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UMI
Church Decoration and the Politics of Reform in Late-Sixteenth and Early-Seventeenth-Century Bergamo

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of History of Art
University of Toronto

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The relationship between religious reform and the arts during the later sixteenth century has long been debated by historians. One model for understanding the course of tridentine reform is one of simple opposition between the invasive authority of Rome, and local churches dedicated to defending their historical prerogatives. This view risks reducing Rome's dependencies to homogeneous communities, unified in their opposition to reform.

Through a case study of three churches in the north Italian city of Bergamo (the cathedral of S. Vincenzo, S. Maria Maggiore and S. Alessandro in Colonna) I examine the process by which reform was transposed into the terms of local interests, traditions and conflicts. Tridentine initiatives were advanced by groups when they conformed with other problems and ambitions of longer standing.

Chapter one examines a situation of direct and open antagonism: the attempts to rebuild S. Vincenzo following the 1561 demolition of the city's second cathedral, the basilica alessandrina. The conflict that resulted in opposition to one of the agendas of reform was between two groups of cathedral canons fighting for primacy within the context of the city.

Chapters two and four address painted decorative cycles commemorating local saints. Although no doubt devoted to their respective saints, I argue that the two groups of canons at the cathedral, as well as the rulers of S. Alessandro in
Colonna, tried to channel the new importance of Early Christian saints that had developed around that time into the effectuation of their own particular goals.

Chapter three discusses S. Maria Maggiore, engaged at this time in a patronage strategy aimed at consolidating its position as the city’s most popular church. Ruled by a lay confraternity and exempt from episcopal control, its rulers nonetheless oversaw a comprehensive redecoration that conformed closely with the ideals of Carlo Borromeo. S. Maria Maggiore also became a powerful symbol of Bergamo’s residual autonomy under Venetian rule. Its redecoration was devoted to articulating themes related to its important symbolic role as civic representation.
Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

ACVB - Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Bergamo
ASCB - Archivio Storico del Comune di Bergamo
BCB - Biblioteca Civica Bergamo
CAP - Archivio Capitolare di Bergamo
CSAlCol - Consorzio di S. Alessandro in Colonna
MIA - Misericordia Maggiore
VP - Visita Pastorale
Introduction

The relationship between religious reform and the arts during the later sixteenth century has long been debated by cultural historians of this period. The vague and rather brief pronouncements finally issued by the Council of Trent provided only the most general framework. Change was mandated, but it is often difficult to tell how completely it was carried out; with no clearly articulated dictates to obey or oppose, actual reform comprised the varied transformations in local institutional structures and devotional practice, as Trent's overarching programme was translated into the specifics of everyday religious life.

One prevalent model for understanding the gradual and often divergent course of tridentine reform is one of simple opposition between welcome acceptance and hostile resistance. Disputes have been thought to result from a battle between centre and periphery, between the invasive authority of Rome on the one hand (exercised mostly through its bishops), and local churches dedicated to defending their historical prerogatives on the other.¹ This view reveals

antagonisms that significantly influenced religious policy, yet it risks reducing Rome to an undifferentiated monolith, and its dependencies to homogeneous communities, unified in their opposition to reform. This was far from the case.

It is also possible to see much of this friction as inevitable conditions of a process by which the bare outlines of reform were given meaning through their transposition into the real terms of local interests, traditions and conflicts. The relationship between various factions involved in ecclesiastical life gave shape to reform. Tridentine initiatives might be actively advanced by certain groups when they conformed with other programmes, problems and ambitions of longer standing.

A city like Bergamo offers a useful perspective on these questions. During the second half of the sixteenth century and the early part of the century that followed, three churches pressed their claims to being the principal church of the city. This triple rivalry evidences a particularly volatile situation in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the conditions under which issues of reform might be used to promote political interests.

Since the Middle Ages Bergamo had featured two cathedral complexes. In the centre of the city was the cathedral of S. Vincenzo, paired from an early date with a church dedicated to the Virgin. On the outskirts to the west was the basilica alessandrina, the burial site of Bergamo's Early Christian patron saint, S. Alessandro. Although from a fairly early date there was always only one bishop, two separate congregations of cathedral canons developed, the canons of S. Vincenzo and the canons of S. Alessandro, whose relationship was far from cordial. In 1561, the Venetian rulers of Bergamo demolished the basilica

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2 As I discuss in the Appendix, this complex situation seems to be unique to Bergamo, and arose sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries.
alessandrina, and forced the two groups of canons to share the remaining cathedral of S. Vincenzo. Joined together in this unhappy way, the two congregations continued to squabble until their eventual union more than a century later. Such fractious behaviour seriously diminished the prestige of the cathedral, and indirectly raised the status of competing churches. First amongst these was S. Maria Maggiore, built as a subsidiary of S. Vincenzo, but by the mid sixteenth century entirely free of episcopal control, and by far the most magnificent church structure in the city. Second was S. Alessandro in Colonna, merely a parish church, but as the site where S. Alessandro was martyred an important locale within Bergamo's sacred landscape. The open conflict between the two congregations of cathedral canons and the resultant competition with other churches make Bergamo unique. The specifics of its factionalism, though, are far less important than the elemental role of internal struggles in the pursuance of tridentine reform. In fact, Bergamo makes a particularly good example because the dynamics of its inner conflicts are so transparent.

In chapter one I examine a situation of direct and open antagonism: the attempts to rebuild S. Vincenzo following the 1561 demolition of the city's other cathedral, the basilica alessandrina. The existing building of S. Vincenzo was not equal to the task of housing such a prestigious body of clerics, and renovation was enthusiastically espoused by the bishop, the city government and the canons of S. Vincenzo. Yet the project was checked, I argue, by the rival canons of S. Alessandro, who refused to advance the construction of a communal cathedral. The conflict that resulted in opposition to one of the agendas of reform was not between a bishop and his recalcitrant canons, but between two groups of canons fighting for primacy within the context of the city.
Chapter two addresses a similar situation, one related to decorative cycles commemorating local saints rather than church construction. Starting in the second half of the sixteenth century, Early Christian saints began to assume much more importance in the life of the Church than they had previously. In large measure this came about because reformers aimed to renew the Church through a return to its pure and simple roots exemplified by the early martyrs. In Rome, this revival was particularly active and was accompanied by the production of many cycles of painted decoration.

Roman insistence on the authentication of local saints, Simon Ditchfield has argued, led to both a proliferation of writings on those saints and an increase in devotion to them. Although originally aimed at stamping out irregular practices and historically dubious cults, the actions of the Roman church ended up promoting the local and giving its saints a solid historical grounding. Through its focus on the fate of these cults following their authentication, my study on the Early Christian saints of Bergamo easily incorporates Ditchfield's conclusion. Not only did the Roman church indirectly forward devotion to local saints, these figures continued to be used for local purposes that ultimately lay outside of Rome's control.

Like many other smaller centres, Bergamo participated in this broad phenomenon by exhibiting a new interest in its early saints. The canons of S. Alessandro, for instance, who still possessed the relics of S. Alessandro, commissioned paintings, a memorial column and a processional cross to celebrate their eponymous saint, the patron saint of Bergamo, a martyr, and early evangeliser of the city. As I argue in chapter two, however, this patronage was

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also an expression of a political agenda. Trapped within the miserable confines of S. Vincenzo, the canons of S. Alessandro used these works of art not just to expand the cult of their saint, but to advance their own position relative to the rival canons of S. Vincenzo. For their part, the canons of S. Vincenzo were not idle observers of these machinations. Although without important relics of their own, they began to commission works of art to associate to themselves the cult of two other Early Christian local saints, SS. Fermo and Rustico. In this way, the emergence of art focussing on Early Christian saints in Bergamo can be understood not just as a response to external stimuli, but as a phenomenon filtered through local concerns and priorities. Although no doubt devoted to their respective saints, the two groups of canons also tried to channel the new importance of Early Christian saints that had developed around that time into the effectuation of their own particular goals.

The rulers of the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna adopted a strategy similar to that employed by the cathedral canons. According to tradition, this church had been founded on the site of S. Alessandro's martyrdom during the years immediately following that event. When conflict between the cathedral canons reached its peak around 1615, the rulers of this church engaged on a comprehensive programme of redecoration centring on themes related to this illustrious history.

I argue in chapter four that this overall programme was aimed at attracting the canons of S. Alessandro and raising the parish church to cathedral status. Like the canons of S. Alessandro who commissioned works commissioned for the cathedral, the rulers of S. Alessandro in Colonna tried to parlay the new status of Early Christian saints into an increase in their own importance.
At the same time, S. Maria Maggiore, a church without any connexion with the Early Christian saints of Bergamo, was also engaged in a patronage strategy aimed at consolidating its position as the city’s most popular church. Although rebuilt in the twelfth century as a subsidiary church within the cathedral complex, in the centuries that followed it gradually gained independence from episcopal control and emerged as a foundation with close associations with the city government. In the middle of the fifteenth century, the Venetian rulers of the city ensured the continuance of this situation by passing the governance of the church into the hands of a city-wide confraternity, the Misericordia, and obtaining a papal bull exempting the church in perpetuity from episcopal interference. In chapter three I examine how this process took place, as well as analysing its significance for the church’s sixteenth- and early-seventeenth century redecoration.

My discussion of this redecoration raises two important issues. The first is related to the Counter-Reformation, a period when such exemptions were put under intense scrutiny. Suspicious of foundations ruled exclusively by the laity, reformers such as Carlo Borromeo aimed at reinstating episcopal control. As a suffragan diocese of Milan, Bergamo, and S. Maria Maggiore in particular, felt this threat directly. In his 1575 apostolic visitation to the city, Borromeo in fact tried vigorously to change the status of this church. Although he failed, his efforts were an inspiration to a succession of later bishops of Bergamo, who repeatedly attempted to use pastoral visitations to bring S. Maria Maggiore under their direct control. In response to this threat, the MIA consulted with Borromeo’s architect, Pellegrino Tibaldi, and engaged upon a redecoration of their church that conformed very closely with the goals of the great Milanese reformer. Although Borromeo’s principal goal, namely reform, was achieved
the aims of the Misericordia were also satisfied because they were able to maintain their independent control of the basilica.

Issues of civic identity are closely tied to the strategies of the Misericordia. Once Venice had established its terraferma empire in the fifteenth century, its own myth of republican liberty was hard to reconcile with its role as an imperial power.4 Faced with this dilemma, Venice promulgated a second myth presenting itself as a guarantor of liberty. Bergamo and its neighbours, so one understood, had voluntarily entered into a relationship with Venice in order to preserve their own freedoms.5 In Bergamo, the endemic squabbling prevented the cathedral of S. Vincenzo from effectively carrying this message. S. Maria Maggiore gratefully assumed this role, aided significantly by the sheer magnificence of its architecture. Beyond that, it was in fact particularly well suited to this role, because according to a foundation myth developed in the fifteenth century, S. Maria Maggiore had been established by the city government during the period of Bergamo's communal independence. During the sixteenth century, it became a powerful symbol of Bergamo's residual autonomy under Venetian rule. Its redecoration at this time was devoted not just to fulfilling the requirements of Borromeo's architectural reform, but to articulating themes related to its important symbolic role as civic representation.

The archives of Bergamo have provided me with essential information on institutional structures and areas of cultural contention; they have furnished one of the bases for my understanding of the political and ideological struggles that took place there. Like many of Italy's smaller cities, Bergamo has been

4 On the conflicts and tensions that defined Venetian rule of the terraferma, see E. Muir, Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance, Baltimore, 1993, pp. 49-67.
5 For the development of this myth, see E. Cochrane, Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance, Chicago, 1981, p. 380.
served well by local scholars, yet rarely have their discoveries been related to the broader cultural issues of the city, let alone those of the peninsula or Europe. This has been both a blessing and a curse. Local studies into Bergamask art of this period have mostly concentrated on establishing basic facts such as dating and attribution, but done very little to examine how the art may have been intended to function, or on how it was received. Even when more detailed work has been carried out, it tends to focus either on isolated parts of a church decoration, such as Lorenzo Lotto’s choir *intarsie* at S. Maria Maggiore, or on architecture as a completely separate entity from its intended decoration. I offer the first contextualised interpretation of many works of art, joining my archival findings with those of individual studies, where they exist, and integrating them within a broad framework encompassing both architecture and decoration. If Bergamo lacks the copious body of literature offered by larger centres such as Rome or Milan, it provides a stage of manageable proportions on which to observe the realisation of grand injunctions within the world of social alliance of human action.

Works of art are clearly my primary focus, a distinctive measure of cultural trends that register in a symbolic fashion social and political tensions. My arguments begin with discussions of the reputations that the churches enjoyed in the sixteenth century, the understanding of their foundations, rule, and the appreciation of their architectural forms. These factors supported the

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competing claims made by the different patronage groups. The canons of S. Alessandro, for instance, used their long association with the basilica alessandrina and their possession of the relics of Bergamo's patron saint as a means of advancing their cause in the struggle with the canons of S. Vincenzo. These canons compensated for their less illustrious history by promoting new rival cults.

While the foundation and later histories of the church form the essential frame for my arguments, its building blocks are the works of art themselves. These paintings and monuments are not simply products or expressions of pre-existing conditions, but agents in an on-going historical process. Although their iconography, narrowly defined, is often fairly conventional, they effectively signal concerns and issues beyond their nominal subjects. In the struggle between the two groups of cathedral canons, for instance, the best evidence of their posturing is not to found in the written texts, but in the visual documents of the time, when these are carefully and systematically analysed. In my discussion of the series of paintings, I discuss the ostensible subjects, but pay considerably more attention to other aspects of presentation: the choice of style, format, medium and selection of artist. There were clearly many factors essential to the expression of social and political agendas.

Although this study centres entirely on religious art during a period of intense religious change, its analytical focus is less on how art articulated this transformation, than on how these new forms were themselves transformed by local needs into instruments in struggles for social ascendancy. In many respects, this work can be seen as an attempt to apply some of the approach characteristic of the Italian school of microhistory, one of whose aims has been, in the words of
Edward Muir, "to elucidate historical causation on the level of small groups where most of real life takes place." 

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Chapter One

The Fabric and Decoration of the Cathedral of S. Vincenzo, 1561-1600

1. Introduction

Until 1561, Bergamo had the very unusual distinction of having two completely separate cathedrals. In the centre of the city was a church dedicated to S. Vincenzo, while on the outskirts to the west was the basilica alessandrina, containing the tomb of Bergamo's patron saint, S. Alessandro. In 1561, however, this situation was dramatically changed when the Venetians, rulers of the city since 1428, demolished the basilica alessandrina to make way for a new set of fortifications. In this chapter I first explore the process that resulted in this trauma to the city's sacred topography, before turning to a detailed discussion of the remaining cathedral of S. Vincenzo. Following the 1561 demolition of the basilica alessandrina, the canons of S. Alessandro were compelled to move to S. Vincenzo, but were assured by the Venetian authorities that the consequent joining with the canons of S. Vincenzo would be temporary, and that their church would somehow be replaced or rebuilt. What effect did this highly unstable situation have on the fabric of the cathedral? To answer that question fully, I review the largely unsuccessful attempts at rebuilding S. Vincenzo before 1561 as a way of building a picture of the problems facing those intent on continuing this effort. Following 1561, several projects were carried out: the choir was enlarged to accommodate the increased number of canons, a monumental tabernacle was installed in the choir, and the facade of the church was furnished with a new portal. I analyse these projects as products of the often conflicting interests of those involved in their execution: the two groups of cathedral canons, the bishop and the city government.
The discussion also seeks to address the relationship of these local machinations to the broader cultural phenomenon of the Counter-Reformation. This has often been viewed as an authoritarian and strongly centralising movement in which local churches were coerced into following an agenda set in Rome and disseminated to the provinces. It is not my purpose here to invert this paradigm by suggesting instead that all change was instead motivated solely by local concerns, but I do hope to demonstrate how the intersection of the broadly tridentine with the exclusively local could have a decisive impact on how change was effected in this period. The renovations carried out at S. Vincenzo, for instance, could easily be seen entirely in terms of the local bishop executing the requirements of the central church. The carrying out of this broad agenda not only went hand in hand with the fulfillment of local concerns and agendas, however, it was in fact actively conditioned by these particular needs.

2. The demolition of the basilica alessandrina

On the seventh of August 1561, the Venetian military commander Sforza Pallavicino began the demolition of the basilica alessandrina. During the following three months two other major churches of the city, the parish church of S. Lorenzo and the Dominican church and convent of S. Domenico, along with at least 215 houses were destroyed during work on a new ring of fortifications for Bergamo's upper city. Finished sixty years later, these new walls completely transformed the city's urban topography. Prior to their

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2 This estimate was made by Marco Foresti da Verdello, "misurator ed estimator" of the city in 1561. He valued of the damages to the city at 116,000 ducats. Also in 1561, the Venetian podestà Francesco Venier put the number of houses destroyed at 276 and the value of these at 190,000 ducats. Neither of these estimates took into account the value of the churches demolished. Foppolo, "Cronologia," p. 59.
completion, the upper part of the city extended seamlessly into the plain below in the direction of the major routes towards Brescia and Milan. The new walls transformed the upper part of the city into a fortress largely separated from its formerly continuous suburban developments. The purpose underlying this drastic alteration to the urban fabric was the Venetian desire to defend its terraferma possessions, and was in fact part of a wide ranging programme aimed at fortifying all the major cities of this territory.

The need for such expensive measures arose out of the disastrous experience of the Venetian armies following their defeat at the battle of Agnadello in 1509. During the period of war that followed, Bergamo was occupied by a succession of different armies: first the French, then the Venetian, the French again, the Spanish, the Venetians again and finally the Spanish. In 1516 Bergamo returned to Venetian domination where it was the westernmost outpost of the terraferma, with the Spanish controlled territory of Milan lying within view of the city. To the north of Bergamo an important trade route connected the Venetian territory with Switzerland and the rest of Northern Europe. In light of this strategic position and its weakness during the wars of the League of Cambrai, it was not surprising that Bergamo should have been the focus of special attention aimed at containing Spanish territorial ambitions and consolidating Venetian authority.


4 On the effectuation of this policy, see J.R. Hale, “Terra Ferma Fortifications in the Cinquecento,” in Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations, vol. 2, Florence, 1980, pp. 169-187. Both of these reasons are mentioned in a presentation made by Sforza Pallavicino to the Venetian Senate in July 1561. He noted that the borders of the Bergamask territory “sono tutti o col Re Filippo o con suoi adherenti,” but saw the connexion with Northern Europe more in military terms. Quoted in Colmuto Zanella, “fortezza,” p. 110, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Deliberazioni del Senato, filza 34, Relazione di Sforza Pallavicino, 13 July 1561.
Why did the plan as executed isolate the upper city? The answer to this question lies both in the topography of Bergamo itself, and in the form of sixteenth-century fortifications. The upper city is located on a hill that rises steeply at the edge of the Po plain, making it easily defensible. The borghi by contrast, although continuous with the upper city, were located almost entirely on that plain. During the fifteenth century a circuit of walls had been constructed that encompassed these borghi, but advances in artillery technology had rendered those walls obsolete. Sixteenth-century walls were low and broad and relied for their effectiveness not on height, but on complex shapes that provided intersecting fields of defensive fire, as well as on immense thickness to counteract the penetrating power of the latest artillery. The steeply sloping hill of the upper city could itself act as both the surface and thickness of the wall, whereas in the borghi it would have been necessary to build up earthworks on top of the flat ground, an enormously laborious and expensive task. It was thus for largely economic reasons, arising both out of the topography and the new technology of wall building, that only the upper city was destined to receive a modern ring of walls.

These general observations do not, however, explain either why so much destruction accompanied the wall building campaign, or why the basilica alessandrina was amongst those structures demolished. It seems odd on the face of it that the Venetian authorities should have been so insensitive towards the sacred topography of their subject city. It becomes even more strange when one takes into consideration that their rule of the terraferma usually relied not so much on brute force but on the building of a consensus that Venetian rule was

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6 Sforza Pallavicino, in the 1561 presentation to the Venetian Senate cited above in note 5, estimated that fortifying the upper city alone would cost only a third as much as fortifying the whole city including the borghi. Quoted in Colmuto Zanella, "fortezza," p. 111.
in the interests of the local population. Why did Venice risk destabilising a peaceful situation? The answer to this question lies in the process by which the walls were constructed.

The idea of augmenting the fortifications of Bergamo first arose in the 1520s, immediately following the wars of the League of Cambrai. Francesco Maria della Rovere established a plan for walls in 1526 that included all of the borghi, and although work began on this project, it did not continue for long and had little lasting effect. For an understanding of why the basilica alessandrina was later demolished it is significant, as we shall see, that its subsidiary church of S. Pietro was destroyed as part of this work in 1529. The idea of fortifying the city did not come up again until 1560 when Sforza Pallavicino first presented his plans to the Venetian Senate. The documentation surrounding the series of events that followed is copious and comes from the records of the Venetian Senate, including the Relazione of Sforza Pallavicino, the Venetian Rettori in Bergamo, the city government of Bergamo and the Bergamask delegation in Venice. Following the first rudimentary plan, feasibility studies were carried out which eventually bore fruit in a second plan, presented to the Venetian Senate on 13 July 1561, proposing that only the upper city should be enclosed. On 15 July, the Senate sought reassurances from Sforza Pallavicino that the number of buildings to be demolished would be minimal, a question made necessary by the fact that the Senate did not have before it a carefully worked out plan of action.

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Pallavicino agreed to the Senate's condition that demolitions be kept to a minimum and, on 17 July, was ordered to go to Bergamo and begin work.8

In response to these plans the city government of Bergamo sent a delegation to Venice to lobby for a project that would involve a minimum of damage to the city. At this stage, the principal purpose of this lobby was probably to limit economic and social dislocation, but they must have realised that the peripheral location of the basilica alessandrina made it vulnerable. The city government proposed that there should be processions on 30 and 31 July, and 1 August aimed at eliciting God's favour in the negotiation process. Similar protests by the city government of Vicenza had been effective in changing Venetian plans, but its wealthy patricians had much stronger ties with the Senate and could thus exert more influence than distant and relatively powerless Bergamo.9 Fearing that these processions could become focal points of resistance directed against Venetian authority, the Rettori of Bergamo stopped the second and third of these from taking place.10

On 31 July Pallavicino arrived in Bergamo accompanied by a large contingent of soldiers. Almost immediately, he began demolitions in Borgo Canale, the area of the upper city surrounding the basilica alessandrina. Only on 2 August did the city government become aware of the details of Pallavicino's plan. Although unacceptable to them, since it did not include the fortification of the lower city, there was no mention at this time of any need to destroy either the basilica alessandrina or any of the other churches eventually demolished.11

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8 All of the above are in the Relazione cited above, note 5. See also Foppolo, "Cronologia," pp. 37-38.
10 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 29, 30 July 1561, pp. 145-147. See also, Foppolo, "Cronologia," pp. 38, 43. The Rettori were Venetian appointees who ultimately controlled the actions of the city government.
11 S. Buzzetti, "Lettere municipali relative alla costruzione delle mura di Bergamo (1557-1568)," in 1588-1988. Le mura di Bergamo, pp. 379-397, has published a group of letters including both those
This more detailed plan was in turn presented to the Doge on 3 August. Again, there was no mention of any churches to be demolished. On 5 August the Bergamask delegation in Venice sent back a report stating explicitly that the basilica alessandrina, S. Domenico and S. Agostino were to be included within the new circuit of walls. Although within the old circuit of walls, these churches were still on the periphery of the upper city.12

On 7 August, as mentioned at the outset, Sforza Pallavicino began the demolition of the basilica alessandrina. The next day, the Venetian Senate was informed of Pallavicino's actions by the Bergamask delegation in the city and their reaction was one of shock. In their response of 11 August, however, they sanctioned Pallavicino's work on the fortifications, as well as all that he planned to do in carrying out the project in the future.13 Venice immediately sent more troops to Bergamo, and perhaps as a way of forestalling further Venetian threats of force on 16 August the city government addressed a letter to Venice in which they formally approved of the actions taken by Pallavicino.14

How is it possible to understand these apparent manipulations and shifts of fortune? Following their initial shock at what Pallavicino had carried out, the Venetian Senate quickly moved to support his actions. One possibility is that there was a secret agreement between Pallavicino and some high Venetian officials that somehow managed to circumvent the authority of the Senate.15 According to this scenario, Pallavicino was from the outset instructed to proceed

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13 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Deliberazioni del Senato, Secreta, Reg. 72, 8, 11 August 1561, pp. 70-71, quoted in part in Foppolo, "Cronologia," p. 75 note 11.
15 This idea was suggested in Foppolo, "Cronologia," p. 56.
exactly as he felt was required for the fortifications. It may also be possible that the Venetian Senate was not dealing in good faith with the delegation from Bergamo and that it secretly intended to give Pallavicino complete freedom to maneuver. This is less likely, however, since on 8 August, having just heard of the demolitions, the Senate was shocked enough to propose if not actually to bring about a suspension of work on the fortifications. In both of these possible cases the intention must have been one of falsely putting to rest fears that much would be destroyed in the building of any new fortifications. Having through this strategy of surprise prevented a mass of protest from erupting on the periphery of their dominion, the Venetians were able to deal only with the aftermath. This would then explain the strong support for Pallavicino in the Senate’s statements of 11 August. The fawning response on the part of Bergamo’s city government was then an admission that protest was futile when faced with the fait accompli of the demolished basilica alessandrina, and the show of Venetian force manifested in the August deployment of further troops to the city.

The principal reason lying behind why the basilica alessandrina was demolished was one of military necessity. The hill on which the upper city of Bergamo is built narrows almost to a ridge in the area where the basilica alessandrina was located. To the south and north the terrain is steeply sloped, whereas to the west the hill of S. Vigilio quickly rises a further ninety metres in elevation. The area around the basilica thus formed a choke point for any attack coming from a westerly direction. (fig. 1) The removal of the church freed up the space needed to make a system of walls that conformed to this difficult

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16 See above, note 13.
17 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p.459, mentions in his discussion of the destruction surrounding the building of the new walls that troops were brought to the city to prevent a popular uprising against the Venetians.
topography. There is no explicit evidence to back up this conclusion, except for the fact that the demolition was carried out, but it should be noted that the nearby subsidiary church of S. Pietro had already been destroyed in 1529 as part of Francesco Maria della Rovere's plan to fortify the city. This suggests that the *basilica alessandrina* might also have been slated for demolition under this plan and that military strategists clearly saw this area as key to any defensive system. In addition, it is noteworthy that when the Bergamask delegation wrote to the city government on 5 August 1561 they were careful to mention that the *basilica alessandrina* was to be included within the new walls.  

This also suggests that there was a perceived threat to the church, an idea that most likely arose out of a knowledge that its demolition was militarily expedient.

As a victim of military necessity Bergamo was not alone amongst the cities of the Venetian dominion. The principal defensive requirement with implications for city building was for a long unobstructed glacis extending outwards from the walls. In Bergamo this was not as serious a problem as in other cities, since the steep slope of its hill meant that little construction had taken place in many of the areas where the new wall was located, with the exception, of course, of the area around the *basilica alessandrina*. In cities built largely on the plain, however, the problem was much more acute. Nearby Brescia, for instance, had all of its extramural suburban developments demolished following a Venetian decree of 1517. In the process, twelve churches were destroyed, including one that contained the relics of the city's first bishop. Padua also had to submit to some serious losses, but was at least spared

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19 On the numerous laws passed to keep this critical area free of building, see Hale, "Terra Ferma Fortifications," p. 183.
the planned demolition of the Santo. To have eradicated such an important cult site would almost certainly have caused a revolt, a dangerous prospect for Venice given Padua's size and proximity. Not only was the basilica alessandrina a lesser site, Bergamo was a lesser city where revolt could be more easily contained and was less of a potential danger to the Republic as a whole. In the context of such widespread destruction of property and churches elsewhere in the terraferma, it is not so surprising that, given the military benefits, the demolition of one of Bergamo's cathedrals was thought acceptable by the Venetians.

3. 17 December 1561 - Act of Concord between the two Congregations of Canons

Following the demolition of the basilica alessandrina, the ecclesiastical authorities were faced with the difficult problem of how to accommodate quickly the chapter of displaced cathedral canons. In the short term, the canons were moved to S. Vincenzo, but such an arrangement required a rewriting of the relationship between the canons of S. Alessandro and the canons of S. Vincenzo. Were the two chapters to be joined into one, or would they retain separate identities? How this problem was resolved had important implications for the future of the fabric and decoration of the cathedral of S. Vincenzo. To a large extent, however, these implications can only be understood in light of the history of these two chapters, so I begin this section with a brief overview of that history.

By the mid tenth century at the latest, both the basilica alessandrina and S. Vincenzo had an associated chapter of cathedral canons. The relationship

22 For a much more detailed discussion of these historical developments, along with citations to the relevant literature, see the Appendix.
between the two churches was far from harmonious, however, as the two chapters came to be associated with rival political factions in the city. In the late eleventh-century struggle to establish the Commune in Bergamo, for instance, the canons of S. Alessandro were in favour of imperial power and against that represented by the Commune, whereas those of S. Vincenzo were supporters of both the Pope and the Commune. In 1187, the canons of S. Vincenzo then attempted to translate this political victory into one of ecclesiastical dominance. That year marked the beginning of long trial in which the canons of S. Vincenzo claimed that their church should be considered the one and only mother church of the diocese. The canons of S. Alessandro, on the other hand, demanded that their church be given equal status to that of S. Vincenzo. The dispute was finally settled with an act of peace, signed 23 December 1189, largely in favour of S. Alessandro insofar as S. Vincenzo was not recognized as the mother church of the diocese, but had to share that distinction with S. Alessandro. The resolution also involved the joining of the two formerly separate chapters into one so that from this point on a canon from one church was also considered a canon from the other. This relationship still obtained when the basilica alessandrina was demolished in 1561, but perhaps the most important inheritance of this dispute was the continued sense of a conflictual relationship between the two groups of canons.

The weapons in this conflict were provided by the foundation histories of the two churches as understood by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. In marked contrast to the picture as developed by more recent historians, all of these sources seem to tell the same story.23 According to these accounts, the

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23 For the problem of the origins of the two churches amongst historians of the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, see the Appendix. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts range widely in source and date. A.G. Roncalli, ed., Gli atti della visita apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), vol. 1, part 1, Florence, 1936, pp. 184-185; I.A. Guarnerius, De vita et rebus gestis
sequence of events was as follows. Subsequent to the martyrdom of S. Alessandro in the late third century, his companion S. Grata built a church near the site of his burial in Borgo Canale, outside the walls just to the west of the Roman city. This church became the first cathedral of the city. In the late ninth century Bergamo was attacked by the Hungarians causing much damage, in particular to the church of S. Alessandro. In response to this, bishop Adalberto, with the help of Emperor Berengar, restored the church and moved the bodies of Saints Alessandro, Narno and Viatore to a newly constructed crypt underneath. Partially because the cathedral of S. Alessandro, located on the periphery of the city, was in an area vulnerable to attack, Adalberto, again in concert with Emperor Berengar, decided in the early years of the tenth century to establish a second cathedral in the centre of the city. To carry out this plan they moved approximately half of the canons formerly resident at S. Alessandro to the church of S. Agnese located near the former Roman forum of Bergamo and, at the instance of Berengar, had it rededicated to S. Vincenzo.

This unanimously held foundation history set the boundaries of the conflict between the canons following their forced joining in 1561. According to this history, S. Alessandro was the establishment of greater antiquity, founded as a cathedral church with a full chapter of canons. The chapter at S. Vincenzo was an offshoot, according to the story, of that of S. Alessandro. With the demolition of their ancient church, therefore, the canons of S. Alessandro were placed in the

sanctorum bergomatum commentarii, Bergamo, 1583, fols. 108v-111v; M. Muzio, Sacra Historia di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1621, pp. 212-213; Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, pp. 109-112, varies the story slightly, in that bishop Adalberto is given more independence relative to the Emperor; Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, p. 122; CAP 221, Atti dell’Unione e Concordia dei Capitoli e Cattedrali di S. Vincenzo e S. Alessandro, Informatione, late 17c document describing the foundation histories of the cathedrals in Bergamo; G.G. Marenzi, Sommario delle sacre chiese di Bergamo e Diocesi del Sig. Gio. Giacomo Marenzi Cancellerie Episcopale fatto gl’anni 1666, 1667, BCB Sigma 7 15/2, fol. 188v; G.B. Moiolo, Quattro dialoghi nei quali si fà relazione di varie operazioni intorno la Fabrica del Domo e dell’unione delle due Congregationi della Cathedral di Bergamo, Milan, 1617, second dialogue, pp. 1-3.
unenviable situation of having to move to the establishment not only of a long time rival, but one thought to have been of lesser importance historically. It is time now to turn to the means by which this joining took place.

On 13 August 1561, presumably before the complete demolition of the basilica alessandrina, the church's sacred relics were translated to the cathedral of S. Vincenzo in the centre of the city. There they were placed temporarily on the high altar in accordance with an agreement reached between the bishop and the two chapters on 11 August. The translation was accompanied by a large procession including the bishop, the canons of the two chapters and all the clerics of the city. In total the relics of seven local saints were involved. The most important were the bodies of S. Alessandro himself, along with S. Narno and S. Viatore, venerated as the first two bishops of Bergamo, all of whom had been buried together in a crypt chapel beneath the sanctuary of the basilica. Following this, the relics of S. Giovanni, S. Proietizio, S. Giacomo and S. Hesteria were extracted from other altars in the nave of the basilica. Also removed from the church at this time were all of the movable liturgical objects and vestments as well as larger objects such as columns and pieces of stonework.

An official account of the translation, written in September, makes clear that the presence of the saints's relics at S. Vincenzo was to be temporary. Of

24 Several detailed accounts of this event survive. The first was probably written by the cathedral canon Giovanni Antonio Guarneri. It was an official account that was later presented to Carlo Borromeo during his 1575 apostolic visitation to Bergamo, but was actually written contemporary with the events described. For a transcription of the "Processus translationis Sanctorum Corporum et Reliquiarum e cathedrali Divi Alexandri tempore illius ruinae ad templum etiam cathedrale Divi Vincentii translatarum" see Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 189-195. There is also a copy in the archive of the Curia in Bergamo, CAP 611, Tres Dissertationes, pp. 49-72. The second is found in the acts of the cathedral chapters and is also transcribed in Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 194-195 note 1. The events are also recorded in Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 3, p. 569, and Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p. 460.

25 For this agreement, see Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 195.

26 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 193: "..si aliquando de Sedis Apostolicae licentia templum aliud sub invocatione Divi Alexandri martyris aedificari continget, in quo praepositus et canonici,
all the possible scenarios, the canons of S. Alessandro hoped for a return to a situation similar to that which preceded the demolition of their church. Given the long history of conflict between the two cathedral chapters and the various issues of precedence that underlay this history, it was obvious that the two groups required an immediate clarification of their relationship. On 17 November 1561 the general chapter, made up of canons from both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro, elected deputies to discuss the union of the two groups. On 8 December 1561 Pius IV issued a bull stating quite explicitly that the basilica alessandrina should be replaced with a new cathedral church. This was either to be built anew at another suitable location, or created through the conversion of an existing church to that function. Furthermore, the document made clear that the canons had the right in both cases to keep in their possession all the relics from the destroyed basilica as well as all of their other property.

Recognition of the papal pronouncement of 8 December 1561 was made a precondition of the act of concord which followed on 17 December 1561, meaning that the canons of S. Alessandro maintained their right to move to another

uti hactenus residentiam faciant, tunc ipsa sanit corpora, sanctaeque reliquae eo integre transferantur, omni impedimento et contradictione penitus in omnino cessantibus."


28 The canons of S. Alessandro were granted permission "ut aliam Ecclesiam cum Campanili, Claustris, fonte Baptismali, alijisque antique suae, & aliarum Cathedralium Ecclesiarum insigniis, quibus ipsa antiqua Ecclesia decorata erat, in alia dictae Civitatis loco idoneo construere, & edificare, seu aliam Ecclesiam ad hunc effectum sibi canonice concedendam ampliare, & aptare." The papal proclamation and the slightly later act of concord were both published in 1610. A copy of these published versions can be found in CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione. The date of these published versions is not clear from any internal evidence since only the date 1561 appears in the text, but in CAP 574, Expensae (1600-1640), under the year 1610 the canons of S. Alessandro are recorded as paying for a printed version of the act of concord and of the papal letter: "Alli 4 febraro per le cento copie stampate del istramento della concordia - L. 15," and on 8 February, "cinque copie del indulto Apostolico per la fabrica di S.to Alessandro." The accompanying image of the basilica alessandrina is depicted in a style that has always been considered inconsistent with a date as early as 1561, but accords much better with a dating to 1610. G. Colmuto Zanella, in B. Cassinelli, L. Pagnoni and G. Colmuto Zanella, Il Duomo di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1991, p. 151 says that the printed document dates from 1661, but gives no reason for this suggestion. This papal bull is also recorded by Calvi, Effemerie, vol. 3, p. 385.
church or build a new cathedral. It is even stated that it was their intention to carry out this move. The agreement between the two groups of canons was far from an act of union and created instead a very strong boundary between the two congregations of canons. The principal means of establishing this was the complete separation of their economic affairs, so that each group of canons would draw its income from its own land, investments and endowments. The only exception to the principle of financial independence involved improvements to the fabric or the purchasing of liturgical furniture required in the shared liturgy. In these cases the two congregations had to agree before any money was spent. Essentially, this act of concord maintained the highly unusual situation of having two cathedral chapters in one city, and rendered it even more absurd by containing these two foundations, albeit as a temporary solution, within a single cathedral building. As one mid-seventeenth-century document put it, the 17 December 1561 act of concord preserved the "Catedralità" of S. Alessandro.

This agreement between the chapters established the foundations of their relationship for the next hundred years. In many ways, it was a compromise document that did not particularly favour either congregation of canons. For the canons of S. Alessandro, the negative side was obvious. They had been forced to give up their ancient church and move to S. Vincenzo where they were

29 The act of concord, "Concordia Die 17 Decembris MDLXI inter Rev. Prelatos, & Canonicos Ecclesiae Bergomen." was also transcribed by Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 236-244.
30 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 239, "Tamen mensae capitularis et altarium maiorum tam Sancti Alexandri quam Sancti Vincentii respective, earumque mensarum capitularium et altarium proprietates et bona quaecumque, ac fructus, redditus, et proventas cum quotidians distributionibus, ac suis honoribus, et oneribus prout prius separata remaneant."
32 CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione. The untitled document is from the late seventeenth century and outlines the history of the relationship of the chapters in preparation for the eventual 1689 union: "..di 17 Xbre 1561 segui istimento di concordia preservante la Catedralità di S.to Alessandro di unirsi per l'officiatura nella Chiesa di S.to Vincenzo essi Canonici di S.to Alessandro, et di S.to Vincenzo."
doubtless treated like unwelcome guests. They did not, however, have to relinquish any of their economic freedom and lived in the hope of one day being able to reestablish themselves in an independent building. For the canons of S. Vincenzo the agreement was equally infelicitous. They were compelled to share their cathedral structure, which as we shall see was grossly inadequate, with a group of canons with whom they had had a fractious relationship for several centuries.

The structure to be shared by these canons, the cathedral of S. Vincenzo, had been partially rebuilt in the fifteenth century, but this initiative had stalled at the beginning of the sixteenth century. With a newly expanded number of canons to be accommodated, there was a very pressing need to complete the work undertaken. But the 17 December 1561 agreement between the chapters essentially quashed any real hope that this work would be carried out because the act of concord stated that any work on the fabric required the consensus of both groups of canons. The canons of S. Alessandro had little incentive to channel funds into the rebuilding of a church that, they hoped, was only to be a temporary site of their activity. In fact, helping the fabric of S. Vincenzo financially would have actively harmed their plans to build a new cathedral of S. Alessandro since it would have siphoned potential money away from that undertaking.

In this way, two strongly opposing agendas emerged at the cathedral. On the one hand, there were the canons of S. Alessandro who wanted only to leave, but while in residence at S. Vincenzo needed to maintain their independent identity and preserve the importance of the cult of S. Alessandro and the other six local saints. On the other hand, there were the canons of S. Vincenzo who wanted to rebuild their cathedral church. To effect this goal the canons of S. Vincenzo had two options. They could either advocate the departure of the
canons of S. Alessandro and attempt to rebuild the cathedral using their own resources, or they could work towards achieving a real union with the canons of S. Alessandro so that they could both tap into the resources of this group and have jurisdiction over the critical relics possessed by these canons. The canons of S. Vincenzo chose the latter route, and attempted to build consensus. For both groups of canons, art became an important vehicle for the expression of competing agendas. Before turning to how these agendas were expressed, however, it is necessary to examine the fabric as it existed in 1561 because only with a sense of this structure in mind is it possible to assess the significance of the changes made to it after that date.

4. The Form of S. Vincenzo in 1561

S. Vincenzo was probably founded in the fifth century, but the present form of the cathedral (now dedicated to S. Alessandro) dates mostly from the late seventeenth century when the previous structure was almost entirely rebuilt. In the nineteenth century, a cupola and new facade were added. For these reasons, many difficulties arise in determining the form of S. Vincenzo in the sixteenth century. In the reconstruction that follows, I rely heavily on the work of Graziella Colmuto Zanella who has carried out an exemplary analysis of a complex and rather poorly documented situation. My analysis differs mostly in the emphasis it places on the cathedral's significant relationship with the adjacent church of S. Maria Maggiore.

During the middle ages, the cathedral of S. Vincenzo was a very modest structure. The nave was a simple rectangular space about ten metres wide and

33 For these changes to the fabric, see Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 174-195, 200-213, 218-233.
34 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp.136-149.
twelve deep. Attached to the nave at the east end was a slightly narrower choir, approximately nine metres wide and seven metres deep. Beyond the east end of the church was a campanile. Our knowledge of the disposition of the church prior to its complete transformation has been deduced from a series of seventeenth-century drawings executed for the proposed rebuilding of the church at this time. As a way of indicating the exact positioning of the proposed structure, these plans show the outlines of the existing cathedral walls.

In the twelfth century, the adjacent subsidiary church of S. Maria Maggiore was rebuilt on a scale that dwarfed S. Vincenzo. Until the middle of the fifteenth century these two church buildings made up a coherent cathedral complex, with a shared liturgy and patrimony. In 1453, however, the governance of S. Maria Maggiore was, through the agency of the Venetian podestà, given over to a lay confraternity, the Misericordia, and granted complete exemption from episcopal control. The implications of these changes will be discussed in chapter three. Immediately following the shift in jurisdiction there appeared an initiative aimed at rebuilding S. Vincenzo. The speed with which these emerged strongly suggests that before the loss of S. Maria Maggiore the poor state of S. Vincenzo was tolerated because its larger sister church was adequate to the needs of the cathedral canons, both physically and representationally. Without the support of S. Maria Maggiore, however, S. Vincenzo could not stand on its own and had to be rebuilt. A more general stimulus to new construction projects was the period of relative stability ushered in by the 1454 peace of Lodi.

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35 For the problems surrounding the dating of the early structure see the Appendix. The campanile, along with the sacristy and chapel on the south flank of the church, dedicated to the Trinity, were built in the tenth century. The additions to the north, a second sacristy and a chapel dedicated to S. Benedetto, were both added around 1341. For the early architecture of S. Vincenzo, see B. Cassinelli, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 10-23.
36 Cassinelli, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 35.
The principal figure in initiating the fifteenth-century work on the fabric of the cathedral was the very dynamic Venetian bishop of Bergamo, Giovanni Barozzi (1449-1464). As part of his unusually active engagement with diocesan affairs, he planned to rebuild S. Vincenzo and dedicate it to both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro. By this means he intended to reinforce what was believed to be the historic unity of the church in Bergamo, the idea that the cathedral chapter of S. Vincenzo was originally an offshoot of the chapter of S. Alessandro. Although this part of his plan was not carried out, the desire on the part of this Venetian bishop to establish a single cathedral in Bergamo in imitation of what was perceived as a real historical precedent foreshadows, as we shall see, the policies of Bergamo's bishops following the 1561 forced joining of the cathedral chapters at S. Vincenzo. His plans to rebuild the church building did, however, achieve some concrete ends, with work probably beginning at the start of 1456.

Also, on 8 January 1457 the city government decreed that every citizen was to make an annual offering towards the fabric of S. Vincenzo.

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38 See above, pp. 21-23. The double dedication intended by bishop Barozzi is mentioned in many early sources: B. Pellegrini, Opus divinum de sacra, ac fertili bergomensi vinea, ex diversis autenticis, catholicisque libris, Brescia, 1553, fol. 12, "1459 die 3 Maii posuit primum lapidem fundamenti templi novi s. vincentii ut ampliori forma edificaretur non solu sub titulo s. vincentii sed etiam San. Alexandri..."; P. Bonetti, Specchio de' prelati rappresentato nella vita di Girolamo Ragazzoni conte di S. Odorico e vescovo di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1644, p. 64; Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 2, p. 15.

39 This is the date mentioned by the seventeenth-century author Donato Calvi, not always a reliable source, but there is the additional evidence that Barozzi obtained on 13 March 1456 the concession of some city property for the construction of the new building. Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, p. 41. For a more detailed discussion of the work sponsored by Bishop Barozzi see Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 136-149; G. Crippa, "Inediti sul Duomo di Bergamo. Dal Filarete al Fontana," Bergamo Arte 5 (1971), pp. 21-30.

40 Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, p. 41.
The architect chosen to carry out the work on S. Vincenzo was Filarete, active at that time at the court of Francesco Sforza in Milan. Although Filarete is not mentioned in local historiography at all until the nineteenth century, it is clear that he was involved. The most direct evidence is furnished by four letters written in April and May of 1457 in which Francesco Sforza granted his architect Filarete permission to go to Bergamo to "give form to the building of the cathedral church which that community means to build." More interesting are the references to the cathedral of Bergamo in Filarete's Treatise on Architecture. Filarete discusses the Bergamo project for use as a model for a different church, however, raising the possibility that what he described was not the cathedral of Bergamo at all but some variant of it. Nonetheless, the particulars of the site and its dimensions make it likely that the drawings illustrating the text had a close relationship with the parts of the building that were executed. (fig. 4) The Treatise, therefore, offers the most complete picture of the cathedral prior to its almost total rebuilding in the late seventeenth century.

The visual evidence from Filarete's Treatise is in the form of three drawings: a plan, a nave elevation and a facade. According to the plan, the church was to follow a Latin cross design without aisles. The drawing of the nave elevation shows that it was to feature three stories, and that its three bays

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41 "...da, la forma allo edificio de la chiesa cattedrale che intende edificare quella comunità." Three of the letters were sent to Filarete in Bergamo. They are dated 26, 29 April and 10 May 1457 and are preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Milano, Missive sforzesche, reg. 32, fols. 349, 351, 357v. See Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 148 notes 23-27 for further references.
43 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 139. It is worth noting, however, that none of the drawings in the surviving manuscripts of the Treatise are thought to be by Filarete himself, and there are some discrepancies between the illustrations and the forms described in the text. For the most part, studies on Filarete have focused not on the specifics of his church designs, but on his architectural theory. See J. Onians, Bearers of Meaning: The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, Princeton, 1988, pp. 158-170.
were to be covered with two units of vaulting. The facade drawing shows an octagonal cupola, presumably over the crossing, and two very tall towers towards the east end of the church.44

To what extent did Filarete's plan correspond to the cathedral as actually executed? Although work probably began in 1457, Calvi records that the ceremonial blessing of the first stone did not take place until 3 May 1459.45 Unusually, work began not with the east end, but with the facade. Probably this was because the land on which the nave was being built had in 1456 been cleared of obstructing buildings, formerly owned by the city, and construction could proceed without interrupting the liturgy in S. Vincenzo. To have started work at the east would have required the demolition of the campanile and the entire primitive church before construction could have begun, leaving the canons of S. Vincenzo with no functioning liturgical space.46 (fig. 3) This would have been necessary because the greater size of the new church was accommodated principally through an expansion to the west, since to the east there was an important public street that could not be blocked.

In 1464 bishop Barozzi became Patriarch of Venice, and, probably as a consequence of the loss of this dynamic figure, as well as the absence of Filarete who was committed in Milan, work appears to have stopped by 1467. Some hope remained alive that it would be completed, however, since the city continued to elect deputies to the fabric. Up until 1476 these deputies were elected from amongst the Presidenti of the Ospedale di S. Marco. The fact that this was an

44 For a discussion of the dimensions of the plan as proposed by Filarete and how these correspond with the present fabric, see Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 140.
45 Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 2, pp. 15-16. The same date is also recorded in Bonetti, Specchio, p. 64.
46 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 142, suggests that work was begun with the facade in order to establish a clear sign of the division of power represented by the cathedral and the almost abutting civic Palazzo della Ragione. Given the intense involvement of the city government in the financing and direction of the fabric, it seems unlikely that the priority of the programme at this early stage should have been aimed at marking out such a strong distinction.
institution founded by bishop Barozzi may be yet further evidence of his decisive role in the promotion of S. Vincenzo's rebuilding. After 1476 the deputies to the fabric were chosen from the citizenry at large. The records do not specify exactly which group was represented by these deputies to the fabric, but it is clear that through them the city exerted some significant control over the work at the cathedral, perhaps more than was the case under bishop Barozzi. It is also clear, however, that without a bishop particularly committed to seeing work progress little was actually carried out.

There is scant evidence regarding the extent to which the nave planned by Filarete had been completed by the time work stopped in 1467. It is known, however, that the first chapel to the left, dedicated to S. Caterina and S. Geronimo, was founded in this year. This at least suggests that the first bay of the nave had been completed sufficiently to accommodate the decoration and liturgy required in a chapel. Work did not resume on the cathedral until 1494, following a six-year period in which the new bishop Lorenzo Gabrieli and the city government sought new sources of financing for the fabric.

A record of payment from 2 December 1501 provides the first really concrete evidence of the progress of the fabric. On the exterior of the nave, the walls were complete, but on the interior the piers which defined the end of the nave and beginning of the transept had not been completed. It is likely that at this time there was still no permanent roof covering the space of the nave.

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47 This change is registered in the records of the city government, BCB, ACSB, Azioni, vol. 2, fol. 115v, and CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo contro la città di Bergamo riguardo ai corpori santi del Duomo (1438-1715), fol. 21, dated 31 December 1476. The document is transcribed in the appendix of Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 244-245.
48 CAP 419, fol. 6. The chapel was founded by Antonio Rota della Pianca on 25 October 1467.
49 For details of these efforts, see Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 143.
50 The document recording payments made to the stonemason Mariano Grataroli, is transcribed in the appendix of Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 247-248. The original is located in ASB, Notarile, atti di Antonio Vitalba, 939.
fabric was then given further impetus by a plenary indulgence granted by Pope Julius II on 4 May 1504 to those who visited S. Vincenzo.\textsuperscript{51} This single indulgence was clearly not adequate, however, since further indulgences were repeatedly requested of Rome between 1513 and 1525.\textsuperscript{52} Even these, however, were insufficient in overcoming the debilitating dislocations that characterised the period following the battle of Agnadello in 1509.

In 1507, the city government decreed that all private chapels in S. Vincenzo were to be decorated within two years or else the families that had control over them would lose their rights to others more willing to carry out this order.\textsuperscript{53} This suggests that by this date at least all six of the nave chapels were sufficiently complete to warrant their decoration. (fig. 5) In addition to these chapels, there were two further chapels in the transepts. The early-seventeenth-century drawings provide a good source for the groundplan of all these chapels since many of them incorporate the walls of the nave into the new plans. These show that, as in Filarete's drawing in the \textit{Treatise on Architecture}, (fig. 4) there were three deep semicircular chapel spaces on each side of the nave. They also show that only the western walls of the transept were completed. Opening out of each of these walls was a broad but shallow semicircular chapel that appeared neither on Filarete's plan, nor in the written description. The chapel in the south transept, dedicated to S. Giuliano, was first mentioned in 1526 but was deconsecrated by bishop Cornaro in 1566 along with the corresponding chapel in the north transept, dedicated to S. Maria.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} CAP 617, fol. 19.
\textsuperscript{52} Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., \textit{Duomo}, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{53} BCB, ASCB, \textit{Azioni}, 27 December 1507. Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., \textit{Duomo}, pp. 145, 149 note 94.
\textsuperscript{54} This chapel was mentioned in the acts of the cathedral chapter when the chaplain was elected "ad capellam S. Juliani." CAP 205, \textit{Atti Capitolari S. Vincenzo} (1435-1630). The suppression of the two chapels is recorded in the 1566 pastoral visitation of bishop Cornaro, ACVB, VP 20, fol. 60. Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., \textit{Duomo}, p. 149 notes 92, 93.
How and when this nave and partial transept were covered remain almost entirely speculative. According to the drawing in the Treatise, the nave was to be vaulted. Colmuto Zanella, however, has suggested that the bays of the nave were separated by pointed transverse arches. There is no direct evidence for this conclusion, but there existed a long tradition of using such arches in Bergamask architecture. Furthermore, the church of S. Maria della Consolazione in nearby Almenno S. Salvatore, built around the same time as the nave of S. Vincenzo and similar in plan, features nave bays separated by pronounced pointed transverse arches that support a wooden roof. Given that Filarete himself was probably present in Bergamo to direct work for only a very short period of time, and the work then passed to what were essentially local artisans, it is very possible that his plan was modified to conform with the norms of this local tradition.

In terms of the elevation, there is slightly more evidence, and it again points to significant modifications of Filarete's plan. During the early-seventeenth-century debates over how to rebuild the cathedral, Giovanni Battista Moiolo, the author of several polemical works regarding the building, discussed a suggestion made by Palladio that the side chapels should be changed so as to be twice as high as they were wide. Although in general not an advocate of Palladio's plan, Moiolo did agree with this suggested alteration to the existing fabric. To have carried it out, according to Moiolo, would have required the lowering of the chapels, involving the destruction both of the chapel vaults

55 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 146-147.
56 The fourteenth-century church of S. Agostino in Bergamo would have provided an important local precedent. See C. Fumagalli, S. Agostino di Bergamo: la storia e l'arte delle chiese e dei conventi agostiniani di Bergamo, Nembro, Almenno Romano, Bergamo, 1990.
and the walls above them. This suggests that the proportions of the chapels as executed were much taller than illustrated in Filarete's *Treatise on Architecture*. It is quite possible also that the great height of these chapels meant that the galleries planned by Filarete were not constructed.58

The tortuously long and ultimately only partial reconstruction of S. Vincenzo in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries must be viewed as a failure. (fig. 6) One of the principal reasons for the reconstruction was that the governance of the formerly subsidiary church of S. Maria Maggiore had passed into the hands of a confraternity. No longer able to claim the splendours of this church as his own, bishop Giovanni Barozzi promoted the reconstruction of S. Vincenzo with the intention of creating a monument that could vie with S. Maria Maggiore, which had clearly surpassed the cathedral in both magnificence and in the people's devotions. Following the evidence of two early-sixteenth-century descriptions, this intention was not fulfilled. Marcantonio Michiel, writing in 1516, makes much of the contrast between the two churches. He first describes S. Vincenzo and then contrasts it with S. Maria Maggiore:

> In front of the law court, about whose fire we have spoken, is a small square to the south: on the right rises the palace of the bishop, in the centre the church of S. Maria, and to the left S. Vincenzo. This same, though famous for its ancient dedication, for the dignity of its ministers, for being the episcopal church, and notable as well for the size of its marbles, for the excellence of its design, and for its spaciousness, is, however, poorly cared for and rarely frequented. This is not because of the negligence or avarice of those who care for it, but because the restoration of its ruins, caused by its age and by fire, has not been completed, even though by now it is the two hundredth year since the restoration was begun. The church of S. Maria is the opposite, neither having such an ancient dedication as the other, (there being only around two hundred years since its foundation) nor being equal to the other in terms of the dignity of its ministers. The great number

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58 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., *Duomo*, p. 147.
and piety of those who work there, however, have made it so popular that the city does not have a more famous church.\textsuperscript{59}

Although Michiel was not very well informed of the dates of S. Vincenzo's restoration or of S. Maria Maggiore's foundation, his observations on the relative fame of the two churches must have mirrored a common perception. The critical reason given for the relatively low status of S. Vincenzo was not its design, praised by Michiel, but the fact that its restoration was incomplete. The text may also reveal a common perception as to why this work had not been completed. Even though Michiel denies that it was because of "the negligence or avarice of those who care for it," he does not give any explanation for the failure of the two hundred year restoration, thus enhancing the credibility of the the very causes he denies. Indeed, the placement of this sentence directly after one where the building is described as "poorly cared for and rarely frequented" supports the reading of this description in ironic terms. According to Michiel, therefore, S. Maria Maggiore attracted more attention and money than the cathedral.

A second description, written by Pre' Zuanne di San Foca in 1536, does not include the same direct confrontation between the two churches, but S. Maria Maggiore and the adjoining Colleoni chapel are treated first and in much greater detail than the cathedral.\textsuperscript{60} Only just over one folio of the manuscript is


\textsuperscript{60} The full text of this description has been published by L. Pagani, "La Bergamo del 1536 nel resoconto di viaggio di Pre' Zuanne di San Foca," in 1588-1988. \textit{Le mura di Bergamo}, pp. 345-368. For the passages regarding S. Vincenzo and S. Maria Maggiore see pp. 365-366.
devoted to S. Vincenzo, whereas the two other monuments are worthy of eleven folios. These descriptions, written as they were just following the new construction at S. Vincenzo, clearly suggest the failure of this programme to eclipse or at least rival S. Maria Maggiore. As we shall see in chapter three, the rulers of S. Maria Maggiore were not idle observers of these initiatives, but effective advocates in the promotion of their own church.

5. Changes to S. Vincenzo, 1561-1600: The Choir

In the remaining sections of this chapter I will describe the changes to the structure of S. Vincenzo that were carried out following the joining of the two congregations there in 1561. More importantly, I will also analyse how these changes were products of a complex interaction of often competing agendas. Much of the documentary material necessary for this analysis has not previously been published and comes from original research in the archive of Bergamo's cathedral chapter. Furthermore, the studies already carried out by historians of the cathedral of Bergamo have focused more on what was actually done to the structure than on why or for whom it was carried out.

In broadest terms, the period from 1561 to 1600 was one in which the reforms initiated at the Council of Trent began to have an impact on church building. For the most part these reform efforts were entrusted to the local bishop, a charge that helped to increase the power and influence of that office. During this time Bergamo had two bishops who were particularly attached to the process of reform. The first of these was Federico Cornaro (1561-1577) who we have already come across in the discussion of the 1561 act of union between the two congregations of canons. The second was Girolamo Ragazzoni (1577-1592), a personal friend of Carlo Borromeo. As part of their wide-ranging reforms in the
diocese, both these bishops promoted building projects at S. Vincenzo.61 To different degrees, they aimed to use these projects as tools for unifying the two congregations of canons, thus returning them to what was imagined as their earliest form. For Cornaro and Ragazzoni this goal constituted an intersection of the tridentine aim of a return to the early church and the local need to rebuild the cathedral.

In the execution of this agenda these bishops had to have the cooperation of local groups since ultimately they would be responsible for most of the costs involved. The city government and the canons of S. Vincenzo generally supported the efforts of Cornaro and Ragazzoni, and the city actually initiated its own projects at times. All of these groups, however, were faced with the problem of bringing the canons of S. Alessandro on side. These canons were at best reluctant residents at S. Vincenzo, with a long history of independence at their own church. To achieve their shared goal of unity, therefore, the bishops had to employ strategies that would give the canons of S. Alessandro a sense of renewed independence, while simultaneously convincing them that belonging to a unified chapter was the better option.

The figure of Carlo Borromeo must also be considered within this web of factors because he carried out an apostolic visitation of Bergamo in 1575. In this type of visitation the Pope gave the visitor, in this case the archbishop of Milan, the authority to require that any reforms deemed necessary be carried out. Bergamo was not by any means an isolated example of a diocese visited by Borromeo, and these visitations were in fact an essential instrument of his broader reform policy. One of the principal aims of this policy was to empower

61 On the reform efforts of these two bishops, see G. Zanchi, "Dagli inizi del Cinquecento all'attuazione del Concilio di Trento," in Caprioli et al., Diocesi, pp. 170-178.
the episcopacy and kickstart reform. Although sanctioned by the Pope, the other reforms carried out by Borromeo suggest that these visitations were probably not intended as instruments of increased central control, but as exempla to be followed by local bishops. Nonetheless, the role of this external force must be considered along with the bishop, canons and city as a factor in the rebuilding projects at S. Vincenzo.

During the wars of the League of Cambrai, from 1509 to 1516, Bergamo changed hands six times. Following the final return of the city to Venetian authority in 1516 stability returned and building projects could be resumed. The cathedral, however, received very little attention as the city government focused all its efforts on the rebuilding of its town hall, burnt down by Spanish troops in 1513. Following 1561, however, the number of canons required to serve in the cathedral increased to forty four from twenty six creating a pressing need to provide them with an adequate choir space.

It is not at all clear what form the choir took at this time. (fig. 5) Excavations at S. Vincenzo have revealed that the floor level of the original structure was three metres lower than that of Filarete's nave. This meant that if the old church was to be used as the choir of the newly constructed nave the level of its floor had to be raised. It seems that this was carried out, but it is difficult to date precisely the sequence of building. The early-seventeenth-century designs for the rebuilding of the cathedral show that there existed at this

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65 Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 150.
66 Cassinelli, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p.39.
time walls which joined the half finished transepts to the outer walls of the old S. Vincenzo, creating a very narrow space in the transepts only about four metres wide. These joining walls must have been completed by 1566 at the latest since it was at this time that bishop Cornaro suppressed the two transept altars, justifying his decision by saying that these spaces could harbour disrespectful activities during the celebration of the liturgy.67 Had this space not been enclosed at this time then the potential for irreverence would not have existed.

In this same pastoral visitation one of the suppressed transept altars is described as being located "ante choram" suggesting that at this time some sort of choir must have existed. In the 1536 description of Bergamo written by Pre' Zuanne di San Foca, there is evidence both of a choir and of a crypt below. S. Vincenzo's "high altar is beautiful and rich with a magnificent cross. Then below is a second old church where our Lord [the sacrament] is kept."68 By this date, therefore, a temporary arrangement had been established whereby the old structure of S. Vincenzo served as the choir of the new but incomplete cathedral.

Although this choir may have been barely adequate for the needs of the canons of S. Vincenzo, it definitely did not fulfil the needs of the newly combined congregations of canons. Only eleven days after the act of concord between the two chapters, on 28 December 1561, the canons discussed the rebuilding of the choir.69 Bishop Cornaro was strongly behind the undertaking, and the canons agreed at this meeting of the chapter that they should provide part of the financing.70 The explicit reason given for this interest in rebuilding

67 ACVB, VP 20, fol. 60, dated 8 June 1566, "quia.. etiam in tempore celebrationis divinorum diverse persone irreverenter inherent."
70 The role of the bishop is again emphasized in the meeting of 24 January 1562, CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fols. 216v-217.
was the poor physical condition of the choir, but the sudden need to house more canons must have made the need to remedy this situation all the more pressing.

Financial arrangements for the new choir were made in 1562 and actual work on its construction is recorded in the Acts of the cathedral chapter from 1563 to 1569. Around the same time, also on the initiative of bishop Cornaro, an additional sacristy was built, presumably to serve the needs of the canons of S. Alessandro. The work on both the choir and the sacristy seems not to have involved any architect and was essentially an economical way of creating functional spaces. The form taken by the newly rebuilt choir is not specified in any of the written documents, but the early-seventeenth-century rebuilding plans show that this choir followed the disposition of the primitive church of S. Vincenzo. Presumably, therefore, the rebuilding was limited simply to raising the old walls of the church so that its height came close to that of the new nave. A bird's eye view drawing of Bergamo from 1626, in which the city's principal churches are depicted in some detail, shows the rectilinear choir dipping just

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71 CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fols. 216v-217, 24 January 1562; CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fols. 217v-218, 25 January 1562; CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fol. 227v, 20 August 1562, in this meeting there was an election of deputies to the fabric, one from amongst the canons of S. Vincenzo, the other from the canons of S. Alessandro; CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fol. 230, 21 October 1562. Financing the building of the choir was not without significant difficulties. As late as 1591, in the acts of the pastoral visitation of bishop Ragazzoni, the canons of S. Vincenzo complained that they had been made responsible for more than their fair share of the costs, ACVB, VP 31, 1591, unpaginated.

72 CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fol. 234, 14 February 1563, in this meeting there is discussion about money to be spent on "perfectione et refectionis chori eiusdem ecclesiae..."; CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fol. 245, 7 October 1564, in this meeting, two canons were appointed to calculate the expenses incurred in the rebuilding of the choir of S. Vincenzo; CAP 158, Acta Ottolini Rota (1538-1601), fols. 104-104v, 7 December 1569, in response to a need for continuing work on the choir of the cathedral, Gulielmus Beroa, a canon of S. Alessandro says he will leave some money for that purpose. It is also stipulated that this money will be withdrawn if there are any disputes between the two congregations: "dummodo per R. Caplum' reddetetur causas de' eum relevando in .. eventum alicuius turbationis..."

73 CAP 156, Acta Joannis, fol. 257, 5 March 1566, at this meeting the decision was taken to build a new sacristy in the house of the Arciprete, "in canonica contigue ecclesiae..."; CAP 158, Acta Ottolini, fol. 97, 23 June 1567.

74 G.B. Moiolo, Libro manoscritto, CAP 232, fol. 206, written ca. 1627 considered this rebuilding to have been carried out in such a way so as to save money.
below the height of the new nave. (fig. 7) It was not, however, a permanent solution and could not really have been considered as an adequate completion of the cathedral fabric.

Although only a provisional solution, it is important to examine who was responsible for its execution and what their intentions might have been. It appears that bishop Cornaro played a critical role. In the first document cited above recording the resolve to commit funds towards the choir, the bishop was specifically mentioned as a keen promoter of the fabric. Specifically, he encouraged the chapter to elect deputies to the fabric who would be more active in its promotion, since the previous deputies had done nothing.\textsuperscript{75} The goals of bishop Cornaro in this enterprise were similar to those he had in facilitating the slightly earlier act of concord between the two congregations. Faced with a potentially very unstable situation, brought about by the destruction of the \textit{basilica alessandrina} and the need to accommodate its canons appropriately, Cornaro first ensured that the canons of S. Alessandro were given hope that a new church would be built, and then proceeded to make possible their temporary residence at S. Vincenzo. Given the limited nature of the rebuilding he pushed forward at S. Vincenzo it seems likely that at this date Cornaro did not envision this as a permanent solution to the problem of the cohabitation of two separate groups of canons at one cathedral. In the seventeenth century, as we shall see, this early limited agenda on the part of the bishop evolved into one which sought full reconciliation of the two congregations.

Beyond the simple fact that the canons of S. Alessandro did in fact continue to stay in residence at S. Vincenzo, there is some evidence that bishop Cornaro's efforts at promoting peaceful coexistence were successful. In December

\textsuperscript{75} For specific references to the bishop see above, notes 69, 70.
1569, Guglielmo Beroa, a canon of S. Alessandro, promised money towards the fabric of the choir. Although this canon felt impelled to include a clause stating that he could demand the money back if trouble emerged between the chapters, it is significant that a canon of S. Alessandro should have contributed to an effort aimed at making residence at S. Vincenzo possible. It is an example of the success of Cornaro’s policy, and might indicate that at least some of the canons of S. Alessandro felt that continued residence at S. Vincenzo was possible. On the other hand, it could simply be interpreted as a willingness by these canons to spend some money to make their present circumstances bearable, and it is true that, in general, this conciliatory attitude was not typical of the canons of S. Alessandro.

In fact, these canons were almost certainly responsible for blocking a rebuilding of the choir that was supported by the city government, the bishop and the canons of S. Vincenzo. The manifest need for this project had been made clear by no less a figure than Carlo Borromeo. The Acts of his visitation in 1575 provide a rich source both on the state of the church fabric at that point, and on what was thought necessary to improve the situation. S. Vincenzo was described as:

very small, irregular and unadorned, and its fabric is as yet unfinished. For example, while the structure begun indicates that it is to be built in the form of the cross with four arms, at this point, however, only the western arm has been built and instead of a true eastern arm there is a temporary principal chapel and choir.. and the facade threatens to fall into ruin.

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76 See above, note 72.
77 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 65, "Haec quidem ecclesia est valde parva, incomposita et inornata, et eius fabrica adhuc est imperfecta; nam, ut structura coepta demonstrat ex quatuor cornibus, in forma crucis est fabricanda; adhuc tamen solum cornu occidentale est fabricatum, in loco vero cornu orientalis extat capella maior, et chorus per modum provisionis... et in frontispicio ruinam minatur."
Given that cosmetic changes would not have been adequate to rectify the poor state of the fabric, Borromeo recommended that an expert should be consulted about a more comprehensive rebuilding. How did the canons of S. Alessandro manage to block a project desired by so many influential parties?

The evidence comes from a series of documents surrounding a city-sponsored project to commemorate the sparing of Bergamo from a plague in 1578. In April of that year the city government made a vow to spend 500 scudi on an appropriate monument. They first considered building a chapel at the hospital of S. Marco but voted against this option before deciding, on 4 December 1578, on sponsoring the construction of the choir of S. Vincenzo. Their deliberations regarding the necessity of this undertaking reveal much about the limited nature of the work done on the choir during the previous decade.

and we [the city council] consider it to be a notable shortcoming of this Magnificent City that its Duomo is seen continually to be unfinished and reduced to a not very praiseworthy form. Moreover, it is such that it causes dishonour as well as inconvenience, which is suffered greatly in these times when, more often, it is usual to limit the number of people in it because of the narrowness and lack of comfort found there. We have all come to the opinion, having conferred with the most Reverend Bishop...that the main chapel of S. Vincenzo should be built according to the old model.

78 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p.118, "Ruinae, quam minatur haec ecclesia, quamprimum periti iudicio occurratur." Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 154. Pellegrino Tibaldi was paid L. 14 by the general chapter for having examined S. Vincenzo on 13 June 1576, CAP 572, Expensae (1508-1594). The choice of Tibaldi, an architect very closely associated with Borromeo, suggests that the fulfillment of his decrees was considered important, but there is no record of what Tibaldi either carried out or recommended so it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions from his involvement. In his slightly later Instructiones, Borromeo recommended that choirs should "correspond accurately in size and proper ornamentation with the importance of the church and the number of its clergy." Translation by E.C. Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae, 1577. A Translation with Commentary and Analysis," Ph.D dissertation, Syracuse University, 1977, p. 153.

79 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 37, fol. 42, "...et considerando noi essere di mancamento notabile a questa Mag.ca Città, il vedersi continuamente il Domo suo imperfetto et ridotto in forma poco laudabile, anzi tale che causa piu tosto disonore oltre l'incomodità che si patisse massime a questi tempi dove piu spesso in esso si suole ridurre il populo per la strettezza et puoca comodita che in esso si ritrova, siamo tutti venuti in questa opinione, havendola conferta anchora con Mons. Rev.mo
This proposal was never carried out. Instead, after much further deliberation, partly concerning problems with the plan for S. Vincenzo, it was decided to spend the money on the construction of a chapel in S. Maria Maggiore. As we shall see in the chapter on that church, this decision was not simply based on the problems that had emerged in carrying out the plan for S. Vincenzo, but these difficulties must have had a significant influence.

One problem with the plans for S. Vincenzo, recognised even in the same meeting at which it was decided to spend the money there, was that the building of a new choir would require much more than the 500 scudi of the voto. In anticipation of this difficulty, the city committed further funds, and hoped that, following a similar arrangement made in 1574, the bishop and the chapter would contribute matching amounts.80 Two years passed before the subject was again broached at a meeting of the city council. On 2 December 1580 they decided that the rebuilding of the choir of S. Vincenzo was simply too ambitious and would take too much time. The city felt it needed to fulfil its vow more quickly than was possible at S. Vincenzo, for fear that further delay would anger God and bring plague to the city. The document recording this change of heart makes an oblique reference to the agenda of an unnamed party, but no explicit reason was cited beyond the simple fact that the rebuilding of the choir was a large undertaking.81 Not surprisingly, on 18 December 1580 the canons of S. Vincenzo

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80 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 37, fol. 42v, 4 December 1578: "...et perché se gli ricerca a questa impresa maggior summa de dinari si aricorda alle V.M. che altre volte sotto il di 14 aprile 1574 fu in questo maggiore consiglio preso parte di dare ducati 500 alla fabrica del Domo dandone ducati 500 Mons. R.mo et 500 il R.do. Capitolo de Canonici, si come anche sono promtissimi di farlo, et promettono anchora di fare di piu quanto a loro sia possibile"; A copy of the city's 1574 decision to help financially with the fabric of S. Vincenzo is found in CAP 615, Atti di causa, fols. 19-20, 14 April 1574.

81 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 38, fol. 19v, "Gli Antiani... hanno considerato che gli rispetti et disegni d'altro non debbano ritardar questo Mag.co Consilio dall'oblighi suoi verso sua divina Maestà la indignatione della quale dalla vicinanza del novo contagioso male si pote facilmente dubitare..."
protested the city's decision to withdraw its support from the choir rebuilding. In the text presented to the city council, these canons stated that while they were willing, along with the bishop, to add their financial backing to the city's efforts, the canons of S. Alessandro were not, in spite of the fact that they had earlier promised their support. In part at least, the city must have decided to change their plans for S. Vincenzo because they could not rely on the unified backing of the cathedral chapter as a whole. The canons of S. Alessandro had effectively blocked a major building initiative at S. Vincenzo.

Although the canons of S. Alessandro were willing to back limited rebuilding aimed only at making their residence at S. Vincenzo bearable, they blocked any more substantial programme of renovation. In doing this they resisted integration and kept alive their hopes that resources might instead be directed not towards the completion of S. Vincenzo, but towards the building of a new cathedral of S. Alessandro. There is, however, no evidence from the second half of the sixteenth century of any concerted effort at raising funds for this end. All of the quite numerous attempts to raise money were directed instead towards the goal of rebuilding S. Vincenzo, and in these efforts the bishop and the city government seem always to have been the initiators. In 1561, as we have seen, bishop Cornaro was instrumental in starting the rebuilding of the choir. In 1564, he established a fund for the promotion of the fabric as well as a committee of deputies dedicated to this end. Throughout the fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century building campaigns the city had strongly supported the fabric and this backing continued in the period following 1561. In 1574, as we have seen, the city

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83 The establishment of this fund is mentioned in a 1699 text documenting the history of the church fabric, CAP 230, Atti della Fabbrica (1614-1690). This document notes that when canons entered the Chapter they paid 10 scudi into the fund.
committed itself to an annual donation to the fabric, and in 1578 they planned the rebuilding of the choir in fulfillment of a *voto*. In not a single instance is there evidence that the option of building a new S. Alessandro was even considered. In spite of the 1561 act of concord that kept this hope alive, the actions of the bishop and city speak of a different goal, of a desire to unify the church in Bergamo by completing the rebuilding of its principal church, not to perpetuate its divisions, rooted in the political factionalism of the middle ages, by fostering hopes of a new *basilica alessandrina*.

The city's 1580 decision to build its votive chapel in S. Maria Maggiore did not mean that it had completely withdrawn its support of the fabric at S. Vincenzo. On 10 February 1581, for instance, the city council decided to have a model made of the completed S. Vincenzo. Although this model was apparently constructed, no actual building work was carried out and the model does not survive. Small improvements to the fabric of the choir did, however, continue to be made around this time. Between 1576 and 1577, for instance, work was probably begun on enclosing the choir area behind a metal grating, and in 1581 there are payments for repairs to the choir stalls. Again, the bishop was mentioned in the Acts of the chapter as having suggested these initiatives. In 1564, a decision was taken to repair the campanile, located to the east of the choir. It is possible that some work was done at that point, but repairs were

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84 BCB, ASCB, *Azioni*, vol. 38, fol. 72. The total cost was to be 45 scudi d'oro to be paid by city, bishop and chapter in thirds. The commission given to a local artisan, Agostino Gualandris.
85 CAP 158, *Acta Ottolini*, fol. 139v, 10 November 1576, at this meeting of the chapter the plans to enclose the choir are first discussed; CAP 158, *Acta Ottolini*, fol. 141v, 8 February 1577, deputies were elected to consult with experts "circa fabricam et constructionem ineriarie ante chorum." It is not clear, however, if this work was actually carried out. Payments for the choir stalls are recorded in CAP 572, *Expensae* (1508-1594), and CAP 573, *Expensae* (1569-1599), for the year 1581. Carlo Borromeo felt it was very important to separate the choir from the public area of the nave: "...the location of the choir should be separate from the standing place of the people. [It should be] enclosed by rails..." Translation by Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's *Instructiones*," p. 153.
desperately needed again in 1580. When in that year the canons of S. Vincenzo complained about the city's decision to build the votive chapel in S. Maria Maggiore they stated that they had let the campanile fall into dangerous ruin because of the expectation that the choir would be rebuilt. The campanile would have been knocked down completely in any expansion eastward of the choir.\(^87\)

As a consequence of this series of events, plans to repair the campanile were developed in 1581, and at least some work was carried out.\(^88\)

6. Changes to S. Vincenzo, 1561-1600: The Tabernacle

By far the most lavish undertaking of this period was the commissioning of large tabernacle to be placed on the high altar of the cathedral, where it remains to this day. (fig. 8) Following the orders of bishop Girolamo Ragazzoni, the chapter began making financial arrangements in 1587\(^89\), and on 31 March 1588 Prisco Benaglio, arciprete of the chapter (a canon of S. Vincenzo), signed a contract with Cesare Targoni, a Venetian artist living in Florence.\(^90\) According to Calvi, the tabernacle was completed and placed on the high altar on 28 July 1588.\(^91\) An inventory of the church's possessions made in 1593 puts the date more realistically at 1589\(^92\), as well as including a description of the work:

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\(^87\) According to the document presented by the canons of S. Vincenzo, the city had for this reason actually instructed them not to spend any money on the campanile. BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 38, fols. 34-34v, 18 December 1580.

\(^88\) The decision to repair the campanile is recorded in CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti dall'anno 1567 all'anno 1630, fol. 118, 25 April 1581, and payments for the work actually carried out there are recorded for 1581 in both CAP 572, Expensae (1508-1594), and CAP 573, Expensae (1569-1599).

\(^89\) CAP 158, Acta Ottolini, fol. 184, 28 February 1587, at this meeting of the chapter a deputy was elected "ab ea omnia que opportuna et necessaria erunt pro et circa fabricationem tabernaculi.";

\(^90\) CAP 158, Acta Ottolini, fol. 184v, 10 March 1587, "In quo quidem R. Caplo. de ordine R.mi D. Epi. ibidem congregato habito colloquio de confectione et fabrica tabernaculi et de electione duorum qui curam habeant et interveniant in his que necessaria erunt pro Tabernaculo conficiendo et sic facto..."

\(^91\) L. Pagnoni, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 70.

\(^92\) This actual date of completion is still open to question, however, since in a city council meeting held 28 December 1591 (CAP 615, Atti di causa, fols. 57-58), it is stated that the tabernacle is not yet in place.
This tabernacle is of bronze, that is the figures of the four evangelists, the little angels, and other figures above the niches are of bronze, whereas the small balustrades and framework is of brass, and the remainder is of very fine stones called jewels with the box within of cypress with a brass cross at the very top.. and Christ in act of resurrection.. and then lined with a painting on which is depicted the Last Supper with some prophets below.\textsuperscript{93}

Of interest here is not so much the specifics of its form, which is in no way exceptional for the period, but the politics of its creation. As was the case with many of the efforts aimed at rebuilding S. Vincenzo, this commission was initiated by the bishop, in this instance Girolamo Ragazzoni.\textsuperscript{94} He paid for part of the total cost himself, but required that the chapter should contribute as well.\textsuperscript{95} Given that the financial affairs of the two congregations, following the 1561 act of concord, were entirely separate, this meant that the bishop had to obtain the agreement of both groups. For a more modest enterprise, this may not have been a problem since the need for a monumental tabernacle would, in the atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation, have been universally acknowledged. The project was far from modest, however, and costs rose from an initially anticipated total of 1000 scudi to the enormous sum of 4500 scudi by the time of the tabernacle's completion. The costs grew to such an extent that the city government made more than one contribution, even though only a single

\textsuperscript{93} CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa in S. Alessandro e S. Vincenzo Bergamo, 1593, 1617, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1589, p. 1, "Questo tabernacolo è di bronzo, cioè li quattro evangelisti, li angelinì, e altre figure sopra le nicchie, et gli balastrini con le cornici di lottone, il resto è di pietre finissime dette gioie con la cassa di dentro di cipresso con una croce di lottone in cima ..et un Christo in atto di resurrezione..poi fodrato con un quadro ove pepinto il cenacolo et alcuni profitti sotto." Although there is no longer a brass cross on top of the tabernacle, its form is essentially the same as described in the sixteenth-century inventory.

\textsuperscript{94} See above, note 89.

\textsuperscript{95} According to Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 2, p. 491, of the total cost of 4500 scudi, the chapter as a unit paid 1000, 500 came from some of the canons individually, and the rest was paid for by the bishop. It is not clear how reliable he is in this since he does not include the documented contributions of the city government (see below, note 96). Calvi probably overstated the contribution of Ragazzoni because his source was Bonetti, Specchio, p. 80, a work celebrating the achievements of the bishop.
contribution had been planned at the outset.96 Because the sum of money was so large, the other important aspect of the 1561 act of concord, the promise that a new basilica alessandrina would be built, became an issue. The canons of S. Alessandro, presumably fearing that the money spent on the tabernacle would harm their ability to finance such a construction, demanded that special conditions be put on their contributions to the tabernacle. In the end, bishop Ragazzoni was so strongly committed to the completion of the project that he conceded to the demands of the canons of S. Alessandro that all money put towards the tabernacle by them would be redeemable if they were to move to, or construct a new church.97

Why was bishop Ragazzoni so strongly committed to completing this tabernacle? To a large extent, this was because its execution marked an intersection of the purely local with the broadly tridentine. In terms of the latter, we should turn to Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae of 1577 and to the Acts of his 1575 visitation. Borromeo devoted an entire chapter of the Instructiones Fabricae to the location and form of this piece of liturgical furniture. It was to be placed on the high altar, and be made of expensive materials such as "silver or bronze plates which are gilded, or of the more costly kinds of marble." The decoration was to include "Pious reliefs representing the mysteries of Christ's Passion" and "On the top... should be a figure of Christ being gloriously resurrected." In terms of shape, the tabernacle "may be octagonal, hexagonal,

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96 The city records are transcribed in CAP 615, Atti di causa, fols. 55-56v, 4 December 1589, the records of this meeting state that the city council had, on 17 March 1587, agreed to donate 200 scudi. At this meeting they agree to give these 200 scudi on the condition that the tabernacle will be finished by next August; CAP 615, Atti di causa, fols. 57-58, 28 December 1591, at this meeting the city council noted the cost overruns and decided to donate a further 200 scudi.

97 A document included in bishop Ragazzoni's 1591 pastoral visitation (ACVB, VP 31, unpaginated) records this agreement. Citing the 1561 act of concord, the document states that: "possit dicta congregatio S.ti Alex.ri omni pecuniam ex medietate praebendarum collatam ad solutione Tabernaculi iuxta Decretri nostri tenorem, recipere et recuperare, pro qua pecunia habeat ius, actionem et hypotecam specialem super ipso Tabernaculo."
square, or round." 98 The example executed for S. Vincenzo definitely conformed with the parameters laid down in the Instructiones Fabricae. As part of his 1575 visitation, Borromeo issued a long list of decrees regarding the ruinous state of S. Vincenzo. The Sacrament was at this time reserved in a wooden tabernacle on the third altar to the left of the entrance. Borromeo found this tabernacle inadequate and ordered that it should be first placed on the high altar and then replaced there with a much larger tabernacle within six months. 99 Although not completed within the specified six months, and in fact requiring more than ten years, Borromeo's prescription may well have furnished the initial impulse for the commission. The Counter-Reformation period witnessed an enormous expansion in the eucharistic cult and its associated apparatus. As a bishop in sympathy with the goals of this reform, and a personal friend of Borromeo, Ragazzoni would doubtless have reacted favourably to his recommendation.

His attachment to the project should also be considered in light of the earlier attempts by bishop Cornaro, as well as the city government to compel the two congregations to act as a single unit. In the rebuilding of the choir, for instance, both congregations had been required to contribute equally. The commission for the tabernacle was simply a continuation of this same policy. It could be argued, however, that this emphasis on equal contributions was entirely the result of the 1561 act of concord which prescribed that the two groups had to pay equally for the fabric or for communally used liturgical furnishings, such as a tabernacle.

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99 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p.109, "Tabernaculum ligneum ad altare maius transferatur, et ibi semper cum SS.mo Sacramento teneatur, terminoque sex mensium aliud magis amplum et ornatum comparetur."
But such an approach results in only a partial picture of the situation, since it denies to both bishops Cornaro and Ragazzoni any more profound motivation. Given that, as we shall see, later bishops used similar tactics to attempt to join the two congregations into a truly unified chapter, I think it is fair to suggest that a move towards greater unity was the motivation at this time as well. By forcing the canons of both groups to engage in large scale communal acts of artistic patronage, bishop Ragazzoni hoped that the canons of S. Alessandro would relinquish their desires for a new cathedral and be prepared to stay permanently at S. Vincenzo. Along these same lines, Colmuto Zanella has argued that by insisting that the tabernacle be so large bishop Ragazzoni hoped that the incongruity of its scale with the tiny space of S. Vincenzo's choir would propel the canons towards a proper completion of the cathedral fabric.\textsuperscript{100} Bolstering this argument is the fact that the bishop was himself strongly committed to completing the fabric but died before anything very substantial could be carried out.\textsuperscript{101}

The commitment of both Cornaro and Ragazzoni to the idea of a unified chapter also had a tridentine aspect to it. Contemporary histories of the local church all agreed that when the basilica alessandrina was founded ca. 300 it housed the city's only cathedral chapter. When S. Vincenzo was founded in the tenth century, its cathedral canons came there as an offshoot of the original chapter. The existence of two congregations of canons, therefore, was an artifact of the middle ages and did not represent the condition of the church in its earliest days. The desire to return the church to its early roots, to rid it of

\textsuperscript{100} Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{101} The evidence of his commitment is found in Bonetti, Specchio, pp. 79-80, but given that this work is highly celebratory of the bishop's contributions it is not a very reliable source. According to Bonetti, Ragazzoni constructed a pulpit, donated three pairs of silver candlesticks, modified the arch that marked the entrance into the choir, moved the organ, built a new cantoria in the choir, and repaired the windows and enclosure of the suoeto beneath the choir.
anomalies contingent on later historical circumstances, was a very strong current of tridentine reform. In this way, the joining of the two congregations of canons at S. Vincenzo should be seen as a goal driven by the intersection of the bishops's tridentine and local agendas.

7. Changes to S. Vincenzo, 1561-1600: The Entrance Portal

In spite of his failure to push forward a comprehensive rebuilding of S. Vincenzo, bishop Ragazzoni was able to initiate other major projects besides the tabernacle. He pushed forward, for instance, the construction of a new monumental entrance portal for the cathedral in 1581. The execution of this project marked, I shall argue, a new phase in the relationship of the canons of S. Alessandro with the church of S. Vincenzo and a success in Ragazzoni's policy of promoting unity through the patronage of artistic projects. At this point it appears that the canons were no longer just biding their time in the expectation of a new basilica alessandrina, but actively seeking to graft at least some of their identity onto S. Vincenzo.

During the fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century building campaign very little was done to articulate the facade of the Duomo. It is likely, for instance, that none of Filarete's highly decorative facade treatment was ever executed.\(^{102}\) (fig. 4) In 1581, the chapter elected deputies responsible for overseeing the construction of a new main entrance portal.\(^{103}\) The Acts of Borromeo's 1575 visitation had decreed that within two months a portal of sculpted stone was to

\(^{102}\) Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 156.

\(^{103}\) CAP 158, Acta Ottolini, fol. 166, 26 December 1581, election of deputies to the fabric "cum coepta fabrica Ianua Ecclesiae adhuc imperfecta remaneat et eis uti instructis ad eam perficiendum opus esse quibus stantibus." The idea of rebuilding the portal was probably not new, however, since on 27 November 1573 the canons of S. Alessandro paid for "assi de la portella nova per la porta maggiore," and in 1571 payments had been made "per far commadar la scala della porta grande della chiesa," suggesting an awareness of the need to rebuild this part of the church, CAP 572, Expensae (1508-1594).
be built for the main entranceway to the church. As with the tabernacle project, this directive may have provided the impetus needed to begin work, but in this case the drive to see the unification of the two congregations was of even greater significance, impacting on the actual form of the portal itself.

The facade of S. Vincenzo was not altered during the late-seventeenth-century rebuilding and remained essentially in its sixteenth-century form until 1880. For this reason, nineteenth-century images document the appearance of the portal as constructed following 1581. (figs. 9, 10) In both images the accurate depiction of S. Maria Maggiore in the background suggests that they reliably record the form of the cathedral portal. Both show a pedimented entranceway flanked by two pairs of Tuscan columns standing on fairly tall pedestals. To each side of this principal doorway were simple rectangular openings.

Most significantly, the columns used in this portal came from the demolished basilica alessandrina. Such re-use of architectural remains was intended to establish continuity with the distant past. At new St. Peter's in Rome, for instance, columns from the Constantinian basilica were incorporated into the decoration of the crossing piers where they acted as a physical sign of the new structure's connectedness with its Early Christian foundation. The situation in Bergamo was rather different, however, in that the architectural fragments in question were not incorporated into a renewed basilica alessandrina, but applied to the long standing rival of this church, S. Vincenzo.

The specific origin of the columns used for the new portal is revealed in a 1582 document recording a protest made by the canons of S. Alessandro before the city council over the appropriation of these columns. The Misericordia, the city-wide confraternity that ruled S. Maria Maggiore, had been given permission

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104 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p.118, "Ianua maior ecclesiae mensium duorum spatio construatur ex lapidibus sculptis, atque laboratis r.mi d. episcopi expensis iam ad id paratis."
by the city in 1573 to use some of the columns that had been rescued from the
basilica alessandrina during its demolition.\textsuperscript{105} In 1582, the canons of S.
Alessandro protested that they in fact were the rightful owners of these columns
and that nobody else could have the use of them. The passage of almost ten
years between the initial granting of permission and the protest by the canons of
S. Alessandro is hard to explain, but perhaps the Misericordia only made the 1573
decision known to the canons of S. Alessandro in response to their 1581 use of
the columns at the entrance of S. Vincenzo. In this way, the protest by the
canons of S. Alessandro came in response to the claims of the Misericordia.

On one level this was an economic dispute concerning the jurisdiction
over objects with a straightforward monetary value, but some of the columns
had been used for the portal at S. Vincenzo, and all had a role in preserving the
memory of S. Alessandro and promoting his cult.

It would seem to us [the canons of S. Alessandro] that if they [the columns] were
taken away in order to give some of them to others they would be
doing great wrong to us, especially since we have need of them also to
serve at the shared church of S. Vincenzo where mercy, the divine
goodness, still lives, and where is preserved the memory and cult of the
glorious martyr S. Alessandro, common advocate and protector under
whose glorious insignia this magnificent city has always happily battled,
having from the beginning chosen for its coat of arms the image of this
famous saint.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} CAP 615, \textit{Atti di causa}, fols. 47-49, 27 April 1582, copy of the text presented to the city council.
"Essendosi stati levati per li Mag.ci Pressidenti della Misericordia alcuni marmi di ragione di S.
Alessandro, e con questa occasione pervenuta a nostra notitia di una parte presa già in questo
Maggior Conseglìo fin sotto li 13 di maggio del 1573 ad instanza et supplicazione delli detti Mag.ci
Pressidenti in materia, che a loro fossero concesse alcune colonne, et pietre di detta chiesa di S.
Alessandro et di sua ragione se bene altrimente si narra in detta supplica, la qual parte sicome non
è mai stata essequita, anzi in effetto rottà, et revocata per esser statte dette colonne convertite in
altro uso, et poste in opera nella portu nova del Duomo."

\textsuperscript{106} CAP 615, \textit{Atti di causa}, fols. 47-49, 27 April 1582, "parerebbe a noi, che quando ci fossero levate
di mano per farne dono ad altri gran torto ci farebbero specialmente havendone noi bisogno, anco per
servitio della commune Chiesa di S. Vincenzo, nella quale mercè la divina Buontà vive tuttavia, et
si conserva la memoria, et il culto del glorioso martire S. Alessandro Commu’ Avocato, e protettore,
sotto la cui gloriosa insegna questa Mag.ca Città felicemente ha militato sempre, havendo sino da
principio elletta per sua arma l'effigie di questo inclito santo."
Interestingly, the author of this text has elided to a certain extent the distinction between S. Alessandro the saint and the church that had formerly housed his relics. The physical remains of the basilica alessandrina, through their use in the portal of S. Vincenzo, were being used to establish the second church as a cult site of S. Alessandro. Indeed, the columns had become in a certain sense coextensive with the remains of the saint himself, transforming them into something approaching relics to be venerated.

This portal is the first example at S. Vincenzo of an attempt to manufacture a permanent link between that church and the cult and canons of S. Alessandro. From the document quoted above it appears that the columns were, in spite of the threat from the Misericordia, owned by the canons of S. Alessandro. It would thus be fair to conclude that even if the bishop initiated or promoted the work, as plausibly suggested in the seventeenth-century biography of Ragazzoni, the canons of S. Alessandro must have played an important role in the decision to use their own columns. Given that these canons had habitually resisted making contributions to the fabric it may at first seem strange that they should have permitted the use of some of the precious remains of their former church towards a new portal. But this project had little parallel with previous ones in that it was not blandly communal. The rebuilding of the choir and making of the tabernacle both did nothing to forward the construction of an identification of the canons of S. Alessandro with the church of S. Vincenzo.

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107 Bonetti, Specchio, p. 80, suggests, in fact, that Ragazzoni was responsible for the entire project, but given the ownership of the columns by the canons of S. Alessandro, that is not possible.

108 The building work on the portal seems to have been financed by both congregations of canons. Payments from the accounts of the general chapter are recorded in CAP 573, Expensae (1569-1599), for 1581. There is evidence, however, that the canons of S. Alessandro may have played a particularly important role. In 1590, a notice from CAP 572, Expensae (1508-1594), the accounts of Lattantio Bonghi, a canon of S. Alessandro, show payments to Guglielmo Beroa, also a canon of that congregation, "per tanti pagati da lui a m.ro Felice per i cerchij di ferro posti alle pilastrate della porta grande et per sua fattura." Beroa was also paid for having contributed to work on the two doors flanking the central entrance.
The portal constituted, by contrast, a grafting onto S. Vincenzo of objects that associated that church with the cult of S. Alessandro, with his demolished basilica, and with the canons. The construction of this portal marks, I propose, a new stage in the relationship of the canons of S. Alessandro with the church of S. Vincenzo. Although the construction of the portal was probably an initiative of bishop Ragazzoni, and part of his programme aimed at integrating the two groups of canons and promoting the rebuilding of the church, it is significant that the canons of S. Alessandro cooperated with the bishop. Since Ragazzoni was not in a position to coerce such cooperation, his plan must have in some way corresponded to the needs of the canons of S. Alessandro. At this juncture, instead of simply biding their time in residence there, these canons now sought to project their own identity onto the fabric and to transform it, at least partially, into a provisional basilica alessandrina.

It is significant as well that the precious columns of the basilica alessandrina seem always to have figured prominently in descriptions of the building. Pre' Zuanne di San Foca writing in 1536, for example, mentions the "very beautiful columns of several colours which are worth a mine of gold," but even though he only devotes a few lines to the description of the church. Calvi, writing in the late seventeenth century, also mentions that there were some "precious columns," demonstrating that identification of these columns with the basilica alessandrina remained strong long after its demolition. This connexion may also have been forwarded by the specific form adopted for the entrances. Although these did not imitate the monumental two storey arcaded loggia of the basilica alessandrina, their arrangement was quite similar to the

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110 Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, p. 70.
entrances of the ancient church that lay behind the porch; both featured a central pedimented doorway flanked by two smaller relatively unadorned rectangular entrances.111 (figs. 9, 10, 11) Further to this local association was the fact that such square doorways were considered particular to Early Christian architecture. In his Instructiones, for instance, Borromeo said that church entrances "should not be arched... but square, as seen in the more ancient basilicas."112 The columns used for the portal to S. Vincenzo, in conjunction with the disposition of the doorways would, therefore, have strongly evoked memories of the demolished church. In many ways, therefore, this use of architectural fragments as relics at S. Vincenzo finds a close analogy in the incorporation of columns from the Constantinian basilica in the crossing piers of the new St. Peter's. In both cases the objects acted as physical signs of continuity with the distant past, but in Bergamo the past evoked was intended to be an agent of change in the present.

Even though the re-use of the columns from the basilica alessandrina may have signalled a movement towards the unity of the cathedral chapter, other events suggest how restricted this really was. The second of the decrees directed towards S. Vincenzo that Borromeo issued during his 1575 visitation regarded the relics belonging to the canons of S. Alessandro. According to this document the relics that had been translated from the basilica alessandrina (along with those of Saints Fermo and Rustico, recently brought to the cathedral on Borromeo's orders) were to be moved from their present location on the third altar to the left of the entrance to the scurolo, the subterranean church beneath the choir that had come into being when the floor level of the choir was made to

111 For the dating of this image to 1610, see above n 28. The same engraving was reproduced in Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, opposite p. 70.
match that of the nave.\footnote{Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 1, p.109, "Sanctorum corpora e cathedrali ecclesia S. Alexandri, necnon ex ecclesia monialium Ss. Firmi et Rustici huc translata, intusque altare S. Sebastiani recondita, intra altae scuroli.. reponatur." On the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico, see chapter two, pp. 77-90. It is odd that Borromeo should have decreed the movement of the relics to such a marginal location in the church. At his titular church in Rome, S. Prassede, he created for its prized relics two niches in the triumphal arch preceding the choir. In the process, part of the mosaic decoration in that part of the church was lost, demonstrating the lengths he was willing to go to place these relics in a location where they would be most visible. On Borromeo and the cult of relics, see G. Miarelli Mariani, "Il 'cristianesimo primitivo' nella riforma cattolica e alcune incidenze sui monumenti del passato," in G. Spagnesi ed., \textit{L'Architettura a Roma e in Italia (1580-1621)}, \textit{Atti del XXIII Congresso di Storia dell'Architettura}, vol. 1, Rome, 1989, pp. 153-155. On the other hand, Borromeo's \textit{Instructiones} did include the option of locating relics in church crypts. See Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's \textit{Instructiones}," p. 207.} In spite of its importance this decree was not carried out. The reason for this inaction could not have been because of a lack of sympathy for Borromeo's goals, as amply demonstrated by the many reforms that were executed. It must have been that this further translation did not intersect with the aims of the groups required to carry it out. Although I know of no documents in which the possibility was debated, it is likely that the canons of S. Alessandro would have resisted its effectuation because it would have implied too strongly the merging of their distinct and separate identity with that of the church of S. Vincenzo. To graft their identity onto the façade of that church was one thing, but to place their precious relics in the crypt was quite another. The canons of S. Alessandro likely felt that the movement of their relics away from their altar in the nave would have suggested that they no longer claimed them entirely as their own possessions, thus implying a much more permanent union of the chapter than they desired. Bishop Ragazzoni had made progress, but in the end never achieved his goal of healing the historic divisions in the Bergamask church.

The changes to the fabric of S. Vincenzo described in the preceding pages could reductively be imagined as direct responses to the recommendations of Carlo Borromeo. This line of reasoning, however, depends on the idea that
tridentine reforms were applied authoritatively by a monolithic central church, and denies the possibility that these reforms sometimes met with a positive reception at the local level. As we have seen, however, the choice of which reforms to carry out, as well as their particular significance were conditioned and transformed by the local situation.

Other scholars have characterised differently the conflicts operant in the implementation of tridentine decrees. Bart Thurber's work on the late sixteenth-century reconstruction of Vercelli cathedral, for instance, has shown that the central conflict preventing the implementation of an ambitious rebuilding plan was between the bishop and the cathedral canons.114 The bishop of Vercelli, Cardinal Guido Ferrero, was an advocate of increased centralisation and imitation of Roman models. He promoted a plan for rebuilding the cathedral that was based on projects for St. Peter's in Rome. The canons opposed the implementation of this plan, according to Thurber's argument, as a sign of their resistance to the bishop's centralising impulse. Thurber thus sees the conflict in terms of centre versus periphery, of local churches defending themselves against a Rome-based homogenisation. By contrast, the study of the Bergamo cathedral I have presented above shows that, in this case at least, the implementation of Counter-Reformation dictates cannot be seen in such dialectical terms. The essential conflict was not between a pro-Roman bishop and his recalcitrant cathedral canons, but between the canons of S. Alessandro and all the other groups involved, some local, some not. These contrasting conclusions serve to

114 T.B. Thurber, "Architecture and Religious Conflict in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy: Pellegrino Tibaldi's Planned Reconstruction of the Vercelli Cathedral," Ph.D dissertation, Harvard University, 1994, especially p. 29, "Any study of the prolonged or incomplete realization of cathedral rebuilding projects, therefore, must be examined in the light of the general resistance to the application of Tridentine reforms."

T.B. Thurber, "Pellegrino Tibaldi and the Rebuilding of Cathedrals in Post-Tridentine Italy: The Planned Reconstruction of the Duomo of Vercelli," Studia Borromaeica 11 (1997), pp. 153-166. In this latter work, Thurber also attempts to extend the model developed for Vercelli to encompass cathedral rebuilding projects throughout northern Italy.
warn those who might seek to use the conclusions of a particular study to make
generalisations about the overall picture. More such studies need to be carried
out before scholars can develop a general picture of the conflicting forces
involved in the local implementation of tridentine decrees.
Chapter Two
Visual Polemics at the Cathedral, 1600-1630

1. Introduction

By the early years of the seventeenth century, it had become painfully apparent both that S. Vincenzo was inadequate to the needs of the general chapter, and that the 1561 concord between the two congregations did not provide a useful framework for financing its fabric. The canons of S. Alessandro would either have to leave S. Vincenzo and construct a second cathedral in fulfillment of the promise made in the 1561 agreement, or come to a permanent arrangement with the canons of S. Vincenzo. In 1614, exactly such a deal was brokered by the bishop of Bergamo. According to its terms, the distinction between the two congregations was to be eliminated, and the chapter and cathedral were to be dedicated to S. Alessandro alone. How this deal came about and why it quickly disintegrated is the subject of the first section of this chapter. It sets the stage for the bulk of the chapter, which centres on the patronage of the two groups of canons following the breakdown of the 1614 agreement.

In this period of uncertainty each congregation commissioned objects that played to its strengths relative to the other group of canons. A silver antependium made for the canons of S. Vincenzo, for instance, proclaimed that these canons had traditionally held the most important office in the chapter, the arcidiacono. Almost in reply, the canons of S. Alessandro had an altarpiece painted which asserted that in the primitive church this office was held by one of their own number, and that at this time the canons of S. Vincenzo did not even exist. Relics also played an important role in the conflict. The canons of S. Vincenzo were disadvantaged relative to their rivals because they could claim no important relics, so around this time they began to associate themselves with the
emerging cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico, two local Early Christian saints. The canons of S. Alessandro, of course, had the relics of Bergamo's patron saint and did not need to construct new cults. Still, they did have to respond to doubts raised by the canons of S. Vincenzo over the authenticity of their relics. The objects they commissioned around this time were aimed at putting to rest these doubts and reestablishing the preeminence of both S. Alessandro and the eponymous congregation of canons. To this end they ordered the reworking of a venerable silver processional cross, and commissioned a new cycle of paintings dedicated to S. Alessandro. This last work, along with a column erected on the site of the demolished basilica alessandrina, related to another issue of paramount concern to these canons, the need for a suitable replacement for their ancient church. These objects have not been grouped together in this way before, and in no instance has there been any systematic analysis of their relationship with this volatile context. Based on research in the Bergamask archives, the story that emerges in this chapter is thus substantially new.

How did this complex web of local conflicts relate to broader changes taking place in Italy at the time? The late sixteenth century had witnessed a great increase in interest in the early Church and in Early Christian saints. The reform of the Church that was taking place at this time was in large part predicated on a return to what were considered the ideals of the Early Christian period. The celebration of Early Christian saints in Bergamo could reductively be interpreted as being part of a broader trend. In this chapter, I argue that the way the phenomenon manifested itself in Bergamo can only be understood if purely local factors are assessed alongside broader cultural movements. Both were operant in the desire to commission works of art dedicated to the Early Christian saints of Bergamo. These two interpretive models are in fact decisively interwoven. The new importance of Early Christian saints meant that the battle
between the two congregations could be carried out visually as a conflict of cults. Had this type of saint not been valorised by changes to the broad set of contemporary cultural assumptions, neither group of canons would have used them as the linchpin in their strategy to disempower their rivals. Although no doubt also motivated by straightforward devotion, the canons were able to channel the new power of their saints into the purely local struggle for legitimacy.

2. Projects for the Cathedral and the Failed Attempts at Joining the Two Congregations, 1600-1615

Faced with a choice between building a new basilica alessandrina, and encouraging a union between the two congregations, the bishops in this period took the second option. It avoided the practical problem of having to finance two cathedral building projects, and its realisation would put an end to centuries of division in the Bergamask church. Understandably, however, the path to achieving a satisfactory new agreement between the two congregations was full of obstacles. Some of these centred on purely economic issues, others on the dedication of the new communal church, but perhaps most important of all was the reluctance of the canons of S. Alessandro to abandon their dream of an independent cathedral.

The drive towards a new union came after a period of renewed efforts to complete the cathedral. In both 1601 and 1602, for instance, bishop Giovanni Battista Milani (1592-1611) donated 1000 scudi to the fabric.1 This did not, however, stimulate any further fundraising until 1610, when on 27 March the city council voted to make an annual donation of 500 scudi on the condition that

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1 ACVB, Consorzio della Fabbrica del Duomo I, 1, Registro Istrumenti di censi, investiture, accordi di fabbrica, testamenti ed altri istromente - 1601-1716, fol. 1, 26 March 1601, bishop Milani deposits 1000 gold scudi at the Ospedale Maggiore of Bergamo for the completion of S. Vincenzo; ibid., fol. 5v, 1 February 1602, bishop Milani deposits another 1000 gold scudi.
the chapter and bishop Milani come up with matching funds.² By 3 April 1610, the challenge had been met by both bishop and general chapter, but at the same time the canons made very clear that their new efforts did not and would not violate the terms of the 1561 act of concord.³ The continued and firm commitment of the canons of S. Alessandro to the 1561 act was evidenced by their sponsoring its publication at this exact time.⁴ The image of the demolished basilica alessandrina that accompanied this publication (fig. 11) must have clearly signalled that, in spite of their support for the city-led initiative to rebuild S. Vincenzo, the idea of a separate church for the canons of S. Alessandro was not to be abandoned.

The canons of S. Alessandro were not alone in their reluctance to proceed with the rebuilding. Some canons of S. Vincenzo were also hesitant since enlarging the choir came at the expense of a number of their houses. The affected canons would not be compelled to contribute towards the fabric,⁵ but the lack of adequate compensation for the cost of these houses would subsequently be used by the canons of S. Vincenzo as the basis for their opposition to the rebuilding of the cathedral. In spite of these difficulties, a new fund, the

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² BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 52, fols. 27v-28v, 27 March 1610, the council elected deputies with the ability to "spendere ogni anno nella continuazione d’essa fabbrica scudi cinquecento dell’ avanzo che si faranno de’ publici denari di questa magnifica comunità, mentre però che mons. reverendissimo Vescovo e detti signori canonici diano tanti scudi ogni anno si che per questa comunità si concorra solamente per la terza parte di tutta la spesa, oltre le oblationi che volontariamente verranno fatte."
³ CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti dall’anno 1567 all’anno 1630, fols. 230-231, 3 April 1610, the minutes of this meeting record that the bishop had by this date already agreed to the annual donation of 500 scudi.
⁴ CAP 574, Expensae (1600-1640), payments for the publication of the act of concord and the 8 December 1561 papal proclamation are recorded for 4 and 8 February 1610.
⁵ CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti, fols. 230-231, 3 April 1610.
"Fabbrica Nuova" was established in 1610 as part of the campaign to rebuild S. Vincenzo.6

This period in the planned reconstruction of the cathedral was dominated by the figure of Giovan Battista Moiolo, the archiprete of the congregation of S. Vincenzo from 1588 to 1630. Although a canon of S. Vincenzo, Moiolo did not follow a particular party line and was impatient with any impediment to progress on the cathedral. He seems to have been involved in all of the decisions regarding the form of the fabric, and was willing to support its progress with significant donations. The extent of Moiolo's devotion to the rebuilding is evidenced in his book Quattro Dialoghi intorno la Fabrica del Domo, & dell'unione delle due Congregazioni della Cathedrale di Bergamo, published in Milan in 1617. In this rather unusual work, the characters in the various dialogues discuss many specific design proposals, but the lack of both illustrations and a coherent narrative make it a problematic source. In spite of these difficulties, Moiolo has provided significant insight into the form and sequence of the projects for the cathedral, as well as into the reasons underlying their failure. I owe the untangling of the complex web of evidence offered by Moiolo and the surviving architectural drawings to the work of Graziella Colmuto Zanella. My purpose here, however, is not to analyse the form taken by the series of projects, but to assess the impact these undertakings had on the relations between the two congregations of canons.

New plans for S. Vincenzo were commissioned immediately following the 1610 joint commitment to finance its reconstruction. As in all previous attempts, the success of the endeavour depended on a consensus amongst the

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6 This fund is recorded in an eighteenth-century document inserted in CAP 229, Atti della Fabbrica (1609-1780). In it the initial donation of the chapter is mentioned along with those of a variety of individual donors.
bishop, the two congregations of canons and the city government, since not one of these entities commanded sufficient resources to carry out such an ambitious project on its own. In 1611, the Vicentine architect Vincenzo Scamozzi was called to Bergamo to develop plans for the completion of the cathedral, as well as for a new town hall. According to Moiolo, a new design was required because the existing one, possibly by Palladio, was flawed; the architect had apparently not been furnished with the correct dimensions. Scamozzi presented his plans, now lost, but no construction took place at this time. Moiolo states that the plan involved the lengthening of the choir to the east, blocking the public street running north south in that location. (fig. 6) Scamozzi's design, employing as it did the nave as already constructed, was not equal to the ambitions of Moiolo. In 1612, he entirely rethought the proposed work on the cathedral and advocated instead a comprehensive rebuilding. To overcome the restrictions of the site Moiolo proposed that the new cathedral be built perpendicular to the existing nave, along a north south axis. He convinced the deputies to the cathedral fabric that this was the best option and in 1613 commissioned a plan from a pair of Milanese architects, Lorenzo Binago and Francesco Maria Richino. (fig. 12) Their plan was for a structure much larger than ever before contemplated for this project but, even though it met with the approval of bishop Giovanni Emo (1611-1622), both groups of canons were strongly opposed. The canons of S. Vincenzo complained that too many of their houses would have to be demolished, while the canons of S. Alessandro lamented the cost of constructing such a huge

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8 For suggestions regarding the form of Scamozzi's plan see G. Colmuto Zanella, in B. Cassinelli, L. Pagnoni and G. Colmuto Zanella, Il Duomo di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1991, p. 157. See also, Moiolo, Dialoghi, dialogue 1, p. 17.
church. In a document presented to the bishop and deputies to the fabric on 17 September 1613, the canons of S. Alessandro clarified their position. Realising that the new plan was going to cost much more than they had anticipated in their 1610 commitment to help fund the rebuilding, they demanded that two conditions be fulfilled before agreeing to offer more money. First, the new church would have to be dedicated to both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro. If a dispute arose over which of the two saints should have precedence, the canons of S. Alessandro suggested that the Holy See mediate. Second, the financial separation of the two congregations agreed to in 1561 was to be maintained, with the relics translated from the basilica alessandrina remaining under the independent control of the canons of S. Alessandro.

Not discouraged by this lack of support, Moiolo pushed for an even more splendid church, resulting in a design executed between 1613 and 1614 by the Brescian architect Agostino Avanzi. (fig. 13) This plan called for a yet larger church, with the facade facing south and the nave of the old cathedral acting as a

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9 CAP 229, Atti della Fabbrica, 17 September 1613, "Hora tratandosi non piu da proseguire detta fabrica, ma da cominciare da fondamenta una nova Cathedrale in piu ampla et laudabil forma, ricercata essa R.da Congregatione havendo innanzi gli occhi principalmente l'onore et il culto divino, et insieme la veneracione delle S.te Relique d'essa R.da Congregatione in detta Cathedrale custodito di novo prontamente; si essibisse di concorrere insieme con R.da Congregatione di S.to Vincenzo alla spesa di essa nova fabrica nella ratha porzione, et condizioni contenute in essa parte presa, non volendo perhora obligarsi a magior summa per qual si voglia occasione, benche grave, per cagion di detta fabrica, piu di quello che nella detta parte è stata specialmente determinato, aggiunte però queste condizioni, et non altrimenti. Prima che la nova Cathedrale si debba dedicare sotto l'invocatione dell'uno et l'altro S.to nostro protettore, et in caso fosse posto difficolta sopra la prelacione tra detti S.ti Protettori, si facia ricorso alla S.ta Sede Apostolica alla quale s'intenda ex nunc per parte de ambe le detti congregazioni rimessa la decisione quale de detti S.ti Protettori debba haver il primo luogo. Non dovendosi tratanto che seguirà detta dedicaione porre, o fare alcun segno di Prelacione tra l'uno, et l'altro S.to Protettore in detta fabrica et chiesa. Seconda che per qual si voglia attione da farsi per occasione di questa fabrica non s'intenda fatto pregiudicio alcuno al Capitolo de S.to Alessandro ne alle sue ragioni contenute nelle concordie fatte altre volte con il Capitolo de S.to Vincenzo, massime nell'ultima seguita l'anno 1561 di modo che sia sempre riservata la liberta et separacione della mensa, et l'altare, la custodia delle reliquie sante, et l'altre cose contenute in essa concordia, la qual per magior chiarezza sara di novo qui sotto registrata, come fu fatto nella sudetta parte presa."
sort of monumental entranceway into the western aisle.\textsuperscript{10} As part of this ambitious programme Moiolo helped found the Consorzio della Fabbrica del Duomo in August of 1614.\textsuperscript{11}

This flurry of activity coincided with an attempt by bishop Giovanni Emo to achieve a union of the two congregations that would supplant the troublesome 1561 act of concord. Like his predecessors, he was doubtless prompted both by a desire to return to the primitive unity of the two chapters, and by the fact that the 1561 concord was such a strong impediment to the rebuilding of the cathedral. On 26 March 1614 all parties agreed to a comprehensive act of union whose explicit goal was to construct the cathedral.\textsuperscript{12}

According to this document, the two congregations would cease to exist as separate entities and would fuse into a single chapter with a single dedication, to S. Alessandro. The cathedral was likewise to be dedicated to S. Alessandro, whereas S. Vincenzo was to be commemorated only in a chapel, albeit the second

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} For details on Avanzi's plan, see Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 161-164.
\item \textsuperscript{11} CAP 227, Libro del Consorzio della Fabbrica del Duomo (1614-1724), fols. 1-9v, 14 August 1614; D. Calvi, Effemeride sagro profana di quanto di memorabile sia successo in Bergamo sua diocesi et territorio, vol. 2, Milan, 1679 (reprinted Bologna, 1974), p. 572; the original act of foundation in in Archivio di Stato di Bergamo, Notarile, G.B. Averara, 7594, 14 August 1614. Moiolo's co-founders were Paolo Acerbis and Alessandro Tiraboschi, both canons of the cathedral. Milani, the former bishop of Bergamo who had donated so much to the fabric was included as an honorary founder. The regents of this organisation were to be elected by the city council, but the founders had the right to remain until their deaths. At the foundation of the Consorzio Moiolo gave 2000 scudi, and ensured that his influence there would continue by including a clause in the Statutes that essentially gave him complete control: "Et sia in libertà de sudetto Mons. Arciprete mentre viverà mutar et aggiungere capitoli et ordini a detto consortio ... et massime se non seguissere l'unione."
\item \textsuperscript{12} CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri ab anno 1608 usque 1634, fol. 23, 12 March 1614, first discussion of the proposed union in the records of the meetings of the congregation of S. Alessandro. The driving force behind the initiative is given as bishop Emo; CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 23, 26 March 1614, announcement of the instrument of union between two congregations: 'Convocatu' fuit caplu' generale in aula episcopali coram Ill.mo et R.mo dd. lo. Emo digniss.o antistiti nostro ubi publicatu' fuit instrumentu' unionis congregationis S. Vincentij cum congregatione S. Alex.i et statutu' de consensu... usq congreg. ut cathedralis ecclia' nova construatur ecclie. et canonicae S. Vincentij sub invocat'e et titulo S. Alex. martiris cum quibusda' conditionibus de quibus latius in d.o instro' rogato...; For the text of the agreement, see CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione e Concordia dei Capitoli e Cattedrali di S. Vincenzo e S. Alessandro, unnumbered document dated 26 March 1614; Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 1, p. 361.
\end{itemize}
most important one next to the choir. Following the completion of the cathedral fabric, the endowments and all financial affairs of the two formerly separate congregations were to be joined together. Although five canons of S. Vincenzo objected to the terms of the union, Moiolo was instrumental in convincing the remainder. The agreement was made official, pending approval from Rome.

The city council hailed the event, but already by the end of the same year the union was beginning to fail. The first cracks in the agreement appeared in December of 1614, and by January of the next year the canons of S. Alessandro were seriously considering a move to the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna, a proposal with enormous repercussions for that church. On 3 February 1615, the union was formally dissolved in a meeting of the general chapter. The Congregation of Cardinals in Rome had failed to approve the suggested changes, proposing instead that the new cathedral be dedicated to both saints, not just to S. Alessandro. The decision from Rome was certainly an important factor in the breakdown of consensus, but the initial agreement itself was, as we shall see, an extremely fragile compromise.

At issue were problems of financing and corporate identity. Superficially, the union would have been a clear victory for the canons of S. Alessandro; the rebuilding of the basilica alessandrina was to be realised, and the canons of S. Vincenzo were to be symbolically eliminated from the urban landscape. Why would the canons of S. Vincenzo ever have agreed to such a deal? Part of the answer lies in economics. The canons of S. Alessandro had always been

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13 CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo contro la città di Bergamo riguardo ai corpi santi del Duomo (1438-1715), fols. 79-81v, 12 April 1614, transcription of the city council records.
16 CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione e Concordia, 3 February 1615; see also Colmuto Zanella, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 152.
reluctant to give up the economic independence guaranteed by the 1561 concord because their incomes were higher than those of S. Vincenzo. Any agreement where resources were pooled would decrease the earnings of the canons of S. Alessandro while increasing those of S. Vincenzo. To eliminate this disparity the 1614 act of union specified that basic incomes would eventually be equal for all canons, but that all current members of the congregation of S. Alessandro would enjoy higher incomes until their deaths. As a result of protest by the canons of S. Vincenzo, however, this stipulation had to be dropped. A second economic issue was that many of the canons of S. Vincenzo were slated to lose their houses in the demolitions for the new cathedral. The act of union provided for some compensation to these dispossessed canons, but five of the twenty six protested the union, showing that the difficulty had not been resolved. Despite the problems of this minority, most canons of S. Vincenzo looked to gain financially from any union with the canons of S. Alessandro.

These economic priorities were linked to the issue of the dedication. In 1613, the canons of S. Alessandro had requested that their saint be included in the dedication of the new cathedral, but insisted at the same time that the

\[\text{17 \ The evidence that the difference in wealth was a major issue comes from documents written later in the century. A document from 1684 from the canons of S. Alessandro regarding the possibility of a new union relates a history of the failed 1614 union: "E perché le distribuzioni quotidiane e beni del Capitolo di S. Alessandro erano più pugni di quelle del Capitolo di S. Vincenzo, si convenne tra le altre condizioni, che dovessero li canonici di S. Alessandro godere separatamente, sino che vivessero, ma per opposizione d'alcuni canonici di S. Vincenzo detto instrumento non hebbe effetto," transcribed in E. Camozzi, Le visite 'ad limina Apostolorum' dei vescovi di Bergamo (1590-1697), Bergamo, 1992, pp. 626-627; CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione e Concordia, "Informazione," a late seventeenth-century document regarding the union of the chapters; CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo, fols. 140-142, 16 April 1658, document written by the canons of S. Alessandro, transcribed from the filze of the city council. This document also records the fact that the 1614 canons of S. Alessandro gave up the privilege of maintaining their higher incomes until their deaths.}

\[\text{18 CAP 228, Atti della Fabbrica (1190-1559), in a document dated ca. 1615 and subsequent to the failure of the union, the canons of S. Alessandro promise to pay half the cost of the reconstruction of the canons's houses. The need to compensate adequately those canons whose houses were to be demolished was clearly an important issue; CAP 221, Atti dell'Unione e Concordia, "Informazione," shows that the houses of the canons remained a problem into the late seventeenth century.} \]
financial affairs of the two congregations remain separate. In the 1614 union they relinquished this cherished independence in exchange for the almost complete elimination of S. Vincenzo, thus returning the Church in Bergamo to what was imagined as its original configuration. According to almost all contemporary accounts, the canons of S. Alessandro had existed as the only cathedral canons in the city from the fourth century until bishop Adalberto established a second cathedral in the early tenth century. For the goal of being victorious over their long time rivals at S. Vincenzo, the canons of S. Alessandro were willing to give up independent control of their larger patrimony.

For the canons of S. Vincenzo, there was also the very strong commitment on the part of some, in particular Moiolo, to see the cathedral rebuilt. The lack of a workable agreement with the canons of S. Alessandro had impeded construction at S. Vincenzo for more than fifty years. The resulting frustration may well have made the canons of S. Vincenzo more willing to compromise. In the end, however, the combined incentives of financial gain and the complete rebuilding of the cathedral, were insufficient for the canons of S. Vincenzo. As it became clear that the union was collapsing, the canons of S. Vincenzo suggested that the financial merger should be accompanied by an equal dedication to both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro. The canons of S. Alessandro, however, were willing to agree to the double dedication only on the condition that the two patrimonies remained separate. The canons of S. Alessandro might have

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20 See chapter one, pp. 21-22.
21 CAP 160, *Acta Capituli S. Alexandri*, fol. 27, 31 January 1615, in a meeting of the canons of S. Alessandro it is mentioned that the canons of S. Vincenzo had on 24 January proclaimed that any new church should be "sub invocatione sanctum Alexandri et Vincentij."
22 CAP 229, *Atti della Fabbrica*, document of ca. 1615; CAP 221, *Atti dell’Unione e Concordia*, 3 February 1615, Jacobus Cararia and Gerardus Tertius, both canons of S. Alessandro, appeared before the canons of S. Vincenzo and presented a text recording a meeting of the canons of S. Alessandro from 31 January 1615 in which they agreed to the double dedication but not the unification of the patrimonies.
given up some of their economic predominance if the name S. Vincenzo was to be entirely eclipsed, but were most definitely not willing to do this if the cathedral was to have a double dedication. Although the union of the two chapters ostensibly collapsed because Rome insisted that the cathedral should have a double dedication, it is clear as well that the compromises made to achieve it were too great and that it was probably doomed from the outset.

3. The Canons of S. Vincenzo and Art Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 I: The Antependium Commission

How did artistic representations serve to articulate this complex political landscape? In the dispute between the canons described above, each group had distinct advantages over the other. The canons of S. Alessandro had control over the prestigious relics of their saint, as well as having more money than their counterparts. Although the canons of S. Vincenzo lacked important relics of their own, it was always a member of this congregation who filled the most important position within the general chapter: the arcidiacono. During the years around the failed union of 1614 the canons of S. Vincenzo sponsored works of art that attempted either to emphasise their relative strengths or rectify their weaknesses. The first side of this strategy was represented by a commission for a silver antependium while the second involved the promotion of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico, two local saints contemporary with S. Alessandro.

Around 1616, the canons of S. Vincenzo are recorded as overseeing the completion of a silver antependium for the cathedral.23 (fig. 14) The prominent inscription, "SODALITATIS / VINCENTII / SANCTII," loudly proclaims a

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23 CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 29, 21 April 1616, in a meeting of the canons of S. Alessandro, two canons of S. Vincenzo request money previously pledged for the silver figure of S. Alessandro on the antependium. Pagnoni, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 72, dates the work to the early seventeenth century, basing his conclusion on stylistic criteria. Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 3, p. 380, lists a "palliotto per l’altare pur massiccio con l’effigie de Santi Protettori." amongst the possessions of the canons of S. Vincenzo.
connexion with the canons of S. Vincenzo. In the traditional position of honour, on the right from the perspective of the alias, is a figure of S. Vincenzo, while a figure of S. Alessandro is relegated to the less prestigious left. This hierarchical reading is confirmed by the placement of "VINCENTII" at the top centre of the object. At one stage in its execution, however, the canons of S. Vincenzo must have envisioned the antependium project as a joint undertaking, since they requested payment from the canons of S. Alessandro for the figure of their saint. Although the document does not specify whether such a payment was ever made, it is safe to assume that, had this taken place, the canons of S. Vincenzo would not have claimed the work as entirely their own, a fact made so obvious by the inscription.

It is also significant that the intended destination of this antependium was likely the front of the cathedral's high altar. In addition to the full-length figures of the two principal saints, there was also a head above each of the four framing pilasters, representing SS. Fermo, Rustico, Procolo and Hestiera. The relics of the first three saints had formerly been located in the suburban convent of S. Fermo, but bishop Cornaro had suppressed that institution in 1575 and Carlo Borromeo, visiting in the same year, decreed that the relics preserved there should be translated to the cathedral. At the time of the antependium

24 See above, note 23.
25 CAP 246, Inventario di tutte le robe che si ritrovano nella sacrastia appartenute solo al R.mo Capitolo di S. Alessandro, 1639-, p. 91, an inventory of the silver in the cathedral treasury from 2 May 1701 places this silver antependium, which is described in detail, on the high altar. This evidence is, of course, of very late date, but it is quite possible that the "pallium argenteum" mentioned in a pastoral visitation of 1624, ACVB, VP 40, Cornelio, 1624, fol. 10, is to be identified with this antependium. The text of the visitation mentions that it could not be moved to allow for an inspection of the relics held in the high altar. The surviving antependium is quite monumental, so it is likely that this is the object to which the text of the visitation is referring.
26 Pagnoni, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 72.
27 In 1575, these relics were, according to the acts of the apostolic visitation, A.G. Roncalli, ed., Gli atti della visita apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), vol. 1, part 1, Florence, 1936, p. 67, placed on the same altar as the relics translated from the basilica alessandrina, but Borromeo
commission, these relics were located under the high altar of the cathedral.\textsuperscript{28} The representations of these saints on the altar frontal suggest, therefore, that it too was linked with the high altar.

The placement of the antependium in such a prominent position connected the implications of its iconography to the problem of the cathedral's dedication. The importance attached to S. Vincenzo in the antependium was not just an expression of that congregation's will to reestablish its visual presence following the collapse of the 1614 union, but a politically charged manifesto made significant by the timing of the commission. In 1615, both groups of canons agreed that the new cathedral should be dedicated to their two titular saints. The canons of S. Alessandro, however, refused to consider the union of the two patrimonyes desired by the canons of S. Vincenzo, and even went so far as to suggest that S. Alessandro should be the principal dedication, with the other saint as a distant second.\textsuperscript{29} By placing S. Vincenzo in the position of honour on the antependium, the canons of S. Vincenzo proclaimed that their saint was

\textsuperscript{28} Celestino Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadrripartita di Bergomo et suo territorio nato gentile, & rinato christiano}, vol. 2, Bergamo, 1617 (reprinted Bologna, 1969), p. 386, says that the relics were placed on the high altar in 1575, immediately following their translation, but this cannot be true since Carlo Borromeo records them as being placed temporarily on the same altar as the relics of brought from the \textit{basilica alessandrina} in 1561, Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 1, p. 67. They must have been moved from this altar to the high altar some time after 1575. On 28 December 1609, CAP 615, \textit{Atti di causa del capitolo}, fols. 67-68v, there was a city council meeting in which it is decided to spend money on the renovation of a chapel for SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo. This must mean that in 1609 there is at least the intention of moving the relics to an altar of their own. CAP 615, \textit{Atti di causa del capitolo}, vol. 73, 17 September 1611, official sanction was given to some readings to be read on the feast day of SS. Fermo and Rustico. This may have been associated with the move of the relics to the high altar where they were definitely located during their official recognition on 30 July 1611, CAP 618, \textit{Atti di causa intorno ai santi corpi 1715}, p. 14. The relics were also recorded as being under the high altar during the pastoral visitation of bishop Emo, ACVB, VP 38, Emo, 1612-13, p. 181.

\textsuperscript{29} CAP 228, \textit{Atti della Fabbrica}, document of ca. 1615, "Che la detta nova chiesa da fabricarsi in catedrale sia intitolata sotto l'invocazione dell'uno et l'altro Protettore con la prelazione di S. Alessandro per maggiormente honorare le sue sante reliquie conforme alla decisione della sacra Congregatione di Roma senza pregiudicio della separatione delle mense.."
worthy of being placed on an equal footing with S. Alessandro. Significantly, though, the canons of S. Vincenzo did not decide to eliminate S. Alessandro altogether. Their goal was not to banish the patron saint, whose relics constituted a prestigious addition to the church, but to accommodate him and his troublesome canons within an acceptable hierarchical framework.

In this respect, the relationship of the figures on the antependium with the clerics in the choir behind added further commentary by emphasising the hierarchical priority of the canons of S. Vincenzo. Traditionally, the bishop was enthroned on his cathedra directly behind the high altar. To his right sat the *arcidiacono* of S. Vincenzo and to his left the *preposito* of S. Alessandro, an arrangement that conferred much treasured ritual precedence upon the canons of S. Vincenzo. The placement of these representatives corresponded to that of the statues of their saints on the antependium; S. Vincenzo was on the right and S. Alessandro on the left. The antependium thus reminded viewers that the canons of S. Vincenzo had always held the most important office in the general chapter.

Through its position at the high altar, this silver antependium would inevitably have been seen in concert with the similarly decorated altar housing the relics translated from the *basilica alessandrina*. Although this work does not survive and the contemporary description of it is extremely vague, the work did feature figural representations, possibly including S. Alessandro, and maybe some of the other translated saints as well. On the other hand, the range of its imagery almost certainly did not encompass S. Vincenzo.

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30 ACVB, VP 40, Cornelio, 1624, fol. 69.
31 CAP 245, *Oggetti di chiesa in S. Alessandro e S. Vincenzo Bergamo*, 1593, 1617, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1589, p. 35. This frontal is recorded in an inventory of the silver objects possessed by the canons of S. Alessandro first written in 1593, but updated through the the early years of the seventeenth century. "Uno palio, seu pala sempre affisso all'altare di corpi santi con figure di rilevo di argento et pietre finiss.o in luogo di gioie, antichissimo con la sua tavola che si copre con le chiavette."
Considered in conjunction with one another, the two altar decorations would have been perceived as expressing the contrasting political visions of the two congregations. This contrast was highlighted in an account of bishop Emo's first ceremonial visit to the cathedral on 4 October 1611. Upon entering the church, the bishop first went to adore the relics of S. Alessandro and the other saints translated from the basilica alessandrina, before proceeding to the high altar.\(^{32}\) The acts of the canons of S. Alessandro which document this event are usually extremely laconic, referring only very rarely to specific liturgies. This event was, therefore, likely thought of as a reversal of usual practice, and was probably accorded such prominence because it signalled a ritual victory for the canons of S. Alessandro. Common practice for ceremonial entrances of this type dictated that bishops should first visit the principal altar of their new cathedral, so by visiting the altar of S. Alessandro first bishop Emo privileged the canons of S. Alessandro. There was, therefore, a strong awareness that these two altars represented the struggle between the two congregations of canons at the cathedral. The altar with the relics of S. Alessandro obviously stood for the prestige and political programme of its canons, while the high altar was similarly adopted by the canons of S. Vincenzo.

4. The Canons of S. Vincenzo and Art Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 II: The Cults of SS. Fermo and Rustico

The second part of the patronage strategy of the canons of S. Vincenzo was directed at correcting for their lack of important civic relics. Their means of achieving this goal was through the promotion of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the high altar. As Early Christian saints from Bergamo itself these

\(^{32}\) CAP 160, *Acta Capituli S. Alexandri*, fol. 14, 4 October 1611. Calvi, *Effemeride*, vol. 3, p. 141, mentions the entry of bishop Emo, but does not describe his particular actions in the cathedral. 4 October is the feast day of St. Francis, but had no connexion with any of the local saints revered by the canons of S. Alessandro.
figures assumed great significance during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Following an Italy-wide pattern, their cult was established as a means of demonstrating that Christianity in the city had a glorious early history. Soon after its establishment, however, the canons of S. Vincenzo tried to claim these relics as their own as a way of competing on an even footing with the canons of S. Alessandro. So while the establishment of the cult follows an extremely common Counter-Reformation pattern, its development was conditioned by local concerns, in particular the struggle between the two congregations of canons.

Also following an Italy-wide pattern was the flurry of hagiographical writing in Bergamo around this time. Lives of the local saints had been written in the middle ages, but around this time historians began to collect together these narratives in an attempt to eliminate accretions based only on legend. Two sources are of particular relevance to the discussion of saints's cults which follows. The first is Mario Muzio, a parish priest whose *Historia de’Santi di Bergamo* first appeared in 1610. At a slightly later date, a second comprehensive treatment of local saints was included as part of Celestino Colleoni's (ca. 1568-1635) multi-volume *Historia quadripartita di Bergamo et suo territorio nato gentile, & rinato christian*, published starting in 1617.

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34 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, part 1, Bergamo, 1617; part 2, volumes 1 and 2, Brescia 1618 (reprinted in 3 volumes, Bologna, 1969); M. Palma, "Celestino da Bergamo," *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 23, Rome, 1979, pp. 415-416. In the preamble to the first part of the *Historia* Celestino says he will divide it into 4 parts: 1. dedicated to civic history of Bergamo up to the seventeenth century; 2. saints and bishops of Bergamo; 3-4. the churches, monasteries and religious practices of the city. But already in the prologue to the first volume of the second part his plan changed to a three part chronological division: 1. from Christian origins to 303; 2. 303-1280; 3. 1280-1618. For some unknown reason, the work as published went no further than the second volume of part 2. See also D. Calvi, *Scena letteraria*, pp. 95-98, and Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, pp. 285-291.
According to this local hagiographical tradition, SS. Fermo and Rustico lived in the early fourth century and were brothers of the Bergamask noble family Crotta. Converted to Christianity by S. Alessandro, they were captured by the Roman Emperor who tried to force them to make sacrifices to the pagan gods. They refused and were taken to Verona and imprisoned. There they were visited by Procolo, bishop of Verona, who was also imprisoned as a consequence. The imperial agent in Verona tried to put all three saints to death by fire, but failed in these attempts and resorted to decapitation. The remains of the saints were moved around widely, but eventually made their way back to Verona. In the ninth century, the Crotta family of Bergamo decided to recover the relics from Verona, apparently inspired by the contemporary Venetian efforts to retrieve the body of St. Mark from Alexandria. Upon their return to Bergamo the relics were hidden in a forest just to the west of the city. In the twelfth century, the site was miraculously rediscovered and a church with an attached convent of nuns was built nearby to house the relics.

In the middle ages, the saints were invoked primarily as popular agricultural advocates, and their cult lacked any significant civic connotations. In 1575, however, Carlo Borromeo suppressed the convent as part of his general policy to consolidate such institutions and tighten control over female monastic life. Following the translation of SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo to the cathedral, the cultic situation changed and the first two emerged as co-protectors of the city, along with S. Alessandro and S. Vincenzo. It is worthwhile noting

35 For the lives of Fermo and Rustico, see Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, pp. 335-391; M. Muzio, *Sacra historia di Bergamo*, part one, pp. 146-177.
36 For these translations, see Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, pp. 380-381.
as well that, although the relics of S. Procolo were always grouped with the others, he was included only because he was martyred at the same time; his name was for the most part simply appended to those of SS. Fermo and Rustico whose cult was of real importance to the local scene.

The translation of the relics of SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo met with great resistance from the residents of Borgo S. Antonio where the monastery of S. Fermo was located. Residents of this area resorted to force as a means of preventing the removal of the relics, but Carlo Borromeo swiftly excommunicated those involved and the translation was carried out.39 The Borgo promised to build a new monastery within thirty years on the understanding that the relics would then be returned, but by 1611 no new monastery had been built. In spite of a request by the nuns, the relics then became permanent possessions of the cathedral.40

Freed from the possibility that the relics would return to the oblivion of the Borgo, the city government and both congregations of cathedral canons now began to promote the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico. Even a little earlier, in 1609, the city committed money towards the building of an appropriate chapel for the saints, calling them in this document the “santi tutelari d'essa città,” a forthright indication of the civic status they had achieved by this point.41 On 21 June 1611 the city council, along with the two congregations of canons requested that there

39 The documents describing these struggles are transcribed in Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 355-359.
40 CAP 616, Reliquie di SS. Fermo and Rustico, fols. 17-18, 13 August 1611, filze from city council. The nuns, now at S. Benedetto in Borgo S. Leonardo, apply to the city to return their relics.
41 CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo, fols. 67-68v, 28 December 1609, meeting of the city council recording a decision to appoint deputies to negotiate with the bishop and canons to help build a chapel in the cathedral for housing of the “santi tutelari d'essa Città." Usually, this term would suggest S. Alessandro and the other saints translated in 1561. That this is not the case here, however, is demonstrated by another decision of the city council taken 19 August 1628. The text of this meeting refers to the earlier decision, but this time makes explicit the fact that the "santi tutelari" of the first meeting were Fermo and Rustico. See CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo, fols. 107-107v, 19 August 1628.
be an official recognition of the relics of Fermo and Rustico and on 7 September 1611, the Congregation of Rites carried this out.  The need to have the relics in Bergamo given official sanction was propelled not just by the internal politics of the city and cathedral, but, perhaps more importantly, by the strong challenges to the claims of Bergamo put forward by the Veronese, who doubted not only the authenticity of the relics, but also the Bergamask origins of the saints themselves. Furthermore, Celestino, writing in 1618, noted that the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico was widely diffused both in Milan and Verona, evidence of their importance beyond the local sphere that must have furnished even more justification for seeking official recognition. All of this evidence combined demonstrates strongly that major efforts were launched in this period to develop a city-wide devotion to their cult.

Numerous parallels for the story as related thus far can be found in the histories of other Italian cities. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries witnessed an intense renewal of interest in Early Christian saints, premised on the Counter-Reformation goal of returning to the values of the early Church. Joined to this undertaking, however, was a new insistence by Rome on establishing the historical authenticity of the saints in question. By this means Rome intended to exert greater control over local churches and to eradicate historically dubious cults. In an important recent study on the relationship between centre and periphery in Counter-Reformation Italy, Simon

42 CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo, fol. 73, 17 September 1611, fols. 75-76, 21 June 1611, in both cases citations from the records of the city council. See also, Camozzi, Le visite, p. 255 note 36. The recognition of the relics is also mentioned in Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, p. 381. The city asked cardinal Domenico Pinelli to convince cardinal Bellarmino of the need to recognise the relics. On 23 August 1614 the lections for the breviary were approved as well.


Ditchfield has shown how the combination of these two preoccupations spawned a wave of scholarship into the lives of local saints.45 Historians all over Italy sought out documents related to local cults as a means of obtaining official approval from Rome. In Bergamo, the efforts of Mario Muzio and Celestino Colleoni should located within this context. Ditchfield argues that, even though the initial impulse underlying this phenomenon may have been Rome's drive for greater centralisation, the mass of local responses and consequent approvals paradoxically increased the importance of the local.

The emergence of the cult SS. Fermo and Rustico was most definitely related to this Italy-wide movement. These saints had been relatively neglected in the middle ages, but once devotion to Early Christian saints became so widespread in the late sixteenth century SS. Fermo and Rustico became the focus of great attention, eventually leading to their official recognition. This official status doubtless conferred great prestige on the Bergamask church in general and was most likely the principal motivation lying behind these efforts. My purpose here, however, is different from Ditchfield's in that I intend to take the story to its next stage and analyse how the cult was manipulated once it was established. In the section that follows I will argue that the canons of S. Vincenzo tried to appropriate the cult for their own ends in their battle with the canons of S. Alessandro. In many ways this was an ingenious strategy. The canons of S. Vincenzo could easily justify their actions because it brought a general benefit to the local church, while simultaneously forwarding their own particular goals. In other words, these canons attempted to exploit the new power and importance of Early Christian saints that had emerged during the Counter-Reformation period.

Even though the canons of S. Alessandro had participated in the efforts directed at achieving official sanction for the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico, they essentially withdrew from the process following the collapse of the act of union in 1614. At this point the canons of S. Vincenzo, together with the city government, took complete control. Their interest in the further promotion of this cult was manifested in the commissioning and placement of works of art representing the saints. In 1617, for instance, four silver head reliquaries representing SS. Fermo, Rustico, Procolo and, significantly, Vincenzo as well, were produced and, in 1618, placed on the high altar.46 These silver heads no longer survive. In spite of the fact that the canons of S. Alessandro had originally promised to contribute money to this project as well as a head of S. Alessandro, a commitment probably made before the failed act of union, the canons of S. Vincenzo eventually ended up dividing the total cost for the heads of Fermo, Rustico and Procolo with the city. The head of S. Vincenzo was paid for by the bishop and Giovan Battista Moiolo, and the planned head of S. Alessandro was not executed at all.47 The canons of S. Alessandro had completely withdrawn from this act of communal patronage.

46 Calvi, *Effemeride*, vol. 2, p. 549, dates their placement on the altar to 9 August 1618; CAP 207, *Filia Action. vetenum generalis et particularis capituli 1488-1698*, 13 May 1617, the congregation of S. Vincenzo petitions the city to contribute to the new reliquaries for SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo; CAP 616, *Reliquie di SS. Fermo and Rustico*, fol. 25, 1 September 1618, filze from city council in which it is recorded that on 8 July 1617 the city had committed itself to paying for one third of the total cost. The works are recorded as finished at this point and there is a calculation regarding the balance owed by the city. Significantly, the petition for payment was received from the canons of S. Vincenzo.

47 CAP 231, *Processo contro gli eredi di Gio. Batt. Moiolo*, February 1627, in a text written by Moiolo, it is stated that the original plan had been to produce a silver head of S. Alessandro as well, but the canons of S. Alessandro refused not only to pay for those representing SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo, but for the one of S. Alessandro as well. The solution in the end was that the city and the canons of S. Vincenzo split the cost of the heads of the three saints, while the head of S. Vincenzo was paid for by the bishop and Moiolo himself: "Nel fabricare le teste d'argento prima ricercarui inutilemente li canonici di S.to Alessandro ne volendo concorrere alla spesa la Mag.ca Città promise di pagare la metta delle 3 teste di SS.ti Fermo, Rustico et Proculo et in persuadendo all'altra metta la congregazione di S.to Vincenzo gli promissi che il consorto sarra concorso per Alessandro onde per questa contribuzione et nel fabricare quella del S.to Vincenzo a mitta della
Probably at around this time, a painting by Giam Paolo Cavagna representing the three saints was painted for the cathedral, and even though there are no surviving records surrounding its execution, it is likely that the canons of S. Vincenzo were responsible for the commission. (fig. 15) Although rather small in scale, only 130 X 92cm, it too was probably set up as part of this high altar ensemble. In 1639, for instance, it is recorded in an inventory as hanging on the column immediately to the left of the high altar. S. Procolo stands on a step in the centre of the picture while SS. Fermo and Rustico stand slightly lower, symmetrically on each side. The inscription provides clues both to the date of the work, and to the importance of these saints: "CORPORA SS. FIRM ET RUSTICI MART. EX NOB. FAM. CROTOR / CIV. BERG. NECNON S. PROCULI EPI / E TEMPLO MONIALIU IN HANC CATH. BASIL. A [S.] CAROLO TRANSL. AC SUB MAIORI ALTARE / COLLOC. SUNT UT EORUM PATROCINIO SE P[OP]JULUS QUOTIDIANIS PRECIBUS COMENDARET." The fact that the placement of the relics under the high altar is mentioned connects the painting firmly to that site within the church. Although the image almost certainly spent most of the year on the column next to the high altar, as described in the 1639 inventory, it may also have served as a temporary altarpiece for the mensa di R. M. Vescovo Milani et mitta di miei denari tocca in parte mia - L. 770." CAP 212, *Atti capitolare diversi 1600-1699*, in a 1618 inventory of the sacristy of S. Vincenzo are mentioned "Due teste d'argento di SS. Fermo e Rustico." In an inventory of 1701 the head of S. Vincenzo is described as being decorated with "due arme in petto a sinistra l'arma del Vescovo Milani a destra l'arma Moiola..", CAP 246, *Inventario di tutte le robe*, p. 80.

48 Pagnoni, in Cassinelli et al., *Duomo*, p. 91. In the 1699 pastoral visitation of bishop Ruzini, this painting is noted as being associated with the new altar built at that time to SS. Fermo and Rustico, ACVB, VP 71, Ruzini, fol. 40, "Tabula in qua depictae sunt imagines dictorum Sanctorum sed amovibilis, et ratione amplitudinis capellae exigua."

49 CAP 246, *Inventario di tutte le robe*, 1639, p. 24, "Ala colonna sinistra del Altare Maggiore vi è un quadro di S.ti Fermo, Rustico et Proculo..." There is no definite evidence that the painting in this inventory is to be identified with the Cavagna located today in the cathedral sacristy, but the connexion is convincing. The exact coincidence of subject matter is most obvious, but the Cavagna also has an inscription making it clear that it was executed for the Duomo, and implying that it was located near to the altar in which the relics of the saints it illustrates were located.
feast day of the saints on 9 August. Its permanent placement there would, in any case, have been prevented by the monumental sixteenth-century tabernacle on the altar, which left no room for additional fixed decoration.

The inscription on the Cavagna painting also emphasises the fact that two of the saints, Fermo and Rustico were of noble, Bergamask origin. This facet of their histories was absolutely fundamental to the development of their cult because it privileged them with respect to S. Alessandro. That said, however, the expansion of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico also involved the use of terminology and iconography traditionally associated with S. Alessandro. The inscription, for instance, states that their relics were placed under the high altar so that people could pray to the saints for protection. This likened the saints to S. Alessandro because he, as overall protector of the city, was traditionally the saint to which such prayers were directed. In 1609, the city had, as mentioned above, referred to SS. Fermo and Rustico as "tutelari" of the city, a term formerly reserved for S. Alessandro. The inscription on the painting is part of the same discourse.

In the Cavagna painting itself, an image of the city of Bergamo appears to the left of the picture, inserted there as a way of connecting the saints to the city and to the concept of its protection. Moreover, both S. Fermo and S. Rustico are dressed in Roman armour. The narrative of their lives provides no justification for the wearing of armour since they are not described as belonging to any particular profession. Celestino describes how the saints are depicted differently in the major areas where their cult flourished. In Milan, for instance, S. Fermo was shown holding a crucifix while seated on horseback trampling the Emperor, which implied, according to Celestino, the moral superiority of the saint.

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50 See above, note 41.
Caravaggio, just south of Bergamo, SS. Fermo and Rustico had the status of patron saints because when they stopped there on the way from Milan to Verona they performed several important miracles. In this town, the two saints were, again according to Celestino, painted in armour as a way of suggesting their role as protectors of the city. In Bergamo, there was little iconographic tradition for the two saints, but it is significant that S. Alessandro, the principal patron saint of the city, was traditionally shown in armour. It therefore cannot be coincidental that SS. Fermo and Rustico are shown in armour as well. In part the use of Roman armour was an effective means of inserting the saints unambiguously into the ancient world, but the intention must also have been to signal their new role as protector saints of the city and to liken them to S. Alessandro. Contemporary viewers were certainly not meant to confuse these saints with S. Alessandro, but to see them as occupying an analogous position.

SS. Fermo and Rustico were, like S. Alessandro, protectors of the city and martyrs who had lived during the later years of the Roman Empire, but, unlike S. Alessandro, they were of purely local origin and had a widespread cult outside of the city, conferring upon them a significant additional appeal.

The canons of S. Alessandro were not by any means passive observers of the maneuverings of the canons of S. Vincenzo, and in fact they actively attempted to undermine the emergence of a cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the cathedral. In spite of the translation of their relics from the monastic church of S. Fermo in 1575, the miraculous healing water that had always filled the tomb of

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53 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, p. 144, also interprets the fact that S. Alessandro is always shown in armour as a sign of his quickness and readiness to come to the help of Bergamo, and not just a reminder of his profession as a soldier.
the saints began to appear again in the empty tomb that remained at the original church.\textsuperscript{54} The curative powers of this water were much touted by the residents of the immediate Borgo, but doubts as to the legitimacy of the miracle were expressed by bishop Ragazzoni. The holy relics were no longer present and thus no legitimate miracle could be taking place.\textsuperscript{55} In 1580 the bishop ordered the tomb sealed and the church closed.\textsuperscript{56} The persistence of the miracle, however, was proof for the residents of the Borgo that even though the relics may have been physically removed, they continued to sanctify their pre-translation tomb. This continued sacred presence in the Borgo must have been seen by its inhabitants as partial vindication of their powerful opposition to the translation, especially since no similar miracles occurred at the cathedral. Bishop Ragazzoni's closure of the tomb and church did not prevent the miracle from occurring and in fact popular attachment to the site continued to grow.

In this climate, any official recognition of the miracle would have both undermined the legitimacy of the decision to move the relics in the first place, and diminished the cathedral of S. Vincenzo as the site of devotion to these saints. But having failed to stamp out belief in the miracle, and faced with such popular devotion, the ecclesiastical authorities had no option but to sanction the miracle. This took place on 17 September 1617 and was attended to by three canons of S. Alessandro.\textsuperscript{57} It cannot be coincidental that this official recognition

\begin{footnotes}
\item 54 Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, pp. 386-387.
\item 55 There is no direct documentation for the nature of these doubts, but Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, p. 387, argues at some length that the tomb itself could act as a kind of secondary relic, implying that many doubted this possibility. The account of these events by the biographer of Ragazzoni, P. Bonetti, \textit{Specchio de' prelati rappresentato nella vita di Girolamo Ragazzoni conte di S. Odorico e vescovo di Bergamo}, Bergamo, 1644, p. 67, makes no mention of his attempt to suppress the miracle at S. Fermo.
\end{footnotes}
occurred just as the canons of S. Vincenzo were actively attempting to situate the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the high altar of the cathedral. It seems more than likely, therefore, that the canons of S. Alessandro were not simple observers of this ritual, but had actively advocated the official recognition of the miracle to undermine the efforts of the canons of S. Vincenzo. These canons could hardly oppose this clever strategy, however, because the recognition of such a popular miracle forwarded the overall cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico, even while it detracted from efforts to locate it primarily at the cathedral.

The competition between the cults of S. Alessandro and SS. Fermo and Rustico was also played out in the realm of popular prints. In 1618, a print of S. Alessandro designed by Johann Friedrich Greuter was published in Rome. (fig. 16) Although nothing precise is known of the circumstances of its commission, the inscription at the base of the pedestal in the centre of the image, "SENATUI BERGOMI," as well as the stemma of the city below, suggest the involvement of the city government. Its general aim was almost certainly to celebrate the saint's life and miracles following the official recognition and authentication of his relics in the Duomo that took place in 1617. In the centre of the sheet is an image of the S. Alessandro on horseback framed by an archway, while depicted on the front of the arch supports is a series of small narratives illustrating his life, martyrdom and miracles.

Probably from around the same date there exists a drawing by Cavagna of SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo. (fig. 17) It too is centred on a central large-

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2, pp. 544-545 records two dates: on 21 September 1617 the delegation sealed the tomb, and on 8 August 1618 the tomb was unsealed and found to be miraculously full of water.

58 A copy of this print can be found in CAP 625, Officiature proprie della Cattedrale della diocesi di Bergamo.

59 For the circumstances surrounding this official recognition, see below, pp. 102-105.

60 For a discussion of this drawing, see Bergamo per Lorenzo Lotto, ex. cat., Bergamo, 1980, pp. 146-148.
scale image framed by an archway, also with a series of small narrative scenes on the faces of the arch supports. (fig. 18) Although it seems that no print based on this drawing was ever produced, the format and choice of theme are so close to the print of S. Alessandro that it is very likely that such a print was at least planned. Given the similarities, it is also probable that both works were commissioned by the city government. Several motivations can adduced for the production of these prints. As in all the city government's interventions into Bergamo's cultic life, the principal desire was to celebrate the early history of Christianity in the city. By promoting these three Early Christian saints the government built civic pride. Always in background at this time, however, was the dispute between the two groups of cathedral canons. Through an even-handed advocacy of the cults of both S. Alessandro and SS. Fermo and Rustico, the city advanced their claims to equivalency, probably in the hope that this would make the two congregations of canons see themselves as equal in status and thus promote their eventual union.

In the cathedral itself, the canons of S. Vincenzo used the decoration of the high altar as a vehicle for their own advancement with respect to the canons of S. Alessandro. The antependium, (fig. 14) as we have seen, expressed their desire to dedicate the cathedral to both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro. Furthermore, the positioning of the saints reflected the hierarchical relationships of the choir in which the canons of S. Vincenzo were ascendant, and visually claimed for them the high altar. The four reliquary heads, including S. Vincenzo but excluding S. Alessandro, as well as the painting that may well have stood above the altar on the feast day of the saints (fig. 15) served to connect SS. Fermo,  

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61 The case in favour of this for the S. Alessandro image is built on the print's inscription. There is no comparable evidence for the drawing of SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo, but the similarity of the two images combined with the city's traditional support of this cult are quite suggestive.
Rustico and Procolo to the cathedral and in particular to the canons of S. Vincenzo. The possession of the relics of S. Alessandro had been for those canons a critical factor in favour of their being able to demand that the canons of S. Vincenzo give up their identity in the 1614 act of union. I suggest that the canons of S. Vincenzo were so active in promoting the cults of these other civic saints so as to create for themselves a stronger negotiating position in any future attempts at union. In SS. Fermo and Rustico they had two saints who, although not as important as S. Alessandro in the foundation of Christianity in Bergamo, were of equal antiquity, had a flourishing cult, and were of local origin. S. Alessandro, as we shall see, was thought to have been from Egypt, whereas all the narratives surrounding SS. Fermo and Rustico emphasise very strongly their noble Bergamask origins from the Crotta family. An alternative line of argument might suggest that the promotion of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico by the canons of S. Vincenzo was intended not to splinter further the two congregations, but to bring them together. This could well have been true initially, as evidenced by their petitions that the canons of S. Alessandro should participate in art patronage celebrating SS. Fermo and Rustico, but the intransigence of the canons of S. Alessandro compelled them to change course and adopt a more confrontational approach.

5. The Canons of S. Alessandro and Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 I: Enea Salmeggia, Life, Martyrdom and Miracles of S. Alessandro

How did the canons of S. Alessandro respond to the artistic challenges posed by the canons of S. Vincenzo at the high altar? The most significant act of patronage surrounding the so often acrimonious debate between the congregations of canons was a commission from the local painter Enea Salmeggia for a cycle of twelve narrative paintings of the life, miracles and
martyrdom of S. Alessandro, of which ten survive.\textsuperscript{62} (figs. 19-26, 29-30) In the literature on Enea Salmeggia there has always been considerable doubt both as to the integrity of this group of paintings as a cycle, and as to the original purpose of the ten surviving paintings. Traditionally, several pieces of evidence have been cited in favour of seeing it as a cycle intended for the cathedral. Most importantly, the ten paintings are all of almost identical size and format\textsuperscript{63} and they form a coherent narrative sequence. In favour of considering their original location as S. Vincenzo is the mention made by the eighteenth-century author, Francesco Maria Tassi, of some paintings illustrating "alcuni fatti della vita del Santo Martire" in the sacristy of the cathedral, and the fact that two of the paintings are still located there.\textsuperscript{64} This evidence was suggestive but not by any means absolutely conclusive since Tassi neither named the artist of the paintings nor enumerated the scenes illustrated. Furthermore, the cycle of paintings was never mentioned in any of the inventories of the chapter, nor in the acts of the congregation of S. Alessandro.

\textsuperscript{62} The ten paintings illustrate the following scenes (the catalogue and page numbers refer to U. Ruggeri, "Enea Salmeggia," in I pittori bergamaschi, Cinquecento, vol. 4, Bergamo, 1978). S. Alessandro overturns the tables of the idol worshippers, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, cat. 12, p. 297; Martyrdom of S. Alessandro, cat. 13, p. 297, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara; S. Alessandro elected bishop of Bergamo, Translation of S. Alessandro's relics, Bergamo, Duomo, cat. 27, p. 300; Miracle of S. Alessandro, S. Alessandro before a judge, S. Alessandro in prison, S. Grata picks up the head of the martyred S. Alessandro, S. Grata shows her father Lupo the flowers that had sprouted from the blood of the martyred S. Alessandro, Bergamo, Piazzini Albani collection, cat. 56, pp. 306-307; Preaching of S. Alessandro, Brescia, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, cat. 70, p. 309. M. C. Rodeschni Galati, in Il Seicento a Bergamo, pp. 61-65; F. Rossi, in Prima della pittura: Enea Salmeggia 1565(?)-1626, ex. cat., Bergamo, 1986, pp. 26-29.

\textsuperscript{63} The dimensions of all ten paintings are as follows: the two in the Accademia Carrara are 103 X 148cm; the two in the cathedral are 110 X 140cm; the five in the Piazzini Albani collection are 102 X 154cm; the one in Brescia is 100 X 150cm. The vertical dimension varies as much as 8cm whereas the length only 6cm. Since the ten paintings are in four different collections, these variations could easily be the result of differences in reframing or relining.

\textsuperscript{64} F.M. Tassi, Vite de' pittori scultori e architetti bergamaschi, Bergamo 1793 (reprinted Milan 1969), vol. 1, p. 214.
Fortunately, new documentary evidence from the Archivio di Stato in Bergamo can now put these doubts to rest. In June 1623 Lattantio Bonghi\(^{65}\), a canon of S. Alessandro, established a chaplaincy at the altar in the Duomo where the relics of S. Alessandro were located. In addition to the large amount of land donated to finance a perpetual daily mass, he gave the canons of S. Alessandro the use of twelve paintings by Enea Salmeggia that illustrated the life, miracles and martyrdom of S. Alessandro to decorate the church.\(^{66}\) Even though the paintings would remain as possessions of the Bonghi family, the chapter could use them whenever it wanted, and the costs of their transport and installation would be covered by a fund established by Lattantio Bonghi. In all likelihood, this small part of the document was written to ensure the perpetual continuation of an arrangement that already existed in Bonghi's lifetime. The format and size of the surviving paintings, in addition to the extent of the cycle, make it very unlikely that they were intended for a private setting. There is little doubt, therefore, that although commissioned by an individual of the congregation of S. Alessandro, the paintings were always intended for public display in the cathedral.

\(^{65}\) Bonghi was a canon from at least 1586, CAP 159, *Ottolino Rota Atti*, fol. 133v.

\(^{66}\) Archivio di Stato, Bergamo, Fondo notarile 5530, Antonio Facheris notary: Lattantio Bonghi "...instituens intendit, vult et vulet quod ille duodecim tabelle, seu icone, super quibus describere seu imigare fecit vitam, actiones, martirium et miracula gloriosiss.mi Martiris Alexandri Patriae nostrae patroni manu D. Eneae Salmetie appellati Il Talpino, pictoris eximij conserventur, et permaneant in custodia illius qui pro tempore erit antiquior, et senoir ex descentibus ex eius fratribus et per consequens Patronus dicte Cappellaniae, sed quoties R. Cap.lum eas voluent in ornanda ecclesia in solemnitatibus, et festis, in quibus mos est eam exornare possit eas habere nec dictus Patronus possit eas recusare ita ut dominum sit R. Cap.li custodia vero dicti Patroni. Verum ne ipsum R. Cap.lum nec dictus Patronus graventur expensis que contingent fieri in levando asportando repurtando, et reponendo eas ad loca sua contentatur et concedit quod dicte expensae extrahantur ex fructibus et redditibus dicatorum scotorum quinquecentum existentium penes p.tum Venerandum Consortium Carceratorum."
The ten surviving paintings, two of which are signed and the remainder always attributed to Salmeggia, must correspond with this donated cycle.67 Even though the act of donation solves many problems, it does not reveal the date of the works, beyond the obvious fact that they were completed before 1623. The paintings have thus far been dated variously from ca. 1610 to the end of the second decade.68 In no way, however, has there ever been a systematic attempt to link the programme of the pictures to the events surrounding the debate between the two groups of canons, and the datings have been based either on stylistic analysis, a difficult proposition given Salmeggia's tendency towards both stylistic eclecticism and a certain archaism, or on very vague connexions with the reforms of Federico Borromeo.

Before looking to the specifics of this cycle, however, a brief survey of the life of S. Alessandro is necessary. S. Alessandro was in the seventeenth century, and still is today, the principal patron saint of Bergamo. Born in Egypt, he lived in the late third century and was the standardbearer of the Theban legion in the Roman imperial army.69 This legion had entirely converted to Christianity, and while on campaign in France in 297 its members were required to make sacrifices to the Emperor. Not a single member of the legion would carry out this

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67 Two of the paintings, *S. Alessandro overturns the tables of the idol worshippers*, and the *Martyrdom of S. Alessandro* were acquired by Giacomo Carrara on 28 Aug 1768 from a Giuseppe Verdi of Novara who had in turn bought them from Enrico Bonghi for L.242. The connexion with a member of the Bonghi family makes secure the connexion between the donated and existing cycles. Ruggeri, "Enea Salmeggia," p. 297. That the number of surviving images is smaller than specified in the act of donation cannot be considered as evidence against the connexion since the cycle has been dispersed and two of the works could easily have been lost. The composition of one of these is, for instance, probably recorded in a drawing by Salmeggia today in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo.

68 Ruggeri, "Enea Salmeggia," p. 297, arguing entirely on stylistic grounds, dates the whole cycle to the last years of the first decade of the seventeenth century. Rodeschini Galati, in *Il Seicento a Bergamo*, p. 62, places the cycle in the second decade because she sees it as having been stimulated by the reforms of Federico Borromeo in Milan.

command, so all were executed. Not to escape death, but as a means of spreading the Gospel, Alessandro fled along with several companions to Milan where he was captured and put in prison. Whilst in prison he was visited by Materno, the bishop of Milan, who encouraged him to continue refusing to make pagan sacrifices. Alessandro then escaped to Como where he performed a number of miracles, but eventually he was recaptured and taken back to prison in Milan. When the Emperor subsequently tried to force him to sacrifice to some pagan idols, Alessandro defiantly kicked over the altar. Frustrated with this intransigence, the Emperor ordered the execution of Alessandro, but the executioner was miraculously prevented from striking the saint with his sword. Returned to prison, Alessandro soon escaped to Bergamo where he preached the Gospel and converted many of the citizens to Christianity. In particular, his preaching centred around a column (located in the plain south of the city) that supported an idol of Crotacio, the pagan ruler of the city just before Alessandro's arrival. As a sign of the defeat of paganism, this column fell to pieces during Alessandro's preaching there. Eventually, Alessandro was captured again by the executioners of the Emperor and, after repeatedly refusing to make pagan sacrifices, was decapitated near to the site of his earlier preaching. S. Grata, whom Alessandro had converted and who was also witness to the martyrdom, picked up his head and wrapped it in a linen cloth. She carried it across the plain, and at her first resting place drops of blood fell to the ground and flowers miraculously sprouted from the places where the drops of blood had fallen. Grata then carried Alessandro's body through the centre of the city and buried him in her garden, just outside of the walls to the west. Following the burial, Grata gathered some of the miraculously sprouted flowers and showed them to her father Lupo, the successor to Crotacio as ruler of Bergamo. Convinced by the miracle, he converted to Christianity and used his position of authority to ensure
that much of the city's population was also converted. Grata also founded three churches in memory of S. Alessandro, the *basilica alessandrina* marking his grave, S. Alessandro in Colonna near to the site of his martyrdom, and S. Alessandro della Croce on the spot where the flowers miraculously had sprouted from his blood.

The ten paintings and one drawing can be divided into three groups based on when and where the depicted events took place. The first three illustrate events in Milan, the second four record S. Alessandro's actions in Bergamo, including his martyrdom, and the final four show events that took place in Bergamo after S. Alessandro's death. The first image shows the saint in prison in Milan. (fig. 19) A guard and perhaps two visitors are present, but S. Alessandro is singled out from amongst the other prisoners because only he is wearing an approximation of Roman armour. According to Celestino, S. Alessandro is shown in armour not just as a way of indicating his profession, but as a sign of his willingness and quickness to help Bergamo in time of need. It seems, however, that the artist, or more likely Lattantio Bonghi, chose to depict neither the companions of the saint who had also escaped the massacre of the legion, since these too would have been shown in armour, nor bishop Materno's visit to the prison. The second painting shows S. Alessandro kicking over an altar. (fig. 20) This action came in response to the Emperor's insistence that the saint should make sacrifices to the pagan gods. In the background is a

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71 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, pp. 112-117. There are two visitors present but neither is dressed in episcopal garb. Given the care shown by Salmeggia to identify people through costume it is unlikely that either of the visitors is the bishop.
72 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, pp. 121-126. Rossi, in *Prima della pittura*, p. 26, has suggested that the building in the background is to be recognised as the Palazzo della Ragione in Bergamo, but the resemblance is only very slight, and this particular event did not take place in Bergamo, but in Milan. Perhaps it was intended to depict the Broletto in Milan, but the similarity with this structure is likewise rather vague. Rossi does not offer any evidence for his proposal, perhaps assuming the association to be obvious.
flagellation of S. Alessandro against a column. This event is not mentioned in any of the accounts of his life, but was clearly included here as a way of likening S. Alessandro to Christ and the Emperor to Pilate. The idea of connecting the sufferings of martyr saints with the Passion of Christ was commonplace at the time.

The third scene shows S. Alessandro receiving a mitre and a crozier from an enthroned bishop. (fig. 21) Both of these objects is decorated with a lily, one of the conventional attributes of the saint. To the right, a companion holds S. Alessandro's standard on which is an almost identical lily, clarifying the saint's connexion with that symbol. Behind S. Alessandro an attendant stands holding a second crozier, presumably that belonging to the enthroned bishop. In the background to the right is a Christian altar, defining the event as taking place within a church setting. This altar provides an interesting contrast with the overturned pagan altar of the previous image, (fig. 20) emphasizing the legitimacy of the Christian Eucharistic sacrifice as opposed to its pagan equivalent. The altar here is also furnished with a crucifix as a way of underlining, again by contrast with the previous image, the distinction between pagan idol worship and the Catholic cult of images, an important theme in the Counter-Reformation defence of this practice against the claims of the Protestants. The victory over paganism, and in particular idolatry was a strong theme both of the written lives and of this painted cycle.

By the conferral of the mitre and crozier, S. Alessandro was created bishop of Bergamo. This event was heretofore not commonly shown in the

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73 Celestino explains that, even though the lily would not have appeared on S. Alessandro's armour and was thus not archeologically correct, artists were justified in showing him with this symbol as a reminder of the flowers that sprouted miraculously from his spilt blood and of their role in the conversion of Lupo and through him the rest of the city, Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, pp. 101.
iconography of Alessandro, but is treated at some length in Celestino's life of the saint and appears in the 1618 print. Based on the assertion in Pinamonte Brembati's thirteenth-century life of the saint, Celestino argued that even though S. Alessandro was not actually officially consecrated a bishop, he acted in a manner appropriate to this role and had probably been chosen to be bishop by Materno, bishop of Milan, in preparation for his ministry in Bergamo. This would explain why the painting does not show a liturgically correct consecration, but simply the conferral of the mitre and crozier, signs of the episcopal dignity of which Alessandro was deserving, but which he was never officially granted.

Why was this unusual scene chosen for inclusion in the cycle? On one level, it was simply a means of elevating S. Alessandro's status. Indeed, Celestino argued that even though the Apostle Barnabas had first converted Bergamo to Christianity and had established Narno as the first bishop, by the time S. Alessandro arrived in the city there were few remaining Christians. Only following his conversion of the city did the Christian religion truly flourish, leading Celestino to call S. Alessandro the Apostle of Bergamo. This role as Apostle of the city made possible his connexion with the episcopal office, since bishops based their authority to rule on the fact that they were successors to the Apostles. It is likely, therefore, that the painted cycle included this scene as a way of underlining S. Alessandro's pivotal role in the sacred history of the city. From a different perspective, however, the manifest need to associate S. Alessandro with the episcopal office can be interpreted as a response to the Counter-Reformation, which aimed at increasing the institutional authority of the Church. By showing the conferral of the episcopal dignity upon S. Alessandro, his evangelisation of Bergamo is shown to have been an act both prompted by

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74 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, pp. 143-144.
and given official sanction by the Church, as represented by the enthroned bishop of Milan.

The image of S. Alessandro being created bishop would also have had particular relevance to the concerns of Lattantio Bonghi and the canons of S. Alessandro. The iconography proclaimed both that S. Alessandro was the founder of the diocese of Bergamo, and that this had been carried out with the blessing of the bishop of Milan. Although the congregation of S. Alessandro never claimed that their saint had directly founded the cathedral chapter, it is clear that by emphasizing his role as official founder of the entire diocese, they claimed him at least as their spiritual founder. As definitive proof of their connexion to S. Alessandro, the canons had jurisdiction over his relics. This fact, combined with an assertion of his role as founder, enabled them to suggest for themselves an unbroken institutional link to the foundation of the church in Bergamo. In the context of the dispute between the two congregations, the construction of such a history was doubtless aimed at legitimating their attempts to eliminate the dedication of S. Vincenzo at the cathedral.

At what date would such a point of view have been expressed in the public realm of church decoration? Before 1614, both congregations maintained officially that the cathedral should be dedicated to both saints. This outlook had resulted in only limited acts of artistic patronage, but when these had occurred, the two saints were usually commemorated together. In 1604, for instance, the two congregations had purchased tapestries illustrating the lives of SS. Vincenzo and Alessandro, and although these were soon sold to promote work on the fabric, it is known that each saint was represented by an equal number of images.76 After the failure of the 1614 union, the two congregations returned to

76 CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti, fol. 214v, 22 April 1604, commission for tapestries of SS. Alessandro and Vincenzo for the choir of the cathedral: "...nei quai razzi siano descritti le Historie di S.to
their earlier positions regarding the dedication, but as evidenced by the art
sponsored by the canons of S. Vincenzo at the high altar, an increasingly
polemical attitude prevailed. The iconography of S. Alessandro being created
bishop, with its implied assertion of the preeminence of the canons of S.
Alessandro, articulates an agenda that would have been acceptable only in 1614
or in the years immediately following.

The fourth scene in the cycle, the first to be set in Bergamo, shows S.
Alessandro preaching in what would become Borgo S. Leonardo. (fig. 22) This
location is specified by means of the profile of the city on the hill in the
background. S. Alessandro stands on the right and a crowd is gathered around.
In the centre of the painting, in the middleground, is a freestanding column with
a statue on top that must represent the column mentioned by Celestino that
defined the site at which S. Alessandro preached, the future site of his
martyrdom. The figure on top of the column was Crotacio, a pagan ruler of
Bergamo who, after his death, had been worshipped as a deity and to whom
sacrifices were made.77 From the left several figures carry into the image a sick
man, presumably in the hope that the saint might be able to effect a cure.

Picking up on this theme, the fifth image shows S. Alessandro
resuscitating a young man, an episode recorded by Celestino, but without any
suggestion by him of where in the city it may have taken place.78 (fig. 23) The
painting, however, sets the episode on a wooded slope looking towards the walls
of the city, only a short distance up the hill from the site of S. Alessandro's

77 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, pp. 132.
preaching shown in the previous image.\textsuperscript{79} This implied sense of physical movement upwards towards the centre of the city is propelled by the narrative. The sixth painting in the cycle, illustrating S. Alessandro before the imperial judge, is probably set somewhere in the upper city.\textsuperscript{80} (fig. 24) Even though Celestino locates this event in the area of the column of Crotacio, the centre of the city is suggested in the painting by the depiction of dense architectural surroundings. Salmeggia may have changed the location because that part of the city was where contemporary judicial proceedings were carried out. Wearing a tall conical hat, S. Alessandro kneels before the judge and is condemned to death for refusing to make sacrifices to the pagan gods.

The seventh painting in the cycle shows the martyrdom of S. Alessandro. (fig. 25) Set where he had earlier preached, S. Alessandro lies dead on the ground, with the executioner sheathing his sword.\textsuperscript{81} The saint's severed head has fallen to the left of his prostrate body and his hands are joined together in a gesture of prayer. Continuity with the scene of his preaching (fig. 22) is established by the repetition of the same view of the upper city in the background. Fragments of the column with the idol of Crotacio lie on the ground along with the body of S. Alessandro. The contrast with the scene of preaching, in which both saint and column stand erect, delivers the message that it was through S. Alessandro's martyrdom that paganism was defeated. Lilies have miraculously sprouted from the place where his blood spilled, and are indicated by a soldier who points downward. The sprouting of lilies was not

\textsuperscript{79} Rossi, in \textit{Prima della pittura}, p. 26, suggests that the walls in the background are to be identified with the new Venetian walls, but I cannot see the Porta S. Giacomo which he mentions. Also, it would be odd to include the new walls in this painting since they are omitted from all the others.\textsuperscript{80} Rossi, in \textit{Prima della pittura}, p. 26, suggests that the episode is set between via Colleoni and the Cittadella, but it is not possible to be so specific. Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, p. 140, locates the event next to the column of Crotacio.\textsuperscript{81} Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, p. 141.
usually associated with the site of his martyrdom, but Celestino argued that since S. Alessandro spilled so much blood at this location the flowers must have sprouted here as well.\textsuperscript{82}

The eighth painting in the cycle illustrates an event that occurred immediately following S. Alessandro's martyrdom. (fig. 26) S. Grata, who had been converted to Christianity by S. Alessandro's preaching, picked up the saint's head and carried it off across the plain to the east. His body was carried by some of the other converts. At her first resting place, the site traditionally associated with the miracle of the flowers, she put the head down and lilies sprouted. At this location S. Grata later founded the church of S. Alessandro della Croce.\textsuperscript{83}

The painting shows S. Grata bending down to pick one of the miraculous flowers while in the background can be recognised the nearby church and conventual complex of S. Agostino viewed from the approximate future location of S. Alessandro della Croce.\textsuperscript{84}

Significantly, a depiction of the burial of S. Alessandro in the garden of S. Grata, the logical next scene, is not extant.\textsuperscript{85} Either it was intentionally left out of the cycle, or it represents the single lost work for which not even a compositional drawing survives. The latter possibility seems the more likely, since the \textit{basilica alessandrina} was built over this tomb and had become, according to contemporary beliefs at least, the first and principal cathedral of Bergamo. Furthermore, the canons of S. Alessandro had their origins at this church, and their association with it and its relics were absolutely essential to their sense of corporate identity. An image of the burial would also have played a role in another important theme, developed in the last group of paintings, focusing on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, p. 149.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, pp. 147-149.
\item \textsuperscript{84} This suggestion was made by Rossi, in \textit{Prima della pittura}, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Colleoni, \textit{Historia quadripartita}, vol. 2, pp. 148-149.
\end{itemize}
asserting the authenticity of the relics held by the canons of S. Alessandro during the period when the cycle of paintings was executed. To have shown S. Grata burying S. Alessandro at the future site of the basilica alessandrina would have established that the remains buried there were authentic when they were first interred, thereby serving to counter any claim that suggested otherwise. During the early years of the seventeenth century, the authenticity of S. Alessandro's relics, as we shall see, did in fact come under some scrutiny.

A slightly later painting by the local artist Fabio Ronzelli may record some of the features of this lost work. (fig. 27) The body is shown being lowered into a tomb whose form copies that of the sarcophagus of S. Alessandro saved from the basilica alessandrina before its demolition. (fig. 28) After the 1561 translation of the saints to S. Vincenzo, the tomb of S. Alessandro was moved to the monastery of S. Grata where it stayed until the nineteenth century. Today it forms the base of the high altar at the parish church of S. Alessandro della Croce. Given that this same tomb was also depicted in one of the later paintings in the cycle, (fig. 30) it is likely that it was included in the missing painting. To the right of the Ronzelli painting a figure is shown holding a model of the basilica alessandrina. Since this structure was such an important facet of the corporate identity of the canons of S. Alessandro, it is possible that the lost work also featured a model of the demolished basilica.

One of the major underlying themes of the last paintings in the cycle revolves around the authenticity of the relics possessed by the canons of S. Alessandro. Around the time of its execution, the canons of S. Vincenzo began to voice doubts over whether these relics were actually the remains of S. Alessandro. Such reexaminations of traditional beliefs were commonplace at the time. The amply documented Counter-Reformation interest in Early Christian saints was accompanied by a rigorous system of inspections intended to ensure
the authenticity of the relics linked with the burgeoning cults. In Rome, for instance, excavations in the catacombs unearthed a huge number relics, all of which had to submit to a comprehensive authentication process.86 This phenomenon was not limited to newly discovered relics, however, but extended into those traditionally held to be of antique origin, making official recognition a necessary adjunct to the continued flourishing or renewal of a cult. We have already seen, for instance, how such an event played a part in the establishment of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico. In the case of S. Alessandro's relics, however, the impulse behind the demand for their official examination was not to reaffirm tradition but to undermine it.

When the remains of S. Alessandro were translated from the basilica alessandrina to S. Vincenzo in 1561 no official examination of the relics's authenticity took place.87 Moreover, in the years subsequent to this event no bishop sought to rectify the situation, not even Carlo Borromeo, whose apostolic visitation of 1575 was in most respects scrupulously thorough.88 Indeed, no such scrutiny was carried out until 1614, when on 28 December the canons of S. Alessandro, acting alone in response to doubts about the authenticity of the relics, opened the reliquary containing the remains. Although satisfied that they had found the genuine article, the canons decided, according to Celestino, to keep their discovery secret.89 Widespread knowledge that this had taken place would doubtless have led to the embarrassing suggestion that the canons of S. Alessandro had themselves questioned the authenticity of their own relics. On

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86 On the importance of the authentication of Early Christian relics, see Ditchfield, Liturgy, Sanctity, pp. 87-89.
87 For a contemporary account of the translation, see Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 189-195.
88 The location of the translated relics is recorded in the acts of this visitation, but no confirmation of their authenticity was undertaken, Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 66-67.
27 December 1615, the canons of S. Alessandro examined the relics again, but the purpose this time was simply to transfer them from an old wooden casket into a more appropriate vessel. Concerns surrounding the authenticity of the relics increased during this period, however, motivating the canons of S. Alessandro to sponsor an official recognition of the relics. This event, which confirmed the assertions of its sponsors, was presided over by bishop Giovanni Emo on 21 October 1617. Although representatives of both congregations of canons were present, it is significant to note that Lattantio Bonghi was one of only two canons of S. Alessandro to hold keys to the reliquary of the saints. This suggests that he had a particularly strong connexion with the relics, making a strong assertion of their authenticity a personal priority.

Not surprisingly, the doubts over the authenticity of the relics had been expressed by the canons of S. Vincenzo. Giovanni Battista Moiolo, for example, publicly expressed his doubts in his 1617 book on the fabric of the Duomo. Much of the prestige and power of the canons of S. Alessandro derived from their association with their saint, the most tangible evidence of which was the possession of his bodily remains. The attempt by the canons of S. Vincenzo to question this connexion should be seen as running parallel to their simultaneous attempts to promote the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the high altar of the cathedral. By diminishing the prestige of the canons of S. Alessandro, the canons of S. Vincenzo hoped to enter into a more favourable agreement than

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90 Recorded in BCB, MMB 552. The providing of vessels appropriate to the new stature of Early Christian saints was commonplace at the time. For a contemporary parallel in Piacenza, see Ditchfield, Liturgy, Sanctity, p. 91.
91 Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 2, pp. 360-361, cites the reason for this official recognition as being "la falsa voce già disseminata, che nella Catedrale non fossero veramente l'ossa, & reliquie del Santo Martire Alessandro, niuno trovandosi, che si ricordasse haverle vedute." Both Calvi and Celestino (Colleoni, Historia quadruplicata, vol. 2, p. 153) put the date at 27 June 1617; The official act of recognition is appended to the documents recording bishop Emo's pastoral visitation of 1612-1613, VP 38, Emo, fols. 4-11.
92 Moiolo, Dialoghi, dialogue 4, pp. 77-78.
they had been able to achieve in 1614. In this way, the canons of S. Vincenzo tried to channel the power of the commonplace Counter-Reformation practice of recognising relics into the advancement of their own particular cause.

The ninth of the surviving paintings in the cycle does not show the burial of S. Alessandro, however, but S. Grata presenting the miraculous flowers to her father Lupo. (fig. 29) She stands to the left and, to the right, is her companion S. Hesteria. Lupo's importance to the story of S. Alessandro lies in the fact that after his daughter showed him the miraculously sprouted flowers he converted to Christianity and, because of his temporal authority, was able to convert those citizens who had not been converted during S. Alessandro's brief period of preaching.93 He thus completed the evangelisation begun by the saint.

Lupo is enthroned in the centre of the image dressed in an ermine stole and wearing a hat very similar to that worn by the doges of Venice. This might possibly be explained by reference to Celestino, who noted that Lupo had been not simply the duke of Bergamo, but of the entire Veneto as well.94 Although clearly a rather exaggerated claim, the assimilation of Lupo to the contemporary doges of Venice may have played an important role in the overall significance of the cycle. It seems likely, for instance, that the cult of Lupo, although fairly limited in scope, was linked with a celebration of Venetian rule. According to Celestino again, the city government of Bergamo promoted the feast of Lupo as an appropriate day on which to celebrate the return of Venetian dominion in 1513.95 By likening Lupo to the doge, the painting asserts the importance of Venetian secular authority in the maintenance and promotion of the church in

94 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p. 71. Celestino describes a now destroyed painting in which Crotaelo, Lupo's predecessor, receives from the Emperor a hat specifically likened to the contemporary Venetian ducal corno.
95 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p. 422.
Bergamo. Such an implied allegiance with Venice might seem ironic given that they had been responsible for the demolition of the basilica alessandrina, but it is possible that it was included as a play for help in the canons's attempt to reconstitute their ancient church. This same theme is developed further in the last two paintings of the cycle.

These two images, one represented by a surviving painting and the other by a compositional drawing, centre on the tomb of S. Alessandro and must be considered in relationship to the concerns over the authenticity of the relics possessed by the canons of S. Alessandro. (figs. 29, 30) The first of this pair shows the early tenth-century translation of the saint's relics. (fig. 30) Donato Calvi describes how, at this time, bishop Adalberto moved the body of S. Alessandro from its original burial place and placed it in a new chapel built for this purpose in a crypt beneath the basilica alessandrina.96 At the same time King Berengar offered his own crown to be be placed on the new tomb. This is precisely the scene illustrated in the painting. Bishop Adalberto, clearly identified by his episcopal mitre, stands in the centre holding the head of S. Alessandro. Berengar kneels just to the right offering his crown, which is prominently displayed in the centre, on the same axis as the body of the saint. The placement of Adalberto and Berengar on the same diagonal emphasises the joint nature of the translation. Adalberto, representing the power and authority of the bishop, acts in concert with Berengar, representing secular authority.

Why should this theme have been chosen? It does not illustrate either an event in the saint's life, or a miracle that occurred afterwards. This is all the more strange because the event was sometimes associated with a miracle. When the bishop and emperor opened the tomb it was found to be miraculously filled

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with blood. If the intention of the cycle had simply been to glorify S. Alessandro, then it would have been logical to focus on the miracle rather than the banalities of a simple translation. In the 1618 print with scenes from S. Alessandro's legend, for instance, the artist opted for the obvious and illustrated the miracle not the translation. (fig. 16)

I propose that the translation was chosen here as a way of articulating a number of interlocking themes of particular relevance to the canons of S. Alessandro at this time. Perhaps foremost in their minds was the issue of the authenticity of the relics of S. Alessandro. By showing the intact and still clothed body of S. Alessandro being removed from his tomb, a strong visual continuity is established between this figure and the others representing the saint at his martyrdom, and in the scenes that followed that event. The forthright presence of the body of S. Alessandro in the translation is visual proof that his tomb had not been tampered with in the period between his burial and the tenth century. Moreover, as was likely for the lost painting of the burial of S. Alessandro, the tomb shown in this image copied the exact form of the surviving tomb of the saint, (fig. 28) suggesting continuity between the tenth century and 1561. The events surrounding the tenth century translation, however, might have raised doubts about the authenticity of the surviving relics and needed to be put to rest.

In 907, according to Celestino, Berengar sacked Bergamo and burnt down the **basilica alessandrina**. In the painting, Berengar kneels on a column base and his crown is placed on a piece of moulding, significantly another architectural fragment. These details almost certainly refer to Berengar's destruction of the **basilica**. It is quite possible that the canons of S. Vincenzo had used this well-known event to argue that the true relics had been destroyed at that time and

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those owned by the canons of S. Alessandro were, therefore, not authentic. In this way, the painting would be a direct response to their claims. It is also highly significant for this interpretation that Celestino included the story of the translation illustrated here as an integral part of a narrative aimed at convincing the reader of the authenticity of the relics kept at the cathedral. In less than a page he quickly recounts the sequence of their movements, from the burial by S. Grata, through the translation by Adalberto, to the move to S. Vincenzo in 1561. Completing this sequence is a description of the 1614 and 1617 examinations of the relics. There is, therefore, little doubt that the painting of the translation was also addressed to this preoccupation.

A second theme alluded to in the painting is that of the preeminence of the canons of S. Alessandro. Although S. Vincenzo was probably founded in the fourth century, as I have argued in chapter one, seventeenth-century writers, including both Calvi and Celestino, attributed the founding of this church to bishop Adalberto in the tenth century. Although the foundation is not shown directly in the painting, it is noteworthy that Adalberto is pictured here holding the head of S. Alessandro in both hands. In Bergamask iconography in general, and in this cycle in particular, this act is most commonly associated with S. Grata. In the image from this cycle which shows S. Grata picking the flowers miraculously sprouted from S. Alessandro's blood, she is shown holding his head in a way that is almost identical to Adalberto's. (fig. 26) S. Grata was, according to tradition, the founder of the church built where S. Alessandro was buried, so it seems very likely that the intention underlying the assimilation of Adalberto with S. Grata was to celebrate his role as builder of a new chapel for the body S. Alessandro and, by extension, as founder of S. Vincenzo. The peripheral

reference to S. Vincenzo serves to point out both the rather late date at which this church was founded and the fact that it was a mere offshoot of the basilica alessandrina. Similarly, the allusion acts to emphasise that the canons of S. Vincenzo were created as a subsidiary of the original chapter of S. Alessandro.

The choice of Adalberto’s translation was also significant in the resonances it established with the 1561 demolition of the basilica alessandrina and subsequent translation of the relics to S. Vincenzo. As noted above, Berengar had been responsible for the sack of Bergamo and the burning down of the basilica alessandrina. Bishop Adalberto remonstrated with him for having carried out this terrible act, and Berengar responded by offering his crown at the subsequent translation of S. Alessandro’s relics. Significantly, as mentioned above, the need for such an act is alluded to in the painting by having Berengar kneel on a column base, with his crown resting on a fragment of architectural molding. Following the translation, a new tomb was constructed for the saint and a new basilica alessandrina constructed. The parallel with the 1561 demolition is profound. The Venetians had demolished the basilica alessandrina just as Berengar had done, but unlike Berengar they had not repented of their actions and had not supported the rebuilding of the church. The actions of Berengar alluded to in the painting, namely his destruction of the basilica alessandrina, suggested an historical parallel to the actions of Venice, while the image itself offered an expiatory pathway to the Venetian governors of the city.

100 M.C. Rodeschini Galati, in Il Seicento a Bergamo, p. 65; Although this author has proposed that the image acted as an admonition to the contemporary secular authorities who had not hesitated in sacrificing the basilica alessandrina, she did not elaborate on her suggestion. She also does not link this idea either to an overall programme for the cycle or to the particular agenda of a patron. Indeed, she does not speculate on who the patron may have been.
The last surviving image from this cycle is recorded only in a compositional drawing. (fig. 31) Its connexion with the cycle of surviving works is suggested by its similar proportions and design, and by the fact that its iconography does not repeat any of the other stories. Although it is possible that a painting was never executed after this drawing, or that its subject was markedly altered, the conformity of its message with that of the immediately preceding painting makes it more likely that the final work is lost. The drawing shows Emperor Federico Barbarossa’s failed attempt to remove S. Alessandro’s relics from his tomb in the basilica alessandrina.101 The Emperor stands in amazement to the left as his soldiers fail in their attempts to pry off the lid of the tomb in the centre. Their failure to carry out their task could only have come about courtesy of the holy relics of S. Alessandro contained within the tomb. In fact, by showing that their illegitimate removal was impossible, the subject of the drawing suggests that the relics themselves acted to ensure their perpetual future integrity. Clearly, therefore, this story is connected with the same concerns over authenticity that underlay the inclusion of Adalberto’s translation in the cycle. Again, it can be surmised that the canons of S. Vincenzo suggested that the remains of S. Alessandro must have been lost at this time, thus prompting the depiction of this particular moment.

Furthermore, by showing two scenes of translation, one legitimate, (fig. 30) the other not, (fig. 31) a connexion with the 1561 translation must have been intended. In the case of the work showing Adalberto, the repentant Berengar was probably to be viewed as a model for the contemporary Venetian authorities. Having demolished the basilica alessandrina, they were now enjoined, like Berengar, to acknowledge their error and help in its reconstruction. By contrast,

Barbarossa's arrogant attempt at removing the relics was a negative exemplar that acted as a partial parallel to the Venetian decision to knock down the basilica alessandrina. The parallel works only with respect to intentions, however, since the Venetians actually obtained the cooperation of the clergy before undertaking their own translation. They were not, after all, stealing the relics as Barbarossa had intended, and for this reason were not impeded by the miraculous powers of the relics. The painting suggests, therefore, that the Venetians were, like Barbarossa, arrogant in their desire to move the relics of S. Alessandro, but at the same time stops short of suggesting that they carried out the translation in an illegitimate manner.

The two essential themes articulated by the Salmeggia cycle of paintings are the preeminence of the canons S. Alessandro, and the authenticity of the relics in the possession of those canons. The first of these themes is expressed in the painting of the conferral of the episcopal dignity upon S. Alessandro, (fig. 21) since this scene shows the saint as the founder of the diocese, implicitly connecting the contemporary canons of S. Alessandro to the very foundation of Christianity in Bergamo. The painting which shows the relics of S. Alessandro being translated by Adalberto (fig. 30) also makes this same point, since by alluding to the late foundation of S. Vincenzo it underlined the antiquity of the basilica alessandrina and its canons. As argued above, this theme of preeminence would probably not have been given such emphasis until 1614, the year of the agreed union of the chapters, or in the years following. Indeed, the founding of the diocese by S. Alessandro, and the allusion to the founding of S. Vincenzo can also be read as assertions of the ancient unity of the church in Bergamo to which the 1614 union agreement was a return.

The second and perhaps more important theme, that of the authenticity of the relics, can also be associated with the years following 1614. If the missing
painting from the cycle illustrated the burial of S. Alessandro by S. Grata, as I argued above, then three of its twelve works were devoted to proving that the canons of S. Alessandro were in possession of the true relics of the saint. The two surviving images (figs. 30, 31) proclaim that in spite of threats to the tomb of S. Alessandro over the years, first the destruction of the basilica alessandrina by Berengar and second the attempted theft by Barbarossa, the relics had remained intact. The emphasis of the cycle must be linked to the doubts expressed in this matter by the canons of S. Vincenzo starting in 1614 and finally put to rest with the official authentication of the relics in 1617. It seems likely, therefore, that the cycle was executed some time between these two dates.

What might have prompted Lattantio Bonghi in particular to have commissioned this cycle? One motivation might have been provided by the burgeoning cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the high altar of the cathedral. Simultaneous with their promotion of this cult, the canons of S. Vincenzo expressed doubts over the authenticity of the relics of S. Alessandro. Clearly the two congregations of canons were trying to manipulate the cults of these local saints to forward their own agendas. As a way of diminishing the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the cathedral, (while simultaneously being able to make the legitimate claim that they were advancing its city-wide popularity) the canons of S. Alessandro had in 1617 sponsored the official recognition of a miracle associated with the saints's original tomb at the church of S. Fermo.102 Significantly, one of the canons present at this event was none other than Lattantio Bonghi. He is also known to have been one of the custodians of the relics of S. Alessandro.103 This combination of personal ties shows that he was involved both in the issue of authenticity, and in the attempts to diminish the

102 See above, p.???
103 See above, p.???
canons of S. Vincenzo through an undermining of the cult of SS. Fermo and Rustico at the cathedral. With the Salmeggia cycle of paintings, Bonghi wanted to advance the position of the canons of S. Alessandro.

My analysis thus far has centred on locating the iconography of the cycle and the impulse lying behind its creation in almost purely local concerns. The rather limited secondary material on the cycle has, by contrast, mostly ignored the particular in favour of interpretations based on broad cultural phenomena. In the remainder of this section I will examine this material and suggest how the two interpretive approaches can be mutually enriching.

Francesco Rossi is the only scholar to have attempted an analysis of the cycle as a whole, and even this effort was limited to a fairly short catalogue entry. In addition to the usual issues addressed in such a format, Rossi attempted to locate the motivation for the production of Salmeggia's cycle in the reforms to sacred art sponsored by Archbishop Federico Borromeo in Milan. Salmeggia had worked for some time in Milan, and would have known the extensive cycle of paintings dedicated to the life of S. Carlo Borromeo carried out for the Duomo in the first decade of the century. These paintings played an active role in the legitimation of S. Carlo's cult preparatory to his canonization in 1610. According to Marco Rosci's book on the Milanese cycle, its narrative style closely reflected the theory for the reform of sacred art articulated by Federico Borromeo. Rossi built his conclusions about the Bergamask cycle on Rosci's analysis. According to this interpretation, Salmeggia in turn felt the stylistic influence of the S. Carlo Borromeo cycle, and although he may not have been

104 Rossi, in Prima della pittura, pp. 26-27.
directly cognizant of Borromeo's art theory, the paintings of S. Alessandro also reflect it.

There are several problems with Rossi's analysis. In the first place, it should be noted that the trend toward an expanded iconography of the saints was quite widespread at the time, so comparative models need not be restricted to one example. Contemporary with the cycle of Carlo Borromeo, for instance, were attempts at establishing a narrative iconography for Ignatius of Loyola, with the similar goal of promoting his swift canonisation. That said, however, the Milanese cycle was both nearby and known by the artist, so any analysis should start there. Rossi's argument to associate the two cycles is built on an assumed connexion, developed by Rosci, between Federico Borromeo's ideas and the cycle of narratives for the Milan cathedral. Although the archbishop did show an interest in the promotion of his predecessor's cult, there is no evidence of his direct involvement in the commissioning of the paintings, this in spite of the fact that his activities in the realm of art patronage are copiously documented. Rosci's argument that Federico Borromeo was associated with the cycle's execution is based entirely on the idea that the narrative style of the images was somehow directed by his theories of the representation of sacred narrative. Two obvious objections can be raised to this suggestion. First, the very theories thought to have determined the form of the cycle were not published until 1624, and so may not even have been developed by their eventual author at the time of the Carlo Borromeo cycle's execution. Second, the cycle itself was painted by a variety of artists whose narrative styles were quite diverse. The final appearance of the cycle furnishes absolutely no evidence to suggest that these

108 F. Borromeo, De pictura sacra, Milan, 1624.
individual traits were suppressed by a patron anxious to make the works conform to a particular theoretical model. The arguments of both Rossi and Rosci are flawed on a deeper level, however, since both have assumed that it is possible to connect the very vague goals for art set out in Federico Borromeo's texts with the appearance of actual works of art. For both Rossi and Rosci, the combination of precise fidelity to the historical narrative, with an insistence on "excitare in humano pectore motus" are the decisive (and only) factors joining the two cycles of paintings with Federico Borromeo's theories. Doubtless Borromeo himself could have made such connexions, but the modern reader of his texts has little way of making a reasonable assessment.\(^\text{109}\)

The question of which specific artistic characteristics Borromeo may have referred to in his theories can be approached through an investigation into his taste as a patron. This well documented but previously little studied subject has been the subject of a recent book by Pamela Jones. Her work shows that Borromeo focussed on collecting devotional images whose subjects emphasised the benevolence and accessibility of the Lord.\(^\text{110}\) His collection was, for instance, filled with many paintings of the Holy Family, and of the Adoration of the Magi. When saints were the principal subjects, they were usually shown in prayer, and not, significantly, undergoing gruesome yet heroic martyrdom. In general, it seems that he did not have a taste for such violent themes. This fact does not decisively remove him from the position of having had an influence on the Milanese cycle, since S. Carlo was after all a confessor saint, but it does suggest that it may be a little far fetched to posit a connexion between Federico


Borromeo's theories and the Salmeggia cycle in which the martyrdom of S. Alessandro played such an important part.

In spite of doubts as to the relevance of Federico Borromeo's theories, the two painted cycles did both serve a similar purpose, the legitimation of a saint's cult. The Milanese cycle was created before its subject, Carlo Borromeo, was officially made a saint, and thus acted to promote and lend authority to his cult as a way of advocating a swift canonization. The success of that undertaking in 1610, and the use of the cycle in the celebrations at the Duomo surrounding the event, must have confirmed its authority. Although other factors were indubitably of greater significance in the process leading up to S. Carlo's canonization, the important role of this cycle of paintings cannot be overlooked. In the Lombard context, the cycle would have become a powerful example of how art could be used simultaneously to promote and valorise a particular version of a saint's life. So even if neither cycle marked a significant response to the theories of Federico Borromeo, it is quite possible that, given the complete absence of local precedents, the Milanese cycle was a model for Salmeggia's paintings of S. Alessandro. The purpose of the two cycles was different in that S. Alessandro had been a saint for centuries, but in both instances the cults were not on firm foundations. In the Milanese example the venerated figure was only recently dead, and in Bergamo doubts over the authenticity of S. Alessandro's relics had undermined the centrality of his cult.

What significance did the emulation of a Milanese cycle of paintings hold? Had this connexion with Milan been an isolated aspect of the programme, it might have been possible to argue that its meaning was limited simply to the emulation of an important regional model. There are, however, further connexions with Milan. The style of the Salmeggia paintings, for instance, has often been likened to that of the early-sixteenth century Milanese artist,
Bernardino Luini. It is difficult to say whether this quality is more or less apparent in this cycle than in the remainder of Salmeggia's oeuvre, but it is quite possible that he was chosen by Lattantio Bonghi because of his imitation of an earlier Milanese style. This conscious archaism would have suggested the timelessness of the cycle's programme, thus acting further to legitimate its message. The simplicity and purity of the style may also have been meant to suggest that the time represented in these narratives embodied these very qualities. The Early Christian period was, after all, idealised by contemporaries as exemplifying in moral and spiritual terms exactly these two stylistic characteristics. An emphasis on Milan is also apparent in the choice of themes made for the cycle. I have already discussed how the image of S. Alessandro created bishop of Bergamo (fig. 21) expressed the idea that the saint had been the official founder of the diocese and that his canons were rightfully its leaders. In this context, it is noteworthy that the official presiding over this rite, Materno, was bishop of Milan, thereby proclaiming Bergamo's status as suffragen of Milan. Also key in this respect is the great importance with which Carlo Borromeo had invested the office of bishop. He envisioned the bishop as the principal effectuator of tridentine reforms. Perhaps by giving the bishop of Milan such an important role in the painting, the intention was to honour Materno's great successor in this position.

Together, these elements suggest that the canons of S. Alessandro sought to construct their corporate identity through an appeal to Milanese models. No doubt this was motivated in part by a desire to maintain a strong local identity in the face of Venetian political control and cultural influence. By using Lombard

111 Rossi, in Prima della pittura, p. 27.
artistic models for a cycle dedicated to the patron saint of a Lombard city, the canons of S. Alessandro were able to suggest that Bergamo was not, in the realms of either culture or religion, in any way subservient to Venice. The prescriptions to Venetian secular authority that seem to have been one message of the cycle must be considered in light of this proclaimed local autonomy. In the painting of the translation of S. Alessandro, (fig. 30) for instance, the penitent Berengar acts as the canons of S. Alessandro hoped the Venetians would, and in the image of S. Grata presenting the miraculous flowers to S. Lupo, (fig. 29) he is an exemplary Christian ruler.

Although the Milanese cycle dedicated to Carlo Borromeo was an important model for the Bergamask example, I have already noted one critical distinction; S. Alessandro was not a contemporary cleric, but an Early Christian martyr. The great significance attached to such figures in late-sixteenth-century culture had manifested itself in the proliferation of painted cycles dedicated to their lives. In the last two decades of the century, for instance, fully eight such cycles were created for churches in Rome. In an insightful article on these cycles, Alexandra Herz has argued that underlying this phenomenon was a revival of the idea that martyrs "repeat, complete and renew Christ's Passion and His work of salvation." In visual terms the Roman programmes of decoration articulated this idea through the linking of all the iconographic elements either to a large image of the cross, or to scenes alluding to Christ's redemption of mankind.

Did the Salmeggia cycle have the same purpose? In the background of the work showing S. Alessandro kicking over the pagan altar, (fig. 20) I have already remarked on the inclusion of a scene not found in the hagiographical accounts, a

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flagellation. Given the strong Christological emphasis of the Roman cycles, however, this seems a rather modest and peripheral insertion, especially since there are no other such significant marginalia. Isolated from its physical context in this way, the programme does not appear to emphasise the themes of the Roman examples. But as I will discuss in the following section, contemporary with the cycle’s execution the canons of S. Alessandro reworked a processional cross in such a way that it conveyed quite explicitly the idea that their saint’s martyrdom was a renewal and completion of Christ’s victory. Still, this evidence of an attachment to a widely held set of cultural values cannot be separated from the more particular concerns that motivated the patronage of the canons of S. Alessandro.

6. The Canons of S. Alessandro and Art Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 II: The Processional Cross

In 1616, the canons of S. Alessandro ordered that one of their prized possessions, a large silver processional cross, be reworked by a Milanese silversmith, Carlo de Giulij.114 (figs. 32, 33) This cross had originally been commissioned around 1386 when the canons were still resident at the basilica alessandrina. Although the cross still survives at the cathedral today, it has undergone further changes subsequent to those of 1616.115 The documentary evidence is such, however, that its appearance both before and after the 1616 restoration can be reconstructed, at least in terms of its iconography.116 The 1386

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114 CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, p. 35, "Una grande, et antichissime croce de argento con varie figure et ornamenti la quale poi l’anno 1616 e stata refatta del tutto in Milano a spese della mensa del Capitolo S. Alessandro..." The date is also inscribed on the base of the cross.

115 For a description of these later changes, as well as a discussion of the 1616 modifications, see B.D. Montaldo, "La croce di Ughetto del Duomo di Bergamo," Osservatorio delle arti 1 (1988), pp. 38-44.

116 The contract, BCB, AB 354, Quaedam notabilia sec. XI-XV, fols. 6-7, is reprinted in its entirety in the appendix of Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 241-243. A document of 1617, CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, pp. 193-208, records in great detail the alterations made at that date.
contract specified that on the front of the cross there was to be a Christ crucified
in the centre flanked by the Virgin and St. John on the arms. Above Christ there
was to be an angel, while a S. Alessandro on horseback was to be affixed to the
base.\textsuperscript{117} On the back of the cross Christ in Majesty was to appear in the centre
while on the arms were to be the four Evangelist symbols, and a relief of S. Grata
holding the head of S. Alessandro.\textsuperscript{118}

Following the 1616 changes, the central element on the front of the cross
was still the crucified Christ, but the arms of the cross were now decorated with
the four Evangelist symbols previously on the back of the cross.\textsuperscript{119} (fig. 32) The
changes to the reverse side were more significant. In the centre, in the place
formerly devoted to Christ in Majesty, was S. Alessandro on horseback. (fig. 33)
On the ends of the four arms of the cross were relief images of saints, with S.
Vincenzo at the top, S. Adleida to the right, S. Grata at the bottom, and S.
Barnaba at the left. Halfway along each arm were four smaller reliefs identified
as, starting from the top and moving clockwise, SS. Procolo, Rustico, Carlo
Borromeo and Fermo.\textsuperscript{120} Forming the base of the cross was a newly made small

\textsuperscript{117} BCB, AB 354, Quaedam notabilia sec. XI-XV, fol. 6, from Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 241, "...cum
crucifixo pulcro in forma crucis... cum figura domine sancte Marie ab uno latere et ab alio sancti
Johannis et de supra unius angel... et sancti Alexandri in forma unius militis et in equo sedens."

\textsuperscript{118} BCB, AB 354, Quaedam notabilia sec. XI-XV, fol. 6, from Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 241, "...et
ab alio latere Christus sedens in trono et iudicio, toto opere relevato, cum quatuor evangelistis a
lateribus crucis... videlicet hominis, aquile, leonis et bovis relevatis et figura domine sancte Grate
cum capite domini sancti Alexandri in ipsius brachiis."

\textsuperscript{119} CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, pp. 197-198, "Nel mezzo puoi di detta Croce vi è il Christo vecchio,
et alle quattro teste d’essa Croce, vi sono li significati delli quattro Evangelisti, cioè nella testa
sopra il capo di Christo vi è l’Aquila, et tra detta Aquila, et il capo di detto Christo, vi è il breve
solito pondersi sopra le croci, cioè I.N.R.I.

Nella testa alli piedi d’esso Christo, vi è l’angelo.

Nella testa che si trova alla destra d’esso Christo, vi è il Bue.

Alla testa, che si trova alla sinistra del medemo Christo vi è il Leone.

Quali quattro significati sono vecchi, eccetto le ali che sono fatte di nuovo..."

\textsuperscript{120} CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, pp. 198-199, "...in quello di mezzo, vi è sigillata la Città di Bergamo
con S.to Alexandro a cavallo come Padrone di essa Città, figura vecchia, salvo che se gli sono fatti
di nuovo la bandiera in mano, il stocco, et speroni, et nella detta bandiera vi è dentro un ziglio, tra il
qual corpo, et il secondo, descendendo a basso, vi è l’effigie di S.to Carlo, sotto a qual effigie seguita
il detto secondo corpo del detti sei sopra il qual secondo corpo, vi è un vaso de fiori, palme, et
hexagonal structure with niches, into which were inserted figures of SS. Narno, Viatore, Giovanni, Proiettizio, Giacomo and Hesteria. The front of the cross was therefore dedicated to the universally relevant figures of Christ and the Evangelists, whereas the reverse side has been transformed into a veritable pantheon of local saints.

The intention underlying this arrangement was to parallel Christ and the Evangelists with S. Alessandro and the other local saints. Through the placement of S. Alessandro at the centre of the new scheme, in a position analogous to that of Christ on the front of the cross, the cross announced that S.

corone, et sotto a detto vaso vi sono numero due palme, et un friso de fiori diversi, con coronette attaccate a dette palme; sotto a quali palme seguita il terzo corpo dellì detti sei, sopra il qual terzo corpo vi è l'effigie di S.ta Grata Principessa di Bergamo, con la corona in capo, et una baccia in mano, con dentro la testa di Santo Alessandro; sopra puoi detta effigie a cavallo di Santo Alessandro vi è Santo Procuolo Vescovo, et sopra esso vi è il quarto corpo dellì detti sei, nel quale vi è l'effigie di Santo Vincenzo, con la palma in mano, figura vecchia. Alla destra puoi vi è il quinto corpo dellì detti sei, sopra quale vi è l'effigie di Santa Adleida Principessa di Bergamo, con la corona bianca in testa, figura vecchia, tra qual figura, et quella di Santo Alessandro, vi è Santo Fermo. Alla sinistra vi è il sesto corpo dellì detti sei, con sopra l'effigie di Santo Barnaba Apostolo, con un libro sotto alla mano, tra qual effigie, et quella di Santo Alessandro vi è S.to Rustico martire.."

121 CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, pp. 199-200, "In fondo puoi di detta Croce, vi è un pomo fatto tutto di nuovo, con la sua canna, qual pomo è fatto in sei facie, con sue nizze, nelle quali nizze vi sono numero sei figure, cioè Santo Narno primo vescovo di Bergamo, Santo Viatore parimenti vescovo, Santo Gioanni Vescovo et martire, i quali tre Vescovi sono in habito pontificale, et hanno il bastone pastorale in mano, et detto Santo Gioanni ha di più ancora la palma in mano, Santi Procetio, et Iacomo Canonici, et martiri, ambi con le palme in mano, et Santa Hesteria Vergine, et martire, con la palma in mano."

122 None of the major figures were replaced in the 1616 reworking, but several changed identity. These changes can be determined by a process of exclusion since, with the exception of the Evangelist symbols, all the major relief figures survive on the cross today. The relief of the Virgin that was originally placed to the side of the crucified Christ was moved and transformed into S. Adleida. The fact that the Virgin had been shown wearing a crown may actually have had a role in determining which local saint she was to become. S. Grata, for instance, could have been shown wearing a crown since she had been married to a German king and is often shown crowned, but she was already included on the cross holding S. Alessandro's severed head. S. Adleida was the only other local female saint who could be depicted wearing a crown; she had been the wife of Lupo, ruler of Bergamo at the time of S. Alessandro, and later ruler of the city herself. In addition to this change of identity, St. John the Evangelist became S. Barnaba, and an angel became S. Vincenzo. The only figures that were newly made for the cross were the small reliefs of SS. Fermo, Rustico, Procolo and Carlo, and the figures placed in the hexagonal base of the cross. These were not executed in a style consistent with the original Trecento figures, but are so small that they have little effect on how the object appeared as a whole. In this respect, the decorative modifications of the 1616 reworking were much more important.
Alessandro was foremost amongst local saints. His identification with Bergamo and with its protection was also emphasised by the fact that he was placed against a view of the city.\textsuperscript{123} Within the image of the city itself flags decorated with the lily of S. Alessandro are flying, further reinforcing the connexion between saint and city. None of the other saints were elaborated in this way and indeed all were subordinate, both in position and scale, to the central figure of S. Alessandro. Furthermore, the profile of the cross was dominated by thirty-three finial-like decorative forms, each terminated with a lily.\textsuperscript{124} These symbols, added as part of the 1616 reworking, underscored the centrality of S. Alessandro.

What relationship did this programme have with the cycle of paintings by Salmeggia? I have already observed how, following the example of contemporary martyr cycles in Rome, the artist of the cycle introduced the idea that S. Alessandro's suffering and martyrdom should be seen as renewing Christ's Passion and redemptive sacrifice. The placement of the saint and Christ crucified on opposite sides of the reworked cross made this same point, and in fact it would be hard to imagine a more explicit way of expressing this. If the painted cycle was intended to be hung in the space of the chapel, as is likely at least for the feast day of S. Alessandro, then there would have been a visual relationship between it and the cross on the altar. In many of the Roman cycles, the narratives of martyrdom were similarly disposed around a cross, although usually included within the painted or mosaic decoration. The juxtaposition of cross and martyrdom gave meaning to the scenes of torment; each death in the struggle against the devil renewed the victory of Christ on the cross. At the

\textsuperscript{123} CAP 245, \textit{Oggetti di chiesa}, p. 198, "vi è sigillata la Città di Bergamo con S.to Alessandro a cavallo come Padrone di essa Città..."

\textsuperscript{124} CAP 245, \textit{Oggetti di chiesa}, pp. 196-197, "Prima atorno ad essa Croce vi è un frisio, con fiorini grandi, numero diecisei, con li peretti adorati in essi fioroni, et in cima per chiodi vi sono gigli bianchi. Altri fiorini numero sedecì piu picioli con suoi peretti adorati, et gigli bianchi... Quali tutte cose sono fatte di nuovo."
Bergamo cathedral the same point would have been made primarily on the processional cross, but the idea it suggested must then have served as a key to understanding the surrounding cycle of paintings.

The figures ranged around S. Alessandro on the cross expand the parallel to include other important local saints. On the arms of the cross were founders of the church in Bergamo. S. Barnaba was thought to have introduced Christianity into the city during the first century. S. Grata was, of course, a witness to the martyrdom of S. Alessandro, and the founder of the basilica alessandrina. S. Adleida was the Christian wife of S. Lupo, S. Grata's father. She ruled the city for a time after the death of Lupo, and founded a number of churches as well. Finally, S. Vincenzo was included in honour of the cathedral dedicated to him. Also on the arms of the cross, but smaller in scale and consequently of lesser importance were the two early local saints, Fermo and Rustico, along with S. Procolo, and S. Carlo who had been responsible for the translation of their relics to the cathedral. The six saints represented on the base of the cross correspond to those whose relics were under the jurisdiction of the canons of S. Alessandro. Although all of these saints had some importance within the scheme of local sacred history, the cross is unambiguous in its celebration of S. Alessandro as the principal member of the pantheon.

The reworking of the cross was carried out around the same time as the canons of S. Vincenzo commissioned the antependium for the high altar. (fig. 14) Not surprisingly, given the 1615 collapse of the proposed union between the two congregations, the cross and the antependium express diametrically opposed ideas. Through reference to the hierarchy of seating in the choir the

125 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, pp. 2-16.
127 See above, pp.???
antependium underlined the traditional precedence given to the canons of S. Vincenzo. The rearranged cross, by contrast, emphasised S. Alessandro's centrality amongst local saints, thereby suggesting that the congregation of canons which possessed his relics should be ranked first within the church of Bergamo. Both works, therefore, were commissioned to forward the political agendas of their patrons.

The forms by which these two messages were delivered, however, could not have been more different. The antependium was executed in a classicizing mode that stood within contemporary stylistic norms, whereas the cross reworked at the behest of the canons of S. Alessandro was largely in a Gothic style. The persistence of this style was principally the result of having chosen not to make an entirely new cross or other object, but to modify an existing one. Had the canons of S. Alessandro not desired this stylistic archaism they could have requested the eradication of the offending elements, but they chose, significantly, not to do so. Indeed, the additions to the cross, especially in terms of its decoration, emphasised rather than diminished the impression that it was an old object.128

The use of such an outdated style must have been intentional on the part of the canons of S. Alessandro. We have already seen how the style employed by Salmeggia had a variety of meanings, suggesting a political connexion with Milan, as well as providing a commentary on the simplicity and purity of the Church during the time of S. Alessandro. Together these qualities helped to legitimate the position of the canons of S. Alessandro. In the case of the cross,

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128 Each four-lobed arm of the cross, as well as the boundaries between lobes, was decorated with a finial-like motif terminating each lobe. Even though these forms were developed out of acanthus decoration, of obvious classical derivation, the overall effect has little affinity to crosses executed in a contemporary style and actually accentuates the impression that the cross is entirely from the Gothic period.
however, the role played by style was even more central. Even though the specifics of its programme were conditioned by the immediate needs of the chapter following the 1614 failure to achieve union, this message was articulated by an object that already had a very long association with the canons of S. Alessandro, and with the basilica alessandrina as well, thus suggesting that the concept it expressed had a similarly long lineage.

The reworking of the cross may also have been intended as a provocation to the canons of S. Vincenzo. In an earlier section of the document recording the detailed appearance of the reworked cross, the blessing of the finished cross by bishop Emo is described as having taken place on 9 January 1617, the feast day of S. Vincenzo.129 Following its blessing, the cross was carried at the front of the procession. This detail was probably recorded because it must have seemed to have marked the official recognition by the bishop of the claims of the canons of S. Alessandro. There is also evidence that the canons of S. Vincenzo were not amused by this turn of events. In the months immediately following the blessing of the cross, these canons claimed that the figure of Christ crucified belonged to them, and demanded its return to their possession.130 On closer examination, it does appear that the crucified Christ on the cross today was executed in a style that is different from that of the Trecento figures. The 1617 description of the cross is, however, quite explicit in saying that the crucified Christ was a component part of the old cross.131 Presumably, therefore, what

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130 The request is recorded both in the acts of the congregation of S. Alessandro, CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fols. 31v-32, 16 May 1617, "Hic placuit ut si constitent crucifixum argentum existentem in nostra cruce magna esse MR Congregationis S. Vincentij inde amoveatur et restitutur et de huismodi restitutione conficiatur publicum instrumentum," and in a document from the canons of S. Vincenzo, CAP 207, Filia Action., 13 May 1617.

131 CAP 245, Oggetti di chiesa, pg. 197, "Nel mezzo puoi di detta Croce vi è il Christo vecchio."
happened was that sometime between 1386 and 1616 the canons of S. Vincenzo contributed a silver figure of Christ crucified to the cross possessed by the canons of S. Alessandro. This contribution doubtless occurred during one of those brief periods when the two congregations coexisted harmoniously. Once the canons of S. Alessandro had transformed the cross into a manifesto for the cause of the primacy of their saint, and then, to add insult to injury, orchestrated its official reception into the church for the feast of S. Vincenzo, the canons of S. Vincenzo rebelled and demanded the return of their portion. This attempt on the part of the canons of S. Vincenzo to destroy the integrity of the cross must be considered as evidence of the effectiveness of the artistic means employed in this battle by the canons of S. Alessandro.

Like the Salmeggia cycle dedicated to the life of S. Alessandro, the reworked cross also alluded to a strong connexion with Milan. No single piece of evidence is decisive in this regard but seen together they form a suggestive link. In the first place, the work was carried out by a Milanese artist in Milan. Secondly, two of the saints shown on the side of the cross with S. Alessandro were closely associated with Milan. S. Barnaba was considered the founder of the church in Bergamo, but his cult had never been particularly strong there. He was, however, venerated to a much greater extent in Milan, where he was also thought to have introduced Christianity. The showing of S. Barnaba on the cross made an analogous point to the painting of S. Alessandro created bishop in the Salmeggia cycle. (fig. 21) In both cases the origins of the church in Bergamo are implicitly connected with those of the church in Milan. The other saint shown on the cross who had a strong link to Milan was, of course, S. Carlo Borromeo. Partly, he must have been included because devotion to his cult had become quite widespread following his 1610 canonisation. But on a more specific level, the canons of S. Alessandro may have desired to link the church in Bergamo
with that in Milan. It has even been suggested that S. Carlo, because of his 1575 apostolic visitation, was beginning to be thought of as a kind of second founder of the Church in Bergamo. As evidence of this proposal, there is at least one other surviving image in which S. Alessandro is shown paired with S. Carlo.\footnote{G. Bonetti, "Testimonianze figurative della pietà popolare a Bergamo dal medioevo alla controriforma," tesi di laurea, Università cattolica, Milan, 1984-85, pp. 28-29. The surviving image is an external fresco above via Borgo Canale, 72 in Bergamo. Painted by Pietro Baschenis, it is dated 1617 and shows the Virgin and Child flanked by SS. Carlo and Alessandro, as well as two other unidentified saints.} Together, the allusions to Milan in the iconography and manufacture of the cross suggest that the canons of S. Alessandro sought to fabricate an identity for themselves that included a connexion with that city. As discussed with reference to the Salmeggia cycle of paintings, this strategy may have been aimed at asserting Bergamo's Lombard identity in the face of Venetian secular and religious control.

7. The Canons of S. Alessandro and Art Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 III: The Memorial Column to the basilica alessandrina

With the construction of a memorial column on the site of the demolished basilica alessandrina in 1621, the canons of S. Alessandro sought to amplify and nuance the agenda articulated by the reworking of the silver cross and the commissioning of the Salmeggia cycle of paintings, and to expand it beyond the boundaries of church decoration. (fig. 34) Like these objects, the column was aimed at encouraging the Bergamo-wide cult of S. Alessandro, while simultaneously suggesting the necessity of rebuilding or at least reestablishing somehow the lost basilica. Unlike these other works, however, the impulse for its commission was probably provided not by the canons of S. Vincenzo, but by the expansion of S. Alessandro's cult at the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna.
The canons had first decided to erect such a column in 1611, but the idea then completely disappeared from the acts of the congregation of S. Alessandro until August 1621, just a month before the column was actually set up. On 29 September 1621, following mass at S. Vincenzo, bishop Emo, the Venetian Rectors, along with all of the city's ecclesiastics and nobles processed towards the area just outside the walls where the basilica had been located. The end of the procession was marked by the blessing of the cross that was later placed on top of the column.

Why should the canons of S. Alessandro have abandoned the idea of erecting a column in 1611, only to revive it in 1621? A significant reason for a lack of interest in the years following 1611 must have been the movement towards a comprehensive act of union between the two congregations of canons. With the possibility alive that the dedication of the cathedral to S. Vincenzo might be eliminated in favour of S. Alessandro, effectively transforming the cathedral into a new basilica alessandrina, the need to commemorate their former seat would doubtless have been less of an imperative to the canons of S. Alessandro. After the collapse of that proposed union in 1615, as we have seen, the two congregations fought for precedence by commissioning forceful assertions of their corporate identities. In the documents, the explicit rationale for erecting a column was that tridentine decrees required the marking of sacred ground with a cross. As the burial ground for many centuries of S.

133 CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 13v, 9 March 1611; CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 41v, 31 August 1621, "Elegerunt ad erigendum columnam cum cruce in loco ubi erat ecclesiam S. Alexandri maioris ad perpetuam... memoria iuxta prescriptum S. Concil. Trid.i..."

134 The ceremony is described in considerable detail in a contemporary document, BCB, Misellanea, AB 398, document 50, 29 September 1621. See also Calvi, Effemeride, vol. 3, p. 120.

135 The document that records the decision to erect the column, CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 41v, 31 August 1621, mentions tridentine decrees, as does the description of the blessing ceremony BCB, Misellanea, AB 398, document 50, "...ut iuxta sacrorum canonarum, ut precipue sacrosancti concilii Tridentini decreta vexillum sacratissimae Crucis ibi erigeretur ad Christi fideles monendos terram illam esse sanctam."
Alessandro and the other local saints, the site of the *basilica alessandrina* certainly qualified, but many decades had passed since the Council of Trent. While the canons of S. Alessandro were probably motivated in part by a genuine desire to bring about reform, their purely local agenda, especially the relative status of the two congregations of canons, must also have been served by this decision. By invoking tridentine decrees the canons were able to couple their local goals to a broader programme of reform.

The appropriation of old columns and the erection of new ones had in fact become somewhat of a mania in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Italy. In Rome, for instance, Sixtus V planned that the triumphal columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius act as two foci within his new systems of streets. To symbolise the Christian triumph over paganism one column was surmounted with a statue of St. Peter, and the other with St. Paul.\textsuperscript{136} Similarly, Paul V erected in front of S. Maria Maggiore an ancient column he salvaged from the basilica of Maxentius. This monument was claimed for Christianity by a statue of the Virgin on its summit.\textsuperscript{137} In Milan, Carlo Borromeo sponsored the erection of a large number of new columns. During the plague of 1576, the archbishop set up altars in the streets so that the faithful could hear mass. When the plague was over, these temporary altars were removed, but desiring to continue this sacralisation of city space, Borromeo ordered the erection of a series of columns with crosses on the sites of the plague altars. Just after his death twenty five of these were in place, and by the early Seicento the number had risen to thirty nine. Each of these columns was dedicated to an event from


\textsuperscript{137} Magnuson, *Rome in the Age of Bernini*, vol. 1, p. 124.
Christ's Passion, making it possible to travel a symbolic *Via Crucis* through the actual fabric of the city of Milan.\textsuperscript{138}

In Bergamo, three of the columns erected around this time marked sites with which S. Alessandro was associated. Unlike in Milan, however, this did not emerge out of the concerted effort of a single individual, but out of a competitive environment, with different factions eager to capture for themselves some of the prestige of the patron saint. The first of these columns was erected in 1618 in front of the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna. (fig. 35) Its new presence must have been a strong motivating factor for the canons of S. Alessandro,\textsuperscript{139} for not only did this column mark the traditional site of the saint's martyrdom, its dedicatory inscription implicitly claimed that it was a recomposition of the very column that had borne the idol of Crotacio in S. Alessandro's time.\textsuperscript{140} As a powerful public marker of that location it advocated the idea that the cult of S. Alessandro should be centred there. As we shall see in the chapter devoted to this church, the column was but one part of a

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\textsuperscript{139} CSAlCol, *Terminazioni 1614-1629*, 12 May 1615, fol. 14v, the decision was taken to erect the column in front of S. Alessandro in Colonna: "Essendo sta recordato in questo M.co Colleggio esser bene per honorevolezza della chiesa di S. Alessandro di questo pio loco et del borgo di S. Leonardo metter in piedi la Colona sopra la quale giaceva l'Idolo de Crotatio ... la qual colona fu decapitato da S. Aless.o et essendone alcuni pezzi di detta colona apresso alla detta chiesa..." Due to problems with acquiring some dispersed pieces of this column its completion was delayed until 1618.

\textsuperscript{140} CROTACII/BERGOMI DUCIS IDOLO/SUPSTIOSE HIS PRIUS/ERECTAM/S. ALEXANDRI/LEGIO. THEBEAE SIGNIF./XPM PDICATIS MIRACULO/EVERSAM/EIDEM TUTELARI DIVO/ALEXANDRO/MART. HIC PALMAM ADEPTO/RELIGIOSE REPONENDAM/EX PIOR STIPE/CONSORTII PRESIDES CC/IOE EMO EPO/AN SAL MDXXIX. The claim that the column is a recomposition of the original one is not made directly, but by using the word "reponendam" or restored, the connexion is implicit. As further evidence of this intention is the fact that in the records of the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna, the surviving column fragments are described as actually being from the column of Crotacio. See above, note 139.
comprehensive programme in which art was used to promote ecclesiastical advancement. The column on the site of the basilica alessandrina must have been erected at least partly in response to the column at S. Alessandro in Colonna, as a way for the canons of S. Alessandro to proclaim that their site was of equal importance in the cult of the saint, and that they, not the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna, were the arbiters of his cult. By marking these places both groups sought to advance the cult of S. Alessandro and, by extension, the prestige of Bergamo, but at the same time they wanted to join the fate of their respective institutions to the ascendancy they were promoting.

Although not stated explicitly in any of the documents, or in its dedicatory inscription, the monument in Borgo Canale was almost certainly made up of parts drawn from the remains of the basilica alessandrina owned by the canons of S. Alessandro. During the speedy demolition of their church the canons had managed to save a large number of marble columns. Some of these they had already employed in the construction of the entrance portal to S. Vincenzo, but their stockpile had not been completely exhausted in this undertaking. In 1622, for instance, a year after the dedication of the monument in Borgo Canale, there is a document recording their possession of several columns. It would seem logical, therefore, that in a monument to the demolished basilica alessandrina the canons would have used one of the columns they had salvaged from that church. Indeed, the quite comprehensive record of the expenses incurred in the erection of the column cited no payments either for the purchase or working of stone. The column in Borgo Canale was probably understood by

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141 A document of 1582 records their possession of columns that had come from the basilica alessandrina: CAP 615, Atti di causa del capitolo, fols. 47-49, 27 April 1582. For the use of some these columns in the construction of the portal at S. Vincenzo, see chapter one, pp.???
143 CAP 574, Expensae (1600-1640), document dated to September 1621.
contemporaries as a fragment of the structure built by S. Grata immediately following the martyrdom of S. Alessandro. Both this column and the one at S. Alessandro in Colonna, therefore, acted in a similar fashion, as physical links with the time of the Bergamo's patron saint.

An essential difference between the two monuments, however, was that only one was connected with an extant church. In this way, the column at the site of the basilica alessandrina not only marked the sacred ground of S. Alessandro's burial, it acted as a physical reminder of the demolition of the ancient church, and of its central importance. Underlining the loss in this emphatically public manner would have reminded viewers that nothing had been created that had adequately taken its place. Like the cycle of paintings by Salmeggia, therefore, the column was in part a plea for a return to the pre-1561 situation, a plea for the building a new church. Backing up this interpretation is the fact that a connexion between the erection of columns and the restoration of Early Christian buildings had developed in late-sixteenth-century Rome. When Cardinal Cesare Baronio began his restorations of SS. Nereo ed Achilleo and S. Cesareo de'Appia in the late 1590s, in front of each church he set up a column topped with a cross. According to the convincing interpretation of Alexandra Herz, in doing this Baronio wanted to imitate the Early Christians who, it was believed, used to set up crosses to claim sites where they planned to build churches.144 By erecting columns with crosses, therefore, Baronio signalled his intention to begin the restoration of the two churches. Although I am not suggesting any direct influence of the Roman example, it does show that the erection of columns with crosses in situations such as this could have meaning beyond their role as indicators of sacred ground. By placing a column where they

did, the canons of S. Alessandro actually may have intended to mark the absence of a building more strongly than the presence of sacred soil.

While the canons of S. Alessandro intended the column as a plea for a new *basilica alessandrina*, the Venetian authorities may have been trying to make amends for its demolition. The column's dedicatory inscription makes clear that the work had been partially sponsored by Giacomo Suriano, one of the Venetian Rettori of the city.\(^\text{145}\) (fig. 36) It is quite possible that he did this to placate the congregation of S. Alessandro. One member of this group had, after all, just recently commissioned a cycle of paintings suggesting that the Venetians should, like the Emperor Berengar, rebuild the *basilica alessandrina*. Although I would not suggest that Giacomo Suriano acted directly in response to the cycle of paintings, its message, however conveyed to him, may well have motivated his actions. It is likely, therefore, that the two parties responsible for this monument had contradictory agendas. The canons of S. Alessandro almost certainly considered it as a first step in a process leading ultimately to the building of a new cathedral, whereas Suriano probably viewed his sponsorship as a symbolic restitution that would obviate any need to build a new cathedral.

The agenda of the canons of S. Alessandro was elaborated even further in another column erected in 1623. In 1622, the confraternity of the Beata Vergine dello Spasimo from Borgo S. Leonardo, along with the Vicinia itself, requested the use of one of the columns owned by the canons of S. Alessandro.\(^\text{146}\) Their

\(^{145}\) His contribution is also recorded in a list of expenses incurred by the canons of S. Alessandro in erecting the column in 1621, CAP 574, *Expensae (1600-1640)*. Suriano appears to have ordered the erection of the column as well as contributing L. 142 towards its cost. The remaining L. 510 was covered by the canons of S. Alessandro.

\(^{146}\) CAP 160, *Acta Capituli S. Alexandri*, fol. 43, 19 January 1622, "Deinde concessinint columnam existentem in curtem episcopalis vicinie S. Mariae a planetu siti in suburbio S. Leonardi cum his conditionibus ut erigatur in honorem S. Alex patroni nostri cum verbis inscriptionis quae nobis placuerint non tamen expensis capituli et praeterea remaneat iuris ipsius capituli." The request is also recorded for the same date in CAP 212.
intention was to erect the column in the Prato S. Alessandro in honour of the saint. This area was located between the two major borghi of the lower city and was the site of the annual fair of S. Alessandro. The canons of S. Alessandro granted the request, but only on the condition that the column remain perpetually under their jurisdiction and that they be allowed complete control over its inscription. The column was erected in 1623, and although it no longer stands, its square base does survive.\footnote{147}

This features an inscription including both the conventional references to date and patronage, as well as elements suggesting that the canons of S. Alessandro did strongly influence its wording. The text on the first side of the pedestal describes how the monument was placed on the site of an anciently instituted fair that took place on the feast day of S. Alessandro.\footnote{148} Just as many people attended the fair, so they used to come to the basilica alessandrina, according to the inscription on the second side of the base, especially after the crucial donation made to this institution by Emperor Berengar.\footnote{149} There can be little doubt that this reference to Berengar must have been required by the canons of S. Alessandro. For them, as we observed in the Salmeggia painting of the translation of S. Alessandro, (fig. 30) Berengar's actions provided an historical precedent for how the Venetians should compensate the city for having demolished the basilica alessandrina. Berengar had sacked the very same church, but redeemed himself by helping to rebuild it. Like the painting, therefore, the inscription on the base of this column was probably meant to

\footnote{147} "Interessante avanzo dell'antica Cattedrale di S. Alessandro Maggiore," Bergomum 20 (1926), p. 39. The column was knocked down in the middle of the eighteenth century to make way for new fair buildings.

\footnote{148} The inscription is recorded in "Interessante avanzo," pp. 38-39: the first side reads "UT UBI NUNDINAE PRO SOLENI FESTO/S. ALEXANDRI MART BERG PATRONI/POPULIS UNDIQ CONFLUENTIB/ATIQSS ISTITUTO CELEBRATUR."

\footnote{149} "Interessante avanzo," p. 38, "IBI SICUT IN PRAEDIO EIUS/BASILICAE A BERENGARIO IMP/POSTEA ATTRIBUTO FIDELIU ETIA/SUPPLICATIONES FREQUETETUR."
suggest that the Venetians should help finance the rebuilding of a cathedral dedicated to S. Alessandro. There can be no other reason for the prominence accorded to Berengar in the inscription.

The third side of the base records the involvement of the confraternity and the date\textsuperscript{150}, but the final side puts to rest any doubts about the origin and purpose of the inscription as a whole. It states that the stone of the pedestal actually came from the basilica alessandrina, and that its use in this context had been authorised by the canons of S. Alessandro.\textsuperscript{151} Like the column marking the site of the basilica alessandrina, there is little doubt that the canons of S. Alessandro used the column at the fair both to encourage devotion to the patron saint of Bergamo, and to advance their own particular agenda, which was to identify the cult of S. Alessandro with themselves alone and to promote the construction of a new cathedral dedicated to that saint.

8. The Canons of S. Alessandro and Art Patronage Around the Failed Union of 1614 IV: Their Altarpieces in S. Vincenzo

The final objects to be discussed in this chapter are two altarpieces for the chapel of the canons of S. Alessandro in the cathedral. The first of these paintings, which came from the basilica alessandrina, (fig. 37) was replaced by a much larger work in 1625. (fig. 38) Although of quite different dates, both works emphasised the fact that the original cathedral chapter was founded in the name of S. Alessandro immediately following that saint's life. The two works, therefore, countered the claims to legitimacy made by the canons of S. Vincenzo with the antependium of the high altar.

\textsuperscript{150} "Interessante avanzo," p. 38, "VICINIA ET B MARIAE VIRG/A SPASMO SOCIETAS EREXIT/FEDER CORNELIO IUNIOR BE EPSIC/AN S. ALESSANDRO MDCXXIII KAL MAL."
\textsuperscript{151} "Interessante avanzo," p. 39, "EX EADE COLLAPSA ATIQSSIMA/S. ALEXANDRI MAIOR CATHEDR/BASILICA UNUM HUNC AD USUM CAPITULI PERMISSU DEVECTAM."
This chapel, located third on the left from the perspective of the church entrance, housed the relics of the saints translated from the basilica alessandrina, and was one of the logical foci for the fashioning of a collective identity. In an earlier section of this chapter, we saw how the antependium of its altar stood in opposition to the one commissioned by the canons of S. Vincenzo for the high altar. How was the altarpiece of the chapel integrated into the programme articulated by the other objects sponsored by the canons of S. Alessandro at this time? Until 1625, the altar was decorated with a painting that had originally stood above the altar of S. Hesteria in the basilica alessandrina. Signed and dated by Jacopino Scipioni in 1529, the painting now hangs in the choir of the parish church of S. Pancrazio. (fig. 37) Employing a very conventional sacra conversazione format, it depicts the Madonna and Child in the centre flanked by four of the local saints whose remains were housed in the altar in S. Vincenzo: SS. Giacomo, Giovanni, Hesteria and Proiettizio. As with the silver cross, the columns of the portal, and the columns set up in honour of S. Alessandro, this painting was chosen largely because it had been located in the demolished church. In all cases, the effectiveness of these objects relied on this connexion,

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152 See above, pp. 73-77.
153 Its original location in the basilica alessandrina is recorded only by Tassi, Vite, vol. 1, p. 47, who also states that the work was located on the altar housing the relics translated from that church. Firmer evidence of the painting’s location there is provided by the acts of the 1624 pastoral visitation of bishop Cornaro in which the altarpiece is described as depicting the Virgin and Child accompanied by four saints and three angels, ACVB, VP 40, Cornelio, fol. 11v. The painting is also described in the 1699 pastoral visitation of bishop Ruzini: ACVB, VP 71, Ruzini, fols. 38v-39, "Icon est antiqua a picte Averaria firmata exprimens in parte superiori B.V.M. cum puero Jesu, et inferius a cornu evangeli Sanctos loem [Johanem] Epum, et Jacobum Archidiaconum, et a cornu epistolae sanctum Proiettium et Sanctam Gratam quorum fit officium ut in libro Sanctorum Bergomi, et in extrema iconis parte chororum angelorum cartas, et instrumenta musice gestantium est corona lignae aurata circumsepta, et translata fuit ad hanc ecclesiam ab antiqua cathedralis S.ti Alexandri tempore eius demolitionis." Ruzini identified the female saint as S. Grata, but she is not shown holding the head of S. Alessandro, her usual attribute. Moreover, the relics of all the other saints represented in this picture had been located in the basilica alessandrina, whereas S. Grata’s relics were in the possession of the convent of S. Grata. The other identifications conform with those given by Tassi.
acting as physical links to a lost past, analogous in some ways to the holy relics they were intended to honour.

There must have been many paintings in the ancient basilica, however, which raises the question of why this particular painting was chosen. In the bottom centre of the picture is a group of three musician angels whose form and location are reminiscent of a motif that appears in altarpieces painted by Lorenzo Lotto in Bergamo from 1513 to 1523.154 Lotto was far and away the most famous painter ever to have worked in the city. His works were singled out for particular praise by seventeenth-century local writers, and, in fact, Donato Calvi in his Effemeride tended to link the name of Lotto to any painting that was considered of great prestige and antiquity.155 The connexion the Scipioni painting had with Lotto's style may have been part of the reason it was selected.

The subject matter of this altarpiece, however, was probably the decisive factor in its selection. Most obviously, the painting depicts four of the saints whose relics were kept in the altar below it. Of course, this altarpiece may have been the only existing work from the basilica alessandrina in which more than just one of these saints was shown, but it is impossible to be certain since there is no extant list of images from the demolished church. At first glance it seems odd that the canons did not chose a work that illustrated S. Alessandro, their most important relic by far, but there are three possible explanations for this. First, the relics of S. Alessandro had been housed in the crypt of the basilica alessandrina and may, therefore, not have been connected with an altarpiece. Second, the Scipioni altarpiece at S. Vincenzo was complemented by a second painting that...

154 On Jacopino Scipioni's connexions with Lotto, see F. Rossi, "Lorenzo Lotto e la cultura pittorica bergamasca del '500," in Bergamo per Lorenzo Lotto, pp. 40-45.
155 Rossi, "Lorenzo Lotto e la cultura pittorica," pp. 45, 51 note 27, remarks that this tendency has meant that many of the "Lottos" noted by Calvi were actually by other artists.
showed a standing figure of S. Alessandro dressed in Roman armour. Third, and most important, the depiction of S. Proiettizio holding a model of the basilica alessandrina to the right of the painting would, in the new context of S. Vincenzo, have been charged with political meaning for the canons of S. Alessandro. On one level, the model of the demolished church would, like the column, have been intended as a reminder of the loss suffered by the patrons of the chapel, but the choice of a work showing S. Proiettizio as the bearer of this message was neither random nor without greater significance.

According to local tradition, following his conversion by S. Alessandro, S. Proiettizio founded a chapter of canons at the basilica alessandrina and became its first leader, the arcidiacono. In the equivalent position on the left side of the altarpiece is S. Giacomo, a slightly later arcidiacono of the chapter. By showing S. Proiettizio holding a model of the basilica alessandrina, and including the figure of S. Giacomo, the painting proclaimed the fact that the original chapter of cathedral canons in the city had been founded at that church. Although it is hard to know what exact role this message played at the time of its execution in 1529, it was of particular relevance to the canons of S. Alessandro after 1561 because their church had been demolished and the chapter was still divided into two congregations. By appealing to the historical authority of SS. Proiettizio and Giacomo, the canons of S. Alessandro intimated that the chapter should return to its ancient unified state. This does not encompass the full implications of this motif, however, because the arcidiacono was by this date an office always filled by a canon of S. Vincenzo. As argued earlier, this situation

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156 This complementary image, which cannot be connected with any extant work, was mentioned in the 1624 pastoral visitation of bishop Cornaro, ACVB, VP 40, Cornelio, fol. 11v.
157 For the identification of this saint as Proiettizio, see above, note 153.
158 For the life of S. Proiettizio, see Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 3, pp. 1-19.
159 For the life of S. Giacomo, see Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 3, pp. 45-56.
was alluded to in the antependium commissioned by those canons. The altarpiece countered the claims of the canons of S. Vincenzo since the ancient unity of the chapter would have returned the office of arcidiacono to the canons of S. Alessandro, and consigned the canons of S. Vincenzo to oblivion.

In 1625, the canons of S. Alessandro decided to replace the Scipioni altarpiece with a work that was to depict all of the saints whose remains were kept in their altar.160 (fig. 38) No painting matching that description still survives at the cathedral, but a large altarpiece now hanging behind the high altar of the parish church of S. Vittore in the nearby town of Terno d'Isola can almost certainly be identified with the 1625 commission. The large size of this painting (400 X 320cm) corresponds with the high price mentioned in the document, and, more tellingly, the subject is exactly as specified there. It has also been dated to the correct period, and was executed by Enea Salmeggia, the same artist who painted the cycle dedicated to S. Alessandro for Lattantio Bonghi.161 Moreover, the eighteenth-century writer Francesco Maria Tassi describes the work in Terno d'Isola as having come originally from the cathedral.162 Perhaps most convincing, however, is the fact that the painting is structured to articulate an expanded version of the agenda expressed by the Scipioni altarpiece it replaced.

The painting shows S. Alessandro along with six other figures representing the saints whose relics were located in the altar. The saints are

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160 At a meeting of the canons of S. Alessandro on 12 July 1625, it was decided that the legacy of Gabriele Alberici, former preposito of the canons of S. Alessandro, was to be applied to the purchase of a painting: "Applicaverunt legatum q. T et MRD Gabrielis Alberici (quod an valeat investum est) altari S. Alex ut ex eo pingatur Icona in qua exprimant' imagines sanctorum qui in eadem loco reconditi sunt expendendo in ea L. 1169." See: CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, fol. 50v.
161 Ruggeri, "Enea Salmeggia," p. 320, dates the altarpiece to the late years of Salmeggia's career; Salmeggia died in 1626.
162 Tassi, Vite, vol. 1, p. 220, mentions that: "dicesi che questa tavola fosse prima in un altare del Duomo di questa città collocata."
ranged along a narrow cloudy platform, while the Virgin and Child appear in a heavenly apparition above. Christ blesses the assembled group of saints below. Two of these saints are given particular emphasis. To the left of centre, in the position of honour relative to the Virgin and Child, is S. Alessandro, shown wearing Roman armour and holding his standard. He looks up towards the heavenly vision and with his left hand gestures prominently to the figure just to the right of centre. This young male saint, who holds a model of the basilica alessandrina almost identical to that shown in the earlier altarpiece, is dressed as a deacon and must, therefore, be identified as S. Proiettizio. Almost in supplication, he looks upward and extends his right arm towards the Virgin and Child.

In essence, therefore, this replacement altarpiece activates and makes more explicit the agenda articulated in the Scipioni painting. In the new work, reference to its predecessor was not abandoned. S. Proiettizio, for instance, is placed in the same position relative to the Virgin, is similarly dressed, and, as already mentioned, holds a model of the basilica alessandrina. The new altarpiece by Salmeggia clearly owed part of its power to an association with its venerable predecessor. But by representing all of the saints whose relics were in the possession of the canons of S. Alessandro, the newer painting is a clearer statement of their claims to preeminence. Most important in this respect, is, of course, the inclusion of S. Alessandro himself, absent from the earlier work. Moreover, there is the new sense of implied narrative in the work by Salmeggia that strongly connects S. Alessandro with S. Proiettizio. These two saints are shown together, interacting in what must have been understood as an appeal to the Virgin and Child above. Christ replies to their supplication by giving it his blessing. The implications of this divine sanction are profound. S. Alessandro founded Christianity in Bergamo. He converted S. Proiettizio who in turn
founded the institutional structure of which the canons of S. Alessandro were the direct heirs. Within this framework the canons of S. Vincenzo were merely medieval interlopers. In this way the new altarpiece undermined the claims of precedence made by the canons of S. Vincenzo with their antependium, suggesting instead that local ecclesiastical hierarchy should be based on the primitive church, in which the canons of S. Vincenzo played absolutely no part. The canons of S. Alessandro could hardly have made a more eloquent statement of their claims to preeminence.
Chapter Three

S. Maria Maggiore, "Cappella della Città"

1. Introduction: S. Maria Maggiore as Civic Representation

Following the destruction of the basilica alessandrina in 1561, the cathedral of S. Vincenzo did not emerge as the undisputed principal church of Bergamo. Partly, this unusual situation arose as a result of the many problems enumerated in the previous two chapters, in particular the cramped space of the incomplete church building, and the constant and self-destructive squabbling between the two congregations of canons. But perhaps most critical in understanding why cathedral status did not automatically translate into undisputed primacy was the presence in the city of a magnificently decorated church celebrated as the "cappella della città," S. Maria Maggiore. Not only was this church located immediately adjacent to S. Vincenzo on the same small piazza in the centre of the upper city, it also physically dwarfed the cathedral. (figs. 6, 39, 40)

From as early as 1309, documents record the close connexion between S. Maria Maggiore and the city as a whole, describing it, in one instance, as "sancte marie de la capella pergami."¹ In response to this local tradition, Marin Sanuto, who visited Bergamo in 1483, referred to S. Maria Maggiore as the "Capella de la Comunità."² A slightly later account, written by Marcantonio Michiel, described how, even though S. Vincenzo had greater importance in the local ecclesiastical

² M. Sanuto, itinerario per la terraferma veneziana nell'anno 1483, Padua 1837, p. 77. Sanuto also praised the decoration of the church: "chiesia è bellissima et bene adornata, imo adornatissima, si de preti, altari et la grandeza sua; le porte magnifice, alte e di marmo lavorate; à uno batistero mirabellissimo, più che viti mai excelso et degno; e quando è gran caldi, qual sopra a li monti adviene, ìì è fresco mirabellissimo."
hierarchy, the fame and popularity of S. Maria Maggiore easily surpassed that of the Duomo:

In front of the law court, about whose fire we have spoken, is a small square to the south: on the right rises the palace of the bishop, in the centre the church of S. Maria, and to the left S. Vincenzo. This same, though famous for its ancient dedication, for the dignity of its ministers, for being the episcopal church, and notable as well for the size of its marbles, for the excellence of its design, and for its spaciousness, is, however, poorly cared for and rarely frequented. This is not because of the negligence or avarice of those who care for it, but because the restoration of its ruins, caused by its age and by fire, has not been completed, even though by now it is the two hundredth year since the restoration was begun. The church of S. Maria is the opposite, neither having such an ancient dedication as the other, (there being only around two hundred years since its foundation) nor being equal to the other in terms of the dignity of its ministers. The great number and piety of those who work there, however, have made it so popular that the city does not have a more famous church.3

I have already had cause to quote Michiel's description in chapter one, where I used it to demonstrate the failure of the fifteenth-century rebuilding of S. Vincenzo. S. Maria Maggiore still outshone the cathedral. For this chapter, Michiel's observations raise two important questions. What exactly was implied by the term "Capella de la Comunità," and how did this church come to achieve such prominence? Although founded as part of the cathedral complex, S. Maria Maggiore gradually moved out of that orbit and into the hands of the city government. In the fifteenth century, a partially fictional story was developed suggesting that this civic association came not as the result of a gradual evolution, however, but as a direct product of the church having been founded through a spontaneous and voluntary act of the people and city government. In sections two and three I examine the foundation history of S. Maria Maggiore, as well as the emergence of the foundation myth. This myth of the autonomous

civic church will provide an essential grounding for an understanding of the church's decoration.

By the time this myth developed, the city government itself was no longer autonomous. In the Trecento the city had been ruled by the Visconti of Milan, and in 1428 Bergamo gave itself over to Venetian control. In the face of such outside control, the fact that S. Maria Maggiore was such a magnificent product of the city's autonomous action became of particular importance. Realising this symbolic value, the Venetians gave the administration of the basilica over to a lay confraternity associated with the period of communal autonomy, the Misericordia Maggiore (MIA). Around the same time, the Venetians managed to obtain a papal bull completely exempting the MIA and S. Maria Maggiore from episcopal control. In section four, I argue that the Venetians undertook this strengthening of the institution as part of a programme aimed at consolidating their rule over the city. By promoting such an important symbol of civic autonomy they were able to suggest that, even though they outside rulers of the city, they were the preservers of Bergamask liberty.

One of the earliest surviving pieces of figural decoration from S. Maria Maggiore is the north portal into the church. (fig. 41) Although built while Bergamo was under the rule of the Visconti, its selection of saints acted as a manifesto for the quasi-democratic ideals of communal government. In the late fifteenth century, the Venetian condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni built a large and ornate funerary chapel abutting the portal of S. Maria Maggiore. (fig. 42) Its iconography suggested a different political ideology, one based instead on the rule of a single virtuous individual. In section five, I look at this pair of monuments and suggest that the style of the Colleoni chapel was meant in this context to act as a challenge to the portal, implying in this way that the political
ideology carried by its iconography should supersede that expressed by the portal and church.

In the early sixteenth century, the MIA tried to respond to the challenge of the Colleoni chapel through the commissioning of an immensely expensive copper altarpiece for the high altar of S. Maria Maggiore. Although never brought to completion, I argue in section six that the iconography of this altarpiece was intended to preserve the idea of the church as a symbol of the city, while at the same time suggesting that it was Venice that was the agent of Bergamo's liberty. In recognition of the centrality of Venetian influence at the basilica, the intarsia choir planned around this same time was arranged so as to give priority to the Venetian Rettori.

In the fifty years following the apostolic visitation of Carlo Borromeo to Bergamo in 1575, the interior of S. Maria Maggiore was almost completely redecorated. Tapestries were commissioned to cover the walls, old altarpieces were replaced with new ones, and the supports, vaulting and dome were completely obscured under stucco decoration. Why should this comprehensive redecoration have been undertaken? A few months after Borromeo's visitation, the MIA invited the architect most intimately connected with his reforms, Pellegrino Tibaldi, to recommend changes to their church. In section seven I analyse the many changes carried out in direct response to this intervention. The MIA followed Tibaldi's directives very closely, I argue, because of their desire to maintain S. Maria Maggiore's much treasured autonomy from episcopal control. Its lay rulers carried out reforms in the areas of both decoration and liturgy so as to avoid furnishing the bishop with an excuse to assert his authority.

Several themes were developed within the new decoration of S. Maria Maggiore. On the one hand, there was a new comprehensive Marian cycle
centred around the decoration of the high altar, while on the other hand the altars continued to express concepts contingent on the special history of the church within the city. (fig. 43) In particular, the indebtedness to Venice remained a theme of central importance. Many of these themes crystallised in the city's commission for a votive chapel in the church. (fig. 44) Intended as an offering to God in thanks for having spared the city from a plague, the altarpiece articulated some important aspects of the church's symbolic meaning. (fig. 45) Amongst these were the association of S. Maria Maggiore with civic harmony, and the physical protection and good government of the city, defining characteristics of the idealised communal past. This same concept was expressed by the exterior form of the basilica. While the interior submitted to a comprehensive redecoration, the exterior remained largely unaltered. In section nine, I show that this preservation was not simply a result of so much energy being devoted to the interior, but was an intentional part of a strategy aimed at constructing continuity with the distant communal past when the basilica was first constructed.

Finally, I look at the series of events surrounding the baptistery of S. Maria Maggiore. (fig. 46) Founded as a subsidiary church within a cathedral complex, the basilica was probably furnished with a baptistery from an early date. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the baptistery structure within S. Maria Maggiore became the focus of disputes between the bishop and the MIA. As a site within the church where the bishop still had jurisdiction, the baptistery was a reminder of the church's subsidiary status. In the final section of the chapter I examine the efforts of the bishop to use it as a site for colonising the basilica, as well as the eventually successful efforts of the MIA to remove it permanently from their building.
In the background at all times was the example of the cathedral, with its important relics and canons, and its connexion to the episcopal dignity. The programme of decoration at S. Maria Maggiore did not aim at appropriating any of the attributes linked to the importance of the cathedral, but was clearly motivated by the many problems and disputes there to establish itself as a symbol of the city as a whole, as the principal site at which collective civic piety was expressed.

2. The Founding of S. Maria Maggiore

As observed in chapter one, the church of S. Maria was originally paired with S. Vincenzo, with the two separate structures together forming a double cathedral. The earliest surviving documentary evidence of this relationship appears in a will from 774 in which S. Vincenzo was paired with S. Maria, and S. Alessandro with S. Pietro. But as I argue in the appendix, the two church complex in the centre of the city had likely been founded as the cathedral of Bergamo much earlier than 774, probably in the mid-fourth century.4 During rudimentary excavations carried out in 1950, traces of an earlier church structure were discovered under the pavement of the present S. Maria Maggiore.5 Sometime during the twelfth century, this earlier structure was demolished and S. Maria Maggiore was rebuilt on a scale that dwarfed the adjacent early medieval structure of S. Vincenzo.

The essential structure of the church as built in the twelfth century survives to this day. In the most general terms, it approximately followed a Greek cross type of plan, although the nave and choir were both somewhat

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4 See the Appendix.
longer and wider than the transept arms. (fig. 39) An octagonal dome over the crossing gave the structure a strong centralising focus, and both the East and West sides of each transept arm featured an absidiole, a motif that gave further emphasis to the centrality of the plan. These absidioles mirrored the single large apse of the choir at the East end of the church. Blocked at the West by the bishop's palace, the principal entrances to this church were always located on the transept facades. From the stonework of the surviving building it is obvious that construction proceeded in two distinct phases. Towards the East end of the church the stone has been cut and laid very precisely, whereas for the remainder of the structure the stonework is much less regular. It is probable, therefore, that the second phase was carried out under conditions of greater financial restraint.6

The history of this rebuilding can be constructed from two different types of evidence offering different points of view. Contemporary documents show that S. Maria Maggiore only gradually assumed its role as civic church independent of outside control. Later chronicles and histories, by contrast, project their own reality onto the past by describing the foundation of S. Maria Maggiore in terms of the status it eventually attained.7 I will first examine the documentary evidence, before turning to the later histories in the section that follows.

When exactly did construction on the church begin? According to an inscription located on the external arch of the south entrance portal to the building, the basilica was founded in 1137.8 (fig. 47) This date corresponds to the

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7 The early history of S. Maria Maggiore has been discussed in great depth by Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," pp. 207-229.
8 "IN. XRI. NOMINE. AMEN. IN LIMINE. SUPERIORI. ECCLESIE. BEATE. MARIE. VIRGINIS. CIVI. TATIS. PERSGAM. CONTINEBA. TUR. QUCL. DICTA. ECCLESIA. FONDATA. FUIT. ANNO. DOMINICE. INCARNATIONIS. MILLESIMO. CENTESIMO. TREGESIMO. SEPTIMO."
Romanesque style of the architecture as built, but the inscription is problematic because it contains graphical errors and names an erroneous combination of historical figures. The inscription may owe these inconsistencies, however, to the fact that the portal of which it is a part is later than the original fabric, meaning that the original text may well have been mistranscribed. Also, the inscription dates not just the construction, but the founding of S. Maria Maggiore to 1137, seemingly contradicting the archaeological evidence that a church of S. Maria certainly existed on the same site before that date. It is possible, however, that this founding may refer either to the complete eradication of the old church in the construction of the new one, or to its new status as S. Maria Maggiore, not simply S. Maria.

SUB. DOMINO. PAPPA. INNOCENTIO. SECONDO. SUB. EPISCOPO. ROGERIO. REGNANTE. REGE. LOTERIO. PER. MAGISTRUM. FREDUM."

9 For a discussion of the inscription and the many problems with its transcription by earlier historians, see A. Meli, "La complicata storia e l'avversa fortuna di due scritti del 1360," Bergomum 57 (1963), pp. 39-52. "QUCL" should probably be read as "QUOD." It calls the bishop of Bergamo Roger, when in 1137 the ruling bishop of the city was actually Gregory, and in fact not a single twelfth-century bishop of Bergamo was called Roger. The inscription also describes Lothar as a king, when by that date he was not just king, but Emperor.

10 The date of this portal is fixed to 1360 by means of a second inscription referring to its construction. For the text of this inscription see Meli, "complicata storia," p. 39.

11 It is likely that the sculpted inscription was copied around 1360 from a painted text, of which small fragments survived until early in this century. The substitution of "ROGERIO" for "GREGORIO," for instance, could have arisen out of simple paleographical confusion, and emperors could still be referred to as kings even after their status had been elevated. See Meli, "complicata storia," p. 46.

12 As suggested by Meli, "complicata storia," p. 48. Recently, Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," pp. 219-220, has suggested a different date. In one of the documents surrounding the 1187 trial between the two cathedral chapters, it is mentioned that just over thirty years before this date the rebuilding of S. Maria Maggiore had not yet been started, putting the date at 1157 instead of the 1137 of the inscription. The same document also records that construction was not completed as of 1187. For the complete document, see, G. Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit. Storia di un processo del XII secolo," Bergomum 84 (1989), p. 132. There is little reason to doubt this second notice, given that it refers to a contemporary situation, but similar credence cannot, however, be given to the date on which work was initiated. The figure of thirty years offered by the witness could simply have been intended to indicate a time outside of immediate memory, but not lodged in an ancient past. In the end, therefore, in spite of the many significant doubts surrounding its reliability, the date of 1137 furnished by the inscription must be taken as the more accurate.
The question of who sponsored the reconstruction of S. Maria Maggiore is also an important issue, because the fifteenth-century foundation myth claims, as we shall see in the section that follows, that the city government had been entirely responsible. From the twelfth-century documents, however, it is clear that S. Maria Maggiore was rebuilt to serve as an integral part of the cathedral complex in the centre of the city. Its economic and religious functions were entirely encompassed by those of S. Vincenzo.13 In a document from 1187, for instance, it is stated that "S. Vincenzo is one church with S. Maria."14 Just prior to this date, the usual practice of the canons of S. Vincenzo had been to officiate in S. Maria during the winter months and in S. Vincenzo during the summer. This had changed by 1187 because S. Maria Maggiore was incomplete, but the canons still celebrated there on the feasts of the Virgin Mary and on Holy Saturday, as well as for the blessing of the baptismal fount.15 Given that these canons manifestly played a central role in the liturgy of the church, it seems logical that they should have been involved in stimulating its rebuilding in the first place. It has been suggested quite plausibly, for instance, that Girardo da Bonate, arcidiacono of the chapter of S. Vincenzo around the time of the rebuilding of S. Maria Maggiore, was instrumental in the promotion of the new construction.16

Indeed, it is more than likely that the decision by the canons of S. Vincenzo to rebuild S. Maria Maggiore on such a large scale was aimed at

13 See Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," pp. 218-219, for specific references to documents which show this dependence.
14 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 173. The document was written on behalf of the canons of S. Vincenzo, and forms part of the copious documentation surrounding the trial regarding the precedence between the two groups of cathedral canons: "Preterea scio quod ecclesia Sancti Vincentii est una ecclesia cum ecclesia Sancte Maria, sibi prope posita..."
15 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 50-51.
advancing their status relative to that of the canons S. Alessandro. As discussed in chapter one, the early twelfth century was a particularly heated period for the dispute between the two groups of canons. Before the construction of S. Maria Maggiore, the basilica alessandrina was both the most ancient and most magnificent ecclesiastical foundation in Bergamo, and must have given the canons of S. Alessandro a great advantage in the struggle with the canons of S. Vincenzo. Significantly, it is from the 1187 documents recording the testimony of witnesses in favour of S. Vincenzo that we come to learn that S. Maria Maggiore was joined to S. Vincenzo. There is little doubt that this connexion was given such emphasis in these documents because the magnificence of the church helped to counteract that of the basilica alessandrina, granting its rulers an advantage in the struggle with the canons of S. Alessandro. What better way to advance one's position than to sponsor the building of the biggest church in the city.

The early years of the twelfth century also saw the emergence of the independent Commune in Bergamo. As discussed in chapter one, it is probable that the canons of S. Vincenzo allied themselves, at least at the outset, with the political faction that promoted the formation of this type of government. The dispute between the chapters was, after all, ultimately a struggle for political control of the city. During the second half of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth, the connexion between S. Maria Maggiore and the

17 This same point is also argued by L. Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity. Lay Religious Confraternities at Bergamo in the Age of the Commune, Northampton, Mass, 1988, p. 23, and by Scalvini et al., Le città nella storia, p. 28. It is odd that the canons of S. Vincenzo decided to rebuild S. Maria Maggiore rather than their eponymous church. Given that their saint had never excited much devotion in Bergamo, however, and that the twelfth century saw a flowering in the cult of the Virgin Mary, it is possible that a new Marian site was thought of as a more effective means of taking focus away from S. Alessandro at the basilica alessandrina.
18 See chapter one, pp. 20-21.
19 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 50-51.
20 See the Appendix.
communal government gained considerable strength. In the process, the canons of S. Vincenzo were actually displaced, and S. Maria Maggiore began to emerge as a civic church with little or no connexion with any higher ecclesiastical authority. The exact process by which this came about has not been adequately studied, but the move towards de facto independence was certainly gradual, evolving over a considerable period of time.\textsuperscript{21}

It is also not entirely clear why this transformation should have taken place, but changes to the structures of communal government may have been responsible.\textsuperscript{22} The early-twelth century shift towards the Commune and away from rule by the bishop was not marked by a great change in the distribution of power, since the same noble families still dominated the city.\textsuperscript{23} The essential change was, instead, to the forms through which this power was exercised. The canons of S. Vincenzo had always been part of Bergamo's ruling elite, and therefore still played a significant role within this new governmental form. Their sponsorship of the S. Maria Maggiore reconstruction took place at a time when they were closely associated with the Commune. In the early thirteenth century, however, the so-called democratic Commune evolved, eclipsing the power structures that had existed earlier, and displacing the canons of S. Vincenzo in the process. Their role as important players on the local political stage had disappeared. Even though these canons maintained some liturgical presence at S. Maria Maggiore into the late sixteenth century, their symbolic association with the place became marginal next to that of the city government.

The Commune asserted its connexion with S. Maria Maggiore in a number of ways. It often intervened to defend the interests of the church, as well

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\textsuperscript{21} Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," pp. 224-226 documents the increase in independence, but only deals in very vague terms with why it might have developed.
\textsuperscript{22} Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," p. 227 argues this connexion most forcefully.
\textsuperscript{23} On the emergence of the Commune, see the Appendix.
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as using its space for the public activities of the government, including meetings of the citizen assembly. S. Maria Maggiore was not simply an inert site at which the city bureaucracy functioned, but, more importantly, a symbol of the Commune. From the early 1240s until about 1340, the meetings of all the citizens of the Commune were held in the space immediately to the north of the church. To the left of the main entrance onto the square, the present day Piazza del Duomo, was set up a permanent regio, or speakers platform for the leaders of these meetings. This regio no longer survives, but the masonry wall of the exterior shows signs of there having once been a structure attached to it.

Another type of evidence in favour of seeing the church as a symbol of the Commune comes from the fact that it was often the site of protest against that institution. Politically, the thirteenth century in Bergamo was characterised by a series of armed disputes between two main factions. Allegiances were constantly in flux and boundaries between groups were rather fluid, but these two factions seem to have represented the old landed aristocracy on the one hand, a group whose power had been eroded by the emergence of the democratic Commune, and newer urban-based elites on the other. In 1206, the former group, led by the important Suardi family, attacked the city and occupied S. Maria Maggiore.

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24 See: A. Mazzi, "I Milites iustitie del Comune di Bergamo," Archivio storico Lombardo, series IV, 10 (1908), pp. 108-140, for a discussion of one group which met in S. Maria Maggiore. They were officials of the Commune elected by the Consigli cittadini to keep control over standards at markets and fairs.

25 In a document of 1246, for instance, it is mentioned that "in publica concione comunis pergami more solito convocata et coadunata in platea parva sancti vincentii super regio ecclesie sancte marie mayores," BCB, Archivio comunale, no. 986, cited by Russell, "Vox Civitatis," p. 74.

26 The original regio was replaced with a new one sometime between 1300 and 1308, but it is not known when this structure was removed. See Russell, "Vox Civitatis," p. 75 for documentary references to this regio novo. The city statutes of 1248 record that the regio was located against the wall of S. Maria Maggiore in an area where standard local measures were located. Some of these measures survive along the wall to the left of the main entrance portal. See also Zizzo, "S. Maria Maggiore," p. 228.

27 For this interpretation of urban factionalism in thirteenth-century Bergamo, see Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity, pp. 24-26.
They did not succeed in their attempt at overthrowing the government, however, and were expelled by a citizen militia. In 1289, another such militia, the Società delle Armi di Santa Maria Maggiore, was actually formed at S. Maria Maggiore. It not only had its headquarters at the church, but stored its weapons in a structure attached to S. Maria Maggiore, in a part of the building subsequently taken over by the Colleoni chapel. In 1296, during yet another phase of civil strife, the Suardi faction again turned its attention to S. Maria Maggiore, this time not just occupying the structure, but sacking it as well. In 1307, a peace agreement was signed bringing an end to this period of factional struggle. The importance of these events to this argument lies not in an enumeration of battles, however, but in the fact that S. Maria Maggiore was the focus of repeated attacks from the faction opposed to the democratic Commune, and that that group in turn used it as the locus of their own defence. All of this evidence, both positive and negative, strongly suggests that S. Maria Maggiore was the symbolic centre of this form of government in Bergamo. As representatives of the ruling class displaced by the democratic Commune, the canons of S. Vincenzo became increasingly marginalised at S. Maria Maggiore.

The documentary sources on the origins of S. Maria Maggiore suggest that one reason underlying its foundation was the desire of the canons of S. Vincenzo to advance their status within the city. As this group lost power and influence, the city government stepped in to appropriate the prestige of the magnificent new construction. Although started as a subsidiary to the cathedral, as a project designed to provide a focus for Marian devotion and to increase the prestige of the cathedral, by the thirteenth century S. Maria Maggiore had gradually begun not only to emerge from the shadow of S. Vincenzo, but to usurp its former

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master. Just as the newly powerful of the democratic Commune displaced the old ruling elites, S. Maria Maggiore began to outshine S. Vincenzo.

3. The Fifteenth-Century Foundation Myth of S. Maria Maggiore

Beginning in the fifteenth century, there emerged a different history of the origins of S. Maria Maggiore, one that joined it and the city government together at the moment of the church’s foundation.29 The first to articulate this myth was the Bergamask historian Jacopo Filippo Foresti. In the writing of his immense universal history, the Supplementum Chronicarum, Foresti’s goal was to update the great medieval world chronicles according to the standards of late-fifteenth-century history writing. Although a universal history, it did include many items of local interest, drawn mostly from medieval chronicles.30 Foresti began his story of the foundation of S. Maria Maggiore by recounting how in 1135 the city was stricken with a drought, quickly followed by famine and plague. The local populace implored the help of the Virgin and vowed collectively to construct a church dedicated to her, a project that was immediately undertaken.31 The fact that the vow was, according to this story, made by all citizens strongly associated the founding of S. Maria Maggiore with the democratic ideology of communal government, while simultaneously distancing the church’s foundation from the influence of the bishop or the cathedral canons. Foresti made no mention either of the earlier church dedicated to the Virgin, or of its status as subsidiary church within the cathedral

29 For a more detailed history of the many slight variations in the development of this myth, see Zizzo, “S. Maria Maggiore,” pp. 213-217.
complex. In these ways, his version of events does not accord with the foundation history of S. Maria Maggiore as recorded in contemporary documents. Significantly, however, Foresti’s story does agree with the inscription dating the foundation of the church to 1137, just two years after the city-wide vow. It also seems to resonate with the close ties between the church and the city government that had emerged in the thirteenth century. Given his heavy reliance on medieval chronicles, it is likely that Foresti drew on such a document for the foundation story. This document would probably have been written in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries to legitimate the city’s de facto control of the basilica.

Foresti’s story does not, however, make explicit the role of the city government in the foundation of S. Maria Maggiore. Still, by omitting any reference to the bishop or any other ecclesiastical authority such a connexion was definitely implied. In sixteenth-century MIA documents, for instance, there is evidence that Foresti’s text was understood exactly in this way. After citing Foresti as an authority for its conclusions, one 1595 document stated unequivocally that S. Maria Maggiore had been founded by a public deliberation of the city government. The same idea is repeated in many other documents without the explicit reference to Foresti, culminating in the 1620 printed Rule of the MIA which recorded how S. Maria Maggiore had been founded in 1137 "by

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32 MIA 887, Pro Ecclesia S. Mariae 1594, fols. 4-6, 14 January 1595, "...ex mundi historiis celeberrimis fratribus Jacobi Philippi Foresti anno 1137 ceptam esse Civitatis deliberatione ad impetrandam Miam' Dei Genitricis Mariae."

33 For example, MIA 883, Raccolta di documenti per gli anni 1419 1613, curata da Marcantonio Benaglio nel 1640: bolle, diplomi, ducali, salvacondotti, visita di S. Carlo 1575, reliquie di S. Maria Maggiore, fol. 16, 1575, "Qual chiesa di S.ta Maria fu fabricato per la mag.ca comunita ex voto del anno 1137 et per essa mag.ca comunita governata con eleger ogni anno nel mag.co maggior consiglio fabriceri 12 deputati."
a public decision of the city, which to that effect assigned some of the principal citizens the title of Presidenti alla Fabrica."34

The essentials of Foresti's story were preserved almost intact in the centuries that followed. Even though the core of the account remained constant, it was made more specific through the association of the church with charitable activities. Marcantonio Michiel, whose comparison of the cathedral with S. Maria Maggiore was quoted at the outset of this chapter, perpetuated the idea that S. Maria Maggiore had always been independent of the cathedral, and that it was of relatively recent date in comparison with S. Vincenzo.35 He also made the important point that S. Maria Maggiore was considerably more popular than the cathedral, a phenomenon rooted, according to Michiel, in the many pious acts performed there. The idea that the church was a special site for such acts was a commonplace amongst sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. Celestino followed Foresti in linking the foundation of the church to a vow made after a drought and plague, but added that it was a place where "infinite alms are given to the poor for those divine scourges of hunger and pestilence."36 He also expanded Foresti's story by saying that the church built following the vow was dedicated not simply to the Virgin, but to the "Beatissima Vergine Madre di misericordia."37

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34 "..per publica deliberatione della Città, che à tal effetto destinò alcuni de' principali cittadini, con titolo di Presidenti alla Fabrica." from Institutione, & Ordini della Misericordia Maggiore di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1620, p. 4.
35 Scalvini and Calza, Bergamo 1516, p. 66. Unusually, Michiel dated the foundation of the church to ca. 1316, around two centuries earlier than the date when he was writing.
37 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p. 129.
4. The Misericordia Maggiore and S. Maria Maggiore

Foresti's story, in which the city government, along with the entire population of the city, were given responsibility for the founding of the church, can be explained as an attempt to legitimate the close relationship that had developed between the city and S. Maria Maggiore. Why was charity added to this construction of events? In some ways, the answer is quite straightforward, because in 1449 the governance of the church was completely turned over to a city-wide lay confraternity, the Misericordia Maggiore (MIA), one of whose principal activities was the administration of charity.

The MIA was founded in 1265 by a group of Franciscan and Dominican friars led by a Dominican, Pinamonte da Brembate. From its very inception, members were drawn from all areas of the city, including the suburban borghi. Although never under the direct control of the city government, the administrative structures of the MIA mirrored those of the Commune, and many officials played leading roles within both institutions. From early in its history, the MIA carried out a wide range of charitable activities, including basic relief to those in need, as well as helping to marry poor girls and to bury the poor. Also from an early period, the city government gave considerable cash support for these activities, making the MIA into a sort of social services arm of the Commune. Despite the closeness of this connexion, the MIA was never under the city's direct control, and it never allied itself with a political faction. In part, the lack of factional allegiance was a result of its Rule, which prescribed that office could be held for only short periods, and that single families could not

38 My knowledge of the early history of the MIA has been immeasurably enriched by discussions with Roisin Cossar who is at present completing her Ph.D dissertation, "The Misericordia Maggiore of Bergamo: Piety and Civic Life, 1265-1365," at the University of Toronto. See also, Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity, pp. 57-60.
dominate the council. Also, its purpose of providing social assistance to the people and spiritual benefit to its members put the MIA on the periphery of the political arena. When the Visconti of Milan began their rule of Bergamo in 1333, for instance, they had been brought to the city by the anti-communal Suardi family. Nonetheless, the MIA sought from the government under the Visconti the same subvention of their activities as they had received from the Commune. The MIA was therefore willing to continue in the same role regardless of which faction held political power.

On 23 June 1449 the city council voted to entrust the administration of S. Maria Maggiore to the MIA, including both the church's possessions and its fabric. Of great significance to this study was the fact that the MIA was required to provide for the church's decoration and liturgy. The document recording the granting of authority to the MIA states that the reason for this transfer of authority was that the possessions of S. Maria Maggiore were being administered poorly by the group of lay deputies appointed by the city government. It was hoped that the MIA might bring some order to the situation. This purely practical reason for the transfer of power, although still cited in MIA documents

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39 On this aspect of the Rule, see Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity, p. 60. The Rule was first published as, Institutione, & Ordini della Misericordia Maggiore di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1620.
40 See Cossar, "The Misericordia Maggiore."
42 The text of the meeting is recorded in many later transcriptions, including MIA 887, Pro Ecclesia S. Mariea 1594, fol. 14, and in Institutione, & Ordini, p. 5, 23 June 1449: "In quo quidem Consilio prefatus D. Potestas, proposuit quod cum ita sit quod ad notitiam DD. Antianorum pervenerit, quod multae possesiones, et bona fabricae D. S. Mariea vadant in sinistrum, et etiam multi sunt qui aliquod dare debent, ipsi fabricae, et ecclesiae eiusdem, ex quo opus esset ut multe personae ad essent regimini ipsius fabricae, bonum ei videretur quod dicta fabrica ecclesia... predicta committeretur regimini presidentii' Consortiu' Misericordie D. S. Mariea Bergomi .. ipsa ecclesiam, et fabricam eiusdem regere, et administrare debeant iuxta regulam praedicti consortij."
of the early seventeenth century, must have been only one of several purposes lying behind the decision.43

Before proceeding to a discussion of these other possible reasons, it is worthwhile noting that by 1449 the city government (although itself now controlled by Venice) must have had full jurisdiction over S. Maria Maggiore. According to the rule of the MIA, published first in 1620, the city governed the church through the appointment of lay "Presidenti della Fabrica" drawn from amongst the principal members of the community.44 These "Presidenti" were responsible not just for the fabric, but for the religious services of the church as well.45

The creation of the foundation myth, in which it was understood that S. Maria Maggiore had originally been founded by the city government, may well have had a role in legitimating the new relationship of the MIA to the church. An essential element of this process was aimed at establishing that the city actually had the right to grant the MIA the powers it did. Connected with this phenomenon was a partial merging in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts of the histories of S. Maria Maggiore and the MIA. I have already mentioned

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43 MIA 883, Raccolta di documenti per gli anni 1419 1613, fols. 147-147v, 18 January 1623: "Informatione dello stato presente della Misericordia... et andato crescendo di tempo in tempo il suo patrimonio perciò vedendo i Cittadini il beneficio grande che conseguivano i poveri et l'accrescimento del divino culto che proveniva dall'ottimo governo di questo luogo, non solamente gli hanno con pia liberalità fatto in ogni tempo molti legati, parte liberi, et altre con carichi di far celebrar messe, di far certe limosine, et altre pie opere ma davantaggio la mag.ca Città gli consegnò sin dell'anno 1449 in perpetuo governo la Chiesa di S. Maria Maggiore con tutte l'entrate di quella, et col carico di farla honorevolmente officiare."

44 Institutione, & Ordini, p. 4, relates that S. Maria Maggiore was founded in 1137 "per publica deliberazione della Città, che à tal effetto destinò alcuni de' principali cittadini, con titolo di Presidenti alla Fabrica." These Presidenti were responsible for everything regarding the church, not just its construction.

45 This source may not be reliable, since to establish its own legitimate rule of S. Maria Maggiore the MIA needed to demonstrate that the city had had full control of the church before it was passed into their hands. In spite of these doubts, the gradual move towards independence that can be documented for the early thirteenth century must have culminated at some point in the city assuming full control, otherwise they would not have had the authority to grant the MIA rights over both the fabric and liturgy of S. Maria Maggiore.
how the story of the church's foundation was connected with the concept of charity. The MIA was in the fifteenth century Bergamo's principal organization dedicated to the distribution of alms. According to these histories, therefore, the roles of the MIA and of S. Maria Maggiore were parallel, making the turning over of the church to the MIA a logical course to follow. Furthermore, S. Maria Maggiore was very frequently described as having been dedicated originally to the "Madonna della Misericordia," a terminological coincidence that suggested the parallelism of the two organizations and, if not the inevitability, then at least the appropriateness of their eventual joining.46 Mario Muzio, for instance, said that a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Clemency had been located where S. Maria Maggiore is today, thus linking the site itself with the concept of mercy.47

In March 1453, the MIA obtained a bull from pope Nicholas V entirely exempting S. Maria Maggiore from episcopal control.48 This bull gave the MIA a completely free hand in the running of the church, both in terms of its fabric and its religious services. The foundation myth grew to correspond with this reality

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46 MIA 1752, Ven. di Consortii MIAE d. S. Mariae Major Bergomi, Pro Ecclesia, Acta Notabilia ab a. 1137, fol. 1, a document prepared for the MIA in 1612 describes a plague of 1135 and the building of S. Maria Maggiore, "et in questa maniera la Città di Bergamo fu salvata dalla peste et dalla fame per l'Intercettione della Madre di Misericordia." MIA 888, In Causa Visitationis Baptistertij praetensae ab Ill.mo D. Episcopo de mense Aprilis Anni 1612, fol.1, also prepared for the MIA in 1612: "Dirò hora d'un'altra prodigio che avvenne negli anni 1135 in circa et ciò fu che venne un caldo tanto grande che seccò tutti i grani, et gli altri seminati, sino agli arbori, et abbruciava anco le suole delle scarpe dove seguì una così fatta fame e pestilenza che levò la vita a piu di dugento mila persone nella Lombardia. Laonde i Bergamaschi fecero fabricar un tempio grandissimo ad honor della beat.a Vergine Maria, et lo nominavano il tempio della Misericordia nel quale facevano grandissime limosine a poveri, et in questo maniera la città di Bergamo fu salvata dalla peste et dalla fame per l'Intercessione della madre di Misericordia. Questo tempio è degnò d'esser veduto: et dall'ora in qua hanno sempre continuato nelle opere della Misericordia in sovventione de poveri." Colleoni, Historia quadrupartita, vol. 1, p. 129, after describing the plague, he says that "i nostri maggiori ricorrendo all'aiuto divino, & alla intercessione della Beatissima Vergine Madre di misericordia, in honore di lei fabricarono quel sontuoso tempio ch'hoggidi anco si vede nel mezzo della Città."

47 M. Muzio, Sacra Historia di Bergomo, Bergamo, 1621, part 3, p. 5.

48 The text of the bull is transcribed in many places, including Institutione, & Ordini, pp. 6-8, and A.G. Roncalli, ed., Gli atti della visita apostolica di S. Carlo Borromeo a Bergamo (1575), vol. 1, part 1, Florence, 1936, pp. 366-367.
as well. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts dealing with the history of the church asserted that S. Maria Maggiore had always been governed by members of the laity, and that it had never in its history submitted to the rule of any higher religious authority. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the papal bull granting S. Maria Maggiore immunity from episcopal control became a critically important document as successive bishops of Bergamo tried to wrest control of the church out of the hands of the MIA. The complete redecoration of the church at this time was, as I shall argue, part of the MIA's defence of this immunity.

What motivated the city to transfer control of S. Maria Maggiore to the MIA? There is little doubt that the pragmatic reasons cited in the documents played some role. The city's deputies, for instance, were said to be administering the church poorly. The MIA then became the logical choice because, according to the 1620 published Rule, by the time of the 1449 granting of complete authority, the MIA was already playing a significant role in the governing of the church. Nonetheless, other agendas, not explicitly articulated at the time, must have been served as well. Because S. Maria Maggiore was strongly associated with the free and independent city government, any change to how the church was ruled

49 MIA 5052, fol. 8: In a document written in 1592 in defence of S. Maria Maggiore's episcopal exemption, the church is described as having been, "governata dal principio della sua fuondatione ancora da laici, et come tale fondata fusse libera dalla visita dell'i R.mi ordinarij." MIA 883, Raccolta di documenti per gli anni 1419 1613, fol. 16: Similarly, in a document connected to the apostolic visitation of Carlo Borromeo in 1575 it is asserted that: "Qual chiesa di S.ta Maria fu fabricato per la mag.ca comunita ex voto del anno 1137 et per essa mag.ca comunita governata con eleger ogni anno nel mag.co maggior consiglio fabricerici 12 deputati." See also, Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 356-365.

50 Institutione, & Ordini, p. 3: As a result of the MIA's growth, many "cominciarono ad instituir messe, & officij da celebrarsi nella chiesa di S. Maria Maggiore, Capella di questa Città, commettendone la cura à medesimi Sig Reggenti della Misericordia. Nella qual amministratione si fece ben tosto palese, che se grande era stato il zelo, & la diligenza di quelli nell'essercitare l'opere di misericordia, non minore si dimostrava nel trattar le cose sacre. Onde per deliberatione della Magnifica Città fù poi l'istessa Chiesa di Santa Maria commessa in perpetuo, & assoluto governo a questo Collegio."
was a political gesture. In 1449, however, Bergamo had not had such an independent city government for more than a century. For most of the fourteenth century the city had been ruled by the Visconti of Milan, and in 1428 Bergamo became part of the Venetian empire of the terraferma. Under Venetian rule, Bergamo continued to have a local city government, but with limited scope for autonomous action. Significantly, the shift in the governance of S. Maria Maggiore was driven by the most important Venetian official in the city, the podestà; he proposed both that the Misericordia should take control of the church, and that it be independent of the bishop.\textsuperscript{51} Even following these changes, however, S. Maria Maggiore maintained a strong connexion with the city government. For instance, the MIA had to seek the city's permission before making any major changes to the church fabric.\textsuperscript{52} The Venetian governors of the city, by contrast, had no direct authority over the church, except through the city council, over which they did exert significant control.

The ruling Venetians must have been aware of the symbolic associations of S. Maria Maggiore. Venetian policy in the terraferma was, in general, directed at promoting local organizations that could bolster social stability. For the most part they were not able to use coercive means of exercising power, and had to rely instead on the cooperation of the local population and its institutions.\textsuperscript{53} As an institution that extended charity throughout the city and drew on the entire city for its leaders, the MIA was an extremely potent agent of social stability.

Through the prompting of the Venetian podestà its importance was increased by being made the governing body of S. Maria Maggiore. Furthermore, it was an

\textsuperscript{51} In the city council acts recording the decision to transfer power to the MIA it is stated that the podestà had suggested the change to the council. For the text of the decision, see above, note 42.

\textsuperscript{52} For specific cases in which this actually happened, see Meli, "Trapasso di Amministrazioni."

institution that had been founded in Bergamo's period of communal independence, and had been intimately associated with the communal government. By promoting the amalgamation of this confraternity with Bergamo's civic church, and placing it outside their direct control, powerful memories of the autonomous communal past were evoked.

Paradoxically, by this means the Venetian authorities were also trying to consolidate their own political control over the city. Using several examples drawn from early modern Italy, Edward Muir has discussed the close relationship between the control of the sacred, and the exercise of political control. In Venice, for instance, St. Mark and his basilica were at the physical and ritual centre of the state cult. Neighbourhood allegiances were weak and centrally located institutions dominated Venetian social and spatial order. Florence, by contrast, was cultically much less centralised, with competing saints vying for dominance. This fact was mirrored in its polycentric political system. Although Bergamo was not discussed by Muir, his model offers a tool for understanding the situation in that city, in particular the Venetian attitude to S. Maria Maggiore.

Unlike the examples cited by Muir, Bergamo was not independent, but subject to an outside power. With two cathedrals at this time, as well as the civic church of S. Maria Maggiore, it had no single sacred focus. In some ways, an analogy to the Bergamask situation can be found in Bologna. Although obviously a much more important centre, by 1278 it too fell under the domination of an outside power, the papal state. During the crisis over the Great

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Schism (1378-1415) Bologna was able to free itself from this control and achieve full autonomy. As a celebration of this independence, the civic church of S. Petronio was founded in 1390 under the exclusive control of the Commune, completely outside of episcopal jurisdiction. One intention lying behind its founding was to overshadow the nearby cathedral dedicated to St. Peter. Although Bologna returned to the papal state soon after 1390, work on the enormous church continued. During the centuries that followed, S. Petronio became "a stage for the city's assertion of its autonomy against the Papacy."56

S. Maria Maggiore and S. Petronio therefore had quite similar roles as symbols of lost autonomy and focuses of civic devotion. The two outside powers reacted to this situation in quite different ways, however. In 1506, for instance, when Julius II reestablished papal authority in Bologna after a short lapse, he had a statue of himself placed over the main portal of the church. When his forces were ejected in 1511, the Bolognese pulled down this statue and used its metal for a cannon to be directed against papal forces.57 In 1561, pope Pius IV forced an end to the expansion of S. Petronio by decreeing the construction of part of the university on the site of the planned transept.58 In many ways, as we shall see, the Venetians were much more astute in their management of S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. Instead of inciting revolt by aggressively imposing their own symbols on the church, they sought to channel its power towards achieving their own ends. Returning briefly to Muir's thesis that cultic control could lead to political control, the Venetians may have sought to create in Bergamo a

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56 Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, p. 11.

57 Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, p. 191.

58 Terpstra, Lay Confraternities, p. 13.
situation analogous to what existed in Venice. In the place of a state cult centred on St. Mark and his basilica, they hoped to build an equally strong attachment in Bergamo for S. Maria Maggiore.

The question remains, however, of how the Venetians were able to nurture a sense of autonomy in Bergamo while simultaneously asserting their own power. The answer lies in the story of how the city imagined its submission to Venice. By the early fifteenth century, the independent city state had essentially disappeared from the Italian political mosaic, replaced by the larger regional state. Small cities such as Bergamo could not realistically hope for independence, and instead had to seek the best possible arrangement with the larger states, in this case, with either Milan or Venice. For their part, these larger powers lacked sufficient resources to rule autocratically and were compelled either to promote identification with the central state or suggest within their subject cities a certain level of autonomy.59 To a large measure, the success or failure of this latter policy depended on attaining the correct balance between central control and local autonomy. The joining of S. Maria Maggiore and the MIA created an institution that was essentially powerless in the political arena, but carried with it the purely symbolic apparatus of autonomous political power. Through this gesture the Venetians were able to suggest that they were the preservers of Bergamask liberty. In local histories, the Venetians were in fact celebrated as such. Celestino wrote in his *Historia quadripartita di Bergomo* of 1617 that:

Up until 1428 [the date at which Bergamo came under Venetian dominion] Bergamo had always found itself... flung about by strong raging winds like a ship in the middle of a stormy and dangerous sea,

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59 In terraferma cities closer to Venice it seems that the first policy was adopted. In both Vicenza and Udine, Venice refashioned the central square in imitation of the Venetian piazza and piazzetta. See Muir and Weissman, "Social and Symbolic Places," p. 98.
and it had been conquered and treated by the Visconti in a most tyrannical fashion. The citizens gathered in council and decided that... although it could set itself up again as a free state, it lacked sufficient power to preserve and maintain it. They decided to find a support under which with tranquility and peace they would be able to enjoy their private possessions. Wisely, it is held that, in order to live safely and quietly, it is without doubt better under the government and protection of another, and that the result of the ambitious hope of liberty would be continuous misery, suffering and disaster....

This account shows that, by the seventeenth-century at least, the Bergamasks believed that independence, although desirable, was not possible for such a small city. The only route to stability was to become part of a larger entity.

Significantly, it appears that Bergamo viewed its submission to Venice as having been made by its own city council. Celestino continues by describing that Venice was chosen because it alone preserved liberty:

The Venetian Republic is the ornament and splendour of Italian dignity: it represents an image of the authority and grandeur of the Roman Republic, under which our leaders used to live happily. In this dark and tempestuous century no other light or splendour is left to miserable Italy... This one alone [Venice] has kept its ancient liberty... If we put ourselves in her embrace, it [Venice] will not be able but to love us and to hold us dear. And we, by serving her, serve ourselves, our patria, our liberty, our health, our reputation, our offspring and descendants, the eternity of our name. Under other princes... we have often carried arms which have then spilled the blood of our offspring and brothers, and of our friends and relatives... Kings are mortal... the Republic is perpetual, always alive... the living image of the ancient grandeur and of the true liberty of Italy.

60 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 1, p. 307, "Trovandosi Bergomo essere stato sempre, da diversi potenti Prencipi, fin all'anno 1428 diverse volte, in diverse strane maniere, come nave in mezzo a tempestuoso, e procellosso mare, da gagliardi impetuossi venti sbattuto, & conquassato, & da i Visconti per lo più tirannicamente trattato; raccolti i Cittadini a Consiglio, poiche si vedevano in fortuna tale che, quantunque havessero potuto in libertà rimettersi; non erano però le forze loro bastanti a conservarla, mantenarla; consultaron di trovarsi appoggio, sotto'l quale con tranquillita, & con pace potessero le private sostanze sicuramente godere; saviamente stimando essere senza dubbio veruno, molto meglio sotto'l governo, & protettione altrui, vivere sicuri, & quieti; che per ambitiosa speranza di libertà, esser a continue miserie, travagli, & sciagure..."

61 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 1, pp. 307-308, "La Republica Vinitiana è l'ornamento, & lo splendore della italiana dignita: ella rappresenta una imagine dell'autorita, & grandezza della Romana Republica, sotto la quale i nostri Maggiori vissero già felicemente. In quest'oscuro, & tempestuoso secolo, nell'altra luce, o splendore è rimaso alla misera Italia... Questa sola ha
Celestino argues, therefore, that only Venice represented liberty, and to submit to Venetian authority was the only possible route to the achievement of true liberty. Critical to the paradoxical idea that Bergamo remained free even though under the dominion of another, was the promotion of the idea that Bergamo chose freely to place itself under the control of Venice. This version of events follows a common pattern for many of the cities of the terraferma and was without doubt part of Venetian propaganda. Whatever its origin, however, it still served a role in how Bergamo imagined its relationship with its overlord. A Venetian official describing the city in 1596, for instance, mentions that: "...in the piazza there is set up a column... on which it is not permitted by the city that there should be an [image of] San Marco as in other cities, because this [city] gave itself, not by force, but voluntarily to the rule of this... Republic." The amalgamation of S. Maria Maggiore and the MIA helped to further the idea that the city maintained a certain autonomy even whilst under Venetian political control. As we shall see, the approach taken by civic authorities with respect to direct displays of allegiance to Venice found significant parallels in the choice of themes chosen for the decoration of S. Maria Maggiore.

5. The North Portal of S. Maria Maggiore and the Colleoni Chapel

conservato la sua antica libertà... Se nelle sue braccia ci mettiamo; non potrà se non amarcì, & tenerci cari. Et noi servendo a lei serviremo a noi medesimi, alla Patria nostra, alla nostra libertà, alla nostra salute, alla nostra riputatione, ai figliuoli, a i posteri, all’eternità del nome nostro. Sotto a gli altri Principi... abbiamo ben spesso portato quell’armi; le quali hanno poscia sparso il sangue de i figliuoli, & de i fratelli, & de gli amici, & de parenti nostri... I Regi sono mortali... La Republica è perpetua; sempre vive... viva Imagine dell’antica grandezza, & della vera libertà d’Italia."

62 See Cochrane, Historians and Historiography, p. 380, for the origins of this official Venetian thesis in the fifteenth century.
63 Giovanni da Lezze, Descrizione di Bergamo e suo territorio 1596, V. Marchetti and L. Pagani eds., Bergamo, 1988, p. 126: "...nella piazza vi è piantata una colonna... sopra la quale non è permesso dalla città che sia posto un S.to Marco come nell’altre città, poichè questa non per forza ma volontariamente si è datta sotto questa... Republica."
Completely blocked at the west by the bishop's palace, S. Maria Maggiore never had a conventional facade; the two transept entrances had to play this role instead. The more important of these faced north onto the present day Piazza del Duomo. In the middle of the Trecento this north entrance was decorated with an imposing portal projecting from the plain wall behind. (fig. 41) This portal, however, was destined to be cast into shadow both literally and figuratively by the enormous Renaissance funerary chapel of the condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni (1400-1475), who commissioned his chapel in the 1470s from the Lombard sculptor and architect Giovanni Antonio Amadeo (1447-1522).64 (fig. 42) Although a completely separate foundation, with absolutely no administrative connexion with the basilica, the chapel was actually built onto the structure of S. Maria Maggiore, and its facade immediately abuts the principal entrance into the basilica. I shall argue here that the Colleoni chapel was not intended to blend harmoniously with its surroundings but to confront the portal of S. Maria Maggiore physically, stylistically and thematically. Colleoni intended his chapel not simply to act as a fitting monument to a long and illustrious career as a condottiere in the service of the Venetian republic, but also as an enduring visual expression of his political ideology, an ideology that contrasted with that expressed by the portal of S. Maria Maggiore. The chapel articulates an ideal vision of the Signoria as a state ruled by a virtuous individual, as opposed to the by now defunct, but historically idealised Communal form of government.

Past scholarship has not concentrated on the physical context of the chapel, focusing instead either on its position within Tuscan-centred models of architectural history, or examining in isolation from its surroundings, the use of

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64 For comprehensive transcriptions of the relevant documentation, see A. Meli, Bartolomeo Colleoni nel suo mausoleo, Bergamo, 1966.
classical iconography on the facade. When compared with similar monuments in large centres such Milan or Venice, it is possible to forget that the chapel's Romanising style was relatively new and that in smaller cities its introduction would have been received as representing a decisive break with the past. In Bergamo, for instance, the Colleoni chapel was the very first building to be completed in this new style. Given that the facade of this building dominated if not overpowered the city's most important public space, it is hard to imagine a more dramatic or significant way of introducing the Renaissance style to Bergamo.

Before turning to the relationship of the chapel to its setting, we must first examine its dense iconography in isolation. In this I am indebted to the secondary literature on the subject. The facade of the Colleoni chapel is richly decorated with figurative sculpture trumpeting the virtues of the patron. Forming the bases of the two terminal pilasters of the facade are four relief sculptures of the Labours of Hercules. These were included because, according to the 1472 Life of Colleoni written by Antonio Cornazzano, the

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65 As an example of the first approach, see the comments of L.H. Heydenreich and W. Lotz, *Architecture in Italy 1400-1600*, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 102, "Lacking any unifying common measure, this host of dwarf pilasters and columns, towering above each other in tabernacles, ends up as an extremely primitive conglomeration of small units which cannot form an organic whole." The second approach looks to the specifics of the classical iconography employed and how its subjects relate to the biography of Colleoni. See F. Piel, *La Cappella Colleoni e il Luogo della Pietà in Bergamo*, Bergamo, 1975; J. Bernstein, "Patronage, Autobiography, and Iconography: the Facade of the Colleoni Chapel," in J. Shell and L. Castelfranchi eds., *Giovanni Antonio Amadeo. Scultura e architettura del suo tempo*, Milan, 1993, pp. 157-173. In part, the political implications of the chapel have been discussed by F. Rossi, "La Cappella Colleoni, in Bergamo," in *Restauro - Cappella Colleoni in Bergamo*, Bergamo, 1990, pp. 5-10, but the author does not systematically compare the chapel with the adjoining portal. The most recent study on the chapel does acknowledge its urban context, but does not seek to analyse the implications of this context for the meaning of the chapel, D. Erben, *Bartolomeo Colleoni: Die künstlerische Repräsentation eines Condottiere im Quattrocento*, Sigmaringen, 1996, pp. 101-105.

66 The cathedral of S. Vincenzo had been planned by Filarete, but its facade was not completed by this date, and the nave was likely finished following local traditions that deviated from his plan.

condottiere claimed that his family descended from Hercules, a figure often connected with Christian fortitude and virtue. The two figures personifying Fortitude and Constancy next to the central doorway reinforce these associations, and above the windows flanking the door are four figures that also represent virtues. Above them are two aediculae with busts of the Roman Emperors Julius Caesar and Trajan. (figs. 49, 50) Above each Emperor is an inscription stating the number of years they ruled. Together these totalled one year less than the period during which Colleoni acted as an army commander, thus putting great emphasis on the length of his service. Condottieri often used Roman Emperors as prototypes for their own military activities, and that is certainly one of their purposes here, but particular Emperors could carry other meanings as well. While Julius Caesar was most definitely a military model, Trajan by contrast exemplified the concept of the just ruler. The theme of the legitimate and virtuous exercise of power is further emphasized by the placement of the Emperor busts above the four figures representing virtues. Seen together they act as a general justification for the exercise of both military and judicial power by a virtuous individual, in this case the patron of the chapel.

In the centre of the facade perched above the large rose window is a small figure in antique armour. (fig. 51) Given that he carries no attributes other than the armour, it seems most likely that the viewer is meant to associate this

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69 Piel, *La Cappella Colleoni*, p. 38, noted that the total number of years ruled by these two emperors was 23 according to the inscriptions. Under Caesar the inscription reads: "IMPERAVIT ANNIS V," and under Trajan: "IMPERAVIT ANNIS XVIII." Significantly, Colleoni reigned for 24 years as military commander. Piel was puzzled by fact that the inscriptions were inaccurate (Trajan actually reigned for longer than 18 years), but it seems obvious that the numbers were modified as a way of glorifying Colleoni, by making him appear greater than the combined authority of two Roman emperors. See also, Erben, *Bartolomeo Colleoni*, p. 122.
70 For a detailed discussion of this view of Trajan, and how the combination of Trajan and Julius Caesar was in harmony with panegyrics associated with Colleoni, see Erben, *Bartolomeo Colleoni*, pp. 122-125.
virtuous warrior of antiquity with Colleoni himself.71 Directly above this figure, for instance, just below the drum of the dome, are two putti displaying the Colleoni stemma. I am not suggesting that it is to be identified as a figure of Colleoni in any strict sense; the statue is not a portrait likeness, but an embodiment of Colleoni's virtue and prowess as a military commander and political leader. Strong evidence for such an interpretation is offered by the sculpted entranceway of the Vimercati Palace in Milan. Executed between 1450 and 1466, it shows Francesco Sforza in the centre flanked by Julius Caesar on the left and Alexander the Great on the right.

What exactly was the nature of the power being claimed by Colleoni? As already mentioned, by the fifteenth century the autocratic regional state, the Signoria, had almost completely displaced the small independent city state with its communal form of government, essentially an oligarchy of wealthy families. The legitimation strategies used by the rulers of the Signorie run exactly parallel to that which we have seen on the Colleoni chapel: the virtue of the leader is the justification for the exercise of power.72

Colleoni's biography backs up the appropriateness of this reading of the chapel's iconography. In the last ten years of his life, from 1465-1475, Colleoni became immensely wealthy and powerful, and was able to ask more and more of his employer, the Venetian republic. In the 1465 renegotiations of his contract, for instance, he asked that his feudal possessions in the Bergamask be given him as a free possession, meaning that, except for some minimal requirements, he had full ownership of the lands, as well as complete legal jurisdiction.73

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71 Piel, La Cappella Colleoni, p. 6.
72 For a general study on this subject, with much further bibliography, see A. Cole, Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts, New York, 1995.
73 On these events, see B. Belotti, La vita di Bartolomeo Colleoni, 3rd edition, Bergamo, 1951, pp. 253-258. J. Bernstein, "Milanese and Antique Aspects of the Colleoni Chapel: Site and Symbolism,"
result was a unique compromise, since although he seems to have been granted a free and sovereign state, the territory he ruled remained formally part of the Venetian state. The history of these negotiations show, however, that his desire was to establish an entirely independent Signoria. It is very likely, therefore, that the iconography of his funerary chapel was an attempt to legitimate a type of power that he never fully exercised, a monument to frustrated ambition.

Colleoni’s choice of architect also relates to the expression of this political ideal. From 1466, Amadeo is documented as working on the Certosa of Pavia, an immense project sponsored by the Sforza rulers of Milan and intended to act as a family mausoleum. Superficially, it seems illogical that Colleoni, who had gained so much during his service with Venice and planned to build his chapel in a subject city of the Venetian republic, should have chosen an architect associated so closely with a persistent enemy of the republic. But in some ways, the Sforza acted as models to Colleoni. In 1449, the condottiere Francesco Sforza, although lacking an aristocratic background and with no legal claim on the dukedom, besieged the city and in 1450 was installed as duke of Milan. This meteoric rise to power, from condottiere to duke, was a model for Colleoni. In 1471, just prior to Colleoni’s decision to commission his chapel, Galeazzo Maria Sforza had made it known that he planned to build a monumental burial chapel based on the baptistery of Florence or Pisa. Although never completed, this ambitious project almost certainly provided the immediate stimulus for Colleoni’s own decision to build such a chapel, since before this date all evidence points to much more modest plans. Given the amply documented competition

Arte Lombarda 100 (1992), p. 100 draws the same conclusions regarding the political message of the chapel.
between the two figures, the hiring of a Sforza architect became a political act that would have amplified the agenda of the sculpture's iconography.74

All of these conclusions can be arrived at without any reference to the physical context in which this complex monument was placed. As mentioned earlier, however, the chapel was actually built onto S. Maria Maggiore, in the angle formed by the nave and transept of the church. (figs. 6, 39) To the west of the chapel in the fifteenth century was a wall that marked the boundary of the bishop's palace. To the north, across the square and in front of the chapel, was the Palazzo della Ragione, the seat of civic government, linked closely with the ideal of communal government, but no longer, given that the city was ruled by Venice, a site of any real power. To the east of the square was the unfinished cathedral of S. Vincenzo. To the north of this very compact space was the Piazza Vecchia, emerging at the time as a second location for civic representation.

The choice of site within this complex of buildings, each with different symbolic associations, was made very carefully by Colleoni, as is clear from the considerable efforts expended by him in obtaining it. Unlike many similar projects elsewhere, Colleoni was not simply founding a chapel that would then become an integral part of the church to which it was attached, but a completely separate church. He was thus free to chose the location that best suited his requirements. Although more expensive, he could have built a free-standing monument with no link to a pre-existing church. The site he eventually chose was, in fact, already occupied by a sacristy and chapel of S. Maria Maggiore. The church agreed to the demolition of these structures, but only on the condition that Colleoni pay for the rebuilding of the sacristy at a different location attached

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74 This same point is argued in great detail by Erben, Bartolomeo Colleoni, pp. 94-100.
to the building. The fact that he was willing to pay these penalties shows how committed Colleoni was to this site. Ample space was available in places where the demolition of parts of important civic structures was not required, such as to the north of this square in Piazza Vecchia, or on the south side of S. Maria Maggiore itself.

I propose that Colleoni was so demonstrably determined to build on this site because he wanted to confront, both literally and symbolically, the basilica of S. Maria Maggiore. One of the most obvious ways this desire manifested itself was in the decision to knock down not just the sacristy of S. Maria Maggiore, but the transept absidiole as well, destroying in the process a significant part of the twelfth-century fabric. Although it could be argued that without this demolition the space for a new chapel would have been inadequate, it cannot be denied that it also permitted the juxtaposition of the new with the old. The choices regarding the disposition of the chapel's spaces also forwarded this possibility. Faced with the magnificence of the facade, the expectation of the viewer is that the altar of the chapel will be located on the same axis, against the wall opposite the entrance. Instead, the tomb of Colleoni was placed in this position, and the altar was enclosed within a small extension of the structure to the right, towards the west. The decision not to place the altar against the back wall was probably motivated by a desire to place greater emphasis on the tomb, but having made that decision, and faced with the option of placing the altar either towards the

75 On this new sacristy, see A. Pinetti, "La 'cimergia' o sacristia nuova di S. Maria Maggiore," La Rivista di Bergamo, Feb. 1923, pp. 695-700.
76 Although lacking a facade, the Portinari chapel at S. Eustorgio in Milan is the closest precedent for the Colleoni chapel. In similar fashion it consisted of a large square space joined to a smaller space housing the altar. Unlike the Colleoni chapel, however, its altar was on the same axis as the entrance. For a comparison of the two chapels, see Erben, Bartolomeo Colleoni, pp. 107-109. See also, J.G. Bernstein, "A Florentine Patron in Milan: Pigello and the Portinari Chapel," in C.H. Smyth and G.C. Garfagnini, eds., Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations, vol. 1, Florence, 1989, pp. 171-200.
east or towards the west, the choice was in favour of the unconventional west. Although practical issues related to fitting the bulk of the structure into the corner formed by the two walls of S. Maria Maggiore must have played a large role in this decision, it must also have been taken to make the facade of the chapel abut directly against the entrance portal of S. Maria Maggiore.

What exactly was the iconographic programme of the portal confronted in this way by the Colleoni chapel? (figs. 41, 42) The north portal to S. Maria Maggiore was built in two phases. The first part of the project, completed by Giovanni da Campione between 1351 and 1353, consisted of an arched entranceway into the church surmounted by three over life size statues placed beneath a canopy. In 1398, Andrea de' Bianchi executed a second canopy above the central arch of the first. It also housed three large free-standing statues. No early documents reveal the identity of these figures, but some of the seventeenth-century local historians are more informative, if sometimes contradictory. Both Mario Muzio and Marcantonio Benaglio, for instance, identify the top range of figures as the Virgin and child flanked by SS. Hesteria and Grata, two contemporaries of S. Alessandro central to the dissemination of his evangelizing mission. Doubtless the Virgin was present because of the dedication of the church, but neither of the two local saints had any particular association with S. Maria Maggiore. No altar in the church was dedicated to

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77 A. Pinetti "Cronistoria artistica di S. Maria Maggiore - II: I portali, il campanile, la sacrestia nuova," Bergomum 20 (1926), p. 141: on the inside of the left bracket of the portal is the following inscription: MCCCLI MAGISTER - JOHANES - DE CAMPLEONO - CIV. PERG. FECIT HOC OPUS. Another inscription appears on the equestrian statue of S. Alessandro: MAGISTER JOHANNES FILIUS MAGISTRI UGI DE CAMPLEONO FECIT HOC OPUS. MCCCLIII.

78 See Pinetti, "Cronistoria II," p. 143, for references to the documentary evidence for this dating.

either one of them, and their major relics were located elsewhere in the city.80

Why should SS. Hesteria and Grata have been included on this portal?

According to one tradition, the two women were amongst the Early Christian rulers of Bergamo. In Mario Muzio's description of the portal, the two figures are both named and described as "two of our glorious citizens and princesses."81

Celestino relates that, following the deaths of both Lupo and Adieida, the citizens of Bergamo elected Grata as their leader, and then after Grata's death Hesteria in turn became ruler of the city.82 As evidence of this assertion Celestino cites the existence of a fresco located in the palace of the podestà in which Hesteria and Grata are shown amongst the other early rulers of the city, Crotacio, Lupo and Adieida. Although the work does not survive, it is clear that the two saints represented on the portal to S. Maria Maggiore were connected with the idea of civic government. Moreover, Celestino mentioned that Grata achieved her position by means of an election, thus implying that the mode of civic government she stood for symbolically was to a certain extent democratic, an approach to governance represented by the Commune.

How do the figures on the lower level of the portal fit into this theme? (fig. 52) On the left is a standing figure of a male saint. He is bearded and carries a book and crossed staff, but neither of these are very distinctive attributes and there are no identifying inscriptions. In the centre is an equestrian statue whose rider is shown wearing medieval armour and carrying a banner. (fig. 53) To the right is a statue of a beardless young man dressed as a deacon. Muzio identified these three figures, from left to right, as SS. Barnaba, Alessandro and

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80 At the time of the portal's construction, the relics of S. Hesteria were located in the basilica alessandrina, while those of S. Grata were preserved in the conventual church of S. Grata.
81 Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 3, p. 10, "ambedue gloriose nostre Cittadine & Principesse."
S. Alessandro was, of course, the principal patron saint of Bergamo, described by Muzio as the city’s protector saint, whereas S. Barnaba was thought to have been the first evangelizer of the area, and S. Proiettizio the first arcidiacono of the cathedral. Together, therefore, these saints are all connected to the founding of the church in Bergamo, not a theme that would not have resonated strongly with the history of this church building. According to the version of events that had been developed at least by the fifteenth century, S. Maria Maggiore was a fairly recent foundation, without a particular relationship to the origins of Christianity in the city. Muzio seems to have misunderstood the iconographic programme of the portal and in response, Celestino rejected his identifications. For both authors there was no doubt surrounding the identity of the mounted knight, S. Alessandro, but the indistinct attributes and lack of inscriptions for the other figures excited some controversy. Celestino argued that the two flanking sculptures represented SS. Andrea and Vincenzo:

...in the most worthy middle position is that [a statue] of S. Alessandro on horseback, to whose right is the Apostle Andrew and to the left the Levite Vincenzo. Someone says [M. Mucio appears in the margin] that the right statue is of S. Barnaba, and the left of Proiettizio, but I do not know on what foundation this is built since it is common opinion that these statues are of the protector saints. His error is shown by the ancient writings where Andrew and Vincenzo are called protector saints, as well as in the painting in the Sala del Publico Consiglio, where they are shown. Neither is it to be believed that our leaders would have wanted to put here statues of saints less esteemed than the protector saints and thus eclipse these.

83 Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 3, p. 10.
84 For S. Barnaba, see Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, pp. 1-16; Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 1, pp. 2-6. For S. Proiettizio, see Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 3, pp. 1-19; Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 1, pp. 178-191.
It does seem, therefore, that there was a strong tradition referring to the overall theme that connected the group: the protection of the city. Celestino argued that these two sculptures represented the Apostle Andrew and S. Vincenzo because they had traditionally been, along with S. Alessandro, the protector saints of Bergamo, and of Bergamo's civic government. As evidence of this last connexion, Celestino cites the existence of civic images in which these very same saints are shown together as protectors of the city. Although not mentioned by Celestino in this context, these saints were invoked together in a document of 1307 that marked the end of a period of civic strife.86 There was, therefore, clearly a tradition of joining these saints together. Furthermore, there is nothing about the figures themselves that might run counter to these identifications, and in fact the bearded figure to the left of the portal could easily represent the Apostle Andrew, and S. Vincenzo was most commonly depicted as a deacon, like the statue on the right.

With the sculptures of the lower tier identified according to Celestino's argument, the portal as a whole should be read as articulating a fairly unified political message. SS. Grata and Esteria were included as holy prototypes for the broadly-based quasi-democratic ideal of communal government. In conjunction with the Virgin, the figures on the level below expressed very directly one of the principal roles of any form of government, the protection of those governed. The entrance portal of S. Maria Maggiore thus served to unite the political and the religious, and to act as a sign of the Commune's legitimacy through associating its values with holy figures, including some of the founders of Christianity in Bergamo. These symbolic connexions with the values of the city

*quivi habbian voluto i nostri Maggiori mettere statue de Santi, meno stimati che i Protettori, & tralasciare questi.*

86 The peace treaty is, in fact, recorded elsewhere by Celestino, Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 1, p. 186.
government, although a little confused by the seventeenth century, would not have been lost on fifteenth-century viewers. There was, after all a long-standing relationship between the two institutions, exemplified by the regio, or speakers platform attached to the wall next to the entrance, a structure which had been used for communal meetings at least until the 1340s and was probably still associated with that function at the time the Colleoni chapel was built. In purely iconographic terms, therefore, the Colleoni chapel and the north portal of S. Maria Maggiore expressed contrasting ideologies.

I would like to turn now to a different question: did the designer of the Colleoni chapel introduce visual elements to highlight this political distinction and if so, were these intended to suggest that one system should supersede the other? (fig. 42) The most important distinction between the two structures is that the chapel is in an antique rather than Gothic style. In larger cities where several examples of the new style might have existed by this date, such a contrast would not have been so significant, but in Bergamo this was the first structure to be built in the antique style. Its very form, therefore, implied progress with respect to the immediate past. The chapel is also much larger than the S. Maria Maggiore portal and its facade is more ornamental and colourful. In spite of these great differences, however, there are many points of contact which suggest that the chapel was intended to be viewed not in isolation from the chapel, but in conjunction with it, as if the two monuments formed a pair. Even though the chapel uses more colour, the fact that both are so colourful is significant, especially since not only is the use of such coloured stone in Bergamo very rare, but Amadeo seems not to have used much colour in his other commissions.87

87 The facade of the Certosa at Pavia, for instance, is very ornate and uses marble of many different shades, but does not feature the large amount of pink stone found at the Colleoni chapel. On the Certosa, see J.S. Ackerman, "The Certosa of Pavia and the Renaissance in Milan," Marsyas 5 (1947-49).
The tall and narrow proportions of the chapel also clearly mimic those of the portal, and stand in marked contrast to the rather squat appearance of Amadeo's other major facade project at the Certosa of Pavia. In many ways, therefore, the way in which the chapel was designed appears to have invited comparison with the portal. At the same time, however, it is clear that the Colleoni chapel was meant to be viewed as the victor in this stylistic contest.

The dialogue is not restricted to a general stylistic relationship, however, but extends also to the parallel arrangement of some sculptural elements on both structures. The most significant parallel is between the three figures of the main arcaded area of the portal, and the two Roman Emperors and soldier in antique armour ranged along the facade of the Colleoni chapel at the level of its rose window. (figs. 52, 54) Although the scale and format are different, the three saints of the entrance portal were probably meant to be read in parallel with the two Roman Emperors and soldier of the chapel. The two groups share the same general disposition, as well as being placed at very similar levels. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that the soldier in antique armour should probably be identified as S. Alessandro, the same saint who appears on horseback at the centre of the church portal.88 (figs. 51, 53) I suggested above, however, that this figure, at the centre of the facade and placed very near to the Colleoni stemma, embodied the patron's virtue. How can this be reconciled with an identification as S. Alessandro? It seems that Colleoni, although stopping short of actually identifying himself with the saint, sought here to associate himself

88 Piel, La Cappella Colleoni, p. 6, identifies this figure as both Colleoni and S. Alessandro, but the dual identification is mentioned only in the caption to an illustration and is not elaborated in the text. Both Rossi, "La Cappella Colleoni," p. 8, and Erben, Bartolomeo Colleoni, p. 131, identify this figure as S. Alessandro. Erben argues that since the figure represents S. Alessandro (using the evidence of the adjoining portal sculpture) it cannot represent Colleoni. The identification as S. Alessandro, however, should not exclude the fact that the viewer is encouraged to make an association between the statue and Colleoni.
with some aspects of the saint's legend, particularly his role as protector of Bergamo. Had such a blurring of boundaries not been intentional, it is likely that the statue would have been provided with an unambiguous attribute signalling its identity. As further evidence for this intention is the form of the condottiere's tomb within the chapel, placed against the wall immediately opposite the entrance. Surmounting the tomb is a just under life size wooden equestrian statue of Colleoni. (fig. 55) Given that at this date large scale equestrian statues were comparatively rare, it seems likely that on some level one is meant to draw a parallel between this figure and the similar one of S. Alessandro just next door.

Perhaps the most convincing, however, is that the quasi-assimilation of Colleoni with Alessandro fits so well into the political programme of the chapel as a whole. It joins the general message in favour of rule by an enlightened, virtuous individual, with a specific local message suggesting that Colleoni, like Alessandro, was the protector of Bergamo, and that he would have been the ideal ruler of a Signoria centred in Bergamo. The idea that this political ideology should supersede and not simply complement that expressed by the portal is carried by the contrasting style of the two figures. On the portal, S. Alessandro is shown as a mounted medieval knight in armour. Amadeo's S. Alessandro on the Colleoni chapel is not only posed less stiffly, he stands in an approximation of classical contrapposto, and wears all'antica armour. As the first extant image in Bergamo showing S. Alessandro as a Roman soldier, the statue loudly proclaimed the newness of Colleoni's political vision with respect to that articulated by the adjoining portal.

Immediately opposite S. Maria Maggiore is the town hall of Bergamo, the Palazzo della Ragione. Like the basilica, it was built in the twelfth century and served as a focal point for the representational needs of the Commune. (fig. 56)
In 1474, Colleoni proposed that this important civic structure be demolished and rebuilt elsewhere. There could be no clearer evidence of Colleoni’s aim, which was to remake the piazza as a monument to himself and to individual rather than collective rule. His pretext for making this request was that the Palazzo obstructed the chapel and prevented it from being viewed from a distance, but it is obvious that it also formed part of a grander programme either to remove or mask representations of communal rule so that his political ideal would have fewer symbolic rivals within Bergamo’s central piazza.

6. Interior Transformations I: The Ancona di Rame and the Choir Intarsie

As observed in chapter one, the wars of the League of Cambrai, from 1509 to 1516, saw Bergamo change hands six times. In 1516, the city was finally returned to Venetian authority for good, stability returned and ambitious artistic projects could be initiated. The period immediately following this peace saw the first in a long series of efforts that would eventually entirely transform the medieval interior of S. Maria Maggiore. In January 1518, the leaders of the MIA commissioned a new altarpiece for the high altar of S. Maria Maggiore. The new work was to replace a statue of the Virgin and child that was judged "ugly and not at all appropriate to such a church." After much consultation with experts, the MIA decided that the new altarpiece was to be made of gilded copper, with some silver parts as well. The explicit reason given for the choice of such

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89 Rossi, "La Cappella Colleoni," p. 5.
90 For comprehensive discussions of the copious documentation recording the various stages of this commission see F. Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intarsiato di Lotto e Capoferri per S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, vol. 1, Bergamo, 1987, pp. 17-18; A. Pinetti, "Cronistoria artistica di S. Maria Maggiore - IV: le curiose vicende d’una ancona di rame," Bergomum 22 (1928), pp. 131-151.
91 The old altarpiece is described as "turpem et minime tali ecclesie decentem" in the records of 22 July 1521, MIA 869, Libro della spesa dell’Ancona di rame, 1521 sin 1526, fols. 3-4v, cited by Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intarsiato, vol. 1, p. 17.
an unusual combination of expensive materials was that the chapel had insufficient light for a painted altarpiece. Though this was no doubt the most important reason, other factors must have played a role as well.92

Peter Humfrey has argued that in Renaissance Venice sculpted altarpieces carried greater prestige than those that were painted. For the most part, he argues that this importance probably came from the fact that such objects cost much more money than their painted equivalents.93 Given this relationship, the choice of materials of very high intrinsic value for the S. Maria Maggiore altarpiece must have been intended to confer considerable prestige on its patron. Under the legitimate cover provided by the concern about sufficient light, the social ambitions of the MIA could be advanced. What in particular might have stimulated the MIA to opt for such luxurious materials? To answer this question we need to turn to the relatively recent altar decoration of the immediately adjacent Colleoni chapel. The three free-standing marble figures of this ensemble, representing SS. Bartholomew, John the Baptist and Mark, were executed by Pietro Lombardo and installed by him between 1490 and 1491.94 Even in 1518, this would have been the most up-to-date and prestigious example of a sculpted altarpiece in Bergamo. Given the competitive relationship of the two exteriors discussed above, it seems likely that this altarpiece should have stimulated the MIA to commission a sculptured work themselves, and to go one

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92 The chapel is described as having "modicam lucem et non idoneum prospectum qui sufficiat picture." 22 July 1521, MIA 869, Libro della spesa dell'Ancona di rame, 1521 fin 1526, fols. 3-4v, cited by Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intarsiat, vol. 1, p. 17.
93 On the tradition in Venice, and on the greater prestige of sculpted altarpieces, see P. Humfrey, The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice, New Haven, 1993, pp. 273-299. With regards to the prestige attached to particular materials, see Ibid., p. 274: "...it must often have been thought that the more luxurious the material (wood, marble and bronze, in ascending order), and the greater the technical difficulties it involved, the greater prestige earned by the donor." Ibid., p. 274, Humfrey also involves the MIA commission in his argument here, suggesting that lack of light was no doubt an important factor, but that desire for prestige at the same time should not be overlooked.
step further by ordering it to be made of extremely expensive materials. The high altar of S. Maria Maggiore was, after all, one of the most important in Bergamo, and the aim of the 1518 decision was that the result should be "in praise of the divine cult and an embellishment to the entire city."95 This same goal was articulated again in 1521, when it was stated that the altarpiece "can merit praise not only amongst the images of our city, but even amongst those of other cities of Italy."96

The MIA's ambitious altarpiece project was not, however, destined to be brought to completion. Many painters, sculptors and architects were consulted for the work, including Lorenzo Lotto, and many models were prepared, but in the end only seven decorative plaques were completed, but in the satisfaction of the MIA. It is not exactly clear why work on the altarpiece ceased, but it seems that unsatisfactory quality of the parts actually executed may have played a decisive role. A silver statue of St. John the Evangelist, for instance, was deemed inadequate and, as a consequence, melted down in 1542.97 For the purposes of

95 "ad laudem cultus divini et ornatum totius Civitatis..." MIA 1257, Terminationes, fol. 90, cited by Cortesi Bosco Il coro intersiato, vol. 1, p. 17.
96 "...pulcra et decora et condicens tali altari et que merito laudari possit non solum inter Icona civitatis nostre, sed etiam aliarum civitatum Italie." 22 July 1521, MIA 869, Libro della spesa dell'Ancona di rame, 1521 sin 1526, fols. 3-4v, cited by Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intersiato, vol. 1, p. 17.
97 "Li Magnifici Presidenti della Misericordia vedendo che la figura de Santo Zoane Evangelista alias fabricata per M.ro Jacomo et Galeazzo fratelli de Cambii de Gremona aurifici... parte de rame et parte de argento a spese della Misericordia per metter nella palla de S. Maria Magior, non era opera laudata, anci reprobata da molti periti, mandorno Ser Jovan Antonio Mollica, fator della Misericordia, da Fara a Cremona ad parlare a dito M.ro Galeazo et nunciarli como per li urgenti bisogni de dita Misericordia volevano far infonder seu colar dita figura, perhò se esso M.ro Galeazzo se poteva prevalere de dita figura in qualche cosa senza fonderla la venisse a piliar a Bergamo portando lo argento o il valore et pagando etiam il metallo che la de seria data per argento et metallo rotto piu presto a lui che ad altri. Et hauta la risposta fatta per ditto Ser. Jo. Antonio ne la qual ha referto che dito M.ro Galeazo resolutamente ha resposto che dita figura non è per lui ne per metallo bono ne rotto.. imperhò de ordine del M. Consiglio sono sta infuse seu colate quelle parti de dita figura che sono de argento ... videlicet: una testa grande, doi piedi, due mani, tute de argento... 1543 sub die 7 mensis Februari." MIA 869, Libro della spesa dell'Anona di rame, 1521 sin 1526, fol. 51, cited by Pinetti, "Cronistoria artistica - IV," pp. 147-148. Difficulty with the production of satisfactory large scale silver statues was in fact common in this period. The problem was noted by Benvenuto Cellini, whose capacity to judge such matters can hardly be doubted. For further discussion of this problem see, E.A. Levy, "A Canonical Work of an Uncanonical Era: Re-
this argument, however, the process by which the work failed is of less import
than the intentions lying behind its commission. What role was it meant to play
in the fashioning of a political identity for S. Maria Maggiore? In one way, the
sheer magnificence of the work was probably intended to impress upon the
visitor the importance of the church within the city, and perhaps especially the
superior status of S. Maria Maggiore relative to the Colleoni chapel. The
iconography of the altarpiece, on the other hand, would have embodied a more
complex series of claims and allegiances.

In the copious contemporary documentation surrounding the creation of
the copper altarpiece, however, little is revealed about the intended subject of the
work. There are, for instance, no transcripts of debates regarding what should be
represented there. On the high altar prior to the new commission was a statue of
the Virgin and child, flanked by painted wings showing Sts. John the Evangelist
and Mark. The only reference in the documents to the subject of the new
decoration indicates that the new work would follow the old.98 Given that the
MIA actually went ahead with the production of a statue of St. John the
Evangelist, it is probable that the selection of these particular saints represented
the final decision of the MIA. At the time this decision was made, statues of
these saints on the high altar of S. Maria Maggiore would have carried important
resonances with contemporary events. In 1516, just two years before the first

98 "Propositum fuit oportunum esse deliberare quorum imagines sanctorum apponende sint in illis
duabus nichis a lateribus anchone nove construi incepte pro altari maiore Ecclesie S. Marie cum
hactenus de aliqua dictarum imaginem seu statuarum deliberata spetialitate non constet, qua
propter considerata piisima et antiqua dedicatione dicti altaris Immaculate Virgini Marie ac
beatis Joanni Apostulo et Evangeliste et Marco Evangeliste dicati prout ex veteris anchone picturis
dignoscimur, posita fuit pars quod ad imitationem predicte antique dedicationis altaris et Icone
vetereis in predictis duabus nichis anchone nove predicte, a latere dextro beati Johannis Aposoli et
Evangeliste et in sinistro beati Marci Evangeliste imaginies seu statue construautur et apponantur."
26 June 1522, MIA 869, Libro della spesa dell‘Ancona di rame, 1521 sin 1526, fol. 7, cited by Pinetti,
mention of the altarpiece project, Bergamo was returned to Venetian dominion after having changed hands innumerable times during the war of the League of Cambrai that had raged for the previous seven years. In May 1517, the city council was reelected. For many in Bergamo, this return to stability was cause for celebration and for paying homage to the agent of that restoration, namely Venice. It is in this light that the choice of saints for the altarpiece should be seen. St. Mark was, of course, the patron saint of Venice, making the use of his image on the high altar of S. Maria Maggiore a statement of political allegiance to that city. St. John the Evangelist was also associated with Venice because Bergamo had, according to its local mythology, voluntarily submitted to Venetian authority on one of the feast days of this saint, the feast of St. John ante portam latinam. Both Celestino and Calvi made much of this coincidence in dates and associated the celebration of the day with the church of S. Maria Maggiore. In the 1620 published statutes of the MIA, for example, which record the calendar of special celebrations at S. Maria Maggiore, the feast is particularly singled out for its significance within the history of the city. Except for the feasts of the Virgin, it is the only feast highlighted in this way.

99 The Martinengo altarpiece by Lorenzo Lotto has been interpreted as expressing a pro-Venetian agenda in exactly these years. See F. Cortesi Bosco, "Riflessi del mito di Venezia nella Pala Martinengo di Lorenzo Lotto," Archivio Storico Bergamasco 5 (1983), pp. 213-238.
100 This same argument has been made by Cortesi Bosco Il coro intarsiato, vol. 1, pp. 17-18.
102 Institutione, & Ordini, pp. 31-32: "Et perche questa chiesa, & insieme questo pio luogo della Misericordia sono sempre stati protetti, favoriti, & ornati dimolti nobili Privilegi, dal Serenissimo Principe di Venetia & dagli Illustissimi suoi Rappresentanti, i quali per singolar gratia del sommo Iddio reggono tutti i suoi fedelissimi sudditti con singolar sapienza, & con paterno amore: perciò in segno di particolar fede, & divotione doveranno essi Signori Deputati far, che in essa chiesa si porgano preghiere à S.D.M. per la conservatione, essaltatione, & felicità perpetua di questa Serenissima Repub. & di tutti id suoi publici Rappresentanti. Et a questo fine, oltre all'altre continue orationi, doveranno ogn'anno il giorno di S. Giovanni Porta Latina (nel quale l'anno mille quattrocento venti otto, la Città con felicissimi auspici, volontariamente si diede sotto la protettione di questa Eccelsa Repub.) overo il giorno seguente far celebrar una Messa solenne, alla
combination of Sts. John the Evangelist and Mark would, therefore, have strongly proclaimed the connexion between S. Maria Maggiore and Venetian rule, as well as asserting that this allegiance had been arrived at through a voluntary act on the part of Bergamo's city government. This latter aspect of how the altarpiece was probably received was, in turn, foregrounded by the decision to place St. John the Evangelist to the right of the central image of the Virgin, in the position of honour. The symbol of Venetian dominion par excellence was thus given second billing to an image that alluded to the freedom with which Bergamo had joined in that relationship. In this way, the altarpiece would have permitted S. Maria Maggiore paradoxically to preserve its long association with the notion of civic autonomy and liberty.

Even though it is probable that these two saints represented the final choice of the MIA, it is worthwhile noting that other possibilities were seriously entertained, and that one of these at least suggested a different political emphasis to what has been suggested above. Marcantonio Michiel described having seen the actual finished altarpiece set up in S. Maria Maggiore, and although this is not possible since the work was never completed, he may well have been describing one of the many models executed for the MIA: "In the middle niche [of the altarpiece] is the Assumption of our Lady with the twelve Apostles, and in two niches to the sides Sant'Alessandro and Santa Grata." S. Alessandro was, of course, Bergamo's patron saint and S. Grata had been one of the Early Christian rulers of the city. Had the MIA followed through with this choice of

quale s'invitaranno gli Illustri Signori Rettori, & vi assisteranno tutti i Signori Reggenti, ô la maggior parte di essi."  

103 M. Michiel, Notizie d'opere di disegno, J. Morelli ed., Bassano, 1800, p. 48, "La Palla de rame dorato, zoè li nicchii, la cornize, e colonne, con le figure d'arzento de sizello, grande de due piedi, tutte tonde, fu de man de Simon da Pavia, finite per Galeazzo di Cambi orevese Cremonese: e sono nel nicchio de mezzo l'Assunzione de nostra Donna con li 12 Apostoli, e in due nicchii dalle bande Sant'Alessandro, Santa Grata, e nel scabello e muretti delle colonne istoriette de basso rilevo." The exact date of Michiel's text is unknown.
iconography, the altarpiece would, instead of emphasising fealty to Venice, have have acted as a sign of the city's residual self-determination. It is possible that these two alternatives represented two factions within the MIA itself, one that favoured the return of Venetian control and another that sought greater autonomy for Bergamo. This factional divide might, in turn, have been one of the causes of the problems encountered in completing the altarpiece project. Ultimately, however, the existence of such a split remains entirely speculative. I have introduced it here, however, because the question of which saints were to be represented in the basilica became increasingly vexed as its redecoration was carried forward in the second half of the sixteenth century.

On 18 September 1522, the MIA initiated discussions on how the choir area as a whole should be modified to make it a more fitting setting for the planned altarpiece. In this way, they started work on the project for which the church of S. Maria Maggiore is most famous today, the intarsia choir. An enormously complex undertaking, the choir took a team of numerous artists more than twenty five years to complete. Like the altarpiece which provided the initial stimulus, the choir was surely intended to outshine other similar works in the city and to compete in magnificence with the best offered in Italy as a whole. As evidence of this intention is the fact that Giovan Francesco Capoferri, the head of the project from 1522, was paid by the MIA to travel around Northern Italy examining other such choirs. In these competitive terms, the MIA was successful because the choir became, along with the Colleoni chapel, the two most remarked upon works of art in the city.

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104 The idea that these two choices may have represented a factional split has been suggested by Cortesi Bosco Il coro intarsiato, vol. 1, pp. 17-18.
106 The choir was, for instance, one of the few Bergamask works of art that remarked upon by Michiel, Notizie d'opere di disegno, pp. 47-48.
The scholarly literature on the choir has been directed towards an understanding of the series of enigmatic symbolic images designed by Lorenzo Lotto as covers for Old Testament narrative scenes. These covers depict a superficially random assemblage of objects whose symbolic meanings and associations actually join together in a gloss of the image they obscure. Many intractable problems have been encountered in this interpretive project, due both to the multivalency of most symbols, and to Lotto's notoriously idiosyncratic approach to such symbolism. For the most part, however, interpretations of the Old Testament scenes and their covers have centred on their relationship to theological and cultural issues that stood apart from S. Maria Maggiore as a representation of the city government. Even though there can be little doubt that there was some form of political agenda intended by the intarsia scenes, it will not be my purpose here to investigate that relationship. An entire dissertation dedicated to that subject alone would be required to treat it adequately.

The assignment of the seats within the choir, however, does reveal how the MIA understood itself and its church within local power structures, both civic and ecclesiastic. The choir as a whole was divided into three main sections. In front of the altar towards the nave of the church was an area reserved for the resident clerics who sat to recite the divine office. (fig. 57, zone 1)

To the sides of the altar were benches reserved for the celebrant and the highest

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108 The original seating plan of the choir is revealed by an anonymous Seicento account of the liturgy at S. Maria Maggiore: MIA 1906, Extravagantium rerum tractatus. The evidence offered by this source has been analysed by Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intarsiato, vol. 1, pp. 103-105.
secular authorities in the city, the two Venetian *Rettori*, the *Podestà* and *Capitano*. (fig. 57, zone 2) As a means of preserving the immunity of the church from episcopal control, the bishop was invited only in exceptional cases. When invited to officiate, he sat next to the celebrant, but when not acting in that role, he sat in the area reserved for the resident clerics. The third zone of the choir was located in the apse behind the altar. (fig. 57, zone 3) In this semi-circular area sat representatives of the civic government, as well as the Presidenti of the MIA. This disposition clearly privileged the secular authorities by placing them in such close proximity to the altar.

As has been amply demonstrated by Francesca Cortesi Bosco, this arrangement seems to have been unique amongst north Italian churches. Although no comprehensive study of these has been carried out, and diversity of arrangement seems to have been the rule rather than the exception, no other church, either monastic or cathedral, appears to have reserved the seats in the semicircle of the apse for representatives of the civic government.109 In the church of the Frari in Venice, for instance, the choir consisted of a 'U'-shaped rectangular enclosure in front of the high altar. From the nave, clear view of this altar was obstructed by the rood screen, but the open side of the 'U' allowed for a close connexion between friars and altar. This type of plan was taken up as the basic form inspiring the area reserved for the resident clergy at S. Maria Maggiore, with the notable exception being that there was no strong visual barrier there, meaning that the high altar could still be clearly seen from the nave. At the cathedral of Modena, the canons sat along a semicircular series of seats that followed the form of the church's apse. This disposition was taken up at S. Maria Maggiore, but with the significant change, already mentioned, that

109 This analysis, including the comparative examples, is drawn almost entirely from Cortesi Bosco *Il coro intarsiato*, vol. 1, p. 103.
civic representatives sat in the place of cathedral canons. At the cathedral of Cremona, where the canons also sat along a bench in the apse, the civic representatives and the bishop sat to the sides of the altar. This too was taken up at S. Maria Maggiore, but with the notable exception that the bishop did not have a permanent place to side of the altar, but was only granted that privilege when specially invited by the MIA to officiate. This recasting of forms drawn from different traditions was almost certainly intended to emphasize the special status of S. Maria Maggiore. It was not a cathedral church under the jurisdiction of the bishop, nor was it a conventual church, but was instead a centre for the representation of civic authority. By placing the Venetian Rettori to the side of the altar, the choir plan acknowledged the ascendancy of this authority, but simultaneously gave to the MIA and the city government a prominent complementary role, thus preserving the idea of S. Maria Maggiore as a symbolic surrogate of the autonomous Commune.

7. Interior Transformations II: The Apostolic Visitation of Carlo Borromeo and the Re-ordering of Altars

The most significant interventions in the interior of S. Maria Maggiore occurred not in the first half of the sixteenth century, however, but in the period following Carlo Borromeo's apostolic visitation to Bergamo in 1575. Despite the papal exemption guaranteeing freedom from any outside interference, Borromeo carried out a visitation of S. Maria Maggiore at this time. Fearful that this would

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110 A better comparison would be with a church of similar status. S. Petronio in Bologna is such a foundation, but its principal choir has been subject to many modifications since it was assembled in the late fifteenth century. Although no detailed study of its changing arrangements has been carried out, it is known that the choir was divided into two parts, one for the resident canons and the other for civic officials. It is possible, therefore, that S. Petronio had an arrangement that was quite close to what we have observed at S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. For the literature that does exist on the choir of S. Petronio, see G. Romano, M. Ferretti, "Opere di tarsia: Agostino de Marchi e il coro della cappella maggiore," in La Basilica di San Petronio, vol. 2, pp. 269-276.
compromise the future independence of S. Maria Maggiore, the city government and the MIA swiftly acted to prevent it from being turned into a precedent for the bishops of the city. The first part of the section that follows will centre on the events surrounding Borromeo's intervention. Why did he insist on visiting S. Maria Maggiore? How did the city manage to convince him that the bishop should not have the right of visitation? The bulk of the section, however, will discuss the implications of this visitation for the decoration of the church.

Afraid that they would ultimately lose their much vaunted exemption, the MIA consulted with Borromeo's architect, Pellegrino Tibaldi, on how to improve their church. I will argue that the comprehensive redecoration of the interior that followed was intended to conform with Borromeo's vision for ecclesiastical architecture as expressed in his 1577 *Instructiones fabricae*. Paradoxically, this exemplary reform was actually carried out as a means of avoiding the interference of the bishop, the figure most usually associated in this period with the effectuation of such reform. Along the way, I will touch on a variety of other issues. How was the desire to create thematically unified programmes of decoration reconciled with the impulse to preserve historically contingent altar dedications? How did this new decoration continue to express the special place of S. Maria Maggiore in the history of Bergamo? To what extent were Borromeo's reforms translated into a particular architectural aesthetic?

One of the most potent weapons in the arsenal of the Counter-Reformation bishop was the pastoral visitation. By means of these highly structured visitations, bishops were able simultaneously to uncover abuses and assert their authority in all the secular churches of the diocese. In the decrees of the Council of Trent it was recommended that bishops carry out this task every year, and although unrealistic in practice, the second half of the sixteenth century
did indeed witness the emergence of regular, well-documented visitations. \footnote{111} In Bergamo, for instance, both the number and meticulousness of visitations rose sharply in this period. \footnote{112} This increase in episcopal engagement with diocesan affairs inevitably caused friction, especially between the bishop and those institutions claiming immunity from episcopal control. The climate of conflict became so intense in Bergamo that bishop Federico Cornaro, through the agency of Carlo Borromeo, obtained a papal brief dated 4 January 1568 entitling him to intervene in cases where exemption was claimed. \footnote{113} Even with such a powerful document in his hands, the bishop was unable to prevail. This may have pushed Borromeo into his decision to carry out a visitation of the diocese himself. On 22 April 1575, he obtained permission from Pope Gregory XIII to carry out visitations of the dioceses of Cremona, Novara, Lodi, Brescia, and Bergamo. \footnote{114} This type of visitation, carried out by the archbishop himself (or by an appointed delegate), but authorised by the pope, was an apostolic visitation. The visitor was given the authority to require that any reforms deemed necessary be carried out. The number of dioceses involved in the papal permission shows that Bergamo was not an isolated case, and even though the difficulties encountered by bishop Cornaro may have offered Borromeo a convenient excuse for asking to carry out this type of special visitation, it seems

\footnote{111} The requirement to visit the diocese was mentioned several in the decrees of the council: session 7, ch. 7, p. 688; session 21, canon 8, p. 731; session 24, canon 3, pp. 761-763; session 24, canon 9, pp. 764-765. Page numbers refer to N.P. Tanner, ed., Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 2, Trent to Vatican II, Washington D.C., 1990.


\footnote{113} On the events leading up to the visitation of Borromeo, see Zanchi, "Dagli inizi," in Caprioli et al., Diocesi di Bergamo, p. 175; For the text of the papal brief, Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 244-247.

\footnote{114} Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 25-29.
that these also formed part of his broader reform policy. Given that one of the principal aims of this policy was to empower the episcopacy, it is likely his visitations were intended to kickstart reform.\footnote{J.M. Headly, "Introduction," in J.M. Headly and J.B. Tomaro, eds., \textit{San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century}, Cranbury N.J., 1988, pp. 11-26.} Although sanctioned by the Pope, the other reforms carried out by Borromeo suggest that these visitations were probably not intended as instruments of increased central control, but as exempla to be followed by local bishops.\footnote{On the aims of Borromeo's reform policy, see J.B. Tomaro, "San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent," in Headly and Tomaro, \textit{San Carlo Borromeo}, pp. 67-84.}

Borromeo's brief was to inspect every church in the diocese, regardless of whether or not the church traditionally enjoyed exemption from such visitations.\footnote{The requirement to visit all the churches in the dioceses was spelled out explicitly in the permission Borromeo received from Gregory XIII. Churches ruled by the laity were specifically mentioned as being within his purview. Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 1, p. 26.} The carrying out of this plan soon brought him into conflict with the MIA and with the city government, since one of the central tenets of the 1453 bull granting rule of S. Maria Maggiore to the MIA was that the combined institution was to be exempt from any outside interference in perpetuity. On 15 September 1575, however, the records show that a visitation to S. Maria Maggiore took place.\footnote{Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 316-319.} On 15 October of the same year, Borromeo even went so far as to suggest to the city council that S. Maria Maggiore and the MIA should, like any other church or confraternity in the diocese, submit to an annual visitation by the bishop.\footnote{Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 368-370.} In this request, Borromeo had the authority of Tridentine decrees which were very clear on this matter: all confraternities had to submit to episcopal visitation.\footnote{Tanner, \textit{Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils}, vol. 2, p. 740, session 22, canon 8.} In general, Borromeo was not opposed to confraternities per se, but did feel that the lay spirituality they represented should...
be firmly under the control of the clergy, which was patently not the case with the MIA. The city government was intent on maintaining the ancient privileges and exemptions of the MIA and S. Maria Maggiore. They elected four deputies, joined by two chosen by the MIA, to negotiate with Borromeo on this issue. Together they argued that Borromeo's visitation, carried out under the special circumstances obtaining during an apostolic visitation, should not set a precedent for subsequent intrusions by the bishops of Bergamo. Their principal piece of evidence for this defence was, of course, the papal bull of 1453, while Borromeo was able to appeal to the decrees of the Council of Trent, where it is stated quite explicitly that there should be no exemptions from episcopal visitations, at least amongst churches administered by the secular clergy.

Local ordinaries will be obliged to visit each year with apostolic authority churches, no matter how exempt, and by appropriate legal means to make provision that any repairs which are necessary are carried out, and that the churches are not deprived of the care of souls, if this applies to them, or of other services due to them: with a total exclusion of appeals, privileges, customs, even with prescription from time immemorial. The MIA countered the claims of this document in several ways. First, they argued that the decrees of the Council of Trent did not have greater authority than a papal bull and could thus not overturn the critical document of 1453. The document in which they defended their rights and privileges then turned to

121 MIA deputies had elected to meet with Borromeo on 5 October, MIA 1270, Terminationes, fol. 181v, 5 October 1575.
122 Tanner, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 2, session 7, chapter 8, p. 688. Also, "It is right that the bishop should keep a watch on everything that concerns the worship of God and where necessary supply any deficiencies. Hence those ... benefits both with and without the care of souls, both secular and regular, however held in trust and even exempted, should be visited annually by bishops, even acting as delegates of the apostolic see," Tanner, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. 2, p. 731, session 21, canon 8.
123 The response of the MIA to the threat posed by Borromeo is recorded in MIA 886, Pro immunitate ecclesiae S. Mariae maioris Bergomi, fol. 12-14, a section entitled "Iure Consortij Misericordiae ecclesiaeque S. Mariae Maioris allegata coram Ill.mo Cardinale S. Praxedis 1575."
a close reading of the Council decrees. They argued, for instance, that S. Maria Maggiore did not fall into the category of churches with exemptions, because it had been free from the moment of its foundation, and thus did not actually need the 1453 bull.\footnote{MIA 886, Pro immunitate ecclesiae, fol. 13v., "Per Cap. 8 sess.e 7 Concilij non complecti ecclesias liberas ab origine, sed exemptas tantum, quoniam non dixisset exemptas unam tantum ecclesiarum speciam amplectens sed omnes ecclesias."} Also according to the MIA, the real intention of the decree quoted above was to allow bishops to intervene in cases where abuses were present.\footnote{MIA 886, Pro immunitate ecclesiae, fol. 13, "3.o Ad Cap. 8 sess. 7 Concilij respond. sumpto argum.to ex illis verbis, et opportunos iuris remedijs negligentes compellant p' haec verba debere intellegi, ut iuxta formam iuris procedant. ideo cum visitatio de iure stantibus non p'mittatur, ecclesia minime debet visitari."} Since in this particular case the rule of the church was exemplary, there was simply no need for episcopal interference. This line of argumentation was, however, potentially problematic for the future autonomy of S. Maria Maggiore, since it essentially committed the MIA to continue in a way acceptable to the bishop, thus effectively giving the holder of that office the very control the MIA were seeking to keep out of his hands. The need to conform closely with the aims of the Council of Trent as a means of avoiding episcopal visitations became, I will argue, an important motivating factor lying behind the many changes to the fabric of S. Maria Maggiore following Borromeo’s departure from Bergamo.

On 30 October 1575, the question of the S. Maria Maggiore’s special status was again at the top of the city council agenda. By this date, the deputies elected fifteen days earlier had completed their negotiations with Borromeo, and achieved victory. Borromeo agreed to stop promoting the idea that S. Maria Maggiore’s exemption was inappropriate, thus eliminating doubts as to the legitimacy of the city’s rule, through the MIA, of the basilica. He promised instead to “favour and protect always.. the never interrupted exemption enjoyed
by this city," by which was meant the exemption of S. Maria Maggiore from episcopal interference. In this way, Borromeo gave up the idea that the basilica should, like any other church, submit to annual visitations. No precedent had been set by his own visitation of the church. In documents penned fewer than twenty years later, memory of Borromeo's recantation was so powerful an influence that it seems to have rendered inauthentic the visitation that was actually carried out. No document that I have found records the precise reason for Borromeo's about-face, but it is likely that the close connexion between the church and the Venetian overlords of the city was an important factor. This relationship is, in fact, mentioned frequently and positively in the documents defending the immunity of S. Maria Maggiore, where Venice is always cited as having been a strong defender of this church. Having helped establish such a potent symbol of the city's autonomy, the Venetians were no doubt reluctant to see their work neutralised by the forced submission of S. Maria Maggiore to episcopal authority. It is very likely, therefore, that Borromeo changed his mind as a result of pressure from the Venetian Rettori in Bergamo.

In the years following Borromeo's visitation, the MIA engaged in a programme of redecoration aimed at complying with his reforms. Borromeo's

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126 Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 371, from the city council meeting of 31 October 1575, "...favorire et sempre protegere detta essentione goduta da questa città e non mai interrotta..."

127 MIA 887, Pro Ecclesia S. Mariae 1594, fol. 32, regarding the decrees of Borromeo following his "visit" to S. Maria Maggiore: "Haec asserta visitatio absque die, et anno, non est authentica nunquam fuit indica, nondum publicata, nunquam intimata, di ea nunquam Consortiu' habuit notitiam, nullum denique habuit unquam effectum, aut executionem." Similarly, in a document from 1595, MIA 5052, fol. 7, "quatro deputati, li quali conogni desterita possibile procurassero apresso sua Sig.ie III.ma che virtu delle ragioni sue dovesse astenersi dala sudetta visita, per non interrompere le raggioni dell'oro integro stato et liberta del suo principio per sin' all'hora continuatamente havta," it is suggested that the visitation did not really take place.

interest in architecture developed soon after he became archbishop of Milan. In 1573, he oversaw the Third Provincial Council at which a series of diocesan decrees on ecclesiastical architecture were issued, and in 1577 he published the influential *Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae*. Primarily, Borromeo was interested in churches as functional vessels for the carrying out of the sacred liturgy. Because of this predilection, his text focuses mostly on developing the best possible spatial arrangements for accommodating the action appropriate to this purpose. The question of what influence this programme had on actual buildings is not easily answered because Borromeo was not himself an architect. He did, however, have a very close relationship with Pellegrino Tibaldi, often referred to as the architect of S. Carlo. Tibaldi regularly accompanied Borromeo on his pastoral visitations and was frequently asked to rectify any of the architectural problems they encountered. In these and in other projects Tibaldi became the translator into spatial terms of Borromeo's written *Instructiones*. Translated in this way, Borromeo's text transcended the abstract and became a stimulus to real architectural change.

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133 This point has been argued most convincingly by J. Ackerman, "Pellegrino Tibaldi, S. Carlo Borromeo e l'architettura ecclesiastica del loro tempo," in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale S. Carlo e il suo tempo*, vol. 1, Rome, 1986, pp. 573-586. Following the 1577 publication of the *Instructiones*, Ackerman argues that Tibaldi began paying very close attention to the specifics of that text. This manifested itself principally in the planning of chapels and in the illumination of altars.
134 R. Haslam, "Pellegrino de' Pellegrini, Carlo Borromeo and the Public Architecture of the Counter-Reformation," *Arte Lombarda* 94/95 (1990), p. 29, has argued that: "The archbishop's preoccupation with questions of use and social well-being must have helped the architect [Tibaldi] towards the maturity of his own writings on building types and the ideal city, and towards a design language of clear and simple functionality." S. Benedetti, "Aspetti e connessioni nell'architettura della riforma cattolica tra Roma e Milano," *Studia Borromaea* 11 (1997), p. 39, has argued that Tibaldi's contact with Borromeo led the architect from a Mannerist style towards the: "necessità
In 1576, the MIA asked that Pellegrino Tibaldi visit S. Maria Maggiore and give an assessment of what should be done to update the structure. By choosing Tibaldi as their consultant, the MIA was clearly trying to ensure that any changes to the fabric of the church would conform to the most up-to-date models established by Borromeo. Having prevented him from turning his visitation into a precedent for the bishop of Bergamo, one might have expected the MIA to proceed independently of the architectural reforms associated with the archbishop of Milan. But the MIA had prevented this infringement on their rights only by proclaiming noisily that such a visitation was unnecessary, since their organisation was a model of propriety. In the years following 1575, therefore, the MIA needed to match its assertions with actions.

Before examining what changes were made after 1575, it is necessary to examine briefly the state of S. Maria Maggiore at that date, especially with respect to its altars. Although no records of visitations from before this date survive, probably because none were carried out, and Borromeo’s description is very rudimentary,135 it has been possible to assemble enough evidence from a variety of MIA sources to build a picture of the locations and dedications of these altars.136 At the time of Borromeo’s visitation, there were ten altars in S. Maria Maggiore,137 including the high altar, which was dedicated to the Assumption of

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135 Even though the record for this particular visitation does survive, it is much less thorough than those for other city churches. The Verbali cover four pages, whereas those for the cathedral encompassed more than forty. It is quite possible that the resistance of the MIA prevented him from gaining access to the church records necessary for a comprehensive visitation. Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 316-319.

136 For information on the altars around the time of Borromeo’s visitation, I am entirely indebted to the research of Cortesi Bosco, Il coro intarsiato, vol. 1, p. 10, where all of the relevant documentary sources for this information are recorded.

137 Borromeo counted only nine altars, but MIA documents from both before and after his visitation make clear that there were ten. On 6 June 1555, MIA 1265, Terminaciones, fol. 28, ten altars are listed in a document recording the rotation to be followed by the chaplains in the saying of their masses. This is further evidence of the incompleteness of Borromeo’s visitation.
the Virgin. (fig. 58, position 1) There was an altar at the end of each of the short
aisles flanking the choir. The one to the north was dedicated to St. John the
Evangelist (fig. 58, position 2) and that to the south to Sts. Mark and Peter Martyr
(fig. 58, position 3). Both of these altars were decorated with images of the *Virgin
and Child with Saints*, which are now lost. The two eastern absidioles of the
transept had altars dedicated to S.Egidio (fig. 58, position 4) and Corpus Domini
(fig. 58, position 5). On the Corpus Domini altar there was possibly a sculpted
*Virgin and Child with Saints*. There were also four altars placed against the
main piers supporting the cupola. Clockwise, these were dedicated to St. Peter
and the SS. Quattro Coronati (fig. 58, position 6), St. Sebastian (fig. 58, position 7),
Sts. Martin and Bassiano (fig. 58, position 8), and All Saints (fig. 58, position 9).

On the altar of St. Peter and the SS. Quattro Coronati there was a polyptych (1509)
by the local painter Antonio Boselli representing Sts. Peter, Paul and John the
Evangelist. On the altar of St. Sebastian there was an altarpiece dating to 1481 by
Giovanni da San Pellegrino, and on the All Saints altar was a painting of *Christ
in Glory with saints* (1514) by Antonio Boselli. (fig. 59) In the westernmost bay of
the nave was an altar dedicated to the Virgin and St. Joseph (fig. 58, position 10)
at which a confraternity devoted to St. Joseph was established around 1515.

The direct result Tibaldi’s visit to S. Maria Maggiore was a lengthy written
record of his recommendations to the MIA. In the preamble to this unpublished
document he outlined his general goal, which was to modify the building so that
it had "more beauty and ornament and fewer defects."138 This rather vague
principle was made specific by a series of precise recommendations for different

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138 MIA A.1.1738 *Silloge di documenti d’arte riguardanti S.Maria Maggiore*, fol.3, "Non molti
giorni fa le S.V. mi comisero che io visitassi con diligentia la Ven.da chiesa di S.ta Maria della
Misericordia de questa Mag.ca Citta di Berghamo, accio si potessi vedere se la sua struttura et
forma si fosse potuto ridurre con piu belezza et hornoamento et mancho difetti di quella che la detta
fabricha si ritrova di presente."
parts of the church. In the paragraphs that follow, I show how this document was in harmony with Borromeo's ideals, as well as assessing the extent to which the MIA acted on these recommendations.\textsuperscript{139}

As the site at which the most important liturgy of the Church was performed, the altar was of particular concern to reformers such as Borromeo. Where they were to be placed within the church building, as well as their decoration and general upkeep were all subject to precise prescriptions. This concern is reflected in Tibaldi's \textit{Relazione}. Turning to the document itself, the first item suggests that the high altar should be moved slightly back, towards the semicircle of the apse.\textsuperscript{140} Given the obvious concern in this text for the dimensions of the space in front of this altar, it is likely that this was what motivated Tibaldi's recommendation. The provision of sufficient space for the celebrant was also one of the first issues dealt with by Borromeo in his chapter on the main altar of a church.\textsuperscript{141} There does not seem to have been an immediate response to Tibaldi, but by 1603 the altar had been enlarged and reconsecrated. The documents are not clear, but it could have been moved at this date.\textsuperscript{142} Item five of Tibaldi's document also deals with altars. Here he suggested that the four altars attached to the piers of the crossing should be removed.\textsuperscript{143} (fig. 58,

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\textsuperscript{139} Tibaldi's \textit{Relazione} has not been published, but the harmonious relationship of its recommendations to Borromeo's ideals has been discussed by R. Noris and P. Ravasio, "Il cantiere di S. Maria Maggiore a Bergamo tra il 1550 ed il 1800," tesi di laurea, 1989-90, Politecnico di Milano, pp. 34-38.
\textsuperscript{140} MIA A.1 1738, \textit{Silloge di documenti d'arte}, fol. 3, "Prima si rapporterà lo Altar Maggiore indirieto verso il semicircholo del choro braza due, talmente che le sedie dele Rettori rispondino di fuori dello Altare, et questo si fa' accio che inante al Altare, vi sia uno piano de braza quatro, locando la bredella inutile, la quale è di presente di dietro et la bredella si ridura in alteza di oncie 3 larghe d 18 longha tanto, che sopra vant[?]i li capi del Altare, d. 9 per parte."
\textsuperscript{141} Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's \textit{Instructiones}," p. 143.
\textsuperscript{142} MIA 911, \textit{Cappellanie di S. Maria e indulgenze}, fol. 44v, 11 August 1603.
\textsuperscript{143} MIA A.1 1738, \textit{Silloge di documenti d'arte}, fols. 3v-4, "Et si levava li 4 altari che sono di presente posti in li 4 pilastri del corpo della chiesa, per che dovendosi sarare, come conviene ochuparebbe troppo il corpo della chiesa, oltre che sono troppo vicini l'uno a l'altro, et rompe l'ordine della fabricha." "Et si porra li balaustri di pietra mischia, con le cornicie di sotto et di
positions 6-9) The reason cited was that these four altars were too close together and that they cluttered the central space of the basilica. Although Borromeo's *Instructiones* do not explicitly call for a reduction in the number of subsidiary altars, he did warn that if these were too close then "a priest celebrating [Mass] at one altar will be hindered or disturbed by one celebrating at the other."\(^{144}\) The effectuation of this particular recommendation occurred in 1581 when the four altars attached to the piers of the crossing were removed.\(^{145}\) This action precipitated a period of confusion during which now redundant altarpieces were moved to different altars, sold or given away, and the remaining altars changed dedications.

In the second item of Tibaldi's *Relazione* it was suggested that the windows of the choir be enlarged.\(^{146}\) Borromeo devoted an entire chapter of the *Instructiones* to windows and he was particularly concerned that there be sufficient light in the main chapel.\(^{147}\) In 1584, two new windows were opened in the choir and the existing three were enlarged.\(^{148}\) (fig. 43) The third item in the *Relazione* centres on an issue of great concern to the reformers: pulpits.\(^{149}\) Tibaldi recommends that two permanent pulpits be installed, one for the reading of the Epistle, and the other for the Gospel. The MIA had already thought of installing two such pulpits in 1573, but it was only after Borromeo’s visitation 

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\(^{144}\) Voelker, "Charles Borromeo’s *Instructiones*,” p. 175.

\(^{145}\) The removal of these altars is documented in a meeting of the MIA: MIA 1272, *Terminationes*, fol. 71v, 11 December 1581.

\(^{146}\) MIA A.1 1738, *Silogio di documenti d’arte*, fol. 3, "Et si alargha le 3 finestre del choro tanto che si levi tuttili cantoni che sono di dentro dalla ramata, che sarà mezo brazo per parte inc.a.”

\(^{147}\) Voelker, "Charles Borromeo’s *Instructiones*,” p. 110

\(^{148}\) Noris and Ravasio, "Il cantiere di S. Maria Maggiore,” p. 28.

\(^{149}\) Borromeo devotes an entire chapter to the subject, recommending that, if possible, each church should have two, one for the Gospel, the other for the Epistle. Voelker, "Charles Borromeo’s *Instructiones*,” pp. 292-294.
that anything was actually carried out. In 1584, the MIA commissioned Martino Bassi, also a Milanese architect closely associated with Borromeo, to make designs for two pulpits. Significantly, the architect was asked to base these designs on two pulpits built for S. Fedele in Milan, the Jesuit church of that city and an important example of the application of Counter-Reformation decrees to architecture. Between 1591 and 1602, two pulpits were attached to the piers flanking the entrance to the choir. In points four and six, Tibaldi recommended that the subsidiary altars facing east should be enclosed behind balustrades. The introduction of balustrades was meant to establish a boundary between the sacred, clerical area of the altar itself and the lay area of the remainder of the church. In 1585, a balustrade was built to block off the choir from the nave, and all the other altars received such enclosures around the same time.

Item eight of Tibaldi's Relazione deals with the freeing up of sufficient space in the nave of the church, but parts nine through twelve have wider implications since they deal with the overall form and ornamentation of the church. Here Tibaldi notes the difficulties that would be involved in making the

150 The MIA's earlier decision is recorded in MIA 1270, Terminationes, fol. 36v, 2 April 1573.
151 The decision to construct pulpits, basing their design on the examples found in S. Fedele in Milan, was taken on 1 September 1584, MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 220v. A letter from Martino Basso dated 9 November 1584, MIA A.1.1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fol. 18, records that he has sent a drawing of the "forma et ornamento d'uno dei pulpiti o siano lettorini." He discusses the specifics of how the pulpits should be built, with the stairs hidden at the back.
152 For S. Fedele, see S. Della Torre and R. Schofield, Pellegrino Tibaldi e il S. Fedele di Milano: invenzione e costruzione di una chiesa esemplare, Como, 1994.
153 For the documentary references, see Noris and Ravasio, "Il cantiere di S. Maria Maggiore," p. 13.
154 Ideally, according to Borromeo, Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's Instructiones," pp.191-192, "Iron railings three cubits high should be set into the upper step of every chapel, including the main chapel, on the front or entrance part." See also Ibid., pp. 201-202 note 6.
155 The need for balustrades enclosing the altars was discussed in 1582, MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 111, 14 July 1582; MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 201v, 3 February 1584 records the decision to construct a balustrade enclosing the choir.
structure conform to an architecture based on antique models, as the proportions of antique architecture were "very far from those that were in use when the said church was built."\footnote{MIA A.1 1738, \textit{Silloge di documenti d’arte}, fols. 4-4v, "9. Dovendosi ridur la chiesa con nove forme di ornamenti si entrarebbe in molto travaglio, molto pericholo, et molta spesa, perche le misure et proportione della rinvovata et buona architettura anticha, in molte parte è molto lontano da quella che fu in uso nel tempo che fu edificato la detta chiesa, et per questo in molti lochi convenia romper il fatto, et in molti lochi chrass[?], dando principie sin da li basimenti che sono sopra il pavimento della chiesa, sin alla maggior somita del tempio, che par questo si tolererebe, quando sopra potassi riuscir in modo che fosse senza difetto et questo non puo essere poiche vi sono molti errori et inconvenienti notabili et inremediabile, che fra le altre cose è che dove dove conviene che sia le porte principale non vi pono esser per esservi la fabrica del Vescovato, et il notabile batisterio et le altre porte laterale che di presente vi sono, non si pono poste nel mezo delle facciate al locho suo et con molte altre difcitià però stando io di parere che la detta fabrica si lasci della forma et ordine del Architettura sua si seguiria in quello che mancha conforme al resto, in le parte però contenute in la principal struttura; ma quelle cose che soprapongono, et si metteno fuori della principal forma, si pono fare di quella varietà che vole, però regalate con fondamenti reali et probati dalla antiqui Romani et grecij per tanto si farà cha la cornice che è sotto ale finestre le quale rispondono in li lochi sopra le nave pichole, del corpo della giesa, r[?]alighi anchora sotto alle finestre simile a quelle che sono in la chrociera, la qual cornice sarà di forma et modo conforme a l'altra."}

deal with the

11. Et da questo potrà esser variato li ornamenti et compartimenti della nave grande del corpo della chiesa et della chrociera et choro ma però in se simile.
doubt that both the consistency in the style of ornamentation and the rational division of the structure into component units were aimed at, and may well have ultimately been motivated by Tibaldi’s recommendations.158

In the final item of note, number thirteen, Tibaldi suggested that all images except for those directly connected to a chapel and the cult centred there should be removed from the church.159 This was probably aimed at the elimination of the many votive images that had cluttered the walls of S. Maria Maggiore over the centuries. (fig. 61) Carlo Borromeo was never that extreme, in writing at least, but he did prohibit the placement of images in inappropriate locations such as the floor, or on a damp wall.160 The text of Tibaldi’s *Relazione*, where he implies that images of saints can be honoured more decorously in the chapels, suggests that his concern was similar in this case. Some of these earlier images were covered over in later campaigns of decoration, but there was never a systematic effort to remove them.

Perhaps the most significant change to S. Maria Maggiore following the first consultation with Tibaldi was in the decorations of the altars. The high altar kept its dedication to the Assumption of the Virgin, but its decoration was entirely transformed. The apse of the choir had been painted with the *Last Judgement* some time during the Trecento. During the 1581 negotiations over the establishment of a civic votive chapel in S. Maria Maggiore, discussed at

158 Had Tibaldi played a more significant role in the effectuation of this stuccoing programme it would be possible to draw a firmer conclusion. His role, however, was limited to the writing of this and another later (but less significant) *Relazione*. He never submitted stucco designs to the MIA and can therefore not be securely credited with providing the impetus for what was eventually carried out.
159 MIA A.1 1738, *Silloge di documenti d’arte*, fol. 4v, “13. Et non si farà le imagine di santi o di pictura o de rilievo che siano senon in li lochi delle capelle accio possino esser con dechoro honorate et si levarano le già fatto fuora delle detti lochi, salvando perla la pictura del Albero di nostro Signore per la sua antichità et belezza la qual è in la faciata della chroce voltata a la parte meridionale.”
length in the following section, the dated style and poor condition of the choir paintings were criticised, and their subject was seen as inappropriate to the dedication of the altar and church.\footnote{BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 38, fol. 66v.} Although the proposal that followed on from this criticism did not meet with approval, the sentiment expressed regarding the choir decoration may well have been a commonplace at the time. Accordingly, in 1592 the MIA commissioned Giovan Paolo Cavagna to paint in the apse of the choir a fresco of the assumed Virgin.\footnote{For the details of this commission, and for further bibliography, see Il Seicento a Bergamo, ex. cat., Bergamo, 1987, p. 155.} Completed that same year, the MIA decided in 1594 to complement the image by commissioning from Camillo Procaccini a large canvas of the *Apostles gathered around the empty tomb of the Virgin.* (figs. 42, 63) This work was probably finished around 1596.\footnote{For the details of this commission, and for further bibliography, see Seicento a Bergamo, p. 163.} The late sixteenth century, however, was also a period when pictorial decorations for the high altar were often displaced by monumental tabernacles celebrating devotion to the Sacrament, so it might be thought of as anomalous that such an elaborate Marian decoration should have been created for that location.\footnote{Although only a small part of his discussion, P. Hills, "Piety and Patronage in Cinquecento Venice: Tintoretto and the Scuole del Sacramento," Art History 6 (1983), pp. 30-43, argues that the development of lateral paintings with sacramental themes came about partly as a result of the altarpiece having been displaced from the high altar by a sacrament tabernacle.} Tibaldi's *Relazione* actually suggests that a tabernacle might be constructed on the high altar, using the few completed metal pieces of the early sixteenth century altarpiece project, but it is phrased more as a possible option rather than a forceful prescription.\footnote{MIA A.1 1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fols. 4v-5, "14. Et della forma dei lettorini o pulpit se ne farà uno modello però senza pensiero di servirsi di parte alcuna delli rame che per altro uso si ritrovano fatti, parendo che tale opere di ramo si possino goder per uno tabernacholo per pore sopra del Altar magiore, nel qual si potra pore o il Santissimo Sachramento, o le reliquie chein la detta chiesa si ritrovano, accio possino esser esser dal popolo viste, et honorate."} Churches with dedications to the Virgin, in fact, very commonly did not have a strong focus on a monumental tabernacle,
and, in Venice and the Veneto at least, were decorated with subjects very like those employed at S. Maria Maggiore during the late sixteenth century. Peter Humfrey has suggested that this may have been the case because the Assumption "served to express the idea of the possibility of the bodily resurrection of all mankind through the self-sacrifice of Christ, and through its liturgical re-enactment in the mass." The prominent empty tomb in the Procaccini work may, in fact, have alluded to this relationship, appearing as it does above the altar, a structure with strong symbolic connexions with the tomb of Christ.

The late sixteenth century also saw the emergence of a new, broad ranging Marian cycle at S. Maria Maggiore, with the decorations of the high altar at its centre. The strength of the MIA's commitment to this programme is shown by their 1580 decision to commission an extremely expensive series of nine tapestries to adorn the church on the major feasts of the Virgin. Executed according to the designs of Alessandro Allori between 1583 and 1586 at the Medici tapestry works in Florence, the resulting tapestries represent the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, the *Marriage of the Virgin*, the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Circumcision*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Assumption*. The enormous costs of this project, totalling 2357 scudi, required that the MIA liquidate some of its land holdings, thus manifesting the institutional commitment both to the expansion of the Marian cycle at S. Maria Maggiore, and to luxurious splendour as a goal for the decoration of the church. In 1586, the MIA commissioned the Venetian artist Francesco Bassano to paint four oval canvases of the *Birth of the Virgin*, the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*,

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the Annunciation and the Visitation. (fig. 64) These arrived in Bergamo only in 1592, when they were placed within the newly completed stucco work of the choir vault.168 In 1593, these explicitly Marian works were complemented by two paintings by Cavagna representing Esther before Assuerus, (fig. 65) and Judith and Holofernes. (fig. 66) The two Old Testament heroines were, of course, types of the Virgin Mary and were thus appropriate to the overall scheme of decoration.169 Two further paintings, an Adoration of the Shepherds by Cavagna from soon after 1593, (fig. 67) and an Adoration of the Magi, executed by Enea Salmeggia (fig. 68) in 1595 act as the fronts of two false organs located on the walls to the left and right of the opening into the choir.170 Completing the cycle was the painting of the Coronation of the Virgin in the dome over the crossing. (fig. 69) This work was executed between 1614 and 1616 by Cavagna, after the artist had won a competition for the commission against the two other prominent local painters, Enea Salmeggia and Francesco Zucco.171 The painting in the dome marked the termination of a narrative sequence begun in the Assumption located in the apse behind the high altar. Significantly, Tibaldi had earlier recommended in 1580 that this theme be painted in the vault of the dome, offering yet another example of the importance of his suggestions, and his approval of the Marian emphasis carried forward by the MIA in its redecoration of the church.172

168 Seicento a Bergamo, p. 153.
169 Seicento a Bergamo, pp. 157-158.
170 Seicento a Bergamo, pp. 156, 161-162.
171 Seicento a Bergamo, p. 159-160.
172 The recommendation is in fact made in Tibaldi's second report on S. Maria Maggiore, carried out on 28 December 1580 following the city's decision to locate its votive chapel in the church. MIA A.1 1738, Sillole di documenti d'arte, fol. 7, "Par aviso che molto si conveniera ornar la copola, nel qual luogo si potrebbe mostrare la gloriosa assumptione della Madona, facendo nel mezzo della volta di essa Copola Dio Padre di rilievo mostrando che stia nel ciel Empireo, et che mostrasse atto di ricevere la detta Gloriosa, la qual fosse parimente di rilievo portata dagli Angeli al Cielo, et questa sarebbe dalla somita dell'arco della bocca del Coro sin a imposta della detta volta della
Although the creation of the Marian cycle was clearly the focus of much effort at S. Maria Maggiore, the altars for the most part kept their traditional dedications. This was not one of those instances, documented in both Florence and Venice for this period, where altar dedications were coordinated as a way of expounding on a central idea or theme.\textsuperscript{173} It was instead more like the situation that would emerge later at St. Peter's in Rome.\textsuperscript{174} Once the old basilica had been completely demolished, the authorities at that church had to decide on how the altars in the new church were to be dedicated. There were insufficient places to accommodate all the altars of Old St. Peter's, so some difficult choices had to be made. Many different factors had to be considered in this selection, including the antiquity of the altar, its endowment, the significance of its relics, and the popularity of the cult centred there, to name just a few. These choices in turn had to be balanced against a second desire, which was to introduce a certain programmatic unity to the dedications. The result was a compromise between traditional dedications and this new programmatising impulse. At S. Maria Maggiore, the coordinated decoration that did exist focused on the high altar and the dome. Spatially, it was clustered in areas on which the tradition represented by altar dedications could make no claims. The altars, although rearranged and provided with new altarpieces, for the most part kept their old titles. As a consequence, they articulated a different agenda.

The altar to the north of the high altar, for instance, kept its earlier dedication to St. John the Evangelist. (fig. 70, position 2) In 1582, work began on

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\textsuperscript{174} On the altars of St. Peter's, see L. Rice, \textit{The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter's: Outfitting the Basilica, 1621-1666}, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 78-103.
the renovation of the altar itself, as well as on the stucco decoration of this part of the church.\textsuperscript{175} (fig. 60) In 1588, this phase of the work was complete and Cavagna was commissioned to paint a new altarpiece for the chapel.\textsuperscript{176} (fig. 71) The finished work, in place by August 1589 and still in situ, shows an isolated figure of the saint seated on clouds accompanied by his symbolic eagle.\textsuperscript{177} The altarpiece that stood previously on this altar had at its centre an image of the Virgin. This painting was valued by the MIA so much that, unlike some of the other altarpieces that became redundant following the removal of the four altars attached to the central piers of the church, it was decided that this object was to be kept in some other part of the church, and not to be sold or given away.\textsuperscript{178} Still, it was clearly not thought of as an adornment appropriate to the newly renovated altar, probably due to the lack of focus it placed on the altar's titular saint.

In the position of honour to the right of the high altar, the chapel of St. John the Evangelist adumbrated an important complementary theme to that of the Marian cycle.\textsuperscript{179} As discussed above, it was on the feast of St. John ante

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\textsuperscript{175} MIA 1272, \textit{Terminationes}, fol. 91v, 3 March 1582. In 1586 Francesco Brembilla was invited to execute sculptural work for the altar: MIA 1273, \textit{Terminationes}, fol. 41v, 12 May 1586; fol. 85v, 12 March 1587, Martino Bassi was asked to come from Milan to work on the altar.

\textsuperscript{176} MIA 1273, \textit{Terminationes}, fol. 148, 19 December 1588, "Cum d Io. Paulus Cavaneis pictor sponte obtulerit ut ipsius virtus pingendi omnibus innotescat, pingere proprirj impensis Iconam ad altare S. Joannis evangeliste et Io. Baptiste in ecclesia S. Maria ad altare ipsum situm prope cimergiam ipsius ecclesia addita conditione quod posquam Icona ipsa per ipsum picta et ad perfectionem per ipsum producta ac in opere posita possint Mag.a dd Regentes Consorcium MIA si eisdem videbitur, Iconam ipsam ab ipso d Io. Paulo emere precio per ipsos dd Regentes liquidando cui precio ipso d Io. Paulus stare et acquiesecere promisit verum si secus foret et opus ipsum ipsis dd Regentibus non placeret possint ipsum repudiare quo casu ipse d Io. Paulus non possit ab ipso Consorcio consequi sed tantum Iconam ipsam aspotari. Qua eposisione intellecta omnibus suffragys captum fuit."

\textsuperscript{177} The work was accepted and Cavagna paid on 12 August 1589, MIA 1273, \textit{Terminationes}, fol. 180v.

\textsuperscript{178} For the decision not to sell the old altarpiece, see MIA 1272, \textit{Terminationes}, fol. 94v, 22 March, 1582.

\textsuperscript{179} That this altar was indeed considered the most important after the high altar is articulated in Tibaldi's second \textit{Relazione} for the MIA in which he suggested a shuffling of the old altar dedications to accommodate the planned votive chapel: MIA A.1 1738, \textit{Sillologe di documenti d'arte},
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portam latinam that Bergamo, according to contemporary local historians, had voluntarily chosen Venetian dominion. By representing this saint the MIA was able to proclaim its allegiance to Venice while simultaneously suggesting the voluntary nature of Bergamo's submission to that authority, thus avoiding any implication that the city was simply a pawn in the process. In this way, the choice to preserve the dedication to this saint can be understood as motivated by the old but still operant requirement that S. Maria Maggiore act as a civic representation.

The chapel to the south, formerly dedicated to Sts. Mark and Peter Martyr, is a somewhat confusing case. (fig. 70, position 3) Throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the documents waver between three different dedications, St. Mark, All Saints and Peter Martyr, but the vast majority refer to it as the altar of St. Mark. In fact, during the 1581 consecration of the altar by the bishop, All Saints, St. Mark, St. Sebastian and the SS. Quattro Coronati were all cited as co-titulars. In this way, many of the dedications of the four altars removed from the piers of the crossing were preserved in this one altar.

Although St. Peter Martyr was not included in the record of this consecration, his

fols. 6-6v, "questa Capella dalla parte della Sagrestia si potra dedicare al detto glorioso S.Roccho per sodirevare la buon intensione della Mag:ca citta, la qual Capella e' quella che e' la pui degna per esser lei dalla parte dell'Evangelio et a man dritta dell'altar maggiore."

180 See above, pp. 187-188.
181 Of these three dedications, the most commonly cited is St. Mark: MIA 1273, Terminationes, fol. 28, 22 February 1586; MIA 1273, Terminationes, fol. 41v, 12 May 1586; MIA 1387, Spese, fols. 192-200, a series of receipts dealing with the decoration of the chapel of S. Marco, all dated in June and July of 1585; MIA 1389, Spese, fol. 201, 15 March 1597; MIA 1390, Spese, fol. 211, 13 February 1604; MIA 1390, Spese, fol. 465, 16 June 1607; MIA 89-2, Giornale, fol. 8, 1604.
appearance in later documents must be explained by reference to the old dedication of this altar. In 1582, the altarpiece from this altar was given away to another church, and replaced by the painting from the former altar of All Saints, dismantled in 1581. This particular painting may have been thought suitable because it depicted All Saints and could thus encompass the multiple dedication of the altar. This same line of reasoning was in fact employed in a contemporary document that described one possible rearrangement of paintings and altar dedications in the church. The painting represents Christ in Glory with Saints, and by not privileging a particular saint encompasses all.

Although S. Maria Maggiore owed much of its status in the city to Venetian aid, this altar, as well as the one dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, show that allegiance to this external force was only expressed obliquely. St. John the Evangelist was popularly associated with Venetian rule, and showing him evoked the free and voluntary decision made by the city to join with Venice. The south altar, although dedicated only in part to St. Mark, was popularly associated with that saint, and given that all the other altars in this part of the church were being decorated at this time with new altarpieces, it might be supposed that it too would have been decorated with a new image of the Venetian patron saint. Lack of funds could not have been a problem since the chapel was expensively stuccoed at this time to make it appear similar to the chapel opposite. (fig. 72) A pair of altarpieces showing Sts. John the Evangelist and Mark would have asserted very strongly the connexion between S. Maria Maggiore and Venice, but perhaps too strongly. By privileging St. John the

183 The donation of the earlier altarpiece to the church of S. Grata inter vitas is documented in MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 96v, 2 April 1582.
184 MIA A.1.1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fol.44, anonymous document dated 11 December 1581, "All altare che hora è dedicata a S.Alb [This is a variation on S.Egidio] si può postare l'ancona d'ogni santi et dedicarlo a ognissanti a S.Marco S.Sebastiano, et quatro Incoronati, perché l'ancona servira per tutti detti santi.."
Evangelist, both through the placement of his altar in the position of greatest honour, and through the commissioning of a new altarpiece focussing entirely on the saint, the MIA was able to foreground Bergamo's agency in the acceptance of Venetian authority, while simultaneously de-emphasising the cult of a saint more directly associated with the exercise of that authority. Had St. Mark been given greater emphasis, the important notion of S. Maria Maggiore as a symbol of communal autonomy would have been substantially eroded. Through these altars, therefore, the MIA expressed the paradox of an external power being thought of as a preserver of liberty.

What of the remaining altars in S. Maria Maggiore? The only altar in the nave, opposite the baptistery in the westernmost bay, kept its dedication to the Virgin and St. Joseph, (fig. 70, position 6) but we know nothing of this chapel's figurative decoration since the altar was suppressed in the nineteenth century and the whole apparatus was removed. The two large chapel niches in the transept, by contrast, underwent many important changes. The chapel to the north (fig. 70, position 4) became the votive chapel of the city and was dedicated to the popular plague saints Sebastian and Roch. The long process by which this was decided, and the implications for the symbolic associations of the church are the subject of the following section. Here, I wish only to note that the architecture of the chapel niche was executed in an up-to-date style by the Milanese architect Martino Bassi during the 1580s. (fig. 44, 45) The altar itself was provided with a painting by Giam Paolo Lolmo of Sts. Sebastian and Roch standing before the city, with an image of the Virgin and Child in glory above. Above the altarpiece, embedded within the architectural framework, was a second work by Lolmo, showing Moses and the Brazen Serpent. (fig. 73) This subject offered an Old Testament parallel for the legitimate use of contemporary intercessory images, in particular the altarpiece immediately below it. Shortly
after the completion of the votive chapel, the corresponding chapel to the south (fig. 70, position 5) was given an almost identical architectural veneer by the same architect, a goal made explicit in the document recording the initial decision. The altar kept its old dedication to the Corpus Domini, but was furnished with a new altarpiece by the Venetian artist Francesco Bassano showing the Last Supper, clearly an appropriate theme to the dedication of the altar. In the decorative framework above the altarpiece, there is a smaller painting by Lolmo showing the Mannah from Heaven, a straightforward Old Testament prefiguration of the Eucharist. Altars dedicated to Eucharistic themes were given special importance during the Counter-Reformation, and most reformers, including Carlo Borromeo often advocated the placement of a monumental tabernacle on the high altar. The fact that this altar in S. Maria Maggiore was never provided with a such an important piece of liturgical furniture, and that the Sacrament was not reserved on the high altar may have been, as discussed above, a result of the Marian dedication of the church. It is possible, however, given its dedication and decoration, that the MIA were thinking of a tabernacle for the Corpus Domini altar.

Borromeo's abortive visitation to S. Maria Maggiore in 1575 seems to have prompted its rulers to engage on a thorough redecoration of the interior of the

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185 The decision to redecorate this chapel was made on 5 November 1583, MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 168, "Vedit pars quod capella sacratissimi corporis christi quae est a meridia ecclesiae predictae ornetur stucco prout alia que est a montibus modis et formis quibus."

186 On this painting, see Seicento a Bergamo, pp. 150-151.

187 The decision to award this commission to Lolmo was made on 15 September 1584, MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 223v.

188 It is, in fact, unclear as to where the sacrament was usually reserved. The records of Borromeo's visitation were rather imprecise, and there are, of course, no episcopally carried out pastoral visitations to draw on. The visitations to the church regularly carried out by the MIA itself are not very detailed and do not reveal the location of any tabernacle. See MIA 949, Registro degli ordini spettanti, fol. 19-29v for the records of visitations carried out from 1614-1636. There is evidence that it was sometimes kept in the baptistery located in the nave. On this practice, see below, note ??
church. In this programme of redecoration, the overall picture is one of a very carefil and self-conscious attempt to follow as closely as possible the essential requirements of the reform as articulated by Pellegrino Tibaldi. Not only was Borromeo's architect chosen to give his opinion on what was needed to be done, the MIA seems to have acted on most of his recommendations. The way in which they conformed with Tibaldi worked on at least two levels. The first set of concerns voiced by the architect centred on the practical requirements of the liturgy, on such things as balustrades, pulpits, and the placement of altars. These problems were fairly swiftly rectified by the MIA. The second agenda that appeared in the Relazione was aesthetic, and thus more difficult to define exactly. It does seem, however, that Tibaldi wanted the interior of S. Maria Maggiore to be decorated with a regular, symmetrical framework of classicising ornament. The MIA soon engaged upon a programme of furnishing the church with a modern scheme that must have been thought to match what Tibaldi had meant. Since the two aspects of reform suggested by Tibaldi were voiced in a single document, the question is raised of whether they should both be linked with the reforms outlined by Borromeo in his Instructiones. I have already noted how some scholars have argued that Tibaldi's architecture became after 1577 a kind of translation into spatial terms of Borromeo's principles.189 The MIA's conformity with Tibaldi's aesthetic as well as purely practical goals suggests that the two parts of Borromeo's programme of reform were not separable and that the Counter-Reformation can, in the orbit of Milan at least, be associated with an architectural aesthetic that goes beyond limited practical changes.

189 See above, notes 133-134.
8. Interior Transformations III: The Votive Chapel

At the same time that Borromeo's visitation provided a significant impetus for work on S. Maria Maggiore, important civic themes continued, as we have already seen, to be articulated at the church. On 2 April 1578, the city council vowed that they would erect a monument thanking God for sparing the city of Bergamo from an outbreak of the plague that had seriously afflicted many other nearby cities.\footnote{BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 36, fols.293v-294. Most of the documents concerning the votive chapel have been published in A. Meli, "La Capella votiva della città nella basilica di S.Maria Maggiore in Bergamo e la storia inedita del voto, (1578-1584)," Bergomum 55 (1961), pp. 1-28.} The decision precipitated a long series of discussions on how to spend the five hundred gold scudi they had committed. The first suggestion was that a chapel dedicated to Sts. Roch and Sebastian should be erected in the church of the hospital of S. Marco in the lower city. This idea was voted down, and attention turned to a wide range of other options. Eventually, on 4 December 1578, the city council settled on the idea of contributing towards the completion of the choir of the cathedral.\footnote{BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 37, 4 December 1578, fols. 41-43.} As discussed in chapter one, however, this project came to naught due both to the great expense of the undertaking, and to the incessant and self-destructive bickering of the two congregations of cathedral canons.\footnote{See chapter two, pp. 44-47.} Discussions of what to do once that plan had failed do not appear again until December of 1580, when the city council decided to spend its money in the decoration of a chapel at S. Maria Maggiore dedicated to the Virgin and Sts. Roch and Barnabas.\footnote{BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 38, fol.19v.} Barnabas might on the surface be thought of as an unusual choice for a plague altar, but local tradition held that he was the first to evangelize Bergamo and was thus considered as one of the protector saints of the city.
To determine how exactly this plan should be effected, Pellegrino Tibaldi was called in again to inspect the basilica. In the *Relazione* of this visit, Tibaldi revealed that the original intention of the city government was that a new chapel should be built on to the exterior of the church, but this was soon abandoned in favour of the interior.\(^{194}\) Tibaldi then relates that the first proposal for the interior centred on the main chapel encompassing the high altar. This area was to be redecorated with scenes from the life of the Virgin, but the suggestion was rejected because St. Roch had to be included as well and this would have required the rededication of the high altar. Such a dual dedication was not acceptable because it was felt that the high altar dedication should follow that of the church as a whole, with no amendments.\(^{195}\) Given these restrictions, Tibaldi suggested that the chapels flanking the choir be rebuilt and that the altar to the right of the high altar (dedicated to St. John the Evangelist at this point; fig. 70, position 2) be dedicated to St. Roch in fulfillment of the city's vow.\(^{196}\) The deputies appointed by the city presented this idea to the assembled council on 25 January 1581, but in spite of their appeals that it would cost little and not "disturb the ancient architecture of the church," it was rejected.\(^{197}\) At this same meeting fully eight proposals were tabled by various members of the council, yet not one met with the acceptance of the majority.\(^{198}\)

\(^{194}\) MIA A.1 1738, *Siloque di documenti d'arte*, fols. 5-5v. In addition to the great cost of erecting such a chapel, potential problems with the foundations existed in the area along the south wall of the nave where the chapel would have been located.

\(^{195}\) MIA A.1 1738, *Siloque di documenti d'arte*, fol. 5v.

\(^{196}\) MIA A.1 1738, *Siloque di documenti d'arte*, fol. 6v.

\(^{197}\) BCB, ASCB, *Azioni*, vol. 38, 25 January 1581, fols. 65v-66, "Et questo partito giudichiamo esser non solamente accomodato all'intentione della sudetta parte, ma quasi solo et necessario per voler con puoca spesa, et presto, far cosa, che sia apparente, et d'ornamento, senza turbare l'anticha architettura della chiesia."

Discussions continued for another year, but it was not until 10 February 1582 that the council agreed upon a plan. A chapel in S. Maria Maggiore was to be transformed into the city's votive chapel. This proposal did not represent anything particularly new, but pressure to make a decision had been building for some time. The bishop had written a strongly worded letter urging the city to action, and the city records themselves document that there were worries that God would seek retribution for the unfulfilled vow.

Although the option of converting a chapel in S. Maria Maggiore had already been suggested in Tibaldi's second Relazione, the final decision did not involve the simple implementation of Tibaldi's plan, since on 2 April 1582 another Milanese architect, Martino Bassi, was invited to give his expert opinion on what was to be done. At this point in the process, the city government passed executive control of the project over to the MIA, and on 1 September 1582 that organisation was granted the five hundred gold scudi. Bassi had recommended to the MIA that one of the two large chapels located in the transept be converted into the votive chapel, and eventually the altar of S. Egidio was rededicated to Sts. Roch and Sebastian (fig. 70, position 4)

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200 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, vol. 38, 3 February 1582, fols. 189-189v, "Il differire tanto tempo a sodisfare all'obligo che abbiamo con la sua divina Maesta del voto non e' altro che un dare occasione alla Maesta de Dio di movere l'ira sua contra de noi." The bishop's letter is transcribed in the minutes of the same meeting, fols. 190-190v.
201 See MIA A.1 1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fols. 10-12v, for the Relazione. MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 96, 2 April 1582, records the payments by the MIA for the consultation.
202 Meli, "La Capella votiva," p. 25. MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 118v, 1 September 1582.
203 MIA A.1 1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fol. 11v. Bassi suggests the use of "una delle due fatte in semicircolo seg.te F.G" as the votive chapel. Bassi's text obviously makes precise references to a now lost plan of the church, but given that he describes two symmetrically disposed semicircular chapels, he must be referring to the chapels then dedicated to S. Egidio and to Corpus Domini. By the MIA meeting of 1 September 1582 the chapel of S. Egidio had been chosen. MIA 1272, Terminationes, fol. 118v, 1 September 1582.
In coming to this final decision, the city government had to juggle the competing claims of a variety of ecclesiastical foundations. The church of the hospital of S. Marco, for instance, could claim that its role in the curing of the sick made it the most appropriate location for a votive chapel commemorating the sparing of the city from a great affliction. The real battle, however, was between S. Vincenzo and S. Maria Maggiore. As the cathedral of Bergamo, the claim of S. Vincenzo was strong. Moreover, its structure was only partially complete, a state incommensurate with its ecclesiastical dignity. The city government had repeatedly tried to promote its completion through the donation of significant monies, meaning that the granting of the votive money to S. Vincenzo could be added to an already existing commitment. The city's efforts in this regard had consistently been stymied by the squabbling of the cathedral's two congregations of canons, a problem that was not resolved during the negotiations over the votive chapel donation.

Even though S. Maria Maggiore had not yet undergone its internal transformation, it was still viewed as the most magnificent church in the city. In this respect, therefore, it was much less deserving of a gift from the city, but in another important way S. Maria Maggiore was a perfect choice. According to the foundation myth developed in the fifteenth century, S. Maria Maggiore had been founded as a direct result of a very similar vow to that made by the city government in 1578. This coincidence was not lost amongst contemporaries. In a meeting of the city council from 25 January 1581, one of the many proposals argues in favour of redecorating the apse of S. Maria Maggiore. According to this argument, the existing apse paintings were inappropriate because they were mostly ruined, and because their subject, the Last Judgement, did not accord with

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204 On the city's attempts to promote the fabric of S. Vincenzo, see Chapter two ???
the principal feast of the church, the Assumption of the Virgin. The author of the proposal then goes on to parallel the two vows: "the said church was built because of a vow" and "this other similar vow now has to be executed."205 Even though this argument appears in favour of a proposal that was rejected, its tenets must have lain behind the ultimate decision to opt for S. Maria Maggiore as the site of the votive chapel. Subsequent descriptions of the church often mention this special concordance between the foundation of the church and that of the chapel, suggesting that it played an important role in how the chapel and by extension the church were received.206 The presence of this important civic commission within its walls served to reinforce and update the link between S. Maria Maggiore and its symbolic role as protector of the city.

Once the decision to remodel the chapel of S. Egidio had been made, work proceeded at a fairly rapid pace. (fig. 44) Already on 23 April 1582, the Milanese sculptor Francesco Brembilla is recorded as having been paid to come to Bergamo to work on the chapel, and, as observed above, Martino Bassi was consulted that same month.207 The chapel would take about two years to complete, with Bassi providing the overall design and Brembilla actually carrying out the work on site. Under the tutelage of these artists, the space of the chapel niche was decorated with a rich armature of the most up-to-date architectural elements. At the centre of this ensemble are two paintings by the local artist Gian Paolo

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205 MIA 1272, *Terminationes*, fol. 67, 25 January 1581, "Essendo la festivita principale de la chiesa di S.ta Maria la gloriosissima Assontione et essendo nella capella grande depinto il giudizio universale, con pitture antique, disproporionate, corroso, brutte, le piu belle guaste, et non convenienti alla dedicazione dalla detta chiesa, et essendo la detta chiesia sta fabricata per voto come in consilio fu ricordato et dovendosi hora eseguire questo altro simile voto."

206 P. Bonetti, *Specchio de' prelati rappresentato nella vita di Girolamo Ragazzoni conte di S. Odorico e vescovo di Bergamo*, Bergamo, 1644, p. 24, "Essendo dunque all'hora miracolosamente stata preservata la nostra Patria dalla Peste, non ingrati di tanto beneficio li nostri antenati per consiglio del Vescovo saggiamente deliberorno d'adornare nella Chiesa di S. Maria maggiore, già fabricata dalla liberalità de nostri bisavoli per quasi simile cagione, una Capella, e dedicarla a i Santi Rocco, e Sebastiano."

207 Meli, "La Capella votiva," p. 25.
Lolmo, an altarpiece showing the *Virgin and Child in Glory with Sts. Roch and Sebastian* standing in a landscape below, and smaller work in the zone above illustrating *Moses and the Brazen Serpent.* (figs. 45, 73) As already discussed, the Virgin and Sts. Roch and Sebastian are the most commonly invoked plague saints, and Moses freeing the Israelites from the snakes is an obvious biblical parallel for the saving of the city.

The iconography of the altarpiece is particularized through the placement of Sts. Roch and Sebastian before a walled city easily recognisable as a view of Bergamo from the southwest. By placing such emphasis on the representation of the city, the first time such an image of the city is known to have appeared in Bergamask painting, the altarpiece served to identify the church and its ruling body with Bergamo itself and with the idea of the city's protection. This idea is further reinforced by the way in which the city is represented in the painting. The view towards the city on the hill is recognisable as Bergamo primarily because of the distinctive walls, whereas the buildings within these walls are depicted in a rather generic fashion. Although it may be possible to identify some of the buildings, none of the city's principal structures are included, not even the campanile of S. Maria Maggiore, the highest point on the profile of the city. The emphasis is fully on the enclosing walls, and not on what they enclose. Since walls act to protect the city, the emphasis placed on them in the painting suggests the same thing of the saints represented there, as well as linking the idea of protection to the patrons of the work, the city government and the MIA.

These are not just any walls in the Lolmo altarpiece, however, but the highly controversial new Venetian walls of the city. As discussed in chapter one, the construction of these new fortifications caused enormous disruptions to the sacred topography of the city, marked by the demolition of several churches, as well as to its economy. In short, the walls represented a very unpopular aspect of
Venetian dominion. The prominent appearance of these same walls in this altarpiece, at a time when their construction was both incomplete and still causing dislocations in the local economy, would have indicated a strong allegiance with Venice. Given the close connexion between the MIA and the Venetian authorities, such a visual suggestion is not surprising. The walls in the painting therefore expand on the idea of the city's protection by suggesting that Venice provided Bergamo its first ring of defence. It is worth noting, however, that like the other altarpieces produced for S. Maria Maggiore around this time the pro-Venetian agenda lay at least partially in the background. The patrons chose not to represent St. Mark, and they selected a local instead of a Venetian painter to carry out the commission.

The choice of a local artist for this important civic commission must have had some significance. Giovan Battista Moroni, the leading Bergamask painter of the second half of the sixteenth century, was dead by the time of the commission and his place had yet to taken by any of the younger generation. The artists who would emerge as the leaders of the local school in subsequent years, Enea Salmeggia, Giovan Paolo Cavagna and Francesco Zucco, had not yet achieved sufficient prominence for such an important commission.208 Lolmo was a relatively minor figure even on the Bergamask scene. The paucity of options in Bergamo casts into considerable relief the MIA's decision to go ahead with such a local painter. The choice was certainly not made because the MIA was reluctant to hire foreign artists; the chapel itself was designed by a Milanese architect, and the MIA would later commission many paintings from both Milanese and Venetian painters, as discussed above. Instead, the choice of a local

208 Cavagna's first known work is from 1580, and Salmeggia and Zucco were not active until the 1590s. S. Milesi, Cavagna-Salmeggia-Zucco Palma il Giovane e il secondo Cinquecento bergamasco, Bergamo, 1992, pp. 16, 34-36.
painter was probably one of the requirements of the commission. By buying Bergamask, it is possible that the MIA's intention was to assert its connexion with the city. In this way, the pro-Venetian agenda represented by the emphasis on the walls was balanced by an assertion of artistic independence.

The same theme of protection lay behind the programme of the Trecento entrance portal discussed above, but in that case the patron saint of Bergamo, S. Alessandro, was the key to the cycle. (figs. 41, 42) Given that one goal of the altarpiece was to identify S. Maria Maggiore with Bergamo itself, why did the city not choose saints of local significance, like those on the portal, in place of Sts. Roch and Sebastian, saints universally associated with relief from the plague? This is all the more puzzling since S. Alessandro had actually been credited with giving relief from the very plague being commemorated. Amongst a not very extensive list of the saint's miracles, Mario Muzio described how, in 1576, "almost all of Italy was infected with the plague, and through all cities, and above all in Venice and Milan thousands of persons died, [while] in Bergamo (thanks to the merits and intercessions of S. Alessandro) scarcely eighteen or twenty died."209 S. Alessandro, although the undisputed principal patron saint and protector of the city, and at times also a powerful symbol of civic unity,210 was left out, I propose, because his cult was highly contested in this period, and his inclusion would have detracted from the intended expression of civic harmony.

Even though S. Maria Maggiore had been one of the foci of civic factionalism during the thirteenth century, the fifteenth-century foundation

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209 Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 1, p. 81, "fra quali è questo segnalato l'anno 1576 quando quasi tutta l'Italia era infetta di peste, & per tutte le Città, & massime in Venetia, & in Mila10 morivano le migliaia di persone, in Bergamo (merce de i meriti, & intercessioni di Santo Alessandro) appena morirono diciotto, o venti."

myth promoted the church's symbolic connexion with the notion of civic harmony. One way this was achieved was through a complete prohibition on burials in the church, encompassing both clergy and laity.\(^{211}\) It is possible to argue that this was motivated by a need to keep uncluttered the relatively compact spaces of the building, and this rationale is the one given in the text of the prohibition, but this reason does not exclude there being others lying behind the decision. First amongst these must be the fact that, without tombs, the church could not become an arena for competition between the different families of the city. This interpretation is lent credence by the fact that in 1475, the city council extended the rule to include any object attached by a private individual to any of the church's surfaces.\(^{212}\) From the late Middle Ages onward, Italian churches were increasingly filled with an abundance of elaborate family tombs. Carlo Borromeo considered it a serious problem since it essentially made private a large part of the church, as well as distracting from the required focus on the high altar.\(^{213}\) The arrangement was to the advantage of both families and churches, however, since the former were able to have their remains interred on holy ground, near to the relics of saints, and the latter enjoyed enormous financial benefits, and employment in the saying of memorial masses.\(^{214}\) This system was not eschewed entirely at S. Maria Maggiore, since some such masses

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\(^{211}\) This prohibition first appeared in the city statutes from 1391: "Item pro manutenenda et conservanda ecclesia domine sancte Marie maioris et pro eius pulcritudine et pro evitanda destructione et occupatione ipsius ecclesie quod non sit aliqua persona cuiuscumque condicionis vel status existat que audeat vel presumat facere nec fieri facere aliquod sepulcrum munimentum nec sepulturam seu archam in ecclesia domine sancte Marie maioris pergamen." Transcribed by A. Meli, Bartolomeo Colleoni nel suo mausoleo, p. 305. Meli also records the several repetitions and amplifications of this rule during the fifteenth century, pp. 306-312. The Colleoni chapel did not fall under this ruling because, even though it shared two of S. Maria Maggiore's walls, it was a completely separate foundation.

\(^{212}\) The records of the meeting, from 21 August 1475, are transcribed in Meli, Bartolomeo Colleoni nel suo mausoleo, p. 309.


\(^{214}\) On this system, see Humfrey, Altarpiece in Renaissance, pp. 57-62.
were still endowed, but there is no doubt that much more money would have been earned had tombs been permitted. After all, a memorial mass was much more effective at promoting familial prestige when said before a family altar in the presence of the family tombs. Not only were tombs not permitted, families were also not able to take control of individual altars according to the system of juspatronatus. Unlike the prohibition on tombs, this was not mentioned in the statutes of either the MIA or the city, but it is clear that it was in operation from the fact that the documents never attach family names to particular altars, and from the complete control the MIA exercised over the movement and decoration of altars in S. Maria Maggiore. By banishing all familial imagery from the basilica in this way, the MIA was able to develop the church's symbolic connexion with the idea of civic harmony.

The ritual life of the basilica also encouraged an identification with this concept. In 1307, a long period of civic strife was brought to an end by the signing of a peace agreement mediated by the Franciscans and Dominicans. To commemorate this treaty, a procession culminating at the high altar of S. Stefano, the Dominican church in the city, was held every Christmas day. In 1561, however, this church fell victim to the Venetian fortification builders, leaving the procession without a final destination. In December 1566, the city council voted to renew the procession, with its goal as the high altar of S. Maria Maggiore.215 There are a number of interesting things about the purposes and

215 MIA 885, Documenti sull'immunita di S. Maria Maggiore, fols. 4-4v, 15 December 1566, "Essendo stato per gli antichi padri di questa Mag.ca Citta sin del anno 1307 a laude del S.or Iddio et consolazione universale di questa Mag.ca Citta, et in memoria dela sanctissima pace alhora conclusa tra gli gentilhuomini, et citadini di Bergamo tra quali alhora erano diverse sedizione statuito et ordinato che il glorioso giorno della nativita del nostro S.re fussero dalli R.di parochiani di quella confratelli gli loro vicini nelle loro gesie parochiali et tutti poij uniti insieme a vicinanza per vicinanza unitamente andessero a visitare l'altare del glorioso protomartire S.to Stephano, posto nella gesia di S.to Dominico et ivi ringratiar la bonta divina di tanto dono concesse a questa nostra citta, qual sacro rito et tanta honorata consuetudine et statta dal hora in poij sin all'anno 1561 continuamente con grandissima devocione et riverentia osservato, ma da esso anno
form of the procession as recorded in the minutes of the city council meeting. First, it is mentioned that the Venetians advocated a renewal of the traditional event. In general, this support must have been motivated by a desire to preserve local ceremonies that were symbolic of civic stability, especially since it was the Venetians themselves who were responsible for the disruption of stability through their destruction of S. Stefano. The choice of S. Maria Maggiore for the renewed procession, made by the city government in concert with the Venetian Rettori, formed a logical part of the Venetian policy aimed at promoting the church as a symbol of civic harmony and of residual self-determination. The form and meaning of the procession fitted perfectly with their goals. As the document attests, the body of the procession was made up of representatives from every parish in the city, and was thus a powerfully unifying event.

The endless disputes between the two cathedral chapters, by contrast, were constant reminders of the sort of civic factionalism that had required the 1307 peace treaty. To have chosen S. Alessandro as one of the saints in the altarpiece for the votive chapel would have broadcast an allegiance with one particular faction. This would not have been in the spirit of civic harmony so carefully fostered by the MIA and the Venetians as a quality to be associated with S. Maria Maggiore. Instead, inoffensive plague saints with widespread cults were chosen. This message of civic harmony was joined to two related concepts. The depiction

1561 in poij, per la destructione dilla sudetta gesia distrutta per la nova fortificazione della citta nostra, non si e tal sacro rito continuato, con grandissima displicentia (perho di tutta questa Citta et populo suo) perho desiderandosi che al medesimo fine a qual fu posto tal sacro rito et per conservacione anchora del Ser.mo Do. di Venetia che tal sacro rito sia rinovato, si è posta parte per l. Clmi. S.r Rettori et Mag.ci Antiani che sia fatto intendere alli R.di Parochiani di questa Citta che il giorno di Natale proximo et cossi di tempo in tempo debbano congregare secundo il solito a sono di campane i loro vicini respectivamente et cossi uniti di parochia in parochia in loco del sudetto altare di S.to Stephano - visitare l’altare della Gloriosa Vergine Maria nella gesia di S.ta Maria Maggiore capella de questa Mag.ca communita, ove sono molte reliquie si di esso glorioso protomartire come de altri Beatissimi sancti et ivi come solevano fare al detto altare di S.to Stephano, pregare il S.or Iddio per la conservacione di questo eccelso stado et pace universale di questa Mag.ca Citta ringratianndo sua divina Majesta delli continui Beneficij che ne fa.”
of the newly walled city expressed the idea of the city protected by a benevolent Venetian authority, while the choice of a local painter served to emphasise the continued residual autonomy of the city.

9. The Preservation of the Exterior

In marked contrast to the complete transformation of the interior of S. Maria Maggiore undertaken during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, almost nothing was done to alter the appearance of the exterior. (figs. 40, 42, 47) Why should such a disparity have arisen? One possible reason is that the focus of Borromeo's architectural reform to which was responding was not on the creation of an appropriate exterior but on the liturgical space of the interior. Tibaldi's *Relazione* can certainly be introduced as evidence of this predilection since it makes no reference to the exterior decoration of the basilica. Although this reason may well go a long way towards explaining the absence of attention on the exterior, it does not exclude other hypotheses. In this section I will argue that the conservation of the medieval exterior was not the result of negligence or lack of interest, but was instead actively sought after as a way of preserving continuity with the communal past.

When the city government called on Pellegrino Tibaldi in 1580 to determine how they should build a votive chapel at S. Maria Maggiore, his *Relazione* of the visit revealed that their intention was for a new chapel built on to the exterior of the church. Significantly, this chapel was not to appear like an appendage to the church, but as an element organically related to the whole. It was to be: "joined, however, in a way that it would not be separate from the body

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216 In his *Instructiones*, Borromeo devotes only two of thirty three chapters to the external appearance of churches, and in the section on facades most of the text is given over to a discussion of appropriate figural iconography. See Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's *Instructiones*," pp. 63-84.
of the church, on the contrary appearing as if it were all one design."217

Although the idea of such a chapel was soon abandoned for various practical reasons,218 the desire expressed by the city that it should not be perceived from the outside as a separate structure is very strong evidence in favour of seeing the preservation of the medieval exterior of S. Maria Maggiore as intentional.

When alterations were actually carried out, the modified or renewed elements were made to harmonise with the architecture of the church as a whole. In 1614, for instance, the dome of the crossing was reconstructed by Francesco Maria Ricchino, a leading architect in Milan at the time.219 (fig. 40) From the outside, the completed dome appears as a typical product of the Lombard Romanesque style. The arcing of the dome's upper levels even seems to have been carried out with re-used colonettes taken from the original twelfth-century cupola. This fact might seem to suggest that financial restraints were an issue, but given the lavishness with which the interior was decorated at the very same time, it seems a very unlikely consideration. Also, a prominent Milanese architect would not have been brought to Bergamo if the goal was to save money. Although Ricchino was one of the leading exponents of Baroque architecture in Milan, his work there on the Ospedale Maggiore does have some parallel with our Bergamask example. In this project Ricchino harmonised his new construction with Filarete's earlier work there by including Gothic windows.

217 MIA A.1 1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fol. 5, 28 December 1580, "Dinovo sia visto et esaminato la Ven.da chiesa di S.ta Maria della Misericordia per vedere in che modo si puo eseguire il voto, che ha fatto questa Mag.ca citta di Bergomo di essersi per la Dio gratia salvata dalla passata contagione, et prima con pensiero di far per tal memoria una nuova Capella, et decente alla citta, et alla Chiesa, dedicandola al glorioso S. Roccho anessa pero in modo che non sia separata dal corpo della Chiesa, anzi parere che sia tutto uno disegno."

218 MIA A.1 1738, Silloge di documenti d'arte, fols. 5-5v. In addition to the great cost of erecting such a chapel, potential problems with the foundations existed in the area along the south wall of the nave where the chapel would have been located.

within a classically inspired architectural framework.\textsuperscript{220} Although carried out later than the dome of S. Maria Maggiore, this example does show that Ricchino was sensitive to medieval styles and perhaps provides some explanation as to why he may have been chosen for the work in Bergamo. Whatever the answer to that question, there can be little doubt that the preservation of S. Maria Maggiore's unified exterior was an active goal of the MIA during the seventeenth century.

What was the purpose of this attachment to the past? The answer to this question lies in the history of the church. The foundation of S. Maria Maggiore was intimately connected with the medieval communal government. The Trecento entrance portal alluded to this form of government and to its role in the protection of the city. (fig. 42) This last theme would have coincided nicely with the purpose of the body that ruled the church, the MIA, which was dedicated to the relief of poverty and affliction in the city. The preservation of the portal, along with the rest of the exterior, must also have evoked a connexion with a past in which Bergamo was independent of foreign control. When the basilica itself was constructed, the city was completely autonomous, a fact which helped promote its becoming a symbol of the Commune. When the portal was erected, the city had already come under the control of the Visconti of Milan. Given that it articulated such a strong vision of a locally controlled autonomous government, it is quite possible that its intention at that time was to stress the residual self-determination of the city even while under foreign control.\textsuperscript{221} According to this scenario, the iconography of the portal, as well as

\textsuperscript{220} On this project, see Denti, \textit{Architettura a Milano}, pp. 157-158.

\textsuperscript{221} This idea was suggested by Scalvini et al., \textit{Le città nella storia}, p. 42, but the authors see the equestrian warrior as a feared image representing the shadow of the Signoria, an odd interpretation given the usual association of this figure with S. Alessandro.
the dated style of both the portal and the church itself, were active in the
construction of continuity with the distant communal past.

Evidence that S. Maria Maggiore may have been received in this way is
provided by the almost contemporary alterations to the immediately opposite
Palazzo della Ragione. (fig. 56) After a fire of 1513, the city decided to rebuild the
palace, but instead of employing a modern style, they imitated very closely
indeed the twelfth-century form of the building. In so doing, the contemporary
city government, although controlled by Venice, reaffirmed its connexion with
the autonomous Commune.222 This episode clearly demonstrates that the style
of the twelfth century was recognised, and carried with it associations with the
communal past.

A similar appreciation for archaic architectural styles was manifest in
Milan around the same time. In 1573, the dome of the Early Christian church of
S. Lorenzo collapsed. Immediately following the disaster, Carlo Borromeo began
assembling funds to rebuild the ancient church. In this planned rebuilding,
however, he decreed that the architect in charge, Martino Bassi, should make no
change to the plan of the old church. Although no text survives in which
Borromeo's aims in this project are spelled out explicitly, he must have confined
Bassi in this way so as to ensure that the final product maintained something of
its Early Christian character.223 The reforms of Borromeo were, in part, directed
at reviving the contemporary church by a return to its early roots, so his
conservative approach to the work on S. Lorenzo can be seen as a visual

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222 I owe this interpretation to R. Russell, "Il Palazzo della Ragione tra incendi e restauri,"
223 For a general treatment of this rebuilding project, see Heydenreich and Lotz, Architecture in
Italy, pp. 299-301. For more detailed studies see C. Parodi, "Martino Bassi e la ricostruzione della
cupola di S. Lorenzo tra Cinque e Seicento," Arte Lombarda 92/93 (1990), pp. 31-45; Denti,
Architettura a Milano, pp. 65-67; A. Calderini, G. Chieric and C. Cecchelli, La basilica di S.
Lorenzo Maggiore in Milano, Milan, 1951, pp. 163-169.
articulation of that general policy. Nobody in Bergamo suggested that their own S. Maria Maggiore was an Early Christian church, but the example of S. Lorenzo is relevant because even though the conservative changes to S. Lorenzo were intended to renew a different past, Early Christian Milan, they show that there was an awareness of past architectural styles in this cultural context, as well as a sensitivity to the potential for these styles to carry meaning.

A much closer analogy is offered by the plans to complete the facade of S. Petronio in Bologna. In terms of foundation history (imagined or otherwise) this church was quite similar to S. Maria Maggiore; it was founded by the city government and became a symbol of civic autonomy in the face of outside political control. Even though the first stone had been laid in 1390, the enormous scale of the undertaking meant that it was not nearly complete by the beginning of the sixteenth century. A significant part of the facade had been decorated with a lavish Gothic marble encrustation between 1390 and 1400, and in the early fifteenth century a monumental entrance portal was constructed by Jacopo della Quercia.224 Throughout this century the Fabrica commissioned a succession of architects to come up with a viable solution for the completion of the facade. These architects were faced either with eliminating the already completed decoration or incorporating it within their designs. With a few notable exceptions, all of the many drawings submitted to the Fabrica drew on the Gothic style of the existing facade as the basis of their designs. In the past, the scholarship devoted to these drawings has centred on the aesthetic problem faced

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by these architects, without acknowledging that there may have been political implications as well.\textsuperscript{225} Recently, however, it has been suggested quite plausibly that the persistence of this Gothic style was intended to evoke the heroic moment of Bolognese independence represented by the foundation of S. Petronio.\textsuperscript{226} Given that S. Maria Maggiore in Bergamo had a similar history, it seems likely that the preservation of its exterior was meant to act in an analogous fashion.

10. Interior Transformations IV: The Removal of the Baptistery

In section six of this chapter it was observed that the interior redecoration of S. Maria Maggiore carried out after 1575 conformed quite closely with the decrees of the Counter-Reformation as articulated by Carlo Borromeo. Why should this have been the case, especially since the MIA had won its jurisdictional dispute with Borromeo? As already suggested, the answer to this question lies in the constant friction between the basilica and the bishop of Bergamo. To a great extent these difficulties arose from the fact that, starting in 1453, the MIA and S. Maria Maggiore had enjoyed complete autonomy from episcopal control. This situation must have been particularly galling considering the relative size and magnificence of S. Maria Maggiore, especially in the period following the 1561 demolition of the basilica alessandrina. Borromeo’s attempt to have the bishop make annual visitations to S. Maria Maggiore was a very grave threat to its autonomy. Even though Borromeo in the end agreed that his visitation would not set a precedent for further such events, the MIA must have been aware both that they had won only the narrowest of victories, and that

subsequent bishops would no doubt try to impose their authority. One of the arguments used by the MIA in reaching the agreement with Borromeo was, after all, that episcopal visitations were not necessary because the church was governed in an exemplary fashion, a condition obviously open to interpretation.

There was, in fact, a long tradition of the MIA worrying that the bishop might try to interfere with S. Maria Maggiore and corrode its immunity. Indeed, one of the factors that had prompted the city to obtain the 1453 exemption in the first place was the fact that bishop Barozzi was trying to muscle in on the affairs of the church. In the century that followed the Bull, no bishop objected to its conditions, but the MIA and city government were very careful to ensure that there should be no hint of episcopal interference. In 1521, for instance, bishop Pietro Lippomani planned the installation of a window in the west wall joining the basilica to the bishop's palace. The MIA and city council responded by reading the exemption to the bishop, and leaving him a copy of the document. The bishop was forced to back down.

In fact, all dealings with the bishop were dealt with with great suspicion, strongly suggesting that the MIA had a fear that any interference by him, however trivial, would result in the loss of their exemption. This concern makes it more than likely that the attempt by Borromeo to carry out a visitation of the church was seen as presaging future attempts by the local bishops, in spite of the assurances to the contrary.

In the years following 1575, therefore, the MIA were intent on not offering to the bishop any pretext which he could use to insist on violating the much

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228 Meli, "La Misericordia Maggiore di Bergamo," p. 58. All the documents relevant to the immunity of S. Maria Maggiore, and the extent to which the city and the MIA protected this immunity, were transcribed and assembled together in the late sixteenth century, MIA 886 Pro immunitate ecclesiae S. Mariae maioris Bergom. The decision by the city to confront the bishop is transcribed in MIA 885, Documenti sull'immunita, fol. 8, 6 February 1521.
cherished immunity. At a meeting of the MIA council on 23 January 1584 concern was voiced that abuses at the church might have negative implications.

There is nothing of greater importance in the governance of this *pio luogo* than the diligent care of the church of S. Maria Maggiore, pupil of the eye and ornament of this entire city, to preserve it in the same state of liberty with which it was consigned and joined to the governance of the MIA by the city, and it is to this end that the Magnifico Consiglio, with all study and vigilance, attempts to remove any abuses and to prevent disturbances that might interrupt the already mentioned lay freedom and exemption of which the ancient fathers were so jealous.229

This document makes very clear the importance with which the freedom and exemption of S. Maria Maggiore was invested, as well as indicating that the MIA was concerned about the possibility that their autonomy might be eroded.

In 1594, the fears of the MIA were fulfilled. Just two years after having been consecrated bishop of Bergamo, Giambattista Milani tried to institute a visitation at S. Maria Maggiore. As before, the request was based on an appeal to the decrees of the Council of Trent. The bishop's desire quickly came to the attention of the city government, which began to mount a vigorous protest.230

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229 MIA 1272, *Terminationes*, fol. 186, 23 January 1584, "Non essendo cosa nel governo di questo pio loco di maggior importanza, nè, della quale tener si debba più diligente cura della chiesa di S. Maria pupella dell'occhio et ornamento di tutta questa Cita; per conservarla nella istessa liberta con la quale fu dalla sudetta Mag.ca Cita al governo di questo pio loco consegnata et unita, e ben ragione che questo Mag.co Consiglio con ogni studio et vigilanza provedda di rimovere gl' abusi et che non seguano disordini che sturbare potessero la gia detta liberta laica et essentione della quale gl' antichi padri sono stati tanto gelosi."

230 MIA 1752, *Ven.di Consortii MIAE*, fols. 35v-36, 11 December 1594, a transcription of the city council records. The bishop "le ha fatto sapere piu d'une volta esser mente de SS. R.ma di voler visitar Santa Maria Capella di questa M.ca Citta asserendo esser obbligato a tal visita per il sacro Consiglio tridentino retta dal detto Ven.do Consortio, et cosi bene quanto ad ogni un è ben noto il che parendo a detti M.ci Regenti esser motivo insolito, et non ma piu sentito atteso che per bolla pontificia et decreto del Ser.mo N. Principe con l'autorita dell' Ecc.me Senato fatto il governo di tal capella, et deli paramenti et mobili d'essa non può cascar in altri che in essi M.ci Regenti li qual doppo l'institutione d'esso pio luogo che corrono li centinaia d'anni l'hanno retta et governata sempre senza alcun interruzione, ne inanzi ne doppo al detto sacro Consiglio detta Capella di alcuno R.mo Vescovo, ne altro Prelato è stata mai visitata anzi con non interotto possesso essi M.i Regenti .. l'intiera liberta nel govern d'essa Capella col mezzo delle loro raggion, et benche anonche[?] raggion habbino procurato apresso di R.mo Vescovo di levarlo di tal opinione tuttavia pace che continua nel suo pensiero di voler far tal visita, pero considerando li M.ci Antiani l'importanza di
In this effort the MIA was eventually successful, but victory was not easy, coming only after almost three years of episcopal persistence. Although most of the documents created by the MIA understandably make no mention of art, in one instance it is suggested that the care with which the church had been redecorated in recent years meant that an episcopal visitation was simply not necessary.

And chiefly it is believed that this requested visitation is not necessary, so when it would be done, nothing would be found that would need either repair or reform, and neither could one add to the extent and great magnificence of the expenditure which is being made all the time in the furnishings, vestments, ornaments, musicians and priests, so that in this respect it is second only to a few churches in Italy.

This statement places a great emphasis on the sheer amount of money spent on the church, as if that were enough to render an pastoral visitation unnecessary, but is not, however, completely focused on magnificence. Note for instance that the author insists that nothing requiring reform would be discovered, suggesting that not only was a lot of money spent, but that it was spent on forms that would meet with the approval of the bishop.

Another strategy adopted by the MIA to prevent episcopal intervention in its affairs was the removal of the baptistery from S. Maria Maggiore. (fig. 46) No documents record the presence of a baptistery before the twelfth century, but it is most likely that the earliest church of S. Maria was the baptistery church of S. Vincenzo. When S. Maria was rebuilt as S. Maria Maggiore, the baptistery of the

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231 MIA 886, Pro immunitate ecclesiae, fol. 4, 20 March 1597.
232 MIA 5052, fol. 7v, 1595, "Et si suppone principalmente, che questa pretensa visita non sia necessaria, perciocché quando fusse fatta, non si può trovar cosa alcuna che habba bisogno non solamente di reparatione over reformatione, ne che si possa agionger all'grandezza et Magnific.ma spesa qual si fa in ogni tempo nelli mobili, et paramenti, ornamenti, Musici, numero de sacerdoti, che in ciò non cede, se non à poche giesie d'Italia."
cathedral was located there, as was appropriate given the subsidiary status of the basilica at this time. In 1344, the city commissioned Giovanni da Campione to construct a monumental freestanding baptistery to be placed in the nave of the basilica towards the western wall. This baptistery remained in this position even after the administration of the church was granted exemption from episcopal authority in 1453. The Misericordia was responsible for its decoration and maintenance, but the liturgy there remained under the control of the bishop. This baptistery was very important to the MIA for at least two reasons. First, it was valued as a magnificent object on a par with the intarsia choir stalls. Indeed, several early descriptions of the church singled out the baptistery for particular praise, and even Carlo Borromeo mentioned it in the rather abbreviated Verbuli of his visitation. Second, baptisteries in general were powerful symbols of civic unity, since in the times when cities had only one such structure, it was the site at which people entered not only the broader Christian community, but also the community of the city. Adding to this civic dimension was the fact that this particular example was actually commissioned by the city government and stood in a church whose history, as we have seen, foregrounded its relationship with the city. In this way, the baptistery was a

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233 The existence of a baptistery at S. Maria Maggiore is attested to in the 1187 proceedings surrounding the primacy of the two cathedrals. Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 213.
234 This baptistery was rebuilt in its present location in the piazza in front of both churches in 1898-1899. Cassinelli, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, p. 58, and A. Pinetti, "Cronistoria artistica di Santa Maria Maggiore - I: Il Battistero," Bergomun 19 (1925), pp. 167-183.
235 Cassinelli, in Cassinelli et al., Duomo, pp. 48-52
Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 1, p. 316, "Baptisterium valde honorificum pro baptizandis curae animarum cathedralis ecclesiae extat in hac ecclesia."
concrete sign of S. Maria Maggiore's relationship with the city as a harmonious whole.

Nevertheless, the baptistery was also a reminder of the original subsidiary status of S. Maria Maggiore, and during the sixteenth century became a launching pad for both episcopal and capitular interference in the affairs of the church. As mentioned above, both the cathedral canons and the bishop maintained a liturgical presence at the baptistery even following the transfer of S. Maria Maggiore to the MIA. These two groups repeatedly overstepped the boundaries of this relationship. In 1544, for instance, the canons of the cathedral tried to consecrate the baptistery after having performed a baptism there. The priests of S. Maria Maggiore ejected the canons from the church and did not allow them to perform this rite, presumably because it suggested that the canons had jurisdiction over the structure and not simply over the liturgy that took place there. In 1557, bishop Soranzo made an attempt to take possession of the baptistery by not returning its key to the sacristan of the church. Only two days after this attempt, however, he was forced to back down, and the key was returned to the hands of the MIA appointee. These two events establish that the canons and the bishop had a history of wanting to increase their roles at the baptistery and, by extension at S. Maria Maggiore. The shared jurisdiction over the baptistery was a cause of friction even before the reforms of the Council of Trent gave new impetus to the exercise of episcopal power over lay confraternities.

In 1573, the Scola del Sacramento from S. Vincenzo, an organization led by the cathedral canons, requested that they be able to hold their orations in S.

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238 The events surrounding this attempt were transcribed in the early seventeenth century: MIA 886, Pro immunitate ecclesiae, fol. 2, 17-19 April 1557.
Maria Maggiore and use the baptistery to house the Sacrament at this time. In their supplication the *Scola* assured the MIA that their jurisdiction over the baptistery would not in any way be compromised, and the request was granted.239 This use of the baptistery continued without a problem for a number of years, but in 1586 the MIA decided to reserve the sacrament in the baptistery for its Good Friday procession.240 The cathedral canons felt that this action violated their rights to the baptistery, so they proclaimed their complete jurisdiction over the structure, and threatened the deputies of the MIA with excommunication if they attempted to make any changes to its fabric, including the temporary apparatus that would have been involved with the display of the sacrament for one day. The dispute was settled with a compromise. The MIA would agree not to use the baptistery for that purpose and the cathedral canons would withdraw their threat of excommunication. In the end, though, the MIA was victorious, since the bishop agreed the next year to allow the display of the sacrament in the baptistery on Good Friday.241

In 1592, Girolamo Ragazzoni was succeeded by Giambattista Milani, who turned out not to be a keen defender of the MIA's privileges. As discussed above, this bishop expended considerable effort between 1594 and 1597 in establishing the right of the bishop to carry out pastoral visitations at S. Maria Maggiore. In 1593, this official campaign was anticipated by a visitation of the baptistery that was carried out by bishop Milani without there having been any prior notification of the MIA.242 Naturally, the legitimacy of such a clandestine visitation was not accepted by the MIA, but by this point they were tiring of the

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239 MIA 1752, *Ven.di Consortii MIAE*, fol. 21, 15 June 1573.
240 The whole sequence of events is recorded in MIA 885, *Documenti sull'immunita*, fols. 9-10v.
constant attempts, on the part of both bishops and cathedral canons, to encroach upon their jurisdiction using the baptistery as the locus of this effort. Consequently, shortly after the collapse of bishop Milani's campaign to carry out visitations of S. Maria Maggiore, the MIA began negotiations with the cathedral chapter aimed at removing the baptistery. These attempts met with considerable resistance on the part of the cathedral canons and bishop, and nothing was done to the baptistery. Although never stated explicitly in the contemporary documents, it seems clear that at least one reason for this opposition was that the canons and bishop did not want to give up such a potent symbol of their presence at S. Maria Maggiore.

Arguing that he had the right to inspect all sacramental sites in the diocese, Giovanni Emo, the next bishop of Bergamo (1611-1622), suggested to the MIA in 1612 that he had jurisdiction over the baptistery in S. Maria Maggiore, and he thus wanted to carry out an official visitation. Inevitably, the MIA opposed this entreaty. In 1613, the Venetian Rettori, acting as arbiters of the dispute, declared that the MIA should pay for the removal of the functional parts of the baptistery to the cathedral. This decision satisfied the MIA's need to

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243 MIA 1276, Terminationes, 19 February 1599; CAP 158, Acta Ottolini Rota (1538-1601), fol. 245v, 10 February 1599; CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti dall'anno 1567 all'anno 1630, fol. 195, 19 January 1599; Ibid., fol. 196, 10 February 1599.

244 MIA 887, Pro Ecclesia S. Mariae 1594, fol. 68, 8 June 1612, the MIA appealed to the city council and the Venetian Rettori for help: "Havendo Mons. Ill.mo et R.mo Vescovo fatto instanza alli mag.ci S.ri Presidenti della Misericordia di far visita del Battisterio di S. Maria Maggiore attione non ordinaria et dalla quale non possono venir emergenti, importanti, et gravi considerationi. Per l'importanza di questo negotio et per l'esempio negli anni adietro che simil materia e stata portata alla Mag.ca Città madre e protettrice d'esso pio loco, quale con efficace et ardente maniera ha preso quei partiti, che per dignita et sua prudenza ha giudicato convenire di qui essi Mag.ci Presidenti havuto di cio discorso con l'Ill.mi Sig.ri Rettori prima, et con Mons. Ill.mo Vescovo med.mo quanto hanno giudicato profico; hora hanno deliberato darne conto ad essa Mag.ca Città affin che viste le scritture et ragioni et considerato quanto si deve essa ancora possa consultare quanto per prudenza sua giudicarà expediente."

245 MIA 888, In Causa Visitationis Baptisterij, fol. 45, "Per terminar le difficoltà tra gli intervenienti della V.da MIA di questa Mag.ca Città di Bergamo da una, et li m.to R.di Canonici della Cathedrale Chiesa di S. Vincenzo di detta Città dall'altra nate per occasione del Battisterio hora esistente nella Chiesa di S. Maria della stessa Misericordia. Noi Pietro Paolo Battaia
eliminate this foothold of episcopal power at S. Maria Maggiore, while at the same time appeasing the canons and bishop through suggesting that they had always had jurisdiction over the baptistery. The much admired baptistery structure, however, remained in S. Maria Maggiore as a shell. Without a function, it lost most of its symbolic associations and became simply an obstruction within the restricted space of the basilica's nave. In the 1640s the MIA planned to demolish it, but first had to negotiate with the city. Permission was eventually granted, and the baptistery was dismantled in 1660.246 It was reassembled in its present location in 1888-1889.

The events surrounding the removal of the baptistery show that, in spite of Carlo Borromeo’s assurance that his visitation in 1575 was not to be a precedent for the bishops of Bergamo, subsequent to this event they increasingly began to threaten the immunity of the MIA and S. Maria Maggiore. Although the cathedral canons played some role in the attempt to erode the independence of these institutions, the principal player was the bishop, newly empowered by the decrees of the Council of Trent. The repeated efforts by the changing holders of this office to colonise the baptistery as a means of expanding the office’s influence must have had a decisive impact on the decision of the MIA to redecorate their church according to the latest Counter-Reformation.

Podestà, et Alvise Mocenigo Capitaneo veduta la liberta a noi data per li Mag.ci Sig.ri Deputati per il Consegl.io di essa Misericordia del di 18 Dec.re prossimo passato et parimente l’auttorità in noi transmess a per li m.to R.di Canonici soprascritti del di 24 del medemo con l’auttorità, et decreto di Mons. Ill.mo et R.mo Vescovo de di 5 del corrente et udite le informationi, che da ciascuna di esse ci sono state portate, et il tutto maturamente considerato invocato il nome di Dio dal quale.. con l’auttorità soprascritta decchi arimo.. Che nel termine di giorni quind ec prossimi tutto il vase battismale con sua figura di S. Gio. che si ritrova nella battisterio nella chiesa sopradetta di S.ta Maria sia a spese dell intervieni di detta Misericordia levato, e trasportato nella Chiesa Cathedrale di S. Vincenzo, dove sia riposto per modum provisionis nella Capella a basso detta del seculo, che ha la ferrata, et in oltre, che per la fabrica che e per farsi nella detta Chiesa di S. Vincenzo, et perche detto vase sia poi in essa condecentemente collocato, detti interven.ti della Misericordia debbano depositar nella m.ca Camera Fiscale ducati doi mille in questo modo.. “ See also, CAP 159, Ottolino Rota Atti dall’anno 1567 all’anno 1630, fols. 235v-237v, 24 December 1612. 246 BCB, ASCB, Azioni, 15 January 1660, fol. 33.
requirements. In this way the MIA denied the bishop the excuse he needed to interfere in their affairs, and thus preserved their immunity.

11. Conclusion

Although not a cathedral, S. Maria Maggiore was essentially the most important church in sixteenth-century Bergamo. From its beginnings as a subsidiary structure within the cathedral complex, it gradually obtained autonomy from all higher ecclesiastical authority, becoming instead a foundation linked very closely with the city government. A myth soon developed in which its early relationship with the cathedral was completely elided, and the idea of S. Maria Maggiore as a monument representing Bergamask autonomy and freedom was born. This alluring myth was promoted by the Venetian overlords of the city as a way of cementing their own rule. During the sixteenth century, the exterior of the church was left unchanged as a way of constructing continuity with the idealised period of the Commune, when Bergamo was actually free. The extensive transformations of the interior carried out at the same time articulated ideas both of civic harmony and of the protection of the city from the outside forces. The decoration also suggested the sources of these positive qualities by simultaneously alluding to a political indebtedness to Venice and a strong sense of self-determination. In these ways, this case study shows some of the mechanisms by which church art was used to shape civic identity in early modern Italy.

The relationship of the redecoration of the interior of S. Maria Maggiore with the reform of architecture as led by Carlo Borromeo in Milan has also emerged as an important issue. Frequently, the effectuation of the decrees of the Counter-Reformation with respect to architecture and decoration has been thought of as evidencing an increased centralisation of church authority. The example of S. Maria Maggiore shows, however, that this viewpoint needs to be
nuanced. At this church, the threat of increased outside control was enough to compel the MIA to engage in a programme of redecoration designed to conform with the latest requirements. In one sense, therefore, this case does show that reform could be enforced from above, since the mere threat of outside intervention was sufficient to prompt change. But at the same time, the only reason why this outside threat was so effective here was that the MIA was trying to preserve aspects of its own history that were anathema to reformers like Carlo Borromeo, such as complete lay autonomy in the governance of a church. In this way, paradoxically, the effectuation of reform was contingent on the preservation of a freedom that the very same reforms were actually aiming to stamp out. The motivations that underlay the physical reform of ecclesiastical architecture, therefore, cannot be understood without such a detailed examination of how the church is grounded in its local context. In this case, the need to preserve the church's rich symbolic connexions with the history of the city was of paramount importance.
Chapter Four

S. Alessandro in Colonna and the Quest for Cathedral Status

1. Introduction

As the previous two chapters have shown, the period following the 1561 demolition of the basilica alessandrina was one of profound volatility for the church in Bergamo. The status of the cathedral within the city was effectively compromised at this time by the incessant squabbling of its two congregations of canons. Works of art produced for the cathedral served to articulate and advance the competing agendas of these groups, but did little to establish the site as a focus of civic identity. The MIA stepped into this power vacuum by overseeing a comprehensive redecoration of S. Maria Maggiore, a transformation that was instrumental in the advancement of that church within Bergamo's ecclesiastical hierarchy. These two churches, however, were not the only ones battling for supremacy within this uncertain situation. In the lower city, the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna began a programme of redecoration that was clearly aimed at exactly this goal. Although only a parish church, and thus superficially no real threat to either the cathedral or S. Maria Maggiore, local tradition held that S. Alessandro in Colonna marked the site of S. Alessandro's martyrdom and had been founded by his contemporary S. Grata. Both of these associations were exploited by the rulers of the church as a way of simultaneously legitimating their own claims to importance and undermining those of the cathedral of S. Vincenzo. In this way, the rulers of S. Alessandro in Colonna hoped to attract the canons of S. Alessandro and raise their parish church to cathedral status.

The argument of this chapter builds on that already developed in chapter two. At the cathedral I argued that the canons of S. Alessandro, although clearly also motivated by a legitimate devotion to their saint, tried to parlay the new
importance given to Early Christian saints at this time into control of the cathedral chapter. Having been stymied in this project, however, the canons began looking for alternative cathedral sites. It is around this time that the rulers of S. Alessandro in Colonna began for the first time to decorate their church with cycles of paintings devoted to S. Alessandro and S. Grata. They too were trying to translate the new power of the Early Christian saints into real influence on the local scene.

2. The founding of S. Alessandro in Colonna

As described in chapter two, during S. Alessandro’s relatively short time in Bergamo, he preached the Christian message next to a column located in the plain below the hill of the upper city. This column had been erected by Lupo, the ruler of the city, in honour of his predecessor and father Crotacio. On top of the column stood an idol of the pagan ruler that was venerated by the local populace. As a result of S. Alessandro’s preaching, the column and the idol of Crotacio it supported fell to pieces. When eventually captured by the agents of the Emperor, S. Alessandro was brought back to this same column and, because of his refusal to make sacrifices to the pagan gods, was martyred by decapitation. S. Grata then took up his severed head and carried it to the upper city where it was buried. According to some versions of the story, lilies miraculously sprouted from the drops of the saint’s blood fallen onto the ground during his martyrdom. S. Grata showed these miraculous flowers to her father Lupo, the same Lupo who had erected the column to his father, and he was converted to Christianity. Not satisfied with this gesture, he proceeded to convert the remaining population of Bergamo. Soon after the burial of S. Alessandro, S. Grata founded three churches in his honour, the basilica alessandrina, S. Alessandro in Colonna and S. Alessandro della Croce. The basilica alessandrina marked his grave, S.
Alessandro in Colonna the site of his martyrdom, and S. Alessandro della Croce a second site associated with the miracle of the flowers that sprouted from drops of the martyr's blood. Although backed up only by tradition, this understanding of how these churches were founded was unanimously agreed upon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\(^1\)

The documentary evidence, however, does not match that offered by the hagiographers. The first reference to S. Alessandro in Colonna appears only in 1133, in a document of a land transaction.\(^2\) It was not included, for instance, in the 774 will of Taidone which included a list of all the city churches.\(^3\) Indeed, it is possible that 1133 may mark a date quite close to that of the church's founding.\(^4\) Throughout the eleventh century, the neighbourhood of the church was called Credacio, with no reference either to S. Alessandro, or to any column. Not until 1177 did S. Alessandro appear as the name of a street in this area.

Moreover, it was not until the twelfth century that the basilica alessandrina began to be called S. Alessandro Maggiore, suggesting that earlier on there was no need to distinguish it from any other church with the same dedication. Only from around the middle of the thirteenth century is there evidence of a cemetery at S. Alessandro in Colonna. This is significant because churches with early foundations located outside of the city walls were very frequently associated with cemeteries. In Bergamo, there are several examples of this phenomenon,

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\(^3\) For a discussion of this important document, see the Appendix.

including the *basilica alessandrina* itself, but also S. Andrea and S. Lorenzo, which eventually became parish churches. The fact that S. Alessandro in Colonna did not have a cemetery until such a late date suggests that it was not founded around 300 as the legend attests. Had there been a church at this site from an early date, linked to a tradition that it marked the location of S. Alessandro's martyrdom, then it is almost certain that such a cemetery would have developed there.

By 1180, S. Alessandro in Colonna was organised as a parish, but in sacramental terms it was not autonomous, since in 1196 it entered a dispute with cathedral over the administration of baptism. This type of dispute was common at the time as cathedral churches attempted to preserve their traditional monopoly on this sacrament in the face of the rise of the parish church. The next significant event in the life of the church was the founding of a lay parish confraternity, the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna. Although active as early as 1302, the rule was written down officially only in 1363.\(^5\) Although it is not clear what their exact relationship was with the church fabric at this early stage, by the sixteenth century the Consorzio was in complete control over any changes made to the structure and decoration of the church. In this way, they were much like the MIA at S. Maria Maggiore, but with some notable exceptions. Unlike at S. Maria Maggiore, there were many tombs at S. Alessandro in Colonna, and many chapels under the control of individual families. The Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna thus never had the same ability to refashion their church so completely. Also unlike S. Maria Maggiore was the fact that services in the church were not entirely under the control of the Consorzio.

Instead, there were two parish priests in charge of the liturgy at S. Alessandro in Colonna, and they were completely independent of the Consorzio. The confraternity was not completely divorced from religious service in the church, however, since they were responsible for the administration of masses left by numerous testators. To this end the Consorzio directly employed a number of chaplains. Perhaps the most significant difference between the MIA and its equivalent at S. Alessandro in Colonna was the fact that the Consorzio lacked the special exemption from episcopal control and was thus, amongst other things, subject to regular pastoral visitations.

In spite of these many differences, the similarity of their roles as charitable institutions in control of a church fabric drew them together. In fact, this affinity was felt so strongly that in the Rule of the Consorzio published in 1589 the MIA is singled out as a model of particular importance.\(^6\) In what sense did the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna model itself on the MIA? On one level, the Consorzio sought simply to follow the same effective administrative practices: "even if it [the Consorzio] is very much weaker than the MIA, it is nonetheless its emulator and imitator as regards administration and government, and among these pious works of the city it does not hold last place."\(^7\) But this admiration for the MIA is not without a competitive edge, however, since the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna represented itself here not in absolute terms, but weaker than the MIA.

Admiration of the MIA also extended to its management of S. Maria Maggiore, obviously an important concern for an organisation with a church of

\(^6\) *La Regola del Ven. Consortio di Santo Alessandro in Colonna*, Bergamo, 1589, fols. 3v-4.  
\(^7\) *La Regola del Ven. Consortio*, fol. 4, "Ci è questo Consortio nostro di S. Alessandro in Colonna il quale, ancor che sia di gran lunga più debole di quello della Misericordia Maggiore: nondimeno, circa la amministrazione, & governo, è suo quasi emulo, & imitatore, & tra queste pie opere della città, l'ultimo luogo non tiene."
its own to run. According to the rule of the Consorzio, S. Maria Maggiore was maintained by the MIA "with great dignity in its structure, ornament and furnishings, and in the celebration of the divine offices, and the divine cult," and its fabric, choir and baptistery were so beautiful that people came from afar to admire them.\(^8\) Why was the MIA given such an important role within the Rule of the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna? Both organisations were first and foremost dedicated to the alleviation of the effects of poverty, with the main difference being one of scope. The MIA was responsible for the whole city, whereas the Consorzio focused on its neigbourhood, Borgo S. Leonardo. I shall argue here that one reason for the establishment of the MIA as such an important model was that the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna had a similar goal, namely a desire to establish itself and its church as a focus of civic identity. The MIA strove for S. Maria Maggiore to be considered as the central focus of an all encompassing civic identity, whereas the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna wanted to establish its church as an alternative focus of identity based in its region of the city, the Borgo S. Leonardo. In this way, they hoped to establish that Borgo as a legitimate part of the city and to create a representational centre away from the upper city.

In the effectuation of this goal, however, the Consorzio would employ a strategy very different from that of the MIA. As discussed in the previous chapter, the late sixteenth-century decoration at S. Maria Maggiore avoided any reference to local saints, focusing instead on themes of more universal relevance and appeal. In this way the MIA hoped to distance its church from the

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\(^8\) La Regola del Ven. Consortio, fol. 3v, "Et il Consortio della Misericordia Maggiore, dal quale vengono sovvenuti tutti i poveri d'ogni qualità della città, & distretto, & mantenuta con molta dignità nelle sue strutture, ornamenti, & suppellitile, & nella celebratione de gli officij divini, & divino culto, la Chiesa maggiore della Sacratissima Vergine; la bellezza della cui fabrica, & del Choro, & del Fonte Battesimale, molti forastieri vengono a vedere."
factionalism that dominated life at the cathedral and suggest instead a connexion with an idealised communal past. Their ability to carry out this project was entirely contingent on the special history of S. Maria Maggiore. For this reason, a similar approach was not available to the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna. In spite of their deep admiration for the MIA, manifest in the desire of the Consorzio to emulate the city-wide confraternity, they had to adopt a different strategy. Not surprisingly, the Consorzio chose to exploit its own special history to suggest that S. Alessandro in Colonna should have greater status within the city and that it should, in fact, be established as a new basilica alessandrina.

3. The Church in the Sixteenth Century: Choir Renovations

S. Alessandro in Colonna as it stands today is the result of an almost complete rebuilding carried out between 1692 and 1715. The structure that existed prior to this period probably dated to the fifteenth century. A now lost inscription established the start of this building at 1447, and Calvi records that the church was consecrated in 1474, probably indicating that construction had finished by this date.9 In the 1575 visitation of Carlo Borromeo the church was described as "very large," an observation born out by the fact that it had eleven altars including the high altar.10 (fig. 77) This made it the largest parish church in the city, yet smaller than several of the conventual churches.11

Following the normal pattern, the records of Borromeo's visitation included not just a description of the church, but a series of recommendations.

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11 The next largest parish church was S. Alessandro della Croce, with eight altars, Roncalli, Gli atti, vol. 1, part 2, p. 303; the Franciscan conventual church of S. Francesco, however, had fourteen altars, F. Buonincontri, "Conventi e monasteri francescani a Bergamo," in Il Francescanesimo in Lombardia, Milan, 1983, p. 271.
One of these was that the choir of the church should be enlarged as planned, or, if money was not available, then it should at least be rebuilt using the existing walls.\textsuperscript{12} The Consorzio had already decided to undertake this project following a fire in 1570 during which the altarpiece of the high altar was damaged, presumably along with the structure of the choir as well.\textsuperscript{13} Nothing was done to act on these good intentions, however, until after the visitation of Borromeo. The records of the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna document in great detail the payments made for the rebuilding that was eventually carried out, but offer little evidence of either the appearance of the structure or the motivation lying behind its enlargement. The documents reveal five main phases in the project, dating to 1579, 1584-1585, 1590-1596, 1605, 1611-1614.\textsuperscript{14} From the number and frequency of payments it seems that most of the construction work was carried out in the third phase. In the fourth phase the choir was embellished

\textsuperscript{12} Roncalli, \textit{Gli atti}, vol. 1, part 2, p.149, "Capella maior fabricetur et augeatur ut vicinia decrevit et iam cepit: et si ob nimiam expensam hoc perficere nequeat, saltem super parietibus veteribus ecclesiae reedificetur."

\textsuperscript{13} CSAICol, \textit{Terminazioni} 1567-73, fol. 41, 16 February 1570.

\textsuperscript{14} Phase 1: CSAICol, \textit{Terminazioni} 1573 sino 1584, fol. 148, 2 February 1579, "Fu ordinato che si debba nel nome di Dio dar principio al fabricar della Capella grande di S.to Aless.ro." Payments for work on the choir continued until 30 October 1579, \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 163.

Phase 2: Work on this phase began on 30 November 1584, CSAICol, \textit{Liber Terminationum} ceptus anno 1584 usque annum 1591, fol. 23. At least ten payments are recorded between this date and 27 December 1585, \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 58.

Phase 3: This phase was the longest and, given the number of notices of payment, probably the most productive. Discussion regarding the fabric of the choir are recorded for 23 February 1590, \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 159v and work began in earnest in October 1591, CSAICol, \textit{Terminazioni} 1591 sino 1599, fol. 3, 25 October 1591. Payments are fairly continuous up until 1596, when there are mentions of the construction of a roof, suggesting that the essential structure was complete. \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 111v, 12 May 1596.

Phase 4: This phase centred on the stuccoing of the chapel interior. It stretched from March through August 1605. CSAICol, \textit{Liber Terminationum} 28 August 1599 - 1 January 1607, fol. 187v, 18 March 1605; fol. 201v, 6 August 1605.

Phase 5: During this phase choir stalls were the focus of the work. Plans for these had been mentioned as early as 1592 (CSAICol, \textit{Terminazioni} 1591 sino 1599, fol. 18, 10 April 1592), but work did not begin until 1610, CSAICol, \textit{Parti} 1607-1614, fol. 99v 18 January 1610. The references peter out by the end of 1614, \textit{Ibid.}, fol. 193v, 1 December 1614.
with stucco decoration, and in the final phase it was furnished with stalls for the resident clergy.

Why did the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna enlarge the choir of their church? In part, it can be thought of as a response to the values of the Counter-Reformation. Enlarging the choir emphasised the high altar as the principal focus of the church. It also expanded the space allotted to the clergy, thus ensuring a strict division of clerical and lay zones. Although a desire to provide the church functional space that conformed with contemporary norms was probably the primary concern of the rulers of S. Alessandro in Colonna, it does not exclude the existence of other factors. The printed Rule of the Consorzio revealed how important the MIA was as a model for emulation. In one of the documents regarding the stuccoing of the choir at S. Alessandro in Colonna, the artist was required to carry out the work using the stuccoing of the choir of S. Maria Maggiore as a model. Although the final product of this work does not survive at S. Alessandro in Colonna, and it is thus not possible to compare results, the very fact that S. Maria Maggiore was mentioned is significant. It demonstrates that the emulation of the MIA was not limited to an attempt to carry out their charitable missions in a similar way, but extended as well to the way in which the Consorzio decorated its church.

4. From Parish to Cathedral: The Possible Move of the Canons of S. Alessandro, 1615

The cathedral also offered an important model for the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna. The forms of its physical structure were not emulated,

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15 CSAICol, Liber Terminationum 28 August 1599 - 1 January 1607, fol. 190, 26 April 1605, "..havendo visto et considerato il modello fatto da m.ro Lorenzo stuchatore con li pretij[?] circa il stucchar il friso del cuoro maggiore nella chiesa di S.to Ales.ro sudetto in colonna qual e di relevo come nel detto modello hanno deliberato che detto m.ro Lorenzo habba a far detto frisio con fili di ramme di relevo iusta il friso del cuoro di Santa Maria maggiore.."
but the prestige of its chapter was very much an object of desire. It is quite possible, for instance, that the choir of S. Alessandro in Colonna was enlarged as a means of making it attractive to the canons of S. Alessandro. The evidence for making such a suggestion, however, comes from a much later date, from 1614-1615, and the documents surrounding the enlargement of the choir do not even hint at the possibility. Nonetheless, from 1614 on the desire to attract the canons of S. Alessandro became explicit and can certainly be used as means of interpreting much of the art produced at S. Alessandro in Colonna in the years that followed. During this period, the Consorzio commissioned a whole series of art objects aimed at articulating their claims to primacy in the city.

Some time in 1614, the canons of S. Alessandro began to consider transferring their institutional presence to the church of S. Alessandro in Colonna. In December of that year, the canons of S. Alessandro entered into a tentative agreement with the Consorzio. They were to move to S. Alessandro in Colonna and make it their cathedral. Not coincidentally, these negotiations corresponded with a particularly difficult period in the relations between the two congregations of cathedral canons. In March 1614, there had been a much celebrated act of union between the two groups, but it had already started to collapse by the end of the year. As discussed in chapter two, this act of union

16 CSAiCol, Terminationi 1614-1629, 30 December 1614, fol. 2v, "sia stato concluso per parte di essi R.di Canonici che siano di volonta ferma di eleggere la chiesa nostra di S. Alessandro per loro Cathedrale et farlo per loro ferma locho, et che mai per conto alcuno derogaranno in parte alcuna tenesi minima alli privilegij et ordini di detto ven. Consortio et che offeriscono ad uso comune paramento et argentaria et in summa la supellictile di detto ven. Capitolo cerca la chiesa et che habbino usato amorevolissime parolle et promesse per ciò. Che se risponda all R. Canonici di S. Aless.o di accettarli nella nostra chiesa. Passando che per crearla massimamente debba esser onorata tanta cortesia salve le sudette cose senza le quali non si sarà venuto alla infra. parte, fu posta parte per il M.co R. Benedetto benalio presidente che si risponda di accetar le persone de detti m. R. Canonici del capitolo de S. Alesh.o nella detta nostra chiesa de S. Aless.o in Colona con le sudette conditioni come di sopra et che s'intendano accettar - qual parte balatata fu presa a tutti voti ecetto di contra."

17 On these events, see Chapter two.
would have abolished the two separate congregations of canons, and replaced them with a single chapter dedicated to S. Alessandro. The dedication of the cathedral was also to be singular, to S. Alessandro alone, so the act of union represented a decisive victory for the canons of S. Alessandro. Not only were they to rule their own cathedral, a replacement for the lost basilica alessandrina, but their centuries-long rivalry with the canons of S. Vincenzo was to be extinguished. The collapse of the act of union towards the end of 1614 put a quick end to this positive solution, and pushed the canons of S. Alessandro towards seeking an alternative, the parish church of S. Alessandro in Colonna.

The move of the canons to S. Alessandro in Colonna would have made it the new basilica alessandrina of the city, thus restoring in some ways the pre-1561 situation. Although it is not clear which of the two parties was responsible for initiating contact, both looked to reap considerable benefits.\(^\text{18}\) For the canons of S. Alessandro it would have removed them from their uneasy cohabitation with the canons of S. Vincenzo and the endless squabbling that involved, and reestablished their autonomy. For the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna it was also extremely attractive. The prestige of their church would have been immeasurably increased, from parish to cathedral. The canons would also have brought with them their very important collection of relics, transforming S. Alessandro in Colonna into a centre of the civic cult.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{18}\) CAP 160, *Acta Capituli S. Alexandri ab anno 1608 usque 1634*, fol. 26, 14 January 1615, "... in archivio novo tractatu' fuit an debemus accipere oblata' ecclesiae S. Alex.i in columnac ac illic transferemus corpora SS. Alex.i et sociorum commendata .. et custodie nostre capli S. Alex. et cum quibusnam conditionibus.." suggests that the canons were approached by the Consorzio, but documents from S. Alessandro in Colonna suggest the opposite. See above note. 16.

\(^{19}\) Both of these points were emphasised in the documents surrounding the negotiations. On S. Alessandro in Colonna becoming the new basilica alessandrina: CSAlCol, *Terminationi 1614-1629*, 14 Jan 1615, fol. 6-6v, "...la parte fu presa nel mag. Consilio di detto ven. Consortio sotto il 30 del mese pasato sopra la subrogatione della chiesa di S. Aless.o in Colonna nel loco et dignita che fu gia S. Aless.o magiore della presente citta.." and "Prima detto m.o Collegio havendo molto bene considerato come piace al detto Ro capitolo de S. Alessandro di eleggere la detta chiesa per sua ordinaria residenza perpetua et stabil Cathedrale talmente che sia assenta et divenga in effetto la
agreement, worked out in January of 1615, established that the canons would have full control of the church. The Consorzio would still operate, but its role would be limited to the fulfillment of its obligations to celebrate certain masses.\textsuperscript{20} The prestige brought by the canons to S. Alessandro in Colonna must have been of greater importance than the desire of the Consorzio to maintain control over its own church. The agreement between the canons of S. Alessandro and the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna was, however, only worked out in principle, with no firm date actually set for the move.\textsuperscript{21} The canons may never have seriously intended to transfer themselves to the lower city, but whatever their specific motivation, the fact that no date was set for the move is of critical importance to an understanding of the subsequent decoration of S. Alessandro in Colonna. The problems between the two congregations of cathedral canons were not resolved until much later in the century, meaning that in the years that followed the 1615 agreement with S. Alessandro in

\textit{Cathedrale Antica Basilica di S. Alessandro magiore... memoria del 2 xmb 1561.}" On the transfer of the relics: "Di piu transportara in essa chiesa le S.te Reliquie sudette accio in essa perpetuamente faciano protettione et Intercesse a Dio per questo collegio del Consortio et suoi devoti - et tutta la supellettile della Cathedrale d'esso R.o Capitolo."

\textsuperscript{20} CSAICol, \textit{Terminationi 1614-1629}, 14 Jan 1615, fol. 7, "Che sia bene a compiacer essi SS. Canonici che il R.o Preosto seu capitolo habba comando assoluto de tutte le cose concernenti il far governo di detta chiesa, pero cerca l'offitij divini messe processioni et altro spettante al culto divino, et cio nonostane qual si volia privilegio di detto Consortio eccettuando pero che non sia impedito il R.o sacrista magiore di detto Consortio di far celebrar messa alta li giorni feriali all'altare del S.mo Corpo di N.S. conforme alla disposizione del .. et anco di far celebrare le messe all alta altar - et far offitij de morti - per ducere - conforme all' oblighi di detto Consortio."

\textsuperscript{21} CSAICol, \textit{Terminationi 1614-1629}, 14 Jan 1615, fols. 7-7v, The conclusion makes it clear that no date had been set for the move of the canons to S. Alessandro in Colonna, "Si pone parte sia ratificato tutto cio che sopra e scrito che habbino fatto et concluso li sudetti. R. S.i Deputati cioe .. Alvise Agazo et .. Luca Tascha et Ant.o Viti, questo dico a laude di Dio et de S. Alessandro sia perpetuamente stabile et fermo quando pero et non altrimenti ne sia seguita la solenne stipulazione, per il che effettuare sia a neo data liberta alli sudetti ampla et efficace, ed questo pero non possino in essa liberta departisse dal concluso soprascritto[?] se non meliorando la condizione del Consortio, possino in oltre piliar consulto avanti essa stipulazione se con pata spediente a detti SS. Deputati, qual parte balotata fu presa omnibus suffragijs." The potential move of the canons of S. Alessandro to S. Alessandro in Colonna is mentioned directly only one more time in the records of the Consorzio, \textit{Ibid.}, 1 June 1615, fol. 15, and this citation involved an insignificant revision to the text of the agreement.
Colonna, the real possibility remained open that a move to this church might take place.

5. The Column

As discussed already in chapter two, from 1615 to 1618 the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna erected a freestanding column in front of their church to mark the site of S. Alessandro's martyrdom. (fig. 35) In name, the church had been associated with a column from at least the twelfth century, but it is not likely that this referred to a freestanding column. Instead, it probably arose out of the fact that two ancient columns seem to have formed part of the facade of S. Alessandro in Colonna. Many of the sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century sources attest to the fact that one column fragment was immured next to the main entrance, while the second piece was located at the top of the facade towards the north. There is no unanimity, however, as to the relationship between these column fragments and the column toppled by S. Alessandro during his preaching. The rule of the Consorzio, published in 1589, says that the church was given its name "either because of the column that was there first, or because it or another was fixed into the wall to the left of the main door, and another at the top of the wall." This document, therefore, makes no specific

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22 The column next to the main entrance was mentioned in a meeting of 11 June 1583, CSAICol, Terminationi 1573 sino 1584, fol. 262v-263, "et la colonna che al presente si trova serrata dentro il muro dalla bando destra al detta porta grande levare et remetterla in qualche altro loco commodo." The published Rule mentions both fragments, La Regola del Ven. Consorzio, fol. 2, "eretti gli furono in diversi luoghi altari, & Tempij: si come nel luogo ancora, dove egli consegui la Corona del suo Martirio, fu edificata, & a lui dedicata questa Chiesa parochiale, di cui si ragiona: la quale; o per la medesima Colonna, che prima vi era’ o perche essa, od un’altra, fu dalla sinistra parte della porta grande infissa nel muro, & un’altra nella sommità del pariete posta (si come non ha molto tempo che vi si vedevano) vien chiamata Chiesa di S. Alessandro in Colonna." Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 1, p. 76 mentions both column fragments. According to G.B. Manganoni, "Memorie della Chiesa prepositurale di S. Alessandro in Colonna," dated 1713, BCB, MMB 431, a column "fu infissa anticamente nel muro di detta Chiesa della parte sinistra della porte grande; et un’altra fu posta nella sommità del muro verso tramontana, e questa l’ho veduta ancor io, che fu levata, saranno cerca vent’anni, nella riedificazione della Chiesa."
claims for the columns within the facade of the church; they may or may not have had anything to do with the column associated with S. Alessandro's preaching and martyrdom. By the early years of the seventeenth century a different version had emerged. Celestino described how the original column had been composed of two parts superimposed on each other. The smaller upper portion of this monument to Crotacio survived, according to Celestino, in the piece of column at the top of the facade of S. Alessandro in Colonna. Marking S. Alessandro's triumph, it supported a metal cross instead of a pagan idol. The lower part also survived at the church, but in fragments not immured in the facade.23

These fragments had not been mentioned at all in the Rule of 1589, but in 1615 were identified in the records of the Consorzio as having belonged to the original column of Crotatio.24 Fragments that just twenty six years previously had not even merited a note had now become the object of some considerable discussion and expense. The first problem that had to be overcome was that one of the fragments was not owned by the Consorzio, but was being used as a counterweight in the wine press of a certain farmer named Bressano. Probably because this farmer knew that his stone was now of great value, negotiations continued between him and the Consorzio for several years. Eventually, in 1618 he was paid seventy lire and the column fragment became available.25

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23 Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, p. 132, "un altissima colonna di marmo... ch'hoggidi ancora si vede in pezzi nel luogo dove adesso è la Chiesa Parochiale del Borgo San Leonardo."

24 CSAICol, *Terminationi 1614-1629*, 12 May 1615, fol. 14v, "Essendo sta recordato in questo M.co Colleggio esser bene per honorevolezza della chiesa di S. Alessandro di questo pio loco et del borgo di S. Leonardo metter in piedi la Colona sopra la quale giaceva l'Idolo de Crotatio... la qual colona fu decapitato da S. Aless.o e essendone alcuni pezzi di detta colona apresso alla detta chiesa et un pezzo si ritrova nel sedumme del S. Fonte Bressano a S. Lazaro qual gli serve per ponzero nel suo torchio et sopra cio fatto lungo discorso fu posta et presa parte di far metter in piedi detta Colona."

25 Negotiations with S.r Bressano are mentioned many times in the documents: CSAICol, *Terminationi 1614-1629*, 1 June 1615, fol. 15; 18 November 1617, fol. 60; 28 April 1618, fol. 77; 29 June 1618, fol. 81 for the payment to S.r Bressano.
meantime, the Consorzio arranged for the reconstruction of those parts of the column that had been lost over time. In fact, only three sections survived, necessitating the creation of a pedestal, some column sections, and a capital.\textsuperscript{26} Although payments for this work continued until 1619,\textsuperscript{27} the inscription on the pedestal of the final product records the date of erection as 1618.\textsuperscript{28} The inscription describes how S. Alessandro had preached the Christian message at this site, how he had miraculously overturned the column, and how he had then received the palm of martyrdom. The claim that the column is a recomposition of the original one is not made directly, but by using the word "reponendam" in reference to the column, meaning put back together or restored, the connexion is implicit.

None of the contemporary documents reveal what, if anything, was to have stood on top of this column and capital. Celestino mentioned that the column fragment at the top of the facade was surmounted by a cross in place of the idol of Crotacio. The column later erected by the canons of S. Alessandro to mark the site of the demolished \textit{basilica alessandrina} also has a cross on top. (fig. 34) It is possible that a similar addition was intended for the column at S. Alessandro in Colonna, and in a view of Bergamo from ca. 1680 such a cross is very clearly shown. (fig. 78)

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} CSAI\textit{Col}, \textit{Terminationi 1614-1629}, 28 December 1617, fols. 63-63v, "Inherendo alle parti prese cerca il reger in piedi la colona de S. Aless.o come nelli atti di questo pio loco apare fu datta liberta alli m.ci SS.ri Deputati alla chiesa di far reger in piedi detta Colona con far fare un pedestallo et un altro pezzo apresso a quelli pezzi tre vechi che si ritrovano al presente per fare che la Colona sia fatta conforme all'opinione de periti et modello presentato in questo .. Colleggio." \textit{Ibid.}, 6 April 1618, fol. 75v, "Fu parimente datta liberta alli M.i SS.i deputati alla colona di far far il capitello di essa Colona et trattar con periti."
  \item \textsuperscript{27} The final payment is recorded on 16 December 1619, CSAI\textit{Col}, \textit{Terminationi 1614-1629}, fol. 111.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} CROTACII/BERGOMI DUCIS IDOLIO/SUPSTIOSE HIS PRIUS/ERECTAM/S. ALEXANDRI/LEGIO. THEBEAE SIGNIF./XPM PDICATIS MIRACULO/EVERSAM/EIDEM TUTELARI DIVO/ALEXANDRO/MART. HIC PALMAM ADEPTO/RELIGIOSE REPOENDAM/EX PIOR STIPE/CONSORTII PRESIDES CC/IOE EMO EPO/AN SAL MDCXIX.
\end{itemize}
Why did the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna go to so much trouble to erect this column in the first place? As already mentioned, the column fragments they utilised were not even worthy of mention in the 1589 Rule. By 1615, however, the connexion of S. Alessandro in Colonna with the Early Christian history of Bergamo was of vital importance in the campaign aimed at attracting the canons of S. Alessandro to the church. The intention lying behind the construction of the column must have been to reinforce the traditional identification of S. Alessandro in Colonna with the place where the saint was martyred, as a means of bolstering its position within the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. As far as attracting the canons was concerned, the fact that the column fragments were described as having belonged to the actual column felled by Alessandro’s preaching is significant, in that it transforms the column into a relic of the saint. What could be more appropriate than reuniting the body of S. Alessandro, not just with the site of his martyrdom, but with a concrete sign of the miraculousness of his preaching?

6. The Baptistery and the Chapel of S. Grata

In 1619, following the erection of the column, the regents of S. Alessandro in Colonna expanded their programme of ecclesiastical advancement through a decision to build a new baptistery and a new chapel. Although Carlo Borromeo had decreed in his 1575 visitation that a new baptistery was required at S. Alessandro in Colonna, this could hardly have been the immediate motivation underlying a decision taken more than forty years later. Even

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29 The decision was taken on 15 February 1619, CSAICol, Terminationi 1614-1629, fol. 96v.
30 Roncalli, Gli Atti, vol. 1, part 2, p. 149, "Baptisterium infra sex mensium sparium aptetur cum sacrario coniuncto ad secundam vel tertiam formam instructionum, et collocetur ubi nunc est Ianua septenttrionalis." There were discussions regarding the baptistery immediately after the visitation, but nothing was done until 1619. CSAICol, Terminationi 1573 sino 1584, 26 November 1575, fol. 72, "Furno eletti .. Gio. Ant.o Salvagno, Pauolo Tasca et Pietro Cornali a far veder da
though by this date a baptismal font was a requirement of both parish and cathedral churches, the cathedral baptistery was not only the most prestigious in the diocese, it was also a central element in any cathedral complex. It was more important for a cathedral to have a baptistery than it was for a parish church. Given the coincidence of this baptistery commission with the S. Grata chapel paintings, which strongly suggested that S. Alessandro in Colonna should become the new basilica alessandrina, it is likely that the intention was to refashion the church in order to make it conform to the needs of a cathedral. Following the 1619 decision, the baptistery was built fairly rapidly, with records of payment ending in 1622. (fig. 77, position B) The relative speed of execution was largely a result of the fact that this baptistery essentially involved only the modification of an already existing chapel space to the right of the main entrance. Appropriate to its function, the baptistery was decorated with a painting of the Baptism of Christ carried out by Francesco Zucco in 1620.

The association of this baptistery construction with the desire to attract the canons of S. Alessandro is reinforced by the content of the pictorial decoration of the new chapel, planned at the same time but executed just following the completion of the baptistery. (fig. 77, position G) Between 1620 and 1621 three

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31 E.C. Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae, 1577. A Translation with Commentary and Analysis," Ph.D dissertation, Syracuse University, 1977, p. 247, "A baptistery with a sacrarium should be constructed in every cathedral and... in every parish church."

32 The first payment record was for stucco work, CSAlCol, Terminationi 1614-1629, fol. 107, 3 August 1619. The last payment, for the tiling of the floor, was on 29 April 1622, Ibid., fol. 164.

33 Zucco received payment for this work on 2 January 1620, CSAlCol, Terminationi 1614-1629, fol. 113v, and on 20 June 1620, Ibid., fol. 127v. According to Lumina, S. Alessandro in Colonna, p. 16 note 4, the painting survives in the offices of the parish archive.

34 Payments for the construction of this chapel are recorded from 9 March 1620, CSAlCol, Terminationi 1614-1629, fol. 121v, to 18 January 1621, Ibid., fol. 137.
paintings were executed for the new chapel dedicated to S. Grata. The altarpiece of this chapel, painted by Giovan Paolo Cavagna, shows the aftermath of S. Alessandro’s martyrdom. (fig. 79) S. Grata stands in the centre of the image holding S. Alessandro’s head in her arms while flowers miraculously sprout from the drops of blood fallen to the ground. To the left, S. Grata’s companion S. Esteria reaches down to dig up these flowers and put them in a vase. The body of S. Alessandro has been lifted from the ground, ready to be carried to his grave. He is surrounded by candle bearing acolytes, giving a liturgical gloss to the event. At the far left is a broken column, above which is S. Alessandro’s standard decorated with the lily. The close proximity of the standard to the column makes clear that the column is meant to represent the one that fell to pieces during S. Alessandro’s preaching, thus locating the action at the site of the church of S. Alessandro in Colonna. Significantly, the column in the painting is fluted, just like the re-erected column outside the actual church.

To the left side of Cavagna’s altarpiece is a lateral painting by Francesco Zucco showing S. Grata presenting the miraculous flowers to her father, Lupo. (fig. 80) S. Grata is shown in the act of passing the flowers to her father who sits enthroned as ruler of the city to the left. He wears an immediately recognisable Venetian doge’s corno, very similar to the one worn by Lupo in the Salmeggia painting for the cathedral. (fig. 29) As noted in my discussion of that cycle, there was a tradition that Lupo had been not simply the duke of Bergamo, but of the entire Veneto as well. In the context of the work for the cathedral, I argued

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35 Payments to the three artists of these paintings, Giovan Paolo Cavagna, Enea Salmeggia and Francesco Zucco are recorded in CSAICol, Terminazioni 1614-1629. Cavagna was paid on 5 September 1620, fol. 129; 19 February 1621, fol. 139; 6 June 1621, fol. 144v. Salmeggia was paid on 20 June 1620, fol. 127v; 19 February 1621, fol. 139; 6 June 1621, fol. 144v. Zucco was paid on 5 September 1620, fol. 129; 19 February 1621, fol. 139; 6 June 1621, fol. 144v; 31 December 1621, fol. 152. The Cavagna altarpiece is signed and dated to 1620, while the other two works are signed and dated to 1621.

that since the cult of Lupo was linked with a celebration of Venetian rule, the painting asserted the importance of Venetian secular authority in the maintenance and promotion of the church in Bergamo. It was included there as a play for help in the canons's attempt to reconstitute their ancient church. In the painting for S. Alessandro in Colonna, it is possible that it may have had an analogous purpose, but the evidence is less clear than it was for the cycle at the cathedral. Below Lupo, a woman, probably to be identified with S. Hesteria, holds a small painted image of S. Alessandro, making the point that it is from his blood that these flowers miraculously grew.

To the right side of Cavagna's altarpiece is a work by Enea Salmeggia showing S. Grata presiding over the blessing of the first stone of the church of S. Alessandro in Colonna. (fig. 81) She stands to the right of the painting looking over her shoulder, while pointing towards the stone that is being blessed by an ecclesiastic. Behind him, in the very centre of the composition, a second ecclesiastic holds a model of S. Alessandro in Colonna. No detailed images of the church exist from before its late seventeenth-century remodelling, but the distant views that do survive show the campanile in the same position as in this model, so it is reasonable to suggest that it records the appearance of S. Alessandro in Colonna at time of the painting's execution. (fig. 78) In the background to the right is a decayed Corinthian colonnade, a reference no doubt both to the pagan tradition that was to crumble with the arrival of S. Alessandro and Christianity, and to the name subsequently given to the church.

Several themes emerge here that relate to the potential move of the canons of S. Alessandro from the cathedral of S. Vincenzo. First, the altarpiece includes the column S. Alessandro toppled through his preaching, and places this at the site of his martyrdom, reaffirming the association of S. Alessandro in Colonna with that event, and with the preaching that preceded it. (fig. 79) By
showing Grata holding the head of Alessandro in her arms, her presence there soon after the martyrdom and her consequent connexion with S. Alessandro are explicitly stated. Also, it is worth noting that the moment shown immediately precedes the carrying of the saint's body away from the site of his martyrdom. He has already been lifted from the ground, and candle bearers gather around in preparation for a quasi-processional transit across the plain below the upper city. Indeed, might it not be possible that, by implying such a processional movement of the remains of S. Alessandro, the artist is trying to bring to mind the much hoped for translation in the opposite direction, back to S. Alessandro in Colonna?

Salmeggia’s painting to the right of the altarpiece builds on the connexion with S. Grata by actually showing her in the act of founding the very church where all of the events in the previous image took place, and where both paintings are in fact located. (fig. 81) By placing a model of the contemporary church building of S. Alessandro in Colonna in the very centre of the composition continuity between the ancient foundation and the present church was forcefully suggested. Together, therefore, these two paintings make a number of connexions extremely clear: S. Alessandro was martyred at the site where S. Grata, present soon after that martyrdom, eventually founded S. Alessandro in Colonna, the very same church where these paintings were located. The canons of S. Alessandro, in uneasy residence at the cathedral of S. Vincenzo, must have found this message profoundly appealing. They had been forcibly removed from the basilica alessandrina, another church founded by S. Grata, and were at this time still considering a move to S. Alessandro in

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37 It is, however, worthwhile noting that Celestino also treats the event as a procession, Colleoni, Historia Quadripartita, vol. 2, p. 147, "Inviata la divota processione Salmi, & Hinni cantando, & nelle mani lumi accesi portando."
It is therefore far from coincidental that the fact of her foundation of S. Alessandro in Colonna is so strongly emphasized here. There is little doubt that it must have been intended to suggest the worthiness of this church as a new S. Alessandro Maggiore.

The sacredness of the site is further emphasized by the inclusion in both Cavagna's altarpiece and Zucco's lateral painting of the flowers which miraculously sprouted from the drops of S. Alessandro's blood that had fallen to the ground. (figs. 79, 80) In most accounts of his life this miracle occurs at a different site. After the martyrdom, S. Grata wrapped Alessandro's head in a cloth and carried it east across the plain that stretches to the south of Bergamo's upper city. It is only at her first resting place, when blood dripped again from the severed head, that the flowers appeared. On this site, according to all the legends, S. Grata founded another church, S. Alessandro della Croce. By showing the flowers sprouting at the site of martyrdom, the future site of S. Alessandro in Colonna, Cavagna had appropriated for that church the only major miracle of the saint that occurred immediately after his death. The significance of this claim is made evident in the painting showing Grata converting her father, Lupo, to Christianity. Lupo was converted only after having been shown the miraculously sprouted flowers. Following his conversion, he was baptised and, exploiting his position as Duke of Bergamo, proceeded to convert the majority of the citizens of the city. His baptism is in

38 M. Muzio, Sacra Historia, part 1, p. 76, "volesse Iddio, come la sua diletta Città di Bergamo col nobilissimo & richissimo tesoro del corpo del suo illustre Campione, così i due principali suoi Borghi, l'uno col sacrato sangue ivi per amor di Christo sparso nel martirio, l'altro col gran miracolo de'fiori altamente honorate." Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, p. 149, argued that, even though most earlier authors said that the miracle of the flowers occurred on the future site of S. Alessandro della Croce, theirs was not a logical story: "se ne nacquero ove caderono alcune poche goccie, chi dirà che non ne nascessero ove egli sparse tutto il sangue?"


40 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, pp. 175-188.
fact depicted in a detail in the background of the painting. (fig. 82) Not only, therefore, was S. Alessandro in Colonna built on the site where S. Alessandro preached and was martyred, the miraculous flowers that sprouted there were instrumental, through their role in the conversion of Lupo, in completing the conversion of the city to Christianity started by S. Alessandro. The emphasis on the theme of baptism would also have had an obvious resonance with the the baptistery that had just been constructed next to the chapel of S. Grata. As discussed in chapter three, cathedral baptisteries were important focuses of civic identity because within their walls people became full members of both the Christian and city communities. By showing the baptism of Lupo in the background of his painting, Zucco connected the site of S. Alessandro in Colonna, where the miraculous flowers had sprouted, with the first mass baptism of the citizens of Bergamo. In this way, the idea that S. Alessandro in Colonna was the perfect site for the cathedral of the city was furthered even more.

It may also be significant that the theme of building is implied in the painting of the blessing of the first stone. (fig. 81) The canons of S. Alessandro were blamed at the time for impeding the rebuilding of the cathedral of S. Vincenzo. For the most part, as discussed earlier, this was because they were not the principal authorities responsible for the rebuilding, and so refused to cooperate with the canons of S. Vincenzo with whom they had to share the task. As the possessors of S. Alessandro's relics and the inheritors of the tradition established by S. Grata at their destroyed *basilica alessandrina*, they would, according to the subtext of this cycle, have free reign in any rebuilding at S. Alessandro in Colonna. The emphasis on building may also refer to the restructuring of the choir at S. Alessandro in Colonna to accommodate a cathedral-type chapter.
7. Paintings for the Choir

Scholars of Bergamo have always described the chapel of S. Grata as a site for competition amongst the artists involved, with the victorious artist receiving the commission to execute the altar painting in the choir of S. Alessandro in Colonna.41 This suggestion presupposes, quite reasonably, that the chapel was merely a foretaste of a much grander programme. And in fact, the commission for this painting was granted to Enea Salmeggia on 15 September 1621, just three months after he had received his final payment for the S. Grata Blessing the First Stone of S. Alessandro in Colonna. (fig. 81) The subject was, logically enough, to be the martyrdom of S. Alessandro. (fig. 83) The opening lines of the contract placed great emphasis on its size; the canvas was to cover the area "from the seats to the main window, and between one column, or pilaster, and the other."42 The huge scale of the work (4.5 X 6m) was surpassed in Bergamask altar painting only by Procaccini's Apostles at the Tomb of the Virgin in S. Maria Maggiore. (fig. 63) This large choir painting must have offered an important model for the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna, and in fact the format, scale and positioning of the two works are almost identical. Emulation of the MIA and S. Maria Maggiore was, as we have seen, an explicit goal of the Consorzio of S. Alessandro in Colonna, so this coincidence is not surprising, and nor is it without significance. By copying a MIA commission in this way, the Consorzio hoped to raise its own prestige. In terms of scale they were unable to turn to the canons of S. Alessandro, since by this date their efforts had been quite

41 Lumina, S. Alessandro in Colonna, p. 18, for instance, discusses the chapel of S. Grata under the heading, "Artisti in gara."
42 For a complete transcription of the contract, see Lumina, S. Alessandro in Colonna, pp. 197-198. The painting was to be "dilla grandezza che capisca dalle sedie alla finestra maggiore, et fra una Colonna, o pilastro et l'altro."
modest in scale, limited for the most part to the cycle of twelve relatively small paintings dedicated to the life of their saint.

S. Alessandro is shown kneeling serenely in the centre of the huge image, his hands clasped in prayer as he awaits the fall of the executioner's sword. An angel descends from heaven with the saint's crown and palm of martyrdom. The large crowd that has gathered to witness the event is divided into two large groups framing the central dramatic focus of the picture. As in the S. Grata altarpiece, the artist has been very careful to indicate the specific site where this action took place. Behind the figure of the kneeling saint is a panoramic view of the city as seen from Borgo S. Leonardo, and around S. Alessandro are scattered the fragments of the column upset by his preaching. To the left there is even a fragment of the idol of Crotacio, face down in the dirt. Like the actual column recently re-erected outside the church, this one is fluted, and of the Corinthian order. (fig. 35) Even more directly than with the S. Grata altarpiece, therefore, this painting served to connect S. Alessandro in Colonna with the most important event in the life of the city’s patron saint.

S. Alessandro in Colonna had been without an adequate altar decoration since 1570, when, as mentioned above, there was a fire at the church. Carlo Borromeo had decreed in his 1575 visitation that something should be done to improve the situation, but nothing came of that, and indeed the remaining pieces of the burnt altarpiece were actually sold in 1595, leaving the church with no image connected with the high altar. In the contract with Salmeggia, it was specified that the painting was to be completed by the feast of Corpus Domini in

43 See above, note 13.
1623, less than two years later, or else he would forfeit a quarter of his total payment. This urgency cannot be connected with Borromeo's decree and must, like the chapel of S. Grata, be linked instead with the desire to attract the canons of S. Alessandro. In this respect, it appears that at least one of those canons was also active in promoting this move. Gio. Giacomo Pozzo appears in the contract with Salmeggia as having offered L. 500 of the total L. 1400 required for the completion of the painting. This participation probably demonstrates that even in 1621, six years after the agreement in principle was signed between the Consorzio and the canons of S. Alessandro, the move of these canons to S. Alessandro in Colonna was still considered a possibility, and was even being promoted by at least one of its members.

Originally, this large painting of S. Alessandro's martyrdom was intended to be surrounded with narrative scenes from his life, a quite explicit emulation of the twelve painting cycle commissioned by Lattantio Bonghi for the cathedral of S. Vincenzo. On 18 December 1621, only a few months after the date when Salmeggia undertook the Martyrdom, Francesco Zucco signed a contract in which he agreed to paint six narrative scenes for the choir of the church. They were, according to this contract, to be placed in a row above the Martyrdom. Zucco also committed himself to finish by the feast of Corpus Domini, 1623, strongly suggesting that his cycle was intended as a complement to the large altar painting. The price agreed to by the artist was in fact higher than that offered to

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45 In the contract, Pozzo is identified only as a "Canonicò," but his name is listed in contemporary acts of meetings of the canons of S. Alessandro. CAP 160, Acta Capituli S. Alexandri, passim.
46 The text of the contract is transcribed by Lumina, S. Alessandro in Colonna, p. 198. The subjects to be painted were: "la predicazione di S.to Alessandro et quando gettò a terra la colona, l'altro l'apparitione di S.to Aless.ro, l'altro quando passò il fiume Adda, l'altro quando il R.mo Vescovo lo benedì, l'altro quando gettò a terra gli incensi et che fu flagellato, l'altro quando a Milano gli volsero tagliare la testa et che gli apparse un monte."
Salmeggia, so it could be argued that Zucco was the winner of the unofficial competition held in the chapel of S. Grata.

Zucco completed only two of these works, but the contract specified the subjects for all six, so it is possible to arrive at a general sense of the programme and how it differed from that executed for Lattantio Bonghi at the cathedral. (figs. 84, 85) The order of subjects as they appear in the contract does not coincide with the chronological sequence of events in S. Alessandro's life and one very likely explanation for this anomaly may be that the order refers instead to the intended arrangement of the paintings in the choir. Bolstering this conclusion is the fact that the two works actually completed would, according to this scenario, have been in the two central positions. It is likely that the two most important images would have been finished first. Following this plan, at the far left looking towards the altar would have appeared the preaching of S. Alessandro and his toppling of the column of Crotacio. Next there would have been the apparition of S. Alessandro, an early sixteenth-century miracle in which S. Alessandro appeared over Bergamo and brought relief to a siege. Just left of the central axis there would have been an image of S. Alessandro miraculously crossing the Adda river on his way to Bergamo from captivity in Milan. A painting of this scene by Zucco survives today in S. Alessandro in Colonna, but it has been cut down greatly. (fig. 85) The work to the right of the central axis was to have depicted the bishop blessing S. Alessandro. Zucco completed this painting, and it survives in the choir to this day, although somewhat enlarged on all sides. (fig. 84) The images to the right of the altar were to have shown S. Alessandro kicking over the table of offerings to the pagan gods, and the abortive attempt at his execution carried out in Milan.

The most obvious difference between this planned cycle and that executed for Lattantio Bonghi is that only half as many scenes were planned. In part this
was because the martyrdom was already shown, and S. Grata's involvement in S. Alessandro's life had been treated in the paintings of the chapel dedicated to her. But the differences can also be connected to the two distinct contexts for which the cycles were executed. The last two paintings in the cycle for the cathedral, for instance, were aimed at demonstrating the authenticity of the relics preserved by the canons of S. Alessandro, a theme of little relevance at S. Alessandro in Colonna.47 (figs. 30, 31) There was one parallel theme in the two programmes, however, namely the preeminence of the canons of S. Alessandro. At the cathedral this agenda was determined by their long struggle with the canons of S. Vincenzo, while at S. Alessandro in Colonna it can be connected to the process of attracting the canons of S. Alessandro. At both churches it was articulated principally through the image of S. Alessandro and the bishop. In the painting for the cathedral it is clear that what is happening is the election of S. Alessandro as bishop of Bergamo. (fig. 21) The bishop of Milan is shown giving S. Alessandro a mitre on which is prominently displayed the lily, his conventional attribute. This part of S. Alessandro's legend had not been emphasized until the publication of Celestino's history of Bergamo in 1617. Around the time of its publication, the theme appeared at least three times, in a print of 1618, (fig. 16) in the series of paintings for the cathedral, (fig. 21) and in the Zucco example. (fig. 84) In the print, the mitre and its lily are absent, but the inscription "he is elected bishop of Bergamo" makes clear what is happening. In the Zucco painting for S. Alessandro in Colonna the iconography is very close to that of the print, so we can perhaps assume that the subject is the same. The contract for this cycle, however, called for the bishop blessing S. Alessandro. In spite of these slight differences, the essential message of the images would have been very similar.

47 For this interpretation, see chapter two, pp. 105-107.
As argued already in chapter two, this iconography emphasised the fact that S. Alessandro came to Bergamo with the official sanction of the church, and suggested at the same time an unbroken institutional link between the canons of S. Alessandro and the foundation of the church in Bergamo.

The planned cycle for S. Alessandro in Colonna, like the paintings in the chapel of S. Grata, also focused on the importance of the site of martyrdom. The first image mentioned in the contract was to have shown the preaching of S. Alessandro, and the toppling of the column of Crotacio. The general significance of the scene, centring on the defeat of paganism and victory of Christianity brought about by S. Alessandro, would have been linked through the column to the particular site at which S. Alessandro in Colonna was later built. Two other events listed for the cycle, the miraculous crossing of the Adda, and the failed attempt at execution in Milan, would also have suggested that the final site of martyrdom had particular significance, and was not simply where S. Alessandro happened to be when captured by the agents of the Emperor. The first of these showed how S. Alessandro, in his escape from Milan towards Bergamo, was able to walk across the deep and fast-flowing Adda river without even getting his feet wet.\(^\text{48}\) (fig. 85) This painting was, if my supposition is correct, to have been paired with the blessing of the bishop in the centre of the choir. In Celestino's account of S. Alessandro's life, these two events were closely linked both chronologically and thematically. During his visit with S. Alessandro, the bishop first told stories of Christians martyred for their faith, and then advised the saint to go to Bergamo because of the very great need for him there. Since the Adda formed the border with the Milanese, the subsequent miracle there was first proof that S. Alessandro's mission to Bergamo was divinely ordained. The

\(^{48}\) Colleoni, *Historia quadripartita*, vol. 2, p. 130.
scene of the failed execution in Milan would have reinforced this message, since by releasing him from this trial God made clear that S. Alessandro's glorious martyrdom was to occur elsewhere.49 His mission was not in Milan, but in Bergamo. By showing his preaching and martyrdom at the future site of S. Alessandro in Colonna, it is clear that this mission, while directed at Bergamo as a whole, had its focus at that church.

As a way of likening S. Alessandro in Colonna to the basilica alessandrina, an image of the apparition of S. Alessandro was also planned. This apparition must have referred to a fairly recent but quite famous event.50 In 1514, the Imperial general Raimondo Cardona took control of Bergamo, but was expelled by a group of citizens commanded by the Venetian Lorenzo Orsini. The city was then placed under siege by Cardona. Orsini sent ambassadors to plead that Cardona's soldiers not sack the city. That night the people and clergy prayed to S. Alessandro. The next morning Cardona humbly entered the city where he was accompanied by the cathedral canons to the basilica alessandrina. Upon entering the church he saw an image of the saint and pointing it out to the clergy said that they should offer great thanks to the saint. Cardona had decided on sacking the city, when he had seen an apparition as bright as the sun telling him not to sack the city because the apparition was more powerful than he was. Protected by S. Alessandro, Cardona knew he could not sack the city. In the years around the commission for the cycle at S. Alessandro in Colonna, this event had been depicted a number of times. It was, for instance, shown prominently on the pedestal of the equestrian image at the centre of the 1618 print. (fig. 16) Here at S. Alessandro in Colonna, however, the intention must have been to recall the

49 Colleoni, Historia quadripartita, vol. 2, p. 126, describes how the executioner was unable to carry his task because to him S. Alessandro's head looked like a big mountain, making him tremble too much to carry out his task.

image of the saint seen by Cardona in the basilica alessandrina, thus suggesting that this church was a worthy successor to the demolished structure.

The cycle of paintings planned for the choir of S. Alessandro in Colonna centred on three interrelated themes. First, great emphasis was placed on the fact that S. Alessandro's mission to Bergamo was both divinely and officially sanctioned, and that this mission was fulfilled at the future site of S. Alessandro in Colonna. In this way the church essentially claimed primacy within the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. This same concept was reinforced by the second theme, the likening of S. Alessandro in Colonna with the basilica alessandrina. Finally, the painting of S. Alessandro before the bishop implied the preeminence of the canons of S. Alessandro. The overall message of the cycle, therefore, is that, following the destruction of the basilica alessandrina, the only truly appropriate location for the relics of Bergamo's patron saint, and for the canons always associated with these relics, was at S. Alessandro in Colonna.

8. Conclusion

S. Alessandro in Colonna never did succeed in attracting the canons of S. Alessandro to their church. The two congregations of canons at the cathedral continued their battles for most of the remainder of the seventeenth century, not resolving to join together finally until 1689. Perhaps made impatient by the fact that the canons had not yet decided to move to S. Alessandro in Colonna, in 1622 the Consorzio initiated a concerted effort lasting until 1627 aimed at establishing S. Alessandro in Colonna officially as a collegiate church.51 The installation of its own chapter of canons was in explicit imitation of the organisational model of

51 The early stages of this initiative are recorded in CSAlCol, Terminationi 1614-1629, fol. 174, 3 July 1622; fol. 177v, 15 October 1622; fol. 180v, 9 December 1622. Prior to this date the church was sometimes referred to as essentially having this status already. Giovanni da Lezze, Descrizione di Bergamo e suo territorio 1596, V. Marchetti and L. Pagani eds., Bergamo, 1988, p. 169, "E parochiale collegiata..."
the cathedral and would have substantially improved the church’s position within the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. Because of the importance of this church within the sacred history of the city, the establishment there of a chapter of canons was a potential threat to the status of the cathedral canons. Not surprisingly, they opposed this change.

Having documented the pictorial and other means by which S. Alessandro in Colonna sought to advance its position within the city, I would like to turn briefly to the issue of why this particular church was so set on this path. One could argue simply that its special history propelled the endeavour, but S. Alessandro della Croce had a similarly illustrious past and its ruling confraternity made no such attempts. The answer is instead to be found, at least in part, in the changing urban form of Bergamo. As discussed in chapter one, the building of the modern set of fortifications after 1561 decisively divided the upper and lower cities. Before the building of these walls, the borghi and upper city had formed one continuous unit. Authors describing the city likened the relationship of these suburbs to the centre of the city to the way in which fingers are joined to the hand. When the walls were being constructed there were many appeals for the inclusion of the borghi because not only were they integral parts of the city, but important economic and population centres in their own right. Of these, Borgo S. Leonardo was the most populous. During the fifteenth

52 CSAI Col, Informazione del fatto per il Ven.do Consortio di S.to Alessandro in Colona di Bergamo contra il S. Paolo Emilio Solza et Consorti nella causa della Collegiata Chiesa di Santo Alessandro sudetto 1627, document 4 January 1624, "Che detti Canonici Sacerdotali siano tenuti a risedere in detta Chiesa di S. Alessandro nella forma et modo che risedono li Canonici nella Chiesa Cathedrale di questa Città, et celebrare la messa in detta Chiesa, come fanno similmente nella detta Cathedrale."

century this growth was recognised through the construction of an extension of the early walls, called the *muraine* locally.

Once cut off by the sixteenth-century walls, these large suburbs began to develop a sense of separateness from the upper city. Each of the *borghi* elected its own local governing council, for instance.\(^{54}\) It would perhaps be an exaggeration to suggest that they developed definable identities, but they did express resentment over the fact that all of the city’s representational focuses were in the upper city. As outlined in chapter two, the residents of Borgo San Antonio had to be threatened with excommunication to stop their violent protests following the translation of the relics of SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo to the cathedral in 1575.\(^{55}\) In 1631, the same *borgo* protested vociferously yet again, this time over the forced removal of a local miracle working image to the upper city. Both events show that the residents of this *borgo* felt separate from the city as a whole.\(^{56}\) Had that not been the case then there would only have token resistance to moving important objects to the centre of the city. On an emotional level at least, it seems that dwellers in the lower city considered themselves residents of the *borgo* first and citizens of Bergamo second.

Although neither of the above examples directly concerns Borgo S. Leonardo, there is little doubt that there was a similar emergence there of a *borgo* identity, as well as an opposition to centreing everything of civic importance in the upper city. It is in this light that the desire of the Consorzio either to attract cathedral canons or to establish S. Alessandro in Colonna as a collegiate church must be considered. In one of the documents associated with this latter process, a donor willing to endow the church with enough money to pay for three resident

\(^{54}\) Da Lezze, *Descrizione di Bergamo*, p. 132.
\(^{55}\) See chapter two, pp. 79-81.
canons revealed that one of his motivations was for the "grandezza di questo borgo," with no mention at all of the city as a whole.\(^{57}\) Borgo S. Leonardo had a population of 6949 in 1596, fully thirty seven per cent of the city's entire population, and more than inhabited the entire area within the new fortifications.\(^{58}\) Separated from the representational centres of the upper city by the new walls, a lowly parish church was simply not of sufficient prestige. Had the canons of S. Alessandro moved to the lower city Bergamo as a whole would have been restored to its pre-1561 situation of having two cathedrals. In the process, the importance of Borgo S. Leonardo, both economically and as a population centre, would have been matched by its representational status. This borgo would no longer have been considered a lesser appendage of the upper city, but as an equal partner.

\(^{57}\) CSAICol, *Filze of seventeenth-century documents with no segnatura*. The document was written by Paolo Emilio Solza and read out to the Reggenti of the Consorzio 1 May 1628: "L'intento di me Paolo Emilio Solza nell'assegnatione de bene da me fatta a fine di erregere questa chiesa di S. Aless.ro in Collegiata non è mai stato altro che di promovere con questo mezzo lo splendore del culto divino in essa Chiesa la grandezza di questo borgo et l'honorevolezza di questo Ven.do Consortio."

\(^{58}\) Da Lezze, *Descrizione di Bergamo*, pp. 125-139. The total population of city and suburbs was 18,483. The upper city total was 6461.
Appendix

The Cathedrals of Bergamo in the Early Middle Ages

Up until 1561, Bergamo had two cathedral buildings, one in the centre of the city dedicated to the Spanish early Christian martyr saint S. Vincenzo, and the other on the periphery of the city dedicated to the principal patron saint of Bergamo, S. Alessandro. In 1561, the Venetian authorities demolished the peripherally located church to make way for a monumental new system of fortification for the city. Following this, the canons of the basilica alessandrina and those of S. Vincenzo were forced to share the cathedral building of S. Vincenzo. In this appendix, I will outline the historical circumstances that gave rise to the coexistence of two cathedrals in one city. To do this, I will examine two types of evidence: archaeological findings of the last hundred years, and early medieval documents.

In addition to the very direct relevance to art produced for the cathedral itself, this discussion can also help build an understanding of the art produced for the other two churches discussed in this dissertation, namely S. Maria Maggiore and S. Alessandro in Colonna. S. Maria Maggiore began its life as a subsidiary of the cathedral of S. Vincenzo and emerged in the fifteenth century as a church not only independent of its former master, but competing with it for prestige within the city. S. Alessandro in Colonna, although only a parish church, almost became a cathedral in the seventeenth century, a change which would have given the city two cathedrals again, and restored the situation that existed before the 1561 destruction of the basilica alessandrina.

How did Bergamo come to have two cathedrals? The answer to this question is not simple, and has been the cause of much debate. The phenomenon of the double cathedral, which usually consisted of two nearby
buildings linked together into a single complex, was quite widespread in North Italian cities of the fourth and fifth centuries. Debate surrounding the purpose of these complexes has centred on how and to what extent the two structures articulate different functional requirements.¹ The situation at Bergamo, however, was even more complex, since the city did not simply have a single double cathedral, but two separate cathedrals both linked with other structures, meaning that it had, in fact, two double cathedrals. It is this that makes the problem of their origins so complex.

The first and most important piece of evidence that addresses this problem is a will written in May of 774. This documents the donation of property to the church of Bergamo by a Lombard royal official called Taidone.² In it, the testator lists the churches to which he is making the donation:

Basilice beatissimi Christi martyris Sancti Alexandri intra hac civitate Bergomate ubi ejus sanctum corpus requiescit sed et beatissimi martyris et apostoli Sancti Petri infra curte Sancti Alexandri adque ecclesia beatissime semper Virginis et Dei Genetrice Marie et Sancti Vincentii ecclesie Bergomensis.

The document identifies two different complexes, one centred at a church dedicated to S. Alessandro to which a second church dedicated to S. Pietro was connected, and another made up of S. Vincenzo and S. Maria. The two complexes are clearly differentiated from the fairly long list of other churches to which Taidone made his donation, thus making it clear that they were to be considered the principal churches of the city.

¹ For further bibliography and a discussion of these problems, see P. Piva, La cattedrale doppia. Una tipologia architettonica e liturgica del Medioevo, Bologna, 1990, passim; J. Hubert, "Les 'cathédrales doubles' et l'histoire de la liturgie," in Atti del I Congresso internazionale di Studi Longobardi, Spoleto, 1951, pp. 167-176.
The eighteenth-century scholar Mario Lupo was the first to suggest a reason for the simultaneous existence of two cathedral complexes. According to Lupo, one of the cathedrals was to be associated from an early date with the orthodox catholic community, while the other was a foundation of the Lombards who ruled Bergamo from 568 to 774, and who were, until their conversion in the seventh century, followers of the arian heresy. His interpretation was based to a large extent on the writings of Paul the Deacon, who described how many Lombard cities had both an arian and a catholic bishop, necessitating two cathedrals.\(^3\) Paul the Deacon did not list Bergamo amongst the cities with two bishops, however, and there is in fact no explicit evidence that the city ever had an arian bishop. Nevertheless, Bergamo was a ducal centre whilst under Lombard dominion and Lupo concluded as a consequence that it was certainly possible that it had had an arian bishop, although no direct records of it survive.\(^4\) Lupo's interpretation, based as it is on analogy with the situation in other Lombard cities, will always remain hypothetical.

Lupo also identified which church was to be connected with which confession. According to local tradition, the basilica alessandrina was built in the early years of the fourth century as a memoria marking the burial site of S. Alessandro, martyred in Bergamo in the late third century. It then became, again according to local tradition, the first cathedral of the city. When the arian Lombards came to Bergamo, according to Lupo, they established their cathedral dedicated to S. Vincenzo in the centre of the city. Under the catholic bishop

\(^3\) Paul the Deacon, Historia Langobardorum, L. Bethmann and G. Waitz eds., Hannover, 1878, vol. 4, p. 42. J. Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098. Storia istituzionale, sociale ed economica di una città lombarda nell’alto medioevo, Bergamo, 1980, p. 29, accepts only very cautiously Paul the Deacon's statement that there were two bishops, one arian and one catholic, in each city under Lombard dominion.

Giovanni (ca. 660- ca. 688), during the reign of the Lombard king Grimoaldo, the arians were converted to catholicism and S. Vincenzo became the catholic cathedral, while the basilica alessandrina became of secondary status. The evidence for this reduction in importance is in the fact that the buildings around the burial site of S. Alessandro are referred to in the will of Taidone as "basilice," whereas S. Vincenzo and S. Maria are described as "ecclesie." Lupo argued that this semantic differentiation was significant and corresponded to one in status.

Lupo's thesis has been very popular within local historiography, in part because it provides a satisfying origin for the disputes over primacy that dominated the relationship between the two cathedral churches in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and became an issue again most notably in the second half of the sixteenth century. If it is true that the basilica alessandrina was the first cathedral of the city and that it lost primacy to S. Vincenzo only after the conversion of the Lombard arians to catholicism, then the disputes between the two churches can be seen as an attempt on the part of the canons of S. Alessandro to regain what had been theirs in the earliest days of the church in Bergamo.

Although Lupo's is the most popular of the hypotheses regarding the origin of the presence of two cathedrals in the city, some alternatives have been advanced: 1) S. Alessandro was the original cathedral and was arian from its foundation, forcing the catholics to construct S. Vincenzo as their cathedral centre. 2) S. Vincenzo was the original cathedral, and S. Alessandro became the

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5 Lupo's view is followed most notably by Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098, p. 29, and by B. Cassinelli in B. Cassinelli, L. Pagnoni and G. Colmuto Zanella, Il Duomo di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1991, p. 10, although Cassinelli downplays the significance of the distinction between "basilice" and "ecclesie," preferring to see the two churches as more or less equal in 774. He does, however, agree with the sequence of events suggested by Lupo.

6 This thesis has been advanced by N. Coreggi, N. Paganoni and T. Rossi, "La battaglia delle cattedrali (Bergamo, sec. X-XII)," tesi di laurea, Milan, 1988-1989, vol. 1, pp. 140-144.
arian cathedral in the seventh century. S. Vincenzo was the original cathedral of the city, but S. Alessandro replaced it in the seventh century because thearians took over S. Vincenzo. A common characteristic of all these alternatives is that each questions in some way the assumptions on which Lupo built his argument.

One critical assumption made by Lupo was that the basilica alessandrina was older than S. Vincenzo, and that it had been the first cathedral of the city. The evidence establishing the truth of these assumptions is anything but decisive. One of the mainstays of the assumption is that the presence at the basilica alessandrina of the bodies of the earliest bishops of Bergamo was proof of its antiquity, and of its early cathedral status. In the documents surrounding the transfer of relics to S. Vincenzo (following the destruction of the basilica alessandrina in 1561), it is recorded that the bodies of the first two bishops of the city, S. Narno and S. Viatore, were buried at S. Alessandro. According to one tradition, Narno was bishop towards the middle of the fourth century and Viatore was his immediate successor. Also, Narno is thought to have been responsible for the actual building of the basilica alessandrina. Some have argued that the two saints are entirely legendary, but they both appear in an eleventh century local saints's calendar, suggesting that their cults had been active for a considerable period of time. Even if they were real historical figures, the fact of their burial in the basilica alessandrina would only show the antiquity

7 This possibility was suggested by Piva, Cattedrali lombarde, p. 103, but he in fact argued against it.
8 This hypothesis has been advanced most convincingly by L. Chiodi, "L'antica basilica di S. Alessandro e le mura di Bergamo," in Le mura di Bergamo, Bergamo, 1977, pp. 319-322; as well as by P. Piva, Le cattedrali lombarde. Ricerche sulle "cattedrali doppie" da Sant’Ambrogio all’età romana, Quistello (MN), 1990, pp. 103-106.
10 See Chiodi, "Dall'introduzione," pp. 18-19; and Piva, Cattedrali lombarde, p. 103.
of the church, not its early status as a cathedral, since it could simply have been a burial church.

Lupo also assumed that the actual church building of the basilica alessandrina was of great antiquity. Unfortunately, since it was demolished in 1561, there is no way of verifying its date except through excavation, which has not been carried out in any systematic way. In the poorly documented excavations of Elia Fornoni, an outcropping of rock located near a bastion of the later fortifications was identified with the sacristy of the demolished church, but this proves only that a church existed on that site, a fact already firmly documented. More significant was the discovery in this area of both Roman and Early Christian tomb inscriptions, suggesting but not proving that there was an early church in this zone.\(^{11}\) As with the evidence of the burial of the first bishops, it only suggests the antiquity of the church and says nothing of its status as cathedral. Even if it were discovered that the foundation of the church went back to as early as the fourth century, there would then have to be comparisons drawn with the results of similar work at S. Vincenzo. Excavations are a necessary tool at that site as well, since the last parts of the early medieval structure were demolished before the church was rebuilt in the late seventeenth-century. Two campaigns of excavation have been carried out at S. Vincenzo, but nothing was found that could provide an accurate foundation date for the structure.\(^{12}\) There is thus no archaeological evidence that the structure of the basilica alessandrina was older than that of S. Vincenzo.


\(^{12}\) For a description of the excavations at S. Vincenzo, see Cassinelli, et al., *Duomo*, pp. 41-43.
There are two further pieces of evidence that have led scholars to conclude that there was a strong connexion between S. Alessandro and the early bishops of Bergamo. In a history of the church in Bergamo published before the destruction of the basilica, it is mentioned that in the choir of the church were images of the city's first bishops.\textsuperscript{13} In addition to this, there is evidence that in the thirteenth century there was a baptistery (fontibus S. Johannis) near the church of S. Alessandro.\textsuperscript{14} These facts both suggest that the church had at some time been a cathedral, but do not prove that it preceded S. Vincenzo in that capacity.

It is important to point out, however, that none of the above questioning of Lupo's assumptions entirely negates the possibility that his is the correct interpretation. Faced with such paltry evidence it is impossible to say which of the hypotheses listed above is correct, but by examining each of the proposed sequences of events, it should be possible to determine which is the most likely. Lupo, for instance, suggests that following the conversion of the arians, the catholics established themselves in the formerly arian cathedral of S. Vincenzo. Would the fact that S. Vincenzo was in the centre of the city have been enough of a reason for the catholics to have made their original cathedral of S. Alessandro into a foundation of secondary status?\textsuperscript{15} It seems more likely, given this set of conditions, that S. Alessandro would have returned to its former position as principal church of the city, and S. Vincenzo would have shrunk in importance. As it was, this did not appear to happen, with the evidence being that subsequent urban development focused on S. Vincenzo, not on the basilica

\textsuperscript{13} B. Pellegrini, \textit{Opus divinum de sacra, ac fertili bergomensi vinea, ex diversis autenticis, catholicisque libris}, Brescia, 1553, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{14} F. Savio, \textit{Gli antichi vescovi d'Italia}. Bergamo, Brescia, Como, part 2, vol. 1, Bergamo, 1929, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{15} Piva, \textit{Cattedrali lombarde}, p. 103.
alessandrina as would doubtless have happened had it been the site of greater importance.

How do the other suggested hypotheses fair under the same sort of scrutiny? The first hypothesis, advanced in a recent *tesi di laurea*, proposes that S. Alessandro was from its origins arian, forcing the catholic minority to construct S. Vincenzo as their cathedral centre. The authors of the thesis argue that arianism was the religion of the Roman state from the time of Constantine, and since according to tradition S. Alessandro was founded at this time, it must have been arian from the time of its foundation.\(^{16}\) This supposition, however, is based on an error on the part of the authors, since arianism was not the state religion during the reign of Constantine.\(^\)\(^{17}\) But what if the hypothesis is modified slightly, and it is suggested instead that S. Alessandro was founded first, and was then taken over by the Lombardarians in the sixth or seventh centuries, at that point forcing the catholics to construct S. Vincenzo? There is no decisive evidence against this idea, but according to Paolo Piva, who has done extensive research into double cathedrals, it is very unlikely that a church founded in the sixth or seventh centuries would have been linked with a second church,\(^{18}\) since the phenomenon of the double dedication was common only in the fourth and fifth centuries. There is firm evidence of this having been the case in nearby Milan, Pavia and Brescia.\(^{19}\) The fact that S. Vincenzo was, according to the 774 will of Taidone, joined with the subsidiary church of S. Maria strongly suggests that it was similarly founded in the fourth or fifth century.

\(^{16}\) Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," pp. 142-144.
\(^{17}\) This error was pointed out in A. Zonca, "Est una matrix ecclesia. A proposito di due recenti studi sulla chiesa di Bergamo nel medioevo," *Archivio Storico Bergamasco* 18/19 (1990), p. 284.
\(^{18}\) Piva, *Cattedrali lombarde*, p. 106.
\(^{19}\) Piva, *Cattedrali lombarde*, p. 12.
The second hypothesis proposes that S. Vincenzo was the original cathedral, and that S. Alessandro became the arian cathedral in the seventh century. One might be tempted to argue that this could not be the case given the supposed greater antiquity of S. Alessandro with respect to S. Vincenzo, but as we have seen, this is not necessarily true. In addition, there is the evidence furnished by Taidone's will of 774 in which S. Vincenzo and the basilica alessandrina are both identified as principal churches of Bergamo. If S. Vincenzo had always been the cathedral and S. Alessandro was simply a later arian foundation, it seems unlikely that, following the conversion of the arians to the catholic faith, the basilica alessandrina would have continued to have had such importance.\textsuperscript{20}

By far the most important of the challenges to the hegemony of Lupo's hypothesis was proposed by Luigi Chiodi, and is listed above as the third of the alternatives to Lupo: S. Vincenzo paired with S. Maria formed the original cathedral complex of the city, but S. Alessandro became a cathedral in the seventh century because the arians had taken over S. Vincenzo.\textsuperscript{21} For Chiodi, the issue of whether the walls enclosed the basilica alessandrina was a critical indicator of its status within the city. In the 774 will of Taidone, the complex is described as "intra hac civitate Bergomate," clearly indicating, according to Chiodi, that it was at this time actually enclosed by the city walls. This situation contrasts with that expressed in two documents from the early ninth century. The first, dated to 816, says that the body of S. Alessandro was buried "prope muro civis Bergom" and the second, dated to 856, repeats this formulation.\textsuperscript{22} This led the author to conclude that, although the basilica alessandrina was first

\textsuperscript{20} As with the previous example, this reasoning was suggested by Piva, Cattedrali lombarde, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{21} Chiodi, "L'antica basilica," pp. 319-322.

\textsuperscript{22} CAP perg. 3895 and CAP perg. 97.
founded outside the walls of the city in accordance with late Roman burial practices, it was enclosed during the period of Lombard domination. Chiodi interpreted this as evidence of the church's special status in this period. Following the advent of the Franks in the late eighth century, however, the walls were reduced in extent and S. Alessandro was returned to its original position outside of the walls.

Based on this evidence, Chiodi proposed the following sequence of events. During the fourth century a *memoria* was built over the tomb of the martyr Alessandro, and at the same time the main cathedral complex, S. Vincenzo and S. Maria, was built in the centre of the city. When the arians came to Bergamo they occupied the already existing cathedral in the centre of the city and the catholic community fled to the *basilica alessandrina*, making it a cathedral for the first time. Following the conversion of the Lombards in the late seventh century, S. Vincenzo became the the only cathedral of the city again and S. Alessandro reverted to its former status. Chiodi marshalls two pieces of evidence in favour of the reduced status of S. Alessandro. Under the Lombards the church had been specially enclosed within an extension of the walls, whereas following this period, as evidenced in the early ninth century documents, it was again excluded from the protective circuit. Chiodi also returns to the semantic distinction made in the will of Taidone, in which S. Alessandro and S. Pietro are together described as "basilice," whereas S. Vincenzo and S. Maria are called "ecclesie." Following Lupo, Chiodi also interprets this distinction as signifying a difference in status.

According to Chiodi, even though S. Alessandro was not a cathedral anymore by the ninth century, its chapter of canons seems to have continued to exist. Chiodi suggests that this was simply a continuation of the situation that existed when the arians controlled S. Vincenzo. According to this thesis, the
dispute over primacy that erupted between the two chapters in the twelfth century goes back to a short period under arian domination when S. Alessandro was the catholic cathedral of Bergamo. Having lost its status as cathedral, the canons of the church that remained even after this loss were constantly maneuvering to regain it.23

In a recent variation on the Chiodi thesis, Gisella Cantino Wataghin removes the arian issue from the picture.24 As noted earlier, the testimony of Paul the Deacon, in which he says that all cities under arian Lombard domination had two bishops, has met with much scepticism by modern scholars. Cantino Wataghin proposes that the double church of S. Vincenzo and S. Maria was founded in the fourth century as the centre of episcopal authority, whereas S. Alessandro, built as it was in a Roman and Early Christian burial area, was built as a simple memoria and cemetery church. The later struggle between the two churches becomes, therefore, not a battle between two churches with legitimate claims to the title of cathedral through having at one time had that status, but a battle between the episcopal church, S. Vincenzo, and the sanctuary of S. Alessandro. According to this thesis, the canons of S. Alessandro were cynical exploiters of the prestige of their relics, using them to gain for themselves a cathedral status to which they had no legitimate historical claim.

There is, however, additional available evidence that has not been systematically considered in this debate. Although the 774 will of Taidone is the earliest document attesting to the existence of these churches, a considerable number survive from a slightly later period, the early years of the ninth century, and these reveal much about the relative status of S. Vincenzo and S.

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Alessandro. During the episcopacy of Garibaldo (ca. 857-888) the principal ecclesiastical offices of the city were centred at the *basilica alessandrina*. In addition to this, the church was identified in numerous documents, both in imperial diplomas and in acts regarding the management of its property, as the "ecclesia bergomensis," suggesting that at this time it was considered the only cathedral of Bergamo.25 Until 870, all surviving documentation where a cathedral is mentioned treats S. Alessandro, and only two documents survive in which S. Vincenzo is mentioned at all. The first is, of course, the will of Taidone from 774, and the second is an imperial diploma of Lothar from 840. In these two documents, S. Vincenzo appears in conjunction with other churches; it never appears on its own as does S. Alessandro. From 870 to 888, S. Vincenzo appears in four documents dealing with its possessions26; in all of these documents the endowment of the church appears to be managed directly by the bishop, without the intervention of a chapter of cathedral canons. In addition, in none of these documents is S. Vincenzo distinguished in any way from other churches, thus showing that it was most likely considered on the same level as other churches of the city and diocese. These factors all point to the fact that in the ninth century S. Vincenzo was of lesser importance than S. Alessandro.

How does this evidence fit with the various hypotheses advanced so far? Both Lupo and Chiodi used the distinction between "ecclesia" and "basilice" in the will of Taidone to suggest that at this time S. Vincenzo had greater importance than S. Alessandro. The conclusions developed from the documents presented above do not rely on this semantic distinction. When S. Alessandro is

described as the "ecclesia bergomensis," the conclusion that this should be read as referring to the cathedral of the city does not rely on any supposed distinction between "ecclesia" and "basilica," but on the fact that S. Alessandro is the only church that appears in these documents. In addition, the work of Andrea Castagnetti has decisively shown that in early medieval documents the terms "basilica" and "ecclesia" were used interchangeably, often being being employed to describe the same church even when that church had not changed in status at all.27

What implications does this have for the credibility of Lupo's argument? One of the most attractive components of his thesis was that it provided a neat explanation both for the coexistence of two cathedrals, as well as for the origins of the dispute between them. Given that S. Alessandro seems to have been more prominent than S. Vincenzo in the eighth and ninth centuries, his explanation that the twelfth-century struggle was caused by the desire of the canons of S. Alessandro to regain the privileges appropriate to its ancient status, must be modified. If S. Alessandro had indeed been the first cathedral of Bergamo, as suggested by Lupo, then why did the canons of S. Alessandro desire only that their church be considered equal to S. Vincenzo? Given Lupo's proposed set of circumstances, it would have made more sense for them to have claimed a return to their ancient primacy.

Chiodi also relied on the significance of the "basilica/ecclesia" distinction, reinforcing his interpretation with evidence of changes to the city walls. Together, the two types of evidence reinforced one another, but the removal of the implications of the semantic distinction arising out of the 774 will makes necessary a re-examination of the interpretation of the placement of the walls.

Taidone's will describes the basilica alessandrina as being "intra hac civitate Bergomate." Without the supporting evidence of S. Alessandro's greater status during the period of Lombard dominion, this can surely be read simply as meaning that the church was considered part of the city, and does not necessarily imply that it was included within the walls. The later documents, cited by Chiodi to prove that S. Alessandro was later excluded from the circuit of walls as befitting its lower status following the Frankish conquest, use terms that specifically mention the church's relationship to the walls, referring to S. Alessandro as "prope muro cives Bergom." There is thus considerable doubt as to whether S. Alessandro was first included in the walls because of its temporarily elevated status, (the evidence of which is in the "basilica/ecclesia" distinction) and then excluded once it had lost that special position. Chiodi's conclusions are put in doubt most particularly by the fact that the ninth-century documents show that this proposed loss in status did not occur.

Even though the distinction in status between the two churches, interpreted in the same way by both Chiodi and Lupo, has to be reversed, one is still left with the sequences of events proposed by them and by Cantino Wataghin. In this respect, the evidence of this relative status presented above seems superficially to make Lupo's thesis more attractive than either that of Chiodi or Cantino Wataghin. If S. Vincenzo had been an arian foundation as suggested by Lupo, then it is likely that, even after the conversion of the arians, it should have had a lesser status than S. Alessandro. But it is also possible, following Chiodi's thesis, that subsequent to the arian conversion S. Vincenzo became secondary to S. Alessandro because of its associations with the arian heresy, even though S. Vincenzo was founded as the first orthodox cathedral of

28 CAP perg. 3895. Similar doubts have been expressed by Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," p. 124.
the city. This interpretation becomes the more likely one when one takes into consideration that, as mentioned above, foundations with double dedications were common only in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The hypothesis of Cantino Wataghin must also be revised. She rejected the arian hypotheses entirely and proposed that S. Alessandro was never a cathedral before the successful late twelfth century attempt at achieving that status. Given the evidence of the ninth century documents presented above, in which S. Alessandro appears as the more important of the two churches in this period, it is clear that S. Alessandro cannot be seen in this way.

What sense can be made out of this rather confusing picture? Without the evidence provided either by comprehensive archaeological excavations, or some new document, it is impossible to arrive at a definitive answer to these problems. It is possible, however, to suggest the most likely sequence of events. I propose that the complex of S. Vincenzo and S. Maria was founded around the middle of the fourth century as the cathedral of Bergamo. Around the same time, the church of S. Alessandro was built on outskirts of the city as a cemetery church and memoria to the local martyr. In the seventh century, the Lombard arians took over the urban complex centred at S. Vincenzo. Even if Paul the Deacon's testimony regarding the presence of an arian bishop may be incorrect, it is still possible that this church was colonized by them, forcing the catholic population to establish its episcopal centre at S. Alessandro. It was probably at this time that the church of S. Pietro was built next to S. Alessandro, since it then would have required additional buildings commensurate with its new function.29 Following the arian conversion, S. Vincenzo remained relatively

29 Piva, Cattedrali lombarde, pp. 106-108, has already suggested that S. Pietro may have been added as a way of adapting S. Alessandro to its new role. Piva concluded, following in this respect Chiodi and Lupo, that S. Vincenzo was more important than S. Alessandro in the eighth century. His evidence included the "basilica/ecclesia" distinction, but he invoked as well a document
low in status because of its associations with the arian heresy, and S. Alessandro persisted in its role as cathedral of the city.

Such a long and detailed discussion of the origin of the two cathedrals in Bergamo is made necessary by the certainty that in these origins lies at least one root to the centuries long struggle between the two chapters of canons that represented these cathedrals. The defining moment of this struggle was a trial that took place in 1187. The goal of the canons of S. Vincenzo was for their cathedral to be declared the sole cathedral of the diocese. The canons of S. Alessandro, by contrast, desired only that their cathedral be considered equal in status to S. Vincenzo. As we shall see, these goals reflected the enormous changes in the relative importance of the two churches that had taken place in the period between 774 and 1187. Only when this change is taken into consideration, is it possible to understand why S. Alessandro claimed only equivalency with S. Vincenzo. The origin of S. Alessandro as proposed above also helps to explain the limited claim made, since in that theory S. Alessandro would originally have been subordinate to S. Vincenzo.

Before examining directly the trial of 1187 and its implications for the future of the two cathedrals, it is necessary to look into how and why the relative status of the two churches seems to have been reversed from 774 to 1187. Two periods were decisive in this reduction of power, the first corresponding to the episcopacy of Adalberto (888-935), and the second to that of Arnolfo (1077-deposed 1098). The first of these periods was defined by the struggle over who should assume regal power in Italy following the collapse of Carolingian

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presented by the canons of S. Vincenzo in the 1187 trial. Coming from this group, the document naturally extends S. Vincenzo's importance into the distant past. Piva uses it as objective evidence of that past status, without assessing the impact of its origin on its content. The evidence cited in the main text, coming as it does from contexts outside of the contentious battle between the churches, is a more reliable indicator of relative status.
authority. In 875, Louis II died leaving no clear heir. A bipolar situation emerged in which Charles the Bald ruled a western territory centred in an area corresponding to modern France, and Louis the German ruled a zone centred in what is today Germany. A factional split, based mainly on relative geographical proximity, developed around Charles the Bald and Louis the German, continuing well into the tenth century as a defining feature of the battles over who should succeed to the Imperial throne. After 887, when Charles the Fat, the last of the Emperors from the Carolingian line, was overthrown the struggle over succession developed into an almost twenty year period of civil war in Italy. Two figures are central to this struggle, Berengar I of Friuli and Guy of Spoleto, supported by the pro-German and pro-French factions respectively. Berengar had been declared king in 888, but Guy returned to Italy from France in 889 and was elected king against Berengar in 889. Guy defeated Berengar and in 891 took the title of emperor. In 894, Arnulf of Germany came to Italy at the request of Berengar, but actually aimed to rule Italy himself as emperor.30 It is this invasion of Arnulf that is relevant for our discussion S. Vincenzo’s rise to prominence.

The essential events are as follows: on February 1, 894 Arnulf attacked the castle of S. Vigilio located on a hill overlooking the city. In the attack a Veronese cleric Gotefrido opposed to Arnulf was killed by him and, on the same day, the possessions of Gotefrido were donated to the church of S. Vincenzo. On the following day the city itself was attacked and the church of S. Alessandro was damaged in the process. Adalberto, bishop of Bergamo, was taken prisoner by Arnulf, but was shortly afterwards, although it is not clear exactly how, a supporter of Arnulf.

30 For a discussion of this very complex sequence of events, see C. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society 400-1000, Ann Arbor, 1981, pp. 168-171.
The diploma of Arnulf dated to 1 February is a critically important document in understanding the process by which S. Vincenzo was empowered. Pretenders to the throne of Italy advanced their claims not simply through military conquest, but through the granting of privileges to those whose support was essential to their exercise of power. It is clear that Arnulf's donation was a political act of this type, and was intended to garner the support of the clergy of S. Vincenzo, as well as of the families they represented. Through the use of the following formula, S. Vincenzo was identified in the diploma as the ancient site of the bishop's throne and therefore, as the cathedral of the city: "in qua etiam primitiva illius episcopii sedes est." The use of such a formula, which appears in neither earlier nor later documents, suggests that it expresses a situation that is different than the already existing one. In this way, it becomes part of Arnulf's strategy aimed at attracting the support of the clergy of S. Vincenzo. It is also clear that the priests of S. Vincenzo could not have been silent partners in this transformation. Seeing that Arnulf was bound to be victorious, they probably expressed their support for him in the hope of receiving some sort of reward. This turbulent period offered many opportunities for groups to exploit royal rivalries to their own ends, meaning that the privileging of S. Vincenzo should be seen not simply as a ploy on the part of Arnulf, but as an agreement mutually beneficial to both parties involved.32

Another aspect of this process was the changed attitude of bishop Adalberto himself. Initially, as mentioned above, the bishop had been made

31 Quoted by Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," p. 280.
32 This point has been argued in several places, but has never really entered into the mainstream of local historiography. For the argument, see: Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," pp. 280-281; M.P. Zonca, "I Canonici delle cattedrali di Bergamo fino al secolo XII," tesi di laurea, Università cattolica Milan, 1961-1962, pp. 53ff.; Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," pp. 68-71. For an example of how this argument has been ignored in local history, see: L. Chiodi, "Dal vescovo Adelberto alle origini del libero Comune," in A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi and L. Vaccaro eds., Diocesi di Bergamo, Brescia, 1988, pp.39-43.
prisoner by Arnulf, but only in the following year Adalberto received privileges from his former captor.\textsuperscript{33} It is not at all clear how this change in position took place, but the implications are quite important. Not only had Arnulf successfully coopted the clergy of S. Vincenzo, he had also managed to bring the bishop to his side as a supporter. This marks a shift in the city's power allegiances. Before Arnulf attacked Bergamo, the powerful families of the city supported Guy of Spoleto, opposed to Arnulf in the struggle for the throne of Italy. As evidence of this is the initial opposition of bishop Adalberto, as well as the spirited defence of the city. But following Arnulf's successful alliance with the powers represented by the church of S. Vincenzo, he was able to bring the bishop into his camp as well. This suggests that he had effectively neutralized the opposition, and established a new centre of power based on the loyalty of the bishop, the clergy of S. Vincenzo and the families linked with that body. This centring of power at S. Vincenzo also strongly implies that the clergy associated with the two churches represented different political factions. The fact that Arnulf privileged S. Vincenzo so consistently at the expense of S. Alessandro suggests that S. Alessandro was linked with those who supported Guy of Spoleto. S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro thus represented at this time two different power groups within the city.\textsuperscript{34} Although I have identified these two factions as being linked to the broader issues over imperial succession, I am not proposing that this represented some sort of ideological split. The development of these factions can

\textsuperscript{33} This diploma is dated 1 January 895. Chiodi, "Dal vescovo Adelberto," p. 40, interprets this diploma as a sort of revocation of the donation made by Arnulf to S. Vincenzo the year before, since the donation is to the "bergomensis ecclesia," and not specifically to S. Vincenzo. Since S. Vincenzo continues its upward trajectory, it seems more likely that this diploma may suggest a certain identification between the church of Bergamo and S. Vincenzo.

\textsuperscript{34} See also: Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesiae," pp. 281-284, and Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," pp. 72-74, who argue along similar lines. Coreggi et al. argue that S. Alessandro represented a pro-Imperial stance whereas S. Vincenzo was anti-Imperial. This is an anachronistic interpretation, however, since these were not yet the dominant factional divisions in Italy. For a discussion of the ninth- and tenth-century factions, see: Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 168-181.
always be linked to the control of power within the confines of the local context: attachment to a larger issue always had a local goal.

In 897 the new power centre of S. Vincenzo was consolidated with the founding of a *canonica* there.\(^{35}\) This was not simply a new construction for an organizational framework that existed already, but an entirely new way of ordering life at S. Vincenzo. There is no evidence to support the idea that there was an earlier *canonica*, or that there were any cathedral canons.\(^ {36}\) The creation of this new institution, therefore, added considerable prestige to S. Vincenzo. It seems that this was a continuation of the policy sparked off by Arnulf's decision to privilege S. Vincenzo. In the document establishing the *canonica*, its possessions were described as belonging to the "sedis bergomensis ecclesiae," thus leaving out what had become in Carolingian documents describing such possessions the conventional reference to S. Alessandro. This may have been an intentional omission aimed at avoiding any implicit subordination to S. Alessandro, and thus acted as a further reassertion of the autonomy of S. Vincenzo.\(^ {37}\) It should be noted, however, that its establishment was made in honour of both S. Vincenzo and S. Alessandro. S. Alessandro was therefore not entirely omitted from the document, but was at the same time clearly not given the same prominence as in the past.

The extent to which S. Vincenzo was privileged by this foundation is cast into sharp relief by the fact that a similar *canonica* at S. Alessandro was not founded at this time. Ninth century documents show that there were minor officials, *custodi*, resident at S. Alessandro and that the feast of the patron saint

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\(^{35}\) Cortesi, *pergamene*, no. 34 (897).
\(^ {37}\) Zonca, *Est una Matrix Ecclesia*, p. 282, and Coreggi, et al., "battaglia" p. 69, see the 894 damage to the basilica alessandrina as the pretext for the founding of the *canonica* at S. Vincenzo, but as pointed out by Zonca, *Est una Matrix Ecclesia*, this presumed damage is based only on a false document of the eleventh century.
was celebrated there, but only in 908 is there a reference to a priest attached to S. Alessandro with the title of prepositus, one of the offices of a cathedral chapter. This does not mean, however, that there was a canonica there, since this was a legally recognised form of organization that would have appeared in contemporary documents. If there had been a canonica it would have been mentioned. Two documents from 915 and 917 show that S. Alessandro was still run by a preposito along with other clerics, but no canonica was mentioned. The 928 will of bishop Adalberto refers only to the canons and canonica of S. Vincenzo. In May 954, however, bishop Odelrico made a donation "in suntum et usum de canonis qui in praedicta ecclesia S. Alexandri nunc esse videntur," making it clear that by this date a canonica was established at S. Alessandro. Without an act of foundation, the precise date of this event cannot be determined, but it was obviously some time between 928 and 954. The importance in this context lies in the fact that it was certainly founded after the canonica at S. Vincenzo. This reinforces the argument made above that S. Vincenzo was in this period favoured over S. Alessandro as a patronage site. But the eventual founding of the canonica at S. Alessandro shows that in spite of the apparent ascendancy of S. Vincenzo, S. Alessandro was not entirely eclipsed by it.

38 Cortesi, pergamente, no. 6 (800), no. 10 (829), no. 24 (875), no. 28 (881). See also, Picasso, "canoniche," pp. 65-67.
39 Cortesi, pergamente, no. 44 (908). Chiodi, "Dal vescovo Adelberto," p. 41, argues that this document is evidence for the presence of a canonica at S. Alessandro at this date, but then goes on to undermine his argument by citing the will of bishop Adalberto (928) in which no canons of S. Alessandro are mentioned. He also argues that the invocation of both saints in the foundation document of the canonica of S. Vincenzo is evidence that such an institution already existed at S. Alessandro, but it is clear that it was simply a convention to invoke the city's two principal saints and is not evidence of an earlier canonica at S. Alessandro. Cassinelli, et al., Duomo, p. 20, also puts the date of the founding of the canonica of S. Alessandro at 908, but does not justify his assertion.
40 Cortesi, pergamente, no. 58 (915), no. 59 (917).
41 Lupo, Codex Diplomaticus, vol. 2, col. 165.
42 Cortesi, pergamente, no. 95 (954).
Bishop Adalberto, although focused on increasing the status of S. Vincenzo, did not entirely ignore S. Alessandro. A document of 928, for instance, shows not only that Adalberto made a donation to S. Alessandro, but also that he may have been involved either in repairing or building anew the crypt where the remains of the martyr lay.\(^{43}\) His will of 928 also prescribed that a lamp be kept perpetually alight before the tomb of S. Alessandro.\(^{44}\) Even though these documents show that Adalberto did not ignore the *basilica alessandrina*, his will demonstrates the balance of his patronage. In it Adalberto describes his wish to be buried at S. Vincenzo in front of the altar dedicated to the Holy Trinity. This altar had earlier been consecrated by Adalberto, and had probably also been constructed by him. He prescribed that a lamp was to burn perpetually before the altar and that a weekly mass was to be said there, administered by six priests chosen from amongst the clergy of S. Vincenzo. S. Alessandro was not by any means forgotten, but under Adalberto S. Vincenzo had become the more important site.

There are further early-tenth-century documents that evidence the ascendancy of S. Vincenzo. Of these, the most important is a diploma of 904 in which Berengar, in conformity with much of the policy of this ruler, conceded to the bishop and church of Bergamo the right to rule over the city and to rebuild its walls.\(^{45}\) In this document, S. Vincenzo is clearly identified as the *bergomensis ecclesia*, and is the first in a series of deeds in which bishops and kings, and later the Emperor, compete in building up the patrimony and prestige of S. Vincenzo. The term *matrix ecclesia*, so important to the later dispute over primacy, appears for the first time in 922, in a diploma of Rodolfo II, and then again in 928 in the

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\(^{43}\) Lupo, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 2, col. 171. See also, Chiodi, "Dal vescovo Adelberto," p. 43.

\(^{44}\) Lupo, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 2, col. 165.

\(^{45}\) Cortesi, *pergamene*, no. 204 (904). For Berengar's policy of alienating royal rights, see: Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, pp. 172-173.
will of bishop Adalberto, but in both these cases the documents survive only in the form of twelfth-century copies. Matrix could easily have been a later interpolation, intended to confer historical legitimacy on the contemporary claims of S. Vincenzo, because the form matrix ecclesia becomes common only in the eleventh century, and even then it is not the only term used. In spite of these doubts, the term mater ecclesia describing S. Vincenzo appears in a document of 986. Although there is not a systematic use of a single term to describe S. Vincenzo, there was a growing tendency to identify it as the principal church of the city, an identification that clearly served to differentiate it from its lesser partner S. Alessandro. During this same period S. Alessandro was consistently described using formulas similar to those used for churches in the diocese that were manifestly subordinate to the cathedral. In addition to this terminological distinction, S. Vincenzo was by the early tenth century also the church at which the arcidiacono of the chapter was resident. This was not only the most important position within the chapter, but within the diocese second only to the bishop.

The relative positions of the two cathedrals remained stable, as far as we know, until the late tenth century when the canons of S. Alessandro began to reassert their perceived rights and privileges. The culmination of this process was a trial that took place in 1187, in which the canons of S. Vincenzo claimed that their church should be considered the one and only mother church of the diocese. The canons of S. Alessandro, on the other hand, demanded that their church be given equal status to that of S. Vincenzo. The surviving documentary evidence surrounding this trial is immense, and has been the subject of several

studies. A detailed analysis of these sources would be tedious in this context; the intention here is simply to adumbrate those aspects relevant to the present argument. First I will describe the series of disputes that led up to the 1187 trial, including an examination of the explicit set of problems around which they all revolved. This analysis will reveal how these disputes were connected to the political control of the city and to the emergence of the autonomous Commune.

I will then look to the means by which each side justified its position in the 1187 trial, since the essential elements of these texts will be seen to resonate with the disputes of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

In general terms, the complex series of claims and counter-claims centred on the issue of primacy within the community. The goal of the canons of S. Vincenzo was to eclipse S. Alessandro, a policy that put the canons of S. Alessandro in a defensive position and largely determined their policy. The first step in this process occurred during the episcopacy of Arnolfo (1077-1098), during a period of widespread conflict between the Pope and the Emperor. Gregory VII sought to increase the central authority of the Church at the expense of that exercised by the Emperor. The foundation of Arnolfo's power base in Bergamo consisted of those noble families who supported the Emperor. In the late eleventh century this group made up by far the majority of families. Arnolfo was thus opposed to the reform movement sponsored by Gregory VII, because he saw it as a threat to his own authority. In June 1079 Gregory VII accused Arnolfo of simony and in response, Arnolfo associated himself with Henry IV's attempts to install his own candidate on the papal throne. Gregory VII in turn excommunicated Arnolfo in 1080. Arnolfo's power in Bergamo was sufficiently

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49 Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098 , p. 71
strong, however, that this papal accusation had little impact. By 1097, by contrast, the power of Henry IV had slipped to such an extent that Anselmo, the Archbishop of Milan and a supporter of papal reform, was able to depose Arnolfo in 1098.50 Although deposed from his role as spiritual leader of the diocese, control over the temporal possessions associated with the office of bishop could not be removed from Arnolfo's grasp because the imperial faction in Bergamo still held too much power.

As a consequence, it was not possible to elect a successor to Arnolfo, and Alberto da Sorlasco, archiprete of S. Vincenzo, took control of the diocese.51 This situation remained in place until Arnolfo's death in 1110, when Alberto da Sorlasco set up the election of a real successor. The victor in this process was the pro-papal Ambrogio da Mozzo, a canon of S. Vincenzo. This choice has been interpreted as one of compromise intended at satisfying both sides, because even though the candidate was pro-papal, his family was traditionally associated with the imperial faction.52 Although his election may have been at least partly motivated by this desire, it should be noted that it was carried out without the participation of the canons of S. Alessandro. These canons then appealed to the Emperor to have the election declared invalid, but were not successful.53

51 Usually, as will be discussed later in reference to the claims made by the canons of S. Vincenzo, the archidiacono of S. Vincenzo would take over episcopal duties in the absence of the bishop. This office must have been vacant at the time, and the election of a new archidiacono would have met with the same set of problems as the election of a new bishop.
52 Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098 , p. 72; Ambrogio was described in a contemporary document as a "patarina," namely a supporter of Gregorian reform, cited in Chiodi, "inizi," p. 20; on Ambrogio, see also A. Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," pp. 274-275.
This sequence of events is clearly suggestive of a real shift in the balance of power within the city. Before the deposition of Arnolfo the faction which supported the Emperor clearly held sway, whereas afterwards there seems to have been a shift in favour of the pro-papal forces. This shift coincided with the emergence of the Commune in Bergamo. The exact date for the emergence of the Commune is not known, but the first consuls are recorded in 1108, during the period when the diocese lacked a bishop and was ruled by Alberto da Sorialasco. Here is not the place to delve very deeply into the complex issues surrounding the origins of the Commune, but it is of some relevance given the fact that, as demonstrated above by the problems over finding a successor to bishop Arnolfo, the two cathedral chapters seem to have represented the two political factions that were struggling for control of the city.

The study of the rise of the Commune in Italy has until relatively recently been dominated by the idea that it was defined by the rise of an urban bourgeoisie and a decline in the power of the feudal aristocracy. The Italian city state became in this manner an attractive historical antecedent to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rise of the bourgeoisie.\(^{54}\) Another interpretive strategy has been to see the process as being intimately linked with the struggles between the Pope and the Emperor.\(^{55}\) Although this strategy is clearly more closely tied to contemporary concerns, it can lead to interpretations that see local events simply as mirroring the larger picture. There is too often the possibility that the historian can be blinded to the purely local concerns underlying a particular conflict simply because factions take a stand in the larger struggle between Pope and Emperor.

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\(^{54}\) For this tendency, and for further references, see Jarnut, "inizi," p. 201.

\(^{55}\) This approach was taken by Chiodi, "inizi," pp. 5-6.
The situation in Bergamo was similar to that in many other Lombard cities in that the rise of the Commune came at the expense of episcopal power. King Berengar's diploma of 904, through granting the right to fortify the city, gave to the bishop of Bergamo complete temporal authority over the city. In the exercise of this power the bishops relied on both the support of the Emperor, and that of the local land-based aristocracy. The bishop himself also came to control large tracts of land, perhaps amounting to as much as a third of the land within the territory of Bergamo. Gregorian reform challenged this situation through an increase in central ecclesiastical authority over the appointment of bishops. Older interpretative models saw this change as being brought about through the channeling of the aspirations of the emerging urban elites, opposed those of the traditional land-based aristocracy. But these have been reassessed in light of more recent research which has established that the city and the country, as well as the nobility and bourgeoisie, were very much interconnected entities, making it impossible to sustain such a reductive dialectic. Jörg Jarnut and to a lesser extent Luigi Chiodi have proposed that in Bergamo the Commune came about because of a need to fill a power vacuum following the 1098 deposition of bishop Arnolfo. This sequence of events was not unique to Bergamo, but part of a more general shift in power. Emperor Henry IV began to lose power in Italy following the 1093 defection of his son Corrado to the papal camp. The Pope moved quickly to exploit this weakness by enforcing the removal of bishops who had relied on imperial patronage and protection. Prior to the 1098 removal of Arnolfo the stable government of Bergamo had relied on the bishop and a coalition of powerful noble families who supported his rule. With the removal of the pivotal figure of the bishop the system was in threat of collapse. In 1106,

56 Jarnut, "inizi," p. 204.
bishop Arnolfo was again excommunicated by the Pope, and in 1108 the first consuls are recorded in Bergamo. The two events are surely connected. To prevent chaos, the same noble families who had ruled in conjunction with the bishop established the Commune. The changes wrought by these reforms were thus not in any way revolutionary, but involved instead a shift of focus away from the bishop and towards the foundations on which the bishop had traditionally based his power. In the process, the bishop certainly lost a good deal of his hold on temporal power, but even this facet of the changed situation should not be overstated, since the bishop still remained a pivotal figure in the early years of communal government.

Jarnut's argument centred on establishing that the same class of people made up the governing group before and after the emergence of the Commune. He did not address specifically the extent to which the two cathedral chapters represented different parts of that group. The events surrounding the deposition of bishop Arnolfo reveal that the two chapters were involved in these shifts. The canons of S. Alessandro, for instance, complained to the Emperor when the pro-papal Ambrogio da Mozzo was elected bishop in 1111.58 Their exclusion from the election process must have been grounded in the fact that they were not expected to vote in favour of a pro-papal candidate. The implications are clear: in this series of events at least, the canons of S. Alessandro were in favour of imperial power and against that represented by the Commune, whereas those of S. Vincenzo were supporters of both the Pope and the Commune. The shift that took place as a result of the change in the form of government was not one of class, but of faction. It seems clear that the canons of the two cathedral chapters were the focal points of two factions, each vying for both religious and political

control of the city. The canons of S. Alessandro associated themselves with the imperial party as a way of advancing their local cause, but found in the end that they had chosen the losing side. The canons of S. Vincenzo chose a similar strategy, but emerged victorious.

It would be a mistake, however, to interpret, as some authors have done, the almost endless series of twelfth-century disagreements in terms of a struggle between a conservative pro-imperial faction, represented by the canons of S. Alessandro, and progressive pro-papal faction, represented by the canons of S. Vincenzo. There was no rigid attachment on the part of either of the two groups of canons to either of the papal or imperial causes. Allegiances changed as opportunities presented themselves. These were not ideologically-driven attachments, but motivated by the contingencies of the moment. If one is to accept that the canons of S. Alessandro should always be connected to the imperial faction, then why should their status have declined just as the bishop assumed broad temporal powers in the early tenth century, a change brought about through the intervention of the Emperor? If the connexion between the canons of S. Alessandro and imperial power were fixed, then an imperially sponsored increase in episcopal power would without doubt have resulted in an increase in their importance, not the decrease that actually took place. It is clear therefore that the canons of S. Alessandro must have been opposed to imperial policy in the early tenth century. By the late eleventh century, however, the canons of S. Alessandro supported the Emperor and bishop Arnolfo. Clearly, it is

59 Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," pp. 88-94; E. Camozzi, ed., Le visite 'ad limina apostolorum" dei vescovi di Bergamo (1590-1697), Bergamo, 1992, p. 138n4; C. Storti Storchi, Diritto e istituzioni a Bergamo dal Comune alla Signoria, Milan, 1984, p. 83, all interpret the struggle between the two chapters within such a rigid framework, an outlook that it is justifiably criticised by A. Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," p. 277, and Pesenti, "Chiesa nel primo periodo," p. 86 note 84. In addition to this, both also relate the struggle to the issue of social class, with the canons of S. Alessandro representing the land-based aristocracy, and the canons of S. Vincenzo the emerging urban bourgeoisie. See above for a critique of this approach.
not possible to predict which side each of the two chapters might support. Their political allegiances were not fixed at any given moment in a way that provides the historian with a convenient key to the interpretation of their centuries long conflict.

The rigid associations made by some between the two chapters and the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor collapse further when only slightly later events are considered. In 1129, tensions flared up between bishop Ambrogio and the canons of S. Alessandro. Ambrogio attempted both to deny these canons certain rights to money and property, and to impose canons of his own choice on the chapter of S. Alessandro, thus infringing on their traditional right to select their own members. As a response to the opposition of the chapter, Ambrogio imposed on them an episcopal interdict. Thus far, the sequence of events described accords with the notion that Ambrogio was the enemy of the canons of S. Alessandro. But their response to the crisis does not. They appealed to Pope Onorius II who, on 14 May 1129 raised the episcopal interdict and settled the dispute largely in favour of the canons of S. Alessandro. Given a model in which the political allegiances of these groups were fixed, this is not a logical sequence; the canons of S. Alessandro should have appealed to the Emperor, not the Pope. Furthermore, Ambrogio, a supposedly pro-papal bishop, should have had the support of the Pope in this matter. This sequence of events suggests the fluid and opportunistic nature of political allegiances in this period.60

During the episcopacy of Gregory (1133-1146) there were numerous disputes between the two chapters, but these did not directly address the issue of

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60 A. Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," pp. 274-276; Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 17.
the political allegiances of the two groups. In 1146 bishop Gerardo was elected from amongst the canons of S. Vincenzo, but excited no controversy, since the canons of S. Alessandro had participated in the process. At the beginning of his episcopacy, Gerardo supported the papacy, but later turned to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, perhaps as an attempt to gain back some of the power lost as a result of the ascendancy of the Commune. In 1156, Gerardo, in a show of support for the Emperor, sanctioned the second marriage of Barbarossa even though the Pope had refused to annul his first. In 1159, Barbarossa promoted Victor IV as anti-pope and in 1160 Gerardo declared his support of this effort. In 1164, following the death of Victor, Gerardo was one of the few bishops in Italy to support Pascal III, the successor advocated by Barbarossa. During this period both chapters of canons received privileges from both Victor and Barbarossa. It seems on surface at least that both groups supported the actions of Gerardo, but it should be remembered that the bishop was originally elected from amongst the canons of S. Vincenzo. In 1167 the Lombard league was formed to combat the ambitions of Barbarossa. His power declined and as a consequence so did that of bishop Gerardo, who was deposed by the Archbishop of Milan. In 1168 Guala, a canon of S. Alessandro, was elected as his successor. This provides an analogous case to that following the deposition of bishop Arnolfo in 1098, except that in this situation the results were reversed. The elevation of a canon of S. Alessandro to the episcopacy suggests that the chapter of S. Vincenzo was associated with the pro-imperial schismatic policies of bishop Gerardo. This episode demonstrates

61 For a detailed description of the issues at hand in these disputes, many of which required papal intervention, see Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 19-28.
63 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 31-33.
64 A. Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," pp. 277-278.
65 Pesenti, "Chiesa nel primo periodo," p. 85 note 64, notes that there were difficulties in electing Guala because some members of the chapter of S. Alessandro were supporters of Gerardo's
again how allegiances to broader factions could rapidly change depending on the opportunities offered by particular circumstances. During his episcopacy, Guala (1168-1186) acted as a conciliator between the two chapters and prevented any new episodes of conflict.  

Perhaps the most convincing evidence in favour of seeing the conflict in primarily local terms is furnished by the list of privileges granted both chapters by popes and emperors in this period. This list clearly shows that both chapters received such privileges in almost equal numbers from both parties. In spite of this apparent fluidity in the attachment to the larger issues of the day, it remains clear that the two groups of canons did represent two opposing political factions, each vying for primacy in the city, not simply for its own sake, but as a means of controlling the election of the bishop and thus attaining political power. At the same time, it should be noted that this struggle reached its peak just as the temporal power of these bishops was declining relative to that of the Commune. It is, however, easy to lose sight of the political facet of the 1187 trial when confronting the mass of evidence furnished by the documents of its proceedings, since the testimony presented there treats not so much the root causes of the conflict as its symptoms.

schismatic policies. On the surface this may appear to contradict the conclusion reached above, but it is in fact further evidence of the fluidity of political attachments in these disputes. Additionally, the election of a canon of S. Alessandro did eventually take place, suggesting that the majority of those canons did not support the schism.

67 The following list was compiled by Pesenti, "Chiesa nel primo periodo," p. 86 note 84. In favour of S. Vincenzo, there are papal bulls from 1101 (Lupo, Codex Diplomaticus, vol. 2, col. 829), 1125 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 927), 1140 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1021), 1141 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1037), 1169 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1261) and 1186 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1363). In favour of S. Vincenzo there are imperial decrees from 1132 (Ibid., vol. 2, cols. 969, 971), 1136 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 993), 1156 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1149) and 1158 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1161). In favour of S. Vincenzo there are imperial decrees from 1132 (Ibid., vol. 2, cols. 969, 971), 1136 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 993), 1156 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1149) and 1158 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1161). There is also an 1160 bull favouring S. Vincenzo from anti-pope Victor IV (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1179). In favour of S. Alessandro, there are papal bulls from 1109 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 859), 1128 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 937), 1139 (Ibid., vol. 2, cols. 1117, 1119), 1144 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1047), 1154 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1127) and 1156 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1151). There is an imperial decree in favour of S. Alessandro from 1159 (Ibid., vol. 2, col. 1165).
Immediately following the death of bishop Guala in 1186 open conflict reerupted between the chapters of canons, sparked off by the exclusion of the canons of S. Alessandro from the preparation of Guala's body for burial and by the attempts by Adelardo, *arcidiacono* of S. Vincenzo, to elect a new bishop without consulting the canons of S. Alessandro. In this way the canons of S. Vincenzo were acting as if their chapter constituted the only legitimate cathedral chapter. Between the end of 1186 and the beginning of 1187, Pope Urban III sent Cardinal Adelardo (not Adelardo, the *arcidiacono* of S. Vincenzo) to Bergamo to preside over the election of a new bishop and to sort out the problems between the two chapters. On 30 January 1187, Lanfranco, a canon of S. Vincenzo, was elected as successor to Guala.68 Once that problem had been settled, Cardinal Adelardo turned immediately to the intractable dispute between the chapters. In the months following, a long series of witnesses, twenty-nine for S. Vincenzo and seventeen for S. Alessandro, testified before the papal representative.

The issues raised by these witnesses were not by any means new, but had been treated many times before in a long series of papal pronouncements.69 Several problems surrounded the protocol to be followed in the places and situations in which the two chapters met.70 When the two chapters gathered together in choir of one of the cathedrals for an important service, for instance, the bishop took the place of honour in the centre, the *arcidiacono* of S. Vincenzo sat to his right, and the principal canon of S. Alessandro at that time, the *prevosto*, along with the other canons of this chapter, sat to his left. The canons of S. Vincenzo, while admitting that this was the usual practice, claimed that the

68 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 35-37.
69 For the content of each of these previous pronouncements, see Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 13-35.
70 These problems are treated in general terms by Coreggi, et al., "battaglia," pp. 1-28, whereas Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," deals with each issue in great detail, summarizing the differing points of view of each of the witnesses.
prevosto sat in that position not *ex debito*, but *ex gratia*. In other words, this honoured position in the choir was not representative of any sort of equivalence between the two chapters, but was simply a favour granted by the canons of S. Vincenzo.71 A second problem surrounded the presence of the prevosto or another priest of S. Alessandro in the cathedral of S. Vincenzo during the assignment of the penance required of sinners who sought liturgical reconciliation with the Church on Maundy Thursday of Holy Week.72 The canons of S. Vincenzo claimed that the right should take place without the participation of the other chapter.

In fact, the trial dealt with a very broad range of problems, encompassing discussions of how processions73 and funeral rites74 should be carried out, and of who was responsible for the consecration of diocesan priests75 and churches.76 There was testimony also on exactly how the feasts of the two patron saints77, Vincenzo and Alessandro, should be observed, and on the participation of the two chapters in the Holy Week liturgy78. Discussion of economic problems, centred on the distribution of tithes to the two chapters, had its place as well.79 In all of these cases, the witnesses for S. Vincenzo tried to minimize the historic role and importance of the canons of S. Alessandro, while the witnesses for S. Alessandro were forced simply to defend themselves against this onslaught. All of the tedious battling over seemingly insignificant issues of ritualistic precedence was not without purpose. Through the establishment of primacy

72 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 99-103.
73 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 68-73.
74 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 73-82.
76 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 87-90.
77 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 109-122.
within the symbolic framework of ritual the canons of S. Vincenzo hoped to advance their position within the civic hierarchy and achieve real political power.

One means by which they hoped to achieve this was through control over the election of the bishop. During the trial considerable effort was expended in an attempt to determine what the conventions were for electing the bishop and to assess the relationships between the bishop and the two chapters. To determine these conventions questions were asked about how the elections had been carried out for some recent bishops. In the interpretation of the answers the judges had to distinguish between what was thought to be normal practice, and what had come about as a result of special circumstances pertaining to a particular election. As outlined above, from the time of the election of Ambrogio da Mozzi in 1110 up to that of Lanfranco in 1186 there had often been extenuating circumstances that had forced a deviation from standard practice. In spite of the difficulties in separating convention from contingency, it was agreed that the convention was that the bishop had usually been elected by a group of six canons, three from each of the two chapters. The witnesses for S. Vincenzo maintained, however, that since the bishop was always elected, proclaimed and consecrated in S. Vincenzo and that the bishop's electors, although representing equally both groups of canons, were themselves chosen by canons of that church, S. Vincenzo was the mother church of the diocese. In terms of the relationship between the bishop and the two chapters, the dispute centred on who took over the running of the diocese in the absence of the bishop. The witnesses for S. Vincenzo argued that the arcidiacono took over, or in his absence, the arciprete,

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80 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 56-60.
81 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," pp. 61-65.
both offices of the chapter of S. Vincenzo alone. The witnesses for the canons of S. Alessandro stated that the arcidiacono and prevosto shared power under these circumstances. The bishop remained a pivotal figure in the political landscape of Bergamo, even though the Commune had by this time emerged as the most important feature. Control over his election would have been a meaningful achievement for the coalition of families whose interests were represented by the chapter of S. Vincenzo.

According to the witnesses for S. Vincenzo, the church of S. Vincenzo was not as old as S. Alessandro, but was more important because all functions necessary for a cathedral took place there. The bishop celebrated all the major feasts at S. Vincenzo and these services were carried out entirely by the canons of that church. All ordinations took place at S. Vincenzo, including, as mentioned above, the consecration of the bishop himself. All the ritual privileges accorded to the church of S. Alessandro did not arise from its status as mother church of the diocese, but simply because it possessed the relics of S. Alessandro. The witnesses for S. Alessandro did not deny that these important ceremonies took place at S. Vincenzo. Their testimony aimed instead at demonstrating that S. Alessandro was deserving of equal dignity exactly because it contained the relics of SS. Alessandro, Narno and Viator, because it had been the first episcopal seat of the city, and because the Church and diocese of Bergamo are referred to as "di S. Alessandro." The dispute was finally settled with an act of peace, signed 23 December 1189, largely in favour of S. Alessandro insofar as S. Vincenzo was not recognized as the mother church of the diocese, but had to share that distinction with S. Alessandro. The resolution also involved the

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83 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 49.
85 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 36.
joining of the two formerly separate chapters into one.86 From this point on a
canon from one church was also considered to be a canon from the other church.

This act of union was not destined to mark an end to the conflict between
these two groups. Although officially joined into one chapter, the distinct
identities of the two groups were not effectively submerged since there remained
within the single chapter a congregation of S. Vincenzo and one of S.
Alessandro. In the centuries following the act of union there was relatively little
friction between the two groups, however, since the growing power of the
Commune progressively marginalized that of the bishop. No longer could the
two chapters be used a ciphers through which the political ambitions of family
coalitions were channeled. These coalitions moved towards the open civic
conflict that characterises much of Bergamask history from the thirteenth
through to the fifteenth centuries.87 In spite of the political disempowerment of
the cathedral chapter, the two congregations still represented two distinct factions
within the city. In 1561, the Venetian rulers of the city demolished the basilica
alessandrina, forcing the cohabitation of the two congregations at S. Vincenzo.
The disputes subsequent to this event were grounded in the histories of the two
churches.

86 Valsecchi, "Interrogatus... respondit," p. 43.
87 For further discussion of this relationship, see A. Zonca, "Est una Matrix Ecclesia," pp. 279.
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fig. 1. Alvise Cima, View of Bergamo before 1561 with a superimposed outline of the later walls, detail of the area around the *basilica alessandrina* (marked with a '9' just to the left of the large 'S'), BCB
2. Plan of S. Vincenzo, Bergamo, ca. 1341
3. Plan of the centre of Bergamo, ca. 1341. (1. S. Vincenzo; 2. S. Maria Maggiore; 3. town hall)
4. Plans for the Duomo of Bergamo from Filarete's *Treatise on Architecture*
5. Plan of S. Vincenzo, Bergamo, in the sixteenth century
7. Bird's eye view of the centre of Bergamo, 1626, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Raccolta Terkuz
8. Cesare Targoni, Tabernacle, Duomo, Bergamo, 1588
10. Costantino Rosa (attributed), *Piazza del Duomo of Bergamo*, ca. 1870, private collection
PIVS. PAPA. IIII.
Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

Vperna dispositione, cujus inceutabili prudencia ordi-
orem falcipum unius, in supereminenti Apostolice
dignitatis specula meritis licet imparsi constitutor
eter curas multiplices quae nobis ex Apostolico utio
incumbunt illam potissimum hibenter ampliitum, per
quarn insignis Ecclesiae ruinas & demolitiones perpetue
conrietioribus locis restauratur, & edificiorum, & invic-
minus in illis Cuitus sustinetur, illustrantis reformatores
et gratias nobis reportasse grerentur, & præmissa hunc cordis nostri deh-La-
min subiecto pontificae s nobis petetur operariis natus favebilibus ad-
hicernus.

11. Facade of the basilica alessandrina, 1610, frontispiece of a printed version of the 1561 act of concord
12. Position of the Cathedral of Bergamo according to the Binago-Richino plan, 1613
13. Position of the Cathedral of Bergamo according to the Avanzi plan, 1614
14. Silver antependium, Duomo, Bergamo
15. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo*, Duomo, Bergamo
16. Johann Friedrich Greuter, *S. Alessandro on Horseback with Twenty-Three Scenes From His Life*, printed in Rome, 1618
17. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo, detail of central field, Accademia Carrara n.1686, Bergamo
18. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *SS. Fermo, Rustico and Procolo*, detail of one of the flanking narrative scenes, Accademia Carrara n.1686, Bergamo
21. Enea Salmeggia, _S. Alessandro Elected Bishop of Bergamo_, Duomo, Bergamo
26. Enea Salmeggia, *S. Grata Picks up the Head of the Martyred S. Alessandro*, Piazzini Albani collection, Bergamo
27. Fabio Ronzelli, *The Burial of S. Alessandro, S. Alessandro della Croce*, Bergamo
28. The tomb of S. Alessandro from the *basilica alessandrina*, S. Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo
29. Enea Salmeggia, *S. Grata Presenting the Miraculous Flowers to S. Lupo*, Piazzini Albani collection, Bergamo
32. Processional cross, front, Duomo, Bergamo
33. Processional cross, back, Duomo, Bergamo
34. Memorial column to the basilica alessandrina, Bergamo
35. Column in front of S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo
36. Inscription, Memorial column to the *basilica alessandrina*, Bergamo
38. Enea Salmeggia, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, S. Vittore, Terno d'Isola (BG)
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40. Exterior from the East S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
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42. North portal of S. Maria Maggiore and Colleoni chapel, Bergamo
43. Choir, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
44. Votive chapel, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
45. Gian Paolo Lolmo, *Madonna and Child with Saints Roch and Sebastian*, votive chapel, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
46. Baptistery, as reconstructed on Piazza del Duomo, Bergamo
47. South transept facade, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
48. Colleoni chapel, Bergamo
49. Bust of Trajan, Colleoni chapel, Bergamo
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51. Soldier in Roman armour, Colleoni chapel, Bergamo
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58. Plan of S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, showing the positions of altars before 1575. 'B' refers to the baptistery and 'C' to the Colleoni chapel.
59. Antonio Boselli, *Christ in Glory with Saints*, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
60. Chapel of St. John the Evangelist and Gospel pulpit, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
61. Interior wall of North Transept, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
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64. Francesco Bassano, *Birth of the Virgin, Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, Annunciation, Visitation*, choir vault, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
65. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *Esther before Assuerus*, choir, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
66. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *Judith and Holofernes*, choir, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
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68. Enea Salmeggia, *Adoration of the Magi*, cover of false organ, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
69. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *Coronation of the Virgin*, cupola, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
70. Plan of S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, showing the positions of altars after 1575. 'B' refers to the baptistery and 'C' to the Colleoni chapel
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72. 'St. Mark' altar, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
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74. Corpus Domini chapel, S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo
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77. Plan of S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo, ca. 1600
78. Stefano Scolari, Plan of Bergamo, detail of S. Alessandro in Colonna, ca. 1680
79. Giovan Paolo Cavagna, *S. Grata Carrying the Severed Head of S. Alessandro*, S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo
80. Francesco Zucco, *S. Grata Presenting the Miraculous Flowers to S. Lupo, S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo*
Luca, S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo

82. Francesco Zucca, detail of S. Corona Presenting the Miraculous Flowers to S.
84. Francesco Zucco, *S. Alessandro Elected Bishop of Bergamo*, S. Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo
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