaboration with Vasari see Monbeig Goguel 1972, pp. 130-40, esp. p. 131.
108 See Sambin de Norcen 2018, p. 56. The bell tower is being studied by Marco Zuppirolli from the Architecture Department of the University of Ferrara.
110 From a chronicle quoted in Campori 1875, p. 38, see Righini 1953, p. 5.
111 What remains of the inscription reads “Anno SALutis M.DXCII – Men NOVembris Die XXVIII”.
112 Guarini 1621, p. 393; Baruffaldi 1843-6, I, p. 83; Scalabrini 1773, p. 29.
octagonal columns made of bricks, with capitals of white stone, sculpted with the symbol of the Olivetan congregation (fig. 41). A comparison with the octagonal columns of the narthex of Sant’Antonio in Polesine (fig. 42), also made of bricks and decorated by similar capitals in white stone, seems to point to a date in the fifteenth century. These pre-existing columns are embedded into the south wall of the vestibule. The latter wall blocks out the arcade the columns once sustained; the arch is still visible (fig. 43).

If we move to consider the present layout of the chapels flanking the cappella maggiore, which are divided into two spaces, those housing the altars being about eight metres long and the one before them about six metres long, we may speculate that these latter square spaces were part of an early transept (fig. 44). This is especially obvious if we consider the space before the chapel of Saint Benedict, which serves as a vestibule connecting the presbytery and the monastery, through a door leading to the sacristy.

It seems plausible that this space before the chapel of Saint Benedict is “the vaulted vestibule connecting the choir to the sacristy” (“vestibolo in volta che parte dal coro e va alla sagrestia”) which was built by the mason Antonio Maistrello in the early 1580s. Furthermore, the existence of a transept in the old church seems to be confirmed by the gable roof covering this same space, intersecting with the roof of the nave (see fig. 45). The alterations made to the northern end of the transept are clear if we look at fig. 46 and compare the different friezes running above the external wall of the nave, one in moulded terracotta and the other one, a rather crude frieze made of triangles of cut bricks. The possible presence of a transept is further discussed below (chapter 5).

The length of the present chapel of Saint Maurelius is about fourteen metres, and the space at its western end is about six metres long, leaving about eight metres from the steps, exactly the length indicated in the 1434 contract. It seems that the bricked-up lancet window lit the northern end of the transept, while the third bay of the north side of the church, the traces of which are still visible (fig. 47), was part of the outer wall of the chapel of Saint Maurelius built in the 1430s.

The 1434 contract specifies the width and the height of the high altar chapel, but not its length. If we take into consideration examples of Gothic churches in the Veneto, such as Sant’Anastasia in Verona (begun in 1280 and completed in 1400, fig. 48), and the proportions between its cappella maggiore and the flanking chapels (about sixteen and eleven metres long respectively), we can assume that San Giorgio’s high altar chapel was about twelve metres long.

113 The church of Sant’Antonio in Polesine was consecrated in 1413. The narthex is generally thought to date to the fifteenth century, see Balboni 2014, pp. 133 and 135.
114 See chapter 5 for the intervention by Maistrello.
If the fresco by Gherardi in the refectory of San Michele in Bosco provides a somewhat schematic image of the apse of San Giorgio, by combining its clearest details with examples of Gothic polygonal apses, such as the one of San Domenico in Ferrara and the cappella maggiore of Sant’Anastasia in Verona we can have an idea of how San Giorgio’s apse would have looked. Thinking about the vaulting, it is most likely that the three east end chapels built in the fifteenth century had Gothic ribbed vaults, like the surviving apsidal chapel of San Domenico. Indeed for the outer chapels the 1434 contract mentions ‘crosarias’ (literally crossing) and well carved capitals, which must refer to ribbed vaults.

Another rare visual record of San Giorgio before the late-sixteenth century renovations appears in one of the niello plaques engraved by Giovanni Antonio Leli around 1512-14 for the reliquary casket of Saint Maurelius (fig. 49). In this plaque Saint Maurelius blesses Fra Girolamo Bendedei, prior of San Giorgio, in the piazza outside the church and monastery. The church façade is divided into two registers. The central part of the first register is divided into three sections, with the door at the centre. The upper register is shorter and is divided into three sections by four columns (also found in the order below). It has a central oculus flanked by two arched windows and it is crowned, almost compressed, by a large curvilinear tympanum. This structure is balanced by two pinnacles on either sides of the tympanum and by the Gothic gables crowning the entablature on the sides of the façade as well as on the north side.

A curvilinear tympanum with pinnacles similar to the one on the façade is also represented at the eastern end of the church. In the fresco by Gherardi (fig. 39) both the east end of the nave and the façade are crowned by triangular pediments with pinnacles. The curvilinear tympanum appears in Venetian architecture from the late fifteenth century. As no examples of façades of Ferrarese churches with this feature are known, we might think that Leli incorporated an element of fantasy into the image on this plaque. We should therefore consider the possibility that Leli’s representation of San Giorgio is not completely faithful.

Looking at the façade in Leli’s plaque and its outer sections we might wonder if the church had three aisles. The evidence gathered so far shows that two contiguous chapels, dedicated to the Annunciation and to Saint Michael, were built in the 1450s and early 1470s. It is very plausible that they were the first and the second on the north side of the church.

The structure flanking the nave of San Giorgio represented by Leli does not seem to be a portico, although its first bay is occupied by a vaulted entrance, with the door facing the city. As pointed out by Monica Caviechi, a similar side entrance appears on the north side of San

115 The plaques were removed from the casket and are today kept in the monastery.
116 To have an idea of how the gables might have looked, we can consider those on the south side of Mantua cathedral, by the Venetian architects Jacobello and Pierpaolo Dalle Masegne (1395-1401).
117 As pointed out by Marcianò (1991, p. 109), in Leli’s engraving the bell tower appears with five storeys, one more than those we see today.
Michele in Bosco in Bologna (fig. 50).\textsuperscript{118} This latter church also has a façade with comparable features, even if with a less Gothic character.\textsuperscript{119} Like the old San Giorgio, here the façade is divided into two registers crowned by a tympanum. The layout of the two registers is very similar, especially that of the upper one, with an oculus flanked by two arched windows.

The multi-gabled structure on the north side of San Giorgio represented by Leli is not dissimilar from the one appearing in the 1539 fresco by Gherardi, even if elements like the pinnacles are not depicted. That this building was not a portico seems to be confirmed by the oculi, which suggest that chapels were attached to the nave. A crucial piece of information attesting that there was no north aisle and that the chapels sprang directly from the north side of the nave is given by the diarist Nicolò Baruffaldi. On 24 November 1681 he recorded that the prior Giacinto Bonacossi “dismantled three chapels which were on the left-hand side in three niches and he had them moved back, creating an aisle leading to the chapel of Saint Maurelius”.\textsuperscript{120} As far as the south side of the nave is concerned, Baruffaldi reports that Bonacossi had three chapels erected in the pre-existing aisle (which only had one altar), facing those on the north side.

It is not easy to prove that in 1496 San Giorgio was among the ecclesiastical foundations that benefited from additions and renovations promoted by Ercole I, as recalled by Frizzi.\textsuperscript{121} However, close examination of the fabric allows us to glean some information about the renovation works that were probably carried out before the re-consecration of the church in 1479. As mentioned above, a document found by the present author dating from 1472 refers to the chapel of Saint Michael (the first on the north side) as “new”, that is newly built. AS seen above, we should also date the construction of the chapel of Saint Benedict and of another one on the south side to the 1470s (after 1474).

The south wall of the nave retains evidence of the circular windows that lit the late-Gothic church (fig. 51). Particularly striking is the oculus above the first window, which has been only partially blocked.\textsuperscript{122} One can see clearly the width of its frame, which was probably decorated by a terracotta frieze, like the oculi of the first and second tiers of the campanile. The oculus above the second window is not as clearly visible as the first one, while the traces of the one above the third window have been effaced when this area of masonry was repaired. As far as the north side of the exterior wall of the nave is concerned, some traces of the old oculi can be detected above the windows (fig. 52). It seems that a total of eight oculi lit the nave of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item Cavicchi in Cazzola et al. 2005, p. 93.
  \item For San Michele in Bosco and the possible intervention of the Ferrarese architect Biago Rossetti, who was probably involved also in the renovation of San Giorgio, see Cervellati and Scannavini 1971, pp. 37 and 39 and Pascale Guidotti Magnani 2018, who reject the hypothesis of Rossetti’s intervention at San Michele in Bosco.
  \item Appendix, no. 22.
  \item See chapter 5 below for more information about the addition of the windows.
\end{itemize}
old church. The other sources of light were the rose window and two lancet windows of the façade, the oculus and two lancet windows of the cappella maggiore and one lancet window in each of the two outer chapels. But we also need to add the windows of the transept and those of the chapels springing from the north side of the nave (these appear as oculi in the fresco by Gherardi at San Michele in Bosco).

When studying the architectural history of San Giorgio, it is necessary to consider what remains of the monastery attached to it. The internal walls of the cloister are decorated by a terracotta frieze including console brackets, ovuli and dentils (fig. 53). The same kind of frieze is visible on the exterior wall of the eastern side of the cloister (fig. 54) and is comparable to the one running on the north side of the church (between the chapel of Saint Maurelius and the bell tower), as well as to the decorative elements of the campanile attributed to Biagio Rossetti. The similarities of these ornamental features suggest that a renovation campaign (involving at least the re-decoration of the external walls, if not more substantial structural work) on both the monastery and the church was carried out in the late fifteenth century and possibly involved Biagio Rossetti or his collaborators. Marcianò has proposed the year 1473 as a terminus ante quem for a campaign of works in San Giorgio, in preparation for the entry to Ferrara of Eleanor of Aragon, who was to marry Duke Ercole I d’Este. However, considering that San Giorgio was not one of the churches benefitting from Este patronage, it seems to us that a more important occasion which might have prompted the works campaign was the re-dedication of the church to the Saints George, Maurelius and Lawrence in 1479. What is certain is that the campanile designed by Biagio Rossetti was completed by 1485, as attested by the inscription on a marble plaque (‘Pace Ferraria parta MCCCCLXXXV’) still visible nowadays on its base.

One final element of the old church to be considered is the tramezzo separating the Olivetans from the laypeople. Very little is known of choir screens in Ferrara and the nearby territory. As noted above, the balladuro of the cathedral was a deep structure with three vaults. A comparable rood screen stood once in the Benedictine abbey at Pomposa and is recorded in a plan dating from the late sixteenth century. Sadly, no information is available on the choir screen in the fifteenth-century San Giorgio. An unpublished plan found by the present author in

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123 A very similar terracotta frieze with console brackets, ovuli and dentils runs along the top of the apse and nave walls of Santa Maria della Consolazione in Ferrara, the construction of which started in 1501. The project of this building is attributed to Biagio Rossetti and his collaborators. A comparable frieze decorates the façade of the so-called Casa di Biagio Rossetti, the house the architect started building for himself and his family in the 1490s and completed in 1502.

124 Marciano 1991, p. 66. This hypothesis is accepted, without further discussion, by Alessandra Massarenti, in Cazzola et al. 2005, p. 85. However, in the same volume (p. 92) Monica Cavicchi more cautiously reports that the attribution to Rossetti of the works in the church and monastery. See also ibidem, pp. 97-8, note 7.

125 On choir screens in Medieval and Renaissance Italy see the comprehensive overview by Cooper 2017.

126 According to Russo (2008) this monumental screen, over two metres deep with an accessible upper storey, was already in place when the abbey was consecrated in 1026.
the archive of San Giorgio shows an Olivetan church with a monastery (fig. 55). The plan shows a rather unusual pictographic mode, including the flat representation of doors and altars. This drawing, perhaps dating from the sixteenth century (as suggested by the handwriting), does not seem to be very relevant to our purpose, as it may not represent San Giorgio. While the first cloister seems to match the existing one, the cappella maggiore is far too small and there are no flanking chapels. Furthermore, the substantial rood screen with three arcades, raised some steps above the level of the nave, does not have a door opening onto the stalls of the monks. Three altars are depicted under the vaults of this screen, the central one occupying the place where one would normally find the door to the stalls, which allowed laypeople a glimpse of the high altar at the back of the apse. Only twenty stalls are represented, set against the walls of the eastern end of the nave, with returns placed at the far end, strangely facing west. This number appears too small if one considers the dimensions of the choir precint (18 by 20 braccia, that is about 11,60 by 13 metres). Laypeople could access the church from the side entrance located by the tramezzo, on the north side of the nave.

Even if we are not sure that this plan records San Giorgio, it is nevertheless useful as it provides a good idea of how the western part of the fifteenth-century church would have looked, according to our reconstruction (fig. 56), with chapels springing on either sides of the nave. The renovations the building underwent over the centuries might have destroyed possible traces which could have helped to locate the tramezzo and make hypothesis about its structure, as is the case for other churches.

2.7 The choir stalls in San Giorgio

Today a choir of thirty-three upper stalls and twenty-six substalls fills the apse of San Giorgio (figs. 57-58). It is possible that these are the same stalls which according to Guarini were removed from the middle of the nave and transferred behind the high altar in 1581, during the priorate of Giovan Battista Pelizino. This operation was part of the renovation campaign directed by the architect Alberto Schiatti, who is documented to have rebuilt some parts of the church in the early 1580s, including the main apse (discussed below, chapter 5). According to Scalabrini, writing in the 1770s, the choir stalls were originally “by the double squared and octagonal columns”. The columns separating the nave from the two aisles we see today are all octagonal (made of brick) and decorated with fictive fluting, probably dating to the eighteenth century.

127 The emblem of the Olivetan congregation (the three-peaked Mount Calvary with a cross and two olive branches) appears above the church main door as well as above the doors of the monastery.
128 ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Mappe e disegni (1673-sec.XVIII).
century. As no double or square columns survive, it is hard to establish the exact location of the columns referred to by Scalabrini.

The majority of the intarsia panels once decorating the seat-backs of both upper stalls and substalls are unfortunately lost, but all the panels between the seat capping and canopy base in the upper row survive (figs. 59-60). Only two of them feature perspective intarsia. The first one represents an urban view with a church and a turreted building on a hill (fig. 61) and the other one an open cupboard containing books, a wooden box and brushes in a cylindrical box (fig. 62). The other twenty-nine panels differ in their technique - spindle-wood intarsia - but also in the simplicity of their decoration, and in our opinion they seem to date from a later period. They feature religious symbols, some of which are relevant to the Olivetans and to the history of the monastery: a bishop’s mitre and a crozier (in the central upper stall, fig. 63), an abbatial cross, a stylized sun inscribed with the letters IC (Iesus Christus; fig. 64), the symbol of the Olivetan congregation (fig. 65) and floral compositions (three branches tied with a bow; a “column” standing on a base made of leaves, with three rings holding its branches through which various flowers can be seen).

Thirty-two of the panels of the upper stalls (the central stall is a later addition) are framed by two slim twisted columns with Corinthian capitals (some of which are lost) supporting a tracery semi-circular arch (fig. 66). The spandrels are adorned with Gothic floral motifs. A double border of intarsia a toppo with spiral and geometric motifs runs around all the panels (fig. 67). Twisted columns framing intarsia panels are a feature employed by the Canozi da Lendinara, for instance in the choir stalls of Modena cathedral, dating from the 1460s (fig. 68), where the tracery they support is more elaborate, the semi-circular arch being divided into two sub-arches with an oculus above. Gothic motifs are also used in the stall-dividers at San Giorgio, composed of foliate volutes the upper part of which rests against pilasters with Corinthian capitals separating the stall-backs (fig. 69). Simpler volutes above the capitals support the continuous canopy, which seems to have lost the panels of its vault (four for each section, fig. 70). The choir stalls in San Domenico in Ferrara, made by Giovanni da Baiso in 1384, have a comparable canopy (fig. 71), with the single sections decorated by four panels with geometric motifs. It is plausible that this type of canopy was still to be found in choir stalls made in the fifteenth century, like those at San Giorgio.

The panel with the urban view (fig. 61) recalls the style of the brothers Lorenzo (1425-1477) and Cristoforo (d. 1491) Canozi da Lendinara, responsible for some of the most beautiful intarsia works in Quattrocento Northern Italy, which provided much inspiration to the next generation of marquetry craftsmen. The two Canozi brothers are documented in Ferrara in the early 1450s. Their activity was continued by Bernardino, the son of Cristoforo, who received the
prestigious commission for the new choir stalls of Ferrara cathedral in 1501.\textsuperscript{131} Ferretti argued that the panel with the urban view in San Giorgio dates after the Canozi’s activity in Ferrara and was executed by a craftsman resident in San Giorgio, perhaps the Istrian lay brother Sebastiano da Rovigno.\textsuperscript{132}

A different opinion on the authorship of the choir stalls in San Giorgio was expressed by Bagatin, who initially proposed that they were executed by Lorenzo and Cristoforo Canozi in the 1450s and that the only extant elements from the original stalls are the two panels with perspective intarsia and the toppi distributed in various parts of the choir.\textsuperscript{133} Bagatin reviewed to some extent his opinion in his monograph on the Canozi, stating that perhaps it is more correct to think about old intarsia panels out of context, or that other panels with perspective intarsia went lost and were replaced by the panels with spindle-wood intarsia we see today.\textsuperscript{134} Bagatin considered the panels decorating the dignitaries stalls in San Giorgio as the earliest examples of Renaissance intarsia in Ferrara, “in the unique style of the school of the brothers from Lendinara”.\textsuperscript{135}

Bagatin’s ideas were dismissed by Daniele, who regarded the choir of San Giorgio as the only surviving example of the art of Sebastiano da Rovigno.\textsuperscript{136} Born in Rovigno (Istria) probably around 1420, Sebastiano is recorded as a converso novice in the monastery of San Benedetto Novello in Padua in 1460-62. According to the Familiarum tabulae he was at Santa Maria in Organo in Verona in 1464-6.\textsuperscript{137} In 1466-8 and later in 1474-6 Sebastiano was at Monte Oliveto Maggiore. In 1470-3 he was at San Bartolomeo in Florence. Sebastiano was at Santa Maria della Riviera in Padua in 1476-7 and then spent two years in the Ferrarese monastery (1477-79). In 1479 he moved to the Venetian monastery of Sant’Elena, where he executed sixty choir stalls, thirty-four of which represented views of cities under Venetian rule. Like the rest of the works by Fra Sebastiano, these choir stalls, highly praised by his contemporaries, are lost.\textsuperscript{138} It is therefore virtually impossible to assess the artistic profile of Sebastiano, who is considered the founder of the Olivetan school of wood intarsia. The main argument raised by Daniele is the fact that Olivetans generally employed craftsmen belonging to their order for the execution of choir stalls for their churches.\textsuperscript{139} He also pointed out that the “predominance of elegant inlaid

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131 On the Canozi da Lendinara see Bagatin 2004.
133 Bagatin 1987, p. 42; idem 1991, pp. 44-7. See also idem 2000, pp. 31-32, where the author reformulates his arguments, adding a few considerations.
135 “… nello stile inconfondibile della scuola dei fratelli lendinaresi”, ibidem, p. 122.
136 Daniele 1998, p. 16.
138 It is worth quoting here Francesco Sansovino’s description of the choir stalls of Sant’Elena: “nei cui sedili di tarsia oltre a i disegni de i fogliami che vi sono, e le prospettive, vi sono ritratte in 34 sedili, 34 città delle principalì del mondo a punto com’èllo sono, con molto artificio e vaghezza”; Sansovino 1581, f. 77v.
\end{flushright}
vegetal volutes” can help to imagine how the “fogliami” in the choir stalls of Sant’Elena described by Sansovino might have looked.¹⁴⁰

Bagatin rightly pointed out that it is unlikely that the two panels with perspective intarsia were the only focal elements of the choir.¹⁴¹ Extant choir stalls in other Olivetan churches feature indeed a coherent iconographic programme. The tracery and twisted columns look too elaborate as a framing for the spindle-wood intarsia panels. This and other atypical features, including the restraint of figurative iconography, can only be explained as the result of losses and alterations. One possibility suggested by Bagatin is that the re-adaptation of the choir stalls was made at the time of the re-consecration of San Giorgio in 1479, but it seems to us unlikely that if the Canozzi were responsible for the choir stalls in the 1450s, as he assumes, the majority of the panels could have been lost or damaged within two decades.¹⁴² The other possibility indicated by Bagatin seems more probable: the rearrangement of the choir stalls happened at a later stage, and it involved the reuse of old materials (such as the tracery employed to frame the spindle-wood intarsia panels).¹⁴³

A different hypothesis was formulated by Manni: dating the two panels with perspective intarsia to the 1470s, he associated them to Pier Antonio degli Abati (about 1430- d. 1504), son-in-law of Lorenzo Canozzi.¹⁴⁴ In 1472 to 1474 Pier Antonio was working with Lorenzo on the choir stalls of Parma cathedral. In 1483 he received the commission for the choir stalls in San Francesco in Treviso (now lost) and later worked on the choir stalls for Monte Berico and for the church of Santa Corona in Vicenza. In the later 1480s he executed some intarsia panels for the sacristy of the Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua. Furthermore, it is possible that he made the choir stalls for Sant’Andrea in Ferrara (now at San Cristoforo della Certosa, fig. 72).¹⁴⁵ Dismissing Bagatin’s theory, Manni convincingly argues that the two intarsia panels in San Giorgio do not display the stylistic features of early Ferrarese intarsia, but are later works inspired by examples of the Canozzi. The panel with the urban view recalls some panels of the choir stalls made by the Canozzi for San Bartolomeo in Vicenza (now in Monte Berico) and the other panel with the still-life is similar to one of the stalls in the choir of Modena cathedral.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the name of the Canozzi proposed by Bagatin seems to us implausible not only for stylistic reasons but also because if they had worked on a commission of such a scale, this would have probably been recorded by local diarists and historians, and perhaps more than

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¹⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 17.
¹⁴¹ Bagatin 2000, p. 31.
¹⁴² Ibidem, p. 33.
¹⁴³ Bagatin (ibidem) has read the presence the mitre, bishop’s crozier and abbatial cross on the intarsia panels as elements pointing to the deaths of both Lorenzo (1474) and Nicolò Roverella (1480) as a terminus post quem.
¹⁴⁵ Bagatin 1991, p. 98.
just two panels and tracery elements would have survived. It is tempting to think that the choir stalls in San Giorgio were made by Sebastiano da Rovigno, as his residency in the Ferrarese monastery in 1477-9 coincides with the period when the Olivetans attended to the adornment of the high altar chapel and the chapel of Saint Maurelius, before the church was re-consecrated on 18 November 1479. A new set of choir stalls might have been an integral part of the decoration campaign.

It is also important to remember that the celebrated wood carver and intarsia master Fra Giovanni da Verona, responsible for the beautiful choir stalls in Santa Maria in Organo in his hometown and those of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, amongst others, entered San Giorgio as a novice in 1475. Aside from a short absence due to his profession at Monte Oliveto Maggiore in the spring of 1476 (Sebastiano da Rovigno was there at the same time), he remained in San Giorgio until May 1478, when he moved to San Michele in Bosco, Bologna. In 1475-6 another Olivetan intarsia master, Fra Paolo da Recco (d. 1521), was at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, where he met Fra Sebastiano. From 1481 to May 1482 Fra Paolo was at San Giorgio. Is it possible that he was called to complete a work begun by Fra Sebastiano?

The fact the stall-backs are missing from both the substalls and upper stalls clearly suggests that what we see today is the result of transformations and re-adaptations. Chiara Toschi Cavaliere has rightly pointed out that these alterations are the effect of the dramatic history of San Giorgio, which had to endure the earthquake of 1570, the occupation by Prussian troops in 1708-9, the expropriations of Napoleon’s Cisalpine Republic and finally the Second World War. Therefore, in the absence of documents, and considering the altered state of the choir stalls, it is hard to name the authors of the various elements and to formulate hypotheses on their original aspect.

It is surprising that the scholars who have proposed a fifteenth-century dating for the choir stalls in San Giorgio have not addressed the important issue of the number of the existing stalls in relation to the size of the Olivetan community at that time, nor have they considered their original location in the middle of the nave and the area they occupied. The extant fifty-nine stalls are exactly double the number the monks would have needed in 1485 (as mentioned above from 1455 to 1475 the community included 25 monks and rose to thirty in 1485).

It is useful to look at one of the few examples of documented Ferrarese choir stalls. The convent of Santa Caterina da Siena was built by Ercole I d’Este for Suor Lucia Beccadelli da Narni, a Dominican nun blessed with the stigmata, whom the duke had procured at great expense from Viterbo in 1499. By 1502 the building was in great part complete, housing seventy

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147 Lugano 1905, p. 146.
148 Ibidem, p. 231. The only scholar to have picked up this information is Toschi Cavaliere (2005, p. 55).
nuns already. The church was divided between the nuns and the secular congregation and measured 40 by 12 metres.\textsuperscript{150} For the nuns the woodcarver Bartolomeo da Modena made 118 choir stalls of walnut, with kneelers, floor, backs and arm rests (now lost).\textsuperscript{151} The quantity of the stalls was probably superior to the real needs of the community, but it seems likely that the convent was expecting to house more nuns in the future, as suggested by the fact that it had ninety-five cells for the sisters and forty-six for novices.

The church of Santa Maria in Organo in Verona holds a rare example of late-fifteenth century choir stalls made for an Olivetan church (fig. 73).\textsuperscript{152} The stalls, made by Fra Giovanni da Verona between 1493 and 1501, stood originally below the crossing and were dismantled in 1570 to be re-installed in the apsidal curve behind the high altar. In her exhaustive study on the choir stalls of Santa Maria in Organo Elena Bugini has suggested that Fra Giovanni made forty stalls, “in order to guarantee the choir offices to all the monks, even in the eventuality that the monastery was fully occupied”.\textsuperscript{153} From the \textit{Familiarum Tabulae} we learn that during the period of execution of the stalls thirty-five monks lived in the monastery. The latter had forty-two cells and a cell for the prior; we must remember that oblates were not allowed into the choir.

Another case to consider is that of Sant’Elena in Venice, for which church Fra Sebastiano da Rovigno executed sixty choir stalls in 1480. In contrast to Santa Maria in Organo, here the new choir stalls seem to have exceeded the actual needs of the community, which was composed of only sixteen monks.\textsuperscript{154} The Olivetan congregation did not hold provincial chapters, so there must have been another reason for having more stalls than those really needed.\textsuperscript{155}

In spite of the loss of decorative elements, the extant choir stalls in San Giorgio are a coherent whole and it seems unlikely that new stalls were added to the original ensemble over the centuries (with the exception of the stall of the prior). On the other hand the reason for having about twenty stalls more that those which would have suited the size of the community in the mid-to-late fifteenth century remains to be explained.\textsuperscript{156} Considering that the average

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{150} Tuohy 1996, p. 371. The convent was demolished in 1847.
\item \textsuperscript{151} “Spesa del monastero de sore de Santa Catherina da Siena lire 215 de moneta, per lo amontare de avere fato sedie 118 fra grande e picoli con li soi inzenochiaduri e solari soto le sedie, et spalere computa lire 2 de moneta l’una”, ASMo, Camera Ducale, Munizioni e Fabbriche 41, f. 209, published by Tuohy 1996, note 55, p. 373.
\item \textsuperscript{152} At Santa Maria in Organo there are today twenty-seven upper stalls (two of which are in fact doors) and fourteen substalls.
\item \textsuperscript{153} “in modo da garantire l’ufficio in coro a tutti i monaci anche nell’eventualità che il monastero fosse interamente abitato”, Bugini 2014, p. 100.
\item \textsuperscript{154} AMOM, \textit{Familiarum Tabulae}, vol. II, f. 83v.
\item \textsuperscript{155} In the fifteenth century the general chapter met annually at Monte Oliveto Maggiore. Later it met every other year, see Picasso 1999, p. 159.
\item \textsuperscript{156} Considering the contracts for the choir stalls at San Vittore, Bologna and at Cremona Cathedral, Joanne Allen has argued that the “overall number of seats was not of great importance to the church representatives and did not correspond to the exact size of the community” and it was important that there were two rows of stalls and that the upper row could be easily accessed; see Allen 2009, p. 83.
\end{itemize}
width of a stall is between 65 and 70 cm and that the nave in San Giorgio is about ten metres wide, we can try to consider the original location of the choir precinct. As was common, the stalls would have been arranged in a U shape. A possible solution is an upper row of eleven stalls on each side and five on the returns and a lower row of eleven stalls (with an access to the upper row) and two on the returns. The central stall we see nowadays is a later addition and would not have fitted within this proposed plan. Bearing in mind the aforementioned information provided by Guarini about the original placement of the stalls in the middle of the church, we can speculate that they occupied the area before the presbytery built in the early 1580s, plausibly the first two bays of the current nave (a surface measuring about 10 by 10 metres).

We turn now our attention to a key artefact which usually stood above the western entrance to the choir stalls. As we have seen, the record of the pastoral visitation from 1447 for Ferrara cathedral lists a crucifix with other large wooden saints by the canons’ choir stalls, most probably placed above the rood screen. The presence of a large crucifix in San Giorgio is attested by an unpublished document dated 25 January 1496. Count Giovanni Antonio Vallisneri, called Mazzone, a high officer of the Este court who served as camerlengo of the Dukes Borso an Ercole I, stipulated an agreement with the Olivetans of San Giorgio.157 The notarial act was drafted in the monastery, in the “loco deputato ad hospicium”, in the presence of the prior Giovanni Cloari and of the subprior Giorgio Nigrissoli, as well as of Nicolò de Lardi, the notary of the Spenderia (treasury) of the Este, among the witnesses.158

Giovanni Antonio promised to donate to the monks fifty lire marchesane every year, “for the love of God, for his soul” (“Amore Dei pro anima sua”), to keep a cesendellum or lamp always burning in front of the “image of the big crucifix placed in the church of the said monastery” (“immaginem crucifissi magni positi in ecclesia ipsius monasterii”). The document does not provide details on the exact location of the crucifix, but we can assume that, as it was common practice at the time, it hung above the tramezzo, clearly visible by the laypeople. The large crucifix is also mentioned in the inventory of the sacristy from 1584 (further discussed below), which lists a cloth painted “alla moresca” which was used to cover the crucifix during Holy Week. The document from 1496 confirms a common practice. As Joanna Cannon has shown in relation to Dominican churches in central Italy, the laity expressed their devotion to these large crosses placed above the screen by donating oil for the lamps that often hung before them, and

157 As recorded by an anonymous diarist On 1 February 1469, Giovanni Antonio was among the notable people appointed palatine count by the Emperor Frederick III in Ferrara, Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502, p. 55: “Zoanne Antonio da Valesinera, camerlengo del prefacto duca e chiamato Mazon, conte palatino, il quale Mazon è genero del dicto Albertor di Vign conte et paladino”. In 1471 Mazzone served as captain of the Rocca of Finale Emilia, and in 1483-85 was risante at Argenta, see Mantovani 2005, p. 185.
such donations often had a commemorative aim.\textsuperscript{159} Cannon also pointed out that specific references to different crucifixes in testamentary donations for oil imply the presence of more than one crucifix, and that “the one attracting particular lay devotion was notably large and prominently displayed”\textsuperscript{160}

To get an idea of how the crucifix that hung above the tramezzo at San Giorgio might have looked we might consider the one still in place on a beam in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Antonio in Polesine (fig. 74). This Benedictine complex preserves a unique example of a nuns’ church in Ferrara, with three Gothic chapels and choir stalls by the Canozzi da Lendinara (fig. 75).\textsuperscript{162} The chapels are graced by beautiful frescoes depicting \textit{Stories from the Infancy of Christ}, the \textit{Passion} and the \textit{Life of the Virgin} executed in the early fourteenth century by Bolognese and Paduan followers of Giotto.\textsuperscript{163} The crucifix is one of the rare extant Renaissance wooden sculptures made for a Ferrarese church and is the work of an artist of German origins based in Venice, who was able to satisfy commissions coming from both sides of the Adriatic, from Ravenna to Trau/Trogir and Parenzo/Poreč, in the second half of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{164}

If the case of Sant’Antonio in Polesine provides a good idea of the visual impact of the the crucifix in the church interior, we should take into consideration another crucifix made for an Olivetan foundation. The chapel of the Crucifix in San Michele in Bosco, Bologna, is adorned with a powerfully realistic representation of the crucified Christ (fig. 76) which has been ignored by scholars until very recently. In a groundbreaking article published in \textit{Analecta Pomposiana} in 2014 Aldo Galli and Matteo Mazzalupi have reconstructed the artistic profile of Paul Moerich (d. 1475), a German cleric and sculptor, who is thought to have supplied crucifixes to various churches in north-eastern Italy, including San Michele in Bosco.\textsuperscript{165}

Mazzalupi has pointed out that the chapel of the Crucifix in the latter church (the first on the left) is documented from 1457, a date which would fit well with the known movements of Moerich. Furthermore, in April 1457 master Giovanni of Cremona was paid for a wooden tabernacle that was to contain a crucifix.\textsuperscript{166} Mazzalupi therefore suggested that the crucified Christ was made by Moerich around 1457 for the chapel of the Crucifix. However, it seems to us that the above mentioned information does not prove that this sculpture, about two metres high, was made for the chapel in which we see it today. The “tabernacolo” made by Giovanni of

\textsuperscript{159} Cannon 2013, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibidem, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{162} For the church and monastery see Caselli 1992.
\textsuperscript{163} For the frescoes see Novelli 2016.
\textsuperscript{164} For a complete bibliography see Galli and Mazzalupi 2014, p. 35, note 31.
\textsuperscript{165} Galli and Mazzalupi 2014. The wooden crucifix Moerich made for the cathedral of Saló (230 cm tall; fig. 77) stood above a beam at the entrance of the cappella maggiore, ibidem, p. 33. Another crucifix attributed to Moerich, still recognizable in spite of the rather heavy alterations, is the one hanging above the high altar of San Petronio, Bologna, ibidem p. 36.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibidem, p. 36, note 33.
Cremona is more likely to have contained a smaller crucifix, which would have served for the adoration by the monks, and perhaps also by laypeople (during processions). Examining the present state of the chapel of the Crucifix, it is clear that it underwent a few interventions over the centuries: the fifteenth-century sculpture of the crucified Christ is inserted into a baroque gilded frame, set against a wall which was once decorated by a fresco of the Christ on the way to the Calvary (likely to date from the sixteenth century), of which only the central section survives. According to Malaguzzi Valeri in 1521, when Scipione Ramenghi was paid for its painted decoration, this chapel was dedicated to the Virgin. Nevertheless, some perplexities arise from the fact that the extant decoration comprising the Prophets, the Agony in the garden and the Flagellation and the fragmentary Way to the Calvary (attributed by some scholars to Bagnacavallo senior) does not seem appropriate for a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Even if we cannot establish with certainty the transformations of this chapel, we can argue that it is unlikely that the crucified Christ attributed to Moerich was made for it, as it is much more plausible that originally it hung above the tramezzo. In 1463 Moerich was the chaplain of the pieve of Bondeno, a little town located about fifteen kilometres northwest of Ferrara. Bearing in mind the close connections between the Ferrarese and the Bolognese Olivetan communities and the fact that in the 1460s Moerich lived not too far from Ferrara, it is tempting to consider the possibility that he was first commissioned to sculpt a crucifix for San Giorgio, and then the one for San Michele in Bosco.

As far as the cesendello burning in front of the large crucifix in San Giorgio is concerned, it is plausible that it was similar to the one seen in Vittore Carpaccio’s Apparition of the Crucified of Mount Ararat in the church of Sant’Antonio in Castello from 1512-13 (Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice, fig. 78). Above the choir screen hangs a single large cesendello, as well as a group of smaller lamps, hanging from an elaborate high wooden structure. The prominent position of the lamp in the painting indicates that it probably represents a votive offering and was commissioned for a particular occasion. Cesendelli were supended from the ceiling (or from a wall bracket) by a metal mount incorporating a triple or quadruple chain, and they were fitted with a dome-shaped shade above a round disk into which the flaring top of the lamp was inserted. As we have seen above, another request for a votive lamp in a key location of the church was made in 1474 by Francesca, widow of the furrier Baldrino. She asked the monks to

167 Zucchini (1943, p. 32) reports information about the renovation of the chapel of the Crucifix in 1662, including an ornament of wood with foliage and carvings designed by Antonio Levanti (probably the frame).
168 Malaguzzi Valeri 1895, p. 39.
169 Zucchini (1943, p. 29) suggests that the chapel of the Virgin was the one currently dedicated to Saint Francesca Romana, and previously to Saint Benedict.
170 For Renaissance cesendelli made of glass see the interesting article by Sani 2017. For an example of a more basic Ferrarese hanging lamp, made of wood with metal chains (probably a nineteenth-century replica of a fifteenth-century original) see Toschi Cavaliere 2005, pp. 45-6.
keep a “cesendelum sive unam lampadam” burning in the chapel of Saint Maurelius, where she wanted to be buried.

2.8 Ecclesiastical furnishings in San Giorgio

The only extant inventory of liturgical implements and vestments of San Giorgio dates from 1584. However, some useful information on the ecclesiastical paraphernalia in the fifteenth-century church can be gathered from various sources, including some unpublished documents found by the present writer. The earliest document recording a bequest for liturgical vestments is found among the well preserved parchment collection from San Giorgio kept in the Archivio Storico Diocesano at Ferrara. On 28 September 1429 a certain Antonio, the son of the late Pietro da Carretta, whose profession is not specified, from the contrada of the Misericordia (the parish under the pastoral care of San Giorgio) dictated his will. He wished to be buried in the church of San Giorgio, leaving his executors to decide the cost of his interment. He also made a bequest of ten lire towards the purchase of a chasuble for the church of San Giorgio, asking that the Olivetans celebrated masses and said prayers for his soul and those of his ancestors in perpetuity. To make sure his wishes would be fulfilled, the testator nominated among his executors the prior of San Giorgio, whomever he would be at the time of his death. The relatively modest sum of money bequeathed by Antonio to the Olivetans might seem too little considering that he would get not only permission to be interred in the church, but also perpetual masses for his soul.

A much more generous bequest was made three years later by a certain Pietro Brasone, also from the contrada of the Misericordia. On 9 April 1432 in the Ferrarese episcopal residence Fra Simone of Pavia, cellarius of San Giorgio received from the executors of the late Brasone the sum of one hundred and fifty-seven lire for the purchase of a missal, a silver chalice, a chasuble and an altar cloth (“apparamento”) for San Giorgio. In his will dictated on 19 February 1431 Brasone had given instructions to sell a property in the contrada of the Misericordia and to give part of the income to the monks of San Giorgio, to be spent on the above mentioned liturgical implements and vestments. In exchange he asked the friars to say daily prayers for his soul. Brasone nominated as his executors the prior of San Giorgio, whoever he would be at the time of his death, and his son-in-law Bonaventura, who was a caulker.

171 Appendix, no. 3.
172 Samaritani mentions the will of Pietro Brasone drafted on 28 December 1430, in which he arranged bequests to the poor and to the hospitals of the Battuti Bianchi and of Saint Agnese (ASDFe, Pergamene pars antiquior, Buste varie, 21). As we have seen above, the Brasone had a special connection with the Olivetans of San Giorgio.
173 Appendix, no. 4.
Nicolosio of Savona, prior of San Giorgio in 1432, was surely aware of the sale of the property of the late Brasone, and we can argue that arrangements were made in the monastery for the imminent purchase of the various liturgical items. Indeed, while receiving the money from Brasone’s executors, Fra Simone affirmed that he had already been delivered a missal from Bologna (probably from the scriptorium at San Michele in Bosco), and that he was to order a chalice made of silver of the weight of sixteen ounces. Furthermore, for making the chasuble he intended to use a *gabano* (that is a sort of cloak) of green cloth of textured velvet he himself had and he was to buy a trimming for it. He was also going to purchase the adornment for the altar (most likely the altar cloth). Considering the purpose of Pietro Brasone’s bequest, to be remembered in the daily prayers of the monks, we can be sure that these new liturgical items were intended for an altar where mass was celebrated daily, that is the high altar.

An interesting piece of information provided by Bellini indicates that in the early 1450s the Ferrarese monks purchased some of their liturgical linens from the Olivetan monastery of San Benedetto Novello in Padua. On 12 October 1452 Fra Benedetto of Cremona paid five *lire* for a “tovagia” for the sacristy at San Giorgio bought from the Paduan monks. In 1455 Bishop Francesco dal Legname commissioned a reliquary for the arm of Saint Maurelius from the goldsmith Simone d’Alemagna. As stated in the record of the payment from 6 February 1456, the reliquary was intended for the sacristy of the cathedral, and not for San Giorgio. During the month of April 1456 the precious relic was inserted into the new reliquary and transferred to the cathedral with solemn pomp. As we have seen above, in her will dictated in 1474 Francesca, the widow of the furrier Baldrino, bequeathed six hundred *lire* to the Olivetans for the erection of two chapels. This sum was intended to cover also the costs of the necessary liturgical equipment, including metal chalices and chasubles.

No more evidence survives about liturgical equipment and vestments in San Giorgio in the fifteenth century, but we can gain an idea of the variety and the quantity of the items used for the liturgy by looking at the 1584 inventory of the sacristy found by the present writer (fig. 79). The 1462 inventory of the sacristy of Ferrara cathedral shows that liturgical implements were regularly repaired, so we might argue that some of the objects listed in the 1584 inventory from San Giorgio dated from the previous century. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that one the chalices is described as “moderno fatto del 1572”, implying that the others were older.

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176 Ibidem, p. 56. On the reliquary, kept in the Museo della Cattedrale at Ferrara, see Sassu and Giovannucci Vigi 2010, pp. 191-2, no. 95 (entry by Barbara Bertelli).
177 Appendix, no. 12.
178 ASDFe, 40.6, G. Inventari diversi, Inventario della sacrestia 1584.
As stated in the title, on 9 May 1584 the items listed in the inventory passed into the hands of the priest Don Costante of Ferrara (plausibly the new chaplain). The first item is a silver cross with various figures weighing fifteen *libbre*, that is about five kilograms.\textsuperscript{179} It is most plausible that this ornate and rather heavy cross was used on the high altar. The series of twelve chalices opens with a large chalice made of silver, with six figures in relief in the “groppo” (that is the knot); its paten was decorated by a large enamelled crucifix.\textsuperscript{180} A shorter chalice, also made of silver, was adorned by six little angels bearing the symbols of the Passion in the knot, with the foot decorated by foliage in relief; a San Giorgio in enamel was on the paten. Other chalices are listed, two of them smaller, made of silver, and with enamels on both the knot and the foot; as mentioned above, another chalice is referred to as modern, made in 1572 with the paten made of silver and decorated with foliage and heads of seraphim in half relief on both the knot and the foot. A set of three chalices with paten, made of silver, were decorated by a Mount of Olives and two saints (probably George and Benedict) “intagliati” (chiselled) on the foot.

The inventory continues with two paxes and two silver incense burners with their incense boats, decorated with enamels. A basin (“bacinella”), also made of silver, was decorated by a Saint George in enamel, while the images of the same saint and of Saint Maurelius decorated the covers of two cruets (“ampolline grandi”, most likely to be used on the high altar). The preciousness of a container (“custodia”) for the Holy Sacrament made of silver in the shape of the Holy Sepulchre with various figures is highlighted by the additional information that it was highly worked and expensive (“con gran manifattura e spesa”). A little box of silver with foliage decoration, with a Saint George and a little cross on top of the lid, containing the consecrated Hosts was kept permanently in the tabernacle at the altar of the church (we assume the main altar). A tabernacle made of silver with an eight-faced knot and the vessel made of crystal, used to carry the Eucharist “across the parish” (“per la parrocchia”) was under the direct care of the chaplain. The sacristy also held the arm reliquary of Saint George made of silver, with a base of gilded copper and the foot decorated by six enamels. Even if no relics of Saint George are known to have been kept in the church, we might wonder whether this item was a replica of the reliquary in the cathedral, to be used during the celebration of the feast of the saint.\textsuperscript{181}

The list of liturgical textiles includes twelve altar cloths (“paramenti”), some of which made of sumptuous fabric, such as crimson gold brocade (“panno d’oro rizzo in cremesino”), gilded brocade with column motifs with embroidered figures, white damask with gold flowers

\textsuperscript{179} One *libbra* was equivalent to 345.13 grams.

\textsuperscript{180} One of the chalices, decorated with three enamels representing Saint George, Saint Benedict and the Mount of Olives is said to be in the church of San Giorgino, which was governed by the Olivetans.

\textsuperscript{181} In the eighteenth century Scalabrini (1773, p. 27) saw the reliquary busts of Saint Maurelius and of the Blessed Pandoni, both made of silver.
with “fornimenti” of gold cloth. One altar cloth was made of white velvet with symbols of the Olivetan congregation (the Mount of Olives) and embroidered figures. Some of these altar cloths were part of sets, as it is clear by reading the description of some of the twenty copes listed below. The ten hoods to be used for feast days were embroidered with various images, including the Coronation of the Virgin, the Annunciation, the Baptism of Christ, Saint George mounting a horse, Saint Benedict, Saint Michael and Saint Lawrence. Another nine hoods said to be worn are listed in a separate section below. Five of these are described as “alla fiorentina” and were embroidered with either the Pietà or the Assumption of the Virgin.

In the sacristy there were thirty-seven chasubles for feast days, made of various fabrics, such as damask, velvet and “raso alessandrino”, a satin coloured with an especially prized deep rich blue. The practice of re-adapting worn vestments to make new ones is revealed by the entry listing a chasuble decorated with birds obtained (“cavata”) from an old cope. Another seventeen daily chasubles are listed in a separate section. As said above, a cloth painted “alla moresca” served for covering the large crucifix during Holy Week.

The inventory lists sixteen altar frontals (“davanzali”), some of which were part of the already mentioned sets. Three altar frontals were made of leather, while another one is referred to as “davanzale di spaliera” and was decorated with a Pietà, Saint George and Saint Maurelius. All three subjects were included in the Pala Roverella and it is most plausible that this altar frontal was used for the high altar. An idea of how altar frontals of this kind looked is provided by the nice illumination in the manuscript life of the Blessed Giovanni Tavelli da Tossignano (1386-1446), Bishop of Ferrara, in the Biblioteca Ariostea, Ferrara. The illumination on the second frontispiece, attributed to the master of the Pliny of Pico, represents Tavelli kneeling in front of a richly decorated altar, receiving the habit of the congregation of the Gesuati (fig. 78a). Two cesendelli hang on either sides of the altarpiece with Saint Jerome and two candlesticks are set on the altar.

The list continues with another category of liturgical textiles, the frontlets (“fregi da altare”). Two of these, part of a series of four items described as being ‘alla fiorentina” were adorned by the Pietà and by the Annunciation. Another frontlet, made of red velvet with flowers embroidered in gold thread, was embellished by the figure of Saint George. There were also eight lectern covers, two of which made of white velvet “fatte a Mont’Oliveti”, that is with the symbol of the Olivetan congregation. The two white lectern covers were likely to be part of a set comprising a cope (“un piviale di veluto bianco a Monte Oliveti con freggio”), an altar frontal (“un davanzale di veluto bianco a Monte Oliveti e fioroni”) and two spalliere for the choir stalls (“dua spalliere di veluto bianco a Mont’Oliveti”).

182 BCAFe, Ms Classe I, 306, Vita Beati Joannis., f. 4r. For this codex see La miniatura a Ferrara 1998 (entry by F. Toniolo), pp. 314-18.
The inventory also lists three veils made of silk and twenty-five chalice veils (“copertine da calice”), one of which was used for solemn masses. The latter was made of white ormesino (light silk fabric) and was embroidered with foliage along the edges and a Christ with the cross pouring out blood in a chalice in the middle. The chalice veil was lined with azure ormesino and because of its quality (it had cost eight scudi) it was in the care of the prior Signa.

On the second to last page are listed miscellaneous items, including a large carpet in two pieces for the high altar, a pallium of cloth with silk embroideries of animals and other motifs of various colours (“una palla d’altare solindente lavorada di seda …”), a banner for the cross with the Saints George and Benedict for feast days, six gilded kneeling angels, also for feast days, seven pairs of white angels, small and large, sixteen candlesticks of brass, four made of cast bronze, two large gilded candlesticks for the torches of the high altar and another sixteen made of iron for the altars.

The information provided by the 1584 inventory of the sacristy suggests that the Olivetans at San Giorgio owned a wide range of liturgical furnishings. It is plausible that several of the items listed in this inventory dated from the late fifteenth century and would have been used at the high altar. The descriptions of these furnishings are particularly valuable, as they help us to recreate the original context of the Roverella altarpiece.

2.8 The scriptorium and library

Manuscript writing and illuminating was one of the main artistic activities practised by the Olivetans. The study of some codices once in San Giorgio and now in the Biblioteca Ariostea in Ferrara throws light on the scriptorium and the library of the monastery. Before looking more closely at these manuscripts, it is interesting to consider the information provided by the Familiarum Tabulae kept in the archive of the abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore to track the presence of calligraphers in San Giorgio.

An overlooked entry from the account books of the monastery (now lost) published by Bellini in 1761 is the earliest record of the presence of an illuminator in San Giorgio. In 1453 Paolo de’ Vetri was paid for a glass window for the “guest room where the illuminator is staying” (“camera della foresteria dove sta el miniador”). The fact that the illuminator had been given guest accommodation suggests that he was not a member of the Olivetan congregation and was probably a lay man. The presence of monk calligraphers and illuminators in San Giorgio is documented from 1460, when the prior was Alessandro da Sesto (d. 1503), a

183 Chiappini 1981.
184 “1453 adì 13 Agosto. Item pagai a maestro Paolo de’ Vetri per una finestra, che ha invitriata per la Camera della Foresteria dove sta el Miniador, foro occhi 62 a dinari 9 ...”, Bellini 1761, pp. 124-5.
talented calligrapher.\textsuperscript{185} Between 1456 and 1460 Alessandro had worked on the series of choir books commissioned by the abbot general Francesco dalla Ringhiera for Monte Oliveto Maggiore (now in the Museo della Cattedrale, Chiusi). This extraordinary series was subsequently decorated by other calligraphers including Pietro da Barcellona (d. 1481), Fra Bartolomeo da Ferrara (1470-73), and illuminated by artists such as Sano di Pietro, Francesco di Giorgio, Liberale da Verona and Girolamo da Cremona.\textsuperscript{186} Corrado di Alemagna (d. 1485), calligrapher and illuminator was in San Giorgio in the years 1471-73.\textsuperscript{187} Little is known about his activity, but in 1482 he is documented as working on some manuscripts at Monte Oliveto Maggiore.\textsuperscript{188} The Spanish calligrapher Fra Pietro da Barcellona (documented from 1462 to 1482) was in San Giorgio in 1480-1 as master of the novices.\textsuperscript{189}

Bartolomeo da Ferrara (d. 1511) entered San Giorgio in late 1464 or early 1465 and took the Olivetan habit there on 8 February 1466.\textsuperscript{190} He stayed until 1468 and he returned in 1478-79, 1483-84, 1485-88 and 1509-11. He was at San Benedetto Novello in 1468-70 (and later in 1479-82) and then went to Monte Oliveto Maggiore, where he stayed until 1473, to work on the above mentioned series of choir books. Bartolomeo was next sent to Sant'Elena in Venice, probably to attend to some other manuscript commission and stayed there until 1475. In the late 1460s, together with Fra Francesco, he worked on some initials in the Gradual commissioned by the Lanzarotti family for San Benedetto Novello in Padua (now in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena).\textsuperscript{191} Furthermore, Bartolomeo’s presence is documented in the monastery of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo (1491-99 and 1500-1509).

As first shown by Chiappini, the scriptorium at San Giorgio took on outside commissions, including some from the Este. The most notable figure of the scriptorium was the Fra Filippo da San Giorgio mentioned in a letter written in 1483 by Andrea da le Vieze to Ercole I d’Este. Andrea was a calligrapher and illuminator who supervised a team of craftsmen involved in the production of illuminated manuscripts.\textsuperscript{192} Filippo had executed “the responsories for Lenten Vespers worked in gold and brush with the ducal coat of arms” (“lo respondente de li Vespri de la Quaresima lavorado d’oro et de penello con l’arma ducale”) and a “choir book for masses” (“libro da messe da canto”).\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{185} On Alessandro da Sesto see Lugano 1903, pp. 39-43.
\textsuperscript{186} Sano di Pietro worked on the codices U, V, and X (1459-63), Francesco di Giorgio worked on fol. 3v of Cod. B (1470-75), Liberale da Verona decorated the codices A, Q, R, and Y (1466-69) and Girolamo da Cremona fol. 4v of Cod. M (1472).
\textsuperscript{187} Lugano 1903, pp. 47-8.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibidem, p.47, note 1.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibidem, pp. 49-50.
\textsuperscript{190} Di Cocco 1910, p. 462; Lugano 1903, pp. 52-3.
\textsuperscript{191} BEMo, Lat 1022. See La miniatura a Ferrara 1998, no. 53, pp. 252-3 (entry by Giordana Mariani Canova).
\textsuperscript{192} Venturi 1900, pp. 17-9.
\textsuperscript{193} Bertoni 1918, p. 44.
Filippo took the Olivetan habit in San Michele in Bosco in 1470 and is recorded in San Giorgio from 1473 to 1501 (he was absent only in 1488-9). This is a very long period of time, considering the Olivetan rule which established that monks stayed in a monastery for one or two years before being sent to their next destination. From a letter sent by Filippo to Ercole I d’Este on 10 October 1490 we learn that he was working on a missal for the duke and he was planning to work on other books for him. Filippo was willing not to receive any payment for the missal, if the duke granted the monastery permission to sell wheat to local millers. The Olivetan calligrapher specified that the money derived from the sale of the wheat was to be used to pay for clothes for the monks. This letter is important as it records that in San Giorgio there was a scriptorium producing books not only for the use of the monastery itself, but also for other patrons.

The German Fra Guido di Alemagna (d. Rome 1460) was another important calligrapher in the scriptorium at San Giorgio. He entered the Olivetan congregation at San Benedetto in Siena in 1451 and two years later arrived in the Ferrarese monastery, where he stayed until 1458. He copied the codex with Saint Thomas’s *Expositions* on the gospels and Saint Paul’s *Letters* (in six volumes). Guido also completed two volumes containing works by Chrysostom and a miscellaneous volume with writings by Bernardo da Chiaravalle and William of Saint-Thierry. The manuscripts written by Guido are accurately decorated, as can be seen, for instance, in the illuminated initials of volumes III and IV of the *Expositions* (figs. 80, 81). Furthermore, an idea of their level of refinement is given by some fragments of the original Florentine embossed-leather covers which are now glued onto the interior of the new covers. The activity of the German monk is praised in the last written folio of volume V of the *Expositions*. Here the glossator of most of the codices from San Giorgio defines his work as “labor assiduus” and “maximus”, and says that the calligrapher deserves “immortales gratias”.

Another three manuscripts now in the Biblioteca Ariostea, less elegant than those by Guido di Alemagna, were written by the same calligrapher in the scriptorium at San Giorgio. They contain writings by Saint Jerome (fig. 82), Saint Ephrem the Syrian and John.

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195 Appendix, no. 17.
196 BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 189. Chiappini 1981, pp. 195-6. An interesting feature of these manuscripts is the fact that in four of them the first two and the last two folios are from an antiphonary no longer in use.
197 BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 333; Ms Cl. II, 334, Ms Cl. II, 337. For these codices see Chiappini 1981, pp. 214-18. On fol. 103r of Ms Cl. II 333 is the explicit: “Explicit liber dialogorum beati Iohannis Crisostomi et Basilii qui intinalaturur de dignitate sacerdotali. Deo Gracias. Anno Domini nostri Ihesu Christi MCCCCVLI o, mense octobris, die XI, hora XVI. Frater Guido de Alamania. Orate pro eo. Ave Maria.” The codex II, 334 was also written in 1457, as it appears from the explicits on fols 42r, 76v and 100v. On fol. 110v of ms II, 337 is the explicit “Explicit liber quintus in vita sancti Bernardi Clarevallensi abbati, anno Domini Domini MCCCCVLI VIII in vigilia apostolorum Petri et Pauli. Frater Guido de Alemannia scrisit. Orate pro ei, Pater noster cum Ave Maria. Cuius proprietas est monasterii Sancti Georgii de Ferraria extra muros”.
Chrysostom. Some annotations in the first and in the third of these codices suggest that the calligrapher was Marco da Ferrara, who was prior of San Giorgio from 1470 to 1474 and again in 1481-2, 1486-8 and 1491-3. One important detail, which was overlooked by Chiappini, is that these annotations were written in “monasterio Sanctae Mariae in Organo de Verona”. This detail is a significant proof of the close connection between the two Olivetan communities: the notes seem to imply that the codices copied by Marco da Ferrara in San Giorgio were at some point lent to the monastery in Verona.

The codex containing some of the sermons from Bernardino da Siena’s De Christiana Religione was also produced in San Giorgio. The text layout and the rubricated annotations at the top of the folios are comparable to those found in the manuscripts written by Guido di Alemagna. As pointed out by Chiappini, the majority of the extant codices from San Giorgio share the same type of decoration for the initials of the chapters and for the sections of the texts. Therefore it can be argued that the Olivetan scriptorium in Ferrara was responsible not only for the decoration of manuscripts produced internally but also of codices acquired from outside. This activity can be explained by the desire to give a sense of homogeneity to the contents of the library. The fact that the same kind of ornament is found in other Ferrarese codices belonging to other libraries at that time suggests that the scriptorium at San Giorgio received external commissions also for this type of work.

The shelf-marks on the extant codices from San Giorgio reveal that around 1459 the library contained already one hundred and eighty manuscripts. Chiappini has shown that the monks in San Giorgio started building up their library around some purchases. Fra Benedetto of Cremona, who was prior of San Giorgio in 1419, 1426, 1442 and 1451, purchased in Florence a manuscript containing some texts in Tuscan vernacular by Saint Bernard for the price of five ducats. The codex was decorated in Ferrara and the pen-flourished ornaments are likely to be by Guido d’Alemagna (fig. 83).

200 BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 67; Ms Cl. II, 142; Ms Cl. II, 239.
202 BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 330.
204 Ibidem.
205 Ibidem, p. 198.
207 BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 367, on the verso of the initial protective folio is the annotation “Iste liber est monasterii Sancti Georgii de Ferraria quem ego frater Benedictus emi Florentie pretio quinque ducatorum”. See Chiappini 1981, pp. 218-20.
A codex with the *Beniamin maior* by the twelfth-century Scottish theologian Richard of Saint Victor was bought for one and a half ducats. It entered the library of the Ferrarese monastery in the fifteenth century, as it appears in some notes on the first folios written by the same hand who annotated other codices from San Giorgio. The codex does not contain any *ex-libris*, but a note attached to it is addressed to Fra Girolamo da Ferrara, resident in San Giorgio. This can be identified with the Olivetan monk Girolamo Bendedei junior (d. Ferrara 1550), son of Battista and brother of Timoteo, a poet and member of the court of Duke Alfonso I d’Este. Girolamo junior was prior of San Giorgio in 1512, and he is portrayed in one of the three silver plaques by Giovan Antonio Leli decorating the aforementioned reliquary casket of Saint Maurelius. Girolamo’s uncle, Girolamo Bendedei senior (d. Florence 1482), had been prior of San Giorgio in 1475-6.

In 1463 Salvatore Paolo Aurispa, son or more likely pupil of the humanist Giovanni Aurispa, entered the monastery of San Giorgio. In his will drafted in 1464 he nominated the monks of San Giorgio as his universal heirs. In this way one hundred and thirty seven codices collected by Giovanni ended up in the library of San Giorgio. Only forty of these were manuscripts with religious subjects, the majority of them being classical Latin texts (a few of them Greek), or works by Quattrocento humanists. This generous bequest must have provoked the envy of humanists such as Bessarion, Ludovico Carbone and Gaspare Tribraco, who had followed with apprehension the fate of Aurispa’s manuscript collection. But the monks of San Giorgio did not consider this bequest relevant to their needs and did not wait long before selling the majority of the codices to Ludovico Carbone, a distinguished Ferrarese author of Latin dialogues, poems and translations. This decision reflects the fact that the Olivetans devoted themselves to the spiritual life rather than engaging in scholarly activities.

One of the gems of the library of San Giorgio was the richly decorated codex of Saint Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* which had belonged to Lorenzo Roverella (figs. 84-87). It was bequeathed by him to the Ferrarese monastery, together with three incunabula, the *Letters* by Saint Jerome (Sweynheyn and Pannartz, Rome 1470) and the 1474 edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* (now in the Museo di Palazzo Schifanoia, discussed below). Among the manuscripts once in San Giorgio and now in the Biblioteca Ariostea is a codex of Jacopo da Voragine’s

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208 Chiappini 1981, p. 188.
209 BAFe, Ms Classe II, 401, on the recto of the initial protective folio. For this codex see Chiappini 1981, p. 220.
210 Franceschini 1976, p. 41.
211 They are listed by Sabbadini 1890, pp. 157-67.
212 Franceschini 1976, pp. 31-3.
214 BAFe, Ms Classe II, 167. The Roverella coat of arm appears on the first folio and a series of epitaphs dedicated to Lorenzo are written on the verso of the last folio. On this codex see Chiappini 1981, pp. 208-9.
Legenda Aurea dating from the fourteenth century and perhaps produced in Bologna.\textsuperscript{216} The absence of humanist codices in the library of San Giorgio may be surprising, if one considers the intellectual circles in Ferrara and the fact that some of the monastery’s priors had a humanist education. But isolation from the local cultural life is not a unique case in Olivetan communities, as this feature also emerges from the study of the order’s library at Baggio near Milan, as well as of those of Santa Maria della Riviera in Padua and San Bartolomeo in Florence.\textsuperscript{217}

The extant choir books from San Giorgio are now in Palazzo Schifanoia. Of these fifteen codices, all dating from the fifteenth century, thirteen are graduals and antiphonaries, and two are smaller-sized hymnal books (\textit{Innario P-1752} and \textit{Innario Q-1701}). The signature of Guiniforte da Vimercate with the date 1449 can be read inside the initial I on fol. 29v of Gradual \textit{L} and in the initial A on the initial protective folio of Gradual (M)\textit{N}.\textsuperscript{218} At least two choir books from this series were used well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as suggested by the following elements. On fol. 6v of the latter codex the title of the feast was erased and re-written in the eighteenth century; on fol. 184r the Saint Bernard in the initial is another eighteenth-century addition. Other similar additions and re-written texts are found on fol. 7r-v, 27-8 r-v, 33 r-v, 183r-198v. Furthermore, in the seventeenth century an image of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei was added to the \textit{Antiphonary I}.\textsuperscript{219} It is possible the terminus \textit{post quem} for this addition is the year 1673, when the Sacred Congregation of Rites granted the permission to celebrate masses in honor of Tolomei. The presence of Guiniforte’s signature inside or very close to pen flourished initials has led scholars to wonder whether he was not an illuminator but a calligrapher; however, the possibility that he practised both activities is suggested by the fact that all the choir books signed by him have illuminations by the same Lombard hand.\textsuperscript{220} Guiniforte also signed the codex executed for a Franciscan convent now in the Biblioteca Panizzi in Reggio Emilia (17.A.153) and the choir book no. 547 in the Museo Civico Medievale of Bologna (part of a series of seven choir books, nos. 547-553), which like the \textit{Graduals L and M(N)} (fig. 89) in Ferrara, are the product of a workshop.\textsuperscript{221} The style of the illuminations contained in these choir books is influenced by the Lombard school and it has been suggested that the craftsmen working on these codices were not necessarily Lombard, but Emilians.

\textsuperscript{216} BCAFe, Ms Classe II, 106; Chiappini 1981, p. 193, 206-7.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibidem, p. 203.
\textsuperscript{218} For the Gradual (M)\textit{N} see Giovannucci Vigi 1985, pp. 93-4. The signature is in the ‘A’ of “Ad honorem omnipotentis dei et beatissimae virginis Mariae et beatorum martyrum eius Georgii et Maurelii totiusque curtis celestis amen: Guinifortis de Vimerchato mediolanensis hoc opus miniavit anno domini 1449 die primo decembris”.
\textsuperscript{219} Codex I, inv. OA/1314m, f. 139v, Museo Civico di Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara.
following Lombard models. Amongst them we find indeed Giovanni di Antonio, one of the foremost Bolognese illuminators of the period, active in the second half of the fifteenth century. Massimo Medica has attributed to this artist the illuminations of the Antiphonaries I and O from San Giorgio (now at Palazzo Schifanoia, fgs. 90-91).

The style of these two choir books is very close to that of a Breviary (now at the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan, ms Gerli 18), which is probably to be identified with the one that was commissioned from Giovanni di Antonio by Andrea Bettini, prior of San Michele in Bosco in 1440. Medica persuasively argued that the Bolognese illuminator might have been charged with the execution of the Antiphonaries I and O for San Giorgio during the priorship of Michele Simoni of Bologna (1443-44).

We have provided here a brief survey on some of the choir books from San Giorgio, to give a sense of the precious illuminated manuscripts that were used by the Olivetans. This series held in Palazzo Schifanoia still needs to be studied as a whole, but this goes beyond the limits of this dissertation.

### 2.10 Conclusions

In this chapter we have recovered the history of San Giorgio in the fifteenth-century, from the arrival of the Olivetans in 1418 to the various phases of renovation of the church. By examining the 1434 contract for the erection of the new east end it has been possible to understand how the Olivetans wished to reshape their church. The fact that the model indicated in this document was the apsidal area of San Domenico shows that the monks wanted to be in line with the local Late Gothic tradition. Looking at a few extant examples of Late Medieval apses in Ferrara has been helpful to try to understand how the old apse in San Giorgio might have looked. A close examination of the church fabric has provided a number of clues about the fifteenth-century building. As a result, we have been able to provide a possible floor plan of the old San Giorgio and to identify some parts of the church and the monastery dating from the fifteenth century.

Our research has brought to the fore Aliprando Guidiccioni, a figure until now almost totally overlooked, especially in Ferrarese studies. This wealthy merchant and businessman from Lucca, with close connections with the Olivetan order, played a key role in the renewal of the church. Unfortunately his will is still to be found, but a Venetian source reveals that Aliprando was buried in San Giorgio, most probably in the chancel he had contributed to build.

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222 Medica 2007, p. 143.
224 Medica 2007, pp. 142-43.
The discovery of new documents and the study of published material have revealed how the history of the two chapels flanking the main apse is closely linked to two laywomen, Lorenza, son of the notary Graziadeo Montolini, and a certain Francesca, widow of the furrier Boldrino. In the 1430s Lorenza paid for the construction of the north chapel, dedicated to Saint Maurelius, while four decades later Francesca bequeathed a sum of money for building two chapels, one of which was to be dedicated to Saint Benedict (this is likely to be south chapel). Both donors requested to be interred in the chapel of Saint Maurelius, the devotional focus of the church. Further documents found by the present writer have shed light on other Ferrarese individuals who were granted the *jus patronatus* of chapels in San Giorgio, or simply burial rights, or else had arranged small bequests to pay for liturgical furnishings. An unpublished inventory from 1584 has been particularly useful for this latter category of objects, revealing the richness of the vestments and implements possessed by the Olivetans at San Giorgio.

The choir stalls were a prominent feature of the old San Giorgio, filling part of the nave until 1581, when they were moved behind the high altar. The stalls we see today in the apse are the result of transformations and re-adaptations. Although it is difficult to identify the authors of the various elements and to formulate hypothesis on their original aspect, it is tempting to think that at least some parts of the stalls were executed by the reputed intarsia master Fra Sebastiano da Rovigno, who was resident in San Giorgio from 1476 to 1478. It is also possible that some work on the stalls was made by a pupil of Fra Sebastiano, Paolo da Recco, who was in San Giorgio in 1481-2.
Chapter 3

Roverella patronage in San Giorgio

3.1 The rise of the Roverella

In this chapter we provide an outline of the history of the Roverella, who were among the most notable families in fifteenth-century Ferrara. They played a major role in the last decades of the century, promoting an important decorative campaign which transformed the east end of San Giorgio.

The Roverella family had its origins in the town of that name situated between Rovigo and Lendinara, but acquired Ferrarese citizenship in 1393. Giovanni Roverella was camerlengo of Leonello d’Este and in 1444 he was granted the title of Count Palatine, also receiving a coat of arms (the oak with the Imperial eagle) from Emperor Frederick III. In 1468 the Emperor was received at the Roverella palace in Rovigo and bestowed similar honours on Lucio Antonio, Giovanni’s grandson, together with the governorship of all Imperial castles and lands in the local territory. The Emperor also gave an Imperial fief in Germany to Giovanni’s son Bartolomeo.²

Giovanni married Beatrice Leopardi of Rovigo and the couple had nine children. Their eldest son, Pietro Roverella (about 1400/1405- post 1461), covered the offices of Senator, Praetor and Consul of Rome. In 1460 Florio, the youngest of Pietro’s siblings, was elevated to the highest ranks of the Knights of Jerusalem by Paul II and thereafter he was employed as Papal ambassador to the court of Naples. In 1473 Ferrante of Aragon chose him to accompany his daughter Eleonora to Ferrara, for her wedding with Ercole I d’Este.³ Bartolomeo, Lorenzo and Nicolò Roverella pursued very successful careers in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁴

Bartolomeo Roverella (Rovigo, 1406- Rome, 1476) received a degree in civil law in Bologna in 1438 and studied with the humanist Guarino in Verona and Ferrara before entering the service of Niccolò Acciaccia, Bishop of Tropea, and later of Scipione Manenti, Bishop of

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¹ The information that follows on members of the Roverella family is largely drawn from Campbell 1997, pp. 102-105, who does list his sources (note 14, p. 182), but without going into detail.
² Frizzi 1848, II, p. 57.
³ Some information on Florio’s career is provided by Lo Cascio 2008, p. 661, note 18.
⁴ The other children of Giovanni Roverella and Beatrice Leopardi were Maria Giglia, Giacomo, Caterina and Giovanni Francesco, see Litta 1838 and Traniello 2017.
Modena. While visiting Florence with the latter, Bartolomeo came to the attention of Eugenius IV, and in 1442 he became the pope’s *cubiculario* (butler) and secretary. In 1445 he was appointed the first bishop of Adria, and elevated to the Archdiocese of Ravenna shortly afterwards. After being employed by Eugenius IV and Nicholas V for important diplomatic missions, Bartolomeo was created cardinal (with the title of San Clemente) by Pius II in 1461. Ten years later he came close to being elected pope at the conclave that chose Sixtus IV. In 1473 Bartolomeo celebrated the wedding of Ercole I d’Este with Eleonora of Aragon, the daughter of Ferrante, whom he had crowned king of Naples in 1458.

Bartolomeo enjoyed ancient feudal rights and held several benefices in the Este territory, including the *commendae* of San Romano in Ferrara, the abbey of San Pietro degli Umiliani near Reggio Emilia, and the abbey of Vangadizza. In 1474 he received the *commenda* of the monastery of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo and he arranged for it to be assigned to the Olivetan congregation. We may say that with his brothers Lorenzo and Nicolò, Bartolomeo commanded a state within the Este state.

Bartolomeo befriended and maintained epistolary exchanges with several learned figures, such as Girolamo Aleotti, Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Dati and Enea Silvio Piccolomini. Furthermore, he attracted talented young individuals to his entourage who subsequently became men of letters or successful diplomats. The influence of the humanistic culture emerges from Bartolomeo’s briefs contained in the books of the *cancelleria pontificia* as well as from his letters.

In spite of the fact that Bartolomeo spent his time mainly in Rome, he had a particular attachment to his native town of Rovigo, to the point of commissioning the construction of a palace in its main square (Piazza Maggiore). The project, attributed to the Ferrarese architect Biagio Rossetti, was begun in 1474. The works were completed around 1478, after the cardinal’s death, the commission having passed into the hands of his nephews Antonio and Girolamo (sons of Pietro).

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5 On Bartolomeo Roverella see Griguolo 2002-3 and Traniello 2017.
6 On 4th July, after a ceremony in the sala grande of Ercole’s palace, the bride and the groom with their supporters crossed the piazza to the cathedral, where their marriage was blessed during a solemn High Mass celebrated by Bartolomeo Roverella. The ceremony is described by Caleffini 2006, p. 51.
7 Bartolomeo’s book purchases also attest to his intellectual interests. Among the manuscripts owned by Bartolomeo there was a copy of Strabo’s *De Situ orbis*, translated by Guarino da Verona, with illuminations by the Florentine school (BCAFe, mss. Cl. II, 185). Bartolomeo bought the manuscript from Vespasiano da Bisticci, the leading dealer of books and manuscripts in Florence. Indeed an annotation on f. 264r reads: “Liber Bartholomei Cardinalis ravennatis quem emit a Vespasiano librario ducatis LIII”. Bartolomeo Sacchi, called Platina, dedicated his *De honesta voluptate et valitudine* to Cardinal Roverella. The presentation copy transcribed by Giovan Pietro da Spoleto and decorated by Gioacchino de Gigantibus, dates from 1467-70 (Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, Triv. 734). It was Roverella’s powerful patronage of Platina that helped to make this work the first gastronomic treatise ever printed. See Scippacerola 2017, footnote 9, p. 27.
8 On the Palazzo Roverella in Rovigo see Lanzoni 2009, Tomasi 2013 and Tolnai 2018.
Bartolomeo died in Rome in 1476 and was buried in his chapel in San Clemente. His tomb, among the most significant examples of Renaissance Roman sculpture, is a collaborative work by Andrea Bregno and Giovanni Dalmata, two of the most notable sculptors working in Rome in the 1470s. The sepulchral monument, dating from around 1476-8, is composed of a deep, classical niche sheltering the sarcophagus with the effigy of the deceased (figs. 92-94). The rear wall is treated like an apse, adorned with a relief representing Bartolomeo being presented to the Virgin and Child by Saints Peter and Paul, and God the Father blessing from the semi-dome above.

Lorenzo Roverella’s date of birth is probably to be placed in the early 1420s. In 1440 he received a degree in arts at the University of Padua and three years later he completed the doctorate in arts and medicine. Soon after he started teaching in the same university (he is documented there as lector from at least 1444), while taking his first steps in an ecclesiastic career. In 1445 he is listed among the clerics of the diocese of Adria, but in the same year he was summoned to Rome, to be charged with some financial tasks in the March of Ancona. On 24 November 1446 he was appointed apostolic sub-deacon, but he was dispensed from receiving the minor orders, as he wanted to devote himself to the study of theology. In September 1449 Lorenzo was among the students of the renowned Robert Ciboule at the Sorbonne in Paris. He obtained a degree in theology there in 1454.

In 1456 Pope Calixtus III appointed Lorenzo canon of the Ferrara cathedral, and the following year sent him on a delicate diplomatic mission to Vienna, together with Cardinal Enea Silvio Piccolomini. The turning point of Lorenzo’s ecclesiastic career came with the election of Piccolomini to the papal throne in the summer of 1458. Roverella was elected bishop of Ferrara on 26 March 1460. He played an important role as intermediary between the Este and the church, and in 1463 he was elected member of the Consiglio segreto of Duke Borso. Apart from diocesan synods in 1465 and 1466 and pastoral visitations in 1470 and 1474, Lorenzo was rarely present in Ferrara, being away to perform various tasks demanded from him as a member of the papal court. He was in fact personal physician of Pius II and was also employed for diplomatic missions to France, Burgundy, Hungary and the Imperial Courts. Furthermore, as datario he was active in the international administration of the city of Rome. On 21 May 1468, when leaving Ferrara for one of his missions, he appointed Fra Girolamo d’Olanda, the then prior of San

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9 On the chapel’s location within the choir enclosure, where it forms a subsidiary apse, perhaps serving a purpose in the liturgies particular to San Clemente in the fifteenth century se Richardson 2009, pp. 217-18. See also Richardson 1996.


11 The following discussion summarizes the account of Lorenzo’s life given by Liboni 2017.
Giorgio, as his vicar. Lorenzo died on 23 July 1474 while visiting his brother Nicolò at Monte Oliveto Maggiore, Siena.

Nicolò Roverella (died 1480) took the Olivetan habit at Monte Oliveto in 1449. He was appointed prior of San Giorgio in 1464, holding this office until 1468 and then again from 1478 until his death in 1480. From 1472 to 1476 he was abbot general of the Olivetan order. He was appointed as the executor of both Lorenzo and Bartolomeo and was resident in San Giorgio during the period of the Roverella’s most significant involvement with the monastery church. It is important to recall that Nicolò was prior of Santa Maria in Organo in Verona in 1457-58 and of San Benedetto Novello in Padua in 1468-69. Nicolò was buried in San Giorgio, as recorded by the diarist Ferrarini.

3.2 The Roverella art patronage in Ferrara

Before discussing the patronage of the Roverella in San Giorgio, it is useful to provide a brief survey of their known commissions, starting with a major work of Ferrarese art. On 2 June 1469 Cosmè Tura received 48 ducati in payment for the organ shutters for Ferrara cathedral, representing the Annunciation and Saint George and the Princess (now in the Museo della Cattedrale, Ferrara, figs. 95-96). These four large canvases painted in tempera (363 x 170 cm each) are among the greatest surviving works by the artist, executed at the very same time as the decoration of the Salone dei Mesi in Palazzo Schifanoia.

The contract for the new organ for the cathedral, commissioned from Giovanni da Mercatello, was stipulated in 1465 in the residence of Bishop Lorenzo Roverella, in the presence of Roverella himself, two canons of the chapter, and representatives of both the city council and Duke Borso d’Este. This was clearly a commission with particular civic and religious significance. The oak branch above Saint George

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12 ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Ludovico Miliani, IV, 21.05.1468, published by Peverada 2001, pp. 104-6, no. 5.
13 He had gone to the “bagni de Siena per liberarse de certa infermitade ch’e l haveva”, Caleffini 2006, p. 79.
14 During Nicolò’s priorate at Monte Oliveto, Francesco di Giorgio Martini was working for the monastery almost in the guise of official artist, see Strehlke 1988, pp. 54-5.
15 AMOM, Familiarum tabulae, I, f. 240v (Verona).
17 See Sassu and Giovannucci Vigi 2010, pp. 118-26 (entry by Giovanni Sassu). See also Campbell 1997, pp. 131-61. It is worth remembering that this was not the first work made by Tura for the cathedral, as in 1458 he had painted a fresco with the Nativity for the doorway leading to the sacristy. This was recorded by Baruffaldi 1844-46, I, p. 65.
and the gourd hanging from it in the right-hand external shutter clearly refer to Bishop
Roverella (the oak featured in his family’s coat of arms) and Duke Borso (the gourd was one of
his imprese).

It seems most likely that Lorenzo Roverella was closely involved in the conception of
the elaborate iconography of the organ shutters, the first major artistic commission for the
cathedral since his elevation to the see of Ferrara. This is not the place to discuss the
iconography of Tura’s organ shutters, but it is worth saying here that one of the possible
interpretations of the Saint George and the dragon is their allusion to the crusade planned by
Pius II, but never launched (as mentioned above, Lorenzo Roverella was close to Pope Pius). 19

We should also mention that the artistic patronage of the Roverella includes important
book illuminations. The most notable of the books illuminated for the Roverella, which was
once in the library of San Giorgio, is Gratian’s Decretum, an incunabulum printed in Venice in
1474 by Nicolaus Jenson, now in the Museo Civico di Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara (fig. 97). 20
The decoration was probably commissioned by Nicolò Roverella from artists close to
Guglielmo Giraldi and his collaborators. The name of Lorenzo Canozi da Lendinara has been
convincingly proposed by Giordana Mariani Canova; 21 Canozi was active in Padua as an intarsia
master, painter and typographer in the first half of the 1470s (as we have seen, two intarsia
panels in San Giorgio recall the work of Canozi). The style of the illuminations in the Decretum,
referred to as “Roverella style”, is found in legal, philosophical and theological incunabula made
for the University of Padua in the 1470s and decorated by a workshop of Veneto-Ferrarese
artists. 22 Mariani Canova has persuasively highlighted the stylistic affinities between the
illuminations of Gratian’s Decretum and those of the Olivetan Graduals now in the Biblioteca
Estense, Modena (Lat. 1006, 1013, 1014, 1022), which she associated with the monastery of San
Benedetto Novello in Padua. 23 The writing and the penwork decoration of these Graduals seem
to date to the time when Nicolò Roverella was abbot there. The illuminations may date around
1470-2 and show Ferrarese stylistic elements, in particular the influence of the Master of Ceres
who painted the decani of August at Schifanoia. 24

Eleven manuscripts once in the library of the monastery of San Giorgio are now in the
Biblioteca Ariostea, Ferrara. Sant’Augustine’s De Civitate Dei (Ms Classe II, 167; fig. 84) is
generally thought to have been purchased by or given to Lorenzo Roverella (his coat of arms

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19 For the iconography of these paintings see Guidoni and Marino 1969 and Bertozzi 1985.
20 For a thorough study of this volume see Mariani Canova 1988 and 1991. See also ead. in La miniatura a Padova
1999, pp. 341-3, no. 140. It is worth mentioning here that Olivetan monks feature in several vignettes of this
illuminated book.
21 Ibidem.
22 Andriolo 2012, p. 327, examining St Jerome’s Epistolae in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Trinity College,
VI.16.10, 2 vols) and originally in the library of the Olivetan monastery of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo.
24 Ibidem.
was clearly added later). On the other hand an original Roverella coat of arms appears in Saint Jerome’s *Epistolae* printed by Sveyheim and Pannartz in Rome in 1470 (S.16.5.9). The volume is decorated with friezes of white wine stem decoration (*bianchi girari*) which include the Olivetan emblem and medallions with animals (fig. 98). A similar coat of arms and decoration are found in Saint Thomas Aquinas’ *De catena aurea*, printed by the same publishers in the same year, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Auct. 7.Q. inf. 1.12.13). As stated in a note at the end of the text, the borders and the initials were decorated by Fra Timoteo da Napoli, who can also be considered responsible for the decoration of Aquinas’ *De Catena Aurea*, and who most likely belonged to the Olivetan community.

From this brief survey it is clear that the Roverella were active art patrons and that their relationship with the Este court as well as with Olivetan monasteries linked to San Giorgio is a key element for studying their patronage.

### 3.3 The Roverella and the church of San Giorgio

Considering sacred architecture in Ferrara, we can say that Borso d’Este’s (1450-71) contribution was not significant. The duke commissioned the additions to Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Este mausoleum which had been founded by his father Niccolò III in the early fifteenth century, and the construction of San Cristoforo, built in the early 1460s for the Carthusian monks. But a real impulse to church architecture was given towards the end of the century by Borso’s brother, Ercole I (1471-1501): from 1493 he founded or rebuilt fourteen churches or monasteries and contributed to the alteration or enlargement of twelve others. These did not include San Giorgio, the old cathedral of Ferrara located to the south of the city walls, which had welcomed the Olivetans in the 1410s thanks to the support of Niccolò III d’Este and some aristocrats from his entourage.

Considering our survey of churches in fifteenth-century Ferrara provided below, it is possible to trace a map of art patronage across the city. Several chapels of the cathedral were under the patronage of the clergy, some of them having been founded by bishops or canons. At

25 A donation *in vita* made to San Giorgio (for which see note 27 below) explains why this and other volumes stayed in Ferrara. Lorenzo Roverella bequeathed other codices to the abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, see Mariani Canova 1988, note 14, p. 32.

26 An inscription on f.1v (vol. I) in red ink reads: “Hic liber est principalis Monasterii ordinis sancte Marie de Monte Oliueo quem habuimus de expensis Reuerendi domini domini Laur. Ferrariensis episcopi datarii et legati apostolici gubernatoris Perusi cum pluribus alius libris et bonis supellectilis sue pro sacristia et ecclesia. Qui in tantum dilexit fratres et ordinem ut in hoc monasterio mori et sepeliri uoluerit, cuius uenerabile corpus iuxta altare mai[us] ex consilio et uoluntate seniorum et patrum huius monasterii locatus est ...”.

27 Mariani Canova 1988, p. 15.

28 On Borso and the Certosa see Rosenberg 1976.


30 Appendix, *Art patronage in Ferrarese churches in the second half of the fifteenth century*. 

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the time of the pastoral visitation by Francesco dal Legname in 1447 the Este held the patronage of two chapels, while other chapels were under the *jus patronatus* of Benastruto Ippocrati, the *camerario generale* of the Este and of other leading families. The highest echelons of Ferrarese society, including several families associated with the Este, particularly favoured the main mendicant churches, San Domenico and San Francesco. The latter church also housed two chapels under the patronage of the Este, one of them being the burial chapel of the earlier members of the family. In San Domenico the Contrari, one of the most powerful local families, had acquired the *jus patronatus* of the high altar chapel. Other prominent figures and members of the Este court chose the Observant church of Santo Spirito for their chapels and burials.

When the Olivetans arrived in Ferrara, they took over the city’s ancient cathedral, which housed the relics of Saint Maurelius, hitherto rather neglected. In their first decades at San Giorgio the Olivetans lived in silent austerity, almost totally ignored by local people. At the beginning this cloistered community did not have any reformist or pastoral commitment, and the location of their monastery in the Borgo della Misericordia, less sparsely inhabited than the areas inside the city walls, was well suited to their eremitical vocation. In the decades from the 1420s to the 1450s the monks worked towards reactivating the economic system inherited from the Canons Regular of the Lateran. After reinvesting the profits in the purchase of land, the economy of the monastery gained some vitality.

It was not until the mid-fifteenth century that members from the local nobility started entering the Olivetan cloister at San Giorgio. Perhaps its balanced asceticism was preferable to the more rigid rules followed in the Carthusian monastery of San Cristoforo, founded by Borso d’Este in 1452. From the second half of the fifteenth century the latter duke became increasingly dominant even in the religious sphere, and this even more true of his successor Ercole I. Antonio Samaritani has argued that some local aristocrats who were retreating from the Este circle could find in San Giorgio an environment of tranquillity. By choosing the Olivetan habit, they would keep themselves away from observant reforms and new eremitic monasticism, both of which were supported by the Este and appealing to the high and middle local bourgeoisie.

San Giorgio attracted members of the Ferrarese elite whose spirituality and culture were rather traditional, and who had little interest for humanist piety and Modern Devotion which were being practiced in some religious foundations of the city (for instance in the monastery of the Poor Clares at the Corpus Domini), as well as in some not too distant

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31 The Carthusian monks settled in San Cristoforo in 1461. The 1445 Constitutions of the Olivetan Congregations somehow softened the primitive austerity of the order, see Cattana 2007, p. 9.

Benedictine monasteries (such as that of the congregation of Santa Giustina in Padua). Among the Ferrarese individuals who chose to enter the Olivetan congregation, Niccolò Roverella was the one who acquired more prominence. He was surely well placed to do so, being part of a wealthy and well connected family, with two of his brothers also in the ecclesiastic sphere. As we have seen, Niccolò served in key assignments, being prior of the monastery at Ferrara from 1464 to 1468 and from 1478 to 1480.

As explained above, the Este, after their initial involvement, which was essential for the settlement of the Olivetans in Ferrara, directed their spending and their support towards other ecclesiastic foundations in the city. In the fifteenth century therefore San Giorgio was not under the patronage of members of the Este family. Our research has revealed that in the 1430s the major benefactors were a wealthy Lucchese merchant and the daughter of a Ferrarese notary. It is significant that none of the families closely related to the court were interested in this church, and that the major patron who financed the reconstruction of the main apse was not Ferrarese. The first instance of patronage more strictly connected to the Este seems to date from 1472, the year the heirs of Michele Savonarola, physician of Niccolò III, Leonello and Borso d’Este, obtained the jus patronatus of a chapel in San Giorgio. The chapel, dedicated to Saint Michael, was to house the tomb of Michele, who had died six years earlier.

The fact that Niccolò Roverella was a key figure within the Olivetan hierarchy explains how he came to be particularly attached to the church in the city where his family had their main interests. He shared this special connection with San Giorgio with his brother Lorenzo, bishop of Ferrara from 1460, as revealed by a document drafted two years after the death of the latter. Even if Lorenzo spent most part of his career away from Ferrara, we should recall that the city’s ancient cathedral had a particular significance for local bishops. Indeed Lorenzo, like some of his predecessors, might have valued the importance of San Giorgio as the church housing the shrine of Saint Maurelius, bishop of Voghenza (the old diocese of Ferrara) in the seventh century and one of the two patron saints of Ferrara. If Lorenzo did have a particular interest in Saint Maurelius, we might also wonder whether he was responsible for commissioning from Cosmè Tura the altarpiece for the chapel dedicated to him in San Giorgio. We should also point out that San Giorgio housed the relics of another Ferrarese bishop, the Blessed Alberto Pandoni (d. 1274).

33 Although the latter congregation did not have a monastery in Ferrara, it attracted some members of the Ferrarese bourgeoisie.
35 It is important to recall that Aliprando had chosen as his executor Benastruto Ippocrati, camerario of marquis Leonello d’Este.
36 Appendix, no. 11.
37 Appendix, no. 14.
3.4 The Roverella and the high altar chapel of San Giorgio

Unfortunately no records survive for the decoration of the high altar chapel in San Giorgio after the rebuilding in the 1430s, or indeed on artworks gracing its other chapels and altars. From what can be gleaned from the existing evidence, we could imagine that San Giorgio was more sparsely adorned than San Francesco and San Domenico, the churches where the most prominent Ferrarese families had their chapels. In the late 1470s the church became the mausoleum of the Roverella, and members from this family commissioned works of art for its chapels.

An important document for the history of San Giorgio was published by Adriano Franceschini in 1995. It is somehow surprising that the implications of this document, which is ignored by the authors of major monographs on Tura published between 1997 and 2000, have been considered only by a couple of local scholars.\(^38\) On 5 July 1476 the monks of San Giorgio gathered in chapter to grant the heirs of Lorenzo Roverella, upon the request of Nicolò Roverella (who was then in monastery in the capacity of visitor of the Olivetan congregation), permission to erect his tomb in the high altar chapel of their church.\(^39\) The monks took this decision after considering Lorenzo’s “unique love and benevolence” (“singularem amorem et benivolentiam”) towards the monastery of San Giorgio and the Olivetan congregation, as well as his wish to be buried in the same church. Roverella’s heirs were to build at their own expense a tomb (“unius sepulcrus”) in the main chapel of the church (“in capella magna et principali”), and the monks would keep the chapel’s property and jus patronatus (“directo domino et proprietate ac patronatu”). The monks also granted Lorenzo’s heirs permission to be buried in the church in the place that would suit them and Fra Nicolò, as well as permission to decorate the high altar and spend what they wished on the ancona “for the soul of the late bishop of Ferrara” (“ornandi et expendendi in ornatum ancone dicti altaris magni secundum et prout eisdem videbitur et placuerit et pro anima dicti quondam domini Episcopi ferrariensis”).

From the early modern age presbytery and crossing were the privileged burial places of rulers and high clergy. From the point of view of spiritual benefit, the place between the choir of monks or canons, which was usually placed in the nave, and the main altar of the church attracted the greatest interest. In Ferrara, it was not unusual to find tombs of prominent individuals in the cappella maggiore. We can recall the case of the widow of Teofilo Calcagnini Marietta Strozzi, who in 1498 expressed her wish to be buried in the family tomb by the high altar of the Observant church of Santo Spirito.\(^40\) The family of Francesco Naselli (secretary to

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\(^{39}\) Appendix, no. 14.

\(^{40}\) ASFe, Archivio Bentivoglio, Lib. 17, no. 29.
duke Borso and later to Ercole I) had their tombs in the *tribuna* of the church of San Niccolò, administered by the Augustinian canons of San Girolamo da Fiesole.\(^{41}\) Also in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Venice, as noted by Martin Gaier, there was a tendency for lay patrons to create funerary chapels around the high altar of the churches officiated by the regular clergy.\(^{42}\) Since the mid-fifteenth century there are cases in which this practice has visible consequences for the position of the main altar and for the architecture and conception of the presbytery, which is considered as a private mausoleum.\(^{43}\)

It might come as a surprise that before getting formal permission from the Olivetans to erect the funerary monument of his brother Lorenzo (fig. 99) in 1476, Nicolò Roverella had already commissioned it and made some payments to Antonio Rossellino. Indeed, at least part of the tomb was completed in 1475 (the year inscribed by Ambrogio da Milano, who was responsible for some parts of the monument).\(^{44}\) But we can assume that Nicolò (or indeed Lorenzo himself before dying) had already discussed this issue with the monks at San Giorgio and the notarial act was drafted at the earliest opportunity when Nicolò had to be in Ferrara (from 1472 to 1476, as abbot general of the Olivetan order, he must have spent most of his time at Monte Oliveto). Furthermore, another issue needs to be considered: the permission granted by the monks to the heirs of Lorenzo Roverella is strictly connected to the wishes expressed by Cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella in his will, drafted just over two months before, on 29 April 1476.

Bartolomeo had arranged for the church of San Giorgio to receive the benefices and revenues owed by the Ferrarese church to the late Lorenzo. This donation was intended to pay for the decoration of the *cappella maggiore* (‘*pro ornando tribuna maioris altaris*) and for Lorenzo’s tomb (‘*costruenda ibidem sepultura*’). Both commissions were to be in the hands of Nicolò, who was free to decide the details at his will.\(^{45}\) Any remaining funds were to be given to...

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\(^{41}\) See Appendix, *Art patronage in Ferrarese churches in the second half of the fifteenth century*, under San Niccolò.

\(^{42}\) Gaier 2006. Patrons usually had the *jus patronatus* of the high altar.

\(^{43}\) Gaier discusses the cases of two churches of the Friars Minor in Venice, San Giobbe and San Francesco della Vigna. Doge Cristoforo Moro (d. 1471) obtained burial rights in the high altar chapel of San Giobbe, for which he also had the *jus patronatus*. The extent of Moro’s patronage is evident from his choice of the subject for the high altarpiece (Saint Bernardino of Siena, replacing Saint Francis) as well as from his success in persuading the friars to change the dedication of their church to the latter saint (sees Gaier 2006, pp. 164-5).

\(^{44}\) The four payments to Antonio Rossellino, made between 12 February and 12 October 1475, are annotated in a ledger of creditors and debtors of the Florentine monastery of San Bartolomeo di Monte Oliveto. They were published by Von Fabriczy in 1907, see Appendix, no. 13.

\(^{45}\) “*Item reliquit omnes et singulos fructus et redditus et proventus, qui ex ubatibus et redditiis ecclesie Ferrarensis tempore obitus bone memorie reverendi patris domini Laurentii Roverelle episcopi Ferrarensis germani sui, necnon omnia et singula nomina debitorum ecclesie predicte Ferrarensis, de quibus tunc soluto facto non fuerat seu que a debitoribus adhuc exacta non fuerat tempore dicti obitus, ecclesie Sancti Georgii ordinis Montis Oliveti extra muros civitatis Ferrarie pro ornando tribuna maioris altaris ipsius ecclesie ac construenda ibidem sepultura ipsius domini Laurentii olim episcopi Ferrarensis secundum discretionem et conscientiam ac voluntatem reverendi fratri Nicolai Roverelle ordinis Montis Oliveti fratris sui. Item voluit, iussit et mandavit quod quaequid ex fructibus , redditiibus et ex nominibus predictis debitorum superfluorum ultra constructionem dicte capelle et sepultura assignetur et traddatur ecclesie Sancti Bartholomei extra muros oppidi Rodigii Adriensis*”
the church of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo, which had been assigned to the Olivetans only two years earlier. It is worth pointing out that this passage of Bartolomeo’s will refers to the “construction of the said chapel” (“constructionem dicte capelle”), that is the high altar chapel, rather than to its decoration. Thus we can speculate whether this is a mistake of the notary or whether the word “ornando” used in the previous passage refers to something different from the altarpiece. As the will was drafted on Bartolomeo’s deathbed in Rome (he died there three days later, on 2 May 1476), it is possible that the wrong word slipped into the text, the Roman notary being unaware of the context he was referring to, and was not corrected.

In the aforementioned notarial act dated 5 July 1476 it is stipulated that the tomb and the high altarpiece (“ornatum ancone dicti altaris magni”) were to be paid for by Lorenzo’s heirs, suggesting that the ecclesiastical benefices and revenues of the late Lorenzo were going to be employed in a different way. The payments made to Antonio Rossellino by Nicolò Roverella in 1475 suggest that the latter was already in charge of the commission of the monument. The date 1475 inscribed by Ambrogio da Milano is a terminus ante quem for at least the architectural elements, but the phrasing used in the notarial act of 5 July 1476 implies that tomb still had to be erected in the main chapel (“fabricandi … unum sepulcrum in capella magna et principali”).

Lorenzo died on 6 July 1474 at Monte Oliveto and was buried there. According to a Cronicon of the Olivetan congregation his remains were transferred to Ferrara after several years (“aliquot annis evolutis”) and placed into the tomb in San Giorgio through the care of his brothers, as recorded in the epitaph by Tito Strozzi. Lorenzo had expressed his wish to be buried in San Giorgio, as we learn from the notarial act of 5 July 1476, and we also know that he nominated Bartolomeo as his universal heir. It was in this capacity that Bartolomeo gave instructions for Lorenzo’s tomb and the funds that would pay for it.

Given his close connection to San Giorgio and his high rank within the Olivetan congregation Nicolò was the best placed person to act as patron of the decoration of the cappella maggiore. He probably commissioned the various elements of the monument from Antonio Rossellino and Ambrogio da Milano sometime after Lorenzo’s death in 1474. It is possible that the monument was installed shortly after the formal permission granted by the monks at San Giorgio in July 1476. In his will Bartolomeo nominated his nephews, counts Antonio and...
Girolamo Roverella (the sons of Pietro) as universal heirs.\textsuperscript{48} In his will of 18 September 1478 count Girolamo Roverella stipulated that fifty gold ducats should be spent to erect an altarpiece for the high altar chapel of San Giorgio (“quod de bonis sue hereditatis expendantur ducati quinqueginta auri in construere faciendo unum pulcrum aparamentum pro Altari magno ecclesie sancti Georgii de prope Ferrariam”).\textsuperscript{49} Another document, also unpublished and discovered by the present author in the Archivio di Stato of Ferrara, shows that Filiasio, the brother of Girolamo and Antonio Roverella, was involved in the project for the high altar of San Giorgio. On 23 December 1479 Filiasio, who was archbishop of Ravenna, arranged for an annual donation, which would also cover the expenses “for the ornament of the high altar of the church of San Giorgio” (“pro ornamento Altaris Magnis ecclesie Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrariam”); it is important to mention that Tura was among the witnesses.\textsuperscript{50} After Nicolò’s death in 1480 control of the commission of the altarpiece was taken over by Antonio, Girolamo and Filiasio Roverella.

Two of the aforementioned documents dating between 1476 and 1478 have been picked up only in a handful of publications, mainly by local historians.\textsuperscript{51} As far as the scholarship on Tura is concerned, Stephen Campbell, Joseph Manca and Monica Molteni, authors of three important monographic studies on the artist (all of them printed after the 1995 volume by Franceschini), take for granted the location provided by Girolamo Baruffaldi (1675-1755), who saw the altarpiece outside the chapel of Saint Maurelius, at the eastern end of the north aisle, not far from the campanile.\textsuperscript{52} Only the authors of the catalogue of the exhibition on Francesco del Cossa and Cosmè Tura held at Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara in 2007 and Marcello Toffanello in his book Le arti a Ferrara nel Quattrocento (2010) have registered the information implied by these documents, by simply mentioning that the Pala Roverella was on the high altar of San Giorgio, without expanding this important information further.

3.5 The funerary monument to Lorenzo Roverella

As pointed out by Thomas Tuohy in his study on Ercole I d’Este’s art and architectural patronage, it is surprising that no major chapel or altarpiece commissioned by the Este in the fifteenth century has survived. Tuohy also argued that court circles may have preferred sculpture

\textsuperscript{48} Antonio Roverella was among the prominent members of the familia at the Este court, first as consocio e commensale of Borso d’Este (from 1466) and later as secret consellor of Ercole I d’Este from 1475 to 1485, see Folin 2001, ad indicem.

\textsuperscript{49} Peverada 2009, p. 381 (quoting a document pointed out to him by Tamara Tolnai, without providing a reference).

\textsuperscript{50} Appendix, no. 16.

\textsuperscript{51} Peverada 2001, p. 91, note 56 (referring only to the funerary monument); Petrucci 2007, p.154; Cosmè Tura 2007, p. 340 (entry by Toffanello); Toffanello 2007, p. 28; Peverada 2009, p. 379; Toffanello 2010, p. 5.

over painting, and that the materials used (bronze, terracotta and stucco) could have compromised their rate of survival. The funerary monument to Lorenzo Roverella (fig. 99) stands out as an exception, being one of the rare sculptural works made in Ferrara in the fifteenth century to have survived almost intact in its original location.

The monument is set against the left-hand side wall of the chancel and rests on a double plinth. The complex structure, with an *arcozolium* or arched niche in the centre, is composed of three tiers. The sarcophagus of the deceased occupies the centre of the lowest tier, with his portrait effigy lying on top of it (fig. 100). Lorenzo Roverella wears the episcopal vestments and a mitre, his hands crossed on his abdomen. His head, which is carved separately, rests on a pillow, with a book underneath, and another one by its side, alluding to his scholarly knowledge. Other books rest between the niche’s wall and Roverella’s legs, while another volume supports his feet. The orientation of the effigy has never been discussed in the literature. Lorenzo Roverella’s head is to the west and his feet are to the east, facing the high altar, following a common practice in place up to at least the first half of the fourteenth century.

The front of the sarcophagus is inscribed with an epitaph by the Ferrarese humanist Tito Strozzi (fig. 101), the text being divided into two columns (recalling the layout of printed incunabula):

*Tu decus urbis eras magnae solertia me(n)tis
Laurenti ad magnas res tibi fecit iter.*

*Nec contenta fuit latiis tua gloria terris:
sed toto nomen claruit orbe tuum.*

*Romanus quascu(m)que plagas te Pastor adire
iussit ubicque tibi dextera fama fuit.*

*Gallia te studis florentem vidit et omne
officium grato praestitit obsequio.*

*Te venerata ferox Germania norit hyberus
quid tibi consilii iustitiaeque foret.*

*Te duce P(a)nnonii saevos fregere Boemos.
Bellaque pro sancta sunt tibi gesta fide
amisse tristis Ferraria praesule luget.*

*Moesta suum dfflet (sic) stirps Roverella pr(a)em.
Nunc fratru(m) in patria(m) cura translata tuorum*  

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54 The fullest discussion of this tomb is in Apfelstadt 1987, pp. 188-239. See also Stemp 1992, pp. 24-6. As we will discuss below, in the 1580s the monument was relocated to the west, on the north wall of the presbytery.

79
hoc tua sub tumulo clausimus ossa. Vale.

Titus Strocia eques insignis

Two rather large bipartite coats of arms of Lorenzo Roverella, representing an eagle and an unrooted *Quercus pubescens* (a variety of oak tree, *roverella* in Italian), the one on the left surmounted by the cruciform top of an abbatial crosier, the other one by a mitre, are placed on either sides of the sarcophagus (figs. 102 and 102a). Peverada has pointed out that the crosier should be associated with Nicolò Roverella (who had been prior of San Giorgio), the mitre with Lorenzo. However, the mitre could also be for a Benedictine abbot.

The middle register is composed of five shell-topped niches housing free-standing, half-size statues of saints, framed by Corinthian pilasters decorated by candelabra (fig. 103). Aiming to create a different ornament for each candelabrum, the sculptor employed an array of elements, assembling them in various ways (fig. 104). The sections are ornamented with acanthus leaves, floral and vegetal motifs, diagonal or vertical grooving, ribbing, scale patterns and hanging prayer beads. A comparable repertoire of motifs is found in the candelabra-style pilasters framing the portal at Palazzo Schifanoia (fig. 105). This analogy was remarked by Apfelstadt, the only scholar to have shown some interest in this ornament.

If we take the analysis of the candelabra further, new interesting elements emerge. The inventive fertility of the sculptor is seen in the variation of the flame (representing the renewed life) on top of each candelabrum. All the candelabra have flaming tops, with the exception of those of the two inner pilasters, where burning candles are seen, with two drops of wax dribbling down their sides (fig. 106). The choice of representing the candles in the inner pilasters is perhaps not a casual one, as it is inside the niche that the effigy of the bishop is placed, and the candles are intended to illuminate this sacred space. As will be argued below, the monument was designed for the left-hand side wall of the *cappella maggiore*, and the top of the inner right pilaster would have been visible to people standing in the nave (fig. 107). We might wonder whether this burning candle (originally gilded) was intended to act as a signpost for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella, echoing the real candles that would have burned on the nearby high altar.

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56 Peverada 2008, p. 46.
57 It is hard to detect any stylistic affinities between the candelabra of the Roverella tomb and those, much more sophisticated and elegant, on the pilasters flanking the sarcophagus of the Cardinal of Portugal by Rossellino in San Miniato. Nothing as elaborate as the flaming tops of the candelabra by the Florentine sculptor is seen in the work by Ambrogio, whose style is far less naturalistic. If ever Rossellino provided the drawing for the candelabra of the Roverella monument, it seems likely that the sculptor in Ferrara did not follow it.
59 Comparable flaming torches are seen in the central panel of the Roverella altarpiece, on top of the knobs with grotesque heads at the far ends of the balustrade above the niche.
The fantastic qualities of the Salone dei Mesi at Schifanoia (especially pronounced in the *Trionfi* of the upper register and in the painted pilasters separating the *Months*) here give way to more stylised and almost abstract forms. Looking at some details, such as the reliefs of the first pilaster on the left, the geometric rigour of the elements seems to recall the objects represented by wooden intarsia craftsmen, such as the vessel in one of the panels executed by Fra Giovanni da Verona for the choir stalls of Santa Maria in Organo, Verona (fig. 108). Even more relevant is the comparison with some of the candelabra on the pilasters separating the same choir stalls, such as the one crowned by a flaming torch, where one finds the same repertoire of ribbed fluted elements, vase-shaped parts and leaf ornamentation (fig. 109).

Fra Giovanni da Verona worked on the choir stalls for the Olivetan church in his native town in the 1490s, but, as mentioned above, at the beginning of his monastic life, from 1475 to 1478, he had been in San Giorgio in Ferrara, where he learned the art of wood intarsia from Fra Sebastiano da Rovigno. The similarities between the candelabra of the pilasters of the Roverella monument and the motifs in Olivetan choir stalls mentioned above suggest the possibility that the intarsia master working at San Giorgio in the mid-1470s (Sebastiano da Rovigno) was somehow involved in their design. But we should also consider that both the sculptor and the intarsia master might have drawn from the same repertory of decorative motifs.

The saint occupying the first niche on the left is Saint Gregory (figs. 104 and 110). He is represented with a bird, most likely a dove, whispering into his right ear, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit which dictated his books to him. At the centre of his left hand a decorative pattern is visible, around a green ogival inset (traces of polychromy are also found on the first finger) and we might wonder if both hands were painted to simulate gloves. His mitre was richly adorned, as suggested by the traces of gilding and polychromy on the lower band. Saint Augustine is represented in the act of reading a book held open by his right hand (fig. 111). Saint John the Baptist holds a scroll with the inscription *AGITE PENITENTIAM* (fig. 112). Saint Ambrose has a book open in his left hand and holds something in his right, probably what is left of a whip (one of the saint’s attributes; fig. 113). Saint Jerome is represented with his lion, half covered by his cloak, and seems to have had something clenched in his left fist, most likely a crucifix (fig. 114).

While the four Doctors of the Church are most probably intended to pay homage to Roverella’s deep theological knowledge, the presence of Saint John the Baptist is explained by the link between death and resurrection through the symbolism of baptism. The latter theme inspired several chapels endowed by cardinals in fifteenth-century Rome, including Bartolomeo Roverella’s foundation in San Clemente, which was almost certainly dedicated to Saint John the

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60 Bagini 2014, p. 365.
Baptist. But another reason for the choice of this saint might be that fact that Lorenzo’s father’s name was John.

The first scholar to notice to notice that the current arrangement of the five saints (ABCDE) is not coherent was Heinz Gottschalk, who proposed to reorder the group with the aim of unifying their appearance and redirect their gaze (EDABC). In the subsequent literature on Rossellino, Apfelstadt is the only one to have considered this incoherence, proposing a different order (EADBC; Sant Jerome, Saint Gregory, Saint Ambrose, Saint Augustine, Saint John the Baptist). This way all three bishops would be oriented towards the effigy of Roverella, but Saint John the Baptist would be left “staring rather vacantly outwards from the right side”. Following the observations by Gotschalk, Apfelstadt also pointed out that some of the awkwardness of the Saint John (with his right leg turning sharply inwards and the rest of his body remaining frontal and leaning slightly forward) results from the fact that the statue was reset poorly after a reinstallation of the tomb. Indeed fractures are seen at both ankles, at the right sheen and left knee, and at the neck (fig. 115). The Baptist is also the only statue on the monument obviously anchored to its niche by a metal rod; furthermore, Saint John and Saint Augustine, which likewise has a crack at the neck, have broken noses. The possible explanation for the rearrangement of the figures and these damages is discussed below.

The monument is crowned by a semi-circular arch decorated by seven cherub heads. The arch frames a garland-encircled roundel with the Virgin and Child flanked by two half-length angels with their hands joined in adoration (fig. 116). The vault of the arch is decorated by seven rosettes, matching the cherub heads decorating its front. A statue of Saint George killing the dragon stands on top of the arch, the dragon resting on two rosettes (fig. 117). Two putti holding grapes are perched on two rosettes at the far ends of the entablature.

The monument is partially gilded. Gilded details include the haloes of the Virgin and Child, the borders of the cloaks and mitres of Saints Augustine and Ambrose, the stole of Saint Gregory, the sheep skin of Saint John the Baptist, the mitre of Lorenzo Roverella and elements of the architectural parts such as the candelabra and the capitals of the pilasters and the shells of the niches. Careful inspection suggests that only few traces of the original gilding survive, the major part of the gilding we see today being a later addition. Traces of the original preparation

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62 This was suggested by Apfelstadt 1987, p. 196.
63 Gottschalk 1930, p. 83.
64 Apfelstadt 1987, p. 223.
65 Ibidem, p. 224.
66 Similar rosettes are found in works by Pietro Lombardo, such as those supporting the three statues crowning the lunette in the funerary monument to Pasquale Malipiero in the Basilica Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice (about 1467-70).
containing red pigments are also visible (for instance on the borders of the cloaks of Saints Augustine and Ambrose).

Focusing mainly on attribution and stylistic analysis, scholars have overlooked more technical, but no less important aspects of the Roverella monument, such as the variety of materials and the polychromy, and also the relationship of the tomb with its surroundings. Slabs of *cipollino rosso* are inserted between the central register and the lunette, and in the internal surfaces of the central register (fig. 118). The short plinth below the sarcophagus is decorated by a narrow band inlaid with serpentine marble and Egyptian porphyry (fig. 119). The Virgin and Child are set against a round stone painted in greyish blue and the panels of the niches housing the Saints are painted to simulate a variegated green stone (fig. 120). The external sections of the lunette have a painted surface that emulates breccia marble. The spandrels above the shell-headed niches show traces of their red and green polychromy (see for instance those above Saint Augustine, fig. 121). It is possible that also the effigy of Lorenzo Roverella was originally set against a coloured background, as suggested by the traces of polychromy still visible.

Porphyry, serpentine and white marble were a frequent and highly prized combination in both classical and Christian antiquity. The use of these costly materials is seen in Florentine tombs, such as the monuments of Leonardo Bruni by Bernardo and Antonio Rossellino (about 1445) and of Carlo Marsuppini by Desiderio da Settignano (about 1455-59), both in Santa Croce. As pointed out by Clare Lapraik Guest, *all'antica* ornament in precious materials made a fitting representation of the illumination of fame. Precious polychrome marbles were also employed by Antonio Rossellino in the decoration of the sepulchral chapel of the cardinal of Portugal (about 1460-66) in the Olivetan church of San Miniato in Florence, which the Roverella would have known. Compared to these lavish examples of Florentine sepulchral monuments, Lorenzo Roverella’s tomb seems to have been executed with an economy of precious materials, perhaps because of the difficulty in getting supplies, the only exception being

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67 In the funerary monument of Leonardo Bruni by Bernardo Rossellino and collaborators in Santa Croce, Florence, the gold leaf was applied on a preparation containing lead white, red ochre and minium bound in an oil medium, see Giusti and Venticonti 1992, p. 166.

68 Francesca Petrucci has considered one of such features, see note 60 below.

69 The restorer Fabio Bevilacqua pointed out that these slabs of *cipollino rosso* or Carian marble (from the town of Iasos in Caria, extensively used in Rome in the 4th and 5th centuries AD) are likely to be re-employed materials; Fabio Bevilacqua, *Tecniche e tecniche della scultura a Ferrara nella seconda metà del Quattrocento*, talk given at Palazzo Bonacossi, Ferrara, on 9 December 2015. Re-employed slabs of *cipollino rosso* are seen in some basilicas in Ravenna, such as in San Vitale.

70 As it will be argued below this plinth is probably the result of the relocation of the monument.

71 Petrucci (2007, p.154) wonders whether the greenish blue we see today behind the Virgin and Child is the effect of a discoloured ultramarine.

72 Lapraik Guest 2016, p. 465. See also Koch (1996, p. 550) for the use of porphyry, serpentine and white marble by the Medici for the connection of these materials with Classical antiquity and for the association that porphyry and serpentine had with royalty.
the Carian marble. Therefore the alternative was to paint some parts of the monument to imitate precious marbles.

The traces of polychromy mentioned above can give us only a vague idea of the visual impact the Roverella tomb would have once had, with its red, green (and possibly blue) and gold details in vivid contrast against the white of the Carrara marble and Istrian stone. The polychromy of the monument explains the choice of the restrained palette in Tura’s lunette of the Lamentation (fig. 134), mainly including white, green and red, similar to that employed in the main panel with the Virgin and Child enthroned with angels (with the addition of the blue for the sky and the Virgin’s cloak and the gilded ornaments). And therefore we can imagine the carefully orchestrated dialogue between the polychrome sculpted wall tomb and the vibrantly coloured altarpiece by Tura, and the chromatic coherence of these two works of art made for the high altar chapel.73

It is interesting to point out that the choice of green and red against the white of the marble and Istrian stone is not casual, as white, green and red are the colours associated to the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity. We should also mention that white, green and red are the colours of the Olivetan emblem in its more orthodox version, as it is found for instance at Monte Oliveto Maggiore (the three peaked Mount Calvary with a red cross atop the central peak and green olive branches protruding from the lateral ones; see also the emblem in the bas-de-page in fig. 80).74

Today the Roverella monument is set against a wall decorated with Baroque trompe l’oeil frescoes and it is rather hard to visualise how it would have looked originally, set against a more neutral background (perhaps a whitewashed wall). But there is an old black and white photograph taken by Alinari between 1876 and 1888 (fig. 122) showing the monument against a black background which can help us to imagine its visual impact, not only of the polychromy but also of its design, with the two putti and the crowning Saint George standing out of the harmonic arched structure.75

The funerary monument of Lorenzo Roverella is signed and dated ‘MCCCCLXXV AMBROSII MEDIOLANENSIS OPVS’ across its base. The profile of this artist is discussed in a separate section below. In spite of the signature, in his commentary to Vasari’s Lives, Gaetano Milanesi attributed the Roverella monument (or at least parts of it) to Antonio Rossellino, on

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73 During a research seminar given by the present writer at the National Gallery on 9 June 2016 Nicholas Penny raised the question of the green and pink architectural elements in Tura’s Virgin and Child enthroned with angels, suggesting that the painter intended to emulate coloured stones.

74 “Gli emblemi di questa [congregazione] ... consistono in tre monticelli di colore bianco uniti e congiunti, della stessa grandezza e forma; quello centrale, un po’ sporgente rispetto agli altri due, apparirà più alto. Sopra di esso starà eretto il vessillo della santa croce dipinto in rosso. Dalle due parti, su ciascuno dei due monti, farete disegnare un albero d’ulivo”, words addressed by the Bishop of Arezzo Guido Tarlatt to Bernardo Tolomei and his companions from the Cronaca della Cancelleria (XVth century), quoted by Donghi 2014, p. 54.

75 Photograph no. 201477, Fototeca Zeri, Bologna. The black background is the result of Alinari’s staging.
the basis of some payments (for a total of 36 florins) the Florentine sculptor received from February to October 1475 from Nicolò Roverella, abbot general of the Olivetans, for a marble tomb for the bishop of Ferrara.\textsuperscript{76}

The roundel with the Virgin and Child in the Roverella funerary monument recalls the same element in Rossellino’s tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato (1461–66; fig. 123), while Saint John the Baptist is comparable to the same figure executed by Rossellino for the Martini chapel in San Giobbe in Venice (about 1471–6; fig. 124). The facial traits of the four Doctors of the Church recall those of the Saints Anthony and Francis in the same chapel. The stylistic qualities of the Virgin and Child as well as those of the saints make it hard to accept the opinion expressed by some scholars, according to which Rossellino was asked to provide the design of the Roverella monument, while its execution was contracted to Ambrogio da Milano, with the exception of the bishop’s effigy and maybe the Saint Jerome.\textsuperscript{77} The hypothesis suggested by Massimo Ferretti, among others, seems to us more likely: Rossellino (with his workshop) was responsible for the elements of the tomb made of Carrara marble, while the remaining parts in Istrian stone were executed by Ambrogio da Milano.\textsuperscript{78} A sculptor of Milan called Ambrogio, son of Giacomo, is documented in Ferrara and, as pointed out by Toffanello, seems to have specialised in the execution of funerary monuments after specific models, including some designed by others. This is suggested by a contract stipulated in 1483 whereby “Ambrogio of Milan son of the late Giacomo” agreed to execute a sculpted tomb for Giovanni Romei following the design he himself had marked in his own book (most likely a model-book).\textsuperscript{79} Ambrogio was to make the tomb in marble “gollo” with “its capitals and adornments and figures”.\textsuperscript{80}

Unfortunately no other certain works by Ambrogio da Milano survive, but we must point out the stylistic analogies, also noted by Apfelstadt, between the candelabra reliefs in the monument and those flanking the large Este coat of arms above the main portal of the Palazzo

\textsuperscript{76} Vasari 1568, ed. Milanesi (1878-85), III, 1878, note 2, p. 96. For the payments see Appendix, no. 13. As pointed out by Apfelstadt (1987, p. 227), these regular and small payments do not represent an appropriate compensation for the parts most clearly in the style of Rossellino.


\textsuperscript{78} Ferretti in Cosmè Tura 2007, p. 139. Talking about the tomb of Francesco Sacratì by Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino, Ferretti convincingly argues that the sculptors may have well sent the marble elements to Ferrara, rather than working in town, as the tomb typology was one which allowed for marble sculptures of relatively small size to be inserted into an architectural structure. See also Apfelstadt 1987, p. 217 and Toffanello 2010, p. 328. Pope Hennessy (1971, p. 280) suggested that the work was in part executed by Ambrogio da Milano and that the documented payments to Antonio Rossellino “are concerned with isolated sculptures on the monument”. For a summary of the various opinions on the attribution of the Roverella funerary monument see Petrucci 2007, p. 156.


\textsuperscript{80} “…cum suo capitello et adornamentis et figuris iuxta designum quoddam signatum super libro Magistri Ambrosii”, ibidem, doc. 434, p. 300. “Gollo” is probably a transcription mistake for “giallo”, and if this is the case than the material was probably yellow marble from Verona. It is useful to remember that the 1521 contract for relief of the Agony in the Garden for San Francesco stipulated that Cristoforo and Bernardino da Milano were to use “marmore de gola”, see note 123 below.
Schifanoia (fig. 105), dating from the early 1470s and attributed to Ambrogio da Milano (son of Giacomo) and Antonio di Gregorio da Milano (who in 1471 received payments for works in the palazzo).\footnote{Apfelstadt 1987, pp. 209-10. For the portal of Palazzo Schifanoia see Ghironi 1987 and W. Cupperi in Il Palazzo di Schifanoia 2007, pp. 207-9.} Also the capitals topping the candelabra above the portal at Schifanoia can be compared to those in the Roverella tomb.

The two putti and the Saint George have distinct stylistic features and bear no affinities with Rossellino’s works. The decorative solution of the putti at the far ends of the entablature is comparable to the same feature in Tura’s Roverella altarpiece, where two putti lean against the shell crowning the Virgin’s throne in the central panel (fig. 125). But the putti seem to lack the athletic vitality of those by Tura, their anatomy and hairstyle with heavy and compact curls being closer to those of the children represented in the scene with the triumph of Apollo (month of May) by Francesco del Cossa and collaborators at Schifanoia. Another Ferrarese feature of the putti is the almost metallic rendering of the ribbons.\footnote{Petrucci 2007, p. 156.} The possible sources for the Saint George have not been discussed in the literature on the Roverella tomb. The Saint George from the bronze group of the Crucifixion with Saints executed in 1454 by Nicolò Baroncelli and his workshop for the iconostasis in the cathedral (fig. 7) is among the extant Ferrarese sculptures which might have served as model for the same figure here. The different function and the material employed for the statue crowning the Roverella tomb required a less dynamic pose for the legs, with the dragon acting as a pedestal for the saint, as well as a simplified representation of his armour. As with the Saint George by Baroncelli, here too the tail of the dragon coils around the saint’s right ankle.

Considering now the overall design of Lorenzo Roverella’s tomb, various scholars have highlighted the fact that the monument is an elaboration of the Florentine tomb type developed by Bernardo Rossellino.\footnote{See for instance Stemp 1992, pp. 24-5. Francesca Petrucci (2007, p. 155) has made connections with Florentine prototypes such as the tomb of Leonardo Bruni and the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato.} Nevertheless, Francesca Petrucci also noticed some unusual features, including the prominence of the coat of arms, the simplified structure of the sarcophagus and the profuse decoration of the middle register with the saints within niches. Petrucci proposed a comparison for these features and the tomb’s complex structure with the imposing monuments by Pietro Lombardo in Venice as well as the tomb of Doge Niccolò Tron (d. 1473) by Antonio Rizzo in Santa Maria dei Frari (fig. 126).\footnote{Ibidem, p. 155. It is hard to accept the idea that the tomb of Doge Niccolò Tron served as a model for the sepulchral monument of Lorenzo Roverella. Indeed only on 17 April 1476 the left side of the high altar chapel at Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari was ceded to Filippo Tron, son of the late Doge Niccolò Tron. It is clear from the document that Niccolò’s tomb had not been installed by this date. The contract was published by Sartori 1983-88, II, p. 1802, see also Allen 2009, p. 270.} Petrucci indeed considered that Ambrogio could
easily have travelled to Venice, and that Antonio Rossellino probably made a trip there to install the Martini altarpiece.

However, the most appropriate stylistic context in which to view the Roverella monument is that of mid- and later Quattrocento Roman tombs, as Fritz Burger rightly argued at the turn of the last century.\(^\text{85}\) Indeed, as observed by Burger, a comparable arrangement, with a lower tier with the sarcophagus flanked by tall reliefs, a middle tier with niches with saints and an arch adorned by heads of cherubs is found in the tomb of Cardinal Alain Coëtivy (died in Rome on 3 May 1474) attributed to Andrea Bregno in the basilica of Santa Prassede in Rome (fig. 127). There, small figure-bearing niches are set into wide pilasters framing a large central niche, where the Saints Peter and Paul are set against two flat arcades. Two ornate candelabra reliefs are on either side of the sarcophagus. The arms of the deceased in low relief adorn the fourth and bottom tier, flanking the slab with the epitaph. As in the Roverella monument, strong horizontal divisions predominate.

It is surprising that among all the scholars who have written on the Roverella monument only Apfelstadt has acknowledged the important considerations by Burger and the fact that the model for the Roverella tomb is to be found among the monuments executed by Andrea Bregno.\(^\text{86}\) We can add that two Roman precedents for the two large coats of arms prominently placed on either side of the sarcophagus with the *gisant* have been so far overlooked: the tomb of Cardinal Giacomo Tebaldì (d. 1466) also by Andrea Bregno (in collaboration with Giovanni Dalmata) in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and the tomb of Cardinal Juan de Mella (d. 1467) now in the cloister of Santa Maria in Monserrato (from the destroyed San Giacomo degli Spagnoli), attributed to Giovanni Dalmata (fig. 128).\(^\text{87}\) The comparison with the latter monument is particularly relevant, as the arrangement with three shell-topped niches housing figures of saints in the tier above the sarcophagus, is similar to that of the Roverella tomb.

We can now introduce one new crucial element, which can explain the reason for the choice of this specific model. The analogies between the monument in San Giorgio and sculpted wall tombs in Roman churches by Andrea Bregno and Giovanni Dalmata may not be coincidental. The tomb of Bartolomeo Roverella in San Clemente was indeed executed by these same two sculptors. And even if the layouts and stylistic features of the tombs of the two Roverella brothers are different, the above mentioned similarities could be explained by the

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\(^{85}\) Burger 1903, pp. 240-41.

\(^{86}\) Apfelstadt 1987, p. 198. We must also mention the study by Otto Kurz (1955, p. 52), who considered the tombs of Albret and that of Roverella as belonging to the same category. Claudio Crescentini (in Crescentini and Strinati eds 2008, p. 148), without any reference to Burger, nor to Apfelstadt, has noted that the Roverella monument “risente proprio delle strutture umanistiche e antiquariali già attuate da Andrea [Bregno] nel monumento d’Albret e nel successivo altare di Santa Maria del Popolo”.

\(^{87}\) The monument of Juan de Mella was attributed to Giovanni Dalmata by Federico Zeri (inscription on the verso of the photograph of this work in the Fototeca Zeri, Bologna).
relationship between Ambrogio da Milano who signed the monument in San Giorgio and Andrea Bregno, who were most likely brothers.\textsuperscript{88} If it is plausible that Ambrogio had access to his brother’s drawings, we should also consider the possibility of specific requests made by Bartolomeo Roverella, if not by Lorenzo himself before dying, on the layout of the funerary monument for San Giorgio. Having spent several years in Rome, both Bartolomeo and Lorenzo were likely to be familiar with the works by Andrea Bregno and they could have proposed an existing Roman monument as a model.

The coexistence of Northern Italian and Tuscan features in the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella supports the hypothesis of a collaborative work of Antonio Rossellino and Ambrogio da Milano. While Rossellino and his workshop were the authors of the Virgin and Child, the Saints and the bishop’s head, it seems that Ambrogio da Milano was responsible for the monument’s architectural structure, and perhaps also for the two putti and the Saint George.\textsuperscript{89} Pope Hennessy, followed by Apfelstadt and Stemp, among others, considered the head of Lorenzo Roverella (see detail of fig. 100) unequivocally autograph.\textsuperscript{90} As observed by Stemp, the face shows the delicacy of modulation typical of Antonio’s portrait heads, and the execution, in particular the decoration of the mitre, reveals a freedom of execution which would not result when copying a model.\textsuperscript{91}

Considering earlier examples of Ferrarese sepulchral monuments, we must mention the lost tombs of Jacopo and Francesco Sacratì in San Domenico, dating from about 1428 and from 1460-1. Their layout was inspired by Venetian models (notably the Bernardo tomb in the Frari).\textsuperscript{92} It is very relevant to our discussion that sculptures from the tomb of Francesco Sacratì, one of the major Ferrarese art commissions dating from the period of Borso d’Este, were commissioned from Antonio Rossellino and his brother Bernardo.\textsuperscript{93} The \textit{Virgin and Child} by Antonio Rossellino has miraculously survived the dismantling of the Sacratì chapel and the church renovation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and is now set into the back wall of the eighteenth-century marble altar of San Domenico.\textsuperscript{94} Another four elements, ascribed to Bernardo Rossellino survive from the tomb of Francesco Sacratì (fig. 129): \textit{Beheaded


\textsuperscript{89} For an in-depth analysis of the various elements of the tomb see Apfelstadt 1987, pp. 217-38.

\textsuperscript{90} Pope Hennessy 1971, p. 280; Apfelstadt 1987, pp. 236-8 (the author suggested that a mask made while Lorenzo was at Monteoliveto easily could have been delivered to Rossellino in Florence, p. 237); Stemp 1992, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{91} Stemp 1992, p. 26.\textsuperscript{92} On the two Sacratì chapels in San Domenico see Stemp 1991.

\textsuperscript{93} Francesco Sacratì (d. 1461) belonged to one of the most prominent families in Ferrara. He served Niccolò III d’Este as capitano of Reggio Emilia, see Ughi 1804, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{94} For this work see Stemp 1999, esp. pp. 63-5.
saint (George), Beheaded saint (Paul), Saint Francis intercedes for Francesco Sacrati (all in the Museo della Cattedrale, Ferrara), and Saint Dominic (Raccolte Civiche, Lugo).  

As we saw in chapter 1, the artist employed for the decoration of Francesco Sacrati’s chapel was Cosmè Tura, who executed frescoes and an altarpiece in 1468-69. This chapel in one of the most important mendicant churches in Ferrara, graced by works by Tura and Rossellino, was indeed a precedent for the high altar chapel in San Giorgio. As rightly pointed out by Richard Stemp, sculpture and paintings in funerary chapels like those of Francesco Sacrati in San Domenico and of the Roverella in the cappella maggiore of San Giorgio should not be studied separately, but considered as parts of a whole project. Indeed paintings and sculptures were commissioned together, as shown by the wills of Francesco Sacrati and of Virgilio Silvestri, and we might wonder whether this was also the case with the Roverella.

The choice of Antonio Rossellino for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella was not a casual one. The Roverella were surely familiar with the funerary monument of Francesco Sacrati in San Domenico, made by Antonio and his brother Bernardo in 1460-61. But it is no less relevant that in the 1460s the two Florentine sculptors had decorated the funerary chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in the basilica of San Miniato al Monte in Florence, an Olivetan foundation. Antonio’s contribution to this masterpiece of the Florentine Renaissance includes the cardinal’s magnificent tomb and the episcopal chair. It was the success of this work that had earned Antonio Rossellino a prestigious commission for another Olivetan foundation. Antonio Piccolomini, Duke of Amalfi and nephew of Pope Pius II Piccolomini, decided to build a chapel to commemorate his wife Maria of Aragon (natural daughter of Ferrante of Aragon, died in 1469) in the Neapolitan church of Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto (later called Sant’Anna dei Lombardi) based on the model of the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato al Monte. By 1474 Rossellino had delivered the marble altarpiece of the Nativity for this chapel, while leaving unfinished the tomb of Maria of Aragon, which was completed after 1481 by Benedetto da Maiano.

The commission of the Roverella sepulchral monument was therefore the third one Rossellino had received for an Olivetan church. In the case of the Neapolitan commission, the payments to Antonio for the Nativity altarpiece were made through the monastery of San

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95 Cosmè Tura 2007, pp. 378-83 (entry by Massimo Ferretti) and Giovannucci Vigi and Sassu 2010, pp. 103-7 (entry by Massimo Ferretti).
96 Stemp 2004, p. 133. For the will of Virgilio Silvestri and his chapel in the Ferrara cathedral see Geddes 2006. See also the chapel of Blessed Gabriele Ferretti in the church of San Francesco ad Alto, Ancona, which was adorned with the altarpiece by Carlo Crivelli, dating from about 1489 (NG 668) and Gabriele’s tomb; Lightbown 2004, pp. 366-73.
97 On the chapel of the cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato see Hartt et al. 1964.
98 On the Piccolomini chapel in Sant’Anna dei Lombardi see Carl 1996.
Miniato al Monte.\textsuperscript{99} The Spannocchi bank in Naples sent one hundred and twenty florins to its Florentine correspondent, the Rabatti and Cambi bank, who gave the money to the monastery. The sum served as a deposit for the payments to be made to Rossellino. Another Olivetan monastery, that of San Bartolomeo in Florence, also called Monte Oliveto, served as the intermediary for some payments received by Rossellino for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella. In this case, however, no banks were involved, and the monastery’s ledger of debtors and creditors registers that small amounts of money due to Nicolò Roverella were given to the sculptor.\textsuperscript{100}

Doris Carl has convincingly suggested that the Olivetan monks might have played an intermediary role in the Piccolomini commission, as it is documented that they had responsibility for handling the money deposited with them and for period payments to the artist. She also wondered whether it was an Olivetan who suggested the name of Antonio Rossellino to the patron. Furthermore, Carl mentioned the possibility that the Portuguese monk Alfonso Iannis “exercised a certain influence in the choice of Antonio Rossellino as the sculptor for the Ferrara tomb”.\textsuperscript{101} Iannis, who died in San Giorgio in 1473, had been much involved in the construction of the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato, probably as the cardinal’s testamentary executor, and knew Rossellino well.\textsuperscript{102} This hypothesis implies accepting the death of Iannis in 1473 as a terminus ante quem for the project of the Roverella tomb, or at least its preliminary idea.

As rightly pointed out by Parmiggiani, it is significant that Antonio Rossellino worked simultaneously on works commissioned for two Olivetan churches, in Naples and in Ferrara.\textsuperscript{103} There is little doubt that after his brilliant achievements in the chapel for the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato al Monte, the Florentine sculptor enjoyed a good reputation within the Olivetan community. While the hypothetical role played by Alfonso Iannis put forward by Doris Carl is tempting, it is almost certain that the Roverella brothers, notably Nicolò, one of the highest-ranking members of the Olivetan order, knew the work of Rossellino in San Miniato.\textsuperscript{104} It is therefore not surprising that they considered him the best artist to be entrusted with such a prestigious commission for San Giorgio.

It is no easy task to determine the circumstances and the timescale of the whole project of Lorenzo Roverella’s sepulchral monument. But what can we gather from the surviving documentation and evidence about this work? By 1475 part of the monument had been completed by Ambrogio da Milano, who inscribed his signature with that year across its base. It

\textsuperscript{99} Ibidem, p. 320.
\textsuperscript{100} Appendix, no. 13.
\textsuperscript{101} Carl 1996, p. 320.
\textsuperscript{102} Hartt et al. 1964, p. 62; Apfelstadt 1987, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{103} Parmiggiani 2014, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{104} Petrucci 2007, p. 154.
seems probable that by this time Antonio Rossellino and his workshop were already at work on the marble sculptures for the tomb. Indeed the four instalments, totalling thirty-six florins, received by the sculptor from February to October 1475 from the Florentine monastery of San Bartolomeo for “the tomb of the bishop of Ferrara”, surely only a small portion of the total sum agreed for this commission, seem to be the kind of periodic payments usually made during the execution of a work.\textsuperscript{105} Previous and later payments to Rossellino were almost certainly made in other ways, through other intermediaries. On 12 October 1475 the Florentine sculptor received a payment of six florins made “for part of a marble tomb” (“per parte d’una sepultura di marmo”). It is hard to tell whether this was the final part.\textsuperscript{106}

As mentioned above, in his will of 24 April 1476 Bartolomeo Roverella had ordered the donation of the benefices and revenues owed to his late brother Lorenzo to the church of San Giorgio. As this money was intended to cover the expenses for the ornament of the high altar chapel and for Lorenzo’s tomb, it is probable that after this date Rossellino received part of the payment from the Ferrarese monastery. Bartolomeo’s will seems to have accelerated the bureaucratic procedures linked to the project. Indeed on 6 July 1476 the Olivetans at San Giorgio met in chapter to grant formal permission to Lorenzo’s heirs to erect his sepulchral monument in the cappella maggiore. By this time Ambrogio da Milano had finished his work on the tomb, most probably the architectural parts. It is not known when Rossellino and his workshop completed the work, but we can argue that the monument was installed before the re-consecration of the church on 23 April 1479. By this time Lorenzo’s remains must have been transferred from Monte Oliveto to San Giorgio. According to the last two lines of the epitaph by Tito Strozzi this was arranged by his brothers.\textsuperscript{107}

Considering the prestige of the commission, it is possible that Rossellino travelled to Ferrara to install the sculptures executed in his Florentine workshop, like he did for other projects, including the sculpted altarpieces for the Piccolomini chapel in Naples and for the Martini chapel in San Giobbe in Venice.\textsuperscript{108} The fact that another sculptor had executed the architectural parts of the monument may have provided an additional motivation to make sure he was satisfied with the final result; or he could have sent a trusted assistant from his

\textsuperscript{105} We can recall that Rossellino was paid a total of four hundred and twenty-one florins for the tomb of the cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato, see La Bella 1999.

\textsuperscript{106} The last documented payment made to Rossellino on 19 May 1474 for the altarpiece for the Piccolomini chapel in Naples by the monks at San Minato amounted to twenty florins, being this all that was left of the deposit they were keeping for this work (“i quali sono el resto avevamo qui noi frati di Sancto Miniato di detto diposito”). This wording suggests that this was the final payment and that the altarpiece was complete by that date; see Carl 1996, p. 320.

\textsuperscript{107} In reality, Nicolò must have been the only living brother of Lorenzo when his remains were transferred to Ferrara.

\textsuperscript{108} For Rossellino’s trip to Naples see Carl 1996, pp. 319-20.
workshop. If Antonio himself did travel to Ferrara to install the monument, this must have happened before 1479, as he died sometime during that year.\textsuperscript{109}

Another important issue that needs to be addressed is the involvement of Ambrogio da Milano in this project. Was Rossellino asked to provide the design of the whole funerary monument and to execute its key elements (the Virgin and child roundel, the five saints and the head of Roverella), leaving it to a local sculptor to work on the architectural elements and minor decorative details? The analogies shared by the Roverella tomb with Roman three-tiered funerary monuments by Andrea Bregno highlighted above raise the question of a possible contribution of Ambrogio (the brother of Andrea) to the monument’s design. They might also point to specific requests made by the patron, who had a precise model in mind.

It is hard to establish if Lorenzo commissioned his tomb before dying or whether it was Nicolò who dealt with this project after his brother’s death. Unfortunately Lorenzo’s will is no longer extant, but it might have included the request to be buried in San Giorgio, the same wish referred to in the aforementioned document dated 6 April 1476. Furthermore, Lorenzo might have left the arrangements for his sepulchre in the hands of his executors, most likely his brothers Bartolomeo and Nicolò. This is suggested by the fact that in his will of 29 April 1476 Bartolomeo, considering the importance of such a task, charged Nicolò with responsibility over the projects of Lorenzo’s tomb and of the high altarpiece. It is possible that the project for the latter was also mentioned in Lorenzo’s will (see further discussion in chapter 4).

One last but important issue to consider about the funerary monument of Lorenzo Roverella, which has not been addressed in the literature, is its original location within the high altar chapel of the old San Giorgio. If our reconstruction of the plan of the old San Giorgio is correct and there was originally a transept, the wall into which the tomb is set would have not existed in the fifteenth century. The walls separating the cappella maggiore from the two outer chapels would have terminated roughly where we see today the pilaster to the right-hand side of the monument. The Saints John the Baptist and Jerome look to their left, towards the space that was occupied by the high altar with the Pala Roverella. This seems to be confirmed also by the orientation of the effigy, as discussed above, with the head to the west and the feet to the east. Thus it appears highly likely that the monument was designed for the left-hand side wall of the chancel, and that it was relocated in the early 1580s, when the choir was renovated and the new apse was built. The tomb was shifted towards the nave and reinstalled in the middle of the north wall of the new presbytery. It is odd that the half-pilasters at the corners of the niche are not decorated by candelabra (fig. 130). Their rough surface is probably the result of damages caused.

\textsuperscript{109} A document on the death of Antonio Rossellino was published by Carl 1983.
during the dismantling of the monument. The same could be said about the more substantial damages to the figure of Saint John noted above.

3.6 New considerations on the sculptor Ambrogio da Milano

In the most recent literature on Ferrarese art the Ambrosius Mediolanensis who signed and dated the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella is identified with Ambrogio Riva, the son of Giacomo of Milan. However, this cannot be taken for granted. In a detailed biographical entry on Ambrogio Riva Marcello Toffanello highlighted the fact that he was the brother of the more famous Andrea Bregno (1418-1503), one of the most prominent sculptors working in Renaissance Rome.

The kinship between Andrea Bregno and a sculptor called Ambrogio is established by a document first published in 1868 by Cittadella in his Notizie amministrative di Ferrara. In a notarial act compiled on 26 March 1504 by the Ferrarese notary Benedetto Lucenti the sculptors Cristoforo and Giovan Antonio, sons of the late Ambrogio de Bregnis of Rigesio (“Magister Christoforus et Magister Joannes Antonius filii quondam Ambroxj de Bregnis de Rigesio tajapetre et sculptores”), both living in Ferrara, agreed to go to Rome to receive the estate of their uncle, the sculptor Andrea, son of the late Cristoforo Bregno of Rigesio (“Magister Andreas sculptor filius quondam Christofori de Bregnis de Rigesio”). Among the witnesses there were some sculptors, including Girolamo, son of the late Cristoforo, who was living in Ferrara (“Magister Hieronymo filio quondam Christofori de Bregnis de Hostene ducatus Mediolani sculpore et tajapetra habitatore Ferrarie in contrada S. Michaelis”). Cittadella suggested the possibility that Girolamo was Andrea’s brother, but the reason why he is referred to as from Osteno rather than from Rigesio in the notarial act needs to be explained. Rigesio (the present Righeggia) is a hamlet of Osteno, a commune in the Province of Como, situated on the south shore of Lake Lugano, which was part of the Duchy of Milan. Therefore it seems likely that Cittadella was right. From this document it appears that Andrea, Ambrogio and Girolamo Bregno were the sons of Cristoforo.

110 Petrucci 2007, p. 152; Toffanello 2010, p. 329. Most surprisingly Alfredo Bellandi and Pietro di Natale (in Sgarbi 2006, p. 152) refer to the author of the Roverella monument as to “Ambrogio Barocci, detto Ambrogio da Milano”, ignoring that as early as 1864 Cesare Cittadella correctly remarked that the latter sculptor, who was active in Venice and Urbino, is definitely not the one who worked in San Giorgio (Cittadella 1864, p. 660).
112 Cittadella 1868, p. 223. About six months earlier the same notary Lucenti had drafted a document whereby the architect Biagio Rossetti and the stonemason Gabriele Frisoni, who could no longer work on the palazzo commissioned by Antonio Costabili (the patron of the polyptych by Dosso and Garofalo for the high altar of Sant’Andrea), passed on the direction of this building project to Girolamo Pasino and Cristorofo, son of the late Ambrogio from Milan. The document was published by Cittadella 1868, pp. 259-62.
113 Cittadella 1868, p. 223.
Specialists who have written about the Roverella monument have overlooked this document from 1504, which points to a possible Ferrarese connection of Ambrogio Bregno. On the other hand, Toffanello, the only Ferrarese scholar who has drawn attention to the kinship of Ambrogio and Andrea Bregno, has linked this information to another sculptor named Ambrogio, whose father was called Giacomo instead of Cristoforo. Ambrogio di Giacomo (who is never referred to as Bregno in the documents) is first recorded in Ferrara in November 1469, when he received a payment of seventy lire from the Camera Ducale. In the 1470s Ambrogio di Giacomo worked for the court as well as for other patrons in Ferrara, on most occasions in collaboration with other Lombard stonemasons, including Antonio di Gregorio da Milano (doc. 1466-1502). As mentioned in chapter 1, in 1483 Ambrogio di Giacomo was commissioned with the execution of the funerary monument of Giovanni Romei, a prominent member of the Ferrarese elite, for the chapel of the Holy Virgin in Santo Spirito, church of the Friars Minor. This is the last occasion on which Ambrogio is documented in Ferrara.

Cittadella rightly noticed that another stonemason, Antonio, who was responsible for the execution of the sepulchral monument of the humanist Guarino Guarini for the church of San Paolo (unfortunately lost), was the son of the late Giacomo of Milan. In the document registering the payment for this work in 1468 he is referred to as “Magistrum Antonium tajapredam filium quondam Iacobi de Mediolano”. Therefore it is possible, as proposed by Cittadella, that Antonio and Ambrogio, who were both commissioned funerary monuments for members of prominent Ferrarese families, were brothers. After formulating this hypothesis, Cittadella recalled the presence in Ferrara of another stonemason called Ambrogio de Toris, son of Jacopo (who, being already dead by 1468, cannot be the author of the Roverella tomb).

114 See for instance Francesca Petrucci, who simply provides the reference to the various documents on Ambrogio da Milano published by Cittadella and Franceschini (Petrucci 2007, note 31, p. 163).
115 Already Cittadella had confused the two personalities. In 1864 he wrote that the Ambrogio (son of Giacomo) who was business partner of the Rasconi was the author of the Roverella monument; Cittadella 1864, p. 660. Later he stated that the tomb was executed by Ambrogio, “father of Cristoforo Bregno” and that this Ambrogio also worked on the Loggia by the cathedral in 1473; Cittadella 1868, p. 214.
116 The stonemason is referred to as “Maestro Ambroxo da Riva da Millano tagliapreda”, Franceschini 1993-97, I (1993), doc. 1161, p. 743. In all other documents he is simply referred to as the stonemason Ambrogio or Ambrogio di Milano with the exception of an act dated 5 April 1473, when “Magistro Ambrostio quondam Iacobi de Mediolano de Rivo taiapetra” is among the witnesses at the chapter of the Augustinian friars at Sant’Andrea, together with his colleague Giacomo of Giovanni Rasconi of Mantua; see Franceschini 1993-97, II, part I (1995), doc. 45, p. 46.
117 See the useful regesto provided by Toffanello 2010, pp. 329-30.
118 The contract was first published by Cittadella in 1868 and refers to the stonemason Ambrogio of Milan of the late Giacomo (“Magister Ambrosius de Mediolano quondam Jacobi… taiapetra”); Cittadella 1868, p. 184; published also by Franceschini 1993-97, II, part I (1995), no. 434, p. 300.
120 Cittadella 1868, p. 183.
121 Ibidem.
The shortage of biographical information on the many stonemasons from Milan active in Ferrara in the fifteenth century and the difficulty of establishing firm connections between them is an issue which concerns also the Bregno family. Stonemasons and sculptors from this clan of Righeggia were active in various regions, from Veneto, to Emilia Romagna and Lazio, over a period of about a century. In spite of the growing interest in the Bregno seen in recent years (especially in Andrea), which resulted in a series of conferences, exhibitions and publications (2008-2010), many questions on the identity of its members remain unanswered.

In the monographic volume edited by Claudio Crescentini and Claudio Strinati published in 2008 and in the catalogue of the exhibition held at Palazzo Venezia in 2010, some light is shed on some sculptors from the Bregno family.\(^{122}\) However, both of these important publications contain some discrepancies and inaccuracies which complicate the task of reconstructing a Bregno family tree. The statement that Cristoforo, the father of Andrea Bregno, was one of the architects and stonemasons employed by Duke Ercole I d’Este for the so-called Addizione Erculea, one of the most important examples of Renaissance city planning, is among the most obvious errors.\(^{123}\) At the centre of the Addizione was the Palazzo dei Diamanti, commissioned by Sigismondo d’Este, brother of Duke Ercole I. Work on the palazzo had started in 1493 under the direction of Biagio Rossetti. In 1503 Cristoforo son of the late Ambrogio Brognoni from Milan was entrusted with the completion of the building.\(^{124}\) It is clear that this Cristoforo cannot be father of Andrea (1418-d. 1503) and Ambrogio Bregno (d. before 1504), but is instead the son of the latter.

Another inconsistency concerns the composition of Andrea’s family. In his essay of 2008 Crescentini states that Cristoforo had four sons: Andrea, Ambrogio, Tommaso (d. 1503) and Girolamo (d. 1504).\(^{125}\) On the other hand the family tree provided by Floriana Spalla in 2010 lists only three sons of Cristoforo: Andrea, Ambrogio and Antonio.\(^{126}\)

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\(^{122}\) Crescentini and Strinati 2008; La forma del Rinascimento 2010.

\(^{123}\) Pastore 2008, p. 93; Macioce 2008, p. 129. The same mistake is found in the press release of the activities of the Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni del V centenario della morte di Andrea Bregno (consulted here http://www.librari.beniculturali.it/export/sites/dgbiit/documenti/Profilo_Bregno.pdf), along with the certain attribution to Cristoforo, father of Andrea, of the relief with the Agony in the Garden in the church of San Francesco (this attribution is also supported by Macioce 2008, p. 129). But the latter relief is a documented work by Cristoforo, the son of Ambrogio, and Battista Rizzo of the late Bernardino of Milan, from 1521. The contract was published by Cittadella 1868, pp. 213-15. Oddly Crescentini (2010, pp. 136-7) states that the relief was the work of Cristoforo and of Giyan Battista Bregno, the son of Tommaso.

\(^{124}\) Cittadella (1868, p. 223-24) made the distinction between Cristoforo de Bregnis and Cristoforo de Brognoni, but these variations of the family name occurring in the notarial acts must refer to the same person.

\(^{125}\) Crescentini 2010, p. 29. Girolamo Bregno, brother of Andrea and Ambrogio is also referred to by Mariacher in his entry on Andrea Bregno for the Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani (vol. 14, 1972). See also Caglioti 1997, p. 229. Some information on Tommaso Bregno, son of Cristororo, active mainly in Como, is given by Crescentini 2008, p. 136.

\(^{126}\) Spalla 2008, p. 69. The same family tree also includes their cousin Antonio (Verona 1430-Foligno 1501), the son of Giacomo. Spalla (2008, p. 71) refers to this figure as Antonio Bregno called Rizzo, the sculptor who worked on many prestigious commissions in Venice. However, she attributes to this artist also works which are unanimously assigned to Antonio Bregno (about 1400- after 1485), like the tomb of Doge Francesco Foscari in the Frari. It
In his will, dictated in Rome between July and September 1503, Andrea Bregno left his estate to his nephews Cristoforo and Giovanni Antonio. This decision demonstrates his attachment to his relatives in Ferrara and the uninterrupted relationship he kept with them, in spite of the fact that he had been in Rome since the early 1460s. Andrea also requested that Giovanni Antonio went to Rome to execute his funerary monument in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva within one year from his death as well as to complete the tomb of Bishop Juan Ortega Gomiel in Santa Maria del Popolo, a project which Andrea had just begun. Andrea was the head of a well organised workshop in Rome, and he could have chosen one of his collaborators for these tasks, but he assigned them to his nephew instead. This is a further proof of his strong sense of belonging to his family, and implicitly suggests that, being so attached to his nephews, Andrea would have had a good relationship also with their father, Ambrogio.

Taking into consideration all the elements mentioned above, we can say that it is not true that the stonemason Ambrogio Riva of Milan (son of Giacomo) documented in Ferrara from the late 1460s to 1483 was the brother of Andrea Bregno. The similarities between the candelabra in the monument of Lorenzo Roverella (fig. 103) and the decorative elements of the portal of the Palazzo Schifanoia (fig. 105), attributed to Ambrogio Riva, are not sufficient to prove that the latter was the author of the tomb in San Giorgio. Furthermore, the fact that the stonemasons Cristoforo and Giovanni Antonio, nephews of Andrea Bregno, were established in Ferrara at the start of the sixteenth century opens the possibility that also their father Ambrogio had been active there. Therefore the formal analogies between the Roverella tomb and the funerary monuments executed by Andrea Bregno in Rome in the 1470s might be explained with the participation of his brother Ambrogio in the execution of the tomb in San Giorgio, as suggested by some scholars.

3.7 Conclusions

In this chapter we have explored the connections between the Roverella and San Giorgio, bringing together all available information on their patronage in this church. It was common for monks of the Olivetan congregation to be interred in their churches, but the case of Ferrara is a peculiar one, as the family of one of their members were granted permission to be buried in the high altar chapel. It was in fact Niccolò Roverella who in 1476 interceded on behalf of his

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127 Crescentini 2010, p. 29; idem 2008, pp. 137-8. Andrea's only son Marc'Antonio, died in 1473 and his only heir was his wife Caterina, see Crescentini 2008, note 30, p. 164.
128 Ibidem.
129 Ceriana 2004, p. 62; Crescentini 2008, p. 148. The latter author does not provide a full explanation for his argument and refers to an article he was working on, which has not been published yet.
family so that the tomb of his late brother Lorenzo, who had died at Monte Oliveto Maggiore two years earlier, could be erected in San Giorgio’s chancel. The notarial act by which the monks of San Giorgio accepted this request also specified that Lorenzo’s heirs were allowed to be buried wherever it would have suited them as well as Niccolò (it is not clear from the document whether these tombs were to be also in the cappella maggiore or elsewhere in the church).\(^{130}\)

The principal rationale underlying the patronage of a given superior’s sepulchral monument was the annexation of the maximum possible amount of intercessory prayer.\(^ {131}\) With the erection of the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella in the second half of the 1470s and the installation of the great polyptych by Tura on the nearby high altar, representing Niccolò and Lorenzo next to the saints George and Maurelius, the chancel of San Giorgio was transformed into the mausoleum of the Roverella. We can argue that both the funerary monument to Lorenzo Roverella and the pala by Tura showing the portraits of Lorenzo and Niccolò served the function of reminding the monks (and the laypeople who had access to the chancel) of their former status: as loving fathers, good shepherds and generous benefactors.

Another significant initiative, for which this family was most likely responsible, confirming its special attachment to San Giorgio, was the rededication of the church to the Saints George, Maurelius and Lawrence in 1479. The ceremony was celebrated by Filiasio Roverella, archbishop of Ravenna, and nephew of Lorenzo and Niccolò. The choice of Lorenzo’s eponymous saint along with Maurelius is a further evidence of the Roverella’s propaganda. San Giorgio was a church which suited well their aim to perpetuate the memory of their family.

By reassessing the funerary monument to Lorenzo Roverella in San Giorgio, the most important surviving work of Ferrarese sculpture from the fifteenth century, we have been able to add some new elements to its interpretation. Firstly, we have argued that the current arrangement of the main tier is not original. This is suggested by the postures and gaze directions of the saints, which must have clearly have been placed in a different order when the monument was first installed. Secondly we have addressed the question of the authorship. In recent times scholars have attributed some parts of the tomb to Ambrogio Riva, a Lombard sculptor active in Ferrara from the late 1460s to the early 1480s. By taking into account the existing evidence on sculptors working in Ferrara in the second half of the fifteenth century, but also by examining the style of the Roverella tomb, it has been possible to formulate a new hypothesis.

\(^{130}\) Appendix, no. 14.

\(^{131}\) See for instance the considerations by Luxford 2012, p. 81, writing about the art and patronage in English Benedictine monasteries.
Although some sculpture specialists have pointed out the fact that the structure of funerary monument is indebted to Venetian models, it is clear that the source of inspiration for the tomb in San Giorgio it to be found in Rome. The close analogies with some works by Andrea Bregno and Giovanni Dalmata are obvious (and it is significant that these very sculptors executed the tomb of cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella in San Clemente, Rome). These stylistic elements, together with the documented connections of Ambrogio Bregno (brother of Andrea) with Ferrara, point to the possibility that Ambrogio was responsible for the parts of the tomb executed in Istrian stone.

The marble elements of the Roverella monument were commissioned from Antonio Rossellino, the Florentine sculptor who had already delivered two important works for prestigious patrons in the Olivetan churches of San Miniato al Monte, Florence and Santa Maria di Monte Oliveto, Naples. The collaboration between Rossellino and a Lombard sculptor (probably Ambrogio Bregno) for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella is a rather unique case in the context of art patronage in Olivetan churches. Antonio Rossellino, one of the chief exponents of Florentine sculpture, was chosen because of his Olivetan connections (but we must also recall that in 1460s he had been contracted for the execution the tomb of Francesco Sacrati in the church of San Domenico in Ferrara). We can argue that with this commission the Roverella wanted to rival the patrons of the above-mentioned works by Rossellino in Florence, Naples and Ferrara. But they might also have wished to introduce the latest novelties of Roman sculpture, with the choice of specific models, and possibly by employing the brother of one of the most prominent sculptors active in Rome.
Chapter 4

The *Pala Roverella* by Cosmé Tura

4.1 The extant elements of the altarpiece

The only description of the *Pala Roverella* before its partial destruction in 1709 is provided by the Ferrarese cleric Girolamo Baruffaldi. In the first version of his life of Tura from about 1706, Baruffaldi mentions an altarpiece composed of eight elements, the central panel of which depicting the Virgin and Child surrounded by six musician angels, two playing a little organ in the foreground. Baruffaldi was able to read the words “Surge Puer Roverella” in the inscription on the organ and suggested that the verses were dedicated to Lorenzo Roverella.¹ In a later version of Tura’s biography Baruffaldi associated the inscription with a couplet of the *Tumultuaria Carmina* (1492) of the Ferrarese poet Bigo Pittorio (further discussed below) and attributed the commission of the altarpiece to Lorenzo Roverella.²

According to Baruffaldi the right and left compartments represented respectively the Saints Peter and George, with a keeling figure, apparently dressed as a monk, and the Saints Paul and Maurelius with another monk, also keeling. The author proposed to identify the first donor, described as wearing a chasuble *all’antica*, folded on his arms, as Lorenzo Roverella. Baruffaldi highlighted the similarities of the traits of this figure with those of the effigy of the bishop in the tomb monument in the same church. He also added that he was represented in the act of knocking on something.³ The upper register of the polyptych included Saints Bernard

¹ “… la tavola dell’altare de’ Roverelli… compartita in otto parti, nel cui di mezzo stà assisa la Nostra Signora col bambino Gesù fra le braccia, e sei angeli all’intorno suonanti varie sorti d’instrumenti musicali, con due altri ai piedi, che gentilmente suonano un piccioł organo; nella cassa del quale stanno scritti alcuni versi in parte corrosi, de’ quali non intendonsi seguitamente altre parole che queste: *Surge Puer Roverella*. I quali versi ragionevolmente posso credersi fatti in lode di Lorenzo Roverella… Alla destra della Beata Vergine sono effigiati li santi Pietro, e Giorgio, ed un monaco ginocchione. Alla sinistra li santi Paolo e Maurelio, con un simile monaco parimenti genuflesso. Nel compartimento di sopra si vedono s. Bernardo e s. Benedetto; e nel più eminente posto in un gran semicerchio, appare Maria Vergine addolorata, con Cristo morto sù le ginocchia, compianto dalla medesima, da s. Giovanni e dalle Marie. La più bassa parte poi viene occupata da alcune tavolete, nelle quali espresse alcuni fatti di detti santi Benedetto, e Bernardo, con tanta minuzetze e studio, che si scorgono fino i più minuti peli, e sembrano miniate anzi che nò.”, Baruffaldi 1836, pp. 17-8.
² Baruffaldi 1844-6, I, p. 78.
³ “… avvi ancora il ritratto dello stesso Roverella vestito con pianeta all’antica, piegata sulle braccia, che sembra vestito in foggia monacale, ma ben si può paragonare colla statua marmorea del deposito, e si vedrà essere similiissimo. Sta egli ginocchioni in atto di battere colla mano non so qual cosa, e s’accorda benissimo con ciò che dicono i versi sopradetti…”, ibidem, p. 79.
(Tolomei, founder of the Olivetan Benedictine congregation) and Benedict. The lunette depicted the Virgin with the dead Christ in her lap, with Saint John and the Maries. The predella contained small panels (“tavolette”) with stories from the lives of the Saints Bernard and Benedict painted with miniature-like accuracy.

Sadly, only four elements of this altarpiece survive. The central compartment with the Virgin and Child enthroned and musician angels is in the National Gallery, London (fig. 131). The right-hand wing with the Saints Paul and Maurelius with a member of the Roverella family is in the Galleria Colonna, Rome (fig. 132). The head of Saint George in the San Diego Museum of Art is all that remains of the left-hand wing (fig. 133). The lunette with the dramatic Lamentation over the Dead Christ is in the Louvre (fig. 134). In 1894 the National Gallery panel was displayed at the exhibition of Emilian Art held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London. Next to it viewers could see a photograph of a painting which had been discovered shortly before in the private rooms of the Palazzo Colonna in Rome and which the curators rightly believed to have been the right-hand wing of the Roverella polyptych. In an article on that exhibition, dating from the same year, Adolfo Venturi was the first to propose the association of the panels in the National Gallery and the in Galleria Colonna with the lunette in the Louvre. These hypotheses formulated in 1894 seem to have been overlooked by scholars, who generally claim that the Pala Roverella was first reconstructed by Roberto Longhi in 1934. Drawing on Baruffaldi’s description, Longhi added the Saint George in San Diego to the three elements identified by Venturi. Longhi also proposed that three tondi in Boston and New York were part of the predella (fig. 135), but we do not agree with this suggestion for reasons that will be discussed below.

In the National Gallery panel the scene takes place underneath a coffered barrel vault resting on entablatures supported by pilasters. Scholars have not shown much attention for the setting of this picture, but we must point out that a comparable architecture, with a niche crowned by a scallop shell appears in the famous Prevedari engraving (1481), after a design by Donato Bramante, representing a pagan temple given over to Christian worship (fig. 136). The pilasters in the painting by Tura are decorated by candelabra which mix vases, vegetal motifs and wings (fig. 137). The gilded capitals are very ornate and show winged putti in profile.

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4 Maurizio Bonora (2007, p. 12) has convincingly proposed that the Saints Bernard and Benedict were represented as keeling, considering the fact that this pose expressing devotion was chosen by Tura for some figures in the lunette above, for the two donors and for the two angels playing the organ in the main compartment.

5 Exhibition of pictures 1894, p. XIV (introduction by R.H. Benson).

6 Venturi 1894, p. 90.


9 This comparison was kindly suggested to me by Dr Charles Robertson after a research seminar I gave at the National Gallery in June 2016. On the Prevedari engraving see Aldovini 2009 and 2012.
supporting cornucopias with fruits. Rather bizarrely, the pilasters are not of the same colour, the one on the left being pink and the other one green, the colours of the architecture represented in this picture and generously employed also for the figures. The architectural setting and the overall design of the altarpiece are discussed below, in relation to the wider context of altarpieces in North-eastern Italy.

The Virgin wears a gold and crimson brocade dress held by shiny green buttons, over a white shirt rising in a small fan (fig. 138). Her mantle is blue, with green lining and her gold coronet with inset red/blue and green/blue stones is topped with pearls. She is seated on a very elaborate throne, with a niche crowned by a lunette and a balustrade above it. The four golden Evangelist figures are shown above and in front of the balustrade, which is also decorated by two golden lamps in the form of bearded heads and by two monochrome shell-like roundels (the shells are in fact fabric) with heads of putti set against a black background (fig. 139). The putti have downcast eyes, possibly closed. Two golden cherubim are perched on the extrados of the lunette, with their feet resting rather precariously on cornucopia-like trumpets filled with ornamental vegetation (fig. 140). This includes cucumber-like gourds and two large bunches of grapes. These elements are further discussed below.

The two cherubim hold a gold ribbon interlaced within the cavities of two scallop shells decorating the lunette. The ribbon is strung with pearls and coral beads, hanging inside the niche, very close to the pearls that decorate the crown of the Virgin. The two shells are set one against the other, with their beaks touching, and are painted in contrasting colours, the one above with a pink interior and a green exterior, and vice versa for the other one (fig. 141). The pink is of a paler hue than the colour of the breccia marble of the throne. Although scholars writing about this painting have highlighted the fantastic nature of the architecture and the artificiality of its colours, we must point out that Tura is likely to have reproduced real materials and the marble of the throne might well be one of the varieties Rosa del Garda or Breccia Pernice from Verona. The entablature supporting the lunette is green, like the two rosettes on the extrados and the moulding at its top.

The right-hand pilaster now in green was first painted in pink, see Dunkerton, Roy and Smith 1987, p. 35. See also comments here below.

Stephen Campbell (1997, p. 115) has suggested that these heads wear the pileus cornutus, the horned Jewis cap.

Claudia Wardle (2016, pp. 33-4) has identified in the central panel of Mantegna’s San Zeno polyptych a prototype for the peculiar notion of fruit coming out from brass instruments.

The motif of the two scallop shells assembled one above the other is not new in Tura’s oeuvre. Indeed it appears in the drawing representing the Virgin and Child with Saint Sebastian, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Agatha and Saint Dominic in the British Museum, London (1885, 0509.1613), probably dating from the 1460s.

According to Robert H. Benson the Virgin and Child enthroned with angels in the National Gallery “with its peculiar scheme of colour, and divested as it is of wings and predella and frame, both repels and attracts”; Exhibition of pictures 1894, p. XIV. Nicholas Penny has pointed out that pink and green stones are used in some parts of Italy (for instance in Florence serpentine marble from Prato and bleached red Tuscan marble on the Campanile of the Duomo) but they “never have the confectionary brilliance found here”, Dunkerton et al., 1991, p. 326.
Two horned tablets with some of the words of the Ten Commandments inscribed in Hebrew appear on both sides of the Virgin’s seat (fig. 142). Burning lamps decorate the semi-circular elements at the top and bottom of the tablets. Burni.
The Virgin’s round footrest is made of alternating white and purplish squares, like the pavement on which the angels kneel in the foreground. This step is placed above a rather impractical tiered structure composed of blocks of light pink veined marble with an opening in the middle (fig. 143). As noted by Nicholas Penny “these blocks supporting the Virgin’s throne could not in fact support themselves let alone a throne”. In Ferrarese paintings of the Virgin and Child enthroned (for instance Ercole de’ Roberti’s San Lazzaro altarpiece, fig. 13) this sort of opening allowed a view onto a landscape. This is not the case here, as the blue sky serves as a backdrop to the action of the two angels playing the organ. The two angels standing on the throne play the rebec, while the other two sitting at the Virgin’s feet play the lute (fig. 144). As rightly pointed out by Lorne Campbell, the relationship between the pilasters, the stepped structure and the floor is rather uncertain. 

As far as the identification of the two donors is concerned, Martin Davies argued that Nicolò Roverella was a highly probable candidate for one of them and almost dismissed Cardinal Bartolomeo as a possibility. However, this suggestion was not pursued in subsequent literature and some scholars, including Giordana Mariani Canova and Stephen Campbell assumed that Bartolomeo was portrayed in the Colonna panel, coupled with Lorenzo in the lost wing (accepting Baruffaldi’s theory). Campbell noted that the figure in the right-hand compartment, wearing a long, trailing red garment, closely resembled Bartolomeo’s portrait in his tomb in San Clemente in Rome. In an article from 2008 Peverada, while supporting the identification of the donor in the Colonna panel with Bartolomeo, convincingly proposed that the kneeling figure knocking on the door of Paradise in the lost panel was Nicolò Roverella, pointing out that the act of supplication fitted his profession and the good fame he enjoyed. Furthermore Peverada suggested that Saint Maurelius should be identified as Lorenzo Roverella, pointing out that the lavishly adorned cope in crimson cloth of gold worn by the bishop saint might correspond to one of the copes described in the 1462 inventory of the liturgical furnishings kept in the sacristy of Ferrara cathedral. Finally, the author speculated

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15 These might be read as the fogo (fire) one of the personal emblems of Borso d’Este, as explained below. 
16 Dunkerton et al., 1991, p. 326 (entry by Nicholas Penny). 
17 Manuscript notes by Lorne Campbell (18 November 1997), National Gallery Conservation dossier (NG 772). 
19 Mariani Canova 1988, note 10 p. 32 
20 Campbell 1997, p. 113. 
22 “Unum pluviale de carmexino de auro riçato cum uno pulcerimo frixo recamato de auro et perlis cum figuris cum caputio suo recamato de auro cum s. Georgio super equo cum fiocho”. This precious vestment had been
that the Saint George might be a portrait of Florio Roverella, a sibling of Lorenzo, Bartolomeo and Nicolò, who covered several diplomatic and military tasks. This hypothesis was later rectified by Peverada, proposing that the Saint George represents Pietro Roverella instead, another sibling of the three brothers, a choice that can be explained by the fact that his sons were the ones who oversaw the commission of Tura’s altarpiece, as will be discussed below. In our opinion, these hypotheses on the identity of the donors proposed so far are partially correct. The information provided by Baruffaldi about the monastic habit worn by the donor on the left-hand panel is to be considered reliable. Therefore it seems most plausible that Nicolò Roverella, who was a key figure of the Olivetan congregation and played a major role in the commission of the altarpiece, was represented in the lost wing. It is more difficult to ascertain that the cleric represented in the Colonna panel is Bartolomeo. The latter is portrayed twice in his funerary monument by Andrea Bregno and Giovanni Dalmata in San Clemente in Rome (figs. 93 and 94), and considering that Bartolomeo conducted his career there, it is hard to explain the need of celebrating his memory also in an altarpiece for a Ferrarese church. We should also consider that in the aforementioned documents from the 1470s the projects for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella and the high altarpiece for San Giorgio appear to be strictly connected. Thus, it seems to us more likely that Lorenzo is the donor in the right-hand compartment (fig. 132). Analogies between the physiognomic traits of this figure and Lorenzo’s effigy in the tomb in San Giorgio (fig. 100) support this theory. Finally, we must point out that while Nicolò, who had been prior of San Giorgio, is conveniently placed below Saint George, Lorenzo, who had been bishop of Ferrara, is positioned below his illustrious predecessor Maurelius. The fact that Lorenzo is shown without clear episcopal attributes might be explained by the fact that Tura chose to give more visual emphasis to Saint Maurelius, who wears a luxurious chasuble. Our proposed identification of the donors as Lorenzo and Nicolò Roverella is confirmed by a reliable contemporary source. Girolamo Maria Ferrarini, who saw the altarpiece shortly after its installation (further discussed below) registered that it had been made in memory of the late bishop of Ferrara (Lorenzo Roverella) and of Fra Nicolò Roverella.

The fragment in San Diego shows the bust of Saint George (fig. 133), the style and the scale of which correspond with the other figures from the Roverella altarpiece. The plain black cap is similar to the red one worn by Saint Maurelius in the other panel. The wispy clouds in the

commissioned by bishop Francesco Dal Legname in the 1450s and the contract with master Antonio da Venezia from 1452 stipulated that he was to embroider nine figures, three of which half-size, see Peverada 2008, p. 47.

23 Idem 2009, p. 381.

24 I am most grateful to Guido Rebecchini for having raised this important point at the study day on Renaissance Ferrara organised by Professors Amanda Lillie and Kate Lowe on 29 June 2018 at the Warburg Institute, London.

25 It is important to recall that in his article on the 1894 exhibition on Ferrarese and Bolognese art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club Adolfo Venturi identified the donor in the panel recently found in the private rooms of the Palazzo Colonna with Lorenzo Roverella; Venturi 1894, p. 90. The author does not provide an explanation for this identification. No other scholar seems to have shared Venturi’s persuasive hypothesis.
sky are also comparable to the ones appearing in the Colonna picture. The fourth extant element from the altarpiece is the lunette now in the Louvre (fig. 134). Like the central panel of the main tier, here the scene takes place under a barrel coffered vault and the figures, seen from below, are staged on a platform of alternating red and white blocks. The Virgin is represented at the centre of the composition, with the body of the dead Christ in her lap (fig. 145). It is not easy to classify the Virgin’s seat, but the long foreshortened sides suggest that this could be a sarcophagus.\(^{26}\) Two kneeling Marys are on the left (fig. 146), while their other female older companion is on the other side, next to Saint John the Evangelist (fig. 147). The latter is the only figure looking at the viewer, with his right hand supporting Christ’s left arm and his left. Behind Saint John a male character is represented in a dynamic pose (fig. 148), with his left foot raised. Another male, but older figure appears to the left of the Virgin, with both his arms raised to express grief. All of the characters, with the exception of the Mary dressed in red, are represented with their mouths opened, some of them crying. While this scene of the lamentation over the body of the Dead Christ is very likely inspired by contemporary sculpted groups, such as those by Guido Mazzoni (fig. 14), the representation of emotions seems to be somehow subdued.\(^{27}\)

The group of the Virgin and the Dead Christ recalls the *Vesperbild*, a widespread type in Netherlandish and other Northern European art. Tura had already painted this subject in a small panel dating from 1460 (now in the Museo Correr, Venice, fig. 149), where the Virgin is seated on a sarcophagus and is represented as a mother tenderly accepting the death of her son, being aware that it will bring salvation to humankind. It is in this sense that we should interpret the hushed drama represented in the lunette once crowning the Roverella polyptych.

We come now to consider the hypothesis on the predella first formulated by Longhi and accepted in subsequent literature.\(^{28}\) Longhi argued that three circular panels with the *Flight into Egypt* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; fig. 150), the *Circumcision* (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; fig. 151) and the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fogg Museum, Cambridge MA; fig. 152) were part of the predella of the Roverella altarpiece, which might have included also stories of Saints Bernard and Benedict, as reported by Baruffaldi.\(^{29}\) According to Longhi,

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\(^{26}\) Manca (2000, p. 71) seems to be the only scholar to raise this question.

\(^{27}\) The aforementioned Lamentation group made by Mazzoni for the church of Santa Maria della Rosa dates from 1483-5. Ortolani (1941, p. 52) was among the first to highlight the affinities between Mazzoni and Tura, although he suggested that this dramatic representation by Tura was a source of inspiration for Mazzoni’s sculptures and not the other way round.


\(^{29}\) Longhi 1934, pp. 25-6. The connection between these three roundels and the possibility that they were part of a predella was first proposed by Venturi 1894, pp. 90-4. Several authors have accepted that these *tondi* are from a predella but resist the suggestion that they come from the Roverella altarpiece, see Ortolani 1941, pp. 56, 67; Davies 1951, p. 399; Ruhmer 1958, p. 177.
the predella was composed of seven *tondi* (fig. 135). Longhi argued that the style of the three *tondi* with stories from the infancy of Christ is the same as that of the panels of the polyptych and that in the *Circumcision*, which was at the centre of the predella, Tura repeated the “Solomonic architecture” of the main panel, almost with the style of a crypt.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, horned tablets appear in both the roundel in Boston and the *Virgin and Child enthroned* in the National Gallery. In his monograph on Tura Joseph Manca discussed the arguments in favour and against Longhi’s reconstruction. For instance, he rightly pointed out that the style of the main panels and that of the *tondi* does not correspond very well. Manca concluded his discussion by affirming that it is not impossible that they formed part of that altarpiece, but it is more likely that they “belonged to some other complex of unknown site and composition”.\(^{31}\) In a later publication Manca, dating the roundels to the mid-1470s, rejected their connection with the Roverella altarpiece.\(^{32}\) Writing in 2007, Marcello Toffanello allowed that the *tondi* date from the same period as the altarpiece (1474-80), but was unconvinced that they were part of that work.\(^{33}\)

Scholars who have dismissed Longhi’s reconstruction of the predella of the *Pala Roverella* include Kirsten Lippincott and Jill Dunkerton. Lippincott distanced the *tondi* from this polyptych, because they do not correspond to Baruffaldi’s description and their round shape would be unusual for a predella.\(^{34}\) As concerns the information provided by Baruffaldi, it is important to consider that usually predella scenes are related to the saints represented in the main compartment of an altarpiece, and not to secondary elements (like the *Saint Bernard* and the *Saint Benedict* in the pinnacles, now lost).\(^{35}\) However, an exception to this practice might be explained by the fact that Tura had already painted an altarpiece of Saint Maurelius for the chapel dedicated to him, and it would have been redundant to insert stories from his life (along with those of Saint George) in another polyptych for the same church. The choice of representing episodes from the lives of Saint Bernard Tolomei, founder of the Olivetan congregation, and Saint Benedict, whose rule this congregation followed, seems to us appropriate for the high altarpiece of an Olivetan church, especially if the church had no other altarpieces dedicated to these saints.\(^{36}\)

Jill Dunkerton has convincingly explained that there are several technical reasons for doubting the connection of the *tondi* with the Roverella altarpiece. Firstly, the direction of the grain of the panels was almost vertical, slanting very slightly to the left. Such a predella, made

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\(^{30}\) Longhi 1934, p. 25.  
\(^{31}\) Manca 2000, p. 98.  
\(^{32}\) Italian paintings 2003, pp. 663, 665 no. 4 (entry by J. Manca).  
\(^{33}\) Toffanello in *Cosmè Tura* 2007, pp. 342-3.  
\(^{34}\) The Dictionary 1996, p. 431 (entry by K. Lippincott).  
\(^{35}\) Toffanello in *Cosmè Tura* 2007, p. 340.  
\(^{36}\) The first altarpieces of the Blessed Tolomei and of Saint Benedict in San Giorgio are documented only in the seventeenth century, as discussed in chapter 5.
out of several joined vertical planks “instead of the usual one or two horizontal boards would not only have involved unnecessary labor, but would also have introduced structural weakness in the predella box, which had to support much of the weight of the main part of the altarpiece”. The supports of the *tondi* have been altered and it is impossible to establish their original function, or even whether the planks have a continuous grain which would indicate that one was once above another. Dunkerton proposed that, “given their vertical orientation, the panels are more likely to have been part of shutters, or perhaps doors to some piece of ecclesiastical furniture”. Finally, the palette of the *tondi* is more muted than that of the Roverella panels, in contradiction of the usual tendency for predella scenes to be painted in colours higher in tone than those of the main altarpiece.

These technical reasons pointed out by Dunkerton are persuasive, but there is a new element which needs to be considered, which further supports her arguments. As will be discussed below, the *Pala Roverella* was installed on San Giorgio’s high altar in 1487. The stylistic gap between the three *tondi* and the main compartments of the polyptych could be explained by the different dating. Indeed, the style of the roundels is comparable to that of works generally considered to fall in the 1470s, such as the *Annunciation with the Saints Francis and Louis of Toulouse* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 153). In our opinion it is highly unlikely that the three roundels were included in the Roverella altarpiece.

4.2 Technical notes

**The Virgin and Child enthroned with musician angels** (fig. 131)
National Gallery, London (NG 772)
Oil with some egg tempera on poplar; 242 x 102 cm

**The Saints Maurelius and Paul with Lorenzo Roverella** (fig. 132)
Galleria Colonna, Rome
Oil with some egg tempera on poplar; 153 x 75.3 cm

**The Lamentation** (fig. 134)
Louvre, Paris (M.I. 485)
Oil with some egg tempera on canvas (transferred from wood in 1893); 131.2 x 268 cm

**Saint George** (fig. 133)
San Diego Museum of Art (inv. 44:3)
Oil with some egg tempera on poplar; 38.7 x 29.1 cm

37 Dunkerton 2002, p. 141. The author pointed out that the two roundels with stories of Saint Maurelius now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, belonging to an altarpiece made by Tura for the chapel dedicated to this saint in San Giorgio “are painted on panels with a horizontal grain and may well have been part of a predella, although one of rather unusual proportions”, ibidem, p. 142.

38 Ibidem. Schubring (1915, pp. 151, 352) suggested that the three *tondi* were from a piece of church furniture, perhaps a baptismal font; this hypothesis was echoed by Venturi, 1931, no. CCLXI and Hendy 1931, p. 382.
The Virgin and Child with musician angels in the National Gallery is composed of three vertical planks, with vertical grain. The left join is visible at the centre of the left tablet of Commandments, while the right join is slightly right of the centre of the right tablet. The three planks (about 28, 48 and 26 cm wide respectively, starting from the left, and with variable thickness of 2.5 to 3 cm) are held together by tree horizontal battens, unlikely to be original, but set in the original position and held by metal brackets. Vertical lines incised 1.4 cm from the edges of the original panel might indicate the framing area. A single plank of poplar was used for the painting in the Galleria Colonna, which at some point was cut about fifteen centimeters along the top, losing an area containing an inscription in gold capital letters. Two battens, running respectively 13.8 cm from the top and 28 cm from the bottom edges, secured this wing to the central and left elements of the altarpiece main tier. The clearly visible join damages in the lunette in the Louvre reveal that is was composed by at least three planks assembled horizontally. These damages were the main reason for the transfer onto canvas carried out in 1893. It is difficult to say whether there were two additional strips at the top and bottom (which would have been covered by the frame).

The perspective lines of the architecture are ruled and incised (fig. 154). Architecture circles are also incised and freehand curves are seen behind the Virgin’s head, generally stopping at the contours of the figures. One exception appears in the lunette, where the lines continue on Christ’s body. Incisions are also used for the haloes of the six angels and the capitals above the pilasters. The capitals with putti supporting horns of plenty were drawn using the same tracing, which was reversed for the symmetrical parts (fig. 155). The capitals where later incised, probably for gilding which was never carried out.

As it was his usual practice, Tura made detailed underdrawings for the figures on the gesso using a carbon based liquid drawing material, indicating modelling and light and shade by hatching of different weight (fig. 156). Cross sections made from paint samples of both the panels in London and in Rome show that a very thin paint layer is applied over the gesso and underdrawing, containing small amounts of the colour employed in the principal paint layers. The possibility that the painter was finalizing the distribution of colours across the composition

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39 The text that follows summarizes Jill Dukerton’s analysis (2002) and elements resulting from the examinations of the painting conducted in the National Gallery Conservation studio by the present writer (6 June 2016; with the assistance of Jill Dunkerton, Rachel Billinge and Marika Spring) and by Lorne Campbell (18 November 1997). I am most grateful to Lorne for allowing me to consult his exhaustive notes.

40 As kindly indicated by Mauro Natale, visible traces of the letters could be what remains of the words “Sanctus Maurelius”, or an invocation to the Virgin.

41 Dunkerton 2002, p. 137.
could be confirmed only by extensive sampling. This method might be connected with the colouring of drawings and cartoons for tapestries.\textsuperscript{42}

As observed by Jill Dunkerton, at first sight the palette of the extant fragments of the \textit{Pala Roverella}, especially of the painting in the National Gallery, seems rather restricted, with architecture and draperies painted in hues of pink, green and blue, with occasional areas of golden brown for cloth-of-gold draperies and architectural details. However, Tura’s technical abilities allowed him to achieve subtle variations of colour and tone (now less apparent as a result of damage and time) within these limitations. For instance, the several shades of pink were completed with glazes of pure red lake, which appear different as a result of minimal variations in the composition of the underlayers.\textsuperscript{43}

Tura’s painting technique owed much to Netherlandish masters, and this is especially visible in the luxurious crimson pile-on-pile velvet cloth of gold of the cope worn by Saint Maurelius (fig. 157). The Virgin wears a dress of a comparable fabric and the red velvet pattern is painted applying red lake with a brush so loaded that the oil-rich paint slides down to form thick accumulations of colour along the lower edges of the shapes (fig. 158). Analysis of paint medium has shown the artist’s ability in achieving refined chromatic effects by alternating linseed oil and walnut oil (preferred for darker colours).\textsuperscript{44} As in other paintings, Tura employed rapid-drying egg tempera medium for underlayers and oil for the upper layers. This seems to have been a common practice in the fifteenth century, not only in Italy but also in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{45}

As far as paint condition is concerned, Jill Dunkerton has pointed out that the disparity in colour between the skies in the London, Rome and San Diego panels is the result of their different conservation histories. It seems likely that thin glazes of old repaint and discoloured varnish still remains on the surface of the Colonna wing.\textsuperscript{46} The sky of the lunette in Paris is rather dark and, considering the dramatic subject, it is plausible that it was originally darker than that of the other elements of the altarpiece.\textsuperscript{47} While red lake has faded to some extent, in many areas the ultramarine has suffered from the form of deterioration commonly called “ultramarine sickness”. This is especially visible in the Virgin’s mantle (fig. 159), which “has lost contrast and depth in the modelling and now appears too similar in tone to the paler blue of the sky”.\textsuperscript{48} This problem also applied to the mantle of the Virgin in the lunette, which is also covered by a layer of discoloured varnish. The flesh paint of Christ and of the Virgin (fig. 160) is among the areas

\textsuperscript{42} Ibidem, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{44} Dunkerton 1999, pp. 93-8; Poldi and Villa 2007, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{45} Dunkerton 2002, pp. 140-1.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibidem, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{47} This could be confirmed only when analysis of paint samples will be carried out for this painting.
\textsuperscript{48} Dunkerton 2002, p. 140.
which has most suffered from the transfer onto canvas, which caused the abrasion of the paint layers. However, some passages have remained intact in spite of the transfer, in particular the highlights containing more lead white (for instance on the belt and the calcei or laced shoe-boots of the third figure from the left, figs. 161-162). The haloes, with the exception of few retouches, seem to be well preserved and one can appreciate nice hatching in some parts (fig. 163). As suggested by Jill Dunkerton, Tura might have used mosaic gold for the larger areas of the haloes. Finally, one rather beautiful aspect of this Lamentation is the accuracy with which the artist painted details such as the tears of Saint John the Evangelist and the Mary next to him (figs. 164-165) and the blood spilling from Christ’s wounds (fig. 162). This is somehow exceptional, if we think that the viewer would have not been able to appreciate these details in this painting hung at a considerable height, and testifies to Tura’s brilliant technique.

4.3 The frame

The dimensions of the extant compartments of the Roverella altarpiece suggest that this was surely a monumental work, measuring no less than 4.5 by 3 metres. There is little doubt that the wooden frame that enclosed the various panels was an integral part of the pala. Like in Mantegna’s San Zeno altarpiece (overall dimensions 440 x 460 x 40 cm; fig. 166), which seems to have been a model for Tura, the frame might have contributed to unify the compartments of the main tier, as well as to create a single three-dimensional space, together with the painted architecture. Therefore, it seems most plausible that Tura designed the whole structure, or had at least a controlling voice in his collaboration with the woodcarver and gilder.

In 2007 the Ferrarese artist Maurizio Bonora produced a reconstruction of the Pala Roverella (fig. 167). In this large work made with graphite on paper, the artist proposed for the first time a perspective rendering of the polyptych and a reconstruction of its frame (fig. 168). The frame imagined by Bonora includes a predella box which supports a main tier composed of four pilasters with elaborate capitals (similar to those shown in the painted panels). The crowning lunette, with the extrados decorated by two rosettes at the top and two on either side derives from the original frame of Tura’s Virgin with the sleeping Infant Christ (or Madonna of the

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49 I am most grateful to Jill Dunkerton, who examined with me the lunette in Louvre in September 2018, for the fruitful discussion we had while looking closely at this painting.

50 Marcello Toffanello (2010, note 190, p. 86) has suggested that the frame of the Roverella altarpiece was most probably designed by Tura.
**Zodiac**, Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice, usually dated about 1470, fig. 169. \(^{51}\) A similar extrados is found in the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella.

We can take this reconstruction further and speculate that the pilasters of both the frame and the panels by Tura shared common ornamental motifs. Like Mantegna’s San Zeno altarpiece, here the pilasters of the frame would have formed a sort of temple façade, giving optical depth to the whole ensemble, and aligning the spatial recession of the sacred scene so that the viewer is looking into the front of a box where the perspective runs logically away, up the floor plane and down the ribs of the barrel vaults. Considering the upper part of the central panel and the two compartments with half-figures of saints that once flanked it, Bonora seems to be right in his reconstruction, proposing that Saints Bernard and Benedict were kneeling under barrel vaults.

The frame of the *Madonna of the Zodiac* recalls the Florentine tabernacle type with curvilinear tympanum that was diffused in the Veneto by Donatello and used by Nicolò Pizolo in the frame of the terracotta altarpiece for the Ovetari chapel and by Andrea Mantegna in his *San Zeno* polyptych (fig. 166). Marcello Toffanello has convincingly proposed that the frame of the *Madonna of the Zodiac* was probably made by one of the woodcarvers active for the Este court, like Stefano di Donna Bona, Giacomo di Giuseppe or Bernardino da Venezia (Bernardino Rugeri di Giovanni). In 1474 the last of these gave Duke Ercole I a portable altarpiece with *all’antica* carvings (“una anchona de intaio cum foiami minuti minuti e lavori alantiqua”), on which Tura painted the Virgin and Child with eight figures of saints. \(^{52}\)

If this is the only documented example of the collaboration between Tura and Bernardino, we know that the latter executed carved frames for paintings by Ercole Roberti. On 24 January 1494 the painter and the woodcarver were contracted by Clara Clavell for the execution of the altarpiece of the Annunciation and its carved *ancona* for an altar in the church of Santo Spirito. \(^{53}\) The contract stipulated that Bernardino was to produce a “tabula” six feet wide and fourteen feet tall, to be carved following the design provided by Roberti. Once the latter had finished his work, Bernardino was to install the completed altarpiece in Santo Spirito. This is the first documented example of a Ferrarese altarpiece of which both the frame and the painted elements are designed by a painter.

About twenty years earlier Ercole Roberti had delivered one of the major altarpieces painted in Ferrara in the second half of the fifteenth century, the *Virgin and Child enthroned with Saints* (fig. 13) for San Lazzaro, a church administered by the Lateran Canons (San Lazzaro was

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\(^{51}\) A comparable frame encloses the devotional panel of the *Virgin and Child* attributed to Vicino da Ferrara, with a date in the 1480s, now in a private collection; see Benati 1990, pp. 53-9. According to Adriano Cavicchi, the frame bears a coat of arms with an oak tree, most likely the one of the Roverella.

\(^{52}\) Toffanello in *Cosmè Tura* 2007, p. 320.

less than one kilometer away from San Giorgio). The painting, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, was destroyed in 1945. Catherine Turrill has argued that *all’antica* frames including mouldings, pilasters and friezes would have been appropriate for the San Lazzaro and the Portuense altarpieces, given their rectangular shape, unified composition and classically-inspired architectural details. The now lost frame of the *Pala Portuense* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) was executed by Bernardino da Venezia. In 1480 the same craftsman worked on the choir stalls with marquetry panels for San Lazzaro and it is possible that he was also responsible for the frame of the high altarpiece painted by Ercole.

We agree with Bonora’s choice of the frame of Mantegna’s altarpiece for San Zeno as a model for his reconstruction of the Pala Roverella, as it seems to us that no better type of frame would have suited Tura’s masterpiece. The frame of the *Pala di San Zeno* (fig. 170), made of carved wood, gilded and painted in blue in some areas, is composed of seven elements: the predella box, four half-columns, the entablature and the broken curvilinear pediment. The Corinthian capitals of the half-columns, the entablature and the pediment are adorned with vegetal motifs executed in *pastiglia*. Originally the whole altarpiece was supported by a wooden structure made of battens inserted into the altar; this was replaced by a modern one which holds the *pala* in place today in the apse of San Zeno. Furthermore it appears that initially the altarpiece was not placed directly onto the altar, but stood on a sort of ledge above it. It needs to be pointed out that the visual impact on today’s visitor is rather different from the one experienced by the monks who sat in the choir stalls before the altarpiece in the fifteenth century. Indeed at that time the *pala* was set against a wall erected behind the high altar. As argued by Paola Marini, this wall might have had different functions: closing the choir, acting as support and background to Mantegna’s altarpiece, partially blocking the light coming from the tall windows of the apse, which could have been too strong for those who assisted to the functions celebrated at the high altar.

All these elements concerning the structure and the way Mantegna’s altarpiece was installed in the apse of San Zeno need to be kept in mind when thinking about the *Pala Roverella* within its original context. Finally, we should not forget that Tura’s polyptych was part of a

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54 It is interesting to recall that until the 1930s this altarpiece was considered a work by Tura, see Turrill 1995, p. 129. The high altar of San Lazzaro was dedicated to the Saints Augustine and Jerome, who occupy a prominent position within Ercole’s altarpiece.
55 Turrill 1995, p. 126. The *Pala Portuense* was painted in 1479-81 by Ercole for the church of Santa Maria in Porto, outside Ravenna.
56 On the frame of the San Zeno altarpiece see Brogi et al., 2009.
57 Ibidem, p. 189.
58 For this speculation by Alessandro Da Lisca (1868-1947), *funzionario* of the Soprintendenza of Verona, see Marini 2008, p. 21.
59 Traces of the wall, about six metres high and 30 centimetres deep were found on the pilasters separating the presbytery from the apse by Alessandro Da Lisca in the late 1910s, see Marini 2008, p. 20.
60 Ibidem, pp. 20-1.
larger project, and it is well possible that its frame reflected some of the ornamental motifs employed in the funerary monument of Lorenzo Roverella, which had been erected in the cappella maggiore some years earlier.

4.4 Dating and location

In the literature on Tura the Pala Roverella has been dated to the second half of the 1470s. Most scholars have considered the death of Lorenzo Roverella in 1474 as the terminus post quem. Mariani Canova suggested that the altarpiece was commissioned after 1474 by Bartolomeo Roverella and executed before his death in 1476. Stephen Campbell proposed a date in the mid-1470s. Joseph Manca judged the execution of the pala to fall about 1474, but left open the possibility of a date around the time of the rededication of the church in 1479.

The starting point for discussing the date of Tura’s altarpiece is a careful consideration of the information provided by the surviving documents concerning the Roverella patronage of the cappella maggiore at San Giorgio, already discussed in chapter 3. The adornment of the high altar is first referred to in the will of cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella dictated on 29 April 1476. A donation to the monks of San Giorgio was intended to pay for the decoration of the cappella maggiore (“tribuna maioris altaris”) and for the tomb of his brother Lorenzo, both commissions to be in the hands of Nicolò Roverella. In a document from 5 July 1476 the Olivetan chapter granted the heirs of Lorenzo Roverella permission to erect his funerary monument and to provide an ancona for the high altar, which would celebrate his memory. It is clear from these two documents that the tomb and the pala were intended as elements of a single project for the cappella maggiore.

It seems that the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella had the priority. Indeed Ambrogio da Milano had completed the architectural parts of the monument by 1475 and Antonio Rossellino received payments for sculptures for the tomb in the same year. But it appears that no action had been taken about the altarpiece, at least in the following two years. This is suggested by the will of count Girolamo Roverella (nephew of Lorenzo, Bartolomeo and Nicolò, and one of the executors of Bartolomeo) drafted on 18 September 1478, in which he stipulated that fifty gold ducats be spent to erect “a beautiful adornment for the high altar” of San Giorgio.
From a further document drafted on 23 December 1479 we learn that the archbishop of Ravenna Filiasio Roverella (the brother of Girolamo and Antonio), arranged an annual donation of two hundred golden ducats which would also cover the expenses for the “ornament of the high altar” of San Giorgio. Cosmé Tura is listed among the witnesses. Both Girolamo’s and Filiasio’s donations suggest that the high altarpiece was on their agenda, but it had not been contracted yet. After Nicolò’s death in 1480 control of this project was taken over by Antonio, Girolamo and Filiasio Roverella.

No other documents related to the high altarpiece of San Giorgio seem to survive. However, in 2006 a relevant Ferrarese source was published by Primo Griguolo. The Memoriale Estense is a chronicle covering the period between 1476 and 1489 written by Girolamo Maria Ferrarini, a jurisconsult and a relative of the Roverella. Under the date 19 August 1487 Ferrarini records that he accompanied Filiasio to the church of San Giorgio outside Ferrara, to see the ancona made in memory of the late bishop of Ferrara (Lorenzo Roverella) and of fra Nicolò Roverella. The pala had been installed that month on the high altar of San Giorgio. Filiasio spent some time looking at the altarpiece and then left on a boat, while Ferrarini stayed in San Giorgio to have lunch with count Girolamo Roverella. Strangely, the diarist does not mention the name of the painter of the ancona. However, we might speculate that Tura was present in the Olivetan church on that day, to accompany his patrons to see the masterpiece he had produced, finally installed in its intended location.

It is rather surprising that Griguolo chose the right-side panel of the Pala Roverella for the cover of his book but overlooked the crucial fact that Ferrarini provides the date of installation of San Giorgio’s high altarpiece. The authors of the catalogue of the exhibition on Cosmè Tura and Francesco del Cossa held at Palazzo dei Diamanti in the autumn of 2007 were not aware of this publication, and proposed the date 1474-76 for the pala. Ferrarini’s chronicle remained unnoticed until the attentive eye of Don Enrico Peverada spotted the precious account of the visit of the small committee to San Giorgio in 1487, and wrote an article about it. He convincingly suggested that the altarpiece may have been installed in time for the feast of San Lorenzo, celebrated on 10 August.

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67 Appendix, no. 16. The donation was also to contribute to the expenses for the building works of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo.

68 Ferrarini 2006.

69 The manuscript is held in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena (ms. It. 178 = α.F.5.18).

70 “Io lo [Filiasio] accompagnai insino alla giesia di frati di Santo Zorzi fora di Ferrara et li stete sua signoria per alquanto spacio per vedere la anchona facta fare per lo vescovo di Ferrara passato deli Roverelli vel per frate Nicolo de dicto ordine et deli Roverelli anchora lui, aol alta grande de Santo Zorzi; la qual anchona di questo mexe li è stà posta a dicto altare. Poi montò in nave et se parti, et dopo fu partito el conte Hieronymo Roverella et mi desenasimo a sancto Zorzi...”, Ferrarini 2006, p. 274.

71 Peverada 2009, p. 370. The discovery of the latter author about the date of installation of the Roverella altarpiece was acknowledged by Cecilia Cavalcà (2013, p. 167) in her exhaustive volume on altarpieces in Bologna in the second half of the fifteenth-century.
The date of the installation of the *Pala Roverella* revealed by Ferrarini is about ten years later than the one suggested by most scholars. They assumed that the altarpiece commemorating Lorenzo Roverella and other members of his family was executed not too long after his death (perhaps following instructions that Lorenzo might have dictated in his will), and around the same time of the funerary monument. However, the events followed a different course and we should explore the possible reasons for the gap between the plausible terminus *ante quem* of 1479 (year of the re-dedication of the church to the Saint George, Maurelius and Lawrence) for the erection of the tomb and the installation of the high altarpiece in 1487.

Peverada has rightly argued that Filiasio, with his generous annual donation arranged at the end of 1479, gave significant impulse to the project of the high altarpiece for San Giorgio.\(^2\) The presence of Cosmé Tura as a witness at the stipulation of this donation is perhaps to be interpreted as a sign that he had been already designated to execute the work. In the late 1470s Tura was still employed by the Este, and we might wonder whether his activity as court painter left him enough time to work on a major and complex commission for other patrons.\(^3\) We should leave this possibility open, as it did happen that under special circumstances court artists could undertake external works, provided that they were granted permission from their employers. Indeed, as we have seen in chapter 1, a letter addressed to duke Ercole I in 1490 attests that in the mid-1480s some figures from the Este entourage had requested works from Tura. In 1484 the artist painted an altarpiece for the ducal secretary Francesco Nasello for the church of San Nicolò as well as a painting of Saint Anthony of Padua for Nicolò di Gurone d'Este, Bishop of Adria.\(^4\)

If we consider the early 1480s as a possible date for the commission or early stages of execution of the *Pala Roverella* we should also bear in mind that this was a rather difficult period for Ferrara. The city was involved in a disastrous war against Venice and Pope Sixtus IV. The War of Ferrara (also known as the Salt War) began in 1482 after Venice had attacked the duchy of Ferrara over commercial and territorial disputes. After two years of strenuous fighting, the hostilities ended with the Treaty of Bagnolo, signed on 7 August 1484. Ercole I d’Este relinquished the territory of Rovigo to the Republic of Venice but successfully avoided the absorption of Ferrara into the Papal States. The war had strong impacts not only on the territory, but also on the city, as fighting came close to its walls. In March 1483, for instance, the Venetians managed to get to the Certosa, Belfiore and Santa Maria degli Angeli, even if this

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\(^3\) For Tura’s documented activity for the Este see Toffanello 2010, pp. 228-33.

seems not to have had serious consequences for the buildings.\textsuperscript{75} We also need to recall that an outbreak of plague struck the city in 1482.

We can get a sense of the critical situation in Ferrara from the words of an anonymous diarist, who, after reporting that on 19 June 1482 the banks of the Po River at Lamian (Ameano according to Zambotti) broke, flooding the territory of the Polesine with disastrous consequences for local agriculture, recorded that “several people starved to death and many died; and so we had fire, water, famine, plague and war”.\textsuperscript{76} Writing at the end of October 1483 the chronicler Bernardino Zambotti noted that Ferrara was struck by three calamities: war, famine and plague (with at least sixteen people dying every day).\textsuperscript{77} It is certainly possible that in this critical situation fewer artistic commissions were undertaken, and we could argue that Tura’s activity was somehow affected by these calamitous events.

In 1485 the artist was still employed by the Este. In August he received a payment for a drawing reproducing the silverware displayed on the credenza at the Este court palace to be sent to Ludovico il Moro. Furthermore he painted a portrait of Beatrice d’Este, also for Ludovico, her future husband.\textsuperscript{78} From the mid-1480s Tura’s name is no longer mentioned in the Este account books and after 1485 Ercole Roberti, who had returned to Ferrara, seems to have replaced Cosmé as the duke’s favourite painter. Tura’s documented activity for the court and some Este associates in 1484-5 does not exclude the possibility that around the same time he had undertaken the commission for the Roverella, who were closely connected to the Este. A comparable situation took place about one decade later, when Ercole Roberti, then employed as court artist by Ercole I, was requested to execute the aforementioned\textit{ pala} for Clara Clavell for the church of Santo Spirito.\textsuperscript{79}

Bearing all aforementioned elements in mind, the 29 December 1479 (date of the act of donation of Filiasiò Roverella) seems a plausible terminus\textit{ post quem} for the commission to Tura. Since he was a very efficient artist, who is known to have generally met his deadlines, we might speculate that the execution of the altarpiece was not protracted over a long period of time.\textsuperscript{80} However, we must allow for the possibility that the difficulties arisen during the years of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[75]\textit{Diario Ferrarese} 1409 -1502, p. 107, 11 March 1483.
\item[76]“... et morino molte persone de fame et fu grande moria: et costi havessemo focho, aqua, carastia, peste et guerra”, Ibidem, pp. 100-1.
\item[77]“Nota che de questo mezo heramo percossi de tre gran calamitade, 1a per la guerra grande, 2a per la carestia, chè el staro del nostro fromento se vendeva soldi 45 e la farina 55, poi la peste crudele tochava che non hera may zorno che almeno non ne morexe sedexe”, Zambotti 1934-7, p. 148.
\item[78]Toffanello 2010, p. 232-3.
\item[79]This was a fairly large altarpiece, measuring about 560 x 240 cm. Ercole was to receive one hundred ducats for painting an Annunciation in the main compartment, the Adoration of the Magi and the Circumcision in the predella, four saints on two pilasters and God the Father in the\textit{ cimasa}. The “tabula” was to be prepared by the woodcarver Bernardino da Venezia, who was given six months to carve it, for a fee of fifty-eight\textit{ lire maršeane}. The contracts were published by Franceschini 1993-97, II, part 2 (1997), docs. 106-107, pp. 108-110. Ercole died in 1496, two years after stipulating the contract, and is it possible that he left this work unfinished.
\item[80]On Tura’s efficiency see Stemp 1991, p. 63.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
War of Ferrara and the health problems the painter had in the mid-1480s slowed his work down. Moreover, we should consider that this was Tura’s most ambitious project, and it might have required additional time for its completion.

The authors of three major monographs on Tura, Campbell (1997), Molteni (1999) and Manca (2000) were not aware of the 1476 document published by Franceschini in 1995 (which reveals the Roverella’s intention to commission the high altarpiece of San Giorgio) and gave for granted the location of the *pala* provided by Baruffaldi in the eighteenth century, without investigating whether this place was suitable to a polyptych of rather large dimensions. In other words these scholars did not show much interest in the original context of such an important masterpiece. Richard Stemp is the only author to have given some serious thought to this crucial issue. In an essay on fifteenth-century sculpture in Ferrara from 2004 Stemp suggested that the *Pala Roverella* and Lorenzo’s funerary monument were intended to be seen together in the *cappella maggiore* of San Giorgio. It is surprising that twenty-two years passed after the publication of the 1476 notarial act, before Marcello Toffanello and Francesca Petrucci (in an essay on Tuscan sculpture in Ferrara) pointed out the important implications of this document. The prominent location of the Roverella altarpiece was also mentioned by Don Enrico Peverada in two articles published in 2008 and 2009. So far no scholars have investigated the original context of this masterpiece by Tura.

It is hard to tell the exact location of the high altar, which was raised above some steps, as required by the 1434 contract for the erection of the new east end of the church. When thinking about this monumental altarpiece, we also need to consider its weight and how it sat on the altar. For instance, we might wonder whether it was raised above a ledge fixed onto the altar and supported by a system of battens, like Mantegna’s San Zeno altarpiece. We should also consider the surrounding apsidal space, but sadly there is no available information on its decoration. If the *cappella maggiore* was built according to the instructions given in the 1434 contract, it was lit by two windows and an oculus. The National Gallery panel is lit from the right and we might wonder whether this element reflects the opening of an extra window in the apse, as was the case for the San Zeno altarpiece by Mantegna.

As will be discussed below, Tura’s altarpiece was removed from the high altar when the new apse was built in 1581. It is worth recalling some relevant Ferrarese sources which provide

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81 Tura’s poor health is mentioned by Touhy 1996, p. 298.
82 Campbell 1997, p. 100 (the “enormous altarpiece, originally 4 metres in height, was in the private chapel of the Roverella – which appears to have been little more than an altar in the north aisle”); Molteni 1999, p. 106; Manca 2000, p. 114 (“Baruffaldi... established that the picture now in London was the central panel of an altarpiece in the Roverella ‘chapel’, probably on the wall of the north aisle in San Giorgio”).
84 Toffanello 2007, p. 28; Petrucci 2007, pp. 154, 163, note 19. See also Toffanello 2010, pp. 5, 501.
information on the location of the polyptych after this date. According to Agostino Superbi (1620) the *Pala Roverella* was in the chapel next to that of Santa Francesca Romana, in the north aisle.86 This seems to be confirmed by Marcantonio Guarini, who recorded the altarpiece by Tura in the “first chapel to the right when leaving the said chapel of Saint Maurelius”. 87

Another Ferrarese author, Carlo Brisighella recalled that the first altar when leaving the chapel of Saint Maurelius was dedicated to Santa Francesca Romana. In that location he had seen the Roverella altarpiece, a few years before it was partially destroyed by cannon fire in 1709.88 In his life of Tura, written about 1706, Girolamo Baruffaldi, after mentioning the altarpiece of Saint Maurelius, at that time already replaced by a painting by Guercino, reports that the only work by Cosmé in San Giorgio was the “tavola” on the Roverella altar, without adding further details.89

In one of his notes to Baruffaldi’s text Giuseppe Petrucci explained that according to local historians the chapel of Saint Maurelius was under the patronage of the Roverella. 90 Petrucci pointed out that the two altarpieces by Tura were in the same chapel: the *pala* of Saint Maurelius was on the altar and the polyptych of the Virgin and child with Saints and Roverella donors was on a wall.

In a later biography of Tura included in the *Vite dei pittori ferraresi* (published in 1844) Baruffaldi stated that the Roverella altarpiece was by the campanile. 91 This was interpreted by Giuseppe Boschini, the editor of this volume, as an indication that Tura’s work was hung on the north wall of the church, on the altar by the door leading to the bell tower, before entering the chapel of Saint Maurelius.92 Boschini therefore disagreed with the hypothesis formulated by Petrucci some years earlier, according to which the *Pala Roverella* was in the chapel of Saint Maurelius. This seems indeed implausible, as this large altarpiece would not have fitted in this chapel, nor it is possible that it was hung in the antechapel, considering the fact that in 1690 Francesco Ferrari decorated its two walls and lunettes with episodes from the life of Saint Maurelius.

86 Superbi 1620, p. 122. The chapel of Santa Francesca Romana was the first on the north side of the nave, when leaving the presbytery. It was pushed back when the north aisle was created in the 1680s.
87 “... l’altra posta nella prima cappella alla destra nell’uscire dalla sopradetta di San Maurelio dipinta dal famoso Gusmeo”, Guarini 1621, p. 394.
88 “...fuori di detta cappella (Maurelio) il primo altare è dedicato a Santa Francesca Romana. In questo sito pochi anni sono era una tavola antica coll’immagine di Maria Vergine, alcuni Santi e certi ritratti della famiglia Roverella fra li quali il Vescovo Lorenzo, dipinti da Cosmé ma offesa la tavola da un colpo di cannone rimase lacera, et indecente e perciò fu levata e posta in una stanza del monastero”, Brisighella 1991, p. 561.
89 Baruffaldi 1836, p. 17.
90 Petrucci recalled that according to Scalabrini (1773) the patrons of the altar of Saint Maurelius were the Roverella and that the other altarpiece by Tura “on the Roverella altar” was in the chapel of Saint Maurelius when it was damaged in 1709.
91 “... l’altra pala, ch’io ho veduta per molti anni, era nella chiesa presso la torre delle campane”, Baruffaldi 1844-6, I, p. 77.
92 Ibidem, note 3, p. 77.
The location suggested by Superbi, Guarini, Brisighella and Baruffaldi (1844 edition) seems to correspond with the first bay of the north aisle, between the altar of Santa Francesca Romana and the chapel of Saint Maurelius. If this is correct, the door leading to the bell tower we see today must have been blocked by the altarpiece.\footnote{A door (now bricked up) on the north wall of the vestibule of the chapel of Saint Maurelius would have provided access to the campanile from the outside.}

4.5 Iconography of the altarpiece

As explained previously, this altarpiece was part of a larger decorative project for the \textit{cappella maggiore} of San Giorgio, together with the funerary monument of Bishop Lorenzo Roverella. The polyptych was commissioned to celebrate the memory of the brothers Lorenzo and Nicolò Roverella, who were represented on the side wings. The donor on the left-hand panel (now lost), was depicted in the act of knocking, plausibly on the door of Heaven. This motif, as first pointed out by Penny, was most likely invented for someone recently dead (Nicolò, died in 1480, according to our interpretation) and the idea of representing the donor in the act of knocking is an extraordinary invention (generally the donor is merely a beholder in an altarpiece).\footnote{Dunkerton \textit{et al.}, 1991, p. 329 (entry by Nicholas Penny).} The verses inscribed on the organ (now partially lost; fig. 171) are a crucial element for interpreting the meaning of the altarpiece. The couplet \textit{Imago Virginis excitandis filium} by the poet Bigo Pittorio (published in 1492) actually reads: “Surge puer. Roverella forens gens pulsat./Apertum redde adytum. Pulsa lex ait, intus eris” (“Arise, boy, the Roverella family are knocking outside. Let entry be given unto them. The law says ‘knock, you shall be admitted’”; see the reconstruction of the inscription made by Maurizio Bonora, fig. 172).\footnote{Translation provided by Stephen Campbell (1997, p. 107). The same author (ibidem, p. 114) rightly noted that Baruffaldi replaced the word gens with the world “jam” (already). When the painting was cleaned and restored in 1951/52 Martin Davies (1952) recorded the letters that were still visible; “…ER/…LLA/…GENS(?)/…T. A./…R(?)/TVM/…/…DDE/…DI/…/…M/…SA/…/…T/…/…S (?)/…” Davies noticed that on the organ case there is space for more than the two lines by Bigo Pittorio and did not exclude the possibility that there was a date in Roman figures.} These verses clearly explain the commemorative nature of the polyptych and the action of knocking as a way to wake up the sleeping Infant Christ and let the Roverella enter Paradise. Also the music played by the angels is intended to raise the Child from his sleep (another beautiful invention), which prefigures his death, represented in the lunette once crowing the altarpiece.

The theme of the sleeping Christ Child was not new to Tura.\footnote{For a discussion of the iconography of the sleeping Christ Child in the Renaissance see Firestone 1942 (see pp. 53-4 for an iconographic reading of the \textit{Pala Roverella}). Ercole Roberti’s San Lazzaro altarpiece is an important precedent including the motifs of the sleeping Christ Child and the throne crowned by a scallop shell. This work is discussed further below.} He had illustrated it in the beautiful devotional panel of the \textit{Madonna of the Zodiac} (Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice, fig. 169). The inscription on the ledge (“Sviglia el tuo figlio dolce madre pia/per far in fin felice
l’alma mia”) is meant as an invocation to the Virgin to waken her son so that the worshipper’s soul will be assured of eternal life. It is important to point out the strong Passion symbolism of this picture, which shows two large bunches of grapes hanging on either sides of the Virgin’s head, with two birds perching on them, a goldfinch (symbol of the Passion) and a wall-creeper (symbol of Resurrection). In the *Pala Roverella* the artist proposed again the association between the sleeping Infant Christ and the grapes symbolizing the Eucharist and the coming sacrifice. These hang on either sides of the Virgin’s throne and we can notice here for the first time that Tura represented two different kinds of leaves, one with jagged contours (fig. 173). Furthermore, on one of the shoots hanging on the left-hand side we can see a vegetable resembling a cucumber (fig. 173). The artist provided a realistic representation of vine shoots but also of gourd shoots. Cucumber-like gourds indeed fill the same horns from which the grapes are suspended and are another relevant element to consider. The gourds can be read as a symbol of the Resurrection, and this motif resonates with the awakening of the Christ Child.97 The Passion of Christ is also alluded to by the coral beads hanging above the Virgin’s head (fig. 141). They are strung together with pearls, which again symbolise the Resurrection. The two shells decorating the upper part of the throne can be read as a symbol of divine conception.98 The sacrifice of Christ, a necessary consequence of the Incarnation and the only way to the redemption of humanity, is dramatically represented in the crowning element of the polyptych, the lunette with the *Lamentation* (now in the Louvre).

As far as music is concerned, Camilla Cavicchi noted that Tura’s choice of instruments was rather accurate, as he did not include *pifferi* and tambourines, which have a more popular character and are common in contemporary representations of this subject.99 Stefania Macioce has argued that the angel nearest to the Infant Christ is represented in the act of singing, but his lips are slightly parted and his expression seems rather one of sadness, while he looks at the sleeping Child (fig. 174).100 In an article published in 1991 Don Enrico Peverada wondered whether the music makers are angels, speculating that these wingless youths might simply recall musical performances at the Este court.101

97 Claudia Wardle (2016, p. 41) suggests that, as the gourd appears in the story of Jonah, its inclusion in the painting may evoke the traditional typological association of Jonah’s three days in the whale and the resurrection of Christ after three days in the tomb.
98 Among the paintings of the Virgin and Child represented below a scallop shell we can recall Piero della Francesca’s *Brenta Madonna* (1472–4), Bernardino Butinone’s *Virgin and Child with the Saints Leonard and Bernardino* (1484) in the Brera, Milan and Mantegna’s *Madonna della Vittoria* (1496) in the Louvre. In the painting by Butinone, like in the central panel of the *Pala Roverella*, the shell is the crowning element of the Virgin’s throne, with a string of alternating coral beads and pearls hanging from it.
99 Cavicchi 2007, p. 141.
100 Macioce 2009, p. 135.
101 Peverada 1991, p. 67. Longhi (1934, p. 26) referred to these wingless angels as being “almost disturbing and courtly minstrels” (“questi menestrelli inquietanti e cortesi”). 
In a later article Peverada convincingly proposed that the particular form of the organ played by the two angels (fig. 143) reflected an instrument documented in fifteenth-century Ferrara. According to the antiquarian Ciriaco Pizzicolli (also known as Ciriaco d’Ancona), who visited Ferrara in 1449, the studiolo of Leonello d’Este contained a “famous Melpomenean organ”, which had been constructed for the marquis only two years before by master Costantino (Tantini) da Modena. The peculiarity of this organ was that its pipes, made of maple wood, were arranged in a spiral. The instrument also had three registers and three bellows. Cosmè Tura, who worked on some of the paintings for the studiolo in the 1460s, was surely familiar with this special organ.

Other important iconographic details are some Este emblems included in three compartments of the altarpiece. In the Galleria Colonna panel we can see the paraduro (the stockade or steccato) in the volute of the crozier of Saint Maurelius (fig. 175) and the unicorn visible in the cloud above. The fogo (flame), a personal impresa of Duke Borso, appears above the balustrade and in the Tablets of the Law in the National Gallery picture (figs. 139 and 142). A buckled string in red, white and green, the livery colours of the Este, is seen on the armour of the Saint George in San Diego (fig. 133). The paraduro, the unicorn and the fogo may well be retrospective references to Borso d’Este, who had facilitated the careers and advanced the social standing of various members of the Roverella family (including Lorenzo and Bartolomeo) during the 1460s.

An interesting interpretation of the iconography of the altarpiece was proposed by Claudia Cieri Via, who provided a thorough discussion of the Salomonic throne and other symbols as indications of Wisdom and Justice, typical attributes of the Virgin, who would take on the role of the Sedes Sapientiae. The author interpreted Mary as the tabernacle within the templar architecture and considered the central panel of the Pala Roverella as a representation of the continuity from Old and New Testament, from the Mosaic Law of the tablets and the Salomonic elements to the Christian World of the Incarnation and the Four Evangelists.

In his monographic volume on Tura Stephen Campbell interpreted the Old Testament references in the altarpiece as reflecting attempts to convert Jewish Ferrarese citizens and regarded the Hebraic references as a militant stance against the Jewish religion. Morover, the

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102 Peverada 1993-4, pp. 22-3.
103 Pizzicolli saw the organ near the painting representing the Muse Melpomene.
104 The Latin text of Pizzicolli’s description was first published by Peverada 1993-4, pp. 13-14. An Italian translation is provided by Cavicchi 2007, p. 132-3.
The author saw some anti-Este elements, especially in the Jewish references, which would have reminded Ferrarese viewers of the tolerant Jewry policy of the Este.

In his study on Tura from 2000 Joseph Manca agreed with Cieri Via about the fact that the ornate architecture and sculpture in the National Gallery panel are meant to allude to the Temple of Solomon and the Virgin is to be seen as the *Sedes sapientiae*. Manca correctly observed that Saint Peter on the left-hand panel and the Saint Paul in the Colonna picture respectively stood for the Jewish and for the Gentile elements in the early Church.¹⁰⁷ The two saints bring harmony to the altarpiece and their presence would argue in favour of Cieri Via’s reading and against Campbell’s interpretation of the Hebraic aspects as anti-Jewish attacks. Manca rightly pointed out that the Ten Commandments and the Hebraic visual traditions represented in the central compartment of the *pala* are in accord with Christian events and the Incarnation.¹⁰⁸ The philological accuracy of the Tablets of the Law seems to indicate that Tura had sought scholarly advice, as pointed out by Giulio Busi. The author suggested that the artist might have consulted the distinguished Jewish-Italian intellectual Avraham ben Mordecai Farissol, probably with the help of Pellegrino Prisciani, who was closely connected with the Este court.¹⁰⁹

Claudia Wardle has recently carried out an in-depth analysis of the iconography of the London panel, highlighting elements that had been overlooked in previous literature. Among the most interesting novelties of her reading is the identification of the horns on which the two cherubim on either sides of the lunette rest their feet as trumpets. These objects seem indeed to be more like instruments than cornucopias and “offer a clue to the viewer as to the nature of the Christ Child’s sleep”.¹¹⁰ These annunciation horns are to be read in the context of the music played by the angels to awaken the Infant Christ so that the awaiting Roverella brothers can enter Heaven. Wardle suggests that the trumpets “metaphorically announce Christ’s Second Advent” but they also represent the sound announcing the final confluence (in the Old Testament they signal the summoning of God’s people) of two worlds: Heaven (the place of the Virgin and Jesus represented in the central panel) and Earth (the place of the donors in the side wings).¹¹¹ Rather convincingly Wardle points out that an additional dimension is given to the sleeping Christ Child, as his sleep not only mirrors his own death from which he was resurrected but also “the sleep of death from which the multitudes will be resurrected”.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Manca 2000, p. 117.
¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.
¹⁰⁹ Busi 2007, pp. 84-6. While this hypothesis is enticing, we need to consider that Farissol spent some years away from Ferrara in the 1480s, returning to the city in 1487.
¹¹⁰ Wardle 2016, p. 34. The author identifies in the central panel of Mantegna’s San Zeno polyptych a prototype for the peculiar notion of fruit coming out from brass instruments.
¹¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 35-6.
¹¹² Ibidem, p. 36.
Indeed this is the sense of the message expressed in the couplet by Bigo Pittorio inscribed on the organ.

Like Manca, we think that it is most plausible that Tura intended to emphasize the continuity from Old to New Testament (a recurrent theme in Renaissance iconography) and we find little convincing evidence that the Roverella altarpiece represents an anti-Jewish manifesto.\textsuperscript{113} It happened quite frequently in Ferrara that Christians tried to convert Jews, and the \textit{Pala Roverella} seems to reconcile the two religions, showing that the later one sprang from Hebraic roots. Furthermore, the inclusion of the aforementioned Este imprese and of the Este colours in the ribbon on the chest of Saint George clearly indicates the Roverella’s loyalty to the Ferrarese ruling family, contrary to Campbell’s reading of anti-Este sentiment in the \textit{pala}.\textsuperscript{114}

4.6 The \textit{Pala Roverella} in the context of late fifteenth-century altarpieces in North-eastern Italy

In his \textit{Officina Ferrarese} (1934) Roberto Longhi wrote that with the \textit{Pala Roverella} Tura “established the model of the local triptych-polyptych, employed later by Francesco del Cossa in the Griffoni altarpiece in San Petronio and still echoed in the Cinquecento by Dosso in his altar for Sant’Andrea”.\textsuperscript{115} In fact, the Griffoni polyptych (fig. 176) dates from the 1470s and we can say that it does not seem to have had a particular impact on the conception of the high altarpiece for San Giorgio that Tura completed by 1487.\textsuperscript{116} If there is a work that provided Cosmé with motifs and ideas for his Roverella altarpiece, this is the \textit{pala} painted by Mantegna for Gregorio Correr, the abbot of the Benedictine basilica of San Zeno in Verona (1456-9, figs. 166 and 170). Indeed the three panels of the main tier recall the tripartite structure of Mantegna’s work and its setting in a loggia supported by pilasters, open onto a receding landscape stretching to the horizon. However, Tura did not succeed in creating an equally unified space: being attached to the tradition of the polyptych, he introduced some changes to the solution offered by Mantegna. Cosmé increased the height of the central panel to accommodate the tall throne of the Virgin, inserting two figures of saints above the wings, somehow compressing the architecture in the latter panels.\textsuperscript{117} Tura also added the lunette, an element which was absent from the San Zeno altarpiece.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Manca 2000, p. 117. A clear explanation of the reasons for which Campbell’s arguments are wrong is provided by Busi 2007, p. 85, note 39.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Toffanello (2010, p. 5, note 18) is in disagreement with Campbell’s anti-Este reading of the altarpiece.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Longhi 1934 (1968 ed.), p. 25.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Work on the carpentry of the Griffoni polyptych was completed by July 1473. For this work see Cavalca 2013, pp. 138-50.
\item \textsuperscript{117} A comparable arrangement with the central panel taller than the wings is adopted by Giovanni Bellini in his triptych of the \textit{Virgin and Child enthroned with Saints} in the sacristy of the Frari, dating from 1488.
\end{itemize}
Tura’s experimentation of the unified space in sacred paintings started in the 1450s, as we can see from the *Virgin and Child with Saints* of about 1455 (Fesch Museum, Ajaccio; fig. 177) and from the preparatory drawing for a panel of analogous subject in the British Museum, London, dating from around 1460 (fig. 178). Both the painting and the drawing reveal that the artist had studied Paduan works by Donatello as well as some altarpieces by Mantegna. If the *Pala di San Zeno* was surely an important model for Tura, perhaps indicated by his patrons, we should also take into consideration contemporary examples of altarpieces produced in Ferrara. Around 1475 the young Ercole Roberti delivered the *Virgin and Child enthroned with saints* for the high altar of San Lazzaro (destroyed, formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin; fig. 13). At a time when the polyptych was still the preferred type of altarpiece in north-eastern Italy, Ercole was able to produce an extraordinarily innovative work, the first unified *sacra conversazione* to be painted for a Ferrarese church. As pointed out by Turrill, Ercole’s *pala* for San Lazzaro, with its height of over three metres, must have been one of the largest altarpieces in Ferrara at the time it was executed. From the iconographic point of view this complex work by Ercole, representing the continuity from the Old Law to the New and expressing the harmony of Hebraic and Christian elements, was an important precedent for Tura. We must recall the motif of the scallop shell crowning the throne of the Virgin and the theme of the sleeping Christ Child, both of which also crucial to the meaning of the Roverella altarpiece. Moreover, the *Pala di San Lazzaro*, with its extraordinary representation of the architecture, filled with ornamental reliefs, and the meticulous reproduction of the texture of the different materials no doubt exerted some fascination on local artists, including Tura.

Apart from the high altarpiece for San Giorgio, in the mid-80s and early 1490s, as we have seen, Tura was asked to paint polyptychs for other Ferrarese patrons, so we might assume that the innovative format introduced by Ercole with the *Pala di San Lazzaro* did not have a great impact on local artistic production. It is significant that well into the 1490s Ercole was commissioned an elaborate *pala* comprising various elements by Clara Clavell. In 1505 Antonio Costabili contracted Dosso and Garofalo to paint a *pala* composed of various compartments.

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118 British Museum, London, 1885, 0509.1613.

119 It is important to recall that Turrill argued that the Saint Augustine was a portrait of Biagio Novelli, the bishop of Adria and founder of the original Ferrarese community of Lateran canons, who had endowed a chanpialy in honour to the Virgin Mary in the presbytery of San Lazzaro, where he wanted to be interred, in front of the high altar, see Turrill 1995, pp. 128, 133. Therefore, like the *Pala Roverella*, the lost altarpiece by Roberti would have celebrated the memory of a prominent ecclesiastical figure.

120 The unframed *pala* measured 309 x 234 cm; ibidem, p. 131. The only other large-sized altarpieces known to have graced Ferrarese churches at this time were the sculpted “magnifico edificio” on the high altar of the cathedral (mentioned here in chapter 1), and one or more Venetian-style polyptychs that were in the Carmeliche church of San Paolo. Small panels believed to have been part of the latter altarpieces are in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara.

121 Turrill (1995, p. 136) pointed out how the Virgin's monumental throne would have evoked biblical descriptions of both the thrones of the Lord and of Solomon, “for it was “tall and lofty”, and “round behind”, and was constructed of precious materials, including marble, crystal and gold.”
(fig. 179) for the high altar of Sant’Andrea, of the major churches of the city: this seems to confirm that at this date the polyptych traditional structure still enjoyed good appreciation.

If we turn to the nearby city of Bologna, which had attracted Ferrarese artists such as Francesco del Cossa and Ercole Roberti, we must recall the fresco of the *Virgin and Child enthroned* (known as the *Madonna del Baraccano*, fig. 180) painted by Cossa in 1472 on the high altar of Santa Maria del Baraccano (the painter conceived this work as a frame for the earlier image of the Virgin and Child, which was thought to be miraculous).\(^{122}\) The Virgin, whose throne is decorated by a scallop shell at the top, is represented under a barrel vault supported by two columns with elaborate capitals, which provide an elegant frame to the scene. Two angels holding candlesticks stand before the columns, qualifying the painted architecture as a tabernacle. The kneeling donor, Giovanni II Bentivoglio is portrayed below the throne. As convincingly suggested by Cecilia Cavalca, the classical niche housing the Virgin in the *Pala di San Lazzaro* might derive from the *Madonna del Baraccano*.\(^{123}\) This work by Cossa was pivotal for the development of the altarpiece with unified space in Bologna, one of the most accomplished examples of which was the *Pala delle Rondini* by the Ferrarese Lorenzo Costa (about 1483-5, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, now lost).\(^{124}\) If Tura is likely to have been abreast of the novelties of the Bolognese artistic scene, we know that he travelled to Venice and therefore he must have been familiar also with the innovations introduced in Venice by Giovanni Bellini (such as the *Pala di Santa Caterina*, from before 1475, formerly in the basilica Santi Giovanni e Paolo, destroyed by fire in 1867 and known through an engraving by Francesco Zanetti, fig. 181) and Antonello da Messina (the *Pala di San Cassiano*, from 1475-6, fragments of which are now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

To conclude, we can say that in the *Pala Roverella* Tura merged the types of the Sacred Conversation within a unified space and of the multi-tiered polyptych. He produced a masterpiece by harmoniously combining the rational representation of Renaissance space with a vibrant Gothic palette. Toffanello has rightly pointed out that the visual unity of the Roverella altarpiece derives not only from the calculated rendering of the perspective, but also from the alternating sequence of the reds and greens of the architecture and of the clothes over the blue background, as well as from the specular poses of the angels playing string instruments.\(^{125}\)

\(^{122}\) For this work by Cossa see Cavalca 2013, pp. 160-2, 336-7.

\(^{123}\) Ibidem, p. 167.

\(^{124}\) For this altarpiece by Costa see ibidem pp. 180-3, 341-2.

\(^{125}\) Toffanello 2007, p. 32.
4.7 Conclusions

In this chapter we have re-examined the extant compartments of the Roverella altarpiece by Tura. As far as technical examination is concerned, the paintings’ condition does not allow us to make much speculation about the way the polyptych was constructed. The frame must have been an important element of this altarpiece, contributing to unify the space represented in the single panels. An idea of how the lost frame might have looked can be suggested if we consider original frames of other works by Tura and Mantegna. Although we have proposed a floorplan for the fifteenth-century San Giorgio, we do not have enough evidence on the high altar chapel. While it is likely that it was lit by two tall lancet windows and an oculus, no information survives on its altar and on the decoration of its walls (for instance, we do not know whether there were frescoes). It is therefore difficult to tell how the design of Tura’s altarpiece responded to the spatial context for which it was conceived.

The study of the available documentation, published and unpublished, has been crucial to delimit the dating of the *Pala Roverella*. An unknown document reveals that in 1479 Filiasio Roverella, archbishop of Ravenna, arranged an annual donation of two hundred gold ducats which would contribute to pay the expenses for the “ornament of the high altar” of San Giorgio. This suggests that the altarpiece, already mentioned in two notarial acts from 1476, had not been contracted yet. The *Memoriale Estense*, a chronicle written by the jurisconsult Girolamo Maria Ferrararini, a relative of the Roverella, provides the date of the installation of the polyptych painted by Tura. On 19 August 1487 Ferrarini himself visited San Giorgio with Filiasio Roverella to see the *pala* (in memory of Niccolò and Lorenzo Roverella) that had been installed a few days earlier on the high altar. Assuming that Tura started work on this project shortly after the end of 1479, his activity might have been slowed down by the critical circumstances experienced in Ferrara in the first half of the 1480s (the war against Venice and Pope Sixtus IV, famine and plague).

After having established that the *Pala Roverella* was commissioned for the high altar of San Giorgio and not for a side chapel, as assumed by almost the totality of scholars, it has become easier to understand the function of this masterpiece. As indicated by Claudia Cieri Via, the Solomonic throne and the sculpture details in the National Gallery panel suggest that the Virgin is represented as the *Sedes Sapientiae*. The central panel can be read as a representation of the continuity from Old and New Testament (from the Mosaic Law of the tablets to the Incarnation and the Evangelists), which is a recurrent theme in Renaissance iconography. The Saints Peter and Paul in the wings stand respectively for the Jewish and for the Gentile elements in the early Church. Rather than being an anti-Jewish manifesto, as argued by Stephen

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126 Appendix, no. 16.
Campbell, Tura’s altarpiece seems to reconcile two religions, showing that Christianity sprang from Hebraic roots.

One of the important findings of our study is that the two donors should be identified as Niccolò Roverella (on the right-hand side panel, now lost) and his brother Lorenzo (in the panel in the Galleria Colonna, Rome). Many factors point to this conclusion, not least a highly reliable contemporary source, which confirms indeed that the donor in the latter painting is indeed Lorenzo and not Bartolomeo, as claimed by most scholars. The inscription, now partially lost, on the organ played by the angels in the foreground of the London painting is crucial to understand the meaning of the altarpiece. The couplet *Imago Virginis excitandi filium* by the Ferrarese poet Bigo Pittorio is an invitation to the Infant Christ to wake up, as the Roverella are knocking outside, and they should be given entry, as prescribed by the law. Tura provided a striking image to illustrate this distich, depicting Niccolò Roverella in the action of knocking in the lost side wing. The verses by Pittorio clearly reveal the commemorative function of the polyptych once in San Giorgio.

The iconography of the altarpiece was carefully studied to suit its intended destination, the Olivetan church of Ferrara. As we have seen, the Virgin and the Passion of Christ (here beautifully depicted in the lunette) were particularly important to the Olivetans and these subjects were combined frequently in altarpieces. Conveniently, the Saints Benedict and Bernard, also significant to the Olivetan congregation, were chosen for the compartments of the upper tier. Furthermore, stories from the lives of the two saints featured in the predella. The two patron saints of Ferrara, George (the titular saint of the church) and Maurelius, appear in the side wings next to the two donors. This was therefore a polyptych created to answer to the commemorative and celebrative needs of the Roverella family, but also to the devotional requirements of the Olivetan community in San Giorgio as well as of Ferrarese laymen.

Finally, in this chapter we have considered the *Pala Roverella* in the wider context of late fifteenth-century altarpieces in North-eastern Italy. In the 1470s Ercole Roberti delivered the high altarpiece for the church of San Lazzaro in Ferrara (fig. 00). The innovative format of this work, which superseded the traditional polyptych, does not seem to have had a significant impact on the local artistic production. Indeed, the new layout proposed by Roberti was not followed by Tura in this altarpiece for San Giorgio, nor indeed in other known works.

As the critics have rightly pointed out, some motifs and ideas employed in the *Pala Roverella* derive from the *Pala di San Zeno* painted by Andrea Mantegna in the late 1450s. Although the tripartite structure of Tura’s main tier recalls the work by Mantegna, the Ferrarese artist did not succeed in creating an equally unified space. We can say that in the Roverella altarpiece Cosmè combined the types of the Sacred Conversation with unified space (he must
have been familiar also with Venetian models) and that of the multi-tiered polyptych. The Ferrarese artists produced an extraordinary work in which the visual unity derives not only from the accurate rendering of the perspective, but also from the well-orchestrated combination of reds and greens.
Chapter 5

The renovation of San Giorgio from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century

5.1. San Giorgio in the early sixteenth century

In this chapter we provide an account of the history of the fabric of San Giorgio and its interior from the early 1580s to the first decades of the eighteenth century. Published sources as well as new material found by the present author are used to trace the transformations of the building over this period.

It is worth recalling that Scalabrini in his *Memorie* on the churches of Ferrara (1773) states that San Giorgio was almost destroyed during the wars of Pope Julius II in 1512. To support this statement, Scalabrini quotes an entry from the chronicle by Paolo Zerbinati, who on 21 January 1512 witnessed the start of the operations to destroy the bell tower of San Giorgio. The diarist reports seeing the base of the campanile being cut and torches prepared to set it on fire. Fortunately, this action was suspended. Sifting through Ferrarese sources no information has emerged on damage to buildings in the city caused by actions against the troops of Julius II in 1512 (in the context of the war of the Holy League). Therefore it seems wise to take with a pinch of salt Scalabrini’s statement about San Giorgio being close to destruction.

In an essay on San Giorgio from 1991 Ada Marcianò, considering the information provided by Scalabrini, argued that the church “seems to have suffered damage in 1512”. To strengthen this hypothesis, Marcianò provided some unpublished records from a register of the *ufficio della munizioni* from 1512, which in her opinion demonstrate that the borgo San Giorgio was a battleground. But this account book simply records that munitions were transported up to the peninsula of San Giorgio (“de suxo la punta de Sancto Georgio”) and that warships were being prepared nearby. It seems more likely that what the register describes is nothing but preparatory operations in the context of the war which opposed Duke Alfonso I and Pope Julius II, rather than a conflict which might have damaged the surrounding buildings. However,

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1 “La nostra baslica di S. Giorgio andó a pericolo di essere affatto distrutta per le Guerre di Papa Giulio II del 1512; per lo che fu duopo poi ristabilirla, come scrive il Zerbinati sotto il dì 21, Gennaro detto anno”, Scalabrini 1773, p. 21.
3 Scalabrini does not report damage to other buildings in Ferrara due to the war against Julius II in 1512. It seems really odd that if Ferrara was the scene of a battle, only San Giorgio risked being destroyed.
4 Marcianò 1991, p. 63. What is referred to as the “punta” of San Giorgio is the peninsula at the bifurcation of the river Po (Primaro and Volano branches).
the failed (or interrupted) attempt at destroying the campanile of San Giorgio remains to be explained.

An important event in Ferrarese history needs to be considered here. Between 1512 and 1513, during the war against the Venetians and the Papacy, Duke Alfonso I improved the defensive walls in the eastern area of the town. In order to erect new fortifications, in 1512 the duke ordered the demolition of the Porta di Sotto, of the Porta Formignana and of the Canton del Follo, as well as of four churches, including San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito of the Minor Observants. It is interesting to point out that the most precious elements of these buildings were preserved and used to rebuild the churches elsewhere in the city. The duke’s project also included the erection of the so called Montagnone (or Baluardo della Montagna). The height of this artificial hill, which stood on the other side of the river from San Giorgio, allowed Ferrarese troops to have a better view and to be in a better position for shooting any adversary. The dimensions of this bastion were so large that it was compared to a full-scale fortress.

The Montagnone, also called the Bastione di San Giorgio, built by Duke Alfonso I to protect Ferrara from the enemy, served its purpose well until the eighteenth century. It was indeed from this very bastion that on 14 January 1709 the Ferrarese fired cannon against the Prussian troops who were inside the church and monastery of San Giorgio.

Going back to 1512, it seems highly likely that the context of the operation to the campanile of San Giorgio witnessed by Zerbinati was not a battle but rather the campaign of demolitions carried out to erect new fortifications of the eastern area of the town.

A book of the ufficio munizioni e fabbriche of the Este from 1552 registers payments to Andrea Nasello for repairing a “ruined wall”. This is a rare instance in which works to the fabric of San Giorgio are paid for by the Este.

5.2 The earthquake of 1570

The night of 16 November 1570 bright lights were seen above Ferrara and flames were reported to come out from the soil and rise into the air. The earthquake struck at dawn and several shocks hit the city during the following days. Six hundred pieces of stone masonry (mostly crenellations, balconies and chimneys) were reported to have fallen across the city, damaging the flimsy stone and thatch roofs. At 3.00am on 18 November the ground shook harder than ever,

5 Lottici 2017, pp. 15, 32, 49, 50 and 98.
6 Baruffaldi 1836, p. 34, note 19 (by Giuseppe Petrucci)
7 “Nel 1512, al tempo della guerra contro Giulio II, la chiesa rischiò di essere distrutta poiché il Duca Alfonso I voleva erigere nuove fortificazioni a levante della città, ma fu subito restaurata”, Lottici 2017, p. 27. If this statement on San Giorgio establishes a connection between the attempt to demolish the campanile in 1512 and the new fortifications built by the duke, the meaning of the last sentence about the church being restored is not clear.
8 ASMo, Camera Ducale, Munizioni e Fabbriche, no. 120; mentioned by Marciano 1991, p. 66.
causing the collapse of many buildings which had been damaged by the previous tremors. According to an anonymous diarist, whose text was transcribed by Scalabrini in the eighteenth century, most of the Este castle was destroyed (fig. 182), and the duke and his court escaped to the Giardini della Rosa, by San Benedetto, where they stayed until January 1571. 9

Many ecclesiastical foundations sustained critical damage to pillars and main walls. The churches of San Paolo and San Giovanni Battista collapsed, and the same happened to Santa Maria degli Angeli, which was still under construction. San Francesco partially came down, as did the Certosa, which had been built by Borso d’Este in the 1450s. The façades of many churches, often built as self-standing walls, collapsed. This was the case of Santa Maria in Vado, Sant’Andrea, San Domenico and Santa Maria della Consolazione. The side of the cathedral’s façade towards the Gorgadello (on the north side) also came down and there were further damages, with the collapse of the chapel of the Corpus Domini as well as of part of a side wing. In addition, the heavy iron chain which was above the high altar fell to the ground, as did some marble capitals. Furthermore, the violence of the earthquake caused the collapse of bell towers and spires, including those of the cathedral, of San Silvestro, San Giorgio and San Bartolo.

About forty percent of the city buildings were damaged. The sources give different numbers for the victims of the earthquake, oscillating between nine and one hundred and fifty. After the initial shocks, the tremor continued for about four years, with over two thousand aftershocks concentrated from November 1570 to February 1571. Because of the exceptional length of the seismic swarm, unprecedented at the time in Ferrara, some believed that it was a supernatural phenomenon. The seismic sequence was promptly presented by papal propaganda as both a proof of the sins of duke Alfonso II d’Este (a renowned protector of the Jews and also the son of an avowed heretic, Renée de France) and a sign that the duchy should be devolved to the Holy See. While processions were being organised in Ferrara to placate the divine wrath and the Duke was urging the scholars of the University of Bologna to demonstrate that the earthquake had natural causes, in Germany and other countries broadsheets were printed in which Ferrara was depicted as the “New Sodom”. 10

In March 1571 the first actions were taken to reorganize the city. Alfonso II, who had returned to his castle at the end of January, ordered a census of the population. The Ferrarese citizens who had fled the town (some sources reported that up to eleven thousand people had left Ferrara after the earthquake) were ordered to come back, or face their properties being confiscated. The report of the apostolic visitation of Giovanni Battista Maremonti from 1574

9 Memorie antiche di Ferrara, XVIII c., f. 337v. On the 1570 earthquake in Ferrara see also the account made by Solerti 1890.
reveals that the cathedral, San Michele, San Romano and Santa Maria in Vado were among the first buildings to be restored or reconstructed after the earthquake. In his *Compendio historico* Guarini mentions the restoration or rebuilding of other ecclesiastical foundations, including San Roceco, San Silvestro, San Francesco and San Paolo. According to the record by Maremonti, in 1574 twenty-one of the twenty-eight urban churches of the diocese of Ferrara still bore damage from the earthquake, while more than half of the suburban churches had serious damage, two having been totally destroyed and ten in a state of collapse.

Considering the situation recorded by Maremonti, is it not surprising that San Giorgio, like many suburban churches, had not received much attention since the quakes and that damage was still visible on 30 September 1574. The visitor found that the church had been “powerfully shaken by the earthquake and completely rendered in pieces to the point of threatening ruin, especially in the roof and the vaults”. It is clear from these words that almost nothing had been done to repair the damaged fabric. Indeed Maremonti ordered to the prior and monks to restore the church as soon as possible, or to build a new one if this was going to be more convenient, and to this purpose the Olivetans demanded through the “Apostolic seat” to receive a sum of money in order to begin the works, or to be granted an indulgence. Maremonti lists the chapel of the Holy Sacrament (this must have been the chapel of Saint Benedict, where the Holy Sacrament was kept), the altar of Saint Maurelius, other altars on the left-hand side which were abandoned and unadorned, the altar of the Holy Virgin (which was found in good condition) and an altar by the counter façade.

Over four centuries after the catastrophic seism of 1570, on 20 and 29 May 2012 a powerful earthquake struck Emilia Romagna and other regions in Northern Italy. About one hundred churches in the municipal area of Ferrara were damaged. With the exception of San Giorgio fuori le mura, all of the old ecclesiastical foundations in town had to be closed to the public. The Franciscan churches of Santo Spirito and San Francesco, the churches of San Paolo, San Cristoforo alla Certosa and San Domenico suffered serious structural damages. Sadly, as in the 1570’s, restoration of religious buildings is progressing very slowly, the main reason being the lack of necessary funding.

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11 Maremonti’s report was published by Mazola 1978, II, p. 414. Giovanni Battista Maremonti was the bishop of Utica and suffragan to Giulio della Rovere, Bishop of Ravenna. On the 1574 Apostolic visitation of Ferrara see Belvederi 1986, pp. 363-67. The visitation took place between 3rd September and 2nd November.
12 Guarini 1621, p. 171 (the new San Paolo, designed by Alberto Schiatti, was built in 1575); p. 232 (San Francisco); p. 337 (San Rocco was rebuilt in 1575).
14 See Appendix, no. 19.
15 See the report by Ghelfi, Menegatti and Toffanello 2012.
16 Ibidem.
5.3 The reconstruction of San Giorgio in the early 1580s

The seismic swarm continued well into the year 1572, and it can be assumed that this was the main reason for waiting to repair or reconstruct Ferrara’s damaged buildings. Indeed, according to local chronicles, post-seismic reconstruction in town begun shortly before 1574. As far as San Giorgio is concerned, it is clear from the requests made by the prior and monks to Monsignor Maremonti that the lack of funding was another important reason for the church not having been repaired after the 1570 earthquake. It would seem that the Olivetans did not get the financial help they had requested in 1574, as only in 1580, under the priorate of Giovanni Battista Pelizino (or Policino), were they able to begin the renovation of their church. Not surprisingly their choice fell on Alberto Schiatti (1500-1586) an architect who had received great profit from the earthquake, being called to work on the reconstruction of the damaged parts of the Castello Estense, as well as of churches like San Paolo, the Gesù, San Giovanni Battista, San Cristofo de Bastardini and Santa Maria della Visitazione. Furthermore, Schiatti’s employment can be explained by his connections with the Olivetan congregation: from 1572 to 1577 the architect had worked on the renovation of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo, an Olivetan foundation which had been affiliated to San Giorgio since 1476.

The main sources providing information about the renovation of San Giorgio in the early 1580s are some testimonies gathered in 1586 by the Ferrarese notary Pannizzari in relation to a payment dispute. The notary took statements from two builders and a capomastro who carried out the work under Schiatti’s supervision, as well as the architect Alessandro Balbi. Although these documents were published by Marcolini and Marcon in 1987, they have so far been overlooked. Before looking closely at their content, it is worth understanding the circumstances under which these testimonies were given. On 20 August 1586 Alessandro Balbi, who was superiore of the Munizione, the office responsible for armaments, fortifications, and major building projects for the Este, was summoned to give his testimony on Alberto Schiatti, who had died a few years before. At the end of his account Balbi mentioned the fee which was due to Schiatti for his work in San Giorgio, saying that he had not seen the fabric and therefore he was not able to judge. However, he said that considering the qualities of his colleague, his

17 Guarini 1621, pp. 171, 215; Scalabrinii 1773, pp. 150, 296. Other architects who worked on post-seismic reconstruction in Ferrara include Galasso Alghisi (c. 1523-1573), Alessandro Balbi (c. 1530-1604), Marcantonio Pasi (1537-1599) and Giovan Battista Aleotti (1546-1636).
18 For the intervention of Schiatti at San Bartolomeo see Mezzetti 1973, pp. 183-6. The Augustinian monastery of San Bartolomeo (formerly San Pietro in Maone) in Rovigo was transferred to the Olivetan congregation in 1476. This was made possible through the intervention of Nicolò and Bartolomeo Roverella. Together with San Lorenzo in Baura and Santa Francesca Romana, both in Ferrara, San Bartolomeo was affiliated to San Giorgio, see Scalabrinii 1773, p. 21. The archbishop of Ravenna Filiasio Roverella made large contributions towards the rebuilding of the monastery, which started in 1479. San Bartolomeo was part of the Emilian Olivetan province and it was not until the end of the 1580s that it was aggregated to the province of the Veneto. For the history of the Olivetan community of Rovigo see Il monastero di San Bartolomeo 1979.
work was worth more than five *scudi* per month.\(^19\) These words suggest that a dispute had arisen about the fee owed to Schiatti by the Olivetans.

This seems to be confirmed by the testimony given on 30 July 1586 by Bartolomeo Tristano, an architect and master builder on the building site of San Giorgio. Tristano said that he could not tell how much labour Schiatti had undertaken for San Giorgio, although from what he had heard his work was worth more than five monthly *scudi*. He added that Giovan Battista Aleotti earned three times more being employed by the duke and he himself would not even accept to be paid ten monthly *scudi* to work on a single building.\(^20\) Earlier in July 1586 two builders who had worked in San Giorgio, Sebastiano Monari and Ercole da Nona, had been heard by the notary Pannizzari.

Sebastiano Monari started his testimony by saying that Alberto Schiatti had been employed as architect by the Olivetans of San Giorgio, specifying that in 1580 he had provided the design for the little vault in front of the church entrance (“capelota che è avanti la porta della chiesa … sopra la collona che vi era et è anco di presente”). Work on this vaulted entrance started on 17 November 1580 and was carried out by Monari with master Antonio Maistrello and master Giovanni Battista Ongarello. The same team also worked on the choir (“coro”), following the design by Schiatti, who went to the building site every day to advise the builders. The choir was begun in March 1581 and completed by the end of that year.\(^21\)

The builder Ercole Da Nona declared that he was not aware of the fact that Schiatti was employed as an architect by the Olivetans (perhaps meaning a monthly paid employee). In September 1581 Da Nona started to build the apsidal semi-dome (“bacina”) of San Giorgio. As Schiatti was ill, the prior and the *cellerarius* had asked Da Nona to go and see the apse project drawing at his house. The builder had been to see this drawing three times, and Schiatti had given him advice on how to erect the “bacina”. In spite of being denied access to the drawing after Schiatti’s death by the latter’s son Taddeo, Da Nona was able to complete the apsidal semi-dome, following his own experience. Indeed he remarked that if Schiatti had not been ill, the apse would have been completed according to his design. Da Nona ended his testimony by

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\(^{19}\) “… quando anco alla mercede che sia debita al detto quondam messer Alberto per la fatica usata in servigio del convento del frati di Santo Giorgio non havend’io veduto le fabriche che egli habia fatto per loro non posso ne so dir altro se non che conoscendo la suficientia et altre qualita sudette che erano in detto messer Alberto egli meritava assai piu di scudi cinque il mese, perchè uno buono architeto come lui merita asai si per la suficientia come anco per l’utile che da alle fabriche”, ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Particolari, no. 994, testimony by Alessandro Balbi, published by Marcolin and Marcon 1987, p. 215.

\(^{20}\) “se bene non so la fatica che egli habbia usata in servigio del convento di Santo Georgio se egli ha servito quel convento si come ho udito dire mi pare che sia per scudi cinque il mese et a raggion di mese massime che messer Giovanni Battista d’Argenta che serve sua altezza ha quindici scudi il mese et io non servirei per scudi cinque il mese, ne manco per dieci, quando havessi da impiegare tutta la mia opera in una sola architettura …”. ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Particolari, no. 994, testimony by Bartolomeo Tristano, published by Marcolin and Marcon 1987, p. 215.

\(^{21}\) Testimony by Sebastiano Monari, see Appendix, no. 20.
stating that earlier ("per il tempo prima", most likely meaning the time before beginning the apsidal semi-dome) he had not seen Schiatti working as an architect for the monks of San Giorgio.\(^{22}\)

The master builder Antonio Maistrello (or Mistrelli) gave his testimony on 6 July 1586.\(^{23}\) He recalled working on the choir of San Giorgio sometime in 1580, under the priorship of Giovanni Battista Policino. Schiatti was the architect in charge of the building works. Maistrello supervised the work of Sebastiano Monari and of master Giovanni Battista Ongarello, following the orders and the designs provided by Schiatti. They built the “recetto fatto a crociera” in front of the entrance to the church and the choir. Furthermore Schiatti designed the “arca ... fatta a crociere”, that is the crypt under the presbytery, as well as the vaulted vestibule linking the choir to the sacristy. Maistrello confirmed that Schiatti tested the fabric of the new choir. The master builder added that after completing the above-mentioned projects, the Olivetans asked him to erect the dome above the main altar and to attend to other works for their monastery. Maistrello spoke to Schatti about this new commission and the latter showed him the drawings he had made. Eventually Maistrello did not reach an agreement with the prior and the works were contracted to Ercole da Nona, who built the dome in 1581, after having asked Schiatti for advice.

What emerges from these testimonies is that in the early 1580s Alberto Schiatti was employed by the Olivetans of San Giorgio, designing some new parts of the church and supervising the works carried out by the builders. In November 1580 the workers started building the vaulted space in front of the church entrance. In the above mentioned engraving by Giannantonio Leli (about 1512-14) a vaulted side entrance is seen on the north side of the church (fig. 49), while in front of the main entrance on the façade once can see the “capelletta seu recetto fatto a crociera che è avanti la porta di essa Chiesa” (“the small chapel or vaulted vestibule which is in front of the church entrance”) mentioned by Maistrello. We could therefore argue that this protiro was damaged by the 1570 seism and it was decided to rebuild it as had been before the quake.

Among the material of the archive of the monastery of San Giorgio only one filza containing information on the building works survives. It is marked “Fabbriche K” and includes documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all of which are unpublished. The expenditure for building works in the church and monastery, but also in other properties belonging to the Ferrarese Olivetans in the early 1580s, is annotated on a loose folio entitled “Denari spesi in fabrica”. From May 1580 to April 1581 nine hundred lire were spent for the

\(^{22}\) The testimony by Ercole da Nona (ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Particolari, no. 994) was published by Marcolin and Mareon 1987, p. 214 (with the wrong year 1596).

\(^{23}\) For the testimony by Antonio Mistrelli see Appendix, no. 21.
The considerable sum of about seven thousand and eight hundred lire for the fabric of the choir is listed under the expenses of the following year.\textsuperscript{24}

The key project of this campaign from the early 1580s was the rebuilding of the main apse (figs. 183-184). The aforementioned apostolic visitation of 1574 leaves no doubt that San Giorgio had suffered serious damage and the vaults and roofs were particularly vulnerable. Even if no specific mention is made of the choir and its semi-dome, we can argue that at least the latter was in a bad state and it was for this reason that a new apse was built. By March 1581 the fifteenth-century apse of San Giorgio, modelled on the main apse of the late-gothic San Domenico, had been demolished and the builders started working on the construction of the new choir. But before erecting the latter, it seems highly likely that they built the crypt with cross vaults designed by Schiatti, which still is below the presbytery.\textsuperscript{25} The walls of the new \textit{cappella maggiore} must have been completed by September 1581, when Ercole da Nona started working on the “bacina”, the apse semi-dome. The whole apse was finished by the end of the same year. Finally, Maistrello and his team built a vaulted vestibule linking the choir to the sacristy. Looking at the present church ground-plan (fig. 44), it seems that this vestibule corresponds to the ante-chapel of Saint Benedict.

Considering the damage to the church vaults reported by Monsignor Maremonti in 1574, we might well think that this was extended to whole eastern end of the church. The testimonies of the builders working under Schiatti’s supervision do not contain any references to the two outer chapels. An episode narrated by the cleric Girolamo Baruffaldi reveals that the frescoes of the chapel of Saint Maurelius completed by Domenico Panetti in 1509 were still visible during the lifetime of his father Nicolò (1645-1748). The latter was able to save some fragments of the old frescoes before 1690, the year Francesco Ferrari completed the new decoration of the chapel, which had been rebuilt.\textsuperscript{26} This information is of great relevance to the

\textsuperscript{24} “…In prima l’anno 1580 dal di 18 maggio per tutto li 28 aprile 1681 si è spesa in la fabrica ... lire 903 soldi 15 denari 4 computa lire 368 soldi 6 spesi nella lozetta denanzi la chiesa ... per la fabbrica del cuoro... sono lire 77.796 soldi 2... [this follows an entry for expenses between 20 August and 25 November 1582]”, ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Fabbriche K, unnumbered folio, unpublished.

\textsuperscript{25} Being described by Antonio Maistrello in 1586 as “arca dei padri”, the crypt was intended for the burial of the monks and probably occupied the same area of the vault below the main altar recorded by early fifteenth-century sources. The crypt is accessible through a trapdoor behind the main altar we see today. According to Marco Zuppiroli, who has visited this underground chamber recently, it is in a bad state of repair. This crypt is right below the main altar, with a surface not much larger than the latter, and a single barrel vault. As this latter feature does not match with the cross vaults referred to by Maistrello in 1586, it could be argued that the crypt underwent renovation works sometime later.

\textsuperscript{26} Baruffaldi 1844-46, II, p. 354. In the biography of the painted Francesco Ferrari in the same volume of his \textit{Vite dei pittori ferraresi} Baruffaldi states that the chapel was in a bad state of repair, and that its walls were whitewashed and painted anew by Francesco Ferrar, ibidem, p. 292. For Ferrari’s frescoes see Brisighella 1991, p. 565, notes 23-24.
history of the church, as it shows that the chapel of Saint Maurelius was spared from demolition in the 1580s.

The new cappella maggiore was designed to be as high as the nave. Today a continuous roof covers the apsidal semi-dome, the dome above the presbytery and the nave (fig. 185). The main apse is deeper than the old one. Its clean design, with the brick masonry ornated by thin pilasters, and the layout of the windows recall some of the apses designed by Biagio Rossetti in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, such as those of the cathedral and of Santa Maria della Consolazione. In the mid-1980s some tests were carried out on the masonry of the external hemicycle, on the adjacent wall and on the terracotta frieze running on the eastern wall of the monastery. These tests revealed that at some point the walls had been painted in yellow and red on the outside, imitating the brickwork in some areas.

The planning of the new east end of San Giorgio had to take into consideration the constraints imposed by the surrounding buildings, such as the monastery attached to its southern edge and the bell tower. The south apsidal chapel is compressed between the chancel and the east wing of the monastery (fig. 184). It is lit by a fairly tall rectangular window on the south side (fig. 186). It semi-dome is covered by a pitched roof. Looking at the aerial view of the church (fig. 45) one is struck by an asymmetric feature: while a gable roof covers the area corresponding to the vestibule of the south apsidal chapel, intersecting the gable roof above the nave, on the north side there is no such structure. Indeed a plain and much lower roof covers the vestibule of the chapel of Saint Maurelius. As discussed in chapter 2, the aerial view also reveals a slight recess along the north side of the nave, at the level of the latter chapel and its vestibule.

We can wonder whether the gable roof on the south side is what remains of the upper part of an original transept, or a reconstruction of a damaged transept (fig. 187). Looking closely at this part of the fabric we can see two windows, on both the east and west sides. These windows are very close to the intersection with the nave, almost too close. Furthermore, the south face of this structure is pierced by an oculus. The latter has been reworked, as it clear by looking at its jumbled lower frieze. Examining the masonry of the east side of this structure we see a rather long band of bricks laid out vertically running just below the roof. The area below this band seems to have been reworked (see detail of fig. 186).

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28 Zevi 1960, p. 90.
29 Marcianò 1991, p. 68. See also Biscontin et al. 1989, pp. 45-7. Di Francesco (1989, p. 12) writes that the painted brickwork in the apse of San Giorgio is not so recent, but does not provide a dating. She highlights that Renaissance buildings in Ferrara were painted above a layer of intonaco.
30 This oculus is not levelled with those which originally gave light to the nave (see below). It appears rather too close to the gable.
There is another element that we should consider when thinking about an original transept from the fifteenth-century building: as noted above, in 1581 the builders working under Schiatti built the “vaulted vestibule leading from the choir to the sacristy”. If the late-Gothic church did have a transept, it is well possible that with the reshaping of the east end it was decided to adapt it. Schiatti’s intervention might have simply involved erecting a cross vault in the south transept, halving its height and creating the “vestibule” leading to the sacristy. It would have been odd to add a gable roof in this area of the church in the 1580s or at a later date. It is more likely that an existing element of the old fabric was repaired (if it was damaged by the 1570 earthquake) and readapted in the most fitting way.31 Furthermore, the possibility that this was originally the upper part of a transept is suggested by the presence of the windows on both the eastern and western faces and of an oculus on the south side. However, it remains to be clarified what happened to the other side of the transept. The slight recess along the north side of the nave discussed in chapter 2 could be the result of the demolition of the upper part of the north transept, perhaps following damage from the 1570 earthquake. The interruption of the terracotta frieze (not as old as the one seen on the external wall between the chapel of Saint Maurelius and the campanile) running along the top of the north outer wall of the nave is a clear indication of an intervention in this area (fig. 46). The frieze was replaced by bricks laid diagonally to create a saw tooth edging. A comparably crude ornamental feature appears at the top of the southern outer wall of the nave (with an extra layer of alternating bricks at the bottom), where the terracotta frieze is nowhere to be seen (fig. 188). Exactly the same kind of decoration is used at the upper level of the north apsidal chapel, suggesting that at least these two interventions date from the same time.

A band of grey intonaco covering the brickwork is clearly visible just below the saw tooth edging on the south external wall of the nave (and also below the roof of the transept), as well as on its north wall (fig. 52). We might wonder whether the intonaco served as a preparatory layer for a painted decoration, or for some other sort of ornamentation, perhaps in terracotta.32 A comparable band of intonaco is visible under the frieze at the top of the outer wall of the apse of Santa Maria della Consolazione, a church built under the direction of Biagio Rossetti in the early sixteenth century. In San Giorgio this band overlaps the blocked out oculi, suggesting that it must be a later intervention, post dating the opening of the windows.

As noted above, the nave of the old San Giorgio was pierced by eight oculi. These probably had terracotta frames. At some point the oculi were blocked out and larger

31 Figs 187a and 187b show the space below the gable roof, which was decorated with painted architecture in the 1730s. Within this space is a chapel with seats for the monks with a grilled window looking onto the presbytery (figs 187c and 187d).
32 See the terracotta frieze running above the pilasters on the façade of San Francesco (fig. 10), as well as on its sides, dating from the late sixteenth century.
rectangular windows were opened just below them. We wonder whether this change was part of the renovation campaign carried out by Alberto Schiatti in the early 1580s, or even a later intervention made in the eighteenth century, as suggested by a drawing by Andrea Bolzoni from 1709.\footnote{In 1709 by Andrea Bolzoni made a drawing showing a view of the city besieged (BCAFe). The complex of San Giorgio is represented being under cannon fire. Two cloisters, some buildings in the square in front of the church and also the oculi of the nave can be seen. If this representation is faithful, in 1709 the rectangular windows had not been opened yet.}

Turning our attention now to the eastern end of the north side of the church, it is interesting to see that the first bay of the blind arcade (a late-fifteenth century feature, judging by the terracotta frieze above it) was filled in to be integrated into the new wall of the chapel of Saint Maurelius (fig. 36). A record of this chapel before the reconstruction is offered by the fresco representing San Giorgio in San Michele in Bosco, Bologna. Here we can see clearly how the old north apsidal chapel was decorated by a blind arcade (fig. 39). All of the architectural elements noted above, emerged from close examination of the church fabric, reveal the various phases of its history and the difficulty of their interpretation, in the absence of documents.

As already mentioned, under the impulse of Duke Ercole I d'Este, the apses of several churches in Ferrara were rebuilt between the end of the fifteenth and the start of the sixteenth century, resulting in a new distribution of the sacred space, especially in the area of the presbytery. In some of these churches the choir stalls, which once stood in the middle of the nave, were pushed back into the curve of the new apse. The tramezz which stood before the choir stalls, separating the laymen from the clergy were removed. Therefore within the Ferrarese context San Giorgio, for most of the sixteenth century, must have been a rare example of church with an outmoded layout, with the Roverella altarpiece dominating the cappella maggiore, the choir stalls of the Olivetans before it and a tramezzo separating the monks from the laypeople.

The radical change of the church ground-plan resulting from the erection of the new apse and the general renovation of the east end in the early 1580s was recorded by local historians. According to Guarini, in 1581 San Giorgio was restored, enlarged and embellished by removing the choir which stood in the middle of it and relocating it to the east, during the priorate of Giovan Battista Pelizino.\footnote{“[1581] venne poi anche ristorata, ampliata ed abbellita levandone il coro, che nel mezzo di essa era situato, trasportandolo da capo verso l'Oriente...”, Guarini 1621, pp. 390-91.}

The Pala Roverella had been installed on San Giorgio’s high altar in 1487. If it survived the 1570 earthquake, probably with no major damage, its story was to change shortly after that disaster. A century had not yet passed from its installation, when in 1581 (we cannot be sure of the date, but surely sometime before March 1581) the various compartments of the
altarpiece were disassembled, prior to the demolition of the old late-Gothic apse. The masterpiece by Tura celebrating the illustrious Roverella family was to be moved to the wall between the altar of Saint Francesca Romana and the chapel of Saint Maurelius, where Marcantonio Guarini and Girolamo Baruffaldi saw it in the seventeenth century, as we have seen above. This was surely a less splendid context compared to the cappella maggiore, but nevertheless it was in close proximity to the main focus of the laity’s devotional interest in the church, which housed Tura’s other altarpiece.

Luckily the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella did not share the same fate as Tura’s altarpiece. Even if we cannot establish its precise original location on the north wall of the high altar chapel, we must assume that the erection of the new apse would have been rather difficult without dismantling this imposing monument. As noted above, the tomb shows damage which can be attributed to its relocation. Other tombs were removed (for instance those documented in the chapel of Saint Maurelius) and probably destroyed, like other elements of the fifteenth century church, including some ancient marble epigraphs of Roman families recalled by Guarini.35

The re-building of the apse and the re-organisation of the east end of the church required the rearrangement of the furniture. The choir stalls were relocated to the east, behind the main altar, and were readapted to fit along the curve of the new apse, following the example of other major churches in Ferrara. The campaign of works entailed re-thinking the decoration and furnishings of San Giorgio. Some new and interesting material on its refurbishment in the 1580s was published in 1997. Costanza Cavicchi discovered an album gathering one hundred and seventy-five sheets in the private archive of the Borromeo family. These include several designs for decoration and furniture, many of them by the Ferrarese architect Giovan Battista Aleotti (1546-1636) and his circle, others by architects and designers employed at the Este court. Among these drawings there is also a group of sketches for ecclesiastical furniture for San Giorgio, which Cavicchi attributed to Alberto Schiatti and his collaborators.36

The lectern on sheet no. 50 (bearing the inscription “San Giorgio”) was probably designed for the new choir.37 The foot of the bookrest has an elongated diamond-shaped insert. The solid base incorporates a cupboard for the storage of choir books and is decorated with architectonic features. A more elaborate lectern appears on sheet no. 54 (fig. 189), featuring an octagonal base with similar diamond-shaped inserts, arranged in two rows. The bookrest is held by an acanthus-leaf carved baluster above a hexagonal plinth, and is crowned by an ornament.

representing the symbol of the Olivetan order, three hills topped by a cross with olive branches (only the left-hand arm of the cross is represented).

The inscription “San Giorgio” also appears on a sheet with a cover for a baptismal font (no. 49). It is interesting to point out that an ornate cupboard housing a tabernacle, probably dating to the mid-seventeenth century, survives in the chapter hall of San Giorgio. A piece of furniture of comparable structure is shown in the drawing no. 51 from the Borromeo album.38 Another piece of furniture designed for San Giorgio is represented in the drawings 21, 21a, 21b (these are glued together along one side). Cavicchi has convincingly suggested that this bench with tall panelling might have been designed by a painter rather than by an architect.39 Indeed if compared to the other drawings related to San Giorgio, these sketches show more subtlety and accuracy. The sheet no. 21 (fig. 190) shows the lower tier with two different solutions for the four outer pilasters and an ornament with paired feline creatures in the field framed by the pilasters of the main tier.40 More ideas for the decoration of the two tiers are found on sheet no. 21a (fig. 191), while no. 21b (fig. 192) reproduces the whole back of the bench up to the ceiling, including painted lunettes representing two seated saints or prophets and God the Father. In our opinion, this latter detail and the architectural setting it reveals are crucial for a correct interpretation of the function of this item. The spandrels reproduced here seem to match those of the ceiling of the sacristy (or indeed of the adjacent chapter hall). The elegant piece of furniture sketched on these three sheets might therefore be a vestment bench for the sacristy (or a bench for the sala capitolare).41 While the putti seated on the entablature recall those supporting the balcony above the doorway of Palazzo Prosperi-Sacrao, the caryatids framing the fields are comparable to those ornating the organ balcony in San Giorgio (dating from the end of the sixteenth century).

These sketches from the Borromeo album give us a sense of the wide-ranging activity of Schiatti and his collaborators working in San Giorgio in the early 1580s. However, as no pieces of furniture matching with these drawings survive, it is difficult to say whether these designs were ever translated into real objects.

38 Ibidem, p. 137. This sketch represents a sacristy cupboard, featuring pilasters in Doric order topped by two vases and a frieze. Only the left-hand side shutter is represented. The interior contains a tabernacle with a monstrance. The compartments creating a geometric pattern, recalling those of contemporary wooden ceilings made in Ferrara, were probably intended for inlaid work.

39 Cavicchi 1997, p. 47. The author argues that after Schiatti’s death several of his drawings for San Giorgio were inherited or indeed bought by Aleotti; ibidem, p. 48.

40 Comparable feline creatures are found in one of the two candlesticks on the sketch no. 59, reproduced by Cavicchi 1997, p. 145.

41 Writing about these drawings Cavicchi (1997, p. 47) does not discuss a specific function of the benches, and simply refers to the decoration of the church interior.
5.4 The church of San Giorgio in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

On 29 May 1608 Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani (1384-1440), the founder of the Olivetan Oblates, was proclaimed saint by Pope Paul V with the bull Acquae Celestis Flumen. Following the canonization of Francesca Romana, as she is best known, the monasteries belonging to the Olivetan congregation were encouraged to promote her cult by erecting altars and chapels dedicated to her. Considering the Provincia Emilia, in 1612-14 a painting of Saint Francesca Romana with the Angel by Alessandro Tiarini was installed in a chapel in San Michele in Bosco, Bologna. Also the Olivetans of Ferrara had been receptive to the directions given by the mother-house by building an altar dedicated to Francesca Romana, the first on the north side of the nave (in the north aisle today), looking from the presbytery. The date of the erection of the altar is not documented, but surely it was in place by 1611, when Francesco Naselli delivered a canvas with Saint Francesca Romana with the angel.

Another important change to the interior of San Giorgio in the early seventeenth century was the replacement of the Saint Maurelius altarpiece by Cosmé Tura. In 1634 the Olivetans commissioned from Guercino a canvas representing the beheading of the saint (the painting is now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara). According to Baruffaldi, writing in the early eighteenth century, the pala by Tura was “for the most part ruined”. But it is also plausible that the monks wanted a more fashionable ornament for this key chapel. It has convincingly been suggested that this commission was prompted by the Olivetans’ admiration for the Saint Francis receiving the stigmata which Guercino had delivered to the church of the Sacre Stimmate in Ferrara two years earlier.

After the works campaign in the early 1580s, it seems that about one century passed before new works were carried out in San Giorgio. Documents contained in the above mentioned filza “Fabbriche K” attest that in 1675 a door was opened in one of the walls of the campanile and another one in a wall of the chapel in front of it (this must be the present vestibule of the bell tower). The same year saw the erection of the altar dedicated to the Blessed Bernard Tolomei (1272-1348), the founder of the Benedictine congregation of the

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42 Brizzi 2009, pp. 136-7, 192 (entry no. 156).
43 For this painting see Brizzi 2009, pp. 136, 201-2 (entry no. 191). For interesting considerations about paintings of Saint Francesca Romana in Olivetan churches in Verona, Bologna and Ferrara see Molteni 2012, pp. 31-33.
44 “ruinata in gran parte”, Baruffaldi, 1844-46, I, p. 77.
45 On this painting see Ghelfi 2015.
46 This information from the filza “Fabbriche K” is included in the chronology of San Giorgio compiled by Cecchiniato and Farinelli 2003-4. Traces of one of the two doors referred to in this document can be seen on the east side of the vestibule of the bell tower (fig. 193), where a lintel is clearly visible (the opening has been bricked-up). The second door is less easy to locate.
Olivetans, whose cult had been officially recognised in 1644. The reason for building the altar is explained by the orders given by the abbot general Domenico Minutoli at the general chapter that was held in Monte Oliveto Maggiore in 1674. The following year the feast of the Blessed Tolomei was to be celebrated by all Olivetan monasteries with “public displays of pomp and veneration”. The newly built altar stood to the right of the door leading to the sacristy, not too far from the chapel dedicated to Saint Benedict, whose rule Tolomei followed. It is possible that some sort of devotional image was installed on the altar, before the latter was adorned with the Blessed Bernard Tolomei receiving the Rule from the Virgin and Child, a work painted by Francesco Ferrari in 1690 and framed by a richly carved frame. The altar of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei appropriately faced the altar dedicated to Saint Francesca Romana mentioned above. In 1675 the latter altar was elevated by one foot, a slight adjustment most likely to be explained by the necessity of having both altars on the same level.

The chronicler Nicolò Baruffaldi registers an important stage of the renovation of the church under the date 24 November 1681. The prior Giacinto Bonacossi ordered the demolition of three chapels on the north side of the church, which were previously set into “niches” and “relocated them to the north, creating a nave leading to the altar of Saint Maurelius”. Another three chapels were created on the facing aisle. According to the diarist this aisle already existed and there was only one altar, graced by the Adoration of the Magi by Garofalo. But this information seems to be inaccurate, giving the fact that the altar of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei had been built six years earlier in the same aisle. It also needs to be pointed out that the latter altar came to occupy the place of Garofalo’s Adoration of the Magi, which was relocated to

48 ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Fabbriche K, unnumbered folio. Even if Bernard Tolomei started being venerated and recognized as beato not long after his death in 1348, it was only in 1644 that the Olivetans received from the Sacred Congregation of Rites the approbation of his cult ab immemorabili, see Brizzi 2009, p. 3.
49 In 1673 the Sacred Congregation of Rites granted permission to celebrate the mass in honor of the Blessed Tolomei on 20 August. In 1674 the abbot general Domenico Minutoli ordered that for the feast of their founder “si facessero pubbliche dimostrazioni di pomp a e venerazione in ogni monastero”, ibidem, p. 9. Bernard Tolomei was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on 26 April 2009.
50 It is of interest that in 1686 Francesco Ferrari had painted frescoes with stories of the Blessed Tolomei on the arch and vault of the chapel dedicated to him in the Olivetan church of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo.
51 This arrangement with the altar of Saint Francesca Romana facing that of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei is a recurring feature in several Olivetan churches (see Brizzi 2009, p. 136), such as Santa Maria dell’Organo, Verona. For this church in 1638 Guercino delivered the canvas with Saint Francesca Romana with the angel. It is interesting to point out that a key role in this commission was played by Angelo Torre, the prior of the Olivetan monastery of Saint Francesca Romana in Ferrara, see Molteni 2012, note 42, p. 45. In 1634 the monks of San Giorgio had commissioned from Guercino the Martyrdom of Saint Maurelius for the homonymous chapel in San Giorgio (now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara). In 1661 Guercino was to execute another painting for an Olivetan church, representing the Blessed Bernard Tolomei for San Michele in Bosco, Bologna (looted by the French in 1796, the picture was destroyed by a fire in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Bordeaux in 1871). The fact that Guercino was asked to paint three altarpieces for the Olivetan churches of Ferrara, Verona and Bologna highlights the importance of the relationship between these communities, which was already strong in the fifteenth century and continued well into the seventeenth century.
52 This information is included in the chronology mentioned in note 47 above.
53 Baruffaldi, Annali, I, p. 87. See Appendix, no. 22.
the west. Baruffaldi goes on to report that the Holy Sacrament was placed in the chapel to the east of the south aisle, housing the relics of the Blessed Alberto Pandoni. The prior removed the furnishings that were unnecessary and modified the high altar “alla romana”, adding the adornment which was previously on the altar of the Holy Sacrament. Furthermore, the two statues of the Saints Maurelius and George which originally stood by the high altar were relocated to the entrance of the cappella maggiore.

An idea of how the chapels set “into niches” on the north side of the nave with might have looked before the 1681 renovation is provided by the Olivetan church of San Bartolomeo in Rovigo, the rebuilding of which started in 1562 (fig. 194). Chapel niches also appear in the Olivetan church represented in the aforementioned plan from the archive of San Giorgio (fig. 55). It is clear from the words by Baruffaldi that before the intervention promoted by prior Bonacossi the church did not have a south aisle, though there was a north aisle. The asymmetry of a ground-plan resulting from such considerations could be explained by an original layout with a single nave, projecting transept and three apsidal chapels and the later creation, probably in the 1470s (at the time of the building works in the first cloister), of a north aisle.

Thinking about the chapel niches in San Giorgio we must also point out that a comparable layout is found in San Michele in Bosco (fig. 195), the church of the Olivetan monastery in Bologna which had firm connections with the Ferrarese community. The Bolognese church underwent various building campaigns, but the overall structure of the fabric we see today has not changed much since construction in the second decade of the sixteenth century.

A few years after the works promoted by the prior Giacinto Bonacossi another intervention, perhaps more substantial, was to alter significantly the interior of San Giorgio, by giving it a truly Baroque makeover (fig. 27). In 1690 the painter Francesco Ferrari started working on a complex decoration campaign which included the frescoes of the Apostles and Olivetan Saints above the arches of the nave, the Virgin and child in glory with Olivetan Saints in the apse, the Apotheosis of Saint Benedict on the arch above the choir and other subjects on the vault above the presbytery and the Stories of the Saints Maurelius and Benedict in their respective chapels.

Hard times for San Giorgio and its religious community arrived in the early eighteenth century. In 1708, since Pope Clement XI still adhered to Philip V as the rightful King of Spain, the Austrian pretender, Joseph I invaded the Papal States without a declaration of war, and

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54 Guarini (1621, p. 394) reports that the Adoration of the Magi by Garofalo was in the chapel next to the sacristy, therefore on the second altar of the south aisle. In late seventeenth century Brisighella (1991, p. 560) saw this painting on the first altar, entering the church. The Adoration, signed by Garofalo and dated 1537 was transferred to the local Pinacoteca in 1836 and replaced by a copy by Bambini, now in the vestibule of the chapel of Saint Benedict.
55 On San Bartolomeo in Rovigo see Tomasi 2008, p. 271.
57 For the frescoes by Ferrari see Roveroni et al. 2000, pp. 51, 58.
occupied Comacchio (24 May 1708) amongst other territories. Ferrara was well protected by its defensive walls and bastions and resisted the Austrian attack, but the town was besieged for several months. San Giorgio stood in a strategic position, outside the city walls on the other side of the river Po and the monastery was occupied by some two thousand Prussian soldiers. During the attacks received from the papal army, on 14 January 1709 the church was damaged by cannon fire shot from the baluardo of San Giorgio. This event was fatal not only to the fabric, but also to the Pala Roverella, which hung at that time near the chapel of Saint Maurelius. It has been so far overlooked that another painting was seriously damaged by cannon fire on this occasion: as registered by the canon Girolamo Baruffaldi in his Vite of the Ferrarese painters, the Saint Anthony of Padua, a canvas by the Ferrarese painter Maurelio Scannavini, was “hit and lacerated in various parts”.

The diarist Niccolò Baruffaldi reports that in January 1710 works started to repair and renovate the church and monastery of San Giorgio at the expense of the Camera Apostolica. The façade was demolished and the church was shortened by ten feet (about 4 metres), that is one entire bay, losing the two altars nearest to the entrance, dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua (north aisle) and Saint Francesca Romana (south aisle). The side entrance in the second bay of the old church, as seen in the engraving by Leli (about 1512-14), was closed and its place was occupied by the funerary monument of Orazio Ariosto (d. 1593), still visible nowadays.

Baruffaldi ends his account by recalling that while excavating to build the foundations of the new façade the workers found some altars and burials from the old church. These renovation works were carried out during the priorate of Giacomo Bottoni, who entrusted the direction to two architects, his own brother Giacomo and Francesco Mazzarelli, who had worked on Ferrara cathedral. The demolition of the first bay of the old church entailed readjusting the second bay, which was covered with a barrel vault (the rest of the nave is covered with groin vaults), and repairing areas of the decoration. The frescoes were reintegrated by Anton Felice, the son of Francesco Ferrari, as well as by Giacomo Parolini. The new San

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58 Scalabrini 1773, p. 447.
59 Baruffaldi 1836, p. 35, note 19 (by Giuseppe Petrucci).
60 “…toccò a questo quadro restare colpito e lacero in diverse parti, così che giudicato irremediabile, fu tolto via affatto…”, Baruffaldi 1846, II, p. 258.
61 Appendix, no. 23.
62 The altar dedicated to Santa Francesca Romana was originally the one near the entrance to the campanile. For some reason this dedication shifted to the first altar of the north aisle sometime before 1709. According to Niccolò Baruffaldi, following the reconstruction, the pala of Saint Francesca Romana replaced the Pala Roverella, which had been removed after having been damaged. If this is true this implies that its original location (the second altar on the north aisle) was not available and the painting by Naselli was for some time in the vestibule of the chapel of Saint Maurelius.
63 Orazio Ariosto (1555-1593), the great-nephew of Ludovico Ariosto, was a priest and canon of the cathedral of Ferrara, as well as a writer. The original location of Orazio’s tomb was the first bay of the south aisle, see Guarini 1612, p. 394.
Giorgio and the refurbished square are recorded in an engraving dating from the eighteenth century (fig. 196).

The engraving shows a loggia against the north side of the church, a feature which was most likely added during this renovation campaign. This loggia, a unique example of this kind in Ferrara, was blocked out, most probably in the early 1880s, when structural problems to two bays arose. This space was later divided into three rooms. The first two rooms are connected by a doorway and are used at present for parish activities. The third space, occupying the first bay by the campanile, serves as a storage area for an array of liturgical objects.

5.5 Some information on burials in San Giorgio (sixteenth and eighteenth centuries)

The only extant sepoltuario of San Giorgio dates from 1721 and provides useful information on some of the tombs from the sixteenth century. The compiler specifies that the document lists the tomb slabs that are broken (“rotte ed infrante”): the tomb of a certain Giacomo Giovanni Crispino, bearing the date 1561, was in front the altar of Saint Benedict. The next entry seems to confirm that the chapel of Saint Maurelius was of particular interest to the associates of the Este. Indeed the sepoltuario records the presence of the tomb of Alfonso Bianchi in this chapel (“avanti San Maureglio”). It is tempting to identify this layman with one of the two Alfonso Bianchi who were employed by the Este. Alfonso senior was official of the Camera Ducale from 1563 to 1592, while his son was ufficiale di Camera from 1569 to 1578 and ufficiale di Casa from 1582 to 1592. However, if our identification is correct, we might argue that the date 1591 recorded in the sepoltuario is not correct, considering the fact that both father and son were still alive in 1592. The tomb of Benedetto Valeri and his brother and descendants was in front of the “banco delle compagnie”. The tomb slab was engraved with the date 1591. Other sepulchres were less than a foot away from to the steps of side altars: the tomb of the brothers Sebastiano and Andrea Monari and their descendants (1592) was before the altar of the Epiphany; the tomb of Bartolomeo Girolamo Cassetti and his heirs (1592) was in front of the altar of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei; the tomb of Marchino Donni and his descendants (1592) was before the altar of Saint Francesca Romana.

An edict listing the above mentioned sepulchres was published and if nobody claimed their rights over the tombs within fifteen days, the monks would be free to make of them what they wished, that is to remove the remains and to make those vaults available to other laypeople.

64 Zaccarini (1919, p. 31) is the only author to mention this hypothesis.
65 This is registered in the chronology by Cecchinato and Farinelli 2003-4.
66 “Pro (?) Alfonso de Blanchis et suis heredibus MDXCI vi e l’arma d’un albero con cinque stelle d’intorno alla superficie di esso”, ASDFe, Archivio di San Giorgio, 63.2 (scanzia 1.2, armadio 2), Sepoltuario del 1721.
Indeed it seems that the remains in the vaults in front of the altars of the Epiphany, of the Blessed Bernard Tolomei and of Saint Francesca Romana were removed after 1721. Their names are not mentioned in the compilation of epitaphs by Barotti, who recorded the sepulchres of two laywomen who had died in the 1760s in front of the altars of the Epiphany and of Saint Francesca Romana, as we will see below.

It is clear that this document from 1721 only records the tomb slabs that were broken, or those over which no descendants were claiming their rights. It is therefore likely that other burial vaults were in the church at that time. The sepoltuario provides information on the location of the tombs, two of which were in the chapels of Saint Maurelius and of Saint Benedict and the others in close proximity to some of the side altars. This document seems to confirm what emerges from earlier sources: only laypeople of high social status were allowed to be interred in the chapel of Saint Maurelius, while the others were assigned vaults near the side altars.

We turn now to consider the information provided by Cesare Barotti in his Iscrizioni sepulcrali e civili della città di Ferrara compiled around 1760 and reworked in 1776 in two volumes with the addition of church plans. Barotti transcribed some twenty epigraphs in San Giorgio, including those found on some tomb slabs, also providing a plan of the church with the location of the inscriptions (fig. 197). The tomb of Andrea and Pietro Giovanni de Zambardi, bearing the date 16 March 1592, was found in the first bay of the south aisle. The tomb of Giovanni Battista Minelli and Samaritana Beccari was in the second bay and the inscription revealed that the tomb slab was laid on 16 June 1592 upon commission of the woman’s second husband and by the brothers Girolamo and Giacomo Maria Piacentino.68 The tomb of Elisabetta Branchini Legnaghi, who had died on 20 luglio 1760, was in front of the altar of the Epiphany. The Ferrarese priest Don Antonio Massari Moschini, who had died in 1729, had chosen a privileged location for his tomb: on Barotti’s church plan his tomb is the middle of the nave, right in front of the presbytery. Lucrezia Mantovani Travagli, who had died in 1762, had been interred in front of the altar of Santa Francesca Romana. On the next bay to the west was the tomb of Niccolò Piccinini and his descendants, inscribed with the year 1592. The sepulchre of Pietro and Alberto Massarenti, on which Barotti read the date 6 November 1588, was in front of the altar of the Crucifix. Finally, the funerary monument of the writer Orazio Ariosto (1555-1593) was found in the first bay of the north aisle. In total the author lists seven tombs of laymen and one of a priest.

It is striking that three of the tombs recorded in the 1721 Sepoltuario and another three listed by Barotti (of a total of seven) were laid in 1592. We might wonder whether this is not a

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68 “... sua consorte nel primo matrimonio e nel secondo di Marcho di Volpi quale insieme con Hieronimo e Iacomo Maria fratelli di Piasentino anno fatto fare la presente sepultura per li detti nominati et suoi desendenti adi 16 giugno 1592”, inscription reproduced in Cazzola et al., 2005, p. 104.
mere coincidence, but could rather be explained with a replacement of the sepulchral slabs made that year. Floor slabs were forms of memorial that by both design and destined location were particularly prone to wear, breakage or replacement. It is plausible that a few years after the renovation campaign by Schiatti it was decided to replace worn slabs. This was surely the case of the tomb slab of Cosmé Tura, which is inscribed with the year 1592.69

The eight burial spots recorded in San Giorgio by Barotti seem very scarce if compared to the number of those he registered in other Ferrarese churches, like San Francesco, San Domenico and Santa Maria in Vado. Barotti lists about two hundred sepulchres in San Francesco (mainly concentrated in the eastern end and in the two aisles), no fewer than sixty in San Domenico (with two exceptions, the vaults are concentrated in the nave), and about one hundred in Santa Maria in Vado. Bearing in mind the location of San Giorgio outside the city walls, in a borough which was less densely populated and probably less prosperous than those in the city, and also the fact that mendicant churches were preferred by many laypeople for their burials, perhaps the result of this comparison should not be so surprising. Nevertheless, it is possible that in the late fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries San Giorgio attracted more laypeople than those recorded in the compilation by Barotti.

69 The last two lines of the inscription read: “SALutis M.DXCII- Men NOVembris Die XXVIII”.
Conclusion

Ferrara has suffered many losses to its cultural heritage. Apart from the façade and a few other parts of the cathedral, almost nothing survives of the religious buildings that graced the medieval townscape. The fabric of several churches (the apses in particular) was altered in the late fifteenth century upon the initiative of duke Ercole I d'Este. Furthermore, in 1570 the city of Ferrara was struck by a violent earthquake that caused serious damage and destroyed many buildings, including churches. Those which survived, like San Giorgio fuori le mura, underwent alterations over the centuries.

From the above, it is clear that bringing back to life the interiors of churches in Ferrara in the fifteenth century is a rather difficult task. As noted by Cast, if much of the town is preserved, “despite appearances, much is lost. Many buildings are empty of decoration; many, like the Cathedral, were remodeled and redecorated in the eighteenth century…” Paintings by such artists as Ercole Roberti and Cosmé Tura went missing or were dispersed. “If we wish to repopulate the buildings of Renaissance Ferrara or to recreate something of the culture that once informed them, we have to make a considerable effort, one largely literary in scope.”

To give a broader context to the subject of this thesis, we have provided a survey on the main churches of Ferrara, including the cathedral, San Domenico, San Francesco and Santo Spirito. Information of the patronage of chapels and church interiors has been gathered from various sources, such as fifteenth-century chronicles and notarial acts, and descriptions by local historians.

This thesis aims has recovered Sang Giorgio fuori le mura in its fifteenth-century aspect, as well as considering it within the context of sacred architecture in the city. Our research has shown that the study of an apparently unpromising building, renovated over the centuries (as is the case for the majority of Ferrarase ecclesiastical foundations from the Late Gothic period), can produce unexpected results. By piecing together elements derived from various sources (the church fabric itself, notarial acts, local chronicles and church descriptions, as well as sixteenth-century visual records) we have been able to formulate a hypothesis on the Late-Gothic San Giorgio. The single-naved church seems to have had a transept (lost with the renovation of the 1580s) and its three polygonal apses were most likely built on the model of those of San Domenico in the same city. The central and northern apses (the latter housing the relics of Saint Maurelius) were erected in the mid-1430s. New documents found by the present writer suggest that at least two chapels were added in the second half of the fifteenth century on the north side.

[70] Cast 1975, p. 278.
[71] Appendix, Art patronage in Ferrarese churches in the second half of the fifteenth century.
of the church, in the *ecclesia laicorum*, and that the south apse (the chapel of Saint Benedict) was built in the 1470s (it seems probable that the south aisle was created around this period). A *tramezzo* separated the laypeople from the monks. The old campanile plausibly stood in the same location as the one designed by Biagio Rossetti, completed in 1485, not far from the northern apse. A chapel linking the campanile with the nave is documented at least from 1491, when Tura indicated in his will the wish to be buried in a chapel by the campanile. The church layout changed in the early 1680s, with the addition of the north aisle.

The choir stalls filling the apse today are probably the same as those which stood between the *cappella maggiore* and the *tramezzo* until 1581, when the east end of the church was altered by substantial building works. The stalls, which might date to the last quarter of the fifteenth century, were readapted to fit the new and enlarged apse. They appear to have suffered losses and to have been reworked with the addition of later elements. The demolition of the old central apse also entailed dismantling and relocating the high altarpiece by Tura (re-installed near the chapel of Saint Maurelius and the campanile) and the funerary monument of Lorenzo Roverella (moved to the west on the same wall). A few unpublished documents, including notarial acts of bequests to the Olivetan church as well an inventory recording the contents of the sacristy in 1584 (including several items plausibly dating from the previous century), have provided valuable information on the broader setting of Tura’s altarpiece and the liturgical furnishings used at San Giorgio.

Our research has dealt not only with the materiality of architecture, but also with the historical framework, the religious community who lived in San Giorgio and the laymen who played a major role in the history of this church, by acting as patrons of chapels and altars. In-depth investigation in the Archivio di Stato of Ferrara and in the archive of the monastery of San Giorgio (transferred to the local Archivio Storico Diocesano in 2018) has been particularly fruitful. New documents have emerged shedding light on the history of the church and its benefactors, from Niccolò and Giovanni Savonarola (respectively the father and the uncle of the Dominican preacher Girolamo) who were assigned the chapel dedicated to Saint Michael in 1472, to Lorenza Montolini and Francesca, widow of the furrier Baldrino. These two female donors played a major role in the renovation of the church in the fifteenth century, contributing with their bequests to the construction of the two chapels flanking the *cappella maggiore* in the 1430s and in the 1470s. Another important discovery concerns the identity of the donor who bequeathed a large sum of money for the erection of the high altar chapel. Although his name appears in the 1434 contract published by Peverada in 2001, this figure has been completely overlooked in Ferrarese studies. Aliprando Guidiccioni was a key member of a prominent family of merchants and bankers from Lucca, whose activity stretched to London and the Flanders.
After living for many years in Venice, Aliprando settled in Ferrara, where he was one of the main suppliers of the Este court. Our research has shown his connections with the Olivetan order, especially in Venice.

With this thesis we advance our understanding of the Pala Roverella, one of the only two altarpieces by Cosmé Tura for which we know the original context (the other one being the altarpiece painted for the chapel of Saint Maurelius in the same church, of which only two elements survive). Our reconstruction of the fifteenth-century San Giorgio fills a significant gap in the literature on Tura, as the original context of the Roverella altarpiece has been ignored in studies on Renaissance Ferrara, especially by Anglophone scholars. Studying this work of art in relation to its intended architectural setting has provided new elements to understand its function. We have been able to clarify the iconography of the altarpiece, proposing to identify the two donors with Nicolò (in the lost left-hand panel) and Lorenzo Roverella (in the Colonna panel), discarding the hypothesis accepted by the majority of scholars that the kneeling figure in the Colonna picture is Cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella. The detailed iconographic programme of the polyptych was conceived to celebrate the memory of the two Roverella brothers, Nicolò being represented knocking on the door of Paradise, while the musician angels gently try to wake the Christ Child from his sleep to fulfil the donor’s request. For about one century this large polyptych, installed on San Giorgio’s high altarpiece, was before the eyes of the Olivetan monks gathered for their daily devotions, prompting them to pray for the souls of the Roverella. If the tramezzo would have blocked at least partially the view of this imposing altarpiece from the nave, it seems plausible that laypeople would have been able to see this altarpiece on particular occasions.

By recovering the fifteenth-century church of San Giorgio and reassessing the Pala Roverella by Cosmé Tura painted for its cappella maggiore, this thesis casts new light on this masterpiece, rightly considered the apex of Ferrarese figurative culture in the late Quattrocento. The history of San Giorgio in the fifteenth century emerges through several unpublished documents presented here, making an important contribution to Renaissance Ferrarese studies. With this in-depth study of the church of San Giorgio and the artworks commissioned for its chapels, we offer a valuable addition to the history of Olivetan artistic patronage, a subject which most scholars have approached in piecemeal fashion. Finally, our research has shown strategies for recovering lost contexts (spatial and material settings) of Renaissance altarpieces, an issue that in recent years academics and museum curators have recognised as being particularly important.
Appendix

Art patronage in Ferrarese churches in the second half of the fifteenth century

Bringing back to life the interiors of churches in Ferrara in the fifteenth century is a rather difficult task. As noted by Cast, if much of the town is preserved, “despite appearances, much is lost. Many buildings are empty of decoration; many, like the Cathedral, were remodeled and redecorated in the eighteenth century…” Paintings by such artists as Ercole Roberti and Cosmé Tura went missing or dispersed. “If we wish to repopulate the buildings of Renaissance Ferrara or to recreate something of the culture that once informed them, we have to make a considerable effort, one largely literary in scope.”

For the survey which follows, information on the patronage of chapels and church interiors has been gathered from various sources, such as contemporary chronicles and notarial acts, and texts by local historians. The notarial documents, most of them published by Adriano Franceschini, are a particularly precious source. They reveal not only the names of the patrons and their requests, but also the modalities for stipulating contracts for works of art commissioned for sacred interiors. Unfortunately the records of the pastoral visitation of Bishop Francesco dal Legname from 1447 do not provide much information on the interiors of Ferrarese churches, except for the cathedral, which is described in great detail, with a list of all its chapels and their furnishings. Another important source which is especially valuable for the study of ecclesiastical furnishing in fifteenth-century Ferrara is the inventory of the sacristy of the cathedral dating from 1462, published by don Enrico Peverada, the former archivist of the local Archivio Storico Diocesano. Its accuracy remains unmatched for a Ferrarese source of this kind, and the publication includes a meticulous commentary by Peverada.

In his Compendio (1621) on Ferrarese churches Marcantonio Guarini provides some relevant information on chapels, their patrons, funerary inscriptions and the laypeople who were buried in the churches. However, by the time of Guarini the majority of the churches had undergone renovations which had significantly altered their late-medieval fabric, like the cathedral, San Francesco and San Domenico. Between 1493 and 1505 Ercole I d’Este promoted a campaign of renovation in twelve Ferrarese churches (fig. 5), with most of the works being

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72 Cast 1975, p. 278.
73 Peverada 1981.
paid for by the duke himself.74 The apse of the cathedral as well as those of other churches including San Domenico, San Nicolò, Santa Maria degli Angeli and Sant’Andrea, were demolished and new, larger apses were built. The *tramezzì* separating the clergy from the laypeople were removed, and the choir stalls which stood in the middle of the nave, in front of the high altar, were pushed to the back of the new apses. In this way naves became more spacious and altars more visible. Ercole’s campaign of modernisation of ecclesiastical spaces was stirred by the example of Saint Peter’s in Rome, where in the mid-fifteenth century Bernardo Rossellino, upon commission of Pope Nicholas V, had built a new apse significantly larger than that of the old Constantinian basilica.75

In some churches, like San Giorgio, this radical change of removing the choir stalls from the middle of the nave took place only in the early 1580s, with the rebuilding that followed the collapse of part of the fabric in 1570. That year a terrible earthquake stroke Ferrara, inflicting severe damages to many buildings, including several churches, as will be discussed in chapter 5.

The cathedral of Ferrara

The cathedral of Ferrara was built in Romanesque style from the mid-1130s and was consecrated in 1146.76 The church had five aisles, which were separated by forty columns of terracotta with marble plinths and capitals; the ceiling was made of larch beams painted in blue with golden stars. Sadly, virtually nothing is left of its original Medieval and Renaissance interior, as the building was altered and radically remodelled in the late fifteenth and again in the eighteenth century (fig. 6).77 However, some information can be gathered from written sources,

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75 Ercole I d’Este indeed expressed his admiration of Roman churches in his reply to Felino Sandei, one of his main agents at the Vatican, who had criticised the duke’s plan to rebuild the apse of the cathedral. Ercole wrote that churches in Ferrara were dim and not well organised: “Vedendo nui le ecclesie de questa nostra citade essere molto offuscate a non bene partite, li havemo posto tale studio che molte de epse sono state acconce et datali bona forma, per modo che a vederle adesso satisfano molto et se representano cum altra gratia che non facevano prima: il che cede ad honore de Dio, a commodità de religiosi et ad ornato de la citade... [the cathedral] se aconzarà in tale modo che lo haverà de la forma et gratia che hanno quelle ecclesie de Roma... “, ASMo, Cancelleria ducale, Ambasciatori Roma, 8, letter of Ercole I d’Este to Felino Sandei, 4 June 1498, published by Folin 2006, p. 106. That Ercole took inspiration from Roman models was clear to the diarist Hondedio di Vitale, who wrote that the duke had had the churches of San Francesco and Sant’Andrea demolished and rebuilt with the high altar “ala guisa romana”, Hondedio di Vitale, *Cronaca* (1471-96), f. 28v. See also the interesting article by Joanne Allen on the extension of the apsidal chapel at Padua cathedral and other similar examples in north-eastern Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century; Allen 2013, especially p. 180.
76 On the building phases of the cathedral in the Middle Ages see the recent monograph by Marta Boscolo Marchi published in 2016.
77 In 1498 Ercole I paid for the rebuilding of the apse. The design was provided by Biagio Rossetti, and new choir stalls were commissioned in 1501 from Bernardino Canozi. On the choir stalls see Allen 2009, pp. 178-9. Before the renovation the high altar was “dove al presente son quei gradini per i quali si ascende al detto altare”, Equicola, XVI c., f. 76r.
such as local chronicles, notarial acts mentioning chapels and the record of the 1447 pastoral visitation, which includes a list of twenty-seven chapels.78

Among the patrons of the cathedral chapels it is important to recall Leonello d'Este and his camerario Benastruto Ippocrati.79 The chapels dedicated to Our Lady of the Snow and Saint James of Galicia had been founded in the 1380s by Leonello’s father, Nicolò III d’Este.80 On the north aisle, between the chapels of Our Lady of the Snow and that of the Purification of the Virgin stood the chapel of Saint Mary the white (Santa Maria Alba), which was under the patronage of Benastruto Ippocrati.81 In 1447 Bishop Dal Legname found the chapel in good order, with all its furnishings, including a “puer parvo de ligno et angelis”.82 The chapel was graced by a fresco decoration and by the Madonna of the pomegranate by Jacopo della Quercia (now in the Museo della Cattedrale).83 This sculpture had been commissioned in 1403 by the executors of Virgilio Silvestri, the former patron of the chapel.84

The records of the pastoral visitation of 1447 also mention a Crucifix with “other big wooden saints” by the canons choir stalls (that is above the tramezzo), while the chapel of Saint Michael stood nearby.85 The Crucifix and the sculptures of saints were soon to be replaced by a monumental bronze group of the Crucifixion with Saints Maurelius and George (fig. 7). The sequence of events related to its commission reveals how the artistic choices of Bishop Francesco dal

78 A useful compilation of sources on Ferrara cathedral is provided by Boscolo Marchi 2016, appendix. The record of Dal Legname’s pastoral visitation was published by Peverada 1982, pp. 175-84.
79 Benastruto Ippocrati is mentioned in chapter 2 in relation to the church of San Giorgio.
80 For the foundation of these chapels and for other chapels in the Cathedral founded by noblemen at the Este court in the late fourteenth century see Geddes 2007, note 36, p. 43.
81 In his will dictated in 1447 Benastruto stated that the wished to be buried in the chapel of Santa Maria Alba in the Cathedral, leaving one thousand lire marchesan for the chapel and a further ten lire to celebrate annual masses to commemorate his death, see Geddes 2007, note 55, p. 45. “... altare e cappella di Santa Maria Bianca o sia l’Assunta di Maria Vergine donate da Benastruto dell’Ippocrati l’anno 1447. Quivi v’era la porta che usciva in Gorgadello e avanti di questo altare vi fu sepolto il sudeto Benastruto, nobil uomo per il quale si celebrava un anniversario il 18 agosto...”, Scalabrin (Vita), f. 133v, published by Boscolo Marchi 2016, Appendix, p. 37. At Benastruto’s death the fus patronatus of the chapel passed to his wife Antonia Sacратi. For later records of the Ippocrati chapel see Geddes 2007, note 55, p. 45. During the episcopate of Lorenzo Magalotti (1628-37) the chapel is recorded under the patronage of Alfonso Sacratì, Scalabrin (Vita), f. 75r, published by Boscolo Marchi 2016, Appendix, p. 33.
83 “In questa capella di Santa Maria Bianca v’er la statua antichissima della Beata Vergine di marmo greco a sedere col Bambino in piedi sopra un ginocchio, detta la Madonna del pane dal suo popolo, per aver ella nell’altra mano un pomo granato ed i Bambino un globeto a guisa di luna, qual statua si conserva nella sala capitolare...”, Scalabrin (Vita), f. 133v, published by Boscolo Marchi 2016, Appendix, p. 38.
84 For this commission and the patronage of Virgilio Silvestri, who was chamberlain at the Este court, see Geddes 2007. Even if this episode of patronage dates to the early Quattrocento, it is worth recalling it. On 1407 the executors of the will of Virgilio Silvestri commissioned the ferrarese painter Michele dai Carri to paint the chapel. The contract stipulated that “at either sides of the Virgin Mary were to be two saints and an image of Virgilio de’ Silvestri, and above this image, surmounting the capitals, a Christ enthroned with the twelve Apostles kneeling and above this twelve angels and above the oculus of the chapel a further angel”, see ibidem p. 29. The chapel also included a coloured marble surround, which was partially gilded. Interestingly, Michele dai Carri was to “paint in good German azurite in as good a quality as was used in the chapel of Ser Antonio Pendaglia”. This specification has been convincingly interpreted by Geddes as an indication that dai Carri had previously painted the Pendaglia chapel, perhaps in the church of Santa Maria dei Servi (ibidem, p. 30 and note 21, p. 42). One might wonder if Benastruto Ippocrati had some changes made to the decoration on the chapel, given the fact that it included a portrait of its previous patron.
Legname were influenced by his network. Dal Legname, a Paduan who had a close relationship with Pope Eugenius IV (the Venetian Gabriele Condulmer), had first contacted the Florentine Antonio Filarete, the author of the bronze doors for St Peter’s (completed in 1445). After the refusal of the latter, on 26 October 1450 the bishop contracted with another Florentine sculptor, Niccolò Baroncelli, a pupil of Donatello who had been in Padua from 1434 and 1442 and moved to Ferrara at the start of 1443. Towards the end of 1450, shortly after Baroncelli had begun working on this ambitious project, Donatello, who was in Padua at that time, was summoned by Dal Legname, receiving a payment of ten ducats for his mission in Ferrara. The bronze group of the Crucifixion is indebted to the high altar by the Tuscan sculptor at the Santo. Caglioti has convincingly suggested that Donatello was called to Ferrara to provide advice on this commission. Baroncelli died in 1453, leaving his brother-in-law Domenico di Paris to cast the statues, which were installed above the tramezzo in 1455. At that time the screen was described as having three vaults which crossed the cathedral (“uno balladuro a tri volti che traversava il domo […] fatto suso doe colonne”). The world balladuro (ballatoio in modern Italian) suggests that this deep structure supported a balcony.

Another major commission for the Duomo, dating from the time of the episcopate of Dal Legname’s successor Lorenzo Roverella, were the shutters for the new organ, which had been commissioned from the renowned organ builder Giovanni da Mercatello in 1465. Four years later Cosmé Tura received a payment for having painted the four canvases to be mounted on the antae of the instrument (The Annunciation and Saint George and the Princess, now in the Museo della Cattedrale). In March 1468 the new organ was installed “in the chapel behind the choir above Jesus Christ and the apostles”, probably a fresco or a sculpted relief.

A large “ancona with various figures of saints painted in gold and made in relief” stood on the high altar of the cathedral. This had been installed in 1397, on the eve of the feast of the
Annunciation.94 Peverada has suggested that the ancona was an old painting on panel dating from 1242 by Gelasio di Nicòlò della Masnada, to which Antonio da Ferrara added polychrome wooden sculptures in 1397.95 In 1456 the high altar was modified, most likely enlarged, and pushed back about five feet (2 metres).96

In 1498 Ercole I d'Este paid for the rebuilding of the apse. The design was provided by Biagio Rossetti, and new choir stalls were commissioned in 1501 from Bernardino Canozi.97 The old choir stalls stood in the middle of the nave in front of the high altar. The new choir, which contained one hundred and fifty seats, was installed in the new apse and the high altar was pushed back.98 The interior of the cathedral changed shape again towards the end of the century. In 1596 Bishop Giovanni Fontana, in line with post-tridentine requirements, ordered the removal of the majority of the altar which stood against various columns of the aisles.99

San Domenico

After the cathedral, the most important ecclesiastical foundations in Ferrara were the main churches of the mendicant orders, San Domenico and San Francesco. The church of the Dominicans was built in 1274 on a site to the west of the Palazzo della Corte in the centre of the old town. Unfortunately very little information on its early interior is available: by 1693 the church was threatened with collapse and it was rebuilt on the old foundations (the works were carried out between 1693 and 1715; fig. 8). The Gothic building had a single nave and three apsidal chapels.100 Some information on the decoration of the church interior in the late Trecento is provided by Guarini, who in 1621 saw the frescoes of the chapel of the Holy Rosary (the old Petrati chapel). According to an inscription quoted by Guarini, the author of the mural

94 Equicola, ms XVI c., f. 30. “El quale quadro overo anchona era una mirabile e dignissima cossa da vedere e uno magno edificio con molte bellissime figure si dipinte come messe a oro de relievo”, Peverada 1979, pp. 39-40.
95 Peverada 1979, pp. 36-62. According to Filippo da Rodi on the high altar there was a large marble frame set above four grooved columns, also of marble; Rodi, Annali di Ferrara ms. XVIII c., f. 304r. Scalabrini refers to Antonio da Ferrara as the author of the ancona: “fu messa suso l’altare grando de domo de Ferrara, adi 24 marzo, una bella anchona depinta da maestro Antonio de Ferrara, dipintor, et l’haveva dintorno molte belle cornise et statue indonande che l’era cosa digna da vedere: et ancha di questo anno li reverendi canonici se deliberavano de voler fare agrandire el so coro 1397”, Scalabrini, Memorie antiche, f. 161v.
96 Information about the renovation of the altar is provided by Scalabrini, Memorie della cattedrale, vol. I, f. 306.
98 According to an early sixteenth century source, the latter was “by the steps leading to the altar today” (“dove al presente son quei gradini per i quali si ascende al detto altare”), Equicola, ms XVI c., f. 76r. The diarist Zambotti records that the ceiling of new apse was completed on 15 December 1498: “...La torrina nova de l’altaro grande del vesqua’ fu liurà de coperire, la quale hê sta’ refatta e agradida indrio verso la caxa de’ Contrarii per la Excellentia del duca nostro, a fine de farge le sedie e tirare lo altaro grande indrio e metterge lo Crucifixo grande. E fu liurà la croxara nova denanti al predicio altaro” (note 11: fu terminato il braccio trasversale della croce), Zambotti 1934-37, p. 284.
99 Scalabrini, Annali della Chiesa di Ferrara, ff. 144v, 149r.
100 On San Domenico see Scafuri 2000.
paintings was Serafino da Modena, who executed them in 1373 following the orders of the inquisitor Fra Aldobrandino, upon commission of Francesco di Lamberto Petrati’s wife. \footnote{Mille trecento, con septanta trei/ erano corsi gli anni del Signore / el quarto entrava quando al so honore / questa capella al so bel fin mine, / et tu che tua esti la storie,/ fui Serafin de Mutina Pintore,/E frate Aldrovandino Inquisitore/l’ordine diede, et io lo seguieti, e far la feo, suppi a ogni certo/ la Donna di Francesco de Lamberto”, Guarini 1621, p. 90. The poetical nature of this inscription is highlighted by Francesco Barbi Cinti, who draws the attention on Dante’s influence on the author of these verses; Barbi Cinti 1877, p. 76. For similar verse inscriptions in Ferrarese churches see the introduction to Rime scelte 1713, unnumbered pages.}

Important discoveries on the late Gothic San Domenico were made in 1911, during an inspection of the church organised by Ferrariae Decus, an institution which had been founded only five years earlier by Giuseppe Agnelli for the protection of the local historical and artistic heritage. The visitors went up a ladder and reached the attic above a corridor by the sacristy. They discovered the ara of Bishop Tommaso Perondoli (d. 1445), as well as a fresco representing episodes from the life of Saint John the Evangelist (now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, fig. 9). \footnote{The outcome of the inspection is recorded by a report drafted by Giuseppe Agnelli; Adunanza assembleare 2 aprile 1911, archive at Ferrariae Decus, Ferrara. The tomb of Tommaso Perondoli is registered by Guarini (1621, p. 106) on the right-hand side of the tribuna, above the door leading to the sacristy.}

The fresco originally decorated a chapel by the campanile (one of the apsidal chapels of the old church) and was detached between 1930 and 1932 and transferred onto a new support. The upper register represents \textit{Saint John in Patmos while recording the vision of the Apocalypse} and the \textit{Raising of Drusiana}, taking place within an urban setting, in the presence of many bystanders. The lower register depicts \textit{Saint John raising Satheus} and the \textit{Destruction of the temple of Diana}. Shortly after it was detached, this large fresco (488 x 442 cm) was on show at the great exhibition on Renaissance Ferrarese art in 1933, with a dating around 1440. This date is suggested by the dress style and by the headdresses of some characters, recalling those of the oriental bishops who attended the ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic church that was held in Ferrara in 1438. \footnote{For the fresco see the entry by Daniele Benati in Bentini 1992, pp. 50-53 and Minardi 2007, pp. 187-8. Benati attributed this work to an anonymous artist influenced by the so called G. Z. Master. The G.Z. Master was later identified with Michele dai Carri, see Benati 2007, pp. 69-75. Michele dai Carri was the author of the painted decoration of the vault of the \textit{cappella maggiore} of San Domenico, as planned by its patron Uguccione Contrari in his will, see Toffanello 2010, pp. 177-8.}

In 1496 San Domenico’s main apse was enlarged and the choir stalls which stood in the middle of the nave were pushed back behind the altar. \footnote{The rebuilding and enlargement of San Domenico’s main apse is discussed in chapter 2.}

Two years later this major renovation the church housed the General Chapter of the Dominicans. \footnote{“Domenica a III dicto (June), in Ferrara, a Sancto Domenico se fece Capitolo generale, a lo quale furono da 500 in 600 frati forastieri et non più, perché era il morbo in più loci”, Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502, pp. 211-12.} Another two years passed and, as reported by local diarists, more building works were carried out in San Domenico. In 1500-1501 four new chapels were built on the north side of the nave, next to the cloister. These are recorded as the chapel of Saint Ambrose of the Tassini family, the Strozzi chapel, the chapel of ...
the Compagnia della Croce and that of the Twelve Apostles. This diarist Zambotti provides interesting information about the latter chapel, the *jus patronatus* of which was held by Guido and Giovanni Pasqualetti. This chapel was created by enlarging an existing one, which was “moved back four *braccia* with the aid of rollers without damaging the wall and the paintings… towards the cloisters” The decision of saving the painted decoration of a chapel in the early sixteenth century and the ingenious method employed to this purpose is rather exceptional. Tuohy, without providing an explanation, has suggested identifying this painted chapel (Pasqualetti) with the chapel described by Guarini as being under the patronage of the Petrati in the late fourteenth century. Many noble and eminent families associated with the Este chose San Domenico for their burial, including the Contughi, the Bevilacqua, the Lardi, the Giocoli, the Strozzi, the Sandei and the Prisciani. The *cappella maggiore* was under the patronage of the Contrari, who had firm connections with the Este since the time of Niccolò III.

The chamberlain of the latter marquis, the above mentioned Benastruto Ippocrati, held the patronage of a chapel in San Domenico. Jacopo and Francesco Sacrati, members of a prominent family, also had chapels in this church. In the 1430s Jacopo commissioned his funerary monument from Filippo Solari and Andrea da Carona, while Francesco’s tomb was executed by Antonio Rossellino in the 1460s. In 1468 Cosmè Tura completed the decoration

106 “Et in questo tempo se atendeva a fare in la giesia de S. Domenico di Ferrara capelle quatro ritirate, poste in fuora dal lato verso lo inclausto di frati, la prima de S. Ambroso per li Tasini, la seconda per li Strozzi, la terza per la compagnia della Croce et la quarta de XII Apostoli, che prima era dreto al muro alto, che veniva al drito zoso, per Guido et Zanon, fratelli, di Pasqualetti da Ferrara”, Ibidem, p. 260.

107 Giovanni (called Zanon) Pasqualetti was a wealthy Ferrarese merchant. Another member from the Pasqualetti family, Marco, was commendator of the church of San Nicolò, as noted below.

108 “La capella de li Dodexe Apostoli di Pasqualiti, con tuto il muro e li Apostoli, fo ritirata in drio quatro braza suxo li ruxoli senza guastare il muro e le dipurent, la quale hé in la chiesia de San Domenego verso li inchiostri”, Zambotti 1934-37, p. 307. It is clear from the words used by the anonymous compiler of the *Diario Ferrarese* that the new four chapels were created outside the perimeter of the northern aisle towards the cloister (“poste in fuora, dal lato verso lo inclausto”). The author also refers that the chapel of the Twelve Apostles was formerly behind the “high wall, which came down straight”, see footnote 35 above.


110 For the Contrari see Dean 1988, pp. 141-42.

111 For the surviving elements of the Sacrati tombs from San Domenico, now in the Museo della Cattedrale, Ferrara see Sassu and Giovannucci Vigi 2010, nos 39-42, pp. 98-100 (entry by Giovanni Sassu) and nos 44-46, pp. 103-107 (entry by Massimo Ferretti). For the chapel of Francesco Sacrati see Stemp 1991. In his first will dictated on 6 June 1460 Francesco Sacrati had requested that two hundred gold ducats should be spent on the construction of a tomb, placed as the executors think best, in which his wife and children could later be buried, but no one else. The chapel was to be painted with the Nativity and the visit of the Magi within eight months of Francesco’s death (“quam capellam totam pingi voluit …cum istoria nativitatis Domini et qualiter Magi visitarunt”). The will was first published by Stemp 1991, pp. 66-67; it was republished by Franceschini 1993-97, II, part 1 (1995), no. 964, pp. 586-7 (with the wrong date 1461). Francesco died in 1461, but the frescoes were not completed until December 1468, when Cosmè Tura absolved Giacomo Sacrati from responsibilities relating to the sum of one thousand lire marchesane he had received for the chapel’s decoration. In this important document, also discovered by Stemp, the chapel, which in eighteenth century sources is referred to as “Cappella de’ Magi”, is said to be located near the rear side door of the church; see Stemp 1991, pp. 65-66. The burial of Francesco Sacrati is described by an anonymous diarist: “[1461] a di Xv de Zugno, messer Francesco dal Sacrato, cavaliero ferrarexe, richio de 60000 ducati, passò de questa vita et fu sepulto honoratamente a Sancto Domenico in una arche ne la sua capela, la quale hé quella de li tri Magi. Et inanti il corpo ge andorno XIII famegli, vestiti e coperti de bruna…”,” Diario ferrarese 1409-1502, p. 44.
of the chapel of Francesco Sacrati, including an altarpiece of the Adoration and the Magi and frescoes with Stories of the New Testament (both of which now lost).

In 1472 Baldassarre Estense, the natural son of Niccolò III d'Este and court portraitist, was contracted by Simone Ruffini, a merchant of Milanese origin, to paint his chapel in San Domenico. The choice of the subject of the frescoes, the stories of Saint Ambrose, is explained by the fact that Simone Ruffini's father was called Ambrogio. The surviving documentation on this commission is particularly interesting, as it reveals the active role played by the patron in the conception of the fresco decoration. The contract twice specifies that Baldassarre was to paint the chapel following the instructions of Ruffini. The cycle was to comprise twelve compartments, including a Maestà and the portraits of Simone and his wife, as well as those of Antonio and Ambrogio Tassino, nephews of Simone, and of Giovanni Castelli, the notary who drafted the contract for this commission. The price was established at one hundred and thirty ducats, but it could have been higher after the appraisal by Cosmé Tura upon completion of the work.

In the same year 1472 the friars of San Domenico assigned to counts Antonio and Girolamo, the sons of Pietro Roverella, the chapel of the late Benastruto Ippocrati. The chapel was painted and had a sepulchre covered with a tomb slab (“unam capellam muratam, pictam, cum uno sepulcro ante eam coperto lapide marmoreo”). This description suggests that the chapel may have been barely more than a recess in the wall, furnished with an altar. According to the document, which was drafted by Ludovico Miliani, a notary employed by the Roverella on other occasions, this transaction was subject to the approval of Antonio and Girolamo’s uncles, cardinal Bartolomeo and Bishop Lorenzo Roverella. They must have approved the choice of their nephews, as Antonio and Girolamo Roverella were buried in this chapel.

112 Simone Ruffini was among the merchant suppliers of the Este court. In 1495 and 1469, for instance, he supplied materials to Cosmé Tura for making patroni for tapestries; see the documents published by Tuohy 1996, pp. 408-9. Little is known about Ruffini, but another proof of his cultural and artistic interests is the medal he commissioned shortly before 1476 from the celebrated Mantuan medallist Sperandio Savelli.

113 The contract for the decoration of the chapel of Simone Ruffini in San Domenico was first published by Cittadella 1866, pp. 26-7; see also Franceschini 1993-97, II, part 1 (1995), doc. 11.

114 The only information about Ippocrati as patron of the chapel in San Domenico is found in the document registering the transfer of the jus patronatus to the Roverella in 1472. Given what has been said above about Ippocrati’s chapel in the cathedral, his wish to be buried there and the high sum of money left aside for the chapel, it is possible that he had renounced his rights of patronage on the chapel in the Dominican church.


116 Marcantonio Guarini (1621, p. 113) transcribed the epitaph in memory of Girolamo Roverella which had been set up by his daughter Lucrezia in 1577, after the earthquake of 1570 had damaged the family chapel. In his Annali di Ferrara Niccolò Baruffaldi refers about some chapels that were dismantled in San Domenico from 1693, including that of the Annunciata, “where there was the tomb of the Roverelli”. In order to build a foundation, the remains were dug out, among them the “body of a man in armour of the Roverella family”, and the bones were put in various bags ready to be put back in the chapel, Baruffaldi, Annali, I, fr. 143-4, published by Stemp 1999, p. 74.
Other prominent patrons of San Domenico were the Strozzi, a branch of the powerful Florentine family. In the early 1390s Giovanni, also called Nanne (1376-1427), the son of the exiled Carlo Strozzi, arrived in Ferrara, where he served Niccolò III d’Este as condottiero, leading successful military campaigns and was later appointed consigliere di stato. Nanne’s funeral was celebrated with solemn pomp in San Domenico; although the anonymous diarist does not mention the exact place of his burial, it is possible that Nanne was buried in his family chapel.

All of Nanne’s four sons (Niccolò, Lorenzo, Roberto and Tito Vespasiano) attained a high socio-economic status, being allowed into the most restricted entourages of Borso and Ercole I d’Este.

Like his father, Niccolò, “cavalere splendidissimo e sapientissimo”, who died in 1477, was buried in San Domenico, as registered by the local diarist Zambotti. That the Strozzi held the patronage of a chapel in San Domenico seems to be confirmed by the will of Niccolò’s widow, Contessa of Aldobrandino Giocoli. In this document dating from 7 March 1497, Contessa requested that her body was to be buried in San Domenico, in the arca to be built in her chapel according to the wishes of her son Carlo. She also gave instructions to move the remains of her late husband Niccolò and of her late son Borso to this newly built arca. Unfortunately no evidence about artworks or furnishings of the Strozzi chapel in San Domenico survives.

However, Contessa’s will provides some interesting information about another Strozzi chapel, also in a Dominican foundation. Santa Maria degli Angeli had been built by Niccolò III d’Este in 1403 next to a male Dominican Observant convent and became the burial site of Este rulers. Contessa arranged the bequest of sixteen golden ducats to the friars of Santa Maria degli Angeli to be spent on an ancona for the altar in the chapel of her heirs. The latter must be the chapel dedicated to Saint Peter Martyr, the patron of which had been Count Lorenzo

117 On the Strozzi in Ferrara see Fabbri 1994.
118 “A di XVIII de Zugno [1427], era el di de Pasqua Rosada, fu sepulto messer Nanni di Strozzi da Fiorenza a Sancto Domenico con cavali X, coperti, con le bandiere con le sue arme”, Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502, p. 18.
119 “A di 21 [February], de vegneri [1477]. Messer Nicolò di Strozzi, cavalere splendidissimo e sapientissimo, morite e fu sepelito hoi con gran pompa, ritrovandose a tal esqueue tutti li magnati e zintilhomini de questa citade in la chiesa de Santo Domenego, dove messer Ludovico Carbon, poeta laureato e nostro cittadino, fece la oration funchre e recitò cum gran laude de li audienti”, Zambotti 1934-37, p. 31.
120 “Corpus suum postquam ab eo anima separata fuerit sepeliri disposuit et commandavit apud fratares predicatores conventuales in ecclesia S.ti Dominici in civitatis Ferrariae in Archam costruendum in eius capella arbitrio et voluntate inscripti Magnifici d. Caroli eius filii et heredis …”, ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Villani, matr. 285, 1; first published by the present writer in Mancini and Penny 2016, p. 89, note 108. Even if the Giocoli had their chapel in San Domenico, it seems likely that “eius capella” refers to the chapel of the Strozzi, as it would be strange that Niccolò and Borso Strozzi were buried in a chapel other than their own.
122 “… item fratribus S.te Marie ab angelis predictis reliquit ducatos sexdecem (?) aurii in auxilium faciendam unam Anchonam ab altari in capella inscriptorum eius hereditum …”, ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Giovanni Antonio Villani, matr. 285, 1; see note 49 above. The sons of Contessa, Carlo and Camillo Strozzi, were both buried in the family chapel in Santa Maria degli Angeli. Indeed 1621 Marcantonio Guarini mentioned the tombs of Lorenzo, Camillo and Carlo Strozzi in the second chapel to left of the main altar of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Guarini 1621, p. 161.
Strozzi (son of Nanne), one of the most prominent members of Borso d’Este’s court. A few years after Lorenzo’s death the patronage of this chapel was transferred to his nephews Carlo and Camillo Strozzi, who promised the Dominican friars to repair the chapel at their own expense and to pay for the ancona with “gilded figures of saints”. The Strozzi chapel was most likely graced by the altarpiece “with Saints Sebastian, Jerome and Peter Martyr, with a Dead Crist” which was seen in Santa Maria degli Angeli by Girolamo Baruffaldi. In his Vite dei pittori ferraresi (written between 1697 and 1722) Baruffaldi referred to it as a work painted by Lorenzo Costa and commissioned by Tito Vespasiano Strozzi. The church had been heavily damaged by the 1570 earthquake. The painting had been removed from the church in 1690 and Baruffaldi saw it in the monastery. In the 1770s the altarpiece is recorded in the Sacrati chapel, where some years later Cesare Cittadella saw a Saint Jerome by Costa. Unfortunately there are no elements to document the later history of this altarpiece, and the attribution to Costa or Roberti of three fragments (Saibene collection, Milan and Bargellesi collection, Genoa) believed to have been part of it is rather problematic.

To conclude the account of the Strozzi patronage we must mention the church of Santa Maria in Vado, where the family held the jus patronatus of two chapels dedicated to Saint Jerome and to Saint Frediano. The patrons were two of Niccolò’s brothers, Tito Vespasiano and Roberto. The latter was especially attached to the church, to the point of providing money to build an oratory dedicated to Saint Jerome in the area of the first cloister, which was partially used as burial space. The oratory was consecrated in 1495. In the seventeenth century

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123 Lorenzo, “principal homo et compagno” to Borso d’Este was buried in Santa Maria degli Angeli in 1479, see Caleffini 2006, pp. 305-306. “A dì 18 [March 1479], ad hore 22, la zobia. El conte Lorenzo Stroza morì e fu portato a sepoltere a la giesia de li Anzoli fora de la terra, dove li intervenne tuti li frati e preti, Batudi e compagnie de questa citade con grande moltitudine de zente, e messer Ludovico Carbone, poeta laureato, fece la oratione funebre con gran laude”, Zambotti 1934-37, p. 62.
124 Carolum presentem stipulante et recipiente per se et in nomine et vix prefati domini Camilli sui fratris … capella sancti petri martiris suprascripta …promisit prefactis reverendis et venerabilis religiosis dictam capellam reparare et reparatam manterere sui expensis propriis et Anconam dicte capelle de novo construere seu construi facere cum figuris sanctorum deauratis ad arbitrium boni viri …’, ASFe, Archivio Notarile, Leonardo Novelli, matr. 335, I, c. 39r., first published by the present writer in Mancini and Penny 2016, p. 89.
125 Baruffaldi 1844-46, I, p. 110.
126 Scalabrini 1773, p. 114; Cittadella 1782-3, I, pp. 87-8.
128 Mezzetti 2015, nos 46 and 47. See also Sassu 2015. Santa Maria in Vado was founded in the twelfth century. It was initially administered by the Canonici Portuensi of Ravenna, and given in commendam to the poet Giovanni Aurispa in the fifteenth century. After the return of the canons in 1457, duke Ercole introduced the regular Augustinian canons (Canonici regolari di S. Agostino detti di S. Salvatore) in 1473. The church was rebuilt in the late fifteenth century with the involvement of Biagio Rossetti and Ercole Roberti (for the design and decoration), see Tuohy 1996, pp. 388-89.
129 Roberto served as commissario per le Romagne from 1453 to 1470. On the poet Tito Vespasiano see Il Palazzo di Schifanoia 2007, pp. 232-34 (entry by Marco Folin).
130 On the oratory of Saint Jerome (now parish hall) see Guarini 1621, pp. 304-5.
Guarini lists the chapel of Saint Jerome, the first to the right of the *cappella maggiore*, housing the tombs of Roberto, Tito Vespasiano and other members of the Strozzi family.¹³¹

The case of the exiled family of the Strozzi shows how their rise within the Este court and the Ferrarese elite went hand in hand with the expansion of their patronage in some of the major ecclesiastical foundations of the city. While Nanne chose the prestigious San Domenico, followed by his son Niccolò, his other son Lorenzo preferred Santa Maria degli Angeli of the Dominican Observants, the burial church of the Este, no doubt because of his strong connection with Duke Borso. The two other siblings, Roberto and Tito Vespasiano, opted for Santa Maria in Vado, one of the oldest places of worship to the Virgin Mary in Ferrara, which drew pilgrims after the Eucharistic miracle that took place there in 1171.¹³²

**San Francesco**

San Francesco, the church of the friars minor conventual (fig. 10), was founded by Azzo VIII d'Este in 1243 and rebuilt by Obizzo III from 1344. In 1381 Bartolino da Novara, the architect of the Este, directed the renovation of the apse as well as the construction of the chapel of Saint Anthony to its right.¹³³ Two years later Bartolino built a chapel for Alberto II d'Este. This burial chapel of the earlier Estensi, which was dedicated to the Virgin and Saint James, housed the Arca Rossa, a large sarcophagus probably made of porphyry.¹³⁴ The Este chapel must have been of considerable size, given the fact that it had its own choir stalls.¹³⁵ It was perhaps for this chapel that Duke Ercole I commissioned from Cosmè Tura a gold-background polyptych, three panels of which survive. The central panel with *Saint James the Elder* (Musée des Beaux-Arts of Caen) was flanked by *Saint Anthony of Padua* (Louvre, Paris) and *Saint Dominic* (Uffizi, Florence).¹³⁶ This work was probably painted around 1480, at the same time as Tura was reworking some of the *Muses* of Belfiore.

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¹³² On Santa Maria in Vado see Galvani 2017. The Zerbinati and the Varani were among the families connected to the Este who had their burial chapels in Santa Maria in Vado.
¹³³ Bartolino was granted the *jus patronatus* of the chapel of Saint Anthony; see Cittadella 1860, p. 9.
¹³⁴ The chapel had a yearly endowment of 1000 lire (Guarini 1621, p. 231). According to Guarini at least eight Este Marquis were buried in the Arca Rossa, see Folin 2015, p. 171, note 1. See also Cittadella 1860, pp. 45-6 and Tuohy 1996, p. 376.
¹³⁵ This information is provided by the 1428 contract for the execution of the choir stalls in San Francesco. Arduino da Baiso was asked that tracery on the stall-backs should to be similar to the choir of the Este chapel: “transfora sint quantum transfora in frontispito chori cappellae D. Marchionis, quae est in dicta ecclesia S. Francisci”, Cittadella 1867, note 1, p. 86.
¹³⁶ For these paintings see *Cosmè Tura 2007*, pp. 352-7 (entry by Marcello Toffanello). Toffanello has suggested a provenance from the Este chapels in San Francesco or in the cathedral, but the presence of Anthony of Padua seems to suit a Franciscan context better. The inclusion of both a Franciscan and a Dominican saint in the same altarpiece has been explained by Ercole I’s intervention in a controversy on the Immaculate Conception which had arisen between the two orders in 1478. The choice of representing the two saints might have been interpreted as a sign of equal benevolence towards the two ecclesiastical orders, see Campbell 1997, pp. 92-3. Furthermore, Toffanello (in *Cosmè Tura 2007*, p. 356) proposed that, like Bellini’s altarpieces for Santa Maria della Carità (1462-71), Tura’s triptych was crowned by a *cimasa* with the Dead Christ supported by two angels.
Saint Bernardino was very popular in Ferrara (he had preached in town on a few occasions between 1408 and 1443) and his impact on the court was very strong.\(^{137}\) Borso d’Este paid for the construction of the chapel of Saint Bernardino in San Francesco. Works started in 1454 and were completed by 1456. A temporary altarpiece on canvas painted by Giacomo Busoli was later replaced by a polyptych with golden background painted by his son Bartolomeo in 1464. In 1475 Baldassarre d’Este was paid to add some retouchings to this work.\(^{138}\)

Other chapels in San Francesco included the one founded in 1435 by Alberto Bonacossi, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin and located by the pulpit (the proximity to the pulpit suggests that this chapel was by the *tramezzino*).\(^{139}\) Bartolomeo Pendaglia, reputedly the richest man in Ferrara, must have held the patronage of a chapel in San Francesco, as he was buried in this church on 1st March 1462.\(^{140}\) Also Giovanni Romei held the *jus patronatus* of a chapel in San Francesco.\(^{141}\) His will dictated on 13 May 1475 is of particular interest as it reveals Romei’s concerns about his tomb. He left instructions to his heirs to complete the decoration of his chapel if this was still unfinished at his death, as well as to build his sepulchre. He wished the latter to be made of marble and to be a standing tomb ("sepulchrum marmoreum et elevatum"), appropriate to his social rank and to the other tombs erected by Ferrarese noblemen.\(^{142}\) It is unknown why Romei changed his mind and in his testament of 17 April 1483 he gave instructions concerning his burial in Santo Spirito instead, as we will see below. A notarial act published by Adriano Franceschini is among the rare documents concerning art patronage in San Francesco before its rebuilding in the late 1490s.\(^{148}\) This act is of particular interest as it illustrates an example of a female patron who delegated the decoration of her chapel to the friars, after having indicated her chosen subject. In 1474 Antonella, the daughter of the late...

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\(^{137}\) On Bernardino da Siena and the Este see Cobianchi 2009, pp. 68-70.

\(^{138}\) Cosmé Tura 2007, p. 262 (entry by Marcello Toffaninello).

\(^{139}\) Scalabrini 1773, p. 176. Alberto Bonacossi is first documented in July 1424, when he and Gabriele Pendaglia were appointed *fattori generali* by Niccolò III d’Este. He served the Este mainly for financial administration, see DBI, vol. 11, 1969 (entry by Peter Partner).

\(^{140}\) "... messer Bartolamio Pendàia, cavaliere richo, passò di questa vita in l’atra, e fu honorevolmente sepulto a Sancto Francesco", *Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502*, p. 44. Bartolomeo Pendaglia (1395-1462) was among the wealthy individuals who financed the Este. The son of Gabriele, who had been *fattore generale* in the early decades of the XVth century, Bartolomeo held farms of the *valli* in the 1420s and 1430s and was appointed *fattore generale* to Niccolò III d’Este in 1434. Bartolomeo was the owner of “the most beautiful house of Ferrara, all gilded with ducat gold” ("la più bella casa di Ferrara, tuta metuda ad oro de ducato"), according to a source of 1452, see Sambin de Norcen 2004, pp. 46-9. On Pendaglia and his architectural patronage see eadem 2012.

\(^{141}\) Giovanni Romei (1402-1483), a successful businessman, was one of the key figures of the financial administration of the Este household. In 1457 he was appointed *fattore generale* to Duke Borso d’Este. He held high positions also under Ercole I d’Este, becoming his *consigliere segreto* in 1476. He built a magnificent palace on the present via Savonarola (formerly via San Francesco). This building, nowadays housing the museum of Casa Romei, is a rare example of residential architecture dating from the early Renaissance in Ferrara. See DBI, vol. 88, 2017 (biographical entry by Maria Teresa Sambin de Norcen).


\(^{148}\) For the rebuilding of San Francesco see Tuohy 1996, p. 376.
Petruccio of Siena and the widow of the late “spectabile vir” Checco Agli of Florence was assigned the chapel of Saint George, standing between the Este and the De Roberti chapels. Antonella endowed the chapel with a house in the contrada of Santa Maria in Vado and a sum of four hundred and forty lire. The friars committed themselves to celebrate masses in the chapel in memory of Antonella, her husband and her brother Mariotto, and to commission its decoration (probably a fresco) representing the Virgin and Child with the Magi, as well as to provide it with the necessary furnishings.

The Riminaldi, the Bonacossi, the Marocelli, the Ariosti and the Gualenghi were among the notable families who had their burial in San Francesco. The old San Francesco must have been a rather spacious church, as suggested by the fact that it housed the general chapters of the Friars Minor in 1382, 1424 and 1472. San Francesco was rebuilt starting from 1494, under the direction of Biagio Rossetti, thanks to the initiative of Duke Ercole I d’Este. The new church was designed with a Latin cross plan with three aisles and twenty-two chapels, reversing its orientation. Damage was caused by the 1570 earthquake, following which the cappella maggiore was rebuilt.

Santo Spirito
Another Franciscan foundation in Ferrara, dating from the early fifteenth century, was the Observant convent and church of Santo Spirito, in Borgo della Pioppa. In 1407 Bartolomeo Dalla Mella, counsellor and referendario to marquis Niccolò III d’Este, paid for renovation works to the church. When in town for preaching, Bernardino of Siena, Giacomo della Marca and Bernardino of Feltre stayed at Santo Spirito. In 1481 the convent and church housed the general chapter of the Observants. In 1452, two years after Bernardino da Siena’s canonization, Borso d’Este had given twenty-five lire marchese to the friars at Santo Spirito for an altarpiece representing the saint made by a painter called Nicolò. Rare examples of paintings made for Santo Spirito are the Saints Louis of Toulouse and Bernardino of Siena now in the local Pinacoteca Nazionale. Along with the Saint Anthony of Padua formerly in a Milanese private collection,
they were part of a polyptych painted by Michele Pannonio around 1455-63. Saint Louis d’Anjou (1274-1297), who had renounced to the throne of Naples to enter the Franciscan order and was later elected Bishop of Toulouse, recalls the connections between the Este and the French ruling family. The choice of including Saint Louis might therefore point to a commission from the court circle.

Like Della Mella, other local notables chose Santo Spirito as their burial place, including members of the Obizzi family, Nicolò Bruzi (d. 1481), fattor generale of Duke Ercole I and Teofilo Calcagnini (d. 1488), compagno of Duke Borso. The above mentioned Giovanni Romei, wealthy businessman and consigliere segreto of Duke Ercole I d’Este, held the patronage of the chapel of the Holy Spirit and chose it for his burial. His funeral was celebrated in Santo Spirito on 10 October 1483, as reported by the diarist Zambotti. A few months before dying Romei had commissioned the execution of his tomb to the Lombard sculptorAmbrogio di Giacomo (further discussed below in chapter 3).

In 1494 Clara Caligi, the widow of Francesco Clavel from Valencia, stipulated a contract with Ercole Roberti. He was to paint an altarpiece for Clara’s chapel in Santo Spirito representing the Annunciation in the main compartment. The preparation of the “tabula”, which was to be six feet (about 242 cm) wide and fourteen feet (564 cm) high, was contracted to the woodcarver Bernardino da Venezia. Unfortunately Ercole died before completing this work.

The time chosen by Clara Caligi for this ambitious artistic project was not a casual one. Between 1492 and 1494 Santo Spirito had been renovated under the supervision of Biagio Rossetti. The nave had been enlarged and columns of marble had been added. Sadly, the church and convent were demolished in 1512, when Alfonso I d’Este, at war with the Papal State, ordered the destruction of the entire Borgo della Pioppa for strategic reasons.

154 The photo of this painting published by Gombosi (1931, p. 101) seems to support the idea that it was a side panel, placed on the right-hand side (like the Saint Bernardino), rather than the central panel as suggested by Toffanello (in Cosmè Tura 2007, p. 264).
155 See Ricci in Cosmè Tura 2007, pp. 62-3. In 1431 Charles VII d’Anjou had granted Nicolò III d’Este permission to include the golden lily in his coat of arms.
156 The dignitaries buried in Santo Spirito are listed by Guarini 1621, pp. 345-49. Teofilo Calcagnini was buried in the sacristy of Santo Spirito, see Lombardi 1974, p. 39. In her will dictated on 5 September in 1498 her widow Marietta Strozzi (daughter of Lorenzo di Palla) expressed her wish to be buried in the family tomb by the high altar chapel of Santo Spirito, ASFe, Archivio Bentivoglio, Lib. 17, n. 29. An anonymous Ferrarese diarist registers that Marietta was buried in Santo Spirito on 13 novembre 1498; Diario ferrarese 1409-1502, p. 215. As there is still some confusion about the identity of Calcagnini’s wife, it is worth recalling that her paternal grandmother, also called Marietta, was Nanne Strozzi’s sister, see Kent 1977, note 12, p. 314.
161 “A di 10 [October], de vegneri. Messer Zanne de Romeo, cavalero e consiliario segreto del duca/nostro, il quale morti heri ad hore 22, bozi he sta sepelito con gran pompa a la chiesia de Sanct Spirito fora de la citade, che hera de anni 80”; Zambotti 1934-37, pp. 146-7.
162 For the documents about this commission see chapter 4.
San Nicolò

The church of San Nicolò was a Benedictine foundation established in the early twelfth century. In the late fifteenth century, after the monks left, San Nicolò was given in commendam. In 1475 the last of the commendatari, Marco Pasqualetti had the church rebuilt from its foundations. Around the same time Pasqualetti resigned and Ercole I assigned San Nicolò to the Augustinian canons of San Girolamo da Fiesole. The duke entrusted Biagio Rossetti with the project of enlarging the apse, a work which was completed in 1499 (fig. 11).163 The above mentioned Francesco Clavel from Valencia, consocio and familiare to Ercole I had a chapel in this church, which was very close to the Castello Estense (fig. 5). In the will dictated on 20 April 1483 Clavel expressed his wish to be buried in front of the altar of his chapel. The tomb slab was to be decorated by his coat of arms as well as to be engraved with an epitaph.164

Some important information about the cappella maggiore of San Nicolò is provided by Marcantonio Guarini, who in the early seventeenth century saw the tomb (“sepolcro”) of the Naselli family in the middle of the tribune (“nel mezzo della tribuna”).165 This detail ties in with the contents of a letter written by Cosmé Tura to Duke Ercole I in 1490. From this letter we learn that six years earlier the painter had made an altarpiece for Francesco Naselli (ducal secretary to Borso and later to Ercole I) and was still waiting to be paid sixty ducats for it.166 It has been proposed that the Saint Nicholas of Bari (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, fig. 12) and the Saint Louis of Toulouse (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, fig. 12) were part of this ancona, and that the central panel of this gold-background polyptych represented Saint Francis, the patron’s name saint.167 The modest dimensions of the two compartments in Nantes and New York (74 x 37 cm and 71.8 x 32.1 cm respectively) seem to suggest that they were part of a two-tiered polyptych, which might have adorned a side altar.

In the same letter addressed by Tura to Ercole I in 1490 a painting representing Saint Anthony of Padua is also mentioned. It was made for the duke’s nephew Nicolò di Gurone d’Este, who was appointed Bishop of Adria in 1487. This beautiful panel, now in the Galleria Estense, Modena, is recorded in San Nicolò in the eighteenth century, but we cannot be sure that it was originally painted for one of its chapels.169

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165 Guarini 1621, p. 76.
166 “… havendo da sei anni in qua facto una ancona da altaro a spexe mie de oro, collori e pictura al spectabile Francescho Nasello secretario de la Excellenta Vostra, la qual è in San Nichollo in Ferrara, che me ne vegneriano ducati sexanta...”, letter by Cosmé Tura to Ercole I d’Este, 9 January 1490, first published by Venturi 1889-90, pp. 368-9.
167 Cosmi Tura 2007, p. 358 (entry by Toffanello).
168 For this painting see Toffanello 2007, pp. 37-8.
Other churches

Moving to the suburbs of Ferrara, we must mention San Lazzaro, the church of the Lateran Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. This Romanesque oratory, founded in 1177, was located in Borgo della Pioppa, only about two miles outside the town, in proximity to a branch of the Po River, the Po di Volano. By the mid-fifteenth century the oratory was in ruin and a new church, was built and completed by the late 1470s. In 1480 the Venetian woodcarver Bernardino Rugeri di Giovanni was contracted to execute a new wooden choir with marquetry panels. About five years earlier Ercole Roberti had delivered his first independent commission, the large altarpiece of the *Virgin and Child enthroned with four saints* for San Lazzaro’s high altar (destroyed, formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, fig. 13). As will be explained in chapter 4, this was an extraordinarily innovative work, the first unified *sacra conversazione* to be painted for a Ferrarese church. The canons took the decision of moving to the city, in the new area of the Herculean addition. In 1505 they left San Lazzaro for their new church of San Giovanni Battista, taking with them the church furnishings, including the high altarpiece. San Lazzaro was demolished in 1576.

Also outside the old city walls, leaving the Porta dei Leoni to the right, stood Santa Maria della Rosa (also called Santa Maria del Guazzadore), a small church with attached hospital. In 1449 the church and monastery were occupied by a congregation of Augustinian friars (the Hermits of Saint Jerome). The church was among those which were renovated by Ercole I d’Este. The duke paid for the building of three chapels in 1495 and for the reconstruction of the crossing of the altar (which followed the model of the recently built San Niccolò), which was probably complete by 1502. The church was rebuilt in the early seventeenth century and seriously damaged by bombing in 1944. It was demolished in 1950. The fact that the Ercole’s secretary Siviero Sivieri was buried there, and the commission of a masterpiece of Renaissance sculpture for one of its chapels show that the duke and his court were particularly attached to this little church. The *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* by Guido Mazzoni, dating from about 1483-5, consists of eight larger-than-life-size polychrome terracotta figures and has been preserved in the church of the Gesù in Ferrara since 1938 (fig. 14).

The association of this beautiful sculptural group by Mazzoni with the Este court is attested by a gift of Florentine fabric made by Eleonora d’Aragona in May 1485 to Pellegrina

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170 On the site of San Lazzaro see the thorough study by Faoro 1991.
171 On San Lazzaro see Turrill 1995, pp. 124-5. The author suggests that Biagio Rossetti might have provided the design of the new church.
173 The choir stalls stood in front of the high altar see Turrill 1995, p. 126.
174 For this church see Tuohy 1996, pp. 386-7. The church stood in the area of the Herculean Addition and was not far from San Domenico.
175 Siviero Sivieri also had his house near Santa Maria della Rosa, see Pandolfi 2014, p. 19.
176 On this masterpiece by Mazzoni see Lugli 1990, note 64, pp. 325-26.
Azzi, the wife of “master Paganin of Modena, painter, who made the sepulchre in Santa Maria della Rosa”. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that Joseph of Arimathea and Mary of Cleopha represent the donors: Duke Ercole I and his wife Eleonora (fig. 14). The duke’s choice of this church for Mazzoni’s Lamentation has been explained by Verdon with Ercole’s larger plan of adorning and advertising the institutions of his new urban area (the so-called Herculean addition). Another important Augustinian foundation in Ferrara was Sant’Andrea. This church existed already in 1070 in the parish of San Tomaso, near the church of Santa Maria in Vado. In the thirteenth century, under Este patronage, it was assigned to the Augustinian Hermits. In 1451 the general chapter of the Eremitani met there and was generously provided for by Borso d’Este. Like Santa Maria della Rosa, also Sant’Andrea was among the churches for which Duke Ercole promoted renovation works in the late 1490s. Some information about the high altar chapel is provided by the books registering the payments for these works. In 1497 the painter Fino Marsigli was paid for decorating the cappella maggiore and retouching figures of the Apostles and other figures which had been damaged by the workers (Tuohy has suggested that these were sculpted figures).

Tommasina Gruamonti, the wife of Azzo X d’Este (d. 1415), was buried in Sant’Andrea. In his survey of Ferrarese churches of 1621 Guarini records Tommasina’s tomb in the fifth chapel of the south aisle. The funerary monument, dating from 1498, was commissioned from the sculptor Luigi da Montagnana by Bernardo Bembo, Venetian visdomino in Ferrara. It survives in the museum of Casa Romei.

177 “mastro Paganin da Modena dipintore che feze il sepolcro in Santa Maria dela Rosa”, see Verdon 1978, pp. 247-8.
179 For Sant’Andrea see Tuohy 1996, pp. 367-8. Sant’Andrea was in close proximity to Palazzo Schifanoia.
180 “1451 in la festa de la Pentecoste. Fu celebrato il Capitulo generale di frati heremitani de l’Ordine de Sancto Augustino in la giesia de Sancto Andrea. A lo quale Capitulo ge furno circa mile et ducento frati con il suo Superiore Generale. A li quali frati lo illustissimo et excelsu marchexe messer Borso da Este concesse che li fusse dato una / grande quantitate de victualia per la loro sustentazione”, Diario Ferarrese 1409-1502, p. 33. The splendour of the late Gothic Sant’Andrea can be gauged by the detached fresco with the Triumph of Saint Augustine (after 1378) attributed to Serafino de’ Serafini, now preserved in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara. The fresco (764 x 556 cm), which was transferred onto canvas in 1906, originally decorated the chapel dedicated to Saint Dorothy which was founded in 1378 by Buonsostegno and Giorgio Marinetti. Guarini (1621, p. 369) gives a transcription of the epigraph in memory of the founders of the chapel, after mentioning a member of their family, Giovanni Marinetti, a nobleman of Florentine origin, who had settled in Ferrara in the late thirteenth century. The Marinetti were prominent at court and in Este service, see Dean 1988, ad vocem.
181 Tuohy 1996, pp. 367-8. Some detached wall paintings that can be attributed to Fino Marsigli are held in the museum of Casa Romei.
182 Guarini 1621, pp. 362-3, mentions the will of Tommasina, drafted on 15 September 1388, which gave instructions for an annual donation to the church of Sant’Andrea.
The high altar chapel was under the patronage of the Costabili. Paolo Costabili, the son of Albertino and one of the consiglieri segreti to Duke Borso, was buried in Sant’Andrea in 1469. Another prominent member of the same family, count Antonio, served Duke Ercole I as a soldier and diplomat and later became a leading figure at the court of Alfonso I d’Este. In 1513 Antonio Costabili commissioned a monumental polyptych from Dosso Dossi and Garofalo for the high altar of Sant’Andrea, a masterpiece of Cinquecento Ferrarese painting (now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara, fig. 179). We can only imagine how magnificent the cappella maggiore would have been, with the Pala Costabili framed by beautiful choir stalls. It is rather fortunate that these choir stalls, made in the early 1490s for the old apse, still survive. The stalls, twenty-nine of which are decorated by intarsia panels with perspective views of townscapes (fig. 72), are attributed to Pier Antonio degli Abati and are now in the church of San Cristoforo della Certosa, where they were transferred in 1897. Sant’Andrea collapsed in 1938 after more than a century of neglect and survives as a fragmentary ruin.

This survey on the main churches in fifteenth-century Ferrara provides only an idea of the richness of their interiors and the range of the works of art which graced their chapels. As far as ecclesiastical furnishings are concerned, it is interesting to recall the information provided by the anonymous author of the *Diario Ferrarrese* on 26 December 1496. On the occasion of the Christmas festivities, Duke Ercole I d’Este offered some liturgical vestments to the religious communities of the following ten churches: Santa Maria dei Servi, San Niccolò, San Francesco, Santo Spirito, San Domenico, Santa Maria della Rosa, Santa Maria del Vado, Santa Maria degli Angeli, Sant’Andrea. The set included a chasuble decorated with a cross of gold cloth at the centre, two cleric vestments for the Epistles and for the Gospel with gold trimmings of the width of about one span (20 cm), an altar frontal, also with a gold band and all the “fornimento”

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183 *Diario Ferrarrese* 1409-1502, p. 62. Among the notable people who were buried in Sant’Andrea were Manfredo Maldente of Forlì (d. 1478), one of the judges at the service of Duke Ercole I, Ludovico Brugia (d. 1497) massaro and conduttore della Gabella Grossa, see ibidem, pp. 51 and 203. Also the court architect Biagio Rossetti was buried in Sant’Andrea.

184 Another work of art from Sant’Andrea is the *Saint Nicholas of Tolentino*, attributed to Alfonso Lombardi (now in the museum of Casa Romei), which was in the chapel dedicated to the homonymous saint, under the patronage of the Muzzarelli family. The chapel was to the right to the cappella maggiore, see Guarini 1621, p. 362. The marble sculpture was the central element of an altarpiece of which three paintings by Garofalo survive. These represent episodes of the life of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino and were probably from the predella (two of them are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and one is in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara). The sculpture was flanked by two panels representing Saint John the Baptist and Saint Michael, also painted by Garofalo and now lost. Of the fifty-six stalls seventeen have panels with left-oriented perspective, twelve have right-oriented perspective, while the panel of the central stall represents Saint Andrew (in a damaged state). The 1897 inscription registering the installation of the choir stalls in San Cristoforo records Pietro Riccardi dalle Lanze as their author. For these choir stalls see Bagatin 1991 and Manni 2002, pp. 289-90. Because of the stylistic analogies with the panels of the choir stalls from Sant’Andrea, the two panels with perspective views of cities in San Giorgio have been attributed to Pier Antonio degli Abati, see chapter 2 below.
which was necessary for a friar (or monk) to get dressed for mass. The sets were made of “alexandrino” brocade, with the exception of the one for San Nicolò, which was made of crimson velvet. The diarist specifies that the sets were worth two hundred scudi, an exception being made for the one for San Francesco which was to cost double that sum. The previous year the duke had given to the cathedral a set of liturgical vestments worth one thousand scudi and another one to the church of San Paolo, valued at two hundred scudi.

Our survey is also useful to trace a map of art patronage in churches across the city. Several chapels of the cathedral were under the patronage of the clergy (some of them had been founded by bishops or canons). At the time of the pastoral visitation by Francesco dal Legname in 1447 the Este held the patronage of two chapels, while other chapels were under the jus patronatus of Benastruto Ippocrati, the camerario generale of the Este, of the Del Sale (chapel of Saints Bartholomew and John the Evangelist), of the Costabili (chapel of Saint Christopher) and of other leading families. The highest echelons of Ferrarese society, including several families associated with the Este, particularly favoured the main mendicant churches, San Domenico and San Francesco. The latter church also housed two chapels under the patronage of the Este, one of them being the burial chapel of the earlier members of the family. In San Domenico the Contrari, one of the most powerful local families, had acquired the jus patronatus of the high altar chapel. Other prominent figures and members of the Este court chose the Observant church of Santo Spirito for their chapels and burials. As almost no information is available on the plans of these churches in the fifteenth-century, it is hard to have an idea of the distribution of the chapels.

The contribution of Borso d’Este (1450-71) to sacred architecture in Ferrara was not significant. We must mention the additions to Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Este mausoleum which had been founded by his father Niccolò III in the early fifteenth century, and the construction of San Cristoforo, built in the early 1460s for the Carthusian monks. A real impulse to church architecture was given towards the end of the century by Borso’s brother, Ercole I ((1471-1501): from 1493 he founded or rebuilt fourteen churches or monasteries and

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186 The “alexandrino” refers to a bluish purple colour, see Battaglioli 2010, footnote 3, p. 65. These sets of liturgical vestments donated by the duke were therefore to be used during Advent and Lent.
187 Diario Ferrarese 1409-1502, p. 192.
188 Ibidem.
189 Among the families who held the jus patronatus of chapels in the cathedral (as recorded during the pastoral visitation of 1447) were the Roberti (chapel of the Purification of the Virgin), the Montanari (chapel of Saint John the Baptist) and the Belai (chapel of Saint John the Baptist founded by the Menabuoi family). The Montanari, who were from Pistoia, moved to Ferrara in the fourteenth century. Some of its members covered prestigious roles at the Este court, see Guarini 1621, pp. 254-55 (listing the Montanari who were buried in the family tomb in San Francesco). A useful list of the patrons of the chapels of the cathedral at the time of Bishop Giovanni Tavelli da Tossignano (1431-1446) is provided by Balboni 1982, p. 341.
190 On Borso and the Certosa see Rosenberg 1976.
contributed to the alteration or enlargement of twelve others.¹⁹¹ These did not include San
Giorgio, the old cathedral of Ferrara located to the south of the city walls, which had welcomed
the Olivetans in the 1410s thanks to the support of Niccolò III d'Este.

Appendix

Documents and other sources

1. 1405, 7 June. The benefices of San Giorgio are assigned to Baldassarre Dalla Sale

1405 indictione XIII die septimo mensis Iunii Ferrariae in Episcopali Palatio Ferrariae Camera residentiae infrascripti Dni Episcopi ... idem contulit Prioratum Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrariam vacantem propter provationem factam per dictum Dominum Episcopum de Carolo filio Domini Andreae Tomacelli, et per annulum suum de dicto Beneficio investivit eodem die post praedicta in Monasterio S. Georgii de prope Ferrariam iuxta Altare maius praesente Domino Antonio de Ugodonicis, Domino Thoma de Pirondolis, Domino Nicola de Ariostis decretorum Doctore, Domino Iacobo de Codegorio Canonico Maioris Ecclesiae Ferrariensi; et aliis Dominus Petrus de Boiardis Episcopus antedictus induxit in tenutam D. Baldassarem de la Sale de Monasterio Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrarium, dando in manibus de cornu palio Altaris, et aperiendo portas et claudendo, eundo, stando per ipsam Ecclesiam...

(Scalabrini 1773, pp. 18-19)

2. 1419, 7 May. Inventio and translatio of the relics of San Maurelio and Blessed Alberto Pandoni in San Giorgio

Pietro Boiardi, Vescovo di Ferrara, volendo rinovare la memoria, e venerazione di S. Maurelio, il cui corpo giaceva quasi incognito, per alcune inondazioni del Pò, molti anni avanti e all’ora seguite, conche la Cappella sotterranea s’era resa humidissima, piena di belletta e quasi impraticabile li 7. maggio del sopradetto anno [1419], giorno della festa di S. Maurelio, transferendosi processionalmente con tutto il clero regolare e secolare, e suoi canonici, tra i quali v’era Opizzo Costabili arciprete; Pietro da Salicetto; Iacomo Mesotti e Ugo da Codegoro, alle Chiesa di S. Giorgio Traspadano, presente Nicolò d’Este, Marchese di Ferrara, e altri nobilissimi signori, e moltissimi popolo, il vescovo Boiardi fece cavare la terra, o belletta portata dal fiume Pò nel scruolo, o cappella sotto l’altar maggiore, e vi trovarono due cassette, in una vi era il corpo del Santo martire e vescovo Maurelio, e nell’altra il corpo o ceneri e ossa del nostro B. Alberto Pandoni... Dalle quali due casse usciva un’acqua chiarissima, che lavandosi alcuni infermi le parti offese subito furono sanati; tanto si legge nelle scritture dell’Archivio di San Giorgio de Monaci Olivetani. Il vescovo Boiardi fece poi fare due bellissime cappelle, in una a mano destra dell’Altar maggiore, dentro d’un sepolcro di metallo si conserva il corpo di San Maurelio, riservatone alcune ossa fuori, legate in argento per divozione de’ Fedeli. Nell’altra capella verso la sagrestia dentro di un bellissimo sepolcro di candidissimo marmo, adornato di vaghe figure, e sottilissimi intagli di basso rilievo, qual sepolcro serve per altare, e vi si celebra sopra il santo sacrificio della messa, furono collocate le ceneri e ossa santissime del nostro Beato Alberto, estratone prima con molta rivenza il Capo, che parimente si conserva in un ricco e
gran busto di finissimo argento, rappresentante la figura, maggiore dell’ordinario, d’un vescovo confessore, con mitra in capo e pastorale in mano d’argento, quale assieme con l’altro busto, e statua di S. Maurelio vescovo e martire della medesima grandezza di puro argento, ne’ giorni di festa amendua si mettono sù l’Altar maggiore a gloria di Dio, e suoi santi, e per divotione de’ fedeli.

(Libanori 1667, II, p. 70)

3.

1429, 28 September. Will of Antonio della Careta

Testamento di Antonio della Careta in lo quale lassa chel sia fato una pianeta al monastero de S. Zorzo

Antonio a chareta filius quondam ... Petri a Chareta de contratà Misericordia Burgi Ferrariae ... in primis quidem iussit voluti et mandavit ... corpus suum sepelliri debere apud ecclesiam sancti Georgi Burgi Ferrarie circham eius corpori sepulfuram iussit voluit et mandavit expendi debere id totum quod conveniens... videbitur suis commissariis item reliquit dictus testator missas Sancti Gregorii 200 (?) ... item reliquit dictus testator in auxilium emendi unam planetam ad ecclesiam Fratrum Sancti Georgi Burgi Ferrarie libras decem marchisinorum. ... ut dicti fratres ... debeant semper et in perpetuum dire et celebrare missas et orationes pro anima sua et suorum defunctorum... Et suos autem commissarios et testamenti executores ... reliquit elegit et mandavit Jacobum a Chaligis fiium ser Petri a Chaligis, magister Jacobum de Remondi sartum et dominum priorem Sancti Georgii Burgi Ferrariae qui est et pro tempore erit ...

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamente D 15; unpublished)

4.

1432, 9 April. Act recording the execution of the bequest arranged by Pietro Brasone in his will of 1431

Esecutio legati facti per Petrum Brasonio per Monasterium S.cti Georgii

In Christi nomine amen anno ... nativitas millesimo quadrungentesimo trigesimo secundo indicatione decima dii nono mensis aprilis ferrariae in episcopali palatio ... cum hoc sit quod de anno millesimo quadragesimo trigesimoprimo indicatione nona die decimonono mensis februarii Ser Petrus de Braxonibus quodam Bartholomaei de Misericordia burgi Ferrariae suum fecerit testamentum rogatum per Johannem de Mezaprilis notarium ferrariae a me notario infrascripto visum et lectum et in eo testamento fecerit legatum tenoris infrascripti videlicet item reliquit dictus testator quod per commissarios infrascriptos vendatur una petia tere arative in totum stariorum duodecim ... et una domo de canis posita in contrata Misericordie ... dominus Dominicum de Chilo viam publicam Johanne de Benedetis et Christoforum de Chilo de cuius Rei parte solvuntur omni anno pauperibus ex citivtatis ferrariae libras quatuor et solidos quatuor marchisinorum. Et de precio ipsius Rei parte ematur unus calix de argentu una planeta unus missale et apparamenta ab altare que omnia iure legati reliquit idem testator Ecclesie Sancti
Georgii de prope Ferrariae ut frates ipsius ecclesie teneantur quotidie deum rogare pro anima ipsius testatoris. Cum ... post predicta de anno predicto millio quadringlestimo trigesimoprimo die nono mensis augusit predictus testator fecerit certos codicilos rogatos per dictum Johanne de Mezaprilis notarium a me notario infrascripto visos et lectos et in eis reliquerit in effectu quod commissarii sui infrascripti emant et emere debeant ex pretio rei de qua supra fit mentio vendende per commissarios predictos secundum et pro ut eis videbitur et placuerit missale calicem et apparamentum relictos in testamento suo monasterio et Ecclesiae Sancti Georgii residuum vero pretii predicti quod superit de dicta emptione calicis missalis et aparamenti voluit et mandavit distribui et erogare debere per eius commissarios infrascriptos pauperes et personas ac miserabiles domicelas nubendas et orfanos viduas ac pia loca secundum quod eis melius videbitur et placuerit pro anima ipsius testatoris. Et in dicto testamento fecerit suos fideli commissarios dominum et priorem Ecclesiae Sancti Georgii de ferrariae qui nunc est et vel in futurum erit et Bonaventuram galafaxium ipsius testatoris generum et in dictis codicilis fecerit dictos dominum et priorem sancti Georgii qui nunc est et vel pro tempora futura Bonaventuram ipsius testatoris generum et dominun Johanne Lanarolum capellanum ibidem ad ecclesiam Sancti Georgii et Messer Jacobum Fornarium confirmando et adendo cum potestate ... predicta exequendi pro ut plenum (?) in dictis testamento et codicilis continetur. Cum quod dicti commissaribus de anno presenti et de mensis martii ... vendiderunt dictam petiorem terram ex instrumento ut asseruerunt rogato per Johanne de Mezaprilis notarium publicum ... dederunt solverunt et numeraverunt ... fratri Simoni filio quondam Stephani de Papia celerario sindico et per eum ut asserent dicti monasterii et ecclesiae Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrarie et recipiente nomine et ... dicti monasterii et ecclesiae Sancti Georgii et fratrum eiusdem ac quo voluit secum exportanti libras centum quinquagintaseptem marchisinorum in monetis auri et argenti ad hoc ut dictus celerarius emere debeat unum missale quem asserunt idem celerarius facesse portari de Bononia ... et fieri faciat unum calicem de argento ponderis onciam sexdecim argenti et fieri faciat unam planetam quam dictus celerarius dixti velle facere fieri de uno gabano pani veluti viridis afiguratis quem habet penes se , et pro emendo fulcimentum pro dicta planeta et pro altare ad plenam executionem dicti legati ut supra dicta Ecclesie Sancti Georgii fiant... que omnia videlicet unum calicem missale planetam et fulcimentos pro planeta et pro altare. Idem frater Simon celerarius sindicus et procurator antedictus obligando bona dicte ecclesie Sancti Georgii omnia et singula presentia et futura promisit dictis domino Johanni et Magistro Jacobo commissariis antedictis presentibus et stipulantibus ac acceptabantibus omnibus propris et nomine et vice aliorum commissariorum predictorum ac nomine et vice hereditatis predicte facere fieris de dictis libris centumquinquegentaseptem marchisinorum ad plenam executionem legati predicti dicte ecclesie Sancti Georgii per dictum testatorem factum...

Ego Martinus natus quondam Ser Bartholomei de Schivetis imperiali auctoritate notarius predictis ominibus et singulis presens fui et ea rogata scribere scripsi...

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamente E 4; unpublished)
5.
1434, 26 January. Contract for the erection of the high altar chapel and two flanking chapels stipulated between Benastruto degli Ipocrati and the prior of San Giorgio and the stonemason Domenico of Padua

In Christ nomine amen. Anno eiusdem nativitatis millesimoquadringentesimo trigesimoquarto indiction duodecima die vigesimosexti mensis Ianuarii, Ferrarie in contrata sancti Romani in stacione cambii et fontici infrascripti Benastruti. Presentibus testibus vocatis et rogatis Christoforo campore filio quondam Constantini de Rodigio habitatore Ferrarie in contrata sancti Iacobi, Lodovico de Milianis notario filio quondam Miliani de contrata sancti Romani, Guasparo campore filio quondam Montis de contrata sancti Iacobi, Tomasino filio quondam Laurentii de Trivisio habitatore Ferrarie in contrata sancti Clementis et aliis.

Honorabilis vir Benastrutus filius quondam Boecii de Ipocratibus de contrata sancti Romani comissarius et executor testamenti et ultime voluntatis quondam honorabilis viri Aliprandi de Guidizonibus de Luca qui tempore eius vite habitabat Ferrarie in contrata sancte Marie de Bucco comissario nomine antedicto et nominibus et vice aliorum comissariorum testamenti et ultime voluntatis dicti quondam Aliprandi pro quibus promisit de rato et ratihabitatione de omnibus et singulis in presenti instrumento contentis sub obligacione omnium suorum honororum presentium et futurorum et sub pena infrascripta prout de ipsorum omnium comissaria constat et apparit in testamento ultimo dicti quondam Aliprandi scripto manu Urbani de Rossettis notarii ex una parte et magister Dominicus murator filius quondam Antonii de Padua habitator civitatis Ferrarie in contrata Mainardorum capele santi Nicolai ex alia parte: predicte partes et utraque ipsarum agentes ut supra se convenerunt ad infrascripta fienda per modum infrascriptum et ut infra dicetur. Videlicet: quod dictus magister Dominicus obligando se et sua bona presentia et futura per se et suos heredes teneatur et de beat et sic solemni stipulacione promisit dicto Benastruto stipulanti et recipienti comissario nomine antedicto facere in ecclesia santi Georgii de Ferraria capellam magna dicte ecclesie sancti Georgii ad similitudinem capele magne monasterii Sancti Dominici de Ferraria altitudinis pedum triginta ad pedem episcopatus ferrarie usque ad chochonum dicte capele incipendo mensurare dictos pedes triginta abatuto veteri dicte capele et latitudinis pedum viginti ad dictum pedum cum lapidibus marmoreis positis in dicta capela a latere maiori prout sunt in dicta capela sancti Dominici et si aliquis lapis marmoreus positis esset extra dictam capelam dictus Dominicus ponere non debeat aliquem lapidem marmoreum extra ipsam capelam et hoc cum troina ad similitudinem dicte capele et facere copertum de loro et sufficienti lignamine et coperire de bonis cupis et facere fundamentum bonum et sufficientem arbitrio boni viri et ipsam capelam smaltare et albare suis expensis ponendo dictum magistrum Dominicum omnem lapides et calcinam et alia necessaria pro dicta capella fienda et ponere arpices necessarios pro dicta capella prout est capella monasterii sancti Dominici et facere altare cum gradis sine lapide marmoreo ad dictum altare ponendo et ponere omnes cintanos necessarios pro faciendo dictam capellam et solvere manualibus et alii ad dictam capellam laborantibus et illam capellam selegare de lapidibus magnis a platea lisatis cum silice et facere duas fenestras ferreas magnas prout fuerit opportunum in dicta capela et facere inter duas dictas fenestras unum oculus laboratum de lapide cocto. Et dictam capellam dictus magister Dominicus compleere et perficere promisit per totum mensem ianuarii proximi futuri. Et habendo dictum magistrum illos lapides marmoreos existentes in dicta ecclesia et extra ipsam ecclesiam secundum quod videbitur et placuerit infrascriptis domino priori et celerario monasterii predicti sancti Gregorii [sic] et dicto
Benastruto. Et hoc ideo facere promisit dictus magister Dominicus quia dictus Benastrutus comissario nomine antedicto obliquando dictam comissariam t bona ipsius comissarie dare et solvere promisit dicto magistro Domenico presenti stipulantii et recipientii pro se et suis heredibus libras mille marchisinorum mastellos vigintiquinque vini de vino Bragantini quod heredes dicti Aliprandi presentaliter habent in domo et staria quadraginta boni frumenti de quibus libris mille marchisinorum dictus magister Dominicus ad instanciam et peticionem dicti Benastruti presentis stipulantis et recipientis comissario nomine antedicto dixit asseruit et sponte confessus fuit quod ipse habuit et recepit libras quinquagenasquinqueintaunam et solidos quatordecim marchisinorum computatis in dictis libris quinquagenasquinqueintauna et solidis quatordecim marchisinorum omnibus quantitatibus denario et rerum habitorum per ipsum vel alium eius nomine a dictis comissariis vel aliquo ipsorum et presertim a dicto Benastruto vel alio pro eiusmod nomine a dictis comissariis vel aliquo ipsorum et presertim a dicto Benastruto vel alio pro eiusmod nomine hinc retro usque in presentem. Et renunciavit exceptioni dictus magister Dominicus sibi non datorum non traditorum non habitorum non solutorum ac numerorum dictorum denario occassione predicta spique future dacionis tradicionis habicionis solutionis et numeracionis forique privilegio exceptioni doli malique metus causa vel ex iniusta causa actioni in factum et condictioni sine causa omni aliquo exceptioni suo iuri et legum auxilio sibi competentii et competitori. Residuum vero dictarum librarum mille marchisanorum dictus Benastrutus comissarius antedictus dare et solvere promisit dicto magistro Dominico presenti stipulantii et recipientii pro se et eiusmodibus in terminis infrascriptis. Videlicet: libras centum marchisinorum arbitrio dicti Benastruti tamen solvendas ante mensem iunii proximam et restum dicti residui cum dicta capella fuerit completa et dictum vinum et dictum frumentum dare promisit idem magistro Dominico presenti stipulantii et recipientii usque ad quindecim dies proximos futuros. Annullantes ex nunc dictus Benastrutus dicto nomine et dictus magister Dominicus quandam aliam compositionem factam inter ipsos Benastrutum dicto nomine et Dominicum predictum super constructione et fabrica dicte capelle de qua constat et apparat publico instrumento rogato per me notarium infrascriptum dicente tamen et protestante dicto magistro Dominico in presentia dictorum testium et mei notarii infrascripti quod propterea predicta vel aliquo predictorum non intendit neque vult derogare aliqui suo iuri quod ipse haber contra et adversus Andream de Nasele fornasarium et Vivianum fabrum quondam Bartolomei de Miliarino et utrumque ipsorum in solidum et eorum bona et bona utriuscumque ipsorum in solidum in petendo et exigendo omnem quantitatem lapidum et calcine sibi promissorum et promissarum pro dicta capella construenda ut in dicto primo instrumento conventione rogato per me notarium infrascriptum plenius continetur et in petendo omnem suum damnum et interesse ime vult et intendit illud sibi fore salvum et reservatum. Item venerabiles viri dominus frater Nicolaus de Regio prior dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii et frater Laurentius de Bononia celerarius dicti monasterii ex una parte et dictus magister Dominicus ex alia parte predicte partes et utraque ipsarum se convenentur ad infracepta fienda per modum infrascriptum et ut infra dictur. Videlicet: quod dictus magister Dominicus teneatur et debeat et sic obligando se et sua bona presentia et futura per se et suos heredem solemn statu ad missione promisit dictis domino priori et celerario presentibus stipulantibus et recipientibus nomine er vice dicti monasterii capituli et convenuts eidem facere duas capellas in dicta ecclesia sancti Georgii unam a latere dextro dicte capelle magne sic fiende ut predictur et aliam a latere sinistro omnibus suis expensis longitudinis pedum viginti et altitudinis pedum quindecim usque ad chochonum ad pedem episcopatus Ferrarie incipiendo mensurare ab atesto veteri sacrestie dicti monasterii et latitudinis pedum duodecim ad dictum pedem cum bonis et sufficientibus
fundamentis et destruere illud quod fuerit necessarium destruere habendo dictum magistrum Dominicum lapides in dicto edificio destruendo existentes ita tamen quod aliquod edificio destruere non debeat nisi cum incipere voluerit laborare et illas selegerare de lapidibus magnis cum altaribus sine lapidibus marmoreis ab altaribus cum gradis et facere unam fenestram in qualibet capella magnam ferratam cum feras rotundis et laboratem et facere duas crosarias de lapidibus magnis cum capitalis marmoreis bene laboratis et illas smaltrare et albare suis expensis et facere in ipsis capelis copertum de bono et sufficienti lignamine et de bonis cupis coperire et facer quod aque pluviales dictarum capellarum pluere debeant prout eius domino priori et celerario videbitur et placuerit. Et hoc ideo facere promisit dicus magister Dominicus quia dicti dominus prior et celerarius obligando bona dicti monstrii dare et solvere promiserunt dicto magistro Dominico presenti stipulante et recipienti libras ducentas marchisinorum pro factura dictarum duarum capellarum per modum infra scriptum et ut infra dicetur. Videlicet: libras centum marchisinorum in lapidibus et calce per totum mensem marci proxime futurum et dare eadem staria quadraginta frumenti mastellos viginti vini boni staria viginti melice et staria sex ordei quorum frumenti vini melice et ordei precium debet computari et computetur in alis libris centum marchisinorum et de presenti dare et solvere debeant eadem magistro Dominico libras duodecim marchisinorum et residuum ipsarum librarum centum marchisinorum quod residuum superest a dicto precio et ab ipsis libris duodecim marchisinorum dare debeant eadem magistro Dominico completis dictis capelis. His pactis appositis et declarati sint inter dictas omnes partes ut supra agentes. Videlicet: quod si aliqua dictarum trium capellarum destrueretur seu devastatur in toto vel in parte defectu dicti magistri Dominici teneatur et debeat ipse magister Dominicus et sic per pactum promisit dictis [sic] Benastruto dicto nomine et dictis domino priori et celerario ut supra stipulantibus et recipientibus illam sic devastatam et destructam seu illas sic destructas et devastatas reficere et aptare suis expensis. Item quod donec dicte tres capelle non fuerint complete dictus magister Dominicus non possit ire ad laborandum in aliquo alio loco et hoc sub pena infrascripta que pena tociens comittatur et exigi possit per ipsos dominum priorem et celerarium et Benastrutum a dicto Dominico quotidianum in predictis capellis et ad implenda tam circha capellam magnam quam circha aliam capellam.... Et per pactum promiserunt dicte partes et quelibet ipsarum obligando se et bona dicti monasterii et dicte commissarie et sua ut supra agentes et non contrafactum et nichilominus dicta pena soluta vel non predicta omnia et singula in presenti instrumento contenta firma permaneant. Item quod ex pacto speciali liceat et licitum sit dictis domino priori et celerario compleure dictum magistrum Dominico ad predicta facienda et ad implenda tam circha capellam magnam quam circha aliam capellam.... Et per pactum promiserunt dicte partes et quelibet ipsarum obligando se et bona dicti monasterii et dicte commissarie et sua ut supra agentes et non contrafactum et nichilominus dicta pena soluta vel non predicta omnia et singula in presenti instrumento contenta firma permaneant. Ego Ludovicus filius quondam ser Miliani de Milianis notarii imperiali auctorialis dictis tamen quod aliquod edificio destruere non debeat nisi cum incipere voluerit laborare et illas selegerare de lapidibus magnis cum altaribus sine lapidibus marmoreis ab altaribus cum gradis et facere unam fenestram in qualibet capella magnam ferratam cum feras rotundis et laboratem et facere duas crosarias de lapidibus magnis cum capitalis marmoreis bene laboratis et illas smaltrare et albare suis expensis et facere in ipsis capelis copertum de bono et sufficienti lignamine et de bonis cupis coperire et facer quod aque pluviales dictarum capellarum pluere debeant prout eius domino priori et celerario videbitur et placuerit. Et hoc ideo facere promisit dicus magister Dominicus quia dicti dominus prior et celerarius obligando bona dicti monstrii dare et solvere promiserunt dicto magistro Dominico presenti stipulante et recipienti libras ducentas marchisinorum pro factura dictarum duarum capellarum per modum infra scriptum et ut infra dicetur. Videlicet: libras centum marchisinorum in lapidibus et calce per totum mensem marci proxime futurum et dare eadem staria quadraginta frumenti mastellos viginti vini boni staria viginti melice et staria sex ordei quorum frumenti vini melice et ordei precium debet computari et computetur in alis libris centum marchisinorum et de presenti dare et solvere debeant eadem magistro Dominico libras duodecim marchisinorum et residuum ipsarum librarum centum marchisinorum quod residuum superest a dicto precio et ab ipsis libris duodecim marchisinorum dare debeant eadem magistro Dominico completis dictis capelis. His pactis appositis et declarati sint inter dictas omnes partes ut supra agentes. Videlicet: quod si aliqua dictarum trium capellarum destrueretur seu devastatur in toto vel in parte defectu dicti magistri Dominici teneatur et debeat ipse magister Dominicus et sic per pactum promisit dictis [sic] Benastruto dicto nomine et dictis domino priori et celerario ut supra stipulantibus et recipientibus illam sic devastatam et destructam seu illas sic destructas et devastatas reficere et aptare suis expensis. Item quod donec dicte tres capelle non fuerint complete dictus magister Dominicus non possit ire ad laborandum in aliquo alio loco et hoc sub pena infrascripta que pena tociens comittatur et exigi possit per ipsos dominum priorem et celerarium et Benastrutum a dicto Dominico quotidianum in predictis capellis et ad implenda tam circha capellam magnam quam circha aliam capellam.... Et per pactum promiserunt dicte partes et quelibet ipsarum obligando se et bona dicti monasterii et dicte commissarie et sua ut supra agentes et non contrafactum et nichilominus dicta pena soluta vel non predicta omnia et singula in presenti instrumento contenta firma permaneant. Item quod ex pacto speciali liceat et licitum sit dictis domino priori et celerario compleure dictum magistrum Dominico ad predicta facienda et ad implenda tam circha capellam magnam quam circha aliam capellam.... Et per pactum promiserunt dicte partes et quelibet ipsarum obligando se et bona dicti monasterii et dicte commissarie et sua ut supra agentes et non contrafactum et nichilominus dicta pena soluta vel non predicta omnia et singula in presenti instrumento contenta firma permaneant.
6.

1436, 31 December. Will of Lorenza Montolini

In Christi nomine Amen. Dum corpus umanos langore corporeo agitatur in sospitatem interiori sola menete manente dispositioni ulitme voluntatis est celerius providendum.. honesta domina domina Laurentia filia quondam ser Gratiadei de Montolinis et uxor quondam Magistri Francisci a Gabella de contrata ... Sancti Romani ... disposito primo namque animam suam omnipotenti Deo recomendavat corpus vero suum iussit et volute sepeliri debere apud ecclesiam Monasterii Sancti Georgii montisoliveti nuncupati in archa quam fratres dicti monasterii facere debeant in capella ipsius domine Laurentie posita in Ecclesia dicti Monasteri per fratres dicti Monasteri eidem domine data circha cuius corporis sepulturam dicta testatrix expendi voluit id quod suis commissariis videbitur et plucerit ut corpus suum honorifice sepiatur.

Item voluti dicta testatrix quod commissarii sui veri dicere et celebrare faciant quinquaginta missas at quod dare debeat sacerdotibus qui ipsas missas dicient soldi quinquaginta marchisinorum et hoc pro anima sua.

Item etiam reliquit quod suis commissarii dicere et celebrare faciant sexaginta missas et quod debant sacerdotibus quod ipsas dicerent libras tres marchisinorum et hoc pro anima sua.

Item quod dicere et celebrare faciant missas centum quod dare debeat sacerdotibus quod ipsas dicerent libras quinquaginta marchisinorum et hoc pro anima sua.

Item quod dicere et celebrare faciant mille missas et quod dare debeat sacerdotibus quod ipsas dient libras quinquaginta marchisinorum et hoc pro anima sua.

Suos autem commissarios et huius testamenti executores ad predicta omnia et singula in presenti testamento contenta et distribuendi et executo mandandi dicta testatrix elegit et voluit venerabilem virum et priorem monasterii Sancti Georgi Montisoliveti nuncupato qui nunc est vel pro tempora erit, religiousum virum fratrem Benedictum de Botis ordinis Montisoliveti, ser Raynaldus de Ziponario notarius... Pelegrinus de Montolinis eius nepotem, Ser Antonium de Montolinis eius testatrix fratrem et religiosum virum priorem monasteri Sancte Anne Burgi Ferrarie qui nunc est vel pro tempora erit... dicta testatrix heredem suum univeralem instituit ellegit et voluit prefatum Ser Antonium eius fratrem et filium quondam Ser Gratiadei de Montolinis...

Lectum et publicatu fuit presentibus testibus per me Nicolaum de Pincernis notarium infrascripti de mandato et iussu dicte testatrix anno a nativitate eiusdem millio quadrigentesimo trigesimo sexto indictione quarta decima die ultimo mensis decembris Ferrarie in contrata sexti Sancti Romani in domo habitacionis dicte testatrix.

Ad huius testamenti publicationes fuerunt testes ... presentes vocati a dicta testatrice rogati videict frater Benvenutus de Botis ordinis Montisoliveti, frater Simon de Papia ordinis predicti, Johannes quondam Zunte de Uliveriis de contrata Mainardorum capele Sancti Nicolai, Andreas de Sancto notarius filius quondam Ser Francisci de contrata Buccacanalis, Tura de Palmeris notarius filius Ser Johannis de contrata Sancti Apolonarii, Bartolameus dictus poverinus filius
7.

1440, 3 March. Will of Bartolomeo of the late Pietro Brasone

Testamentum ser Bartholomeo quondam magistri Petri Braxoni

...Ser Bartholomeus filius quondam magistri Petri Braxoni .. de contrata Misericordie de prope Ferraria... comendavit et iussit cadaver sive corpus suum cum anima sua... separata a corpore .. sepoliri debere apud ecclesiam monasterii Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrara .... item reliquit voluit et iussit ... per infrascripti eius commissari ... post obitum dicti testatoris expensis bonorum eius hereditatis dixi et celebrari faciant per unum devotum sacerdotem dicti monasterii Sancti Georgi missas Sancti Gregorii pro anima ipsius testatoris et ad remissionem peccatorum suorum...item reliquit voluit et iussit ... eius commissari expensis bonorum eius hereditatis dici et celebrari faciant continue singulo anno in ... in die obitum ipsius testatoris in dicta ecclesia Sancti Georgi unum a... cum missa solemni in cantu et officio mortuorum per anima ipsius testatoris in remissionis peccatorum suorum ...Item reliquit voluit iussit et mandavit dictus testator quod una domus cum curte et arboribus ... positam in contrata Misericordie ... debat ad honorem omnipotentis Dei redemptoris humani generis ad acceptandum et hospitandum Christ pauperes ibi accedentes et qua domus sit deputanda reducat et reduci debeat ad formam hospitalis pro ut melius fieri possit ... et iussit et mandavit ipse testator ipsam domum sic reformataet et reductam intitulari debere sub volcabulo hospitalis etd omus Sancti Maurelii ...

Suos autem commissarios et huuii sui ultimi testamenti executores as predicta omnia et singula in presenti testamento contenta et descripta exequunda et executionem mandanda dictus testator allegit nominavit et esse voluti iussit reliquit dictum magistrum Johannei eius fratrem, venerabilem virum dominum Jacobum quondam Petri de Robertis capelanum in ecclesia Sancti Georgii qui nunc est et qui pro tempora fuerit, venerabilem virum dominum priorem monasterii Sancti Georgii qui pro tempora fuerit ...

Actum et publicatum fuit presentibus testaibus per me Robertum de ... notarium ... Anno nativitatis domini nostri Yhesu Christi millio quadrigentesimo quadragesimo indictione tertia die tertio mensis marci in refectorio monasterii Sancti Georgii de prope Ferraria.

Ad cuius testamentum publicatum fuerint presentes teste item vocati et rogati ... videelicet venerabili et religiosi fratres Anthonius Benedicti de Bononia, frater Laurentius Bartholomei de Cremona, frater Anthonius quondam Jacobi de ..., frater Martinus quondam domini Lanzaloti, frater Bartholomeus de Catanea de Padua, frater Cristoforus quondam ... Lanzaloti de Madiolano omnes fratres dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii de prope Ferraria et venerabile vir dominus Jacobus quondam Petri de Roberti capelanum in ecclesia monasterii predicti Sancti Georgii et ali....

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, E 20; unpublished)
8.
1452, 13 January. Endowment of the chapel of the Annunciation in San Giorgio

Dos capelle sub vocabullo Annuntiatione Virginis Marie per d. Dominicum de Chilo

In Christi nomine Amen. Anno nati vitatis eiusem millio quadrigentesimo quinquagesimo
secundo indicatione quintadecimae die terciodecimo mensis januarii Ferrariae in contrata Sancti
Pauli in stacione et spiciaria magistri Zacharie testis infra scripti presentibus testibus vocatis et
rogatis M.ro Bartolameo Falconeto phisico filio quondam M.ri Falconeti phisici de contrata
Sancti Romani, M. ro Zacharia Zamboto spiciario filio quondam m.ri Joannis de contrata
predicta Sancti Romani, Antonio Nasimbene de Florentia de contrata predicta Sancti Romani et
aliis. Egregius et prudentissimus juris peritus vir dominus Dominicus de Chilo civis ferrariensis
filius quondam Bartolamei de contrata Sancti Petri sponte libere et experta scientia per se et
suos heredes hoc instrumento titulo dotis pro capella per eum fieri constructa in ecclesia Sancti
Georgii sub vocabulo Annunciationis Virginis Marie dedit cessit transtulit atque mandavit
venerabilibus et religiosis viris fratribus Lazaro de Ferraria vicario et Benedicto de Mezarilis
priori conventus Monasterii Sancti Georgii de ordine Montisolivi de contrata misericordie
presentibus stipulantibus et recipiendibus nomine et vice fratrum dicti Monasterii et conventus
...omnia iura .. actiones et obligationes reales et personales utiles et directas tacitas et expressas
seu ... ypotecharias et alias quascumque speciales et genera... ipse dominus Dominicus habet
habebat seu habere poterat seu posset contra ed adversus dominam Ursolinam filia, Nicolai de
Cattis et uxorem Petruccii de Fulgineo familiaris Illustrissimi Domini nostri Dominico Marchionis
et contra adversus Jacobum de Fabro alias cognominatum Jachobum Bagarotum de contrata
Sancti Salvatoris in petendo exigendo recipiendo et consequendo omni et singulo anno
temporibus debitis infrascriptis post mortem ... ipsius domini Dominici ... libras viginti
marchesini quas ipsa domina Ursolina debet ipsi domino Dominico omni anno in festo
paschalis resurrectionis domini nostri Yhesu Christi pro usu et nomine usus possessionis
infrascripte et rerum eius infrascriptarum in fine presentis instrumenti primo loco. Quam
possessionem dicta domina Ursolina tenebat et tenet ad usum ab ipso domino Dominico
solendo omni anno in terminis antedictis libras viginti....
Res autem de quibus supra sunt infrascripte et primo quasi tenet domana Ursolina videlicet unus
casalis casamentivus de una domo cuppata partim murata et partem de assidibus et solerata ...
cum quatuor alius domibus de cuppis ... et duobus ortis arativos de tribus modii terre vel circa
et vineatis de septem ... in fondo Ville Fossanova a latere Sancti Georgii distritus Ferrariae...
Res autem empte per dictum Jacobum Bagarotum sunt hoc videlicet una petia tere aratorie de
stariis decem octo tere vel circa prative de stariiis quinque et caementive de domibus tribus de
cannis cum area curte et orto posite in contrata S. Gulielmi Burgi Ferraraeae prope Ferraria ...
Ego Baldassar filius quondam Ser Francisci de Bradellis notarii publicus imperiali....

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Catastro 3/2 (1393-1552); unpublished)
9.
1455, 31 December. The monks of San Giorgio sell the properties in *fundo Gaibane*, endowment of the chapel of Domenico de Chilo

In Christi nomine Amen Anno eiusedem nativitatis Millioquadringentesimo quinquagesimoquintio… die ultima mensis decembris in Monasterio S. Georgii prope Ferraria in contrata nomine ultra padum in camera … Venerabilis patris fratris Iacobi de Carpo dicti Monasteri cellerarii presentibus testibus vocatis et rogatis Paulo Magnanino filio quondam Bernardi Manani de contrata Sancti Romani civitatis ferrarie, Francisco Valerio filio quondam predicti de contrata montis burgi civitatis ferraria et alis

Cum honesta domina domina Ursolina filia quondam Nicolai de Cattis … teneretur et esset obligata domino Dominico de Chilo usus nomine omni anno in libris viginti moneta pro usu certarum rerum positarum in fundo Gaibane districti Ferrarie et dictus dominus Dominicus construi et edificari fecerit certam capellam in ecclesiam S. Georgii dicti monasterii pro anima sua et defunctorum suorum cui consignavit in dote ac nomine dotis dictum usus quem domino Dominico dicta domina solvebat omni anno videlicet dictum esset (?) et hoc ex testamento ultimo dicti Dominici … et infrascripti fratres emerunt certas res sitas in teritorio Bononiae ut apparat … instromento rogato per me notarium infrascriptum de anno domini millioquadringentesimo quinquagesimo quinto indicione tercia die secundo mensis decembris et … predicti infrascripti fratres necesse per acquisitione dictarum rerum … infrascriptos denarios, nec …

Venerabiles et religiosi viri presentes fratres monaci eiusdem religionis professi infrascripti videlicet Reverendus in Cristo pater frater Michael de Bononia prior claustralis docti conventus et monasterii, frater Marius de Ferraria vicarius dicti monasterii, frater Baptista de Milano ( ?) magister novitiorum, frater Jacobus de Placentia, frater Andreas de Brissia, frater Silvester de Milano( ?), frater Alexander de Verona, frater Nicolaus de Ferraria, frater Michael de Florentia, frater Joannes de Padua, frater Guido de Alemania, frater Maurum de Alemania, frater Joachinus de Bononia, Frater Joannis de Ferraria, frater Albertus de Ferraria, frater Jacobus Phyllippus de Ferraria, frater Petrus de Alemania, Georgius de Albania, frater Berto de Brissia omnes supradicti monaci professi … voces in dicto capitolo ibdem convocati coadunati et congregati sono campanelle ut moris est… totum capitulum dictu conventus seu maiorem partem… dederunt vendiderunt et traddiderunt Pedrutio de Fuligno filio quondam Cionis de Fuligno … presenti ementi stipulanti et recipienti per se et suis heredibus … usus superius descripi rerum supradictarum sitarum in dicto loco sic … consignati diete capelle per dictum dominum Dominicum sub annua solutione libras viginti marchisinorum …

Ego Ugo de Califfinis filius quondam nobilis viri Recevuti de Califfinis civis et notarius presens Ferrariae…

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, G 13; unpublished)
10. 1463, 1 January. Will of Isabetta de Santi

In Christi nomine Aen. Et si mortis hora debent continuo previdentis animo suspecta consistere attamen eius formidandus est eventus … Egregia has honestissima domina domina Isabetha filia quondam Ser Antonii de Montolinis notarii ferrariensis et olim uxor egregii viri ser Andree de Sancto civis et notarii ferrariensis habitatrix Ferrarie in contrata buccocanalium sana per gratiam domini nostril Jesu Chirst mente et intellectu et corpore nolens intestata decedere pro hoc presens nuncupatum testamentum sint scriptis bonorum suorum dispositionem facere procuravit et fecit in hunc modum. … corpus vero suum sepeliri jussit ac mandavit apud ecclesiam monasterii et fratrum Sancti Georgii ordinis Sancti Benedicti sitam in contrata Misericordie burgi Ferrarie in sepulcro aliorum parentum ipsius testatrixis circa cuius corporis sepulturam expendi voluit iussit et mandavit id quod infrascriptis eius commissariis videbuitur et placuerit. Item iure legati reliquit capelle ipsius testatrixis circa cuius corporis sepulturam expendi voluit iussit et mandavit id quod infrascriptis eius commissariis videbuitur et placuerit. Item iure legati reliquit capelle ipsius testatrixis sitam et constructam in ecclesia supradicta sancti Georgii fratrum et seu monacorum ordinis Sancti Benedicti in contrata Misericordie Burgi ferrarie, sub vocabulo sancti Maurelii…

Lectum et publicatum fuit presentibus suprascriptum testamentum per me Evangelistam Massam notarium infrascriptum …

11. 1472, 15 October. The chapel of Saint Michael in San Giorgio is assigned to Giovanni and Niccolò, sons of Michele Savonarola

Consignatio capella facta illis de Savonarola

In Christi nomine amen. Anno eiusdem nativitatis millesimo quadrigentesimo septuagesimosextundo indicatione quinta die quintodecimo mensis octobris in contrata Misericordie in domibus monacis Sancti Georgii et in capitulo ipsius monacis presentibus testibus vocatis et rogatis Anthonio Mainiero filio quondam Alviixij de contrata Sancti Romani, Tura dicto centolance filio quondam Petri ab asino de contrata Sancte Marie de Vado et aliis et venerabile et religioxi Patres frater Marcus de Spinelis de Ferraria Prior dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii ordinis Sancti Benedicti de Monteoliveto, frater Maurelius de Ferraria Vicarius eiusdem
monasterii, frater Donatus de Mediolano cellerarius ipsius monasteri, frater Gregorius de Mutina, frater Bartolameus de Padua, frater Jeminianus de Ferraria, frater Luchas de Ferraria, frater Anthonius de Xona, frater Coradus de Alemania, frater Franciscus Calegarinus, frater Placidus de Arimino, frater Anthonio de Pergamo, frater Iacobus Filippus de Ferraria, frater Michael de Ferraria, frater Felixius de Pergamo, frater Sebastianus de Ripa, frater Joannes Paulus de Ferraria, frater Jacobus de Mantua, frater Lazarus de Ferraria, frater Jacobus de Mutina (?), frater Placidus de Ferraria, frater Franciscus de Laude, frater Dominicus de Urbino, frater Georgius de Pergamo, omnes fratres monasterii Sancti Georgii extra muros civitatis Ferrarie ordinis Sancti Benedicti de Monteoliveto convocati coadunati et congregati in capitulo dicti monasterii sono campanele pro ... per eos faciendis ut eorum moris est asserentes et protestantes se ... ultra duas partes fratrum vocem habentium in dicto monasterio et nomine et vice dicti monasterii capituli et conventus eiusdem unanimiter et concorditer et eorum nemine discrepante. Considerantes affectionem devotam et puram ed fidelem mentem quam infrascripti nobiles et prstantes viri Magister Joannes della Savonarola et Nicholaus eius magistri Joannis frater cives Ferrarie ac quondam Spectabilis eques hierosolimitanus eximius videlicet // et medicine doctor dominus Magister Michael dela Savonarola qui ad ecclesiam ipsius monasteri sepultus est haec tenus habuerint et habentur ad dictum monasterium Sancti Georgii et capellam infenus describendam et omne alio meliori modo via iure forma nomine et ... quibus magis et melius potuerunt et possunt sponte et ex certa scientia et animo ac proposito deliberato ... concesserunt et consignaverunt predictis notabilibus viris videlicet eximio artium et medicine doctori M.ro Joanne dela Savonarola et egregio viro Nicholao dela Savonarola eius fratri filiis quondam dicti domini M.r Michaelis dela Savonarola de contrata Sancte Marie de Vado presentibus petuntibus et recipientibus pro se et suis hereditibus in infinitum capellam unam novam sitam in dicta ecclesia sancti Georgii sub vocabulo Sancti Michaelis iuxta quandam capellam heredum Dominorum Dominici et Damiani de Chilo ex a parte exteriori juxta sacratum dicte ecclesie vel iuxta alios veriores confines dicte rei si qui forent cum omni iure et facultate corpora ipsorum dela Savonarola et suorum defuntorum humandi et sepeliendi in quodam sepulcro per eos in dicta capella noviter construendo et hoc cum omni iure quod dicti fratres et monaci predictum habent in dicta capella dictu fratres agents ... dictam capellam spectatur et pertinetur predicti M.ro Joanni et Nicholao dela Savonarola presentes et recipientes .. dicti Magistre Joannis et Nicholaus obligantes se et sua bona presentia et futura...promiserunt dictis fratribus Sancti Georgii ... dictam capellam dotare de una re inmobili usuali bona idonea et sufficienti posita in civitate vel burgis aut districtu ferrarie ex qua re usuali habeant et recipientur a bono et idoneo et sufficienti usuario libras quindecim ...

Ego Joannes filius providi viri Ser Bartolamei de Brusantinis Publicae Imperiali auctoritate notarius ferrariensis ...

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Catastro 3/2 (1393-1552); unpublished)
In Cristi nomine Amen. ... mors et vita in manibus dei et nichil certius sit morte nichil quod incerti sit hora mortis et voluntatis hominis sit ambulatoria plurumque a varietate successius alternatur et mutatur usque ad extremitatem vitae. Igitur honesta domina domina Franciscas uxor quondam magistri Buldrini Varotarii et filia quondam Johannis habitatrix ferrarie in contrata Sante Marie de Vado sana per gratiam domini nostri Ihesu Christi mente sensu et intelectu atque ... dispositionem et ordinance corporis sui et anime sue et bonorum suorum per presens suum nuncupatum testamentum sine scriptis in hunc modum facere procuravit et fecit videlicet Imprimis ... comendavit ipsi omnipotenti deo predicti et filio et spiritui Sancto eius quidem glorioso matri semper Virginis Marie et beato ac sancto Georgio atque Beato et sancto Benedicto et omnibus sanctis celestibus curae quos rogavit ... corpus suum sepeliri debere apud ecclesiab monasterii Sancti Georgii de prope Ferraria et in ipsa ecclesia in capella Sancti Maurelii in archa marmorea in dicta chapella sita quam archam prior et fratres dicti monasterii eidem testatrici dedicarunt contulerunt et concesserunt pro benemeritis dicte testatricis erga dictum monasterium colatis. ...

Item reliquit dicta testatris atque voluit et mandavit quod prior et fratres monasterii Sancti georgii predicti qui nunc sunt et per tempora erunt tam in vita ipsius testatricis quam post mortem dicte testatricis disponendum secundum eorum voluntatem ... ipsis fratribus et priori videbitur et placuerit duas chapillas quas fieri voluit ac construi et edificari et que facte constructe et edificate fuerunt et sunt in ecclesia predicta monasterii Sancti Georgii predicti de bonis ipsius testatricis in fabrica ... expendite fuerunt libre sexentum marchisinorum quas sic expendi iussit et voluit ipsa testatris de bonis suis atque altaribus et fulcimentis et preparamentis necessariis pro ut videbitur infrascriptis suis commissaribus de ipsis apparamentis unam quam voluit mandavit fulciri in totum de chalice metallici et planeta et alii ad ... necessariis sumptibus hereditatis dicte testatricis. Et quorum chapellarum altera est fundata sub vocabulo Sancti Benedicti quam et mandavit conferri et concedi debere per dictos priorem et fratem ac posse cui et quando ipsis priori et fratrum placuerit disponendos de ea in quam voluerint iuxta ipsorum prioris et fratrum voluntatem. Et item reliquit iure legati de bonis sue hereditatis libris ducentis marchisinorum monasterio [...] de Monte Oliveti de Senis dicti ordinis Sancti Benedicti montis Oliveti. Item reliquit dicta testatris frater Bartolameo de Padua quondam Chatanei fratri dicti ordinis et conventus ad presens dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii libras centum quinqueginta marchisinorum debitas sibi testatrici ex pretio librarum trecentarum marchisinorum quas libras trecentas moneta solvere debet Nicolaus Pangua (?) de casali quem tenet ab ipsa domina Franciscas testatrice cum pacto apropriandi pro dictis libris trecentum monetae. Ad hoc ut ipse frater Bartolameus unam cum priori dicti monasterii qui nunc est vel propterea erit disponat et depense? dictas libras centumquinquaginta marchisinorum secundum suam coscientiam pro ut videbitur atque pro anima ipsius testatricis. Item reliquit voluit et mandavit dicta testatris quod fratres dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii et eorum prior qui nunc sunt et per tempora erut acenem teneant et tenere facient unum cesendelum sive unam lampadam ad capellam Sancti Maurelii in dicta ecclesia dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii in qua corporis sui ... ipsius testatricis sepelietur et reliquit ac iussit sepeliri in archa marmorea in ipsa capella construeta et fondata. Et item reliquit dicta testatris de bonis suis Ecclesie Sancte Marie de Vado civitatis ferrarie et fratribus ... officiantibus libras decem marchisinorum pro omni quarta que posset quoquo modo vel iure ... pro ... dispositis et relictis supra per ipsam testatricem et aliqua parte
eorum dispertorum et relictorum ut dicti fratres sive offiti dicentes divina et celebrantes in ipsa ecclesia Sancte Marie de Vado celebrantes regent deum pro anima dicte testatrix. Et suos autem commissarios ut huius testamenti et ultime voluntatis executores dicta testatrix reliquit elegit nominavit et esse voluit venerabilem patrem priorem dicti monasterii Sancti Georgii qui nunc est monasterii qui nunc est vel per tempore erit et nobilis et egregium virum Alexandrum de Trotis notarium filium quondam nobilis et comendabilis viri ser Nicolai de Trotis notarii civem civitatis Ferrarie. Quibus suis commissariis dicta testatrixis dedit contulit et attribuit plenam licenciam et omninum potestatem auctoritatem et … de bonis hereditatis dictae testatrixis pro exequendo et ut exequant et executionem mandent omnia et singula supra per ipsam testatricem conduta et relicta et disposita usque ad integram satisfactionem et executionem omnium et singularum per ipsam testatrice supra dispororium et faciendi et exequendi …

Item omnibus autem alii suis bonis mobilibus et immobilibus iuribus atque actionibus se se moventibus et debitorum nominibus dicta testatrix sibi heredes universales elegit nominavit instituit et esse voluit monasterium predictorum fratrum Sancti Georgii de prope ferraria. Item quod prior dicti monasterii qui nunc est vel pro tempora erit bona hereditatis predicte ac iura ac actions possit dicto monasterio consignare et ea acceper e et tradere dicto monasterio et fratres dicti monasterii regent deum pro anima ipsius testatrixis. Et hoc dixit et esse voluit suum ultimum testamentum et suum ultimam voluntatem et dispositionem quod et quam iussit … Et sciens dicta testatrix se alias testamenta condidisse rogatum per Benasutum de Benasuto notarium et codicillasse per codicillos rogatos per me Johanem de Mezavrilis notarium infrascriptum illud testamentum et illos codicillos et quodquidem aliud et quamquidem aliam ultimam voluntatem quod et qui reiperiret … facult conditum fuisse per ipsam testatricem … cassavit et annulavit et …

Lectum et publicatum fuit presens suprascriptum testamentum per me Johanem de Mezavrilis notarium infrascriptum de consensu et mandato ipsius testatrixis antedicta ore eius proprio mandantis anno nati vitatis domini nostri Jesu Christi millio quadrigentesimo septuagesimo quarto indictione septima die quinto mensis septembris … in contrata Sancte Marie de Vado in domo habitacionis dicte testatrixis a parte superiores in mansione que est in superiori capite scalarum dicte domus et apud camaram residentie dicte testatrixis sedentis supra quadam chatreda cuperta de paleis apud hostium dicte chamare.

Ad cuius testamentum publicationem presentem fuerunt infrascripti testes vocati et ore proprio rogati a dicta testatrice videlicet nobilis vir et sacerdos dominus Rafetus de Marocelis filius quondam spectabilis et nobilis equitis Rafeti de Marocelis … egregius vir Ser Alexander de Trotis notarius filium quondam egregii comendabilis viri ser Nicolai de Trotis notarii… Antonius de Sandalo filius quondam egregii comendabilis viri ser Nicolai de Trotis notarii… Belinus de Columbati filius quondam ser Bartolomei de Columbati … Nicolaus pictor filius quondam magistri Antonii de Cultelinis preceptoris gramatici… frater Filippus de Ferraria quondam Almerici Civaldini… et frater Gregorius … quondam Antonini de Padua ambo ordinis Sancti Benedicti fratrum de Monteoliveto et nunc conventus fratrum monasterii Sancti Georgii de prope Ferraria … Johannes Bresanus … filius Marchexini… Thomas Bresanus filius dicti Marchexii …

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, I 4; unpublished)
13.
1475, 12 February to 12 October. Payments to Antonio Rossellino for the tomb of Lorenzo Roverella

Anno domini MCCCCLXXiiij

E de dare adi xij di febraio 1475 fiorinj quindici la. per luj a frate Nicholo roverella al presente abbate generale e per luj antonio di matteo scharpellino per parte di paghamento d una sepultura del veschovo di ferrara apare a uscita segn. B c. 221 fj. xv la.

E de dare adi xxvij di giugno fiorinj diecj la. per luj a frate nicholo roverella e per luj a Antonio di matteo da settignano scharpellino porto el detto per parte d'una sepultura di marmo apare a uscita segn. B c. 226 fj. x la.

E de dare adi di luglio fiorinj cinque la. per luj a frate nicholo roverella e per luj ad antonio di matteo da settigniano scharpelino porto el detto per parte d una sepultura di marmo apare a uscita segn. B c. 230 fj. vj la. 118. o. o.

(ASFi, Conventi soppressi, S. Bartolomeo di Monteoliveto. Libro di Debitori e Creditori n° 23 dal 1467 al 1485; published by Von Fabriczy 1907, pp. 165-166)

14.
1476, 5 July. The heirs of Lorenzo Roverella receive permission to erect his funerary tomb in the cappella maggiore of San Giorgio and to pay for the “ornatum” of the high altar

Licentia et concessio sepulcri in truina ecclesie Sancti Georgii pro Reverendissimo domino Laurentio olim episcope Ferrarie

Eisdem millesimo (1476) et indictione (9ª), die quinto mensis iulii, in capitulo monasterii fratrum Sancti Georgii de prope Ferrarium... venerabiles et religiosi viri frater Ioannes de Ferraria prior conventus fratum Montis Oliveti, frater Sabastianus de Senis vicarius dicti conventus, frater Paulus de Argenta cellerarius... considerantes singularem amorem et benivolentiam quem erga dictum monasterium et totum ordinem ipsorum fratrum gessit quondam Reverendus in Christo pater et dominus dominus Laurentius Roverella olim episcopus ferrariensis, qui reliquit corpus suum sepeliri in aliquo loco et ecclesia ipsorum fratrum... necnon etiam attendentes fidem et devotionem quam gerunt et habent erga Reverendum patrem fratrem Nicolaum Roverellam olim germanum dicti domini episcopi dicti ordinis ad presens visitatorem, et propter ius multa beneficia in dictum monasterium etc., ad instantiam et petitionem predicti Reverendi patri domini fratris Nicolai Roverelle presentis, instantis, stipulantis et recipientis nomine et vice heredum dicti quondam domini Episcopi ferrariensis, ac mei notarii inscripti
ut publice persone stipulantis et recipientis nomine et vice dictorum heredum et successorum
suorum, concesserunt et attribuerunt licentiam, auctoritatem et facultatem fabricandi eorum
sumptibus unum sepulcrum in capella magna et principali dicte ecclesie Sancti Georgii pro
reponendo corpore seu cadavere dicti quondam domini Episcopi ferrariensis in eo, et que
capella ad ipsos fratres et dictum eorum monasterum spectare pleno iure dixerunt et asseruerunt
dicti fratres et eiusdem capelle directo dominio ac proprietate ac patronatu remanente semper
penes eos et successores suorum in dicto monasterio; et similiter pro sepeliendo alia cadavera
heredum dicti domini episcopi et descendentium suorum, et in eo loco in quo magis et melius
videbitur et placuerit dicti fratri Nicolao et heredibus dicti domini episcopi: et etiam ornandi et
expendendi in ornatum ancone dicti altaris magni secundum et prout eisdem videbitur et
placuerit et pro anima dicti quondam domini Episcopi ferrariensis etc.

Hac tamen lege: quod propter hanc concessionem non intelligatur translatum aliquod dominium
dicte capelle magne ad dictos heredes dicti domini Episcopi etc., nec ius aliquod patronatus etc.

(ASFe, Achivio Notarile, Giovanni Migliani, matr. 179, Pacco 2, Prot. 1476, c. 64; published by

15.
May 1477-May 1478. Composition of the *famiglia* at San Giorgio

In Monastero Sancti Georgii de Ferrara

Prior frater Hyeronimus Bendedei de Ferrara, Vicarius frater Maurelius de Ferrara, cellerarius
frater Paulus de Argenta, Magister novitiorum frater Desiderius de Verona, Sacrista frater
Fabiano de Verona, Coad. Frater Antonius de Padua, port. Frater Marinus de Sancto Vito,
conventuales frater Bartholomeus de Padua, frater Jacobus de Abbatis, frater Philippus de
Ferrara, frater Jacobus Balarius, Frater Matrinus de Adria, frater Thomas de Codecca, frater
Jacomo de Manthua, frater Georgius de Rovigio, frater Hyeronimus de Ferrara, frater
Hyeronimus de Civite Castelli, frater Petrus Paulus de Alemania, frater Sebastianus de Verona,
frater Antonius de Brisia, frater Joannes de Verona no., frater Symon de Hystria q, frater
Philippus de Verona no., frater Bernardus de Laude no., frater Jacobus de Verona no.

(AMOM, *Familiarum Tabulae*, vol. II, f. 70r; published by Bagatin 2000, p. 24)

16.
1479, 23 December. Filiasio Roverella, Archbishop of Ravenna, arranges an annual
bequest of two hundred gold ducats to be spent for the Olivetan convent at Rovigo and
for the “ornamento” of the high altar of San Giorgio. His uncle Nicolò Roverella will be
in charge of spending the money

Consignatio facta per Reverendissimum Dominum Archiepiscopum et delegatio Laurentio De
Pixis pro fabrica S. Georgii et pro Ecclesia de Rodigio
Eidem millio indiction die vigesimoterio mensis decembris Ferrarie in palatio Magnificorum de
Roverela in camera … residentie infrascripti Archiepiscopi presentibus testibus rogatis
nobilibus … viris Domino magistro Petrobono Advogaro (?) artium medicine doctore … filio
quondam Nicolao de Foligno … Cosma de ferrara picture et alii.//
Cum Reverendissimum … Dominus Fylaius Roverella … Ravennatis Ecclesie Archiepiscopus
decretit (?) erogare pro anima sua .. eterni salvationis … gloriosissime Virginis Marie singulo
anno ducatos ducentos auri … ad beneplacitum … pro fabricam Monasterii noviter erecti extra
castrum Rodigii sub vocabulo Sancti Bartoli pro congregatione fratrum ordinis Montisoliveti et
pro orname nto Altaris Magni Ecclesie Sancti Georgii de prope Ferraria …
Idem prefactus Reverendissimus Dominus Fylaius Archiepiscopus … delegavit Reverendo
domino Fratre Nicola Roverella eis patruo priori ad presens dicti Monasteri Sancti Georgii de
prope Ferrarie ordinis Montisoliveti presenti recipienti … nomine dicte fabrice … ad libitum
voluntatis prefatis Reverendissimi domini Archiepiscopi … Laurentium … de Pixis habitatorem
in villa Paviola districti Ferrarie conductorem ad plenam possessionum … domini Archiepiscopi
… positas in villa Paviola presentem volentem … ut singulo anno ab eo exigi .. dictos ducatos
ducentos auri… expendendos in dictas fabricas per ipsum dominum frater Nicolaum…

(ASFe, Notarile, Giovanni Migliani, pacco 3, 1479-83, ff. 38r-39v; unpublished, mentioned by

17.
1490, 10 October. Letter of Filippo da Ferrara to duke Ercole I d’Este

Illustrissimo princes et domine mi honornde

Sapiando io che vostra D. Signoria è tuta humanissima, me metto in tuto ali piedi di quella che
me voglia per sua elemencia et di gratia concedere che io cum el priore mio di San Giorgio
posciamo vendere 40 moza di formento ali pistori in Ferrara: atió cum questo aiuto posciamo
comprare li pani per nostro vestire: avixando in verità vostra d. Signoria che altro modo non li
habbiamo se quella per questo modo non ce aiuta. Ex nunc io me voglio obligare a vostra
Signoria de ogni dano et intereso che quella naverà patire. Io haverò ad ogni modo fornito
 quello libro de messe a Natale: et posa ne faremo de li altri cum la gratia de Dio: et altro precio
non vorò de vostra Signoria se non la gracia di quella. Ala quale de continuo mi ricomando:
priego vostra Signoria che io non sia confuso in questa grazia che adimando: et solum per
questa volta e non più. Dio mantegni lo Signore mio in prosperità et liberalo da ogni pericolo.
Ex sancto Georgio de Ferraria, S.D.V. fr. Philippus de Ferraria

(ASMo, Carteggi di Regolari, busta 42; published by Chiappini 1981, p. 187)
18.
1496, 25 January. Count Giovanni Antonio Vallisneri, called Mazzone, stipulated an annual donation of fifty lire for oil provisions for the lamp hanging in front of the large crucifix at San Giorgio

Obligatio facta per Spectabilem Comitem Mazonum de Valesineria Fratribus et monasterio Sancti Georgii de Ferraria

In christi nomine anno Amen. Anno eiusdem nativitatis Millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimsesto indictione quartadecima die vigesimoquinto mensis januarii in monasterio Sancti Georgii posito extra muros civitatis Ferrariae videlicet in loco deputato ad hospicium ipsius monasterii Presentibus testis vocatis et rogatis Egregis viris domino Rainaldo Coza de Mutina filio quondam Ser Johannes de presens Judice victualium civitatis ferrariae et habitatore ferrariae ... Ser Nicola de Lardis filio quondam comendabilis viri Ser Constatini de Lardis cive ferrariense de contrata Sancti Petri et alis. Spectabilis et Circumspectum vir Ser Johannes Antonius de Valesineria nominatus Comes Mazonus filius quondam Johanni Jacobi civis ferrariensis de contrata Buccacanali ... promisit Reverendis patribus fratri Johanni de Cloaris de Ferraria priori ... dicti monasterii et fratrum Sancti Georgii de Ferraria et fratri Georgio filio quondam magistri Hieronymi de Nigrisolis de Ferraria vicario ipsius monasterii et fratrum predictorum presentibus stipulantis et recipientibus nominibus et ... ipsius monasterii et dictorum fratrum ac alii Hieronymo de Novello notario infrascripto ut publice persone presenti stipulanti et recipiendi nomine et ... dictorum monasterii et fratrum Sancti Georgii ... dare solvere et cum effectu nominare Amore Dei pro anima sua libras quinquaginta marchisinorum omni et singulo anno ut ipsi fratri et eorum successores in ipso monasterio teneant et debant manutenere et manuteneant unam lampadam seu cesendellum ardentem ante imaginem crucifissi magni positi in ecclesia ipsius monasterii in perpetuum. Itam tamen ... prefactus Comes seu eius heredes consignarunt seu consignaverunt ipsis monasterio et fratribus unum sufficientem usum respondentem ipsis fratribus et monasterio omni modo dictas libras quinquagintam marchisinorum non intelligatur de cetero prefactus Comes seu sui heredes obligatus et obligati ad ipsam solucionem: Item Et renuntiavit prefactus Comes Mazonus exceptioni non facte dicte permissionis et obligationis ... futuri obligationis futurique constructus .. privilegio exceptioni...

(ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, 41 (34), n. 23; unpublished)

19.
1574, 30 September. Record of the apostolic visitation by Mons. Giovanni Battista Maremonti

Die ultima septembris 1574.
Ecclesia Sancti Georgii quod est monasterium quae cum reposita sit valde quassata terremotu et conscissa undique ad minantem ruinam presertim in tectis, et fornicibus, mandavit eandem per D. Abbatem et monacos quam primum reparari ac resarciri licet foret magis expediens aliam de
novo construiri et properterea petunt sibi per Apostolicam sedem aliquid indulgeri ex solitis prestationibus ut operi incumbere possint vel indulgentia aliqua concedenda.
Ad capellam S.mi Sacramenti illud in tabernaculo ligneo decenti noviter construendum fore et esse transferendum ad altare maius nec non tabernaculum parvum argenteum conflatum condecen Sanctissima Eucharistia ibidem recondatur nec non illud foderari interius.
Ad altare Sancti Maurelii nihil
Ad alia altaria a sinistro latere existentia denudata et inutilia ob ruinam imminentem reparari ut supra et exornari
Ad altare Beatae Marie Virginis bene repertum nihil
Ad altare in ingressu colere


20.
1586, 6 July. Testimony by the bricklayer Sebastiano Monari about the architect Alberto Schiatti and the works in San Giorgio in 1580-81

Io so che il già messer Alberto Schiati servì per architetto li Reverendi padri di Santo Giorgio più anni, masime peril tempo che diro disotto, cioè che del anno 1580 egli fece il disegno della capelota che e avanti la porta della Chiesa di Santo Georgio sopra la collona che vi era et e anco di presente et secondo il suo disegno mastro Antonio Maistrello, mastro Giovanni Battista Ongarello et io testimonio che erano compagni non solo per far detta capella, ma anco il coro della detta Chiesa facesimo fare ditta capeletta, et secondo anco il disegno che egli fece facessimo il ditto coro et esso mastro Alberto mentre facessimo le ditte fabbriche della capeletta e del coro veneva et venne giornalmente a vederci lavorare e ci commetteva quello che havevamo da fare come e sfitio delli architetti e noi facevamo quanto egli ci commandava perché lo riconoscevamo per tale, la qual fabbrica della capeletta fu comintiata alli 17 novembre del ditto anno 1580, secondo il raccordo che io feci all’hora sopra li miei libri, et la fabbrica del coro si fece l’anno del 1581 et fu principiata il mese di marzo et fu finita del mesdesimo anno, et esso messer Alberto fu anco quello che fece il disegno della fabbrica della casa della Sanmartina et di quella di Baura di essi padri, anco che vene anco lui in persona nella villa della Sanmartina condottovi dal reverendo don Petronio Tambotto, all’hora collettario di detti padri, quando fu piantata essa fabbrica che fu lui che la fondò a suo modo et il detto Ongarello et io testimonio la facesimo secondo l’ordine del detto messer Alberto il quale se bene non stete sempre fuori sopra a quella fabbrica egli però vi venne alcune volte et in particolare ad ordinarci come dovevamo fare certi […] sopra quali e fondata essa casa, et altre volte secondo che ocurrera il bisogno del suo parere come architetto di essa fabbrica, et quanto alla fabbrica di Baura, fu anco lui che fece il disegno del modo che doveva essere alzata, secondo il quale fabricai poi io in quella senza la sua presenza et qual fabrica pero la feci io ut de a compagnia furon fornite del anno 1582 in buona forma, et quella di Baura la feci poi del anno 1584 e però so che per ditti tempi esso gia messer Alberto servi detti padri fedelmente anco et diligentemente porque vedova che egli haveva bona cura di quelle et le assaggiò anco tutte et in qual messer Alberto fu quello che faceva li conti de noi altri muratori essendo che noi da una parte et essi padri da l’altra ci rimettevamo in lui intorno a essi conti et stavamo anco a quello che egli diceva… so che egli è stato architetto della maggior parte delle fabbriche medesime massime importanti dei suoi tempi et in particolare della chiesa de
Santo Paolo, la fabbrica della Bastardini, la chiesa della reverendi padri del Gesù, la facciata della Madonna della Porta de Sotto, e molte altre lasciate per brevità…

(ASMo, Cancelleria Ducale, Particolari, 994; published by Marcolin and Marcon 1987, no. 1, p. 213)

21.
1586, 6 July. Testimony by the bricklayer Antonio Mistrelli about the architect Alberto Schiatti and the works in San Giorgio in 1580-81

... del anno 1580, et altrimente del tempo piu precisamente non mi raccordo, io, testimonio, tolsi a fare il coro della chiesa di Santo Giorgio di Ferrara dal padre Giovanni Battista Policino, all'hora bate di quel monasterio, e mi fu consignato dal ditto padre il gia messer Alberto Schiati per architetto delle sur fabriche, ond'io secondo il disegno et li ordini e comisioni d'esso Schiati feci far a Bastiano Monaro et mastro Giovanni Battista Ongarello [...] la capelletta seu recetto fatto a crociere che e avanti la porta di essa chiesa, et feci anco fare alli ditti due maestri la fabrica di essi padri nella villa della Sanmartina per secondo l'ordine et disegno del ditto messer Alberto [...] ma di qual anno precisamente non mi raccordo se non che fu doppoi che fu coperta la fabrica del coro, egli fece il disegno dell'arca de ditti padri, che è nel ditto coro la quale è una bella fabrica fatta a crociere et secondo il suo disegno et ordine la feci io testimonio insieme con altri maestri, e feci anche il vestibolo in volta che parte dal coro et va alla sagrestia pur secondo il disegno et ordine del ditto messer Alberto et però so che in tutte dette fabriche nelle quali intraveni egli servi per architetto et anco assaggiò tutta la fabrica del coro [...] et doppoi che furono fornite ditte fabriche io fui anche ricercato dal reverendo abate signa de ditto monasterio a voler fare la cupula sopra l'altar grande et altri lavorieri per esso monasterio et di ordine di esso padre ne parlai anco col ditto messer Alberto il qual mi mostrò i disegni che havea fatto sopra ciò, ma perché non potei poi restar da cordo con ditto padre abate mastro Hercole da Nona moradore fu quello che la fabricò del anno passato del 1581 [...]et so che molte volte esso messer Alberto s'affaticò gravemente et vi sudò perché er huomo tanto diligente et affetionato alli lavorieri che non si fidava che le fabriche fussero fatte bone se egli non le vedeva fare presentialmente, et pero massima alla fabrica del cordo et de l'arca ogni giorno vi veniva o almeno falava pochi giorni che non vi venisse et saliva sopra le armature nei furor del i caldi di manera che per esser poi homo debile come era sudava che io lo vidi incaldito et affaticato molte volte ...

(ASMO, Cancelleria Ducale, Particolari, no. 994; published by Marcolin and Marcon 1987, pp. 213-14, no. 2)

22.
1681, 24 November. The chronicler Nicolò Baruffaldi registers works being carried out at San Giorgio

[The prior of San Giorgio Giacinto Bonaccossi] fece rimodernare la detta chiesa disfacendo le tre cappelle che erano a man sinistra fate in tre nichij et le fece trasportare più indietro facendovi una nave che imbocca l'altar della San Maurelio et fece tre altre capelle in dirimpetto a quelle, nella nave che già vi era, ma senza altari eccetto quello de Magi di Benvenuto Tisi da Garofalo, et in
capo a detta nave poserovi il Santissimo Sacramento dove è il corpo del Beato Alberto Pondoni; et disfece le altre cose che erano inutili in detta chiesa. Ridusse parimente l’altare maggiore alla Romana riportando l’adornamento dell’altare del Santissimo e le due statue di San Maurelio e San Giorgio furono portate avvanti all’imboccatura della cappella maggiore.


23. 1710, January. The chronicler Nicolò Baruffaldi registers works being carried out at San Giorgio after the damages caused by cannon fire in 1709. The old façade was demolished and the church was shortened by 10 ferrarese feet (one bay)

In questo mese a spesa della camera apostolica fu incominciato a risarcirsi la Chiesa e il monastero di San Giorgio fuori di città, la quale era stata in gran parte ruinata dalle canonate gettate dai soldati papalini e per far cosa di buon gusto venne atterrata affatto l’antica facciata e rifatta di nuovo con moderno disegno abbreviando la chiesa di dieci piedi e tirandola indietro un arco intiero, levandosi l’altare di San Antonio da Padova e quello di Santa Francesca e questo fu trasportato dov’era l’altro della famiglia Roverella col quadro di Cosimo Tura, […] la qual tavola che era in legno fu da una cannonata guasta in gran parte e perciò fu levata affatto. Fu chiusa enziandio la porta laterale nel suo loco fu collocato il deposito d’Orazio d’Ariosti, nel fare i fondamenti della facciata trovarono sotto terra i vestigi dell’antica chiesa con altari e sepolture.

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1432, 9 April
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1436, 31 December
Will of Lorenza Montolini
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1440, 3 March
Will of Bartolomeo of the late Pietro Brasone
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1452, 13 January
Endowment of the chapel of the Annunciation in San Giorgio
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1455, 31 December
The monks of San Giorgio sell the properties in fundo Gaibane, endowment of the chapel of Domenico de Chilo
ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, G 13

1463, 1 January
Will of Isabetta de Santi
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1472, 15 October
The chapel of Saint Michael in San Giorgio is assigned to Giovanni and Niccolò, sons of Michele Savonarola
ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Catastro 3/2 (1393-1552)

1474, 5 September
Will of Francesca, widow of Baldrino varotaro
ASDFe, Fondo San Giorgio, Pergamene, I 4
1479, 23 December
Filiasio Roverella, Archbishop of Ravenna, arranges an annual bequest of two hundred gold ducats to be spent for the Olivetan convent at Rovigo and for the “ornamento” of the high altar of San Giorgio. His uncle Nicolò Roverella will be in charge of spending the money
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1496, 25 January
Count Giovanni Antonio Vallisneri, called Mazzone, stipulated an annual donation of fifty lire for oil provisions for the lamp hanging in front of the large crucifix at San Giorgio
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