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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*
MMJ *Metropolitan Museum Journal*

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

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New Insights into Filippo Lippi's Alessandri Altarpiece

SANDRA CARDARELLI

The cult of saints-physicians Cosmas and Damian in Florence has been strongly associated with the Medici family, especially Cosimo the Elder. However, while Medici commissions for private and public display featuring these saints revealed much about the family's devotional proclivities, the extent of, and responses to, this veneration in the context of the city's political and social milieu remains understudied. The altarpiece *Saint Lawrence Enthroned with Saints Cosmas and Damian and Donors*, also known as the Alessandri altarpiece, is now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is indicative of a complex set of relationships within the civic and religious life of Florence that resulted in the veneration for Saints Cosmas and Damian being more deeply interwoven in the city's cultural and devotional

life than has previously been suggested. Thanks to a corpus of documents housed in the Archives of the Opera del Duomo in Florence, this research note brings to the fore an expanded understanding of Alessandro Alessandri's influence as an art patron. It further sheds light on the substantial role of the Medici and coeval Florentine culture in forming Alessandri's sensitivity and piety for the saints-physicians in the first half of the quattrocento, and specifically during the years of the construction of Filippo Brunelleschi's dome. In doing so it provides context for the commission of the Alessandri altarpiece and elucidates the significance of the painting for the family.

Connecting the Alessandri family history with contemporary devotional practices in Florence allows for a new hypothesis that the saint depicted to the right of Saint Lawrence is Saint John Gualbert, not Saint Benedict. Saint John Gualbert was likely the onomastic saint of Alessandri's first son, Giovanni.

THE ALESSANDRI, THE MEDICI, AND FLORENCE

A close look at the political career of Alessandro di Ugo Alessandri (1391–1460) prompts new insights into his patronage. He served in the Signoria in 1431, 1441, and 1448. He was *priore delle arti* (1431) and *console* of the *arte della Lana*, the powerful wool guild (1438 and 1441), and *gonfaloniere di Giustizia* (1441; 1448). Further, he served as *capitano* in several outposts of the *contado*, and was ambassador to Venice on behalf of Pope Eugene IV (1435).¹ Importantly, the Alessandri were the owners of lucrative businesses in the wool trade and were members of three of the major *arti* (guilds) of the city: the *arte della Lana*, the *arte di Calimala*, and the *arte della Seta*. The Catasto of 1427 indicates that Alessandro and his brother Niccolò were in the sixteen top contributors to the Catasto for the quarter of San Giovanni, with 14,868 florins.² The Alessandri owned multiple properties, including a palazzo in the heart of the city in Borgo degli Albizzi,³ and a castle in Vincigliata, in the hills of Florence.⁴ The family belonged to the *consorteria* of the Albizzi, but in 1372 due to political acrimony changed their name to Alessandri, which was recorded in the *Prestanze* of 1375.⁵

Alessandro held the important role of *operaio* of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence in 1430–31, during the years when the cathedral's dome was built by the Opera under Brunelleschi's direction.⁶ Six *operai* were drawn from among the eligible members of the powerful *arte della Lana*, and they oversaw the planning, management of resources, and

expenditure of the Opera.⁷ Cosimo de' Medici also held various roles.⁸ However, the cathedral's Opera was not where the Alessandri and the Medici met for the first time: Cosimo the Elder and Alessandro Alessandri were acquainted with each other from their student years in the humanist circle of Roberto de' Rossi.⁹ Moreover, Alessandro Alessandri was acknowledged as a supporter of the Medici during the construction of the dome, between 1420 and the 1430s, and when Cosimo the Elder was exiled.¹⁰

Although they have not been exhaustively researched, the Alessandri was a renowned family among elite Florentine international merchants. According to Natalie R. Tomas, Alessandri's support of Cosimo at the time of his exile in September 1433 was the beginning of a closer allegiance that would later be sealed with the marriage between Cosimo's second son, Giovanni, and Alessandro's niece Ginevra, the youngest daughter of his brother Niccolò.¹¹

The Alessandri family also owned quarries in Vincigliata and Fiesole, and profited from business transactions concerning the cathedral's Opera.¹² Documents show that in 1422, the Opera paid rent to Alessandro and his brothers Niccolò and Bartolomeo for the use of the quarry at Trassinai, near Vincigliata.¹³ Documents dated 1428, 1429, and 1430 record further payments to Alessandro and his brothers for the same purpose.¹⁴ In this period the Alessandri established their identity as prominent citizens and patrons of the arts.

AN ALTARPIECE IN CELEBRATION OF THE FAMILY

About 1439–40, when Filippo Lippi received the commission for the altarpiece intended for the church of Santa Maria in Vincigliata and now in The Met, the Alessandri were already established as influential patrons in the region.¹⁵ They held the right of patronage to a family chapel in the Florentine church of San Pier Maggiore (it was demolished at the end of the eighteenth century). The chapel was known as Cappellone degli Alessandri and featured an altarpiece by Lippo di Benivieni (ca. 1310–20) now in the Galleria degli Uffizi. The central panel with the Madonna and Child was flanked by Saints Zenobius and Peter, at the right of the Madonna, and Saints Paul and Benedict at her left. Predella panels were commissioned from Benozzo Gozzoli in the 1460s,¹⁶ and are also in The Met (fig. 1).¹⁷ The panels show Saint Peter and the Fall of Simon Magus, Saint Zenobius Resuscitating a Dead Child, the Conversion of Saint Paul, and Totila before Saint Benedict. The connection of the Alessandri family with



fig. 1 Reconstruction of the altarpiece commissioned for the Alessandri chapel in San Pier Maggiore, Florence, ca. 1460s. Top: Lippo di Benivieni (Italian, act. 1296–1327), *The Virgin and Child with Saint Zenobius, Saint Peter, Saint Paul and Saint Benedict*, ca. 1310–20. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Bottom: Predella panels by Benozzo Gozzoli (Italian, ca. 1421–1497), *Saint Peter and the Fall of Simon Magus, Saint Zenobius Resuscitating a Dead Child, Conversion of Saint Paul, and Totila before Saint Benedict*, 1460s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.106.1)

the church of San Pier Maggiore was long-standing, not only by virtue of their residence in the area, but also because four members of the family became nuns in the attached female monastery.¹⁸

The Alessandri altarpiece by Lippi differs substantially from the commission for San Pier Maggiore. Here, the presence of the patron and two of his sons, as well as the choice of saints represented, reveals a self-celebratory theme for the panel (fig. 2). The saints depicted are either onomastic saints connected with a member of the family or symbolic of the family's devotional preferences and cultural traditions. Since the early Middle Ages, territories and landmarks had become associated with certain saints and their hagiographies. After the rise of the communes, large cities and smaller communities placed themselves under the protection of patron saints, and their names were invoked in official documents and civic statutes.

The records of the Opera of the cathedral of Florence indicate that the quarry in Trassinaia had to be leased except for the share that belonged to the Alessandri. The area was designated as “the whole hill-ock of Vincigliata, in the district of Florence, among the people of St Lawrence of Vincigliata.”¹⁹ The family and territory were strictly connected with the patron saint of their community, Saint Lawrence. Devotion to the saints-protectors of the community was fostered by individuals and families.²⁰

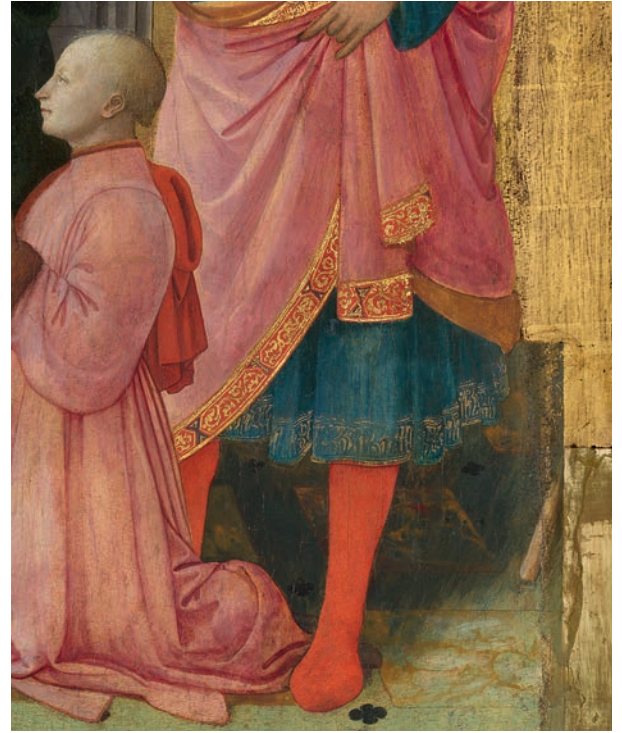
The figure of Saint Lawrence is the central focus of the Alessandri altarpiece. In fact, the church of Santa Maria in Vincigliata housed a chapel dedicated to him that later became part of the dedication of the church.²¹ Scholars have debated whether the altarpiece was originally intended for the family chapel in the castle or for the church of Santa Maria in Vincigliata. Discrepancies in Giorgio Vasari's ambiguously worded vite of 1550 and 1568 do not clarify the issue.²² The pastoral visitation by Bishop Roberto Folchi in 1493 records that the Alessandri altarpiece was then displayed on the main altar of Santa Maria.²³ Although Folchi's documents date from about fifty years after the completion of the painting, the large size of the altarpiece, the saints represented, and the portraits of prominent male members of the family suggest that this image was commissioned to be displayed in a public setting and viewed by a wide audience.

Technical analysis determined that the central panel was extended on three sides and that the side panels with Saint Anthony Abbot and the saint identified as Saint Benedict were originally part of a single image whose commission was described by Vasari in his biography of Filippo Lippi.²⁴ In enlarged images of the bottom left and right corners of the central panel, details of the saints' shafts—likely the bottom part of the crozier, or processional Crucifix, on the left and of the crutch on the right—are recognizable behind the feet of Alessandri's sons on the left, and behind the leg



fig. 2 Filippo Lippi (Italian, ca. 1406–1469). *Saint Lawrence Enthroned with Saints Cosmas and Damian and Donors*, known as the Alessandri altarpiece, ca. 1440s. Tempera on wood, gold ground, 47¾ × 45½ in. (121.3 × 115.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935 (35.31.1a–c)

fig. 3 Details of the Alessandri altarpiece (fig. 2). Left: bottom part of the crozier. Right: crutch



of Saint Damian on the right (fig. 3).²⁵ Despite later extensions of about three inches along all sides of the central panel, a reasonably accurate reconstruction of the position of the lateral saints can be attempted on the basis of the remaining portions of their iconographic attributes.

The original form of the Alessandri altarpiece was likely a *tavola quadrata* (rectangular altarpiece), one of the artist's first examples of this novel type of unified scene, and a departure from the old-fashioned multipaneled altarpiece. Lippi experimented with the new format in the 1440s, exemplified by the Novitiate altarpiece (ca. 1440–45). As noted by Megan Holmes, in this *sacra conversazione* with Saints Francis, Damian, Cosmas, and Anthony of Padua, Lippi places the saints in an elaborate architectural setting with a central vanishing point, a rendering of space that he had already adopted in the Barbadori altarpiece (1438).²⁶ In the Alessandri altarpiece, Lippi limited his attempt to reproduce three-dimensional space to the central perspective of the floor plane, the solid structure of Saint Lawrence's throne, and the foreshortening of Saint Cosma's lozenge box. The solid modeling of the figures stands out against the lavish golden background, an outmoded choice that is strikingly revealing of the patron's attitude to devotion, social status, and family values. He was concerned with the visual manifestation of piety and spirituality, but also, very explicitly, of the self. The copious use of pseudo-Kufic decorations that later progressively disappeared

from Lippi's decorative repertoire is visible in Saint Lawrence's dalmatic and in the robes and capes of Saints Cosmas and Damian. They help determine the time span for the commission of the Alessandri painting to 1439–40.

The portraits of Alessandro Alessandri and two of his sons suggest that the altarpiece was intended as a celebratory image of the family and their patron saints, underscoring devotional traditions and continuity of family lineage under the watchful eyes of their protective saints (figs. 4, 5). Despite the damage that the lateral panels have sustained, it is evident that Saint Anthony and the saint formerly believed to be Saint Benedict are depicted kneeling, as if in the act of presenting the donors to Saint Lawrence. The complete altarpiece may also have included the family coat of arms and perhaps a predella. Although the early history of the panel is uncertain, it can safely be argued that the choice of subject and iconography provides circumstantial evidence of the family's wealth, role, and social connections in Florence.²⁷

The representation of Saints Cosmas and Damian aligns with the great devotion for the saints-physicians that became synonymous with Cosimo the Elder and subsequent members of the Medici family in Florence. Medici patronage of chapels and altarpieces with this dedication included the following: an altarpiece recorded in 1418 in the family palace that belonged to Cosimo's father, Giovanni di Bicci, in Via Larga; a chapel in Santa Croce; a family chapel in San Lorenzo;



fig. 4 Filippo Lippi. Possibly Saint John Gualbert, side panel from the Alessandri altarpiece, 28½ × 15½ in. (72.4 × 39.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935 (35.31.1c)

fig. 5 Filippo Lippi. *Saint Anthony Abbot*, side panel from the Alessandri altarpiece, 28½ × 15½ in. (72.4 × 39.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935 (35.31.1b)

fig. 6 Coat of arms of the Alessandri family. MS 471, Armi di Firenze, Città, Terre e Castelli, e Famiglie fiorentine, sec. XVIII, A72, ASF



the convent of San Marco, which also held a dedication to these saints; involvement in the confraternity of the Buonomini of San Martino that also held an ancient dedication to these saints; and altarpieces depicting these saints for the convents of Bosco ai Frati and San Vincenzo d'Annalena.

There was more to the Alessandris' devotion for these saints than political allegiance and family friendship.²⁸ Cosmas and Damian were also patron saints of physicians and appear in related commissions.²⁹ Further, they served as saints-protectors of the *divettini*, the wool finishers, whose *compagnia* owned images of their patron saints until their suppression at the end of the eighteenth century.³⁰ The case for the painting commissioned for a pilaster of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Novella by Antonio di Ghezzo della Casa in 1429 suggests a close connection between the wool guild and the veneration for Saints Cosmas and Damian.³¹ Although the Catasto of 1427 does not mention Antonio's trade, the records of the Opera del Duomo acknowledge him as one of the elected *operai* in 1433/34, thus indicating that he was likely a member of the *arte della Lana*, the guild from which these officers were drawn.³² Antonio di Ghezzo's association with the *arte della Lana* probably granted him authorization to display the panel with Saints Cosmas and Damian on one of the piers of the cathedral.³³ The commission was completed shortly before Alessandro Alessandri became an *operaio* in the cathedral in 1430.³⁴

Guild membership was a critical part of the identity of its members and their families. As prominent affiliates of the *arte della Lana*, the Alessandri were allowed to use the image of a lamb in their coat of arms, but with two heads to distinguish it from the coat of arms of the guild (fig. 6).³⁵ Therefore, Saints Cosmas and Damian reveal the political alliance with the Medici family, but also represent the family business and symbolize their association with the guild. Moreover, archival records show that Alessandro's firstborn son, Giovanni (1415–1439), was elected as a member of the confraternity of the Buonomini di San Martino in 1436. The oratory of the Buonomini, a charitable institution largely subsidized by Cosimo the Elder and other wealthy families of Florence, also held an ancient dedication to Saints Cosmas and Damian.³⁶ Indeed, the Alessandri held a number of motivations for showing piety toward the saints-physicians.

SAINTS, SONS, AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

As Catherine Lawless has perceptively argued, associating offspring with their onomastic saint was key to the construction of family identity, and in calling upon the patron saint to protect that member of the family.³⁷ The choice of the onomastic saint was often linked to the family's devotional proclivity and current devotional trends, as well as political ties and business relationships. Lawless makes a case for such a complex network of relationships in the choice of Saint Peter Martyr as the patron saint of Cosimo's son Piero di Cosimo de' Medici (1416–1469). She identifies the first known visual record of this connection in Fra Angelico's Annalena altarpiece from about 1434–35 (fig. 7).³⁸

The saints represented in the side panels of the Alessandri altarpiece correspond to the same cultural traditions. Therefore, Saint Anthony Abbot takes his place to the left of Saint Lawrence as the onomastic saint of Alessandri's son Antonio, who became prominent in the family's political and business activities after the death of his older brother Giovanni. Saint Anthony Abbot is also a saint traditionally represented alongside Saint John Gualbert, the founder of the Vallombrosan Order, and he is likely the saint at the right of Saint Lawrence rather than Saint Benedict, as previously suggested.

There is a body of evidence that supports the identity of Saint John Gualbert as the patron saint of Alessandri's first son, Giovanni.³⁹ Giovanni Alessandri died in 1439 at the age of twenty-four, but by the age of fifteen had already been included in the records of the Opera del Duomo alongside his father, Alessandro,



fig. 7 Fra Angelico (Italian, ca. 1395–1455). *Madonna and Child with Saints Peter Martyr, Damian and Cosmas, John the Evangelist, Lawrence, and Francis*, known as the Annalena altarpiece, 1434–35. Tempera and gold on wood, 70½ × 79½ in. (180 × 202 cm). San Marco Museum, Florence



fig. 8 Bicci di Lorenzo (Italian, 1373–1452), assisted by Stefano d'Antonio (Italian, 1405–1483). *The Virgin and Child with Saints Anthony Abbot, John Gualbert, John the Baptist, and Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, 1434. Tempera on wood, 81½ × 117⅞ in. (207 × 299.4 cm). Originally in the Compagni chapel in Santa Trinita, Florence. Westminster Abbey, London (inv. WA 0045)

in various transactions. These include the sale of spruce planks, likely used for the refurbishment of the pope's apartments in Santa Maria Novella in 1434.⁴⁰ Pope Eugene IV had left Rome following hostilities with relatives of the previous pope, Martin V, but also due to his inability to effectively manage the financial affairs of the Papal State.⁴¹ The Alessandri must have acquainted themselves with the pope during his Florentine years as Giovanni was recorded as a cleric of the apostolic camera.⁴² Pope Eugene IV was involved in the reformation of Benedictine congregations in Florence, Fiesole, and Pistoia. One of them was the Monastic Order at Vallombrosa, which was founded by John Gualbert about 1038, and followed the Benedictine rule.⁴³

Devotion for Saint John Gualbert surged in quattrocento Florence, as attested by a number of images commissioned by both lay individuals and religious organizations. These included an altarpiece by Bicci di Lorenzo for the Compagni chapel in the church of Santa Trinita, Florence (1434, and now in Westminster Abbey,

London) (fig. 8),⁴⁴ and a fresco image by Neri di Bicci dated 1455 currently in the church of Santa Trinita, but originally in the cloister of the convent of San Pancrazio.⁴⁵

Jesuit historian Giuseppe Richa noted that it was Eugene IV who called the General Chapter of the Order in the Vallombrosan church of Santa Trinita in 1435.⁴⁶ Richa also details that the feast day of Saint John Gualbert had been celebrated by the Florentine Republic on July 12 each year since 1415, the year when Giovanni Alessandri was born.⁴⁷ Moreover, historian Giovanni Baroni vividly describes fresco images of Saint John Gualbert in the Castle of Vincigliata, therefore underscoring a tradition for the devotion of this saint by the family.⁴⁸

It is likely that Saint John Gualbert was represented in the altarpiece as the onomastic saint of Alessandro Alessandri's son Giovanni in the wake of the renewed devotion for the saint that was promoted by the Signoria. Although it is impossible to confirm that the

altarpiece was completed before Giovanni Alessandri's death on October 18, 1439, this date might provide the terminus ad quem for the commission of the Alessandri altarpiece, shortly after the completion of the Barbadori altarpiece now at the Louvre.⁴⁹ By associating himself with Saint John Gualbert, Giovanni Alessandri differentiated his identity from that of members of the Medici family, namely Giovanni di Bicci, whose patron saint was Saint John the Evangelist, and from Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. Scholar Dillian Gordon proposes that this was also the case for the son of Cante Compagni, the patron of Bicci di Lorenzo's altarpiece now in Westminster. Gordon has effectively argued that since Cante's father's name and that of one of his sons was Giovanni, Saint John Gualbert would have been the most suitable choice of patron saint.⁵⁰

The Alessandri altarpiece shows Saint John Gualbert tonsured. This iconographic element originates from hagiographic accounts that describe how John Gualbert put on the monastic garb at the altar and tonsured himself in order to convince his father of his unwavering intention to join the Benedictine Monastery of San Miniato Al Monte.⁵¹ The panel with this saint is severely damaged, and the bottom part of the figure is completely missing. The remaining part shows that the iconography in the Alessandri panel is reduced to a minimum, but both are attributes of St. John Gualbert: the bishop's cope, which abbots were allowed to use as head of a monastery, worn over the monastic cowl; and the remnant part of what was probably the bishop's crozier or a processional Crucifix.⁵² Lippi had already used the iconographic expedient of the bishop's cope worn over the monastic habit and the bare, tonsured head in the representation of Saint Augustine in the Barbadori altarpiece (ca. 1438), originally intended for the family chapel in Santo Spirito, Florence.⁵³

Art historian Cordelia Warr has argued for the evolution in the color of the Vallombrosan garb over the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through the shades of brown and gray, to the final black garb.⁵⁴ Other studies have provided valuable insight into the challenges posed by the ambiguous use of some iconographic elements.⁵⁵ The similarities between Saint John Gualbert in the Alessandri panel and in the representation in the Westminster altarpiece suggest that Lippi or his patrons must have been acquainted with this earlier rendition of the saint and deliberately chose to present him

wearing the bishop's cope with an elaborate border of gold embroidery. As mentioned earlier, the Westminster altarpiece was intended to furnish the personal family chapel commissioned by Cante Compagni, which was also the chapel dedicated to Saint John Gualbert, and featured fresco scenes of the Saint's vita attributed to Bonaiuto di Giovanni. About 1452, another cycle was commissioned to decorate the adjacent Spini chapel from Neri di Bicci.⁵⁶

The cult of Saint John Gualbert manifested in manifold ways and long-standing traditions that involved both the lay and religious realms. Chronicles of the rituals and processions that occurred in Florence in March 1387 show that the relic of the head of Saint John Gualbert was brought into procession alongside the miraculous image of the Madonna dell'Impruneta, an event that was attended by the ambassador of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. The icon and relic of Saint John Gualbert were received by the bishop at the city gate of San Piero and brought to the Duomo, a further indication of the importance that Saint John Gualbert held in the devotional and political life of the city.⁵⁷

Previously neglected documents and visual evidence help us to better define the Alessandri family as wealthy and influential art patrons in quattrocento Florence. Contemporary imagery depicting the much-venerated founder of the Vallombrosan Order, Saint John Gualbert, as well as contemporary historic accounts, suggest that he is the saint depicted in the lateral panel of the Alessandri altarpiece. The placement highlights the practice of representing the onomastic patron saint of donors in altarpieces. As a namesake of Alessandro Alessandri's firstborn son, Giovanni, Saint John Gualbert would have been a suitable choice for this role and would have helped to distinguish his identity from that of other patrons. While some uncertainties remain about the original form of the Alessandri altarpiece and its exact date of completion, the premature death of Giovanni and the subsequent rise of his younger brothers, Jacopo and Antonio, in Florentine politics and social circles may suggest that the altarpiece was dismembered not long after its completion, possibly after the death of the head of the family, Alessandro Alessandri.

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NOTES

- Documents from the Archivio dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore (AOSMF) that are cited in the article have been recorded in both their archival collection and their website link. When too many records for a specific instance are present, only one example has been cited.
- 1 Alessandro Alessandri's political career is well outlined in Martines 2011, 104, 176, 181, 186, 196, 256, 261n, 268, 278, 304, 329–30.
 - 2 *Ibid.*, app. II, 369.
 - 3 Documents show that in February 1419, Palazzo Alessandri hosted important visitors including Niccolò Trincia Trinci, Lord of Foligno, Braccio da Montone, and Guidantonio da Montefeltro for a conciliatory meeting of condottieri and lords of the lands that were part of the Papal State. Mori 2013, 141–42, 286.
 - 4 For an in-depth history of the family homes of the Alessandri, see Vigotti 2019 and 2020.
 - 5 In the financial system of the Florentine republic, the *prestanze* were forced loans imposed by the commune on its citizens in addition to ordinary taxation.
 - 6 The Opera was the institution that built and decorated the cathedral. For the oath of Alessandro Alessandri as one of the elected *operai*, on January 3, 1430, see Risoluzioni, II 2 1 c. 135, AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ENG/HTML/S021/C253/T002/TBLOCK00.HTM>. There is a series of documents in the Archives of the Opera del Duomo that sheds light on the role and influence of Alessandro Alessandri and his family in this institution. One entry records that a property of the Alessandri was chosen as the location for meetings by Brunelleschi and officials of the Opera, as well as the audience hall for the *operai* and the *provveditori*'s and as the notary's office: Ricordi, II 4 4, c. 15 [December 9, 1432], AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ENG/HTML/S022/C025/T003/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 7 See Haines and Riccetti 1996, 320.
 - 8 Malleverie, II 1 74, c. 51 [September 23, 1418], AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S008/C091/T001/TBLOCK00.HTM>, and Deliberazioni, II 2 1, c. 250v [March 14, 1435/6], AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S021/C471/T003/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 9 Kent 2000, 23–24.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 24; Kent 2009, 36. Cosimo was arrested in September 1433; his exile ended a year later.
 - 11 Tomas 2003, 17. Ginevra and Giovanni di Cosimo's only son Cosimino died in childhood.
 - 12 This profitable connection with the Opera del Duomo is evident in several records of lease and rent of the quarries of Trassinai and Vincigliata to the Opera from at least March 11, 1421/22. For example, "That Ugo di Bartolomeo Alessandri should receive for the rent of the quarry on the hillock of Vincigliata for sandstone for the dome"; Stanziamenti, II 1 80 c. 66v, AOSMF: "Ugoni Bartholomey de Alexandris quos recipere debet pro affictu cave podii Vincigliate pro macignis habendis pro cupola"; <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ENG/HTML/S014/C081/T005/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 13 For example, "Allocation to the sons of Ugo Alessandri and wages they must have from the Trassinai quarry for the year 1422"; Ricordi, II 4 11, c. 8v, [March 9, 1422/23], AOSMF: "Stanziaro a' figliuoli d'Ugho Alesandri e salario debono avere della chava di Trasinai per l'anno 1422"; <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S025/C011/T012/TBLOCK00.HTM>; see also Stanziamenti, II 4 9 c. 98v [March 9, 1424/25], AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S024/C190/T003/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 14 "Niccolò di Ugo Alessandri and brothers must have 100 lire granted to them as the remaining part of the payment of all the money they must have from the Opera for all the time that [the quarry] was held, and for compensation and for all damage"; Stanziamenti, II 4 12, c. 71 [March 29, 1428], AOSMF: "Nicholaio d'Ugho degli Alessandri e frategli deono avere lire cento p. a- loro chonceduti per resto di paghamento di tuti ' danari debono avere dall'Opera per tuto el tempo che-lla se n'è tenuta e per ristoro e ongni danno"; <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S026/C121/T004/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 15 Although current scholarship generally agrees on a date of production about the mid-1440s, other hypotheses were previously made. See Ruda 1993, 429–31, for a summary.
 - 16 Diane Cole Ahl (1996, 235) gives an earlier dating for the Gozzoli panels, about 1442–44.
 - 17 Giorgio Vasari erroneously credited this commission to the painter Francesco di Pesello. Vasari 1966, 182. At the time of the commission for the predella panels, Gozzoli was busy completing other commissions in Florence. Michelle O'Malley (2005, 109) pointed out that in 1461, Gozzoli signed a contract with the *compagnia* of Purification and Saint Zenobius. This was about the time of the completion of the fresco cycle in the Chapel of the Magi in the Medici palace in Via Larga.
 - 18 Among them was Alessandro Alessandri's daughter Maria, who was abbess of San Pier Maggiore with the name of Francesca. Litta 1876, table XXV.
 - 19 "videlicet totum podium Vincigliate positum in comitatu Florentie in populo Sancti Laurentii de Vincigliata"; Deliberazioni, II 2 1 c. 4 [July 30, 1425], AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S021/C006/T002/TBLOCK00.HTM>.
 - 20 Civic appropriation of religious cults is evident in the incipits of cities' civic and guild statutes. For an overview of the large bibliography on this topic, see Vauchez 1986 and Benvenuti 1995. Records of individual and family devotional preferences can be traced in last wills, contracts, and domestic material culture. See Brundin, Howard, and Laven 2018.
 - 21 Brucker 2007, 63.
 - 22 Vasari's wording is somewhat garbled. I have a slightly different reading from other published translations and I suggest that he intended as follows: "it is said that Messer Alessandro degli Alessandri, a knight of that time[,] acquaintance and friend of [Filippo Lippi], had him make in his villa for his church at Vincigliata, on the hill of Fiesole a panel with a Saint Lawrence and other Saints, in which he portrayed him and two of his children." Vasari 1966, 338: "dicesi che Messer Alessandro degli Alessandri allora cavaliere[,] domestico et amico suo, gli fece per in villa fare per la sua chiesa a Vincigliata, nel Poggio di Fiesole una tavola con un Sancto Lorenzo et altri Santi, nella quale ritrasse lui e due suoi figliuoli." Another important document that records the location of the painting in the church in the seventeenth century is contained in the inventory published in [Baroni] 1871, 50–52.
 - 23 Brucker 2007, 71–76 (appendix).
 - 24 See Ruda 1993, 429–30, no. 39.
 - 25 The removal of the pictorial additions of 1955 revealed that the crozier, or processional Crucifix, was originally painted on an incline, not vertically. This configuration is confirmed by the remains of the bottom part of this object in the central panel and a faint but visible shadow in the damaged gold background of the side panel.
 - 26 Holmes 1999, 113–14.

- 27 The cost and details of the commission for this altarpiece are undocumented, but the cost may be approximated by comparing it with other commissions by the artist in the same years. O'Malley (2005, 44, 114, 156–57) has persuasively discussed how Lippi secured high fees of 350–400 florins for his commissions in 1439 and 1455, and more specifically for the Coronation of the Virgin also known as the Sant'Ambrogio altarpiece. In doing so, Lippi joined a restricted group of highly sought-after painters such as Sassetta and Perugino, who produced some of the most expensive altarpieces in central Italy.
- 28 Holmes (1999, 155) argued that the veneration for the saints-physicians was also a sign of Alessandri's personal devotional preferences.
- 29 Harrold 2009.
- 30 Francesconi 1739, 114; Giannarelli 2002, 97.
- 31 George Bent (2016, 200) suggested that Antonio di Ghezzo was a medic and had adopted the saints-physicians as his saints-protectors for this reason, but Antonio's role in the Opera implies that he was active in the wool trade. See note 32 below.
- 32 Martines 2011, 370. For further details on Antonio di Ghezzo della Casa in the Catasto of 1427 and for his position in the Opera, see *Deliberazioni*, II 2 1 c. 209v [January 4, 1433/34]; c. 210v [February 3, 1433/34]; c. 214v [April 20, 1434]; and c. 215 [April 22, 1434]; all AOSMF, <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ENG/IN/INlist800S0.HTM>. See also Herlihy et al. 2002.
- 33 "Likewise, the aforesaid *operai*, having heard a certain request made by Antonio di Ghezzo della Casa, by which Antonio himself, in perpetuity, out of reverence for God and for the Saints Cosmas and Damian, appointed a chaplain in the main church of Florence to officiate in the said church; and that because of his reverence for the said saints he wished to place on a certain pilaster of the said church a painted image of the aforementioned saints on one of the pilasters of the said church facing the pulpit"; *Deliberazioni*, II 2 1 c. 128v [June 22, 1430], AOSMF: "Item prefati operarii audita quadam postulatione facta per Antonium Ghezi della Casa per quam dixit ipsum Antonium perpetuis temporibus ab reverentiam Dei et sanctorum Cosimi et Damiani deputasse in maiori ecclesia florentina unum cappellanum ad offitiandum in dicta ecclesia et quod ob reverentiam dictorum sanctorum vellet apponi facere in quodam pilastro dicte ecclesie unam tabulam pitture sanctorum prefatorum in uno ex pilastris dicte ecclesie existentibus versus pergamum predicationis"; <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S021/C241/T011/TBLOCK00.HTM>. See also Poggi 1988, 2:138–39 (doc. 2113).
- 34 Like the Alessandri and the Medici families, the Della Casa also resided in the San Giovanni quarter, in a palazzo across from the Medici Palace, in Via Larga. Alessandro Alessandri was one of the elected *operai* at the time when the altarpiece commissioned by Della Casa was installed in the cathedral.
- 35 Stemma Alessandri, MS 471, Armi di Firenze, Città, Terre e Castelli, e Famiglie fiorentine, sec. XVIII, A72, ASF; <https://www.archiviodistato.firenze.it/ceramellipapiani/index.php?page=Famiglia&id=120>.
- 36 Kent 1992, 51.
- 37 Lawless 2005.
- 38 The altarpiece shows Saint Cosmas for Cosimo, Saint John the Evangelist for Cosimo's father, Giovanni di Bicci, Saint Peter Martyr for Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, son of Cosimo, and Saint Lawrence for Cosimo's brother Lorenzo.
- 39 Litta 1876, table XXV.
- 40 The Archivio dell'Opera has documents from 1434–35 recording these cash accounts: "Alessandro degli Alessandri must give by November 20 one hundred and fifty *grossi* for me from Neri Bartolini, in credit here at fol. 89 (l. 41 s. 10); Ditto on January 4 thirty gold *grossi*, were brought by his son Giovanni (l. 8 s. 6); Ditto on 19 of the said [month] sixteen *lire* ten *soldi* for me from Neri Bartolini, here at fol. 100 (l. 16 s. 10; 66. 6. 0). On January 15 Alessandro Alessandri should have thirty-eight *lire* ten *soldi* recorded for him as a payment at fol. 55 for 140 pieces of fir plank given to the Opera (l. 38 s. 10)." AOSMF, VIII 1 1, cc. 87v–88r a cassa: "Allesandro degli Allessandri de' dare insino a di 20 di novembre grossi centtocinquanta per me da Neri Bartolini, posto debi avere in questo a c. 89 (l. 41 s. 10); E a di liii di genajo grossi trentta d'oro, portò Giovanni suo figliolo (l. 8 s. 6); E a di xviii decto lire sedici soldi X per me da Neri Bartolini, in questo a c. 100 (l. 16 s. 10; 66. 6. 0). Allesandro degli Allessandri de' avere a di xv di genajo lire trentta otto soldi X, mesi a lui a uscita a c. 55, per 140 pezi d'asse d'abetto dato a l'Opera" (l. 38 s. 10); <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/cupola/ITA/HTML/S029/C086/T001/TBLOCK00.HTM>. Compare with Haines 1979.
- 41 Plebani 2012.
- 42 Litta 1876, table XXV.
- 43 Salvestrini 2012a.
- 44 The altarpiece was bequeathed by Viscount Lee of Fareham to the abbey in 1947. See Gordon 2019.
- 45 Berenson 1963, 155; Neri di Bicci 1976, 26–27.
- 46 Richa 1755, 150.
- 47 "At all times in perpetuity in the city of Florence is celebrated the feast of Saint John Gualbert's head, and founder of the Vallombrosan Order. He was from the region of Val d'Elsa. July 12." Ibid.: "Omni tempore in perpetuum celebretur in Civitate Flor. festum S. Ioannis Gualberti Capitis, & Principis Ordinis Vallisumb. Qui fuit de partibus Vallis Else 12. Iulii." This was an addendum to the deliberation by the Florentine Signoria of 1396 about the participation of all civic officials in the celebration of the St. Trinity in that church.
- 48 "Those [paintings] in the line below are almost lost and there remains only a figure of St. John Gualbert and, in another space, two people in the act of praying in front of the aforementioned tomb to heal from infirmities, with other spectators of the grace that he bestows to them. . . . In the vault countess Matilde, Pasquale II, Urban II and St John Gualbert are portrayed in good fresco." [Baroni] 1871, 28: "Quelle [pitture] della linea sottostante sono quasi perdute e non ci rimane che una figura di S. Giovanni Gualberto e, in altro spartito, due persone in atto di pregare avanti la mentovata tomba per guarire da infermità, con altri spettatori della grazia che egli loro comparte. . . . Nella volta sono stati effigiati a buon fresco la contessa Matilde, Pasquale II, Urbano II e S. Gio. Gualberto."
- 49 The Barbadori altarpiece was commissioned to decorate a chapel dedicated to Saint Fridianus in the church of Santo Spirito with money bestowed by Gherardo di Bartolomeo Barbadori for this purpose to the confraternity of Orsanmichele of which he had been a *capitano*. The commission from Lippi took place several years after Barbadori's death, which had occurred in 1429.
- 50 Gordon 2019, 42n55.
- 51 Quilici 1941, 40. This is recorded in the vita of Saint John Gualbert written by the saint's hagiographers Andrea di Strumi and Bishop Atto of Pistoia. For the Latin hagiographies of John Gualbert, see *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* 1898–99,

651–52, sections 4397–4406. For Andrea di Strumi and Atto, see *Andreas Strumensis* 1934, 1080–1104, and *Atto Pistoriensis Episcopo* 1853, cols. 671–706.

- 52 According to the saint's vita, the Crucifix of the Monastery of San Miniato bowed to him in recognition of John Gualbert's act of mercy, when on the chance encounter of his brother's murderer on Good Friday, he accepted his pledge to be forgiven in the name of Jesus. From the fourteenth century the Crucifix became one of the attributes of Saint John Gualbert. See Padoa Rizzo 2002, 7ff. On this episode in the saint's vita, see Jansen 2005, 203–27 and n14.
- 53 The main panel is in the Musée du Louvre, Paris. The predella panels are in the Galleria degli Uffizi. On this altarpiece see Shell 1961, 197–209. The warm hue of moss green that Lippi used for the cope of Saint Augustine in the Barbadori altarpiece is replicated in the mantle of Saint Lawrence in the Alessandri altarpiece. This was not the most obvious choice, as contemporary iconography represented Lawrence with the red dalmatic of the deacon-martyr.
- 54 Warr 1994, 109.
- 55 Salvestrini 2012b, 1143–85; Argenziano 2011.
- 56 Gordon 2019, 36 and n2.
- 57 Chronicle of Naddo da Montecatini (1387–89) reported in Mori 2013, 162–63.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASF Archivio di Stato di Firenze
AOSMF Archivio dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore

Andreas Strumensis

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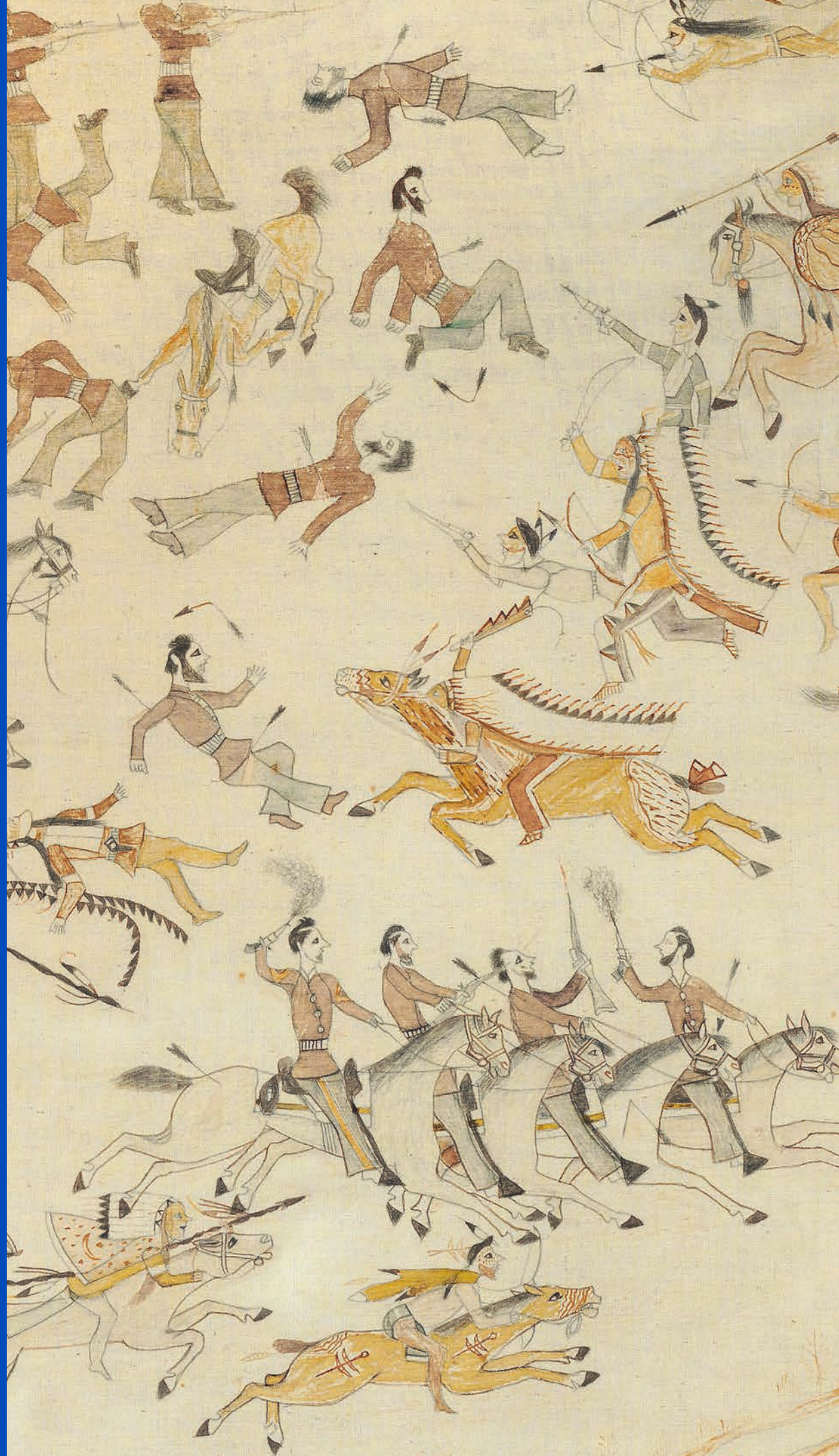
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